Autism in Schools Project Comes to Brighton & Hove

PaCC have recently become involved in the Autism in Schools project in Brighton & Hove.

Background to the Autism in Schools Project

It is a project that has been created and is funded by the NHS but delivered by local authorities. It comes from something called the Transforming Care Programme, which is focused on Learning Disability and Autism. They ran some pilots in schools which were successful, so they created the Autism in Schools project from it.

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums have released some information, about how the Autism in Schools project was created:

https://nnpcf.org.uk/2021/06/23/autism-schools-project/

West Sussex were one of the pilot areas for Autism in Schools, so their parent carer forum (WSPCF) are able to support PaCC and provide us with resources that we can adapt for B&H. East Sussex are also beginning to roll out the project too, so there have been meetings between PaCC, ESPCF and WSPCF.

Here is how the Manchester Parent Carer Forum describe the project:

Being closely aligned with the **Transforming Care programme,** we have an overarching aim to improve services so that more people can live in the community, with the right support, and close to home. We seek to ensure that children and young people are supported better in the school environment; foster good relationships between and among staff, parents and students; signpost families to sources of information and support; and promote neurodiversity awareness and acceptance among young people.

What does the Autism in Schools Project involve?

Setting up mini parent carer forums within chosen schools, providing and delivering workshops to parent carers as part of half termly coffee mornings. Training will also be provided to school staff. The idea is to increase knowledge within the school and create, or strengthen, a culture of inclusion in the school and coproduction between the school staff and parent carers. Children and young people will also have the option to attend their own workshops and have the opportunity to share their views about the school.

Is the project just focused on autism?

No, any parent carer who has a child on the SEND register (including those with an EHCP) can fill in the survey and attend the workshops and coffee mornings. Most of the training and workshop themes will be broader than autism, for example, parent carer wellbeing, executive functioning.

Which schools are involved in Brighton & Hove?

Cardinal Newman secondary school, Cottesmore primary school and Woodingdean primary school.

Who else will be involved with Autism in Schools?

PaCC, two BHISS ASC specialist teachers (one working with the secondary school and the other with the two primary schools), schools mental health service participation worker (working with the children and young people at the schools).

What are the outcomes the project is aiming for?

- To promote early identification and intervention
- To help prevent children and young people reaching crisis
- To develop or strengthen coproduction between the school and families
- To create more awareness of inclusion in the schools
- To share good practice and promote to the positives of inclusion and coproduction to other schools
- For the coffee mornings to be self-sufficient and run by school staff and parent carers once the project ends

What is PaCC's role?

- Help to coproduce the parent carer survey
- Analyse the results to help inform the AIS project for that particular school.
- Co-produce the training and workshop resources with BHISS
- Co-produce an AIS pack for parent carers at each school
- Facilitate the half termly coffee mornings at each school
- Co-deliver workshops to parent carers at the coffee mornings
- Help to run the coffee mornings in a way that they can run without PaCC in the future
- Analysing the effectiveness of the project

Louise Howe and Ruth Price will be running the coffee mornings for the schools, with one covering the secondary school and the other covering the primary schools.