



SENDIASS GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021 – AUGUST 2022

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Background

In May 2019, SENDIASS Gloucestershire returned to the council following the cessation of business by Carers Gloucestershire with whom the Service had been contracted since August 2013. Since that time, the Service has been able to maintain its impartiality and develop more effective partnership working across services in education, health and social care. It operates a fully independent database, website and social media platforms from the council.

Overview

SENDIASS Gloucestershire is a statutory, countywide service that provides confidential and impartial information, advice and support to parents who have children with special educational needs and disabilities. The service also provides advice and support to young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who have additional needs.

Advice is given on a range of topics about Education, Health and Social Care. These include, but are not limited to; admissions and admission appeals, exclusions and exclusion appeals (including Independent Review Panel Hearings), SEN transport & transport appeals, the Graduated Pathway including EHC Needs Assessments & EHC Plans, school-based issues (e.g. school trips, bullying, risk assessments), changing school placements, special schools and SEND Tribunals, referral routes to specific services, explaining the role of CYPS, SALT, OT and Physio, Safeguarding issues, CIN / CPP, ICPC, Core Group and explaining the different functions of different teams and processes within Social Care.

Although calls to SENDIASS are predominantly about Education, there has been a significant increase in the number of health-related calls in recent times with parents seeking clarification about a number of issues. Parents remain very unsure about who should be referring to health services, with schools and GP's often giving parents mixed messages and parents feeling that they are being 'bounced between the two'. Parents are sometimes keen to pursue a diagnosis for their child or young person, having been told by their child's school that 'this is the only way you'll get any help' or 'we can't really do anything until we get a diagnosis'. Parents also frequently report that schools won't refer their child for assessment 'because they don't see any issues' in school. Parents also regularly seek clarification of the role of 'health' in the Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment process, particularly when they feel strongly that their child has an unmet health need.

The five most common reasons for a parent to call the service are:

- School placement – particularly around parents wishing to secure a special school place for their child

- Mental Health / Anxiety (including school refusal)
- Behaviours that can be described as challenging
- School support
- Getting a formal diagnosis for their child / understanding referrals routes and processes

Staff

There are currently two full time members of staff and one part-time young person's adviser. The service secured some funding as part of the IAS Programme (NCB), which paid for the young people's adviser until March 2021. Additional resources were secured from March 2021 to make the role permanent.

An Options Appraisal for additional funding was submitted to the Local Authority as the service has seen a significant increase in referrals year on year, but no increase in funding. From September 2022, the service will have the following structure:

- 1 full time Service Manager
- 1 full time Senior Adviser
- 1 25 hpw term time only Senior Adviser
- 2 x part time (18.5 hours per week) Support Advisers
- 2 x part time (18.5 hours per week) Young People's Advisers

Local Picture

Gloucestershire is a rural county with a population of 625,000. 181,688 of those are children and young people are aged 0 – 25 and approximately 86,000 are of statutory school age. There are currently 4,045 children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans and 11,872 children and young people are receiving some form of SEN support. The county has 246 primary schools, 40 secondary schools, 10 special schools, 5 Alternative Provision Settings, 30 independent schools, 3 further education colleges and 4 specialist Post 16 providers.

Regional Picture

The following table is taken from the National Information Advice and Support Service's (IAS) Data Report comparing data from 2019 to 2020 in which contributed to an overview of the range and nature of IAS services nationally. The report focused on funding arrangements and staffing levels in IAS services.

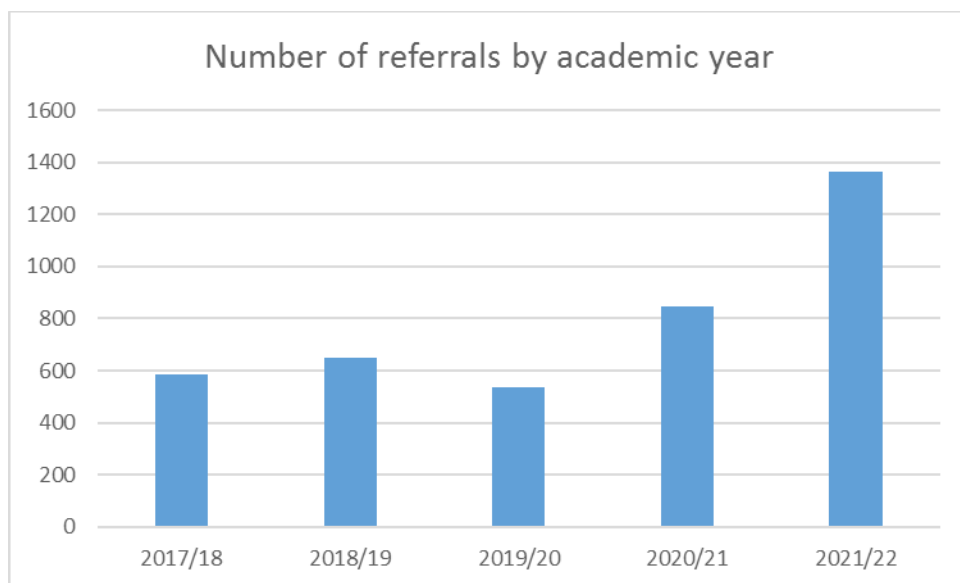
The report was published in order to support the work of IAS services and help all to see and understand both a regional and national picture.

This shows that in 2020 Gloucestershire was the third lowest funded service per head in the south west region.

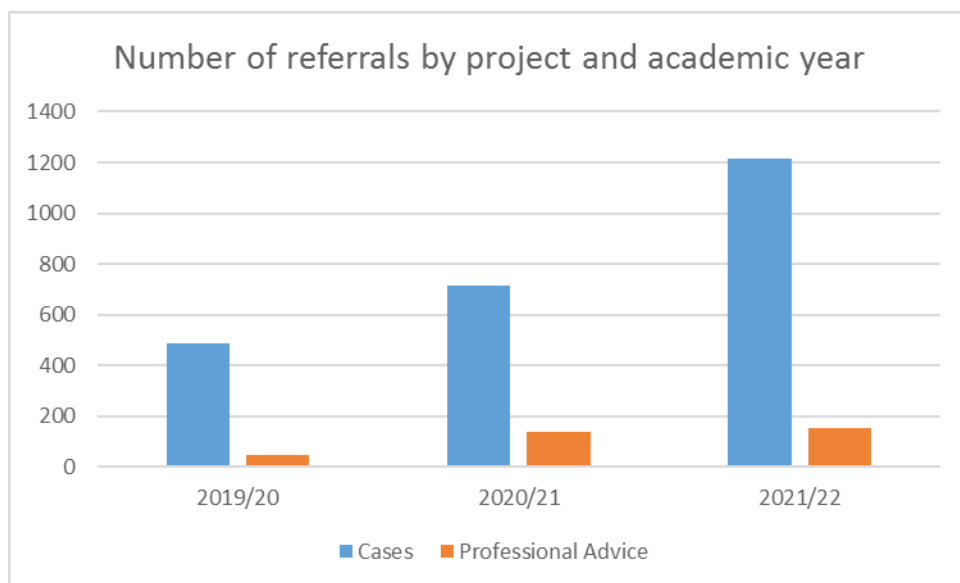
Local Authority	Pop 0-25	FTE staff to Pop-June 2020	IASS Apr 2019	IASS (total) June 2020	FTE June 2020	Vols June 2020	Heath and Social care input	Health only Input	Social Care only input	£ per head April 2019	£ per head June 2020	IASS % Diff April 2019-June 2020
Bath & N.E Somerset	67,101	18,384	91,321	169,800	3.65	5	Yes			1.36	2.53	186%
Bournemouth, Christchurch + Poole	116,310	21,945	160,500	176,200	5.30	0				N/A	1.51	
Bristol	167,035	50,161	54,716	141,200	3.33	2	Yes			0.33	0.85	258%
Cornwall (& Isle of Scilly)	156,643	87,024	85,667	58,600	1.80	1				0.55	0.37	
Devon	216,113	33,768	293,000	290,000	6.40	15				1.36	1.34	99%
Dorset	106,311	39,374	67,099	96,300	2.70	0				0.63	0.91	144%
Gloucestershire	181,688	90,844	97,000	97,000	2.00	0				0.53	0.53	100%
North Somerset	58,822	30,478	48,416	51,100	1.93	3	Yes			0.82	0.87	106%
Plymouth	88,532	14,755	246,095	277,012	6.00	0		Yes		2.78	3.13	113%
Somerset	153,188	16,436	107,800	335,100	9.32	1				0.70	2.19	311%
South Gloucestershire	85,837	44,941	54,050	55,000	1.91	2	Yes			0.63	0.64	102%
Swindon	68,293	42,683	63,000	61,000	1.60	1				0.92	0.89	97%
Torbay	35,911	17,956	45,000	50,000	2.00	2				1.25	1.39	111%
Wiltshire	143,910	79,950	59,209	58,302	1.80	0				0.41	0.41	98%
	113,738	42,353	93,741	128,865	4	2	4	1	0	0.82	1.39	148%

SENDIASS Data

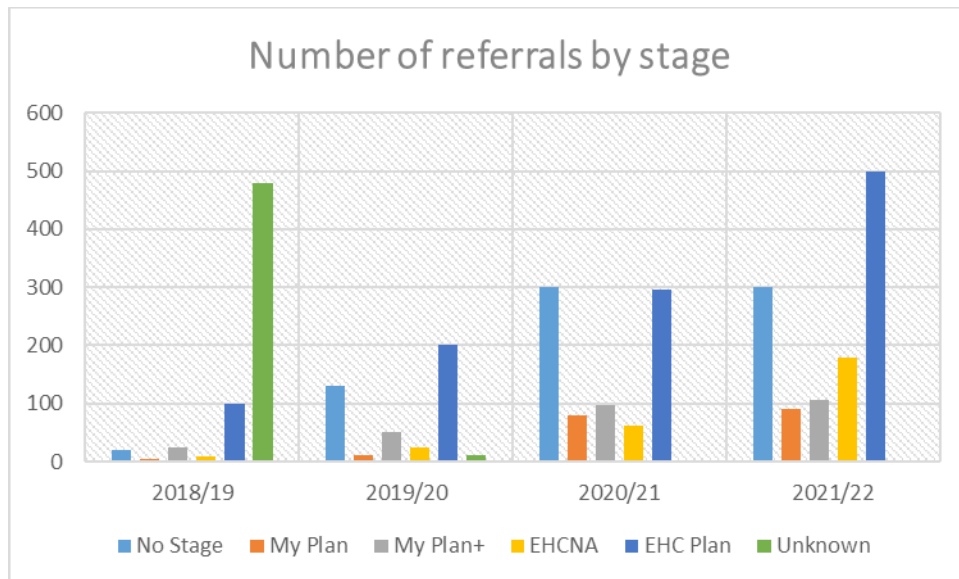
During the 2021/22 academic year, 1,366 referrals were received by SENDIASS Gloucestershire. As the figure below shows, this is an increase compared to the previous academic year when 849 referrals were received. This is the highest number of referrals received over the last five academic years and is over two and a half times the number of requests received in 2019/20.



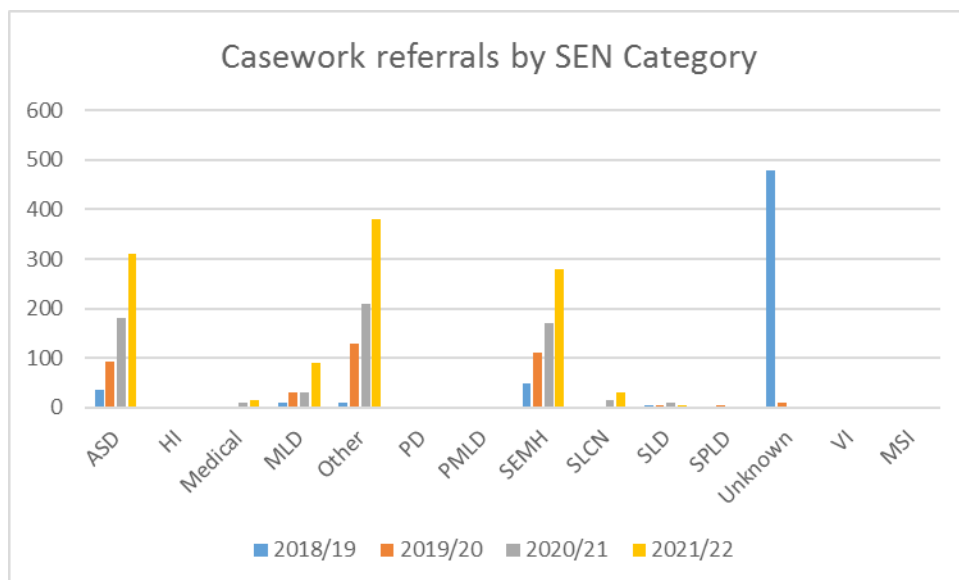
The following chart provides a breakdown of case work requests and professional advice requests. Please note that there is no way to capture SEN category on a professional record in Crossdata.



During the 2021/22 academic year, 42% of case work requests related to children and young people with an EHC plan. The number of requests for information for children who have an EHC Plan is in line with the increasing numbers of children and young people who have EHC Plans.

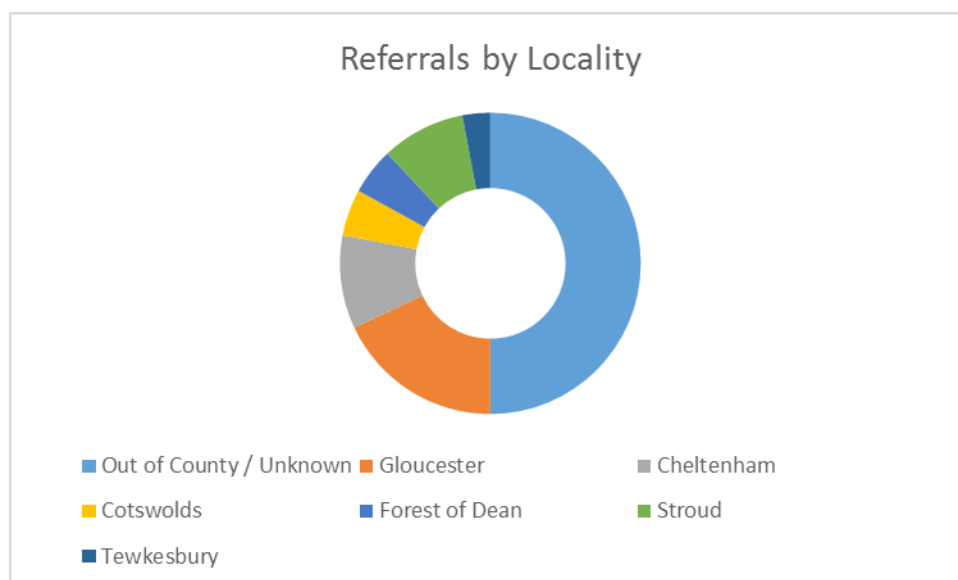


Of the case work referrals received during the 2021/22 academic year, 372 children (30.6%) were recorded as having a primary need of 'Other', whilst 314 (25.9%) had a need of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and 275 (22.7%) had Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.



The number of children identified as having ASD has more than trebled since 2019/20, when 93 children were recorded as having this need; the number of children identified as having SEMH has doubled since 2019/20 (123 to 275 in 2021/22).

During the 2021/22 academic year, where a district was recorded, the majority of case work referrals received were for children and young people residing in Gloucester (18%) followed by Cheltenham (10%). Over the last three academic years the highest number of referrals have been received for children and young people living in these two districts, followed by Stroud.



Advice & Support to Children & Young People:

SENDIASS provides information, advice and support to young people. There is also a dedicated section of the SENDIASS website specifically for young people. A large part of the face to face work is delivered through the Post 16 Adviser. This support includes, but is not limited to:

- Supporting young people to have their voice heard. The service has seen a significant increase in young people with SEMH needs requiring support post pandemic.
- 'SENDI CLINIC' a 'no name' drop in for SENCOS to get advice and support about processes to support a young person.
- 'SENDI CAST' – a podcast where a focus group of young people chat with the Post 16 Adviser about issues that arise.
- Working with schools and settings to relay the importance of gathering the young person's views, wishes and feelings.
- Supporting young people at their Annual Reviews, ensuring that their views are heard and appropriately recorded.

- Developing a positive working relationship with professionals who may be the first point of contact for young people – GP's, Health Visitors, Paediatricians, Nurseries, SENDCos as well as a range of teams who work within the Local Authority.
- Working with local sector and specialist colleges to identify young people that may require advice and support around 'next steps' so that they are aware that there are support services for young people outside of the college.
- Continuing to deliver 'Preparation for Adulthood' sessions with schools and settings to ensure Annual Reviews from Y10 onwards are thorough and capture the YP's views and wishes.

SENDIASS Steering Group:

The SENDIASS Steering Group meets three times a year and has an Independent Chair who is also a Committee Member of the Parent Carer Forum.

The Steering Group comprises of representatives from key stakeholders including statutory services (health, social care, and education), the voluntary sector and parent carers with children who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

Members can be selected to represent key stakeholder groups and are chosen by their ability to make an effective contribution and their willingness to be active in promoting the interests of SENDIASS Gloucestershire.

Service Promotion / Social Media:

SENDIASS welcomes opportunities to meet with a wide variety of parent carer networks and support groups to both promote the service and to reach communities that are seldom heard.

SENDIASS has a standalone website, a Facebook page and a Twitter Feed. The Post 16 SENDIASS service has a dedicated section of the website and its own Twitter Feed.

Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum:

SENDIASS has a positive working relationship with Gloucestershire's Parent Carer Forum. One of the PCF's Committee Members (and the person responsible for Parental Engagement) is the Chair of the SENDIASS Steering Group. We meet regularly to share intelligence and feed this back to the Local Authority in a number of ways, including through our Steering Group.

We have a reciprocal arrangement where we signpost parents to GPCF and they signpost parents to us, wherever and whenever appropriate.

Feedback from Service Users:

We ask for feedback from service users, with all advisers having a link to a 'Survey Monkey' survey on their email footers. Service users are asked to rank each comment on a scale of 1 (low score) to 5 (high score) for the following 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?

Whilst numbers of service users completing the survey are quite low, we get lots of anecdotal feedback and have received comments such as:

'It's been really nice to talk to someone who listens'

'Thank you so much. I can't tell you how reassuring it is to chat to someone in the know in this otherwise rather daunting time'.

'Thank you so much for helping us – it really is very much appreciated. It's so nice to be able to speak to someone who can explain what is happening'.

'Thank you so much for your call last week, it felt like therapy! You were so helpful, understanding and knowledgeable. Thank you for the advice and for the information in the email'.

'We can't thank you enough for your support through such a difficult time. Thank you'

We also have an 'exit survey' on our website, so that if there is any information missing or if parents would like to see information about a particular topic or subject, they are able to communicate that to us.