

Support options for foster carers

during allegations, concerns or complaints



Contact: independent.support@fostering.net

Support pathways for foster carers



- **Fosterline** – all foster carers and prospective foster carers can access free, confidential and impartial advice, support and signposting on a wide range of issues including concerns, complaints and allegations. The service is not able to advocate on foster carers' behalf to services, or attend meetings, panels or home visits.
- **Membership** – specifically for foster carer members of The Fostering Network. See our membership leaflet for full information.
- **Advocacy & Mediation Service** – this is the most comprehensive and effective service for foster carers and fostering service staff. The service provides direct support to foster carers experiencing a concern, complaint or allegation. Consultants provide intensive emotional support, advice, guidance, mediation and advocacy to foster carers throughout to ensure that they understand processes, their views are represented to empower them to fully participate in the process and services are meeting the National Minimum Standards.



Advocacy & Mediation Service



This service can be spot purchased, delivered via a service level agreement where The Fostering Network is the preferred provider or through a variety of contracts:

- **Spot purchase** – fostering services can refer their foster carers when they need support. Funding is then agreed with the service and a worker is allocated to support the foster carer.
- **Service level agreement** – preferred provider - having a service level agreement means The Fostering Network is the preferred provider for the service and guarantees that a consultant is provided when required at reduced cost.
- **Variable consultant contract*** - bespoke contracts can be offered to meet the individual needs of services guaranteeing a consultant is available when needed by foster carers and providing closer links with The Fostering Network to enhance the support available more widely to staff and foster carers.
- **Named dedicated consultant contract** - foster carers are able to contact their named, dedicated consultant directly and there is a commitment to respond to foster carers within two working days. Fostering services also benefit from this service because the dedicated consultant can provide advice on a range of fostering issues, attend meetings and events, and contribute to the service's development through an annual report.



Feature	Fosterlines NI, Wales, Scotland, England	TFN membership (foster carer)	Advocacy and Mediation (spot purchase)	Advocacy and Mediation (SLA)	Advocacy and Mediation (variable consultant contract)	Advocacy & Mediation (named, dedicated consultant contract)	A&M plus membership (named, dedicated consultant contract)
Advice	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Guidance	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Mediation	x	x	√	√	√	√	√
Advocacy	x	x	√	√	√	√	√
Home visits	x	x	√	√	√	√	√
Attendance at meetings	x	x	√	√	√	√	√
Legal support	x	√	x	x	x	x	√
24 hour counselling support	x	√	x	x	x	x	√
Direct access for foster carers	√	√	x	x	x	√	√
Consistent, dedicated worker	x	x	x	x	x	√	√
Attendance at and provision of training courses	x	x	x	x	√*	√	√
Fixed cost	N/A	√	x	x	x	√	√
Open ended (no time limit)	√	√	x	x	x	√	√
Provides tailored comprehensive service	x	x	x	x	x	√	√