



DORSET SEND INFORMATION, ADVICE & SUPPORT SERVICE (SENDIASS)

SENDIASS ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

INTRODUCTION

Dorset SEN and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service provides free, impartial, confidential advice to children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers.

The aims of SENDIASS are to:

- provide a high quality, impartial, accurate and confidential service
- empower children, young people and their parents/carers to play an informed and active part in decision making and supporting them to make the best decisions
- contribute to partnership working with providers of education, alternative provision, training, supported employment, health and care
- ensure service user views are heard and understood
- make sure service users understand their rights, roles and responsibilities

In October 2020, Dorset Council's Cabinet, made up of local councillors, approved plans to find an external provider to deliver SENDIASS to make sure an impartial, compliant and effective service is provided.

The service currently sits within the Dorset Council structure in Commissioning with management from the Educational Psychology Service. From February 2022 the service will be delivered by Family Action, a long-established charity supporting families. Further details can be found on Dorset Council's website:

[Award-winning charity to provide Dorset's SENDIAS service - Dorset Council news](#)

Further details of the charity, and the other SENDIASS they deliver can be found on Family Action's website:

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/>

SUMMARY OF DATA

This report relates to the academic year, September 2020 to August 2021.

From April 2021 the service has been jointly funded by Dorset Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This joint arrangement has increased the core budget available to deliver the service. Department for Education grant funding has been available for service development since 2015. The grants have been administered by the Council for Disabled Children through the Independent Support Programme and then the Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP). The grant funding available is not expected to continue after the academic year 2020/21.

During the academic year, we had enhanced staffing provided through the IASP grant. The service had 4 staff based solely within SENDIASS, including a fulltime Coordinator and officers completing development work on the digital, training and child and young person offers alongside their casework. There are currently 2.6 FTE SENDIASS Officers in post.

The Impact of the Pandemic

The service continued throughout the pandemic and lockdowns. Support work was largely through telephone, email and online meetings. Online drop-ins were offered.

The Covid pandemic and the lockdowns reduced the full impact of the enhanced capacity provided through the grant funding, particularly the expected developments in the offer to children and young people.

The regular face to face drop-in sessions for parents and carers (Verwood, Weymouth and Dorchester) were suspended during the pandemic and have not yet been re-established.

501 families made use of the service in 2020/21 academic year. This is a reduction on the 549 cases total in 2019/2020. We believe that the move to home-schooling, closure of our drop-ins and families adjusting to the changes and concerns of the pandemic influenced this reduction in casework.

Work with Children and Young People

Children, young people and young adults with SEN and/or disability and in the age range 0 to 25 years can access the service for information, advice and support.

In the academic year 2020/21, one young adult (20 – 25 years) and one young person (17 to 19 years) accessed the service independently. Nine young people accessed with their parent/carers. Six of these young people were in the secondary age group (11 – 16 years), one in the primary age range (5 to 10 years), one in the adult age range (20 – 25 years) and one whose age was not recorded. 24 hours of officer time was spent with young people and young adults in total. The total of 11 children, young people and young adults is the same as the previous year academic year.

Special Educational Need

Recording of primary SEN or Disability shows that SENDIASS main area of work is still with families where the primary need of the child or young person (CYP) is communication and interaction, mainly autistic spectrum conditions. Half of our casework is for CYP with this type of need. 21% of casework is for CYP with cognition and learning needs. Casework relating to social, emotional and mental health needs accounts for 23% of the total. A small number of families using the service have children or young people who have primary needs in physical or sensory (visual or hearing) domains.

Age Range

The service is accessed by families with children, young people, and young adults across the range of ages 0 to 25 years. Most casework relates to school age children.

Location

SENDIASS is available to families across Dorset. Dorset Children's Services are delivered in six localities: North, Chesil (Weymouth & Portland), Dorchester, Purbeck, West and East. Our monitoring shows that the service is used in all localities. The localities do not have an even distribution of population and areas of deprivation. Chesil Locality continues to have the

highest number of families using the service. West Locality has the lowest number.

However, this has increased with a greater focus in the area.

On average families in need of support are in contact with officers between 7 and 9 times in all localities.

Tribunals

Tribunals (SENDIST) continue to place a significant demand on the service. All Officers are trained to support families before, during and after Tribunal. SENDIASS have supported families with 74 SENDIST appeals in the academic year 2020/21.

Feedback

We asked for feedback from people using the service when we had completed work with them. 21% of service users responded to online, email or telephone surveys. We asked them to rate the service on a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high), on each of six questions.

1. How easy was it to get in touch with us?
2. How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?
3. How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?
4. What difference do you think our information, advice and support made for you?
5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?
6. How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?

The average scores fell between 3.72 and 3.96 out of a possible 4.

Comments provided with the feedback included:

“Very good support. Everything explained simplistically. Am now more knowledgeable as to what my rights are.”

“I recommend your service to everyone in the SEN community. Words fail me at how excellent the officer was. The outcome has made a huge difference to my son. He's smiling for the first time in a long time.”

“Amazing support and advice and I truly don't think I would have been able to complete the process without the SENDIASS Officer. Her knowledge was outstanding and she is an asset to your team. She gave me confidence in what is a very difficult and stressful situation. I couldn't have asked for any more support and have recommended your service to others.”

CHARTS AND TABLES

The following pages present detailed information on service delivery in the academic year 2020/21

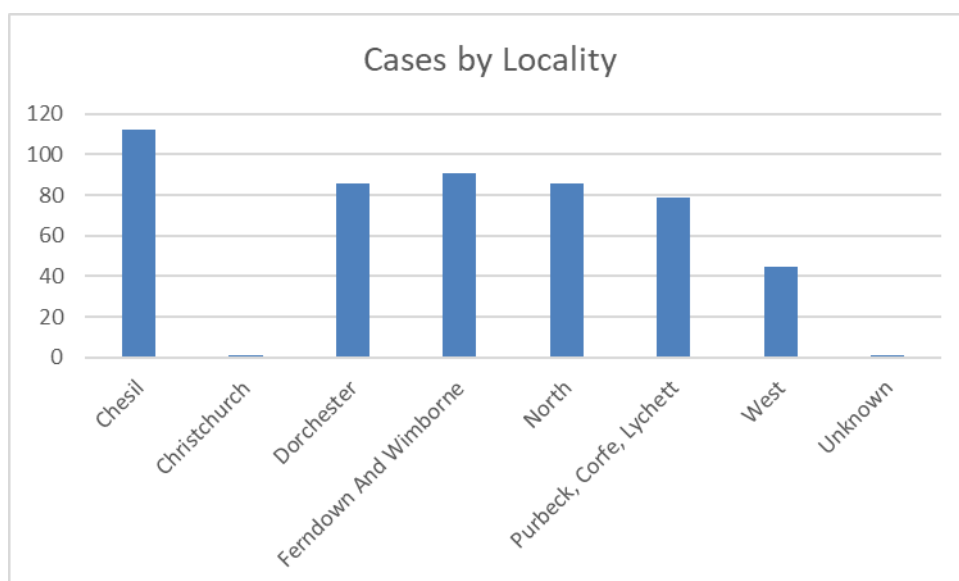
Page 6	Service user feedback
Page 7	Casework by Locality
Page 7	Number of contacts
Page 8	Hours in Locality
Page 9	Primary SEND
Page 10	Age Range
Page 11	Data Comparison 2016 - 2020

SENDIASS Service User Feedback Academic Year 2020 – 2021

Total number of responses	104 21% of service users
Responses by Survey	34
Responses by e-mail	26
Surveys not completed; feedback given by phone	17
E-mail not returned; feedback given by phone	24
Feedback given by phone; no survey or e-mail sent	3
Surveys not completed; unable to contact by phone	14
Unable to contact by phone; no survey or e-mail sent	2
Surveys not completed or e-mail returned but no phone call due to Coronavirus	10

SCORE	How easy was it to get in touch with us?	How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?	How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?	What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?	Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?	How likely is it that you would recommend the Service to others?
4	78	98	100	92	98	102
3	24	4	4	8	6	2
2	1	2	0	1	0	0
1	1	0	0	2	0	0
0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Average	3.72	3.92	3.96	3.81	3.94	3.94

Cases by Locality/Number of Contacts



Locality	Cases	% of total
Chesil	112	22%
Dorchester	86	17%
East (Ferndown And Wimborne)	91	18%
North	86	17%
Purbeck	79	16%
West	45	9%
Unknown	1	0.5%

1 case from Christchurch which is no longer Dorset Council area

TOTAL CASES 501

Locality	Cases	Contacts	Average no. contacts per case
Chesil	112	1287	11
Christchurch	1	1	1
Dorchester	86	799	9
East (Ferndown And Wimborne)	91	819	9
North	86	626	7
Purbeck	79	706	9
West	45	482	11
Unknown	1	27	27

Officer Hours Spent on Casework by Locality

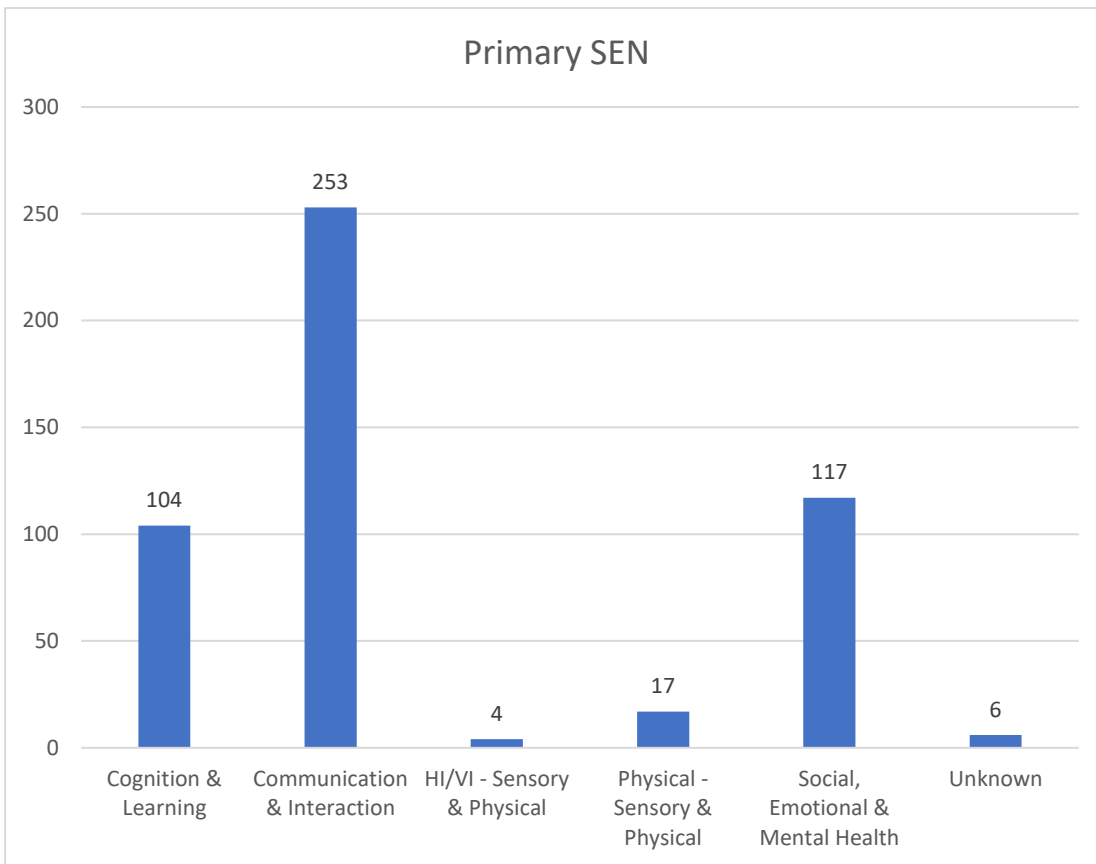


Locality	Hours
Chesil	407
Dorchester	339
East (Ferndown And Wimborne)	358
North	298
Purbeck	251
West	182
Unknown	5
TOTAL HOURS	1840

Christchurch

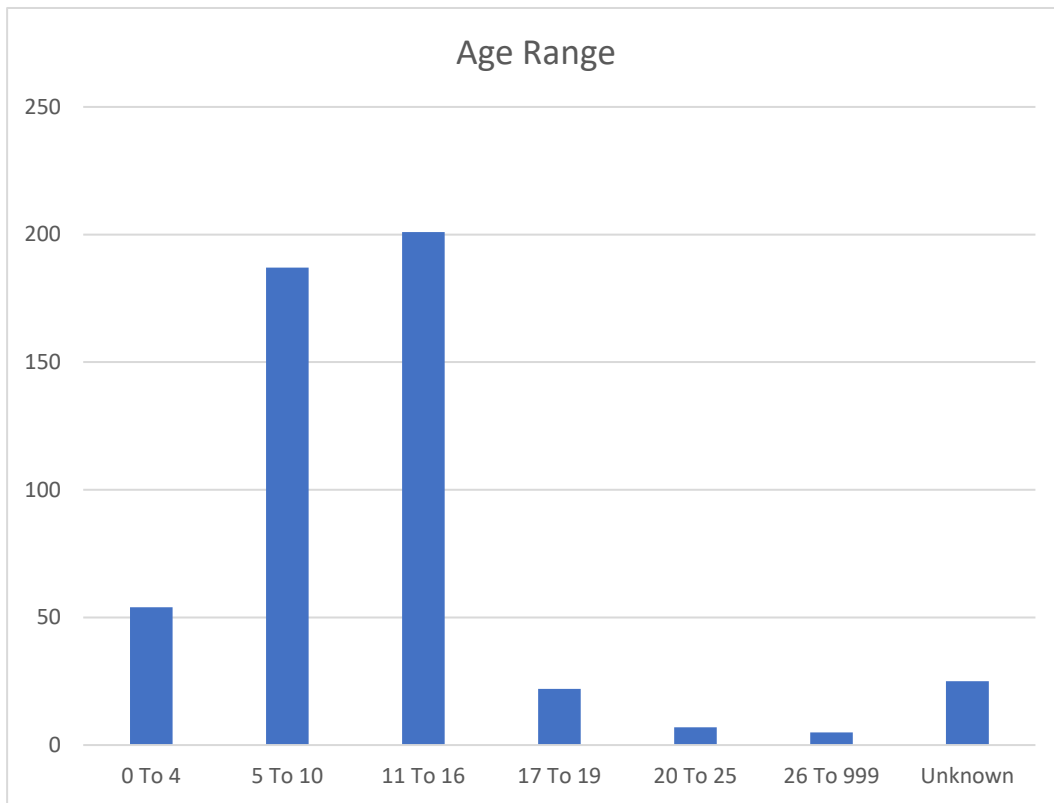
10 mins

Primary SEND of children and young people



Primary Special Educational Need	Cases	% of total
Cognition & Learning	104	21%
Communication & Interaction	253	50%
HI/VI - Sensory & Physical	4	1%
Physical -Sensory & Physical	17	3%
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	117	23%

Age Range of children and young people



Age range	No. of cases
0 To 4	54
5 To 10	187
11 To 16	201
17 To 19	22
20 To 25	7
26 To 999	5
Unknown	25

SENDIASS Comparative Data 2016/2017 to 2020/2021

Cases (academic year)					Time on casework (hours)				
16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
404	501	550	549	501*	980	1143	949	2647	1840*
	+97	+49	-1	-48		+163	-194	+1,698	-807

*501 families made use of the service in 2020/21 academic year. This is a reduction on the cases total in 2018/19 and 2019/20. We believe that the move to home-schooling, closure of our drop-ins and families adjusting to the changes and concerns of the pandemic influenced this reduction in casework.

Primary SEND	% of cases 2017 - 2018	% of cases 2018 - 2019	% of cases 2019 - 2020	% of cases 2020- 21
Unknown	2%	30%	33%	0%
Cognition & Learning	13%	13%	13%	21%
Communication & Interaction (mainly ASC)	63%	37%	37%	50%
Sensory & Physical	6%	7%	3%	4%
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	17%	13%	13%	23%