

7 Minute Briefing – Learning from Complaints – Fostering

01 Learning from Complaints

Learning from complaints is one part of our Quality Assurance Framework. It is important that if there is a complaint that has been made, and a mistake is made or our practice falls short for children, families or professionals that we understand what has happened, how it happened and what we have done to put things right. We then need to make sure that the service learns from the mistake, our practice improves and that we don't repeat the mistake again.

02 What happened, and what did it mean?

Three foster carers were concerned about many things that were not happening to help and support them in their role as carers for looked after children. This included:

- Fostering policies and procedures were not followed by practitioners and managers
- One Foster Carer did not have her Annual financial review held in time
- One Foster Carer had an updated assessment and this was not shared with them. One Foster carer had not been confirmed as long-term carers for children and this meant that some children did not know if they were staying with their carers
- Foster Carers did not always receive information about the children they were planning to care for and this meant that some children arrived at the foster carers with little known information
- One Foster Carer did not feel confident in looking after children from different backgrounds to herself. She felt that the training she received had not been adequate
- When complaints were made by the Foster Carers that their complaints were not responded to or resolved. This meant that the Foster Carers felt unheard and not listened to

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Fostering – Learning from Complaints

03 – Where did it happen?

The complaints were made by Foster Carers in the Fostering Service.

04 – When did it happen?

The complaints dated from 2016 and the foster carers were concerned that this was still happening early 2018.

07 – What do you need to do?

- Make sure that you have read this 7 minute complaints briefing
- Reflect on your own practice and consider if you need to do anything differently in your practice

06 – What was the learning for our practice in Sandwell Childrens Trust?

- It is important that all practitioners are clear about and follow the Policies and Procedures for the work that they do to ensure that children, families and foster carers get a consistent service
- That where there are timescales for work that we do that we keep to the timescales to ensure that children, families and Foster Carers get a good timely response and there isn't delay
- We always remember to share completed assessments with children, families and Foster Carers, before sharing these in meetings or panels
- We make sure that we feel confident in working with families from different backgrounds than ourselves and access appropriate training if needed
- We make sure that we respond to any complaints made in a timely way, and that complaints are resolved and learned from

05 – What action did we take?

- Fostering policies and procedures have been updated and shared across the service
- All the Fostering Teams have had training on the fostering standards and changes to policies and procedures
- There is now a tracker in place to ensure that financial reviews take place on time for foster carers
- There is now a long term fostering panel planned to ensure that children are matched with their carers
- That assessments are always shared with Foster Carers before Fostering Panel
- The Fostering Handbook and foster Carer Training was updated to include cultural competence training
- Complaints framework, process and guidance has been updated to ensure that complaints are responded to in a timely way and resolved from complainants