

I came from France with my family : my husband and our 5 children, last November, so 8 months ago now! I was born in France, I grew up there and I have all my family and my friends in France. I let you realise, how much it was difficult to take the decision to try to live in another country, without knowing anyone and without speaking English. We have never been to England before, but our choice fell on this country because we wanted to stay geographically close to France and wanted our children to become English speakers.

I admit with hindsight now : we are clearly a little bit crazy! 😊

Anyway, actually, I want to share with you where we are since our arrival.

In fact, they are ups and downs in every country.

Before living in Birmingham, I just heard that English population is very kind, polite and welcoming and I can only confirm it. I heard that the weather is not too good and yes it is true, it rains often and the sky is often overcast. The weather is really different from that of France.

The main cultural difference in the UK to what I knew in France is its strong attachment to opposing all forms of discrimination. I was pleasantly surprised by its multiculturalism and I think it is the point which *has allowed* me to feel as if I were at home. 😊

In addition to the English language, we have had to change our habits in different things, such as the food, the uniform at school, the education system, the difference of the buildings especially the houses because actually we live in a house in Birmingham which is 2 times smaller than our house in France. Also, the weather, the rubbish collection once a week whereas in France it was 3 times a week!

Our move to Birmingham required adaptability from us, we learnt the language, to be patient, to go in search of information and never give up! When we arrived, we were incapable of speaking and understanding English, but now, we all feel more confident! My life is now better by understanding people, by making myself understood, I go to the swimming pool, to the gym with my family, we have new friends, I continue to learn English and also maths with BAES and that is a great opportunity!

I like Birmingham because my area, Selly Oak, is very clean, calm and safe. Birmingham is very green with many playgrounds, parks that is very appreciable for families. However I discovered other areas and I was disappointed about the lack of the cleanliness and I hope one day I can participate in making that change. 😊😊

To conclude I can say that, by moving to Birmingham I lost a lot from a material and financial point of view, however, I have gained a lot from a human point of view. 😊

To compare with France, I can actually say that English people are more positive and more polite. I don't feel any discrimination in my own way and I feel that we are free to be in England as we want to be. In France because I am a Muslim wearing a hijab, I couldn't practice any sport, I can't work and study. Since I have been here, I have felt revived, I am really more fulfilled because I am no longer self-conscious about wearing a headscarf. The most difficult thing for me now is actually just the lack of my family living here :-)

Thank you.