

Secondary lesson plan

Citizenship

Case study cards

Case one – struggling to pay for a home

The client

You are a single dad with two children aged 19 and 13. Your 19-year-old daughter is a full-time student, you work full time and you've just been promoted at work. Up until the promotion, you were struggling with money, and this was made worse when your mother died and you were landed with an expensive funeral bill. You took out a loan to pay this off, but then ran into trouble paying the mortgage on your home. You owe the building society money and they are threatening to repossess your home. How do you describe your situation?

The caseworker

- a. You offer to talk to the building society and negotiate with them to allow the client to stay in his home while he pays off the debt in instalments.
- b. You say you'll do nothing for now until the repossession case comes to court, when you will try to persuade the judge to allow the debt to be paid off.
- c. You say you can't help because Shelter doesn't provide advice to homeowners – only to people who are street homeless or in very rundown rented accommodation.

Secondary lesson plan

Citizenship

Case study cards

Case two – living in a run-down home

The client

You are an elderly man, living alone, who has mobility problems and bronchitis. You have just moved into council sheltered housing for the elderly in a nice area. Unfortunately though, your new home suffers from severe disrepair. There is no heating, a broken rear door (which had allowed access to burglars, who have stolen most of your belongings), a damp problem, rotten window and door frames, and kitchen units that are falling apart. There is also evidence of a mouse infestation. How do you describe your situation?

The caseworker

- a. You suggest that the client should abandon the property and move in with family or friends.
- b. You offer to send in a Shelter maintenance team to install heating, repair the door, windows and kitchen units and to treat the mouse infestation.
- c. You offer to contact the council to make them aware of the terrible state of the property, and to persuade them to arrange a new home for the client.

Secondary lesson plan

Citizenship

Case study cards

Case three – stuck in an overcrowded home

The client

You are a 17-year-old with a young baby, living with your mum and your stepfather. Including all their other children, there are nine of you living in a four-bedroom house. You and your baby share a bedroom with your eight-year-old sister. The overcrowding leads to tensions and family rows that upset your baby. You have made an application to the council for housing, and they accept that it isn't reasonable for you to stay where you are, but they have a policy of not providing properties to under-18s. How do you describe your situation?

The caseworker

- a. You tell the client that councils never provide accommodation to under-18s, so they will just have to put up with the situation they are in for a bit longer.
- b. You explain to the client that council policies like the one they described are illegal. You say that you will contact the council and argue that the client qualifies as homeless and should be moved immediately into temporary accommodation.
- c. You suggest that the family could have counselling and anger management classes to learn to cope with their overcrowded conditions until the client turns 18.

Secondary lesson plan

Citizenship

Case study cards

Case four – thrown out of home

The client

Your boyfriend has been violent towards you, so you are leaving him and the home you rent together. You are healthy and in your 30s with no kids, but you've lost your job recently so you don't have much cash. You have no local networks apart from your partner, so there are no friends or family who could accommodate you. You may have to sleep on the street tonight. How do you describe your situation?

The caseworker

- a. You get in touch with local women's refuges to try to find the client a place, and offer to refer her to the homeless person's officer at the council to find a home in the long term – but explain that there could be a long wait.
- b. You give the client details of a Shelter soup kitchen scheme and offer her blankets and a sleeping bag for the night.
- c. You offer to call the client's partner and try to arrange for her to stay at the house for a while until she can really afford to move out.