

SEND Information Advice and Support Service's and Ofsted/CQC 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: Ofsted reporting.

This report is one of four key reports providing a national picture of SENDIAS services. The others are our Data Report, the Minimum Standards Benchmarking report and our Service User Feedback Report.

All reports can be found on our [website](#).

The Impact of Ofsted reporting

We monitor and write this report on Ofsted reporting for two key reasons:

1. The impartial reporting of Ofsted on SENDIAS services helps contribute towards the national picture of these services. This reporting, alongside the [service user feedback](#), [the data report](#) and [the minimum standards report](#), contributes towards an overall picture of SENDIAS services including, challenges, successes and possible future directions.
2. Through our reporting we can evidence the positive impact a SENDIAS service has on children, young people, families and professionals when it has the funding and capacity to meet its responsibilities. We can also evidence that a properly funded service saves local authorities time, resource and money by making sure things are done right the first time around, which benefits the sector as a whole.

Ofsted reporting can lead to positive change. There have been examples where Ofsted have reported on a service as being hugely well valued but lacking the capacity to meet the needs of their population. This has resulted in more funding for the service to build capacity in order to meet the needs of their local population. We will continue to work with all partners to ensure that SENDIAS services continue to be considered and reflected upon within Ofsted reporting. In addition, we continue to support SENDIAS services to use this reporting in order to evidence their work and impact.

Ofsted reporting and SENDIASs

Of SENDIAS service mentions, we divided the comments into four categories for ease of reference: where the comments were almost entirely positive; where the comments contained reasonably equal numbers of positives and challenges; where the comments were not positive; and where there was no mention at all.

Table A: Ofsted

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
SENDIAS service reported positively only by Ofsted	21-60%	13-72%	8-57%	16-47%	2058%	1257%
SENDIAS service reported by Ofsted as being seen to be positive by service users, but significant areas of improvement needed	5-14%	3-17%	2-14%	39%	13%	314%
Reported by Ofsted as needing to improve to meet standards/duties	26%	0-0%	0-0%	00%	0-0%	00%
No mention of SENDIAS service in Ofsted report	220%	2-11%	4-29%	1544%	1339%	628%
Total	35-100%	18-100%	14-100%	34100%	34100%	21100%

Qualitative analysis of feedback

Themes from Ofsted Report:

Positives

Themes	Number of reports mentioned	Percentage
High quality/highly valued information, advice and support	5	28%
Positive relationships with parent/carers	4	22%
Collaborative working/coproduction	2	11%
Well known/regarded	2	11%
Supporting professionals and parent/carers to understand the law	1	6%
Joint commissioning has happened recently and had an impact	1	6%

Challenges

Theme	Number of reports mentioned	Percentage
Increasing demand on SENDIAS services that are nearing or at capacity	3	17%
Joint commissioning not in place	2	11%
LAs not involving SENDIAS services as well as they could	1	6%

Conclusion

It is positive to note an increase in Ofsted reports mentioning SENDIAS services compared to last year. We will continue to work with our colleagues to improve on this as we understand the power of SENDIAS services receiving mentions in Ofsted inspection reports.

In terms of positive themes for SENDIAS services, Ofsted reports have particularly highlighted the quality of the advice and support given and the collaboration, coproduction and positive relationships services had with parent/carers.

It is important to note that any challenges relating to SENDIAS services mentioned in Ofsted reporting, are all in relation to funding, commissioning and capacity. There is not a single negative mention or challenge raised in an Ofsted reporting otherwise.

This year's report further highlights the vital role of SENDIAS services in improving relationships between parent/carers and services within local areas, including the building and improving of trust. However, it also highlights the need for better funding, further work around joint commissioning and the need for improved capacity.

Appendix One: Quotes from Ofsted

Examples of negative only mentions of services

N/A

Examples of services seen as positive by service users but some areas of improvement needed

'Referrals to Lincolnshire's Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service, called Liaise, have grown significantly. However, the capacity of the service has not increased. As a result, the service is limiting face-to face support.'

'Families can access Buckinghamshire's SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS). However, the partnership recognises that issues around funding mean there is insufficient capacity within the service. This means that some parents do not get the support they need.'

The SENDIASS service in Buckinghamshire is not currently jointly funded by all multi-agency partners. This is despite evidence of the service experiencing a growing number of requests for support across education, health and social care. This restricts the service's ability to meet the needs of families as effectively as they would hope to. Leaders have immediate plans to address these concerns, recognising the importance of supporting this service for families.'

The local area partnership should further develop the SENDIASS offer. This should include joint funding with health to ensure children and young people with SEND, and their families, get the right guidance and support at the right time.'

'Although there are areas where improvements in commissioning across the partnership have been made, the lack of formal systems and processes for the commissioning of some services mean there is a risk of improvements not being sustained. For example, the effectiveness of the SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS) is currently commissioned solely by the local authority rather than it being jointly commissioned across the partnership.'

Examples of services reported only positively

'The SEND information, advice and support service is well established.'

'Whenever possible, dedicated practitioners take time to build positive working relationships with children and young people with SEND and their parents. For example, the SEND information, advice and support service team members are committed to offering support and signposting to parents and carers.'

'The SEND information, advice and support service is well known and highly regarded.'

'While some parents and carers are concerned about the support in place for their children, those who are accessing Slough's SEND information, advice and support service highly value its support. More families are now benefiting from this service because it has recently become more stable with a full complement of knowledgeable staff.'

'The SEND information, advice and support service provides impactful, tailored support to families. Despite rising demand and case complexity, they help children and young people with SEND and their families to navigate the SEND system.'

'(SENDIASS), SENDiass4BCP, help embed a collective, representative voice in strategic planning and operational delivery.'

'The SEND Information, Advice and Support Service offers valuable support to children and young people with SEND, as well as their families. Practitioners have carefully shaped the service to ensure that it is both easy to access and offers extensive support.'