# 07-FC\_Rose

**Rose:** My name is Rose Pearse. I've been fostering for 11 years now and it's been a life-changing journey. I'd always had a lot of children in my life. But I felt like becoming a foster carer was something where I could make a real difference to children who really needed someone to step up for them.

I was presented with a range of different opportunities to care for different children, and I was asked whether I would consider caring for a little newborn baby. That wasn't something I had really planned for myself. So I really had to think hard about that, because it did mean taking leave from my work, just re-thinking everything that I had mentally prepared myself for, and that little baby is still in my care.

He's not a little baby anymore. He's a 10-year-old boy. As we went along - and you know, you don't know a child has autism when they first come as a little bundle. Having a child with a disability does have an impact on your life. It changes you. But I guess the positive is, he has made me a better person. There's no question about that.

In the last few years, I've taken a couple of teenage placements, and it's added a very interesting element to our little family dynamic. If they've come to you at an older age, they've often been very independent in their life. They've had to be. That doesn't mean they still don't need, you know, that loving home and that safe place to come home to, even when everything goes really badly in life.

When you're a teen in care, your capacity to trust people to do the right thing by you, to be there for them, is severely impacted, and to help someone to believe that you will be there for them in that long term view - well, that's a life's work, really.

The reality can be hard, and the challenges are extremely challenging. But if you decide that you're in it for the long term, then you learn to take the challenges as they come. Knowing them, and expecting what the reality is, it's opened me up to a lot of different knowledge and ideas. And there's nothing quite like having a child's love, and I get a lot of that love. So, that's pretty amazing.