SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER RECEIVES OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD

19.11.19

NFA Wales Supervising Social Worker Picks Up National Award

October's Fostering Excellence Awards 2019 hosted by **The Fostering Network** championed the heartwarming fostering story of Nigel, who continued to care for children alongside his wife Penny as a defiant response in the face of life-changing circumstances.

We also want to take the opportunity to acknowledge another member of our National Fostering Group, **Steve, Supervising Social Worker** for the **National Fostering Agency**, who also picked up an award on the night for 'Outstanding Contribution by a Social Worker'.

Steve has worked on behalf of NFA Wales for the last two years, providing dedicated support for foster carers and children in their care based across the north and west of the country.

Start your fostering journey today ENQUIRE NOW

Having previously worked for Fostering Solutions assisting potential foster carers with their enquiries and **assessing their suitability to foster**, a fundamental understanding of the level of support our foster carers desire has been vital to forging a successful and growing fostering community in the region.

Strong professional relationships towards positive outcomes for children

When commenting on what it meant to receive the award, which was unanimously voted for on his behalf by all of his foster carers, Steve was characteristically humble: "I was completely shocked and surprised that I'd been nominated.

"I know this sounds very clichéd, but I just saw myself as doing my role in terms of making sure my foster carers were being supported, as well as trying to make positive relationships with the children that they care for to focus on their outcomes".

"Looking at our business core values, in terms of delivering on promises and taking accountability and responsibility for the positive outcomes of foster carers and children in their care, that seems to have come across in the way I am with our carers'.

Supervising Social Worker Steve receiving his award at The Fostering Network's Fostering Excellence Awards

'If I say that I will do something for them then they know it is going to get done. They have that security that I will always support them and advocate for them, as well as being readily available whenever they have any questions or need advice on a particularly challenging subject'.

*'We have a very positive support group here, including people like **Alison, Regional Manager**, who has been up from the NFA Wales office near Cardiff. She commented on how close the carers feel, especially given the often long distances between each foster family, as well as the professional relationship I have with all the carers, who each believe that they are able to talk to me about anything, which I think makes a massive difference to them".*

Creative solutions for logistical challenges

One of the main challenges facing Steve in his role has been in maintaining a strong peer-to-peer support network for foster carers wanting to share in their experiences and offer advice when required.

While regular support groups, foster carer meetups and training can prove difficult to organise in the remote regions of the UK in which we provide foster care services, Steve has consistently demonstrated how it is possible to work around such geographical barriers and still deliver a high-quality level of support.

"Between my supervising social worker colleagues and myself, we are able to deliver a fostering support service to all of our foster carers across the country', Steve continued.

'The vast majority of social workers are based between Cardiff and Swansea due to population density and demographics. North Wales is covered by myself and West Wales covered by another social worker. This is because there is currently the highest density of foster carers within the catchment area of the major cities'.

'Encouragingly, our foster carer presence in the north is steadily growing, to the extent that we have now developed into a nice team of 12 carer families in total'.

*'We do all of our training and support groups out of St Asaph, as it is central for many of our carers. Training is done with carers from our sister company **Fostering Solutions**'.*

'It's vital that we are quite creative in how we keep the carers in contact with each other. We use technology to our advantage, so they have social media and WhatsApp groups where they can still feel as though they always have someone in their situation to talk to when they need, meaning they don't necessarily have to be across the street from each other'.

'We also try to come up with things that the carer group can all get involved in together. The last very successful event involved a day on Abersoch beach back in August. It was so well received and all the kids were commenting on when they could do it again – it was a great day out".

Determined focus on the needs of foster carers, children and young people

Going above and beyond in doing whatever it takes to ensure that children in our care are placed within safe, nurturing and loving foster families represents a common theme running through Steve's work to date, with the winding country roads comprising late evening drives all being worth the effort when considering the significant social impact being made.

"I have a foster carer in Corwen that had a foster child from Swansea placed with them. They didn't set off until after school finishing time, and because of the length of the journey they only arrived into Corwen at about 10:30pm'.

'By the time we had completed the paperwork and settled the child in it was gone well past 11:00pm and I didn't get home until midnight'.

'At the end of the day, it's all about making sure we're available for children and the carers and being organised enough to make sure we have followed all the correct policies and procedures, ultimately knowing that if anything happens with the child that we have the means and the authority to support them in any way we can".

Do you live in Wales and want to find out more about becoming a foster carer? You will have the opportunity to change the lives of vulnerable children and young people with the help of passionate social workers like Steve. Start your rewarding fostering adventure by **enquiring with us** today!

All Tags

campaignbykids | fo | foster care fortnight | Fostering February | Fostering News | Shine a light | Stories

Start your fostering journey with National Fostering Group

- We have fostering agencies all across the UK
- Over 3,000 carers already part of our family
- Benefit from our local support groups and social workers

ENQUIRE NOW | CAN I FOSTER?

© National Fostering Group