

SENDIASS in Stoke on Trent

Built on the existing Parent Partnership Service the new Service provision SENDIASS came into effect on the 1st September 2014.

SENDIASS will provide impartial, confidential, information, advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, aged 0-25yrs.

General Purpose of the Service

SENDIASS delivers information, advice and support as applicable to the appropriate stage of Special Educational Need. The purpose of the Service is to ensure that parents and carers of children and young people with SEND are provided with the appropriate information, advice and support at the earliest opportunity / appropriate time enabling:

- (1) Parents and carers and young people to participate fully in any decision making process in regards to the provision of any necessary support for their child or themselves.
- (2) Parents and carers and young people to participate in a meaningful manner in any consultation, engagement or co-production opportunities with the Local Authority, partner organisations and wider stakeholders.

Through provision of this service, children and young people will be supported to identify outcomes and aspirations, and the necessary support mechanisms to achieve these, and to effectively prepare and transition into adulthood.

Principles

In delivering the Service, SENDIASS adheres to the following principles:

Information, advice and support is delivered in accordance to, and with reference to, the SEND Graduated Assessment and Response Pathway;

The welfare and wellbeing of children and young people is of paramount importance;

The aspirations, outcomes and needs of children and young people, supported by their families, are of the utmost importance;

Communication is open, honest and solution focused;

Information, advice and support are accessible to any parent or carer or young person who is concerned about their child's or their own educational progress;

The information, advice and support offered is impartial and provided at arm's length from the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCGs);

The information, advice and support offered is free, accurate and confidential;

The information, advice and support offered will be in formats that are accessible and responsive to the needs of users and delivered in a timely manner by appropriately trained staff;

The information, advice and support offered enables parents and carers and young people to understand their rights, roles and responsibilities within the legislative frameworks and local practices

applicable to SEND, maximising their participation in the assessment / planning / decision making / delivery / review process;

The information, advice and support, and additional functions expected of SENDIASS, promotes parents and carers and young people's confidence, empowerment, independence and self-advocacy;

The information, advice and support offered enable parents and carers and young people to understand the Local Offer;

The information, advice and support offered will be inclusive of Personal Budgets guidance;

Staff providing information, advice and support services will ensure that the views and experiences of children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers, inform strategic developments and commissioning intentions, to ensure the delivery of appropriate responsive outcome focused support;

Staff providing information, advice and support to promote parents and young people as equal partners and participants;

No parent or carer or young person is either excluded, or discouraged, or prevented from accessing information, advice and support or participating in consultation or engagement exercises (sharing their views and opinions), or otherwise discriminated against, as a consequence of their race, age, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion/beliefs, racial origin, ethnic background or disabilities.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance for the provision of the Service

SENDIASS has regard to guidance, circulars and publications issued by the Department of Education in relation to this service and are responsible for complying with the requirements of all applicable enactments, inclusive of, but not limited to the following:

- The Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3, in particular Section 32)
- The SEND Code of Practice January 2015 (0-25)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Equalities Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- The Health and Social Care Act 2012
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014

SENDIASS maintains membership of, consults and has regard to the practice standards, guidance, communications and publications of the Information, Advice and Support Services Network (formally known as the National Parent Partnership Network, referred to IASSN for the remainder of the document)

The following legal requirements are placed upon Local Authorities:

Participation of parents, children and young people

(Section 19 of The Children and Families Act 2014 / Chapter 1 SEND Code of Practice January 2015)

1.1 Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), must have regard to:

- (1) *the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents*
- (2) *the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions*
- (3) *the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood*

Provision of Information Advice and Support

(Sections 19(c), 26(3), 32 and 49 of the Children and Families Act 2014 / Chapter 2 SEND Code of Practice)

2.1 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.

2.2 Local authorities **must** take steps to make these services known to children, their parents and young people in their area; head teachers, proprietors and principals of schools and post-16 institutions in their area, and others where appropriate.

2.3 They **must** ensure that their Local Offer includes details of how information, advice and support related to SEN and disabilities can be accessed and how it is resourced.

2.4 Information, advice and support should be provided through a dedicated and easily identifiable service. Local authorities have established Parent Partnership Services to provide information, advice and support to parents in relation to SEN. In addition, many local authorities provide or commission information, advice and support services for young people. Local authorities should build on these existing services to provide the information, advice and support.

2.5 Information, advice and support services should be impartial, confidential and accessible and should have the capacity to handle face-to-face, telephone and electronic enquiries.

2.6 Local authorities should involve children, young people and parents (including local Parent Carer Forums and Youth Forums) in the design or commissioning of services providing information, advice and support in order to ensure that those services meet local needs. Local authorities should do this in a way which ensures that children, young people and parents feel they have participated fully in the process and have a sense of co-ownership.

Objectives, Specific Service Inputs and Required Service Outcomes

Through the provision of high quality, accurate information, advice and support, given in a timely manner to parents and carers and young people through the Graduated Response and Education, Health and Care Statutory Assessment and Plan Pathway.

SENDIASS is committed to engagement, co-production, co-design, co-delivery and co-review with parents and carers and young people across the spectrum of support mechanisms and services for children and young people with SEND, driving service improvement through ensuring they are reflective of and responsive to local need.

Stoke on Trent's Stronger Together Priority Outcomes

The overarching aim of Stronger Together is to ensure all disabled children, young people and adults are able to live healthy, full and fulfilling lives.

- (1) The **best start in life** for children and young people who have SEND through the provision of information, advice and support at the earliest opportunity to parents and carers; empowering parents and carers and young people to make an informed decision in regards to sourcing and securing the right support at the right time for their child, encouraging the development of early milestones in a safe and stimulating manner, which will in turn maximise life chances.
- (2) Access to **Lifelong Learning** opportunities for children and young people with SEND which will be achieved through the provision of information, advice and support to their parents and carers to ensure access to appropriate and meaningful educational and learning/skills development opportunities that prepares children and young people for adulthood and enables them to take their place as full citizens.
- (3) Through the provision of information, advice and support to parents and carers, children and young people with SEND and their families will be able to exercise **choice and control** over the way in which they live their lives.
- (4) Ensuring that children and young people with SEND have equal access to universal services and **community opportunities** through the provision of information, advice and support. Such opportunities are shaped and informed via meaningful engagement with parents and carers and young people.
- (5) **Good health** (both physical and emotional wellbeing) will be achieved through listening to parents and carers and young people, and valuing their contribution as an equal partner; this combined with purposeful engagement and consultation will result in improved health outcomes and reduced health inequalities for children and young people with SEND.
- (6) Meaningful engagement with parents and carers and young people, and the provision of information, advice and support at the right time will promote a **strong voice for disabled people and their families**.
- (7) **Staying Safe**: We will enable all disabled people to live safer lives and protect the most vulnerable.

Specific Service Inputs and Service Outcomes

The **specific service inputs** for the provision of information, advice and support are as follows:

The provision of free and impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people who are not making the expected educational progress, or have SEND, through a specifically tailored casework service, at the earliest / appropriate opportunity, in matters relating to:

- (1) Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- (2) Education
- (3) Health
- (4) Social Care

The provision of a specifically tailored casework service may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) Telephone helpline support
- (2) Provision of accessible written information, advice and support, including: leaflets, information packs and the provision of a specific website
- (3) Attendance at meetings, as appropriate

The provision of information, advice and support should be applicable to the child/young person's education setting, with recognition of the individual's outcomes and aspirations;

The views, needs and opinions of parents and carers of children and young people who are not making the expected educational progress or have a diagnosed SEND are listened to and valued, starting from the initial point of concern;

SENDIASS provides, in addition to our existing support functions, Independent Support (upon request) to children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers, who are eligible for an Education Health and Care Assessment/ Plan (referred to as EHCP for the remainder of the document) to ensure these are representative of lifelong outcomes and aspirations.

Provide information, advice and support in regards to the Local Offer;

Provide information, advice and support in regards to Personal Budgets;

- (a)** SENDIASS works with parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, and those providing support, to facilitate impartial, open, honest and solution focused conversations;
- (b)** SENDIASS supports parents and carers of children and young people with SEND to make a complaint, and pursue the appropriate action, as per the relevant organisations procedure and policy, where necessary;
- (c)** SENDIASS challenge the provision of poor practice across education, health and social care. Should these issues not be rectified the Service lead will report these issues to senior management;

Engage with parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, in a meaningful and purposeful manner across education, health and social care in order to inform service delivery and future commissioning intentions;

To collate and share the experiences, wishes and feedback of parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, with the Local Authority in an appropriate manner and format;

Encourage parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, to engage, participate and respond to Local Authority and partner organisation's consultation events;

To provide training to parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, through PEGIS on a range of topics and issues (responsive to local need and requests) including participation;

To provide information, advice and support, upon request, to individual professionals and organisations, in regards to positively engaging with parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.

The required **Service Outcomes** are as follows:

- Parents and carers and young people are provided with the necessary accurate impartial information enabling them to play an informed role in the assessment / decision making process / support planning process, including sign posting to relevant services and support mechanisms applicable to their circumstance;
- Parents and carers and young people feel empowered, knowledgeable, confident and independent;
- Parent and carers and young people feel respected, listened to and valued – support is personalised, reflective of needs;
- The right support is delivered at the right time to children and their families, maximising their life chances and potential through the provision of early intervention;
- The service encourages resilience and independence;
- Inequalities experienced by children and young people with SEND, and their families, are reduced;
- The wellbeing of both the child and family are promoted/sustained;
- Parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, are able to navigate the Local Offer, and identify support services applicable to their circumstances;
- Parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, understand and feel confident to manage a Personal Budget;
- Individualised Person Centred EHCP's which are built upon the direct needs and aspirations of children and young people with SEND and their families.
- The outcomes and aspirations of children and young people are identified, and the appropriate support mechanisms are employed to achieve these;
- Children and young people with SEND are appropriately supported and prepared for the transition to adulthood;
- Open, honest and trusted relationships between parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, and professionals are forged and maintained;
- Parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, work in partnership with professionals, and their respective organisations;
- Poor practice is challenged;
- The practice of education, health and social care is in line with legal requirements and statutory duties;
- Early conflict resolution achieves: reduction in the number of complaints and instances of Tribunal, where appropriate;
- Children and young people with SEND, and their families, are sign posted to relevant agencies, to enable them to access community based opportunities and services which are of a high quality;
- Parents and carers, of children and young people with SEND, feel confident and able to engage with the local authority and education settings.

Eligibility Criteria

SENDIASS provides information, advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people who:

- (1)** are aged 0 – 25 years
- (2)** have SEND – this includes supporting parent and carers:
 - (a)** who are concerned about their child’s educational progress (no diagnosis)
 - (b)** whose child is undergoing assessment
 - (c)** whose child has a diagnosed Special Educational Need and/or a Disability
- (3)** ordinarily reside in Stoke on Trent

SENDIASS is required to register with and maintain active membership of the IASSN – West Midlands Region.

Should the child or young person have an existing SEN Statement or require an Assessment / EHCP (including those requiring a transfer) the responsibility to provide information, advice and support to parents and carers and young people will become that of the Authority they reside in.

The IASSN West Midlands Region consists of the following localities:

- Birmingham
- Coventry
- Dudley
- Herefordshire
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Shropshire
- Telford and Wrekin
- Staffordshire
- Stoke
- Walsall
- Warwickshire
- Wolverhampton
- Worcestershire

Referrals

Self-Referrals

Parents and Carers and Young People may make referrals and requests for the provision of information, advice and support directly to SENDIASS via but not limited to:

- (1)** SENDIASS dedicated telephone helpline
- (2)** SENDIASS dedicated e-mail address
- (3)** Written request/referral to SENDIASS office/email/web address
- (4)** Verbal referrals, for example at parent and carer events and information sessions

Professional referrals

SENDIASS, on occasion, may receive referrals from professional bodies including, but not limited to:

- (1)** SEN Assessment and Monitoring Team;
- (2)** Independent Support Agency (Core Assets);
- (3)** Social worker;
- (4)** Family support Worker;
- (5)** Health Professionals;

- (6) School staff;
- (7) Service Co-ordinators.

SENDIASS accepts referrals from professional bodies where it is felt that parents and carers and young people would benefit from the provision of impartial information, advice and support however they are unlikely to or are unable to seek this provision independently for any reason.

SENDIASS accepts referrals from professional bodies where the consent to disclose and share information has been obtained from the parent or carer or young person by the referring party, prior to contact.

SENDIASS accepts referrals from Core Assets Independent Support Agency, where the parent or carer or young person requires information, advice and support that exceeds the role of an Independent Supporter.

Referral Response time

SENDIASS endeavours to respond to referrals and enquiries within one working day, wherever possible in keeping with the principle of earliest intervention and delivery of the right support at the right time.

SENDIASS has a period of two working days in order to respond to an initial referral or enquiry request.

Referral Information

Upon receipt of each new referral, SENDIASS obtains the following information, as a minimum requirement:

- (1) Referral Source – should this not be the parent/carer/young person;
- (2) Name of parent/carer/young person/child;
- (3) Contact Details – including preferred method of contact and any specialist requirements for example large print or easy read literature;
- (4) Name of child/young person;
- (5) Date of Birth of child/young person;
- (6) Education setting attended by child/young person;
- (7) Overview of needs of child/young person – including any diagnosis;
- (8) Reason for referral;
- (9) The current stage at which the child or young person is at;
- (10) How the parent or carer or young person became aware of the Service;
- (11) Ethnicity of parent/carer/young person.

Individual Casework Service

A bespoke casework service will help parents and carers and young people to feel knowledgeable, confident and empowered in discussions and decisions in relation to SEND matters.

Casework will be an individual approach offered by appropriately trained and skilled staff and volunteers specifically tailored to the needs of the individual parent and carers and young people in order to move towards positive outcomes.

Staff and volunteers delivering IASS will build positive relationships with parents and carers and young people through the employment of open, honest and solution focused conversations.

SENDIASS promotes open, honest and trusting relationships between parents and carers and young people and professional bodies and agencies promoting all parties as equal and respected partners.

SENDIASS encourages the parent or carer or young person to be proactive and initiate contact with professional bodies and lead discussions, as opposed to a reliance on the Service.

An individual casework service is offered to parent and carers of children and young people of SEND, at any time upon request, this includes but not limited too:

- (1)** Parents and carers who are concerned their child is not making the expected educational progress;
- (2)** Parents and carers whom require support to navigate the Local Offer;
- (3)** Parents and carers of children and young people upon initiation and completion of Early Help Assessment and Support Planning, implementation and review process;
- (4)** Parents and Carers of children who are subject to a Child in Need Plan where education is one of the prime areas of need;
- (5)** Parent and carers of children and young people undergoing an EHC Assessment;
- (6)** Parents and carers of children and young people upon design, implementation and review of an EHCP (including those persons transferring from an SEN Statement);
- (7)** Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND who wish to challenge any decision made in regards the provision of support – this can include parents and carers undertaking mediation and those whom have progressed to Tribunal;
- (8)** Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND who wish to make a complaint against any service or professional body.

The delivery of case work can be via, but is not limited to:

- Telephone support
- Face to face support
 - (a)** SENDIASS encourage parents and carers and young people to meet with staff and volunteers at their dedicated office space;
 - (b)** SENDIASS undertake meetings at the home of parents and carer's in exceptional cases where the parent or carers is unable to travel to the SENDIASS office;
 - (c)** SENDIASS support parents and carer's and young people through attendance at meetings and decision making forums.
- Written support and information (in accessible formats) is sent on request via letter or e-mail

Information, advice and support on matters relating to social care, education and health, delivered as per individual need and circumstance:

- (1)** Signposting to appropriate support services;
- (2)** Support to interpret and apply the law and local practices and applying this to their own situation;
- (3)** Support for parents/carers and young people during an Education Health Care Plan (EHC) assessment;
- (4)** Support during the transfer of a Statement of SEN to an EHC Plan;
- (5)** Access to an Independent Supporter during an EHC assessment;
- (6)** Support to access and navigate the Local Offer;
- (7)** Support to organise, prepare for and attend meetings:
 - (a)** During the course of the meeting the officer shall record in brief the key points and actions;
 - (b)** The officer shall reflect upon and review the meeting with the parent or carer or young person following completion of the meeting to ensure clarity and add to the Service data base;
 - (c)** In instances where the officer has not attended the meeting, the officer shall contact the parent or carer or young person post meeting, to review the meeting and offer additional support, if appropriate;
- (8)** Presentation of clear, concise and accurate information to parents and carers and young people to enable an informed decision to be made;
- (9)** Support parents and carers and young people to view potential service provisions and establishments and assess suitability from an objective viewpoint;
- (10)** Support parents and carers and young people to challenge poor practice;
- (11)** Support parents and carers and young people to compile and submit complaints via the appropriate channels across social care, education and health provisions;
- (12)** Inform parents and carers and young people on the Local Authority's processes for Resolving Disagreements;

- (13) Support parents and carers and young people who are undertaking informal disagreement resolution or mediation with support services and agencies;
- (14) Support parents and carers and young people who are undertaking tribunal proceedings in their preparation;
- (15) Liaise with professionals and support agencies in order to understand the family circumstances; encouraging open, honest and solution focused conversations through promotion of parents and carers and young people as equal partners.

SENDIASS shall not contact any professional or service provider on behalf of the parent or carer or young person without their express consent to do so.

SENDIASS shall not attend any meeting on behalf of a parent or carer or young person. The officer will only attend meetings where the parent or carer or young person is in attendance also.

Empowerment, Training and Information Sharing

Literature and materials

SENDIASS ensures all promotional and information literature and leaflets includes their individual logo, which is different to that of the Local Authority, in order to demonstrate impartiality.

SENDIASS ensures a leaflet detailing the purpose of the service and how to make a referral is produced as standard and includes contact details.

SENDIASS ensures a leaflet detailing the role of Independent Support is produced as standard.

SENDIASS can select to co-produce the Independent Support leaflet with the Core Assets should both parties wish to.

SENDIASS produces a range of literature for example leaflets and information packs offering information, advice and support on a range of topics including but not limited to:

- (1) SEND information, advice and support
- (2) Early Years
- (3) Early Intervention
- (4) Transition
- (5) Statutory EHC Assessment Process
- (6) Reviews
- (7) Mediation and Tribunal
- (8) Exclusion
- (9) Preparation for Adulthood

SENDIASS engages with parents and carers and young people through the service's Independent Steering Group and Parent Engagement Group (PEGIS) in order to inform on content of leaflets and literature produced, this ensures that it is responsive to local need.

All literature will be produced in accessible formats upon request.

SENDIASS ensures all the materials are downloadable via their dedicated website.

SENDIASS employs a range of Social Media to advertise and publicise their service, and share information.

Newsletter

SENDIASS produces a regular publication for parents and carers and young people.

The purpose of the publication is to inform and empower parents and carers and young people about relevant topical SEND issues.

The publication may include, but is not limited to:

- An overview of the SENDIASS service – including how to make referrals;
- SEN Updates;
- Local parent/carer/young people events;
- Local activities for children and young people;
- Independent, voluntary sector support organisations;

SENDIASS distributes its publication to both parents and carer's and young people directly, and to its local partners.

Information Sessions and Training

SENDIASS supports local parent and parent carer forums, independent and voluntary sector support services to offer information sessions and events, where appropriate, for the benefit of parents and carers and young people.

Parent and Carer and Young People Engagement

SENDIASS

On delivery of IASS/IS to parents and carers and young people, the Service will seek feedback from parents and carers and young people in regards to the quality of the service delivery, informing future practice and policy and ensuring delivery of high quality information, advice and support.

SENDIASS ensures that anonymised parent and carer and young people feedback and evaluation of the IASS/IS is detailed within the Monitoring Reports; for discussion within the Steering Group.

SENDIASS engages and consults with parents and carers and young people through the Steering Group when developing and reviewing their Service Delivery Plan, as per National Quality Standards.

Wider Engagement

SENDIASS has a duty to work with the local parent carer forums and other representative user groups to encourage expression of and gather the views and experiences of both children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers to inform policy, practice and future commissioning intentions across the Local Authority and partner organisations including CCG's.

SENDIASS promotes partnership working between children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers and professionals.

SENDIASS ensures that parents and carers and young people are viewed as equal partners and their contributions are listened too, understood and valid thus informing local practice and future delivery of services.

SENDIASS provides support to parents and carers and young people in regards to confidence and voicing their views and opinions in a range of environments; giving parents and carers and young people a strong and powerful voice.

On engagement with Professionals, the officer promotes proactive engagement and open communications with parents and carers and young people.

SENDIASS employs a range of techniques, including Social Media, in order to both share information with parents and carers and young people, and collate feedback/response/engagement.

SENDIASS feeds back outcomes from specific engagement exercises undertaken with parents and carers and young people, via agreed means with the person/organisation who initiated the request for engagement.

SENDIASS supports parents and carers and young people to challenge poor practice within any services or support mechanisms for children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers, in a timely manner.

Should poor practice persist the service lead will escalate and share this directly with senior management unless the nature of the complaint requires immediate action and rectification, identifying the service/provider.

SENDIASS will record issues of poor practice, in an anonymised form (both the individual affected and the service provider/organisation) within their Monitoring Report.

SENDIASS will capture and record positive outcomes in regards to parent and carer and young people engagement and co-production facilitated by them in the Monitoring Report.

Promotion of SENDIASS

SENDIASS takes lead responsibility for the promotion and advertisement of IASS/IS on behalf of the Local Authority, fulfilling the statutory duty to make these services known to parent and carers and young people and professionals / partners / services city wide.

SENDIASS establishes positive relationships with key local partners and organisations across the Local Authority, and ensure they are aware of IASS/IS and positively promotes this to parents and carers and young people.

SENDIASS is expected to employ a range of techniques and methods in order to advertise IASS/IS for parents and carers and young people city wide. Promotion channels and methods may include, but are not limited to:

- attendance to information events and sessions
- attendance to local parent and carer forums and networks
- promotion and distribution of leaflets, literature and the local offer
- social Media including Twitter and Facebook
- articles and publications

Impartiality

Independent Steering Group

In order to demonstrate impartiality and ensure their practice adheres to national guidance and legal/statutory duties, SENDIASS has established an Independent Steering Group.

The Steering Group meets on a quarterly basis.

SENDIASS submits a copy of their Monitoring Report to this group for review and comment.

Impartiality Policy

SENDIASS is required to have an Impartiality Policy in operation in order to demonstrate its neutrality and operation at 'arm's length' from the Local Authority.

SENDIASS formulates its Impartiality Policy in conjunction with, the Steering Group, ensuring regular review.

SENDIASS makes a free a copy of its Impartiality Policy available upon request to any party.

Impartiality and Service Specifics

On appointment of staff and volunteers, SENDIASS utilises a wide range of resources and training opportunities, not limited to those provided by the local authority, providing wide ranging and neutral information.

Staff and volunteers, on behalf of SENDIASS, provide parents and carers and young people with an accurate interpretation of the law, regardless of local practice, and present the full range of options that are applicable for consideration at a particular stage of their child's education.

Operational Requirements

In order to demonstrate its impartiality, and that the service operates at 'arm's length' from the Local Authority, SENDIASS is required to adhere to a number of operational requirements;

Service Logo

SENDIASS engages with parents and carers and young people in order to design a representative individual service logo that is different to that of the Local Authority.

SENDIASS includes the service logo on all materials, literatures and resources, for example their dedicated website and information packs.

Office Space

SENDIASS occupies its own office space. The office space can be leased from the Local Authority and is separate from any other service operated by the Local Authority, in order to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

SENDIASS ensures that its office space is situated in an easily accessible location for parents and carers and young people whom:

- (1) have their own transport – the provider will ensure there is appropriate parking facilities; including disabled parking facilities, within a reasonable walking distance of the office premises;
- (2) utilise public transport –including local bus and rail services;
- (3) are on foot.

SENDIASS ensures the office space is wheelchair accessible.

SENDIASS ensures the office has a space to facilitate confidential meetings with parents and carers and young people.

Office Opening Hours

In order to provide effective and timely information, advice and support to parents and carers and young people, SENDIASS ensures the office premises are staffed or supported by an answer machine service between the hours of:

Monday – Friday
08:00 – 17:00

Dedicated Website

SENDIASS operates a dedicated website, demonstrating impartiality.

SENDIASS includes the website address on promotional materials and correspondence.

SENDIASS ensures the dedicated website informs parents and carers and young people that the service is commissioned by the Local Authority, however it operates independently and impartially of the Local Authority.

SENDIASS ensures the dedicated website acts as a 'one stop information shop' for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. Suggested content may include but is not limited to:

- information, advice and support in relation to SEND
- contact details and referral methods.
- link to the Local Offer
- copies of information leaflets and literature – in a downloadable format
- useful links
- local parent and carer and young people events
- personal budgets
- volunteering

SENDIASS is strongly encouraged to employ and utilise Social Media as a means to promote themselves and engage with parents and carers and young people encouraging interaction, discussions and feedback.

Confidential Helpline

SENDIASS operates an independent, confidential Telephone Helpline service.

SENDIASS includes the Telephone Helpline number on all promotional literature, correspondence and on their dedicated website and social media

SENDIASS ensures the Telephone Helpline is staffed by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable staff member or volunteer.

SENDIASS operates an answerphone messaging facility.

SENDIASS ensure messages are retrieved by staff and volunteers in order to maintain confidentiality.

SENDIASS has a maximum period of two working days in order to respond to a referral/enquiry/answerphone message.

In order to demonstrate good practice, SENDIASS will endeavour to respond referrals/enquiries/answerphone messages within one working day, wherever possible in-keeping with the principle of earliest intervention and delivery of the right support at the right time.

Dedicated E-mail

SENDIASS established a dedicated e-mail address for parents and carers and young people.

SENDIASS includes the e-mail address on all promotional literature, correspondence and on their dedicated website and social media

SENDIASS In order to maintain confidentiality ensures the dedicated e-mail inbox is only accessed by staff and volunteers.

SENDIASS has a maximum period of two working days in order to respond to an e-mail.

In order to demonstrate good practice, SENDIASS will endeavour to respond to a referral/ e-mail/enquiry/answer phone message within one working day, wherever possible thus in-keeping with the principle of earliest intervention and delivery of the right support at the right time.

Electronic Recording System

SENDIASS operates and monitors an electronic recording system i.e. a database in order to record all referrals and requests for information, support and advice received.

SENDIASS seeks the consent of parents and carers and young people before recording their details on the electronic recording system, and advise parents of the purpose and usage of the information.

The operation of an effective recording system will enable parents and carers and young people's details to be stored and maintained, preventing the need for parents and carers and young people to repeatedly provide information.

Following entry of the initial referral information, the electronic recording system will enable SENDIASS staff to record summary information, including but not exclusively limited to:

- (1) summary of any information, advice and support offered (including dates);
- (2) the dates of contact with any professional bodies;
- (3) summary of any actions taken – including attendance at meetings and sharing of any support information/literature;

In order to maintain confidentiality, the electronic recording system will only be directly accessed by SENDIASS staff and volunteers.

Parents and carers and young people have the right to request the removal of their information from the electronic recording system at any time.

SENDIASS will ensure any information taken from the database for the purposes of reporting to the Local Authority will be anonymised.

Confidentiality

SENDIASS is required to have a Confidentiality Policy in operation in order to demonstrate its impartiality from the Local Authority.

All staff and volunteers delivering IASS/IS will sign the Confidentiality Policy, upon commencing their post; failure or refusal to sign will prevent the individual from delivering information, advice and support on behalf of SENDIASS.

SENDIASS acts in compliance with Common Law and the requirements of the Data Protection Act in regards to the storing, handling and disclosure of information.

In maintaining Confidentiality, no information about either a parent or carer, or their child, or young person is disclosed either directly or indirectly to any party external to the SENDIASS; this includes the Local Authority, without the express consent of the parent/carer/young person.

SENDIASS anonymises all information contained within any monitoring or reporting requirements in regards to issues and examples of poor practice. This data is shared with the Steering Group and Local Authority.

SENDIASS does not contact any other agency or professional body without the express consent of the parent or carer or young person.

SENDIASS may disclose information to an external party if consent is granted by the parent or carer or young person.

Exceptional circumstances may arise where SENDIASS is required to disclose information these include:

- (1) Safeguarding concerns: SENDIASS is required to be fully aware and compliant with Stoke on Trent's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- (2) Information, which, if disclosed, may prevent a crime
- (3) Information that must be legally disclosed

SENDIASS has, as part of the Confidentiality Policy in operation, strict procedures for all staff and volunteers delivering IASS/IS on behalf of SENDIASS to adhere to should exceptional circumstances arise.

Only staff and volunteer's delivering IASS/IS on behalf of SENDIASS will have access to and respond to all correspondence/messages/referrals/enquires.

SENDIASS reviews its Confidentiality Policy on an annual basis in conjunction with parents and carers and young people. All changes will be verified and consented to by the Steering Group.

Service Delivery Plan

SENDIASS adheres to and strives to achieve the Quality Standards as per IASNN and the Department of Education guidance at all times. The purpose of the guidance is to shape service delivery and drive for service improvement.

Service delivery plan

As per National Quality Standards, SENDIASS develops a Service Development Plan.

The Service Delivery Plan will include as a minimum standard:

- (1) The vision, values and principles behind the delivery of information, advice and support.
- (2) All service components and standards of delivery.
- (3) Any development needs and how SENDIASS will work to achieve these.
- (4) The quality assurance measures in operation
- (5) Ensure the provision of the service supports the achievement of Stoke on Trent's over-arching key priorities.

SENDIASS co-produces the Service Delivery Plan with parents and carers and young people through the Steering Group to ensure the service delivery is responsive to and representative of local need.

SENDIASS ensures regular review and update of the Service Delivery Plan, in consultation and agreement with the Steering Group.

SENDIASS will share a copy of their Service Development Plan upon request with any party.

Accountability, Reporting and Monitoring

Service Lead:

The lead for SENDIASS reports directly to the Strategic Manager for Learning Services.

The Service lead participates in and attends regular supervision sessions with the Strategic manager for Learning Services, which includes discussion in relation, but not solely limited, to:

- service performance
- service issues

- poor practice – individual cases will be anonymised in terms of reference to the child/young person with SEND and their families, unless consent to disclose this information is granted
- examples of good practice

Monitoring

SENDIASS produces quarterly Monitoring Reports for the Steering group.

The Monitoring Report will be completed by SENDIASS and submitted to the Steering Group for review and comment.

Staffing

The delivery of information, advice and support will be facilitated by both paid staff members and volunteers on behalf of SENDIASS.

Volunteers

SENDIASS actively encourages and advertises for persons to volunteer in the delivery of information, advice and support for parents and carers and young people.

Following an application or expression of interest from a potential volunteer SENDIASS will undertake an 'informal' interview/discussion with the person to ensure suitability of skills.

Volunteers receive appropriate support and training by SENDIASS, and as per IASSN national training standards and recommendations. This will include, but is not limited to:

- (1) Mandatory training;
- (2) SEND legal training;
- (3) Independent Support training.

No person acting in a volunteer capacity will attend meetings or professional forums in order to further their own personal interest.

Training

SENDIASS ensures staff and volunteers undertake mandatory training and if engaging with casework, the national training programme delivered by the IASSN and associates.

SENDIASS ensures that all staff and volunteers delivering information, advice and support to parents and carers and young people are properly and sufficiently knowledgeable with regard to the provision of the Service. This will include, but not limited to, matters relating to:

- Core Principles of the service
- Education, Health and Social Care – including relevant legislation and practice relating to SEND
- Impartiality and Confidentiality
- Safeguarding
- Disability Awareness
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety
- Interpersonal skills
- Local Offer
- Disagreement Resolution and local practice
- Mediation and Tribunal

On appointment, SENDIASS will ensure that all staff and volunteers undertake the City Council Mandatory Induction Programme which will cover all basic policy and procedure and the core principles of the service which is inclusive of, but not limited to the aforementioned matters.

SENDIASS ensures that an appropriately qualified and trained staff member observes any new staff member or volunteer to ensure delivery of accurate information and a high quality service, before they undertake lone case working, during their Induction Programme.

Supervision

SENDIASS has an accessible Supervision Policy in operation.

SENDIASS ensures that all staff and volunteers acting on their behalf are in receipt of routine supervision and support.

Based upon the nature of individual casework, SENDIASS is required to carry out supervision on a monthly basis by the Service Lead.

Regular supervision will offer staff and volunteers the opportunity to discuss:

- Individual casework issues;
- Practice issues;
- Health and Safety issues and concerns;
- Wellbeing;
- Training Requirements and Development opportunities.

Independent Support

SENDIASS ensures a proportionate number of staff and volunteers undertake the additional national Independent Support Training – in order to provide information and support to persons undertaking the EHCP Process: be this a new EHCP application or conversion from an existing statement.

SENDIASS is encouraged to undertake an application for additional funding opportunities via The Council of Disabled Children in relation to appointment of additional Independent Supporter's.

Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)

SENDIASS ensures that all staff and volunteers, regardless of their role or responsibilities within the provision of the service, have undertaken a Criminal Record's check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before commencing their role: evidence of which will be presented to Stoke City Council on request.

For the avoidance of doubt, SENDIASS ensures that Enhanced DBS and Barred Check Lists are routinely carried out for all persons acting on their behalf in the provision of the service.

For the avoidance of doubt, SENDIASS will not permit any person, either in a paid or volunteer capacity, whom is deemed ineligible through the information disclosed within the Enhanced DBS and Barred Checks to provide any element of the service provision.

SENDIASS will inform the Council immediately should the aforementioned issue arise.

Complaints

SENDIASS operates a comprehensive, fair and accessible Complaints Procedure in relation to its own service provision for the following persons:

- (1) Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.

(2) Any persons (including professional) working with SENDIASS.

SENDIASS shall listen, review, respond and take action/implement changes if necessary upon receipt of any comment, compliment or complaint supporting with shaping best practice.

Upon request, SENDIASS shall:

- (1)** Promptly provide a copy of their Complaints, Comments and Complaints Procedure upon request to any person;
- (2)** Use its reasonable endeavours to explain its Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure to any person who has difficulty in understanding it;
- (3)** Deal with each complaint which is received in accordance with the Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure in an efficient and courteous way without delay.

SENDIASS shall use reasonable endeavours to rectify or correct any complaint about the provision of IASS/IS which is substantiated in whole or in part;

Where the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the Investigation undertaken, the complaint will be forwarded to the Strategic Line Manager for review and further investigation if necessary;

SENDIASS will partake in mediation when necessary in order to reach a satisfactory resolution of a complaint, where appropriate.

SENDIASS will maintain a comprehensive record of all complaints, comments and compliments, including:

- (1)** Name & address of person / date/ complaint/comment/compliment was made
- (2)** in respect of a complaint, record the measures adopted in investigating and remedying the complaint
- (3)** the outcome of the complaint

SENDIASS will discuss all compliments and complaints within the Strategic Management and the Steering Group.

SENDIASS will anonymise all compliments and complaints for inclusion within the Monitoring Report and demonstrate any reflective and responsive learning steps undertaken.

SENDIASS will review its Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy on an Annual basis. Any changes to documentation will be approved in the first instance by the Strategic Line Manager and the service Steering Group.