

Local Knowledge

“My mummy’s fallen down the stairs.”

The female emergency call handler knew that the tiny voice in her ear belonged to a young child.

“OK darling, what’s your name?”

“It’s Ella and I’m three and a half.”

“What’s your second name sweetheart?”

“It’s Lara.”

“No, sorry love I meant what’s your full name?”

“It’s Ella Lara.”

“That’s fine darling. Can I speak to your mummy please?”

“No, she’s asleep now. She gave me the *tefelone* and then she closed her eyes.”

“Is your mummy hurt darling?”

“Yes, she banged her head and it’s bleeding.”

“OK love, can you tell me where you live?”

“I live in a house with Mummy.”

“Do you know what street your house is in?”

“It’s got lots of trees and there’s a park with swings and a roundabout...”

“You’re doing really well Ella. Can you tell me anything else about where you live?”

“Yes, my best friend Rita lives at the end of the road.”

Do you know her second name sweetheart?”

“No, but she’s very pretty and has a pony-tail.”

“Do you know who lives next door?”

“Nobody does ‘cos it’s a shop.”

“What kind of shop?”

“I don’t know.”

“What does it sell, love?”

“It has lots of sweeties....and Mummy buys me my Haribo there and gets her paper from Mr Patel.

“That’s good Ella. I think I know Mr Patel’s shop....I’m going to send some nice people round to help your mummy. Can you please stay on the phone sweetheart and I’ll tell you when they get to your house. You’ve been a really clever girl and your mummy will be proud of you.”

“Do you think she’ll buy me the dolly I saw on the telly?”

“I’m sure mummy will get you something really nice but you’ll have to ask her when she wakes up.”

A few days later the Daily Mail printed this human interest story.

“Three year old Ella Marlowe of Elm Road Surbiton managed to alert the emergency services to the plight of her mother, Maria, who was hurt after a nasty fall. Before she lost consciousness. Maria had dialled 999 and her daughter then picked up the phone. Coaxed by a patient call handler, the child managed to identify her address by saying she lived next to a newsagent owned by Mr Paresh Patel. The paramedics arrived within ten minutes, forced entry to the property and Mrs Marlowe is now in hospital recovering from a fractured skull and a broken leg. There was an unexpected twist to this heart-warming story. Alerted by the 999 call, a police patrol vehicle arrived at the scene just as two men were running from Mr Patel’s shop. The police officers gave chase and apprehended the men who had held Mr Patel at knife point and stolen all the cash in the till and several hundred cigarettes. The newsagent has given Ella a bumper pack of Haribo Starmix to thank her for bringing the police to his door at the opportune time.”

500 Words