



**brain
in hand**

Evidence of the impact of Brain in Hand

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This short report summarises some of the major areas of impact of Brain in Hand, the evidence supporting these changes, and feedback from our users. Impact reports will be published every quarter, the next being shared in November 2024.

Our impact in numbers

Like the previous impact report, we have been consolidating user feedback into a single survey that is sent to each user every three months of their license. Between February and June 2024, 438 users responded to the survey.

We have used the data from this survey to identify four themes for our areas of impact.

Impact theme	Percentage of users reporting Brain in Hand helped with a specific area of life
<p>Mental health and emotional and physical wellbeing</p> <p>Health and happiness of users and tangible clinical symptoms, such as anxiety, as well as behaviours that lead to positive health outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61% with stress and or anxiety • 43% with overwhelm and or burnout • 35% with self-care <p><i>It's really useful for tracking my mood and allows me to be aware of how things are affecting me. My coach has helped me think things through step by step and put together scripts I can use in various situations and my psychologist is also helping me to find ways to integrate scripts into BIH too.</i></p>
<p>Daily life skills</p> <p>The skills that enable someone to navigate through daily challenges and needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45% with organisation • 35% with self-care • 34% with problem-solving or decision-making • 22% with independence • 18% with life-skills <p><i>Felling less anxious, struggling with memory and procedures gives you a lot of anxiety, having BiH has helped as don't keep worrying about have I done this or that and feedback from other people as they comment and that increases anxiety so being more organised and worrying less has helped.</i></p>
<p>Communication and interaction</p> <p>Having the confidence and skills to communicate and interact well with friends and in new social situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% with confidence • 14% with participating in meaningful social interactions • 10% with relationships <p><i>Helped in that I am more able to reach out to friends and family I can convey what is wrong. I can also reach out to my academic tutor as I now have something to say to express what I want to say.</i></p>
<p>Personal growth and development</p> <p>Life successes and achievements, and being where you want to be and doing what you want to be doing.</p>	<p>For those in work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are retained: 33% are more likely to stay in their role • Performance is improved: 35% are performing better in their role • Absenteeism is reduced: 14% had less days off work <p>For those studying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved time management: 63% manage their time better • Attendance goes up: 32% attend more classes • Making progress: 37% feel they are succeeding in their studies <p><i>Brain in Hand helps me put in all the lectures I have to do. So I know when I am free and can organise other career opportunities. I don't think I would make it to lectures without Brain in Hand.</i></p>

Feeling safe

Our research has shown that feeling safe is a priority for autistic people.

57% of autistic people ranked “feeling safe” as their top priority, and 75% ranked it first or second. This was top priority across all age groups from 18 up to 45 years old.

397 autistic people surveyed in 2022 responded to the question “Which of these is more important to you – feeling safe, feeling respected, feeling independent and feeling confident”

Recent conversations with our users provided insights into what “feeling safe” means to them

When asked “What does feeling safe mean to you” there were diverse narratives from people who had signed up to Brain in Hand with some focusing on physical safety but most on emotional safety, feeling comfortable and supported, being able to be themselves, and not worrying about anything.

“Feeling comfortable where I am and who I am with.”

“Being able to fully relax, not having to worry about anything.”

“Feeling emotionally and mentally calm...personally its all about emotional security. It's about calmness and love. Feeling protected. Feeling completely content by your environment and everyone in it.”

“Quiet, warm, cosy. In an enclosed space. Happy.”

“Having secure housing, having enough food and living in a safe area. Emotional safety which for me is more important to my well being and that is being around people who are kind. Having my boundaries respected, feeling supported and looked after. That I can be myself.”

Preliminary findings from a prospective study indicate that Brain in Hand can improve our users perceptions of feeling safe.

After 6 months of using Brain in Hand, the percentage of people feeling safe ‘all of the time or often’ increased from 59% to 77%, and this was statistically significant at the 5% level ($\chi^2(1, N = 107) = 7.722, p \leq .05$).

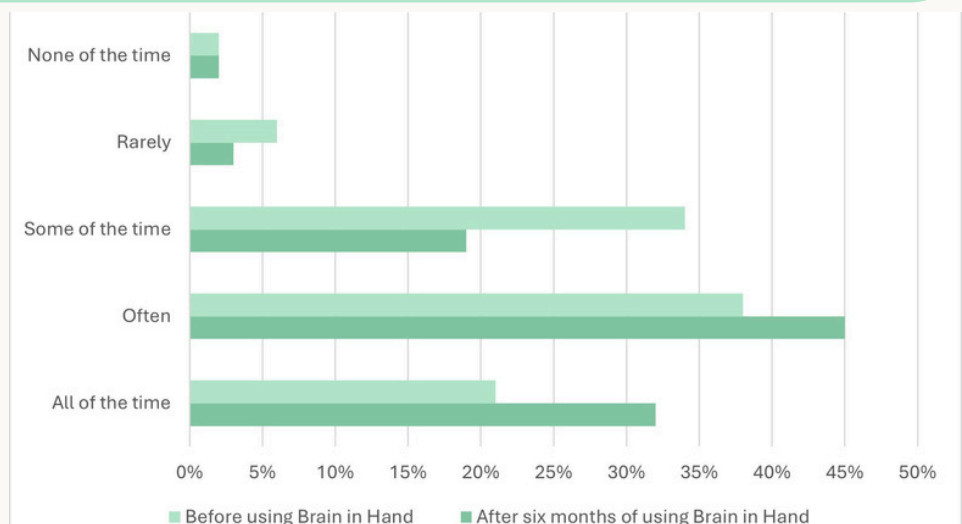


Figure 1: Users rating how often they feel safe before Brain in Hand and after 6 months.

Spotlight on our users not in employment or study

With around 3 in 10 autistic people in any kind of employment ([DWP, 2023](#)), and 36% of autistic students who enrolled on an undergraduate degree in 2019 not completing their degree ([North East Autism Society, 2019](#)), there is a cohort of users who are not eligible for funding through Access to Work, or DSA.

From the user survey there were 62 users who were neither in employment nor in education. This cohort were most likely to share they use Brain in Hand regularly (59% compared to 39% for all participants). These users said that Brain in Hand had helped them in different ways:

61% said Brain in Hand has helped them with stress and/or anxiety

“Brain in hand really helped following a sibling bereavement, I was able to use the app in correspondence with a member of brain in hand staff to use strategies to help with my mood and what to do when I was at dire straits with my mental health. I really don’t know where would be without brain in hand, it helps not only with my mental health but my physical too.”

32% said Brain in Hand had helped with problem solving or decision making

“I was in two minds about some things, and I realised I could now make informed and logical choices by referring to my plan of action lists made with help from my coach from brain in hand.”

41% said Brain in Hand had helped with overwhelm and/or burnout

“I use it to remind me of all the things in my routine and can relax now that I know even if something happens or goes wrong, I can still make sure I get my daily living tasks done.”

32% said Brain in Hand helped with organisation

“Need to keep up with medication schedule to prevent health condition deteriorating. Use alerts on Brain in Hand to try and keep to this (something I really struggled with previously due to extreme disorganisation).”

37% said Brain in Hand had helped with self-care

“When I was having negative thoughts comparing my life situation with a number of other friends or family my age. I used the ‘unplanned events’ section to see what strategies I’d previously suggested to myself when I compare myself to them. I then tried several of these strategies and tried to repeat some helpful phrases to myself. This helped get me out of the ‘dip’ my mood had been experiencing and the unhelpful thoughts I was having.”

26% said Brain in Hand had helped with self-awareness and self-acceptance

“It helps me to be aware of how I am feeling. This helps me to know that I am feeling tired /overwhelmed /ill/ hot /cold / thirsty when I would not normally notice. This helps me stay on an even keel, and means I am less likely to have a meltdown.”

Understanding the needs of our cohort

Brain in Hand offers an on-demand support service whereby users can request support from a responder. Users are either called or texted within 30 minutes of requesting support. Support is available 24 hours a day. In June 2024, the Brain in Hand Research team conducted a scoping activity at the Autism shows in London, Manchester, and Birmingham to better understand what people expect of an on-demand support service, when they might access it, and what would prevent them from using a service like this.

Inclusive research

We used findings from a research project on how we can conduct more inclusive research with neurodivergent people. [See our blog here.](#) Part of this was to create a printed handout of the tool. This visual aid was used to support with information processing, as it allowed the participant to follow along with the survey. The tool was well received by participants, with some wanting to hold it themselves and others wanting to read along while the interviewers held the printout.

1

Do you identify as autistic?

- No
- Yes, I have a clinical diagnosis
- Yes, I do not have a clinical diagnosis
- Prefer not to say

2

Based on our description, can you think of a time recently where the on-demand support service would have been useful for you?



Please consider:

- Where you might be
- What might be happening
- What getting support in the moment would mean in this situation?

Example question layout on the handout

Findings

Findings from the research show there are differences between how neurodivergent participants, and professionals perceived barriers to utilising the service. Neurodivergent people were more than 3 times more likely to say they did not want to feel like they are wasting the services time, and thinking someone else may need it more compared to professionals.

Participants were also asked what having access to an on-demand support service would mean to them, and when they think they may use it if they had access to it. Responses often mentioned using the service for emotional dysregulation, having support as and when needed, using the service when other support was unavailable, and having external support and understanding.

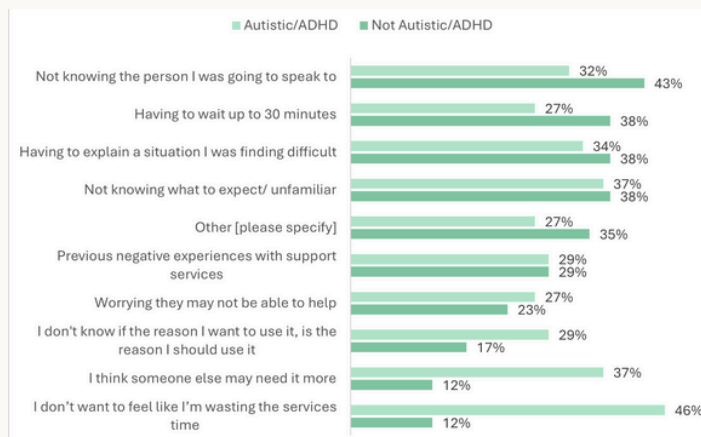


Figure 2: What would prevent you from using an on-demand support service?

"In my job I've just recently started a new job, things that come up, useful to have somewhere or someone to refer back to. I've been in and out of therapy but in the moment, you can go blank so in the moment it could be really useful. Having that clear head to refer to when your head isn't."

"I think it's the reassurance knowing it's there. The worst feeling is not knowing what to do so it avoids me getting into that panic, saves a lot of stress"

"It would reduce the amount of meltdowns, someone to talk to in the moment, I don't want to burden"