

11) Case Study: Aspirations and outcomes

This case illustrates why it is necessary for YP to be listened to and be supported to achieve their goals and aspirations and find the best way forward for them. Over cautious, albeit caring and well meaning professionals, would traditionally have “won” this battle and who knows what effect that may have had, not just on the YP but his family’s life too.

Teddy is 16 and has been diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. He has a Statement.

Teddy’s Story

I met Teddy and his mum at a transition review meeting (to convert his statement to an EHCP) in the special school provision that Teddy attends. It is attached to a mainstream secondary school and pupils are able to attend mainstream lessons where appropriate. At the meeting were the family’s support worker, head teacher, mum, Teddy and myself.

Teddy was very clear in his views that he wanted to attend more mainstream lessons and become a full time pupil in the mainstream school. The head teacher was concerned that he was currently on a part-time timetable due to his history of not being able to cope in previous educational settings, and he did not want to put too much pressure on him. Teddy, however, was very expressive in his view that he wanted more and the outcome of the meeting was that a request for a transition to an EHCP would be sent to the LA.

I met with Teddy and his mum after this meeting to discuss in more detail EHCPs and to ensure they understood their rights throughout the process.

In response to the request for an EHCP, the LA proposed options for Teddy to continue his education either in the current setting or for a move to a local college. The professionals were concerned he would not be able to cope with more GCSE work as he had already been held back a school year to enable him to catch up. However, Teddy and his mum did not agree. They had very clear beliefs, so I met with them separately to outline their options and to gather their views how they wanted to proceed.

My relationship with Teddy gradually began to develop, which was crucial to gathering his views of his future aspirations and goals, so he could have his voice heard from someone independent of the LA. It took a little bit of prompting to stay on track and to focus on looking forward to his future rather than concentrating on the past. Teddy was often more concerned with discussing past events as he felt he hadn’t had any of his questions answered. We agreed that I would write them in his views as it became clear that he needed answers if he was going to be able to move forward. He also stressed his wish to become a full time mainstream student and really wanted this opportunity to succeed as he also had a very clear vision of passing A levels and then a degree at university.

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I gave Teddy a copy of “his views” along with a red pen and asked him to go through them and alter anything he wanted. He took great pride in correcting the grammar he thought was incorrect and to changing some of the wording and he was very proud of the result. On reflection I can see how important this was for him to do as it gave him some control of his own future – I shall use this technique again!

I also gathered his mum’s views and asked her to do exactly the same and it was interesting that her views almost mirrored Teddy’s. She asked for him to be given a chance to thrive and succeed, she believed he would excel and go on to achieve his grades, then his A levels and then onto university if given the chance to do so. She also wrote about her feelings of being let down previously by the LA and that she now “*feels supported to get her point of view across.*”

Teddy had a trial of more learning time being spent in the mainstream facility and he thrived. It has now been proposed that he attends the mainstream secondary school full-time from September with 20 hours of support. This will of course be monitored but he is determined to achieve and is really happy he is being given the chance to do this. His EHCP will be reviewed in early September, where he will be supported to give his views on how he feels he is managing. His mum thanked me and said he will succeed as he is a very strong willed young man and I believe he will be inspired to succeed as he has now had his voice heard. He had a number of options open to him and he made his own decision for his future, which will hopefully empower him when the time comes for him to move on again, to the next phase of his education.