The Difference We Make: Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIASS) Impact Report 1st September 2025 – 31st August 2026

Introduction

Welcome to the Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND (PIASS) annual report September 2025– August 2026. 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 outlined 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."*

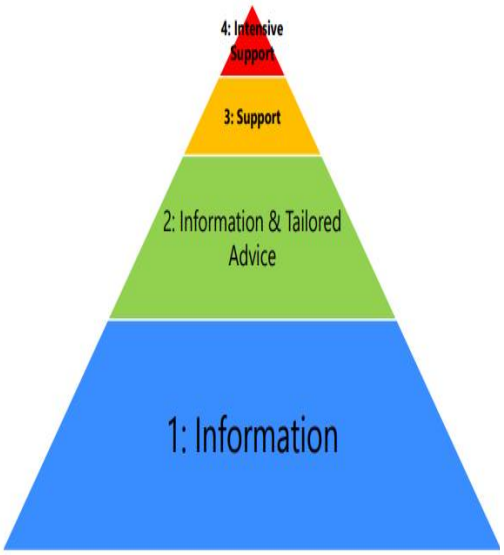
SENDIAS services also have a set of minimum standards which sets out the national expectations and good practice in the provision of impartial Information, Advice, and Support Services (IASS) to increase parental confidence. These standards inform the service development plan and are used as a tool for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

Minimum Standards.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 2024-2025	% of Intervention	Number of cases 2025-2026	% of Intervention
Level 4	290	12.3%	309	12.30%
Level 3	310	13.1%	225	8.86%
Level 2	297	12.5%	170	6.77%
Level 1	1461	61.2%	1808	71.97%
Total	2,358		2512	
Current open case			198	
Total			2,710	

Facebook
9058 visits **108534** people saw at least 1 post

PIASS Website
17122 users

Community Engagement and Workshops

250 families accessed impartial information and advice at community events and workshops. This includes ongoing links with Family Hubs, Plymouth Parent Carer Voice (PPCV) and other voluntary groups across Plymouth

The team

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

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

This year has seen periods of staff absence due to sickness, the retirement of the Senior PIASS coordinator and the planned retirement of a SENDIASS Case officer at the end of September 2026.

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 (2025-2026)	FTE Sept 2026
Team Manager	0.8 FTE	0.8 FTE
Senior PIASS Support Coordinator	1 FTE	0.8 FTE
SENDIASS Case Officers	4.3 FTE	2.6 FTE in post 2 vacant posts
Web editor	0.5 FTE	0.5 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 Standards.pdf (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

Development plan

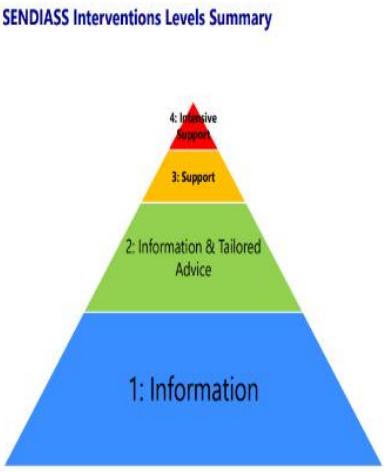
PIASS has a development plan monitored by the Service User Advisory Group (SUAG). The SUAG consists of young people's representation, parents, Plymouth Parent Carer Voice, head teachers, Plymouth Local Authority staff.

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 2025 to August 31st, 2026, the number of times PIASS Facebook page was visited was **9058.** The number of people who saw any posts on Facebook PIASS page at least once was **108534.** The PIASS website had **17122** users during this period.

Community and Workshop information

PIASS has provided access to information in community events, activities, and workshops. This has given **250** families an opportunity to find out about PIASS, the services we offer and to receive impartial information.

This year we added a new workshop on How schools can support my child at SEN Support.

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 2025 to August 2026, we recorded **1808 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 2025- August 2026 we supported **170** 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 2025 to August 2026, we recorded **225** 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.

Between Sept 2025 and August 2026, we supported 309 families who requested support for mediation and tribunals.

PIASS continues to work closely with families and the Local Authority to resolve issues before a **t**ribunal.
This year we received 81 enquiries regarding suspensions and exclusions and supported 20 families in ongoing casework.

In total **PIASS supported 2710** families across all levels.

Casework Summary main themes identified by level of intervention

Intervention level	Nature of Support	Main themes identified
Level 2	Information, advice, signposting, attendance at meetings, early intervention, and short-term casework.	EHAT/TAM meetings, statutory assessment requests, annual reviews, admissions, exclusions, reduced timetables, parent contributions, health-related SEN concerns, and transitions.
Level 3	Ongoing casework requiring coordination with schools, Local Authority, and other agencies.	EHCP processes, annual reviews, admissions, local disagreement resolution, transitions, exclusions, health-related SEN, children's social care involvement, post-assessment support, and statutory assessments.
Level 4	Complex advocacy and specialist SEND support including formal dispute resolution.	Tribunal appeals, mediation, EOTAS, complex EHCP disputes, placement disagreements, statutory assessment appeals, transport issues, health-related SEN, exclusions, and multi-agency cases involving social care.

Main Caseload Themes

Theme	Summary
EHAT/TAM	Most frequently recorded intervention across all levels, reflecting extensive multi-agency working.
Education Health care Plans	The largest area of demand, including statutory assessments, annual reviews, amendments, and placement issues.
Tribunals and Mediation	Significant proportion of Level 4 work, demonstrating sustained demand for specialist advocacy.
Admissions and Placement	Frequent requests for support with school admissions, consultations and securing appropriate placements.
Statutory	High levels of support around requests for assessment, evidence gathering, and appeals.
Exclusions and Reduced Timetables	A recurring issue for many Children Young people, particularly those with SEN Support or EHCPs.

Health Related SEN	Increasing numbers of cases involving mental health, anxiety, medical conditions, and access to suitable education.
Children's Social Care SEN	Complex cases requiring joint working across education, health, and social care.
Transitions	Support around phase transfer, post-16 education, and preparation for adulthood
EOTAS and Alternative Provision	Smaller in number but among the most complex and intensive Level 4 cases.

Tribunal Support and outcomes

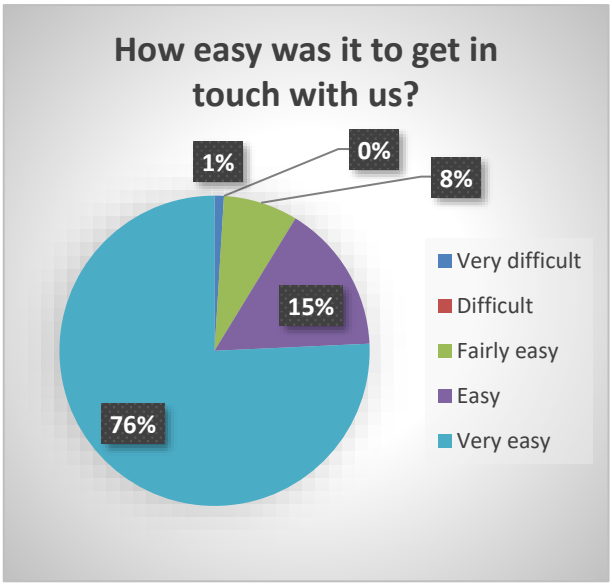
How resolved	Total
JADR	1
Oral Hearing	7
Paper hearing	13
Parent used solicitor for hearing	1
Prior	152
Withdrawn	1
Total	175

Impact – Evaluations from families

At case closure, families are contacted and asked 6 national and 3 regional evaluation questions via an online survey. The number of feedback surveys completed was **103**.

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 **86** % in 2024-25.



Example of feedback from parents
"Filled out your online form and then someone called me back. Throughout the time the case officer from PIASS was involved it was always easy to get hold of her either via phone or email."

"PIASS were easy to find via google when searching for support with an EHCP dispute. I sent an email and was contacted quickly after to see how they could help."

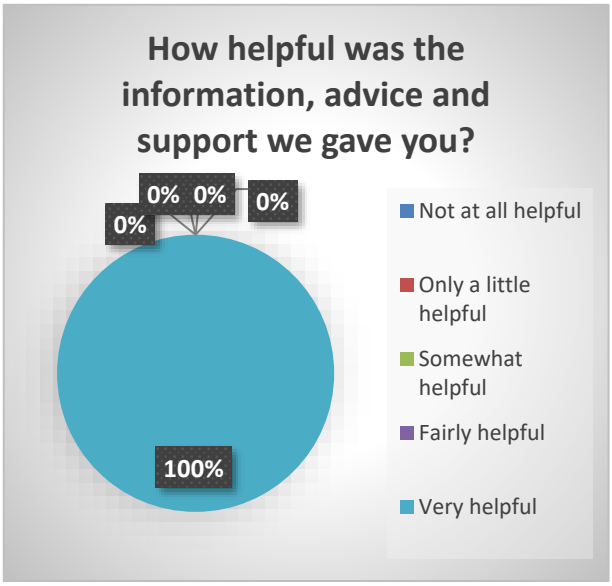
"Was very easy to get hold of PIASS and had a quick reply."

"The whole team were really approachable, and I felt very well supported from start to finish."

"Easily contactable, friendly staff always willing to help."

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

You told us:
100 % reported that it was very helpful This compares to **90**% in the previous academic year.



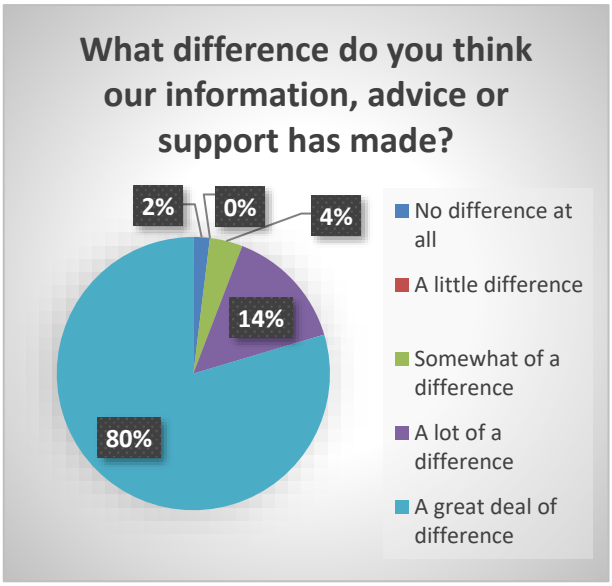
Example of feedback from parents
"With everything the Case officer said and did make instant changes for my child."

"Although I work in education, I find the EHCP and EOTAS a bit of a minefield at times! The case officer was really helpful and patient in explaining progress and next steps."

"Amazing, have genuinely made a huge positive impact on my son's education."

"Without their expert knowledge I would have been completely lost."

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



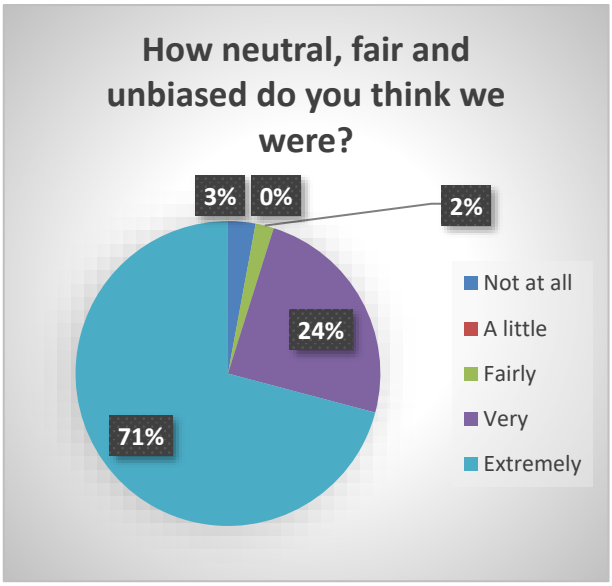
You told us:
94% of families we asked told us we made a great deal or a lot of difference. This compares with the **88%** in the previous academic year.

Example of feedback from parents
"Without the help I had I would have been stuck without any knowledge."

"Because of the support, my son will be able to receive an education suitable to his needs and will finally begin to thrive. This is a huge step for our family and will impact us for a long time in the best way."

"I have got everything I needed for my child and quickly, the support I had was above and beyond, especially since my relationship with the Local Authority and school broke down to far beyond repair."

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



You told us:
95% of families we asked told us they found us to be neutral, fair, unbiased. This compares to a figure of **91%** in the previous academic year.

Example of feedback
"Very clued up and unbiased."

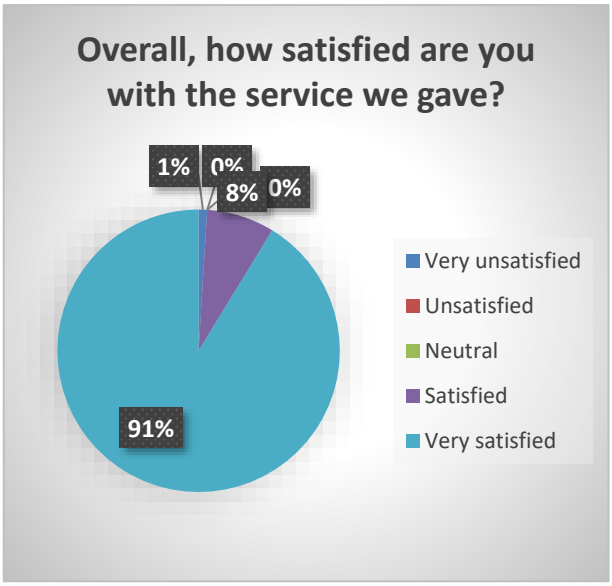
"Very fair and unbiased, gave me the right information but always made sure it was my choice on decisions I made."

"My case officers was extremely fair and always gave me the best advice, she was a massive help to myself and my family."

"Very realistic on what could happen."

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

You told us:
99% of families told us they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service they received. This is a is an increase from **95** % in the previous academic year.

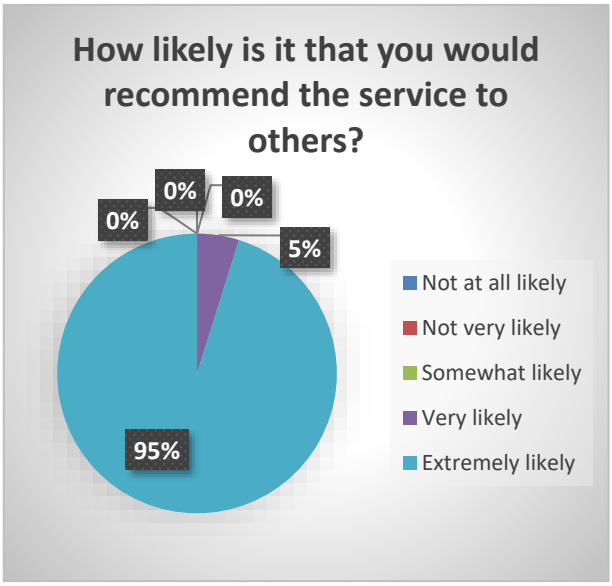


Example of feedback from parents
"The case officer worked their magic and we skipped mediation and a tribunal."

"Nothing was ever too much, incredibly knowledgeable, and resourceful. So supportive and just overall a positive experience. It really helped me ease a lot of my anxiety and we were able to feel heard."

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

You told us:
100% of families told us that **t**hey would recommend our service to others.

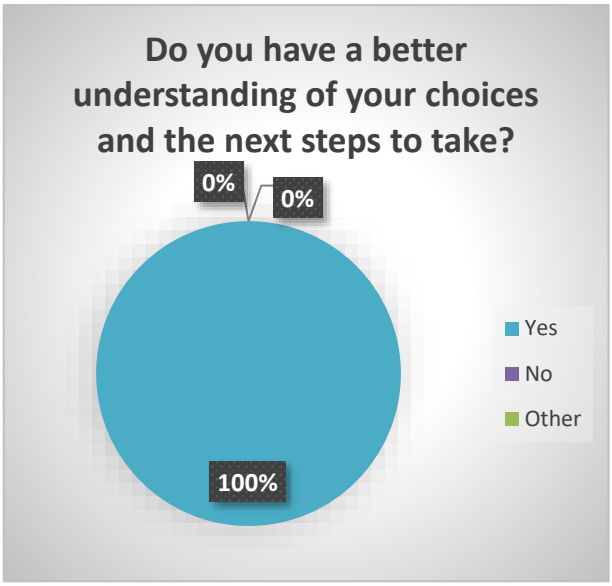


Example of feedback from parents
"I always recommend this service to friends."

"I have often recommended your service and having experienced it firsthand I can see how vital this support is for families in need. I hope it is here for many years to come."

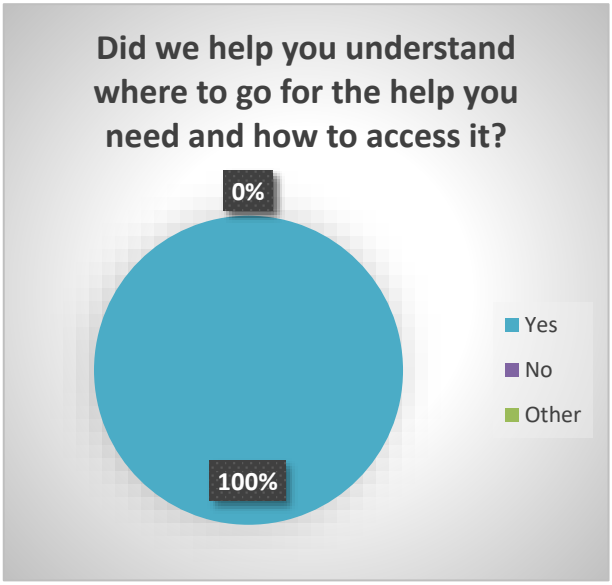
We asked:
Do you have a better understanding of your choices and the next steps to take?

You told us:
100% of parents told us that they had a better understanding of choices and next steps to take.



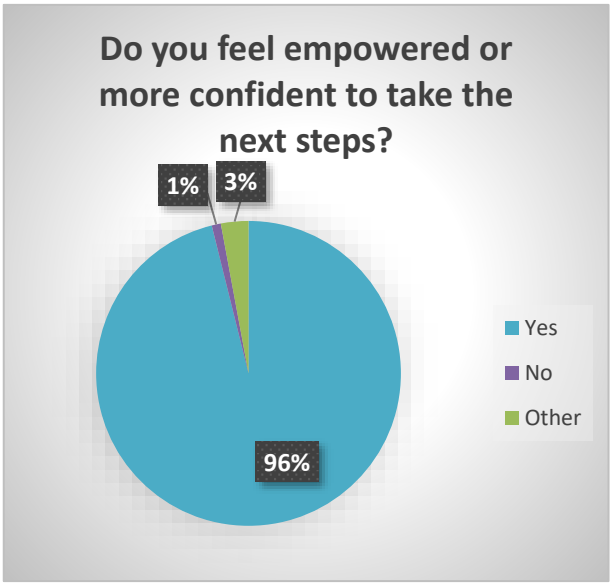
We asked:
Did we help you understand where to go for the help you need and how to access it?

You told us:
100% of families told us we helped understand where to go for help and how to access it.



We asked:
Do you feel empowered or more confident to take the next steps?

You told us:
99% of families told us that they are more confident and empowered to take the next steps.



Feedback from professionals

"Always provide honest, fair comments. Supported school and parent."

"Case officers have been fantastic to work with, are efficient responding to emails, acting on family queries and have supported both school and families that we have worked with to ensure best outcomes for the children."

"Through your support and advice, we were able to secure places for 2 pupils at their chosen settings without them having to go to tribunal. Your advice on what to include in my evidence both on the phone and via email was very helpful."

"The case officers has been invaluable support to our families and has made a significant difference to the outcomes of some of our most vulnerable learners. Her expertise, persistence and commitment have been instrumental in securing the right support and provision when it has been most needed. Without her involvement, I have little doubt that some children would have found themselves in educational settings unable to meet their need appropriately. They have always been reliable, knowledgeable, and compassionate professional and their support has been greatly appreciated by both our staff and families. We are enormously grateful for all that she has done."

Summary and Conclusion

During 2025-2026, PIASS continued to provide a high-quality, impartial service for children and young people with SEND and their families. Despite staffing changes and increasing demand, the service supported **2,512 families**, an increase on the previous year, with particularly high demand for advice relating to EHCPs, statutory assessments, exclusions, admissions, health needs, and transitions.

PIASS delivered support across all intervention levels, from information and advice through to complex casework, mediation, and tribunal support. Family feedback remained exceptionally positive, with all respondents reporting increased confidence, high satisfaction, and a positive impact on outcomes for their child or young person.

The service also extended its reach through community engagement, professional networks, the website, and social media, ensuring families could access timely information and support.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that PIASS continues to make a significant difference to families navigating the SEND system, helping them to understand their rights, participate in decision-making and secure appropriate support for their children and young people.

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.