

Service User Feedback Report

Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

July - February 2015/16

This report is an analysis of the service user feedback received from parents, carers, and professionals who had a service from the Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service from July 2015 to the end of February 2016.

Methodology

The six IAS Co-ordinators, who work directly with families, send a link to an on-line service user form or sent out a paper copy (if they prefer) to parents, carers and some of the professionals they work with at the end of an intervention. This gives families and colleagues a chance to feedback on the service they have had from our co-ordinators.

Having an online feedback mechanism ensures complete freedom for families to make whatever comments they wish and the paper copies are returned to the Business Planning and Improvement team. During this period, 17 replies were received; 8 from Furness and South Lakes, 4 from Copeland and Allerdale and 3 from Carlisle and Eden. 2 respondents did not give an area

There are a range of closed, graded and open questions on the form and they are designed to measure satisfaction with the outcomes of the service, the level of service provided by the staff and offer suggestions on the ways the service could be improved.

Feedback Gathered in response to questions

Where did you hear about the service? (Service users can tick more than one box)

It is interesting to note the range of places from where parents had heard about the service: 23% of parents had heard about the Cumbria IAS service from an educational setting, 23% from word of mouth and 17% from a support group. 41% had been informed of the service by Cumbria County Council, 6% from health colleagues and 6% from the internet. Several people put that they had heard about the service from more than one source. 35% of respondents had used the service before for support with other issues.

Why did you contact the SEND IAS Service? (Can tick more than one box)

Parents had contacted the service for various reasons:

General support 6 people, health support 2 people, support that is available for SEND 13, help at meetings 7, help to resolve an issue 6, changing schools 4, the EHC plan process 5, appeals 3, and 4 people said they had contacted the service for other reasons including help to write letters and help for families they were working with.

Was the information you received useful and relevant?

	Poor	Ok	Good	Very good
Was the information you received useful and relevant?	0%	0%	6%	94%

From the figures above, it is clear that the parents and carers who answered the service found the information they received very useful. It is very rewarding for staff to feel their services are so appreciated by the families that they work with.

What difference did the information and support given to you by the IAS service make to you?

Comments from parents show what difference the support from the service made to them personally:

- Nobody else would have known what we were supposed to do.
- All a big difference to my life, without my support worker helping me I couldn't have done things on my own. She has given me the strength and will power to keep going.
- Helped to make sense of the process
- It gave my son the chance to achieve the best he can be.....
- Totally what I needed at the right time
- The service made a lot of difference to our circumstances in explaining tribunal rights, support with regard to composing an accurate statement and appealing against decisions which we did not agree with. They were extremely helpful and came to offer their support whenever possible, even at short notice.
- Felt more informed about the process.
- Clarification amongst services and helped develop joined up thinking.
- I couldn't have done it on my own, the difference was amazing.
- Very timely advice. Great signposting to relevant information and reassurance.
- The support and information from the SEND IAS has been amazing and continues to be, without this service I would have felt very alone and unsure of where to obtain a lot of the information.
- Clarification of the issues which need to be dealt with, support going forward

Comments from professionals:

- Provided good information and advice, so that parents are better informed about their situation and what they can do.
- Helpful support for parents - useful mediation for me. The children and families who have accessed SEND IAS service have been wonderfully supported and

guided through the process of accessing new educational opportunities, and the difficult process that is involved in this.

It is clear from the comments above that parents and carers value the information, advice and support that IAS co-ordinators give them and the clarification and explanations given around the processes; professionals have also given very positive comments about the services they have had from the IAS Service.

Since contacting the SEND IAS Service is your child any better supported at school and making progress?

The survey results to this question were that 64% of parents thought their children were better supported at school and 12% said they were not. 24% gave no answer to this question. The figure of 64% is down from 89% of parents from the previous 6 month period.

We asked a range of closed questions on staff behaviours and responses and the results were as follows:

Did the IAS staff:	No	Yes	No Reply
Return your calls/emails promptly?	0%	100%	
Keep in touch?	0%	100%	
Explain why decisions were made and what was happening?	0%	100%	
Listen to your views?	0%	100%	
Treat you with respect?	0%	100%	
Explain who they were and what their role was?	0%	100%	
Was the service you received impartial?	0%	94%	6%
Was the service you received confidential?	0%	100%	
Did the information you received meet your needs?	0%	94%	6%
Would you recommend this service to another person?	0%	100%	

The positive responses to the above questions show that parents and carers have found the standards of service they have received to be excellent

What did we do well?

We posed this question to find out what families valued about the service they had had. These are just a few of the many positive comments about the Cumbria IAS service that parents had experienced:

- Every time I have needed help over the last 14 years, you have known what to do; you have supported me and advised me.
- She gives support, and gets questions answered - helps by coming to meetings and writing notes. Helps to write letters worded properly, phones and keeps in contact. I feel without the support of my worker I couldn't cope with what I have to cope with, and the stress and worry of things can be so overwhelming. I feel I'm making progress in life.
- Explaining the process of EHCP
- Everything - a fantastic and valuable service, deserve their weight in gold.
- Amazing knowledge of what is important dealing with disability matters
- Give valuable support and help when most needed
- Keep in contact as much as possible and fully look into circumstances and background, as well as listening well and providing excellent support and advice.
- My co-ordinator was very informed, polite, showed compassion and responded quickly.
- The help I received was brilliant. I could not have written a letter as good without the help from the co-ordinator
- Impartial advice, but felt listened to and very well supported. Thank you!
- Liaise closely with parents, support parents in making difficult decisions and exploring options, supporting parents through difficult and lengthy processes such as the EHCP process
- The support shown from the service has been exceptional. I have also received support at meetings with the council and also with the school this meant that I have a better understanding of EHCP. I have since recommended this service to numerous people at the support group I attend.
- My co-ordinator has such a wealth of experience, expert knowledge and empathy, great asset to the service.

Replies from professionals:

- Providing impartial informed advice and guidance to parents who need it.
- Helpful and pleasant staff who seem to have a real interest in doing their job well

What do you think we could do better?

We asked this question as we wanted to know how the IAS Service could be improved. Parents gave suggestions for improvement as follows:

- Let more people know you are there.
- To have more hours to do this important work
- More hours to cover all the needy children
- When receiving letters from yourselves, put on the contact numbers, email addresses of who the original letter was addressed to. No good putting a name and number on only to be told when you call it, it's not who you need to speak to.
- Just keep doing what you're doing! It works!

Strengths

From the comments respondents have made, it is clear that parents value the great knowledge of the law and of the processes involved in getting an EHC Plan that the co-ordinators have and how well they can explain and make sense of these for parents. They value the signposting to other services too.

Parents value the practical support they get from co-ordinators, citing instances of helping with letter writing, coming with them to meetings and taking useful notes.

On a personal level, parents have said they think staff are good at listening, are empathetic and give them strength and confidence to deal with the stresses which arise when going through the various processes they need to in order to get services for their child with SEND.

Areas for development

The team need to ensure they increase awareness of the service and ensure that leaflets are widely available, that they continue to attend events with parents to promote the service, that articles are regularly put on the councils Facebook page, that the webpage is kept updated and that they attend more events with support groups and professionals from other agencies.

Ensure contact details for co-ordinators are clear on all communications.

Parents have requested more hours for the service to be able to give more time to individual families but in these times of austerity that is unlikely.

Future plans

On closure of a case or intervention, the Cumbria SEND IAS Co-ordinators officers will continue to send out a service user feedback web link to parents they have worked with or a paper copy if requested, so they may make comments on line about the service they have received and reporting will be done regularly.

For information, given below is the web link to the on line service user feedback form for the Cumbria SENDIAS Service:

<https://cumbriacountycouncil.researchfeedback.net/wh/s.asp?k=143152772376>