

# WIAS&S



Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service

Providing an Impartial Service to Children and Young People (aged 0-25)  
with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and their Parents



## Annual Report 2021/2022

Information,  
Advice & Support  
Services Network  
for SEND





# Overview

## WIASS

WIASS is a statutory service for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) and their parents.

WIASS provides confidential, **impartial** information, advice and support on education, health and social care matters.

WIASS is expected to run at **arm's length** from the Local Authority (LA) and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

The obligations and expectations of WIASS (information, advice & support services) are set out in Chapter 2 of the **SEND Code of Practice January 2015**.

## Commissioning responsibilities for IASS

Section 26 of the Children and Families Act 2014, places duties on local authorities and their partner commissioning body (Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)) to jointly commission and secure information and advice for children and young people with SEND and their parents.

At the end of this year the local CCG agreed to jointly commission and fund WIASS with the LA.

## Accountability:

WIASS continues to work towards the Department of Education, and the Department of Health & Social Care, **National IASS Network Minimum Standards 2018** for SEND Information, Advice & Support Services 2018:

A yearly service improvement plan is written, which is linked to the national minimum standards and \*feedback received from children, young people and parents.

Improvement priorities are set for the year and reviewed on a termly basis by the service.

## Vision and Aim:

WIASS believes that children and young people will achieve their potential if everyone (parents, children & young people, education settings and professionals) work together, and the family are actively involved and at the centre of decision making.

**WIASS' overall aim is to contribute to better outcomes for children, young people and their parents by:**

- **Providing confidential, impartial, information, advice and support.**

## Service users:

WIASS provides a direct service to children and young people with or who may have SEND (aged 0-25) & their parents (with parental responsibility), who are Wandsworth residents.

## Referrals:

WIASS has a self-referral policy. Parents, children and young people can contact the service directly or they can be signposted, with their permission by others, for example, family members, schools, colleges, and other professionals/services.

## Independent Training on Law and Guidance:

All staff who work directly with parents, children and young people are required to complete and pass the IPSEA delivered Legal Training (accredited by the Bar Council).  
Level 1-3.

**The remainder of the report summarises the service activities, developments, successes and challenges for the year.**



# WASS Budget and Staffing from 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

## Service Budget

This year the LA increased the service budget by 50% from **£112,000** to **£222,000**.

The increase in the budget will fund two additional permanent full-time information, advice, and support officer posts.

For this year, the service was able to recruit one of the additional Information, Advice and Support officers.

## IASS Staffing

**From 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022:**

- WASS Manager- (Monday - Friday)
- Information, Advice & Support Officer (Parent lead) (Monday - Friday) **started at the end of August 2021.**
- Information, Advice & Support Officer (Children and Young Peoples' lead) (Monday - Friday)
- Business Support officer (formally the admin assistant) (Tuesday and Friday. Term time only)





## Key Challenges and Successes

### Successes

- Permanent increase in the service budget (including an agreement from the CCG to jointly commission and fund WIASS with the LA)
- One of the additional Information, Advice and Support officers coming into post.
- Recruiting a Helpline Information, Advice & Support officer at the end of the budget year, who will hopefully start by May 2022.
- The service was given the go ahead by the corporate IT team for a standalone WIASS microsite to be built, so the service could meet the following minimum standard:  
**“3.3 The IASS has a stand-alone service website that is accessible to all service users.”**

- The service was successful in commissioning a new external confidential case management system, which has strengthened WIASS’ arm’s length from the LA and monitoring of service activities and trends.
- WIASS was awarded a one off grant from the DfE National Information, Advice and Support programme, to develop digital resources. The grant was used towards developing content for the new microsite.
- Commenced work on revising the service logo and branding.

### Challenges:

- Due to the increased number of referrals and staff vacancies, the service mainly delivered a phone and email service for the first five months of the year. Resulting in limited attendance at school/LA meetings with parents.

# Activities from 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

The service was delivered in the following ways, over the year:

- **Telephone and Email service**
- **Casework Support**
- **Face to Face meetings (including virtually) with children, young people and/or parents**
- **Attendance at school/college and LA meetings**
- **Information on the WIASS webpage**

# Key Referral Data for the Year

Below is a breakdown of key data collected and analysed when parents or children and young people made their first contact or returned for further support:

## Number of Families Supported

- During this period **376** families were supported compared to **311** the previous year.
- Initial contact by parents continued to be made by phone or email.
- \*New referrals for this period were **299** which meant that the majority of cases had come to the service for the first time or returned after six months.
- The service endeavoured to provide case work support to all families who requested it, however, due to staffing issues this was not always possible and were sign-posted to other services when necessary

### \*New referrals and ongoing cases:

A new referral is when a family has contacted WIASS for the first time or contacted the service after six months of their last contact. Cases are considered ongoing when case work support has been provided (i.e. follow up/attendance at a meeting, looking through paperwork) outside of the month of referral.

## How Families heard of WIASS:

The three main ways parents, children and young people found out about the service were:

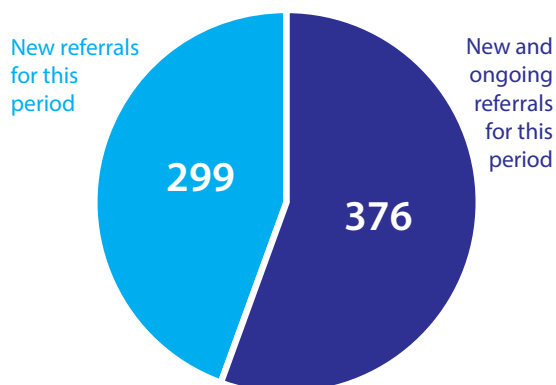
- Used the service before (same as last year)
- Internet (Last year LA, professionals, and schools/colleges, were higher.)
- The Special Needs, Assessment Section (SNAS) (compared to last year: the Internet)

## Service Reach (Postcodes):

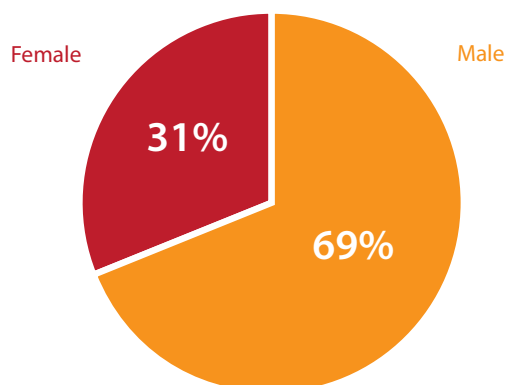
Most families who contacted the service lived in the following localities:

- Roehampton/Putney (last year: Battersea)
- Battersea (last year: Roehampton and Putney)
- Tooting (last year: Wandsworth)
- Wandsworth (last year: Tooting)

Number of families supported 2021-2022



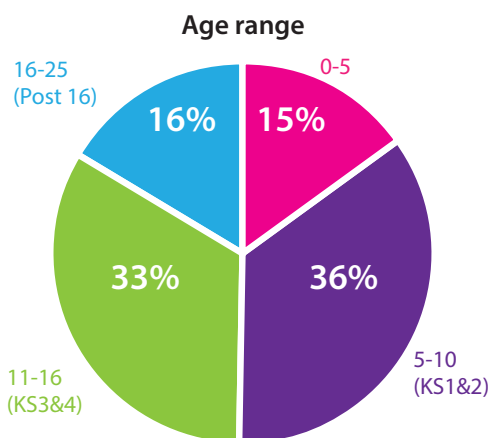
Gender



## Gender

**69%** of all referrals were for male children and young people.

**31%** of all referrals were for female children and young people (a slight increase compared to previous year).



## Age Range

Most referrals were for Primary and Secondary age pupils

- **36%** Primary age
- **33%** Secondary Age (an increase from the previous year)
- **\*16%** Post 16 (an increase from the previous year)
- **15%** Under 5's (a decrease from the previous year)

## Education Settings

Most referrals were related to children and young people who were attending a mainstream education setting.

However, **9%** of the families we worked with, the children and young people were out of school (compulsory school age aged 5-16) or NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training-aged sixteen or over).

Reasons for children being out of school or withdrawn were:

- The LA had not named the parent's preferred school, in the EHC Plan
- Children were newly arrived in the borough

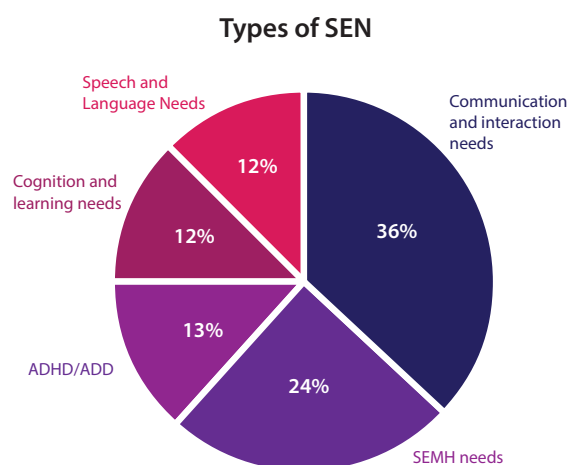
## Reasons why young people were NEET:

- Continued issues with young people not having a device to access college courses remotely.
- Issues linked to emotional health

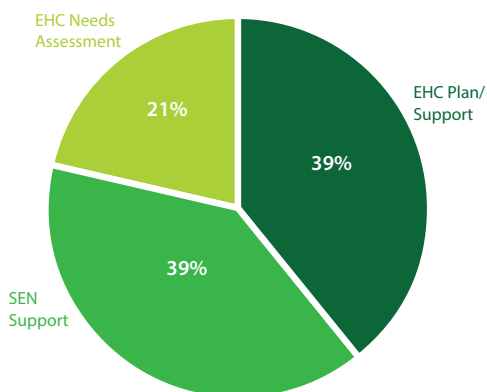
## Type of SEN

Of the families supported this year:

- **36%** were children and young people with Communication and Interaction needs. The majority in this group had a diagnosis of Autism.
- **24%** were children and young people with Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs (linked to the impact of the numerous lockdowns the transition into secondary school (from year 6 to 7),
- **13%** were children and young people with ADHD/ADD diagnosis
- **12%** were children and young people with Cognition and Learning Needs
- **12%** children and young people with Speech and Language Needs



### Stage of SEN Support



## Stage of SEN Support (type of SEN support CYP were receiving at referral)

Of the families supported this year:

- **39%** of children and young people had an EHC plan
- **39%** of children and young people were on SEN Support
- **21%** of children and young people under going an EHC Needs Assessment

## Reasons for Referrals:

The main reasons the service was contacted at the referral stage, were for the following reasons (starting with the highest):

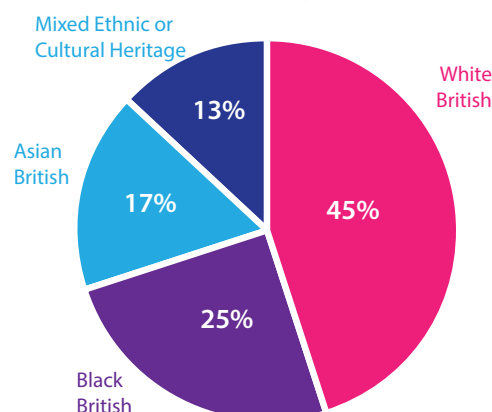
- Admissions/Attendance/children and young people out of school/colleges (an increase from last year)
- EHC Needs Assessments (EHC NA)
- Support to look through an EHC plan.
- Appealing (Refusal to start an EHC NA or the contents of an EHC plan) - the service managed to support a number of parents to resolve these informally or via independent mediation.

## Ethnicity:

Of the **261** families who consented to provide this information:

- **45%** White (English/Welsh/Scottish) British families.
- **25%** Black (African & Caribbean families) British families
- **17%** Asian (Pakastani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese. Filipino) British families
- **13%** were from mixed ethnic or cultural heritage families.

### Ethnicity



## Provision of Information, Advice and Support

All IASS are expected to work towards providing information, advice, and support to individual children, young people and their parents which:

“Empowers them to express their views and wishes and helps them to understand and exercise their rights in matters including exclusion, complaints, SEND processes and SEND appeals” -IASS Network National -Minimum standard 3.4.

Below is a breakdown of the data gathered to demonstrate how the service met the above standard.



# Breakdown of Case Work Data:

## Complexity of cases

The service continued to use the National \*IASS Network Intervention levels for IASS' to identify and monitor the complexity of case work support provided by the team - monthly and annually.

The IASS network intervention levels document (see link below) provides a descriptor for each level (1-4) with Level 3 and 4 being the most complex: **National IASS Network Intervention Levels 2016**

## Case work Intervention Levels

**Table 1: Intervention Levels breakdown for 2021-22**

2021-2022	
Number of cases	Percentage
Level 1	41%
Level 2	45%
Level 3	14%
Level 4	1%

The level of complexity of cases remained high throughout the year however the level of input the service could put in was impacted by staff vacancies, as reported earlier on in this report.

## Meetings

The service attended **179** meetings with parents and or children and young people.

Below is a breakdown of the most popular reasons for attending meetings with parents, children and young people.

**34% of total meetings attended, were 1:1 meetings with parents, children and young people respectively.**

The majority of the 1:1 meetings, were with parents only (virtually or in person)

**8% of meetings were 1:1 meetings with children and young people.**

The main reasons for meeting with parents, children and young people were:

- Looking through the EHC plan
- Supporting with writing a parental/ young persons' request for an EHC Needs assessment.

The remainder of meetings attended with parents were at schools/colleges, or the LA for the following reasons:

- Annual Reviews of an EHC plan
- SEN Support (getting school-based support for children without an EHC plan)
- EHC Needs and Assessments/plan (issues with school delivering provision)
- Team Around the Child





# Direct work Children and Young People

The SEND Code of Practice 2015, Chapter 2 and IASS Network Minimum Standards, clearly states that all IASSs **must** provide Information, Advice & Support directly to children and young people with SEND with or without their parents.

The direct work is conducted by the Children and Young Peoples' lead officer.

This year, the number of children and young people provided with IAS directly increased compared to the first year of the pandemic.

**31** children and young people were supported either directly or jointly with their parents.

The service was able to resume with it's South Thames College Drop In's in person, for students with SEND.



Children & Young Peoples Officer:  
Louisa Jaouadi



# Service Evaluation - Parents:

## Parent Feedback

Parents are asked for formal feedback using a survey.

The survey includes the six questions the DfE expects all IASS' to ask when obtaining feedback

from parents, children and young people:

**61** completed surveys were received from parents (the majority completed over the phone, with this service Business Support officer)

**Table 2: 61 parents reported the following**

It was easy to contact WIASS	79%
WIASS were very impartial	89%
The information, advice and support was very helpful	87%
Were very satisfied with the service provided	87%
Were likely to recommend the service to others	87%

**Please note:** The variation in percentage reflects that not every parent answered each question on the survey sent to them.

## Parents also reported on the impact the information, advice or support made for them and their child.

Below are the main areas of impact reported by parents, starting with the highest:

- I feel more involved in decisions about my child's education.
- I have a greater understanding of my child and my rights, the law and the support that should be made for children and young people with Special Educational Needs or a Disability
- I feel more confident about giving my views to the Local Authority/School/College other services.
- My child's needs are better understood than they were before.
- I feel less confused or overwhelmed.
- My child is getting support and doing better at nursery/school/college.

- I am happier/less worried about my child's future
- I feel my child is happier at nursery/school/college.

## Improvements suggested by parents.

- Reduce the time to respond from five days. **WIASS reduced the response time to 3 working days from September 2021 to March 2022, when the Parent lead came into post.**
- It would be better if you could do more or have more force/power against the LA. **Our aim is to work collaboratively with parents, LA, and other services. The service raised several issues with SEND leads within the LA on behalf of parents.**
- **Please hire more highly trained staff.** The service was successful with two recruitment campaigns this year. One new member of staff started at the end of August 2022. This increased the service reach, i.e. attending meetings and reducing the service response times, from September 2022.

## Quotes from parents:

I had a very positive experience and found it far more helpful than I expected.

Staff are friendly and understand parents. Children are happy and that's what counts!

# WASS Website Data 2021-2022

The service has a webpage on the council's website.

**Table 3: WASS Webpage Data 2021-2022**

MOST POPULAR PAGES		
Pages Visited	Number	%
WASS information and resources on SEND - Wandsworth Borough Council	3485	39%
Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service (WASS) - Wandsworth Borough Council	2303	26%
Contact WASS - Wandsworth Borough Council	2051	23%
About WASS - Wandsworth Borough Council	1087	12%
SEN home to school travel assistance - Wandsworth Borough Council	74	1%
Wandsworth Borough Council	24	0%
Transport for compulsory age children - Wandsworth Borough Council	4	0%
WASS Coronavirus Update - Wandsworth Borough Council	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9029</b>	<b>100%</b>



## How to contact us:



**Call back service: 020 8871 8065**  
(24 hour answer machine)



**Email: [wiass@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:wiass@wandsworth.gov.uk)**



**Web: [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wiass](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wiass)**

