

Essex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

Annual Report

September 2021-August 2022

1. Introduction

The role of Essex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SEND IASS) is to ensure that children and young people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) and their parent carers have access to impartial information, advice and support so that they can make informed decisions about matters relating to their special educational needs. This is achieved by working in partnership with parents, children, and young people, providing information, training, and identifying and encouraging working with relevant partner agencies.

2. Statutory Framework

The Children and Families Act 2015 places a duty on Local Authorities to ensure that children, young people up to age 25 and their parent carers are provided with free confidential, impartial advice and support on matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This should be available in a range of formats that are accessible for all users.

Essex SEND IASS is a statutory 'in house' service funded by Essex County Council. The Service operates within the council offices at arm's length from the Local Authority. We maintain our own impartiality and confidentiality processes and have dedicated email and telephone lines. We also have our own branded literature and are developing our own information resources. The database is only accessible to the SEND IAS Service.

3. Joint Commissioning

Section 26 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities and their partner commissioning bodies to make arrangements to jointly commission and secure provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disability.

It is a requirement that SENDIAS Services are jointly commissioned by Education, Health and Social Care.

Essex SEND IASS has recently received significant additional funding which has enabled us to now be compliant in terms of our capacity and ability to deliver the range of IAS responsibilities as set out in the Minimum Standards. This additional funding has come about through an arrangement at senior leader level between Education, Health and Social Care.

4. Resourcing and capacity

As of November 2022 the Service consists of:

2 x managers job sharing the full time role

4 x case workers (one fte in each of the four quadrants, however due to recent movement in the team 2 of these roles are currently vacant which we will recruit to by April 2023)

4 X fulltime helpline worker (2 of these workers are new to the role and are currently on a 6 month probation period of training)

1 x Promotion and Development Worker 0.8 This role leads on delivering training to parents/carers and professionals across health, education and social care

2 x Senior IAS Worker who lead on Tribunal work.

We also have additional funding for an additional SEND IAS worker/s to cover our highest referring areas of Mid and NE which we will recruit to by April 2023.

5. Casework and Intervention levels

The intervention service levels for cases are recorded following the IASS (Information, Advice, and Support Services) national guidelines to monitor the demand for different types of support regionally and locally. There are 4 intervention levels, which range from the delivery of a single piece of IAS (level 1) to the most complex of casework e.g. Appeal work, at level 4.

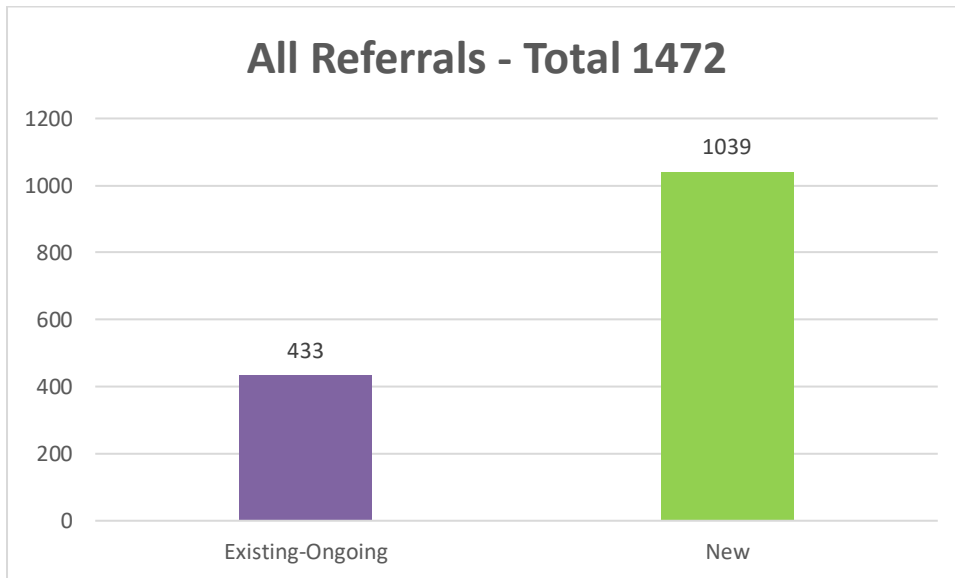
The charts below show the levels of casework and intervention type undertaken by the service during the reporting period. A total of 2613 referrals were recorded during this reporting period. This is an increase of 907 referrals from the previous year, that is a 35% increase in referrals.

Data on tribunal work is recorded separately in the section below.

5.1 Number of referrals.

Included in these referrals recorded are those received which are non-child/young person specific, but on which IAS is delivered. For e.g. SENCOs, health and social care colleagues who call the service asking for detailed information and advice on a range of SEND Processes, as well as those parents who contact the service but do not wish for their child's details to be recorded, but for whom Information Advice and Support is also delivered.

Existing referrals refers to those cases that have carried over from one month to another where casework is ongoing or a parent / YP has come back to us to support. Many families will have contact with the team many times, sometimes over a number of years.



5.2 Reason for Contact

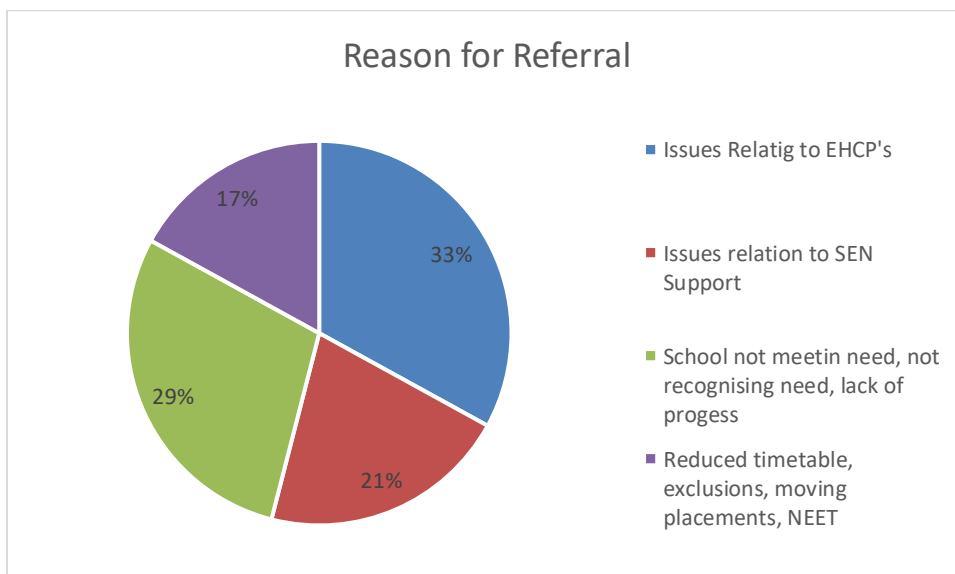
The top three reasons for contacting the service continue to be around Requesting an EHC Needs Assessment, Information on SEN Support in Schools, and concerns about School not Meeting Needs.

Overall, 33% of referrals received are in relation to EHCPs which includes requests for assessments, Refusal to Assess, issues with the content of EHCPs, Annual Reviews, amendments and ceasing EHCPs.

21% of referrals are in relation to information and advice on SEND processes/SEN Support in schools.

29% of referrals relate to a school not meeting needs, not recognising needs, concerns about lack of progress and breakdown in communication with school and information on moving to a different school.

The remaining 17% include referrals around reduced timetables, NEET, exclusions and moving placement.



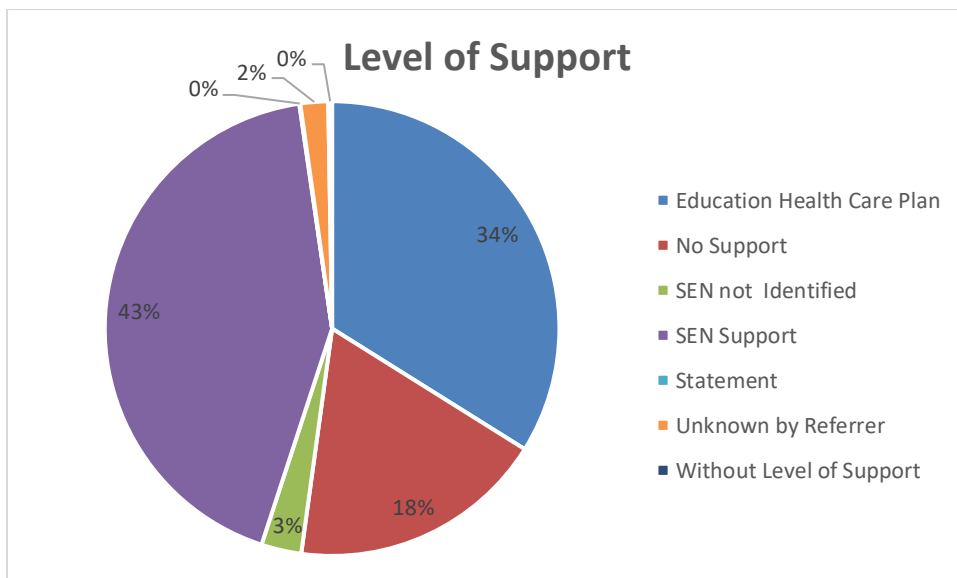
5.3 Category of need

Referrals around children and young people who have ASD continue to dominate referrals (37%), followed by children/young people who have ADHD and then those children/young people who are experiencing anxiety in relation to attending school. There are also a high number of children and young people awaiting assessments.

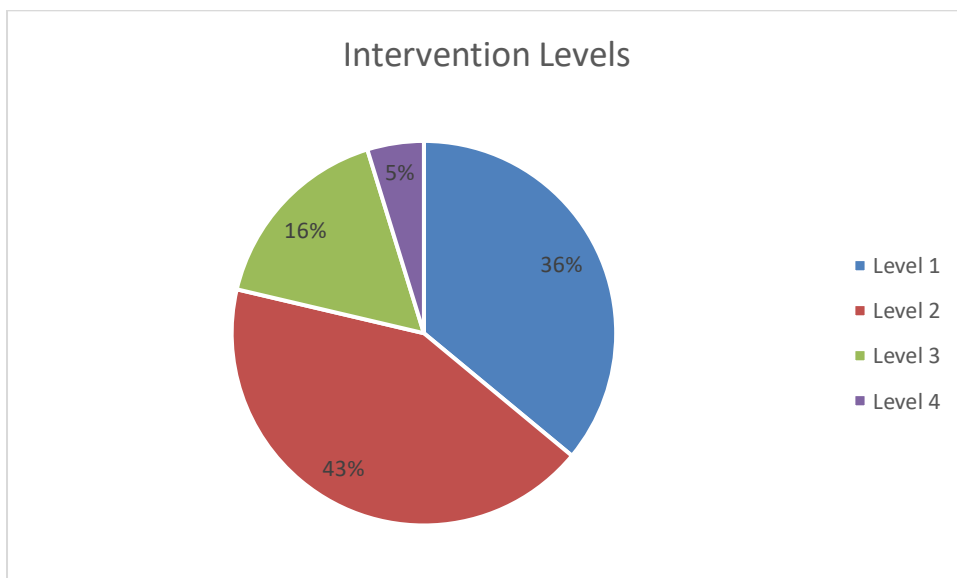
CATEGORY OF NEED	Total
Attention Deficit Disorder	4
Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder	260
Auditory Processing Difficult	7
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	540
Body Dysmorphia	2
Borderline Personality Disorder	1
Cerebral Palsy	3
Down Syndrome	16
Dyslexia	34
Dyspraxia	6
Emotional Based School Avoidance	103
Generalised Anxiety	15
Global Developmental Delay	30
Hearing Impairment	12
Medical Condition	41
Moderate Learning Difficulties	15
Multi-Sensory Impairment	1
Oppositional Defiant Disorder	3
PDA	2
Physical Disability/Difficulty	33
Sensory Processing Disorder	5
Severe Learning Difficulties	3
Social Communications Disorder	6
Social Emotional Mental Health	71
Speech & Language Difficulties	34
Speech, Language & Comm Needs	2
Tourette's	8
Under Assessment	111
Undiagnosed	90
Visually Impaired	7
Without Category	7
Total	1472

5.4 Level of support

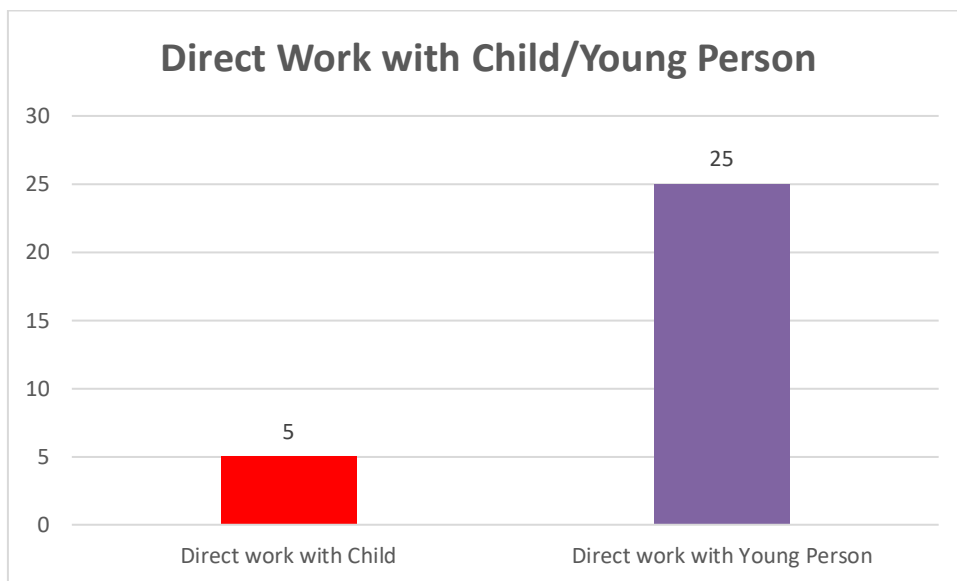
The majority of referrals that the service receives are for children/young people who do not have an EHCP (43%).



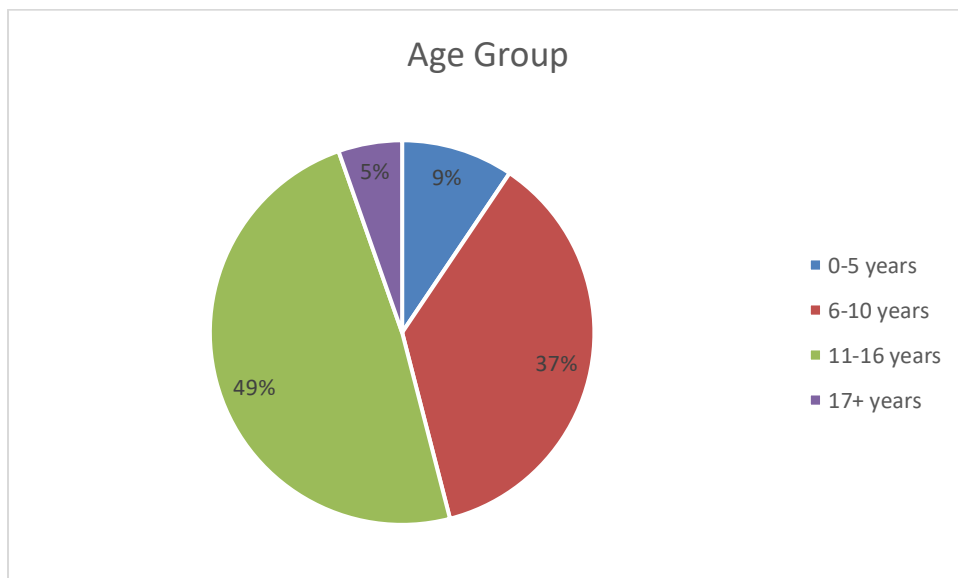
5.5 Intervention Levels



5.6 Direct work with children and young people



5.7 Age group



5.8 Face to face work/virtual meetings delivered

Alt Education Meeting	2
Attendance Meeting	7
CETR Meeting	1
CIN - Child in Need Meeting	4
Direct IAS with Child	5
Direct IAS with Young Person	25
EHCP - Annual Review Meeting	25
EHCP - Needs Assessment Form Completion	21
EHCP - Outcomes Meeting	11
EHCP - Paperwork Review	10
EHCP - Way Forward Meeting	6
EWMHS Review Meeting	1
EXC - Reintegration Meeting	4
Formal Complaint Paperwork	1
Mediation Meeting	4
Meeting Preparation	59
One Planning Meeting	32
Post 16 - Support Review Meeting	3
Post Meeting Discussion	10
Pre Sch - Support Review Meeting	1
Sch Place - Managed Move Meeting	1
Sch Sup - Support Review Meeting	35
TAC - Team Around The Child Meeting	1
TAF - Team Around The Family Meeting	39
Transport Appeal Support	1
Tribunal - Appeal Meeting	1
Tribunal - Appeal Form Completion	19
Tribunal - Hearing	11
Tribunal - Paperwork Support	58
Tribunal - RTA Form Completion	11
Tribunal - TCMH	3
Unable To Attend Meeting - Capacity	38
Case Closed	10
TOTAL	460

5.9 Tribunal Work

The number of referrals requesting support around tribunal has grown. In addition to parents known to the service requesting input around tribunals, new referrals are increasingly coming in at the point at which support around tribunal is requested.

An evaluation survey for parents, specific to tribunal work is producing feedback that reflects the high quality of IAS delivered.

Training is delivered to the team on tribunal processes. Feedback on this training reflects the impact on the ability of the service as a whole to deliver support around tribunal work. An annual report on tribunal work delivered is available.

Signposting Through contact with our service, in addition to the advice we can offer we may identify the need for alternative support and signpost service users to additional sources of advice, information and support that may be available locally or nationally. We do not make or receive referrals.

6. How we provide support

Referrals come into the service in a variety of ways. Our helpline receives emails, calls and online contact forms.

Our criteria for face-to-face support e.g. support at meetings and in a range of settings, is determined by the needs and circumstances of the parent carer, child or young person and by the capacity of service. Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic all face-to-face support was suspended and instead the support was completed virtually.

All parent carers, children and young people will be made aware that the main purpose of the service is to support them to understand their rights and empower them to have their views and wishes heard.

We are not an advocacy service and as we are impartial, do not favour either side or have influence over the outcome of any meeting.

Parent carers will in the first instance, be provided with telephone and or email advice and guidance to be able to access the information they need in order to represent themselves.

We may signpost to other services.

We do not give priority to any particular impairment, disability or special educational need and we do not campaign for any particular approach to education

We promote access with Contact who have a National Freephone Helpline, manned Monday to Friday during office hours. Their teams provide information and advice covering a wide range of matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities.

Contact, like SENDIASS also works in partnership with the Council for Disabled Children on the Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP). Their national helpline and online advice service form part of the IASP. This brings together the IASS Network and Contact's services, offering families a more comprehensive service.

The website for the service went live in May 2022. The website enables a much greater degree of self service and accessibility.

7. Children and Young People work

Direct work with children and young people continues to be a vital part of the IAS that we deliver. Numbers of children and young people worked with are set out in the service data in section 5. Raising awareness about our work with CYP amongst CYP themselves, their parents/carers, education settings, and services and agencies remains a priority for the service, to ensure access to the service from a wider range of CYP. Joint working projects with the Youth Service, Multi Schools Council and Education Settings enables the service to build on this ambition.

9. Feedback and evaluations

The service uses an online survey to evaluate parent carer feedback following input from the service, which includes 6 core questions as required by the IASS Network. The responses received were as follows:

Q1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?

65% very easy

25% easy

10% average

Q2 How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?

95% very helpful

5% helpful

Q3 How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?

85% very neutral, fair and unbiased

15% neutral, fair and biased

Q4. What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?

90% a great deal of difference

10% a lot of difference

Q5 Tell us some more about the difference(s), if any, have we made for you?

75% I have a greater understanding of the educational process for children/young people with SEND

70% I feel more confident in approaching/communicating with educational settings in the future

65% I felt empowered to address my concerns

65% I felt listened to and supported

45% I am happier/less worried about the future

40% I feel my child/young person has benefited as a result of the service being involved

35% Communication with the education setting been improved around the education of my child/young person

35% I feel more involved with my child's education

30% I now have a better relationship with my child's school or setting

25% I felt I got more out of the meeting at Nursery/School/College/FE Setting

Q6. Were given information on other agencies/support groups which may be able to offer support/advice?

55% were given information on other agencies/support groups which may be able to offer support/advice

Q7 Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?

95% very satisfied

5% satisfied

Q7 How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?

95% very likely

5% likely

Feedback from parents and children who have had input from the service:

'Absolutely excellent service extremely knowledgeable and very friendly and helpful. Cannot thank you enough.'

'The advice and support provided by Siobhan is invaluable. I now understand the next steps we need to take re appealing the placement decision and going to tribunal.'

'Siobhan Beaumonts help and support was invaluable to us! Without her we wouldn't have been able to complete the appeal paperwork and get it submitted on time, after issues with the Local Authority left us with only a couple of weeks to get it all done!

She was kind, understanding, clear, honest, on-the-ball, calming and just all round amazing in the support she gave us.

I was very unsure about it all being done over the phone, especially as I suffer with anxiety when dealing with phone calls and had hoped to do it in person, but unfortunately that wasn't possible with Covid still being an issue. However Siobhan quickly put me at ease and reassured me that we could do it all in the time we had and that we would get the same level of support as if it was in person with her.

Her support has meant the world to us and we are extremely grateful for her passion and dedication! Thanks for your help and support'

'I had a phone call today. I was given so much helpful information over the phone and then it was all sent to my email. I was feeling overwhelmed before I had the call and received the email. Thank you to whoever called me today I feel confident to start to tackle things. It's really helped us.'

'I would really recommend this service to anyone. Sally gave me the confidence to push forward with the request for an EHC Needs Assessment, after not knowing what to do for so long. Sally gave such good support and was so patient and brilliant. I don't think that there was any question I asked that she didn't know the answer to. She always came back to me when she said she would and was really good in her communication with me. She was really patient with me when I had to be sending lots of information back and forth and never made it seem a trouble for her. Whatever the outcome of the NA request, I am so pleased that I was supported by Sally. I know that if it doesn't go ahead she will be able to support me with the steps, but also has really helped me with my confidence to push ahead with what I need to do for my son.'

'I was absolutely thrilled to have had the outcome I have had and feel that I was supported throughout to stand up for my daughters rights and enable her to access her education.'

'The support and advice was excellent and enabled me to work with the LA on my daughter's EHCP so it is now really well written, and enabled Essex to agree to an out of county residential placement for her further education. Thank you so much for all your help!'

'Vicky Torr was excellent giving me lots of guidance and information she is a credit to your team'

Clare Woodcock and Louise Bracci

Managers Essex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

November 2022