

CASE STUDY

The family were referred to The Family Intervention and Prevention Project by a local housing association. The reason for referral was that the family were at risk of eviction due to Anti-Social Behaviour. The family had received a written warning due to neighbour conflict, noise disturbance, parenting issues, garden maintenance and the home was in a dire condition.

There were also risk factors relating to family members. These were Mental Health Issues / learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural issues. There was minimal support from agencies with no routine or boundaries within the home.

When we undertook the initial assessment of the family many disclosures of adverse childhood experiences were made. These were:-

- Physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Familial domestic abuse
- Domestic abuse between the parents
- Time spent in local authority care
- Parental separation

Various types of support had been offered to the family, but their engagement did not last. They were lethargic and appeared unable to make sustainable changes.

The family make up was:-

- LS – mother – aged 51
- CS – son – aged 22
- DS – son aged 19
- JS – aged 17

The immediate danger in this property was the poor living conditions. The family were living in such dire conditions that no surface or floor space could

be seen. There was a double bed in the living room that could not be seen due to rubbish and clothes. Every surface was covered in grime. There were two cats and a dog at the property. All the animals had fleas and the home was infested.

After trusting relationships had been built with the family and they felt they could talk openly with us, the reasons behind the home conditions became more apparent.

Whilst living with her ex partner LS had not been allowed to clean without being beaten, so for many years she didn't clean. This had then turned into hoarding when her partner left as a way of LS being able to take some form of control. As such the children became entrenched within their mothers behaviours and so also didn't clean. The conditions were so unsanitary that a specialised cleaning company had to be employed to empty and clean the whole property. Whilst all this was being undertaken work started with the family to change these entrenched behaviours. Daily support went into the home to set up cleaning routines and rotas. This was difficult as LS has physical disabilities and the sons have learning difficulties or mental health issues. However with the intensity that FIP is able to offer over many months their new routine and rotas started to become more habitual. DS became the instigator on a daily basis encouraging his family to clean. FIP also worked with LS's hoarding. She was encouraged to let go of one to two items a day until she became strong enough to dispose of more items. The animals all saw a vet and on-going flea treatments were put in place. The dog was re-homed as the family were unable to meet the dogs needs. Home conditions are now greatly improved and maintained to a good enough standard. The garden was full of rubbish and was very overgrown. The boys in the household worked alongside FIP to tidy and clean the garden. They were then supported to maintain the garden over a period of time until this also became habitual for them.

There were many complaints by neighbours. The immediate neighbour alleged there was continuous loud shouting, arguments, loud television and music and this was often worse at night time. FIP visited this neighbour and built a working relationship with her. She was initially very angry, emotional and at "the end of her tether." Over the months she was able to see that improvements were taking place and she became more tolerant of the family.

She knew she could talk to us and be given honest explanations. Although she didn't speak to the family again complaints were minimised.

Whilst working with the neighbour work was also being completed on relationships and personal improvements / aspirations in the home. There was familial domestic abuse between the brothers. They were verbally aggressive and often volatile with each other. The family had not received any support to deal with the years of abuse they had suffered. All the children had also witnessed domestic abuse between their parents. LS and CS were referred for cognitive behavioural therapy and attended. Specific one to one sessions were carried out with DS and JS.

The outcomes from this were that relationships within the home improved greatly with physical violence ceasing and arguments minimised. JS now attends college more regularly. DS has moved to live with his sister and is working. CS is working. He is in a relationship and is looking to move into his own accommodation.

The family live in an isolated location with no amenities close by. This puts added pressure on the family as they are unable to walk anywhere to join in outside groups or activities. They can't even walk to a shop. The family are currently bidding on properties in a different area. JS and mum LS will move to an area where they can access local amenities and JS can get to college much easier. Tenancy support will be in place when they move. A fresh start for the family is definitely needed and they are now ready to make the move.