

Lewis (part 2)

Lewis is serving an eight-year sentence for offences of kidnap, sexual assault, and robbery. He is being released in four weeks time. Lewis's Probation Officer, Sarah, is coming to the prison for a meeting with him to plan his release. Paul, Lewis's offender supervisor will be there, as will Zainab, a nurse with the prison in-reach team. Zainab was not going to attend the meeting, but Lewis self-harmed for the first time in ten months three nights ago, and is now on an ACCT document. He repeatedly burnt his arms with a cigarette. Lewis has said that the interference from staff is unhelpful and that it won't make a difference to whether he self-harms.

Sarah last met with Lewis eight months ago for his annual sentence-plan meeting. She returned from this meeting feeling frustrated that Lewis was not willing to participate in any interventions, and that he does not engage fully with her, but makes a lot of demands about what she should be doing for him on release, particularly around housing. She was aware that she spent a lot of time in the meeting telling him what he had to do on release, becoming quite agitated. He refused a referral to a prison pathways unit, saying he 'did not want to open stuff up' and wanted 'to just get his sentence done.' He also said that they couldn't do anything that his Offender Supervisor (Paul) within the prison, isn't already doing. Sarah is presenting Lewis's case at MAPPa next week; she was late making the MAPPa referral and said this was because she thought she had already done it. Sarah told her manager that she thinks this is the MAPPa administrator's fault, as she is convinced she missed her email.

Paul also attended this previous meeting. He had been talking with Lewis about finding accommodation on release, and thought that Sarah was unhelpful about this and could have been more supportive. He also thought that the licence conditions she had outlined were too restrictive. Paul said in the meeting that he thought Sarah was being unhelpful and setting Lewis up to fail. Lewis agreed.

Sarah has talked to colleagues about being anxious about how quickly things might unravel for Lewis in the community, and has made jokes about having the recall

papers ready for the day of his release. There is a shortage of Approved Premises beds and his previous AP have refused to have Lewis back – saying that the referral came too late. On a previous sentence he had been recalled after a week; he had breached his curfew twice, and was threatening to the night staff whilst under the influence of alcohol.

At the start of the meeting Lewis quickly asked what housing would be available for him on release. He became agitated, and said that if he is not housed he'll have to do something 'big' to get the support he needs – and that 'it'll be probation's fault if he ends up back inside on a new sentence.' Sarah explained that she is trying to find an alternative Approved Premises, and asked Lewis if he had an address to provide if one is not available. Lewis said that 'of course he doesn't, 'and he has lost contact with his brother but didn't explain how. Paul said that he couldn't believe Lewis wasn't being offered housing, and actually agreed with Lewis 'that he was being set up to fail and is better off in prison.' Sarah responded by saying that it is up to Lewis whether he gets recalled or not, and tells Paul, 'it's alright for you, you don't know how difficult he is to manage in the community'.

Zainab said that she will not be referring Lewis back to a community mental health team, and he will need to register with a GP once he has an address in order to get a prescription for anti-depressants. Zainab suggested to Lewis that it was in his interest to work with probation, and that it is obvious Sarah and Paul are both trying to help him. He said 'if that was the case, why hasn't she sorted me out a bed.' Paul asks why the MAPPa discussion is taking place so late, and stated that he thought they should be able to sort out the housing problem.

The meeting ended with Sarah saying that she will call Paul after the MAPPa meeting so that he can update Lewis. Lewis says 'they had better sort something out'. Zainab leaves feeling relieved that she doesn't have to carry on working with Lewis once he is released. Sarah feels like she has made lots of mistakes and will need to explain these to her line manager in supervision tomorrow. She thinks Paul is unprofessional and collusive. Paul doesn't understand why Lewis is not being given the help he

needs. Lewis leaves feeling angry, and gets an adjudication later that day after he refuses to return to his cell whilst he is queuing for the phone.