

Information
and advice for
Young People

Who looks after you?

Essential facts about Private Fostering



Who do you live with?

- Are you living with someone who is not a close relative, meaning a grandparent, brother sister, aunt, uncle, legal guardian or other person with parental responsibility?
- Are you under 16 years old (or 18 if you are disabled)?
- Are you going to be living there for more than 27 days?
- If you have said yes to these questions then you are living in a Private Fostering arrangement.

What is Private Fostering?

There are many reasons why your mum, dad or guardian might need to ask someone they trust, to look after you. Maybe your parents need to go into hospital for a long time, or are going to be living abroad.

The person who they ask might not be a close relative. It may be a friend of theirs or a distant relative, such as your mum's aunty or your dad's cousin or someone similar.

Your mum, dad or guardian will not usually do this without a great deal of thought.

It is important that your mum, dad or guardian have discussed why they want someone to look after you and what arrangements should be made for you in case you get ill or have trouble at school.

You don't need to worry about being in Private Foster Care...you can enjoy it!

We are here to help you and make sure everything goes okay!



What do you need to do?

Your mum, dad or the people you are living with (your carers) should have told Children Service's that you are going to be looked after by someone else, no matter what the reason is.

There is a rule that says we must be told if you are in private foster care, and the rule shouldn't be broken.

If it gets broken, your parents and carers could get into trouble.

Why don't you ask your mum, dad or carers if they have told us or not? And if they haven't tell them to phone **0300 123 5012** as soon as they can and explain what's happening.

What will we do then?

It's our job to make sure you are being cared for properly and that you get any help you may need for your health, education and happiness.

We wouldn't want you to be sad and unhappy, or have any problems and not have anyone to help you sort it out.

To do this some of our staff will visit you and the people you are living with (your carers) and we will contact your parents to make sure they are happy too.

What will we ask you?

Our staff (Social Worker) will have a chat with you and ask a few questions. Nothing too hard, just things like:

- Are you happy where you are living?
- Is it the best arrangement for you?
- Is the house safe and suitable?
- Are your parents staying in touch with you?
- Are you from a different ethnic or cultural background? Does this have an impact?
- Do you have any religious beliefs which you want to be helped to carry on with?

We just want to make sure you are as happy as you can be and that you know you can tell us if you aren't happy.

The Social Worker will also talk to your carers to make sure they are suitable people for you to be living with, and will look after you properly.

Then what happens?

When our staff have talked to you and your carers, your mum, dad and maybe your school teacher or doctor, we will write up everything we have talked about in a special report.

This report will be all about you and your needs, your family situation and about your carers.

Then this report is given to one of our managers, who will decide whether the place in which you are living is safe and best for you.

Your Social Worker will tell you what they have decided.

What happens if the manager says everything is okay?

If the manager is happy with the report then you can carry on living with your carers as planned, but we will want to keep an eye on things to make sure you are okay. You will be visited by your Social Worker at least once every six weeks. You can ask for them to visit more often if you need help or advice.

The Social Worker's job is to make sure you are safe, healthy, happy, doing well in school or college and that your needs are met. If you have any worries about these things, you should discuss these with your Social Worker. The Social Worker is also there to make sure you have good contact with your parent/s. They will also visit your carers to make sure they have any help they may need to look after you.

Once every six months, the Social Worker will have a meeting called a 'review'. This will be a meeting with you, your carers, your parents, the Social Worker and perhaps someone from school or your doctor and will be chaired by an independent person who will make sure everyone has a chance to say how things are for them.

The meeting is to make sure all the arrangements are working properly to help you. It's nothing to worry about and your Social Worker will discuss the review with you before the meeting.

What if our managers think you are not in the best care?

If where you are living is not felt to be safe and a good place for you to live, the Social Worker will talk to you about what you want and what else would be best.

This could be:

- You go back to live with your mum/dad with help from us
- You go to live with another relative (like your Grandmother) or
- You go and live with foster carers that we could match you to



What should you do if you are not happy with something?

If you are not happy with school or have worries about your health, you should talk to either your mum, dad or carers. You can also talk to your Social Worker about these things.

If you are not happy with your carers or are worried about something that you don't want to talk to them about, you should tell your mum, dad or your Social Worker.

If you aren't happy with your Social Worker, you can talk to someone who is completely independent who works for an organisation called The Children's Society. They provide a range of independent, confidential information and legal advice for young people.

You can phone them yourself, their number is **0800 564 530** or **01606 333 689** or you can email: **participation.cheshireeast@childrenssociety.org.uk**



What should you do if things change?

Your carers must tell us if something changes:

- If you move house and change your address
- If someone moves into your house, or moves out
- If anyone living in your house gets into trouble with the police or commits an offence
- If your carers financial circumstances change, maybe if they lose their job or get a new job

What happens when you go back to live with your parents?

When the time comes for things to change back, your mum, dad and carers will agree when this will happen and they will let you and Children's Services know.

This could be quite upsetting for you when you have got used to living with your carers, but your Social Worker will help you and make sure everything works out okay.



Children's Services can
provide you with more
information on all of the issues
covered within this leaflet.

Call 0300 123 5012 or visit
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

