



TRAFFORD  
COUNCIL

# PRIVATE FOSTERING

INFORMATION AND ADVICE  
FOR PRIVATE FOSTER CARERS

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**ARE YOU LOOKING AFTER  
SOMEONE ELSE'S CHILD ?**

**THIS COULD MEAN YOU ARE A  
PRIVATE FOSTER CARER**



## ARE YOU A PRIVATE FOSTER CARER?

- Are you looking after someone else's child?
- Is the child below the age of 16? (18 if the child has a disability)
- Are you not the child's parent, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, legal guardian, or other person with parental responsibility?
- Is the child going to be living with you for more than 28 days?

If you have answered yes to all these questions, then you are a private foster carer.

## WHAT IS PRIVATE FOSTERING?

There are many reasons parents might need to ask someone they trust to care for their child in a private arrangement; if parents need to be admitted to hospital for a long period of time, are living abroad, or are in conflict with their child. Parents do not usually do this without a great deal of thought.

It is important that you and the parents have discussed why they want you to look after their child and what arrangements and contingencies should be made if for example your child falls ill or has an accident.

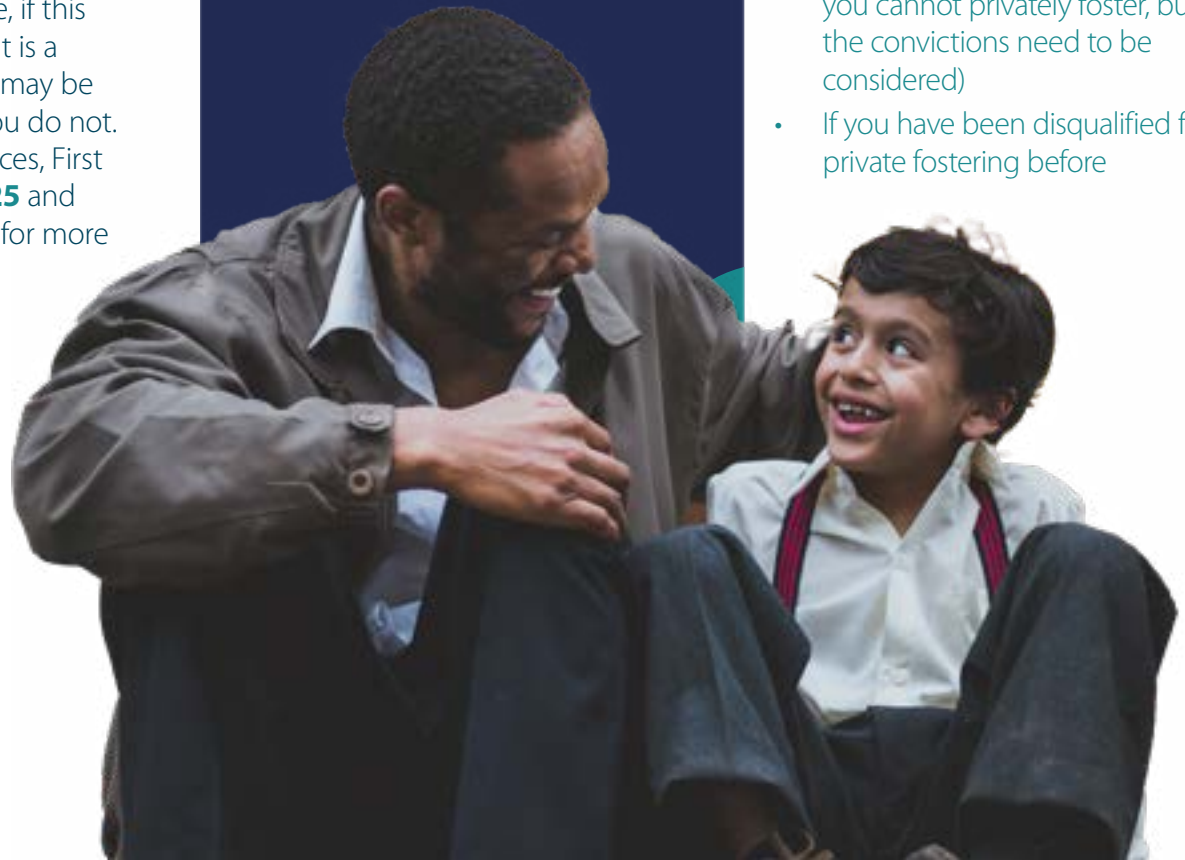
You should also have discussed the child's health and education and agreed financial arrangements.

## WHAT NEXT?

If you think you may be a private foster carer, you need to contact Children's Services to register the situation as soon as possible, if this has not already happened. It is a legal requirement, and you may be committing an offence if you do not. Call Trafford Children's Services, First Response on **0161 912 5125** and explain your circumstances for more information and advice.

You will need to inform them of some basic facts such as:

- The child's name, date of birth, religion, ethnicity, and language
- How long you expect the child you are caring for to stay with you
- Name and address of the child's parents and anyone else who has parental responsibility for them.
- Date the arrangement is expected to start (or started)
- Your previous addresses covering the last 5 years
- Any offences you may have been convicted of. (Having convictions does not mean you cannot privately foster, but the convictions need to be considered)
- If you have been disqualified from private fostering before



## WHAT WILL CHILDREN'S SERVICES DO?

Children's Services want to ensure that children in private fostering arrangements are safeguarded, and their needs met. They will work with carers and parents and speak to children to ensure they are happy and safe.

A social worker from Children's Services will undertake an initial visit to discuss the proposed arrangement and check that the accommodation and you can meet the needs of the child. They will also meet with the parents and the child to ensure that everyone understands the arrangement that will be in place.

Children's Services will also inform local agencies such as schools and ensure that arrangements have been made to register the child with a doctor.

Assessments will be undertaken by a social worker- these will consider the private fostering arrangement and the safeguarding of the child. The assessment will be discussed

with managers in Children's Services to confirm whether the arrangement is suitable.

They will want to check that your household is safe and suitable for the child and what arrangements you have made for the child's health and education. You will be asked to fill in forms to check your records with Disclosure and Barring Service, Health, Education etc.

- They will support you to work together with the child's parents
- They will support you to get the services you may need to meet the needs of the child
- They will support you to get the support needed to care for the child
- They will discuss arrangements alone with the child if the child is old enough
- They will discuss arrangements with the child's parents
- They will discuss any arrangements that they think are not satisfactory
- They will notify other agencies of the arrangements
- They will consult with other agencies to obtain information about the child.



## HOW OFTEN WILL CHILDREN'S SERVICES BE IN TOUCH?

Ongoing support to the arrangement will be provided. The child will be allocated a social worker who will visit the child at least every 6 weeks for the first 12 months and at least every 12 weeks thereafter.

The visits will consider how well the arrangement is working and the child's views will be obtained. If there are any concerns raised in respect to safeguarding and welfare of the child visits may become more frequent.

If the child wants to be visited more frequently, the social worker will arrange for this to take place.

## WORKING TOGETHER

It is important that you work together with the parents and that the child sees you are working together for their benefit. Parents need to provide you with as much information as possible about their child.

You will need to agree what arrangements have been made about the child's family time with parents and make sure the child understands this.

The child may have a lot of anxiety about living away from home and worry about when they will see their parents again.

Family time can be in lots of different ways - face to face is best, but if this is not possible, you may need to use indirect forms of contact such as video calls, telephone, emails, text messages or letters.

The child may have difficulties settling and this may be apparent through behaviours which may be difficult to manage such as tempers, unusual behaviour, bed wetting. You will need to discuss these with the parents. If these become very difficult the social worker can offer advice and strategies to help. They can also offer you training alongside other carers who deal with similar difficult behaviour.

## WHAT TO DO IF THE SITUATION CHANGES?

You must inform Children's Services if there are any changes in your household circumstances whilst you are privately fostering.

### This includes:

- Change of address
- If someone moves into your house, or moves out
- If anyone living in your house commits an offence
- If you move to another Local Authority
- If your financial circumstances change

## WHAT IF THE PLACEMENT ENDS?


You should agree with the parents in what circumstances the arrangement should end and what arrangements will be made for the child. It may be upsetting for a child if this is done suddenly without preparation or planning.

You must inform Children's Services of the situation within 48 hours and give the name and address of the person the child has gone to live with.





## CONTACT US



If you would like further information about private fostering, please contact us on:

**0161 912 5125** or  
**firstresponse@trafford.gov.uk**

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, please ask First Response.

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**www.trafford.gov.uk**

