

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT WE DO



Professional Guide

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SENDIASS is a statutory service.

The Children and Families Act 2014 sets out, in law, the requirement for every Local Authority in England to 'arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to their SEN or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care'.

SENDIASS services must meet, at least, the Minimum legal requirements for the provision of information advice and support. These are described in Chapter 2 of The SEND Code of Practice 2015 and are set out in The SENDIASS Minimum standards, a copy of which can be accessed online at councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network. A copy of the standards can be requested from Halton SENDIASS.

SENDIASS offer impartial, confidential information, advice and support to parents, carers, children and Young People (aged up to 25) about matters related to Special Educational Needs and disability (SEND)

Staff are legally trained and provide unbiased information and advice including:

- Education, health and social care law
- National and local policy and processes
- What to do where there are disagreements, including SEND Tribunals

SENDIASS is free, easy to access and confidential. The Service operates weekdays throughout the year (including school holidays).

SENDIASS support those who have or may have a special educational need or disability. Diagnosis is not a criteria required to access the service. Halton SENDIASS offer support, where the child or young person is a Halton resident, irrespective of where their education is provided.

Operating at 'arm's length' from the Local Authority, SENDIASS give impartial information, advice and support around SEND, at every stage of a child's or young person's education. This includes SEND related health and social care need.

SENDIASS listen to concerns, gather information about the situation and determine what information and advice is required, and the level of support that is appropriate to provide.

SENDIASS aim to empower Children, young people and their families with the information, advice and support they need to make informed decisions and to achieve the best possible outcomes.

SENDIASS aim to give children, young people and their families the skills and support needed to enable them to confidently share their views.

SENDIASS Promote positive partnership working between families and professionals

Halton SENDIASS use an 'empowerment model' to guide the service staff in making informed triage decisions. This model enables the service to fairly prioritise what levels of support are required by, and offered to, each individual service user. This model supports the service to efficiently manage capacity and to allocate staff time to cases where the highest levels of support needs are identified.

*** Extract from Halton SENDIASS empowerment model, available on request**

1. Parents with additional needs of their own
2. Review meetings where:
 - a. the placement is at risk
 - b. it is a phased transfer and there is uncertainty re next placement
 - c. the child has multiple or complex needs and parents are struggling to engage support or necessary services
 - d. it is a complex situation, may be at risk of going to SEND Tribunal, or escalating beyond a local area or settings complaint procedure.
 - e. following SEND tribunal decision where there are on-going issues re implementation or delivery of the ruling
3. Other situations as determined by and at the discretion of the IASS manager as warranting face-to-face support. IASS staff will be required to log the circumstances relating to such situations and should be prepared to justify their decision to the Halton SENDIASS Steering Group.

Home visits

Will only be carried out if:

- 1. The parent is housebound either due to:
 - a. their own needs*
 - b. caring responsibilities for another*
 - c. the child they are contacting you about is unable to leave the house and no other arrangements for their care can be made**
- 2. There is no other suitable alternative or accessible place to meet e.g. school, LA building, coffee shop etc.*

NOTE – If the family are actively receiving information advice and support, or legal representation from elsewhere then SENDIASS will not offer individual support for the matter to which this relates.

How do children, young people and their families access the SENDIASS service ?

SENDIASS are a self-referral service only.

Please pass a copy of our service leaflet and advise that families, young people call or email us. Advise them to include the name and date of birth if emailing or leaving us a voicemail. Make them aware that the service will aim to reply, wherever possible, within 3 working days.

****The service does not return missed calls that have not left a voicemail.***

Q. Can I refer a family to you?

A. No. We can only accept referrals directly from families

Q. What if the young person/parent/carer finds it difficult to call?

A. Please sit down with the family member, call our number 0151 511 7733 and pass the phone over. If the call is not answered immediately, please leave a voicemail and let the family know that SENDIASS will endeavour to call back within 3 working days.

Q. What if they would prefer to email initially?

A. Please assist them to email the service at SENDIASS@halton.gov.uk. If the email is not sent directly from the young person/parent/family email address, then personal consent and permission to email on their behalf must be made very clear in your email. Replies will only be sent to the email address of the YP/parent/carer.

Q. You provided support to the family at a previous meeting. Can we invite you to the next meeting?

A. Only the family can ask us to attend, and if they do, we will triage the request as per the SENDIASS Empowerment model.

Q. Can we discuss specific families with you?

A. No. We are happy to give you general advice and information but will not ask for, or discuss, any personal details.

Q. Can I send you child/young person/ family names and details and ask that you make contact with them?

A. No. You can only send personal details after the family have made direct contact with SENDIASS and explicitly given SENDIASS permission to receive these. An information received without this consent will be deleted

What families can expect when they contact us?

- Our primary aim is to empower families with the information, advice and support they need to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- We will contact/reply usually within 24 hours, but allow up to 3 working days during busy periods.
- We will listen to concerns, gather information about the situation and determine what level of support we can provide.
- Support from our service can take place via the telephone, Skype/Zoom/Teams, email, letter; or, in some cases, home visits and support at meetings.
- If support is needed at a meeting we will require at least five working days' notice (please note whilst we try our best to attend meetings on request we cannot always be available, but will always provide advice).

HALTON SENDIASS DOES NOT

- Make decisions for parents and young people or tell them what to do.
- Discuss an individual case with other people without their permission (unless there is a safeguarding concern)
- Accept referrals
- The service does not return missed calls that have not left a voicemail.
- Take minutes in meetings. SENDIASS make informal notes that are shared with the family/ young person only.

Will Halton SENDIASS contact professionals and settings on behalf of Children, Young people and their families?

We will only contact the school, setting, agency or professionals involved when the child, young person or family have explicitly given us permission to do so. We will only pass on information about cases where prior agreement and consent is obtained.

With appropriate consent, SENDIASS officers may telephone you for the following reasons:

- To check / gather further information, and our understanding of it
- To understand each parties point of view / perception etc.

- To request information which will help us to offer the most effective support, and ensure that we provide the most relevant information
- To arrange a meeting to discuss a particular issue;
- To pass on information

ATTENDING MEETINGS

We always ask families and young people to let the meeting host know that we will be attending.

When attending meetings or visiting any setting, SENDIASS Officers will be identifiable by their Halton Borough Council ID badge (worn on a purple lanyard). All staff have had accredited legal training and hold a current DBS.

During meetings, we aim to:

- Ensure that the family or young person understands the purpose of the meeting and the role of everyone attending
- Support the family or young person to take an active and informed role, and to express their concerns clearly and calmly
- Ensure that the person that we are supporting has sufficient opportunity to speak, and that they feel professionals have listened to them when they have shared their point of view or expressed an opinion
- Support the family or young person to access the meeting, for example, ensuring that they understand any terminology or jargon used, give overviews of processes been followed etc.
- Remind the family or young person about things they have told us they want to discuss or any questions that they may have planned to ask
- Clarify, at the end of the meeting, any decisions taken or actions planned so that the family or young person is clear of these and any intended outcomes.
- Halton SENDIASS may take informal notes during the meeting. These notes are intended to help the family or young person to remember what was discussed and agreed during the meeting. If the family / young person agree, a copy of these notes can be shared between family/ young person and host

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE SENDIASS SERVICE?

If you are unhappy with the service provided by Halton SENDIASS please contact Lead Officer outlining your concerns.

Please also see complaints, comments & compliments policy at sendiasshalton.co.uk/policies

Contact Details

Halton SENDIASS Information, Advice and Support Service

0151 511 7733

E-mail: SENDIASS@halton.gov.uk

Website: sendiasshalton.co.uk