

FosterWiki®



THE 2024 INDEPENDENT FOSTER CARERS SURVEY

Question 3 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.

Question 3 was as follows:

“From your evidence of front-line practice does your fostering service or agency comply with National Minimum Standards and fostering regulations?”

2449 people answered this question and left 378 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. Even though I work for an Ofsted 'Outstanding' authority there are many examples of them not following NMS or stat regs, but there seems to be no oversight and Ofsted doesn't hear about it.
2. They make things up to suit themselves. We live in fear all the time.
3. I constantly have to remind our LA of their statutory obligations from SSW and up the chain of command. I also believe they are failing in not ensuring all their foster carers are aware of what the National Minimum Standards are.
4. Only if they comply with what the LA wants us to do.
5. Depends on the staff member and if they want an easy Friday and weekend. For example, have left another foster child at risk in placement but couldn't do anything due to it being a weekend.
6. Failed to give in writing the details of an allegation, failed to support carer.
7. But we all know the minimum standards aren't good enough. They also sometimes forget to do things.
8. Mostly they are good.
9. Staff shortage and crisis management means visits are left to the last minute or by telephone only when it suits them, or it can be done on the cheap.
10. Only when it suits them. They are more than happy to bend the rules if it gets them out of a fix.
11. Allegations process unsound.
12. Only since I filed sixteen complaints against them. this seems to have altered the way both ourselves and the children in our care are treated now. Sadly, it's taken six years of fighting them to get to this stage.
13. We have not had an allocated Supervising Social Worker for around 6 months now. We are currently "supported" by a manager. We have not had supervision for a few months.
14. The timelines are not kept in line with fostering regulations.
15. It can often be lip service rather than actual adherence.

16. Only the bits they want, most social workers don't even know NMS or regulations. Them that do interpret it to their own advantage. For example, you're not employed so can't use whistle-blowing protection.
17. Poor service from some social workers.
18. We have never been given any information on national minimal standards or fostering regulations. Presumably, we should have access to this.
19. Supervision notes so rarely it is almost never.
20. Their handbook is years out of date with the wrong manager's name and incorrect information. They do not discuss allowance rates, we find out after the placement begins when we receive our first pay, up to 3 weeks later. Lack of transparency.
21. It tries to but time/caseload pressures/keeping LA happy sometimes get in the way.
22. I had a baby placement and didn't see the CSW for 7 months and my SSW was off for 2 months at the same time.
23. Not sure what the minimum Standards are.
24. Northern Ireland does not have statutory fostering standards therefore the Trusts (LA) do what they want. We do have the old NFCA 1999 standards, but these are largely ignored as best practice guidance which does not have to be followed.
25. Out-of-date policies and inconsistencies.
26. Who is meant to ensure compliance with these standards and regulations? And how would we as foster carers go about CHALLENGING any possible non-compliance? Where is there a plain English version of such standards and regulations for ALL stakeholders to see and easily understand?
27. They do now for the first two years, however, they did not and only when I threatened to leave, did they step up and support me the way they should do.
28. When it suits them.
29. Very dependent on the social worker.
30. Hit and miss due to the high turnover of social workers.
31. Children definitely do not come first. Everything is manipulated to suit social workers' agenda. Their goal is cost saving not what's in the best interests of the child.
32. Sometimes it's about the local authority rules and regulations rather than child centred.

33. I have way too many examples of some social workers having complete disregard for the children at
34. all and calling the carers liars despite things being backed by medical teams, they change paperwork to fit their narrative and when it's proven that a foster carer's concern was correct, factual and proven right - they then try and manage a foster carer's reputation and end placements. For example - Some CSWs do not meet NMS for visits and information on the system is inputted as if a visit has occurred. Evidence that there was no visit.
35. Very poor procedure adherence.
36. Does not adhere to fostering regulations, timescales for supervision or reviews.
37. Not when it suits them - no supervision notes, no supervision, long gaps between visits. Delayed annual fostering approval so many are not actually approved annually. Only had about 6 annual reviews in 11 years. we have to adhere to NM when it suits them.
38. My agency was found not to follow NMS for dealing with allegations and internal investigations.
39. No social workers create their own standards.
40. They rarely write supervision notes. Children's social workers on many occasions just turn up at your door gone 5 pm. Showing up for Statutory visits shows no respect for your private family time. Busy time to turn up when you are having a family meal and getting ready to bath the children.
41. Having to fight, ask and ask for money for equipment, clothes and items that you might need for your children.
42. They only follow when it suits them.
43. Poor matching - empty bed syndrome Communication - if your face fits
44. When we accepted the new placement, the social worker did not make a care/ placement plan etc. -The child's social worker did not visit the child after placement started within the time scale. -The child's social worker did not investigate when I reported an injury, bruise and comments which were not true. -When an allegation happened, the social worker did not follow the procedure and provided wrong, insufficient and misleading information to the doctor and in strategy meetings and LADO meetings.
45. She said the council didn't know about the bruise until respite care was reported. However, I reported already to the social workers and their manager. When I requested to discuss about the social workers' mistakes and possible professional misconduct, the council and social workers ignored did NOT discuss new info and concluded regardless.

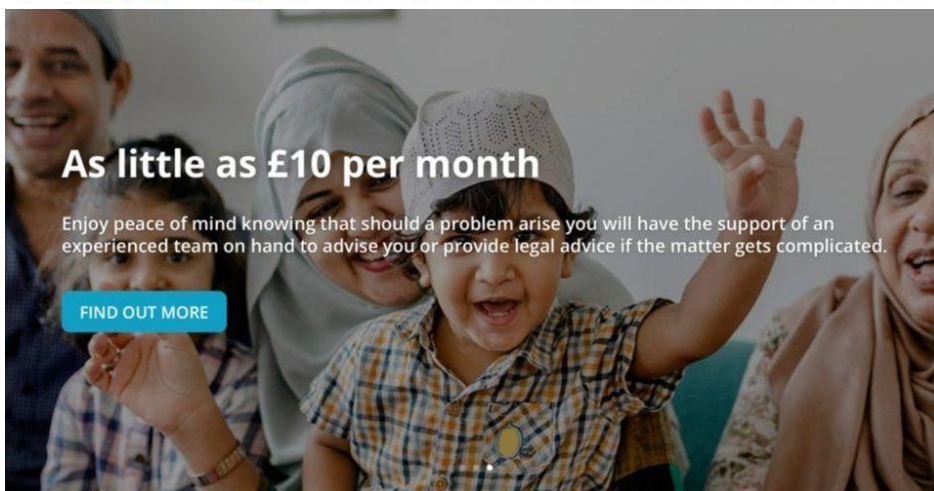
We were unable to get all the data because we were excluded whole process and had no parental rights. -After S47 conclusion, we haven't got the report as NMS 22.7. -The fostering team wanted to send us to the panel without fostering investigation and telling us the outcome. When we refused to attend the panel, the fostering manager said they could make a decision without us.

The manager from the fostering team gave a statement that foster carers could provide their explanation, views and opinion of the allegation during the fostering investigation although it needed to be separated (NMS22.8) and we were confused because we complained against the exclusion whole the child protection medical and S47 investigation process. During the stage 2 investigation of our complaint, the director of the children, education and skills from the council wrote that there was NO allegation was made against us by the service.

We still don't know why we were suspended from work, referred to allegation support and need to have a fostering investigation then attending the panel without the LADO recommendation. The council is unable to explain clearly and trying to cover their mistakes.

I personally feel even senior managers for fostering team and the children's services in the council don't understand fully the NMS and regulations, and/or ignore the NMS and guidelines. They also ignore the Human rights of foster carers. and have been breaching the law like the children's act and working together, too.

46. It feels like this is an aim, however often insufficient information or staff shortages mean this does not always happen.
47. When it suits them, they will change things otherwise they refuse to agree to things a foster carer just has to follow or leave and leaving g is a very daunting process which takes up months of your life and you then have the threats from the IFA saying negative things about you to try stopping the transfer.
48. I'm relatively new so don't understand everything yet but in my experience so far things are not as thorough as they should be which is concerning.
49. Social workers have long had their own personal practices and only record what works for them. My personal experience is seeing the difference in children being adopted or not and being returned to abuse. They regularly falsify records to look efficient. I have been left with no support whatsoever on a case and dealt with a lot myself.
50. Our agency (EFS) has been rated as Outstanding and in the main they are great BUT they have made some appalling decisions for us.



<https://nupfc.com/>

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Intergrated Assessment Process (IAP)