



## Liverpool & Knowsley SENDIASS: A blended model of virtual and face-to-face service offer

Liverpool & Knowsley SEND IASS has operated a mixed working from office/working from home model during the pandemic. The service now has a digital offer of virtual meeting attendance and facilitating webinars/information sessions. This way of working will continue, in addition to the service face-to-face offer, when the pandemic has ended.

Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Skype for video conferencing have all been established. A small laptop was purchased and an internet dongle, that is made available for families if they have issues accessing technology for important meetings such as tribunals.

In addition to attendance at virtual meetings such as; annual reviews, mediation, tribunal, team around the family, and exclusions, the service attends strategic meetings virtually including; SEND Partnership Board, SEND Support group, EHC Quality Assurance group and SEND youth voice.

The service has facilitated webinars to Liverpool & Knowsley parents on various aspects of the SEND system, and how to exercise their rights. It has also facilitated webinars for school/college/early years professionals on "Making Sense of SEND Law" to help explain duties and legal processes around requesting an EHC needs assessment and issuing a plan. Professionals fed back that this session was useful and should be rolled out more widely including to all new SENCO's. A similar webinar for early help and social care professionals will be available in the coming months.

### The difference made

Parents have fed back that the virtual coffee sessions have been valuable, and have enabled them to stay connected. It has been easier and more cost effective to facilitate evening webinars for working parents virtually instead of face-to-face. This has meant the service reach during the pandemic has been greater than if working face-to-face.

A virtual offer also means a reduction in travel time for staff, making it easier to attend virtual meetings than face-to-face meetings. Although there are families for who virtual working does not meet their needs, there are other families who prefer this way of working and find it easier to juggle appointments.

Liverpool and Knowsley SEND IASS will continue to offer a blended model of virtual and face-to-face service delivery, to enable it to meet the needs of as many families as possible.

### Contact details

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