



Department
for Education



Reading SENDIASS: Supporting families when an EHC needs assessment has been refused

The issue faced

A parent was signposted to IASS by her child's school following a decision by the LA not to assess her daughter. Both parents are vulnerable with physical and mental health needs. Their primary aged daughter is on the autistic spectrum with very high levels of anxiety and speech and language needs. She had been allowed into school during lockdown and had thrived in small groups with a high level of support.

The support provided by IASS

IASS helped to arrange a virtual meeting with the SEND Team. This was attended by both parents, a representative of the school and two representatives of the SEND Team. IASS had made sure they had a full understanding of all aspects of the case from discussions with one of the parents and (with parental consent) the school. IASS was, therefore, able to help to explain to the LA why the parents felt that a needs assessment was required and to ask appropriate questions to help clarify the facts. Agreement was reached in the meeting that school would provide some further written information and the case would be resubmitted to the SEND Panel. A decision was subsequently made for the EHC needs assessment to go ahead.

When a draft EHCP was issued IASS joined a virtual meeting with parents and the LA case officer to finalise the content. The final plan was issued, and parents were happy with the content. The parents subsequently returned to IASS when they were not given their choice of secondary school for their child. IASS had extensive contact with the LA SEND team to find a solution that would not require an appeal. This resulted in an offer of a special school place.

The difference made

This vulnerable family was able to receive support from refusal to assess through to the allocation of a place at a special school, without needing to resort to any formal legal processes. Where service users are willing to engage with this process, IASS will always try to resolve matters without recourse to tribunal. The parents expressed their gratitude for the support they had received.

IASS benefits when cases can be resolved either without recourse to tribunal or in the early stages because such processes are very labour-intensive for a small service to manage. It is in everyone's interest to resolve informally where possible.

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