

## **Case Study**

### **Basic Profile**

Susan is parent of five year old Anna who has severe anxiety, selective mutism and is in the process of being assessed for ASC. Susan heard about Compass Card West Sussex from her Support Worker and got her card in July 2016.

Date 18 May 2017

- **Before involvement**

Susan was going through a difficult time before she applied for a Compass Card as her daughter was being assessed. “At the start, I felt overwhelmed. I didn’t know if we deserved [the card]. Because Anna’s disability is invisible, sometimes I feel a bit of a fraud.” They were limited in the places they could go and often Anna became anxious and a visit had to be aborted after a short time. “I’d taken Anna swimming [at Arun and Littlehampton leisure centres], but we’d hit a brick wall because it was often too busy or they were playing music. Anna didn’t speak at all when we went out.”

“I didn’t know much about the Compass Card and I didn’t know if we’d qualify, but I thought I’d give it a try and see if it worked.”

- **Participation**

Once Susan had the Compass Card, she and Anna began to swim more regularly at Arun and Littlehampton leisure centres. Because it was free for both of them, it didn’t matter so much if they had to leave after a short time. “Swimming made a big difference. We usually go a few times a week. Now she can swim a bit by herself and she can swim confidently with floats. I think we might be able to try lessons soon.”

Susan and Anna began to use the card in other places too – Sea Life in Brighton, Harbour Park in Littlehampton, cinemas in Littlehampton and Bognor Regis, Aldingbourne Country Centre, Out of Bounds and many more.

“It helps us go out without it costing too much. ...It really makes a difference. When you see the sign you know you’re welcome. No one’s ever questioned the card and I feel confident using it. Anna has an invisible disability and [the card] makes things so much easier. The [Compass Card] app is great. I showed staff at Arun and Littlehampton leisure centres when they weren’t sure about the offer. It gives me confidence because I can prove it. ...I usually plan trips in advance – I sit and look through the app and decide.”

Sea Life: “She really enjoys looking at the fish – she can name and count them. She loves the stingrays and [the staff] are really good there.”

Cinema: “I choose a film that’s not scary, we go when it’s less busy and Anna wears her sunglasses.”

Harbour Park: “We have an annual pass for Anna and \*I go with her on all the rides. She wears her ear defenders and loves it.”

\* a carer goes free at Harbour Park with the Compass Card

Out of Bounds: “We go early when it’s not so busy”.

Tangled: “It’s the only place we go to get her hair cut. They take time and don’t expect her to talk - but they talk to her.”

- **Impact**
- “It’s made me more confident about going places and trying new things and I don’t mind so much if we have to leave.”
- “I prefer places with a Compass Card offer – I feel more welcome and feel that people – the staff at least – won’t stare.”
- “For Anna, it helps her get out and about with other people.”
- “She looks forward to going out. We’re much more likely now to try somewhere new – she used to be reluctant, now she’s excited.”