

ONE MINUTE GUIDE: Private Fostering

What is Private Fostering?

Private Fostering is a private arrangement made by a child's parent (or someone with parental responsibility) for the child to live with someone who is not a close relative (grandparent, brother, sister, biological uncle or aunt, or step-parent by marriage or civil partnership). Private Fostering only applies to a child under 16 years, or under 18 years if the child is disabled. If the arrangement is expected to last more than 28 days, it becomes a Private Fostering arrangement, and you must tell Merton Council. Privately Fostered children are not in the care of Merton Council.

Parents

The law tells us all those with parental responsibility must tell Merton Council about the details of the Private Fostering arrangement. This should be done before making the Private Fostering arrangement or as soon as the arrangement starts.



Parental Responsibility

When a child lives in a Private Fostering arrangement, the child's parents keep all legal rights and their parental responsibility for the child. They should financially support their child.

Parents must be:

- Involved in planning the child's future.
- Kept in touch about the child's progress.
- Involved in any decisions made about the child.

Parents can end a Private Fostering arrangement at any point.



Partner Agencies

Education colleagues, Health Workers, Police, social workers, volunteers and other professionals may know of Private Fostering arrangements because of their contact with children and families.

Professionals from all agencies have a legal duty to tell Merton Council if they

find out about or believe a child is living in a Private Fostering arrangement.

Merton Council

Merton Council has a legal duty to make sure Privately Fostered children are safe and well. Where they are told of a proposed or existing Private Fostering arrangement, a social worker will make an initial visit and will then assess the suitability of the arrangements and the need for any additional help and support.

Who do I contact to notify of a private fostering arrangement?

Merton Child and Family Hub.

By telephone: 020 8545 4226

By email: candfhub@merton.gov.uk

Where can I get further information about Private Fostering?

The statutory guidance for local authorities on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Privately Fostered children: [National minimum standards for Private Fostering](#)

Where do I go for further information?

Please visit the MSCP page for up to date information and latest news. [Private Fostering - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](#)