

Case Study: Ms Mackaldry known as Miss Janet

Miss Janet is an African Caribbean woman who is aged 87 and lives alone. She said that she used to go to church regularly but since she became frailer and with deteriorating eyesight, she seldom went. It is a Black-led, predominantly Caribbean congregation. In the last four and a half years visits from people at church gradually decreased and the one friend Clarice, who consistently visited and sometimes stayed over, died a year ago. Miss Janet has three children aged 63, 61 and 54. Only Chris, 54 lives in the same **county** but as manager for a hairdressing salon reports that she has hardly any time to do anything, much less make the three-hour round trip to see her mum. Chris also asserts that she is barely able to keep her business alive yet she is paying a whole lot of tax and she expects services to look after her mum, otherwise what is the point in paying taxes.

Miss Janet was first referred to social services two years ago when she was locked out of her house, with no key after she went to put rubbish out. She was wondering outside in the icy winter and would not ask for help but appeared to have no clear plan to get back inside. When she was helped back inside the workmen called social services to report that they felt that Miss Janet had very little in the house and seemed to be neglected. They also reported that she seemed “cranky and irritable” that they had helped her, and that she seemed “not all there”. In the intervening years Miss Janet had regular falls when going to get a few provisions from the nearby shop. She also fell down the stairs and a neighbour heard the banging as she fell and then her cries of pain. The neighbour could not get in the house and called social services.

During an assessment with a White, male social worker called Samuel Miss Janet reported that after she had a fall she often went without food and was unable to do her laundry or anything much around the house. She said that her main problem was that she was no longer able to get to her Caribbean food and had little contact with anyone else and was becoming less motivated. She said however that she did not want any help from Samuel and she was not keen on anyone trying to force her daughter Chris to do more. Miss Janet said that she did not want the pastor from her old church to visit because she did not warm to him.

Samuel said that he respected her wishes but that he was concerned that if she did not get some support she would rapidly lose her independence completely. He explained about personal budgets and the possibility of direct payments. Miss Janet said that she had had enough of Samuel telling her what she could and couldn't do.

Task

What would you hypothesise about what might be helpful?

What additional pieces of information would you try to gather?

What questions or information would you feed into strategic planning for managers about what is needed in the local area?