

## **HEADLINE: 'Life-changing' foster carers from Glasgow handed prestigious Fostering Excellence Award**

Two foster carers from Glasgow who 'completely changed the lives' of the children in their care have won a prestigious Fostering Excellence Award, recognising their exceptional contributions to foster care.

Paul and Sam Richardson, who foster for The National Fostering Agency, were awarded The Fostering Network Award for foster carers at The Fostering Excellence Awards, sponsored by The Mortgage Brain, in Birmingham on Tuesday.

The couple, from East Kilbride, permanently foster seven children and young people and have one adopted son. They were nominated by their foster daughter Hollye, who says the couple have always made their foster children feel safe and secure.

Paul and Sam have consistently gone above and beyond for all the young people they look after, whether it be home-schooling, teaching practical skills or showing endless determination and support in helping people. When Hollye turned 18, the couple bought her a flat to make sure she always had a stable home nearby.

Hollye said: 'After several fostering placements, I met Paul and Sam who became my Mum and Dad. They have spent over 10 years permanently fostering myself and several siblings.

'We certainly made their life difficult at times, but they never gave up, they never let us down and always made us feel safe and secure.

'No one will ever understand what it is like to move from house to house looking, and hoping, for a family. I will always be grateful for the day I found mine.'

The annual Fostering Excellence Awards are the UK's most prestigious foster care awards, celebrating outstanding achievements in fostering and recognise those who make exceptional contributions to foster care every day.

The award ceremony took place at Birmingham Repertory Theatre, hosted by broadcaster, TV presenter and inspirational speaker Ashley John Baptiste, who grew up in care himself.

Chief executive of The Fostering Network Sarah Thomas said: 'This year marks my first Fostering Excellence Awards as CEO and I am over the moon to be able to celebrate the outstanding work of people within our fostering communities in this way.

'It's been such a joy to read everyone's stories and hear about exceptional people who go above and beyond to support others. It's an honour to be able to celebrate these incredible achievements with our annual awards as well as highlight the vital role fostering is playing to those outside the fostering community.

'The fostering community is truly a special one and all our winners, and everyone else involved in fostering in the UK should be incredibly proud of their contributions to foster care.

‘With more than 7,000 fostering families needed in the UK, it’s vital that we get more exceptional foster carers on board to provide stable homes for children and young people.’

## Notes for editors

For more information, interviews and pictures please email [media@fostering.net](mailto:media@fostering.net) or phone 020 7620 6441.

- **The Fostering Network** is the UK’s leading fostering charity. We are the essential network for fostering, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered children.
- **The Fostering Excellence awards, sponsored by The Mortgage Brain** are the UK’s leading foster care awards. They celebrate excellence and outstanding achievement in fostering and recognise those who make exceptional contributions to foster care every year. Award categories include:

**The Fostering Network award for foster carers, sponsored by The Mortgage Brain** recognises foster carers who have made an exceptional contribution to foster care

**The Fostering Network award for kinship carers, sponsored by The Mortgage Brain** recognises kinship carers who have made an exceptional contribution to foster care

**The Fostering Network award for a social work team** recognises fostering teams who are delivering excellent practice which is helping to improve outcomes for children and young people in foster care

**The Fostering Network award for children of foster carers, sponsored by Williams Giles Xeinadin Group** celebrates children of foster carers aged 24 and under who have welcomed and supported a child who has come to live with them

**The Fostering Network award for young people, sponsored by John Lewis Partnership** celebrates all types of achievements by young people with experience of foster care, aged 16-24

**The Jon and Kathy Broad award** recognises the outstanding work of a foster carer who specialises in fostering children and young people with learning disabilities.

**Fostering Community Supporter award** recognises a person for group of people who have given their time and effort to promote or support fostering

**Fostering Friendly employer of the year award** recognises a Fostering Friendly Employer who has supported foster carers in their employment

### **About fostering**

On average in the UK, a child comes into foster care every 15 minutes.

Currently there are over 90,000 children in care in the UK and three quarters live with foster families.

In England and Wales, over a third of foster placements will be outside of a child's local authority boundary, so it's vital more foster carers are recruited to bring this number down.