

How do you feel?

Sometimes you might feel sad or unhappy about being privately fostered. If this is the case and you want to talk to someone, you can phone any of the people on the list included in this leaflet.

What if you are unhappy living with your private foster carer?

You should talk to your social worker if there is anything you are unhappy about or contact any of the agencies below:

Children's Legal Centre 0845 120 3747

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

ChildLine This is a special 24-hour helpline for children who are in trouble or at risk of being hurt or abused. Call free on **0800 1111** or you can find out more about them on your computer on www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC If you are experiencing a bad time at home, or being bullied at school, or if you are worried or scared about something, you can ring the NSPCC free on **0800 800 5000**. You can find out more about them on your computer on www.nspcc.org.uk

Advocacy (The children's society)

An advocate is a person who can help you say if you don't like something or if you don't agree with a decision that affects your life. Advocates are independent which means they don't work for the council or children's services. Call free on **0800 652 3839**.



Meetings

Whilst you are living with your private foster carer there will be regular meetings with you and your temporary family. These will usually involve social workers. These meetings talk about your wellbeing and are an important part of helping us decide with you about what is best for you. You will also be given the opportunity to talk to the social worker alone so that you can talk about anything you feel concerned.

Questions?

If there is anything that you want to know it is okay to ask questions of your social worker and private foster carer. They will be able to answer most of your questions straight away or can find out the answers for you.

What happens next?

The social worker will visit every six weeks and talk to both you and your carer to make sure that you are ok. If you are not happy, you can talk to the social worker about what is making you feel unhappy and they will try and sort things out for you.

If you have any questions or need to ask anything about being a privately fostered child, please contact the Sandwell Family Placements team on 0121 569 3101.

Sandwell Children's Trust
The Wellman Building, Dudley Road
Oldbury, West Midlands
B69 3DL

Explaining Private Fostering

A Guide for Young People



What is private fostering?

Private Fostering is when you are under the age of 16 (or 18 if you have a disability) and you live with an adult (Private Foster Carer) who is not your mum, dad or a close relative like your grandparents, aunts or uncles. Your mum or dad will have agreed that this person can look after you if they are unable to take care of you themselves.



What happens to me?

If you are living with a private foster carer, your mum or dad and the private foster carer must tell the Sandwell Children's Trust that you are living with someone else and not with your parents. Sometimes teachers, doctors or school nurses may tell the Trust.

What Sandwell Children's Trust must do.

The Law says that Sandwell Children's Trust must make sure that you are well looked after where you are living. A social worker will visit you and talk to you about how you are feeling, and make sure that you are safe and well. A social worker's job is to make sure that children and young people are properly cared for.

The social worker will come to see where you live and will talk to both you and the private foster carer. He or she will also talk to your mum or dad to make sure that they know you are being well cared for. Even though you are living with a private foster carer, you can still see your mum or dad and arrangements can be made for you to have contact, if that's possible.

Things your private foster carer **MUST** do.

While you are living with them they should look after you as if you were their own child. They must do all the everyday things for you that parents do for their own children.

- Give you regular meals – like breakfast, lunch and supper.
- Make sure that your hair and skin are properly looked after
- Make sure you have warm clean clothes and a bed of your own.
- Make sure you go to school so you can learn
- Take you to the doctor or the hospital if you are sick or injured, or if you need vaccinations.
- Take you to the dentist so your teeth are looked after properly.
- Make sure you have a chance to make friends and to enjoy sports and hobbies that you like.
- Help you stay in touch with your family.
- Your private foster carers must also respect the things that are important to you and your family.
- If you have religious customs like special prayer times or special foods that you eat, your private foster carers should respect these things and help you to follow these customs.
- They must help you learn about your culture and meet people from your community who speak your language.



Things your private foster carer **MUST NOT** do.

You are still the child of your own parents. Your private foster carers must not:

- Change your name
- Change your school
- Move you to another family
- Take you to another part of this country.
- Take you overseas to another country without telling your parents and asking their permission.

When someone gives permission, it means they have said "yes" to the thing they are being asked. If you need serious medical treatment, your own parents have to agree to this – unless it is an emergency and your parents cannot be contacted quickly enough. Then a doctor will decide what to do.