

# Factsheet



## Private fostering

### A guide for young people

Sometimes your mam or dad may need to ask someone to look after you for a while. If you are under 16, or under 18 if you are disabled, and you stay with someone who isn't a close relative for more than 28 days then this is called private fostering.

The person you are staying with is called a private foster carer. They may be a cousin, a neighbour or family friend. If you stay with a close relative like a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle then this isn't private fostering.

### Why do we need to be involved?

The law says that your parents and private foster carer must tell us about the arrangements they have made for your care. The law also says that once we know about you we must make sure that you are safe, and that your private foster carer is looking after you properly.

As soon as we know that you are going to live with a private foster carer a social worker will arrange to visit you. Your social worker will talk to you to find out how you feel and if there is anything you are worried or unhappy about. Your social worker must come to see you every six weeks for the first year. After this they may visit you less often.

You can contact your social worker at any time, you do not have to wait for your next visit.

### Frequently asked questions

#### Can I stay in touch with my family?

Yes - it is important that you stay in touch with your family. Your family should visit, phone or write to you as often as they can and they must check to make sure you are being well looked after.

#### What will my private foster carer do?

They will make sure you:

- eat regular meals (like breakfast, lunch and tea)
- have a bed and get enough sleep
- are clean and have clean clothes to wear
- see a doctor, a dentist and an optician if you need to see one
- go to school and do your homework
- keep in touch with your family and friends
- continue with your hobbies and sports

#### Can my private foster carer make big changes to my life?

No - not unless your parents give permission. Even though you live with a private foster carer your parents must still make all the important decisions about your life.

For example, your private foster carer **MUST NOT** ask you to change your name, make you change schools, send you to live with another family or arrange for you to have medical treatment without asking your parents permission.

**Can I still follow my religion and family customs?**

Yes - your private foster carer must respect the things that are important to you and your family.

**Do I have to go to school?**

If you are under 16 years old you must go to school - this is the law. Your private foster carer must make sure that you go to school every day.

**Do I have to do jobs around the house?**

Yes – but only small jobs. In most families children and young people help with jobs around the home like washing the dishes and keeping their bedroom clean and tidy.

**Who can I talk to?**

Most children and young people are very happy living in private foster care. If there are problems we can help you sort them out. You can contact your social worker

Your social worker is called:

Telephone number:

Mobile:

Email:

or if you need to speak to someone on a weekend or evening you can contact us.

**Tel: 03000 26 79 79**

**Text: 0778 602 7280**

**Email: [scd@durham.co.uk](mailto:scd@durham.co.uk)**

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

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