Flourish Fostering

Start your journey with Flourish

Flourish Fostering

Foster Parent

Case Studies

www.flourishfostering.co.uk

Welcome

Foster parents are the heart and soul of our community, providing love, stability, and support to children who need it most. Their dedication and compassion create a safe haven for young people during times of uncertainty.

Some of our Foster Parents always knew they wanted to foster, but for others the route into fostering is more unpredictable.

Either way, fostering is life-changing. Read about some of our Foster Parents stories about how they discovered their calling and how their experiences have been so far.



Contents

Welcome 2
Emily & Ben 4
Yasmine & James 6
Paul & Elliot 8
Leah & Adam 10
Pearl 12
Mark & Jenny 14
Nicola & Kevin 16
Tracey 18
Liz & Ed 20
Lorraine 22







EMILY & Ben

ABOUT EMILY & BEN

- Emily and her fiancé, Ben, look after two children alongside their three birth children.
- They have been fostering for 5 years.
- Ben's parents fostered for 20 years

WHAT DOES FOSTERING MEAN TO THEM?

Emily always wanted to work with children and found herself working in a school. She left this role because she disliked the focus on policies and rules.

She wanted to do more to help take care of children emotionally, which encouraged her take the leap and start therapeutic fostering.

One of their biggest pieces of advice was for new foster parents to make sure that they are looking after themselves properly, too.

"a common myth about fostering is that it's easy and not much is required of you".

WHAT DO THEY THINK MAKES A GREAT FOSTER PARENT?

"You've got to be quite fun. You've got to be able to give them fun because there's so many times when it will be serious or sad and it can be really stressful so you've got to be able to do that for them.

You also need to understand both your and your child's needs and to be organised. Sometimes it feels like you need 10 pairs of arms and eyes, but the key skill you need is kindness."

ADVICE FOR NEW FOSTER PARENTS

Make connections with the people who are in the same boat as you and can understand it because no one's going to know better than the people who have lived through what you are living through."

Training can be hugely beneficial to foster parents, helping them to understand behaviours in more depth and feel more comfortable when flying solo at home."

For Emily & Ben's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Emily



YASMINE & James

ABOUT YASMINE & JAMES

- They transferred to join the Flourish family in 2021.
- They fostered with another organisation for many years.
- They describe themselves as 'Foster Parent extraordinaries!'

WHAT DO THEY THINK MAKES A GREAT FOSTER PARENT?

"Foster Parents need to be caring, non-judgmental and it helps to have a good sense of humour and a good support network – something that Flourish Fostering offer in abundance.

"When a child is with you, he or she becomes part of your life. Everyone fosters differently but, for us, the children are our family."

Flourish Fostering

Yasmine mentions that sharing experiences and thinking outside of the box has helped her to be a great Foster Parent.

WHAT MADE THEM TRANSFER TO FLOURISH?

"We spoke to people who were currently fostering with Flourish and checked the organisations Ofsted reports as we'd heard about the good work that Flourish was doing." says James.

"It quickly became apparent that Flourish's ethos and excellent training and support they provide convinced us to talk to them about transferring"

THEY ARE THE FIRST TO ADMIT IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY

"When you start fostering, it changes your life," says Yasmine. "You see and go through so much with the children you take into your home, but the support you give them is vital. Being a Foster Parent is a profession and it's not one you go into lightly."

"Someone told us fostering is the hardest job in the world but over the years we've realised it's not a job at all, it's your life."

For Yasmine & James' full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Yasmine & James



PAUL & Elliot

ABOUT PAUL & ELLIOT

- Paul and Elliot have been together for nine years. They were looking into surrogacy initially before deciding to foster.
- Paul worked in a children's residential home where he gained a lot of knowledge.

THE COUPLE DECIDED THEY 'HAD TO' BECOME FOSTER PARENTS

"There are so many children out there who need help and need a loving, stable, and secure home environment. We felt like we couldn't not do it, especially with my experiences and learnings from my career."

"As a same-sex couple, all we wanted was a child and thought fostering would be the best way to go about it.

Flourish Fostering

Paul and Elliot are encouraging more people, especially from the LGBTQIA+ community, to come forward and foster.

PAUL AND ELLIOT'S EXPERIENCE AS FOSTER PARENTS

The couple were placed with their first child – a six-year-old boy – in November and said it has been "amazing" so far. They have already celebrated Christmas and a birthday together as a family.

Their foster son had a neglected childhood and is working through the trauma while slowly adjusting to his new family environment.

We're very lucky, he's been very, very good. He's really bright and brave and loves being with us."

ADVICE FOR NEW FOSTER PARENTS

"Do your research, educate yourself on trauma, attachment and therapeutic care, talk to as many people as possible, and go into it only if you're 100% sure you want to do it.

Absolutely do it because it's the most rewarding thing in the world, especially when you get past the hard point where they start to settle down and make progress."

For Paul & Elliot's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Paul and Elliot



LEAH & Adam

ABOUT LEAH AND ADAM

- They have been fostering for 20 years
- They have fostered many children into independence as well as undertaking Parent & Child placements.

WHY DID THEY CHOOSE FLOURISH?

"The peer support and supervision that Flourish Fostering provide is second to none and has helped us overcome the odd rocky patch. We have been so fortunate with the children we have cared for, the genuine love they show us is very humbling."

"It's often the little things that make a big difference to children's lives."

Leah believes her family set up helps children feel at home and gives them the sense that they can belong and fit in.

LEAH & ADAM'S FOSTERING EXPERIENCE

"Being a Foster Parent is something not to be taken light-heartedly" Leah says "But we couldn't imagine doing anything else. I've always liked people and we both find it easy to find the good things in children."

WHAT MADE THEM WANT TO FOSTER YOUNG PEOPLE?

"Like most people who foster, we wanted to provide a stable, loving home to children who have not been as fortunate as we have growing up. At times it has been challenging and emotional, but it's also highly rewarding."

"We feel very privileged to be part of their lives, to watch them grow and develop into wonderful, confident, happy children."

For Leah & Adam's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Leah & Adam



PEARL

ABOUT PEARL

- When she was a young teenager, she met a young boy from an orphanage in the West Indies.
- From then she knew she wanted to work with young people

WHY DID PEARL CHOOSE FLOURISH?

"Being part of the Flourish family and building up a trusting, working relationship with other Foster Parents and the team at Flourish, who's ethos is about supporting each other" is something that Pearl connects with.

Flourish has provided me with support around the clock."

Flourish Fostering

"Fostering is not for everyone but for me it's the most rewarding thing that I have ever done."

WHAT DOES SHE THINK MAKES A GREAT FOSTER PARENT?

Pearl says: "There's no blueprint for what makes an 'ideal' Foster Parent. Everyone brings their own special something and bit of life experience. Being naturally calm, caring, and patient and a good listener will all stand you in good stead."

PEARL'S ADVICE FOR NEW FOSTER PARENTS

"My advice for anyone considering becoming a Foster Parent would be to pick up the phone and talk to an organisation like Flourish Fostering. There are lots of different parts to becoming a Foster Parent and at any point you can change your mind.

It's important to work out if it's for you. If you're going to foster as a single person, it is good to have a really strong support network around you.

For Pearl's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Pearl



MARK & Jenny

ABOUT MARK AND JENNY

- They have been fostering since 2006 and have fostered 16 children so far
- They have a focus on supporting children into independence
- Mark delivered online baking sessions for over 600 looked-after children during lockdown

WHAT MADE THEM WANT TO FOSTER?

"Their birth daughter inspired the couple to take up fostering at 14 years old when she became concerned about two looked-after children she attended school with - their wellbeing, their home life, how many foster parents they had - this inspired Mark and Jenny to take the leap.

After looking into fostering Mark thought 'these children need better, and we can do better.'

Flourish Fostering

Mark explained that fostering with Flourish makes him feel "empowered" and like he is "doing the best job possible"

WHAT DO THEY THINK MAKES A GREAT FOSTER PARENT?

"There are so many job roles that provide you with the skills to become a foster parent, and the career you already have has most likely provided you with some if not all.

Mark explained: "You need to be very resilient, open-minded, playful and flexible. But most of all you need to be unique and generous. You need to be able to step back and understand that this isn't about you."

WHY DID THEY CHOOSE FLOURISH?

"Working with Flourish has been wonderful, we knew the people at Flourish and we trusted them, respected them professionally, and admired their theoretical framework.

"The most important thing for us is that the Flourish team respects their foster parents. If the parents are respected and supported, that feeds down to the children.

For Mark & Jenny's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Mark & Jenny



NICOLA & Kevin

ABOUT NICOLA & KEVIN

- Nicola and Kevin have been fostering for more than 16 years
- They are currently fostering siblings who are 11 & 13 years old.
- Their former foster child, who is now 18 , also still lives with them

WHAT DOES FOSTERING MEAN TO THEM?

Despite facing some challenges in fostering, Nicola said that it is the most rewarding thing she's ever done and that often the small or unusual gestures from her foster children mean the most to her. She recently received a birthday card from the foster children that thanked her for letting them into her home and making them feel like family.

"A child's behaviour is a symptom, not a cause. You just need to provide that safe environment"

To Nicola, fostering is just parenting, "That's why I call myself a foster parent. I'm just like anyone else who's got children."

WHAT DO THEY THINK MAKES A GREAT FOSTER PARENT?

Nicola feels incredibly lucky to have support from her husband and her eldest foster child but said that foster parents need to have a set of key skills to be successful.

"You have to be a good listener, that's for sure. You don't have to know how to help, but you need to be able to listen. Then you can work out what support they need."

THEIR EXPERIENCE BLENDING FOSTER FAMILIES

Nicola and Kevin often foster multiple children at a time. Nicola has found this to be a huge success, even when having to manage children of different ages from different backgrounds. She said the young people often end up learning from each other.

At the moment, Nicola's eldest foster child is modelling for the younger ones: "One thing she's really good at is giving the younger ones advice," Nicola explained



TRACEY

ABOUT TRACEY

- She began her journey into fostering with respite care only.
- Tracey looked into fostering after retiring from her old job as a manager in a financial company

TRACEY'S JOURNEY INTO FOSTERING

After six months of retirement, Tracey realised she missed being part of a team.

Her neighbour, who already fostered with us at Flourish, suggested Tracey should look into fostering. This turned out to be the perfect suggestion for Tracey. She said: "it's really nice to feel part of a company again and to feel valued."

Respite is all about welcoming a child into your home and trying to make it seem like a holiday to them."

Flourish Fostering

"I feel younger now than I did before I started doing respite."

WHY DID SHE CHOOSE RESPITE FOSTERING?

Tracey chose to do respite initially because of her and her partner's ages. She says "what we didn't want to do is take on a child and then be too old to see them through the time they needed from us. I didn't want to have to let anyone go because I couldn't cope so that's why we started off respite." However, she went on to say "I feel younger now than I did before I started doing respite." She said, "We honestly have so much fun".

THE FUN OF FOSTERING

One of the things Tracey most loves about fostering is how much fun both her and the children who visit her have. She says: "It's not just fun for the children, it's fun for me. I can honestly say I feel ten years younger now than I did before respite care. It has also helped my transition from my old job to here. Going from a full-on, organised, managerial role and now I have to be organised here. Everything has to be planned and it keeps the energy in me."

For Tracey's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Tracey



LIZ & Ed

ABOUT LIZ & ED

- Liz & Ed became foster parents after closing their family business
- Their foster child made remarkable progress in just four months, going from nonverbal to communicating words, sounds, and imaginative play.

A NEW CHAPTER AFTER CLOSING THEIR FAMILY BUSINESS

When Liz and Ed's business closed, they finally had the time and space to pursue fostering, something Liz had dreamed of since working as a teaching assistant. With their teenage son becoming more independent, they joined Flourish Fostering North in August 2024 and opened their home to their first child.

"I didn't expect to feel so strongly so quickly, I thought it would take time to develop that connection."

"Pretty much every day, he does something new that makes us smile. There hasn't been just one emotional moment, there have been so many."

SURPRISING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS AND STRONG SUPPORT

Liz bonded with their foster child far more quickly than she expected, while Ed was surprised by how much support Flourish provides. From regular training to knowing help is always a phone call away, they've felt guided, reassured, and fully supported throughout their fostering journey.

PROGRESS THROUGH LOVE, ROUTINE, AND STABILITY

In just four months, the progress their foster child made was extraordinary. Initially nonverbal and withdrawn, he now communicates with words and animal sounds, waved for the first time, and plays imaginatively. Every new milestone brings emotional moments for Liz and Ed, who believe his progress reflects the power of being in the right environment. Their experience has also deepened their understanding of mental health and trauma, reminding them that patience, consistency, and a loving home can transform a child's world.

For Liz and Ed's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Liz & Ed



LORRAINE

ABOUT LORRAINE

- **Lorraine has been fostering for over 11 years, caring young people with complex mental health needs.**
- **She transferred to Flourish after feeling unsupported by her local authority and struggling to access the help she needed.**

FINDING A THERAPEUTIC HOME

After years of feeling unheard by her local authority, Lorraine reached out to Flourish and immediately noticed a difference. She felt listened to, supported, and understood right from the first conversation. Discovering that Flourish specialised in therapeutic fostering was the turning point, she finally found a service that shared her values and truly understood children's emotional needs.

"I feel like I'm with people that actually know what fostering is and they've got the same ethos as me."

"It was a big decision, but it's the best thing I've done. I'm settled now, and I know I'm in the right place."

A SUPPORTIVE TRANSFER PROCESS

Lorraine describes the transfer process as open, honest, and pressure-free. She felt safe to be herself and appreciated being treated like a person, not a number. The Form F assessment was inclusive and straightforward, giving her reassurance and confidence from the start.

FEELING CONFIDENT WITH FLOURISH

Since joining Flourish, Lorraine has experienced a level of support that has transformed her day-to-day fostering experience. She describes the team as responsive, knowledgeable, and genuinely committed to understanding trauma. Whether she needs advice, reassurance, or just someone to talk to, she knows that help is always there. Access to therapeutic support and reflective practice has strengthened her confidence and helped her feel part of a real team. For Lorraine, transferring to Flourish was not just a change of agency but a turning point that allowed her to feel settled, valued, and supported again.

For Lorraine's full story, visit: Foster parent case study: Lorraine