

Case Studies – Education

Case study: Justin – education, social work

A new pupil has started at the school in the January term he has been moved to a foster placement in your area. He is reluctant for the other pupils to know he is in foster placement. He is also keen that he is treated as the same as other pupils in his class. There are issues about Justin's behaviour in class and in the playground especially the days following contact visits with his birth mother. Only the SEN teacher currently knows that he is a looked after child.

Case study: Victoria- Health, Education, Social Work

Victoria aged 12 provides care for her mother who has complex health needs following a brain tumour. When her father works away from home Victoria has to prepare and administer injections to her mother she also prepares the special food which needs to be given to her mother through a tube directly into her stomach. She has received no formal training to enable her to carry out these procedures – she just follows the instructions that her mother gives her. She also takes on a lot of caring roles such as helping her mother go to the toilet, cleaning and shopping. She worries about her mother and sometimes finds it hard to concentrate in school. She likes to keep a mobile phone on her in case her mother needs to contact her if she is unwell. **See audio visual clip of Victoria's Story**

Case study : Elizabeth – education, social work

Elizabeth is 14 years old and lives with her parents and older brother. She has moderate learning difficulties and Prader-Willi Syndrome one of the features of which is obesity caused by an excessive appetite and overeating. Elizabeth finds difficulty controlling her behaviour and at home will have temper tantrums, rolling on the floor and shouting, if she is criticised by her parents. She attends a local high school but complains that she is being bullied by the other pupils and that the staff are not doing anything about it.

Case Study : – school concert - education

At Christmas this year one of the parents complained that her children were celebrating Christmas as it was not part of their religion, also another of her children who loved gym each Monday found he could no longer do gym in the 4 weeks up to Christmas as they had to practise their songs – he hated singing and was refusing to go to school or attend for the school play.

Case study : Jessica – education, social work

Jessica is 11 years old and lives with her parents. She has cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user. Jessica has very limited verbal communication and is completely dependent upon other people for all her daily living needs. She attends a local comprehensive school where she receives 1:1 support. Jessica has found it difficult getting to know the other children in the school and is very unhappy there and cries each day before going to school.

Case study : Brian – education, social work

Brian is 14 years old and lives with his parents, twin brother and younger sister. He is blind and has severe behavioural problems that are evident both at home and in the local comprehensive school he attends. They feel that the school are not meeting their son's needs and are struggling to cope with his behaviour at home. They approach a solicitor to support them to challenge their son's school placement. As part of the process, Brian has a private assessment with a psychiatrist and is diagnosed as autistic. The school accept the assessment and admit that they are not meeting Brian's needs. They offer a placement in another school in the county, but Brian's parents who are their wits end request that he be placed in an out of county special school where he will receive a 24 hour curriculum.

Case study : Darren – police, education, social work

Darren is 16 years old. He was apprehended by a police officer for being in possession of a small amount of cannabis. Darren says he is not a regular substance abuser, but that he does occasionally smoke cannabis. He told the police officer that he was really keen for his parents not to find out about this, but that he was happy to tell his pastoral tutor at school and that she would come with him to the police station. The police officer asked for Darren's address and the name of his parents, but Darren refused to provide this information. He did give his teacher's name and the name of his school, but asked if he could be the first one to speak to his teacher about this. The police officer is worried and feels strongly that Darren's parents should be told. He wants to insist on this, threatening to arrest Darren and take him to the police station immediately if he doesn't provide the information requested. Darren is very unhappy about this and feels that it should be his decision about whether to involve his parents or not.

Case study : Eyllt –health, social work,

Eyllt is 2 ½ years old and is due to have her routine health check up with the family health Visitor at home. This is the third time that Eyllt and her mother have been seen by Karen the Health Visitor. Eyllt speaks Welsh at home with her mother and father. Karen arrives and gets out some coloured wooden blocks, a measuring tape and her notes to document things. Karen and Mum chat in English about how things are in general, any concerns about Eyllt, and are there any questions? Mum mentions that Eyllt still doesn't have many words in her vocabulary and seems to struggle with certain sounds.

Karen suggests that Eyllt may need to be referred to a speech therapist. Mum asks if they can see someone who speaks Welsh to assess Eyllt as the therapist wouldn't know what was being mispronounced if she didn't speak Welsh. Karen replies that this is not possible at the moment but it would probably be OK in English anyway. Mum refused to have Eyllt referred and says she will consider it again in 6 months if there still hasn't been any improvement.

The consultation continues. Karen wants Eyllt to pick up the blocks in the order of colour she asks for. Karen says: "Can I have the red one please"?

Mum repeats – "Gallu di roi yr un coch iddi?" Eyllt responds accurately. This continues until the exercise is complete. Karen leaves stating she will be back for the pre school check up and to get in touch if there are any further concerns.

Case study : Gethin- police, social work, lawyers, education

Gethin is 10 years old and he has been physically abused by his mother. This has been going on for the last three months and his mother has admitted that she hits him when she gets stressed – and recently she has been very stressed because Gethin’s father has left the family home, leaving them without any money. Gethin is very distressed about his father leaving and about his mother’s abuse. The social worker allocated to the case informed the child protection police officer. The police officer felt, in consultation with the social worker, that there was not reasonable cause to believe that a child would be likely to suffer significant harm, and decided not to remove the child. They decided that it is in Gethin’s best interests to stay within the home – the social worker said that Gethin’s mother does not want him to be removed and she is keen to keep the family together. The social worker will monitor the situation carefully and has arranged some interim financial support for the family. She will make sure the police officer is updated when she can.

Case study : Maria – health, education

Maria is 14 years old and she has gone to her GP because she is frightened that she might be pregnant. Her boyfriend, Mark, refused to come with her to the surgery because he’s scared that they might get into trouble – Mark is 15 years old. The reception has asked Maria why she wants to see the doctor without her parents being there. Maria refuses to say and gets quite upset, saying she must see the doctor on her own. The receptionist tells her that it is the surgery’s policy not to see young people under the age of 16 alone. Maria insists and says she won’t leave until she can see a doctor. The receptionist goes to the doctor and asks her what to do.

Case Study : Bahman

Bahman is an age disputed minor from Iran claiming to be 15 years old. He had been age assessed by a local authority in England as over the age of 18. However, on receiving the age assessment, it was evident to the child advocate that this was not a Merton compliant¹ age assessment. The child advocate wrote to the social services department that conducted the age assessment and requested that they completed another age assessment.

Bahman maintained that he was a minor and was very distressed by the situation that he faced. The child advocate talked to Bahman about other methods of showing the authorities that he is a minor. Bahman mentioned that he has documents with his date of birth on them, that his uncle sent the documents from Iran but that they are all written in Farsi. Bahman is very distressed and unsure what to do.

Merton-Compliant - a term used to describe a local authority age assessment that has been conducted in accordance with the case law on age assessments and is therefore fair and lawful. The term derives from the Merton judgment of 2003 which gives 'guidance as to the requirements of a lawful assessment by a local authority of the age of a young asylum seeker claiming to be under the age of 18 years'.
