

# National Portage Association: Impact Report 2023 Right Support, Right Place, Right Time

National Portage Association 2023

# Background

The National Portage Association (NPA) is a charity which provides a quality framework and training for portage services across England and Wales; supporting Portage services, Portage Practitioners and parents.

Portage is a home visiting, pre-school, education service supporting young Disabled children in the family home and learning environment.

Portage is a model of support for children and families and the Portage principles can be adapted and used effectively both in the home and in early years and school settings.

- The NPA works with over 100 Portage services across England and Wales.
- 2023 sees the National Portage Association (NPA) celebrating 40 years in England. Portage has been established in the UK since 1976 and the NPA was formed in 1983.
- Many Portage services offer a range of groups and activities in their local areas.
- Portage services are required to meet a set criteria and register with the NPA in order to ensure quality of intervention and consistency across services.





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NationalPortageAssociation



nationalportageassociation



Portage\_uk

**Registered Charity Number: 1087865** 

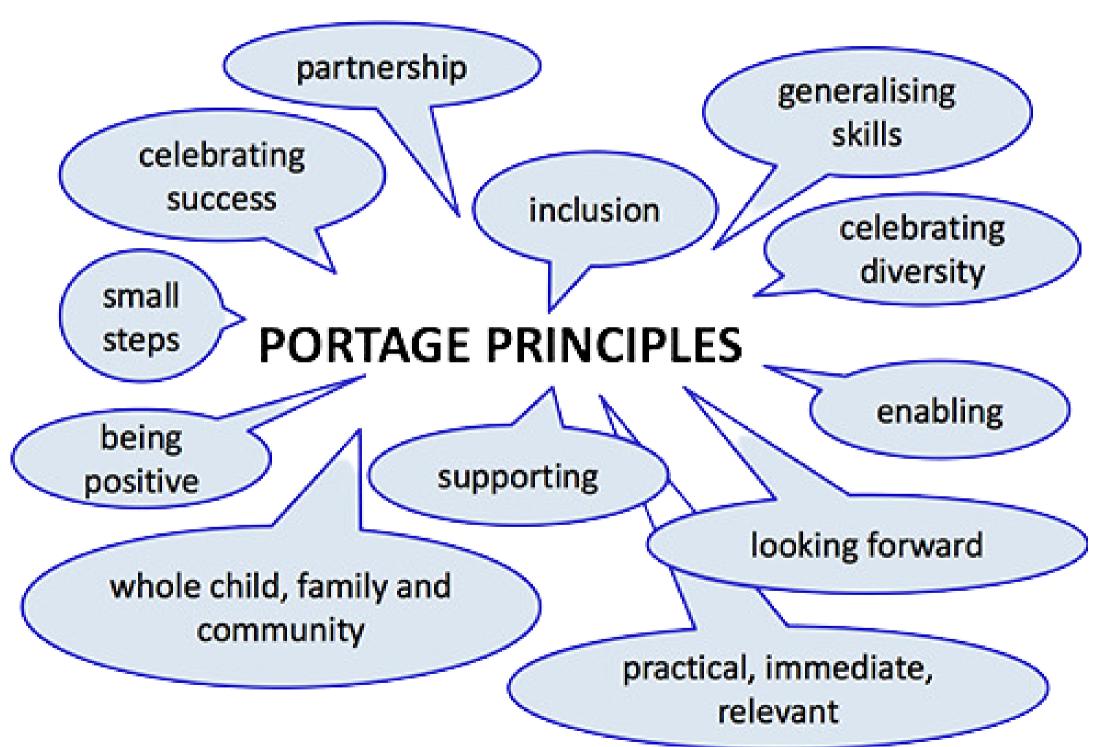
# Portage Principles

The National Portage Association is passionate about supporting children, parents and families and aim to...

Work with families to help them develop a quality of life and experience for themselves and their young children in which they can learn together, play together, participate and be included in their community in their own right;

Play a part in minimising the disabling barriers that confront young children and their families receiving Portage services;

Support the national and local development of inclusive services for children.



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# Objectives

**Summary of reasons for the survey** 

#### Specific research objectives were as follows:

- Measure the Portage **family experience** to understand where families see most value in the services so that the business strategy can be aligned to community requirements;
- Capture what families say is unique and beneficial about Portage interventions, so that these drivers can be leveraged to inform future brand engagement and security of funding for services;
- Capture feedback on how Portage services across the UK could be **improved** i.e. to understand what's working well in addition to identifying potential gaps in family needs;
- Gather **testimonials** from advocate families that can ultimately be used by Portage to promote their services to the wider community;
- To prove 'added value' to Local Authorities when Portage services are funded through LA's and secure future funding for Portage services with increasing economical/ financial pressures on budgets.



# Research Design

The research took the form of an online self-completion survey conducted amongst families using the Portage services across the UK.

- An online quantitative self-completion survey was created and hosted on Google and Microsoft platforms;
- The survey link was distributed to Portage services and service managers, to disseminate to parents through social media, email and publications;
- A free prize draw (£30 Amazon voucher) was offered as an incentive to families to complete the survey.
- The survey was open for responses between 1st February and 31st March 2023;
- A hard copy version of the questionnaire was provided for those that requested it;
- A total of **981** completed responses were received, including partial responses.



Family Survey



# **Question Areas**

Question topics covered family views about Portage (e.g. usage and opinion of home visits, education targets & activities and health & wellbeing etc)

#### **Experience of Portage interventions**

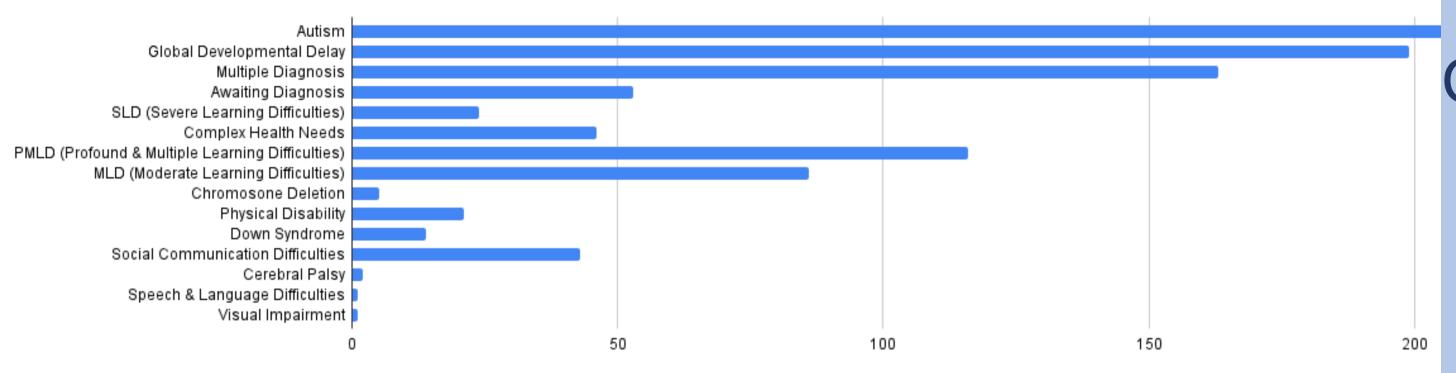
- **Portage visits** e.g. awareness, waiting times, frequency of visits, overall rating etc
- **Education** e.g. Portage targets and play & learning activities set in the home
- Family e.g. impact of Portage support on family life, value in home visiting service etc
- **Health & Wellbeing** e.g. emotional & mental health needs, use of other support agencies
- **Community** e.g. Portage groups attended, gaps in service provision, specific referrals etc
- **Economic** e.g. attendance at Portage events, other Portage service team support taken etc

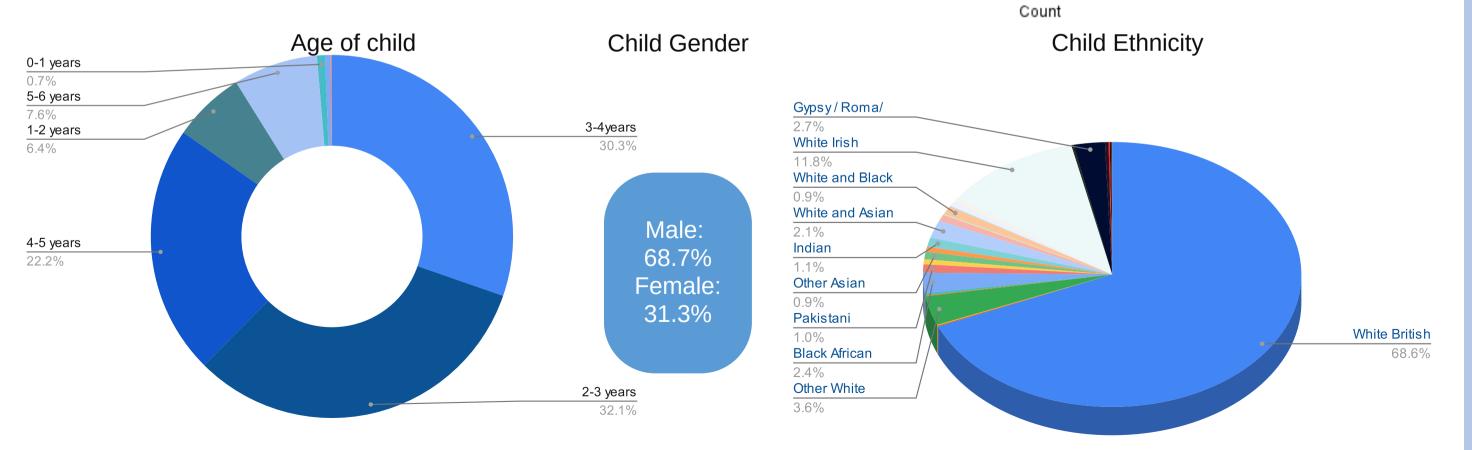




# Respondent Profile

Count







# Child Profile Summary

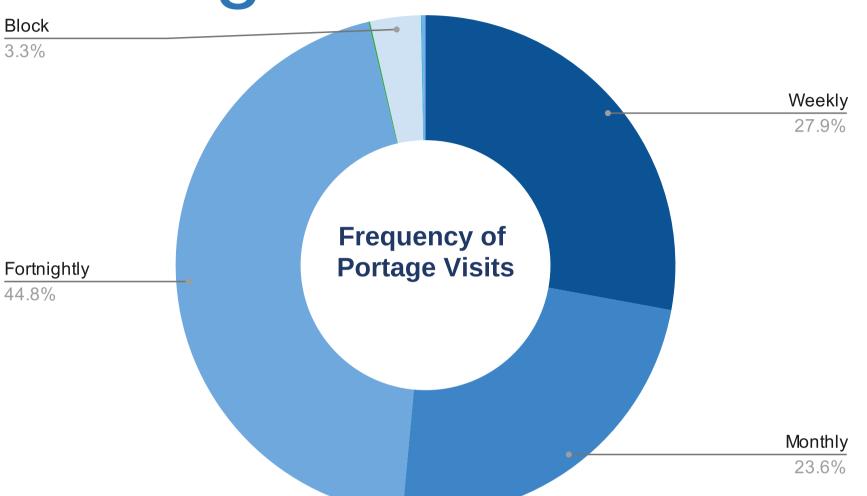
Across the total sample, the most commonly stated child's primary area of need was 'Autism' (21%), 'Global Development Delay' (20.3%) & 16.6% have stated their child has more than one diagnosis, with 56% stating that Autism was one of the multiple diagnoses received.

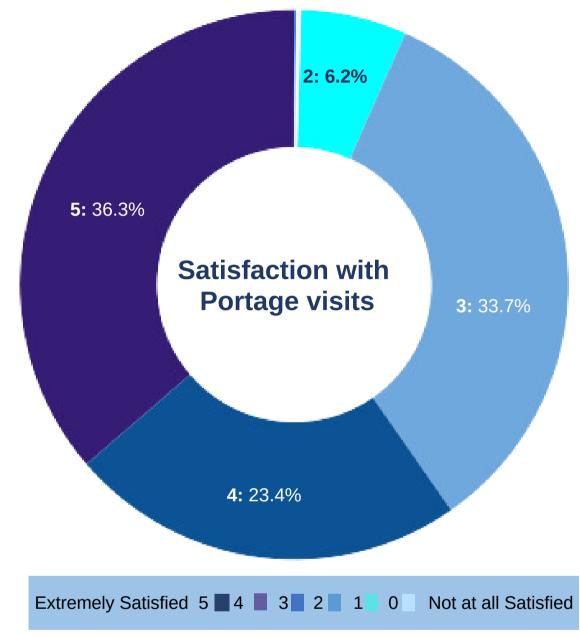
The typical child profile was 3 years old, male and White British.

Base: All respondents answering



Portage Intervention







"They set realistic goals, our Portage worker was very easy to talk to and we really enjoyed the sessions."

"Having been under Portage since my son was nearly 2, they have been absolutely amazing and gone above and beyond. I truly can't be more thankful to our Portage worker - she is the best. She is also now working with my daughter too and again has been amazing we are so very lucky to have Portage.

"I like that it is different from medical therapy and focused on support of us as a family as a whole."

"I feel less isolated and have more 'choice' and 'control' with my child's education and learning and a better understanding of my child's learning and development."

"Portage is amazing! We couldn't be more grateful for the knowledge and support it has given us."



Over 90% of families rate
Portage as either Excellent, Very
Good or Good

Almost 90% of parents would recommend
Portage to other families

59.7% of respondents are either extremely or very satisfied with the frequency of home visits



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"The support they give is beyond amazing."

#### What would you tell other parents about the Portage service?

"Our Portage worker supported me as much as my child in the early days. With our son's early surgery I had poor mental health but due to the lack of mental health services in the area she supported me where they couldn't. I was isolated from other families due to the level of intervention and appointments my child had, I had little time to socialise and Portage helped me feel less isolated. She helped me navigate the high volume of paperwork that is needed in the system when having a child with an additional need"

"My own understanding of my child's needs has increased significantly and our Portage worker has helped us to navigate our way through the world of SEND."

"My Portage worker played with my child every session and had wonderful ideas on how to engage him. They have a very unique bond."

That they are amazing and the support is second to none."

"That there is lots they can help with, even filling in forms, that they make you feel comfortable and they're only there to help."

"The sessions are supportive and relaxed, without judgement."

"We received a great deal of good advice and support."

"Our Portage Worker is professional, kind, friendly, understanding, passionate about her work and goals we achieve, loves children, supportive, goes an extra mile to make sure she supports her patient. Extremely knowledgeable and experienced."

"Do it! This service will help you with your mental health, and with your child's health and social skills."

"They offer support, ideas, and commitment where a lot of services haven't been able to."

"We were extremely happy with our Portage sessions and they helped my son a lot, alongside us working with him as well and all doing the same thing."

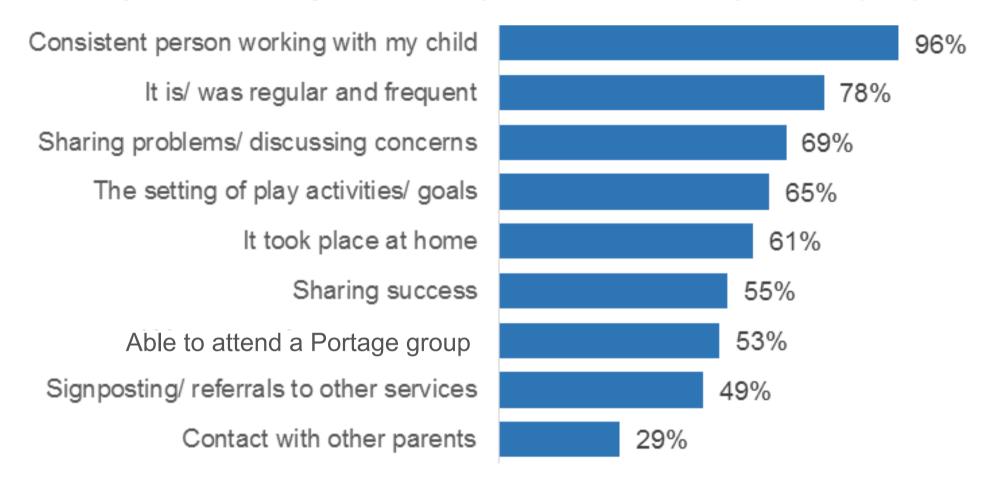
"My child has made significant progress in all areas of development. He is now using words, will take turns, understands how to join in with signing, has better attention and listening skills! Thank you Portage!"

"Our portage worker has been amazing! Always there for us if we've had any concerns. More often than not, she is able to offer advice and ideas. If she is unsure of anything she always finds out from the relevant people and gets back to us or provides details of people to contact."

"She was always willing to listen and asked about us as a family as a whole which made us feel very included in the process. We learned lots and our son made lots of progress, which we were a part of."

# Portage – Home Visits/ Usage

Portage home visiting service components considered particularly important



- Stated that their Portage worker supported/ helped them to 'a great extent' as parents/carers and as a family to become more effective at teaching their child to learn and play
- 71.2% Stated they felt extremely involved with the planning and delivery of sessions, aims, targets, reports, form filling etc for their child
- 84.3% Stated they felt it was extremely important that the Portage sessions took place in their home
- 99.9% Stated there was time during the home visit to talk to the Portage worker and share concerns and ask questions

## Portage Referrals to other agencies:

DLA (72%)
EHCNA (62%)
Short Breaks (35%)
Sensory Impairment (7%)
2 Year Funding (18%)
Speech & Language Therapy (75%)
Occupational Therapy (47%)
Physiotherapy (25%)
Sleep Support (18%)
SEN Dentist (36%)
HomeStart (19%)

## Professionals Referring to Portage:

Most children were referred to Portage via their Paediatrician (47%), Health Visitor (32%), Physio/Speech/ OT Therapist (14%) Children Centre (4%) Other (3%)

#### **Financial Support:**

Other support provided includes Application for DLA (72%%), Short Breaks (35%), 2-year funding (18%)



#### At Home

Most families stated that the home visiting component was an important part of the Portage service and that Portage helps parents/ carers to become more effective at teaching their child to learn and play.

Consistency of the person working with their child was paramount along with being involved in the planning and delivery of sessions.

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What did you like about the session planning & delivery process?

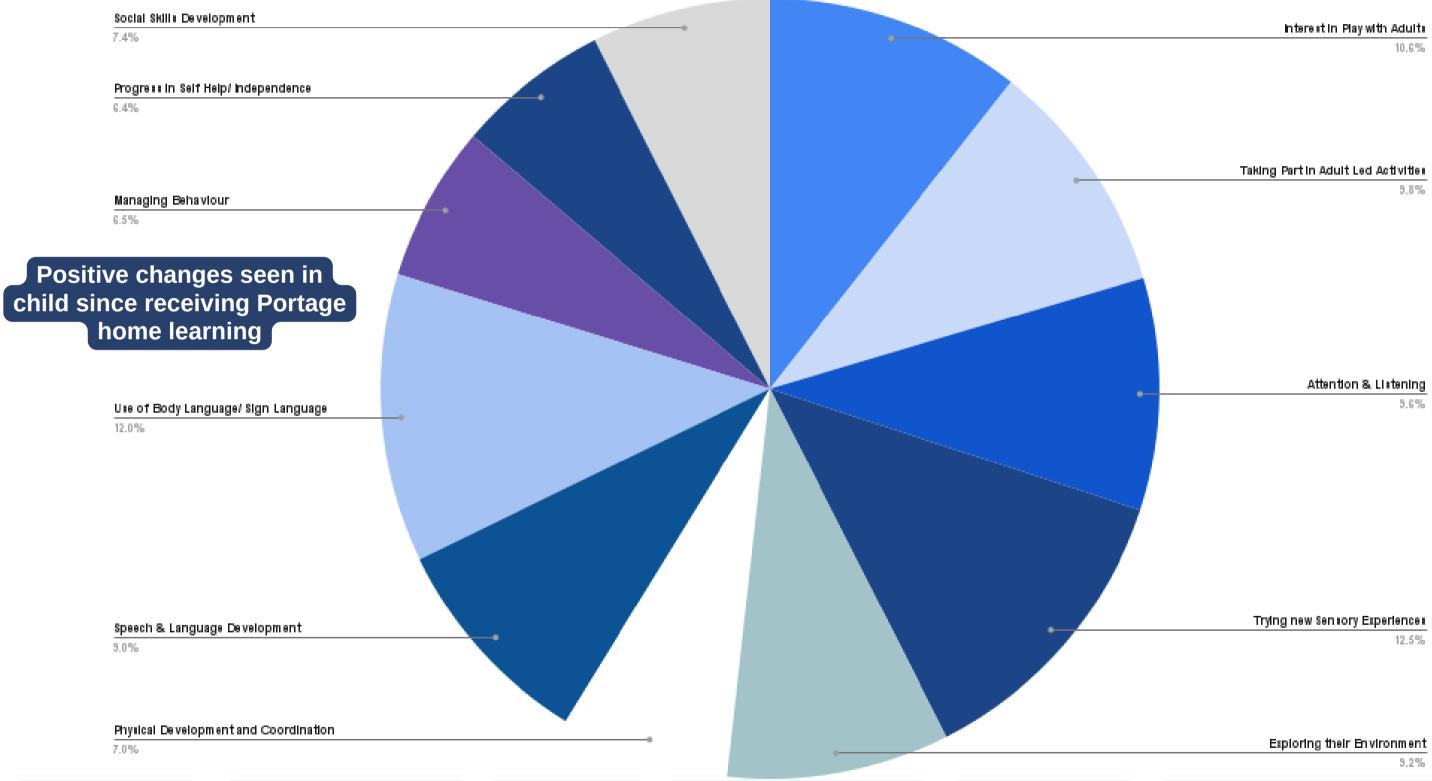
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Our Portage worker has been invaluable for our child. For an hour every two weeks my child interacts with an adult outside of his parents and plays. She is a fountain of knowledge and my child has made some fantastic progress in all areas of development."

"As parent's we were involved in every goal my son was working on and felt a part of his successes.



# Portage Services – Impact



"Portage has been life changing for us as a family"

"It would have been an uphill struggle without the Portage Service" "They made learning possible for my child" "I couldn't have got through the process without my Portage worker"

"It gave us the confidence to try different things"

"Portage have been the most supportive and helpful agency that have been involved with my son!"





Our Portage Worker, from day one, built trust with my son. It was very tough for me at the time waiting on his diagnosis so to have someone who knows about autism and things we can be doing to support his development really helped. The service is for my son but I always had so many questions and my Portage worker always had great suggestions to help and had lots of patience and experience.

# Portage Services – Impact

#### 99.1%

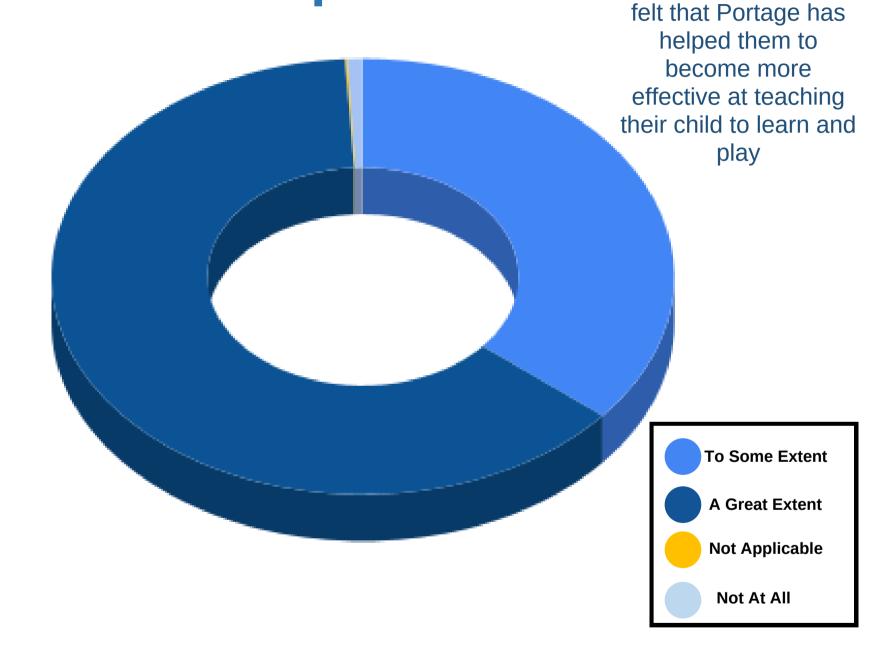
Stated that Portage has contributed to their child's progress

63.1% to a 'Great Extent'/
36% to 'Some Extent'

#### 98%

Stated that the Portage service helps to support their emotional & mental health needs

65.3% to a 'Great Extent'/ 32.8% to 'Some Extent



#### When asked:

"Do you feel more able to understand and meet you child's needs since receiving Portage?"

93% of parents said YES



Key:

Count of parents that

"Portage has been a massive and extremely helpful contribution to our family."

"I would have been totally lost without the service. My Portage worker helped my child and helped me so, so much. When I was doubting myself she reassured me and said I'm doing a great job. She answered my anxious questions and always focused it all on my son. Not forgetting to let me know she's happy to answer my questions and point me in the right direction if she couldn't help. I honestly don't know what I would have done without it. Waiting for an autism diagnoses with no support for the child is tough, we needed this time."

"She even taught us strategies as a family on how we can help my 3 year old to engage with us and notice us."

What other comments do you have about the Portage service contributions to your child's progress?





"The Portage visits and group sessions have been incredibly useful for my child. The groups and sessions grow their confidence, offer the opportunity to meet other children with similar needs and provide activities that are suited to their needs. We have both made friends for life."

# Portage – Areas of Improvement

# Portage targets and play & learning activities

"The targets were great and worked well at home but we needed more support to help generalise the skills outside of the Portage home sessions."

# Planning and delivery of sessions, aims, targets, reports, form filling etc

"Would love to have a video to watch on how to support my child's development as an hour long appointment is not long enough to practice new activities."

"Fortnightly home visits mean that targets are not moved on as quickly as they could have been."

Spontaneous

#### **Portage Groups**

"We know that some Portage services in different areas offer a range of groups, but our Portage Service doesn't. Groups would make such a difference to my family and give me the opportunity to meet other parents and carers."



The main improvement areas to the Portage service spontaneously mentioned by families were as follows:

"Sessions are not frequent enough. Most sessions are fortnightly and only for an hour during Term Time."

"The waiting list was long and as my child started to go to nursery - I couldn't access any support from Portage, When we finally reached the top of the Portage list."

"I had to make a choice between my child receiving Portage home visits or attending nursery - but I think he should have had both as both support his learning and development."



# Portage- Case Study: Holly

"Our Portage worker did lots of joint visits with speech therapy, occupational therapy physiotherapy and the

"The Portage group on a Monday morning" was fantastic - to finally have a group where we could go and have the people there to support us and to meet other families in similar positions was fantastic."

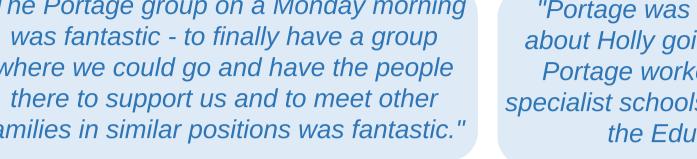
"Portage was wonderful at helping us think about Holly going to nursery and school. Our Portage worker arranged for visits to local specialist schools and attended the session with the Educational Psychologist."

"The difference in my child, since receiving Portage is phenomenal."

"From day one of starting our home visits with Portage, It was obvious that Portage was going to be a tremendous help to the whole family."

"We do not believe that she would have progressed so far and so fast without the targeted activities of Portage. We now have lots of hope for the future."

"Our Portage worker was wonderful with both our girls (twins) and Holly's sister was included as much as possible and made welcome at the weekly Portage group."







### Making a difference

All case studies show the impact Portage has made on the family as well as the development of the child.

Parents report that attending groups and receiving home interventions with Portage considerably and consistently impacted positively on their child's future, providing invaluable early intervention at a time when its needed the most.



# Key Insights





Parents highly value the support and intervention provided by the Portage service & would recommend it to other parents.



Portage plays a fundamental role in the early identification and early intervention of needs for children.



Portage interventions increases a parents' understanding of their child's needs both now and for the future.



Portage provides young children with the Right Support, in the Right Place and at the Right Time.



Portage empowers parents and carers and plays an important role in supporting parental mental health and wellbeing.



Portage creates a holistic package of support for child and family and encompasses the needs of the whole family.



Portage plays a large part in ensuring parents are linked in to the appropriate services, support and interventions.

# How does Portage 'fit' into legislation/ guidance?



'It is particularly important in the early years that there is no delay in making any necessary special educational provision. Delay at this stage can give rise to learning difficulty and subsequently to loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and to behaviour difficulties. Early action to address identified needs is critical to the future progress and improved outcomes that are essential in helping the child to prepare for adult life'. The 0-25 SEND Code of Practice 2015



'Excellent early years provision can play a key role by identifying needs early and putting the right support in place so that children can progress. Research has found that high-quality early years provision for children significantly decreased the likelihood of a child being identified with SEN in later years.' SEND Review. Right Support, Right Place, Right Time. March 2023



'Parents are children's first and enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in Early Years Settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning'. EYFS 2012



'For very young children local authorities should consider commissioning the provision of home-based programmes such as Portage. The 0-25 SEND code of Practice.' 2015



'Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers'. EYFS 2021





Partners with Parents and Children

"Since we have had Portage in our lives, we as a family feel less isolated and that we have more 'choice' and 'control' with our child's education, We now have a greater understanding of benefits, entitlements and services available to us. We feel we have a better understanding of our child's learning and development and therefore cope much better with stress.

We feel Portage has changed our lives for the better.

Thank you."





The National Portage
Association Board and
Trustees would like to thank
everyone that took part in
and contributed to this
impact survey.

Thank you also to our wonderful parents, carers and Portage children
We are so lucky to be a part of your journey.

