Introduction
This leaflet aims to give professionals a better understanding of the law on private fostering and the role of the Council.

Many professionals who work with children will come across private fostering situations. Professionals in the education, health and social care fields have a shared responsibility to work together to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and safeguarded from harm.

Professionals play an important role by identifying and notifying Havering Council of private fostering arrangements and by ensuring parents and carers are aware of their responsibilities.

By monitoring and supervising private fostering arrangements we can all help to safeguard children at risk of abuse and neglect.

Havering Council should be notified of all private fostering arrangements in Havering.

What is private fostering?
Private fostering occurs when a child or young person under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for and provided with accommodation for more than 28 days by an adult who is not a close relative.

A close relative is an uncle, aunt, step parent, grandparent, great grandparent or sibling but not a cousin or great uncle or great aunt.

Private Fostering and the Children Act 1989 and 2004
Privately fostered children are safeguarded by the Children Act 1989. Under the act, councils have a legal requirement to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are privately fostered in their area are being satisfactorily safeguarded.

It is essential that Havering Council is made aware of private fostering arrangements so they can safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people who may be vulnerable.

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

It is important that all those who might come into contact with a privately fostered child are aware of the need for such arrangements to be notified to the local authority. In particular professionals working in the universal services of health and education have a pivotal role as they will often be the first to become aware of such arrangements.

These agencies share the local Councils responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of privately fostered children. Other agencies need to be aware that failure by a private foster carer or parent to notify a local authority of a private fostering arrangement is an offence and if local authorities are not aware of such arrangements they cannot carry out their duty to satisfy themselves that the welfare of the children concerned is being satisfactorily safeguarded.

If you believe a child is being privately fostered please contact the Havering Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Contact:
Havering Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):
Phone: Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm) 01708 433222
Out of hours/weekends 01708 433999
Email: tmash@havering.gov.uk
www.havering.gov.uk/privatefostering
Email: tmash@havering.gov.uk
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