



SENDIASS Support at Meetings

We often get requests for SENDIASS to attend meetings. Due to the number of parents/carers, children and young people we support we are not able to accept all the meeting requests we receive. Meeting requests will always be considered on an individual basis, and a decision will be made based on the guidelines below.

We may agree to attend with you where the following has been established first:

- We have been given at least **2 weeks'** notice of the meeting.
- There is no other friend or family member who can attend with you.
- You have previously told us that you have an additional support need which prevents you from being able to put across your views independently.
- You are a young person aged 16-25 years and have requested independent support.
- There are other support needs, for example, English is an additional language.

Due to service capacity and the geographical size of County Durham, SENDIASS prefer to attend a meeting virtually by using Microsoft Teams, Google Meet or Zoom online. Meetings in person (sometimes called face to face meetings) are subject to availability, necessity, and location.

If we do not agree to attend a meeting, we can provide advice before the meeting, provide you with our leaflet *Making Meetings Matter*, or help you to access relevant resources where enough time is given before the meeting date.

Mediation, Appeals and Tribunals

There may be occasions when you ask SENDIASS to support and/or represent you during the Appeal & Tribunal process because you are unable to do this on your own.

SENDIASS can attend meetings such as Mediation, Judge Assisted Dispute Resolution (JADR) and the Tribunal Hearing with you if they are available and if you are unable to independently advocate for your child, or yourself and this has been agreed during your contact and communication with us.

Our role is to provide information and tools to give you the confidence to express your views, wishes and rights. You are the best person to speak for your child or for yourself and we will not do this on your behalf unless it is necessary, and you have asked us to do this for you. Attendance as a supporter or representative **must** be agreed with the service before naming us on the appeal paperwork.