



MILTON KEYNES
SEND IAS

SEND Information, Advice and Support Service



Annual Report
April 19 – March 20



SEND Information Day 2020 – Art Workshop (Sophie Bennet)

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. National Context	4
3. Delivery Model in Milton Keynes	4
4. Service Level Agreement	5
5. Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP)	5
6. Additional Projects	5 – 6
7. SEND Information Day	6 – 7
8. Referrals and Feedback	7 – 10
9. Case Study – Informal Dispute Resolution	11 - 12
10. Social Media	12 – 14
11. Moving Forward	14

1. Introduction

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 requires that quality information, advice and support is offered to:

- children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities
- parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities

There should be access to free, accurate and impartial information to support effective partnership working. The legislation recognises the importance of the active involvement of parents and young people in decisions about special educational provision.

This Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. It includes information about:

- National context
- Delivery model in Milton Keynes
- Service Level Agreement
- Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP)
- Additional projects
- SEND Information Day 2020
- Referrals and Feedback
- Social media
- Moving forward



SEND Information Day 2020 – Spectrum Arts performance

2. National Context

A dedicated and easily identifiable service providing impartial information, advice and support is a statutory requirement of every local authority. In Milton Keynes the SENDIAS Service delivers this support to children and young people with additional needs as well as their parents and carers.

The Children and Families Act 2014 underpins the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and together form the legislative framework for the service delivery of information, advice and support (IAS) services across England.

The Information, Advice and Support Network (IASSN) provides training and support to local IAS services across England. All staff are required to undertake [IPSEA](#) SEND legal training. The [IASS Network](#) is funded by the Department for Education and is based within the Council for Disabled Children in the National Children's Bureau.

The SENDIAS Service in Milton Keynes links with other services within the East Midlands region to share good practice, facilitate cost effective training and benefit from peer support.

All IAS services are required to comply with the [Minimum Standards](#) endorsed by the Council for Disabled Children and Department for Education – these include requirements such as providing a service across the year and being a jointly commissioned service.

3. Delivery Model in Milton Keynes

A minority of IAS services are outsourced and sit within the voluntary sector but the vast majority are in-house. In Milton Keynes the service is in-house, sitting within the local authority.

Milton Keynes SENDIAS remains impartial and works at arm's length from the council. When appropriate, it has a challenging role and supports families to explore statutory decisions and provision.

Currently the team comprises a service manager, two senior staff and four caseworkers together with two volunteers. All are part-time equating to 4.3 full time equivalent staff; two people work term time only.

The support for families is delivered via a dedicated advice line, email and online referral process. For those needing a higher level of support, face to face support is available. In addition, SENDIAS offers outreach information sessions (often collaboratively with other services and organisations), a training programme for families and professionals as well as an increasingly popular annual information day in February (delivered jointly with PACA MK – local parent carer forum).

4. Service Level Agreement

The [Service Level Agreement](#) details the service delivery available for families living in Milton Keynes.

5. Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP)

SENDIAS has a contract with the National Children's Bureau to deliver an agreed task order funded by the Department for Education. 2020/21 is the third year of delivering this contract which is led by the Council for Disabled Children.

The aim of the contract is to enhance service delivery ensuring access to free and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND and their parents, a statutory requirement of local authority's (LAs).

6. Additional Projects

Projects outside the core IAS work of SENDIAS include:

- Targeted outreach support for young people
- Targeted health outreach support for families
- Annual SEND Information Day
- Engaging with ethnic minority groups
- Training for parents/carers
- Training for professionals

Family Support -

Information support sessions for families have taken place at four family centres including: Rowans (2 sessions), Daisy Chain (1), Moorlands (2) and Hedgerows (2). These sessions have been jointly delivered with the parent carer forum – PACA MK and over 57 families have benefited from these sessions.

SENDIAS is a regular contributor to the Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Social Communications Difficulties (ASD/SCD) Parenting Course. This 6-week multi agency delivered course is delivered termly and SENDIAS contribute to session 6 on the support available for families, 32 families have accessed this support.

Support for families following a diagnosis of ASD is facilitated by the LA's Inclusion and Intervention Team. SENDIAS contribute to these termly sessions which has reached 17 families.

A new focus on the schools in the Bletchley area began with Water Hall Primary. A drop-in session was accessed by 7 families. This initiative will be

followed up in the Autumn Term with the delivery of a workshop covering SEN Support.

SENDIAS continued to support the Children's Development Centre at MK University Hospital with monthly information and support sessions with 29 families accessing advice over the year.

Targeted Support for Post-16 Young People –

An important focus for the service with information and support sessions being delivered at 3 settings: MK Christian Foundation, MK College and McIntyre. 13 young people have accessed these sessions.

Liaison with the young person participation project within the LA has led to a link with a group of young people with a hearing impairment. It is hoped this will develop and lead to a valuable contribution from young people to the SENDIAS Advisory Group ensuring the voice of the young person is heard.

Engaging with Ethnic Minority Groups –

SENDIAS delivered a workshop at the Ethnic Minority Achievement conference in October 2019 together with manning an information stand at the event. 50 families benefited from support and information at this event.

Parent and Professionals Training Programme –

As part of the IASP contract (see page 5) the service delivers a range of training sessions for parents and professionals. These included:

- SENCo Conference (workshop/stand – 20 attendees)
- Early Years SENCo Conference (workshop/stand – 8 attendees)
- SEND/Social Care Conference (workshop/stand – 80 attendees)
- Positive Mental Health/Resilience (presentation – 148 attendees)
- Hearing Awareness (training for staff – 12 attendees)

7. SEND Information Day 2020 – Good Partnerships, Improved Outcomes

February saw another successful event with over 440 children, young people and adults attending. The event, organised in collaboration with PACA MK, delivered workshops on a range of subjects including for parents:

- Behaviour difficulties at home and school
- Dyspraxia
- ADHD
- Transition health project
- Speech and language therapy communication strategies
- School refusers and building resilience
- SEN Support in schools

Children and young people joined in workshops on art, craft, dance, drama and martial arts. Over 140 children and young people joined in the activities including the Play Bus parked in the car park.

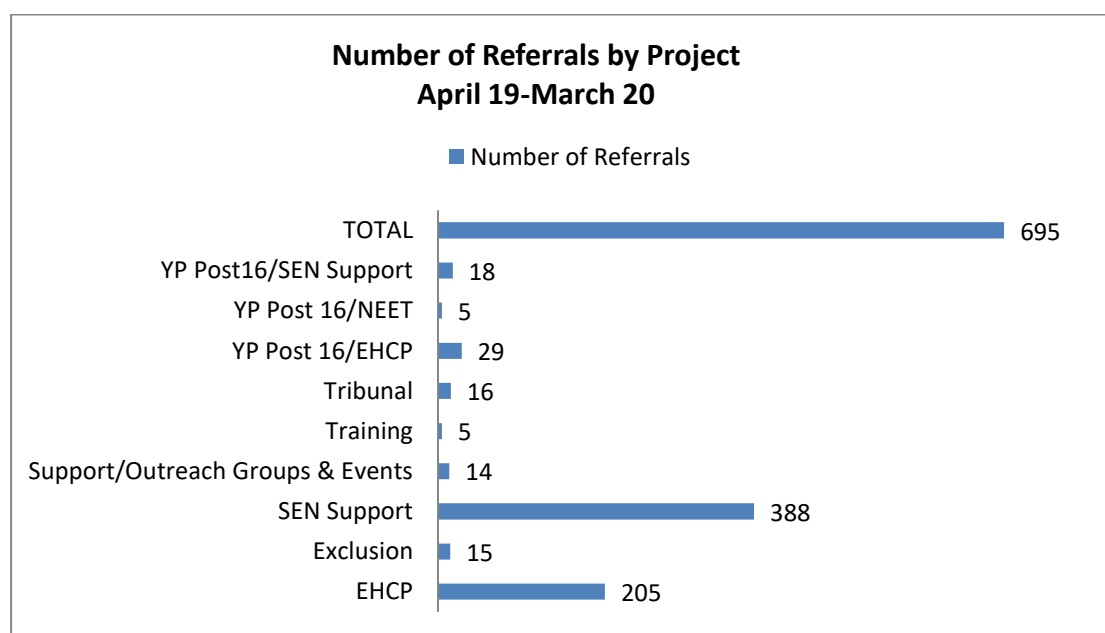
A moving keynote speech was delivered by Joe Price about his relationship with his teaching assistant at school and how this helped him through difficult times due to his additional needs. Joe has recently graduated as a teacher.

Spectrum Arts danced on stage with a wonderful performance from a large group of children and young people (see page 1).

The film [Pardon?](#) was played over lunchtime – a short movie created and acted out by a group of young people with a hearing impairment from MK schools to raise the awareness of the difficulties young people experience at school or college due to their hearing impairment.

8. Referrals and Feedback

Referrals by Project

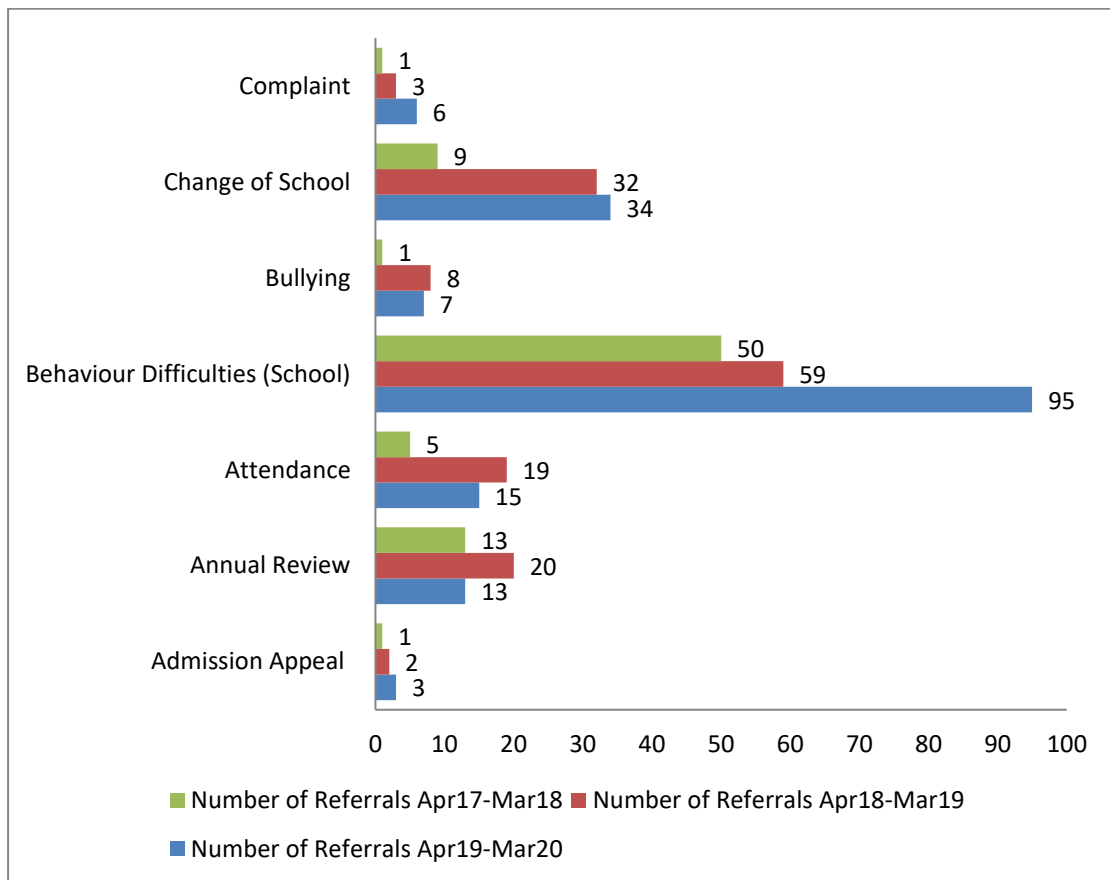


The above data relates to new referrals only, received during this period, it does not account for any referrals still open as at 1st April.

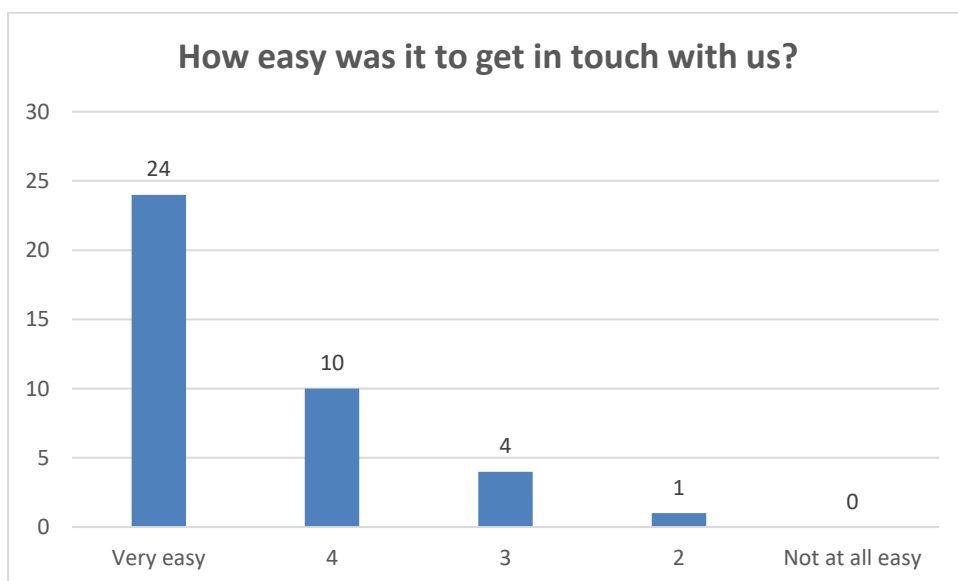
618 referrals were received during the same period in the previous year 18/19, therefore **695** in 19/20 represents an increase of over **12%**.

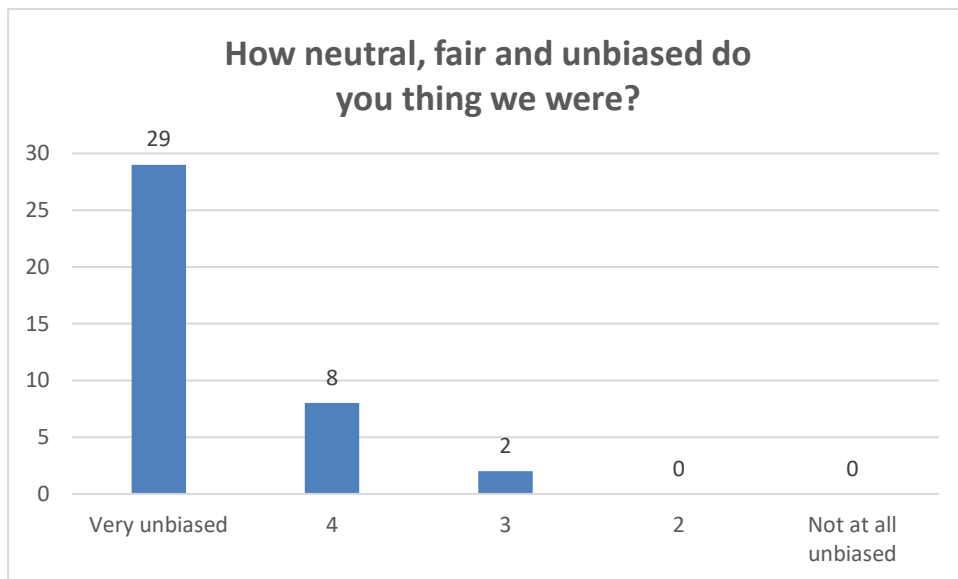
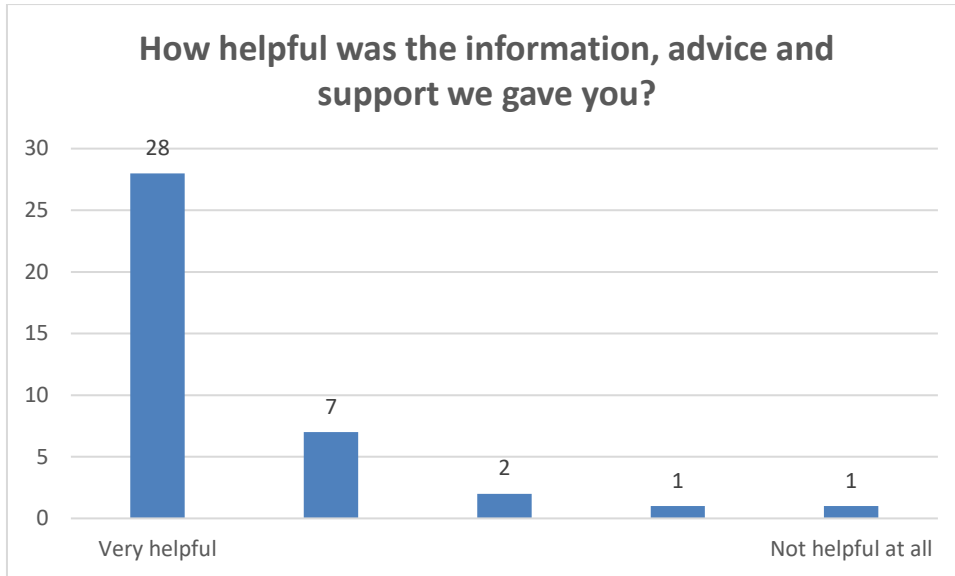
19/20 saw **9505** contacts made (telephone call/email/meeting) to and from parents, young people and professionals compared to **9155** in 18/19 representing an increase of nearly **4%**.

Referrals by Referral Reason



Feedback from six questions asked of families following a defined area of support, for example, supporting with a SEND tribunal or a school exclusion. A sample of comments received via evaluation also quoted.



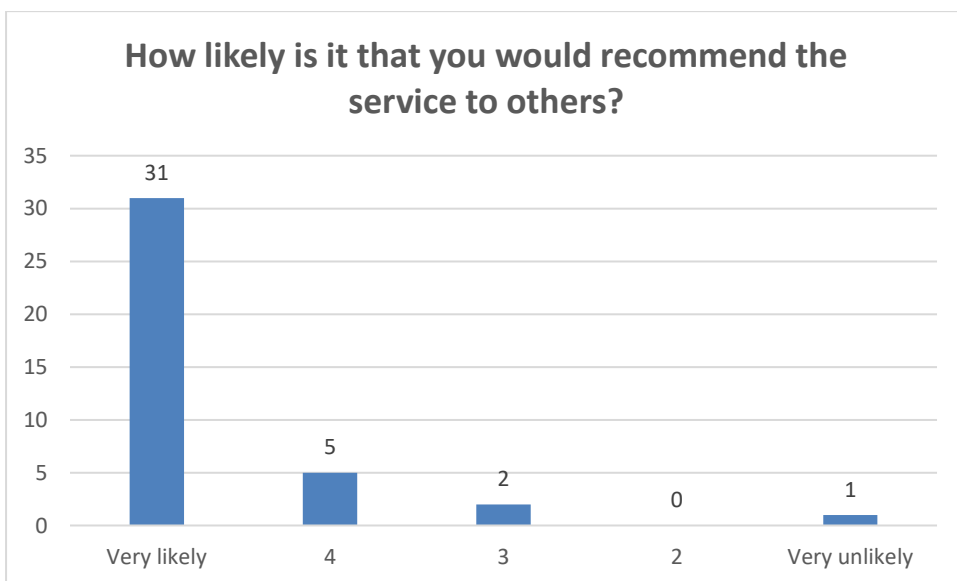
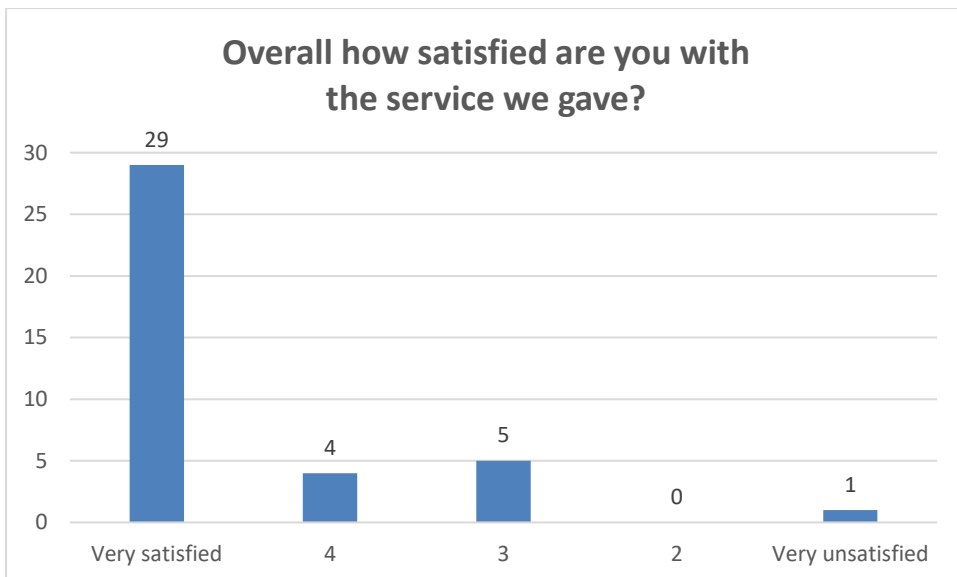
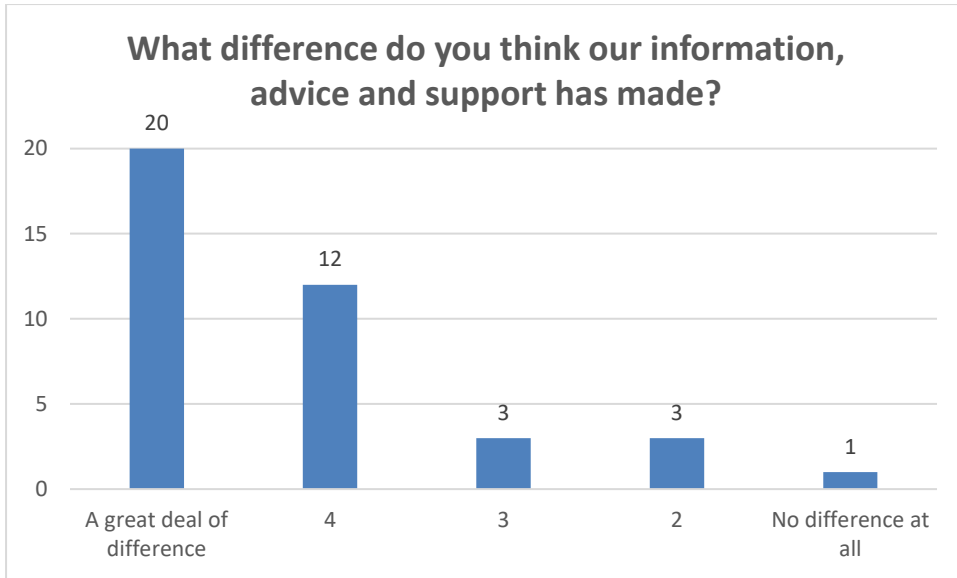


“Anna has been wonderful and given me loads of useful information. She has always been forthcoming in her communications. Thank you”

“Your help made the family feel confident that we could at last make progress getting support for XXXX. It is unfortunate the process was stopped due to XXXX’s illness and Long stay in hospital.”

“The knowledge from SENDIAS has given me the opportunity to help my child and feel I am doing everything I can to make sure his needs are met. Thank you! Brilliant service!”

“They definitely listened to my concerns and advised accordingly and I felt my case was treated as an individual, not a textbook.”



9. Case study – Informal Dispute Resolution

When an impasse is reached for whatever reason, informal dispute resolution (IDR) is a positive step to suggest to all parties concerned. SENDIAS encourages and often facilitates IDR to enable a family to move forward to a hopefully positive outcome avoiding the stress of attending a SEND Tribunal Appeal, for example, which may be the only alternative option. IDR represents a cost-effective alternative to the LA funding representation at an appeal hearing.

The parent had been in touch with our service prior to her call for advice when she was unhappy with the secondary school allocated for her 10-year-old son in February 2020. The parent had visited a few secondary schools; the school of 'parental' preference told her they were unable to meet her son's additional needs.

SENDIAS suggested scrutiny of the EHC plan and appendices, particularly the educational psychology report. The report evidenced that the child had only started school in Year 4 and was very behind in his levels although had caught up quite a lot since starting school. He had a diagnosis of learning difficulties impacting on his social communication.

At this point it was important for the parent to lodge an appeal even though hopefully this could be avoided. This was advised and a meeting arranged with the parents where SENDIAS explained the process and the steps to be taken at this point. With the pandemic lockdown in March the process was further complicated by no face to face contact possible. However, the parent was telephoned and help given to complete the appeal form over the phone to make sure this part of the process was done promptly and correctly.

When the parent received the Tribunal letter, SENDIAS helped her to fill in the attendance form over the phone as well as suggesting an IDR meeting with the Head of SEND in the LA. This was arranged.

A virtual IDR meeting was held with the child's mother, Head of SEND and a senior member of the Inclusion and Intervention team in the LA (specialist teachers). At this meeting the parent felt confident enough to disclose some particularly personal information that had not been disclosed before which the LA representatives considered very relevant and affected the school allocation. Discussion then took place about approaching other mainstream secondary schools to see if they could meet her son's needs.

As the Tribunal deadline was looming the parent was asked to complete a consent order to say that the LA were consulting schools and that mum was happy to wait until they had found a suitable school. SENDIAS advised the parent to wait until an offer was agreeable to her and received in writing.

Following discussions between the LA and other schools it appeared that no mainstream secondary schools felt they were able to meet the child's needs, so the LA offered a place in a school providing specialist provision. Mum was

invited to visit the school in September to see if she was happy with this suggestion and considered it appropriate for meeting her son's needs. SENDIAS offered support and information about the differences between mainstream and specialist provision, small class sizes and the expert tuition that her son would receive in a specialist setting but reassured her that support was there if she did not feel the school was suitable and that mainstream was preferable.

Further support was offered when the former school called the parent concerned about the child's non-attendance. SENDIAS requested, on the parent's behalf, the LA to liaise with the former school to explain and reassure them all was in order as well as to organise a visit to the proposed new school.

When the visit had taken place and the parent was happy with the new school offered, SENDIAS advised once the new school offer in writing was received, then withdraw the appeal.

With timely advice and reassurance from SENDIAS as well as support through a legal process, the parent felt empowered to make decisions and felt supported during the difficult process of lodging an appeal with the SEND Tribunal Service. Facilitating a virtual IDR meeting with the LA avoided the need to go to this next step.

10. Social Media

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/MKSENDIAS>

Launched on 6th November 2014



Likes

Date	Number of likes
March 2019	809
March 2020	1,045

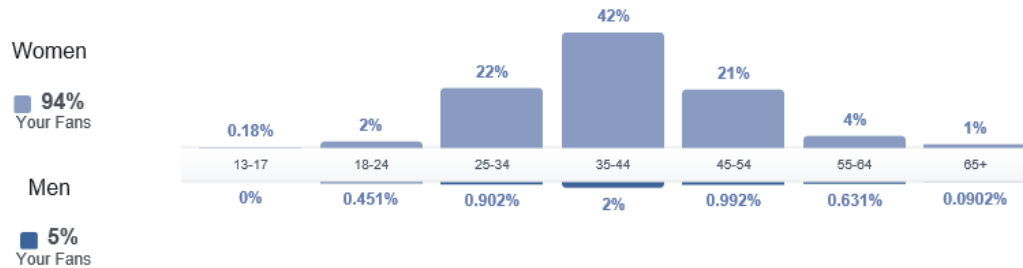
As of 08 September, total page likes are **1,111** and **1,161** followers. In February 2020 we have reached our 1000 likes milestone.

All likes are organic and based on the content of the page.

People who like our page

Similar data as last year

The number of people who saw any of your posts at least once, grouped by age and gender. Aggregated demographic data is based on a number of factors, including the age and gender information that users provide in their Facebook profiles. This number is an estimate.

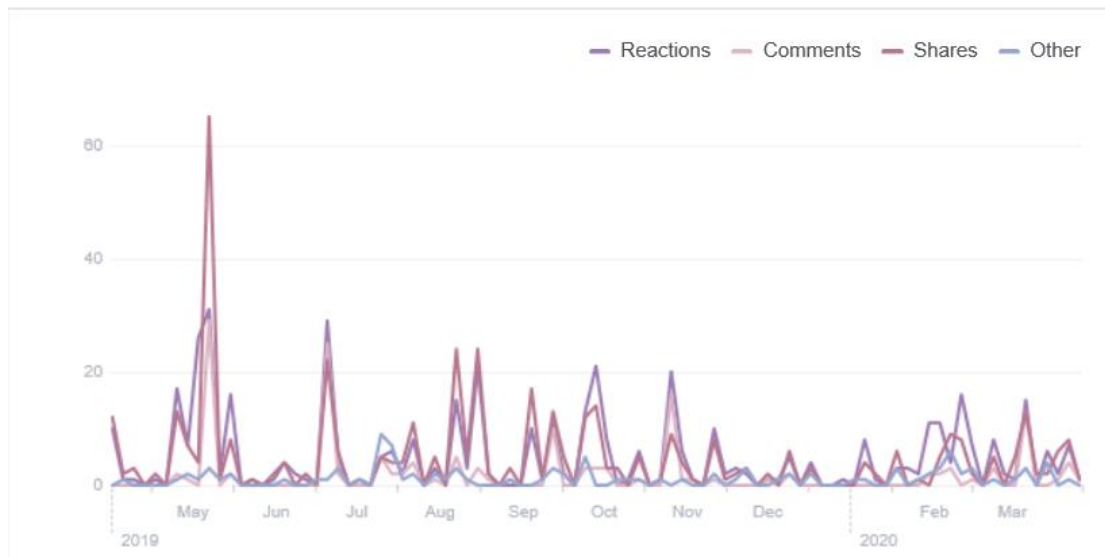


Top three by country, city and language

This year Northampton is back in top three, replacing North London.

Country	Your Fans	City	Your Fans	Language	Your Fans
United Kingdom	1,063	Milton Keynes	872	English (UK)	763
United States of America	10	Northampton	24	English (US)	322
Philippines	7	Bedford	18	Romanian	4

Average engagement with posts 01 April 2019 – 31 March 2020



There was an unusual spike in May. The post with information regarding Measles outbreak in the area attracted a lot of attention and was shared 65 times.

Events

Social media is a very effective marketing tool to promote events e.g. Information Day, SEND drop-in sessions and CDC sessions.

This year for MK SEND Information Day 2020, social media accounts of other services were actively engaged in promotion. Our co-host PACA, MK Local Offer, Children Centres and MK Council shared e-posters and information via their own social media channels

Event	Went	Interested
MK SEND Information day 2017	85	132
MK SEND Information day 2018	76	261
MK SEND Information day 2019	88	221
MK SEND Information day 2020	69	205

Twitter



Joined: January 2017

Handle: @MKSENDInfoDay

Followers: 52

This account is active around our Information day.

10. Moving Forward

As with most people, services and teams, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the SENDIAS Service. The team is continuing to work from home in the main and for the time being is not offering any face to face support. The team is still maintaining the high level of support to families via a dedicated advice line, email, website resources and virtual meetings if required.

Unfortunately, we have said 'goodbye' to two experienced members of the team during this period as well as three valued volunteers. So, the challenge moving forward is to deliver the high quality support and advice with a smaller team as recruitment is currently frozen and budgets are being cut throughout the local authority.

The team remains focussed on delivering training for parents and young people virtually alongside its core remit. The IASP contract funding for 2020/21 will enable targeted support for young people post-16, for example, with the annual review process.

There is a strong ethos of collaborative delivery of support for families within Milton Keynes of which SENDIAS is a part alongside its partners such as the parent carer forum and colleagues from services and teams within the local authority, health and the voluntary sector.

September 2020
Jane Cliff
Service Manager