

Hartlepool IASS: Reflecting on the benefits of IASP Funding

The context

Hartlepool SENDAISS was successful in attracting IASP funding to enable it to provide a full service offer against the minimum standards. The SENDAISS Operational Plan has been developed and the approaches outlined are being implemented to meet the goals and outcomes.

To enable this to happen, the service manager increased her hours to dedicate time to enable work at a strategic level to gain commitment through the SEND Strategy and Operational Groups by highlighting and raising awareness of the value and importance of the work and support to families and young people through the development of the operational plans. This included setting out to obtain full commitment from Education, Health and Social Care to work with the SENDAISS on a jointly commissioned basis.

The case study below demonstrates how the IASP funding has been used to date to enhance the work of the service.

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

The funding has greatly improved the focus on extending the remit of the service by appointing a young person's worker to work primarily with post 16 young people and those going through Year 9 transition (Preparation for Adulthood). The increase in hours of the manager to work strategically has enabled a full service offer as stated in the minimum standards. The service is now fully operational over 5 days a week and 52 weeks of the year.

Drop-in sessions for parents and carers are now available on a fortnightly basis which has enhanced the way in which the service is delivered and provides further reach to families across different times of the day. Information days have also been delivered to raise awareness and increase the profile of the service.

Funding has also allowed the service to promote more widely and effectively to also increase the service reach and ways it can be accessed.

Since the implementation of the 2 year operational plan, there has been an increase in service users accessing the service. In 2017/18, the reach was 88, 2018/19, increased to 126 and in the current academic year to date the service has and is currently offering support to 54 families.

Funding has also enabled the service to deliver joint training across the North East which has enable parents, carers and young people access to workshops that have been requested by them and delivered in a way that builds up confidence and resilience of individuals to be able to challenge and engage in a more positive way with schools, LAs and health providers.

The funding has also enhanced the skills and knowledge of SENDAISS Staff in that they have been able to access more service specific training to better support service users.

Ways in which improvements have positively enhanced the service user experience

The appointment of the Young Person's worker has enhanced the direct work to young people and support them through their education if required including as an advocate to ensure their views, and wishes are heard and implemented. This involves engaging with schools and colleges to raise the profile of the service to increase access for young people so they can receive the support they require in a timely way.

A new website is currently under development. It will include a young person's section to meet their needs, together with the introduction of a digital platform to enable both young people and families to communicate with the service more effectively and efficiently. This is a very exciting and will bring the service in line with current technology and enhance the service user experience and hopefully engage and attract more young people to access the service in a way that is comfortable to them.

Feedback from parents and carers who have accessed the drop-in sessions is that it has been very useful. They like that they don't have to make an appointment as it places less pressure on them should they need to cancel. The opportunity to have face to face discussions provides the opportunity to break down barriers, build relationships and confidence as they feel listened to in a safe environment over a cuppa and be provided with ideas and solutions to support them e.g. in school meetings. This means more support time is available for more complex cases. These sessions are also used to promote and signpost other services relevant to families. The drop-in sessions have seen an increase of people access SENDIASS either due to word or mouth or by promotion of the service via various means.

The training delivered to date has provided a valuable insight into SEND Law and SEN Support for parents, carers and young people. These are still ongoing and an evaluation report will be produced and forwarded to the IAS Programme. This work has been delivered on a collaborative basis across the North East SENDIASSs, which has brought parents, carers and young people together to be able to share experiences and solutions. The sessions have also provided information on their rights and how they can challenge LAs and schools with more confidence.

These are a few of the comments received from the training feedback:

"Preparing for adulthood - what a good plan looks like"

"Highly informative and useful. Presented in a parent friendly way"

"Complicated law broken down into easy to understand, with real life examples"

"Trainer knowledgeable on their subject area. Spoke with interest, approachable and willing to answer questions"

"Knowing my rights and explaining the misconceptions that we think we can't challenge"

"The trainer was truly amazing and explained everything and more..."

"Knowing legal obligations and parental rights"

"Key points, how funding is spent in school and what 1:1 really means"

"Better understanding what a Notional Budget is"

"Being better prepared for meetings in school and the right things to ask"

Lessons the service has learnt making service improvements

The appointment of a Young Person's worker has provided more opportunities and direct access to the service for young people that hadn't been possible previously. The importance of management time to

develop the strategic links and raise awareness of what the service can provide and a better understanding of what support and information families require.

It has demonstrated that with the additional funding greater reach, including young people, is achievable and the need to ensure that this is not lost once the IASP funding ceases.

The approach being taken to sustain the improvements achieved

By working very closely with the SEND Strategy and Operational Group, which includes representation from the LA, Health, schools, Social Care, parents and SENDIASS to ensure that there is buy-in and commitment from all parties of the importance of the service and longer term sustainability to be able to deliver and continue to deliver a full service offer.

By working in conjunction with the SEND Strategy Group to develop an agreement with the LA and the clinical commissioning group to be signed by all parties to demonstrate their commitment to the service and what the expectation is of all parties.

Closely working with the parent carer forum to jointly deliver training, continue the drop-in sessions for parents, carers and young people and by working together to access funding to enable this to happen.

Continue to work across the SENDIASSs across the North East Region to deliver training and workshops collaboratively to parents and carers and explore ways of attracting funding to support this delivery.

Continue to support a Young Person's Steering Group to help shape services and have a voice at strategic level to effect change.

Contact details:

Tracy Liveras

Service Manager

Hartlepool SENDIASS

tracy.liveras@hartlepool.gov.uk