

# 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

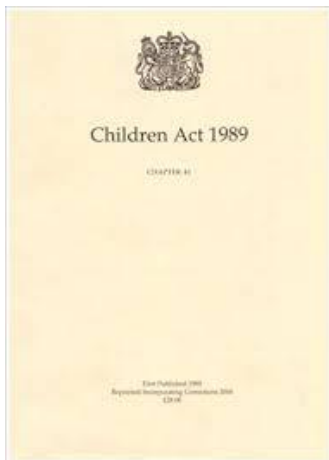
Children who are brought to the UK for adoption

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

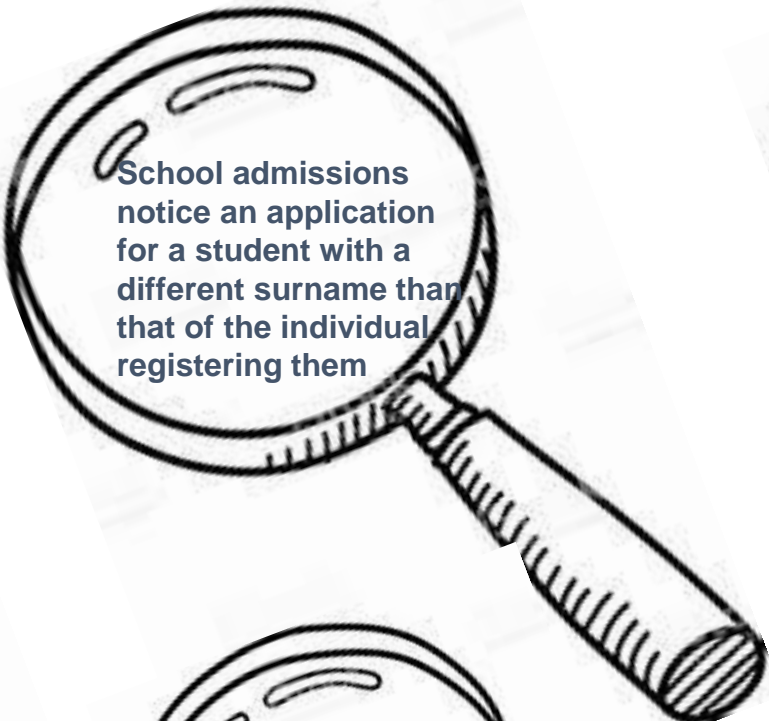
The legislation governing private fostering is the 'Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005' and came into force following the death of [Victoria Climbié](#) in 2000. Victoria was privately fostered by her great aunt.




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.



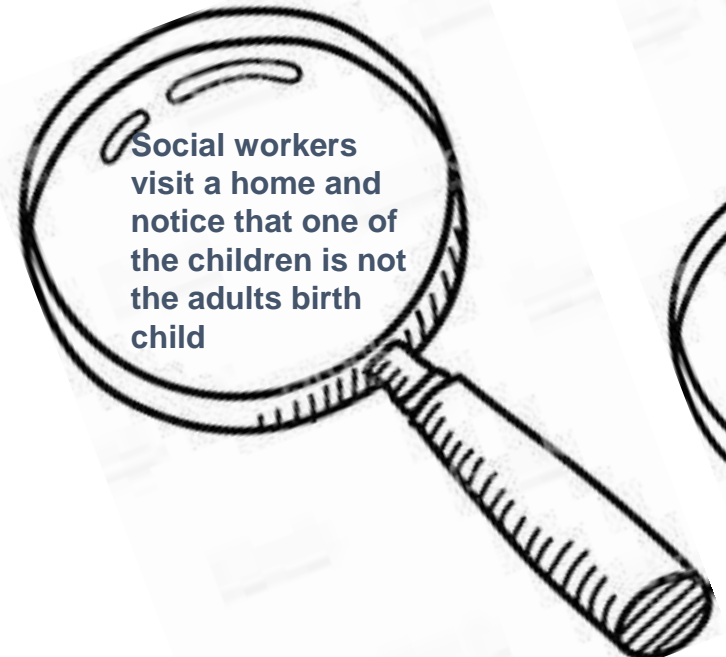
# Spotting a Private Fostering arrangement




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

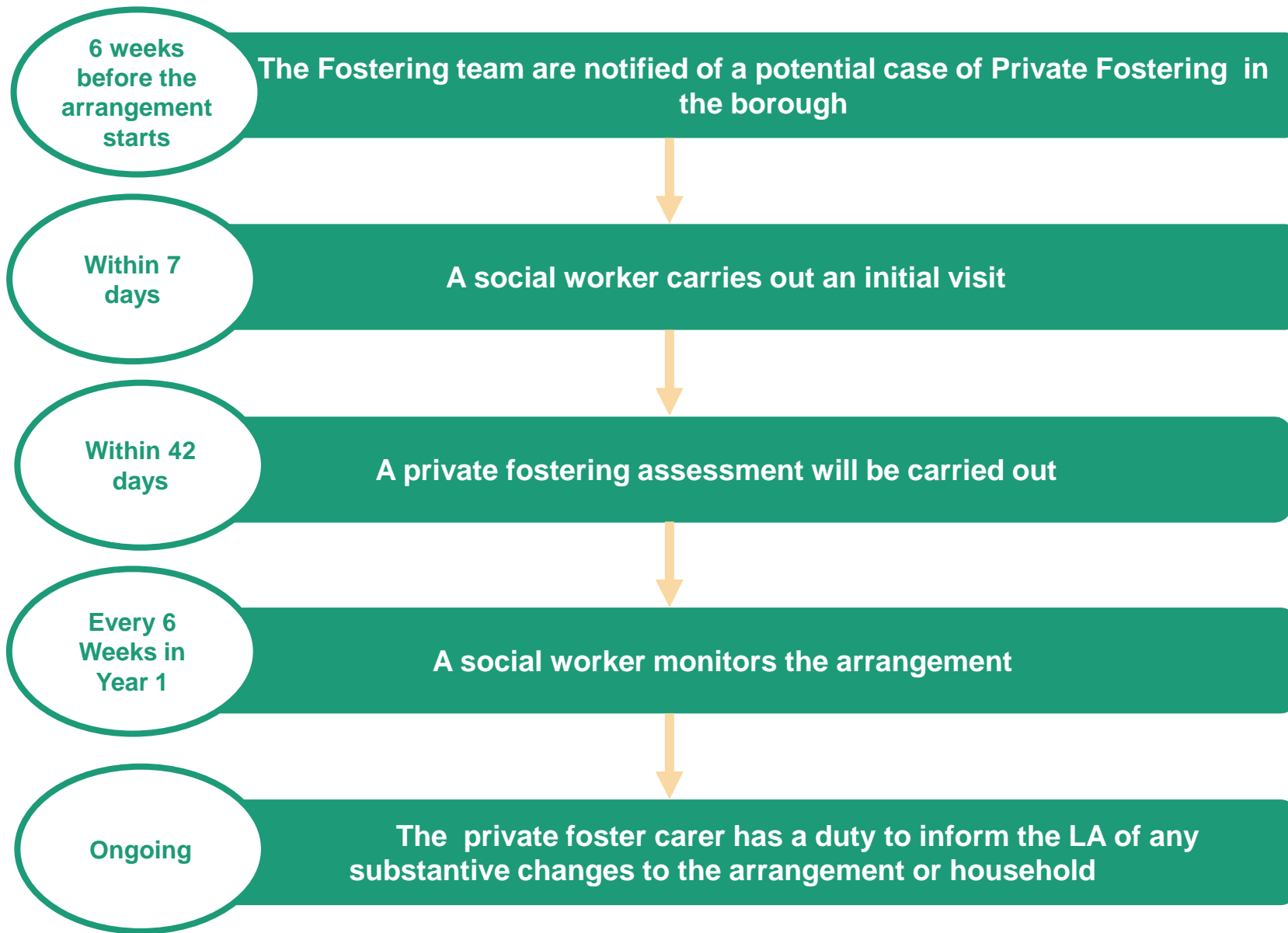


GP notices an individual trying to register a child that is not theirs



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

# The process

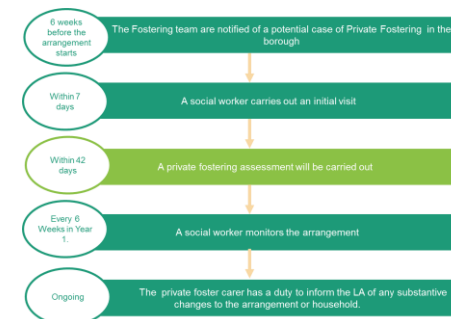


# The assessment

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

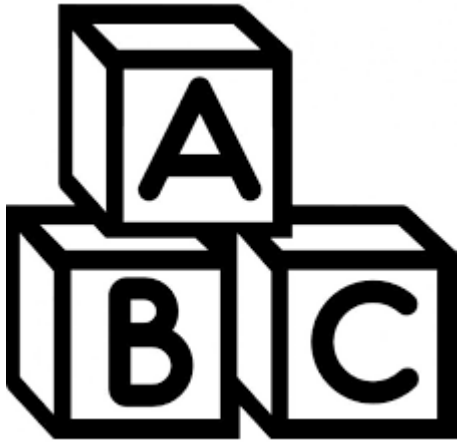
# Our strategy

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

