

**The difference we make: Plymouth Information
Advice and Support for SEND (PIAS) Impact report
1st Sept 2021 – 31st August 2022**



Introduction

Welcome to the Plymouth Information Advice and Support for SEND (PIAS) annual report Sept 2021 – August 2022. This report highlights the work of the service and the difference we have made to children and young people with SEND and their families.

PIAS is the SENDIAS service for Plymouth and is a statutory service which provides free, impartial, confidential, accurate information, advice and support about education, health and social care for children ,young people and their families and their parents/carers.

PIAS also provides evidence based parenting programmes and facilitates the Young Peoples Forum (Youth Ascends).

The team

All team members are skilled and experienced in their specialist area of work. Caseworkers have completed the IPSEA legal training to level 3. Parenting programme facilitators have training in several parenting programmes. All the team are passionate, skilled and dedicated to providing the best outcomes for children young people and their families.

Team structure

Team Manager 1 FTE			
The SENDIASS Team	FTE	The Parenting Team	FTE
Senior PIAS Support Co-ordinator	1	Senior PIAS Support Co-ordinator	1
SENDIASS Case Officers	4.5	Parenting Programme Facilitator	1.5
SENDIASS Case Officer – CYP	1	Project and Finance Officer	0.8
Project and Finance Officer	1		
Website Editor	0.5		

Plymouth Information advice and Support for SEND Annual report 2021- 2022

PIAS is also supported by volunteers who support the work of the SEND casework team and parenting. This year we also welcomed students from the University of Plymouth Social Work and Psychology courses.

The Budget

PIAS has a revenue budget provided by Plymouth Local Authority. The minimum standard* for SENDIAS services requires that the budget is ring-fenced.

In 2021/22 PIAS received a small amount of DfE funding from the Council for Disabled Children to support the implementation of the minimum standards. The funding supported work focussed on transitions to adulthood and increased our understanding of the challenges faced by young people and their families.

*SENDIAS services have a set of minimum standards which can be found here:

[Minimum%20Standards.pdf \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](#)

Development plan

PIAS has a development plan which is monitored by the Service User Advisory Group (SUAG). The SUAG consists of Young people's representation, Parents, Plymouth Parent Carer Voice, head teachers, Plymouth Local Authority staff.

Impact

Information

PIAS has both a dedicated website and a Facebook page which provides families with information on SEND issues. In December 2021 and January 2022 we asked parents for their views on our website. Feedback was positive with 100% of respondents able to find the information they were looking for. 95% found the information to be very easy or easy to access and 100% found the information to be fairly or very useful.

Web statistics show that we have had **13282** visits to the PIAS website in 2021 – 2022

Community based information

With the return to face to face activity we have worked hard to attend community based events and have attended Step by Step groups, PPCV coffee and cake and SEND conference, parent sessions at Friends and Family of Special Children. This has given families an opportunity to find out about PIAS and the services we offer.

Webinars: In 2021/22 we produced and created our first Webinars. The first introduced the work of PIAS and the second was co-produced with the Local Authority on the Graduated Response.

What next: In 2022/23 we plan to publish regular SEND information sheets and increase the number of webinars.

Advice

Advice is provided by PIAS caseworkers through telephone calls, emails, face to face meetings and drop-in sessions at the PIAS office.

Plymouth Information advice and Support for SEND Annual report 2021- 2022

These are less intensive pieces of work (level 1) which signpost families to useful information, offer advice on next steps and support and empower families to make informed decisions.

In the period Sept 2021- August 2022 we recorded **1137** new level 1 enquires.

What next in 2022 – 2023 We will pilot ways to ensure that families have found the information/advice they were seeking and that we have provided the right level of support.

Support

More in depth support is provided through our level 2 work which assists families over a longer period of time. For example support at SEN support meetings, support through statutory assessments.

In 2021-2022 we saw an increase in the number of young people we supported through transitions into adulthood and in the number of young people requesting an EHCP over the age of 16.

In 2021 - 2022 we continued to support 352 families supported 339 new families

More support

More support is provided to families when they request for work around tribunals, exclusions, suspensions.

This type of work has increased considerably this year with **130** families supported for Tribunal support.

PIAS works closely with families and the local authority to resolve issues before a Tribunal and a consequence of this is that only 4 tribunal hearings were attended. 126 cases were resolved before attending tribunals.

In total **821** families were supported

Impact – Evaluations

At case closure families are contacted and asked 6 evaluation questions. Many of these call backs are conducted by our volunteers to ensure that families are able to give an honest response. We had 156 responses.

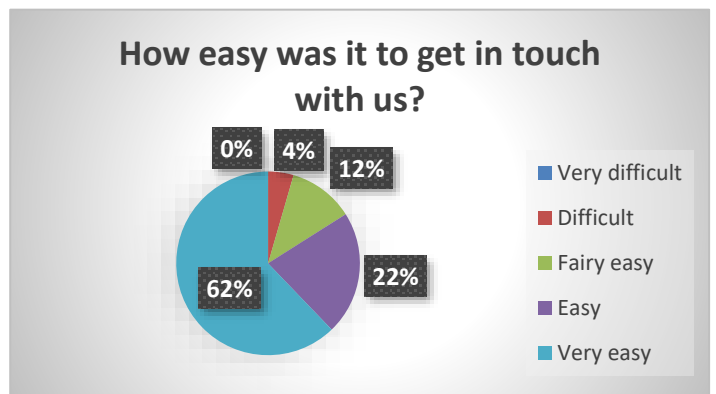
We asked:

How easy was it to get in touch with us?

You told us: 84% found it easy or very easy to get in touch with us

What Next?

We are reviewing our duty and response system to identify ways that we can improve this for families.



Plymouth Information advice and Support for SEND Annual report 2021- 2022

We asked:

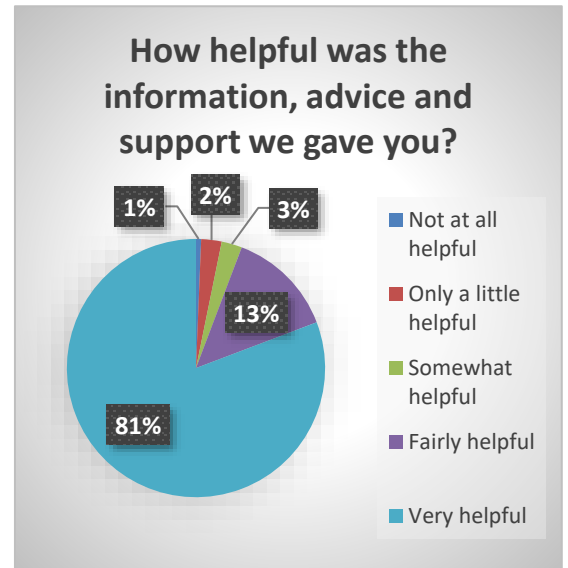
How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave?

You told us:

81% reported that it was very helpful

What next?

We reintroducing topic specific workshops, creating a regular themed SEND information newsletter and further developing webinars to ensure that families can access information and advice at a time and a format that best suits them



We asked:

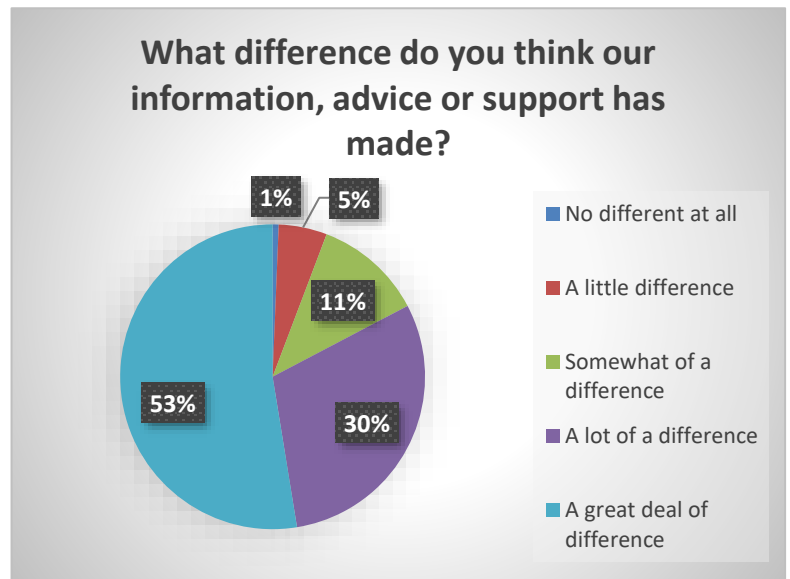
What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made?

You told us:

83% of families we asked told us we made a great deal or a lot of difference.

What next?

We will explore how we can more accurately understand the impact of PIAS support.



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We asked:

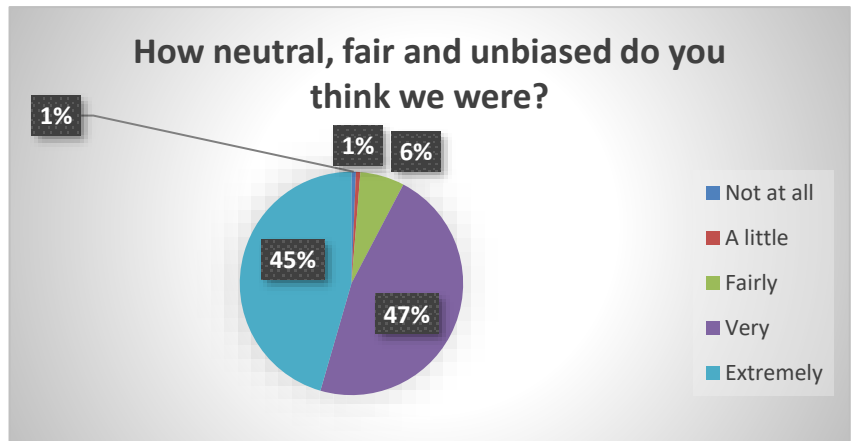
How neutral, fair and unbiased did you think PIAS was?

You told us:

92% of families we asked told us they found us to be neutral, fair and unbiased.

What next

Continue to monitor.



We asked:

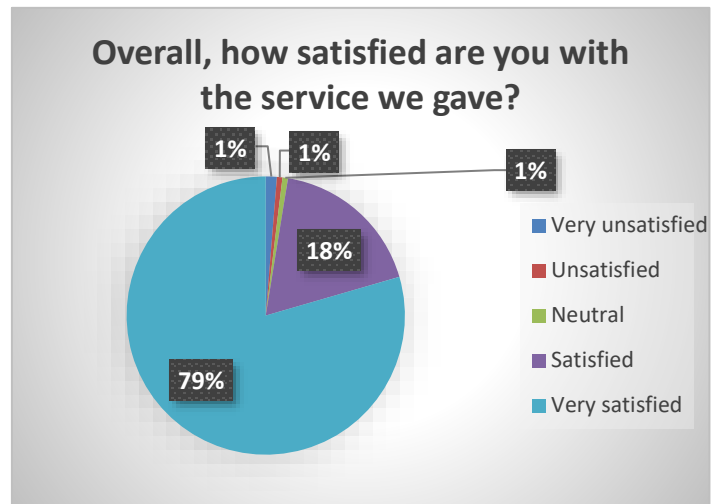
How satisfied were you with the service PIAS gave?

You told us:

97% of families told us they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service they received.

What Next:

We are pleased with the high levels of satisfaction surveys from the 156 families who replied. Our ambition for the coming year is to get responses from even more families.



We asked:

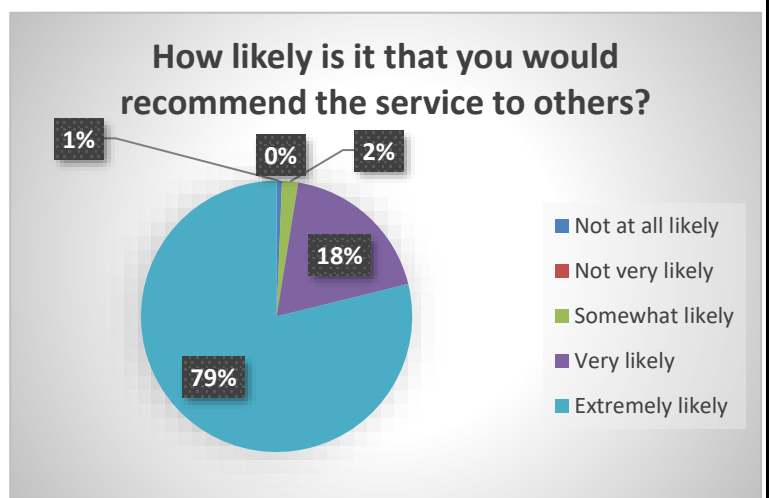
How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?

You told us:

97% of families told us that They would recommend our service to others.

What next:

We would like to get a better understanding of Children and Young People’s views of the service.



Plymouth Information advice and Support for SEND Annual report 2021- 2022

Youth Ascends

Youth Ascends is the SEND youth forum for Plymouth. The group meets fortnightly on a Tuesday evening.



In 2021- 2022 the group has continued due to the dedication and passion of its members who have stayed with the group during lock down and returned to face to face meetings.

The group have contributed to both local and national agenda's and discussions around SEND services for children and young people.

Locally the group have attended the SEND strategic group and have invited senior Local Authority members to the group to share their view points. The SEND service manager Penny Whitell attended in May and presented a certificate from Ming Zhang in recognition of the commitment and hard work of the group. Youth Ascends were invited by the Children's Commissioner to be part of the national conversation on the impact of covid on children and young people with SEND.

In July Youth Ascends were part of the DfE's consultation on the SEND and alternative provision green paper. Youth Ascends worked with the Council for Disabled Children to focus on the issues raised in the green paper. Following the sessions the facilitator described the group as **"truly an Inspiration"**. Youth Ascends was the only group of Young people in the South West to take part in the process.

Council for Disabled Children recently published the report [CDC CYP response to the SEND & AP Green Paper.pdf \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](https://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CDC-CYP-response-to-the-SEND-AP-Green-Paper.pdf).

Youth Ascends ambition was to produce a promotional film about Youth Ascends and since April 2022 have been co- producing a film with a local film producer. The amazing animations on the film were created by the talented Nats who attends Plymouth College of Art and design. The film is currently having its final edit and will be completed soon.

Next steps: the group want to promote the film and encourage others to join the group. We will also be looking at the national response to the green paper and identifying any issues which the group feel are important for Plymouth.

Parenting

The parenting team experienced significant change in 2021 -2022 with three team member's leaving and recruitment to these posts not completed until August 2022. The remaining Parenting Program Facilitator and Part time Senior Parenting Support Coordinator worked hard to ensure that we continued to deliver the parenting programmes. In August 2022 all vacancies were filled and the team was back to full capacity.

Between September 2021 and August 2022 15 parent groups were delivered. These were a mixture of both face to face and virtual.

Programmes delivered

13 Incredible Years programs

2 Strengthening Families Plymouth

54 parents attended and completed the Incredible Years programme

10 Parents completed the Strengthen Families Plymouth programme.

Plymouth Information advice and Support for SEND Annual report 2021- 2022

The waiting lists for all parent programmes were significant at the start of September 2022 .We made the difficult decision to close referrals for the Strengthen Families programme until we were clear when families could be offered a place on the programme.

We introduced a trouble shooting session for parents/carers and child to meet with the Parenting Programme Facilitator, we provided families with alternative means of support. In October 2022 the waiting list had reduced to under 10 families and we plan to reopen for new referrals to the parenting program.

We have also introduced a new parenting programme, Circle of Security, which offers families a relational, attachment based approach to parenting.

We have continued to work in partnership with others and have co delivered with Action for Children, Barnardo's and Lark Children's Centres and supported the CDC to offer Circles of Security at the Jan Cutting Centre.

Feedback from parents on the difference attending the programmes made:

I have gained a more affectionate relationship with my child.

We have a happier family home.

Helping me to help my son with coping strategies in regards to his emotional wellbeing.

Finding tools that actually work to improve issues at home.

The course has been useful, to get both parents on the same page, learning great ways to deal with our child's unique behaviours.

It has been a great way to understand our child's behaviour and how to make effective positive changes.

I really looked forward to seeing everyone and felt safe and open in the group.

Next steps

The team are part of the ongoing planning of the move to Family Hubs. We are developing a menu of parenting workshops with a SEND focus. Feedback from parents is that they would welcome the opportunity to participate in themed workshop sessions on specific topics. The focus will be on areas prioritised by families with children with SEND. We will be engaging with parents to finalise the topics and working with partners to ensure that the content is in line with the current evidence base.

Plymouth Information advice and Support for SEND Annual report 2021- 2022

We are reviewing our evaluation forms and process to ensure that we are giving parents a streamlined opportunity to recognise the difference attending the sessions has made to their child.

We are offering colleagues from across Plymouth the opportunity to find out more about delivering Strengthening Families Plymouth. In the New Year train the trainer sessions will be rolled out.

We will continue to contribute to the development of Family Hubs.

Helen Huntley
Team Manager