

Dear Jo

I know that I told you before how appreciative my husband and I are for all the time and work you and your team have done with our daughter. We were literally at our wits end when our daughter first came to you. She had become quite withdrawn and was constantly very anxious and not sleeping well. She was reluctant to attend school, suggesting that she would go if she could be placed in internal exclusion. A meeting with an Educational Psychologist was arranged with her School in February 2012. The resulting report described her ('who presented as a pale, tired and quite anxious young girl') as needing to build her confidence and self-esteem. It was a very stressful and worrying time for us as a family.

Our daughter began attending sessions with you, we were very worried about how she would manage with coming along on an evening. Her want and determination to attend is testament to the fact that she, herself, knew that she needed some help. When we visited I recall you commenting that perhaps there may come a time when she would not need her hood up!!

Our daughter has now been with you for eighteen months: we have always been interested in what she does at Aspires and always ask how her evening has been. She can rarely remember, we respect this and are happy for this to be her time, something she does for herself. I feel it has been a very important part of the process for her to have ownership of her time with you. My sister once described her Aspires night as 'the oasis in her week'. I firmly believe this to be an insightful and accurate description of what you provided for our daughter.

She is now a much more confident young girl, she will interact more readily in unexpected or unfamiliar social situations although this can still be difficult. This is delightful for us and our family to see. She will happily come along to sessions without her hood up, she positively looks forward to the evenings. She still becomes anxious but not to that same degree, she is much less withdrawn and her attendance at school has dramatically improved since her involvement with Aspires.

My husband and I very much feel that we will never really be able to thank you, and your team, enough for the help and support our daughter has received, but I do hope that this letter (whilst sounding a little formal and stiff) outlines just a few of the positive effects Aspires has had, not just for our daughter but for us as a family.