

# North Lincolnshire IASS : increasing the service engagement with young people

## The context

During recent years, YP were an under represented group amongst those who have directly engaged with the North Lincolnshire service. In spring 2019, data showed that over a 1 year period a total of 5 YP had directly accessed the service for Information, Advice and Support. As a result of this, engagement with YP was identified as a key development opportunity for the upcoming year and formed the basis of the IASP funding application in the areas of Service Contribution and Supporting Core Functions.

In order to develop engagement with YP effectively, it was identified that the core team required a SENDIASS Officer post with dedicated time to invest into a CYP's Engagement Plan. In addition to developing SENDIASS' work with children, the purpose of the plan was to broaden service reach to YP, ensuring they have access to information, advice and support that will help them make informed choices about their future, as well as having the opportunity to share ideas to help develop the service.

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

Having a dedicated SENDIASS YP Officer with capacity to develop the offer to YP and to complete casework with those who require a higher level of support has enhanced the local service offer. The post has recently been secured on a permanent basis which has developed further stability within the team and ensures that the work in this area is sustainable on a long term basis.

The officer has co-produced a CYP'S Engagement Plan outlining how the offer will be developed. In line with the plan, time has been ring-fenced which to date, has included meeting with various staff across local post 16 provision to raise awareness of the service and ensure that those supporting YP with SEN are able to sign post or refer appropriately. In addition, the officer has participated in various local events ranging from open evenings for YP within post 16 provision, to holding an information stall at local Learning Disability Awareness Week events. This provided opportunities for YP to meet the officer informally, learn more about the service and its purpose, and gain specific information and advice when required.

The work has also developed the service offer to CYP who are attending or preparing to attend post 16 provision through engagement within transition events held at a local specialist secondary school. Further work has also taken place directly with YP in post 16 provision, supporting them to understand their rights and providing the opportunity to access specific information relating to their personal circumstances.

Through consultation, YP have been involved in the review of easy read leaflets and have also contributed to decisions around how SENDIASS extends the reach to more YP.

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

During the six months since the CYP's Engagement Plan was developed, the service has reached out to many YP who have either not accessed the service before, or were not previously aware of the service and its offer to YP. During the same period, the service has seen 140% increase in YP who have had contact with the service. This figure includes a combination of YP who have had contact with the officer at events,

have been involved in targeted sessions, have been consulted with about service developments and/or have requested direct support.

Many of the YP who the service has had contact with have requested specific information, advice or support about their personal circumstances in areas such as their rights as a YP, which they have been able to access as a result of the enhanced offer to YP. In addition to this, there have been direct requests for more intensive involvement, including requests from those who had initially appeared hesitant to learn about the service. These requests include advocacy support within meetings. Where a higher level of support has been provided, positive feedback has been gained from YP, which includes that it has been useful and that they would contact SENDIASS in the future if they required further support. Parents have also shared the benefits of their YP having support from an independent professional who has knowledge about educational processes who can support them to represent themselves.

## Lessons the service has learnt making service improvements

The work undertaken to date has indicated that the majority of YP who have engaged with the officer through local events across education and social care, were not previously aware of North Lincolnshire SENDIASS.

Whilst one of the key aims of this area of development is to promote self-advocacy amongst YP and ensure they are involved in the co-production of the service, it is identified that raising awareness of the service to YP is a continuous area of development. As the engagement opportunities have predominately been focussed within education settings, opportunities via Health events are now being explored for the next reporting period.

The work has highlighted that the team will continue to be responsive to the needs of YP and therefore utilise a range of creative engagement techniques.

## The approach being taken to sustain the improvements achieved

Developing the offer to YP remains a key priority for North Lincolnshire SENDIASS and will continue to form part of local planning and service development. The CYP's Engagement Plan remains in place and this will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis. There are various commitments that the team have made to ensure that the profile of the service continues to be raised directly with YP and through engagement with professionals who support them. These commitments include attendance at upcoming post 16 provision SENCO meetings and the current development of YP's promotional materials.

Appropriate enhanced training has been identified to ensure that staff skills in engaging with YP are continually developed; this may help the service to reach out to more YP. The team are also exploring how training can be provided to YP directly.

The team will continually strive to seek ways to gain feedback from YP and ensure that their views are reflected within the work that we do.

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