

Suffolk SENDIASS Self-evaluation

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>				
	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.	<p>Joint Commissioning (JC) between the local authority and the Integrated Care Board's (ICBs) in Suffolk. ICBs combined contribute approx. 14.5% of overall budget.</p> <p>Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the period 2023 to 2026.</p>	Building capacity to meet the rising needs and complexity.	Discussions with commissioners to explore future investment opportunities.
	1.2 The IASS is designed and commissioned with children, young people and	Record numbers of referrals managed.	Meeting published response times.	Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals.

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
	<p>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.</p>	<p>The service is able to meet the needs of many families accessing - as per 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 working with Healthwatch Suffolk as part of their project to support services to think about ways to encourage and enable coproduction.</p> <p>Advisory Body provides a steer and supports us with our development.</p>	<p>Recent feedback from parents shows frustrations with our response times and suggestions that we need more staff.</p> <p>Frequent backlog of referrals (families awaiting IAS).</p> <p>Rising needs and complexity mean that we may not be able to provide the level of support some families need.</p> <p>For the academic YTD (Sep 23 to April 24): We have been unable to meet the needs of 98 families.</p> <p>Size and structure of service does not provide many progression opportunities for staff. As a result, staff retention is a particular issue.</p> <p>There is a continuous need for the team to invest (in training and with support) for new team members.</p>	<p>Continue to explore additional investment to build capacity.</p> <p>Review roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>In consultation with the Advisory Body, explore alternative options for delivery, which are efficient and sustainable.</p> <p>Digital resource to explain the steps we take to consult and co-produce.</p>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
			<p>No contingency for periods of annual or sick leave.</p> <p>Attempts to secure additional investment have, so far, been unsuccessful.</p>	
	<p>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.</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 vacant post. Explore interim cover.</p>
	<p>1.4 There is a dedicated and ring-fenced budget held and managed by an IAS service manager located within an IASS</p>	<p>The Service Lead manages the ring-fenced SENDIASS budget.</p>		
	<p>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</p>	<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 'new to service'.</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>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
	<p>Group and/or host organisation.</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 Annual Report shows that 75.8% of respondents told us they found us to be ‘very impartial’ (with a further 13.2% 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>Finalised Frequently asked questions about SENDIASS - information for families.</p>
	<p>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.</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>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</p>	<p>Continued expansion of reach to early years and post-16 children and young people.</p> <p>Continued promotion to raise awareness.</p> <p>More videos to promote service with young people.</p>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
		<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>is likely to need additional investment to realise this.</p> <p>Capacity to develop reach to young people.</p>	<p>Explore preferred ways for young people to access the service.</p> <p>Practitioner publicity.</p> <p>Future action when additional capacity realised.</p>
	<p>1.7 The Governance arrangements outline a clear management structure, encompassing 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.</p>	<p>The service has an Advisory Body which meets termly to monitor the performance against the minimum standards.</p> <p>Representation is across education, health, social care and includes schools, parents/carers and young people.</p>	<p>Difficulty of attracting the regular attendance of busy professionals and families can lead to time spent repeating info to different attendees.</p> <p>Challenge of recruiting more young people.</p>	<p>Expand group particularly with young people and parents/carers.</p> <p>Co-produce a flyer and video to encourage young people to take part.</p>
	<p>1.8 The IASS has a development plan reviewed annually with the steering group/advisory body, which includes</p>	<p>Service Development Plan is reviewed by the Advisory Body annually.</p>		

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
	specific actions and improvement targets.			
2. Strategic functions				
	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 delivery, and quality assurance.	<p>The Service Lead is based solely within SENDIASS and takes care of strategic planning and service delivery.</p> <p>New 'button' included within email signatures – to draw attention to the feedback survey.</p> <p>Service feedback is monitored monthly. Negative feedback is reviewed and responded to, and learning points acknowledged and actioned.</p> <p>'Triage' system in place to ensure consistency of IAS and support newest members of the team, who are undergoing training.</p>	<p>Fewer people are completing the survey, and this impacts results.</p> <p>Lengthier response times are impacting on satisfaction levels.</p> <p>Resignation - vacant post G5 Senior SEND IAS Worker.</p>	<p>Continue to explore ways to encourage service-users to complete feedback survey.</p> <p>Feedback from the survey is used to improve the service.</p>
	2.2 The IASS engages with regional and national strategic planning and training and demonstrates effective working with	Staff are signed up to the national forum and can post comments/questions and respond to other SENDIASS staff nationally.		Joint working with the Eastern Region – planned whole staff training event June 2024.

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
Green	other IASSs to inform service development.	<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>		
Yellow	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.	<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>SENDIASS data is included for the SCC CYP leadership team.</p> <p>Involvement with SEND Programme Office and Improvement Board.</p> <p>Themes/issues the service has flagged with LA/partners:</p> <p>SENDIASS Activity (policy and process)</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>	<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 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>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
		Licence to deliver Talking Mats training to multi-agency practitioners in the use of a communication tool which can enable children, young people and adults to reflect on and express their views, thus supporting person-centred practice across the county.		
3. Operational Functions				
	<p>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.</p>	<p>Activity outlined in monthly and Annual reports.</p> <p>Sep 22 to Aug 23 stats:</p> <p>No. of referrals* - 3,098 (up 10% on previous year and 28% over 5 years) No. of service users accessing – 2,254 No. ‘new to service’ – 1,310 (58%) No. of training registrants – 1,201 Community Outreach – 61 events, reaching 723 people. Website page views – 119,234 Facebook reach – 39,288 Twitter (now X) impressions – 14,275 YouTube channel views – 27,700</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 need has become extremely challenging.</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>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
Yellow		<p>*referrals = requests for information, advice or support (via helpline, email, web contact form, Text, face to face)</p> <p>We 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>Attended every Family Hub drop-in.</p>	<p>Wellbeing of team members.</p> <p>Outreach is likely to be limited in the coming year.</p>	<p>Increase focus with caseload supervision and wellbeing conversations in the team.</p> <p>Depending on availability, continue to attend SEND advice drop-in’s hosted by local authority.</p>
Green	<p>3.2 The IASS provides branded information and promotional materials in a range of accessible formats.</p>	<p>Leaflets and resources (includes some translated information into 9 languages)</p> <p>Videos on our YouTube channel</p> <p>Easy Read version of our survey</p> <p>Subscribers for our monthly newsletter - 2,800</p>	<p>Reaching young people.</p> <p>Resource and costs producing printed publicity.</p> <p>Capacity to continue development projects.</p>	<p>Coproduction of information with young people.</p> <p>Continued focus on providing alternative versions of information and publicity (posters, video content and easy-read).</p>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
Green		<p>Young person service leaflet and postcard – coproduced with young people.</p> <p>Suffolk SENDIASS – welcome children and young people!</p> <p>Easy-read resources developed 2023 to 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and young person Easy-Read leaflet • Child and young person Easy-Read poster • Support to get your voice heard • Rewards for working with SENDIASS • Annual review of your Education, Health and Care plan 	Funding.	<p>Finalise drafts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support across 5 days (opens PDF of the latest draft) • Care and support needs 18+ (opens PDF of the latest draft) • Travel and transport 16+ (opens PDF of the latest draft) • SEN Support 16+.
Green	<p>3.3 The IASS has a stand-alone service website that is accessible to all service users.</p>	<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>		Exploring ways to improve accessibility of website.

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
		<p>The website is a well-used resource. With average monthly page views of 9,936.</p> <p>www.suffolksendiass.co.uk</p>		
	<p>3.4 The IASS provides advocacy support for individual children, young people, and parents that empowers them to express their views and wishes and helps them to understand and exercise their rights in matters including exclusion, complaints, SEND processes, and SEND appeals.</p>	<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> <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 About us page.</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>Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals.</p> <p>Talking Mats Foundation has asked us to pilot a programme for parents in teaching them how to use a Talking Mat with their child, to support and empower them to share their views.</p>
	<p>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.</p>	<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</p>	<p>Capacity of team to manage the current volume of tribunals and level of support required.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor capacity of team to manage the volume and complexity of referrals.</p> <p>Create new training for team members in supporting parents with tribunal appeals.</p>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
		<p>to the needs of the individual accessing the service.</p> <p>Videos to help parents to fill in tribunal appeal forms.</p>		
	<p>3.6 The IASS offers training to local education, health and social care professionals, children, young people and parents to increase knowledge of SEND law, guidance, local policy, issues and participation.</p>	<p>Termly programme of training</p> <p>1,201 training registrants Sep 22 to Aug 23.</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 Autism, 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>Young people – preparing for adulthood/annual reviews. Information/training gaps identified.</p>	<p>Planned coproduction with parents and young people for new ‘Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years’ information and/or session for families.</p> <p>Future action – build capacity to expand training offer with young people.</p> <p>From summer 24 will be delivering our Working with Parents session to school SENCOs too, as part of their national award training.</p>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
		<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>Offer to provide training for EHCP decision-making panel members.</p> <p>Read our recent feedback.</p>		
4. Professional development and training for staff				
	4.1 All advice and support providing staff successfully complete all online IPSEA legal training levels within 12 months of joining the service.	Established staff have completed all levels of IPSEA training.		Newest team members to complete IPSEA training.
	4.2 The service routinely requests feedback from service users and others, and uses this to further	Service-users are invited to complete an online survey (which includes the 6 questions set nationally plus some of our own).	Encouraging service-users to complete the online survey	Explore ways to encourage.

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
	<p>develop the work and practices of the service.</p>	<p>Responses are monitored and reported on monthly and included in our Annual Report.</p> <p>Read our recent feedback.</p> <p>Attendees of our training session are encouraged to complete an online evaluation and all feedback shared in the 'chat' is captured and informs future practice.</p>		
	<p>4.3 All IASS staff and volunteers have ongoing supervision and continuous professional development.</p>	<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>In-house staff training which covers solution-focused approaches, impartiality and empowerment.</p> <p>'Switches' training (for children and young people with significant communication difficulties) attended by team member.</p> <p>'Talking Mats' whole team training - for working with children and young people</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>Continue to explore and create training opportunities, both inhouse and externally, to support new team members to manage the immediate challenges of IAS delivery and their wellbeing.</p> <p>Explore training for team around supporting young people in crisis.</p> <p>Joint whole staff training with Eastern Region colleagues (June 2024).</p>

RAG	Minimum Standard	Evidence of standard being met	Challenges	Plans
		with Speech, Language and Communication needs. 'Helplines' training for team (provided by national IASS network).		

Updated June 2024

DRAFT