



**SUPPORTIVE
PARENTS**

Supporting families of children with SEN



Annual Report

1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016



Annual Report: 1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016

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Some of our achievements in 2015/16 included:

- Delivering an evening event for 60 people **“What works for us...!** Focused on achieving better outcomes as a result of the SEND reforms.
- Achieving secured funding from our LAs for 3 years to allow for improved sustainability and service-planning.
- Securing DfE funding to deliver phase 3 of the Independent Support Programme. This additional funding will allow us to continue to deliver our enhanced and extended service post March 2016, including retention of trained staff.
- Recruiting new members of staff across the organisation, including an Information and Communications Coordinator and a Post-16 Coordinator.
- Publishing a comprehensive range of legally accurate information leaflets explaining SEND reforms and new processes, including “easy reads”.
- Recruiting two new Trustees to the board.
- Delivering presentations about our service and about SEND reforms, to undergraduates, post-grad.s and EP doctoral trainees at UWE and Bristol Universities, and to SENCOs, parents and professionals across 3 authorities.
- Completing redesign of our newsletter and service user satisfaction survey – contributing to a national pilot.
- All staff completing further accredited legal training in relation to new legislation, regulations and statutory guidance.
- Implementing data management systems so that our processes are streamlined, transparent and secure.

Our goals for 2016-17 include:

- Raising grant funding to enable us to undertake innovative service improvements.
- Refurbishing our offices, to improve our efficiency and the environment for staff and for service-users.
- Delivering an event for parents and professionals in spring 2017.
- Securing DfE funding to deliver phase 4 of the Independent Support Programme, transferring developments into sustainable practice and retention of trained staff.
- Recruiting and successfully inducting new staff across the organisation as required, including one new member of the IAS team.
- All staff completing accredited legal training in the new legislation, to level 3.
- Updating our website to deliver an SP16-25 offer that is guided by a focus group of young people, so that it is meaningful, timely and accessible.
- Updating our Business Plan, Strategic Action Plan, Business Continuity Plan and Hazard Analysis for 2016-19.
- Purchasing additional IT equipment and improving our ITC system, to support our staff and improve security of data, efficiency and flexibility of working.
- Recruiting new Trustees to the board, with expertise in funding and finance

Supportive Parents – the SENDIAS Service in Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire

From 1st September 2014 the Parent Partnership Service in every local authority became the Information, Advice and Support Service. Supportive Parents continues to provide free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support (IAS) to parents and carers, children and young people with any type of special educational need and/or disability (SEND). We have also extended our service to offer support to young people aged 16 – 25 with SEND, in line with the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Our IAS service covers all aspects of SEND from the earliest stages of concern, through SEN Support in schools to support during statutory assessment, which may lead to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and beyond. We are actively engaged with the delivery of Parent Carer Forums in each authority. In many authorities the SENDIAS Service is provided by a local government officer, but government guidance supports as best practice the model of arms-length independent service delivery as provided by Supportive Parents. We believe that in the foreseeable future parents, children, young people and professionals, will continue to need and benefit from the service we provide.

Our objectives

Supportive Parents has 5 primary strategic goals:

1. To support all parents, their children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, ensuring that they have equal educational opportunities.
2. To publicise the service, and to provide parents, children, young people and professionals with accurate unbiased information.
3. To provide training for parents and others on SEND processes and to enable parents of children and young people with special educational needs to support each other.
4. To encourage parents, voluntary groups, schools and other professionals to work more closely together in the interest of the children and young people, and to support strategic planning and service development by the Local Authority.
5. To voice the views of parents and young people, to ensure that their voices directly influence the development of local SEND services, policy and practice.

Our goals

Supportive Parents has 3 primary operational goals:

1. To provide parents, children and young people with information and training so that they are well-informed about the range of services available to support them and to have increased understanding of the SEN process;
2. To provide parents with support so that they become more confident of their expertise in relation to their own child, enabling them to work more effectively in partnership with their child's education setting and with the Local Authority; and
3. To encourage families and professionals to work more closely together in the interests of, and improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs.

Our Team

Supportive Parents' Board of Trustees 2015-16

Carolyn Sims – Chair

Chris Gardner – Deputy-Chair – Chair, Employment Sub Group

Anne Bush – Treasurer - safeguarding

Moira Lloyd - Training

Meryl Woodgate - Trustee

Maya Vaitilingam – fundraising

Sue Osborne – fundraising – Health & Safety (appointed 1st July 2015)

Lorri Farrell - co-opted member of Board of Trustees (as of 16th Nov 2015)

The role of Company Secretary is carried out by Maggie Potter, Head of Service.

Day to day management of Supportive Parents is delegated to the staff team. They are currently:

Head of Service

Deputy Head of Service (currently a Local Coordinator)

Office & Finance Manager

Information & Communications Coordinator

3 Local Coordinators (one for each Local Authority)

Post-16 Coordinator

8 Information, Advice & Support Team members

Independent Examiner:

Lloydbottoms

Chartered Accountants

118 High Street

Staple Hill

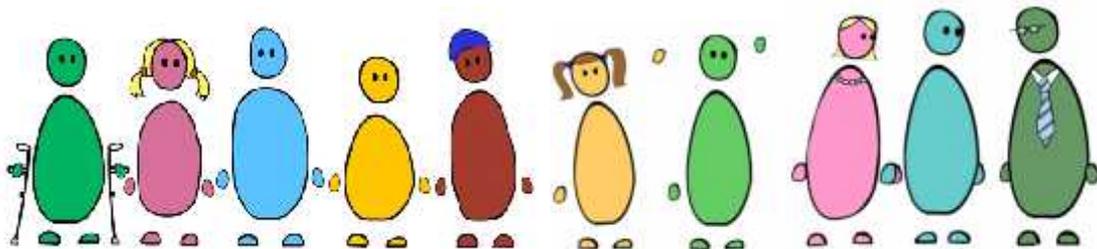
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Report from our Chair of Trustees – 2015-16

It feels as if we are still in the midst of change as the SEND reforms are progressively rolled out – so it has been especially good to get ongoing funding from our LAs to deliver our SENDIAS service until 2019. We have also had funding from the DfE for at least one further year, to continue delivering Independent Support to parents and young people who are going through the process of transferring from a statement to an EHCP. We hope this will continue until 2018, allowing us to retain our full complement of exceptional staff.

So the SEND climate is still challenging for us all. As trustees we remain committed to supporting our staff to deliver the best information, advice and support service to families that we can achieve, while reaching out to all the families that are going through these changes, to make sure that they have the best experience, and the children and young people achieve the best outcomes possible.



We are always looking for opportunities to let people in the wider community find out more about our service. It's important that people hear about us and understand our work, so that's why it was so great to get a cheque from Asda at Abbey Wood and have the chance to publicise Supportive Parents. I was able to provide the store with some of our leaflets and tell them what we do to support families who have children with special educational needs and disabilities. We use all donations to

support our work and to try to do more for the families who use our service. We are always so grateful for your support – it makes a difference - Thank you!

The number of families we support continues to increase significantly, year on year, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff for their hard work and dedication as they have also taken on the huge task of re-training in the Children and Families Act and delivering our extended service to the 0-25 age-group. Their commitment to ensuring that all service-users get the best information, advice and support possible is as remarkable as it is inspiring. It is only matched by the dedication of families to their children's best interests and our shared determination to achieve the best outcomes for all our children and young people.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Board of Trustees. Supportive Parents depends on their dedication and hard work too, as we extend and enhance our service offer to parents, children and young people with SEND. We need to continue to recruit trustees and we welcome interest in joining our Board. We are currently looking in particular for skills in finance. Please contact us directly if you would like to find out more about joining us.

It was lovely to meet so many parents and professionals at our evening event in November. It was particularly close to my heart and gave me the chance to share with everyone how I became involved with Supportive Parents and the difference it made to me. I found it very moving that at the end of the meeting people were coming up to me to share their similar experiences, and talking about the difference Supportive Parents has made to them. It reminded me why I have been involved with and committed to the work of Supportive Parents for the last 26 years, and how proud I am to still be involved, and to be Chair of Trustees.

I would like to end with a personal message. Join us and make a difference! Support us.....help us to continue to do the work that we do. Even the smallest contribution to our work can make a positive impact on the outcomes for families and for children and young people and we welcome your support.

Carolyn Sims, Chair of Trustees, June 2016

Manager's report: Maggie Potter, Head of Service

Supportive Parents provides the SEND Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) Service for Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire via a Service Level Agreement which requires us to deliver against the duties identified in the Children & Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice.

SEN Code of Practice, s2.1: Local authorities must arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to special educational needs or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care. This must include information, advice and support on the take-up and management of Personal Budgets.

Currently our SENDIAS service is available in term time, with a reduced service available in school holidays. We aim to offer an accessible, flexible, responsive service. In addition to our 3 weekly helpline sessions we respond to all answerphone messages and emails within 2 working days, in term time. We can offer face-to-face meetings, support with paperwork and support at meetings. **We have provided information and support to 2,300 enquiries (including almost 800 families) through our Information and Support Line during the last year.**

We provide a website, LinkedIn, Facebook and twitter plus a regular e-bulletin and a termly newsletter for parents and professionals.

We deliver monthly peer networking/parent support groups which includes regular speakers on items of interest. We also provide presentations and courses on SEND and related issues to parents and professionals, and can provide presentations to groups on request. We offer drop-in sessions for parents in community settings – e.g. colleges, schools and Early Years settings – parents and young people value networking opportunities and face-to-face communication.

We identify and work in partnership with any other local/national provider of services for families of children & young people with SEND. We support and signpost parents and young people to find and access other services, including social care/leisure activities and short breaks provision. This also allows us to highlight shortfalls in provision to the local authority.

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced changes to the system of SEND support and provision, implemented from September 2014. These included:

- Giving parents and young people control over the decisions about the support they receive
- The replacement of SEN statements and learning disability assessments (LDAs) with new, child-centred, birth-to-25 Education, Health and Care plans (EHC plans)
- The offer of a personal budget to all parents and young people with EHC plans
- A duty for local authorities to provide a Local Offer which will outline the education, health and care services available locally to all young people and families, and to disabled young people and their families more specifically.

In order to support families of children with SEND and young people, build confidence, and support local areas in preparing for, and implementing the new SEND reforms, SENDIAS Services are tasked with supporting families through change to ensure that children and young people with SEND can take full advantage of the reforms.

Changes to staffing: During 2015-16, Clive Osborne (our then Development Programme Coordinator) worked on developing and extending our service for young adults. Clive has moved on and we wish him all the best for the future. We have now appointed a member of staff, Kirsty Cottier, to work directly with and for this age group, to build on and further develop resources and information that is meaningful, timely and accessible. Kirsty would like advice and guidance from young people to make sure we meet these goals, so she will also be aiming to meet and engage directly with groups of young people across the three LAs during the coming year.

We'd also like to give our congratulations and best wishes for the future to Fiona Austin, our Administrator who accepted a promotion to work with Integrate Bristol, another Bristol based charity. In spring we welcomed Francis Mallender, our new Information and Communication Coordinator. She will help us to produce up to date SEND information and will be managing our newsletter and social media, including working closely with Kirsty to develop our SP16-25 webpages.

Welcome to our new Trustees: SP are always looking for new Trustees and we are pleased to confirm that this year Sue Osborne has joined our Board and Lorri Farrell has agreed to be co-opted as a new member.

INDEPENDENT SUPPORT for the EHCP assessment process: An EHC plan should be seen as a 'living' document and not one to be put on the shelf once it's completed. As children grow, their aspirations change and develop and they become bright young adults with their own ideas and dreams. Good planning depends on trust between professionals and families; trust that often takes time to nurture and develop. It is so important that people have a voice and can make informed choices – which will in time hopefully lead to better life chances for young people.

Independent Support (IS) is a Department for Education (DfE) programme to support young people and their parents during the EHCP assessment process. Supportive Parents have secured continuing funding to deliver this service until 2017. The scheme continues to have an impact across the country, with an IS offer available in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire from Supportive Parents and from KIDs. Figures (based on NCB's report in summer 2015) indicated that, of those parents and young people who have used the Independent Support service across the country:

- 85% found the support they received had a positive impact
- Over 96% confirmed that support was available when they needed it
- More than 74% said they were completely satisfied with the support they received
- Over 88% felt they needed support with Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning in the future.

What people say about us.....

Parent's comments:

"Thank you so much, the checklist you sent looks really useful! Many thanks - you people are a godsend!!!!"

"Thank you for taking the time to see me



yesterday and for the e-mail with the suggested text for requesting a meeting with the Senco. I very much appreciate your help and will let you know of the response from the Senco as soon as it is received by me."

"Just sat in a presentation from this Charity. They're so knowledgeable and helpful with regards to what support your school should be providing your child. Well worth a call if you're struggling to get from your child's school if they're anxious and worried and it's impacting on their health and well-being but not recognised by their school."

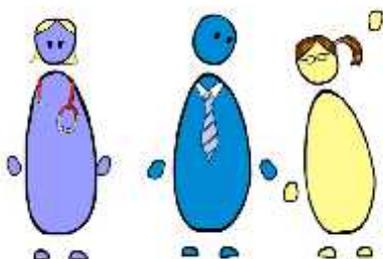
"Wow! Thank you so much. That is epic!"

"Thanks so much for taking the time to send this information off to me - it's been invaluable and given me a lot more confidence in dealing with the whole process."

"Thank you very much for your support I'm still very undecided and confused about what would be the best provision for my son but all the information you sent had been very helpful."

Professional Comments: "Brilliant, well done to all." (North Bristol Health Trust)

"Hello star team: well done again!" (Barnardos)



"I want to thank Supportive Parents for coming to Resound on 1st December. It was enormously helpful and appreciated by the parents who attended. Nadine and her colleague made a great team. Would you pass on my thanks to them please.." (Parenting Course Practitioner)

"Thanks so much for your help last night, the feedback is really good. SENCOs really appreciated your support (as did I)....." (Inclusion Support Co-ordinator)

Consultations and strategic work: We facilitate parent participation events and we work closely with the Parent Carer Forum. Our Local Coordinators work at a strategic level with our Local Authorities to support strategic planning and implementation of SEND reforms, including development of processes and procedures related to EHC plans and personal budgets and to support the delivery of the Local Offer and person-centred approaches. For a detailed overview of the work they have been engaged in this year, take a look at their locality reports.

Supportive Parents runs monthly support groups for parents and professionals and all Local Coordinators regularly visit other local groups run by parents, educational settings and local voluntary organisations in each authority. Regular visits from speakers have ensured that parents and carers find out about changes and developments in their local authority. In addition, members of the team sit on regional advisory groups in addition to contributing directly to local strategic developments on SEN and services for children with SEN and disability.

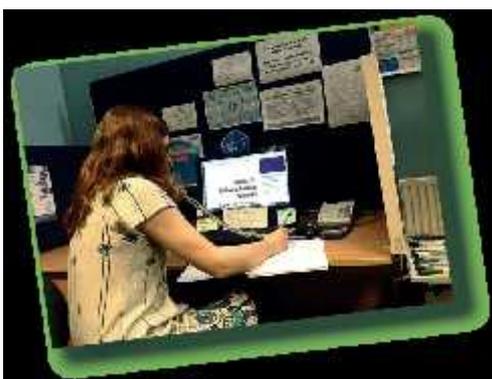
Our work to support the Parent Carer Forums (PCFs) continues to enable and empower the voice of parents to contribute to strategic planning and delivery of statutory services for children and young people with SEND, and their families. We work closely at a national and regional level with our SENDIASS colleagues in other authorities and with the DfE (via IASSN; the national IAS Service Network), SENDiST (First-tier Tribunal - Special Educational Needs and Disability), Global Mediation, Council for Disabled Children and Nasen. We have regular meetings with KIDs, the voluntary organisation which also provides IS, and with the PCFs and

senior LA managers. We also sit on regional advisory groups on disagreement resolution (mediation) and SENDiST.

Training for staff: In light of the new legislation staff training has been an ongoing significant burden on the organisation and we are deeply appreciative of the commitment and enthusiasm that all members of our staff team have evidenced, in their determination to become fully prepared to offer skilled and confident information and support to our service-users.

Almost all staff have now completed level one accredited legal training in SEND (delayed only by lack of access to the face-to-face element of the course, which is in short supply). Most are in process of completing level two and are about to embark on level three! In addition, all staff have completed additional training on writing good Education Health Care Plans, time management and prioritisation, and on safeguarding. Key staff have also completed training in tribunal processes and procedures and in preparing for adulthood: engaging with young people and young people's rights. We have delivered in-house training on anti-bullying, mental capacity and the Care Act for all operational staff. Our Office & Finance Manager has commenced her NVQ level 3 in Information Technology.

We remain determined to offer the best service possible to our clients, and competent support and advice to other professionals who are working to navigate or interpret legislation, regulations or statutory guidance in order to achieve best outcomes for children or young people with SEND and their families.



Training for parents: Supportive Parents FREE course "SEND and You" – Supportive Parents' new, free course "SEND and you" ran for five weekly sessions from 11th January with ten parents from Bristol and South Gloucestershire completing the course. It included an overview of current SEND legislation, an exploration of the experience of being a parent of a child with SEND, the processes involved in assessing and providing support in settings including surviving meetings and working in partnership with professionals, with a specific focus

on effective communication and the statutory assessment process. In response to the parent's requests, the fifth session focused on the conversion process, from Statements to Education Health Care Plans. Parents heard about our course via the Parent carer Forum as well as through our own advertising. Most of them were hoping for lots of information and where to go for more help.

The participant's feedback was positive saying: "More info about what I can ask for...knowing a better approach" "Understanding of the law and what an EHCP is. Support and understanding from other parents..." "Very informative, answered my questions really well..."

Additionally we network closely with professionals from both the statutory and voluntary sectors including health and social care, sharing developments and changing practice with a range of professionals across all 3 authorities. Staff regularly attends regional networking meetings; a crucial opportunity to share good practice across the South West and feed up issues, concerns and comments on national developments to DfE.

Training for professionals: A key aim of delivering presentations is to raise the awareness of professionals to the significance and uniqueness of the part played by parents in the education of children with special educational needs and the promotion of the importance of partnership

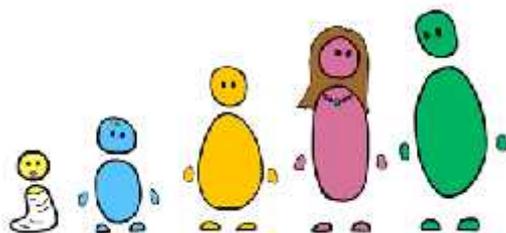
between parents and professional. Supportive Parents always encourages positive, effective relationships between parents and with professionals, to the benefit of children experiencing special educational needs and disability.

Professionals told us: “Excellent – your passion and commitment were evident. The parents are very lucky to have you working with them. Great knowledge and attitude”

“Very detailed and focused presentation.”

“Useful to spend some time thinking about the different issues in working with parents.”

“Practical advice re. report writing for parents was really valuable. Thank you for a very useful session”



Thanks to everyone for all your hard work in 2015!

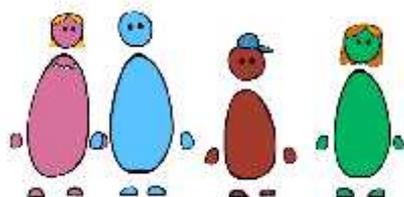
How we make a difference.....

Service User Satisfaction Survey (SUSS)

For the first time this year we carried out our Service User Satisfaction Survey on-line. There was a paper version available for parents who did not wish to use the electronic version and these responses were input into the electronic version by members of staff. The survey was, as usual, targeted at the first 100 callers on the first occasion they called. The response of 38% was an improvement on the last two years figures of 25% and 30%.

Overall, 95% of responders said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received with no-one being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

87% of respondents said that it was easy or very easy to get in touch with us, although two people commented on how busy the phone line was. One parent said “Phone lines were very busy, it took me an hour and a half to get through....once I got through I was happy with the advice & service I got”. For parents who left a message on our answerphone or who emailed us, 92% said we responded quickly or very quickly to their enquiry. This is in line with our aim to respond to callers within two working days.



99% of responses said that we understood their questions or concerns well.

When asked about how they heard about our service, seeing a leaflet or hearing about us from a friend or other parent were the most common responses at 30% each. The Internet was the next most common source of information at 16%, followed by the school or other education setting at 13%. This is a considerable, and disappointing, reduction from the 24% last year. A further 13% heard about us from professionals such as the Local Authority SEN Team, a Health Professional or an EP/Advisory Teacher.

When asked about the difference our information, advice and support made almost 45% of responders said that we made them feel more confident with 32% saying that they felt their child had benefited as a result of our involvement. 21% of parents felt that they are now more involved in decisions about their child's education. 18% have a greater understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and 16% said they are happier or less worried about their child's future. Comments about the difference our service made included

"I feel more confident in doing things that need doing to help my child"

"Meeting other parents in the same situation at the monthly meetings has been fantastic"

"Prepared me better for meetings I had with my son's school"

When asked if there was anything we could have done better, two parents mentioned their difficulty in getting through to the helpline, while one said that they would have liked support at EHCP meetings.

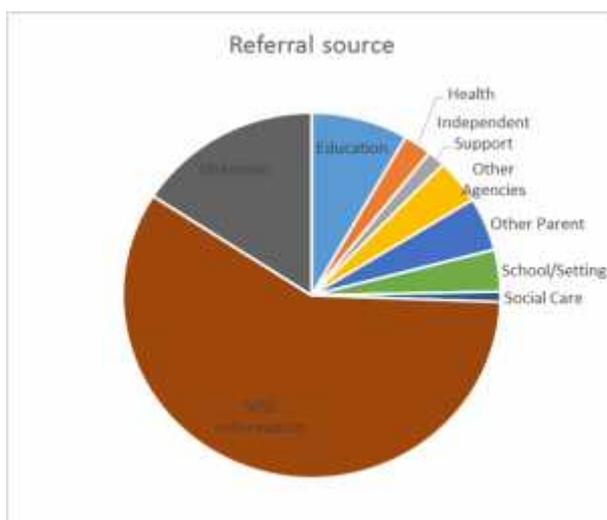
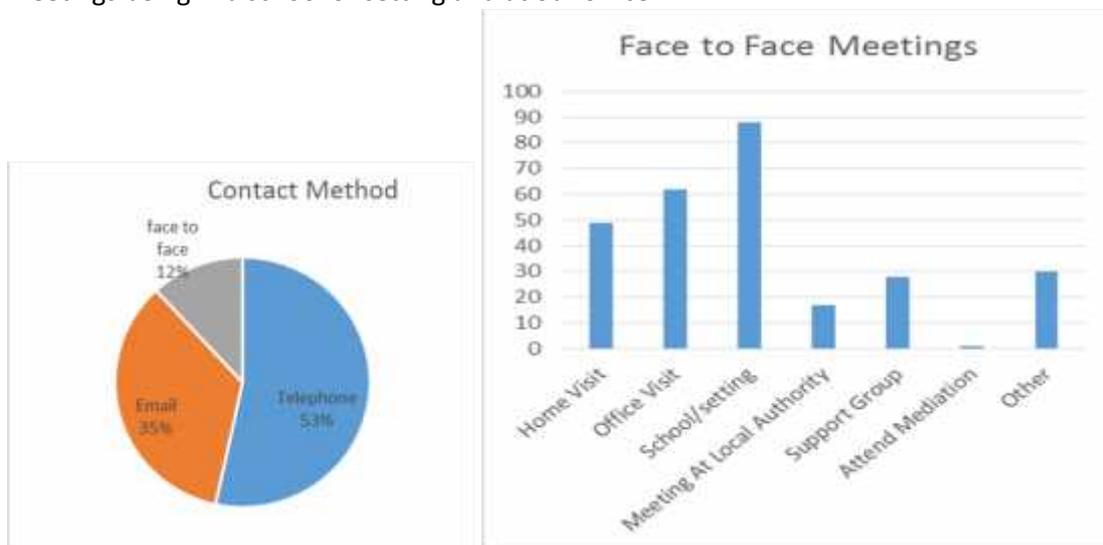
Other comments about our service included

"Only the usual about how lovely it would be if there was enough funding to provide a daily/longer service. Once you get to speak to someone the support and advice is fab!"

For the full results and analysis, including all of the comments please go to our website.

Working with parents: Call Monitoring

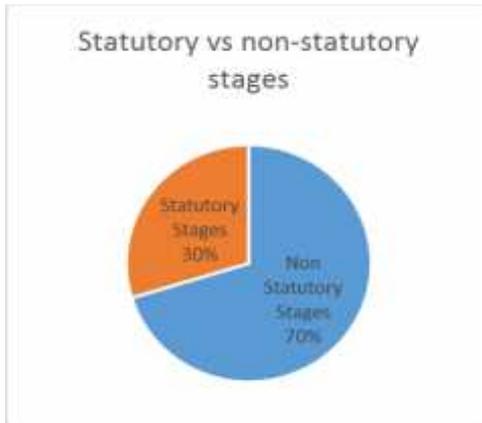
We have now been using the Charitylog data management system to record our work for a complete year and have used it to produce the year end reports for the first time. The charts below show how parents contact us. The majority are by telephone although the use of email is increasing. Face to face meetings account for 12% of our contacts, with the most frequent meetings being in a school or setting and at our office.



When parents call for the first time we record how they heard about us so that we can target particular sectors to make sure that they are aware of our service and can tell parents about us.

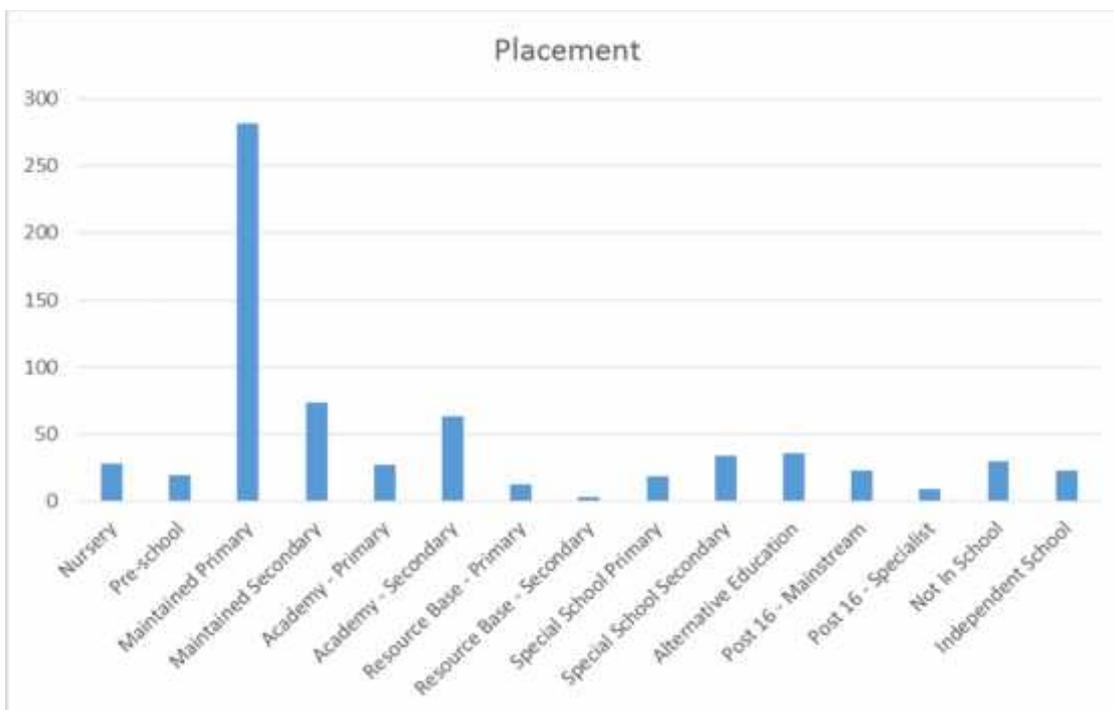
We get over double the number of contacts about children who are receiving

SEN support in school than we do about those who have statements or EHC Plans or are going through the EHC needs assessment process.



Although a large majority of our contacts are with parents, we are beginning to see more young people either with or without their parents. The development of our service for young people aged 16 – 25 should see this increase year on year.

By far the greatest number of contacts concern children in maintained primary schools with a much smaller number in Academy primary schools. The number of contacts concerning children in Maintained Secondary schools and Academy Secondary schools are broadly similar.



Calls about provision are the most frequent and include issues around amount and type of provision as well as provision planning. Placement is another area of concern, with the lack of specialist provision being raised most often. Refusal to assess is the most common reason for parents to contact us about mediation and tribunal. There are still a number of children who are not in school full time and this appears to be increasing. Parents tell us that they only agree to this because schools say they will permanently exclude if they do not. Government guidance says that it should only be used for the shortest time possible with a view to getting the child back into full time education as soon as possible. Exclusions also appear to be on the increase, most worryingly for very young children.

Our service – in print and on line

We want everyone to know that we are still offering a comprehensive, free, impartial and confidential service about SEND! We also offer regular e-share mailings for information about our services and about SEND in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. Parents, professionals and young people can sign up to receive a regular e-bulletin. You will also find us

on Facebook and Twitter, often sharing what we are up to as well as information that helps service-users and other interested readers.

Developing our service to meet the wider age range, up to age 25 – the launch of SP16-25!

In spring 2016 Supportive Parents launched a new section of our website to deliver news and information for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The new pages reflect changes in the law, which means support for people with SEND who are in education or training can now continue until they are 25. Features of the SP16-25 pages include news items, general articles and SEND information resources. We set up SP16-25 to tell young people with SEND about us and for them to tell us what more we can do to help. We would like to hear from anyone aged 16 to 25 – whether they are asking a question, sharing some information or even giving advice on situations they have found themselves in...one young person in five requires help with SEND at least once in their lives, and having the right support at the right time can make an enormous difference.

We have new downloadable SEND resources: We think that it's vital that parents, children and young people have quality information about the new SEND processes. To complement our existing suite of booklets, which aim to help people understand EHC plans and the law about Special Educational Needs/Disabilities, we have also produced printer-friendly



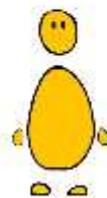
versions which can be downloaded directly from our website.



Easy Read leaflets: We have also just produced several Easy Read leaflets designed to be easy to understand for people who can have problems reading standard leaflets. They cover Confidentiality, EHC Needs Assessments, Getting the Right Support, Personal Budgets and the Local Offer. You can find

the Easy Read leaflets on our website.

EHC PLAN



Have you watched our newest animation? We are really proud of our internet-based animations, tailor-made for Supportive Parents. We hear so often that too much information can be overwhelming, so we made our sure our animations are eye catching and straightforward. Our new video lasts just over 5 minutes and explains what an Education Health and Care Plan is. We are finding that other groups, services, service-users and professionals are starting to create links to our animations and we love to think that this accessible format is increasing our reach, to provide valuable information to a wider audience.

We will continue to offer conferences, workshops and provide accessible information for parents and young people on topics highlighted by them: ie - local leisure options; transition to college; post-16 and post-19 options; finding and keeping a job; benefits; personal budgets; making decisions; planning for and getting the most out of EHC Plan meetings.



“What works for us...!”A Free Supportive Parents’ evening event was held in November 2015, in Filton, Bristol, when parents, young people, professionals and local elected

members were able to find out more about our service and the SEND reforms, celebrate what we achieved in 2015 and share our hopes for the future.

We also heard from Cathy, whose daughter has complex needs and has just transferred to college. She shared what worked well during this exciting transition, as well as some of the challenges! Thanks Cathy – this was such a positive and powerful presentation and reminded us all how important it is to have high aspirations for our young people, and to make the most of the journey!

Thanks also: to Sue Rickerby and Lloydbottoms (chartered accountants) Quartet (Trustee training & fundraising advice), Peninsula (HR), Third Sector (IT), Mike Taylor (website), Rhiannon Chaloner (design), VANS, VOSCUR & The Care Forum (VCS networking), Waitrose & Asda (for donations).....and so many more! Thanks guys – you have contributed to our journey immeasurably!

What else have we done?

Reports from our Local Coordinators

BRISTOL: Last summer **Davina – Bristol’s Local Coordinator** - was involved in delivering a series of four workshops around the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process. Themes covered included Engagement and Information, Working Together and Simplifying Systems and Processes. In 2015-16, Bristol Local Authority planned to convert more than 530 statements to EHCPs, for pupils transferring between phases of education. Supportive Parents and KIDs offered Independent Support with the conversion process. Members of the **Bristol team, Anne and Jo**, were also busy. Anne provided Independent Support in a post-16 setting, with a focus on developing outcomes for college and into adult life. Jo enjoyed the opportunity to attend a Somali Engagement Day in June, to hear the concerns of the Somali community as well as get the message out about our Supportive Parents service. Thanks also for an invitation to a parent support group at a local Primary School.



In the autumn Davina attended a workshop for parents and professionals, jointly facilitated by Bristol Parent Carers and Bristol City Council, “Specialist Education – Planning for the Future”, aimed at sharing information with parents and gathering their views and aspirations. The first part of the morning was an opportunity for parents to share their concerns with Local Authority officers around a variety of themes. Among the topics for discussion were post-16 provision, concerns around SEN Support in schools and EHC Plans. It was really good that some parents were able to give positive feedback about their child’s school and the way in which they meet children’s needs. Other topics included top-up funding, lack of person centred planning, when a parent should ask for an EHC Needs Assessment, and how to get support for children’s social issues. The next session focused on steps which the council have taken to improve specialist provision and planning for future provision. The final two sessions were around post-16, considering parent’s aspirations for their children and what the provision available might look like. Anne and Jo, Bristol team members, have also been busy with training on Personal Budgets, attending a parents group at a local Academy and having an information stall at the new Senco Induction training.

In spring there were two big events in Bristol – The Senco Conference and Bristol Parent Carers Annual Participation Event. At the Senco Conference, the Keynote

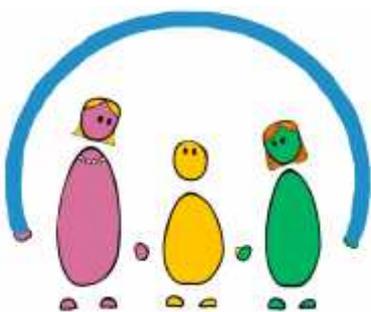


Speaker was Gareth Morewood on successful delivery of 'Quality First Inclusive Teaching' in the classroom. The second big event was Bristol Parent Carers' Annual Participation Event - a huge success. This year, there were two sessions, a daytime and an evening session. The daytime session had 120 parents and professionals booked in, and the evening session had over 80 bookings. Each session had 2 main topics – the launch of a parents' guide to the SEND system (produced jointly by BPC, Supportive Parents and Kids) and secondly an introduction to a multi-media package which allows children, families and young people to share their hopes, aspirations and support needs with a variety of professionals. Jo attended a Department of Education one day course on 'Writing Good Education, Health & Care Plans'. It was a useful training course with good resources to equip us in our work supporting parents and young people during the EHCP process. We are rolling out the training to all Supportive Parents staff. Anne & Jo have also exhibited at three Post 16 Transition Information events. All of these transition events offered the chance for our team to talk to parents and young people and to signpost to information and support.

NORTH SOMERSET: We have seen a substantial increase in the number of calls to the helpline from North Somerset parents; contacts between 2011 and 2015 are up by 141%! Calls to our Information, Advice and Support line have been around the EHCP process, communication with schools, access to top-up funding, refusals to carry out assessment and out of county placements. The main increase in calls from schools was based around non top-up and statemented pupils. **Jackie – North Somerset's Local Coordinator** – has worked to provide Independent Support to parents and young people throughout the EHCP transfer process with **team members Sarah and Helen**. During the summer term they ran three parent sessions about moving up to school, at different venues across North Somerset. This complements their outreach work in more than 16 different children's centres. The monthly support groups and monthly drop-in support sessions at Springboard have provided opportunities for information, advice and support. Speakers at support group included local health commissioners and the ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Enhanced team, plus a specialist workshop on managing behaviour was delivered.

During the winter term the team remained busy supporting many parents through the new Education Health and Care Plan process. The experience for families has been variable as the system develops and schools get used to the person centred planning model. Their aim is to support parents/young people to receive a final plan that they can say really reflects their child/young person and their needs. They attended parents' evenings at all the special schools in the Authority, providing parents with information about the transfer process from Statements to EHC Plans. They also provided drop in support sessions at Springboard Clevedon, Ashcombe Weston and South Weston's For All Healthy Living Centre. Strategic works includes helping the local Clinical Commissioning Group improve Children's Community Health Services and attending engagement groups on the SEND EHCP, Local Offer and the 14 – 25 service development.

In spring 16 the main focus remained on direct support for parents and young people with new EHCP assessments and transfers to EHCP. Experiences are variable and we continue to work with the Local Authority on how these can be improved. Of particular concern was the overspend on Top Up funding, which required monies already allocated to schools to be reclaimed and an amended moderation process put into place, and changes in the way schools measure pupil progress. Jackie and Maggie attended and presented at the SENCO conference, 'Completing the Circle – Parent Participation in SEND'. It was wonderful to hear so much positive discussion from SENCOs on how they are developing their work with parents. In February the support group was very well



attended with a behaviour specialist providing welcome advice and strategies to parents.

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE: during last summer the Independent Support funding enabled **Kathryn Mason, South Gloucestershire's Local Coordinator, and her team (Sara and Kirsty)** to extend support to more families at more meetings. Kathryn contributed to a 0-25 Service information workshop at the South Glos Parents and Carers event with KIDs. Families are having very varied experiences of statutory processes – from request or conversion review for an EHC plan, to getting an existing statement amended. Kathryn meets the local authority regularly to make sure that concerns are picked up and acted upon. The team held information sessions for parents in a range of local schools. Outreach to specific groups included parents of children newly diagnosed with ADHD and Rainbow groups at Children's Centres, supporting parents to work in partnership with their child's education setting.

The team continues to run Parent Support Groups in Yate and Kingswood. In April 2015, senior managers from the 0-25 service explained the funding changes for resource bases and special schools. In May parents considered their child's experience of accessing help if they were worried about school, if they were are so anxious that it was affecting their attendance. Kathryn also linked with South Gloucestershire Parent Carers (SGPC), working with the Local Authority and Health to improve access to mental health services. We followed up parent concerns by inviting Jonathan Parker, CYP Psychotherapist and Off the Record (OTR) Supervisor, to talk to parents about the work OTR do with young people in South Gloucestershire.

During the winter term Kathryn continued to work with the local authority with a strategic focus on improving the information on statutory processes (the EHC needs assessment, conversion review), with the goal of achieving more straightforward forms for use by spring 2016. At the Parent Support Group in September council officers attended to discuss proposed changes to supported travel with parent carers. Through the year Sara has regularly attends South Glos Parent and Carer's monthly Coffee Mornings to ensure that families have access to free, impartial SEND information, advice and support (IAS).

February 2016 brought a useful opportunity to attend the SENCO conference and meet other services supporting our children and young people's inclusion in schools and colleges. Sara was busy working with parents at a range of Early Years settings. Kirsty and Sara ran a well-received event at a local Secondary school resource base for parents and students, about our work as an IAS service. Kirsty and Kathryn attended useful training run by the SWRIASS Network called from 'Aspirations to Outcomes' where they worked with local authority colleagues on anonymised draft EHC plans. The main focus for direct work this year has involved work to support parents to contribute to and review draft EHC plans and at school-based meetings to support effective inclusion.

Fundraising and finances

Autumn Boost to fundraising: Thanks to all our parents and supporters living in Portishead whose green tokens at Waitrose raised a whopping £541 for Supportive Parents. Supportive Parents was also very fortunate to receive £200 through ASDA's (Filton branch) - Community Life scheme. All monies raised help provide a better service for parents and young people.

For details of our financial activities please refer to our Report and Accounts 31st March 2016.



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