

Early Help Case Study

Intensive Family Support Team



Fran* is 8 years old, with a friendly and happy disposition. She worries about her mum as she knows mum is different when she is with her drinking friends, she has said she doesn't like them coming to the house.

* Fran is a pseudonym



Mum has a diagnosis of emotionally unstable personality disorder. She has also used cocaine and alcohol as coping strategies which cancel out any positive benefit from her medication. She has been in a cycle of poor mental health resulting in poor decision making, whilst also experiencing feelings of guilt and shame.

Fran's wider family have been aware of the difficulties her mum faces and have always stepped in so that Fran's needs have been met. Earlier this year Fran's aunt took her in to live with her and her cousins.



01 Self-Referral

Fran's aunt contacted Children's Services in early Summer asking for some support. The case came to Families First Triage and a Senior Family Intervention Worker (SFIW) from their local Intensive Family Support Team (IFST) became involved, with maternal consent.

The family have managed the situation as best as they can but have reached a crossroads:

- HCC school transport to get Fran into school from her auntie's will not be renewed in September
- Fran is asking to return to her mum and her mum is asking for Fran to return but Auntie is nervous. She has noticed the difference in her niece during the six months she has had her there – she's less anxious; eating better; enjoying life and Auntie is really worried that all this will be undone if her sister cannot make the changes needed and was reluctant to let her go back to her mum without professional accountability.

02 Initial Meeting

A family meeting was held at Fran's house whilst she was at school. It was attended by Fran's family support network – aunt (whom Fran had been living with), great aunt (who lives a few doors away) and maternal grandmother.

Fran's mum said she wanted to make the changes but she was scared of letting Fran down. When asked what would help, she identified that when the aunt steps in to look after Fran it leaves her feeling isolated almost giving her permission to disappear for days on end – drinking and using. She didn't want the aunt to let her off but instead support her to be the parent she wants to be to Fran.



03 Support

Completion of a Families First Assessment (FFA) enabled individual needs of the family to be identified from which an action plan was put in place to address presenting needs.



- Completed a Young Carer application based on worries she carries about her Mum
- Referred into CGL's Hidden Harm Service to help Fran understand addiction in an age-appropriate way

Fran had already done a piece of work with the School Nursing Service and shared that this had helped her understand her early warning signs and when her anger thermometer was rising. Fran has strategies to help her to deescalate.



- Attended a creative, therapeutic course at the Family Centre course called 'In Your Shoes' where clients look at their past (left foot) and future (right foot), along with Family Intervention Worker
- Engaged with CGL and tried AA and CA meetings
- Supported to attend Future Living to see what they could offer

04 Progress to Date

Two Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings have taken place and included the school and family members. Fran's mum says this has really helped as she doesn't have to hide away anymore; the appropriate people know her vulnerabilities and she has accountability, not only to her daughter, but to those supporting the family.

It has now been 4 weeks 6 days since she last had an alcoholic drink, and several months since she used cocaine. She has no intention of going back because she reports feeling well – her medication is doing what it is supposed to to keep her emotionally well; her relationship with Fran is improving every day – activities planned and carried through with during half term were a testament to this; she has moved in with Fran's great aunt and this amazing lady has put a blanket of love and care around them both. Fran's mum has also realised that some people can have one drink and walk away, she is not one of these – she has therefore pledged to abstinence.