



Norfolk Special Educational Needs and Disability, Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) are a statutory service that provide free confidential and impartial information, advice and support (IAS) to children and young people up to the age of 25 who have special educational needs and/or disability and their parents and carers. This includes health and social care where it impacts on education.

Annual Report 1st September 2024- 31st August 2025

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Statutory Framework
- 3 Minimum Standards
- 4 Joint Commissioning
- 5 Current Service Structure
- 6 Capacity
- 7 Intervention Levels
- 8 How we provide our support
 - 8.1 Anonymous calls/outreach
 - 8.2 Telephone Helpline
 - 8.3 One off support and casework
 - 8.4 Library drop-ins
 - 8.5 Resources
- 9 Classification codes – Reason for contact
- 10 Outcomes
- 11 Professional contact
- 12 Website, Newsletter and Social Media
- 13 Feedback and evaluations

"The help and advice we got today, along with suggestions on what to do next we're incredibly helpful. The information will help us to get our son the support he needs"

- Helpline evaluation comment from parent/carer

1. Introduction

Norfolk SENDIASS is a statutory service, our main focus is to ensure that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parent/carers have access to impartial information, advice, and support (IAS) so that they can feel empowered to make informed decisions about matters relating to SEND in education and health and social care where it's impacted by education.

Alongside this we work to inform and influence policy and practice locally and nationally, provide IAS to professionals and signpost children, young people, parent/carers and professionals to alternative and additional sources of advice, information and support that may be available locally or nationally.

3. Minimum Standards

Every SENDIASS must comply with Minimum Standards, these standards were written by a group of IASS managers, parents, LA reps and the chair of the Information, Advice and Support Project board, in consultation with the DfE. These minimum standards are based on the requirements relating to support that IASS must provide, as set out in the Children and Families Act (CFA) 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and on additional legal advice commissioned by the Information, Advice and Support Service Network (IASSN).

Norfolk SENDIASS is a statutory 'in house' service jointly funded by Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB). The Service operates at arm's length from all other bodies including the Local Authority and ICB.

Norfolk SENDIASS's most recent RAG rating of the Minimum Standards (August 2025) has **24 Green**, **8 Amber** and **1 Red**.

2. Statutory Framework

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities (LA) to ensure that children and young people up to age 25 and their parent/carers are provided with free confidential and impartial information, advice and support on matters relating to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Chapter 2 of The SEND Code of Practice 2015 goes into greater detail around the expectations of a SENDIAS Service.

Every SENDIASS in England is overseen and supported by the Information, Advice and Support Service Network (IASSN) who sit within the Council for Disabled Children (CDC). This helps to ensure their impartiality.

"I recommend your service all the time.

You've helped me with paperwork that I couldn't do, and we've got to an end result and I don't think we would have got there without your help." - Casework evaluation comment from parent/carers

4 Joint Commissioning

Section 26 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities, and their partner commissioning bodies to jointly commission and secure information, advice and support provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disability and their parent/carers. It is a legal requirement that SENDIASS Services are jointly commissioned by Education, Health and Social Care.

The service is currently funded by Norfolk County Council and Norfolk and Waveney ICB, there isn't a formal Service Level Agreement between the Service and these bodies currently, but this is being worked on.

We do not currently have a funding agreement with Norfolk County Council Adults Social Care.

5 Current Service Structure

- 1 x Manager (1 FTE) – Core Funding
- 1 x Senior Advisor (0.8 FTE) – Core Funding
- 6 x SENDIASS Advisers (5 x 0.6 FTE and 1 x 0.4 FTE) – Core and Health Funding
- 1 x Helpline Advisor (fixed term) (0.8 FTE) – External IASP Funding
- 3 x Engagement and Advice Worker (2 x 1 FTE and 1 0.6 FTE) – Core Funding
- 1 x Business Support Officer (0.6FTE) – core funding
- 1 x Business and Communications Officer (0.8FTE) – core funding

Total FTE = 10.00

6. Capacity

Over the last year our capacity has been stretched with waiting times to speak with a Helpline Advisor exceeding 6 weeks and those waiting to being allocated a SENDIAS Advisor for casework support taking anywhere up to 6 months. This has been due to inconsistency with staffing levels and consistent demand for our support.

Over Summer 2025 we implemented a 'Fire break' to reduce the waiting times. Over the course of two weeks the team completed 115 booked phone appointments. Following these two weeks we added an additional 20 appointments per week for 5 weeks, bringing our weekly total number of appointments to 50. This then brought our waiting times down to one working day, at the end of the 5 weeks we went back to 30 appointments a week due to staffing. Our waiting times then started to increase and as of 15th September 2025 we went back up to 17 days, we implemented another mini 'Fire break' to try and reduce the waiting times. In the space of 2.5 days 27 of the additional mini 'Fire Break' calls were booked, raising our waiting times again. This does mean that we are firefighting rather than addressing the demand that is there if we have appointments available.

7. Intervention levels

The intervention service levels for referrals are recorded following the IASSN (Information, Advice, and Support Services Network) national guidelines to monitor the demand for different types of support regionally and locally. There are 4 intervention levels.

Level of Intervention 1 –

Signposting, presentations, training and website downloads

Level of Intervention 2 –

Information & Tailored Advice • Booked phone call / virtual meeting, exchange of emails. More complex / high level information shared.

Level of intervention 3 –

Agreement completed, case worker allocated, liaison with other agencies, face to face meetings / home visits, support with forms, giving views, preparing appeals.

Level of intervention 4 –

Intensive Support, any or all of Level 3, plus representation for parent, child or young person at meetings, appeals (including exclusions) and CETRs. Ongoing and intensive casework / advocacy that includes representation.

"What was your favourite part of the workshops?" "Finally able to tell someone how I feel" - Year 6 Student who was part of the 'Transition' Workshops held by an Engagement and Advice Worker

8 How we provide our support

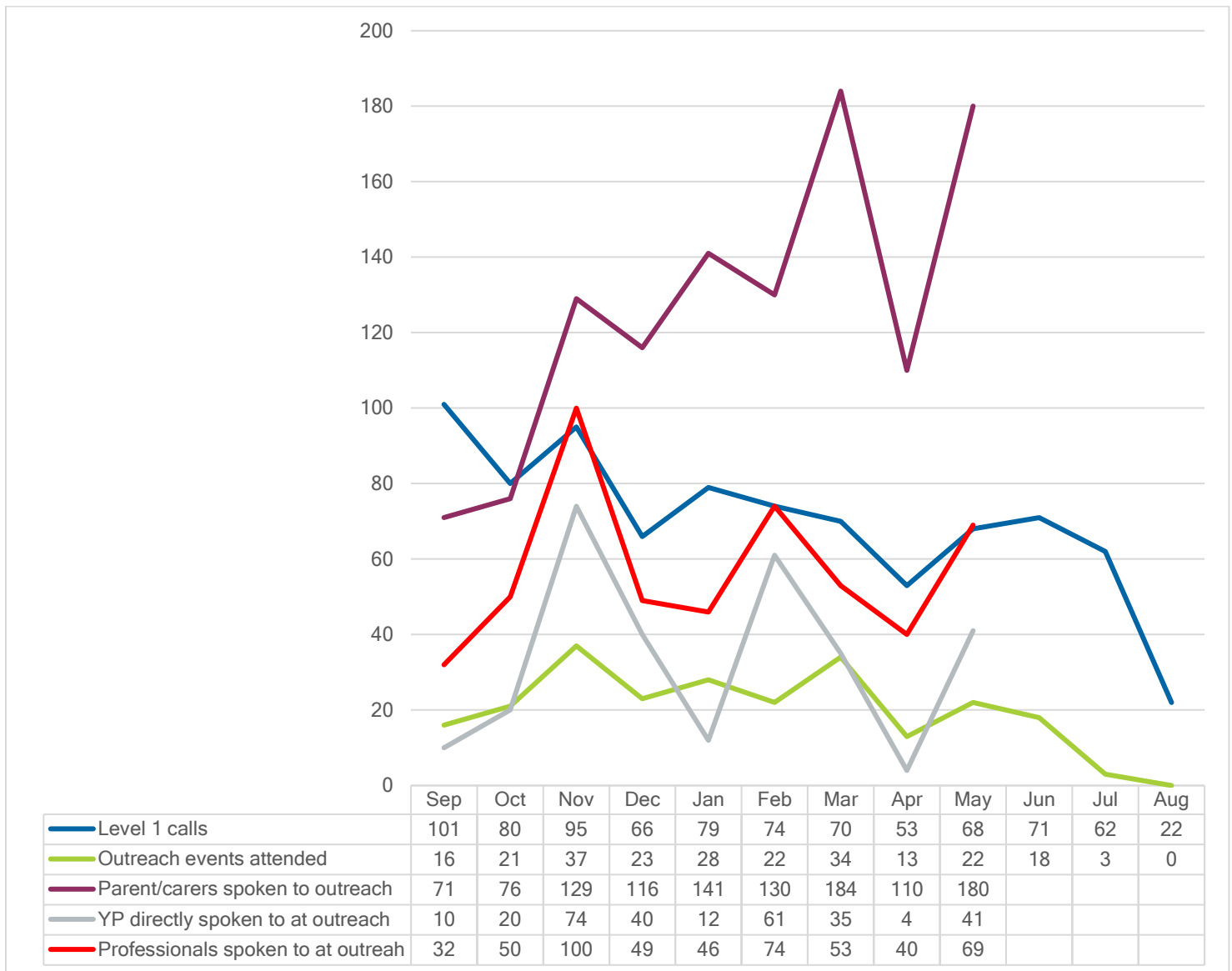
SENDIASS base their work on the Empowerment Model, the main purpose of the service is to support parent/carers, children and young people to understand their rights and empower them to have their views and wishes heard.

We offer support to parent/carers, children, young people and professionals in a range of different ways:

- A helpline open 9am-5pm for 51 weeks of the year with an average of 35 calls a week offered.
- Some parent/carers, children or young people that need it due to their own needs will be offered representation or advocacy through casework.
- One-off support is offered to some parent/carers, children or young people that need help with filling in forms such as an EHC Needs Assessment, support with reading through paperwork such as a draft EHCP or attendance at a one-off school meeting or mediation.
- We provide face-to-face 'drop ins' across Libraries in Norfolk.
- We attend outreach and events across Norfolk to promote the service and provide information, advice and support.
- Bitesize training, booklets and resources for parent/carers and professionals to self-serve are on our website.
- SENDIASS work locally and nationally to help inform and influence policy and practice.
- Signposting to other services that can help parent/carers, children, young people and professionals with things that we can't help or support with.

We promote access with Contact who have a National Freephone Helpline, available Monday to Friday during office hours.

8.1 Anonymous calls/Outreach - Intervention Level 1



We've had a total of:

841 Level 1 calls

237 outreach events attended

1137 parent/carers spoken to at outreach events

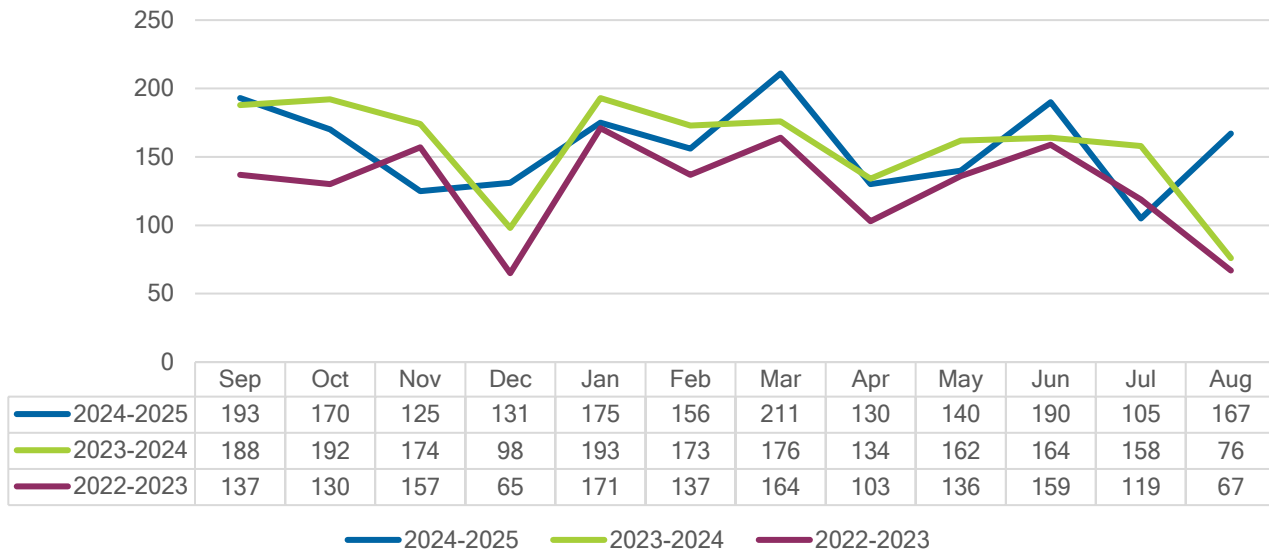
297 young people spoken to at outreach events

513 professionals spoken to at outreach events

We do not have figures for June, July and August as two of our Engagement and Advice Workers left over the course of those three months. There was also a whole team focus on reducing Helpline wait times over this period which meant we reduced other aspects of the Service.

8.2 Telephone helpline – Intervention Level 2

Timely Created (Demand)

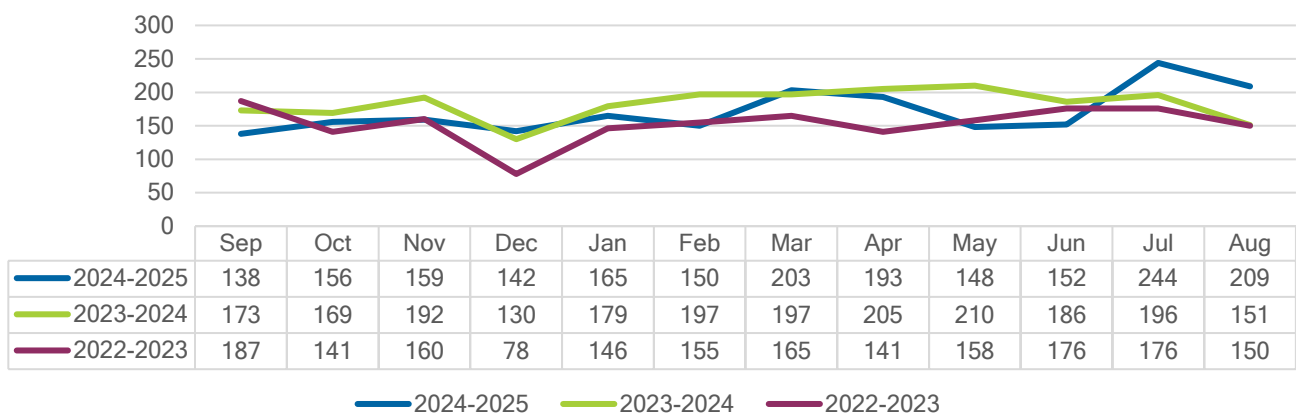


Totals

2022-2023 – 1545 2023-2024 – 1888 2024-2025 - 1893

There has been a **0.2% increase** from 23/24 to 24/25 in people booking appointments with us.

Number of Helpline actions completed - Output



Totals

2022-2023 1833 2023 -2024– 2185 2024-2025 - 2059

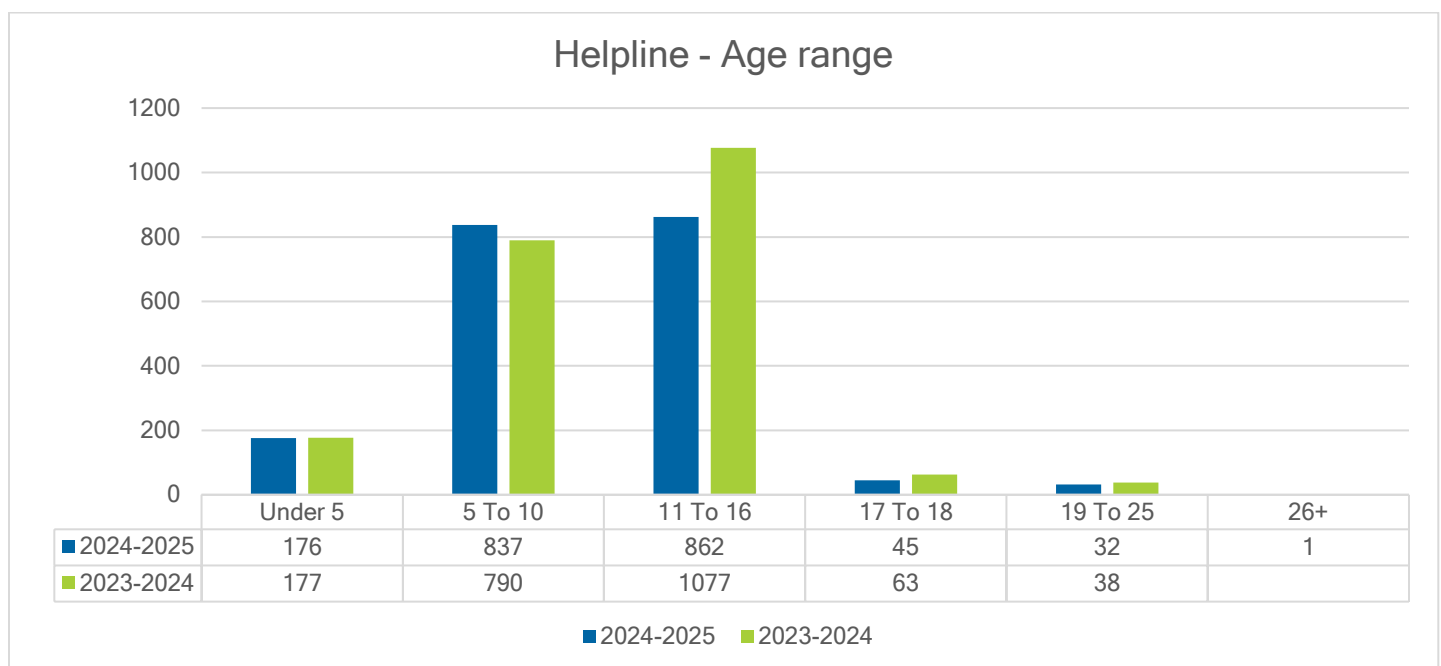
There has been a **5.7% decrease** between 23/24 and 24/25 in helpline calls that have been completed across the year.

Over the course of the year although there has been a slight increase in appointments being booked, there has been a decrease in calls being completed compared to last year. The feedback we received from families was that our waiting times were too long, so they were either not booking or booking and then cancelling them, we had a significant rise in parents attending Library drop ins as it was quicker to see us at these then speak with us via the Helpline. Throughout July and August, we had our 'Firebreak' as explained above in Section 6, this shows that if we offered the appointments they would be taken. As a Service we can see the demand is there but there is a lack of capacity and ability to offer the appointments. The below is a snapshot from our evaluation forms:

It took 3 weeks to get a telephone appointment by which time my initial questions/concerns have been dealt with so it would be helpful if there were more appointments available

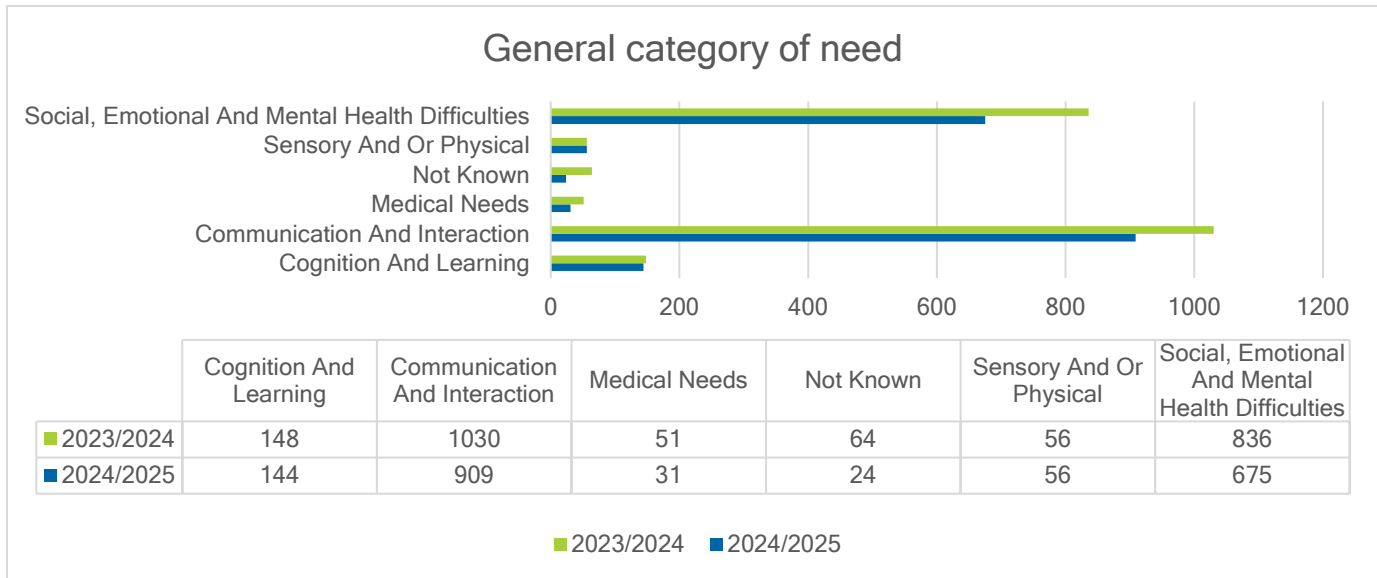
Wish there wasn't so long to wait for an appointment your service is vital and very much needed. Thankyou great service as always.

I was worried about a delay of 2 weeks before having the appointment, but once I've spoken to someone, I feel much better.

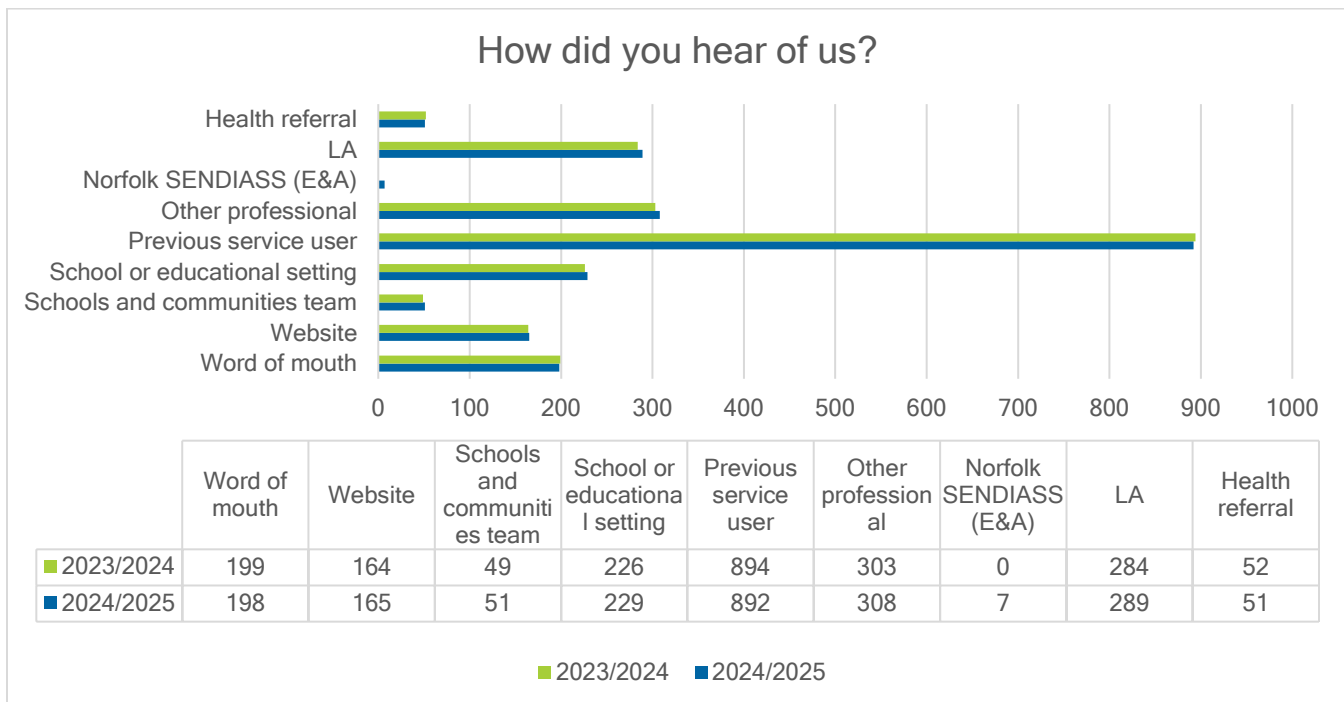


We have seen an almost 20% decrease in the 11 – 16 age range and an almost 6% increase in the 5 – 10 age range.

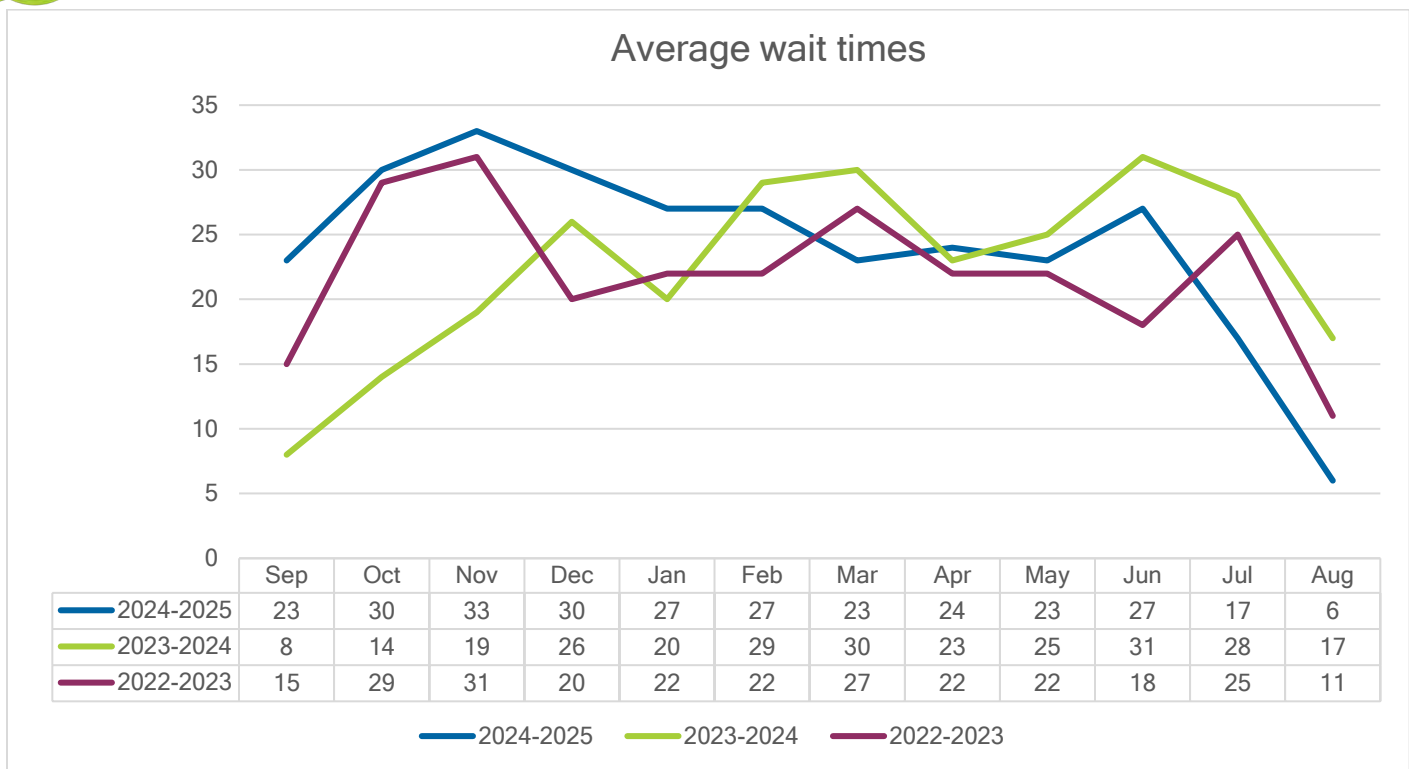
We record within 5 categories of need set by the National IASS.



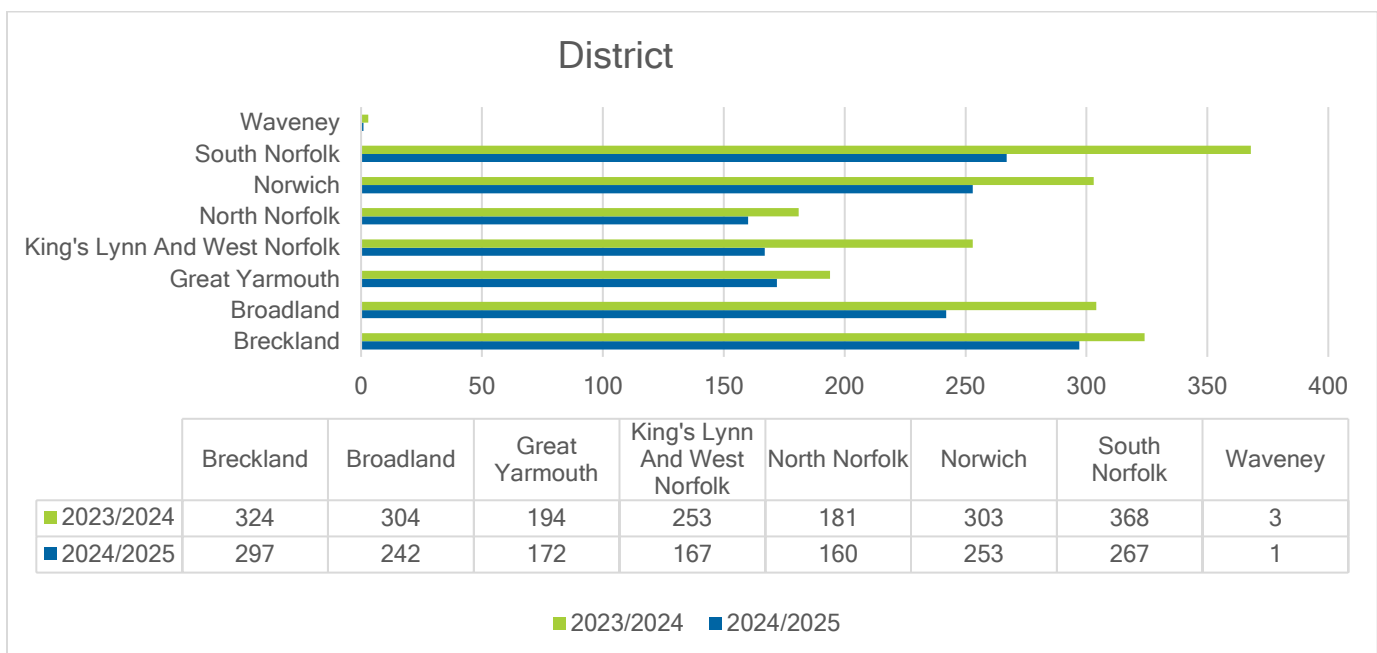
There is either a reduction or consistency in figures related to the general category of need. The biggest drop comes from medical needs with a **39% decrease**.



These figures are consistent with last year, there is no big increases or decreases. Previous service user is still our highest with 43% of our overall contact from those that have used the Service before, this is a **2% increase** compared to last year.

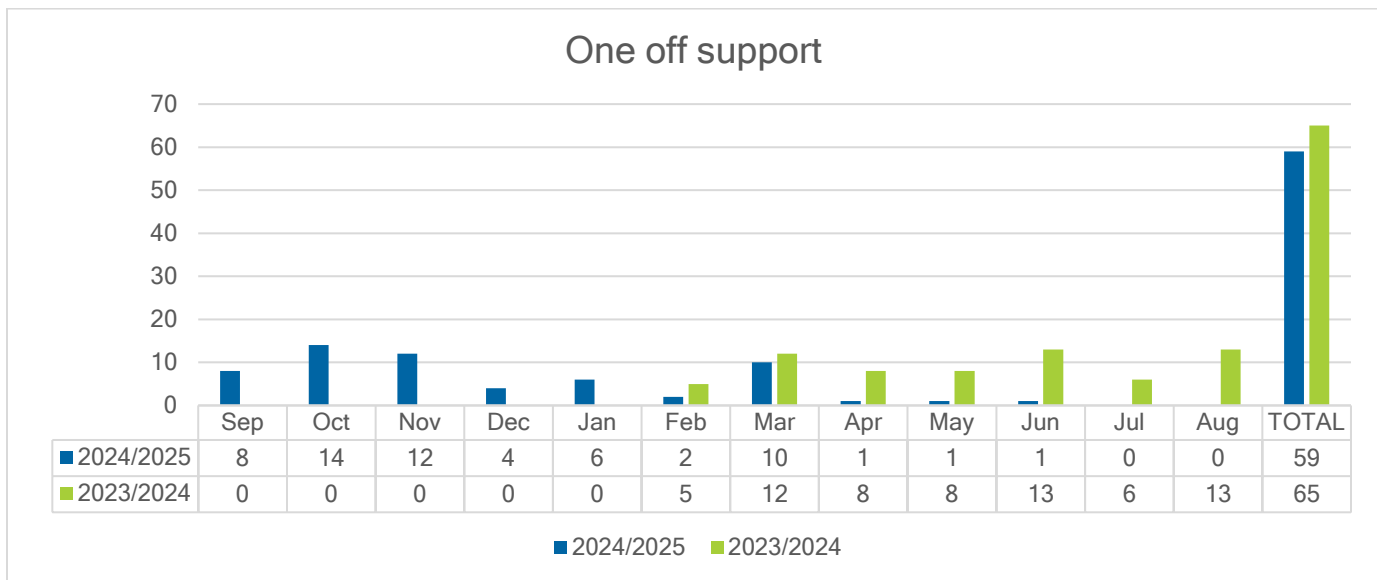


Wait times have **increased by 2 working days** compared to last year, the average wait time for 24/25 is 24 working days. The reason for the sharp decline across July and August is due to the 'firebreak' that we implemented.

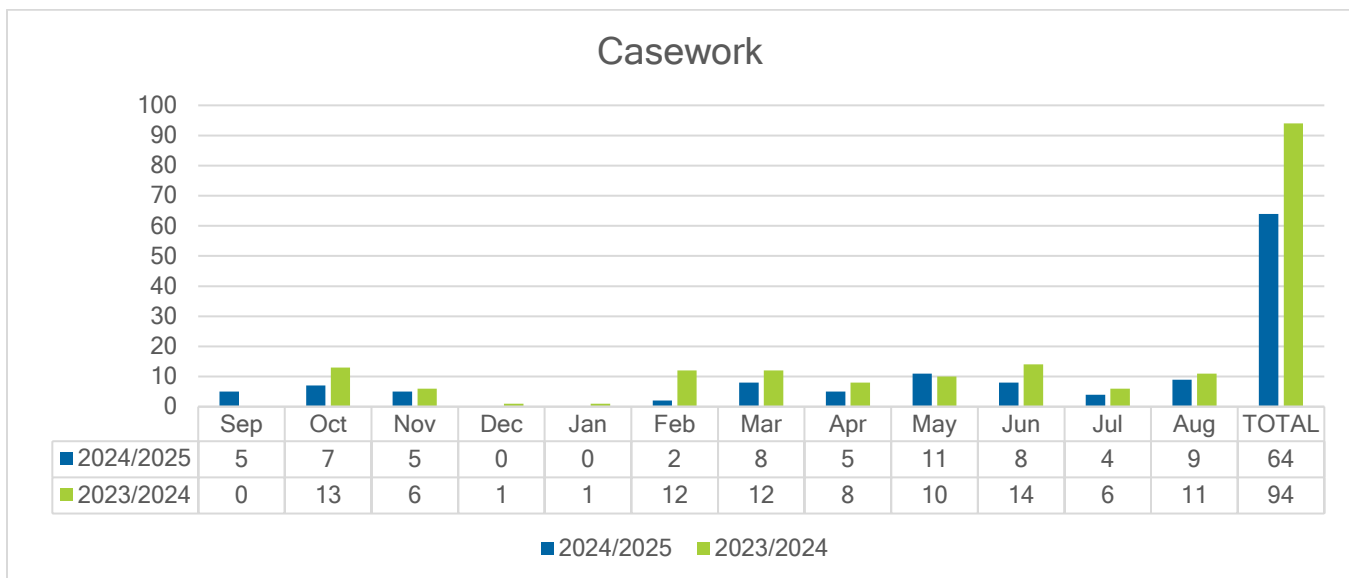


There has been a decrease across all districts compared to last year, this is due in part to our database. There are increasing postcodes being created across Norfolk but these aren't always recognised by the system and so we are unable to populate a district.

8.3 One off support and Casework – Level of Intervention 3/4

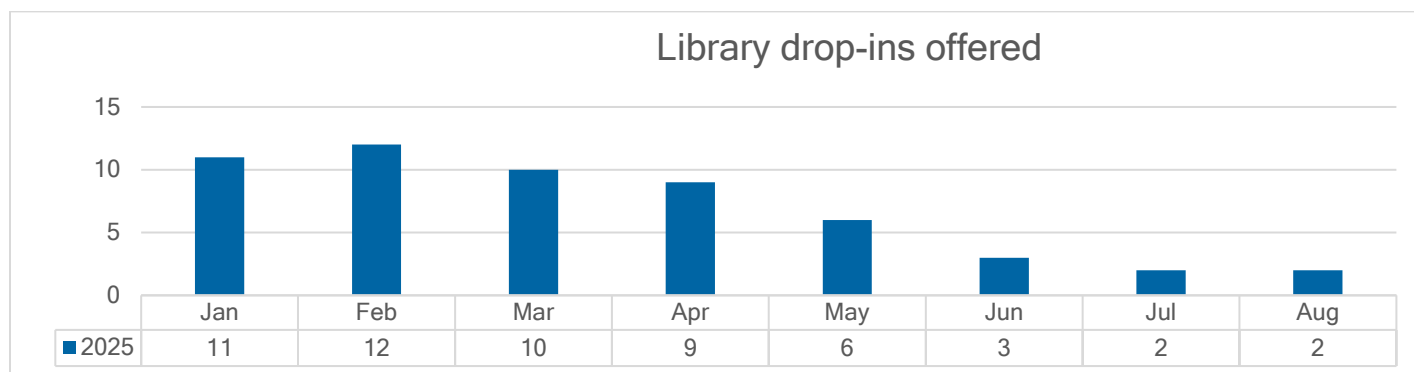


We have supported 59 families this year compared to 65 families last year with one-off support, this is [a 9% decrease](#). This decrease is due to inconsistent staffing over the last year.



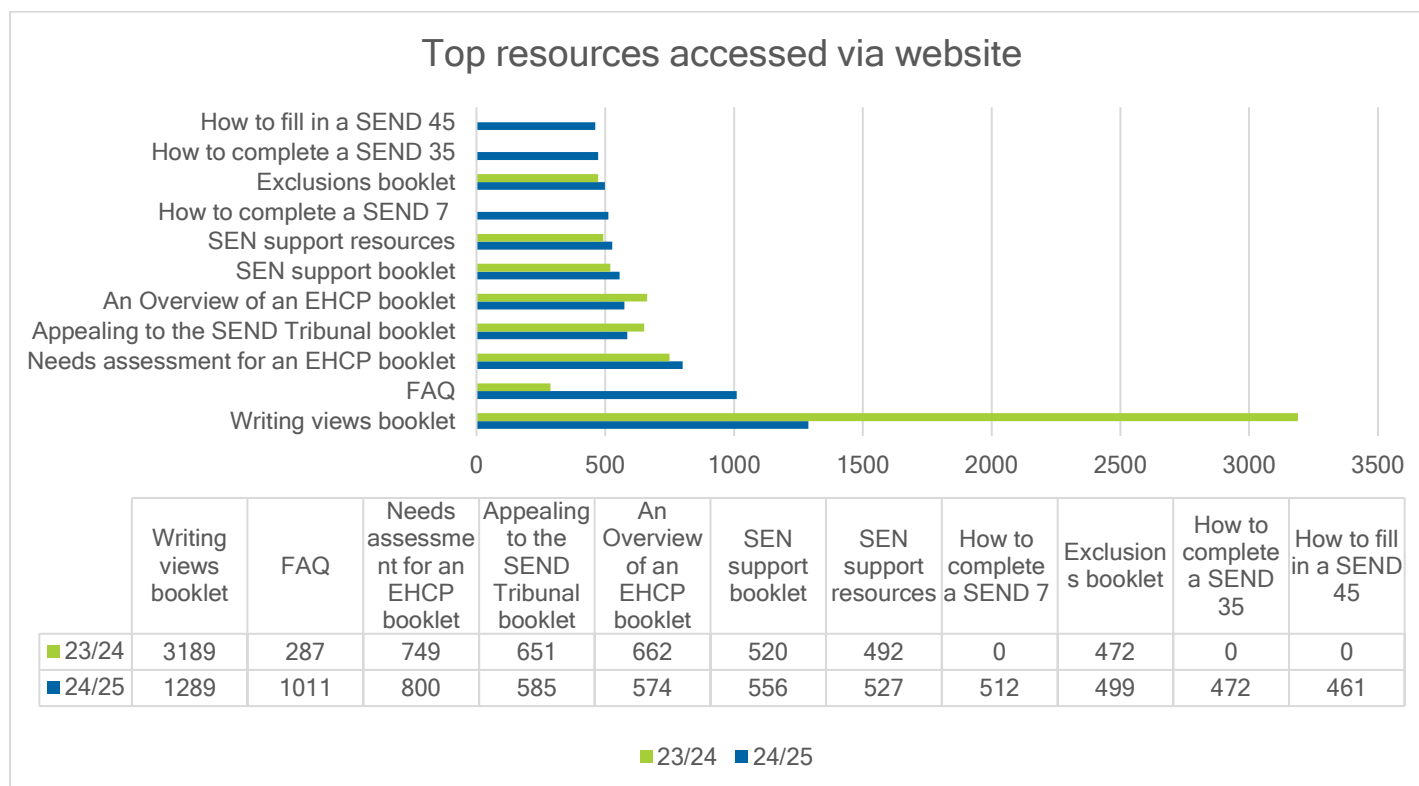
We have supported 64 families with casework this year compared to 94 families last year, this is [a 32% decrease](#). This decrease is due to inconsistent staffing over the last year.

8.4 Library drop ins



We began running face-to-face library drop ins in January 2025, these replaced booked appointments at Family Hubs. We booked and attended 55 libraries across Norfolk during this 8-month period. We had anywhere up to 10-12 parent/carers attending each drop in, these became busier as our waiting times on the Helpline became higher. We had incredibly positive feedback from families that attended these drop-ins.

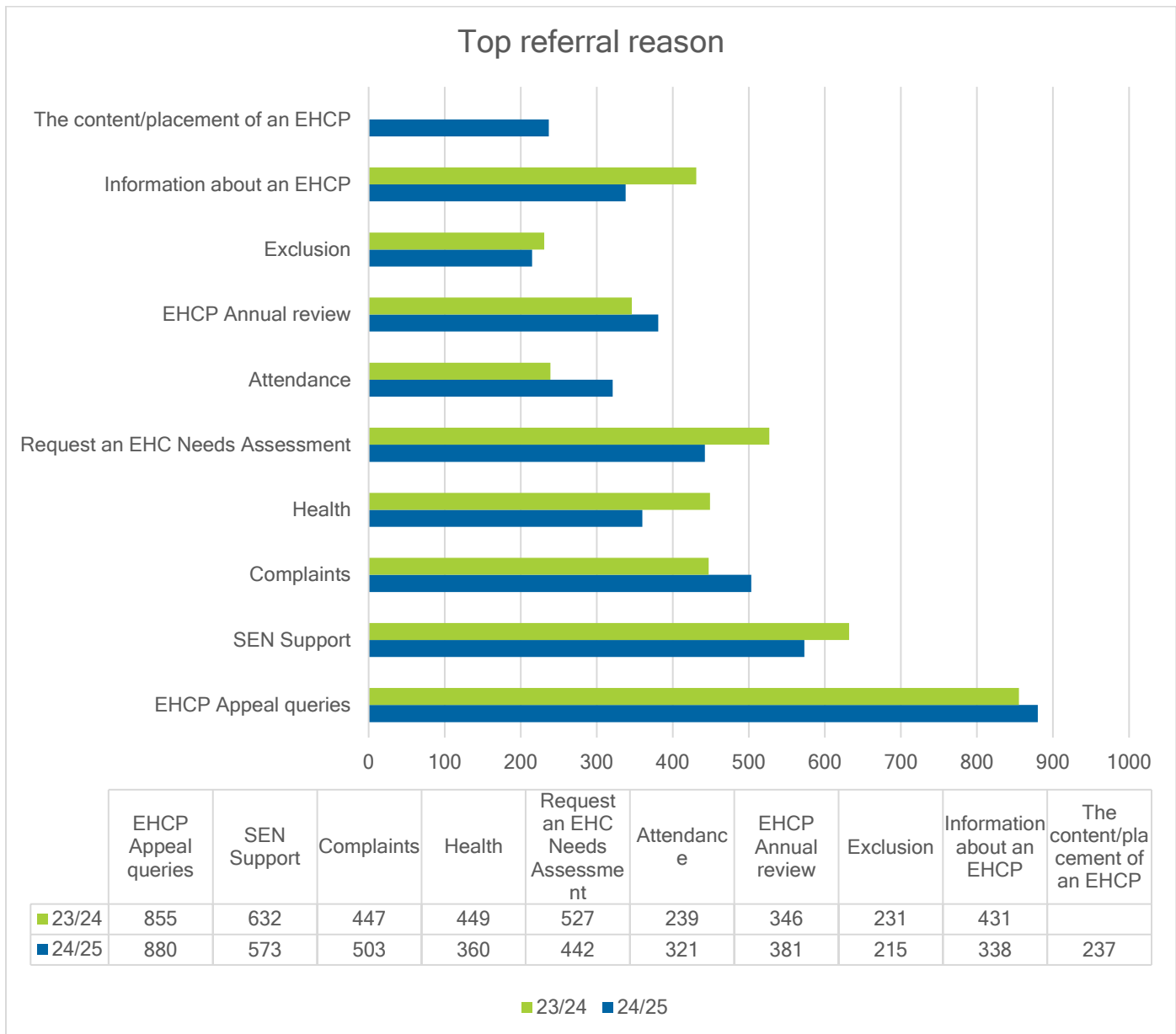
8.5 Resources



There has been a **6% increase** in people accessing our 'Needs Assessment' booklet, a **7% increase** in people accessing our SEN support booklet and resources and a massive **252% increase** in people accessing our FAQs.

9. Classification codes (reason for contact)

The classification codes have been set by Norfolk SENDIASS. Classification codes are recorded against each referral and multiple codes (subjects) can be recorded against each referral.



There was a **3% increase** in EHCP appeal queries compared to last year.

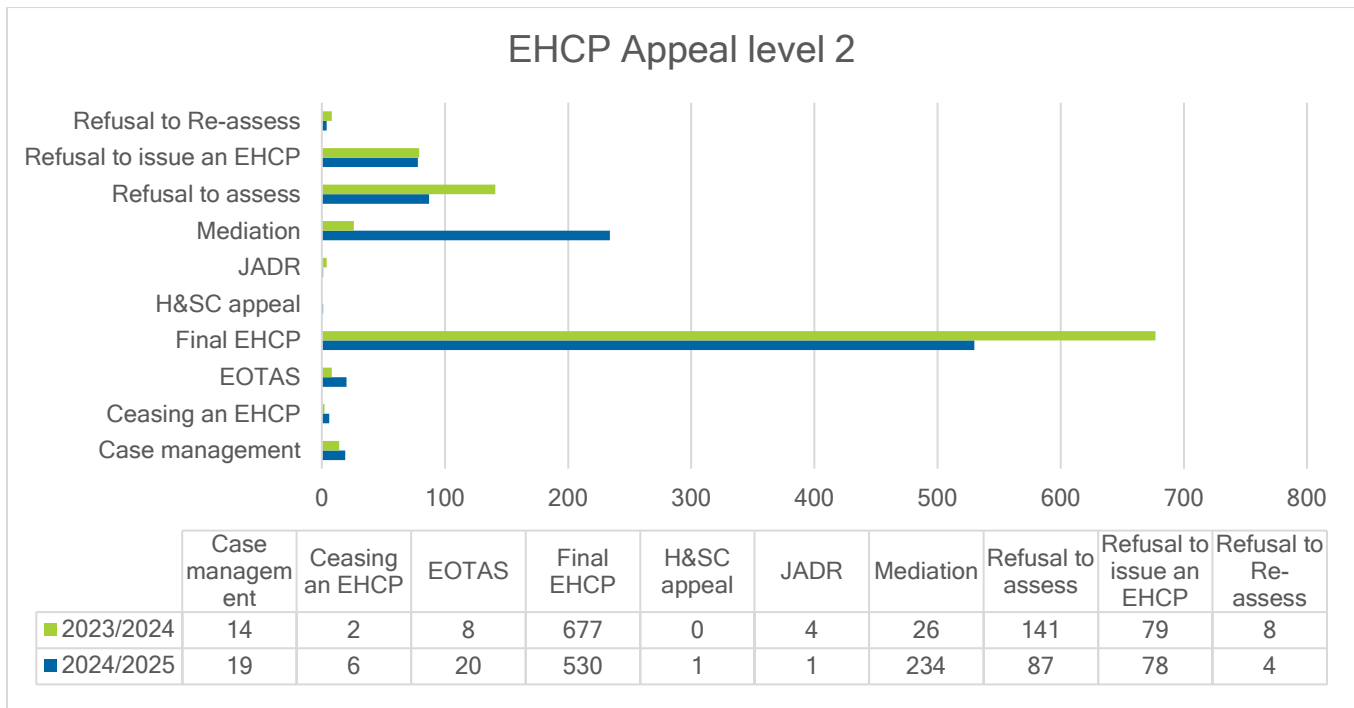
There was a **10% increase** in EHCP annual review queries compared to last year.

There was a **12% increase** in complaint queries compared to last year.

There was a **34% increase** in attendance queries compared to last year.

Content/placement of an EHCP is a new classification code.

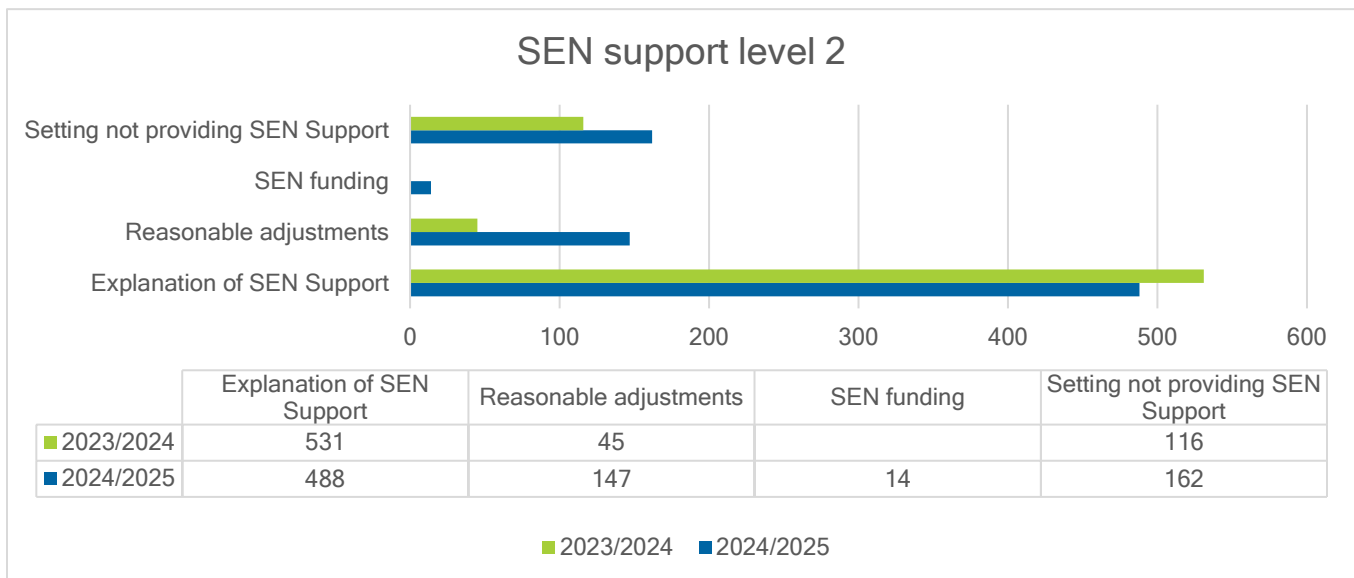
There was a **decrease** across all other classification codes.



60% of EHCP appeal queries relate to appealing a final EHCP

There has been a **150% increase** in EOTAS/EOTIS queries

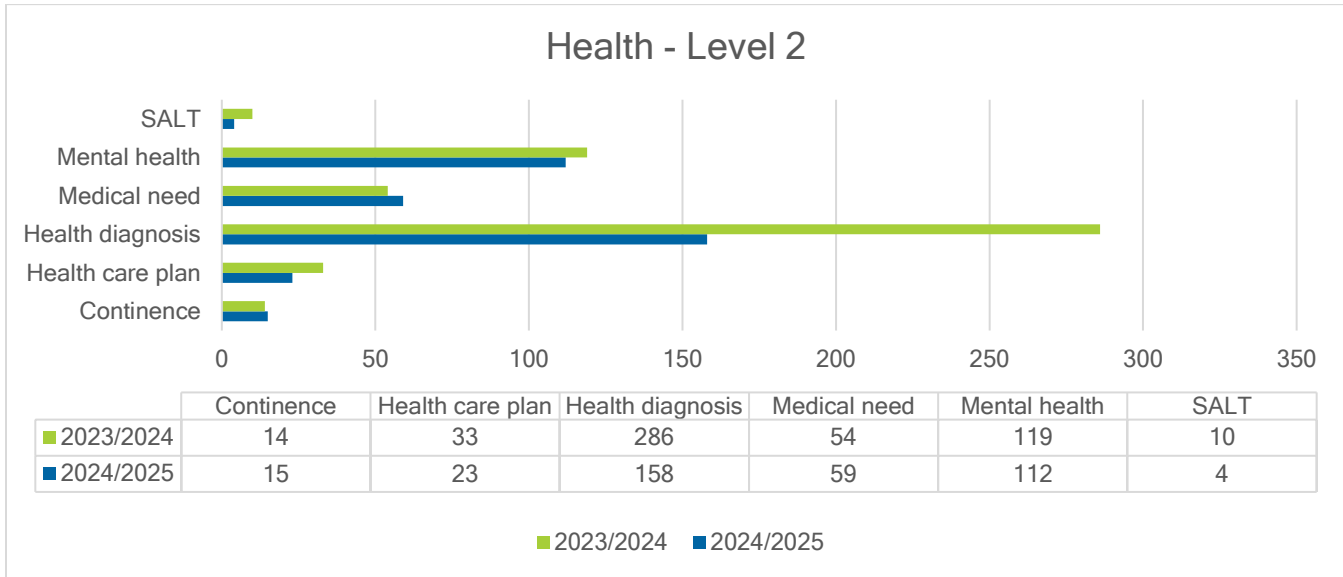
There has been an **800% increase** in mediation queries – this is likely due to not being recorded historically



85% of SEN Support queries are an explanation of what SEN support is

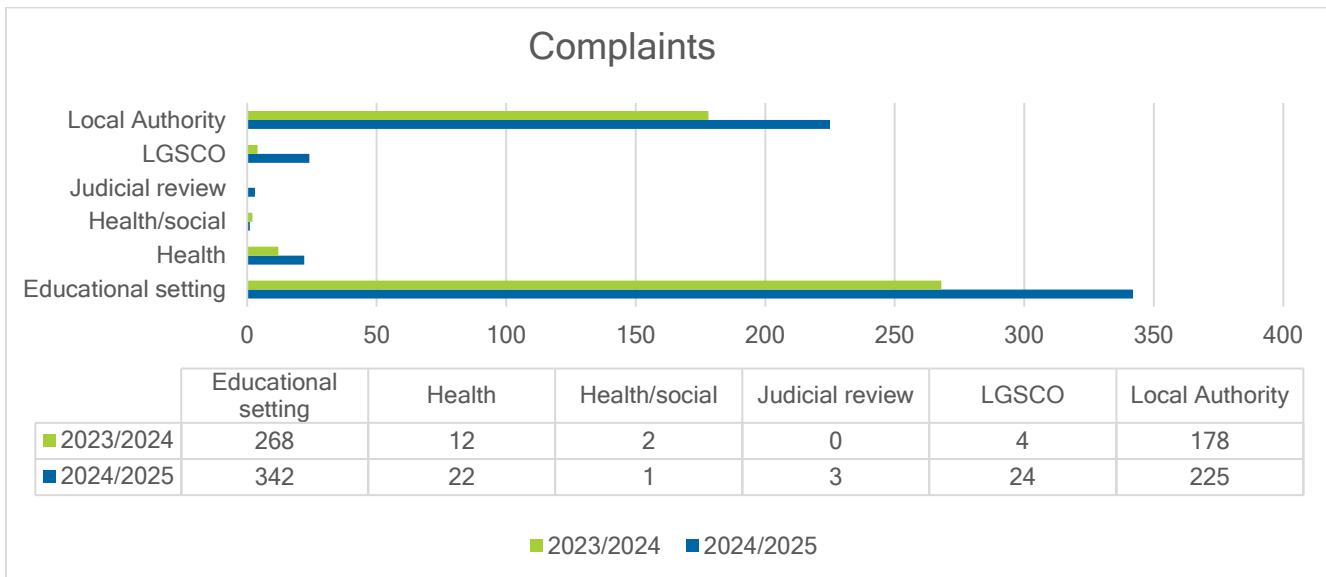
There has been a **226% increase** in reasonable adjustment queries

There has been a **40% increase** in setting not providing SEN support queries



42% of Health queries relate to diagnosis

There has been a **9% increase** in medical need contacts



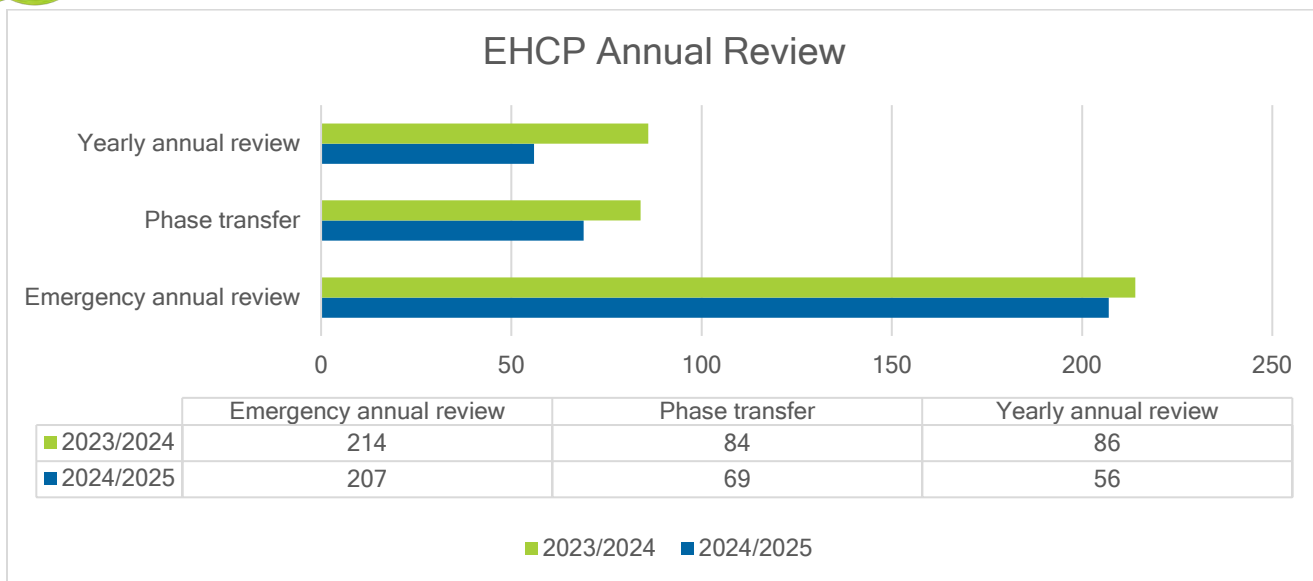
55% of complaints relate to the educational setting

There has been a **27% increase** in complaint queries related to educational settings

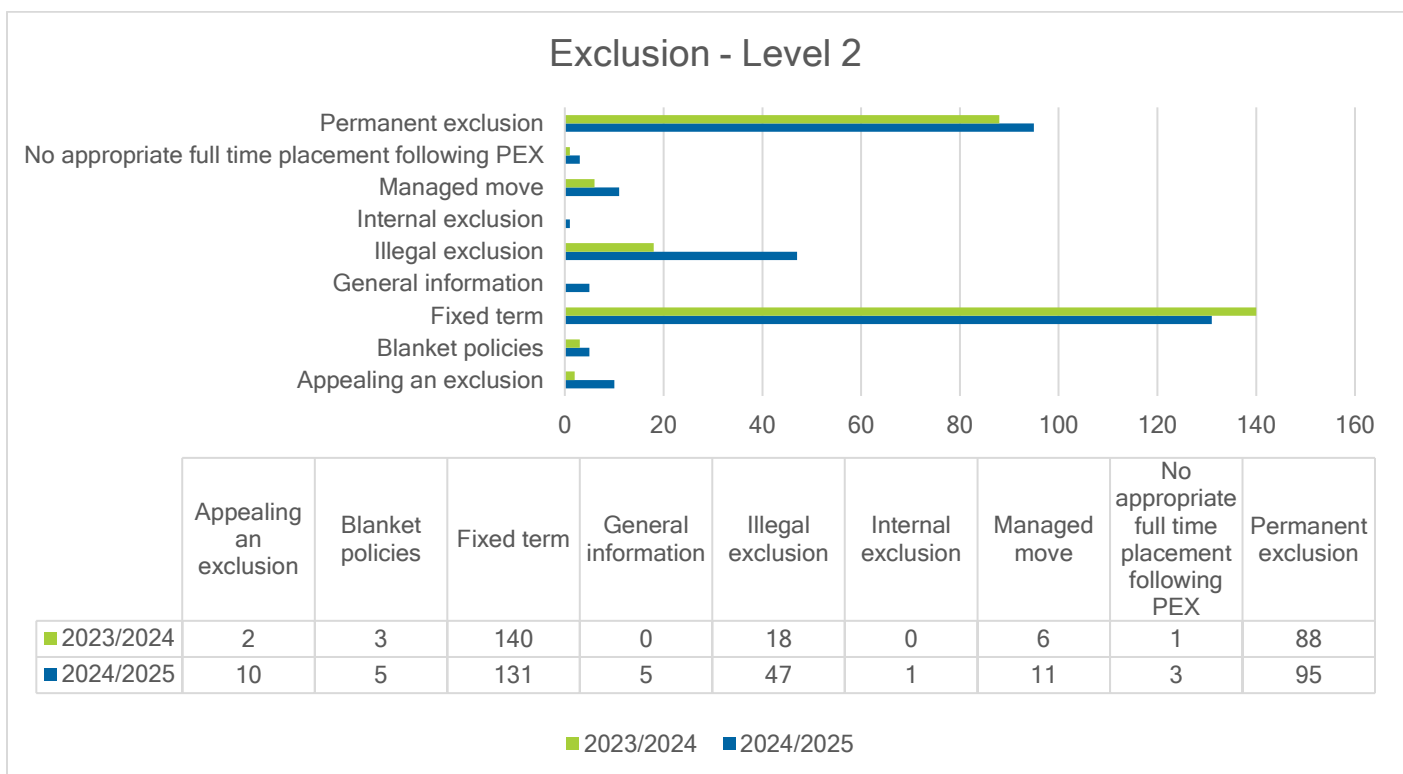
There has been an **83% increase** in complaint queries related to health

There has been a **500% increase** in complaint queries related to LGSCO

There has been a **26% increase** in complaint queries related to the Local Authority



Of the 332 Annual Review classification codes **62%** relate to emergency annual reviews. There has been a decrease across all codes compared to last year.

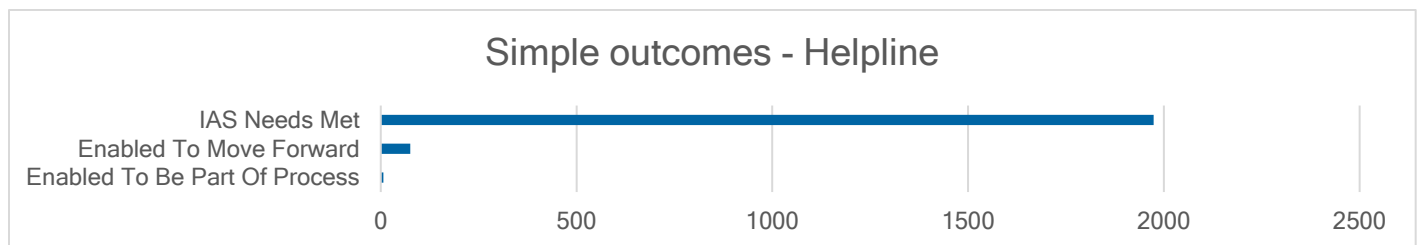


Of the 308 exclusion codes **42%** relate to fixed term suspensions. There has been a **161% increase** in illegal exclusion queries. There has been an **83% increase** in managed move queries.

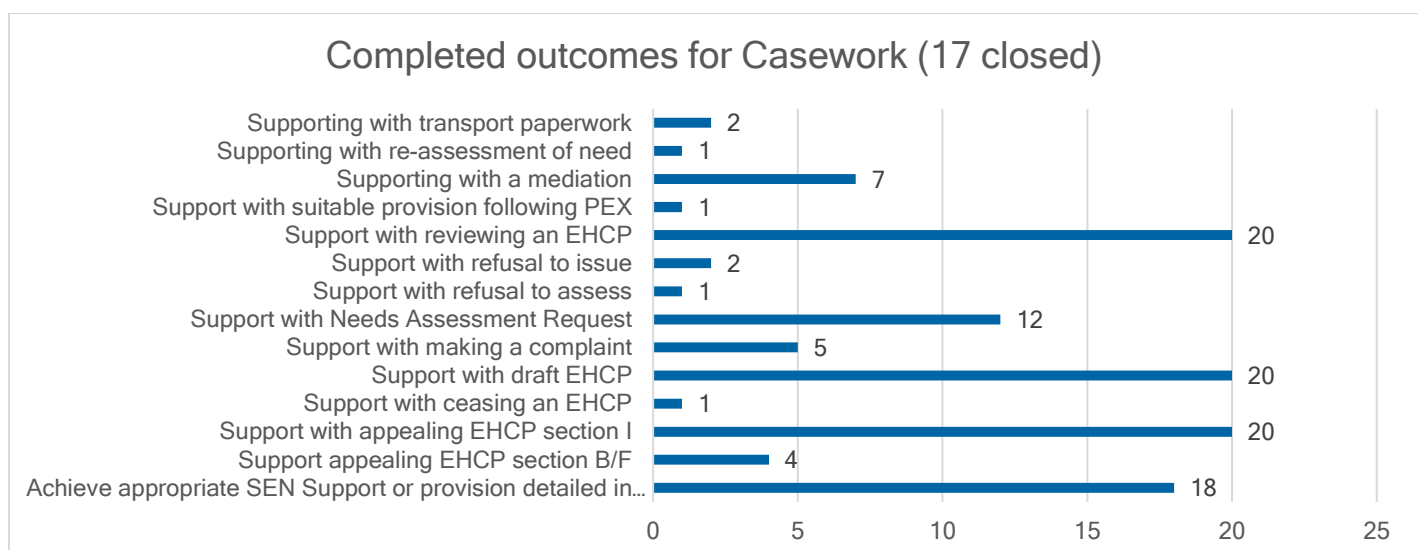
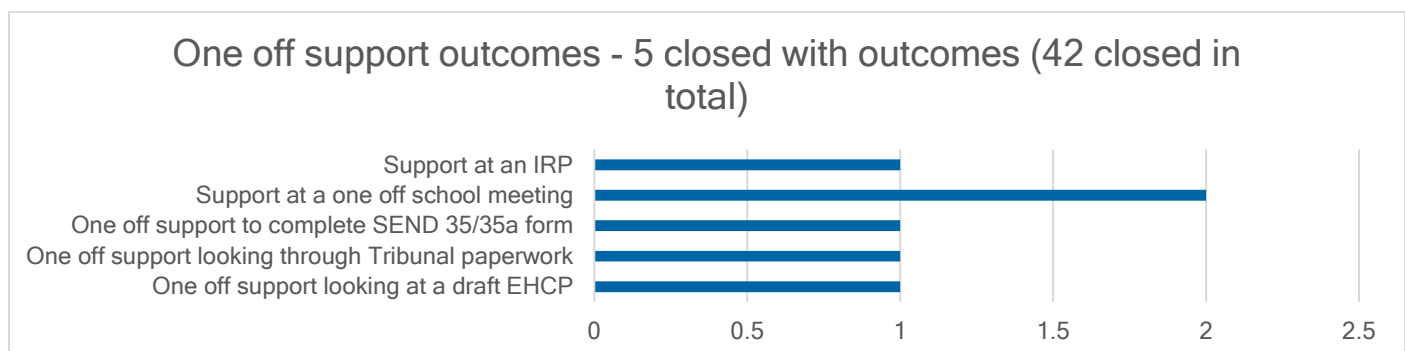
"This service is fantastic, without the Services help I wouldn't have been able to do it myself, I can't thank them enough for explaining everything to me, supporting me through what is a very stressful process and ultimately helping me get the best outcome possible." - Casework evaluation comment from parent/carer

10 Outcomes

Simple outcomes are set by the National SENDIASS. All intervention level 1 and 2 referrals are closed with a simple outcome.



Ladder outcomes are only given to casework. These are more specific and set by Norfolk SENDIASS. More than one ladder outcome can be achieved on a single case.

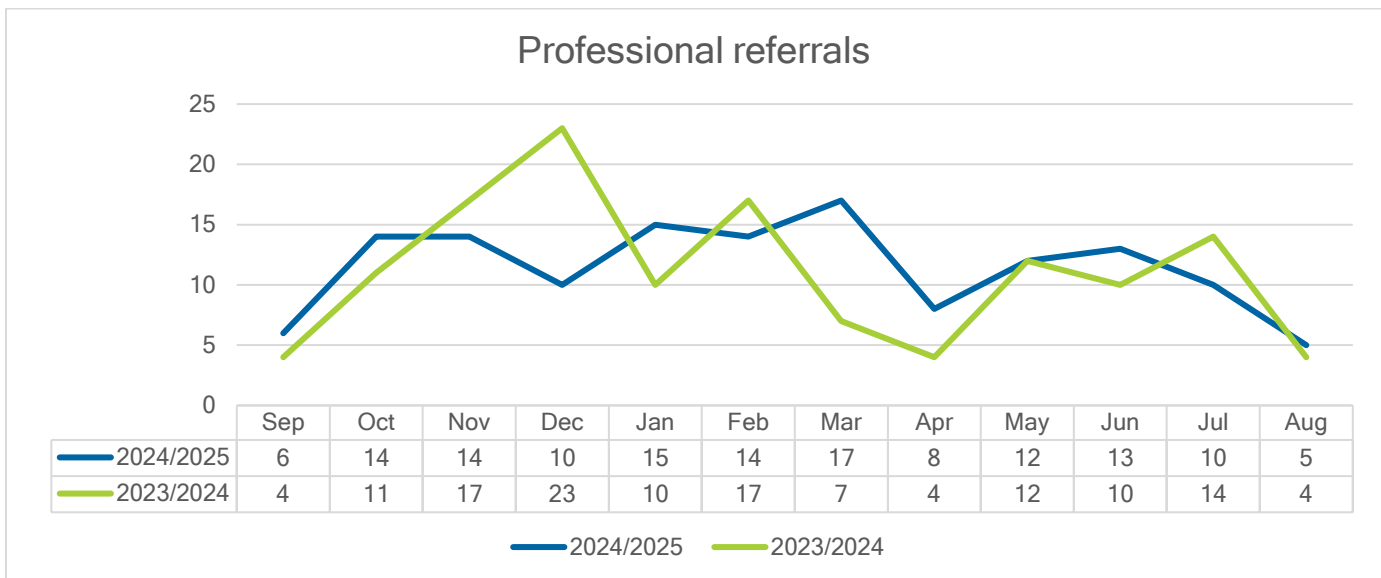


The way we record outcomes were changed mid-way through the year.

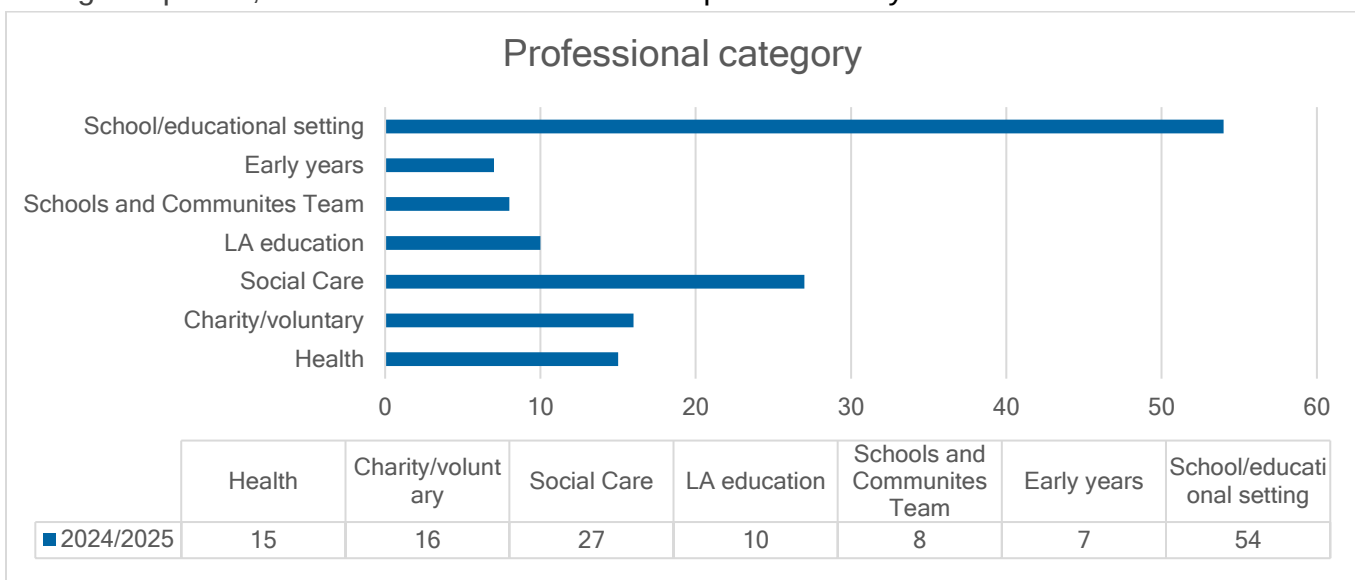
"More training like this, this was the best training I have been on in more than 5 years. Thank you"

- Education and Family Worker from the School and Communities team about legal training presented by Norfolk SENDIASS

11 Professional contacts



We received 138 referrals from professionals requesting information and advice from the service during this period, this is an **increase of 22%** compared to last year.



"This service is essential for parents trying to navigate a system that feels like it is set up for you to fail."

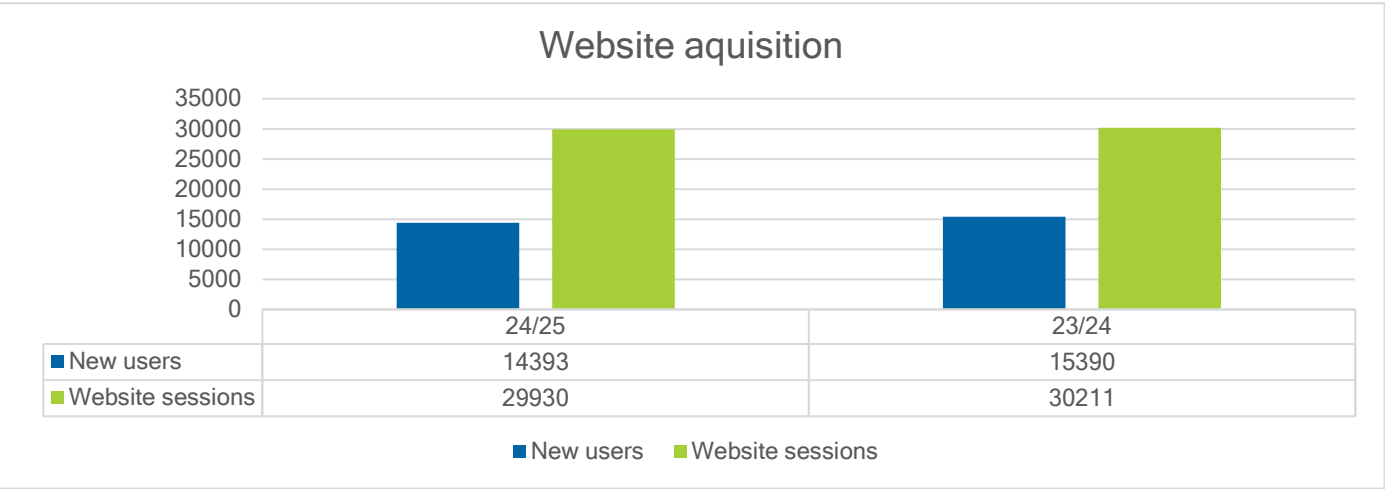
- Helpline evaluation comment from parent/carer

12 Website, newsletter and social media

The website was built by Bigfork and is managed within a CMS system. The website content and design is maintained and developed by staff at Norfolk SENDIASS. The website has a section dedicated to young people and the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum.

There is a wide range of resources available for service users on the website, including information booklets, SEND resources and bitesize training videos.

6.4% decrease in new website users
0.9% decrease in website sessions



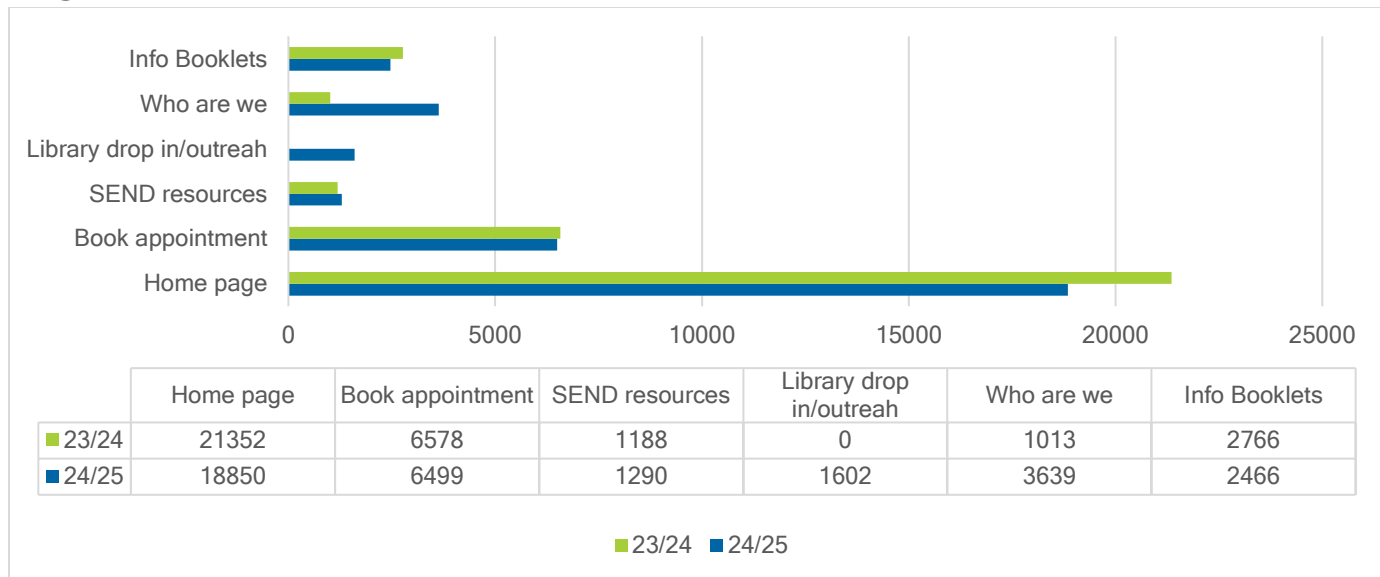
Website Chat AI



"This is a vital service but one that is not a catch all for SEND; I hope this training will help

- *improve signposting and reduce the strain on SENDIASS."* - Education and Family Worker from the School and Communities team about legal training presented by Norfolk SENDIASS

Page visits



There has been a **259% increase** in people visiting our 'Who are we' webpage.

Social media and newsletter

	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24	Sep-25	Increase %
Facebook followers	2070	2297	2579	2922	13%
Twitter followers	502	541	578	-	
Instagram followers	170	210	252	304	20%
Newsletter subscriptions - Parent/carers	3661	4253	4964	5506	11%
Newsletter subscriptions - Schools	294	424	505	556	10%
Newsletter subscriptions- Professionals	214	349	464	651	40%

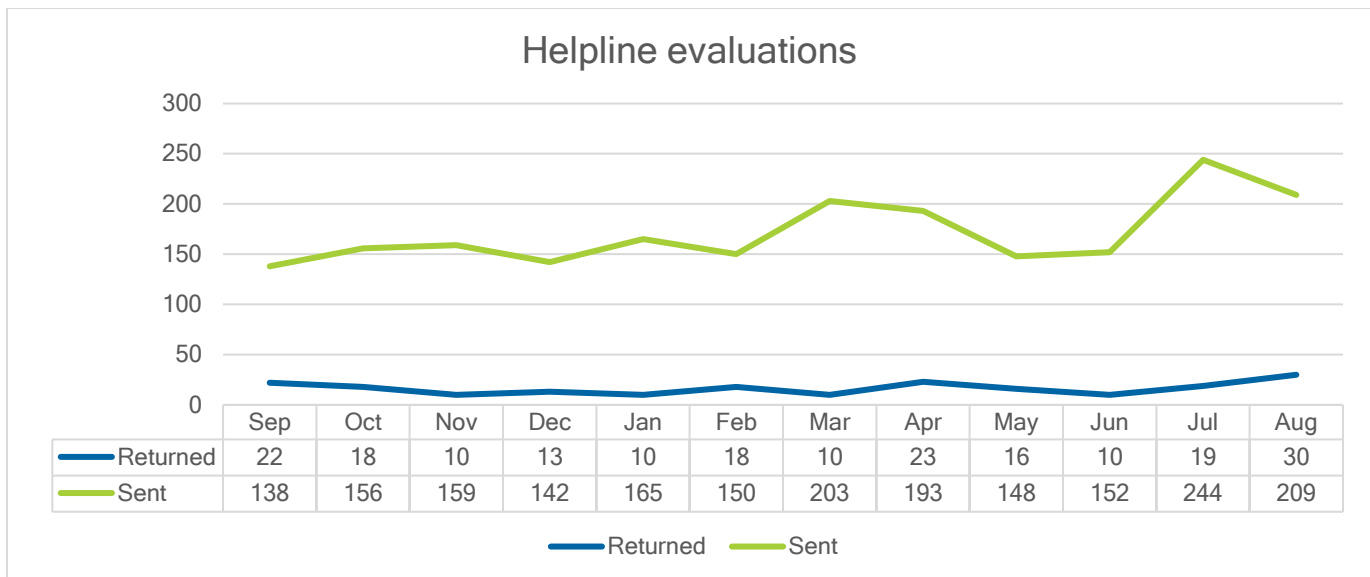
There has been an increase in social media followers and newsletter subscriptions compared to last year.

"Very professional and informative and discussed the way forward in a clear and understandable way. The information given was very helpful and clear. Feel very grateful for the discussion we had and it made my understanding feel more positive, that I was on the right page, with regards to what I was doing and how to take it all going forward." - Helpline

evaluation comment from parent/carer

130 Feedback and evaluations

Our Microsoft forms evaluations are broken down into 2 categories. Helpdesk, One off and Casework. These are now being sent directly from the online booking calendar Timely, 24 hrs. after an appointment by text. Return rate for this year is 9.66%, which is 6.5% less than last year.

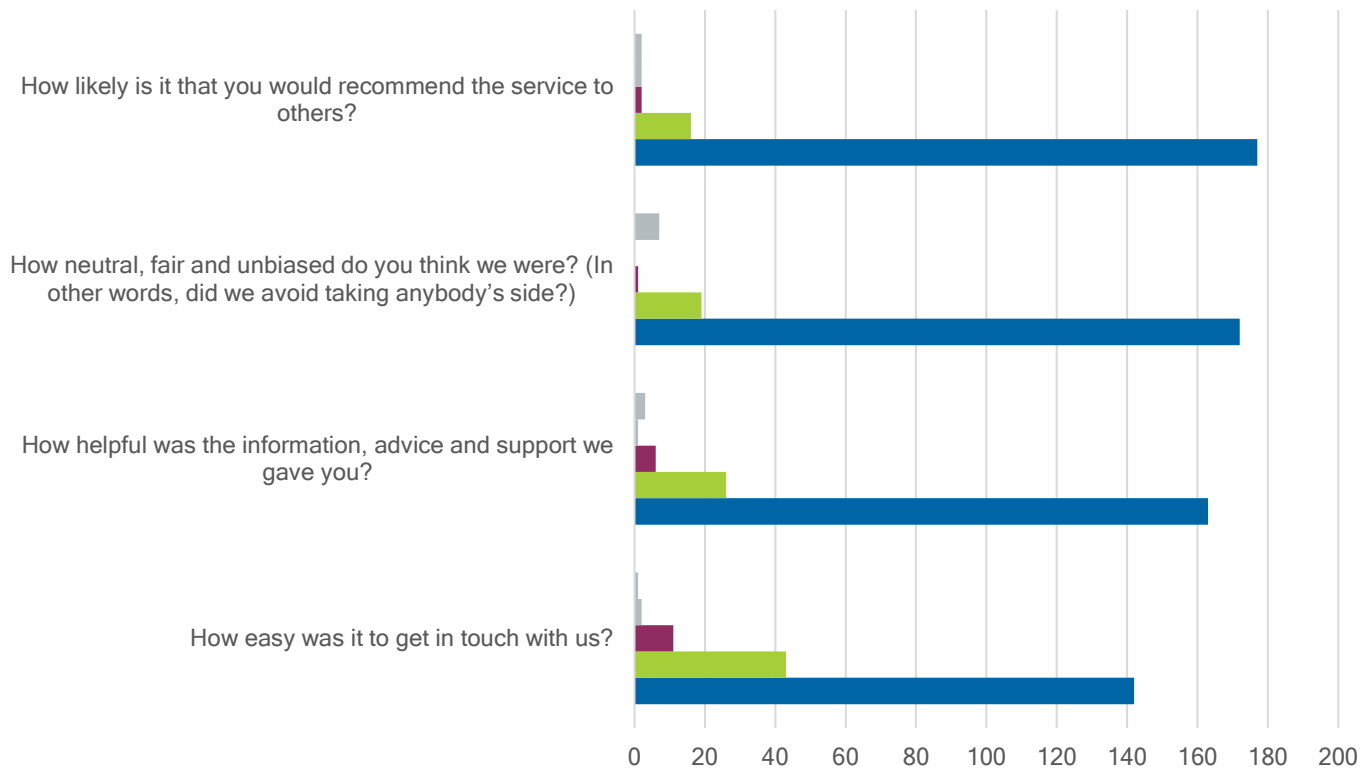


There is work being undertaken to look at how we can increase our return rate for evaluations, this is something we have looked at multiple times in the past but something we have always struggled to increase.



Not at all likely ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Extremely likely

Helpline evaluation summary



	How easy was it to get in touch with us?	How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?	How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were? (In other words, did we avoid taking anybody's side?)	How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?
1	1	3	7	2
2	2	1	0	2
3	11	6	1	2
4	43	26	19	16
5	142	163	172	177

1 2 3 4 5

82.1% of evaluations gave us a rating of 5*

Of the evaluation forms we received, it is overwhelming that we receive good qualitative and quantitative feedback. If we do receive negative feedback and the person has left their contact details, we will call them to discuss and action.