



# **SEND IASS**

Special Educational Needs  
and Disability Information,  
Advice and Support Service

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2015 - 2016**

## **Introduction**

From 1st September 2014, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide SEND Information Advice and Support Services as outlined in the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0-25 years) 2014*.

SENDIASS is expected to meet a set of quality standards outlined by the DfE, and based around the following five key areas:

- Commissioning, Governance and management
- Strategic functions
- Provision of Information and Advice
- Supporting Individuals
- Professional development and training

The quality standards outline clear expectations of the SEND Information Advice and Support Service and they act to support both the local authority and the service itself to ensure the quality of the service provided, and its impact for service users.

## **Commissioning Governance and Management**

### **Staffing**

The service has benefitted from a year of stability within the team. There are currently 2 permanent SEND IASS officers and a part time admin assistant. The service is line-managed via Hampshire's Childrens Services Education Officer for West Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Dorothy Harrington Snr SEND IAS Officer

Emma Morris SEND IAS Officer

Heather Drudge, Admin Assistant

Our volunteers: Alison Priddle, Steve Palmer, Maxine Sewell, Trish Wray, Jane Pelosi, Tania Burnett, Terrie Yeomans and Lisa Ross.

## **Volunteers**

Following a successful recruitment process we have 8 IAS's with an active caseload.

In addition to the cases the volunteers currently hold, some of the volunteers have supported parents at meetings with parents when SENDIASS Officers are not available to attend.

Some of the cases held by volunteers involve very short term input such as attending an Annual Review, or a school meeting, with the parent and the school. Other cases require more ongoing support. Six volunteers have completed the Independent Support Training with CDC and are able to support parents and young people through the Statutory Assessment process from start to finish.

SENDIASS has been extremely busy between September 2015 and August 2016 and the support from our volunteers is invaluable.

## **Independent Support Grant**

The Government has continued to provide grant funding to SEND IASS via the Council for Disabled Children (CDC). We provide termly data to CDC who acts as an agent on behalf of the DfE to monitoring the Independent Support Programme. The aim of the funding is to provide an element of Independent Support as well as use the funding to "build capacity" to ensure the new duties around the provision of information, advice and support are in place. We were successful in this bid and an additional £20,000 was allocated during the financial year April 2015-March 2016, with a further funding of £20,000 for the financial period to March 2017.

Alongside our 2 members of staff, 6 volunteers have completed the mandatory training to act as Independent Supporters.

SEND IASS is operated at arm's length of the local authority, located within a separate building in the centre of Newport.

## **Strategic Functions**

The SENDIASS team has been involved in the SEND Reform agenda – supporting some of the work streams associated with the major changes affecting process, policy and service delivery.

### **Contribution to regional and national policy and practice:**

SENDIASS attends termly regional group meetings and events. Meetings have focused on developing advice for parents and young people, the National Quality Standards for SEND Information, Advice and Support Services and sharing practice.

The SENDIASS team are also members of the National Information, Advice and Support Network Group, which provides peer support on issues affecting the delivery of the Information, Advice and Support Services throughout England. We also attend national policy days and conferences where possible.

### **Provision of Information & Advice and Supporting Individuals**

SEND IASS operates an open referral policy and provides confidential, impartial information, advice and support to parents/carers, children and young people on the Isle of Wight aged 0-25 years who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a broad area for the service which was previously aimed solely at supporting parents/carers, with the same long-term staffing arrangements in place.

Through liaison and partnership working we provide active support to contribute to positive outcomes for children and young people.

## **SEND IAS service to children and young people**

We have not seen much demand specifically from young people themselves, however we have met a number of young people alongside their parents. From September 2016 we will have a Young People Development Officer in post, so this is an area for development in the coming months.

### **Service Users between September 2015 and August 2016**

<b>Information and advice</b>	<b>New Referrals resulting in casework (Information, advice and support)</b>	<b>Total number of clients who received a service from SEND IASS (including ongoing cases)</b>
<b>74</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>482</b>

Number of young people 16-25 receiving a service	1
Number of young people 16-25 receiving a service (with their parent)	
Number of parents supported with Mediation	6
Number of parents supported with Tribunal preparation	4
Tribunals Attended	0
Formal Complaints (school and LA)	15

### **The Independent Support Programme**

IASS continues to offer Independent Support in collaboration with People Matter, the Independent Support Provider for the Isle of Wight. We have a good working relationship with People Matter. There are referrals from SENDIASS to People Matter and vice versa as appropriate, when the referral is outside of the Independent Support Contract.

Alongside our 2 members of staff, 6 volunteers have completed the mandatory training to act as Independent Supporters.

### **Service User Feedback**

Every year the service reviews its effectiveness by seeking feedback from users in the form of a survey. In June 2016 a questionnaire was sent to parents via a survey monkey and post. 200 surveys were sent out and we received 35 responses, a rate of 17%.

### **How we make a difference...**

A parent/carer evaluation of the service was carried out in July. A full copy of the survey is at the end of this report. (Appendix 1).

The most common way that parents found out about SEND IASS is from other parents, (29%), school (29%). All of the responses were positive about the service they had received from SEND IASS and the impact.

93% of respondents found the service very easy or easy to contact; this was down from 100% on the previous survey, but was due to a change to our telephone system, which caused difficulty with incoming calls for a period of 2-3 months.

Of those parents that responded 97% responded that they felt we had remained very neutral, fair and unbiased throughout or most of the time (3%).

When asked the question "what difference do you think our information, advice and support has made for you"? 78% said a great deal of difference, 15% a fair amount of difference and 6% some difference.

72% said that they felt more confident and 69% felt that their child's needs were better understood than they were. 60% felt that their child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved. 67% said that they have a greater understanding of the SEN Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children with SEN.

Very satisfied that when I have approached you for advice contact has always been very prompt. This is imperative when timescales have to be met. The difference that having sought your advice is huge. Thank you

## **Information and Publicity**

### **Publications**

SENDIASS provides a comprehensive range of information leaflets for parents; these are also available on the SENDIASS website. Any information given to parents or included on the website is closely monitored to ensure that it is impartial and legally accurate. Feedback from parents/carers and other stakeholders clearly shows that information they receive is seen as impartial.

At SENDIASS we have our own logo, colour etc. on our publications, whilst still meeting the LA requirements as required within our quality standards.

The SEND IASS termly newsletter is distributed to parents, schools/early years' settings, local authority officers, health services, multi-agency teams, and voluntary organisations.

### **Website**

Our new website was launched in April 2016. We have received 3,565 page views from 717 visitors upto 31<sup>st</sup> August. The website continues to contain up-to-date and relevant information for parents and children and young people with SEND.

## **Networking and Collaboration**

### **Professional Development and Training**

#### **Training accessed by service staff and volunteers**

Both SEND IASS officers have now completed the IPSEA online legal training to Level 3 – there is due to be a face-face element to this course too in Autumn 2016. This area of training focussed on areas such as tribunal, judicial review and Disability Discrimination.

Other training that we have attended:

- Jordans Legal Conference
- Transitions and Transfers
- Transition Workshop

## **Training delivered**

'Communicating effectively with parents' delivered to Early years and primary SENCOs.

- Volunteer training programme
- Parent workshops on SEN Support, EHCP and Personal Budget and EHCP and Outcomes.
- Parent Information sessions in schools

Service staff often visit groups, services and events to promote the IASS. We also receive a number of requests from voluntary groups and schools to talk about our service and to be on hand to talk to parents and young people. Here are some of the events that we have attended:

- Moving on Evening St Georges Special School
- Careers Fair, St Georges Special School
- Short Breaks Fun Day
- Transition Conference run by Parents Voice
- Personal Budget Workshop

## **Priorities for 2016/17**

- Develop our service to Young People including promoting Year 9 annual reviews and transition to adulthood planning and peer mentoring.
- Social Media
- Keep confidentiality and impartiality policies under review.
- Develop information sessions for parents within schools around identification and SEN Support
- Consider steering group/advisory group.
- Form stronger links with Parents Voice

**If you have any comments/question please contact: Dorothy Harrington,  
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