



## Newcastle IASS : Relaunching the service offer

### The context

The national minimum standards have prompted change within Newcastle SENDIASS to bring the service in line with the national expectations. The service has been liaising with the LA and the CCG to develop a joint commissioning agreement and to look at the service structure. The lead specialist, who has been with the service for over 20 years, has submitted her notice and will retire at the end of August 2021. This will lead to a change of leadership for the service.

The IASP funding has been used to develop a website and social media page as specified in the minimum standards. During the pandemic adaptations have been made to the service procedures to ensure it is running effectively “from home”. During this period the lease for the office, which is rented space at a charity building, came up for renewal and a decision was made in the LA to not renew the lease, but to move the service to a stand-alone council building. This will enable the service to remain at arm’s length from the LA, and also enable the council to reduce costly outgoings.

### The issue that was identified to be tackled using IASP funding

Newcastle SENDIASS is a popular well used service. The funding was used to ensure it is meeting the national minimum standards while so many changes were being made to the service, including all contact information and a new team, so it was decided it would be necessary to do a complete service relaunch. It was felt this would ensure that the correct information is being shared, reduce confusion and use the opportunity to expand the reach of the service. It is so important to the service that CYP, parents and professionals know who the service and who it is for; what it’s role is; and how to make contact.

### How the funding was used

As the pandemic is still ongoing this has impacted on anticipated progress with many aspects of the relaunch, however, the funding is being securely carried forward into next year’s budget to enable the launch to be completed as planned.

The new staffing structure consists of a SENDIASS manager, a senior practitioner, a parent/carer worker and a CYP worker, has been agreed in principle by the SEND executive board. This has now progressed to the new service manager job description sitting with HR ready to be advertised. The pandemic put a halt on the hiring of staff and so this has also caused delays.

The new premises for the service have been secured and arrangements have been made for removals to transfer the office equipment and furniture. However, the requirement to work from home remains in place, thus preventing setting up the new office space ready for business. New phone lines have been sourced and arrangements are in place with the previous landlords to ensure no calls are being missed. It was agreed not

to release any publicity with the new location and contact numbers until the office can be operational and staffed. Publication materials have been researched and costed ready to order for the relaunch.

The pandemic has created opportunities to see how things can be done differently including how information can be delivered. The service has noticed how online resources have become more popular as people are using technology a lot more. A lot of time was spent researching and developing a new website and social media platform which are both now live. The service has become aware that 'talking heads' and Vlog style videos have a vast appeal and are accessible to a much wider audience and so is now planning videos it would like to record to be posted on the website and social media platform, but also shared between professionals, parents and individuals. The LA has recently created some apprenticeships for YP with SEND. One of those roles is specifically around technical projects, IT and resources. Discussions have taken place with the YP in post and the community Wellbeing Officer, who is their manager, about commissioning them to help to create the videos for the service. As these videos will create an opportunity for people to meet the team and see the faces behind the voice, it was concluded that it would be beneficial to wait until the new team and structure is in place.

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

Once it is possible to implement all aspects of the plan it will mean the service will be fully compliant with the national minimum standards.

The service has really taken on board the need to be fully accessible to a wide range of needs. The development of the online platforms has been service user led and service information has been compiled into a range of different mediums to make it accessible for all. The service has already received really positive feedback about the planned videos even though they are still delayed due to the pandemic.

The plan to do a full-service relaunch is to help give a clear message about what the service is and who it for, what it does and how to make contact and is intended to reach as wide an audience as possible. As part of the joint commissioning agreement, discussions have taken place including how awareness of the service can be raised and promoted across Education, Health and Social Care (professionals and families). This will increase service reach and enable more families to get the advice and support they need.

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