

Foster Sheffield's Future

Foster Carers Carol and Ian's Story

We became foster carers as I was a volunteer Appropriate Adult and attended many police interviews with young people. After a few months in this role I found out that some of the young people were locked up overnight in a police cell awaiting youth court the following day. I heard that there were foster carers who provided young people with a bed for the night in their home, instead of a young person being locked up in a cell. It was at this point that my wife and I made our minds up that we wanted to become foster carers and provide a room and a bed in our home for a young person who may have to spend one or more nights alone in a police cell.

We've been fostering for 5 years now. We mainly foster for age range 12-18 and have had over 30 placements. We currently look after teenager who has some learning difficulties but goes to college and is doing really well.

Our best achievement as a foster carer was with a 17 year old teenage girl a few years ago. She came to us when her relationship with her mum broke down to the extent where she asked to be placed in care. This young person arrived at ours feeling worthless and very introverted. She sometimes self harmed and would not travel on public transport and she didn't like to be in large groups.

Over a couple of months we spent a lot of time helping her feel better about herself, we travelled with her on public transport and encouraged her to socialise more. We actively encouraged her and her mum to start communicating and meeting in neutral settings to try and repair their relationship. We spent time with her course tutor at college to give her a sense of being someone who was cared for, which she appreciated.

After a couple of months the young person and her mum decided they wanted to live together again. This was successful and is still a success two years on. She has maintained some contact with us by phone and everything seems to indicate a level of stability in her life. We really had a fantastic moment when she and her mum hugged each other when she went home

When you find out that you have made a difference and a positive contribution to a young person's life then this is a priceless moment that no-one can take from you. That's why fostering is worth it.

As a family we have become far more understanding that there are lots of young people out there who have not had the benefit of a safe and loving family environment and this has made all of us more committed to continue our vocation as foster carers.