

# SIASS Newsletter

WINTER/SPRING 2022



**SIASS is here when you need  
someone to #SENDhelp**

Call us: 0208 323 0462

Email us: [sutton@siass.co.uk](mailto:sutton@siass.co.uk)

Follow Sutton SIASS on



Or follow @Sutton\_IASS on



[www.siass.co.uk](http://www.siass.co.uk)

## Sutton Information Advice and Support Service

### OFFICE HOURS

- SIASS staff are normally available Monday-Friday from 9-5pm via telephone or email.
- If we are unavailable to take your call, or if you call outside office hours, **please leave a voicemail**. We aim to return calls within 3 working days, though almost always return calls by the next working day.
- We are currently working from our home offices, which allows us to attend to a higher quantity of casework and meetings and do so with maximum confidentiality. However, if you need us to support you in person at a meeting, we are willing to do so as our schedules allow.



# SIASS NEWSLETTER

HAPPY  
NEW  
Year



## A Message from SIASS

We know last year was TOUGH... but we've made it through to this new year, what a gift. Here at SIASS, we wish each and every one of you a happy new year! We hope you've each had a lovely holiday break -time to really rest relax with your loved ones. And now, with the festivities behind us, it's back to school and back to routine. Best wishes that this time of transition goes smoothly for your family and most of all that your child receives what they need this year to thrive and succeed in education and life!

Before we share all of our updates with you, we want to say "Thank you!" to all of you for patiently bearing with us these last few months. We are -as always- committed to giving you the very best possible support for your situation, but since September 2021 we've been managing double our usual number of cases, many of which have been quite complex. The good news about this increase in service volume is that one of our key service development goals -to increase the profile of the service- has been wildly successful! The word is getting out about our service, and more families than ever are benefitting from the support we offer. However, with any growth comes growing pains, and I know it has taken us slightly longer than usual to respond to calls and emails for new cases (up to 3 working days). I want to assure you that we are absolutely still here for you and doing our best to respond the same day or the day after to your calls and emails, and we thank you for your understanding as we adapt to this increase in service volume.

## Service Developments



### **Volunteers have started!**

When you call or email in with a new referral, you may first speak to someone other than SIASS manager or caseworker. SIASS has recruited two volunteers to serve as first point of contact to gather data and offer support to those calling or emailing in with new enquiries. Both of our new volunteers are mums of kids with additional needs, and both have received full IPSEA level 1 legal training, in accordance with the Council for Disabled Children's Minimum Standards for IAS services. Our first volunteer, Keeley, started in September and has been taking calls and emails for the last couple of months. And our second volunteer, Lauren, is almost finished legal training and will start shadowing staff soon to get ready to field calls and emails herself. Both have delightful, supportive personalities, and have been a tremendous benefit to the service, particularly during these last few busy months.

If you spoke with one of our volunteers and would like to offer feedback to the SIASS Manager to let us know how you perceive the work that they're doing, please email [laura.haupt@siass.co.uk](mailto:laura.haupt@siass.co.uk). We love to hear positive feedback (doesn't everyone?) but we also really value feedback that can help us improve the service we offer.

And if you would like to join the SIASS volunteer team, feel free to contact [laura.haupt@siass.co.uk](mailto:laura.haupt@siass.co.uk) for more information.

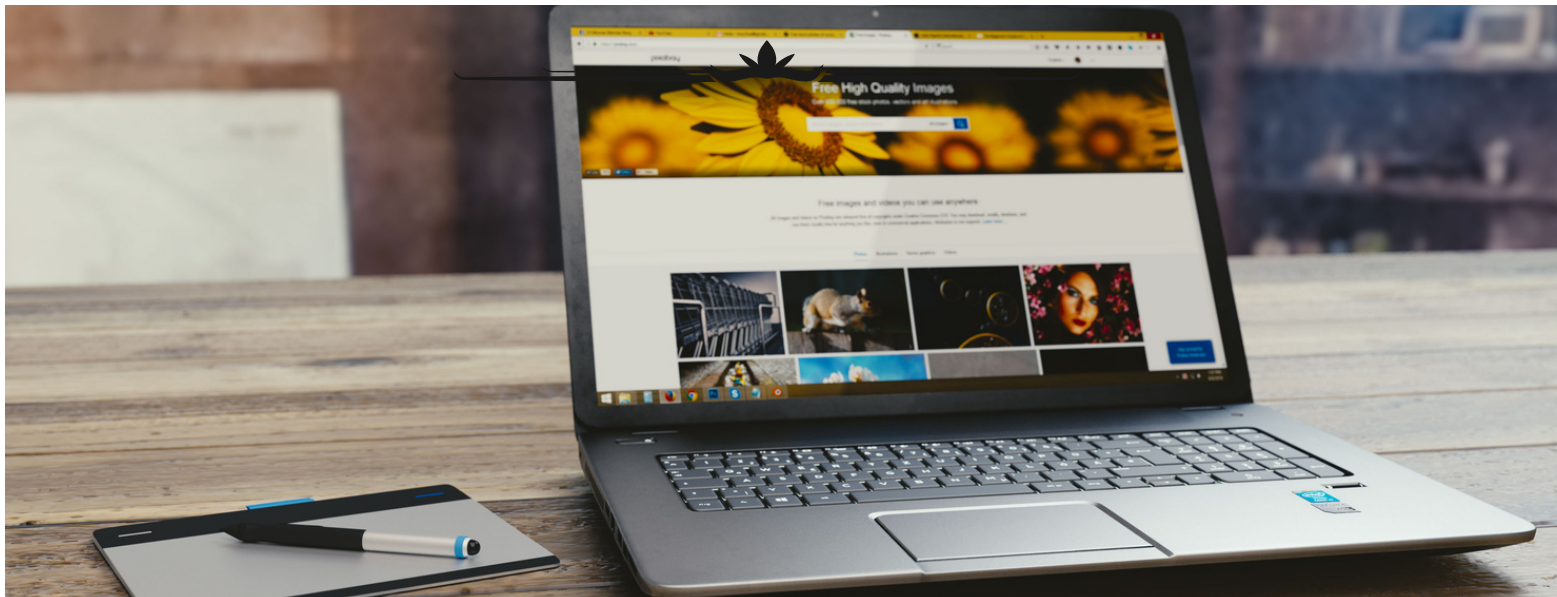




## Website Updates

The SIASS stand alone website was one of our most significant service development successes in 2020, but has changed very little since launching that summer. I'm happy to report that has now changed. In summer 2021, SIASS changed web hosts, which has given us the freedom to update the website ourselves, rather than relying on a third party tech company.

Working within our existing format, we have deleted duplicate/very similar pages to make our sight navigation more stream-lined. We added a video to our home page explaining what an IAS service is, and added a whole new page on Mediation. And, we have done major work on the Children and Young People section of our website: adding lots of video information content, direct links to Preparing for Adulthood and the Local Offer, and adding a "live chat" function to enable young people to communicate directly with SIASS staff without having to call or email.



Stay tuned for:

- Additional digital resources added to the webpage such as "How to" Tribunal guides.
- New pages on Health and Social Care resources for children with SEND.
- And so much more!

Please do let me know what you think and what other information you'd like to see. Our website is our best information resource, and we want to make it the best it can be, for you!

## NEW YEAR, NEW YOUTH OFFER

We've listened to your feedback and ended the once a month SIASS Youth Forum meetings, and we've used your ideas to add several online opportunities to connect with staff, ask questions, and get information designed for young people. Check out all the ways you can connect with SIASS below:



Follow **@Sutton\_iass** on Instagram for content specifically made for children and young people.



Your parents may follow our **Sutton SIASS** Facebook page, but we've made a closed Facebook Group for 16-25 year olds with SEND to ask questions and chat together. Search Facebook for **"SIASS Youth Chat"** and click join.



Want to ask a question or get help with a problem, but you don't have a phone or email address? Go to [www.siasm.co.uk](http://www.siasm.co.uk), click on any of the pages under **"Children and Young People"** and a chat box will pop up, connecting you directly to SIASS staff during office hours.

**We're not JUST here for your parents!**