



FOR PARENTS & CARERS

FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

How working in co-production improves outcomes for families.

Wolverhampton Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) provides impartial information, advice and support on matters relating to a child or young person's special educational needs or disability. The IASS explains how working in co-production improves outcomes for young people and their families.

William is a young person with complex health needs. He has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a legal document written by the local authority which details his special educational needs and what education, health and care provision is required to meet those needs.

Mum contacted IASS on William's behalf because his EHCP had been reviewed to ensure the provision would continue to meet his needs as he moved to post 16 education or training. William had attended a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for the last four years. The amended EHCP named a mainstream college but William's preference was to attend a specialist college in another area. Mum was also concerned that the local mainstream college advised they could not meet William's needs.

When writing EHCP's local authorities must have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents and carers. They should be provided with information and support to enable them to participate as fully as possible and to be involved in making decisions that affect them.

IASS met with the family to carefully read through EHCP and supporting advice. The family felt that it didn't accurately reflect Williams needs. Mum explained that William is a very anxious, volatile and vulnerable young person who would not cope in a large mainstream environment. Hence, he had spent past 4 years at PRU for children and young people with social and emotional difficulties.

She felt the EHCP didn't highlight the day to day struggles William experiences.

With the family's permission, IASS spoke with the local authority SEN team and Connexions to gather thoughts on the college that had been named and if further advice could be sought. IASS suggested the family consider a mediation meeting as this would enable everyone to come together to discuss things in a person-centred way. The family agreed even though legal aid had advised them to make an appeal against the local authority for contents of the plan.

William didn't feel confident in attending a meeting so IASS met with him to gather his views, wishes and feelings. He talked about his future aspirations and how he wanted to work in a pub because he enjoyed going to the club with his grandad. Most of all, this teased out that William really wanted to be able to socialise and have friends. IASS stressed the importance of involving members of staff from the PRU who had been directly working with William for the previous 4 years.

Through mediation it was agreed the EHCP was not robust enough and that some of the original advice lacked substance and the local authority agreed to amend the plan. IASS met with family again so they could suggest amendments based on the new advice from the PRU and Williams preferred specialist college.

Three months later mum informed IASS that "*William absolutely loves the college. He has settled well and is being treated like an adult.*" 12 months on William was doing voluntary work with the college.