

making sure that their racial, cultural, and religious needs are being met and that the accommodation and sleeping arrangements are suitable.

The social worker will talk to your child about his/her feelings and wishes about being privately fostered.

How often will they visit?

The social worker will visit your child at the private foster carer's home every 6 weeks for the first year, and every three months after that, for as long as they stay with the same carer. The social worker will talk to other people who live in the same house and they will usually see your child on their own. Every time the social worker visits, they will write a report. One of the things the social worker will ask about on every visit is how long the arrangement is going on for. This is so the plan remains focused on meeting the needs of your child. Any changes in your circumstances or the child's, private foster carers can be planned for. If your plans change, you must let the social worker know as soon as possible.

What else can the social worker do?

The social worker will support the private foster carer to give the best possible care for your child and will offer advice and training to the private foster carers. They

can give you advice and support so that you can make other arrangements for the care of your child if private fostering is not the right arrangement for your child. We can take action to stop a Private Fostering arrangement if there is evidence that the child may be at risk.

How to get in touch with us

Phone the duty team on 01225 396313

Email childcare_duty@bathnes.gov.uk

Write to us at:

**Children, Young People and
Family Services Duty Team,
Bath & North East Somerset Council,
Lewis House, Manvers Street,
Bath BA1 1JG.**

Contact us by dropping into Council Connect at Keynsham Civic Centre, Market Walk, Keynsham, BS31 1FS and ask for the Duty Children's Social Workers.

This information can be made available in other languages or formats (including large print, Braille, on CD) on request.

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Private Fostering Information for parents



Is someone else looking after your child?

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What is Private Fostering?

Private Fostering is when a child under the age of 16, or 18 if disabled, is living with someone other than a parent or person with parental responsibility, or a close relative for 28 consecutive days or more. Private foster carers may be extended family such as a cousin or great aunt, a friend of the family or parents of a child's boyfriend or girlfriend.

They could also be someone unknown to the family who is willing to privately foster a child. Close family members, i.e. aunt, uncle, brother, sister, grandparent or step-parent are not private foster carers.

- Private fostering is not arranged or paid for by the Local Authority
- It requires parental consent. If parents do not agree to it, then the Local Authority will still assess the situation
- It is used by parents to make arrangements for the care of their children, often for a fixed period of time because of work commitments or because they are living abroad although there may also be other reasons
- Private fostering includes arrangements made by independent or language school for a child under 16 or 18 if disabled, to live with a host family for more than 28 days

Do I have to tell anyone that my child is privately fostered?

Parents and carers must inform Bath & North East Somerset Council Children's Services of this arrangement not earlier than 13 weeks or later than 6 weeks before it begins. If it is or was an emergency placement or you were unaware that this law existed then inform us straight away.

How can Bath & North East Somerset Children, Young People and Family Services help?

Although it is a private arrangement between parents and carers, Children's Social Care have certain responsibilities under the Children Acts 1989/2004 to ensure that children who are privately fostered are given adequate care and with respect to their specific and cultural needs.

Asking someone to look after your child does not rule out your parental responsibility. Your confidence in your chosen carers will be supported by us and we will complete an assessment of the private arrangement.

A social worker will visit carers to assess the arrangement to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of the child.

If we find that a placement is unsuitable we can place requirements on the carer about the placement or take action to stop the private fostering arrangement.

What do parents need to know?

Parents remain responsible for the child's welfare including financial support throughout the duration of the arrangement.

Private fostering arrangements are usually temporary. Parents should give as much information to the carers as possible about their child to assist in any changes of his or her routines. This should include details about family culture and language, the child's health, education and diet, as well as details of when and how often you will be seeing your child. So that your child's education and healthcare are not disrupted, they should stay at the same school and have the same doctor if this is possible.

You should also include information on how the carer can contact you.

This should be put in writing so that the arrangements remain clear and open. We can help you to draw up a written agreement.

Parents must give written agreement to the carer to allow them to sign a medical consent form in case of an emergency.

Why will a social worker visit my child and the carer?

The social worker's role is to make sure your child is safe and that their needs are being met in the right way for them, while they are living away from you. This means