



# Dorset SENDIASS

Annual Report  
1st April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

**31<sup>st</sup> March 2026**

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## Introduction

Dorset SENDIASS is a free, confidential and impartial service for children, young people and parents/carers requiring information, advice and support about SEND.

The aims of the SENDIAS Service:

- Provide a high quality, impartial, accurate and confidential service, which is at arm's length to the LA
- Provide advice relating to the relevant legislative frameworks by IPSEA trained members of staff
- Ensure that service users understand their rights, roles and responsibilities
- Empower children, young people and parents/carers to take an informed and active part in decision-making in order to pursue desired outcomes
- Contribute to partnership working with providers of education, alternative provision, training, supported employment, health and social care
- Ensure service users' views are heard and understood
- Influence the future shaping of services for users through strategic partnerships and links

On 1st February 2022, Family Action, a charity delivering a wide range of family support services nationally, was contracted by Dorset Council to take over the delivery of Dorset's SENDIAS Service in order to ensure that an impartial, compliant and effective service is provided.

## Staffing and Teamwork (KPI 1 – MS 1.2; 1.4; 2.1; 4.1; 4.3. KPI 3)

At the end of this financial year in March 2026, we had 4 Case Officers (part-time contracts - one 0.8, two 0.6, one 0.4), 1 Project Manager (0.8) and an Operational Manager (0.2) in post. The Triage and Information Officer (part-time, fixed term for one year 0.4) started in April 2025, but left in January 2026 following promotion to a Case Officer role in another LA SENDIAS Service contracted to Family Action in the South. Recruitment to the TIO post commenced in May 2026.

The SENDIAS Service team focus remains service delivery and response times for initial enquiries, while staffing capacity has been addressed through the recruitment process and induction and training up of new starters. The Project Manager manages the team to ensure cases are only opened if Level 3 work and above is required. Cases are closed at the earliest opportunity when it is safe to do so, in collaboration with Dorset Council SEND Services Managers and Provision Leads. As part of this, parent/carer and other agency professionals' expectations are being managed to ensure understanding of the SENDIAS Service's remit, outcomes achieved and how re-referral can be made for further input as and when required.

All staff have completed the initial mandatory Family Action training and are trained in IPSEA Level 1, 2 and 3 (Independent Provider of Special Education Advice) legal modules where relevant for their roles; these have been completed by attending the IPSEA webinars, including refresher courses.

Each staff member has an ongoing cycle of monthly case audits which are graded according to Family Action's evaluation criteria. These are undertaken by the Project Manager and conducted within the context of individual supervision sessions with the member of staff and case overview discussion of all active cases worked on by the Case Officer. Fortnightly Team Meetings and termly face to face Team Days provide an opportunity for casework reflection and best practice training. Dip sampling of Initial Enquiries using a Level 1 / 2 audit tool is also conducted and the Operational Manager audits the Project Manager's case work and audit quality. This promotes good practice and enables all elements of service delivery to have quality and effective oversight, to allow for reflective learning, feedback and to promote a culture of continuous improvement. In January 2026, all staff completed the Family Action appraisal process. In between these times, there are team meetings, team briefings and peer support sessions. The team work remotely, meeting together on a bi-monthly basis in-person at Dorset County Hall, and maintain open and fluid conversations around case challenges, working positively together to maintain an efficient and creative outcomes-led service.

## Overview and Operational Matters (KPI 1 – MS 3.1; 3.4; 3.5)

### Initial Enquiries (Intervention Levels 1 & 2) & Casework (Levels 3 & 4)

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, 1497 parents/carers or young people contacted our Service (1302 in the previous financial year) – an increase of 195.

If an enquiry is marked as 'Closed Successfully', there has been information, advice or signposting provided that has been accepted by the service user as meeting their needs. There were 816 Initial Enquiries closed successfully. Although this appears to be a decrease on the previous year (1227); the implementation of a new database Level 2 conversion system in July 2025 will have had an impact on the recording of Level 2 IE closures, which were initially recorded as 'Outcome Achieved' as if they were cases. This was resolved in October 2025 to revert back to the 'closed responded successfully' closure category. [Note that 623 IEs were converted to Case, which includes Level 2 IE conversions.]

All support given by the Case Officers is based on their IPSEA SEND Law Levels 1-3 training, knowledge of the SEND processes and experience of the Dorset County pathways. This support is accurate, impartial, confidential and at an arm's length as a service from Dorset Council.

The Service has a working model of advice at Levels 1 and 2 aimed at empowering service users to advocate for themselves, armed with the information and advice provided by the Service. Cases become active according to the Minimum Standards if support is required at intervention level 3 or 4: where a young person is accessing the service independently; cases are complex; or families need additional support (such as parents having learning needs or children and young people being in the care or youth justice system). This model successfully ensures consistent service delivery, reaching more service users in a timely manner and enabling enhanced outcomes.

### Safeguarding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Project Manager. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is the SW Operational Manager.

All staff are trained, and undertake refresher training as appropriate (within 3 years), in Safeguarding for Children and Adults Levels 2 and 3; Domestic Violence and Abuse Levels 2 and 3; and Bullying and Sexual Harassment e-learning by Family Action.

Cases during the financial year requiring a RAG rating of Red were as follows: Q1 – 2; Q2 – 1; Q3 – 2; Q4 – 2 = 7 total. Current cases with a RAG rating of Red (as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026) relate to Annual Review support for YP with high risk of self-harm and suicide; and a case open to Child Protection. SENDIASS Case Officers, with oversight from the Project Manager, work closely with Dorset Council SEND Service Managers/ Provision Leads and Children's and Adult Services (via the Learning and Belonging structure) to mitigate risks and support /empower young people and parents/carers through SEND processes.

Risk Assessments are conducted on opening of every case at Level 3 or 4 and, where risks exist, on Level 2 IEs. A rigorous review system and safe closure procedure is in place, whereby risks are monitored and

escalated/de-escalated through the RAG ratings throughout intervention, or each time the service receives new information which impacts the risk levels identified. Red risk assessments include cases where children are missing education; mental health crisis or escalation; or those that have been referred to social care, including cases involving children in care and children under a Child Protection order. Special alerts are placed on accounts to inform the team of crucial information, such as social care status, self-harm, suicidal ideation or attempts, high risk vulnerability, CME, gender identity and preferred pronouns, or parents needing support with learning, physical or mental health needs.

## Data Protection

All cases comply with Family Action's Data Protection Policy and there has been no breach of confidentiality at a level that requires reporting to the ICO.

During an Initial Enquiry at Level 2, staff gain service user's permission (parents/carers, or a child/young person) to hold and keep data on Inform, Family Action's case management system. Confidentiality and information sharing is discussed, after service users have read the Privacy Notice, which is signposted on our website, on the initial contact form and email response. The nature of consent is agreed and recorded on Inform. Consent, data handling, processing and retention processes are clearly detailed on all feedback survey forms and service users are asked to confirm that they have read and understood the Privacy Policy.

## Summary of Data

### INITIAL ENQUIRIES

Number of Initial Enquiries during 2025-26: 1497 (+195 from 2024-25 (1302):

Reason for contact	Number of Initial Enquiries
Assessment	17
Check-in/update	3
<b>Complaint</b>	54
Consent	0
<b>Education</b>	242
<b>EHC plan</b>	688
Exclusion	16
Feedback	0
Funding	12
Health Care	6
Mediation	0
Outreach	3
Preparation for Adulthood	5
Professional Consultation	2
Provision/placement	306
Service information requested	13
Signposting only	41
Social Care	6
Transition	0
<b>Tribunal</b>	75
Tasks	0
Unknown	8
<i>Total</i>	<i>1497</i>

- EHC Plan continues to be the main reason for enquiries, totalling 688. This has increased by 61 from 2024-25 (627).
- Provision/placement is the second highest reason for enquiry at 306. This is an increase of 65 since 2024-25 (241).
- Education is the third reason for enquiry at 242. In 2024-25 it was 198; an increase of 44.
- Tribunals as the subject of enquiry at 75 has increased by 7 from 68 in 2024-25.
- Data is largely consistent with 2024-25 with EHC Plans, Provision/Placement, Education and Tribunals as the top 4 main reasons for enquiry.

## Initial Enquiries by Locality and Reason:

Reason for contact	Chesil (Weymouth and Portland)	Dorchester	East Dorset	North Dorset	West Dorset	Purbeck	Unknown/Out of Area	Total
Assessment	1	3	4	4	1	1	3	17
Check-in/update	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Complaint	10	1	18	11	4	10	0	54
Consent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education	47	25	55	42	22	35	16	242
EHC plan	158	75	158	130	51	62	54	688
Exclusion	1	1	4	4	1	2	3	16
Feedback	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Funding	2	1	2	3	0	3	1	12
Health Care	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	6
Outreach	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Preparation for Adulthood	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	5
Professional Consultation	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Provision/placement	55	38	67	57	26	26	37	306
Service information requested	1	2	3	2	2	0	3	13
Signposting only	7	4	7	3	2	2	16	41
Social Care	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	6
Transition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tribunal	14	7	21	17	8	3	5	75
Tasks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	1	1	2	1	1	0	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>1497</b>

Note: Enquiries from the same service user may be received more than once as repeat initial enquiries. This strategy will influence totals, although not dramatically.

- The Annual Report 2024-25 showed East Dorset (24%) had the highest number of enquiries, with North Dorset next (19%) and then Chesil (16%).
- In 2025-26 East Dorset remains the locality with the highest number of enquiries (23%), with Chesil (Weymouth and Portland) next (20%) and then North Dorset (19%)
- Across all localities, EHC Plan is the main reason for enquiries, which reflects the overall trend in reasons.
- 'Out of Area'/'Unknown' (147) – accounts for Out of Area (where service users are signposted to the relevant SENDIAS service for their council area) and Not Disclosed by the service user. Of the Not Disclosed, these include mainly IEs at Level 1 where detailed data is not recorded.

## Breakdown of Reasons for Initial Enquiries:

### Provision/Placement:

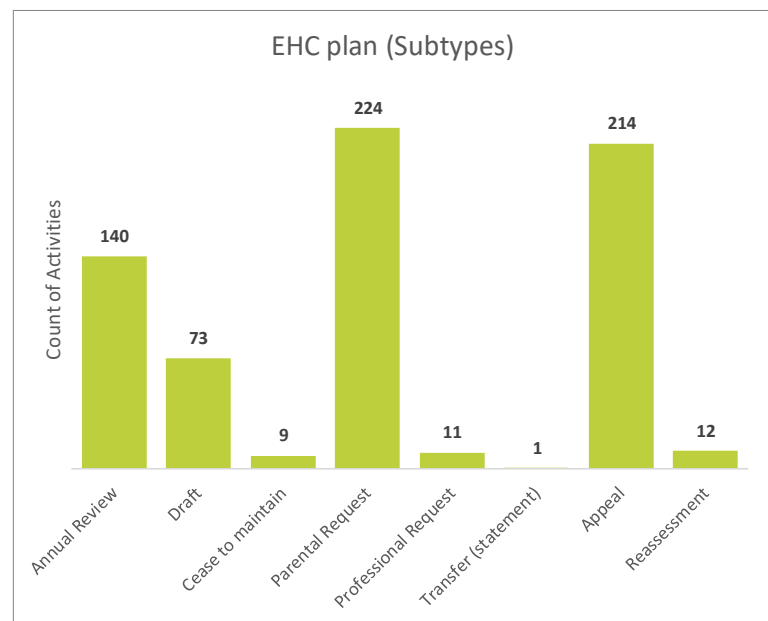
Provision/Placement does not have sub-categories on the Inform system and therefore breakdown of reasons cannot be provided. However, this over-arching category of reason for contact will cover enquiries where the CYP has an EHCP (and for these, the enquiry will relate to implementation of provision or how to request a change of placement, for example); and those where the CYP does not have an EHCP (where the enquiry will relate to SEN Support in school and the Graduated Approach). Whilst it will be recorded in the notes, there is no way of recording this currently on the Inform system under this category, for data download purposes.

## EHC Plan

### EHC plan

Subtype	Count of Activities
Annual Review	140
Draft	73
Cease to maintain	9
Parental Request	224
Professional Request	11
Transfer (statement)	1
Appeal	214
Reassessment	12
YP Request	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>684</b>

4



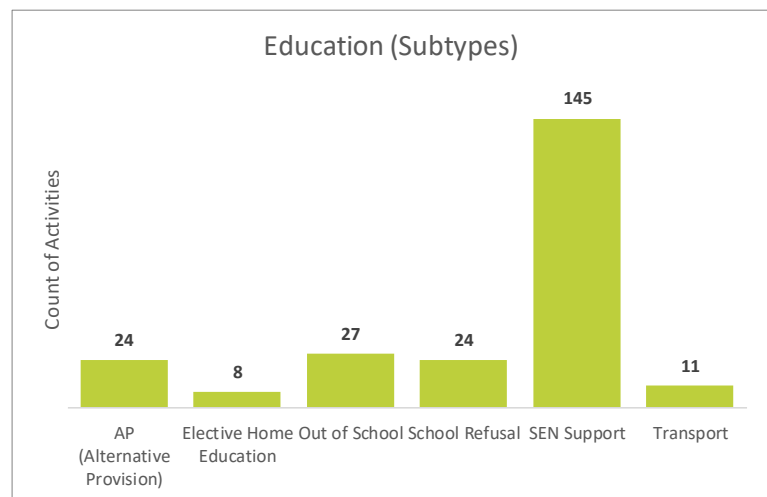
- Parental Request accounts for the majority (33%) of IEs relating to EHCPs, with Appeal (31%) the next highest subtype of reason for contact. [Note: the 4 missing sub-categories are where the service user has made a general enquiry about EHCPs]

## Education:

### Education

Subtype	Count of Activities
AP (Alternative Provision)	24
Elective Home Education	8
Out of School	27
School Refusal	24
SEN Support	145
Transport	11
Unknown	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>

0



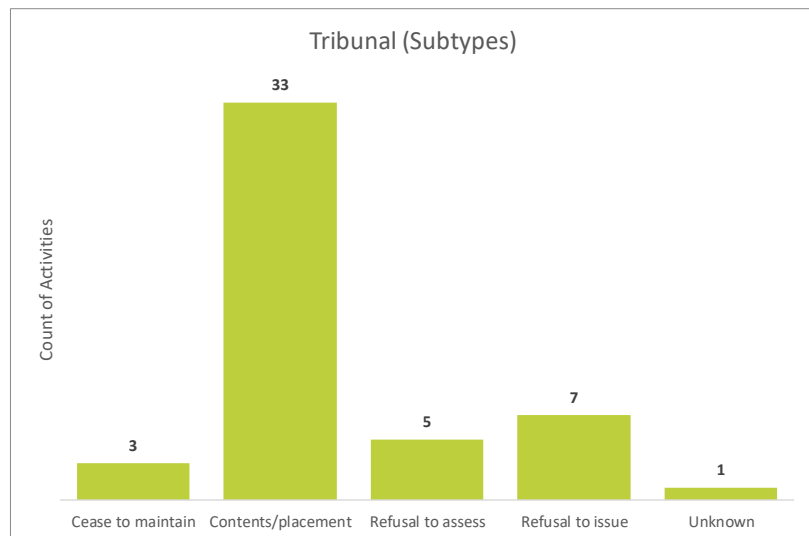
- SEN Support (60%), along with School Refusal and Out of School combined (21%), account for the majority of IEs relating to Education.
- There is a link between subcategories (SEN Support and Parental Requests), with many enquiries asking about ordinarily available provision and when an EHC Needs Assessment is triggered for the school or parent to submit an application.

## Tribunal:

### Tribunal

Subtype	Count of Activities
Cease to maintain	3
Contents/placement	33
Refusal to assess	5
Refusal to issue	7
Unknown	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>

26



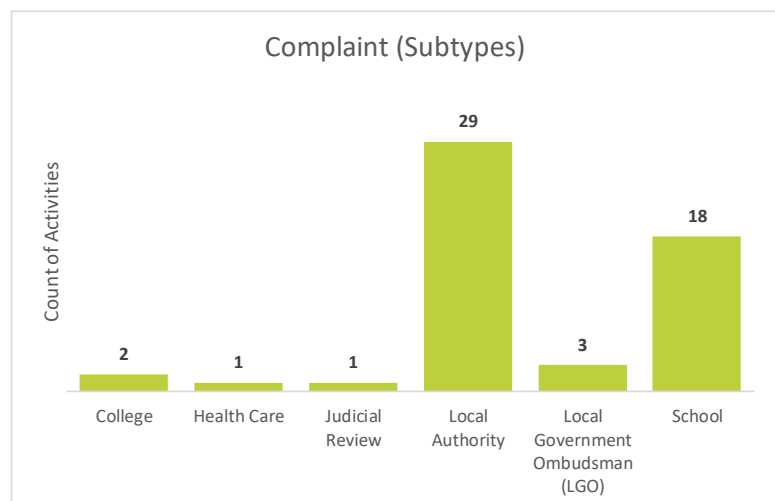
- The majority of enquiries within the Tribunals category relate to Contents/Placement Appeals of existing EHCPs (44%). Refusal to Assess (6%) and Refusal to Issue (9%) combined account for the next highest reasons for enquiry. [Note: the 26 missing sub-categories are where the service user has made a general enquiry about Tribunals.]

## Complaints:

### Complaint

Subtype	Count of Activities
College	2
Health Care	1
Judicial Review	1
Local Authority	29
Local Government Omb	3
School	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>

0



- There were 54 IEs relating to Complaints, (54%) in relation to the Local Authority and (33%) regarding Schools.

[Note: where the subtype is unknown, this will be due to enquiries at Level 1 where generic information is provided around processes, or the service user has not disclosed detail in their enquiry.]

## Initial Enquiries Response Times (KPI 1 – MS 1.3):

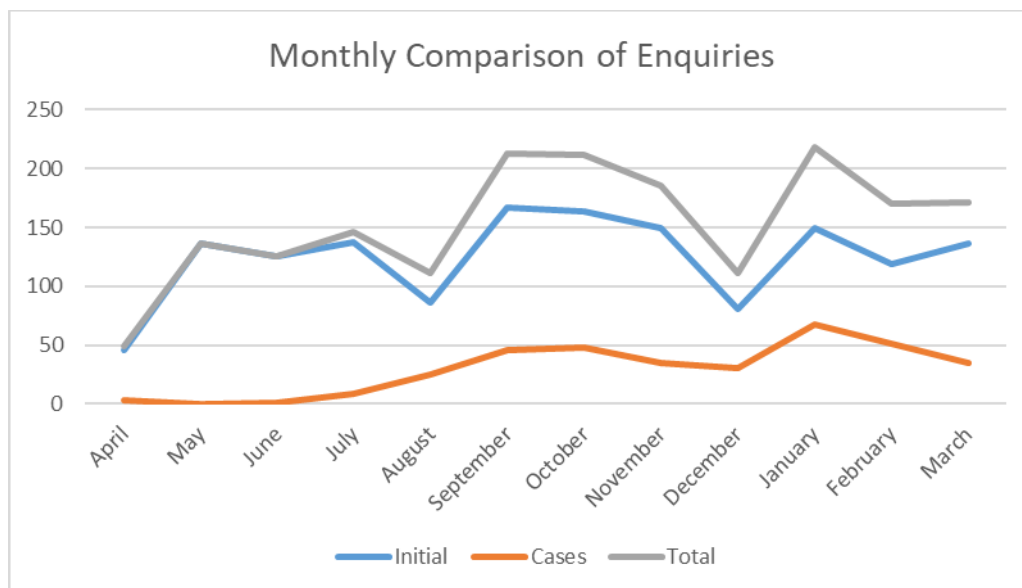
Response days (working days)	Number of Initial Enquiries	% (cumulative)	Target
2 days or less	467	31%	90%
3-5 days	536	67%	100%
6-9 days	407	94%	
More than 10 Days	87	100%	
Not yet responded	0	100%	
Incorrect Dates	0	100%	
<i>Total</i>	1497	-	

Response days (working days)	Number of Initial Enquiries	% (cumulative)	Target
0	176	12%	
1	156	22%	
2	135	31%	90%
3	156	42%	
4	145	51%	
5	235	67%	100%
6-9 days	407	94%	
More than 10 Days	87	100%	
Not yet responded	0	100%	
Incorrect Dates	0	100%	
<i>Total</i>	1497	-	

- 67% of enquiries were responded to within the target of 5 working days (66% in 2024-25).
- 31% of enquiries were responded to within 2 working days (30% in 2024-25).
- 94% of enquiries were responded to within 9 working days.

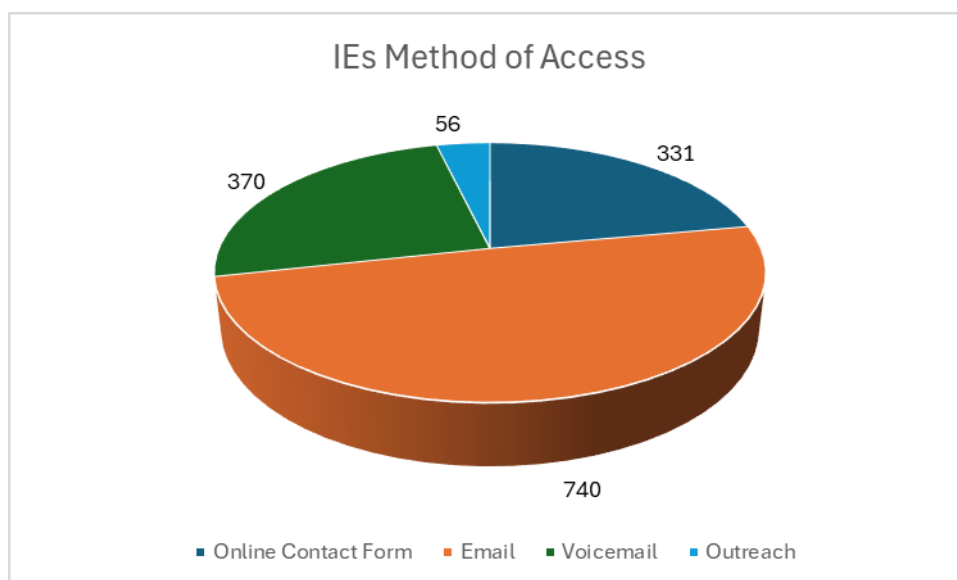
Service users are informed on receipt of their enquiry that we aim to respond within 5 working days, but that during busy periods this can be up to 10 working days. It is worth noting that the quality of information, advice and support provided has been maintained to a high standard, as evidenced by the appreciation communicated via feedback from our service users.

## Monthly Comparison of Enquiries Q1-Q4 2025-26:



The average number of enquiries per month from April 2025 to March 2026 is 125 (mean) (2024-25 109). Overall, Initial Enquiries have continued to increase throughout the financial year. We experienced significant peaks of enquiries during key SEND process periods across the academic year in September/October 2025 (167/164), when Annual Reviews for phase transfer are taking place and return to school issues arise; July 2025 (137), when service users' concerns are raised about transition to new schools the following September; and January 2026 (150), when anticipation of phase transfer EHCPs being issued by 15<sup>th</sup> February is at its height.

## Method of Enquiry (KPI 1 – MS 1.3):



Email remains the main method of enquiry, with phone call second and contact form third. The service remains accessible to all enquirers and therefore the reluctance of some to complete details in the online

form does not preclude them from accessing SENDIAS services. 56 enquiries this year came from Outreach work at the Let's Talk SEND events in October 2025 and the term time monthly Drop-Ins.

## Types of Service Users and Locality:

	Chesil (Weymouth and Portland)	Dorchester	East Dorset	North Dorset	West Dorset	Purbeck	Unknown/Out of Area	Total Cases
Parent/Carer	288	153	336	270	114	141	130	1432
Child/YP	3	1	3	0	0	1	3	11
Professional	11	8	7	7	4	3	14	54
Friend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neighbour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>1497</b>

- These 2025-26 figures are largely consistent with 2024-25, with 96% of service users being Parents/Carers (2024-25, 95%).
- The CYP Lead is dedicating time to direct work with young people who either self-refer into the service (11) or whose parents contact the service on their behalf and the CYP Lead follows up for young person's consent.
- There were 54 enquiries from professionals (an increase on 2024-25 at 38). These may be general enquiries for information, or referring a CYP into the service. In the latter situation, SENDIASS will then follow up with the CYP and parent/carer to gain their direct consent for involvement.

## Referral Origin

Referral Origin	Initial Enquiries
CAMHS	16
Early Help	13
Early Years	4
EP	2
Family Action	4
Friend/Family	58
GP	7
Health Assessment	0
Health Visitor	9
Local Authority	36
Local offer	3
Mediation	1
Nurse	5
Occupational therapy	2
Outreach	34
Pediatrician	4
Post-16	0
Previous User	724
SALT	0
School	61
Self	432
SEND Local Authority	5
SENDIAS	12
Social Care	15
Social Media	5
Social Prescriber	1
Specialist teaching service	1
Vol Org	9
Website	26
Youth Services	0
Not Recorded	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1497</b>

- Of the professional referrals (either direct referrals or where the service user tells us that they were directed to our service by a professional), 3% were recorded as from a health professional (16 CAMHS, 7 GP, 9 Health Visitor, 5 Nurse, 2 OT, 4 Paediatrician, 1 Social Prescriber).
- 48% of enquiries are from service users coming back who have previously used the service, reflecting the nature of support by SENDIASS to empower service users to seek advice at each stage of SEND processes, act on that advice and then return to check in to move their situation forward.
- 28 enquiries were received due to a social care referral.
- Schools/Early Years settings accounted for 4% of referrals.
- Website and social media account for 2% of referrals.
- Outreach accounted for 2% of referrals.

## Initial Enquiries Total & Activity for Cases worked on by Locality during 2025-26:

	Initial Enquiries	Chesil (Weymouth and Portland)	Dorchester	East Dorset	North Dorset	West Dorset	Purbeck	Total Cases
Active	1497	84	47	101	96	39	47	414

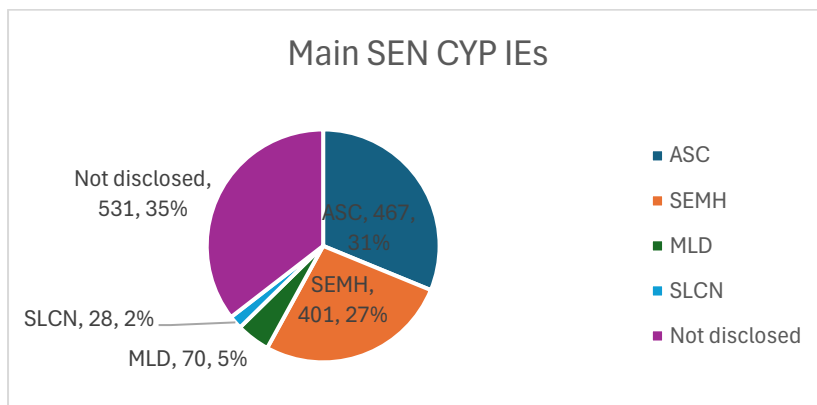
The number of cases with activities worked on in 2025-26 (414) has increased significantly since 2024-25 (36). However, it should be noted that this data now reflects Level 2 IE conversions and Level 3 & 4 cases with the introduction of the new Level 2 conversion system in July 2025. This new conversion to Level 2 system provides evidence of the increasing volume and complexity of enquiries.

## Enquiry Outcomes: Closures and Case Conversions during 2025-26:

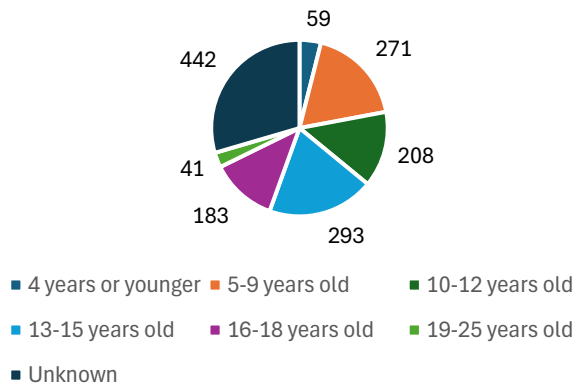
Enquiry Status	Number of Initial Enquiries
Closed - made 3 or more attempts to respond	53
Closed - responded successfully	816
Closed - no availability for meeting	5
Converted to case	623
Received	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>1497</i>

The number of IEs converted to case in 2025-26 is significantly higher (623) compared to 2024-25 (18); again, this is due to the new Level 2 conversion model, where Level 2 IEs are recorded as 'cases'.

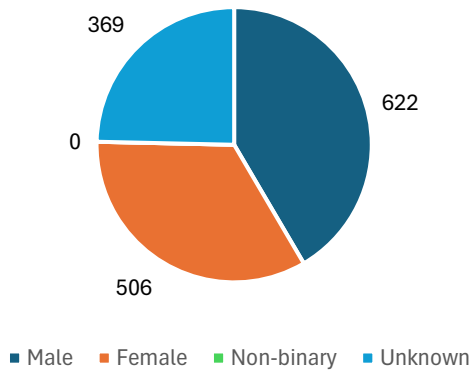
## Demographics of Initial Enquiries during 2025-26:



### Age of Index CYP IEs



### Gender of Index CYP IEs



[Note: This level of data is not mandatory for recording for Level 1 enquiries, and some service users may choose not to disclose this information, hence the 'unknown' category.]

## Casework during 2025-26 (KPI 1 – MS 3.1; 3.4; 3.5)

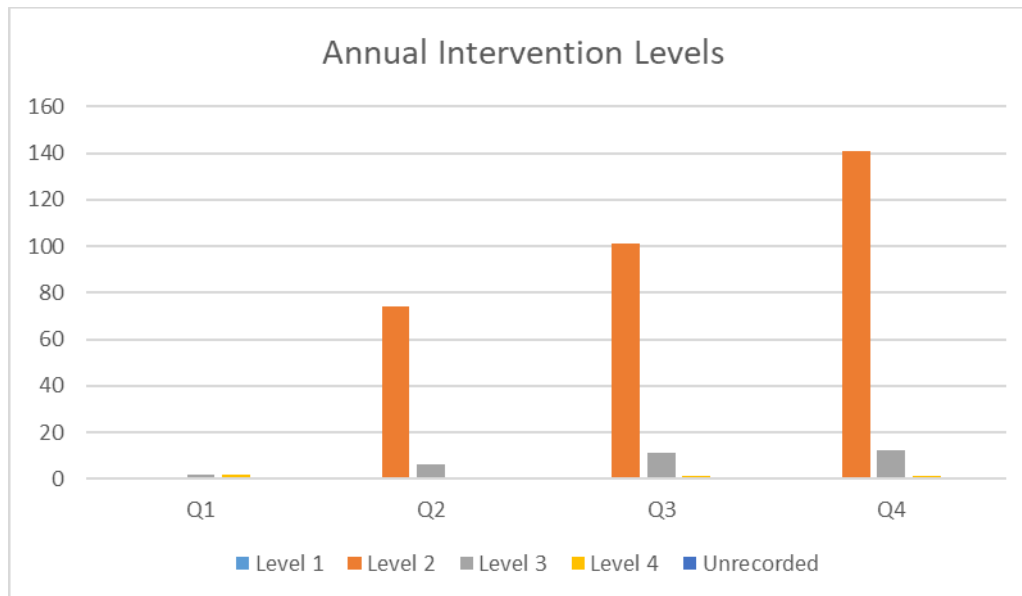
### Intervention Levels of Cases opened and closed:

Intervention Level	Chesil (Weymouth and Portland)	Dorchester	East Dorset	North Dorset	West Dorset	Purbeck	Total
<b>Active</b>							
Level 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Level 2	64	36	76	69	30	40	315
Level 3	6	4	8	6	5	1	30
Level 4	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
Unrecorded	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>349</b>
<b>Closed</b>							
Level 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Level 2	62	35	73	68	30	40	308
Level 3	3	4	5	5	2	1	20
Level 4	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Unrecorded	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>329</b>

[Note: This table shows client accounts that were opened (converted to L2 IE or L3/4 case from IEs) or re-opened and active during the reporting period (top table) and client accounts that were opened/re-opened and closed during the reporting period (bottom table). 349 were open/re-opened and active during the reporting period, of which 329 were closed during the reporting period, leaving 20 client accounts remaining active by the end of the reporting period.]

### Comparison of Intervention Levels of Cases opened and closed during Q1 to Q4 2025-26:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Level 1	0	0	0	0
Level 2	0	74	101	141
Level 3	2	6	11	12
Level 4	2	0	1	1
Unrecorded	0	0	0	0



## Closure of Cases and Outcomes during 2025-26:

Closure Type	Chesil (Weymouth and Portland)	Dorchester	East Dorset	North Dorset	West Dorset	Purbeck	Total
Disengaged	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Left Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outcomes Achieved	14	14	43	33	19	19	142
Outcomes Partially Achieved	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Signposted	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Solicitor/professional Involvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No availability for meeting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Total Closed Families</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>146</i>

[Note: These figures relate to case referrals opened and closed during the reporting period. The previous table included Level 2 IEs where the recorded outcome is 'closed – responded successfully'; hence the difference in figures of 146 and 329.]

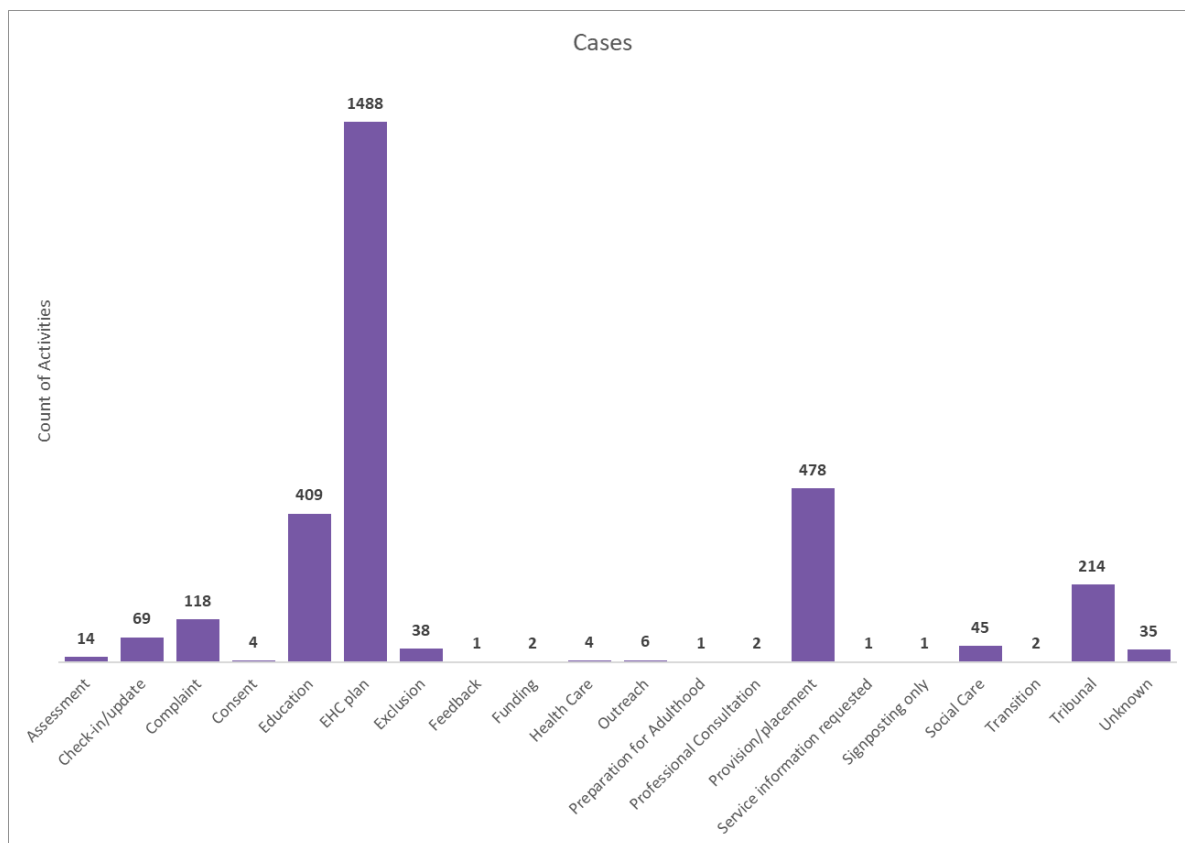
Of the 35 Level 3 / 4 cases closed in the reporting period:

### 31 - Outcomes Achieved

- School meeting; support with YP expressing their views.
- Support at Annual Review for YP expressing their views.
- Support at Transition Meeting with Specialist College and YP expressing their views.
- Support at Annual Review for YP expressing their views.
- Parental EHCNA and support at school meeting TAF and Section 19 request.
- Support with Tribunal paperwork, child on CP Plan.
- Refusal to Issue – support with lodging Appeal, YP.
- Support with Annual Review for YP expressing views. Adult Services; moving out of county.
- Refusal to Issue – support with lodging Appeal. Section 19 request.
- School EHCNA.
- Content Appeal – support with paperwork.
- CYP Lead supported young person to express views at Annual Review.
- Child not in school full time with AP. Parental preference special school. Provided advice around raising complaint to LGSCO and JD processes. Supported with Draft Amended EHCP to reflect most up to date information from the annual review (including professional reports) for accurate consultations and meeting deadline for issue of Final Amended Plan according to statutory timelines.
- CYP Lead provided advice to YP accessing independently of parent around Annual Review processes. Follow up with Adult Services and college.
- CYP Lead supported YP to express views at co-production meeting with LA around Draft Amended EHCP.
- CYP lead provided advice to YP wishing to Appeal decision Refusal to Issue. Appeal papers lodged with Tribunal Service.
- Supported with issue of Final Amended EHCP to accurately reflect child's needs and provision. Placement at special school – liaison with school and LA to support transition.
- CYP Lead provided support with paperwork to lodge Appeal against intention to Cease.
- CYP Lead provided support with paperwork to submit YP's request for EHCNA.
- Supported YP with SEND45 (Case Review Form) prior to Hearing for Refusal to Issue Appeal.
- Child Year 3 not in school. Part-time timetable and no AP. Supported with Appeal BFI for special school.

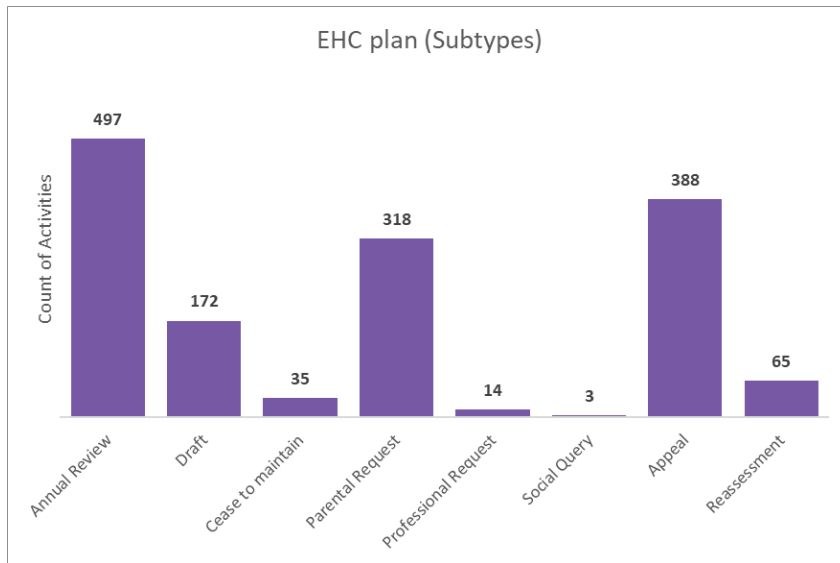
- CYP Lead provided support to child and parents at Annual Review. Parental request for Re-Assessment.
- Parental preference placement at specialist school. LA conceded prior to Tribunal Hearing.
- Child at risk of PEX, multiple suspensions - AP approved, EP consultation referral, re-integration plan, building evidence for school EHCNA.
- Supporting YP with views for EHCNA request.
- Advice around referrals following alleged serious safeguarding incident at specialist independent setting.
- YP EHCNA request.
- YP Support at Annual Review.
- YP continued placement at specialist independent setting agreed.
- Support at Annual Review through to issue of Final Amended Plan for child where specialist was parental preference. Ongoing consultations.
- Support with Section 19 and EHCNA. Liaison with Inclusions. Awaiting EHCNA decision.
- Support with YP requesting Exam Access Arrangements from school. Advice provided around routes for Disability Discrimination Claim.

### Reasons for Case Activities during 2025-26:

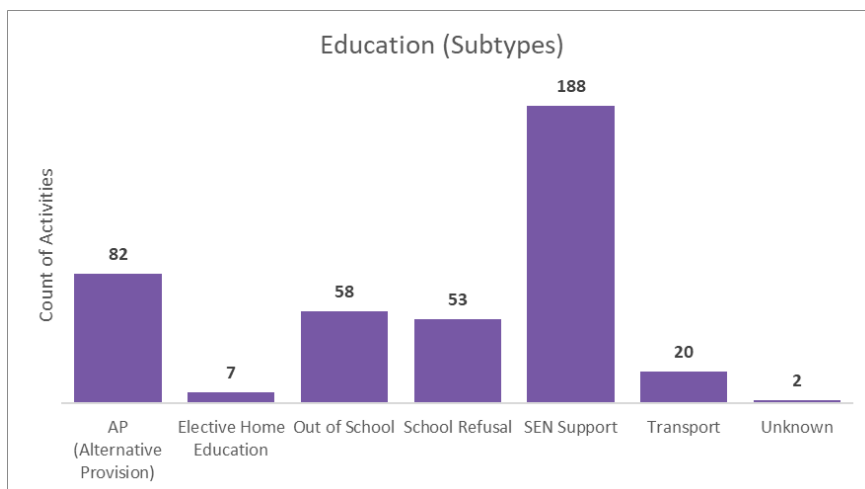


## Breakdown of Reasons for Case Activities during 2025-26:

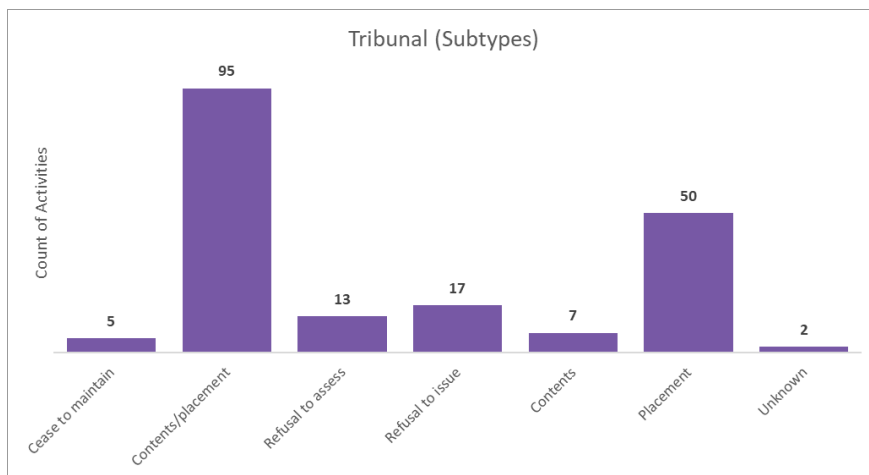
### EHC Plan:



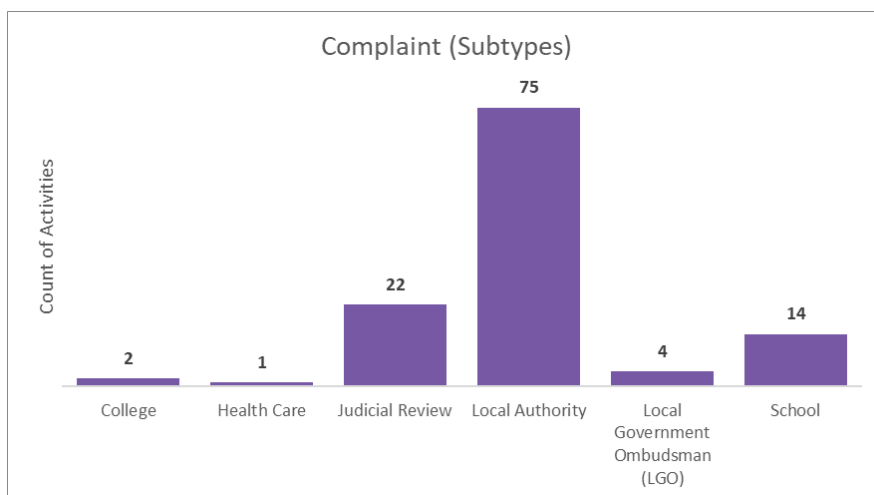
### Education:



## Tribunal:



## Complaint:



[Note: This data includes Level 2 IE activities as if they were cases, where the level of detail of information in terms of sub-category may not be provided at IE level, e.g. where Tribunal is discussed and supported at targeted level but details of grounds of Appeal are not known at this stage].

## Schools with 4 or more cases in 2025-26

[Note: These include Level 2 IEs recorded as case activity on the database].

School Names
All Saints Academy
Atlantic Academy Portland
Beaminster School
Budmouth Academy Weymouth
Cranborne Middle School
Dorset Studio School
Emmanuel Church of England Middle School
Ferndown Middle School
Ferndown Upper School
Gillingham School
Lytchett Minster School
Pimperne Church of England VC Primary School
Queen Elizabeth's Academy
Shaftesbury Primary School
Shaftesbury School
St Marys CE VC Primary School - Bridport
St Mary's Church of England Middle School, Puddletown
Sturminster Newton High School
The Blandford School
The Gryphon School
The Sir John Colfox Academy
The Swanage School
The Thomas Hardy School
West Moors Middle School
Wey Valley Academy
Weymouth College
Wimborne First School and Nursery

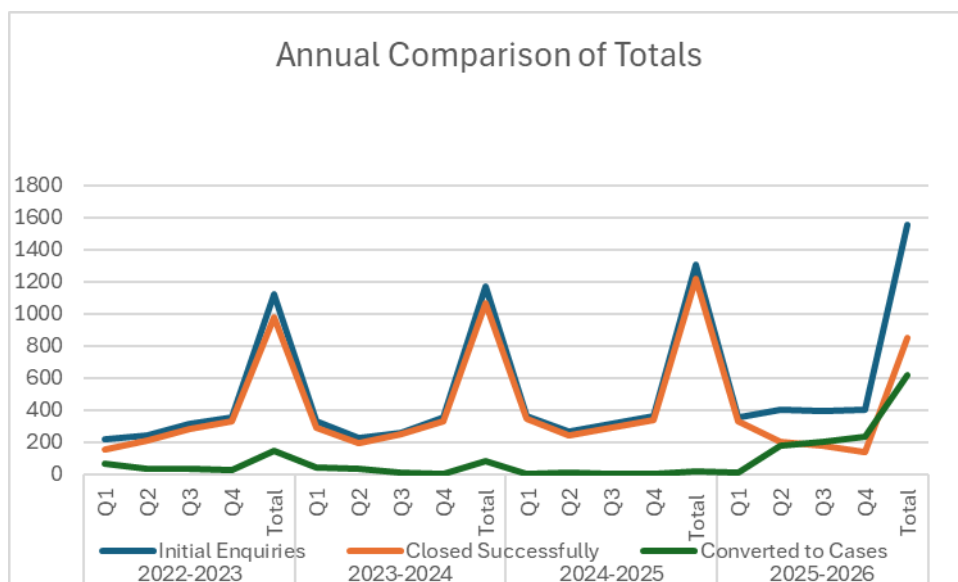
## Comparison of Yearly Data over Quarters:

[Note: When running data throughout a year, there are small movements after the fact from data cleanups and late recordings. Hence the discrepancy between the data reported quarterly and totalled in the table below (1555) and the end of year data (1497) earlier in this report. The deviation of 58 in a dataset of 1555 is not significant enough to cause concerns about data integrity.]

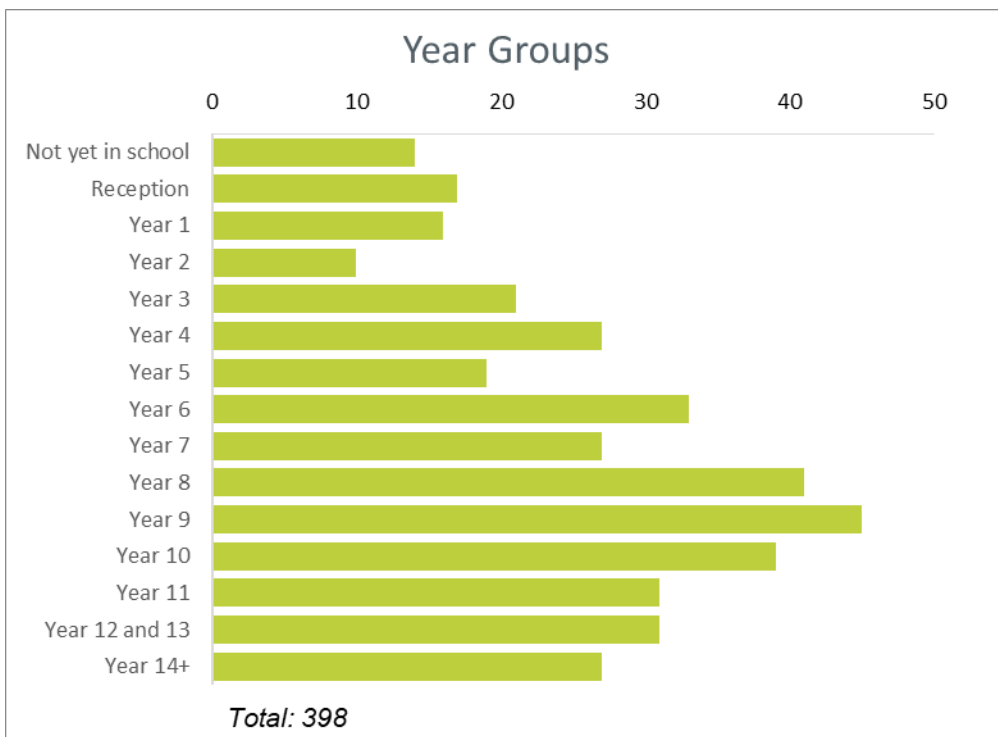
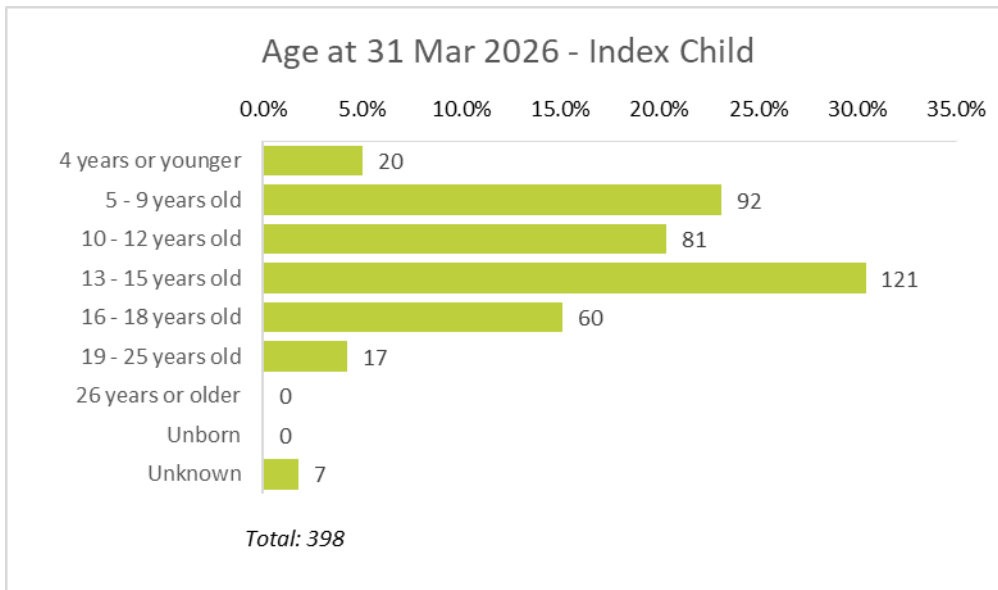
Annual Comparison	2022-2023					2023-2024 (Implementation of new Working Model from Q3 onwards)				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Initial Enquiries	218	244	313	350	1125	328	225	261	355	1169
Closed Successfully	155	208	283	328	974	290	194	253	331	1068
Converted to Cases	63	34	30	22	149	40	32	7	2	81

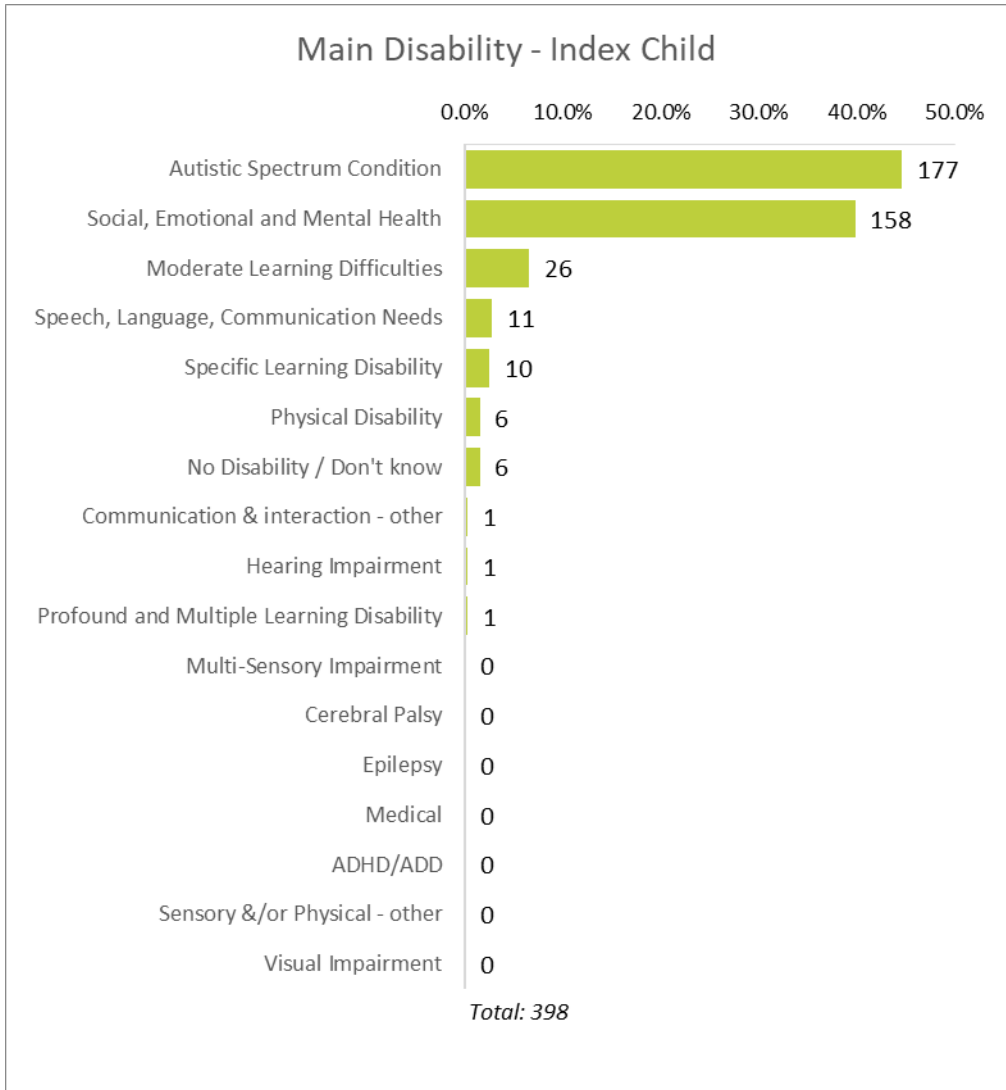
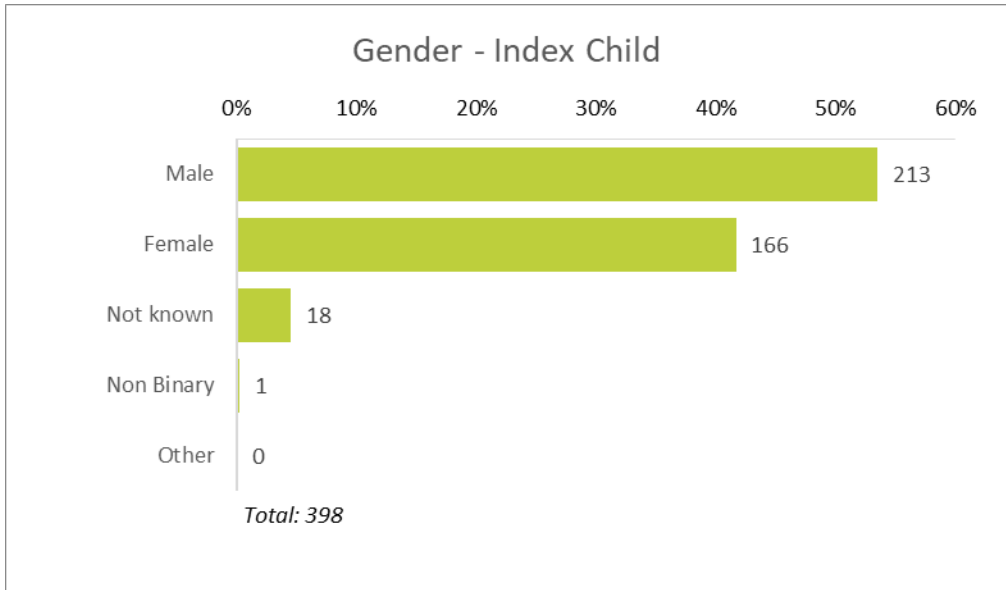
Annual Comparison	2024-2025 (Implementation of new Working Model ongoing)					2025-2026 (Implementation of new SENDIASS Handbook/intervention levels)				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Initial Enquiries	362	269	314	364	1309	356	398	396	405	1555
Closed Successfully	347	242	293	337	1219	333	201	179	140	853
Converted to Cases	3	6	4	4	17	11	174	198	236	619

Please note that L2 IE conversions are now included from 2025-2026 Q2 onwards, due to recording changes on Inform, hence the large increase in converted cases. There is also year on year increase in Initial Enquiries by 246 between 2024/25 and 2025/26. See p16 for breakdown of intervention levels 1-4.



Demographics (Index Child/YP) relating to CYP with active casework on 31 March 2026 (including C/F from previous quarters)





## Strategic Themes Arising from Initial Enquiries and Casework

Strategic Thematic meetings aim to be held between SENDIASS and LA representatives twice a year. The aim is to proactively promote collaborative working to support early intervention and improvement in transparency of processes and inclusive practices, thereby supporting positive outcomes for children and young people across the county:

- EHC Needs Assessment: transparency of processes and statutory deadlines; communication and co-production with parents/carers and CYP; Refusal to Assess / Refusal to Issue follow up by school and Integrated Front Door to signpost to support at universal and targeted level without the requirement for an EHCP
- Placement/Provision – school inclusivity, Section 19 requests and medical inclusion referrals, understanding Alternative Provision options, EOTAS, Personal Budgets, implementation of provision in EHCPs
- Mental Health in schools – EBSA and attendance
- Annual Review of EHCP – statutory timelines according to the Devon Ruling, draft amended plans and consultation processes for requests for change of placement, phase transfer deadlines
- Mediation – meeting timeliness, LA representative attendance (particularly in role as decision-maker) and timelines for referring back to LA panels.

## Strategic Functions and Accountability (KPI 1 - MS 1.1; 1.4; 1.7; 1.8; 2.3)

### Stakeholder Group

The Stakeholder Steering Group met three times during the year, interested parties included: Dorset Council, DPCC and Family Action, amongst others, including a wide range of represented roles, such as Educational Psychologist, Designated Clinical Officer, DC SEND representatives, 0-25 Birth to Settled Adulthood Designated Social Care Officer for SEND and Service User representative. We continue to seek further involvement in the Steering Group from other sectors, such as Inclusion professionals and young person representatives, in particular, and welcome representation.

The strategic direction of the Steering Group is of co-production in line with our Minimum Standards and revised Terms of Reference (February 2024; reviewed and accepted autumn 2025) and information sharing, which influences our Continuous Improvement Plan.

SW Operational Manager or Project Manager ensure SENDIASS attendance at strategic meetings, including the SEND and Inclusion Partnership Board Meetings.

- Project Manager (PM) attended the Dorset EHCP Enquiry Day to present the Parent/Carer and CYP Voice on 12 May 2025.
- PM attended the Southwest Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (SW RIIA) Meeting on 10 November 2025.
- PM presented to the Dorset Learning and Belonging (Inclusion) Team Managers Meeting on 10 March 2026.

## Promotional and Community Events, Publicity and Feedback (KPI 1 – MS 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.6)

### a) Online Presence – Website and Facebook

[Note: web data for Q3 and Q4 reports is from launch of the FA National SENDIAS site from 22/10/25 onwards. The site is configured differently to the previous Dorset SENDIASS stand-alone site, with generic resources and information on the National site and local information on the Dorset Hub. Therefore, Q1 and Q2 2025 data from the Dorset SENDIASS stand-alone site is not a direct comparison to the data provided for Q3 and Q4 below.]

Total Unique Users :

Q1 1958

Q2 1961

Q3 FA National SENDIASS site 2,904; Dorset Hub 907)

Q4 FA National SENDIASS site Q4: 14586; Dorset Hub 1,339

Dorset SENDIASS is the most viewed local service on the FA National SENDIASS site (the next highest had 1,173 views)

528 followers on Facebook as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

## b) Networking and collaboration (KPI 1 – MS 1.6; 2.2; 2.3; 3.6):

Networking with Dorset Council, health agencies and community/voluntary groups continues to remain a priority:

- DPCC meetings with Project Manager.
- Project Manager attendance/involvement at monthly themed Let's Talk Live Online Events.
- Project Manager meets monthly with Family Information Service (Information Development Manager) as part of a continuing collaborative initiative to align information and improve service user engagement at enquiry Level 1.
- Project Manager continues liaison with SEND locality leads, and, where required, initiates escalation to Service Managers in the Learning and Belonging Team.
- Project Manager has attended workshops and Core Group Project Meetings relating to the VSEND Toolkit.
- All team members have attended various COP (Community of Practice) sessions within Family Action. These include SENDIASS, SEND, Family, YP and Safeguarding COPs.
- Staff regularly book onto Continuous Professional Development courses run by IASSN.
- Project Manager regularly attends the SW IASSN Regional Managers meetings.
- CYP Lead regularly networks and attends: Dorset Youth Regional Group, Local Alliance Groups, SEND Employment Forum, Dorset Unstoppables.
- Project Manager attended NHS Dorset - Writing Health Advice to support the Education Health and Care Needs Assessment Process Training 6 May 2025.
- The Project Manager and Southwest Operational Manager attended the Family Action South Extended Leadership Group Conference in Reading on 7 May 2025.
- Project Manager presented on Tribunal processes and the role of SENDIASS for Dorset Council SEND Provision Leads Training on 6 June 2025.
- Project Manager and all Case Officers attended the SW IASSN Regional Conference on 11th September 2025.
- The Project Manager and Southwest Operational Manager attended the Family Action South Management Away Day on 17 September 2025.
- All team members attended Tribunal Training organised by the Family Action National SENDIASS Project on 22 October 2025.
- Project Manager provided a presentation on SENDIASS to the Family Action South Extended Leadership Group at an in-person event in London on 26 November 2025.
- All team members, PM and OM attended an in-person Team Day in Dorchester on 27 November 2025 with training provided around Annual Reviews and Safeguarding, including reporting to the LADO.
- Project Manager attended the SEND and Health CDC Meeting on 14 January 2026.

- Project Manager attended the IASSN SEND White Paper Workshop in London on 26 February 2026.
- Project Manager attended the SEN Law Conference in London on 3 March 2026.
- Operational Manager attended DFE SEND Reform Engagement Event on 27 March 2026.

c) Feedback and evaluation: Survey data 1st April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 (KPI 1 – MS 1.4; 3.1; 4.2. KPI 4):

Short Survey [Note that from Q3 onwards a new short survey was used, hence the separate reporting for Quarters 1-2 and 3-4]

Q1 - 13 responses to short survey: [one respondent did not want comments shared]

Q2 - 6 responses to short survey

Q: What were you hoping to get out of this contact?

A: *Some help and where to look for the help.*

A: *Email.*

A: *Specific advice relating to requesting an EHCP for our currently home educated, ASC son.*

A: *Advice and support.*

A: *Information about inclusion hubs.*

A: *Advice.*

A: *More information on how to move forward with my query.*

A: *Advice in relation to specialist provision.*

A: *Help with EHCP appeal.*

A: *Assistance in EHCP appeal.*

A: *Advice on what to do next and for someone to listen.*

A: *Advice re next steps.*

A: *Advice on what to do next and for someone to listen.*

A: *Advice re. next steps.*

A: *Some guidance and support and answers to specific questions I had.*

A: *Support with processes and rights around sexual assault at a residential college, and how to navigate this situation going forward.*

A: *Positive feedback for XX.*

A: *Support with understanding the process and how to move forward with interactions with the LA.*

Q: My query was responded to quickly

A: *Strongly Agree – 64.5%*

A: *Agree – 24%*

A: *Neither Agree nor Disagree – 11.5%*

Q: I was satisfied with the response to my query

A: *Strongly agree – 84%*

A: *Agree – 16%*

Q: Do you have any other comments about the difference we have made, or the support you have received today?

A: *They made me feel better that I am not the only parent going through this.*

A: *No.*

A: *Appreciated the general support /advice, but do feel that it's a service created / offered due to an overall poorly communicated and designed government process. If the EHCP process was a truly*

*integrated multi-agency offering and analysed / costed correctly, with a front-loaded process that actually supported the families / individuals applying, then the need for SENDIASS support would be reduced and focused on the cases that really professional / legal support.*

*A: I am aware of more options to try.*

*A: As always, the help and advice was phenomenal. I never feel like I'm being rushed, and they're always a great source of help and support.*

*A: Thank you so much.*

*A: It was extremely helpful to feel supported.*

*A: The advice was very detailed and thorough. Thank you for the quick reply to my query and for the information you gave me.*

*A: XX was extremely helpful and calming in a distressing situation. I feel supported and able to carry on fighting for my daughter, thank you.*

*A: My situation is not yet resolved but the support received was great. With the mine field of the appeals process the help and guidance was very helpful and greatly appreciated.*

*A: The phone call from XX came at the right time. XX listened to my concerns and understood our struggles. Her advice will help us to move forward, knowing that we are supported. I cannot stress enough the positive impact that the call from XX made to us as a family. Thank you very much!*

*A: Very helpful as usual.*

*A: The phone call from XX came at the right time. XX listened to my concerns and understood our struggles. Her advice will help us to move forward, knowing that we are supported. I cannot stress enough the positive impact that the call from XX made to us as a family. Thank you very much!*

*A: Very helpful as usual.*

*A: The person I spoke to was very helpful and took the time to listen to my concerns.*

*A: The support from SENDIASS has been invaluable, not only to help parents understand what happens (and should happen) in these situations and what rights our young adult and we have as parents, but also as a source of reasonable discussion which has very much helped us to work through, navigate and validate some very tricky emotions and dilemmas surrounding this really difficult problem. It gave us the confidence to deal with the school, social services and the LA, knowing what to ask, who to ask and that how ours and our daughter's concerns could be voiced. THANK YOU SO MUCH! You are all appreciated!*

*A: XX has been my saving grace. Just fantastic wouldn't have made it this far.*

*A: The service has armed me with the tools I needed which in turn, boosted my confidence with the interactions I had with the LA. Has made the process less daunting, relieved anxiety and felt listened to!*

Q3 - 4 responses to short survey (new version in use from 1/9/2025)

Q4 - 4 responses to short survey (new version in use from 1/9/2025)

How easy was it to get in touch with us?

*A: Easy 25%*

*A: Very Easy 50%*

*A: Neither hard nor easy 12.5%*

*A: Hard 12.5%*

How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?

*A: Very helpful 100%*

How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?

*A: Very 100%*

Did we help you understand where to go for the help you need and how to access it?

*A: Strongly Agree 87.5%*

*A: Agree 12.5%*

Do you have a better understanding of your choices and the next step to take?

*A: Strongly Agree 100%*

Do you feel empowered or more confident to take the next step?

*A: Strongly Agree 87.5%*

*A: Neither agree nor disagree 12.5%*

What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?

*A: A massive amount, we are actually moving forward.*

*A: Clear and easy to understand information shared. Very helpful and supportive.*

*A: I feel less confused and alone in the process, XX is brilliant.*

*A: I was feeling so upset and unsure of my next steps in terms of advocating for my son. The call today made all the difference in providing me with the info I needed to make empowered choices and steps. So grateful.*

*A: It gave my son the opportunity of an education he is entitled to.*

*A: We feel supported and understood.*

*A: More confident about how to move forward with the school.*

How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?

*A: Very likely 100%*

Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?

*A: Very satisfied 100%*

#### Long Survey sent on Level 3 / 4 Case closure:

Q1 and Q3 – no responses to long survey

Q2 - 1 response to long survey

Q4 – 2 responses to long survey

Q: Where did you hear about Dorset SENDIASS?

*A: School and education settings.*

*A: Social Media (Facebook etc)*

*A: Health Professional*

Q: How did you receive support? [multiple options selectable]

*A: Over the Phone; In Person; Email; Virtually via Video Call; Texting*

*A: Over the Phone; In Person; Email*

*A: Virtually via Video Call; Texting*

Q: Please provide details in the box below about the type of support you received.

*A: Helping me secure placement for my son in an education environment suitable to him also supporting me with 4 of children's EHCP*

*A: Education for my daughter who is ASC*

*A: Support and advice for XX's urgent EHCP review with school and LA*

Q: I found it easy to get in touch with the service

A: *Strongly Agree – 75%*

A: *25% Agree*

Q: The information, support and/ or guidance I received was helpful

A: *Strongly agree – 100%*

Q: I am happy with the service I received

A: *Strongly agree – 100%*

Q: I feel the service is impartial and fair

A: *Strongly agree – 100%*

Q: I am likely to recommend the service to others

A: *Strongly agree – 100%*

Q: I now have a greater understanding of the SEND arrangements that should be made for myself or my child/young person

A: *Strongly agree – 75%*

A: *25% Agree*

Q: When thinking about the support you and your child/young person received from Dorset SENDIASS, what were you hoping to achieve?

A: *Already achieved*

A: *For the school to put the right and fair support in for my daughter.*

A: *For the school to implement reasonable adjustments in line with the EHCP and for new adjustments to be made without conflict or push back.*

Q: How effective has Dorset SENDIASS been in helping you achieve these goals 1-5 😊😊😊😊😊?

A: *5 75%*

A: *4 25%*

Q: What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you/your child/young person?

A: *Happy*

A: *I feel it has made a huge difference, in supporting myself as well as hoping it has got through to school what they need to be doing.*

A: *A huge positive difference and outcome. XX was amazingly calm, reassuring, supportive and professional with my very anxious and worried son. XX rarely trusts new people and doesn't like to talk to them but XX very quickly managed to build a good rapport and XX trusted her totally which is why we had such a positive outcome.*

Q: Is there anything SENDIASS could have done differently?

A: *No 100%*

Q: Do you have any other comments about the difference Dorset SENDIASS has made to you and your child/children?

A: *Very helpful polite clearer to help me understand prompt. XX was my case worker for a number of years, I will not fault her in any way she has been very supportive.*

A: *I felt heard and listened to and I was supported during this hard process with school.*

A: *We are very grateful to XX, she is a real asset to your team. Sendiass not only reassured and supported XX but also made the whole process so much easier and less stressful for me too.*

## d) Anonymised Complex Case Studies (KPI 4)

### Q1

#### Background

SENDIASS' involvement started to support considerations of onward placement after Independent Non-Maintained Specialist College (INMS) placement ended. SENDIASS supported to gather YP's views and ensure statutory processes around Annual Review were met within timelines and taking into account YP's view and wishes.

SENDIASS initiated another Annual Review in order to request a Re-Assessment of education, health and care needs due to the significant changes since the EHCP was last amended. SENDIASS continued to support around requests for Alternative Provision to be put in place.

LA issued Refusal to Re-Assess decision.

#### Impact and risks to CYP of the situation:

Education will need to be bespoke to fit alongside health and social care considerations, but must not be lost as an ongoing aspiration and central to YP's sense of identity.

The longer the delay around decisions about education provision and implementation, there is increased risk of YP dis-engaging from an education pathway.

#### Actions SENDIASS has taken to support CYP and work collaboratively with LA SEND:

YP's Views document and covering letter was sent to the LA on YP's behalf by SENDIASS, requesting a re-consideration of the decision to Refuse Re-Assessment. YP was supported by SENDIASS, acting as their Advocate to request Mediation.

A decision to Agree to Re-Assessment was made as a result.

### Q2

#### Background

SENDIASS supported with parental EHCNA Request, initially declined by LA.

New parental request submitted and agreed by LA.

SENDIASS supported parent to request Alternative Provision via Inclusions. This was not secured via Inclusion Team and EHCP process overtook.

SENDIASS supported parent to challenge initial EP Report as assessment conducted over the phone. LA agreed to addendum to EP Report for inclusion in EHCP.

Final EHCP issued naming current mainstream.

#### Impact and risks to CYP of the situation:

Not engaging in any formal learning - expressing little/no aspirations for the future.  
Socially isolated  
Mental health deterioration

#### Actions SENDIASS has taken to support CYP and work collaboratively with LA SEND:

SENDIASS supported parent to seek Mediation.

Section I Appeal lodged.

Despite Section I only, SENDIASS supported parent to work with LA to update the EHCP with CAMHS report and child's voice.

LA conceded prior to Hearing and placement at parental preference specialist independent setting agreed.

### Q3

#### Background

YP with aspirations to attend a specialist college offering courses in an area of interest to the YP and live independently. Dorset Adult Services assessment.

#### Impact and risks to CYP of the situation:

Uncertainty of placement.

YP wanted to move to live independently prior to starting course to benefit from a careful transition into the education setting.

#### Actions SENDIASS has taken to support CYP and work collaboratively with LA SEND:

SENDIASS CYP Lead attended YP's AR and shared YP's views in their absence, having gathered these directly via a home visit and checked approval of written Views document and consent to share.

SENDIASS CYP Lead liaison around the Care Act Assessment, Annual Review decision-making processes, potential onward placement to College and supported living arrangements as assessed by Adult Services.

### Q4

#### Background

SENDIASS provided advice around PEX processes, timelines and rights of appeal.

Parents supported with following up with LA the Section 19 Education Act duty to provide education from 6th day following PEX.

SENDIASS supported parent to submit a parental request for EHCNA - LA agreed. EHCP issued.

Impact and risks to CYP of the situation:

Risk of mental health deterioration and disengagement around future of education.  
Lack of academic learning - falling further behind.  
Isolation from peers.

Actions SENDIASS has taken to support CYP and work collaboratively with LA SEND

Advice and support through placement following PEX. Requests for AP, transition plan.

Right of Appeal following issue of Final EHCP and a change to grounds of Appeal.

CYP Lead and CO worked together to provide YP's views for Appeal.

## Service Development (KPI 1 – MS 1.2; 1.6; 2.2; 2.3; 3.2; 3.4; 3.6. KPI 3)

### a) Service Level Development Plan

Significant progress has been made with the following areas:

- ✓ Continue to ensure that intervention levels are used accurately so service users receive the right level of intervention for the identified needs at the right time, with timely conversion of case work where needed.

Level 2 IEs are open for no more than 2 weeks with a clear agreement and consent between the service user and Case Officer in the Service as to the purpose of the intervention offered and intended outcome on closure. The exception to this is CYP who access the service independently of parents/carers and where Level 3 or 4 Case opening is appropriate. Approximately 70% of enquiries are dealt with at intervention Level 1 and 2 as reflected in the quarterly data reports. Monitoring is conducted via Level 2 audits, Supervisions and Case Overviews by the PM and dip sample audits by the OM of the PM's work.

September 2025 to March 2026 - PM conducted 14 audits: 21% Required Improvement; 79% Good. OM conducted 9 audits with 44% Good and 56% Outstanding.

Q2 398 IEs responded to with 74% response rate within 5 working days. Q3 396 IEs responded to with 65% response rate within 5 working days. Q4 405 IEs responded to with 38% response rate within 5 working days. New objective has been set on the revised CIP in relation to embedding of Level 2 IE conversion system introduced in October 2025 and improving consistency of 5 working day response time.

- ✓ Continue to ensure consistent use of the recording on the secure database (Inform Tabs - Assessment; Plans; Chronology and Data Recording) for improved record keeping relating to case work on Inform; and linking with continued accurate and timely Risk Analysis and reporting of CME cases (according to DfE definition) to the LA.

OM input on Team Day in December 2025 re new Inform Tabs and chronologies as refresher for all staff and for benefit of new staff members; handout/guide distributed for staff reference (OM); PM and OM audits to ensure consistency; managers' supervision logs and tasks on Inform case records; FA SENDIASS Handbook as guide; regular team meetings and individual supervision to reflect on best practice. Updated CME document / regular oversight of risk assessments / adherence to Dorset Council's CME flow chart for reporting initial, individual cases of CME to DC (by Case Officers to DC Inclusion Leads; use of escalation process when necessary (e.g. PM/DSL to DC SEND Team Manager) & further escalation if required (e.g. PM or OM to relevant DC Service Manager). Dorset SENDIASS to liaise further with FA wide SENDIASS Project Lead to press for progress on accurate breakdown of 'Out of School' and CME recording on Inform data-base (according to DfE definitions)- PM to follow up with Inform Team directly as this National FA Project Lead role has now ceased.

Audits have focused on improving accuracy of Inform recording and use of tabs, particularly for Detailed Recording and clear Risk Analysis. Safeguarding continues to be a focus of training/refreshing of skills to ensure best practice in this area. The new system of Level 2 IE conversion allows for assessment of risk during these shorter timeframes of involvement and consideration of safe closure or escalation to Level 3/4 casework. One LADO referral has been made in autumn term 2025 with NFA outcome. From Q3 2025 to Q4 2026, there were 2 open Red RAG cases. PM to follow up again with Inform team to request amendment to 'out of school' and 'school refusal' categories on the database - this, however, requires FA wide cooperation.

- ✓ Increase engagement directly with children/young people with the first phase of implementation of the Young Person Development Plan; priority areas are:
  - Further develop 16+ YP consent form and other methods of gaining consent
  - YP feedback form
  - Develop the role of YP Lead to implement the YP Development Plan with oversight from the Project Manager
  - Training for local networks
  - Advocacy
  - Collaboration and Co-Production
  - Accessibility
  - Knowledgeable / Accurate Information on PfA and Post 16 Options for SEND YP in Dorset.

YP consent form always used for IEs where parents contact service and YP is 16+. Followed up with Teams video or phone call with YP if they are unable to complete the form. Young person's email is also used if they consent to this method of direct contact. Face-to-face visit on case opening if appropriate - this is offered in a public setting (education setting, Family Hub, library, cafe), but is conducted in the home (with lone working safeguards in place) if the young person's needs mean that they are unable to access the community (socially isolate/high levels of anxiety/mental health). Views of the young person are at the centre of all casework (audited via supervisions, case audits and overviews) with every Case Officer, but particularly the Young Person Lead.

At Q1 2025 report, direct work with 8 YP; Q2 2025 report, direct work with 6 young people; Q3 2025 report, direct work with 5 YP; Q4 2026 report, direct work with 8 YP. Total YP direct work: 27.

Demographics of casework show work with 60 young people in Year Groups 12+ during 2025-26:

Year 12 and 13	33
Year 14+	27

Presentations/meetings with Post 16 and Year 11 education settings continues – e.g., Yewstock, Westfield, Thomas Hardy School, Dorset Studio School, SWARAC, Coastland College.

YP specific feedback form is still in development. DC B2SA Manager presentation held at Steering Group on 26/3/26 and whole team attended.

YP with Disability Health Review training will be delivered to the team on 18/6/26 at in-person team meeting.

- ✓ Developing website and social media presence via the new Family Action national SENDIASS website launch in summer 2025, co-produced with parents/carers and young people in Dorset, to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.

Resources and the new FA National SENDIAS website, with local links built in, had a 'soft' launch in October 2025. Co-production with local partners (Dorset Family Information Service, Dorset Parent Carer Council, Dorset Youth, Dorset Youth Voice (The Unstoppables) will be coordinated by Dorset SENDIASS Project Manager as the new website embeds.

More work ongoing to review and improve accessibility of resources, specifically targeted at young people. Filming took place with Dorset Youth for a TikTok video on SENDIASS' offer for young people and this was shared across platforms (Facebook, YouTube) in September 2025.

- ✓ Identifying further training priorities in-line with Minimum Standards so wider professionals, parents/carers and YP have an increased knowledge about legislation for the benefit of service users. The monthly drop-ins have been launched via a pilot at Dorchester Family Hub in summer 2025. This will be extended to include other localities across Dorset as feasibility is assessed following the pilot.
- ✓ Raising profile of SENDIASS to best support the needs of the community, according to data, within SEND law and signposting to holistic services.

Drop-Ins were held regularly at the Dorchester Family Hub (from May-July 2025, September-December 2025, January-March 2026) and one was held in November 2025 at Sturminster Newton (The Vale Pantry) Family Hub during the reporting period. The Dorchester Drop-Ins have become established amongst families in Dorset as an opportunity to meet face-to-face with a SEND Law trained (IPSEA Level 3) Case Officer for information and advice. These are held on the first Tuesday of every month during term time. The team also attended the Let's Talk Event at Kingston Maurward in October 2025. During the reporting period, 11 Drop-Ins were held during which service users attending were: Q1 5; Q2 7; Q3 24; Q4 20.

PM presented on Tribunal processes and the role of SENDIASS for Dorset Council SEND Provision Leads Training on 6 June 2025.

PM presented to the Dorset Learning and Belonging (Inclusion) Team Managers Meeting on 10 March 2026.

- ✓ Identify and develop key roles and responsibilities for individual Case Officers to provide an enhanced offer and support progression with fully meeting the Minimum Standards.
- ✓ Evidence of positive outcomes for children, young people and their families with moving case work forwards using a collaborative approach (appropriate support and challenge) with LA, Health and Social Care partnership working.

Case Officers' areas of expertise cover: EOTAS/Personal Budgets and Complex Cases, Outreach, Early Years, Young People. Much of this enhanced offer and collaborative working in the best interests of the families we serve is reflected in the data reporting within the main body of this report.

Priorities for the year ahead will include:

- ✓ Fully embed the practice of Level 2 IE conversions according to FA SENDIASS Handbook (October 2025) so that service users are able to access information, advice and support in a timely way, and so that staff capacity is effectively used to respond to the increased demand and complexity of need reflected in enquiries and casework.
- ✓ To continue to ensure consistent use of the Inform Tabs (Assessment; Plans; Chronology and Data Recording) for improved record keeping relating to case work on Inform and linking with continued accurate and timely Risk Analysis and reporting of CME cases (according to DfE definition) to the LA.
- ✓ To build on increased engagement directly with children/young people, particularly targeting those aged 16 years + in the first instance, as all YP have a right to access the service and be involved in the decisions being made regarding their futures. Improve gathering and recording of YP voice in recordings on case files. Implement the Young Person Development Plan (short term targets highlighted in green; new targets for 2026-27 highlighted in blue).
- ✓ Full staffing capacity to be in place with recruitment of a Triage and Information Officer as a result of an agreed Uplift to funding for 2026/27 for this post.
- ✓ To continue to develop key roles and responsibilities for individual Case Officers to provide an enhanced offer and support progression with fully meeting the Minimum Standards.
- ✓ Ensure the budget remains sufficient to evidence continued progress towards meeting the Minimum Standards and KPIs, maintaining a sustainable service to keep in line with increasingly complex enquiries and growing demands in the context of the SEND Reforms and evolving requirements of the SENDIASS offer decided nationally.
- ✓ Completion of audit actions identified in the Dorset SENDIASS Safeguarding Audit 22/01/2026 and continued safeguarding oversight of the team's practice in relation to systems of recording, professional curiosity and alerting/escalation via the DSL and senior management in FA.
- ✓ Further embedding of SENDIASS Handbook best practice model to include Refresher on Impartiality and IPSEA SEND Law Refresher to reflect latest case law. To also include updates on the SEND Reforms.

## b) Young People Development Plan

- Direct work with young people at Level 3/4 casework continues, particularly around empowering young people to express their views independently of parents. There were 27 cases involving YP 16+ during 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, an increase from 2024-25 of 14.
- CYP Lead has attended a number of networking meetings and is developing outreach work in mainstream and special Post 16 settings (see networking above).

### c) Continuous Improvement Plan (KPI 1 – MS 1.8; 4.1; 4.3. KPI 2)

The CIP is reviewed regularly throughout the financial year to track progress against identified objectives. A revised CIP for 2025-26 was written by the Project Manager in liaison with the Operational Manager and shared with the Steering Group in the summer 2025 meeting, in-line with Minimum Standards annual reporting requirements.

### d) Minimum Standards (KPI 1)

All staff working within the Dorset SENDIASS team are aware of the Minimum Standards for SENDIAS Services. We benchmark the Service against these regularly to evidence compliance and they are referred to during team meetings and supervisions. We also share our progress and priorities regarding the Minimum Standards during Steering Group meetings. Minimum Standards Review was presented and discussed at the Steering Group on 6/11/2025.

Summary: FC = Fully Compliant. MC = Mostly Complaint. PC = Partially Compliant

FC	MC	PC	Plans to Address
1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8	1.2; 1.6		Co-production with Dorset Youth Voice (Unstoppables) - ongoing. CYP Lead and PM to schedule series of presentations to FE College Learning Support Managers and Special School teachers around remit to ensure appropriate referrals – commenced autumn 2025, ongoing work to cover all settings.
2.1; 2.2	2.3		CYP Lead meets with Dorset Youth Voice, 0-25 VCS Forum, DYRG, Employment Forum and local special schools regularly. Networking to continue.
3.3; 3.5	3.1; 3.2; 3.4	3.6	<p>Outreach work with face-to-face drop ins provided monthly in Dorchester started summer term 2025 and now established as a regular event which Dorset families are aware of. Target to widen the delivery of these to North and East localities – commenced with Sturminster Newton in November 2025. In 2026-27 to also offer online bookable appointments via Facebook marketing.</p> <p>Family Action Marketing Team have ‘soft launched’ new National SENDIASS website in October 2025 and PM is working on improvements to Dorset SENDIASS Hub, alongside Commissioner, DPCC and Dorset Youth Voice with schedule of opportunities for co-production with longer lead times for planning.</p> <p>Target for further social media presence with scheduled posts on Facebook and other platforms using the newly developed YP promo video – launched 29/9/25. Ongoing.</p> <p>CYP has been liaising with Dorset Youth Voice (Unstoppables) to plan an approach to develop co-production from youth ambassadors with SENDIASS – ongoing.</p> <p>Target to provide a series of social media and website posts around key areas of law and SEND processes. Also to consider webinars. Ongoing.</p>
4.1; 4.2; 4.3			Not applicable – all fully compliant.

e) KPIs

Revised KPIs (outlined below) were agreed and commenced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. The Operational Manager proposed an updated reporting schedule to the Commissioners to ensure full coverage of the revised KPIs via Contract Review Meetings, the SENDIASS Steering Group and Strategic Themes Group, which was accepted with a few minor amendments made.

	<b>KPI</b>	<b>Measurement</b>
1	Achievement and progress towards the National Minimum Standards	Evidenced via quarterly and annual reporting.
2	Effective implementation of the Quality Assurance Continuous Improvement Plan	
3	Effective implementation of the Children and Young People Engagement and Service Improvement Plan.	
4	Maintain or improve feedback for enquiries and cases, broken down by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 1 and 2</li> <li>• Level 3 and 4</li> </ul> Include triangulated feedback on complex cases and report on volumes.	

Report compiled by Lucy Holliday, Dorset SENDIASS Project Manager (PM)

Approved by Helen Wemyss, Family Action’s Southwest Operational Manager (OM)