

## 2) Case Study: Joint case working

This case study reflects how an effective partnership between IS agency and IASS can operate seamlessly when supporting a family, enabling the parent to access the most relevant support as the situation evolved.

Nigel is in Y5 and is on the autistic spectrum.

### **Nigel's Story**

The IAS service was contacted by Nigel's mum regarding concerns related to his lack of progress in school. She felt the school were trying to meet Nigel's SEN within the limits of their resources but that this wasn't enough; the gap between Nigel and his peers was widening. Furthermore, she felt that Nigel's communication difficulties were causing him to struggle with social interaction, leading to anxiety. She felt that, whilst he managed to "hold things together" in school, his emotions were routinely released on arriving home, resulting in challenging behaviour, to the detriment of family life.

There was a Team Around the Child meeting arranged at the school; Nigel's mum asked the IAS officer to support her at the meeting as she wanted to raise the above concerns. At the meeting, the school appeared to be less concerned about Nigel's progress than his mum. However, there was an agreement that the school would make a request for an EHC needs assessment. After the meeting the IAS officer explained to Nigel's mum how an IS could help her through the EHCP process. Nigel's mum felt that this support would be valuable, so the IAS officer arranged to allocate an IS to the case.

The SENCo met with Nigel's mum to prepare the EHCP request. Nigel's mum asked her IS to attend as she felt she needed help to clearly describe Nigel's needs. She was also worried that the school might try to play down the severity of his needs. Following this meeting an EHCP request was completed and sent to the LA. During the meeting, and through ongoing phone calls, the IS was able to inform Nigel's mum about the process, including relevant aspects of the law, deadlines and her right to be properly listened to.

The LA declined to carry out an EHCP assessment. Nigel's mum contacted the IS as she had decided that she wanted to appeal the LA's decision to the SEND Tribunal. The IS referred her back to the IAS officer.

Nigel's mum met with the IAS officer who helped her begin the appeal process. At the same time he arranged for Nigel's mum to meet with an LA officer to discuss the reasons for the refusal to assess, and establish whether there were grounds for the LA to reconsider their decision. At Nigel's mum's request, school agreed to ask an Educational Psychologist to work with Nigel and produce a report.

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Following the EP report and notification of the appeal, the LA agreed to carry out the EHCP needs assessment and the process has resumed. Nigel's mum is again working with the IS to help her express her views at meetings and on paper.

Nigel's mum says she values the support of the IS in clarifying the process and offering professional support throughout, backed up with knowledge of SEN law. She especially feels the IS was able to encourage professionals to recognise her concerns and take them seriously. She also valued the IS's timely referral back to IAS for support with the Tribunal appeal when the LA refused to assess and requesting EP involvement. Nigel's mum has grown in confidence through the process and has embraced her right, in law, to be listened to as the expert on her child.