

Annual Report

1st September 2025 - 31st August 2026

“Wow what an amazing service this is, it makes everything so much more understandable in a subject that is so confusing and complex. Amazingly friendly people. All our questions were answered, and we received a confirmation email the following day with all the details discussed in the meeting. I highly recommend this service to anyone needing advice or help in the SEND system. Nothing has been too much trouble. Amazing.”

— Evaluation comment from parent/carers



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“This is the second time I have used the helpline for advice on specific matters and have found them to be friendly non-judgmental and have an amazing knowledge base.” – parent/carer Helpline evaluation

1. Introduction

Norfolk SENDIASS is a statutory service that provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support (IAS) to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their parents and carers. By helping people understand their rights, options and available support, we empower families and young people to make informed decisions and play an active role in shaping their education, health and care.

In addition to supporting individual families, we work with local and national partners to influence policy and practice, helping to improve SEND services and outcomes across Norfolk. We also provide advice to professionals and connect families and young people with additional sources of support to ensure they can access the help they need when they need it.

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 Suffolk 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 **27 Green**, **6 Amber** and **0 Red**.

2. Statutory Framework

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a statutory duty on local authorities to ensure that children and young people aged up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), together with their parents and carers, have access to free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support (IAS).

The role and responsibilities of SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) are further defined within Chapter 2 of the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), which sets out the expectations for the provision of high-quality, accessible and impartial support.

All SENDIASS services in England are supported by the Information, Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN), hosted by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC). This national framework promotes consistency, quality and impartiality across local SENDIASS services, ensuring that children, young people and families can access trusted and impartial support.

"I felt I was able to explain my feelings to the school and with support from SENDIASS helping me navigate through the meeting. Enabled a successful ending where clear outcomes were made."

— One-off support evaluation comment from parent/carer

4 Joint Commissioning

Section 26 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities and their partner commissioning bodies to make joint commissioning arrangements for services that support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including the provision of information, advice and support for children, young people and their parents/carers. As such, SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) should be jointly commissioned across education, health and social care.

Norfolk SENDIASS is currently funded by Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk and Suffolk Integrated Care Board (ICB). There is a formal Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place between the service and its commissioning partners, this SLA will continue to be reviewed to ensure correct commissioning arrangements.

At present, Norfolk SENDIASS does not receive commissioned funding from Norfolk County Council Adult Social Services, despite the statutory requirement for joint commissioning arrangements across education, health and social care.

5 Current Service Structure

- 1 x Manager (1 FTE) – Core Funding
- 1 x Senior Advisor (0.8 FTE) – Core Funding
- 5 x SENDIASS Advisers (3 x 0.6 FTE and 2 x 0.8 FTE) – Core and Health Funding
- 1 x SENDIASS Advisor (fixed term) (0.8 FTE) – External IASP Funding
- 3 x Engagement and Advice Worker (2 x 1 FTE and 1 x 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 (9.2 permanent)

6. Capacity

Demand for Norfolk SENDIASS continued to increase throughout 2025/26, placing significant pressure on service capacity. Compared with the previous year, waiting times increased substantially, reaching a peak of 50 working days for families and young people seeking to speak with an advisor. This reflected sustained high demand for support alongside ongoing challenges in maintaining staffing capacity.

To address this, the service implemented several targeted "firebreak" periods throughout the year. During these periods, advisor capacity was temporarily redirected to increase the number of telephone advice appointments available, enabling us to reduce waiting times at key points of peak demand. As a result, waiting times reduced significantly and many families were able to access support more quickly than would otherwise have been possible.

The strategic use of firebreaks has helped us manage demand more effectively and prevent waiting times from increasing further. However, this approach has required the temporary reallocation of staff time away from other areas of service delivery. Consequently, our ability to undertake outreach and engagement activities, as well as provide one-off interventions and longer-term casework support, has been reduced during these periods.

Balancing timely access to advice with the provision of preventative outreach and intensive casework remains an ongoing challenge for the service. The demand experienced during 2025/26 demonstrates that current levels of need exceed the capacity available, requiring careful prioritisation to ensure that children, young people and families continue to receive support when they need it most.

7. Intervention levels

The intervention service levels for referrals are recorded following the IASSN 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.

"This service and it's employees are key to getting the support our children truly need and deserve, we wouldn't be where we are now without them." - Parent/Carer that received long term casework support

8 How we provide our support

Norfolk SENDIASS delivers its services in line with the principles of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), which place children, young people and their families at the centre of decision-making. Central to our approach is the Empowerment Model, which focuses on equipping children, young people and parents/carers with the knowledge, confidence and skills to understand their rights, express their views, wishes and feelings, and participate fully in decisions affecting their lives.

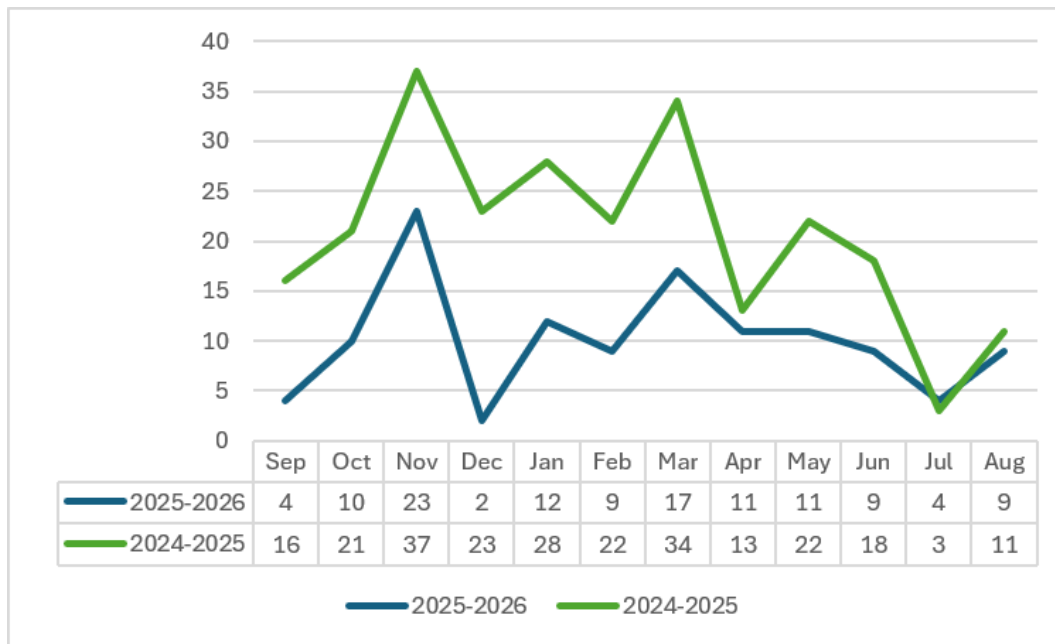
Our role is not to make decisions on behalf of families, but to provide the information, advice and support needed to enable informed decision-making and meaningful participation in SEND processes across education, health and social care. Through this approach, we help ensure that the voices of children, young people and their families are heard and considered in line with statutory requirements.

We provide information, advice and support to parents/carers, children, young people and professionals through a range of accessible channels and tailored interventions, ensuring that support is available at the right level and at the right time:

- A helpline that is open 9am-5pm for 51 weeks of the year with an average of between 35 and 60 calls a week offered.
- Some parents/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 parents/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 parents/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 Level 1 - Outreach



We've had a total of:

121 outreach events attended in 2025-2026 with:

903 parent/carers spoken to

477 young people spoken to

408 professionals spoken to

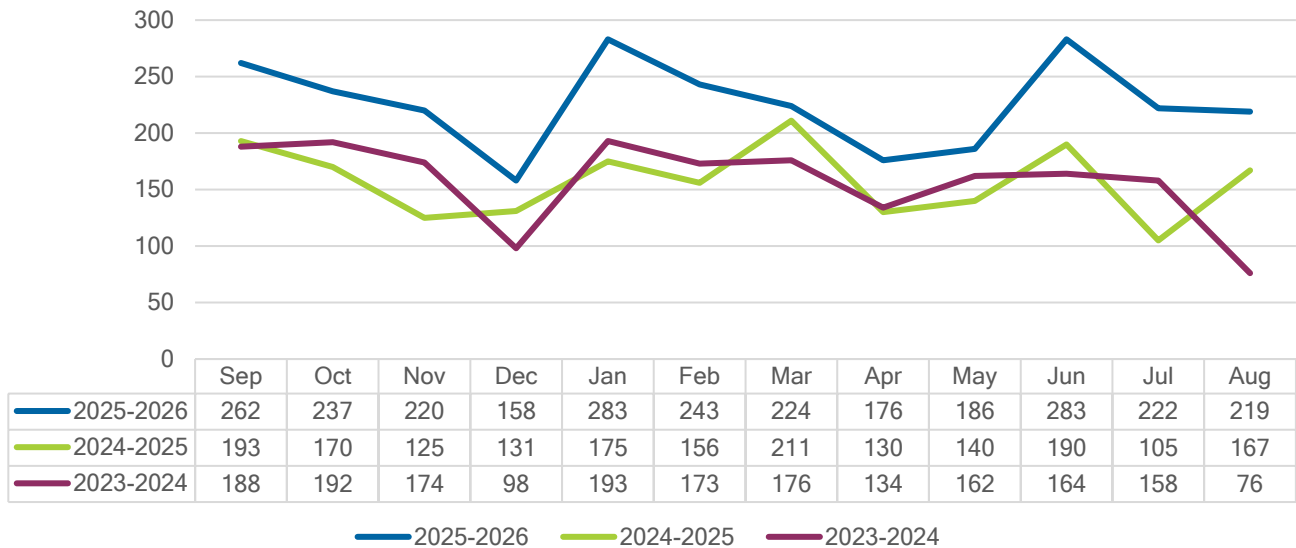
Outreach activity during 2025/26 decreased by 51% compared with the previous year. This reduction was driven by several factors. Firstly, changes within the Engagement and Advice Team, including staff turnover and recruitment, temporarily affected capacity. Secondly, the service delivered a greater number of targeted "firebreak" initiatives to respond to rising demand and increasing waiting times for advice and support on the Helpline. While effective in improving access to the service, these interventions required staff resources to be redirected from other areas of activity, including outreach.

In addition, the service has adopted a more strategic approach to outreach delivery, prioritising opportunities that align with our service development priorities and where engagement is likely to have the greatest impact for children, young people and families. This targeted approach aims to ensure that limited resources are used as effectively as possible while continuing to raise awareness of SENDIASS and support those who are most likely to benefit from our service.

Although outreach activity has reduced, demand for direct advice and support has continued to grow. Throughout the year, the service has had to carefully balance the need to provide timely access to information and advice while maintaining wider service offers, including outreach, participation work and casework support.

8.2 Helpline – Intervention Level 2

Timely appointments created (DEMAND)

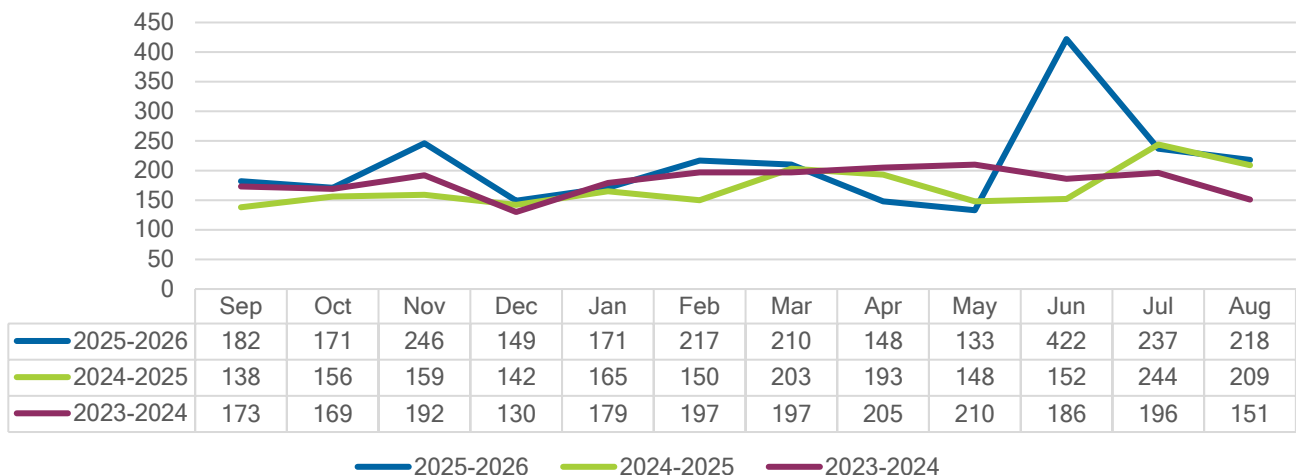


Totals:

2022-2023 – 1888 **2024-2025 – 1893** **2025-2026 – 2713**

There has been a **43% increase** in parents booking appointments with us.

Appointments completed (OUTPUT)



Totals

2023-2024- 2185 **2024 -2025– 2059** **2025-2026 - 2504**

There has been a **21% increase** in helpline calls that have been completed across the year.

Demand for the service has increased significantly over the past year, continuing an upward trend when compared with the previous two years. This growth in both demand and service output has been driven largely by the number of targeted firebreak initiatives implemented throughout the year to address increasing waiting times and rising enquiry volumes.

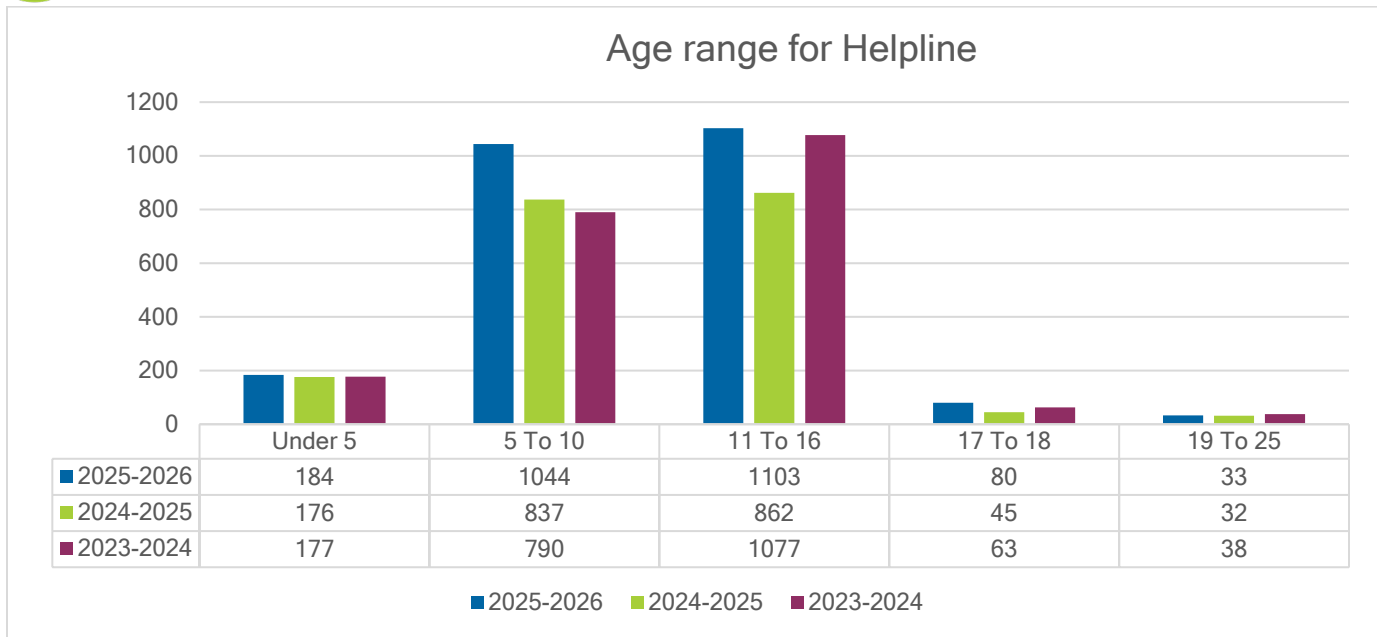
In June, the service delivered its largest firebreak to date, resulting in an additional 198 contacts being responded to over a three-week period, on top of the usual offering, resulting in 350 calls total. This intervention was strategically planned to reduce waiting times ahead of the summer period, when demand is typically lower, and to better position the service to manage the anticipated increase in requests during the September peak.

Despite these additional measures and the increased output achieved by the team, feedback received throughout the year consistently highlighted concerns regarding waiting times. Through monthly highlight and hotspot reports, Senior leaders within Children's Services have been kept informed of demand levels and the associated service implications. While targeted interventions have helped mitigate some of the pressures, sustained demand growth remains a significant challenge and reinforces the need for continued monitoring, service planning, and consideration of future capacity requirements.

5 weeks wait for an appointment with Norfolk SENDIASS when my daughter needs advice more quickly. You need more trained staff to take appointments to help SEN parents who need advice. This would help to reduce the ridiculously long wait time.

The soonest available appointment I could book was weeks in advance and it ended up being after the EHCP was issued, so what could have been a really valuable appointment to get the best out of an EHCP

I appreciate the waiting lists, but I'm sure more appointments, quicker wait times would be helpful.



We have seen:

A **4% increase** in under 5 contacts

A **19.8% increase** in 5 to 10 contacts

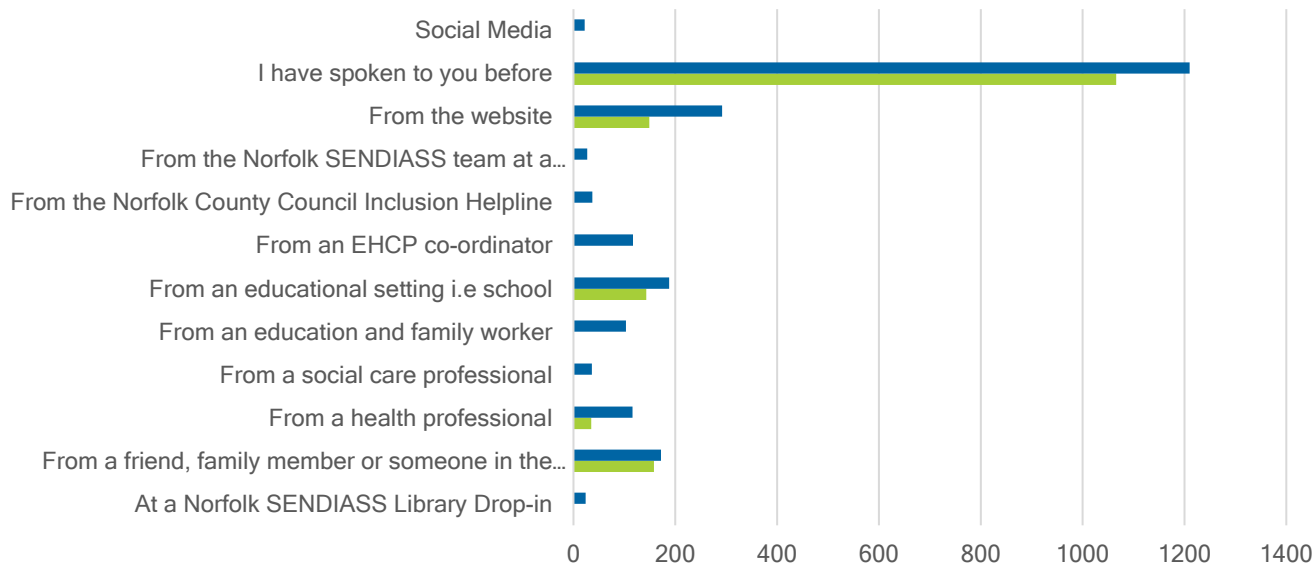
A **21.8% increase** in 11 to 16 contacts

A **77% increase** in 17 to 18 contacts

An increase in service activity has been observed across all age ranges during the reporting period, reflecting the overall growth in both demand for support and the service's increased capacity to respond through targeted interventions.

The most notable increase was within the 17 to 18 age group. This is likely attributable to the enhanced focus on post-16 provision by the Engagement and Advice Team.

How did you hear of us?



	At a Norfolk SENDIASS Library Drop-in	From a friend, family member or someone in the community	From a health professional	From a social care professional	From an education and family worker	From an educational setting i.e school	From an EHCP co-ordinator	From the Norfolk County Council Inclusion Helpline	From the Norfolk SENDIASS team at a parent/carer event	From the website	I have spoken to you before	Social Media
■ 2025-2026	24	172	116	36	103	188	117	37	27	292	1210	22
■ 2024-2025		158	35			143				149	1066	

■ 2025-2026 ■ 2024-2025

We can see a significant increase in how families and professionals are accessing the service. This reflects both rising demand and the success of efforts to improve the visibility and accessibility of SENDIASS support across the local area.

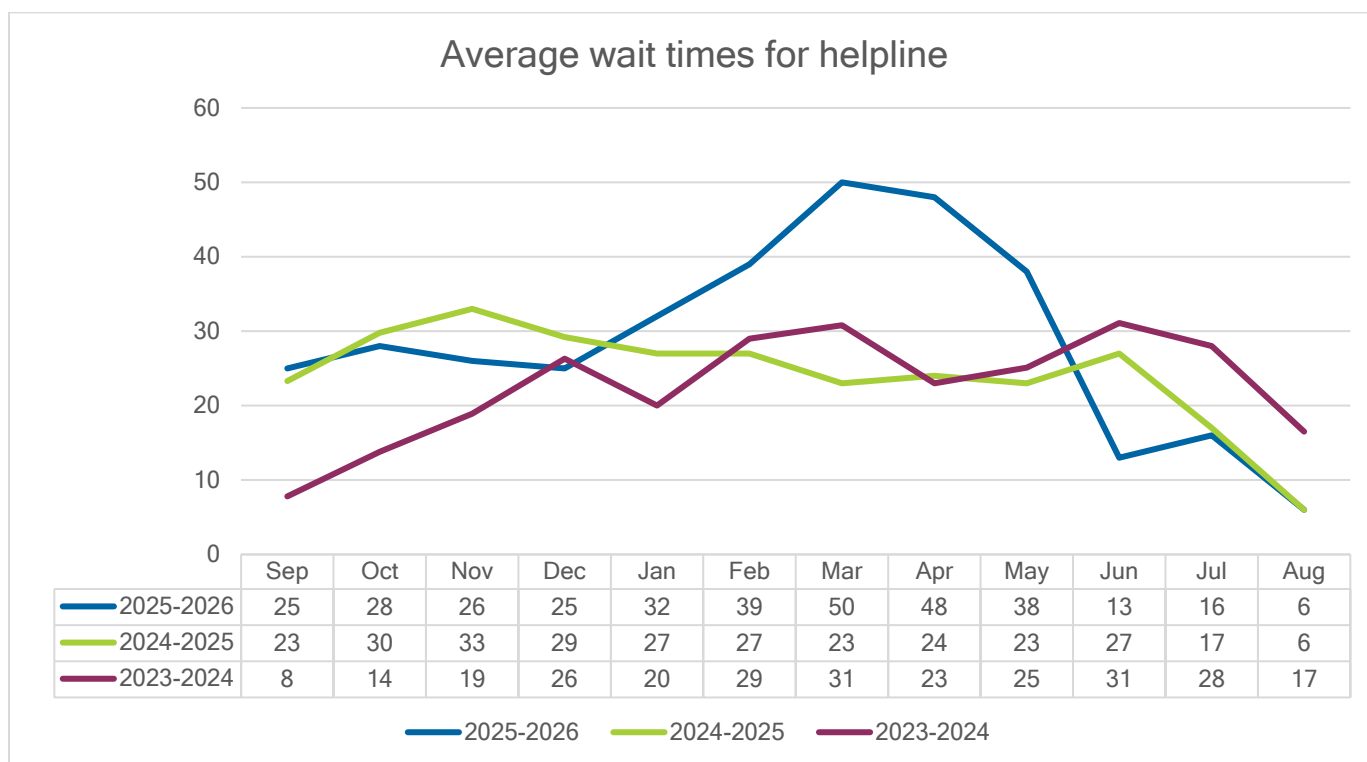
A notable increase was in parents and carers reporting that they found the service through the website, which **increased by 95% compared** to the previous year. This is likely the result of continued improvements to the service's online presence, increased signposting from partner agencies, and a growing reliance on digital channels by families seeking information and support.

There was also a **13% increase** in returning parents and carers accessing the service. This may indicate that families are experiencing more complex or longer-term SEND journeys, requiring ongoing advice and support at different stages. It may also reflect growing confidence in the service, with families choosing to return when additional issues or changes in circumstances arise.

The most significant growth was seen in referrals from healthcare professionals, which **increased by 231%**. This substantial rise is likely linked to the strengthening of relationships with health partners, increased awareness of the SENDIASS offer amongst healthcare practitioners, and recognition of the

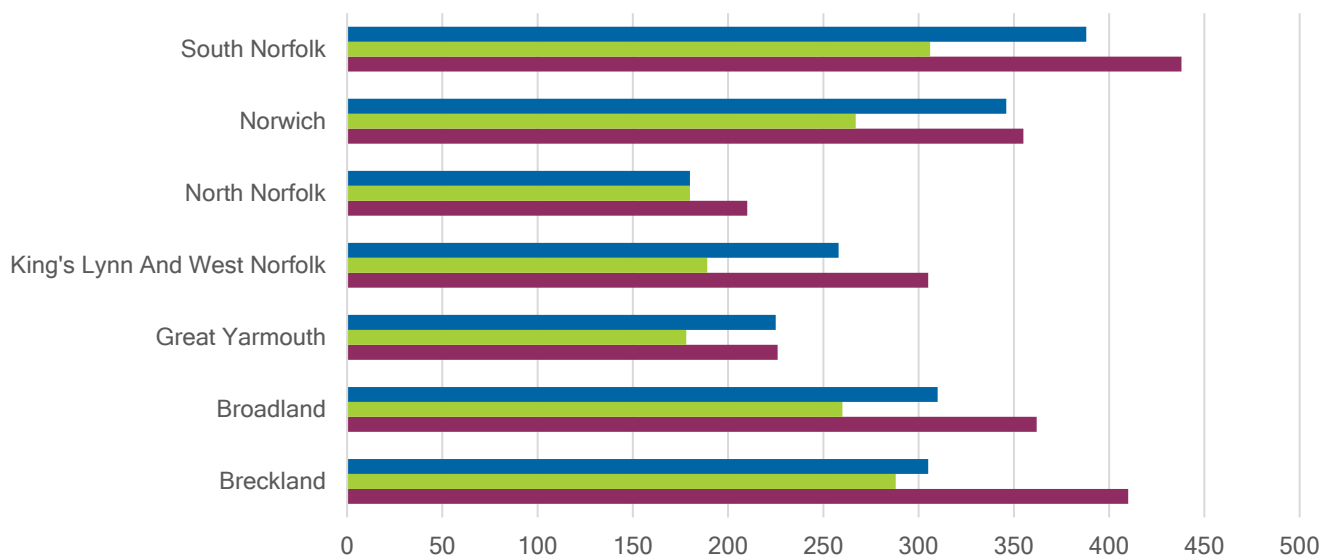
value of impartial information, advice, and support for families navigating SEND processes. It may also reflect the increasing complexity of cases being identified through health services and the need for families to access broader support and advocacy.

While comparative data is not available across all referral categories due to changes made during the year to simplify terminology and make forms more accessible for families, there has been a notable number of parents and carers reporting that they were signposted to the service by EHCP Coordinators. This suggests that SENDIASS is becoming increasingly embedded within local SEND pathways and is recognised by professionals as a key source of impartial advice and support. Continued partnership working and effective signposting across education, health and social care will be essential to ensuring families are able to access support at the earliest opportunity.



Waiting times peaked at 50 days in March, the highest level recorded during the reporting period, reflecting sustained demand that continued to exceed service capacity. Following the implementation of a targeted firebreak in June, waiting times began to reduce, with performance in July and August returning to levels comparable with the previous year. While this demonstrates the positive impact of targeted interventions, it also highlights the ongoing capacity pressures facing the service as demand continues to grow.

Districts for helpline



	Breckland	Broadland	Great Yarmouth	King's Lynn And West Norfolk	North Norfolk	Norwich	South Norfolk
■ 2025-2026	305	310	225	258	180	346	388
■ 2024-2025	288	260	178	189	180	267	306
■ 2023-2024	410	362	226	305	210	355	438

■ 2025-2026 ■ 2024-2025 ■ 2023-2024

Breckland **5% increase**

Broadland **19% increase**

Great Yarmouth **26% increase**

South Norfolk **27% increase**

Norwich **29% increase**

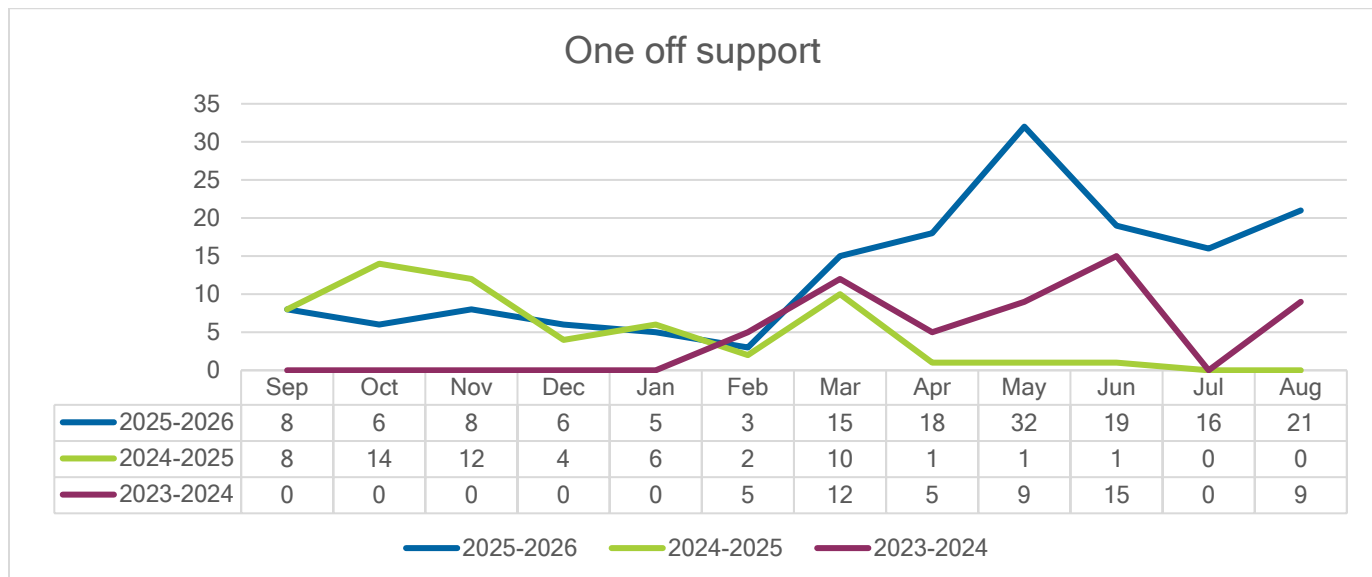
Kings Lynn and West **36% increase**

Demand increased across all but one of the districts during the reporting period. While this reflects overall growth in demand for the service, it is also likely to have been influenced by increased awareness of SENDIASS, improved signposting from partner agencies, and greater visibility of the service across Norfolk. In addition, ongoing pressures within the wider SEND system have resulted in more families seeking impartial information, advice, and support. Together, these factors suggest that SENDIASS is supporting a growing number of families to navigate an increasingly complex system.

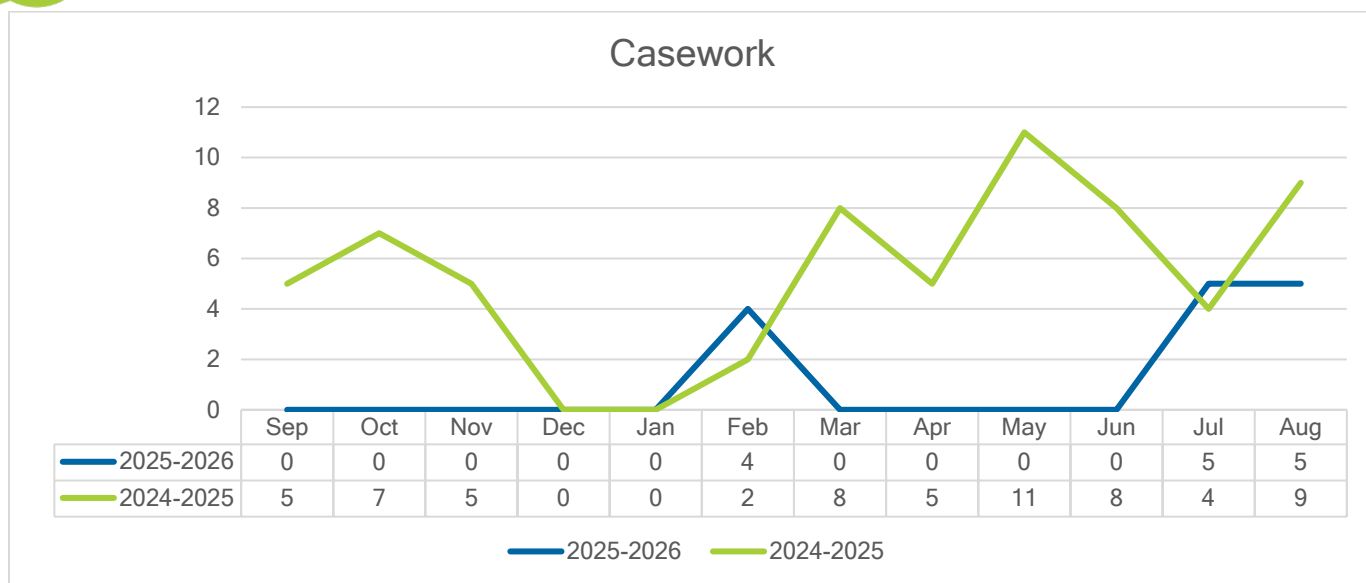
8.3 One off and Casework – Level of Intervention 3&4

Over the course of this year, we've changed the way we provide intervention Level 3 & 4, this change was the implementation of a triage-based service model. Most families can access the information, advice and support they require through self-service resources, the helpline, or library drop-in sessions. Where a parent or carer requires additional assistance, they may be offered one-off support for a specific issue, such as completing forms, reviewing draft EHCPs, or attending meetings with education providers or mediation services.

Where a family's needs are assessed as more complex and require ongoing involvement, a referral is made for triage by the Service Manager and Senior Advisor. If agreed, the case is allocated for longer-term casework support at either Level 3 or 4. This approach ensures that resources are targeted effectively, enabling the service to provide intensive support to families with the greatest level of need while maintaining access to timely advice and information for all.



We have supported 157 families this year compared to 59 families last year with one-off support, this is a **166% increase**.



We have supported 14 families with casework this year compared to 64 families last year, this is a **78% decrease**.

To support the delivery of targeted firebreak activity, there were periods during the year when the allocation of one-off support and longer-term casework was temporarily paused, allowing Advisors to focus on responding to helpline enquiries and reducing waiting times for initial contact.

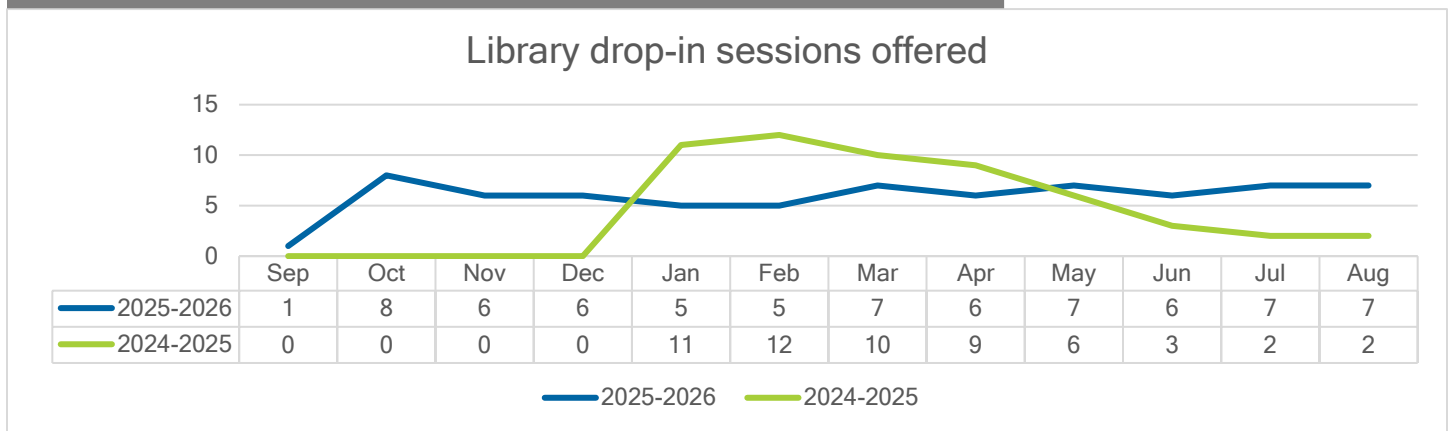
While this approach increased the service's capacity to manage immediate demand and address backlogs, it also resulted in periods where waiting lists for enhanced support remained static. Consequently, some parents and carers experienced longer waits than would be expected to access one-off interventions or longer-term casework support. This highlights the ongoing challenge of balancing increasing frontline demand with the capacity required to provide more intensive, tailored support to families with complex needs.

Young People and Casework

During the reporting period, the service was able to increase its direct support offer for young people, enabling more young people to access tailored information, advice, and support. A total of 10 young people received one-off support from an Engagement and Advice Worker, helping them to develop their understanding of SEND processes and amplify their voice in decisions affecting their education and future outcomes.

The service was also able to provide longer-term casework support directly to young people, an area of work that has historically been limited due to capacity constraints. During the year, five young people received ongoing casework support, enabling more sustained engagement and personalised assistance to help them navigate complex challenges. This represents an important step in strengthening the service's commitment to ensuring that the views, wishes, and feelings of children and young people remain central to decision-making.

8.4 Library drop ins



Over the course of this year we've:

- Organized and attended 71 Library drop-in sessions which is a **29% increase** compared to the previous year.
- Spoken with 364 parent/carers
- Spoken directly to 20 young people
- Spoken with 54 professionals

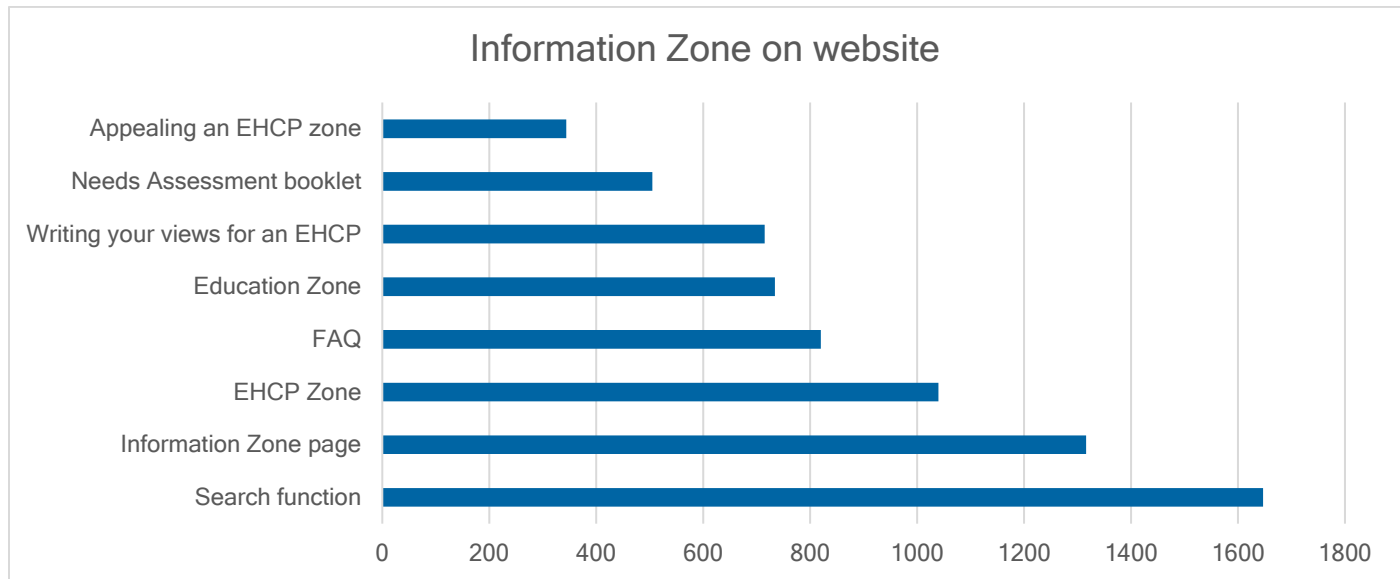
This was the first full year of delivering our library drop-in programme across Norfolk. While there were some challenges during the year relating to staffing and recruitment, which at times impacted on our ability to deliver the full planned schedule of sessions, we remained committed to responding to local demand and worked hard to maintain a consistent presence within our communities wherever possible. Feedback from families attending the drop-ins has continued to be overwhelmingly positive. The programme has strengthened SENDIASS's visibility within local communities and provided accessible opportunities for parents, carers, children and young people to seek information, advice and support in an informal setting.

The initiative has also enabled us to develop and strengthen strategic partnerships with library services, whose staff now regularly signpost families to SENDIASS. In addition, we have built valuable relationships with Family Hubs and the Schools and Communities Team, often collaborating at drop-in events to provide a more joined-up and comprehensive offer for families.

More recently, we have expanded our partnership working with Local Authority Participation Officers. During school holidays and half-term periods, Participation Officers have attended library drop-ins to provide activities and engagement opportunities for children and young people, enabling parents and carers to have more focused conversations with our advisers. In return, SENDIASS has attended Article 12 Gamers sessions, creating further opportunities to engage with parents and carers and raise awareness of the support available through the service.

These collaborative approaches have enhanced the reach and effectiveness of our engagement activities, strengthened referral pathways, and contributed to a more integrated support offer for families across Norfolk.

8.5 Information Zone



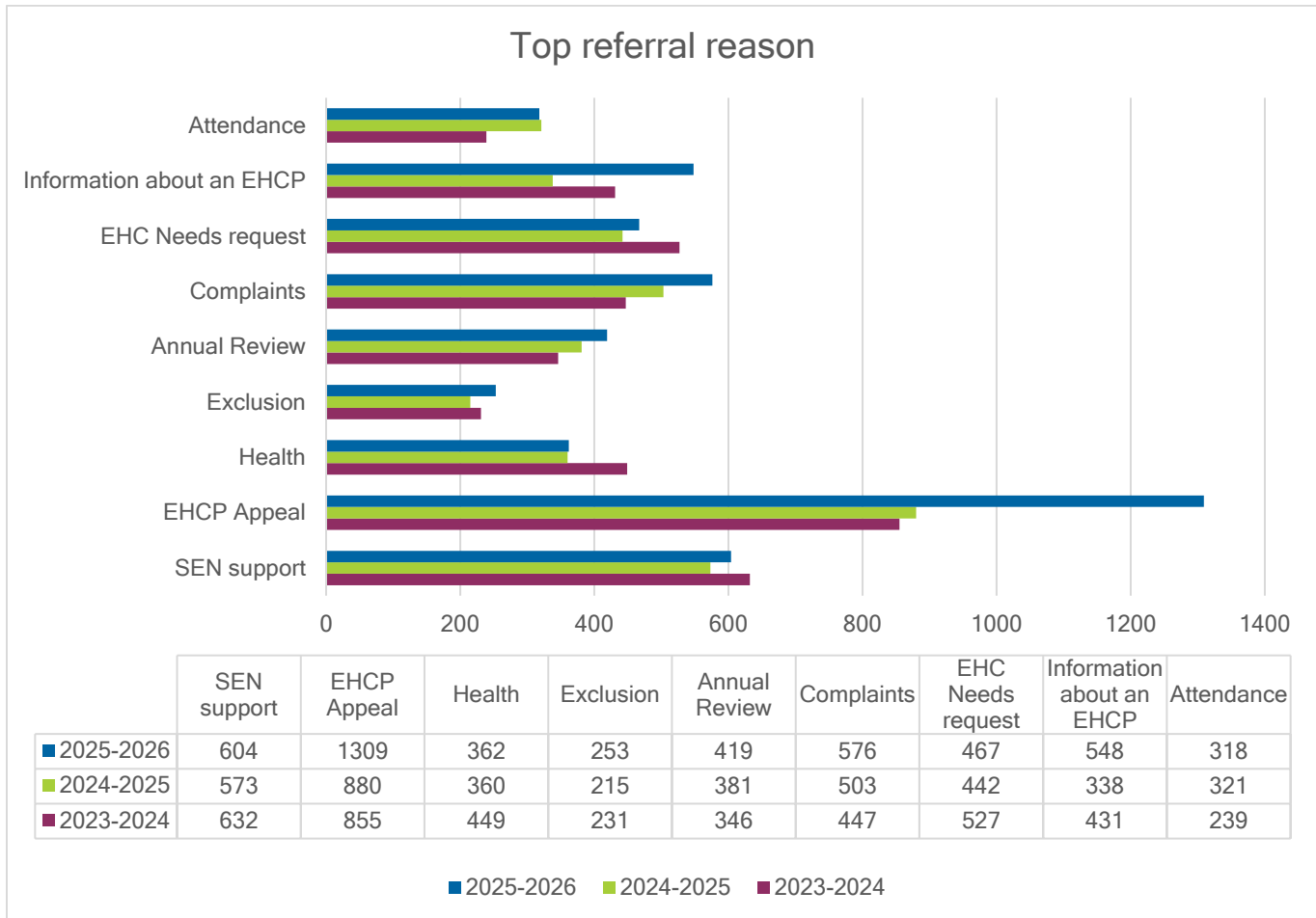
Over the past eight months, the team has undertaken a comprehensive redevelopment of the Information Zone on our website, with a strategic focus on improving accessibility, usability, and the quality of information available to parent carers and professionals.

This work has included the expansion of online resources, the restructuring of content into more accessible and user-friendly sections, adding an easier search function and the development of additional Frequently Asked Questions informed by emerging themes and trends identified through service enquiries. By using intelligence gathered from direct engagement with families and professionals, we have ensured that the information provided is responsive to current needs and supports early access to advice and guidance.

The continued enhancement of our digital information offer remains a key priority. We are actively developing and adding further resources, while also maximising the reach of this information through our social media channels. This integrated approach supports greater awareness of SENDIASS services, promotes self-help and informed decision-making, and enables parent carers and professionals to access timely, reliable information through a range of accessible platforms.

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.



We have seen an increase across all classification codes, apart from one, the most significant are:

Information about an EHCP **62% increase**

EHCP Appeal **48.7% increase**

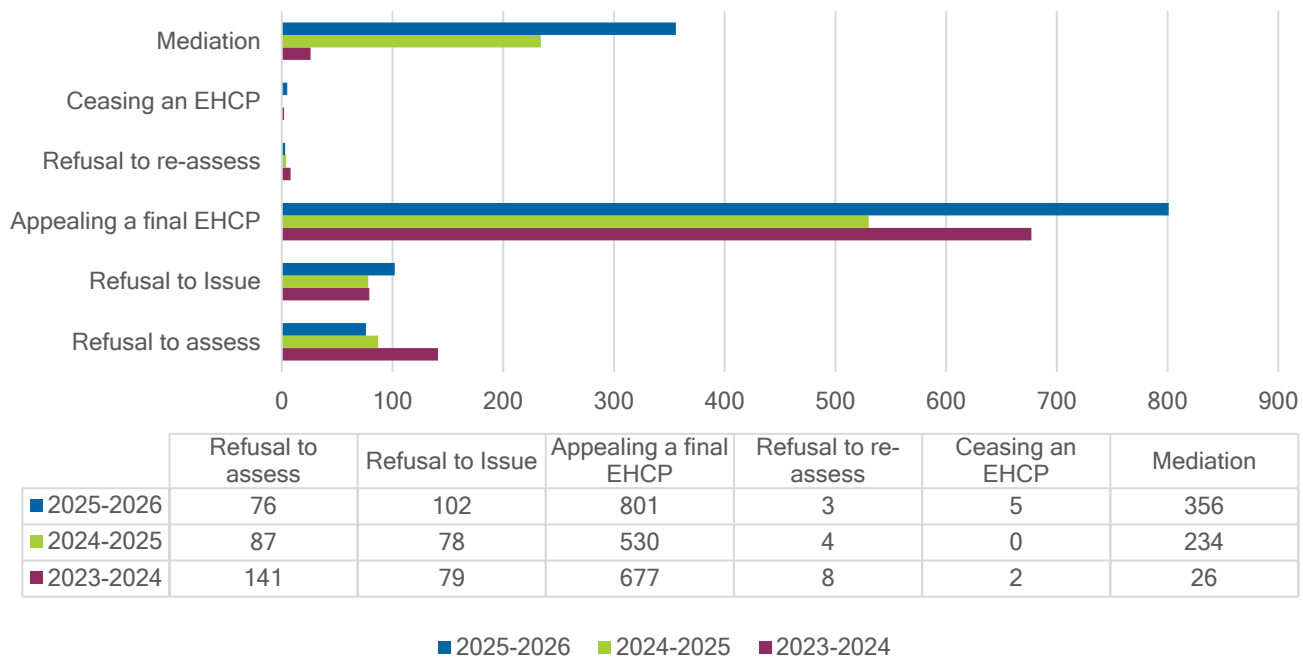
Exclusion **17.6% increase**

Complaints **14% increase**

Annual Review **9.9% increase**

SEN Support **5% increase**

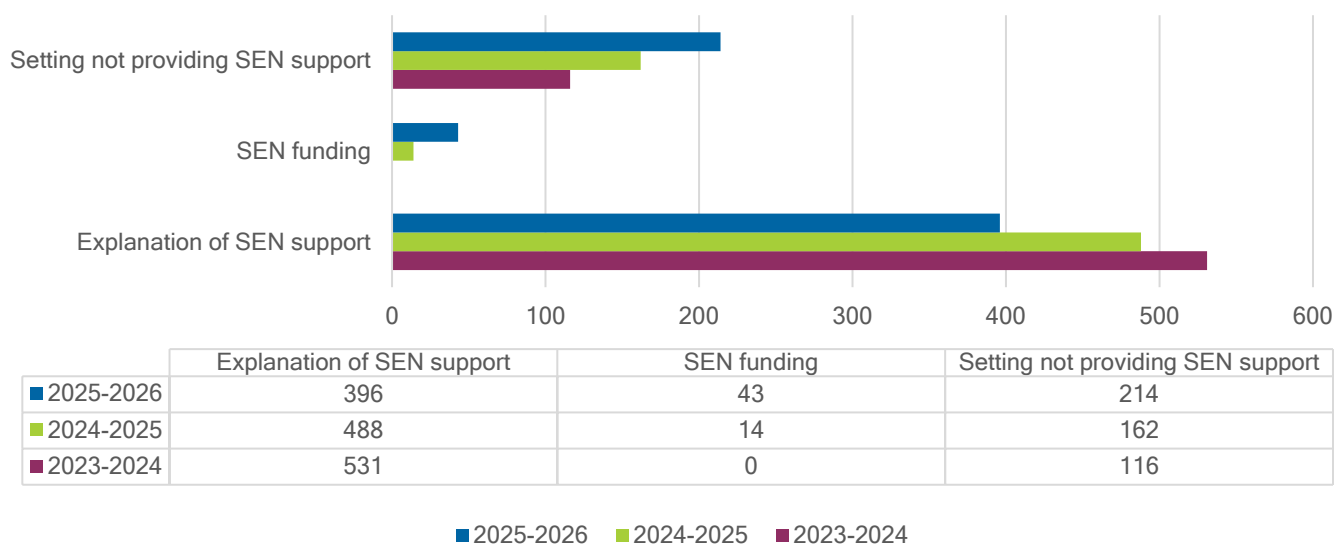
EHCP Appeal - Level 2



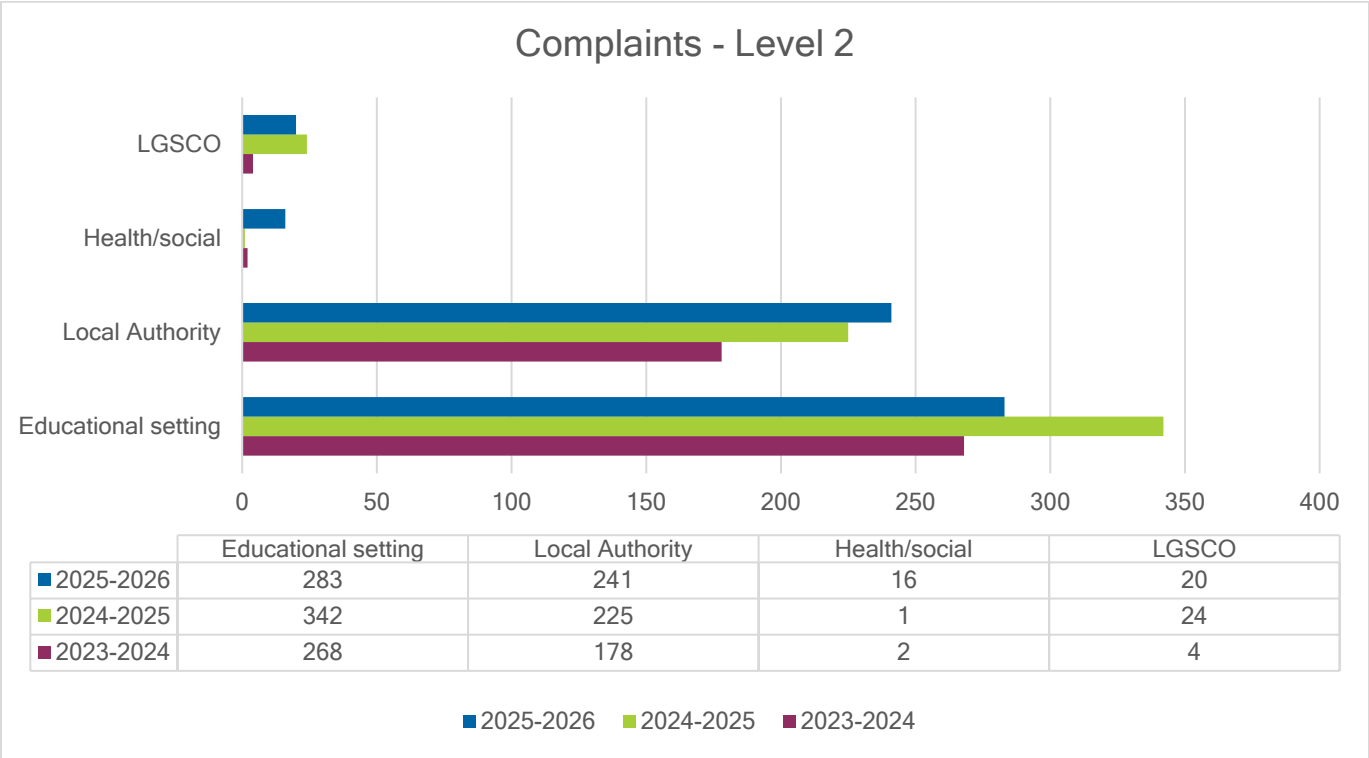
There has been a **51% increase** in appealing a final plan contacts compared to last year, meaning that almost 60% of all EHCP appeal contacts relate to appealing a final plan.

We have also seen a **52% increase** in mediation contacts and a **30% increase** in refusal to issue contacts.

SEN Support - Level 2



There has been a **32% increase** in parents/carers speaking to us about the setting not providing SEN support and a **207% increase** in contacts related to SEN funding.



We have seen a 17% decrease in complaints related to educational setting and only a small 7% increase in complaints related to the Local Authority.

There has been a 1500% increase in parents/carers contacting us about complaints related to Health or Social Care.

"I have worked alongside the E&A team at a number of community drop-in events, and their knowledge has been invaluable when speaking with parents. On many occasions, a parent has initially approached one service, but through careful and curious conversations, they have shared additional worries or concerns. By working collaboratively, we have ensured that families receive the right support at the earliest opportunity. I believe it is essential that we continue working together to support our families within the community at the earliest opportunity." – Education & Family Worker from the School and Communities Team

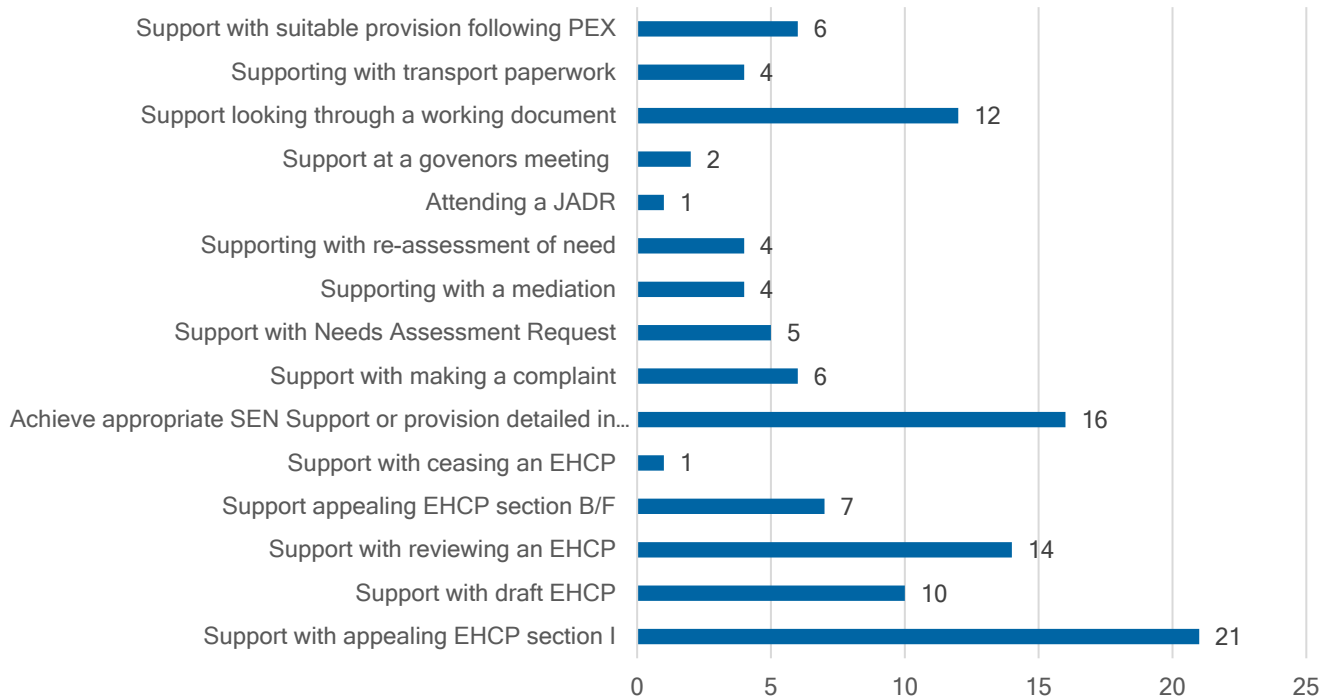
10 Outcomes – Intervention Level 3/4

During the year, we reviewed and revised our approach to recording outcomes to strengthen our ability to evidence impact and monitor progress more effectively. Previously, outcomes were only recorded when a case was closed. However, due to increasing demand and system-wide pressures, some cases remain open for extended periods, often exceeding a year. This meant that significant progress and achieved outcomes were not reflected in our data until closure, limiting our ability to accurately assess the service's impact in real time.

To address this, we introduced a more flexible outcome-recording process, enabling multiple outcomes to be recorded and closed throughout the lifetime of a case. This change provides a more accurate picture of the support being delivered and the positive difference being made for children, young people, and families as it occurs.

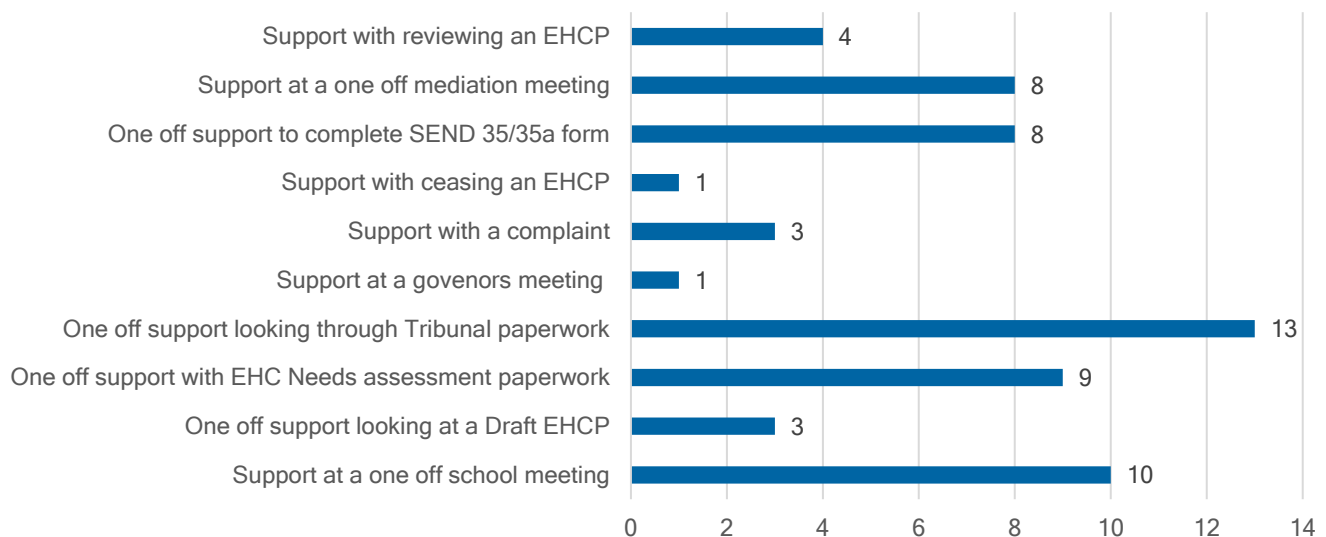
Alongside this, we have further embedded an outcome-focused approach to case management. Cases are now kept open only where there are clearly identified outcomes that fall within the remit of the service and where ongoing support can contribute to achieving those outcomes. Where outcomes have been successfully achieved, or where any remaining needs fall outside the scope of the service, cases are appropriately closed. This has improved the accuracy of our performance data, strengthened our focus on impact, and ensured that resources are targeted where they can add the greatest value.

Long Term casework outcomes - January - August



Support with appealing Section I of an EHCP, securing appropriate SEN provision, and reviewing Education, Health and Care Plans were the most frequently achieved outcomes through our long term support offer.

Casework outcomes January - August



Support with tribunal paperwork, attendance at a one off school meeting and support with EHC needs assessment paperwork were the most frequently achieved outcomes via our one-off support offer.

“SENDIASS have been helping us for over two years, credit to them all, the support we’ve had has been very much appreciated. We wouldn’t be in the position we are now without it.as a family we will be forever in their debt and grateful for getting our son the support he needed.” – parent/carer long-term casework evaluation

11. Professional contacts

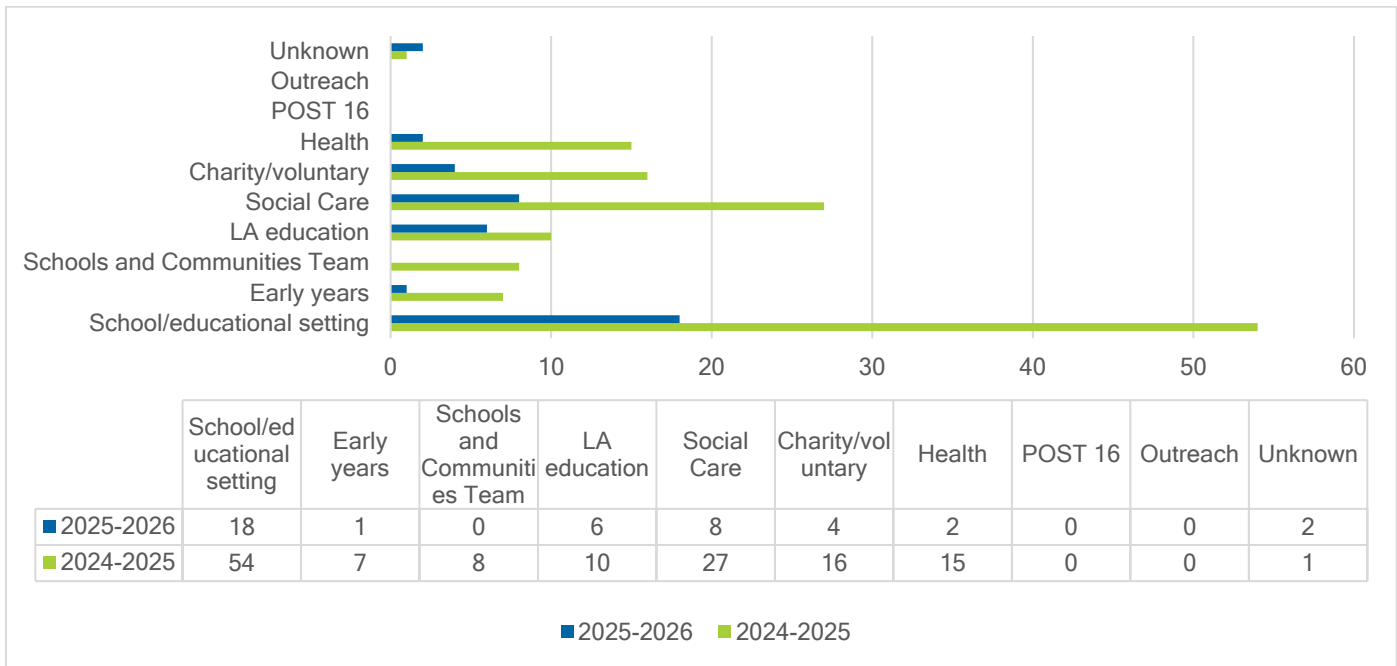


During this reporting period, the service suspended bookable appointments for professionals for approximately six months due to staffing capacity challenges. As a result, professional engagement with the service reduced during this time, reflecting the impact of limited appointment availability on access routes for practitioners seeking support and guidance.

Compared with the previous year, professional enquiries and engagement **decreased by 70%**. Whilst this reduction was anticipated given the temporary withdrawal of bookable appointments, it has highlighted the importance of maintaining dedicated opportunities for professional consultation and strengthening awareness of the support available through SENDIASS.

As capacity has improved, reinstating and promoting professional appointments has become a key area of focus. Over the coming year, we will seek to rebuild professional engagement through targeted communications, strengthened relationships with schools and partner agencies, and increased promotion of our advice and support offer. We will also continue to develop accessible online resources and guidance for professionals, ensuring they can access timely information whilst encouraging greater use of direct consultation services where appropriate.

"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." Long-term casework parent/carer evaluation

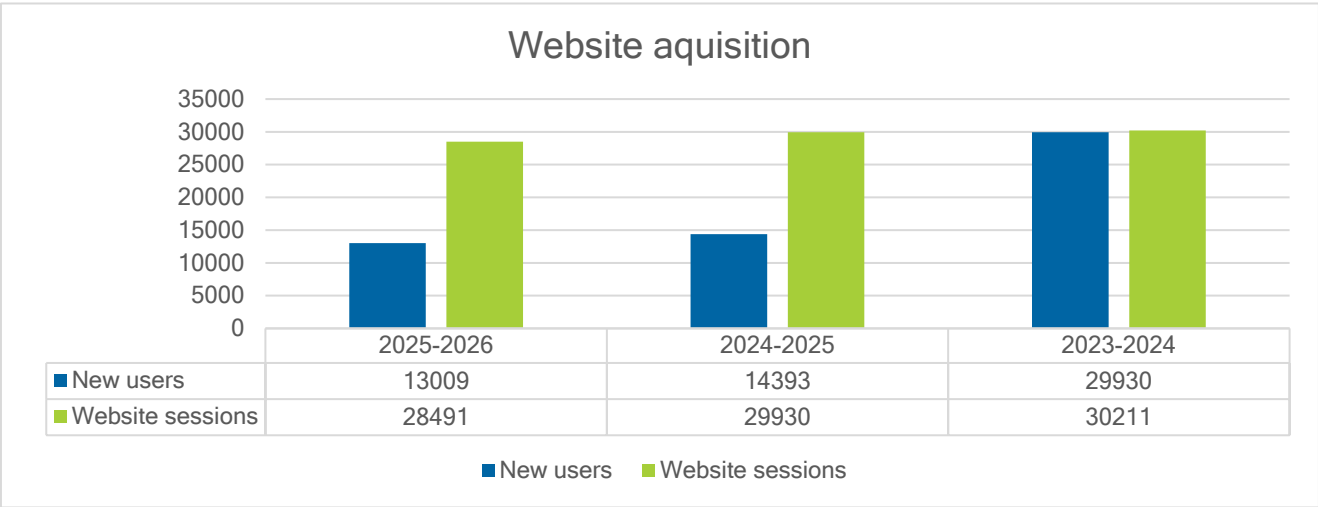


Although the overall number of professionals contacting the service was lower than in the previous year, the highest proportion of professional contacts continued to come from places of learning. This demonstrates a strong level of awareness and understanding of the service within educational settings. However, there remains a need to further raise the profile of the service beyond schools and strengthen engagement with a wider range of agencies and professionals.

12. Website, newsletter and social media

The website was built by Bigfork and is managed by 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 within our Information Zone.

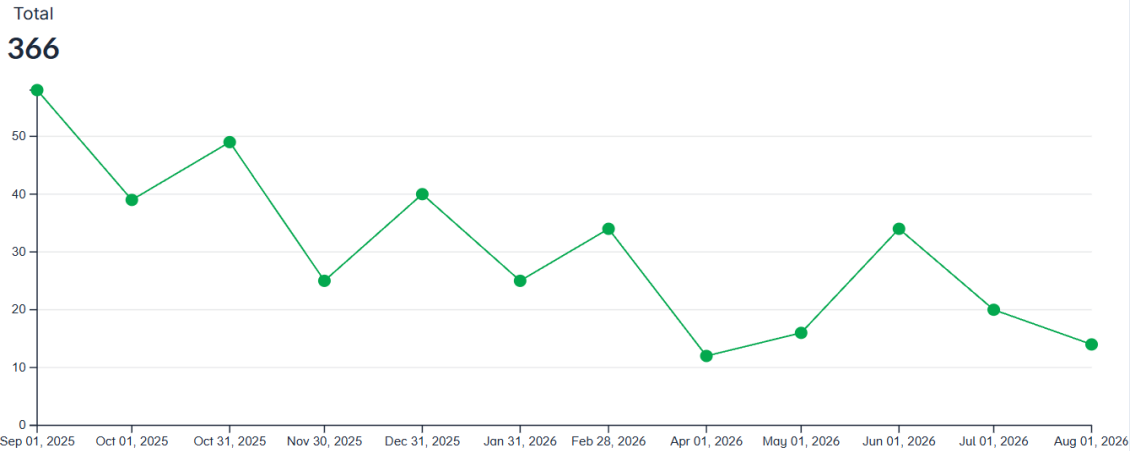


6.4% decrease in new website users

0.9% decrease in website sessions

Changes implemented through our communications plan have altered how users access information on our website. Rather than directing users to specific webpages from individual posts, we now signpost audiences to the main website. This change is likely to have contributed to the reduction observed in website analytics, as traffic is no longer being routed directly to individual pages.

Website Chat AI



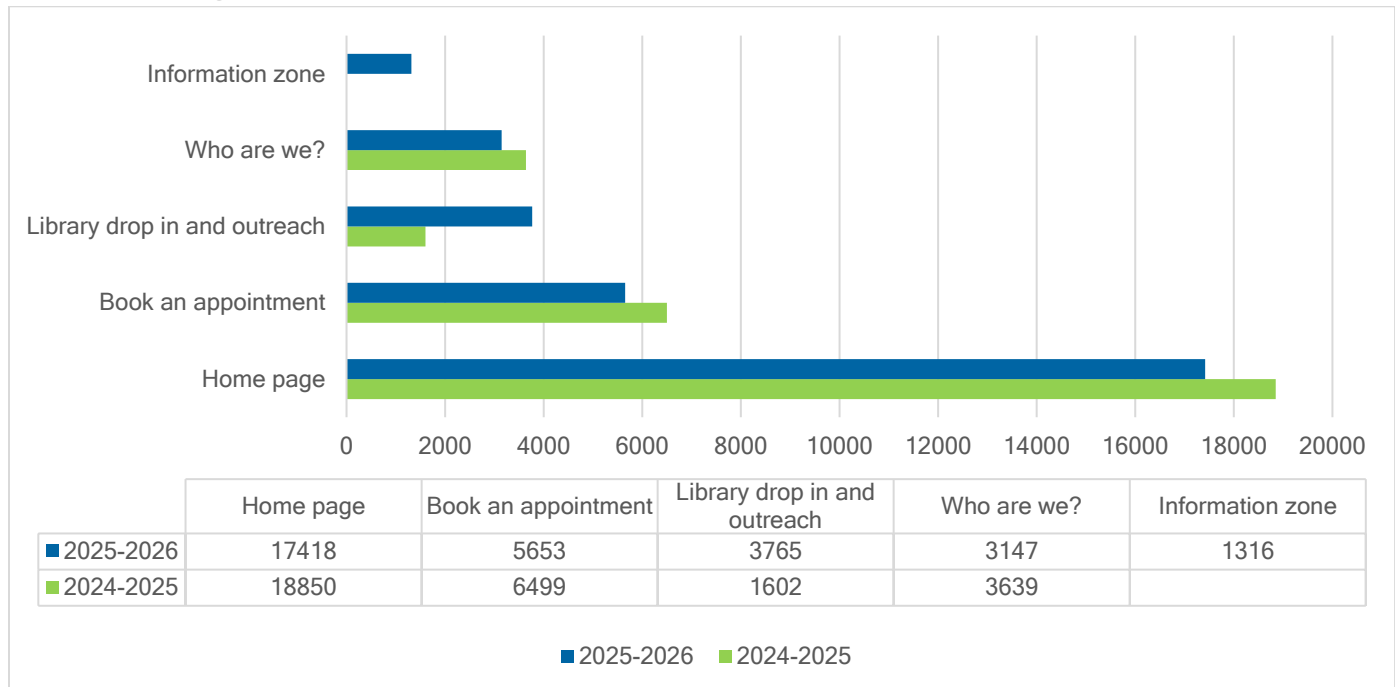
Over the course of the year, the website chatbot facilitated 366 interactions. The majority of these involved users seeking information, with the chatbot providing responses based on content available on our website. Where users required further support, including an email response or telephone discussion, they were signposted to book an appointment with the service.

I was very pleased with the service I received.

Time was taken to both listen and advise with a friendly and supportive manner.

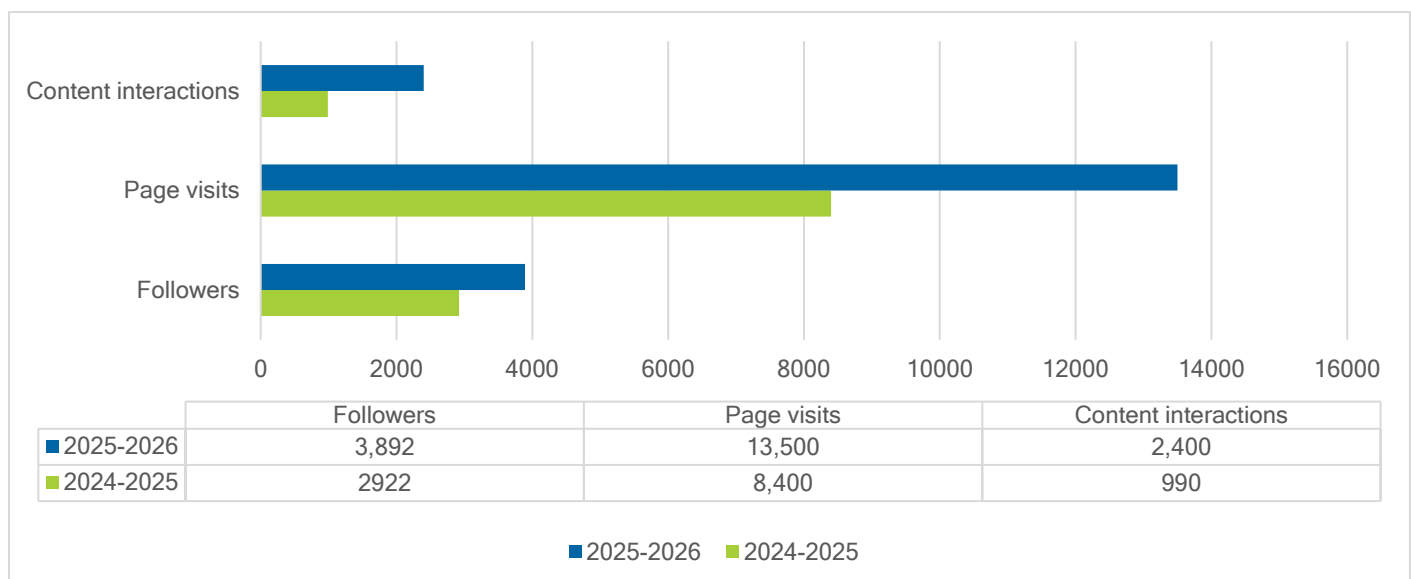
– Helpline evaluation from parent/carer

Website Page visits



Although overall page visits have decreased, there has been a significant **135% increase** in visits to our Library Drop-In and Outreach page. This page includes a calendar of upcoming sessions and locations, and the increase in engagement reflects the growing interest in and uptake of our outreach offer. This trend is also consistent with the positive feedback received from service users, providing both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the value and impact of these sessions.

Facebook



Over the course of the year, we have taken a more strategic approach to strengthening our social media presence, with a focus on increasing both the reach and accessibility of our information, advice and support. By maintaining consistent daily content and actively promoting engagement, we have seen a **33% increase in Facebook followers**, a **142% increase in content interactions**, and a **60% increase in page visits**. While overall website usage has declined, these figures demonstrate that service users are increasingly engaging with us through social media channels. This shift reflects the importance of providing information through platforms that are accessible and convenient for parents/carers and young people, enabling us to reach a wider audience and extend the impact of our service.

Newsletter

	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	Increase %
Newsletter subscriptions - Parent/carers	3661	4253	4964	5506	6191	12%
Newsletter subscriptions - Schools	294	424	505	556	625	12%
Newsletter subscriptions- Professionals	214	349	464	651	718	10%

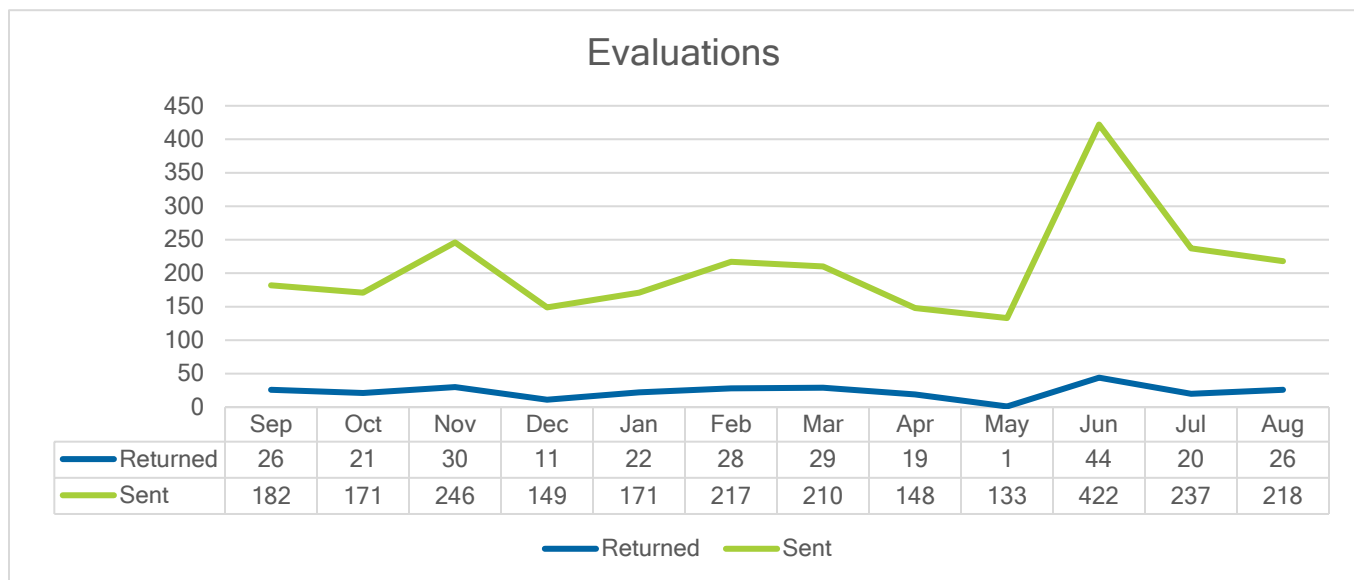
The increase in newsletter subscriptions across all audiences reflects the success of our wider communications and engagement strategy. Through more consistent social media activity, increased outreach within the community, and greater promotion of our services and events, we have enhanced awareness of SENDIASS and encouraged more individuals to access information in ways that suit their needs. The growth in subscriptions demonstrates that service users and professionals value receiving regular updates, resources and information directly from the service, enabling us to strengthen relationships with our audience and extend the reach of our information, advice and support.

Really helpful information to prepare me to advocate for my son. The only issue is that I didn't know about your service before now. Perhaps some more active advertisement or contact with SEN parents at schools?

- Parent/Carer Helpline Evaluation

13. Feedback and Evaluations

Our Microsoft Forms evaluation process is structured across three support categories: Helpdesk, One-Off Support, and Casework. Helpdesk evaluations are issued automatically via our online booking system and sent by text message 24 hours after an appointment, ensuring timely feedback is captured. Evaluations for Casework and One-Off Support are sent directly by the adviser once the support has been completed, enabling service users to provide feedback on their experience and the outcomes achieved.

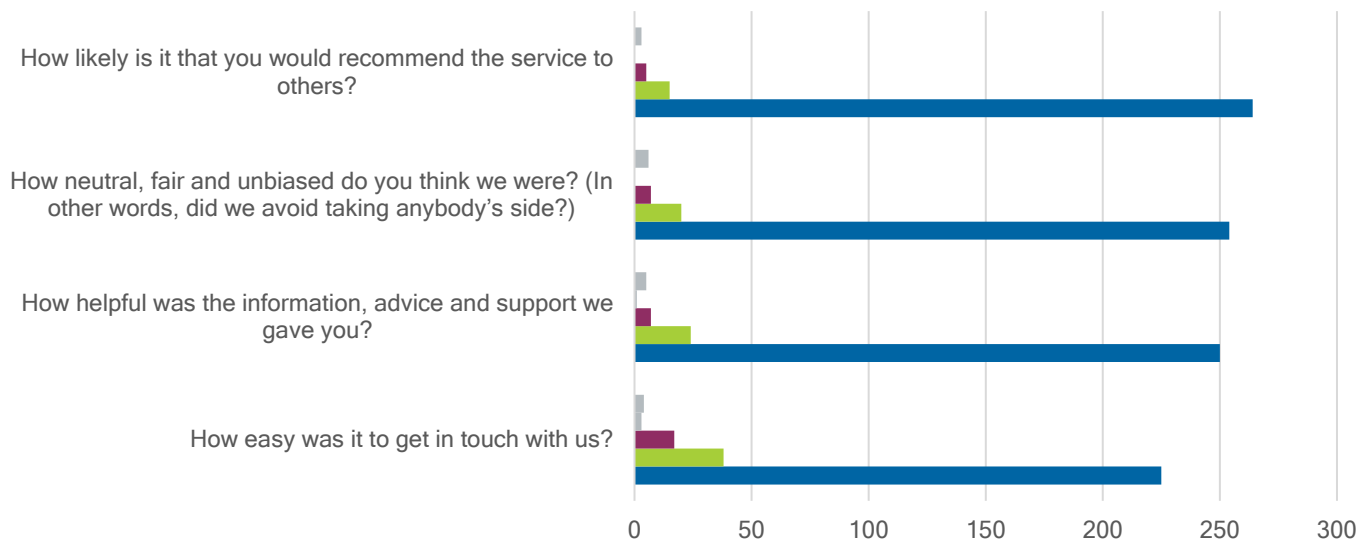


Return rate for this year is 9.66%, which is a **decrease of 6.5%** compared to last year.

- 2504 evaluations were sent
- 277 evaluations were returned

Improving evaluation response rates remains an ongoing area of focus for the service. We continue to review and refine our approach to capturing feedback to ensure the views and experiences of service users are effectively represented. While a range of initiatives have been implemented over time, increasing return rates has remained a persistent challenge. We are therefore exploring further opportunities to improve accessibility, timeliness and engagement with our evaluation processes.

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	4	5	6	3
2	3	1	0	0
3	17	7	7	5
4	38	24	20	15
5	225	250	254	264

1 2 3 4 5

82.1% of evaluations gave us a rating of 5*

The evaluation feedback received throughout the year continues to demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the service, with both qualitative and quantitative responses overwhelmingly positive. Service users consistently report that they feel listened to, better informed, and more confident in understanding and exercising their rights within the SEND system. This feedback provides valuable assurance that the information, advice and support provided is making a meaningful difference to children, young people and their families.

We recognise that feedback, whether positive or negative, is a vital component of continuous service improvement. Where concerns or areas for improvement are identified and contact details have been provided, we make every effort to follow up directly with the individual to better understand their experience and identify any actions that can be taken. This commitment to listening, responding and learning from feedback helps ensure that service users remain at the centre of our practice and supports our ongoing drive to develop and improve the quality of our service.

14. Norfolk SEND Youth Forum

The Norfolk SEND Youth Forum is a participation group supported and facilitated by Norfolk SENDIASS's Engagement and Advice Team. The Forum was established in September 2020 to create a dedicated platform for young people with SEND aged 11–25 to share their experiences, discuss issues that affect them and work collaboratively to improve services across Norfolk.



Since its formation, the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum has provided opportunities for young people to engage with decision-makers, contribute to service development and create positive changes within the local SEND system. Members take part in regular meetings, outreach events and consultations, ensuring that services are developed with young people rather than simply for them. By drawing on their personal experiences, Forum members play a vital role in promoting co-production and helping organisations design services that better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum participated in **six professional consultations**. These consultations were integrated into the Forum's monthly online meetings and provided members with opportunities to engage directly with professionals from a range of sectors. Professionals utilised a variety of engagement methods, including visual presentations, discussion activities, question-and-answer sessions and structured feedback exercises. Members were encouraged to share their views, experiences and recommendations in a supportive environment and were able to respond to direct questions about the issues being explored.

The consultations provided professionals with valuable insight into the lived experiences of young people with SEND and enabled Forum members to influence service development, research projects, policies and practice.



"Following my visit to the meeting a few weeks ago, I have attached a presentation that I delivered at a SEND Reform Workshop today which includes the feedback from your members. This was delivered to senior leaders from across NCC, Health Services and schools, and will form part of the Norfolk SEND Reform Plan which we will submit to government in June." - Hannah Robinson, NCC

"It was an absolute pleasure meeting with the SEND youth forum. The young people were so knowledgeable and capturing this knowledge is going to be invaluable for our course at UEA. Expertly facilitated by the team involved as well. I really hope to come back and to maintain an ongoing relationship with the forum and I really hope that we can contribute to the forum and its members and reciprocate back. Because what they offer is incredibly important for our communities. The forum is an incredibly important community resource, for inclusion, representation, agency, sharing of knowledge and collaboration. Young people are centred at the heart of the forum, and they should be because their voice and knowledge is significant and needs to be heard. This is not only about inclusion and voice, it is about properly acknowledging valuing and providing space for the knowledge and lived experience of young people to be centred as experts in their own lives. Well done to everyone involved, it is my pleasure attending and I hope to be involved again." - Ryan Cullen, UEA