The Difference We Make: Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIASS) Impact Report
1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025

Introduction

Welcome to the Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIASS) annual report September 2024– August 2025. 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.

PIASS 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"*

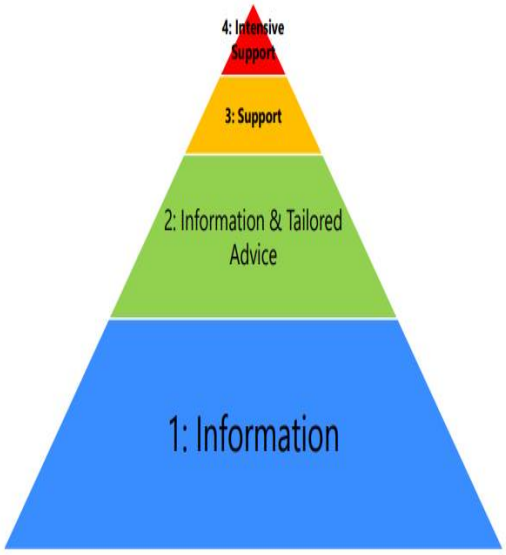
SENDIAS services also have a set of minimum standards which sets out the national expectations and good practice in the provision of impartial Information, Advice, and Support Services (IASS) to increase parental confidence. These standards inform the service development plan and are used as a tool for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

Minimum%20Standards.pdf (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

Information, Advice, Support and Advocacy is provided to **c**hildren and young people through individual casework.

Data Summary – SENDIASS

SENDIASS Interventions Levels Summary



Level of intervention	Number of cases	% of Intervention
Level 4	290	12.3%
Level 3	310	13.1%
Level 2	297	12.5%
Level 1	1461	61.2%
Total	2,358	

Facebook
11084 visits **110489** people saw at least 1 post

PIASS Website
17595 users

Community Engagement
169 parents accessed information at a community event

Professionals Events
499 accessed information and advice

The team

From September 2024 to May 2025 PIASS underwent a service review and restructure. This resulted in the following changes to the team:

1. An overall reduction in the staff number within the SENDIASS function of the team.
2. The transfer of the SEND focussed parenting programme /workshop delivery to On Course Southwest (Adult Education provider).
3. The transfer of Youth Ascends, SEND youth participation group, to the Children and Families participation team.

The PIASS team has continued to provide a high level of information, advice, and support to the families within this change process.

PIASS remain a stable, highly skilled team who are experienced in their specialist area of work.

Case officers have completed the IPSEA legal training to level 3 and attend regular updated training from IPSEA. All the team are passionate, skilled, and dedicated to providing the best outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Team structure

Role	FTE	Change from 2023-2024
Team Manager	0.8 FTE	Reduction of 0.2 FTE
Senior PIASS Support Coordinator	1 FTE	No change
SENDIASS Case Officers	4.3 FTE	Reduction of 1.6 FTE
Web editor	0.5 FTE	No change
Project and Finance Officer	0 post deleted	Reduction of 0.4 FTE

The Budget

PIASS has a revenue budget provided by Plymouth Local Authority.

In June 2023 PIASS received confirmation that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) would jointly fund the service. For this year, the funding split 95% from the Local Authority and 5% from the ICB. This funding remains with no increase.

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)

Development plan

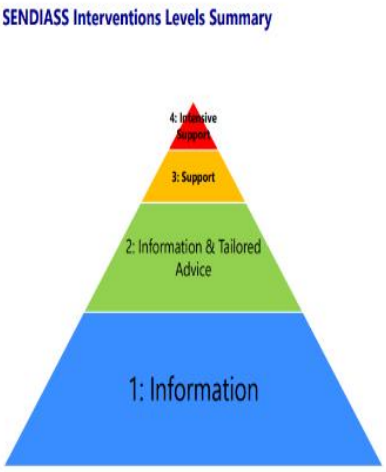
PIASS has a development plan monitored by the Service User Advisory Group (SUAG). The SUAG consists of young people's representation, parents, Plymouth Parent Carer Voice, head teachers, Plymouth Local Authority staff.

Quality Assurance/Practice Standards

Internally the work of the SEND case officers is reviewed monthly by the Senior PIASS Support Co-Ordinator and Team Manager.

Levels of work

PIASS offers information, advice, and support in a variety of ways using the SENDIASS Intervention levels guidelines produced by the Information Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN) who are funded by the Department of Education. (see Appendix 1)



Levels of Intervention

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

Impact - information

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

Website, social media

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

From Sept 2024 to August 31st, 2025, the number of times PIASS Facebook page was visited was **11084.** The number of people who saw any posts on Facebook PIASS page at least once was **110489.** The PIASS website had **17595** users during this period.

Community information

PIASS has provided access to information in community events and activities. This has given 168 families an opportunity to find out about PIASS, the services we offer and to receive impartial information.
This year we saw an increase in the number of professionals. We reached increasing to **499**.

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 ins and our Contact us page on the website. These enquires are responded to within 48 hours.

In the period September 2024 to August 2025, we recorded **1461 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 PIASS caseworkers through telephone calls, face to face meetings and drop-in sessions at the PIASS 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 2024- August 2025 we supported 297 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 2024 to August 2025, we recorded **310** 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 again this year with **290** families supported at level 4.

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

This year we received **81** enquiries regarding suspensions and exclusions and supported **20** families in ongoing casework.

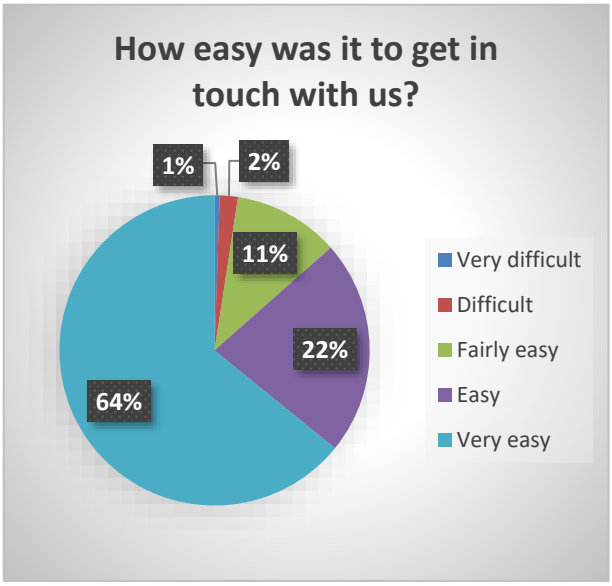
In total **PIASS supported 2358** families across all levels.

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 **371.**

We asked:
How easy was it to get in touch with us?

You told us:
86% found it easy or very easy to get in touch with us. This compares with **91%** in 2023-24, **92%** 2022-2023 and **84%** in 2021-2022.



Example of feedback from parents
"I got a quick response as soon I rang up."

"Used the form and was called back the next day."

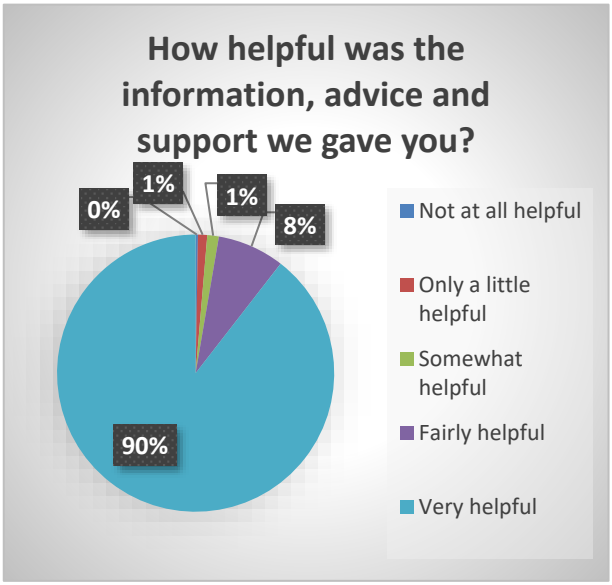
"I left message and got a timely call back."

"A member of PIASS always contacts me back on the same day of enquiry."

"The case officer has been incredibly accessible and responsive throughout the process, making it easy to get in touch with him whenever I've needed support with my case. His promptness and availability have been invaluable."

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

You told us:
90% reported that it was very helpful and **8%** helpful. This compares to **89%** in 2024-2025, **86%** in 2022-23 and **81%** in 2021-2022**.**



Example of feedback from parents
"The Case Officer was brilliant. A really calm influence and supported me very well in advance of and throughout the mediation."

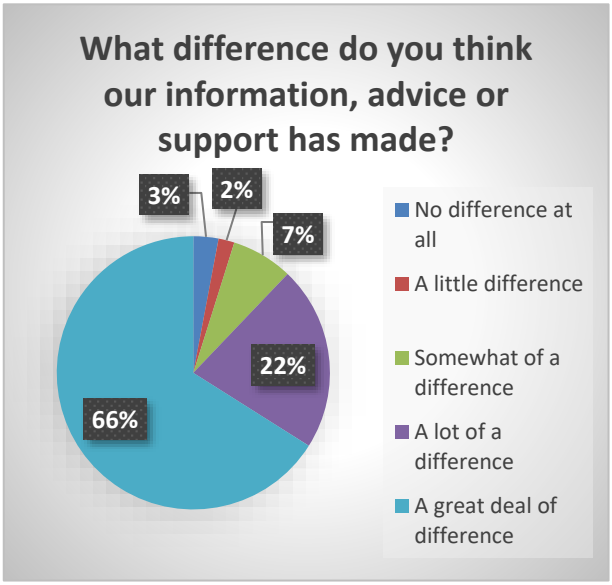
"Helped, support me through Permanently exclusion and EHCP."

"Extremely helpful, and very informative valuable information and support."

"I was at an utter loss before contacting PIASS, the help I received has made an immense positive difference to my situation."

"I felt heard & supported. Sometimes my ADHD brain can spill too much information but irrespective of that I felt held, supported, and heard as well as reassured that there is help ongoing available. I have felt alone with this journey recently and I felt that instantly lift."

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



You told us:
88% 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 two academic years.

Example of feedback from parents

"The support was invaluable & enabled us to contact the relevant people directly."

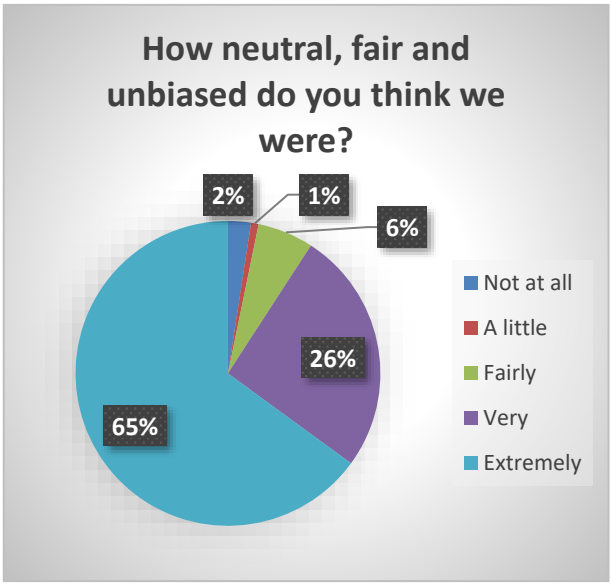
"Eased anxieties I have about my son's situation and knowing the support is there when I need it makes me feel confident I have somewhere to go when I need support again. It makes me feel more confident having difficult conversations in professional settings knowing I can potentially have someone from PIAS with me."

"The case officer was kind, compassionate, gave me space to talk and was clear with what the next steps are which I really appreciate."

"Without PIASS we would have been lost with no sense of direction."

We asked:
How neutral, fair, and unbiased did you think PIASS was?

You told us:
91% of families we asked told us they found us to be neutral, fair, unbiased.
This compares to a figure of **92%** figure as the previous three academic years.



Example of feedback from parents
"PIASS is not to on either side but there to support fairly."

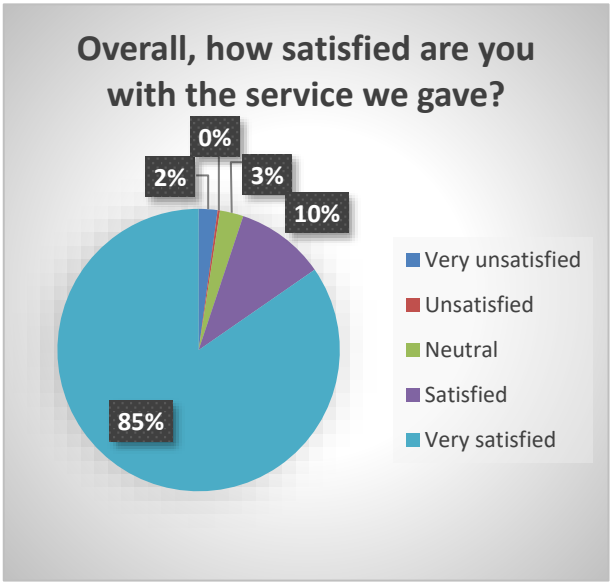
"Very kind and understanding and supported me to a balanced view."

"Remained fair and unbiased throughout."

"Totally fair and unbiased focussing on the needs of the student first and foremost."

We asked:
How satisfied were you with the service PIASS gave?

You told us:
95% of families told us they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service they received.
This is a slight decrease on the previous year's **96%** on the previous year.



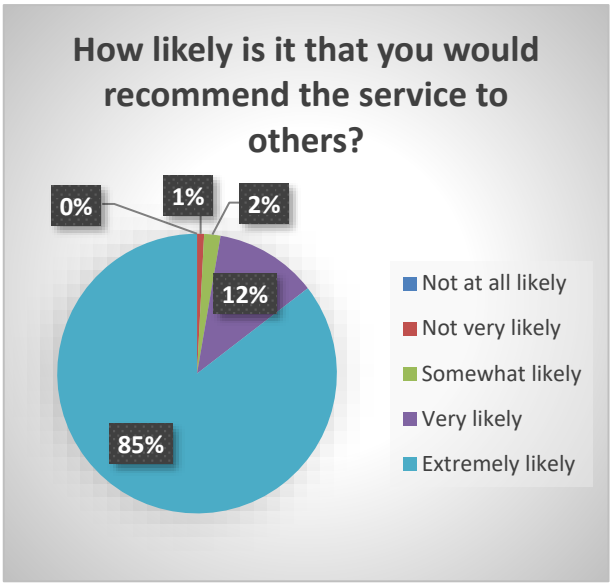
Example of feedback from parents
"PIASS are an amazing service to have to support send children and parents it is a vital part of a child future"

"Just extremely helpful and really supportive."

"Always there to give advice and to run through the correct procedures, we are very satisfied."

"Fantastic service. Felt like I wasn't on my own and was given good advice throughout."

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



You told us:
97% of families told us that **t**hey would recommend our service to others.

Example of feedback from parents

"I will highly recommend this service."

"The service we got was brilliant. Everything was explained in easy-to-understand terms with no stress."

"I have recommended to others already."

"PIASS are outstanding in every aspect I'm always recommending PIASS I will forever be grateful to the Case officers for their time effort support and kindness shown to us all at such a difficult time."

Feedback from professionals

"The outcome of the meeting, including identified actions were clear and the PIASS professional made sure that there was a clear process with an identified follow up meeting planned."

"Very helpful to have a fully rounded support for the family as a whole - advocating parent and family - especially when there are disputes between home and school."

"I have invited PIASS to meetings for several years an always found them to be supportive with a wealth of knowledge."

"PIASS is a very supportive and helpful service and have supported A LOT of the families and young people I have worked with - it is an invaluable resource/service."

Helen Huntley
Team Manager

Appendices 1

PIASS 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 & SPECFIC 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 PIASS. 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 chil**d**/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 PIASS. Reviewed every 6- 8 week.