‘Judy’ started working with her NYAS advocate just as a Child Protection Conference was arranged. Judy had been struggling with her mental health and had a short stay in a hospital to get the support she needed to change medication.

Social Services were concerned about the impact of Judy’s stays in hospital on her 3 children who had stayed with family members whilst she was unwell.

In the beginning Judy was very confused by the process she was in and did not feel able to speak out in meetings. She did not trust Social Services or understand what they were saying. Judy’s advocate helped to bridge the gap between her and social services. Following a change of Social Worker, Judy’s Advocate supported her to meet with the Social Worker to enable them to understand each other and work better together.

Social Services took the case to court due to their concerns. Judy found this an incredibly stressful experience and her Advocate supported her to voice her views, wishes and feelings through the process. Her Advocate also helped her to voice her opinions to her solicitor and barrister. Her Advocate also listened to Judy’s concerns around the process.

The court did not grant any orders and Judy’s’ children remained with her. Judy’s’ confidence in her own voice grew and her Advocate slowly backed away to enable Judy to work with Social Services by herself.

After Social Services closed her case, Judy found a job with the NHS, which was a huge step for her. Her job role involves mentoring others who are working with the Community Mental Health Team. This is the first time Judy has had paid employment since before her children were born.

Judy has gone on to be very supportive of the work of Advocacy and is now training to be a Supporting a Voice Volunteer with NYAS. She is keen to use her experience to support other parents in a similar position to the one she was in when she needed an Advocate.