

## REPORT

### 'ADOPTION HAS BEEN THE MOST INCREDIBLE THING FOR OUR FAMILY'

**Ruth, 39, a patient administrator, and her husband Oli, 37, a train driver, live in Berkshire with daughter Amy\*, three.**

"Sitting in the corridor, my heart was thumping. It was July 2018 and on the other side of the door a small group of strangers were deciding if my husband Oli and I could become parents. Our lives were about to change forever.

I met Oli at work in July 2007, when I was 25. At the Christmas party that year we clicked and we got married the following November. I'd always wanted children, but I was naive - I assumed that when I stopped taking the Pill in late 2010, aged 28, I'd get pregnant immediately. Nine months later, instead of giving birth, I was at the GP's for the start of years of investigations and painful treatments.

They discovered I had blocked fallopian tubes and I had an operation to open them in summer 2012. At the end of 2013, an

IVF cycle we'd secured on the NHS was cancelled because my tubes were filled with fluid. I had both tubes removed in May 2014.

Still, I remained optimistic through three private IVF cycles that cost us £30,000, as well as one on the NHS. But nothing worked.

In August 2016 we paid £3,500 for two rounds of IVF in Greece. When the test came back positive, I was in shock. We'd finally done it!

But at eight weeks, I began bleeding. When the miscarriage was confirmed, I wept. We'd fought so hard, how could it all be over? For weeks all I wanted to do was sleep so I didn't have to be awake and feel the pain.

I felt isolated and bitter, distancing myself from anyone with children. We tried one final cycle in Greece in February 2017, but it didn't

work. Oli said it was breaking me and he couldn't bear it. I knew he was right.

We'd always spoken about adoption, even before trying to conceive. When Oli was 11, his mum died and he was raised by his godparents. Surrogacy wasn't

something either of us considered - if we had a biological child, we wanted me to carry it. But before we explored adoption, I had some counselling. I knew I'd never get

over the trauma of the past few years, but it enabled me to move forward.

In September 2017 we nervously attended an information evening for the adoption agency PACT. We met adopters and adoptees, and could see the incredible impact it had had on their lives. Walking

out that night, we just knew adoption was the right thing to do.

In February 2018 we began the formal process. PACT doesn't sugarcoat the reality of adoption, including the situations that kids come from and the health conditions they may have. We had to discuss eventualities as well as our financial situation with a social worker.

That July, a panel of adopters, adoptees

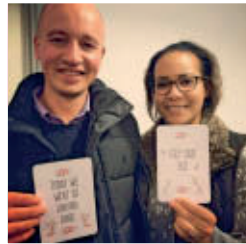
and social workers approved us. I wept. We immediately created a profile for the website Link Maker, which brings together local authorities and potential adopters.

The very first child we saw was Amy. My heart jumped as I watched her video, this 10-month-old girl sitting on a blanket, laughing. I felt an immediate connection. Six weeks later we heard that her social workers were coming to meet us - we were one of two families shortlisted.

For the two days between their visit and their decision, we didn't eat or sleep. When the social worker called to say they'd like us to be Amy's mum and dad, we just sobbed. We hadn't met her or spoken to her, but she was going to be our daughter.

The first time I saw her smile and held her on my lap, in October 2018, it felt like we'd always been together. It was incredible. Amy officially became our daughter in April 2019 and has brought so much love and light into our lives. Right now, we are happy with our family, but wouldn't rule out adopting again. I truly believe that the universe brought us together." **F**

## 'I distanced myself from people with kids'



Ruth and husband Oli felt an immediate connection with Amy after seeing a video of her giggling

