



ANGELA FRAZER- WICKS MBE

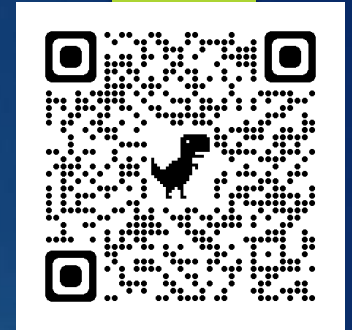
Chair Trustees Family Rights Group and
Founding Member Parents Panel

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING TO FAMILIES
VOICES

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Background

- ▶ Abusive childhood
- ▶ Self harm age 11
- ▶ Sexual abuse age 14
- ▶ Drug & Alcohol addiction age 14
- ▶ Domestic abuse relationships
- ▶ Single mum at 23
- ▶ Catastrophic birth complications



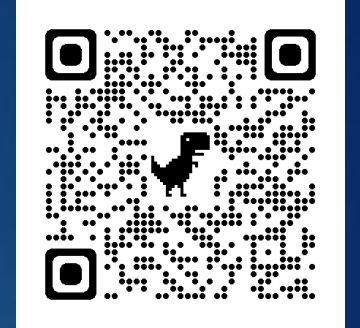
Christine – Family Support

- ▶ Saw me as a vulnerable young mum
- ▶ Heard my past and saw its impact
- ▶ Didn't judge or label
- ▶ Listened and acted
- ▶ Helped me form support network
- ▶ 8 months support
- ▶ Successful legal career



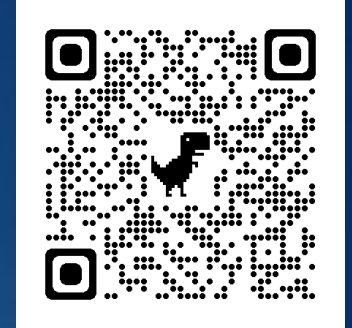
Life changed

- ▶ Lonely and stressed
- ▶ Overworked and struggling
- ▶ Mental Health problems
- ▶ Opiates overprescribed
- ▶ Met partner
- ▶ Control and coercion
- ▶ Addiction issues
- ▶ Turned to GP signposted to LA
- ▶ Asked for Christine
- ▶ No more Family Support Workers
- ▶ Son given Social Worker



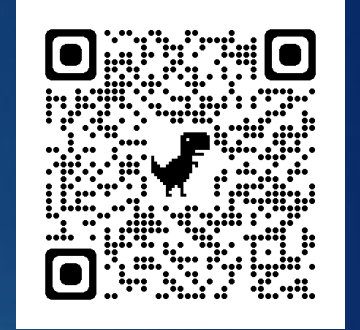
Social Worker

- ▶ Judged and blamed
- ▶ Abusive childhood – made me a risk to my child
- ▶ Opiate addiction – my fault
- ▶ Abusive partner – leave him – told him I made allegations
- ▶ No access to support – waiting lists
- ▶ Mental Health Breakdown - Son into foster care – S20?
- ▶ Pregnant with second child – partner left
- ▶ Space to make changes – got clean
- ▶ Son returned home – severe attachment issues
- ▶ Second son born – catastrophic labour as focus on CSC not maternal needs
- ▶ Partner bullied way back in – his house – no choice



Beginning of the end

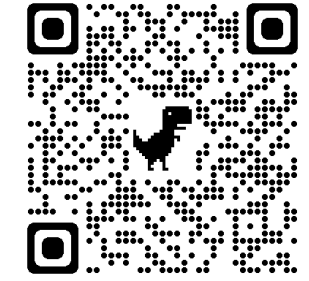
- ▶ Health needs ignored – labelled using drugs
- ▶ Haemorrhaged – 24 hours off septic shock
- ▶ Forced to go home care for children
- ▶ Viciously assaulted
- ▶ Children at risk – Failure to Protect
- ▶ Signed contract – keep him away
- ▶ No help – couldn't stop him
- ▶ Begged for help “Get us out of there – please!!”
- ▶ Children removed – son from nursery causing trauma
- ▶ Tried to fight for them
- ▶ Told they were being adopted New Years Eve 2003
- ▶ Attempted suicide Feb 2004
- ▶ Goodbye 2nd July 2004
- ▶ Final words “I love you – I promise mammy will write to you really soon”



Broken promises

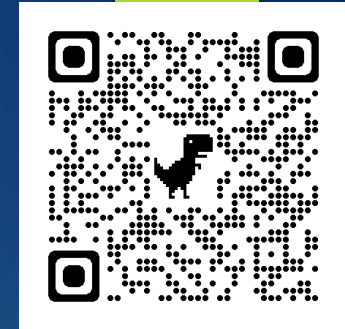
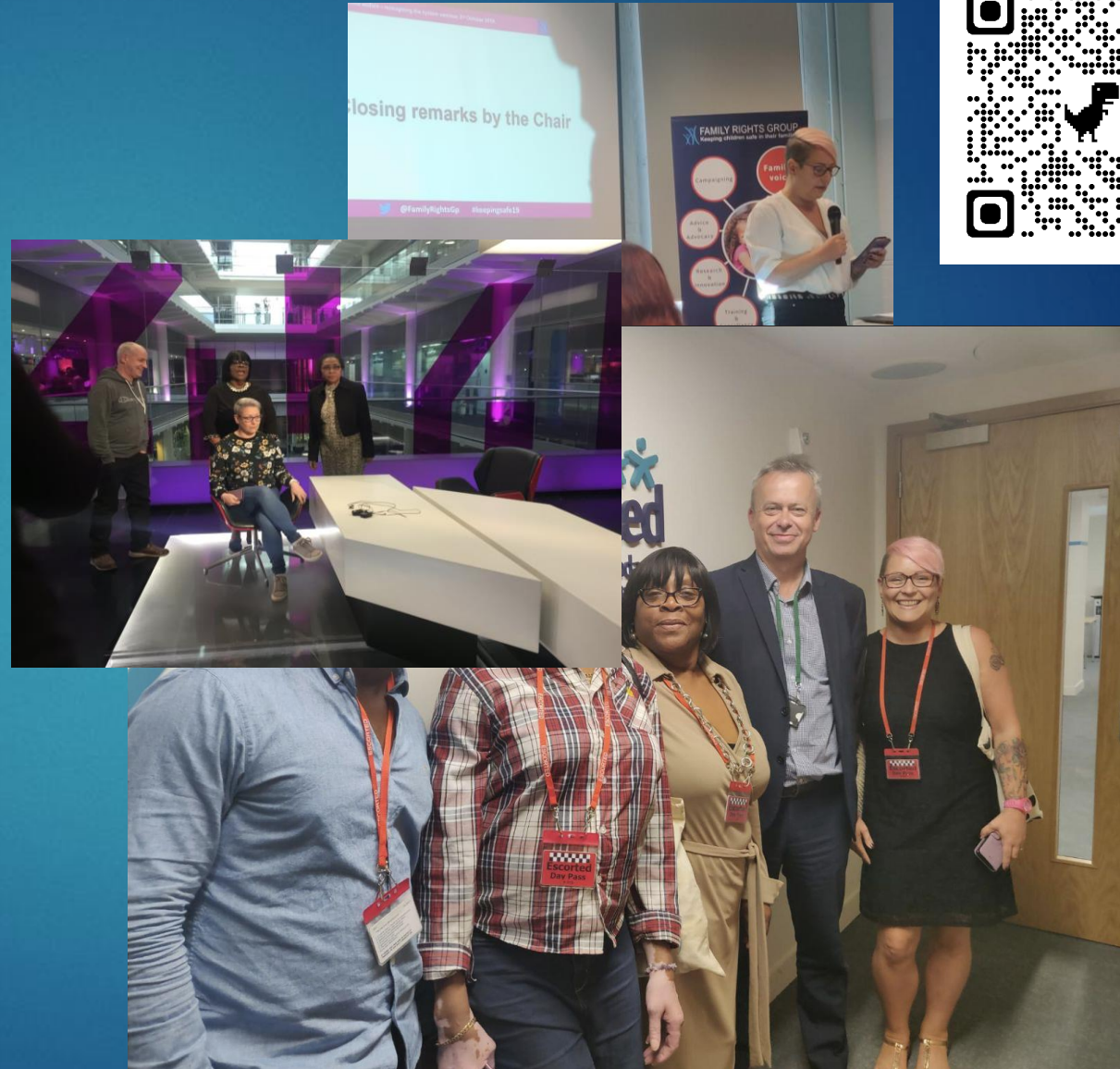
- ▶ Abandoned by Local Authority
- ▶ No agreement for letterbox
- ▶ Desperate for help and support
- ▶ Solicitor referred me to After Adoption
- ▶ Supported & empowered
- ▶ Secured letterbox
- ▶ Encouraged to speak out, raise awareness
- ▶ Terrified of judgment and blame
- ▶ Met Bridget Lindley Family Rights Group
- ▶ Joined FRG. Found my tribe

Keep the faith.
The most amazing
things in life
happen right at the
moment you're about to
give up hope.



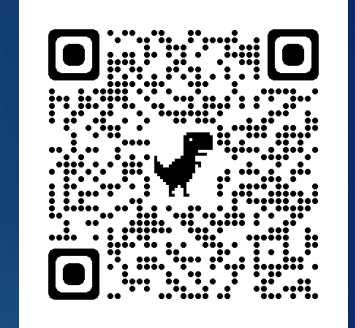
Finding my voice

- ▶ Scared of judgment & blame
- ▶ Accepted & valued
- ▶ Lone voice in the beginning
- ▶ 2013 Care Enquiry – voices of all together
- ▶ 2014 FRG panels – comfort and support from each other
- ▶ 2016 Became Trustee – use my voice to shape organisation
- ▶ Our voices matter – we can turn negative experiences into positive messages for policy and practice



Being seen as an Expert

- ▶ 2020 Co-chaired Cafcass L&I Board
- ▶ 2021 Took over as Chair Family Rights Group – 50% Board has lived experience
- ▶ 2022 Joined Family Justice Council
- ▶ 2022 EbyE Board Care Review
- ▶ 2023 National Implementation Board
- ▶ 2023 Awarded MBE for services to children and families
- ▶ Work with Local Authorities setting up panels and forums
- ▶ Born into Care study & HOPE mum
- ▶ Speak nationally and internationally about the importance of lived experience in service design and implementation
- ▶ Reunited with son in 2020 – battle on his side this time!



FOUR KEY QUESTIONS

WHY

- ▶ Because it's the right thing to do
- ▶ Partnership – legislation
- ▶ Work with – not do to!
- ▶ Complaint route only way to feedback – where's the good stuff?

WHO

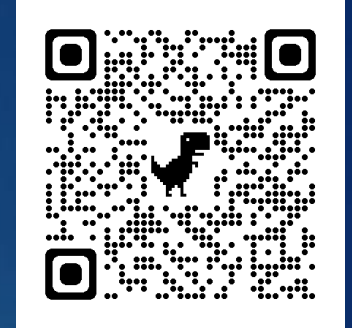
- ▶ Senior Management Buy In
- ▶ Who will support?
- ▶ Who could join?
- ▶ Who shouldn't join?

HOW

- ▶ Make collecting feedback routine
- ▶ Ask families how they feel
- ▶ Give them a voice
- ▶ Acknowledge and minimise trauma
- ▶ Be realistic
- ▶ Feedback the actions

WHEN

Only when you understand WHY, HOW and WHO can you answer WHEN?



YOU SAID - WE DID

TOGETHER!

