

# Hartlepool **SEND IASS**



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY INFORMATION, ADVICE AND  
SUPPORT SERVICE

## **Annual Report** **September 2020 - August 2021**

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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 2020/21, together with developments for the 2021/22 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 2020 - August 2021

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	Numbers 20/21
Total number of referrals received	125	131	132
Number of cases closed	107	93	83
Number of cases still open to the service	19	38	49
Number of females	42	40	38
Number of males	83	91	94
EHCNA requests/refusals to assess/ placement Appeals to SEND Tribunal,	13	23	57
Advice on Ceasing of EHCP's			6
Advice on SEN Support	77	68	76
Parental Views Support Given	45	31	30
Young Persons views supported	45	31	30
Home Visit	6	0	0
School Visit/ TAC Meetings/Virtual Mtgs	236	238	394
Nursery Providers (non-school)	2	2	2

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Numbers 18/19</b>	<b>Numbers 19/20</b>	<b>Numbers 20/21</b>
Number of secondary schools visited	5	5	5
Number of Primary schools visits	22	23	25
Number of post 16 providers visited	3	3	1
Out of Area Schools	2	4	4
General Support/Advice - Telephone	125	131	132
Exclusions - fixed term exclusion, PEX and Reintegration	18	20	16
Admission Appeals	2	2	1
Mediation/Disagreement Resolution Advice	4	2	7
EHC Plan - Support/Review	24	31	33
Coordinated Support Plan Reviews	19	25	37
Personal Budget Enquiries	3	0	1
Local Offer - all families provided with a link	125	131	132
Support at Tribunal/Advice	4	1	7
Support – managed move/school transfer	5	6	7
Bullying	3	4	1
School Attendance/Non-attendance Mtgs	19	17	28
Placement		2	4
Transition Support		6	8
In year school transfer advice		3	7
Managed Moves		3	1
Alternative Provision Advice		2	11
Exam Concessions Advice			1
Complaints Advice			3

A total of 734 hours of support was provided by SENDIASS to parents/carers/young people at meetings.

In addition to this, the SENDIAS Service has accessed 25 days of training, 1 regional and 1 national development day, and 4 regional meetings. A combination of E Learning 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 132

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

### **Level 1 – 25 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 – 68 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 – 32 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

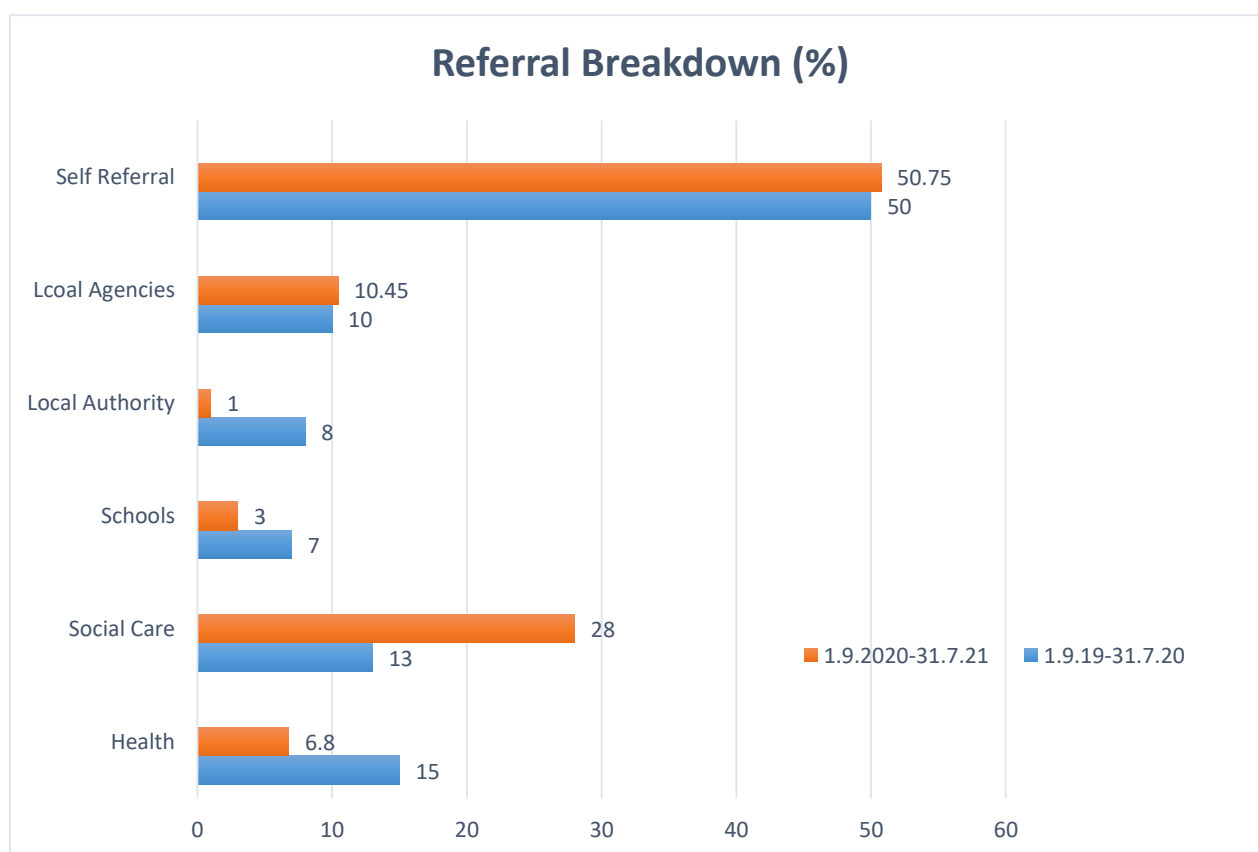
## Level 4 – 7 Mediation and Tribunal

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



## 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	Number 2020/21
Learning Disability	10	9	12
ASD	35	32	31
ADHD	12	11	8
SEMH/Anxiety	7	31	40
Aspergers	4	2	0
Sensory Processing Disorder	Not recorded	8	16
Dyspraxia/ Dyslexia	8	7	10
Other	26	33	37

In addition to the above 32 families reported that their child had been referred to or on the ASD Neuro Development Pathway.

## Key Findings

Key findings for the reporting period of 2020– 2021 academic year include:

- A significant increase in school visits/TAC/Virtual Meetings
- A slight decrease in supporting families around exclusion
- An increase in supporting families and young people with regards to school attendance/Non-attendance with anxiety and mental health issues who are

finding it extremely difficult to attend school. This is reflective of the second lockdown between January and March 2021

- A consistent number of children and young people with ASD receiving support from the service
- A significant increase in families requesting support with regards to the EHC Needs Assessment process, Annual Reviews and making Appeals
- An increase on cases remaining open to the service from the previous academic year
- An increase of 332 hours providing direct support from the previous academic year
- A further increase of children and young people with social, emotional, mental health from the previous year's recordings

### COVID 19 – Impact

COVID 19 continued to impact the service during this academic year. In January 2021 until March 2021, a further lockdown was implemented whereby many of our children found themselves being educated on line and at home. The service continued 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.

Service delivery continued to provide support in the following ways:

- SENDIASS staff continued to work using the hybrid model with a mixture of working from home and office based
- Changes to technology usage including an increase in the use of 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, together with how school would look upon returning back into the educational environment
- Increased concerns from parents around transitions arrangements and that due to the closures, the impact it would have on their child

- Understanding of definitions of vulnerable children/keyworker children and their entitlement to access education
- From March to the end of the academic year, some face to face meetings commenced, with strict measures in place to ensure the safety of everyone
- Access to training continued to be delivered virtually and staff in SENDIASS continued to improve on their continued personal development

### 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 115 questionnaires were sent out, and the questionnaire was also available to be completed on line. A total of 19 completed questionnaires were returned, which equates to a 16.52% 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:

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Easy to get in touch with the service	56.25%
Information, advice and support given was very helpful	71.43%
The service was always neutral, fair and unbiased	53.85%
The service made a great deal of difference for their involvement	50%
Very satisfied with the service provided	76.92%
Extremely likely to recommend the service to others	75%

Where did you find out about the service?

Heard about the services from CAMHS & Social Care	25%
Heard about the service via another parent or the Parent Carer Forum	18.75%
Found out about the service using the website/Leaflets/Local Offer	25%
Found out about the service either directly from school or a voluntary sector group	31.25%

## **These are comments from respondents who told us of any other differences**

*“Made me more aware of the process for an EHC Needs Assessment”*

*“A plan has been put in place, but still to be implemented”*

*“It made me prepare for meetings and have questions to ask that I wouldn’t think to ask. Staff in school were impressed with my preparation too in meetings and because of your information leaflet I did well!”*

*“I really like the Preparing for Meetings factsheet. It reads to me in a caring and understanding way. I just want to praise that leaflet really. It is a confidence booster.”*

*“Thank you for the support you give to visit a provision. It was great support for both me and my child.”*

*“Thank you so much in supporting us to appeal against the decision not to carry out an EHC needs assessment by the local authority.”*

*“Thank you for your help with regards to the issues my daughter was having in school.”*

*“I just needed some kind of help from somewhere or my daughter and you found me it, so a huge, huge thank you.”*

## **Other comments received on the service feedback questionnaire, which are not related directly to the service:**

*“To get children’s EHCP quicker to the relevant parent or carer as been waiting since October for my updated one”*

## **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 2020 to July 2021, IASS has sign- posted 7 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 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

A 2- year national trial commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018 to extend the power of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) tribunal. As part of a special educational appeal, the SEND tribunal will be able to make non-binding recommendations on the health and social care aspects of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

The trial was extended beyond the original finish date and is currently running until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021. It has been confirmed that the extended powers given to the SEND Tribunal will continue after this date.

### 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 2020 to August 2021

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
Minimum Standards	E Learning
Outcomes in EHCP's	E Learning
Information, Advice and Support Service- Introduction for new staff	E Learning
Introduction to Mental Health	E Learning
Annual Reviews of EHCP's	IASSN Webinar
Ceasing to maintain EHCP's	IASSN Webinar
EHCP process	IASSN Webinar
Exclusions Training	IASSN Webinar
Home to School/College Transport	IASSN Webinar

Non-implementation of special education provision	IASSN Webinar
Elementary SEND Law Level 1 – on line (New staff)	IPSEA
Elementary SEND Law Level 2 – on line (New staff)	IPSEA
Elementary SEND Law Level 3 – on line (New staff)	IPSEA
Psychological First Aid	Public Health England
Strategic Workshop	IASP
Challenging Discriminatory Exclusions	IASP
SEND National Trial Briefing Session	Mott Macdonald
IPSEA Level 1 Face to Face Training	IPSEA
Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	HBC
IPSEA Level 2 Face to Face Training	IPSEA
IPSEA Level 3 Face to Face Training	IPSEA
Gaming/gambling awareness (Teenagers)	HBC
Neglect Statement of Intent - The Tool in Practice	HSSCP
Short Breaks Workshop	CDC

### 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.

### **Local Offer**

Hartlepool's Local Offer of Services continues to evolve. 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 information 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. To access the Local Offer, click on the link: [www.hartlepoolnow.co.uk](http://www.hartlepoolnow.co.uk)

### **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 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.

A further year of funding from the IAS Programme was made available and again Hartlepool were successful in their bid to continue its service development from April 2021 through to March 2022.

### **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.

### Achievements in the last 12 months- April 2020 - March 2021

- Continued to work with the CCG, the other SENDIAS Services across the Tees Valley around Joint Arrangements to agree and develop a memorandum of understanding and joint partnership arrangements to agree and implement a joint arrangement framework
- Continued to develop the work to increase participation of children and young people worker to be part of the establishment
- The stand-alone website was launched and accessible to all service users. Access to the website: [www.hartlepoolsendiass.co.uk](http://www.hartlepoolsendiass.co.uk), which includes an on line self- referral for service users
- The SENDIAS Service continues to provide advocacy support for children, young people and their parents to enable them to express their views and wishes
- All new advice and support staff successfully completed all online IPSEA legal training levels
- Produced a service continuity and sustainability plan for the period April 2021 onwards as part of the IAS Programme and it received high accolade and shared as a plan of good practice
- Supported the delivery of briefing sessions to promote and raise awareness of the service
- Continued to work in partnership with the Parent Carer Forum to provide drop in sessions for families to access
- Continued to engage and contribute to the SEND Operational Group and SEND Improvement Plan
- Secured IAS Programme funding to deliver a variety of initiatives to support the service to meet full service offer against the minimum standards
- A new dedicated Young Persons worker in post since September 2020, working 15 hours per week 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
- Attend 2 public information events to raise the profile and awareness of the service to parents, carers and other providers
- Submitted 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 review the current local offer of services

### Priorities for April 2021 – March 2022

- Memorandum of Understanding with the LA/CCG Commissioners to be developed and agreed detailing joint commissioning arrangements for SENDIAS Service
- Support the plan of action to ensure joint arrangements are agreed between the CCG/LA/SENDIAS Services across the Tees Valley to support the delivery of the Health Offer
- Produce a draft MOU/Terms of Reference for joint commissioning arrangements
- Increase service user uptake and engagement using digital resources using the stand alone website
- Review the current website with parents, carers, children and young people to further develop and promote the functions of the site and to increase service user take up
- Deliver briefing sessions to promote the service to parents, carers, schools, LA and CCG
- Review and update policies and factsheets on the SENDIASS website to ensure families and CYP have up to date and appropriate support information

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