

Looking after somebody else's child

Advice and support available in private fostering arrangements



Information for professionals



Kensington and Chelsea

Local Safeguarding
Children Partnership

| Westminster



City of Westminster



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Information provided to families

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster have a strong commitment to support parents and carers to promote children's safety and well-being. In some circumstances, parents choose to make arrangements for someone else to look after their child for a period of time.



If it is a private fostering arrangement, we have a **legal responsibility** to carry out an assessment of the child's needs.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child is under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) and is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative.

This is a private arrangement between a parent and a carer where they agree how to best care for a child. If this arrangement lasts 28 days or longer, the local authority has a duty to offer advice and support. It is a legal offence, under Children Act legislation, not to notify the local authority of any private fostering arrangement.



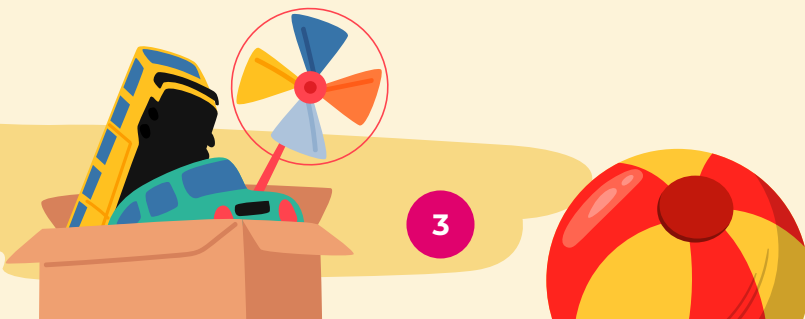
Who is a private foster carer?

Examples of private foster carers can include:

- extended family members, such as a cousin, great aunt
- a friend of the parents or child, or a neighbour.

Who is not considered a private foster carer?

Close relatives (grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts or step-parents) are not considered to be private foster carers. Parents can make arrangements for their child to be cared for by close relatives without notifying the local authority.



Why are private fostering arrangements made?

Private fostering arrangements are made in a wide range of circumstances, including when:

- the parent has gone abroad to visit family
- the parent has moved away from the area to work elsewhere
- the parent is in prison
- the parent is in hospital or is in treatment for a long-term illness, mental health condition, or alcohol and drug problems
- a child or young person has been sent to the UK from overseas for their education
- a young person has left home because of a difficult relationship with their parent/s
- a young person wants to live with their girlfriend or boyfriend's family.



What support do we offer?

- Parenting support and advice.
- Advice on how to meet the needs of the child, including health, education and financial support.
- Help in bringing families in crisis back together.
- Advice and support to make sure the child's racial, cultural, language and religious needs are met.



Important information for professionals

If you work with children in any remit, you should have knowledge of your legal and statutory responsibilities.

Learning from case reviews has highlighted that children in private fostering arrangements can be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. You must be aware of the need to recognise what a private fostering arrangement is and what action you would need to take.

Signs to watch out for include:

- Has the child turned up with a new carer?
- Has the child mentioned that they are not staying at their usual home, or of their parents being away for a long time?
- Does the carer seem vague about the child's routines (such as bedtimes), their health history, development checks and immunisation record?
- Do you know of a child living with a carer who is not a parent or a close relative, or who does not have parental responsibility?

Are you looking after somebody else's child?

What to do if you become aware of a private fostering arrangement

- Speak to your manager within your organisation.
- Make a referral to the relevant local authority (where the child is now):

Kensington and Chelsea

✉ socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk

☎ 020 7361 3013



Westminster

✉ accesstochildreansservices@westminster.gov.uk

☎ 020 7641 4000

- Discuss with the Social Work Team about notifying the carer of your referral.



IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Please visit www.privatefostering.org.uk for wider information.



What does the Council do with the information?

All councils are legally required to ensure that all privately fostered children are being cared for by a suitable carer in an appropriate environment. This is important to make sure the child is safe and that their needs are being met.

When you notify the Council of the private fostering arrangement, they will:

- establish if the child's needs and circumstances meet the private fostering criteria and statutory requirements
- undertake a full assessment of the child's needs
- regularly visit the private foster carer and child in their home to speak to them
- speak to the parents
- provide help and advice where necessary.



English

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different languages. If you require further assistance please use the contact details below.

Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات أخرى. إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مزيد من المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دسترس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به کمک بیشتر لطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

French

Les informations présentées dans ce document peuvent vous être fournies dans d'autres formats et d'autres langues. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide complémentaire, veuillez utiliser les coordonnées ci-dessous.

Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

Somali

Macluumaadka dokumentigan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale iyo luuqado kala duwan. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawinaad intaas dhaafsiisan fadlan isticmaal xiriirka faahfaahinta hoose.

Spanish

La información en este documento puede facilitarse en formatos alternativos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda por favor utilice la siguiente información de contacto.

To receive translation of this document, please contact
Kensington and Chelsea Social Services on **020 7361 3013**.