



Private Fostering in Bexley

Do you look after a child/young person under 16 years old (under 18 if the child has a disability) that is not a close relative?

Are you a child/young person who is living with a carer who is not a close relative?

Are you a parent of that child/young person and you have asked another adult to look them, who is not a close relative?

Is the child/young person going to be cared for by/has been care for by an adult who is not a close relative on a full-time basis for more than 28 days?

If any of the above apply then the child/young person is being Privately Fostered

**If this applies to you - either as a parent, carer or child/young person please contact:
Bexley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
on 020 3045 5440**

What are common private fostering situations?

- ▶ Children living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home.
- ▶ Children whose parents' study or work involves
- ▶ unsuitable hours that make it difficult for them to use ordinary day-care or after-school care.
- ▶ Teenagers living with the family of a friend, boyfriend
- ▶ or girlfriend
- ▶ Children sent to the UK for education or health care by birth parents from overseas.
- ▶ Asylum seeking and refugee children.

Birth parents must:

- ▶ ensure that the proposed fostering placement is suitable for their child and is with someone who they trust;
- ▶ inform Bexley's Children's Social Care at least six weeks before the arrangement begins, unless the arrangement is made in an emergency, in which case, they must tell Bexley's Children's Social Care within 48 hours;
- ▶ retain parental responsibility and participate in all decisions about their child;
- ▶ provide the prospective carer with as much information as possible to help them care for the child.
- ▶ inform Bexley's Children's Social Care immediately if there are any changes to the arrangements, for example, if the carer moves address or the household composition changes.

Private foster carers must:

- ▶ inform Bexley's Children's Social Care at least six weeks before the arrangement begins, unless the arrangement is made in an emergency, in which case, they must tell social care within 48 hours of the child's arrival;
- ▶ notify Bexley's Children's Social Care of any change in circumstance relating to the care of the child - for example, a change of address, a change in household composition or if the child leaves their care (the child's new address must be given to the local authority).

The London Borough of Bexley must:

- ▶ check on the suitability of the private foster carer through home visits as outlined in The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering (DfES 2005);
- ▶ undertake assessments and checks, make regular visits to the child and monitor the overall standard of care;
- ▶ will ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are considered.
- ▶ ensure arrangements are in place to keep a record of private foster carers and children who are privately fostered;
- ▶ ensure that appropriate advice and support to carers is made available when needed;

If you would like the information in this document in a different format, please call 020 8303 7777 and ask for Communications/Graphics. The reference to quote is: 607933E/ 11.2021