



The Inclusion and Support project offers support for children and young people who are living with domestic abuse

Liz and her children were unknowingly living with psychological abuse and Liz knew that her children needed support.

Liz had a turbulent relationship with her partner, but never fully realised the true extent of what was going on. Having been to the project Relate, Liz was told that what she was suffering with was domestic abuse. Liz's partner had never physically hurt her; however, what he was putting her through was emotional abuse.

"He would play mind games and was spiteful, taking things special away from the children. The children would never stay with him. Services do not understand psychological abuse."

Liz found out that her local Women's Aid was Llamau and she called them up and explained the situation to see if there was a children's worker. She then self-referred her family to the service, as her problems had not been identified by any agency. Liz was then contacted by the Inclusion and Support Project. They asked questions about the urgency of the situation and collected details.

Her son, Ryan was then supported one to one by the domestic abuse children's worker.

Ryan suffered from the effects of living with domestic abuse; he was untrusting and had no confidence. He was also very worried about his mother and particularly his baby brother, Jacob.

"He was exceptionally worried about Jacob, refuses to have a room on his own. He took on the role of worrying" his mother explained.

Ryan also had difficulties in school; having problems with friendship groups and no confidence to answer in class, afraid of being shot down. He would spend time at his one to one sessions doing age appropriate activities and normal things he would associate with fun. He would draw pictures, do puzzles and make jokes, but all while supporting him to understand his home environment.

"Some little things were the end of the world to him. He was in tears asking, when am I going to see my counsellor" Liz explained.

Ryan would talk about it and when it was difficult he had activities to distract him. He could touch back in to bits that made him uncomfortable; a flexible way of going at his pace.

"Ryan felt he was in a safe environment, he was quite anxious but a lot of time was taken explaining to him what was going to happen."

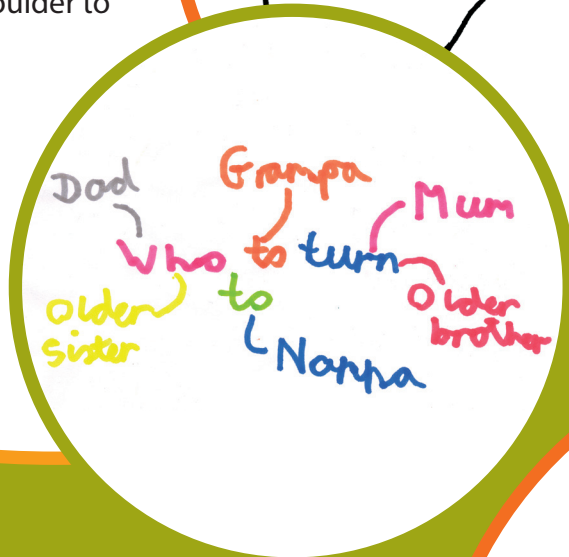
The project helped Ryan calm down and helped him see what was appropriate, particularly in his heightened concern for his brother. He also now knows that he is not a personal target when he is asked to put his hand down in class. Ryan has also started trusting people; he has made new friends and accepts his mother's new partner, who he used to challenge.

Coming to the end of his support, his mother explained that he still relies on what he did with the project, and is very aware that if he wanted to go back at a later date he could. "He's getting better and better and has lost the weight he always had on his shoulder to always need to look after Jacob."

"He doesn't feel like he's on his own and this safety net is so important."

Seeing how much more comfortable Ryan is after the support, his sister is now being supported. Though her coping mechanisms are different, they both know that they are not alone.

Liz feels that without the support of the domestic abuse team in the Inclusion and Support project, her children would be very different. "He's nearly cocky again, he was unrecognisable."



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The Inclusion and Support project offers support for children and young people who are young carers

Lewis and Loughy had no idea that they were young carers and needed something to help them 'be kids again'.

When Lewis, 15 and Loughy, 14 become involved with the Team Around the Family project, neither of them had any idea that they were young carers. They both care for their mother, who suffers with severe mental health and would often skip school to make sure that she was safe. Lewis would often have upset stomachs and headaches as well as feeling anxious about his mum's health.

As young teenagers, both boys did not socialise often after school, feeling that being at home would be better for their mum. Team Around the Family recognised that they would benefit from additional support and referred them to the Inclusion and Support project, which provided specialist support for young carers.

"Young carers host activities during holidays so we can go out and have fun and we won't panic about who we're caring for. They also host the group

sessions; we go there and we see all the other people that's got the same situations as us. We go there and we know we're not different and we know that there's other people that's in the same situation so we don't have to panic as much." Lewis explained.

"We see other young carers, that gives us a chance to socialise. It's like a youth club, you can play pool, they lay a table out with food which is usually empty by the end of the night! We can just have a chat with our friends."

The project allows the young carers to relax in a safe environment where they can take a break from responsibilities at home. "It's given them the chance to be kids again. Too many kids have to grow up too quickly when they take on a caring role and it's not fair on them, so a big thank you to the project" the boys' father explained.

"I'd be excited to show her all the work we'd done or the milestones we'd reached because it was somebody that was showing me how good I was. I can't express what that did for me personally."

The project ignited in Hayley an active interest in childhood development and play, and the project opened that door for her. Through the support, Hayley was able to help create an Independent Education Plan for Alex to help him in school. His bedtime routine was also perfected.

"Everything has improved tenfold", she explained. "I can put him to bed and I know he's in bed. I started to look at it not as me being a horrible mum but as giving him a gift. That was a huge learning curve for me."

Hayley admits that without the project, she would be asking for respite by now. She was wearing herself and Alex down and was struggling to find joy or any normality. "That was the great thing in retrospect; she wasn't the crutch that I thought, she was really holding up a mirror and showing me, leading me to see it myself."

Hayley is now studying an English literature degree and volunteering as a peer mentor, leading to employment.

"From her coming it was hard and her leaving it was so much better, and it was in a relatively small period of time - around six months. I got to a point where I realised quickly you can access help and to do it, maybe had I gone any further I wouldn't have found help because I was so far gone. There was an element of me that thought I was an epic fail because I had to access somebody, but it's the thing you should be most proud of, to go and access support, so I hope other people do it too because I know the fear and the embarrassment."



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The Parenting Programme and Individual Support engages with parents and families to support parenting skills and capacity

Hayley and her son had become stuck in a cycle and just wanted someone to make her feel normal again.

Hayley was having difficulty with her son who would never sleep through the night. Alex, three years old, was also not in education after having been asked to leave nursery because he had been aggressive. Hayley was exhausted and struggled to stay calm when managing Alex, which led to increased attention seeking negative behaviours. Alex also struggled with his speech.

"I wasn't maintaining the routine at home because I was becoming depressed and pre occupied. It got to the stage where it would be the afternoon and neither of us were dressed, it was so gradual that I didn't see it happening, then I realised I really, really need someone to talk to. I felt completely alone." Hayley explained.

Hayley received support from the Parenting Programme and Individual Family Support project. "They were so lovely and we started talking and they said 'this isn't about us judging you, this is

about us seeing what you need from us and if we can provide that for you', so that felt a lot better because I was expecting Social Services at the door."

"My support worker came each week and I'd make small changes each week, and I would really look forward to our meetings. The biggest help was having someone to chat to." Hayley said.

"She taught me to pick my battles. I was fighting everything and we had got to the stage where there was no fun."

The project taught Hayley various techniques and skills that helped her to look at things from a different perspective and realise that it wasn't her failing as a parent. Her support worker supported Hayley to look at herself differently and realise how much she did for Alex. She also supported her in getting Alex back into education, with the understanding that he was a kinaesthetic learner.

"You don't go into the first meeting and they rip you apart, it is something that is done gradually over time and you get to the bottom of things. It's a very pleasant process and it's not something that is done there and then. Each and every one of us had some sort of support network put in place that had benefited us."

Even though Ceri required more support, Ian and the boys had no idea that they were all suffering as a family. It brought to life that they needed help desperately with school, and that Ian himself needed someone to talk to.

Goals that were decided on together were school attendance, housing and finance. Since working with TAF, the boy's attendance has gone up tremendously and they have relocated to a more suitable house. "This house has been the key to helping with Ceri's recovery and helping us move forward as a family." Ceri now has a disabled ramp and a garden in which she can enjoy her jewellery making, something that she's wanted to do for many months.

The project also helped provide new school uniform for the boys that helped because they no longer felt isolated. "Silly things that most people would look over but to us it meant the world."

Both Ian and Ceri received support from other support networks that enabled them to talk through their difficulties and have emotional support, whereas the boys now attend free-running lessons which has given them their independence back.

The family, very positive, said that it was "purely because of the support put in place from TAF."

"Until you're actually sat there and they work with you to find out what it is that you need exactly, I just thought that we were trying to help Ceri get better, and then you find out that we've all got issues that we didn't even know."

"The help that we've had is tremendous and I would hopefully wish that any family that gets approached to join TAF to take it on board because they will benefit from it."



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Team Around the Family co-ordinates support for families with a range of needs during difficult times

Ian and his family had buried their heads, unaware that they were struggling to cope with their caring duties.

Ian and his two sons act as carers to mum, Ceri who suffers with severe mental health problems. Due to her illness, Ceri is unable to be left on her own and her health impacted the whole family; the boys would often be unwell and would miss school to be sure their mum was safe. The family also struggled financially due to Ian missing work to care full time for his wife.

Ian was called into school one day and chatted to their Education Welfare Officer, "she offered to put us forward to a support network to give support to me and the boys and that basically got the ball rolling. Team Around the Family (TAF) got involved and it snowballed from there. All these support networks started falling into place and things started changing for us as a family."

"Even though we were struggling we didn't think that we needed the support. Until you're actually shown the support is

there and you can benefit from it, you just bury your head and just try and get on with it."

A TAF Officer visited the family and talked through some goals that would form their action plan. "There was as much responsibility on us as both parents and service users; it gave us things to do as well." The family also had group sessions with all the support networks to air out any targets that everyone needed to achieve, "it made it good for us because we could see where the support networks were aiming for and also goals we needed to achieve."

The family were always able to suggest their ideas, often having the other Officers picking up on it and saying 'that's a brilliant idea, let's do that'.

Team Around the Family

Having only been with the project for three months, Emma and her family have already seen changes in that time. "I think we've sussed it with Ben. My support worker knows how to push things, that's what I like about her."

The special thing about the Families First project, Emma explained, is that the support before was for herself, but this was for everybody.

"The best part is having someone around to talk to and they don't judge you, it's nice to get that extra advice. When I talk to her she's helping me with things."

The project has focused on helping Emma with her self-esteem and is taking her on a confidence course. My support worker praises me up all the time and says 'you're so different to the first time I met you'.

She has gained confidence in being on her own and supporting the children and has come a long way in herself.

"I don't really care what people think since I've met my support worker, it's my life."

Emma is confident with working and plans to go back as an apprentice and do her business admin to level two and three, with the hope of getting a job out of it.

Her journey with the help of the project has left her in a place where she feels that life is so much better.

"I wouldn't know what to do if she wasn't here. I am happy. I am really, really happy compared to a few months ago."



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The Supporting Family Change project provides intense support for families who receive a lot of support from services

Emma had gone through a few changes and was struggling to get on, especially with her confidence.

After splitting from her husband and with two sons, aged two and six, Emma was advised by the children's school teacher that she may need a bit of support.

Eldest son, Ben had some behaviour problems and Emma often felt low, suffering from anxiety attacks and depression. Her confidence also suffered; having been married for seven years, being on her own was a big change.

The Supporting Family Change project recognised that she needed that extra support. Emma's support worker wanted to know what goals to set and what she would like to do with her life. "I reeled a lot off" Emma said.

Emma had previously been supported by a different project and got used to having some support. Emma explained "this time it was different because the support worker would phone and come round and it's having someone to talk to about family

and things, just understanding."

Emma and the support worker did a lot of chatting. Ben was a big concern for Emma and has only just started using the toilet with his learning difficulties. "He's trained now, that's a big relief."

Emma stated that she wished she had the project a couple of years back and when talking about her support worker said, "if I ever want her, she's there. We do make appointments but it's flexible".

The project also helped Emma with Ben's behaviour and with his schooling, as Ben attends school an hour away. Emma said "I'm 31 and I'm going to bed at 7.30pm every day!"

"Ben is totally different; he's come out of his shell a lot."

Her support worker assisted in getting the boys into playgroup for two hours, which Emma thought was a good idea as it gives her a break as well.

Andrew pieced together his life story and through the Advocacy project wrote a letter explaining his worries. "They were a little bit more qualified to cope. The answer I was giving him wasn't good enough. I couldn't give him the answers and that made him angry. Andrew's dealing with a lot of emotions and the things he's been through and the counselling is bringing things up" his grandmother said.

Andrew was supported to manage his frustration, hurt and anger more appropriately and was able to talk and make sense of the gaps in his life. "I think it's helped him accept what's happened with his little brother. It's definitely helped there because that was a big major problem as to why he was playing up."

Andrew often asked his grandparents why Charlie couldn't live with them, and with Sandra's health this was difficult. "I think he's had more of those answers with the counselling because he doesn't seem to go on about Charlie so much" Sandra said. "He didn't seem to grip it, but he obviously seems to be accepting it."

A major help was Families First getting in touch with the adoption team, and as a result Andrew received a letter from Charlie with answers to questions that he had been asking. "He knows he can send letters and cards via the letter box now, if only we'd known this in the beginning."

Andrew always looked forward to the sessions and liked his counsellor very much.

Now that Andrew is getting some closure on Charlie, he is progressing and accepting things better. Sandra admits that there's still so much they need to do and that they have his behaviour to work on, but hopes that in the near future there is more counselling for Andrew. The family will also continue to have Team Around the Family support.

"If he had the choice to keep going he would, he's benefiting from it. Anything that benefits Andrew because he's the most important one in all of this. Obviously this support has helped with the Charlie situation; it has helped him understand more."



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The Inclusion and Support project offers support for children and families around mental health

Andrew had been struggling to accept why his little brother had been adopted and was in desperate need of closure.

Andrew is one of five siblings and lives with his grandparents. In 2012, his younger brother, Charlie was adopted which left Andrew feeling confused, lost and worried. His biggest fear was that Charlie wasn't being looked after, and this led to a lot of emotional and psychological difficulties.

His grandmother, Sandra explained "It's really difficult for him." Andrew's behaviour has been very difficult for Sandra to manage; often turning to harm himself and not sleeping, as he would suffer from nightmares. "He's got a log of anger and he can't cope with it. He's also been making himself sick."

The family received support from Team Around the Family, and with their family action plan in place, Sandra attended support sessions through the Parenting Programme and Individual Family Support Project. "I've been to the family parenting

group. I listen to other mothers and think oh I've got that problem as well. I do find it good." Sandra felt understood, reassured and listened to without being judged. "There's many a day I think I don't know what I'm doing wrong, and having a professional say you're not doing anything wrong, it's just the way it is."

Team Around the Family reviewed the families case, and it was thought that Inclusion and Support Project needed to be involved. Andrew was supported for three months by the mental health strand and attended counselling sessions. "The first two weeks was in the house and then they asked if I minded if he went on his own, so the therapist picks him up from school" Sandra explained.

Dafydd could only speak his mother's language for the first three years and so could not read or write in English when he first came. "The children's English has improved definitely, very much. They miss it so much."

Dafydd, who did not like school in Ibiza has transformed with the help of the project. "He's really engaged with his reading and writing".

Supplementing their difficulties in school, both children found it quite hard to settle in to their new lives with little friends. "Katherine is very nervous like me, she is very shy. It is difficult to make friends", but with the help of Integrated Family Learning the children have also made strong friendships through the group.

Katarina also benefited more than she ever expected, "I didn't know anyone but I've made friends for sure. They've involved me with the leisure centre which I didn't know is close to us, and Dafydd started going to karate". "It was a help for me, especially with English."

Following in Dafydd's footsteps, his sister Katherine also attended and said that it was her favourite time of the week. Katarina told us "she couldn't wait to come."

With many new changes for the family, the Families First Integrated Family Learning project not only helped with the children's learning, but also gave Katarina a chance

to spend precious time with her children. "To have that time together with children, learning together and be involved in that was really good."

She explained "the best part for me was spending time with the children and improving our English for the three of us". Katarina feels more confident about asking questions relating to phonics and handwriting so that she can help the children settle into their new school. Dafydd is more willing to write, speak and express his views, whereas all three have increased confidence in all aspects of literacy and with making friends.

Katarina plans on continuing her studying with English and urges other families to benefit from the support that she received. "It was really, really good. I was surprised that people don't use it more when it is for free, I cannot understand why parents don't use it".



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Integrated Family Learning project offers basic skills so that families can learn together

Katarina and her children learned much more than Maths and English from the project. She was welcomed into the project, and the community.

When Katarina moved to Caerphilly from Spain in May 2013, her children were her priority. Dafydd aged ten and Katherine, aged six, moved back to Wales with Katarina and their Caerphilly born dad because of schooling. "Dafydd was not happy in school, the children were taught in Catalan mixed with French and Latin and he spent most of his time staring up to the ceiling".

On moving to Caerphilly, the children were excited and kept asking Katarina "do they speak our language here?"

She said they feel safer. "They couldn't believe that when they went to class they could understand what they were saying."

The family found out about the Integrated Family Learning project through their new school. When Dafydd brought home a leaflet Katarina thought that it was

something to help the school. She said, "I had no idea it would be like that with the children. After the first time, Dafydd kept saying 'you must, you must, I love it, you must keep on coming', so because of him I kept going".

The family attended the project at their school on Monday afternoons 1pm-3pm. The sessions were split into two parts; the children and parents would work separately and then come together in the second hour to do active things such as play. Katarina and other parents studied English and Maths and learned about what verbs and adjectives were.

Katarina explained "Katherine loves to talk. In Ibiza, although she could understand what was being said, she could not take part in any discussion because she could not communicate."

Integrated Family Learning project

Anne said that the support she received from the project was vital in helping her give up smoking. The one to one support and encouragement that was provided in the home was crucial to Anne and Lawrence. Anne said "the best bit was the support worker coming and explaining everything, the personal contact".

As well as the advice and information on the stop smoking tablets, the support worker also used a CO2 monitor to motivate Anne and Lawrence. The week after Anne had given up smoking, Anne was asked to test her levels of Co2 using the monitor.

"I was classed as a non-smoker because I didn't have it in my system, so it was very good. When he told me that, I was like 'What, that's brilliant'.

Anne quickly began to realise the difference and noticed herself feeling better. "You see people smoking and think I'm glad I don't do that".

"The smell is really horrible, and I'm now more aware of it. I see smokers now and I think I used to smell like that".

Both grandparents knew that the grandchildren were impressionable and plan on being good role models. "The children know it's bad for you, you try to say to them don't do what I do but when they see you doing it they think, well I can do it".

Anne has now started to crochet a lot while her husband, who is more active, goes out looking for wood for their log burner.

For the future, Anne and Lawrence intend to stay smoke free. The smoking cessation strand of the Health Inclusion project provides that on-going support even after you have given up. Anne said "I wouldn't have been able to do this without the project".



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The Health Inclusion project offers Smoking Cessation support that is flexible and effective

Ann and her husband, Lawrence from Crumlin had wanted to give up smoking for years, but looking after their four grandchildren made them think ‘it’s not the right thing.’

Anne and her husband, Lawrence had been long term smokers, both smoking since the age of 16. They had wanted to give up smoking for years, but found it difficult because they enjoyed the habit.

Anne said “I’ve tried loads of times, and when I was pregnant with both girls I gave up, but as soon as I had them I started again”. On the arrival of their four grandchildren, aged seven, six, three and two years old, they both decided ‘It’s time to give up.’

Anne’s grandchildren were her main concern and motivation for giving up, as being a doting grandparent, Anne looks after her grandchildren twice a week while her daughters were in work.

Anne had been to see her doctor about a year ago to ask about a give up smoking group, and was told that they used to have a nurse that run the group, but that that

stopped. The doctor gave Anne an NHS pack, but all the meeting times were in the day, and so that didn’t suit her because of work commitments.

Anne’s determination to set a good example to her grandchildren meant that when she received an email about the Families First Health Inclusion project, she contacted the support worker from the project straight away.

Anne started meeting him during October 2013, Anne admitted ‘I was a bit nervous when I first met the support worker, but he made me feel comfortable.’

“He came to the house after work and went through everything we could take to help us give up. We both decided to take the stop smoking tablets. I didn’t smoke after that. It does take the actual craving away”.

"They've shown me that just because you have a baby, your life doesn't end. Things are easier to do than you expect, even though you've got a child".

Angharad has also gained a lot of independence with the project's help, going from relying heavily on her mother's support to going to groups by herself with Evie. It was also a big change for her due the accident. "I'm not the same Angharad as I was before the accident. Because of the brain injury I've had a personality change."

"It felt really welcome because you knew that it wasn't just you in the situation. Everyone had different situations as to why we were here, but we were here for the same reason. You didn't feel so alone and it's nice to have friends in the same situation as you."

"It's made me a lot stronger. I can pick Evie up on my right side now."

The project has provided a lot of emotional support for Angharad. "Without the project, mentally and emotionally I'd probably be more within myself. This has helped me come out of my shell. I can talk to new people and it doesn't bother me. It's showed me that people can like me for who I am and not who I used to be."

Angharad's ambition was to go into musical theatre, and all her qualifications were in performing

arts and drama, however, that ambition was no longer possible as she could not sing or dance. Angharad is now going to university to study psychology and counselling, and wants to become a counsellor.

Her positivity is captivating, claiming "I'm loving life" and that the accident has made her see how people take the little things in life for granted.

The project has done a lot for Angharad and Evie, "Evie loves coming here. It's helped her because she's an only child."

"It's amazing. I look forward to coming here. I love coming here, it's so welcoming. The girls treat you for what they see; they take you on face value."



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The Family Engagement project offers specific group and individual support to young mums

Angharad, 20 from Penpedairheol had no idea what she was going to get from the project, but needed support following a near fatal accident.

When Angharad suffered a near fatal car accident, she was left in a coma for a month. On waking up she couldn't move the entire right side of her body and was unable to walk or look after her six month old daughter, Evie.

Angharad heard about the support from the Family Engagement Project, and started attending when Evie was nine months old. The project workers visited at their family home and told Angharad that she could join in the September. "I had no idea what I was going to get from coming here but it was good, I really enjoyed coming".

Angharad's accident left her unable to pick her daughter up or make her food. Having to learn to walk again was also something that the young mother had to accomplish in the first months of her daughter's life. "I went from being bed bound, to in a

wheelchair, to on a Zimmer frame, to on two crutches, to one crutch, to walking in seven weeks. I wanted to come home to Evie."

The project was something that Angharad looked to for support in this new stage of her life. "I wanted to learn how to cook. All I could cook was a boiled egg and microwave meals. I wanted to learn how to do things for Evie and cope with her behaviour."

Angharad has overcome many barriers whilst with the project, and learned new skills through the many courses that she has attended with them, the latest being DIY. "I do more activities with Evie, they show me what I can do with her and I've learned to cook so Evie isn't forced to eat microwave meals!"

Family Engagement project

The project also provided Lewis with one to one, support to help him to understand his mother's mental health issues. He was able to discuss his concerns and as a group, chat amongst themselves and figure out how much caring they do.

"I was nervous at first. I felt awkward because I didn't know if there would be people that had the same situation and that they would secretly take the mick. But after the first few sessions I got used to it then and made more friends." Loughy explained.

"We've made new friends, we've even found out there are friends of ours at school that we didn't even know were carers."

Inspired by the others in the groups, the boys soon realised that they could be nothing but themselves; "it showed us to be ourselves and to act the way we would when we were out with other friends."

So much so that Lewis and Loughy have completed a peer mentoring course with the project, helping them more with their panicking and supporting other young carers. Lewis has used this coaching in a role he's already doing in school.

"It's good for us as parents to see that other people have confidence in our children for them to go ahead and do this. It shows how much they've grown in confidence" their father said.

"The project gives the boys a chance to be themselves. For us as parents it's good knowing that they can now get the support that they need, they haven't got to suffer in silence as they were."

The project has also helped the talented boys to pursue hobbies, such as free running, that would have otherwise been impossible. Lewis and Loughy have bright lives ahead of them; "I've got quite high plans for when I'm older." Lewis said.



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