

# Andrew's Story



**Andrew's story is an example of how children and, boys in particular, can be overlooked as being victims of exploitation by services. In Andrew's case, the focus was placed on his own behaviour as opposed to the risks posed to him by others. Andrew's story further demonstrates how perpetrators can provide drugs and/or alcohol to children to further facilitate the abuse.**

Andrew came to the attention of services for committing an offence and because of his behaviour, and not because of concerns at home and the risks from those he was associating with.

Andrew is 14. He lives with his mum, stepdad and younger half-sister. His relationship with his stepdad is strained and Andrew spends increasing amounts of time outwith the family home. He becomes involved in low level anti-social behaviour and starts truanting from school for the odd period here and there. Andrew's relationship with his stepdad further deteriorates, he starts running away from home due to arguments and often stays with friends overnight.

After a particularly heated row, Andrew runs away from home and cannot find a place to stay. One of his friends has an older friend who's 23, who he suggests might be able to give Andrew somewhere to stay for the night. Andrew's friend has been to this man's flat before and says that he will want to help him. Together they go to the flat and explain the situation and the men there welcome them in. The men are all friendly and seem genuinely concerned about Andrew and listen as he recounts the row with his stepdad.

Andrew returns home the next day and his mum is concerned about where he spent the night. He tells her he stayed at a friend's.

Because of the difficult relationship with his stepdad, which his mum struggles to manage, Andrew begins to disengage from his family and starts spending more time with his friend at the men's flat. Andrew enjoys spending time with them as they are all sympathetic of his circumstances.

On his 15th birthday he spends the night at the men's flat and they give him alcohol to celebrate. After this he drinks regularly with the men at the flat, often becoming so intoxicated that he cannot remember what has happened the night before. He begins to spend more and more time at the flat and away from home. Andrew does not tell his mum about the flat, just saying he's with friends.

Andrew's attendance at school is poor and, when he does attend, his teachers notice that he lacks concentration and no longer appears interested in learning. His behaviour has become challenging, he is increasingly disruptive in class and he has been found with cannabis, resulting in a number of suspensions.

His relationship with his mum deteriorates as she does not know how to deal with his behaviour, and he spends more time at the flat with his older friends. When he does go home he is often dropped off and collected in one of the men's cars.

It is discovered that Andrew has sent inappropriate images of himself to a girl at school and has encouraged her to do the same. The school contacts the police and Andrew is charged.

During the police and social work investigation it is alleged that Andrew has been having sex with an 18 year old female. Andrew refuses to disclose any information. Social work are aware of this older female as she is known to the police as a vulnerable person and for supplying cannabis to minors.

Andrew attends a Children's Hearing and is placed on a CSO with condition of residence at home and is allocated a social worker. Andrew's mum works with the social worker, but his stepdad refuses as he believes Andrew is trouble and cannot be helped. Andrew continues to distance himself from his family and their relationship breaks down.

Andrew's dad moves back to Scotland and Andrew goes to live with him and they re-establish their relationship. Andrew returns to school. After a while he no longer goes to the men's flat and reignites his old friendships at school.

Andrew leaves school and starts college where he begins a relationship with a girl his own age. Andrew's relationship with his mum and stepdad improves and he stays with them every fortnight for the weekend.

**#HelpingHands**

**#CEADay21**