

West Sussex SEND Information,
Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS)

Who we are and what we do



The role of the SENDIAS

The West Sussex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS) provides impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers of children (0-25) who have special educational needs and/ or a disability. The service aims to encourage partnership between parents, their child's school, social care, the Local Authority, health and other agencies.

Our service is available for any parent carer whose child has or may be identified as having special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND). We also support young people to think about their options for their future and think about their views, wishes and aspirations. Please ask SENDIAS for a young person leaflet for more details.

What information, advice and support do we offer?

We offer accurate, up to date and impartial resources and information about the law on special educational needs and disability. This covers:

- Education, health and social care.
- National and Local policy.
- The Local Offer.
- Your rights and choices.
- Your opportunities to participate.
- Where you can find help and advice.
- How you can access this support.

We provide information in many ways, including our facebook page, publications, training events and conferences.

Sometimes information alone is not enough. You may want help to gather information, make sense of it and apply it to your own situation. We call this advice and we offer this service by email, on the telephone, face to face and through work with groups or in training.

We can offer more intensive support if needed. This can include helping with letters, attending meetings with you or supporting you in discussions with the local authority, school or other setting. We may also be able to find an a volunteer who can support you.

When we are not able to help we will do our best to tell you about, or put you in touch with, other groups or organisations that can help. We call this signposting.

What do we mean by impartial information, advice and support?

This information is about the impartial information, advice and support required by the SEND Code of Practice.

What does the SEND Code of Practice say?

The Children and Families Act 2014 says that local authorities must provide information, advice and support about special educational needs (SEN), disability, and health and social care for children, young people and parents.

The SEND Code of Practice (2.1) says:

Local authorities must arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to their SEN or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care. This must include information, advice and support on the take-up and management of Personal Budgets. In addition, in carrying out their duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must have regard to the importance of providing children and their parents and young people with the information and support necessary to participate in decisions.

This means that every Local Authority should provide a service that is free, easy to access and confidential and that can help children, parents and young people take part in decisions that affect their lives. This service is known as the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS).

What do we mean when we say we are impartial?

The SEND Code of Practice (2.8) says:

The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups

This means that the information, advice and support that we offer is firmly based in the law and the SEND Code of Practice.

We provide unbiased information and advice about the Local Authority's policies and procedures and about the policy and practice in local schools and other settings.

We do not give priority to any particular impairment, disability or special educational need, nor do we campaign for any particular approach to education.

How do we know that we are impartial?

At SENDIAS we follow a national set of Quality Standards for services providing impartial information, advice and support developed by the Network of Information, Advice and Support Services. This helps us to monitor the effectiveness of the service we provide and ensure that it is 'at arm's length' from the Local Authority. By this we mean that we act, and are seen to act, separately and impartially, with no undue influence or control from either the Local Authority or the Clinical Commissioning Group in our area.

We also have a SENDIAS Steering Group that monitors our effectiveness and whether we are following our impartiality and confidentiality policies. Included on the Steering Group are parents, as well as professionals. There is also an independent chair of the Group; this is a parent representative from the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum.

You can find our Impartiality Policy on the SENDIAS information pages on the Local Offer at www.local-offer.org

We really value your opinion about the information, advice and support we offer. We want you to tell us if you think we are not impartial. To help us check that we are impartial we routinely ask those who use our service to say whether they think we have been biased one way or another.

Is the service confidential?

We will not share your information with anyone unless you tell us we can. The only exception to this would be because we have a specific concern related to safeguarding.

You can find our Confidentiality Policy on the SENDIAS information pages on the Local Offer at www.local-offer.org

Where can I find out more?

You can read about impartial information, advice and support in the SEND Code of Practice Chapter 2. You can find this guidance on the West Sussex Local Offer website www.local-offer.org

The Local Offer includes details of West Sussex arrangements for providing information, advice and support. Look at the SENDIAS information pages on the Local Offer for information about our services, copies of our publications and contact details.

Our intention is to provide information to enable you as a parent carer or young person to make your own, informed choices.

The service we offer can help you become more empowered to find the confidence to participate in discussions and decisions relating to outcomes for you or your child. This will assist you to play an active and informed role in you or your child's education, care and health.

Other information you may like to know about us:

- We have a confidential helpline open weekdays, 9am-4pm.
- We have a termly newsletter detailing activities, information about local groups and regular updates on changes to SEN policy. If you would like to be added to the distribution list then call us on our helpline number or email.
- We deliver training for parents through the charity 'Reaching Families'
- We deliver training and guidance for professionals/practioners on communicating with parents.

How to contact us

Helpline: **0330 222 8555**

By Post: **SEND Information, Advice and Support Service
St James Campus
St James Road
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 7HA**

Email: **send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk**

Website: **www.westsussexsendias.org**

SEND: Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities



The role of the SENDIAS service is to ensure that all parents, children and young people have access to impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions related to their SEND. Any information that is shared with the service is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share this with other individuals, services and agencies that may be able to help the family with their circumstances. To view our policies, and our privacy notice, please look at the SENDIAS pages on the Local Offer: www.local-offer.org