



Private fostering

**A guide for children
and young people**



www.sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk



What is private fostering?

If you are under 16 years old (or 18 if you have a disability) and living arrangements are made for you to live with someone who is not a close relative (like a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or step-parents through marriage or civil partnership) for more than 28 days, you are in private foster care.

Why might a child or young person need to be privately fostered?

There are many reasons why a child or young person might need to be privately fostered.

- Your parent(s) might be ill and are unable to look after you for a while;
- Your parent(s) have to go away for a while so they can't look after you;
- Your parent(s) have come to this country to study or work and cannot find somewhere for you to all live together as a family;
- You have come here from another country to study or for medical treatment and your parent(s) have arranged for you to live with family members;
- You are having problems at home and are not getting on with your family;
- You are being bullied so move to stay with a family friend in a different area for a while.



What happens if you are privately fostered?

Your parent(s) and your private foster carer(s) must tell Social Services about the private fostering arrangement as this is the law. The Social Services in Slough is Slough Children First.

The law also says that, once we have been told about you, we (Slough Children First), must see you regularly to make sure that you are safe and that your private foster carer(s) are looking after you properly.

Is private fostering like foster care?

No not at all.

When you are privately fostered, your parent(s) would have chosen where you will live for a while but the council must check that you are kept safe and properly cared for.

If someone has gone into foster care, they will become looked after by the local authority who will find a family for them.

Your family's responsibilities

Your parent(s) or close relatives who usually look after you will still be responsible for you.

They will be able to have regular contact with you, and make sure that you are being looked after well. They will also have to give your private foster carer(s) permission for certain things to happen. This includes:

- Changing your name
- Changing your school (if necessary)
- Going on holiday (includes domestic and international)
- Having serious medical treatment
- Moving you to another family



Your private foster carer's responsibilities

Your private foster carer will be responsible for your day-to-day care.

This means they should do the same things that your parent(s) would do.



Your private foster carer's responsibilities

School

The law says every child under 16 is required to have an education so if you are of the compulsory school age, your private foster carer must make sure you are getting one.

If you usually go to school and are feeling unwell, it is your private foster carer's responsibility to get in contact with your school. It is understandable that you may not feel like going sometimes especially if you are missing your family and friends (if you have moved area) but it is important to go. If you're struggling, please speak to a teacher or guidance counsellor at the school.

Health

Before you start living with your private foster carer(s), your parent(s) should tell them about any health problems or allergies you have, and any medicine or vaccinations you need. If they forget these, do tell your private foster carer(s) yourself.

Your private foster carer(s) should make sure that you are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician, you have any medication you may need and that you're eating healthily.

Bullying

Bullying in any form is not acceptable.

This includes being physically bullied, verbally bullied and cyber bullied. If this happens to you then you must tell someone such as a teacher at school, your private foster carer or your social worker.

There are also organisations such as Childline that you can get in contact with, who will be able to help too.

Racism

Racism should not be tolerated and if you're experiencing it, please tell somebody as suggested with bullying above.

You should also tell your social worker or trusted adult if you are being made to eat something which is against your religion or beliefs or you are not allowed to pray or go to your place of worship.



What will Slough Children First do?

Slough Children First will give you a social worker who will visit you as soon as you move into your private foster carer's home and then every six weeks.

A social worker is responsible for helping children, young people and families, making sure they are safe and being looked after. If you are worried about anything or are being treated wrong, please do tell your social worker as they will be able to help you. Your social worker will also help you to stay in touch with your family.

Your social worker will speak to you on your own and will also talk to your private foster carer separately too.

About you

Education

Name of school.....

Parent(s)/close relatives details

Their name.....

Contact number.....

Social worker details

Their name.....

Contact number.....

What if you're not happy?

Sometimes it is hard to talk about things that worry you.

If you have something on your mind and would find it easier to talk to someone other than your social worker, please do reach out to someone you feel you can trust, whether it's a teacher, school nurse, guidance counsellor or health visitor.

You can also talk to any of the organisations listed below who can give support and advice:

Children's Legal Centre

Contact number: 0845 120 3747

Website: www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Childline

Contact number: 0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Children's Commissioner for England

Contact number: 020 7783 8330

Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

National Youth Advocacy Service

Contact number: 0808 808 1001

Website: www.nyas.net

Action for Children

Contact number: 0300 123 2112

Website: www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Would you like to know more?

If you would like help with understanding this document/ would like to request it in another format, please contact Slough Children First's MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 01753 875362.

The team can also help you answer any questions you have about being privately fostered.

You can also email them at Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

