

1) Case Study: Parents needing additional support

This case study illustrates the importance of being available at short notice but also how to understand and overcome views arising from cultural differences.

Adnan and Hasan's story

An urgent referral was received by phone from the IASS requesting for an IS to meet with a parent that afternoon? The IS were made aware that there could be cultural differences which may create barriers to communication. As the request to meet was so urgent, there wasn't the usual time available to match the family with a volunteer who could have better met the families' cultural needs but thankfully there was an IS who could meet with them at such short notice.

The IS rang and spoke to Adnan, the father of a 6 year old boy, Hasan, who was non-verbal with limited understanding.

Adnan wanted to meet at the office later that afternoon and he duly arrived with all his paperwork. He was nervous. The IS asked looked at all the paperwork, and given the urgent nature of the request was amazed to see the first letter was dated 6 weeks ago for a conversion and this was the draft plan. So he still had 8 weeks left. What was the rush?

Adnan explained that because of his culture he thought he was required to sign and send the draft back even if he disagreed. He hadn't realised that he was allowed to challenge the decisions and ask for amendments as he believed this would be disrespectful.

The IS assured Adnan that it was perfectly alright to ask for more detail including timeframe. Adnan wanted to be able to support Hasan at home in the same way that was being used in school. The IS explained about consistency of approach and how his siblings could become involved too. Adnan was really pleased and relieved to be discussing these very important issues and options but then came the part of writing it down. He was still worried that if he made changes it would look bad.

The IS asked him how he would like her to help him, being mindful that she was trying to empower him to use his voice. Adnan gave this some thought and asked the IS to read the points to him so that he could then tell her what he wanted to say and she could write it down for him.

The IS agreed and together they made all his suggested amendments. The IS couldn't help but notice that all the worry and fear disappeared from Adnan's face.

The IS offered to make Adnan a copy of the amendments so he could be send his copy in to the LA. Again he was very relieved and pleased with this suggestion.

Adnan said he had been worried that the IS wouldn't understand his concerns or would rush him but instead he felt reassured and listened to and able to make a proper contribution to his son's education and EHCP.

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The IS was later invited to do a home visit to meet Hasan and his other children. He wanted assistance in making a One Page Profile for Hasan. One had been done in school and he wanted to see if it would be different if it was created in his home environment.

When the IS left she knew that they had built up a mutual respect and trust with each other.

Adnan has spoken to other families about his experience and the support he received from the IS service and it is quite likely some of them will access the IS service in the coming months.