

RESTORING HOPE

How School Admission and Mental Health Support Transformed a Young Boy's Life

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BACKGROUND

Aneela is a 35-year-old single mother from Pakistan who arrived in the UK with her two sons, aged 16 and 10. The family applied for asylum and was placed in temporary accommodations provided by the Home Office in Birmingham. They lived in a hotel where many other asylum seekers were also housed.

The younger son, aged 10, began to show signs of severe emotional distress after moving to the hotel. He became unusually quiet, isolated himself in their room, and refused to eat or participate in any activities. This drastic change in behaviour deeply worried Aneela, who felt helpless watching her child's mental health deteriorate. The stress of the situation also took a toll on her mental well-being, and she began blaming herself for the impact the asylum process was having on her children.

The family's displacement and lack of stability caused significant emotional and mental health challenges, particularly for Aneela's younger son. He withdrew from social interactions and refused to eat, which further exacerbated Aneela's anxiety and feelings of guilt. The unfamiliar environment, lack of a routine, and absence of friends and school further contributed to the child's declining mental health.

SOLUTION

Recognising the urgent need for mental health support and routine stability, the coordinator referred the case to BIRCH and the Children's Society. BIRCH facilitated the child's admission to a local school, providing him with a familiar structure and a chance to engage with peers. Meanwhile, the Children's Society arranged mental health therapy sessions for both Aneela and her son.

The therapy sessions allowed both mother and child to express their feelings and learn coping strategies for dealing with the stress and uncertainty of their situation. The child began to show improvements in his behaviour, slowly returning to his usual self. His appetite improved, and he started participating in school activities and making friends. This positive change in her son's demeanour brought immense relief to Aneela, who felt more optimistic about their future.

IMPACT

The intervention had a profound impact on the family's well-being. The school admission provided the child with a sense of stability and normalcy, which is crucial for mental health development. The therapy sessions helped both Aneela and her son process their emotions and build resilience.

AT A GLANCE

SCHOOL ADMISSION is essential for the mental health and development of children in temporary accommodations.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT for both parents and children can significantly improve the overall well-being of asylum-seeking families.

CHARITY ORGANISATIONS play a vital role in providing essential services and interventions that can transform lives.

EARLY INTERVENTIONS and structured routines can help children cope with the stress of displacement and uncertainty.

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For privacy and data protection purposes, pseudonyms have been used and all personal details have been anonymized to ensure confidentiality.