



Cheshire West and Chester Information, Advice and Support Service Sustainability & Continuity Plan 2021 – 2022

This plan sets out how Cheshire West and Chester Information, Advice & Support Service will continue to operate, develop and thrive after the grant contribution from the Council for Disabled Children ceases.

The service is staffed with a full time Manager and four IASS permanent officers (1 full time, 3 part time) and one part time business support officer. The service currently has eight volunteers who support the service delivery.

This plan sets out how Cheshire West and Chester IAS Service will cover the following functions past March 2021:

1. Commissioning, governance and management arrangements
2. Strategic functions
3. Provision of information and advice
4. Supporting individuals
5. Professional development and training

All these functions will include working with children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers; information and publicity; training, advice and support; networking and collaboration; and informing and shaping local SEND policy and practice

We will also continue to support Cheshire West and Chester Parent Carer Forum and work closely with other local Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) parent support groups.

The Service Development Plan (SDP) has to combine the statutory duties, the national standards and identified core work, as well as any priority outcomes identified within Cheshire West and Chester Council and Education plans – with regard to children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities and their parents and carers.

Current inputs to Cheshire West and Chester IAS Service including Local Authority funding, CDC Grant Funding and staffing levels and support:

Funding- Allocated from Local Authority Children and Families, Education Directorate budget. The amount covers staff salaries, travel expenses, staff mobile phones, delivering training for parents and a small amount to cover out of pocket expenses for the volunteers. Office premises, equipment and office support costs are not included. We are currently in discussion with Senior Management (Director of Education, Senior Commissioners etc.) to establish and identify ways of making up any forthcoming budgetary shortfall.

The availability of additional funding to bridge gap of approximately £18k is currently being discussed with LA Director of Education (Feb 2021).

CCG/Health & Social Care Funding – Jointly commissioned service with the local Clinical Commissioning Group and Health & Social Care.

CDC Funding – Additional funding used to support innovation and developing the service to become future proofed.

Staffing - All staff and volunteers have the relevant skills, SEND legal training and knowledge – in total the allocated funding provides a manager and 0.75FTE officer. There are also 8 volunteer Independent Supporters.

Local Support - IAS Service Steering Group, as well as from colleagues across all parts of Cheshire West and Chester Children's Services, CCG & Health & Social Care Colleagues.

National Support and information from National IAS Network, North West SEND IAS Services Consortium, Council for Disabled Children, Independent Support and DfE.

Potential Case Load and Background:

At January 2019, there were approximately 7,500 under 25's with an identified SEND in CW&C. This is a rate of 78.8 per 1,000 under 25 population; around 1 in 13 children and young people. Most children with SEND are having their needs met by their school without the need for additional support. Of those with a SEND, 1,857 had a high level of need that required an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP); a rate of 19.6 per 1,000 under 25 population; around 1 in 51 children and young people.

The proportion of children and young people with an EHCP has been steadily increasing in CW&C, increasing demand on EHCPs. During 2018, there were 27 per cent more EHCPs issued for the first time compared to the previous year. The most common SEND need was a moderate learning difficulty, followed by speech, language and communication needs and social, emotional and mental health. For those with an EHCP, the greatest need was autistic spectrum condition (ASC). Over the last five years, speech, language and communications needs has seen the biggest increase in need for pupils from 17.4 per cent of pupils at January 2015 to 21 per cent at January 2019. In CW&C schools, almost half of all pupils with a EHCP have multiple disabilities. IASS has

the potential and opportunity to support many of these families, Children and Young People directly now.

Current Activities, impact and sustainability

Activity	Actions/outputs	Outcome/ evidence /by when	Sustained activity what actions are required.
<p>One to one work with Families, Parents, Children and Young People.</p>	<p>Service offers impartial, accurate, up to date information and high quality advice and support tailored to the individual (up to and including SEND Tribunal), which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • casework support • representation • an independent supporter <p>key working Staff available for parents on the phone or via virtual platforms. IAS Service to ensure availability of a volunteer or member of staff wherever possible to offer 1-1 support.</p>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users have the information and advice they need to make informed decisions about provision made by education, health and social care. • Parents and young people feel positive and confident about their rights and responsibilities and know where and how to access help when they think they need it <p>evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of comments, compliments and complaints • Analysis of service users' perceptions of relevance and impartiality • Case studies • Feedback on Local Offer <p>ONGOING</p>	<p>Core work will always continue and remain priority even if we must reduce staffing levels. Virtual platforms will be more prominent for one -to-one advice sessions. Reliance on digital media via recorded information sessions on video. Additional support will include extra recruitment of volunteers, parent to parent support and use of wider team members to support any future capacity issues.</p>
<p>Staff Training/Professional Training.</p>	<p>Undertake legal and Independent support Training</p> <p>Completed for all staff. Any new training offered will be taken up by staff</p>	<p>Outcomes: Customers receive a quality advice- delivered by knowledgeable staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer feedback 	<p>Access to free online training via national support networks (IPSEA etc.) will continue to be accessible to all</p>

		ONGOING	team members and volunteers. We will also access CCG & Social Care Training when appropriate. Inhouse training via LA will also continue to be available.
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Activity	Actions/outputs	Outcome/ evidence /by when	Sustained activity what actions are required.
Volunteer recruitment and training	<p>Recruit and train new volunteers to increase the numbers of available volunteers. Ensure needs of volunteers are met to ensure quality service is delivered.</p> <p>Volunteer basic training programme delivered and ensure they have an individual Continuing Professional Development Plan.</p> <p>Design and deliver “advanced” level training for existing volunteers on various topics e.g. education, social care and health, early years, law related to SEN and disability, national and local policy and practice in meeting SEN and disability</p> <p>Ensure all volunteers have completed</p>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New volunteers join service and support parents and young people. • Volunteers are confident to support parents and young people • Volunteers feel supported and also receive professional development. <p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feedback from training sessions and responses from individual volunteers re CPD • volunteers report they feel valued <p>ONGOING but new initial training and associated process completed by April 2020</p>	<p>Volunteers will play a vital role in the future of the service and ensure we can and will meet the demands on the service.</p> <p>More families than ever are requesting our help and volunteers will enable us to reach all those families needing help and support.</p>

	<p>safeguarding training</p> <p>Continue to build local teams of volunteers with regular group meetings, to monitor their work and build confidence in the role.</p> <p>To evaluate the future training needs of the volunteers.</p>		
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Activity	Actions/outputs	Outcome/ evidence /by when	Sustained activity what actions are required.
<p>Regularly review effectiveness of service. Management/Strategic planning etc.</p>	<p>Measure the service against National Standards on annual basis and add any actions to action plan Service provides data for a termly Education report including number of new cases, ongoing cases and type of case based on initial contact. Continue to promote Rate and Review on the Local Offer and use of IAS Service feedback postcards by staff and volunteers</p> <p>Evaluation is completed after every parent group information session. Team will regularly reflect on and evaluate their practice and endeavour to</p>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service is meeting all the National standards. • Active involvement of parents in shaping services • The service is responsive to the needs of families. • The service feeds into the LA any patterns which may need to be addressed e.g. any schools or other settings causing concern or any increase in a particular issue e.g. exclusion rates of children with SEND to be addressed strategically <p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • case studies 	<p>Manager will continue to monitor and evaluate effectiveness and value for money. We will utilise various means (Collaborative working with CCG, Volunteers, digital media, online platforms etc.) to continue meeting the IASS National Standards. By being flexible and adaptive to every situation we will be able to continue.</p> <p>Evidence of a clear management structure,</p>

	<p>provide best practice and value for money. Staff are supervised by manager through team meetings, 1-1s and appraisal system. Volunteers are given individual supervision re case work. New case management system has played a vital role in the streamlined reporting requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feedback from families • Rate and Review on LO <p>ONGOING</p>	<p>including, where appropriate, advisory or steering group membership with service user involvement Annual report Examples of service user involvement in planning and review of the services provided will support the strategic planning and development of the service.</p>
<p>Information for parents & staff including events.</p>	<p>Leaflets & IASS Local Offer pages have been reviewed and updated August 2020.</p> <p>Talks to parents and various other organisations about IAS Service. Deliver to SENCo clusters. Manager involved in delivery of LA training modules to SENCos Social media/website presence up and running. Looking to explore new ways of working; including how to utilise school FB pages.</p> <p>PFA Transition to Adulthood Event being hosted virtually Feb 2021.</p>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families report back that they find the service accessible and the information provided useful. • Professionals are aware of service and how it can help families <p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from families • Feedback from professionals <p>New leaflets for families produced and updated August 2020</p> <p>ONGOING for other events</p>	<p>All information leaflets and other sources of information, advice & guidance have been updated (completed August 2020). These are accessible via website & Local Offer. All events and training are now run virtually which we will continue to do. Resulting in less time and budget being spent on the organisation and staff capacity.</p>

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Reaching parents whose first language may not be English, engaging BME Groups.	IAS to build links with other services (E.g. travellers, ethnic minorities and EAL and CW&C's family learning) to try to reach families who may not find out about IAS Service through the more usual routes and to look for new possibilities to reach these parents. Look at Schools who have a high number of children with FSM.	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionals are aware of service and how we can support families and sign post to service Potential service users are aware of Service and what it can offer them. <p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data recorded shows increase of users from minority groups Support group for BME families established and running successfully. 	This work will continue in conjunction with other BME support groups. Virtual platforms have been utilised to facilitate meetings during the current situation and this will continue.

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The voice of the child/Direct work with Young People.	Encourage parents to consider their child's views & ensure they are represented in meetings with schools, the LA etc. and in formal assessment paperwork. Support young people with information, advice and support and sign post to other sources of support to enable them to take part in decisions made about them. To increase reach-Team to actively promote the service in colleges- priority provide impartial, comprehensive and high quality information, advice, guidance and support to all young people to assist them to make successful transitions to further learning and work.	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child's, young person view taken into account when decisions are made Number of young people accessing the service increases. Young people participate in local policy and practice decisions Clever Champions group successfully established. <p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from young people Case studies Changes to policy and practice as a result of participation e.g. Local offer Section for YP, 	Clever Champions group to be sustained through the use of School Support Staff, IASS Staff & Volunteers and digital technology. Digital Media to be utilised to engage and communicate with more YP directly. We have also worked collaboratively with local SEND Youth Groups such as LIVE! to establish a mechanism for YP to feedback on various issues affecting them. This will continue with support from us

	Lead Clever champions group to ensure the participation of disabled young people in local and national SEND policy and practice	<p>short break evaluation of tenders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature produced by YP for YP (Decision Making Booklet etc.) 	attending a meeting once a month.
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Partnership working	<p>To attend local groups, NWIASS consortium, IASSNN meetings and other strategy groups to enable the service to adopt a strategic approach Service informs policy and practice at the LA and CCG level by working with parents, children and young people, the Parent Carer Forum and local voluntary groups and organisations.</p> <p>To further develop partnership working between parents and carers and the local authority to ensure co-production becomes embedded in all aspects of SEND</p> <p>To work with parents and carers to develop the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) to be completely led by parents and carers.</p> <p>To deliver training for parents on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-production “Expert Parent” to ensure parents are supported to deliver the training in future to support and empower 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on policy or practice-to share and use good practice with other areas and to feed into national policy and practice Parents will be equal partners with LA and other partners in developing local policy and practice. <p>Evidence Feedback from parents</p>	<p>PCF will lead on Parent/Carer Training and Information Sessions etc. The organisation will be undertaken by the PCF and we will carry on being the lead professionals carrying out the training sessions etc. which will ensure less of our time is used on the event organisation and more time to develop the training and interventions etc.</p> <p>Feedback from those attending training</p> <p>Involvement of service users in decision making</p> <p>Examples of partnership working (e.g. with parent carer forums)</p> <p>Service reach.</p>

	<p>those families waiting to receive a service from CAMHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting other families who have disabled children to navigate the system <p>Initial training July Expert Parent Training</p> <p>To have parent, carer chair and vice chair for pcf and trained parents who are supported to be parent representatives on strategic groups including being representatives for the forum during local area inspection March 2021</p> <p>To develop documentation to support the work of the forum including a co-production policy, a memorandum of understanding and produce a PCF survey for families to report back to SEND SG feedback regarding current situation.</p>		
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Activity	Actions/outputs	Outcome/ evidence /by when	Sustained activity what actions are required.
Service is commissioned in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, through the joint arrangements the LA and CCG must have to consider and agree the information and advice to be provided.	Share nationally document regarding what an IAS Service should look like and deliver with strategic managers Manager to share expertise take part as appropriate in any local discussions regarding the future delivery of the service. Consideration to be given on how to meet capacity if funding is no longer available after 31 st March 2020	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed commissioning process based on an assessment of need, specifying what information, advice and support are to be provided, by whom and how it is to be provided • Agreement with the Local Authority/CCG based on national quality standards setting out the expectations of both the service and its commissioners. 	Joint Commissioning agreement now in place. SLA now in place. December 2020.

Self-Evaluation of Cheshire West and Chester IAS Service: January 2021

Strengths of the Cheshire West and Chester SEND IAS Service

- SEND IAS Service is able to offer impartial support tailored to the individual (up to SEND Tribunal), which may include:
 - Casework support, impartial & up to date information and practical support at meetings.
- SEND IAS Service builds upon service users' skills, knowledge and confidence to promote independence and self-advocacy.
- All staff, independent supporters, and volunteers are trained and competent in providing impartial information and advice for all service users.
- Offering training sessions on various aspects of SEN to parents and carers.
- Providing practical support and information to Cheshire West and Chester Parent Carer Forum and other local parent carer support groups.
- All staff completed accredited legal training and competent in supporting all potential service users in meetings, through statutory processes and preparing for SEND Tribunal.
- Strong links to development of the Local Offer and IASS Website.

- Service innovation and development, during this on-going current situation (The Pandemic) the service has constantly and consistently adapted, developed and utilised more tools available than ever before. Online virtual platforms have been the way forward.
- Excellent feedback from service users.

How we will continue past March 2021:

- **Joint Commissioning (CCG and H&SC)**
- **Staff time, capacity and responsiveness adapted, less travelling to meetings and virtual platforms used for meetings and advice sessions.**
- **Reliance on Digital Media for events etc.**
- **Signposting to national IASS organisations – CONTACT, IPSEA etc.**
- **Case Management System – Crossdata, used to its full potential to streamline administration duties.**
- **Emphasis on empowering families making them more resilient, and better informed to challenge situations and be heard.**
- **Partnership working with PCF.**
- **Local Offer**
- **Volunteers and wider community SEND networks.**
- **Feedback/Case studies to demonstrate to all stakeholders our importance and effectiveness, including service reach.**