

Private Fostering Arrangements



**A guide for Parents, Private Foster Carers,
Children and Young People in Harrow**



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW



What do we mean by Private Fostering?

Children under the age of 16 (under 18 if they have a disability) are said to be privately fostered if they are cared for by an adult who is not a close relative for more than 28 days. This arrangement has to be made between the parent of the child and the foster carer.

The Children Act 1989 describes relatives as a grandparent, sister, aunt or step parent. Cousins and great aunts are not considered close relatives and children living with them will be privately fostered.

A private foster carer is someone who is not a close relative, for example:

- A family friend.
- The parent of a child's friend.
- An individual who is unknown to the child's family and is willing to care for the child.
- An extended family member.



A guide for Parents, Private Foster Carers, Children and Young People in Harrow

Under government legislation carers, parents and any professional that is aware of the arrangement must notify Harrow Council of plans to privately foster a child at least 6 weeks in advance. If this arrangement is an emergency placement carers must contact the Local Authority within 48 hours of the child being in their care.

Private fostering is used across the United Kingdom as a means of caring for children when birth parents are unable to do so.

Many different children may be privately fostered.

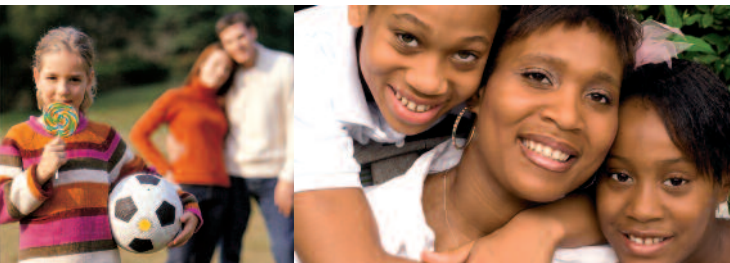
- Children whose parents either work or study.
- Children who are trafficked and are living with extended family members.
- Children where their families reside abroad.
- Children who are adopted from non-Hague convention countries with a view of adoption at a later date.
- Children who are refugees and those seeking asylum.
- Children who come from overseas to study and live with families they are not related to.

A close-up photograph of several hands clasped together in a supportive grip, overlaid with a purple-to-orange gradient.

Parental Responsibility

Under the law birth parents still have parental responsibility for their child. Consequently, private fosterers should not:

- Change the child's name or school.
- Send the child to live with someone else.
- Take the child to another part of the country.
- Take the child from the country without parents permission.
- Make major decisions such as permitting treatment for serious medical treatment unless in cases of emergency.



A guide for Parents, Private Foster Carers, Children and Young People in Harrow

Financial Arrangements

Private foster carers should arrange financial support for the child with his/her birth parents.

Privately fostered children are eligible to benefits such as child benefit and universal credit if they meet all relevant criteria.

Harrow Council does not provide regular or on-going financial support to privately fostered children or their carers.

However in exceptional circumstances the Local Authority may carry out an assessment under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to determine what other advice or support may be needed and in exceptional circumstances this may include a discretionary payment.



Responsibilities of a Private Foster Carer

- Private foster carers are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their care.
- Private fosterers should inform Harrow Council when a child leaves their care.
- Provide the name, address and contact details of the person into whose care the child has moved.
- Ensure that a child's medical and educational needs are met.
- Provide continuous contact with birth family.
- Provide the child with warmth and fulfil all their basic living needs.

A guide for Parents, Private Foster Carers, Children and Young People in Harrow

Harrow Council's Responsibility to privately fostered children

After Harrow Council receive notification of a private fostering arrangement for a child, a social worker will visit. They will check if the child is safe, assess the suitability of the private foster carers and the placement.

Following this initial visit they will present a child care plan to senior manager for approval. After this a social worker from the Permanency team will carry out four to six weekly visits.

This is required by law under the Private Fostering Arrangements 2005.

A register of private fostering arrangements is kept by the Local Authority to confirm details of all privately fostered children in Harrow. As with every other child living in the borough a privately fostered child has access to support and local services available.



If a parent or carer is thinking of privately fostering a child or if you know that a child is privately fostered, please inform us as soon as possible. If in doubt, please ring us and we will be able to give you advice.

Contact details:

Fostering and Permanency Team
Harrow Children's Services
Harrow Council Hub
Forward Drive
Harrow
HA3 8FL

For any information or advice on Private Fostering contact
Fostering and Permanency Duty Team (at the same address)
Tel:020 8736 6971
Email:fpuduty@harrow.gov.uk



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW