

## Hull IASS : Improving our offer, increasing impact

### The context

Kids Hull has been the SENDIASS provider for a number of years dating back to Parent Partnership. The service is well established and highly regarded across the city by parents and professionals; parents report that it is a gold standard service. Unintentionally, a number of challenges developed as the service grew. Parents often regarded practitioners as their “Key Worker” who would automatically support them for the duration of their child’s school life, which in turn led to a caseload heavy culture with some cases spanning a number of years. This was compounded by a lack of outcome focus meaning in a number of cases there was no clearly identified purpose or end to the support being offered. These factors became a barrier to dynamic progress and full compliance with the national IASS standards.

In response to the needs stated above Kids Hull developed clear overarching objectives to develop the service and ensure service compliance. The overall strategic aims were to;

1. Empower parents and young people to have the information and confidence to manage the challenges and barriers they face in Education, Health and Social Care
2. To have a greater focus on outcomes for the service, parents and young people.
3. To create a greater capacity in the team for the development of the service by reducing casework.

These aims informed the development of the operational plan and the goals as stated in the task order.

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

As a result of the service review a tiered approach has been introduced to providing support, with an emphasis on equipping and empowering parents. An additional member of staff has been employed to support the service working differently, adding capacity during the transition to achieve the agreed aims in the task order. One of the primary areas successfully targeted for improvement was the “duty” telephone advice line. Due to offering a more effective and accessible phone advice service to parents, they are being empowered to address and resolve issues without the need for increased levels of support which has resulted in a significant reduction in referrals requiring face-to-face support. Previously approximately 50% of phone advice converted to face-to-face referrals, this has reduced to 33%. Parents appear more confident and have been happy to approach difficulties independently empowered by the information and advice provided. Consequently there has been a reduction in waiting times for face-to-face support. There is also now an opportunity for parents and young people to attend one-off visits to the office on Fridays. This was not an agreed goal for the task order but has been a positive consequence of the new way of working. A drop-in offer has been established and has been rolled out across the city at strategic locations. These have included children’s centres, supermarkets, assisted living community areas and soon will include schools. This has improved the offer to hard to reach groups and enabled areas of the community previously unable to access the service, new opportunities to do so. The drop-ins are provided at different times, including evenings, to improve opportunities for contacting the service.

With the increased capacity to implement change, the increased phone presence has enabled the service develop in other key areas such as providing of training packages. These have been developed following consultation with parent forum and the steering group and have been targeted at specific areas where parents and young people feel there is not adequate information and support available.

## Ways in which improvements have positively enhanced the service user experience

There have been a number of ways the changes to the service have enhanced the experience for service users. These have included;

- **Implementing a tiered support process** – This has enabled appropriate support to families to be offered in a timely way. It has ensured effective triage meaning the highest need families such as those in appeal process are can be prioritised accordingly.
- **Shorter waiting times** – With the reduction in 1:1 casework, practitioners are able to allocate and begin support far more efficiently for all cases. This is also linked closely to having clearer outcomes for support and alternative ways for families to access the service such as drop-ins.
- **Parents feel more confident** – This is evidenced through the reduction in referrals from phone advice. There has also been a decrease in cases the service has acted as “representative” at SENDIST, as parents have felt more confident to represent themselves with SENDIASS as support.
- **More ways to access service** – with the increased offer for the service parents and young people now have a range of ways to access support.
- **Improved accessibility for people with mobility issues and/or living in deprivation** – Hull is higher than national average for people living in poverty. This creates inequality and barriers to accessing services particularly if services are not in the local community. People living with disability and mobility issues are already disadvantaged in relation to mobility and accessing services. By arranging drop ins in a variety of key locations around the city SENDIASS is enabling hard to reach and disadvantaged groups a greater level of access to its service.

## Lessons the service has learnt making service improvements

- Clear systems and processes support teams to work more efficiently and effectively
- Clear boundaries and outcomes are helpful for empowering parents to self-advocate and have confidence instead of fostering reliance on services.
- Taking risks and switching approaches is necessary but you must take the whole team on the journey and ensure the process is clear to everyone.

## The approach being taken to sustain the improvements achieved

The need for support increases year on year, yet funding and capacity have not moved in line with this. By being able to increase capacity in the team and reducing the casework culture along with changes in service delivery processes, has improved and increased efficiency. There is a shift towards a proactive delivery of information to equip and empower parents, as opposed to being reactive and holding cases. These areas are sustainable and adopting these new ways of working has demonstrated ways of increasing capacity in the team for other functions and creative working methods. There are aspects of the new offer that may require additional staff in order to maintain and continue in the future, such as the training. The service is considering this question and how the new way of working will shape the service into the future.

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