



CASE STUDY 1: Children and Families

Different types of racism

Case Study Overview

The Khan family is currently open to Children's Services under a Child in Need plan. The referral was made following concerns regarding Ayaan's declining school attendance, emerging indicators of possible criminal exploitation, financial pressures within the family, and difficulties accessing support for his grandmother's healthcare needs.

The family consists of:

- Naseem Khan (72) – Grandmother, retired textile worker with multiple health conditions and limited English.
- Farah Khan (43) – Single mother, employed as a teaching assistant.
- Ayaan Khan (15) – Secondary school student.

Farah has recently become increasingly concerned about Ayaan. Over the past six months, he has become withdrawn, secretive and disengaged from education. His school attendance has fallen significantly, and he has begun spending time with an older group of young people known to local agencies. Staff have reported incidents where Ayaan has been found in areas of the city far from home without a clear explanation.

Recently, Ayaan told his mother:

"There's no point trying to get good GCSEs. People like me don't get those opportunities anyway."

He has also started avoiding speaking Urdu outside the home and refuses to attend cultural community events. When his grandmother speaks Urdu in public, Ayaan appears embarrassed and asks her to speak English instead.

Farah has noticed Ayaan returning home with expensive trainers and a new mobile phone that she knows she has not purchased. When questioned, he becomes defensive and refuses to explain where the items came from. He has also been observed carrying multiple phones and receiving frequent calls and messages late at night.

Professionals are concerned that these behaviours may indicate criminal exploitation, although Ayaan does not perceive himself as being exploited. He insists that the older boys are his friends and states that they are the only people who "look out for him."



Anti Racist Practice Toolkit 1

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At school, Ayaan reports that classmates regularly make jokes about terrorism and ask if his family is "really British." Although he has reported these incidents, he feels staff minimise them as "banter." One teacher frequently confuses Ayaan with another South Asian student despite teaching both boys for over a year.

The family's house is located in an area characterised by high unemployment, gang activity, underfunded schools, limited youth provision and poor public transport links. Farah works long hours but continues to experience financial hardship. She believes opportunities available to families in wealthier areas are largely inaccessible to them.

The allocated social worker is committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognises the potential risks associated with criminal exploitation. However, they notice feeling more comfortable with White British families whose experiences feel more familiar to them. They find themselves focusing primarily on exploitation indicators and practical interventions while feeling less confident exploring the impact of racism and cultural identity on Ayaan's vulnerability.

