

Children and Families Directorate

Care and Justice Division
Looked After Children Unit

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Education Authorities (Schools, Nurseries, Family Centres)
Health Authorities (GP Surgeries, Dentists, Health Visitors, Clinicians)
Housing Authorities
Immigration and Custom Authorities (Border Entry points)
Scottish Police (Stations)
Libraries
Faith Groups



27 November 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

BE SAFE BE SURE NATIONAL PRIVATE FOSTERING CAMPAIGN 2-6 DECEMBER 2013

The purpose of this letter is to request your help in raising awareness nationally about private fostering.

Private fostering is when a private childcare arrangement is made between parents and other adults who are not close relatives (i.e. not a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt) of the child or not formally approved foster carers and where the care of the child is to be undertaken for more than 28 days.

The law states that these arrangements need to be brought to the attention of local authority Children's Services Departments so that they can ensure the wellbeing of the child(ren) involved. Since there are been very few of these arrangements brought to the attention of local authorities in Scotland, there are concerns that many more may exist, leaving some children in potentially vulnerable circumstances.

We would like to raise awareness about private fostering with as many services as possible working directly with children and families in Scotland. The enclosed campaign materials have been designed to help encourage parents, carers and service providers to notify local authorities of any private fostering arrangement they are involved in or are aware of.

Distribution

We have made arrangements for hard copies to be sent to schools, GP Practices, Police stations, libraries, UKBA and Citizens Advice Centres and some local authority children's services that will be supporting the campaign locally. These services will receive this letter along with their hard copies.

For other services (Medical Directors, Nurse Directors, Dental Health Boards, Housing authorities, third sector organisations and others) we are requesting them to carry out an electronic dissemination of this letter within their sectors with the electronic link (below) to our website where service providers can view information and resources about private fostering.

We are also publishing good practice guidance for local authorities on how to handle private fostering arrangements and have arranged to have a link and downloadable versions of the leaflets and poster available on our website at www.scotland.gov.uk/privatefostering.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for service providers dealing directly with children and families within your area of work to display a poster and have leaflets for parents available in any public areas where parents or carers will have access. Also to ensure that service workers are made aware of the information leaflet for service providers. We are also preparing a radio focus on local radio stations to support the work of the campaign during the week 2-6 December.

We do have a small supply of hard copy materials which can still be requested by e-mailing us at lookedafterchildren2@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or calling Suzanne Allan on 0131 244 0407.

As well as working to have campaign materials in place by 2 December, we would also value your help in raising awareness by other means available to your organisation by adding a few lines and a link into any newsletters, onto websites, Facebook, home screens etc.

Finally I would like to thank all of you for your assistance in helping to raise awareness about private fostering and helping to ensure children living within private fostering arrangements do not go unnoticed.

Yours faithfully

HEATHER BROWN