

Fostering Network Advice and Mediation Service

My name is Sarah Furby and many will already know that I am the Advice and Mediation worker for Notts.

What Do I Do?

I provide an independent service you can turn to about any aspect of fostering that affects you or your family.

For example:

- Allegations and complaints;
- Financial issues;
- Concerns about a child's future;
- Changes in legislation;
- And anything else you can think of

I will advise you by phone or, if necessary, visit you or attend meetings with you. If possible I will sort out what is worrying you before it becomes complicated. If it is a difficult issue, I will help you untangle it.

Who uses the service?

The top three reasons why carers contact me are making a complaint, facing an allegation and de-registration.

Allegations can have a huge impact on carers and their families and the distress caused cannot be overestimated. I have supported families going through such an ordeal by staying in regular contact by phone, communicating with the department on the carers' behalf, visiting, helping with reports, ensuring communication between relevant people is happening and attending Panel with carers.

Many complaints are the result of communication difficulties and when sorted early on can result in more satisfying and supportive working relationships. I would strongly urge any carer who is unhappy about the services they are receiving, to contact me as soon as they can, in order that we can see how the issues can be resolved.

Not just allegations:

Carers contact me about a wide range of things and I am happy to discuss anything that may be of concern to a carer. This year I have offered support and advice to carers about allowances, damages and theft, placement planning, training, support and leaving care.

Contacting me:

You can contact me by phone or email.

Tel: 0115 9452486
Mobile: 07918 708945
Email: sarah.furby@fostering.net

I work part time (9 hours for the County), but please leave me a message and I will ring you back as soon as I can. Any conversation with me is confidential (unless of course there are child protection concerns) and I never take matters out of carers' control. Anything I do on behalf of a carer is always agreed beforehand.

What do carers think of the service?

After working with a carer, they are sent a questionnaire to fill in about the service they received. Here are some of the comments carers made last year:

"I found the service extremely useful. I felt I was able to talk to Sarah quite easily even before I met her. If she wasn't at the end of the phone when I called, she returned the call very promptly. Without the service I would have felt very alone."

"At the time of need of the A & M service I was distraught, being able to talk to someone who understood what I was going through was crucial. Sarah Furby was absolutely fantastic, sympathetic and professional."

"I cannot express enough how important this service is. It was my lifeline. Being a foster carer is stressful enough, but when there is an allegation against you it is very traumatic for all involved. Also facing the panel is very daunting and so it is great to have the A & M worker there."

Please feel free to contact me about **anything** that concerns you as a foster carer, if I don't know the answer I know someone who does!

Look forward to hearing from you.

No problem is too small – or too large!