

Service User Feedback Report

Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

July 2020

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 May 2019 to June 2020.

Methodology

The five IAS Co-ordinators, who work directly with families, send a link to an on-line service user questionnaire 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. During this period, 39 replies were received; 6 from Furness and South Lakes, 9 from Copeland and Allerdale and 24 from Carlisle and Eden and one person did not specify where they lived.

There is a range of closed, graded and open questions on the questionnaire 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.

Analysis of Feedback to the questions

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

It is helpful to learn the range of places from where parents had heard about the service and some ticked more than one box:

Source	Percentage of respondents
Word of mouth	22.5%
Used the service before	17%
Educational setting	15%
Internet	12.5%
Health Colleagues	12.5%
Children's Services Colleagues	10%
Support Groups for Parents	7.5%

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

Parents who responded to the questionnaire had contacted the service for various reasons over this period:

Reason for seeking support	Percentage of respondents
Support available for children with SEND	55%
Process for obtaining EHC Plan	40%
Help to resolve an issue	30%

Support at a meeting	40%
General support about their concerns	24%
Advice on how to appeal a decision	20%
Information on changing schools	5%
Health Services	5%

	Not at all easy 0	1	2	3	Very Easy 4
How easy was it to get in touch with us?	0%	2.5%	7.5%	15%	75%

75% of respondents said it was very easy to get in touch with the service and this is up on 62% for last year.

	Not at all helpful 0	1	2	3	Very Helpful 4
How helpful was the information and advice we gave you?	0%	2.5%	2.5%	5%	90%

90% of parents rated the information being very helpful up from 84% last year. The vast majority of parents and carers who answered the service found the information and advice they received very useful for their situation.

	Not at all 0	1	2	3	Very 4
How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we are?	0%	0%	5%	7.5%	87.5%

87.5% of parents and carers scored the service highly as being neutral and unbiased which is up on last year as well which is very positive.

	No	Yes
Was the service you received confidential?	2.5%	97.5%

Again this is a very high figure of satisfaction regarding confidentiality from those who answered the questionnaire but down slightly from 100% last year.

What difference has our information, advice and support made to you?	No difference at all 0	1	2	3	A great deal of difference 4
	0%	0%	7.5%	22.5%	70%

Comments from parents show what difference the support from the service made to them personally including gaining knowledge of the system, being reassured and supported at meetings and being given correct and up to date advice on what the law states. The comment about their child being back in school due to the support from the service showed how valuable the service is to families.

“The advice and support I received from Polly Shields was fantastic. I don't think I would have managed without her help.”

“The LA website was not working on the page about Personal budgets - we had never been told about them. Your representative sent me information straight away. That was very much appreciated.”

“Useful information e-mailed through.”

“SG has been very supportive, she has provided all the information I needed and reassured me in the process.”

“The advice of Susan and that she is local, I have benefited from her attendance in meetings with the school and mediation. This has made me feel very supported. Without Susan's help I would have continued to face the fight to help my child with SEND on my own. Although I have family members supporting me, the fact that you have support from someone who knows the legislation has been invaluable, and I have felt supported when putting my concerns forward to the school/CCC.”

“It is difficult to answer as we are at the start of a long process but the support and direction has been invaluable. Just to have someone who understands and wants the best for you and your child is amazing. Some parts of the system are just a little unclear but the help has been great.”

“Support and advice on what to expect in meeting and what we can do to challenge.”

“Very supportive on behalf of my son - made a massive difference with Polly's support today.”

“Information very informative, useful and support provided has helped. The support helps when I struggle to find the right words to say or will point us in the right direction where we need to look. This service gives us and our child a voice! This service listens respectfully, but fairly and helps us fight for our child's rights.”

“My daughter has returned to school.”

“Felt I wasn't alone as I'm struggling with school.”

“Tracey O who supported us through an IRP and governors meeting was amazing and so supportive.”

“Without Susan Eastwood and her vast knowledge, we wouldn't have got as far with our son's education issues.”

“If it wasn't for the service my son wouldn't be getting the extra support at school because I just kept getting fobbed off by professionals.”

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 41% of parents thought their children were better supported at school and 23% said they were not. 36% said they did not know.

Closed Questions on Staff Behaviours

Did the IAS staff:	No	Yes
Return your calls/emails promptly?	2.5%	97.5%
Keep in touch?	2.5%	97.5%
Explain why decisions were made and what was happening?	2.5%	97.5%
Listen to your views?	2.5%	97.5%
Treat you with respect?	2.5%	97.5%
Explain who they were and what their role was?	2.5%	97.5%

The positive responses to the above questions show that parents and carers have found the standards of service they have received to be very good and are very satisfied with staff behaviours. Most of the percentages are show a small improvement on last year.

	No	Yes
Did the service you receive meet your needs?	5%	95%

Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?	Very unsatisfied 0	1	2	3	Very satisfied 4
	2.5%	2.5%	0%	2.5%	92.5%

How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?	Not at all likely 0	1	2	3	Very likely 4
	2.5%	2.5%	0%	5%	90%

What did we do well?

This question aims to find out what families valued about the service they had had. Some of the comments parents made about what SENDIASS does well:

“Advice and clarification.”

“Once we connected, you responded to my query immediately.”

“Useful source of information and support”

“Non-judgmental, honest and very good at listening to us and keeping us in track.

“I appreciate that my calls are always returned and the attendance and support in meetings.

“Communication and knowledge of the system.”

“Happy to advocate for parents with other agencies. Advice to navigate a complex system and reassurance and support to have someone to ask questions etc.

“Excellent support.”

“Gave me a lot of information about EHCPs and explain how they work. My daughter has one but I found it quite difficult to follow. I didn't know my rights. I know feel more in the know about what the school can and can't do.”

“We have been given the information and support to be able to progress with our case. It is early days, so no progress yet made, but I am confident it can now be made.”

“Very well educated on children with special needs and the requirements they need to succeed. Polly was an absolutely great support to me and my son today and feel like the schools taking on board what's been said today with Polly being there for support.

“Listen and explain what steps to take.”

“The information is very informative and useful.”

“Offer support to parents that isn't given in schools or elsewhere. Many parents do not have the information needed to support their children so this service is invaluable.”

“I have already recommended the service to a couple of people. The help I have had has been amazing.”

“Let families know they are supported and support for children is available even when schools attempt to make you believe it isn't.”

“Celia was very friendly and easy to chat to.”

What do you think we could do better?

This question was included so information could be gathered on how the IAS Service could be improved. Several respondents said there was nothing to improve on and they were very happy with the service. Other parents gave the following comments:

“Keep me informed. Since contacting you I am still none the wiser as to whether my son will get an EHCP. Only my MP, Tim Farron has helped me in this matter.”

“I feel we would benefit from a few more like Susan, to help and support, especially in this current SEND crisis.”

“I emailed in the end because no one was available to answer my call from the 4 on the list.”

“Be more available. Offer face to face service.”

“More SEND IAS advisors, the demand in the area has increased so much, there should be more of you.”

“Everything..... should be much easier to get things done.... these are kids who need help, we found it very difficult to receive help quickly.”

Summary

Strengths

The feedback from parents and carers who have used the Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Information Service is excellent. From the high numbers of the positive responses to closed questions, 97.5% for all questions, it is clear that staff behaviours are rated highly, including responding to calls, listening carefully to parents and explaining their roles. Staff are rated as being knowledgeable about the law relating to SEND and about the services that are available round the county and nationally.

The service has a great impact on parents as they report increased confidence levels, great support for their child or young person and becoming more knowledgeable about SEND matters and more empowered through the process. The service is obviously effective as 95% of people who responded said they had had their needs met and 90% said they would recommend the service to others and many parents tell us they come to us from word of mouth recommendations. Other parents tell us that support from

SENDIASS means their child has now returned to school as the appropriate support is now in place for them.

Areas for development

Parents would like staff to be more readily available and for there to be more staff on the team to deal with the high demand for services. They would like to be able to contact staff more easily and for SENDIASS staff to be able to move things on more quickly for them including securing an EHCP for their child.

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, so they may make comments on line about the service they have received and reporting will be done regularly. Parents may comment at any time as the link to the Survey Monkey questionnaire is on each staff members' email signature.

This report will be circulated to the AD for Learning and Inclusion and the Senior Manager for SEND and cascaded to SEND IASS staff for discussion at the team meeting. This report will also be uploaded to the Continuous Improvement Website.

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>

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