



Special Educational Needs,  
Disability Information,  
Advice & Support Service.



## **Impartiality and Compliance Policy**

### **Statutory Requirement**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) provides independent support, advice and information for parents/carers of children with special educational needs and for children and young people themselves so they can make appropriate informed decisions.

- (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.

Children and Families Act 2014 c.6 part 3 Information and Advice 32

To ensure effective independence and impartiality Bury Local Authority has outsourced its Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) to Barnardo's Rochdale Service

An effective SENDIASS is expected to meet and be compliant with the minimum standards and ensure:

- The provision of neutral, accurate information for parents and young people on all SEN procedures as set out in SEN legislation and the SEN code of practice

## **What is Impartiality and how it is maintained**

Bury SENDIASS provides an impartial service to children, young people and parents/carers and other professionals engaged with the service.

**Impartial: 'Not favouring one side or the other' Collins English Dictionary**

This means that we will work with parents/carers, children and young people to listen to their concerns, assess their needs, support at meetings and provide accurate information. Workers will not take sides with any party. They will provide factual information and advice based on what the guidance and legislation says. Workers will endeavour to provide parents and young people with enough information and support so that they can make their own decisions, we will not tell parents and young people what to do. Equally we will not tell settings what they should do but again make clear the legally complaint position on any given matter in relation to the code of practice.

Bury SENDIASS will ensure that parents/carers, children and young people and professionals who engage with the service are made aware in the first instance that we are impartial. We will also ensure that this is publicised in all relevant materials e.g. leaflets, website and initial correspondence with parents.

The steering group will monitor the information leaflets to ensure they reflect the impartiality policy as well as monitor the impartiality of the overall service. We will seek to ensure that parents/carers and young people are represented on the steering group. Bury SENDIASS engages with relevant networks and organisations as an impartial facilitating service. Ensuring compliance with the minimum standards is the role of the SENDIASS service management team and the steering group to hold the practice of the service to account.

Bury SENDIASS is funded by Bury Council and delivered by Barnardo's. The service is based away from the council services at Blue Pit Mill, Floor 2, Suite 2, Queensway, Rochdale OL11 2YW.

All workers will be made aware of the Impartiality Policy and are required to inform the SENDIASS manager of any conflict of interest in relation to individual families; parent support groups, schools, nurseries, colleagues or other agencies. Workers are required to inform the SENDIASS manager of any personal or voluntary

involvement in issues relating to education or SEN that might impact upon their work. The policy will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies so that they are aware of it and understand it. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Following the issuing of the new minimum standards 2018 a definition of advocacy has been provided to be added to the policy:

Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes and help you understand and exercise your rights. IASS do not fulfil the role of statutory advocates - more info here - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/advocacy/legal-rights-to-advocacy/>

nor do they provide legal advocacy as provided by a lawyer.

More information on what we mean by advocacy can be found on the MIND website and in the extract below:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/advocacy/#.WyJ4mKdKiM9>

An advocate can:

- listen to your views and concerns
- help you explore your options and rights (without pressuring you)
- provide information to help you make informed decisions
- help you contact relevant people, or contact them on your behalf
- accompany you and support you in meetings or appointments.

An advocate will not:

- give you their personal opinion
- solve problems and make decisions for you
- make judgements about you.

The support of an advocate is often particularly useful in meetings when you might not feel confident in expressing yourself. They can:

- support you to ask all the questions you want to ask
- make sure all the points you want covered are included in the meeting
- explain your options to you without giving their opinion
- help keep you safe during the meeting – for example, if you find the meeting upsetting, your advocate can ask for a break until you feel able to continue.