SAY
SEND AND YOU
SENDIAS

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

Understanding SENDIASS for Professionals

FEBRUARY 2026

www.sendandyou.org.uk
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SEND and You provides the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) in South Gloucestershire, Bristol and North Somerset.

Who We Are

SEND and You SENDIASS provides information, advice and support (IAS) to children and young people with any type of special educational need and/or disability (SEND) and their parents and carers that is

- Free
- Confidential and
- Impartial

We are a registered charity with a board of trustees and a range of experienced and trained staff delivering the statutory information advice and support service local authorities must offer. This is in line with the expectation of the principles for SENDIASS services set within the SEND Code of Practice guidance (SEND Code of Practice 2.1, 2.2, 2.8).

We are mainly funded through service level agreements with local authorities and have some funding streams from other sources to enhance our remit.

Our goals at **SEND and You** are to

- Provide information, advice, support and training
- Work together
- Promote participation
- Enable Decision-making.

How Do We Reach Our Goals?

We offer support to children, and young people (CYP) aged 0 – 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), in line with the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014.

We work closely with Parent Carer Forums, other parent groups, youth and local area services, voluntary sector services and organisations in each authority. Close partnership working ensures that the local area SEND needs for children and young people are identified, planned for and met through the local SEND strategy.

We deliver an accessible service with information electronically available on our website and Facebook page for all service users, including professionals working with children and young people with SEND, parents and carers and other stakeholders.

We promote working together, participation and decision-making through communication of information, advice and support.

Who Can Use the SENDIASS?

Children and young people with SEND can use our service independently to ensure their views are shared, they understand educational processes and can contribute to decisions about their future.

Parents and carers with parental responsibility can use the SEND and You service to understand their own and their children and young people with SEND's rights, as well as processes and policies. They can also use our service to support them with practical guidance and support in voicing their views.

Professionals are able to use the information advice and support on offer to build on their own knowledge and understanding. They can also enable children and young people, as well as parents and carers to access the SENDIASS.

Partnership Working with Professionals

Professionals have the option of contacting SEND and You for training and information sessions on SEND across education, health and social care related to education or training.

Professionals working together should aim to empower service users and provide information, advice and support for them to be able to engage, participate and make decisions. Service users should also be enabled to express themselves and their CYP's views, wishes and feelings in a clear way, with confidence.

Professionals can:

- **Use** SEND and You to learn about our function as a SENDIASS, and the information, advice and support service that we offer.
- **Work with** SEND and You by supporting their own service users to access the SEND and You website, where they can find resources and our contact form.
- **Help** service users who need additional support to fill out the contact form on our website.
- **Help** SEND and You **provide** effective information, advice and support to service users by being clear about **any additional support needs** individuals may have. This will mean that we are able to make adjustments in how we make information available. For example, parents and carers, foster parents or others may need shorter meetings or simplified information.
- **Work in partnership** with SEND and You to support children and young people with special educational needs, and their families, in enabling children and young people with SEND to reach good outcomes in education and training.

What We Cover

Our service covers all aspects of special educational needs and disabilities, from promoting inclusion to social care and health concerns, appeals, complaints and exclusions where SEND may be identified.

Examples of the range of information we cover are:

- Statutory work, which may lead to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and beyond
- Concerns from the earliest stages of getting help
- SEN Support from early years to post-19
- Ways of accessing services to support education
- Signposting to other services
- Disagreement resolution.

What We DO

- Offer **impartial and confidential** information, advice and support (IAS) to enable our service users to make their OWN decisions and choices.
- Discuss **topics related to education** which can cover **education (learning), health, and social care**.
- Give IAS about **general support for pupils with SEND (diagnosed or undiagnosed)** expected to be available in educational settings.
- **Enable our service users** to be more **confident and clearer when communicating with professionals** (across education, health and social care).
- Offer **IAS about factual information** that may impact on CYP with SEND for example, local policy and practice, the Local Offer, personalisation, Personal Budgets, the law on SEN and disability, health and social care.
- **Help CYP, families and partners we work with understand statutory SEND processes**, for example, EHC assessment and planning, timescales, how to check draft plans, understanding what to do when unhappy with a draft EHCP, how naming a school works and parental preference.

- **Work individually with service users** in preparing for and attending meetings. For example, helping them prepare for a meeting and consider ways of expressing their views in a meeting.

- **Work in groups with service users to inform and equip them in a practical way about SEND topics**. For example, delivering a workshop on a topic like SEND in School or working through a practical exercise like explaining my young person's SEND.
- **Support service users to understand and navigate through specific topics** like exclusions or disagreement resolution such as mediation and tribunals.
- **Signpost** to -
    - o local sources of information, advice and support including the SEND Local Offer
    - o National sources of information, advice and support including CONTACT
    - o SEND and You resources like toolkits, guides, recordings, support groups and events.

- Provide **information about local links** for parent carer forums and voluntary groups.
- **Offer training sessions on the law relating to SEN and disability** as it applies to education, health and social care. This training can be provided to early years settings, schools, colleges, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Support service users within the remit of our service delivery and **make access arrangements** for them, for example, using the translation service on our website. We also offer accessible information through Easy Reads , browsealoud, a web-based text service and videos.

What We DO NOT DO

- Offer information, advice or support on issues that are **not linked to SEND**, for example, financial matters like benefits, Disability Living Allowance, carers' allowance.
- Offer a **counselling service** – enquiries must be based around a question related to SEND, with a clear starting point.
- Deliver **emergency support or interventions** for service users – this is for the three local authorities to have in place.
- Offer to automatically **complete paperwork on behalf of service users** - we use our discretion based on the individual needs of the service user on a case-by-case basis.
- Complete forms or **support service users to complete forms** that address issues not related to SEND.
- Allocate a **named 'support worker'** within the IAS Team.
- **Automatically check EHCPs for service users** unless there is an access need on the part of the service user or it is necessary as part of a process that we are supporting with.
- **Spend a disproportionate amount of time re-addressing an enquiry** that has already been addressed by another member of the IAS team.
- **Act as an intermediary between the service user and other professionals** unless we are supporting a service user with their own access arrangements (disabilities, learning difficulties, health needs).

Attending Meetings

Our aim is to enable our service users to participate independently in meetings following our input. However, attending meetings is part of the service that we offer when it is necessary.

The SENDIASS may agree to attend with a service user where the following has been established first:

- There is no other friend or family member who can attend with the service user
- The service user has disclosed a learning difficulty (or mental health difficulty) or disability which prevents them from being able to put across their views independently
- The service user is a CYP and has requested independent support
- There are other access requirements that need to be addressed, for example, English is an additional language for the service user
- The meeting is a mediation or tribunal hearing and one of the above also apply.

Protocol when Service Users are in Crisis

The SENDIASS is not an emergency service. If a service user has an emergency, we use our protocols for addressing this during our standard office hours. This could be:

- Calling the police for any criminal behaviour;
- Raising a child protection or safeguarding concern by informing the Children and/or Adult Services of the relevant local authority as per our Safeguarding procedures;
- Offering signposting information e.g. emergency housing.

The above fall out of the SENDIASS offer and the Information Advice and Support Team are not required to fulfil any function that would overstep the remit of the service.

Still unsure if SENDIASS can help? Need further information?

Please contact SEND and You via one of the methods below and our trained advisors will be happy to help:

- Information, Advice & Support Line: 0117 992 6009
- Email: support@sendandyou.org.uk Complete the
- contact form on our website
- Our Postal Address:

3rd Floor
Royal Oak House
Royal Oak Avenue
Bristol
BS1 4GB

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