

**Service User's Advisory Group (SUAG)**  
**Minutes**  
**15 July 2021**

**Present:**

Helen Huntley	PIAS Manager
Bob Burton	Senior Caseworker SEND
Linda Pearce	Senior Caseworker Parenting Programmes
Nicolle Gallagher	Facilitator Youth Ascends
Claire Wills	Special School Head Teacher
Jenny Hutton	Early Years
Anzel Lai	Parent
George Osborne	Young Person, Youth Ascends
Claire Paddon	Plymouth Parent Carer Voice
Bob Hunter	City College Plymouth
Sue Syers	University Hospitals Plymouth
Judith King	Project and Finance Officer

**Apologies:**

Janet Greaves-Stocker	Commissioning Officer, Local Authority
Emma Veale?	Parent
Jim Barnicott	SEND Advisor, Plymouth Local Authority
Graham Rosser	Secondary Head Teacher
Aaron Meredith	Primary Head Teacher
Matt Rundle	Parent

**1. Introductions**

- Helen H, PIAS Team Manager, was introduced to the group and introductions were made.

**2. Minutes and actions of previous meeting (Bob Burton)**

- Janet Greaves-Stocker had asked how the number of supported families were recorded. It was found that in the annual report PIAS had reported the number of new cases and had not included the total number of families supported across the year. This will be changed in future.
- Janet G-S had also observed that the reported figures may not have been the best way to prove what PIAS do. She asked that the total support be broken down into, for example, Tribunal support, Exclusions, Statutory assessment, Team Around Me, Transmissions & Admissions, Annual Review.
  - This year's report will provide a more detailed picture of types of support that have been provided by PIAS.

**3. Manager's update (Helen Huntley)**

- Helen has been with PIAS for three weeks, has met a warm and welcoming team, has received a good induction and has met many people from Plymouth City Council.
- Lots of ideas will be put into plans so that we can continue the fantastic work that has been going on so far and make it even better.

**4. SEND Youth Forum ASCENDS update (George & Nicolle)**

- (See also the report at end of these minutes)
- Things have been more successful since going back to face-to-face groups.
- The next steps will be to be involved in building the young people involvement again. During the pandemic contact was lost with a few young people due to the group meeting virtually.
- Contacts will be built up again with the hope that more young people will be able to meet up again face-to-face in September at the Jan Cutting Centre.
- The young people took part in the 10 Wishes Project (see report at end for further details).
- Youth Ascends will volunteer at the Sail GB event giving out leaflets, tickets, directing people.
- George is working with HYPE (Helping Young People Engage), a charity founded last February with Barnardos. They:
  - interview people for Band 4's and Band 7s and other bands in hospitals.
  - help personal assistants, doctors etc improve their knowledge
  - promote young children and young people's rights
- Bob H, City College Plymouth, offered for the young people to meet (as they did last year) in September 2021 at City College. Nicolle accepted the offer and will meet with Abi Gee in September to put a plan in place.
  - Some of the young people from last year transitioned to City College and found this supportive due to already knowing some of the staff and lay-out. They have just completed their first year.

**5. Parenting Programmes (Linda Pearce)**

- (See also the report at end of these minutes).
- The team have worked incredibly hard in order to deliver programmes online.
- The only programme we have not been able to deliver is Strengthening Families but we were able to run a short, taster, Incredible Years for parents, to mitigate the non-running of SFP.
- We are hoping to run at least one face-to-face SFP group under current Covid guidance in September, possibly two.

- Parent feedback on virtual groups has been positive. This term's courses have just finished. More detailed feedback on evaluations will be provided at the next SUAG meeting.
- Family Hubs have been approved by Cabinet. PIAS will be linked in with this. Helen H will work with Commissioning on this.
  - Parenting Programmes 0-19 will be looked at across the city. The Family Hub vision is that there will be an offer that will be shared by partners across the city
  - At the moment the partnership who will oversee the Family Hubs is being looked at and then it will go out to ask who would like to provide the services.
  - Where Parenting will sit will become clearer as we go through this process.
- There is a possibility, that alongside the Educational Psychology Service, a Bid has gone in to do an evaluation of the impact of the SPOKES project working with the Virtual School, foster carers and the impact of that on children in care. Further details should be available at our next meeting.

#### **6. SEND Casework update (Bob Burton)**

- (See also the report at the end of these minutes).
- The Casework team are extremely busy. The Local Authority have run out of Special School places and a lot of parents have decided to go down the Tribunal route.
  - At present we are supporting 40-42 parents at different stages of the tribunal. This is the first time this has happened in Plymouth.
- The number of Level 1 casework cases (working with one piece of work and following it through) is approximately 765, a similar figure to the year before last.
- The number of Level 2 cases (in-depth cases such as Tribunals) have increased and become more complex.
- With new work, such as Transitions to Adulthood, we don't have the capacity to cover this so do not advertise.
- We have had a couple of cases regarding health support, around Transitions to Adult Services, and although do not openly advertise, it is good that we have gained experience.
- The joint commissioning side of our service is with Health, Social Care and Education. The Terms of Reference for this will be decided in the next month or so and will decide how we will work and report.
- In the last report it was stated that we were unable to attend approximately 120 first meetings with parents. It was decided to prioritise the first meeting so that: parents were aware that we would attend and offer support, schools would be aware that we would attend and be involved, it would reduce our workload in the longer term.

- All meetings continue to be attended remotely. This allows us to cover more meetings, save fuel and money. Future meetings will be delivered both face to face and virtually as sometimes face-to-face works best for some parents.
- The office has been open (Covid safe – two case workers only) since April. On average, five parents a week are calling in, most sent from the Child Development Centre.
- Volunteers – we have three to help with answering phones. They have received legal training. It has been good to have them. We are hoping to have more volunteers in January 2022.
- Council for Disabled Children.
  - Minimum standards PIAS want to prioritise:
    - Support through Post 16 and Transitions to Adulthood, Adult Social Care and Health. When we receive the joint funding this should help us reach capacity to meet the need.
    - Engagement of Children and Young People. Getting young people involved with Youth Ascends is helping: Nicolle is also attending Annual Reviews of EHCPs.
    - Re-develop the PIAS website as it was outdated. We are working on using government guidance to make the content accessible to young people and parents.
  - Reports are due in October and March. SUAG will be updated at the next meeting.

## 7. Any Other Business

- The House of Commons Education Committee has published a report on SEND. They are clear that Local Authorities have been hampered with the issue of (shortage of) special school places because of the Free School and Academy Agenda. They are allowed to open new schools and Local Government can't. The Select Committee are suggesting that that is addressed to help improve things across the country. (Claire W).
- The website and Youth Ascends. From September Nicolle will be asking Youth Ascends to take a look at the website and see what information/format can be improved to best reflect what young people want. (Helen H)
- It is difficult to hire people, particularly in London. For young people in Special Schools, City College, could we do something to help SEND young people? Anzel L has connection to companies who would be willing to employ special needs young people and would like to see where this could go. Helen H suggested that the Skills Launch Pad might be able to be matched up. Bob B stated that we will come back to Anzel. **Action: Bob B**
- Sue Syers's role is changing. Her new role will be leading and developing the SEND processes within the Trust.

## 8. Next Meeting tbc

### Acronyms:

HYPE	Helping Young People Engage
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
PIAS	Plymouth Information, Advice and Support
SPOKES	Supporting Parents on Kids Education in Schools
SUAG	Service Users Advisory Group

### Reports:

### Casework update:

Level One Cases (Short triaged pieces of work)  
Since September 2020 – July 2021 = 765 new cases

Level Two cases (In-depth support)  
Since September 2020 there have been 326 new cases of these 22 do not have an allocated caseworker however the first meetings have been attended.

The casework team have managed to attend the majority of first meetings where service users have requested support, this initiative provides good support, however this does produce some additional pressure regarding caseworker reporting.

All meetings continue to be conducted remotely except in exceptional circumstances.

Primary Reasons Only - Opened in Period

Reason Description	No of People
Admissions	15
Adult Social Care SEN	1
Annual Reviews	22
Children Social Care SEN	13
Early Annual Review	6
EHAT/TAM	182
Exclusions	7
Health Related SEN	3
Local Disagreement Resolution	3
Parent Contribution	11
Post Assessment	5
Statutory Assessment	16
Transitions	7
Transport	1
Tribunal	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>

### *Front of door service*

Since April 2021, two members of staff have been in the office on a voluntary basis (fully Covid risk assessed) to provide the front door service. On average 5 parents per week have

accessed the service since April. It is anticipated that we will return to a normal front door service once Government and Local Authority guidance allows.

*Volunteers*

The SEND Volunteers are providing valuable support to the casework team. Six volunteers commenced their training at the beginning of November 2020. Three Volunteers have completed the training and are now an asset to the team allowing paid staff members to focus on casework.

At present three volunteers are fully involved, the other three there personal circumstances have changed It is anticipated that a further Volunteer recruitment will commence in the New Year (2022).

*Information Advice and Support Programme (IASP) update*

We were successful in bidding for the 2021 – 2022 final funding round (£10000). The IASP was introduced to help local authorities to achieve the government minimum standards for IAS Services. This will be used to hopefully improve the following minimum standards

- Minimum standard 3.4: Support Young people through post 16 and transition into adulthood with adult social care and Health
- Minimum standard 3.4: Engagement of children and young people.

Minimum standard 3.3: Redeveloping the PIAS website

**Parenting update:**

The PIAS Parenting Programmes team have risen to the challenge presented by Covid19 remarkably, by delivering over and above service specification requirements. The team have become proficient in online delivery methods, and have worked in partnership with 4 Educational Psychology Research Assistants, Barnardos, Lark Children’s Centre and Action for Children staff to maintain delivery capacity across the academic year. See table below:

<p>Service Specification: The Service will deliver 14 Incredible Years/SPOKES courses. These will include a mix of the following courses which will be decided on a needs based analysis across the year: Incredible Years: Baby, Toddler, Basic 3-6, School Age and ASC/Language Delays 2-5 and SPOKES</p>	<p>Review Date: June 2021 IY Basic 3-6 – 6 courses IY School Age - 3 courses IY ASC 2-5 – 3 courses IY Toddler – 1 course SPOKES – 3 courses</p>	<p>Delivery Overview: 16 Incredible Years/SPOKES full courses completed/in progress &amp; 4 x 7 week School Age courses (2 full course equivalent) 1 x 7 week Basic course 2 x 7 week Toddler courses All delivered virtually using Microsoft Teams, due to Covid 19 face to face restrictions 4 courses completed with Children’s Centre partners</p>
<p>The Service will deliver 3 “Strengthening Families Programme 10-14” courses per year</p>	<p>June 2021</p>	<p>a) Gap: No Strengthening Families courses have been run in the last year b) Why? The tripartite format of the programme made virtual delivery untenable c) Pressure on service demand: this has led to an increased number of families on the waiting list with some no longer eligible  Note: to mitigate this shortfall the 7 week IY School Age has been offered to families of children aged 10-12 to provide some level of support (see 2 full course equivalent detailed above)</p>

Going forward the PIAS Parenting Team has been identified as one of the PCC providers who will contribute to the evolving Family Hubs Services for Families Delivery Model. Cabinet agreed funding for the next 10 years in March of this year, and we are excited to know that we have a secure funding base to continue to provide essential services for families in Plymouth. Helen Huntley our new Service Manager will be working with commissioners and city wide partners to develop this joint approach from September 2021.

## Youth Ascends update

- The youth forum have been back to face to face meeting since start of June.
- Youth Ascends where part of a project with Livewell and Plymouth safeguarding board during the pandemic which included producing a booklet and video called the 10 wishes. Please see link for the video of 10 wishes. Attached will be the booklet <https://vimeo.com/542120818>
- We have limited the number of young people during this time due to social distancing but this will be relooked at when the group commences September. The plan is to promote the youth forum and get new members.
- We have one more session before the summer term which will take place next week. We have a member from Devon & Cornwall police within the call centre coming to chat to the young people as they would like some input into the police website to make sure its young person friendly
- Young people have met and discussed what topics they would like to take forward next term – these include meeting with someone from CAMHS to discuss waiting lists, more support groups in and outside of schools such as councillors and/or psychiatrist and also more vocational options in education and/or bespoke packages.
- Young people are also taking part in and volunteering for the Mayflower 400 Sail GB event that is happening the weekend of the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> July. Young people will have the opportunity to speak to members of the public and be a part of an amazing event.