

# What you can expect from us

- Meeting the needs of all our users

## Who can access the service?

The West Sussex SEND Information Advice and Support

Service (SENDIAS) provides impartial and confidential information, advice and support to the following people living in West Sussex:

- **Children and young people up to the age of 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.**
- **Parent carers of the children and young people above.**

We also offer general information and advice to those working in West Sussex who support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and their parent carers.

## How can the service help me in my situation?

We primarily aim to empower you by helping you understand what the law and statutory guidance says about your situation. We also explain local policies to enable informed decisions about your next step options in relation to your child's education. This could cover initial concerns or identification of potential SEND, through to ongoing support and provision, which may include an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). Where necessary, the information and advice may also include matters relating to health and social care.

Often, the information and advice you need for your situation can be signposted or sent for you to look at in your own time. This may be by way of **factsheets** on SEND related subjects, giving you links to **web page guides** on our website if you feel willing and able to take in more information to understand the background (e.g. the law and national guidance), and/or other useful external sources. At other times your situation may also need initial or ongoing advice from an Adviser who covers the area in which you live. The Adviser will decide with your help as to the appropriate level of information and advice you require.

Occasionally we may feel you need extra support to take the pathway you have chosen. This could be because you have additional needs and would need help to do this, English may not be your first language, or the complexity of the subject would overwhelm you. When it is felt extra support is needed, we may allocate a volunteer to help with certain pieces of work. Our level of support is based on those with the greatest need. Sometimes this is not obvious, so we may need your help to make this decision.

## How do I access the service?

Any parent carer or young person can access us by:



- **sending an email;** [sendias@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:sendias@westsussex.gov.uk) / [cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk)
- **phoning our contact line;** 0330 222 8555
- **completing the [contact form on our website](#).**

**All other service users:** We prefer parent carers and young people to voluntarily contact us directly, however if you feel for whatever reason they would be unable to contact us themselves, then we ask that you explain the service to them and get permission for us to contact them. Getting their permission by email and forwarding that email on to us or ringing us whilst you are with the parent carer and getting them to give verbal permission, are probably the easiest ways of doing this.



## When will I hear from the service?

We do our best to respond to your initial contact within 7 working days. When emailing us or calling our contact line and leaving a message there are a few things you can tell us that will help us to deal with your enquiry as quickly as possible, and to ensure you are contacted by the relevant Adviser:

- **tell us which village or town you live in**
- **give the name and date of birth of your child**
- **give a brief summary of the reason for contacting us.**



If we don't receive this information in your initial contact, this may delay the time in getting an Adviser to contact you. We would normally contact you by way of the communication method you used to make the initial contact unless you tell us otherwise. Please leave your phone number if you want us to call you.

## Are there any exceptions from my receiving IAS from the Service?

If you are already receiving information and advice on a given subject from an independent SEND service or legal representative, our help would be limited to basic information and signposting to avoid confusion and duplication. We can of course still help you with a different topic or situation. There is also a wealth of free resources and information on our website that can be accessed and may be helpful.

When a child reaches the age of 16, the Children and Families Act 2014 sees them as a 'young person', with the right to make their own requests and decisions. Our team includes two Young Person Advisors who give advice about post-16 SEND related issues. When working with you, they will ask for confirmation (usually by email) that the young person is aware of, and consents to, us discussing their situation. Occasionally, some young people decide that they do not want us to discuss them, however we are still able to give parents, or other family members, general SEND-related advice.

Other examples of where we may have to adapt or restrict the service are in our 'Policy for Supporting Parent Carers and Children / Young People in Different Situations'.

## Are there other specialist organisations who can help me?

There may be other organisations we would signpost you to that specialise in certain subjects. The main ones would be:

- **IPSEA** - offer free, independent advice and support to parent carers who have children with SEND.
- **CONTACT** - offer support to families with disabled children, especially known for benefits advice.
- **Reaching Families** - a West Sussex parent carer led charity which aims to support parents and families of CYP with SEND. They are known for their information sheets, befriending service and local benefits support.
- **West Sussex Local Offer** - helps you find information about local services, support and events for children and young people aged 0 - 25 years who have SEND.

## What do I do if I am not happy with the service I have received?

If you are not happy with the service you have received from us, then please email Heather McIntosh (Team Manager of the SENDIAS Service) on our main email address or call our contact-line to leave a voicemail message. You will also have an opportunity to complete an evaluation form if you have provided us with your email address. We of course always welcome any positive feedback you may have about the service as well!

To view this information online: <https://bit.ly/3KQTzfl> or scan QR code:

