

## **Case Studies – Youth Justice**

### **Case study : Callam – Police, Youth Justice, lawyers**

Callam is 14 years old. He was apprehended at the scene of an altercation and placed in a police van. He and his parents claim that he was assaulted by a police officer and Callam says that he made an allegation of assault at the time, but no such allegation was recorded or acted upon. The police then investigated this, which resulted in a written warning to the police officer involved. However, Callam and his parents were not satisfied and wanted to take it further – they feel that Callam’s rights have been infringed in two ways – firstly, the assault and secondly the failure to act on the allegation, which they suggested was because Callam was a young person and that if he was an adult he would have been listened to and his allegation would have been taken more seriously.

### **Case study : Geraint – Police, youth Justice, Social work, Education**

Geraint aged 14 has been arrested at 1 a.m. for criminal damage of a property after a complaint by his parents. He is very subdued and had rejected the offer of a solicitor. A social worker has been called to the police station to act as an appropriate adult as neither of his parents have come with him. During the questioning Geraint gets very upset and said that he only smashed the pictures and doors at the house after his parents kept on and on about how he had never fit into the family properly, about how disappointed they were with his continued poor results at school, and that they wished they had never adopted him. They have said they do not want him to return to the house.

**Case study : Lauren – youth Justice, Police, Education, Social work**

Lauren is 13 she has been referred to the Youth Offending Team after being arrested for shop lifting from the local shops. It appears that she has not been attending school regularly for the last 4 months. Her mother works some night shifts as a care worker and expects Lauren to look after her two half brothers aged 2 and 4 if she needs to sleep in the day. Lauren has previously been arrested for disorderly behaviour whilst drinking with an older group of friends.

**Case study : Darren – police, education, lawyers, Youth Justice**

Darren is 16 years old. He was apprehended by a police officer for being in possession of a small amount of cannabis. Darren says he is not a regular substance abuser, but that he does occasionally smoke cannabis. He told the police officer that he was really keen for his parents not to find out about this, but that he was happy to tell his pastoral tutor at school and that she would come with him to the police station. The police officer asked for Darren's address and the name of his parents, but Darren refused to provide this information. He did give his teacher's name and the name of his school, but asked if he could be the first one to speak to his teacher about this. The police officer is worried and feels strongly that Darren's parents should be told. He wants to insist on this, threatening to arrest Darren and take him to the police station immediately if he doesn't provide the information requested. Darren is very unhappy about this and feels that it should be his decision about whether to involve his parents or not.

### **Case Study : Bahman – lawyers, social work**

Bahman is an age disputed minor from Iran claiming to be 15 years old. He had been age assessed by a local authority in England as over the age of 18. However, on receiving the age assessment, it was evident to the child advocate that this was not a Merton compliant<sup>1</sup> age assessment. The child advocate wrote to the social services department that conducted the age assessment and requested that they completed another age assessment.

Bahman maintained that he was a minor and was very distressed by the situation that he faced. The child advocate talked to Bahman about other methods of showing the authorities that he is a minor. Bahman mentioned that he has documents with his date of birth on them, that his uncle sent the documents from Iran but that they are all written in Farsi. Bahman is very distressed and unsure what to do.

Merton-Compliant - a term used to describe a local authority age assessment that has been conducted in accordance with the case law on age assessments and is therefore fair and lawful. The term derives from the Merton judgment of 2003 which gives 'guidance as to the requirements of a lawful assessment by a local authority of the age of a young asylum seeker claiming to be under the age of 18 years'.

### **Case study: Alex**

Alex is 13 years old and has autism. He sometimes spends time with boys from school David and Paul. There is not much to do in the town where they live and so they hang around outside the local shops. David dares Alex to go into the shop and steal something. The shop keeper notices what he is doing and calls the police. Alex is taken down the police station and questioned. Alex becomes distressed and rocks back and fore and generally acts in a strange way.

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