

2) Case Study: Aspirations and outcomes

This case study really highlights how strong aspirations helped everyone focus on what could be possible and achievable, rather than what was wrong. By looking at the final goal it was easier for the family to work backwards to identify specific targets to achieve along the way.

Bertie is 10 and is in Y5 at a Specialist School and has health needs.

Bertie's Story

Bertie is a very engaging boy who really loves talking to adults and was eager to tell me about all his hobbies and interests that he enjoys, particularly his love of Golf. He shared with me his aspiration to be a golf coach when he is older. Bertie also told me how much he really enjoyed arts and crafts, as well as playing golf games on the Wii. Bertie also shared with me his nerves about moving into his last year at primary school and how he was nervous about going up to high school.

Bertie became tired very easily and at this point he asked if I could chat with his mum and dad. Bertie's mum in general is very happy about how Bertie has settled into Year 5 but both parents were keen for him to have an EHCP, as his Statement is very dated and they feel it didn't reflect his current needs. They were also keen to work in a way that captured Bertie's and their aspirations for his future.

Bertie's parents felt that some of his health needs and lack of support in this area, were impacting on his potential and that his aspirations wouldn't be reached unless specific targets were put in place. Therefore, Bertie's parents found it very beneficial to look at his aspirations and work backwards using these as the starting point. They thought about what support and provision Bertie might need (from a health perspective) if his aspirations and potential were to be achieved. For Bertie's parents, this meant thinking about how a range of health professionals might support him and support the family, to access specific provision and equipment.

Bertie is very good with his ICT skills, and his parents spoke about how working in a way that clearly focussed on Outcomes, really helped them both to think about how his skills with ICT could be used in a positive way to work towards his aspirations.

Bertie's parents expressed how they felt working in this way had helped to keep them focussed on their longer terms goals for Bertie and also supported them to stay positive and draw on everything they feel he is great at, rather than how they had been expected to think previously i.e. focussing on what Bertie couldn't do.

When Bertie's draft plan came back his mum got back in touch with me as she was upset that the draft plan didn't fully capture the strategies that needed to be in place in order to support Bertie's aspirations. She said she couldn't phone the local SEN team as she was too upset and would prefer for me to contact them on her behalf. I suggested to her that I could request a meeting with the SEN team for her to discuss her concerns and that if she would like, I could attend this meeting as moral support for her. I phoned the SEN team and the meeting was arranged to discuss a way forward.

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Myself and Bertie's mum met beforehand and drafted some of her concerns. After our meeting with the local SEN officer she felt the meeting was productive but also commented how useful it was that I had been there to keep her on track, remind her of key points, and support her to ensure her voice was heard.

Bertie's draft plan was amended and she subsequently phoned me to say how relieved and pleased they all were with the final draft as they felt it fully captured Bertie; his needs and his aspirations.

When I look back at working with Bertie and his family a few thoughts come to me.

Firstly, IS support was important to the family as they wanted to be able to comfortably say what wasn't working for Bertie and this way of working allowed them to do that.

Secondly, I found it challenging because Bertie wasn't really bothered about talking about things and was happy for his mum and dad to do all the talking. However, where possible, I always like to capture a young person's voice and it, therefore, made me think about how I might do things differently.

Thirdly, for me this case also highlighted how supporting parents to find their voice and address their concerns can make a big difference to parents' confidence and their ability or willingness to work in partnership with professionals. Bertie's mum felt that because she had been provided with an IS to raise her concerns with, working on what was good about the draft, what aspects needed amending, and to work through what she might need to raise at the meeting, *all* helped her to remain focussed at the meeting and in control. This feeling of control allowed her to remain friendly and positive in the meeting and ultimately meant that a solution was found and his plan was approved, rather than parents' voice not being effectively heard and the parents ending up going to Tribunal.