



PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

Adoption case study: Eddie, Jody, Harry and Leyton

Eddie and his partner Jody approached PACT in the summer of 2016 following the advice of New Family Social, the UK network for LGBT adoptive and foster families.

The couple had previously started the adoption process with another agency but this hadn't worked out.

Eddie said PACT staff were clear with them that there would be challenges ahead but were also really positive about what the couple had to offer.

"We just felt really heard and understood from the start. We have always felt that PACT has been very invested in us and throughout the process we knew they were there on hand to support us if we needed it."

The interracial couple were approved to adopt in April 2017 and started the family-finding process.

Originally they had planned to adopt one child, but then they read about two brothers Harry,* who was 20 months old, and Leyton,* who was ten months old.

"Jody was really keen and just had an instinct about them from the get go. I was more reluctant, I'd always thought we'd have just one child, and suddenly we were considering two children, with just a year apart in age, I just wasn't sure we could do it."

"We decided to see if we were a match and it turned out we were. I then remember really clearly reading the first few sentences of their Child's Permanence Report and having this intense connection with these kids and calling Jody and saying these are our boys."

Eddie said meeting the boys for the first time was a wonderful experience, but also very surreal.

"It was so lovely but also just really strange to see these two tiny humans who are going to become your children but are essentially strangers. Obviously they had no concept of what was happening but we were so keen to engage with them and want them to warm to us."

Later that same day Eddie and Jody met the boys' birth mum, which they found a very difficult experience.

"It was really hard. Her perception was that we were taking her kids away from her. At the same time it was helpful to get a sense of who she was and what her wishes were for her children."

The boys moved in with Eddie and Jody in September 2017, and settled in really well.



Eddie said life as parents to two young boys had taken a bit of adjusting to initially.

"The hardest challenge for us was from having no children to having two children 24-7. People can try and prepare you for it, but the reality is something else and with them both being so small a lot of it was repetitive and just all about the naps, the nappies and the feeding."

Eddie said both him and Jody love family life, and being parents.

"We're obviously still learning all the time but I think parenting did come very naturally to us, and that's nice because it feels like we were meant to be parents."

"And the transformation in our boys is just phenomenal. They have just thrived from feeling loved and secure in our lives and our home. It's changed our lives completely too – it's really given us a new sense of meaning and purpose. We both just want to be the best parents we can possibly be."

The couple are currently waiting for a court hearing for the adoption order to be approved.

Eddie, who shares his experiences of adoption at PACT's information events for prospective adopters, said his best advice to anyone considering adoption was to have belief that they had something to offer as a parent.

"The other thing I'd say is to take a leap of faith. I understand that people are tentative and nervous about starting the process of adoption, and it's actually not a bad thing to feel that, but you'll never know for sure if it's right for you unless you take that leap of faith and go for it."

* Names changed in line with confidentiality



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