Private Fostering:
A guide for carers and parents

Are you looking after someone else's child?

Is someone looking after your child or children?

www.havering.gov.uk/privatefostering
What is private fostering?
Private fostering is a private arrangement between a parent and a carer. When a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) is cared for and provided with accommodation by an adult who is not a close relative, for 28 days or more, it is called private fostering.
A relative in this situation is either a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or grandparents or great grandparents. They can be a full or half relation and could be related by marriage. Relatives also include step-parents.
Partners of the mother or father would not qualify as a relative; neither would extended family members such as great aunts, great uncles or cousins.

What is the Council’s role?
Havering Council has a legal duty to ensure that children and young people in this situation are safe and properly cared for. Under the Children’s Act you must tell the Council if you are entering into a private fostering arrangement.

There are many reasons why a child may be in a private fostering situation. They can include:
- Children living with a family friend because of a family crisis
- Children living with a friend’s parent
- Children who are living with someone else because their parents are studying or working unsociable hours
- Unaccompanied minors and homeless children
- Children with parents overseas.

If someone is, or will be looking after your child you must:
- Check that the arrangement is suitable for your child
- Contact Havering Council at least six weeks before the arrangement begins or within 48 hours if made in an emergency.

What should you tell the carer?
- You must make sure you give as much information about your child as possible, including the child’s health records, dietary preferences, school records, hobbies, religion and ethnicity.
- You are not giving up any rights as a parent and should be involved in all decisions concerning your child’s development and upbringing
- You must provide the carer with full financial support to care for your child
- You must provide an address and your contact details.

What will Havering Council do for me and my child?
Havering Council has a duty to find out whether the carer is suitable to care for your child. The Council will make regular visits to see your child and provide support and advice where needed.
If you have any concerns about your child’s welfare do not hesitate to contact Havering Council.
If you intend to foster a child privately

You need to contact Havering Council as soon as the arrangement is made or at least six weeks before the child comes to you. If it is an emergency the Council should be notified within 48 hours.

What information do you need?

• You must make sure the child’s parents give you as much information about the child as possible, including health records, dietary preferences, school records, hobbies, religion and ethnicity.

• You will need to discuss financial arrangements with the parents as they must continue to pay for their child’s upbringing.

• When a child leaves your care you must tell Havering Council within 48 hours that the child has left your care. You must also give the name and address of the person who will be caring for the child in the future.

• You must have the address and contact details of the parents.

For more information and to notify Havering of a private fostering arrangement please contact:

Havering Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

Phone: Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm) 01708 433222
Out of hours/weekends 01708 433999

Email: tmash@havering.gov.uk

Refer online: www.havering.gov.uk/privatefostering