

Hartlepool **SEND IASS**



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY INFORMATION, ADVICE AND
SUPPORT SERVICE

Annual Report **September 2019 - August 2020**

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HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Introduction

The Information, Advice and Support Service provide free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support about education, health and social care for children, young people and their parents on matters relating to special educational needs and disability. The provision of information, advice and support helps promote independence and self-advocacy for children, young people and their parents.

This annual report provides an overview of the work completed across the academic year 2010/2020, together with developments for the 2020/2021 academic year.

Remit of SENDIASS

- A service which supports parents/carers with children who have or may have special educational needs and disability
- A service which supports young people / children who have or may have special educational needs and disability
- To provide access to independent advice through volunteers and other independent organisations who can offer information and support on a one-to-one basis
- A service which recognises the importance of parents, carers and young people's views
- A service which helps the Local Authority and parent/carers and schools work together to meet the needs of individual children
- A service which helps support parents/carers, children and young people through Education, Health and Care Plan Assessments and Reviews

Core Functions

The Information Advice and Support Service provides:

- Impartial advice and information to parents/carers, young people, schools and other professionals
- Signposting to voluntary groups, charities and other organisations
- Clear explanation of educational procedures
- Help for parents/carers/young people to complete forms
- Someone to attend meetings - schools, LA, multi-agency

- Someone to talk to in confidence
- Support to parents/carers in their preparation for and attendance at Governing Body appeals for exclusions
- Support to parents/carers in their preparation for and attendance at Independent Appeals Panel for exclusions
- Support to parents/carers/ young people in their preparation for and attendance at SENDIST appeals/ Tribunals
- IASS representation at regional meetings
- Lobbying for change and to influence policies and procedures
- Supporting parents/carers/children and young people with SEN Support and Statutory Assessment

Hartlepool SENDIASS is an in-house funded service situated within Children's Joint Commissioning Directorate.

Report on Activities September 2019 – August 2020

The table below provides data relating to the number of referrals enquires and levels of intervention across the academic year and includes the previous academic year as a comparison:

Reason	Numbers 18/19	Numbers 19/20
Total number of referrals received	125	131
Number of cases closed	107	93
Number of cases still open to the service	19	38
Number of females	42	40
Number of males	83	91
EHC needs assessment requests/refusals to assess	13	23
Advice on SEN Support	77	68
Parental Views Support Given	45	31
Young Persons views supported	45	31
Home Visit	6	0
School Visit/ TAC Meetings	236	238
Nursery Providers (non-school)	2	2
Number of secondary schools visited	5	5
Number of primary schools visited	22	23

Reason	Numbers 18/19	Numbers 19/20
Number of post 16 providers visited	3	3
Out of Area Schools	2	4
General Support/Advice - Telephone	125	131
Exclusions - fixed term exclusion, PEX and Reintegration	18	20
Admission Appeals	2	2
Mediation/Disagreement Resolution	4	2
EHC Plan - Support/Review	24	31
Coordinated Support Plan Reviews	19	25
Personal Budget Enquiries	3	0
Local Offer - all families provided with a link	125	131
Support at Tribunal/Advice	4	1
Support – managed move/school transfer	5	6
Bullying	3	4
School Attendance Meeting	19	17
Placement		2
Transition Support		6
In year school transfer advice		3
Managed Moves		3
Alternative provision advice		2

A total of 402 hours of support was provided by SENDIASS to parents/carers/young people at meetings.

In addition to this, the SENDIAS Service has accessed 11 days of training, 1 regional and 1 national development day, and 4 regional meetings. A combination of face to face and virtual training.

***The above does not include preparation time for meetings, research, and recording of meetings or other work required of the service.**

Casework

The total number of cases during the time period has been 131

Using the National IASS Intervention Levels guidance, the service recorded the following:

Level 1 – 20 Single Enquiry

This is described as; phone or email support, tailored to the particular circumstances of the service user. Information and advice was given about SEND matters, typically less than 2 hours of service time as part of a single intervention

Level 2 – 80 Independent Support

This support includes helping to understand documents or complete documentation, support in communicating with the school, local authority or other services. Level 2 is also described as detailed and personalised guidance on SEND issues and/ or exclusion procedures. Level 2 also indicates support from SENDIASS during the EHCP process and also conversion from Statements to EHCP

Level 3 – 31 Casework

This support includes detailed and continuous assistance and guidance with statutory processes:

- Complex, multi-agency needs
- Assistance in overcoming serious breakdown in communications with school/LA/other services
- Requires intensive support due to personal circumstances (eg low literacy levels, learning or sensory difficulties. English as an additional language)
- Provision of support at/for a series of meetings over a period of months
- Assistance with preparation for an exclusion appeals and support at the appeal meeting
- Support with EHCP's and EHCP Reviews
- IASS undertakes key working roles with other agencies

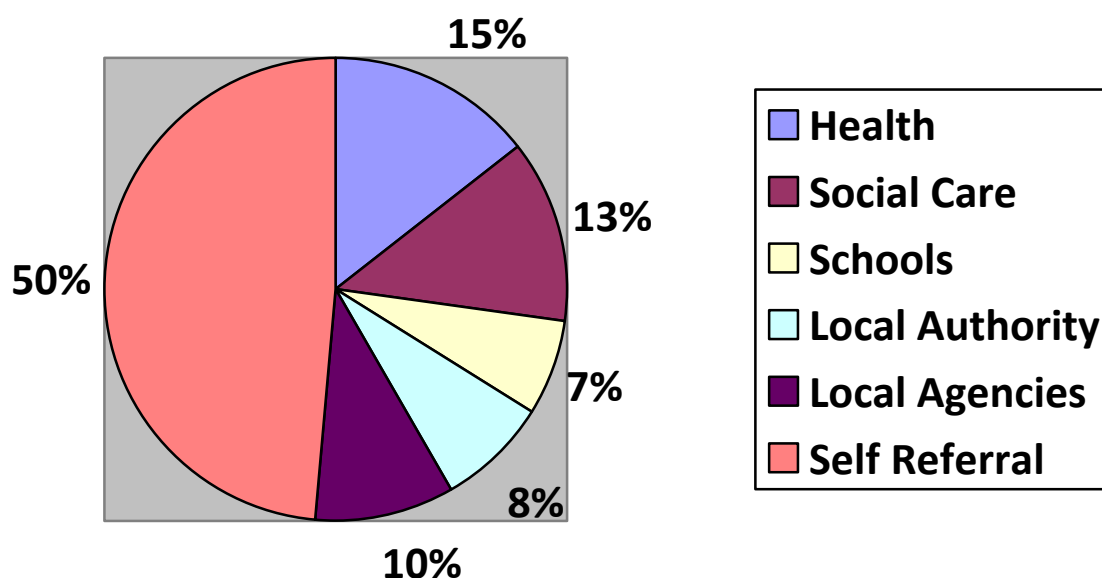
Level 4 – 1 Mediation and Tribunal

This support includes detailed and continuous assistance and guidance with preparation and support during First Tier Tribunal (SEND) including DDA complaints to Tribunal, Complaints to Tribunal, Complaints to Ombudsman, Judicial Review.

Referral Type

Hartlepool SENDIASS have taken a variety of referrals over the last academic year. “Self-referrals” are our main source of referral, as indicated below. This means a parent/carer or young person makes direct contact with the service after some support. The other type of referral is when a parent/carer or young person is advised to contact us either by someone in the local authority, health, social care, school or local agency.

Referral Breakdown from 1st September 2019 to 31st July 2020



Condition/Disability

Children and young people that are supported by the service may have a number of conditions or a disability which may impact on their learning without the right level of support.

Over the last academic year the parents/ carers of children and young people accessing the service for support have presented with a variety of conditions and disability, and includes the previous academic year as a comparison. As detailed below:

Condition/Disability	Number 2018/19	Number 2019/20
Learning Disability	10	9
ASD	35	32
ADHD	12	11
SEMH	7	31
Aspergers	4	2
Sensory Processing Disorder	Not recorded	8
Dyspraxia	8	7
Other	26	33

In addition to the above 15 families reported that their child was on the ASD Pathway and 1 child was on the ADHD Pathway.

Key Findings

Key findings for the reporting period of 2019 – 2020 academic year include:

- A slight increase demand of parents/young people accessing the service from the previous academic year, albeit the pandemic had seen schools closing and cessation of face to face meetings and home visits

- A slight decrease from the previous academic year supporting parents, carers and young people to express their views and aspirations
- A slight increase in supporting families around exclusion
- A slight decrease in supporting families and young people with regards to school attendance with anxiety and mental health issues who are finding it extremely difficult to attend school. This data was only captured up until March 2020, therefore it would be reasonable to assume that this would have increased significantly from the previous year
- A consistent number of children and young people with ASD receiving support from the service
- An increase in families requesting support with regards to the EHC Needs Assessment process and Annual Reviews
- 100% increase on cases remaining open to the service from the previous academic year
- An increase of 25% on the direct number of hours of support
- A significant increase of children and young people with social, emotional, mental health from the previous year's recordings

COVID 19 – Impact

In March 2020 the service was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The service had to adapt its way of working due to the ever-changing landscape of SEN provision and Government guidance due to the effects of COVID -19.

Changes to service delivery included:

- SENDIASS staff changed to home-based working from office based working
- Changes to technology usage including virtual meetings via SKYPE/ZOOM and TEAMS, including increased telephone calls to the service
- Difficulties around timescales for statutory assessment for EHC Needs Assessment and Annual Reviews
- A shift in enquires from parents with regards to school closures, access to online learning, home schooling and concerns about their child's general mental health

- Increased concerns from parents around transitions arrangements and that due to the closures, the impact it would have on their child
- Carried out Keep in Touch by phone to parents identified as needing that regular contact throughout the lockdown to provide support, an ear to listen and sign post to others services who could also provide the support a family may need
- Understanding of definitions of vulnerable children/keyworker children and their entitlement to access education

Evaluation of IASS and Responses

A feedback questionnaire was distributed to parents and young people who had used the SENDIAS Service during the academic year. In total a 131 questionnaires were sent out, and the questionnaire was also available to be completed on line. A total of 29 completed questionnaires were returned, which equates to a 22% return rate.

Six questions were asked of the service users and these are prescribed questions set by the National IASSN. Other supplementary questions were also asked:

Comment	Percentage
Easy to get in touch with the service	55%
Information, advice and support given was very helpful	67.8%
The service was always neutral, fair and unbiased	82.1%
The service made a great deal of difference for their involvement	53.57%
Very satisfied with the service provided	71.43%
Extremely likely to recommend the service to others	89.29%

Where did you find out about the service?

Heard about the services from CAMHS & Social Care	50%
Heard about the service via another parent or the Parent Carer Forum	25%
Found out about the service using the website	12%
Found out about the service either directly from school or a voluntary sector group	13%

These are comments from respondents who told us of any other differences that their contact with the service made:

"The service has been Amazing!"

"Initially I had been misinformed, until I was given the contact details for SENDIASS, who provided me with the right information and support"

"I feel better knowing there are experienced people able to help me advocate for my daughter"

"I found out about the service 2 years ago and had struggled to have schools understand my daughters since she was 4 years old. I wish I had been aware of this service any time sooner in the last ten years"

"I felt that having the SENDIASS present at meetings I was listened to rather than just talked at by the SENCO. My child's thoughts and feelings were also taken into account in the meeting"

"Just having the SENDIASS Manager in the background, was so useful when things that would crop up outside of our knowledge base, because of her familiarity with the SEND Code of Practice brought a whole new way for us to challenge the school"

"The service while excellent, feels rather business like, a more community based approach perhaps!" **Following this feedback, the service worked with Hartlepool Carers and the Parent Carer Forum and provided fortnightly drop in sessions for families to call in, which was well received.**

"As a parent, I really appreciated the service keeping in touch with me during the first lockdown. It was good to know someone was there"

Disagreement Resolution and Mediation Service

The Local Authority has an approved list of Providers who can offer Independent Disagreement Resolution and Mediation Services. There are 2 providers who can provide this service for parents, carer, children and young people.

During the period September 2019 to July 2020, IASS has sign- posted 2 families to the provider list. However, all parents receive a copy of the Independent Disagreement and Mediation Leaflet to inform them about the service and they can then make the choice of which provider they would prefer to use. To our knowledge all parents made contact with either one of the services, but may not have requested a certificate of mediation.

National Trial - Single Route of Redress

The Government extended the powers of the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), sometimes referred to as the 'SEND Tribunal', to make non-binding recommendations about the health and social care aspects of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans as part of a two-year trial. The trial will apply to decisions made on EHC plans issued/amended from 3 April 2018.

To date, the parent or young person has only been able to appeal the educational aspects of EHC plans. The trial gives them new rights to request recommendations about the health and social care needs and provision specified in EHC plans, in addition to the educational aspects, when making a SEND appeal. This gives you the opportunity to raise all your concerns about an EHC plan in one place.

It is only possible for the Tribunal to consider the health and/or social care aspects of the EHC plan where the parent or young person is already making an appeal in relation to the education aspects of the EHC plan and the education aspect must remain live throughout the appeal.

The trial was extended beyond the original finish date and is currently running until 31st August 2021.

What does this mean for parents and young people?

If a parent or young person is unhappy with a decision not to issue an EHC plan or with the special educational content or placement in the plan, they can make an appeal to the SEND Tribunal. This trial now gives the opportunity to request recommendations about the health and social care content of the plan at the same time. This will mean the Tribunal will take a more holistic, person-centred view of the needs of the child or young person.

[IASS SEND Training – September 2019 to August 2020](#)

Across the last academic year to complement and enhance the knowledge and skills of the Information, Advice and Support Service Officer the table below shows the training, accessed and completed.

Training	Delivered by
Communicating with Young People	CDC
SEN Support in Schools	Regional SENDIASS Teams
Exclusions - Medical Conditions	Regional SENDIASS Teams
SEN Education Law	Regional SENDIASS Teams

IPSEA – Level 1, 2 & 3 online (YP worker)	IPSEA
All you want to know about Autism, daren't ask!	Steve McGuinness (via HBC)
Reducing Parent Conflict, Modules 1,2, & 3	HBC
Information Governance Training	HBC
Exclusions Training	ACE
Supporting Young People with Autism	CDC
IPSEA Level 1 face to face (virtual- YP worker)	IPSEA

Parent / Carer Forum

The IASS works very closely with the parent carer forum 1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future and raises awareness amongst parents and carers of the services that can be provided. The SENDIAS Service attends regular meetings of the group and is also co opted onto the Forum's Steering Group. Whenever possible, the service also attends regular information days organised by the forum and information shared via the PCF Face Book page. During this year the PCF/Hartlepool Carers provided a base whereby the service was able to provide fortnightly drop-in sessions for parents and carers.

Local Offer

Hartlepool's Local Offer of Services continues to evolve and during this academic year a newly revamped website was under development. This has been in conjunction with the Parent Carer Forum, Local Authority, Health and local groups. The Local Offer informs parents, carers, children and young people, including schools and professionals about what is on offer. All families that come into contact with the IASS receive a leaflet informing them about the service, which also includes a direct web link to the Local Offer page. The Local offer is also promoted through the IASS website.

National Quality Minimum Standards for IASS

A set of minimum standards has been developed and implemented to enable SENDIAS Services to work towards delivering a full service offer. The standards cover four main areas:

- Commissioning, governance and management arrangements
- Strategic Functions
- Operational Functions, including Advocacy and IASS
- Professional development and training for staff

Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP)

In March 2019, SENDIASS were successful in their bids to secure funding for year 2 of the DfE Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP). In order to secure the funding, the service carried out a comprehensive self-assessment to ensure compliance with the National Quality Standards for IASS. 5 funding streams were available, with a requirement to deliver on expected outcomes set against contract timescales. Hartlepool SENDIASS were successful in all 5 bids submitted and task orders and contractual arrangements were issued by Council for Disabled Children under contract by the DfE. These outcomes have shaped the priorities for SENDIASS for the latter part of this academic year until March 2020.

In January 2020, further funding became available through the IAS Programme, to cover 2 areas of work. Again Hartlepool SENDIASS were successful and awarded the funding to commence further development work from April 2020 through to March 2021.

North East SENDIASS Regional Network Group (NEIASS)

Hartlepool continues its membership of this regional group, comprising of the 12 local authorities represented in the region. Representatives from each service meet up to 4 times a year. These meetings provide opportunities to share issues, national and regional developments, including new funding initiatives, development of regional tools and resources as well as access to training opportunities to develop skills and knowledge to disseminate to services and schools across the region.

The group provides a confidential and supportive space for SENDIASS Officers to discuss issues affecting their service and serves as a link to the National IAS Network and Staff Association.

As a region, NEIASS commissioned and organised a regional training programme for parents and carers. Sessions included: SEN Support in schools, SEND Education Law, and SEND Exclusions, Medical needs and Children Missing Education.

NEIASS also held a regional development day to plan for the future service development, however due to COVID-19, work on these developments has been postponed.

Achievements in the last 12 months- April 2019 - March 2020

- Secured IAS Programme funding to deliver a variety of initiatives to support the service to meet full service offer against the minimum standards
- Dedicated Young Persons worker in post from October 2019, working 22.5 hours to support young people up to the age of 25 years with an Education, Health and Care Plan and to build capacity and work with young people to empower them to influence and provide meaningful feedback to the SEND Operational Group in relation to SEND
- Continued to work on the development of the dedicated website for IASS in collaboration with the PCF to ensure that information is accurate, up to date and easy to access
- All SENDIASS Factsheets, leaflets and policies were rebranded, including the new service logo and provided in accessible formats
- Continued to promote the service to increase awareness and importance that the service can provide
- Complied with the outcomes set out in the IASP funding agreement towards delivering a full service offer
- Self-evaluated the service compliance in line with the new minimum Quality Standards
- Worked with Strategic Managers across Education, Health and Social Care to work towards agreed goals around joint arrangements of the service going forward
- Worked collaboratively with our partners across the Tees Valley around co production
- Delivered a series of training requirements in partnership with the Parent Carer Forum and the Regional SENDIAS Services
- Continued to deliver fortnightly drop in sessions working collaboratively with Hartlepool Carers and the Parent Carer Forum, providing the opportunity for parents and carers to pop in and have a chat in an impartial setting, unfortunately due to COVID-19, this service ceased to be provided due to lockdown, however the staff in the SENDIAS Service maintained contact with parents throughout the lockdown and the service continued to operate fully, albeit it virtually

- Attend 2 public information events to raise the profile and awareness of the service to parents, carers and other providers
- Submit timely reports and case studies for the CDC/DfE Information, Advice and Support Programme contract
- Provided verbal feedback and reports to the SEND Operational Group and contributed toward the SEND Improvement Plan
- Attended training and workshop events to increase the knowledge and skills of SENDIASS staff
- Contributed and worked collaboratively with the local authority and Parent Carer Forum to revamp the current local offer of services

Priorities for April 2020 – March 2021

- To further explore Joint Arrangements to agree and develop a memorandum of understanding and joint partnership arrangements to agree and implement a joint arrangement framework
- Continue to develop the work to increase participation of children and young people worker to be part of the establishment
- To ensure that the service standalone website is launched and accessible to all service users
- The SENDIAS Service provides advocacy support for children, young people and their parents to enable them to express their views and wishes
- All advice and support staff successfully complete all online IPSEA legal training levels
- To produce a service continuity and sustainability plan for the period April 2021 onwards
- To support the delivery of briefing sessions to promote and raise awareness of the service
- To work in partnership with the Parent Carer Forum to provide drop in sessions for families to access
- To test and launch 'Connecting You', to further enhance and increase the engagement with young people
- To continue to engage and contribute to the SEND Operational Group and SEND Improvement Plan

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