

Leicester City IASS: Improving our digital and training offer

Context

The Leicester City IASS is outsourced and became SENDIASS Leicester in 2014 in response to the C&FA. Leicester City has a 0-19 population of approximately 135,000. The service funding has remained the same for many years and yet demand has increased, thus the service needed to evolve in order to reach as many people as possible. In the context of the Covid pandemic the service also needed to adapt quickly in terms of developing the digital offer to ensure that the service could be accessed as an alternative to face to face delivery.

The issue that was identified to be tackled using IASP funding

Given the existing mismatch between core funding and increased demand the service was already struggling with, the impact of a global pandemic required the service to focus on evolving creatively in order to widen its reach. It was essential that the additional resourcing enabled legacy building i.e. something that could continue into the future without reliance on additional funding to sustain it.

To ensure accessibility of the service, the Digital Offer became the focus of this change to 'take the service out to others' without physically requiring additional staff to do this. As such this would future proof some of the service delivery thus ensuring it was not reliant on funding or physical staffing.

How the funding was used

The Digital Offer was identified as a primary source of information for many. The impact of Covid 19 and lockdown also highlighted the importance of offering information, advice and support other than in a physical environment.

The service already had its own dedicated and standalone website but the IASP funding supported the employment of a Social Media and Digital Offer Co-ordinator for a few hours a week to redesign this alongside setting up Facebook and Twitter and the monitoring of these accounts. The CYP and Training Officer employed using the IASP funding worked closely with this role to create new packages specifically for CYP, their parents/carers and professionals. The Training Offer was created to extend the reach of the IASS beyond that of individual IAS, to ensure all had access to high quality, legal information and advice as well as information relating to local policy and processes. With the aim being on self-service the Training Offer and thus the Digital Offer evolved to provide self-help tools and platforms of support allowing information and advice to be accessible so the majority of families could make informed choices.

After consulting with CYP and their parents/carers to identify key topics they would like included, and how they would like to receive/access this information, the training/awareness sessions were designed and recorded with visuals and voice overs. Information was made available online to be accessed "on demand" by families at their own convenience. In addition, the sessions were also offered at set times supported by a SENDIASS Officer to provide a more formal and supported learning experience.

Training/information sessions were also designed and delivered to SENCOs to support them in capturing CYP views thus ensuring they were included throughout the Annual Review and other school processes.

The difference made (i.e. the impact of your work and how your service/service users have benefitted)

CYP, their parents and carers and professionals have all benefitted from the work as there is now an accessible, free and impartial set of packages on the website, via YouTube and communication of information via social media platforms. There have been 279 YouTube views of resources, 453 Facebook followers, 377 Twitter followers all accessing the IASS through the Digital Offer, numbers the service could not have been able to support in a physical world with current staffing capacity.

The service has benefited by being able to offer a range of information and advice beyond that of one-to-one support. The Digital Offer compliments the traditional face-to-face offer meaning there is choice of how to access the service to suit individual requirements and importantly this option will remain beyond the additional funding provided by the IASP Programme thus ensuring the service is accessible and compliant.

Contact details

Lucy Synclere

SENDIASS Leicester Manager

info@sendiassleicester.org.uk