



Case Study

Self-harm - Case Study 3

A MAN who has a history of self-harm and attempted suicide claimed he suffered homophobic insults while receiving care.

Mr X has had several admissions to the Emergency Department. He has been admitted for cutting himself and taking paracetamol overdoses, while his most recent admission had been for attempted suicide by drinking bleach.

He was discovered in his room by a security guard at his supported accommodation after he started to make loud noises due to the intense pain caused by swallowing bleach. The guard called the emergency services. An ambulance attended and paramedics gave a saline solution to attempt to flush Mr X's system but it was decided that he needed further medical assistance and was taken to the Royal Cornwall Hospital. It was approximately 1am.

Following a three-hour wait to see a doctor who took blood samples, he was next seen by the psychiatric team. He said on seeing him he was greeted with the comment "not you again", which he felt was not appropriate. Mr X felt this team were not interested in him, but other staff, on this occasion, had been "okay". At approximately 9am he was discharged from the hospital, given bus fare and told to go home.

However, it was during this discharge conversation that he said he became angry and lost his temper and swore at the staff. On his way home he attempted to jump in front of a car but the car stopped without hitting him. He then walked to Truro and went to a multi storey care park intending to jump off it but was picked up by the Police and taken to the secure (136) suite in Redruth.

It was here that Mr X said he felt he was taken seriously. He was there for almost a day and was assessed by a doctor and was told he would need to go to hospital for further assessment. He was told he could either go in voluntarily or be sectioned. He chose to go in voluntarily.

He was then informed that there were no spaces in Cornwall available so he was taken to Harrow, London. Mr X said he was treated well.

It is when he visits the psychiatric team in Cornwall that he feels they don't treat him with respect and that he had been told by staff during visits that he is "wasting their time".

He said: "They see my cuts and they think, 'He's done it before he will do it again'."

Mr X said he had been upset by a male nurse who he claims called him a "f**king poof" when he said "ouch" as the nurse was stitching a cut after he had self-harmed. Mr X said it made him feel like "chinning" the nurse.

Mr X added that he felt he had really achieved something by not being admitted for self-harming for two years.