

Case Study for two Young Carers

BACK GROUND HISTORY OF THE CASE

- Family of three who live in a small two bedroom property which does not meet mothers needs for her mobility condition.
- They were originally a family of four however, the eldest son was killed whilst serving in the British Army in Afghanistan. Due to this sudden and tragic death, the mother has a lot of mental health issues. As a family of four, they lived in a three bedroom house, due to mother's loss of earnings and the issues to do with her son's will, they had to sell their home and move in with the maternal Grandmother (MGM). The relationship between MGM and her daughter had been very difficult before the family moved in. MGM made the family homeless. Coming to Herefordshire Council as registered homeless they were given a property that could house them but didn't meet their specific needs.
- Mother's health is very poor and deteriorating. She has Fibromyalgia and Hyper mobility syndrome (Ehlers-Danlos) which is a soft tissue disorder and was diagnosed 20yrs ago with this - both conditions affect her mobility greatly. She now has Osteo Arthritis in her joints. She has subluxation where her joint pops and this tears soft tissue. She also has Oedema in her legs – where her legs fill with fluid. The best way to alleviate some of the discomfort is through elevation of legs helps this. She has a hiatus hernia and has liver issues.
- The family were referred to YCSS via Hereford Young Carers and the school where the boys attend. The referral stated that both boys look after their mother a lot at home due to her physical and mental health conditions. The boys were cleaning the home, doing the laundry, looking after the pets and cooking the family meals.
- Due to the family bringing most of their belongings from MGM's property to a much smaller home, the house was very full of clutter and many bags of excess clothes and household items. A large portion of these bags were put into the double bedroom and filled the room floor to ceiling, only allowing the door to be opened a fraction to get in. As mother finds it hard to get up and down the stairs she slept in the lounge and the boys shared a single room with bunk beds. The dining room table was also full of clutter so the family could not eat their meals together.

INTERVENTION DELIVERED

- At the start of the intervention was to focus most of the FSW visits to support mother and sons to remove old items from the house which were not needed, grown out of or broken to make room for one of the sons to move into the double room.

- FSW supported mother to request a Fire Safety Check from the Fire Brigade to check the home and whether it was suitable for the family to live in.
- FSW spent a lot of time speaking with the boys 1:1 and building a rapport with them. Both have aspirations for future life to succeed in different fields of study, however both also felt they needed to remain at home to look after their Mum. FSW encouraged the boys with their aspiration and explained that as their mother's care needs became more personal than a professional carer would be needed.
- FSW ensured there was good communication with school as the eldest son felt the school were aware but unsympathetic to his role as a young carer – for example though knowing his duties at home, as he was in top set for all subjects there was an increased workload and amount of homework and he felt the school pushed him to keep at this top level.
- As mother had a lot of worries and concerns about life whether it was to do with her health, her sons' education, the memories of her eldest son, her housing issues and worries about the future, FSW would spend on average an hour just letting mother talk and help guide her to some outcomes or different points of view. Due to her mental and physical conditions she had a weight problem which she wanted to address so the FSW supported her to access the Healthy Lifestyles Trainer Service.
- Mother encouraged to look to move to more suitable accommodation. She had become low regarding the hope of going to a new place that she had long stopped looking and felt worried that though she had been told she was on a waiting list for a purpose built property, that if she moved somewhere else then she'd lose her place. FSW met with the Hospital Discharge Officer, the Housing Development Officer and the Housing Officer – Fortis Living to give mother clear communications regarding her housing status, where to look for new properties, when she can apply and importantly that she is still on the list for the purpose built property.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

- The double bedroom is now clear of clutter and the boys have their own bedrooms. This has meant they are getting along better and able to have better bedtime routines. Removing a lot of the clutter has allowed all the family to appreciate what they do have and to understand what they can take and will need to buy for the next property they move to.
- At time of writing case study, family are still waiting for Fire Brigade to book fire safety check.
- Both boys have been clear that they have felt the support invaluable in being able to talk with someone about their problems and how they felt about caring for their mother. Both have said they have a better understanding of their role as young carers and, through the conversations about routines and their tasks, they feel they are able to manage their time better. This better time management has enabled them to ensure they have some down time and has meant one can focus on learning the guitar and practice using music making software.
- Both boys are feeling better about school. School have helped the eldest son to drop French as an after school activity which has relieved some of the pressure. The older of the two brothers is in year 11 and feeling more ready for his exams and relaxed about being able to study at home.
- They didn't have a public responsibility at the last Remembrance service at school as they said they wouldn't like to, but still sat holding their older brother's medals on the front row.

- Mother is still attending sessions with her Healthy Lifestyles Trainer and has decided to change the food the family eat to improve all of their health and wellbeing. Mother has ensured she is talking with her friends more about her feelings and is ready to call on her local support network of friends when needed.
 - Though they are still living in a two bedroom property, mother is very enthusiastic about regularly searching for a more suitable property knowing that the family will remain on the list to have a purpose built property. The FSW has been in contact with the Housing development officer who has confirmed that there is a new build in Bromyard that will be ready in March which the family can bid on. The FSW has also supported mother to look on Rightmove for private rentals.
 - The dining room table is now clean and the family can eat meals together.
 - The FSW has spoken to the boys about activities. One likes to be in his bedroom playing computer and the other brother prefers to take part in after school clubs, be with his friends and walking the dog.
 - A referral was made to for bereavement counselling to Phoenix but only limited support of one appointment was given. Another bereavement counselling service CRUISE is currently being explored.
 - The FSW has supported the family with putting curtains poles up in the bedrooms and putting shelves up in the shed to store tins of paint that were originally housed on the stairs causing a danger and fire risk.
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