



From Voice to Action: How a Young Person Shaped Their Own Support

SPACE

A secondary-aged young person with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) was given a safe, supported opportunity to share their views using a Talking Mat. They chose to complete the activity independently, asking for their mum to wait outside. The Talking Mat helped them reflect on their communication strengths, challenges and support preferences.

VOICE

Using familiar visuals, extra processing time and a reduced rate of speech, the young person identified what helped and hindered communication. They shared concerns about specific classroom situations and highlighted strategies that supported their learning and wellbeing.

AUDIENCE

The Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) used the young person's views to co-produce a communication profile. The young person reviewed and approved the profile before it was shared with home and school. They explained that sitting at the front of the class helped concentration and that having a seating plan reduced anxiety. The young person also suggested offering Chromebooks to whole groups rather than singling them out, helping reduce feelings of difference and stigma.

INFLUENCE

School adapted their own student profile to include information from the communication profile, ensuring the young person's voice was shared in a format familiar to staff. Staff received training on DLD, classroom strategies were implemented, and familiar staff from school used a Talking Mats-style approach to review the communication profile with the young person to check what strategies were consistently in place, and any changes to supports needed.

Outcome

Listening to and acting on the young person's views led to:

- more effective, personalised support,
- reduced anxiety,
- improved inclusion, and
- engagement in decisions about their own learning and communication needs.

