

Service User Feedback Report

Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

March 2016 to March 2017

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 March 2016 to March 2017.

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, 27 replies were received; 12 from Furness and South Lakes, 3 from Copeland and Allerdale and 12 from Carlisle and Eden.

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: 21% of parents had heard about the Cumbria IAS service from an educational setting, 5% (down from 23%) from word of mouth and 10% (down from 17%) from a support group. 16% (down from 41%) had been informed of the service by Cumbria County Council, 5% (down from 6%) from health colleagues and 21% (up from 6%) from the internet. Several people put that they had heard about the service from more than one source. 37% down from 35% of respondents had used the service before for support with other issues. It would appear that more and more parents are using the internet to source information from our website and through the Local Offer.

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

Parents had contacted the service for various reasons:

General support 8 people, health support 0 people, support that is available for SEND 13, help at meetings 13, help to resolve an issue 12, changing schools 6, the EHC plan process 11, appeals 7, and 4 people said they had contacted the service for other reasons including asking for help because their child had been excluded from school.

Was the information you received useful and relevant?

	Poor	Ok	Good	Very good
Was the information you received useful and relevant?	0%	0%	4%	96%

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:

- *It was a relief to speak to your advisor*
- *Amazing difference. We have accessed other services but this has been one of the more useful in retrospect.*
- *I had more confidence. I understood more about the plan*
- *Confidence to push for what we wanted to be included on the EHCP. Knowledge of our rights as parents. Moral support in the EHCP meeting.*
- *I was very happy with all the help I get from them*
- *Support was very good from Celia as it was all a new thing to the whole family*
- *I felt supported and that I had someone helping our family for a change.*
- *It was very important as I was able to fully back up my representations with the correct knowledge of procedure*
- *The moral support given was invaluable to me at that time as I was going through an extremely challenging time in my personal life and I just didn't know how or where to begin with the EHC plan. Susan made what seemed like an insurmountable task into an achievable task.*
- *I feel like issues have now been resolved and I understand more of how the education system is run. I could not have dealt with this on my own without Sally's support.*
- *I understand more about the law now and our right to make sure our daughter gets the best.*
- *Gave us confidence not to give up for what we believed was right for our child.*
- *They are very well informed and extremely supportive. I would simply not have the confidence to attend meetings without their support and the knowledge has been invaluable in getting my son the educational support that he needs.*
- *The information helps you to understand where you stand in trying to fight for help for your child. It allows you to know the processes and what you can do!*
- *Felt listened to, empowered, confidence, knowing there is a service to help & support - this made a big difference!*

- *I felt like I had put the best case forward for an EHC Plan using the help & advice received*
- *A huge help, to have a professional take such interest and care was amazing, super service!*

Comments from professionals:

- *I took the carers' concerns back to panel and decided to issue an EHCP*
- *No personal difference but difference made to families supported by 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 60% of parents thought their children were better supported at school and 12% said they were not. 28% said they did not know.

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%	100%	
Was the service you received confidential?	0%	100%	
Did the information you received meet your needs?	0%	100%	
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 some of the many positive comments about the Cumbria IAS service that parents had experienced:

- *Be a buffer between the school system and SEN students and parents and talk both languages, as it were*
- *I have used the service before and it's still excellent. It's nice having the support and I think school listen better with outside help*
- *Provide clear, concise advice and pointers on where to find more detailed information. We really appreciated Celia turning up in person at the meeting.*
- *Guide and support throughout the EHCP process.*
- *Liaise well with others with a strong partnership ethos. Provide a valuable service to children and families who may at times find their situation difficult to deal and cope with.*
- *Susan made me feel supported and nothing was too much trouble.*
- *You befriend the parent and address all of their concerns. You take the time to explain the processes to us.*
- *I feel that supporting families with the professional side of things is very important as having a child with SEN is challenging enough without having issues with education*
- *Calm, patient, confident; very knowledgeable about current legislation. No question was too easy! Responded in a very timely manner to our enquiries.*
- *Support parents in getting vital help for their children, whether it be from education, social care or health, their knowledge is huge and they are lovely caring ladies who instantly put you at ease and reassure you that everything is under control and will be ok. Personally, I would have not managed without my co-ordinator she has been a massive support to me and my son and given me the strength to fight for his bespoke education package.*
- *Help to structure arguments and confirm/ clarify understanding of the process of appeal.*
- *Help in an impartial way with advice.*
- *You provide this service, giving the information and standing in when you're needed. You are very quick to answer emails, phone calls etc and provide information.*
- *Respond to needs - quickly & provide a wealth of knowledge & expertise in a friendly & informal format, non-judgemental, positive & reassuring.*
- *When it becomes difficult to work with school itself vital to have an outside department to help with concerns*

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:

- *Continue to share updates with the wider professional partners.*
- *The service that was provided was really good. Wouldn't change anything, just let more people know about it.*
- *It was a bit of a challenge to get hold of someone as I received the letter about changing the statement over to an EHC plan just before the summer holiday.*
- *Have a 24/7 service!!??*
- *To keep this service running, I don't know where I would be without it.*
- *Nothing so far as the service has really impressed me and I will definitely recommend this service to others.*
- *I was only in contact with Karen for a short period of time but she was an excellent help and support to me.*
- *I don't think you can do any better than you did and I am very happy with the results we got*

Strengths

The help and support offered by co-ordinators to parents is obviously valued, as is their calm and professional approach. Parents report that their confidence is built up as co-ordinators give them the knowledge to negotiate the system and understand the law. Coordinators offer a structured approach to working on issues that have arisen and give clarification of the steps in the processes and where to get further support from other agencies. Just having someone to talk to about the issues is something that many parents value.

Areas for development

The team need to let more people know about the SENDIAS Service so the information reaches as many parents, carers and young people as possible.

The team also need to be sharing contact details and wider information with a range of professionals and agencies to raise awareness of what the SENDIAS Service offers so they can pass on this information to their service users who may have need of information, advice and support.

Sometimes it can take longer than the team would like to respond to enquiries; the 6 team members are all part time and there has been some staff sickness over the past 12 months resulting in a lack of capacity at times.

Future plans

On closure of a case or intervention, the Cumbria SEND IASS 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 SEND IAS Service: - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HCJ5PWX>

There are plans to promote the SEND IAS Service more widely with head teachers, young people, social care staff and parents and carers. We will be looking into setting up a Facebook page, improving the web page and getting out and about to more events to promote the service directly with families and with professionals.

April 2017