



Strengthening Team Around models for children, families and schools in Redcar & Cleveland



Inspiring Short Case Studies



Produced by the Making Attendance Everyone's Business Project

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Lived experience case studies: from absence to attendance to belonging

In 2025, the Making Attendance Everyone's Business Project team created a range of resources including:

Making attendance everyone's business: Framework for positive action 2025 to 2030

Redcar and Cleveland Attendance Handbook: *A guide for schools, governing bodies, academy trustees, local authority practitioners and wider partners*

Strengthening Team Around models for children, families and schools in Redcar & Cleveland

This a complementary companion to these resources providing you with eight lived experience stories capturing the journeys of children and young people across Redcar and Cleveland who, with the right support around them, moved from severe or persistent absence to greater stability, confidence, and engagement in school or college life.

Each story is told in the voice of the young person and their family, supported by practitioners from Early Help, Education, and Youth Justice services. Together they show what can happen when the *Team Around* approaches are made real: when professionals, schools, parents, and the young person themselves work together with empathy, consistency, and creativity.

Across the stories we see very different starting points - anxiety, exclusion, disengagement, unmet needs, and fractured relationships - but a shared destination: reconnection, improved attendance, and renewed belief in the value of learning.

There are some golden threads running through the stories...

- **Listening and trust:** Each young person began to attend more regularly once adults listened to their worries and took them seriously.
- **Relationships before attendance:** Improvements came when relationships with teachers, parents, and support workers were strengthened, not when punishments increased.
- **Small, achievable steps:** Gradual reintegration, flexible timetables, and realistic expectations helped rebuild confidence.
- **Personalised support:** Adjustments such as safe spaces, reduced sensory demands, and one-to-one support created the right conditions for success.
- **Joined-up working:** Communication between school, home, and services was key - ensuring that everyone knew the plan and shared responsibility for progress.
- **The young person's voice:** Many of the best outcomes came when children and young people led meetings, helped design their own support, or co-produced goals.

The Team Around the Child and Family

Across these eight stories, the following people and organisations feature as part of the multi-agency response that helped children and families move forward:

- **Redcar & Cleveland Council** - Early Help Intervention Team, Education Service, Attendance and Welfare Service
- **South Tees Youth Justice Service (STYJS)** - case managers, support workers, and ETE (Education, Training & Employment) leads
- **Schools and Colleges** - class teachers, SENDCos, Year Managers, pastoral staff, and senior leaders
- **Health and Specialist Services** - CAMHS, GP, Speech and Language Therapy, Continence Nurse, Complications in Children with Excessive Weight Clinic
- **Voluntary and Community Sector Partners** -The Junction (young carers support), Hart Gables, Tuned In, MFC Foundation (Chances Programme)
- **Families and carers** - parents, step-parents, and extended family members whose persistence and advocacy were central to change

Together, these networks formed the wraparound support that helped children you will read about in these case studies move from frustration or fear to stability, belonging, and hope for the future. Electronic versions of these case studies are available free online here: [Lived experience](#)

[Case study 1: B's story of change: from severely absent to vocal and making positive choices](#)

[Case study 2: J's story of change: from permanent exclusion to more settled and improved attendance](#)

[Case study 3: L's story of change: from anger to understanding](#)

[Case study 4: South Tees Youth Justice Lived Experience Case Study Findings](#)

[Case study 5: M's story of change from close to permanent exclusion to confident performer and positive role model](#)

[Case study 6: R's story of change from isolated and anxious to settled, supported, and thriving](#)

[Case study 7: E's story of change from isolated and anxious to confident, connected, and attending every day](#)

[Case study 8: F's story of change from feeling trapped and unheard to confident, engaged, and building a positive future](#)

Case Study 1: From severely absent to vocal and making positive choices

Background

This case study was completed in August 2023 by a member of Redcar & Cleveland Council's Early Help Intervention Team. Names have been changed.

This is about 'B', a boy who was aged 8 when he and his family started receiving support from the Early Intervention Team. At that time, B had become **severely absent**, meaning he was missing over 50% of his education. With 18 months of support and encouragement, B's case was closed meaning, he had a transition plan in place that was proving successful.

B has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)¹ and when the Early Help Team started working with him and his family, B had been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty. He also had poor eyesight but refused to wear his glasses. B was assessed for Autism/ADHD however was unsuccessful in gaining a diagnosis. His mam was challenging this. The family were originally from Guisborough but were now living in Skelton.

Team around the child and family

A range of people were supportive of B including the Early Help Team, his school including the SENDCo, a Speech and Language Therapist and a continence nurse. B still wears pull ups at nighttime.

What were the main reasons for B not attending school?

B's mam chose not to send B to school as she did not feel that B's needs were being met by school. Mam suspected B had a problem with learning and that he was unable to learn at the same speed as his peers in the classroom.

Mam said:

"It was a nightmare. I didn't feel like they were listening to me, so I pulled him out. I know others didn't agree but they didn't see what I saw at home. The kicking, the crying, the shouting and throwing things at me. B telling me he hated school, and he seemed to be left to do the work, he wasn't moving forward because he didn't understand it. He got that bad, he would have a bad stomach, headaches and everything. This wasn't a new thing; it had been going on since Year 1, but he had a good 1:1 worker then that he liked."

B would often tell her he didn't want to go; he didn't like the teachers and told me he sits at the back of the class and cannot see what is on the board.

B also struggled with speech and language, and he refers to himself in third person, such as "*me do...*" At the point of referral B's speech was very difficult to understand and I could not hold a clear conversation with him.

B also told me of a time a teacher had slammed a door when he was about to walk through it. This scared and upset B.

¹ [What is an Education, Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\)](https://www.educationadvocacy.co.uk/what-is-an-education-health-and-care-plan-ehcp/)
([educationadvocacy.co.uk](https://www.educationadvocacy.co.uk/))

B also still wore pull ups during the day and would not use the toilet at all and refused to eat in front of other people.

Mam said she would scale things at a '1' out of 10 in the beginning because she had no trust from a parent or student point of view. Now, she would rate things as a '6', as:

"... although there are some niggles, it's a fair jump from where we were. I don't have any qualms about ringing school now and I know they'll deal with things."

What has made the difference to the young person attending?

Mam explained:

"Listening to me and the EHCP. Noticing that his difficulties weren't just because he wasn't attending. When it was stepped back and broken down, it was about them - school - listening rather than him not being there. We lost all that time in Year 2 and Year 3. I had to shout from the rooftops, but we got there."

There were other things too. Professionals working together to listen to B and mam about what their worries are and work together to resolve this. Mam said:

"The staff came to the house one morning and saw what I was dealing with. B shouting, crying, throwing things and refusing to move. Then they understood, it wasn't just me being unreasonable. The schools SENDCo was more proactive in helping him. I get on now with her."

Having a plan in place has helped find a way forward to support B in school and B has had assessments that have allowed professionals

to better understand B's levels of learning which has allowed them to put a tailored plan in place and a 1:1 support worker following B getting an Education, Health and Care Plan. B has been supported with transport to and from school when the family moved out of the area, and this has helped B also develop some level of independence. B has improved with eating in school as he refused previously and has been encouraged to use the toilet in school and at home. Both are much better.

B told me:

"School? It was a 1 (out of 10) before, now it's a 5 (out of 10). My 1:1 worker was good, she helped me. I put my hand up in class now."

How are they now?

- ✓ B' attendance has improved. He has increased his time in school to nearly full time, and some days this is full time and is led by B.
- ✓ B' toileting is better, and he has gone from requiring a pull up all day, every day to now just needing them during the night.
- ✓ B is accessing small group learning which is targeted at his level.
- ✓ B's speech has improved and is clearer in his speech and is easily understandable.
- ✓ B's personality is really shining through, and he seems much happier.

Mam said:

"Now he's mouthy more, more vocal."

Mam says he gets in the taxi on his own and he isn't as grumpy on a morning like before.

Case study 2: From permanent exclusion to more settled and improved attendance

Background

This case study was completed in 2023 by a member of the South Tees Youth Justice Service (STYJS). Names have been changed.

'J' was 16 when she received support from the STYJS for 4 months. Throughout this time, we tried to put support in school to address the barriers, however, J was **permanently excluded** before the plan was put in place. She moved to a new school where she felt supported. Discussions and meetings took place with the new school regards to her needs and how to address her behaviour. After a one-month period in the new school she was settled in, and her attendance began to improve.

Team around the child and family

A mix of STYJS staff were involved including the Case Manager, Support Worker and ETE (Education, Training and Employment) Lead. J and her family also received some support from the Early Help Intervention Team at Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.

What were the main reasons for J not attending school?

J felt like staff did not want her there at school and this made it hard for her to attend. She felt as though she was blamed a lot.

A family member agreed saying:

"They did not care and wanted to get rid of her. The assistant head was not a nice man. Communication was shocking and the attitude from staff. They used to say I would get a call back and never did. I was always trying to ring them and speak to someone. J is not an angel,

but I felt that they provoked her, and they knew how to push buttons."

J said:

*"The staff they used to talk S*** all the time. Then I used to get mad. They used to say one thing and do something else and there have been times where my friends were running about school, and I wasn't and used to get blamed. Because I was with them the school staff thought I was bad. I felt like they were picking on me. I did not like some classes, so I used to mess about in them."*

Can you tell me a bit about what happened to make it easier for you to attend more regularly?

J said:

"I was kicked out of that school and the new school staff were nice they helped me when I used to get mad. The staff from the YJS helped me a lot."

A family member said:

"It helped when Youth Offending were in because I think the new school took me seriously. I think the old school would have listened if there was someone like you involved. They would not fob me off. The new school was better, so all staff were told. Like if there was problem all teachers were informed so that day staff knew J was frustrated or there was issue so they would be careful. Like before you tell someone at school and no one else knew what was going on."

What has made the difference to the young person attending?

- ✓ She felt the support from services helped.
- ✓ Communication with school
- ✓ J felt that she was listened to, so teacher and student relationships were better.

How is J doing now?

J is now working part time and attending College.

What's going well for you at the moment?

J said:

"Don't know. Going to college and working aren't I."

A family member said:

"I'm proud of her as she left school and is working and going to college. She has worked hard in school and got qualifications. I never thought she would do it when they kicked her out."

How are you feeling now your attendance is good at school / college?

J said:

*"I'm happy and moving school was the best thing. The staff were sound; they listen to me and treated me better. The old school was s*** they did not like me, so I didn't go. College is good."*

A family member said:

"I'm proud. She has done well and worked hard. Staff were good and made sure there was support and talked to me not like the old school."

Do you feel different to before, when you were unable to attend school /college like you are doing now?

J said:

"Yeah, happier that I am doing something with my life. If I stayed at the old school, I probably wouldn't be doing anything."

And why do you believe the previous school was against you?

"I don't know. I just maybe had the wrong friends which didn't help but staff were out to get me all the time."

Do you feel different to before, when your child was unable to attend like they are now.

A family member said:

"No stress at home, has her head screwed on. The old school were provoking us. The way the staff spoke rubbish."

What changes have you noticed in yourself since before?

J said:

"I'm happier and calmer. I don't kick off as much and learnt that I need to work hard in college because I want a mint job."

A family member said:

"She has matured a lot and understands that staff were trying to help her but the only reason she got this was because they did not treat her like a child. Our relationship is better we get on more because I know she is trying hard and not wasting time."

Does J have any advice for young people that are not attending school?

"Talk to people that can help"

Case study 3: From anger to joint understanding

Background

This case study was completed in 2023 by a member of the South Tees Youth Justice Service (STYJS). Names have been changed.

‘L’ was 12 when he received support from the STYJS on a Community Resolution programme. L had experienced several Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and had previous social care history. L’s parent needed support to access services for their child such as their GP and CAMHS and was now receiving support.

L’s parent had a positive relationship with the primary school and felt that she needed the same support from the secondary school. STYJS worked on repairing the relationship with the secondary school and managing L’s parent’s expectations. STYJS worked on sleep patterns, rules in the home and diet for L who was on the EHCP Pathway, and school adjusted support.

Team around the child and family

A mix of STYJS staff were involved to support L along with specialists from CAMHS.

What were the main reasons for L not attending school?

L said:

“Didn’t like teachers, they were always shouting. The work was hard. You forget socks and you get detention.”

L’s parent said:

“This school does not understand his needs. In primary school they spent time with him and took him out with one staff member. I was on the phone to the Head every day sometimes and we didn’t get on at first but now we do coz she listens and put things in place. They knew

how to deal with him, and I said for a long time I think he has ADHD.”

She felt that she was supported in primary school, and the transition may not have met her expectations.

Can you tell me a bit about what happened to make it easier for you to attend more regularly?

L said:

“I like that doodle thing in (teacher’s name) room. I like PE now coz I get changed in a different place.”

Did anyone like a teacher or anyone you know do anything to make it better?

“(Teacher’s name) said I can go into a different class when I get angry or a different room.”

L’s parent said:

“Getting the support I need for him and started listening to me. Now we got CAMHS involved his needs actually might be met. He seems a lot more settled. The teachers take time out and talk to him more now and I think that has helped.”

Do you feel the school have listened now?

L’s parent said:

“Yeah, well he is on that pathway (referring to EHCP) now and CAMHS are involved so they had to listen.”

What has made the difference to the young person attending?

- ✓ Some choice for the young person – where they change, a place to go if angry
- ✓ More teachers listening and understanding L's needs
- ✓ Specialist support from CAMHs which also helped engage the school more

What's going well for you at the moment?

L said:

"Going to PE and going to some lessons and going kickboxing."

L's parent said:

"I am really pleased with him going to school. He is trying hard to go now some days he still doesn't go but he goes most days now. He is coming home in time now and helps me in the house."

How are you feeling now your attendance is good at school / college?

L said:

"I feel happier now."

L's parent said:

"Much happier now he's settled in. He is better than last year I don't know if he likes the teachers more. Before when you mentioned school to him, he just wouldn't bother with it. Now he doesn't mind it but still gets bored and walks around sometimes then gets into trouble."

Do you feel different to before, when you were unable to attend school /college like you are doing now?

L said:

"I don't know. Before, I was feeling angry and didn't want to go. No, I am not angry now."

Do you feel different to before, when your child was unable to attend like they are now.

L's parent said:

"I feel less stressed – I used to dread each day he would ring me every day from the toilet and say the teachers are shouting at him and I have other to think about and it is a lot."

What changes have you noticed in yourself since before?

L said:

"I don't know I have time outs. So, I feel better, but I still hate (name of teacher), and she doesn't like me."

L's parent said:

"He understands that when he gets upset, he can go somewhere so he is trying his best with his behaviour so that's better. The skill to remove himself is a big step for him but the school would not listen. I have been saying for ages, but they don't support you."

How is L doing now?

L appears to have settled in at the secondary school and this took some time. He says he is not "angry" when he goes to school now. He is on the EHCP pathway, and L's parent has a more positive relationship with school.

Case study 4: From close to permanent exclusion to confident performer and positive role model

Background

This case study was completed in August 2023 by a member of Redcar & Cleveland Council's Early Help Intervention Team. Names have been changed.

This is about 'M,' a 15-year-old girl who was referred to the Intervention Team in February 2023. The referral came via M's nurse at the Complications in Children with Excessive Weight clinic, as M's mam was struggling to manage M's behaviour at home and was very concerned about M's risk of permanent exclusion from school.

M's mam, who has her own health challenges, shared that this was having a significant impact on her mental wellbeing.

At that time, M was on stage 6 of the school's behaviour system, very close to permanent exclusion. She had experienced multiple suspensions, regular detentions, and periods in isolation.

M has a SEND plan in school and was under assessment for possible Autism and ADHD via the neurodiversity CAMHS pathway.

M describes herself as a big personality - confident, loud, and passionate about singing and performing arts, with ambitions for a career in this field.

Team around the child and family

Support for M and her family came from:

- Early Help Intervention Team
- School staff including the SENDCo and Year Manager
- Complications in Children with Excessive Weight clinic
- The Junction charity (young carers support)
- RCBC's Attendance and Welfare Service.

What were the main reasons for M not attending school?

M's attendance was affected by multiple suspensions and detentions, not by a desire to avoid school. In fact, M has always said she enjoys school and wants to be there every day.

M shared:

"It's like people don't get me. I get told off for being myself – being loud, laughing, singing. Then I argue back, and it gets worse. I feel like some staff just look for me to tell me off."

M's mam said:

"She's not listened to. They punish her for who she is, not for doing anything bad. It just gets worse when they don't follow her SEND plan, and she ends up in isolation or suspended."

What has made the difference to M attending?

M herself was central to the positive change. With support, she began to reflect on how to manage her big personality in school while staying true to herself.

Key changes included:

- M leading her own Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings, helping her to feel in control and listened to.
- School adapting their approach, especially after TAF meetings, by following the SEND plan more closely and allowing more flexible use of the Time Out card.
- Support at home and at school for M's efforts to manage her weight, including cycling daily and controlling her eating habits.
- M working with teachers to focus on positive feedback. M said:

"I ask them to write comments when I've done well. Makes the green bits bigger on the app so it looks better."

How is M doing now?

- ✓ M has been moved down from stage 6 to stage 4 in school, no longer at risk of permanent exclusion.
- ✓ She performed as a lead singer at the Sage Gateshead in front of 2,500 people, earning praise from the Trust's senior leadership:

"M absolutely nailed it. I am so proud and so happy for her." (Year Manager)

- ✓ M won a talent competition at Comic Con and has been invited to open a future event.

- ✓ M has become a positive influence in school, helping younger pupils and receiving recognition for her kindness.
- ✓ She has lost over a stone in weight and is more physically active.
- ✓ M's relationships at home have improved. She now gets on better with her stepdad, Andy, and talks more openly to her mam about her feelings and worries.

Reflections on change

M said:

"It's going great to be honest. I feel happier. I'm getting out more, seeing friends, and school is better."

M's mam said:

"She's working so hard. I'm proud of her. She's thinking about her future now and letting people help her."

M's intervention worker reflected:

"M has always seemed confident, but now there's a genuine brightness to her. She's using her confidence in positive ways, and she's letting people in to support her. She's on a good path."

Case study 5: From isolated and anxious to settled, supported, and thriving

Background

This case study was completed in 2023 by a member of Redcar & Cleveland Council's Early Help Intervention Team.

Names have been changed.

'R' is a 13-year-old girl who was referred to the Intervention Team in November 2022.

At that time, R had not attended school for around six months due to persistent bullying at her previous school, mainly focused on her appearance.

The bullying left R feeling anxious, scared, and unable to face school.

R's mam shared that she felt let down by the previous school's handling of the bullying and the advice provided around elective home education.

The family felt isolated and unsure how to support R's learning at home, and R's anxiety grew as she withdrew from friends and family.

R has no SEND or EHCP but was clear that she wished to return to mainstream school - somewhere she felt safe and supported.

Team around the child and family

Support for R and her family came from:

- Early Help Intervention Team
- School staff (pastoral team, key staff)
- School admissions team
- Hart Gables (advice and guidance on LGBT+ issues)
- Tuned In (LGBT+ youth group)

What were the main reasons for R not attending school?

R's absence was due to her experience of ongoing bullying at her previous school, which left her feeling frightened and anxious about returning.

R said:

"I felt scared to go to school. I locked myself away in my room. I didn't want to face it anymore."

R's mam said:

"She was so anxious and upset. We felt stuck - we didn't know how to help her, and we couldn't teach her at home."

What has made the difference to R attending?

A carefully planned and supportive transition to another school helped R regain her confidence:

- Gradual and personalised school start, designed with R and her family, allowing her to build up time in school slowly and at her own pace.
- Placement in Year 7, despite being Year 8 age, so that R could catch up on missed learning and build confidence.
- Strong pastoral support, with named staff available at any time to help with worries.
- Peer support, with R matched with friends she already knew in school.
- Open communication, with regular updates and praise shared with R's mam.

R said:

“The staff really listen to me, and I have good friends now. It’s a place I want to be. I even go to clubs after school.”

How is R doing now?

- ✓ R has not missed a day of school since starting at her new school.
- ✓ She attends after-school and homework clubs and enjoys being part of school life.
- ✓ R is happier, more confident, and no longer isolates herself at home.
- ✓ She spends quality time with her family and friends and feels supported.

R said:

“I think I’m getting back on track. I try my best, and I’m happy at school.”

R’s mam said:

“She’s a different young person. She’s socialising, enjoying life, and so much happier.”

School staff shared in the final Team Around the Family meeting that they had no concerns about R and rated her start at school as 8 out of 10.

Case study 6: From isolated and anxious to confident, connected, and attending every day

Background

This case study was completed in August 2023 by a Child and Family Intervention Worker from Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.

Names have been changed.

‘E’ is a 12-year-old boy who started secondary school during the Covid-19 pandemic. The disruption and isolation caused by Covid left E struggling to mix with people and feeling increasingly anxious about attending school.

He spent long hours in his bedroom on his computer, which worried his mam.

In early 2023, E refused to attend school for several months. His attendance only began to improve gradually in the months leading up to the summer break of 2023.

By the end of the summer term, E was attending every day and, since returning in September, has continued with full attendance.

Team around the child and family

Support for E and his family came from:

- Child and Family Intervention Worker
- School staff (including pastoral team and teaching staff)
- RCBC’s Attendance and Welfare Service
- GP (supporting mam with her health needs).

E has no SEND or EHCP.

What were the main reasons for E not attending school?

E’s attendance was affected by challenges at home and difficulties settling into secondary school:

- E felt anxious and alone at his new school, describing it as “big and scary” where he didn’t know any teachers or friends.
- At home, E was frightened by arguments and noise linked to mam’s drinking, which often kept him awake at night and left him tired and worried in the mornings.

E said:

“Sometimes I didn’t want to leave mam on her own, I was scared to go.”

What has made the difference to E attending?

Key changes that helped E attend and feel settled at school included:

- Mam seeking help from her GP, stopping drinking, and managing her mental health - leading to a calmer home environment.
- E feeling reassured that mam was safe, as she began getting up in the morning and walking E to school.

- The school putting in place tailored support:
 - A **RAG-rated system** for lessons (red, amber, green) so teachers could provide extra support in subjects E found hardest.
 - Access to **The Bridge**, a nurturing space E could go to if he felt overwhelmed.
- Attendance team involvement and a contract E signed, committing to daily attendance, which helped motivate him.

E said:

“Since I got support from school, I’m thinking differently. I feel more supported and listened to.”

How is E doing now?

- ✓ E has full attendance since the start of the new school year in September.
- ✓ He feels settled in school, knows where to go for his lessons, and no longer finds the school as daunting as before.
- ✓ E has a good friendship group and is taking part in after-school clubs.
- ✓ Home life is calmer, and E is enjoying more quality time with his family.

E said:

“I feel part of the school now. I have good friends and staff who really support me.”

Mam shared:

“He’s like a different person - more confident, part of school, and we’re so proud.”

Does E have any advice for other young people?

“Don’t be frightened of asking for help. Since my lessons were RAG-rated, I feel much better. I know I can ask for help now.”

Case study 7: From feeling trapped and unheard to confident, engaged, and building a positive future

Background

This case study was completed in September 2023 by a member of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Education Service. Names have been changed.

'F' is a 17-year-old young person who left school in summer 2022. During his time in mainstream secondary school, F found it difficult to cope in a large, noisy environment.

He struggled with confidence, particularly in reading and writing, and felt embarrassed when asked to read aloud or complete written tasks in front of others.

F received frequent exclusions - sometimes weekly - for what he felt were minor issues such as uniform or timekeeping.

He felt unheard and unsupported with the bigger issues, like his anxiety in class. F used earphones to manage noise but felt trapped when he couldn't leave a classroom, leading to incidents where he pushed past others in distress, resulting in exclusions.

In Year 11, F moved to the Eston Centre, a smaller, quieter alternative provision. Here, F built trust with a key member of staff and his behaviour improved. He gained GCSEs at grades 1 and 2.

However, leaving school was disappointing for F as he was not accepted at college, which affected his confidence.

Team around the child and family

Support for F came from:

- MFC Foundation – the Chances Programme
- A trusted key worker
- Counselling services
- Learning support assessment team

What were the main reasons for F not attending school?

F shared that the main reasons were:

- Frequent punishment for minor things like uniform rather than support for bigger challenges.
- Feeling trapped and overwhelmed in classrooms, with no opportunity for time out, which led to negative behaviours and exclusions.
- Anxiety about reading or writing in front of others and feeling embarrassed in class.
- A sense that no one was really listening to his worries or helping him in ways that worked for him.

What has made the difference to F attending and progressing?

- A smaller, quieter learning environment - fewer people and less noise made it easier for F to cope.
- A key person who listened - F built trust with a member of staff who understood his needs.

- Practical support - following an assessment, F was provided with a laptop for written work, extra time in exams, and access to counselling.
- A nurturing post-16 environment - through the MFC Foundation Chances Programme, F had one-to-one support, developed confidence, and was able to engage in training and employer placements.

F's mum said:

“Once F had that assessment and they gave him the right support, it changed everything. He wanted to go to school.”

F said:

“Having someone who understands your worries and gives you a chance - this can have a great impact on your life.”

How is F doing now?

- ✓ F is attending and engaging in a small, supportive training setting, with 100% attendance, travelling daily from Redcar to Hartlepool.
- ✓ He has completed and passed a CSCS course on his own initiative.
- ✓ F received positive feedback from an employer placement.
- ✓ At home, F is more sociable, helps out, and has taken an interest in learning to cook. He enjoys going out with friends.
- ✓ F is building confidence and is able to engage in a classroom with peers and tutors.

Case study 8: Youth Justice: Lived Experience Case Study Findings

Colleagues from Youth Justice completed four in-depth case studies with young people and families in 2023, that had at some time in their past been either persistently or severely absent from school. Taken together, the following conclusions were drawn from these four stories of change.

Relationships

All four young people felt the teacher and student relationships should be improved. Mainly around how children are challenged which they believed was a punitive method rather than a restorative approach.

One parent did acknowledge that their child is “*not an angel*” however tried to explain to school how to address behaviours and feels this was not successful.

It was explained to some parents that school must follow a behavioural policy. One parent stated that children are all different and he understands that the rules apply to everyone but there must be some leniency, and it is not only about the rules it is how the children are challenged.

On an encouraging note, young people reported having positive relationships with some staff members has helped them.

One young person informed us that she felt that a teacher has made it easier for her when she is attending school.

Communication

Parents and students felt that communication from school was not accurate at the best of times. In some instance calls were not returned. It was also felt staff were not communicating with each other in school so if there was a plan in place some staff were not aware of this.

However, parents did state that when school took advice from professionals’ things did improve.

Support from external services

Parents believed support from agencies was one factor that contributed to improving attendance but more importantly that they supported their views and helped get their message across to school.

Conclusions

The consensus from parents was that a combination of intervention work and having support from agencies to challenge schools as well as better communication helped their child attend.

It was made clear in some cases that relationships with teachers helped improve attendance.

Some schools made changes and reasonable therapeutic adjustments and tried more restorative approaches which also made a difference to attendance.