

The Difference We Make: Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIAS) Impact Report 1st September 2023 – 31st August 2024



Introduction

Welcome to the Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIAS) annual report September 2023– August 2024. This report highlights the work of the service and the difference we have made to children and young people with SEND and their families. It demonstrates the breadth of work the team undertakes and its commitment to continuously put children, young people with SEND and their families at the heart of all we do.

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 with SEND and their families. This role is outline in the Children and Family Act (2014) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 (2015).

*“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 and disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care. This **must** include information, advice and support to take-up and management of personal budgets.*

*In addition, carrying out their duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the local authority **must** have regard to the importance of providing children and their parents and young people with the information and support necessary to participate in decisions”*

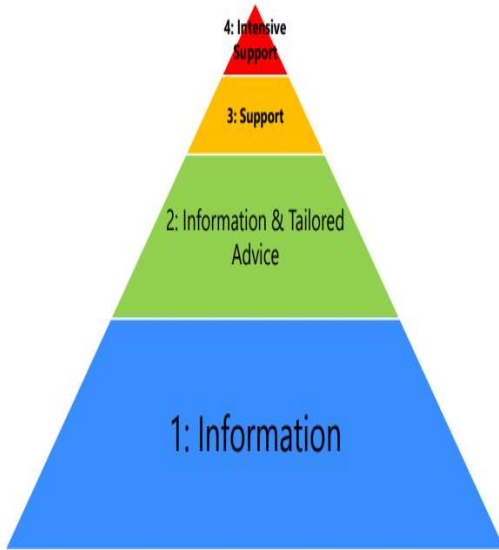
SENDIAS services also have a set of minimum standards which sets out the national expectations and good practice in the provision of impartial Information, Advice, and Support Services (IASS) to increase parental confidence. These standards inform the service development plan and are used as a tool for rating the service performance in line with the commissioning arrangements for IASS locally

[Minimum%20Standards.pdf \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](https://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/Minimum%20Standards.pdf)

Information, Advice, Support and Advocacy is provided to children and young people through individual casework and Youth Ascends. Support is also provided to parents through evidence based SEND focussed parenting programmes and workshops.

Data Summary – SENDIASS

SENDIASS Interventions Levels Summary



Level of intervention	Number of cases	% of Intervention
Level 4	274	9.6%
Level 3	313	11%
Level 2	372	13%
Level 1	1903	66.4%
Total	2,862	

Facebook
10323 visits 121521 people saw at least 1 post

PIAS Website
18080 users

Community Engagement
341 parents accessed information at a community event

Professionals Events
323

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The team

PIAS has a stable, highly skilled team who are experienced in their specialist area of work. Caseworkers have completed the IPSEA legal training to level 3 and attend regular updated training from IPSEA. Parenting programme facilitators have training in several evidence-based 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	6.18	Parenting Programme Facilitator	1.78
Across both teams			
Project and Finance Officer	0.8	Website editor	0.5

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.

In June 2023 PIAS received confirmation that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) would jointly commission the service. For this year the funding split 95% from the Local Authority and 5% from the ICB.

The minimum standard* for SENDIAS services requires that the service is jointly commissioned and that the budget is ring-fenced.

*SENDIAS services have a set of minimum standards which can be found here: [Minimum%20Standards.pdf \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](https://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/Minimum%20Standards.pdf)

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.

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Quality Assurance/Practice Standards

Internally the work of the SEND case officers is reviewed monthly by the Senior PIAS Support Co-Ordinator and Team Manager. Plans to formalise this into a set of Quality/Practice Standards has begun. In partnership with Plymouth Parent Carer Voice (PPCV), a set of Quality/Practice Standards have been identified.

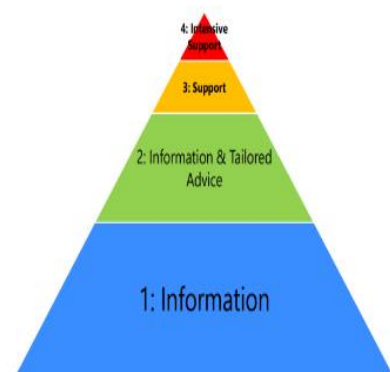
Feedback on these will be sought from children and young people and the Service User Advisory Board in September 2024. Feedback for children, young people, their families and professionals are sought at every opportunity. A summary of feedback is found in the report.

SENDIASS Interventions Levels Summary

Levels of work

PIAS offers information, advice, and support in a variety of ways:

1. Information
2. Information and tailored advice
3. Support
4. More support



(Appendix 1)

Impact - information

PIAS provides **information** in a variety of ways.

Website, social media

PIAS has an active website and Facebook page which provide easily accessed information including resources and pre-recorded webinars.

From Sept 2023 to August 31st 2024, the number of times PIAS Facebook page was visited was **10323**. The number of people who saw any posts on Facebook PIAS page at least once was **121521**. The PIAS website had **18080** users during this period.

Community information

PIAS has provided access to information in community events and activities. This has included attending Step by Step groups, Friends and Family of Special Children, Intercom Trust, Family Hub engagement sessions, PPCV coffee and cake, SEND and Transition to Adulthood conferences. This has given families an opportunity to find out about PIAS, the services we offer and to receive impartial information. **341** families received information at these events.

PIAS has also delivered SENDIASS workshops, including Next Steps, on Choosing Schools, Confidence in Meetings, the Voice of the Child and Young Person and Annual Reviews

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This year we have also continued to contribute to regional SENCO training and have worked with the University of Plymouth contributing to the University of Plymouth Equality, Diversity and Inclusion conference.

Our reach to professionals was **323**.

Casework information (level 1 enquiries)

Parents, carers, children, young people and professionals are provided with information by the SENDIASS caseworkers. We receive enquiries via telephone, email, face to face drop in's and our Contact us page on the website. These enquires are responded to within 48 hours.

In the period September 2023 to August 2024, we recorded **1903** enquires to the helpline.

We have continued to use our online enquiry form, online appointment booking form and use of messenger service. Our feedback survey shows that satisfaction levels with how easy it is to contact us remain high.

Information and tailored advice (level 2 enquiries)

Information and tailored advice is provided by PIAS caseworkers through telephone calls, face to face meetings and drop-in sessions at the PIAS office. These are less intensive pieces of work (level 2) which signpost families to useful information, offer tailored advice on next steps and support and empower families to make informed decisions.

In the period Sept 2023- August 2024 we supported **372** families at this level.

Impact - Support (level 3 enquiries)

More in-depth support is provided through our level 3 work which assists families over a longer period. For example, support at SEN support meetings, support through statutory assessments.

In the period September 2023 to August 2024, we recorded 313 cases.

Impact - More support (level 4 enquiries)

Level 4 support is provided to families when they request support around mediation, tribunals, exclusions and suspensions. This type of work has increased considerably this year with **274** families supported at level 4.

Between Sept 2023 and August 2024, we supported 215 families who requested support for mediation and tribunals.

PIAS continues to work closely with families and the Local Authority to resolve issues before a tribunal.

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This year we received 100 enquiries regarding suspensions and exclusions and supported 26 families in ongoing casework.

In total **PIAS supported 2841 families** across all levels.

Impact – Evaluations from families

At case closure, families are contacted and asked 6 evaluation questions via an online survey. The number of feedback surveys completed has increased to **220**.

We asked:

How easy was it to get in touch with us?

You told us:

91% found it easy or very easy to get in touch with us. This compares with **92%** 2022-2023 and **84%** in 2021-2022.

Example of feedback from parents

“Anything I needed knowledge or help with was always available.”

“I would email or phone and usually someone would get back to me pretty quickly.”

“I booked a call through an emailed link, there were plenty of appointments available and the call came right on time.”



We asked:

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

You told us:

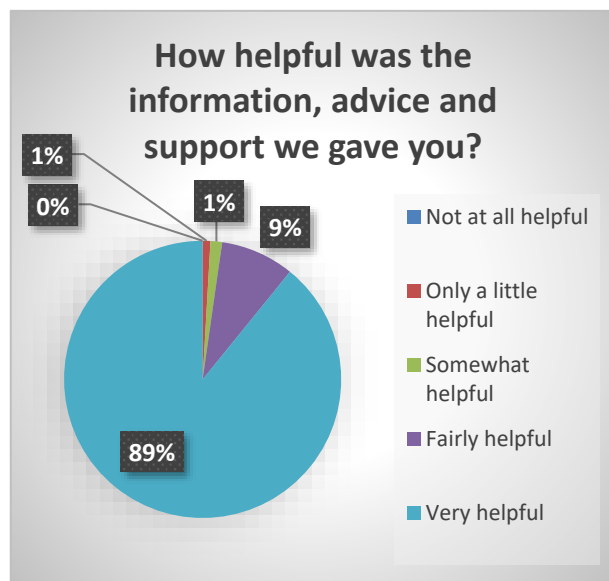
89% reported that it was very helpful and **9%** fairly helpful. This compares to **86%** in 2022-23 and **81%** in 2021-2022.

Example of feedback from parents

“The advisor was great and very helpful giving me the advice I needed.”

“It helped us make informed decisions and laid out options and advice.”

“It was like a breath of fresh air! I wasn’t made aware of how much support there was available to parents with children of SEN and have been silently struggling for several years.”



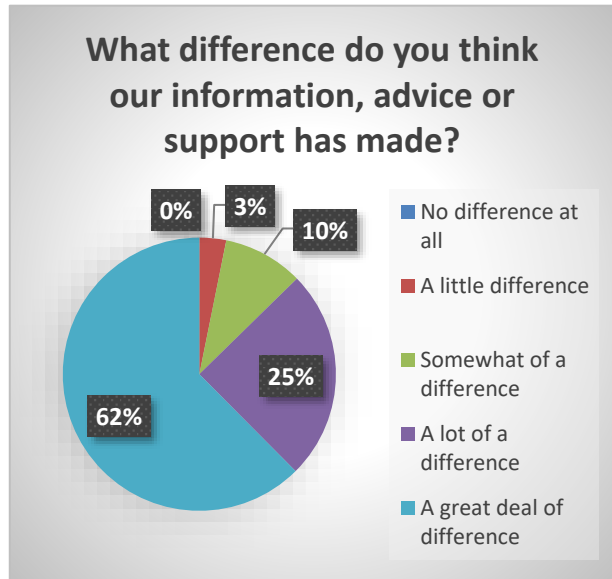
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We asked:

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

You told us:

87% of families we asked told us we made a great deal or a lot of difference. This compares with the same figure (87%) in the previous academic year.



Example of feedback from parents

“The Case Officer has been empowering for us as a family providing timely and great advice and support. I feel that we would not be where we are today without their support, their knowledge and application of that knowledge is amazing.”

“It has meant so much to have the support of PIAS. Felt confident in making the choices and decisions about my son as was able to discuss and rely on support from the case officer.”

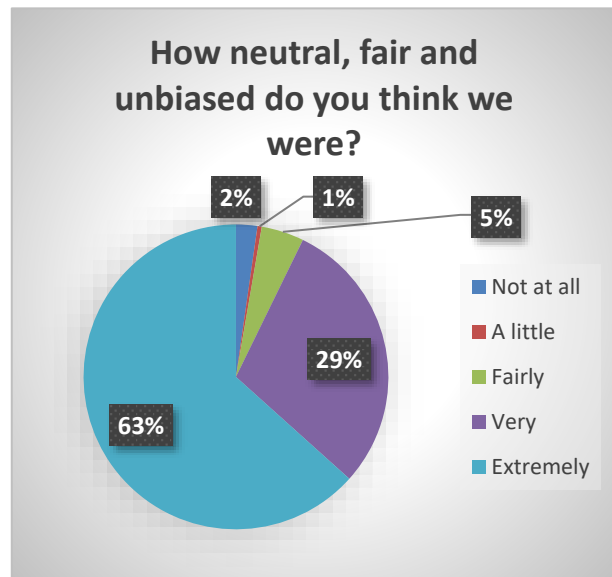
“I feel clearer on what I need to do next and how to access support for my son.”

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, unbiased. This is the same figure as the previous two academic years.



Example of feedback from parents

“PIAS is extremely unbiased. I was treated very well and with so much care and love.”

“I did not get a sense of any bias in my conversation with the case officer. They provided support and information that responded to my requests in a way that best meets our individual circumstances and the needs of my child.”

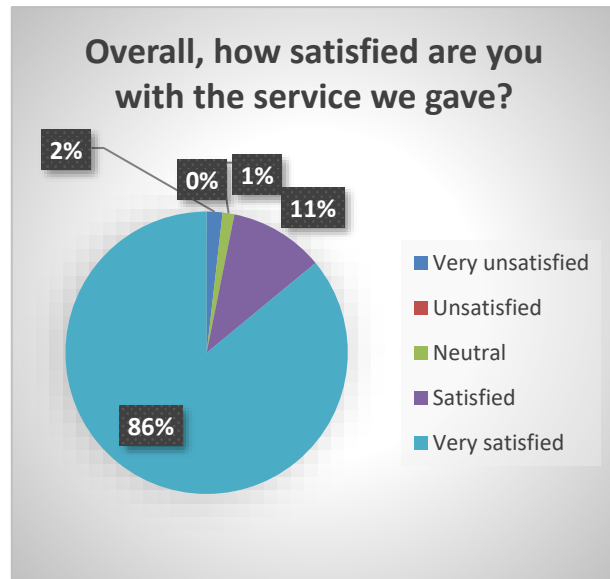
“Empowered us to make our decisions.”

“I was always given neutral advice and information to make clear informed decisions throughout the processes.”

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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.
This is an increase on the previous year of where 92% of families reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received.

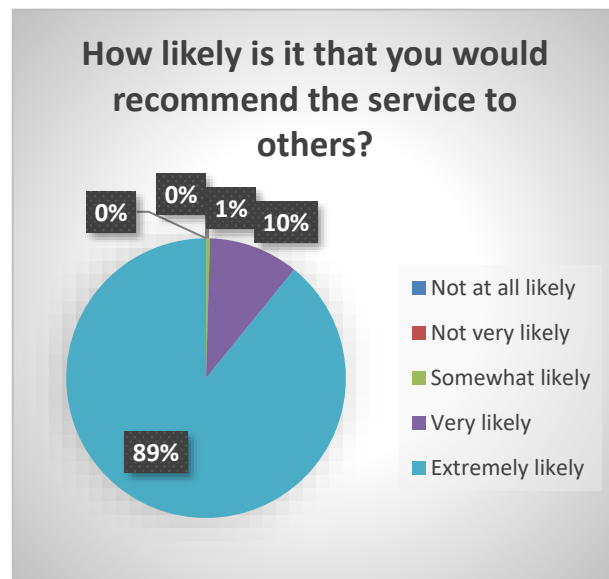


Example of feedback from parents

“Amazing service.”
“Very satisfied I’ve always been put at ease and reassured on things I didn’t know about I’m very grateful.”
“Nice to talk to someone who answered all my questions in a way I understood.”

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

You told us:
99% of families told us that they would recommend our service to others.



Example of feedback from parents

“This service has been a lifeline as I was lost in where to start, and was in desperate need of the professional advice and help which PIAS have provided.”
“I will recommend to others as I received the information I was after and the case officer was very friendly and nice to speak to.”
“I would advise any parent in need of advice or support to contact you for guidance.”

Youth Ascends

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



2023 – 2024 has been an amazing year **where** the group has continued to meet and has several new members. Nicolle Gallagher has continued her work with schools in Plymouth and this has seen an increase in numbers of young people who are able to share their voice on important issues.

The group has continued to contribute to the SEND Strategic Group and the SEND Improvement Board.

Youth Ascend co-produced the Commitments from the SEND Improvement Board which is an accessible version of the improvement plan.

[\(Commitments from the SEND Improvement Board - Plymouth Information Advice and Support for SEND. \(plymouthias.org.uk\)\)](https://plymouthias.org.uk).

In February, the group were invited to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel meeting. Eight children and young people and were able to raise several questions.

Youth Ascends co-produced the Local Authority's Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) document and were asked to contribute their views to several priority action groups.

The group supported the Co-production event in April which developed Plymouth's Co-production and Engagement Framework.

In June, Youth Ascends were nominated for and won the Youth Award for Inclusivity. It was an amazing night which recognised the amazing contribution the members of Youth Ascends make ensuring the voice of children and young people with SEND is heard in Plymouth.

Parenting programmes

The parenting team has been at full capacity for this year and has been able to increase the number of parenting programmes and workshops delivered. The team continued to work as part of the 'Family Hub Family' and co-delivered parenting programmes with Action for Children, Lark, Barnardo's, Hamoaze House and On Course Southwest. New partnerships this year have included the Mental Health in Schools Team, Millfield's Inspired and several schools.

Programmes Summary

Name of programme	How many programmes delivered	How many parents started	How many parents completed	Completion Rates
Incredible Years - School age	3	14	12	86%
Incredible Years - Basic	3	18	15	83%
Incredible years - ASC	5	35	28	80%
Circle of security	5	29	21	72%
Strengthening Families Plymouth	3	28	21	75%
Total	19	124	87	79.2%

Retention and Impact Scores

Overall, the retention rate for parents (the % of parents who started and completed each programme) was **79.2%**. This ranged from the highest **86%** (Incredible Years School Age) to the lowest **72%** (The Circle of Security).

We also gathered information on the **impact** the programme has on:

- Their relationships with their child.
- Their understanding of their child's behaviour.
- Their confidence as parents.
- **98%** of parents reported that attending a parenting programme had a positive impact on their relationship with their child.
- **88%** of parents reported an increased understanding of their child's behaviour.
- **92%** of parents reported an increase in confidence after attending a programme.

General feedback on the courses

- **100%** of parents reported being satisfied with the parenting programme.
- **100%** of parents reported that the information and advice they received made a difference.
- **100%** of parents reported that they would recommend a PIAS parenting programme to friends or family.

Family Feedback

“The course has really helped me understand my children’s behaviour. I’m so thankful to and felt supported by going to this course not only meeting other parents feeling the same way but having a person that is teaching us about the circle taking part in the group chats and including her own personal experiences really made me really appreciate the group.”

“A helpful, positive course, great facilitator, a lovely group too. Clearly delivered, friendly and compassionate delivery. Would highly recommend this course.”

“Getting better consistency, routine & structure has helped.”

“I feel I have been very well supported in this course which as a result as helped me support my child.”

“Really enjoyed the course and it has taught me really practical ideas that I am using, and they do work.”

“I’ve learned so much on the course and feel like I’m understanding more about my children and their behaviours. It was great to connect with other parents too.”

Case example

A parent self-referred to the Incredible years parenting programme and was already supported by the Child Development Centre, School and medical practitioners. The parent attended 10 out of the 11 sessions and started the programme feeling that they had “tried everything” and was struggling to break the parenting cycle. During the programme the parent shared the difficulties in getting other members of the family and friends to understand and support the new way of parenting. At the end of the course the parent told us that she was successfully implementing the strategies and was well supported by friends and family who were now embracing the new parenting style. The parent felt they had a more consistent parenting approach, had a better understanding of their child’s behaviour and was a more confident parent.

Parenting workshops

This year the team continued to develop and provide a range of SEND standalone workshops. This was in response to parents of children with SEND telling us that they needed specific information and advice around topics relating to their child’s SEND and did not feel that attending a parenting programme would always meet this need. Families told us this was not provided by other services.

The workshops have again proven to be very popular with families and we hope to continue to increase the workshop titles available.

The team delivered **57** workshops with **243** parents attending (See appendix 3 for full list).

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76% of parents reported increased confidence after attending a workshop.

100% of parents reported being satisfied with the workshop.

100% of parents reported that the information and advice they received during the workshop made a difference.

“Lovely ladies running the course made me feel at ease and comfortable and they have a great deal of knowledge to share.”

“Great workshop! Lots of resources to use to help with transitions. Thanks again.”

“The training serves the purpose very well. The topics were very relevant, and parents were able to share their personal experiences.”

Partnership working

One of the key strengths of the PIAS parenting team is partnership working. This year we have provided Strengthening Families Plymouth Practitioner training to 39 different professionals over three sessions.

We have continued to be part of the Family Hub development and have engaged with both the Primary and Secondary partnership groups.

This had led to creative, positive delivery to families in Plymouth for example: 11 Members of the Mental Health in School Team (MHST) attended the Strengthening family Plymouth training and 6 went on to co-deliver sessions at Jan Cutting Healthy Living Centre.

We attended the Step-by-Step sessions at High View and Manor Street Family Hubs. Feedback from staff and parents was that they would benefit from a bespoke programme of workshops. We worked in partnership with Action for Children (Family Hub) and Millfield’s Inspired Trust to provide 4 workshops with creche in Devonport/Stonehouse area of Plymouth.

Case study example - Step by Step workshops

Parent attends Step-by-Step sessions regularly at their local emerging family hub. Parent has a diagnosis of a long-term mental health condition and struggles with poor mental health. Their child is 3 years old and is awaiting assessment at the Child Development Centre. Child is non-verbal and presents as violent at times. Parent has one other older child attending mainstream primary school with a diagnosis of ASC and ADHD. The provision of extended workshops delivered by PIAS, the creche provided by emerging family hub, enabled the parent to leave her children in the creche. The creche workers were known by the parent and she felt comfortable leaving her child knowing that they were safe, and their needs were be met. The parent shared that they had enjoyed attending the workshops, had learned new strategies including how to use visual resources to improve communication.

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Feedback from the Emerging Family Hub

Feedback from the Emerging family Hub was that the workshops provided an opportunity for parents to attend workshops that they would otherwise not be able to due to childcare and other issues. The parents were able to build positive relationships with other parents. The PIAS parenting workers were able to support parents with intensive interactions with their children and scaffold the parents understanding and use of strategies.

Feedback from Millfield's Inspired

"This gave us the opportunity to work together with Local organisations to support our aim of identifying individual families, children, or young people to help communities and their residents improve their socioeconomic circumstances, fostering improvements in outcomes and ways in which they live their lives. The workshops are key in providing both parents and children with opportunities to learn, develop, and understand their children and their needs, leading to more positive outcomes for children with SEN."

Feedback from parents

"The way to play I learned today is really good! I realised that I was afraid to have conflict too much. I will try." (Mum with English as an additional language, child age 3, non-verbal without diagnosis)

*"Was so helpful, and me and *** have enjoyed the last 4 weeks of sessions thoroughly."*

"This session has been informative. I really liked the small numbers."

Helen Huntley
Team Manager

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Appendices 1

PIAS Intervention levels Summary**Appendix 1 – Levels of SENDIASS interventions**

Level	Description	Service user need	Time allocation
1	Information & advice about education, health and social care SEND system and processes. Inclusive of initial concern up to appeals.	Service user can express their needs and those of their child. They need information and generic (not tailored to specific CYP) advice to make an informed decision/better understand the system,	For individual contact Maximum 1 hour Including call, research, email response
2	Information & SPECIFIC advice about education, health and social care SEND system and processes. Inclusive of initial concern up to appeals	Service user can express their need and those of their child. They need more tailored information and/or advice specific to their individual need or circumstance than s available at level 1. May be a returning level 1 who needs additional advice at next stage	Booked call/virtual appointment. Up to 2 hours Total time including email exchange, research etc. 3 hours.
3	Information, specific advice and support about education, health and social care SEND system and process inclusive of initial concerns up to appeals	The needs of the individual service users and/or the complexity of their child/ren circumstances significantly impacts their ability to independently navigate the system. They are a child or young person who need/want information advice or support separate from that given to their parent /carers.	Over 2 hours. Case is active with agreed actions and timescales for PIAS. Reviewed every 6- 8 week.
4	Information specific advice and support about education, health and social care SEND system and process inclusive of initial concerns up to appeals	The needs of the individual service user and /or the complexity of their child/rens circumstances means that they are not able to independently navigate the system and/or access justice. They are a child or young person who need advocacy/representation* separate from or instead of their parent this includes CYP who are looked after those who are in residential schools and those in YOIs AND MUST ALSO INCLUDE Representation* for parent, child or young person at meetings, appeals mediations and CERTS Ongoing and intensive casework/advocacy that includes representation.* *REPRESENTATION Means attending meeting with parent/YP where they may need you to speak their views for them if they feel unable.	Over 2 hours. Case is active with agreed actions and timescales for PIAS. Reviewed every 6- 8 week.

Appendix 2 – Description of Parenting Programmes

Parenting Programmes

Incredible Years Basic (3–6-year-old)

The Preschool Parenting Programme (Basic) strengthens positive parent-child interactions and attachment, reducing harsh discipline and fostering parents' ability to promote children's social, emotional, and language development. Parents also learn how to build school readiness skills and are encouraged to partner with teachers and daycare professionals so they can promote children's emotional regulation and social skills.

Incredible Years School Age (6-12 years old)

The School Age Parenting Programme strengthens parent-child interactions and attachment, reducing harsh discipline and fostering parents' ability to promote children's social, emotional, and academic development.

Parents learn how to:

- Monitor children after school.
- Set rules regarding TV, computer, and drug use.
- Support children's homework.
- Partner with teachers so that they can promote children's academic, social, and emotional skills.

Incredible Years ASC

This programme is offered to parents of young children on the Autism spectrum or with language delays to promote children's emotional regulation, social competence, language skills, school readiness and relationships with others.

Because many group leaders delivering the Toddler or Preschool Basic programmes often have several parents in their group with children on the spectrum or with language delays, some of these vignettes can be easily used to replace or supplement several of the Toddler or Preschool Basic programme vignette

The Circle of Security

Circle of Security is an 8-week reflective program designed to help caregivers and those who support families as they understand your child's emotional world by learning to read the emotional needs, support the child's ability to successfully manage emotions, enhance the development of the child's self-esteem and honour the caregiver's innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure.

Strengthening Families Plymouth

Strengthening Families Plymouth is a parenting programme that has been shown to work in Plymouth for a wide range of families. It is designed for parents and young people aged 10 to 14 years.

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Key features

- Teach you simple ways of dealing with issues before they become major problems.
- Gives you and your child time together away from day-to-day pressures to get to know and understand each other.
- Develop techniques to help your child to resist peer pressure and keep them safe from drugs and alcohol.
- Fun, games and loads of laughs along the way.

Workshops titles

- How to understand and support my child's communication.
- How to use visual resources to support my child's communication.
- How to understand and support my child's behaviour.
- How to use visual resources to support my child's behaviour.
- How to understand and support my child's play and social skills.
- How to use rewards and incentives with my child.
- How to understand and support my child's transitions.
- Choosing a secondary school, my child has SEND.
- Choosing a secondary school, my child has an EHCP.
- How to have confidence in meetings.
- How to include the voice of the child.
- Choosing a primary school, my child has SEND.
- Choosing a primary school, my child has EHCP.
- All you need to know about annual reviews.