

## 7 Minute Briefing

### 7. Questions to consider

Do I know what to do if I find that a child is being privately fostered?

Do I know how to make a notification to the Local Authority?

How does my service recognise and support the needs of children living in private fostering arrangements?

### 6. Support resources

[LLR Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

[Procedures: Private fostering](#)

[CoramBAAF information on private fostering](#)

Leicestershire County Council: [private fostering](#)

Leicester City Council: [private fostering](#)

Rutland County Council: [private fostering](#)

### 5. Private fostering vs. Looked-After Children (LAC)

Children cared for in private fostering arrangements do not have the same legal status as 'Looked-After Children'/'Children in Care'.

**Age:** Private fostering arrangements end at 16yrs (or 18 yrs if a child has a disability); Looked-After Children can choose to stay in their current placement until 21yrs.

**Provision:** Looked-After Children receive regular health assessments and priority access to local education; these are not available to privately fostered children.

**Outcomes:** well-established information on lived experiences & outcomes for Looked-After Children; very little research or data for those privately fostered.

### 1. Background

Private fostering arrangements are:

- Made directly between the parent(s) and carer(s), rather than by the Local Authority.
- For a child under 16 yrs (or under 18yrs if they have a disability).
- The carer is someone other than a parent or close relative (grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle or step-parent who has PR).
- The arrangement lasts more than 28 days.

### 2. Why it matters

Privately fostered CYP are a diverse & sometimes vulnerable group;  
Includes: teenagers who have broken ties with parents & are staying with friends or other non-relatives, language students living with host families, children sent from abroad to stay with another family.  
Beware hidden harms: child trafficking, exploitation and modern slavery.

### 3. Key Messages

Parent(s) & carer(s) should notify the local authority of any private fostering arrangements.

There is a **statutory duty** on professionals to notify Social Care if they become aware of a private fostering arrangement; this is not a breach of confidentiality and failure to do so may put the child/young person at risk.

Professionals should not make any assumptions; they should always find out & document the name and relationship of any adults accompanying children or young people during visits/appointments.

### 4. Signs a child may be privately fostered:

- An adult mentions that they are caring for a child who is not their immediate relative.
- An adult is seen by services with a child who has not been seen before.
- An adult attends regularly with different children referred to as their 'niece' or 'nephew'.
- A child mentions that the person they are with is not their parent.
- A child says there is another child staying at home with them.
- A child suddenly stops attending their usual education setting.

