

**Information
Advice and
Support
Kent**



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

Information, Advice and Support Kent

Interim Service Report

30 September 2022

Contents

Overview	3
Impact	4
Case Studies	5
Outputs	7
Key Performance Indicators	12
Mission Statement	13

Appendices

Appendix 1 Steering Group Members	14
Appendix 2 User Survey Feedback 1 April 2019 31 March 2020	15

‘I feel more confident in the system. Knowing there are people out there willing to listen and put your mind at ease’.

(parent’s feedback September 2022)

Overview of IASK - Kerry Miles Service Coordinator

Information, Advice and Support Kent have had a very busy six months and experienced a 56% increase in calls and emails to the helpline, compared to the same six-month period in 2021. During this time, IASK have recruited three part time Helpline officers who have undertaken independent legal training to Level 3 through IPSEA. They have also undertaken virtual training to level 2 to support their understanding and knowledge of the law relating to special educational needs and disabilities. Along with an experienced member of the team they are providing information and advice to parents and ensuring that all calls are responded to within service standards.

As per parental request, we have continued to promote the service across the County at information roadshows attending eight school parent groups; providing market stalls at twelve school and community events, this has included a Deaf Expo and Rise Expo; and attended five virtual coffee mornings, giving parents time to talk. We have provided information to 369 parents, 40 children and young people and one hundred and one people from various agencies and services from Kent, school staff and trainee Education Psychologists.

Our face-to-face support has increased from 25 to 149 for families who feel they needed our direct support rather than virtually. Although virtual support has reduced by 27%, there has been an overall increase of 18% for support at meetings (virtual and face-to-face). We have also experienced a 39% increase in requests for bookable appointments to enable parents to prepare for a meeting.

We are committed to working with parents to support developments with the production of a service video and website developments and have set up a ‘parent advisory group’ to help drive forward these developments. We also plan to engage young people service users to support these developments.

Impact over the six month period 1 April – 30 September 2022: (For full details of feedback please see Appendix 2, page 15)

The service has conducted user feedback surveys for cases that closed from 1 April to 30th September 2021. We sought feedback from 112 service users via telephone and email using survey monkey, which resulted in a 48% response rate.

100% 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

(Note: A respondent scored one across all the questions, left no comments or contact details for the Co-ordinator to follow up).

87% of respondents found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us

100% of respondents felt IASK listened to their view

95% felt the information and advice provided met their needs

76% feel more confident

Ad Hoc feedback from service users outside of the usual survey: Email compliments direct to the service:

'You have been a great help in, frankly, a complex and serious situation. The fact that we can bounce questions off to you and you reply so quickly has been supportive, professional and always giving us guidance'.

'I'm very impressed with your speed of response and level of knowledge. For someone who is feeling a little bogged down with each revelation that there's more information I didn't know I needed to know you're a glimmer of hope that I can have an unbiased response with sensible and helpful advice'.

'I can't thank you enough for your support. You have actually changed things hugely just by doing that for me

'Also thank you for your valued points, it really made a difference and we felt confident to put our points across'.

'Just to say a big thank you for your time yesterday. I appreciate your support and the great work you do'.

Case Study 1:

Background:

Julie had an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan in place before starting reception class in a mainstream school due to concerns that she would not cope, without a high level of support. It had become evident that Julie was not managing at school and school were struggling to meet her needs despite putting in the support identified in the plan. Parent requested a change of placement to specialist provision, during the annual review of the EHC plan.

Support:

The SENCo contacted IASK at Parent's request asking for support to appeal the local authority decision not to change the placement. Parent struggled to communicate her views and feelings and found it very difficult to understand the paperwork and how to complete the forms. Parent was adamant that Julie needed to go to a special school. IASK explained about the process of going to appeal, helped Parent to answer the questions using the relevant paperwork. Parent had agreed to post everything to the tribunal as she had no access to email and was advised to contact us when she heard back from the tribunal. IASK contacted some weeks later to enquire about the date of the hearing, but Parent had forgotten to send the paperwork and was out of time to appeal.

An emergency annual review was arranged some months later because Julie was finding it harder to cope in the mainstream setting. Julie was being taken out of the class to do her work because she found the classroom setting too overwhelming due to her sensory difficulties. Despite the extra funding to provide support, Julie had been put on a part time timetable and although they tried to increase the timetable, it always failed due to her behaviour difficulties, which often resulted in her trying to escape from the school.

The local authority again refused change of placement, and IASK supported parent with submitting the updated information and reasons for appeal – this time seeking permission from the Tribunal to submit the paperwork on parent's behalf via email. IASK supported through the process, but the case didn't go to hearing because a suitable school place was identified.

Impact:

Parent felt that without our support to appeal and explain the process her child would never have got the place. Parent stated she couldn't understand the paperwork and didn't know how to complete the form and that IASK helped her to get her views and reasons across saying 'I am extremely grateful for IASK support'. Julie is currently going through a transition period to the special school and seems to be happy.

Case Study 2:

Background:

Mary has had a lot of difficulties in engaging with education despite being extremely capable. Her health needs had negative impact on her attendance at school and ability to complete her course work and exams. Mary wanted to succeed and gain employment, but her mental health needs were holding her back from attaining her education goals.

Support:

Mary had support from IASK to attend annual reviews of her education, health, and care plan and during this time she built a good relationship with her IASK named worker and started to contact the service directly for support, not through her mother.

Mary had found it extremely difficult to engage with learning despite being very able, she was not engaging fully with education, which was not helped by the fact that she became homeless. Despite these set-backs, Mary desperately wanted to gain the qualifications to support her future employment plans.

Mary asked for support with discussions around her educational needs at several multi-agency meetings because she felt other professionals from health and social care, were not listening to her. IASK supported Mary to get her views across about her education and the impact that her health and social care needs were having on her education.

Impact:

Over a period of 6 years, Mary knew that she could contact IASK for advice and support, and during this time built good rapport with a named worker. For Mary, the IASK supporter was a trusted person who understood her and explained processes and procedures to her in a way that she could understand. This helped Mary to engage with the meetings and gave her the confidence to voice her opinions herself and she knew that if she got into difficulties, IASK would be able to help share her views.

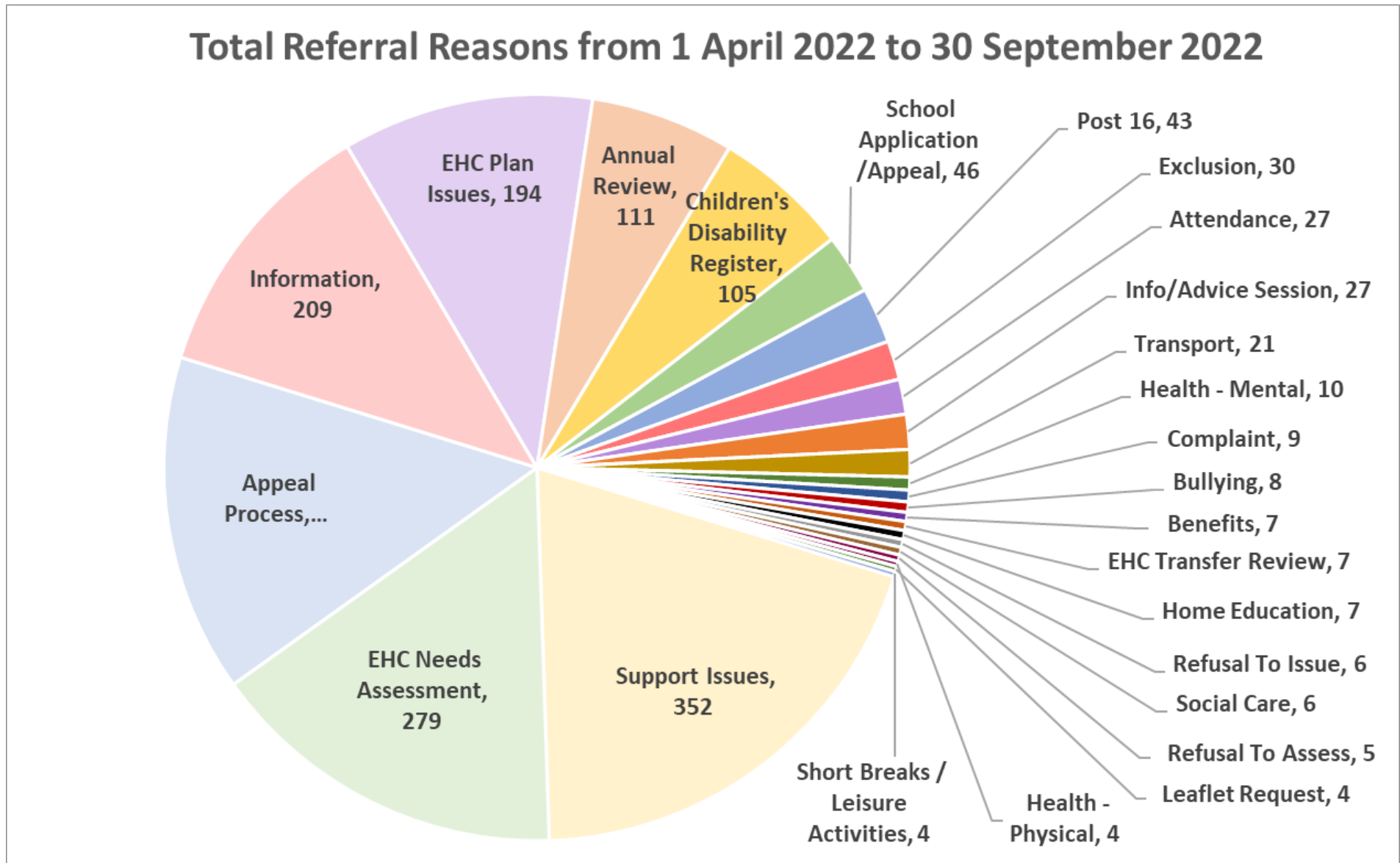
This resulted in the meetings focussing on the wider picture and the outcomes for Mary were that she gained a mainstream college placement over a two-year period rather than a year, so that she could finish her education and gain the relevant qualifications; and housing secured accommodation for her with support through a social care package.

Service Outputs:

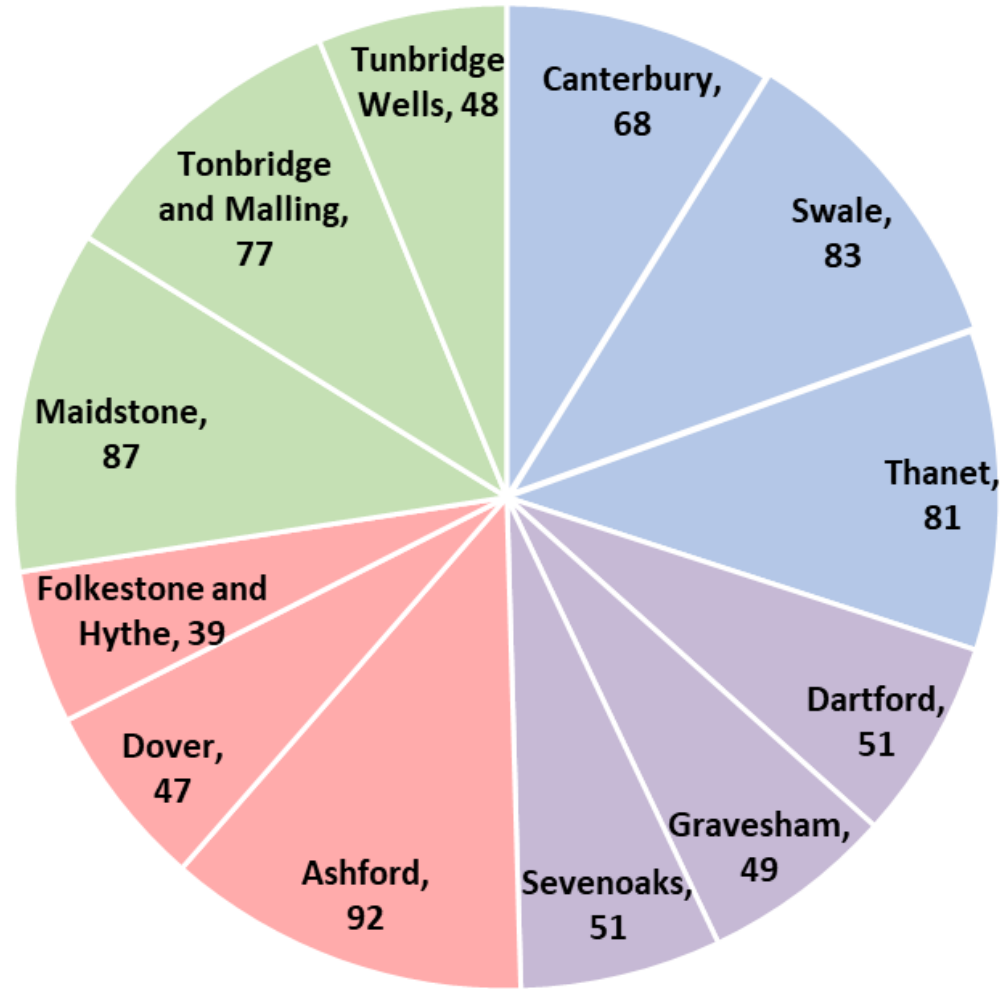
- **2330** calls and emails came through the helpline. Of the **1288** emails received, **54** came through the website
- **2139** telephone calls and **3951** emails were recorded for all staff providing support to families.
- **190** families have received support at meetings via video or telephone conference calls
- **262** booked telephone appointments – where we would usually have met face to face to go over paperwork
- **146** face to face meetings for families who would have struggled to have only virtual support
- **779** New referrals for casework and **643** enquiries
- **34** virtual information sessions have been offered, with **81** attendees
- **120** young people over age 16 were accessing the service with support from their parents and **24** young people have received direct support from a caseworker
- **261** families have received information, advice and support relating to appeals to the SEND Tribunal, with **70** families being supported with paperwork and **47** tribunal appeals lodged.
- Staff have virtually attended **2** mediations, **2** telephone case management hearings, **7** Judicial alternative dispute resolution hearings, **15** tribunal hearings, supporting families who would otherwise have found it difficult to attend on their own. With IASK support **20** appeals were resolved before the hearing date
- Of the **279** families that have been supported through the EHC needs assessment **10** had support with the draft EHC plan and or support with co-production meetings, **17** had help with paperwork.
- **34** contacts included health discussions
- **116** discussions relating to social care and **6** referrals recorded as the reason for contacting IASK, and **4** referrals relating to short breaks and activities
- Service attendance at: **8** Roadshows to school parent groups across the County. **10** events providing a market stall; **5** virtual coffee mornings giving parents the time to talk. Reaching **369** parents, **40** children and young people, and **101** people from various agencies and services from Kent, including school staff and trainee Education Psychologists,
- An analysis of the of the data for the April to September 2021 compared to the data for April to September 2022 shows there is an **84%** increase in new referrals for casework, **10%** increase in enquiries, and **22%** increase in case contacts.

The graphs on the next 4 pages show referral reasons, referral reasons by district and main disability by district.

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

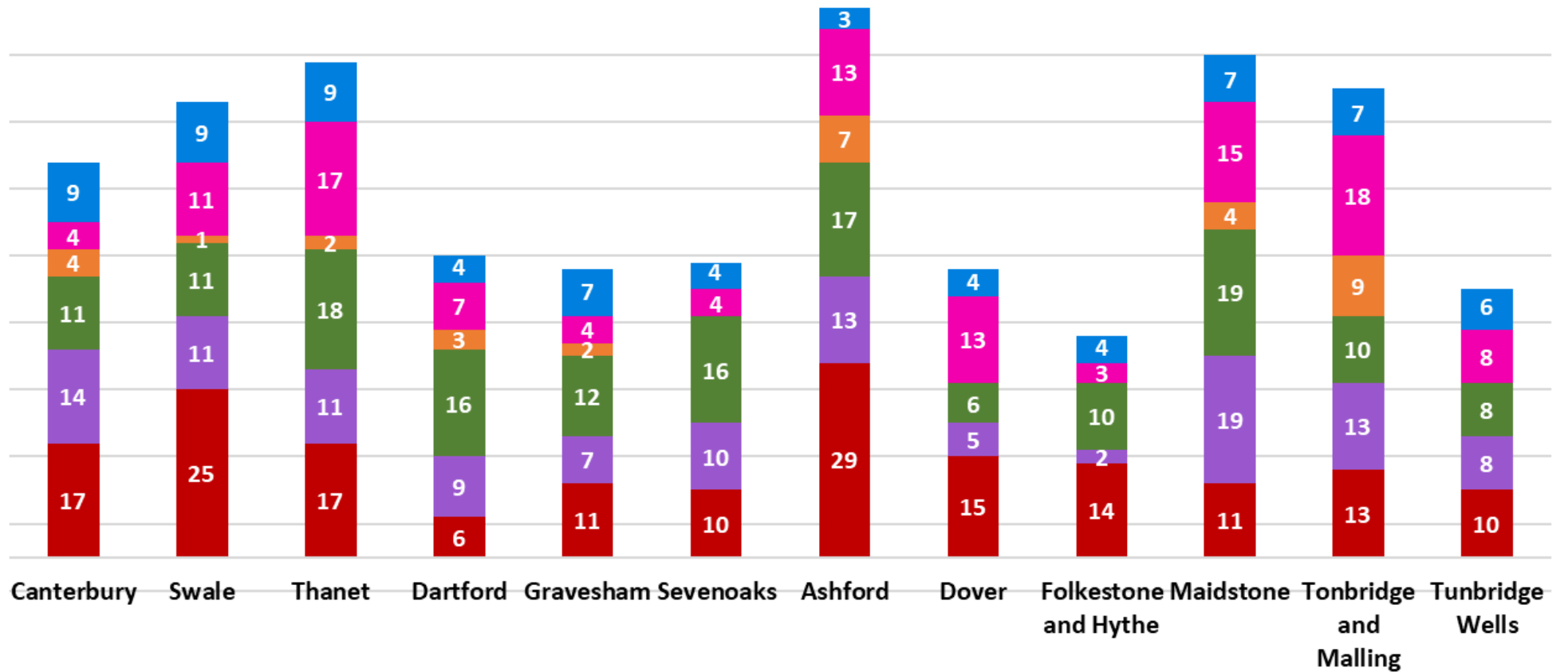


**Number of Referrals by District of Kent
from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022**

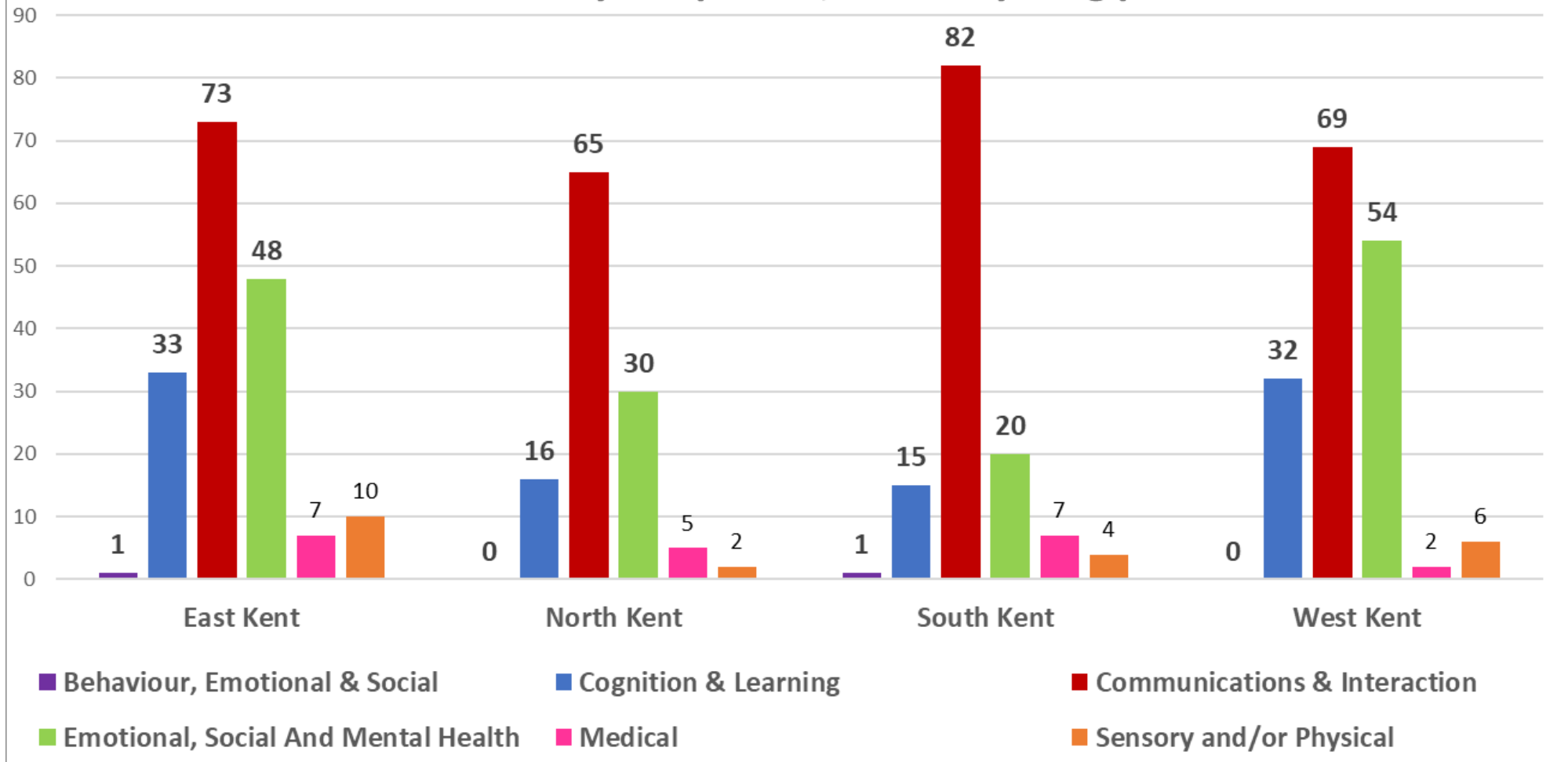


Top six referral reasons by district

■ Support Issues
 ■ EHC Needs Assessment
 ■ Appeal Process
 ■ Information
 ■ EHC Plan Issues
 ■ Annual Review



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



Key Performance Indicators

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

From 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022:

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%

88% of service users found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us, (*Q1 user survey*) not quite reaching the target of 90% (12% scored a 2 on a scale of 0-5). The service has received a record number of calls and emails to the service, and this means that parents might wait longer for a return call although they are always contacted within 2 working days. Despite seeking a convenient time to talk, sometimes the first call back is not successful.

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

93% of Parents had access to either virtual or face to face support at meetings when requested **exceeding** the target of 90%

Website Usage

Website use has increased by 37% during the same six-month period in 2021, with a total of **6,985** hits. There were **6,560** new users to the site and **24,322** page views. The top six viewed pages, excluding the home page, were: Information for parents and carers, EHC plans, young people, information sessions/drop-ins, frequently asked questions, and leaflets. Young people's pages have been more popular than last year.

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.

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 and Chair

Jan Gray, Parent from South Kent

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/

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

Siobhan Price, Education Officer, Mainstream Inclusion

Sue Gibbons, Designated Clinical Officer (SEND) for Kent and Medway

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

Information, Advice and Support Kent User Survey 1 April – 30 September 2022

For cases closed between the period of 1 April to 30 September 2022 a total of **112** parents and young people were contacted. We sought feedback from families who received more than 2 hours support during this period who are identified as receiving an intervention level 2,3 or 4.

48 responses were received resulting in a **43%** return rate

94% of responses recorded satisfied (3*) or very satisfied with the service

100% 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

88% 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 view

95% felt the information and advice provided met their needs

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

Examples of the difference made:

83% have a greater understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children/young people with SEN

76% feel more confident

88% of respondents felt their child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved

(Please also see charts on pages 4/5)

Comments about the service:

'Really, really helpful, more than what she thought. The woman who helped me was amazing and cannot thank her any more'.

'IASK are really sought after, and how busy they are, but they get around to everyone. X has been amazing; cannot put into words how much support she has given every step pf the way'.

'Absolutely fantastic and forever grateful for the help given to daughter'.

'X was really faithful, and really compassionate and understanding and phenomenally expert in her field. Even if the result went sour, she would have been satisfied knowing that X had helped with all her wisdom to the last. Because of X I feel in a better mental place regarding the issue'.

'Supported me through a legal process I didn't understand, nor could I afford legal representation. IASK helped me get my head around this at a very stressful time'.

'I was initially sceptical about using IASK because it was affiliated and paid by KCC. But I was pleased to have been wrong. X just "embraced us" with the support she provided and took the "faff" out of it and made it easier for me to follow through'.

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.'

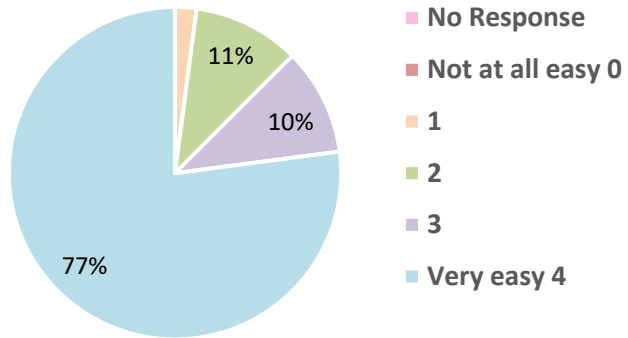
'There could be more prompts to coincide with statutory dead-lines'.

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

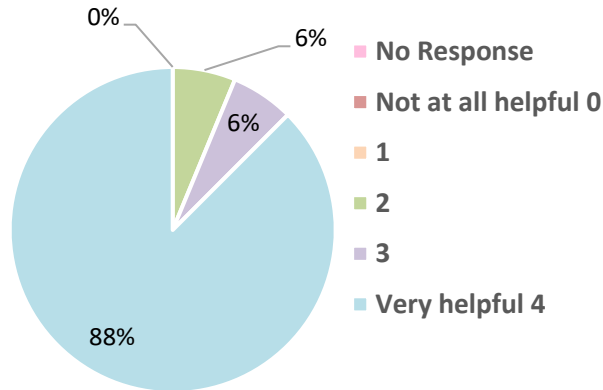
Following feedback from the Information, Advice and Support Kent User Survey 2021-2022 we have made the following changes:

You said	We did
'Initially, getting an appointment online was confusing'.	We have updated the webpage to make this clearer.
'Picking up the phone instantly. The service is sometimes very busy.' 'High demand so sometimes difficult to get help at every meeting.' 'Having more people at IASK', 'Not having to make people wait 48 hours for a reply to a phone call or e-mail.'	We have a dedicated helpline staff and a person to triage calls, and reassure that our helpline team will call back within 2 working days. Whenever possible staff endeavour to call back by the next day.
'Emphasis on law not policy.'	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.

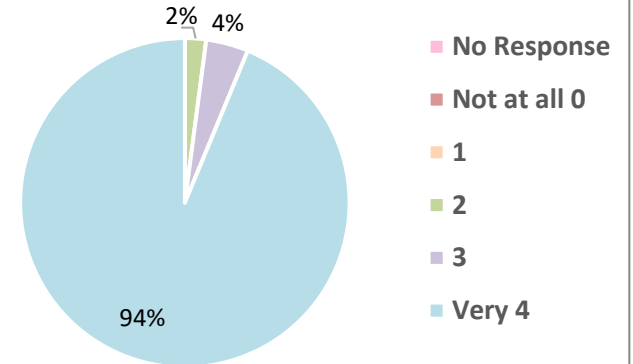
Q1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?



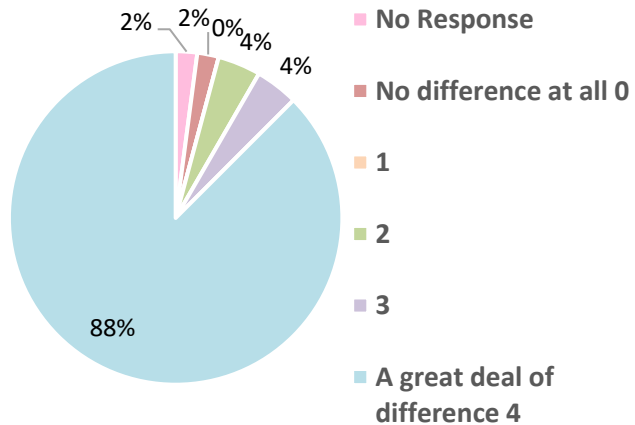
Q2 How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?



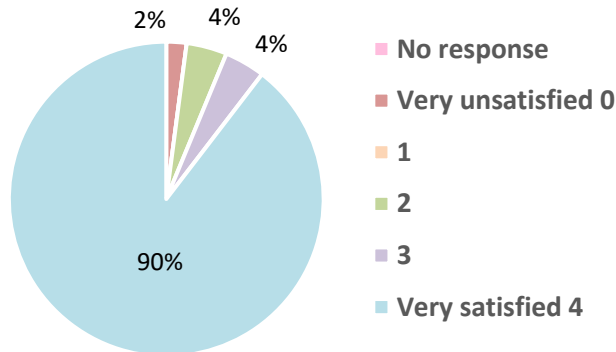
Q3 How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?



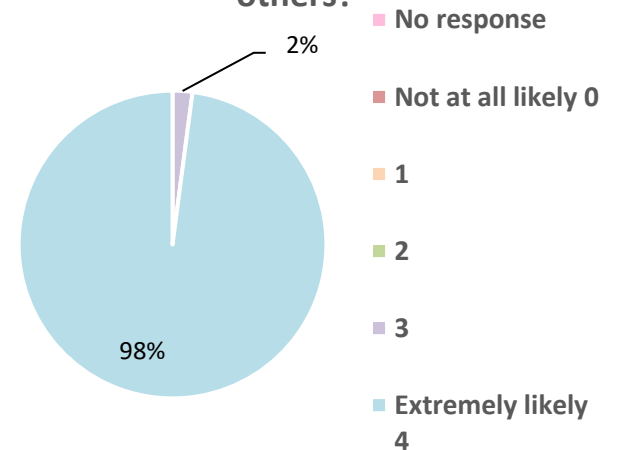
Q4 What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?



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)

