



SEND PARTNERSHIP SERVICE (SPS) ANNUAL REPORT

1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT
2. ACCOUNTABILITY
3. PERFORMANCE MONITORING
4. CONCLUSION AND FORWARD PLAN

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Team Organisation Chart post restructure 1 October 2020
- Appendix 2: Staff Continuing Professional Development and Awareness Raising and Training delivered
- Appendix 3: Self-Assessment against Minimum Quality Standards endorsed by DfE and DHSC for the provision of SENDIASS
- Appendix 4: SPS Operational Plan 2019 – 2022 updated
- Appendix 5: Journey of an Enquiry Flowchart

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the SEND Partnership Service (SPS) Annual Report. This report summarises the activities and evaluation of the service for the year September 2020 – August 2021. Throughout this report, unless otherwise specified, when we refer to 'parents' we include all parents, step-parents, adoptive parents or adult carers who have legal responsibility for a child or young person with special educational needs or a disability and live in the Bath and North East Somerset area.

SPS is commissioned by the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group (LA/CCG) to fulfil the statutory duty to provide information, advice and support (IAS) for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their parents across Bath and North East Somerset. The service is jointly funded by the Local Authority (LA), with a contribution specifically from Children's Social Care, and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

In August 2021, 1689 children and young people had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan: 45 of whom are pre-school, 1294 aged 5-16 and 350 post-16, of whom 120 are aged 20+. The school census data for Bath and North East Somerset tells us that there are a further 3000 children and young people with SEND receiving SEN Support who have not reached the threshold for an EHCP. The FE Sector reports over 700 young people in need of exam arrangements to meet their specific needs. In the Early Year's sector 286 children between April 2020 and March 2021 received inclusion support funding and/or transition support funding. A potential cohort for support which totals more than 5500 families.

Additionally, children and young people with SEND are included in activities at Children's Centres, voluntary organisations, alternative education provision, supported internships, apprenticeship programmes like Project Search and inclusive employment schemes that fall outside these three sectors. All of these children and young people are entitled to the impartial information and advice provided by SPS.

In the 2020-21 academic year SPS worked with **636** families through a range of scenarios including educational placement breakdown, inadequate provision, requesting an assessment, exclusion (**430** of these cases required in depth, complex support). **3255** visitors viewed over **10,800** pages on the website during the year and on average posts on Facebook reached **2,375** people per month. SPS recorded **58** consultations with professionals where generic advice was sought.

During this academic year SPS reached approximately 11% of the known cohort of parents, children and young people offering information, advice and support which demonstrates a continuing increase of reach over time. It should be noted that the increase, though small, is not insignificant. As SPS increases its reach to families so do the numbers of children and young people able to access support.

This data must be considered against the backdrop of the year long disruption to children and young people's education resulting from the pandemic and in particular the impact of the lockdowns which resulted in considerably lower in person attendance across all education settings.

Since March 2020, SPS has become an agile and responsive service with staff working from home, adjustments have been made to working hours to fit in with home commitments, lots of research and webinar training was undertaken to keep up with the constant changes in guidance and legislation from Government for children and young people with SEND (as well as their families), time spent trialling and testing a range of communication platforms TEAMS, Zoom, Skype to share important information and to alert each other to urgent enquiries requiring attention. All alongside strategies to maintain team cohesion and good health and wellbeing, the recruitment and induction of a new member of staff and volunteers and identifying and contacting those families who we were aware might find this a difficult time.

SPS is designed to deliver an impartial and supportive service for those who need it and making sure we deliver what our service users want is important to us. At the end of an intervention, we contact families

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

and ask them what went well, did they feel more confident as a result of working with us and what, if anything, could we improve. This is some of the feedback we received:

- SPS has been supportive, knowledgeable, proactive where needed, the team bring an emotional crutch in terms of support, invaluable.
- Very, very helpful, gave good knowledgeable advice
- Have already recommended service. Y was brilliant and efficient.
- Can't fault service received
- Very important service - absolutely brilliant
- The service made me feel empowered and I felt heard.
- The service is fantastic, and I would be lost without it.

Some families and professionals have taken the time to email their thanks for the support received:

- I just wanted to say a big thank you for all your help and support over the last few months, we couldn't have done it without you, and I am truly grateful.
- I'm really grateful for your help in getting things moving forward for us, it wasn't clear which way we should go, with all the different issues involved
- Your advice and support were invaluable and meant the world to us.
- I would like to say a huge thank you for your input at the meeting yesterday. Your knowledge and expertise were very helpful in securing a more positive future for C. (Primary SENCo)
- The presentation by SEND Partnership was stand out. I feel reassured that there is a service that can support from an independent standpoint should the need arise (parent at Step-By-Step session)

As a confidential and impartial service SEND Information, Advice and Support Service, our overriding objective is to support children and young people with SEND to access education, employment and training enabling them to transition successfully to adulthood and to lead happy, independent lives. In doing so we contribute to the overarching Council objective of Improving People's Lives as well as the outcomes in the Children and Young People's (CYP) Plan: CYP are healthy; CYP who are vulnerable have fair life chances and CYP are engaged citizens within their own community.

This is my first report as service manager. Despite all the challenges that the past year has thrown at the team, the commitment of every one of them to provide the best service they can for families has been astonishing. The feedback from families demonstrates the impact that each member of the team has had on the lives of their children and young people.

Chris Jorgensen
SPS Manager
October 2021

1. CONTEXT

The Children and Families Act 2014, Equalities Act 2010, related regulations, and statutory guidance, including the SEND Code of Practice 2015, provide the legal framework within which the SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) work. The SEND Partnership Service is the SENDIASS for Bath and North East Somerset.

Local authorities (LA) **must** provide children and young people (aged 0-25) with SEND, their parents and carers, with clear, accessible information, advice and support about matters relating to special educational needs and disability, including health and social care as it relates to SEND.

SENDIAS Services must be free, impartial, confidential, and provided at arms' length from the LA and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and have the capacity to handle face-to-face, telephone and digital enquiries.

SPS ensures that children and young people, parents and carers can access impartial, accessible, legally based information and support via a range of methods including the telephone advice line, text, email, SPS website and Facebook page, resources, our Volunteer Supporters (2) and Parent Champions (4) as well as the LA's searchable Local Offer.

The provision of information, advice and support should help promote independence and self-advocacy for children, young people and parents. There must be strategies in place to enable service users to shape policy and practice.

Whenever possible, and often in collaboration with other services, SPS acts as a conduit for consultation with children, young people and parents. Such opportunities enable families to comment on SEND provision, services and delivery at a local and national level. SPS works strategically with other agencies to ensure the voice of children, young people and parents is heard to inform the development of services.

All members of the Service involved in providing information, advice and support have undergone a rigorous legal training programme provided by IPSEA (a national charity providing legally based SEND information and advice). This is enhanced by training in specific areas eg Health and Social Care, SEND Tribunal and School Exclusions. Volunteer Supporters and the volunteer Parent Champions receive training appropriate to their role.

In January 2020 we began a major restructure exercise where we reviewed and rationalised the management function which took effect on 1 October 2020. We now require the Advisory Group, and especially the Chair of the Group, to take a more proactive role in supporting and championing the service. The post of Volunteer Co-ordinator (previously fixed term and funded by the IAS Programme) was made permanent as part of the restructure.

SPS

Despite the pandemic, the demand for support has remained high, as does the complexity of each case the service is engaged in.

SPS continues to work with Early Years providers, schools, colleges, alternative provision, Social Care, Health, Children's Transition and Adult Services along with voluntary organisations and service providers to achieve successful partnerships with parents, children and young people with a view to improving educational outcomes and avoid placement breakdown. Through the provision of quality information, advice and support families become empowered in their interactions with a range of professionals. As

SEND Partnership Service Annual Report 2020 - 2021

evidenced in the feedback gathered from service users, parents become more confident as they are supported with their children's or young person's additional needs and the provision to support them and are more able to make appropriate, informed decisions with respect to their education.

SPS delivers two volunteer programmes: Volunteer Supporters who support families on an individual basis and Parent Champions who provide an outreach service to families. Both volunteer programmes have been severely curtailed by the pandemic as we have been unable to offer face to face sessions.

SPS continues to offer support to the families of all children and young people who have been long fixed term excluded, and permanently excluded, whether they have an identified SEND or not. This work was originally part of a pilot project and not statutory for SPS, but this has continued as a permanent part of SPS delivery to date.

Information, Advice and Support Programme

The Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP), part of the Council for Disabled Children and funded by the Department for Education, was launched in April 2018. SENDIAS Services across England who met the eligibility criteria have been able to bid for pots of money to work towards compliance with the Minimum Standards for Delivery (2018) in each of the subsequent financial years.

SPS has been successful in bidding for this funding each year which has enabled the service to develop a standalone website and social media presence, a new case management database independent of the LA and to trial different service delivery models. Two part-time posts are currently funded via this external grant until August 2022.

The part-time Enquiry and Referral Officer post, appointed in June 2020, has proved effective in triaging enquiries to the service, as well as maintaining the SPS social media presence and collecting feedback from service users.

In addition, to develop the service offer for children and young people a part-time Engagement Worker for Children and Young People with SEND was appointed in July 2021 with a particular focus on the 16-25 cohort.

Earlier in 2021, eligible SENDIAS Services had the opportunity to bid for a further pot of money for the financial year 2021-22. The criteria were related to enhancing Services' digital offer as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

SPS and the SENDIAS service for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) submitted a joint bid for 65% of the funding available to individual services to work with a group of young people from our respective areas to co-produce at least 3 short, accessible films on themes suggested by the young people. (The two services bid for the remaining 35% individually to support developments in their respective services.)

A group of 7 young people from Bath and North East Somerset have worked with one of the Information and Advice Officers and the Engagement Worker to identify themes they would like to explore. A joint meeting was held with a young people's representative from SENDIASS4BCP to agree the themes. The next stage will be to appoint a professional film maker/s to work with the young people to bring their ideas to life. The films will be published on the two services respective websites and social media channels and used in training with children and young people, parents and professionals.

Whilst the IASP funding has enabled the service to become compliant with many areas of the Minimum Standards and provided the service with opportunities to trial different methods of service delivery, the funding is short term. Any future funding opportunities will not be known until early 2022, but it must be noted that in each year of the IASP's existence, the available funding has substantially decreased, and it seems unlikely that there will be further funding after March 2022.

Without additional core funding for the service, the two fixed term contracts will be at risk.

The impact of Covid-19

SPS has not been immune to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic felt by families and across the education, health, and social care sector.

Most of the team continue to work from home, although a few team members have been given access to the office for limited periods during the week. Maintaining staff morale and connectivity has been crucial. A team WhatsApp group enables us to maintain quick and easy contact with one another, weekly coffee and chat sessions are well attended as are the opportunities to meet face to face when they have arisen. Team members are encouraged to contact one another regularly either to discuss work issues or to have a more private 1:1 talk and do so.

However, the impact of social isolation even despite these measures, cannot be underestimated especially when combined with other external or life changing events.

The impact on families has been noticeable. Families reported support services were stretched, waiting times for assessments increased, and mental health concerns, both their own and their children's, were growing. As reported in other areas, some children and young people appeared to cope well attending school or college with a reduced number of students on site. Others, particularly those at SEN Support, appear to have fared less well.

This is reflected in the nature of the enquiries received, particularly once schools fully re-opened in September 2020 and March 2021 after the national lockdowns. 44% of enquiries related to children and young people who had not reached the threshold for intervention or at SEN Support in their respective settings compared with 39% in 2019-20. Requests for support with applying for an Education, Health and Care Plan or for assistance in reviewing a draft plan rose from 16.7% in 2019-20 to 21% in 2020-21.

New referrals	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
During school term	98	79	47	72	80	71

The above table shows the number of new referrals received during each school term, a total of 447 over the academic year. A further 43 enquiries were received during the school holidays (none over the Christmas period). Historically SPS has seen the greatest demand for support during the school term.

Service delivery was primarily via telephone or email although a number of families were supported via Zoom, including at formal mediation sessions or SEND Tribunal. This may have disadvantaged those families who do not have sufficient expertise or technology to enable them to take part in virtual meetings.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Service is monitored by the Service Level Agreement signed with the LA and CCG and an independent Advisory Group. The Advisory Group has responsibility for ensuring that a high quality, 'arm's length' service is maintained for the Local Authority and that SPS is responsive to local need, whilst taking into consideration best practice on a regional and national level. An Independent Chair acts for the Advisory Group.

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

In October 2020, the restructure of the service put in place steps to strengthen the role of the Advisory Group and reinforced the role of the Independent Chair to support the Service Manager on a more regular and formal basis and take a more proactive role in championing the service.

The annual self-assessment, which evidences compliance against the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care endorsed SENDIASS Minimum Standards Framework 2018, is ratified by the Advisory Group. (See Appendix 3 for the current self-assessment). The SPS Operational Plan is a series of actions to work towards compliance against the Minimum Standards (See Appendix 4 for the updated SPS Operational Plan 2019 – 2021).

SPS is located within the Business Change and Customer Service portfolio of the Local Authority which is distinct from Children’s and Young People’s services. This has strengthened SPS impartiality and ‘at arm’s length delivery’ from the LA/CCG decision makers and strengthened compliance with delivery of the Minimum Standards.

3. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The SPS Service Level Agreement with the local authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group requires that the service supports 500 families per year and from the table below we can demonstrate that we have exceeded that number for the academic year 2020-21.

Due to the recent pandemic, along with many other services, we have had to change the way we deliver the service and have consciously moved to digital options, which has rationalised travel time (amongst other things) associated with meetings. The team is equipped with smart phones which has enabled easier and more efficient contact by text and email.

Additionally, we have continued to pilot a new triage post, the Enquiry and Referral Officer the contract for which has been extended until August 2022. The post-holder handles all enquiries and referrals to the service, completes necessary contact and consent information and allocates the referral geographically to one of the Information and Advice Officers. This saves valuable time for the Information and Advice Officers who previously answered the Advice Line on a rota, entered contact data, obtained consents, and set service boundaries with our service users. The Enquiry and Referral Officer has undertaken level 1 and 2 legal training with IPSEA and is able to fulfil initial enquiries to the service, as well as collecting and collating useful and relevant information for the next step.

September 2020 to August 2021	
Caseload (Families)	430
Quick calls	85
Professionals	58
Parent Champions - parents contacted at group events & individually	8
Outreach – parent/carers	Step-By-Step (42) Step into School (8) Castle Coffee morning (5)
	636 Families
Outreach - professionals	SENCO Conference (60) Inter-agency (67) NR Primary Panel (15) Specialist Autism Support Service (9) Youth Connect (8)

This table identifies the type of referrals the service undertakes by age group and gender. This table includes referrals relating to long term fixed, and permanent, exclusions

Number of CYP supported						
	Sep 15 – Aug 16	Sep 16 – Aug 17	Sep 17 – Aug 18	Sep 18 – Aug 19	Sep 19 – Aug 20	Sep 20 – Aug 21
No of Boys	216	262	277	278	295	259
No of Girls	108	123	134	136	160	158
Not Known	2	4	2	1	38 ¹	13 ²
Pre-School	21	36	35	25	22	13
Infant	66	69	69	60	48	46
Junior	85	111	128	130	117	116
Secondary	124	142	144	161	148	155
Post-16	24	20	29	31	23	17
Post-19					12	21
FE		3	2	4	3	
HE		0	0	0		
Apprenticeship		1	1	1		
Supported Internship		0	0	0		
Not Known	6	7	5	3	120	62
SEND	319	380	408	412	487	427
Non-SEND	7	7	5	3	6	3
Other	0	2	0	0	0	430
Fixed Term Exclusions	18	17	17	15	26	18
Permanent Exclusions	7	11	11	17	13	14
Totals	326	389	413	415	493	430

¹We transferred to a new data collection system at the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year all contacts to the service were entered directly onto the system. Previously, we kept a separate schedule of contacts at Level 1 that we didn't report in detail. For interventions when we signposted customers or gave initial information and support and they did not return to the service, or were able to proceed, we would not have necessarily have full contact or case work detail.

²This figure includes young people who identify as transgender or non-binary.

We are also working with other SENDIAS Services in the South West to build a consistent understanding of intervention levels and performance monitoring across the region. This will enable us to benchmark and compare data with each other more meaningfully and aim for a more consistent offer to families. During the latter part of 2021, the Information, Advice and Support Services Network will be working with representatives from each of the 9 regional managers groups to review and revise the current Intervention Levels guidance.

Demand for the service, even in the unusual situation in which we find ourselves, remains high, particularly with those cases which demand intensive and time-consuming in-depth case work by the Information and Advice Officers. We constantly look for strategies to make the service more efficient,

SEND Partnership Service Annual Report 2020 - 2021

review business systems regularly, work with groups of families rather than individuals where that is appropriate, skill up other professionals so that they have a working understanding of the SEND agenda and can give reliable support.

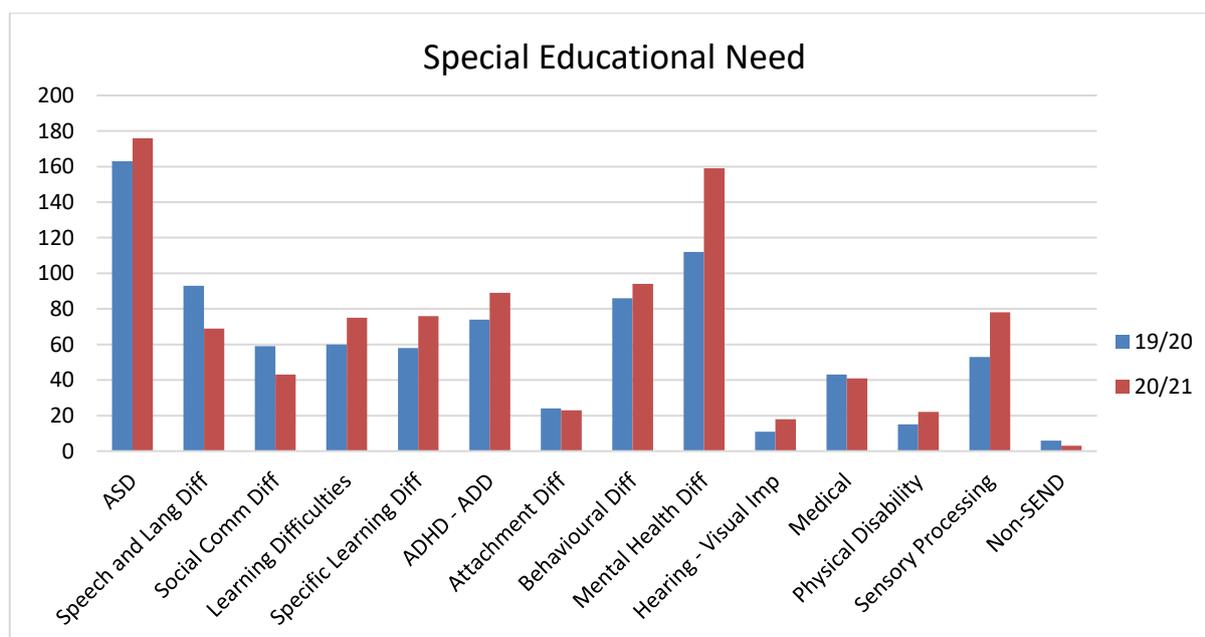
Referrals for SPS support for those post 16 remains low – historically we have found it unlikely that young people will seek out and contact an impartial advice and support service themselves. Developing links with adult social care and organisations such as Youth Connect SW has resulted in more contact with young people in the 19-25 year-old cohort. More accessible information on the website, such as You Tube clips, may be useful for those young people when ‘googling’ for information but we need to have a greater presence in schools, colleges, alternative providers and supported work and apprenticeship programmes, especially at review and transition times. The joint project with SENDIASS4BCP to create short accessible films for young people by young people with SEND may help to bridge this gap.

The pilot post of Engagement Worker for Children and Young People with SEND is designed to raise the profile of SPS, the support available for the 16-25 cohort and increase participation of CYP with the service. However, this role is fixed term and part time and there is insufficient time for the Engagement Worker to offer in-depth one to one support.

During the past year SPS provided training for Youth Connect SW, particularly staff working with young people on the Learning4work programme to enable them to better understand SEND processes and the law.

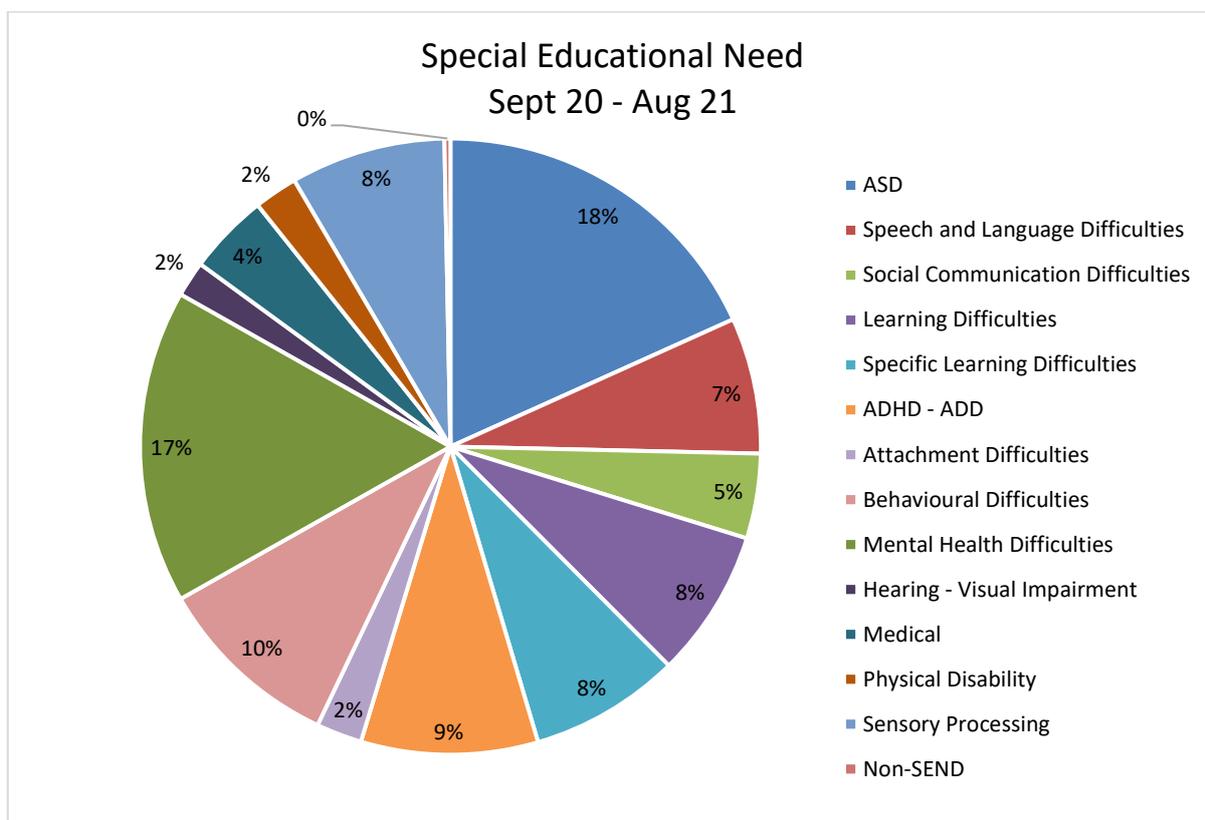
Referrals from families of children in the Early Years decreased over the past year. This is a likely consequence of the lockdown and fewer children attending formal settings. However, we continue to attend the Step-by-Step programme run by the Children’s Centres which are well received by those parents who attend them. We also attended the new Step into School sessions which were run in the summer term. Feedback from these sessions has been good.

This is a breakdown of case work identifying the child’s or young person’s additional need as identified by the family (families often report multiple conditions) - compared with 2019-20

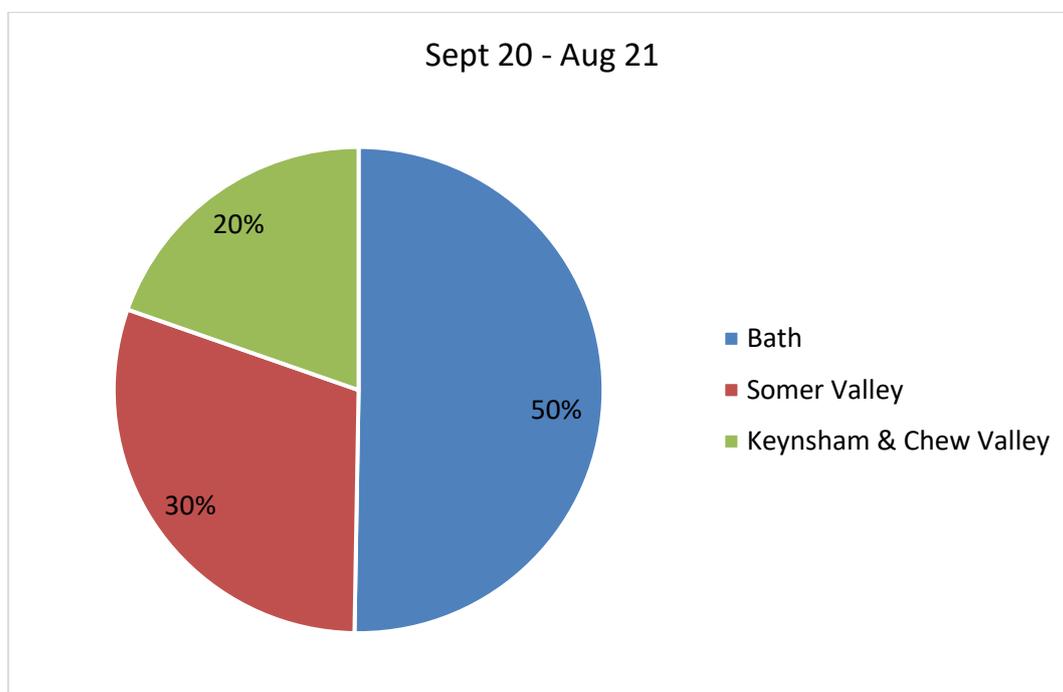


We continue to see a rise in most areas of need as identified by parents or young people. However, the increase in those reporting mental health difficulties is significant. Although not directly attributed to the lockdown by parents and young people, it is likely that this is a factor.

Here is a more detailed breakdown of the reported SEN of our referrals for 2020 – 2021



Geographical breakdown of residency of families we supported this year



This is very similar to the geographic distribution for 2019-20. The local authority population is split: Bath 57%, Somer Valley 23% and Keynsham and Chew Valley 20%. Our referrals roughly reflect that distribution ie we have a greater number of referrals from Bath where the population is largest. However,

SEND Partnership Service Annual Report 2020 - 2021

as we hold more detailed postcode information, we can target promotion of the service more locally and, prior to COVID 19, our Parent Champions were targeting their support in those areas.

Impact of the Enquiry and Referral post

In order to monitor the effectiveness of the Enquiry and Referral Officer post we have been analysing our average response times alongside the number of enquiries dealt with solely by the Enquiry and Referral Officer. Prior to the start of the pilot average response times were 5 working days, and at the busiest times exceeded this. The table below shows the average response time over the year was 1.6 working days, whilst approximately 50% of the enquiries were dealt with at the initial point of contact.

The addition of the Enquiry and Referral post has made a significant contribution to improving overall service delivery. Families receive timely initial information and advice and are referred to an Information and Advice Officer swiftly where more in-depth knowledge and support is required. The Information and Advice Officers no longer deal with routine enquiries and are therefore able to provide more dedicated time to try and resolve the issues facing some families.

TOTAL (C&YP and Professionals) September 20 – August 21	
No of Referrals	483
Total Response time (working days)	1.6
Number Dealt with by E&R Officer	244
% Dealt with by E&R Officer	50.5%

Additional Information from Service Users - Top reasons for contacting the SEND Partnership Service:

The five top reasons enquirers initially contacted the SEND Partnership Service were:

- EHCP Process
- Educational Placement
- EHCP – Application
- Provision – Educational Non-Statutory (no EHCP or pre-EHCP)
- Provision – Education Statutory (CYP has an EHCP)

These are consistent with previous years.

Due to more consistent data collection, we have noted this year more referrals are mentioning health or social care as a reason for contacting the service. This is particularly the case when the CYP is undergoing an EHC Needs Assessment or has an EHC Plan.

We supported families where the children and young people were at the following stage (comparative data for 2019-20 is shown in brackets):

Pre-Statutory	10.2% (8.5%)
SEN Support	33.8% (30.8%)
EHC Needs Assessment	10.9% (9.0%)
Draft EHCP	8.2% (7.7%)
EHCP	36.9% (43.5)

SEND Partnership Service Annual Report 2020 - 2021

As we reported over the past few years a larger proportion of the work of the service is related to statutory processes, we noted that this has changed over a 5-year period, as historically the service supported a larger number of those pre plan/statement or without a plan/statement. This is particularly true since the 'lockdown' when the majority of enquiries have been related to the statutory process.

Referral route to SPS

Of those who told us how they had heard about the service, over half of those contacting SPS said they had used us before.

Others said they had learned about the service from:

- School/Pre-school/College
- Parent/Friend
- Website
- Other B&NES Service
- Social Care

Digital Access to the service

The SPS website, www.spsbathnes.gov.uk, has been live for almost 3 years and activity on the site is increasing, eg almost 10% of enquiries are now received via web form. There have been over 3225 visits to the site this academic year. During the spring and summer one of the Information and Advice Officers worked with some young people on the Learning4Work Programme to refresh the information on our Young People's page to make it more accessible.

Our Facebook account is also very popular. The Enquiry and Referral Officer is now coordinating our social media presence and we have seen a steady increase in engagement with the page over the past year. A young person worked with SPS to design a series of slides on a variety of SEND related topics aimed at young people which will be posted at the start of each month.

During the past year there have been 1053 posts to the page, an average of 88 per month and reached a total of 28508 people, an average of 2375 people per month. In September 2020 we had 224 followers and 216 'likes', by August 2021 this had risen to 318 and 302 respectively.

Enquiries from Professionals

58 Professionals contacted the service to seek advice about scenarios relating to the children or young people. As an impartial and at arm's length service this advice would be generic and related to the law and guidance rather than a specific families' situation.

Evaluations

We contact families after an intervention and talk to them about their experience of using the service and ask what impact they think the service has been made.

- How easy was it to get in touch with SPS? 65% of responders said it was very easy.
- How well do you think we understood your questions or concerns? 90% of responders said very well.
- How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you? 90% of the responders said very helpful
- How neutral, fair, and unbiased do you think we were? 100% of the responders said we were neutral, fair, and unbiased

SEND Partnership Service Annual Report 2020 - 2021

- What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you? 89% of responders said yes definitely made a difference
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave? 94% were very satisfied
- How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others? 100% were very likely

These results are very positive given the constraints we were operating under during 2020-21 and unable to answer 'live' calls until part way through the year.

We asked for a bit more detail and this was the result

Can you tell us more about the difference(s) we made for you? (Please tick any that apply)

I feel that my child's needs are better understood than they were (89%)

I now have a better relationship with my child's school or setting (71%)

I now have a better relationship with the Local Authority (71%)

I feel more confident (100%)

I have a greater understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children and young people with SEN (89%)

I feel more involved in decisions about my child's education (88%)

I am happier/less worried about my child's future (69%)

I feel my child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved (94%)

Particularly striking was the increase in percentage of parents who felt they now had a better relationship with their child's education setting and the Local Authority as a result of support by the SEND Partnership Service.

4. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The overall assessment of the service's effectiveness, feedback from parents and compliance with the standards and our commissioners are all good. But we still have work to do, especially to ensure all aspects of the service delivery for children and young people are compliant with the Minimum Standards. The demand for SPS increases year on year, as does the cohort of children and young people who are entitled to receive our support.

With the development of the website and social media presence, and more accessible digital and self-help resources for parents/carers and professionals, access to the service has increased significantly. However, we still need to improve our information offer to children and young people and we are addressing that through the current project with SENDIASS4BCP.

In previous years the resources allocated to the service increased incrementally, however this is no longer the case. External funding from Department for Education via the IAS Programme at the Council for Disabled Children has enabled SPS to develop some key aspects of delivery but we are not anticipating being able to bid for additional funding beyond the current phase.

The restructure of SPS whereby we reviewed and rationalised the management function now requires the Advisory Group, and especially the Chair of the Group, to take a more proactive role in supporting and championing the service. We have been able to make permanent the post of Volunteer Coordinator (previously fixed term) to enable us to increase capacity with our volunteer supporters and Parent Champions.

We have identified a few areas in our delivery that we need to develop:

SEND Partnership Service Annual Report 2020 - 2021

1. The number of direct contacts with children and young people, especially those post 16, is low. By piloting a post of Engagement Worker for CYP with SEND we will increase awareness of the service offer for children and young people and the support they can receive particularly at transition points.
2. We need to develop opportunities for children and young people with SEND to participate in influencing SPS service delivery. By working with partners, we can support children and young people with SEND to have their voice heard across a range of services and organisations to influence wider service and policy development.
3. We need to enhance our information offer to children and young people. The funding from the Council for Disabled Children via the IAS Programme is enabling us to work with SENDIASS4BCP and young people across both our service areas to create new digital resources for young people by young people with SEND. These resources will be available on a SPS YouTube channel to be launched later in 2021.
4. We have made some progress with service evaluations from parent carers this year – we need to learn from these (as well as celebrate them) and deliver the service accordingly. We need to develop an appropriate and consistent method of collecting feedback from young people.
5. By continuing to offer training, and awareness raising, for families and those working with children and young people, SEND guidance and law can become less complicated
6. We need to recruit and retain volunteers to replace those who, for a variety of reasons, have had to return to the world of paid work. By continuing to offer an accredited volunteer experience we can increase service capacity.

Throughout the past year, the team have risen magnificently to the challenges that have arisen from the pandemic and working from home despite having to deal with challenges in their own lives. As demonstrated in the feedback and compliments we have received, they have continued to offer the very highest level of service to our clients, ensuring our most vulnerable children and young people are at the centre of everything we do.

Chris Jorgensen

SPS Strategic Manager

1 October 2021

Thank you to the staff and volunteers of the SEND Partnership Service, your commitment, knowledge, professionalism and stamina have provided a huge number of families in the local area with impartial information, support and confidence, especially when seeking the best outcomes for their children and young people. I would like to offer each and every one of you congratulations on behalf of the Advisory Group for the exceptional impact you have made.

You should all be very proud of yourselves; we are certainly very proud of you.

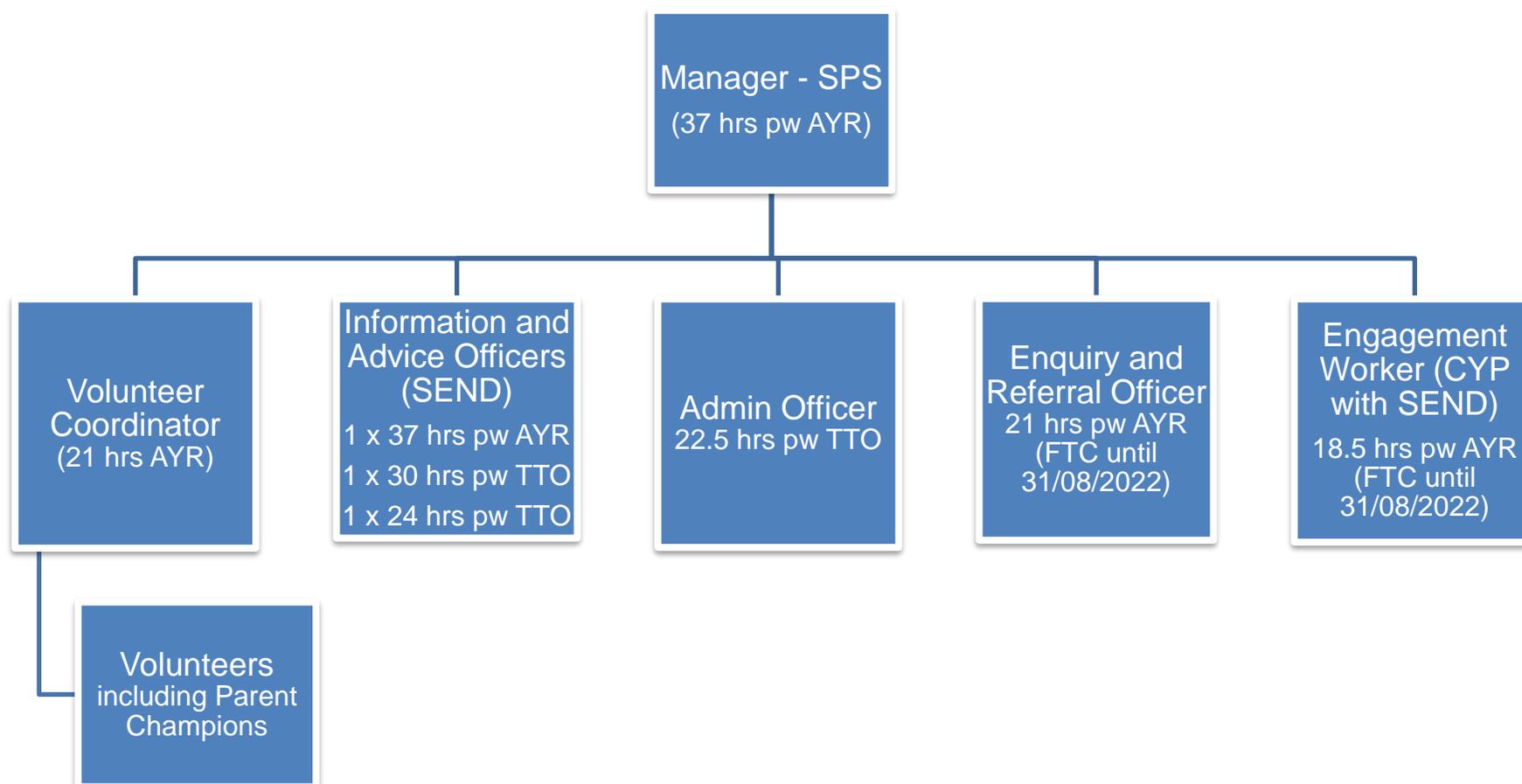
Thank you again

Jackie Fielder

Independent Chair

Appendix 1

SEND PARTNERSHIP SERVICE
Organisation chart – 31 August 2021



Appendix 2

Continuing Professional Development – attendance by Team members

September 2019 – 31 August 2020

- SWIASSN Regional Meetings
- Children and Young People's Network SW Meeting
- Cross Data Training
- Standard Interagency Child Protection
- Early Help Assessment
- Safer Recruitment
- Solution Focused
- Anti-Bullying
- Engaging and Working with Children & Young People
- 18-25 year olds and Covid-19
- Joint Commissioning
- Family Fund
- Access, Anxiety and Remote Learning
- Digitalisation and the impact of Covid-19 on Tribunals
- Returning to School in September
- Practical Tribunal Training
- Covid-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace
- Exclusions
- Key legal issues for Covid-19
- Introduction to the Mental Capacity Act
- ASD and co-existing Mental Health Difficulties
- Supporting Young People with Autism
- Coronavirus Update
- Entitlement for Children and Young People with SEND during Covid-19
- Introduction to Working with LGBT+ Young People
- B&NES Covid-19 Lockdown and Renewal – Key Issues for Young People
- Suicide Awareness
- Preparing for the New Normal
- Preparing Children and Young People to return to School
- Psychological First Aid
- Understanding Autism
- Supporting Bereaved Pupils with Additional Needs
- IPSEA Level 1 - legal training
- Mental Health
- Covid-19 Test & Trace – Information re Procedures
- Understanding Forced Marriage
- Intro to Cognitive Psychology
- SARI: Domestic Abuse within Eastern European Relationships
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Induction

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

- Data Protection
- Parent Champions Home Learning Module

Training/presentations delivered

- Children's Workforce Development
- 2 SENCO Conferences (40 SENCOs + 50 SENCOs)
- C&YP Network Training
- Children & Families Induction (15 attended)
- EY SENCO Core Training (45 attended)
- University of Bath Disability Team Meeting

Contributed to the following groups/events

- Somer Valley Forum (30 community organisations)
- BOP Parent's Meeting (3 parents 2 professionals)
- BOP Coffee Morning (4 families)
- FACES Parent Support Group (6 parents)
- Step-by-Step (Keynsham, Radstock) (6 families + 3 families)
- Inter-Agency Meetings (Keynsham, Bath) (40 + 30 professionals virtually)
- Independent Living Fair (3 families, 8 professionals)
- Parent Carer Voice (PCV) Christmas Party (5 families)
- Young Voice Social Group (5 families)
- Apprenticeship & Job Fayre (46 students, 10 professionals)
- Broadlands Open Day (10 families)

Appendix 3

Self-Assessment Minimum Standards August 2021

Standard	C/PC	Notes
1. Commissioning, governance and management arrangements		
<p>1.1 The IASS is jointly commissioned by education, health and social care in accordance with the CFA 2014. A formal agreement is set out in writing which refers directly to these Minimum Standards, whilst also considering the need for continuity and stability of the service.</p>	PC	<p>Social Care contribution to the funding of the service is minimal. There is no contribution from Adult Services</p>
<p>1.2 The IASS is designed and commissioned with children, young people and parents, and has the capacity and resources to meet these Minimum Standards and local need. For smaller local authorities (LAs) this may involve commissioning across local areas.</p>	PC	<p>Work still on-going to include children, young people and parents/carers in service design and to increase resources to provide support to the post-19 cohort</p>
<p>1.3 The IASS provides an all-year-round flexible service which is open during normal office hours and includes a direct helpline with 24-hour answer machine, call back and signposting service, including linking to the national SEND helpline.</p>	C	
<p>1.4 There is a dedicated and ring-fenced budget held and managed by an IAS service manager located within an IASS.</p>	C	

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

<p>1.5 The IASS is, and is seen by service users to be, an arm's length, confidential, dedicated and easily identifiable service, separate from the LA, Clinical Commissioning Group and/or host organisation.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>1.6 LA and IASS ensure that potential service users, Head teachers, FE principals, SENCOs, SEND Teams, children's and adult social care, health commissioners and providers are made aware of the IASS, its remit and who the service is for.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>SPS - rolling programme of visits to teams/settings and marketing campaign September 2021 onwards</p>
<p>1.7 The Governance arrangements outline a clear management structure, encompassing a strategic manager within the IASS and a steering group or advisory body which includes representatives from service user groups and key stakeholders from education, social care and health.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>Ways to ensure the voice of CYP feeds directly into the Advisory Group via a CYP participation group being explored</p>
<p>1.8 The IASS has a development plan reviewed annually with the steering group/advisory body, which includes specific actions and improvement targets.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>2. Strategic functions</p>		
<p>2.1 Each IASS has a manager based solely within the service, without additional LA/CCG or host body roles. They have responsibility for strategic planning, service management and delivery, and quality assurance.</p>	<p>C</p>	
<p>2.2 The IASS engages with regional and national strategic planning and training and demonstrates effective working with other IASSs to inform service development.</p>	<p>C</p>	

<p>2.3 The IASS works with local partners, including local parent and young people forums to inform and influence policy and practice in the local area.</p>	PC	<p>Protocol signed with PCF and LA February 2021. Work beginning to ensure YP are able to inform and influence policy and practice</p>
<p>3. Operational Functions</p>		
<p>3.1 The IASS provides:</p> <p>Impartial information, advice and support (IAS) on the full range of education, health and social care as defined in the SEND Code of Practice to the following service users –</p> <p>a) children b) young people c) parents</p> <p>This support is offered in a range of ways which includes face to face, a telephone helpline, email, website and social media.</p>	PC	<p>Work ongoing to develop resources for and by young people and to raise awareness with YP of the SPS offer. Fixed term Engagement Worker post trialling support offer for young people</p>
<p>3.2 The IASS provides branded information and promotional materials in a range of accessible formats.</p>	C	
<p>3.3 The IASS has a stand-alone service website that is accessible to all service users. The website includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contact details of the service <input type="checkbox"/> Opening hours <input type="checkbox"/> Response times 	C	<p>Work to commence autumn 2021 to redesign website to ensure fully co-produced with children and young people and parents.</p>

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Information on a range of SEND topics <input type="checkbox"/> Signposting to other useful groups including parent groups and youth forums and national helplines <input type="checkbox"/> Signposting to the Local Offer <input type="checkbox"/> Key policies including a complaints procedure 		
<p>3.4 The IASS provides advocacy support for individual children, young people, and parents that empowers them to express their views and wishes and helps them to understand and exercise their rights in matters including exclusion, complaints, SEND processes, and SEND appeals.</p>	PC	A programme of awareness raising with CYP and parents has been put on hold due to the impact of the pandemic
<p>3.5 The IASS provides information, advice and support before, during and following a SEND Tribunal appeal in a range of different ways, dependent on the needs of the parent or young person. This will include representation during the hearing if the parent or young person is unable to do so.</p>	C	Work to ensure young people are aware of their rights and support available through the Tribunal appeal process currently on hold.
<p>3.6 The IASS offers training to local education, health and social care professionals, children, young people and parents to increase knowledge of SEND law, guidance, local policy, issues and participation.</p>	PC	Programme of family training is being developed. Delivery on hold as families prefer face to face delivery.
<p>4. Professional development and training for staff</p>		
<p>4.1 All advice and support providing staff successfully complete all online IPSEA legal training levels within 12 months of joining the service. Volunteers who provide advice and support should complete IPSEAs Level 1 online training within 12 months.</p>	C	

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

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.	C	Feedback is collected. Looking at ways to improve response.
4.3 All IASS staff and volunteers have ongoing supervision and continuous professional development.	C	

Appendix 4

Operational Delivery Plan 1/4/2020 – 31/3/2021

Area of work (link to Standard)	Task objective	Action	Outcome	Who?	Timescale	Actual Completion
Commissioning, governance and management arrangements (1.1)	Review SLA with LA and CCG based on Minimum Standards and local need	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and monitor progress of SLA 2. Review with LA and CCG 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timely Review of service 2. SLA in place 3. Service jointly commissioned by LA and CCG (Education, Health and Social Care) 	Strategic Manager, Advisory Group and LA Commissioner	Autumn 2021	31 March 2022
Commissioning, governance and management arrangements (1.1), Operational Functions (3.5)	Review and refresh website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake review of existing website with young people, parents and professionals 2. Research additional resources and functionality 3. Research partners to develop website in co-production with young people and parents. 4. Procure website 5. Test 6. Promote 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website is co-produced with young people and parents to meet local need and is well used 2. Create additional accessible resources eg for children and young people 3. Increase self-serve offer 4. Increase quality of information for service users and professionals 	Manager, I&A Officers, Vol Co-ord and Engagement Worker	Spring 2021	Summer 2022
Commissioning, governance and management arrangements (1.6)	Make potential service users and partners (as specified) aware of SPS, its remit and who the service is for (Parent Champion model)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further develop the Parent Champions programme (in conjunction with Coram Family Trust) to include online delivery 2. Planned programme of Outreach across B&NES 3. Advertise with education settings, including Early Years and Post 16 4. Recruit and train new cohort of volunteers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver a sustainable service that is available face to face and virtually 2. Peers may be more trusted than LA/formal services 3. Reach 'hard to reach' – go to family as opposed to expecting them to come to services 	Vol Co-ord, and Strategic Manager	Autumn 2021	January 2022

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Evaluate and record contact 6. Advertise on web, social media 				
Commissioning, governance and management arrangements (1.6)	Continue to make potential service users and partners as specified aware of SPS, its remit and who the service is for	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan programme of briefings via networks, social media 2. Deliver briefings 3. Evaluate success 4. Advertise and repeat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off the shelf promotion briefings for anyone to deliver 2. Plan delivery to a wide range of networks across LA, Third Sector and CCG, including parent carer and young people forums 3. Deliver to a wide range of networks 4. Promote via web and social media to engage wider audience 5. Increase quality of information for service users and professionals 	Strategic Manager, I&A Officers and Engagement Worker	Autumn 2021	Ongoing programme of promotion
Commissioning, governance and management arrangements (1.7)	Continue to maintain the Advisory Group to include representatives from service user groups and key stakeholders across education, social care and health.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the impact of the revised membership and attendance of the Advisory Group 2. Recruit to gaps eg from schools 3. Develop model to allow YP to feedback to Advisory 4. Review annually 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor effectiveness of Advisory Group model 2. Recruit informed and sustainable members from a wide network 3. On-going monitoring and evaluation of impact of Advisory Group 	Strategic Manager, Independent Chair and Advisory Group	June 2021	31 March 2022 on-going
Strategic functions (2.3)	Sustain meaningful partnerships with other groups and services including local parent and young people forums to inform and influence policy and practice in the local area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish with the LA a protocol for involving service users/groups in consultation activities /events 2. Develop a model to encourage YP participation in development of service 3. Advertise opportunities via website, social media, and networks 4. Review annually 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring together a range of groups who can represent widely 2. YP views represented 3. Have one place to ensure consultation will happen 4. Be clear with LA and CCG what consultation role is 5. Influence policy and procedure nationally and locally 	Strategic Manager, Vol Co-ord, Engagement Worker and LA Commissioner	January 2022	March 2022. This work has been severely impacted by lack of capacity within relevant LA services due to demands

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

						of the Covid-19 pandemic
Operational functions (3.1 and 3.6)	<p>To maintain a bespoke IAS service for children and young people</p> <p>Develop new IASS digital resources on matters relating to the service and SEND – which increases current service uptake and engagement with children, young people and families and which can also be used for training sessions with children and young people, parents and professionals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit an Engagement Worker for CYP SEND to lead on effective promotion of service offer to CYP 2. Agree a protocol with SENDIASS4BCP to jointly develop digital resources for children and young people 3. To work with children and young people to co-produce additional resources to be shared on SPS and SENDIASS4BCP websites and social media platforms. 4. Identify partner to work with SPS and SENDIASS4BCP to develop resources 5. Procure resources in collaboration with SENDIASS4BCP 6. To work with children and young people to co-produce additional resources to be shared on SPS and SENDIASS4BCP websites and social media platforms. 7. Develop a SPS YouTube channel to increase accessibility to information for CYP with SEND 8. Continue to work with professionals supporting children and young people 9. Monitor and evaluate impact 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement Worker in post. 2. Links developed with educational and informal settings for CYP with SEND 3. Protocol with SENDIASS4BCP in place 4. Partner in place to support production of animated resources/short films 5. In collaboration with SENDIASS4BCP children and young people co-produce 3 short accessible digital resources for children and young people 6. SPS YouTube channel live and being used. 7. Be compliant with Minimum Standards 8. Enable more children and young people to have their voice heard 9. To increase by 20% the number of children and young people accessing the service 	Strategic Manager Engagement Worker for CYP SEND and I&A Officers	January 2022	31 March 2022

SEND Partnership Service
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

		of additional resources				
Operational functions (3.2 and 3.6)	Develop new IASS digital resources on matters relating to the service and SEND – which increases current service uptake and engagement with children, young people and families.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with children and young people in Bath & NE Somerset and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) research additional resources required 2. Agree a protocol with BCP SENDIASS to jointly develop digital resources for children and young people 3. Procure resources in collaboration with SENDIASS4BCP 4. Promote to service users and professionals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In collaboration with BCP SENDIASS, children and young people co-produce accessible, appropriate, targeted resources for children and young people 2. Protocol with BCP SENDIASS in place 3. Increased engagement with young people's pages of SPS Website and social media platforms 4. Promote widely thereby increasing self-serve offer 5. Increase quality of information for service users and professionals 	Strategic Manager, Admin, Vol Co-ord, I&A officers and CYP SEND Engagement Worker	November 2021	31 March 2022

