



Norfolk SEND Partnership Impartiality Policy

Norfolk SEND Partnership (NSENDIASS) will deliver a service that places an equal value on the views of all stakeholders; it will ensure that when conveying the views of others it is accurate regarding content and source. Information will recognise the hierarchy of Law, Acts, regulations and statutory guidance. The service is provided in-house at “arms length” from the Local Authority.

Role of NSENDP

“The role of Norfolk SEND Partnership (SENDIASS) is to ensure parents, carers, young people and children have access to confidential and impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions. This is achieved by working in partnership, providing information, advice, support services and training, working with relevant agencies and ensuring parents, carers, young people and children’s views influence local policy and practice.”

Norfolk SEND Partnership (NSENDIASS) Impartiality Policy - Summary

“The role of Norfolk SEND Partnership IASS is to give parents’ carers, young people and children confidential and impartial information, advice and support so they can make decisions about their, or their child’s special educational needs. We work in partnership with parents, carers, young people and children providing information, services and training, working with other agencies and to make sure our user’s views are heard.”



We have a Steering Group which includes people from local voluntary groups, IPS, parents, Children’s Services (Education and Social Care) and Health.



We work together with families, not on their behalf, to help them to be able to be fully involved in their own or their child’s education.



We take part in local and national training courses to make sure that the information given is accurate and impartial.



We never take sides, we give factual information based on government guidance, the law and local policy.



When callers contact us, they are told that we work in a confidential and impartial way.



We will always listen to comments and use them to help plan services we offer

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that SENDIAS Services (SENDIASS) must ensure that parents, young people and children are provided with:

“Accurate, neutral information on their rights, roles and responsibilities within the Special Educational Needs process and on the wide range of options available, to enable them to make informed decisions.”

We work in partnership with parents and carers, young people and children towards ensuring that children and young people reach the ‘every child matters’ priorities.

The Steering group has a responsibility for ensuring and monitoring the impartiality of the Norfolk SEND Partnership Service (SENDIASS) (Exemplification of minimum standards)

Physical relationship between Norfolk SEND Partnership IAS Service and the Local Authority	NSENDIASS will be physically situated away from the authority's decision-making processes. In a building which does not impact on any perceived partiality and has private meeting rooms.
The Norfolk SEND Partnership IAS Steering Group	<p>Membership of the steering group will be of an equal balance between parents and professionals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chair will be independent of the Local Authority or schools. They will be elected by secret ballot. • The duties and roles of the chair and vice chair will be set out in writing and agreed to when accepting the role • The dates of all meetings will be published on the website and in the newsletter. • The mechanisms to raise issues will be made clear in the information given at the beginning of an individual becoming a member of the group. • Outcomes of steering group meetings will be freely available through published minutes, on the SEND Partnership IASS website or upon request. • The steering group monitors resources to ensure that the service is able to meet the needs of parents, carers, young people and children in Norfolk and raises concern to the local authority if necessary. • All members will agree to adhere to the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the role description, if a member steps outside this remit membership may be terminated. • The group will ensure that there is a well-defined relationship between NSENDIASS and the Local Authority that encompasses a clear understanding of impartiality and the arms length position of the service.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Steering Group will monitor that the service does not take decisions on behalf of the parent, carer, young person or children, give directive advice or act on behalf of the local authority or other agencies through termly evaluation reports. • Training will be available from Norfolk SEND Partnership IASS in one hour slots delivered at the end of Steering Group meetings by arrangement with the chair and service manager at the previous Steering Group meeting.
<p>The Terms of Reference for the Norfolk SEND Partnership Steering Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference will be given to all steering group members. • The terms will be reviewed bi-annually through a sub-group of the steering group. • The terms will give action to direct the service to safeguard service impartiality in all activities. • The terms will check and compare NSENDP IASS with other local or national, independent and authority-controlled organisations for the impartiality of information given.
<p>Training, Supervision and Practice Development</p>	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff and volunteers will take part in, and complete, the IPS training course. • All members of the steering groups will have access to a place on the IPS training course. • The IPS training course will encourage ongoing thought on communication skills whilst acting in the role expected by the service. • A sub-group of the Steering Group will monitor the impartiality of the IPS training course. • Training for staff will be undertaken at national and local level linking into both

	<p>independent law and practise based and authority courses.</p> <p>Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision for SENDIASS staff and volunteers will be in house by staff trained in impartiality through the IPS training course. • The manager will be supervised for employment purposes by a local authority representative whose role has an element of impartiality reflected within it. <p>Practice Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice development is prepared by NSENP staff and discussed by the Steering Group reflecting on its impartiality. • All new information leaflets will be presented to a sub-group of the steering group for verification of the impartiality of the information presented.
<p>Norfolk SEND Partnership promotes opportunities for all parents and carers of children with SEND to have their views heard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSENDIASS will endeavour to remove barriers for parents, carers, young people and children to access and benefit from the service it offers within its own budgetary constraints. • Parents, carers, young people and children will be encouraged to take part in questionnaires and consultations from all local and national organisations with information given in its newsletter and online as appropriate. • NSENDIASS will consult with the authority in order to present information within SEND and education in a friendly, neutral and impartial manner. • NSENDIASS will offer consultancy to those groups or organisations that record the parent, carer, young person or child's views to influence service developments. • NSENDIASS will, through its best endeavours, reflect the views and concerns of parents, carers, young people and children to the local authority and other relevant agencies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSENDIASS will ensure staff and volunteers are well trained and able to support the SEND partnership ethos when attending meetings with parents, carers, young people, children and professionals enabling everyone to be heard. • informing all parents of the impartial nature of the SENDIAS service • being clear with parents, carers, young people and children that the role of NSENDIASS is to help them participate in their or their child's education and advise them on their rights, not to advocate on their behalf or take sides with the Local Authority; • empowering the individual to speak for themselves and make their own decisions, rather than pushing them towards a particular course of action; • being aware of respecting the individuals' decisions without making a judgement, irrespective of your views as individuals; • providing factual information and advice based on what the guidance and legislation says, not offering your own opinions or reflecting local policy;
<p>Norfolk SEND Partnership supports impartiality in staff and volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective practice will be encouraged and supported through all areas of supervision. • A wide range of information organisations will be made available to those employed or volunteering in the service, being supported by it or gathering information from it. • Service user evaluations will reflect on the impartiality of the support and information given. • It will be recognised that for some service users a volunteer or member of staff may need to speak on their behalf. Before this happens the views and wishes of the individual must be understood so that these can be accurately conveyed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSENDIASS will ensure parents, carers, young people, children and practitioners clearly understand that the role of the service is to provide impartial, neutral and objective support and information. • It is the responsibility of staff, volunteers or any member of the steering group to declare any vested interest in the outcome of a decision taken with regard to any individual, child or family, or any personal or voluntary roles which may impact on their role within NSENDIASS. • NSENDIASS will ensure a wide range of literature from both local and national organisations is available for the family along with that produced by the service itself. • There will be established links on the NSENDIASS website to a wide range of local and national organisations that offer advise, support and information regarding SEN and disabilities. • NSENDIASS will represent staff and volunteer concerns and ensure these are taken to the appropriate level, either locally or nationally by NSENDIASS staff or by the Steering Group.
<p>Norfolk SEND Partnership recognises the partiality of others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training given through the IPS training course reflects on the agendas from individuals, agencies and sectors, considering the background to any information given. • Training in communication reflects on messages given and received through verbal and non-verbal means. • When giving open, impartial and neutral information, background information will be reflected where a bias is perceived and reasons discussed if requested. Best practice is to be taken into account both locally and nationally. • Whenever possible, Sub groups will reflect a balance of sector representatives.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it clear that the best educational outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities are the ultimate aims of NSENDIASS and their role is to support families to achieve this. • informing Local Authorities, education settings or any other agency of the impartial nature of NSENDIASS and making them aware of this policy; • being clear that NSENDIASS do not undertake Local Authority functions, or act on behalf of Local Authorities, educational settings or any other agency; • Being clear that SENDP do not take sides.
<p>Norfolk SEND Partnership gains feedback from service users and other to include how impartial it is.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The views of service users, both of the Helpline and the support of an IPS, will be gained through questionnaires, which include targeted questions on the impartiality of information and support given. • The Steering Group will offer support and advice that will inform practice within the service, to monitor the effectiveness of the service through questions, comments and suggestions. • Membership of the Steering Group will include a number of representatives involved in providing support to parents in an alternative capacity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All NSENDIASS staff and Independent Partnership Supporters (IPSs) receive a copy of the Impartiality Policy and it is explained to them. • The policy is shared with the Local Authority and other agencies so they are aware it exists and they understand the stance. • The policy is published on the Norfolk SEND Partnership IASS Website. • The policy is reviewed bi-annually and amendments made as they arise.