

Q *Is there a cost for the CRB service?*

A Yes. For the enhanced disclosure there is a cost of £40 which is made up of £36 charged by the Criminal Records Bureau, and a £4 administrative charge by SSAFA Forces Help. This may be subject to change.

Q *What if I become concerned about the arrangement?*

A You are in control of the arrangement and may decide to remove your child from it. Or you can talk to your child and private foster carer and/or social worker to try and sort things out.

Q *What if the social worker has concerns about my child?*

A If the social worker becomes concerned about the placement then you will be told immediately or as soon as possible so that you can tell us what you want us to do. If we need to protect your child from immediate harm the social worker will tell you what our plans are. We will make sure that the care of your child is our priority until you are able to take care of your child yourself.

Q *What if I want to make a complaint about the PF carers?*

A Complaints should be put in writing to the SSAFA Forces Help Social Work.

Q *Will I need the permission of the social worker to take my child out of the PF arrangement?*

A No. The arrangement is a private one and you can move your child at any time. The role of the social worker is to make sure your child is well cared for during the time he or she is looked after by a private foster carer.

If you have any questions please contact your local SSAFA Forces Help Social Work office:

BFG - British Forces Social Work Service

Cyprus - Personal Support & Social Work Service

Gibraltar - Joint Social Work Service

Brunei - Personal Support & Social Work Service



Photos in this leaflet are posed by models



**The Soldiers, Sailors,
Airmen and Families
Association – Forces Help**

For more information about SSAFA Forces Help and how we can help you and your family, please contact us:

19 Queen Elizabeth Street,
London SE1 2LP

T 020 7403 8783

F 020 7403 8815

E info@ssafa.org.uk

www.ssafa.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 210760. Est 1885
Registered Charity (Scotland) No. SC038056

Private Fostering

Information for parents
and carers

Private Fostering is a cause for concern for all professionals working with children. Studies in the UK have shown that parents and private foster carers are not aware who needs to be informed when such arrangements are made. This means that the people responsible for ensuring that children are safe and well cared for may not be in a position to protect privately fostered children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. This leaflet describes what private fostering is, and who needs to be told about it.



Q What is Private Fostering?

A A Private Fostering (PF) arrangement is when a child under 16 years (18 years if the child has a disability) intends to live or is living with an adult other than a parent or person with legal parental responsibility for 28 days or more. This person will not be a relative (such as an aunt, uncle or grandparent).

Q Why are PF arrangements used?

A PF arrangements are made for a number of reasons. Usually in a military environment it is because one or both parents/carers are on exercise or working away from home, or a child may be living with friends to complete a key stage of education. Sometimes it is because there are difficulties at home and a PF arrangement suits everyone best until the situation is sorted out.

Q As a parent should I be telling anyone about my PF arrangement?

A Yes. A person who plans to foster a child privately must tell the SSAFA Forces Help Social Work at least 6 weeks and not more than 13 weeks before the PF arrangement begins. You can get the forms to complete from your local UWO office/Hives/medical centres and SSAFA Forces Help Social Work offices.

Q What if the placement has already started?

A You should tell SSAFA Forces Help Social Work immediately.

Q What will the SSAFA Forces Help Social Work Service do?

A The SSAFA Forces Help Social Work has a legal responsibility (given by the GOC) to check on children who are in private fostering arrangements.

Within 7 working days of being told of a PF arrangement the SSAFA Forces Help Social Work will arrange for a social worker to visit you, and where possible, any other person with parental responsibility, visit and speak to your child, and visit and speak to the people who will be the private foster carers. The SSAFA Forces Help Social Work Service will make a report and you will be given a copy of this. When your child is being privately fostered the social worker will visit and speak to your child alone at least every six weeks. If you, your child or the private foster carer wants the social worker to make extra visits we will discuss this with you.

Q Is there anything else I should be doing?

A Yes. You should tell SSAFA Forces Help Social Work of any changes such as a new person coming to live in the house where your child is being looked after, or if your child moves to another address or the private fostering arrangement is ending.

Q What checks are carried out on the private foster carer?

A Because the arrangement is a private one between you and the person or people you choose to be the private foster carer you are encouraged to make sure that the right checks are made on the foster carer and anyone else living in the house who is over the age of 16. SSAFA Forces Help, is registered with the CRB as an 'umbrella body'. This means that SSAFA Forces Help Social Work may make criminal record checks on your behalf. You need to speak to your local social worker. You should also ask the PF carers to have a medical examination before the PF placement starts. This is to make sure they are fit and well.