

Appendix 2

CASE STUDY –Advocacy in Action

CSV received a referral from a foster carer asking for independent advocacy support for a young person aged 8 years with regard to his admission application into his local primary school.

The young person had applied to his local primary school but had been turned down. His foster sister already had a place at the school. The family were desperate for support for the young person and didn't know where to turn. They had been advised to contact advocacy by their social worker.

The advocate arranged an urgent meeting with the young person. It was explained to him that the role of an advocate was to help him get his voice heard and that a meeting had been arranged about which school he would attend. The advocate asked him what he would like to tell the people at the meeting about his life and his experience of school.

He explained that he enjoys playing outside with his foster sister, he likes to do press ups and arm wrestles, he is really keen to play the piano, he loves swimming, attending church and attending a Friday group.

He talked about his school life experience, and how children made fun of him and called him a girl and that he would get into fights about it. He said he is pleased that he doesn't have to go there anymore. He told the advocate that he and his foster sister race to school on their scooters; he said they take their dog with them but that when they get to the school, he has to say goodbye to his foster sister because he isn't allowed to go in. He could not express his feelings about how he feels when he leaves his foster sister at school, but a cloud crossed his face, he looked sad and lost.

The advocate asked him why he would like to go to that school and he said that he has friends there and that he wants to go to the same school as his foster sister. He said that when he looks at the school it looks nice and peaceful, different to his previous school. When I asked what makes a good school, he said somewhere where you can make friends and be safe.

As a looked after child the local authority has a duty to promote the young person's educational achievements and provide him with every opportunity to reach the best possible outcome and fulfil his potential. The advocate therefore agreed with the young person to attend the appeal hearing in his place and express for him the feelings he had shared.

The advocate attended the appeal, and drew to the attention of the admission panel extracts of the school's Ofsted report that supported the desired outcome of the young person as expressed during our meeting. Fortunately, the panel approved the appeal and the young person was able to join his sister at their local school.