

At least 1 in 4 foster carers face 'nightmare' of false allegations



GMB Union calls reform to allegations' process which sees foster children ripped from their home and causes heartbreak for foster carers

GMB, the union for foster carers, has today revealed at least 1 in 4 foster carers face the 'nightmare' of false allegation.

The study – one of the widest ranging surveys of foster carers ever undertaken – shows 55% of foster carers have faced allegations, more than half of which have been proven false.

The rest are unfounded and unsubstantiated with only a tiny percentage of allegations actually proven.



Of the allegations made, 42% resulted in children being moved from the home.

Once shocking example, a foster child was taken from his home of two years due to unfounded allegations foster parents were trying to 'poison' the child. The foster parents never found out who made the allegations and never saw the child again.

66 It's shocking that one in four foster carers face unfounded allegations against them – yet many receive no training or support to get them through the nightmare

GMB has released the figures as part of its 'Allegations Campaign' launch in Leeds today [Thursday, 18th April] – part of the 'Foster Carers Make It Happen' event for Leeds City Council foster carers.

The survey highlights the current process for dealing with complaints is far from adequate, leaving many foster carers in limbo for weeks on end.

The union says it goes without saying that allegations need to be taken seriously with the child's best interest at the centre of any investigation. However, what is apparent is that often investigations are carried out without consideration of the impact to the foster carer, their family and other children in the home.

GMB has represented foster carers for a decade and this is the latest in a long line of campaigns to support them and to improve their worker status.

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer for foster carers, said:

"It's shocking that one in four foster carers face unfounded allegations against them – yet many receive no training or support to get them through the nightmare.

"Foster carers are isolated individuals, working in their homes, providing a vital role to the most vulnerable children in society, and yet due to their 'self-employed' status, they are often denied trade union representation and are forced to endure processes which are far from clear and transparent.

"The current system sees foster children unnecessarily ripped from their home and causes heartbreak for foster carers.

"The message from our members is loud and clear – reforms to the allegations' procedures are very much needed in order to protect all involved in fostering.



“That’s why GMB will continue to campaign for improvements in the fostering system for all of our members, including reforms to the allegations processes.”

Tracy Brabin, MP for Batley and Spen and campaigner for improved foster carers’ rights, said:

“It is absolutely essential that children in foster care and those who care for them receive the best possible support.

“Foster carers do an incredibly important job, but sadly the Government is failing to develop a strategy for the wholesale improvement of the care system that delivers for all.

“And this failure is affecting the most vulnerable in our society and those who care for them.”

Press office

079859 1525698

press.office@gmb.org.uk

Member requiring help?

Click to contact your local GMB Region

info@gmb.org.uk

