**Steering Group Terms of Reference**

**Childrenand Families Act 2014 – Advice and Information**

**32** (1) A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people for whom it is responsible, and the parents of children for whom it is responsible, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the special educational needs of the children or young people concerned.

(2) A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people in its area with a disability, and the parents of children in its area with a disability, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the disabilities of the children or young people concerned.

(3) The authority must take such steps as it thinks appropriate for making the services provided under subsections (1) and (2) known to—

(a) the parents of children in its area.

(b) children in its area.

(c) young people in its area.

(d) the head teachers, proprietors and principals of schools and post-16 institutions in its area.

(4) The authority may also take such steps as it thinks appropriate for making the services provided under subsections (1) and (2) known to such other persons as it thinks appropriate.

**Introduction**

[Norfolk Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)](https://www.norfolksendiass.org.uk/) is a statutory service offering free, impartial, confidential information, advice and support. The service provides information and advice based on education law related to SEN and disability and health and social care legislation. SENDIASS’s follow [Minimum Standards](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/Minimum%20StandardsFINAL%20with%20DfE%20DH%20logos_0.pdf) to ensure they are a compliant service. SENDIASS staff are independently trained in SEND law and practice, this ensures they keep their impartiality when advising parent/carers, young people and professionals.

Norfolk SENDIASS works in partnership with parents and young people, the Local Authority, health, educational settings, and other key agencies working with children and young people up to the age of 25. The Service operates at ‘arm’s length’ from Local Authority and Health Services.

**Aims of the Service**

The aim of the service is to ensure parents, carers and young people have access to timely, accurate and impartial, information, advice and support. This enables parents, carers and young people to take an informed and active role in the decision-making process.

The service works to limit misunderstandings and secure partnership working between parents, carers, young people, schools, the Local Authority and other services, ensuring that the views of parents, carers and young people are listened to.

**Purpose of the Steering Group**

A forum for key members to act as a critical friend to Norfolk SENDIASS by engaging in strategic oversight of the service, this will include monitoring, challenging, developing and supporting the service with policies and procedures.

**Aims of the Steering Group**

The primary functions of the Steering Group are to:

* Discuss key issues and developments that are relevant to SENDIASS
* Sign off by majority vote anything related to the strategic direction of the SENDIAS Service
* Support, promote and develop the service
* Monitor the impartiality of the service and ensure it remains at ‘arm’s length’ to Statutory Bodies
* Ensure that impartiality and confidentiality policies are reviewed and monitor that they are implemented consistently and effectively
* Monitor the continued development of the service in a way that best meets the needs of children and young people with SEND in Norfolk and their parents/carers by agreeing and reviewing the Norfolk SENDIASS development plan annually
* Evaluate the level to which the service achieves the Minimum Standards for SEND Information, Advice and Support Services and is compliant with the SEND Code of Practice 2015

**Membership**

There will be a broad representation of members on the Steering Group, they will be chosen on their ability to make an effective contribution on behalf of the stakeholder they represent and their willingness to be active in promoting the interests of Norfolk SENDIASS. The Steering Group will include representatives from the following:

* Local Authority Manager of Norfolk SENDIASS
* Primary, secondary, special schools
* Early Years settings
* Post 16 provider
* Voluntary groups or organisations
* Health
* Social Care
* Parents/carers of children who have SEND
* Norfolk parent/carer forum Family Voice

**Members of the Steering Group will:**

* Promote Norfolk SENDIASS to parent/carers, young people, and professionals across a range of agencies
* Promote a partnership approach by informing Norfolk SENDIASS and their own service/organisation of any findings and feedback that is relevant.
* Be prepared to attend small ‘task and finish’ working groups or ‘one off exceptional’ Steering Group meetings.
* Make sure they have the ability as a representative from their service/organisation to cast a vote if needed, respect the vote when it’s announced and understand that if they are unable to attend the meeting it may forfeit their vote
* Behave with sensitivity, respect and honesty, ensuring they abide by requests for confidentiality
* Attend each meeting, notify the Norfolk SENDIASS team if they are unable to attend a meeting and understand that when members are unable to attend 3 consecutive meetings, their position may be reviewed by the Chair and their membership may be withdrawn.
* Identify and acknowledge with the Chair any conflict of interest if it arises
* Delegate their attendance to another person in their organisation if they are unable to attend a meeting. Before they do this, they need to show that individual these Terms of Reference and the Norfolk SENDIASS information booklet as well as inform the SENDIASS Manager and Chair.
* Read relevant material before and after meetings even if they are unable to attend the meeting itself
* Ensure active participation and contribution whilst in attendance at meetings, this will be reviewed by the Chair and SENDIASS Manager

**Becoming a member of the Steering group**

Where a new member is nominated, they must:

* have a conversation with the Norfolk SENDIASS manager and/or another member of the Steering Group to ensure they understand their role and the role of Norfolk SENDIASS
* read and agree to adhere to the Steering Group Terms of Reference

**Chair/Vice Chair**

* The Steering Group will appoint a Chair and Vice Chair to serve a maximum of 3year term subject to annual confirmation of the appointment
* The Chair and Vice Chair will be independent of SENDIASS and appointed from within the membership of the group
* If the Chair or Vice Chair are unable to attend an email will be sent to those attending asking for someone to step up and chair the meeting

**Governance**

Any concerns or questions raised by the Steering Group will escalate up to the SENDIASS Manager’s line manager (Team Manager Voice and Impact), then to the Head of Voice Impact and Assurance and then to the Assistant Director for Independent Services and Practices, Partnerships and Inclusion where it will then feed into Childrens Services Leadership Team (CSLT) if necessary.

# Meetings

Steering group meetings will be held termly, 3 times a year.

**Norfolk SENDIASS will:**

* Produce and publish an ongoing development plan and Annual Report
* Ensure either the Service Manager or Senior SENDIAS Advisor is in attendance as the SENDIASS representative
* Circulate an agenda, previous minutes and supporting papers to Steering Group members prior to meetings
* Operational decisions (unless they have a significant impact on the ability to fulfil the minimum standards) will be decided by the SENDIASS manager and notified to the steering group
* Ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are kept up to date by itemising as a rolling programme of review on the agenda.
* Support members to carry out their responsibilities
* Produce and present relevant reports including quantitative and qualitative information
* Provide help to access meetings (venues, materials, formats)
* Ensure that 50% of members (minimum) are in attendance when being asked to cast a vote
* Be available to members to discuss issues and problems
* Process expenses claims as soon as possible
* Provide induction to the role
* Invite members to attend Norfolk SENDIASS training opportunities whenever numbers allow

**I agree to the above -**

**Signature:**

**Name:**

**Representing:**

**Date:**