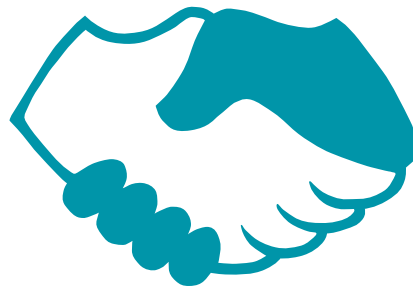


# WIAS&S



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



# Arm's Length 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 the age of 25 years old.

## Arm's Length from the Local Authority

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that an information, advice and support service should be impartial and provided at "arm's length" from the local authority and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

This is achieved by offering a confidential, impartial (neutral/ objective) service to you, your child or young person.

Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service (WAISS) is funded by Wandsworth Council (Local Authority) and is located within the Childrens Services department. WAISS is part of the National Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) Network.

## What is Working at Arm's Length?

A service is at arm's length when it is able to act impartially, with no influence or control from the local authority or CCG in which it is based in.

We achieve the requirement to be arm's length by:

- A separate office base used only by WAISS staff and located in a different building from other education and social 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 confidential email facility.
- Referral systems to signpost you, your child or young person to voluntary sector organisations where we are unable to help.
- Legal and other training provided by external agencies, for example, Independent Provider Special Education Advice (IPSEA).



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.

Information given to you, your child or young person by WIAS&S is based on national SEND legislation (law) and guidance.

## Identity

WIAS&S has its own distinct identity and logo which is used on all WIAS&S information sheets and publicity.

## Ensuring the Effectiveness of our Arm's Length Policy

- All WIAS&S staff receive training on this policy.
- WIAS&S staff are trained in SEND law by external agencies.
- WIAS&S staff are clear that the service does not undertake local authority functions or take sides with the local authority, education setting or any other agency.

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



## How to contact us:

---

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

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

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

