

FosterWiki®



THE 2024 INDEPENDENT FOSTER CARERS SURVEY

Question 21 Additional Comments

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Independent Foster Carer's Survey 2024 powered by FosterWiki Ltd.

We appreciate all the Foster Carers/Carers' time in completing this survey as it is your voice that needs to be heard to help raise the outcomes for the children and young people we care for.

The survey was completed by current or carers who have left fostering in the last 5 years.

The question was as follows:

"On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all easy, it does not feel safe and 10 is very easy and comfortable, how easy is it for you to openly discuss your experiences and your feelings about the challenges of the fostering role in your supervision discussions.?"

2284 people answered this question and left 165 additional comment responses.



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2. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. Easy to raise issues but not always resolved.
2. I have scored 8 as I'm still getting to know my new SSW. My old one I could say what I felt without fear of it being used against me. The jury is still out at present with my new one but so far, no issues.
3. I do not trust anyone employed by our LA.
4. It's only 10 because I'm quite abrupt and will always speak out for children
5. It feels like the worker deliberately doesn't ask things, then writes something untrue in reports
6. You fear being judged for failing or being careful what you say so it isn't taken out of context we are not treated at all like human beings with feelings.
7. My SSW is actually quite good, but some things still feel difficult. I have faced being told my feelings or requests have been unprofessional or a red flag.
8. My SSW is great. The only thing that stops me from being completely open is the fear of blowback or being seen as emotional etc.
9. We are very open with both our SSW and the CSW on how things are going and how we are feeling. This is so they fully understand the issues we are having with the girls.
10. I have been fostering for over 20 years. My role is now as a respite carer. But if one thing I've been taught is to watch my back and don't rock the boat. As an SW once told me it's not what you say it's how you say it. We have in the past had work withheld until we "reflected" on our actions. We came close to leaving. But I'm glad to say a change in management gave us the hope to stay on. We retire this year. Would I do it again, No.
11. What is said in supervision never gets reported accurately and positives are left out altogether. Everything seems to need the view of the management.
12. I am totally honest about everything good and bad. I don't care if what I say is not liked.
13. Very comfortable to talk about any problems and confident action will be taken if needed
14. I am very upfront with my SSW.
15. Anything said is turned into your fault, you're not doing it right, prove it.
16. We discuss this regularly but the usual response from our new SSW is that she doesn't know the answers we need. We then have to push for her to find out a response.
17. It feels safe as I have grown a few new layers of skin since becoming a foster carer and have realised that you have to speak up to advocate for the child. However, not much changes even when many of us are saying the same things. I joined a carers consultation group and am outspoken now because polite, quiet and smiley are not listened to.
18. Knowing that every single word I say is written down makes me very cautious about what and how much to say.
19. I now have an excellent worker
20. Open communication is possible within the boundaries of a professional relationship
21. We are lucky to have a good supervising social worker who has been with us for 7 years
22. I have been constantly bullied by my SSW since I reported the CSW so am very wary of reporting anything again.
23. I always get very negative feedback from my supervising social if I try and raise anything with him
24. Had really bad treatment two years ago but since moved to a new team I can't fault them so it just

shows the difference last team were toxic and bullies.

25. Just had a change so unable to comment.

26. I feel you have to be careful what you say As it took the wrong way.

27. It's like sitting with a barrister, you have to be careful of how you look.

28. I am very confident in my role as a carer and I find because of this I never hear from Social Work

29. I could tell my old SSW almost anything but have a new one so getting to know her and build a trusting relationship. So far she is lovely.

30. I specifically asked for my particular SSW, as she is professional, knowledgeable and does her job well.

31. Afraid if you are fully honest it will be used against you.

32. If discussed we are deemed not coping and given more training rather than support.

33. Depends on relationships with social workers, what they take back to management, feeling like a failure when things go wrong is all too common.

34. There is always that awareness that it could backfire & I may be judged and found lacking

35. Now we put ourselves first in discussions. We used to be so worried to say how we felt but now it's a

matter of if they don't like the truth then we stop foster caring.

36. Have excellent support with my IFA.

37. Sometimes you are deemed as a troublemaker and told not to discuss with others.

38. SW rarely sees the positives, over-emphasises the negatives and can't seem to make a decision without the guidance of management.

39. We are supported to a high standard regarding process and us conforming to standards. The supervision has a tick-list approach to child's health, training we have done etc. However, emotionally our worker seems not to care. This is difficult as we crave an authentic connection where we can openly discuss the experiences and emotions of loving somebody else's child and the complexities involved. Our support seems very mechanical and it is assumed we can 'cope' as we are experienced, this translates to no phone calls or check-ins... we recently did a final contact with a heartbroken Mum, it was harrowing for me and not so much as a text from our worker to see how I felt. We attended the adoption planning meeting, our worker informed the professional of their absence but not us. During adoption introductions, we were completely unsupported as another foster carer informed us our worker was on holiday.... We are to just get on with it. The support is shocking at the moment and we feel unable to raise it, thinking about quitting but we believe in the difference fostering can have upon a little life and are proud of what we have contributed!

40. My social worker is good but the system is very bureaucratic.

41. It's a constant daily worry that keeps me up at night that we are going to get the child ripped away at any point because we show any sort of concern or disagree with a social worker.

42. I always voice my opinions.

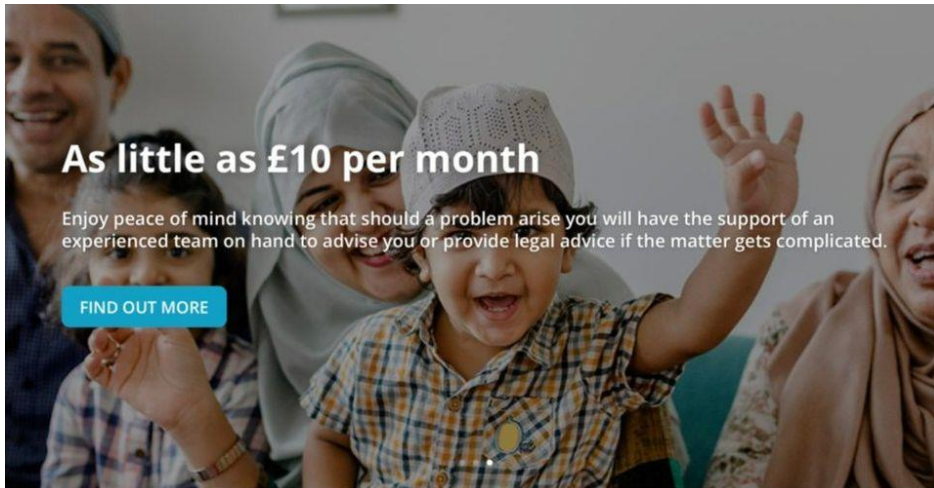
43. We are lucky we have an amazing SSW and have had her for 7 years! The difference this makes is incredible.

44. Sometimes my views are not listened to

45. I'm not one to speak up but I'm getting better at it.

46. Due to recent poor relationship with an SSW has made us wary to discuss how we feel

47. You feel you will be judged. We have identified a need for a regular break because of undiagnosed developmental delays/autism we were not told about when YP first arrived, but the manager's response is more concerned we are seeking respite not helping us to avoid breakdown and preserve our own mental health and wellbeing.
48. This is because I have had 3 amazing SW, other carers are not so lucky! Consistency needed.
49. Too judgemental, do not allow you to let of steam
50. Never want to be anything other then midline with them because you never know the consequences



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