



## Private Fostering Statement

### Private fostering

Private fostering is looking after somebody else's child.

Private fostering is when a child or young person under the age of 16 (or under age 18 if the child or young person is disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative' for 28 days or more. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer.

If a child is looked after by any of the people below, it is not a private fostering arrangement;

- Biological parents or step parents
- Biological grandparents or step grandparents
- Biological uncles and/or aunts
- Half or full siblings

People become private foster carers for all sorts of reasons. Private foster carers can be a friend of the child's family, or be someone who is willing to care for a child of a family they do not know such as;

- Neighbour
- Friend
- Child's or young person's friend's parent(s) or family
- Great aunt or uncle
- Non biological aunt or uncle
- Cousin
- Great grandparents

It is not a private fostering arrangement if the placement was made by a social worker who has intervened on behalf of the local authority

### Why (and when) are children privately fostered?

There are many reasons why parents sometimes arrange for their child to live with someone else. For example;

- The parent may go abroad for lengthy periods for work or study
- The parent may be admitted to hospital for 28 days or more
- A child or young person is sent to study in Richmond and is living with a host family
- There is a relationship breakdown between the parent and child or young person

If you are unsure whether a child or young person is privately fostered, please contact Richmond Single Point of Access.



### **Why do you need to notify Richmond Council?**

It is a legal requirement to inform your local Council of any private fostering arrangements. This is to ensure:

- The child or young person is safeguarded and their welfare is being promoted and met
- The child or young person is receiving an appropriate level of care
- The child or young person, carers and parents receive appropriate support or training

### **Parents, carers and professionals, what do you need to do?**

**You must contact us immediately if:**

- you are already looking after someone else's child
- If you intend to look after someone else's child for more than 28 days
- If you know of someone who is looking after someone else's child in a private fostering arrangement in Richmond

If you are a parent or a private foster carer arranging for a child to be privately fostered you must contact us at least six weeks prior to the arrangement starting.

All professionals (e.g. health visitors, school nurses, teachers, religious leaders, tutors) have a legal responsibility to notify Richmond Council if they know of a child or young person who is being privately fostered or if it is being planned for them to be privately fostered.

**Contact the Single Point of Access on 0208 891 7969**

### **What happens next?**

A social worker will arrange a visit with the carers to discuss the private fostering arrangement.

The wishes and views of the child/young person, carers and their parents will be sought. The suitability of the placement/living arrangements will be looked at and the checks to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child or young person will also be completed. Advice and support will be offered.

Most private fostering arrangements are wholly suitable. However, if the child or young person is found to be at risk and their needs not met, arrangements will be made to end the placement. The parents will be contacted and asked to make alternative arrangements to safeguard their child.