



SENDIAS

Information | Advice | Support

West Sussex

2022-23



SENDIAS

Annual Report

Statistics, feedback and service development

About us



By law (the Children's and Families Act part 3) every Local Authority must have a SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS). The Code of Practice 2015 is statutory guidance and explains in Chapter 2 how a SENDIAS should operate.

The following principles for the service should be taken into account:

- it should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority
- it should be free, accurate, confidential and in formats which are accessible and responsive to the needs of users
- the effectiveness of the IAS provided, including customer satisfaction should be reviewed and information published annually
- staff should work in partnership with children, young people, parents, local authorities, CCGs and other relevant partners
- The provision of IAS should help to promote independence and self-advocacy for children, young people and parents
- staff should work with their local Parent Carer Forum and other representative user groups (such as Youth Forums) to ensure that the views and experiences of children, young people and parents inform policy and practice.

It is a pleasure to work with people who are really passionate about helping people. I therefore want to take the opportunity to thank my team of extremely dedicated individuals, our volunteers who give up their free time to help our service users, and to our Steering Group who supports us, challenges us where needed, and helps us to put together any solutions that are required to improve the service we provide. – Heather McIntosh,

SENDIAS Team Manager

To find out more about our steering group and the members involved, see our [steering group webpage](#)



Delivering Information, Advice and Support



With the ever growing demand on the service, we knew we needed to change how we gave information, advice and support to ensure we could still offer a quality service in a timely manner, dependant on the service's needs.

The statutory remit has always been to empower the parent carer and child/young person as much as possible so they feel confident in moving forward within their own situation. With the help of the SENDIAS Steering Group we thought about how we could do this more effectively.

Although children and young people are more likely to require extra support due to their additional needs, with the right knowledge and information, parent carers may be able to advocate for their children themselves. Parents told us they often realised they knew what to do but just needed reassurance from our service. So we focused our energies over the last year on adding to our factsheets and webpage guides.

Factsheets

During this year we have added a number of factsheets to our website. These include:

- SEN in the Early Years
- SEN Support
- Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) and Plans
- How to request an EHCNA
- How to check your draft EHC Plan

[To view all our factsheets click here.](#)

Web Page Guides

We continue to add additional subjects to our webpage guides. The aim with these is to empower the parent carer who wants to know more detail about a subject than just the basic points, including what law and national guidance says.

New webpage guides recently added include: Appeals, mediation, disagreement resolution and complaints, FAQs about EHC Needs Assessments and Plans. School attendance (including information on exclusions, schools admissions medical needs and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)) will be added soon.

[To view our web page guides click here.](#)

What to Expect from Us

To help answer any initial questions you have about how we may work with you in order to meet the needs of all our service users, please see our 'What You Can Expect From Us' factsheet on the ['How We Work' page on our website.](#)



Continuing to expand the information we provide...

When the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Advisory Team (EMTAS) approached us to put together some videos on SEN subjects that they could translate into different languages, we did not need to be persuaded! It gave us the opportunity to try and create succinct videos that could be helpful to all our service users, but also help those that arrive in the country, especially if not planned, and where English is not their first language.



EMTAS have started to translate our videos into Polish, and they will also be translated into the following languages by the end of the Summer Term 2023:

- Bangla
- Bulgarian
- Dari
- Pashto
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Russian
- Ukrainian

We will upload them to our website as and when completed. The translations home page can be [found here](#)

Factsheets

Our translations factsheets continue to help service users and professionals working with families. In June 2022 we were successful in securing funds related to refugees from the Local Authority. We were able to add factsheets in Ukrainian, Russian, Dari and Pastu to our website. Thank you to Emily King (Assistant Director for Communities) for enabling this.

Below is a feedback from a professional using our factsheets:

"I have used SENDIAS translated EHCNA, EHCP and appeals process factsheets to support two of my EAL families recently. The factsheets I used were Russian and Romanian. It really is an invaluable resource as our SEND processes are lengthy and difficult to negotiate for families who speak English, let alone for a family who do not fully understand our school system and assessment pathways. Having the literature to hand made our conversations much easier and helped to put the parent's minds at rest. They were able to take the leaflets away and read them again and come back to me with questions using google translate. I am very thankful for the service and being able to access information quickly".

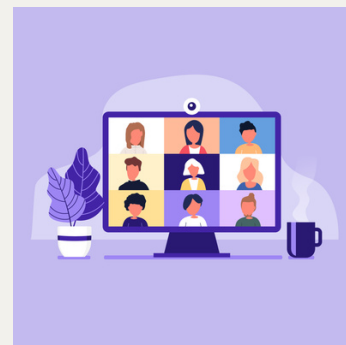
- Nikki Stone
Inclusion Co-Ordinator
and SSC Teacher,
Bognor Regis Nursery

Partnership Working

Training for Schools

Last year the SEND and Inclusion Advisers approached us to help deliver a section on working with parents in their overall SENCo Development Programme. We delivered this with the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF). The training was online so was an ideal opportunity for us to reach more schools.

This year we worked with the same partners and a SENCo to focus on updating the training, making it more specific to the local area.



We hope to build on this by recording videos with a local SENCo and the WSPCF to accompany the training. The videos will model a positive meeting between a parent carer and the school.

Feedback from the session in November 2022:

"Thank you for this. It was helpful to reflect on the perspective of the parent."

"Thank you - a great opportunity to reflect and plan next steps."

"Thanks, really helpful session to reflect on everything and plenty to discuss with other SLT and teachers/staff!"

"Thank you, a great session this afternoon. Lots to think about"



Local Offer

Future of the Local Offer

With Keir Margrave (previous Local Offer Officer) leaving for a change of career, it gave us an opportunity to trial a co-produced approach to the Local Offer work.

Key partners will be the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS), Family Information Services (FIS) and West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF).

The Parent Carer Forum are leading on engagement with families with children and young people with SEND to develop and review the Local Offer.

If you are a parent carer and would like to help with this please contact

WSPCF at: office@wspcf.org.uk. To find out more about the charity: <https://www.wspcf.org.uk>



Parent Carer Online Training Workshops

Another one of our key partners is 'Reaching Families'. We deliver training on 'Zoom' to parent carers throughout the year via this West Sussex charity. These include:

- Making Sense of School Support
- Making Sense of EHC Needs Assessments and Plans
- Making Sense of Annual Reviews

Reaching Families

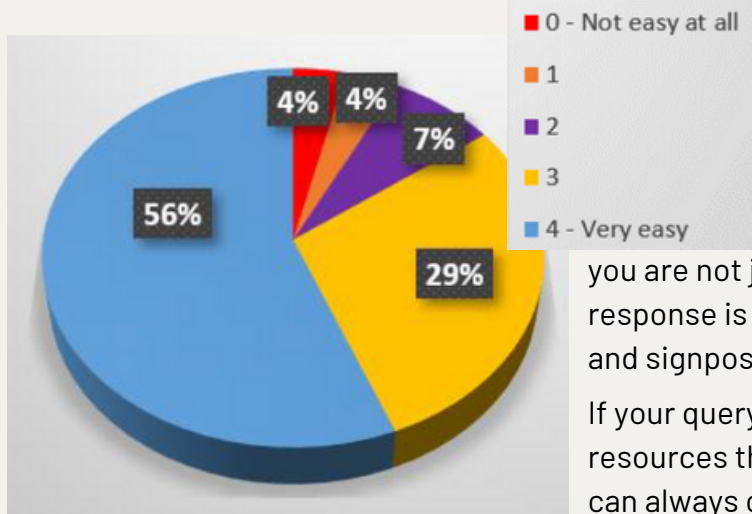
Empowering families of children with disabilities

[Click here to view all their training events.](#)

"it was extremely useful and helped to clarify what my next steps should be with school etc. <Adviser's name> really knows her stuff!" - parent

Evaluation Statistics April 2022 - March 2023

How Easy was it to Get in Touch?



The first impression you will have of us is when you initially contact the service.

Due to increasing demand we can't respond as quickly as we would like.

However, we continue to look at ways to ensure you are not just left waiting. Our answer phone and auto email response is clear as to when you can expect to hear from us, and signposts to other places that may be able to help.

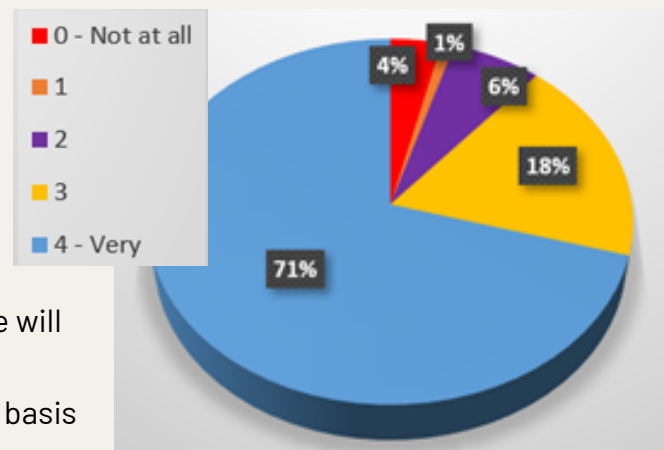
If your query can be answered simply by pointing you to our resources then we will also do this to avoid you waiting. You can always call back and ask to speak to an Adviser if needed.

Despite our concern with this, 85% of you still felt it was at least fairly easy to get in touch with us.

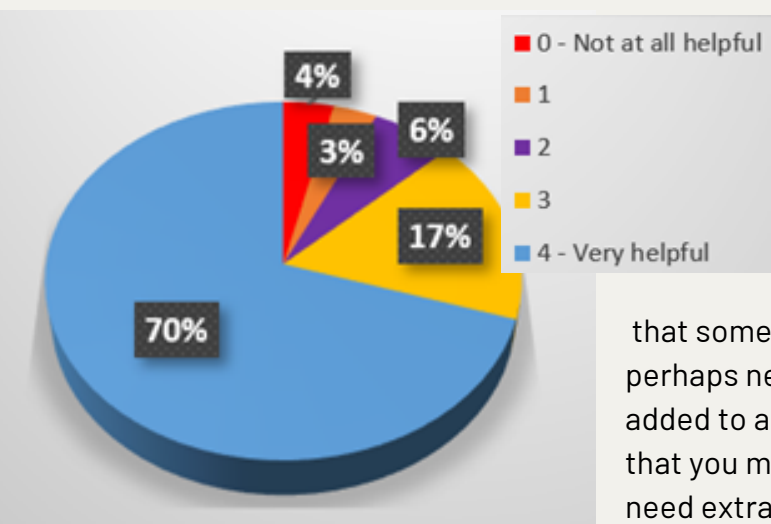
How Neutral, Fair and Unbiased do you think we were?

Statutorily, we have to ensure that we are working in an impartial way, ensuring that our advice is in line with what the law and national guidance says related to your query. We will also make sure you understand local policies and processes, and give you all your next step options and the possible outcomes and consequences that may come from every pathway you choose. We will never give you our personal opinions.

This is really important to us as we know it is a vital basis to build trust in the service, we work hard with partners and our steering group to ensure that people understand that we work in this impartial way. We are therefore really pleased that 89% of you believe we do work in this way.



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

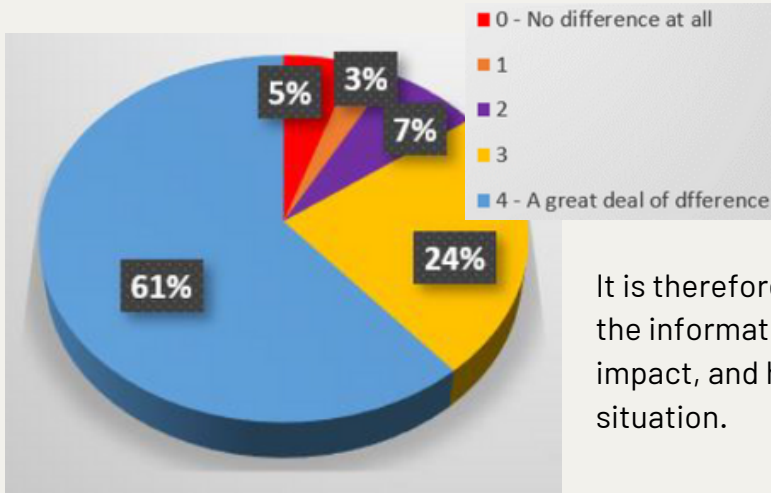


It is difficult to measure this as we often do not hear what happens after we have given you the information needed. So it is helpful to ask this question to know whether you felt it did help you. 87% of you said that you found the information helpful. We have noticed in some of your feedback

that sometimes we have not picked up that you perhaps needed extra support. We have therefore added to any emails or new literature we produce that you may need to help us to know if you need extra support.

Evaluation Statistics April 2022 – March 2023

What Difference do you think our Information, Advice and Support Made?



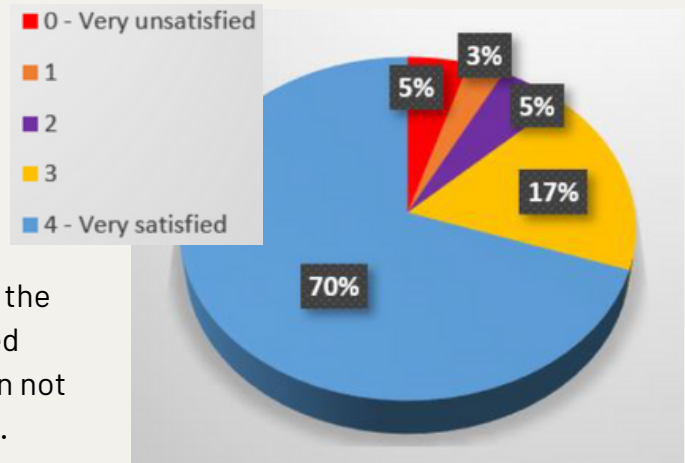
Empowering you with the information and advice you need to move on with your situation, or supporting you where necessary, does not always guarantee the outcome that you hoped or needed.

It is therefore helpful for us to know that 85% of you felt that the information, advice and support we gave you had a positive impact, and hopefully you were able to move on in your given situation.

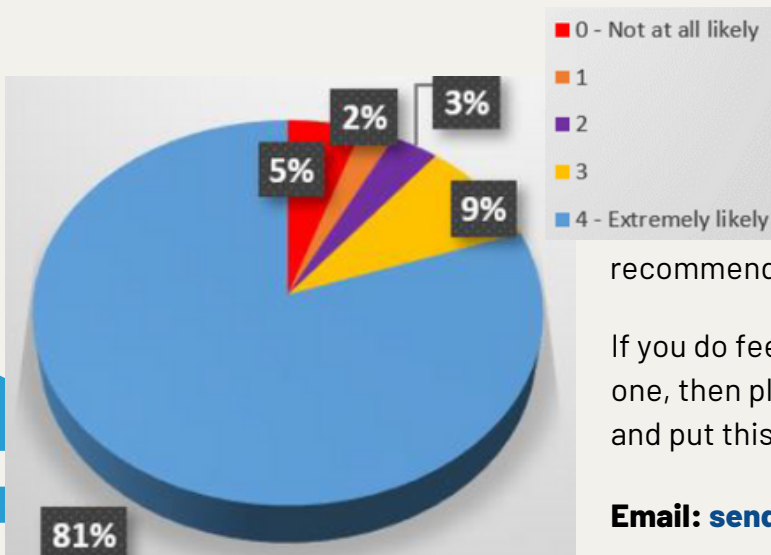
Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?

We know we cannot influence the outcome but hope the information, advice and support that we give you, as well as being clear about what your different options are, helps you to move forwards positively in your situation.

We are pleased that 87% of you were satisfied with the service we gave. The reasons for not being satisfied tended to be related to the outcome of the situation not being as hoped, or mixing us up with other services.



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



There is nothing more powerful than you telling others about your experience when using our service. We know from talking to parents how vital that peer to peer support is, and so it is great to see that 90% of you would recommend the service to others.

If you do feel that your experience was a negative one, then please do contact us so that we can try and put this right.

Email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk

Work Still To Be Done...



Demonstrating Good Practice in working with Parent Carers Award

This year we aimed to visit a minimum of 1 SENCo locality Group a term to explain our 'Demonstrating Good Practice in working with Parent Carers' award.

We also hoped to encourage a further 12 more Schools to receive the award.

We exceeded the first target and managed to visit 5 locality groups across the 3 terms.

However, we were only able to award 2 certificates this year. We know this is for a number of reasons, including our capacity to be able to give the focus this work needs as well as schools having to prioritise their time.

We have therefore decided that it may be better to support other work that is happening in the same area. The Autism in Schools Project (West Sussex Parent Carer Forum, West Sussex County Council and Aspens) has been running for a little while now. The Parent Carer Involvement Policy was co-produced as part of this project, to aid in improving communication between parent carers and their children's schools. SEND and Inclusion Advisers are also considering work in this area. This will involve various partners, including ourselves, working together. This will use the time we have to produce a more effective outcome.



Develop Young Person section of the Local Offer

The vision was to continue to develop the Young Person section of the Local Offer. We had previously worked with 'Young Voices', who helped Keir (the Local Offer Officer) to start to develop the young person pages of the Local Offer. An example of the work achieved from this work is on the ['friends and relationships' page of the Local Offer](#).

The next step was to link up with colleges to work with groups of young people that may be studying an area of work linked to IT, to find out what else they wanted, and whether they wanted to be more hands on in developing these pages further, including making some videos.

This took longer to set up than hoped and the Local Offer Officer role became vacant from January. There is currently a temporary arrangement in place

(see page 5), whilst the role and work is re-evaluated, so this work will be on hold until the new post-holder is in place. The hope is that the new person will have more support with the IT admin side of the work so that they can focus more on the relational side, such as this work.





Elizabeth Holland
Liaison Officer



Heather McIntosh
Team Manager



Claire Chapman
Parent Adviser



Patricia Byrne
Parent Adviser



Shirley Sutton
Parent Adviser



Jacqueline Paterson
CYP Adviser



Linda Fairbairn
CYP Adviser



Paula Bower
Adviser Support



Karen Hasted
Adviser Support

Contact Us

If you feel you may need help from us then do not hesitate to get in touch.

Contact line: 0330 222 8555

Email: send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk (parents of children age 0-16, and professionals working with them)

cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk (Children and Young People up to the age of 25 yrs, parents of CYP age 16-25, and professionals working with them)

Website: westsussexsendias.org

Feedback

Thank you for all the positive feedback you gave us over this year. Also, thank you to those who on occasions give constructive feedback which has helped us to review and continue to improve the service we provide. A few quotes from our service users:

"The comments and support of staff gave me great confidence and helped me through the tribunal, which was very stressful."

"Thank you for your support. What you say means a great deal to me. Your work is extremely valuable to so many parents and it is a credit to our system that you are working for the County, yet you have such an independent role."

"I was so impressed with both the clarity of responses and compassion in every interaction. The service is truly impartial, highlighting what my son's school were trying to achieve."

"Such a relief to have some advice and support. Also information I could print out to help me understand how to talk to my son's school about concerns."

"The lady I spoke with was thorough, compassionate and made me feel worthwhile. As I have depression and anxiety, that means a great deal"

Farewell and Welcome



Susanna Whitaker
CYP Adviser

We would like to thank those members of staff who left us this year, for their dedication to the service and to those whom they served. Susanna retired and Keir pursued a change of career. We welcome Linda as our new CYP Adviser. The Local Offer Officer role is currently vacant.



Keir Margrave
Local Offer Officer