

When must my parents and private foster carers tell Tower Hamlets that I'm being privately fostered?

If the plan is for you to live with your private foster carers for 28 days or longer, then your parents and private foster carer must tell Tower Hamlets before you start living with them.

Sometimes it can be difficult to know how long you might stay with your private foster carers. If your Mum or Dad are ill, they might not know when they will be able to look after you again and you may have to stay with private foster carers for longer.

You may already be living with private foster carers and if this is the case then your parents or private foster carers must tell Social Services as soon as possible.

What will Tower Hamlets do for me?

Tower Hamlets will arrange for a social worker to come and see you. It is the social worker's job to make sure that you are being well looked after and safe. You can talk to the social worker about anything, so if you feel happy or sad you can tell them how you feel. You have the right to talk to your social worker on your own, especially if you are feeling worried or frightened.

The social worker must come and see you, and after the first visit they will visit you again in 6 weeks. During the first year of you staying with your private foster carers, the social worker will come and see you every 6 six weeks. After the first year, the social worker will see you every 12 weeks but you can still ask to see them if there is anything that you want to talk about.

You should make sure that you know the social worker's telephone number or email address so that you can contact them at any time.

What if I have a problem but don't want to tell my social worker?

Sometimes it's hard to talk about things that worry you. Sometimes you might find it easier to talk to your school teacher or friends. Some children find it is easier to talk to their teacher or school nurse if they have a problem.

You can also ring Childline if there is something that is worrying you on 0800 1111 or NSPCC on 0800 800 5000.

If you want to find out more information or you have any questions, you can call the Private Fostering Team on 020 7364 5006.

Tower Hamlets is regulated and inspected by the Commission of Social Care Inspection. If you wish to contact them, their details are as follows:

CSCI Stratford (East London) Area Office
4th Floor, Gredley House,
1-11 Broadway,
Stratford,
London, E15 4BQ

Tel: 020 8221 3360
Email: Enquiries.Stratford@ncsc.gsi.gov.uk



Are you being cared for by someone other than your parents?



Information on Private Fostering for **Children**

What is private fostering?

Sometimes your own family – like your Mum and Dad – ask someone else to look after and care for you in their own home.

If you are going to be cared for by this person for 28 days or more, this

is called **Private Fostering**. The person looking after you is called a **Private Foster Carer**.

If you are being privately fostered, then the London Borough of Tower Hamlets needs to be told about this arrangement. This is to make sure that you are being well looked after.

Why are children privately fostered?

There are lots of different reasons why children or young people are privately fostered. This could be because:

- Your Mum or Dad are ill or they have to go away for a long time and they cannot look after you. They may ask a neighbour/family friend/cousin/grand aunt or uncle to take care of you until they get better or return home.
- Your parents could have recently moved to this country to study or work and they might not be able to find somewhere for all of the family to live together, so they might ask somebody to look after you for a while.
- You might have left your own country to go to school or for some medical care in this country. While you stay in this country, you may need to stay with people who are not your family.
- Your Mum or Dad may have a new partner you do not get on with them. So you may stay with a neighbour or a family friend who can look after you for a while until you can go and live back at home.

When you are privately fostered it means that your parents or close relatives, rather than social workers, choose a place where you will live. It is still important that we know where you are living so that we can make sure that you are well and cared for safely.

Who will be responsible for you?

Your Mum and Dad are the people who are responsible for you. This means that when your private foster carers are looking after you, you are still your parents' child and they must still make important decisions about your life.

The Law says that your parents must tell the London Borough of Tower Hamlets if they are asking someone else to look after you. The Law also says that it is important that your parents try and stay in touch with you, and to visit, telephone or write to you as often as they can. Your parents must check that you are being well looked after.

What will my private foster carers do for me?

While you are living with them they should look after you. They must do things that you do every day such as:

- Give you regular meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Make sure your hair and skin are properly looked after.
- Make sure you have clean clothes.
- Make sure that you go to school so that you can learn.
- Take you to the doctor or hospital if you are ill and make sure that you have regular visits to the dentist.
- Make sure you can meet new friends and enjoy your hobbies.
- Help you to stay in touch with your family.
- Help you to follow your religion or culture.

Your private foster carers should also respect the things that are important to you, such as, your religious customs and prayer times or foods that you eat. Your private foster carer should help you and respect this. They must also help you to learn about your culture and meet people from your community.

Are there things private foster carers must not do?

Your private foster carers must seek agreement from your parents, but if your parents are not around then they must speak to Social Services first. You private foster carers cannot:

- Change your name.
- Change your school.
- Move you to another family.
- Take you to another part of this country.
- Take you overseas to another country.

If you need serious medical treatment, your own parents have to agree to this, unless it is an emergency and your parents cannot be contacted quickly enough.

Why do Tower Hamlets' Social Services need to know if I am being privately fostered?

The Law says that the Social Services must make sure that every child is safe and well looked after. The best way to do this is to make sure that Tower Hamlets are told about every child who is privately fostered so that we can check that the child is well and happy.