



DIASS Annual Report 1st September – August 31st 2019

Introduction

The role of Derbyshire Information Advice and Support Service is to ensure Parents/ Carers, Children and Young People have access to confidential and impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions about the special educational needs and disability processes. This is achieved by working in partnership with parents/carers and young people, providing information, services and training, working with relevant agencies and ensuring parents/carers and young people's views influence local policy and practice.

Staffing

Six members of DIASS staff covered Derbyshire this year: Maria Finnegan Assistant Manager, Angela Leedham Support worker, Jo Bowman Support worker (left Oct 2018), Geraldine Crawford Support worker, Jaz Nicolson Support worker, Abby Koerner Support worker, Rebecca Edgar Business Service Assistant / Acting Support worker (from October 2018 to July 2019).

Service Developments

DIASS is supported nationally by the Information Advice and Support Programme (IASP). This programme commenced in June 2018 and is led by the Council for Disabled Children and funded by the Department for Education. The IASP offered all Information Advice and Support services (IASS) the opportunity to bid for additional funding to support the implementation of the IAS Minimum standards <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/Minimum%20Standards.pdf>

DIASS was successful in securing funding allowing for a temporary support worker to be employed for one year to cover High Peak and Northern Dales. Interviews took place in July and a support worker will start in September 2019.

Racheal South began volunteering for the Service this academic year. She has agreed to work on the service evaluation and has begun work on a telephone evaluations.

DIASS has attended a number of market place events to promote and publicise the service. This has included the Skills festival. Events at Holbrook, Bennerley Fields, Alfreton Park School and Bolsover School. Lea Green Autism Awareness weekend, Parent groups in Swadlincote and Ashover. Umbrella market place event in Derby.

DIASS statistics

How many new referrals did we have?

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
No. of Referrals	1066	1059	1151	1322
No. of advice line enquires	597	601	670	747
No. of new cases allocated	469	458	481	575

Using the service database projects are assigned to all of the new referrals. These are Parent, Parent and Child and Young Person, Child or Young Person, and Professional. From these 49 projects were allocated where support workers worked with both parents and the child or young person. 8 cases were allocated to working with the child or young person directly.

DIASS has seen a significant increase from previous years in the number of referrals to the service. Out of the 747 number of enquires 55 were also made from professionals, some examples of why professionals contacted the service were around the EHC needs assessment process, EHCPs, processes and time scales, how to name a school on a draft EHCP, GRIP funding, next steps meetings, the tribunal process, and exclusions. Most of the 1322 new referrals with one or two exceptions would have been dealt with at the first point of contact on the service advice line. The helpline is open Monday – Friday 9.30am -3pm. Out of office times or if the advice line is busy people can leave messages. Alternatively they can also send an email to the IAS inbox. The service aim is to get back to people within 48 hours.

Why did service users contact us?

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
EHC Plans – continuing provision	16%	17%	20%
EHC Assessment	23%	26%	32%
Exclusion	16%	13%	8%
Health and Social Care	2%	1%	2%
Relationship with school	10%	9%	5%

SEN Support	26%	26%	27%
Signposting	3%	3%	2%
Transport	1%	1%	1%
Annual Review	1%	2%	2%
Relationship with LA	1%	1%	1%
Transition Review	1%	1%	NA

The database has been updated and next year we can report on how many tribunals the service is supporting.

Age distribution of new cases

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Foundation Stage	6%	3%	5%
Primary	51%	45%	47%
Secondary	39%	45%	42%
Post-16	4%	7%	6%

The age distribution has been even over the past few years. The breakdown of this in numbers for this year is FS = 27, Primary = 271, Secondary = 243 and Post 16 = 34.

Distribution across category of need

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Sensory/physical	5%	6%	7%
Social, emotional and Mental Health	37%	32%	31%
Cognition and learning	23%	22%	28%
Communication and interaction	35%	40%	34%

Distribution across district council areas

District	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	School pop.
Amber Valley	18%	18%	19%	17%
Bolsover	7%	8%	7%	10%
Chesterfield	16%	16%	9%	14%
Derbyshire Dales	7%	6%	8%	9%
Erewash	15%	14%	15%	15%
High Peak	14%	12%	12%	12%
N E Derbyshire	11%	9%	10%	12%
S. Derbyshire	12%	17%	20%	12%

There has been a rise in the number of cases in South Derbyshire.

Where did service users hear about us?

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Used before	33%	39%	42%
LA Support Service	16%	14%	13%
School	17%	16%	13%
Another parent / word of mouth	7%	7%	10%
MAT/Children’s Centre	11%	12%	8%
Internet	3%	3%	2%
Health	6%	5%	6%
Voluntary Organisation	4%	2%	4%
Social Care	3%	2%	2%

Evaluations

This year information has also been collected through telephone evaluations for casework that has been carried out.

Casework Evaluations

The service has feedback from September 2018 – January 2019. Information from January – August 2019 is still being collated as is information from advice line evaluations. These should be ready by the end of March 2020.

180 parents / carers were contacted by telephone in this time frame. 155 took part in the survey. This response rate equates to 86% and shows that the telephone calls are really valuable way of getting feedback.

12 Questions were asked:

Q1, How easy it is to get in touch with us? On a scale of 0-4 (0 being “not easy at all” and 4 being “very easy”).

85 scored 4, 35 scored 3, 28 scored 2, 6 scored 1, and 1 scored 0 = 155

Q2, How quickly did we respond? On a scale of 0-4 (0 being “very slowly” and 4 being “very quickly”).

61 scored 4, 63 scored 3, 28 scored 2, 3 scored 1, 0 scored 0 = 155

Q3, How well do you think we understood you questions and concerns? 0 being “not very well” and 4 being “very well”

95 scored 4, 18 scored 3, 32 scored 2, 6 scored 1 and 4 scored 0 = 155

Q4, How did you hear about us?

Another parent 78, Leaflet 23, Education Setting 27, Local Offer 4, LA SEND team 23, Health professional 2 = 157 (2 from 2 sources)

Q5, How useful was the information, advice and support we gave you? (0 being “not at all useful” and 4 being “Very useful”)

86 scored 4, 36, scored 3, 15 scored 2, 11 scored 1 and 7 scored 0 = 155

Q6, How impartial do you think we were? (0 being “not all impartial” and 4 being “very impartial”)

108 scored 4, 24 scored 3, 8 scored 2, 12 scored 1 and 3 scored 0 = 155

Q7, How much of a difference do you think our information, advice and support has made for you? (0 being “no difference at all” and 4 being “a great deal of difference”

71 scored 4, 49 scored 3, 27 scored 2, 5 scored 1, and 3 scored 0 = 155

Q8, What if any difference(s) have we made for you? The participants could agree to multiple options

- I now have a better relationship with my child’s school or setting = 48
- feel more confident = 59
- I have a greater understanding of the educational process for children with SEN = 66
- I feel more involved with my child’s education = 53
- I am happier/less worried about the future = 25
- I feel my child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved = 142

Q9, Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave? (0 being “very unsatisfied” to 4 being “very satisfied”

81 scored 4, 47 scored 3, 20 scored 2, 4 scored 1 and 3 scored 0 = 155

Q10 Was there anything we could have done better?

The majority of participants said no and that they were pleased with the service they had received. A few comments we received are detailed below.

- Support worker changed part way through
- Worker was not always able to attend meetings
- More advertising
- Drop in sessions at schools
- An online chat service would have been preferable
- The initial call back took a while but from then on support has been brilliant
- Taken a more active role in meetings I felt unsupported
- Given consistent information
- Returned calls promptly
- Represented us at tribunal, I find speaking difficult
- Support DLA applications, although I know this is not what DIASS does
- I feel I already knew a lot of the information, but it was good to check my

understanding, having a better website with factsheets would have helped me more than phoning.

- I was disappointed that I had to wait for a call back and the worker couldn't answer my questions without calling again later

Q11, Would you feel happy to contact the service again if you needed to?

115 scored 4, 22 scored 3, 9 scored 2, 7 scored 2 and 2 scored 0 = 155

Q12 How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?

93 scored 4, 44 scored 3, 10 scored 2, 4 scored 1 and 4 scored 0.

All participants were thanked for their participation and asked if they have any other recommendations about the service or how to conduct future feedback.

- Call in the evening
- Have the worker fill in the form with them
- Would prefer to have a posted version
- On line survey would be quicker
- There's too many questions
- I'd prefer to speak to the manager
- The support we had was a long time ago, it hard to remember, do the survey sooner
- Online and talking is hard for some
- This could have been done at the end of the phone call, rather than months later

In terms of overall scoring the percentage of respondents who;

Scored 4 was 57%

Scored 3 was 24%

Scored 2 was 13%

Scored 1 was 4%

Scored 0 was 2%

Staff also receive a number of emails throughout the year individually thanking for support.