
LIFESTYLE CHOICE?



North Lanarkshire
Adult Protection
Committee

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ALCOHOL AND ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 aims to support adults over the age of 16 who meets the three-point criteria:

1. Are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests.
 2. Are at risk of harm
 3. Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness, physical or mental infirmity, they are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected
- Adult Support and Protection referrals relating to concerns of alcohol use and increased risk are often referred under physical health concerns, financial harm and self-neglect. Alcohol use does not tend to be seen as a stand-alone concern but rather something that may be discovered during inquiries.
 - Police concerns - Between 01/11/23 and 31/01/25, there were 4,086 Adult Welfare Concerns in NLC where the nature of concern was alcohol and/or mental health issues.
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I WANT YOU TO MEET JAMES



- James is 43 years old and is living alone in his two-bedroom flat in North Lanarkshire. James is not working. James' flat is described as sparse with little to no personal support, and it is often cold.
- James spends most of his time in his flat and is consuming alcohol on a daily basis. He has no contact with his family.
- Neighbours frequently complain to local authority about the noise coming from James' flat, the rubbish that is lying outside and the many people seem to come and go to his flat.
- Police Scotland has been called out on five occasions over the last three months due to concerns about noise coming from James' home. James was arrested on one occasion for being abusive towards Police Officers.
- James has been known to a variety of services including Addiction Recovery Team, community care social work team, District Nurses due to a wound on his leg he sustained during a fall, GP input for medication, hospital acute setting, Distress Brief Intervention and out of hours Community Mental Health Team.
- James is known across services as a “frequent flyer”. He is often not engaging with support offered and is missing appointments.
- James can present as hostile and unwilling to engage with services. He is often regarded as a risky person.
- Police Scotland have submitted three Police Welfare concerns to the local social work office as they are concerned that James seems vulnerable to exploitation by the people attending his home.
- When asked about the concerns James is very dismissive. James appears dishevelled but he does not want any support, and he states that he is perfectly happy to have his friends coming to his home. There is no information to say that James lacks capacity.
- James is making a lifestyle choice to consume alcohol and have people frequenting in his home.

WHAT IS LIFESTYLE CHOICE?

"a choice a person makes about how to live and behave, according to their attitudes, tastes, and values".

Oxford English Dictionary

WHO IS JAMES?



- James used to work as a taxi driver and was previously married and has two children. He does not have any contact with them.
- James is no longer able to work and is in receipt of disability payments following a car accident. The car accident left him with a head injury which sometimes means he struggles to remember things.
- James started to consume alcohol as a way of coping following the divorce from his wife.
- James has been befriended by some people in the community who often ask him for money. He has said no on occasion but has then been threatened and locked in his flat.
- James feels embarrassed about his life and does not want anyone to see him like this. James is isolated and often experiences feelings of low mood.
- James is care experienced and was in foster care from age 11. He has no contact with his parents.

**"Associates involved in drug use.
Adult Support and Protection concerns
were raised that [name] was being
financially exploited and threatened by
some associates, however, ultimately
was not deemed suitable due to [their]
capacity to make decisions of choosing
to live this lifestyle.**

NLC Case

Lifestyle Choice?

**"...putting themselves in harm's way with
the choices [...] is making"**

**"but is making choices in relation to drug
use that his impacting on his wellbeing,
safety and quality of life.**

NLC case

**"Did not want to attend
hospital due to possible
sepsis as they felt judged
as an "alcoholic"**

NLC Case

**"The adult is
making the choice
of allowing
the perpetrator in
her house**

NLC case

**'Adult was able to choose
[although] it was clear
that they were scared. '**

NLC Case



WHAT CAN IMPACT ON ADULTS' ABILITY TO PROTECT, MAKE DECISIONS AND ENGAGE?

- Having legal capacity does not always mean you have the ability to protect or ability to engage.
- Ability to protect and engage can be a process not a choice
- Understanding risk does not always mean you have the ability to protect yourself from it

Decisional and executorial ability

- Impact of historical and current trauma
- Abilities = Skills/means/opportunities
- Non-engagement may not be 'refusal' – ability to make free and informed decisions
- Importance of worker attitudes – we are all value laden

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive functioning is controlled by the frontal lobe of our brain.

Cognitive processes that control our behaviours

Skills that helps us humans to get things done



CAUSES OF EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION

NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST

Attention-deficit
hyperactivity
disorder (ADHD)

Autism Spectrum
Disorder

Alcohol/Substance
Use

Traumatic Brain
Injury – especially
damage to the
frontal lobe

PTSD

Trauma

Depression

Obsessive-
compulsive
disorder (OCD)

Schizophrenia

Alzheimer's disease

Dementia and
frontotemporal
dementia

Brain tumours

Brain damage from
lack of oxygen

Epilepsy and
seizures

Stroke

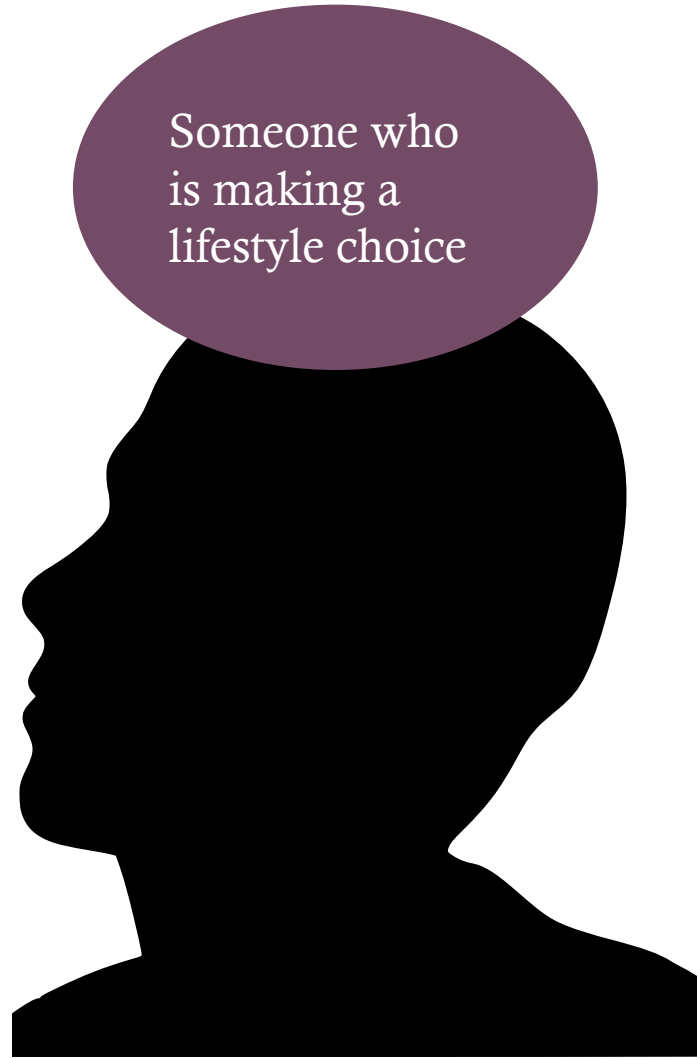
Huntington's
Disease

Infections

Chronic stress

Sleep disorder

WHO IS JAMES?



WHO IS JAMES?

Someone who
is struggling
with his
motivation

Someone who is
scared of saying
no to the people
who are asking
him for money

Someone who
is making a
lifestyle choice

Someone who is
ashamed of
himself

Someone who was
in a car accident
and has a head
injury

Someone who
has had
difficult
experiences
with services

Someone who
has consumed
alcohol on a
daily basis for a
number of years

Someone who is
struggling with
his mental health

Someone who is
using “hostility”
as a way of
keeping people
away

Someone who
is struggling
with his
memory

Someone who
does not think
he is worthy of
support

Someone with
health issues

Someone who
has experienced
significant
trauma in his life

Someone who
is being
exploited and
locked in his
flat





“Respecting lifestyle choice isn’t the problem; it’s where people don’t think they’re worth anything different, or they don’t know what the options are.”

Michael Preston-Shoot (2017)
