



Bradford IASS : Professionals and Parents benefiting from training workshops with the SENDIASS team

The context

Prior to receiving IASP funding, training was an area of the minimum standards that Bradford SENDIASS did not have the capacity or resources to provide. As a busy service it recognised there was a gap in its service offer but lacked capacity to develop and deliver a training offer without impacting negatively on the necessary 1:1 support it provided. An attempt to deliver support in a different way via drop in group sessions fell flat due to a lack of capacity to build links with partners and promote the sessions.

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

With the IASP funding the service recruited a designated Participation and Engagement worker whose role did not include casework, enabling them to focus entirely on developing various strands of the service and widening the service offer. It was also able to recruit additional casework hours to boost capacity, support delivery, and meet the additional demand created by raising awareness of the service. As a result the service was able to develop, effectively advertise and deliver workshops that were responsive to need identified through quarterly and annual reports, and through feedback from service users via parent steering group and Facebook polls.

Since April 2019 the service has delivered EHCP training to 80 professionals, increasing their understanding of the process, their potential role within it, how they can support parents, and the support available from SENDIASS if required. Additional professional training has been delivered around the voice of the child to a further 12 professionals. Both topics received very positive feedback.

Parent workshops were slightly harder to get started and initially a mistake was made by making open workshops too specific (e.g. refusal to assess) and not frequent enough. This resulted in low numbers attending the first session and the second being cancelled. However, with such positive feedback from the professional training, and the feedback from parents attending targeted sessions clearly showing that this support was needed, it was essential to get it right for the open workshops. After going back to the drawing board 2 workshops were created; SEN Support and EHCPs, offered bi-monthly to start with. These were kept deliberately small so as to be comfortable for vulnerable families. The first session on EHCPs was fully booked with 10 attending and 4 on the waiting list for the next session. Feedback was very positive with parents saying they would recommend it to friends. The first SEN support workshop, which will take place next week, is also almost full, and word is starting to spread to services supporting families of the availability of these workshops. In total so far this year workshops have been delivered to 30 parents.

112 participants have benefitted from a SENDIASS training workshop in total since April 2019.

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

“Everything was explained to me in a way which made sense”

“I am now more informed in how to support families”

Increasing the knowledge of professionals from other services working with Children, Young people and Parent/carers has meant more information and support is available from a range of sources and at an earlier stage, sometimes reducing the need for SENDIASS support.

Service users who were waiting to allocated a caseworker have been contacted and offered workshop dates as another option; this was well received and enhanced the experience of these service users who felt that they were still supported whilst waiting. In some cases their query was resolved quicker, reducing the need for caseworker support.

IASP funding was also used to design and print a number of branded SENDIASS folders suitable for putting together packs of information given out during training. They contain handouts and further information on the subject of EHCP or SEN support for participants to take away and refer back to, therefore, empowering them to make informed decisions and act independently knowing their rights.

This offer and information has been widened and is readily available in a range of formats, meaning the same information is accessible according to the needs of the family, e.g. information sheets, website, social media, workshops and group support, one to one casework support.

An additional benefit reported by parents was the opportunity for peer support from other parent/carers going through similar issues. The workshops are informal and encourage discussion of issues, leading to one parent writing on her evaluation form that she “no longer felt so isolated and alone.”

Lessons the service has learnt making service improvements

- Keep it simple
- Identify key trends
- Running two topics more frequently and well has proved more successful than offering a variety of topics but only one date for each.
- Advertise, advertise, advertise!
- Use Eventbrite to manage bookings and send reminders, and after speaking to colleagues at Wakefield WESAIL the service learnt to assume some will not attend on the day and to overbook by 20% e.g. 12 for a ten place workshop.

The approach being taken to sustain the improvements achieved

Session plans, PowerPoints, handout/information folders and flyers created, all stored in accessible place.

Staff and volunteers all involved in delivery and shadowing delivery for those less confident, so all staff would be confident to deliver and not need additional capacity to plan as already prepared. Anyone could pick up the session plan, deliver the presentation and activities, and have the resources in place to create comprehensive packs for participants to take away

Eventbrite account created to manage bookings/reminders making admin easier and quicker.

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