



SEND Family Partnership Impartiality Policy

The Special Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014) states that the Local Authority must provide an Information Advice and Support Service (IAS) that provides parents with:

“accurate, impartial, information on their rights, roles and responsibilities on issues about education, health and social care which relate to their SEN or Disability .

SEND Family Partnership (SFP) provides the IAS Service in Staffordshire, which is funded by Staffordshire County Council (i.e. it is an “in house” service). It operates at “arms length” from the Local Authority as an independent and confidential service for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and or a disability (SEND).

SFP aims to enable parents and carers to become effective partners in their child or young person’s education by providing with impartial information and support to allow them to make informed decisions and to feel more confident in expressing their views.

Location

SFP occupies its own offices, leased from the County Council, but separate from any other service within the LA.

Image/Identity

SFP does not have to comply with County Council guidelines in respect of corporate identity; letter heading, logo etc.

It has its own logo and strap lines for use on leaflets and other publications.

Advisory Group

An Advisory Group exists to steer and monitor the work of the SFP and works to agreed Terms of Reference.

The Group has representation from parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, SFP staff, Independent Parental Supporters, Independent Supporters and Voluntary and Support Group representatives.

The Group is chaired by a parent or carer to ensure its impartiality and independence from the LA.

Line Management

The SFP Co-ordinator is line managed by the Commissioner for Inclusion and Wellbeing. Regular meetings between the FPS Co-ordinator and their line manager allow issues of concern to parents and carers to be raised. However, all information is kept strictly confidential and no names are disclosed unless parents have asked specifically for their named case to be raised.

Processes

SFP has policies and procedures to ensure that impartiality underpins all its activities and is covered during training and induction for all staff and volunteers.

Information, books and resources on a wide range of groups and voluntary organisations is held in the Parent Resource Room and SFP Reference Library. This is used in staff induction and IPS training to make sure that the staff and volunteers are able to give impartial and neutral information.

External speakers from non-LA backgrounds are brought in, when appropriate, to input into team training events and IPS training courses. Staff induction will include visits to speak not only with personnel working within the Local Authority but also with local support groups and others.

National Law training is undertaken by all staff to ensure that accurate information can be given to all parents.

SFP maintains subscriptions to various independent organisations to ensure that up-to-date impartial information is received.

Staff and volunteers are aware of the importance of outlining to parents the range of options open to them at a particular stage of their child's education.

A system of monthly line management and My Performance Conversations has been established to include observation of practice and a sampling review of casework with all staff and volunteers to ensure that this principle is adhered to.

Conflict of Interest

A member of staff would not, unless unavoidable, work with a parent in circumstances where there could be a potential conflict of interest. If this situation is unavoidable (e.g. no other staff member being available), then the parent is made aware and given alternative options.

Agreed by Advisory Group: 24th April 2015

Date of review: April 2016