

## 1 Background

Since the Children Act 2004 it has been a legal responsibility for Local Authorities to recognise, monitor and support any child in their area who is being 'privately fostered'.



## 2 What is Private Fostering?

This is an informal arrangement where a child up to the age of 16 (or 18 if registered with a disability) is living with someone not classed as family under the Children Act 1989, for a period of 28 days or more.



## 3 Why it Matters

It is believed a lot of children are living in these circumstances unrecognised which could put children at risk of abuse.

Victoria Climbié was brought into the country by a distant relative who went on to abuse and murder her.



## 4 Considerations

If the arrangement is broken by a brief visit home it may still be classed as Private Fostering. The arrangement does not need to be 28 days consistently.

The parents will still hold Parental Responsibility and will need to be consulted when decisions about care are made.



## 5 Responsibility of the Private Fosterer

- To notify the Local Authority 6 weeks before the arrangement is proposed or immediately if within 6 weeks
- To agree to checks and assessment being made
- To agree the terms of the care with the parents or whoever holds parental responsibility



## 7 Action

Recognise when a child you are working with may be in this situation, or about to be. Contact the Integrated Front Door (0151 606 2008) [IFD@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:IFD@wirral.gov.uk)

Give as much information about the child and the circumstances as possible.



## 6 Responsibility of the Local Authority

- Complete a Private Fostering Assessment of suitability
- Complete checks on the adults in the household including DBS/ Criminal Records
- Assign an IRO to undertake regular reviews of the arrangement

