

Case Study: Empowering

This case study illustrates how the IS needed to demonstrate sound knowledge of the statutory assessment process for an EHCP and reassure and empower an anxious parent who had already been turned down for the assessment and who was then feeling pressured by the LA into naming a school.

Donna's story

Donna is the parent of an 8-year-old who has Tourette's Syndrome, anxiety disorder and hypersensitivity disorder. Her son had very poor attendance at school arising from his needs including his anxiety. Donna was unhappy with the school and she felt they were not addressing her son's needs. She had applied for an EHCP assessment but it had been rejected due to lack of evidence.

Donna contacted the Independent Support Service (ISS) to provide her with information and to help her improve her reapplication for an EHCP assessment.

The Independent Supporter (IS) met with Donna and discussed the evidence she had submitted previously and what additional evidence could be included in the new application. Donna discussed her issues and concerns and how she felt that the school were not currently able to meet her son's needs.

The IS accompanied Donna to several TAF (Team around the Family) meetings where several professionals were present. The IS supported Donna in raising her concerns with regards to the EHCP and also how her son was being adversely affected by the disruption to his education.

With the IS's help Donna resubmitted her application for an EHCP assessment with more detailed evidence and reports. This time the LA agreed to go ahead with it. The LA scrutinised the evidence and issued a draft EHCP.

Donna felt the LA were pushing her to send her son to a maintained special school which was a long way from the family home. Donna still went and looked around the school but was unhappy with it and didn't feel it would be able to meet her son's needs. Donna was given 2 options of independent special schools to visit. Donna visited her preferred choice of school first, that is the one she felt was better suited to meet her son's needs. Donna phoned the IS to ask if she actually needed to visit the alternative independent school as she really wanted her son to go to the school that she had already visited. The IS suggested to Donna to have a look at the second school to ensure she was fully informed as to why her first choice of school would be the best for her son.

Donna was concerned to be receiving emails, or being copied into them, not only from the LA case officer who'd drafted the EHCP but from special schools that Donna had not even discussed with the LA. Donna asked the IS about this, who confirmed that no school should be named in the EHCP until Donna had made her choice of school known to the LA. The IS explained that at this stage it was not for the LA to decide which school her son should attend. So Donna made it clear to the LA officer which school she had chosen for her son and was told that this would be considered by a LA panel and they would let her know their decision.

The LA panel agreed to name Donna's choice of school and he is due to start there at the start of term.

Donna is very happy with her son's EHCP and is delighted that he has been given a place in her preferred choice of school.