

12) Case Study: Empowering

This case study highlights how the IS identified that the location of the meeting would affect Ben and his mum's ability to share their views and also how the IS was able to adapt/reduce the level of support provided as mum's confidence grew as she was able to take a more proactive role.

Ben's Story

I have worked closely with this family (mum and Ben) throughout the EHC process, including the request stage. This took approximately 30 weeks.

I initially accompanied mum on a meeting at school, which was focused on finalising the request form for an EHCP. Mum had been especially anxious that she wasn't being listened to, so I met with her prior to the meeting to establish what she wanted from the meeting and how I could ensure she had her say.

This approach meant I quickly built up a good rapport with mum. She put her trust and faith in me to support her. At the meeting we had to complete the "One and Only" forms. This enabled her to tell me all about her son and family; she needed lots of time to just talk and off-load, and the process of completing these forms was a useful vehicle for doing this.

Ben and his mum found meetings at the school extremely difficult (there was a history with older siblings). Consequently, I worked with the school SENCo and Assessment Coordinator to hold meetings on a neutral site, in our offices. This enabled mum and Ben to feel more comfortable and therefore, more able to express their views and wishes.

This family also required considerable support in seeking appropriate provision for Ben. To this end I met with mum to seek what it was she wished for and helped to formulate very specific questions that she wished to ask prospective schools. I then accompanied her to school visits (5 in all). Mum then had the confidence to ask the questions and to probe further, while my role was now to write down everything mum was told by the school.

With this informative knowledge mum was able to consider which provision she thought best met her son's needs. When she received the proposed plan, she was in a position to request a school and write an accompanying letter. I helped her to formulate this letter, using the information we had gained from the school and linking this to the outcomes/provision that were outlined in the proposed plan.