

If you think you are privately fostered you should tell your carer or your teacher, school nurse, youth worker, young people's adviser or a responsible adult.

The law says that the part of the council called the Children and Young People Service have to be told about every child or young person who is being privately fostered. Your mum, dad or private foster carer should have told them that you are being privately fostered.



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Private Fostering a cause for concern



Information for children and young people

What is private fostering?

It's very different from the care children and young people receive from the council's foster carers.

If you are under 16 (or 18 if you have a disability) you are regarded as being privately fostered if you are cared for on a full-time basis by an adult, who is not your parent or a close relative, for a period of 28 days or more.

A close relative means a grandparent, brother, sister or step-parent. Or it can be an uncle - who is the brother of your mum or dad, or an aunt - who is the sister of your mum or dad. This includes an aunt or uncle who is related to you by marriage.

Some examples of private fostering

- If you, have been living with your friends' parents for about six weeks because you don't get on with your mum or dad.
- If your mum or dad live overseas and they have asked someone else, not a relative, to look after you in the UK so that you can get a good education.
- Your dad has got a new job and works away, you still see your dad at weekends but you live with his girlfriend during the week.

Some examples of what isn't private fostering

- If you are staying with a grandparent, aunt, uncle or step-parent for a couple of months because your mum or dad isn't well.
- If you go away on holiday with your best friends' family for three weeks.
- If you are 17 and have decided to live with your girlfriend in student accommodation.

What should your private foster carer do?

- Advise the council of their intention to foster you at least six weeks before they start caring for you.
- Where foster care has been made in an emergency, 48 hours notice should be given.
- Notify the council when a young person leaves their care, telling them why. They should give the name and address of your new carer.

You should be safe and well cared for. Your foster carers should:

- give you regular meals
- make sure you have your own bed and clean clothes
- make sure you go to school
- take you to a doctor or hospital if you are ill or have an accident
- make sure you go to the dentist regularly
- help you to achieve at school and enjoy sports and hobbies
- help you to keep in touch with your family
- help you to follow any religions or customs that are important to you.

What should your parents do?

- Remain responsible for you by being involved in all the decisions made about your foster care.
- Provide your foster carer with as much information about you as possible, including health records, the food you prefer, school records, hobbies, religion and ethnicity.
- Advise the council of the private fostering arrangement.

Your family are responsible for you by law, they should:

- stay in contact with you
- provide financial support to your private foster carer
- be involved with important decisions affecting you, such as:
 - changing school
 - going on holiday
 - moving to another family
 - having serious medical treatment.

What the council must do

The part of the council called the Safeguarding & Specialist Provision Service has clear responsibilities for private fostering. The council and other agencies must make sure that you are being kept safe. They also have to make sure the private foster carer is suitable and make sure that they get support and guidance to help them care for you.

To do this they must carry out what is called a social work assessment.