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Local Authority Accommodation (Section 20)

It is possible for parents to voluntarily place a child into local authority foster care. This occurs by way of a section 20 agreement that those holding parental responsibility are requested to sign.

The local authority has a duty to provide appropriate accommodation to any child that requires such. This may be with a foster carer, or in certain cases, the local authority may approve a family member of family friend as a temporary foster carer.

A section 20 agreement does not provide the local authority with parental responsibility for a child. However the local authority may ask that the parent signs certain consent forms that will delegate certain decisions to the local authority – for example decisions with regards to urgent medical treatment.

A parent can request that a section 20 agreement is terminated with return of their child to their care immediately – the parent does not need agree to prescribed timescales.

It is advised that parents always seek legal advice prior to signing such an agreement.

Disclaimer: The material contained in this fact sheet is for general guidance only. It is specific to the law of England and Wales, and represents a brief outline of the law current as at the date of the fact sheet. It is not intended to constitute, or to be a substitute for, legal advice specific to your case. Information up to date as at 13 May 2019.

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