

NEW CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO REGISTER PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

Northamptonshire County Council is encouraging people who have a child living with them who is not their own to register it as a private fostering arrangement.

Private fostering is when children up to the age of 16 living with someone other than a close relative, guardian or person with parental responsibility for 30 days or more and the county council has a statutory duty to record it.

Private foster carers can be a friend of the child's family, or be someone who is willing to care for the child of a family they do not know.

This could include:

- Children and young people living apart from their families
- minority ethnic children with parents working or studying in the UK
- children with parents overseas
- children living with host families for a variety of reasons
- children on holiday exchanges

Those providing private fostering could be entitled to benefits and support they may not currently be receiving.

The county council can also arrange professional support and advice for the guardians and the child's parents, and has a duty to ensure the child's needs are being met.

County council cabinet member for children and families Cllr Matthew Golby said: "There are occasions when someone may look after a child who isn't their own, for example a family friend who offers to help when a parent is going through a difficult time or a student from overseas who comes to stay with a family friend or a distant relative.

"Most people won't even recognise this as a private fostering arrangement, but by law we need to know about it so that we can make sure the needs of the child, the parents and the guardians are being fully met.

"That's why we're encouraging anyone who is involved in a private fostering arrangement, or knows someone who it, to get in touch."

To register a private fostering arrangement, people can call 0300 126 1000 or email mash@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk.

For more information about private fostering, visit www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/privatefostering.

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