

Two experiences as told by our second foster carer.

I'm not sure whether I can help or contribute, but wanted you to know our experiences of being Foster carers.

We have always wanted to foster, I was raised in a fostering family. My Birth parents fostered long term and short term. Sharon and Keith came to our family when I was 6 months old, their mum had passed away and their dad could not cope. I grew up with them. Contact then was nothing like it is now, their dad (uncle Fred we called him) would come and see them every Sunday. No supervising workers, logs etc. I never forget those days, as I was envious he brought them both a multi pack of wagon wheels. Sadly Keith passed away at 22, I am still in touch with Sharon and class her as my sister.

There were moments when I grew up that I resented her, why did she get 2 lots of Christmas and Birthday presents and have an amazing dad who flew planes. As I grew older and wiser I understood the truth and the reason why Sharon would say her dad was away flying the prime minister around the world.

So once our own kids were old enough we decided we wanted to be foster carers. I have worked with children with additional needs for 14 years and thought I had more or less seen it all. Fostering would fit in with our lifestyles, I work days, hubby works nights.

Our first few placements were relatively easy, I say easy as I have worked with children for 14 yrs. We have had relinquished babies, teenagers, and usually younger children whom are on the adoption list, for reasons that no one would contend with.

Let me tell you about our last placement before I tell you about our current one.

Friday lunchtime, I receive the call. We have a ten yr old boy, broken English, needs Halal diet. I ask can we find out more and think about it. They say "how long will you be, he's on his way from London" so we agree, as it's only for the weekend till they find something permanent.

So the child arrives 8.30 at night, the SW says she has a long drive back and departs, despite my protests.

Imagine our despair when the only word the child can say is hello. Imagine our despair when we realise this child isn't a child, he is over 6 foot tall and has stubble.

Imagine our despair when we realise this child has only just come to the UK from Somalia and was in fact a foot soldier.

There's lots more imagines I could give, but we didn't give up. We learnt Arabic, Somalian ways if life and produced social diaries and pictographs so we could communicate.

Sadly the placement ended when he tried to force himself on my daughter.

Onto current placement.

After the last placement, we said we needed a break. After 36 hours we received the phone call. We have 2 siblings from a 6 sibling group. We are proposing placing the eldest 2 with you. The other 4 will be will 2 other foster carers.

They are still all with Birth parents but it is in court today.
Hubby being the level headed one says we need a break.
Me being the one who works with kids, says "they need us"
So here they are 7 months later.

Their birth parents are lovely people, no abuse etc, but have no ideas of boundaries, safeguarding, money etc, despite all the help offered.
Sadly their younger siblings will all be going for adoption (recommendation for court next month)
our 2 will go into long term foster care.

So here we are, heading onto our silver years and trying to fund an extension so the kids can keep the only consistency they have and stay with us.

