

Community Safety Casework Team

Case study

Family X – abusive neighbours and stalking

Initial contact

In September 2015 the Community Safety Casework Team (CSCT) were contacted by Family X. The family consisted of two parents and their 21 year old son CX who is LGBT and has learning difficulties. They reported homophobic verbal abuse, loud parties, deliberate banging and noise and drug use by their downstairs neighbours. This had been going on for several months and was worsening; tensions were heightened between both families and family X were concerned that this could lead to physical conflict if not addressed.

Initial actions

The CSCT carried out a HARA (Hate and anti-social behaviour risk assessment) and Family X was assessed as being of medium vulnerability (21/36). They were allocated a caseworker to ensure that they had a single point of contact who they could report further incidents and discuss any concerns with. Their caseworker also ensured that we gave regular updates about the progression of the case.

The family downstairs were visited by the CSCT. They were informed of the reports that had been made and that we would seriously consider legal action if the reported behaviour didn't stop. A history marker was placed on Family X's address and regular contact was had both families. The anti-social behaviour and hate incidents ceased and we closed the case in December 2015.

Further contact

In February 2016 Family X re-contacted the CSCT and reported that their son CX, was experiencing stalking and harassment by an older male MT. MT had initially appeared to be a friend but was now sending repeated abusive texts to CX and his parents. MT was regularly appearing outside the families' house & telling CX that he was watching him. At the same time CX was also experiencing homophobic verbal abuse within the neighbourhood from visitors to a neighbouring property. CX was receiving support from the Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT).

Actions

The CSCT visited Family X and agreed a support plan with them. Information requested from Police identified that MT was a violent offender with a history of sexual offences. CX informed the CSCT that he wanted to report MT to the Police and he was supported to make a statement cataloguing the incidents involving MT. As a result of this statement a PIN (Police Information Notice) was served on MT, warning him to stop his behaviour or risk arrest. Whilst occasionally CX would see MT in the street and be stared at, there were no further abusive text messages and MT stopped visiting the area where CX lived.

With regards to the homophobic abuse that CX had been subject to within the neighbourhood he asked that we didn't engage with the perpetrators and agreed that he would report any further incidents to the Police and the CSCT so that this could be monitored through our regular contact with him.

The CSCT liaised with CLDT to ensure that they were fully aware of the situation and could work with us to ensure that CX was fully supported. We worked with CX to improve his self-esteem and reduce the risk of future exploitation. The CSCT referred CX to a local group for young LGBT people to provide him with extra support and opportunities to meet peers. We informed staff at the project of our work with CX so they could recognise any potential risks and report them to the Police and the CSCT. CX loved going to this group and made many new friends. Although the possibility for future unwelcome attention from MT still existed, CX felt a lot safer and he and his family are aware of how to raise any concerns with services. CX told the CSCT that the problems in the local neighbourhood had ceased.

The family were very appreciative of the support and interventions that the CSCT provided & at the time of writing in July 2016 there has been no hate incidents or crimes for four months.