

# Somebodyelse'schild

## Appendix 2

### Case studies

- **A teenage girl**

A 15-year old Albanian girl was forced into prostitution in the UK after being tricked into a bigamous marriage. She spoke to BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

'I stayed at home with him thinking I was his wife, but then I started to have doubts because when he had guests or friends coming to the house he hid me,' she said. 'He understood I knew the truth so he started to threaten me. He hit me with a mobile phone charger and he said he would cut me into pieces and throw the pieces in a forest.'

She said the experience left her feeling like she no longer wanted to live. 'I hated myself, I wanted to be dead. I thought I was at the lowest level of society. I thought people know, and they really are disgusted knowing what I am, knowing I am a prostitute.'

**(Taken from <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, 9 June 2009, reproduced in BAAF guide Looking after a young person who has been trafficked: a guide for social workers)**

- **Thomas**

Thomas, 16, is British, but came under the malign influence of traffickers after a childhood of neglect and abuse by family members. During a succession of foster placements and stays in children's homes, he would frequently go missing, returning sometimes weeks later with large amounts of cash and several mobile phones. Thomas is reluctant to talk about his experiences, or even to admit that he has been the victim of trafficking. 'Why are social workers worried about me now, when they didn't care that my uncle was abusing me?' he complains.

**(Taken from Siverman J, 'Traffick hazards', The Guardian, 17 June 2009, available online at [www.guardian.co.uk/society](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society) reproduced in BAAF guide Looking after a young person who has been trafficked: a guide for social workers)**

- **Georgina**

Georgina is 10 years of age, black African, speaks Swahili as a first language and has very little English. Over the past few weeks she has accompanied one of your regular members, Miriam, to the church services.

You discover that Miriam was asked to look after Georgina by an eastern European man who is lodging in the house next door. Miriam understands that this is a temporary arrangement and that Georgina is to be taken to live with an aunt in another town 200 miles away. Miriam is taken aback when you talk to her about private fostering and tell her that she will need to notify the local authority. Georgina does not appear at church again; Miriam tells you that she was taken away the day after you talked to her.

You are concerned about this situation and contact the local children's social care team. It transpires that the Police have been watching the house next door to Miriam's and they suspect that Georgina is a trafficked child.

- **Ivanhoe**

Ivanhoe is 10 years of age. He is staying with his 'Auntie', Ms Lawrence. He has recently been registered at the local GP practice and on his first visit to the GP it is discovered that he is from the Caribbean. His 'Auntie' tells the GP that his mother died a few months ago and it was decided he should come to the UK to live with her.

The GP asks Ms Lawrence to confirm her relationship with Ivanhoe and discovers that she is a friend of the family and not a blood relative. He realises that this is a private fostering arrangement and asks Ms Lawrence whether the local authority are offering any help and advice with this arrangement. Ms Lawrence informs him that there is no need for their involvement as she is very happy to be helping out and Ivanhoe is no trouble. The GP tells her about her duty to inform the local authority because this is private fostering, gives her the contact details of the local children's services office, and talks to her about how they might be able to help her and Ivanhoe. Ms Lawrence thanks him for the advice.

At a follow-up appointment the GP realises that Ms Lawrence has not been in touch with the local authority. He explains to her and Ivanhoe that he has a responsibility to inform them and asks their permission to do so. Ms Lawrence reluctantly agrees. Ivanhoe does not want social workers in his life because he has a friend at school who has a social worker. The GP explains that he will be contacting the local authority because he has a responsibility to ensure that Ivanhoe's needs are met in the best way possible and he is concerned about all the upheaval he has experienced in recent months. Later that day he telephones the children's services duty team to notify them.

- **Daniel**

Daniel is 15 years of age. He is picked up one Friday night with a group of boys in the local park. There was a fight and a local resident called the Police. One boy with wounds to his head is taken to hospital. Daniel and the others are taken to the Police station and their parents are contacted. Daniel reveals that he is living with Ms Green, a 30-year-old woman who works in the restaurant where Daniel has a Saturday job. He has been living there for the past couple of months following an argument with his parents with whom he has had no contact since.

Ms Green informs you that Daniel's parents are not in agreement with this arrangement but will not have him home until he apologises and changes his ways. She has not anticipated having Daniel to stay for such a long time but doesn't want to throw him out either as she worries about where he might end up. She is unaware that this is a private fostering arrangement but agrees to contact the local authority as she needs some financial help if Daniel is to stay. She is happy for you to notify the local authority also.

- **Lucy**

Lucy is 5 years old. She has a hearing impairment. She is known as Lucy Smith and has a 7 year old 'sister' who also attends the local school. Ms Smith explained that Lucy's mother is a friend of hers and has gone abroad for work. Ms Smith says she agreed to care for Lucy until her mother is able to return to the UK.

You realise that this is a private fostering arrangement and ask Ms Smith whether the local authority are offering any help and advice with this arrangement. Ms Smith informs you that there is no need for their involvement as this is strictly between herself and Lucy's mother. You tell her about her duty to inform the local authority because this is private fostering, give her the contact details of the local children's services office, and talk to her about how they might be able to assist. Ms Smith is taken aback and non-committal about getting in touch with the local authority.

When you talk to her a week later you realise that she has not been in touch with the local authority. You explain that you have a responsibility to inform them and ask her permission to do so. Ms Smith tells you that this is none of your business. You talk to her and Lucy about what you will need to do, trying to reassure them that you will be acting in Lucy's interests. You discuss the matter with the designated teacher for safeguarding who notifies the local authority.

## Local Authorities

- A local authority worked with schools and the 'looked after' Children Education Support (LACES) worker to raise awareness of private fostering. As a result of this work, the LACES worker carried out checks on every child who was said to be 'fostered' by the school, and if they were not on the database as being looked after, she brought the case to the attention of the private fostering team. The authority also provided training to designated teachers and met with each designated teacher in the authority twice a year. The training focused on the legal status of children (covering both looked after children and private fostering arrangements) and used case scenarios and quizzes to help designated teachers identify private fostering arrangements. The training also encouraged teachers to ask about parental responsibility for the child as a means of identifying a private fostering arrangement.

### **NCB/BAAF research (DCSF 2010)**

- Another local authority published a series of articles about private fostering in newsletters for school governors and on the schools web portal. Letters were sent out to all schools with a private fostering information pack (including leaflets and posters). The authority also conducted a survey of schools to find out more about their levels of awareness and what schools were doing in relation to private fostering notifications.

### **NCB/BAAF research (DCSF 2010)**

- A London borough identified that majority of privately fostered children and young people in their area are unaccompanied immigrant children staying with their parent's friends or distant relatives. As part of their awareness-raising work, the authority wanted to target specific community groups where private fostering is common.

The authority was able to draw on the expertise of the African Families Service and the Muslim children's safeguarding coordinator, who both raised awareness amongst religious leaders and other community representatives.

The authority gave talks on private fostering to pastors, mosques and imams to raise awareness about private fostering in their communities. The private fostering workers also attended community and faith events.

### **(NCB/BAAF research (DCSF 2010))**

- A local authority sent information about private fostering to GP surgeries and to receptionists. The letter contained a telephone number which was a direct line to social workers. As a result of this work, referrals from GPs increased.

### **(NCB/BAAF research (DCSF 2010))**