

Recurrent Care Proceedings Change Project

Exercise One: Mapping Service Provision

Case Study 2: Amy

Background

Amy was brought up by her mother. She didn't meet her own father until adulthood and only met him twice. She has two younger siblings and one older brother. All the children have different fathers and none of them were part of the family home. Amy was frequently left responsible for the care of her younger siblings while her mother went out in the evenings.

Amy's uncle and brother have convictions for sexual assault of children. Amy was raped when she was 12 by a friend of her uncle. She doesn't remember if it was reported to police but remembers having some counselling sessions when she was in her late teens. There was some short-term children's social care involvement and Amy was on a child protection plan for 6 months. During this time work took place to ensure that Amy's mother stopped her brother and uncle having any contact with Amy.

From the age of 14 Amy spent little time at home but moved from friend to friend. She described herself as a 'party animal' and frequently used a range of drugs and alcohol. School raised concerns regarding Amy's lack of attendance and a referral was made to children's social care. Her mother agreed to try and enforce more boundaries but also seemed to think that Amy was old enough to make her own decisions. No further action was taken. When she was 16 Amy began a relationship with man 12 years older than her and her drug use escalated and became more routine. The relationship was very violent, but Amy moved in with him. She quickly became pregnant, but her partner did not want the baby and severely beat her. He was arrested and convicted and served a prison sentence.

Motherhood

Following the birth of her son Alfie, an anonymous referral was made to Children's Social Care reporting that Amy was neglecting her baby. Amy was living in a hostel but agreed to move back to her mother's house and the case was quickly closed.

Amy was enjoying being a mother and with some support from her own mother was coping well. When Alfie was four months old Amy heard that her ex-partner was being released from

prison. She was terrified that he would come and find her and seek revenge. Amy became highly anxious and left her mother's home with her baby. She moved weekly between friend's houses in order to stay hidden and hardly went out. In order to cope with her anxiety she began using cannabis and alcohol.

When Alfie was six months old Amy became pregnant again following a one-night stand with a friend. The father of child was also in a relationship with another woman and did not want any further contact with Amy. Amy had a little girl, Jade, and she and both children moved back to live with her Mum. However, Amy's Mum had also allowed Amy's older brother to move back home. Amy was terrified for the children's safety and felt very unsettled and angry with her mother.

Amy stayed awake at night watching over her babies and then stayed out of the house all day in order to avoid her brother. The anxiety became too much for her and she decided to move out of her mother's home. When Jade was three months old the health visitor told Amy that she was going to make a referral to children's social care as she had concerns regarding Amy's transience, mental health and the lack of routine for the children. Amy was frightened at the prospect of social work involvement, worried that the children will be removed from her care and that the social worker might tell her ex-partner where she is living. Amy stopped attending meetings with children's services and changed her mobile number. Her anxiety escalated, and she decided to ask her mother to look after her children. Her mother agreed to ask Amy's brother to leave the house and to care for the children while Amy got some help.

Amy rung the children every day but would only visit after dark as she was scared she would be seen. Amy's mother struggled to cope with the children due to her own difficulties and telephoned children's services for help. One day Amy's mother did not collect the children from nursery. The nursery rung children's services and both children were removed to foster care. They were aged six months and 23 months. Care proceedings were issued by the local authority.

During care proceedings Amy had a psychological assessment and was told she had a borderline personality disorder and required 12 months therapy. Amy's mother did not feel she could care for the children and there were no other family members put forward for assessment. The children were both made subject to care and placement orders.

Amy became pregnant with her third child during proceedings. This pregnancy again followed a brief relationship and the father was not interested in supporting the child. Amy did not book in with the midwife until she was 18 weeks pregnant. During professional meetings Amy was inconsolable and workers struggle to calm her down. The local authority recommended removal at birth and Amy's third baby Cassie was removed from her care at five days old. Following a rapid set of proceedings Cassie was placed for adoption.

Current Situation

Amy is now 19 and is four months pregnant. She has self-referred to Children's Social Care. During the first meeting with a social worker, she weeps inconsolably about the loss of her other children. She describes how she feels lost and feels that being a Mum was the only thing she ever felt she achieved in her life. She is angry that she was not given another chance and that the children were adopted. Amy says that she is now in a new relationship with a lovely man Joe. He is 18 and he lives at home with his parents. She says she is abstinent from drugs and alcohol and says it is because Joe has helped her keep away from her old friends. Amy and Joe want to keep this baby and plan to move into their own accommodation.