

Elective Home Education Case Study - Mason

About Mason

- Mason is 13 years-old, Mason lives with his mother, Emma and siblings.
- Mason loves his dogs and cats
- Mason is Young Carer as he has sibling with severe physical needs
- Mason has recently expressed that he identifies as a male and would like people to use the pronouns he/him.
- Mason has attended a mainstream primary and had a short time at a mainstream secondary school.
- Mason struggles socially and Emma reports any friendships he has had are short lived.
- Mason has a diagnosis of hypermobility in both legs, Irlens Syndrome and Asthma. He has some sensory sensitivities to noise and crowds. Emma believes he as ASD and is awaiting assessment.
- Mason has a small but reliable family network that supports and cares for him.
- Mason loves music and taught himself to play guitar.

What happened?

- Mason transitioned to high school during the period between COVID lockdowns, at that point he began to need to use a wheelchair to get to and move around within the school due to the greater distances involved. He was experiencing symptoms of anxiety before school, during the school day and when he returned home. This included panic attacks , struggling to sleep and compulsive washing leading to a reluctance to leave home or attend school.
- A CAF had been initiated by the primary school to support transition to secondary school, mental health and attendance. Emma approached the school to discuss support available but felt the response was not adequate or supportive and elected to home educate Mason.
- Emma discussed her reluctant decision to home educate with the home education consultant and her wish for Mason to be able to attend a school with the right support. The Consultant suggested they apply for a Multi-Agency Assessment Programme (MAAP). Emma also sought an ASD assessment for Mason.
- The MAAP outcome suggested 4 options to Emma, mainstream with a MAAP supported integration, specialist placement via request for an Education health and care needs assessment (EHCNA), request for alternative placement followed by transition to mainstream setting or to seek medical evidence and access to Alternative Tuition Service (ATS).
- First application for EHCNA was rejected as the panel felt that Mason should go on roll at a mainstream school whereby his needs could be met through the graduated response. Emma did not receive a letter from Family Services and by the time she was informed of the outcome, she had missed the appeal window.
- Following this advice Emma applied for a place at local mainstream high school and Mason attended as asked but felt he was singled out by a specific staff member who indicated the agreed transition period would not be adhered to and he was expected to attend full-time within 2 days. Emma felt this was excessive pressure and Mason was unable to cope so approached the school who were not flexible and therefore she elected to home educate again.
- Emma asked the home education consultant to support her in a second request for EHCNA which on this occasion, following discussions between Senior Managers, was agreed.
- The initial draft plan was issued to mum in June 2022 but Emma did not receive this. A further plan was issued July 2022 naming Elective Home Education as the setting, despite Emma clearly saying she does not wish to home educate and would like a setting. Consultation is now taking place with Yellow House and an application to ATS is now progress.

Multi Agency Working

- Family
- Early Help - Family Support Practitioner
- Education Welfare Officer
- MAAP team (No longer available)
- Elective Home Education Consultant/Advisor
- Family Services
- Occupational Therapist
- Emotional Wellbeing Hub

Learning Point's & Questions

- **How can we better support young people with unidentified Educational Needs who are Electively Home Educated?**
- **What support and reasonable adjustments are young people entitled to in mainstream school and how can parents access information about what is reasonable to expect a school to do?**
- **Children who are EHE and awaiting EHCNA may not be accessing any education at all during the process which is often in excess of the 20 week timescale and any identified placement can add a further 9- 12months wait.**

Challenges

- When Mason become EHE it became difficult for Emma to be able to evidence that Mason's need for further assessment.
- Emma reports that communication with Family Services has been a challenge and therefore progress has been slow.

How is Mason Now?

- Consultation is now taking place with Yellow House and an application to ATS is now progress.
 - Mason's mental health remains poor.
 - Mason is awaiting an ASD assessment

Mason's Voice

‘I would like to go to school, but not a big school’.