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.

This includes:

- offering advice and support to the child / young person, their parents and private foster carer to make sure that the child's racial, cultural, language and religious needs are met
- visiting the child and private foster carer throughout the arrangement.

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.

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.

Contact details

Hammersmith & Fulham Council
Tel: 020 8753 6600
Fax: 020 8753 4209
Email: Familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk
In person: 145 King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9XY

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.

If you would like this leaflet produced in large print, Braille or any other language, please call 020 8753 6600

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hammersmith & fulham

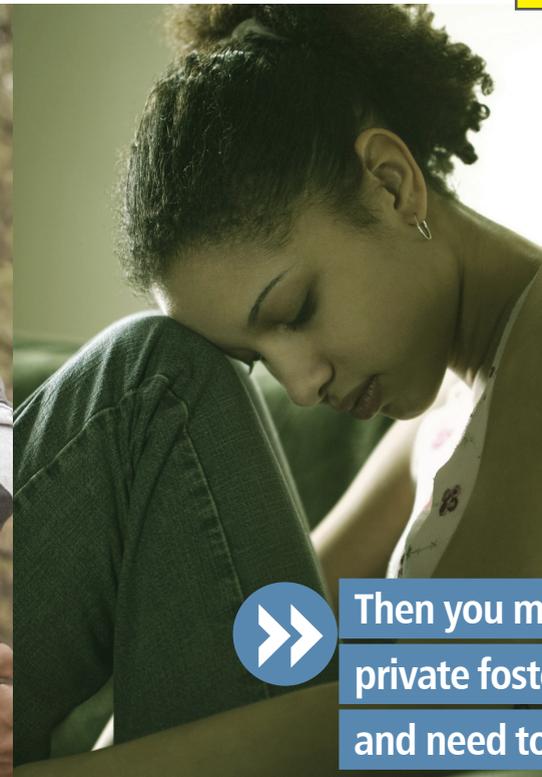# Are you looking after someone else's child?
Private fostering information

>> **Are you looking after someone else's child?**

>> **Is your child living with another family?**

>> **Then you might be involved in a private fostering arrangement and need to let us know.**

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 made by social services.

Examples of private fostering situations include:

- children and teenagers living apart from their families for a variety of reasons e.g. if a parent is ill, has had to temporarily move for work or there has been an argument within the family
- children with parents working or studying elsewhere in the UK
- children with parents overseas
- children on holiday exchanges.

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.

Whilst 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 his/her 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 Council 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 claiming benefits and possible funding for essential items
- support with finding school places and registering with GP/medical practice
- parenting support and advice
- helping in bringing families in crises back together, where a child/ Young Person is in an arrangement following relationship breakdown.