



## Rotherham SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

Annual Report April 2016/ March 2017



### **Introduction:**

The SEND Code of Practice (0-25) January 2015 states:

"Local authorities must arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to their SEN or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care.

Information, advice and support should be provided through a dedicated and easily identifiable service. Local authorities have established Information, Advice and Support Services (formerly known as Parent Partnership services) to provide information, advice and support to parents in relation to SEN. In addition, many local authorities provide or commission information, advice and support services for young people. Local authorities should build on these existing services to provide the information, advice and support detailed in this chapter (2).

Information, Advice and Support Services should be impartial, confidential and accessible and should have the capacity to handle face-to-face, telephone and electronic enquiries."



## **Commissioning Governance and Management Arrangements**

Rotherham SENDIASS continues to be funded from the base revenue budget in recognition of the statutory responsibility on LA's to provide such a service. However the Code of Practice states;

The joint arrangements that local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) must have for commissioning education, health and care provision for children and young people with SEN or disabilities must include arrangements for considering and agreeing what information and advice about education, health and care provision is to be provided, by whom and how it is to be provided.

Initial discussions have taken place with the Head of Inclusion and one of the Commissioners with regards to joint commissioning. It was agreed this discussion would be revisited at a later date.

The Service sits under the Head of Inclusion, Paula Williams and in turn is part of Schools and Lifelong Learning within Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS). The LA is committed to providing a service at 'arms length' to ensure impartiality of the Service. The Service is based in Riverside House, staff are based on the same wing and floor as the Educational Psychology Service and the EHC Assessment Service but not alongside these Services.

### **Service Monitoring Group**

The Service Monitoring Group has met during this period. The group is predominantly attended by parents who represent different groups ie Forum, Nas, Rods, however also has representation from different SEND services including HealthWatch. Terms of Reference are agreed and published on the website outlining tasks the Monitoring group can support with. The group meet 3 times per year. Minutes are shared with the Head of Inclusion and are published on the Website. The latest Monitoring Group looked through the draft Service Level Agreement and considered the wording to be included within the SLA. This work is still ongoing to consider the voice of children and young people.

### **Additional Funding**

The Government recognised that the implementation of the SEND Reforms would impact on service capacity, and so in 2014 Rotherham SENDIASS applied for grant funding from the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) to provide an element of Independent Support as well as use the funding to "build capacity" to ensure the new duties around the provision of information, advice and support were in place. Following on from the successful bid in 2014 additional funding of £25,000 has been allocated each financial year since.

During this period, there were plans to utilise the funding to provide peer support for young people going through the EHC process. The service advertised for a Young



Person's Independent Support Volunteer Coordinator post, however failed to secure a suitable candidate following both internal and external applications being received. CDC were made aware of this issue and agreed to carry the funding over for the following financial year.

A Growth Funding bid was also submitted in readiness for the 2016/17 financial year. This bid requested that funding be allocated to support the offer of IAS for Children and Young People as well as build capacity for the parent offer for IAS. The bid was successful and so the service was allocated an additional £98,000.

### Resources:

	2016/17 budget Including Growth Funding (Temporary)	CDC funding (ring fenced)	Total
A: Staff	£141,500	£1,899	£143,399
B: Other Expenditure	£5,185	£773	£5,958
C: Total Expenditure (A+B)	£146,685	£2,672	£149,357
D: Income	£177,010	£33,833	£180,393
E: Net Expenditure (C-D)	-£30,325	-£31,161 which will be carried over to next financial year	-£31,036
Explanatory Note: underspend was caused by inability to recruit a suitable candidate utilising the CDC funding and Young Person's Information Officer role being vacant from August to February. There was also slippage on the role of clerical from CDC until October.			

### Staffing for this financial year (Revenue funded):

Kerry Taylor - Service Lead (full time)

Donna Sanderson- Clerical Officer (0.6)

Rachel White (substantive post until 31<sup>st</sup> May)/Angela Rodgers (secondment from August) - SEND Advisor (0.8)

John Gilling - Independent Parental Supporter (Volunteer)

### Staffing (Growth Funding)

Louise Mulligan - Children's Information Officer (0-16) - (0.5)

Kelly Stevenson (from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 10<sup>th</sup> August 16) - Young Person's Information Officer (16-25) - (full time)

Sally Thomas (from 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 17) - Young Person's Information Officer (16-25) - (full time)

Rachel White (Secondment from 1<sup>st</sup> June) - Referral Officer (Full time)



### **Staffing (CDC funded):**

Vacant - Young Independent Support Volunteer Coordinator (0.8)

Donna Sanderson (from 31<sup>st</sup> October) - Clerical Officer (0.2)

Joanne Pilgrim - Independent Supporter (volunteer) - *(Provision of equipment, training and expenses)*

Catherine Hancox - Independent Supporter (Volunteer) - *(Provision of equipment, training and expenses)*

Marie Simmons - Independent Supporter (Volunteer) - *(Provision of equipment, training and expenses)*

### **Strategic Function**



The Service's work is based around the five core activities of; Commissioning, Governance and Management Arrangements, Strategic Function, Provision of Information and Advice, Support to Individuals and Professional Development and Training. SENDIASS activity in terms of outcomes and impact on parents, children and young people is measured through case studies, training evaluations, accessibility and feedback from individuals. Impact on

children and young people includes feeling listened to, being happier to attend their provision, understanding other's points of view and supporting others to understand what is important to the individual. On parents it includes school and other professionals being more sensitive to parental concerns and views, parents being more able to understand and engage with practitioners, accessing services from other organisations and groups, feeling confident to deal directly with the school/setting when issues arise, aware of legislation regarding Equalities, Exclusions, SEND etc.

### **Charter**

Service staff continue to be involved in the Rotherham Charter, and have been involved in the implementation to one school during this period,

Staff have also attended the Charter Implementation Meetings.



### **Strategic Planning and Working Parties**

Service staff have been actively involved in; development of the Charter process, 'In it together', Charter Gold Celebration event, SEND Team Development Days, Yorkshire and Humberside IASS Regional Meetings, co-production Activity around the Graduated Response, ASC Stakeholder Group, Charter Implementation Meetings, Area Inspection



Rotherham SENDIASS has also been actively involved in the SENDIASS Monitoring Group, the Forum Drop in sessions, and took the lead in promoting the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET)

### Contact with Voluntary Organisations

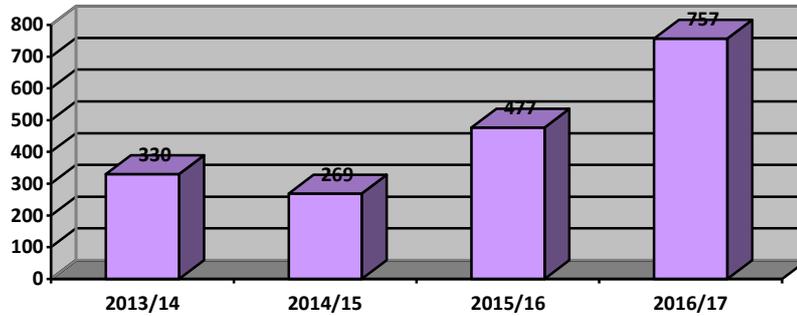
The Service has worked closely with Rotherham Parent Carers Forum, Core Assets, Contact a Family and Cerebra. Training is offered to groups outlining the role of SENDIASS and services provided.



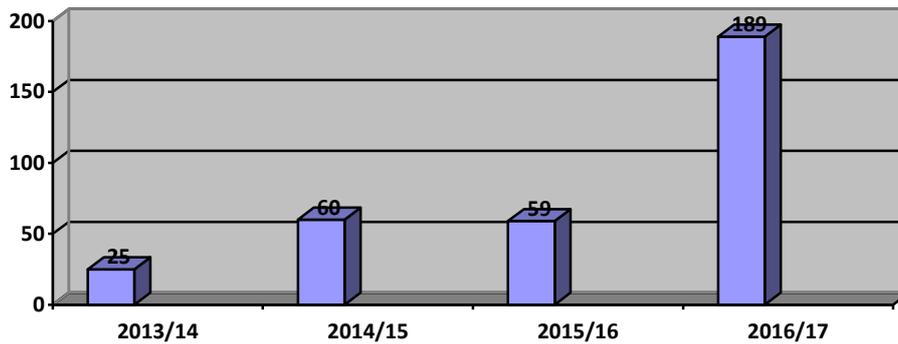


## Provision of Information Advice, and Supporting Individuals.

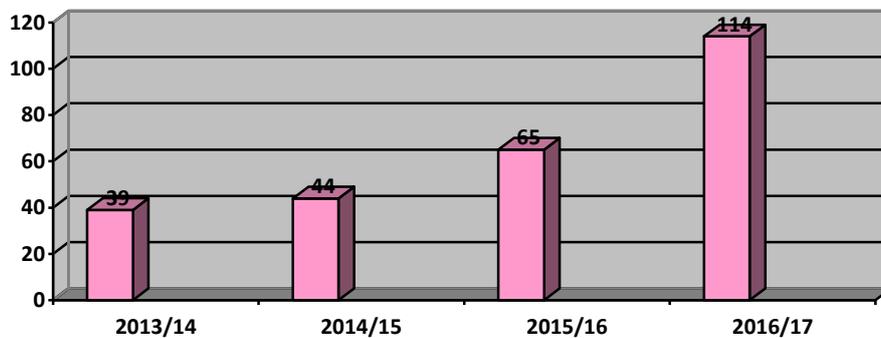
Number of New Referrals to the Service (including parents/carers, children and young people)



Number of calls to the service dealt with as a contact only

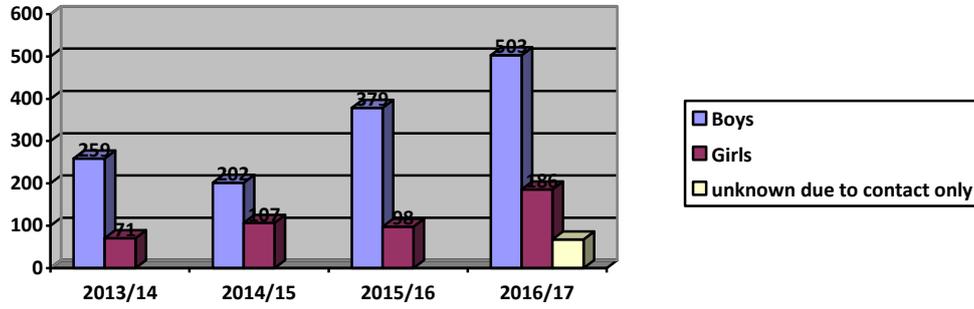


Number of referrals to the service with no special provision made and no SEN recorded

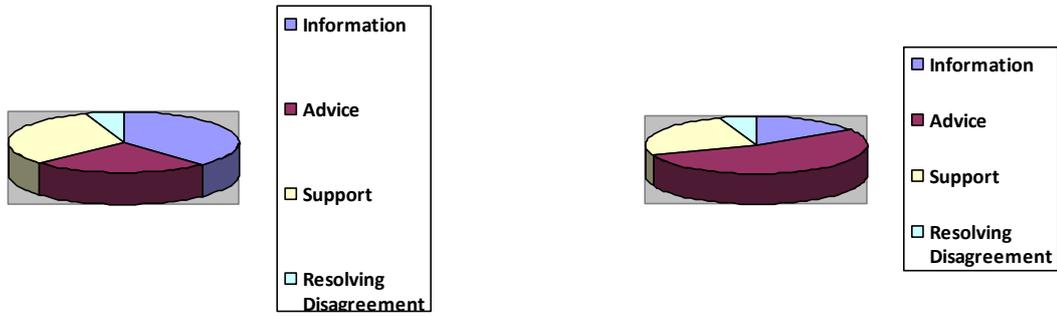




Number of referrals broken down into gender



Nature of new referral 2016/17 compared with Nature of new referral 2015/16





	2015/16 Financial Period	2016/17 Financial Period
Number of ongoing referrals from previous period	33	134
Statement	59	63
SEN Support	222	297
EHC Plan(as of Sept 14)	108	215
Level of commitment (on-going and new referrals)	1:67 2:234 3:41 4:0 134 cases still open and yet to report	1:316 2:252 3:88 4:6 There are 133 cases yet to report on as they are still open.
Number of meetings supported	Not reported	298  6 mediation meetings 8 governor 1 Independent Review (exclusion) 23 with LA and parent 216 school/college based 44 service user only (ie to provide support for views in writing etc.)
Number of referrals who used the service only once per child this year	Not Reported	352 (including contacts)
Number of referrals who returned to the service more than once for the same child this year	Not reported	405 referrals which accounts for 161 children
Number of referrals who used the service in the previous year for the same child	Not reported	136
Number of referrals who are new to the service (not used the service over the past 2 years)	Not reported	378



## Ethnic Minority Monitoring

The 2011 census indicated 8.1% of Rotherham's population are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The main ethnic group being Pakistani and Kashmiri. 83.5% of referrals to the service are from White English/British or other background. Only 0.4% are recorded from minority ethnic background and the remainder of cases were not specified. This data suggests there is work to be done to publicise the IAS offer around this group.

## Gender

While boys count for 50.7% of Rotherham schools population, in this period boys accounted for 73% of referrals to the service. This over representation of boys over girls has historically been seen nationally by Parent Partnership/SENDIASS services.



## Looked After Children

Service staff work alongside colleagues from Social Care. In this period the Service has received 14 new referrals involving a 'looked after' child (1.8% of new referrals to the Service which is an increase from previous year

## Referrals to Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

1 referral was made to SENDIST against Rotherham LA within this timescale. The outcome of which was the parent withdrew following agreement made. SENDIASS was involved for some of this situation, but not heavily so.

During this period 20 service users contacted the service with the sole purpose of gaining information, advice and support around SEND Tribunal. Advice given around Tribunals could include; the process and timescales, the need to consider mediation where necessary and how to action this process, the options available which may not result in a tribunal. This may include ways forward such as; looking in detail at the reasons why the LA has made the decision they have and how this could then be used to support processes in the future, utilising the timescales to appeal wisely to ensure additional evidence is available to support ongoing discussions with the LA via mediation or informal discussions, considering what the support currently looks like for the child or young person at SEN Support and offering advice and support around further discussions with the school or setting.

## Formal Mediation

During this period 10 mediation certificates were issued including 6 who entered into mediation. SENDIASS supported in 6 mediation meetings.

Support at mediation may include things such as; preparation beforehand ensuring the service user has a clear understanding of the process, possible outcomes, and clarity around their situation and points to share/questions to ask.



It could also include encouraging self-advocacy and where appropriate asking questions of the service user to prompt their thought process based on prior knowledge and discussions. SENDIASS also act as a point of reference to the legislation around the EHC, mediation and appeals process which may consist of reminders around the relevant legal tests which would need to be considered if a tribunal were to be lodged.

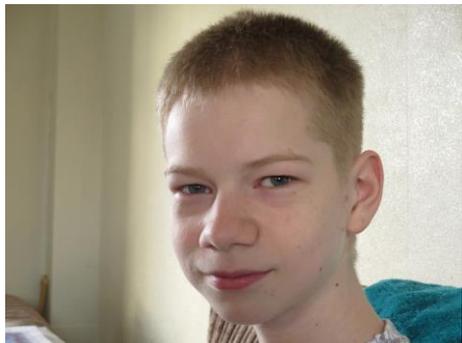
### **Independent Parental Supporters:**

During this period we had 1 volunteer Independent Parental Supporter working with the Service. The Independent Parental Supporter contributed to the service taking 2 cases and being available to support parents wanting additional reassurance of the 'arms length' from the Local Authority. Unfortunately due to circumstances beyond any control, this has not been an offer throughout the whole financial year.

### **Case work development**

Parents contacting the Service for the first time are able to have an in depth conversation with Rachel White/Angela Rodgers (SEND Advisor) about their concerns and receive detailed advice and information, this has been followed up in writing and posted to the parent. The majority of cases received a service within 5 working days.

Ongoing case work support is provided by Kerry Taylor, Rachel White (due to secondment - referral officer), or the IPS volunteer. A significant amount of casework involves actively engaging with parents, schools and LA staff to prevent or resolve disagreements. The volume and complexity of case work has increased during this period. During this period 37.5% of service users went on to require more in depth 1:1 support in the form of ongoing case work involvement, following the initial in depth conversation, advice and follow up written information being received. This is an increase of 0.9% compared to last period (36.6%). However this is a huge increase in cases as there has been a 58.7% increase of referrals to the service from previous year.



### **Exclusions:**

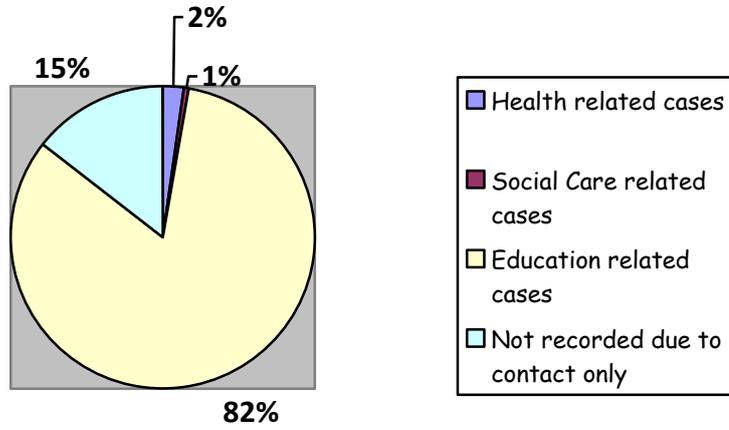
Over the April 15 - March 16 period, the service has been contacted by 52 service users requesting information, advice or support around Exclusions from school. This represents 3.7 % of Rotherham LA Exclusions which is an increase from previous year (3.5%)

### **Education, Health and Social Care:**

Since the SEND reforms, the Service has extended duties to provide IAS around Education, Health and Social Care. The following chart provides information relating to each area service users contacted the service for.

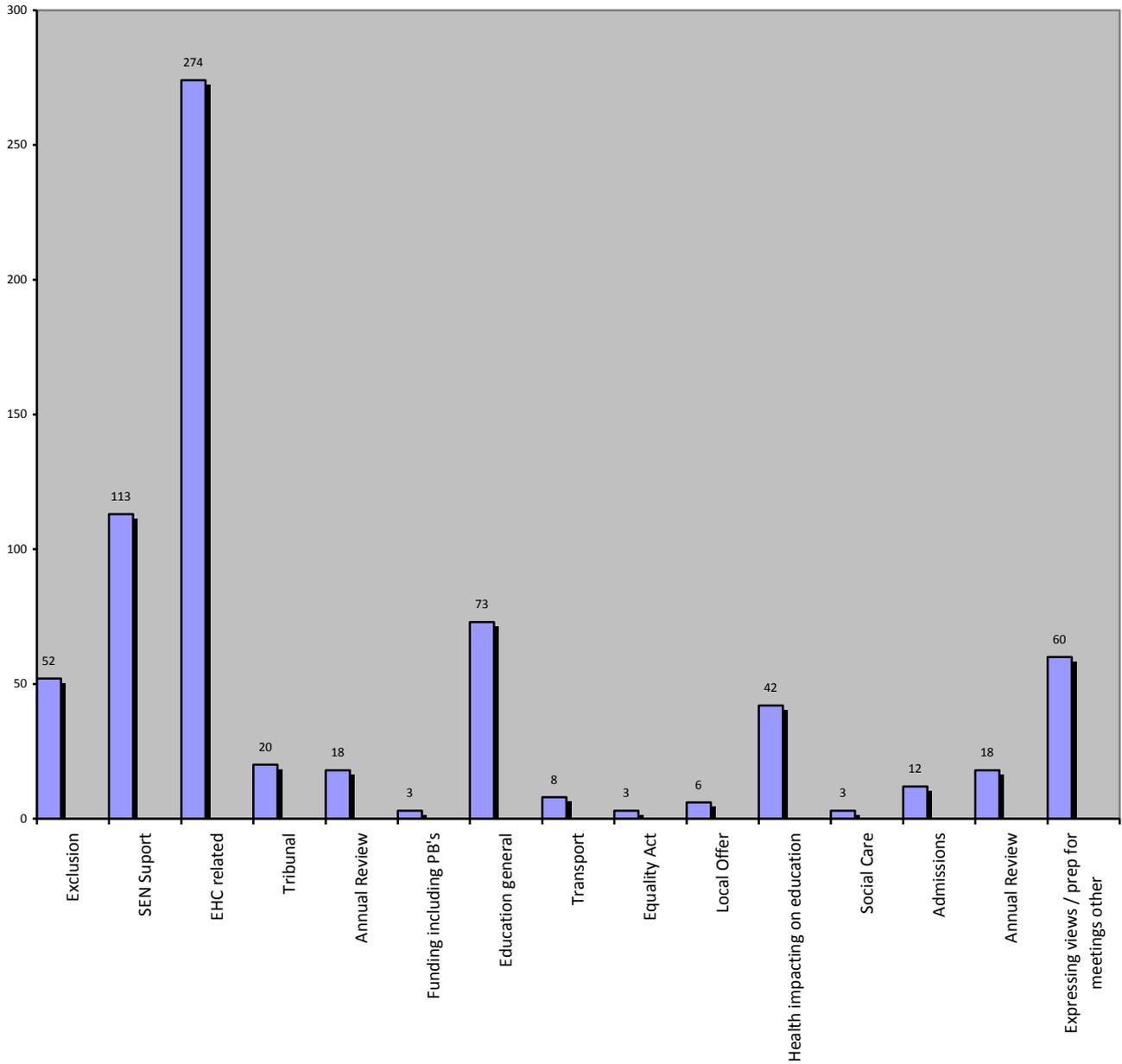


Breakdown of cases around Education, Health and Social Care





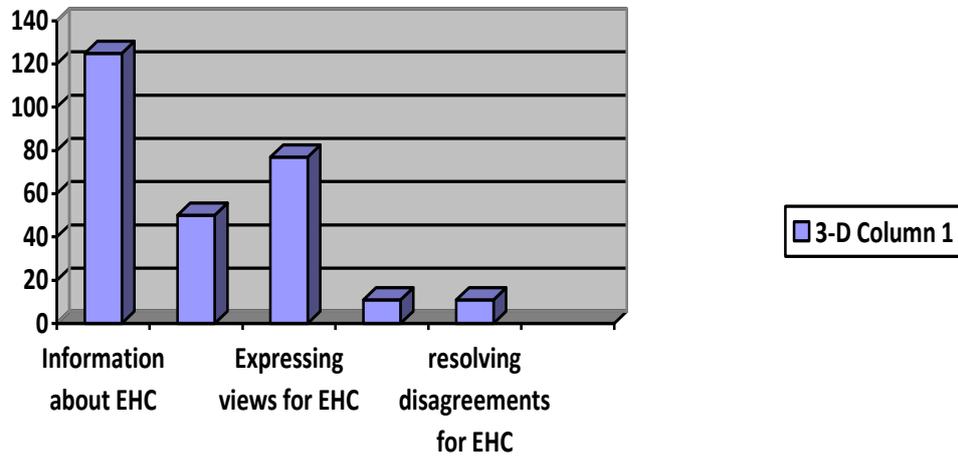
**Breakdown of topics for education related cases** (note this doesn't include some cases which were dealt with as a contact or email and so didn't provide all information)





**Breakdown of EHC related cases.**

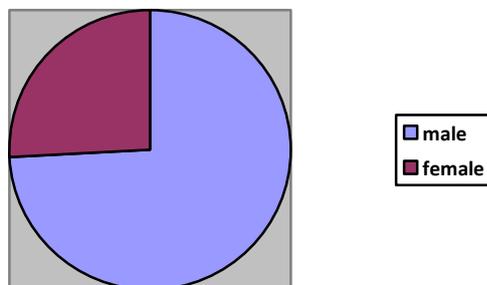
As the number of cases who are EHC based has risen significantly it is useful to see how this is broken down further.



**Working with Children and Young People**

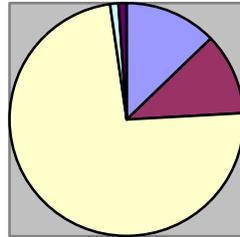
	2016/17
Number of children (0-16) accessing IAS	77
Number of Young people (16-25) accessing IAS (note this service was not fully active whilst recruitment process was underway)	10

**Gender of Children /Young People Service Users**





## Nature of New Referral for children/young people



## The Role of the Independent Supporter (IS)



During this period, Independent Support has continued to work within the Rotherham area. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Service, Core Assets, the EHC Assessment Service and the Parents Forum Ltd is fully operational. The Referral Protocol is deemed by all parties to be working well. Regular meetings and discussions take place between SENDIASS and Core Assets to continually assess the role, its development and consider other avenues for service promotion.

During this period 82 service users have specifically requested an Independent Supporter. Of these, 73 were referred to Core Assets as parents either didn't have a preference of which service they worked with or SENDIASS IS was at capacity. As yet we have not received a referral specifying Core Assets over SENDIASS. However service users may contact Core Assets directly if this is the case.



## Information and Publicity



Schools have a duty to inform parents and carers of SENDIASS at the time when SEND is identified. All schools, settings and SEND related services have received copies of our new SENDIASS postcard to share with parents, children and young people. Leaflets have also been distributed at SENCO events and relevant SEND locations for the 0-16 and

16 - 25 Information Officers. The service details are also placed on all LA letters with regards to the EHC process. There were no specific publicity projects using outside agencies during this period but staff continued to publicise the Service through Presentations to; ASC parent group, Monday Briefing, PEST early years group, SENCO's, and Early years SENCO's. Although there has been nothing specific around publicity the service has been contacted by 378 new service users who have not used the service during the previous 2 years.

## Website

Rotherham SENDIASS has it's own dedicated website which went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015

Summary of terms used:

**Sessions:** Included on multiple reports, sessions track how often the site was visited, and what actions were taken during each visit. A session defines a period of consecutive activity by the same use, and persists until a user stops interacting with the site for a period of 30 minutes.

**Page views:** measures how often a specific page is visited. (Example If a visitor visits Page A, goes to the homepage, and then comes back to Page A, it's counted as two page views)

**Referring sites:** Where the traffic is coming from (ie google, direct, corporate site)

Number of sessions 4839 (decrease from last year by 11.9%)

Number of individual users 3036

Page views 11'664 (a 4.8% decrease from previous year)

Top five pages:

Homepage 3095 hits

parents 1031

contact us 765 (7% increase from previous year)

support 648

children 399



Top five referring sites:

Google 2345

Direct (ie typed the URL in without being sent from another site) 1008

Rotherham.gov.uk 509

Rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org/referral 188

Bing 179

Although there seems to have been a decrease in the number of sessions to the website from previous year, the number of page views has not decreased to the same degree, suggesting service users are utilising the site more effectively. However there has been an increase in service users searching the 'contact us' page suggesting they intend to make specific contact either via email or via the phone perhaps to gain more specific advice to their situation.

More service users have googled the site rather than type in the address directly than was the case in the previous year. This may be due to the service not publicising the website as much. (Last year the service provided postcards which displayed the website address and distributed these freely at all SEND reform events that were attended and shared cards with other relevant services in order to pass on to potential service users.)

## **Professional Development**

### **Training Accessed**

It's My Life - Mental Capacity Act Training (delivered by CDC)

Tribunal Training

Early Help Pathway Workshop

Level 1, 2 & 3 IPSEA Training (face to face)

Rotherham Charter Welcome Package

SEMH in SEND

Post 16 Conference

People Management

Sickness Absence

Tribunal - witness involvement

Independent Support Training

### **Training Delivered**

Legislation/ Appeals and Mediation - delivered to EHC Team

Graduated Approach

SENDIASS Awareness x5

Post 14 (legislation around EHC processes)



SEND in Rotherham  
Young People SENDIASS offer

### **Strategic and other meetings**

Developing a shared 'stronger families' approach in Rotherham a joint workforce event

Monitoring Group x2

SEND Inclusion Development Day x2

Education and skills development day

IASS Regional Meeting x3

Charter Celebration Event

Charter IT

Area Inspections

Post 14 development planning

In It Together

PEST

IS Joint Planning

IS Management

SLA

Q&A at the Town Hall to Members.

Futures Night - Hill Top

Parent Forum drop ins

Visits to various settings around the young person IAS offer

*NOTE - not all staff and volunteers have accessed all training.*

### **Regional and National SENDIASS**

#### **Regional:**

The service engages in development through networking and collaborative work with SENDIASS staff from other LAs through the Regional Network. Service staff have attended Regional SENDIASS meetings and utilised the regional and national e forum.

#### **National:**

Following on from the Legislative changes to SEND, the SEND National Information Advice and Support Network developed a set of [National Quality Standards](#) which were then endorsed by the DFE. In July 2016 all IASS were invited to assess their service against the Quality Standards. 96 services (64% of all IASS) submitted returns and so the National QS report provides a first 'snap-shot' of the extent to which IASS are meeting the Quality Standards. The QS used a grading system 0-3 in this cohort of data. The descriptors are as follows;



### **Level 3**

Confident that the Quality Standard is met

Full range of evidence is available

Full range of recommended outcome assessments are in place **and** confirm service effectiveness

Rating agreed with service commissioner(s)

### **Level 2**

Confident the Quality Standard is met

Wide range of evidence is available (i.e. most of the types of evidence listed for the Quality Standard)

Some of the recommended outcome assessments are in place

Rating agreed with service commissioner(s)

### **Level 1**

Working towards the Quality Standard but not yet fully met

Some evidence available **or** available evidence confirms Quality Standard is not fully met

Outcome assessment limited **or** outcome assessments show low levels of impact

Rating not yet agreed with service commissioner(s)

### **Level 0**

Not yet meeting the Quality Standard

**and/or**

Evidence very limited or not available

**and/or**

Outcome assessments not in place

Rotherham SENDIASS is one of 92% of services who offer IAS to all three user groups (parents/carers, children and young people)

67% of SENDIASS are In- House services (as is Rotherham) compared with 29% who are Outsourced and 4% who are a combination of both.

Rotherham's measurement against the 20 Quality Standards proved on the whole to be positive showing 14 of the standards to be scored either 2 or 3.

Standards measured at the highest level (3).

- Rotherham is in the 52.6% who scored the highest level stating; The IASS complies with current safeguarding children legislation and guidance. All staff, independent supporters and volunteers who may have contact with children and young people are trained in, and have accurate and up to date knowledge of, safeguarding children.
- Rotherham is also in the 26.3% who scored level 3 stating; The IASS contributes to policy and practice at the regional and national level by working with other providers and relevant stakeholders to share, promote and develop best practice.
- Rotherham is in the 23.7% of services who scored level 3 stating; The IASS is accessible to all potential service users.



- We are also within the 44.7% of services who scored level 3 stating; The IASS offers confidential support to service users and;
- within the 35.5% of services whose staff, independent supporters, and volunteers are trained (including independent training) and have accurate and up to date knowledge of: education, social care and health law related to SEN and disability and national and local policy and practice in meeting SEN and disability

Standards measured at the lowest level (0)

- Standard 1:1 states "The Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) is commissioned in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, through the joint arrangements LAs and CCGs must have to consider and agree the information and advice to be provided. The commission should secure the provision of impartial, confidential and relevant information, advice and support to:
  - the parents of children and young people between 0 and 25 years who have, or may have, SEN or a disability
  - children and young people who have, or may have, SEN or a disability.Rotherham is in the 25% of services who responded with a level 0 in this area.
- We are also in the 8% of services who reported themselves at a level 0 specifying The IASS is planned, monitored, reviewed and evaluated, and prompt actions are taken to improve services and meet service users' needs.
- 21.1% of services scored 0 with regards to The IASS offers training to parents on:
  - working with professionals
  - involvement in decision making
  - the law relating to SEN and disability, as it applies to education, health and social care
  - in collaboration with parent carer forums, contributing to strategic developments

Areas where the service scored low or 0 are the focus for the service development plan. A copy of the national report is available on request.

The service contributes to the National Information, Advice and Support Network and has shared information and practice with other services regionally and nationally.

### **Multi Agency Working**

The service has been keen to make use of opportunities for multi agency networking through case work practice.

Service staff have attended Tesco Community Room to provide advice and information to parents attending the Rotherham Parent Carer's Forum 'drop in' sessions.

Service staff are involved with the Implementation for the Rotherham Charter for Parent and Child Voice.

The Service Lead also attends the Early Years PEST group and Schools and Life Long Learning weekly briefings which brings together agencies to share information and best practice.



Future improvements of the Annual Report:

The SENDIASS Service Annual Report has been shared with Director Leadership Team prior to being published on the website. There have been some suggestions made on improving the layout and quality of the report for the 2017/18 period. The photo's used in this report are of SENDIASS service users who have given us their permission to use their images. As part of our continuous improvement, we look to make future reports more representative of our user base and will utilise the Signs of Safety methods in its headings when reporting. These will be incorporated in to future reports.