

Black Country FDAC

Family Drug and Alcohol Court

FDAC, so what's different? A social worker's view.



'My name is Jodie and I am one of the FDAC Social Workers. I have been a Social Worker since 2014 and my area of practice interests are Care Proceedings, particularly recurrent proceedings. My background is in Children's Residential and Local Authority Social Work.'

What has struck me most about FDAC compared to standard Care Proceedings is the time given to building a relationship with parents whilst working to the same 26 week timescale. I feel I have more space to get to know parents, whilst still working in a transparent, child-focused and problem – solving way.

Non-Lawyer reviews feel much more person-centred and gives parents the space to tell their story, which has been powerful for me to see happen in real time. Having sat in court hearings, I find being able to speak directly to the judge helpful in terms of feeling listened to and valued. A significant change for me is focusing on working with parents through a trauma-informed lens, and with this, reframing language. I have considered that perhaps terms can be used too readily such as a disguised compliance and non-compliance, without fully reflecting on what early and ongoing trauma means for people. None of this means FDAC is an 'easy' option for parents, the expectations placed on parents is very high; with contacts being up to and, with everything else in mind, upwards of five times per week. The FDAC model remains one of high challenge, high support, with children at the core.

A concern I had joining FDAC was the risk of becoming over focused on the needs of parents and losing sight of the child. My fears have been allayed, as the regularity in which we see parents enables an on-going open dialogue about what their actions mean for their children. Further, the communication with the Local Authority, the Guardian and other important people help keep the children in mind throughout.'

If you would like to find out more about FDAC feel free to contact:

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BlackCountryFDAC@cgl.org.uk.

Alternatively, you can learn more via the FDAC webpage:

<https://www.changegrowlive.org/black-country-fdac/info>