

## Amy and Harvey

It's been over 30 years since we started fostering children with additional needs and have fostered over 43 children in that time. Our son and his wife have followed in our footsteps and are now fostering. We sometimes help each other out with babysitting and childcare. A good support network is so important.

Many of our young people have been with us since babies and we have supported many of them through to adulthood. Most of them are still living at home with their parents but sometimes we are asked to support other foster carers with respite.

The young people we currently support tend to have more behavioural issues and need a higher level of supervision often with poor sleep patterns, so we often find ourselves having to think outside the box and being one step ahead!

We came into fostering quite by accident, triggered by a photograph I saw displayed in a local shop. The idea just grew from there and with Harvey being home all day and me working part time, we felt we had the space and time to give to a child with additional needs. Our own children were young teenagers at the time and were happily into their own thing. It seemed the right time for the whole family.

Helping these families to manage and keep their heads above water is the main reason we do this role. Providing time for siblings to have time out with their parents and giving parents the chance to get a good night's sleep, while providing the child in placement with the 1:1 opportunities they can achieve with us, is crucial to helping these families stay together.

We have been so lucky with the support we have received from the social workers who have been with us at each step of the way. We still attend training and feel that we always come away with something really useful and often find ourselves talking to other foster carers who have been on the same journey as us and share our love of fostering.

Seeing a child achieve the smallest milestone and helping them to deal with life in a better way is such a reward and makes our life richer, it could make such a difference in your life too!