

*The young person's name has been changed to preserve anonymity and is referred to as Sam throughout.*

Sam was referred for an IV by his social worker who felt that he was prone to experiencing distress in relation to his life story, and felt that an IV would provide him with a space where he could “off-load” about his feelings, as well as providing him with a person who would be able to advocate for him.

At the time of referral, Sam was only able to express his emotions in a dramatic way, tending to dwell on the past rather than looking at the positives of his current circumstances.

During initial meetings prior to matching him with an IV, Sam expressed that he felt an IV would be beneficial for him as it would give him someone to talk to, that the person would be independent, that they would be able to see beyond his past, and that they would help him to be more sociable.

Since being matched with his IV, they have met regularly and have developed a strong, supportive relationship. They have enjoyed going out for meals together, visiting the cinema, and have planned to go to a Comic Book Convention soon as this is something that Sam is interested in.

The IV was able to signpost Sam to a drama workshop provided through Bolton Octagon Theatre; this took place over the summer holidays and involved him taking part in a number of sessions to produce a performance. This was a fantastic opportunity for Sam to be involved in and allowed him to mix with peers who had similar interests to him, who were all working towards a shared goal. It promoted him to use his social skills and encouraged him to develop his confidence.

Now that they have developed a good relationship, Sam finds it useful to talk with his IV about issues he is having both at home, at school, and with friendships; this gives the IV chance to support him to work through his problems by helping him to rationalise them and to put things in perspective. Sam has recently started to use his IV as an advocate, asking her to share his opinions with the Coordinator in order for them to be addressed with the relevant people.

The IV has noticed a significant difference in the way that Sam now discusses his worries. The IV feels that he is now able to express himself more effectively, seek support from her and then use this guidance to be able to move on and enjoy their time together. This is something that has also been reflected on by school and the young person's carer, with them recognising that Sam is currently more settled emotionally.

The relationship between Sam and his IV continues to develop; I feel that this will be a support for Sam as he moves into his final year at secondary school and begins to look towards planning for his future.