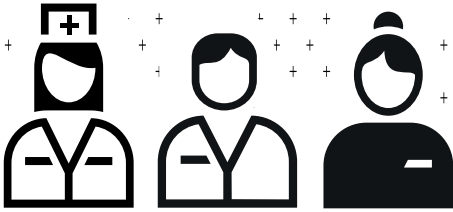




AUGUST 2018 issue 2



FOSTER CARERS

Fostering Better Outcomes

The government in England has finally released their report following on from the Education Committee Inquiry into Fostering and the National Fostering Stocktake – and what a disappointment it was. GMB members have contacted us to express their anger at what appears to have been a waste of time, effort and resources as the report does little to remedy many of their concerns.

GMB members made contributions into both the Inquiry and the Stocktake to form the evidence submitted by the GMB in good faith that foster carers would be listened to and the necessary changes would be made to improve fostering for all – foster carers and children looked after.

The report did make some key recommendations including training for social workers, better support for foster parents including access to peer support and respite, and delegated authority for foster parents.

However, the report proved to be very disappointing and lacking in many areas.

Despite the report referring to a need to understand national and local vacancies better, there was no mention of the creation of a national register. This was one of the key recommendations made by the GMB in both the Inquiry and Stocktake and it is extremely disappointing that it has been ignored. The GMB believes that a national register of foster carers is a fundamental part of making the fostering system more efficient. It would assist with cross-authority and agency working and the sharing of resources ensuring the child is placed with the right foster carer for them. Recruitment campaigns would no longer need to be run at the expense of each different local authority or agency. A national register, providing national terms and standards would also recognise foster carers as the professionals they are.

The report also failed to make any recommendations to change current tax and benefits entitlements or to allow access to local authority or employer provided pension schemes. The report may have said that local authorities would have to adhere to national minimum allowances, but these need to be reviewed, increased and funded accordingly. Positive changes in these areas would make a huge difference to foster carers lives in enabling them to continue fostering in this financially insecure profession.

Worryingly, the report failed to recognise the vulnerability of foster carers when it comes to allegations. Foster carers are left in the hands of varying local procedures, without employment right protections or even access to trade union representation. The report may have announced that it is OK for a foster carer to hug children – but if the government is serious about attracting and retaining more foster carers it has to address their lack of protections and representation rights as a matter of priority.

The report also failed in making a recommendation regarding funding. Local authorities are in desperate need of funding and fostering services have suffered greatly as a result of almost a decade of austerity measures. Within the last couple of weeks two more local authorities have announced that they will have to cut essential children's services due to the lack of funding. Our most vulnerable children in society and the people who provide the vital role in caring for them are being hugely let down and it has to change now.

JOIN ONLINE: WWW.GMB.ORG.UK/JOIN



“LET’S STICK TOGETHER AND RETAIN OUR HARD FOUGHT TERMS AND CONDITIONS”

You can read the full report at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-better-outcomes>

You can also read The Fostering Networks Response at:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/news/2018/huge-disappointment-and-wasted-opportunity-fostering-networks-response-governments>

GMB will continue to campaign on behalf of foster carers to address the concerns raised with us throughout both of the Inquiry and Stocktake. Keep an eye out for next month’s GMB newsletter which will contain a survey for you to complete to set our agenda for the next 12 months.

The Fostering Network – State of the Nation Survey

GMB continues to work alongside The National Fostering Network to jointly campaign for national improvements to the fostering system – for foster carers and children looked after. This year’s State of the Nation Survey is now live and needs your valuable contribution. You can access the survey at:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/research/state-nations-foster-care-2018>

Get Involved

Do you want to arrange a GMB meeting for you and other foster carers in your area? Email Rachel Harrison – GMB National Officer – Rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk

Pass this newsletter onto a non-union member and ask them to join today – www.gmb.org.uk/join

GMB Membership Subscriptions:

1 Oct 2017 rates for GMB membership will be as follows:-

Part time - Grade 2 = £1.78 per week (£7.72 pm)

- Like our Facebook Page: GMB – The Union for Foster Carers
- Rachel Harrison – GMB Public Services National Officer (Foster Carers) – Rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk
- For details of other GMB benefits including pensions advice, credit union and discounted insurances – please contact your local GMB office.

Join GMB today

Joining GMB is easy, quick and fast. You or your colleagues can join online at: www.gmb.org.uk/join

Or, you can complete the enclosed GMB application form (No stamp required) and simply post to:

FREEPOST GMB

Any questions?


Ring 020 7391 6700 and ask for the GMB Public Services Section or email: info@gmb.org.uk

JOIN ONLINE: WWW.GMB.ORG.UK/JOIN

Join now for protection, support and advice.

Hand this form to your local GMB representative, or post it by simply writing 'FREEPOST GMB' on an envelope. You don't need a stamp or any other address details. Questions? Email us at info@gmb.org.uk or visit our website: www.gmb.org.uk where you can also join instantly.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

SIGN WHERE YOU SEE THE 

TELL US ABOUT YOU. This will help us do the best possible job for you.

Forename <input type="text"/>	Home address <input type="text"/>	Work address <input type="text"/>
Surname <input type="text"/>	Postcode <input type="text"/>	Postcode <input type="text"/>
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Mobile number <input type="text"/>	Employer <input type="text"/>	Hours a week <input type="text"/>

THE IMPORTANT BITS. Please authorise the Direct Debit.



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the form and send back to 'FREEPOST GMB'

Name & full postal address of Bank/Building Society

To the Manager of Bank/Building Society
Address:

Postcode:

Service User Number

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Instruction to your Bank or Building Society. Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with GMB & if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Signature(s)



Date

Account number

Sort code

Banks/Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.

PAYMENT DATE. Please select a payment date.

This is not part of the instruction to your bank or building society.

If you are paid monthly 1st* 8th* 16th* 23rd* Last day of the month* OR if you are paid 4 weekly 1st Friday 2nd Friday 3rd Friday 4th Friday
* or next working day

STAYING IN TOUCH. We want to make it as easy as possible to talk to each other.

GMB contacts members by email, phone and SMS about issues related to membership, membership services and campaigns.

Tick if you DO NOT wish to be contacted by: Email Phone SMS

GMB has a political fund to pay for political campaigning, which you can opt-in to for 1p a week. In the past, the fund has helped win rights such as the minimum wage and maternity leave. There will be no detriment to you if you do not opt-in.

Do you want to opt-in to the political fund? YES NO

AND JOIN. I agree to abide by GMB rules.

Signed 

Date

To read the GMB rulebook please visit www.gmb.org.uk/rules For our privacy policy go to www.gmb.org.uk/your-privacy

You can change your contact preferences at any time by logging into your MyGMB area at www.gmb.org.uk/mygmb

Welcome to the GMB Union family!

FOR GMB USE ONLY

Section

Branch number

Membership number

Join date