

Case study: SENDIASS direct work with young people

This case study demonstrates how an IAS service has worked with and supported a young person as they transferred between a key phase of education.

Background Details

John is 16 years old and lives with his family within a large family unit. John's parents own a fast food business which demands a large proportion of their time and requires them to work unsociable hours. John had attended a mainstream community school up until the age of 13 and had a statement/EHCP since primary school. Following permanent exclusion John secured a placement in a non-maintained specialist setting for boys with social emotional and mental health challenges, situated a considerable distance from the family home. A psychological therapeutic intervention was implemented for John and he was successful in accessing a highly supported curriculum with an intense focus on enrichment. John left school Summer 2018.

John contacted the IASS independently with the support of a National Citizen Support Worker towards the end of the Summer holidays 2018 to request information support and advice around his preference to remain at the specialist setting and also access the Barbering course as discussed with the LA at his Annual Review held in Y11. I discussed John's rights as a YP in accordance with the C&FA 2014.

What I did

1st meeting; Tuesday - John's father explained that the Annual Review had not been completed in accordance with the CoP '*by March 31 where a young person is expected to transfer to a new institution in the new academic year*'. Dad informed me that the draft plan had only just been issued with the family waiting its arrival. John explained that at the Annual Review in Autumn of Y11, he had expressed a preference in writing to the LA Casework Officer, to remain in the 6th form specialist provision and with their support attend a local mainstream college to access a Barbering course. Parents explained that the LA did not formally consult with the specialist provision and that John had been informed verbally that the LA would not continue to fund a placement at a specialist provision.

John's father raised his personal concerns around John being able to manage travelling independently to the mainstream setting, a journey requiring 3 buses, and also the significant change from specialist to mainstream environment. Furthermore, John's father was concerned as he had been informed by the mainstream college that John would not receive the level of support that he had done in the specialist setting and was highly anxious at the prospect of John regressing socially and emotionally without such support. School confirmed that John had completed some Independent Travel Training and I advised John's dad to seek the outcome of the risk assessment of such training.

I shared with John the YP's guide '*what to do if you are not happy with decisions made about your SEN and/or disability*' and invited John and his family to an initial information gathering meeting in order to support the family appropriately.

During the 1st meeting, I sensed parental anxiety, therefore, and although not disregarding such anxieties, I navigated the discussion with John around the support that **he** felt was needed to access

mainstream college. I gave John the option of speaking with me alone but he was comfortable to share his views in front of his family. John said '*he needed someone to keep an eye on him' and 'to let him know where he needed to go and what his timetable was'*. John said that he was ok with travelling but if he stayed at the specialist setting '*then he could travel to college quicker as it was nearer'*. To explore further I asked John if it would be helpful if I went through his draft plan with him to ensure he understands its content. John arranged to meet with me independently to do this.

Prior to the 2nd meeting - I had several conversations with John via email with regard to his views and his thoughts about his future aspirations which he responded to in a very clear manner with a detailed plan 'A' and a plan 'B' in terms of his aspirations. I sent John information about the journey to the proposed setting and to other settings within a closer proximity offering the same course in order to enable John to make an informed decision. John informed me he had accessed some travel training and had started to think that if he went to a college nearer that would make the day more manageable in terms of travel.

2nd meeting; Thursday - I went through the draft EHCP with John. John shared his concerns that the plan was very out of date with much of the content relevant to Primary School. John felt that much of the support specified within the plan was now inaccurate, did not support him and did not accurately reflect his ambitions. John suggested some amendments and I worked with him to compose his own correspondence with the LA. John informed me within our meeting that he wanted to look at a more local college and that he had not enrolled at any college. Time was of an essence as the enrolment day was the next day. I encouraged John to be proactive and check the college websites for further information, which he did with ease and independently. I sensed some difficulty in conversations with John that his family would be unable to support him with the enrolment day because of their work commitments. I made the decision in accordance with John's wishes to contact the college directly and accompany him to the enrolment the following day. We agreed a plan to take the opportunity for John to trial the journey to the college giving me an opportunity to assess concerns raised by John's father in relation to John's independence skills.

Prior to the 3rd Meeting - To alleviate any anxieties about the journey and promote independence I exchanged emails with John and suggested that he planned the train journey to college and use google maps to plan the walking route.

3rd Meeting; Friday - I met John at the train station to accompany him to the nearer college he had in mind. John independently purchased a ticket and navigated the train timetable. I took the opportunity to explore John's resilience should journey arrangements change. John explained easily what he would do and who he would contact in an emergency. I supported John with his enrolment interview, advocating where necessary. John explained he liked a clear structure and things written down in order to help him feel secure, college agreed to this support. John was offered a place there and then with a start date of the following Monday. With John's approval, I ensured a robust plan was implemented for John's first week as he had missed transition within that particular college. I accompanied John back to the train station encouraging John to use his maps to navigate the journey which he did successfully.

Prior to John's First Day; Sunday evening - I exchanged emails with John offering reassurance to alleviate any anxieties, discuss his preparation for the following day and to revisit the journey and any contingency plans for changes to travel. John appeared to benefit from this reassurance.

John's First Day; Monday - Early that morning I emailed John to offer encouragement and send him good luck wishes for his first day. I received a courtesy email that morning from the college tutor confirming "*John had arrived on time and had had a good morning*". That evening John and I exchanged emails about his day, he explained "*it went really well and thank you for your help*".

John's 3rd day; Wednesday - On checking in with John I received an email to say "*I am enjoying it so much*".

John's 3rd week - I received an email from John to say "*I have settled in well and I'm just focusing on my future career ahead as becoming a Barber*"

Behind the scenes and also in partnership with John I liaised with:

- Local Authority
- Careers Service (Careers Officer on annual leave – no other support available)
- Admissions/SEN/Course Leaders at the FE College
- Specialist setting that John had attended to inform of my involvement.

Conclusion

This case demonstrated whilst it was necessary to work with John and his parents to understand the EHCP process and inform of actions that could be taken in terms of the delayed EHCP, perhaps more importantly at that particular moment was working swiftly, intensively, intuitively and being confident in my experience of working with YP in order to ensure that John could make informed decisions regarding his education. Using a person centred approach, simplistic and consistent communication methods and trusting the YP's capacity to make informed decisions was fundamental to the successful outcome of this case. Adapting my ways of working to a very short but intensive style including out of hours e.g. early mornings and evening, several short visits, out of remit at times due to lack of availability from other services successfully facilitated, reassured and empowered a YP to start to make positive steps towards his aspirations.