



Cumberland  
Council

# Cumberland Support For Private Foster Carers

[cumberland.gov.uk](http://cumberland.gov.uk)

# What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if they have a disability) lives with someone who is not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more. This is a private arrangement made with the child's parents, not a placement made by Cumberland Council. Private foster carers are not employed or paid by the local authority. However, the council has a legal duty to make sure the child is safe and well, and to offer advice, guidance and support to carers and families. Notifying Children's Services helps ensure you and the child receive the right help at the right time.

## Why telling the council helps

Letting Cumberland Council know about a private fostering arrangement helps make sure the child is safe and well, and that you have access to advice and support if you need it. The council's role is not to take over, but to offer guidance, carry out basic checks, and help everyone understand their responsibilities. Many carers find that notifying the council provides reassurance and support while they care for the child.

## Support from a Social Worker

When a private fostering arrangement is notified, a social worker will visit to check that the child is safe, settled and well cared for, and to offer guidance to the carer. The social worker is there to support you, provide advice, and help you understand everyone's roles and responsibilities. If a child needs extra help, the social worker can work with you and other services to offer Child in Need support, focusing on the child's health, education and emotional wellbeing. Many carers find this support reassuring and helpful while they care for the child.

## Support from Cumberland Family Help service

Cumberland Family Hubs are welcoming community spaces that offer help and support for families and carers at different stages of family life. Private foster carers can access advice, signposting, groups and activities for children and young people from their local Family Hub. You can find your nearest Family Hub and see what support is available in your area at [www.cumberlandfamilyhubs.org.uk](http://www.cumberlandfamilyhubs.org.uk)

For more targeted support with things like parenting, wellbeing and relationships, private foster carers can contact CCASS and ask to be referred to the Family Help Locality team. They can be contacted on **0333 240 1727**.

# Support from Cumberland Virtual School (for Private Foster Carers)

Cumberland Virtual School supports schools to meet the educational needs of children who may have experienced change or disruption, including children in private fostering arrangements. While the Virtual School does not take over responsibility for your child, it can offer advice to schools about attendance, behaviour, emotional wellbeing and helping children settle and achieve. As a private foster carer, you can ask your child's school to link with the Cumberland Virtual School or find more information by visiting [www.cumberland.gov.uk](http://www.cumberland.gov.uk) and searching **Virtual School**.

## Support from the national charity Kinship

Kinship is a national charity that supports people caring for someone else's child, including private foster carers. They offer free, independent advice, online information, and access to training workshops on topics such as understanding trauma, managing behaviour, and supporting children at school. Kinship also provides opportunities to connect with other carers through peer support and local groups, helping carers feel informed, supported and less alone.

Website: <https://www.kinship.org.uk>

Advice Line: **0300 123 7015**

Find training and support: <https://compass.kinship.org.uk>

### Support from the Kinship Team within the local authority

If you consent, you can be placed on a mailing list and receive information around support groups and training being offered in Cumberland. You can also seek advice and support from the team by emailing [SGOsupport@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:SGOsupport@cumbria.gov.uk). The Kinship care team can also sign post to other agencies which may support you in this role.