

Information Advice and Support Service's Network Service User Report

What do parents, children, young people (and Ofsted)
think?

March 2024

For any queries regarding any of the data please contact us via email iassn@ncb.org.uk

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Foreword

Written by the IASSN Children and Young People's steering group. The group is made up of eight young people who previously accessed their SENDIAS service. For more information about the young people's steering group, please contact us on IASSN@ncb.org.uk

The Children and Young People's Steering group, having looked through the report together, had the following feedback.

Positives

The young people's group were glad to see a higher level of engagement from services regarding numbers of services submitting feedback. They also commented on the high scores that those submitting their feedback were rating against the questions.

Concerns

The young people wanted to highlight again the low level of response from children and young people. There was concern amongst the young people that, based on their own personal experience, this could be to do with young people's opinions not being seen as, as valuable as they should be and others speaking on their behalf.

The young people's group wanted to reiterate the importance of SENDIAS services and the vital work that they do. As such they felt that 44% of Ofsted Reports not mentioning SENDIAS services was a concern as they felt they were too vital a service to not be part of the final report. Direct quotes on this included:

- *SENDIAS services are an absolutely key part of providing for both young people and their families, and it's important that they're listened to and understood through Ofsted reports.*
- *SENDIASs are essential for children and young people across the board so it's important to ensure they're promoted and heard.*

Next steps

The young people welcomed the idea of doing a separate, more accessible report based around feedback gathered from children and young people. This to be looked at by the group in due course.

Introduction

The IASSN team

As part of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) it is a legal requirement that all local authorities ensure children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities ([SEND](#)) and their parents have access to an impartial [Information, Advice and Support \(IAS\) service](#).

The IASSN are funded by the Department for Education ([DfE](#)) to support this.

We do this by:

- Working with the [SENDIAS](#) services to ensure they have the resources and training to provide high quality information, advice and support to children, young people and parents in their area.
- Listening to, and working with, SENDIAS services to understand their challenges and successes in order to feedback to the [DfE](#) to implement positive and necessary change.
- Working with SENDIAS services and other stakeholders to develop and promote the [Standards](#) for SENDIAS services.

This report

This 2024 report explores how SENDIAS services are perceived by service users and by Ofsted. This report is designed to be part of creating a national picture and can be used alongside the earlier [data report](#).

This report is one of three key reports providing a national picture of SENDIASs. The other two are our Data Report and the Minium Standards Benchmarking report.

All reports can be found on our [website](#).

Service User Feedback

We asked the services covering all 152 local authority areas to submit 30+ sequential pieces of service user feedback collected within the last financial year. The response this year was greatly improved, with more services submitting feedback than from the last four reports.

This is positive as it indicates more services are meeting [minimum standard 4.2](#): *'The service routinely requests feedback from service users and others and uses this to further develop the work and practices of the service.'* Greater data also provides a more valid analysis of the national picture as well as showcases the importance services place on listening to those that access their service.

Table A: Overview

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Number of services providing feedback	87	87	88	92	127
Total pieces of feedback	4624	6734	5566	7917	9230
Average per service	53	77	63	86	73
From parents	3528	3625	4347	4485	5633
From Children (0-16)	27	12	40	12	26
From young people (16-25)	146	132	151	98	131
Unspecified	923	2965	1028	3322	3440

The Six Questions 2023

All services collect data in a way that works for them. The core of this, however, is asking service users to score their service from 0-4 considering six questions co-produced with the IASSN and service managers some time ago. Those six questions and their mean (average) score from sequential pieces of feedback from service users this year are as follows:

Table B: 2023 Mean Scores

Questions	Mean Score
Q1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?	3.50/4
Q2 How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?	3.67/4
Q3 How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?	3.72/4
Q4 What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?	3.49/4
Q5 Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?	3.66/4
Q6 How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?	3.73/4
Total	3.63/4

We can see that those that submitted service user feedback rated their service very highly. We ask for sequential feedback to ensure we get an accurate snapshot, so this is incredibly positive at a time where we know funding and capacity are providing huge challenges. The lowest scored question, Q4, also doesn't take into account that services are impartial so cannot always make the difference service users were hoping for. Despite this, and with all credit to services, the highest score being Q6 suggests even when service users didn't get the outcome from which they were hoping, they'd still recommend the service to others.

It's important to also consider the trend in service user feedback to see how it tallies to funding and capacity issues in services.

Table C: Mean Score Trend

Questions	18-19 Mean score	19-20 Mean score	20-21 Mean Score	21-22 Mean score	22-23 Mean Score	23-24 Mean Score
Q1	3.50	3.58	3.59	3.53	3.50	3.50
Q2	3.70	3.76	3.72	3.74	3.65	3.67
Q3	3.70	3.80	3.85	3.75	3.70	3.72
Q4	3.40	3.53	3.60	3.60	3.48	3.49
Q5	3.60	3.71	3.72	3.73	3.64	3.66
Q6	3.70	3.80	3.81	3.80	3.73	3.73
Mean	3.60	3.70	3.72	3.69	3.62	3.63

Services continue to receive high scores across the board with very little change year to year. However, considering the challenges with funding and capacity we can see from the following table taken from this financial year's [data report](#):

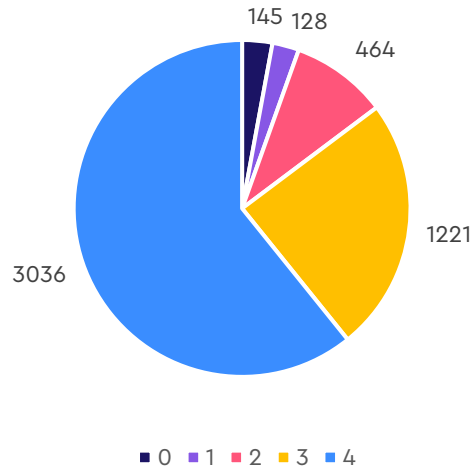
Table D: Funding increase compared with complexity of cases, number and inflation

	Helpline increase	Casework increase	Increase % of cases level three or four	Inflation	Mean funding increase	Mean FTE staffing increase
2022- 2023	15%	19%	-9%	11.1%	13%	8%
2019- 2023	273%	348%	14%	25.8%	54%	29%

We can conclude that services maintaining that high level of service user feedback in the face of very challenging funding and capacity circumstance, is a real testament to the teams.

Question Breakdown 2024: Q1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?

How easy was it to get in touch with us?



(Scale - 0-4 with 0 being not at all and 4 being very)

From the 2023/ 24 report:

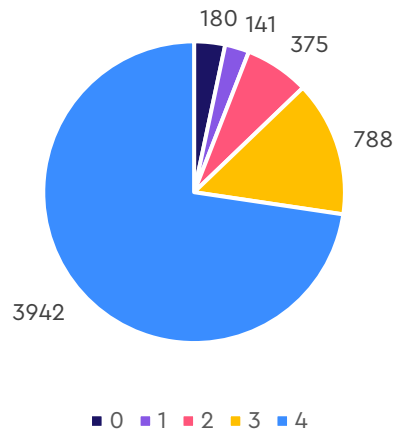
- Mean Score is: 3.50
- 85% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 5% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

From the 2022/23 report:

- Mean score is: 3.50
- 88% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 4% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

Q2 How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?

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



(Scale - 0-4 with 0 being not at all and 4 being very)

From the 2023/ 24 report:

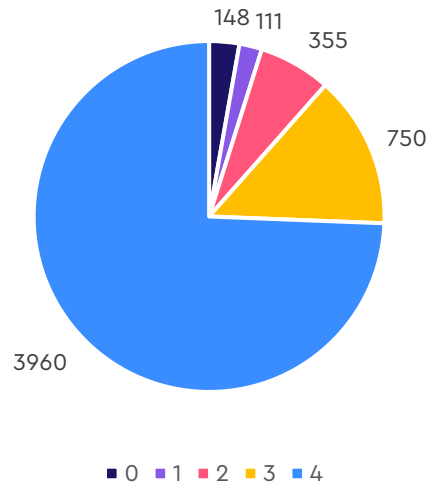
- Mean Score is: 3.67
- 87% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 7% neutrally
- 6% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

From the 2022/23 report:

- Mean score is: 3.65
- 93% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 4% neutrally
- 3% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

Q3 How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?

How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?



(Scale - 0-4 with 0 being not at all and 4 being very)

From the 2023/ 24 report:

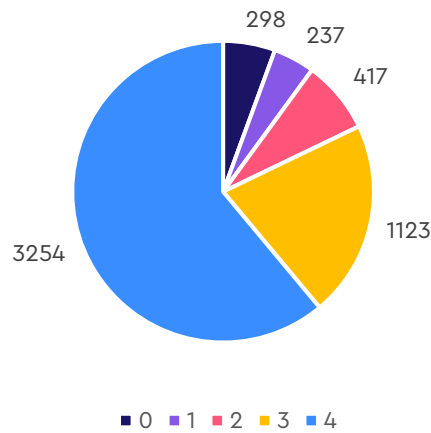
- Mean Score is: 3.72
- 92% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 5% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

From the 2022/23 report:

- Mean score is: 3.70
- 94% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 2% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

Q4 What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?

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



(Scale - 0-4 with 0 being none at all and 4 being a great deal)

From the 2023/ 24 report:

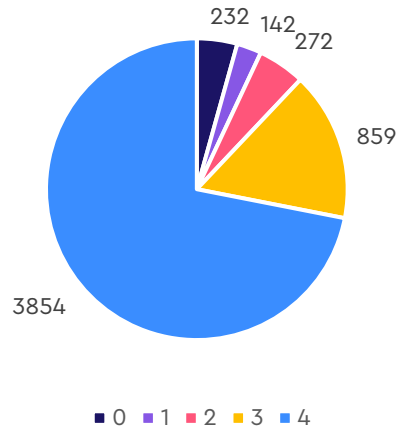
- Mean Score is: 3.49
- 82% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 10% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

From the 2022/23 report:

- Mean score is: 3.48
- 88% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 5% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

Q5 Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?

Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?



(Scale - 0-4 with 0 being not at all and 4 being very)

From the 2023/ 24 report:

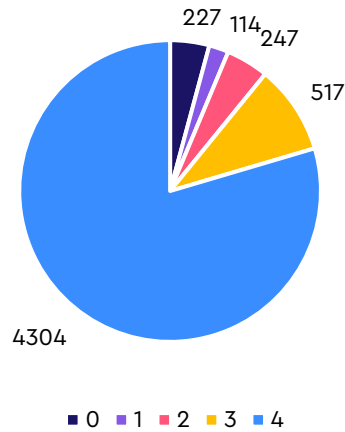
- Mean Score is: 3.66
- 88% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 7% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

From the 2022/23 report:

- Mean score is: 3.64
- 91% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 4% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

Q6 How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?

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



(Scale - 0-4 with 0 being not at all and 4 being very)

From the 2023/ 24 report:

- Mean Score is: 3.73
- 89% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 6% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

From the 2022/23 report:

- Mean score is: 3.73
- 94% of respondents rated their IAS positively
- 3% of respondents rated their IAS negatively

Ofsted Reporting

Alongside service user feedback we have been monitoring IAS mentions within Ofsted reports to consider how they are evaluated as part of the bigger picture. We have thirty-four further Ofsted Reports to consider from last year.

Of IAS mentions, we divided the comments into four categories for ease, where the mention was positive, where the mention contained both positives and challenges, where the mention was not positive and where there was no mention at all.

Table E: Ofsted Scores

	Count 20/21 report	% of total 20/21 report	Count 21/22 report	% of total 21/22 report	Count 22/23 report	% of total 22/23 report	Count 23/24 report	% of total 23/24 report
IAS reported positively only by Ofsted	21	60%	13	72%	8	57%	16	47%
IAS reported by Ofsted as being seen to be positive by service users, but areas of improvement needed	5	14%	3	17%	2	14%	3	9%
Reported by Ofsted as needing to improve to meet standards/duties	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
No mention of SENDIAS service in Ofsted report	7	20%	2	11%	4	29%	15	44%
Total	35	100%	18	100%	14	100%	34	100%

Quotes from Ofsted

Examples of negative only mentions of services

N/A

Examples of services seen as positive by service users but some areas of improvement needed

- *'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) plays an active and effective role in informing families about the help and support that is available to them. However, there are challenges with recruitment and retention that impact on the ability of SENDIASS to respond to requests for its services. Some families do not get the support they need in a timely fashion.'*
- *'The information and advice service in **** is recovering from a lack of capacity and several changes in management. Parent representatives say they have needed to fill this gap until recently. Over time, the information and advice service has not done enough to make its offer of advice known to children and young people with SEND.'*
- *'Parents and carers have access to information, support and guidance provided by the parent and carer forum, ***** and ***** and published online. **** are involved in key strategic decision-making, such as the All Age Autism Strategy. However, some parents and carers do not know about these services so lack the support they need to understand and navigate the complex system with its very many projects and schemes. This is particularly the case for parents and carers from marginalised groups.'*

Examples of services reported only positively

- *'The SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS) is highly valued by families. The service helps parents and carers receive useful advice and guidance. This helps families to successfully navigate the SEND system and reduces their anxieties.'*
- *'Some services, such as early help and The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service, help parents and carers to navigate the local offer and access the right support in a timely way.'*

- *'The help and advice provided by SENDIASS is also highly valued. All this helps ensure that children and young people get bespoke support from the right professional at the right time.'*
- *'The **** SEND information, advice and support service is jointly commissioned by the local authority and the ICB. It is also well used and highly valued by parents.'*
- *'The SEND Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) provides an effective service supporting children and young people with SEND and their families. SENDIASS practitioners have taken a thoughtful approach to making their service both accessible and impartial. Parents, carers, children and young people do not need to wait for support from the SENDIASS team, as practitioners get in touch straight away.'*

Conclusion

At a time where the SEND sector is facing massive challenge, that on average service users would score their service 3.73 out of 4 for '*How likely is it that you'd recommend your service to others,*' is both very impressive and goes some way to explaining the huge rise in demand SENDIAS services are facing.

Considering both the service user feedback and the Ofsted reporting we can conclude, once again, that the service SENDIAS services are providing in this challenging time, is exemplary. This is important to note both as a reflection but also moving forward. We know from the [First Phase Data report](#) that funding is not matching demands on capacity and complexity. This must be addressed if SENDIAS services are going to continue to do the work that they do.