

Information Advice and Support Service's Network: Training Report 2025-2026

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Introduction

The IASSN team

As part of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) it is a legal requirement that all local authorities ensure children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities ([SEND](#)) and their parents have access to an impartial [Information, Advice and Support \(IAS\) service](#).

The IASSN are funded by the Department for Education ([DfE](#)) to support this. We do this by:

- Working with the [SENDIAS](#) services to ensure they have the resources and training to provide high quality information, advice and support to children, young people and parents in their area.
- Listening to, and working with, SENDIAS services to understand their challenges and successes in order to feedback to the [DfE](#) to implement positive and necessary change.
- Working with SENDIAS services and other stakeholders to develop and promote the [Standards](#) for SENDIAS services.

This report

This national 2025-26 report, required as part of the DfE contract, considers a key measure we use when assessing the national picture of SENDIAS services: staff training. All reports can be found on our [website](#).

Training: legal

This year we partnered with IPSEA to deliver legal training, commissioning them to deliver three levels of legal training for SENDIAS service staff as well as refresher sessions for those staff who need to update their legal knowledge. The aim of the IPSEA legal training is to give attendees an entry level understanding of all areas of SEND law, and to enable them to apply this knowledge when carrying out practical work advising and supporting children, young people and parent/carers. The IPSEA levels are split into an online component and a face-to-face component. The main the learning content is provided by the online component and the face-to-face component is intended as a top-up to this.

Online IPSEA legal training

The numbers accessing the online component of the training were as follows:

Level	Number completed
Level One	85
Level Two	81
Level Three	84
Total	250

Face-to-face IPSEA legal training

The number of face-to-face sessions and attendees for each of the three IPSEA levels were as follows:

Level	Number of sessions	Number of attendees
Level One	4	73
Level Two	4	84
Level Three	4	87
Refresher	4	84
Total	16	328

100% of managers who completed the annual survey reported that they had at least one member of staff trained to IPSEA Level Two. 99% of managers reported they had at least one member of staff trained to IPSEA Level Three.

In addition to this, 75% of managers who completed the survey reported that all members of staff in their team were trained to IPSEA Level 2 and 69% reported that all members of staff in their team were trained to IPSEA Level 3.

IPSEA short courses and webinars

We also commission IPSEA to deliver a series of interactive short courses and webinars on an annual basis. These activities provide SENDIAS service staff with focussed, expert guidance to support them with key aspects of their work. Engagement with these were as follows:

Topic	Number completed
Addressing non-implementation of special educational provision	65
Ceasing to maintain an EHC plan:	44
Exclusion from school	57
IPSEA Level 3 - Challenging decisions – alternative routes of redress	22
Obtaining EHC plans	50
Understanding home to early years setting, school or college transport: short course v.1	32
Understanding home to early years setting, school or college transport: short course v.2	18
What an EHC plan should contain: short course v.1	57
Total	345

Training: SENDIAS service specific

In addition to legal training, we have continued to deliver training sessions on a variety of other topics specifically tailored to the needs of SENDIAS services. These sessions are chosen and commissioned based on feedback we receive from SENDIAS services via our annual staff survey, our online forums and through our attendance at regional meetings.

Training title	Number of sessions	Number of attendees
EOTAS Policy Briefing Webinar	3	84
Helpline Communication Skills and Vicarious Trauma	3	43
SEND Tribunal training	7	226
Staying Well While Supporting Others	4	224
Total	17	577

Training: other

We are sometimes approached by training providers who offer us sessions for services which are free of charge. These sessions may not be SENDIAS specific but if we think they cover areas which pertain broadly to service work and which may be useful to service staff then we will agree to host them. This year we have hosted trainings on safeguarding in relation to illegal money lending and sessions on children and young people's experiences of racism.

Training title	Number of sessions	Number of attendees
How to Spot a Loan Shark safeguarding training	5	102
Children and Young People's Voices on Racism training	6	104
Total	11	206

Training feedback

We continue to send evaluation forms to all attendees of the training sessions we run. This year the feedback across all our training sessions was as follows:

Question	% Agree/ Strongly agree	% Satisfactory	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
This activity was relevant to my job	97%	3%	0%	0%
I'd recommend this to my colleagues	93%	7%	0%	0%
This activity improved my knowledge	92%	7%	1%	0%
This activity improved my confidence	83%	15%	2%	0%
This activity improved my skills	84%	15%	1%	0%
Average	90%	9.4%	0.6%	0%

We feel that an average of 90% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that the trainings we provide are useful is positive and meets our target of 85% or above. When asked in our annual survey if attendees were satisfied with the training package provided, 68%, reported they were satisfied or very satisfied. The reason for this score is due to the limited nature of training spaces due to our budgetary capacity. With more funding, we could increase the number of training sessions and thereby widen access to a larger numbers of SENDIAS service staff. A representative sample of feedback on all of our training sessions is as follows:

- *There was a good balance between presentation and practical application (and enough breaks to rest eyes and stretch legs). I enjoyed getting the case studies prior to the training so that I could read and digest the paper work and consider the questions prior to the session. The small break out rooms of 5 were a good size- small enough to feel comfortable enough to join a discussion whilst being large enough to hear different opinions and views. I have come away with a more practical understanding of tribunals and of the IASS role in relation to it as well as with some practical tools such as the templates letters.*
- *I felt the training was positive and would help officers to gain better understand if new to the tribunal process, they were some really good information within the training in key points to consider.*
- *The training had a good pace to it and an excellent mix of delivering and discussions in smaller groups. Each discussion had a focus which helped to structure the smaller group conversations.*

- *I found all of the training really useful and interesting. I have already started to implement some of the practical ideas from the training into my work practice. I have other colleagues and friends who work for the LA who asked where could they access this training.*
- *The EOTAS policy briefing provided a clear overview of the statutory framework and local implementation practices surrounding alternative education provision. It effectively highlighted the legal duties under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, ensuring that children unable to attend school receive suitable education.*

The main concern expressed by respondents to the survey was access to training places:

- *More courses on anything, would be good to run more workshops as it sold out very quick which to me shows that there is a demand.*

We continue to work with services to make them aware that in some instances, training will need to be attended by a single representative from each service and that this representative will need to cascade their learning to the rest of their staff teams. As we are a small team, we do rely on services taking responsibility for considering other services when they sign up to training.

Workshops and other sessions

We have also run additional other sessions and workshops over the year, to support the work of SENDIAS services. These are as follows:

Title	Number of sessions	Number of attendees
IASSN Regional Workshops: The White Paper and SENDIASs going forward	5	334
IASSN SENDIAS service new staff national induction sessions	3	69
IASSN Information and resources refresher sessions	3	112
SENDIOG meetings	3	n/a
Children and Young People's Steering Group	7	n/a
Total	19	515

During February and March 2026 IASSN delivered a series of four in-person workshops and one online version of these workshops. The locations of these workshops were chosen to ensure accessibility for services from all of the English regions. Workshops were thus held in London, Birmingham, Manchester and York. The overall aim of the workshops was to provide services with a detailed briefing on the content of the new [Education White Paper](#) which was published in February of this year and to support them in preparing for the changes to the SEND system which the paper outlines. Between seventy and ninety places were allocated for each workshop depending on venue capacity. Initially, a two-attendee per service limit was placed on the workshops to ensure fair and equal access and representation for each service.

The structure of the workshops was twofold. The first half of each workshop consisted of a detailed presentation of the key aspects of the White Paper as it pertains to the SEND system. This was delivered by the Department for Education's (DfE) Strategic Advisor on SEND, Dame Christine Lenehan. This session was followed by a SENDIAS-specific presentation on the White Paper, delivered by Council for Disabled Children's Assistant Director, Daisy Russell. IASSN's Tom Quilter, Jai Crookshank and Luke Evason-Browning then delivered an update on IASSN's work and key data metrics from the last financial year.

The second half of each workshop consisted of a session entitled "Staying Well While Supporting Others" facilitated by Kiltti and Authentic Responses. This was a reflective practice session to help SENDIAS service staff consider how they could look after themselves and continue to support others whilst managing change.

The workshops were successfully delivered to 334 SENDIAS service staff in total. The following feedback was collected from attendees:

Question	% Agree/ Strongly agree	% Satisfactory	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree
This activity was relevant to my job	97%	3%	0%	0%
I'd recommend this to my colleagues	92%	6%	1%	1%
This activity improved my knowledge	87%	11%	1%	0%
This activity improved my confidence	76%	17%	6%	1%
Average	88%	9.5%	2%	0.5%

E-training

We continue to offer our own online training courses which can be accessed through the Council for Disabled Children's (CDC) online learning platform. This training was developed specifically for SENDIAS service staff but is open to all. This year we transferred our online courses to a new, more advanced platform which has provided enhanced functionality and user experience. When asked in our annual survey, 61% of those that responded stated that they have accessed online training through CDC's online training platform.

Engagement with our e-training was as follows:

Title	Number completed
Introduction to mental health	159
Introduction to social care	60
Care Education and Treatment Reviews (CETR) and Dynamic Support Registers (DSRs)	96
Total	315

Conclusions

The feedback received from services in regard to our training package continues to be positive with the clear majority of attendees and respondents indicating that the training provided was relevant as well as improving their skills, knowledge and confidence. We will continue to work closely with services to monitor their operational and strategic needs and to tailor our training package accordingly in order to meet these needs.

Looking ahead, respondents to our annual survey expressed needing further training in a number of key areas. There was a particular interest expressed for training in education other than in/at a school (EOTIS/EOTAS) and emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA), tribunals, and exclusions. Respondents also expressed wanting to have further input in regard to the reforms proposed by the White Paper as these progress. Finally, respondents mentioned wanting continued training being offered into relation to helpline management skills and vicarious trauma. These are areas that may want to be considered and prioritised for further training which is provided in future.