

HELEN TAUBMAN



Helen Taubman is the founder director of NEWFOCAS. She is a registered and experienced senior level Social Work Manager who has been undertaking Form F Assessments and identifying the aptitude and skills required by applicant Foster Carers, since the early 80's.

Having commenced her social work career in 1973 in inner city Liverpool, moving to Wirral in the mid 70's as a generic social worker who also undertook out of hours duties and worked on the Steering Group for Merseyside Fostering and Adoption Consortium. Before leaving Wirral, Helen also worked for some time in the under 8's section, responsible for registering and inspecting Child Minders and inspecting 'Adventure' Playgroups, a forerunner of integrating children of all abilities and needs into mixed play activities.

After she moved to North Wales in 1979, Helen worked for East Clwyd Social Services, funded by a Government Regeneration scheme to develop support for unemployed who were suffering depression as a direct result of the closure of local industry. Helen then successfully completed her social work degree, returning to East Clwyd to work initially in the Mental Health field and gaining relevant qualifications to do so. Later, after local government re-organisation, Helen specialized in Child and Family Services and Child Protection.

In the early 1990's Helen took over the management of the Family Support and Prevention Services including responsibility for the Youth Justice Teams, attendance centre recruitment, liaison and development of Voluntary Crime Prevention Schemes eventually being an instrumental working group member in setting up the Youth Offending Teams in North East Wales. Latterly this responsibility included the Fostering Services where Helen quickly identified deficits in support systems for foster carers. Helen also been on various Welsh Assembly Government working groups in the late 90's and early 2000's.

Qualified as a Probation Officer, Helen has also worked with high risk offenders and the Victim Liaison Scheme for victims of serious crime including convicted murderers and paedophiles. Helen has been a foster carer assessor for over thirty-seven years, as well her direct fostering experience as an approved respite carer with Wirral and Liverpool Local Authorities, in late 70's and early 80's.

Helen became more acutely aware of the families who did not seem to benefit from the average services on offer by the care and support systems, particularly the children who seemed to bounce around such systems. She has systematically directed the development of **NEWFOCAS** to its current level of knowledge and expertise in caring for children who have suffered severe childhood trauma, and in identifying and supporting staff and carers who have the right attitude, aptitude, resilience and sustainability to undertake such specialist work.

Creating a 'team around the child' **NEWFOCAS** has achieved some remarkable success stories and has been able to stabilise the lives of many severely trauma damaged children who would otherwise been at risk of entering residential or secure services. Helen has always understood that supporting carers to whatever level required when secondary (vicarious) trauma occurs is key in sustaining placements, as is flexibility and responsiveness rather than fixed bureaucratic support models.