



BRENT

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT (SEND IAS) SERVICE

IMPARTIALITY POLICY

Introduction

Brent Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) is a statutory service that offers free, impartial information, advice and support on matters around Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) to parent carers and young people up to the age of 25, across Brent. The service operates at arm's length from the Local Authority.

Note: Brent SENDIASS complies with all Brent Council Policies and in addition also has the following service specific policy.

Aim

The aim of the service is to ensure parent carers and young people have access to high quality, accurate, impartial information, advice, and support based on current legislation to enable them to extend their knowledge and to take an informed and active role in decisions. The service works to limit misunderstandings and secure true partnership working arrangements between parent carers, young people, schools, the Local Authority (LA), and other services. Brent SENDIASS also acts strategically to enable children's, parent carers and young people's views to be heard and to influence service developments.

Impartiality Statement

To ensure parent carers have confidence in the service it is important that staff can offer impartial advice and information. Brent SENDIASS Staff will demonstrate impartiality by:

- Being seen not to have a personal stake in the outcome of any discussions
- Reflecting the perspectives and wishes of parent carers (their children) and young people.
- Ensuring that staff who attend decision making meetings are clear whether their role is:
 - to support or represent an individual.
 - to contribute and discuss on strategic issues.
 - to participate in supporting decision making

Brent SEND IASS staff will undertake casework, with a clear emphasis on enabling those they are supporting to make informed decisions. This will be done by presenting information and advice grounded in legislation, statutory guidance, and the SEND Code of Practice.

Relationship with the Local Authority

Brent SENDIASS Service is an "in house" service. This means that the service is funded by the Local Authority (LA) and service staff are Brent Council employees. To ensure parent carers, children and young people have confidence in Brent SENDIASS it is important that staff can

operate impartially. It is understood that for the service to be seen as neutral and impartial, it must operate at “arms-length” from the LA. The LA recognises and respects this position. Brent SENDIASS sits within Brent’s Children and Young People Department within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. Line management and service oversight is provided by the Quality Assurance and Learning Service Manager.

When working with the LA, schools and other agencies, Brent SENDIASS aims to demonstrate impartiality by:

- Informing the LA, education settings or any other agency of the impartial nature of the service and making them aware of this policy.
- The service has a dedicated manager with autonomy over service development and delivery.
- The service does not undertake LA functions, or act on behalf of the LA, educational settings, or any other agency.
- The service has a delegated budget.
- The service uses a remote, cloud-based client relationship management system (CRM).
- The service occupies office space and access to private meeting rooms within LA buildings.
- The LA supports the role of Brent SENDIASS as an impartial service in networking and collaboration at national, regional, and local levels.

Supporting parent carers, children, and young people

The role of Brent SENDIASS is to empower parent carers, children, and young people by providing them with relevant information, advice and guidance that includes national legislation and its application through local policies and practices. Brent SENDIASS seeks to help parent carers and young people to understand the pros and cons of any decisions they may take.

Brent SENDIASS staff will:

- provide parent carers, children, and young people with a balanced and comprehensive range of information, setting out all options available, enabling them to make informed decisions dependent upon the individual circumstances of the referral.
- where requested and with consent, put forward the views and wishes of parent carers, children, and young people in communications e.g., during meetings or telephone calls whilst, at the same time, ascertaining the views of professionals involved with the family.
- signpost parent carers, children and young people to other agencies that enable them to verify the impartiality of the information and advice provided e.g., IPSEA.
- where possible, state their role at the beginning of meetings they attend, to clarify the position taken.
- maintain a professional relationship with parent carers, children, and young people they support.
- strive to empower children, young people, and their parent carers to speak for themselves and take active roles in decision making.

- inform the Service Manager of any conflict of interest in relation to individual families e.g., governor at the same school. These cases will be referred to other team members.

Liaising with Other Professionals and Organisations

Brent SENDIASS Staff:

- may have parental/young person's consent to act as an intermediary by relaying their perspective to school or LA professionals. This does not indicate bias in favour of the parent/young person, nor does it represent the views of Brent SENDIASS staff.
- should make it clear that they have no vested interest in the outcome of any decision-making process in relation to an individual child/young person or family.
- will maintain an impartial stance whilst collaborating and engaging with relevant organisations and networks.

Publications

Brent SENDIASS has its own service identity, including service logo, which takes precedence over other service identities on service communications and publications.

Brent SENDIASS has responsibility for the content and maintenance of its own web pages within the LA website; it includes relevant internal / external links and downloadable documents.

Brent SENDIASS writes its own materials and seeks input from parent carers, children, young people, and professionals. Latest information and publicity are monitored for its impartiality.

Brent SENDIASS publications routinely include references and recommendations for further reading.

Training

Brent SENDIASS will ensure that all staff access high quality, independent training in current and relevant education law, policy, and practice in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Information sessions and training provided by Brent SENDIASS may include a range of providers and organisations to ensure impartial delivery.

Steering Group

Brent SENDIASS Steering Group seeks to maintain representation from a number of agencies and professionals and includes parent carers and young people who are well placed to provide perspectives on the effectiveness of service delivery. The Steering Group Terms of Reference include monitoring the effectiveness and impartiality of all Service activities.

Policy effectiveness

On initial contact the impartiality statement will be verbally shared with parent carers, children, or young people either over the phone or face to face. A copy of the Impartiality Policy will be available via the Brent SENDIASS website. Copies of the Impartiality Policy will be made available to parent carers, children or young people who request it.

All Brent SENDIASS literature states the impartial nature of the service.

Existing and new staff will be introduced to the policy via induction and training. It is expected that all staff will adhere to the principles of Impartiality outlined in the policy. Every effort will be made to publicise the impartial role of Brent SENDIASS to other services and organisations.

Monitoring

Day to day monitoring of the Policy will be undertaken by the Service Manager.

Feedback from service users via the Brent SENDIASS survey will function as a reflection of service satisfaction.

Parent carers and Members of the Brent SENDIASS Steering Group will be periodically asked to monitor the impartiality of the information provided by Brent SENDIASS.

The Brent SENDIASS Steering Group will annually review this policy. Any amendments should be agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Created: September 2021

The Impartiality Policy has been approved by the Brent SENDIASS Steering Group.

Approved: (Reviewed) 29th September 2025

Date of next review: September 2026