

The logo features a stylized kite with a purple top section, a green bottom section, and a yellow section on the right. A blue and purple ribbon-like shape extends from the bottom of the kite.

**Information
Advice and
Support
Kent**

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

Annual Service Report

2019/2020

Information, Advice and Support Kent

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

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‘The service provided to us, was amazing, help was given from the first moment of contact to the final result.’
(parent feedback survey 2019/20)

Overview of IASK - Kerry Miles Service Coordinator

We have had a busy year, with an increase in emails and telephone calls in general and also an increase in calls and emails to the helpline, in particular triage, which has meant the numbers of referrals for casework is lower than previous years.

We finished the year just as we were going into lockdown and have continued to offer our usual service, replacing face to face meetings with video calls, which was well received.

We applied for funding to the value of £41,900 through the National Information, Advice and Support Programme funded by the Department for Education. This has meant that the service was able to recruit to a 0.8fte Engagement and Participation Officer to facilitate engagement with parents, children and young people. The development activities throughout the year were:

1. Design and develop a new stand-alone website. Throughout the design and development stage respondents were invited to comment and make suggestions as well as children, young people and professionals that the Engagement and Participation Officer was meeting over 8 months prior to the website going live. This totalled 118 children and young people, 159 practitioners and 43 parents.
2. Pursue joint commissioning of the service with Education, Health and Social Care. Social Care Commissioners have been supporting IASK to drive forward joint commissioning of the service. A report was submitted to Health and Education Commissioners explaining the Department for Education expectation that Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) are jointly commissioned in line with the National Quality Standards for SENDIASS. A meeting with senior health managers was requested to discuss this further. This objective will continue to be relevant in the IASK development plan (April 2020 – March 2021).
3. A county-wide awareness raising campaign to promote the website and gain feedback was held in 11 Districts of Kent. Those that attended really enjoyed the content of the event and the opportunity to find out about our service. Positive feedback was also received about the website along with suggestions for additional items and improvements. Whilst numbers were not as anticipated, we are pleased that we just exceeded our target of at least 30 children and young people attending.

Event Dates	Parent	Children & Young People	Professional	Total Attendees Per Event
04.11.19	8	1	11	20
07.11.19	13	1	20	34
14.11.19	4	0	12	16
16.11.19	9	9	6	24
19.11.19	9	3	15	27
21.11.19	3	0	11	14
26.11.19	10	2	13	25
27.11.19	10	1	14	25
28.11.19	1	1	14	16
03.12.19	1	0	9	10
04.12.19	7	13	13	33
Total Per column	75	31	138	244

Overall referrals to the service have increased by 12.5% with a 155% increase in calls that have contacted us at the suggestion of their education setting. We have seen a 41% rise in invites to provide a market stall at events and the provision of presentations about the Service at groups and information sessions. We are working with health to provide information about the service to their ASD workshops for parents of post and pre- diagnostic children.

4. We have been providing workshops at parents request to increase our capacity to support parents at an earlier stage. This had been a development target for next year, demand was identified this year. 64 parents and practitioners have attended a workshop about SEN Support. Following a presentation to a parent group, 3 parents requested a workshop session about EHC needs assessment as they were currently starting the process. All attendees gave excellent feedback scoring mostly the top score of 5 or 4. Feedback from attendees: 'I feel more confident now to go back to the school to find out more about what they are doing for my son'.
'Lots!!! Brilliant workshop, really enjoyed it. Excellent information, friendly, amazing ladies delivering the session. Really knowledgeable, answered loads of questions from everyone - Brilliant! Thank you very much'. 'I know where I can find a voice for myself and my child. I can also use this information to help the children in my placement setting'.
5. Staff training to support parents at tribunal. 80% of staff have had training and are confidently supporting parents and young people to complete paperwork, provide advice and support through the process and for 9 cases support was provided at tribunal. Positive feedback

has been received about the support provided to those that we supported at tribunal. We have received verbal feedback about how our support through the process has helped parents to feel confident to attend the tribunal with support of a family member or friend.

6. Increase participation: There has been a 20% increase in young people accessing the service, although there has been a 10% in reduction of direct support for children and young people.

The numbers of people who have influenced Service practice has risen from 30 to 149.

The service has bid for a further £27,000 to continue developments in the second year of the development plan for 2020-2021.

Impact:

The service has conducted user feedback surveys for cases that closed from April 1st to 31 March 2020. We sought feedback from service users who received more than 2 hours support during this period who are identified as receiving an intervention level 2,3 or 4. We have found that emailing and posting the survey gained only a 10% return. This year alongside emailing surveys, we have utilised the support of a volunteer to telephone service users and this has improved our response rate to 36%.

97% of respondents were likely (3*) or very likely to recommend the service to others

98% of respondents rated IASK as good (3*) or very good at being neutral, fair and unbiased

93% of respondents found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us

100% of respondents felt IASK listened to their view

98% felt IASK provide a confidential service

81% feel more confident

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

Case Study 1:

Parent wanted support with meetings and with encouraging B (young person in post 16 education) to gain more independence and to be able to have a voice at meetings.

Parent felt the educational provider was being reactive rather than pro- active and was not taking into consideration B's EHC plan or making reasonable adjustments in relation to course work and during examinations.

IASK provided one-one support for B with completing Section A, helping B to explore her views and feelings about the support she had been receiving and what support was needed going forward in order to achieve her goals and aspirations in readiness for the annual review.

This preparation work helped at a meeting which was scheduled with the education provider prior to the annual review which had been postponed. With IASK support for B was able to share her thoughts and find a positive way forward to ensure that the young person felt listened to at the meeting.

The annual review meeting took place six months after the original proposed date. Again IASK supported with going over section A with B in order to ensure her views and wishes were up to date.

IASK attended the annual review meeting with the education provider, SEN staff, subject lead and parent.

Annual review re called during lockdown COVID-19, so Annual review called remotely 6 months after initial date as a virtual meeting.

Impact of the support for B and her family:

With IASK support B has become more assertive and able to share wishes and feelings both on paper and at meetings.

Previous issues arising from miscommunication that had a negative impact on B's learning and productivity were resolved and B has been able to identify areas of support that have subsequently had a positive effect on her progression in learning.

B has subsequently met with the educational provider with parent support and is voicing opinions and concerns independently.

IASK information, advice given to the young person and their parent separately, was valued by B and her parent.

B felt supported by IASK and is confident to email IASK and ask questions with concerns about their plan. Further meeting arranged with B and the education provider to check progress and address any issues that are not dealt with on a day by day basis as they arise.

Parent feels the communication at the meetings were more positive and focussed with IASK present. Parent also felt that having an impartial supporter meant that B was more confident to speak at the meeting about her views and wishes.

Parent felt that with IASK support any suggestions being raised were taken on board and actioned where previously suggestions of how to support B were acknowledged, but not actioned.

The educational provider is now being more proactive in many areas and looking at different ways to support and work with B to ensure they are meeting her needs.

Case Study 2:

Student attending special school who wanted to transfer to a mainstream grammar school with a unit because the current school could not provide the range and number of qualifications to meet the student's aspirations. Student was exceeding targets and the work was not challenging.

IASK provided information and advice with options for the parent to consider at the next Annual Review. Parent requested support at the annual review meeting to make a request for a change of placement. The LA refused stating current school can meet need.

Parent was unhappy with the response and took up her right of appeal, with support from IASK to help parent understand the appeal process and how to take the appeal forward.

The parent and student's preferred choice of school was a local mainstream grammar. This school said the pupil was not academically capable. Parent pursued this route and the student sat an entry exam and failed only one part of the exam, however, parent was able to provide evidence from the current school that the student was academically able in this particular area.

IASK continued to provide support to the parent with focussing her on the reasons why the parent and child felt that this school placement was appropriate given the students current progress levels.

Impact of support:

Parent felt well informed and supported to pursue the change of placement. When a new placement was refused, IASK information, advice and support empowered the parent to have the confidence to continue to pursue the right placement for her child.

The local authority conceded, and the student transferred to the local grammar school, where he has settled well despite the Covid 19 pandemic. Parent stated that she could not have done it without IASK support being there to guide and support her.

Over the past year

The team has worked hard to successfully respond to a higher number of enquiries, telephone calls, emails and more recently texts. Face to face support is 6% lower this year, probably due to meetings being cancelled due to lockdown - the figures do include 6 video calls and 1 conference call in March 2020.

The helpline had a 24% increase in emails, telephone calls and letters. Callers contacting the service for more general information are recorded as an 'enquiry', which has increased by 48% since last year. (See Appendix 3).

559 new service users were recorded under casework this year. Although this is 29% lower than last year, there were 424 new cases opened for families already known to the service. The reduction can also be explained by the continued increase in lengthy tailored email correspondence recorded as an 'enquiry' when they should be recorded as a case.

The service has also provided the following:

- 95 drop-ins/information sessions delivered across the County with 247 people attending an increase on the previous year.
- recruited four new volunteers who have commenced training.
- received 48 invitations to attend a variety of events arranged by other organisations, schools, colleges, health and the voluntary sector for a range of service users, either providing a market stall or delivering presentations;
- 249 young people over age 16 were accessing the service with support from their parents and 28 young people over age 16 were receiving direct support from a caseworker.
- the service has provided 257 families information, advice and support relating to appeals to the SEND Tribunal. 66 of these families have received face to face support 44 have been directly relating to paperwork. Staff have attended 7 hearings to support families who would otherwise have found it difficult to attend on their own.
- continuing to compile and update a comprehensive list of short breaks, activities, support groups and voluntary agencies that are able to offer additional information and support;
- IASK policies reviewed and updated as required.
- regularly posting information on social media;
- production of a termly newsletter for organisations and services supporting parents and children/young people with special educational needs and disabilities;
- the service continues to be a regular participant at the South East Regional Information, Advice and Support Services network meetings. The service also regularly attends a National meeting specifically relating to working with children and young people.
- regular attendance at workstream meetings relating to the Written Statement of Action following Ofsted and CQC's visit in January 2018.

- there has been a 25% increase in referrals relating to social care with discussions relating to social care and disability totalling 294, which is a 10% reduction on the previous year.
- 87 contacts relating to health discussions have been recorded this year
- Recruitment of a new member of staff who completed the three levels of IPSEA training modules and attended Level 1 & 2 face to face training.
- Staff training: Children and Young People's Mental Health Training, Young Minds Welcome Day 2 - refugees understanding trauma, Selective Mutism workshop, Kent's Practice Framework, Self-harm introduction, Engaging and working directly with children and young people, Hearing Impairment Training, Website training various e-learning topics through IPSEA and KCC.

Key Performance Indicators

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

From April 2018 to March 2019:

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%.

93% of service users found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us, (*Q1 user survey*) **exceeding** the target of 90%.

98% of service users found the service helpful (3*) or very helpful to them, (*Q2 user survey*) **exceeding** the target of 90%.

90% of Parents had access to support at meetings when requested **meeting** the target of 90%.

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 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 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.

The funding for the Independent Supporter for young people finished in August 2018. The service is now receiving funding through the Information, Advice and Support Programme from the Department for Education (DfE) to support meeting the National Minimum Standards for Information, Advice and Support Services.

IASK has a steering management group which meets three 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

Steering Group members:

George Whitney, Young Person from East Kent – Co-Chair

Jan Gray, Parent from South Kent and Steering Group Co-Chair

Dana Aris, Parent from West Kent

Karen Ponte, Parent from West Kent

Sharon King, Parent from East Kent

Jan Smith Representative from the Weald Parent Support Group

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/

Tiffany Elliot, Commissioning Officer for Social Care for Kent County Council

Louise Burgess, Head of SEN A&P (commissioning from Education)

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 2019-2020

160 surveys conducted over the telephone and emailed/posted to parents and young people whose cases closed between the period of 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020. We sought feedback from service users who received more than 2 hours support during this period who are identified as receiving an intervention level 2,3 or 4.

57 responses were received resulting in a **36%** return rate.

100% of responses recorded satisfied (3*) or very satisfied with the service

97% of respondents were likely (3*) or very likely to recommend the service to others

98% of respondents rated IASK as good (3*) or very good at being neutral, fair and unbiased

93% of respondents found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us

100% of respondents felt that we understood their questions concerns well (3*) or very well

100% of respondents felt IASK listened to their view

98% felt IASK provide a confidential service

100% felt the information and advice provided met their needs

88% of respondents felt that the information advice and support provided has made a **great** deal of difference

Examples of the difference made:

67% have a greater understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children/young people with SEN

81% feel more confident

74% of respondents felt their child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved

(Please also see charts below)

Comments about the service:

'IASK staff have done above and beyond to help my son and me. I cannot thank them enough. They are very professional and offer a very valuable service. I had no idea of the long process involved in trying to obtain an EHCP'.

'You have all been amazing!! We just need more of you to inspire & help parents feel more confident'.

'Through your advice and coming with me to meetings and helping me understand the EHCP process I was confident to fight for my child's rights to a decent education. Because of this my son has now moved from a mainstream school to a specialist school. Thank you'

'Completely changed the way the whole process went if I didn't have the support of IASK I wouldn't have been able to support my son and take it to tribunal, IASK staff were an amazing help'

'Service and people are amazing. It is the first service I turn too. My child has been able to attend meeting with support from IASK'

'Feel more confident and feel knowledge has grown'.

'Given my son confidence and security and having somebody listen to him and that understands him'.

'Being a parent with special needs myself, I am very happy with the way things were broken down in a way that I understood'.

'Feeling that there is someone backing me and understanding the school at the same time. Having that person who is speaking parent and school language. Having someone there to keep me grounded'.

Suggestions to improve the service:

'When the service answers calls they are amazing. Calls should be answered straight away I don't like to leave messages'.

'Having a signer would have been better, as son is deaf'.

'Work on reducing the time it takes for you to get back to people with respect to: 1. Requests 2. Speaking to the member of staff that you want to speak to'.

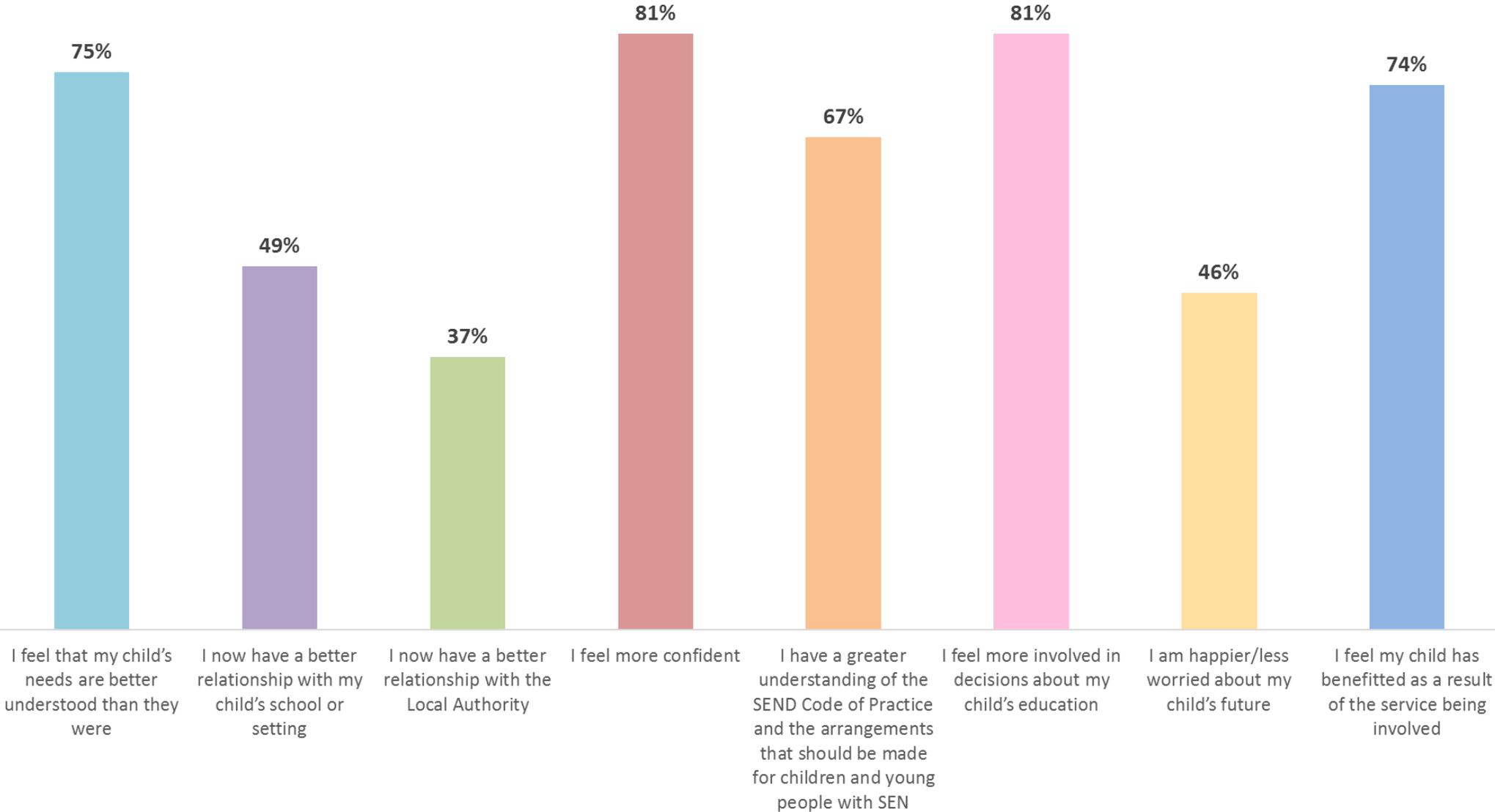
'Would be good to be able to talk to someone the day I call or email but you do always call the next day'.

Following feedback from the Information, Advice and Support Kent User Survey 2018-2019 we have made the following changes:

You said	We did
'Tribunal – would have been nice to have somebody with us'.	We have 5 trained staff who can support at the hearing.
'Follow up calls would have been nice'.	By arrangement, our casework officers and helpline make follow up calls.
'You are not very well advertised'	We held 11 events across the County over the past year. We have attended 8 health events this year to increase awareness of our service.
'Slight conflict of information between what IASK and IPSEA recommended. It should be clarified that IASK are not lawyers'.	We have produced fact sheets about tribunal and have made it clear we are not legal representatives. We continue to have training and peer support with other SENDIASS to up-date service knowledge.



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



Information, Advice and Support Kent comparison of service provision over the past four years:

	April 2015 - March 2016	April 2016 - March 2017	April 2017 March 2018	April 2018 - March 2019	April 2019 – March 2020	Percentage Increase/Decrease from previous year
Enquiries	611	606	548	939	1392	+ 48.2
New Cases/referrals	883	827	794	790	554	- 28%
Total telephone calls	2709	3219	3028	3828	4255	+ 11%
Total email	2180	2603	2924	3402	3763	+ 10%
Helpline emails/tel. calls	-	3066	3300	3806	4749	+ 24%
Face to Face meetings	784	812	545	794	746	- 6%