

**SENDIASS**

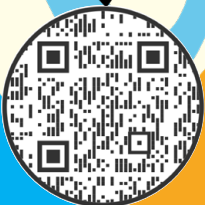
Special Educational Needs and Disability  
Information, Advice and Support Service



# An easy-read summary of our Annual Report

September 2022 - August 2023

SCAN ME



easy-read



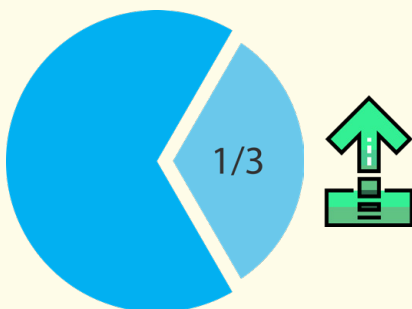
# An easy-read summary of our Annual Report



**We have been very busy over the last year.**



**We have had our highest annual number  
of referrals.**



**Compared to 2018/19, referrals have  
increased by almost a third.**

**More people!**



**Many more people are using our resources.**



**Visits to our website have gone up by nearly 40%.**



**People have said that they value using the website to get answers to questions and to get advice.**



**30% more people have looked at our YouTube channel.**



**Our Facebook posts reached fewer people when compared to the previous year.**

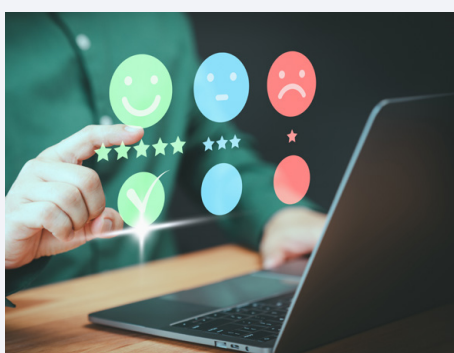
**We will work on how we can improve this.**



**Many families are not connecting with our Twitter page (Twitter is now called X).**



**We will look at how best to reach families through social media.**



**We are already improving how we contact young people.**





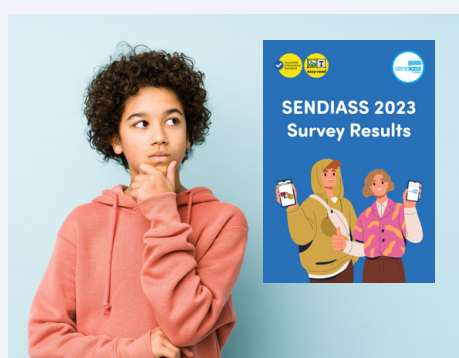
**We also are improving the information we give them.**



**Our survey for young people was created with young people and with our partners.**



**The survey asked how we could better reach young people and what they would like from us.**



**Our survey told us we need to:**



**To have more contact with young people through their school or college**



**To agree with young people what topics they know are important**



**To create new material with them about those topics**



**We have included some content on our website with links to local and national organisations which support LGBTQ+ young people.**



**We have begun to meet with groups of young people to work together on topics important to them.**



**We will also produce information in easy-read.**



**Training**



**1,201 people signed up for our training.**



**There are now more opportunities for people to do our training.**



**Our training now includes:**



**Sessions to support families to prepare for the transition to secondary school as well as primary school.**



**A new information session about SEND support in early years settings.**

**We worked with families to create this session.**



## the curly hair project



We worked with the local authority Specialist Education Services and The Curly Hair Project.



This work was about the communication and interaction needs of children and young people.



We hosted 11 sessions where specialist teachers gave presentations.



We restarted face-to-face training sessions and were surprised to find that not many people wanted them.



**School Governors said they liked our training about SEND responsibilities.**



**Staff can join our webinars about Education, Health and Care needs assessments and annual reviews.**



**We offer a popular 'Working with Parents' session to both schools and other services.**



**We attended 61 events reaching 723 people this year.**



**We were pleased to be part of a successful trial of SEND Advice drop-ins in Family Hubs across Suffolk.**



**Families like being able to come and speak to us in person and we will carry on attending these.**



**We worked with Healthwatch Suffolk to improve our co-production.**

**Co-production is when everyone works together as equal partners.**



**We now have a 'Co-production pledge'.**





## Requests for our services

**More people have asked us for advice and support.**

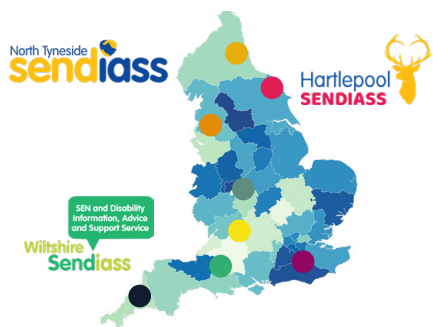
**Many are in situations they are finding difficult.**



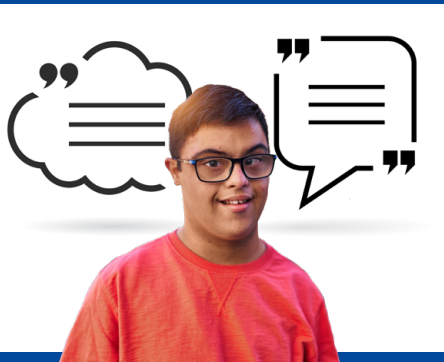
**More people with high support needs are asking for our help.**



**Some requests for our advice and support need more time for us to manage.**



**Other special education advice services across the country are finding this as well.**



**Responding to requests for advice and support**



**We aimed to answer requests within 3 working days.**



**At times this year, this was not possible.**



**Instead of giving people an appointment, we try to give more advice when people first contact us.**



**People now receive quicker information, advice and support.**

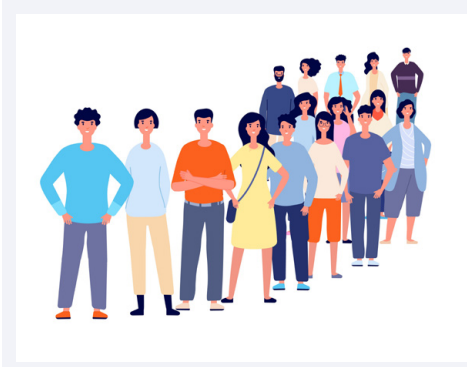


**Experienced members of staff support new team members.**



**We stopped new referrals in the Easter holidays in April 2023.**

**This was a difficult decision.**



**We did this to catch up with people who were waiting for us to get back to them.**



**The local authority gave us more money to employ an additional worker.**



**Some team members increased their hours.**



**Our newest advisor will join us during the autumn term.**

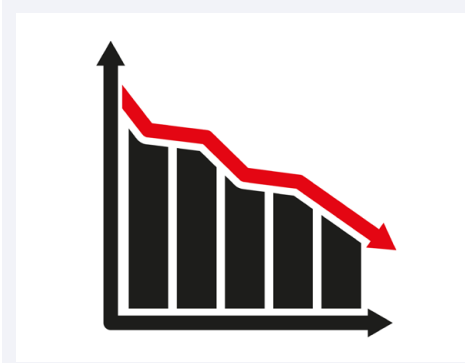
**The new advisor must train for 12 months.**



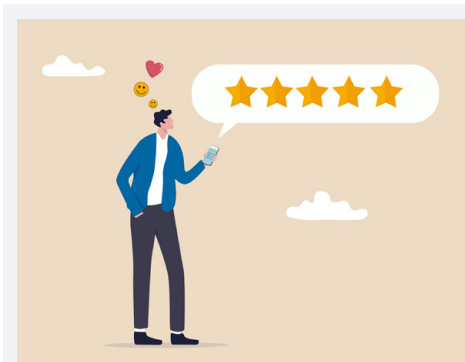
We ask people who have used our service to tell us if they are happy with the service they have received.



We do this using an online feedback survey.



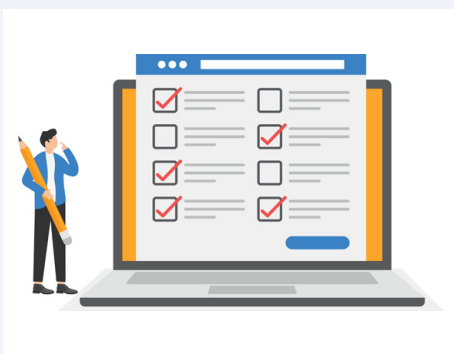
Satisfaction levels have dipped when compared to the previous year.



80% of people were satisfied or very satisfied with our service.



**Not everyone fills in the online survey.**



**We need more people to fill in the survey so we can get a better idea of how we are doing.**



**Some parents and carers were unhappy with how long it took us to get back to them.**



**This is because we could not keep up with the high number of requests for our advice and support.**





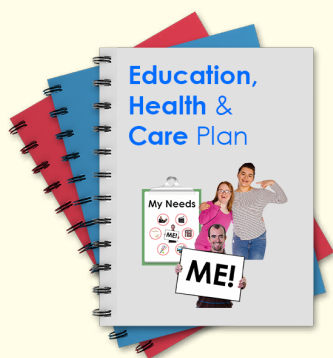
**We want to offer the best service we can to families in Suffolk.**



**We are working out how we might improve.**



**Most requests for help continue to be around:**



**Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans**





**Appealing the setting named (or that no setting is named)**

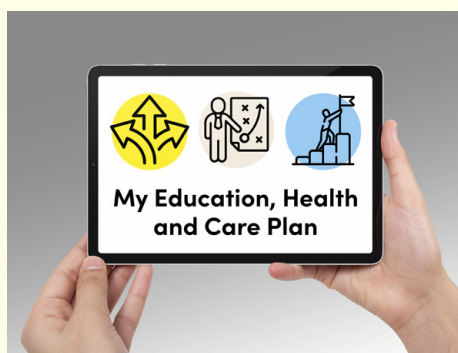


**SEN Support (for children and young people who need extra help in school or college).**



**Families ask us for advice about lots of issues.**

**More common queries are about:**



**'Explaining the Education, Health and Care plan process'**



**'Requesting an EHC (Education, Health and Care) assessment'**



**'placement'**

**(this is the setting named in an Education, Health and Care plan)**



**'suspension and exclusion from school'**



**'working with the local authority'**



**'medical/mental health'**



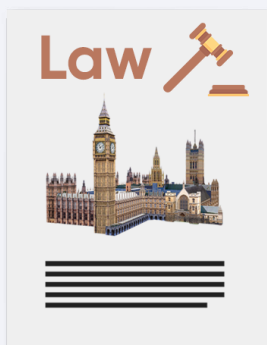
**Parents often tell us they are not feeling involved with discussions about their child's support in school.**



**Parents also tell us about the difficulties arranging meetings or conversations with the right members of staff.**



**We regularly explain that a diagnosis is not needed for a child to receive SEN Support or for an Education, Health and Care plan.**



**We often explain what it says in the Equality Act 2010.**



**The Equality Act is a law which explains what organisations must do to make sure disabled children and young people have the same opportunities.**



**Parents often tell us their child is too anxious to go to school and they are waiting for specialist help.**



**Parents and carers have shared some concerns about their experiences working with the local authority, including:**



**Not being clear about how things are done and how decisions are made**



**Not clearly telling parents about what has been decided**



**About legal timescales being missed**



**Healthcare concerns from parents include:**





**Whether or not a child or young person might get an assessment or therapy**



**Waiting times for assessments or therapies**



**We understand that services are very busy.**



**We also know that services are working towards improvements for families.**



**We continue to work with partners.**

**2 examples are:**



**Responding to suggestions from the local parent carer forum.**



**Our involvement with the SEND working groups in Suffolk.**



## Some comments we have received about the impact of our information, advice and support:

“

Thank you, your service has been such a help supporting me and helping me take my next steps.

”

“

The information I received was very clear. I feel as though I understand where we are in the process for the first time.

”

“

A great deal of progress has been made regarding my child's education and you were a springboard for that to take off.

”

“

You have been fantastic, thank you so much, we weren't sure what to do next, but I feel I know what to do now.

”



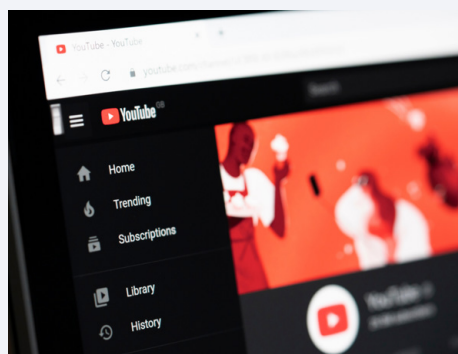
**I would like to say thank you to our team for their hard work supporting families.**



**We will continue to work to improve the lives of children, young people and their families.**



**Nicki Howlett  
(Service Lead)**



**You can watch our videos on YouTube:**

**@suffolksendiass7456**



**Scan the QR code with your phone to  
visit our website.**



**If you need help to understand this  
information in another language,  
please contact us.**

**A co-production group worked together to make this easy-read document.**

**We created this document as people who are:**

“Passionate, approachable and dedicated”

“Chilled, relaxed, kind, helpful, committed and caring”

“Supportive and kind with a good eye for detail”

“Kind, generous, funny, caring and committed”



**Online:**  
[thinklusive.org](http://thinklusive.org)



**e-mail:**  
[hello@thinklusive.org](mailto:hello@thinklusive.org)



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