



Guide to Private Fostering for Young People

What is Private Fostering?

Maybe you're living with a family friend because of arguments at home, or your parents have arranged for you to stay with someone else whilst you go to school or they are ill and unable to care for you. Perhaps your parents live overseas and you are staying with someone they trust whilst you live in the UK or you might be living with your boyfriend or girlfriend's family.

All of these examples could mean that you are being privately fostered. If you're living with someone who is not one of your parents or a close relative* for 28 days or more and you're aged 16 years old or below, or 18 years old and below if you have a disability, then you are being privately fostered.

It's nothing to worry about, but by law, Slough Children's Services Trust needs to know about your private fostering arrangement and who you are living with. **This is just to ensure you are safe, happy and well.**

*Someone who is a close relative would be known to you as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt (they can be a full blood aunt or uncle as a parent's sibling or half blood by marriage). They can also be your step parent by either marriage or civil partnership. Your close relatives do not include any great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins

What is going to happen to me if you think I am privately fostered?

We will visit you and talk to you about where you are living, check that your carer is able to look after you and where you live is suitable.

We will make sure you have a named person in the Trust who you can rely on and who will visit you regularly to make sure you're still safe, happy and well. You will have their phone number and they will be able to give you advice and support if you need it. They will also talk to you about why you aren't living with your parents or a close relative and ask you how you feel about your situation.





What can I expect with my private foster carer?

Your carer should do their best to make sure you are safe, happy and well. This means providing you with all the everyday care you need such as:

- ❖ Regular meals, a nice place to sleep and a loving home where you feel safe.
- ❖ Making sure your health needs are taken care of by taking you to the doctor when you feel unwell or making sure you go to the dentist to look after your teeth.
- ❖ Helping you to make friends by letting you take part in activities that you enjoy and allowing you to follow your interests and be you.
- ❖ Making sure you go to school or college and helping you with your homework so that you can learn and thrive.
- ❖ Helping you to keep in touch with your wider family.
- ❖ Respecting your religious beliefs and customs and helping you to follow them.

Even if you are living with someone else, it is still your parent's responsibility to make all the important decisions about you and what happens to you. That means your carer should not do any of the things below without the agreement of your parents:

- ❖ Change your school.
- ❖ Move you to another family (they also need to tell us if that happens).
- ❖ Take you overseas, even if it is just for a holiday.

Who do I tell or talk to for advice?

Your parent(s) or carer(s) should have told us about your private fostering arrangements before you started living with someone who is not one of your parents or a close relative. If they haven't you should talk to a person you trust like a youth worker or teacher and if you want they can talk to us and tell us about your living arrangements. Your parent(s) or carer(s) won't be in trouble as letting us know that you are being privately fostered is not 'telling' on someone. It is the safest thing for you but we need to know as soon as possible to make sure you are ok.

Amita Sharma is the Trust's contact for private fostering so if you have any questions then please get in touch with her using the details below.

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