

# 7 Minute Briefing

## Private Fostering

### 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 that 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 lead to abuse.

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

### 4. Considerations

The period of the arrangement could be broken by a brief visit home may still be classed as Private Fostering. So 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 before entering into any arrangements.

To agree to checks and assessment being made.

To agree the terms of the care with the parents or whoever holds parental responsibility.

### 6. Responsibility of Local Authority

Complete a Child in Need Assessment of suitability.

Complete checks on the adults in the household, DBS, Criminal Records.

Assign an IRO to undertake regular reviews of the circumstances.

### 7. Action

Recognise when a child you are working with may be in this situation, or about to be.

Make a safeguarding referral to the MASH Team on 0151 606 2008.

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