

# Who is looking after you?

A guide to private fostering for children

***IT TELLS YOU ABOUT  
YOUR RIGHTS AND  
THE RESPONSIBILITIES  
OF THOSE WHO ARE  
LOOKING AFTER YOU!***



**Are you being looked after  
by someone who is not your  
mum or dad?**

**Have your parents made  
arrangements for someone  
else to look after you?**

**This leaflet provides advice  
for children and young  
people who aren't living  
with their parents.**

**WHAT WILL  
PRIVATE  
FOSTER  
CARERS DO  
FOR ME?**



## *What is private fostering?*

Sometimes you might go and stay with someone who is not a close relative ...

If you are 16 years old or younger (or 18 years old or younger if you have a disability) and are living with someone who is not a close relative for more than 28 days, this is known as private fostering, and the person looking after you is called a private foster carer.

If you are being privately fostered, then the Lewisham Council needs to be told about this so they can make sure that you are being looked after properly.

## *Why are children looked after by people other than their parents?*

There are lots of different reasons why children and young people are looked after by a private foster carer, for example:

- Your mum or dad is ill, or they have to go away for a long time and they cannot look after you.
- Your parents might have recently moved to England to study or work, and they might not be able to find somewhere for all the family to live together. In this case they might ask somebody to look after you for a while.
- You might have left your home country to go to school and your parents are living abroad.
- Your mum or dad may have a new partner who you do not get along with, so you may stay with a neighbour, family friend or relative who can look after you for a while until you can return home.

Being privately fostered means your parent or guardian has chosen the person who will look after you, rather than social workers. Even so, it is still important that the Lewisham Council Children and Young People's Service knows where you are living and who is looking after you, so they can make sure that you are safe and being looked after properly.

## *Who is responsible for me?*

Even though you have a private foster carer at the moment, your mum and dad or whoever has parental responsibility for you is still responsible for your health and safety, and must still make sure that you are being well cared for.

Your parents must tell Lewisham Council if they have asked someone else to look after you for 28 days or more.

Your parents should also try to stay in touch with you, and to visit, telephone or write to you as often as they can to check that you are happy and healthy.





## *What will my private foster carers do for me?*

While you are living with your private foster carer, they should be looking after you and make sure that:

- you have regular meals, including breakfast, lunch and dinner
- you are clean, and your skin and hair are properly looked after
- you have clean clothes to wear
- you attend school
- you are taken to the doctor or hospital if you are ill, and that you have regular visits to the dentist
- you are able to stay in touch with your family
- you have the chance to make new friends and enjoy your hobbies
- you are able to follow your religious customs, including prayer times.

Your private foster carers should also respect the things that are important to you, such as your religious customs, cultural practices and help you keep in touch with people in your community.



## *Are there things my private foster carers must not do?*

Your private foster carer must have permission from your parents to look after you, but if your parents are not around, they need to contact Social Services at Lewisham Council before taking you to their home.

Your private foster carer is not allowed to:

- change your name
- change your school
- move you to another family
- take you to another part of the country
- take you overseas to a different country.

If you need to go to hospital, your private foster carer must ask your parent or guardian first, unless it is an emergency and they cannot be contacted.

## *Why do Lewisham Council's Children and Young People's Service need to know that I am not living with my parents?*

Social Services must make sure that every young person in Lewisham is being cared for properly. Social Services need to know if you are being looked after by someone other than your parents, or someone with parental responsibility, so they can check to make sure that you are safe, well and happy.





## *When must my parents and private foster carer tell Lewisham Council that I'm being privately fostered?*

If your parents know that you will be staying with a private foster carer for 28 days or more, then they must tell Lewisham Council Social Services before you move out of your family home and move in with your private foster carer.

In some cases your parents might not know how long you will be staying with your private foster carer. For example if they are ill, they might not know how long it will take for them to be able to look after you again, and you may have to stay with your private foster carer for longer than expected. You may already be staying with a private foster carer, and in this case, your parents must tell Lewisham Council Social Services as soon as they can that you will be staying with them for longer.







## *What will Lewisham Council do for me?*

Lewisham Council will arrange for a social worker to come and visit you to check that you are safe and being well cared for at your private foster carer's home.

You can talk to the social worker about how you are feeling, whether you are happy or sad. You can talk to them in private, especially if you are feeling worried or frightened.

After the first visit, the social worker will come and see you again in six weeks. The social worker will visit you every six weeks during your first year of staying with a private foster carer. After the first year, the social worker will visit you every 12 weeks, but you can see or call them at anytime if there is something you want to tell them.

You should make sure that you know the social worker's telephone number and email address so that you can contact them at any time.

*WHAT IF I HAVE  
A PROBLEM, BUT  
I DON'T WANT  
TO TELL MY  
SOCIAL WORKER?*

Sometimes it's hard to talk about things that are worrying you, and you may find it easier to talk to your school teacher or friends about it. Some children find it easier to talk to their teacher or school nurse if they have a problem.

If there is something that is worrying you, you can also call: **Childline on 0800 1111** or the **NSPCC on 0800 800 5000**.

If you want to find out more information or you have any questions, you can contact the **Referral and Assessment Team on 020 8314 3852**.

Lewisham is regulated and inspected by the Commission of Social Care Inspection. If you want to contact them, their details are:

**CSCI, River House,  
1 Maidstone Road, Sidcup,  
Kent  
DA145RH.**

**Tel: 020 8308 3520 or email:  
inquiries.sidcup@csci.gsi.gov.uk**



For translation, please provide your details below:

Për përkthim, ju lutemi shkruajini më poshtë detajet tuaja:

Pour la traduction, veuillez fournir les détails ci-dessous:

若需翻译, 请您提供下列详情:

Wixii ku saabsan turjumaad, fadlan hoos ku qor faahfaahintaada:

மொழிபெயர்ப்பிற்காக தயவுசெய்து உங்களைப் பற்றிய விபரங்களைக் கீழே அளியுங்கள்:

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Magaca:

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முகவரி:

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- ☐ Français/French
- ☐ 普通话/Mandarin
- ☐ Soomaali/Somali
- ☐ தமிழ்/Tamil
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- ☐ Other language (please state)

Return to:

Kthejeni tek:

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Şu adrese geri gönderiniz:

Gởi trả về:

Private Fostering

Referral and Assessment Service

1st Floor

Laurence House

1 Catford Road

London

SE6 4RU

For other formats, including BSL, Braille, large print, audio tape or computer disc contact: 020 8314 3852

Publication number 078-1-a

Published November 2009

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