

Kenneth is a twelve-year-old boy who is very much at the start of his career at Pear Tree, having been with us for just over 1 year. Kenneth lived in a family who were well known to the Department of Social Services, and he was suspected of being a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of his brother who is also looked after in a Pear Tree home, there is a court order, however, stipulating that there should be no contact between siblings, and this has been rigidly enforced by staff at Pear Tree, despite initial worries.

Kenneth was originally placed with specialist foster parents who had experience in dealing with sexually reactive children. However, when Kenneth was only 10 years of age about 1 year prior to his placement with us, he engineered an opportunity to be left alone with a 5 year old child and subsequently made an attempt to have anal intercourse with him behind a garden shed. Subsequently it was considered that Kenneth presented a high risk of reoffending if an opportunity presented itself. Kenneth was assessed and considered to have responsiveness to the kind of programme that we operate at Pear Tree and the level of nurturing we hoped that we could provide. He was subsequently admitted into one of our homes and has continued to go from strength to strength, responding in exactly the way that we had hoped. The kind of plan that we have spent a great deal of time considering has been made available to Kenneth and he is already developing well along the lines of achieving the normal developmental pathway we strive for.

His presentation in the first 9 months helped form an image that Kenneth was very much a victim more than anything else and due to this he was included on a trip to the Bahamas to go swimming with dolphins. This was an expedition that took forward the idea of helping to develop relationship building skills through working with animals which had, first of all, been established at Toy Top Farm. This trip encompassed a great many hopes for the staff in terms of what we all hoped it would achieve. Six girls were to attend along with Kenneth. We certainly achieved our goal in terms of being able to create more opportunities for young people and widen their horizons in terms of the world around them. It was amazing to see how quickly our group of young children became seasoned travellers within minutes of flying out of Heathrow Airport. The benefits of this kind of trip were clear to see by all those who were involved. Its relevance here is that for this young man at the start of his career at Pear Tree, like all of the other children included in that trip they quite simply have not looked back and it was a tremendous boost towards trying to achieve this all important normal developmental pathway. There are certainly a number of obstacles in the way for Kenneth to overcome but in a short time he has made good progress and we remain as optimistic now, if not more so, as the day he first walked through our door.