

Introduction

This report gives information about the activity of the IASSEND service for the duration of 2023.

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 9033 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 3705 families on a one to one basis, through direct casework which is a significant increase on previous years.
- We have trained parents and carers and professionals for over 62 hours, with legally based workshops- half of which were evening based
- We gave support 766 times in the evenings and at weekends
- We took on average 312 contacts per week
- We provided DRS services on 60 occasions

- In a busy week, IAS supported families at over 70 meetings between a Monday and a Friday.

Complaints and compliments data

In this period (Jan- Dec 2023), we received no complaints.

We have sought regular feedback from users via our anonymous survey. The results for the period are below.

Finance

- We received £96,400 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.
- We agreed a contract variation with the LA due to unprecedented demand on the service, to employ a part time, all year round, IAS officer. This is a new appointment to complement the existing service. We received an additional £14,728.08

Staffing

The office is staffed at a ratio of 3.5 FTE weekly. The 0.5 is through our volunteer, who supports with triage, paperwork and admin.

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
- Transport applications and appeals
- Accessing health services and assessments
- Accessing social care services and assessments
- Supporting families to challenge local authority decisions
- Accompanying families to meetings and appointments
- Supporting with non implementation of SEN support queries
- Supporting schools with all types of queries
- Visiting community hubs and engaging with CYP outside of school/ work time
- Requesting changes of placement
- Support with bullying issues

- Support at CETR's
- Supporting CYP with mental health needs
- Whole school/ service training on SEND Law
- Provision of easy to read material for parents carers and cyp on different SEND based topics
- Attending local events and school event days to promote the service and ensure families are aware of where to come for support
- Supporting those who cannot attend school due to EBSA
- Sitting alongside partner agencies at a strategic level within the LA and ensuring families voices are heard and the law is considered in all decisions affecting SEND families

Affiliation/ directed work with other groups/ services

- COG
- Bolton Parent Carers
- Breaking Barriers NW
- NHS foundation trust
- Educational Psychology
- CAMHS (GMMH)
- Ladywood Outreach
- Bolton Behaviour Support 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 and one volunteer. Reports to the board of Trustees.

Chair of Trustees- Ms Nicola Greenwood. Supported by a board comprising of x4 lay members.

All sitting under the COG charity umbrella- charity number 1151118

Significant changes

The appointment of Samantha Kirby, as a level 3 legally trained IAS officer. Samantha works across three days for IAS, all year round.