

## Hackney: Reflections on IAS service developments and improvements

Hackney is an Inner London borough covering an area of 19.06 square kilometres (7.4 sq mi) with a population of approximately 276,000; 25% being aged under 20 (44,554 of school age); only 15% being over 55 and more than 33% being born outside the UK. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most densely populated borough in London. Hackney is a culturally diverse area with a number of areas experiencing extreme deprivation and for many families English is not their first language. Hackney has 1833 EHCPs with less than a third educated in units or special schools. Manifesto priorities include attainment and achievement and improving the life chances of every CYP and learner in Hackney. Specific groups identified include young black boys and the significant Orthodox Jewish community mainly located in the NE of the borough and accounting for 7.4% of Hackney's population.

Partnership working is very important in Hackney and the IASS is seen as a key player in helping facilitate and improve this. The SENDIASS offers a full range of statutory services to CYP and their families and endeavours to work with all members of its community. In addition to direct casework, training is provided to parents and practitioners as part of the service's core offer.

### The challenge

At the time of the reforms, the service was suddenly without a substantive head of service and consequently struggled to reinvent itself to meet the new requirements. Moving forward to fulfil the wider remit that covers the 0-25 years age range that also required providing information, advice and support directly to YP themselves.

Much of the IASS work over the last couple of years has been entirely reactive in part due to the increased demand following the reforms and exacerbated by fluctuating staffing.

As part of future development the IASS hopes to be able to expand its offer so it can be a more proactive service and develop a quality information, advice and support offer for YP in the same way that it has for parents.

Additionally, although the service believes it is doing a good job, it has not thus far had capacity to be able to evidence this either by evaluating its direct service delivery or by ascertaining from its peers and partner agencies what their true perception of service delivery is.

### Initial impact of IAS programme funding

Initial funding has enabled the recruitment of a YP's caseworker to start to drive forward in a practical sense the strategic development work that had already been started by the Head of Service. Additionally the focus on this programme has enabled the Head of Service to spend time exploring further with the team what their priority areas for development are including evaluation processes. The national focus and support from the DfE has provoked and supported a number of local strategic conversations and a willingness to explore a more holistic buy-in from strategic partners and agencies.

helping develop further opportunities in respect of joined up working and explorative conversations into joint commissioning.

## Impact to service beneficiaries

This exercise has been beneficial in planning with staff and strategic partners, identifying and confirming some of the service's strengths and weaknesses. Stakeholder consultation for example has identified a need to expand the IASS drop-in sessions by including one evening a month as a multi agency event. This has been identified as being beneficial to families and to the practitioners who also make themselves available for these sessions to demonstrate that this is an effective use of their time as well.

The new Minimum Standards are helping support additional strategic and operational conversations between Education, Health and Social Care.

The appointment of a YP 's caseworker has already started to expand the opportunities for active participation by YP themselves and reinforces this message to all practitioners and agencies.

## Lessons learnt

Knowing that the service has a higher profile and appreciation from the DfE and access to additional funding has helped to develop and support staff resilience, as the demand on the team is incessant. It is felt that there is beginning to be a greater awareness of this both locally, nationally, internally and externally. This funding has helped to raise the service profile within and externally to the LA and across Education, Health and Social Care.

## How is the approach being sustained?

Being able to provide clear and sustained evidence in respect of evaluations will help to strengthen conversations in respect of joint commissioning and attract increased representation on the Steering Group. It is hoped this will encourage a deeper understanding from within the LA, of the benefits for further developments e.g. how the service can contribute towards greater participation of YP and improved co-production with families and YP.

Celebrating success and learning from good practice is part of the mantra of Hackney IASS and this has led to it being seen as a key player in delivering and living by this message helping to further facilitate the culture change engendered by the reforms.

The service also hopes to improve its relationship with the Parent Carer Forum and seek greater opportunities for co-production and co-delivery of events in order to further expand service reach to include more families especially from within the identified vulnerable groups in the borough.

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