



### Video: Harry – Decision Making

**Harry (H):** When I was younger and I was going to my first panels and my first hearings, the decisions would always be appealed by my family, because they didn't like the decisions that were being made and at the time, I thought that I didn't like them either. But, because of that it was like every three weeks that I'd be going to the same meetings, hearing the same things, seeing the same people talking, the same decisions were being made.

And at the time they were talking this language, this jargon that I didn't understand, that peers around my age probably still wouldn't understand. So, I felt like it wasn't until I properly understood what they were saying and I learnt that system, that language that they were speaking to each other...they would always speak to me fine...but when they were speaking to each other or speaking to my guidance teacher or members of staff from my house they'd speak and I wouldn't understand what they were saying.

So all of these meetings in the early days just rolled into this one horrible time when I'd be sitting there and decisions would be getting made about my life and I didn't know how to change that. For me, to be in control of those meetings and to have my voice heard and be listened to, I had to learn the way they were talking. So there would be times I'd go to a meeting and panel members would say things to me like "oh, you should be on this side of the table!". Which, to them could come across as a compliment and something really nice to say and in a way it was complimenting my intelligence or whatever, but you shouldn't need to be putting yourself across like an adult as a twelve or thirteen year old.

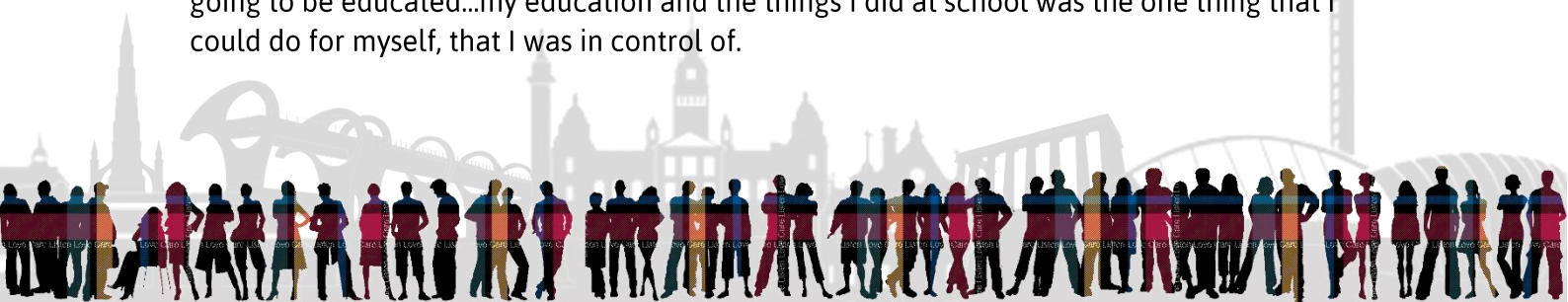
You shouldn't have to be talking the same jargon that they're talking and involving yourself in knowing what a section 70 or a section 25 is to have your voice properly heard and to be listened to.

[Pause]

**H:** I don't want someone to have to be exceptional to be heard. I want someone to be able to go into their first panel and be really shy and really quiet...or to have a young person go into a panel and know that maybe they're not going to like the decision that going to be made and to be quite annoyed and quite angry at times. I still want those people to be able to go into a meeting and be happy that they've been heard or at least have understood what's going on.

I feel like the decisions that were being made in my care journey – I was able to be partly involved in them, both in and out of formal decision making. But as I mentioned before, it was difficult to do and I had to teach myself how to do it. There are processes around being in care that are a lot more formal – having to sign a form to get pocket money and things like that.

So, for me, education was a really important thing with regard to making decisions throughout my care journey – it was the only thing that I was able to be in control of. When there were meetings and formal processes and social workers making decisions about how many times I would get to see my family a week or who I got to see, or you know, where I was going to be educated...my education and the things I did at school was the one thing that I could do for myself, that I was in control of.





## corporate **PARENTING**

I knew that if there were going to be decisions made at these meetings, I had learned that education was one of these things that was always talked about, it was one of those things that had a cover over it. I was never going to let that be in the way. I just wish that in those meetings and in those formal processes it didn't feel like that, it didn't feel like you were going to make big decisions about your life. I know you do and that can't be belittled, but you shouldn't be scared.

[Pause]

You shouldn't have to be scared to go to a meeting. What other twelve or thirteen year olds do you know that have to go to a meeting with their parents, the police and their guidance teacher. It's not a nice feeling and even if the panel members were to acknowledge that and take some time just for that young person, just to let them know that these decisions matter and they exist, but I also want them to let them know that they have the power to change that.

