

## Information for parents about private fostering

Tell us if you are thinking about placing your child with a private foster carer. You should do this six weeks before the arrangement starts, or immediately if it has already started. (It is an offence not to notify the local authority that you have placed your child with a private foster carer). We will offer advice and help you to make the best arrangement for your child.

### What you have to do

- Give the private foster carer as much written information as possible about your child. This should include details about your family routine, language and culture. You also need to tell them about your child's eating preferences, school, hobbies and interests
- Make sure that the carer and we know how to contact you
- Give written consent to the carer enabling them to seek medical treatment for your child
- Reach agreement with the private foster carer about covering the cost of looking after your child
- Be clear about how long the arrangement will last - it is rarely in the child's best interest to be away from their family for more than a short period

You are encouraged to have a written agreement with the carer. This helps safeguard the child's welfare and protects them and reduces risk of misunderstandings. We can help you write an agreement.

### After you contact us

The law says we have to find out if private fostering will keep the child safe and meet their needs. This includes:

- Assessing a carer's suitability
- Talking to you about your child's needs and possible alternative arrangements
- Discussing the length of the arrangement

As a parent you remain responsible for your child's safety and well being. You remain the person with parental responsibility and should continue to be involved in decisions concerning your child. It is very important that you remain in contact with your child.

### What Children and Young People's Services must do

It is our duty to make sure the child is safe and well looked after. We work with and help birth parents and private foster carers to make sure arrangements are legal, safe and will meet your child's needs. We have to make sure an arrangement is in the child's best interests. When private fostering is agreed we do this by regularly visiting the child. We may require changes to be made or things to be done differently. We'll do this if it is best for the child, but carers can appeal to a court if they think we are wrong. If we think a private fostering arrangement isn't suitable for your child we will let you know.