



Private fostering:

A guide for young people



“

I'm living with my friend's family because my mum and dad have to go away lots for work. My social worker is great, and very helpful and gives me lots of advice when I need it. The best thing about living with my friend and her family is that I've got somebody to talk to if I've got problems. ”

Georgia (aged 11)

“

About five months ago I joined private fostering in South Gloucestershire, and it has helped me and my parents' lots. A lady called Laura who is a social worker visited me and she has helped a lot. Private fostering is a really good opportunity for people with family issues ”

Lee (aged 15)



What is private fostering?

Sometimes your family, your mum or dad or a very close relative, asks someone to look after you for a while and to care for you in their home or you may have chosen to stay with someone you know.

If you are likely to stay in this person's home for 28 days or more the Law says that this is called private fostering. The person who looks after you is called the private foster carer. Hundreds of children and young people are privately fostered every year.

If you are being privately fostered then then South Gloucestershire Local Authority must be told about this, because it is their job to make sure that you are properly looked after. The Local Authority has a private fostering social worker who will come and visit you and explain everything about the help you can receive.

**We are here
to offer help,
support and
advice...**



Who is responsible for me?

Your parents, or your mum or Dad if you have one parent, are the people who are “responsible” for you. This means that when your private foster carer is looking after you, you still your parents’ child and they must all the important decision in your life.

The Law also says that it is important that your parents try to stay in touch with you, and to visit, ring or message to you as often as they can. Your parents must check that you are being well looked after.

What will the private fostering social worker do to help?

The private fostering social worker will come to see where you live and will talk to both you and your private foster carer. She will also talk to your mum or dad to make sure that they know you are being well cared for.



What should my private foster carer do to help me?

Your private foster carers must do all the everyday things for you that parents are expected to do for their own children such as:

- give you regular meals - like breakfast, lunch and tea.
- make sure that your hair and skin are properly looked after.
- make sure you have warm clean clothes and a bed of your own.
- make sure you go to school so you can learn
- support you in your schoolwork.
- take you to the doctor or the hospital if you are sick or injured, or if you need vaccinations.
- take you to the dentist so your teeth are looked after properly.
- make sure you have a chance to make friends and to enjoy sports and hobbies you like.
- help you stay in touch with your family.
- help you follow your religion and customs that are important to you and your family.

Will I be able to talk about how I feel?

Whilst you are living with your private foster carer there will be regular meetings with you, your temporary family and a social worker. These meetings talk about your wellbeing and are an important part of helping us decide with you about what is best for you. You will also be given the opportunity to talk to the social worker alone so that you can talk about anything you feel concerned about or need that is not provided for.

My Story



Hi my name is Lucy and I am 12 years old.

My life has been quite hard in the past because my dad is unwell and had to go into hospital for an operation.

While my dad is recovering from his operation, I went to stay with my next door neighbour, and this really helped because I can stay at school and still see my friends.

I still see my dad which my neighbour encourages



Lucy

Useful people to call...

CHILDLINE

A free and confidential helpline for children and young people in the UK. Provides help and advice about a wide range of issues.

 **0800 1111**  www.childline.org.uk

LOOK AHEAD

Look Ahead works with vulnerable people throughout the UK, those with learning difficulties, mental health, young people and the homeless.

 **0333 010 4600**  www.lookahead.org.uk

OFF THE RECORD (BRISTOL)

Support for LGBTQ+ young people around Bristol.

 **0808 808 9120**

MIND TRANS PLUS HELPLINE

A confidential emotional and mental health support helpline and signposting service for people who identify as Trans, A Gender, Gender Fluid and non-binary.

 **0300 330 5468**



Private fostering helped me and my mum when she couldn't look after me properly so I went to stay with her aunt, who is my great aunt. I am happy living with my great aunt because I still get to see my family and she looks after me really well. There are social workers who help us both when we need it.

Claire – aged 14.



For help, advice and support please contact
South Gloucestershire's Private Fostering Team:

 **01454 868222**

 **privatefostering@southglos.gov.uk**