

# Private Fostering



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# Objectives

- To give professionals an overview of the legal framework around private fostering and the referral process.
- To discuss best practice with regards to private fostering and the signs to look out for.
- To discuss the barriers to identifying current arrangements and explore new strategies.

# What is Private Fostering?

**“ a care arrangement in which a child under 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) is looked after full time for more than 28 consecutive days by someone who is not their...”**

- **Parent**
- **Step parent**
- **Someone with parental responsibility or a legal order**
- **Grandparent**
- **Sibling (including half-siblings)**
- **Aunt or uncle**

# For Example

**An unaccompanied minor who is looked after by family friends whilst their parents are abroad**

**Parents who pay someone to care for their child whilst they are away working or studying**

**A teenager who isn't getting on with their parents who goes to live with a friend's family**

**Children who are sent from abroad to live with other families in the UK**

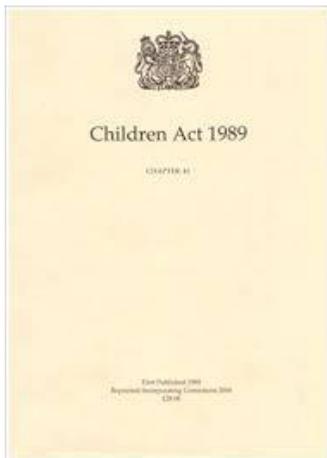
**Children who are brought to the UK for adoption**

**Children at boarding school who do not return home during the holidays**

**Children who attend language schools**

**Why do we need  
to know about  
children in  
Private  
Fostering  
arrangements?**

# Legal Frameworks



Under the **Private Fostering Regulations 2005**, parents and private foster carers **must register any private fostering arrangement** with the local authority where the private foster carer lives.

Professionals, such as teachers and GPs, have a **duty to notify the local authority** whenever they become aware that a child is privately fostered and the arrangement has not been registered.

In January 2014, Ofsted published a report called '[Private fostering: better information, better understanding](#)'.



The report's findings gave much cause for concern. **Many private fostering arrangements are 'hidden'** and, it appears, are rarely brought to the attention of local authorities, even though it is **an offence not to inform them**.

The **penalty for non-reporting is a maximum £5,000 fine**, but it seems that convictions are extremely rare.

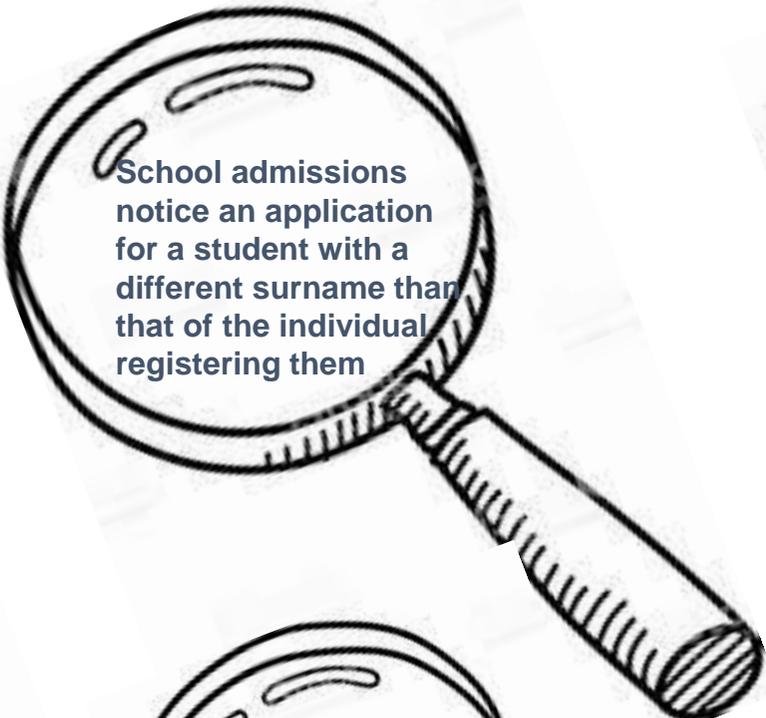
# Victoria Climbié

The legislation governing private fostering is the 'Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005' and came into force following the death of [Victoria Climbié](#) in 2000. Victoria was privately fostered by her great aunt.



Given the 'hidden' nature of many private fostering, local authorities have a duty to raise awareness of the need to notify the local Children's Services department.

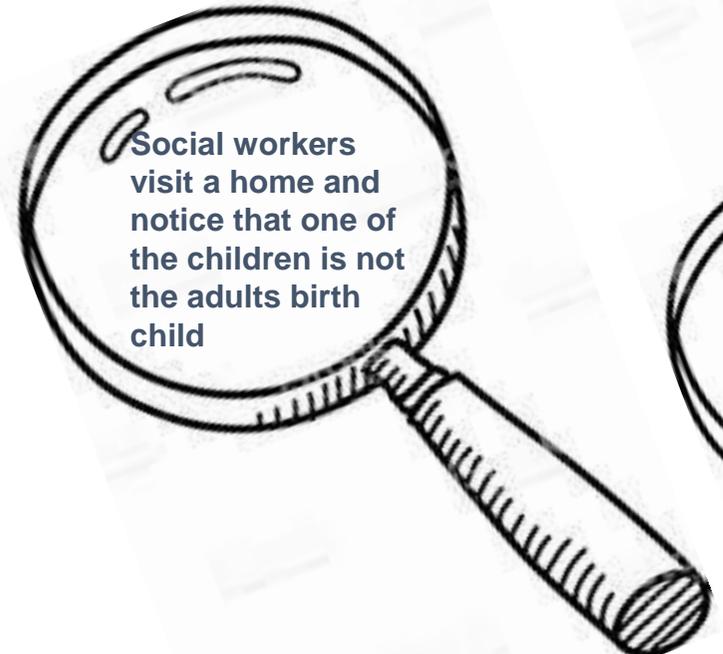
# Spotting a Private Fostering arrangement



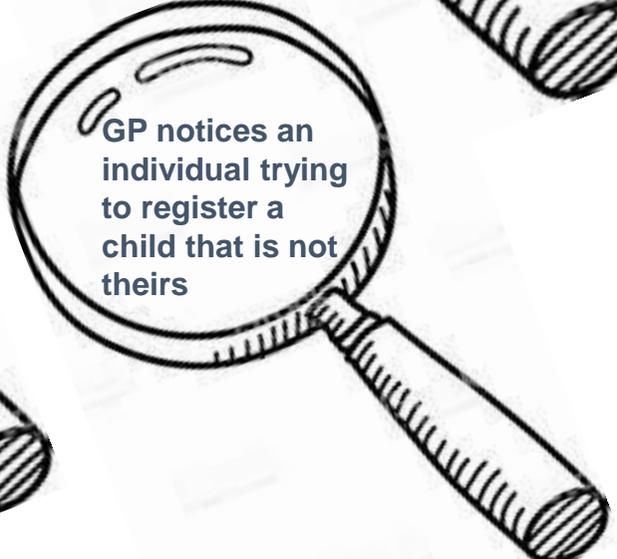
School admissions notice an application for a student with a different surname than that of the individual registering them



The police attend a home and find another child living there



Social workers visit a home and notice that one of the children is not the adults birth child

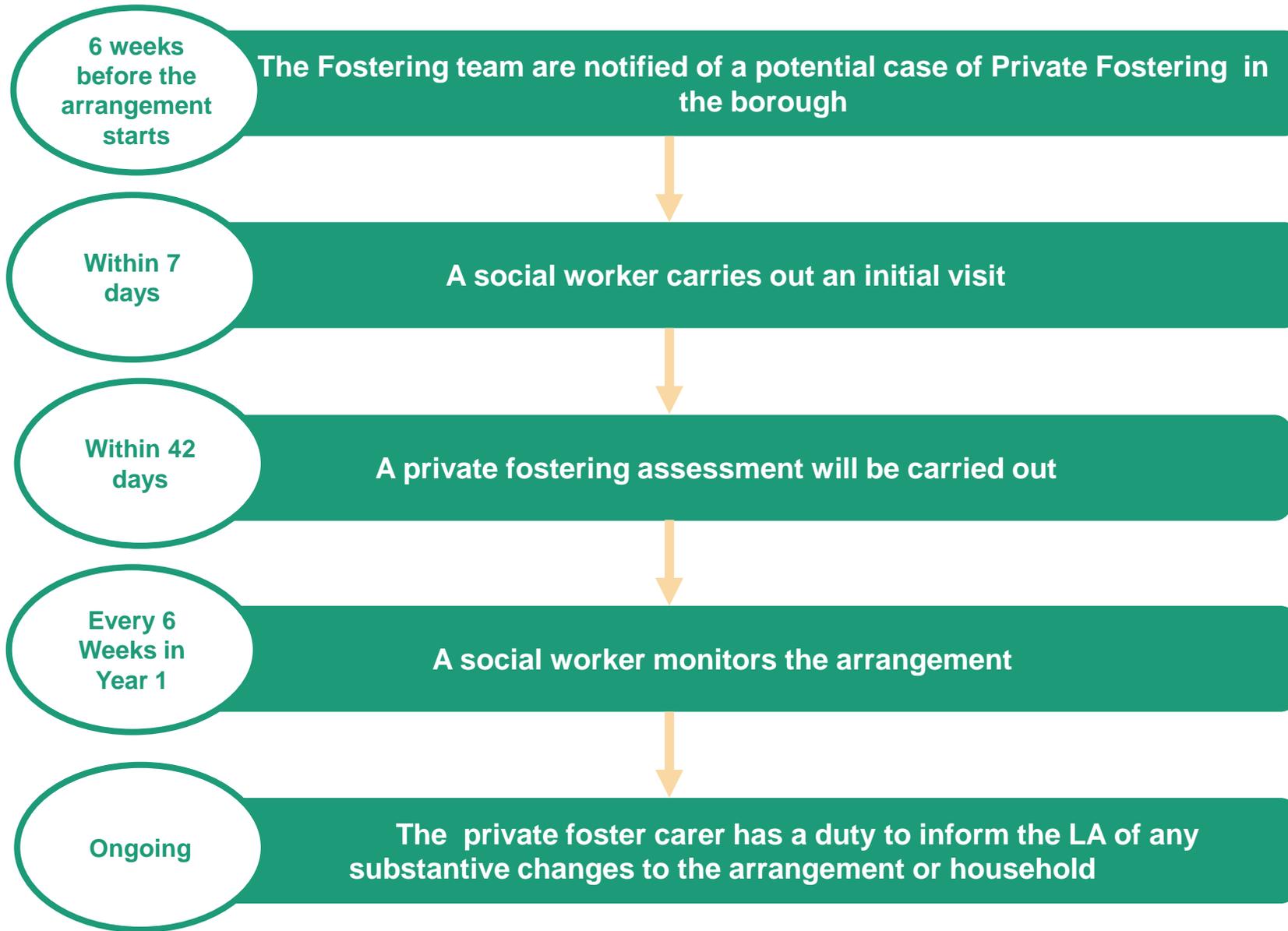


GP notices an individual trying to register a child that is not theirs



Child brought to A&E by someone other than their parent

# The process

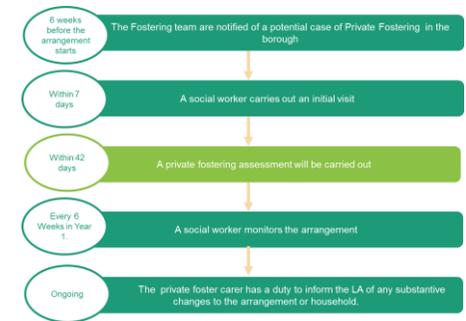


# The assessment

Within 42 days

A private fostering assessment will be carried out

- **Assess the private foster carer's understanding of the child's needs. How well placed are they to meet these needs?**
- **Visit and speak to the child alone to ascertain their wishes and feelings.**
- **Visit and speak to the parent or person with parental responsibility for the child.**
- **Identify what support the private foster carer might need to care for the child.**
- **DBS checks on carers and all adult members of the household.**
- **Character references on the private foster carer.**



# The 'Hidden Nature' of Private Fostering

**What prevents  
families from  
coming forward  
about private  
fostering  
arrangements?**

- Under reporting??
- Lack of awareness around private fostering (from professionals and members of the public)??
- Stigma around social workers and their involvement??/  
Mistrust of services??
- PEOPLE JUST DON'T KNOW...



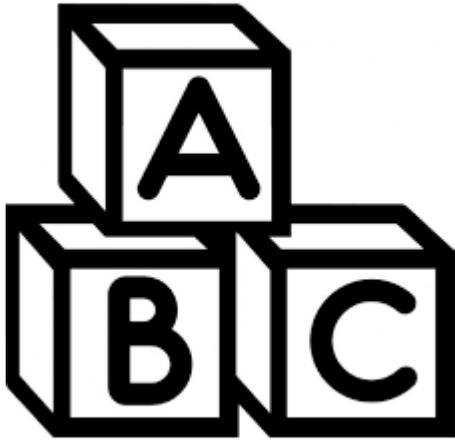
# Next Steps

# Our strategy

To increase awareness of procedures around Private Fostering in Camden.

- Notifications
- Assessments
- Support

# What do we want from you?



**Ask questions**

**Be aware**

**Contact us**

# Contact

To notify London Borough of Camden of a private fostering arrangement, please contact:

**Camden MASH Team** on 0207 974 3317 or

**Zinah Parekh** on 0207 974 6630 or

Send an email to [fostering@camden.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@camden.gov.uk)

# Questions

