

PRIVATE FOSTERING

Information for professionals



Many professionals who work with children will come across private fostering arrangements. These could be teachers, health visitors, play and youth workers and religious leaders. They have a shared responsibility to work together to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.

What is Private Fostering?

Private Fostering is where parents make arrangements for their child to live with somebody else (not a close relative) for 28 days or more.

If you answer **YES** to ALL of the following questions a child you are working with or aware of is likely to be privately fostered:

- Is the child under 16 or under 18 if they have a disability?
- Is the child living with somebody who is not a close relative? – this could be a cousin, great aunt, great uncle or a family friend
- Is the child going to be living with somebody else for more than 28 days or have they already been living with somebody else for more than 28 days?

Some examples of situations when private fostering arrangements are made:

- Parents working away from home
- Parents studying or working unsocial hours
- Illness
- Children from abroad who come to this country for education or health care
- Parental separation, divorce or arguments at home.

Procedure for professionals to notify the local authority

All professionals are required to ensure the local authority knows about private fostering arrangements.

If you know or suspect that a child is being privately fostered:

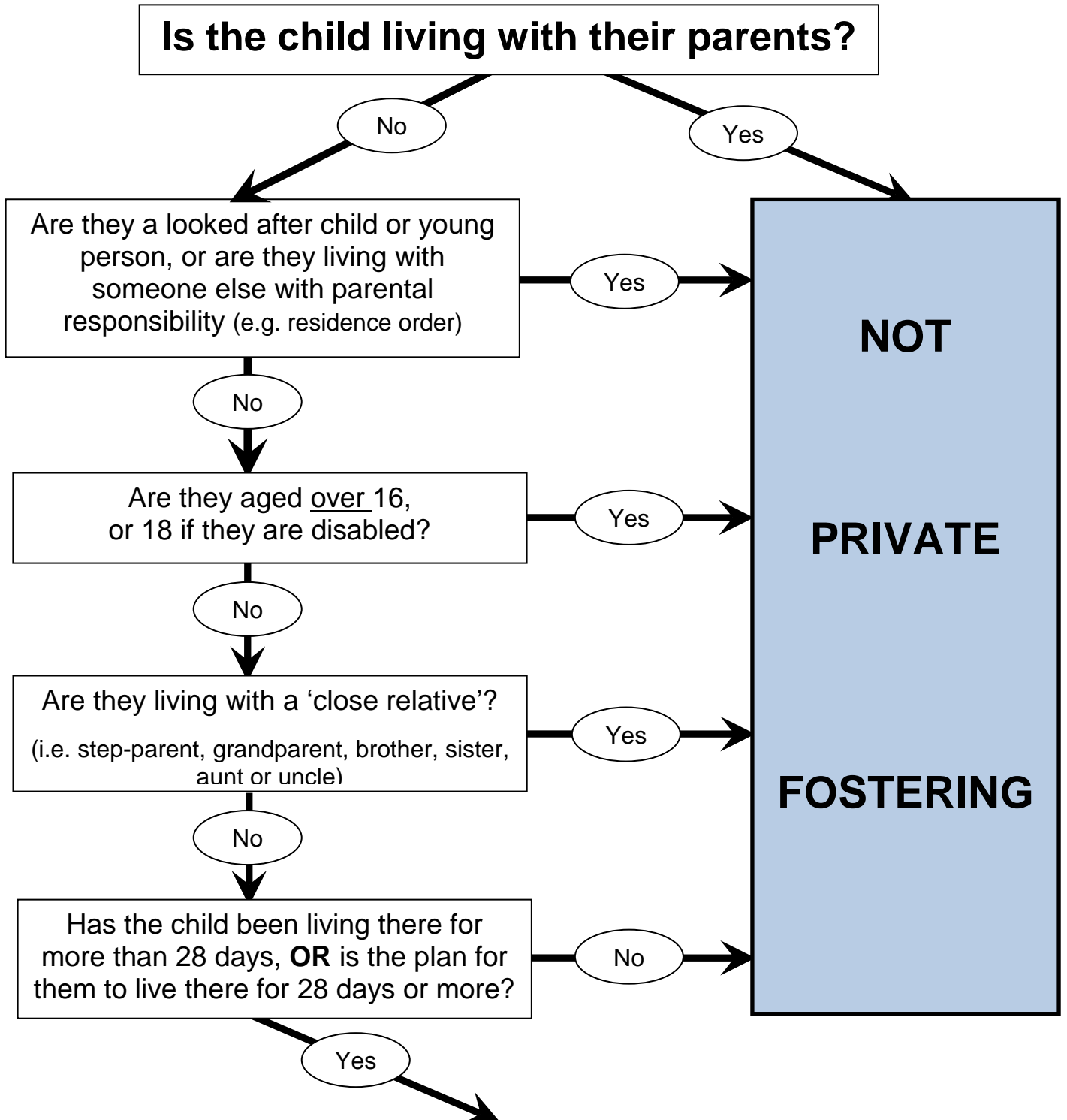
- Find out from the carer and/or parent whether they have notified the Local Authority and if they have not advise them that they are legally required to notify.
- Let the carer and parent know of your responsibility to notify the Local Authority of a private fostering arrangement.
- Whether or not the carer and parent advise you they have notified the Local Authority you have a responsibility to refer to Children's Social Care.

You **MUST** refer the case to Childrens Social Care by contacting our **Integrated Referral Team on 0191 4332653** or via the [online form](#)

For further information about Private Fostering:

- You can contact children's social care on 0191 4332653 or access the full procedure here http://gatesheadcs.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_private_fost.html
- Access Gateshead Safeguarding Children Board website: www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk

Flow Chart: Is the child living in a Private Fostering Arrangement?



THIS IS PROBABLY A PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENT

All professionals are required to ensure the local authority knows about private fostering arrangements

Please contact the [Integrated Referral Team on 0191 4332653](tel:01914332653) to inform them about the case