

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

EXHIBIT NKK / 2

Case Study

Very complex case of a Vulnerable Child exploitation

Client B is a 20 year old woman who first came to SWAN in November 2018. At the time Client B had been residing in South London and was under the care of the relevant Adult Social Services and had an assigned PA. When Client B came to us, she was homeless and had been subjected to a sustained gang-rape over a 48 hour period. Police were called and all the relevant procedures were followed. However, during the first 3-4 weeks of SWAN support it was discovered Client B was pregnant by one of the perpetrators. After discussing her options, she decided to continue with the pregnancy.

Below is a list of behaviours we have identified in many CSE cases we have dealt with and Client B presented with every one of these behaviours:-

- Defending friends of perpetrators who organised transport to meet abusers but did not participate in the rape (these are the facilitators for the abuse)
- Seeing these facilitators as friends.
- No understanding of healthy relationships.
- No understanding of perpetrator traits.
- Easily pressured and bullied into doing things Client A is not comfortable with (sending inappropriate videos and messages upon coercion and pressure).
- wanting the attention from men due to lack of love and affection growing up from birth and foster care families.
- obsessed with social media, selfies culture, attention seeking online to garner sympathy and exhibit her vulnerabilities in the hope someone would respond and give her attention in the form of flattery, friendship, affection which was the foundation for her being a prime candidate for grooming gangs and lone perpetrators.

Client B now has a one year old son and his care is being monitored by social services. Mother and baby are residing at a mother and baby residential facility and are awaiting to secure council accommodation.

History

Client B was a child in care and has suffered numerous and significant traumas throughout her young life which includes:-

- She was sexually abused by her biological father at the age of 3 and he was jailed as a result.
- Mother had alcohol and mental health issues and is currently residing in a psychiatric facility. She was unable to care for her three daughters so all there were put into care and then fostered by a Sikh Family in London.
- Turbulent history with her foster/adopted family from 2006 - 2014, Client B disclosed that foster family whilst was loving and providing, were VERY strict and foster brother would feel jealous of the attention Client B and sisters would get. This would result in Client B being bullied and being verbally abused by him. He would say things like "you will end up a prostitute by the time you are twenty". He would terrorise the girls (whilst never physically hitting them) when the parents were not home and threaten to beat them if they told their parents.
- Began engaging with Pakistani grooming gangs at the age of 15, providing oral sex and other non penetrative sexual acts.
- Was first raped at 17 alongside 13 year old sister by members of a Pakistani grooming gang
- Ran away multiple times from foster family to then be placed in a secure residential facility in DPA where they both resided from 2015 - 2017
- Sent back to London where Client B lived in "supported accommodation" from 2017 - 2018 only to return to seeking out unsavoury characters. This resulted in Client B being plied with drugs and alcohol and ordered to have sexual intercourse with multiple men.

This resulted in one of the perpetrators threatening to kill Client B, if she did not engage in prostitution as his request. In May 2018, out of fear, Client B ran away from the supported accommodation and her Personal Assistant that was appointed to her by Social Services, had no idea what was happening, due to her lack of interaction with Client B.

- Client B started sofa surfing with numerous perpetrators from May 2018 - until November 2019, where in her own words "it became too much, I needed help so I reached out to some old family friends who put me in touch with SWAN"

- Prior to her engagement with SWAN, perpetrators took all of her personal paperwork, such as birth certificates, passports, exam certificates and documentation as leverage to lure her back into their circles. They told her that they would give them back to her if she came to collect them personally.
- Client B had a CIFAS fraud marker against her name due to a perpetrator using her bank account to launder money and this prevented her from opening an account to receive any benefits or financial support.
- Client B was made to work in a shop in exchange for room and board with one perpetrator.
- Client B was lured into other traps where she was promised a job and a room to live in, only to be controlled and manipulated by the perpetrator who made her believe he was her 'saviour'.
- Birth mother contacted her (contact number given to birth mother by PA without Client B's permission after Client B turned 18) and offering Client B to come and live with her. This gave Client B hope, however when she went to the address, she discovered her mother was residing in a mental health facility. Client B then reached out to more perpetrators to secure any kind of accommodation which just continued the vicious cycle of drugs, alcohol and rape in exchange for a bed or sofa for the night.

SUPPORT PROCESS BY SWAN

Since being with SWAN, Client B was assigned a case worker and together with numerous other support agencies. Client B has gone from strength to strength, however, despite the level of support she has been given, her mental health and general well being has been severely damaged due to the sustained and prolonged trauma she has gone through for a large part of her life.

Client B has only recently acknowledged that she WAS a victim of grooming. She feels a lot of shame about this because she had never recognized that she was a victim when family, friends, professionals warned her about her action and choices.

Client B, seems to have an addictive tendency to seek men who have certain traits that lead to her being abused by them. We have had many sessions where we have discussed healthy relationships and helped her to identify her earlier self destructive tendencies that were the root cause that prevented (and most likely still prevents) her from healing and moving forward in her life in a positive direction.

Client B has been supported in the following ways and the support was based on the following areas:-

Engaging with professional services

Client B has been consistent and adamant in her lack of faith and trust in professionals and agencies. In the first few weeks SWAN staff found it very difficult to gain her trust, but we persisted to communicate with her and listen and advise her. Client B would often lash out in frustration and refuse to carry out chores in her accommodation to ensure that she had a safe and clean environment to reside in. She did not have any basic life skills such as cooking, cleaning, managing finances.

Client B would often have mood swings and refuse to engage with other support workers/police or other women in the refuge. She would miss appointments with agencies coming in to see her, lock her door and stay in bed. Helping Client B change her attitude and habits was a very difficult and lengthy process. SWAN staff gained her trust over a sustained period and she began to recognize that not everyone in her life were there to “use and abuse” her or judge her life choices.

Financial support

Client B now has access to a bank account and receives universal credit due to the partnership working of SWAN, the mother and baby unit and women’s aid. Client B was also identified as a victim of modern day slavery and as a result we were able to access targeted counselling.

Client B had no concept of saving, money management or budgeting, our support worker had to assign strict budgets and controls within Client B’s agreement in order to ensure she was able to provide for her child and herself in a responsible manner.

Online and personal safety

Client B was accessible to perpetrators using her previous social media platforms. Her addiction tendency towards controlling men led to her also seeking out perpetrators via facebook, snapchat and instagram. She had been lured into sending indecent videos and images of herself and this was continuing even into her pregnancy. She was easily coerced into meeting men and has found herself in dangerous situations because she did not consider consequences, until after her actions.

A Child Protection Conference was held, as her addiction to the abuse was identified as a real risk to the unborn child. SWAN worked jointly with Social Services to monitor the risks to Client B and her unborn child. Again this was over a sustained period of time and lengthy support sessions that she began to acknowledge the work she needed to do in order to prepare herself mentally, emotionally and physically for her unborn child.

SWAN caseworkers worked tirelessly in educating Client B in the dangers of online grooming. She is now able to identify when someone is simply engaging with her for sexual contact, and will block and remove them if she finds their advances uncomfortable. However, there is still ongoing concern as we recognize her addiction to this kind of treatment by men, especially as it has played a very dominant role in her life.

Client B struggles to break away from social media, as it is a lifeline for her and therefore the focus of our support work has been about teaching her to control her social media presence in a healthy and positive way by understanding and implementing her privacy settings to enable her to access social media safely.

Substance Abuse

Client B suffered from minor alcohol and cannabis withdrawal symptoms when she initially accessed SWAN support. These were supplied to her via her perpetrators.

During her pregnancy, SWAN staff explained the possible risks to the baby and as a result she was able to manage this very well. We are not aware of any further incidents of her abusing drugs or alcohol whilst assigned to our support team.

Summary

While Client B is in a much more stable and secure position since her arrival to SWAN support services, she still has a lengthy recovery process due to the significant trauma that she has suffered over the majority of her life.. She is still living in supported accommodation and is heavily dependant on the staff to motivate her to do simple things like clean her room and flat. She is a very loving and caring mother and takes good care of her child. There are huge gaps however in her understanding of the world due to the lack of real parenting and caregiving role in her life. When she finds council property, she will be left to manage a household including bills, cleaning, budgeting on top of having a young child. We fear this will be a big challenge for her as she does not have an allocated adult social worker in DPA and her PA is based in London with very infrequent visits.

We feel that complex cases such as this need to be assessed on a case by case basis and the relevant local support should be implemented by statutory agencies, rather than cases being reserved by the borough that first identified the need for support.