

# PRIVATE FOSTERING



28  
days

**Does someone else look after your child?**  
**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS  
& PRIVATE FOSTER CARERS**  
**Do you look after someone else's child?**

**This leaflet looks at what you need to know if:**

**You are planning to look after someone else's child (become a private foster carer) or you already do so**

**You are planning to arrange for your child to be looked after by someone else (have your child privately fostered) or you have already done so**

## What is private fostering?

Private fostering is an arrangement where a child or young person under 16 years (or under 18 if the child is disabled), is living away from home for 28 days or more (not necessarily at one time) and is cared for by an adult who is not their:

- > Parent
- > Grandparent
- > Person with parental responsibility
- > Step-parent (by marriage or civil partnership)
- > Aunt
- > Uncle
- > Sister
- > Brother

A CHILD LOOKED AFTER BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IS **NOT** A PRIVATELY FOSTERED CHILD.



These could include:

- > Children whose parents study or work unsociable hours, which makes it difficult for them to use ordinary day care or after school care
- > Children sent to this country for education or health opportunities
- > Cultural exchange students
- > Children living with a friend's family as a result of difficulties at home
- > Teenagers living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend
- > Some refugee children
- > A child living with their parent's cousin
- > A child staying with a family friend for three days a week with the intention that the arrangement reaches a total of 28 days or more
- > Any child whose parents have made a private arrangement for them to be looked after by someone else
- > Any child who is looked after by someone else on a private basis without the parents being involved

By law, a private foster carer can only look after three children, but if they are all brothers and/or sisters, the private foster carer can care for more than three children at a time.



The government introduced new 'Private Fostering Regulations' in July 2005 in order to reinforce the need to support children living away from home. Local councils are not always notified (informed) about private fostering arrangements. This is considered to be an offence under the Children Act 1989, unless there is a reasonable explanation.

Haringey Council's Private Fostering Team has the duty to make sure that children's needs are being met. We can give advice and make sure you are getting the help, support and benefits you need.

### Remember

THE PRIVATE FOSTERING TEAM IS HERE TO HELP.  
WE DO NOT WANT TO DISRUPT THE ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE. WE JUST NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENT TO CHECK THAT CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND BEING PROPERLY CARED FOR. WE ALSO WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED.

Haringey Council's Private Fostering Team is responsible for making sure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and safe.

Haringey's Private Fostering Team will do this by:

- > Ensuring you (carers and parents) receive the relevant support and advice required if you look after someone else's child or if someone else looks after your child
- > Ensuring the child's educational, emotional, cultural and physical needs are met by visiting you (the carers) on a regular basis
- > Seeing the child on her/his own on a regular basis to check that they are OK
- > Keeping in contact with you (the parents), if possible
- > Supporting parents and private foster carers to work together for the benefit of the child
- > Taking action if the care provided is not satisfactory, for example, providing support so that the care improves or informing the parents so they can make alternative arrangements for the child
- > Carrying out compulsory checks on the private foster carers and any other person living in or employed at their household

It is Haringey Council's responsibility to establish whether parents and private foster carers have given consideration to the following in relation to the child:

- > Daily routine
- > Activities
- > School and health details
- > Educational and health needs
- > Behaviour and emotional needs
- > Hobbies
- > Ethnic and cultural needs
- > Eating preferences
- > Contact with family members
- > Social contacts
- > Religion
- > Language

HARINGEY COUNCIL IS **NOT** RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DAY-TO-DAY CARE OF PRIVATELY FOSTERED CHILDREN OR FOR ANY (FINANCIAL) DISPUTES BETWEEN THE PARENTS AND CARERS.



## What do both parents and private foster carers need to do? 9

The carers and parents or other people with parental responsibility (or any other people involved) must notify the local council, in the area in which the private foster carers live, at least 6 weeks before the child comes to live with the private foster carers. Where the private fostering arrangement is to begin within 6 weeks you need to inform the local council immediately. If the child is already living with the carers, Haringey's Private Fostering Team needs to be notified within 48 hours. The notification needs to be in writing. To find out more about how to notify please contact Haringey Private Fostering Team. You will find the contact details at the back of this booklet. People who notified the local council about the proposed arrangement must inform the council that the arrangement has begun. This must be within 48 hours of the start of the arrangement.

Parents and carers should agree what information they would like to exchange on a regular basis and what form of contact will take place between the carers and the parents and the child and the parents, for example, phone calls, letters, regular visits etc.

The carers and parents should discuss issues such as:

- > Consent to medical treatment
- > Educational issues
- > Financial arrangements
- > Any other issues which may come up while the child lives with the private foster carers



Private foster carers must notify the local council about the arrangement themselves in case no-one else has done so.

The carers must inform the parents and the local council of any change of address and any changes within the household within 48 hours (for example, another person joining the household, someone moving out, someone receiving a conviction, including people who work at the home).

The private foster carers must allow Haringey Council to carry out their duty (please see 'What the local council must do').

The private foster carers must notify Haringey Council within 48 hours when a child leaves their care and must provide the name and address of the person into whose care the child has been moved.

The parents must make sure that the private foster carers' local council knows about the arrangement and that the arrangement is safe for the child.

The parents CAN transfer certain areas of their responsibility onto the carers for the time the child is looked after by the carers. It is helpful for all parties involved if the agreement is in writing and both parties should have a copy.

The parents must inform the carers and Haringey Council of any change of address, including telephone numbers.

### **Remember**

IT IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT TO NOTIFY THE PRIVATE FOSTER CARERS' LOCAL COUNCIL OF YOUR PRIVATE ARRANGEMENT.



**Are the parents or someone with parental responsibility still able to make decisions regarding the child's needs while the child is privately fostered?**

Yes, the private foster carers are only looking after your child on a day-to-day basis. You still have parental responsibility for your child and should continue to be involved in decisions concerning your child's development. It is important that you keep in regular contact with your child and the carers.

**What do I do, as a parent, if I have any concerns?**

If you have any concerns regarding your child's private fostering arrangement, contact the Private Fostering Team and we will be able to offer support.

**Am I a private foster carer?**

A private foster carer is a person who is not a 'close' relative of the child that they are looking after. A relative is defined by law as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or step-parent to the child. If you are a cousin, a great uncle or great aunt or a close family friend of the child or the parents you are a 'private foster carer'.

**Do I have legal responsibility as a private foster carer?**

You are only responsible for the child on a day-to-day basis, until the parents/persons with parental responsibility change the private fostering arrangement. The private foster carers are also responsible for the aspects of the child's care which the parents have transferred to them on a temporary basis.

To notify a private fostering arrangement  
or for further information about private fostering,  
please contact us.

**FREEPOST RLZX-TLCE-RZZA**

**HARINGEY COUNCIL**

**PRIVATE FOSTERING**

**4TH FLOOR**

**40 CUMBERLAND ROAD**

**LONDON**

**N22 7SG**

**0800 634 0480**

[privatefostering@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:privatefostering@haringey.gov.uk)

[www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk)

For information on Private Fostering in your  
language, please tick the box on the tear-off flap,  
complete and return.

DESIGN: ROOT 2

MODELS PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANDREAS ILLES & ANDY WOOD

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- Albanian** Për informata në gjuhën tuaj mbi Birësimin Privat, ju lutem shënjeni ✓ kutinë, plotësoni dhe kthejeni.
- French** Pour des informations sur les Familles d'Accueil Privées dans votre langue, veuillez cocher la case, compléter et renvoyer.
- Kurdish** Heke ku hun di derbarî Zaroknêrîna Bi Awayek Xusûsî de, bi zimanê xwe agahiyan dixwazin, ji kerema xwe qutiye îşaret bikin û vê formê tijî bikin û vegeînin.
- Somali** Si aad u heshid maluumaad ku saabsan Ilmo Si Gaar ah u Daryeelid oo ku qoran afkaaga hooyo, fadlan calaamadee sanduuqa buuxina foomkan kadibna dib noogu soo dir.
- Turkish** Özel Evlatlık Edinme konusunda kendi dilinizde bilgi almak için lütfen kutuyu işaretleyip, doldurarak geri gönderin.
- Bengali** প্রাইভেট ফর্স্টারিং বা নিরুদ্বভাবে পোষ্য নেওয়ার ব্যাপারে তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চাইলে, অনুগ্রহ করে এই বক্সে দাগ দিন আর ফর্মটা ভর্তি করে ফেরত পাঠান।

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NAME

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ADDRESS

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**Freepost RLXS-XZGT-UGRJ**

Haringey Council

Translation and Interpretation Services

8th Floor, River Park House

225 High Road, London N22 8HQ

We want every child in  
Haringey to be happy, healthy  
and safe with a bright future

The **Children's Service**  
in **Haringey**