

Blackpool: Improving service visibility and the confidence of its users

The context

Blackpool has significant challenges and has been recognised by the DFE as an Opportunity Area. It has 3 of the most deprived wards and is the most deprived town in the country. Blackpool has twice the national average number of benefit claimants.

- 3.5% higher than the England average number of pupils with SEND Support
- 4.3% higher than the England average number for pupils with SEND
- 32% more pupils on EHCP plans in special school compared to mainstream and the England average

These issues are being addressed and challenged by implementation of a new SEND strategy for 2019 -2021.

How IASP funding has improved the IASS offer to its service users

This case study focuses on some of the funding used via Fund 3 from the IAS programme to support the service core functions. One of the goals for the Blackpool service was an attempt to move even further away from the usual required corporate service branding which had been in place for a number of years by developing an individual standalone and easily recognisable service identity, one which it was hoped would further improve service user confidence in regards to the impartiality and arms lengthness of the service, even though it is an 'in house service'.

Ways in which improvements have positively enhanced the service user experience – provide evidence/examples

A consultation was carried out with service users and the Parent Carer Forum on several potential options for service branding and colours, style and content. A discussion was also held on what new additional material or resources might be introduced which service users may find helpful.

The result:

- new service branding which does not follow the normal corporate theme in any way!
- a new suite of helpful information sheets
- a new meeting preparation booklet to help parents/carers prepare for any meetings with schools, LA etc, including space for parent/carers to record meetings and agreed actions
- promotional service banners and marketing materials are now also in place, these are used at all events to further improve service visibility

Recent feedback from a parent event held at Blackpool Zoo on 23 October 2019:

- service logo is much more eye catching and easier to recognise
- doesn't look part of Blackpool Council

- leaflets look smarter
- meeting booklet will really help me to prepare and think what I need to say and record what's been agreed
- information sheets are easy to read and simple to understand
- information is in plain English, no big words

Lessons the service has learnt making service improvement

It's absolutely invaluable to include and listen to service users and the Parent Carer Forum in the design and development of any changes as they really do have an extremely valuable contribution to make. Keep it simple!

The approach being taken to sustain the improvements achieved

Ongoing discussions with service users to seek feedback on recent changes. All new information will also be made available via email and on service website.

Contact details:

Julie Lavelle
Service Manager
Blackpool SENDIASS
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