

North East Lincolnshire IASS: Adapt the service offer to meet the changing landscape due to Covid-19

Since March 2020 it has been a time of challenge with a need to radically change many aspects of day-to-day life. None more so than for parents of CYP with SEND and their children and young people themselves. Covid-19, and the ensuing restrictions, shifted where people could turn to for help and support and how they interacted with friends, family and services. As the pandemic unfolded parents grappled with working from home, fear of losing their jobs, educating their children at home, balancing the anxiety of sending children back into school etc. Throughout this period NE Lincs SENDIASS adapted and developed its offer of support to ensure that it could continue to respond to the needs of the families in the local area.

The issue that was identified to be tackled using IASP funding

The aims and outcomes for IASP funding 20/21 were planned ahead of Covid-19 becoming a reality. However, the funding and identified aims/outcomes enabled the service to adapt to meet the changing landscape which required everyone to adapt and learn in order to be able to successfully navigate a way through. The key issues identified all had a common thread – technology – and as 2020/21 panned out being able to develop the service's digital capacity and expertise was crucial. Technology became the best means of communication and was extremely important in keeping people connected with their loved ones, friends and services which parents, CYP with SEND are often reliant on. As the pandemic progressed people began to have more positive views of technology and the service was able to empower and support parents and YP on this journey. This was achieved by:

- Piloting the position of Information Officer to lead on launching, promoting and maintaining a digital presence on social media (Facebook) and the new SENDIASS website
- Having capacity to design new workshops and adapt existing workshops to be accessible on digital platforms and relevant to the new digital world.

How the funding was used

Pilot upskilling admin:

A key member of the administration team was identified who was able to:

- Develop and maintain the newly established social media links
- Lead on the development and launch of the new, compliant SENDIASS website
- Research local sources of support and information outside the SENDIASS remit
- Completed IPSEA levels 1 & 2 (almost completed level 3)
- Analyse data to explore in detail emerging trends especially at Intervention Levels 1 and 2 of enquiries
- Scope interest in possible volunteers to be recruited

Delivering SEND training to identified key team meetings:

The 20/21 operational plan included key services and teams of professionals to deliver targeted training to. The service worked alongside the Parent Carer forum to identify current training needs of parents. IASP funding provided the resources to adapt all the workshops to a digital format as well as being able to develop new workshops to meet local need i.e. a workshop on Elective Home Education.

The difference/impact made

Elective Home Education training was developed by SENDIASS in response to a request from the LA following a huge rise in requests for EHE in the local area. Many parents were unaware of the implications of electing to home educate and the impact it would have on them as a family unit. The training was devised to upskill parents/ carers about all aspects when making the EHE decision including the wider implications of EHE such as taking exams e.g. GCSE's, the associated costs and what this might mean if they have an EHCP or SEND.

The hope is that this will have a future impact on reducing enquiries/referrals from parents who are struggling with EHE and wishing to put in a parental request for an EHC assessment or who are struggling to enrol their child back into formal education.

Transition into post 16 opportunities training. The idea behind this training was to upskill parents/carers with the knowledge base of what should happen when their child transitions into colleges/post 16 settings and to raise their awareness of what is available for post 16 options.

Parents who attended these workshops found the training to be extremely useful as they had not realised all the options available for their YP; professionals (social workers) found it useful to know what schools and colleges should be doing. It is hoped that the future impact will enable other agencies working with families to feel more confident in "challenging" within their own job roles.

Humber Teaching School training. A link was established during a networking day organised by the LA to promote SEND. The importance of upskilling new and existing members of the teaching and support staff about the Code of Practice and laws of SEND in education was an invaluable link. The impact is to upskill teaching staff to be able to support children with SEND and reduce the number of parents having to use SENDIASS. By upskilling at the "source" it ensures high quality SEND within all settings and instils confidence with the parents of children with SEND.

SEND is not taught in great depth on the teacher training courses and it raised the awareness and the importance of getting it right for children with SEND. It also raised the awareness of SENDIASS within lots of different educational settings across primary to secondary.

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