

AJ (Cohort B – Placement Stability)

<p>Service Delivery and Engagement (why we are involved with the family)</p>	<p>AJ came into foster care at the age of 3 years old, after residing with family members due to his mother feeling she was unable to cope due to ongoing mental health concerns. AJ's older sibling were also in alternative care with their paternal family and two younger half-siblings were in the process of being placed in their adoptive home.</p> <p>AJ experienced numerous foster home breakdowns due to his challenging behaviour. He resided in two residential homes before transitioning to his current foster home on the 20/10/2014 when he was aged 6 years.</p> <p>AJ is now 14 years old. He was referred to the placement stability programme by social care in October 2021 and the referral provides some of AJ's birth family history, trauma and experience of being in foster care.</p> <p>AJ has a history of attachment and relational difficulties due to the trauma he has experienced. He challenges authority and struggles to follow rules and guidance in the home and at school. AJ can display challenging behaviour including absconding from school, going missing from home and verbal/physical aggression to others. He is currently NEET from school following an exclusion due to a physical assault on a teacher. AJ has had previous interactions with the youth justice system and there is a pending charge of common assault being dealt with in an out of court disposal. AJ has engaged with substance use with his peers (THC and cannabis) and there have been concerns that he is at risk of child criminal exploitation.</p> <p>AJ has been displaying challenging behaviours in his foster home. His foster carers, M and G, are struggling to input boundaries to manage the behaviour. The foster carers have stated that they are unable to manage AJ's behaviour and this has led to them 'giving notice' on the placement; however, they have later retracted this.</p> <p>AJ has a positive relationship with M and G; this is the first attachment that he has been able to sustain. M and G have struggled with the transition of AJ into adolescent and the evolving behaviours he has displayed.</p> <p>STARS are working with the family to maintain AJ in the foster home and avoid a placement move.</p>
<p>STARS support to the family</p>	<p>STARS provide regular weekly visits with weekly contact to offer support to the family.</p>



	<p>Cohort B does not specify the use of the Triple P programme; however, the main issue within the family are boundaries and routines, and managing risky behaviours. The foster carers are engaging with Triple P Standard Teen 1:1 programme delivered by a STARS family support worker. Safer Stronger Families is being delivered in preference to the use of the Team Parenting model in isolation.</p> <p>Foster carers, M and G, are engaging with the Attune therapeutic parenting sessions, facilitated by the STARS therapist. This is to support their understanding of the impact of trauma on AJ's development and behaviour, and support their approach to managing his behaviour when crisis occurs.</p> <p>The STARS education officer is supporting the virtual schools officer in organising an alternative education provision (incorporating CAS fishing project x2 days, and three days home tutoring). The STARS education officer provides support to coordinate meetings and ensure that there is movement in the planning.</p> <p>STARS have engaged a peer mentor from the local police force to engage with AJ on positive behaviour in the community, including substance abuse, criminal exploitation and anger management work.</p>
<p>Direct and Indirect feedback from service users</p>	<p>Foster carers M and G initially struggled to articulate how they could manage AJ's behaviour, they would ask the STARS family support worker to 'fix' AJ's behaviour.</p> <p>A key turning point for the foster carers has been discussing the 'escalation trap' when crisis occurs. G has been able to reflect the 'exhaustion' that he has felt while dealing with challenging behaviour. They have been reflective during their Triple P sessions about more positive ways of managing behaviour. STARS have supported the foster carers to develop behavioural contracts alongside AJ which have been positive in managing challenging behaviours. They have been observed to input strategies learned during times of crisis, and this has enabled them to contain the crisis and address AJ's behaviour more robustly.</p> <p>The foster carers have been able to reflect on the loss they have felt, and their grieving period, of AJ moving from middle childhood to adolescence.</p> <p>There was a recent crisis where STARS supported the foster carers when there was an incident of challenging behaviour</p>



	<p>from AJ and police involvement at school. STARS provided therapeutic consultation to the foster carers and supported them to navigate the incident. They provided feedback to the STARS service manager, that they were grateful of the support given to them and this has supported them to manage the crisis in a more positive way in the home.</p>
<p>Benefits of engaging with STARS</p>	<p><u>Foster carer</u></p> <p>The structured programme of support and ability for the foster carers to reflect on current parenting approaches that work and new strategies to try. Some strategies may not be applicable at the time but can be revisited and gives the carers the opportunity to explore other strategies before they may experience the problem behaviour.</p> <p><u>Child</u></p> <p>Enable opportunity for AJ's voice to be heard and his views to be taken in to consideration when creating expectations for his behaviour. AJ's opportunity to be involved in decision making builds his confidence and ability for autonomy.</p> <p><u>Local Authority</u></p> <p>Regular support visits to stabilise the placement, reducing the need for placement move.</p> <p>Structure of support for the family with different strategies to trial when problem behaviour/ situations arises. Strategies introduced to empower the foster carers and feel supported by the STARS Team Around the Family approach.</p> <p><u>Practitioner</u></p> <p>Triple P provides a structure for the work being completed with the family.</p> <p>Ability to trial methods and discuss what works for the family.</p> <p>It empowers the foster carers when reviewing what current parenting strategies are in place which are working well.</p>

