

Case study – Young carer

J was referred into Barnardo's Young Carers by their parent A, who has an immune mediated disease and J helps them physically and emotionally. The referral detailed that J resided with their Parent A, Parent T, and sibling. Their Parent T worked away. Their older sibling was expecting their first child and lives with their partner nearby.

When completing a home visit, the family informed me that they had moved to a new adapted property due to A's needs, they accepted it as adapted properties don't become available often. The property needed decorating and most rooms had bare concrete floors. The family had a broken cooker and washing machine and were struggling financially, due to being reliant on one wage. The property was also a further distance from J's school, resulting in J waiting for the bus early in the morning and often not being home until late at night. Once a week J was even later due to additional lessons.

J discussed worries about their Parent falling in the property due to the concrete floor and how cold the house feels. J spoke of a recurring fear that they would come home from school to find their parent A unconscious on the floor. On arrival from school, J makes the tea and helps complete jobs around the home, struggling to find time for course work.

I contacted J's Head of Year at school and discussed my concerns. Due to the bus timetable J was having to get an earlier bus to be on time, resulting in J having to wait outside. The additional classes being offered due to Covid lockdowns were resulting in J getting home even later. I composed a report that their Head of Year took to the school inclusion panel. This resulted in a plan being drawn up. J was able to attend school slightly later. J was offered support in the day and all their extra lessons were placed online. Time out passes were put in place and weekly catch ups with their Head of Year were scheduled into their timetable. All their teaching staff were informed of their caring role.

I applied through the Barnardo's Covid response fund – 'See, Hear, Respond' and secured the family a cooker and washing machine. To assist with the plan in place in school to support J, I also applied for a laptop. I applied to Barnardo's Grant Scheme for money to carpet the property. Some money was granted, but not enough to carpet all the rooms required. Our service manager liaised with our regional manager and discussed the concerns. The regional manager accessed additional funding through Barnardo's to carpet the remaining rooms.

I have maintained involvement with the family through the varying Covid restrictions and locks downs. Parent T's hours reduced during Covid, seeing the family struggle more financially. Food parcels were offered to support the family when required. Parent T spoke to me about applying for a local job. We explored the benefits of working more locally on the family. Parent T now has local employment, which means they are more available to the family, and they have informed their workplace of their care responsibilities and the workplace are supportive. J now has a free bus pass which has further supported J and the family.

J spoke to me about how their Parent was struggling with not being able to help their sibling with the new baby. I spoke with parent A and the sibling and with their consent contacted the local children's centre for information. The sibling and their baby started to attend online and then actual classes and groups through the children's centre.

J discussed he was worried about applying to college. I supported him with applications and contacted the college to ascertain what he would need for interviews. J got a place on their first choice of a plastering course. I contacted the college and spoke to the Young Carers lead to discuss J's caring role.

Before college started, I arranged a meeting with the special support team in the college and J now has additional support in college. All J's lessons are sent on PowerPoint and uploaded online should J not be able to attend any of them. J has a Mentor, and all their teaching staff are aware of their caring role and extensions have been added to all their course work deadlines to reduce their worries of possibly submitting work late.

Parent A's condition has continued to progress, and they have been offered a new treatment, which is having more physical impact. J and I have discussed this in our sessions. In discussions with parent A, we agreed that I would make a care enquiry to adult services to consider further adaptations in the home. We have received contact from adult services to update that they will receive an Occupational Therapy re-assessment.

J is doing well at college and benefitting from the support in place. Since the carpets have been fitted J reports the home is warm, and their worries have substantially reduced about Parent A falling. J is feeling more able to focus when at college. Parent A no longer feels like a prisoner in their own home and less worried of falling. They are now able to have their grandbaby over more as they now feel better about baby crawling around the floors now they are carpeted. Parent T is now able to assist more in the home and has managed to decorate, having a regular wage and working locally. Having a working washing machine, has saved the family time and reduced J's worries of it flooding the kitchen and their Parent falling. The cooker has also helped with the food the family can now prepare and reduced the cost and reliance on takeaways. J continues to use their laptop, being able to use it at home and in college.