



2023
- 2024



SENDIAS Annual Report

Statistics, feedback and service development

About us

SENDIAS Service Remit

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.

To find out more about a SENDIAS service remit, please see the [National Minimum Standards for a SENDIAS Service](#). If you would like to find out more about the service specifically in West Sussex, then look on our [SENDIAS website](#).

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank my team of passionate individuals for their continued dedication to the service and the people we help with information and advice. This includes our volunteers, who give up their free time so that we can give that additional support to those who may need it.



To find out more about how to volunteer for SENDIAS, see our [volunteer webpage](#)

SENDIAS Steering Group

Members of our Steering Group are made up of relevant voluntary organisations, Local Authority Officers and parent carers. They support, but also challenge us where needed to drive service improvement. We meet 3 times a year and sometimes co-produce work together. Thank you to all our Steering Group partners, who include:

West Sussex Parent Carer Forum / Reaching Families / Designated Social Care Officer / Family Information Service Manager / Early Help Service Manager / NHS Senior Project Officer / Parent Carers

To find out more about our steering group, see our [steering_group webpage](#).

Parent Carer Online Training Workshops

The local parent-carer charity 'Reaching Families' continues to be a key partner for us, and has been a member of the SENDIAS Steering Group since it began. They commission SENDIAS to deliver training (currently on 'Zoom') to parent carers. Training sessions include: Making Sense of... School Support / Annual Reviews / EHC Needs Assessments and Plans.

Feedback:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| SENDIAS Courses met expectations: | 98.4% |
| Felt more knowledgeable after training: | 96.1% |
| Felt more confident/skilled to deal with issue: | 91.8% |

Reaching Families

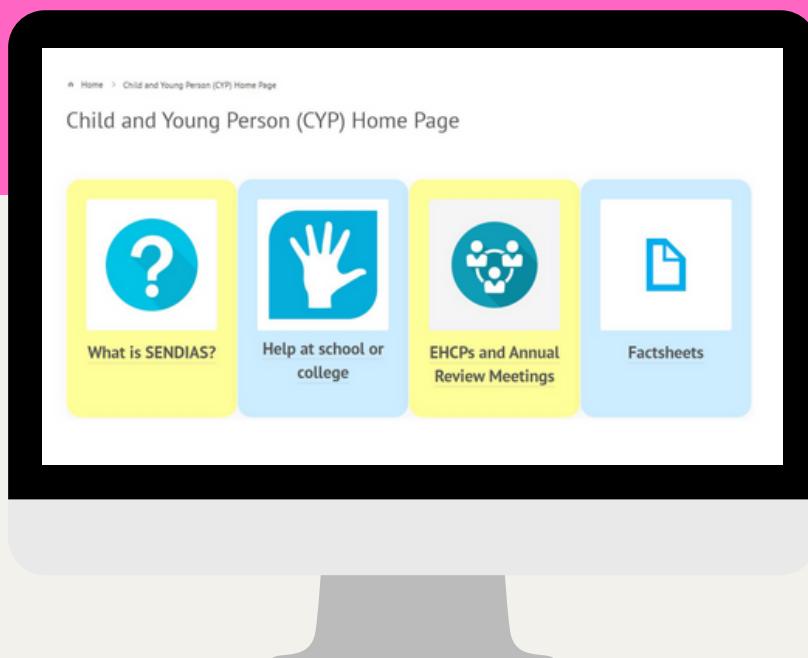
Empowering families of children with disabilities

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

"Thank you for this evening, it has been very informative.
I feel more equipped after tonight's session"

• "Thank you. It was very useful, with lots of practical information"

Children and Young People's webpages



In September 2023 we launched a dedicated section on our website specifically for children and young people.

Young Voices have helped us shape our initial web pages produced for this section. We hope to continue to work with them so that the information on these pages is clear and relevant to young people.

We also hope to add short videos over the next year, to help in accessing information in a variety of ways.

We always welcome feedback on our webpages, and would be particularly keen to receive feedback on these new ones from young people who have additional needs. If you would like to let us know what you like about our [children and young people web pages](#), and what we could do to improve them, then do let us know by emailing cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk.



Factsheets

During this year we have added a number of new factsheets. These include:

- Individual Support Plans
- Elective Home Education and Education other than at School
- Delaying or deferring admission to school
- Delays to EHC Needs Assessments
- Private Reports
- Reduced / Part Time Timetables

[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, including what law and national guidance says.

New webpage guides recently added include:

- School attendance (including information on exclusions)
- Schools admissions
- Health needs
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

[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](#).

Local Offer

Relaunch...



- The Local Offer Officer post has been vacant since January 2023 whilst decisions were being made as to where the Local Offer work should sit,
- what needed to happen to improve the website experience for parent carers,
- and what was required of the new Local Offer role to ensure the work was effective.

It was decided that:

- the Local Offer work would sit better in the Family Information Service, as they have a team of Information Officers who will be able to support the Local Offer Adviser with the admin side of the website.
- using feedback from previous post holders, the job description was changed and role re-evaluated to ensure the new post holder can be as effective as possible within their role.

Sarah Butler was the successful candidate and started in April 2024.

- the website will soon be moving onto the West Sussex County Council platform as a short-term solution. This was driven mainly by the fact that the current website was deemed non-accessible by Government Digital Services. The new website will go live by the end of April 2024.



Welcome to
Sarah Butler
LO Adviser

For more information, and to keep updated, [please see the Local Offer](#)

We and the Family Information Service would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum for supporting us in an interim solution, to help cover the work whilst the Local Offer role was vacant. This included re-wording many of the Local Offer pages ready for the new website.



EMTAS VIDEOS

We have continued to work with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) over this last year and now have the following videos translated into various languages:

[Polish](#): SEN Support / Overview of EHCNA and EHC Plans / Requesting an EHCNA / EHC Plans

[Pashto](#): SEN Support / Overview of EHCNA and EHC Plans / Requesting an EHCNA

[Dari](#): SEN Support / Overview of EHCNA and EHC Plans / Requesting an EHCNA

[Bangla](#): SEN Support / Overview of EHCNA and EHC Plans / Requesting an EHCNA

[Ukrainian](#): SEN Support / Overview of EHCNA and EHC Plans

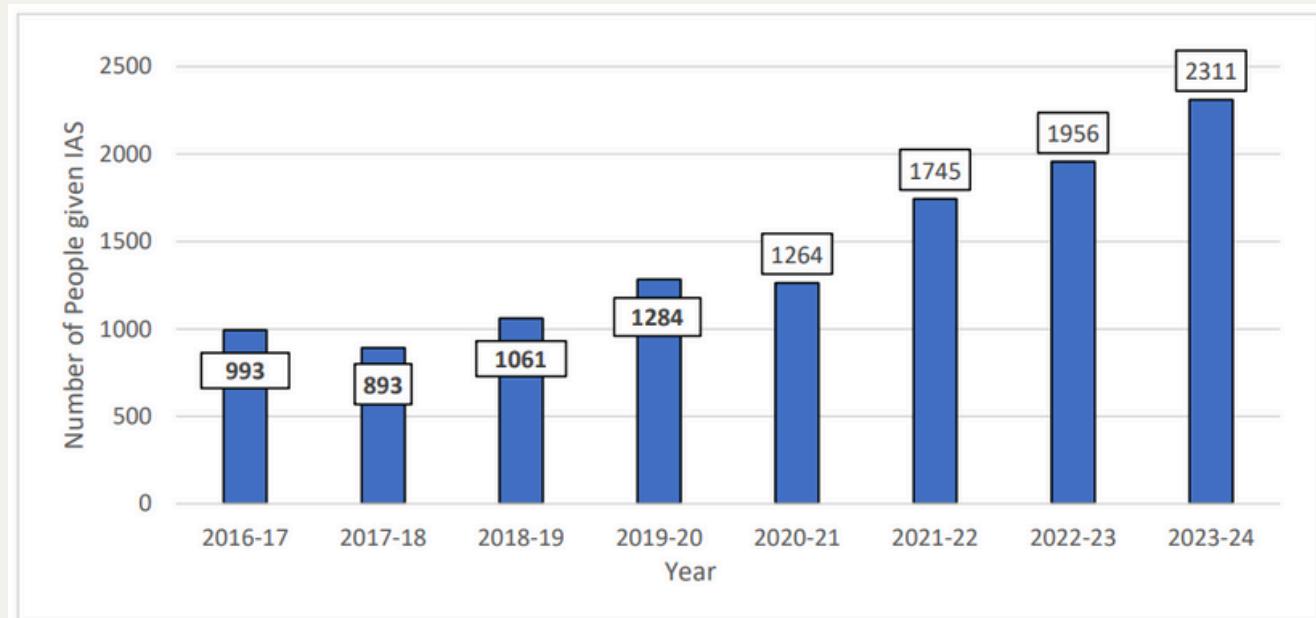
[Portuguese](#): SEN Support / Overview of EHCNA and EHC Plans

[Russian](#): SEN Support

Statistics

April 2023 - March 2024

Graph to show growth in demand for the SENDIAS Service



It is interesting to see the increase in demand of the service over the last few years. When comparing 2018-19 and 2022-23, the contacts (mainly consisting of calls and emails) have increased by over 120%.

| Main Reason for Contact | 2023-24 |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Placement Worries | 1646 |
| Support Concerns | 1483 |
| Appeal/Tribunal | 1370 |
| EHC Criteria | 1152 |
| Draft EHCP Concerns | 717 |
| EHCNA | 672 |
| EBSA | 479 |
| EHCNA Refused | 455 |
| Annual Review | 413 |
| Education TFR Worries | 325 |

The Top 10 main reasons you contacted us

There were no surprises in the statistics for reasons for contacting the SENDIAS Service. Placement worries is always in our top 3 and others are always in the Top 10. EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) queries have increased over the last couple of years which indicates an increase in mental health concerns for children and young people.

| Main Special Need and/or Disability | 2023-24 |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Autistic Spectrum Condition | 3569 |
| Social Emotional Mental Health | 1816 |
| Unknown | 1649 |
| ADHD | 782 |
| Undiagnosed | 737 |
| Speech And Language | 615 |
| Social Communication | 527 |
| Dyslexia | 465 |
| General Learning Difficulties | 322 |
| Medical | 239 |

Main Special Need and/or Disability

Again, no surprises here. Autism is always top of the list for the 'main special need' of children whose families contact SENDIAS. For information:

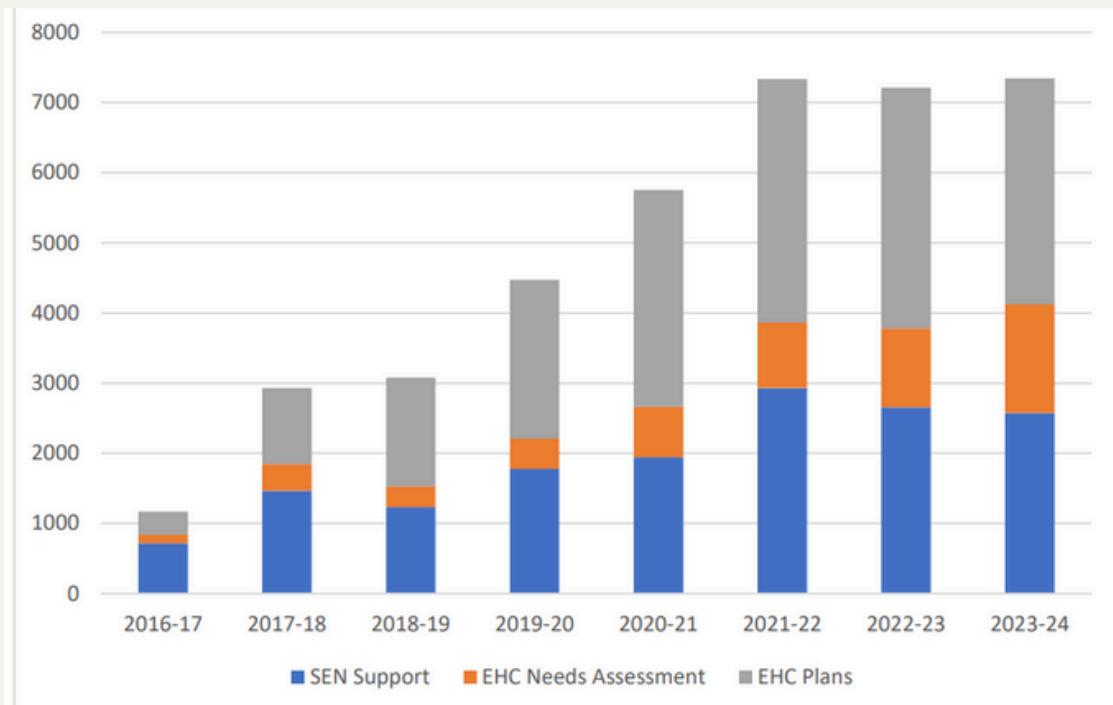
Unknown = we have not found out as contact was brief, or the parent may not currently know what their child's needs are.

Undiagnosed = where the child is on a pathway towards likely diagnosis but no formal diagnosis has been given yet.

Statistics

April 2023 - March 2024

Graph to Show the 'SEN Stage' of the child / young person



Along with the first graph, this clearly shows the increase in demand of the service. However, this also shows that there has been an increase in the 'EHC Needs Assessment' proportion of the overall contacts in the last couple of years. This is likely due to the increase in demand for Education Health and Care Plans and the worries and concerns that are linked to the delays with Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments. When adding the grey and orange portions together (EHCNA and EHCPs) we can see that SEN Support used to account for at least half of the contacts we had, but that has very much changed over the years, and well over half our contacts are now related to EHCNA and EHCPs.

How did you hear about us?

| How did you hear about SEND IAS? | Annual Total |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Website | 529 |
| School | 129 |
| Local Authority SENAT team | 127 |
| Another Parent / Young Person | 105 |
| Family Support Worker | 77 |
| Health Service | 71 |
| Other LA Departments | 68 |
| Parent / Carer of CYP | 38 |
| Social Care | 26 |
| Nursery / Pre school | 24 |

We are pleased to see that many people hear about us from our website. As we know our website is well used, we ensure we keep it up to date and are continually adding new factsheets and information to our guides so that you can have the information you need to make informed decisions about your situation. Below are some website statistics:

Number of visitors this year: **13,332**

Aside from the homepage, our top viewed pages are the 'contact us' (**4913 views**) and our factsheets on SEND Subjects (**3405 views**).

We will work hard to promote our web page guides as these are currently not viewed as much (**1490 views**).

Evaluation Statistics

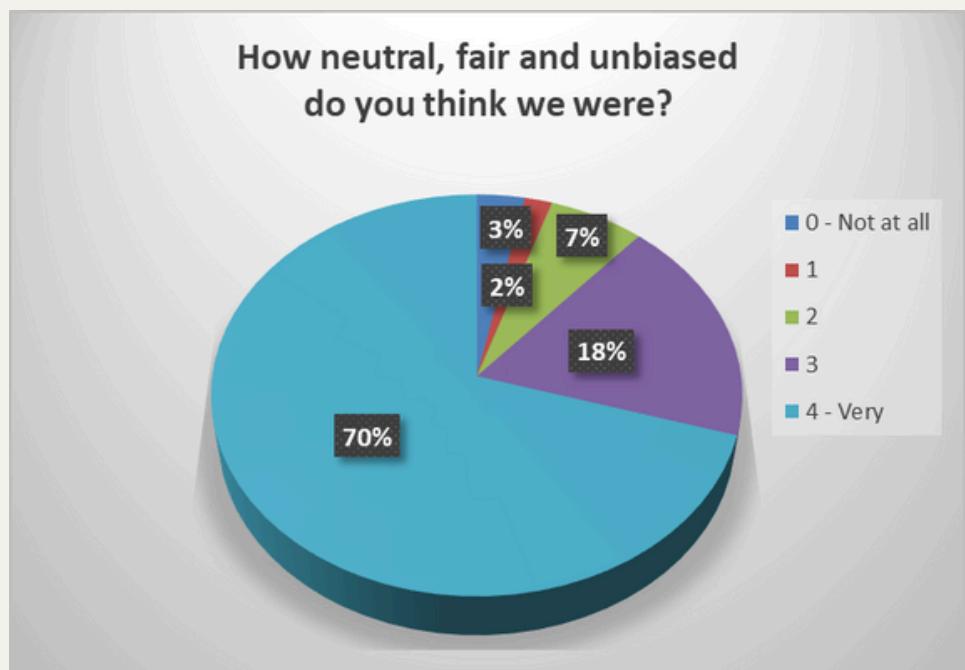
Jan - Dec 2023

We report on our feedback to SENDIAS Steering Group members on a yearly basis. The statistics are based on the calendar year, so apologies that they do not fall in line with our annual report which is based on the 'business year'.

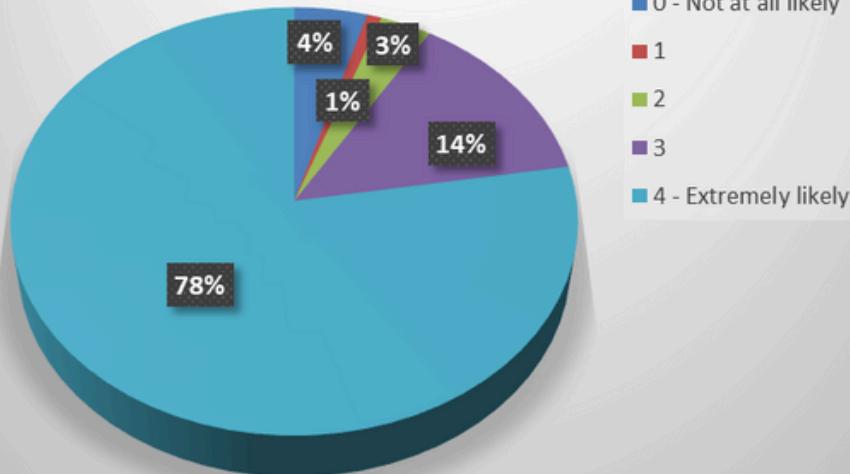
Thank you so much for taking the time to complete our evaluations when they are sent out to you. We had a total of 219 evaluations this last year.

Below are a couple of statistics taken from this report:

We work hard with our partners to promote the fact that we provide impartial advice in line with the law and statutory guidance. This statistic is therefore always a very important one to us. If parent carers do not trust that we are impartial then they will not use the service. It is good to see that 88% thought we worked impartially.



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



92% of you said that you would be likely or extremely likely to recommend our service to others. We know how powerful sharing positive experiences can be so we thank you for doing this.

For the full report, see our [Annual Reports web page](#)

Some of the work we hope to do this coming year...



- Work with the Designated Social Care Officer to arrange online training sessions to raise awareness of the service in Social Care, and to ensure social workers are confident in giving families basic information linked to SEND in education.



- Develop videos specifically for children and young people (CYP), on subjects relevant to them. To help them understand their options in education and beyond.
- Work with CYP to find out ways of seeking feedback from them and trial these suggestions. We will therefore hopefully be able to better show evidence of impact from giving information, advice and support to CYP. Also, CYP have opportunities to give feedback and shape how the service develops.



- Work with partners to produce a video or videos, to encourage schools to improve communication between school and parent carers. Videos will be produced that can be used for training with schools as part of the LA SENCo development programme.





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 feedback you gave us over this year. We get a high number of positive feedback which is really encouraging, examples are below. On the occasions we get negative feedback we look to see if there is anything we can do to improve the service, but sometimes it is due to confusing us with other services. We know how busy families are so we really appreciate the time you take to do this.

A few quotes from our service users:

"The information was excellent. I asked many questions and each was answered without judgement. Several options were suggested - all very very helpful. A brilliant service".

"I was given really useful advice, helping to make sense of a complicated system and work out what's best for my children. I am very grateful for this service!"

"Was very pleased with all information, advice and support. As a SEN parent it's so nice to have a service available for help and advice without judgement."

"In my opinion the SENDIAS service is invaluable. I would have not been able to get the facts over correctly, to get the right support for my daughter, without their help."

"SENDAIS helped feel that I was back in control of the situation and not so helpless."