



Annual Report

2015 - 2016

Changing from a PPS to a SEND IAS!

2.1 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015 outlines what is expected from a SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SEND IAS):

“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 or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care.”

These new regulations widened the remit for the Parent Partnership Service (PPS). As the PPS, we previously supported parent carers by giving them information and advice primarily related to education. To become compliant as a SEND IAS, there was a need to ensure we had the knowledge in the social care and health elements of the Education, Health and Care Plan, and

that we were able to support young people with SEND to think through their views, wishes and aspirations. To achieve this, our Advisors undertook national SEND IAS network accredited law training (delivered by IPSEA – an independent organisation that specialises in SEN law), and we recruited two Young People Advisors (1FTE) to support young people in West Sussex.

The Local Authority (LA) set up an IASS project group to work with parent carers and young people to see what they would like from a SEND IAS and how they would like to access information, advice and support. As a result of this, the LA and Parent Carer Forum sent out a survey and organised a number of workshops around the county. From the findings, a report was written with recommendations and a decision was made by the SEND Core Group, that the SEND IAS would remain an ‘in-house’ service, operating at ‘arms-length’ from the Local Authority. Information that was captured through this report, as well as other surveys (Reaching Families Information survey and an LA wider SEN survey) will be used to maintain continuous improvement of the service as well as meeting user needs.



The Development of the SEND IAS Steering Group

The Steering group is made up of parent carers, voluntary groups' representatives and professionals. The role of the Steering Group is to encourage and challenge the SEND IAS in all that they do. The group decided to increase the membership of the Steering Group to reflect the new remit of the SEND IAS. We currently have representation from West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (the WSPCF representative 'chairs' the meetings), Reaching Families, Early Childhood Services and a SEND Commissioner (also championing the voice of young people). We have already identified interested parent carers who would like to join this group and are looking for representation from Education, Health and Care services.

We considered that a service review of the SEND IAS was needed to ensure that parent carers and young people were helping to shape our vision, and making the service accessible to all who may need it. During the last year, the SEND IAS has been building on the PPS foundations. The review would firmly embed the new elements into the service.

The Steering Group would like to reflect on the service's recent changes and information gathered, to ensure that it is meeting the needs of service users and wider stakeholders.

We will update you on this review through our information page on the Local Offer:

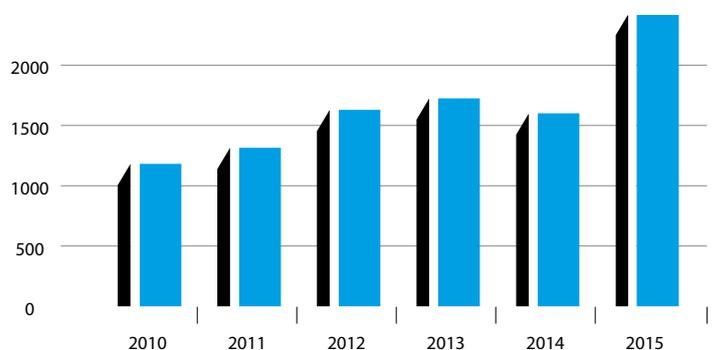
<https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information/3-information-advice-ias>

The Increasing Demand on our Service

We are advising and supporting more people than ever. The graph below shows how the number of calls to our helpline has increased over the last year. It is great that we are able to support more people, but it sometimes means that we cannot get out to see those that may need 1-1 advice and support. We are addressing this by continuing to build up more volunteers and use them where possible (please see the article 'Ensuring We Support as Many People As Possible'). We will also continue to address different ways of accessing the service and this will be a high priority as part of the SEND IAS Service Review previously mentioned.

We also collate any themes that arise which may be a concern, so that they can be addressed through working groups with which we work. By doing this we are able to influence the policy and practice that may be happening in services and settings in the county.

Helpline calls 2010-2015



Working with Voluntary Groups to Support Parent Carers

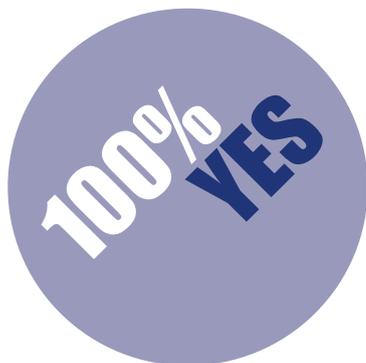
We work closely with other groups that give support to parents, carers and young people. This includes:

- supporting the delivery of the popular PACE (Parent and Carer Event)
- contributing to the education section in Reaching Families' long awaited follow-up to 'Making Sense of It All' booklet, entitled 'Making Sense of Adult Life'
- delivering workshops through Reaching Families called 'Making Sense of Support at School'
- supporting the planning and delivery of parent conferences and events.

Below is feedback, taken from workshop evaluations, to show how you value the 'Making Sense of Support at School'. Following positive evaluations received,

Reaching Families have asked the SEND IAS to deliver 3 more workshops during 2016/2017. Thank you for your valuable feedback. We adapt our workshops based on your responses and this will then help other families that may be struggling to understand the SEN system. One of the areas that had been identified by Reaching Families, based on your feedback, is that it would be good to have a workshop about 'transition' with regard to young people that are reaching the end of statutory school age. We are currently working with Reaching Families to see whether we can put a workshop together to support this.

Did the Workshop Course meet your expectations?



"Great course today about send support at school. Feel I have many more strings to my bow"

"very good speakers"

"the courses are very helpful and I would recommend to any parents"

"Good review of the way the education system has changed"

Parents on 'Making Sense of SEN Support' workshop.

Did the course workshop address the issues you were hoping it would address?



"It has been great working in partnership with SEND IAS to deliver the 'Making Sense of Support at School' workshop. Feedback shows it has helped empower parents to better access the educational support their children need and has proven to be one of the most vital we offer families."

**Rosemary Hudson, Outreach and Training
Co-ordinator, Reaching families**

Feedback on the Service

The West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF) is a key partner in ensuring that we are working effectively, meeting the needs of the community and that co-production with parents is at the forefront of practitioners' minds.

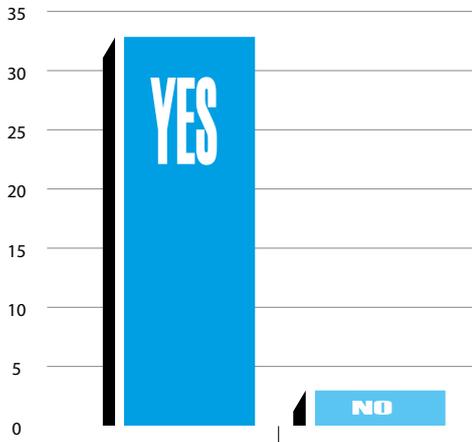
Working closely with these organisations means that we are all collaborating effectively to support parents of SEND children in West Sussex and actioning better outcomes for children and their families. This was perfectly highlighted at the Visioning Day that we co-planned with WSPCF, Short Breaks Team, Reaching Families and Carers Support. The aim of this event was to get all providers that support young people with SEND and/or their families to share their knowledge and produce a shared action plan to support these families in West Sussex. A person-centred approach was used and a plan was produced, which will be monitored and reviewed over the next year (see pic).

Every year we have sent out an annual questionnaire to parent carers to ensure that the service they received is what they were expecting, and to get any feedback to help us to continue to improve the service we deliver.

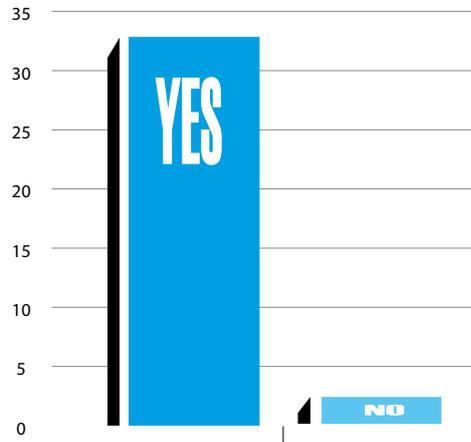
We are always particularly interested to make sure that parent carers feel we are working in an 'impartial' and 'confidential' way. The statistics on the next page show that the majority of parent carers that use the service feel confident that we are doing this.



Do you think the advice/information given by SEND IAS / PPS was impartial?



Were you satisfied that the information you gave the PPS would remain confidential, other than when we sought your permission to talk to someone else?



To read our impartiality and confidentiality policies please look on the Local Offer: <https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information/3-information-advice-ias#how-do-we-ensure-that-we-are-acting-in-an-impartial-and-confidential-way?>

From January 2016, we have changed to individual evaluations (as part of a pilot study by the National SEND IAS Network), so that we can seek feedback immediately after we have supported a parent carer. We have also recently adapted the evaluation form and trialled this with young people. We have found this has worked well and as a result, the National SEND IAS Network will be encouraging other SEND IAS to use this adapted form. We are pleased with the feedback we have received from you so far (thank you!).

The results below show a quick snapshot of how you value our advice and support. The numbers are low as we have only just started to seek feedback in this way. We have recently adapted the form to encourage more feedback from you so hope to be able to report on this in more detail next year.

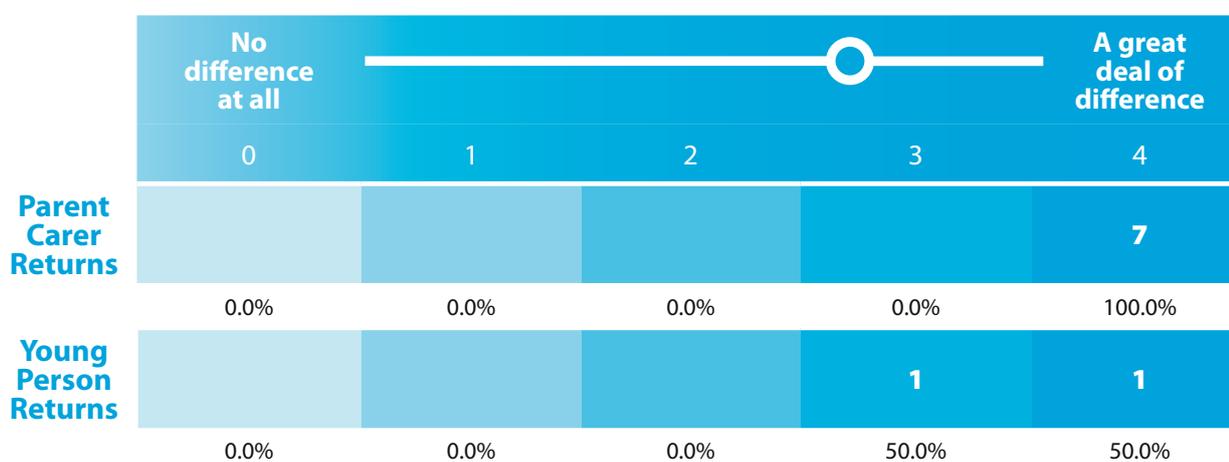
Question: How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?



Question: How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we are?

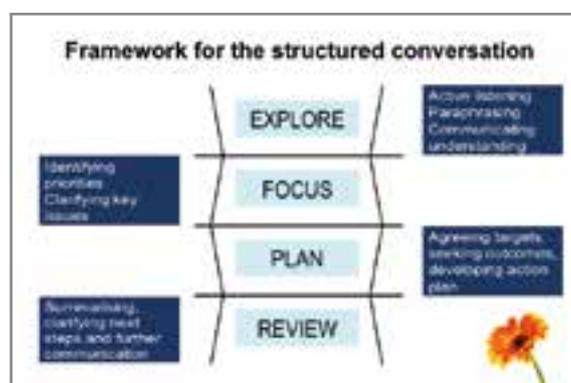


What difference do you think our information, advice and support has made to you?



Training for Schools to Encourage Co-production with Parents

We continue to deliver 'Structured Conversation' training to schools as the feedback we receive is that it is very useful for school staff. The aims of the 'structured conversation' is intended to facilitate a positive relationship between school and parent carers, through the shared purpose of improving the educational achievement of the young people. It allows the free exchange of information, the parent carer to be able to express their views, wishes and aspirations for their child, and encourages supportive teaching, learning strategies and clarity of learning objectives.



Feedback from staff in West Sussex schools Structured Conversation Training delivered by West Sussex SEND IAS

*“relaxed- communicated
very well seemed to
understand our situation”*

*“liked seeing how not
to do it”*

*“great, clear and catering for
LSMS/ teacher/ senco”*

*“real life examples very
useful - particularly the
video clips”*

*“gave a clear and precise
understanding of the
subject”*

*“very knowledgeable-
thorough and good at
answering questions
on spot”*

*“I will make sure I adapt my
approach using the structures
outlined, as I can now see its
true potential”*

Common feedback from schools was that the training seemed more aimed at Primary schools, and that the videos seemed over-staged. We are looking into this to see if anything can be done to address these issues and improve this training for schools in the future.

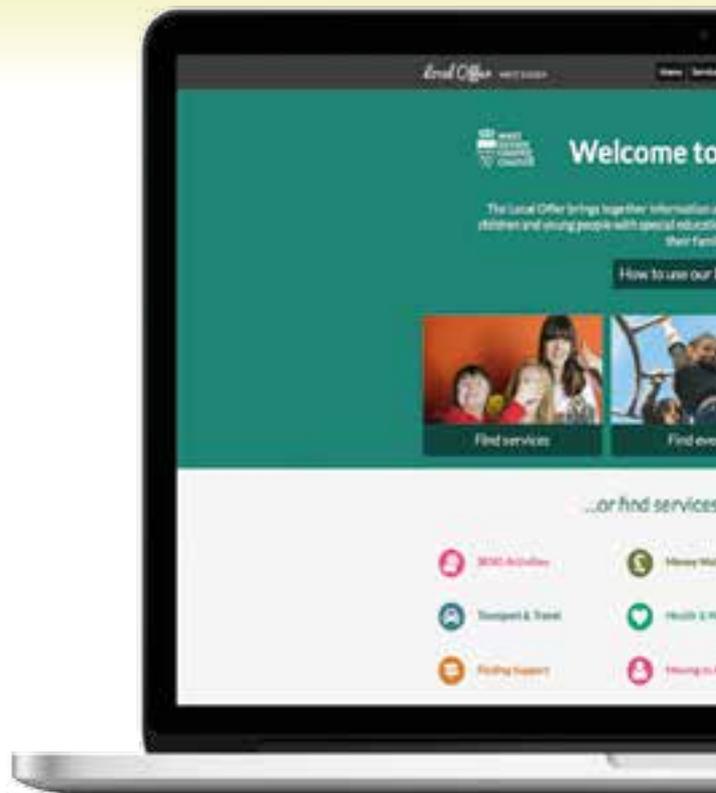
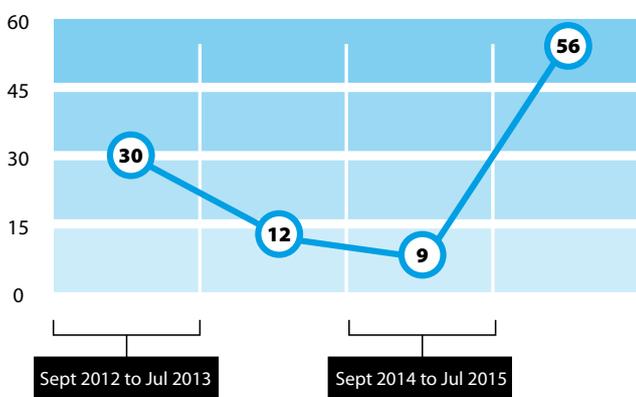
If you are an education setting and would like to take advantage of this training which is currently free of charge, then please email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk

Ensuring We Support as Many People As Possible

We have been able to recruit a Volunteer Co-ordinator with grant funding from the Council for Disabled Children. We have therefore been able to focus on recruiting and training new volunteers, giving more focussed support to our current volunteers, and also streamlining our systems and procedures to make sure we are using them as effectively as possible. We are very fortunate to have excellent volunteers supporting this service, with a variety of skills through personal and professional experience of SEND. We take this opportunity to thank them publicly for all they do to support this service.

The graph below shows that by having our volunteer co-ordinator, the number of parents that our Independent Parental Supporters have supported has increased significantly.

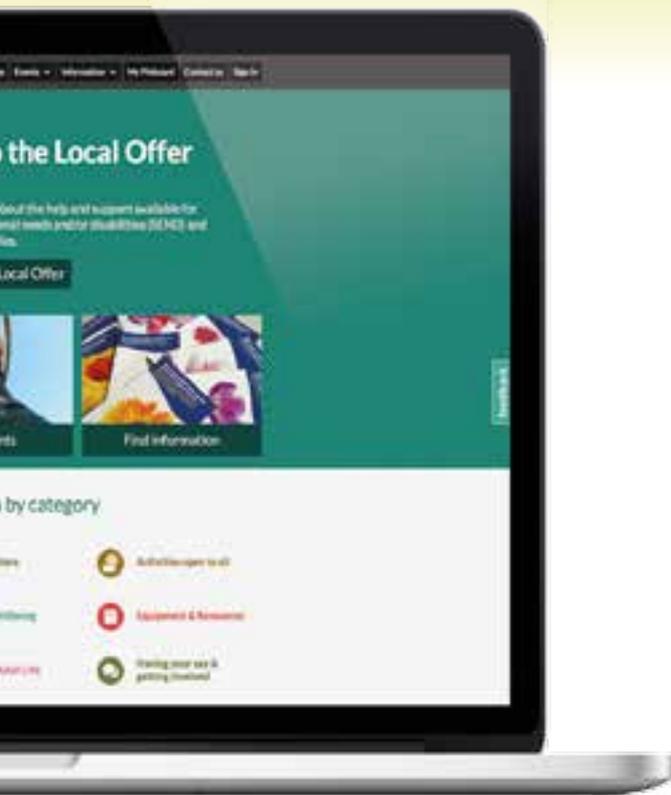
Use of Volunteers Over the Last 4 Years



Local Offer

It was decided that the right place for our Local Offer was within the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SEND IAS) as it is an impartial service operating at arms-length from the Local Authority(LA). We have been making a great deal of improvements to the website this year to ensure that it is fit for purpose and is useful to those that will benefit from the website.

Our biggest development was adding a 'Calendar of Events' to the website. Parent carers had told us that they had missed relevant training and activities, and providers reported multiple occasions where events were clashing as they didn't know other similar events were going on.



Introduction of Supporting Children and Young People

We are really pleased with the progress we have made since November 2015 in appointing two quality Advisors who support Children and Young People to think through their views, wishes and aspirations. Also, they support the development of resources to raise awareness that this new support exists.

We are fortunate to have Advisors that have differing strengths, knowledge and skills. They have also undertaken the same independent SEN legal training that our Parent Advisors have completed.

We have produced a leaflet and poster that encourage children and young people to ask for our support either directly, or through their college or parent.

Calendar of Events

By working with parent carers and providers we were able to develop an event calendar that would help:

- parent carers to plan and know about events and training opportunities beneficial to them
- enable parent carers to select activities suitable and relevant to their child/young person; and
- ensure that providers are able to make a more informed decision when planning events, activities and training.

To view the Local Offer, please visit: local-offer.org



Volunteer training is currently being adapted. A 'Principles in supporting young people', and an 'Advice and tips' document has been created, explaining certain situations that a volunteer may come across when supporting a young person, and how they may be able to cope and improve the situation.

New SEND IAS Database

We have been using a new database since February 2016, implemented by a company called 'Charitylog'. They specialise in databases for charities, so have a wealth of experience in ensuring data is protected. It is cloud based so can be accessed from anywhere that has wifi. However, it can only be accessed by SEND IAS staff using two levels of password protection. Please be assured that we would not pass on any information to anyone outside the service without your permission to do so.

The biggest improvement this new database brings us is the ability to present statistics that we have not been able to report on before. This will help us to evidence relevant information to show the positive impact we have, how we are supporting parent carers and young people, and the issues that we are hearing from you.



What We Hope to Do During 2016-17

We have outlined some of the work we hope to focus on this year, taking into account feedback we have received through surveys, evaluations and the comments through the Local Offer. This will be shaped as we review the service and proactively seek more feedback from parent carers, young people, providers and professionals. We look forward to updating you on the positive work we have done in next year's annual report.

Increasing Support / Accessibility of Service

This will include the translation of all our core leaflets into the 5 most commonly used languages in West Sussex, other than English. Also, to ensure we are accessible to as many people as possible, we will explore the use of Webinars / advice through Facebook and holding drop in sessions.

Better engagement with Schools / Colleges

- We feel that this is one of our strengths, but there has been concern that due to increase demand on the helpline, we are not able to support schools as well as previously.

We have therefore identified a dedicated resource (1 day a week) to work on developing this area. This will include encouraging schools to sign up to our Education Partnership Protocol (which supports co-production with parents), awarding a certificate to schools that have demonstrated good practice in engaging with parents, and also offering training to staff on how to get the best from a meeting with parents.

We know from surveys that 'finance and benefits' is a complicated subject, and one where people would appreciate advice and guidance. Although the County Council has a Welfare Benefits Advisor, who is an expert in this field, we appreciate that we need to be able to pass on an element of this information. We have a 'Money Matters' category on our Local Offer as we know it is important to parent carers. We will also work with the Welfare Benefits Advisor to ensure we have information that can be passed on 'Frequently asked questions with answers' would be helpful. We will also include this information on our Local Offer. This is just one example of how we will improve our information based on your feedback.

Improving information that is given to parent carers and Children and Young People (CYP)

Since September 2014 it is expected that every SEND IAS is now able to give information, advice and support in the area of 'Health', 'Social Care' as well as the 'education' element of an Education, Health and Social Care Plan. We have therefore undertaken further training to become more knowledgeable in these two new areas, but realise that we need to do more.

This will include looking to recruit a representative from each service ('Health' and 'Social Care') to our SEND IAS Steering group, to provide a strong link and an understanding of the sort of information of which we should be aware, to pass on to parents.

Developing service to respond to increased demand

This will include training some of our interested volunteers in supporting children and young people, as well as recruiting more volunteers. We will also look at different ways you could access our service so that we can support you effectively and efficiently. The way we cope with our increased demand will be seen as a high priority to address in the service review, led by the SEND IAS Steering Group.

'a big thank you! You are so professional and please know that you are a great source of support, you are like WONDER WOMAN!'

- parent by email to a SEND IAS Advisor



Meet the team



Heather McIntosh
Team Manager
SEND IAS



Elaine Worrell
Parent Advisor
SEND IAS



Claire Chapman
Parent Advisor
SEND IAS



Paula Bower
Parent Advisor
SEND IAS



Susannah Whittaker
Young People
Advisor
SEND IAS



Jacqueline Paterson
Young People
Advisor
SEND IAS



Luke Bower
Volunteer
Co-ordinator
SEND IAS



Elizabeth Holland
Liaison Officer
SEND IAS



Charlotte Smith
Local Offer Officer
SEND IAS

Feedback on the Service



If you do have a few spare minutes, we would really appreciate it if you would consider sharing your experience on our summary card on the Local Offer. Nothing speaks louder than a positive personal experience, and people are then able to see how we may be able to help them in their situation. If you are able to do this, it would be much appreciated.

For information on how to leave a comment on services:

- 1) **Go to Local-offer.org**
- 2) **Click on 'How to use our Local Offer' button**
- 3) **Click on 'Commenting on Services'**

Thank you



Local Offer

West Sussex
SEND IAS Service

St James Campus, St James Road, Chichester, PO19 7HA

Helpline: 0330 222 8555 Email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk

Email for children and Young People: cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk