



Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS

Sustainability Plan 2021

Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS (Special Education Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service) is a statutory service under the Children and Families Act 2014 that provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support for parents, carers, children and young people (up to the age of 25 years) in relation to special educational needs and disability.

We are an in-house service which operates at arms-length from the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Group. We adhere to national minimal standards which promote a high quality, independent service.

Central Bedfordshire Local Authority provides core funding to support the basic operations and development of the service to comply with the national minimum standards. The service delivery has been enhanced by support through the Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP) delivered by the Nation Children's Bureau. This programme provides external funding to support the implementation of a task order which facilitates service development and reach. The programme is a short-term provision; this together with the increasing demand on the service is directing the need to develop a sustainability plan. We hope this sustainability plan will ensure the continued provision of a high-quality service which is compliant but also contributes to the development of an outstanding SEND Local Offer, which supports children and young people with SEND in Central Bedfordshire to thrive.

Role of SENDIASS:

As outlined in the SEND code of Practice 2015 the following support is expected to be provided:

- a) Signposting to alternative and additional sources of advice, information and support that may be available locally or nationally
- b) Individual casework and representation for those that need it including:
 - Support attending meetings, contributing to assessments and reviews, and participating in decisions about outcomes for the child or young person
 - Signposting to other services relating to preparing for adulthood, housing support, careers advice and employment support
- c) Help when things go wrong including:
 - Attending early disagreement resolution meetings
 - Supporting mediation, appeals to first tier tribunals, exclusions and complaints on matters relating to SEN and disability
 - Raising awareness of LA services for resolving disagreements and for mediation and on the routes of appeal and complaint on matters related to SEN and disability.
- d) Provision of advice through individual casework and through work with parent carer support groups, local SEN youth forums or disability groups or training events.

Value of SENDIASS and impact on the local community

The SENDIASS aim is to provide high-quality information, advice and support that: -

- Supports children and Young people with SEND and their families to feel confident in understanding their rights and responsibilities or duties under legislation relating to SEND including the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 and the Care Act 2014.
- supports the informed participation and choices of parents, children and young people in decision-making relating to their education.
- Supports parents, children and young people to have their views heard; including in situations they may find particularly challenging or inhibitive such as SEND tribunals; Care, Education and Treatment reviews and school or Local authority panels.
- Promotes partnership working with education, health and social care practitioners, in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- Signposts parents/carers, children and young people to information/events and support from other services and external organisations.

We hope that by meeting our aims above we will support children and young people with SEND to experience a pathway to adulthood that provides equal opportunity and where they feel supported, valued and respected by the team around them. Our service directly supports and feeds into the overarching principles and outcomes that underpin the Central Bedfordshire SEND vision and Strategy: -

Principles: -

- Co-production working with parents/carers and young people to be a responsive service
- Early intervention and high aspirations for all children and young people
- Preparing for adulthood

Outcomes: -

- children and young people, and their parents and carers will feel engaged in informing decisions about their support and the strategic commissioning of services
- children and young people and their parents and carers will be involved in the process of assessing their needs
- children and young people, and their parents or carers, will be clear about the identification and assessment processes and the criteria used to make decisions
- we will know our strengths and weaknesses, and what we need to do further to improve the feedback from parents and carers and young people and their contribution to strategic planning
- children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities will be identified early
- we will be effective in accurately assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- we will collectively improve outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- all local agencies and bodies will plan and coordinate their work to assess need and provide necessary and effective support

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/15/special_educational_needs_and_disability_-_local_offer/134/about_the_local_offer/2

The remit of SENDIASS also supports the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young people’s plan 2018-2021 which, among other things places emphasis on the voice of children, young people and their families.

(https://www.centralbedfordshirechildrenstrust.org.uk/assets/1/cypp_final.pdf)

Expected demand on SENDIASS

Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS is experiencing a year-on-year increase in the number of service users contacting the service (table 1), which is following a national trend of increasing numbers of students receiving SEN support and EHC Plans (table 2).

Academic year	Number of new referrals
2017/2018	285
2018/2019	436
2019/2020	551

Table 1- number of referrals to SENDIASS in an academic year

	% EHCP/Statements of SEN	% SEN support
January 2020	3.3	12.1
January 2019	3.1	11.9
January 2018	2.9	11.7
January 2017	2.8	11.6

(Table 2: Data extracted from DfE: Statistics: special education needs (SEN) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-special-educational-needs-sen>)

We are aware of national and local events which are likely to have resulted in current increased demand and the wider remit of the service, which we feel will only contribute to the existing upward trend of demand.

A Local Area SEND Ofsted Inspection completed in 2019 resulted in a written statement of action. We feel the impact of this and the subsequent increase in public awareness has undoubtedly contributed to the increase in demand on SENDIASS. We understand that an improved SEND Local offer will result in families feeling satisfied in the support and decisions being made. We hope that, as the Written statement of Action is implemented, the SEND journey experienced by families will increasingly follow a positive pathway of best practice and legislative implementation, resulting in

less referrals due to complaints against services or settings. The written statement of action is to be implemented over 2 years with further time before its full impact can be evaluated, so it is unlikely that we would see any resulting drop in demand on the service quickly.

Furthermore, the written statement of action in itself is bringing in new workflows and initiatives which also impact on the capacity of the service. For example, structured feedback mechanisms to the LA and an increased co-production on a strategic level through to service and individual case level is placing a demand on Officer time.

We are aware that some of the referrals into the service are related to coronavirus pandemic, lock down and the move to remote learning in 2020/2021 which are impacting students in a variety of ways. Families have immediate concerns around how this is impacting children and young people with SEND, and the full cost of the pandemic on SEND is yet to be analysed. However, given national media coverage, we feel it is likely to result in an increasing level of need which in turn impacts on SEND, education, health and care services.

Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS (CBSENDIASS) Activity currently supported through IASP:

Theme	Area of focus	Developed in funding period -What has been developed under IASP funding	Sustained activity-continuing needs and actions required
<i>Resilience</i>	<i>Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS provides high quality, flexible support through a range of strategies to meet the need within the local area.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Staff/volunteer handbook • Development of staff/volunteer supervision and Professional development structure • Provision of equipment for volunteers • Development of process instructions • Development of initial contact form • Development of feedback structure • Development of ladder outcomes system • Development and implementation of public training programme • Training video recordings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing CPD and supervision of Staff and volunteers – protected SENDIASS Manager and Officer time allocation for adequate implementation • Protected SENDIASS officer Time allowance to ensure knowledge of local activity is current e.g. events offer, service offers, WSOA activities impacting on SEND • Protected SENDIASS officer time to engage in local and national events re wider context of SEND

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued provision and maintenance of equipment for volunteers – confirmed agreement with LA on quantity written into SLA Implementation of feedback structure – protected SENDIASS Manager time allocation to send out and analyse/feedback on quarterly basis and ad hoc when canvassing on needs led basis. Continued development and delivery of training programme to meet the needs of the service users – protected SENDIASS officer time allocation for development and delivery of training and resources Seeking feedback from service users on training needs/desires. Continued production of video/resources – SENDIASS officer time allocation
Accessibility	Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS supports a broad range of service users which reflects the demographic of the local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website development and ongoing maintenance Email domain separate to LA Use of social media platforms Creation of service leaflet/poster Creation of service videos Translated service leaflet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued maintenance and updating of website – continued financing of FNS web design for maintenance Continued use of social media platforms

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piggy back onto the drop in/events of other services e.g. children's centres and Early Help service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued translation provision. – ad hoc basis in response to need • Continued attendance at drop ins and, coffee mornings etc. – SENDIASS officer time allocation
<i>Voice of the Child and Young person</i>	<i>Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS promotes the voice of young people and supports children and young people to confidently participate in discussions regarding their needs and future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of CBSEDNIASS to CYP, schools/colleges and youth focused services • Participation in CYP forum • Engagement with YP directly • Development of YP specific training/workshops and videos • Development of YP specific service video • Modification to commonly used service leaflets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued direct work with YP to increase the number of YP accessing the service – retention of Youth Engagement (YE) officer • Continued networking and liaison with regional forums/IAS services – retention of YE officer/allocated time • Continued delivery of CYP training/workshops – retention of YE officer role to develop and deliver
Strategic development	Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS engages in joined up working with partners to extend the reach of the high-quality Service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to other IAS services to share good practice information • Collaborative work with other IAS services • Collaborative work with other LA and CCG services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing working relationships with other IAS services for collaborative working etc protected SENDIASS Manager time allocation to maintain contacts, attend meetings etc • Ongoing collaborative work with LA and CCG- protected SENDIASS Manager/Officer time allocation to maintain contacts, attend meetings etc

Core SENDIASS activities which also need to be sustained:

Activity	Justification	Potential needs/actions
Providing accurate, high quality, confidential and unbiased Information, advice and support to individuals	Statutory duty under CAF 2014.	Continued provision of the service to include support at 4 interventions levels by experienced and trained SENDIASS officers
Providing the appropriate intervention level of support	Adherence to Minimum standards. Capacity of the service to enable high level of support (levels 3/4) to be implemented when needed and not when capacity allows. Supports empowerment of individual	Ongoing monitoring of the demand on the service against capacity through service user feedback and data collection; with regard to response times and ability to attend meetings, ladder outcomes etc.
Responding to contacts within response time targets.	Responding to needs of the service users Maintaining a service that is able to respond quickly when service users are working to tight timescales or emotionally elevated. Provides early intervention and supports prevention of escalation	
Compliance with minimum standards	Part of the IASP; the standards were drawn up by a group of IASS managers, parents, LA reps and the chair of the IASP board, in consultation with the DfE. They are based on the law, the SEND Code and the IASS Quality Standards (which they now supersede)	Joint commission with LA and CCG
Representation and management through dispute resolution, mediations and SEND tribunal processes	Working with families and SEND services in a solution focused approach to reduce escalation of situations and reach an agreed way forward	Analysis of SENDIASS data/LA data to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention in preventing escalation of the situation through the number of service or school complaints, ombudsman complaints, appeals lodged etc
Working with Central Bedfordshire SEND services to identify areas of need within the Local Authority	Reflects the voice of the Child/Young person and their families.	Engagement with mechanisms being developed through the WSOA and additional development work by the

	Supports development of high-quality SEN provision which meets needs. Improves the SEN journey for families	LA to feedback needs/gaps/trends
Engaging with independent organisations such as SNAP PCF, SEND Partnership board	Supporting the Child/Young person and their families voice in SEND at a strategic level.	Attendance and participation in group meetings
Participating in sub-groups of the Written statement of action and ongoing development of SEND service and local offer in Central Bedfordshire	Support the LA to achieve WSOA and improve SEND local offer and services as recognised through Ofsted inspection.	Attendance and participation in meetings
Reporting through governance structure	Supports confidence in a service which is unbiased and arms-length. Supports development of a high-quality service which meets the needs of the public.	Quarterly reporting to LA and Steering group Ongoing supervision managed by the LA Attendance at Steering group meetings Embedding of the voice of the Young person in the steering group. Development of the steering group to ensure it reflects appropriate cross section of roles/experience

Resources:

	Current resources	Resources required	Potential Deficit
Cash	£3000 approx.	£3000 approx.	Currently ongoing commitments are met within existing resources
Staff	0.8FT equivalent IAS manager 0.6FT equivalent Senior IAS officer (currently FT due to grant top up)	0.8FT equivalent IAS manager FT Senior IAS officer FT CYP officer (currently grant funded on Fixed term contract of 18 months) 0.5FT Business support	0.4FT Senior officer FT CYP officer 0.5FT business support FT CYP officer
Training Requirements	IPSEA training levels 1, 2 and 3 for all staff IPSEA training levels 1 and 2 for volunteers. Time for Staff to complete all IPSEA	IPSEA training levels 1, 2 and 3 for all staff IPSEA training levels 1 and 2 for volunteers. Time for Staff to complete all IPSEA and LA mandatory training. Volunteers access to mandatory LA training	Volunteer access to mandatory training

	and LA mandatory training.	Allocation of time to complete	
Technology	Laptops and mobile phones for 3 Staff and 3 volunteers (5 agreed by LA in principal). Staff with main building access passes for staff and volunteers	Laptops and mobile phones for 3 Staff and 3 volunteers (5 agreed by LA in principle)	Replacement of equipment as needed
Space	Staff have a flexible approach with a mixture of remote working from home and hot desk in offices. Volunteers work from home with access to office space if needed on an ad hoc basis	Staff have a flexible approach with a mixture of remote working from home and hot desk in offices. Volunteers work from home with access to office space if needed on an ad hoc basis	zero

Sustainability strategies

CB SENDIASS is supported by three experienced volunteers with a fourth currently being inducted. Once this is completed, we will look to recruit a fifth. It is currently agreed that the maximum number of volunteers is five. All volunteers are provided with basic equipment to enable them to work remotely whilst maintaining confidentiality and adherence to GDPR Policies.

In order to maintain this resource and contribute to the sustainability of the service, the volunteers must have adequate training and ongoing supervision. With the creation of a staff handbook and supervision structure we have started to embed this. This now needs to be developed to ensure; - there is thorough assessment of their training needs on an ongoing basis, that they are confident with the use of data recording systems and workflows, that they are reliably updated on new information to ensure their support remains current, and that we are seek ongoing substantial feedback from our service users.

Currently volunteers take on discrete pieces of support work. Modifying the role to include ongoing casework management would support the capacity of the SENDIASS officers, however this will need a higher level of managerial supervision than currently in place.

CB SENDIASS will continue to look for and create opportunities for collaborative working with other IAS services, LA/BCCG Services and independent organisations within the local area.

Through the IASP we have begun developing more effective work practices and resources which support efficient use of our time e.g., new initial contact forms, work flow instructions, single social media management app, independent website, video training resources, piggy back on other service drop ins etc. We will continue to monitor

and review the effectiveness and efficiency of our activities and time management through termly RAG review against our action plan.

Financial strategies: -

SENDIASS has approached the Local Authority to request additional funding to support an increase in staff hours in order to facilitate the actions described above. The Local Authority have expressed a keen desire to support SENDIASS and are considering this request, we anticipate a response within the next couple of weeks.

Through the youth engagement role an action plan is being implemented which aims to increase the reach of the service to young people. This will be achieved through a combination of increased advertising through social media and existing channels, joint working with other youth services, individual casework, developing a presence in post 16 settings and whole setting initiatives and development of workshops and resources targeted to young people. Successful implementation will support compliance with minimum standards, Ofsted recommendations as well as supporting the voice of young people within Central Bedfordshire.

The Youth Engagement role is a fixed term contract currently supported through external funding. Whilst many of the outcomes are discrete actions, individual casework, workshop delivery and maintaining network links are currently being supported through the Youth Engagement role. This represents a significant area of the service which could be at risk and where long-term integration into the service needs to be considered.

Feedback from individuals, settings and through ladder outcomes will be gathered over the next 6 months in order to monitor the impact of support and demonstrate the value to SENDIASS and the Central Bedfordshire community. A business case will then be presented to Central Bedfordshire Local authority to seek a permanent position within the SENDIASS structure.

CBSENDIASS, Central Bedfordshire LA and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning group (CCG) are looking to agree a jointly commissioned service. All parties are keen to contribute and complete this agreement however, as health services are pan Bedfordshire (Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Authorities), the CCG would prefer to commission a joint arrangement with both IAS services; this is making joint commissioning more complex. However, we are confident that we will reach an agreement within the next couple of months which will result in provision to support the development and sustainability of the service. Potentially this will promote increased collaborative work and sharing of resources between two IAS services which will support the sustainability of both.

The Information Advice and Support Programme is expected to announce a further round of contract tied grant funding for the year 2021/2022. CBSENDIASS hopes to be successful in applying for the grant with a new contract that will include initiatives to support the continued resilience and sustainability of the service.

CBSENDIASS will continue to explore other external funding opportunities, particularly where targeted to supporting organisations and initiatives designed to support children and young people.

Current/Potential partners:

Central Bedfordshire Local Authority

Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

IASP

Regional IAS services

SNAP Parent Carer Forum

Other services/organisations in the Local Area