

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 serious. 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 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"

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