

# FosterWiki®



## THE 2024 INDEPENDENT FOSTER CARERS SURVEY

### Question 26 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:

*“Have you ever chosen not to seek support for your mental health challenges because of fear it could damage your role as a foster carer?”*

2259 people answered this question and left 275 additional comment responses.



All comments are the opinions of the people who have made them and do not represent the opinion of FosterWiki Ltd. FosterWiki has only supplied a limited number of comments. A full list can be requested for research purposes or official Government use. Any application will be considered on its merit. These comments or any part of this document cannot be used as part of any publication in any form either electronic, written or any other medium without the express written permission of FosterWiki Ltd.

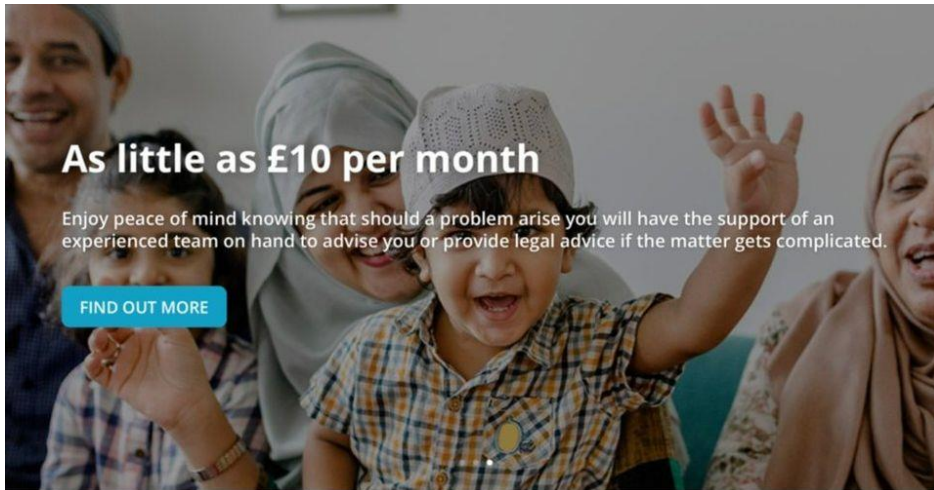
## 2. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. I put it off for a long time but cannot any longer do have now spoken to my GP and SSW.
2. I suffered from serious depression, previously and would prefer not to seek support as it would be held against me.
3. I am a strong person,
4. Think this is common
5. It's difficult to talk to social workers about this but I will access support through family and friends
6. I have put off accessing this until after the panel.
7. We are fighting for the girls to their mental health issues felt with, but not for us.
8. Resisted for over 3 years until it was clear help was desperately needed.
9. N/a
10. I've chosen not to speak about it rather than not get support
11. Without a doubt they discriminate against any disability once we have had a medical our disability is discussed in front of a room full of unqualified people, where you are made to justify why you can foster with a disability. The doctor's report should say yes or no any questions can be asked privately. There is no need for all of them strangers to hear all your medical history. In any other sector, it is disability discrimination to question someone who has been doing the job for years to justify their disability.
12. So many questions on the medical form that I do worry seeking therapy or antidepressants could be used against us to end our fostering career. Especially as I rally other foster carers to join the union, speak up etc so could be branded a troublemaker.
13. I always went to my doctor for guidance.
14. I don't understand this as SW are always off with stress, but they would turn on you if u said you were stressed.
15. But I know many that are afraid.
16. My doctor offered my short-term anxiety meds due to the pressure SW were putting on me to lie about something they had done, I had proof of this and they came after me so hard I had a breakdown but my doctor covered it by saying it was menopause related as they would definitely have used this against me.
17. You know it will come back on your medical.
18. Refused therapy sessions for depression.
19. I believe I am neurodivergent, but I will not get diagnosed because of fear it will affect my fostering.
20. Pride and fear of being tagged as a risk is always present in our minds
21. Of course
22. any record would go on medical records and sure to be brought up at the next review -nothing is withheld and it seems that you cannot seek help without a whole department and Panel knowing about it.
23. There is a stigma around MH being seen as a weakness... FCs are required to be superhuman parents who have no character flaws. FCs are judged for having issues with their MH.
24. Yes! It's marked as 'not coping' that they use against you when you ask questions it's because you're

unstable!

25. Yes Dr wanted to give me anti-depression tablets but I refused in fear of losing my job.
26. But I know of carers that have.
27. I fear having asked for medication from doctors, they would think I wasn't coping. I use my own supplements and meditation etc but at times I still struggle and would probably benefit from professional help.
28. I was open when I signed on that I had depression since having birth children. I know my mental health had to be good to provide a good and safe place for looked after children. I try and be proactive about it.
29. I know foster carers would never see a GP because they are fearful.
30. It's frowned upon. That you can't cope or do the job.
31. Absolutely, fear it would be used by SW as a weapon against us.
32. The slightest thing would be an issue.
33. Absolutely! They will see our humanness as a weakness and exploit us further.
34. Always been open about how it is affecting me
35. I've been concerned to seek help especially because we are wanting to transfer, and I'm worried it would go against me although there's a very valid reason.
36. Dr put on my health review that I was stressed. This was flagged as a concern at my review by the agency Dr who insisted it was discussed with me before re-approving me!! Luckily the IRO was a former foster carer and said she'd be more worried if I wasn't stressed.
37. Too judgemental, would cause issues.
38. No but understand why people wouldn't request help if needed
39. I feel I am viewed as "difficult" and don't want to give SW any ammunition when I feel they are gunning for me.
40. They are very judgemental and make you feel as if fostering isn't the right job for you. Quite patronising too.
41. Fostering does not provide a safe environment for foster carers to look after our mental health. The focus is always on the children not on the actual foster carers and how negative experiences affect our wellbeing.
42. Go against me.
43. Absolutely.
44. I'll shout it from the rooftops. Makes no difference, no service to provide - oh wait, there was a pilot where we were offered 6 individual sessions and had a monthly group facilitated by a specialist therapist - it was great but they decided not to roll it out...
45. I have felt I had to talk to someone because the supervising social worker decided I should.
46. But I know a few carers who have definitely hidden things because of fears they will have their children removed.
47. 100% they would question your ability to care for the children appropriately.
48. I was put on antidepressants for the menopause and was honest about this but felt like it was brought up too many times and spoken about unnecessarily. Even brought up in my yearly review
49. And the advice from XXXXX XXXX was not helpful.
50. I've never spoken to another professional outside of fostering about the damaging impact

fostering has had on me.



<https://nupfc.com/>

## FosterWiki Toolkits



FosterWiki New Foster Carers Toolkit



FosterWiki Fostering Teenagers Toolkit



FosterWiki Toolkit for New Social Workers



FosterWiki Toolkit for Top Ten Tips

Vist our toolkits at [FosterWiki.com](https://FosterWiki.com)