



# Barnsley **SENDIASS**



Annual Report 2020-2021

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## Table of Contents

Forward.....	3
Quality Standards Framework for an IAS Service .....	3
Background .....	4
Service Structure.....	4
Budget.....	5
The Role of Barnsley SENDIASS.....	5
Working with Children, Young People and Parents Carers .....	6
Referrals and Requests for Independent Information, Advice and Support .....	7
Examples of Requests for Support – Case Studies .....	8
Information and Publicity.....	11
Training.....	11
Networking and Collaboration .....	11
Informing Local Policy and Practice .....	12
Monitoring of Service.....	12
Barnsley SENDIASS – The Data Story.....	13
Public Survey Feedback.....	13
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Update.....	13
Data Analysis and Summary.....	23
Actions Following Analysis of Data Collected.....	30
Future Plans for the Service development.....	32
Contact details .....	33

*Please note reference to parents or carers in this report includes any person who is either a parent of the child and has parental responsibility, or who cares for them. Young Person refers to an individual aged 16-25.*

## Forward

I hope you will find this, the annual report of Barnsley SENDIASS, interesting and helpful. The service is an impartial and confidential *Information, Advice and Support Service* (IASS) and is a statutory function of the Local Authority as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015), where it states:

*Local Authorities **must** arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to their SEN and disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care. This **must** include information, advice and support to take-up and the management of personal budgets. In addition, carrying out their duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, local authority **must** have regard to the importance of providing children and their parents and young people with the information and support necessary to participate in decisions.*

[SEND Code of Practice 2015 - 2.1](#)

SENDIASS in Barnsley is an *in-house* funded IASS and situated within the People Directorate, Business Unit 3 - Children's Social Care & Safeguarding.

Barnsley Council can fulfil its statutory duty to provide information, advice and support via Barnsley SENDIASS, a separate and identifiable entity with the Local Authority:

*Information, advice and support should be provided through a dedicated and easily identifiable service. Local authorities have established Parent Partnership Services to provide information, advice and support to parents in relation to SEN. In addition, many local authorities provide or commission information, advice and support services for young people. Local authorities should build on these existing services to provide the information, advice and support detailed in this chapter.*

[SEND Code of Practice 2015 - 2.4](#)

And that:

*Information, advice and support services should be impartial, confidential and accessible and should have the capacity to handle face-to-face, telephone and electronic enquiries.*

[IASSN Minimum Standards 2015 - 2.5](#)

## Quality Standards Framework for an IAS Service

The Quality Standards Framework sets out the national expectations of good practice in the provision of impartial information, advice and support services (SENDIASS) to increase parental confidence in them. The service use these to audit compliance as an IASS for the local area. Recent strategy development is focused towards strategic development of a management group and joint commissioning arrangements.

The National Benchmarking exercise reports on SENDIASS in England. As a participating service we receive the report, and this enables us to benchmark against our statistical neighbors. Barnsley

SENDIASS is number 39 in the data report charts. Additional copies of the Benchmarking summary are available on the National Networks website at:

- [councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network)

## Background

What was previously The Parent Partnership Service (PPS), now known as Barnsley SENDIASS has been in existence in Barnsley since 1994. The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (CoP) (2002) made Parent Partnership Services a statutory requirement for Local Authorities (LAs). A Local Authority was expected to provide a PPS 'in-house' or 'buy in' from an outside organisation. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) has always provided information, advice and support in-house through its previous PPS and current SENDIASS.

The service has always been small in terms of capacity, although has had some additional temporary capacity through successful application for external grant funding. Grant funding amounts have decreased significantly from 2021 and an exit strategy was produced to show what plans were in place for sustainability going into 2021 – 2022. This report was recognised as a good exemplar and published on the Council for Disabled Children's (CDC) Website.

## Service Structure

SENDIASS is line-managed by Head of Service for Safeguarding & Quality Assurance.

Between **1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021** the service were home based working due to Covid 19. Although some work still required face to face interactions, and this meant staff did where necessary facilitate meetings in other venues or in family homes.

Head of Service for Safeguarding & Quality Assurance	Diane Drury
SENDIASS Service Manager	Sarah Wike
SENDIASS Case Advisor	Oliver Griffin (Temp)
SENDIASS Case Advisor	Ria Jones
SENDIASS Assistant Case Advisor & Information Officer	James Stephenson
Business Support Officer 0.5	Karen Wilkinson (Temp until 31/3/21)

SENDIASS engages with service users to help shape the IASS offer in the local area. A new Covid-19 response virtual steering group was set up to support IASS reach and engage with service users during the national pandemic. The developed multi agency and parent steering group was transitioned to be part of the formal Strategic Planning Group that will be put in place from April

2021. An annual survey of IASS takes place and the data is used to evaluate the service and inform the development plan for the coming year.

## Budget

The budget is centrally funded to provide 3 full-time posts and one part-time post and the associated on-costs for those staff. SENDIASS has support from a finance officer and IT systems within BMBC central resources.

In addition to the staffing budget SENDIASS has had the additional funding grant of £28,000 between April 2020 - March 31st, 2021. This funding was used to purchase a better website presence, fund 1 part-time case officer and provide some part time business support. SENDIASS has successfully applied for a further £10,000 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021– 31 March 2022. Due to the reduction in external grant funding for the 2021 -2022 financial year there will be a reduction in staff within SENDIASS after 1/4/21.

## The Role of Barnsley SENDIASS

Barnsley SENDIASS is in place to ensure the LA can fulfil its statutory duty:

*The local authority must ensure children, young people and parents are provided with information and advice on matters relating to SEN and disability.*

This should include:

- Local policy and practice.
- The Local Offer.
- Personalisation and Personal Budgets
- Law on SEN and disability, health and social care, through suitably independently trained staff.
- Advice for children, young people and parents on gathering, understanding and interpreting information and applying it to their own situation.
- Information on the local authority's processes for resolving disagreements, its complaints procedures and means of redress.
- SENDIASS reports data of service activity to the LA commissioning, the national network of SEND IASS and the CDC grant funders.
- SENDIASS collects service user feedback to inform the National Benchmarking data collection of a SENDIASS and its local offer as an in-house service.

[SEND Code of Practice 2015 – 2.17](#)

## Working with Children, Young People and Parents Carers

To meet local needs, local authorities should consider providing the following forms of support through their information, advice and support services.

- Signposting children, young people and parents to alternative and additional sources of advice, information and support that may be available locally or nationally
- Individual casework and representation for those who need it, which should include:

*Support in attending meetings, contributing to assessments and reviews and participating in decisions about outcomes for the child or young person*

*Directing children, young people, parents and those who support and work with them to additional support services where needed, including services provided by the voluntary sector. These services should include support relating to preparing for adulthood, including housing support, careers advice and employment support*

- Help when things go wrong, which should include:

*Supporting children, young people and parents in arranging or attending early disagreement resolution meetings*

*Supporting children, young people and parents in managing mediation, appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), exclusions and complaints on matters related to SEN and disability*

*Making children, young people and parents aware of the local authority's services for resolving disagreements and for mediation, and on the routes of appeal and complaint on matters related to SEN and disability*

*Provision of advice through individual casework and through work with parent carer support groups, local SEN youth forums or disability groups, or training events*

SEND Code of Practice 2015 - 2.19

To meet the above requirements Barnsley SENDIASS offers:

- Direct telephone access providing confidential impartial advice, available five days a week
- Face to face contact, including video-calling.
- E-mail/Facebook communication
- Advice sheets and booklets to help parents and young people develop their knowledge and understanding to support them in their discussions with the LA, schools/settings and other statutory agencies

- Information about other agencies, e.g., voluntary agencies and health services which can offer information and advice about their child's particular SEN and Disabilities
- IASS in preparation for and/or attendance at meetings where necessary and/or appropriate
  
- Support and advice to settings, colleagues and organisations/services
- Support and advice to parents carers, children and young people either individually or in groups

## Referrals and Requests for Independent Information, Advice and Support

All referrals made to the service should be with the consent of parents and young people and where possible made directly by them.

September 2014 to August 2015	- IASS was provided to <b>309</b> service users
September 2015 to August 2016	- IASS was provided to <b>289</b> service users
September 2016 to August 2017	- IASS was provided to <b>578</b> service users
April 2018 to March 2019	- IASS was provided to <b>622</b> service users
April 2019 to March 2020	- IASS was provided to <b>582</b> service users
April 2020 – March 2021	- IASS was provided to <b>553</b> service users

*Please note that this data is reflective of case work demand during the Covid pandemic when the country was in a national lockdown for large parts of this reporting period. In addition to this between April 2020 and November 2020 the service was undertaking recruitment and selection processes for the vacant case officer post.*

The service reports 553 individual children/young people supported, which allows some comparison with previous reporting. What this did not demonstrate was the typical case support provided for most families – where the service supports on several 'pieces of work' or 'Interventions'. For example, a family might request support for issues regarding exclusions, and then also regarding an EHCP – in previous years these would only be recorded once.

The service implemented a CRM data recording system from January 2021, and the figures for the service will provide a more accurate picture of service activity for case work. The CRM will enable the service to provide case work recording by Intervention Levels between range 1 – 4 (guided by the IASSN). As one case/intervention closes, if that case/intervention re-opens this will be recorded as a new case/intervention. This will allow a more accurate representation of the breadth of the work of the service.

Between January 2021 and March 2021, the service invested a small amount of financial resources to purchase additional business support for 1 day a week to input some cases into the CRM, alongside

this service staff also inputted data into it too but this was reliant on spare capacity as and when with individual diaries.

Between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 **681** interventions were recorded. Of these interventions, they appear to be evenly split between Intervention Levels 1&2 and 3&4. The service hopes to improve on the detail of this reporting as more data is entered into the CRM.

## Examples of Requests for Support – Case Studies

Below is a selection of Case Studies, explaining the work and describing the impact of SENDIASS with outcomes for service users.

### IASS Intervention Level 4

A young person (14 years) asked his school to send for his SENDIASS Case Officer and set up a meeting. School and parent both contacted the case officer and requested direct support to the young person in a meeting with the school head teacher.

The young person was unhappy with how he perceived school had dealt with an issue relating to him and decided it was unfair and wanted to challenge it. The SENDIASS officer met with the young person and then contacted the school to set up the meeting. The meeting took place between the young person and the head teacher and the SENDIASS officer acted in the role of mediator between young person and head teacher. The meeting went well and set agreed outcomes going forward.

The young person met with the IASS officer afterwards and said he was happy with the outcomes. The school issued an achievement award to the young person for being mature and articulate in managing the situation and voicing his opinions. This had a positive impact upon his self esteem and confidence.

### IASS Intervention Level 3

A young person was unhappy in their post 16 education provision, they said they did not know what they were achieving and what was going to happen next or if they were going to pass their course. The IASS Officer met with the young person to listen to their concerns and then arranged a meeting with the college staff. The IASS officer encouraged the young person to explain her challenges and worries, the college staff listened and could show the young person the progress that they had made. The college could also explain the next steps open to the young person so that they knew there was a placement within the college for September 2021 if they chose to stay in education.

The young person and her parent were relieved about this and felt more settled about things. The young person was helped to achieve a more positive sense of direction following a time of uncertainty and raised anxiety, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.



#### IASS Intervention Level 4

Parent of a previous young person known to the service approached us to refer her 21-year-old son with a request for a case officer. The case officer previously known to the young person's took the case back on and made a home visit to meet the young person. The young person agreed to having IASS support. We discussed options as the young person felt that he had not made any progress at college and was anxious as he felt he had actually 'gone backwards'. Based on the options he was told he had by the IASS officer he opted to request a statutory reassessment of his EHCP. A college tutor then approached him and asked him to consider an annual review of the EHCP instead of the statutory reassessment; the college tutor told him that the EHCP team had advised this route. The young person was confused so the IASS officer made another visit and explained his rights and options and talked through these with him. He opted to proceed with the EHCP needs assessment process.

The reassessment was undertaken and a new draft EHCP issued, the young person asked his parents to help him with the draft EHCP and the IASS officer with the parents met with the young person to look at the draft EHCP, this required breaking it down into sections and having separate meetings with the young person at different times to work on one section at a time.

Over time the IASS officer, the young person and his parents working numerous hours together created an EHCP that the young person recognised as being about him, which he felt much better reflected his needs and how these were going to be met.

#### IASS Intervention Level 4

A family came to SENDIASS looking for support with appealing the named school in section I of the EHCP. We supported the family to complete the tribunal appeal forms and throughout the process. The family wanted a 52-week residential placement as the child needed a waking curriculum.

We supported the family in gathering further evidence around the child's needs as the assessment process had not adequately identified all needs in section B and therefore section F provision was not sufficient to meet the child's needs. SENDIASS liaised with other services including the LEA and social care throughout the tribunal process in order to get the best outcomes for the child. Prior to the final hearing, all issues relating to section B and F were resolved.

At tribunal the family were successful in securing a 52-week residential placement that was appropriate to meet the child's needs.

#### IASS Intervention Level 4

Parents of a primary age child lodged an appeal for the contents of the EHCP, section B and F, and the placement named in section I. The IASS officer supported parents in meetings with the LA to help the process of working together to create the working document of the EHCP for the appeal processes. There were numerous meetings that took place between parents and LA and eventually full agreement between both sides was reached about the contents of the EHCP, section B and F. This left section I in dispute. The parents reviewed their decision for section I as the LA argument was regarding inefficient use of resources and parental preference of the school placement cost was expensive. The parents secured another placement at much lower cost to it and put this forward as a compromise solution. The IASS officer acted as conduit between the parents and the LA to ensure continued good communication and helped reach an agreement and resolution without the need for tribunal determination on most matters.

#### IASS Intervention Level 2

Parent approached service as her child had been refused an assessment by CAMHS for Autism. The IASS officer supported the parent to write to the NHS customer services department to review the decision making and presented evidence to support their argument. The case was reviewed, and the assessment undertaken. The child was diagnosed with ASD and the scoring was high towards this diagnosis. Although upset by the diagnosis, the parent was also relieved that she felt she finally had answers and with advice from SENDIASS was enabled to find out information and avenues for support.

Parent of a child newly diagnosed as having ASD approached the service seeking support, she felt she had been told her child had a disability and then had been left not knowing what to do about it. CAMHS had advised her to approach SENDIASS. We explained our role and what we could offer to try to work out what the parent needed and what was possible within IASS remit. Parent decided that in the first instance she wanted more information about the diagnosis and what other sources of support were out there. The IAS office put together a bespoke package of Information with links around the diagnosis, Section 17 and carers assessments, short breaks, the Local Offer and EHCP processes. The parent was advised that they could return to the service to step the case up to level 3 intervention if required. 3 months later the parent returned to the service to seek IAS for EHCP needs assessment processes and so the case was reopened at level 3 intervention level for more direct support.

## Information and Publicity

SENDIASS has strengthened its engagement with service users using virtual connectivity due to Covid-19 pandemic and new ways of working. Social media through Facebook saw a sharp rise in interaction with the service through public facing publicity of the service. Information about the service is delivered through:

- Social Media – Facebook and Twitter
- Networking locally
- The Local Authority Local Offer
- A SENDIASS web site on BMBC website
- National Network of IASS website
- SENCO Network Newsletters

SENDIASS sought publicity to reach young people through the IKIC website which is set up for young people to connect within Barnsley. Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts to ensure IASS is known within the SEND information on that site, this has not yet been achieved.

## Training

Through the National IASS Network we are provided with training specifically tailored to the role of IASS. Within our service we share the training opportunities so that all staff have opportunity to access these.

- All staff have achieved levels 1, 2 and 3 of the new legal training expected of a SENDIASS.
- All staff have completed mandatory staff training via POD
- All staff have undertaken GDPR and updated Information Governance Training

## Networking and Collaboration

Due to Covid-19 there has been less interaction with groups as these have not been available. SENDIASS continues to work across all agencies including voluntary organisations to ensure effective communication and partnership links are maintained and this has largely been due to case work. IASS

linked up with the SEND youth forum and a joint piece of work was undertaken to create a bullying advice leaflet to tie into anti bullying week. Local parent carer groups that are active interact with the service and share posts from the Facebook page.

SENDIASS Staff have attended regional network meetings. The SENDIASS Manager provided peer support to one of our Yorkshire and Humber IASS colleagues.

## Informing Local Policy and Practice

SENDIASS informs and influences the development of local SEND practice by providing information to the Local Authority about the needs and wishes of parents, children and young people. This is undertaken through quarterly data reporting and attendance at some local meetings. As an Even Better development for next year we will be working towards the service being more involved with the strategic developments of SEND through the work of the SENDIASS Strategic Planning Group.

## Monitoring of Service

SENDIASS Barnsley participates in a national evaluation of IASS's. This involves conducting a survey using nationally determined questions with local service users after a case is closed. The feedback is compiled and used as a national measure of IASS.

Internal monitoring is undertaken through:

- Annual public survey of service user views
- Review of feedback from case work interaction, compliments and complaints processes, and engagement feedback via social media platforms
- Review of the Equality Standards Framework for an IASS
- Formal supervisions procedures and annual performance and professional development reviews

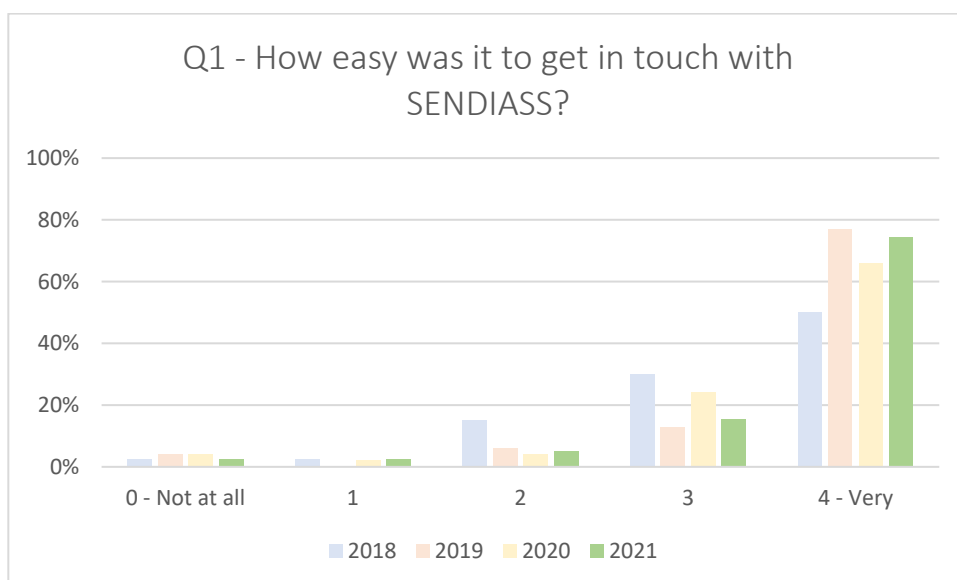
## Barnsley SENDIASS – The Data Story 2020 - 2021

Data is collected through service user feedback; this can be at time of case closure and through a face to face interaction (virtual or in field) telephone conversation or using social media to conduct an online survey. We engage in the LA complaints and compliments processes and report/respond to feedback accordingly. We record cases by child/young person and collect data around their information (key stage, SEN status, additional need etc.). We use both service user feedback and data around case presentation to report IASS activity and themes.

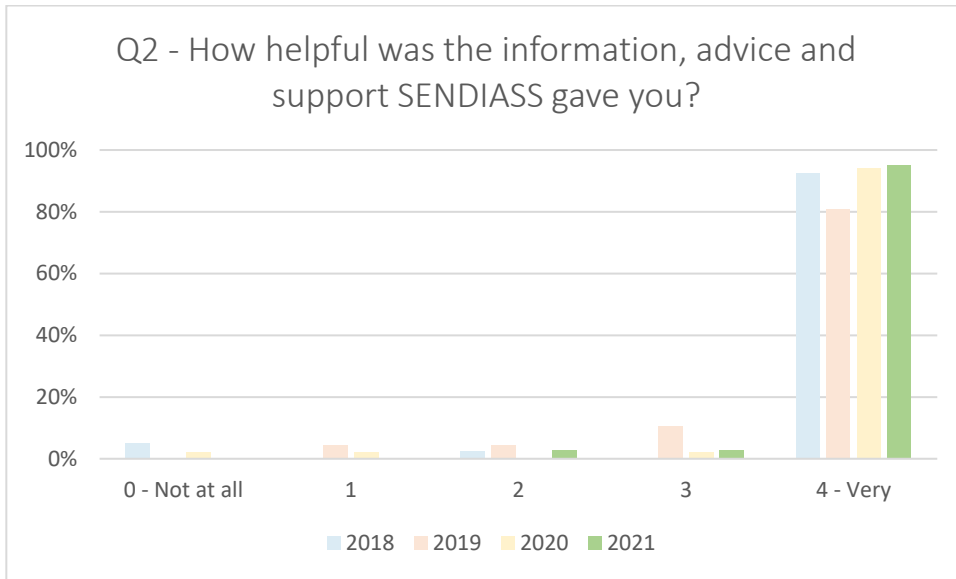
### Public Survey Feedback

For a two-week period during July 2021 SENDIASS conducted a public User Feedback Survey which was promoted on Facebook.

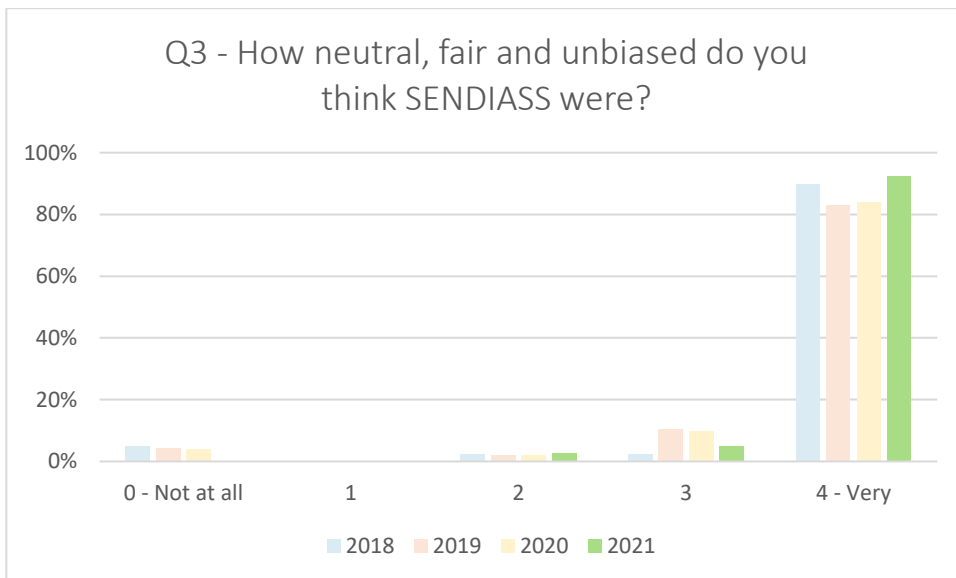
The survey had 39 responses.



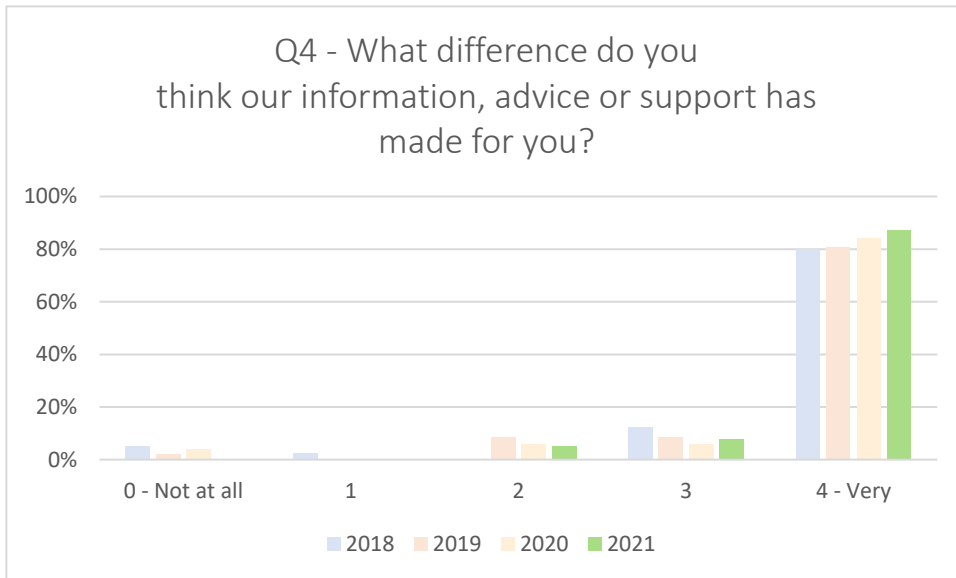
The service, for the past 4 years, has consistently maintained over 50% of its service users report that it is 'very easy' to get in-touch with the service.



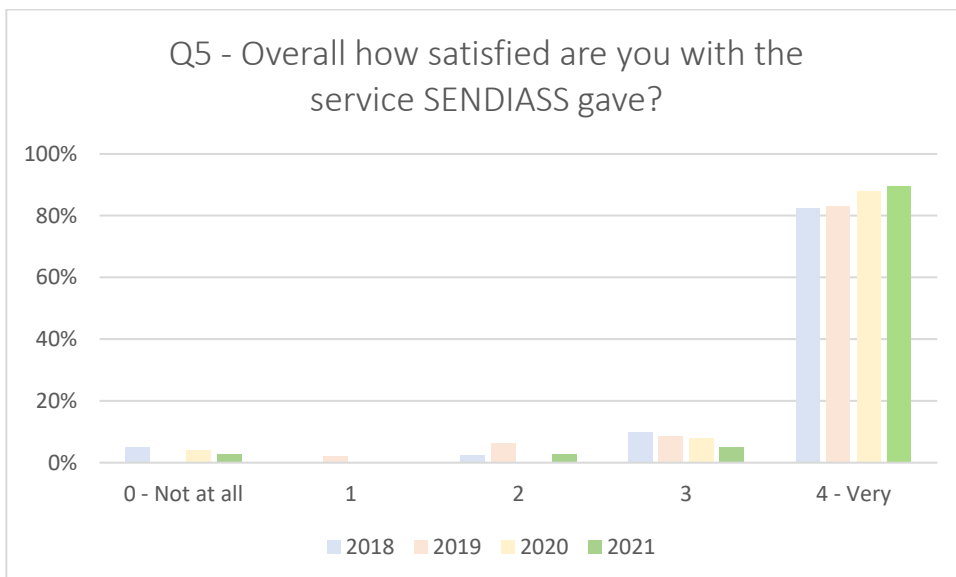
Service users continue to report their satisfaction as to how helpful they found the service’s information, advice and support - with close to a 100% satisfaction reported for the past four years.



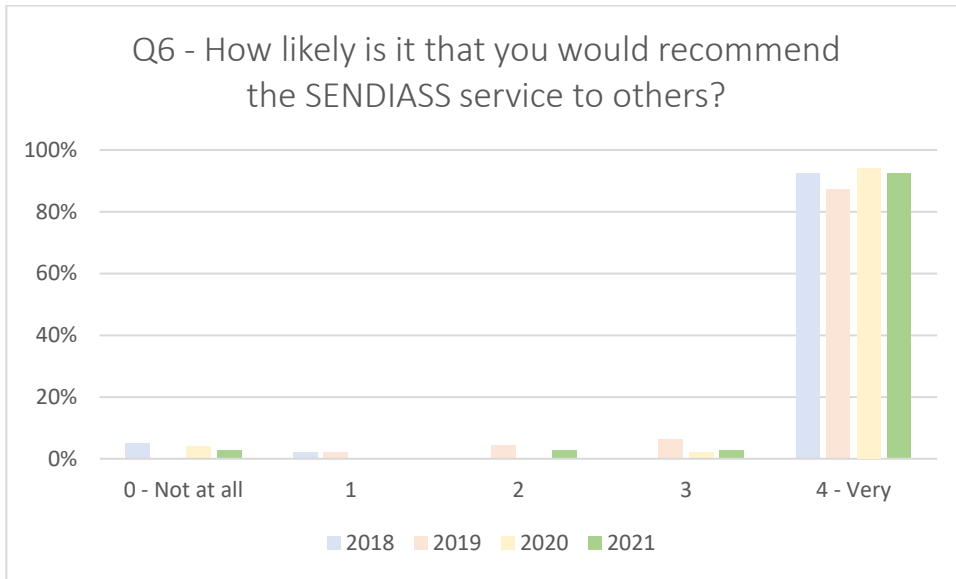
The service continues to see feedback suggesting that the service operates impartially – this is echoed in the direct comments from service users.



Service users continue to report that the service made a positive difference.

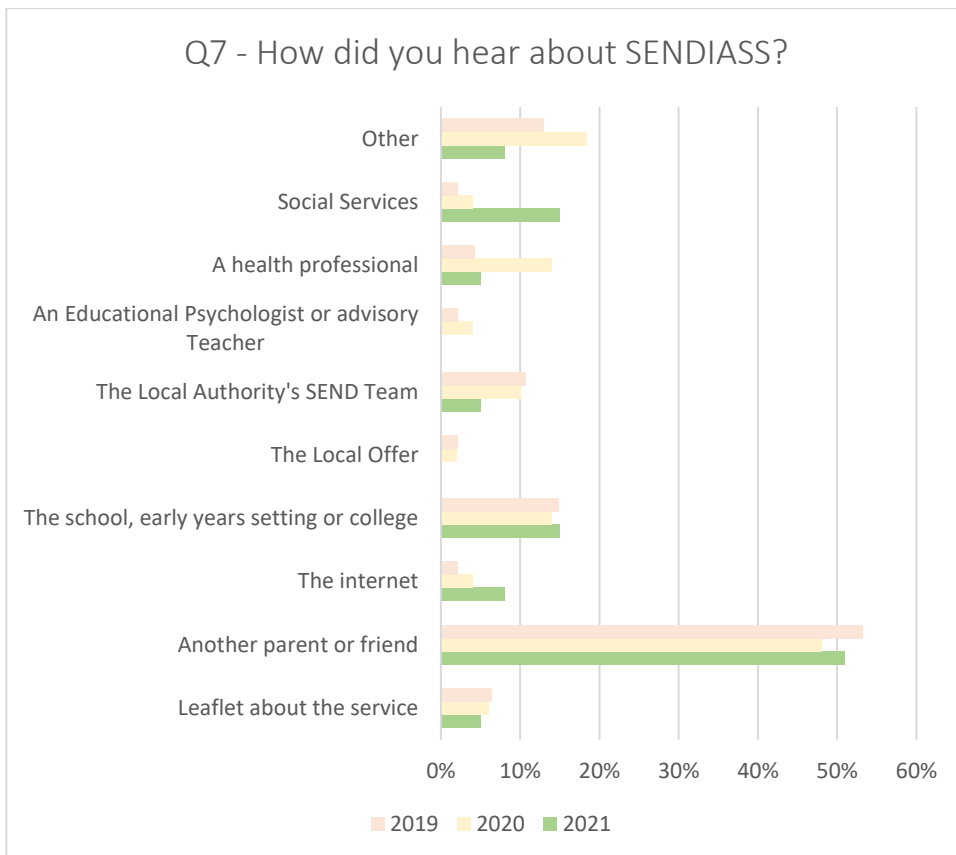


Service users continue to report that they are 'very satisfied' with the support provided.



Service user respondents continue to report they would recommend SENDIASS to others.

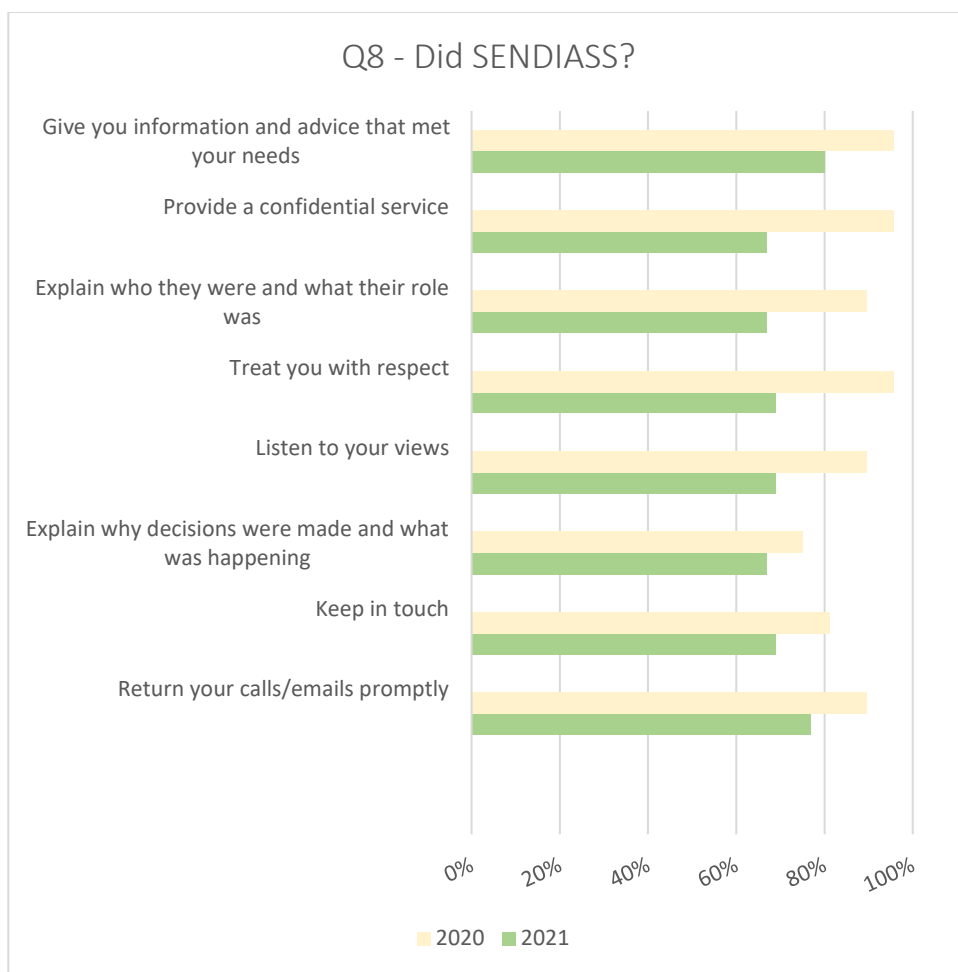
This is echoed in the response from service users that state they were signposted to the service by their family or friends.



Here we can see that the vast majority of service users are signposted to the service by their family or friends. There has been a notable increase in



signposting from the Social Service functions of the LA – which include Family Support Workers.



This survey question asks respondents to state whether the service did or did not provide information and support in these specific areas. The service continues to rate highly on these questions.

What is notable however is a slight reduction in these. It is assumed, that because of the recognised and reported difficulties during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and at a time when the service had reduced staffing capacity compared to previously, to answer telephone calls promptly (contacting the service, staying in-touch etc.) that this has a knock-on effect on how service users perceive the support they have received during the past year. We are also aware that there was a greater demand for SENDIASS and other support services throughout 2020-21, as many families caring for children with SEND experienced problems with isolation, increased impact of poverty in communities and together with children not attending school regularly, this added considerably to the pressures upon families.



Q9 – Further comments

*SENDIASS are amazing and a credit to themselves. My case worker has gone above and beyond to support our family.*

*Fantastic service and help*

*They are absolutely amazing*

*They are an absolutely brilliant service and our family would have struggled a lot more without their input and they are a lovely bunch HOWEVER I do feel that they are becoming harder and harder to contact and due to numbers rising and covid, I think they need more staff to be able to dedicate more time to users so that they can give better support when users need it as at current times aren't able to make most appointments and need to be booked well in front and some users problems can't wait that long and need support promptly, before covid this did happen.*

*SENDIASS have been an invaluable support for me and my family in regard to my daughter needs. It can be difficult for them to return calls/respond due to their large workload. However, the advice they give is first class and I wouldn't have known where to start if I hadn't been for SENDIASS. I feel they need more staff to enable them to do the support on a more one to one basis. They are so busy presently this isn't always possible.*

*The service has been a lifeline for parents who have little SEN knowledge and we are grateful.*

*I appreciated the support through a difficult period at secondary school, and I would recommend the service to any SEND Young Person who is in need to be heard*

*I couldn't have got the outcome for my children without the support I have received from SENDIASS.*

*My only issue is there are not enough people employed and time with SENDIASS is very limited, so everyone is over*

*Fantastic service been a lifeline to our family always there when nowhere else to*

*Fantastic service been a lifeline to our family always when we need them*

*Felt reassured by this service and that gave me confidence in the situation, which I felt was not right.*

*They helped me with my confidence to get my point across to the local authority. Would have struggled without them*

*SENDIASS are valued in Barnsley to help parents and the local authorities and be impartial to both. They have shown me support throughout the years I've been getting there help to navigate the system and how it works. Advise me on things when I don't understand and helped me get the confidence to use my voice as an advocate for my child. They tell me when I have got things wrong and the local authorities have things right. They help both parents and local authorities to communicate with each other and*

*We would be lost with Barnsley SENDIASS. They work tirelessly for the SEND families*

*SENDIASS are amazing and I don't know where we would be without them ♡ ♡ ♡*

*SENDIASS goes on above work they do for all families in borough of Barnsley. they are brilliant excellent group for disabled children and adults up to the age of 24. They make sure parents are looked after put in the right direction in this covid 19 they have made sure parents and children with disabilities that are struggling are still looked after on line and by phone . They are dedicated team and I'm proud support them.*

*Great service Children, young people at the heart of everything they do. Regular engagement and communication with service users. Consults and happy to receive feedback and suggestions to achieve continuous improvement. Goes over and above to "entertain" children and young people with stories, events etc*

*Wonderful service. Kind prompt informative friendly respectful and reliable*

## Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic feedback related to Service engagement

This annual report, like previous reports is a looking back report to illustrate the past financial year's monitoring of service activity for scrutiny, this report is different to any previous report as we have operated through a Covid 19 pandemic. This means we were subjected to new and different ways of working to deliver IASS locally. Through phases of full and partial lockdowns we have taken a creative approach to engagement and participation with families in Barnsley. These times have provided both challenge and opportunities for the service and for families, but a co-production and relationship-based approach enabled a shared platform for co design of how to deliver IASS in different times.

By 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the staff were all working from home. Initial contact with families was through virtual and phone technologies. The service recognised the vulnerability and potential isolation of families, each situation was different to each family, a few families initially embraced home learning whilst many others simply could not manage to achieve that with their children or young person. We saw a variety of responses at this time, for example: the impact of social isolation and the fear for families of contracting Covid-19, confusion in children and young people around the complete change to their routine and life as it was pre-shut down, internet poverty so engagement was limited to phone calls for some families. We were aware that many families were struggling more with the pressures of caring for children with SEND during the lockdowns and needed emotional as well as practical support and advice. The service responded by reaching out to service users and asked for help, we asked for a group of volunteers to form a Covid-19 Steering Group; we set up a virtual group and began working with them to advise us about how best to respond to families during the crisis. The steering group gave up hours of their own time to work with us, they offered suggestions that as a service we would have thought of as we were not SEND families living through the pandemic. This group of volunteer parent carers pushed us to be more visible and accessible and in ways in which families could connect with. We created Top Tip fact sheets about pressing issues and have since seen this as an approach echoed locally and nationally. We shared stories; we created an event with a guest speaker and made this a night out, the volunteer families made donations to enable us to create care packs for other families and we created mini training sessions and catch-up talk sessions. All in all, we had fun with our families and in turn created stronger bonds between the service and service users to support families more effectively during the challenging times.

By upscaling our social media profile and adapting the IASS offer to match the changing need of families we had to change as individuals, we had to become more 'human' in the eyes of families. We provided activities, social media connectivity, emotional health check in, we worked more flexibly to support needs of families, for example early evening meetings once children were in bed and we diversified how we interacted and engaged. We have been hugely successful in staying connected with our families throughout a global pandemic and national lockdown process and because of this we feel our reputation as a LA service within the local area has strengthened with our service users. Working in these times was difficult for some staff members and this was partially due to feeling like we were 'first responders' for all types of crisis issues for families. We saw a sharp spike in enquires to the service due to other services not being accessible in the first lockdown, however this levelled

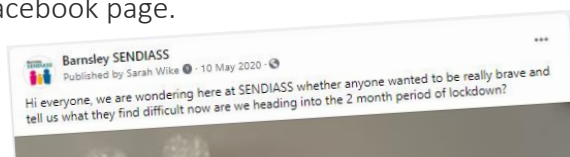
out when other services become more accessible later. We saw mixed responses by children and young people about being in school, returning to school and doing schoolwork at home. Whilst some preferred to be at home, others were stressed about catching the virus but the main reason that most children and young people who came to us for support was because they had not coped with the disruption to their education, health appointments and short break allowance.

Many parents and carers reported feeling their children had not been assessed properly, for example, during statutory assessment phases of the EHCP needs assessment process children and young people were not seen. The waiting list for mental health services and other types of assessment such as ASD grew longer and with this families' patience of the long waiting times was sorely tested.

We received enquires when children and young people's assessment data for educational attainment was released, many complaining that their child has not achieved what they had originally been on track to achieve leaving parents and carers feeling frustrated.

SENDIASS has remained busy throughout the pandemic and the numerous lock downs. The demand for IASS increased with more cases work intervention level at 3 and 4 and requests for mediations, tribunal cases and complaints processes. We have seen a growing level of dissatisfaction and frustration in families around the difficulty in accessing resources, services, and support during this reporting period.

Below is a sample of the different types of interactions we offered during the pandemic and some of the comments captured from this. However, you can view the full breadth of the service engagement by visiting the SENDIASS Facebook page.



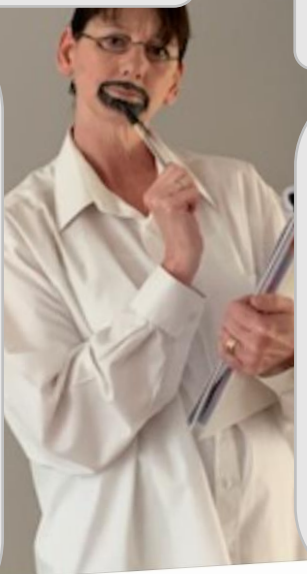
My son's everything being delayed 😞

Struggling, working from home, trying to home school and meet all the needs of both children is hard. Anxiety and depression have kicked in. Toileting progress going backwards.

On a positive note....yes there is one.  
I'm doing a sketch-a-day through the virus.

And then there's my own mental health no idea where that fits in xx

Having to work from home, attempt to schoolwork, cook, clean, make my child wash, keeping some sort of a routine, bills amongst everything else. All honesty not ashamed to admit it I quit yesterday and decided where all just trying to get through this and get to the other side, I'm not forcing school work anymore I've had enough of the battle of everything else, making my daughter actually wash and move because she's so depressed is enough. Yesterday was a good day we just had fun. I can't do it any longer I'm not her teacher and I still have to work. We just need to get through it ❤️



Fight battles for my son seen lots of people fighting for their life's and people missing seeing their family just going home without been scared of given my family something which I will never know if I am carrying or not and us having short break and my son hoping people will still listen, as this virus is not going away any time soon and I for one would really wish every one well .one day get to hug our families and see our friend's again even if just for coffee and proper chat ❤️❤️🙏





**Barnsley SENDIASS**  
Published by Sarah Wike · 26 April 2020 ·

BARNSELY SEND FAMILIES HAVE TALENT..so this week we will be looking out for your talents, hope you have some to share with us. Sarah decided to dust of her baking skills

**Barnsley SENDIASS**  
just loving the continued talent of our children baking together today, well done to the kids and their mum who made this together today...look at all that yummy cream.

840 People reached  
46 Engagements  
46 comments 1 share

**Barnsley SENDIASS**  
Published by James Stephenson · 13 August 2020 ·

Roll up! Roll up!

This time tomorrow we will be virtually sat together as Barnsley SENDIASS, and the service's Steering Group, presents 'An evening with Barney Angliss'.

The Care Packs, created by our Steering Group are out for delivery, and those already signed-up via EventBrite will receive their tickets shortly.

You still have a chance to get a ticket! We are issuing our next batch of tickets upto 7pm Friday evening - all you have to do is sign-up via the link below -OR- you can simply send us a message on Facebook, Twitter or telephone and email.

- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/.../an-evening-with-barney...>

We look forward to welcoming Barney to our town - and we look forward to seeing you all tomorrow.

Warmest wishes,  
The SENDIASS Team, and  
The Steering Group.

P.S. Don't forget to send us your questions to put to Barney!

**BARNEY ANGLISS**

1,184 People reached  
77 Engagements  
1 comment 6 shares

**Barnsley SENDIASS**  
Published by Sarah Wike · 6 August 2020 ·

ROLL UP ROLL UP Lola has a message for you all...

Watch the video!

1,033 People reached  
269 Engagements  
8 comments 3 shares

## Data Analysis and Summary

The data referenced below has been collected from IAS cases supported in the last financial year, both from IAS offered via the 'virtual service' and case-work data collected via IAS Case Workers.

For this year's annual report data was collated by the financial year, from April 2020 to March 2021.

Case Worker flux – we have had an interesting year; we had a gap in staff due to recruitment and selection processes and then delays in getting staff into the service which placed additional demand on the existing staff.

In 2020 the service has begun to use the SEND Categories as used by The DfE in the National School Census. For example; ASD, SEMH (which includes ADHD), SPLD), Hearing and Visual Impairments, Multi-Sensory Impairments (MSI – of which the service reports no cases), Physical Disability (which includes Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy), Profound and Multiple Learning Disability, Severe Learning Difficulty, Moderate Learning Difficulty, Specific Language Disorder, and Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

The latter range of categories are often difficult to identify in the case work – this is reflected in very few official reporting (health assessments) of these conditions. Many of these conditions are also co-morbid alongside other Primary SEND conditions. For example, a child could have a diagnosis of ASD, alongside a Severe Learning Difficulty – the former would be what is recorded in the data.

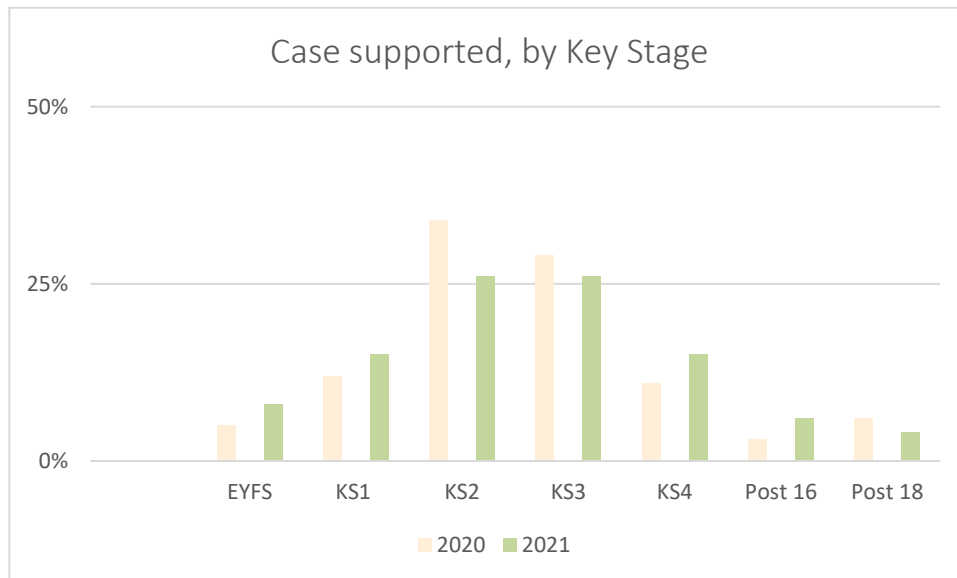
A notable drop in the category, No Specialist Assessment (NSA), could be indicative of the new reporting system, where-as before these might have been categorised as 'Other' – a more specific category could mean that this reporting is more accurate, rather than a reflection of specific needs being identified, assessed and diagnosed.

Although not reporting data we can clearly state that the use of social media via Facebook has increased by almost 100% - last year we hovered around the 290 followers we are reaching over 500. Currently the Facebook page is growing the number of interactions and regularly receives very positive comments from users.



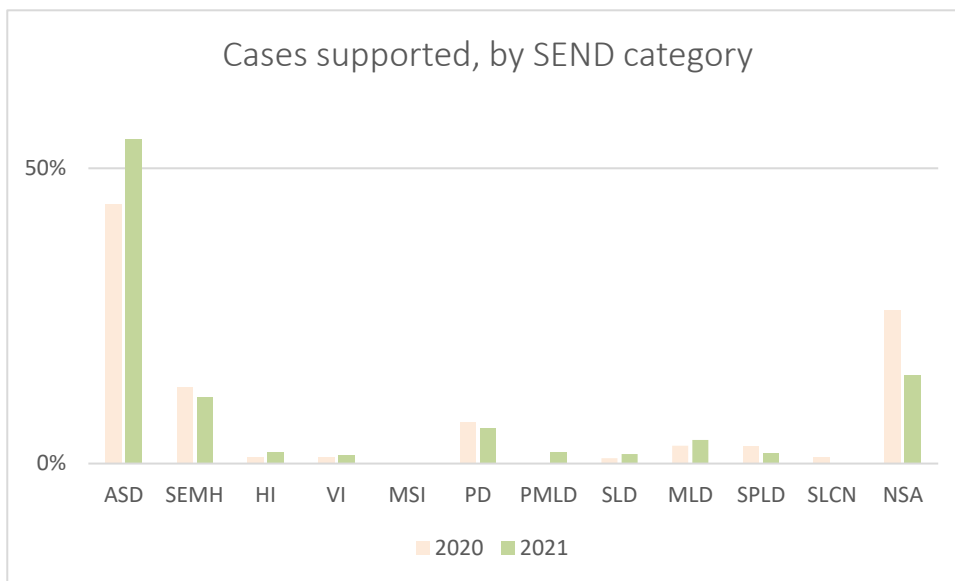
## Case work data

With the introduction of the new CRM reporting system, the service has found it can now more accurately record the complex nature of many of the cases it supports. This data will continue to improve and increase in detail as the years progress.



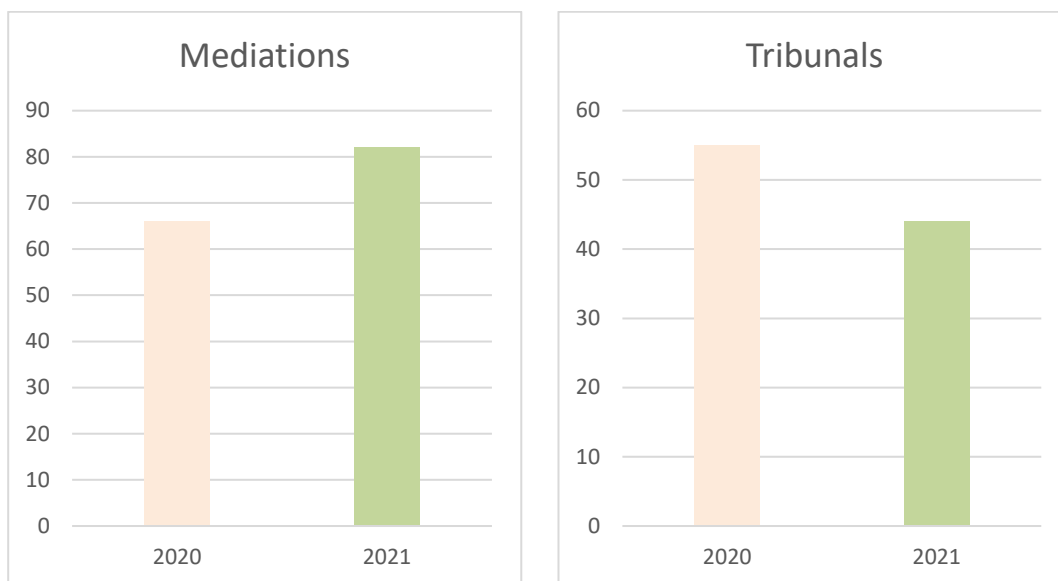
As expected through anecdotal appraisal of the case load – the service has seen an increase in cases supported in the Post-16 age grouping.

There has been a balancing of the KS2 and KS3 age groups – with an increase at KS4. This would indicate that the service is more evenly spread between age groups, with increases seen in KS4 and beyond, as expected due to the Covid-19 pandemic (uncertainty of future placements).



There has been an increase in the number of cases supported where a child of Young Person has a diagnosed condition of ASD. Where there is a co-morbid diagnosis alongside ADHD, the Primary SEND is recorded as ASD. Where children and Young People have a diagnosis of ADHD alone, this is recorded under the SEMH category.

As stated above, there has been a reduction in the category of No Specialist Assessment (NSA). This is more likely indicative of the reporting system, rather than an increase in needs being identified and diagnosed at an early stage.



The service has seen a notable increase in supporting cases at Mediation.

It is expected that the service will be able to more accurately report in future on the type of mediations it supports – Refusal to Assess, Refusal to Issue or on ‘Contents’ of an EHC plan.

Regarding Tribunals, whilst data suggests there has been a drop-in case supported at tribunal, anecdotal reporting from case work suggests a notable increase – particularly in the Q1 and Q2 periods of 2021/2021 – this increase would not be recorded in the data above.

As with mediation, the service expects to be able to report accurately on the type of tribunals it is supporting – particularly tribunals regarding placements (Section I).

The service still receives ‘inappropriate referrals’ for issues that are not SEND specific, such as school admission appeals. This year we have also had an increase in demand for IAS with SEND Tribunal appeals, Independent Review appeals for permanent exclusions, Disability Discrimination appeals, and SEND related complaints. These cases are level 4 case work intervention and take-up larger amounts of IAS officer time per case.

**Data findings for the reporting period of April 2020 – March 2021 highlights:**

- Increased demand for IASS across the three areas of health, education and social care but a specific increase from previous years for health and social care SEN related issues
- Increased demand for IAS with mediations, appeals and complaints work – we have seen more dissatisfaction with decisions made and parents opting to take next steps quicker than in previous times

- Children and young people not making academic progress as some have struggled with the online learning process, this was virtually nonexistent in lock down 1, it improved by lock down 3, not all children and young people who had EHCP's were able to access education during the lockdowns
- Young people have not had the pathways set out in the EHCP for preparation for adulthood phase and so they have not made progression those areas
- School placements for those in key transfer phase not offered in line with statutory timeframes with many children and young people not knowing where they are going for September 2021
- Assessments of children and young people's needs not being undertaken with them
- Struggle to access mental health services and support, with many reaching crisis points and left feeling there was nowhere to go
- Children and young people at primary and secondary phase of education struggling with difficulties around specific learning difficulties and not getting the right type of support they require as there is no route to assessment for this unless parents carers pay privately for this
- A rise in requests for information with seeking independent assessments for children around, speech and language, occupational therapy, sensory needs and educational assessments by psychologists
- Children and young people at secondary phase of education struggling with school attendance due to mental health issues
- Referrals for ASD assessments refused and children and young people expected to wait until their parents have had a family support worker and gone through early health assessment processes
- Transitional planning not undertaken timely for children and young people
- Parent carer anxiety in worrying about not securing transport arrangements for children when they their child is being placed in a specialist provision due to the layer of process between the EHCP decision for their child and agreement given to provide transport
- Increased demand for IAS with EHCP contents, sourcing specialist placements, and school exclusion processes
- Increased demand for IAS with complaints under the Equality Act 2010
- Increased pressure on families due to lack of social care support and respite/short breaks
- Confusion over which children were selected to be able to access education during lockdowns – many children with EHCP's did not have an education offer
- Young People with EHCP's did not have access to local college
- Parents carers reporting children and young people have 'gone back' in education achievement, social and interaction skills, social and emotional behavioral skills within an education setting
- Parents carers reporting young people fearful of re-connecting with their educational setting and going out in the community as they have lost social confidence
- Parents carers reporting feelings of 'abandonment' during Covid-19
- Parents carers report lack of post 16 advice and support for their young people due to TIAG not engaging with young people for the full year

- Managing formal processes such as tribunals and mediations problematic for parents whose only source of technology is a mobile phone
- Managing EHCP processes and plans through a mobile phone is challenging resulting in increased demand for IAS with the process of accessing an EHCP
- Navigating and using the new EHCP Hub has been problematic for some parents carers and working from different styles of EHC Plans which has caused confusion
- Case work demand did not reduce during the pandemic and series of national lockdowns

### **Thematic Findings from analysis of the data highlights:**

- Parent's carers and young people continue to access IAS when in crisis
- Managing and sustaining emotional resilience as carers during the pandemic has had an impact on families
- Learning outcomes and progression for children and young people has been affected due to struggles with home-based learning
- Achievement of education and training outcomes for young people in preparation for adulthood phase has been affected by the pandemic
- Parents feeling that their child's young person needs are not being met in mainstream education settings with demand for specialist placement
- Higher demand for EHCP needs assessment when there is a perception that education settings are not identifying needs and right provision within SEN support processes
- Concerns regarding the consistency of transitional planning in place to support anticipation of needs for children/young people at key phases of transfer
- Understanding and navigating through statutory processes is still a challenge for some parents/carers
- Parents feeling frustrated with waiting times for health assessment and with the processes when an assessment route is declined
- Increased demand for support for the mental health needs of children/young people
- The need for more short break opportunities that are more suitable to the individual needs of SEND children and young people
- Increase in anxiety-based responses when children/ young people are being restrained in education settings
- Higher lean towards complaint processes and other forms of redress due to lower tolerance of perceived failures or with disagreement about decisions within systems and processes
- Increase in sourcing independent assessments of children and young people at a financial cost to families
- Digital poverty and inequality in access using to virtual connectivity platforms due to financial means and or digital confidence for many families can be problematic to accessing support when needed

## **Health and Social care data (this is a new addition to illustrate the IAS sought):**

The service has seen an increase in request for IAS for health and social care. This on one hand is positive as it highlights that parent carers and young people are more aware of where to go if they require IAS in these areas and this can feed into the joint commissioning monitoring arrangements for IAS in the local area. On the other hand, it could be considered that there are potential gaps in service support and approaches to responding to needs of local families.

Looking more closely as a snapshot in this reporting period of the cause for IAS in both health and social care the data story seems to suggest that:

- Carers are requiring more support within the family context to support their child/young person
- Increase in demand for IAS from families who have higher levels of need and may require Early Help or targeted support from a family support worker
- Social care engagement with social care aspect of EHCP processes is still patchy and so section D and H1/H2 is often not threaded into EHCP planning and preparation for adulthood processes
- Signposting to SENDIASS is coming from health services when parents/carers are presenting with issue related to education and social care at health appointments
- Parent's carers are being signposted to SENDIASS for support at point of diagnosis
- There is more evident frustration by parents/carers with long waiting times and access to assessment for potential diagnosis around social emotional and mental health issues in children and young people
- Increased demand for IA around sourcing independent OT assessments for children/young people who have ASD and sensory challenges

## **Findings from Analysis of the data shows recurrence of specific types of cases are:**

- Emotional, Social Behavioral Difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Complex health care needs including mental health
- Autistic Spectrum Conditions
- Undiagnosed or unknown needs

## **Summary with target Ares for development following analysis of data collected**

SENDIASS is a proactive service within the local area, first responses in terms of IAS are always led by the reason for requesting the service at point of contact. Over the reporting period covering the Covid-19 pandemic, service users have often presented in a high state of anxiety and have expressed a range of emotional responses including feelings of helplessness and/or confusion to anger and frustration. IAS officers manage each case as an individual case at the point of contact and advise using a model to promote self-sufficiency rather than dependency, that said many parents have

required additional and higher levels of support during this challenging year, often beyond what SENDIASS can reasonably offer as a small IAS service.

**Service planning going forward to address thematic findings identified in this report SENDIASS will support the local area through:**

- Providing feedback strategically of data known to the service from service user engagement for improvement planning within education, health and care processes locally
- Continue to develop sustainable partner relationships with operational partners across education, health and social care
- Ensure the strategic management of IASS locally is appropriately represented to ensure the two-way flow of important information between the local area processes and SENDIASS
- Develop partnership working with school alliance processes locally
- Further develop training/awareness sessions to support understanding of processes for SEND from local and national perspectives
- Sustain the continued confidence and engagement levels parents' carers, children and young people have of IASS in the local area

SENDIASS needs to be able to work more strategically to inform the processes about the SEND challenges, this means the SENDIASS manager needs to have a reduced case load, currently and historically it's a full time case load, to be able to work with and develop the strategic planning group and to feed into SEND service development. The service needs to invest more resources into Triage of cases at early entry to try to manage these at level 1 and 2 of the case work intervention levels to begin with. To provide more virtual learning tutorials and training opportunities to support peer mentoring. To achieve this:

- Collate the data to inform strategy
- Set up and be accessible at first response stages for requests into IAS
- Create training resources
- Develop business case to increase capacity of 0.5 case worker to reduce case work demand of the manager of IASS and 0.5 business support to answer direct enquiries and reduce waiting time into the service for response to initial enquiries.

**The main conclusions from the analysis are:**

- Of the core functions for SENDIASS the largest percentage of employed staff time is taken up with direct work with parents carers, children and young people
- The more complex the case work is the more time per case is required to provide IAS effectively
- Barnsley IASS is well thought of by service users
- Barnsley IAS is a strong service
- Some SEND Families have felt 'abandoned' during Covid pandemic
- High numbers of case work demand places huge pressure on IAS staff

- Homeworking has placed stress on some IAS staff as they have felt disconnected from a physical service and have so missed the times when face to face staff can support one another in the case work moment
- The self-esteem of IAS Staff was low when the vaccine program to staff was not offered to them, staff were aware of BMBC staff who were not working directly with service users being given the vaccine and IAS staff known to have been working out in the field and being vulnerable were not given it
- Self-esteem and wellbeing of staff affected due to increased hours, long lockdowns and isolation.

**Additional Factors Impacting on IASS development in the local area and that have been beyond what the service could unblock are:**

- The website is not as independent looking at arm's length from the LA as was requested, despite numerous discussions, the result was disappointing for the service
- Joint Commissioning arrangements were not progressed, and this is still ongoing as a development

## Future Plans for the Service development

**The following actions have been identified as targets areas for the service 2021-22 and will be set out in the service development plan:**

- Service Development Plan to be reviewed revised and finalised against local IASS offer
- Review the Quality Standards Framework for an IASS
- Pursue joint commissioning with the CCG
- Embed the Strategic Management Group for the service
- Keep under review SENDIASS policies (confidentiality and Impartiality) to maintain parental and young person confidence in the service
- Ensure the Voice of children and young people continue to be listened to and reflected in the work and developments of the service
- Keep under review and update termly the website
- Report to DMT the Annual Report and findings
- Complete funding paperwork to satisfy IASP grant providers for 2021- 2022
- Inform and influence local policy and practice
- Provide an effective telephone helpline system
- Participate in performance management and identify training needs for staff and volunteers (through support group interactions) to undertake the core functions of SENDIASS effectively
- Ensure professional development is maintained through attendance on relevant training courses



- Strengthen the role of the steering group and extend membership to include colleagues across health, education and social care and voluntary/private sector
- Develop training opportunities
- Support the wellbeing of staff during the continued uncertain times
- Supporting children, young people and families with SEND as they recover from the impact of the pandemic
- Business case for additional resources within the service to meet increased demand.

**SENDIASS as an Impartial Information, Advice and Support Service will aim to develop further through incorporating the 5 sections identified in the quality standards:**

1. Commissioning, governance and management arrangements
2. Strategic functions
3. Provision of information and advice
4. Supporting individuals
5. Professional development and training.

Commitment to achieving outcomes for children and young people **will** remain highest priority.

This report has been written by the SENDIASS manager Sarah Wike with partners support from SENDIASS case officer James Stephenson.

If any of the contents in this report need further explanation, please contact me.

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Alternatively, if you have any concerns in the reporting and wish to highlight these then please feel you escalate these to a more senior officer

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