**Steering Group Terms of Reference**

**Childrenand Families Act 2014 – Advice and Information**

**32** (1) A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people for whom it is responsible, and the parents of children for whom it is responsible, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the special educational needs of the children or young people concerned.

(2) A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people in its area with a disability, and the parents of children in its area with a disability, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the disabilities of the children or young people concerned.

(3) The authority must take such steps as it thinks appropriate for making the services provided under subsections (1) and (2) known to—

(a) the parents of children in its area.

(b) children in its area.

(c) young people in its area.

(d) the head teachers, proprietors and principals of schools and post-16 institutions in its area.

(4) The authority may also take such steps as it thinks appropriate for making the services provided under subsections (1) and (2) known to such other persons as it thinks appropriate.

**Introduction**

Norfolk Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) is a statutory service offering free, impartial, confidential information, advice and support. The service provides information and advice based on education law related to SEN and disability and health and social care legislation. SENDIASS staff are independently trained in SEND law and practice, this ensures they keep their impartiality when advising parent/carers, young people and professionals.

Norfolk SENDIASS works in partnership with parents and young people, the Local Authority, health, educational settings, and other key agencies working with children and young people up to the age of 25. The Service operates at ‘arm’s length’ from Local Authority and Health Services.

The Service operates via a helpline that provides 34 hours’ worth of appointments a week, plus intensive casework support where necessary. As well as the services’ main functions they also provide training to parent/carers, young people and professionals.

Norfolk SENDIASS oversee and manage the SEND Youth Forum, participants are between the ages of 11 and 25 years. The forum provides an opportunity for children and young people with SEND to share their experiences in education & training and to work together to improve services for children and young people in Norfolk.

Norfolk SENDIASS is expected to comply with the Minimum Standards for SEND Information Advice and Support Services set out by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Care. Copies are available from the service and are on the service website.

**Aims of the Service**

The aim of the service is to ensure parents, carers and young people have access to timely, accurate and impartial, information, advice and support. This enables parents, carers and young people to take an informed and active role in the decision-making process.

The service works to limit misunderstandings and secure partnership working between parents, carers, young people, schools, the Local Authority and other services, ensuring that the views of parents, carers and young people are listened to.

**Purpose of the Steering Group**

A forum for key partners to monitor, develop and support Norfolk SENDIASS in the work they do.

**Aims of the Steering Group**

The primary functions of the Steering Group are to:

* Discuss key issues and developments that are relevant to SENDIASS
* Sign off by majority vote anything related to the SENDIAS Service
* Support, promote and develop the service
* Monitor the impartiality of the service and ensure it remains at ‘arm’s length’ to Statutory Bodies
* Ensure that impartiality and confidentiality policies are reviewed and monitor that they are implemented consistently and effectively
* Evaluate the level to which the service achieves the Minimum Standards for SEND Information, Advice and Support Services and is compliant with the SEND Code of Practice 2015
* Monitor the continued development of the service in a way that best meets the needs of children and young people with SEND in Norfolk and their parents/carers by agreeing and reviewing the Norfolk SENDIASS development plan annually
* Act as a ‘critical friend’ to Norfolk SENDIASS

**Membership**

Members of the Steering Group will be chosen on their ability to make an effective contribution on behalf of the stakeholder they represent and their willingness to be active in promoting the interests of Norfolk SENDIASS. The Steering Group will include representatives from the following:

* Local Authority Manager of Norfolk SENDIASS
* Primary, secondary, special schools
* Early Years settings
* Post 16 provider
* Voluntary groups or organisations
* Health
* Social Care
* Parents/carers of children who have SEND
* Norfolk parent/carer forum Family Voice

**Members of the Steering Group will:**

* Promote Norfolk SENDIASS to parent/carers, young people, and professionals across a range of agencies
* Give the perspective and findings of their own agency/constituency or group whilst recognising and appreciating the views of others
* Promote a partnership approach by giving feedback to their own agency, group or constituency using the appropriate channels when requested
* Be prepared to take part in/lead small Norfolk SENDIASS ‘task and finish’ working groups
* Be prepared to attend any ‘one off exceptional’ Steering Group Meetings
* Make sure they have the ability as a representative from their service/agency/organisation to cast a vote if needed, respect the vote when it’s announced and understand that if they are unable to attend the meeting it may forfeit their vote
* Behave with sensitivity, respect and honesty
* Attend each meeting
* Identify and acknowledge with the Chair any conflict of interest if it arises
* Notify the Chair through the Norfolk SENDIASS team if they are unable to attend
* Understand that when members are unable to attend 3 consecutive meetings, their position may be reviewed by the Chair and their membership may be withdrawn.
* Members of the Steering Group may only delegate their attendance to another person in their organisation once they have shown the individual these Terms of Reference and the Norfolk SENDIASS information booklet. The individual must also make time to speak with either the SENDIASS Manager or the Chair and Vice Chair of the Steering Group before attending the next Steering Group meeting.
* Read relevant material before and after meetings even if they are unable to attend the meeting itself
* Abide by requests for confidentiality

**Becoming a member of the Steering group**

Where a new member is nominated, they must:

* have a conversation with the Norfolk SENDIASS manager to ensure they understand the role of Norfolk SENDIASS
* read and agree to adhere to the Steering Group Terms of Reference

**Chair/Vice Chair**

* The Steering Group will appoint a Chair and Vice Chair to serve a maximum of 3year term subject to annual confirmation of the appointment
* The Chair and Vice Chair will be independent of SENDIASS and appointed from within the membership of the group

# Meetings

Steering group meetings will be held termly, 3 times a year.

**Norfolk SENDIASS will:**

* Produce and publish an ongoing development plan through the RAG rating of the Minimum Standards
* Circulate an agenda and supporting papers to Steering Group members prior to meetings
* Circulate minutes of the meetings to all members
* Ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are kept up to date by itemising as a rolling programme of review on the agenda.
* Support members to carry out their responsibilities
* Produce and present relevant reports including quantitative and qualitative information
* Provide help to access meetings (venues, materials, formats)
* Ensure that 50% of members (minimum) are in attendance when being asked to cast a vote
* Be available to members to discuss issues and problems
* Process expenses claims as soon as possible
* Provide induction to the role
* Invite members to attend Norfolk SENDIASS training opportunities whenever numbers allow

**The Norfolk SENDIASS Manager will:**

* Prepare the quarterly development plan and annual report
* Organise quantitative and qualitative date
* Oversee the preparation and distribution of information for members
* Attend all steering group meetings

**I agree to the above:**

**Signature:**

**Name:**

**Representing:**

**Date:**