

Parting with a child for adoption

Birth parents Ian, Becky, Bernadette and Nina talk about the range of feelings and reactions they experienced when they became aware that their child was going to be placed for adoption.

Ian Well, it were really bad at that time cos, eh, when you first told, became suicidal, social services wanted the police involved, even resulted in me being arrested to protect myself by the police and it just snowballed, everything just went wrong at that time. It ... nobody wanted to help, so I basically was suffering on my own and then finally I got some help but not really much. Social services kept on wanting me at arm's length, they just didn't want any contact really.

Becky My most difficult moment was when I was in hospital, when I saw the other parents, all the other mums bathing and feeding their babies but I couldn't feed my own and not having, not having my, my daughter by, by my bedside. That was the most difficult bit.

Bernadette It was like, someone taking something away from you, falling into a hole, and being depressed and not being able to see your own child in the hospital, so they cut all ties off. The two hours that I had on my last contact was quite touching, quite moving for myself and my daughter but the, the social worker was still there. We actually went to a centre room, we had two hours with my daughter and then that was quite emotional when I had to put my daughter in the car. But I had a chance to go back to the centre room for myself to re-think and recap, but after that hour, no social worker supported me after. I ended up getting the bus home. I think the hardest point was actually putting my daughter in the car and saying goodbye to her and that was the last time I ever saw her face. I think that must have been the hardest time.

Nina From the word adoption, it's just a rollercoaster, a total rollercoaster of what happens to you every day leading up to that, em, emotionally, physically ... trying to, trying to spend time with your child to make memories, to make the most of what you've got. But, at the same, not ... still fighting to keep what you've got and it's, it's hard putting any parent in a position where ... you might have him, you might not. Because adoption doesn't ... just the mere word of we want to place your child for adoption ... it's not over yet but you've gotta make preparations in case it is and it's ... I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy, to be honest.

How do you say goodbye to your child? How do you do that? ... You do physically, you say goodbye physically and you say goodbye verbally. Emotionally you don't, you don't say goodbye. You cling on to every bit of hope that you've got but saying goodbye for the final time ... you just, you want to grab hold of him and you just don't want to let go but you've got social services over your shoulder. They're all watching you, it's ... it's an intimate moment that will ... it stays with you forever and you've got people watching you. You know, I hugged him and I said goodbye to the point I even said, I'll see you later. I did what was asked of me and then when his foster mother took him out the door, I watched him walk through the car park and round the corner and I just collapsed.