

Information Advice and Support Service Network

SEND Tribunal overview for 2024-25

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The SEND Tribunal and SENDIAS services- an overview

Supporting children, young people and families 'when things go wrong' including before, during and after a SEND Tribunal, is a statutory part of the role of SENDIAS services as detailed in **chapter 2.19** of the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

This document explores the data regarding SENDIAS services and the SEND Tribunal.

Table A- Casework/ Interventions and Tribunal per SENDIAS services since 2021

	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Increase 23-24	% Increase since collecting data (2019)
Average helpline enquires	1291	1610	1836	1959	7%	192%
Average casework/ intervention numbers	724	1015	1212	1572	29%	351%
Average number of SEND Tribunal's SENDIAS services gave information/ advice/ (level one- three) support regarding	40	64	73	91	24%	128%
Average number of SEND Tribunals SENDIAS services directly supported/ represented parents and/ or children and young people at (level four)	4	11	11	12	9%	200%

In 2024, there were a total of 21,106 SEND Tribunals. The following table explores what percentage of those SEND Tribunals SENDIAS services were involved in

Table B: Percentage of Tribunals SENDIAS services supported with

	2024/25 service average	National Totals	Percentage of all Tribunals (21106)
SEND Tribunal's SENDIAS services gave information/ advice/ (level one- three) support regarding	91	13741 out of 21106 Tribunals	65%
SEND Tribunals SENDIAS services directly supported/ represented parents and/ or children and young people at (level four)	12	1812 out of 21106 Tribunals	9%

Table C explore this same measure since 2021

Table C: Tribunals and SENDIAS services since 2021

	2021	% 2021	2022	% 2022	2023	% 2023	2024	% 2024
SEND Tribunal's SENDIAS services gave information/ advice/ (level one- three) support regarding	6040 out of 9184	66%	9664 out of 12796	76%	11023 out of 15615	70%	13741 out of 21106	65%
SEND Tribunals SENDIAS services directly supported/ represented parents and/ or children and young people at (level four)	604 out of 9184	7%	1650 out of 12796	13%	1661 out of 15615	10%	1812 out of 21106	9%

The percentage of SEND Tribunals that SENDIAS services both inputted to and supported at has stayed steady with a range of 65% to 76% and 7% to 13% respectively. This suggests that the number of SEND Tribunals services are inputting into and supporting at is rising at a similar rate to the overall number of Tribunals.

Tribunal avoidance – the cost

Services also report on the interventions that they believe result in a reduction in the need for Tribunals. Whilst it is difficult to put an exact figure on this, we asked services how many tribunals they estimate they've helped avoid in the previous twelve months. On average, the number given was 48 which is five more than last year's figure of 43.

Last year, services may have helped avoid 7248 Tribunals, saving children, young people, families and the SEND system resource, capacity, time, stress and helping foster more positive relationships.

In 2016, the Department for Education commissioned CEDAR to look into SEND dispute resolution agreements. CEDAR published [their report](#) in March 2017. They concluded that the average cost of a Tribunal was estimated to cost local authorities between £3500- £11000 per case. The Guardian recently [did their own analysis](#) for 2024 and concluded that the average cost of a SEND Tribunal to local authorities is £8500.

Based on the evidence in the CEDAR report we can estimate that last year, SENDIAS services saved local authorities between £25,368,000 - £79,728,000 on Tribunal avoidance alone. Taking the Guardians' more recent analysis, SENDIAS services have saved local authorities £61,600,000 a year.

The total cost of all SENDIAS service budgets combined in 2024-25 was £24,226,806. Considering this data SENDIAS services save local authorities approximately 2.5 times the amount these services cost.

Tribunal avoidance- key themes

As part of their reporting, we asked SENDIAS services to give more detail on how their work supporting early resolution helped avoid Tribunals. We took the replies from the 125 services who completed that question and identified themes.

The themes identified were:

- **Evidence Gathering and Case Preparation:** supporting parents/carers with evidence gathering and the presentation of that evidence resulting in lawful and informed decisions being made earlier.
- **Informal mediation and communication support:** this includes advice and facilitation support to informally mediate with parents/carers, children and young people, schools and local authorities resulting in dispute resolution before the need for Tribunal.
- **Mediation support:** formal mediation support by attending mediation sessions and providing information advice and support during the process
- **Unspecified mediation support:** mention of Mediation but no clarity as to whether this was formal or informal Mediation
- **General guidance and support on SEN systems:** advice on SEN support and SEN thresholds, EHCP guidance, [Level 1 and 2 interventions](#) to ensure rights and responsibilities understood before the need for Tribunal.
- **Consent Order support:**
- **Legal guidance:** to ensure rights and responsibilities understood before the need for Tribunal.

The table below provides data on the number of SENDIAS services who identified each theme as key to early dispute resolution .

Table D: Tribunal avoidance- thematic data

Themes	No. of services that included theme in their response	% (on 125)
Informal mediation and communication support	64	51.2%
Formal mediation support	48	38.4%
General guidance and support on SEN systems	34	27.2%
Evidence Gathering & Case Preparation	19	15.2%
Legal Guidance	8	6.4%
Consent Order support	4	3.2%
Unspecified mediation support	3	2.4%
Unspecified/ categorical data	3	2.4%

