



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

**A Review of Hillingdon Special  
Educational Needs and Disability  
Information Advice and Support Service  
(SENDIASS)**

**July - August 2018**

This Review was conducted as part of a Contract with the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and Hillingdon SENDIASS (Contract Reference: IASP/Y1/059).

## **History**

Section 32 of the Children's and Families Act 2014 sets out the council's duty to provide advice, information and support about matters relating to special educational needs to the relevant children, young people and their parents. Section 2 of The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (January 2015) provides further guidance about the information, advice and support services that the council must provide under the Act.

The Service began as Hillingdon Partnership with Parents in the early 1990's, evolving into the Parent Partnership Service and, following the Lamb Enquiry in 2009 and the Children and Families Act 2014, became the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). The change in name and function coincided with the introduction of Education, Health and Care Planning (which replaced the Statement of SEN). The Service supports the broad concept to greatly increase parental involvement in the assessment of their child's needs and give a greater say in planning their child's future. It also reflected the extension of the remit to include social care and health responsibilities, in addition to education for the 0-25 age group (rather than 2-19) including apprentices and college students.

## **The Service**

1. The Hillingdon SENDIASS has been in place since 2015, having previously been Partnership with Parents. It now comprises 2.17 FTE staff and has a budget of £117,600.00pa
2. The service was last reviewed in 2016. This consisted of an online survey which was distributed to those who had accessed the service previously and two face to face consultation events to support those without internet access to complete the survey. Despite this only 28 people responded but their response is summarised here:
  - That information about the Service needs wider circulation
  - That having contacted SENDIASS, 94% said the information gained was useful
  - That 94% said the Service was easy to access
  - That 92% said the information was of high quality
  - That 93% said the information, advice and support given met their needs
  - That 89% said the Service made a positive difference to them
  - That the Service needed more capacity
  - That the Service should stay within Hillingdon LA

3. As part of this review, the service has rerun its Survey through the Parent Carer Forum. We have received a relatively small number of views in response to the survey that was circulated by the Parent Carers Forum. We had twenty five responses, a number of which appear to be from school SENCOs; we are unclear whether they are responding on behalf of groups of parents, but will follow this up to obtain more information. The responses received suggest that on most of the questions between 76% & 84% of respondents were happy with the service received, that they found the information, advice and support helpful and that they would recommend the service to others. The area that respondents were least satisfied with (40%) was the ease with which they were able to contact the service. This corresponds with an area the service had identified as an area that needed improving and the following actions have recently been taken to address this issue:

- The length of phone calls has been monitored and training has been provided to team members to enable them to respond in a more constructive outcome focused way to calls which became very repetitive.
- A clear answer phone message has been set up informing parents of how and when their message will be responded to and advising them that if their call is to gain general information they might want to look at the online Local Offer to gain information about local services.
- Information has been provided to staff across education and health asking them to support parents to access the online Local Offer when seeking information about local services.
- Clearer and more comprehensive information about SENDIASS is now available via the online Local Offer.

4. The Service has evolved to broadly meet the Quality Standards developed by the Information, Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN) supported by the Department for Education (DfE). In October 2017, with the appointment of an interim Manager, the Service was self assessed against the IASSN Quality Standards:

1. Commissioning, governance and management arrangements

1.1	Commissioning arrangements	Met in full
1.2	Own identity, brand	Met in full
1.3	Governance	Not yet meeting
1.4	Planned, monitored and reviewed	Not yet meeting
1.5	Manager provides training, supervision and support	Met in full
1.6	Safeguarding	Met in full

2. Strategic functions

2.1	IASS informs Policy and practice through PCF et al	Partially met
2.2	IASS informs Policy and practice at Regional level	Partially met

3. Provision of information and advice

3.1	Potential users are aware	Partially met
3.2	IASS is accessible	Partially met
3.3	IASS provides impartial, accurate and timely quality information	Partially met
3.4	Service users have all info needed	Partially met

#### 4. Supporting individuals

4.1	IASS offers confidential support	Met in full
4.2	IASS offers impartial support	Partially met
4.3	IASS builds on Service Users skills etc	Partially met

#### 5. Professional development and training

5.1	Staff are trained on law and Policy	Partially met
5.2	Staff are trained to provide impartial support	Partially met
5.3	Staff complete accredited legal training and support through to Tribunal	Partially met
5.4	IASS trains schools, colleges et al working with parents and the law	Not yet meeting
5.5	IASS trains parents to work with agencies	Not yet meeting

As part of this Review the Standards were revisited and amended to reflect current practice.

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1.6	Safeguarding	Met in full

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5.1	Staff are trained on law and Policy	Met in full
5.2	Staff are trained to provide impartial support	Met in full
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5.5	IASS trains parents to work with agencies	Partially met

The Service is now partially or fully meeting all Standards. Changes were noted in:

1.3	Governance	Partially met - Steering Group involvement plus user involvement
1.4	Planned, monitored and reviewed	
3.1	Potential users are aware	Partially met - SLA in place; TOR in place; Met in full - Improved web presence; Included in Local Offer; Present in all schools
3.2	IASS is accessible	Met in full - Policies in place; Access options publicised
3.3	IASS provides impartial, accurate and timely quality information	Met in full - Impartiality improved;
5.1	Staff are trained on law and Policy	Met in full - Staff fully trained
5.2	Staff are trained to provide impartial support	Met in full - Staff fully trained and operating regionally
5.4	IASS trains schools, colleges et al working with parents and the law	Partially met - Sharing legal knowledge with schools and services
5.5	IASS trains parents to work with agencies	Partially met - Working closely with PCF; Supports partnership working through casework

5. In Hillingdon, the second largest London Borough, there is an overall population of about 310,000. In terms of Ethnicity, 48% are of BME origins (40% in 2011) as opposed to London overall at 55% or England at 20%. The population 15 and under is about 67,000; the percentages of different ethnic groups aged 0-18 is shown below, for the population overall and for those with a special educational need.

### **Ethnic Origin of children in Hillingdon - 2018**

	0-18 Population	Those with SEN in Schools
White British	33.97%	41.00%
White Irish	0.62%	0.82%
Other White	6.86%	7.02%
White & Black Caribbean	2.21%	2.09%
White & Black African	1.63%	0.87%

White & Asian	3.44%	1.81%
Other Mixed	3.13%	5.98%
Indian	14.20%	10.59%
Pakistani	5.09%	4.91%
Bangladeshi	1.53%	1.60%
Chinese	0.85%	0.15%
Other Asian	9.11%	4.33%
Black African	7.31%	7.78%
Black Caribbean	1.48%	2.05%
Other Black	3.54%	0.55%
Arab	2.19%	0.00%
Other Ethnic Group	2.82%	6.29%
Not known/refused/blank		1.16%

## Reflections

1. Over the last 11 months significant changes have been made to the Service. The Service now has a Service Level Agreement with the local authority Commissioner. The next iteration will involve both Social Care and Health Commissioners.
2. SENDIASS have an appropriate place on the local Parent and Carer Forum Management Group where they ensure Strategic direction and operational issues of the Service is a regular agenda item. Previously SENDIASS colleagues were Chairman of the group but felt this was inappropriate.
3. Colleagues in the team are released as necessary and appropriate to participate in Regional meetings of the IASS network. This will continue to enhance the Service through viewing and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of other services in the region, provide peer-to-peer learning and enable Hillingdon to gauge their Service quality against similar authorities.
4. Significant changes have occurred regarding the Provision of Information and Advice online. The Service has ensured its visibility on the Hillingdon Local Offer website. Through the development of this visibility the service has also driven a wide range of changes that not only support the parent/carer and young people's agenda, but also make the Local Offer website more useful and user friendly for various local authority staff e.g. SEN Teams, social care teams and health teams. Work is now underway to more widely advertise the Local Offer.
5. The Service has also created a series of web pages on the Young Hillingdon website. This is to support the principle of our impartiality by ensuring further access to information for parents/carers and young people via a different route and not via the Hillingdon.gov website. This is a precursor to the possibility of creating entirely separate web content to inform parents/carers and young people of the team's existence, its role and purpose and provide a range of useful information. The Service is also in dialogue with local authority colleagues to discuss the use of social media as a way of

advertising our availability more widely and also review communication strands.

- The Service has overhauled all its Policies; it has sent an information flyer to all Hillingdon schools asking that it be displayed in a prominent place for parents/carers to see. This has already resulted in parents contacting the Service about issues at schools in Hillingdon where previously there had been no issue raised. The Service believes that it should have own brand publicity material in support of awareness raising and demonstration of impartiality. To date a lack of resources has hindered that desire.

## Review of service goals

- SENDIASS is managed within the Early Intervention and Prevention Service. The Service has an Annual Plan that each team contributes to and provides quarterly assessments and updates. The SENDIASS contribution is set out below.

<b>Group Objective 1: Improve access to comprehensive information and advocacy services for residents empowering them to lead more independent lives</b>				
	Team Objective	Lead Officer	Target Date	Target/measurement
1.1	Develop the content, functionality & awareness of the Connect to Support - online Local Offer.	Paul Foster	31/03/2019	1. Review and revise pages as appropriate influenced by parental demand 3. Percentage reduction in calls to SENDIASS for basic information
<b>Group Objective 2: Children with SEND have the best possible start in life</b>				
Ref	Team Objective	Lead Officer	Target Date	Target/measurement
2.1	Develop and embed the 'Tell us once' approach, including a seamless approach to step up & step down.	Paul Foster	31/03/2019	1. Support parents/carers in the use of the updated My Support Plan Document for those at SEN support 2. Parental feedback demonstrates that they have not been required to tell their story multiple times & that MSP supports person centred outcome focused planning
<b>Group objective 3: Children, young people with SEND and their families are resilient, self sufficient and independent as possible</b>				
Ref	Team Objective	Lead Officer	Target Date	Target/measurement
3.1	Increase resilience in families through improved access to Early Support Home Intervention Service, ES Key working, Portage and Outreach services	Paul Foster	31/03/2019	Improved confidence in families to challenge education providers and Hillingdon SEN team et al to ensure best outcomes for their children and young people.
<b>Group Objective 4: Children and young people with SEND experience a positive and fulfilling journey from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood (this includes support re pathways to employment)</b>				

Ref	Team Objective	Lead Officer	Target Date	Target/measurement
4.1	Embed a meaningful approach to participation for CYP (at individual and strategic levels)	Paul Foster	31/03/2019	1. For there to be an increase in the numbers of YP accessing SENDIASS
<b>Group Objective 11: Implement the outcomes of reviews of the workforce configuration and capacity to meet demand</b>				
Ref	Team Objective	Lead Officer	Target Date	Target/measurement
11.1	For all teams to have robust processes in place to demonstrate the impact of their service	Paul Foster		For all teams to carry out an annual survey reviewing customer satisfaction for their service/s For impact measures to be built into most pieces of work for example the use of the impact wheel for the Early Support team. A service report to be produced showing how the work of the service has improved outcomes for CYP with SEND.

7. The Service is making progress against all Targets above.

### Accomplishments

1. Since October 2017 the Service has refined its methods for data collection on the use of the Service. Approximately one-third of staff time is spent in direct telephone contact with parents either regarding ongoing case management or via one off calls for information. The balance of telephone work is reflecting an operational shift towards empowering parents to work in a stronger partnership relationship with their child's school. The balance of Service time is spent in meetings with parents, schools, and other relevant local authority staff; answering telephone calls and questions from parents/carers; training; research; planning.
2. In the last 12 months there have been no complaints about the service from parents, schools or local authority services, but there have been a wide range of general compliments and people saying 'Thank You'.
3. The Service has supported a number of parents and their children in their quest for a school or educational arrangement that they believe to be a suitable education setting; this requires the best of our impartiality by maintaining a focus on the educational needs and provision of the child or young person rather than what/where the parent or local authority would wish to place them.

### Challenges

1. In a challenging economic era Hillingdon LA has supported the maintenance of the Service at current staffing levels. However, the team is fully stretched and current staffing levels mean that it has not been able to interface with social care and health colleagues to the same extent as they do with staff in

educational teams which include Participation, Inclusion and SEN. Hillingdon's Policy to reduce the use of and potentially waste paper has meant that we have not produced leaflets but on the positive side this has meant we have developed electronic versions of the same leaflet and asked schools to print and display. As indicated elsewhere there is clear evidence that this has resulted in a wider group of parents contacting the Service.

2. The Service recognises the challenge presented when they have to point out to schools that due processes have not been followed or that the action taken may not be compliant with the SEND reforms. This has happened during meetings with parents and members of schools senior leadership teams. This is a very delicate area that requires great skill to ensure the avoidance of conflict between schools and the Service.

### **Professional growth**

1. Staff members have continued to access training opportunities through the year and now both are up to IPSEA level 3. Wherever multi agency opportunities arise to share knowledge about process and requirements, the team will attend if at all possible.

### **Differentiation**

1. Hillingdon SENDIASS prides itself on being impartial. The SEN team do not issue lists of schools in case parents take a view that one or another is preferred by them. Instead they ask SENDIASS to issue lists or discuss possible solutions. SENDIASS ensures that any discussion with parents is child focussed on individual educational, care and health needs; we give procedural advice, information about the type of school rather than the specific school and present school type options thus empowering parents rather than just signposting; Parents do rely on SENDIASS as witnessed by the numbers of parents/carers who revisit service. The Service endeavours to follow national best practice ideologies.

### **Conclusion**

1. The Service has made significant improvements and changes through the last year and is now in a good place to provide the free impartial, confidential and accurate information, advice to parents/carers, young people and young adults which is informed through user feedback. To improve further we plan to develop even closer links with the parents/carers forum and to develop a further opportunities to capture feedback and share information about the service with local families and communities.