

Case study: SENDIASS support obtaining an appropriate educational placement

This case study demonstrates how an IAS service supported a vulnerable young person which led to a good outcome for the young person and service improvements to the accessibility to information, advice and support for those with a hearing impairment.

This YP (19) lives with his mother. He has a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Learning Difficulties and Hearing Loss. He has an EHCP and previously attended a Special School until the end of Year 12 (2016). At that point he transferred to the local FE College where he had hoped to follow a Sports related course. He has aspirations to become a Sports Coach. This was not possible because of the academic level of the course and the YP was offered a basic skills course which he followed for that academic year. At the end of the year there was some confusion both about the next steps and what sort of course the College could offer for 2017. He moved campuses and was offered a course in basic IT skills. At the Annual Review in January 2018 the College made it clear that they would be unable to offer a suitable course to meet the YP's needs from September 2018.

As a previous service user, the YP's mother contacted IASS at the beginning of January requesting support at the Annual Review as she had become aware that the College would not be offering provision for the coming academic year. She explained that when he transferred campuses in September 2017 there was no support in place for her son despite the College having carried out up to date assessments. In November mum had to provide a copy of the EHCP as this had not been transferred. She was anxious to ensure that her son had appropriate support and provision moving forward. IASS attended the Annual Review to support the YP and his mother and to gather the views of the college. It was clear that the YP's aspirations remained within the Sports area but that these aspirations may need managing. The college made it clear that they could not offer suitable provision after the academic year as he was not making the progress required to follow his preferred course.

On 8 March we (IASS/parent/YP) met with the Youth Advice Guidance Service (YAG) (LA team comprising ex Connexions staff) at the local library to discuss all options, both local and potential residential. The YAG worker agreed to investigate a local new provider – Develop, based in Dunstable but also working with students in Milton Keynes and also the Christian Foundation, a supportive provider in Milton Keynes. I agreed to look at possible residential options which might be able to fulfil the YP's aspiration within the sports area. Mum did make it clear that she was happy for me to look at this option although she doubted that her son would be amenable to a residential placement.

Having consulted with a nationally recognised residential sports college for students with a range of disabilities, they indicated that they would be prepared to offer the YP an interview. However, when mum discussed this with her son and looked at the information relating to the college they decided that this was probably a step too far for him at this time.

However, on 10 April I attended a meeting with the YP and mum at the YAG Service again to discuss the option with the provider in Dunstable. He was offered a place on an extended work experience

programme with a view to moving on to a supported internship in the future. The YP was offered taster sessions in the summer term which he attended and enjoyed.

Subsequently the YP was ready to start the course. There were a few issues to be resolved prior to starting the course in September 2018, not least the issue of transport. Fortunately mum was able to demonstrate the need for her son to receive home to placement transport rather than being dropped off in the vicinity of the provision.

In her most recent communication mum indicated that her son was enjoying the course and has a work experience placement at a local water sports facility. We agreed to close the case for the time being but I made it clear that I would be happy to attend the next Annual Review.

Conclusion

It was difficult to engage with the YP, both because of his hearing loss and also because initially, of his determined focus on Sports studies. His mother was eager to manage his expectations, but needed the input of others to demonstrate to her son that he may need to take more time to achieve his goals. It was clear that mum wanted a supportive “ear” so that she could explore all options and guide her son to a placement that would be both supportive and meet his needs. We communicated a lot by email and by giving a range of options she and her son were able to reach an outcome they were both happy with.

Impact

Discussion with the service manager and the wider team around the value of case studies has led to a decision for all team members to regularly present a case study to the wider team. It was felt that this would enable success stories to be shared and celebrated as well as individual creative ideas and previous working experience to be acknowledged and shared. All the team have different insights into areas of disability and support either from personal family experience or from previous working practice; it is important this is shared and utilised.

Additionally, the initial engagement difficulties relating to the YP’s hearing impairment support the need for a project the service is focussing on at the moment: **improving accessibility to information, advice and support for those with a hearing impairment**. One of the team is liaising with a number of external colleagues, namely an ex-specialist teacher working on a LA wide YP participation project with a particular interest in sensory difficulties, a secondary school with a unit for children with hearing and visual impairments (HI/VI) and the HI sensory specialist teacher within the LA. The service is exploring sign language training for the team as well as sensory difficulties having a high profile at the next SEND Information Day in February. It is hoped the YP may agree to be a part of the different projects.