

# The Role of the SENDIAS Service

## - Who we are and what we do



Please note: 'child' = 'child or young person'

The West Sussex SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS) provides free and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people (up to 25 years old) who have Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability (SEND) and their parent carers. The service aims to encourage partnership between parents / young people, the educational setting, the local authority (LA), social care, 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 or look at our [children and young people specific webpages](#).

### 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
- 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 on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages (links to which can be found at the end of this factsheet), publications and training.

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.

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 offer this service primarily by email or on the telephone. Where possible we also do this through visiting groups or offering training.

Occasionally, we may offer more intensive support if, through our discussion, we agree you would struggle to move your situation on with information and advice alone. This may include helping with letters, attending a meeting with you, or supporting you in discussions with the local authority, school or other setting. This support may be delivered by a volunteer.

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 & support (IAS)?

This means that we will take a neutral stance and not show any bias or take sides. The IAS given, will be based on what national law and statutory guidance says, and we will also

make you aware of local policy where this is necessary. We will make sure you are aware of all your options, and any possible consequences of these so that you can make an informed decision about what next steps to take.

**What does the Law say?** The Children and Families Act 2014 says that local authorities must provide free, impartial information, advice and support about SEND, health and social care for children, young people and parents. To find out more about a SENDIAS service, please read [Chapter 2 of the Code of Practice 2015](#).

**How do we know that we are impartial?** At SENDIAS we follow a national set of minimum standards for services providing impartial information, advice and support developed by the National Information, Advice and Support Services Network. 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 Integrated Care Boards in our area. We also have a SENDIAS Steering Group that monitors our effectiveness and whether we are following our impartiality and confidentiality policies. The Steering Group consists of parents, relevant voluntary groups and professionals.

To check we are seen as impartial we routinely ask those who use our service 'How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?'. You can find our [impartiality policy on our website](#).

### **Is the service confidential?**

We will not share your information with anyone unless you tell us we can. The only exception would be because we have a specific concern related to safeguarding. To find out more you can read our [confidentiality policy on our website](#).

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### **Other information you may like to know about us**

- Our confidential contact-line is open weekdays, 9am-4pm (please note that it can take up to 7 working days for us to respond to your enquiry)
- We blog useful information and updates:  
<https://westsussexsendias.org/blog>
- We deliver training for parents through 'Reaching Families':  
<https://westsussexsendias.org/events>
- We deliver training for professionals/practitioners on communicating with parents



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### **Service Statement**

The role of the SENDIAS service is to ensure all parents, children and young people have access to impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions related to their situation. Any information that is shared with the service is in confidence unless permission has been obtained to share this with any individuals, services and agencies that may be able to help in the circumstances. For more detail, view our [policies and privacy notice](#) on our website.

**How to contact us:** Tel: 0330 222 8555 / Email: [send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:send.ias@westsussex.gov.uk) or [cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:cyp.sendias@westsussex.gov.uk) (up to age 25) / Website: [www.westsussexsendias.org](http://www.westsussexsendias.org)

To view factsheet online and access all links: <https://tinyurl.com/btwbxzep>

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