

**Barnsley**  
**SENDIASS**



# Annual report

## 2022-2023

Written by:

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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.

# Foreword

I hope you will find this 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 Barnsley Council, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 – 25 (2015), which 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 that is situated within Business Unit 3 - Children's Social Care and 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.*

## **SEND Code of Practice 2015 - 2.5**



# Quality Standards Framework for an IASS

The Quality Standards Framework sets out the national expectations of good practice in the provision of impartial Information, Advice, and Support Services (IASS) to increase parental confidence.

The service use these to audit compliance as an IASS for the local area. These standards inform the service development plan and are used as a tool for rating the service performance in line with the commissioning arrangements for IASS locally.

SENDIASS in Barnsley was built on the parent partnership service that existed at the time and has been funded and provided 'in-house'. It has been successful in drawing down additional external funding to increase capacity from 2014 to 2022 to support service developments following the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice 2015. This was when the role and remit changed from IAS for SEN to parents or carers of children aged 2-16 to provision of IAS for SEND to children, young people and parents and carers of those aged 0-25.

In 2021, the SEND OfSTED CQC inspection identified SENDIASS as a highly effective service to families.

In January 2022, the SENDIASS Manager was seconded to work with local families through the Barnsley SEND Parent Carer Alliance and returned to the service in the autumn of 2022. In the summer of 2022, the council carried out a service review and identified that additional resourcing was required into the service and that it should remain provided 'in-house' with a review 12 months a year after providing its recommendations..



# Service structure

SENDIASS is located within Business Unit 3 situated within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance area of Children's Social Care.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, the service moved to a hybrid working arrangement following the pandemic. Staff are now based at home and provide IASS both virtually and face-to-face to meet the needs of families.

Staffing flow was interrupted throughout 2022/2023 when the SENDIASS Manager was seconded into another role, returning through transition phase from 1 October 2022. Two experienced case advisors left during 2022 and interim business support arrangements ceased in July 2022. The service profile below shows the structure within the service:

Head of Service for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
SENDIASS Service Manager (Full-time)
SENDIASS Case Advisor (Full-time)
SENDIASS Case Advisor (New post – Full-time)
SENDIASS Assistant Case Advisor (0.5 additional capacity increase to move existing post to full-time)
SENDIASS Case Advisor (0.5)

## Budget

The budget is centrally funded to provide 4.5 staffing and the associated costs for those staff. SENDIASS has support from a finance officer and has regular budget monitoring meetings. There was an underspend at the end of the financial year due to vacancies of two full-time posts, which allowed the service to increase the hours of the 0.5 case officer to 0.6 to provide increased capacity for case work and fund some support from agency cover until January 2023. The service also receives support from other areas of the council, such as communications and IT, to support virtual and social media working and can also access local resources such as family centres and libraries to facilitate IASS business in local area communities.

# The role of Barnsley SENDIASS to families

Barnsley SENDIASS is in place to make sure the council 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."*

## **SEND Code of Practice 2015 – 2.17**

To support the council to fulfill its statutory function, the service provides Information, Advice and Support (IAS) in line with the case work intervention levels. More detail about those can be found on the Council for Disabled Children's [website](#).

To summarise each intervention level is as follows:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Information, advice or support</b>	<b>Practice standard</b>
1	Information	Information and signposting via helpline, email, website downloads, presentations and training.
2	Information and tailored advice	Booked phone call or virtual meeting, exchange of emails. More complex or high level information shared.
3	Support	Agreement completed, case worker allocated, liaison with other agencies, face-to-face meetings or home visits, support with forms, giving views, preparing appeals
4	Intensive support	Any or all of the Level 3, plus representation for parent, child or young person at meetings, appeals (including exclusions) and CETR. Ongoing and intensive casework or advocacy that includes representation

Case work is reported on the CRM under one of the four levels and data collected reflects service level activity against these interventions.

Barnsley SENDIASS, alongside the council, deliver the service in line with the minimum standards for an IASS, which can be read on the Council for Disabled Children's [website](#).

The service review outcomes show a correlation to some of the requirements set out in the minimum standards. A full audit of both processes has been undertaken to support service development planning going forward. This audited document is reported into the SEND Oversight Board, the Strategic Management Group (SMG) and is used to complete the national audit of IASS for the Council for Disabled Children (CDC).

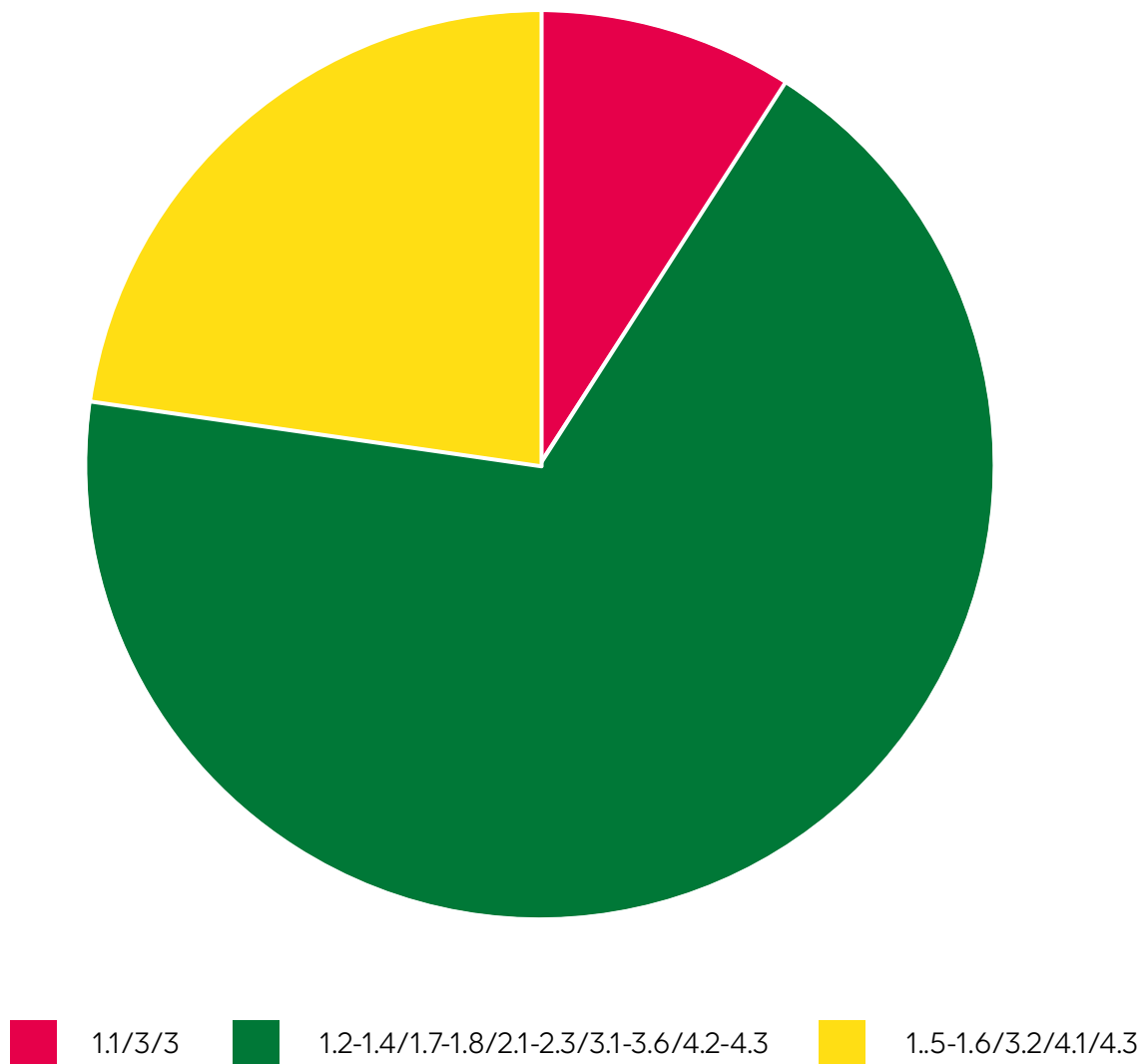
The audit is rag rated using the SEND Oversight Board process: red indicating at risk, yellow a priority area for development and green as on track. The chart on the right shows a summary of the audit document. Should anyone wish to see the full document, please email [SENDIASS@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:SENDIASS@barnsley.gov.uk). It will also be published on the website with the service development plan.

The chart and numbers below illustrate that the service is meeting the standards for an IAS in the local area alongside working towards achieving all the outcomes required from the service review (green).

Where there is need of further improvement (yellow), this is in the areas for development of practice standards and training and development to support the local area partners understand the roles and remit of an IASS and a published refreshed SENDIASS Offer.

Where further conversations are required (red), this is about joint commissioning arrangements with health and the ICB as this is not yet embedded within the Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA also requires a refresh.

### Standards



## Working with children, young people, parents, and carers

Barnsley Council expects SENDIASS to deliver a high-quality service to parents, carers, children, and young people. It is commissioned to meet with the standards for an IASS and to make sure practice standards are in line with national guidance. This [short video](#) shows what an IASS can and should offer and is the model the Barnsley SENDIASS offer is based on.

## Referrals and requests for impartial information, advice, and support

**Historically, data captured was of the number of children and young people supported throughout the reporting period. However, the CRM is now embedded and so the data is recorded by intervention levels. This means that a more accurate reflection of IAS practice per case is now captured.**

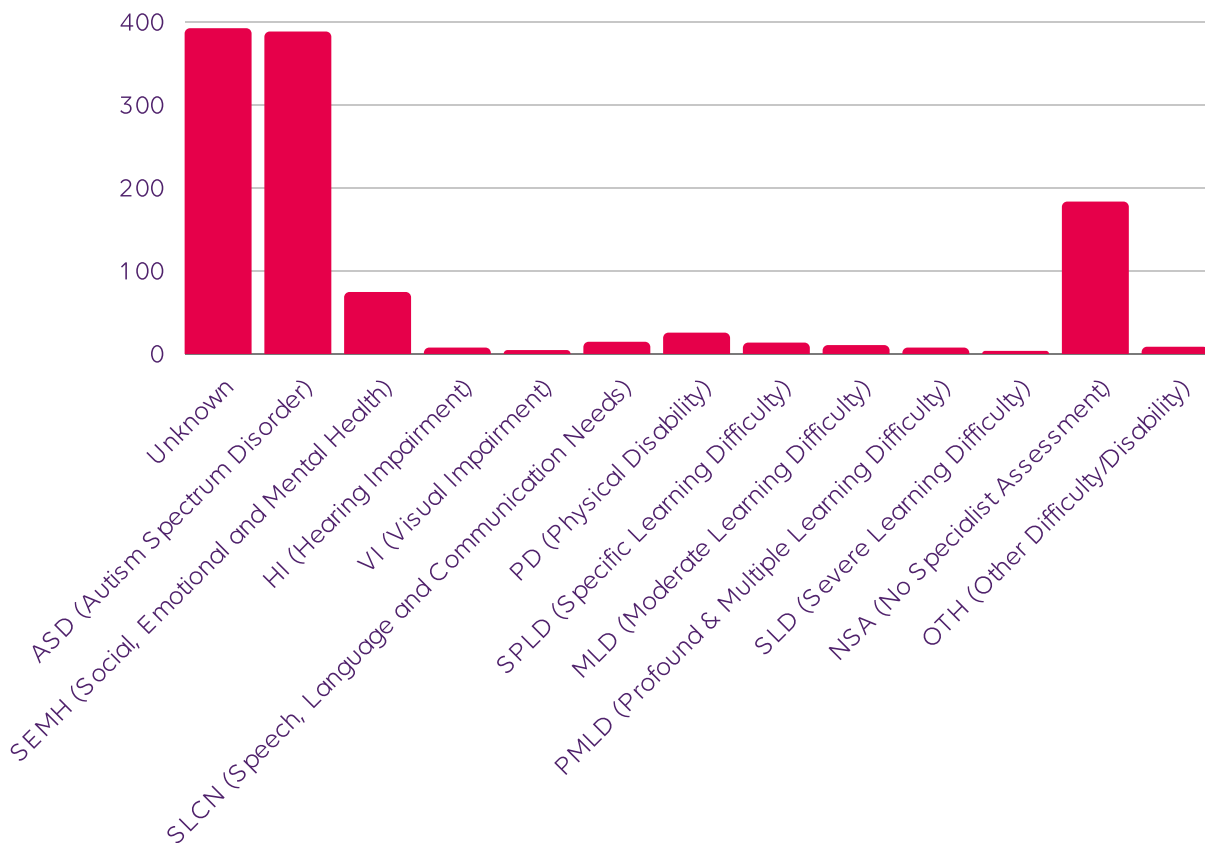
**During this reporting period, there have been fluctuating staffing levels which reduced capacity to meet demand for the first half of the reporting period. This has had a negative effect on the once consistently positive service identity amongst families. Families particularly expressed feelings of dissatisfaction in service response times, the level and quality of service support and an inability to access the service timely.**

The second half of this reporting period is based on service activity following implementation of an interim plan that prioritised recruitment and selection processes and the distribution of all staff capacity to the provision of information, advice, and support to families. Because of this redistribution of service activity, there was less frustration expressed by families. The negativity towards the service reduced quickly and we saw an opportunity to engage and reconnect the service with those accessing the service and service partners.

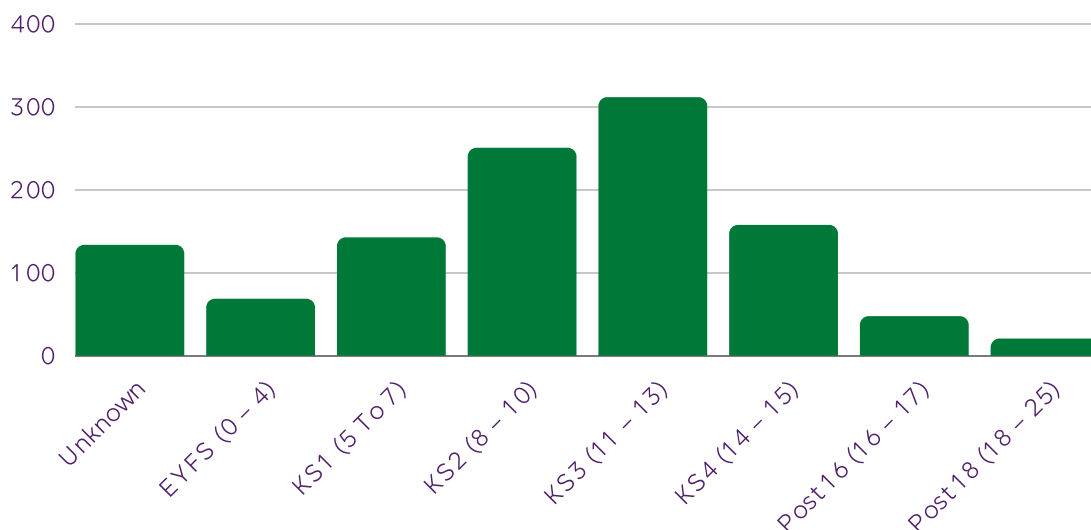
The CRM shows a total of 1130 interventions recorded between levels 1 to 4 of the case work intervention levels. The data also shows staff are not fully recording accurately or consistently in the same format, which has become a target area for staff development.

The graph below shows referrals and triage (level 1 and 2) has been high and is working when initial contact is made into the service. When done effectively, we have noticed response times are greatly reduced. The data also shows the highest demand for IAS has been for SEN support stage, EHCP refusal to assess, EHCP refusal to issue following assessment, EHCP placement (section I of EHCP), school exclusions and annual review of EHCP meetings.

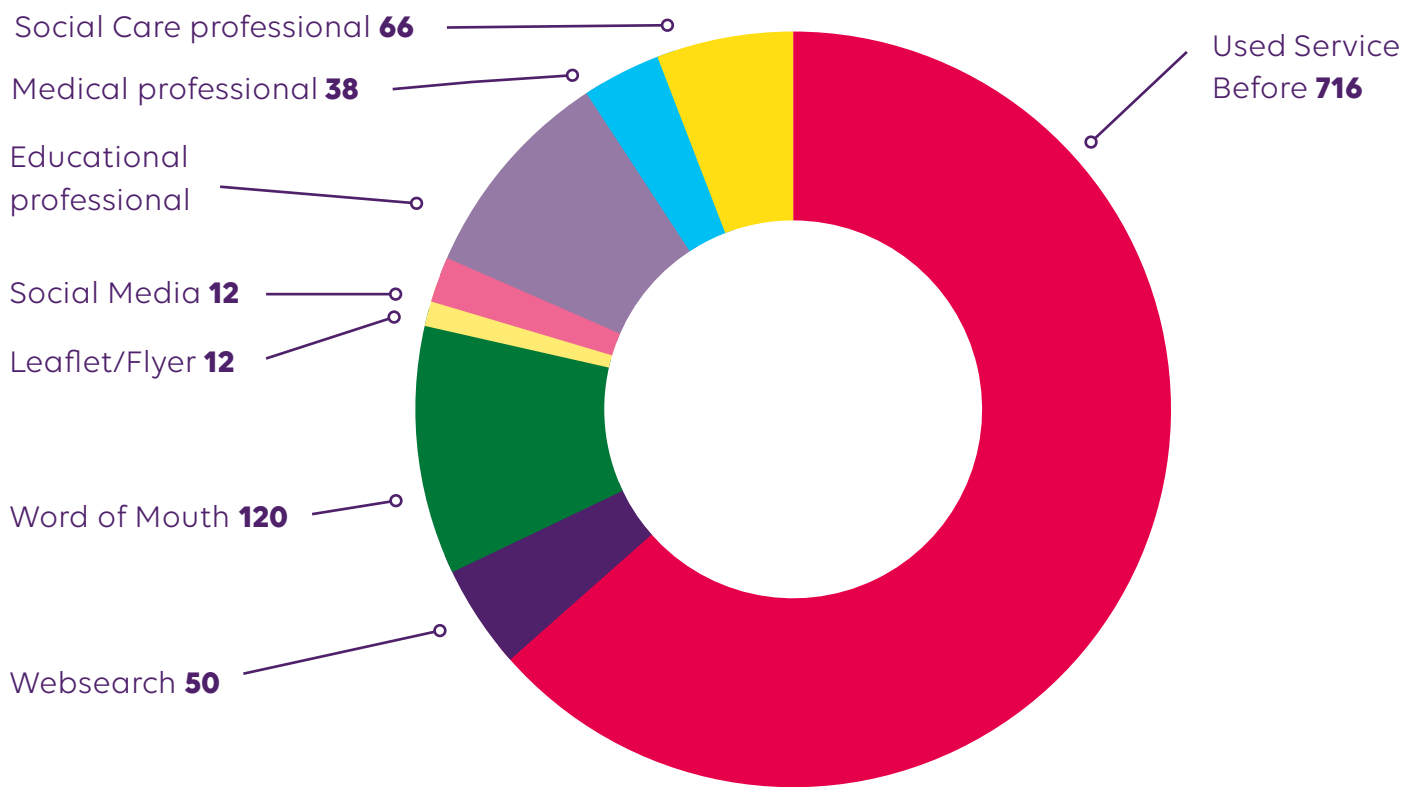




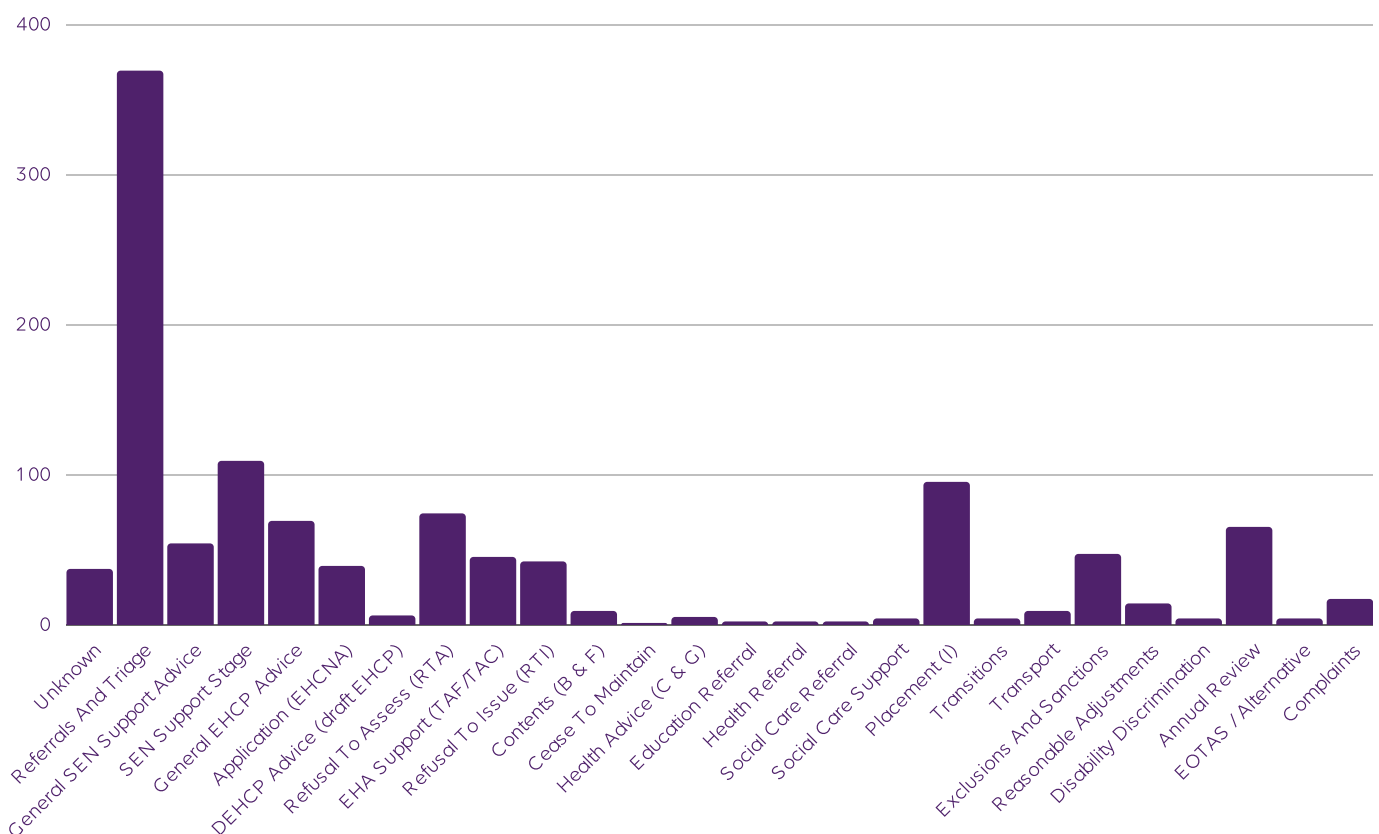
The second graph shows that of the 1130 interventions, there was a gradual incline for referrals of children in primary and secondary phase education with a peak at Key Stage 3.



This third graph illustrates that many referrals and requests for IAS are from those who are aware of the service and have previously used it. However, we have noticed that there is not the facility to record a case as ongoing in the database when completing a record of intervention and have identified that we need to amend this to allow us to record an active intervention as 'already accessing the service'. This will allow for a better capture of where referrals originate.



The final graph below shows what the primary SEND need is upon referral into the service. In line with previous historical data capture, the greatest SEND need remains highest where children and young people have ASD or SEMH. In this data trawl, 386 children and young people had a diagnosis of ASD, with 74 recorded as having a diagnosis of ADHD. The figure of 183 reflects those awaiting assessment or struggling to get an assessment and relate to Communication and Interaction and SEMH as a potential SEN need. Children with HI and VI are numbers 3 and 4, so the lowest area of need for IAS, another consistent historical trend.



## Information and publicity

SENDIASS has attended local information events, school parent meetings and promoted the service wider through:

- Social media – Facebook and Twitter
- Networking locally
- Barnsley Council's Local Offer
- A SENDIASS section on the Barnsley Council website
- National network on IASS website

## Training

Through the National IASS Network, we are provided with training specifically tailored to the role of IASS. Due to staffing departures, interim staffing arrangements and recruitment of new staff, there was a gap in full service legal knowledge required for an IASS within this reporting period. This means more coaching and mentoring for new staff by existing staff who have completed the legal training required for a SENDIAS Service has been and remains a requirement. However, all new staff have successfully completed the mandatory training required to ensure compliance with Barnsley Council governance arrangements.

The legal training and development of new staff is an identified high priority moving forward.

## Networking and collaboration

The SENDIASS manager is a key strategic partner within the local area and attends SEND Oversight Board and other boards as required. The SENDIASS manager completes highlight reports of the service progress and areas of challenge for oversight and scrutiny.

The SENDIASS manager attends and reports into IASS regional meetings to represent the service and local area.

## 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. Data capture is used to inform local policy development. The SENDIASS manager meets with other service area managers to share best practices.

SENDIASS offer a monthly surgery to Family Support Workers to provide SEND specific IAS to support them in their case work interactions where families have SEND.

## Monitoring of service

SENDIASS was reviewed during summer of 2022 by the council with the outcomes reviewed internally as part of commissioning arrangements for IASS in the local area. At the time of the review the service was struggling to maintain its previously high levels of positive feedback. This was largely due to staffing movement of very experienced leadership and staff. In November 2022 the service began focusing on the required outcomes from the review and by March 2023 was meeting many of those requirements.

The Strategic Management Group (SMG) for SENDIASS was reinstated in December 2022 with a refreshed Terms of Reference agreed. Three meetings were arranged, two took place before end of this reporting period and those meetings played a key role in monitoring progress against the review outcomes.

SENDIASS Barnsley participates in a national evaluation of IASSs. We complete a national benchmarking survey which explores how services are performing against the minimum standards. The data is then collated by the National Network for IASS and reported into the Department for Education (DfE).

As a service, we operate an internal monitoring process as part of service development planning and this process involves:



The service focuses heavily on the internal monitoring throughout the year so any barriers or successes are evaluated and practice standards developed or amended. This enables us to keep the primary goal of service activity focused on achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.

# Barnsley SENDIASS – the data story 2022/2023

Data is collected through feedback from families. This can be at time of case closure and through a face-to-face interaction, telephone conversation or using social media to conduct an online survey. We engage in the council's complaints and compliments processes and report or respond to feedback accordingly.

The service collects a range of SEND data relating to individual children and young people which includes the key stage or phase of education, SEN/D need, signposting route, request for help type, etc. We use feedback and data around case presentation to report IASS activity and themes.

This year, we've undertaken two forms of survey collection. We already know when and where we were weaker than we wanted to be for this reporting period and have acknowledged that in this report. We decided to capture data both internally and externally to work out what effective service development should and could look like for the next reporting period.

We began by engaging as a new team and undertaking an internal analysis of where we thought we were for our families; below is a capture of that internal measure.



We then wanted to check what the people accessing the service said about IASS based on their lived experiences of the service to date and created two surveys.

## Public survey feedback

The first survey focused on the standardised questions for an IASS, and we each identified 10 to 15 people accessing the service and invited them to complete the short survey. The data capture from this survey was meant as a small snapshot and we have found the results match to previous years data (the same questions were used). That said, we recognise that this data would tell a different story if it was collected at a time when there were higher levels of dissatisfaction from people accessing the service. Although we are pleased with the responses, we are not complacent.

## The results of survey one



Our second survey took the approach of a 'shop window'. We asked parents and carers for their thoughts about how we provide SENDIASS to them using a 3 'W' approach – what, why and when do you want information, advice and support.

We put this survey in the public domain and sent it to those who may not access social media. We offered an incentive to participate and asked for people to identify themselves so we could make sure respondents were people accessing the service to make sure that the data is valid. This approach was born out of the experiences gained by the service manager during a secondment to a local parent and carer group. The response rate to the survey is encouraging and the data capture is rich.

## Thematic findings from survey two:

### Parents and carers tell us they:

Need someone to stand by their side, to be their support so they can feel stronger to advocate for their children/young person.

Want the legal information and to know what it means.

Need respect and support for their own mental wellbeing.

Want to feel listened to.

Are tired

Need reasonable adjustments so they can participate properly with processes.

Want calm and rationale approaches to situations to help work through them when they become confusing.



We asked about the service and have received an overwhelming number of positive comments. However, we want to understand whether a SENDIASS is effective within a local area and what we can take from the information to help our local partners. Parents are saying:

They are happy with support from the local SENDIASS.

SENDIASS is a great help.

SENDIASS needs to work within the local authority and not be outsourced.

SENDIASS is a good source of support for parents and needed.

Assigned workers help to support parents accessing the service so that their own needs and reasonable adjustments are in place.

SENDIASS has excellent knowledge and excellent people skills. Parents want this from everyone.

Parents need information and advice 24 hours a day.

It would be useful to have SENDIASS at TAF meetings.

More resources are needed in SENDIASS, so no one is left.

SENDIASS is an accessible service.

SENDIASS is a good resource, and more children and young people get what they need if they get support from it.



The parent and carer views collected in the second survey provide us with some detailed rich data and it has the potential for us to use as training resource. The data from both surveys will inform the service development plan.

Key themes emerging as an evaluative summary of this annual report is that service improvement and development involves a combined approach:



## Barnsley SENDIASS



### Contact us

If you require any further information about this report, please don't hesitate to contact the service manager:

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

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