

What is Private Fostering?



Information for children and young people

0300 111 8007

Select Option 1, Option 5, Option 2
or visit staffordshire.gov.uk/privatefostering

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 Staffordshire
County Council

Why would a child be privately fostered?

Private fostering is a care arrangement for children under 16 (or 18 if you have a disability) where your parents have arranged for you to live with another adult instead of your mum and dad. The person who looks after you will not be a close relative.

If you are privately fostered it means that you will be living with a private foster carer in their house for over 28 days.

Common reasons for private fostering

- A child sent to a family in this country for education or health care by parents who live overseas
- A teenager living with a friend's family because they don't get on with their own family
- A child living with a friend's family because their parents work or study makes it difficult to use ordinary day care or after school care
- A child staying with another family because their parents have separated or divorced
- A child from overseas staying with a host family while attending a private/language schools
- Overseas students at boarding school who stay with a host family during the holidays

Your parents and private foster carer must tell Staffordshire County Council if you are living in someone else's house. Your teacher, school, doctor or guardianship agency could also tell us. You could too!

What will happen next?

The law says that Staffordshire County Council must make sure that you are well cared for where you are living and they will ask a social worker to visit you to see if you are okay. There is a three step process that we will take.

Step One: A social worker, who is someone employed by Staffordshire County Council to make sure that children and young people are safe and well, will visit you at your home.

Step Two: They will come and see where you live and make sure you are happy living with the private foster carer.

Step Three: They will talk to the person looking after you to see if they need any help. They will even get in touch with your parents to make sure they know everything is OK.

We follow these three steps as we have to make sure that all privately fostered children are properly looked after.



What Support will Families First provide me?

The law says that the local council needs to know who is looking after you and where you are living to make sure that you are safe, happy and are being properly cared for.

When the council hears about the private fostering arrangement, it will arrange for a social worker to carry out an assessment of your carer(s) and the environment in which you live, and you will be allocated your own social worker. If the council are satisfied that your needs are being met then they will also visit you for the first year and every 12 weeks thereafter.

The social workers will visit your home every six weeks and give you their contact number.

This is to ensure that you are happy in the home and feeling safe. You will also be asked about what you think about your situation and so will your parents if it is possible to contact them.



What should my Private Foster Carer provide for me?

Whilst in a private fostering arrangement the carer should provide you with all the everyday care that you need for example:

- ensure that your health needs are taken care of
- make sure that you go to school and learn
- take you to the dentist to ensure that your teeth are properly looked after
- help you stay in touch with your family
- help you follow any religions and customs that are important to you
- give you regular meals
- make sure that you have a chance to make friends and take part in activities that you enjoy
- Keep you safe from harm
- Include you in their family

What should my Private Foster Carer NOT DO?

Your private foster carer should not:

- change your name
- take you overseas without the agreement of your parents
- move you to another family without arranging this with your parents and informing your social worker.
- Change your school without making an arrangement about this with your parents first.

Remember – your parents are still responsible for you and they will make all important decisions about you and what happens to you.

What do I do if I have problems with my Private Foster Care Arrangement?

You can contact your allocated social worker and ask to speak with her/him to discuss the problem.

If you are unable to contact your social worker and you are concerned about your safety and welfare, you can either talk to your teacher or another adult or contact.

Child/ren's social worker name and contact details;

Useful Contacts

Front Door Service 0300 111 8007 options1,5,2

Emergency duty service (out of hours):

Tel: 0345 604 2886

Useful websites:

CoraamBAAF:

corambaaf.org.uk

Main County Council Site:

staffordshire.gov.uk/privatefostering

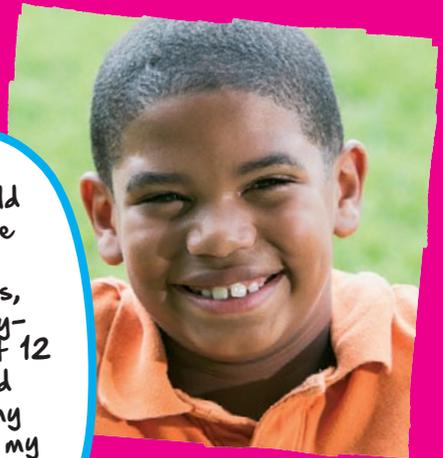


What young people say

Here are some things that children and young people have said about private fostering.



"My name is Tunde. I have been in private foster care for 4 years. I came straight from Nigeria to Mandy and David. It was a very scary time for me but Qudus helped me settle in as he is my cousin and I soon got to know Mandy and David plus I made lots of friends and I now go to school and I even play for a football team and I now love it here thanks to Mandy and David."



"My name is Qudus. I am 14 years old and I have been in private foster care since I was 2 years old. When I first came to Mandy and David, my carers, I was very scared. I did not know anybody and could not speak English but 12 years on I can now speak English and have many friends. I have done all my schooling over here. I am now taking my GCSEs and feel I am doing very well. Everything that has happened in my life I have Mandy and David to thank."

What are the next steps?

To find out more about Private Fostering or to tell someone that you think you are privately fostered you can call Staffordshire County Council:

on: **0300 111 8007**, select option 1, then option 5 and then option 2, or you can go on-line: staffordshire.gov.uk/privatefostering

