BRACKNELL FOREST INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE (IASS) FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 17/18
(Including work completed during August 2018)

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
   a.) IASS Background – legislation
   b.) IASS vision
   c.) IASS mission
   d.) IASS Development to date

2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
   a.) Working with Service User Statistics
   b.) Raising Awareness of IASS
   c.) Staff Training and Development

3. SERVICE EVALUATIONS / FEEDBACK
   a.) Summary of Annual Service Evaluations
   b.) Informal feedback

4. FUTURE STEPS – WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

5. APPENDICES
   a.) Short Evaluation form results
   b.) Extended Evaluation form results
1. INTRODUCTION

a.) Background – Legislation

The Children and Families Act 2014 Sections 19 (c), 26 (3), 32 and 49 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide impartial information, advice and support (IAS) for children, young people and parent/carers (C, YP & P/C) regarding Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) across education, health and social care relating to C & YP’s educational outcomes.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years (COP) sets an expectation that C, YP & P/C should be involved in the identification, assessment and decision making about the provision to meet special educational needs or disabilities.

Access to free, accurate and impartial information and support, promotes effective partnership working and recognises the importance of the active involvement of C, YP & P/C in decisions about special educational provision.

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the revised COP are intended to strengthen the participation of C, YP & P/C. The National IASS network provides a national quality framework with a set of Quality Standards, endorsed by the Department for Education, to support the statutory provision of impartial information, advice and support as set out in the legislation and associated guidance. The National IASS network are consulting on some new minimum standards for all IAS services and these are expected to be finalised by the end of 2018.

b.) IASS Vision

We believe that children, young people and their parents or carers should be involved in the identification, assessment and decision making about provision to meet special educational needs and disability (SEND). Also that access to free, accurate and impartial information, advice and support, promotes effective partnership working and recognises the importance of the active involvement of children, young people and parents/carers in decisions about special educational provision. Therefore, our vision is that every child and young person in Bracknell Forest with SEND and their parents/carers are aware of our service, understand what we do and know how to contact us. We seek to engage as much as possible with children and young people themselves (as well as parents or carers). Our goal is to always provide timely high quality information, advice and support which is accessible to all. We want all service users to feel empowered with relevant information, advice and support, enabling them to make informed decisions. We aim to make continual improvements to our service though analysing service user feedback and reflecting on best practice.

c.) IASS Mission

We provide information, advice and support to children and young people and their parents/carers about matters relating to SEND, including matters relating to health and social care. We provide a free and confidential service which is run at arms-length from the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

We work to the IASS quality standards and IASS minimum standards. We review our service regularly to ensure compliance with these standards and seek regular service user feedback which we analyse and make service improvements accordingly.
d.) IASS Development to date

Bracknell Forest Parent Partnership Service was established in 1999, with one part-time member of staff. In line with the 2014 SEND reforms, it was decided to build on this existing Parent Partnership service and work began in the summer of 2014 to highlight the gaps in service provision and to establish a way of developing the service. In October 2014, the service became Bracknell Forest Information, Advice & Support Service (IASS), with a new logo, service leaflets and a web presence on Bracknell Forest's local offer.

In 2014, Nationally IAS services were given the opportunity to apply for funding from the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) to provide independent support (IS). IS was a service for parents/carers and young people who were transferring from Statements of Special Educational Needs to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or those who are requesting an EHCPs for the first time. Later the remit of IS extended to cover Annual reviews of existing EHCPs. In October 2014, Bracknell Forest IASS were successful in securing a bid for IS work in Bracknell Forest.

Voluntary organisations were also given the opportunity to apply for funding to carry out IS work. Adviza were successful with their bid to provide IS across Berkshire. IASS worked closely with Adviza to write a Memorandum of Understanding in order to work collaboratively to ensure Bracknell Forest parents/carers and young people could access IS. We regularly met to discuss best practice and recent developments.

The IS funding was to be used to develop the IAS service as well as to provide IS. The funding allowed the service to employ two additional part time members of staff to support the service. It also enabled us to purchase the software system, CrossData to keep service users and case work information in one secure online location and to allow more in-depth analysis of service needs, demands and source of referrals.

In July 2018, the Independent support contract ended. IASS worked with Adviza to ensure that there was a handover process. IASS would now deal with all IS work in Bracknell Forest.

The service currently comprises of three part-time members of staff:

**Senior IASS Co-ordinator (job-share) - Local Authority funded 24 hrs pw term time only**

**Senior IASS Co-ordinator (job-share) – funded by CDC 18 hrs pw term time only**

**Administrator – funded by CDC 9 hrs pw all year round**

With the Independent Support programme ending in July 2018, a new opportunity arose nationally for IAS services to tender for a new contract with the Council for Disabled Children and funding bids. In June 2018, we submitted our tender application and in July 2018, we received confirmation that our tender had been successful. The next step was to prepare a detailed self-review document. We reviewed our service compliance in line with the SEND Code of Practice and IASS Quality Standards and draft new minimum standards. In June – August 18 we asked for feedback about our service from service users and a wide range of other professionals, we set up face to face meetings, email questionnaires and telephone interviews to collect the feedback. From our own review and feedback, we prepared a detailed self-review document, which was submitted to the Council for Disabled Children in September 18.
In December 2018, we submitted a detailed operational development plan, including operational plans for the next two financial years and a risk register, to the Council for Disabled Children. We also applied for the maximum funding available across five separate funding bids (totalling £45,900). We await confirmation of whether our funding bids have been successful. If successful, the new IASS contract will commence in April 2019.

2.) KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

a.) Working with Server Users Statistics

Service users self-refer to the service. We are aware that they are signposted from a variety of sources. We collect this data so that we can analyse where to focus our raising awareness efforts. In this academic year, service users were signposted by schools, CAMHS, Autism Berkshire, Konnections, Parent Carer Forum, Sensory Consortium, internet searches, family and friends and various LA services including the SEN team, Family Intervention Team, Family Information Service, Child Development Centre, Short Breaks and Social care.

When a service user self-refers, we explain our impartiality and confidentiality and they are given the option of going on to our confidential software system, CrossData. The majority, but not all of our service users consent to going onto the system. Where an individual opts out we record our case work as an anonymous enquiry.

During the academic year of September 2017 to August 2018, IASS provided information, advice and support to 143 service users (up from 122 service users in academic year 16/17 – a 17% increase). The way in which we have provided information, advice and support is broken down in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of support</th>
<th>Number academic year 17/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homevisits / Face to face meetings with service users</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Meetings attended with service users</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA meetings attended with service users</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service users helpline calls</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service user email service</td>
<td>1782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of our information, advice and support falls in the following categories:

**In connection with the EHCP process, including:**
- Considering whether to apply and explaining the process
- Submitting views or request letter
- Support at draft planning meetings
- Review proposed EHCP
- Support in looking at school options
- Discussing legal test re: naming a school
- Support with disagreements and appeals (including mediation)
- Support with the Annual review process

**In connection with SEN Support, including**
- Support to understand the Code of Practice
- Support in preparing for school meetings
- Impartial support at school meetings
• Support to families experiencing school refusal or anxiety and other mental health difficulties
• Home to school transport enquires
• Supporting a child’s medical needs at school
• Alternative provision for those who cannot attend mainstream school
• Signposting to other services e.g. Berkshire Healthcare, SEND local offer, support groups, Short Breaks, Social care services

Since January 2018, we have been calculating an approximate percentage of the types of queries we are receiving each month. Statistics can be seen in the following chart.

![Types of Queries](chart.png)

We reflect on trends and we have regular meetings with the SEN team where we have an opportunity to share our observations and feedback any issues.

**b.) Raising Awareness of the IAS service**

The SEND Code of Practice says that local authorities must take steps to make their information and advice services known to children, their parents and young people in their area as well as schools and colleges. The IAS service, whilst small, places great emphasis on raising the profile of the service. During this academic year, IASS have regularly contacted numerous individuals and services to ensure that they and their staff have enough service leaflets and offered to speak at team meetings. We keep a spreadsheet to ensure that we are keeping in contact regularly. Amongst those we have contacted, spoken with and / or met up with are; the SEN team (regular arrangement to collect and send out service leaflets), Family Information Service, Family Intervention Team, Child Development Centre, Youth Services, Berkshire Healthcare, Kids, Virtual Headteacher, Autism Support Service), Kooth, The Autism Group, Homestart Youthline. All local schools are also emailed our service leaflets and provided with hard copy leaflets on request.

We are aware that whilst we are a service for children and young people, nearly all of the service users getting in contact with us are parents. With this in mind we have focused on raising awareness with services that work with children and young people. This academic
year, amongst others we have contacted and met or provided service leaflets to; the Ark, Inner Sense, the Youth Service and Challenge Club, Bracknell and Wokingham College and the Leaving Care Team. We have still not significantly increased the number of children/young people contacting the service but they are still able to access the information, advice and support via their parents. We ask young people to sign a form confirming that they are happy for their parents to talk to us on their behalf and they are aware of their right to use the service. We have focused on raising awareness with children/young people in our operational plan.

We endeavour to attend all the Parent Carer Forum events and have attended four meetings this year. We have attended and spoken at two Autism Berkshire coffee mornings and at a Konnections coffee morning. We attended and presented our service at a Council Development morning to raise awareness of IASS. We are also involved in Bracknell Forest’s regular SEND improvement meetings and attend on a regular basis. This year we developed closer links with the Family Intervention Team (FIT) when we prepared and presented on School’s duties for those with SEND in a parent workshop arranged by the FIT team and have been invited to become a regular feature of their workshops.

c.) IASS Staff Training and Development

This year our staff attended the following courses:

- Personal Budget Training
- Working with Children and Young People with Mental Health Issues
- Mental Health and the Law

We were also present at both South East Regional IASS meetings held this academic year, along with other IASS managers / officers where we shared general information and updates.

3. SERVICE EVALUATIONS AND FEEDBACK

a.) Short & Extended Service Evaluation 2017/2018

This year we set up a new procedure to collect feedback from service users throughout the year, rather than once per year. We have had a small increase in the percentage of evaluation form completed.

We asked 111 service users for their feedback of the service that they received in the form of a questionnaire. Service users were either sent short or a long service questionnaire, depending on the extent of the support provided. Over the two questionnaires we had a 30% return rate, which is up from last year’s 21%.

We sent out 44 short evaluation forms for service users falling into the level one category (where IASS has spent less than two hours work and no face to face meetings). We received 10 back, which is a return rate of 23%. We will continue to consider how to get a higher return rate.

For our short questionnaire, we received one negative questionnaire with all the others being extremely positive. We have looked through all the case notes for this service user and had very limited involvement but cannot see why they were dissatisfied, they had indicated on
the form that they did not wish to be contacted to discuss their views, so we have not been able to gain a greater understanding of why they did not score more highly. Please see appendix 1 for full short evaluation form results.

We sent out 67 long evaluation forms for level two and above parents and received 23 back - 34% return rate. Overall we received very positive feedback. There was one less positive questionnaire from a service user who previously complained against the council. We have considered her comments and feel that they reflect a need for more resources and more staff so that we can get back to service users more quickly. The same service user also said that we needed to report back on issues. We have a reporting back system already in place with the SEN team and others.

Please see appendix 2 for full extended evaluation form results

b.) Informal feedback

We found that we were receiving a lot of feedback more informally, usually through emails and we are now recording this feedback and it is included in our monthly reports. All feedback has always been positive

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS – WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

We will continue our efforts to raise awareness of the service with a particular emphasis on raising awareness amongst children and young people in Bracknell Forest who have or may have SEN. We will continue to develop our service, by producing more factsheets for parents, ensure we review and where necessary improve our policies. We will continue to reflect on our service, comparing it to the IASS Quality Standards and draft minimum standards.

If our tender is successful, we will work with the Council for Disabled Children regarding our operational plan and the new IASS opportunity and ensure that we comply with all relevant requirements.

5. APPENDICES

a.) Short Evaluation Form results

b.) Extended Evaluation Form results
APPENDIX 1

Short Evaluation Form Feedback for academic year 17/18

Short evaluation forms sent to “level 1” service users who had received less than two hours of support and no face to face meetings.

Evaluation forms sent: 44
Evaluation forms returned: 10
Return Rate: 23%

Results

1. How easy was it to get in touch with us?

2. How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?
3. How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were (did we avoid taking sides)?

4. What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?
5. Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?

6. How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?
APPENDIX 2

Extended Evaluation Form Feedback for academic year 17/18

Extended evaluation forms were sent to level 2 + service users who had received more than two hours of support, often with face to face meetings.

Evaluation forms sent: 67
Evaluation forms returned: 23
Return Rate: 34%

We sent out 67 long evaluation forms for level two and above parents and received 23 back - 34% return rate.

Results

1a. How easy was it to get in touch with us?
1b. How quickly did we get back to you after you first got in touch?

1c. How well do you think we understood your questions or concerns?
1d How did you hear about us? (Select all that apply)

- friend - 9
- SEN team - 5
- internet search - 2
- health professional - 4
- I had a leaflet - 6
- school/college - 3
- SEND local offer - 2
- Parent Carer Forum - 1
- Autism Berkshire - 1

2a. How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?

0 - Not at all helpful
1 - Somewhat helpful
2 - Moderately helpful
3 - Very helpful
4 - Very helpful

Bar chart showing the distribution of helpfulness ratings.
2b When you asked us to help did we (select all that apply):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return your calls, emails or texts quickly?</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep in touch with you so you knew what was happening?</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain why decisions were made and what would happen next?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to what you wanted to say and how you were feeling?</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat you with respect?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain who people were and what their role was?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a confidential service? (In other words, if you told us something did we always check with you that it was ok for us to tell other people what you had said)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give you the information and advice that you wanted?</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were (did we avoid taking sides)?
4b. Can you tell us more about the difference(s) we made for you? (Select any that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my needs and concerns are better understood than they were</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now get on better with staff at my/my child’s school or college</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now get on better with staff who work for the Local Authority</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more confident</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a better understanding of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children and young people with SEN</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more involved in decisions about my/my child’s education</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happier / less worried about my future</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that things have got better for me/my child because of the help I have had from the Information, Advice and Support Service</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5a Overall how satisfied were you with the service we gave

6a How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others