

SENDIASS TORBAY POLICY PACK



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SENDIASS Torbay Policy Statement

These policies set out how SENDIASS Torbay operates as an impartial Information, Advice and Support Service for children, young people and their parents/carers.

They describe the day-to-day practice of the service and how support is provided in line with the SEND Code of Practice and the National Minimum Standards for Information, Advice and Support Services.

SENDIASS Torbay operates at arm's length from Torbay Council and the ICB. These policies sit alongside wider council policies and procedures where applicable, particularly in relation to safeguarding, data protection and GDPR.

Where specific processes are not detailed within these policies, relevant Torbay Council policies and statutory guidance are followed.

Introduction

SENDIASS Torbay is a free, confidential and impartial service for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) aged 0–25, and their parents and carers.

The service is delivered in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), which place a duty on local authorities to ensure that children, young people and their families have access to impartial information, advice and support.

SENDIASS Torbay operates at arm's length from the local authority to maintain independence and ensure that advice remains impartial.

Purpose of the Service

The purpose of SENDIASS Torbay is to ensure that children, young people and their parents and carers are able to:

- access accurate, confidential and impartial information
- understand their rights within the SEND system
- participate in decisions relating to education, health and care
- make informed choices about support and provision

Statutory Context

Local authorities have a legal duty to arrange for children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers, to be provided with information, advice and support.

This includes support in relation to:

- education, health and social care
- SEND processes, including Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans
- the Local Offer
- personal budgets and direct payments
- disagreement resolution, complaints and appeals

SENDIASS Torbay fulfils this duty by providing support that is accessible, impartial and responsive to individual need.

Policies:

Role of the Service Policy

Advocacy Policy

Impartiality Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Access and Referral Policy

SENDIASS Torbay - Role of the Service Policy

1 Purpose

The policy outlines the role of SENDIASS Torbay and how the service supports children, young and their parents/carers

2 Scope of the Service

SENDIASS Torbay provides information, advice and support on matters relating to SEND, including:

- SEND law, processes and rights
- local policy and practice
- available services and provision
- personal budgets and direct payments
- disagreement resolution, mediation and tribunal processes

Support may be provided through:

- telephone and email contact
- written information
- one-to-one support
- attendance at meetings
- training

3. How the Service Works

SENDIASS Torbay works alongside children, young people and families to support informed decision-making and participation.

The service:

- supports individuals to understand information and processes
- helps individuals prepare for meetings and next steps
- works in partnership with services while maintaining independence
- promotes confidence and self-advocacy

SENDIASS Torbay does not make decisions on behalf of families or services.

4. Children and Young People

Children and young people aged 0–25 can access SENDIASS Torbay separately from their parents or carers.

Support will be provided in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and capacity.

SENDIASS Torbay recognises the importance of ensuring that children and young people are supported to participate in decisions that affect them.

5. Working with Other Services

SENDIASS Torbay works alongside education, health and social care services but remains independent.

The service:

- does not act on behalf of the local authority or any other organisation
- does not take sides between families and services
- maintains impartiality at all times

SENDIASS Torbay – Advocacy Policy

1 Introduction

SENDIASS Torbay uses the definition of advocacy set out by the Information Advice and Support Service Network (IASSN)

Within SENDIASS, advocacy focuses on supporting children, young people and their parents to express their views, understand their rights and take part in decision making.

This reflects to the role of SENDIASS as an impartial information advice support service, where the focus is on empowering individuals rather than directing or making decisions on their behalf

2 Definitions

IASS use this definition of Advocacy

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 on the mind website) nor do we provide legal advocacy as provided by a lawyer.

A SENDIASS 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.

A SENDIASS 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.

SENDIASS Torbay – Impartiality Policy

1 Purpose

This policy sets out how SENDIASS Torbay remained impartial in delivering information advice and support to children young people and their parent/carers as an arm's length in house service

2. Impartiality

Impartiality means that SENDIASS Torbay:

- does not take sides between individuals and services
- provides information based on law, statutory guidance and evidence

The service supports individuals to understand their options and make their own informed decisions.

This means that the information provided may not always align with the preferred outcomes of children, young people or parents/carers.

3. Impartiality Purpose

The purpose of maintaining impartiality is to:

- ensure trust in the service
- provide accurate and balanced information
- support informed decision-making

- enable constructive engagement between families and services

Impartiality ensures that the service remains credible and independent.

4. How Impartiality is Maintained

SENDIASS Torbay maintains impartiality by:

- providing information based on SEND law and statutory guidance
- offering balanced information, including all available options
- explaining both strengths and limitations of different approaches
- avoiding influence from any organisation or service
- not being influenced by external pressures from services, organisations or individuals

5. Conflicts of Interest

SENDIASS Torbay aims to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible.

Where a potential conflict of interest is identified, this will be:

- declared openly
- discussed with the individual receiving support

Where appropriate, support will be provided by an alternative member of staff.

In some circumstances this may not be possible, however transparency will be maintained at all times.

SENDIASS Torbay – Confidentiality Policy

1 Purpose

This policy sets out how SENDIASS Torbay manages confidentiality when providing information advice and support to two children young people and their parents/carers it specifically on the day to day confidentiality practise of the SENDIASS Service

2 Principles of Confidentiality

SENDIASS Torbay is committed to:

- keeping personal information secure
- only collecting information that is necessary to provide support
- respecting the privacy of children, young people and families

3. Sharing Information

Information shared with SENDIASS Torbay staff will be treated confidentially and will only be shared:

- where consent has been given by the parent, carer or young person
- where there are safeguarding concerns
- where there is a legal requirement to share information

SENDIASS Torbay will not routinely share information with schools, the local authority or other services without consent.

Where information needs to be shared due to safeguarding concerns, this will be done in line with safeguarding procedures. Wherever possible, the individual will be informed.

4. Consent and Capacity

SENDIASS Torbay recognises that children and young people may have the right to make decisions about their information.

Consent will be sought from:

- parents or carers where appropriate
- young people where they have the capacity to understand and make decisions about their information

Decisions about sharing information are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

5. Information Held by the Service

SENDIASS Torbay keeps a record of information necessary to provide support. This may include:

- contact details
- basic information about the child or young person (such as name, date of birth and education setting)
- relevant information relating to SEND needs and support

The service does not hold full education, health or social care records.

6. Storage of Information

Information is stored securely on SENDIASS Torbay's independent data systems, separate from local authority systems.

Access to this information is restricted to authorised SENDIASS staff only.

SENDIASS Torbay does not have access to wider council systems or held by other services.

All information held by SENDIASS Torbay is provided directly by parent/cares, child/young person themselves or other professionals where you have given consent for the information to be shared with us

Where paper records are used, these will be:

- kept to a minimum
- stored securely
- disposed of confidentially when no longer required

7. Use of Information

Information is used to:

- provide information, advice and support
- record contact and support provided
- monitor service demand and outcomes

Where information is used for reporting purposes, it will be anonymised so that individuals cannot be identified.

8. Access to Information

Individuals have the right to request access to the information held about them by SENDIASS Torbay.

Requests should relate to SENDIASS records only and not to records held by schools, the local authority or other services.

Requests will be managed in line with data protection legislation.

SENDIASS Torbay – Access and Referral Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how SENDIASS Torbay manages access to the service, including how requests for support are received, assessed and allocated.

It focuses on how the service operates day-to-day to provide fair and proportionate support in line with demand and capacity.

2. Accessing the Service

SENDIASS Torbay primarily operates a self-referral model.

Requests for support should be made via the SENDIASS Torbay online request for support form. [SENDIASS Torbay request for support form – Fill in form](#)

This ensures that all requests are recorded accurately and allows the service to assess and allocate support appropriately.

3. Referrals from Professionals

Referrals from professionals will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, where:

- a parent or carer is unable to make the referral themselves
- a child or young person is unable to access the service independently

Referrals should be made with the knowledge and consent of the individual.

4. Returning to the Service

Where a child, young person or parent/carer has not accessed the service within the last six months or is seeking support for a new or different matter a new request for support form will be required.

This ensures that information is up to date and that support can be allocated appropriately and fairly.

5. Response Times

SENDIASS Torbay aims to respond to enquiries within five working days. Where support is requested for meetings, at least two weeks' notice is required (we can never guarantee someone will be available even with notice).

6. Levels of Support

SENDIASS Torbay provides different levels of support depending on individual need.

- This may include:
- Information and signposting
- advice on specific matters
- ongoing casework support
- support with complex or statutory processes.

7. Allocation of Support

The level of support offered will be determined based on:

- the complexity of the situation
- the level of support already in place
- the ability of the individual to manage the process independently

This ensures that support is provided in a fair and proportionate way.

8. Managing Demand

Due to demand, SENDIASS Torbay prioritises support based on need. Not all requests will receive ongoing casework support.

Where this is the case, individuals will receive:

- Clear information and advice
- guidance on next steps

9. Working Alongside Other Services

SENDIASS Torbay provides a free and impartial service.

Where a family is receiving ongoing support from a privately funded advocate, solicitor or representative, SENDIASS will review the level of involvement to avoid duplication of support.

10. Fair Access

SENDIASS Torbay aims to provide equitable access to the service.

Support is allocated based on need, and the service will seek to ensure that resources are used effectively to support as many individuals as possible.