

Suzie's Story

Intensive

Presenting Concerns:

Suzie is 7 years old. She has a history of parental neglect and has had her name placed on the Child Protection Register in the past. One evening Suzie is out walking the streets alone in her local community and is crying and noticeably distressed. A neighbour finds her and calls the police. The police attend and upon entering the family home find Suzie's mum heavily under the influence of alcohol and unfit to care for Suzie. Social Work is contacted and Suzie is removed under a Child Protection Order given the lack of any alternative safe place and placed with emergency foster carers.

Family background:

Suzie is an only child and lives at home with her mum, who struggles with alcohol misuse. Suzie's only extended family are her maternal grandparents who live a few miles away. Her mum has a volatile relationship with her parents and Suzie's contact with them has been inconsistent.

The family became known to social work several years ago after the Health Visitor noticed signs of neglect and reported concerns relating to her mum's parenting capacity and alcohol misuse. Further investigation at the time revealed the house to be chaotic, with a number of adults in and out of the family home and Suzie often in the care of family friends due to her mum's binge drinking.

Suzie's name was placed on the Child Protection Register, as a result of parental neglect and her mum's alcohol misuse, and a number of coordinated interventions were implemented to support Suzie's needs. After intensive input around the family and positive engagement from Suzie's mum her name was removed from the Child Protection Register. At the Child Protection de-registration Case Conference it was agreed that Suzie's named person in Education would continue to support and monitor her wellbeing needs.

Response:

Following the Child Protection Order and Suzie's removal from her mums care, the allocated Social Worker invited the Named Person, Suzie's Mum and other relevant professionals to attend the 72 hour Planning Meeting where agreement was reached to create a Childs Plan to coordinate the necessary support work.

The following action were agreed under the Child Plan:

- A Child Health Assessment requested
- A Parent Capacity Assessment to be undertaken
- Suzie's mum to be referred to Addiction Services
- Social Work to assess the wider family supports requirements
- Contact arrangement agreed
- Education to support with practical arrangements regarding school transport and in-school support - Named Person in school to support regular communication with foster carers
- Allocated Social Worker designated as the Lead Professional for the Childs Plan
- Continued close monitoring of Suzy's wellbeing needs

A review date (6 week review) was set to monitor progress against the Child's Plan outcomes.

Outcome:

Over the next 12 weeks attempts to engage with Suzie's mum to undertake a full assessment of her parenting capacity were unsuccessful. During this period Suzie's mum disengaged with all services and despite continued effort by both the Lead Professional and Named Person contact arrangements were not kept. Subsequent information suggested she had left the area with no known contact address.

Social work continued to support Suzie's short term foster care placement and, after regular contact and discussion with Suzie's grandparents, undertook a full kinship care assessment leading to Suzie moving to her grandparents care.

Social work and the other supporting services continued to work with her grandparents and reports on the placement were positive. School reported Suzie appeared more settled and her ability to engage with learning had improved.

Suzie's grandparents reported they struggled a bit with Suzie's energy levels at first but felt they were coping and were very pleased to have her in their care. Suzie's mum made intermittent contact with her parents over the next year, requesting contact with Suzie. The situation was monitored by social work and contact visits were arranged however her mum failed to make any of the arranged contacts.

Suzie's Grandparents are now seeking a residence order to remove her from the Children's Hearing System and the need for ongoing formal reviews of her care. This decision is being supported by Social Work and is an agreed action within the Child's Plan