

Looking after somebody else's child?

Advice and support available in private fostering arrangements



Kensington and Chelsea

|

Westminster

Local Safeguarding
Children Partnership



City of Westminster



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Information provided to families

Kensington and Chelsea Council and Westminster City Council have a commitment to support parents and carers to promote children's safety and wellbeing. In some circumstances, parents choose to make arrangements for someone else to look after their child for a period of time.



In a private fostering arrangement, the local authority has a **legal responsibility** to carry out an assessment of the child's needs.

What is private fostering?

If you are looking after someone else's child aged under 16 (under 18 if disabled) full-time for 28 days or more, and you are not the step-parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister of that child, then you may be a private foster carer.

The law says you must tell your local council if you care for a child under a private fostering arrangement.



It is not private fostering if the arrangement was organised by Children's Services.



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

Examples of when private fostering arrangements are made

- the parent has gone overseas 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 in treatment for a long term illness
- a child has been sent to the UK from overseas for their education
- a teenager wants to live with their girlfriend or boyfriend's family



What do I have to do if I am privately fostering or my child is privately fostered?

Call the relevant local authority preferably at least six weeks before the placement begins.

You could be breaking the law if you do not notify us about a private fostering arrangement.

While the parent retains parental responsibility for the child, the private foster carer becomes responsible for the day-to-day care of the child in a way which will promote their welfare. It is very important that the parent and private foster carer agree on how the child will be cared for.



Why are Children's Services involved?

To help us keep children safe and support families who are looking after privately fostered children:

All parents and private foster carers must notify the local authority of a private fostering arrangement.

If not, they miss out on essential welfare checks for children plus other support and services.

These include:

- advice on how to meet the needs of the child, including health, education and financial support
- support with finding school places and registering with GP/medical practice
- parenting support and advice
- help in bringing families in crises back together, where a child/young person is in an arrangement following relationship breakdown



What will Children's Services do next?

Children's Services will work in partnership with the child, parents and private foster carer to ensure that the best possible arrangements are in place for the child.

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 an assessment of the child's needs
- regularly vist the private foster carer and the child in their home to speak to them
- speak to the parents
- provide help and advice where necessary



What if I already privately foster but did not know that I had to tell Children's Services?

Please contact Children's Services immediately, you will not get into trouble and this will not be viewed negatively. Staff will be pleased to take your details and explain the first stage of the assessment process.



Please remember: if you are involved in a private fostering arrangement and you don't notify us, you are **committing an offence** and could risk a fine.

Contact details

If you are involved or likely to be involved in a private fostering arrangement and have not already told children's services, or if you are in any doubt as to whether the regulations might apply to you, you should **seek advice from the Children's Services team**.

Kensington and Chelsea

✉ socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk

☎ 020 7361 3013



Westminster

✉ accesstochildrensservices@westminster.gov.uk

☎ 020 7641 4000

Keeping children safe is everybody's responsibility

If you are concerned that a child or young person is being harmed through abuse or neglect, or for advice and guidance on all child protection issues please contact a duty worker on the above numbers.



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**.