



Shropshire Information, Advice and Support Service

October 2015 to December 2017



Shropshire Information, Advice and Support Service, October 2015 – December 2017.

Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) is a statutory service, which means that every Local Authority must have one.

Since September 2014 Shropshire has provided an IASS around any Special Education Need and /or Disability (SEND) directly to children and young people and their parents / carers. The age range increased from 19 years old to 25 years old so we now support into adulthood. In addition we offer information, advice and support around matters relating to health and social care that are directly related to the SEND.

In October 2015, after a successful tender, Citizens Advice Shropshire (CAS) took over and started delivering new IASS, as commissioned by Shropshire Council. This is a partnership contract with Taking Part and A4U; Taking Part are developing young people's engagement and A4U offer advice on welfare benefits, including help with form filling e.g. PIP, DLA and ESA, all referrals are made through the IASS helpline.

In July 2016 CAS and IASS were successful in securing the Independent Support contract. Independent Support brings added value to Shropshire Council and greatly increases the capacity of the service. The current Independent Support contract will come to an end in March 2018. It is expected that there will be a new tender opportunity from April 2018, however the shape and size is unknown at the time of writing this report. We are concerned that our capacity will be affected from April 2018.

Research nationally has shown that IASS is cost effective due to its role as negotiator, helping to sort problems at the lowest level, preventing escalation.

We send a satisfaction survey to clients at the end of our work with them. We ask 9 questions of which 6 are specified by the Information, Advice and Support Service Network (IASSN), our national body, as these results are collected nationally and fed back to government. In October 2017 our national results were RAG (red, amber and green) rated. Our return rate was RAG rated amber (reasonable to good), with a return rate of 28%. We were RAG green (excellent) for the percentage of maximum possible score. Of this national survey only 5 other services had a higher score. Based on these results we have one of the highest client satisfaction scores. We are working on increasing our return rate.

IASS works towards a set of Quality Standards. The results of our self-evaluation of meeting these standards are used to inform a development plan for the service. We know that we offer a very good service around individual casework but this is a reactive service. Our partnership and strategic work offers a more preventative approach

however we aim to provide a broader training offer in the future. Working directly with young people is also a priority.

As well as direct support via telephone, email and face to face we use our Facebook page www.facebook.com/IASSShropshire/ to make parents aware of activities and to provide up to date information. We also provide a range of information sheets, available on our website, and at least termly electronic newsletters.

Where did client hear about IASS?

Source of referral	Total	Source of referral	Total	Source of referral	Total
A4U	27	EnHance	9	Relative/Friend	41
Autism West Midlands	27	Family Support Groups	12	School/College	78
CAMHS	23	Health Professionals	23	Self	145
Citizens Advice	42	IASS Website/Coffee Mornings	43	Self (Previous Client)	244
Child Psychologist	2	Local Authority	77	Shrewsbury Homes for All	4
COMPASS	10	Other	14	Taking Part	2
Early Help	5	Other IASS services	6	Transferred from Telford IASS	38
				Total	872

Operational issues:

At the start of the contract only 2 members of staff TUPE'd to launch the service. This was an exciting but difficult time but the team expanded following a successful bid to deliver Shropshire Independent Support.

Independent Support brings added value to Shropshire Council and greatly increases the capacity of the service. This funding is due to finish in March 2018 so it was vital that Shropshire IASS plans for this eventuality. Research nationally has shown that IASS is cost effective due to its role as negotiator, helping to sort problems at the lowest level, preventing escalation. A huge concern is that this work will be affected and cases will become more contentious at a quicker rate.

How many clients have we supported in our first two years?

 **872**

Cases opened since start of the contract. Oct 2015 – December 2017

 **701**

Cases closed from start of contract to December 2017.

 **171**

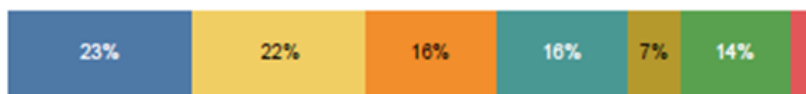
Autumn Term 2017 - current active cases.








+155

In the second year of the contract we can report that we supported an additional 155 clients who were given information via the IASS Enquiry Line. These clients were supported without the need for casework.

Client profile/disability

Type of disability (% of disabled clients)

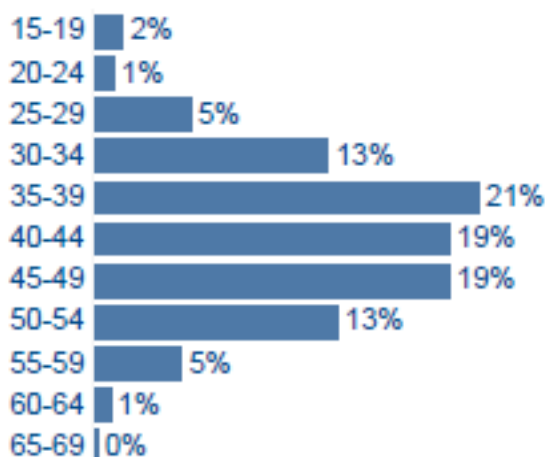


-  Visual Impairment
-  Learning Difficulty
-  Multiple Impairments
-  Other Disability or Type Not Given
-  Physical Impairment (non-sensory)
-  Mental Health
-  Long-Term Health Condition

19% of clients (usually parent/carer) have a disability/long term health condition

90% of clients (usually parent/carer) are female.

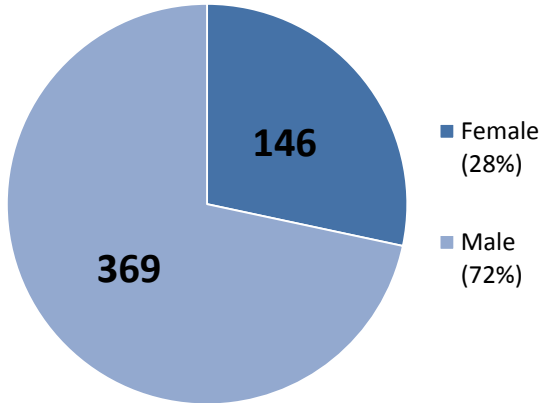
Client (usually parent/carer) ages



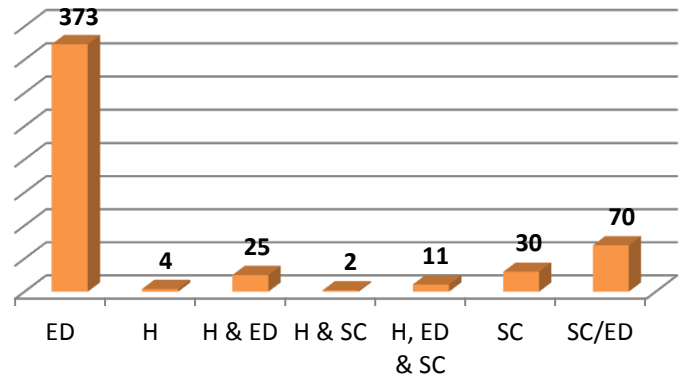
2016 Child / Young person profiles

(based on information provided by parents on initial referral to the service)

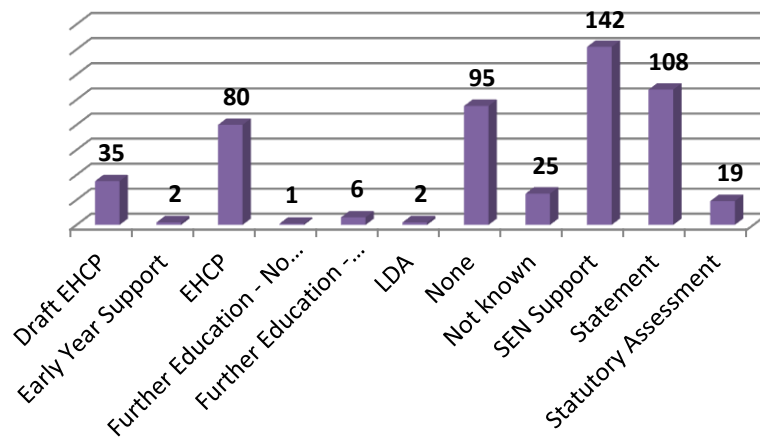
Gender 2016



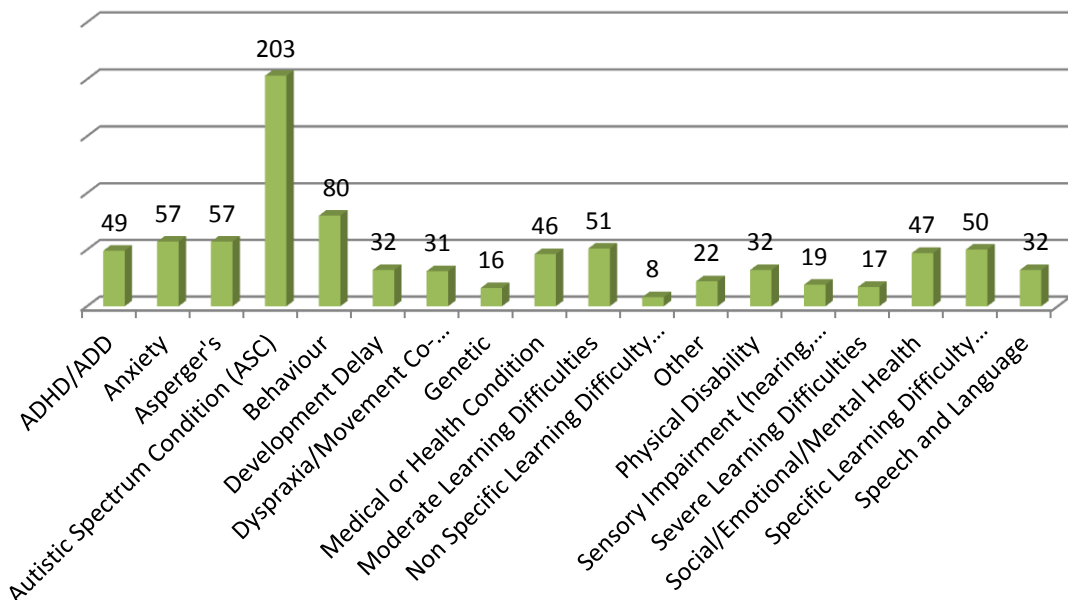
Case category 2016



SEN status 2016



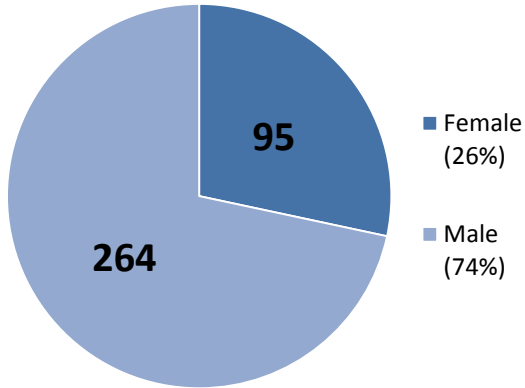
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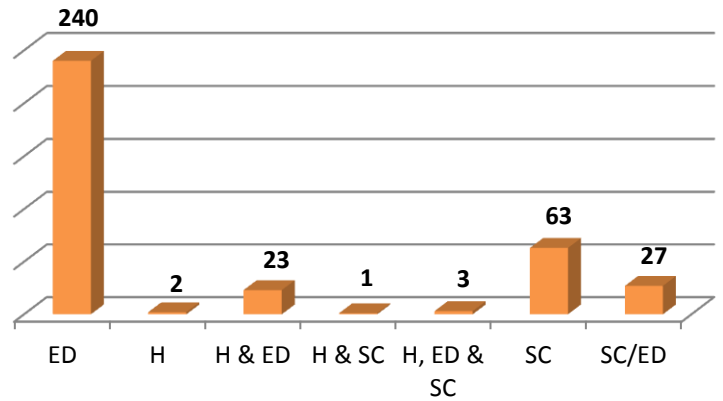
2017 Child / Young person profiles

(based on information provided by parents on initial referral to the service)

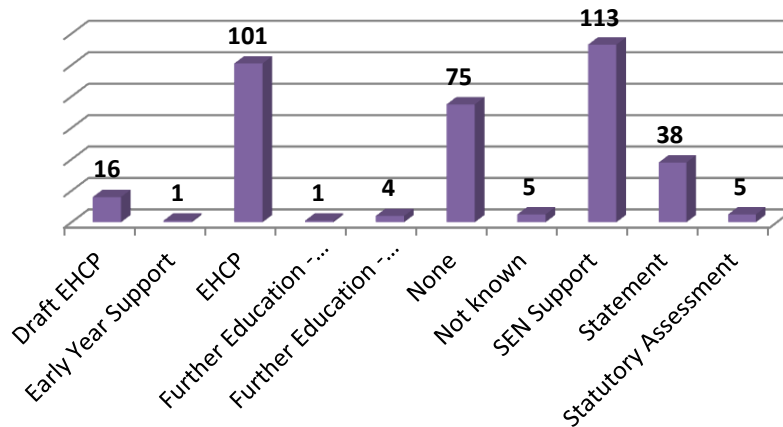
Gender 2017



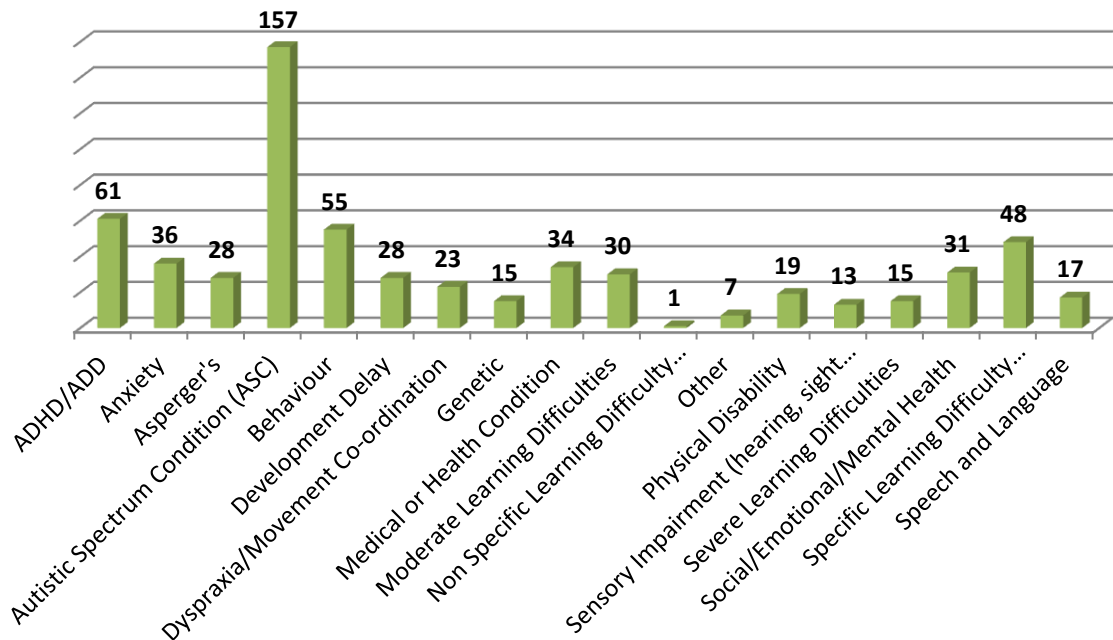
Case category 2017



SEN status 2017



SEN 2017



Education, health & social care case elements:

Of the 872 cases the following issues were recorded:

Social Care issues only	94
Health & Education issues only	47
Health issues only	9
Education, Health & Social Care issues	14
Education issues only	605
Social Care & Education issues only	100
Health & Social Care issues only	3

The most prevalent SEN that a child or young person presents with is ASC/Asperger's.

Anxiety is the second most common SEN, followed by behaviour issues, ADHD and health conditions.

The main social care issue is benefit advice, including benefit applications, mandatory reconsideration and appeal. Other social care issues are post 16 provision and post 19 provision, including college placements, residential placements, independent living, employment, housing and respite. Various other social care issues include home adaptations, Child Protection and Child In Need.

The main health issues we are contacted about are around CAMHS and diagnosis re: autism etc. Various other health issues include barriers to education due to health needs including implementing health plans to adequately meet needs in school, reduced timetable due to health needs, giving of medication in schools, drug policy, sex education and complaints about services.

Main education issues are lack of provision at placement, statutory assessment and exclusion appeals.

Of the cases where the main issue is recorded as EHCP or issues with school (school provision, school issues or school communication) 37% are recorded as EHCP issues and 63% as issues around school.

Of 20 children and young people at risk of exclusion 50% had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement and 5% had a draft Plan. 25% were on SEN Support and 20% were not receiving support. We found that 13 of these children and young people had behaviour issues, 9 had ADHD or ADD, 9 had Autism or Asperger's syndrome, 3 suffered with anxiety, 2 had Social, Emotional and Mental Health issues, one had Specific Learning Difficulties, one had moderate learning difficulties and one had a medical/health issue (some have more than one SEN recorded).

Of 7 permanently excluded children and young people, 2 had an EHCP and 1 was undergoing a statutory assessment for an EHCP. 2 were receiving SEN Support and 2 were receiving no support. Of 7 children and young people on a part time timetable 2 had an EHCP, 2 had or were awaiting a draft EHCP and 3 were on SEN Support.

Partnership & strategic working:

We continue to influence and inform local policy and practice in line with IASS Quality Standards. We achieve this by having a presence at strategic level meetings, by regular communication with the SEN Service Manager to give feedback on issues and feedback on quality of eg EHCPs .

During the Summer Holidays 2017 we asked clients about their experience of the Education Health and Care Needs Assessment process and fed our findings back to the Local Authority. We also developed new guidance for parents and young people to support completion of the All About Me document which is available on the Local Offer.

We were involved in re writing the Shropshire Transition Protocol, the review of Social Care for Disabled Children and Young People and their Families in Shropshire document and attended the Disabled Children's Pathway Workshop. We were also part of the Local Area Inspection data workshop, Peer review for Local Area Inspection and preparation for the Local Area Inspection meeting. We have met with representatives of social care, the COMPASS management Team and attended a COMPASS team meeting. We attended a PACC committee meeting and we have met with local parent groups.

While IASS will not attend decision making panels we help to monitor the quality of EHCPs including attendance at a quality assurance group.

We were part of an EHC Plan writers meeting and Statutory Assessments meeting. We have delivered training on writing SMART outcomes to LA transition Officers.

Events attended:

We attend school coffee mornings and parent groups around the county. We go to many events including the PACC Local Offer Live and Community Games events and have supported 100s of parents and young people in these ways. We hold monthly IASS information sessions in Shrewsbury.

With Carers Trust 4All and PACC we have co-hosted the event Working Together to Support Shropshire Parent Carers which included the workshop Person Centered Planning delivered by IASS. In January 2017 we hosted a Managing Anxiety workshop delivered by No Panic. This was very well received by 55 parents. We presented "EHCP and SEN Support" parent workshop delivered at the Autism West Midlands conference.

We attend transition events at Severndale Academy and a mainstream transition event for year 11 students.

We work with children and young people to explore their ambitions for the future, where they would like to study post 16 etc.

We have attended Children's Centres, met with staff and a service user at The Hive, met with Shropshire Youth Services, Family Information Service and the library service to discuss partnership working.

A4U (referrals for welfare benefits, claims & appeals, community care, forms: PIP, DLA & ESA):

Partnership organisation offering legal advice on welfare benefits, claims and appeals, Community Care issues, debt issues and advocacy. Help with form filling- PIP, DLA, AA and ESA.



Cases referred to A4U
Oct 15 - Autumn Term
2017.



Issues covered include DLA & PIP applications, gender reassignment, residency advice, carers assessment, ESA, reconsideration / appeals / tribunals



32

Autumn Term 2017
current active A4U
cases.

£ 192,263

Financial gain generated by benefit entitlement to clients.

A4U trends identified:

Referrals are regularly being forwarded. The outcomes continue to be favourable, however, it is increasingly evident that people on the autistic spectrum are penalised by the PIP scoring criteria and process and many are not successful when moving from DLA to PIP. This explains the increase in appeal referrals. Demand continues to exceed capacity (only 15 hours funded time).

Outcomes and feedback:

All returned feedback forms are positive.

"Thank you for all your help. I am very grateful. Lovely and kind people"

"Excellent service. Mary's advice and help was brilliant. She was very thorough in her approach in a professional and empathetic way. Also gave me the confidence to put in a MR which ended in my daughter's award being put higher than the original. Many thanks!"

"Know how very grateful I am for your help in doing this, you offer such a wonderful service at a difficult time, you were lovely yourself and so very helpful".

"Great service. I felt support throughout"

"In a very difficult time of my life I received a comprehensive support from my caseworker. I couldn't manage without her help, spiritual support and her routine of official issues. The result of A4U and offices help made a significant change of my family's life. Thank you!"

"Superb, Mary has been fantastic helping our family out regarding my son's DLA and also battling SABC transport for my son. Emailing was the best option to get through as phone lines can be busy as appreciate a lot of staff work part-time but as soon as these are in the office you get a call or email straight away. Superb service and staff"



Children and young people engagement:



Enquiries involving Young People.
Oct 2015 – Autumn Term 2017.

188

If a new enquiry involves a young person over compulsory school age we always ask their permission before working with the parent / carer, unless there is evidence that the young person does not have mental capacity to make that decision.

Direct support given to children and young people by age group via Independent Support

	0-16	16+	19+
Support with All About Me	8		2
Annual Review	2	6	4
Gaining Their Independent Views	4	2	1
Support in Meetings	2	3	6
Statutory Request		1	1
Tribunal			1
S/C Issues		2	
PFA	1	2	
Complaints			2

Young people's events development:

Working jointly with Taking Part we developed and delivered a series of 4 pilot workshops. 2 at The Who Club (Bridgnorth) and 2 at The Big Time Club (Shrewsbury) to test communication and engagement methods with children and young people. A total of 50 young people attended (27M 23F). The workshops were received well with 41 positive feedback forms completed across the 4 workshops.

Taking Part will now deliver the engagement workshops at Severndale, Futures College, Mary Webb Severndale School and Derwen College. The core IAS Service will develop and deliver workshops in mainstream schools.

Training and development:

Previous experience of our IASS Officers includes: specialism in Early Years; a primary school class teacher who has also been an Education Welfare Officer and Education, Health and Care Plan writer; an experienced Health worker; Housing Officer and a Head Teacher who has considerable previous experience which includes working as a Local Authority SEN Manager. All staff are trained Independent Supporters, including our specialised administrator.

The Independent Support contract increases our capacity so that the team currently comprises 4 IASS / IS Officers, one administrator and a manager.

In order to ensure that the service that we provide is accurate, up to date and of the highest possible quality, the IASS team receives regular training. Members of the team have completed Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Level IASSN legal training ensuring that the Shropshire IASS is well qualified to perform its role.

Training has included :

Person-Centred ways of working, Participation of Young People, Preparing for Adulthood and Mental Capacity training

IASSN Health and Social Care Training

Supporting the Emotional Health & Wellbeing of our Children & Young People.

Various SEND issues and difficulties

The Way Ahead- IASS SA Conference

‘What next for SEN? Reforms to high needs funding and the education White Paper’ conference

Early Years SEND Conference

Whole School performance through effective inclusion – LA Conference

Shropshire Strengthening Families Through Early Help event.

Complaints & feedback:

Complaints:

None to report.

Feedback:

"Extremely helpful advice and information. Very friendly, caring and professional. Prompt and efficient. Excellent. Thanks ever so much!"

"The information support and advice was made simple for us to understand and process. Staff were friendly and welcoming. We felt less stressed after meeting with you. We have already recommended your services to friends"

"People I dealt with were excellent, helpful and friendly. Well informed fantastic service. Only wish I had known about this service earlier. Lindsey and Jack were amazing"

"Understanding, helpful service. Excellent service! Would and have already recommended to several parents in need. Thank you!"

"The telephone conversation and follow up email I received from Ami Price contained a huge amount of detailed information that helped enormously in taking my issues further. Massive thanks"

"Ami has always been an amazing help and support to us. She has helped us in an extremely difficult time. She is very understanding, calm and always knows what to do if there is a problem. I'm not sure what I would of done without her help. This service is brilliant!"

"Nothing was put in place until IASS got involved"

"Wow, you are fantastic. I wouldn't think of half of this stuff"

"Without IASS support and advice we would have been floundering"

"Thank you so much for your helpful advice and getting back to me so quickly. I feel reassured and supported"

"We found dealing with our son's school very stressful and upsetting. It was extremely useful discussing matters with XX. She helped us to focus on what was most important to us, but also helped us realise, in a very kind manner, when our expectations of what school could deliver, were too high. XX accompanied us to a meeting with school staff and this, also, was very reassuring, as we were worried our emotions would cloud our judgement."

“Great help and support to my family. Always rang when said you would. Great understanding of my needs. Very friendly and helpful.”

“After 5 months of trying to sort things out for my son-in-law, you achieved it in a few days. Thank you, we will turn to you again, or if we are unsure where to turn too.”

“I am so grateful to IASS. I don’t know what I would have done without all the support, care and attention. I feel very privileged to have contact with such a caring knowledgeable organisation. BIG thank you”.

“Thank you. The service was very prompt, the people I met were knowledgeable and professional and always followed through on things they said they were going to do. Very helpful with the transition from statement to EHCP and for my little boy too moving to a residential setting.”

The IASS Quality Survey contains 9 questions. It is sent to clients on closure of their case. They show that parents/carers feel better informed and more able to make well informed decisions as a result of our input.



Approximate average response rate 30%

Question:



Clients responded:

1. How easy was it to get in touch with us?	95%	Easy or Very easy.
2. Was the information about Education, Health and Social Care accurate and up to date?	99%	Quite or Very.
3. How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?	99%	Helpful or Very helpful.
4. Did the information, at that time, help you to make well informed decisions?	99%	Quite or Very much so.
5. How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?	99%	Quite or Very.
6. Was the information, advice and support tailored to your individual needs?	99%	Quite or Very.
7. What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?	99%	Some or Great deal of difference.
8. Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?	99%	Satisfied or Very Satisfied.
9. How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?	99%	Likely or Extremely likely.