

# WIAS&S



Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service

Providing an Impartial Service to Children and Young People (aged 0-25)  
with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and their Parents



# Impartiality Policy

**CONFIDENTIAL  
IMPARTIAL  
FREE**

**Information,  
Advice & Support  
Services Network**  
*for SEND*



## Introduction

Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service (WAISS) provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their parents. A young person in this case is defined as an individual over compulsory school age (16) and under 25. WAISS is part of the national Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) Network.

The role of WAISS is to ensure you, your child or young person has access to information, advice and support so you can make informed decisions related to Education, Health and Social Care.

## What is Impartiality?

Impartiality is defined as being objective, neutral and free from undue bias or preconceived opinions.

We act impartially by:

- Being clear with you that the role of WAISS is to help you participate in your child's or young person's Education, Health and Social Care. Advise you on your rights and responsibilities rather than giving you our views about what is best for your child or young person.
- Being clear with your child or young person that our role is to help them to be able to make decisions about their Education, Health and Social Care. Inform them on their rights and responsibilities rather than giving our views.
- Respecting you, your child's or young person's decisions without making a judgement.
- Providing factual information and advice based on the law and guidance.

## Relationship with the Local Authority

All local authorities must provide an information, advice and support service (see Section 2 - The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: (2015). The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that this should be impartial and provided at "arm's length" from the local authority and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service (WAISS) is funded by Wandsworth Council (local authority). The service is managed by the WAISS Manager.

The local authority, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and voluntary organisations do not influence or edit the information given to you, your child or young person by WAISS.

Please see the 'WAISS Arm's Length policy' for further information about how we remain at "arm's length" from the local authority and CCG.

## Location

We are based in Wandsworth Town Hall with a separate office used only by us and is located in a different building from other education and social care services teams.

- All WAISS files are stored on a secure network and can only be accessed by WAISS staff.
- A confidential dedicated phone line for parents, children and young people, with a 24 hour answering machine.
- A confidential dedicated email facility.

There are private meeting rooms based at Wandsworth Town Hall that we can use to meet you, your child or young person in. Other neutral venues outside the town hall can also be used, as well as home visits in exceptional circumstances.



## Training

To ensure we keep up to date with national SEND law and guidance, all WIASS staff receive training on SEND law organised by the IASS Network delivered by the Independent Provider Special Education Advice (IPSEA). IPSEA is an independent organisation.

Other sources of external training include the Council for Disabled Children and ACE Education, Advice and Training.

## Children, young people and parents

We try to ensure that there are no barriers to accessing the services that we offer and we achieve this in a number of ways. For example, using interpreters or making home visits. We prioritise parents, children and young people who cannot easily access WIASS for information, advice and support, for example, where there is limited understanding of spoken or written English or those who have their own additional needs.

## Ensuring Impartiality of Staff

Staff within the service are very clear that WIASS do not generally tell you, your child or young person what you should do (exceptions may include if there are safeguarding issues).

We are not involved in any decision-making processes for example, SEN support, Education, Health and Care(EHC) Needs Assessments or Plans. Therefore we can be completely impartial (neutral/objective) in discussions with you, your child or young person.

We believe if you are provided with the appropriate information, advice and support and your options you, your child or young person will be able to make an informed decision.

## Recruitment

We ensure that when recruiting new staff advertised information for posts reflects the impartial work of WIASS.

## Recognising the Partiality of Other Agencies

We understand and recognise that schools/ colleges and early year's providers and other services and agencies will have their own priorities, criteria and systems of working which may sometimes be in conflict with national or local guidance. We will always explain and direct services to national law and guidance.

## Seeking Feedback from Service Users

When we have completed a piece of work with you our Business Support officer will contact you and/ or your child/young person if we have worked with them directly too) to request feedback. You will be asked questions about your experience of using the service, including if the information, support and advice provided was impartial.



## Service Publicity

We ensure that all service publicity clearly reflects the service's guidelines on impartiality. All publicity includes the WIASS and national IASS Network logo.

## Ensuring the Effectiveness of our Impartiality Policy

- All WIASS staff receive training on the policy.
- The policy is shared with the local authority and other agencies to make them aware of the impartial nature of our service.
- WIASS staff are clear that WIASS' ultimate aim is to provide support and empowerment to you, your child or young person to achieve the best educational, health and social outcomes.

**This policy was last updated in January 2022.**

## How to contact us:

 **Call back service: 020 8871 8065**  
(24 hour answer machine)

 **Email: [wiaass@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:wiaass@wandsworth.gov.uk)**

 **Web: [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wiaass](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wiaass)**

