

EVIE'S* STORY

I got to school late today. No surprises there. Nobody even bothers to ask why I'm late or have a go now, not that I'd tell them anyway. What would I say? "Sorry Miss my mum had her mates round last night and they kept me awake drinking and playing the music really loud." Then at about 3am, I had to stop them fighting cause they can't handle their drink. They'd say I was lying, making it up for attention. Truth is, I got about two hours sleep.



When I got up, I was really hungry - cause mum forgot to cook dinner again but as usual there's no food in. Mum can't afford it. All her money goes on her parties and it's not like I can buy it myself, I'm still a kid - I can't get a job and who'd give me one anyway? Everyone thinks I'm stupid and lazy just cause I'm not good with words and I fall asleep sometimes. They have written me off as having "behavioural problems".

So, I got to school late and had English first. I hate English. They make you stand up and read a book written by a bloke, like hundreds of years ago, who wore a dress and can't speak proper English. I don't know what the story was about today. I must have fallen asleep again cause the next thing I know the teacher is shouting my name and telling me it's my turn to read. I can't do that. I can't read in front of everyone, so I started coughing, then choking. Said I needed a glass of water. That only bought me a couple of minutes. Then I said I lost my book. I came up with every excuse I could think of until I was out of ideas, so I just got up and walked out. I heard the teacher say, "I'll be writing to your mum." Like she will care and anyway, I always get the letters before her - she sleeps most of the day. Apparently, it's exhausting being up all night drinking.

I've read the letters the school have sent home. They all say the same thing that I'm disruptive, don't engage, I never pay attention, blah blah blah. Oh, and the best one - that I'm dragging the whole class down with me. I'm a bad influence.

It got better when I walked out of school. I went to the park. I knew Mike would be there with his mates. I want the job he's got. I don't know what it is, but he's always got tons of money and he buys me presents, like all the time. It was my birthday last week. I was 13. Nobody bothered to say, "happy birthday", except Mike. He took me for lunch at McDonald's and said I could have anything on the menu. He really spoils me. He says I'm special. Nobody has ever told me that before.

Mike said he couldn't stay long today as he had business to deal with, but it was still good. He asked me about my day and said school was a waste of time. It's not like I'm there much anyway. Maybe he's right.

SAFEGUARDING ADOLESCENTS CASE STUDY

I went home after that. It was way before school was supposed to finish but it's not like mum noticed. She just wanted to know whether I was going out for the night or staying in my room. She had friends coming again.

In the summer I go out most nights I don't have to be home at any time, so I just hang around but it's a bit cold now. I don't have a coat. It got too small. In fact, most of my clothes are too small now. So, I said I'm staying in my room.

It got to about 11pm and I heard mum screaming my name up the stairs. She said that Denise, her mate, had had too much to drink and needed to sleep it off in my bed. There's no point arguing, not when she's like that, so I grabbed a couple of towels. I'll be sleeping on the bathroom floor tonight.

**Pseudonym*

Questions to consider:

1. If Evie was subject to a Child Protection Plan, under what category?
2. What other issues might Evie be facing?
3. Who would you talk to, to understand more about Evie's life?
4. Who would you work with to change the situation?
5. What would trigger a multi-agency intervention?
6. What would potential interventions look like - who would do what?
7. What are the potential outcomes from intervention?