



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 2023 to August 2024



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Summary

We started the academic year with a vacancy and welcomed a new joiner to the team during the autumn term. Our newest team members have either completed, or are part way through completing, the required SEND legal training.

We end the reporting period with reduced capacity due to a vacancy (Senior SEND IAS Worker). We made some adjustments so that we could manage the priority tasks in the interim until we are able to recruit.

We were pleased to be successful with our request for additional investment for a new post and look forward to progressing this in the next reporting period.

Building knowledge for new staff is an ongoing focus. It takes a minimum of 12 months for someone to pass the required SEND legal training, and this is just the beginning of their learning journey, with significant ongoing development and supervision.

We've seen healthy engagement with our resources, including digital downloads and YouTube views. The number of website page views show another increase this period and we've received positive feedback from people who use it to access information and advice.

Our Facebook audience and reach has grown. We continue to focus on the best ways to reach families and aim to explore platforms and digital content which will help us to reach more young people directly.

Following actions we identified in a survey the previous period, we worked and consulted with groups of young people to develop engaging resources to attract young people to our service. We published a range of easy read information and the first video in a planned series – which introduces our new character 'Cosmo' (named by a young person in our competition).

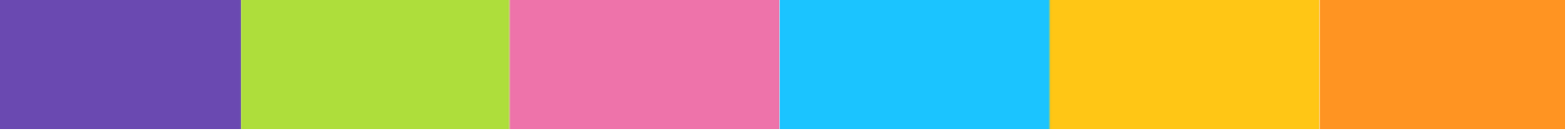
Young people and settings have shared positive feedback about getting involved in our development and we're looking forward to continuing to work with them.

We're seeing positive engagement for our sessions and workshops with an increase in registrants this period.

We're continuing to focus on community outreach and this period reached twice as many people as the previous year. We had a much higher proportion of voluntary, charity and community organisations letting people know about our service this period.

Families value the opportunity to speak with us at events, groups or coffee mornings and this clearly links to our aim to reach families and empower them as early as possible - to understand and navigate SEND processes, and take an active part in discussions.

We continue to work with Healthwatch Suffolk as part of their project to support services with their co-production journey, and find their guidance and suggestions enable us to reflect and plan next steps.



Though slightly fewer referrals this period, when compared to the previous, the number of people 'new to service' has never been higher. The overall number of people directly coming through to the service remains high, indicating that the information, advice and support we're providing is empowering families and might be preventing further escalation down the line.

Our biggest challenge is the ongoing demand and increased complexity of the requests for support. This trend is seen nationally with SENDIAS services spending more time providing support through the highest intervention levels.

Our team are providing tailored responses to complex questions at fast pace. We extended our published response time to 5 working days to ease pressure, though sometimes we exceeded this.

We can see in 'outcomes' that, though fewer than our spike last year, we continue to have a high number of families for whom we were unable to meet the needs of (128). We continue to adapt the way we operate to be as efficient as possible and position our experienced members of the team to provide triage and escalation support to staff managing the incoming referrals.

Comparing our annual reports in recent years, we can see that the way people are choosing to contact us is changing. We receive fewer phone calls in favour of emails and web contact forms. Feedback suggests we need to be careful not to sound impersonal in our email responses. It is much harder to provide a personal touch, reassure and check understanding when replying to emails.

Satisfaction levels within our online feedback survey have improved across some areas, with an increased percentage of people telling us we understood their questions or concerns, that they found us to be 'very impartial', and an improvement in the overall satisfaction score.

Areas to improve on are how quickly we responded, how helpful we were, and around the difference we made.

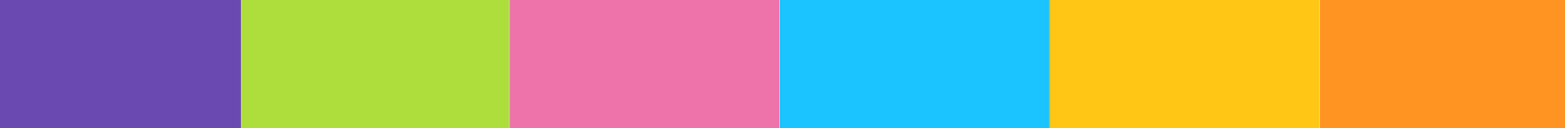
Negative comments received were people sharing concerns about our response times, that we'd not responded, or that we either did not answer their questions or provide support to them.

We apologise to any families who had a negative experience of using our service. We would not knowingly leave an enquiry unanswered. We may have experienced technical or human errors when managing multiple incoming requests and we'd like to make use of IT solutions which minimise errors and support our workflow.

We aim to empower people who use our service and tailor information, advice and support to their needs – in practice this means that two people with the same or similar enquiry might receive a different level of support.

We provide 'support' to children, young people and parents/carers who are not able to understand or take part in SEND processes on their own.

We have also found some people come to SENDIASS with expectations outside of our remit, for example, that we can tell a setting or the local authority what to do.



When someone contacts us, we need to clearly explain our remit and what they can expect from the service.

We will continue to reflect and review existing practice and plan to develop quality standards which support our delivery of accurate information and advice to meet the support needs of families.

Our highest frequency referrals continue to be around EHC needs assessments and plans, appealing the setting named (or that no setting is named) and SEN Support.

Classification codes help us to pinpoint specific common issues raised by families. For example, within EHC needs assessment, we are having more discussions about 'Explanation of process', 'Requesting EHCNA' and missed deadlines.

Other high frequency classification codes to note are 'placement', 'suspension and exclusion', 'working with school', 'health/medical' (in particular, access to services), and 'working with the local authority'.

Parents often come to our service seeking advice with how to get involved in discussions about support and ways to communicate or arrange meetings with their educational setting.

We continue to provide information which dispels the 'diagnosis myth'. We regularly explain that a diagnosis is not necessary for a child to receive SEN Support nor is it a requirement for an EHC plan. We frequently give information about the definition of a disability within the Equality Act 2010 (and the duty to make Reasonable Adjustments for disabled pupils).

We often hear from parents and carers sharing that their child is too anxious to go to school, sometimes on waiting lists with health or wellbeing services, and where they wish to explore bespoke, alternative or specialist provision.

We continue to regularly provide information and advice about communication with the local authority including the options when legal timescales are missed (for EHC needs assessments and plans).

Waiting times (and thresholds) for health assessments and therapies continue to cause barriers for the families we hear from. We acknowledge that services (across education, health and social care) are in high demand and there is work identified to improve the experience for SEND children and young people.

We continue to share insights and the experiences of families with partners, to inform policy and development work.

I would like to thank the team for their hard work and dedication to supporting families in challenging circumstances. They are always flexible and open to exploring new ideas to help us work towards improving the lives of SEND children and young people and their families.

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 this report.

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 2023 to 2026.

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 contribution from health through the Integrated Care Boards covering Suffolk.

Remaining funds from the IASP contract (though the IASS national network, funded by the Department for Education) was used to develop identified tools, training and resources to improve the reach and offer for children and young people.

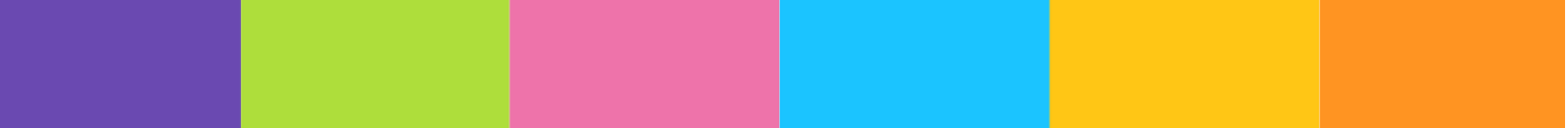
The service has continued to explore, and was successful securing, additional investment this period to enable it to meet the ongoing demand and complexity of referrals.

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 body](#) including parents and representatives across education, health and social care, which meets once every term. The group discuss and share views about the service development plan, review feedback and monitor overall performance of the service.

Read about our development activity in our [Service Development Plan 2023 to 2024](#).

4. Resourcing and capacity

The team, as of 31st August 2024:

Service Lead – 1 FTE

Senior IAS Worker – 0.8 FTE (vacant post)

Senior IAS Worker – 0.7 FTE

Training and Development Officer – 1 FTE

Community Engagement Worker – 1 FTE

SEND IAS Workers (5) – 2.95 total FTE.

Total FTE staff: 7.45

+1 FTE new post agreed - QA & Development Lead

Looking ahead

We begin the academic year (2024/25) with reduced capacity due to the resignation of a Senior SEND IAS Worker. As a result, we made some interim changes to the way we manage enquiries from August. We have needed to shuffle responsibilities within the team and pause some of our planned development work.

We'll continue to support newest team members to build knowledge and complete SEND legal training. We plan to deliver some training in-house to our whole team, which will include practical information and advice to enhance their confidence supporting families through the SEND Tribunal process.

We will make use of the additional investment secured and progress our planned recruitment to a new post - Quality & Development Lead. This will be the first step towards focussing resource and structure to meet the needs of families in a sustainable way.

We're keen to explore IT and AI solutions which might support our workflow and streamline processes.

5. Information, advice and support provided (interventions)

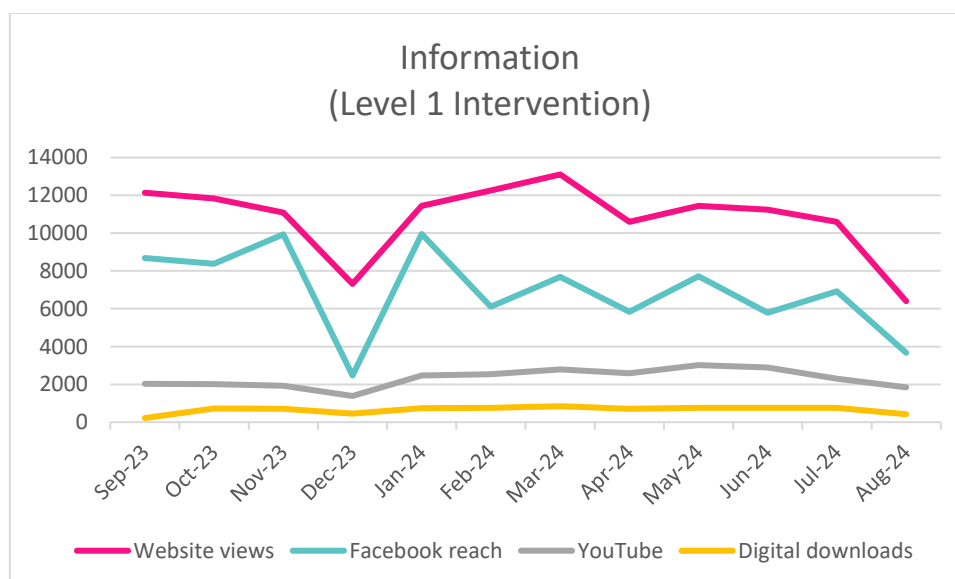
Headline data for the period 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024:

	Total this period	% Annual differential (+/-/=) = means no change
Number of referrals (requests for information, advice and support)	2,805	-9.5%
Number of contacts (number of individual contacts made as part of a referral)	6,195	=
Number of people directly accessing the service	2,190	-3%
Number of people 'new to service'	1,516	+14%
Number of training registrants	1,332	+10%
Number of people reached through 'community outreach'	1,446	+100%
Website page views	129,442	+8%
Digital downloads (website)	7,853	New data
Facebook reach	42,084	+7%
YouTube channel views	27,771	=

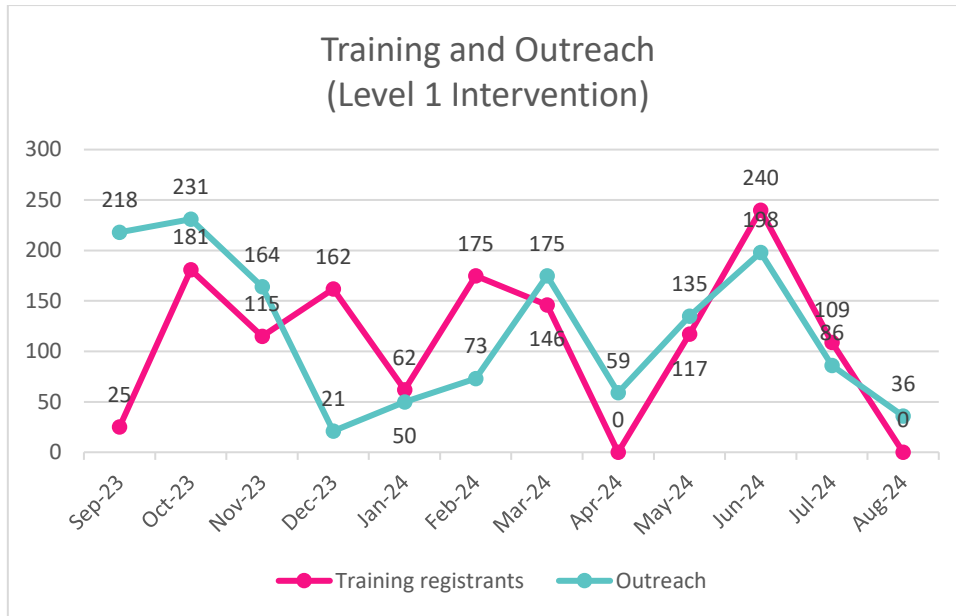
We provide 4 different levels of information, advice and support. We call these ‘intervention levels’ - based on national guidance for SENDIAS services, summarised below:

Level 1	Information	General information and signposting (including website links, factsheets, forms etc). Parent/carer/young person can express their needs and those of their child and needs general (not specific child) advice to better understand the system and make an informed decision.
Level 2	Information and tailored advice	Information and specific advice tailored to individual need or circumstances, about education, health and social care SEND systems and processes. Parent/carer/young person can express their needs and those of their child. They may need more tailored or specific advice. May have previously had information and advice at level 1 and are now at the next stage.
Level 3	Support	Ongoing support, which may include advocacy in line with minimum standards, help with giving views, forms, meetings, or liaising with other services or providers. The parent/carer is unable to independently navigate SEND processes. A child or young person requesting information, advice or support.
Level 4	Intensive Support	Ongoing intensive support, which may include advocacy in meetings and reviews. Support with the appeals process. The parent/carer is unable to independently navigate SEND processes or access justice. Parent/carer/young person who needs advocacy/representation. High need / high complexity.

The chart below shows the reach and volume of digital information provided in the period:



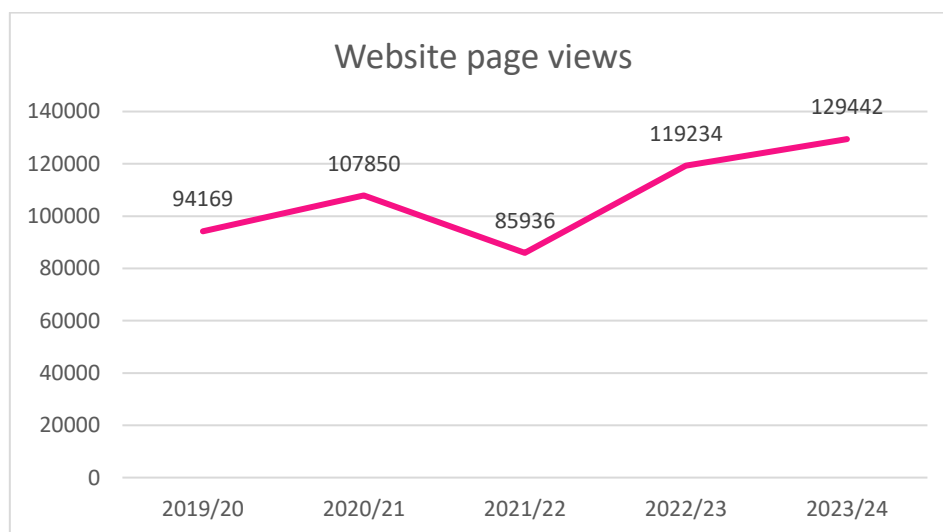
This chart shows the reach of our sessions and community outreach (open events, drop-ins and networking opportunities). Training registrants are always lower at the start of each term (September, January and April):



5.1 Website (Level 1 intervention)

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

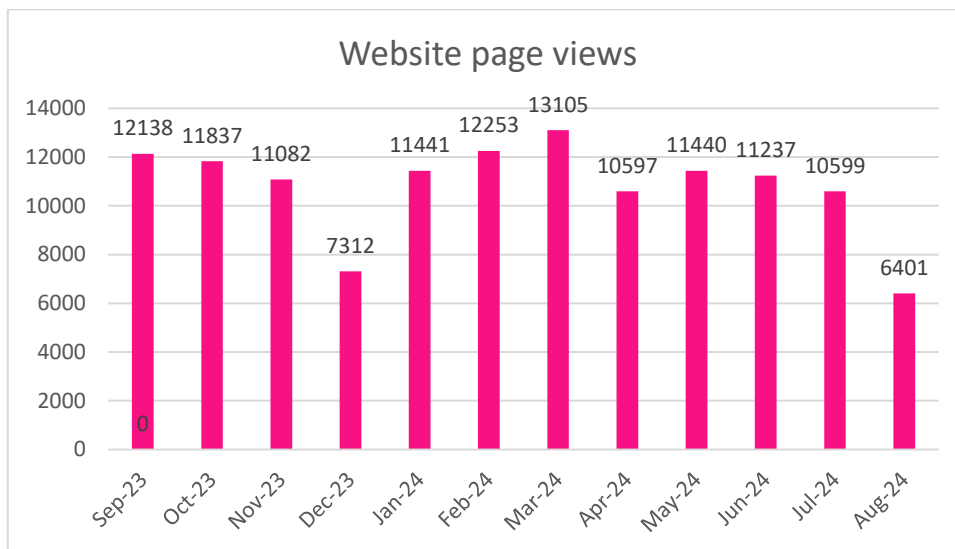
This chart shows the 5-year trend:



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

We have begun to develop the content for the young person section of the website and plan to explore, with developers, different style options for this section.

This chart shows the monthly trends for the period September 2023 to August 2024:



Total page views this reporting period: **129,442 – an increase of 8% from last year (119,234)**

Average (mean) monthly page views: **10,787**

5.2 Information resources (Level 1 intervention)

Publicity and information resources

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](#)

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

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.

We asked a local charity (that work with young people to produce music and videos) to design a character concept as the first step to be used for some new video clips, online content, and social media campaigns.



We took this to groups of young people in settings to involve them and [capture feedback](#).

We ran a competition (for young people) to name the character and introduced 'Cosmo' in the first published video in the series:

[Suffolk SENDIASS – Welcome children and young people!](#)

Easy-read information.

This period, we worked with groups of young people to develop some easy-read information about specific topics:

- [Child-and-young-person-leaflet-easy-read.pdf \(suffolksendiass.co.uk\)](#)
- [Child-and-young-person-poster-easy-read.pdf \(suffolksendiass.co.uk\)](#)
- [Support-to-get-your-voice-heard-easy-read.pdf \(suffolksendiass.co.uk\)](#)
- [Support-across-5-days-16-plus.pdf \(suffolksendiass.co.uk\)](#)
- [Care-and-support-needs-18-plus.pdf \(suffolksendiass.co.uk\)](#)
- [Annual-Review-of-your-Education-Health-and-Care-Plan-easy-read.pdf \(suffolksendiass.co.uk\)](#)

We have a further 2 in progress, which we will finalise in the next reporting period.

We have begun this year to track digital downloads, you can see the numbers across the year earlier in this chapter.

5.3 Social media (Level 1 intervention)

Facebook

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. The total reach this reporting period has increased to **42,084 (up 7% - from 39,288 the previous year)**.

Page and post data

New followers	269
Followers	2,808
Page visits	7,310

Total reach this period (number of people who had any content from your Page or about your Page enter their screen)	42,084
Number of posts in the period	288

‘X’

Following a review of activity in the previous reporting period, our data showed that we were not reaching many families through this platform and we ceased activity. We retain our presence for now and will continue to review our development strategy for social media more generally, focusing on platforms which reach families.

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 people to our information videos. Most 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 have continued to develop the video range, adding recordings of new training sessions and new stand-alone videos following specific requests.

Our channel views this period are on par with the previous reporting period:

‘Channel views’ for period	27,771
Subscribers this period	185
‘Impressions’	209,805

Our top 5 most viewed videos this period reflect our highest frequency referrals, around EHC needs assessments and plans, appealing the setting named (or that no setting is named) and SEN Support:

- [What is a special educational need or SEN?](#) (3,567 views)
- [Drafting and Finalising an EHC plan](#) (2,062 views)
- [What is an EHCP or Education, Health and Care plan?](#) (1,901 views)
- [SEND Tribunal Appeal Form 35 Introduction](#) (1,151 views)
- [Annual Reviews of EHC plans](#) (1,147 views)

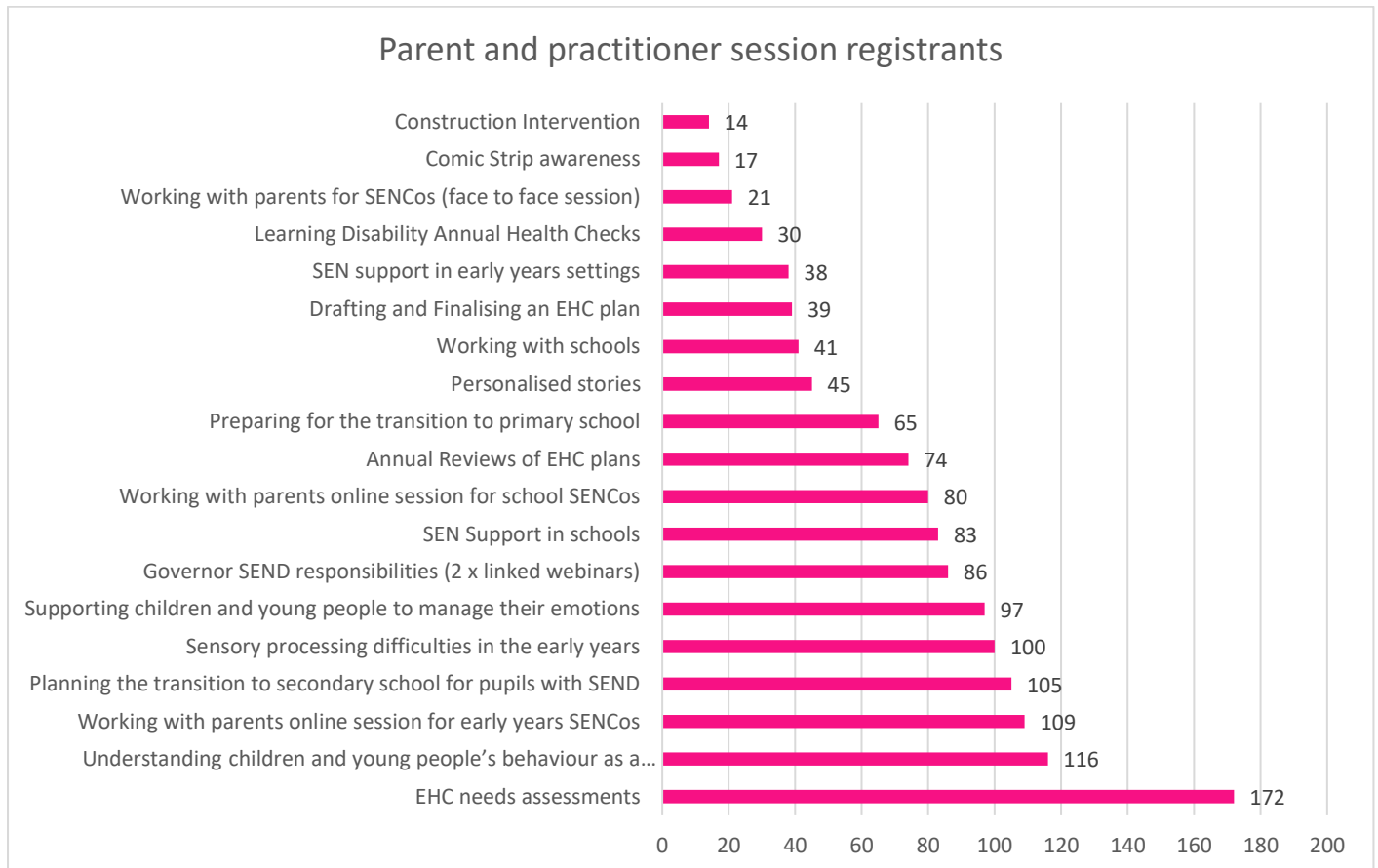
New, this reporting period:

- [4 Pathways to adult life for young people with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [5-day packages of provision for young people with Education, Health and Care \(EHC\) plans \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [Post 16 travel to education for young people with additional needs \(youtube.com\)](#)

5.4 Training - information sessions and workshops. (Level 1 intervention)

Total training registrants this period: 1,332 (up 10% from the previous period - 1,201).

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



As highlighted, our highest frequency referrals continue to be around SEN support and EHC processes. Our termly training offer each term therefore includes sessions to build the knowledge and confidence of families in these areas. SEN support should include support for transition between phases of education, so we also offer sessions to support families to prepare for the transition to primary and secondary school.

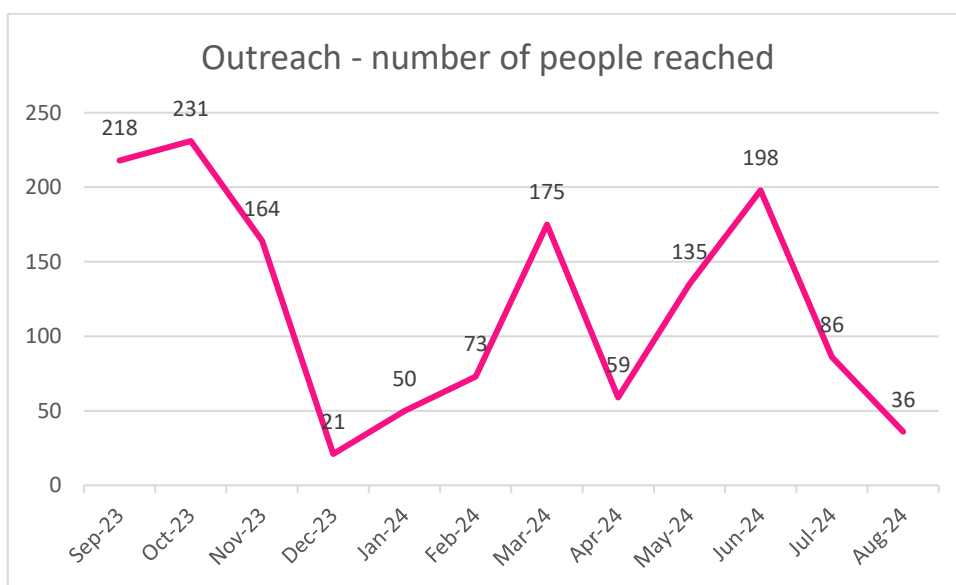
All our information sessions have first been coproduced with families, and the key gap in our training was **post 16 information**. So, in October 2023 we offered three sessions (online and face to face) to gather views from families to begin coproducing a new information session around supporting young people with SEND to prepare for adult life.

For the first time, we didn't have any take up for this, instead some parents told us they would prefer us to create some draft resources around specific **preparing for adulthood themes** and then seek feedback. We therefore began creating a series of videos for families and following feedback this year, we added the first three to our YouTube channel.

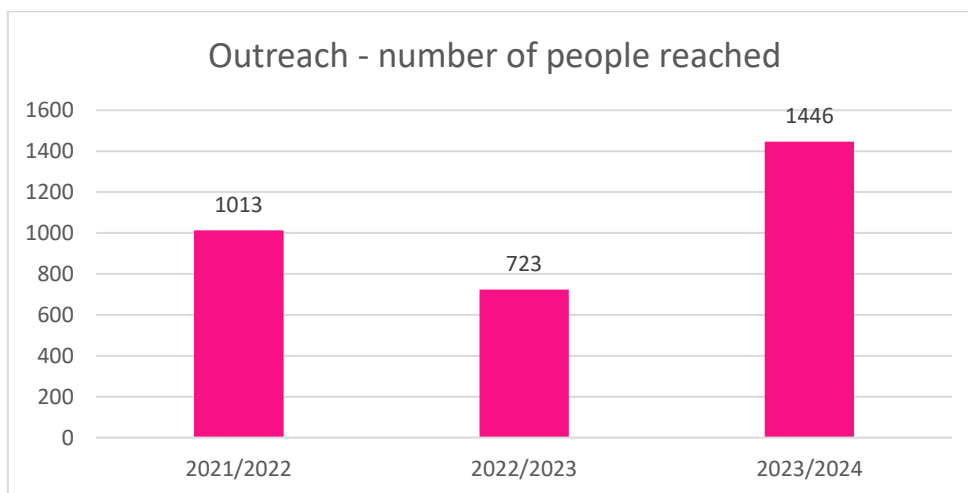
In addition to our SENDIASS sessions, we reach out every term to other services to explore possible collaboration to host additional sessions where other specialists present information (which is beyond our knowledge but still relevant to families of children with SEND) while we address any questions around SEND law.

5.5 Community outreach (Level 1 intervention)

We continued to seek out networking events and other opportunities to raise awareness of the service and answer general questions. This period, we reached 1,446 people (through events including drop-ins, coffee mornings and parent groups). There are drops in numbers in December, April and August, as many groups are suspended over the school holidays:



The chart below shows the 3-year trend. You can see the increase this year when compared to last year, when our team member provided essential cover elsewhere. The increase in outreach activity this reporting period may be why we were received slightly fewer referrals.



5.6 Referrals (Intervention levels 1 to 4)

A referral is an individual request (self-referral) for information, advice and support.

Our data tells us that 81% of referrals during 2023-2024 were for support at Levels 2 to 4, compared to 38% in 2022-2023. Only 19% of referrals required a Level 1 information only response, compared to 62% in 2022-2023.

Translated into practice, this means that 92% of our time is spent providing support at Levels 2 – 4. With a limited staffing resource, this has made it challenging to fully respond to all referrals.

The split across age ranges is very similar to previous years, with most children and young people (for whom we provide information, advice and support for) being across the compulsory school-age years:

Geographically, we continue to see the highest frequency of enquiries for 'Coastal and Northeast Ipswich' and 'West Suffolk'.

Calling our helpline remains the highest frequency method of initial contact (at 48%), though this has reduced this period (from 55%). This period, our web contact form option has shown to be a popular way for people to access the service (27%, up from 21% last year).

Data continues to show that most of the children we support are of compulsory school age attending a mainstream setting (45% at mainstream primary and 31% at mainstream high).

As has always been the case, a high % of the children and young people we support have a diagnosis of ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) at 39% (no change to last year). A slight increase in the 'awaiting diagnosis' category (14%, up from 12% in the previous reporting year).

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 and appealing to the SEND Tribunal about the setting (or that no setting) named in the plan.

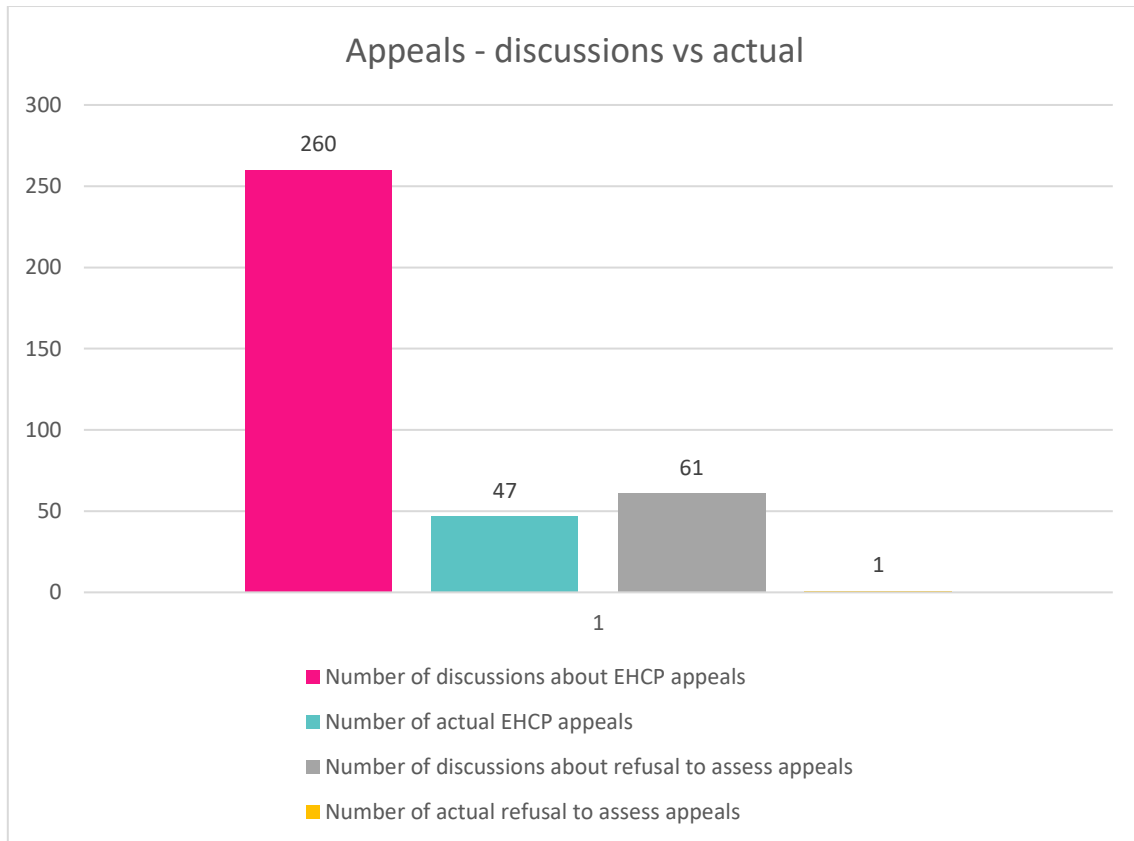
We categorise generally and the data capture may not fully reflect aspects of our discussion, just the overriding theme.

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 continue to refine our data to capture the full extent of a referral and provide a more specific snapshot of types of enquiries.

For health/medical support requests, 68% relate to access to services.

In the chart below, we look at the difference between the high number of discussions (classification codes) around appealing to the SEND Tribunal against the 'actual' number of appeals we supported with. This reflects the support we provide to families to resolve disagreements with the local authority informally:



Full referral data is set out in Appendix A.

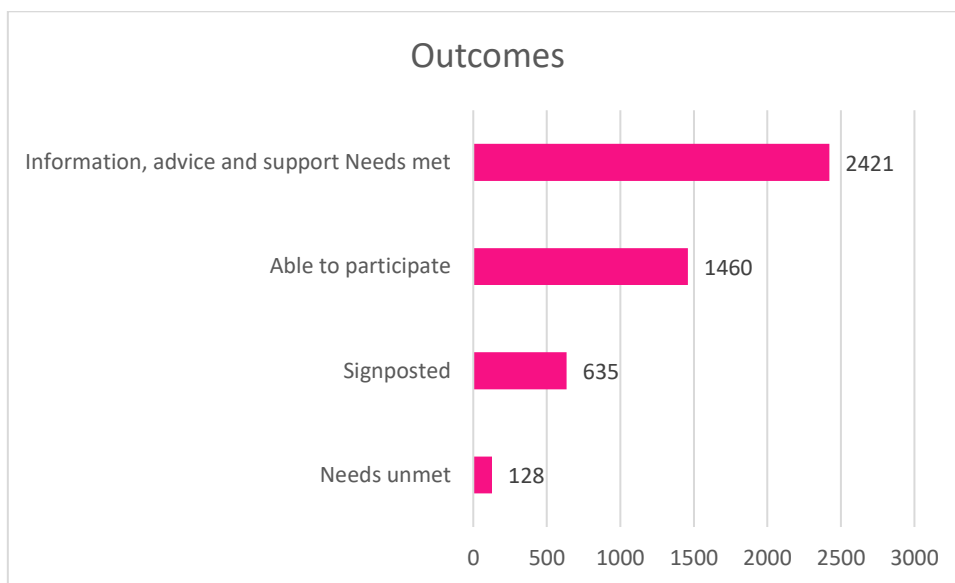
6. Service feedback

6.1 Outcomes

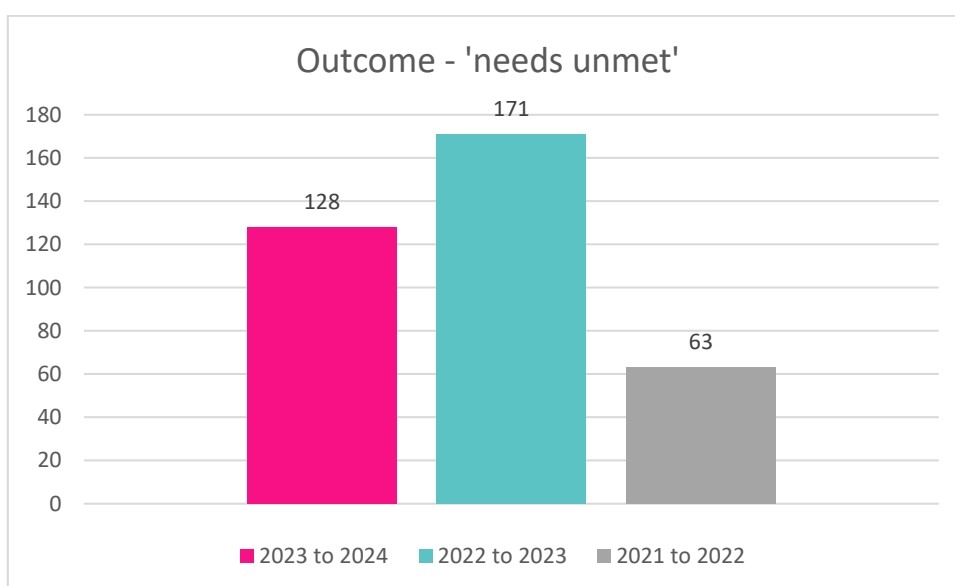
An outcome is recorded by a team member following contact with someone.

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'*.



Though fewer 'needs unmet' this year, this figure remains high. These include instances where we called people back but were unable to get through, with our 'response times' being longer than we'd like and more generally around our availability to provide the requested support:



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

'I have spent the weekend looking at your website and webinars. They have answered a lot of questions, and I also now have a list of queries for my meeting next week.'

'I really appreciate your help, advice and support. This whole situation is very stressful and extremely overwhelming for me.'

'Thank you, after years of battling to get heard, this is the most useful conversation I've had.'

'SENDIASS have been absolutely key to me getting this far. I am so grateful for all your help'

'thank you for just explaining it better, I see letters and forms like this and they just go over my head.'

'You've worked magic! Thank you millions for your help. I think xx will achieve her goals I really do.'

'Thank you for coming to the meeting with me. I felt we got a lot more information about what support is in place as a result of you being there.'

'If you hadn't have been there in that meeting, we'd still be in limbo. It's all coming together after nearly 2 years.'

'I've been finding it a minefield when it comes to specialist units and things and this has been absolutely fantastic.'

'You go above and beyond to help I can't thank you enough for your help and support it's made such a difference.'

'Thank you for calling me. I feel so much better now. I have been so worried I haven't been sleeping well at all.'

'It's so refreshing to speak to someone who understands about SEND.'

'I have been feeling worried about my son's situation and I can tell you just get it. If I need anymore advice about my son then I will definitely call you back.'

'Thank you very helpful. I always contact SENDIASS at times of transition because I know you are in the middle and not taking sides.'

'Thank you, after years of battling to get heard, this is the most useful conversation I've had.'

'thank you so much really glad to have found you wish i found your service sooner.'

'Thank you for calling. I am feeling much better now but was a real mess when I called you. You are very calming and I feel much better after speaking to you. I will call you again if I need more help.'

6.2 Online 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, is invited to complete a short online survey about the service provided. The key questions and response figures are summarised below, and the full data can be viewed in Appendix B.

How easy was it to get in touch with us?

We continued to find it challenging getting back to people within the 3 working day timescale and earlier this year we extended this to 5 working days. The percentage of people giving us the highest rating has reduced **to 60.8%** from **72.5%** last year:

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

77.2% gave us the highest rating (**up from 71.4%** last year)

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

The majority (**81%**) of responses found us to be either very helpful or helpful. We acknowledge a significant change in the percentage giving us the lowest rating here (this was 0 in the previous year):

How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?

Pleasing to see that most people using our service viewed us as being **unbiased with an increase in the highest rating at 86.1% (up from 75.8% last year):**

What difference do you think our information, advice and support has made for you?

Respondents could select multiple answers and results here are very similar to last year, with 52.1% reporting feeling more confident and 49.3% reporting greater understanding of the educational process for children with SEN.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?

An increase this year in those giving us the highest rating here at **67.1%** (up from **62.6%** last year)

We ask how we might improve our service and recent examples (including our responses) can be viewed on our website: <https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/about-us/facts-figures-and-feedback/service-feedback/>



6.3 Training (sessions for parents/carers and practitioners)

Very few attendees choose to fill in the online evaluation, which we send out after every session along with accompanying resources. Most prefer to offer feedback via Teams chat during or at the end of the session. In this reporting period only 21 people filled in an online evaluation.

Of these, 100% strongly agreed or agree that:

- the content and discussions were useful and appropriate,
- the session was presented in a way which was clear and easy to understand
- The session has helped me feel more confident by affirming or building my understanding.

Our aim to build understanding and confidence is clearly reflected in post session feedback.

Feedback for our parent/carer and practitioner sessions can be found in Appendix C.

7. 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](#))

Sharing intelligence

Headline data provided to local authority monthly and detailed data annually. This includes key trends, categories and themes of enquiries.

A summary of the service activity this reporting period around informing and influencing local policy and practice is below, and more detailed information can be found within the [About us](#) section of our website.

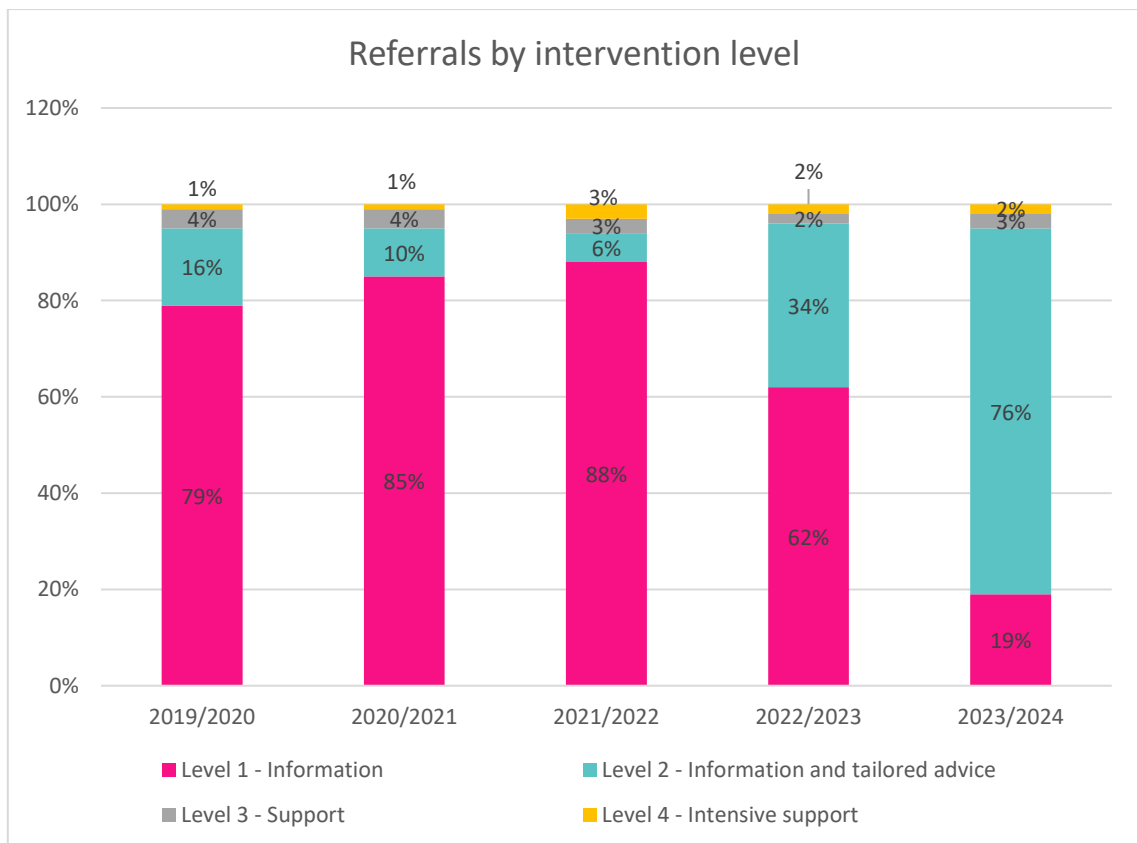
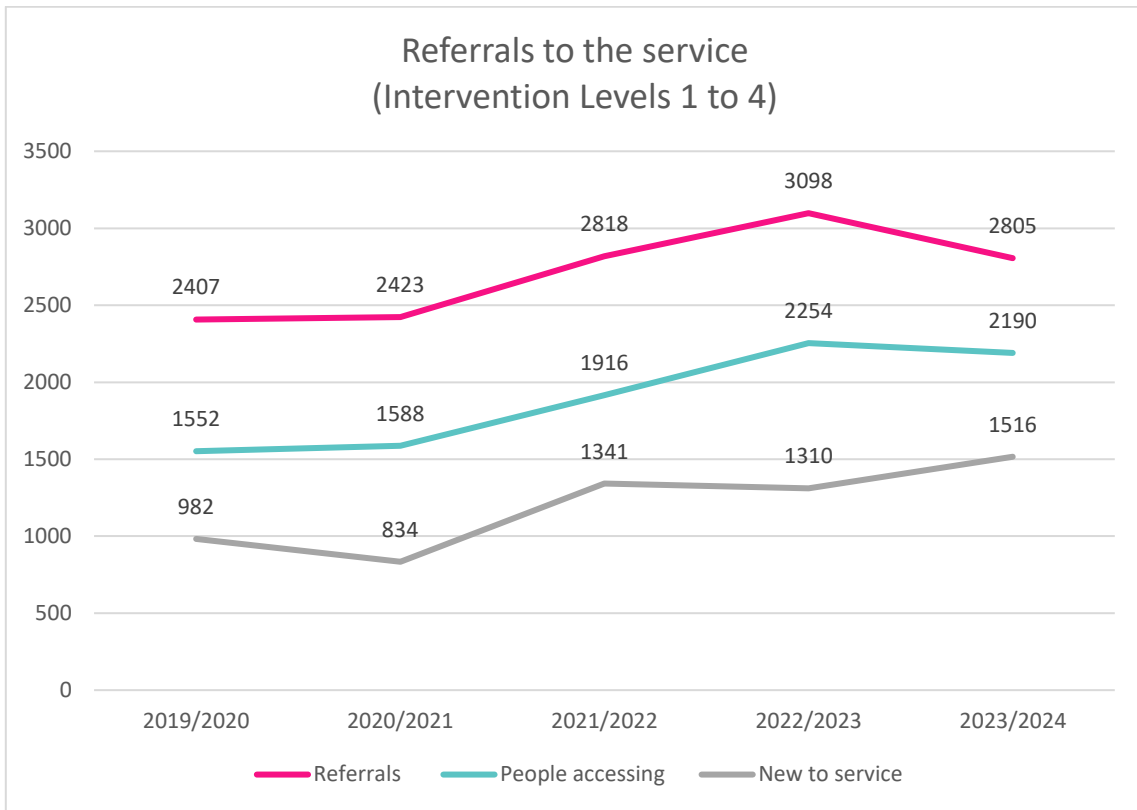
<p>Input to key governance structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area SEND Inspection – meeting with Inspectors • SEND Accountability Board • SEND Programme Board • SEND Improvement Board 	<p>Influencing and bringing parent/carer and young person voice into strategy and policy documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Age Autism Strategy, with specific contributions around sensory overload/sensory sensitivity • SEND Strategy (all priorities)
<p>Influencing and bringing parent/carer and young person voice into training development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-production of local authority training on EHC needs assessments and writing quality advice for EHC processes and annual reviews • Graduated response video resource • Training Providers - facilitated discussion between Training Providers and the local authority (around the process of consulting/naming a setting in an EHC plan) and proposed the idea to develop a resource/content for the Local Offer which explains the process. 	<p>Influencing and bringing parent/carer and young person voice into service and practice development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared details of Vocational Profiles and suggest that the local authority might like to create their own template version. • Contributed to changes to Moving into Adulthood and Annual Review portals and paperwork • Annual Review digitised template • SEND Transition Guide • Feedback on Local Offer website • NDD Pathway and waits • NDD online referral form • Educational Psychology delays • EHC needs assessment and processes • Supervised Family Time • Graduated response resource

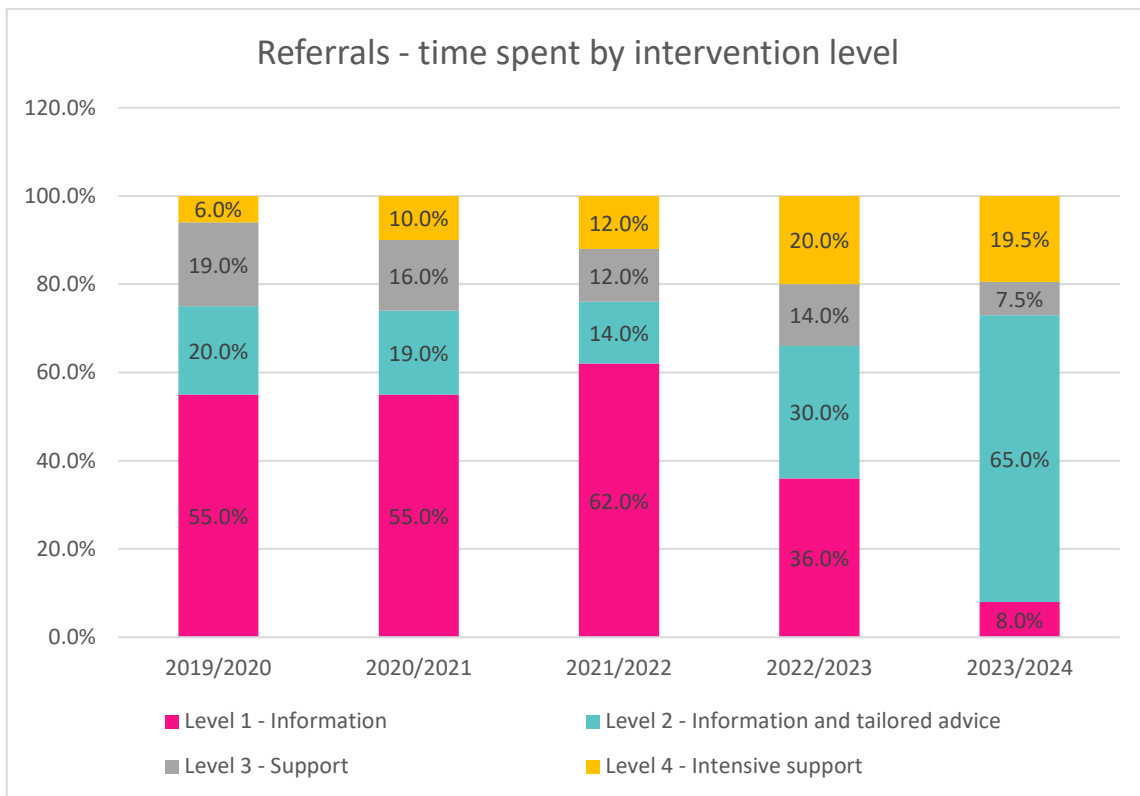
8. Jargon-buster and useful links

Advocacy	Support for someone who needs help expressing their views and wishes.
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.
Empower	A person feels supported and has the information and skills to take control over their own lives and decisions.
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 person 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

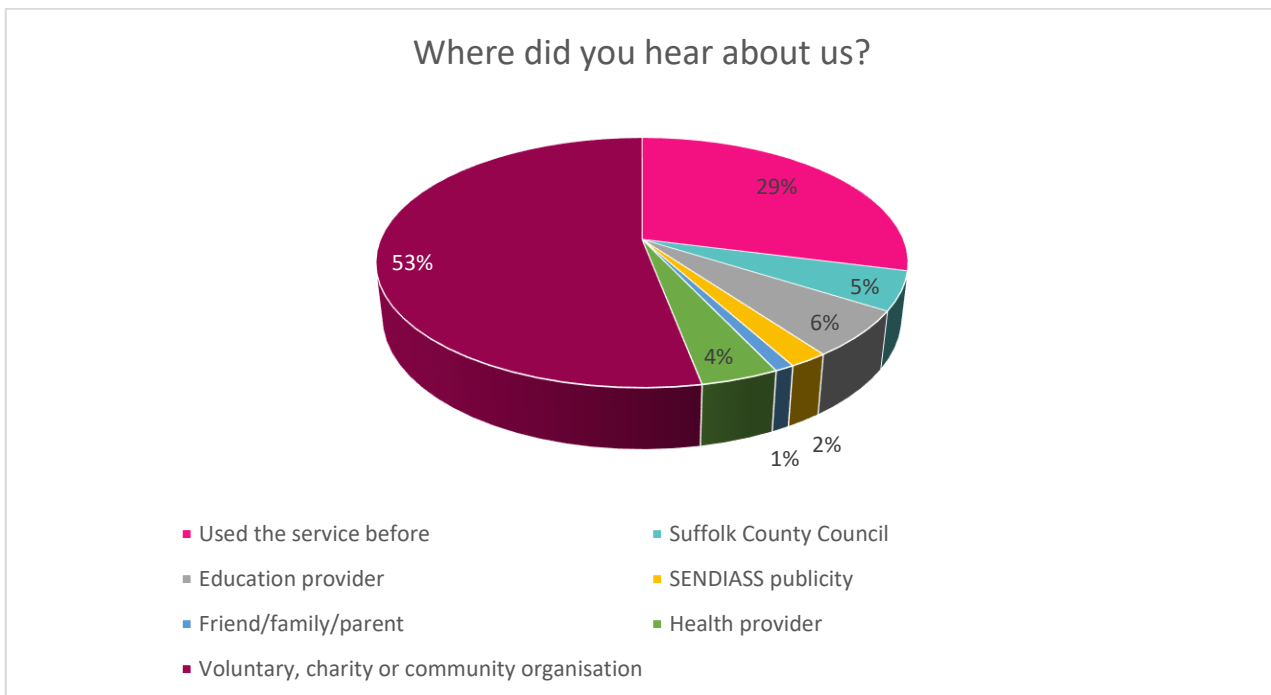
Appendix A – Referrals data

A referral is an individual request (self-referral) for information, advice and support.

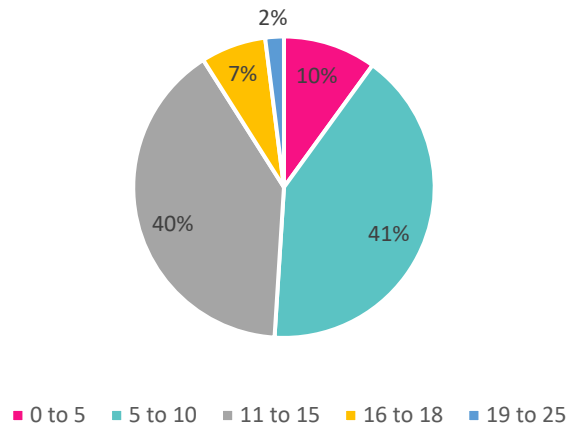




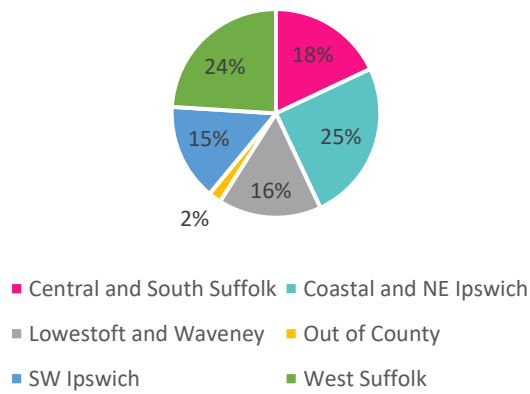
SENDIASS is a self-referral service, and we capture where the person heard about us. The chart shows the % split:



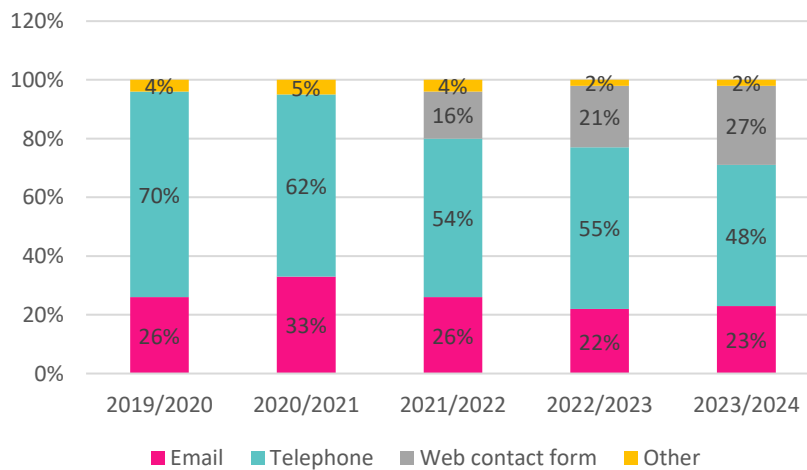
Referrals by age band



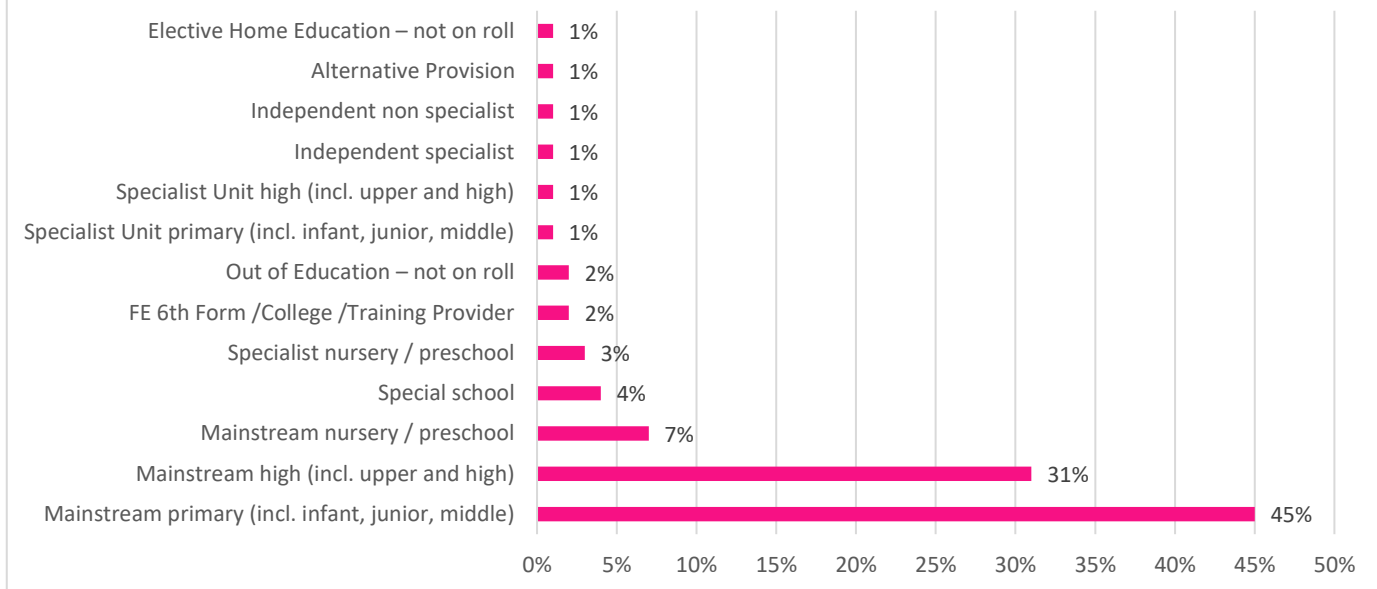
Referrals by district



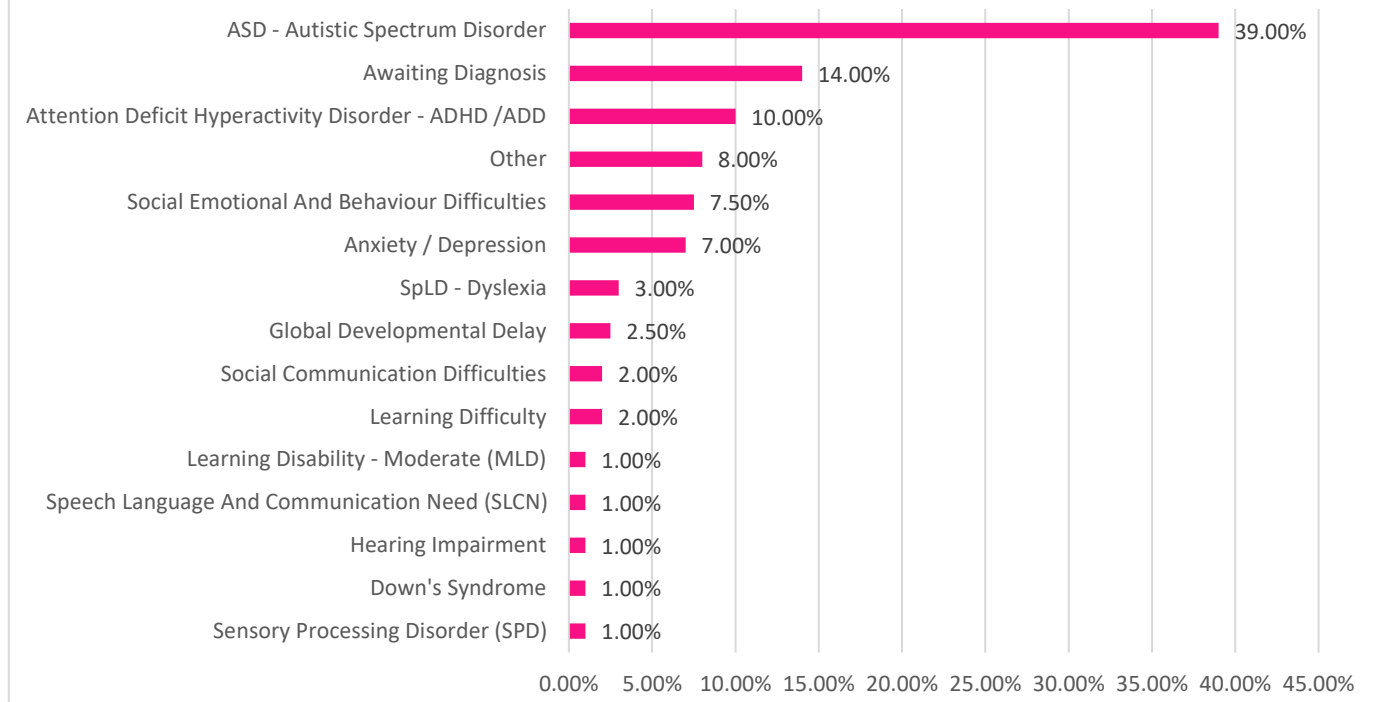
Referrals by contact method



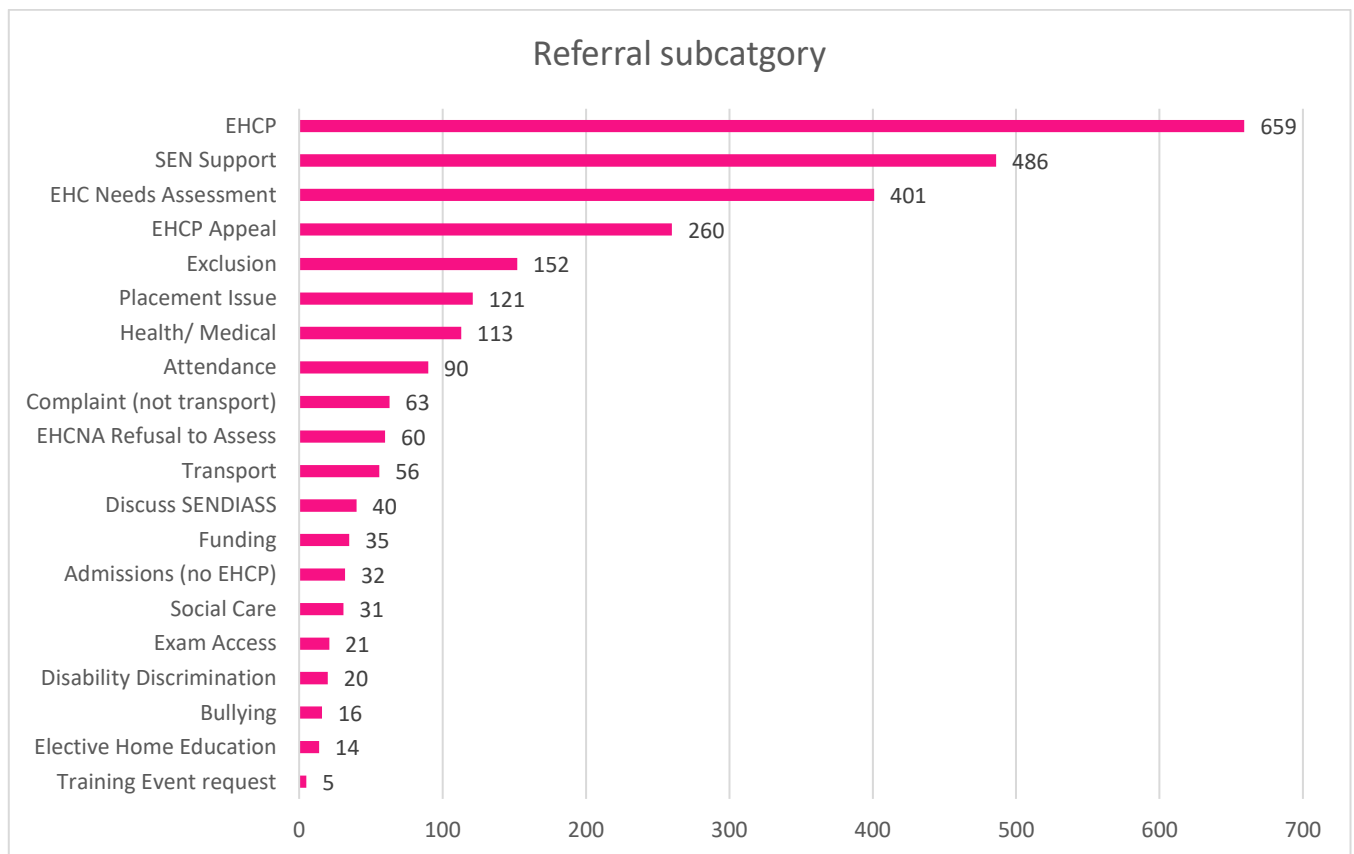
Referrals by type of educational setting



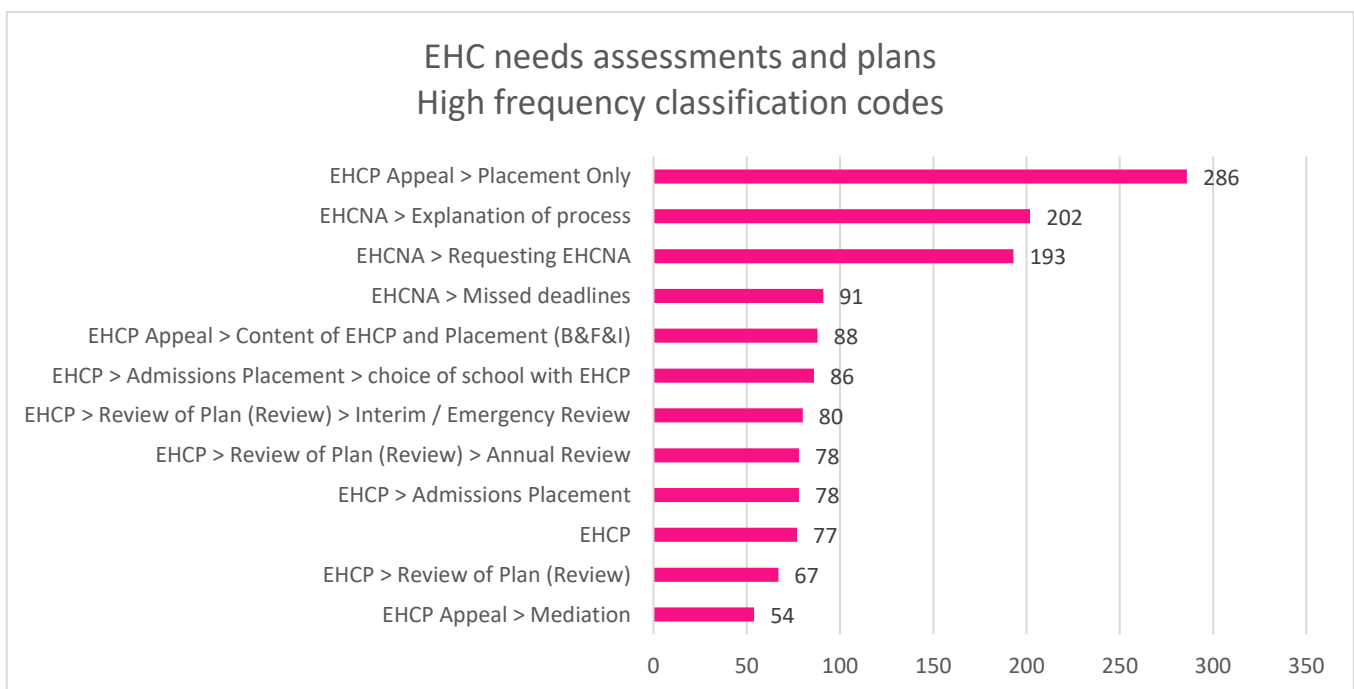
Referrals by category of need

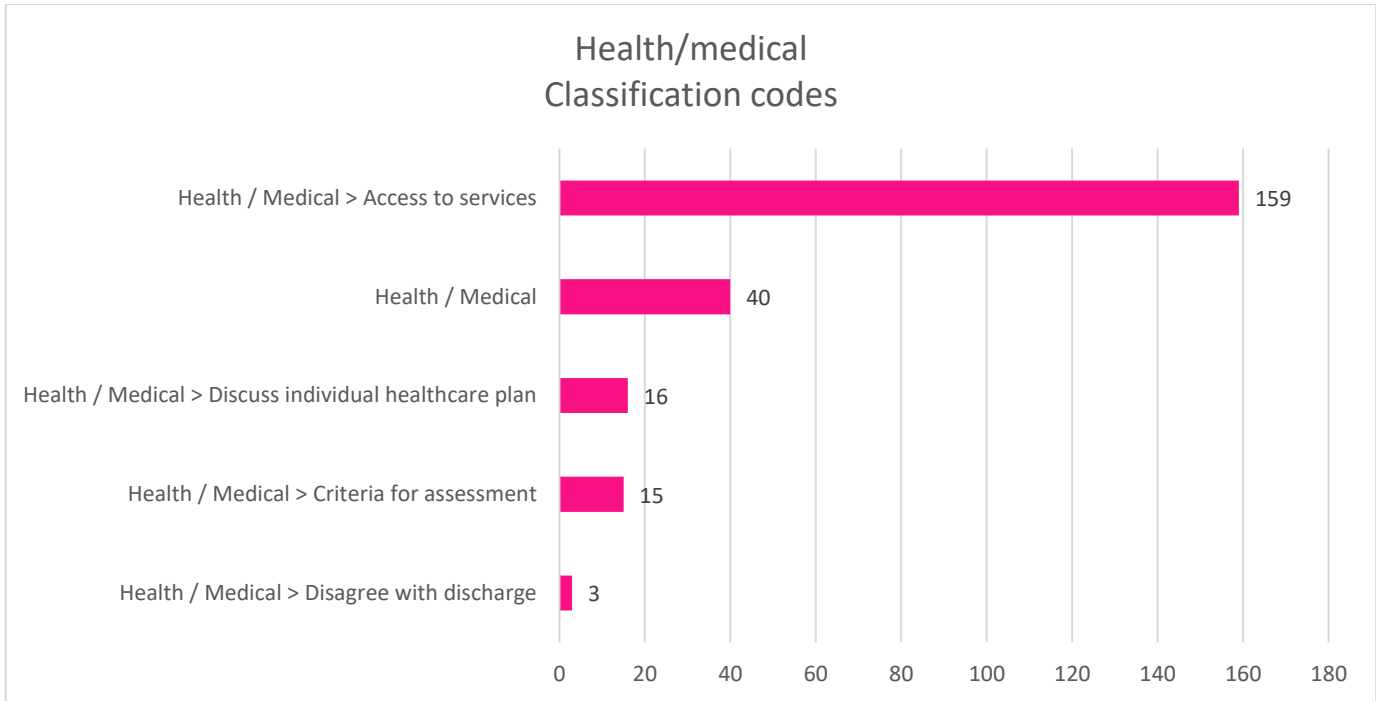
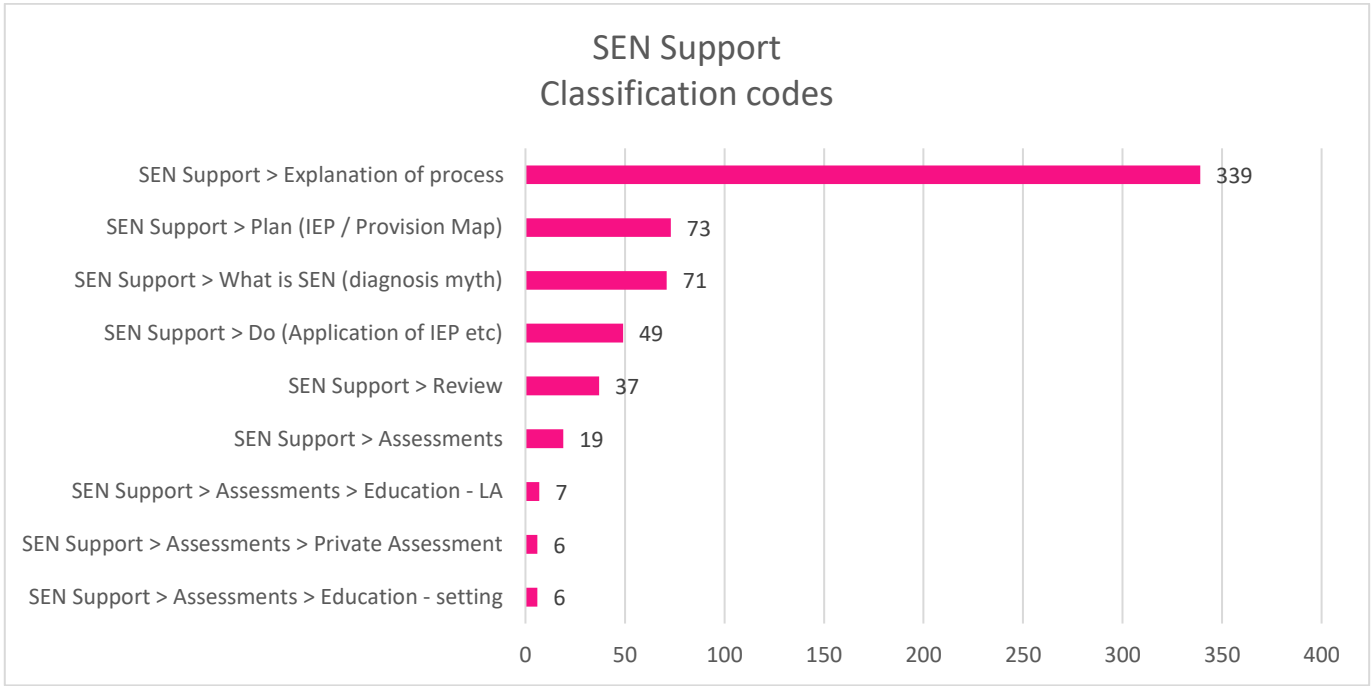
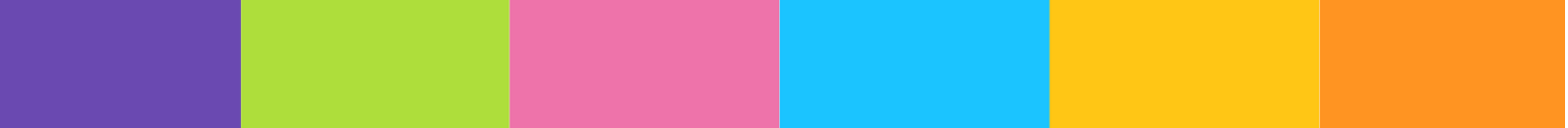


The team categorises each referral by selecting just one general theme:

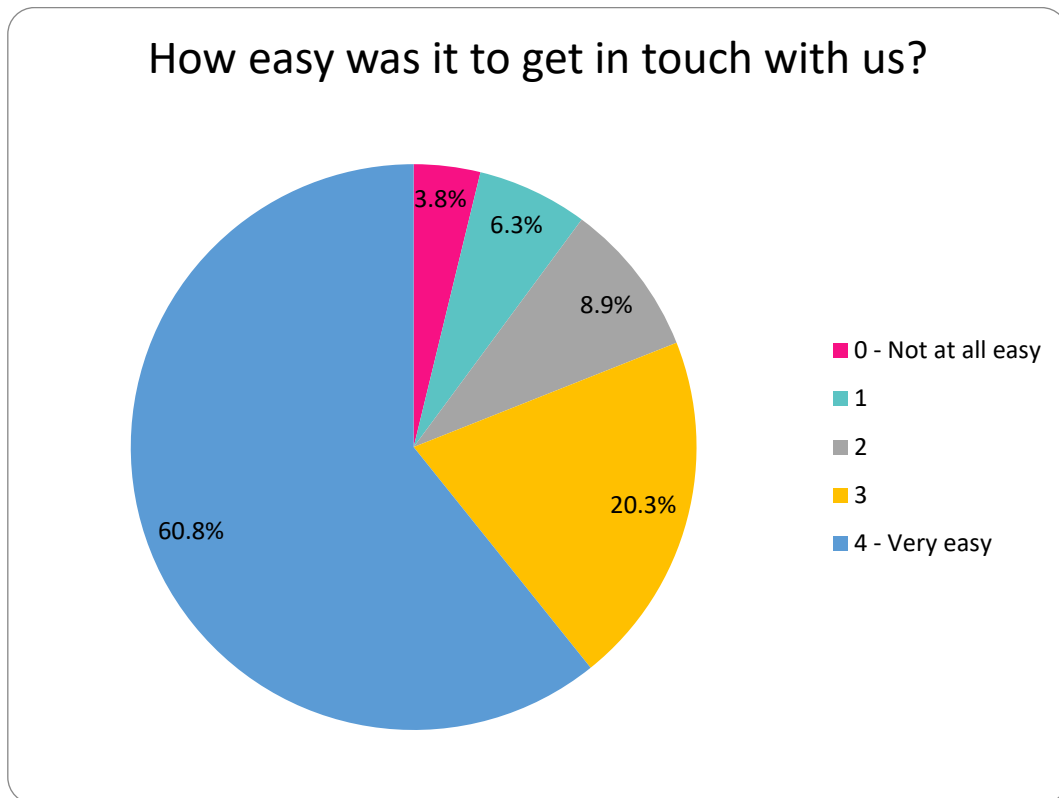


Using a series of classification codes on our database, we continue to refine our data to capture the full extent of a referral and provide a more specific snapshot of types of enquiries. Here, we look at specific classification of referrals across the high frequency categories:





Appendix B – Service feedback (online survey)



Comments received this period about our response times:

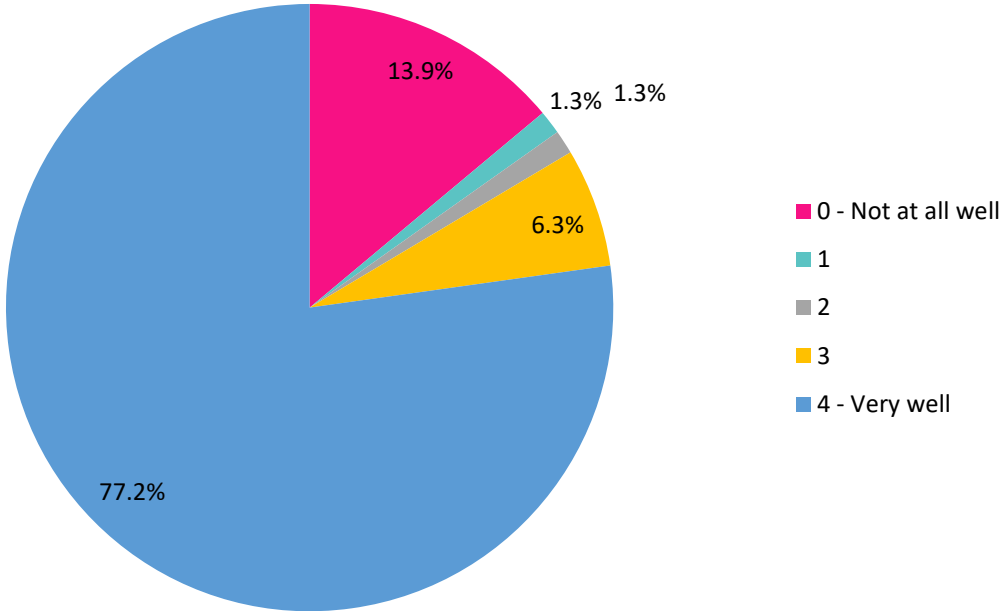
'I appreciate your knowledge and support so much. It just takes a long time. I couldn't get through on the phone and emails take a long time to get a response, although it is clear that this will be the case from the auto reply. So the main improvement, as I am sure you are aware, is to have more of you.'

'I had to wait a week for someone to ring me back which I wasn't expecting and it meant we didn't have the answers to our questions when we had a caf meeting.'

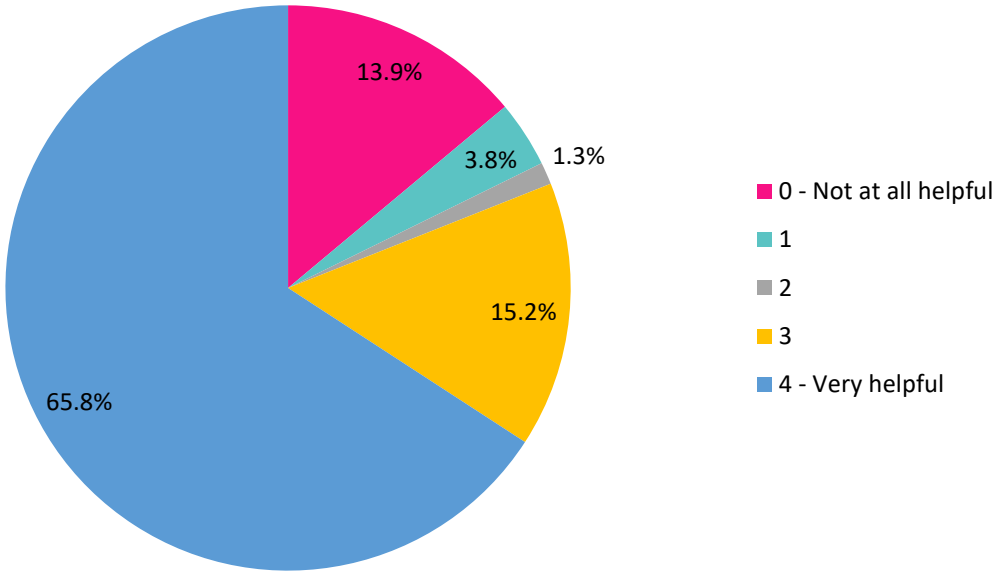
'As with anything SEN related, more resource, and by that I mean more people employed to offer the expert support you provide.'

'Only thing I will say is it's not always the easiest to get through on the phone.'

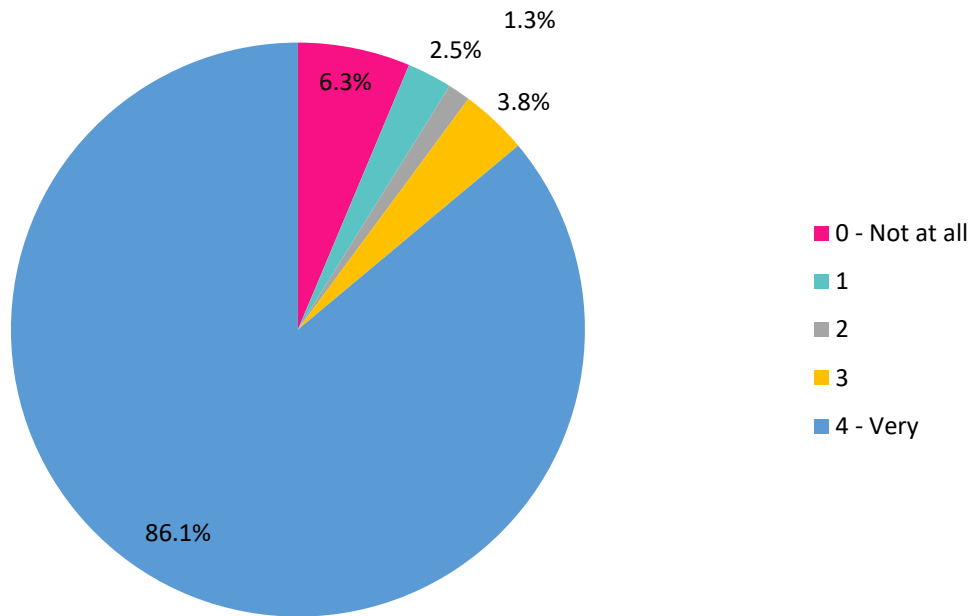
How well do you think we understood your questions or concerns?



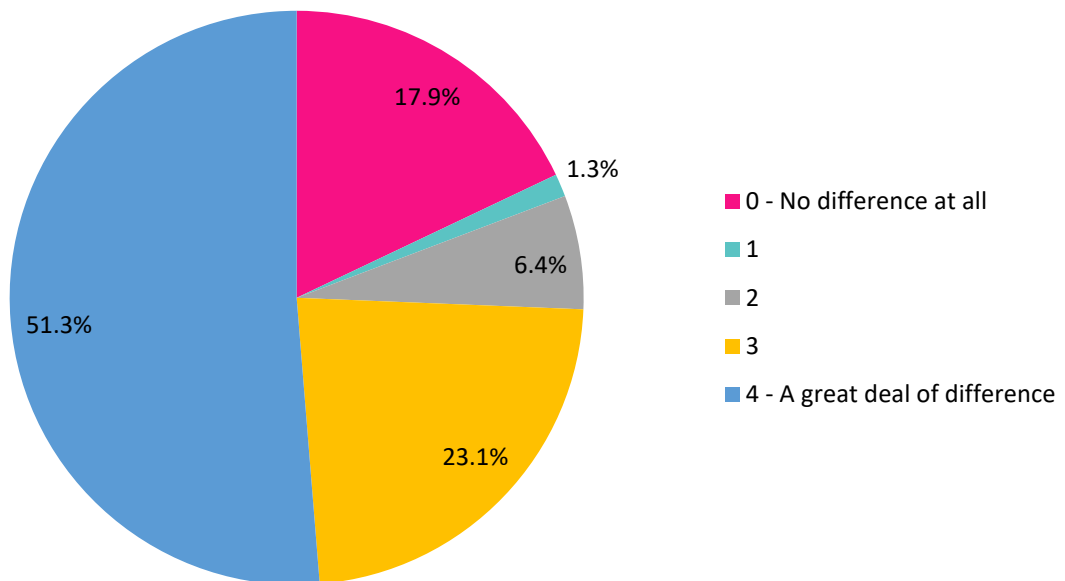
How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?



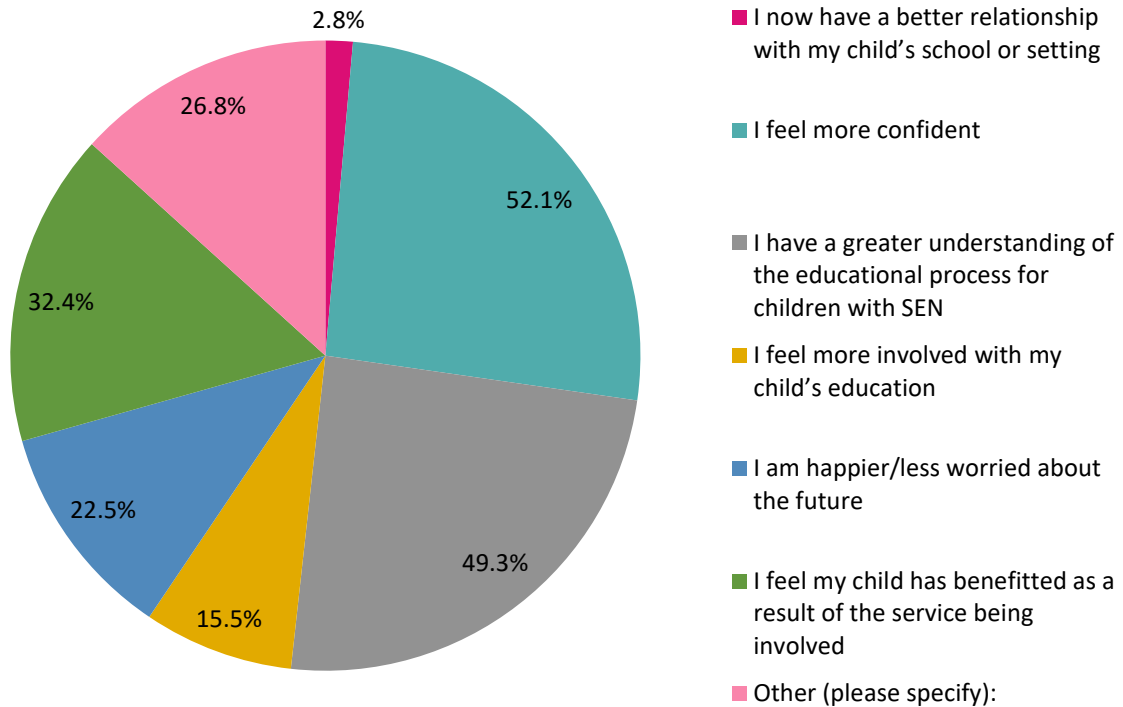
How neutral, fair and unbiased to you think we were?



What difference do you think our information, advice and support has made for you?



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



Respondents can select multiple answers.

Sample of 'other' positive comments received in response to this question:

'It made me take some next steps'

'I feel we are on a better path where we are being listened to and heading in the right direction.'

'I was going to apply for the EHCP myself but got help from his support worker and coll. this would not have happened without the information I got from you.'

'Helped me complete the tribunal forms'

*'We now have *** assigned to us and she is extremely helpful to date. However I do feel that for anyone not as pushy as me the whole area of mental health for children in this area is difficult to access and to know where to go. The whole diagnostics process takes far too long.'*

Sample of negative comments received in response to this question:

'No difference as I was refused help'

'Nothing has changed at all, we are completely unsupported'

'You haven't responded to my request of contact'

'No one got back to me'

'No difference was made as I wasn't offered any help or support'

'I'm still waiting to have a meeting with the relevant people in school.'

'I have tried to work on advice given but the school have refused to act on the advice we were given.'

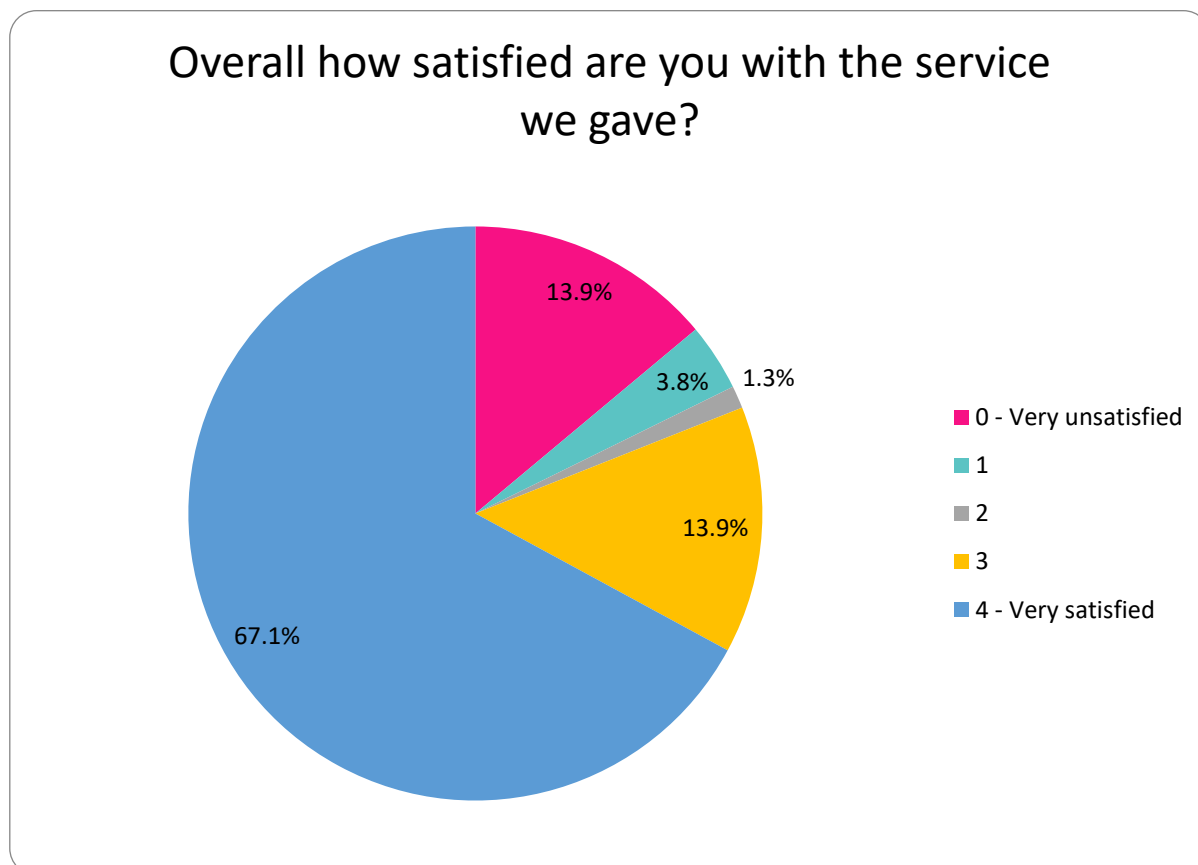
'Nothing'

'Was not satisfied at all'

'Nothing. No information given other than that which could have googled myself. (possible schools).'

'None'

'Still not had a email back'



Appendix C – Feedback about our training

Sample feedback for the parent/carer sessions

'This has been really helpful. Feel clearer about what to expect and how we can work with schools to help our child – thank you!'

'I've been finding it a minefield when it comes to specialist units and things and this has been absolutely fantastic.'

'Thank you very much for the session. It was very useful, and I will be able to use the information to support families. I have had a couple of families complete some of your sessions and say how useful they were.'

'Now I understand that I don't need a diagnosis for my child to get SEN support, I'm rethinking the value of an assessment.'

'Thank you! I feel rather emotional now I realise I have been misunderstanding my daughter's behaviour and how I can now help her so much more.'

'It's such a shame you are a small team, because your knowledge is fantastic.'

'Thanks so much to the three of you (2 specialist teachers and SENDIASS Training Officer) for putting on this session and facilitating it, it's been really useful.'

Sample feedback for the practitioner-only sessions

'I have gone on to have more successful meetings with parents since completing the course. I have adopted techniques suggested by the SENDIASS service on maintaining parental partnerships.'

'Thank you – really helpful in planning for meetings and trying to ensure a positive outcome.'

'Most useful session of the SENCo award course – thank you!'

'Very helpful and has made us think about our practise and has made us more mindful of different situations - thank you.'

'This was helpful, going to make changes to meetings, pre arrange, make it more comfy, remember the small things to help make these conversations a little easier and positive.'

'Very helpful and very informative. Will definitely be taking various things back to discuss with the board.'