

Case Study Three

“How can I stop my child from being excluded?”

Reasons for contacting the service

Laura’s Mum called the service to explain that Laura was feeling so anxious about school that she was struggling to follow procedures and was constantly in trouble, this was making her anxiety worse. She explained that Laura had received a fixed term exclusion and was no longer accessing any taught sessions but instead was having all subjects delivered by learning support in a separate base within the school.

What we did

We listened carefully to Laura’s Mum. She explained how she was feeling and through that process she was able to organise her thoughts and work with us to develop a plan. We suggested that she arrange a meeting at the school and we would support her to attend. We spoke to Laura’s parents before the meeting to ensure that they were confident about what they wanted to say and the questions that they needed to be answered.

At the meeting it became clear that school had a different perception to Laura’s parents. We supported Laura’s parents to voice their concerns and were able to answer questions that the school had regarding the processes they needed to follow to get external advice and support. It was agreed that it would be helpful to find out what was really going on for Laura by having some assessments completed.

There were several meetings with the family and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) whilst these assessments were ongoing to discuss the current support for Laura. We helped Laura’s parents to keep the meetings productive and to develop an action plan with fixed timescales.

Laura’s parents felt very strongly that Laura would not be able to gain control of her anxiety or reach her potential if there was a constant threat of exclusion and Laura was unable to access the lessons. They came to us again for information about alternative schools. We provided information about the schools in Newcastle, the referral or application procedures and how to have a productive and helpful visit to them. Laura’s parents visited a number of settings. We worked with them to apply for Laura to move to a medical provision which dual registers students, delivers a person-centred curriculum and has specialist staff for conditions like anxiety. We explained the referral process and attended a further meeting with the special

educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and with the worker from the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) where it was agreed to start the referral.

Laura's visit to the provision was a success. The provision were really supportive and satisfied that they could meet her needs. Laura's mum called us to help chase the referral, so the move could happen as soon as possible. We made some phone calls and were able to secure a start date for Laura.

Parent's feedback

Laura's Mum rang us to thank us for the support throughout this period. She explained that they had reached a point where they thought Laura would be permanently excluded from school and would leave year 11 with no qualifications. Now Laura has a setting that can meet her needs and they are confident Laura can reach her potential. She explained that having a third party that she could talk to and use as a sounding board and having a knowledgeable service that she could clarify procedures with was incredibly helpful. She added that the support in the meetings helped her to feel empowered, heard and enabled the situation to move forwards.

