

# Private Fostering

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Information for carers



A private foster child is a child (under the age of 16 years or 18 years if they are disabled), who is being looked after for more than 28 days by someone who is not their parent, step-parent, grandparent, immediate aunt, uncle, brother or sister.

### What is private fostering?

If you arrange to look after someone else's child for a period of more than 28 days, the child is a private foster child from the first day.

If you arrange to look after a child for less than 28 days and the child goes home during this period, this is not a private foster child.

If you arrange to look after a child for less than 28 days and later agree or intend to carry on longer than 28 days (over a period of time) the child is a private foster child from the day you knew the arrangements would exceed 28 days.

Buckinghamshire County Council can impose specific

requirements which will be put in writing. These must be carried out and can include areas such as health and safety; the standard of accommodation; the age and gender and the number of children to be privately fostered.

### While you are acting as a private foster carer you must:

- Allow a social worker to visit any foster child whom you are looking after
- Allow a social worker to see the child alone
- Allow a social worker to undertake a comprehensive assessment and checks (police, health etc) on you and anyone else who lives in your household.

- Tell us of any address change in advance, with a minimum of 48 hours notice.
- Inform us if anyone leaves or moves into the household in advance or within 48 hours of the change.

### Tell us as soon as possible and within 48 hours if:

- You are or have been convicted of any offence.
- You have had a child removed from your care by order of the Court.
- Your registration as a childminder or a day care provider has been cancelled or refused.
- If a child in your care has died.



### Duties of a private foster carer:

- If you intend to care for a private foster child, you must tell Buckinghamshire County Council at least six weeks before the child comes to live with you.
- If the child comes to live with you in an emergency, you must tell us within 48 hours.
- If you are looking after a child and you intended to look after them for less than 28 days but later realise the arrangement will last for more than 28 days, you must tell Buckinghamshire County Council immediately.

You must not privately foster more than three children at the same time unless they are all siblings or if Buckinghamshire County Council has given you written permission to do so.

If neither of these conditions apply; for example, where there are more than three children in a private foster home, this will then be treated as a Children's Home and the Children's Home Regulations will apply.

If you stop looking after a private foster child you must tell Buckinghamshire County Council within 48 hours. This does not apply if you have arranged for the child to return to your care within 28 days.

**Contact us on 01494 586460**

For further information please contact:

Private Fostering Team  
Buckinghamshire County Council  
County Hall  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire HP20 1UA  
Tel: 01494 586460

[www.buckscc.gov.uk/privatefostering](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/privatefostering)