



Priory Fostering Services

Foster carer case studies – Sara & Bob's story

Both ex-teachers, Sara and Bob have been foster carers for a total of nine years, the last two of which have been with Priory Fostering Services. Sara had previously thought of fostering before she met Bob, but the time was not right and she didn't have a spare room. When they got together they had a house full of children and weren't looking for a career change. However, when most of their children had grown up they were ready for a new challenge which would allow them to use their skills both as teachers and parents and decided that fostering was perfect...

"Between us we have five children and in fact being a step-parent is good preparation for fostering. Our current foster child has been with us for seven years. He was very difficult at first but we worked hard to make him comfortable which has made a real difference to his confidence and social skills. We also did life-story work with him which proved especially emotional, as he had such a troubled start in life.

The initial assessment process to become foster parents all those years ago was emotionally hard, but also therapeutic. Memories that you deliberately suppress are revisited and discussed. We soon came to realise that these were valuable experiences which we could use to relate to the children's problems. I was still teaching at the time and my school head-teacher was very supportive and had a flexible approach which allowed me to participate in training. The training I received for fostering made me a better teacher, more aware of children's needs.

We moved to Priory Fostering Services two years ago, because we were becoming unhappy with the restructuring of the previous agency, and the reducing level of support left us feeling let down. We knew other carers at Priory who suggested we apply to join them, we just wish we had done it sooner! Even though this meant we had to go through the assessment process again, our assessor was efficient, reassuring and very good, she made it as easy as possible and had clearly made a real effort to get to know us properly.

Our foster child is still with us but we now feel that at Priory, people listen, and there is someone fighting our corner to get the support we need as a family.

We participate in all the training that is available, including Priory's on-line training, which keeps us ticking over and is a useful prompt. We also enjoy the Priory's activity programme and have been on a range of summer activities including a trip to Lego-land, with a coach load of foster carers and both birth and foster children.

Moving to Priory Fostering Services was the best thing we ever did!"