



**Northumberland  
Information  
Advice &  
Support  
Service**

# Annual Report

1 September 2019 – 31 August 2020

**Author: Alison Bravey  
Information, Advice and Support Service Manager**

# CONTENTS

Background information	3
Staffing 2019 - 2020	3
Service structure	3
Governance of the service	4
How the service evidences impartiality from the Local Authority	4
Service Budget	4-5
The Role of the Service	5-7
Referrals from service users	7
Impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on service delivery	7-8
Information & Publicity	8
Training attended or provided by service staff	8
Networking and Collaboration	9
Informing Local Policy and Practice	9
Service Monitoring and Development	10
Priorities for 2020 - 2021	10
Data Collected from Monitoring Arrangements	10 -11
Service Evaluation Questionnaire	11-12
Feedback from service users and stakeholder groups	12
Conclusion	12
Contact Details	12
Appendix 1 - Feedback from Service Evaluation	13-18
Appendix 2 - Summary of Referrals to IASS	19-22

*\*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 outlined 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 2019 - 2020

Alison Bravey, IASS Manager (37 hours per week) – Permanent full-time post funded through Education and Skills core budget

Vicki Graham, IASS Officer (37 hours per week) – Permanent full-time post funded through Education and Skills core budget (since January 2018)

Julia McCormack, IASS Administrative Assistant (37 hours per week) – Temporary full-time post currently funded through the national IAS Programme (since September 2019)

## Service structure

The service is located within the Local Authority's Learning and 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 Administrative Assistant are line managed by the Information, Advice and Support Service Manager.

## Governance of the service

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 evidences impartiality from the Local Authority**

The service sits within the Learning and Skills Service; the Post-16 education, employability and careers guidance arm of the Council. This separates it from other Local Authority and CCG services and functions that commission or deliver services to children and young people with SEND and their families. It is based in premises away from the main Local Authority building.

The service manager is based solely within the service, without additional Local Authority 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 sustain a high quality and impartial service.

The service operates in line with the national IASSN (Information, Advice and Support Services Network) [Minimum Standards for Information, Advice and Support Services](#). It has its own identity, branding and stand-alone website. 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 budget allocated by the Local Authority for staffing and operational costs in the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 was £80,779, with the same budget allocated for 2020/2021.

Additional funding was received from the IAS (Information, Advice and Support) Programme, a time-limited national government initiative designed to ensure that children and young people with SEND, and their parents, continue to have access to impartial and free information, advice and support covering all aspects of SEND. The Council for Disabled Children is managing the programme on behalf of the Department of 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 was successful in applying for funding through the IAS Programme and received £47,500 net over the time period 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020 with a further £27,882.35 available for 2020/2021.

The five funding streams for 2019/2020 were:

- Fund 1: Service contribution - up to £10,000
- Fund 2: Supporting strategic functions - up to £4800
- Fund 3: Supporting core functions - up to £12,600
- Fund 4: Enhancing skills/professional development - up to £6000
- Fund 5: Supporting innovation - up to £12,500

This funding was used to enhance the service offer, with a focus on:

- building service capacity through the employment of an additional member of staff

- promoting the service widely through a range of events and activities
- developing the support provided for children and young people, through the increased use of technology
- increasing confidence in the impartiality of the service, which included the development of a stand-alone website

The IAS Programme funding for 2020/2021 will be used to focus on improving the local statutory service offer and resolving any areas of non-compliance with the IASS Minimum Standards.

## The Role of the Service

The types of **information** and **advice** that the Local Authority **must** ensure is provided to children, young people and parents on matters relating to SEN and disability, should include:

- local policy and practice
- the Local Offer
- personalisation and Personal Budgets
- the law on SEN and disability, health and social care, through suitably independently trained staff
- advice for children, young people and parents on gathering, understanding and interpreting information and applying it to their own situation
- information on the local authority's processes for resolving disagreements, its complaints procedures and means of redress.

To meet local needs the following forms of **support** should also be provided through the IASS:

- Signposting children, young people and parents to alternative and additional sources of advice, information and support that may be available locally or nationally
- Individual casework and representation for those who need it, which should include:
  - support in attending meetings, contributing to assessments and reviews and participating in decisions about outcomes for the child or young person
  - directing children, young people, parents and those who support and work with them to additional support services where needed, including services provided by the voluntary sector. These services should include support relating to preparing for adulthood, including housing support, careers advice and employment support
- Help when things go wrong, which should include:
  - Supporting children, young people and parents in arranging or attending early disagreement resolution meetings
  - Supporting children, young people and parents in managing mediation, appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), exclusions and complaints on matters related to SEN and disability
  - Making children, young people and parents aware of the local authority's services for resolving disagreements and for mediation, and on the routes of appeal and complaint on matters related to SEN and disability
- Provision of advice through individual casework and through work with parent carer support groups, local SEN youth forums or disability groups, or training events

The provision of information, advice and support provided by an IASS should help to promote independence and self-advocacy for children, young people and parents.

To meet the above 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.
- Email communication
- Face to face support
- A standalone service website and web pages on the Northumberland County Council website and Local Offer.
- 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.
- Supporting service users to understand and navigate 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.
- An information bulletin, which provides information about local events, services and news in Northumberland and the North East for children and young people with SEND and their families
- Support with preparation for meetings and attending meetings, when required.
- 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, issues and participation.
- Empowering and supporting children and young people and their parents to raise issues and concerns to enable 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 with regard to education, health and social care services.
- Support to services to develop meaningful consultation with children, young people and their families.
- Geographical and demographic mapping data to the Local Authority, including data on the nature of education, health and social care enquiries

### **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.

A different way of recording referrals to the service has been used this year, 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, home visit by IASS or office visit by 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 341 Level 1 contacts, 117 Level 2 contacts, 10 Level 3 contact and 5 Level 4 contacts (please refer to Appendix 2 for more details of service referrals).

Of the referrals received this year, 25 were for children or young people either directly, through work with focus groups in school or following initial referral to the service by their parents. The service for children and young people is an area of work that we are planning to develop further.

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

The service was fully operational throughout the Covid-19 lock down period. Staff worked from home with service landlines diverted to work mobiles. New ways of working were adopted to meet the challenges presented. Information, advice and support were provided mainly by phone and email as face to face casework was not possible. The number of referrals to the service reduced from an average of 50 referrals per month to 23 referrals per month during the lockdown period. Many educational issues we are contacted about were not applicable while children and young people were not in school.

Technology has played a key role in providing a responsive service during the pandemic. For example, staff have been able to attend online meetings with service users and stakeholders in a range of contexts, and to attend on-line training. This enabled staff to build their knowledge, skills and confidence with the use of communication and collaboration software, including Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and Hangouts, and Zoom. The knowledge we have gained from our work during this time will be used to inform service delivery moving forward.

The service information bulletin was temporarily replaced by an interim email with useful links and information to assist families during the lockdown, including home educating their children.

The service also worked with Calmer Therapy, a local not-for-profit support group for families of children and young people with SEND, to obtain parental views around their child's return to school post Covid-19 lockdown. This included the parent's concerns, their child's concerns,

what they felt a good return to school would look like and what would help their child return to school. The feedback was collated into a report that was shared with the SEND Strategic Board, school SENCOs and CYPS (Children and Young People Service) professionals.

## **Information and Publicity**

The service is currently publicised through:

- The service standalone website
- 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

The Communication and Marketing Strategy currently being co-produced with service users and key stakeholders will be used to inform the future promotion of the service.

## **Training attended or provided**

Service staff have:

- completed or worked towards completing (where required) the most recent accredited legal training around the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and the SEND Reforms, which was delivered by IPSEA on behalf of the IASSN.
- attended training which covered: Exclusions; SEND Law; SEND Support in School; Co-production/Participation; Safeguarding Disabled Children; Vulnerable Adolescents; Engaging and Working Directly with Young People; SEND Tribunal; Psychological wellbeing/Mindfulness; the Impact of Parental Mental Health on Parenting; and Social Care: SEND and EHC Plans

The service has provided training on the SEND Graduated approach and EHC processes to ADHD parents groups (commissioned by CYPS and delivered by Barnardos) and to Early Years SENCOs. We also worked with the other North East IASSs and the regional Parent Carer Forums to offer a substantial package of training for parents across the region, which covered SEND Support, SEND Law and Exclusions. This helped to enhance our collaboration and working relationships with the Parent Carer Forums regionally and provided high quality training for parents to ensure that they are better informed and prepared for dealing with SEND and related issues.

## **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 Strategic Partnership Board which meets monthly and attends the regional North East SEND Information, Advice and Support Service meetings held half termly.

The IASS Officer attends the Post-16 Preparing for Adulthood meetings and the Children and Young People Strategic Participation Group.

Other events attended by service staff:

- ASD Pathway Task and Finish group
- SEND Information Roadshows
- Annual Healthwatch conference
- The annual SEND Careers events organised by the Careers Guidance team
- A Mental Health conference organised for Northumberland schools
- Coffee morning and parent drop-in events – held at Calmer Therapy centre and James Calvert Spence College
- 'Be You' mental health trailblazer launch
- Meetings organised by 'Contact' for the new Northumberland Parent Carer Forum
- Social care 'Short Break Statement' meeting

### **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 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)
- contributing to Local Authority consultations relating to SEND
- 1-1 supervision

### **Service Monitoring and Development**

Service monitoring and development is guided by the [Minimum Standards for Information, Advice and Support Services](#) produced by the IASSN, supported by the Department for Education. A review of the service against these standards was used to inform the objectives for Service Operational Plan covering the period 1st April 2019 – 1st April 2021.

The objectives for this year were achieved except for the service being jointly commissioned by the Local Authority and CCG, with a service level agreement, based on the minimum standards, in place. A report was presented to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board in December 2019 to brief the Board on the function and work of the IASS and the commissioning requirements for the service. This helped to raise awareness of the service at a strategic level. However further progress towards joint commissioning has been delayed by organisational changes within the Local Authority and CCG, which included commissioning functions, and by the Covid-19 lockdown.

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; and through feedback from local partners, including local parent and young people forums. Case studies are produced on specific themes to demonstrate the impact of the service for families. A service update is provided termly to the steering group.

The service falls within the national accreditation scheme for Information, Advice and Guidance, known as the Matrix Standards. The “kite-mark” is held by the Learning and Skills Service and includes the operation of the IASS. The Learning and Skills service is inspected every three years and has a quality monitoring visit annually. It was last inspected in July 2018 and has retained its accreditation for the standard this year, with no actions identified for improvement.

### **Priorities for 2020 - 2021**

Service objectives for this year have been set to ensure full compliance with the IASSN Minimum Standards; with the main priority being the joint commissioning of the service by the Local Authority and CCG.

Raising awareness of the service with service users and key stakeholders also remains a priority and targeted work will include:

- 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 of the use of social media for promoting the service and providing information to service users and stakeholders.

### **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 boys to girls is 2:1
- Most referrals are for schools in south east/central Northumberland - 56%, then West Northumberland - 23% and North Northumberland - 11.5%
- Service user referrals tend to be from Mums (76%) Dads (6%) Children/Young People (5%)
- 8.2% of referrals were from professionals seeking advice on behalf of families they were working with. No confidential information which might identify the families was shared without consent, in keeping with the confidential framework of our work.
- Most service users were aware of the service through previous referral, their child's school or the Local Authority SEND Team.
- 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 (42%) or with an EHCP (41%)
- The main SEN category for referrals were Social, Emotional and Mental Health (67%) and Cognition and Learning (14%)
- The main SEN Primary need categories were Autism Spectrum Disorder (43%) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (36%)
- The main reasons for referral were information about SEN/EHCP processes (25%), concerns about support/provision in school/college - SEN Support (17.5%) and advice about educational placement (14%).
- The main types of initial service involvement were phone or email advice with information sent (59.5%), phone or email advice only (18%) and attending meetings in school (12%).

## **Service Evaluation Questionnaire**

The 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 (pre-Covid-19 lockdown). The feedback from the 53 service users who responded has been collated into a table (Appendix 1).

### **Summary of responses:**

- 100% found it easy or very easy to contact the service.
- 100% reported that the service responded to them quickly or very quickly.
- 96% felt that we understood their questions or concerns well or very well with 4% reporting that we understood them quite well.
- Most service users who responded had found out about the service from another parent or friend (26%), the Local Authority SEND Team (25%), SEND Support Services (19%), the internet (15%), a health professional (11%), a leaflet about the service (11%) or their child's educational setting (8%).
- 96% found the information, advice and support they were given useful or very useful with 4% indicating that it had been quite useful.
- 98% of parents felt that we were impartial or very impartial with none reporting that they felt that the service was not impartial.
- 100% of parents felt that we were confidential or very confidential.
- 100% of parents felt that the information, advice and support they received made a difference to them, with 92% 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).
- 94% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service we gave with none reported that they were not satisfied.
- 98% of parents would be happy or very happy to contact the service again if needed with none reporting that they would be unhappy to.
- 98% of parents would be likely or extremely likely to recommend the service to others with none reporting that they would be unlikely to.

Suggestions from parents 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 co-production of a Communication and Marketing Strategy.

## **Feedback from service users and stakeholder groups**

Service user and stakeholder feedback is used to improve the service reach and offer and is shared at a strategic level to ensure that this information helps to shape and inform local SEND planning, policy and practice.

## **Conclusion**

Good progress has been made with service activities this year and feedback from service users has been positive and encouraging. A priority for the coming year is to move forward with the joint commissioning of the service to ensure that the service fully meets the requirements of the IASSN Minimum Standards. Raising the profile of the service and its arm's length, impartial role will continue to be a priority and work on the Communication and Marketing strategy and the development of the service social media presence will help to achieve this aim.

The support offered to children and young people and ensuring that their 'voice' is heard at both a strategic and operational level is an area of work which will be developed further in the coming year, within the constraints that the Covid-19 pandemic is currently presenting. Staff training will also be a priority to ensure that the information, advice and support provided by the service is of the highest quality.

## **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 (53 responses)

Question	Response
How easy was it to get in touch with us?	Easy - 10 (19%) Very easy - 43 (81%)
How quickly did we respond?	Quickly 4 - (7%) Very quickly - 49 (93%)
How well do you think that we understood your questions or concerns?	Quite well - 2 (4%) Well - 7 (13%) Very well - 44 (83 %)
How did you hear about us? (Tick all that apply)	Another parent or friend – 14 (26%) The Local Authority SEND Team – 13 (25%) SEND Support Service – 10 (19%) The internet – 8 (15%) Health professional – 6 (11%) Leaflet – 6 (11%) School, early years setting or college – 4 (8%) Barnardos Mediation Service – 2 (4%) Portage - 2 (4%) Toby Henderson Trust - 2 (4%) The Local Offer website – 2 (4%) Calmer Therapy - 1 (2%) First Call - 1 (2%) CYPS - 1 (2%) Previous referral – 1 (2%)
How useful was the information, advice and support that we gave you?	Fairly useful - 2 (4%) Useful -10 (19%) Very Useful - 41 (77%)
How impartial did you think we were?	Fairly impartial - 1 (2%) Impartial - 6 (11%) Very impartial - 46 (87%)
How confidential do you think we were?	Confidential - 3 (6%) Very confidential - 50 (94%)
How much difference do you think that our information, advice and support has made for you?	A bit of difference - 4 (8%) Quite a bit of difference -10 (19%) A great deal of difference - 39 (73%)
What, if any difference, have we made for you? (Tick all that apply)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better relationship with school – 8 (15%)</li> <li>• Feel more confident – 28 (53%)</li> <li>• Greater understanding of the SEND system – 41 (77%)</li> <li>• Feel more involved with my child's education – 16 (30%)</li> <li>• Feel happier/less worried about the future – 23 (43%)</li> <li>• I feel that my child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved – 26 (50%)</li> </ul> <p>• <b>Other comments (23 responses):</b></p>

- Great to get clarification on processes and support and confidence to approach issues
- I could not fault the support and advice given by your service; it is everything after that that is ineffective.
- I feel supported with someone to back me up with advice
- It's nice to know there is someone I can contact if I need impartial information and advice. Very helpful and quick to respond and helps immensely with understanding the SEND/EHCP process. Thank you
- The advice and support was invaluable to my sons education and future. I cannot thank you enough :)
- Your service helped me understand the appeal procedure and gave me the confidence to give it my all, making sure it was as thorough as possible. I could not have done this without the guidance I was given. The support was absolutely outstanding 😊
- Was the only person that took my concerns about my children seriously & from all the people I have had to deal with, never made me feel like I was stupid & tho I have been up n down with life as my family has been through a lot she was also very compassionate. If every person I dealt with about my children did their job as professional as this woman, would not of had half the stress I've had to go round in 1 big circle. It makes a lot of different how U talk n treat people esp people in situations u would never understand.
- I gathered more information about my child's situation but I didn't have any influence on making any changes
- School now recognises that I now have parental support
- Factual advice
- My child feels comfortable talking about school and how he feels with myself, IASS and his school teacher.
- It has educated me more as I was not up to date with many aspects of the service
- It's a fantastic service, indispensable
- Guidance re relevant legislation
- EHCP
- Shortcut to familiarity with the legislation and process. Greater confidence we were doing the right thing
- She has helped me with all the information she has given me and will attend meetings to help
- I didn't feel like I was alone I felt they were there to support me which they have done a great deal, supported me through my most difficult time getting my son the support he needed I recommend this service 100%
- The advice, support and guidance from the service was invaluable, without it we would have struggled to achieve a satisfactory outcome to our appeal. The advisors were friendly, knowledgeable and approachable and responded to our numerous questions with

	<p>patience and perseverance. They are to be commended on their excellent service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has enhanced my knowledge to a greater depth</li> <li>• Being listened to well and understood whereas most people and services and school setting I feel that our views are not being listened to as a parent with several children with SEN. I can't praise this service enough with the support and advice which is impartial and a good listening ear to point us in the direction where we need to go.</li> <li>• It made me more empowered.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?</b></p>	<p>Fairly Satisfied 3 (6%) Satisfied 5 (9%) Very satisfied 45 (85%)</p>
<p><b>Would you feel happy to contact the service again if you needed to?</b></p>	<p>Fairly happy 1 (2%) Happy 4 (7%) Very Happy 48 (91%)</p>
<p><b>How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?</b></p>	<p>Fairly likely 1 (2%) Likely 4 (7%) Extremely likely 48 (91%)</p>
<p><b>Was there anything we could have done better?</b></p>	<p>23 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No</li> <li>• Nothing at all....the problems are all elsewhere, and there appears to be little improvement despite the rhetoric on the council's website</li> <li>• I tried to email but that bounced back. Phone service was swift though.</li> <li>• Nothing - the advice given was timely and quick and staff member was extremely understanding of the situation.</li> <li>• No, not at all.</li> <li>• Make more people aware that you are actually there, I was not told by anyone, yet I had every organisation involved &amp; I myself searched google for numbers to help me. I was lucky to get the IASS number..I should of been given that by the council at some point during the past 2 years when I've done nothing but beg for help... so Defo more people need to know there is this service, instead of always having to fight people over n over who don't seem to actually care about anything apart from ticking a box</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• No you were amazing. Helped in a difficult situation</li> <li>• I just feel that it's difficult as the service is impartial so at times in the meetings it is as if the person attending meeting cannot respond for the client yet they have better knowledge</li> <li>• Spoken to the council directly</li> <li>• Possibly provided information leaflets?</li> <li>• Actual administration</li> <li>• Nothing at all you were fabulous</li> <li>• No, the service provided was first class.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing really pleased with the service and we know we can turn to this team to help and support us with the minefield we are expecting threefold.</li> <li>• Be there all the time and employ more people so that we can have more access and advice from you there is a huge problem in schools and their lack of understanding of SEN and lack of care of SEN pupils</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do you have any suggestions about how we can develop and improve our services?</b></p>	<p>21 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No x 3</li> <li>• I think that a leaflet should be sent out to parents of children with SEND on NCC radar or advertised in school so parents know about your services</li> <li>• No. First class service provided throughout.</li> <li>• Nothing</li> <li>• Again, more awareness that this service is available</li> <li>• Display your leaflets at CYPS establishments</li> <li>• Easier for me as knew help by sight. Meeting someone first is invaluable.</li> <li>• More information in schools, the internet etc so that parents know about the service as all parents I speak to have never heard of you.</li> <li>• Can't think of anything. Was really happy with the service. Made me feel at ease. Thank you so much for all your help</li> <li>• Not sure at present</li> <li>• More well-trained staff knowing the legal side</li> <li>• Require all parents to be informed about it by those they first deal with</li> <li>• Awareness is low. People in Facebook groups supporting parents have rarely heard of the service</li> <li>• To give the service more power over Authorities</li> <li>• Maybe have leaflets in school so when your child is placed on the SEN register they are giving a leaflet to parents as a place to call rather than just an email etc as most parents may not know where to go or who to turn to.</li> <li>• More people as equally as qualified as yourselves</li> </ul>
<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>19 responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMMUNICATION WITH SETTINGS and Professionals. There's lots of ways services and communication could be made better and streamlined so it works better for all. For example, the SEN transport department doesn't talk to the schools about children that are on transport vehicles. My child was placed on a bus with a child who is noisy/ high pitched and those sort of noises are a trigger for her and would cause distress and possibly a meltdown. There should be a process where the school who know the children can be involved and where possible children should be transported in bubbles they are in at school.</li> </ul>

- We are still unable to access the services! There needs to be more involvement from the council in EHCP meetings, at the moment it doesn't appear that what is written is being read apart from by the school.
- I think there needs to be more 'first contact' services and support available when a child is identified with additional needs and struggling. Support within schools and services in general are insufficient. Also if there was more training and understanding of complex needs instead of a focus on managing behaviour (and more services to advocate this) I think it would help immensely.
- The continued support of your service is all I require.
- Where are highly functioning ASD/Asperger's children supposed to go? They are educationally capable of achieving but cannot manage socially/sensorially in a mainstream school, esp large secondary setting. Most SEN schools deal with children with learning disabilities that don't offer the opportunities to fulfil their academic potential.
- I feel that schools should focus on all pupils not just the high achievers that want to go to university. Education should be for all including SEN pupils who achieve 7 GCSEs and want to join sixth form. It has been an awful time for my son and I but thanks to the intervention of the IASS staff member and the advice she gave me it has been a happy outcome for my son. CYPS advised that he would not be able to cope with a college environment as he is quite young for his age. The high school were very much pushing us to find a college space over the last 5 months. Anyway, he is very happy and settled in sixth form and a big thank you again to the IASS staff member - she is a star!!
- No nothing. Fingers crossed for the appeal outcome.
- I think a lot of people in council & education department should be retrained at their jobs & their own policies & also learn how to be professional when dealing with people who are genuinely struggling with life. My mental health deteriorated because how people were treating me & speaking to me.. But the IASS service I cannot fault at all
- Thanks for the positive outcome benefiting my daughter
- The IASS staff member spoke with my child to go through his views for his EHCP review and he felt he was able to give his honest opinion that he didn't feel he could do with his school teacher. This was vital information for his EHCP.
- I am now in the process of having to find a school that meets my sons needs not mainstream. I was told to go away and look at schools, but I think the process is better by advising me which school is going to be available for me at that moment then look as no point looking if can't get a place.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My praise to the IASS staff member whose support was outstanding in the last few months</li> <li>• The IASS staff member has given me fantastic support throughout the year. I don't feel I could have done without her help &amp; advice. Sending virtual Flowers!!! Awesome lady 🌸🌸🌸</li> <li>• Funding is inadequate and the EHCP application process appallingly managed</li> <li>• We have been very happy and grateful for the service that has been provided to us.</li> <li>• SEND services overall are focussed on refusing children help. They talk in terms of “notional funding” which doesn't actually exist. The process is badly managed and is clearly set up as a war of attrition. The EHCP application and assessment are one and the same. We have been given conflicting information by the same dept and panel decisions have been overturned immediately by managers. Staff are focussed on the most seriously disadvantaged children and do not buy into the idea of “full potential” for everyone.</li> <li>• That I am dislisc and find it hard to read things and all the support with my son is grateful</li> <li>• I would like to thank your staff particularly the two staff members who worked closest with me and were always there every step of the way and to help me with any concerns I had, they gave me the confidence to proceed and get my son the specialist provision and support he so needed, it was not easy to do and their constant support saved me mentally and emotionally it also gave me a better understanding for what support is available to myself and my son .</li> <li>• Not really I just feel the service has it's limitation in terms or power and once they get to a certain level the IASS staff member alone cannot make changes.</li> <li>• I have no concerns other than the whole EHCP process is a minefield and one which needs to be fixed so that it's not a constant struggle and fight for any parent but with the help of the SEND IASS team I know where we are heading and that support is on hand to come to meetings</li> <li>• Just be there when I do, stop academies also be self- regulating as they aren't really being governed by anyone and too many children dropping through the cracks.</li> </ul>
<b>Equal Opportunities monitoring</b>	<b>Ethnicity:</b> 43 responses: 41 White British (96%) 1 British American (2%) 1 Hispanic (2%)  <b>Do you have a disability?</b> 51 responses: No disability 42 (82%) Disability 9 (18%)

## Appendix 2: Summary of referrals to IASS - 473 referrals

Level of contact	Level 1 - 341 Level 2 - 117 Level 3 - 10 Level 4 - 5																									
Gender of child/young person	Male 160 (68%)      Female 74 (32%)  Level 1 - Data not collected – 239 (Single phone call or email requesting basic information)																									
Year in school	<p>226 responses</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Preschool - 0</td> <td>Year 5 – 16 (7%)</td> <td>Year 12 - 5 (2%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nursery - 11 (5%)</td> <td>Year 6 - 25 (11%)</td> <td>Year 13 - 2 (1%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reception - 12 (6%)</td> <td>Year 7 - 19 (8%)</td> <td>Year 14 - 3 (1%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 1 - 8 (4%)</td> <td>Year 8 - 26 (12%)</td> <td>Year 15 - 1 (0.5%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 2 - 7 (3%)</td> <td>Year 9 - 25 (11%)</td> <td>Year 16 - 1 (0.5%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 3 - 16 (7%)</td> <td>Year 10 - 21 (9%)</td> <td>Year 17 - 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 4 - 7 (3%)</td> <td>Year 11 - 21 (9%)</td> <td>Year 18 - 0</td> </tr> </table> <p>Level 1 - Data not collected - 247 (Single phone call or email requesting basic information)</p>		Preschool - 0	Year 5 – 16 (7%)	Year 12 - 5 (2%)	Nursery - 11 (5%)	Year 6 - 25 (11%)	Year 13 - 2 (1%)	Reception - 12 (6%)	Year 7 - 19 (8%)	Year 14 - 3 (1%)	Year 1 - 8 (4%)	Year 8 - 26 (12%)	Year 15 - 1 (0.5%)	Year 2 - 7 (3%)	Year 9 - 25 (11%)	Year 16 - 1 (0.5%)	Year 3 - 16 (7%)	Year 10 - 21 (9%)	Year 17 - 0	Year 4 - 7 (3%)	Year 11 - 21 (9%)	Year 18 - 0			
Preschool - 0	Year 5 – 16 (7%)	Year 12 - 5 (2%)																								
Nursery - 11 (5%)	Year 6 - 25 (11%)	Year 13 - 2 (1%)																								
Reception - 12 (6%)	Year 7 - 19 (8%)	Year 14 - 3 (1%)																								
Year 1 - 8 (4%)	Year 8 - 26 (12%)	Year 15 - 1 (0.5%)																								
Year 2 - 7 (3%)	Year 9 - 25 (11%)	Year 16 - 1 (0.5%)																								
Year 3 - 16 (7%)	Year 10 - 21 (9%)	Year 17 - 0																								
Year 4 - 7 (3%)	Year 11 - 21 (9%)	Year 18 - 0																								
School Partnership	<p>212 responses</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Alnwick - 11 (5%) <b>North</b></td> <td>Further Education - 7 (3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alternative Provider – 2 (1%)</td> <td>Haydon Bridge - 2 (1%) <b>West</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ashington - 34 (16%) <b>South</b></td> <td>Hexham - 21 (10%) <b>West</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>East/Central</b></td> <td>Morpeth - 20 (9%) <b>South East/Central</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bedlington - 29(14%) <b>South</b></td> <td>Ponteland - 4 (2%) <b>West</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>East/Central</b></td> <td>Prudhoe - 2 (1%) <b>West</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Berwick - 3 (1.5%) <b>North</b></td> <td>Seaton Valley - 10 (5%) <b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blyth - 18 (9%) <b>South East/Central</b></td> <td><b>East/Central</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coquet – 10 (5%) <b>North</b></td> <td>Special school - 20 (9%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cramlington- 7 (3%) <b>South</b></td> <td>Supported Internship - 1 (0.5%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>East/Central</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elective Home Education - 11 (5%)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Level 1 - Data not collected – 261 (Single phone call or email requesting basic information)</p>		Alnwick - 11 (5%) <b>North</b>	Further Education - 7 (3%)	Alternative Provider – 2 (1%)	Haydon Bridge - 2 (1%) <b>West</b>	Ashington - 34 (16%) <b>South</b>	Hexham - 21 (10%) <b>West</b>	<b>East/Central</b>	Morpeth - 20 (9%) <b>South East/Central</b>	Bedlington - 29(14%) <b>South</b>	Ponteland - 4 (2%) <b>West</b>	<b>East/Central</b>	Prudhoe - 2 (1%) <b>West</b>	Berwick - 3 (1.5%) <b>North</b>	Seaton Valley - 10 (5%) <b>South</b>	Blyth - 18 (9%) <b>South East/Central</b>	<b>East/Central</b>	Coquet – 10 (5%) <b>North</b>	Special school - 20 (9%)	Cramlington- 7 (3%) <b>South</b>	Supported Internship - 1 (0.5%)	<b>East/Central</b>		Elective Home Education - 11 (5%)	
Alnwick - 11 (5%) <b>North</b>	Further Education - 7 (3%)																									
Alternative Provider – 2 (1%)	Haydon Bridge - 2 (1%) <b>West</b>																									
Ashington - 34 (16%) <b>South</b>	Hexham - 21 (10%) <b>West</b>																									
<b>East/Central</b>	Morpeth - 20 (9%) <b>South East/Central</b>																									
Bedlington - 29(14%) <b>South</b>	Ponteland - 4 (2%) <b>West</b>																									
<b>East/Central</b>	Prudhoe - 2 (1%) <b>West</b>																									
Berwick - 3 (1.5%) <b>North</b>	Seaton Valley - 10 (5%) <b>South</b>																									
Blyth - 18 (9%) <b>South East/Central</b>	<b>East/Central</b>																									
Coquet – 10 (5%) <b>North</b>	Special school - 20 (9%)																									
Cramlington- 7 (3%) <b>South</b>	Supported Internship - 1 (0.5%)																									
<b>East/Central</b>																										
Elective Home Education - 11 (5%)																										
Source of referral	<p>473 responses</p> <p>Mum - 364 (76%) Dad - 27 (6%) Young Person - 25 (5%) Grandad - 2 (0.4%) Grandma – 11 (2.3%)</p>																									

	<b>Step Mum - 1 (0.2%) Special Guardian - 2 (0.4%)</b> <b>Professional - 39 (8.2%) Friend - 1 (0.2%)</b> <b>Unknown - 1 (0.2%)</b>					
<b>Where heard about the service</b>	<b>228 responses</b>					
	<b>Health professional</b>	<b>3 (1%)</b>	<b>Family member</b>	<b>3 (1%)</b>	<b>Careers Guidance Team</b>	<b>4 (2%)</b>
	<b>CYPS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health)</b>	<b>16 (7%)</b>	<b>Another parent/ friend</b>	<b>15 (6%)</b>	<b>Family Support Worker</b>	<b>3 (1%)</b>
	<b>Local Authority SEND Team</b>	<b>25(11%)</b>	<b>Parent Support grp</b>	<b>4 (2%)</b>	<b>Sensory Support Team</b>	<b>1 (0.5%)</b>
	<b>Social care professional</b>	<b>4 (2%)</b>	<b>Local Offer/ NCC Website</b>	<b>23 (10%)</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>34 (15%)</b>
	<b>Portage</b>	<b>2 (1%)</b>	<b>RNIB</b>	<b>1 (0.5%)</b>	<b>SEND Support Team</b>	<b>2 (1%)</b>
	<b>School nurse</b>	<b>2 (1%)</b>	<b>Previous referral</b>	<b>70 (31%)</b>	<b>Early Help Worker</b>	<b>7 (3%)</b>
	<b>Local Authority complaints team</b>	<b>1 (0.5%)</b>	<b>EOTAS</b>	<b>4 (2%)</b>	<b>Virtual school</b>	<b>1 (0.5%)</b>
	<b>Barnardos Mediation Service</b>	<b>1 (0.5%)</b>	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>1 (0.5%)</b>	<b>Primary Mental Health</b>	<b>1 (0.5%)</b>
	<b>Data not collected - 245 (Single phone call or email requesting basic information)</b>					
<b>SEND Code of Practice Graduated Approach</b>	<b>217 Responses collected</b> <b>No special provision - 8 (4%)</b> <b>SEN Support - 92 (42%)</b> <b>Request for EHC needs assessment - 23 (10.5 %)</b> <b>EHC needs assessment - 4 (2%)</b> <b>EHC Plan not issued following assessment 1 (0.5%)</b> <b>EHCP - 89 (41%)</b>					
<b>SEN Category</b>	<b>208 responses collected</b> <b>Cognition and Learning - 28 (14%)</b> <b>Communication and interaction - 23 (11 %)</b> <b>Sensory and/or physical - 17 (8%)</b> <b>Social, emotional and mental health - 140 (67%)</b>					
<b>SEN Primary need (where</b>	<b>178 responses collected</b>					
	<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)</b>			<b>77 (43%)</b>		

identified)	Speech, language and communication (SLCN)	11 (6%)
	Specific learning difficulties (dyslexia)	4 (2%)
	Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)	8 (5%)
	Severe learning difficulties (SLD)	1 (0.5%)
	Profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)	0
	Social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH)	63 (36%)
	Hearing Impaired (HI)	0
	Visual Impairment (VI)	2 (1%)
	Multisensory impairment (Deafblindness) MSI	1 (0.5%)
	Physical Disability (PD)	11 (6%)
Initial reason for referral	455 responses collected	
	Admissions	1
	Attendance	1
	Benefits	1
	Bullying	1
	Child out of school	11 (2%)
	Complaint processes	5
	Concerns re support - EHCP	28 (6%)
	Concerns re support - SEN Support	80 (17.5%)
	Covid19 – timescales for EHC processes, school arrangements, etc	9
	CYPS – referral processes	4
	Disability Discrimination	1
	Educational Placement	64 (14%)
	EOTAS - Process for referral/concerns re provision	5
	Exclusion	8
	Funding information	2
	Giving views for assessment/annual review	20 (4%)
	How to request an EHC needs assessment	21 (5%)
	Mediation information	3
	Moving to/from another authority/country	3
No assessment - support with appealing	33 (7%)	
School Admissions	1	

	<b>SEN/EHC Processes</b>	<b>112 (25%)</b>
	<b>Signposting to other service</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Social Care</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>Transition between educational settings</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Transport</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Tribunal Information/Support</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Information, advice or support provided at initial contact</b>	<b>471 recorded</b>	
	<b>Attended meeting in school to discuss concerns</b>	<b>57 (12%)</b>
	<b>Home visit to discuss concerns/help with paperwork</b>	<b>24 (5%)</b>
	<b>Home visit and attended meeting</b>	<b>10 (2%)</b>
	<b>Meeting to discuss concerns (office)</b>	<b>4 (1%)</b>
	<b>Phone or email advice</b>	<b>84 (18%)</b>
	<b>Phone or email advice and sent information</b>	<b>280 (59.5%)</b>
	<b>Phone advice and organised on-line meeting</b>	<b>2 (0.5%)</b>
	<b>Signposting to other source of help</b>	<b>10 (2%)</b>