

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr ymchwiliad: [A oes gan blant a phobl ifanc anabl fynediad cyfartal at addysg a gofal plant?](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for the inquiry: [Do disabled children and young people have equal access to education and childcare?](#)

AEC 29

Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

Response from: Individual

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■■■■ was a baby when I just felt something wasn't right, even at her early assessments she was different. Then when she was in nursery when I knew something wasn't right, but we had moved house and everyone put this down to moving. She had massive focuses on specific interests, she wasn't just into Fireman Sam she lived Fireman Sam, she used naughty norman price's language to communicate. Children loved being her friend as she seemed to just do what they wanted, she just sat next to them not making a fuss, she would order things up. She started reception and ate nothing at all in school, she cried every day and spoke to no-one until I told her she had to. I asked for help over and over through primary and eventually circumnavigated them and went to the school nurse and she was diagnosed as Autistic. When the ASD nurse spoke to school, they just called her quirky but quickly admitted to agreeing with what the nurse saw in school. She still hated school, cried most days, had huge melt downs at home and became more and more aware of being different. She galloped everywhere and her pragmatic language was poor, she couldn't work out how to ask for help or questions. She was an almost silent, very still and excellent pupil, but when you actually looked in her book, she often had not started work that was thinking about feelings or imagining things and in truth she was overwhelmed and shutting down not quiet. She went to comprehensive school, and I am a ■■■■■ teacher myself, so I warned school what I could see going wrong. She was so hugely overwhelmed she had melt-downs most days. She still saw occupational therapist as was not struggling with self care and gross motor skills, she helped with organisation and gave recommendations to school that were really not addressed. Over the course of the first half term she became more and more withdrawn, she refused to attend lessons as it was too busy, loud and overwhelming. She could not use the escape card she was given; she was in such a high state of anxiety in school that she quickly tipped into shutdown mode. She wasn't sleeping and I was struggling everyday to get her to school. I made home as calm as possible, but incidents that didn't need to happened and she made herself sick crying. For example a teacher told them home work was optional, what they meant was he couldn't force them to do it but she didn't understand this and it caused an enormous

backlash. After half term in Autumn term in Y7 I contacted the local authority about what I could do, they basically told me there wasn't a provision for girls like [REDACTED] she would just need to get through high school the best she can as she is academically able. At this point they did agree to a statutory assessment. In the interim Children Additional Needs Services worked with her and came into school to support me. The then SENCO agreed she could see that [REDACTED] was actually a hard working pupil who was in constantly in a state of freeze mode and the only thing working currently was her working in the progress centre out of class and just completing the work. She was doing this regularly but obviously not being taught. We all agreed a reduced timetable and took a number of subjects from her and the school agreed to try an LSA to see if this helped. This worked well, she felt safe and began to access more lessons. The assessment was done and she was awarded a statement with 15 hours support. This was great and was working well, she was starting to sleep better and meltdowns reduced, she was still very anxious but doing well academically. The covid struck, she found working from home so difficult and I would sit with her for a long time completing work and teaching some of the maths I could. She would leave all her work almost completed and she refused to hand things in. It became more and more apparent the gap was widening. She was asked as a geography task to write a letter to people advising them about whether they should buy a house on a cliff that they had been studying the erosion mechanism. She simply wrote, I would not advise this as it is likely to have issues due to ongoing cliff erosion. The teacher told her she needed to explain more about how the erosion mechanism was working and the pros and cons of the house. She replied why did you not say that then, you didn't say give then the geography.

Once school returned getting [REDACTED] back in the classroom was really difficult, the LSA with her worked very hard and I forced her to school. What I know about children not in school is they are hard to help, and I needed her there I couldn't work without her at school as staying home alone wasn't really safe for her and she needed to get an education. The self isolation system meant she was in and out after October and between this and the second lock down she stopped going to lessons again. She was withdrawn, she was highly anxious, she only left the house for school and with me and found the classroom highly unpredictable and the over all behaviour of pupils really poor. She had the same LSA in year 10 and she was amazing, she helped her feel safe and she tried classes and bit by bit she was back doing her timetable (although it had been reduced). She was doing really well and teachers suggested she was on track to get As in her GCSE. Then she sat her GCSE Science, they had put her in for the Foundation paper as most of her class had been. As she had an LSA they put her in a class where other pupils could access the help. I have absolutely no issues with this but it meant she was now doing exams that stopped her getting As but they said she was predicted to. At the last minute the school made the change for one of them and did this by asking what her best class was. She chose Chemistry as she found the teacher the most predictable and got an A. She had to do foundation in the others and could only get a C, which she did and got full marks. She also

sat GCSE literature and did very well on the Of Mice and Men part as she had discussed this in class but the poetry was beyond her, she just couldn't understand the hidden meanings. She got a D and decided to resit in the Winter series. Unfortunately, the only exam revision help was done after school and without support this was beyond what she could achieve, and she got another D this time she did better on the poem as I had taught her how to look at it in a scientific way sadly she was not in a good place and didn't remember all the OMAM work as she previously had.

She returned to school in Year 11 and her LSA for last two years was with someone else, she by now had 20 hours but no one explained what was happening. She worked in the progress centre for the first day and then an LSA came up to her and said are you going to maths, she said not alone and the LSA just walked off. Later that week she said I'm your LSA this year and so the downward spiral began. The new LSA just didn't understand quiet Autistic girls, she made demands and left [REDACTED] alone in class feeling stranded and scared, she told her to stop talking when she was info dumping a strategy that helps manage her anxiety, she used demanding language that just triggered her PDA and all of this info was in her statement. [REDACTED] stood outside of a class room in silent tears and messaged me saying mum I can't move im so scared and the ISA has gone in and left me outside. I missed it as I was teaching but eventually the teacher noticed and went out and helped. She then left her in maths, even though they there had been an incident at lunch time with a child throwing chairs and everyone declassified and [REDACTED] had begged her not to go. [REDACTED] left the class and was going to leave school but saw a teacher who helped her. The LSA didn't notice she left when she returned to lesson.

[REDACTED] started refusing school, she was at a crucial point and was back to the anxiety level of year 7. She hid at home in tiny places, stopped talking and had meltdowns when school was mentioned. She stopped sleeping and was obvious not learning at all. I had to demand she was given different support and although this happened the damage had been done, she struggled to get back to class as she felt so behind. She was not going to most lessons and after a painful discussion she agreed to drop her favourite choice computer science as she just couldn't make the class. This was partially the teacher relationship as he insisted pupils speak to each other first before getting help, he questioned the LSA when she left 6 mins early not 5 and generally was someone who she could not build trust with. [REDACTED] didn't really return to lessons properly but did work in the progress centre. On a Wednesday and Friday her support was sometimes not available for a number of hours and this was when she had quiet a lot of lessons. It made the day unpredictable and just fed into the 'im more behind' issue. I taught her each evening to try and keep up but I was only able to really do a little bit each evening as I was so busy in my own job. I am a [REDACTED] and it is a taxing role, [REDACTED] dad works long hours and when he is home often takes her brother to football training. I didn't know how to do English; I got a tutor who helped her with Maths but she had to do that in the November as she was top set pupil. I withdrew her from Numeracy as the class were doing some

advance level exam that she would never access not in class but English wasn't something I thought she would have an issue with as she is a good writer. Her science exams were again messed up, even though I emailed to remind them to put her in the correct exams she was put in the foundation by accident initially. They changed them so last minute that she was accidentally given the foundation paper, and even though she has a prompt and did nothing initially she couldn't work out how to tell the staff (she didn't know them) so did the wrong paper. I complained and let school know they assured me it was sorted but it happened again for physics, this time she managed to get someone's attention and was given a higher paper unfortunately it was the wrong higher paper. █████ left school barely talking, she stopped sleeping and was shutting down at night. She worked extremely hard on her Art and Graphics exams, doing some incredible work.

We had a PCP meeting with the local authority in November to move to IDP this was produced in draft in August, school had said her needs are too high for them to meet in 6<sup>th</sup> form and █████ said the same. They have agreed to a specialist support placement but it was all agreed so late that she has had very little transition and her IDP is so wishy washy that it doesn't really help support her well. █████ passed all her GCSEs with A\* to B except English which she has to resit. It turns out there are too many questions that are like the geography letter task and she couldn't do them, she wasn't sure what a teenage magazine would look like for example and many questions require the level of inference that is seen in literature exam. I will make sure she gets a tutor that can help her learn how to decode the questions and give her a chance of passing.

She passed most with my small teaching and her own learning, imagine if she had managed to go to class. I feel very strongly that schools are getting larger and larger, there is no provision that helps pupils like █████ thrive. She wants to learn and her ALNCO said she is one of the most resilient learners he knows and when her executive functioning needs and anxiety are supported she does very well, sadly main stream schools find this hard. Many teachers hand read her statement or one page profile, I don't inherently blame them they might not know her as they could see 150 pupils a day. She was struggling in primary but secondary has left her with trauma, the evidence of long term impact that living in that level of anxiety has on young people is out there. The new system has just put school under further pressures and the staff don't always have the correct expertise to identify needs or more sadly main stream schools are not the place for the pupils but there is nowhere suitable either. Certainly schools are not inclusive, if I hadn't been a teacher █████ would have probably not passed most of the exams which is alarming because at least she is just not reaching her potential rather than failing everything. The new system is not joined up or reforming it has just meant that schools are advised that we need to help children be able to access these giant mainstream schools with provisions like ELSA as the support mechanisms. Pupils like █████ are falling through cracks and will end up a further burden on society, if they don't get the best education they leave at a loss.