

How to directly reach children and young people

Written by the IASSN Children and Young People's Steering Group

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Introduction

Special Educational Needs and/ or Disability Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASSs) must and should be working to directly reach children and young people to inform them of their service and their rights to access it with support or independently.

They should do this for best practice reasons. It is also in the [code of practice](#):

2.10 The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to provide children with information, advice and support relating to their SEN or disability. Many children will access information, advice and support via their parents. However, some children, especially older children and those in custody, may want to access information, advice and support separately from their parents, and local authorities must ensure this is possible.

And the [minimum standards](#):

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.

This resource, written by the IASSN children and young people's steering group, aims to support and inform on some steps SENDIAS services can take to facilitate this.

Going to where young people are

The members of the Children and Young People's steering group wanted to first highlight the importance of reaching children and young people by going to where children and young people are.

What this looks like:

- Delivering short presentations in schools, youth groups, clubs about what is a SENDIAS service and how it can be accessed.
- Having an information stand at events such as information events or coffee mornings.

What you should consider:

- Focus on what you do and can do. Practical examples can help.
- Keep your information and presentation accessible.
- Find that balance of being informal but not patronising.

Benefits:

- Children and young people will be more comfortable in surroundings they know.
- Children and young people will appreciate the effort and will be more likely to believe that this is something for them.
- It also has the added benefit of building or improving links with the settings you attend such as schools, youth services, or other services.

Challenges:

- It can be time intensive. However improved relationships with children, young people, parents and settings can also save time.
- Building links can be a challenge.

Social Media

The IASSN children and young people's steering group wanted to highlight the use of social media to reach children and young people.

What this looks like:

- Choosing which Social Media platforms to utilise in consultation with children and young people and considering your local policies.
- Creating a social media strategy that should include:
 - What you post and when.
 - Scheduling posts to save you time and capacity.
 - Policies such as how to manage negative activity on your social media.
 - 'Pinning' content such as who we are and how to contact us so these stay visible.

What you should consider:

- Accessibility – you need to carefully consider how to make sure your content is accessible.
- Professional boundaries- you need to make sure you have a policy in place regarding this and ensuring any interactions stay professional.
- What you post. Some examples the group highlighted were:
 - What support children and young people can access.
 - What their rights are.
 - How you can get in contact.
 - What a SENDIASs does.
 - That CYP have a right to access SENDIASs directly.

Benefits:

- Social media gives you the ability to reach and share information with a number of people quickly and easily.
- A social media presence also will link you in with other organisations, parents' groups and other services.

Challenges:

- You need a robust policy and strategy in place. However, once this is, social media can be a convenient and powerful tool.

Posters/ leaflets/ business cards

The group highlighted that they felt physical materials can be a way to increase the reach of your service to children and young people.

What this looks like:

- Co-creating posters and leaflets advertising your service, what you do and how to contact you.
- Ensuring that these are displayed where children and young people will be- such as schools, colleges, youth services, other LA services and more.

What you should consider:

- Accessibility. Keep the designs simple and follow accessibility guidelines.
- Include links to further information such as your social media channels, website and contact details.
- Make use of '[link trees](#)'.

Benefits:

- Less time intensive than presentations.
- Can distribute them far and wide.

Challenges:

- Keeping on top of ensuring information is up to date.
- Printing costs.
- Ensuring someone with the right skills and understanding is able to lead on the design and the co-development of the resources.

Websites

The group highlighted that your website can be a useful way of reaching more children and young people.

What this looks like:

- All SENDIAS services should have a website. It's important to consider that this can be a route to informing children and young people on your service and how this can be accessed.
- The group preferred information being all in one place rather than the creation of a 'young people's' section of the website. If services had this then the group suggested re-branding this section as an 'easy read' section for anyone who preferred easy read information.

What you should consider:

- Accessibility. Keep the designs simple and follow accessibility guidelines.
- Make sure your website is also mobile friendly (i.e. it can work on a phone as well as a desktop).

Benefits:

- Websites can be accessed at any time easily and conveniently.
- You can have a lot of information able to be delivered in a variety of ways such as audio, video and text.

Challenges:

- You need to be able to direct people to your website. This can be done following the guidelines above by using physical materials and social media including at in-person events.
- Keeping on top of ensuring information is up to date.