

Special Educational Needs  
and Disability Information,  
Advice & Support Service

# sendiass

Frequently asked questions  
about SENDIASS



# How is the service funded?

Suffolk SENDIASS is an in-house service which is funded by the local authority, with additional contribution from health through the Integrated Care Boards covering Suffolk.

The budget is managed by the SENDIASS Service Lead.

# How does SENDIASS ensure it is at 'arms-length' to the local authority?

We follow a set of national Minimum Standards to provide impartial and confidential SEND information, advice and support to families. This includes that we must be an easily identifiable service, with our own branding, and at 'arms-length' to the local authority.

'Arms-length' means that we operate separately to the local authority, with day-to-day decisions taken within the service without influence. The service is structured within the QEPD (Quality, Engagement and Professional Development) arm of the CYP (Children and Young People's) directorate and therefore not aligned with the local authority's Inclusion/SEN services. SENDIASS office space is separate to SEN teams, such as Family Services.

Our website is separate and 'stand-alone'. Service branding, publicity, training and all content and resources are developed and maintained by SENDIASS.

It is a 'self-referral' service. Children, young people and parents/carers can contact us via one of the direct access options (helpline, web contact form, text or email).

Any personal information is held confidentially and securely within the SENDIAS service. The SENDIASS database is commissioned and managed by the service and can only be accessed by SENDIASS staff.

Practitioners contacting the service receive general information and advice only, and information about a family is not collected (instead requesting the practitioner to signpost them to contact us directly).

## **What is meant by impartiality?**

The service is neutral, fair and unbiased. We are not led by an agenda, local policy, nor campaign for a particular approach. We do not have any personal interest in the outcome of any decision.

## **Will SENDIASS take my side?**

The requirement to remain impartial means SENDIASS will not take anyone's side or collude.

We help children, young people and parents/carers to express their own views, not those of SENDIASS.

We will openly share information and advice which helps families to have conversations, including explaining what the law expects, how to challenge SEND decisions and raise concerns about provision.

# How can we be confident that SENDIASS is impartial?

We provide unbiased information and advice about the local authority's policies and procedures and about the policy and practice in local schools and other settings.

We...

- are trained in SEND law, so that we can give accurate information and advice.
- work at 'arms-length' to the local authority.
- listen to questions and concerns and give information about the range of available options.
- do not judge, nor seek to blame anyone.
- will not tell someone what to do.

We ask people using the service to tell us how neutral, fair and unbiased they found us to be, and results are published each year in our annual report.

Recent annual reports can be found on our 'Facts, figures and feedback' page.

The Advisory Body helps us to monitor how well we are meeting the national set of Minimum Standards for SENDIAS services.

# Will SENDIASS help me to share my views?

SENDIASS empowers children, young people and their parents and carers by helping them to understand SEND processes and to express their views and participate in discussions.

Support is tailored to the needs of the person accessing the service, and this therefore means that people will receive different levels of support depending on their own needs.

This may include helping a young person to identify their key issues, what helps them best and supporting them to express these. Or it might include offering template letters.

More information can be found on our 'About us' page in the 'How we empower families' dropdown:  
**[www.suffolksendiass.co.uk/about-us/](http://www.suffolksendiass.co.uk/about-us/)**

There are 4 'intervention levels' which have been agreed nationally for SENDIAS services:

- Information (general information and advice, including signposting)
- Information and tailored advice (more specific information and advice tailored to needs)
- Support (ongoing support, tailored to needs)
- Intensive support (support for those who are not able to independently navigate processes and/or access justice or require advocacy)

You can read more about this in the **IASS Definition of Advocacy** and in the **National Intervention Levels Guidance**.

# Will SENDIASS attend meetings with young people, parents and carers?

We may do, depending on the support needs of the person accessing the service (whether they are able to do this on their own – see the intervention levels).

We are a small team and there may not always be someone available, and particularly for short-notice requests. We would record these as 'needs unmet' and report this data monthly and annually.

In addition, we frequently support families to prepare for a meeting, including providing information about what to expect, and with helping them to prepare their views and questions in advance. Our website, training sessions and range of videos can also help families prepare, including for mediation meetings.

# What is SENDIASS doing to improve experiences of SEND children and young people in Suffolk?

We're meeting with groups of young people with SEND and working hard to develop content which matches their needs and helps children and young people, and their families to understand and participate in SEN processes.

We're listening to service feedback and making improvements as we go.

We have no power to direct the local authority (or schools) to do something though we work to inform and influence local policy and practice, as set out in the Minimum Standards.

General data (themes of enquiries and common experiences of families) are shared with partners through activity reports.

SENDIASS data is included for the Children and Young People's Services leadership team within Suffolk County Council, and we also input to SEND Programme and Accountability Boards. The service engages with relevant development work, and this may include highlighting SEND law and experiences of families.

Themes or issues we have flagged with the local authority and partners are included on our website:

**SENDIASS Activity (policy and process)**

# Further information

**You can read more on our website:**

<https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/about-us/>

**Read our Impartiality leaflet**

**You can contact us with any specific questions:**

<https://suffolksendiass.co.uk/contact-us/>

## Useful links

**Children and Families Act 2014**

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted)

**SEND Code of Practice 2015**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

[Minimum Standards for IAS Services](#)

[IASS Definition of Advocacy](#)

[National Intervention Levels Guidance.](#)





[www.suffolksendiass.co.uk](http://www.suffolksendiass.co.uk)



[enquiries@suffolksendiass.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@suffolksendiass.co.uk)



01473 265210



ADVICE4ME to 87007

English	If you need help to understand this information in another language, please contact us.
Arabic	إذا كنت بحاجة إلى المساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، فالرجاء الاتصال بنا.
Bengali	অন্য কোন ভাষায় এই তথ্য বুঝতে আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হলে, অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।
Farsi	در صورتی که نیاز به کمک دارید تا این اطلاعات را به زبان دیگری درک کنید، لطفاً با ما تماس بگیرید.
Kurdish	ئە گەر پێویستت بە یارمەتی هەیه بۆ تیگەیشتن لەم زانیاریانە بە زمانێکی تر، تکایە پەيوەندیمان پێوه بکە.
Lithuanian	Jei reikia pagalbos suprasti šią informaciją kita kalba, susisiekite su mumis.
Polish	Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy, aby zrozumieć tę informację w innym języku, proszę się z nami skontaktować.
Portuguese	Por favor contacte-nos caso necessite de ajuda para compreender esta informação em outro idioma.
Romanian	Vă rugăm să ne contactați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru a înțelege aceste informații într-o altă limbă.
Ukrainian	Якщо вам потрібна допомога, щоб зрозуміти цю інформацію іншою мовою, зв'яжіться з нами.

