

Dorset support service will help children with special educational needs and disabilities

A service to provide support for children in Dorset with special educational needs and disabilities will be launched by Family Action in February.

The SENIASS programme (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Support Service) had previously been run by Dorset Council and will now be operated by families charity, Family Action. The programme is a free, confidential and impartial service for children and young people and their parents or carers. It will be jointly funded by Dorset's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Dorset Council.

Cllr Andrew Parry, Dorset Council Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Early Help, said: "Family Action's bid to deliver this service was very strong. We are committed to the best outcomes for our families and we feel very confident that our valued SENIASS service will continue to grow from strength to strength, providing an excellent service to benefit children and young people with SEND across Dorset."

As well as providing a high quality, impartial, accurate and confidential service, SENIASS will empower children, young people and their parents/carers to play an informed and active part in decision making and supporting them to make the best decisions. Practitioners will work in partnership with educators, trainers, health and care services as well as supported employment.

Amy Brooke, Family Action, Deputy Director for Services and Innovation, South, said: "We are delighted Dorset Council has entrusted Family Action with the delivery of the Dorset SENIASS service. We will bring expertise from our six existing SENIASS services to offer a free, high quality, impartial and confidential service.

"We look forward to working with children and young people with SEND in Dorset, and their parents/carers, to empower them to have an informed and active role in decision making and ensure they continue to receive the highest quality support."

Family Action will work closely with Dorset Council, the CCG, the Dorset Parent Carer Council and the SENIASS steering group to transfer the service. In addition, Family Action will work in partnership with users and stakeholders to develop provision further. The current SENIASS team will have the opportunity to transfer to Family Action.

For more information visit www.dorsetsendiass.co.uk

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Family Action is a national charity committed to building stronger families and brighter lives. Since the charity was founded in 1869, we have continued to help children and families overcome the challenges they face through a wide range of practical, emotional and financial support. Today we work with more than 60,000 families in over 200 community-based services, as well as

supporting thousands more through our national helpline, FamilyLine, which offers free and immediate support to adult family members and national schemes like the National School Breakfast Programme.

We help families and individuals to manage their mental health and wellbeing, working with families to reduce the impact of social isolation, poverty, addiction and other significant sources of stress and pressure. We also support families affected by adoption, special guardianship, separation, special educational needs, disability, domestic violence and sexual abuse. In addition, we provide thousands of welfare and educational grants every year to people in financial crisis.

For further information, please visit our website at www.family-action.org.uk

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