

As part of our sustainability planning, we have undertaken a SWOT analysis; below are the results:

Strengths

- As a statutory service with excellent links to families & professionals in health, education, & social care services, Solihull SENDIAS is valued by service users, the Local Authority (LA) and professional colleagues, as confirmed by ongoing feedback, both formal and anecdotal.
- We are part of the wider IAS network with regional & national networks which link into CDC & DfE.
- Easily accessible, based in Solihull, with car parking & good transport links. We have an accessibility policy which aims to meet the access needs of service users & are not located in a building identifiable as LA.
- We are well known by families & services alike. We have a good reputation, with a high level of trust from service users & an extensive network of professionals who confidently recommend us to families.
- We are Impartial and our service users know this, particularly as we are commissioned outside of the LA, so we are seen by families as not influenced by the LA. Being impartial also assists in developing positive relationships with other professionals involved with families and supports a better 3 way dialogue.
- Person Centred Approach – we put children and young people (CYP) at the centre of our work.
- Expert knowledge across health, education and social care, in regard to local processes & legal requirements.
- Well trained staff with in depth knowledge of law, local processes and support services to refer families to.
- Staff are skilled at supporting and empowering families, with a focus on dispute resolution/ mediation skills, our solution focus approach helps to reduce escalation of issues to the benefit of all involved.
- Up to date knowledge; IAS services feed into national and local consultations regarding change & we support families to be involved in coproduction. Our local knowledge is valued by schools, evident by the number of SENCO's contacting our services.
- Our involvement in strategic boards/ work streams helps to identify gaps in service provision, families & CYP contribute to SEND developments across health, education and social care. Our position allows us to raise strategic issues & enables us to feedback the views of parents & CYP, nurturing a culture of continuous improvement.

- We have established links to a large number of existing support networks, community groups & the Parent Carer Forum which strengthens the trust of future self-referring families & YP, and assists in overcoming initial stigma, language & cultural barriers.
- Well connected to Council for Disabled Children, NCB, Contact & other leading SEND groups.

Weaknesses

- Insufficient capacity to deal with the level of demand for the service, and scope/complexity of support and advice required.
- Case work is largely reactive & not proactive due to capacity issues.
- Not as empowering as we would like to be; once involved with families there can be some difficulty detaching and closing, as parents/ YP's expectations are of continuous service provision.
- We haven't promoted ourselves and our skills enough – more networking at all levels is needed.
- Our professionalism is not always recognised, and our level of expertise is not always acknowledged by professionals & the emotional & practical support our interventions bring to families is not always valued by other services.
- Training & keeping up to date can be both time consuming and expensive
- Training and building the capacity of volunteers can also be time consuming; volunteers, once trained, quickly leave for employment. Training volunteers (& new staff) is particularly difficult during COVID-19). We need to look at how best to attract the right staff & volunteers to the service.

Opportunities

- Develop volunteering e.g. parent befrienders to offer families long-term practical and emotional support, going into communities and promoting the service; these can be a good way of reaching out to diverse communities.
- Young people – recruit YP as volunteers to be buddies for SEND YP to help YP access information, attend meetings & college open days etc. YP peer support can help develop the service remit for YP & can support at transitions, independent living skills, overcoming barriers to access mainstream activities and increased inclusion.
- Aspiration & transition support for young people, helping YP develop & articulate aspirations & consider transition opportunities.
- Development of events to extend reach and make information and support more accessible e.g. SEND events, workshops around School Support,

EHC assessments, specific diagnoses, developing confidence (Getting Your Voice Heard), mental health issues for YP

- Further develop professional networks by doing regular presentations about the work of the service e.g. schools, support services, voluntary groups & offering drop ins for professionals
- Embracing new ways of working – joint commissioning & joint working opportunities
- Skilling local workforce –offering specific sessions to local services on SEND Law & legal processes. Creating better links with local colleges where students welcome the opportunity to volunteer as part of their course remit

Threats

- We are receiving more and more complex IASSN Level 3 and 4 cases, which threatens to stretch our capacity even further.
- As we are at capacity, we operate a waiting list and unfortunately not all families get the support they need as quickly as we'd like.
- We are unlikely to be able to maintain current levels of attendance at meetings both with families & at a strategic level.
- Lack of capacity within the service to develop social media to engage YP via You tube, TikTok
- Loss of trained staff and volunteers – new staff & volunteers need a lot of training & a certain aptitude to be able to work within IAS effectively.
- More independent SEND Information services have set themselves up to meet demand, but are often adversarial & charge families extortionate fees for limited knowledge & poor service.
- Bidding for and securing further funds, in order to increase service capacity can be time consuming & difficult to deliver. Expanding the remit & diversifying the SENDIAS service may lose the IAS element & weaken its place as statutory IAS in the community. Too much diversification could move services away from the core remit.
- Projects which depend on volunteers rely upon quality of volunteers, and the number of volunteers is not always stable – volunteers are hard to train and get up to a certain level of knowledge before they can actively support families. Strong SEND knowledge and needed skills take considerable time to develop. Careful and well targeted recruitment of volunteers is needed otherwise their commitment can be very variable.
- Duplication from other SEND charities & third sector organisations, and the potential for projects to be better resourced than through a SENDIAS service. Also, other charities are bidding for the same type of work.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

| Objective Outcome | Success during IASP | Sustainable planning | | |
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| | | Key tasks | What is achievable | Limitations without additional funding |
| Develop & deliver mediation & tribunal workshops for families | Workshop material & information leaflets developed & delivered to parents online (due to COVID) | Continue to deliver mediation & tribunal workshops as identified by number of initial enquiries & cases coming to service. | Delivering mediation & tribunal workshops will remain part of our offer to families. Mediation & tribunal information leaflets will be shared on our webpage & as necessary with families. | Workshops will be delivered on a rota basis alongside our current workshops, but less frequently than currently. |
| Develop & deliver transition pathway events for families | Virtual Q&A sessions hosted for parents with key LA staff to address transition & COVID questions & concerns. Use of online focus group to identify key transition issues & concerns for families, with involvement of LA SEND team to address difficulties raised. | Further online 'focus' group sessions around key stage & return to school (post COVID) transitions. Post COVID host 'Transition' multi agency events – 1 stop shop for families. | We will host Multi agency events including around key stage transitions, providing we can find funding for venues or source free venues. | An online Transition focus group will not be possible. |
| Improve social media to better engage with young people | Online survey of CYP re their social media preferences identified You Tube & TikTok as most used by CYP, after asking their parents. Training for staff to develop social media resources. Information leaflets created for CYP covering a variety of themes, including school | Create more resources for CYP to engage & inform CYP regarding SEND including Information leaflets & short videos for social media | Currently developed video resources will remain available on YouTube. Current leaflets for YP will be available on our YP webpage & will be shared with CYP & their families as necessary. | The creation of additional resources will not be possible. |

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| | <p>Transport, EHC process, What is SEND.</p> <p>YouTube video created to identify what 'Inclusion' can look like.</p> | | | |
| <p>Enable YP to share their thoughts & inputs on decision making around inclusion.</p> | <p>Advertisements on 'what does Inclusion mean to you' created & sent out to families & shared on social media asking CYP to participate.</p> <p>Collation of what CYP think 'Inclusion' looks like being collated, ready to be drafted into a short video clip.</p> | <p>Create opportunities for CYP to share their views with the LA, CCG & SEND services.</p> | <p>The CYP video on 'Inclusion' will continue to be available to share.</p> | <p>The development of further projects of this type or project work with CYP will not be possible.</p> |