



Information



Advice



Support

Providing confidential and impartial information, advice and support to help children, parents and young people take part in decisions that affect their lives.

Suffolk SENDIASS Annual Report

September 2021 to August 2022



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Summary

Our team started the year with reduced capacity, however, following a successful recruitment campaign, we were very pleased to welcome three new part-time team members who started with us during the spring term. Their training continues, which is a combination of accredited SEND legal training, in-house delivery and peer support.

Website page views remain healthy and in the coming year we will focus on further development, in particular the young person section of the website. The audience for our e-newsletter has grown by 25% on the previous year. We have expanded and updated our range of videos this period, with a significant increase of 52% in channel views on YouTube. We were approached by the Open University and agreed they could use two of our videos in their teaching materials.

A total of 1,758 registrants for our 51 sessions offered (up on last year - 1,571). We have experienced increased appetite for our training, from schools and services this period. We have also identified gaps and we are keen to explore opportunities to further enhance our training offer.

We created and shared resources with SENDIAS services in the Eastern Region. This included slide sets for virtual sessions which were coproduced with parents and carers in Suffolk, for the eastern services to adapt. We also created full length bespoke versions of our EHC needs assessment webinar for 3 of the services.

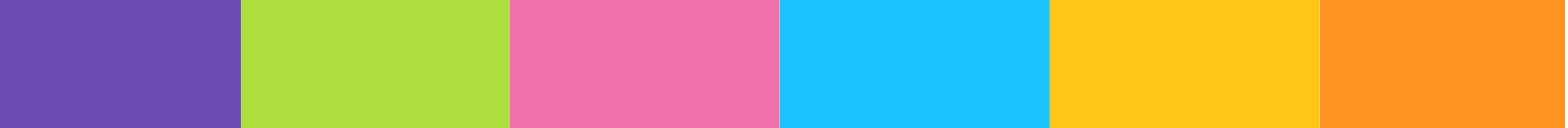
Demand for the service has remained high throughout this reporting period, with numbers of people accessing the service higher than the previous two-years. We've had an increase of 14% with referrals (requests for information, advice or support). 35% of referrals are where the child or young person has a diagnosis of ASD which continues to be our highest frequency category, followed by 20% this period who were 'awaiting diagnosis'. The majority of referrals were where the child was of compulsory school-age (82%) and on roll at a mainstream setting (85%).

Contacting the service by phone or email remain the most popular options, but we see this period that use of our web contact form is gaining popularity. We believe we have improved accessibility for families who now have a wide range of contact methods to choose from.

We have been flexible to adapt this period. We rolled out some short bookable advice appointments to help us meet the high demand and looked at how ongoing support was allocated. We changed the way we manage referrals, resulting in significantly reduced waiting times for families to receive direct advice and support. We have also developed an internal library of advice, which can be tailored by team members to respond to individual enquiries through to the service.

Whilst our newest team members build their knowledge, we have put in place a structure of experienced team members in a 'triage' type role but who also offer support with responses to complex enquiries. This has meant a diversion of resources from our proactive areas of the service, though is necessary due to the high volume of complex referrals.

We have continued to receive a high number of referrals relating to delays with decisions about requests for a setting to be named in an EHC plan, in particular around phase transfers. The classification codes show the significant areas of support were around annual review, placement and the specialist education panel. Within SEN Support, the highest frequency is around the assess-plan-do-review cycle – we split out the elements of this cycle in the codes we now use.



These codes have also helped to pin-point other trends, such as attendance (particularly due to mental health needs), issues with accessing health services and with social care assessments.

In addition, many families sought advice from us about their concerns around communication by the local authority and transparency with processes, particularly around the panel process for considering requests for specialist provision. We acknowledge the local authority continues to experience overwhelming demand.

As we move forward in the coming year, we would like to develop our offer for young people. Themes are emerging around involvement of young people with decisions about their SEN Support plan or with their EHC plan, and with preparing for and moving into adulthood.

We are continuing to input to the SEND Priorities and related actions and some examples include making suggestions for the post-16 transitions guide, suggesting changes to draft of the Local Offer EHC needs assessment prompt sheet, and reviewing drafts of Easy Read explaining the Key Working function. Families that come through to us tell us they are not yet experiencing the positive impact. The service continues to share trends with key partners and contribute ideas about how the lived experience of SEND families might be improved.

We have worked hard to raise awareness of the service explaining what we do and how we work, attending over 100 separate events or networking opportunities, reaching 1,000+ people. The service continues to receive the occasional comment on social media about its impartial position and relationship to the local authority. Further messages are planned in the coming period, to continue to reassure and aims to break down any barriers to access. We are encouraged, however, by the high number who are 'new to service' and that those people who access the service continue to tell us they found us to be impartial, neutral and fair.

I would like to thank the team again this year for their hard work and commitment. They always go the extra mile to help families understand and participate in decisions and processes, and this is evident from comments received in service feedback. I want to acknowledge our new team members who have fitted right in, are embracing the learning, and have the full support of the team as they grow into their role.

Nicki Howlett (Service Lead)

1. Introduction

At arms-length from the local authority and health commissioners, Suffolk SENDIASS is a service which provides free impartial, confidential and accurate information, advice and support about education, health and social care for children, young people and their parents/carers on matters relating to special educational needs and disability. The service provides an Annual Report as part of its Service Level Agreement with commissioners.

The information, advice and support help to promote independence and self-advocacy for children, young people and parents/carers.

SENDIASS helps children, young people and families:

- by providing information to enable informed choices
- with questions about their own or their child's SEND, inclusion in schools and other settings, and the graduated cycle of SEN support (assess-plan-do-review).
- to feel confident to express their views and participate in decisions.
- find positive ways to communicate with schools and the local authority.
- understand their rights and navigate the law and processes relating to SEND, including with school exclusion and SEND appeals.
- through the EHCP process including help with forms, reports or letters etc.
- when things go wrong or there are disagreements – to explore and support options for raising concerns, including with SEND tribunals.

2. Statutory framework

Chapter two of the SEND Code of Practice 2015 outlines the expectations (linked to s32 of the Children and Families Act 2014) for local authorities to provide a confidential, impartial and arm's length SEND information, advice and support service and says:

'Local authorities must arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to their SEN or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care.. (2.1)

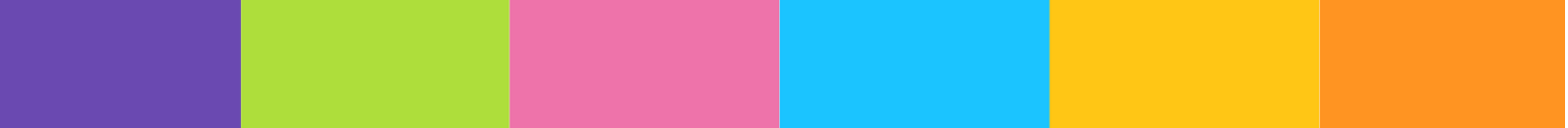
Information, Advice and Support Services should be impartial, confidential and accessible and should have the capacity to handle face-to-face, telephone and electronic enquiries. (2.5)

The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority and CCGs.' (2.8)

Minimum Standards

There are a set of national [Minimum Standards](#) for services providing impartial information, advice and support relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). The Minimum Standards are developed by the [Information, Advice and Support Services Network](#)

Suffolk SENDIASS is a confidential, impartial, dedicated and easily identifiable service which operates at arm's length from the local authority and health commissioners.



The service operates during normal office hours and throughout the year, including school holidays. The helpline has a voicemail facility and the service regularly sign posts and provides information about a range of local and national SEND organisations.

Staff are legally trained to IPSEA Level 3, which is accredited training. Information and advice are provided online, with leaflets and in group training sessions and workshops. Support is provided to families in various ways: by telephone, email, text, face-to-face and virtual meetings. The level of support provided varies according to the needs of the service-user and we explain more about our levels of support in chapter 5.

The service has its own website and provides branded publicity and information in a range of accessible formats.

3. Contract, joint commissioning and governance

The national Minimum Standards say:

‘The IASS is jointly commissioned by education, health and social care in accordance with the CFA 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.’ (1.1)

A Service Level Agreement is in place for the three-year period September 2020 to August 2023.

Suffolk SENDIASS is an in-house service which is commissioned by the Local Authority. IAS services should be jointly commissioned across education, health and care funders. Currently the service is funded by the local authority with additional contribution from health through the Integrated Care Boards covering Suffolk.

We achieved all agreed outcomes within our IASP contract resulting in the successful release of the final payment, as the project came to a close in March 2022. We carried over some remaining funds to this financial year and we will be using this to develop and expand access and our service offer.

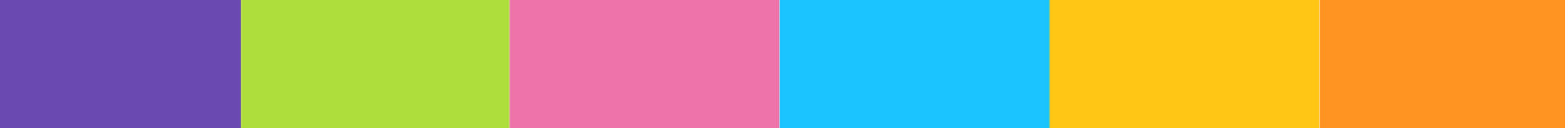
The service is also keen to explore resourcing additional capacity to enable it to expand the offer for young people as they move into adulthood up to age 25.

The budget is ring-fenced and managed within the service.

Advisory body

The national Minimum Standards say:

‘The Governance arrangements outline a clear management structure, encompassing a strategic manager within the IASS and a steering group or advisory body which includes representatives from service user groups and key stakeholders from education, social care and health.’ (1.7)



The service has an Advisory group including parents and representatives across education, health and social care, which meets once every term. The group discuss and share views about service development, review feedback and monitor overall performance of the service.

4. Resourcing and capacity

From September 2021, the team of was made up of:

Service Lead – 1 FTE

Senior IAS Worker – 0.8 FTE

Senior IAS Worker – 0.7 FTE

Training and Development Officer – 1 FTE

Community Engagement Worker – 1 FTE

IAS Worker – 0.7 FTE

In addition, from spring 2022, following a recruitment campaign:

IAS Worker – 0.5 FTE

IAS Worker – 0.5 FTE

IAS Worker – 0.4 FTE

Looking ahead

A significant focus for us is the continuation of training and development for our newest team members. This is a blend of accredited training in SEND law and other external training, alongside in-house delivery and mentoring.

We must keep our referral and helpline process under continuous review. Demand for the service is at a high level, and we continue to see a rise in complexity. We have flexed several times in this reporting period to be able to meet needs and expect we will need to continue to be creative about how we deliver our service to families.

We want to reach out to young people to find out what they would like from the service. We are keen to work with them to develop the young person section of our website and explore the most likely routes to access.

This period, we began to re-introduce face to face training sessions, alongside our well-established virtual sessions, and we will need to consider the capacity challenges faced with a blended offer as we move forward.

We have a substantial and well- established programme of training delivery, and while we have identified further areas where our expertise could help, there is limited capacity to develop this. We will be keen to explore with commissioners any resource available to further enhance our training offer.

We continue with our drive to work to remove any misconceptions or barriers to accessing the service, reaching out to families and building trust and confidence about the arms-length impartial nature of the service.

We have begun to explore other options for building occupation/base, though our team work very effectively remotely, and occupying office space is not essential to the delivery of the service.

Coproduction continues to be ‘at the heart of what we do’. We value the input from people who have lived experiences of support needs and/or services, and welcome families to become equal partners in the creation and development of our service. We are working with Healthwatch Suffolk on our commitment to coproduction.

You can read more about projects we are working on in our Service Development Plan. A copy may be requested by emailing enquiries@suffolksendiass.co.uk

5. Provision of Information, Advice and Support

Headline data for the period 1st September 2021 to 31st August 2022:

Number of referrals (requests for information, advice and support)	2,818
Number of service-users accessing (number of children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners directly accessing the service)	1,916
Number of service-users ‘new to service’	1,341
Number of contacts (number of individual contacts made as part of a referral)	7,577
Number of training registrants	1,758
Website page views	85,936
Facebook reach	189,011
Twitter impressions	27,176
YouTube channel views	21,028

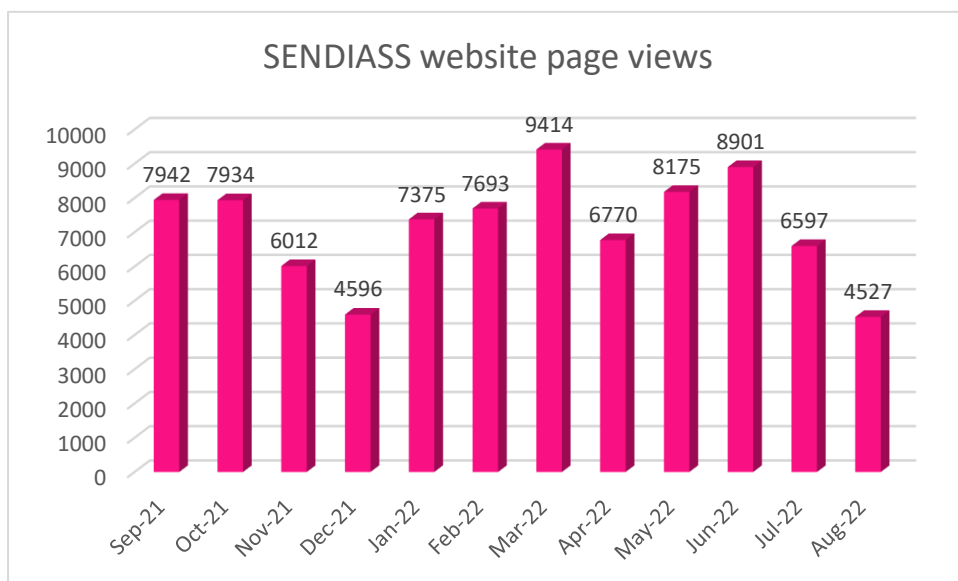
5.1 Website

Suffolk SENDIASS has a website which is promoted within its publicity and communication channels. There are over 100 pages of information and advice for service-users to access and is a valuable reference resource for team members.

It is a helpful tool for the team to guide service-users to specific information and the service has received comments that the website has helped them understand SEND processes and participate in discussions about support.

In the next reporting period, we plan to work with groups of young people to develop the content for the young person section of the website.

Page views for the website for the period September 2021 to August 2022:



Total page views this reporting period: **85,936**

Average monthly page views: **7,161**

August always sees fewer than average views.

We regularly review 'most viewed' pages to inform our information and training development. The sections which remain our most viewed are EHC needs assessments and plans; Choosing a school; SEN Support.

5.2 Written resources

Publicity and information leaflets

There is a range of service publicity leaflets available for families, links to the PDF versions are below:

- [Our service leaflet for parents and carers](#)
- [Contact card \(credit card sized\)](#)
- [Young person leaflet](#)
- [Child/young person postcard style leaflet](#)

Following a request from health, we also created a [PowerPoint slide for use in training and digital presentations](#).

This period, following further input from settings, we finalised our service publicity translated into nine other languages. Our 'What is SEN?' and 'How we can help you' can be found on our [leaflets and resources web page](#).

In line with the requirement to provide information in a range of accessible options, we now have 15 information leaflets which cover key subject areas.

Publicity and information leaflets are available on the service’s website to download as a PDF and can be provided as printed leaflets/booklets. These are regularly requested by schools and providers to make available for families.

E-newsletter

Service-users can sign up to receive news from us, our audience has grown this year and now stands at over 2,000 subscribers. Engagement has improved and the ‘open rate’ is now around 50% (up from 40% last year) for our regular newsletters, and on average around 53% for our invite to complete our online survey.

5.3 Social media

Facebook

Daily posts are created via the service’s business page. It is mostly parents and carers in Suffolk who follow us on Facebook to access news and information. The service relies on organic growth and has not used any of the traded post/audience boost options offered by Facebook. The service provides advice and support via this method too by responding to post comments and direct messages.

Page data

New page likes this period	278
Total of users who engaged with the page this period	5,907
Total reach this period (number of people who had any content from your Page or about your Page enter their screen)	189,011

Post data

Number of posts in the period	417
Lifetime reach for all posts posted in the period (number of people who had your Page's post enter their screen)	234,379
Lifetime “likes” for all posts posted in the period	111,086

Twitter

The service regularly tweets information and news. Our presence enables us to reach wider audiences and monitor news items and trends locally, and across the SEND sector.

“Tweet impressions” for period	27,176
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YouTube

The service has a range of video resources uploaded to our [SENDIASS YouTube channel](#), many of which are embedded across the information pages of our website. The team regularly signposts service-users to our information videos. The majority of the videos support our training, giving attendees the opportunity to revisit manageable chunks at their own pace and with family members. They are routinely sent out to families after training, and some are sent out before a training session. In this reporting period we created or updated 23 videos.

We were pleased to be approached by the **Open University** and agreed they could use two of our videos in their teaching materials: [What is a special educational need?](#) and [What is a disability according to the Equality Act 2010?](#)

Our channel views this period **increased by 52%** when compared to the previous year.

'Channel views' for period	21,028
'Impressions'	98,500

Our most viewed videos this period include:

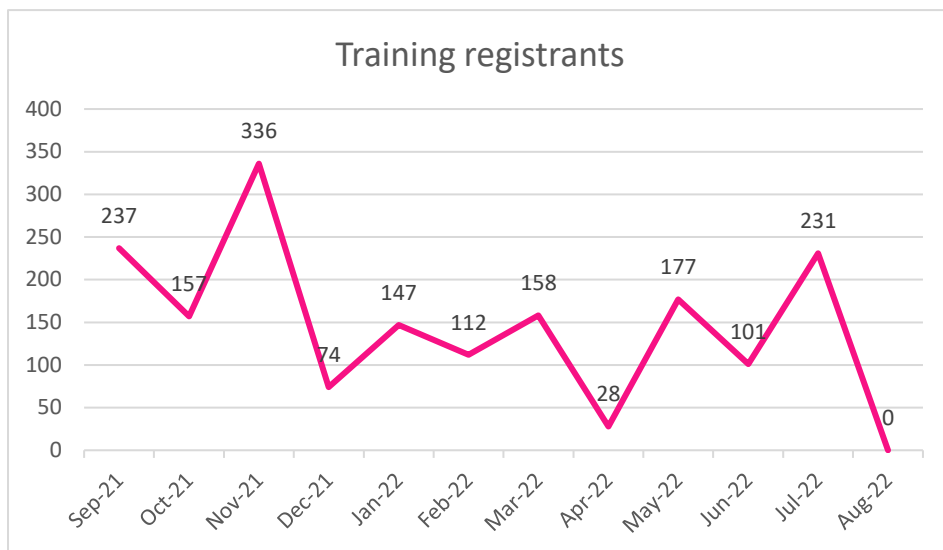
[SEN support for pupils with special educational needs \(SEN\) - YouTube](#) (currently 2.8K views),

[Drafting and Finalising an EHC plan - YouTube](#) (currently 2.8K views)

[What is a special educational need or SEN? - YouTube](#) (currently 1.3K views) and

[Annual Reviews of EHC plans - YouTube](#) (currently 1K views).

5.4 Training (information sessions and workshops)

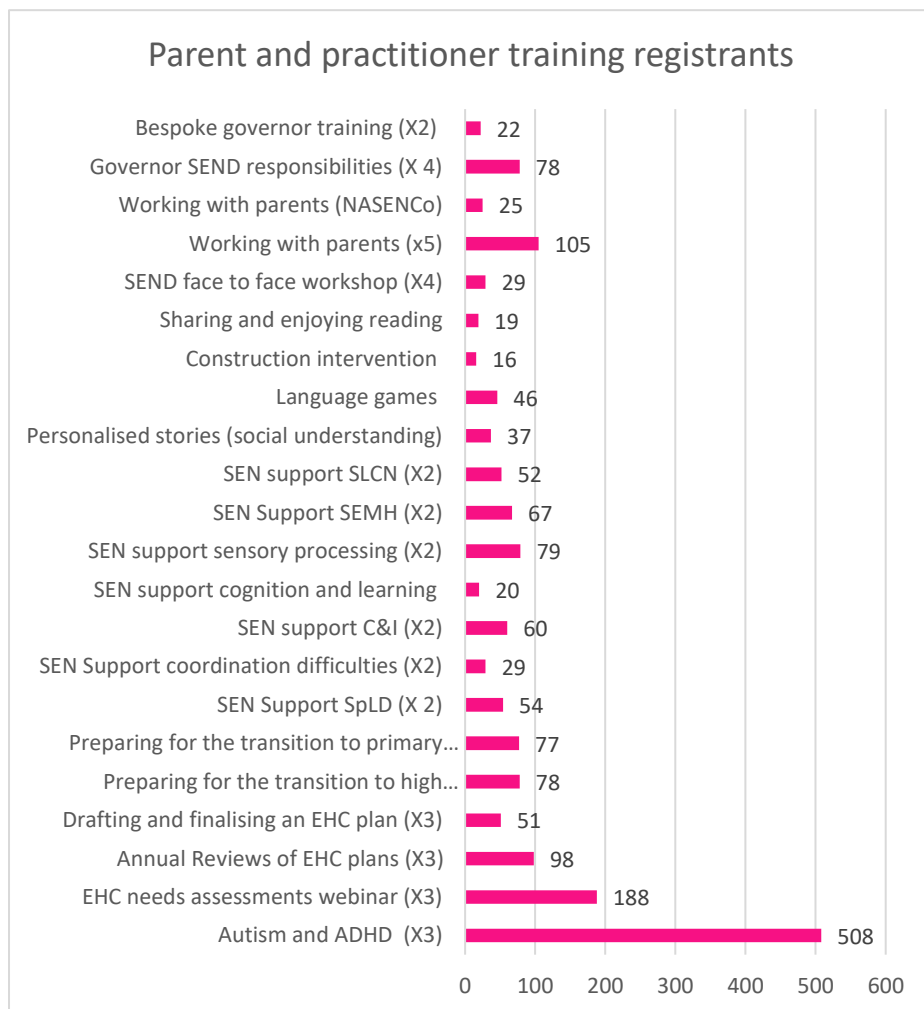


Total training registrants this period: 1,758.

Due to school holidays, we tend to see a dip in numbers for December, April and August.

This period, we reintroduced face to face sessions, and we expect to continue a blended offer of training through the coming year.

Here, we show the number of registrants for the various sessions we delivered or hosted:



We continued with our popular EHC needs assessment, Annual Review and our SEN Support sessions focusing on specific areas of need and reintroduced face to face sessions. Due to the strong interest from parents in sessions focussing on Autism, we reached out to the organisation [Autism and ADHD](#) who kindly agreed to deliver three free sessions for families.

Following coproduction, we introduced our sessions helping families prepare for transition (to primary and secondary).

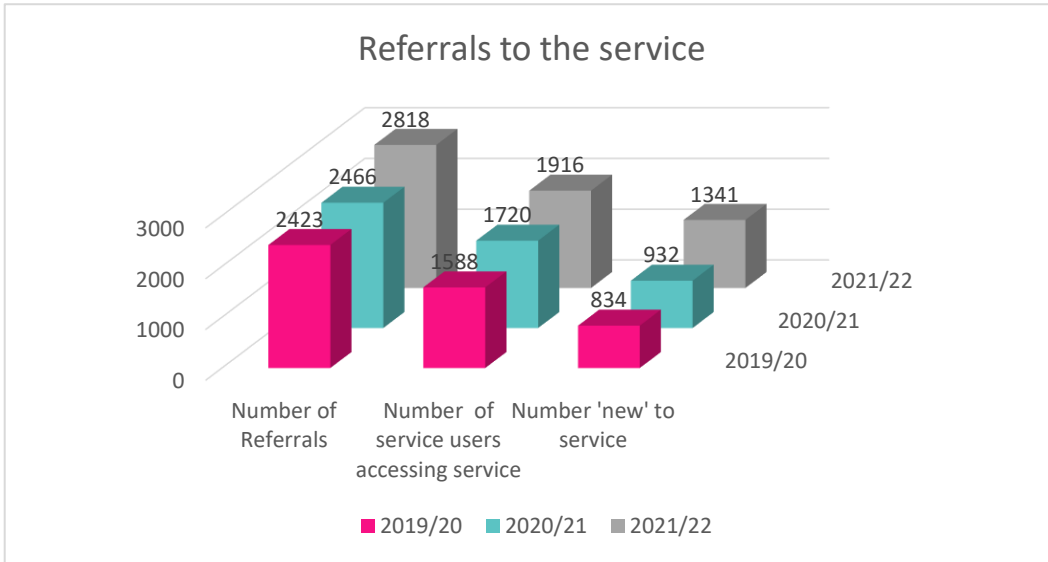
Following feedback, we offered sessions for parents and carers to gather their questions to find out what they would want to know about mental capacity and following this, put together an initial draft set of slides which could be used as the basis for a video and/or web information/leaflet.

Feedback about our training in chapter 6.

5.5 Helpline and ongoing support (individual IAS provided)

5.5a Referrals

A referral is the way we record a request for information, advice and support.

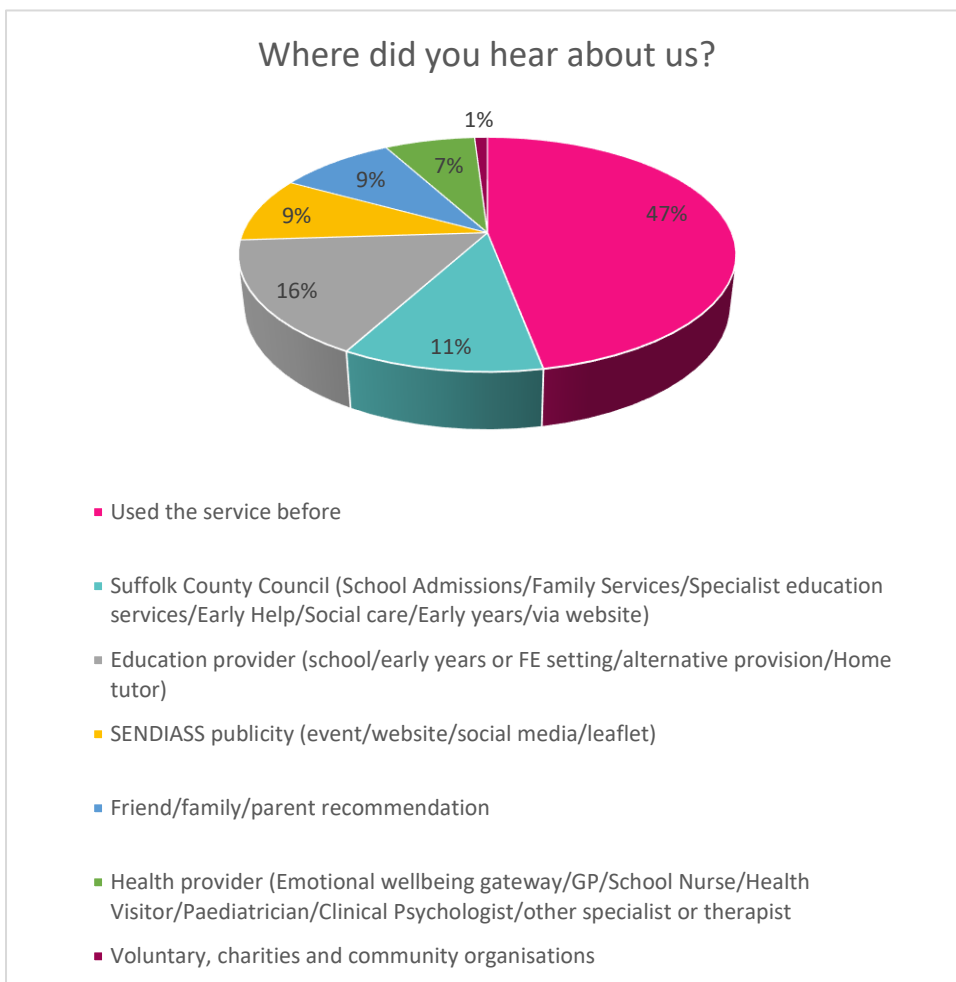


These data include the previous two reporting years for comparison purposes.

An increase when compared to previous years can again be seen across all categories. There is a 14% increase in referrals this reporting period.

'Where did you hear about us?'

SENDIASS is a self-referral service, and we capture where the service-user heard about us. The chart shows the % split:



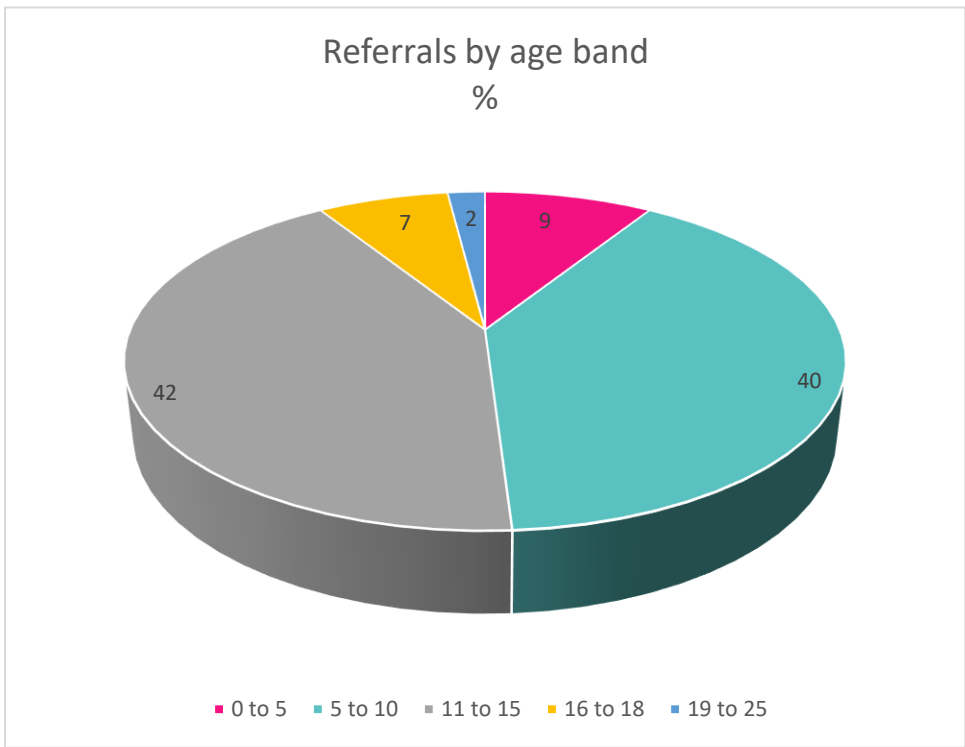
The data shows we have a **high percentage of 'returners' (47%)** clearly indicating that the information, advice and support we offer is valued.

It is pleasing to see that local authority education/social care services, schools/settings and health providers are signposting to our service.

Regularly we receive comments, from parents and carers particularly, that they wish they had learned about the service earlier.

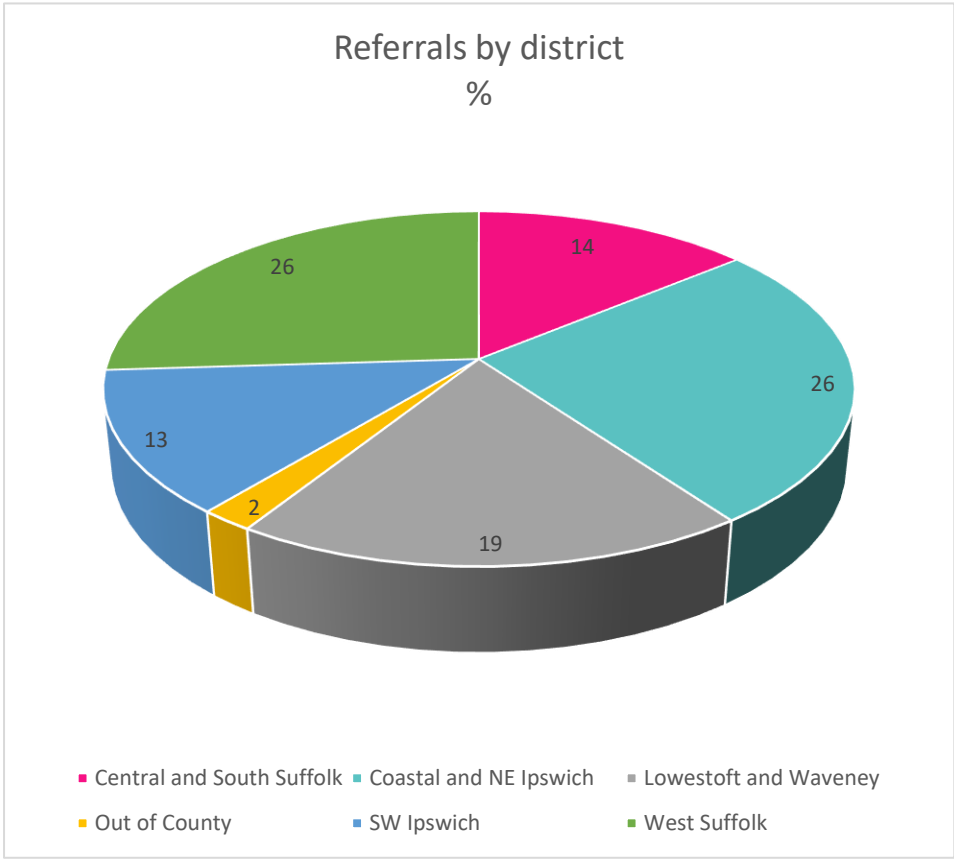
We continue to work with the community and partners to explore further ways to reach families.

% Referrals by age band:



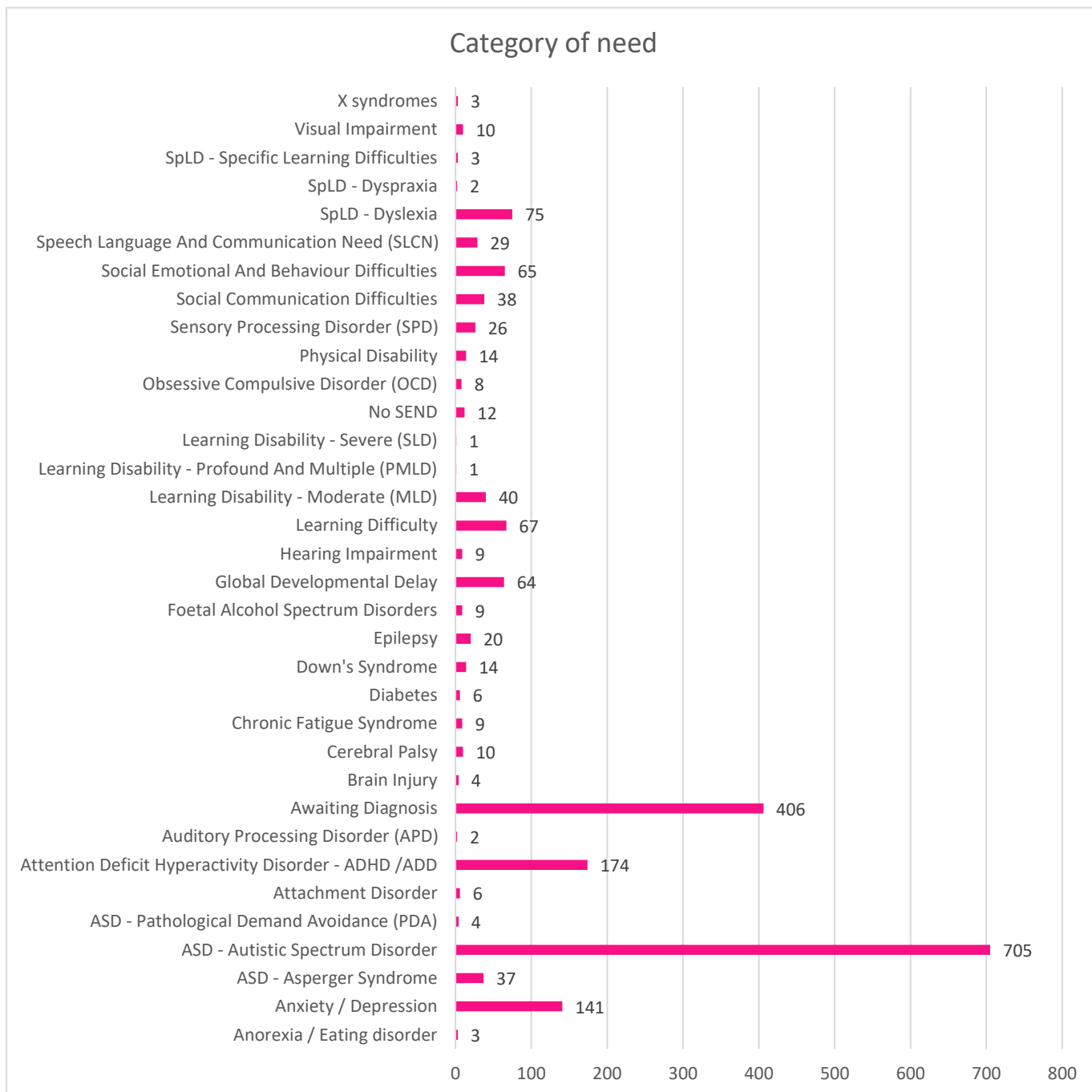
The split across age ranges is very similar to previous years, with the majority of the children and young people we provide information, advice and support for being across the compulsory school-age years.

% Referrals by district:



The chart shows the service is reaching the whole of Suffolk. 'Coastal and North East Ipswich', 'West Suffolk' and 'Lowestoft and Waveney' see the highest frequency of enquiries.

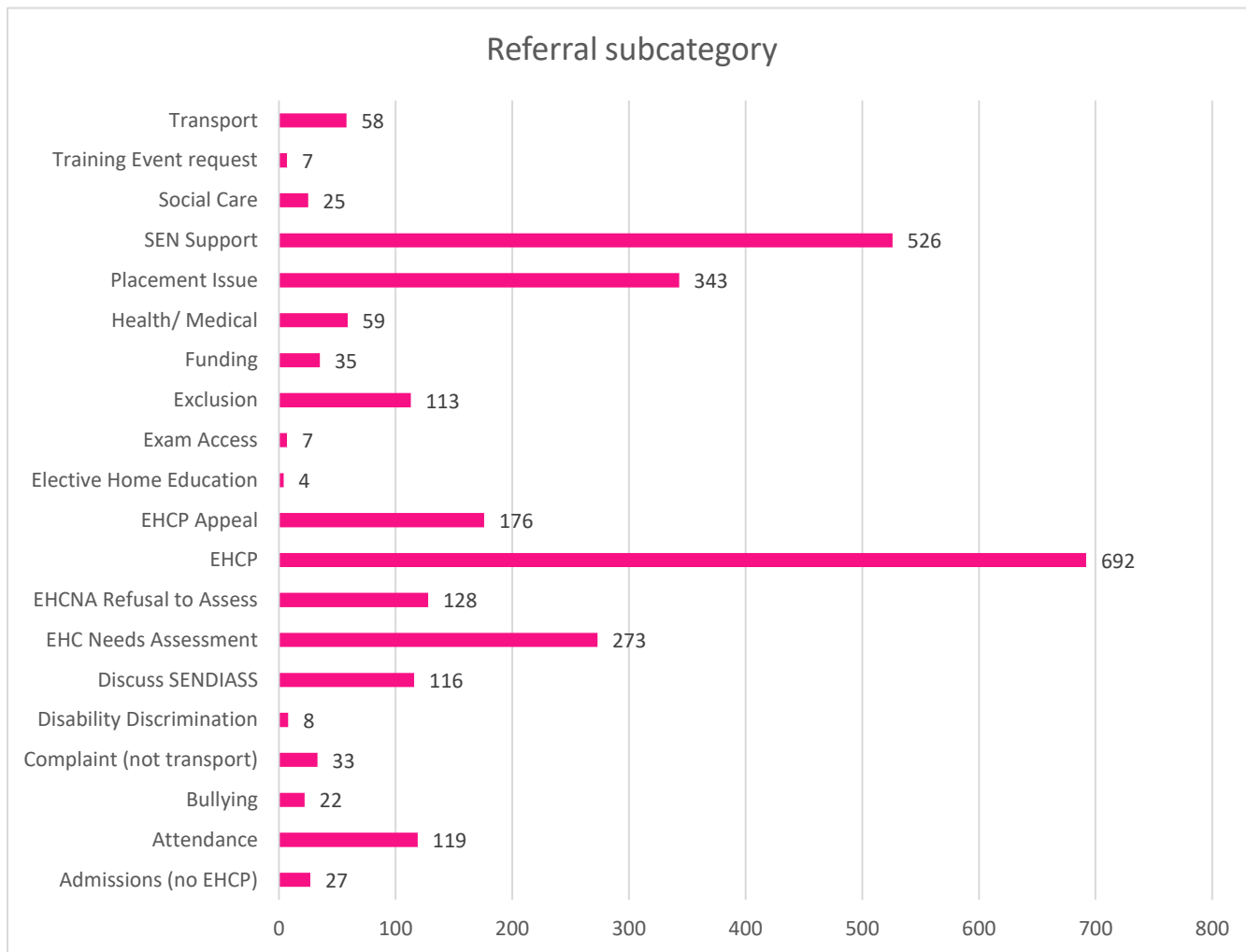
Category of need for the children and young people we supported in this period:



As has always been the case, the largest cohort of children and young people we support have a diagnosis of ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) at 35%. This reporting period saw an increase in the 'awaiting diagnosis' category (20%, up from 18% in the 2020/21 reporting year).

Referral sub-category (theme of enquiries)

The team categorises each referral by selecting just one theme:



Our capture of the referral categories for this reporting period continue to show a high number of enquiries about SEN Support, EHC needs assessments and plans, placement (naming a school in an EHC plan) and appealing to the SEND Tribunal about the setting (or that no setting) named in the plan.

We categorise generally and the data capture may not fully reflect all of the aspects of our discussion with the service-user, just the overriding theme of our discussion.

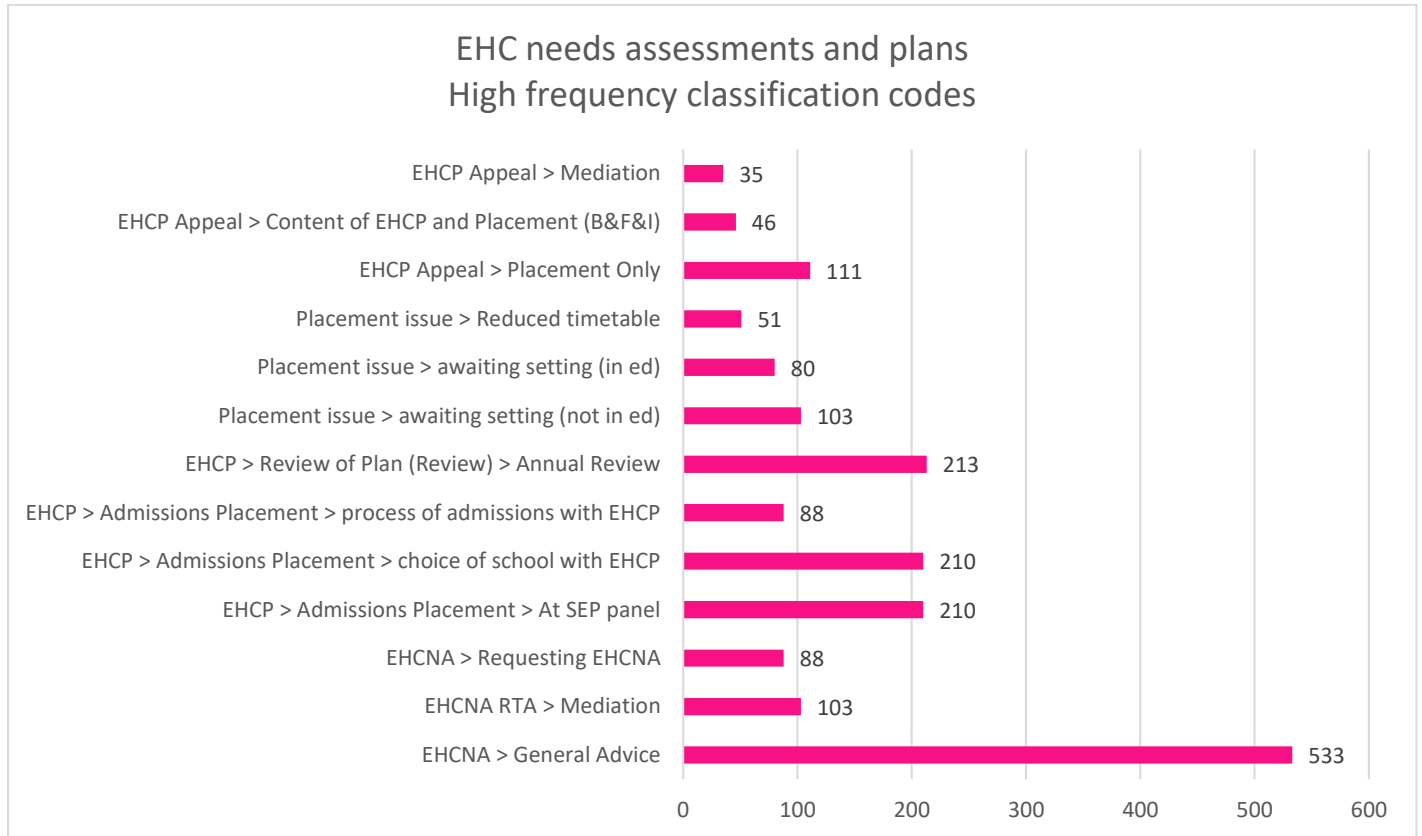
An example of this might be where a parent contacts the service for information about EHC needs assessments and plans and we categorise as such. However, a significant part of these conversations will include health assessments or provision (such as those provided by an Occupational or Physiotherapist, or pathways to diagnosis such as ADHD or ASD), in addition to specialist educational and social care assessments.

Using a series of classification codes on our database, we have enhanced our data capture during this period, enabling us to capture the full extent of a referral and provide a more specific snapshot of types of enquiries.

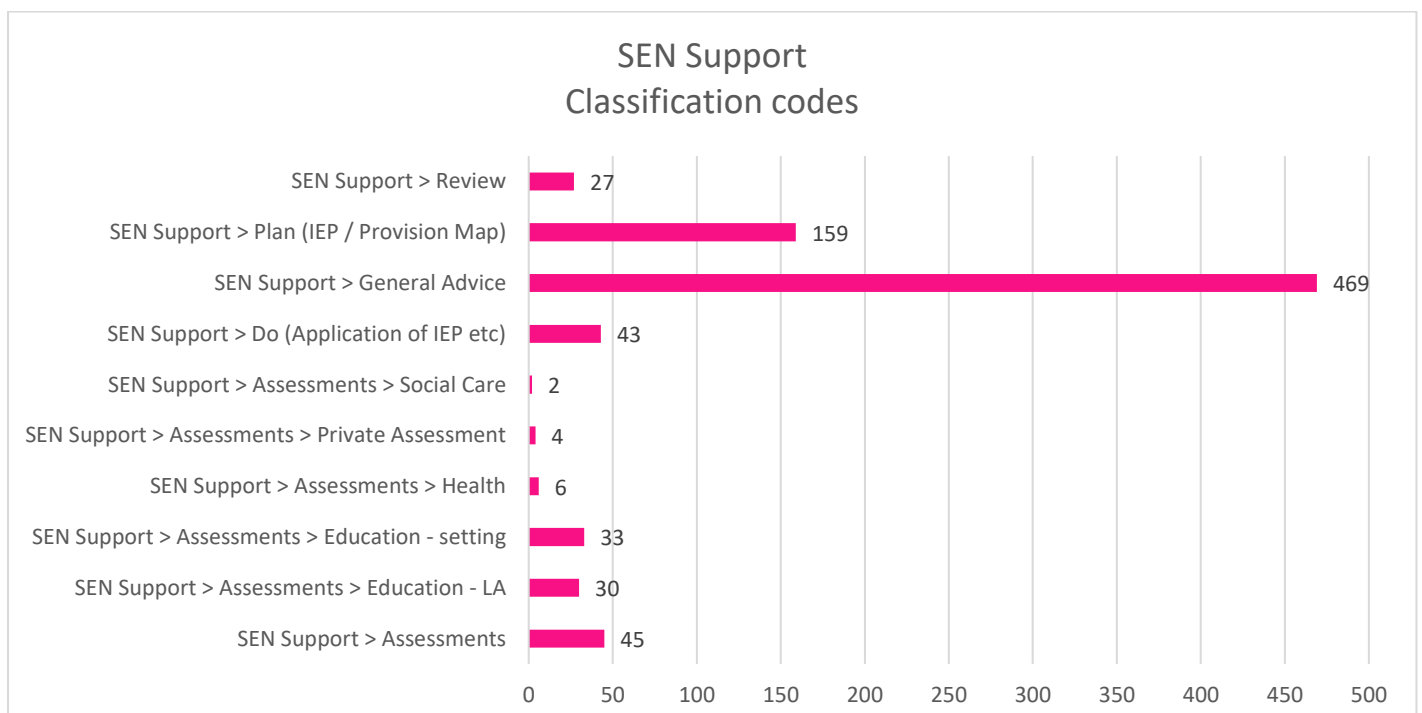
Classification codes

Here, we look at specific classification of referrals across the high frequency categories.

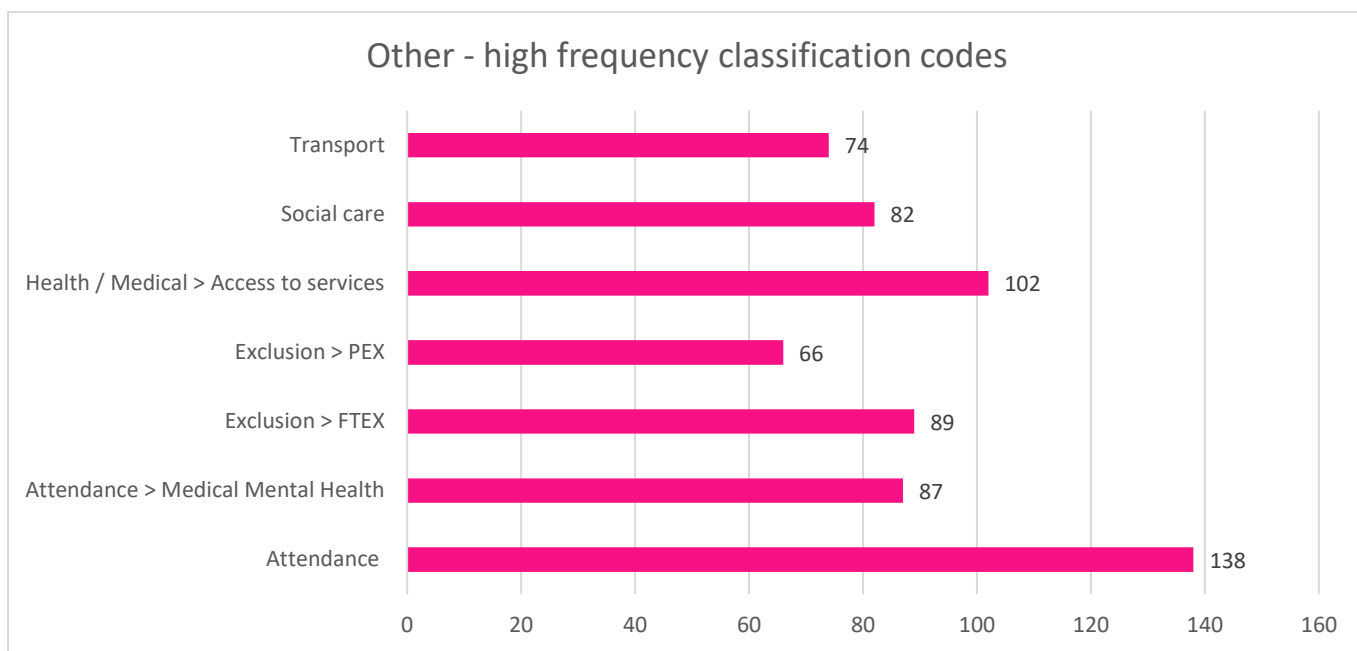
EHC needs assessments and plans (including appeals) classification codes:



SEN Support classification codes:

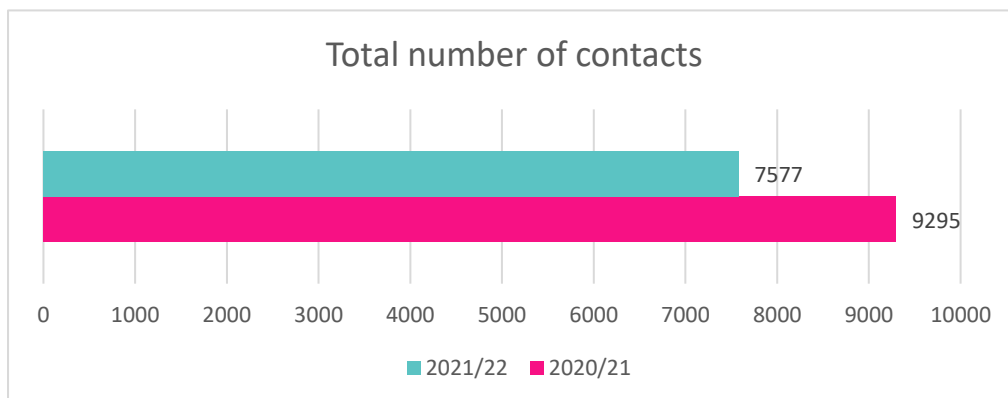


Other high frequency classification codes:



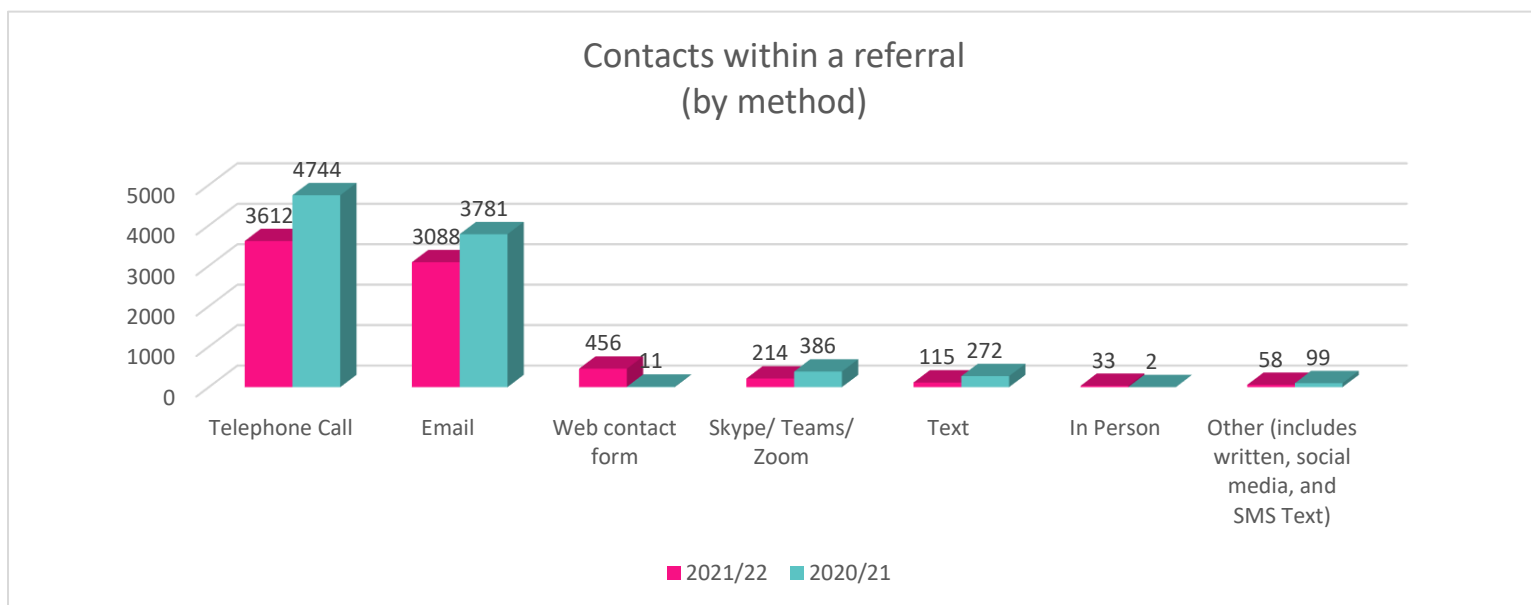
5.5b Contacts

A 'referral' may result in a number of additional related contacts.

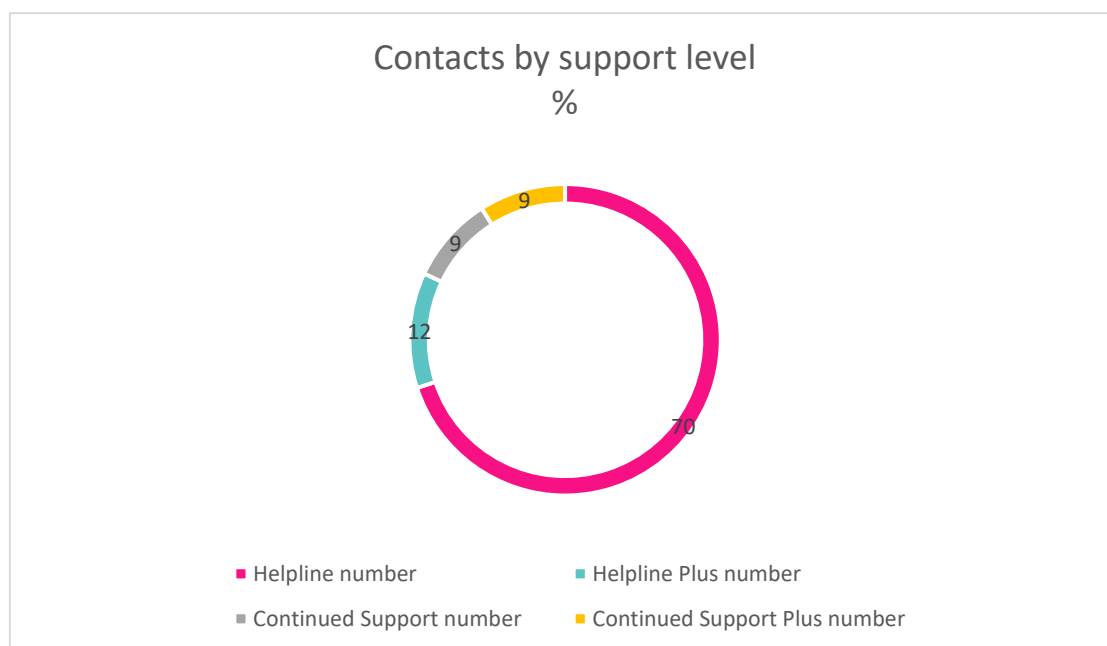


The total number of contacts has reduced this reporting year. This is due to efficiency changes we made to the way we manage referrals.

Phone remains the most frequent method of contact, though we do see increased appetite for our web contact form in these data:



Contacts by support level (the categories align with national guidance for IAS services):



These data show the spread of contacts across the categories we use to describe the 'level of support' provided.

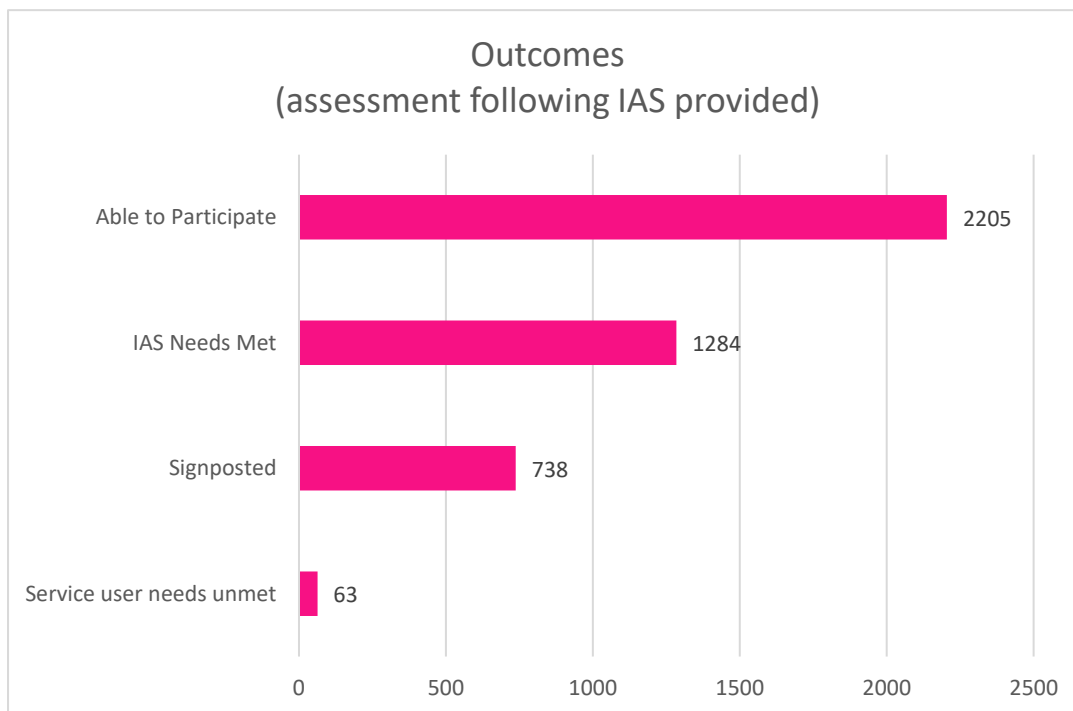
Time spent supporting families increases with each support level. Level 4, for example, we only use to categorise tribunal casework.

Contacts by support level are recorded by the team member using the following descriptors:

Level 1	Helpline	Phone/ email/ webchat/ Skype or In Person support – tailored to the circumstances of service user who was a 'Student' 'Parent' or 'Professional' At the end of the intervention there were no actions remaining open <i>for me</i> .
Level 2	Helpline Plus	After the initial contact, I had further actions such as more emails or phone calls to the service user and/or others. I may have needed to do research or discuss the case with a third party before making contact with the service user again. I may have made a home visit to the service user. I may have attended one meeting with the service user.
Level 3	Continued Support	I may have provided support at more than one meeting or given ongoing support and guidance through statutory processes (EHC needs assessment, disagreement resolution, mediation etc.) I may have assisted with preparation for an exclusion appeal and support at the appeal meeting
Level 4	Continued Support Plus	I provided support to a 'Student' and or 'Parent/Carer' during substantial legal processes This may include assistance with preparation for the legal process and support at, for example, a Tribunal hearing

5.5c Outcomes

An outcome is recorded by a team member following contact with a service-user.



Outcomes can be recorded per contact, and for some referrals we will have multiple 'outcomes' captured. They are a snapshot assessment of the result of the IAS provided, for example: *'we were able to answer their questions; explain their options or provide information which helped them to take part in discussions'*.

The 'needs unmet' category are a mix of our log of unanswered calls or where a meeting or appointment was made but was no longer required.

Some comments received this reporting period about the impact of our information, advice and support:

'Thank you so much for your BRILLIANT email. You have rekindled my hope after yesterday's upset'

'I always feel so much better once I've spoken to you. You have such a positive vibe I feel really empowered to move things forwards.'

'Thank you that's been so helpful, it has cleared my mind and I now understand the processes.'

'Whenever I speak to SENDIASS you are always really nice and give useful and impartial advice'

'Thank you I feel so much clearer after speaking to you. I think I can do this next meeting on my own now'

'Thank you, it was so helpful not only to have info to read on the website but also to actually speak to someone and explain my concerns'

'Thank you so much, it's been so helpful to speak to someone who is impartial and unbiased, so I feel I can have a clear head to make my own decision'

'Thank you so much, we would never have been able to understand this without you. We are so very grateful that this service is available to us'

'I'd not heard of you before, but you have been fantastic, so responsive and on it with messages. The website is really clear and so easy to navigate. Thank you for your help.'

'It's only because of Sendiass that we have as much understanding as we do about the system and the procedures, because others have not explained it in plain layman terms.'

'Thank you so much for your time and help, I feel better going to the meeting now, without speaking to you I would have probably just gone and cried.'

'I wish I had known about you sooner, that was so helpful. I understand what I need to discuss with school now and how to try to help my child'

'Thank you that's been such a help. My mind was in a muddle'

'You've really helped clarify things for me. I hadn't thought of it in that way before'

'Thank you so so much for all the information I can feel the mist clearing a bit now it felt like a thick fog before.'

'That's really helped me think more clearly. I didn't even know where to start with this'

'Thank you for your help and information it has felt like a bit of a mine field up to this point, but you have been really helpful, thank you.'

'Thank you very much, talking to you has really helped to get my mind in order, and helped me to get started'

'Thank you for ALL your assistance with this whole process. You have helped tremendously. We are extremely grateful.'

'Thank you so much, that's really stopped my worrying.'

'Thank you for your reply and informative information. You kindly answered our next steps'

'It expresses my every thought and feeling perfectly ... It really shows that you truly listen to me and my concerns...'

'Felt overwhelmed at beginning of call, thanks that was really helpful'

'Thank you for taking the time to listen and explain everything.'

'Thank you for all your help with all of the meetings and with the paperwork and for your support we couldn't have got here without you.'

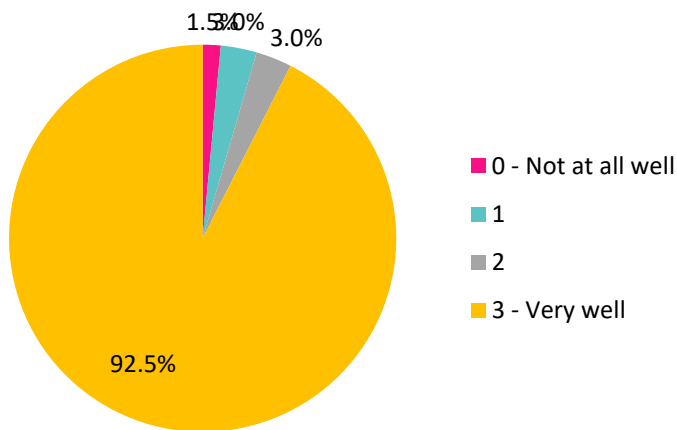
'Thankyou for your guidance in this matter, clarifying the options around appeal and pinpointing the legal obligations was pivotal'

6. Service-user feedback

6.1 Online feedback survey

As the start of each month, anyone who has accessed our service during the previous month and given consent for us to contact them, are invited to complete a short online survey about the service provided. The key questions asked are shown below with all the responses received during this period of reporting:

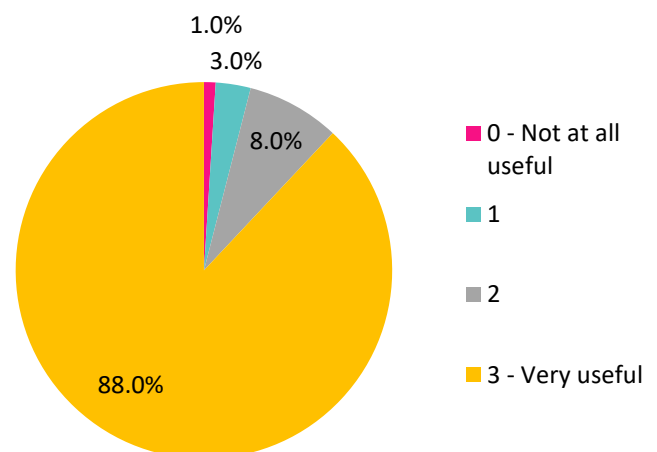
How well do you think we understood your questions or concerns?



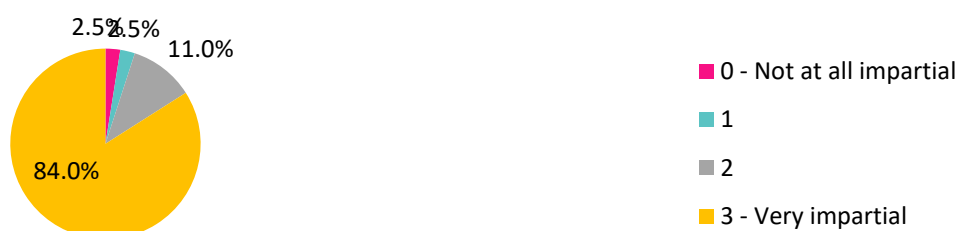
Pleasing to see that our service is viewed as being **impartial** by those accessing. The percentage of people giving us the highest rating '**very impartial**' remains at a high level (84%).

The chart on the left shows **92.5%** giving the highest rating when asked if we **understood their questions and concerns**. The chart below again shows a high level of satisfaction around the usefulness of our information, advice and support:

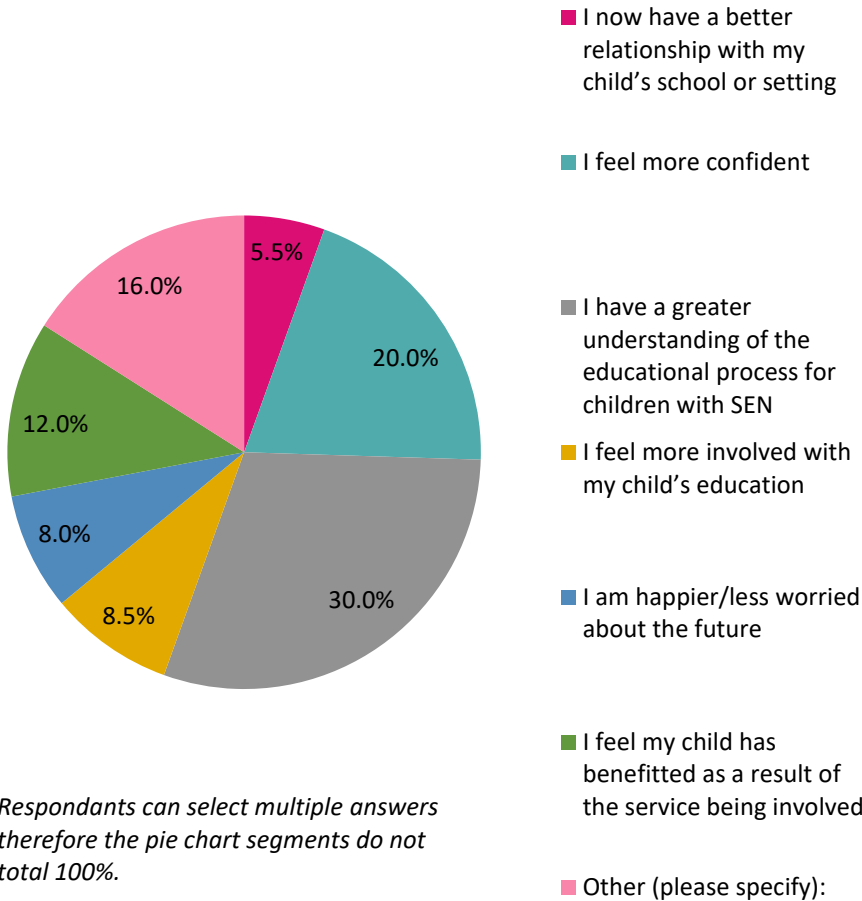
How useful was the information, advice and support we gave you?



How impartial do you think we were? (By impartial we mean we will give you unbiased information about what the law says and local policies. We will discuss options...



What, if any, difference(s) have we made for you? (Please tick any that apply)



Respondants can select multiple answers therefore the pie chart segments do not total 100%.

Sample of 'other' comments received this reporting period:

'I kind of knew the EHCP process but had some questions and they were answered brilliantly! Clear and precise information in regards to the law and terminology to use.'

'I have the information & knowledge to make informed decisions. Provided clarity.'

'I feel I'm equipped to challenge things and question things better knowing that the information I have is correct and lawful.'

'I feel I was finally listened to.'

There was one negative comment, which we will consider as we review our information and advice for young people in the coming year. We note some of the frustration is about availability of provision for this age group:

'Didn't help nor understand post 19 Send Education provision.'

The chart shows a high overall **satisfaction level** for the service at **96.5%**

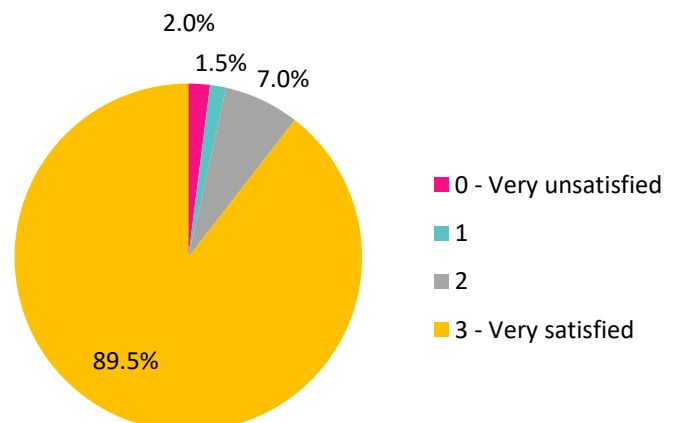
We also ask how we might improve our service and some suggestions include:

'I would have found it easier to be able to phone someone for my initial contact rather than being asked to put what my problems were in an email'

'Offer more support for parents with kids with SEND in transition for Secondary schools'

'I am a professional also. I think it would be helpful to reach out to parents that don't know how to navigate the system.'

Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?



6.2 Training feedback

Not all attendees fill in our online evaluation forms after joining a session.

Of those who did in this reporting period, or who filled in a paper evaluation -

100% of attendees of our SENDIASS information sessions (parents, carers and practitioners) strongly agreed or agreed that:

- the content was useful and appropriate
- the session was presented in a way which was clear and easy to understand
- the session made them feel more confident in that area.

Sample feedback for the parent/carer sessions

'Brilliant session – fantastic! I learnt loads – much more than I think I've learned ever! Amazed at how much support can be offered. Thanks so much.'

'It was very well organised, the presentation was clear and easy to understand. Plenty of time for questions and the follow up email/video was brilliant.'

'Thank you so much, very informative and feel more confident in applying for an EHCP.'

'Thank you for such a good course, it has been really helpful and informative. It has given me some good ideas and things to consider for how to support and help my son better.'

'I found this really helpful, and I am a parent and former teacher with lots of SEN experience.'

'Trainer very knowledgeable and understanding. Loved the interaction. Clear presentation, tailored to needs of the group. Genuinely loved it!'

'Thank you for this information, it has made the EHC process clearer, and it's great that we can have a pre-recording as it's a lot of information to take in in one go.'

'Thank you for this input which contributed to my own understanding of SEN and what is reasonable to expect from schools and settings.'

'I found it very informative, and I liked that we could ask questions and get answers. That alone has helped me a lot.'

'I've found it really helpful. Especially with some questions I can ask for the high school as I'm struggling with that.'

'Thank you, this has been really helpful. I'm going to make our own 'one page profile' with my son to get his views and see if anything comes up that I've never thought of for him.'

'Although face to face sessions are valuable, virtual sessions means you can join them in the comfort of your own home and attend without having to get to a particular place.'

Sample feedback for the practitioner-only sessions

'Thanks very much. This was comprehensive, clarifying processes and also contextualising things, regarding principles and requirements in law. Very good.'

'Very clear and comprehensive and also well presented, thank you.'

'Thank you for a very informative webinar. I am a senco in early years and have not completed a review before. I will process all the information from this evening.'

'Excellent information. Thank you.'

'Really helpful in understanding how to support my SENDco in role. Plus we had quite negative feedback from parents of children with SEND and the links to resources helping to set parental expectations really helps.'

'Thank you very much. Lots of food for thought! It's important that we learn to see parents and pupils as resources.'

'This has been very helpful thank you. I work for health visiting team and support parents of children with send in nursery.'

'Found the wording to use with parents when you can't see them straight away really helpful.'

'I'll be making sure everyone is on the same page before a meeting now.'

'These sessions have been really helpful, and thank you so much for all the resources which will be available to us.'

'I work in a high school with a fair few children with types of SEN. My son is also Autistic, so I feel like these courses will benefit not only myself but all the children I support. Thank you for offering the courses.'

'Thank you - it has introduced me to an area I knew very little about. Huge thanks to you.'

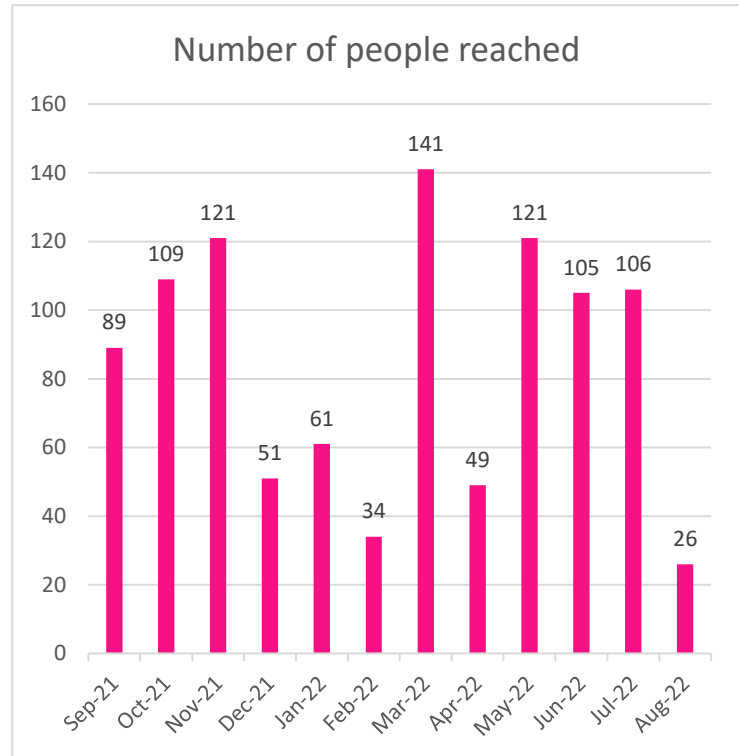
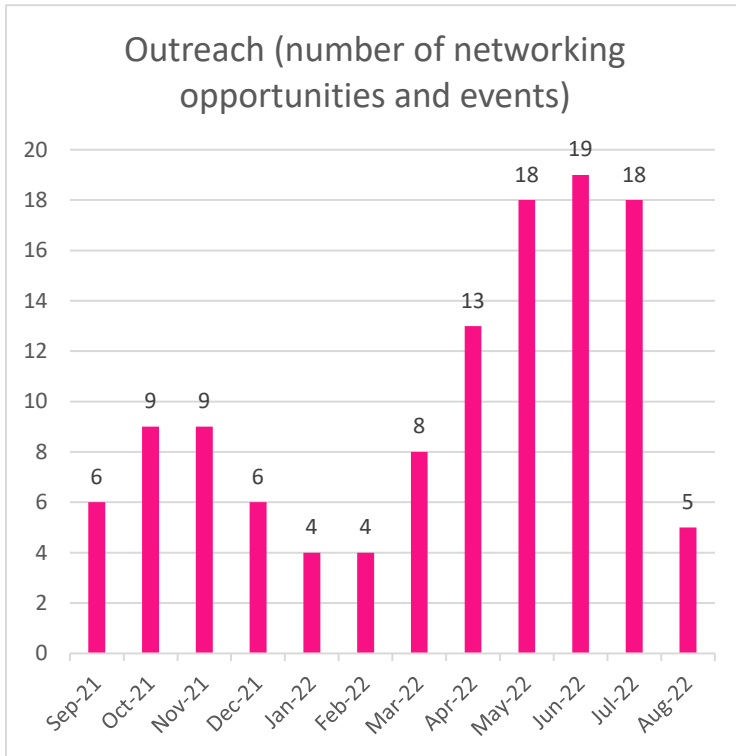
'Following the first webinar I had a really useful and positive discussion with the Headteacher.'

'I'm senco for my nursery. This training shows what the senco needs to do - so useful to know as a governor what needs to be seen and monitored.'

7. Other development and activities

Community outreach

We have continued to seek out networking events and other opportunities to raise awareness of the service, this period we reached 1,013 people by attending 119 events (including drop-ins, coffee mornings and parent groups):



We have established links across the local community, and we will continue to expand our reach and awareness of the service.

Informing and influencing local policy and process

‘The IASS works with local partners, including local parent and young people forums to inform and influence policy and practice in the local area.’

(2.3 national [Minimum Standards](#))

A summary of the key service activity this reporting period around informing and influencing local policy and practice is below:

Input to the Suffolk SEND Priorities and related workstreams

Examples include making suggestions for the post-16 transitions guide, suggesting changes to draft of the Local Offer EHC needs assessment prompt sheet, reviewing drafts of Easy Read explaining the Key Working function.

Sharing intelligence

Data reports shared with partners monthly, biannually and annually. This includes categories and themes of enquiries.

November 2021

- LA 'SEND Decision-making' Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation shared with SENDIASS for comment. Response/issues raised by our service:

Transparency of panel processes

YP/parental preference need to be central to discussions

Consultation process and communication of decision.

Issue of final amended plans, including in phase transfer years, by deadlines

January 2022

- EHC needs assessments and plans – what the law says
Drafted a document detailing the law around key decision points within the EHC process. Offer of exploring providing a resource and/or training for the decision-making panel members (LA and partners).
- Child in Need (CIN) assessment
Suggested that information for parents and carers to be made available on the local offer – about requesting a CIN assessment and what they might expect, including understanding thresholds.
- NDD – Information for families
Suggestion for some clear information for families about the criteria for assessment, seeking diagnosis and what they might expect following a referral.

April 2022

- Sensory assessment and support for pupils with sensory processing differences
Parent/carer experiences shared including parity of offer across Suffolk, myth-busting around OT assessments, and in relation to the application of regulation 6 (h) within EHC needs assessments.
- [EHC needs assessments and plans – what the law says](#)
Information on the document drafted (January 2022) published as a webpage. SENDIASS attended the LA 'Introduction to SEND Decision-making panels' session and provided input.

May 2022

- Barrier to ADHD assessment
Shared with NSFT – issues where parents and carers are being advised their child/young person will not be assessed for ADHD unless they have had an EP assessment.

July 2022

- SEND Accountability Board
Highlighted continued communication issues and frustrations being experienced by parent/carers accessing the service, in relation to EHC plans and decisions.

8. Jargon-buster and useful links

Classification codes	How we specifically categorise the information, advice and support we provided.
EHC plan	A legal document which describes the special educational, health and care needs for a child/young person and the help they will be given to meet these.
FTE	Full-time equivalent. A way of showing proportion of full-time hours
IASP	Information, advice and support programme – nationally run programme where services have been able to bid for funds to develop services in line with Minimum Standards
IASS	Information, advice and support services
Joint Commissioning	Commissioning and funding for IAS services should be shared between Education, Health and Social Care partners
Minimum Standards	National set of standards IAS services comply with
Outcomes	They are a snapshot assessment of the result of the IAS provided e.g., how were the needs of the service-user met during contact with us
Referral	A referral is the way we record a request for information, advice and support
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability What is SEND?
SENCO	A qualified teacher in a school or maintained nursery school who has responsibility for co-ordinating SEN identification and provision
SEND Code of Practice 2015	Statutory guidance for those working with SEND children, young people and their families, which supports part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014
Service-user	Someone who contacts the service for information, advice or support. They might be children, young people, parents, carers or practitioners.