

## 6) Case Study: Aspirations and outcomes

This case study highlights the lengths that some parents go to, before they consider asking for external help. It also demonstrates how the IS stuck true to the Section 19 Principles when supporting this family.

### Ralph's Story

When I first met Ralph's mum I was struck by her intense desire to do the best for her teenage son and how she had tirelessly cared for him and his twin sister since they were adopted as babies. Her story was one of gentle revelations that gradually showed how difficult life had been with Ralph but how she and her husband had resolutely carried on to ensure the best outcomes for both their children were achieved, at sometimes emotional, physical and increasingly financial cost. It was a challenge at times to ensure that details of family life that had become normalised were elaborated on, to enable anyone reading their story to get a very clear picture of how difficult life could be for them.

I wanted to make sure Ralph's voice was heard during this process and although because of his current fragile mental health meeting him was not possible, listening to his mum's stories about their life enabled me using some very active listening skills to "hear" the story of not only Ralph's history but all those key elements that interwoven made him the individual he was and we were careful to use direct examples in what we wrote together.

There were a lot of positive things I heard about Ralph "We like his laugh and his lovely smiley face. Ralph can be really affectionate and funny. He has a real talent for seeing something and then being able to recreate it exactly; like graffiti art. He is very quick to pick things up that he is interested in. He is very, very good at looking after his dog and he can be quite thoughtful at times and he can be caring."

We could not meet at the family home if the children were around, as Ralph's twin disliked strangers in the home, so creativity around this was required from the onset. It was clear that the parents had reached a point when outside help was needed, to ensure the worrying displays of challenging behaviour were alleviated, to help Ralph work towards his aspiration of "being rich and famous". At the very least his family required support to help put in the necessary building blocks that would enable him to make choices along the way to adulthood and towards this goal.

His school; a very small independent one, was trying to support him but it became clear were floundering and recognised additional outside help was required and thus the submission to the LA for an assessment for an EHCP. Ralph's story needed to reach the LA with a very clear outline of the current situation, to try and ensure his future in education was surrounded by more awareness of what help he needed to thrive.

We worked a lot on what Ralph's parents would hope to see for his future in order to provide the LA with an idea what their hopes and dreams for their son were, and that they were achievable if support was provided. "We would like Ralph to be happy. To make some long lasting friends, to show an interest in socialising face to face without feeling sick or feeling anxious. In the next six months we would like him to join a club or take part in an activity with likeminded peers, that would have some longevity and enable him to make and meet

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new friends. For him to enjoy his schooling and to feel less pressurised. For Ralph to feel emotionally stable, with sufficient support provided so that over the next two to four years he can achieve qualifications relevant to him being able to make choices for his future as he approaches adulthood.”

“Long term we would like him to feel secure enough to live independently and be able to manage himself on a day to day basis. Learn to drive, manage finances and find employment that would suit him. Not to have to rely on medication. Eventually for him to have a wife and family of his own.”

Carefully listening to Ralph and his family’s story, enabled us together to submit a “Parent View” booklet to the LA, that hopefully incorporated details that might otherwise have been overlooked without a person-centred approach to gathering the information, combined with an honest regard for what was needed for the future. It was also an opportunity to signpost the family to support that was available locally both for themselves and Ralph. Overall it was a piece of work that attempted to put into practice the key principles behind Section 19 of the 2014 Act.