

My dad grew up in the care system, and one of my best friends was adopted, so, knowing their stories, adoption and fostering have been something I have been aware of from quite young.

After we adopted our youngest daughter we began to think about whether to become a family that fosters. We were so thankful for the love and care that she received from her foster family that we began to discuss with our children whether that was something they thought we could do for other children. The answer was a definite yes - although they were worried about how they would feel when the children moved on (aren't we all!?).

So we took the plunge and have now been task foster carers for nearly 10 years. We have mostly had babies so far as we wanted there to be a decent age gap between the foster child and our youngest. We currently have a 2 month old with us who we have had since he was 4 days old.

So many people when they find out we foster babies assume it must be because mum was on drugs, and sure, sometimes that is part of the problem, but there are so many other issues that you encounter. Sometimes there are learning difficulties, serious health problems, violent partners, homelessness, alcohol, previous history of inability to care for a child, the list goes on.

I find fostering to be both fulfilling and frustrating full of both happiness and sadness - a real roller coaster of a job!

I enjoy meeting the child's family and trying to encourage them, where I get the chance, to not see the social worker as "the bad guy". I enjoy my role as the person who knows the child best and can advocate for them in different meetings and situations. It is very satisfying when you finally get them the help or support they need and see the difference it makes for them.

If you like a challenge, a life of variety, uncertainty, and the feeling that what you do is making a difference and is changing the world for someone - then maybe fostering could be for you. It can be really hard work and is a 24/7 job. Is it worth it? Oh yes.