

# Supporting Effective Parenting

An overview of the input and  
outcome for one client

# Family History

- Grandmother married twice. No children from first marriage. Five children from second marriage.
- Four of these children have been diagnosed with varying disabilities.
- Three of the four are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities.

# Living Conditions

- 2 up 2 down house, with kitchen extention.
- Six adults and two children shared this space.
- All hot water is provided by lighting the range, winter or summer.
- Water must be boiled before drinking.

# Previous interventions.

- 1995: S first came to the attention of Adult Learning Disability Team.
- There were concerns that S might be pregnant. They were unfounded.
- Adult team member arranged an offer of placement for S.
- The family refused it.

# Interventions (continued).

- S subsequently started a day placement in the independent sector.
- 1997: S's mother moved out of home with her children.
- She returned to her husband within two weeks because she was unable to cope with financial matters.

# Susan's Pregnancy.

- 1998: S discovered she was pregnant for the first time.
- The doctor was concerned about S's ability to manage the baby.
- The doctor also expressed concern about possible domestic violence in the home.

# Susan's Baby

- 16<sup>th</sup> April 1999. A beautiful baby girl was born.
- The Public Health Nurse expressed her concern about S's ability to care for her child. She suggested that S needed “sheltered accommodation.”

# Accommodation

- Due to pressure of space in the house, where six adults and one baby were sharing three bedrooms, the health board arranged to buy a mobile home for S. It was parked behind her parents house.
- S used it for a few nights but then returned to live in the main house.

# Child protection.

- In December 1999, a child protection social worker carried out an assessment. The purpose of this was to assess S's parenting and coping capacity.
- The result of the assessment was that the baby was meeting all her milestones but there was concern about safe care.

# Susan's second pregnancy.

- In May 2000, S gave birth to her second beautiful daughter.
- The doctor had extreme concerns about S's ability to parent two children.
- It is of note that prior to the birth, S had come to a decision to place this second baby for adoption.

# Family Support

- In July 2000, there was an application made to have family support supplied to S and her daughters.
- In November 2000, a family support worker was appointed.
- Family support was for 4 hours per week initially, rising to 6 hours per week, spread over 2 and then 3 days.

# Attachment

- During 2002 the support workers realised that they could not do enough to assist the children in the time allowed.
- There were extreme concerns about attachment and separation issues for both children.

# Play School

- In September 2002, a play school agreed to accept both girls into their group.
- This school instantly started work on the attachment and separation issues of the girls.
- They placed both girls in separate groups and supported them through the trauma experienced.
- In time the girls and S learned to trust and respect the staff at this school.

# New Concerns

- In early 2005, Family support became extremely concerned about the elder of the girls having recurring difficulties of a medical nature.
- There was a question mark about possible abuse and exposure to domestic violence.

# Child Protection Concerns

- A decision was taken by the home support team to refer to the Child Protection Team.
- There was frustration at the lack of urgency shown by Child Protection.
- A decision was made that it would be best if S moved out of home with her children, due to ongoing concerns.

# Last attempt

- At this stage, family support made a referral to the Adult Learning Disability Team.
- The referral was accepted. The social worker met with the support worker and was subsequently introduced to S.

# New Social Worker

- There was total honesty and openness when the social worker from the Adult team met with S
- After the introductions and formalities, the social worker explained that the introduction was to facilitate S being supported in the event that her children would be taken into care.

# New Home

- The County Council were very quick to provide alternative accommodation.
- After a Child Protection Assessment, S was informed that if she did not move to and remain in this new accommodation, it was likely that the Health Board would apply for a care order, for her children.

# Supports

- Family support continued to work with S after she moved.
- Disability services provided 12 hours home support per week to S.
- This was initially utilised in the mornings. The worker modeled coping skills for S.

# Difficulties

- At this stage, both children had started mainstream school and were attending after schools at the play school.
- S found the transition to living in her own house and both children being at school extremely difficult. She revolted against the home support worker and the other professionals involved.

# Where to next?

- S now refused to have a home support worker. The question became “how do you utilise the hours when the client will not accept them”?
- The adult team social worker was aware of the good and respectful relationship between staff at the school and S.

# New idea

- S, the staff and the social worker came to an agreement.
- S was to be offered the opportunity to attend the school and observe and practice care and disciplinary skills with children.
- S accepted this offer and eventually found herself being paid for doing some hours as an employee.

# Failure?

- There was a feeling of failure when S announced that she no longer wanted to work at the school.
- It had been noted that there were some concerns arising at the level of care at home again. It appeared to be getting too much for S.

# Not Failure!

- S and the social worker spoke about the difficulties.
- Night time was proving difficult. Not mornings, not when the girls were at the schools.
- It was obvious! Night time.

# Home support

- With S's agreement, the social worker approached one of the staff at the play school. This person agreed to work four evenings a week, from 8 – 10 o'clock. This left four hours spare. Those four hours are now filled at the play school.

# Theory Test

- S is now studying four hours a week, for her theory test for driving. She has assistance available downstairs if she requires it. Her children attend the after schools service.

# Notable Facts

- Both of S's children are doing exceptionally well at school.
- The school noted that if they had not been contacted by the Health Board, they would not have been aware that the children came from a disadvantaged background.

# Congratulations

- I want to thank S for giving her permission to talk about her case, but more than that, I wish to congratulate her on having started what is still a very difficult journey.