Information
Advice and
Support
Kent

A service for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
– helping you to make informed choices

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK)
is a statutory
Special Educational Needs and Disability, Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

Providing free confidential and impartial information, advice and support (IAS) to children and young people up to the age of 25 who have special educational needs and/or disability and their parents and carers. This includes health and social care where it impacts on education.

Service Report 1st October 2025 – 31st March 2026

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'We have received outstanding support from IASK. The service has been consistently professional, informative and reassuring.
(Feedback survey October-March 2025-2026)

Overview of IASK - Kerry Miles Service Coordinator

This report gives an overview of Information, Advice and Support Kent with statistics relating to outputs for the six- month period 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026 with comparisons to the same period last year or over the past five years.

Information Advice and Support Kent is commissioned by Kent County Council with funding from Education, health and social care. As an 'In-house' service we work at 'arms-length' to the Local Authority to provide a free, impartial and confidential Special educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) as identified in the code of practice. The service operates in line with agreed national quality standards and contribute to the SENDIASS National reporting to the Department for Education.

The service receives funding from Education, Health and Social Care and recruits 8.9 full time equivalent staff. We have continued to have an additional member of staff funded through the Dynamic Support Service to provide support for families where a child or young person has mental health issues that are below the threshold for accessing support via the Dynamic Support Database, which has complimented and supported the work of the whole team.

The service has a helpline operating between 9.00 and 5.00 year round, providing information, advice, and signposting to other services and resources. The helpline responded to **3544** telephone calls and emails representing a **2.4%** increase for the same 6 month period last year. Due to the volume of calls and emails received on a daily basis, the service is unable to sustain responding directly to telephone calls. We monitor call back responses to ensure that service users are responded to in a timely and fair manner. **98%** of calls and emails were responded to within two working days for a first call back. (see chart page 6).

The service is pleased to report excellent satisfaction user feedback and have maintained a high standard of service delivery. Staff have ensured that the service operates a 'Tell it Once' system and are trained to record accurate and concise case notes so that clients are not asked to repeat information about previous involvement with the service. We have noted that **37%** of families returning to us when a new concern arises.

The service continuously seek opportunities to engage with young people, promote the service, and encourage their involvement in service developments. We are pleased to have the support of a young person representative as part of our steering group. We have sought feedback about our service leaflet and the outcome is that some young people felt that the service leaflet would benefit from being updated, more pictures and particularly the addition of QR Codes. Working with a group of young people to redesign the leaflet is a development target for 2026-2027.

All staff have undertaken three levels of independent training covering SEND legislation, funded through the National Network for SENDIASS. New volunteers are being trained to carry out their role. Staying up to date is very important to the team, therefore we invite colleagues from other services and agencies to join our team meetings to share their information and network.

Continued effective networking with Kent partners, including working to increase awareness of the service in Thanet. Regular attendance at the SE Regional Network meeting for SEND Information, Advice and support services, plus arranging and attending regional network meetings related to children and young people.

Intervention Levels

Four Intervention Levels are used to describe the support provided by the service as defined nationally and used by the Network for SENDIAS Services for reporting purposes.

Intervention Level 1 describes the provision of general information, advice and signposting provided to a parent, carer, child, young person or professional and is provided in a variety of ways:

- Through the helpline **459** enquiries were recorded during this six month period which included information provided to **32** professionals .
- Families value the opportunity to speak with us during our outreach community work at coffee mornings, voluntary groups, family hub SEN drop-ins and range of networking events and opportunities to raise awareness of the service. Reaching **266** parents, **112** children and young people, **164** practitioners from various Kent agencies and service.
- We offered **9** Virtual Workshops covering a range of topics, received **52** bookings with good attendance. Feedback was extremely positive with **100%** of respondents saying they would recommend the workshops, and they scored a 4 or 5 (high) in response to their learning in line with workshop objectives. Feedback from a parent *'I have more confidence in how to recognise what should be happening and what to do when it isn't'.* Two bespoke workshops were delivered to families supported by East Kent Carers and Flourishing Foster Carer receiving positive feedback.
- Information provided through social media via the IASK website which is fully accessible including information in the full range of languages. Downloadable resources are available and signposting to other relevant sites. The website had **5,746** new users which was **13%** lower than the same time last year, and **21,594** page views representing a **17%** reduction. Just under **3%** of website views are from young people. We recognise that website needs updating with input from parents and young people and is a development target for the service in 2026-2027
- We regularly post on facebook and have reached **58,527**, **1965** page visits and **118** new followers

Intervention Level 2 is provided to families who require information and advice that is tailored to their individual needs and circumstances via telephone calls, bookable appointments and exchange of emails. **1170** interventions were recorded at this level.

Our work at intervention levels 1 and 2 aligns with our aim to reach families early, helping them understand and navigate SEND processes and take an active part in discussions.

Intervention Level 3 encompasses intense work provided by four Family Involvement Workers across 4 districts of Kent.
Their role is to support families in a variety of ways including meeting preparation, to understand the person's viewpoint and help them to focus on what they need to talk about at their meeting. The meeting could be with school/college/training or early years provider; the local authority or at multi-agency meetings.

Over the past 6 months we have received **215** requests for meeting support. Parents value support at meetings and will often rescheduled their meetings to accommodate IASK availability, resulting in the service meeting **98%** of requests. Our role in the meetings is to aid understanding, encourage open communication and empower the person to speak for themselves.

The service also supports families with paperwork which includes supporting understanding of local procedures, reports and legal documents, including completing on-line forms with families.

We have supported **674** families via telephone appointments, **414** via video calls and **62** at in person meetings at our either the office based in Maidstone, or in the local community. Families also have the opportunity to engage with a family involvement worker at a bookable information session on-line or at a local drop-in in the community. Over the past 6 months **45** sessions were offered with **117** attendees.

A dedicated Family Involvement Worker is always allocated to a young person if they contact the service directly themselves. Parents are always encouraged to include older children in discussions, where appropriate. **90** young people over age **16** were accessing the service with support from their parents. **One** young person under age 16 and **11** young people over age 16 were receiving direct support from a caseworker through a total of **66** contacts. **24** young people felt confident to be actively involved in their meeting.

Our highest number of referrals were about appealing to the Special Educational Needs and Disability tribunal because families are unhappy with the contents of their child's Education, Health and Care Plan, mainly about the 'placement' (school, college, post 16 provider). Encompassing Intervention Level 2 and 3, **803** families have received information, advice and support and **258** meetings have taken place to support and empower completion of appeal related paperwork, which included **84** lodged appeals.

Intervention Level 4 is provided to families who would otherwise find it difficult to manage the paperwork and meetings without a high level of support. For example they might have a learning difficulty, high anxiety, or high level of needs due to their own disability. The team provides advocacy support empowering parents or young people to participate fully in the hearing. If a parent or young person struggles to express their views at the hearing, with their permission and the Judge's, the service can provide a level of representation on the day. The service has provided virtual support at: **18** mediations, **10** Telephone case management/Judicial Alternative Dispute Resolution hearings and **38** tribunal hearings. With IASK supporting families to understand their options throughout the process and to support negotiations, **33** appeals were resolved before the hearing date.

Key Performance Indicators From 1st October 2025 – 31 March 2026:

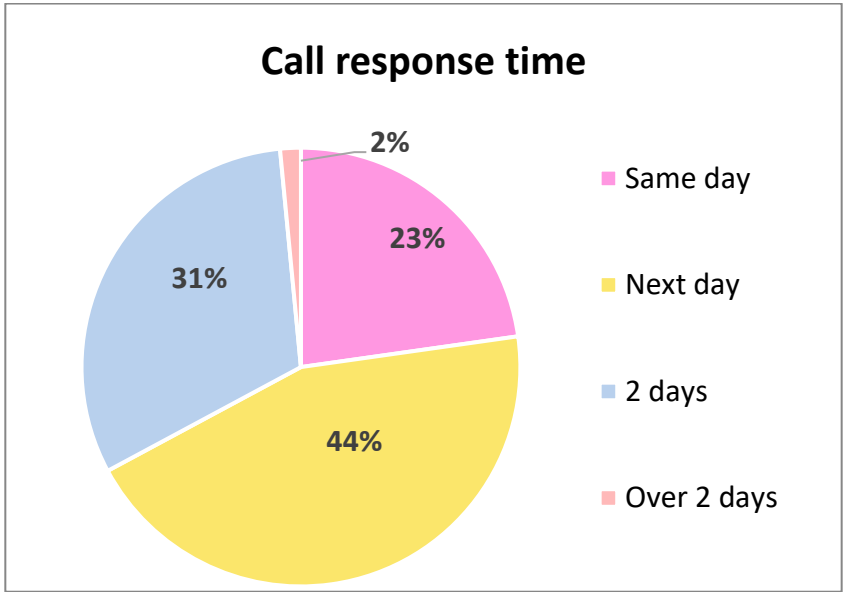
IASK has effective systems in place to monitor performance and these are reviewed monthly at team meetings.

84% of service users found it easy (3*) or very easy (4*) to get in touch with us, *(Q1 user survey)* just falling short by 6%

95% of service users found the service very helpful to them, *(Q2 user survey)* **exceeding** the target of 90%.

96% of Parents had support at meetings when requested, **exceeding** the target of 90%.

98% calls were responded to within two working days **exceeding** the target of 97%.



Impact:

The service has conducted user feedback surveys for cases that closed between 1 October 2025 and 31 March 2026 parents and young people were contacted, who had given us permission to seek their feedback. Feedback was sought from families who received more than 2 hours support during this period who are identified as receiving an intervention level 2,3 or 4. **71** responses were received resulting in a **27%** the return rate for the 6 months is better than the past couple of years.

95% of respondents felt that we understood their questions concerns well (3*) or **very well**

100% of respondents felt IASK **listened** to their views

95% of respondents rated IASK as good (3*) or **very good** at being neutral, fair and unbiased

95% of respondents were likely (3*) or **extremely likely** to recommend the service to others

95% felt **very satisfied** with the service they received.

95% of respondents felt that the information advice and support provided has made a **great** deal of difference

For full details about the user feedback responses, please see Appendix 2.

Thank you emails from service users outside of the usual survey:

‘We want to say again how grateful we are for all your support. You made a very big difference for our family and for X, and this is something we will never forget’.

‘We don't know how to thank you for everything you have done for the two children we love so much.
We now have a start date for F and have been to an initial meeting with the school.
We could not have done any of this without you’.

X has always been extremely professional and patient and genuinely committed to getting to us to the final positive outcome. X was consistently responsive, approachable, and supportive, which helped make a very difficult process feel easier to manage.’

‘Thank you for your detailed and helpful response — that clarifies things very well’.

‘Just a very quick note to say that X’s life has been transformed since starting X school.
We appreciate it is early days but we are so grateful for the guidance and support you kindly showed us in getting us to this point’.

Case Study:

Callum age 16 has autism and had not attended school, full time, since 2024. The Local Authority agreed to a change of placement, but following a taster day, the proposed new school declined to offer a place. The current school used 'isolation' to manage behaviour, and coupled with declining mental health, Callum could not attend school. In June 2025 an appeal for Education Otherwise than in School (EOTIS) was lodged.

Support

Since 2023 IASK supported parent at multiple school meetings and annual reviews supporting the family to understand processes and procedures and to share their views to seek the right support for Callum. In June 2025 parent requested support at mediation with the local authority. Following the mediation, the local authority agreed to amend the Education, Health and Care Plan to reflect current needs.

Callum continued to find it difficult to attend school, parent requested support to appeal for EOTIS and begun to self-fund tuition. IASK supported throughout the appeal process, which included explaining the appeal process, d provided support to complete relevant paperwork and putting forward the request for an EOTIS package.

Parent wanted to get the right support in place in the time frame for the young person to take GCSEs and start Post 16 provision in September 2026. During this time the Family Involvement Worker also had regular involvement with Callum to ensure his views and wishes and post 16 choices were shared.

Impact

Parent was empowered to ensure that the EHC plan was amended to correctly reflect Callum's needs, which resulted in the LA agreeing to EOTIS in October 2025.

Through negotiation, parent was able to seek funding for the package and in April 2026 parent felt confident to withdraw her appeal as all matters had been resolved.

Callum has also been able to secure his choice of post 16 provision for September 2026. The family have written to the IASK Coordinator expressing their thanks and praise saying that the support received 'made a huge difference and made a real positive impact overall in order to get them where they are today.

Statistical breakdown – referrals

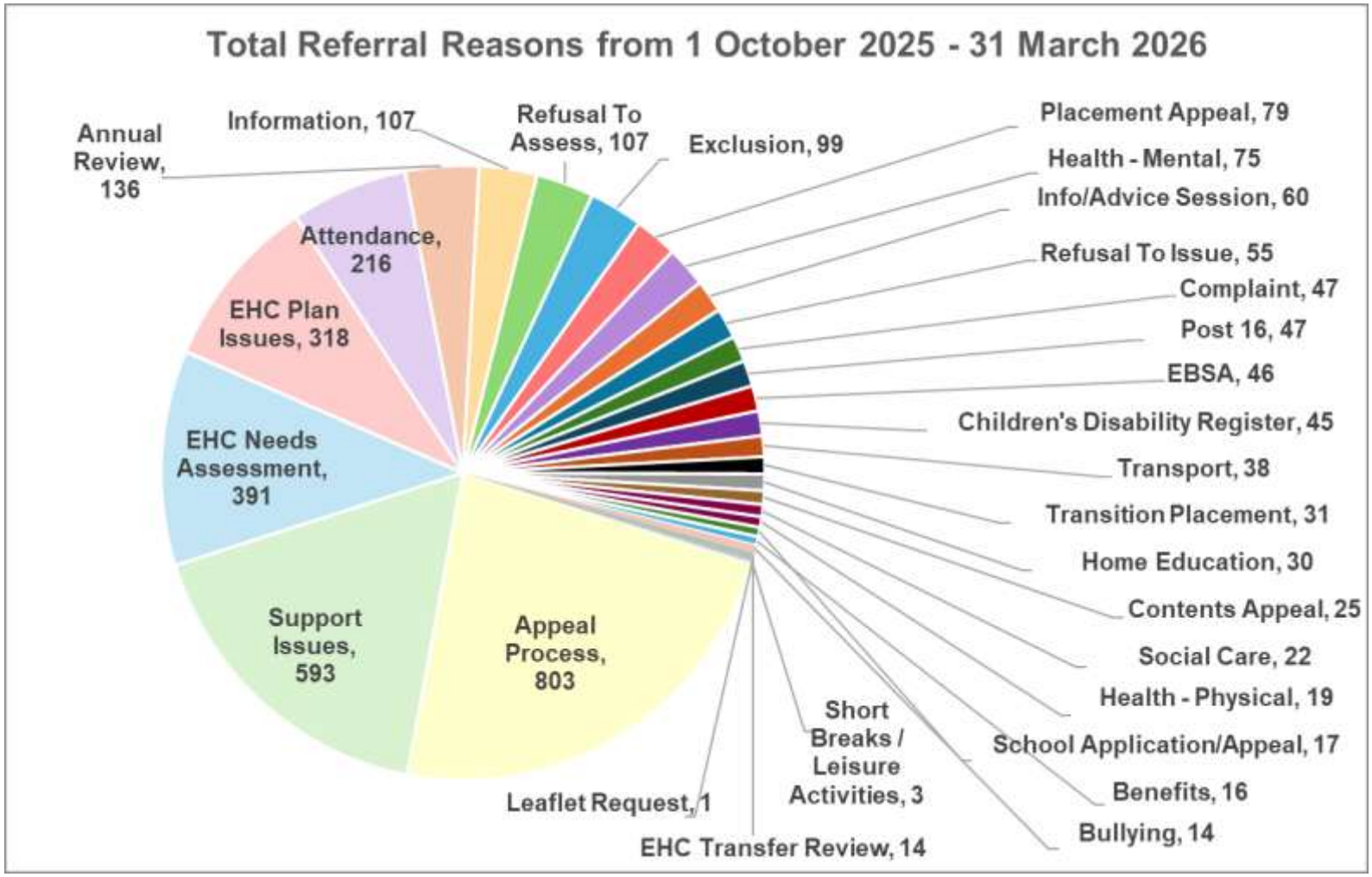
To give an understanding of why parents and young people contact the service, the graphs on the following pages show referral reasons across a number of indicators during the period 1 October 2025– 31 March 2026.

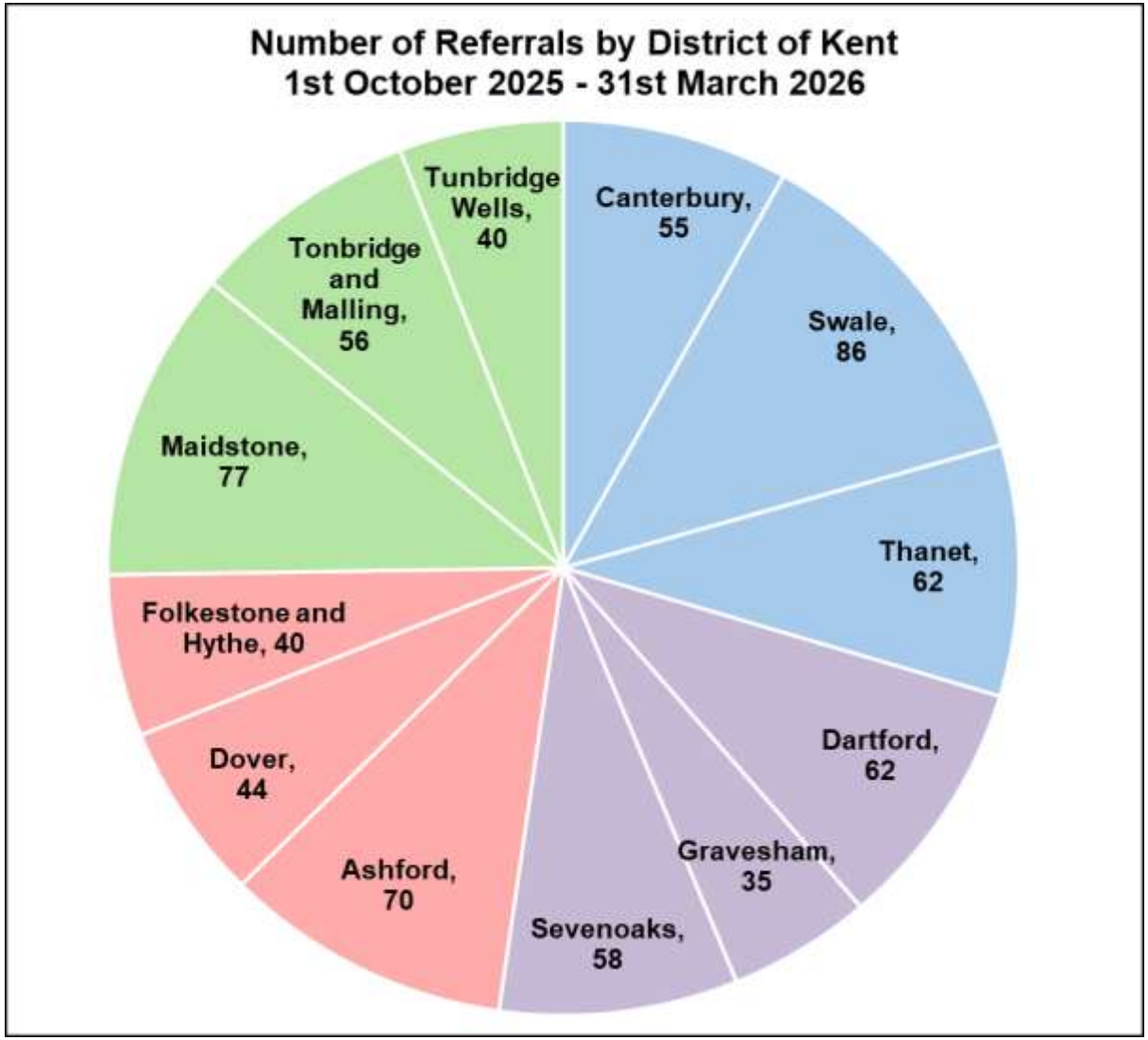
A 'Referral' is created to record details of a new enquiry or a new case 'note'. There may be several contacts with the service before the referral is closed, dependent on the individual circumstances and level of support. When a caller returns to the service with a different query, or after their previous query had been closed, a 'new referral is opened.

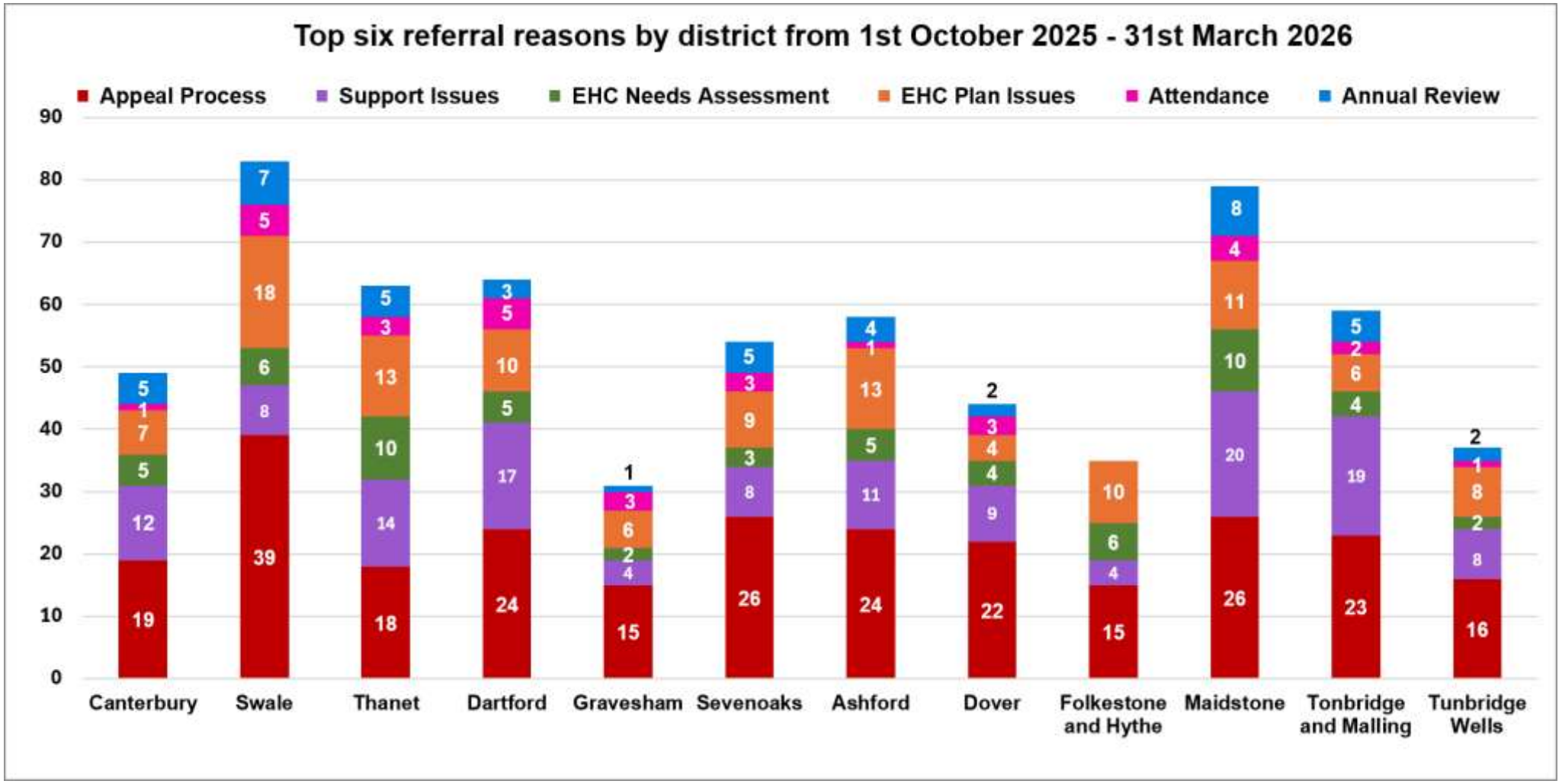
More than one referral reason can be recorded against a referral as conversations often cover multiple reasons for the call. This means the number of overall referral reasons is larger than the number of service users recorded.

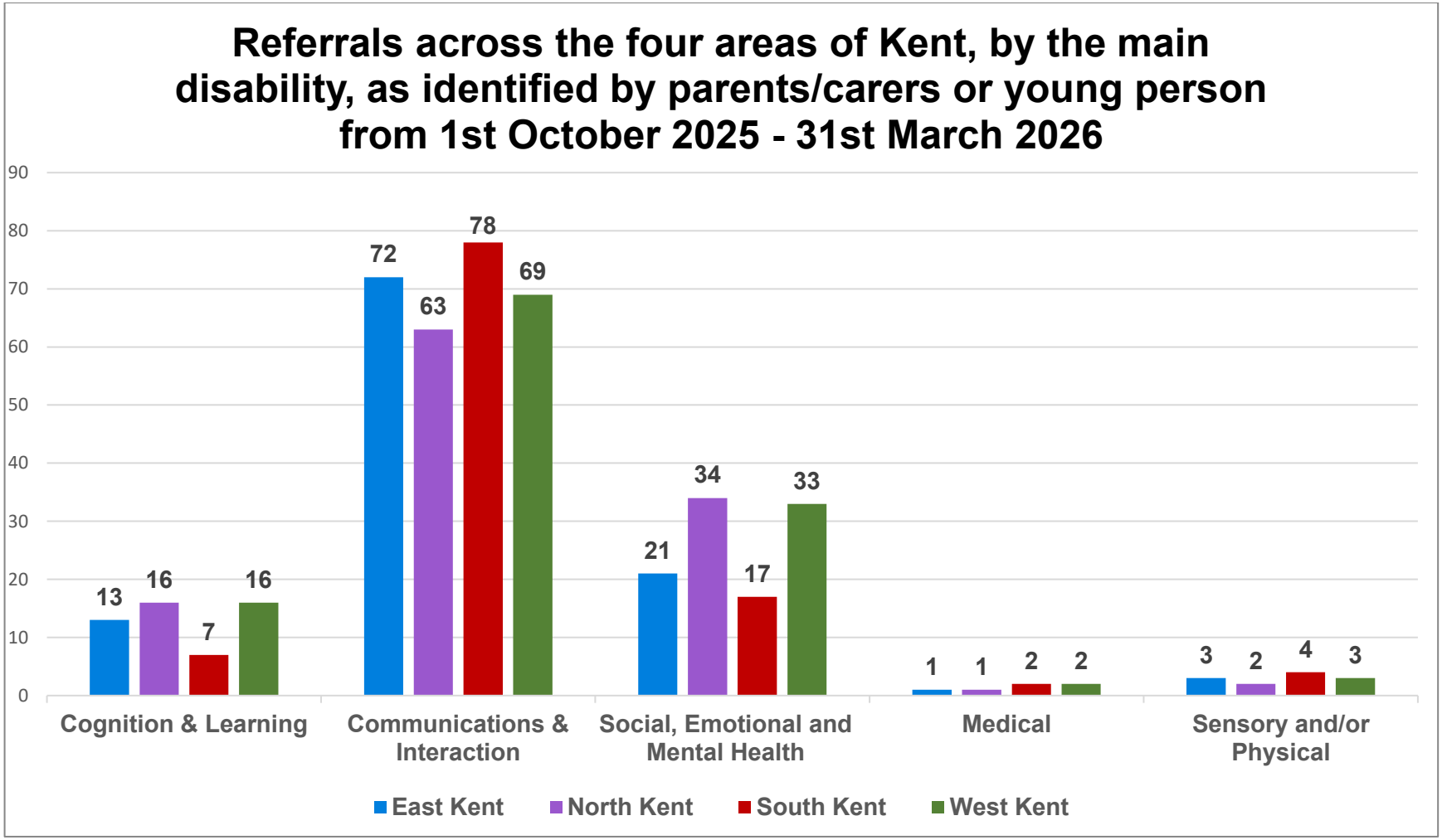
Conversations related to mental health referrals are generally about how this impacts on the child or young person's education. You will see from the referral reasons chart on the next page that referrals are recorded when the overall reason for the call is about Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA), mental health and physical health. The chart below shows in-depth analysis of the referral discussions relating to mental health:

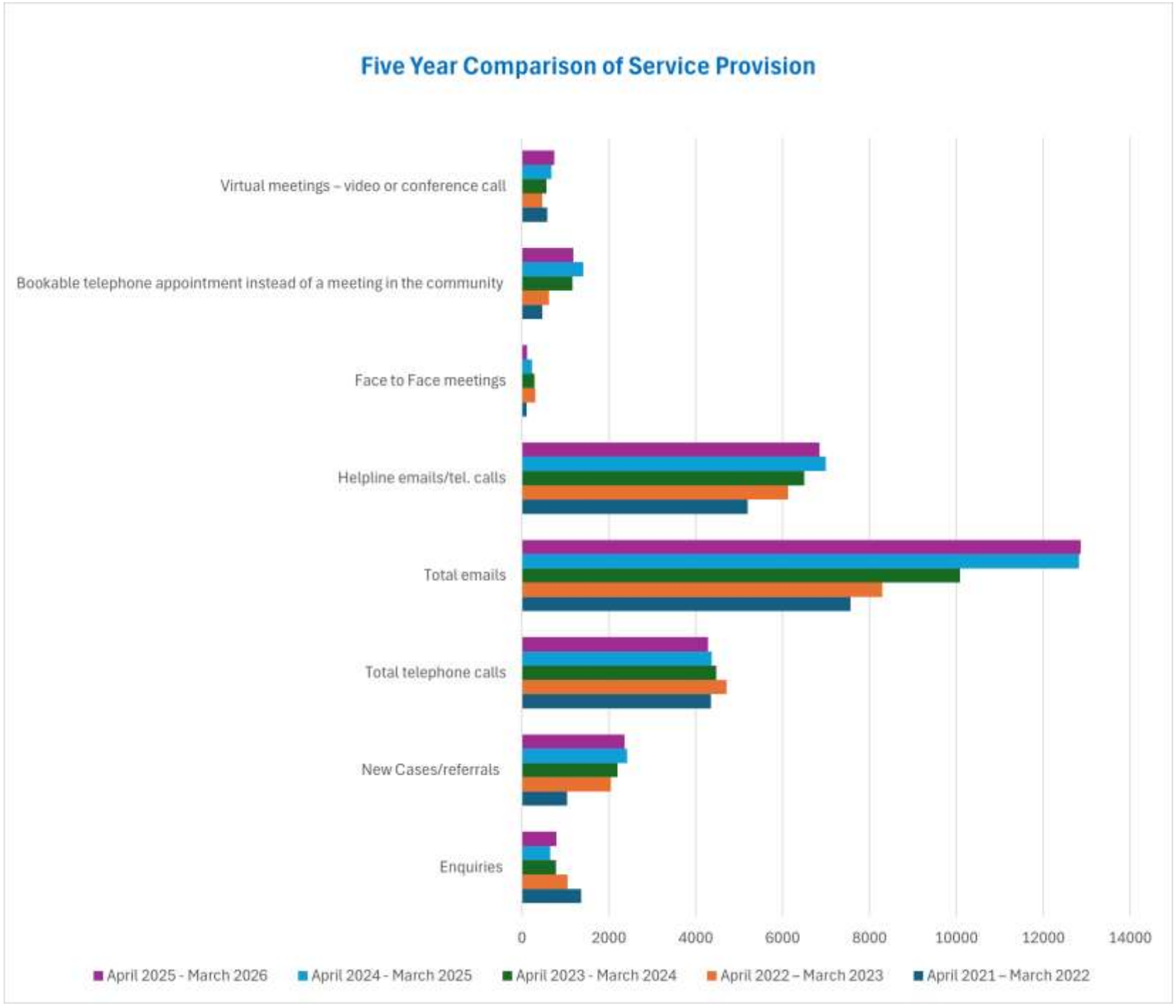
Number of Health Discussions 01/10/25-31/03/26	
CAMHS	21
Counselling	5
GP/Paediatrician	23
Kent School Health	3
Medical Needs	10
Mental Health Organisations	2
Non attendance	1
OT	6
Reduced timetable	2
Right to Choose	6
SALT	11
Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)	4
Total	**94**


Total Referral Reasons from 1 October 2025 - 31 March 2026
Annual Review, 136
Information, 107
Refusal To Assess, 107
Exclusion, 99
Placement Appeal, 79
Health - Mental, 75
Info/Advice Session, 60
Refusal To Issue, 55
Complaint, 47
Post 16, 47
EBSA, 46
Children's Disability Register, 45
Transport, 38
Transition Placement, 31
Home Education, 30
Contents Appeal, 25
Social Care, 22
Health - Physical, 19
School Application/Appeal, 17
Benefits, 16
Bullying, 14
Short Breaks / Leisure Activities, 3
Leaflet Request, 1
EHC Transfer Review, 14
Attendance, 216
EHC Plan Issues, 318
EHC Needs Assessment, 391
Support Issues, 593
Appeal Process, 803


Number of Referrals by District of Kent
1st October 2025 - 31st March 2026
Canterbury, 55
Swale, 86
Thanet, 62
Dartford, 62
Gravesham, 35
Sevenoaks, 58
Ashford, 70
Dover, 44
Folkestone and Hythe, 40
Maidstone, 77
Tonbridge and Malling, 56
Tunbridge Wells, 40


Top six referral reasons by district from 1st October 2025 - 31st March 2026
Appeal Process
Support Issues
EHC Needs Assessment
EHC Plan Issues
Attendance
Annual Review
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Canterbury
19
12
5
7
1
5
Swale
39
8
6
18
5
7
Thanet
18
14
10
13
3
5
Dartford
24
17
5
10
5
3
Gravesham
15
4
2
6
3
1
Sevenoaks
26
8
3
9
3
5
Ashford
24
11
5
13
1
4
Dover
22
9
4
4
3
2
Folkestone and Hythe
15
4
6
10
Maidstone
26
20
10
11
4
8
Tonbridge and Malling
23
19
4
6
2
5
Tunbridge Wells
16
8
2
8
1
2


Referrals across the four areas of Kent, by the main disability, as identified by parents/carers or young person from 1st October 2025 - 31st March 2026
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
13
16
7
16
72
63
78
69
21
34
17
33
1
1
2
2
3
2
4
3
Cognition & Learning
Communications & Interaction
Social, Emotional and Mental Health
Medical
Sensory and/or Physical
East Kent
North Kent
South Kent
West Kent


Five Year Comparison of Service Provision
Virtual meetings – video or conference call
Bookable telephone appointment instead of a meeting in the community
Face to Face meetings
Helpline emails/tel. calls
Total emails
Total telephone calls
New Cases/referrals
Enquiries
0
2000
4000
6000
8000
10000
12000
14000
April 2025 - March 2026
April 2024 - March 2025
April 2023 - March 2024
April 2022 – March 2023
April 2021 – March 2022

IASK Mission Statement

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) believes children and young people thrive and achieve their potential when all partners (parents, children, young people and professionals) work together to plan appropriate interventions and educational, health and social care provision.

Our purpose is to provide legally based information, advice and support to empower parents and their children and young people to make informed decisions.

IASK promotes working together based on mutual respect of the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents. We are committed to providing a flexible and supportive service responsive to individual needs and to enable parents, children and young people to be involved in decisions about education, health and social care as it relates to them.

Service Overview

The Children and Families Act 2014 Part 3, Section 32 states (1) *'A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people for whom it is responsible, and the parents of children for whom it is responsible, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the special educational needs of the children or young people concerned'.* (2) *'A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people in its area with a disability, and the parents of children in its area with a disability, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the disabilities of the children or young people concerned.'*

Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK) is the SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS) for Kent County Council residents. IASK provides confidential and impartial information, advice and support and operates at arm's-length from the local authority to ensure parents/children and young people have confidence in the impartiality of the support and information provided by the Service.

The Service's focus is on education and health and social care as it relates to the child/young person's special educational needs and disabilities. For health-related queries the service signposts to Local Healthwatch, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and to SEAP for advocacy for health.

IASK has a steering management group which meets three/four times a year to monitor service operations. The Service Coordinator formally thanks the Steering Group for their time and commitment to attending meetings and supporting the management of the service.

Appendix 1

Information, Advice and Support Kent Steering Group Members

Amy Chivers - Parent from West Kent – Chair

Becky Clark, Parent / Representative of 21 Together

Nicola Crowfoot - Includes us 2 Parent Driven Charity nicola@includesus2.org.uk

Zoe Delderfield, Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board

Natalie Hanchett – Parent East Kent

Jayden Killacky – Young Person representative

Sharon King - Parent/ Representative of Kent PACT (Parent Carer Forum)

Kayleigh Leonard Young Person representative and Looked after Children

Kerry Miles, Service Co-ordinator for Information, Advice and Support Kent Email: iask@kent.gov.uk Website www.kent.gov.uk/iask

Siobhan Price, Kent County Council Mainstream Inclusion

Katie Wicks, Representative of SNAAP Telephone: 01227 367555 Email: info@snaap.org.uk Website: www.snaap.org.uk/

Information Advice and Support Kent

Appendix 2

Feedback from Information, Advice and Support Kent User Survey October 2025- March 2026

For cases closed between the period of 1 October 2025 - 31 March 2026 a total of **71** parents and young people were contacted, who had given us permission to seek their feedback. Feedback was sought from families who received more than 2 hours support during this period who are identified as receiving an intervention level 2, 3 or 4.

71 responses were received resulting in a **27%** return rate.

84% of respondents found it easy (3*) or very easy to get in touch with us

95% of respondents felt that we understood their questions concerns **very well** (4*)

100% of respondents felt IASK listened to their views

100% felt the information and advice provided met their needs

95% of respondents rated IASK as good (3*) or very good at being neutral, fair and unbiased

95% of responses recorded very satisfied with the service

95% of respondents were **extremely likely** to recommend the service to others

95% of respondents felt that the information advice and support provided has made a **great** deal of difference

Top five examples of the difference made:

79% feel their child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved
68% I feel more involved in my child's education
63% feel more confident
63% have a greater understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children/young people with SEN
63% feel that their child's needs are better understood than they were. (Please also see charts on page 21)

Comments about the service:

'I just can't sing you service's praise enough, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it, it was absolutely brilliant'

'As an advocate for us parents during the appeal and Tribunal process , you have been invaluable in helping us navigate such a complex and dysfunctional system to achieve the outcome we desperately wanted for our son and which has meant we believe he is now in the right school setting for him to reach his full potential with the support he needs'.

'The help that myself and my son have received from X has been outstanding through the whole three four month period help in every way with emails explaining stuff the tribunal meeting deadlines informing us and explaining. I could not have done it without X she is one and a million and the whole service was absolutely 110% I would recommend it to everyone I know I have told people about it already'.

'We felt genuinely supported throughout the whole process, especially thanks to X, whose guidance, availability and empathy made a huge difference to our family. We are extremely grateful and would highly recommend this service'.

'I now have a better understanding on where my child stands within the school education and also now know my rights and also his rights IASK have helped me so much to understand and know my rights for my child I couldn't thank them enough'.

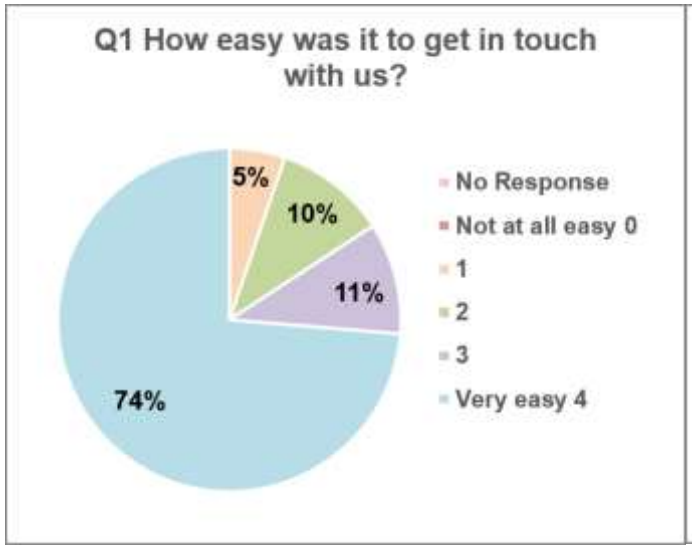
'Through the intervention of IASK, I can now see a brighter future for my son. Your support has given me involvement and answers to my to my questions concerning my disabled son. Thank you'.

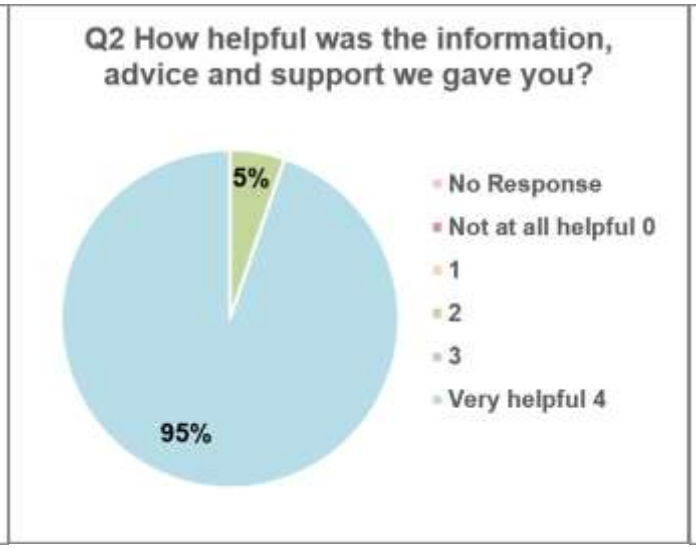
'The lady who supported me went over the call of duty. I am totally blind and she helped as much as she could, if she couldn't help she me put me in touch with someone who could. She was absolutely fantastic'.

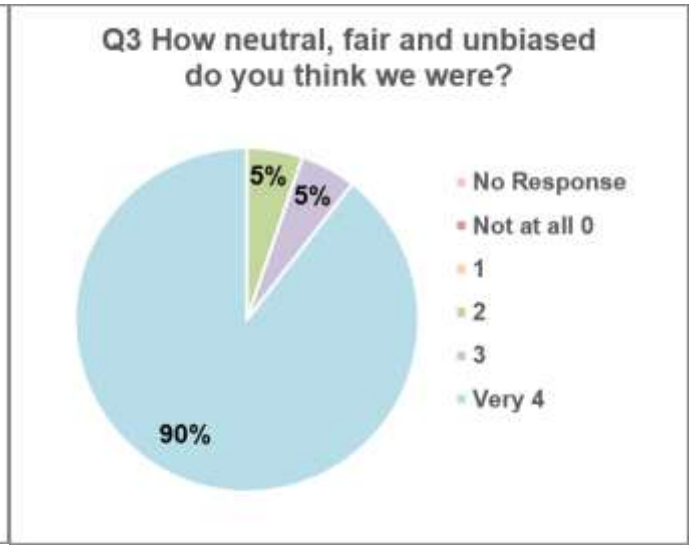
'I was also contacting other departments and it was easy to contact you. You were very quick to reply and kept information for me. You have one person who supports you the whole time, it wasn't different people each time that you would have to explain things to again. I got all the help I needed'.

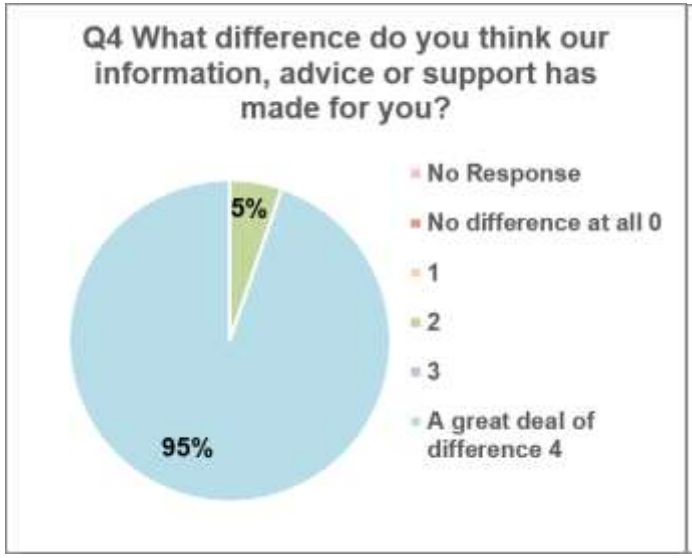
Suggestions to improve the service:

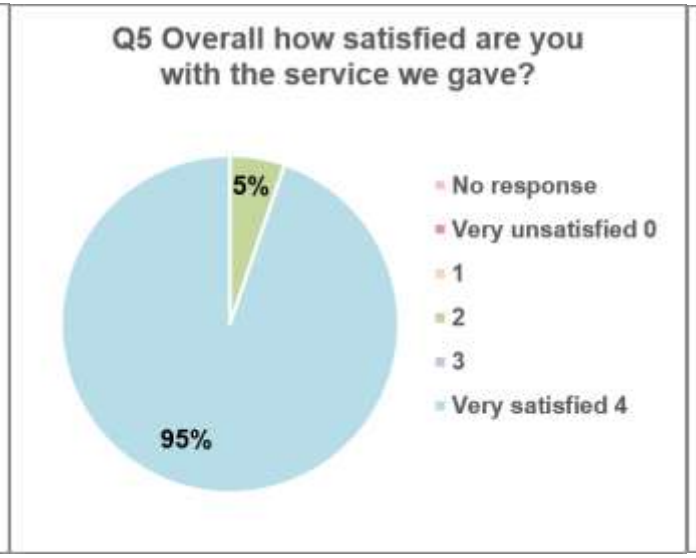
'Sometimes the person I was allocated was not so prompt. In helping dealing with my situation. She would take time in replying to me. Then when she did reply would say can I speak to the other person. Which made me feel she didn't want to speak to me. I did raise this with my KCC early help practitioner'. As this was anonymous feedback, this comment has been addressed with everyone in the team.

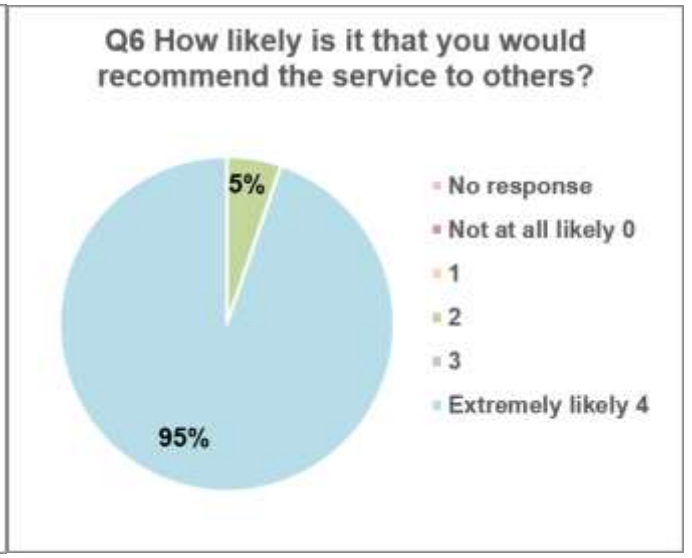

Q1 How easy was it to get in touch with us?
5%
10%
11%
74%
No Response
Not at all easy 0
1
2
3
Very easy 4

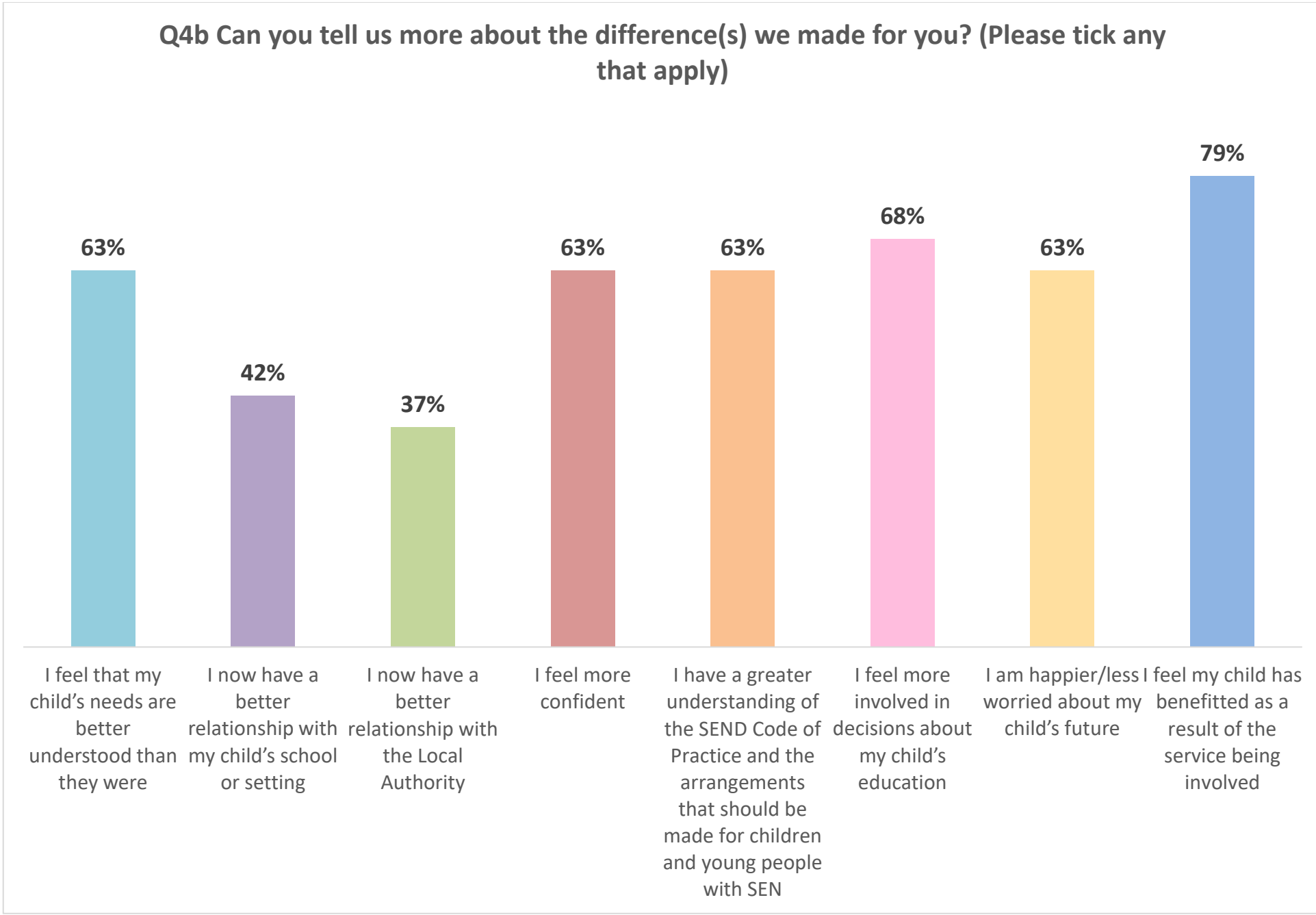

Q2 How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?
5%
95%
No Response
Not at all helpful 0
1
2
3
Very helpful 4


Q3 How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?
5%
5%
90%
No Response
Not at all 0
1
2
3
Very 4


Q4 What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?
5%
95%
No Response
No difference at all 0
1
2
3
A great deal of difference 4


Q5 Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?
5%
95%
No response
Very unsatisfied 0
1
2
3
Very satisfied 4


Q6 How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?
5%
95%
No response
Not at all likely 0
1
2
3
Extremely likely 4


Q4b Can you tell us more about the difference(s) we made for you? (Please tick any that apply)
63%
42%
37%
63%
63%
68%
63%
79%
I feel that my child's needs are better understood than they were
I now have a better relationship with my child's school or setting
I now have a better relationship with the Local Authority
I feel more confident
I have a greater understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and the arrangements that should be made for children and young people with SEN
I feel more involved in decisions about my child's education
I am happier/less worried about my child's future
I feel my child has benefitted as a result of the service being involved