

Resource title: *Incorporating an understanding of poverty into assessments of children in their families*

Audio/Video Transcript

Meet Sue Johnston and her family:

Sue Johnson is a thirty five year old white British woman. She has five children, Paul aged 14, Danny aged 12, twins Chloe and Lauren aged 6 and Marcus aged 3. Geoff, Sue's husband and the father of the 5 children, left the family suddenly two years ago and has since had a child with a new partner. Since Geoff left Sue has felt under enormous stress. She has had to give up work and struggles financially to cope on state benefits. After some initial telephone contact Geoff has no contact with the Sue or the children and provides no financial assistance. The family live in a small privately rented house which is overcrowded and in poor repair. Sue misses Geoff terribly, and she has been treated for depression by her GP. The family had moved shortly before Geoff's departure and she has had few opportunities to make friends locally. Sue has a sister to whom she is close, but she lives 200 miles away.

The children also miss their father and Danny in particular has found school difficult and has already been excluded twice from his secondary school. Paul and the twins cope better although they too frequently feel sad about their father. Marcus was only a baby when Geoff left but Sue has found him an extremely demanding toddler and while she is relieved he has recently started nursery part-time, she finds him very challenging. All 4 of the older children have, like Sue found the decline in the family's finances difficult to come to terms with.

Sue feels that after struggling for 2 years she can no longer cope and having spoken to the head teacher at the twin's primary school she approaches social care services for help.