

# Private Fostering



# Learning objectives

- Understanding private fostering
- legal responsibilities
- safeguarding implications
- and role clarity for professionals and agencies.

# What is Private Fostering ?

Private fostering is a private arrangement between a parent and a carer, to look after a child/children under the age of 16 (18 if disabled).

The carer would not be a blood relative, therefore : a cousin, great aunt/uncle, neighbour, friend as well as boarding schools

This arrangement would have to be more than 28 days, before being considered as PF arrangement.

Private Foster Carers do not have PR but can make day to day decisions for the child.



# What is my role

I oversee all children in Southwark in private fostering arrangements.

When a referral comes in from MASH, an initial visit occurs to see the child and carer within 7 days.

I complete a private fostering assessment to ascertain the suitability of the arrangement.

I present all my cases at the Private Fostering panel every 8 weeks

I supervise carers and visit children every 6 to 12 weeks

I offer advice on benefits and parenting support

I spread awareness of what Private Fostering is to both the community and other professionals.

# Private Fostering Situations

Local children living apart from their families

Children from overseas

Child care arrangements

Asylum seekers and refugees

Parents who may be unwell

Children who may be staying with friends for a short time due to family difficulties

Children attending language schools

Children at independent boarding schools who do not return home for holidays

Children living with another family for a variety of reasons

Children brought into the UK for adoption

# What the Law says about Private fostering



The law requires that both the parents and carer must notify the local authority about the proposed arrangement before it takes place; failure to give notification is an offence.



The local authority is required to assess and say whether or not they agree and accept the private fostering arrangement in regard to a particular child.



# Case study

- **Case Study 1 (15 minutes)**
- **Scenario:** A child from Sierra Leone, aged 13, comes to live in the UK with a family friend for education.
- Discuss the situation: Why it counts as private fostering, cultural expectations, and responsibilities.
- What would you do in this situation as a professional ?

# Case study 2

- **Case Study 2 (15 minutes)**
- **Scenario:** An 8-year-old child is sent by their parents, who are facing temporary financial hardship, to live with a neighbour for more than 28 days. The parents haven't informed the local authority.
  - Explore safeguarding concerns (emotional well-being, school attendance, etc.).
  - **Discussion points:** The role of professionals in encouraging parents to report the situation, possible outcomes, and how to monitor the child's welfare.



# What your responsibilities are ?

It is also imperative that all agencies are aware of the relationship between private fostering and safeguarding activities. Some children who are privately fostered may also have been trafficked, be at risk of exploitation, domestic servitude and abuse.

If you are aware that a child is being privately fostered, encourage the parents or private foster carer to notify us about their arrangements, explaining that it is the legal duty of both parents and carers to do this. \*\*

All key professionals and agencies who are involved with children/young people are able to access advice from MASH in the Assessment and Intervention Service on 020 7525 1921 or email [MASH@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@southwark.gov.uk).

# People who can help

You can speak to or email or invite us to your team meetings...

Rachael Omotayo, Specialist PF Senior Social Worker:  
07395882517 [Rachael.Omotayo@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Rachael.Omotayo@southwark.gov.uk)

Chantal Treanor, Team Manager :  
[Chantal.Treanor@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Chantal.Treanor@southwark.gov.uk)

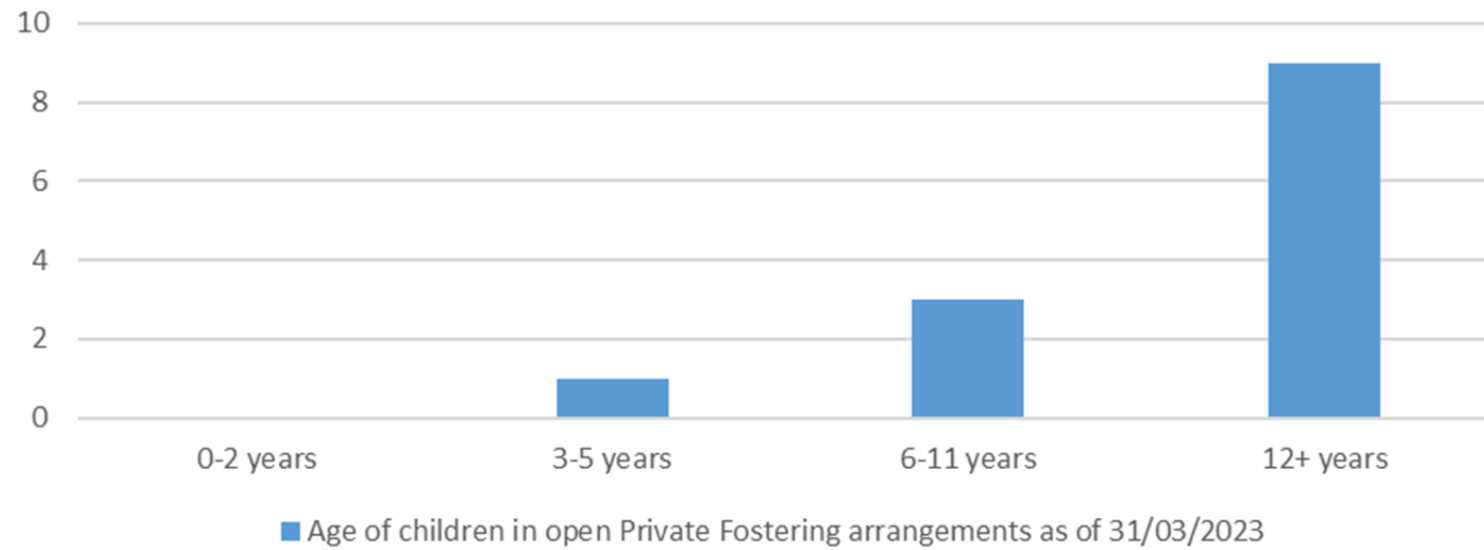
Joyce Patton, Service Manager, SFS A  
[Joyce.Patton@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Joyce.Patton@southwark.gov.uk)

# Summary: Private Fostering Annual Report 2022/2023

- In 2022/23 (April 2022 to March 2023) we received 13 new notifications of privately fostered children in Southwark. The largest referral source were from schools accounting for 3 of the 13 referrals and an internal source - social worker within the Local Authority, which accounted for 3 referrals. Of the remaining 7 referrals, 2 were from other Local Authorities, 1 from an individual family member, 1 from the Education Service, 1 from the Home Office, 1 from a legal agency (Court) and 1 from the Housing service. This showed a wide variation in referral source, although compared to the previous year, no referrals were received from the Police or Health services.\*\*
- Of the 13 new notifications we received in 2022/23, 7 children were in the 12+ age range, 5 children in the 6-11year age range and 1 child was in the 3-5 year age range. \*\*
- Of the 13 new notifications received, the largest ethnic group was Black/Black British (African) at 76.92% (10 children), followed by other ethnic group (Spanish) at 15.38% (2 children) and White British at 7.69% (1 child.) Within the cohort of children from Black - African backgrounds, 6 children were from Nigeria, 1 from Sierra Leone, 1 from the Congo, 1 from Ghana and 1 from Cameroon. \*\*



### Age of children in open Private Fostering arrangements as of 31/03/2023



<b>Country of origin (open)</b>	<b>No of Children</b>	<b>Proportion of children</b>
United Kingdom	4	30.77%
Nigeria	4	30.77%
Spain	2	15.38%
Germany	1	7.69%
Ghana	1	7.69%
Sierra Leone	1	7.69%

## Scenarios of Private Fostering

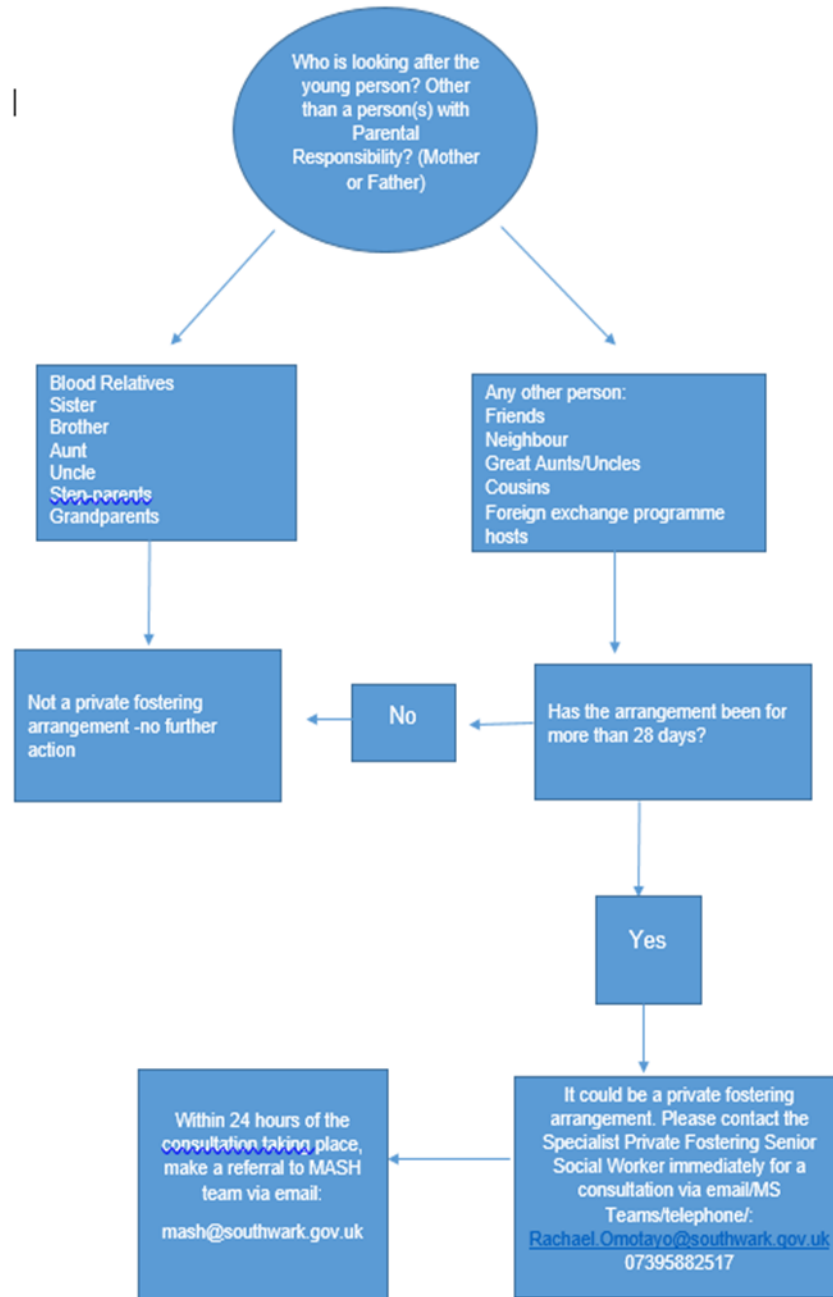
We have had a number of step-parents who were not married to the young person's parent, but want to continue looking after the young person, long term.

A child-minder who started off looking after the young person (6mths) on a contractual basis, but ending up looking after the young majority of the time, and the young person is now 9

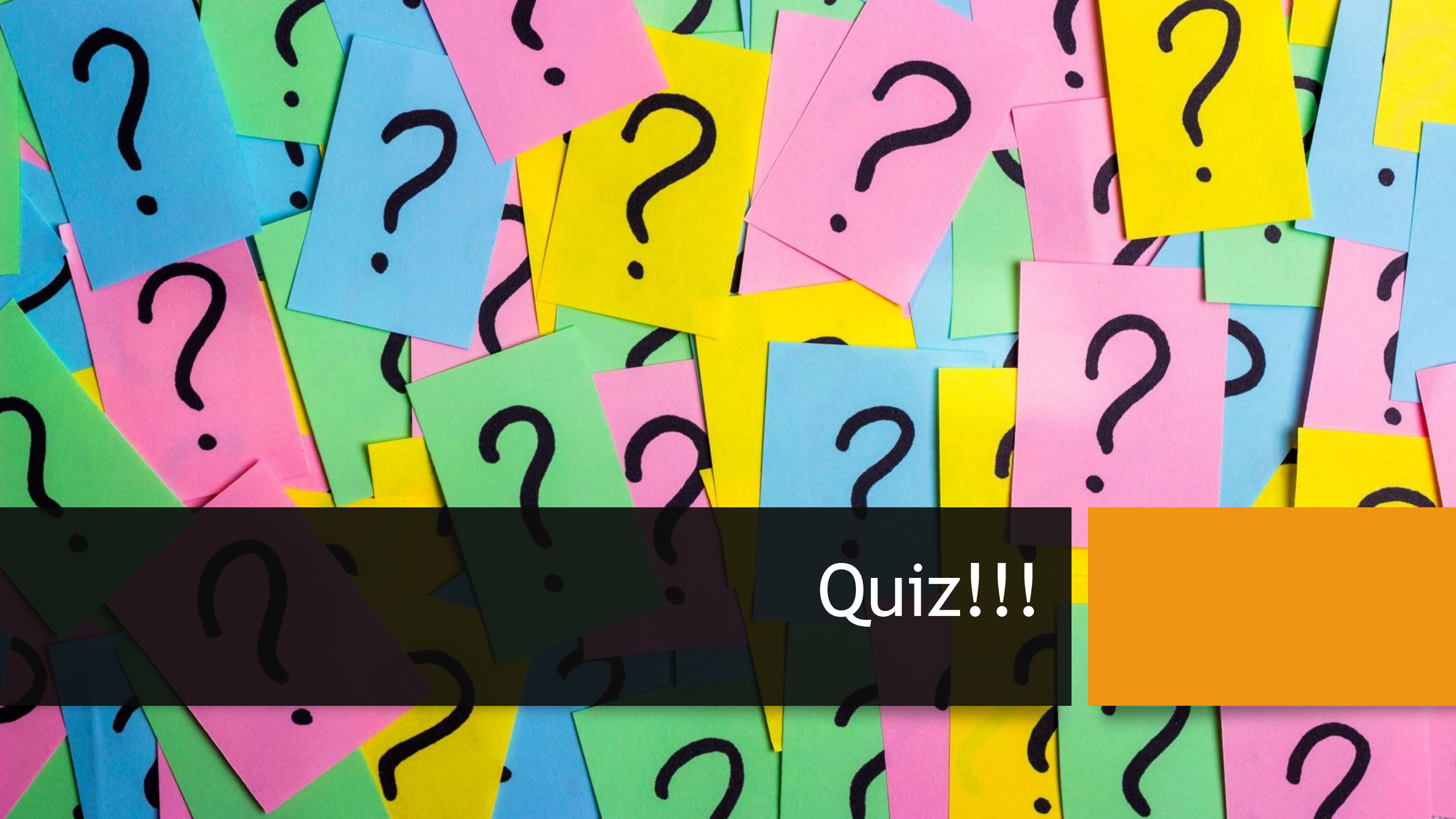
Families who host international students. Schools who runs language educational programmes.



## What is a Private Fostering Arrangement and what to do once identified?



# Private Fostering flow chart



Quiz!!!





- **Question 1:** Private fostering is an arrangement where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) lives with someone who is:
  - a. Their parent
  - b. A relative as defined by the Children Act 1989
  - c. A person with parental responsibility
  - d. None of the above





- **Question 2:** Which of the following relatives is not considered a 'relative' under the Children Act 1989 for private fostering purposes?
- a. Grandparent
- b. Great aunt
- c. Uncle by marriage
- d. Step-parent



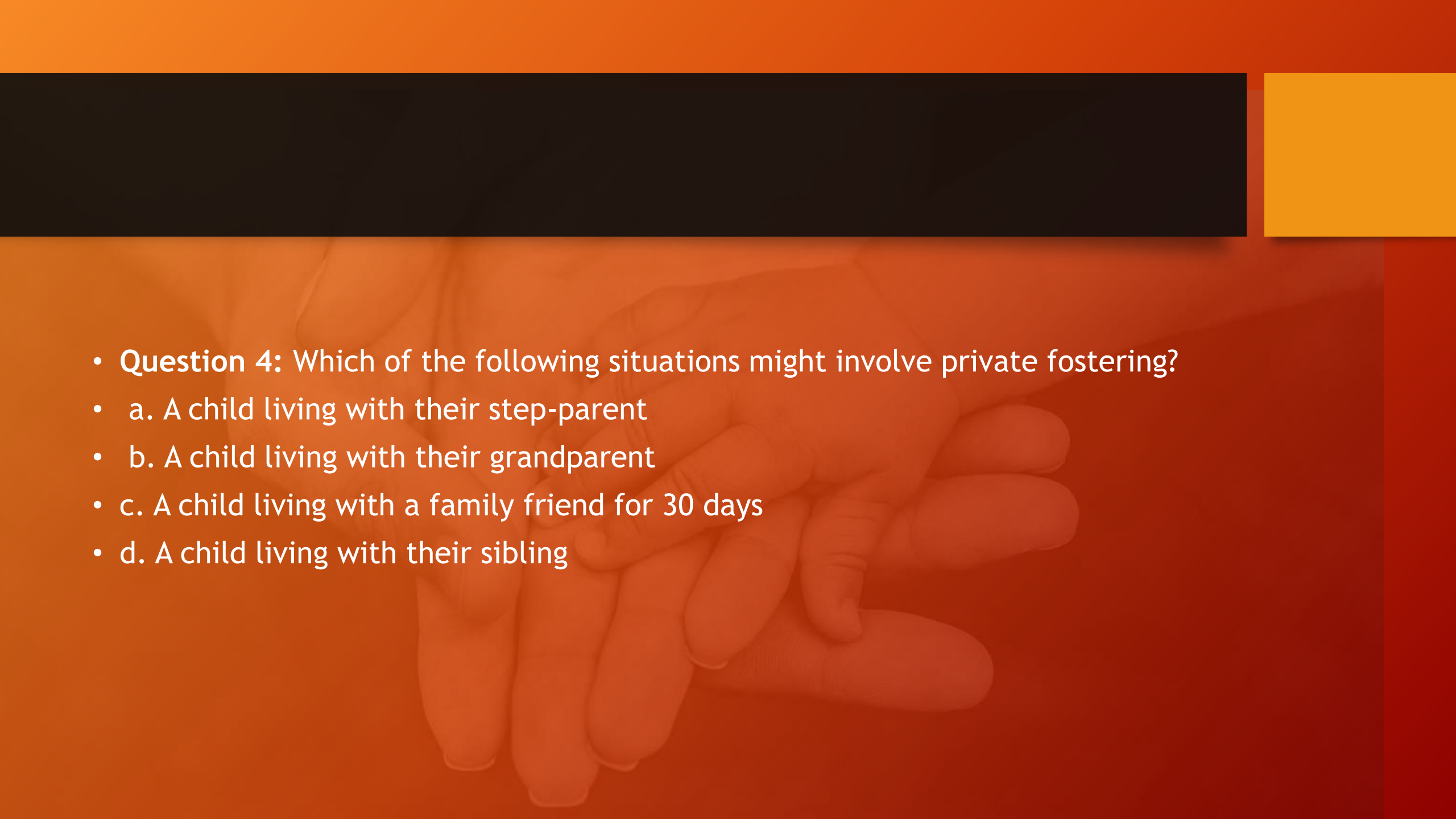
**Question 3:** In private fostering, the local authority must be notified if the arrangement lasts for more than:

a. 14 days

b. 21 days

c. 28 days

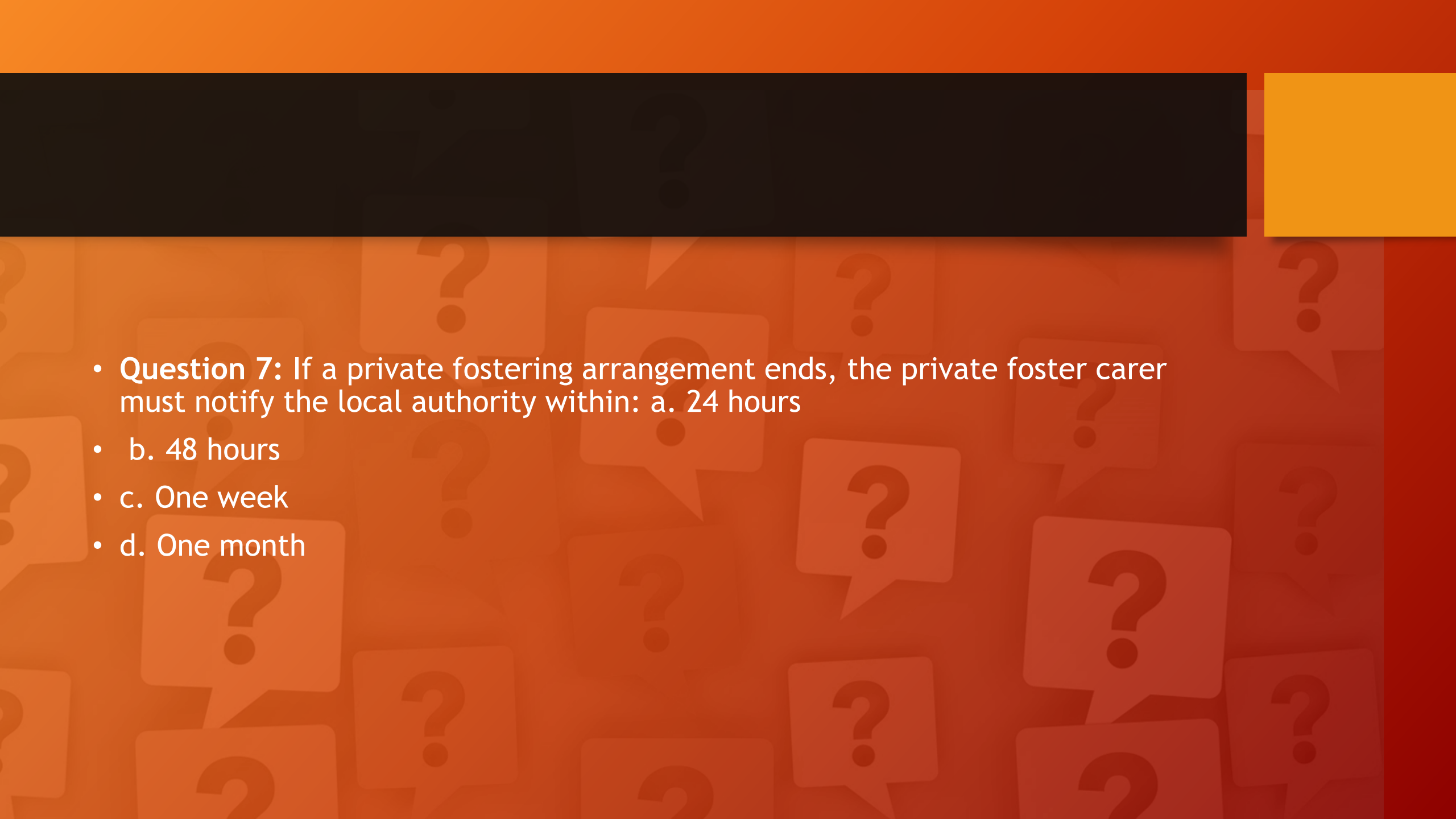
d. 35 days

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- **Question 4:** Which of the following situations might involve private fostering?
  - a. A child living with their step-parent
  - b. A child living with their grandparent
  - c. A child living with a family friend for 30 days
  - d. A child living with their sibling

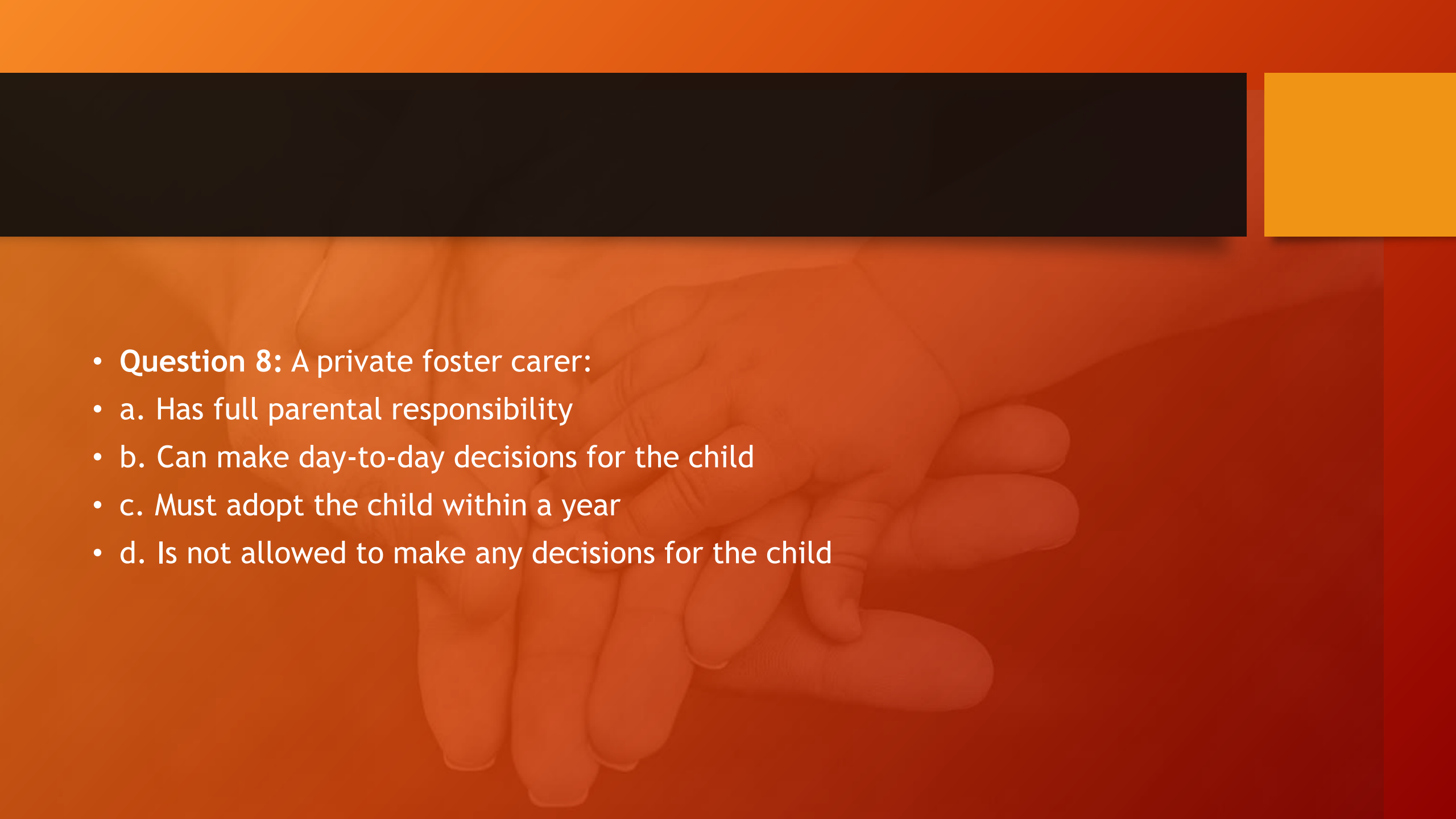


- **Question 5:** What must a local authority do within seven days of being notified about a private fostering arrangement?
- a. Find alternative accommodation for the child
- b. Visit the home and speak to the carer and child
- c. Arrange a court hearing
- d. Enrol the child in a new school

- **Question 6:** Which piece of legislation replaced the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 1991? a. Children Act 1989
- b. Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
- c. Children Act 2004
- d. Adoption and Children Act 2002

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- The background of the slide is a solid orange color with a pattern of semi-transparent, light-orange speech bubbles, each containing a question mark. At the top, there is a dark orange horizontal bar on the left and a yellow horizontal bar on the right.
- **Question 7:** If a private fostering arrangement ends, the private foster carer must notify the local authority within: a. 24 hours
  - b. 48 hours
  - c. One week
  - d. One month



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- **Question 8:** A private foster carer:
  - a. Has full parental responsibility
  - b. Can make day-to-day decisions for the child
  - c. Must adopt the child within a year
  - d. Is not allowed to make any decisions for the child

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- **Question 9:** What kind of support can a private foster carer receive from the local authority?
  - a. Financial support equivalent to child benefit
  - b. Advice on benefits and parenting support
  - c. Full parental rights and responsibilities
  - d. Free accommodation

- **Question 10:** True or False: Private fostering arrangements need to be continuous and cannot include brief breaks.
- a. True b. False



Questions ???