



Department
for Education



Bexley SEND IASS: Supporting a young person to understand SEN Support in Schools and Pathways to Adulthood.

The issue:

- Young Person (YP) contacted us directly via our Website Self-Referral form in May 2023.
- A diagnosis of Autism, Anxiety Disorder and Selective Mutism.
- YP was 17 years old and believed she had been issued with an EHCP whilst she was in Year 9 or 10 but was concerned as she had never had an annual review or seen the document.
- YP reported she had tried to speak to various staff members at school including the SENCO but felt frustrated that no one was listening or answering her questions on her future options.
- The YP had approached Bexley SEND IASS directly via our website referral form as she was concerned, she wasn't getting the support she felt she needed to continue with A' levels to secure a place at university or college to study Performance Arts/ Drama.
- She had lots of questions on the form on pathways for disabled YP into University, College, work, funding, grants and was keen to understand alternative options if she didn't obtain the University or college grades but, wanted to focus on understanding her EHCP document first.
- YP had little support at home as parent has disabilities and a mental health condition so the YP cares for her parent alongside her older sister who also lives in the home. The YP was assured by both mother and older sister that an EHCP was in place to support her at school.
- Due to her anxiety and caring responsibilities, the YP's attendance was sporadic and below 80%.

Support provided by IASS:

We offered the YP any reasonable adjustments she may need to enable her to feel comfortable communicating with us and building trust with the SEND IASS Service.

She made it clear she wanted to communicate via email, not phone, not virtually or face to face as she is too anxious with new people, and it takes her a long time to get telephone ready.

SEND IASS started to gather information from the YP via email.

Once we had gathered the information, we needed we gained the YP's consent to discuss her case with other professionals:

- We contact the Statutory SEN Service to see if / when the EHCP had been issued and to obtain a copy of the Plan.
- We contacted the SENCO at the school to see if the YP was in receipt of any additional SEN Support currently or if a SEN Support plan had been put in place previously.

LBB Statutory SEN Service responded quickly to inform IASS that the YP did not have an EHCP in place, the school had made an application some time ago (Year 9) but the EHC NA was rejected.

The YP was unaware this had happened. As the EHCP NA rejection was some time ago, the YP has lost the right to appeal the LA's decision.

The school SENCO confirmed they had made an application for an EHCP, but it had been rejected which prompted the school start the process of putting a SEN Support plan in place for the YP.

This plan and its outcomes had not been reviewed for some time. This prompted SEND IASS to:

- Assist the YP to understanding the Statutory SEN process of the EHC NA and why she currently didn't have a plan in place.
- Support the YP in understanding SEN Support in schools and her rights here.

The YP discussed her fears moving onto higher education and next stage. Her fears were specifically around financial support, Uni fees, understanding how to apply for University or College, the timescales involved and writing a personal statement if needed.

School had not provided any transition support for her and the standard school careers advice was not differentiated to meet her needs so she didn't engage. SEND IASS then:

- Discussed with her the opportunity to have a face to face or a virtual meeting with the school to discuss her concerns and her questions regarding moving to Post 18.
- YP was extremely nervous regarding a meeting with her school and believed she was "going to get into trouble".
- IASS assured her this would not be the case and asked YP to meet prior to the school meeting to prepare questions on SEN Support and Careers advice.
- YP agreed and we planned to meet at school. Again, we asked if there were any reasonable adjustments to meet her needs for our meeting, but she declined.
- The YP was extremely anxious at our first meeting, sitting in the corner of the room, hunched over with her hair covering her face when we first met.
As the YP had previously disclosed her anxiety and selective mutism IASS had brought along communication cards and a communication mat.
IASS asked the YP if they could sit alongside her and if she would like to use the cards rather than speak, she nodded.
With no eye contact, facing forward and using the communication cards, IASS gained more of an understanding of the YP concerns and needs around her move to Post 18 and pathways to adulthood.

YP consented to allow SEND IASS to contact the school SENCO and ask for a meeting at school to take place. The YP was clear she only wanted specific trusted staff in the meeting, the form tutor and the SENCO as she was feeling extremely anxious about the meeting.

Finally, SEND IASS left a 1-page profile document with the YP to complete in preparation for the school meeting.

- IASS met with the school and YP in the coming weeks following several more communications with the YP via email.
- During the meeting the YP was less anxious than IASS had previously seen and was able to engage with the SENCO. However, she referred to IASS several times for support in voicing her concerns regarding the specific type of support she needed.
- IASS, YP and school discussed at length current attainment levels and support required to achieve passes in her chosen subjects. Currently studying A' levels in Photography, Drama and a BTEC in Health & Social Care she wanted to study a performing arts or drama course at next stage.
- A revised SMART SEN Support plan was agreed including:
Reasonable adjustments when independent work is required to move YP to a quiet area or study room to meet sensory needs.
Agreed regular SLA "check ins" to ensure YP stays on track with tasks. SLA follow ups with teachers if required to support learning.
Access arrangements for all mocks and exams.
IASS to support YP in preparing for College Open Events and structure some questions to ask at the events.
IASS to advise on Post 18 options, rights and funding available.
School to follow up on IASS Post 18 advice to check YP's understanding of options.
School to disseminate the 1 page profile & SEN Support plan to all relevant staff.
IASS to signpost YP to organisations providing volunteering opportunities.

Following the meeting the SEN Plan was put in place.

The outputs:

- SEND IASS successfully challenged the education provider when the SEN Support Plan was out of date and hadn't been reviewed for some considerable time with the YP.
- YP felt more confident knowing what is involved in the SEN Support process including understanding her role in reviewing the document and the importance of her voice in this process through her 1 Page Profile.
- YP was given the additional support she needed with her learning to enable her to confidently sit A 'Levels in photography, Drama and a BTEC in Health & Social Care.
- YP was given resources which she can use to support her in 121 meetings and group meeting environments moving forward.
- SEND IASS provided the YP with supportive organisations and volunteering opportunities to build confidence such as Voluntary sector volunteering BVSC, DDPO's and local charities such as GOTS, all of which would be more supportive to the YP needs. SEND IASS supported the YP in making the necessary connections.
- SEND IASS provided advice to the YP regarding all Post 18 options, education, employment and training.
- SEND IASS provided advice to YP on financial support available for each Post 18 routeway, Eg: Disability Student allowance, Access to Work, etc....
- SEND IASS ensured the YP was able to receive advice differentiated to meet her needs regarding applying to either College or her University of choice and support in writing her personal statement.
- YP has been referred into the LBB Post 16 Autism Advisory Teacher who is currently working with the College to ensure they are communicating with the YP on her transition to her new setting and, on required support on the course.

The outcomes:

- YP has made the decision to go to North Kent College to study Musical Theatre starting Sept 2024.
- YP has secured a volunteer placement for 1 day per week at her local Library.
- YP has been looking for a part time job for the Summer until College starts and has an interview coming up at a local Café!