Written Case Studies

Example 1
Mr Kendall slipped on the ice while getting out of his car to help stranded motorists on a dangerous country lane. The snow had come down quickly and unexpectedly. Unable to move other motorists called for help and he was finally transported to a nearby hospital by air ambulance as only a small vehicle with a paramedic could get to the scene. Mr Kendall is 89 years of age and his wife aged 86 years are both active and relatively healthy. They both lead busy lives and have a social circle and a routine of activities in the community. Mr Kendall’s particular hobby is gardening. He is an intelligent retired professional with lots of technical skills; he regularly researches and shops on the internet. They live in a small cottage in a tiny hamlet in a rural area. Following recovery from a repair of a broken left hip he is transferred 20 miles away from their home to a community rehabilitation hospital where he receives intensive help and support to recover towards independent living. His only concern and that of his wife and family is that he can walk again. As he begins to make progress walking with a frame and his outlook is looking promising his wife asks how will he manage at home...

Example 2
Although Ellie felt well during her pregnancy she was worried as she was 37 years of age having her first baby and had asked for the amniocentesis test. All tests were normal. As the pregnancy progressed Ellie was monitored because the baby was felt to be small. Towards the end of the pregnancy she was told the placenta was lying low and was told to come into hospital as soon as she went into labour. Her baby boy (Jake) was born following an emergency caesarean section for foetal distress. He was unresponsive with an Apgar score of 0. Following resuscitation Jake spent 3 weeks being ventilated and suffered fits for several days. Following a slow recovery all medication was stopped and he went home breast feeding. As Jake grew he failed to reach several developmental motor milestones and at 6 months was diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

Now aged 8 months Jake has problems with fine motor skills, a left sided weakness and poor tone in his lower limbs. He does not tolerate different textures and is uncoordinated when he eats. Both parents are working and are trying to offer Jake lots of help with the support of many people...

Example 3
Danielle, now 32 years of age, lives in a four bed roomed local authority rented home. Her children are 14, 11, 9 and 8 years of age. She has an unhealthy lifestyle being overweight, smoking heavily and she goes out at weekends to drink excessively with friends. Danielle has found it difficult to parent her four children and as a result they are often found in the local accident and emergency department. Their progress at school has not been successful and her eldest child has been excluded because of anti-social behaviour. Danielle is an informal networker on her local estate and her door is always open as she is seen as the local agony aunt. She has had two partners and is on her own at the moment. One of the problems with the children is that the eldest has a different father from the others. Danielle is known by many local professionals who try and help her...
Example 5
Freda is 91 years old and lives on her own in a small terraced house. Freda’s partner, Doris, died a year ago. Doris and Freda had lived together for thirty years. Freda had cared for Doris for many years after Doris had a stroke. Freda herself had a stroke six months ago. Her speech and balance are poor.

Freda has two children, both boys from a previous relationship. Tom is now 72 yrs old and Harry 69. Both are retired from work and do not live locally, Neither son accepted the relationship between Doris and Freda. Freda now has little contact with them and none with her 4 grandchildren.

Tom has begun to receive phone calls from his mum in the middle of the night. He says she is very forgetful, cries a lot, wanders at night time, and forgets to take her medication. It is difficult to talk to her on the phone as she is very deaf. She has tablets for high blood pressure but has not seen her GP for several years. Freda was offered a package of care when she was discharged from hospital but refused to let anyone in the house. The care package was discontinued.

Tom visited Freda to take her a zimmer frame for her birthday but she threw it at him. He is worried because she appears to have adopted a dog. The dog is a ‘pitbull type’ and belonged to a neighbour. Tom reports that the neighbour is often ‘worse the wear’ for drink.

Tom reports Freda sleeps in a chair at night. Freda says it is too painful to climb the stairs because of her leg ulcers and arthritis. There is very little food in the house, other than for the dog.

Case written by Julie Kent (Principal Lecturer, Social Work, DMU)

Example 6
Gemma is 19 years of age and has been in care since she was 5 years old. She has recently been released from a custodial sentence. She has previously visited the local 'Info Shop' - a youth information project for young people aged 11 to 25 - to seek assistance in finding accommodation and staff were able to assist in liaison with social services and local housing charities. However, she returned some days later, in an unkempt state, suggesting she had been sleeping rough. Staff tried to engage with her but her behaviour was erratic and hostile. She seemed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, was talking to herself and had, apparently, pulled out a clump of her own hair. As time went on, her behaviour became worse and she began to threaten staff and other service users. A female member of staff who had dealt with her before tried to placate her but she began to scream and shout, declaring that she had been the subject of a rape or sexual assault. The centre manager decided to close the Info shop to all other users and called the police and an ambulance.

Case written by Christopher Herriot (Senior Lecturer, Youth & Community Division, DMU)

Example 7
Margaret is 58 years of age and apart from feeling more tired than normal is fit and healthy. She has taken the morning off work to attend for a re-call outpatient appointment following a recent routine breast screening. This is not the first time she has been recalled it happened a few years ago but on that occasion she could feel a lump. She is worried about being re-called but is hoping that like last time, there will be nothing to worry about. The clinic is modern and they seem organised. She is called for an X-Ray and is then taken into a consultation room. There they show her the area of
breast tissue that reveals a small dark circle. Following a small procedure she is told that the breast
tissue contains evidence of the early stages of cancer. The doctor is sure that early removal of the
small area of tissue will be the best option. Two days later Margaret is admitted for this surgery and
is being prepared, she is the next on the list the Operating Department Practitioner has come to the
ward to take her to surgery...