

Briefing Note

Private Fostering Responsibilities during Covid-19 pandemic March 2021

We remain aware that there may be more children in our community being cared for in Private Fostering arrangements due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. This may be due to parental illness, isolation, or other emergency situations. We want to remind staff in schools to be alert to any such arrangements and notify Children's Services.

Private Fostering is the term used for private care arrangements made between a parent and an adult who is **not** a close relative, to care for a child aged under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) for **28 days or more**. Close relatives as defined in the Children Act 1989 include: grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and step-parents.

Private foster carers may therefore be distant relatives, friends of the family or adults previously unknown to the child.

Private Fostering arrangements are **different** to fostering placements arranged through the local authority for children who have come into care. There are particular legal responsibilities on parents, private foster carers and professionals regarding these arrangements and this has not changed due Covid-19.

If you become aware of any possible Private Fostering arrangements, you should notify Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (ECIRS) on **020 8825 8000**. This will mean we can take action to check the arrangement is suitable for the child and provide any help and support needed.

Please see the link below for further information and downloadable information leaflets.

<https://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/ealing/directory/advice.page?id=uDwWv33gitU>