



PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

Adoption case study: Susan and Leyton

Susan*, 48, is adopting nine-year-old Leyton* through PACT.

She first became aware of PACT after spotting a poster appealing for adopters in the waiting room at her GP's surgery.

Susan had long been interested in adoption and a few years ago, whilst in the RAF, had made some inquiries with a local authority but hadn't proceeded with this. By the time she saw the PACT poster she had relocated and left the RAF.

"I took the number down and then a few days later while taking the dog for a walk I called up and had a half hour chat with a lovely person on the PACT enquiries team in London. I think it was just a question of right place, right time."

Susan attended one of PACT's adoption information events and found the agency's approach to be "welcoming and engaging".

She decided to go ahead with adoption and in the summer of 2016 Leyton was placed with her, aged seven at the time.

She remembers how on the first day of introductions Leyton was waiting for her at the door.

"As I pulled up in the car he ran out and put his arms around me and called me Mummy. We had great fun that day, it all went really well and when the time came for him to move into my home with me he never looked back."

Around six weeks later Leyton did become very unsettled, and was upset and distressed most nights for several months.

Susan said throughout this difficult time she felt extremely well supported by PACT.

"I can't fault the support I've had from PACT. There were a couple of times when things were particularly challenging, when I called my social worker late at night and she was there at the end of the phone supporting me and coaching me through things as they happened.

"You couldn't ask for more than that and just to know someone is there is very reassuring."



Susan advised anyone considering adoption to think it through carefully.

"I think be honest about what you want, and what you can deal with. Adoption isn't always about walking away with a six-month old baby and playing happy families.

"I'd also say that however well prepared I felt and PACT had made me, however much information and training I'd got, until you are actually in that situation, you have no true understanding of what it's like. I think then you have to trust in your own resilience and know that if you can get through those first few months the rewards will come."

Susan said Leyton is now much more settled and that the two of them are very happy, enjoying lots of walks and outdoors activities.

They are currently waiting for the adoption order to be approved in court.

Susan has recently become a volunteer for PACT, supporting other adopters on the agency's online support website. In this role she helps provide a vital first line of support to other adopters via live web chat and online forums.

She said: "I think actually what I have found is that you can find strength by listening to what other people are going through – sometimes it's helpful just to know there are other families experiencing the sorts of behaviours you are, and sometimes it makes you realise that you're actually doing all right."

* Names changed in line with confidentiality



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