

## Bath and North East Somerset: Reviewing and improving the reach and quality of IASS delivery by effectively collecting and using data

The SEND Partnership Service (SPS) in Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) fulfils the local authority (LA) statutory duty to provide information advice and support (IAS) for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with SEND.

B&NES is home to approximately 67,000 children and young people and is a blend of urban and rural areas. Bath is renowned for its prestigious, heritage attractions but there are also pockets of deprivation and rural challenges within the local authority reach. B&NES has a long history of joint commissioning and funding across education and social care and has well established integrated health pathways.

The service is currently delivered in-house as part of the Customer Services Division and is funded jointly by the LA with contributions specifically from Social Care and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

### The challenge

Data gathered from the schools' census, further education colleges and early year's providers tells us that there are approximately 5,200 children and young people who are entitled to access impartial information, advice and support in B&NES. SPS is currently reaching just over 10% of this cohort. Our challenge is increasing that reach by finding innovative and creative ways to work with our partners, volunteers, provide digital resources.

### Initial impact of IAS programme funding

Funding from the Information Advice and Support (IAS) Programme has given the strategic manager an opportunity to focus and revisit the statute underpinning service delivery, the service's relevance and the quality of the work delivered. With the additional funding time has been allocated for individual and team planning sessions, dedicated consultation events and the purchase of a more capable data management system.

### Impact to service beneficiaries

Presenting the IAS Service 2 Year Implementation Plan to the LA's SEND Strategic Board has engaged a number of partners who have historically supported the IAS Service but now really appreciate the importance of the role. The process has raised its profile with Health, service providers, special schools and parent and young people's groups at a strategic level and with the decision makers.

Assessment against the minimum standards has enabled the IAS Service to produce a clear statement of strengths and weaknesses and the appropriate response required by the LA, Health and Social Care.

## Lessons learnt

The service has always reported in detail to the IAS Advisory Board but working closely with Council for Disabled Children (CDC) especially on the Independent Support Programme which ran from September 2014 until July 2018, and more recently in work related to service planning, it has become evident that it is essential to collect relevant data, understand what it is saying and measure the impact at the right time.

2 years ago a small amount of funding was secured from the Social Care budget directly as a result of the data that had been collected and the evidence produced of the support provided for children and young people with Social Care involvement (e.g. LAC, fostering, adoption, CHIN).

## How is the approach being sustained?

As a stronger and more robust approach to data capture and performance measurement is being achieved it will be easier to demonstrate to the commissioners (and the service) the significant impact the service has on the expected cohort. It will be easier to understand and with increased confidence know where gaps in service provision exist and be able to plan to target those areas of need.

The service will also work to strengthen its service governance, extend its reach and develop a range of digital support tools to deliver impartial information via a range of channels. This combination will help the service maintain a level of support that will assist the LA in meeting its statutory duties regarding providing IAS.

As links are strengthened with the local Parent Carer Forum, capacity will be built through the Parent Champions and young people's and parent/carer groups across the LA thus beginning to address early intervention and universal support. However, none of this is effective without the trained and experienced staff to deliver:

- quality casework support
- safe volunteer recruitment and management.

All supported by informed and relevant strategic partnership work.

### Contact details

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