



Private Fostering in Hackney

A Guide for Professionals



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

 **Hackney**



Private Fostering

Many professionals who work with children will come across private fostering situations. Professionals in the education, health and social care fields therefore have a shared responsibility to work together to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.

Professionals from all agencies can play an important role by identifying and notifying us of private fostering arrangements and by ensuring parents and carers are aware of their responsibilities.

By monitoring and supervising private fostering placements we can all help to safeguard children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Hackney Children Services should be notified of all private fostering arrangements in Hackney.

Do you know how to go about it? If not then read on.

1[1] The Children Act defines 'relatives' in relation to a child as grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt. They could be full or half relation and could be related by marriage. The term also includes a step-parent. A cohabitee of the mother or father would not qualify as a relative; neither would extended family such as a great aunt, great uncle or parent's cousins.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering occurs when a child or young person under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for, and provided with accommodation for more than 28 days, by an adult who is not a relative[1], by private arrangement between the parent and carer. The child would not be one that is looked after by the local authority under the Children Act

Usually a birth parent chooses and arranges a private fostering placement and private foster carers do not hold parental responsibility.

Private fostering can take many forms, for example:

- Local children living apart from their families
- Adolescents and teenagers (possibly teenage parents)
- Black and minority ethnic children with parents working or studying in the UK
- Children with parents overseas
- Refugee and homeless children
- Trafficked children

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These are only examples. There may be other arrangements that come to your notice which do not fall into any of these categories. If this happens use the checklist on page 8 of this leaflet to help you decide whether or not it is a private fostering arrangement. If you feel it is a private fostering arrangement contact the Duty and Assessment Team on 0208 356 5500 or the



What are the rules governing private fostering?

Privately fostered children are safeguarded by the Children Act 1989 (Part 1X) and associated regulations. Under the Act, Children's Services departments have a legal requirement to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are privately fostered in their area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. The Children Act 2004 (paragraph 7a) reinforces this by placing a requirement to raise awareness of the notification requirements within local communities and Children's Services departments.

What should the professional do:

- Private foster carers are legally required to notify their Local Authority but many do not, usually because they do not know that they have to. This means that Children Services are unable to check whether the child is being properly cared for.
- It is essential that Hackney Children's Services is made aware of private fostering arrangements so that they can safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who may be vulnerable.

- Ideally, notification should come from the parent or carer, however, Education, Health and other Social care professionals can also play an important role, as they are often the people who have first contact with children and families.

If you know that a child is being privately fostered, encourage the carer or parent of the child to notify Hackney Children Services. In addition you should give the carer or parent a copy of the leaflet **Information for Parents and Carers**. You may need to follow this action up by notifying Children's Services yourself.

What the private foster carer must do:

- Inform Children's Services at least 6 weeks in advance of their intention to foster a child or, where a child is received in an emergency, not more than 48 hours after the child's arrival.
- Notify Children's Services within 48 hours when a child leaves their care, stating why and giving the

name and address of the person into whose care the child has been moved.

What birth parents must do:

- Advise Children's Services of the private fostering arrangement at least six weeks in advance or, where an arrangement is made in an emergency, within 48 hours and when the arrangement comes to an end.
- Retain parental responsibility, participating in all decisions about their child.
- Provide the prospective carer with as much information about the child as possible, including their health records, dietary preferences, school records, hobbies, religion and ethnicity.
- Ensure that the proposed private fostering placement is suitable for their child.



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What Hackney's Children's Services must do:

- Check the suitability of private foster carers through home visits.
- Make regular visits to the child and monitor the overall standard of care.
- Ensure the child or young person is well cared for in a safe environment
- Ensure arrangements are in place to keep a record of private foster carers and children who are privately fostered.
- Ensure that advice and support to carers is made available when needed
- Provide annual statistics of the numbers of privately fostered children with Hackney to central Government.

Should Hackney's Children's Services decide that an arrangement is unsuitable and if the child or young person cannot be returned to their parents, Children's Services will decide what action to take to safeguard the child's welfare. In some case this will mean providing additional support to the carer but, in others it

may mean taking the child into care, accommodating or looking after the child.

How can private foster carers get support?

- Private foster carers may approach Hackney Children's Services for advice on caring for the children they are privately fostering.
- In certain cases there may be help available under the Children Act for children deemed to be 'in need of services'.
- There may be local support networks for carers.
- Carers may be able to claim Tax Credits or social security benefits such a Child Benefit and possibly Income Support of Job Seekers Allowance if they receive Child Benefit. Enquiries should be made to the carer's local Benefits Agency Office.

If in doubt checklist!

This checklist is to help you decide whether or not the situation you are dealing with should be viewed as private fostering.

If the answer is yes to questions 1 & 2 and any of the other questions, then it is possible that you are dealing with a private fostering arrangement.

	Question	Yes	No
1	Is the young person aged under 16 (18 if young person has a disability)?		
2	Are they being provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, relative or person with parental responsibility?		
3	Are child/young persons parents in agreement with the arrangement?		
4	Has the child/young person been accommodated for a period for 28 days or more? If not, is the intention to accommodate for a period of 28 days or more?		
5	If the placement is less than 28 days, is it one of a series of placements that add up to more than 28 days?		
6	Is the child/young persons parents or persons with parental responsibility living in separate accommodation from the young person?		

If you would like to know more about Private Fostering contact us:-

Access and Assessment Team:
Telephone **0208 356 5500**

If you would like to find out what this document says please tick the appropriate box, put your name, address and phone number at the bottom of this page and return it to the address below.

Bengali



এই দলিলে কি লেখা আছে সে সম্পর্কে যদি আপনি জানতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে উপযুক্ত বাক্সে টিক দিন, এই পাতার নীচে আপনার নাম, ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর লিখুন এবং এটি নীচের ঠিকানায় ফেরত পাঠান।

French



Si vous désirez connaître le contenu de ce document, veuillez cocher la case appropriée et indiquer votre nom, adresse et numéro de téléphone au bas de cette page et la renvoyer à l'adresse indiquée ci-dessous.

Kurdish



Ger hun dixwazin bizanibin ku ev dokument çû dibêje, ji kerema xwe qutika minasib îşaret bikin, nav, navnîşan û hejmara telefona xwe li jêrê rûpel binivîsin û wê ji navnîşana jêrîn re bişînin.

Polish



Jeśli chcesz dowiedzieć się, jaka jest treść tego dokumentu, zaznacz odpowiednie pole, wpisz swoje nazwisko, adres i nr telefonu w dolnej części niniejszej strony i przeslij na poniższy adres.

Urdu



اگر آپ یہ جاننا چاہتے ہیں کہ دستاویز میں کیا لکھا ہے تو اوزارہ کرم مناسب باکس میں صحیح کا نشان لگائے اور اپنا نام، پتہ اور فون نمبر اس صفحہ کے نیچے لکھنے اور اسے نیچے دیئے گئے پتہ پر واپس بھیج دیجئے۔

Somali



Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in aad ogaato waxa dokumeentigani sheegayo fadlan calaamadi godka ku haboon, ku qor magacaaga, cinwaanka iyo telefoon lambarkaaga boggan dhankiisa hoose ka dibna ku celi cinwaanka hoose.

Spanish



Si desea saber de lo que trata este documento, marque la casilla correspondiente, escriba su nombre, dirección y numero de teléfono al final de esta página y envíela a la siguiente dirección.

Turkish



Bu dökümanda ne anlatıldığını öğrenmek istiyorsanız, lütfen uygun kutuyu işaretleyerek, adınızı, adresinizi ve telefon numaranızı bu sayfanın alt kısmına yazıp, aşağıdaki adrese gönderin.

Vietnamese



Nếu bạn muốn biết tài liệu này nói gì hãy đánh dấu vào hộp thích hợp, điền tên, địa chỉ và số điện thoại của bạn vào cuối trang này và gửi lại theo địa chỉ dưới đây.

Chinese



如果你想知道這分文件的詳細內容，請在方框內打鉤，在本頁下面寫下你的名字、地址和電話號碼並寄到下面的地址。

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In another language, please state:

Name:

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Return to: Fostering Team, Hackney Service Centre,
1 Hillman Street, E8 1DY