

NEWS



Press & Public Relations Office

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For Immediate Release

Are you caring for someone else's child?

People who are looking after someone else's child are being asked to contact the Council to help make sure children are safe.

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board is reminding people that in some circumstances they could inadvertently be breaking the law if they don't register the fact they are caring for a child in what are known as "private fostering arrangements".

These arrangements are situations where a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for on a full-time basis (for more than 28 days) by people who are not their parents or a close relative. The Children Act defines "a close relative" as grandparent, brother, sister, uncle/aunt or step-parent.

That could involve:

- Children sent to this country for education or health care by birth parents living overseas
- Children living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or issues at home
- Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend.

By law, people who are privately fostering children in Rotherham must inform the Council that they are doing so. If they do they could be able to access more support and assistance to look after the children in their care.

Alan Hazell, Chair of the Safeguarding Board, said: "There are different ways that people care for children under private fostering arrangements and most of those situations will be very positive for the children and young people involved and provide them with all the care and support they need.

"However, our concern is that in some cases there is no way of assessing the welfare of the children or making sure those carers have the support they require to look after the children in their care. We also don't want people to break the law which they will do if they don't inform the Council."

More information about private fostering for both carers and children and young people is available on the national website at www.privatefostering.org.uk

Further local information is also available on the Board's webpage at www.rotherham.gov.uk/safeguarding

If you know of such situations then please make sure that people are aware of their responsibility to inform the Council of private fostering arrangements. They should contact the Children and Young People's Services' Access Team at:

Norfolk House
Walker Place
Rotherham
S65 1AS.

Or telephone: 01709 823987.

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