



Everything: could you support fostering in West Sussex?

What you do with your life could forever change someone else's

By Nikki Burch, Senior Marketing and Communications Officer (Fostering)

Last year, two West Sussex care leavers, Angel and Ciara, helped develop the script for a national 4 minute film, *Everything*, which aims to raise awareness of the urgent need for more foster carers.

Everything tells the story of Mike, a foster carer celebrating his 60th birthday. It begins with Mike listening to a video message from Will, who he fostered in the 1990s. Later, Will arrives at the party with his wife and son, along with Zara, another young person who Mike had fostered.

The time-hop element of the film shows Will and Zara as teenagers, and again now in happy, stable relationships. We know that many West Sussex foster carers keep in touch with young people they have cared for, and that these ongoing relationships are vital to help build trust and create a sense of belonging and identity.



Sarah (pictured left) from Horsham has been a foster carer for nearly 20 years. Sarah spoke to us about one of the many young people she maintains contact with:

"We love keeping in touch with Nas. She is very warm and loving and she makes us laugh! We are really proud of the way she has achieved a good degree at uni and is a blessing in her role as a nursery teaching assistant. Nas is planning to re-sit her English GCSE this year, so she can start

training as a social worker. Regular encouragement is so important to help young people achieve their dreams."

Lisa, a teaching assistant in Shoreham, told us:

"Having worked one-to-one with lots of children who needed extra support has really been invaluable in my fostering role. I've been able to use lots of resources and strategies that I've learnt over the years. The young person we care for also really enjoys knowing that I do this at my school with other children."

Councillor Jacquie Russell, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Learning and Skills, commented:

"The impact of fostering and kinship care can be profound and lasts a lifetime. If you have a spare room, and an interest in helping children and young people, we urge you to think about becoming a foster carer. We are committed to keeping children and young people safe and helping them fulfil their potential, and our foster carers are critical to this."



Is your school a Fostering Friendly employer?

As colleagues working to achieve the best educational outcomes for local children, you have exactly the value base and experience that Children We Care For need. That's why, in 2024, the Council extended its Fostering Friendly policy to all West Sussex maintained schools. Key provisions within the policy include up to 5 days of additional paid leave for approved foster carers. Please check whether your school has adopted the new policy, or please contact nikki.burch@westsussex.gov.uk if you would like to receive a copy of the policy.

Could you help to improve outcomes for West Sussex Children We Care For?

We still urgently need more foster carers to give a safe and loving home to the over 900 West Sussex children who have experienced abuse, neglect or trauma.

Please consider becoming a foster carer or supported lodgings host yourself. Or, if circumstances mean that fostering really isn't possible for you (right now!), you can still help by starting conversations with family and friends.

Foster carers for West Sussex County Council receive ongoing professional and peer support, a comprehensive range of training, and a competitive financial package of up to £31,338 per year (per child/young person).

Contact the friendly Fostering Recruitment Team on **0330 222 7775**, or click [here](#) for more information and to watch the *Everything* film.