

Support for you when an allegation is made

When an allegation is made against a person in a position of trust, the local authority has a legal duty to investigate and to ensure that children are listened to and safe. Although this is a necessary process, we fully understand that it puts the foster carer and their family under emotional strain. However, a strong and robust investigation now should assist in ensuring that allegations do not resurface in the future or be open to challenge.

The Fostering and Adoption service will continue to provide you with advice and support throughout the investigation process. Having the right kind of support is important and this could come from a variety of sources.

Supervision:

Your allocated social worker (SW) may be the best person to support you and they will continue to meet with you, carry out supervision visits and should remain a source of emotional support. They are responsible for liaison with all professionals involved in the investigation and will provide you with all information that they are able to share throughout the process.

Whilst there is an open investigation into an allegation your social worker may not be able to give you specific details about the allegation as this could interfere with the investigation. This can cause frustration and confusion.

Your allocated SW will be empathetic and mindful of these frustrations. They must also be open minded to the possibility that something has happened whilst acknowledging that it may not have. This is sometimes a very challenging balance to strike.

If you feel unable to work with your supervising SW, please contact their manager who will arrange for a different fostering social worker to support you including supervision visits.

Support from Suffolk Foster Carers Association (SFCA):

It is not unusual for foster carers to feel isolated when they are the subject of an allegation. Emotional support is available via SFCA from fellow foster carers. You can access this support by emailing suffolkfca@gmail.com

Independent Support: Under Fostering NMS, foster carers have the right to access independent support during an investigation. You may wish to access this alongside the support from your own social worker. There are a number of sources of independent support to utilise:

Support from Fostering Network: All Suffolk foster carers are members of Fostering Network as the Service pays your membership fees. This support includes different telephone helplines offering help in the event of an allegation, legal assistance should the allegation become a criminal matter and professional emotional support. For more info, please visit: [The Fostering Network helplines](#) | [The Fostering Network](#) or email memberhelpline@fostering.net

Support from your own family and friends network inc. fellow foster carers:

You may have someone who you know, who you prefer to act as your support. In this case, you are free to make whatever arrangements you wish. It is helpful for your supervising social worker to know that you are getting this additional support and who is providing it. Remember that you should not share any confidential information about a fostered child or their family.

Support from Fosterline: Fosterline is the Dept of Education funded helpline that's available to all foster carers. See link for details:- [Supporting Foster Carers and those that want to Foster | Fosterline](#)

PRACTICAL ADVICE ON THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Keep the **contact details** of your main sources of support handy so they are easily accessible if you need advice or someone to talk to.

NAME: _____

CONTACT: _____

Remember:

Suffolk provides **out of hours support** through Fostering Out of Hours Advice Service (FOOHAS):

Tel: 0808 800 4005

It may help to **talk to your own children and extended family** members so they know there has been an allegation and an investigation is taking place. That way, they can be supportive and understand that things may be difficult for a while.

Remember: although it is unlikely, the fostered child(ren) may be moved for the duration of the investigation or they may be able to remain in placement with you. The decision about this should be made by the child's social worker in collaboration with you and your supervising social worker, thinking about what is best for everyone involved.

If the fostered child(ren) are moved, your family will need to understand some of why this has happened.

It may be difficult to say what will happen until the outcome of the investigation is known; but it can help to be able to talk about what is going on so any worries can be addressed as well as possible. Your supervising social worker may be able to support you to talk to your family, if you wish.

Check that your **daily recordings** are up to date and ensure these have been shared with your supervising social worker and the child's social worker too.

Remember:

any significant incidents, arguments or altercations with or about a child in your care should have been recorded and notified to the fostering service. If this was not done, you can do this now.

If you have attended the **Allegations Training** and/or have a copy of the **Allegations Guidance**, refer to this. It has clear information about the process that will be activated following an allegation including the role of the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and what the investigation will look like.

Please ask your Supervising Social Worker for a copy of the guidance if you do not have one; or it can be found on the Suffolk Fostering Website. [Fostering resource hub - Fostering and Adoption \(suffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/fostering-resource-hub)

Remember:

There is lots of support available for you.

Please take advantage of any provision that will help you manage what we recognise can be a difficult time for you and your family.