What you need to know...  
[a guide for young people]

We can produce this document in braille, in large print, on audio tape and in other languages. If you would like a copy in one of these formats, please call: 01452 426504.

This booklet has been produced with the help of young people who are being privately fostered in Gloucestershire.
Sometimes your own 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 the local council must be told about this, because it is their job to make sure that you are properly looked after. The council has a Private Fostering Social Worker who will come and visit you and explain everything about the help you can receive.

Hi, I’m being privately fostered. My family’s social worker is great and very helpful and gives me lots of advice when I need it. The best thing about being in private fostering is that I’ve got somebody to talk to if I’ve got problems.

Zack (aged 12)

About six months ago I joined private fostering in Gloucestershire and it has helped me and my mum lots. A lady called Karen 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.

Megan (aged 13)

What is private fostering?

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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 carers are looking after you, you are still your parents’ child and they must make 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 write 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 carers 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
- 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.

Hi my name is Rebecca and I am 13 years old.

My life has been quite difficult in the past because my mum was diagnosed with bipolar this is a mental illness caused by depression.

Because of this my mum started arguing quite badly. About four years ago I joined young carers to get help and advice for my mum’s disorder and to help me feel less self conscious and they were great.

I went into private fostering and this has really helped my relationship improve with my mum which is what I wanted. It makes me feel much more positive than negative.

Rebecca
Useful people to call...

**ChildLine**
Tel: **0800 1111**
Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
A free and confidential helpline for children and young people in the UK. Provides help and advice about a wide range of issues.

**Pupiline**
Pupiline is a website set up by teenagers for teenagers and provides information and useful links on a range of issues including bullying. For more info visit [www.pupiline.net](http://www.pupiline.net)

**Gloucestershire Young Carers**
Tel: **01452 733060**
Private fostering has been a good experience. I am where I want to be and I am happy. I was able to stay at my school and with my friends when my mum moved away. Amy (aged 15)

Private fostering came in handy because my mum wasn’t looking after me properly. So I moved to live with my nan and she looks after me, loves me and feeds me. I am happy here with nan. Then the social worker for private fostering got involved and she really helps me and my nan. I can also phone her if I have any problems or if my nan does.
Luke (aged 10)

For help, support and advice please contact:
The Private Fostering Social Worker
Friends & Family Fostering Team
2nd Floor
Quayside House
Shire Hall
Gloucester
GL1 2JU
Tel: 01452 427874
Email: private.fostering@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Or call the Children & Families Helpdesk on 01452 426565