

## 1) Case study: Aspirations and outcomes

This case study illustrates that however well informed parents may have been with the old system, they also benefit from assistance from an IS when transferring to an EHCP.

Nia is 11 and has Down's syndrome

### **Nia's Story**

Nia is a friendly and determined young lady who is very capable and works at a level not very far below that of her peers at a mainstream school. Nia had a Statement before she started school. She is due to transfer to senior school in September 2015. Nia's mum contacted IS when she received a draft EHC plan in February 2015. Nia's mum has always been proactive in educational matters, well researched and resilient but was thrown by the EHC process as it seemed so different from Statementing. She requested the assistance of an IS when she received the draft EHCP.

There were lots of things which Nia's mum was either unhappy with or unsure about. She and the IS together identified that some parts of the plan seemed to have been taken directly from Nia's statement; not even the most recent one but the original, meaning much of the description of her needs was out of date. The outcomes were the same as the objectives on the statement and again not particularly relevant to who Nia is now and what she wants to do and achieve in the future. Nia is very clear about her plans. She wants to go to college and do a catering course, work in a cake shop and drive a pink mini! She had stated all of this as her views at the last annual review but these aspirations had not been clearly stated as such in the draft plan, so this needed to be corrected as well. Nia's mum had completed a "parental advice" booklet for the LA as part of the last review but hadn't expected her views to be taken directly from there without any discussion with the LA first. Because no meeting had taken place, some of what she had said had been quoted out of context, resulting in some of the information, particularly about Nia's emotional needs, being quite misleading for anybody reading the plan who didn't already know her.

With the help of the IS, who made some suggestions about how the outcomes could be made more SMART and relevant using the advice that was available. Nia's mum requested in writing several amendments to be made by the LA. When another draft was received, there was still quite a bit that needed to be updated and changed so the IS suggested that Nia's mum requested a meeting with the EHC coordinator from the LA. Initially, it proved very difficult to arrange a meeting. The LA were keen to finalise the plan and Nia's mum was beginning to feel very pressured into agreeing to a document which she was not happy with. The IS advised Nia's mum that the process required the LA to arrange a meeting with parents during the transfer process, and after some intervention by the IS, a meeting was arranged.

In order to help the meeting run smoothly, Nia's mum and her IS submitted a further document beforehand, highlighting all the changes she wanted including relevant, revised outcomes. The LA officer was able to agree to most of the changes without a lot of discussion.

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After about four weeks, Nia's mum received a further draft plan from the LA incorporating almost all of the changes she had asked for. Whilst she still didn't feel it was perfect, she was pleased that the plan now reflected Nia as she is and would help people working with her, to know what she needs and how to help her achieve her goals.

At the meeting there had also been a chance to discuss speech therapy provision, which Nia's mum had somehow ended up paying for independently, although it had always been specified in Nia's statement. Occupational therapy was also discussed and it was agreed that it would be useful for Nia to be seen before she started at her new college, to make sure that the building was completely safe and accessible for her. The LA Officer agreed to look into these issues.

Within a few days of the meeting, Nia's mum was contacted by the LA Officer advising that the speech and language therapy service had agreed to assess Nia and provide the input they felt she would need going forward. Agreement had also been obtained for the OT to visit Nia and provide advice for her new college. This was an unexpected and very positive bonus of the work done by the IS.

Once Nia's mum received the final plan, she commented on how much she had appreciated the support from the IS and despite being well-resourced and with a clear focus on what she wanted for her daughter, she did not think she could have achieved so much without the assistance provided by the IS service. The important thing of, course, is that Nia should now have a smooth transition to her new placement and everyone will know how best to support her.