

One-Page Profiles and Families

Liz is passionate about person-centred ways of working which she has used in her professional and personal life. Her brother and daughter both have Downs Syndrome. Sarah Jane has grown up with the values of inclusion and person-centred thinking. Tommy has had a very different life but a move to supported living last year has opened up his world.

About six months ago a new service provider took over Tommy's contract. Liz had been very engaged with the previous provider and began to feel quite cut out of his daily life. Liz works full time and can rarely answer a call during typical working hours. She found it very frustrating to have 'missed calls' with no messages or indication of urgency and worried that staff would think she didn't care. Staff share their one-page profiles with families in the organization where Liz works, so she took the idea to her brother's provider. Liz wanted communication to be constructive and effective, and for people to value her involvement.

Liz sat down one evening and created a one-page profile for 'partnership working and fluid communication.' The profile is about supporting family relationships so she included things that build connections. To start with Liz shared the one page profile at a review meeting and staff really appreciated knowing a bit more about her and her busy lifestyle. Liz gave a copy to the regional manager as well. She can easily tell the members of staff who have seen and read the profile and those who haven't. Liz keeps a copy on the noticeboard by her desk at home, and she jots down things she learns. Liz plans to give an updated and visually different copy to the team every six months. She is going to stick the next one inside Tommy's wardrobe door as a daily reminder for staff.

Sarah Jane and Tommy often have conflicting needs so a member of staff always supports their time together. Support staff don't often co-work with family members and many were uncomfortable with hanging out at home or on family trips. Now they have a delightful balance of professionalism and friendliness which is much more relaxing. Niece and uncle have strengthened their relationship because conflict of interest has been minimized and Liz can be mom and sister not mediator!

Liz has high expectations about the quality of support and communication between families and services, and quite rightly so. However, having her values and needs expressed on a one-page profile enables her to clarify her expectations; when people know what she wants and expects they are more likely to give it – and if Liz hasn't been clear she can work to change the profile instead of getting frustrated and coming across as a nag. Liz now gets text messages that are much easier to respond to in a quick break, and voicemail helps her sort the rare urgent issues from those that can wait a day or two. It is really lovely that Tommy now initiates visits with support from staff and Liz gets good news, not just issues to deal with. When she makes suggestions about ways of working or activities to try they are taken as offerings from a partner. Tommy is more relaxed when they are all together. He doesn't use verbal communication but he picks up on tension so Liz can tell he appreciates the new relationships as much as she does.

Liz loves that her views are being sought on things that are important to Tommy. Her role has undergone a transformation too; she feels like she can be a more ordinary sister alongside managing his personal budget and finances.



Liz's one page profile for staying involved with Tommy

What do people like and admire about Liz?

She bakes delicious cakes; a really good listener; creative ideas for turning around difficult situations; she gets things done; follows her dreams in a practical way; principled; level headed and fair; gets things done; passionate about inclusion; a fountain of information.

What is important to Liz?

- My family, spending time together and looking out for each other
- Everyone is valued for their unique contributions and supported to achieve their dreams
- Everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and that I take action this is not happening
- Having time for relaxation, creativity and spontaneity at the weekends
- Having goals but being flexible about how they are achieved
- Being involved and included in all aspects of Tommy's life
- People who support Tommy know his history, believe in his potential and see me as a valuable partner in his support and development
- People being honest and upfront, and dealing with problems immediately
- Getting a reply to my messages, I hate being ignored and haven't learned to read minds

How to support Liz....

- Understand that I work full time and am a lone parent to Sarah Jane who's support takes a lot of my time
- Communication is vital to me:
 - If you don't understand what I am requesting or asking please ask me to clarify
 - Email works well for me for non urgent issues, don't bother giving me an email address unless you use it though
 - If you contact me by phone leave a message I will get back to you as soon as I can
 - Fill in your communication book with details of what we have been discussing if others need to know
- Always let me know if Tommy is unhappy or unwell, even minor health problems
- Support Tommy to get in touch with me, it is fine to take the initiative; I like to see him at least every two weeks but sometimes I get overwhelmed with life and time slips by
- If you can't do what we have agreed let me know immediately and we will make another plan
- Sometimes it is good if you chat or walk with Sarah Jane when we are together so I can spend time with Tommy
- Phone or text to keep me updated with some of the good things going on in Tommy's life