



## Case Study – Families Unit

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### Brief profile / background of Family

- Include priorities for referral criteria
- Referral received from a statutory service for a family of 4, two parents and 2 teenagers aged 15 and 17.

The family have a secure tenancy with Norwich City Council in a 3 bedroom house in the NR1 area. The 15yr old daughter had previously been in temporary foster care with the local authority following an incident where her father had hit her during a heated argument.

Main issues on referral :

#### **SUBSTANCE MISUSE:**

Both parents have substance misuse issues and are regular users of alcohol and cannabis and drink a high amount of energy drinks. It is at these times that many of the family arguments break out.

#### **HOUSING:**

There were no household routines and the mother stated that she struggles to maintain routines as she feels that she does not get support from her partner or the children. Mum stated that she feels that she gives up and can't be bothered as she feels depressed and overwhelmed. There was a lot rubbish in both gardens and the property was in poor condition with several repairs outstanding.

#### **EDUCATION / EMPLOYMENT / ASPIRATIONS:**

The family have a long history of worklessness and benefit dependency. Neither mother nor father have ever worked since leaving school and have no qualifications or work experience.

17yr old son recently dropped out of college and was unlikely to progress into any further Education, Training or Employment without support and the 15yr old daughter regularly refused to go to school and her attendance was down to 72%. The family were at risk of being prosecuted through the 'Fast track' education process for her non-attendance.

#### **NEIGHBOUR RELATIONS:**

Father was very negative about the neighbourhood and the next door neighbours stating that they do not use their back garden because they are verbally abused when they go out. Both parents stated that they do not like living here. Family also needed support with mediation and communicating as a family.

#### **EMOTIONAL HEALTH:**

Mum talked of feeling overwhelmed and depressed, her self-esteem and confidence was very low and she said she felt powerless to change her life and her situation.

Families unit offered weekly support for 12 months offering almost 90 sessions to work alongside the family to meet their goals.

The daughter was referred to the Families Unit **Youth Mediation Practitioner (YMP)**, Phil Sherwood, to improve and repair her relationship with both parents. His work helped address the history of frequent relationship breakdowns and the risk of youth homelessness with the teenagers. He was able to provide fishing line and other equipment so they could spend quality social time together carrying out an activity that they all enjoyed.

The daughter was also vulnerable to emotional, physical and sexual exploitation due to some of the relationships she was developing with other individuals outside of the family network and therefore the parents were supported to use a consistent approach to keep their daughter safe and contained.

The Youth Mediation Practitioner worked with them through family meetings to discuss boundaries, expectations, routines and encouragement of quality time together on a regular basis, he was able to support them with 1:1 parenting advice in respect of teenage development.

In addition the YMP provided 1:1 support, carrying out wishes and feelings work and exploring positive activities and courses for further education, training and employment.

Although Phil was able to provide the daughter with housing advice and temporary housing when she turned 16. The family were able to re-build their lives and slowly felt more empowered and in control. Parents are pleased that their daughter has remained at home and is making good progress. Both parents have stated that they are proud of their children and aware that they require positive time as a family.

- Partnership working – through a multi-agency response and a Family Support Process held at the school. This ensured clear communication between the school, parents and the young people in this family.

**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	<p>Caseworker secured funding for the son to purchase a bike so he was able to return to full time education and secure an apprenticeship.</p> <p>Morning routines were implemented to encourage daughter to attend school and multi-agency meetings were held monthly at her school to provide further support for her to attend.</p>
Improved condition of the property	<p>The family have started to address a long list of household repairs to get the house in a better condition and enable the family to be happier in their environment. They were supported to redecorate. Caseworker accessed funding for replacement of essential items such as carpets, replacement doors, white goods and clothing.</p> <p>All outstanding house repairs have now been reported and are being dealt with by city council contractors.</p> <p>Front and rear garden has been cleared with support from the caseworker.</p>
Family relationships / communication	<p>All relationships and communications have improved dramatically within this family during the 12 months they worked with us. These new skills have also improved relationships with their neighbours and the family are much happier living in this neighbourhood. Although the caseworker did carry out some mediation and restorative work with them, a significant part of this change was as</p>

	<p>a result of increased confidence and self-esteem of individuals, achieving at school/work, etc. Improved living environment and reduced stress factors meant they were naturally able to challenge each other in a more calm and effective way.</p>
<p>Worked towards or Reduction of worklessness benefit</p>	<p>Case worker provided appropriate clothing and footwear and supported mother to identify appropriate work and attend an interview. Mother successfully gained part time employment. Her self-esteem and confidence increased rapidly. This motivated father to seek and secure work.</p> <p>Both parents are now in employment and no longer claiming job seekers allowance.</p> <p>Finances are managed more effectively as a result of increased income. Rent debt reduced.</p> <p>Despite difficult periods both parents continued to remain in employment and be positive role models for their children, raising their aspirations. Both agree that working has improved their self-worth and confidence, as well as their family situation. They feel both the children have more respect for them.</p> <p>The family no longer need the families unit intervention and have worked hard to meet the goals and needs on their support plan.</p>

**What now happens differently for children, young people and families as a result of your actions? What were the outcomes?**

- Highlight feedback from closure evaluation – All 4 family members contributed to the evaluation, stating that they were happier with their lives, feeling that their confidence and self-esteem had improved. This in turn, had a positive impact on their relationships and they all felt it was much easier to communicate their feelings through family meetings. They felt there were far less arguments and that they enjoyed living where they did, feeling pride in their home. They had learnt to enjoy each other's company and share responsibility for decorating and maintaining the home.
- How did you evaluate improvements against outcomes measured?- This family had agreed to set 8 main support goals and successfully achieved 7 of them. They had agreed 9 sub goals and successfully achieved 7.

**Future developments (how these will be achieved and how potential outcomes for children, young people, parents and carers will be delivered)**

- This family have improved their emotional resilience as well as their physical environment, communication and aspirations. As all 4 family members have improved their self-esteem and confidence they have grown in respect for each other. The fact that both parents have continued to stay in employment indicates that they are far more likely to be able to sustain these changes in the long term and provide positive role modelling for their children. The family now have aspirations for their children to achieve that were not previously present.