

## **“If you love kids, you’ll love fostering”**

### **One of our foster carers explains why...**

My name is Yvonne, I have two children of my own and four grandchildren which is wonderful. I started fostering in 2007, before that I worked for the play and youth service in Newcastle for 25 years. I personally felt I could make a change in a young person’s life. Over the years I have worked with young people who come from different backgrounds and their issues varied.

As a foster carer it is really important that every child is valued as an individual with their own unique personality, character, background, needs and aspirations.

One of the young people I looked after had various issues; emotional, behavioural, developmental, identity, family, social, self-esteem and attachment. We had highs and lows but I started from scratch – researching, supporting, guiding and building trust – one step at a time.

Every day I would start afresh as if yesterday never happened, and anything negative was never mentioned again. I made it clear that I was never giving up on them.

The challenging behaviour did not shock me and I didn’t take it personally as this was how they coped with situations. I taught them step-by-step that at the age of 11, certain behaviours were not acceptable. By the second year of care they were more stable, felt safe and able to trust me with their personal belongings at home, as before this they would carry them everywhere.

I am proud of what I have achieved as this young person is currently at university and working part time.

I managed to overcome difficult times thanks to my family, strong network of friends, the training that was provided by the fostering service and the constant support from my social worker.

I left fostering in 2015 due to family commitments and worked for the probation service. It made me realise even more that young people need to be cared for and nurtured so I came back earlier this year, where I’m enjoying building positive trusting relationships. It takes time, but it can make a real difference.