

IAS Service: Person centred planning to empower

This case study highlights how by using person centred tools to support families in expressing their views, wishes and feelings, they are able to gain a better understanding of their needs within the EHC assessment process. The parent's confidence grew throughout her experience and enabled her to gather her son's views in other person centred ways, including adding his drawings of himself.

Luke's Story

Luke is 11 and is currently in a mainstream primary school and concerns had been raised about him transferring to secondary school without extra support. His school made a request for an EHC needs assessment and the IAS Service manager began supporting the family halfway through the assessment process. Section A had already been completed by the family and lead worker from the 0-25 team.

The IAS Service manager met with the family to provide more information on the EHC assessment process, including timescales, EHC plans, and local procedures. Mum's main concern was a meeting that was taking place to discuss the EHC assessment and draft plan in 2 weeks time. Mum had very little information on what to expect and felt totally unprepared. The IAS Service manager and the family discussed what to expect at the meeting and how they could support her.

The IAS Service manager used person centred planning tools "what is important to" and "what is important for" and "what's working" and "what's not working" to help Luke's mum establish the main points she wanted to put across at the meeting. This also helped them consider the outcomes they felt should be included for Luke and meant they felt more prepared for the meeting. Luke had also added drawings of himself that he wanted to include within Section A.

The IAS Service manager accompanied Luke's mum to the meeting. Mum had her notes with her from when she met with the IAS Service manager the previous week. These notes not only helped her feel empowered but reduced her anxiety too. This meant she was able to make the points she wanted raised and discussed within the meeting. After the meeting, the parent stated how happy she felt to be able to express her views and that the professionals had agreed and supported the points she'd raised.

This case study shows the importance of providing information and support to parents and children in advance of meetings and during them, so they can fully participate throughout the EHC assessment process. Without assistance to properly prepare for the EHC draft plan meeting, the parent may have not been able to focus her ideas, been able to verbalise them or feel included within the meeting. Just knowing that someone is there to step in and offer support can make all the difference.