



**Annual Report**

**September 2023**

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## Introduction

Wokingham SENDIASS offers impartial information, advice and support relating to all aspects of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including health, social care, and personal budgets. We support children and young people up to the age of 25 with special educational needs and disabilities and their parents. SENDIASS offer support from initial concerns that a child or young person may have SEND through to requesting and maintaining an Education, Health and Care Plan, advising on the right of appeal through the SEND Tribunal system and support if a child/young person is at risk of, or has been excluded from school.

The information, advice and support offered is firmly based in the law and the SEND Code of Practice. SENDIASS provide unbiased information and advice about Wokingham Borough Council's policies and procedures and about the policy and practice in local schools and other settings.

Support is provided through a mixture of training and workshops for parents, telephone or email support, 'face-to-face' meetings with parents or young people, support in meetings with education, health and social care professionals. This year we have continued to conduct the majority of face-to-face meetings virtually. This has enabled us to increase our capacity in line with rising demand. We offer in-person meetings where necessary, for example, if parents or young people find it difficult to use telephones or technology.

Currently the SENDIASS team is staffed by 2.9 FTE: a full-time manager, an assistant 30 hours per week term time only (0.7 FTE) and 0-25 co-ordinator to develop the youth service (25 hours/0.67 FTE). In addition there is a third assistant 25 hours per week term time only (0.56 FTE) on a fixed term contract until April 2024. There is currently 1 active volunteer who volunteers for 1 morning per week, helping with surveys and assisting with enquiries from parents.

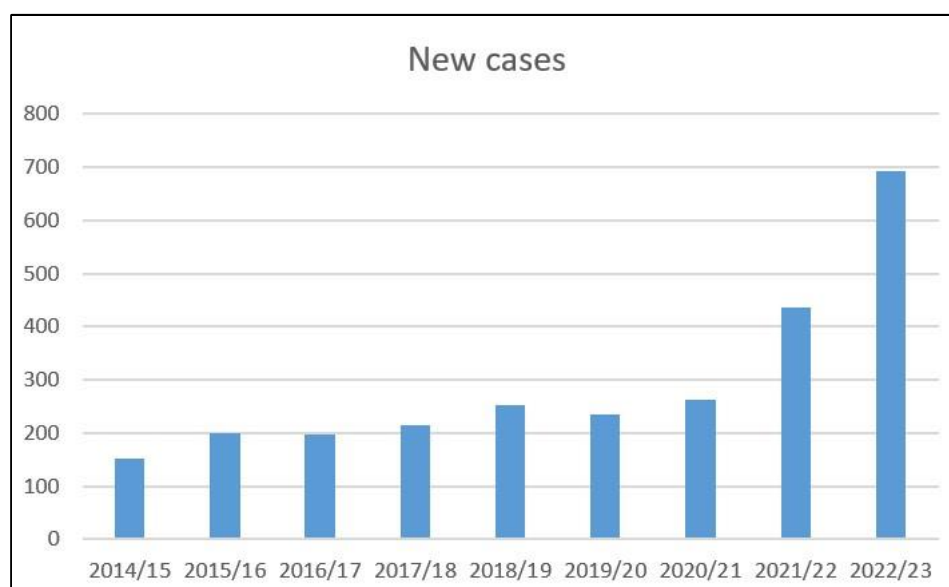
We have permanently adopted a hybrid working arrangement, working partly from home and partly in the office according to the needs of the service/clients and personal preference. The office space can take a maximum of 2 workers at any one time but can also double as a meeting space for parents and young people.

## Summary of Activity September 2022 – August 2023

### Case Work

#### Demand for service

Demand for the service has seen another huge increase this year, with 693 new cases during this academic year compared to 436 cases in the last academic year, an increase of 59%. This comes on top of a 66% increase in the previous academic year.



Last year the increase in demand was attributed to a post-pandemic surge. SEN Support work had increased back to expected levels of demand as a proportion of our total work and it was anticipated that some of the increase was due to a period of catching up, where lower-level concerns had not been addressed due to the interruption in schooling. It now looks likely that this is a very real, permanent and continuing growth in demand for the service, which must now be managed.

#### Responding to demand

The service has been under considerable pressure throughout the year due to the high number of new referrals. The team has endeavoured to give clear, thorough advice, encouraging parents to do some tasks themselves with support, enabling case officers to focus on the most complex cases, or the most vulnerable parents. New advice leaflets have been developed to assist parents to complete EHC Needs Assessment requests, check their own plans and to explain the mediation and tribunal process, all with the aim of increasing the efficiency of the team and the resilience and confidence of parents.

In March a waiting list was introduced for the first time in many years. This helped to control the requests for support and ensure that cases were allocated more appropriately to an officer who has capacity to give it attention. People are placed on the waiting list if they require more focussed support (as opposed to information or

advice) and are prioritised based on a combination of date of referral, vulnerabilities of the parents, specific issues such as a child missing education, and whether there are legal timescales involved, such as exclusion reviews or tribunals. At the end of August there were 8 families on the waiting list.

SENDIASS continue to ensure that cases are closed as soon as a piece of work is complete, rather than having some families who remain open to the service for long periods of time. This enables us to record each piece of work that is done and will also enable us to gain feedback from users more effectively and hence to measure the impact of our involvement (see **Appendix 2** for service user satisfaction survey results). It also ensures that the team is able to focus on the current, pressing issues impacting families. At the end of August there were 177 cases open to SENDIASS, an increase from 133 last year. This is partly due to the number of tribunal cases open, which tend to be open for a longer period of time due to the wait for a hearing, and to the general growth in cases.

SENDIASS aim to follow up cases in a timely manner, but this is still a challenge. There were 101 outstanding actions to complete on casework at the end of August, compared to 44 last year. This figure has fluctuated throughout the year and the service still needs to manage this better to ensure better management of caseloads and ensuring a good service, particular to those more vulnerable service users who are less likely to proactively contact the service part way through our involvement.

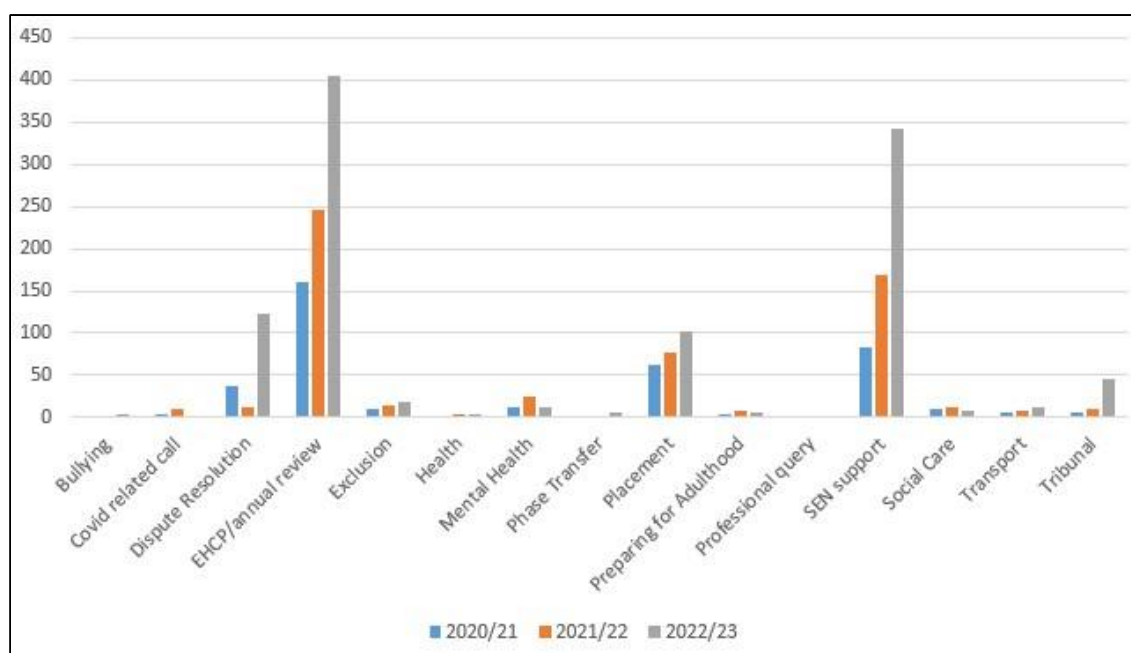
There is a key performance indicator to respond to 80% of new enquiries within 2 working days. Response times this year have been mostly good, especially considering the increase in demand. The average over the year is 82% of new referrals responded to within 2 days. However, last year the response rate was an average of 94% within 2 days, so this is a significant decrease and will need to be monitored closely in the coming months.

Month	Percentage responded to within 2 days
September	95
October	80
November	88
December	86
January	80
February	72
March	83
April	89
May	84
June	87
July	60
August	82

Satisfaction with the response times is reflected in the surveys (see **Appendix 2**). The service user survey indicates that 90% of service users thought that SENDIASS were easy to get hold of (a decrease from 93% last year).

### **New referrals: reasons for requesting support**

The chart below shows the reason for referral for all new referrals in the current year.



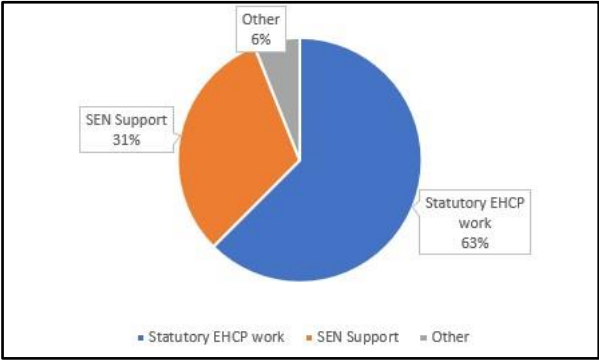
During the course of our involvement the category of need may change, hence there are often more than one referral reasons for a single referral. A high level of work at SEN support level continues to relate to mental health, anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance. In addition requests for support with EHC Needs Assessments, and Annual Reviews continue to increase, in line with the increasing numbers of EHCPs in the borough.

Work around placement issues continues to be a high area of need. Pressures on school places locally and the difficulty in identifying suitable placements is a major factor contributing to this area of work. The numbers of cases for each of these types of work has increased in line with the number of case referrals. The proportions of cases for each of these issues are broadly similar to the previous year.

Requests for support for dispute resolution and tribunal have increased significantly. There has been a large increase in dispute resolution work (from 2% to 11%) and in tribunals (increasing from 2% to 4% of all referrals). Dispute resolution is primarily around EHCPs and assessments, but can also include assisting parents to make complaints.

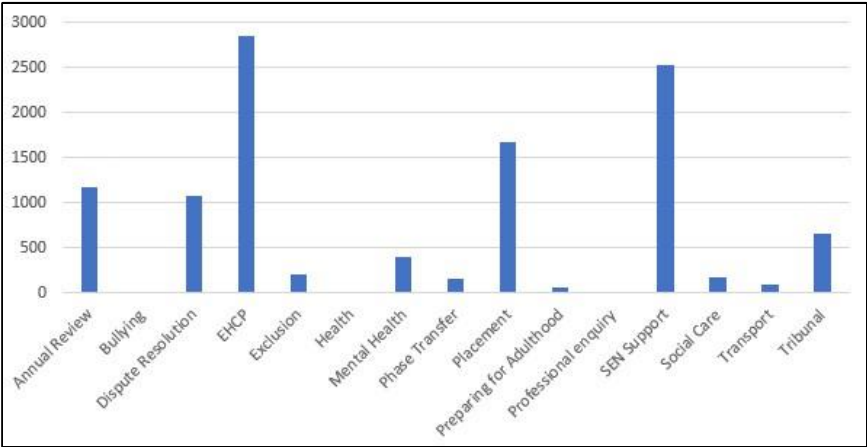
SENDIASS continue to offer effective support to families who wish to appeal decisions. The service has assisted in the preparation 45 tribunal cases this year compared to 11 last year. There have been 122 dispute resolution cases compared to 13 the previous year. The service always strives to bring about quick resolution without the need for costly tribunals. This is achieved by support at way forward meetings and assisting parents to provide clear evidence to support their requests, encouraging all parties to continue to work together to achieve resolution as quickly as possible. The high level of dispute resolution cases compared to tribunal indicates a significant level of success. This last academic year SENDIASS have attended 4 hearings, and there are many more scheduled for the coming months. This is very unusual as it has previously been rare to attend any hearings.

The proportion of work around statutory issues (EHCPs, annual reviews, tribunals) and SEN support and other is shown in the chart below. The majority of new referrals are connected to statutory processes.

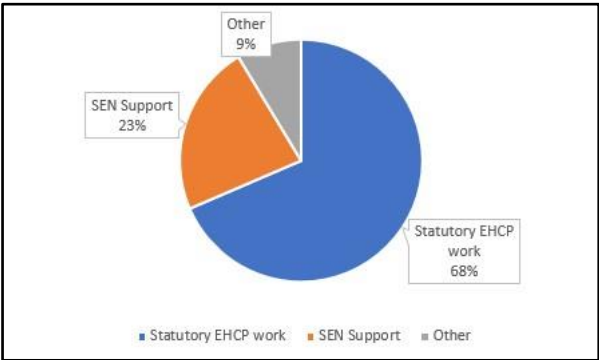


**Reason for support: all cases during the year**

For the first time this year we have collected data on the types of work throughout the year, whether they are existing cases or new referrals, by measuring the number of contacts for each piece of work. The graph below demonstrates the significant time spent now on supporting parents and carers to navigate the tribunal and dispute resolution processes.

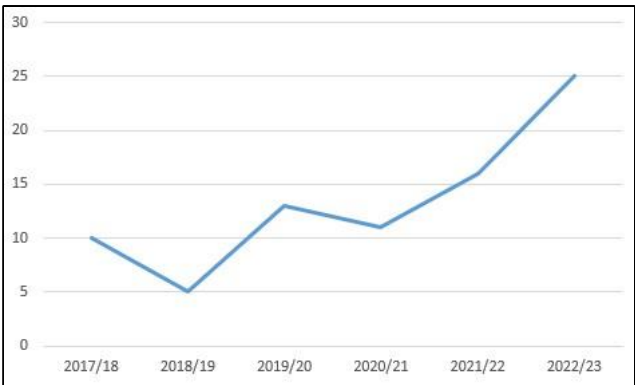


The proportion of work around statutory issues (EHCPs, annual reviews, tribunals) and SEN support and other for all cases is shown in the chart below. The statutory work is a larger proportion for all referrals (compared to new referrals) primarily because they tend to be cases that stay open for a longer period of time.



**Providing Information, Advice and Support to Young People**

SENDIASS continue to promote the service specifically for young people. It continues to be a challenge to increase the take-up of this service. All SENDIASS Officers consider how the voice of the child or young person can contribute to any cases where we are offering advice to the parents, particularly for those age 14 or over, and will discuss with the parents, and where possible, the young person, whether it is appropriate or desired that the 0-25 Coordinator supports the child separately. Children may struggle to engage due to their mental health or anxiety, or because they have already spoken to many professionals and are overwhelmed by the thought of speaking to another. For those who do engage with the service, the experience is positive. 25 young people have been supported this year. Although the number supported is still small, it is a 56% increase on the previous year and growth in numbers is steadily increasing as can be seen from the graph below.



Further information about casework can be found in **Appendix 1**.



## Training and Workshops

SENDIASS are required by the Service Level Agreement to offer at least 3 training sessions to parents and one training session to professionals each term.

### For parents

SENDIASS continue to deliver training online for parents throughout the year, with SEND Voices Wokingham hosting on Zoom. The following courses are available: EHCPs; Annual reviews; Preparing for Adulthood; SEN Support and Effective Communication. At least 3-4 training sessions have been offered each term, but delivery depends on demand. This year 95 parents have attended our training. The aim of the training is to give parents the information they need to enable them to continue with minimal support from us, rather than addressing each individual need separately.

Currently the amount of feedback is disappointingly low (only 30% responded). Those who have responded have been very happy with the courses. Parents indicated an improvement in their knowledge and confidence after attending training for each of the courses. Most were happy with accessing training via Zoom and we believe we do get better attendance via Zoom that we did with face-to-face training prior to the pandemic. The majority of attendees would recommend the training to other parents. We are currently discussing how we gather feedback for these sessions with our hosts SEND Voices Wokingham.

### For professionals

This year we have extended the training offer to include colleagues from schools. In total we have delivered training to 27 colleagues. Two courses are offered:

- **EHCP and Annual Reviews:** The purpose of this workshop is to give colleagues information about EHC Plans, when one is needed, how the application process works and how it is reviewed. By attending the session they should have a greater understanding of the process and how they may be expected to participate. In addition, this greater understanding enables them to challenge other professionals who may be giving inaccurate information and hopefully prevents some queries to SENDIASS.
- **Understanding the Parent's Perspective and Effective Communication:** This training aims to give attendees a better understanding of the emotions and stresses that a parent experiences to encourage deeper understanding and empathy. The training was devised in response to the many parents who tell us that they feel some professionals do not understand the difficulties they face. The course also includes some tips for effective communication (the same guidance given to parents).

## Involvement in Strategic Development of Services

Part of the role of the SENDIASS service is to work with local partners, including local parent and young people forums to inform and influence policy and practice in the local area. SENDIASS have contributed regularly to the following groups:

- Local Offer
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Co-production
- Early Years
- SEN support service
- Keyworking Programme Steering Group
- Specialist Mental Health Learning Disability Steering Group

The 0-25 coordinator has attended the Say Yes Youth Forum on two occasions and plans to attend regularly in the future. SENDIASS also contribute to the national IASS Network through attending regional meetings and providing information for national surveys.

## Reputation and awareness of the service

SENDIASS continue to collect data on user satisfaction in line with colleagues nationally (see **Appendix 2** for full results). The overall satisfaction rate for Wokingham SENDIASS is 92%, down slightly from 92.5% last year. Answers to all questions were above the 75% target. This is an average of the positive responses across all 6 questions. This compares to 90.5% nationally. Views of the service's impartiality have improved again, with 98% stating that we are impartial or very impartial. This is a significant improvement on 87% two years ago.

Many results were similar to last year, with a slight drop in the satisfaction of our response rates, which is unsurprising given the service pressures. There was also a slight decrease in the satisfaction rates (91%, down from 94%) and in the difference our support has made (84%, down from 88%).

It is still proving difficult to get a high response rate to the surveys and improving this needs to continue to be a focus. Currently only 45% of parents respond to our request for feedback.

Many parents commented that they wished they had known about the service earlier. This is a reminder to us of the importance of continuous publicity as new parents enter the SEND system all the time. It was, therefore, pleasing to read the comment from one user that 'SENDIASS has a greater social media presence now and that helps.'

## **Service Development: Progress against 2022/23 Action Plan**

Service development has been much more modest this year. Activity has focussed on increasing the efficiency of the service to manage rising demand. There were 5 main areas of focus:

### **Modify the method of service delivery**

Demand continues to grow, yet resources have remained the same. Delivery of the service must change in response to ensure advice is given to as many parents as possible whilst ensuring those with the most complex problems and the highest need for assistance still get an appropriate level of support. The team have worked hard to encourage self-sufficiency amongst those parents who are more capable. This may involve coaching parents prior to meetings, rather than attending, giving instructions on how to prepare paperwork, check plans, submit appeals, rather than assisting parents directly. This has been a challenge. Parental confidence is exceptionally low currently and many capable parents are feeling the pressure to get things right for their child. As a result they want expert assistance. The SENDIASS team are natural helpers: it is why they do this role and has required a shift in mindset and learning to say no to parents. The current approach is to expect parents to try to complete tasks first and to offer to check what they have done. This will hopefully build their confidence for the next stage, ease the pressures on the team and still provide appropriate support.

### **Revive the volunteer programme.**

The volunteer programme is always a challenge. Our main source of volunteers is parents who have used the service. Many will show interest but may be unable to proceed or have to withdraw due to family commitments. There is a training commitment to ensure our volunteers can work appropriately with parents. This year a long standing volunteer has moved on to employment. One new volunteer has been recruited and has been able to offer us one morning per week. They have been trained to assist with completing paperwork (eg EHCP applications, annual review paperwork) which can be time consuming but does not use much of the detailed knowledge that SENDIASS officers have. They have also answered phone calls, taking initial information from parents, and assisted with the satisfaction surveys. SENDIASS are very appreciative of the time our volunteers give.

### **Website and leaflet development:**

This year the website has been moved to a new platform as part of the council wide website upgrade. In order to meet new accessibility standards we were required to audit the readability of the pages. Most pages passed the readability criteria, but a few did not. It is likely this is due to the complexity of the content and increasing the readability would reduce the usefulness of the site. It would be sensible to relook at

these pages when time allows, to see if improvements can be made, but that is not a current priority and parents always have the option to call for advice. There was also a requirement to ensure the many leaflets on the website were accessible pdfs. This has been achieved and a template has been created to make production of any new leaflets as simple as possible.

The range of leaflets has been expanded to cover common areas of enquiry: how to complete an EHC Needs Assessment form, how to check an EHCP, guidance on mediation and tribunals. This will aid parents with tasks that we may want to coach them to do for themselves.

Some challenges remain. There are still some small errors on the web pages and some design issues that need modification. Currently there is no ability for the team to make small modifications (adding leaflets, updating training) and it is hoped that we will be able to access appropriate training soon.

### **Service for young people:**

SENDIASS have continued to encourage the inclusion of young people in decisions about their education, whether that is in our work with parents, schools or through our training. The 0-25 coordinator has visited Say Yes, the new SEND youth forum, twice this year and plans to visit regularly. The target 20% increase in numbers of young people supported has been exceeded, with growth of 56%.

### **Service level agreement with health:**

Health have once again given a financial contribution to the service for the forthcoming financial year, but contributions are not consistent. It would be beneficial for the service stability if this contribution could be more consistent and to have a formal joint commissioning agreement in place.

### **Action Plan for Next 12 Months**

1. Strengthening our support for young people, increasing the numbers supported by at least 30% per year.
2. Develop a clearly documented policy on the support available and how we manage requests for support based on need.
3. Ensure parents are able to access support before reaching crisis, assisting them to access the right support at the right time: ensure appropriate staffing levels, promote volunteer programme, continue drop-ins.
4. Maintain a high profile for the service to ensure/increase awareness of its availability (particularly among Early Years) through social media presence, attendance at local events. In particular publicise the SEN support aspect of the service, which has recently declined, and focus publicity to parents of Early Years

Children, who are less likely to know about the service and more likely to need support.

5. Maintain and improve the information available via alternative methods to 1:1 support: ongoing training, leaflets and website, investigate online training/short information videos
6. Complete the self-evaluation of service and undertake any further improvements identified.

## **Future Demand and Challenges**

Demand for the service continues to rise and is likely to continue to do so. The Wokingham SEND Strategy 2020-23 and Safety Valve submissions predict that the incidence of SEND will continue to rise, both in terms of those requiring SEN support and those requiring EHCPs. There are still a high number of children and young people presenting with anxiety and mental health difficulties, particularly with Emotional Based School Avoidance. Parental anxiety is still high and resilience is low. In addition, many now have the added stress of the cost of living crisis. Parents of children with SEND have a higher incidence of financial difficulties, either due to the higher costs of having a child with disabilities or because their caring responsibilities impact their ability to work.

This rise in demand must also be put into the context of continued SEND financial pressures nationally, as well as a particular local pressure on school placements. These factors make it much more difficult to achieve an agreeable outcome for families of children with SEND as there is less choice and flexibility in the system. In turn, these pressures are likely to lead to more parents seeking support from SENDIASS to understand the issues and to challenge decisions.

There has been a significant increase in the number of tribunals and dispute resolution cases in recent months. This may be attributable to the Safety Valve programme, with SEN colleagues applying legal tests more robustly and an expectation that schools will meet the needs of more children and young people. This change of approach has resulted in more decisions being contested (many legitimately so) and it will take some time to reach a new equilibrium.

A further challenge faced by the SENDIASS team is the impact of difficulties within the SEND team. Like SENDIASS, they have experienced a significant increase in caseload. This has impacted on their ability to communicate effectively and within an appropriate timeframe. Many parents have approached SENDIASS due to difficulties with the SEND team and their confidence in that team is low. Many feel that they are not being given the opportunity to engage fully in the EHCP and Annual Review processes and certainly do not feel that they are kept informed about progress. This is especially stressful when they are awaiting information about the provision of suitable

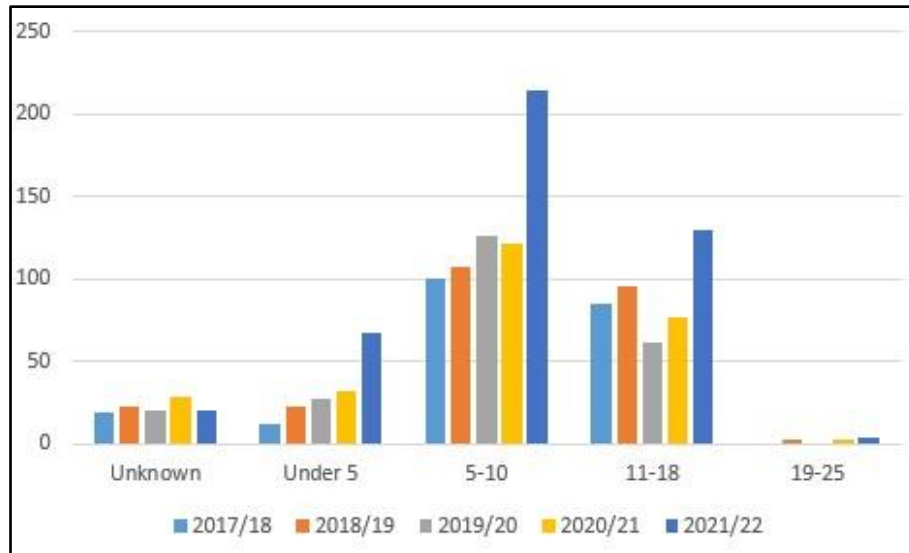
placements for their child or funding decisions for additional and much needed support. SENDIASS continue to work with the SEND team, highlighting common difficulties that are being experienced by parents.

The predicted rise in demand must be considered in conjunction with current staffing challenges: one of the SENDIASS team is on a fixed term contract until September 2024. This position has been funded since 2019 using the additional funding that has been received. It is not part of the core budget. There are some reserves remaining, but these will be spent by April 2025 at the latest. Any further extension of the fixed term contract beyond 2024 will be subject to agreement with Wokingham Borough Council. If no additional funding can be sourced the service will experience a drop in staffing resource of almost 20%. This will have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the service. This is a significant risk to the service.

## Appendix 1: Further Analysis of Casework

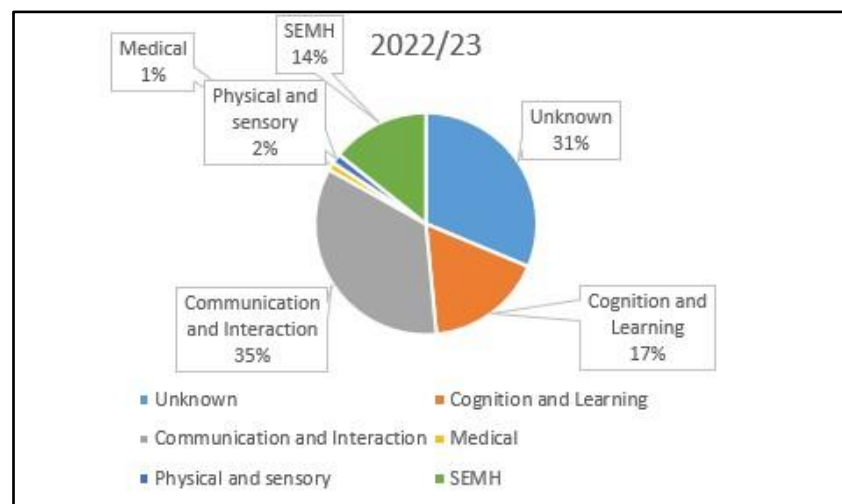
The following analysis is based on new referrals received between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023, and comparison with previous years.

### Number of referrals by age of child



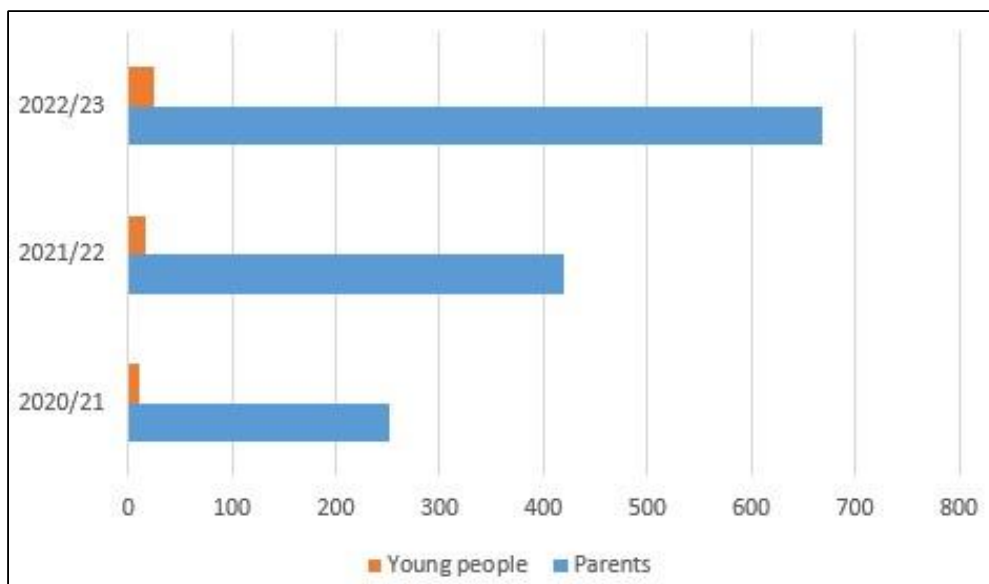
Most age ranges have seen a large increase in numbers of referrals. The majority of referrals are for children in the 5-10 and 11-18 brackets. The proportions of referrals in each age range remains broadly similar. This is comparable to Local Authority data: SEN support is highest in KS1 & 2 and there are high numbers of EHCPs in KS2 and 3, although there are also a large number of EHCPs in the post-16 age range. It is likely that the number of post-16 referrals to SENDIASS are not consistent with Local Authority data as many parents will have a much greater understanding of the processes by that stage and will not need support. The Local Authority has observed a rise in the incidence of children with SEND amongst under 5s, consistent with our referrals.

### Number of referrals by disability



Children and young people with communication and interaction as their primary need continues to be the predominant group, followed by SEMH (social emotional and mental health) and cognition and learning. There are a higher number of unknowns this year, perhaps because of incomplete data, or because children do not fit into a clear category.

### Referrals by person supported (parent/young person)



The large majority of our work continues to be with parents. Increasing the number of young people supported continues to be a challenge, but the numbers supported grow each year.

### Intervention levels

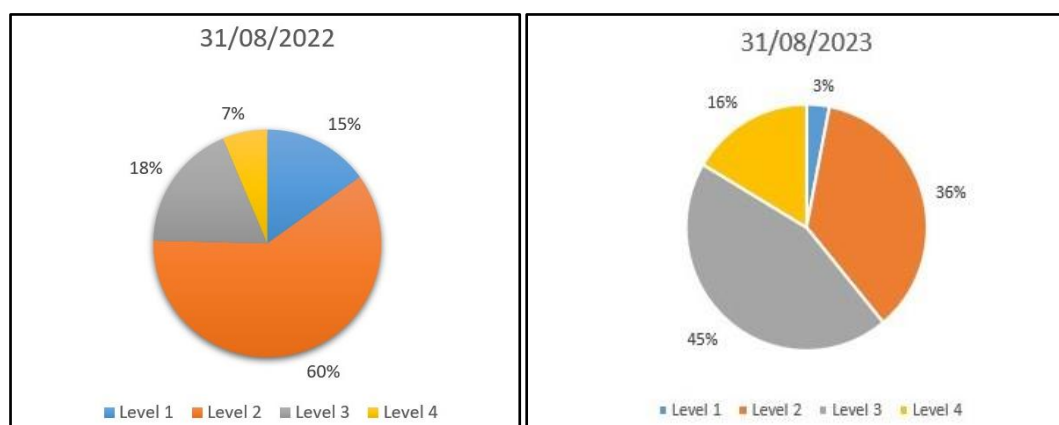
Following advice from the IASSN, Wokingham SENDIASS record intervention levels. The specification for each level has been changed during the course of this year in order to ensure greater clarity. The table below shows the old and new criteria for levels of interventions

	Old definition	New definition
Level 1	Phone or email support – single intervention.	Information: single contact with the service for general advice on SEND issues via phone, email or drop-in.
Level 2	Phone or email support over a period of time. This may include support at a meeting, a home visit, or liaison with other agencies.	Advice: more detailed advice about the young person's specific situation over a short period of time (4-8 weeks)
Level 3	Provision of support at or for a series of meetings over a period	Support: detailed advice and support over a period of time.



	of months; ongoing support through statutory process (eg EHCP); assistance with preparation for exclusion appeal.	Low Need / High Complexity or High Need / Low Complexity
Level 4	Intensive support during legal processes, eg Tribunal.	Support: detailed advice and support over a period of time. High Need / High Complexity

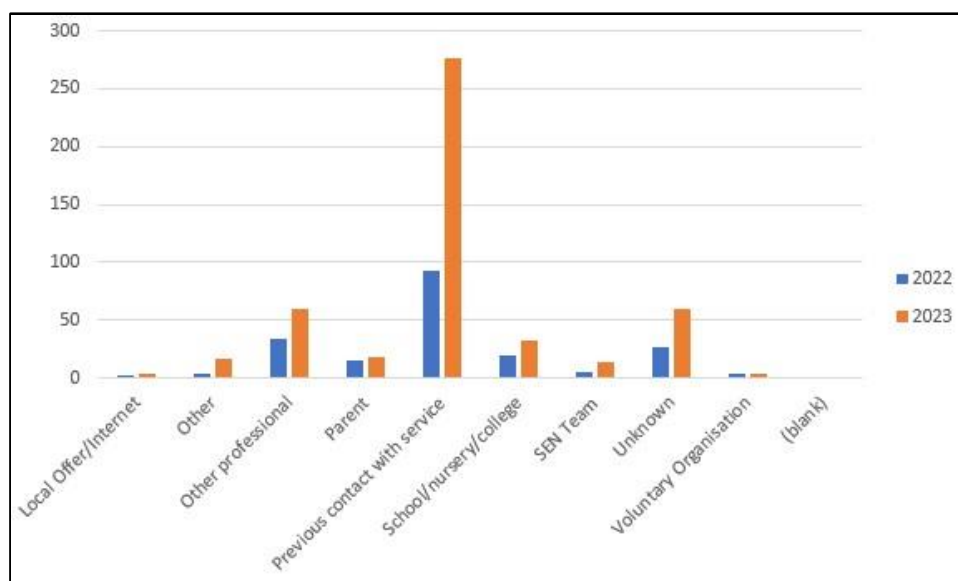
The current proportions at each level for cases open at the end of the academic year, compared to last year is as follows:



The majority of cases are now at Level 3. Recent service developments and the new level descriptors aim to reduce the amount of support required for Levels 1 and 2 aiming to give advice to enable parents to resolve issues by themselves without the need for direct work from a SENDIASS Officer. This allows more attention to be focussed on the more complex cases at Levels 3 and 4. There is currently a high number of parents requiring more long term support. This is partly due to the rise in tribunal and dispute resolution work, but also due to what SENDIASS officers see as the lower resilience and confidence amongst parents currently.

### Referral Source

The chart below indicates how parents found out about the service and compares this to the previous year. Many of those using the service have been in contact with SENDIASS before. Schools and other professionals also often signpost parents to the service. There are still a significant number of unknowns and we need to collect this data more reliably.



## Appendix 2: Parent Carer Survey 2022/23

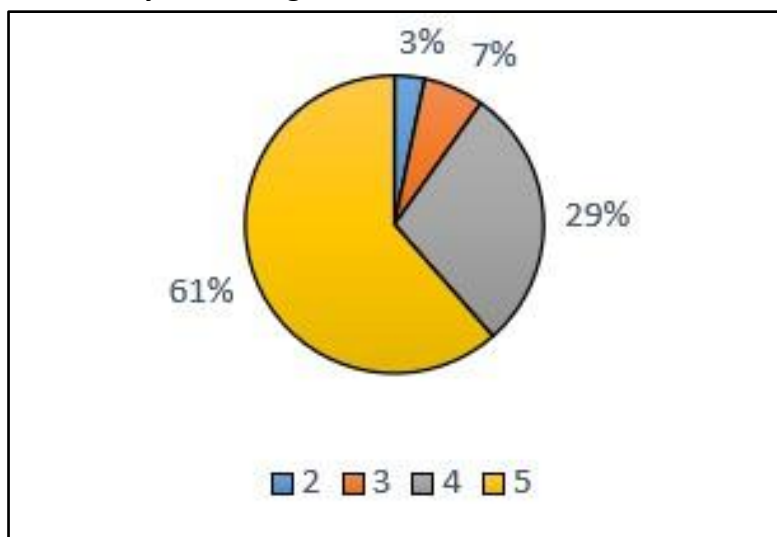
Parents are asked to complete a survey when we close a case at Level 2 or above.

We have the following KPI's in relation to our surveys.

- 100% of cases at Levels 2-4 will be surveyed: we have made contact with 100% of cases, either by phone or email.
- 75% of customers respond: This year we received 122 responses from 273 requests (45%). This is a slight decrease on last year (46%). It is still proving difficult to get the required response rate.
- Target 75% satisfaction rates of those who responded.

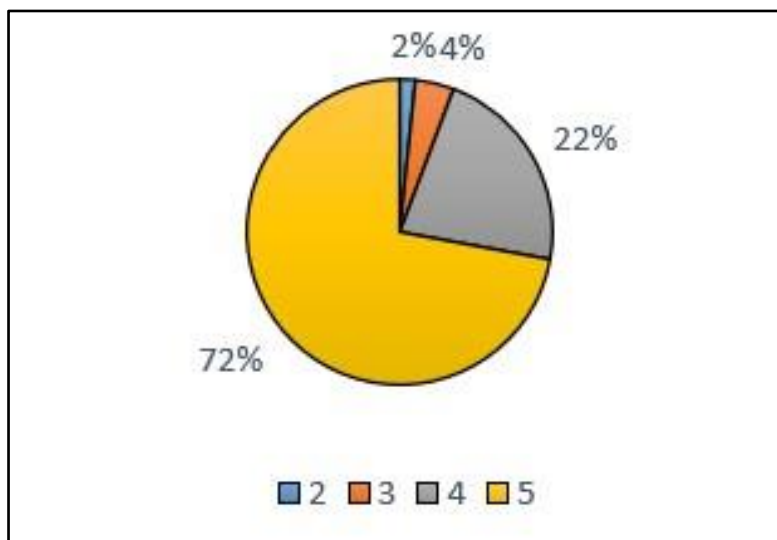
### Results

#### 1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?



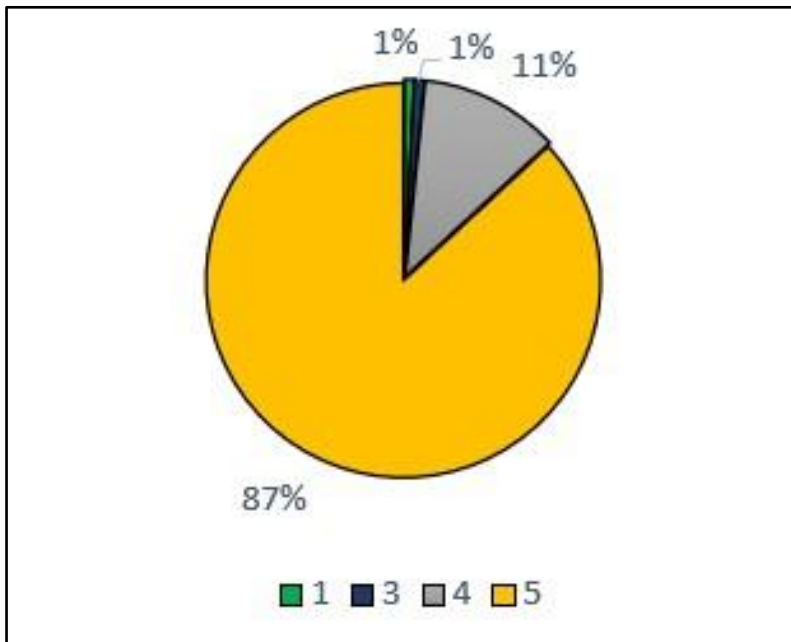
90% found it easy or very easy (decreased from 93% last year).

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



94% found the information helpful or very helpful (increased from 93% last year).

**3 How impartial, fair and unbiased do you think we were?**

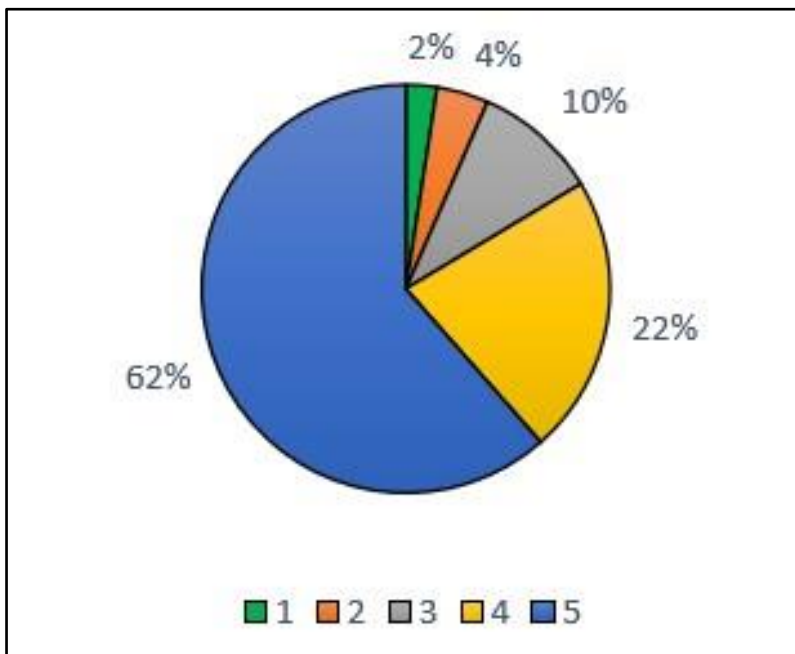


98% said we were impartial or very impartial (92% last year).

**4 What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?**

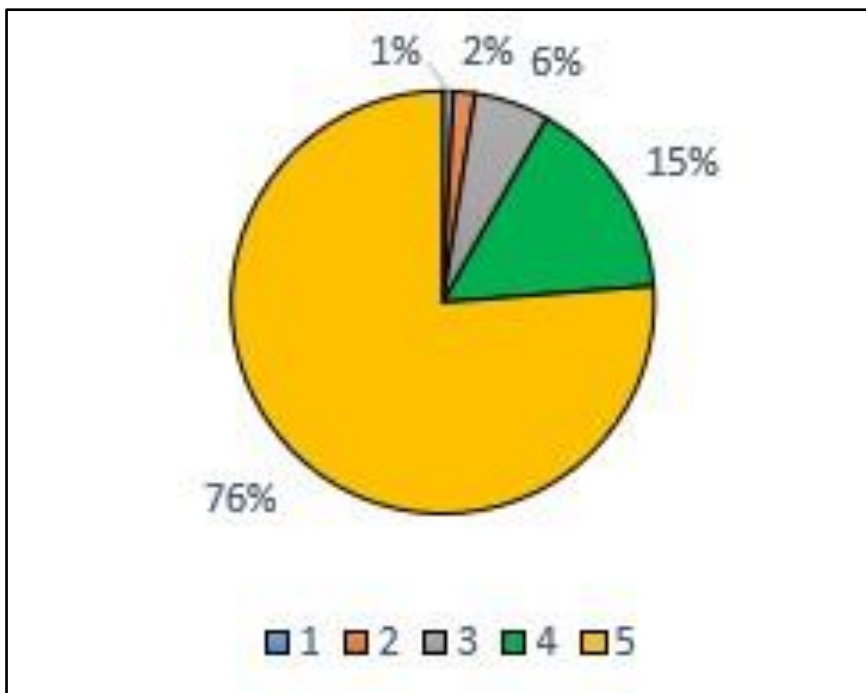
Pie chart showing results for question 4:

88% said we had made a difference or a great deal of difference (76% last year).



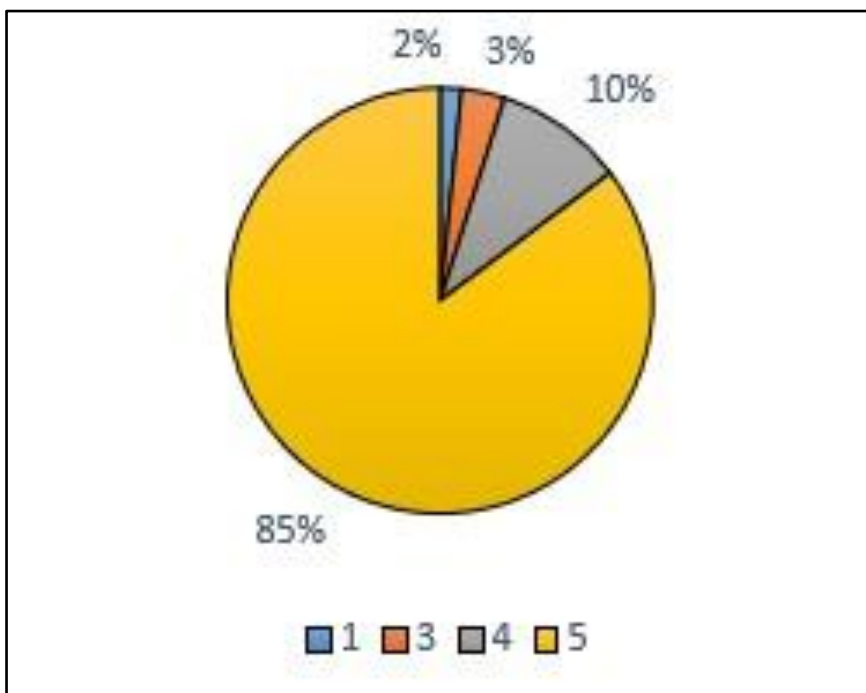
84% said we had made a difference or a great deal of difference (88% last year).

**5 Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?**



91% were satisfied or very satisfied (decreased from 94% last year).

**6 How likely is it that you would recommend this service to others?**



95% said they were likely or extremely likely to recommend the service (same as last year).

The average satisfaction response is 92.% compared to 92.5% last year. All questions were above the 75% target. The lowest score was 84% which is the question about

how much difference we made. This is the issue we have least control over as we cannot always help parents to achieve the results they want. We collect more information about the differences we have made in supplementary questions and further analysis of this issue can be found below.

**Question 4b: Can you tell us more about the difference(s) we made for you**

	<b>% agree this year 2022/23</b>	<b>% agree 2021/22</b>
I feel that my child's needs are better understood than they were	79%	77.5%
I now have a better relationship with my child's school or setting	52%	56.5%
I now have a better relationship with the Local Authority	65%	54%
I feel more confident	87%	90%
I have a greater understanding of the Send Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children and young people with SEND.	90%	92.5%
I feel more involved in decisions about my child's education	82%	85%
I am happier/less worried about my child's future	65%	75%
I feel my child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved	88%	90%

It is positive to see that the involvement of SENDIASS is having a beneficial impact on parental confidence and knowledge and that parents feel that their child has benefitted from our involvement. Unfortunately many clearly feel that their relationships with schools and the LA have not improved and many are still worried about the future. This is perhaps symptomatic of the difficulties more generally within the SEND system, both locally and nationally at the moment.

**7 Do you have any other comments about our service?**

There were 66 positive comments and 2 negative comments and 14 that were neither positive or negative. A selection are shown below.

**Positive comments:**

We received several comments saying that they were very pleased with the service. Some other common themes were that parents felt empowered due to understanding what their children were entitled to. Many commented on how lonely it can feel dealing with these issues on your own and how our service had helped with that.

- With Sendiass support I now feel more empowered to go into meetings with my child's school as I now know what support my child should be getting.
- I have been receiving support from SENDIASS and she has been extremely helpful, without her I was lost and felt alone. She helped me every step of the way so that my son's SEN needs were identified. Her empathy, knowledge and continued support has been a blessing to my family but more importantly my Special child. Thanks a ton !
- There is a lot of negativity on Facebook groups about SEND services but the service I have received from SENDIASS has been amazing. She took the time to go through everything with me and her knowledge was fantastic. I know that she will be there to guide me if I need advice in the future and that helps me to feel more positive in spite of all the negativity I read elsewhere.
- The SENDIASS team were always at the end of the line when wanted to contact. Every one of them clearly empathised our needs and provided immense support at all times. The team provided extremely valuable advice. Every one was approachable, kind and cared for our needs. We were very worried about X's education and right allocation of school. It was only because of the SENDIASS team, X's place at an esteemed school was possible. We are so grateful to you all and can't express enough "Thank you's".
- Having SENDIASS and the help she offered has changed my life and the impact of her help has impacted my family and people around me. When someone like her is helping the parent, she is helping the child and other professionals around the child. It is a ripple effect. I don't know what we would have done without your service.

**Negative comments: with responses in italics:**

Negative comments were case specific so are not included here. In general comments seemed to centre around clarity of communication, which can always be improved.

**Neutral comments:**

Several of the comments want SENDIASS to provide more: face to face meetings, expanding the team so that we can attend more meetings, assistance with completing paperwork. This is going to be a particular challenge given the current rise in demand for services and more efficient ways of working will be required moving forwards. This may mean giving more direction and signposting to parents to enable them to do more for themselves. Several parents commented that they wish they had known about the service earlier and this is a timely reminder that publicity needs to be continuous.