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**DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE**

**PRIVATE FOSTERING  
STATEMENT  
OF PURPOSE**



## Introduction

South Gloucestershire Council holds statutory powers and responsibilities as a local authority in relation to private fostering arrangements.

This Statement provides a description of Private Fostering Arrangements within South Gloucestershire, as required by the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering. It is a guide for professionals, the public, council members and external and partner agencies.

Any comments or enquiries regarding this statement of purpose should be passed to the

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South Gloucestershire Council,  
Department for Children and Young People,  
The Heath,  
2a Newton Road,  
South Gloucestershire,  
BS30 8EZ  
Email: [corporate.parenting@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.parenting@southglos.gov.uk)

South Gloucestershire's private Fostering services are regulated by Ofsted Inspectors. The address of the National Business Unit is:

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# PRIVATE FOSTERING STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

## 1 Policy

South Gloucestershire Council is committed to maintaining high standards in relation to private fostering service provision and to reviewing this on a continual basis.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this service is to improve the life chances of children and young people in private fostering situations in South Gloucestershire through the development of a holistic approach in delivery of services. The service supports the Council's Plan for Children and Young People and incorporates the Council's commitment to priority outcomes areas and the Every Child Matters agenda.

South Gloucestershire Council aims to ensure that

- equal opportunities are incorporated into all aspects of service delivery
- all prospective private foster carers are assessed and supported on the basis of the needs of the individual private foster child/young person regardless of race, religion, class, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.
- where a Private Fostering arrangement takes place in the area that the welfare and life chance benefits of the child is met.
- Partnership working with the child / young person, and appropriate professionals to safeguard the child / young person is undertaken in all cases.
- Awareness of the notification requirement is known to and understood by professionals, parents, carers, the general public and young people.
- Standards for the service meet and exceed the National Minimum Standards

## 3 Values and Principles

The Council has agreed with its partners a vision for all children and young people living in South Gloucestershire, and this is the framework for the Council's aspirations for looked after children and young people. That is, that all children and young people, aged 0-19 years have a right to a life in which:

- Their welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the process.
- Their views, wishes and feelings will be considered at all times.

- They enjoy the best possible physical and mental health and live a healthy lifestyle
- They have equality of opportunity
- They are given encouragement and opportunities to learn, develop, enjoy and achieve, both in and outside school
- They are protected from harm and neglect and feel safe both at and outside of home and school
- They are supported by their parents and carers, and their peers
- They are encouraged to play a full part in their communities and behave in a socially responsible manner.

To achieve this all staff will work in partnership with parents and children, carers and their families, other professionals and other agencies to ensure the most appropriate services are identified based on assessed need.

All staff will respect human rights and will ensure that there is fair and equal access to all its services. The services it provides will be free from discrimination, prejudice and racism.

#### 4 Legislative Framework

South Gloucestershire Council will work to the following legislative framework and Standards:

- The Children Act 1989 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 1989
- The Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Fostering Regulations 2005
- National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005
- South Gloucestershire Council's Policy and procedures for Private Fostering.

#### 5 Local Authority Duties and Functions

The measures in the Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 are intended to strengthen and enhance private fostering services. The Children Act 2004 includes amendments to the Children Act 1989. These measures, along with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005 require local authorities to take a more proactive approach with partner agencies in identifying and supporting private fostering arrangements in the area.

The amendments include: -

- Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 – amendments to the notification scheme to make it a legal requirement to notify a local authority and for the local authority take action if not notified of an arrangement or the end of an arrangement
- Local authorities are required to promote awareness in their area of requirements as to notification
- Local authorities are required to ensure that the welfare of children who are privately fostered are adequately safeguarded and their health and wellbeing is promoted and such advice is given to those caring for them as appears to the authority to be needed

## 6 Definition of Private Fostering

A privately fostered child is defined in section 66 of the Children Act 1989 as one who, being under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled), is cared for and provided accommodated by someone other than

- a parent
- someone who has parental responsibility for the child;
- a close relative such as a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt and uncle whether by full, half-blood by affinity (through marriage),
- a step parent.

A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for him has done so for fewer than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer than that.

Private foster carers may be from the extended family such as a cousin or great aunt/uncle. They may also be a friend of the family or other non-relative.

An arrangement is deemed as private fostering if it meets the criteria above whether for reward (monetary or otherwise) or not.

Privately fostered children are not looked after children in terms of section 22 of the Act, and local authorities are not involved in the making of such arrangements.

## 7 Common Private Fostering situations

Children are placed in a private fostering arrangement for a variety of reasons, some of which are listed below:

- children/young people from overseas staying with their extended families;
- children/young people with parents working in the UK,
- children/young people with parents studying in the UK;
- trafficked children/young people, asylum seekers and refugees;

- children/young people living with host families when attending language schools or undergoing medical treatment
- children unable to live with their birth parents through family breakdowns or inability/unwillingness to parent the child
- children/young people where a parent is serving a custodial sentence

## 8 Private fostering Services in South Gloucestershire Council

South Gloucestershire's Private fostering services are located within the Department for Children and Young and are managed jointly by the Looked After Team and Family Placement Team following the initial notification is made to the Children and Young People's Information service and/or the appropriate Locality Childcare Team and an initial assessment being undertaken.

The service reports to and is line managed by the Corporate Parenting Manager.

## 9 Training for relevant staff

Training on private fostering and the needs of children affected by Private Fostering will be provided to Social Care staff through their induction programme and ongoing multi-agency childcare, child protection and child in need training. There will also be specific training and awareness raising programmes on private fostering targeted within partner agencies as deemed necessary.

The training is underpinned through clear procedures, which are available on the Council's intranet.

Training includes information on the notification requirements; the assessment processes of the suitability of the private fostering arrangement, and will be based on the premise that the child/young person's best interests and welfare are paramount.

Relevant staff will further gain understanding and expertise in relation to private fostering through workshops, and the continual re-statement of the private fostering operational instructions through regular supervision.

## 10 Promotion of awareness of the notification requirements

Awareness of the notification requirements will be promoted via information and advertising in newspapers, as well as information published on the South Gloucestershire Council website ([www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk)) .

Information sessions are provided to key professionals and partner agencies. Publicity and information leaflets are available for professionals, private foster carers and parents. The leaflets contain information about the requirement for

notification, the legal definition of privately fostered children/young people, the procedure for notifying, the benefits of notification and consequences of non-notification.

Publicity materials are distributed to key access points, e.g. schools, libraries and other public buildings, one-stop shops, voluntary/community sector organisations and council offices.

The information leaflets contain the contact numbers of the private fostering social work service available to privately fostered children, their parents, private foster carers and professionals.

Publicity will be accessible on request in a range of different languages to reflect the needs of the local community.

Promotion of the notification requirements will be evaluated in terms of objectives set on a regular basis, and responses to notifications will be carried out within the required timescales.

There will be reporting of this data to the Local Safeguarding Committee Board Meetings.

## 11 Assessment of the suitability of private foster carers and their household

All privately fostered children/young people within South Gloucestershire will undergo a Private Fostering Social Work Assessment, which will include elements of the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000). These Private Fostering Social Work Assessments will be completed and approved by the Corporate Parenting Manager, within 42 working days. All aspects of private foster carers' suitability including the suitability of their household will be assessed.

## 12 Advice/support and information available to private foster carers, parents/those with parental responsibility and privately fostered children

A social worker will be allocated to the child from the Looked After Team and a social worker from the Family Placement Team will be allocated to support the Private Foster carer. Contact details for the social work teams are provided.

The Private Foster carer is provided with a Foster carer Handbook from South Gloucestershire and information booklets are provided to all affected by Private Fostering to ensure they are aware of the processes and their rights.

Private foster carers will have access to the Council's training programmes for foster carers and other social care staff.

The visiting frequency to the privately fostered child will be in accord to their support needs and not less than the statutory requirement. Interpreters who are independent of parents and private foster carers will be used where it is the request of the child/young person or where the preferred language is not English.

We ensure that advice to benefit entitlement is available to the Private Foster carer if required.

Parents of proposed/current privately fostered children or young people will be advised, if in the best interests of the child/young person, of other service provision or other agency help available, which could remove the necessity for the child/young person to be privately fostered.

### 13 Ensuring the welfare of privately fostered children is safeguarded and promoted

All Children's Services will ensure that privately fostered children/young people's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted by staff .

The Service will respond to notifications received in a timely manner and Private Fostering assessments will ensure that the arrangement is satisfactory and can meet a child or young person's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural developmental needs. Short-term support services will be available to assist with this task if there are areas identified which require additional skills.

Approval of arrangements as satisfactory or not will be concluded and signed off by the Corporate Parenting Manager and any Requirements, Prohibitions, Disqualifications and Appeals will be dealt with jointly with the Legal department.

Visiting the child will be undertaken within the statutory timescale and the child will be seen alone (or with interpreter) away from the private fostering placement. Written reports will be completed following these visits,

All private foster carers and members of the household will have an enhanced CRB checks undertaken in relation to their suitability.

Children's Services will carry out internal file audits and reviews on a regular basis, and decisions regarding offences will be made in consultation with the police. Decisions regarding the latter powers will be made whilst bearing in mind the best interests of the individual child/young person.

Where child protection concerns are identified, a Section 47 investigation will be

carried out by following the local procedures.

#### 14. The role of other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of privately fostered children, including encouraging notification

Partnership agencies within the LSCB have been provided with information concerning their responsibilities regarding notification under the Private Fostering Regulations 2005. Information and materials have been sent to schools, housing, health organisations and partner agencies. It is an expectation that these agencies will alert the Service to any situation where the local authority has not been provided with a notification.

#### 15. Monitoring the discharge of functions and compliance with part 9 of the Children Act 1989.

The Corporate Parenting Manager will monitor the way that Children's Services complies with, and discharges its statutory duties, and functions in relation to private fostering.

The reporting of this compliance will be via the LSCB meetings.

#### 16. Advice on private fostering

Advice on private fostering can be obtained from the Corporate Parenting Manager at South Gloucestershire Council by contacting Lesley Raison or e-mailing [Corporate.Parenting@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Corporate.Parenting@southglos.gov.uk)

This Private Fostering Services' Statement of Purpose will be accessible on the Council's website and can be provided in other languages on request.

July 2008