



**Northumberland  
Information  
Advice &  
Support  
Service**

# Annual Report

1 September 2020 – 31 August 2021

**Author: Alison Bravey**

**Information, Advice and Support Service Manager**

# CONTENTS

Background information	3
Staffing 2020 - 2021	3
Service structure and governance	4
How the service demonstrates impartiality from the Local Authority	4
Service Budget	4-5
The Northumberland IASS Service Offer	5-6
Referrals from service users	6
Impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on service delivery	6
Information & Publicity	7
Training attended or provided by service staff	7
Networking and Collaboration	7
Informing Local Policy and Practice	8
Service Monitoring	8-9
Service Development 2020 – 2021	9-10
Service Development 2021 - 2022	10
Conclusion	10
Contact Details	10
Appendix 1 - Feedback from Service Evaluation	11
Appendix 2 - Summary of Referrals to IASS	15

*\*Please note that reference to parents in this report includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person.*

## Background information

Impartial information, advice and support for parents and carers of children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) in Northumberland have been provided through a dedicated service since September 1999. Information, advice and support for children and young people (up to 25 years) became part of the service remit from September 2014.

The statutory requirement for a Local Authority to provide impartial Information, Advice and Support (IAS) Services is set out in Chapter 2 of the SEND Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years 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.'* (para. 2.1)

*'Information, advice and support should be provided through a dedicated and easily identifiable service.'* (para. 2.4).

*'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.'* (para. 2.5).

*'The joint commissioning arrangements that local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) **must** have for commissioning education, health and care provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities **must** include arrangements for considering and agreeing what information and advice about education, health and social care is to be provided, by whom and how it is to be provided. (Para. 2.7)*

A Local Authority can provide their IASS (Information, Advice and Support Service) in-house or outsource it to another organisation. Northumberland IASS is an in-house service funded by and run at 'arm's length from the Local Authority.

## Staffing 2020 - 2021

Alison Bravey, IASS Manager (37 hours per week) – Permanent full time post funded by the Local Authority

Vicki Graham, IASS Officer (37 hours per week) – Permanent full time post funded by the Local Authority

Julia McCormack, IASS Administrative Assistant (37 hours per week) – Temporary full-time post funded through the national IAS Programme until March 31, 2022.

Current staffing arrangements have proved to be an optimal level of staffing for the service. Having administrative support has boosted service capacity and freed up the time of frontline staff to focus on casework and strategic work.

## **Service structure and governance**

The service is located within the Local Authority's Northumberland Skills Service. Line management arrangements are as follows:

- The IASS Manager is line managed by the Senior Manager - Learner Experience, Performance and Policy
- The IASS Officer and IASS Administrative Assistant are line managed by the Information, Advice and Support Service Manager.

The service management structure encompasses the strategic manager within the IASS and the steering group which includes representatives from service user groups and key stakeholders from education, social care and health.

## **How the service demonstrates impartiality from the Local Authority**

The service sits within the Northumberland Skills Service; the Post-16 education, employability and careers guidance arm of Northumberland County Council and is based in premises away from County Hall, the main Local Authority building. It is separate from other LA (Local Authority) and CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) services and functions that commission or deliver services to children and young people with SEND and their families.

The service manager is based solely within the service, without additional LA or CCG responsibilities or roles, and is responsible for strategic planning, service management and delivery, and quality assurance. Effective partnerships have been established with a range of national, regional and local networks in order to inform service practice and development and help to maintain a high quality and impartial service.

The service operates in line with the national IASSN (Information, Advice and Support Services Network) Minimum Standards. It has its own identity, branding and stand-alone website and Facebook page. The information, advice and support provided by the service are impartial, accurate and legally based. Staff understand and adhere strictly to the service impartiality and confidentiality policies. In addition, there are sound processes in place around the General Data Protection Regulations, Information Security, and Freedom of Information.

## **Service Budget**

The service has a dedicated, ring-fenced budget held and managed by the service manager. The core budget allocated by the Local Authority for staffing and operational costs in the financial year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 was £80,779, with the same amount allocated for 2021 – 2022.

Additional funding was received from the IAS (Information, Advice and Support) Programme, a time-limited national government initiative designed to ensure that IAS services meet the requirements as set out in the minimum standards. The CDC (Council for Disabled Children) is managing the programme on behalf of the Department for Education, through a partnership arrangement that brings together the IASSN with a national phone helpline run by the charity Contact. IPSEA (Independent Provider of Special Education Advice), a charity providing free and independent advice and support to families of children with special educational needs (including legal advice), is also involved with the programme as a core training provider.

Northumberland IASS received £27,882 net through the IAS Programme over the time period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021 and was successful in applying for funding a further £10,000 available from 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022. It is anticipated that this will be the final year of funding through the programme.

The funding has been used to increase service staffing capacity to support innovation and compliance with the IASS Minimum Standards, with a focus this year on

- Moving forward with joint commissioning arrangements
- The co-production of a Communications and Marketing Strategy with service users and key stakeholders
- The development of a social media presence for promoting the service and providing information

The funding for 2021/2022 will be used to improve the local statutory service offer and resolve any areas of non-compliance with the IASS Minimum Standards. The areas of work identified in the Task Order are

- The development and improvement of the termly electronic IASS newsletter to make it more accessible for service users and stakeholders.
- The production of a series of video clips on matters relating to the service and SEND

### **The Northumberland IASS Service Offer**

The requirements of an Information, Advice and Support Service are set out in the national IASSN (Information, Advice and Support Service Network) [Minimum Standards for Information, Advice and Support Services](#). To meet these requirements Northumberland IASS provides:

- Direct telephone access providing confidential and impartial advice. This is available five days a week throughout the year during office hours. A voicemail message can be left if service staff are not available to take the call and outside of office hours.
- Email communication
- Face to face support
- A standalone service website ([www.northumberlandiass.org.uk](http://www.northumberlandiass.org.uk)) and information on the Northumberland County Council website and Local Offer. There were 2,477 views of the service website between 1 January 2021 (when we started collecting this data) and 31 August 2021.
- Information sheets and leaflets to help service users to develop their knowledge and understanding of the SEND 'system' to support them in their discussions with the LA, schools/settings and other agencies.
- Support for service users in understanding and navigating the education, health and social care systems, signposting them to the right people at the right time
- Information about other services and organisations, e.g. voluntary agencies and health services which can offer information and advice about their child's SEN and/or disability.
- Support with preparation for meetings and attending meetings, when required (and where possible).
- Support and advice to service users either individually or in groups; up to and including SEND Tribunal level, where applicable.

- Training for service users and professionals to increase knowledge of SEND law, guidance, local policy, issue and participation.
- Empowering children and young people and their parents to raise issues and concerns to support early resolution of disagreements and complaints.
- Feedback to the Local Authority from the gathered views and wishes of children, young people and their families, including any issues for families regarding education, health and social care services.

## **Referrals from service users**

The service operates a self-referral system to maintain its impartial, confidential and arm's length requirements. If a service user has any difficulty with contacting the service directly, staff will work with the professionals involved with them to engage with the service user to ensure they get the support they need.

Referrals are categorised in line with the Intervention levels for Information, Advice and Support Services produced by the IASSN.

**Level 1** - Phone or email support tailored to the circumstances of the service user. Typically, less than 2 hours of service time as part of a single intervention.

**Level 2** - Any or all of Level 1 plus phone or email support over a period of time, research and provision of specialised advice and information, meeting with service user, provision of support at/for meeting, liaison with other agencies. Typically, between 2 hours and 2 days of service time within a six-month period.

**Level 3** - Any or all of Levels 1 and 2 plus provision of support at/for a series of meetings over a period of months, on-going support, and guidance through statutory processes (EHC needs assessment, disagreement resolution, mediation, etc), assistance with preparation for an exclusion appeal and support at appeal meeting, IASS undertakes key working role with other agencies. Typically, more than 2 days intervention in any six-month period.

**Level 4** - Any or all of Levels 1, 2 and 3 plus provision of intensive support for the service user(s) during the legal process. This may include assistance with preparation for the legal process and support at, for example, a Tribunal hearing.

This year there were **297** Level 1 contacts, **114** Level 2 contacts, **14** Level 3 contacts and **4** Level 4 contacts (Appendix 2 provides more details of service referrals). There was a reduction of direct referrals from CYP (children and young people) from last year; 2 compared with 25 last year. This has resulted from reduced service activity within schools due to Covid-19 restrictions (CYP rarely contact the service by phone or email but would tend to seek support through engagement events or activities or following referral to the service by their parents).

## **Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery**

The service has been fully operational throughout the Covid-19 pandemic; apart from group work with CYP in schools which has been put on hold. Staff have worked from home with service landlines diverted to work mobiles. Information, advice and support were provided mainly by phone or email when face-to-face casework was not possible. Staff have been able to attend online meetings with service users and stakeholders in a range of contexts, and to attend on-line training. The knowledge we have gained from our work during this time has been used to inform service delivery moving forward with a move towards the increased use of technology and virtual platforms where possible.

## **Information and Publicity**

The service is publicised through:

- The service standalone website and Facebook page
- The Northumberland Local Offer website
- The Northumberland County Council website – dedicated page with links to information.
- The Local Authority education website – leaflets on SEND pages
- Service flyers, leaflets, information sheets and newsletter
- School SEND Information reports
- Training events/conferences for families of children and young people with SEND
- Networking with local and regional SEND services/organisations

A Communication and Marketing Strategy was co-produced with service users and key stakeholders this year to inform the future promotion of the service.

## **Training attended or provided**

All relevant opportunities are taken to ensure that staff have the training they require to strengthen their confidence, knowledge and skills, and to ensure the quality of information, advice and support provided to service users is comprehensive and of a high quality.

Training attended this year included:

- IASSN - Minimum Standards and Framework for Participation and Co-production; Children and Young People Voices; Training Days covering a range of topics and national SEND updates; National Trial briefing; Visual Impairment (Thomas Pocklington Trust)
- Local Authority - Inclusive Education Services: Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour; Speech and Language; Autism (Early Intervention); Literacy; SENCO conference; Co-production
- Autism; Gaming; PECS (Toby Henderson Trust), Attachment

Training provided this year has been through the attendance at meetings with parent support groups (Calmer Therapy, North Northumberland National Autistic Society and Toby Henderson Trust) to explain our remit and answer questions on SEND support and SEND and EHC processes.

## **Networking and Collaboration**

The service has continued to work across all agencies, including voluntary organisations, to ensure effective communication and partnership links are maintained. The IASS Manager is a member of the SEND Network, facilitated by the Northumberland Parent Carer Forum, and the North-East SENDIASS regional group and has met with a range of health and social care practitioners to promote the service. The IASS officer attends the Post-16 Preparing for Adulthood Network meetings, the Children and Young People Strategic Participation Group and the CHSWYG (Children's Hearing Services Working Group) and provides on-going support to the participation work of Northumberland Disability Youth Forum.

Other events attended by service staff this year have included

- The annual SEND Careers events organised by the Careers Guidance team
- The annual SENCO conference
- CDC Shared Support 'Making Participation Work' sessions for participation and co-production practitioners – held monthly
- Parent events – held by Calmer Therapy and Toby Henderson Trust

## **Informing Local Policy and Practice**

The service informs and influences the development of local SEND policy and practice by providing information and feedback to the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and other services about the views and experiences of parents, children and young people, through:

- the service steering group and Annual Report
- Northumberland Local Authority strategic meetings; including the SEND Strategic Partnership Board, Children and Young People Strategic Participation group meetings and the CHSWYG (Children's Hearing Services Working Group)
- The SEND Network meetings facilitated by the Northumberland Parent Carer Forum
- contributing to Local Authority consultations relating to SEND
- supervision

Anonymised referral data is provided to the Local Authority on a half-termly basis to inform the improvement and development of SEND provision and services.

## **Service Monitoring**

Information about the work of the service is gathered through the collection of data from service users; a Service User evaluation form; National Benchmarking data collection through the IASSN when requested. Case studies are produced on specific themes to demonstrate the impact of the service for families. A service update report is provided termly to the steering group.

As part of Northumberland Skills, the IAS service falls within the national accreditation scheme for Information, Advice and Guidance, known as the Matrix Standards. This includes inspections every three years and quality monitoring visit annually. Northumberland Skills was inspected in June 2021 and has retained its Matrix Standards accreditation.

## **Data Collected from Monitoring Arrangements**

Data is collected as referrals are received, in line with data protection legislation, and entered on the service database. The collated data can be found in Appendix 2.

General trends noted through database information:

- Ratio of males to females is 2:1
- Most referrals are for schools in South-East/Central Northumberland (46%), North Northumberland (18%) and Special Schools – 13%
- Service user referrals tend to be from Mums (83%)
- 8% of referrals were from practitioners
- Most service users were aware of the service through previous referral (28%), the Local Authority SEND Team (15%) or CYPS (12%).
- Service users often re-refer to the service as and when needed
- Most referrals are for children/young people at SEN Support in school/college (46%) or with an EHCP (43%)
- The main SEN category for referrals were Social, Emotional and Mental Health (67%) and Communication and Interaction (12%)
- The main SEND Primary need categories were Autism Spectrum Disorder (55%) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (28%)

- The main reasons for referral were Educational Placement (19%), Concerns about Support/Provision in School/College - SEN Support (17.5%) and How to Request an EHC Needs Assessment (11%).
- The main types of initial service involvement were phone or email advice with information sent.

## **Service Evaluation**

The Service Evaluation questionnaire was sent out electronically to service users who received more than just phone or email (Level 1) support; for example, an initial contact followed by support from the service over a period of time, which may have included a home visit and/or attending meetings. The feedback from the 59 service users who responded has been collated into a table (Appendix 1).

### **Summary of responses from service evaluation:**

- 100% had found it easy or very easy to contact the service.
- 100% reported that the service responded to them quickly or very quickly.
- 100% felt that we understood their questions or concerns well or very well
- Most service users who responded had found out about the service from another parent or friend (22%), Inclusive Education Services (15%), the Local Authority SEND Team (14%), the internet (10%), a health professional (7%) or their child's educational setting (7%).
- 100% found the information, advice and support they were given useful or very useful.
- 100% felt that we were impartial or very impartial.
- 100% felt that we were confidential or very confidential.
- 100% felt that the information, advice and support they received made a difference to them, with 97% reporting that it made quite a bit or a great deal of difference. (Please refer to Appendix 1 for details of the different ways that parents reported that the service had made a difference to them).
- 100% were satisfied or very satisfied with the service we gave.
- 100% would be happy or very happy to contact the service again if needed.
- 100% would be likely or extremely likely to recommend the service to others.

Suggestions for how the service could be developed or improved mainly focused on raising awareness of the service with service users and stakeholders. This is being addressed through the continued implementation of the Communication and Marketing Strategy.

## **Service Development in 2020 - 2021**

The main priorities for service development this year were:

- The co-production of a Communications and Marketing Strategy with service users and key stakeholders, to ensure that all partners are aware of the IASS and its remit and who the service is for.
- The development a social media presence for promoting the service and providing information to service users and stakeholders.
- The joint commissioning of the service by the Local Authority and CCG

The development of a Communication and Marketing strategy has provided a framework for service promotion and linked with the development of our use of social media. The co-production process provided an overview of the different ways of reaching and communicating with service users and stakeholders. The importance of continually publicising the service through a range of platforms was highlighted throughout the process.

The strategy has been in place since January 2021 and the service has been widely promoted through our networks, website and social media. We have already seen an increase in signposting as evidenced by the wide range of ways that services users have heard about the service. Alongside this, IASS promotional leaflets have been co-produced with the Northumberland Parent Carer Forum and have been shared with the SEND Team, on our website and with a range of SEND practitioners and organisations.

Facebook was identified as the best starting point for developing our social media presence and the IASS Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NorthumberlandIASS>) went live in January 2021. It currently has 159 likes, 210 followers and a 7,517 reach.

The joint commissioning of the service has been agreed in principle and contractual processes are currently being discussed.

## **Service development in 2021- 2022**

Priorities for service development in 2021 – 2022 are the promotion of the voice of children, young people and their families in informing and shaping SEND services and ensuring that service users are provided with the information they require about SEND services and provision. Raising awareness of the service with service users and key stakeholders also remains a priority.

Targeted work will include:

- Developing a list of parents/carers, children and young people willing to be consulted to complement the consultation, participation and co-production work of Northumberland Parent Carer Forum and the Respect Equals Change and Northumberland Disability Youth Forums to ensure that the voice of children and young people with SEND and their families informs, and shapes SEND services.
- Developing and improving our termly electronic newsletter to make it more accessible for service users and stakeholders through consultation with key partners. The newsletter currently has 80 parents or carers, 45 Practitioners and 30 organisations or contributors signed up and we will be aiming to increase its reach.
- Producing a series of video clips using 'Biteable' software with key themes and priorities identified with service users and stakeholders, through the service steering group and local and parent and young people groups.

## **Conclusion**

Good progress has been made with service development activities this year and feedback from service users has been positive and encouraging. The enhanced funding of the service through the IAS Programme has boosted service capacity both operationally and strategically, and enabled innovative work, including the service newsletter.

Future challenges will include ensuring that service funding and staffing capacity continues to meet the strategic and operational requirements of the IASS minimum standards when the IAS Programme funding ceases at the end of the 2021-2022 financial year. This will be raised through the joint commissioning processes for the service.

## **Contact details**

If any of the content in this report needs further explanation, or if you would like to make any comments, please contact Alison Bravey, Information, Advice and Support Service Manager

**Tel:** 01670 623555

**Email:** [alison.bravey@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:alison.bravey@northumberland.gov.uk)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1- Feedback from Service Evaluation (59 responses)

Question	Response
How easy was it to get in touch with us?	Easy - 8 (14%) Very easy - 51 (86%)
How quickly did we respond?	Quickly 7 - (12%) Very quickly - 52 (88%)
How well do you think that we understood your questions or concerns?	Well - 3 (5%) Very well - 56 (95%)
How did you hear about us? (Tick all that apply)	Another parent or friend – 13 (22%) Inclusive Education Service – 9 (15%) The Local Authority SEND Team – 8 (14%) The internet – 6 (10%) Previous referral – 5 (8%) School, early years setting or college – 4 (7%) Health professional – 4 (7%) The Local Offer website – 3 (5%) Social Care Services – 3 (5%) Leaflet – 2 (3%) Toby Henderson Trust - 2 (3%) EOTAS – 1 (2%)
How useful was the information, advice and support that we gave you?	Useful - 8 (14%) Very Useful - 51 (86%)
How impartial did you think we were?	Impartial - 9 (15%) Very impartial - 46 (85%)
How confidential do you think we were?	Confidential - 9 (10%) Very confidential - 50 (90%)
How much difference do you think that our information, advice and support has made for you?	A difference - 3 (5%) Quite a bit of difference -12 (20%) A great deal of difference - 44 (75%)
Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?	Satisfied – 4 (7%) Very satisfied – 55 (93%)
Would you feel happy to contact the service again if you needed to?	Happy 2 (3%) Very Happy 57 (97%)

Question	Response																				
<p><b>What, if any difference have we made for you? (Tick all that apply)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better relationship with school – 7 (12%)</li> <li>• Feel more confident – 33 (56%)</li> <li>• Greater understanding of the SEND system – 31 (52%)</li> <li>• Feel more involved with my child's education – 19 (32%)</li> <li>• Feel happier/less worried about the future – 20 (34%)</li> <li>• I feel that my child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved – 27 (46%)</li> </ul> <p><b>Other differences that contact with the service has made (not covered above):</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Feel like I've been listened to and understand things.</td></tr> <tr><td>I feel that my concerns are understood and are valid.</td></tr> <tr><td>Without this service and especially the IASS worker my child would not be on a school register and not getting a proper education</td></tr> <tr><td>Without your service I don't think we'd be where we are today....my son getting a place at a special school.</td></tr> <tr><td>I think the school took me more seriously</td></tr> <tr><td>I was finding the jargon and process daunting. The IASS worker has helped explain this to me.</td></tr> <tr><td>Grateful for the time to talk issues through with a local person who cares. When you start off on this journey it is all so completely new and bewildering, so I was very grateful to have access to this service.</td></tr> <tr><td>The IASS worker empowered me and I felt in control of the actions I took. I do not think we would have got the outcome we did without her care and support. I am very grateful that this service exists.</td></tr> <tr><td>I no longer feel alone to struggle on through.</td></tr> <tr><td>IASS have provided us an invaluable source of support during the stressful process of moving into the local authority and seeking a specialist school place for our son.</td></tr> <tr><td>I would have nowhere to turn to if they were not there. It has helped my Mental Health and have more understanding of my child's rights.</td></tr> <tr><td>I felt as though I had someone in my corner, who understood my concerns and was there to help me, and get the support needed for my daughter.</td></tr> <tr><td>The IASS worker supported me through a very difficult time and went out of her way to help me and provide information</td></tr> <tr><td>The IASS worker is friendly and helps with our stress and worries</td></tr> <tr><td>The school was trying to make me agree to things that I knew weren't acceptable. The IASS worker was able to reference the specific SEN guidance, which was escalated to the Head of School and the school has now started to listen.</td></tr> <tr><td>Feel school have started to listen to my child's needs.</td></tr> <tr><td>To focus our direction and effort correctly</td></tr> <tr><td>It was just nice to be able to talk to someone independently about the SEN process to talk through my options</td></tr> <tr><td>We have had meetings with school and have a plan for moving forward</td></tr> <tr><td>Though I am capable of managing the process it is good to have someone that can oversee if there is anything you have missed. It is good to have someone who knows the process to talk things through with.</td></tr> </table>	Feel like I've been listened to and understand things.	I feel that my concerns are understood and are valid.	Without this service and especially the IASS worker my child would not be on a school register and not getting a proper education	Without your service I don't think we'd be where we are today....my son getting a place at a special school.	I think the school took me more seriously	I was finding the jargon and process daunting. The IASS worker has helped explain this to me.	Grateful for the time to talk issues through with a local person who cares. When you start off on this journey it is all so completely new and bewildering, so I was very grateful to have access to this service.	The IASS worker empowered me and I felt in control of the actions I took. I do not think we would have got the outcome we did without her care and support. I am very grateful that this service exists.	I no longer feel alone to struggle on through.	IASS have provided us an invaluable source of support during the stressful process of moving into the local authority and seeking a specialist school place for our son.	I would have nowhere to turn to if they were not there. It has helped my Mental Health and have more understanding of my child's rights.	I felt as though I had someone in my corner, who understood my concerns and was there to help me, and get the support needed for my daughter.	The IASS worker supported me through a very difficult time and went out of her way to help me and provide information	The IASS worker is friendly and helps with our stress and worries	The school was trying to make me agree to things that I knew weren't acceptable. The IASS worker was able to reference the specific SEN guidance, which was escalated to the Head of School and the school has now started to listen.	Feel school have started to listen to my child's needs.	To focus our direction and effort correctly	It was just nice to be able to talk to someone independently about the SEN process to talk through my options	We have had meetings with school and have a plan for moving forward	Though I am capable of managing the process it is good to have someone that can oversee if there is anything you have missed. It is good to have someone who knows the process to talk things through with.
Feel like I've been listened to and understand things.																					
I feel that my concerns are understood and are valid.																					
Without this service and especially the IASS worker my child would not be on a school register and not getting a proper education																					
Without your service I don't think we'd be where we are today....my son getting a place at a special school.																					
I think the school took me more seriously																					
I was finding the jargon and process daunting. The IASS worker has helped explain this to me.																					
Grateful for the time to talk issues through with a local person who cares. When you start off on this journey it is all so completely new and bewildering, so I was very grateful to have access to this service.																					
The IASS worker empowered me and I felt in control of the actions I took. I do not think we would have got the outcome we did without her care and support. I am very grateful that this service exists.																					
I no longer feel alone to struggle on through.																					
IASS have provided us an invaluable source of support during the stressful process of moving into the local authority and seeking a specialist school place for our son.																					
I would have nowhere to turn to if they were not there. It has helped my Mental Health and have more understanding of my child's rights.																					
I felt as though I had someone in my corner, who understood my concerns and was there to help me, and get the support needed for my daughter.																					
The IASS worker supported me through a very difficult time and went out of her way to help me and provide information																					
The IASS worker is friendly and helps with our stress and worries																					
The school was trying to make me agree to things that I knew weren't acceptable. The IASS worker was able to reference the specific SEN guidance, which was escalated to the Head of School and the school has now started to listen.																					
Feel school have started to listen to my child's needs.																					
To focus our direction and effort correctly																					
It was just nice to be able to talk to someone independently about the SEN process to talk through my options																					
We have had meetings with school and have a plan for moving forward																					
Though I am capable of managing the process it is good to have someone that can oversee if there is anything you have missed. It is good to have someone who knows the process to talk things through with.																					

Question	Response											
<b>How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?</b>	Likely 3 (5%) Extremely likely – 56 (95%)											
<b>Was there anything we could have done better?</b>	<p>32 Responses</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="475 465 1385 987"> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 465 1385 501">No or Nothing - 26</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 501 1385 607">It might just be me but if people could talk a little slower when explaining. If you are new to the terminology used it can seem overwhelming 😊</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 607 1385 678">Not really, but I feel like people who need you may not know your there, I only found out through social services.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 678 1385 779">I don't know if any way would be able to help more proactively in drafting emails etc rather than just giving advice for parents to try to use?</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 779 1385 848">Nothing. Just want to add that the IASS worker was accessible, had the expertise needed and was fully reliable. Great service, thank you.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 848 1385 916">Decisions that are made are not involving your team, but you have helped me understand those decisions that have been made</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 916 1385 987">Great service as mentioned previously – very easy to reach a human being (!) with the expertise needed. Thank you.</td> </tr> </table>	No or Nothing - 26	It might just be me but if people could talk a little slower when explaining. If you are new to the terminology used it can seem overwhelming 😊	Not really, but I feel like people who need you may not know your there, I only found out through social services.	I don't know if any way would be able to help more proactively in drafting emails etc rather than just giving advice for parents to try to use?	Nothing. Just want to add that the IASS worker was accessible, had the expertise needed and was fully reliable. Great service, thank you.	Decisions that are made are not involving your team, but you have helped me understand those decisions that have been made	Great service as mentioned previously – very easy to reach a human being (!) with the expertise needed. Thank you.				
No or Nothing - 26												
It might just be me but if people could talk a little slower when explaining. If you are new to the terminology used it can seem overwhelming 😊												
Not really, but I feel like people who need you may not know your there, I only found out through social services.												
I don't know if any way would be able to help more proactively in drafting emails etc rather than just giving advice for parents to try to use?												
Nothing. Just want to add that the IASS worker was accessible, had the expertise needed and was fully reliable. Great service, thank you.												
Decisions that are made are not involving your team, but you have helped me understand those decisions that have been made												
Great service as mentioned previously – very easy to reach a human being (!) with the expertise needed. Thank you.												
<b>Do you have any suggestions about how we can develop and improve our services?</b>	<p>26 responses</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="475 1088 1385 2045"> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1088 1385 1124">No x 17</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1124 1385 1225">Try to get your info leaflets to be given out on early bird course parents are offered when their child is diagnosed with asd (portage and nhs run it i think)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1225 1385 1261">More staff available.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1261 1385 1296">Could it be advertised more? I found out about it through EOTAS</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1296 1385 1464">I do not think the service is as advertised as it could behaving spoken to other parents. I also wonder if there is a way of having a different email address because having NCC in the email address creates the impression that it 'belongs' to NCC rather than being independent.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1464 1385 1702">I wish that IASS was signposted within correspondence from the SEN team... or if IASS could work with the SEN team to create some information sheets about the process that could then be given to new parents. It can be stressful and overwhelming as parents navigating this process, any information that manages expectations can really help make things easier.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1702 1385 1803">Make yourselves more known, you were a great help to me and I think a lot more parents would come to you if they knew about you.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1803 1385 1872">Just keep doing what your doing. Maybe extra funding for more staff to help more struggling families.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1872 1385 1942">Possibly something around the user experience on the internet so that parents can find what they need more?</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1942 1385 1977">Make sure parents know about you</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="475 1977 1385 2045">Families would benefit if schools made parents aware of the service. I wish I had of known about this years ago</td> </tr> </table>	No x 17	Try to get your info leaflets to be given out on early bird course parents are offered when their child is diagnosed with asd (portage and nhs run it i think)	More staff available.	Could it be advertised more? I found out about it through EOTAS	I do not think the service is as advertised as it could behaving spoken to other parents. I also wonder if there is a way of having a different email address because having NCC in the email address creates the impression that it 'belongs' to NCC rather than being independent.	I wish that IASS was signposted within correspondence from the SEN team... or if IASS could work with the SEN team to create some information sheets about the process that could then be given to new parents. It can be stressful and overwhelming as parents navigating this process, any information that manages expectations can really help make things easier.	Make yourselves more known, you were a great help to me and I think a lot more parents would come to you if they knew about you.	Just keep doing what your doing. Maybe extra funding for more staff to help more struggling families.	Possibly something around the user experience on the internet so that parents can find what they need more?	Make sure parents know about you	Families would benefit if schools made parents aware of the service. I wish I had of known about this years ago
No x 17												
Try to get your info leaflets to be given out on early bird course parents are offered when their child is diagnosed with asd (portage and nhs run it i think)												
More staff available.												
Could it be advertised more? I found out about it through EOTAS												
I do not think the service is as advertised as it could behaving spoken to other parents. I also wonder if there is a way of having a different email address because having NCC in the email address creates the impression that it 'belongs' to NCC rather than being independent.												
I wish that IASS was signposted within correspondence from the SEN team... or if IASS could work with the SEN team to create some information sheets about the process that could then be given to new parents. It can be stressful and overwhelming as parents navigating this process, any information that manages expectations can really help make things easier.												
Make yourselves more known, you were a great help to me and I think a lot more parents would come to you if they knew about you.												
Just keep doing what your doing. Maybe extra funding for more staff to help more struggling families.												
Possibly something around the user experience on the internet so that parents can find what they need more?												
Make sure parents know about you												
Families would benefit if schools made parents aware of the service. I wish I had of known about this years ago												

Question	Response
<p><b>Is there anything you would like us to raise on your behalf about the SEND services provided for your child or family? This could be what is working well or any concerns that you have.</b></p>	<p>15 Responses</p> <p>The complaint would only be with the academy my child attended and with the SEND department within it. The poor transition (on the Academy's part) from primary school and way information that was given to them through an open eha and clinical letters was not utilised about his poor mental health; self harming and possible diagnosis thus making his 3 years he spent there a dreadful experience which in turn has damaged his education. Thankfully he is not at that school now.</p> <p>Appropriate school provision for children with additional support needs in north Northumberland.</p> <p>Really concerned about lack of provision in Northumberland for really complex children.</p> <p>Support for dyslexia and sensory processing needs.</p> <p>Looking forward to my son starting his journey in his new school. Fitting in, making friends, feeling like he belongs to name a few. To see him walk out the school gates and tell me he has had a good day will just be the best feeling ever.</p> <p>I contacted the school and was given slightly different advice which felt misleading. I did not feel confident to go back with further questions. It has been explained more clearly through your service.</p> <p>I think the local offer is not easily accessible or user friendly. In my experience a number of parents of SEN young people also have additional needs. How the info is presented could be more explanatory.</p> <p>The information could be made easier to understand and more accessible. I think parents rely on the school for guidance and unfortunately that means not everyone gets the same level of advice or care.</p> <p>Some parts work fab, others are dreadful. They all need to be singing from the same song sheet.</p> <p>As previous comment, I think communication from the SEN team could be improved.</p> <p>It's hard to contact the SEND team (2 responses)</p> <p>I just really feel that parents who have problems with literacy will find the appeal process very difficult and daunting and won't know where to get support.</p> <p>It is so isolating as a parent trying to fight for child and although IASS worker was very supportive still up to me to do all the applications/ fighting for support and still not told about a school in locality which potentially good for son. The support is not adequate.</p> <p>Schools to recommend the IASS service to help parents</p>
<p><b>Equal Opportunities monitoring</b></p>	<p><b>Ethnicity:</b> 49 responses: 37 White British (96%) 9 British (2%) 3 White (2%)</p> <p><b>Do you have a disability?</b> 51 responses: No disability 44 (82%) Disability 12 (18%)</p> <p><b>Type of disability -</b> Osteoarthritis ..recent stroke ..borderline personality disorder, Type 1 diabetes, Thyroid condition, Deaf Bipolar and walking difficulties, deaf, Arthritis and spinal problems, Adhd, Hearing loss, Autism, Heart Failure.</p>

## Appendix 2: Summary of referrals to IASS - 429 referrals

<b>Level of contact</b>	Level 1 – 297 Level 2 – 114 Level 3 – 14 Level 4 - 4	
<b>Gender of child/young person</b>	<b>410 responses</b> Male 277 (68%) Female 133 (32%)	
<b>Year in school</b>	<b>361 responses</b>	
	Preschool – 0	Year 5 – 29 (8%)
	Nursery – 20 (5.5%)	Year 6 – 36 (10%)
	Reception – 21 (6%)	Year 7 – 22 (6%)
	Year 1 – 20 (5.5%)	Year 8 – 37 (10%)
	Year 2 – 8 (2%)	Year 9 – 27 (7.5%)
	Year 3 – 27 (7%)	Year 10 – 40 (11%)
	Year 4 – 20 (5.5%)	Year 11 – 18 (5%)
		Year 12 – 24 (7%)
		Year 13 – 7 (2%)
		Year 14 – 3 (1%)
		Year 15 – 0
		Year 16 – 1 (0.5%)
		Year 17 & 18 – 0
		Year 19 – 1 (0.5%)
	<b>Level 1 - Data not collected – 68 (Single phone call or email requesting basic information)</b>	
<b>School Partnership</b>	<b>329 responses</b>	
	Alnwick – 34 (10%) North	Further Education – 31 (9%)
	Alternative Provider – 1 (0.5%)	Haydon Bridge – 5 (1.5%) West
	Ashington - 29 (9%) South-East/ Central	Hexham – 16 (5%) West
	Bedlington – 18 (5%) South- East/Central	Morpeth – 25 (7.5%) South-East /Central
	Berwick – 13 (4%) North	Northumberland Church of England Academy – 10 (3%)
	Blyth – 39 (12%) South-East/ Central	Ponteland – 6 (2%) West
	Coquet – 13 (4%) North	Prudhoe – 12 (4%) West
	Cramlington – 20 (6%) South- East/Central	Seaton Valley – 12 (4%) South- East/Central
	Elective Home Education – 3 (1%)	Special school – 42 (12.5%)
		Supported Internship – 0 (0%)
	<b>Level 1 - Data not collected – 100 (Single phone call or email requesting basic information)</b>	

<b>Source of referral</b>	<b>429 responses</b> Mum - 354 (83%) Dad – 20 (4.6%) Friend – 1 (0.2%) Grandad - 3 (0.6%) Grandma – 11 (2.4%) Great Aunt – 2 (0.4%) Sister – 1 (0.2%) Stepdad – 1 (0.2%) Step mum - 1 (0.2%) Practitioner 33 (7.8%) Young Person - 2 (0.4%)																																																																				
<b>Where heard about service</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>379 responses</b></td> </tr> <tr><td>Alternative Provider</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Another parent/friend</td><td>7 (1.85%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Calmer Therapy support group</td><td>2 (0.53%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Careers Guidance Team</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>CYPS</td><td>45 (11.87%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Early Help worker</td><td>11 (2.9%)</td></tr> <tr><td>EOTAS</td><td>2 (0.53%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Family member</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Family Support worker</td><td>4 (1.06%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Health professional</td><td>10 (2.64%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Inclusion Service</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Inclusive Education Service</td><td>10 (2.64%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Internet search</td><td>12 (3.17%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Job Centre</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Learning and Skills Service</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Living Well Coordinator (Adult Mental Health)</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Local Offer/NCC website</td><td>33 (8.71%)</td></tr> <tr><td>NAS (National Autistic Society)</td><td>5 (1.32%)</td></tr> <tr><td>North-East Law Centre</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>OFSTED</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Parent Support Group</td><td>3 (0.79%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Portage</td><td>5 (1.32%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Previous referral</td><td>107 (28.23%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Primary Mental Health Service</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Speech and Language Therapy Service</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>School or nursery</td><td>31 (8.18%)</td></tr> <tr><td>School Admissions</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>School Nurse</td><td>3 (0.79%)</td></tr> <tr><td>SEND Tem</td><td>57 (15.04%)</td></tr> <tr><td>SEND IASS – other authority</td><td>2 (0.53%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Social Care</td><td>7 (1.8%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Sure Start</td><td>1 (0.26%)</td></tr> <tr><td>Toby Henderson Trust</td><td>10 (2.64%)</td></tr> </table>	<b>379 responses</b>		Alternative Provider	1 (0.26%)	Another parent/friend	7 (1.85%)	Calmer Therapy support group	2 (0.53%)	Careers Guidance Team	1 (0.26%)	CYPS	45 (11.87%)	Early Help worker	11 (2.9%)	EOTAS	2 (0.53%)	Family member	1 (0.26%)	Family Support worker	4 (1.06%)	Health professional	10 (2.64%)	Inclusion Service	1 (0.26%)	Inclusive Education Service	10 (2.64%)	Internet search	12 (3.17%)	Job Centre	1 (0.26%)	Learning and Skills Service	1 (0.26%)	Living Well Coordinator (Adult Mental Health)	1 (0.26%)	Local Offer/NCC website	33 (8.71%)	NAS (National Autistic Society)	5 (1.32%)	North-East Law Centre	1 (0.26%)	OFSTED	1 (0.26%)	Parent Support Group	3 (0.79%)	Portage	5 (1.32%)	Previous referral	107 (28.23%)	Primary Mental Health Service	1 (0.26%)	Speech and Language Therapy Service	1 (0.26%)	School or nursery	31 (8.18%)	School Admissions	1 (0.26%)	School Nurse	3 (0.79%)	SEND Tem	57 (15.04%)	SEND IASS – other authority	2 (0.53%)	Social Care	7 (1.8%)	Sure Start	1 (0.26%)	Toby Henderson Trust	10 (2.64%)
<b>379 responses</b>																																																																					
Alternative Provider	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Another parent/friend	7 (1.85%)																																																																				
Calmer Therapy support group	2 (0.53%)																																																																				
Careers Guidance Team	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
CYPS	45 (11.87%)																																																																				
Early Help worker	11 (2.9%)																																																																				
EOTAS	2 (0.53%)																																																																				
Family member	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Family Support worker	4 (1.06%)																																																																				
Health professional	10 (2.64%)																																																																				
Inclusion Service	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Inclusive Education Service	10 (2.64%)																																																																				
Internet search	12 (3.17%)																																																																				
Job Centre	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Learning and Skills Service	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Living Well Coordinator (Adult Mental Health)	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Local Offer/NCC website	33 (8.71%)																																																																				
NAS (National Autistic Society)	5 (1.32%)																																																																				
North-East Law Centre	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
OFSTED	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Parent Support Group	3 (0.79%)																																																																				
Portage	5 (1.32%)																																																																				
Previous referral	107 (28.23%)																																																																				
Primary Mental Health Service	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Speech and Language Therapy Service	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
School or nursery	31 (8.18%)																																																																				
School Admissions	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
School Nurse	3 (0.79%)																																																																				
SEND Tem	57 (15.04%)																																																																				
SEND IASS – other authority	2 (0.53%)																																																																				
Social Care	7 (1.8%)																																																																				
Sure Start	1 (0.26%)																																																																				
Toby Henderson Trust	10 (2.64%)																																																																				
<b>SEND Code of Practice Graduated Approach</b>	<b>388 responses</b> No special provision - 3 (1%) SEN Support - 181 (46%) Request for EHC needs assessment - 20 (5%) EHC needs assessment - 18 (5%) EHCP - 166 (43%)																																																																				
<b>SEN Category</b>	<b>378 responses</b> Cognition and Learning - 46 (12%) Communication and interaction - 59 (16 %) Sensory and/or physical - 18 (5%) Social, emotional and mental health - 255 (67%)																																																																				

<b>SEN Primary Need (where identified)</b>	<b>339 responses</b>		
	Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)	188 (55%)	
	Speech Language and Communication (SLCN)	17 (5%)	
	Specific learning difficulties (dyslexia)	10 (3%)	
	Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)	8 (2%)	
	Severe learning difficulties (SLD)	5 (1%)	
	Profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)	0 (1%)	
	Social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH)	94 (28%)	
	Hearing Impaired (HI)	1	
	Visual Impairment (VI)	0 (1%)	
	Multisensory Impairment (Deafblindness) MSI	0 (0.5%)	
	Physical Disability (PD)	16 (6%)	
<b>Initial reason for referral</b>	<b>429 responses recorded in 2020/2021 (473 collected in 2019/2020)</b>		
	<b>Reason for Referral</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
	Admissions	5	6
	Attendance	6	1
	Benefits	2	1
	Bullying	2	1
	Child out of school	12 (3%)	11 (2%)
	Complaint processes	5	5
	Concerns re support – EHCP	25 (6%)	28 (6%)
	Concerns re support – SEN Support	74 (17.5%)	80 (17.5%)
	Covid 19 – timescales for EHC processes, school arrangements etc	8	9
	Health referral or diagnostic processes	3	4
	Disability Discrimination	0	1
	Educational Placement	81 (19%)	64 (14%)
	EOTAS – process for referral/concerns re provision	3	5
	Exclusion	19 (4.5%)	8
	Funding Information	2	2
	Giving views for assessment/annual review	5	20 (4%)
	Higher Education	2	
	How to request an EHC needs assessment	48 (11%)	21 (95%)
	Mediation information		3
	Moving to/from another authority/ country	10 (2%)	3
	No assessment – support with appealing	24 (6%)	33 (7%)
	Personal Budgets	3	
	Post 16 – general information	14	
	SEN/EHC Processes	32 (7.5%)	112 (25%)
	Signposting to other services	9	4
	Social Care	7	3
	Transition between educational settings	2	10
	Transport	10 (2%)	12
Tribunal information/Support	11	12	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>473</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data recorded differently in 2020/2021</b></li> </ul>			

<b>Information, advice or support provided at initial contact</b>	<b>429 responses</b>	
	Attended meeting with service user	55 (13%)
	Meeting to discuss concerns/help with paperwork	7 (2%)
	Phone or email advice	106 (25%)
	Phone or email advice and sent information	225 (51%)
	Signposting to other source of help	20 (5%)
	Tribunal support/processes/meetings	16 (4%)