

CONNOR

Connor lives with his mum, Sandy and younger sister, Elsie. Sandy has a substance use disorder and lives with a mental health condition. She's out of work and often withdraws to bed for days on end.



With Sandy often bed-bound, Connor is often absent from school. Sandy has told Connor that if he tells anyone what things are like at home, they might take him away. Connor is frightened by this, so barely says a word in school. He internalises a belief that his whole identity is somehow wrong, although he doesn't understand why.

His attendance at school is very low and he is nowhere near meeting age-related expectations. His teachers are exasperated by his work and behaviour and he knows it; he believes himself to be useless at everything – a belief compounded by the fact that he has never been able to make his Mum feel better - and develops very low self-esteem. Ashamed by his academic inadequacy, he avoids schoolwork at all costs, rarely completing homework and often disrupting classes instead of doing the work assigned. Teachers respond with disciplinary action, building on Connor's resentment of school.

After a series of temporary exclusions, he is sent to a Pupil Referral Unit, where he is frightened by the other children but knows he must not show it. Connor leaves school with no GCSEs. His Pupil Referral Unit enrol him in a local, mainstream college where he is encouraged to study Level 1 Brickwork as a practical subject to study although he has no interest in the building trade. He is also told he will need to retake his Maths and English GCSEs. This further fuels Connor's belief that he's not good enough.

Connor rarely attends college and when he does he is not engaging in class or completing assessments. His personal tutor tries to engage him but this is ignored by Connor. He refuses to engage with the NEET team (for children Not in Education, Employment or Training) due to ever-increasing issues such as depression, low self-worth, low self-confidence and low aspirations. Besides, he has enough on his plate caring for his mum.