



The local voice of learning disability

# Family Support Service Impact Report 2022-23

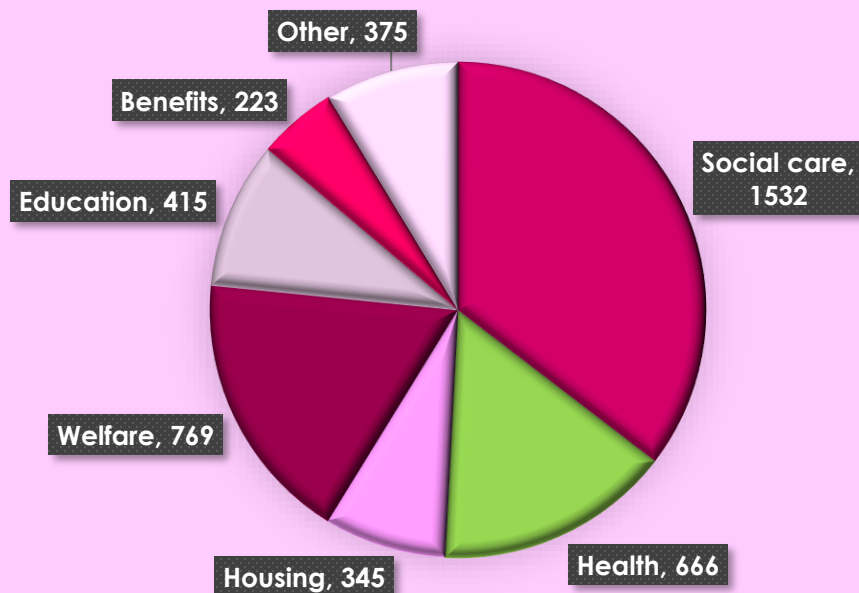
“

My Family Adviser gets me the results I need and keeps going until I get the right support. She has helped me with everything from writing letters, contacting professionals, agency support and emotional support. I really don't know where I'd be without her –  
*Family Support client, 2022*

**The Family Support Service provides free information, advice and casework to support and empower families and individuals with learning disabilities to achieve a good life.**



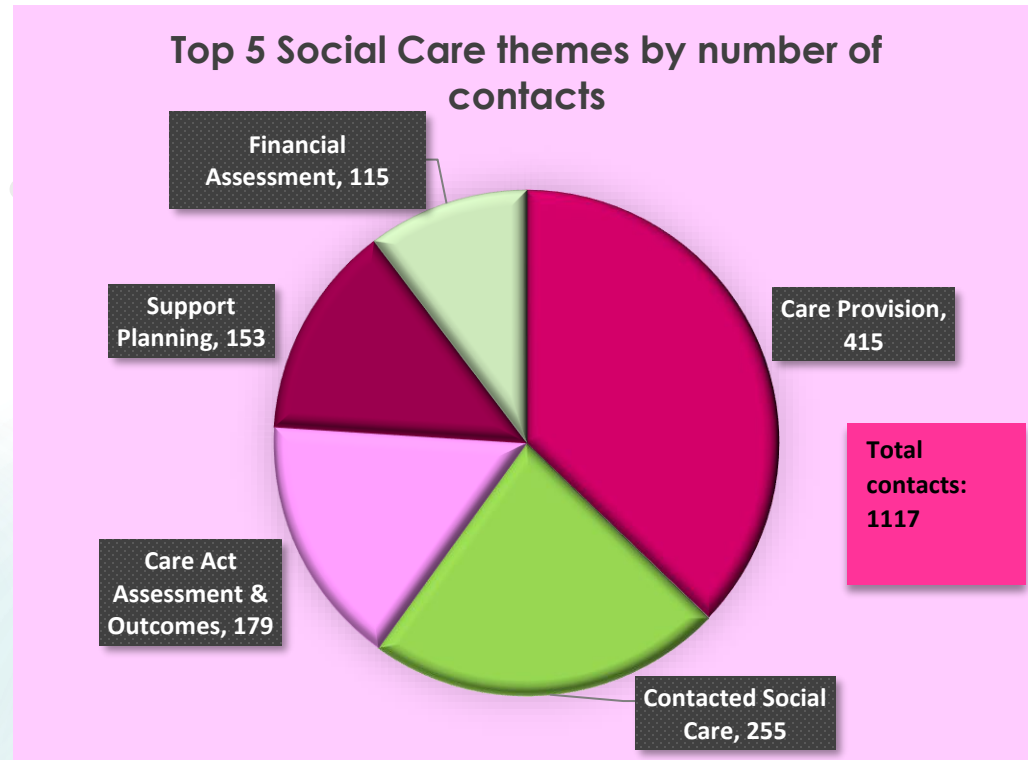
Number of contacts made & received by the Family Support Service during 2022



## Types of Support

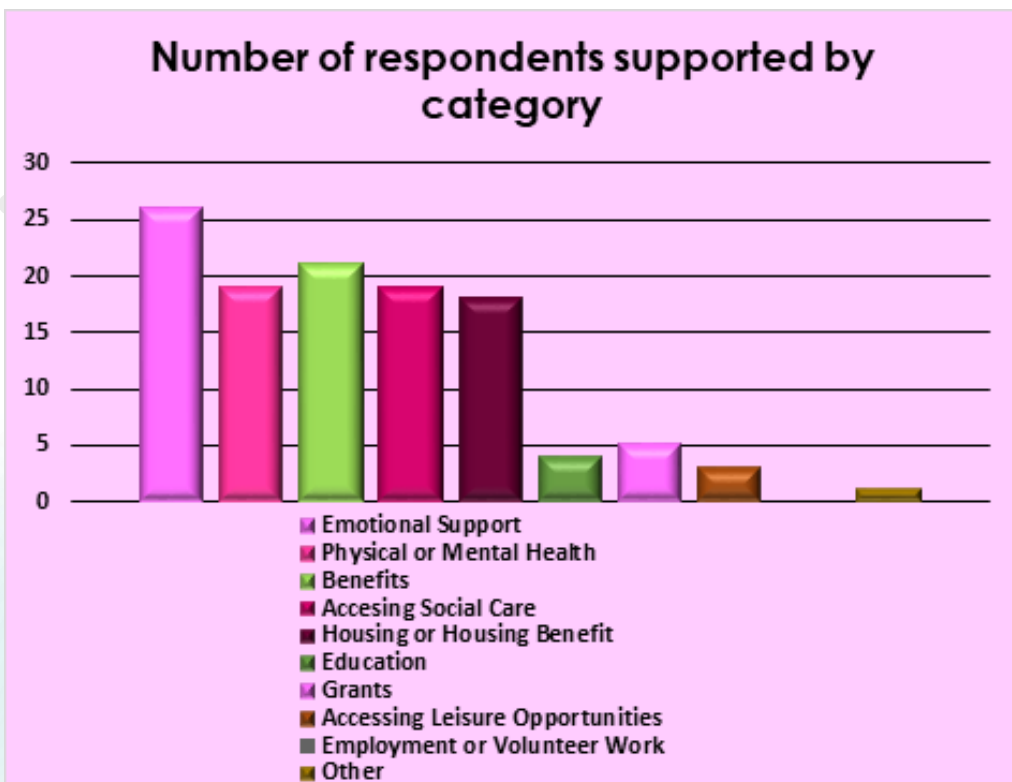
The chart on the left shows the total number of contacts made and received by the Family Support Service in 2022, covering 6 key areas of support. The team made a total of 4325 contacts and Family Advisers reached 171 individuals to provide advice and support in these key areas. Social care was the area with the most contacts, followed by welfare, health and education.

# Social Care



Many clients seek support from our Family Advisers due to issues with social care. The chart on the left shows the social care themes with the most contacts. Family Advisers supported clients to present their needs through Social Care Assessments and Reviews; with care provision and planning; and in the Financial Assessment process. Using the Care Act, the Family Advisers worked with statutory services to highlight issues with delivery of care and failures to meet needs.

# Client Survey

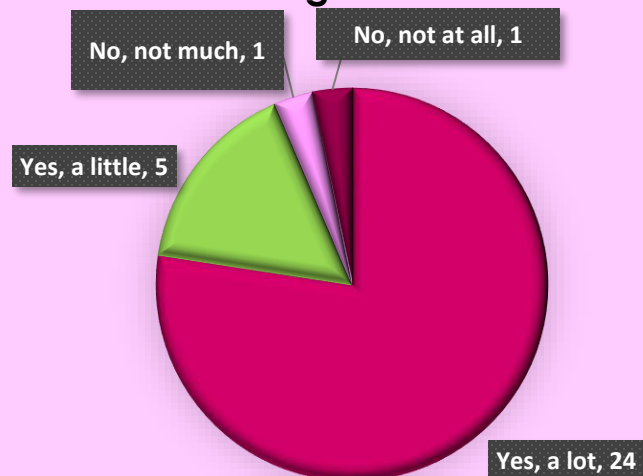


84% of clients felt that their Family Adviser provided them with emotional support in addition to help with a specific issue (such as social care or housing).

Between February and March 2023, 31 service users with learning disabilities and family carers gave detailed feedback online or over the phone about their experience of using the Family Support Service in 2022 (excluding Preparing for Adulthood support, which was done separately; see page 8). The majority of respondents had used the service prior to 2022.

Respondents were asked which areas their Family Adviser had supported them with – see chart on the left. The 31 respondents received support in an average of 3.7 areas each; some clients were helped in 6-8 different areas.

**Number of respondents who now have a better understanding of their options and rights**



29 respondents said they had a better understanding of their options and rights and 30 respondents rated the quality of support they had received as 'excellent' (26) or 'good' (4).



Clients were also asked to feedback on what difference the support had made to them in the areas listed in the chart on the left: 90% said they felt more positive; 77% said they feel less anxious or worried; the same percentage said they feel less alone and more connected to services and sources of support.



# Preparing for Adulthood Client Survey

“The Preparing for Adulthood Family Adviser has given us so much support, she has helped me to understand my son’s educational needs and came to his Education, Health & Care Plan meeting to help everyone look at what might be better for him. They are now supporting his move from sixth form to college. The Family Adviser has told us about places to visit and came to them with us to help to ask the questions. She has supported us through some really tough times and helped me to unravel the hard stuff. She has also helped with form-filling, such as Personal Independence Payments, and to get grants. The support has made such a difference to me as I find it all very confusing.” - *Parent-carer of a young adult with a learning disability*

In December 2022, 13 families with young adults responded to our survey about their experience of Preparing for Adulthood (Transition) support from our Family Adviser.

- 100% of respondents were very satisfied with the support given by our Family Adviser.
- 100% of respondents said that they had a better understanding of their young person’s rights and options as a result of the support that they had received.
- 100% said they were more confident supporting their young person through the transition process now.



# Summary of Client Feedback

- ▶ Respondents were also asked to describe what difference the Family Support Service had made to their lives in their own words. To summarise the comments, the clients found the support from Reading Mencap to be helpful and to have made a significant difference in their lives. They appreciate having a Family Adviser to turn to and feel less lonely as a result of the support they have received. Many clients also mentioned that the support has been very helpful in times of stress, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. The emotional support and advice provided by Reading Mencap staff has been described as knowledgeable, positive and confidence-building. Additionally, many clients mentioned specific ways in which Reading Mencap has helped them, such as with moving home, speaking with social workers, and understanding the care system. Overall, the feedback suggests that the support provided by Reading Mencap has been greatly appreciated and has had a positive impact on the clients' lives.

