

Jamie's Story

The following story is based on the experience of a child living in Staffordshire. The names and other details have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

When I was young, Mum always seemed to be sick with something and I never knew why. She split up from Dad when I was quite young and I hardly ever saw him. We lived on our own, just me and her together.

When I was nine years old I had loads of trouble at school. Someone had found out that my Mum had HIV and all the parents of the other children told them to stay away from me. It was really hard because Mum had never really talked to me about having HIV. I can't even remember how I found out; it was just something she seemed to assume that I knew.

Things got really bad at school with all the children calling me names and parents saying they didn't want their children in class with me. In the end we had to move house and I went to a different school.

When I was eleven she got really ill and most days she couldn't get out of bed. A social worker came in every day to do the housework and help look after her but most of the time we were on our own. I used to help her get in and out of bed and to eat. It was really hard keeping up with my school work and looking after Mum as well but I didn't dare tell anyone because of what happened before.

She got better but she has to take loads of pills and some days she can't do very much. I still keep it a secret from all my friends; they just think she has cancer or something. I hope that one day I'll be able to tell other people without being afraid of what they will do.