



County Durham Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

Impartiality Policy

The role of County Durham SENDIASS is to ensure parents, carers, children, and young people have access to:

- confidential and impartial information
- advice and support

so they can make informed decisions about their or their child's special educational needs.

This is achieved by:

- working in partnership with parents, carers, children, and young people
- providing information
- providing training
- working with relevant agencies
- ensuring that the views of parents, carers, children, and young people
- influence local policy and practice.

Durham SENDIASS respects that parents are experts regarding their own children.

We will

Listen to your concerns.

- We are non-judgemental, neutral and have empathy with your situation.
- We are always happy to listen to your concerns, no matter how big or small.

Support you.

- We will work with you, at your direction.
- We will go through various options that may help you.
- We will encourage you to think about your or your child's situation.
- We will give advice based on your individual circumstances.

County Durham SENDIASS will:

- Provide parents, children, and young people with a balanced and comprehensive range of information setting out all options available, enabling them to make informed decisions dependent upon the individual circumstances of the referral.
- With consent, put forward the views and wishes of parents, children, and young people either during meetings or telephone calls whilst, at the same time, ascertaining the views of professionals involved with the family.
- Inform the Service Coordinator of any conflict of interest in relation to individual families e.g. governor at the same school. These cases will be referred to other team members.
- Signpost parents, children and young people to other agencies that enable them to verify the impartiality of the information and advice provided e.g. IPSEA.
- Where possible and circumstances permitting, state their role at the beginning of meetings they attend to clarify the position taken.
- Maintain a professional relationship with parents, children, and young people they support.

Training and skills

- County Durham SENDIASS will ensure that all staff access high quality, independent training in current and relevant education law, policy, and practice in relation to SEND.
- Information sessions and training provided by County Durham SENDIASS will include a range of providers and organisations to ensure impartial delivery.
- Our staff have SEND legal training which is provided by IPSEA.
- We have knowledge of recent Special Educational Needs developments at a local and national level.

How Durham SENDIASS ensure impartiality

- We work entirely independently from any organisations and are here to give support and advice to parents, to carers, to young people and to children.
- We are based in an easily accessible building.
- We do not liaise with any agencies or the multi-disciplinary team unless you have asked us to do so.
- County Durham SENDIASS are provided by Durham County Council however we must work at 'arm's length' from the Local Authority.
- We do not have access to any information or databases belonging to the Local Authority or any other organisation, everything we know about your child comes from parents/carers or the young person (16-25).
- To ensure parents, carers and young people have confidence in SENDIASS it is important that staff can work impartially.

Liaising with other professionals and organisations

- May have parental/young person's consent to act as a mediator by relaying their perspective to school or Local Authority professionals. This does not indicate bias in favour of the parent/young person, nor does it represent the views of SENDIASS staff.
- Should make it clear that they have no vested interest in the outcome of any decision-making process in relation to an individual child/young person or family, and do not work to a SENDIASS agenda.
- Will maintain an impartial stance whilst collaborating and engaging with relevant organisations and networks.

Publications

- County Durham SENDIASS has its own identity including service logo, leaflet, Advice line number and email address.
- The Service has its own social media pages.
- County Durham SENDIASS has responsibility for the content and maintenance of its own website.
- County Durham SENDIASS writes its own materials and information, and publicity is monitored for its impartiality.

Policy Effectiveness

- All County Durham SENDIASS literature states the impartial nature of the service.
- A copy of the County Durham SENDIASS Impartiality Policy is available on the website.
- Copies of the Impartiality Policy will be made available to parents, children or young people who request it.
- Existing and new staff will be introduced to the policy via induction and training.
- It is expected that all staff will adhere to the principles of the Impartiality Policy.

Monitoring

- Feedback from service users.
- The parent/carer forum will periodically be asked to monitor the impartiality of the information developed and provided by SENDIASS.
- The Impartiality Policy will be reviewed annually by County Durham SENDIASS.