

2024 Annual report

Introduction

This report gives information about the activity of the IASSEND service for the duration of 2024.

Bolton IAS is a statutory commissioned service- solely funded by Bolton Local Authority, to provide information, advice and support to parents carers and young people with SEND, about matters relating to education, health and social care. There are around 9060 children and young people in Bolton with a special educational need. All are entitled to use our free service.

Support figures

- This year, we have supported 4013 families on a one to one basis, through direct casework which is a steady increase on previous years.
- We have trained parents and carers and professionals for over 96 hours, with legally based workshops- half of which were evening based
- We gave support 848 times in the evenings and at weekends
- We took on average 133 calls per week
- We provided DRS services on 60 occasions

In our busiest week, IAS supported 84 on a one to one.

Complaints and compliments data

In this period (Jan- Dec 2024), we received no formal complaints. We had one negative feedback left because of missed communication. Due to the nature of the where the feedback was left, we were unable to rectify the situation.

We have sought regular feedback from users via our anonymous survey. The results for the period are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Finance

- We received £76,400 from Bolton council to run the IAS service for one year.
- We received £10,000 from Bolton council and Bolton CCG for a separate DRS (dispute resolution service) contract.
- The LA have continued with a contract variation for the additional member of staff. For this, we received an additional £14,728.08

Staffing

The office is staffed at a ratio of 3 FTE weekly. We are supported in the office by the Business Manager

from COG. The service operates from 8.30am until 4pm. Our out of office support runs outside of these times (email only). The website provides a contact email which provides a response

within 48 hours. We are available throughout the school holidays. We adhere with our Minimum standards to be a 365 day a year service.

Work themes

- EHC plans, the whole process
- Appeals (DRS, Mediation and Tribunal)
- Exclusions, governing body meetings, including IRP's
- Delivery of training (both to professionals and parent carers)
- Transport applications and appeals
- Accessing health services and assessments
- Accessing social care services and assessments
- Supporting families to challenge decisions
- Accompanying families to meetings and appointments
- Supporting with non implementation of SEN support queries
- Supporting schools with all types of queries
- Requesting changes of placement
- Support with bullying issues
- Supporting CYP with mental health needs
- Supporting those who cannot attend school due to EBSA and producing an EBSA toolkit
- Sitting alongside partner agencies at a strategic level, including with the LA SEND inspection (OFSTED) and ensuring families voices are heard.

Affiliation/ directed work with other groups/ services

- COG
- Bolton Parent Carers
- Breaking Barriers NW
- NHS foundation trust
- Educational Psychology
- CAMHS (GMMH)
- SEND assessment service
- Support services such as Bolton Behaviour Support Service and Ladywood Outreach Service
- Inclusion Team

We are part of the SEND steering group, and sit as representatives on Bolton Parent Carer Forum.

Governance structure

Head of service- Cheryl Wyatt, responsible for x4 IAS officers. Reports to the board of Trustees.

Chair of Trustees- Mary Wheatcroft. Supported by a board comprising of x3 other trustees.

All sitting under the COG charity umbrella- charity number 1151118

Significant changes

There have been two significant changes in this reporting period.

1. In order to assure its continuity and to help develop the offer for families in Bolton further, IAS will be relocating to sit under a new organisation in the new year. This new organisation is called The Compass Partnership Bolton CIC, and will see a bringing together of IAS, the PCF and the further development of a training function. It is anticipated that IAS staff will TUPE over to the new organisation with effect from April 2025.
2. The IAS service current contract ended in November 2024. Recommissioning has been delayed, and commissioners expect the new tender to go live in readiness for the new financial year (April 2025). The arrangements for delivery of the service and payment, will continue through this extension period so that there is no disruption to families.

Cheryl Wyatt
Jan 2025