



**Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) North
Yorkshire**

**Annual Report
1-04-2024 / 31-3-2025**

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Background Information

SENDIASS North Yorkshire (Information Advice and Support Service) is a statutory service:

As part of the Children and Families Act 2014 it is a legal requirement that all local authorities ensure disabled children and young people and children and young people with special educational needs and their parents/carers have access to an impartial Information, Advice and Support (IAS) service.

All SENDIAS Services are part of the Information Advice and Support Network. The IASS Network are funded by the Department for Education (DfE) to support the national network. The IASS Network is based within the Council for Disabled Children in the National Children's Bureau.

Information and Advice Services make up a group of organisations who provide free advice and support on a range of matters relating to SEN and Disability in England. This group is known as the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Organisation Group (SENDIOG). Other services within this group are IPSEA, KIDS, SOS SEN and the National Deaf Children's Society.

SENDIAS Services must strive to achieve the National Minimum Standards which relate to the support that they must provide as per the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015. There are 20 standards within 4 categories:

- Commissioning, Governance and Management – includes being jointly commissioned, formal agreement in place, dedicated ring-fenced budget
- Strategic Functions – manager based solely within the service, engagement with regional and national strategic planning, works with local partners
- Operational Functions – providing impartial information, advice and support, stand-alone website, appeals support, offers training to service users and other organisations
- Professional Development and Training Staff – including IPSEA legal training up to and including Level 3, requesting feedback from service users, supervision and continuous professional development for staff and volunteers.

Introduction

This report is an overview of what SENDIASS North Yorkshire has delivered in 2024/25. It will endeavour to highlight what the service impact has been and what has developed or changed over the past 12 months. It will reflect the statutory duties and requirements of North Yorkshire Council and other commissioners to ensure that this SENDIAS Service delivers a high standard in line with the IASS Minimum Standards.

A glossary of frequently used acronyms has also been added to the appendices to ensure this report is more accessible to all.

The SENDIASS North Yorkshire team

The service staffing structure:

- SENDIASS Manager (full time)
 - SENDIASS Coordinator (4 with a blend of part/ full time roles)
 - Media Support Officer (20 hrs p/w term time).
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- Also, as part of the team there are 3 trained and operational SENDIASS Volunteers who have completed Level 1 IPSEA training and are actively supporting parents and carers with the completion of education health care needs assessment requests and occasional annual reviews.
 - Meet the team by visiting our website: [Meet the team > SENDIAS North Yorkshire](#).

Developing the service offer to reflect referrers and service needs

Throughout 2024/25 the Media Support Officer continued to deliver EHCAR and SEN support information virtual sessions to parents and carers. It was identified during this time by the service and Parent Carer Voice that it would be beneficial to begin to hold Annual Review and Draft EHC Plan information virtual sessions to support the advice line referrals. The Media Support Officer has therefore agreed to develop her knowledge and has currently begun completing IPSEA Level 2 to facilitate the creation and delivery of these sessions.

During October the SENDIAS Service moved across to Effective Practice and Quality Assurance directorate. This was a step that has helped secure the arm's length minimum standard. However, as of end March 2025 the budget remained with the Inclusion Service and could not transfer immediately to the new directorate in October due to being part way through a financial year.

In November 2024 the previous service manager announced she would be leaving SENDIASS North Yorkshire. The current manager took up post at the beginning of December 2024. This left a co-ordinator vacancy for the busiest area Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon and Craven. To ensure service delivery was not impacted due to the increased demand the decision was taken to work in an episodic way. This means when a case is allocated the co-ordinator will concentrate solely on the reason for which it was referred. A virtual meeting will be offered and held considering parents/carers needs. Once the necessary advice and information is delivered in an accessible way the file is closed. The parent/carer is made aware at the point of closure that they can return for further support at any time.

Tribunal cases that historically were kept open from the time the appeal was lodged to the decision of the Tribunal being issued are now managed in the same episodic way as above. The only difference is that these cases are kept open from approximately 2 – 3 months before the hearing date until the appeal is resolved. This enables the co-ordinator to work extensively with the parent and Local Authority on bringing about a resolution.

An exception to the episodic way of working is the support given to young people and parents/carers with learning difficulties. These cases, once opened, remain open to ensure that the support given is accessible, is aligned the with the practice model and consistent.

Early indications are that this is working well. Parents and carers continue to provide positive feedback about the service they have received. Co-ordinators can manage their workloads more effectively and efficiently. The team morale has increased, and co-ordinators are able to incorporate some CPD work into their diaries once again. This also has the added benefit of improving mental health and well-being within the team, reducing sick leave.

The impact on data collection figures by working episodically could have shown a significant increase in referrals however, this does not appear to be as large as initially thought. What it will do is capture the work carried out more accurately.

The change to a new manager and directorate, has opened an exciting opportunity to look at the service holistically. Data collection has been brought up to date with a dashboard which captures more accurately the

work undertaken by the service. This streamlined system will make spreadsheets redundant and help provide data evidencing the value of retaining a SENDIAS service in-house.

Quality assurance work regarding case notes, data entry, together with how and what information, advice and support is given to parents/carers and young people is underway and this will be able to inform practice going forward. Learning Spaces, a quality assurance document used by the Children and Families Service will be used to facilitate reflective supervisions and ensure a more equitable service across the county. It will encourage discussions about what went well while highlighting potential learning points to improve practice and broaden breadth of knowledge and thinking processes across the whole team.

Template emails that are used by co-ordinators when working the advice line are also taking on a new look by using artificial intelligence. This decision was taken to make them easier to follow using a step-by-step approach. Increasingly feedback was highlighting that parents and carers were finding the information overwhelming. Since introducing this to our most frequently used emails no negative feedback has been received.

Unfortunately, the young people's group has ceased, however this has seen the increased utilisation of the Flying high Voice group that exists in Children and Families and included many of the same young people. This was a decision taken by the group itself at the October 2024 meeting by the young people due to dwindling numbers and some duplication. Over the two years the group was active, true co-production was implemented. The topics for discussion and direction in which the topics took were led by the young people. At the SENCO Networks across the county the topic of 'How can you ensure your learners feel included in decision making?'

was launched by SENDIASS. This evolved from the groups chosen topic 'SEND Voice excluded in school and college groups in general' and their passion to change the way things are done.

A lot of the group's work was also included in the Voice of the CYP section in the Inclusive Practice Framework on meetings. The video and voice clips as well as feedback about their experiences will also be included in the SENCO Handbook. The Lead for Developing Inclusive Communities was also going to share the clips with the SEND team and was hoping this team would create a section linked to Annual Reviews within the local offer and Children Young People's Service info etc with the quotes and suggestions for good practice guidance.

The SENDIAS service currently is acquiring the voice of children and young people through the Flying High Group.

The Young People's newsletter has continued to be produced and is now based around topical themes relevant to the time of the academic year: [March 25 YP Newsletter](#).

The new website was launched in January 2024. Following a few teething problems the feedback about the website has been positive and we hope this now gives a more comprehensive offer and is easier to use. Ongoing minor amendments continue to be made to typing errors and links that are no longer live. To rectify any major alterations or issues SENDIASS continue to commission NYES Digital Services for support. It is hoped that we begin to see the use of the website increasing.

Virtual sessions offered by the Media Support Officer continued to draw referrals away from the advice line and allocation to co-ordinators. The additional sessions on annual reviews and draft plans that will be delivered in 2025/26 will extend the current offer and support the advice line. The virtual drop-in sessions have now ceased due to an untenable reduction in the number of parents/carers attending making it an inefficient use of time.

Summary of the Impact of Changes during the Financial Year

- **Positive Impact of Episodic Working:**

- Parents and carers continue to give positive feedback.
- Co-ordinators manage workloads more effectively.
- Team morale has improved, allowing for CPD activities.
- Mental health and well-being have benefited, reducing sick leave.

- **Data Collection Improvements:**

- Episodic working captures service activity more accurately.
- Referral increases were expected but not as significant.
- A new dashboard replaces spreadsheets, streamlining data reporting and evidencing the value of an in-house SENDIAS service.

- **Service Development and Quality Assurance:**

- The change in manager and directorate has enabled a holistic review of the service.
 - Quality assurance work is underway on case notes, data entry, and service delivery.
 - “Learning Spaces” will be used for reflective supervision and consistent service quality across the county.
- **Improved Communication Using AI:**
 - Advice line template emails have been redesigned using AI for clarity and step-by-step guidance.
 - This change addresses feedback about overwhelming information and has received no negative responses.

Steering Group

To meet National Minimum Standard 1.7 all SENDIAS Services are required to have a Steering Group or advisory body.

Steering Group members include representatives from the Local Authority (Inclusion service, SEND service, Disabled Children’s team, Children and Families Service, Youth Voice), Health, local parent carer groups and voluntary sectors as well as parent/carers and young people. The Group ensure that SENDIASS North Yorkshire meets local needs, maintains impartiality and remains arm’s length to the Local Authority.

Meetings are held virtually and take place 3 times per year (June, October and February). However, due to a management change and lack of attendance at a November meeting the final meeting for 2024/25 took place in

March. The next meeting will therefore be scheduled to take place in October 2025. A trustee of Parent Carer Voice chairs the meeting.

Service Compliance – National Minimum Standards

In IASSN's benchmarking report for 2024/25 it published information about the top five standards that SENDIAS services are struggling to meet.

These included:

1.1 The IASS is jointly commissioned by education, health and social care in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014. A formal agreement is set out in writing which refers directly to these Minimum Standards, whilst also considering the need for continuity and stability of the service.

Only 63.71% of SENDIAS services are compliant nationally. Currently North Yorkshire is RAG rated as amber due to the service not being jointly commissioned by all the ICBs that make up the North Yorkshire area.

SENDIASS North Yorkshire also has development areas and is working towards compliance.

1.6 LA and IASS ensure that potential service users, Head teachers, FE principals, SENCos, SEND Teams, children's and adult social care, health commissioners and providers are made aware of the IASS, its remit and who the service is for.

1.6 is RAG rated amber. Since changing directorates, it has become apparent that several colleagues in other services are not aware of what SENDIAS service is or does. To rectify this virtual information sessions are being delivered in August to give an overview of the 'Do's and Don'ts' of SENDIASS to Early Help and Social Care and SEND Team. These will be recorded to enable the sessions to be accessed by colleagues unable to attend. In addition, an information pack will be put together to send out to schools, colleges and other organisations over the summer period.

1.8 The IASS has a development plan reviewed annually with the steering group/advisory body, which includes specific actions and improvement targets.

This is the only standard that has had to be RAG rated red as there is no service development plan for 2024/25. Currently the service is under an internal review, and this will highlight areas of improvement and inform the basis of the service development plan for 2025/26.

3.3 The IASS has a stand-alone service website that is accessible to all service users. The website includes.

- Contact details of the service
- Opening hours
- Response times
- Information on a range of SEND topics
- Signposting to other useful groups including parent groups and youth forums and national helplines
- Signposting to the Local Offer

- Key policies including a complaints procedure

Having checked the website and policies there is no complaints procedure information. Therefore, this is also rated amber. SENDIASS users would complain through the Local Authority's complaint procedure and this needs to have the necessary links added to the website to ensure this can be accessed.

Tribunals and Potential Savings

Number of parents/carers and/or children and young people supported during the appeal process = 91

Number of potential Tribunal hearings that were avoided due to support given = 75

- **Estimated cost per Tribunal hearing:** This can vary, but based on published figures and local authority reports, the cost of a SEND Tribunal hearing (including legal fees, staff time, and associated resources) is often estimated to be between **£4,000 and £6,000 per case.**

Estimated savings:

- **Low estimate:**
 $75 \text{ hearings} \times £4,000 = £300,000$
- **High estimate:**
 $75 \text{ hearings} \times £6,000 = £450,000$

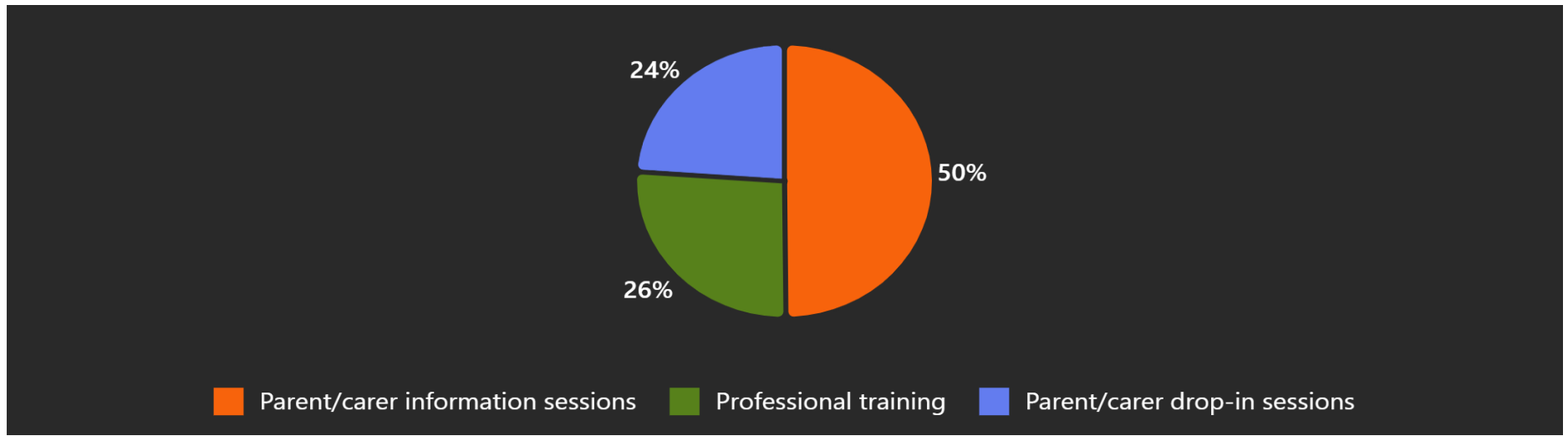
Potential savings range: £300,000 – £450,000

This doesn't include indirect savings such as:

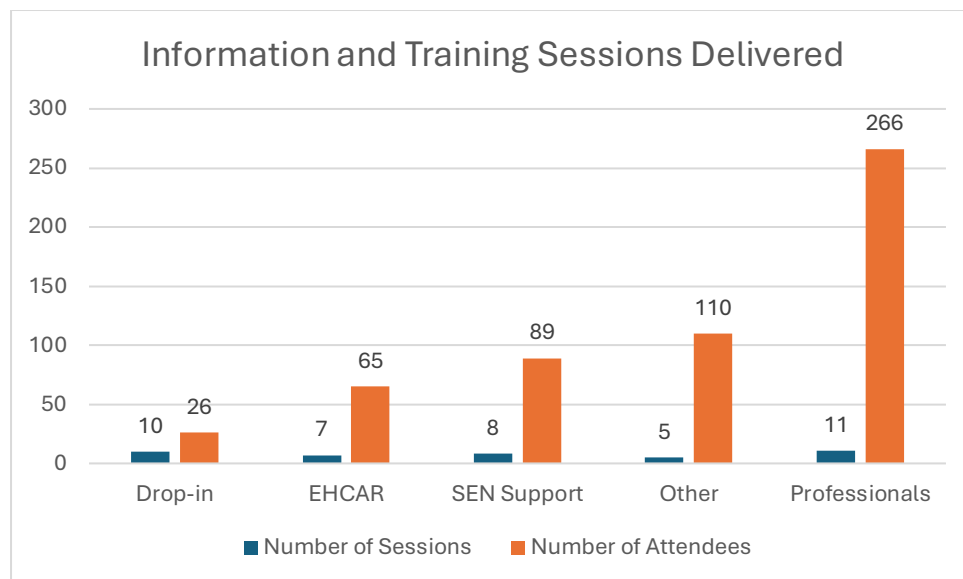
- Reduced stress and time for families and staff
- Improved relationships between families and the local authority
- Earlier resolution of needs, potentially reducing longer-term costs

Information and Training Sessions

2024/25 Training delivered	Number of sessions	Number of attendees	Total of attendees
Parent/carer drop-in sessions	10	23	Combined Total 290
Parent/carer information sessions	21	267	
Professional training	11	258	258
Overall Total	42	548	548



- **Parent/carer information sessions** made up the largest share (21 sessions)
- Followed by **Professional training** (11 sessions)
- Then **Drop-in sessions** (10 sessions)



NB. Professional training session 'How can you ensure your learners feel included in decision making?' was delivered during the SENCO network meetings across the County to a total of 235 SENCOs. This is the context of the elevated number of professionals attending the training.

From 1st April 2024 to 31st December 2024 - 290 parents/carers attended training sessions.

Given the volume of training delivered by the media support officer, were this post to be ended - 290 parents/carers would come to the advice line increasing the number of referrals from 2593 to 2883. This would

require the advice line to absorb 11.18% more referrals. Most of these enquiries would be coming to the advice line requiring allocation to a co-ordinator at level 3. Therefore, the involvements would potentially increase from 365 for the same period to 655 creating a 44% increase in current caseloads, without considering the annual year on year increase overall in North Yorkshire of children with SEND needs.

Data for 2024/25

2024/25

Total number of referrals through the Advice Line: **2593**

Total number of participants in information and training sessions:

Parents carers: **290**

Professionals: **258**

= Total: **548**

SENDIASS combined number of referrals including training and information sessions: **3141**

Comparison:

2023/24

Total number of referrals through Advice Line: **2451**

Total number of participants in information and training sessions:

Parents carers: **423**

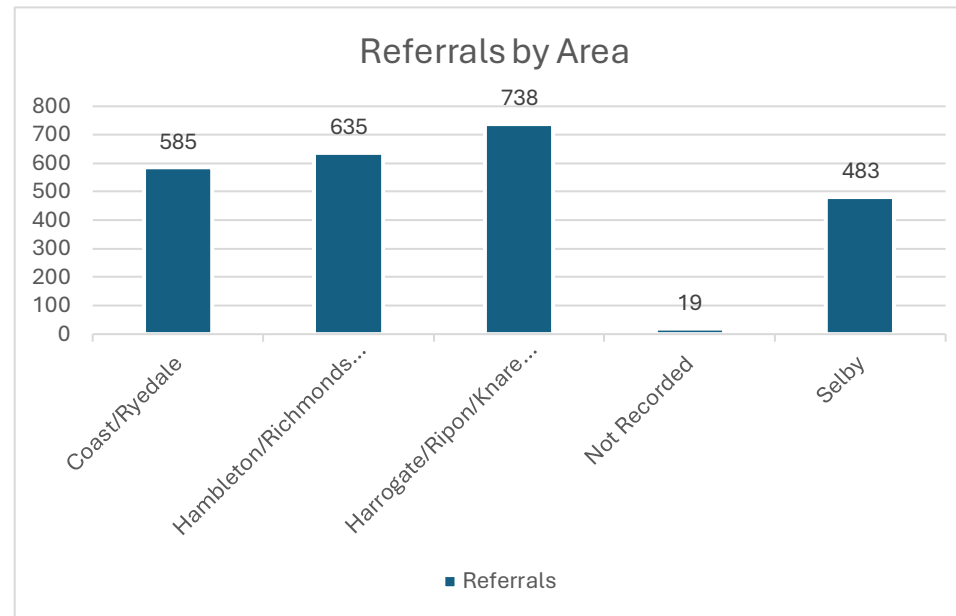
Professionals: **150**

= Total: **573**

SENDIASS combined number of referrals including training and information sessions: **2024.**

Referrals to the Advice Line 2024/25

Area	Referrals	%
Coast/Ryedale	585	22.3%
Hambleton/Richmondshire	635	24.2%
Harrogate/Ripon/Knares/Craven	738	28.1%
Not Recorded	19	0.7%
Selby	483	18.4%
Grand Total	2593	100.0%



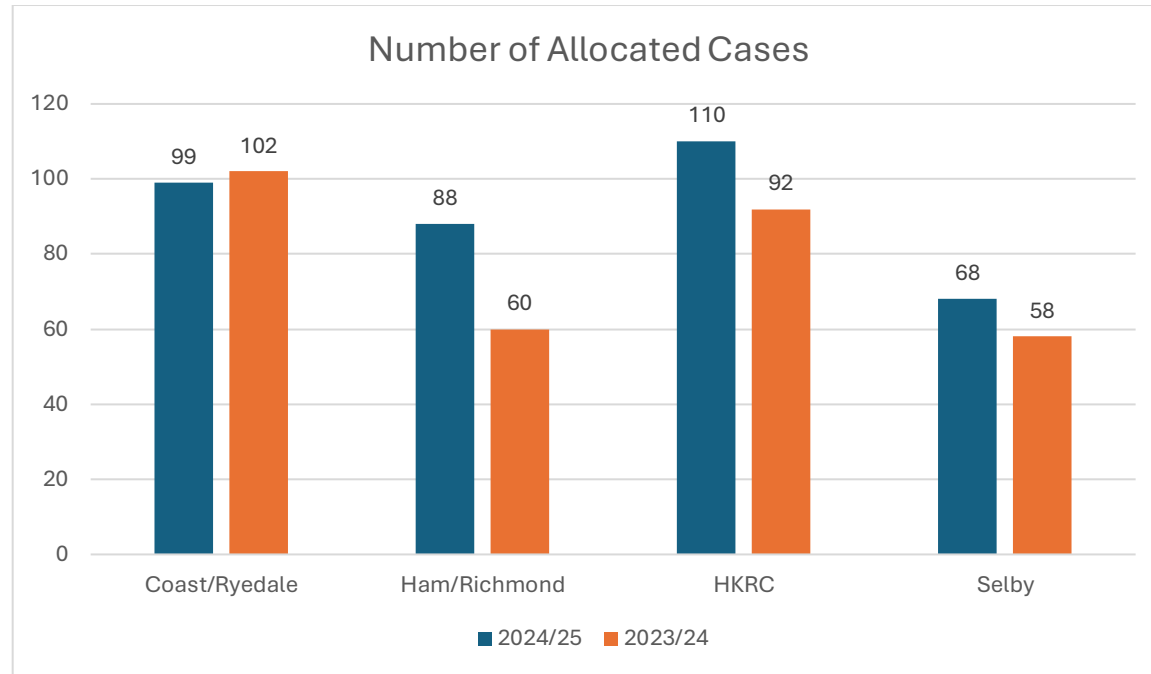
HRKC remains the busiest area however, this is also the most populated area which remains the logical reason for the higher number of referrals.

Advice Line Referral

2024/25	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Number of referrals	693	561	605	734	2593
Comparison					
2023/24					
Number of referrals	585	522	628	716	2451

As the data from Q1 and Q4 evidences these continue to be the busiest times of the school year.

The graph below gives further insight into the referrals being received and the levels of work being undertaken by the co-ordinators:



Total number 2024/25 = 365

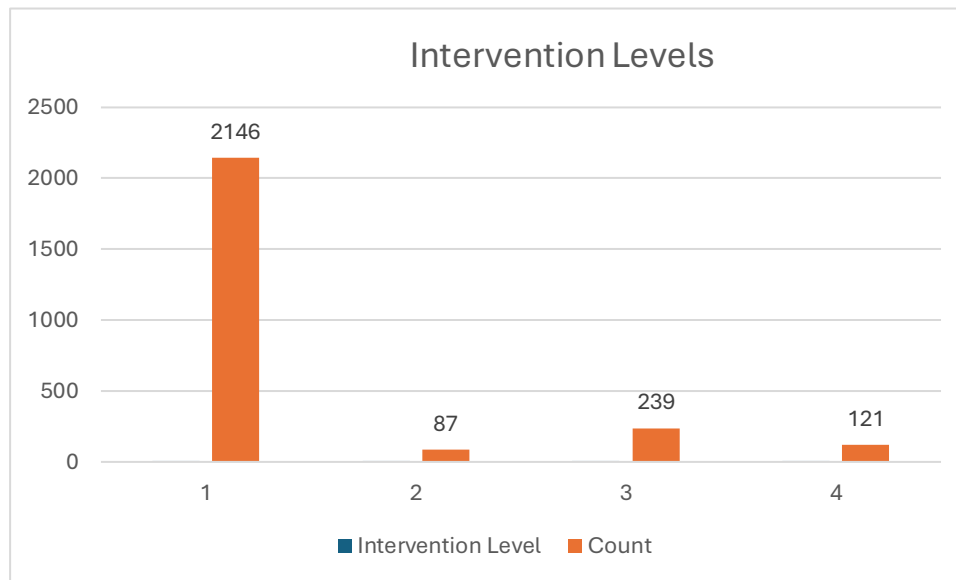
Total number 2023/24 = 312

The majority of allocated cases are levels 3 and 4 and for 2024/25. There were **239 Level 3** and **121 Level 4**.

Intervention Level	Count	%
1	2146	81.7%
2	87	3.3%
3	239	9.1%
4	121	4.6%

Grand Total

2593



Comparison of North Yorkshire and the national IAS Service:

NY SENDIAS Service funding for 2024/25 was £224,500 which left a short fall of approximately £7,000 by the end of the financial year. It is predicted that this will be in the region of £10,000 for the financial year 2025/26, should it not be successful to secure realistic joint funding from the Integrated Care Boards.

Local Authority	Pop 0-25	Area by KM2	Staffing per head of 0 -25 population 2024	Core budget	FTE 2024	Joint Commissioned	In house/ outsourced	Spend per head of population 2024	Budget % Diff 23-24	Budget % Diff 19-24
National			Median – 29,860					Median - £1.64		
North Yorkshire	154,053	8,037	33,490	£224,500	4.60	Yes	In house	1.46	100%	120%
Shropshire	80,675	3,197	31,357	£131,005	2.70	-	-	1.62	-	109%
Cheshire East	101,244		49,932	-	2.10		In house	-	-	-
East riding of Yorkshire	83,392	2,404	16,351	£165,000	5.10	Yes	In house	1.98	100%	160%
Staffordshire	236,258	2,620	29,519	£447,850	8.40	Yes	In house	1.90	107%	166%
Gloucestershire	176,125	2,653	47,069	£256,222	3.86	Yes	In house	1.45	129%	264%
Warrington	58,488	-	20,800	£130,000	3.00	Yes	In house	2.22	87%	356%
Warwickshire	164,976	1,975	47,101	£183,000	3.50	Yes	Outsourced	1.11	100%	133%
Herefordshire	48,018	2,180	26,666	£107,864	1.90	Yes	In house	2.25	159%	180%
Wiltshire	137,974	3,255	41,117	£154,056	3.50	Yes	Outsourced	1.12	99%	260%
Somerset	146,188	3,450	13,093	£446,000	11.70	Yes	In house	3.05	139%	414%

Source: [National SENDIASs Data Report 2024-25 - Final.pdf](#)

Service User Feedback/Evaluations

On the closing of case files all parents/carers and young people are requested to complete a feedback form.

IASSN requested that all SENDIAS services carried out a survey of 50 service users. This was North Yorkshire's results:

0 = lowest score

4 = highest score

Q1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?

Number of returns:	0	1	2	3	4
			1	3	7
Percentage:	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	27.27%	63.64%
	Total Returns		Return Rate		Mean Rating
	11		22.00%		3.55

Q2 How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?

Number of returns:	0	1	2	3	4
				1	10
Percentage:	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	90.91%
	Total Returns		Return Rate		Mean Rating
	11		22.00%		3.91

Q3 How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?

Number of returns:	0	1	2	3	4
				1	10

Percentage:

0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	90.91%
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Total Returns

11

Return Rate

22.00%

Mean Rating

3.91

Q4 What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?

Number of
returns:

0	1	2	3	4
				11

Percentage:

0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
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Total Returns

11

Return Rate

22.00%

Mean Rating

4.00

Q5 Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?

Number of
returns:

0	1	2	3	4
			2	9

Percentage:

0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	81.82%
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Total Returns

11

Return Rate

22.00%

Mean Rating

3.82

Q6 How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?

Number of
returns:

0	1	2	3	4
				11

Percentage:

0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
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Total Returns

11

Return Rate

22.00%

Mean Rating

4.00

See below examples of comments received in emails from parents:

"Thank you so much for the information you have sent us. It's very comprehensive which is useful to us. It also helps us to have been sent the information across a few emails in relevant sections.

We've got the annual review next week for our daughter so hopefully we'll be able to work out the best fit pathway for her.

Thank you so much again,"

"Thank you for response though and for all the amazing help you have provided over recent months.

We're still trying to get our son to a suitable SEN provision and the help/advice from yourselves has been much appreciated. Best wishes"

"Thank you for this. This is really helpful. It was also really helpful speaking to you the other day. You are the first person in 2 years who understood the issue and actually helped me better understand my child too. That in itself is so helpful – more than you can realize. Thanks

Appendix 1 – Glossary of Frequently Used SEND Acronyms

CPD	Continued Professional Development
CYP	Children and Young People
DfE	Department for Education
EHCAR	Education Health and Care Assessment Request
EPQA	Effective Practise and Quality Assurance
IASS	Information Advice Support Service
IASSN	Information Advice Support Service Network
IPSEA	Independent Advisor of Special Education Advice
NYES	North Yorkshire Education Service
PCV	Parent Carer Voice
SEN	Special Education Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENCO	Special Education Needs Co-ordinator
SENDIASS	Special Education Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service

