

Fostering in County Durham – Carers’ experiences video transcript

[At the top left a Durham County Council logo followed by the text ‘Fostering in County Durham – Carers’ experiences’ is displayed. Both are visible throughout the video.]

[Still image with a Durham County Council logo and text below which reads: Fostering County Durham.]

[The video interview is a head and shoulders view of Dave and Pat Cooper, Foster carers for Durham County Council. The wall behind where they are standing has an image of a lady and young girl laughing as they both enjoy a roller-coaster ride. The girl has both arms straight above her head ‘catching the wind’.]

[Pat Cooper speaks]

Walking along Seaham beach one day, and I thought “There’s these kids out there who would this, you know, what we’ve got to offer. I had a day off work and I filled the form in and before I knew it there I was on preparation training.

[Pat laughs and Dave smiles.]

[Text on screen: What is your experience of fostering?]

We do [pause...] at the minute we currently have an eighteen-year-old on ‘Staying Put’ who came to us as short term and then we sort of went onto permanence, and once he became eighteen we decided he wasn’t quite ready because he has got a learning disability, to stay with us now ‘til he’s twenty-one.

Then we’ve got a nine-year-old little boy who’s been with us for three years now and we’re his forever family. So he’s [pause..] he says he’s going nowhere, he’s staying with us ‘til he’s in his thirty’s, which is fine cos we’ll be in our ninety’s.

[Pat and Dave laugh and smile]

[Pat] He can look after us.

[Text on screen: How has it been inviting a child into your home?]

[Dave Cooper speaks]

Quite rewarding. It keeps you fit as well like, all the activities, but yeah, it’s quite rewarding.

[Pat] Initially we were a bit concerned how we would feel, after having the house to ourselves for ten years, having another child in but, just

[Dave] Just adapted quite well.

[Pat] He just slot-in

[Dave] Yeah

[Pat] And it was like he’d always been there.

[Text on screen: Is fostering a child hard work?]

[Pat] I think it's a bit easier [said with emphasis] than we expected. Well, what I expected.

[Pat looks across at Dave to get his response]

[Dave nods his head in agreement and says] Ah huh, yeah.

[Pat] It's a lot easier than I thought. When you do the preparation treatment, they give you the worst-case scenario you know, and you think 'Ohh!'.

[Pat raises her eyebrows and lifts both shoulders up]

[Pat, smiling] But no, it's great. I wouldn't go and do anything else now.

[Text on screen: What has been the most rewarding part about becoming a foster carer?]

[Dave] There is, I suppose going to school and visiting the schools and the headmistress telling us how well they have come on in the short few months they've been with us.

[Pat] Especially the older one, because he was virtually ready to be excluded, and by the time he left school he was an ambassador for the school and he was doing things for the school you know. So, we felt really proud that we had managed to turn him round. [Nods head] Yeah, it was good.

[Text on screen: What support have you received?]

[Pat] The support is fantastic. I know I'm just a phone call or an email away and they've always got someone to ring back or help us with our problems. It's been great.

[Dave] Yes, the support is good. Yep.

[Text on screen: Would you recommend becoming a foster carer County Durham?]

[Pat and Dave together say] Definitely!

[Pat] I have done [Nods]

[Dave] Many occasions.

[Pat] We've got a couple of carers come on board through chatting to me. [Laughs]

[Dave] Yeah. [Smiles]

[Pat, enthusiastically] One woman stopped me on Stanley Front Street and said "Oh, it's you! I want to have a talk with you." and I just said, "Just get straight in touch." and she's actually a carer now.

[Text on screen: Durham County council logo with text 'Find more information at www.durham.gov.uk/fostering]