



# Are you caring for someone else's child?

This could be  
Private Fostering

Wandsworth  
Safeguarding  
Children  
Partnership



# What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering is an arrangement between a parent, legal guardian and another adult (not an immediate relative) to care for their child for a period of 28 days or more. The child is under 16 years old or under the age of 18 years and has a disability.

## Examples of private fostering include:

- Children and young people living apart from their families.
- Children living with family friends whilst a parent is in hospital.
- Children with parents overseas.
- Children living with host families due to family breakdown.
- Children on study exchange arrangements.

## Children are privately fostered if:

They are living with extended family such as a great aunt or uncle, cousin, former cohabitee of a parent or a non-relative.

It is not private fostering if the arrangement was made by social services, or if the person looking after the child is an approved foster carer for the child.

## Children are NOT privately fostered if:

They are living with an immediate relative as defined by The Children Act: parent, grandparent, step parent, sibling, uncle, aunt, by full or half relation or by marriage.

Private foster carers are entitled to advice and support. If you have not yet notified the local authority, please do.

Phone: (020) 8871 6622

Visit: [www.wscb.org.uk](http://www.wscb.org.uk)

# To parents

- Is your child living with someone else?

If so, this could be a private fostering arrangement and the law says you must tell us about it. We want to ensure privately fostered children are well looked after and receiving the correct level of care and services. Private foster carers are also entitled to support and advice around services and where applicable, financial entitlements.

Should you decide to arrange for another adult, who is not your immediate relative, to care for your child, please contact Wandsworth Children's Services within six weeks before the start of the arrangement or as soon as possible if the child is already living with the private foster carer.

Children's Services have a legal duty to ensure that the person caring for your child has appropriate skills, ability to parent and that the home environment is safe.

If your child is privately fostered, you remain the person who has overall responsibility for your child. It is expected that you will delegate some tasks to the private foster carer such as;

- register your child with a GP and dentist
- ensure your child attends school regularly.
- Maintain religious practice or other faith-based routines.

There should be a financial arrangement between you and the private foster carer. If you are in receipt of child benefit this money should be transferred to the private foster carer, ideally you should inform the Department for Work and Pensions that you are currently not caring for your child. Children's Services will not provide financial support for the daily care of the child.





## To private foster carers

- **Are you caring for someone else' child?**

If you are planning to care for a child under a private fostering arrangement you must notify children's services within six weeks prior to the arrangement starting. If you are already caring for a child you need to inform the local authority as soon as possible.

Children's Services would need to assess the arrangement and the child's needs. This will include gathering information about you, your family and the child that you propose to look after, such as; when the arrangement is due to start and how long it will last.

It is important that any financial support required to care for the privately fostered child is discussed and agreed between you and the child's parent/guardian. Children's Services can also advise on other benefits of which you might be entitled.



# To professionals

- Is an adult you know caring for someone else's child?

This includes a wide range of people who come into contact with children, young people, and families including teachers, religious leaders, doctors and health visitors. Professionals play a significant role in the safeguarding and promotion of children's welfare and are likely to be the first people to become aware of a private fostering arrangement. Please notify Children's Services once you become aware of a private fostering arrangement or believe that a child is living under this arrangement. You should, however, in the first instance, encourage the child's parent or carer to notify social services or if you believe they have not made the notification you must notify Children's Services as soon as possible.

You will not be breaching confidentiality by notifying Children's Services, but you will be helping to safeguard a child. As a professional you have a responsibility to safeguard a child who is being privately fostered where the local authority has not been informed.





## The role of the local authority

Wandsworth 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:

- Regular visits to the child and private foster carer
- Helping to make sure that the child's racial, cultural, Linguistic and religious needs are being met
- Offering advice and support to the child, and wherever possible meeting with the parents to discuss the private fostering arrangements.
- Provide advice on financial benefits and ensure private foster carers are receiving the correct financial entitlements

# Contacting Children's Services

To make a referral or to discuss private fostering please contact Children's Services between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Phone: (020) 8871 6622

Visit: [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/make\\_a\\_referral\\_to\\_the\\_multi\\_agency\\_safeguarding\\_hub](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/make_a_referral_to_the_multi_agency_safeguarding_hub)

Email: [mash@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:mash@wandsworth.gov.uk)

MASH, Children's Services, 2nd Floor, Town Hall Extension, Wandsworth High Street, London, SW18 2PU

Notifying all private fostering arrangements is a legal obligation.

The penalty for non-reporting is a maximum £5,000 fine.

## CHECKLIST for Private Fostering

- Please tick those that apply*
- Is the child living away from their parents and being cared for by someone other than a parent, a person with parental responsibility or a close relative i.e. grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or step parent, and is not a looked after child?
- Is the plan for the child to live with the private foster carer for a period of more than 28 days or has the child already been living with them for longer than 28 days?
- Is the child under the age of 16 or under the age of 18 and has a disability?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, contact MASH.



# Request for document translation

If you need any part of this document explained in your language, please tick box and contact us either by writing or by phone using our contact details below.

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Arabic

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى شرح أي جزء من هذا المستند بلغتك،

يرجى وضع علامة في المربع والاتصال بنا إما عن طريق الكتابة أو عن طريق الهاتف باستخدام تفاصيل الاتصال الخاصة بنا أدناه.

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French

Si vous avez besoin d'une explication concernant toute partie de ce document, veuillez cocher la case et nous contacter soit par écrit soit par téléphone en utilisant les coordonnées ci-dessous.

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German

Wenn Sie zu jeglichem Teil dieses Dokuments eine Erklärung in Ihrer Muttersprache benötigen, kreuzen Sie bitte das Kästchen an und kontaktieren Sie uns entweder schriftlich oder telefonisch unter den nachstehenden Kontaktangaben.

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Italian

Qualora lo riteniate opportuno potete chiedere la traduzione nella vostra lingua di qualsiasi parte del documento spuntando la casella e contattandoci per iscritto o telefonicamente utilizzando i dettagli di contatto riportati di seguito.

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**Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**  
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Polish

Osoby wymagające tłumaczenia którejkolwiek części niniejszego dokumentu w ojczystym języku, proszone są o zaznaczenie pola i o kontakt pisemny lub telefoniczny, dane jak niżej.

Portuguese

Se precisar que qualquer parte deste documento seja explicada no seu idioma, assinale a caixa e contacte-nos por escrito ou por telefone através dos nossos dados de contacto abaixo indicados.

Somail

Haddii aad u baahatid ina qayb ka mid ah dukumintigan lagu sharaxo luqaddaada, fadlan sax sanduuqa oo nala soo xiriir iyado qoraal ah ama taleefan adigo isticmaalaya faahfaahinta xiriirkeena hoosta ku taal

Spanish

Si necesita que le expliquemos alguna parte de este documento en su idioma, marque la casilla correspondiente, escribanos o llámenos por teléfono utilizando los datos de contacto que aparecen a continuación.

Urdu

اگر آپکو اس دستاویز کے کسی بھی حصے کی اپنی زبان میں وضاحت کی ضرورت ہے ، تو براہ مہربانی خانے میں نشان لگائیں اور خط لکھ کر یا ٹیلی فون کر کے ہمارے ساتھ رابطہ کریں۔ رابطہ کی تفصیلات درج ذیل ہیں۔

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# Other Useful contacts

## **Barnardos**

Visit: [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

## **British Association for Adoption and Fostering (CoramBAAF)**

Phone: 020 7421 2600

Fax: 020 7421 2601

Email: [mail@baaf.org.uk](mailto:mail@baaf.org.uk)

Visit: [www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk)

## **Childline**

A help line for parents and children to go to when in need of help and advice

Tel: 0800 1111

Visit: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## **(CFAB)–Children and Families Across Borders**

Advice Line: 020 7735 8941

Reception: 020 7735 8941

Fax: 020 7582 0696

Email: [info@cfab.org.uk](mailto:info@cfab.org.uk)

## **NSPCC**

An instant help line providing a confidential and informative service

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Visit: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

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**If you require this leaflet in large print or Braille please contact: (020) 8871 6622.**