



Our responsibility

The law requires us to:

- Check that private foster carers are suitable to care for children
- Check that children are being well cared for
- Impose any requirements thought necessary
- Offer relevant advice to carer, child and their parent

We do this by

- Visiting the private foster carer and discussing the childcare arrangements made for the child/children placed with them
- Checking the suitability of the carer's accommodation
- Taking up references such as checking police records on the carer and other members of their household
- Meeting with the child to ascertain their wishes and feelings

Hounslow Family Placement Service
Civic Centre,
Pavilion BF
Lampton Road,
Hounslow,
Middlesex TW3 4DN
020 8583 3426

fostering@hounslow.gov.uk

www.hounslow.gov.uk

Translations & Accessible Formats:

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020 8583 2298



PRIVATE FOSTERING

A guide to the law for
private foster carers



London Borough
of Hounslow

Private fostering information for carers

If you are, or are considering, looking after someone else's child it is important that you are aware of the legal responsibilities involved in making these arrangements.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is a private agreement between a parent and another adult to care for a child or young person for 28 days or more in their home.

It only applies to children under 16, or 18 if the young person is disabled. It applies if a child is being cared for by someone who is not their:

Parent, grandparent, brother/sister, aunt/uncle, legal guardian, or any other person with parental responsibility whether related by full blood, half blood, marriage or civil partnership.



Common examples of private fostering arrangements

- Children and young people who are sent to this country for education or health care by their birth parents from overseas
- Children or young people whose parents work or study long and/or antisocial hours
- Children or young people who are living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or difficulties at home
- A teenager living with the family of a boyfriend or girlfriend

What must I do if I intend to foster a child privately?

The law requires that you tell your Local Authority at **least six weeks** before the arrangement begins that you intend to privately foster a child, unless the arrangement is made in an emergency, in which case the notification must be made **within 48 hours**.

If you live in Hounslow, you should notify Children's Services on 020 8583 3426

Make sure the child's parents provide you with all relevant information about the child, e.g. health, education, religion, culture, hobbies etc. This will enable you to provide the best possible care for their child.

Will I get help while I am privately fostering

Hounslow's Children's Services will be able to provide you with advice at any time before and during the arrangement, for example, if there are concerns for the child's health or schooling.

There may, in some cases, be help available though the Local Authority for children assessed to be "in need". This may include a range of support services and, in exceptional cases financial support.

What happens if the child leaves my care?

You must notify Hounslow's Children's Services within 48 hours that the child has left your care, or if your circumstances change, e.g. someone else comes to live with you.