



## **Private Fostering Somebody else's child – everybody's responsibility**

Medway Council is urging residents to help them ensure the safety and well-being of children who are being cared for by someone who is not a direct relative.

The call to action is part of a national campaign (19-25 January) called Somebody Else's Child, which is run by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) and aims to raise awareness of private fostering.

Thousands of children throughout the UK are being cared for by someone who isn't a direct relative. This is known as private fostering and includes children sent to England from overseas for a better education and sofa surfing teenagers who've had a row with mum and dad and gone to live with a friend. While many of these children will be fine, some could be at risk of abuse, and many need protection.

Legally the parent and the carer must notify the local authority where the child is going to live so that the local authority can ensure that the child is being properly looked after.

Nobody knows exactly how many children are privately fostered, but in 2001 the Department of Health estimated that there could be as many as 10,000 in England and Wales.

Since April 08 there were **16** notifications of private fostering arrangements in Medway. However the council's fostering team believe there could be many more. The team is asking people who work with children to be aware of private fostering and inform them immediately if they believe such an arrangement exists. The general public also has a part to play.

Cllr David Wildey, the council's Portfolio Holder for Children's Care said:  
"The main purpose of this campaign is to increase notifications to the council of private fostering situations. Everybody has a role in keeping our children safe – whether you are a teacher, youth worker, neighbour or just chat to the other parents at the school gate. If you hear about a child who is being privately fostered please let us know immediately so we can ensure the child is being kept safe."

For more information on private fostering in Medway visit [www.medway.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.medway.gov.uk/fostering) or phone 01634 334466.