

## CASE STUDY 4

## CASE STUDY: Connor



## Part 1

Connor is 23 years old. He has an older brother, Kieran, who has severe autism and challenging behaviour. When he was growing up, Connor's mum and dad had to spend a lot of time looking after Kieran. Connor tried to help out as well because he could see that his mum and dad were always tired, and they were always thankful that Connor 'was no bother at all'.

When Connor was 14, his mum and dad split up and his dad left, leaving his mum to cope alone. After a while of trying to cope, his mum had a breakdown and, although she is much better now, she still gets anxious and depressed. She feels as if she has no life – she has never worked and doesn't have much of a social life because she cares for Kieran. Though Kieran is now living in residential care, Connor and his mum still visit him twice a week otherwise he gets distressed and aggressive. Connor doesn't have any contact with his dad anymore.

When Connor left school, he didn't know what he wanted to do. He drifted and ended up unemployed. People tell him what a caring person he is because he looks after Kieran and has been so supportive with his mum. Connor supposes people might be right and wonders whether he should get a job in a care home.

However, he always wanted to be a plumber and be self-employed (like his dad was), but he hasn't been able to tell anyone that. He thinks he might be too late to get any training to be a plumber.

- What advice would you give to Connor?
- What opportunities are available for Connor to enable him to become a plumber?

## Part 2

Connor started looking into training to be a plumber. He enquired at a local college but when they said it would be a full-time course, Connor wondered what impact that might have on his brother and his mum. He worried that if he wasn't able to see his brother twice a week his behaviour would get much worse, which would then make his mum more stressed and could potentially cause another breakdown. Rather than risk it, he decided not to go ahead with the course. He took on board what people had previously told him and found a part-time job at a care home. The residents at the care home really like him and he gets on with them but he can't help feeling like he made the wrong decision. He often feels stuck trying to balance his caring responsibilities and his aspirations for the future.

- Do you think this was the right decision for Connor?
- What do you think Connor should do?

## CASE STUDY 5

## CASE STUDY: Carmen



## Part 1

Carmen is 17 years old. Her childhood was chaotic because both her parents had addiction problems. She tried her best to help them out, but it never seemed to do any good. She rarely attended school and when she did go she was bullied and found it hard to make friends.

Things came to a head when she was 13 years old and she went to live with her gran. Her life became much more stable and her gran made sure she went to school regularly. She still didn't like school because she felt different from all the other children – because of her past and because she lived with her gran. Her gran is great, but because she is 84 years old she needs some help at times and Carmen is glad to give it. Carmen loved art at school and it felt like the one subject where she could forget all her problems and be herself. She was so happy when she got an A\* grade in her art GCSE.

After school, Carmen did a college course for one year so that she could do more art and also catch up on her English and maths. The college has been very supportive and one tutor in particular has tried to build Carmen's confidence in talking to people, to develop her art and think about her future.

Despite this, Carmen has been staring despondently at an application form for a Foundation course in art and design. She can't think what to write on it, especially the bit about interests and experience! She wonders what the point is – the Foundation course is to prepare you for higher education and she can't ever go to university. She tells herself she won't be able to afford it and anyway her gran needs her more and more.

- What advice do you have for Carmen?
- Who can support her and her gran?

## Part 2

Carmen decided to go back and speak to her former college tutor and they helped her complete the application form. She heard back from the course and her application was successful.

The Foundation course is going really well and her new tutor is very encouraging. The tutor gave Carmen some information on a part-time job in a local art gallery and she started there last month. Carmen is loving her job which is helping her to gain lots of experience. Her confidence continues to grow and this has started making her think more about her future. She really would like to go to university now and has seen online that a local university offers a scholarship that she thinks she might be able to apply for which would help with her tuition fees. However, her gran is getting increasingly frail and needs more and more help, at a time when Carmen seems to be out of the house at college or work more often. Carmen has also begun to make friends for the first time and they keep inviting her out in the evenings. She would like to go and have some fun but can't leave her gran.

- What advice would you have for Carmen now in this situation?
- Is support available to help her gran?

## CASE STUDY 6

## CASE STUDY: Laura



## Part 1

Laura lives with her mum, Sue, who has rheumatoid arthritis. Laura helps her mum with a lot of the household chores and they have a mutually supportive relationship. As Laura's mum finds it difficult to get around, they spend a lot of time together looking after their three cats, three rabbits, two hamsters and a parrot.

Sue is adamant that Laura should have a career and get on in the world. For as long as Laura can remember, she has wanted to work with animals and she has heard that the local college has an Animal Care course which sounds ideal. Sue is worried that Laura doesn't have the confidence to go to college. The college is in a town 10 miles away and Laura has never been there. Laura is also very shy and young for her age and Sue worries about her going to 'the big college' and being able to make friends.

- What advice would you give to Laura at this stage?
- What practical steps can Laura take to overcome some of the challenges she will face in getting to college and settling in?
- How can you help Laura prepare for the transition to college?

## Part 2

The carers support worker arranges to take Laura and Sue to the college open day where Laura is able to look around the classrooms and talk to the tutors on the Animal Care course. The tutor explains that the college has a bus that picks up young people from outlying villages and takes them to college. The tutor also explains that students learn in small groups and how they support new students to settle in and make friends.

However, the visit raises other worries for Laura and Sue. Laura will need course materials and money each day for lunch in the college canteen. Sue is worried about not being able to afford this and how Laura's attendance at college will affect her benefits.

Overall, Laura is really excited about the course but also feels overwhelmed by all the barriers she seems to be facing.

- What support might be available to help Laura meet the cost of going to college?
- Where can she find out more information about this?
- What can Sue do to make sure that they do not suffer financially?
- Is there anything or anyone else that can help to make the transition to college worry-free for Laura and her mum?