



Private Fostering

Do you know of children who live with people who are not their parents?

Information about private fostering arrangements for community and voluntary groups

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Private fostering and Lambeth Children and Young People's Service

Some parents arrange for their children to live with another family. Sometimes this is just for a few days, sometimes it is for longer. If it is 28 days or more, it is known as private fostering and the people who the child lives with are known as private foster carers.

Many people do not know the law says that the local authority must be notified of these arrangements. In Lambeth, children, parents and private foster carers can get help from Lambeth Private Fostering Service.

Private fostering and how you can help us to keep our children and our communities safe

Presently we do not know how many private fostering arrangements there are in Lambeth or across the UK. The British Association for Fostering and Adoption estimates that there could be between 15,000 and 20,000 children being privately fostered in the UK.

Private foster placements take many forms, these include:

- Children living with a friend's family because of separation, divorce or arguments at home
- Children who have been to the UK to be educated

- Children who have come seeking asylum with adults they are not related to
- Young people living with a boyfriend or girlfriend's family
- Children whose parent's antisocial work hours make it difficult to look after them
- Children who have been brought to the UK to be adopted, prior to the notice to apply to adopt is given
- Children who have been trafficked and brought to work in the UK

What is a private foster care arrangement?

Private fostering is when a parent arranges for their child to live with and be cared for by someone who is not:

- A parent
- A close relative
- Someone who has parental responsibility

These arrangements have to last for a total of 28 days or more. Under private fostering arrangements, the law defines a child as someone who is under 16 or, if they are disabled under 18.

Do you know of children who are privately fostered?

The Children Act 1989 and 2004 introduced legislation to safeguard children who are privately fostered. As a result local authorities should be notified about all private fostering arrangements. The law says that although private fostering arrangements are private, local authorities have certain legal duties and responsibilities to make sure that children who are privately fostered are protected. Once a local authority has been notified of the arrangement, they have to:

- Visit the home where the child lives and carry out some checks
- Make regular visits to make sure that the child is safe and well cared for
- Make sure that the advice is available to carers
- Say whether or not they find the arrangements acceptable

Lambeth Private Fostering Service helps:

- Children who live with another family
- Private foster carers
- Parents whose children are being privately fostered

We can also give advice and make sure that they are getting the help, support and benefits they need.

Your help is needed

Many people do not know that the law says that they must notify their local authority about private foster arrangements. Some people will be afraid or suspicious of doing this. We need to encourage private foster carers to inform us of these arrangements so that we can ensure that the children involved are being safeguarded.

Lambeth Private Fostering Service does not intend to stop people from making arrangements that suit them. The vast majority of private foster carers are doing an excellent job. We just need to know about the arrangement to check that children are safe and are being properly cared for.

And here's how you can help – by reassuring families and private foster carers that Lambeth Private Fostering Service is here to help them and may be able to offer their family support and access to advice about benefits.

If you know about a private fostering arrangement or know someone who is planning to make one, please encourage them to call Lambeth Private Fostering Service. A social worker will be able to give them advice and will arrange for someone to visit them. If you are not satisfied that they have notified or will notify us you should let us know immediately.

In particular if you have child protection concerns about a privately fostered child you should notify Lambeth Referral Assessment Service immediately so that appropriate agencies can ensure that the privately fostered child is safeguarded.

Together we can make sure all the children in our communities are safe.

Raising our standards

We regularly review our performance to make sure we are providing the best service we can.

We do this by:

- Consulting service users and using the information to improve and plan our services
- Making regular reports to the council and government with regards to service quality and delivery of positive outcomes for children and families
- Undertaking random spot checks and audits to see whether we are actually doing what we claim

What to do if you are unhappy with service?

It is your right to make a complaint and by telling us about it, this will assist the council to improve its services.

If you wish to make a complaint speak to the allocated social worker or their manager or ask for a copy of the Comments, Compliments and Complaints leaflet. You can also phone **020 796 9624** or **020 7926 9777** or email **CYPScontact@lambeth.gov.uk**

Further information and contact details

For more information or to notify us about private fostering arrangements, please call **020 7926 7081**

Or write to:
Lambeth Private Fostering Service,
9th Floor International House,
6 Canterbury Crescent,
Brixton, SW9 7QE

For child protection referrals on a privately fostered child or on other urgent issues contact the Referral and Assessment Duty on **020 7926 7868**

Or visit/write to:
Referral and Assessment Duty,
4th Floor, International House,
6 Canterbury Crescent,
Brixton, SW9 7QE

Information for community, voluntary groups and professionals

Bengali

এই তথ্য অন্য কোনো ভাষায় আপনার প্রয়োজন হলে অনুগ্রহ করে ফোন করুন **020 7926 7081**

French

Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au **020 7926 7081**

Portuguese

Se desejar esta informação noutra idioma é favor telefonar para **020 7926 7081**

Spanish

Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al **020 7926 7081**

Twí

Se wope saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa fororo mu a fre **020 7926 7081**

Yoruba

Tí ẹ ba fe ìmoràn yíí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjǫ, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo **020 7926 7081**

If you would like this information in large print, Braille, audio tape or in a community language please call 020 7926 7081 or on Type talk: 18002 020 7926 5555.