

IASS Impartiality Guide

Legal guidance is found in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (January 2015). This states “Local authorities must 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. This must include information, advice and support on the take-up and management of Personal Budgets. In addition, in carrying out their duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must have regard to the importance of providing children and their parents and young people with the information and support necessary to participate in decisions.” (2.1)

“When designing Information, Advice and Support Services, local authorities should take into account the following principles: The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm’s length from the local authority and CCGs. “ (2.8)

Shropshire IASS

Shropshire IASS maintains an impartial stance in the service it provides. We do not prioritise any impairment, disability or SEN over another. We do not stand to gain or lose whatever the outcomes of any discussions may be. We will not push Clients towards a particular course of action and will always respect Clients’ decisions, without making a judgement. We provide factual information and advice based on guidance and legislation, without reflecting local policy or own opinions. We provide Clients with enough information to empower them so that they can make their own decisions, we will not tell them what to do and we will not take sides with anyone.

IASS staff should avoid being involved in the workings of local schools and local authorities. This includes becoming a school Governor or getting involved in cases where we may know the child, family, school, local

authority representatives or any person related to the case in any other capacity other than our IASS work.

Shropshire IASS maintains impartiality in the following ways:

1 Organisation

Shropshire IASS is managed by Citizens Advice Shropshire (CAS). Shropshire IASS staff are line managed within CAS. CAS is responsible for the policies and procedures which govern the operation of IASS. CAS produces an Annual Report on its service and financial activities.

2 Funding

IASS receives funding from Shropshire Council. This body has a duty to ensure that there is an effective IASS in their area.

It also receives funding on other occasions from other external sources to enable it to run projects that are consistent with IASS aims and values.

3 Service Standards

- IASS aims to accurately reflect the views of individual parent/carers/young people and of parent groups to the Local Authority and to other agencies
- IASS staff are provided with accurate and appropriate information and training to enable them to carry out their role
- IASS staff are supported in their dealings with parent/carers, professionals and practitioners to ensure that they are able to act in an impartial and independent manner

IASS staff work to empower young people and parent/carers to take an active and informed role in their / their child's education.

IASS staff will:

- Provide impartial and objective information, support and information
- Maintain a professional relationship with the Clients whom they support
- Make it clear that any actions that they take are in agreement with the Client, and that they do not have any personal or wider interest in any decisions that are made
- Inform the IASS Manager of any conflict of interest in relation to individual Clients, parent groups, education settings or other agencies
- Inform the IASS Manager of any personal or voluntary involvement relating to education or disability if this is likely to affect their work

IASS staff will not:

- Make decisions on behalf of the Client
- Give directive advice
- Act on behalf of the Local Authority, educational setting or other agencies

4 Location

IASS is located in Citizens Advice Shropshire premises:
Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LY.

5 Image and Identity

IASS has its own image and identity and produces its own information, independently of the Council. IASS information does not display the Shropshire Council logo.

6 Local Authority, education settings and agencies.

Achieving the best outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities is our ultimate aim and our role is to support parent/carers and young people in securing this. IASS will not allow relationships with the Local Authority, education settings or any other agency to affect the information or support IASS provides to Clients. IASS does not undertake Local Authority functions, or act on behalf of Local Authorities, education settings or any other agency.

Review

This guide will be reviewed by CAS in line with CAS policy review schedule or following publication of advice from IASS Network, whichever is earlier.