

Essex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

Annual Report

September 2022-August 2023

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 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 September 2023 the Service consists of:

2 x managers job sharing the full time role

5 x case workers (one fte in each of the four quadrants and a 0.8 role covering the Mid and NE area. 3 of these case workers are new to the role as of April 2023 and currently on their 6 month probation)

4 X fulltime helpline worker

1 x Promotion and Development Worker 0.6 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.

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.

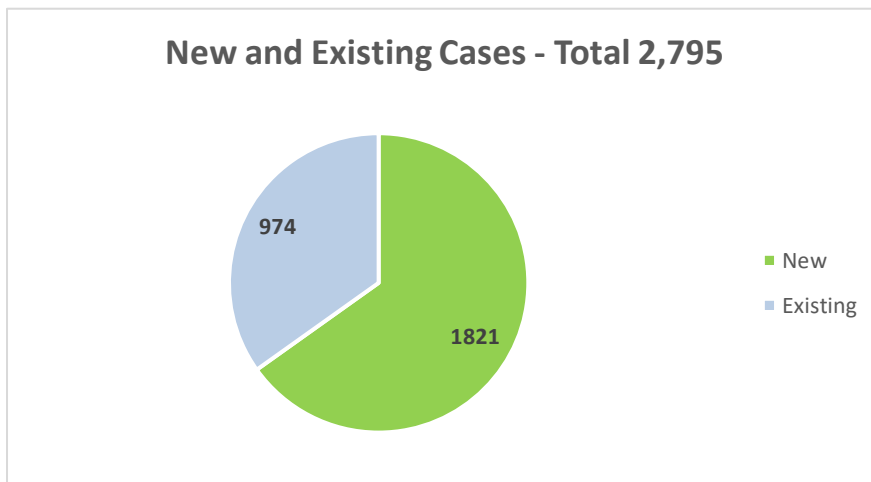
The charts below show the levels of casework and intervention type undertaken by the service during the reporting period. A total of 2795 cases were recorded during this reporting period. This is an increase of 182 cases from the previous year, that is a 7% increase in cases.

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

5.1 Number of referrals.

Included in these cases 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 cases refers to those 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, concerns about School not Meeting Needs and information on SEN Support in Schools.

Overall, 29% 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.

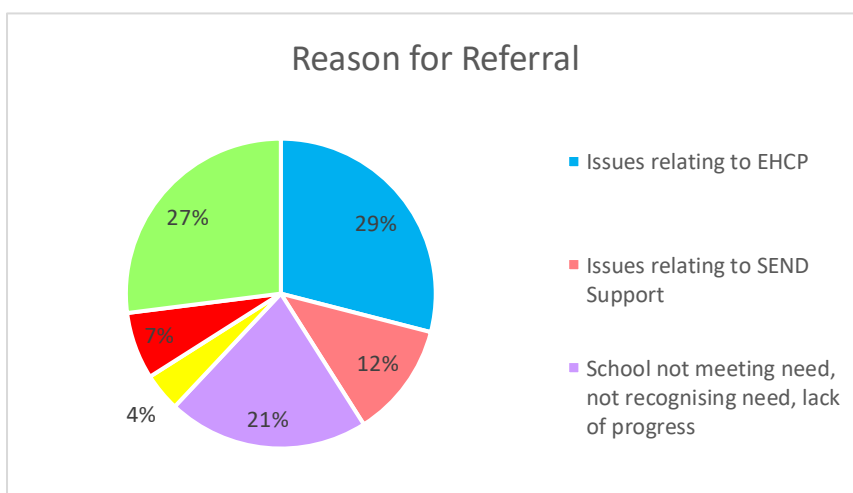
12% of referrals are in relation to information and advice on SEND processes/SEN Support in schools.

21% 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.

7% of referrals were around EBSA and NEET

4% of referrals were in relation to exclusion, including fixed term, unlawful and permanent.

The remaining 27% include referrals around how to complain about LA or schools, Post 16 and transport



5.3 Category of need

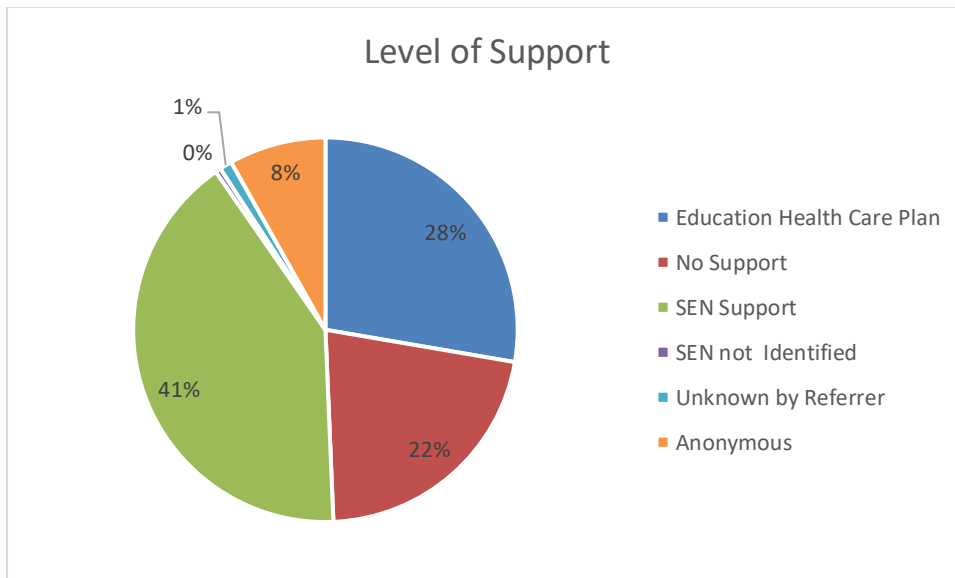
Referrals around children and young people who have ASD continue to dominate referrals (38%), followed by children/young people who have ADHD and then those children/young people who are experiencing anxiety in relation to attending school. There are also a high number of children and young people undiagnosed or awaiting assessments (13%)

Main Category of Need	
Attention Deficit Disorder	13
Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder	478
Auditory Processing Difficult	14
Autism Spectrum Disorder	1050
Body Dysmorphia	6
Borderline Personality Disorder	4
Cerebral Palsy	22
Diabetes	4
Down Syndrome	17
Dyslexia	65
Dyspraxia	6
Eating Disorder	2
Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS)	1
Emotional Based School Avoidance	117
Epilepsy	4
Foetal Alcohol Syndrome	2
Generalised Anxiety	46
Genetic Condition	2
Global Developmental Delay	40
Hearing Impairment	11
Hypermobility	6
ME	1
Medical Condition	43
Moderate Learning Difficulties	45
Multi Sensory Impairment	1
OCD	2
Oppositional Defiance Disorder	3
PDA	3
Physical Disability Or Difficulty	14
PKS Syndrome	1
Prader-Willi Syndrome	2
PTSD	2
Selective Mutism	6
Sensory Processing Disorder	8
Severe Learning Difficulties	9
Social Communication Disorder	2
Social Emotional Mental Health	104

Speech and Language Difficulties	55
Speech, Language and Comm Needs	20
Spina Bifida	1
Tourette's	1
Under Assessment	174
Undiagnosed	199
Visual Impairment	11
anonymous	178

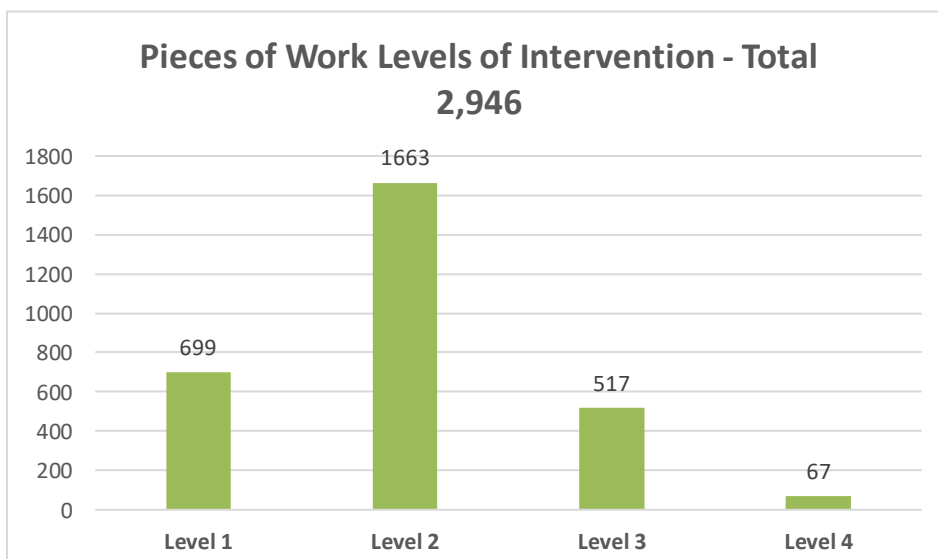
5.4 Level of support

The majority of referrals that the service receives are for children/young people who do not have an EHCP (63%).

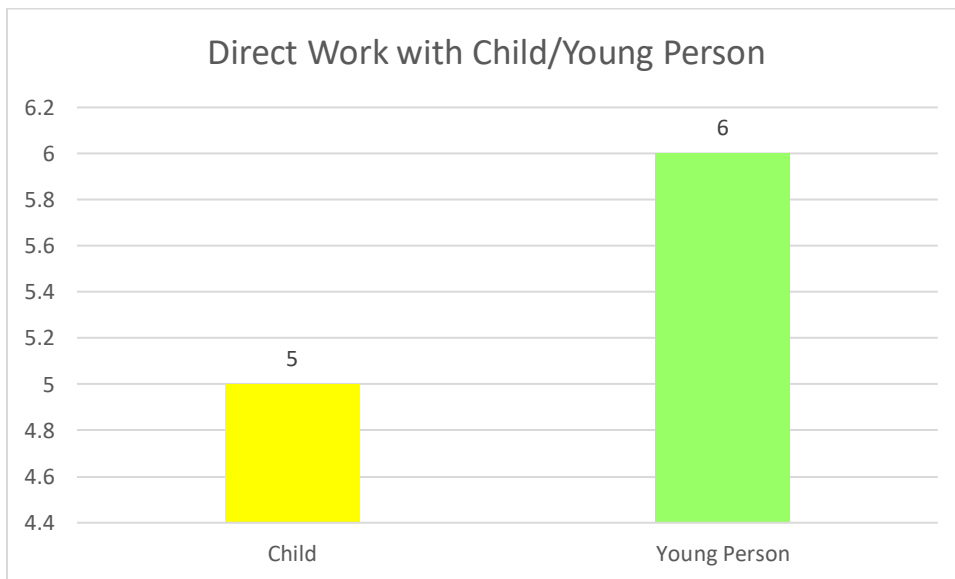


5.5 Intervention Levels

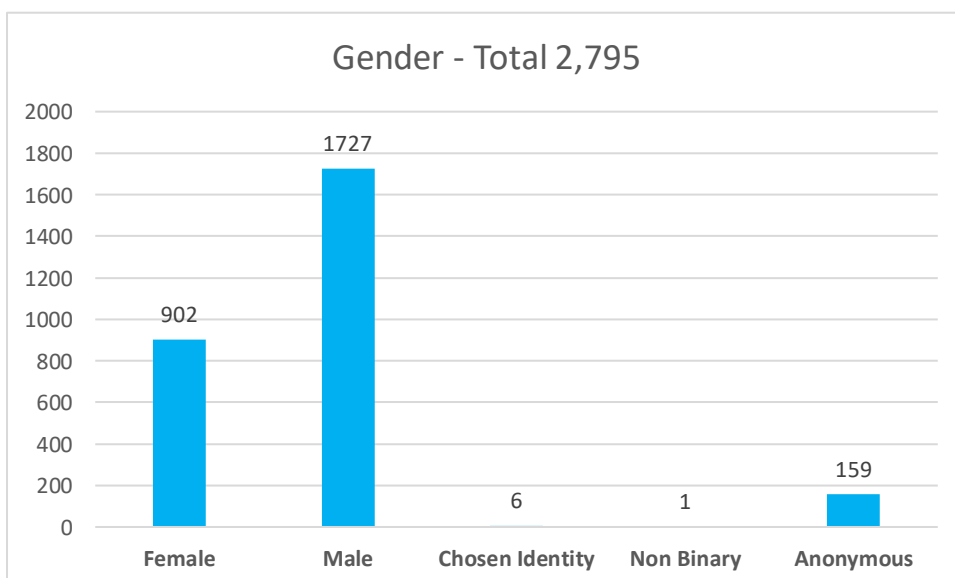
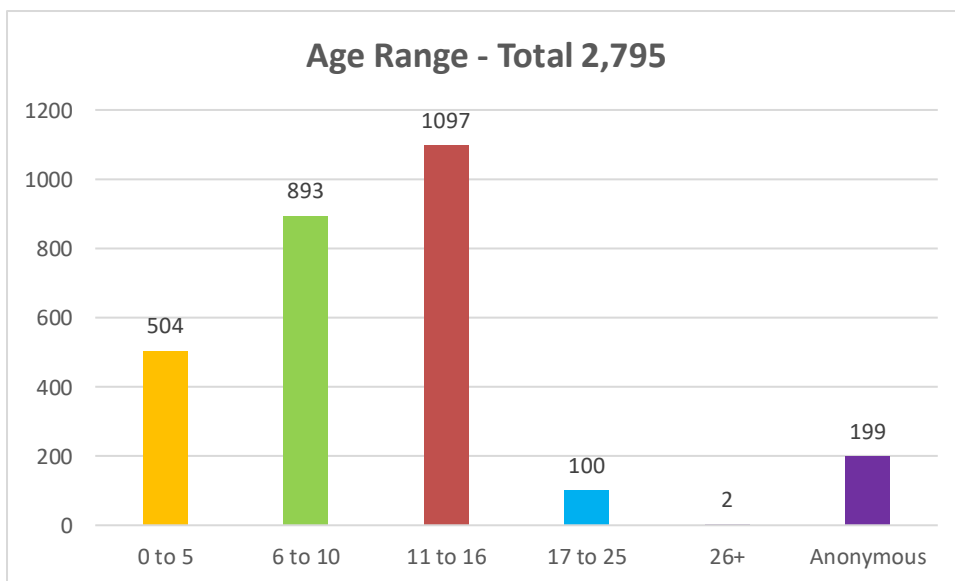
The number of pieces of work is different to number of cases as a case can have more than one piece of work open at any one time.

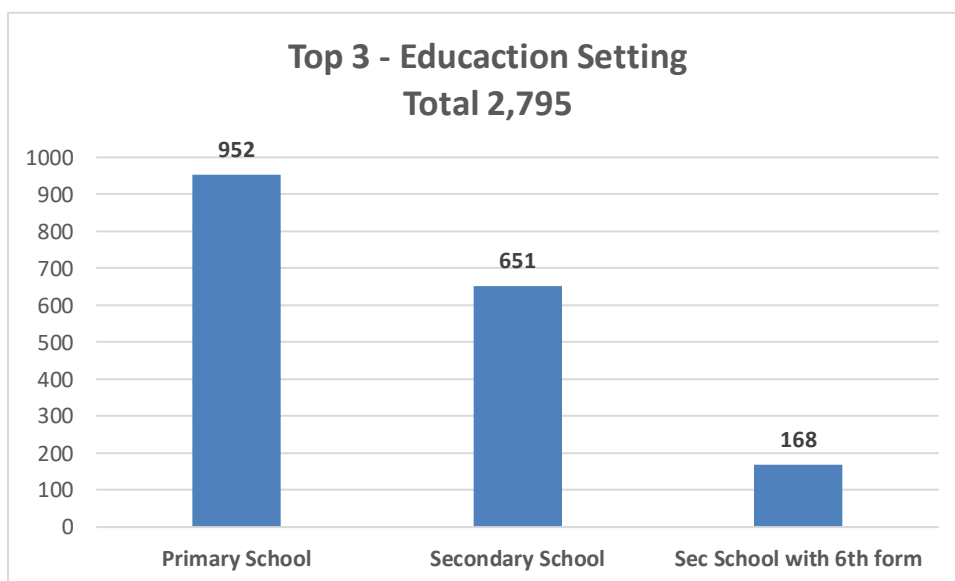


5.6 Direct work with children and young people



5.7 Age group, Gender and Education Setting



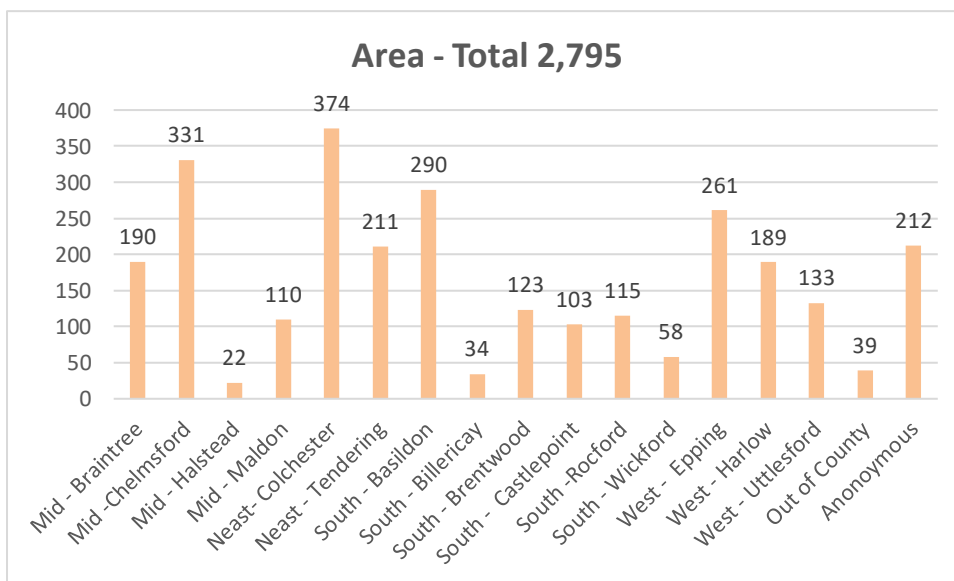


5.8 Casework/Face to face work/virtual meetings delivered

Contact Type/extra info	
CASEWORK	11209
HELPLINE REFERRAL	281
Helpline Returning	998
Tribunal Referral	28
Alt Ed Meeting	1
Attendance Meeting	1
CETR Meeting	1
Child Protection Meeting	1
CIN - Child In Need Meeting	6
EHCP - Annual Review Meeting	21
EHCP - Needs Assessment Form Completion	11
EHCP - Outcomes Meeting	4
EHCP - Paperwork Review	4
EHCP - Way Forward Meeting	3
EXC - Reintegration Meeting	1
EXC- Governors Review Meeting	3
Mediation Meeting	1
Meeting Preparation	30
One Planning Meeting	12
Post 16 - Support Review Meeting	2
Post Meeting Discussion	18
Raising Concerns Meeting	1
Sch Place - School Visit Support	1
Sch Sup - Support Review Meeting	55
TAC - Team Around The Child Meeting	1
TAF - Team Around The Family Meeting	35
Transport Appeal Support	1

Tribunal - Appeal Form Completion	28
Tribunal - Appeal Meeting	1
Tribunal - Hearing	2
Tribunal - Hearing Prep	2
Tribunal - Paperwork Support	13
Tribunal - RTA Form Completion	3
Unable To Attend Meeting - Capacity	6
Case Closed	175
Closure Required	8
Total	12968

5.9 Postal District



6 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.

7. 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.

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.

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.

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

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

8. 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?

46% very easy

34% easy

7% average

10% not easy

3% not at all easy

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

77% very helpful

5% helpful

3% not helpful

3% not at all helpful

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

80% very neutral, fair and unbiased

17% neutral, fair and biased

3% not at all neutral, fair and biased

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

62% a great deal of difference

17% a lot of difference

7% a bit of difference

7% some difference

7% no difference at all

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

55% I felt empowered to address my concerns

52% I have a greater understanding of the educational process for children/young people with SEND

52% I feel more confident in approaching/communicating with educational settings in the future

48% I felt listened to and supported

34% I feel my child/young person has benefited as a result of the service being involved

28% I am happier/less worried about the future

24% I feel more involved with my child's education

14% I now have a better relationship with my child's school or setting

14% I felt I got more out of the meeting at Nursery/School/College/FE Setting

10% Communication with the education setting been improved around the education of my child/young person

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

62% 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?

80% very satisfied

4% satisfied

3% unsatisfied

3% very unsatisfied

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

94% very likely

3% likely

3% very unlikely

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

'I find this service invaluable for helping me to understand the practicalities of supporting my child through the SEND process.'

'The support I have had has been just brilliant and provided me with knowledge and understanding on the law, what should be in an EHCP, and just feel so supported and less lonely navigating through the process.'

'i dont believe anything could of been done better and i will forever be grateful for the support for my child, my child was a forgotten child who now has a voice and the impact sendiass has had being involved has changed his life forever in a positive way'

'I often recommended the service for advice to anyone'

'supporting me in knowing what i should be doing and what the school should be doing If you don't know, it can be very daunting. Its good to be supported'

'She's been very thorough and has shared many links in emails to reassure concerns. She's quite neutral but offers reassurance.'

'When i have needed help you've been there.'

'I wouldn't be in the position we are now without her advice and support. She is still involved after 2 years.'

'I was so lucky to be able to find (caseworker). She has helped us to understand the SEN/EHCP process and provided assurance that the school were doing everything possible to support my grandson.'

'I think the service needs more funding to help more families like us.'

Clare Woodcock and Louise Bracci

Managers Essex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

September 2023