



Private Fostering in Hackney

A guide for professionals

Private Fostering in Hackney



All professionals who work with or have contact with children and young people have a shared responsibility to ensure that privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.

Professionals play an important role by identifying and notifying Hackney Children's Services 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's Services should be notified of all private fostering arrangements in Hackney by contacting **020 8356 5500**.

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 28 days or more, by an adult who is not a relative^[1], by private arrangement between the parent and carer.

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:

- Children and young people that have to live away from their family as a result of separation, divorce or disputes at home.
- Children and young people sent to this country for education or health opportunities.
- Cultural exchange students.
- Children and young people from overseas whose parents are studying or working during unsociable hours, which makes it difficult for them to use ordinary child care provisions.
- Any child or young person whose parents have made a private arrangement for them to be looked after by someone else.

[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.

These are only examples. There may be other arrangements that come to your notice which do not fall into any of these categories. **You can use the checklist on page 6 to help you decide whether or not it is a private fostering arrangement.**

What are the rules governing private fostering?

Privately fostered children are safeguarded by legislation set out in Part 9 of the Children Act 1989; the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005; and Section 44 of the Children Act 2004 effective 1 July 2005. Standards of care and management for private fostering arrangements are set out in the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering (2005).

You can find out more about the legal basis of private fostering on the Department for Education website at **www.education.gov.uk** or from the British Association of Adoption and Fostering at **www.baaf.org.uk**

Studies show that local councils are often not notified about private fostering arrangements, despite this being an offence under the Children Act 1989. When they are notified, it is nearly always after the fostering has started.

It is essential that Hackney Children's Services are aware of such arrangements so that they can safeguard and promote the welfare of potentially vulnerable children.

Ideally, notification should come from the carer or parent, although professionals also play an important role as they are often the people who have the first contact – for example children registering with a local GP or moving into a new school.

Responsibilities of:

Parents

- To advise Hackney 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.
- To retain parental responsibility, participating in all decisions about their child.
- To 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.
- To ensure that the proposed private fostering placement is suitable for their child.

Private Fostering in Hackney

Professionals

- As a professional you are legally responsible to inform the Local Authority of any private fostering arrangements that you are aware of.
- If you know that a child is being privately fostered, encourage the carer or parent of the child to notify Hackney Children's Services themselves.
- Always contact Hackney Children's Services on **020 8356 5500** to notify them of any arrangement you become aware of.

Hackney Children's Services

- Assess the suitability of private foster carers.
- Make regular visits to the child or young person and monitor the overall standard of care.
- Ensure the child or young person is well cared for in a safe environment.

- Carry out Disclosure and Barring checks on the private foster carers and any person over the age of 16 in the household.
- 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 in Hackney to central Government and the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Board.

If Hackney 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.





Private Foster Carer

- Inform Children's Services at least 6 weeks in advance of their intention to privately foster a child or young person or; where the arrangement is made in an emergency, within 48 hours of the child or young person's arrival.
- Allow a social worker to visit and see the child or young person.
- Provide information as required.
- Allow the social worker to inspect their home and make reasonable recommendations.
- Report any changes in the household.
- Comply with any legal requirement. For example, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are undertaken on all those in the household over the age of 16.
- Make an agreement with parents about their expected level of involvement in the day-to-day care and decision-making about their child.
- Promote the child or young person's welfare in the home.
- Notify Hackney Children's Services within 48 hours when a privately fostered child or young person leaves their care, advising why and providing the name and address of the person into whose care the child or young person has been moved.

Private Fostering in Hackney

If in doubt checklist!

This checklist is to help you decide whether or not a child or young person is living in a private fostering arrangement.

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.

If you would like to know more about Private Fostering contact Hackney Children's Services on **020 8356 5500**.

	Question	Yes	No
1	Is the young person aged under 16 (18 if young person has a disability)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Are they being provided with accommodation by someone other than a parent, relative or person with parental responsibility? (see box on page 2 for legal definition of 'relative' in this context).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Are the child/young person's parents in agreement with the arrangement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Has the child/young person been accommodated for a period of 28 days or more? If not, is the intention to accommodate for a period of 28 days or more?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Is the child/young person's parents or persons with parental responsibility living in separate accommodation from the young person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 ازراہ کرم مناسب باکس میں صحیح کا نشان لگائیے 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 número 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。

If you would like this document in any of the following formats or in another language not listed above, please complete and send the form to the address below.

In large print

In Braille

On Disk

On audio tape

In another language, please state:

Name:

Address:

Tel:

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