GMB is now representing foster carers in all 9 regions. Foster carers are joining the GMB for individual protection and support as well as to get involved in the active collective campaigns, local and national. Strength is in numbers. The more foster carers we represent, the more chance we have of making real improvements for foster carers and the children they look after. Please pass a copy of this newsletter on to a foster carer who may not already be a member of the GMB.

Local Campaigns:
The GMB continues to represent foster carers in their campaigns to protect their current terms and payments. As local authorities are facing more budget cuts this year, foster carers terms and children’s allowances are now being looked at as a way for councils to manage these cuts.
**Westminster Debate**

GMB Foster Carer Representatives attended Parliament to meet with John McDonnell MP and Paula Sherriff MP. They want to offer support to foster carers and are looking at calling for a Westminster debate. We have submitted what we think should be our main points for the debate - a national register for foster carers, national standards, tax and pension reforms. Once the debate is called we will be calling on MP’s across the country to support. We will be encouraging all of our foster carer members to speak with their MP’s to request their support with the debate.

**Labour Party Manifesto**

John McDonnell MP has requested that GMB creates a Manifesto for Fostering which can be presented at Labour Party Conference in September 2017 and hopefully adopted as Labour Party policy.

**Allegations**

There have recently been an increase in historic allegations being made against foster carers. GMB members are entitled to contact the GMB for criminal representation should they find themselves being questioned by the police. Please advise foster carers to join the GMB to ensure they have access to support and representation when needed.

**Children & Social Work Bill**

As a result of foster carers responses to the GMB survey regarding the potential impacts of the proposed amendments to the Children's & Social Work Bill, we secured a debate on our proposed amendment. The GMB met with Emma Lewell-Buck MP who has been supporting our foster carers to discuss the issues and what improvements we are striving for. Emma Lewell-Buck MP submitted our amendment and it was debated. The amendment was as follows:

*Standardisation of Local Arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children The safeguarding partners for a local authority area in England must make arrangements for-
  (a) safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, where appropriate, to work across and with multiple local authorities, and (b) a minimum local standard setting out allowances, support, training and terms and conditions for foster carers.*

The response received was that our issues would be raised and dealt with in the upcoming fostering stocktake. Emma will continue to ensure foster carers issues are on the agenda.

For more details about GMB membership & campaigns for Foster Carers contact: Rachel Harrison - Organiser

rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk / 0345 337 7777