

Cheshire East Information, Advice and Support (CEIAS) Team

1st August 2018- July 31st 2019

Self-review of the Cheshire East Information Advice and Support Team to establish how the team is delivering on its responsibilities as required by the Children and Families Act and SEN Code of Practice 2014

Background:

This annual report gives an overview of the team's work during the period 1st August 2018 to July 31st 2019; it encompasses our key areas of work, developments during that period and identifies future plans for the team going forward.

Cheshire East Information Advice and Support service (CEIAS) provide a free impartial, confidential service giving advice and support about education, health and social care for young people and parents/carers of children who have special educational needs and disabilities in order to empower and promote independence and self-advocacy.

The team is an in house funded IASS service, situated within the Children and Families Directorate. The support the service offers is based within the law and the SEND Code of Practice 2015. CEIAS provides support regarding the Local Authorities policies and procedures and practice in schools and other educational settings.

Support is all year round; staffing is reduced over the summer and Christmas periods due to the taking of annual leave.

Our Vision:

The vision for the CEIAS team is that, through our work, children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers, will be more aware of their entitlement and the options available, empowering them to make informed decisions on an individual basis.

At the same time we will ensure that potential barriers to achieving the best outcomes are removed by working with other teams and practitioners to develop understanding, look for solutions and build mutual empathy and respect.

We aim to meet and exceed expectations through the provision of timely, consistently high quality and professional support and advice; in order to be recognised as an excellent service provider by parents, children, and other agencies.

Staffing:

The team is staffed by 4 part time officers as detailed below.

1 x 26.5 hours

1 x 25 hours

1 x 23 hours

1 x 10 hours (term time only)

There is a Manager for CEIAS who also manages the Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCIES) team within the local authority.

During this time period there has also been a Business Support Apprentice who supports both CEIAS and SCIES.

Staff Development

All members of the team have monthly supervisions with the manager and they have annual personal development plans where personal goals and achievements are planned, reviewed and celebrated. Regular team meetings take place to discuss service planning and give the opportunity to discuss concerns and issues.

CEIAS officers have successfully completed levels 1-3 of IPSEA SEN Advisors legal training and have also engaged in training that has become available through the North West regional group.

In addition members of the team have attended the following; some as a team and others as individuals:

- Safeguarding training
- GDPR compliance, storing of data,
- Dignity in the workplace
- Signs of Safety training
- Education and Skills development days
- Children and Young People's Plan launch event
- Crossdata training
- Conflict Management
- IAS regional meetings
- Brighter Futures
- Children and Families conferences

Engagement with North West Consortium and National IASSN

Cheshire East has ensured that it engages more extensively with the North West regional group and maintains its membership.

Engagement with this group provides the officers with an opportunity to discuss issues affecting services and to share effective ideas and information; they have found this group to be a vital source of support. There is also the opportunity to develop training that can be extended to each others services.

A member of the team attended the North West group residential in Lancaster, attendees from the national IASS service attended this and there was the opportunity to share information and hear about recent developments. It was a personal growth opportunity for the officer involved as she was responsible for creating the agenda for part of the day and chairing that session.

CEIAS engage with the national IAS service including regular contribution to the IASSN reporting hub, sending regular updated information on current budgets, staffing, and service user feedback as well as contributing to the National SENDIASS survey.

Collaborative Working

In line with the IASSN minimum standards, an efficient steering group has been created with representatives from health, social care, early years, education, SEN team and parent representatives. Work is currently taking place to effectively include the young person's voice in these meetings

CEIAS officers regularly attend the various SEN work streams in the Local Authority to contribute to policy and decision making; these include the Autism strategy group, EHC timeliness and quality assurance work stream, auditing and Preparing for Adulthood. A member of the team was actively involved in a small working group consultation regarding discussions around High needs block funding.

The team work closely with the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum. CEIAS attend and support at various events providing information to promote our service. The CEIAS manager or a representative regularly attends and contributes to the PCF steering group.

CEIAS has regular attendance at SENCO network events on a termly basis and will be attending the school Governors conference later in the year.

CEIAS officers have attended various team meetings to share information about the support available from the team; these have included with social care, with CAMHS, and with education managers; there are plans for the team to carry out the same awareness raising with the Family Information Service and the Communities team.

Engagement with young people:

During the course of this year CEIAS have attended Participation Events for young people, including a participation picnic evening event and a fun activities day, where CEIAS led a “make your own slime” activity in different geographical localities, with both primary and secondary aged children.

Feedback gained was around how young people felt about the SEN Support they received and their EHCP’s. The team’s young people’s leaflets were shared and staff chatted to young people in a relaxed atmosphere about what they understood about the support that is available for them and if they were happy.

In addition CEIAS attended the Cheshire East Children and young people’s Plan launch. A member of the team attended with a young person with additional needs. At that event information was shared with other teams and other young people around the support CEIAS can offer.

CEIAS have updated the leaflet designs following consultation with a group of young people in an SEN school; taking on board their views and suggestions in the redesign; this has also led us to identify additional leaflets which they have said are needed.

CEIAS continues to reach out to young people; attending Carers Events taking along information and a Fun Activity which enables us to engage harder to reach young people, listening, valuing and advocating their views at all times.

The Team have regularly attended Preparing for Adulthood Work stream Meetings, ensuring that young people’s views are consistently shared and listened to. This has enabled young people to contribute to the new Preparing for Adulthood Transition Pack which is due to be rolled out across the Local Authority.

CEIAS played an active role in a working group with the Youth Support service and the Parent Carer Forum to prepare, plan and deliver a “Planning for your Future” event which took place in July 2019. This was at an accessible, central venue, open throughout the afternoon and evening. There were fun activities, a cafe and a chill out area, to encourage engagement from the YP. We were able again to share information and support young people; this was well attended by providers and families. Feedback is being collated to inform planning for a similar event next year.

Support for individual young people has continued throughout the year and the team have engaged directly with a few young people in their own right.

Challenges

Expectations: One of our main challenges remains that of managing parent/carer expectations with regard to the amount and type of support we can offer; progress continues to be made in this area as evidenced by more positive feedback from our stakeholders in this regard.

We have set up locality-based access to our services via 1:1 consultation sessions; this is increasing our reach and, as a result, we have been able to meet the needs of some parents who previously struggled to get to us for support with complex paperwork and/or preparation for meetings such as mediation. The locality settings have been carefully chosen to give a good reach across the LA and take place in a conducive environment where the parents feel comfortable e.g. Children’s Centre, Carer’s Centre and local charities’ premises. So far all the available sessions have been fully booked and we are monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of these sessions.

To ensure that calls are responded to in real time, where possible, a “duty rota” has been set up. This has proved tricky to organise but is developing well. In addition the business Apprentice takes calls, when required, between the hours of 9:30 and 4:30, inputting key information into the database so that officers have the relevant information they need to call back. It means that parents are able to speak to a person rather than the answerphone.

Issue	Impact	Action Taken
Some calls with parents/carers were taking in excess of an hour because of complexity. Discussions often led to a further face to face meeting	The officer missed calls from other callers during that time and had to then call them back Parents had to tell their story more than once. Time consuming for both parent and CEIAS	When callers are spoken to- if it is clear early in the conversation that the situation is complex/there are things needing to be looked at together- the officer will stop the conversation and offer the parent a consultation slot with a choice of venues

Increased numbers of contacts into the team and complexity of cases: Another challenge has been balancing an increased number of referrals with a fixed number of staff hours and so we have focussed on further improving the information available on our website and through social media. The aim is to enable more parents/carers and young people to find the information they need without necessarily contacting the service directly. Our new leaflets are accessible and concise and have had positive feedback.

We continue to promote self-advocacy in parents and young people by enabling and empowering them and giving them all the relevant information they may require and also signposting to other appropriate services. We regularly interrogate our data to compare the amount of support that they are receiving from the team, in terms of time and type; this information is used in case management discussions.

These may seem like small changes but they are impacting on the experience of those making contact in a positive way.

Issue	Impact	Action Taken
Increased numbers of calls and increased complexity of cases	Needing to have availability for team members to respond to calls/emails/Contact Us forms impacted on number of meetings attended leading to frustration on the part of those making contact	All leaflets have been revised to ensure key information is available The website is being updated to increase accessibility Increased use of data to inform targeted work /materials developed Review of our processes to ensure productivity and efficiency of effort to maximise support offered

Early Years

In previous years the team saw a trend of parents contacting us in the final months just before their child with SEND was due to transition from a pre-school setting to Primary school, often in the Summer Holiday. This was then a race against time for the parents, LA and settings to assess needs and secure appropriate special educational provision was in place for when the child entered Reception class. By raising the profile of our service with other teams within the LA, for instance meeting with the Head of the Early Years Team and staff based at Children's Centres such as Family Support Workers, parents and carers who require information, advice and support from us have been signposted sooner by professionals and/or have seen our information displayed and got in touch or viewed our website for resources.

From an analysis of our data we can see that parents of pre-school children are contacting us at an earlier point, accessing information in a timelier manner and gaining the knowledge and tools they require to engage in the assessment processes, work effectively with the professionals involved, and make informed choices about their child's education. Holding 1:1 sessions in a local Children's Centre has also helped with this and extended our reach to more Early Years parents.

The importance of early assessment and identification of SEN is clear in the Code of practice and will remain a focus for our team, possibly with an Early Years Workshop during 2019-2020.

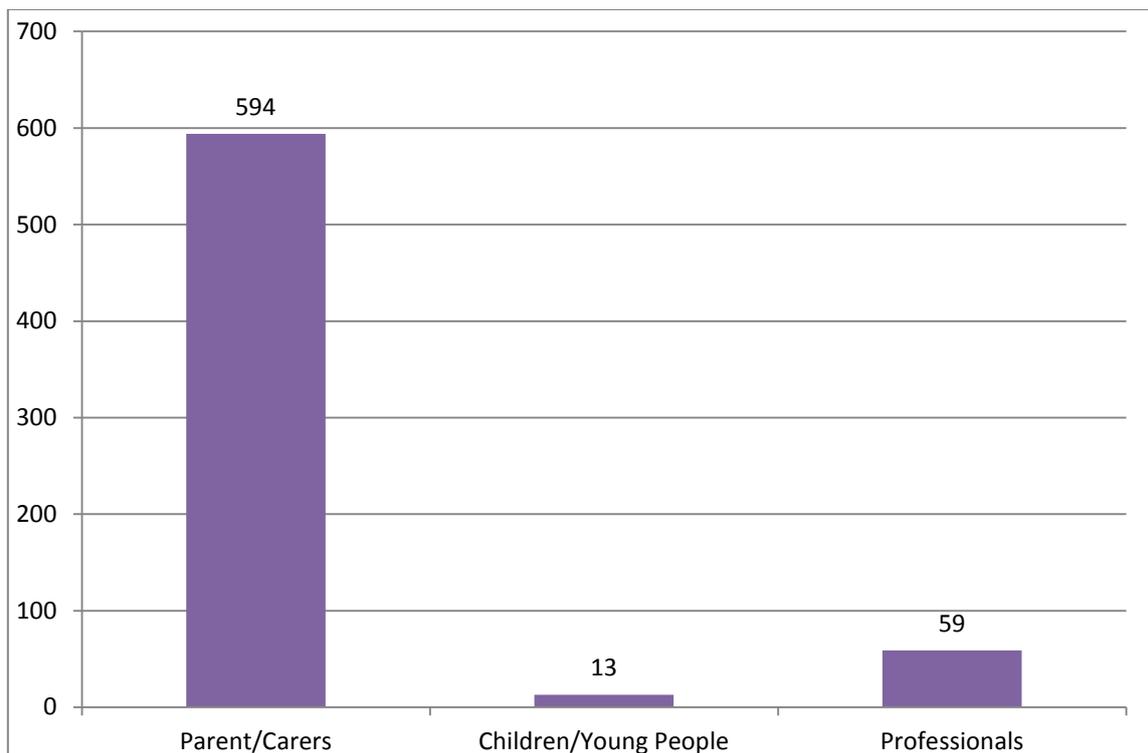
Quantative data:

Between 1st August 2018 – 31st July 2019 there have been 666 referrals to the team for new pieces of work either from new callers or from callers who have had previous involvement. A breakdown shows this has included 594 parent/carers, 59 professionals and 13 young people.

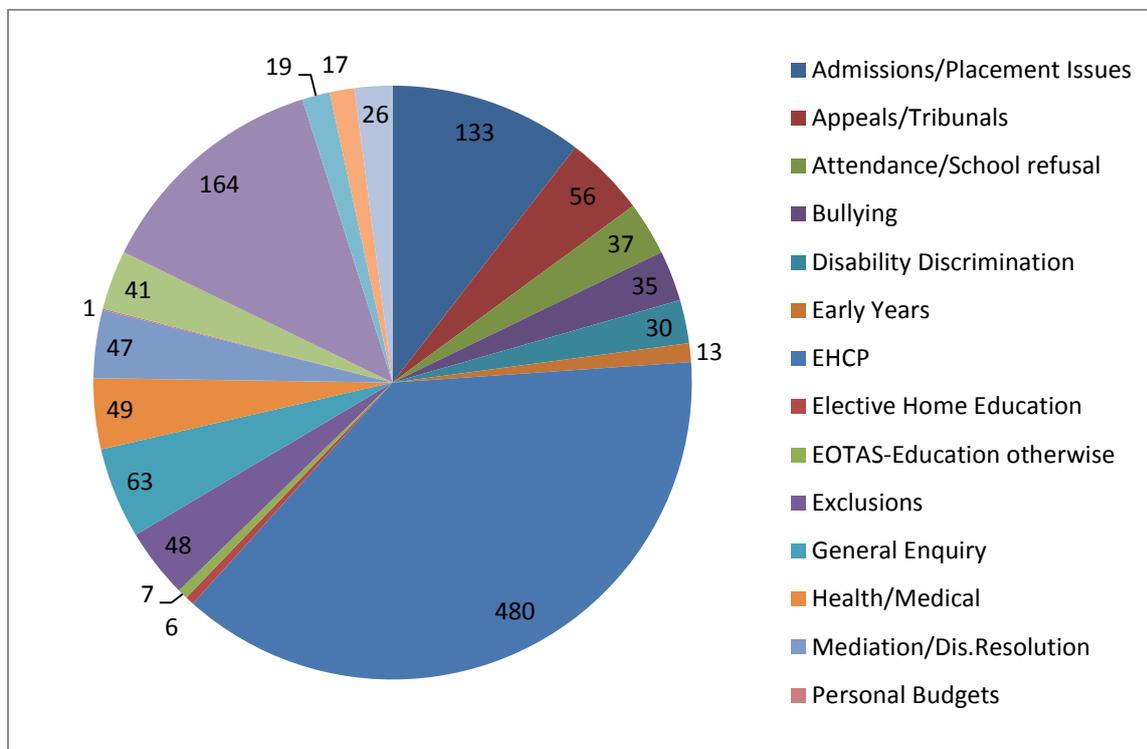
It has to be noted that these figures appear to be lower than the previous year's annual report; however the way in which we are extracting data has changed following additional training from our database consultant. We have now extracted the data from last year in this same way and there is a significant increase from 514 referrals in 2017-18 to 666 referrals in 2018-2019.

The actual contacts to CEIAS in this date range is 3,291 this includes the first referral contact and any subsequent contacts during that period.

Contacts to CEIAS between 1st August 2018 and 31st July 2019

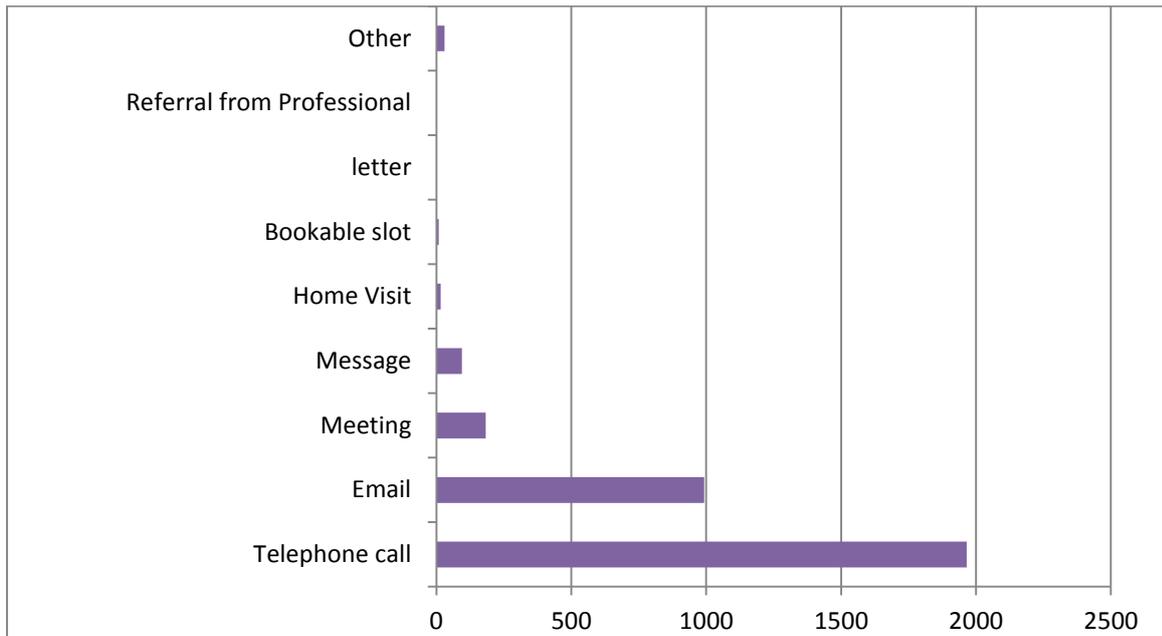


Contacts by area of enquiry:



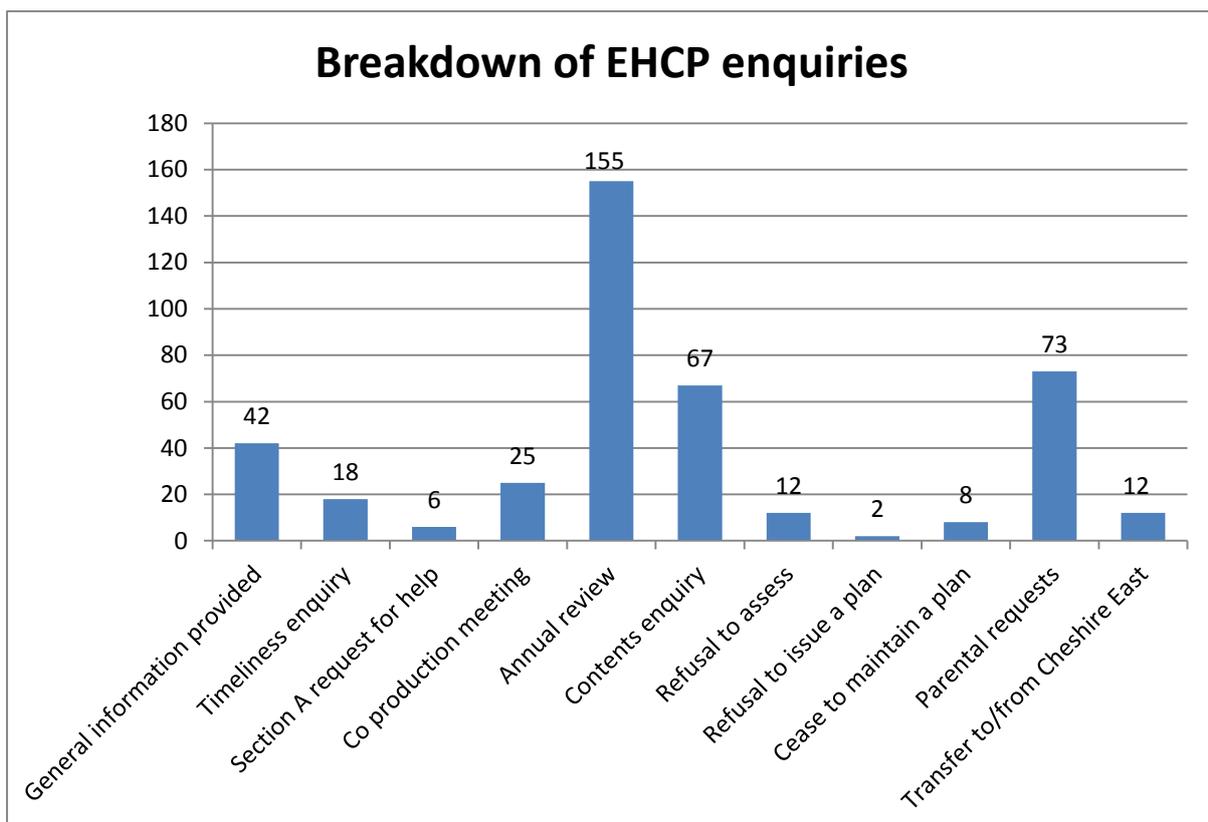
It is evident that, as for previous years, our highest numbers of enquiries are around Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and SEN support.

Contact methods



The chart below gives further detail regarding EHCP enquiries

Breakdown of EHCP enquiries



Going forward the team aim to identify more classification codes that can be added to the database to ensure that the data extracted is as accurate as possible.

Regular discussions at team meetings will ensure that all members of the team are accurately recording codes in the same way.

Feedback on the work of the team:

Feedback surveys and questionnaires have been developed for service users which include service impartiality, effectiveness of support and the level of support that service users receive. Feedback is the form of electronic surveys which remain anonymous with paper copies being available for those unable to access the internet; this can be posted back to the IAS service anonymously.

The following are taken from feedback received this year (it should be noted that nothing negative was recorded about the work of the team in any of the feedback received from parents):

I liked doing the all about me it was good and I liked it. I have made a YouTube video all about me too.

You have made this fun. I thought it would be really hard. Like school work. School work is hard.

Feedback from children and young people



Thank you for listening to me. Finally someone other than my Mum gets me!

You have been an amazing help to me on my EHCP Journey. I'm extremely grateful to you for your advice and support

Thank you very much. The information is incredibly useful. I very much appreciate you taking the time to send it and also, to speak to me today. I hope I can use the information to secure the best possible outcome for my daughter.

You have given me so much advice and support over the last couple of years, it has made such a difference.

Thank you for all of your support, you have made such a difference to my relationship with the school. I was ready to give up before your advice with meetings.

Feedback from Parents and carers

Thank you for sharing your knowledge, this has increased my confidence!

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.



The service and knowledge of the team are second to none

Thank you for your prompt reply.

Many thanks for your help. You have helped me to understand the next steps I need to consider.

THANK YOU!!! Thank you for listening; especially to my many irrational rants. Thank you for your guidance, information, expertise & patience. Thank you for helping me stay focused on our goal & not give up. You've been a wonderful support & great source of strength. Your job must be so very demanding; you have remained professional & calm & positive throughout & I am very grateful for your time & endless support.

2018-19 ambitions and goals

Strategic Priority	Specific ACTIONS	Key Performance Indicators	Intended OUTCOMES
<p>Increase access for Service Users to relevant Quality information and targeted support; so that they are empowered to take the right actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a programme of Workshops for the year on identified key themes Completed • Redesign the website Planning completed- content created - sitting with IT for development • Develop a suite of information disseminated through SENCO meetings, early years leads, network meetings and Facebook- All information re-written, shared for comment being disseminated • Review points of access for service users to ensure these are being maximised – Changes made to first contact including consultation system • Develop further links with the SEND team and Family Support/early intervention workers Team meetings attended, more opportunities to liaise face to face <p>Develop links with Early years settings/SENCOs Meetings have taken place and relevant training sessions attended</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of people accessing the team identified as other than “White British”, • Increased numbers of parents with children in the early years accessing the team • Increased numbers of hits to the website • Reduction in the number of “long term” support cases (those over lasting several months/years) • Feedback forms from parents reflecting less reliance on Independent Supporters and greater self confidence <p>KPIs will take time to embed, there is improvement in all areas</p>	<p>The CEIAS website will be easier to navigate and will have more focused information to meet the needs of service users October 2019</p> <p>Families will have greater access to relevant, timely information due to the expanded reach of the team April 2019</p> <p>More effective work/links with partner agencies which change both their conversations and contacts with families ensuring better/more timely outcomes for children; e.g. dissemination of effective practice, identifying key themes and taking action to support in a way which impacts on the many rather than case by case August 2019</p>

Strategic Priority	Specific ACTIONS	Key Performance Indicators	Intended OUTCOMES
<p>Increase and improve the team's engagement with young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure relevant agencies are aware of the team and can support dissemination of information to young people e.g. YSS, Youth Advisors, Colleges, Sixth Forms, SENCOs etc. Information on the service has been shared in written form and verbally. Visits to work with young people have taken place to a couple of schools for children with SEND • Involve Young People in the re-design of leaflets aimed at YP Consultation has taken place with individual children and with children in a specific school • Ensure the voice of the YP influences the advice and resources developed Discussions have taken place with individual children and with children in a couple of schools • Involve YP in the signposting and distribution of resources Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of Young people accessing the service in their own right • Increased number of YP aware of CEIAS and what they do/have available <p>KPIs will take time to embed, there is improvement in all areas</p>	<p>YP, their families and professionals will know what support is available for YP from the team and will engage with it July 2019</p> <p>As materials are co-produced with YP they will be relevant and accessible to the majority October 2019</p>

Strategic Priority	Specific ACTIONS	Key Performance Indicators	Intended OUTCOMES
<p>Ensure there is robust data collection, collation, reporting (including feedback from families) and that storage and retention of information is legally compliant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for the re-tendering of the team's database (the current agreement ends in April 2019) COMPLETED. Cross data retained • Access training for the team so they can make best use of Cross data and whichever system is purchased going forward Whole team session COMPLETED • Re-visit fields on Cross data to ensure they allow for the information we need to be reported on Fields expanded to support reporting • Re-visit the records CEIAS keep to ensure there is consistency in what is recorded and how it is recorded Expectations clear. Emphasis on actions • Establish timescales for reporting Specific timescales are met e.g. reporting to IAS, CE scorecard etc. • Establish a robust feedback system for parents and young people Survey Monkey used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely, accurate data will be available and reported on • Data will show trends and evidence of impact • Reports will be on time • There will be an end of year report on the work of the service <p>Evidenced in this report</p>	<p>Data will inform development of resources/ ways of supporting March 2019</p> <p>Records kept will be compliant with GDPR Ongoing</p> <p>CEIAS Officers will be consistent in the way they make and store records of contacts and meetings December 2018</p> <p>Parental and YP 's feedback will be available and will inform team developments December 2018</p> <p>Stakeholders in CE will know what demands there are on the CEIAS team, what the team have done to extend their reach and the impact of their work November 2018</p>

Cheshire East Information Advice and Support Goals and Outcomes 2019-20

Goals	Outcomes by November 19	Outcomes by March 20
All aspects of the minimum standards will be met	<p>All CEIAS officers to have received input regarding advocacy and tribunal aspects of work</p> <p>Team development plan will be in place</p> <p>Steering group will have been set up and will have had at least two meetings</p>	<p>Recruitment of Team manager to be in process with no other line management responsibilities (it is essential that the right person is appointed to continue to drive things forward)</p> <p>Apprentice to have been recruited to support the key functions of the team.</p> <p>Development plan will have been reviewed with evidence to show progress</p>
<p>Full involvement in strategic developments locally with partners including children, parents, health, SEND.</p> <p>Effective contribution to regional and national work/events</p>	<p>Standards for strategic contributions will have been drawn up by the team and will be monitored by the Manager to ensure the team are making an effective contribution to key task and finish groups</p> <p>Team attendance and contribution at the regional conference</p> <p>Attendance at key meetings to ensure people understand the role of the team; to include EYs Forum, Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <p>Individual team members will have specific targets built into annual Performance Development Plans (PDPs) around strategic contributions</p>	<p>The team will be able to evidence strategic actions taken as a result of engagement with Health, young people and Early years.</p> <p>Reviews of PDPs with individuals will evidence more effective strategic contributions. This will include 360 scrutiny.</p>

Goals	Outcomes by November 19	Outcomes by March 20
<p>Parents/carers and young people will feel empowered through easily accessible relevant information</p>	<p>All current information guides on the website to have been updated</p> <p>Consultations with stakeholders around communication will have taken place</p>	<p>New website to have gone live</p> <p>Team members will be trained in effective communication e.g. phone calls, e mails etc. This will be evidenced in a reduction in the number of calls lasting for over an hour. The number of planning sessions with individual parents lasting over 2 hours</p>
<p>The team professional development plan will have resulted in information being more effectively disseminated, empowering rather than building reliance</p>	<p>Two year team professional development plan in place</p> <p>All Officers will have had at least two observations of practice</p> <p>All Officers will have received Signs of Safety training tailored to case work to enable them to build on strengths and effectively identify actions and outcomes</p>	<p>An effective procedure and system will be in place for the collection and collation of feedback from parents, young people and other involved agencies. This will be used to inform the end of year report and will be evidenced in supervisions and team meetings</p>
<p>The reach of the service will have extended to encompass “hard to reach” communities across Cheshire East including migrant communities, the Early years, in remote areas etc.</p> <p>Other groups and agencies who directly interface with the parents and carers of children with SEND or young people themselves, will effectively signpost to relevant SEND information available from CEIAS and the local offer.</p>	<p>Attendance at Connected Communities team and Family Information Service (FIS) to build their knowledge of CEIAS and the range of information available.</p> <p>For members of the Connected Communities team and FIS to have the confidence to signpost families to the team and to information on the team’s website.</p> <p>A representative of the team to have attended at least two of the community engagement sessions in Crewe</p>	<p>For members of the Connected Communities team and FIS to have the confidence to, where appropriate and following input from CEIAS, pass on agreed information so that families receive it in a timely way</p> <p>The numbers of families, from migrant communities, accessing information advice and support from the team to have increased by 10%</p> <p>Delivery of the service from various locations within communities</p>

Team accomplishments 2018-19

- Re- design of service leaflets
- Contributions to Parent Carer forum meetings and agm – CEIAS information shared
- Updated CEIAS Policies
- Supported families with meeting preparation in regards to SEN Support, Annual reviews of EHCPs
- Supported families through the mediation process
- Supported families with tribunal preparation
- Part of planning and delivery of “Thinking about your Future”
- Contributed to peer review of SEND in CE
- Information session for CAMHS social care, and with education managers
- Surviving an office move!
- Contributed to SEND work streams (*Assessment and Planning, Communication and engagement, Preparing for Adulthood and Transitions, Autism Assessment group, High Needs Funding, Embedding Quality Assurance in EHCPs, EHC- timeliness processes and quality*)
- Coffee mornings and drop in sessions attended at various settings across CE including Space4Autism, Ruby’s Fund, Autism Inclusive, Mums and Tots Congleton, Parents and Carers in Knutsford to meet with families and share information
- Successful bids to be part of the National IAS programme

We hope that you find this document helpful. Thank you for supporting CEIAS
in our work