

Caring for somebody else's child

Friends and Family Care, Private Fostering and Close Family Care

Friends and Family Care

Friends and family care is when a child is looked after by the council and is placed with family members or friends who have been approved as foster carers just for that child. You will be assessed in the same way as other foster carers and will receive regular visits from the child's social worker and from the Friends and Family Fostering Team. Parental Responsibility remains with the local authority and birth parents if the child is the subject of a care order or just the birth parents if there is no care order.

How long would being a friends and family carer last?

You would be a friends and family carer for as long as this type of care remains the Care Plan for the child - subject to annual review of your approval.

Will I get any help?

You will get regular visits from the social worker for the child and from the social worker from the Fostering Team who is appointed to support you. There are also foster carer support groups and regular training.

Any children placed with you will have detailed Care Plans and any support services needed to meet the children's needs will be included in the plan. The Care Plans will be regularly reviewed.

Will I get any financial help?

You will receive weekly maintenance payments for the child as well as additional allowances for holidays, birthday and Christmas. For this reason you cannot claim child benefit for the child. The maintenance allowance is not taxable. You will not be paid a fee as if you were a regular foster carer.

Hertfordshire County Council
Children, Schools and Families

Telephone: 0300 123 4043
www.hertsdirect.org/csf



Private Fostering

Private Fostering is an informal arrangement where a person looks after somebody else's child under the age of 16 years (or 18 years if the child has disabilities) for more than 28 days, when they themselves are not a close relative of the child and do not have parental responsibility for the child. A placement may have been arranged by the child themselves or by a parent but not by the Local Authority.

The birth parents retain full parental responsibility for the child and for the making of all decisions in respect of the child.

The Local Authority will make visits to the child to ensure the child's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. The Local Authority may act as an intermediary for the exchange of information and views.

How do I become a private foster carer?

A private fostering arrangement is made directly between you and the birth parents - not by the Local Authority.

The Local Authority will make sure that you are suitable and will assess you by making a number of enquiries. Although the Local Authority does not approve private fostering placements, it does have the power to prohibit a person from privately fostering if the assessment shows that the arrangement is not suitable.

How long would being a private foster carer last?

Until the parents decide to remove the child from your care.

Would I get any help?

A social worker will visit the child regularly and complete an assessment of the child's needs. You will also receive information about the support services available in the area if the assessment decides the child needs them.

Will I get any financial help?

Financial support of a privately fostered child is the responsibility of the birth parents. You will be given information about your entitlement to child and other financial benefits.

Care by close family

A close relative is a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle (either full blood or through marriage, civil partnership or adoption) or a step parent.

Care by a close relative is a private arrangement made within the family with the birth parents having full parental responsibility, including responsibility for financial support.

Will I get any help?

If you need any help you can access support services available in the area. If you are concerned about the child you could ask the Local Authority to complete an assessment for support services (as any family with children living at home is entitled to do). This may include social work help or help from other agencies.

Will I get any financial help?

The parents have financial responsibility for the care of the child.

You should take advice about child and other financial benefits you may be able to claim in respect of the child.

This guide provides some general advice on these options and the financial and other support that may be available. The range of support available may vary between authorities and entitlement to financial support in particular will be determined by individual circumstances.

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This factsheet is part of a series which focuses on children who are unable to be cared for by their parents – either permanently or temporarily - and what arrangements can be made to care for them. Please ensure you read the other factsheets which cover:

- **Parental responsibility and Special Guardianship**
- **Residence Orders**
- **Foster care**
- **Friends and Family Care, Private Fostering and Close Family Care**

For more information please contact 0300 123 4043 or visit www.hertsdirect.org

This information can be made available on request in other formats, including large print, Braille, audio and other languages.