

# Suffolk SENDIASS Self-evaluation

This is a live document, which is regularly shared with the SENDIASS Advisory Body for review and comment.

The [national Minimum Standards](#) set out what must be provided by SENDIAS services.

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
<i>1. Commissioning, governance and management arrangements</i>				
	<b>1.1 The IASS is jointly commissioned by education, health and social care in accordance with the CFA 2014. A formal agreement is set out in writing which refers directly to these Minimum Standards, whilst also considering the need for continuity and stability of the service.</b>	<p>Joint Commissioning (JC) between the local authority and the Integrated Care Board's (ICBs) in Suffolk. ICBs, combined, contribute approx. 16% of overall budget.</p> <p>Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the period 2023 to 2026 is in place.</p>		<p>National data shows that some SEND IAS services have secured an equal split with commissioning across education, health and social care.</p> <p>Discussions with commissioners may enable future investment opportunities.</p>

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Yellow	<p><b>1.2 The IASS is designed and commissioned with children, young people and parents, and has the capacity and resources to meet these Minimum Standards and local need. For smaller local authorities (LAs) this may involve commissioning across local areas.</b></p>	<p>The service is mostly able to meet the needs of families accessing in relation to minimum standards and the intervention levels guidance.</p> <p>We value the involvement of young people and parents/carers, and the parent carer forum, across our service strands.</p> <p>We actively seek ways to encourage families to input to our service development and are working with <a href="#">Healthwatch Suffolk</a> as part of their project to support services to think about ways to encourage and enable coproduction.</p>	<p>Increased volume, rising needs and complexity mean that we may not be able to provide the level of support some families need.</p> <p>Data shows a rise in the number of referrals where we were unable to meet the needs.</p> <p>Suffolk PCF have highlighted how much parents and carers value meeting support provided by SENDIASS. High service demand has impacted on availability to provide this support to families.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals. Additional investment is being explored.</p> <p>Explanation of the referrals in the 'needs unmet*' category - to be provided to the Advisory Body and in our Annual Report.</p> <p>(*The category of 'needs unmet' are mostly where we attempted return calls but could not get through, where appointments were not attended or where we were unavailable to provide support.)</p>
Yellow	<p><b>1.3 The IASS provides an all year-round flexible service which is open during normal office hours and includes a direct helpline with 24-hour answer machine, call back and signposting service, including linking to the national SEND helpline.</b></p>	<p>The service operates all year-round, has a direct helpline and web contact form/email/text options for accessing.</p> <p>The service signposts to other organisations including the Contact national helpline.</p>	<p>For the year 2022 to 2023, we have been able to cover the helpline for about 50% of normal office hours.</p> <p>We have needed to divert resources away from our proactive areas of the service, with every team member now supporting the helpline and referral process.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals.</p> <p>Recruit to agreed additional SEND IAS Worker hours.</p>

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	<b>1.4 There is a dedicated and ring-fenced budget held and managed by an IAS service manager located within an IASS</b>	The Service Lead manages the ring-fenced SENDIASS budget.		
	<b>1.5 The IASS is, and is seen by service users to be, an arm's length, confidential, dedicated and easily identifiable service, separate from the LA, Clinical Commissioning Group and/or host organisation.</b>	<p>The confidential service operates at 'arms-length' to the local authority.</p> <p>Data shows that we are reaching a significant proportion of people who are '<b>new to service</b>'.</p> <p>Service feedback includes a question to check that we were viewed as neutral and unbiased (impartial) and is monitored monthly.</p> <p>Our most recent published <a href="#">Annual Report</a> shows that <b>84%</b> of respondents told us they found us to be '<b>very impartial</b>' (with a further <b>11%</b> telling us they thought we were impartial)</p> <p>Branding, content and all publicity is managed by SENDIASS.</p> <p>The database is commissioned and managed within the service and can only be accessed by SENDIASS staff.</p>	<p>A few social media comments have questioned our 'arms-length' position.</p> <p>Reflection indicates misunderstandings about the remit of SENDIASS.</p>	<p>Continue to find ways to build trust with families and work to break down misconceptions and any barriers to access.</p> <p>Working with SPCF on 'myth-busting' information for families about the SENDIAS service.</p>

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	<p><b>1.6 LA and IASS ensure that potential service users, Head teachers, FE principals, SENCos, SEND Teams, children’s and adult social care, health commissioners and providers are made aware of the IASS, its remit and who the service is for.</b></p>	<p>SENDIASS information is available on the Local Offer.</p> <p>SENDIASS information is included in letters from the local authority relating to EHC plans.</p> <p>Various established communication routes to settings, services and providers, including opportunities to present an explanation of our service.</p> <p>Training to multi-agency practitioners.</p> <p>A range of service publicity is available, with printed copies provided on request.</p> <p>Active presence on social media.</p> <p>Service reports include where people heard about SENDIASS.</p>	<p>Fewer referrals are received about children and young people in Early Years, post-16, and for those attending specialist settings.</p> <p>Young people attending specialist settings, those in the youth justice system and those care leavers are underrepresented. The service is likely to need additional investment to realise this.</p>	<p>Projects underway to raise awareness and coproduce with Early Years parents/carers, families where the child/YP attends specialist and directly with <a href="#">SEND young people aged 16+</a>.</p> <p>Continued promotion to raise awareness.</p> <p>Videos to promote service with young people.</p> <p>Explore preferred ways for young people to access the service.</p> <p>Future action when additional capacity realised.</p>
	<p><b>1.7 The Governance arrangements outline a clear management structure, encompassing</b></p>	<p>The service has an Advisory Body which meets termly to monitor the performance against the minimum standards.</p>		<p>Expand group particularly with young people and parents/carers.</p>

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	<b>a strategic manager within the IASS and a steering group or advisory body which includes representatives from service user groups and key stakeholders from education, social care and health.</b>	Representation is across education, health, social care and includes schools, parents/carers and young people.		
	<b>1.8 The IASS has a development plan reviewed annually with the steering group/advisory body, which includes specific actions and improvement targets.</b>	<a href="#">Service Development Plan</a> is reviewed by the Advisory Body annually.		
<b>2. Strategic functions</b>				
	<b>2.1 Each IASS has a manager based solely within the service, without additional LA/CCG or host body roles. They have responsibility for strategic planning, service management and</b>	<p>The Service Lead is based solely within SENDIASS and takes care of strategic planning and service delivery.</p> <p>Service feedback is monitored monthly. Negative feedback is reviewed and responded to, and learning points acknowledged and actioned.</p>	Fewer people are completing the survey, and this impacts results.	Explore ways to encourage service-users to complete feedback survey.

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	<b>delivery, and quality assurance.</b>	'Triage' system in place to ensure consistency of IAS and support newest members of the team, who are undergoing training.	Lengthier response times may be impacting on satisfaction levels.	Feedback from the survey is used to improve the service.
	<b>2.2 The IASS engages with regional and national strategic planning and training and demonstrates effective working with other IASSs to inform service development.</b>	<p>Staff are signed up to the national forum and can post comments/questions and respond to other SENDIASS staff nationally.</p> <p>The service inputs to national strategic development.</p> <p>The Service Lead meets counterparts in the Eastern Region regularly and shares resources and best practice.</p>		Service Lead initiated a national focus group to liaise with the network to produce shared information resources.
	<b>2.3 The IASS works with local partners, including local parent and young people forums to inform and influence policy and practice in the local area.</b>	<p>General data (themes of enquiries and common experiences of families) are shared with partners, including the parent carer forum and the young person engagement hub.</p> <p>Supporting the LA to develop training for multi-agency staff around EHC plans and writing quality advice for EHC processes.</p> <p>SENDIASS data is included for the CYP leadership team.</p> <p>Involvement with SEND Programme and SEND Accountability Boards.</p>	<p>Improvements to services/experiences are not always being felt by families and frustrations are being shared, particularly on social media.</p> <p>The high service demand impacts on availability of team members to engage with strategic partnership work.</p>	<p>Continue to share data and inform and influence policy and practice.</p> <p>Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the rising demand and prevent diversion of resources.</p>

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Yellow		<p>Themes/issues the service has flagged with LA/partners:</p> <p><a href="#">SENDIASS Activity (policy and process)</a></p> <p>Staff in the service engage with the workstreams of the local authority and partners, including highlighting SEND law and the experiences of families.</p>		
<b>3. Operational Functions</b>				
Yellow	<p><b>3.1 The IASS provides; Impartial information, advice and support (IAS) on the full range of education, health and social care as defined in the SEND Code of Practice to the following service users – a) children b) young people c) parents This support is offered in a range of ways which includes face to face, a telephone helpline, email, website and social media.</b></p>	<p>Activity outlined in monthly and <a href="#">Annual reports</a>.</p> <p>Sep 22 to Aug 23 stats:</p> <p>No. of referrals* - <b>3,098</b> (up 10% on previous year and 28% over 5 years)</p> <p>No. of service users accessing – <b>2,254</b></p> <p>No. 'new to service' – <b>1,310</b> (58%)</p> <p>No. of training registrants – <b>1,201</b></p> <p>Community Outreach – <b>61 events</b>, reaching <b>723 people</b>.</p> <p>Website page views – <b>119,234</b></p> <p>Facebook reach – <b>39,288</b></p> <p>Twitter (now X) impressions – <b>14,275</b></p> <p>YouTube channel views – <b>27,700</b></p>	<p>Reaching young people and encouraging them to use the service.</p> <p>Increased volume, rising needs and complexity have meant we have needed to continuously monitor and change the way we manage referrals.</p> <p>Managing the helpline whilst maintaining the ongoing support which some families</p>	<p>Outreach to young people in settings, linked to survey results.</p> <p>Coproduce information with young people on topics which interest them.</p> <p>Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals.</p>

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Yellow		<p>*referrals = requests for information, advice or support (via helpline, email, web contact form, Text, face to face)</p> <p>High demand has caused delays with providing a response and we moved away from an appointment booking model. We now aim to provide specific advice within the initial contact.</p> <p>'Front-loading' our helpline in this way has improved the experience of service-users, who now receive information, advice and support more quickly.</p> <p>Community Outreach is enabling us to reach families, who may not otherwise be aware of, or access the service. Increased engagement activity has led to more requests for individualised specific advice (referrals).</p> <p>Successful trial of a clinic/drop-in approach within Family Hubs across Suffolk, to enable us to reach families much earlier in their SEND journey, and reach families who otherwise may not be comfortable to contact SENDIASS.</p>	<p>need has become extremely challenging.</p> <p>Wellbeing of team members.</p> <p>Outreach is currently limited due to staff member covering helpline.</p>	<p>Increase focus with caseload supervision and wellbeing conversations in the team.</p> <p>Additional capacity to helpline.</p> <p>Continue to attend SEND advice drop-in's hosted by local authority.</p>



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	<b>3.2 The IASS provides branded information and promotional materials in a range of accessible formats.</b>	<p><a href="#">Leaflets and resources</a> (includes some translated information into 9 languages) <a href="#">Videos on our YouTube channel</a>  <a href="#">Easy Read version of our survey</a>  <a href="#">Subscribers for our monthly newsletter - 2,800</a></p> <p>Young person <a href="#">service leaflet</a> and <a href="#">postcard</a> – coproduced with young people.</p>	Reaching young people.	<p>Coproduction of information with young people.</p> <p>Focus on providing alternative versions of information and publicity (for example, Easy-Read).</p>
	<b>3.3 The IASS has a stand-alone service website that is accessible to all service users.</b>	<p>The service has its own stand-alone website and the platform provider was commissioned by SENDIASS.</p> <p>Content is created and maintained wholly by SENDIASS staff.</p> <p>Trends in our monthly data determine areas of development with our information.</p> <p>The website is a well-used resource. With average monthly page views of 9,936. <a href="http://www.suffolksendiass.co.uk">www.suffolksendiass.co.uk</a></p>		
	<b>3.4 The IASS provides advocacy support for individual children, young people, and parents that empowers them to</b>	<p>Sep 22 to Aug 23: 2,254 service-users (1,310 new to service)</p> <p>Highest number of referrals ever recorded. (3,098)</p>	Increased volume, rising needs and complexity mean that we may not be able to provide the level of support some families need.	Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals.

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	<b>express their views and wishes and helps them to understand and exercise their rights in matters including exclusion, complaints, SEND processes, and SEND appeals.</b>	<p>The service follows the national intervention levels and support is tailored to the needs of the individual accessing the service.</p> <p>'How we empower' is explained on our <a href="#">About us</a> page.</p>		
	<b>3.5 The IASS provides information, advice and support before, during and following a SEND Tribunal appeal in a range of different ways, dependent on the needs of the parent or young person. This will include representation during the hearing if the parent or young person is unable to do so.</b>	<p>A significant number of discussions with families about appeals, as our data for Sep 22 to Aug 23 shows:</p> <p>EHCP appeals – 111 (note number of actual appeals 53)  Refusal to assess – 137 (note number of actual RTA appeals 7)  Disability Discrimination – 9</p> <p>The service follows the national intervention levels and support is tailored to the needs of the individual accessing the service.</p> <p>Videos to help parents to fill in tribunal appeal forms.</p>	Capacity of team to manage the current volume of tribunals and level of support required.	Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals.
	<b>3.6 The IASS offers training to local education, health and social care professionals, children, young people</b>	<p><a href="#">Termly programme of training</a></p> <p><b>1,201</b> training registrants Sep 22 to Aug 23.</p>	Young people – preparing for adulthood/annual reviews. Information/training gaps identified.	Planned coproduction with parents and young people for new 'Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years'

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	<p><b>and parents to increase knowledge of SEND law, guidance, local policy, issues and participation.</b></p>	<p>Termly (coproduced) training sessions around key themes for families.</p> <p>Recordings to increase accessibility.</p> <p>Collaboration with local authority services (Specialist Education Services and Early Years and Childcare services).</p> <p>Commissioning external services, to offer additional training which does not lie within our expertise (e.g. strategies for managing ASD, consistently our highest frequency category of need).</p> <p>SEND training to school Governors on behalf of the local authority.</p> <p>Working with parents to Early Year SENCos as part of their training.</p> <p>Multi-agency practitioners join our online sessions for families around EHC Needs Assessments and Annual Reviews of EHC plans.</p> <p>Bespoke training to a variety of services from education, health and social care around SEND and solution focussed approaches for working with parents.</p>		<p>information and/or session for families.</p> <p>Planned collaboration with local authority to coproduce and co-deliver training for school staff to support them to support pupils to prepare for adulthood.</p> <p>Currently agreeing the delivery of a 'Working with Parents' session as part of the National SENCo Award training.</p> <p>Future action – build capacity to expand training offer with young people.</p>

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		<p>Offer to provide training for EHCP decision-making panel members.</p> <p>Feedback is consistently positive and here are two examples:</p> <p><i>'It was an awesome and inspiring presentation! Allowing me to come away feeling empowered with knowledge and information, based around the legalities.'</i> (Parent/carer, January 23)</p> <p><i>'I've produced a template pre-meeting email for staff to send to parents and a handout for colleagues regarding meetings with parents about a child's SEND. My colleagues are feeling more confident to speak to parents regarding SEND. If they are feeling more positive about it then they are more likely to give a good impression to the parents and make them feel more relaxed.'</i> (SENCO, January 2023)</p>		

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<b>4. Professional development and training for staff</b>				
	<b>4.1 All advice and support providing staff successfully complete all online IPSEA legal training levels within 12 months of joining the service.</b>	Established staff have completed all levels of IPSEA training.	Diversion of roles to support helpline due to vacant hours.	Newest team members to complete IPSEA training.
	<b>4.2 The service routinely requests feedback from service users and others, and uses this to further develop the work and practices of the service.</b>	<p>Service-users are invited to complete an online survey (which includes the 6 questions set nationally plus some of our own).</p> <p>Responses are monitored and reported on monthly and included in our <a href="#">Annual Report</a>.</p> <p><b>Sample of some recent feedback:</b></p> <p><i>'The info on your website is really useful, it was great to ask some more specific questions today. Thank you'</i></p> <p><i>'Thank you so much for all your help - I am so glad I contacted you - you have been so helpful and really explained things so well that I understand now'</i></p>	Encouraging service-users to complete the online survey	Explore ways to encourage.

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		<i>'Thank you for this information – I'm pleased to say the school have agreed for the young man to continue with the Support offered.'</i> <b>(January 2023)</b>		
	<b>4.3 All IASS staff and volunteers have ongoing supervision and continuous professional development.</b>	<p>Staff receive monthly supervision where professional development is routinely discussed.</p> <p>The team are encouraged to register for additional training offered by our national body and commissioned by our Eastern Region.</p> <p>We have also developed our own in-house staff training which covers solution-focused approaches, impartiality and empowerment.</p>	<p>The volume and complexity of referrals is impacting work-life balance and general wellbeing of staff.</p> <p>Workflow is impacting available time for professional development.</p>	<p>Focus on wellbeing in supervision and support for individuals.</p> <p>Explore training for team around supporting young people in crisis.</p> <p>Team training around tools to use when working with young people with communication needs.</p>

Updated 27-9-23