

GOVERNMENT ISSUES POLICY STATEMENT WHICH STRENGTHENS THE CASE FOR OBTAINING SPECIAL WORKER STATUS FOR CARERS.

As the only Government Certified Trade Union in the UK solely representing foster carers, the National Union of Professional Foster Carers (NUPFC) sent a letter to all Fostering Service Providers in August and September 2026 advising them of upcoming changes in the Law where all employers are legally obliged to advise their workers of the existence of a suitable Union and that they are free to join a Union if they wish.

A simple request and easy to comply with one may think?

Local authorities and IFA's appreciated this, however the Department for Education (DfE) were contacted by The Fostering Network (TFN) who were obviously worried about all foster carers moving and the DfE have now issued a Policy Statement to all Fostering Service Providers (FSP) advising them that whilst the NUPFC is a Union, its members are not currently workers and the DfE (i.e. the Government), do not see Foster Carers as workers as foster care is not a job and it is not work, a point which you may be aware the Children's Minister Josh MacAlister has stated on television.

The Policy statement and our letter is attached for you to see and also refers to the case of ONI v Waltham Forest which the NUPFC are supporting in order to get Foster Carers the worker status they need to protect them against unjustified allegations, bullying and inappropriate treatment, which they currently have to endure as they have no protection.

We are also aware that the TFN have also forwarded this document to the FSP's they support in order to protect their position.

The NUPFC disputes the fact that being a Foster Carer is not a job or work but it is a special role and very unique work that Foster Carers fulfil and as such should be afforded a proper status to reflect that.

The children's Minister advocates that children and young people in the care system do not like to feel that they are work or a job and we concur with that, however many thousands of Foster Carers devote their whole lives to caring and believe it is their work and a job, however they protect the children and young people they care for from that image due to the exceptional love and care they are given by their Foster Carers, unlike those children who have to live in residential care as more and more foster carers leave the profession through lack of support.

Without pre-empting the changes to the Fostering System that the DfE are currently drafting, we believe that it is unlikely that Foster Carers will be given the full rights and protection they fully deserve and desperately need if the fostering service is to survive.

So far in ONI v Waltham Forest we have won the rights for Foster Carers to use the Employment tribunal system to claim if they have been discriminated against, however the DfE are now trying to overturn this Judgement without offering any independent and accountable alternative, where foster carers can go when they suffer miscarriages of justice at the hands of some Fostering Service Providers.

The good thing about the Governments policy statement is that it sets out their stance and strengthens the Oni Court case as it can now be produced to the Court so that Judges can see what foster carers are up against and to be objected to. In the meantime NUPFC is still fighting to ensure that you have the rights and protections foster carers deserve and earn by loving, protecting and caring for Society's most vulnerable children.

The DfE policy statement did confirm that FSP's should allow their Foster Carers to seek support from wherever they wish at meetings which we do welcome but it is not enough and Foster Carers deserve more.

We would urge you and any other Foster Carers you know to join the Union and help us fight for your rights and protections as you never know when you may need them and also to share a copy of this policy statement with your MP and ask them to get behind the Union in their Supreme Court Challenge to obtain a worker status for foster carers.

Join here www.nupfc.com/join