



SEND Information, Advice and Support Service

Results of SENDIASS Consultation Report

August 2022

Introduction

Between 29th June 2022 and 8th August 2022, Bristol City Council carried out a consultation on the draft [commissioning strategy](#) for the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.

Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council have a statutory duty to fund impartial, confidential, and accessible information, advice and support to the parents of children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND); as well as to young people (age 16+) with special educational needs and/or disability. This includes advice on education, social care and health related topics. This service is called the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS Service). The three neighbouring local authorities currently commission their SENDIAS Services separately from one another.

The council is not seeking to make any significant changes to the current services. However, we have updated our commissioning strategy to propose that the three neighbouring councils work in partnership to contract a single SENDIAS Service that would be delivered across the area. This should provide a streamlined service across the region.

In addition to consulting on this proposal, the consultation looked at how young people and families find out about services, how they want to contact them and how they best access information.

This document summaries the feedback received and Bristol City Council's response to the key issues raised during the consultation.

Promotion

The intended audience for the consultation was the parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and the current provider.

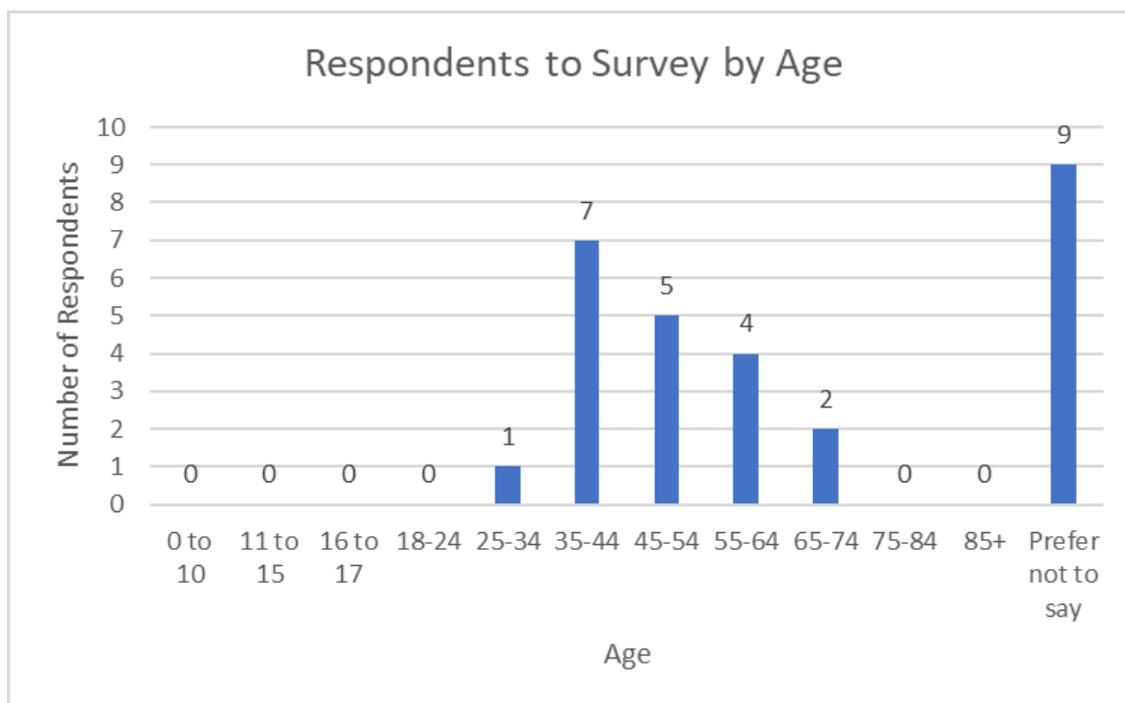
The consultation was promoted through channels including School distribution lists, the Local Offer website, The SEND Community of Groups, Bristol Autism Team professionals, Bristol Parent Carer Forum, Bristol's SEND Local Offer Facebook page, Director's Bulletin for Headteachers & Academy Principals, ASK Bristol newsletter, Youth Council and the Listening Partnership.

Who responded?

Consultation Survey:

28 responses were received, with most responses either not stating their age or being over the age of 35. Responses were recorded from across the region.

Figure 1 – Respondents to Survey by Age



Despite promotion through multiple channels, young people’s engagement with the online survey was limited, although some responses may include parents or carers and answering the questions on behalf of a child or young person.

Alongside the survey, a consultation event took place with a group of 12 young people with Special Educational Needs from the Listening Partnership. Additionally, consultation took place with the youth voice conference and 2 events were held with parent/carers. These views are included below.

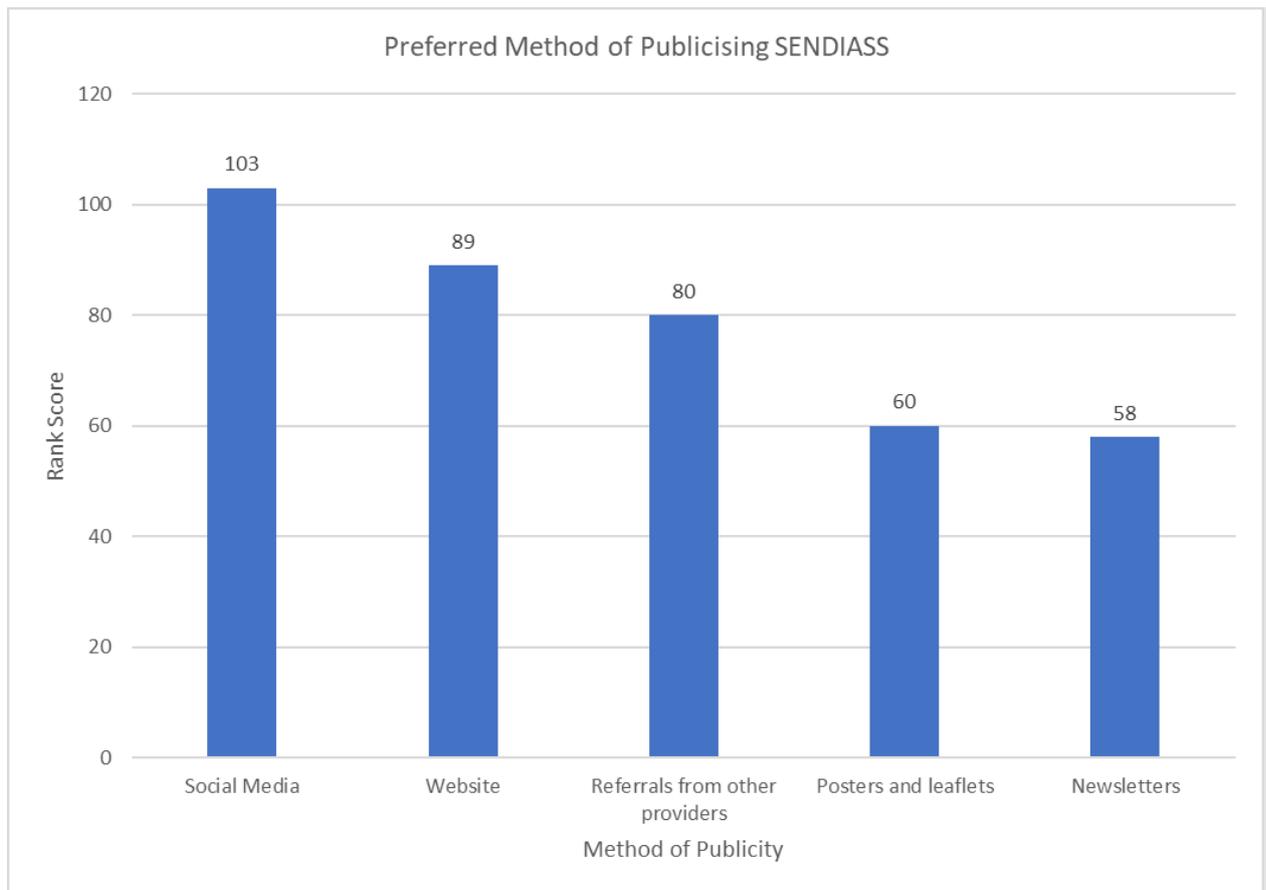
Results

Visibility of Service:

The consultation firstly sought views on the visibility of the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS Service). Respondents were asked to rank which method of publicising the Service is most effective (from 1 being most effective to 5 least effective). 26 people responded to this question.

Each method of publicising SENDIAS was given a rank score. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts. Figure 2 shows that Social Media and the Website were ranked highest, and Newsletters were ranked as least effective.

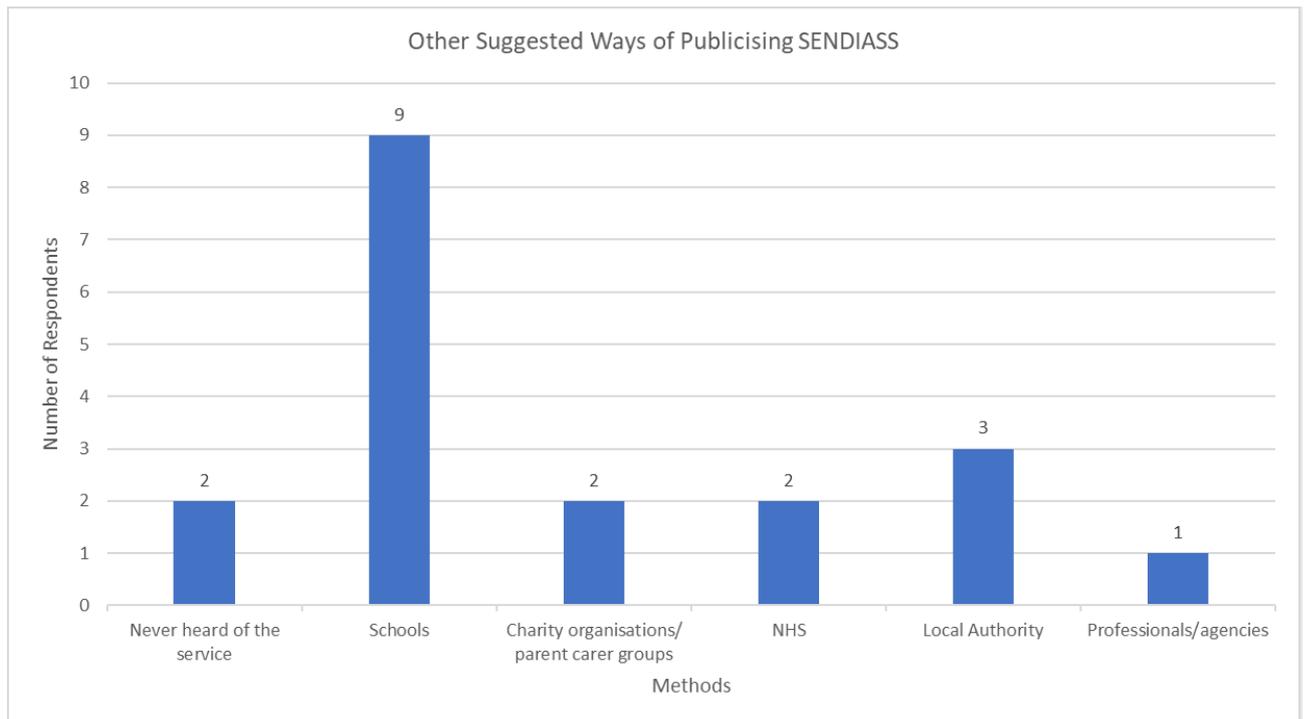
Figure 2 – Rank score to Question 1



Respondents were then asked to suggest other ways of increasing the visibility of the service and several suggested this is best done through schools.

15 respondents provided further comments to this question. The main comments received in response are summarised in the below chart:

Figure 3 – Additional comments on question 1.



In addition to this, 92.3% of respondents said they were more likely to contact the SENDIAS Service if their child’s school put them in touch with the service. 7.7% said they were less likely to contact the SENDIAS Service if their child’s school put them in touch with the service.

Listening Partnership:

The group of young people from the Listening Partnership suggested the following ways of receiving information about the SENDIAS Service:

- Parents
- Schools/college, SENDCO
- Mentor/tutor/therapist
- Word of mouth
- Friends

It was also suggested that young people felt supported at primary school and at college but had struggled most in secondary school where they felt unknown. This suggests more outreach work needs to be done for this age group so young people can understand their rights and advocate for themselves.

Youth Voice Conference:

Children and young suggested more promotion – for example, in school assemblies and taster sessions, mainstream marketing such as advertising on buses, social media (FB, Tik Tock, Instagram). They also suggested there should be stronger links between schools and community organisations.

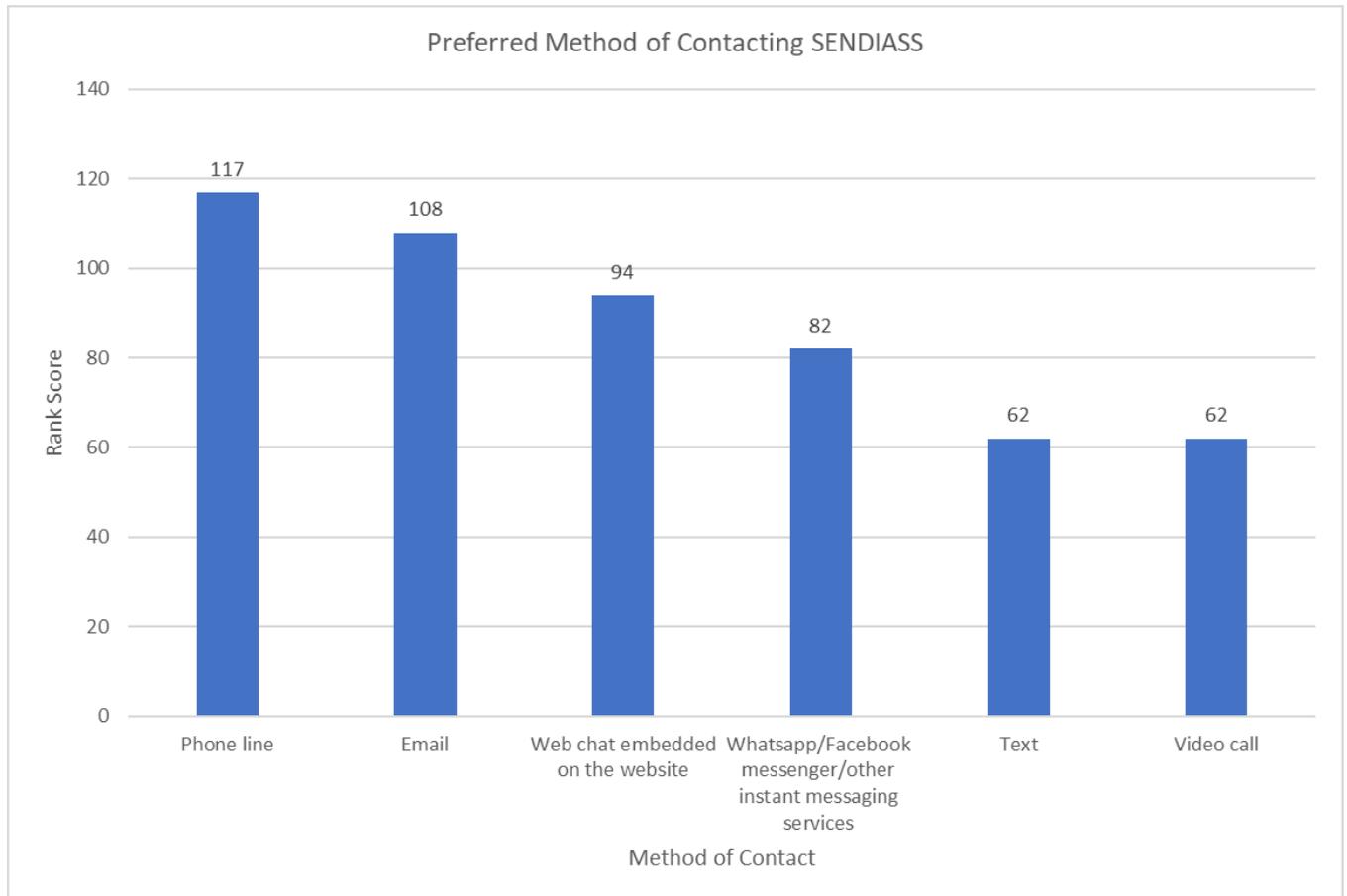
You Said	Our Response
<p>More likely to use SENDIAS Service if promoted or referred through school:</p> <p>Young Person commenting on experience of Secondary School Support: “they didn’t know me which made it hard.”</p> <p>Parent: “I’ve never been signposted to the service through schools – there should be some sort of governance to ensure SENCOS advertise local offer and SENDIASS service”.</p> <p>Parent: “People unaware that they offer early support.”</p>	<p>Outreach work to be done in school – particularly Secondary Schools.</p> <p>The Local Authorities will offer more support to ensure that schools are fully informed about SENDIASS, that they are sharing info on their websites and that they are putting families in touch with the SENDIAS Service.</p> <p>The Service will be required to pro-actively engage with partnership building opportunities such as SENDCo briefings.</p>
<p>Promote service for young people at college:</p> <p>Parent: “Where are they seeing this information? – notice board on college? QR code? WhatsApp number that is memorable”</p>	<p>The Local Authorities will support more in raising awareness of the service in colleges – supporting the provider to work closely with colleges and promoting on college forums.</p>
<p>Promotion through live event:</p> <p>Parent: “Event twice a year with all organisations in SEND where all services come together to promote their services like a freshers fair”</p>	<p>This is something that is currently provided in North Somerset – joint commissioning will provide opportunities to share ideas across the region and increase partnership working.</p>
<p>Raise awareness through multiple reports given to parents:</p> <p>Parent: “Is there room on reports (diagnosis reports) to signpost to SENDIASS service? – “where to go for education support””</p>	<p>The local authorities will work with our health partners and the provider to improve communication regarding education support.</p>

Contacting the SENDIAS Service:

During consultation, views were sought on how respondents would best access the SENDIAS service. Respondents were asked to rank which method of contacting the Service is most useful (from 1 being most useful to 5 least useful). 25 people responded to this question.

Each method of contacting the service was given a rank score. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts. Figure 4 shows that phone line and email were ranked highest, and video calling was ranked as least useful.

Figure 4 – Rank score to Question 2



However, young people at the Listening Partnership stated that they would not call up an advice line and would rather meet face to face.

One parent also highlighted the importance of having different methods of contact available as some parents and young people may not have easy access to technology.

The Youth Voice Conference:

- Children and young people are supported by a trusted adult where self-referral isn't available.
- Focused support should be available at specific times such as transitional times or in a crisis.

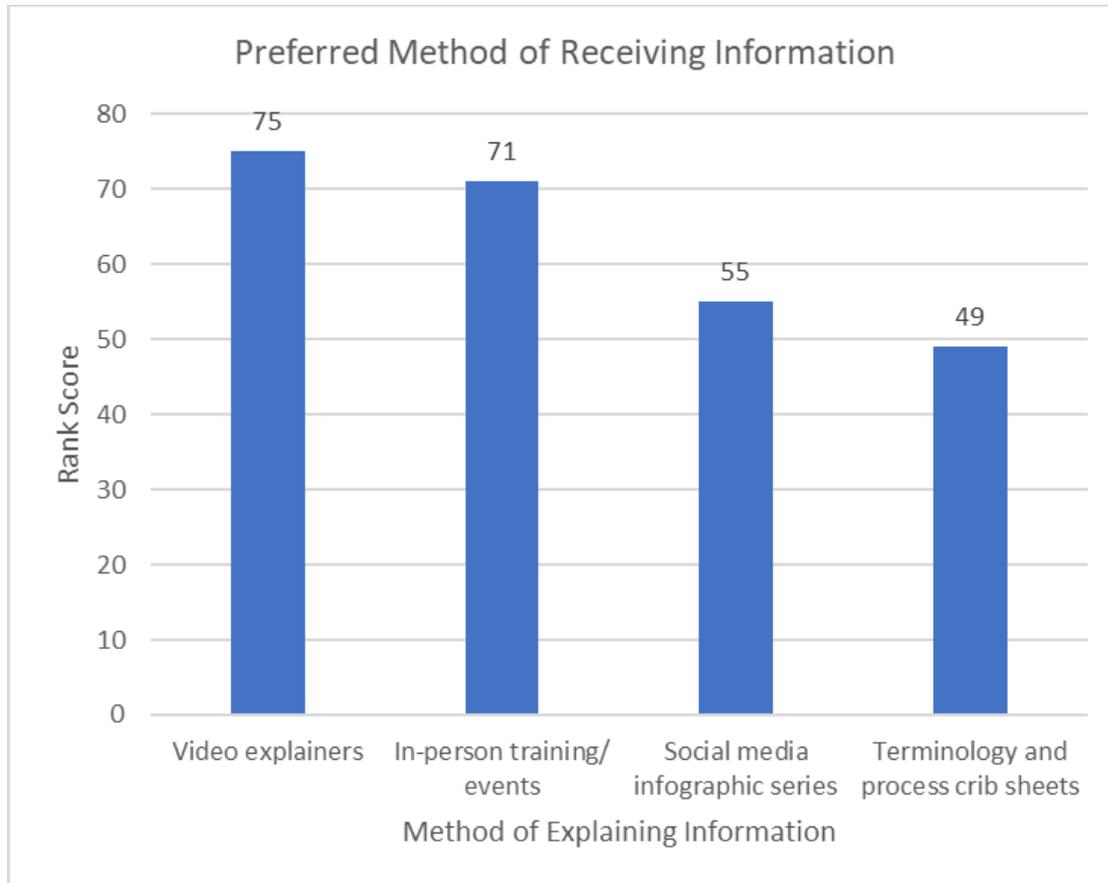
Information Provided:

The consultation sought views on how families and young people preferred receiving advice and information.

Respondents were asked to rank which method of explaining information is most useful (from 1 being most useful to 5 least useful). 25 people responded to this question.

Each method was given a rank score. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts. Figure 5 shows that video explainers and in-person training were ranked highest, whereas crib sheets were ranked lowest.

Figure 5 – Rank score to Question 4



The Youth Voice Conference:

- Staff able to signpost to appropriate support / advice if can't offer it themselves
- Children and young people should have a choice – a range of offer of targeted support.
- Access to services should be available locally.
- Children and young people feel they will not be judged if they ask for help
- Children and young people should be signposted to relevant specialist services and seen within 1 month

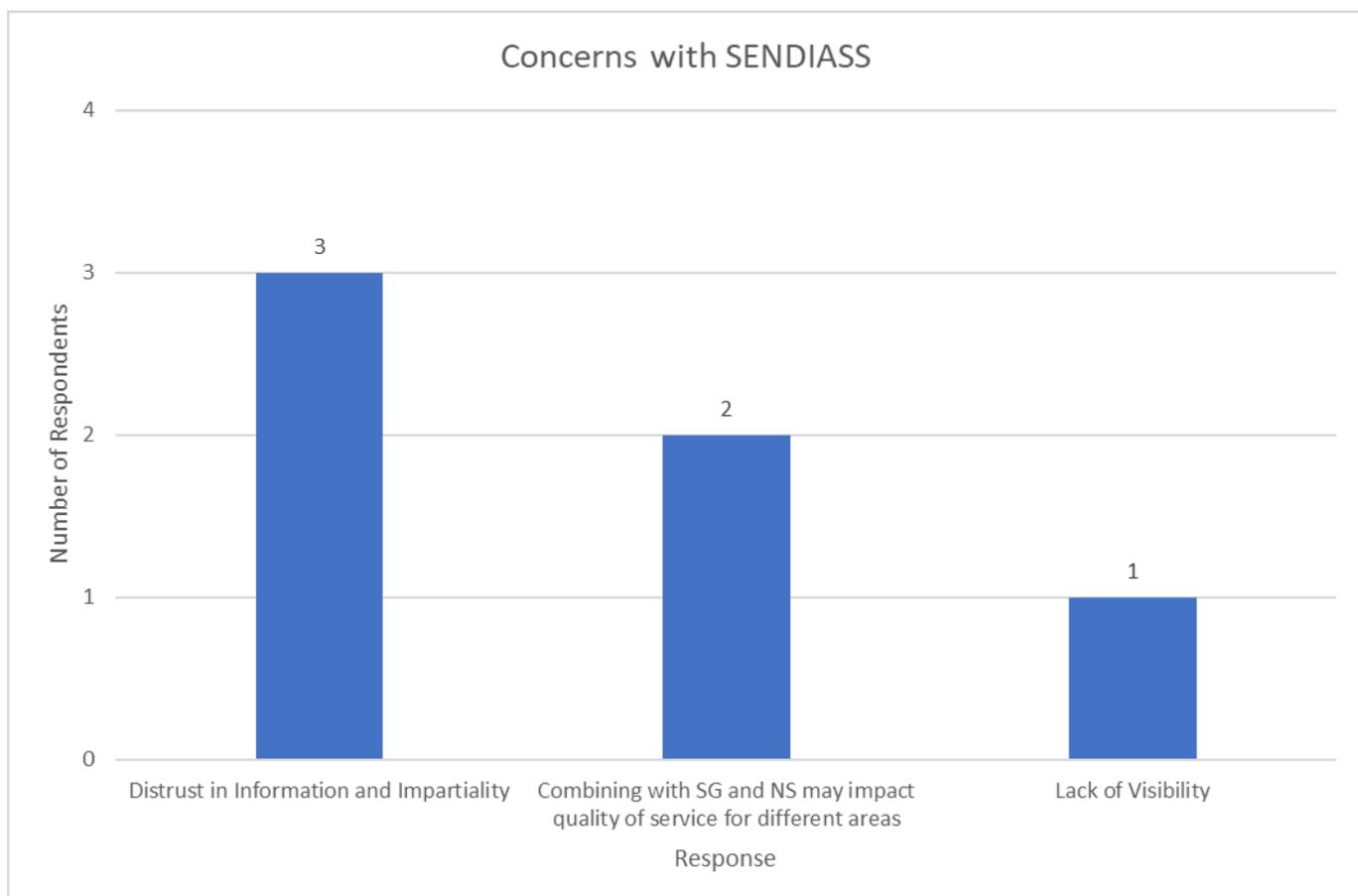
You Said	Our Response
<p>Importance of face-to-face meetings:</p> <p>Young people from the Listening Partnership mostly valued in-person meetings, highlighting that face to face training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be delivered “in a quiet space” • Needs to be “delivered by someone who knows them” • Could be given by “other young people with lived experience.” <p>To overcome barriers in accessing a face to face meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would “go along with someone else” • Need a “clear schedule to know what to expect ahead of time” • Need to meet in a “comfortable, familiar environment”. 	<p>As part of the new contract, SENDIASS will be required to extend their current offer to work more in schools and colleges and offer more face-to-face workshops in these settings.</p> <p>The provider will be required to develop video explainers and run in person events.</p>
<p>Service that provides instant feedback:</p> <p>Parent: “Instant contact is important – if my son doesn’t get an answer quickly – will forget and not check – maybe an automatic reply while they wait?”</p>	<p>The provider is required to respond to all calls and emails it receives.</p> <p>The provider will be required to put in place an automated response, with high quality information, links to resources and signposting to other services.</p> <p>Automatic bounce back could include signposting information.</p>

Other Concerns:

As part of the consultation, families and young people were asked to raise any other opinions they had on the SENDIAS Service. A number of parents mentioned that they distrust some information given and the impartiality of the service. This viewpoint was also echoed in the voice of young people who felt they would only use a service if they could trust the information and who they were talking to. One parent was concerned about visibility and a number of parents stated that they had never heard of the service.

The proposal of commissioning the SENDIAS Service across three local authorities raised concerns about whether the service would be tailored to each individual area and whether resources would be distributed across the region fairly.

Figure 6 – Additional comments on the draft commissioning strategy



You Said	Our Response
<p>Fair distribution of resources across the three Local Authorities:</p> <p>Parent: “I would like to see a service provided across the 3 LAs but with local presence that works in partnership with local related groups, has an effective network and is actively promoted where relevant. The different needs of each LA need to influence and tailor the service but the economies of scale should enhance the responsiveness. The commissioning process must ensure that local schools, health services (eg CAMHS) and others effectively promote and work in partnership with the SENDIAS service.”</p>	<p>The Joint SEND Commissioning Strategy commits all agencies in to work together. The provider will be required to contribute to resource sharing and will share resources with each Local Authority and other professionals.</p> <p>Jointly commissioning the service will offer more purchasing power.</p> <p>As part of the commissioning process, each local authority has analysed the needs of their populations. This information has been used to inform our commissioning strategy and will be fundamental to the design of the service.</p> <p>The provider will be required to deliver an equitable service across the 3 local authority areas. Regular joint monitoring of the service will facilitate this.</p>

<p>Trust was a prominent theme of the consultation:</p> <p>Young Person: “We don't trust or have faith that schools are acting in our interest.”</p> <p>Young Person: “People don’t understand my needs”</p> <p>Parent: “Parents don’t feel like they get all information or whole truth – not aware that judicial review was a process or aware of charities there to help”</p> <p>Parent: “</p>	<p>The provider is required to offer impartial and confidential advice. This is one of the Key Performance Indicators which will be monitored during quarterly contract reports and meetings.</p> <p>Contract Specification requires all advice and support providing staff successfully complete all online IPSEA legal training levels within 12 months of joining the service. Volunteers who provide advice should complete IPSEAs Level 1 online training within 12 months.</p> <p>Contract monitoring information is statistical, with any qualitative information anonymised and not shared beyond the contract manager.</p>
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Next steps

Following this consultation, the Final Commissioning Plan will be published in October. Market Engagement will take place, and providers will be invited to submit their bids. The contract will be awarded in January, followed by the Implementation period before the new contract begins on 31st March 2023.