

Are you being looked after by someone other than a parent or a close relative?



NOT LIVING WITH YOUR

parents?

Information for young people



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

Carers should give you a safe, happy and caring home and look after you

Introduction

Lots of children and young people do not live with their parents and there might be all sorts of reasons for this. But if your parents have arranged for someone else to care for you other than a close family member, this is called 'private fostering'.

Are you privately fostered?

- Are you under 16 years old (or under 18 years old and have a disability)?
- Are you living with someone who is not your parent or close relative (that is someone who is not a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or step parent by marriage)?
- Have you been there for 28 days or more?

If you can say yes to these questions then the law says that the local authority (Birmingham Children's Trust) needs to make sure you are safe and well and living in a suitable home.

Children and young people can be privately fostered for all sorts of reasons. Your parent may have had to go away for some time so their boyfriend or girlfriend is looking after you. Maybe you have come to England to attend school or perhaps there are problems at home so you are staying with a friend.

It does not count as private fostering if you are staying with your grandparents, aunt, uncle, brother, sister or step-parent. It also doesn't count if you are just away with a friend for a week or two or you live with someone different during the week but go home to your parents at the weekend. If you want to check if you are privately fostered then you can call the Children's Advice and Information Service (CASS) on **0121 303 1888** or email **CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**



What happens if I am privately fostered?

If you are privately fostered, a social worker will visit you and the person who is looking after you (your carer). They will want to make sure you are safe and being looked after properly. They will come and see you every six weeks in the first year you are living with your carer and will continue to make sure that the arrangements are suitable for you.

Private foster carers should give you a safe, happy and caring home and look after you as if you were their own child.

They should:

- give you regular meals;
- make sure you have warm, clean clothes and a bed of your own;
- take you to the doctor if you are ill;
- take you to the dentist to make sure your teeth are looked after properly;
- make sure you go to school to help you to learn;
- help you stay in contact with your family;
- make sure you have a chance to make friends and enjoy hobbies and sports; and,
- make sure you can follow your religion and any customs that matter to you.

It is important that all your needs are being met and that you are able to do the things that matter to you.



What if I am worried about something?

A social worker will visit you regularly until you go back to your parents. You can talk to them about anything. The social worker will keep your parents updated on your progress too.

You can also contact the social worker on their phone or send them a message. They will make sure you know how to reach them.

Talk to us

To tell us about a private fostering arrangement or ask any questions you can call the Children’s Advice and Information Service (CASS) on **0121 303 1888** or email **CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**

Further information is also available on our website: **birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/privatefostering**

If you are in a fostering arrangement a social worker will come and talk to you and you can write their contact details below:

Social Worker

Name:

Email:

Phone:

You can also get more information from other professionals who support children and young people like your teacher at school and from organisations such as **Childline**. This is the free, 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. You can call about any problem, at any time – day or night.

Phone **0800 1111** or visit the Childline website to **chat online to a counsellor**.

If you would like a copy of this booklet in another language, in large print, in Braille or on audio tape or CD, please call **0121 303 3401** or email **trustcomms@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**

