

What is *impartial* information, advice and support?

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (June 2016) says local authorities must provide information advice and support that is impartial, confidential and free about special educational needs (SEN), disability, health and social care for children, young people and parents/carers.

In Milton Keynes this service is provided by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS).

What do we mean when we say we are impartial?

The SEND Code of Practice says:

The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups (2.8).

This means that the information, advice and support that we offer are firmly based in the law and the SEND Code of Practice.

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 do not give priority to any particular impairment, disability or special educational need, nor do we campaign for any particular approach to education.

By being impartial we aim to help parents, children and young people have clear, accurate and relevant information that will help them take part in decisions about their lives.

How do we know that we are impartial?

It is very easy to be biased. Everyone has opinions about most things! Sometimes people can be biased without even realising it. That is why we really value your opinion about the information, advice and support we offer. We want you to tell us if you think we are not impartial. To help us check that we are impartial we routinely ask those who use our service to say whether they think we have been biased one way or another.

SENDIAS follows the national [Minimum Standards](#) for services providing impartial information, advice and support developed by the Network of Information, Advice and Support Services ([IASSN](#)).

This helps us to monitor the effectiveness of our service we provide and ensure that it is 'at arm's length' from the local authority. By this we mean that we act, and are seen to act, separately and impartially, with no undue influence or control from either the local authority or the Clinical Commissioning Group in our area.

We also publish an annual report that includes information on what people tell us about our service.

We will often work with parents and children or young people together. Sometimes we will work with them separately. When we do this, the same confidentiality rules apply.