



Newham London

# Are you living away from your parents?

## A guide to private fostering for children and young people

Failure to notify the local authority of private fostering arrangements either by the parent or private foster carer is against the law and could lead to court actions.

### **What is private fostering?**

If you are under 16, or under 18 if you have a disability, and are living with someone for more than 28 days who is not closely related to you, this is called private fostering.

If you are being privately fostered, Newham Council's Children and Young People's Service must know about it.

### **Why does Newham Council's Children & Young People's Service need to know that you are privately fostered?**

The law says that local councils need to know about any children or teenagers that are being privately fostered in their area, because sometimes these arrangements go wrong and children and young people are unhappy. The law requires local councils to make checks on all children and young people who are privately fostered to make sure that they are okay.



### **What will happen when Newham Council's Children & Young People's Service visits?**

They will arrange for a social worker to come round to where you live. It is the social worker's job to make sure that you are being well cared for in your private foster home. The social worker will speak to you alone and sometimes take you out so that you can talk about your home life and how things are going.

This will give you the chance to speak to the social worker about anything that might be worrying or frightening you. Your social worker can also try and help you and your family to keep in touch.

### **What should happen when you go to live with a private foster carer?**

Firstly, your mum or dad or your private foster carers should contact the local council where you will be living to advise them of your details.

Once your parents, or private foster carers, have let us know that you are being privately fostered a social worker will come round to where you live to see you and find out about your school and your health, and to check that you are experiencing a normal family life.

Whilst you are living with your private foster carers they should care for you just like your own parents would. This includes:

- giving you regular meals – like breakfast, lunch and dinner
- making sure that your hair and skin are properly looked after
- making sure you have warm clean clothes and a bed of your own
- making sure you go to school
- taking you to the doctor or the hospital if you are sick or if you have hurt yourself, or if you need vaccinations
- taking you to the dentist so your teeth are looked after properly
- encouraging you to make friends and to enjoy sports and hobbies that you like
- helping you to stay in touch with your family
- helping you to follow your religion and customs that are important to you and your family.



### **Some things private foster carers must not do**

Your private foster carers must not do any of the following without your parents agreeing to it:

- move you to live with another family
- change your name
- arrange for you to be married
- prevent you from contacting your family
- move you to live permanently abroad.

### **How often will you get to see your social worker?**

Your social worker will visit you within a week of knowing that you are being privately fostered. They will then visit you a minimum of every six weeks during the first year you are living with your private foster carers.

After a year of living with your private foster carers the social worker may not visit as often. But you can still ask to see your social worker if you have anything you want to talk to them about.

### **Who is responsible for you?**

However long you stay with your private foster carer your parents are still responsible for you.

Your parents have to tell the local council that they are arranging for someone else to look after you, and they must check regularly that you are being well looked after.

### **Who do you speak to if you are unhappy with your private foster carers?**

If something is worrying or upsetting you, you can always ask to see your social worker. If you don't want to speak to them, you could always talk to your teacher or the school nurse or counsellor.

There are some telephone numbers of organisations that might be helpful to you at the back of this leaflet.



### **When do you go back to live with your parents?**

This will be sorted out between your parents and your private foster carers.

### **Who else needs to know that you are being privately fostered?**

Not everyone needs to know. Your school and class teacher need to know and your doctor and health visitor, and sometimes other professionals. You might want to tell your close friends, but that is up to you.

### **Contact details**

For further information, or to discuss a private fostering situation with a social worker, please contact your Customer Service Centre or telephone 020 8430 2000.

### **Complaints**

We take complaints very seriously. If you are unhappy with our service or the way you have been treated please let us know.

Please complete the form in the Complaints and Compliments leaflet, which can be found at your Customer Service Centre, libraries, leisure centres and other council buildings.

Alternatively you can make a complaint by:

#### **Writing to us**

Please **download the** Children and Young People Services complaint form from the Newham Council website and send it to:

Customer Relations Team  
Newham Dockside  
First Floor East, 1000 Dockside Road  
London E16 2QU

Or **email us:** [customerrelations.team@newham.gov.uk](mailto:customerrelations.team@newham.gov.uk)

**Telephone us:** 020 8430 2000 (**Textphone:** 020 8430 2412)

Newham Council is regulated and inspected by Ofsted and their contact details are as follows:

#### **Ofsted**

Freshford House  
Redcliffe Way  
Bristol  
BS1 6NL

Telephone: 08456 40 40 40



### Useful telephone numbers and addresses

These organisations can help you if you need to talk to someone.

Children's Legal Centre 0845 120 3747. Or you can find information on their website:  
[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

#### ChildLine

This is a special 24 hour helpline for children who are in trouble or at risk of being hurt or abused. Telephone 0800 1111. Or you can find information on their website:  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

#### National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

(they are often called the NSPCC)

If you are experiencing a bad time at home, are being bullied at school, or if you are worried or scared about something, you can ring the NSPCC free on 0800 800 5000. You can find out more about them by visiting [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### The Children's Rights Director for England

The Children's Rights Director for England is called Roger Morgan. With his team Roger spends lots of time listening to what children and young people who live away from home have to say about how they are looked after.

So if you want to talk to somebody who is independent of Newham's Children and Young People's Service, this is who you can contact:

#### Office of the Children's Rights Director

Ofsted  
Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

Free Phone: 0800 528 0731

Website: [www.rights4me.org](http://www.rights4me.org)

Your social worker is:

They can be reached on:

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Monday - Friday  
9:00am - 5:00pm



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