PRIVATE FOSTERING

THE NATIONAL PICTURE

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THE CHILDREN’S VIEWS
A privately fostered child is a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) and who is cared for by, and provided with accommodation by, someone other than a parent, or a relative (defined as step-parent, sibling, aunt, uncle or grandparent).

To foster a child privately means to look after the child for a period of 28 days or more.
Who are the Children?

- African and African Caribbean children with parents or families overseas
- Black and minority ethnic children with parents working or studying in the UK
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Trafficked children, CSE & Domestic servitude
- Local children living apart from their families
- Adolescents and teenagers
- Children attending language schools
- Children at language schools
- Children living with host families for a variety of reasons
- Children brought in from abroad with a view to adoption
THE NATIONAL PICTURE

- 10,000 children estimated in private fostering arrangements in England (DOH 2001)
- "8% were never told why they were sent to live with strangers or distant relatives." (Holman, 2002)
- 1,560 Children reported in private fostering arrangements in England as at 31 March 2015 (DfE 2015)
- Numbers have fluctuated between 1,250 and 1,650 over the past 9 years (DfE 2015)
- Regions with the most children reported continue to be London and the South West (DfE 2015)
PRIVATELY FOSTERED CHILDREN’S VIEWS (Morgan 2005)

• Children themselves would probably not know if their parents/carer had notified the LA
• Social Services should make checks on carers
• Make sure children can speak freely without their carers being present
• See the child alone when visiting
• Check the child is being properly looked after including accommodation, financial arrangements, and that the child is happy
• Give out leaflets about private fostering
• Give out phone numbers and email addresses that people could contact
• Teachers could ask carers to contact Social Services
• Provide advice for private foster carers
BAAF’s guide for privately fostered children and young people