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Private fostering

What private fostering is

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) lives with someone for 28 days or more who is not a:

- close relative such as a grandparent, sibling, uncle or aunt or step-parent
- guardian
- person with parental responsibility

The parent/s and the private foster carer would make this arrangement, not the local council.

Children who are privately fostered until their sixteenth birthday [are entitled to a service from the local authority](#).

Why someone might private foster

Private fostering can happen if the child or young person:

- has parents who live overseas and they come to this country to attend school
- has parents who are ill and cannot look after them
- has been estranged from their families
- is attending language schools and staying with host families

Find out more on the [Coram BAAF Adoption and Fostering Academy website](#).

You're involved in a private fostering arrangement

Some people are not aware that they are a private foster carer or their child is

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in a private fostering arrangement.

Your child is being looked after by someone else

If you're thinking of placing your child with a private foster carer, you must tell us at least 6 weeks before the placement starts. If it has already begun, tell us straight away.

You are responsible for making sure the placement is suitable for your child. We will do checks on the private fostering carer and their family to make sure they meet your child's needs. See more guidance for parents on private fostering.

You're looking after someone else's child

You might be private fostering if you are caring for a child full time and you are not the child's parent or close relative. You must tell us 6 weeks before any arrangement starts or straight away if already begun. Find out more about caring for someone else's child.

Notify us about a private fostering arrangement

You must inform us if you know about a child that is being or going to be privately fostered. By law, we must know of any arrangement. Dorset's Children's Services can then make sure the arrangement is suitable.

[Inform the Children's advice and duty service \(ChAD\)](#) if you are:

- the parent/carer of the child or the private foster carer
- involved in the arrangement
- a social worker or from another local council

If you know someone is private fostering, please contact [our children's advice and duty service \(ChAD\)](#).

[Contact the Fostering Team](#) if you want to speak to the lead contact for private fostering and you are a social worker or from another local council.

Foreign language students

You must tell us about a private fostering arrangement if you are looking after a child under the age of 16 from overseas attending a language school in Dorset.

[Register and complete the form to tell us about a private fostering arrangement for a language student from overseas.](#)

Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD)

Name: Single point of contact for safeguarding concerns

Tel: [01305228866](tel:01305228866)

[Full contact details](#) >

Fostering Team

Email: fosteringenquiries@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Tel: [01305 225568](tel:01305225568)

[Full contact details](#) >

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