

# Somebodyelse'schild

National Private Fostering Campaign 19-25 January 2009

## Young person's podcast

Hi, welcome to the Somebody Else's Child podcast, the first ever podcast for young people who are being privately fostered. My name is David and I work for a charity called the British Association for Adoption & Fostering. As part of this podcast, you're going to be hearing the real life stories of two young people who have been privately fostered.

If you've been living with someone who isn't a close relative for more than 28 days then you are being privately fostered. When we say 'close relative' we generally mean your parents or step-parents, brother or sister or aunty or uncle.

People get privately fostered for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes because they've left home after a really big row with their mum and dad. That was the case with Jessica, who was privately fostered by her school friend's family when she was having problems at home. Here's her story:

### **Jessica**

"On bonfire night a rocket hit our garage and did a lot of damage. My mum used to have depression problems and she couldn't really handle the pressure of the situation. We were running out of money because of the accident and we were all getting upset and losing our temper. We couldn't take it any more and we were letting our anger out on each other. I couldn't take the pressure of always getting told off and I was always chucking things back at them."

"So I just packed my stuff and turned up at my friends door saying can I just stay here for a few nights and it happened from there really."

"I was privately fostered for about a year. It was a nice experience but I had to get used to the changes. But it changed my opinion about how I should treat people, instead of losing my temper."

"My parents were a bit upset at first but finally understood I needed some space to calm down."

"After the first year it I still felt the same about my mum, but a social worker asked me if I wanted to see her again. It took me a few weeks to build up the courage to do it but eventually I did. And after a few weeks I was back living with my family."

"Being privately fostered definitely helped my relationship with my parents."

## **David**

Sadly, not all private fostering arrangements work as well as this. Catherine who lived in Nigeria was excited when her aunty came to take her to England to go to school. However, even before she left Nigeria she was given to a stranger. This stranger did take her to London but then made her work all day long. She wasn't allowed out, even to go to School. This is Catherine's story.

## **Catherine**

"When I was 8, my mother's sister came and said she would take me to England to be educated, but she took me to Lagos and gave me to another woman who I didn't know. This woman took me to England. I don't know where she got a passport from, but she said I was her daughter and we were let through.

When we got to England I didn't go to school. I had to look after her children. I got up at 6 o'clock and feed the baby. She would then take the oldest child to school and go to work. I had to stay at home and wash the clothes by hand, iron and wash all the floors.

When I told them I wanted to go out with my friend, they would say no I can't go. It's dangerous out there. You can't do this, and you can't do that. I thought they just didn't want me to go out, not because of my health but because of the children. I had to stay there looking after them.

The only place she ever took me to was the Millennium Dome. That's the only outing I can remember.

It was like I was in prison because I can't do anything. I didn't tell anyone about my problem because I was scared. I thought there was nobody to trust."

## **David**

Catherine did eventually find an adult to trust and she told them about her situation. They helped her and now she is living a new, much happier life. If you are being privately fostered and are worried about anything then talk to an adult you trust, maybe a teacher at school. Alternatively you can call ChildLine on 0800 1111. Here's that number again, it's ChildLine on 0800 1111