

Summary of Case

Makenna was a 17-year-old girl who sadly died by suicide (overdose) in June 2022, just under a month before her 18th birthday. She was an aspiring basketball player, and played for Ipswich basketball club from age 11, and was a member of the basketball academy at Copleston school. She played basketball at a local, county, regional and national level.

Makenna lived full time with her grandmother since birth who she had a very close relationship/bond with. Makenna had contact with her mother and sibling. There was a wide family and social network who were very supportive and played a big part in Makenna's life.

Makenna struggled in lockdown as had her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother and mother were dealing with their own mental health issues (both open to NSFT) and grandmother was struggling with her physical health too. Makenna struggled with the sudden closure of school and the basketball club along and the loss of face-to-face contact with friends. Makenna became withdrawn, defiant, anxious, and tearful.

Makenna took a significant overdose in January 2021 and was taken to hospital where she received an assessment through the self-harm pathway pilot (NSFT). Makenna described being low in mood and that she had worries about family issues and taking on a caring role for the people around her. She had taken on the role of a carer for both her mother and grandmother for some years and had been finding this difficult. Makenna was referred to 4YP counselling and for a common assessment framework (CAF) to be opened. The counselling from 4YP was online which Makenna struggled to cope with and did not always attend. The CAF was not opened due to 4YP counselling being in place and the family stating they had support. The safeguarding concerns and reasons for Makenna's first suicide attempt were identified but not fully explored further by professionals.

Makenna struggled academically after her suicide attempt in January 2021 until her death in June 22, stating to her family that she couldn't retain information or concentrate, she was lethargic, and her appetite was poor. Makenna's family encouraged her to seek support from her GP surgery (concerns for long covid) and although Makenna made initial contact, she did not engage further with GP services.

Agencies working with Makenna, her mother, and grandmother did not fully consider the young carer role Makenna had taken on and the impact it was having on her, no referrals to young carers were made or recognition that additional support was needed. Before Makenna died, she had just split up from her partner and was struggling with school, she felt she was failing and not good enough.

Makenna was loved deeply by her family and friends, and she is missed every day. Makenna's family don't want her to be forgotten and hope that the learning from her death can help other young people to get the help and support they need.

[Ipswich Basketball Club honours Makenna Williams with game | Ipswich Star](#)