

3) Case Study: Aspirations and outcomes

This case study helps illustrate how combining the flexibility of personal budgets and creative thinking can support the whole family's needs better. It also illustrates how significant some seemingly meaningless activities might be in helping everyone cope and manage a bit better too.

Daisy is 18 and has significant impairment around communication and social interaction requiring high levels of support.

Daisy's Story

Daisy has made great progress in managing her outbursts and is feeling more comfortable with change. However, she is very anxious about the uncertainties around leaving her school of 8 years. She has limited capacity and finds it hard to get across what she needs. Her mum is key to her getting what she needs.

Daisy needs constant support and despite her progress, her family can find it very hard meeting her needs. Family holidays are extremely stressful. For example mum has to take two laptop's so Daisy can watch her favourite DVD that she insists on watching everyday. The extra laptop is just in case she breaks one.

Daisy loves her trampoline, her gadgets and regular pampering sessions at school and at home. Daisy and her mum explored this further with their IS. These activities were essential in helping Daisy manage her anxiety levels and an important provision to meet her wellbeing needs.

IS helped prepare the family for their "family conversation" with school. Daisy's mum has significant health needs herself. Her husband suffered a stroke several years ago and requires support from his wife in order to continue his business and bring money in for the family. In addition the family were in receipt of no services other than school support.

Support was offered to help the family think about what they needed to stay strong. They were unsure if they wanted Daisy to live independently but they were also concerned about how they would be able to continue to meet her needs, as they get older.

The family were supported to think about what they and Daisy needed now, in the next two to three years, and the next 5 years. To think about what kind of life they would want for their daughter, what she would like to do, with who, how often. From here we then pieced together what support was needed now, what this could look like, to bring Daisy closer to achieving these aspirations.

Three main things were clear from the family;

Firstly there was a real need for short breaks from caring. Now that Daisy is 18 she is no longer able to attend the previous provision, as she is no longer a child. Her parents were not willing for her to attend the local adult respite provision, as it was not geared up for young people. It is a service designed for 19 to 65 year olds. The family were very worried about this change.

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Secondly the need for Daisy to have a life outside college. The family were concerned that Daisy did not meet up with friends, do things in the community with other young people her age. This is something she and her family really wanted to see her doing, both now and in the future.

And thirdly to secure appropriate provision within college to ensure that Daisy could develop her talents with IT. This would hopefully enable Daisy to secure a volunteering opportunity in the future.

Daisy's "family conversation" and EHC draft included educational support, college provision but nothing around the social care input needed for Daisy and the family. It seemed the care element of her EHCP was blank.

Daisy and her family were informed about the flexible use of a personal budget and therefore, able to negotiate with social care about how they wanted to use this. They are in talks about the use of a direct payment but Daisy 'pooling' this money with a friend from school. Her friend also requires close support in the community. Pooling direct payments would mean that the girls could share two PA's between them in some situations and make their budget go further, enabling Daisy to maintain friendships that go back to primary school.

The family also hope to secure a personal budget to create their own short break provision for Daisy. They hope that she can attend a spa with a support worker, enjoying pampering sessions and relaxation. Giving her and her family the time out they need to help them stay strong.

This case study demonstrates well the skills and understanding of the IS in assisting this family.

It was essential that the IS was able to provide the family with the information they needed, from the start of the process right through to the end. This meant that choice and control, involvement with family and the aspirations were reflected right through the plan.

The IS picked up quickly what the real needs and key issues were for the young person and the family, and provided some ideas to help the family identify the best way these could be supported to suit them. Recognising that some activities are not "time fillers" but an important part of the person's ability to manage their own behaviours.

The IS was able to support the family to think creatively about what a meaningful short break could look like because she realised that just because a family are not happy with services, it should not mean needs are left unmet. It is about supporting that family to think about what it is they are looking for and then using a direct payment to develop this.