

The logo for Information Advice and Support Kent (IASK) features a stylized kite or paper plane with a multi-colored sail (teal, purple, yellow) and a tail with yellow, purple, and blue streamers.

**Information
Advice and
Support
Kent**

A service for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
– helping you to make informed choices

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK)

Annual Service Report 2022/2023

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Overview | 3 |
| Impact | 4 |
| Case Studies | 6 |
| Service Outputs past 6 months | 8 |
| Annual Perspective | 15 |
| Key Performance Indicators | 16 |
| Comparison last 5 years | 17 |
| Mission Statement | 18 |
| Appendix 1 Steering Group Members | 19 |
| Appendix 2 User Survey Feedback 1 April 2022 31 March 2023 | 20 |

‘Just being supported, having someone to talk to and help with the letters to get X where he is now. He is thriving now which wouldn’t have been possible without the help and information you gave’. (Feedback survey 2022-2023)

Overview of IASK - Kerry Miles Service Coordinator

This report gives an overview of Information, Advice and Support Kent over the past year, statistics relating to outputs for the six- month period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 with comparisons to the previous six months covered in the Interim Report, and comparisons over the past five years.

IASK is seen as a confidential and impartial service giving high quality information, advice, and support to families in Kent. We continues to provide a high level of support to families of children with SEN and disabilities when they need it, as well as those families where a child or young person is suffering from high levels of anxiety and finding it difficult to access school. This has been an extremely busy year with the team constantly working at capacity, even during the school holidays when it would usually be quieter.

We recruited three part time helpline officers to fill vacancies within the team. Staff have worked hard to support the induction and training of the new staff as well as providing cover for 5 months maternity leave. The whole team have risen to the challenge and have ensured that families requesting information, advice and support have been supported in a timely manner, keeping strictly to the service KPIs. By being flexible in their approach staff have moved appointments around to meet the increase in demand for face-to-face support for families who need it, they have also increased their virtual support for parents at meetings as well as offering bookable appointments to manage requests for support with paperwork. This combined way of delivering our support has meant we have nearly doubled the number of support at meetings attended, when compared with the face to face support that we provided pre-covid. The team have received well deserved positive feedback from parents, usually directly to them, as well as via the user feedback surveys.

The team were pleased to receive positive comments in Her Majesty’s Inspector’s report following the Ofsted and CQC re-visit to Kent. The inspector mention that IASK was ‘positively commented on’ by parents, and IASK workshops for parents and practitioners were mentioned as being appreciated and valued by parents.

IASK has received funding through the Designated Key Worker project to recruit a family involvement worker to provide support for families where a child or young person has mental health issues that are below the threshold for support at Level 3 or 4.

Developments for the next year include: Training of newly recruited volunteer; Gain support from parents and young people to co-produce service videos and soundbites to promote the service. Continue to increase service engagement with young people.

Impact:

The service has conducted user feedback surveys for cases that closed between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 **191** parents and young people were contacted, who had given us permission to seek their feedback. Feedback was sought from families who received more than 2 hours support during this period who are identified as receiving an intervention level 2,3 or 4. **72** responses were received resulting in a **38%** return rate.

98% of respondents felt that we understood their questions concerns well (3*) or **very well**

100% of respondents felt IASK **listened** to their view

99% of respondents rated IASK as good (3*) or **very good** at being neutral, fair and unbiased

99% of respondents were likely (3*) or **very likely** to recommend the service to others

95% felt satisfied (3*) or **very satisfied** with the service they received.

92% of respondents felt that the information advice and support provided has made a **great** deal of difference

For full details about the user feedback responses, please see Appendix 2.

'Thank you' emails from service users outside of the usual survey:

Compliments direct to the service:

'Words cannot describe how grateful I am, but from the bottom of my heart thank you for being great, you have been supportive and have made me feel that you are walking in my shoes all the way whilst remaining very professional even when I haven't been. You have kept me on track and given words of comfort each time we spoke'.

'thank you for all your help and support throughout this process and dealing with this matter. And dealing with me at my worst at some points. You have been amazing thank you'.

'X was a kind and compassionate advocate for everyone at that meeting and it was refreshing to have such a thoughtful and highly knowledgeable insight and input into, what has been such a stressful time for the parent.' (Assistant Headteacher)

'thank you ever so much for your support through the process. You have been fabulous. I'm so pleased for X and his future has just become brighter. College/university doesn't seem a complete impossibility for him now!

'Thank you so much X for all of your help. I would not of been able to do this without you. Your guidance and knowledge have helped me so much. You really have been amazing'.

'Thank you so much for all your help X! I really appreciate it and we really appreciate it as a school. You have been wonderful'.

Case Study 1:

Background

Janet has been known to the service since 2014 and has had an Education, Health and Care Plan since 2016 due to her Developmental Co-ordination Disorder which mainly affected physical co-ordination and also dyslexia which affects her memory. Janet was severely behind her peers at age 14 and the service supported getting the right kind of support which resulted in an EHC plan being issued.

Support

IASK Family Involvement Worker supported Janet moving into post 16, but she didn't have the confidence to choose a different course from the one her parents thought she should take. Despite IASK support and encouragement to choose a course, she would like to do and that would support her in her future career aspirations, she spent a year doing art because her parents said she was good at it.

Family Involvement Worker started to build rapport with Janet in preparation for the Year 12 annual review, and with the worker's encouragement and support, Janet was able to communicate her thoughts and feelings and moved to an education pathway that she felt was more suitable, and would support her career aspirations of landscape gardening.

Impact

Janet felt empowered to be able to communicate directly with the Family Involvement Worker instead of via her parents, gaining independence and confidence to make her own decisions even though they were not always what her parents agreed with.

Janet has successfully completed college and gained a level 3 qualification as well as English and Maths, and the EHC Plan outcomes have all been met. Janet has a part-time job and is seeking a full-time employment or an apprenticeship to continue their chosen path and career and the EHC plan will be ceased at the end of the academic year. Janet is aware that she can still access support up to her 25th birthday for information and advice if needed.

Case Study 2:

Background

Fred is on the pathway for ASC and under CAMHS for anxiety and depression, although he was on a school role, he was not attending. Parent felt the school were not providing the right support or trying enough to get him into school. Early help worker was involved to support with this aspect.

Support

Parent contacted the service with her concerns and asked for support at a school meeting to discuss how the school could support re-engagement. Within the meeting strategies were suggested such as home learning and weekly emails to Fred from student support. The school were struggling to put support in place as Fred wasn't going into school. Having exhausted their resources, the school said they were going to start the Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment process. Family Involvement Worker explained about the process and supported parent and Fred with completing their views.

Initially the Local Authority refused to assess, and the parent asked for support to appeal the decision. The local authority conceded without going to appeal and proceeded to assess. An education, health care plan was issued naming the current school that Fred had been struggling to attend. Family Involvement Worker discussed options with parent who is now seeking alternative provision through an appeal to the SEND tribunal.

Impact

Parent didn't know her rights and couldn't retain information well, needing a lot of support to understand processes and procedures, and the time frame for these. Because parent had two jobs and was rarely available during 9-5pm, the Family Involvement Worker offered telephone appointments early evening, which meant that parent knew that she could discuss each step of the EHC needs assessment process with our service and has said that she felt 'well supported'.

Fred struggled to give his views, but with support and encouragement he did complete the paperwork to share his own thoughts and wishes. When the request for an assessment was declined, parent wanted to appeal, but felt she needed regular check-ins with the family involvement worker to ensure she was correctly completing and sending the appeal forms. With constant reassurance from the family involvement worker, parent feels she has the confidence to appeal and is currently requesting the right type of placement for Fred, who is still not attending school despite support from the school and other agencies.

Service Outputs for the six month period 1 October 2022 – 31 March 2023

- **3117** calls and emails came through the helpline representing a **34%** increase on the previous 6 months. Of the **1605** emails received, **86** came through the website representing a **30%** increase in emails and **59%** increase for those coming through the website compared to the previous 6 months.
- **622** families have received support at meetings via video or telephone conference calls and **158** face to face, this represents a **37%** and **8%** increase on the previous 6 months.
- **1265** New referrals for casework showing a **62%** increase.
- **45** virtual one to one information sessions with three slots were offered per session. **93** people attended.
- Virtual attendance at: **3** Multi Agency sessions for parents of children who are on the pathway for an autism diagnosis. **6** Kent PACT virtual coffee mornings giving parents the time to talk and ask questions.
- **126** young people over age **16** were accessing the service with support from their parents and **20** young people were receiving direct support from a caseworker.
- **65** young people were supported to participate in meetings with **11** feeling confident to actively be involved in a meeting. **17** of these meetings were for school or college support, **6** at annual reviews, **4** at a tribunal hearing. **7** young people have been engaging with Education Health care plan drafts/co-production meetings, **3** with Statutory Assessment paperwork, **22** with appeals paperwork and **6** attending a preparation meeting.
- **351** families have received information, advice and support relating to appeals to the SEND Tribunal representing a **34%** increase from the previous 6 months. From this number, we have supported **54** families with paperwork and **28** appeals have been lodged.
- Information, Advice and Support Kent have virtually attended **9** mediations, **1** Telephone case management hearing, **10** Judicial Alternative Dispute Resolution hearing, **13** tribunal hearings to support families who would otherwise have found it difficult to attend on their own. With IASK support **17** appeals were resolved before the hearing date.

- SEN support continues to be the highest reason for contact with our service, having an increase of **66%** of referrals relating to education support. We have seen a **30%** increase in request for information about the statutory assessment requests and a **27%** increase in issues related to Education, Health, and Care plans. Concerns about attendance have risen by **281%** and exclusions by **123%** and are now one of the top 10 reasons for the referral.
- **116** families' reasons for contacted the service are about concern for their child's mental health. Parents report that schools are not acknowledging the difficulties that some children are facing when returning to school relating to their anxieties about return, as well as being behind with their work and worried about exam results and accessing further education. A total of **67** discussions were had relating to health: **42** CAMHS, **7** regarding mental health organisations, **6** GP/paediatrician, **4** counselling, **3** medical needs, **2** parent's mental health and **1** each for health visitor, right to choose, and school nurse.
- **69** discussions were relating to social care and **32** referrals were recorded as part of the reason for contacting IASK. **5** referrals were made relating to short breaks and activities, and **65** related to the disability register (which includes Max cards).
- Website Usage: Website use, and new users have increased in the past 6 months by **13%** and **17%** respectively with a total of **7,873** hits and **7,649** new users. There has also been an increase of **12%** in page views to **27,318**. The top seven viewed, excluding the home page, were: Parents and Carers, SEN Support and EHC plans, Information sessions/drop-ins, FAQs, Helpline, Leaflets, Inclusion and Equality. We have received **86** email communications via the website.
- Social Media followers are around **2,000** each month with up to **1688** post reaches.
- Virtual Workshops: There has been a reduction in the provision of workshops this year due to staffing and capacity within the team. **7** workshops were offered Jan – March 2023 either in the day or evening. A total of **42** bookings were received and **22** parents and practitioners attended workshops: SEN Support in mainstream schools and colleges; Review meetings; Options for post 16 transition, Mental Capacity and decision-making post 16.

We received 100% positive feedback from respondents across the range of workshops, who all said they would recommend the workshops. Examples of feedback received about what the participants will take forward from the session:

‘The importance of the child voice and getting evidence’,

‘The understanding that there is always help’,

‘The whole workshop was brilliant. I’m going to look into reasonable adjustments’,

‘A lot more knowledge on what to expect from the school and where to go for more help’,

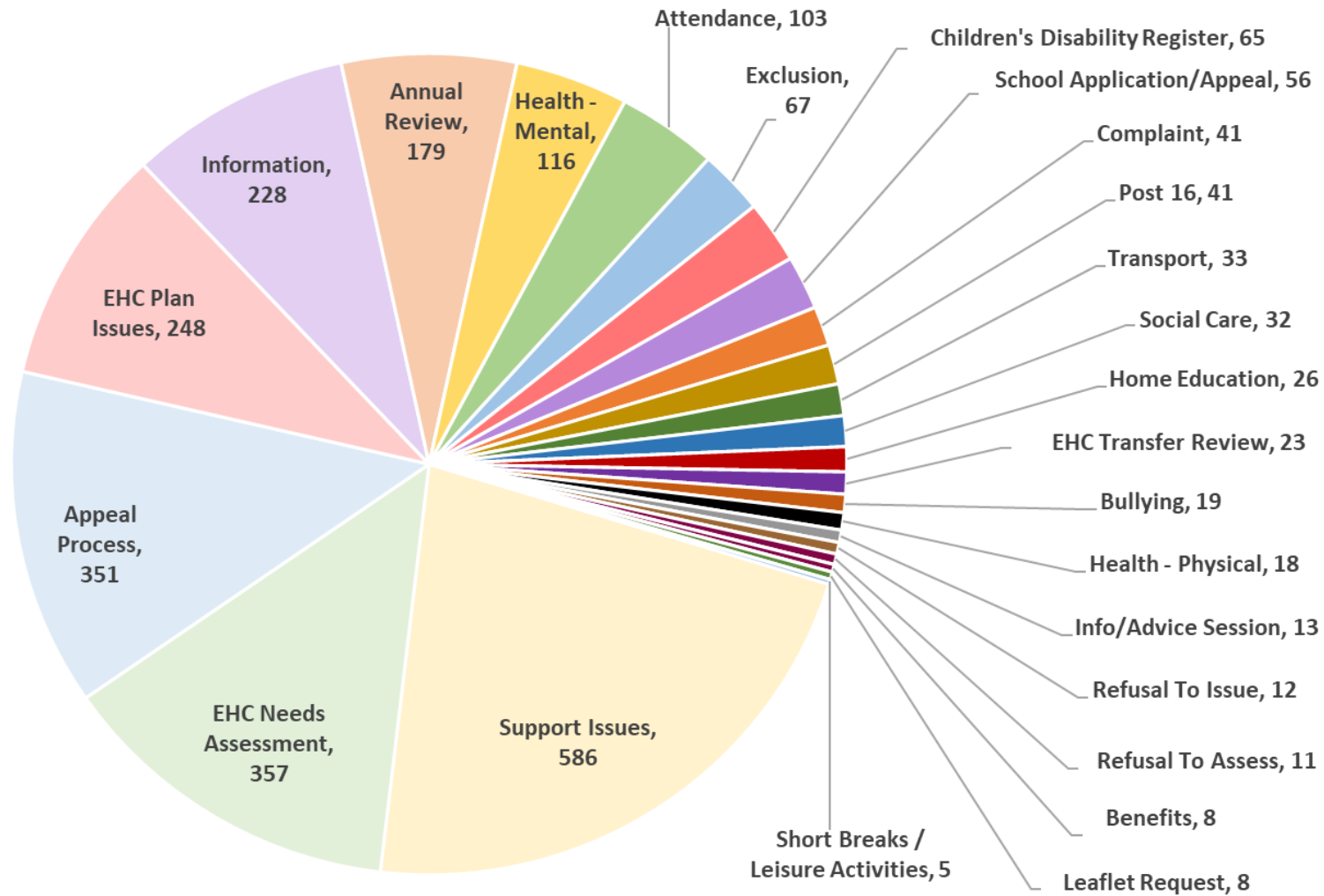
‘What needs to be done to assist children and the processes’.

- Face to face raising awareness activities at Roadshows with colleagues from the SEND Information Hub and Kent PACT. Moving on events for children and young people, Conference for SENCOs and Leaders of inclusion, Foster-carer presentation and information session, in person parent support groups, Elective Home Education Team, virtual presentations to Dover LCP, Early Help Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone and Malling SENCOs Forum, Kent PACT time to chat groups and ASC support groups. Reaching **286** parents, **95** children and young people, **479** people from various Kent agencies and services, including school staff, SENCOs and Inclusion Leads.

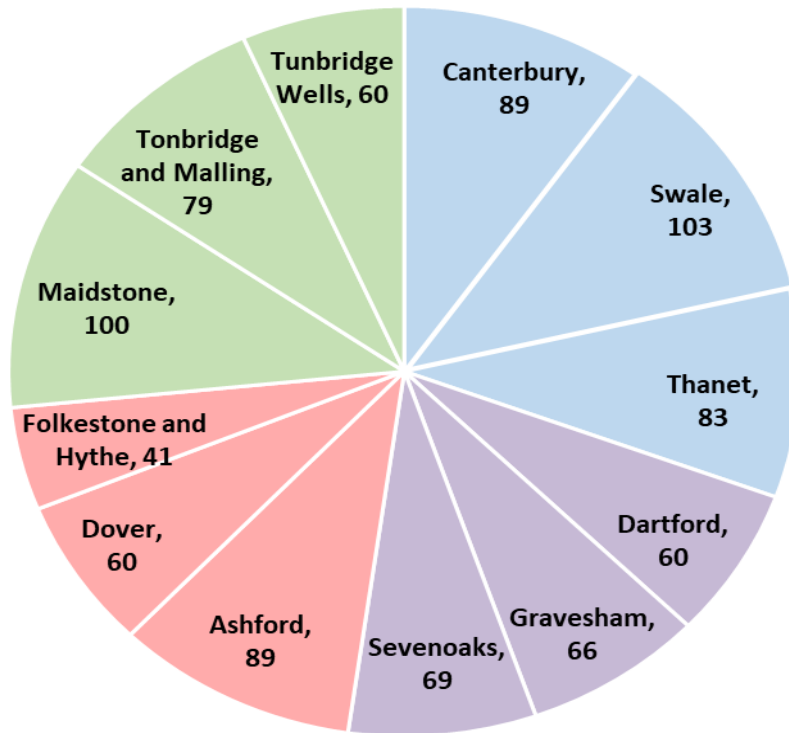
To give an understanding of why parents and young people contact the service, the following graphs on the next 4 pages show referral reasons, referral reasons by district and main disability by district for the period 1 October 2022 – 31 March 2023

More than one referral reason can be recorded against an enquiry a referral for casework which means the number of overall referral reasons is larger than the number of service users recorded.

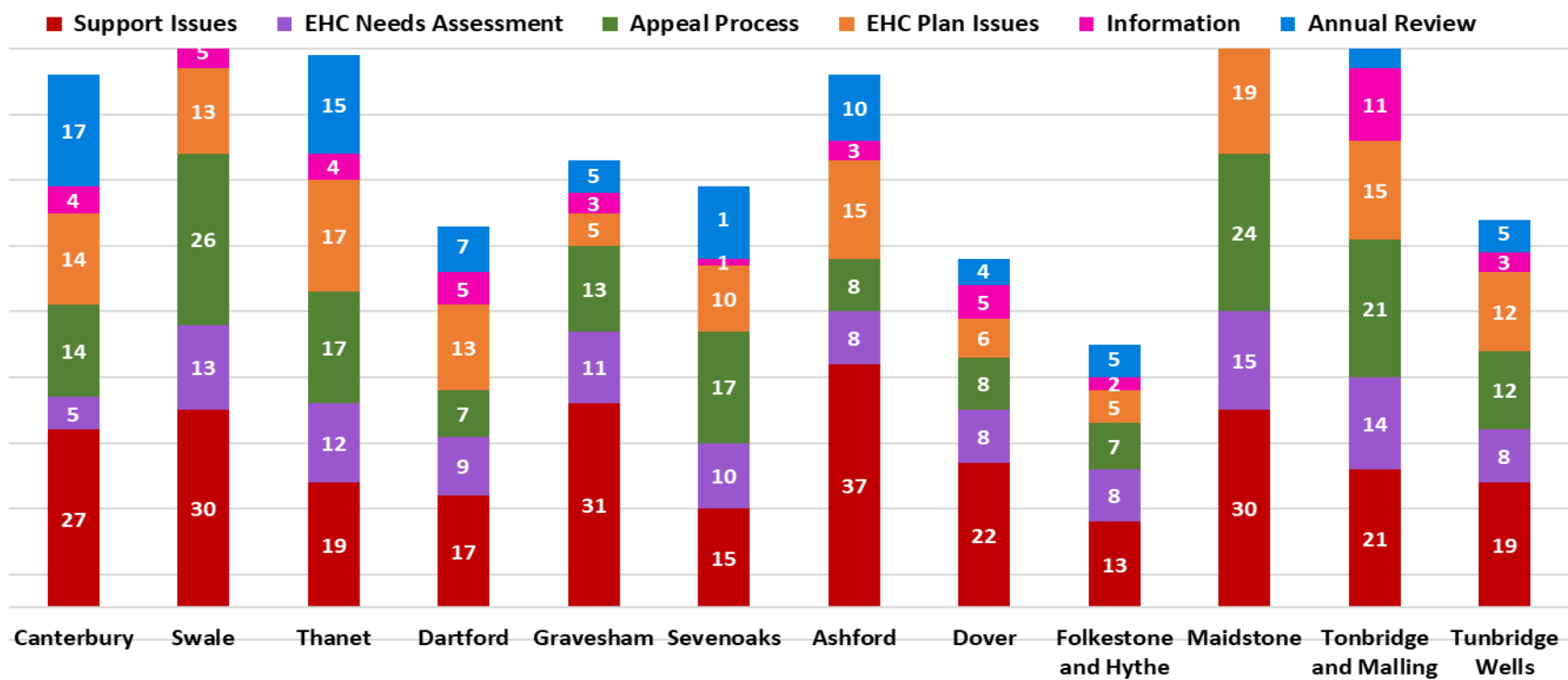
Total Referral Reasons from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023



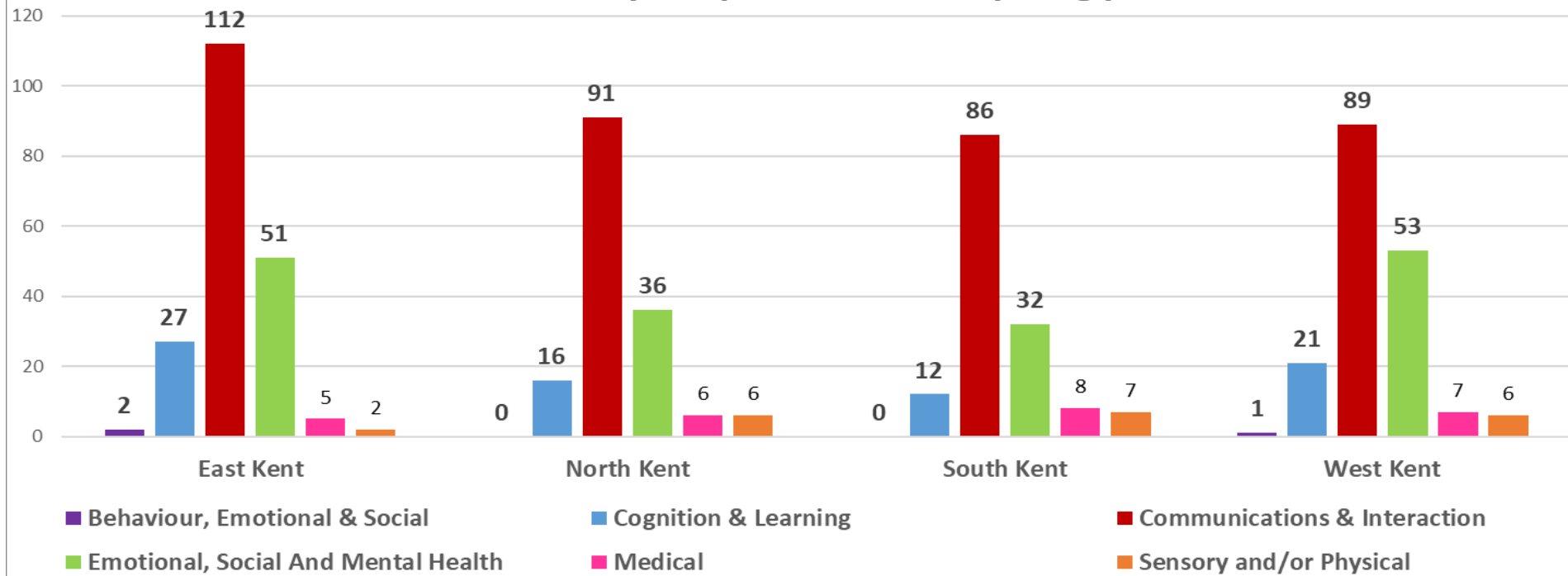
**Number of Referrals by District of Kent
from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023**



Top six referral reasons by district



Referrals across the four areas of Kent, by Main Area of Need as identified by the parent/carer or young person



Annual perspective 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

- Service Co-ordinator continues to be a regular participant at the South-East Regional Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) network meetings and also the regional representative for the IASS staff association
- A service representative regularly attends the following Groups:
 - Special Educational Needs Partnership Engagement Group
 - Designated Keyworker (DKW) Early Implementer Project Steering Group
- Staff Training:
 - Three new staff are now fully trained after undertaken the 3 levels of independent accredited training through IPSEA.
 - Information, Advice and Support Services Induction 3 new staff
 - Safeguarding Adults and Children, DSE for 4 new staff
 - CDC specific IASS training: Challenging Discriminatory Exclusions; Tribunal and general exclusion training; Visual Impairment; Introduction to mental health; CETRs, DSD, introduction to social care training modules all staff.
 - Tribunal Update; IPSEA refresher x 2 staff.
 - Mandatory Training 4 new staff
 - Mental Health Awareness
 - NHS Mandatory modules: Foundations for Key-working, Human Rights Approaches, Understanding the system

Key Performance Indicators From 1st April 2021 – 31 March 2022:

IASK has mechanisms in place to monitor performance and these are reviewed monthly at team meetings.

100% of calls were responded to within two working days **exceeding** the target of 97%.

100% of e-mails were responded to within two working days **exceeding** the target of 97%.

90% of service users found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us, (*Q1 user survey*) **meeting** the target of 90%.

94% of service users found the service helpful (3*) or very helpful to them, (*Q2 user survey*) **exceeding** the target of 90%.

96% of Parents had support at meetings when requested, **exceeding** the target of 90%.

Information, Advice and Support Kent Annual 5 year comparison of service provision

| | April 2018 - March 2019 | April 2019 – March 2020 | April 2020 – March 2021 | April 2021 – March 2022 | April 2022 – March 2023 | Percentage Increase/Decrease compared to 2021-2022 |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Enquiries | 939 | 1392 | 734 | 1362 | 1044 | - 23% |
| New Cases/referrals | 790 | 554 | 640 | 1035 | 2043 | +97% |
| Total telephone calls | 3828 | 4255 | 2900 | 4346 | 4707 | + 8% |
| Total emails | 3402 | 3763 | 5032 | 7562 | 8301 | + 9% |
| Helpline emails/tel. calls | 3806 | 4749 | 3251 | 5196 | 6124 | + 18% |
| Face to Face meetings | 794 | 746 | 3 | 102 | 308 | + 202% |
| Bookable telephone appointment instead of a meeting in the community | | | | 470 | 619 | + 32% |
| Virtual meetings – video or conference call | | | 394 | 586 | 468 | -20% |

IASK Mission Statement

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) believes children and young people thrive and achieve their potential when all partners (parents, children, young people and professionals) work together to plan appropriate interventions and educational, health and social care provision.

Our purpose is to provide legally based information, advice and support to empower parents and their children and young people to make informed decisions.

IASK promotes working together based on mutual respect of the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents. We are committed to providing a flexible and supportive service responsive to individual needs and to enable parents, children and young people to be involved in decisions about education, health and social care as it relates to them.

Service Overview

The Children and Families Act 2014 Part 3, Section 32 states (1) *'A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people for whom it is responsible, and the parents of children for whom it is responsible, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the special educational needs of the children or young people concerned'*. (2) *'A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people in its area with a disability, and the parents of children in its area with a disability, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the disabilities of the children or young people concerned.'*

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) provide the information, advice and support service for Kent County Council residents. IASK provides confidential and impartial information, advice and support and operates at arm's-length from the local authority to ensure parents/children and young people have confidence in the impartiality of the support and information provided by the Service.

The Service's focus is on education and health and social care as it relates to the child/young person's special educational needs and disabilities. For health-related queries the service signposts to Local Healthwatch, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and to SEAP for advocacy for health.

IASK has a steering management group which meets three/four times a year to monitor service operations. The Service Coordinator formally thanks the Steering Group for their time and commitment to attending meetings and supporting the management of the service.

Information, Advice and Support Kent Steering Group Members

George Whitney, Young Person from East Kent – Chair

Sharon King Representative of Kent PACT (Parent Carer Forum)

Jan Gray, Parent from South Kent

Claire Charlton, Parent Advisory Group

Jan Smith, Parent from West Kent

Becky Clark, Parent / Representative of 21 Together

Fiona Pender, Representative of Space 2 Be Me Telephone: 01622 764566 Email: info@space2beme.org.uk

Website: www.space2beme.org.uk/

Sarah Selby-Bird, Representative of SNAAP Telephone: 01227 367555 Email: info@snaap.org.uk Website: www.snaap.org.uk/

Sue Gibbons Designated Clinical Officer, NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board

Siobhan Price, Kent County Council Mainstream Inclusion

Emma Hanson / Nicola Bowden, Commissioning for Disabled Children's Services for Kent County Council

Kerry Miles, Service Co-ordinator for Information, Advice and Support Kent Email: iask@kent.gov.uk Website www.kent.gov.uk/iask

Feedback from Information, Advice and Support Kent User Survey April 2022 - March 2023

For cases closed between the period of 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023 a total of **191** parents and young people were contacted, who had given us permission to seek their feedback. Feedback was sought from families who received more than 2 hours support during this period who are identified as receiving an intervention level 2,3 or 4.

72 responses were received resulting in a **38%** return rate.

90% of respondents found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us

98% of respondents felt that we understood their questions concerns well (3*) or very well

100% of respondents felt IASK listened to their views

97% felt the information and advice provided met their needs

99% of respondents rated IASK as good (3*) or very good at being neutral, fair and unbiased

95% of responses recorded satisfied (3*) or very satisfied with the service

99% of respondents were likely (3*) or very likely to recommend the service to others

92% of respondents felt that the information advice and support provided has made a **great** deal of difference

Examples of the difference made:

86% have a greater understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children/young people with SEN

79% feel more confident

90% feel their child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved

90% feel that their child's needs are better understood than they were. (Please also see charts on pages 4/5)

Comments about the service:

'Just felt I had more support, felt more confident in what I was doing with the process'.

'The confidence in myself and knowing more about how the system works has been improved, also in asking professionals for help.'

'I have learned so much, better than the solicitor I got involved. X was absolutely marvellous I even told the Ofsted people that she was worth her weight in gold. I didn't know where to go, and X made such a huge difference'.

'Absolute godsend, made it easier to navigate the SEN system'.

'IASK was wonderful and was always there when needed. Communication was brilliant. IASK was brilliant, it was just the college that was letting everyone down'.

'I have to express my gratitude for X. She went above and beyond. Answering my 20 thousand emails constantly. Calling me every time I was overwhelmed and panicking. Listening to my rants. Answering my numerous questions. She helped me appeal and go to tribunal. She was amazing in my court hearing. I won my child's place at a specialist school after fighting the local authority for 18 months. Whilst my child had no education. Thank you X from the bottom of my heart'.

Suggestions to improve the service:

'Need a follow-up discussion to make sure that the school meets their objectives and not slacken and need to get updates from the school to ensure they continue their obligations.'

'There could be more prompts to coincide with statutory dead-lines'.

'Maybe more consultants or advisors on team'.

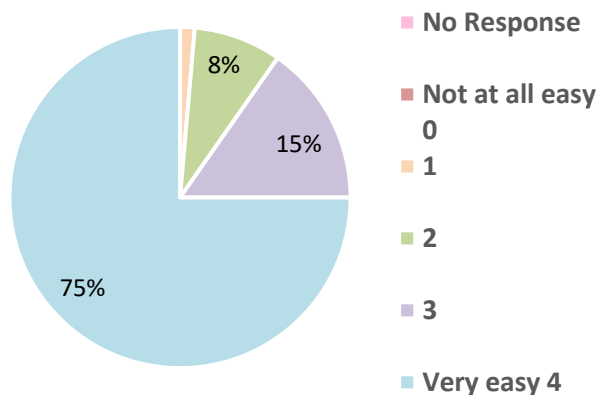
'Wasn't easy to find in the beginning'.

'IASK needs more people and more funding, even with the caseworker being so generous with her time'.

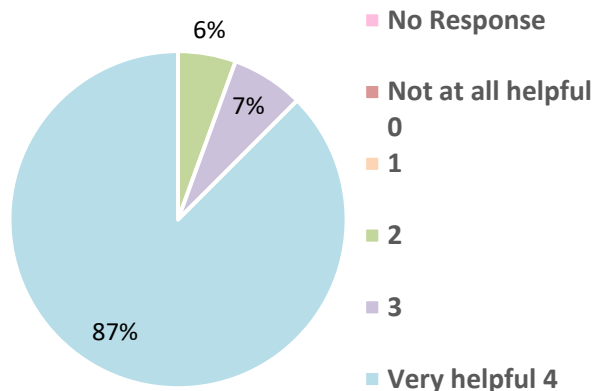
Following feedback from the Information, Advice and Support Kent User **2021-2022** we have made the following changes:

| You said | We did |
|---|--|
| 'Initially, getting an appointment online was confusing'. | We have updated the webpage to make this clearer. |
| <p>'Picking up the phone instantly. The service is sometimes very busy.'</p> <p>'High demand so sometimes difficult to get help at every meeting.'</p> <p>'Having more people at IASK',</p> <p>'Not having to make people wait 48 hours for a reply to a phone call or e-mail.'</p> | <p>We have dedicated helpline staff in addition we have a dedicated member of staff who triages calls to reassure callers that our helpline team will call back within 2 working days. Whenever possible staff endeavour to call back by the next day.</p> |
| 'Emphasis on law not policy.' | <p>Staff have independent legal training about special educational needs and disability. We have held a training session about basing our advice on the law as well as local policy.</p> |

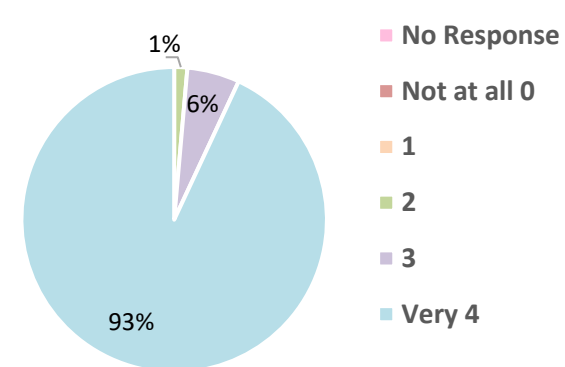
Q1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?



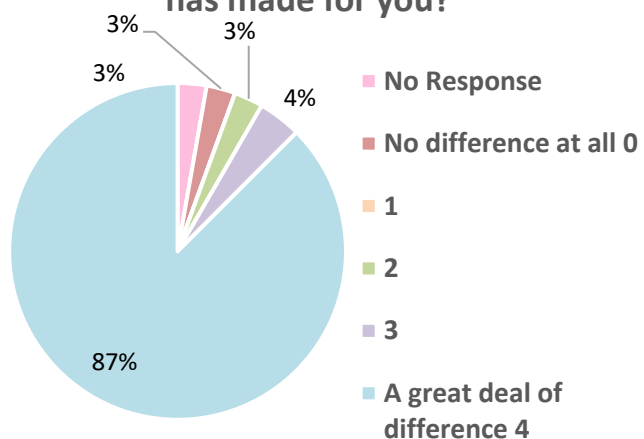
Q2 How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?



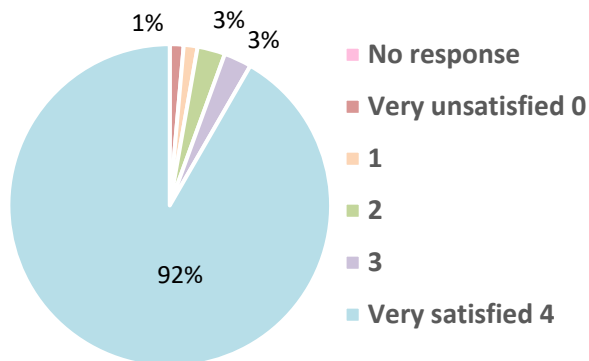
Q3 How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?



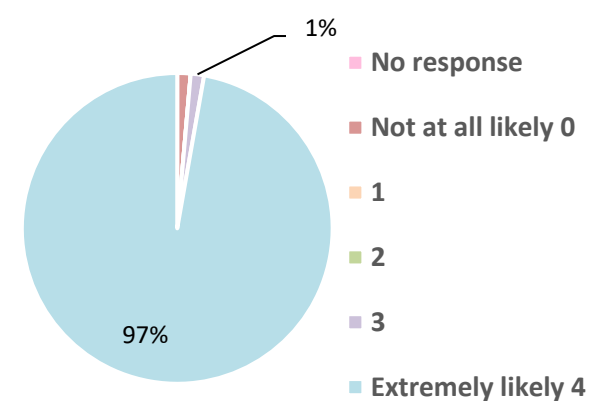
Q4 What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?



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



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



**Q4b Can you tell us more about the difference(s) we made for you?
(Please tick any that apply)**

