

## The case of Keith Jones

### Background

Keith Jones is 87 years old, and lives alone with his wife Paula in a flat. Paula has end stage lung cancer, and is visited by the district nursing team twice a day. For the remainder of the time Keith provides all her care needs. Keith is himself fairly frail and has minor physical health problems and times when he is particularly depressed and anxious. In the past Keith had been referred to the day centre, as the district nurse was concerned that he was very isolated as he rarely left the house and was becoming withdrawn. You arranged for Keith to visit the day centre twice a week so that he could have more social interaction and support.

This seemed to work well, but whilst talking to Keith at the day centre he tells you that he now has an adopted daughter and wants her to be listed as his next of kin. In Keith's initial registration he indicated that he has no children, and only two siblings, a brother and a sister, and so you wonder who this adopted daughter is and where she has come from.

### Questions

*From the information given, do you have any concerns about this situation?*

*What would you do next?*

In this instance the day centre manager began by gathering more information

You ask Keith about his adopted daughter, and he tells you that when he was visiting his wife in hospital after she had recently been admitted he had run into a woman who was the daughter of one of his old friends who had died many years ago. She had comforted him about his wife, who had subsequently died, and had offered to give him any help he needed. Keith admits that he hadn't seen her prior to this for at least 16 years, but keeps referring to her as his adopted daughter. You ask Keith if he is happy if you have a quick chat with her, and he agrees. You manage to speak to her, and when you ask about why she was being referred to as his adopted daughter, she tells you that she had said this to the staff in hospital so that she was able to sit with Keith and his wife as she was considered their immediate family, and that then Keith had taken to calling her his adopted daughter.

Because you have concerns about the situation, you keep in regular contact with Keith to monitor what is going on. On his most recent visit to the day centre he tells you that his adopted daughter is taking him out once a week in exchange for petrol money, and that he pays for all her children to have lunch out on their day trips. You then receive a phone call from another member of the day centre staff, telling you that Keith has changed his will so that his adopted daughter is the sole beneficiary.

### Questions

*Have your opinions about the adopted daughter changed?*

*What action would you take now?*

In this instance the next step was that adult social services were contacted

Because you have concerns that Keith is being taken advantage of, you contact adult social care. In the mean time, Keith's health has declined, and he has been admitted to hospital. An attempt is made to try to prevent the adopted daughter visiting him in hospital, but he becomes very distressed and says that she is the only family he has now that his wife is dead and that he wants her to visit him. Social services contact Keith's brother and sister, and they tell you that Keith refuses to return their calls and that when they speak to the adopted daughter she tells them that she is caring for him now and that they shouldn't get involved. Although they are worried about Keith, they are offended that he has seemingly chosen to have this woman involved in his life rather than them.

After leaving the hospital, Keith moves in with the adopted daughter. He still visits the day centre, and tells you he is paying £800 a month to live with her, and that he buys all the food for the house as well as treats for the children. He never has any money when he visits the day centre. You ask him what has happened to his flat, and he tells you that his adopted daughter has cleared it out for him, and has suggested that he might like to rent it out. Again, you contact social services who speak to Keith and ask him if would like any assistance but he tells them he doesn't want them involved in the situation as he is happy living with his adopted daughter.

### Question

*What impact do you think Keith's refusal to involve social services has had on what action can be taken in this situation?*

### What happened next?

A few months later Keith contacts you to ask if you can go and visit. You ask why and he says that his adopted daughter now has a new boyfriend, who wants his rent to be increased to £1000 a month. You tell Keith that you will need to involve social services in this situation and he agrees, so you all have a meeting at the day centre where Keith can be seen on his own. At the meeting he tells you and the social worker that he can't afford to pay the increased rent, in particular because he has his own flat anyway. He tells you that he is scared to move back in on his own though now that his wife has gone. He wasn't sure if he could manage without the support of his adopted daughter. Social services talk to Keith about the possibilities of him moving into respite care where he would receive an increased level of support until he felt more confident, which he was happy with. It was agreed that he shouldn't return back to the adopted daughter's house on his own, so you accompany Keith and the social worker to collect Keith's possessions.

Keith was moved into respite care, and he has been living there comfortably ever since. He still visits the day centre twice a week and is now growing in confidence. Plans are being made for Keith to move back home, and he is now back in contact with his brother who is helping him with his finances to make sure no money is being diverted to the so called adopted daughter. She has been visited by the police and advised not to attempt to contact Keith. Social services continue to monitor the situation in case of any future changes.