



What is Private Fostering?

Private Fostering is a term used when a parent or primary carer places a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled), in the care of someone else who is not a close relative*, or an officially approved foster carer, for a period intended to be 28 days or more.

Since the implementation of the Children Act 2004, it has been a legal responsibility for Local authorities to recognise, monitor and support any child in the area who is being privately fostered.

A Private Fostering notification should come from the parent or carer but professionals can help to identify these arrangements and advise parents/carers of their responsibilities. If you know a child is being privately fostered or you are unsure and need advice, please contact:

St Helens People's Services Front Door Team
Atlas House, Corporation Street, St Helens WA9 1LD

☎ **01744 676600**

✉ **adultandchildrenteam@sthelens.gov.uk**

*Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (blood relatives and/or by marriage).



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Does someone else's child live with you?

If you are not a *close relative and look after a child under 16 (under 18 if disabled), for a period intended to be 28 days or more, you may be a Private Foster Carer.

Private Fostering arrangements can include:

- Teenagers living with the family of their boyfriend/girlfriend
- Children living with someone else whilst their parents are in hospital
- Children coming from abroad for education and living with another family
- Youngsters living with a friend's family following a separation.

By law you are required to tell the local authority that you are part of a private fostering arrangement. We can advise you on legal matters and provide help and support whilst you care for the child.

If you are already caring for a child who is privately fostered, or would like any more information, please contact:

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