

Private Fostering

A Guide for Children and Young People

What is Private Fostering?

Sometimes children or young people go to stay with someone else who is not a close relative. If you are likely to stay in this person's home for 28 days or longer the law calls this Private Fostering. The person who looks after you is a private foster carer and the law says that the local authority must be told because it is their job to make sure that children are looked after properly.



Why are children privately fostered?

There can be lots of different reasons for being privately fostered, for example:

- You are a teenager and there are lots of rows at home so you go to stay with your friend's family until the problem can be sorted out
- Your mum or dad is ill and cannot look after you so you go to stay with a neighbour or family friend
- You have been sent to this country to stay with a friend, distant relative or another adult because there is no-one to look after you in your home country
- Your parents have sent you here to support your education or to have medical treatment

Is Private Fostering the same as foster care?

No, they are different. When you are privately fostered, social workers don't arrange where you live but they do have to make sure it's safe for you.



What will my private foster carers do for me?

The people you live with should look after you like their own child. This includes:

- Giving you regular meals
- Making sure you have a bed of your own and clean clothes
- Making sure you go to school
- Making sure you go to the doctor or hospital if you are ill
- Making sure you go to the dentist and optician for regular checks
- Helping you to enjoy sports and hobbies
- Helping you to stay in touch with your family
- Helping you to follow any religion or customs that are important to you



What will my family do for me?

Your family are still legally responsible for you and should stay in contact with you. They have to give permission for certain things to happen:

- Changing your name
- Changing school
- Going on holiday
- Having serious medical treatment
- Moving to another family



Who needs to know I'm privately fostered?

The law says that the local authority have to be told about every child or young person who is privately fostered and that every privately fostered child or young person should have their own social worker.

Your school and doctor should be told your new address and the names of the people you are living with. You might want to tell your close friends, but that is up to you.



What will my social worker do for me?

A social worker is someone whose job is to help children or young people and their families; this includes making sure that you are safe and being looked after properly.

You should be seen by a social worker within a week of the local authority being told that you are privately fostered.

After that, your social worker should come and see you every six weeks. Your social worker will talk to your private foster carer and will also want to see you on your own. This is so that you can tell them about anything that is worrying you, so it's a good idea to get to know them.

A year after your very first visit, your social worker might not visit you as often, but they will let you know how to get in touch with them if you want to talk to them.



Useful contacts, telephone numbers and addresses

Your social worker is:

And can be reached on:

If you phone and they are not there you can phone the fostering service and tell them you are privately fostered.

You can contact:

Fostering Team

Station Road Centre, Station Road

Barkingside IG6 1NB

020 8708 7478

Email: fostering@redbridge.gov.uk

If you feel unhappy or just need to talk to someone about your situation, there are people you can talk to who can give you advice. You can call them on these numbers:

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0800 800 5000

If you are unhappy with the service you get from the Council, you can get a leaflet that tells you how to complain by asking your social worker or private foster carer.





