



Case Study – Families Unit

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Brief profile / background of family

- Include priorities for referral criteria
- Mum, Dad and 14 year old son living in the NR5 area of Norwich in a secure tenancy, 2 bedroom NCC property. Mum has very poor mental health and hoarding behaviour which has caused the property and garden to become very cluttered and in a poor state of repair. The son has very poor school attendance (40%) and enuresis. Dad was long term unemployed.

Main issues on referral :

HOUSING:

Significant amount of clutter throughout the property internally and externally due to Mum's hoarding. The clutter was preventing essential repair work to the property i.e. window replacement and kitchen upgrade. The main bedroom was almost unusable as the door could not open fully due to piles of clothing and boxes. Rear of the property was inaccessible due to items – general rubbish/old toys/building materials (wood/window frames/metal)

New carpets were needed throughout the property. The family were using a two ring worktop cooker to prepare family meals and had no washing machine therefore hand washing all clothes/towels etc

The son needed a new bed as his was broken and the mattress and bedding was of unacceptable standard due to bed wetting.

Rent arrears of £577.33 including rechargeable repairs.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT:

School attendance 40%

Both parents unemployed. Dad had been claiming Employment Support Allowance but had been recently assessed as fit for work. Due to Dad's lack of understanding about his responsibilities as a jobseeker his benefits had been sanctioned for 4 weeks during which time the family had very little income. Although Dad had been officially assessed as fit for work, concerns remained about his ability to manage the expectations on him after such a long period of unemployment and health concerns (see below).

PHYSICAL HEALTH:

Mum had been diagnosed with anxiety and depression and was on large amount of medication which often left her feeling confused and "spaced out."

Dad had a heart attack in 2006 and had a bypass as a result of this. He has angina and is under a consultant at NNUH who is investigating back and joint pain which may be arthritis and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

Son is under consultant at NNUH due to low height and body weight, also suspected enuresis.

Mum has a history of fabricating illnesses including pregnancies and cancer. Mum would also call out ambulances once or twice per week if her son complained of headaches or an upset stomach.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH:

Mum has anxiety and depression and suffers regular panic attacks which have left her fearful of leaving the property.

Dad also suffers from anxiety and states that he is very angry with his partner about the amount of clutter within the property.

Son was very socially isolated, found it difficult to make friends and was too embarrassed to invite anyone to the house.

- Partnership working

Links established quickly with the Neighbourhood Housing Officer, Income Officer and school in order to address the issues identified at referral. Multi agency meeting held to talk through coordinated response.

Joint visits arranged with NHO and IO to plan work to be completed on the property in order that the essential work and repairs could be carried out.

Contacted charities and joint visit arranged with Norfolk Consolidated Charities to assess funding available for the family in order that they can obtain white goods (fridge/freezer, cooker and washing machine), carpets, bed and bedding.

Meetings arranged with the school to discuss attendance and possible supported placement at the local Short Stay school in order that the son can be educated in a more containing environment suited to his emotional needs.

What were the demonstrable impacts (describe what the impact has been on outcomes for children, young people, parents and carers to date and how this can be evidenced)

Increased Attendance at school	Following an assessment by the local Short Stay school the son has been offered a supported place at Locksley who have provided him with a timetable which includes functional skills and practical training. They were careful to include a day per week at Easton College which he had specifically shown interest in around small animal care. His attendance now stands at 65% and although there is still work to be done around his attendance and his parents prioritising of this, he is much more engaged with learning. Both parents say there has been an observable improvement in the relationship between the son and his parents following his educational placement at Locksley. The son reports that he feels more independent and enjoys being out of the house more and has made friends at Locksley. His school reports that although it can be difficult to get him to focus on tasks, he is engaging with staff members much more effectively and making good progress. Discussions have been made with Locksley re referring the son to their onsite Psychologist for emotional support around potential trauma experienced due to Mum's fabrication of illnesses and experience of loss around the fabricated pregnancies.
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	The families unit caseworker will provide information to support this referral.
Improved condition of the property	<p>Significant progress has been made within the property. Families unit provided a skip and supported the family to clear the rear and front of the property and the family have plans to make a vegetable garden at the rear.</p> <p>The property has been sufficiently cleared to allow the essential maintenance work to be carried out and the house has new doors, windows and a kitchen upgrade. The family have been supported to remove over 100 bin bags of clothes from the home, recycled/donated to charity. The caseworker has managed to access a fridge/freezer, cooker and washing machine from Consolidated Charities and has had funding approved for new carpets throughout the property. The son has been provided with a new bed and bedding.</p> <p>The NHO has approved clearance of the access passage which had dangerous items within it making it unsafe to use.</p> <p>A payment plan has been put in place for the family to pay off arrears which they are sticking to.</p> <p>Caseworker has arranged a payment plan for court fines due to not having a TV licence and the family have now purchased a license.</p>
Worked towards or Reduction of worklessness benefit	Caseworker has referred Dad to a Disability Employment Adviser at Norwich JCP in order that he receives a higher level of support around finding work. Dad has been supported to access a job club and to create a CV to aide his job search and prevent further sanctions.
What now happens differently for children, young people and families as a result of your actions. What were the outcomes?	
See above.	
Future developments (how these will be achieved and how potential outcomes for children, young people, parents and carers will be delivered)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the family sustain their achievements <p>The family are still open to the families unit and work is ongoing. However, the family have shown that they can maintain the standard which they have worked hard to achieve in terms of their housing. The property, particularly the kitchen, sitting room and external areas have remained clutter free for a period of four months.</p>	