



SHEFFIELDSENDIAS

Sheffield Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice & Support

Sheffield SENDIAS Referral Policy and Procedures

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Sheffield Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice & Support

SSENDIAS is a statutory service offering free impartial, confidential, information, advice and support to Children and Young People (0-25 years old) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their parent/ carers on education and related health and social care matters.

Policy and Procedures

Introduction

This policy applies to all potential service users of Sheffield Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support (SSSENDIAS) Which includes parents/ carers, children & young people. We also ensure that all professionals who work with children and young people including Head teachers, FE principals, SENCOs, SEND Teams, children's and adult social care, health commissioners and providers are aware of the service, its remit and who the service is for. [SENDIAS Minimum Standards](#)

Remit

The service gives information, advice and support around Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) issues at every stage of a child/ young person's education and about any issue, including related health and social care needs. If you think your child may have SEN, but they don't have a diagnosis, we're here to support you too.

Impartial – we don't take sides; we give you information and options to help you choose.

Confidential - we don't share your information unless you say we can.

Information – we offer comprehensive information on an extensive range of topics both statutory and non-statutory, formal and informal, education and leisure, health and social care, individual and family.

Advice – we ensure the service users understand all the options available to them and are able to make informed choices.

Support – we enable and empower service users to understand and make effective use of the information and advice provided. Facilitating effective communication between service users and statutory agencies

Free – there's no charge.

NB safeguarding and child protection concerns, and duties take priority over every other consideration.



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Referrals

The service can only take referrals from parents/ carers, children and young people. This can be done through:

- Phone 0114 273 6009
- Email ssendias@sheffield.gov.uk
- Website [Sheffield SENDIAS - Special educational needs and disability advice and support](http://www.sheffieldsendias.org.uk)
- FaceBook [Sheffield SEN & Disability Information, Advice & Support - Home | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/SheffieldSEN)
- Instagram [Sheffield SENDIAS \(@sheffield_ias\)/](https://www.instagram.com/sheffield_ias/)
- Sheffield Local Offer [Request Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Advice and Support | Sheffield Directory](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk)

SSENDIAS welcomes professionals recommending the service, but we will not take referrals from them unless the circumstances are exceptional.

There may be times when a child, young person or parent/carer feels unable to make contact themselves and asks a professional to do so on their behalf. These will be accepted if:

- There is evidence of the service user giving consent and permission (written)
- Or
- The service user is present at the time of referral (e.g., phone call) and can give consent and permission.

Professionals are also able to contact SSENDIAS for generic advice on education and related health and social care matters, if a child or young person they are working with has SEND. We will not ask any information or detail about the child or young person they are calling about.



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What you can expect from a referral:

SSENDIAS follows a tiered approach of information, advice and support:

- Tier 1- (level 1 intervention) Telephone advice where you will be sign posted and offered basic advice around relevant information and services. Then following up with an email if needed, containing the information and links to what has been discussed.
- Tier 2- (level 2 intervention) A discussion with a member of the team who will offer a telephone consultation and may attend a meeting (virtual or face to face) to discuss in more detail if further information is needed after a tier 1 call/ information session.
- Tier 3 (level 3 & 4 intervention)- Allocated to a caseworker for support through statutory processes. Such as:
 - EHC Plan assessment requests
 - Mediation
 - Tribunals
 - Exclusions
 - SEN support in school
 - Advocacy

Intervention Levels- Information and specific advice about education, health and social care SEND system and processes. [SENDIAS Services Intervention Levels Guidance \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](https://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

- **Level 1-** At this point it will be recorded as anonymous contact it will not be opened as a referral, we may only ask for non-identifiable information such as postcode, placement and reason for request.
 - Provision of information and signposting (including links, fact sheet, forms etc) by an Information Officer which could be via:
 - Helpline
 - Email
 - Website downloads
 - Presentations
 - Delivery of Training & workshops
 - Representing/ promoting the service at events



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- **Level 2** – We will open an individual case record and will need information from the service user; child's name, DoB, address, school/ educational placement, parent's details, SEND (special educational needs and/or disability), ethnicity, reason for request.
 - For service users to express their views and those of their child to receive more tailored information and/ or advice specific to their individual need or circumstances. An Information Officer, Caseworker or Young Persons Involvement Officer may be involved at this level.
 - Phone call/ virtual meeting
 - Exchange of emails
 - Providing more complex/ high level information
- **Level 3-** An individual case record will be opened see level 2.
 - Level 2 information, advice and support and in addition, the needs of the individual service users and/or the complexity of their own or their child's circumstances significantly impacts their ability to independently navigate the system. Allocation of a caseworker or Young Persons Involvement Officer will be done at this level.
 - Advocacy in line with minimum standards
 - Liaising with other education, health or social care professionals (with permission in line with GDPR)
 - Virtual and face to face meetings with parents, young person, other professionals or services.
 - Support with writing letters, filling in forms, giving views, preparing appeals.
- **Level 4-** An individual case record will be opened see level 2 and 3.
 - Can include all the support detailed above but will also involve an allocated caseworker or Young Persons Involvement Officer,
 - Attending with parent and/ or child, young person at meetings, appeals, mediation.
 - Ongoing and intensive casework/ advocacy.



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We offer weekly information sessions for FAQ's:

As an alternative to having a 1:1 call we are offering virtual information sessions or webinars available on our website. These are hosted by members of the SENDIAS Team. If parents then still need a 1:1 discussion, they will be added to an allocation list for a tier 2 call.

The information sessions currently offered are:

- SEN support in schools.
- EHC Plan needs assessment processes.
- Looking at a draft plan.

[Training and Events — Sheffield SENDIAS](#)

We may also throughout the year add in additional information sessions depending on the nature of the questions and enquiries we are receiving.

We can provide information, advice and support on:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) laws, systems and processes.
- Explain national and local SEND policies and your rights & responsibilities around these.
- SEND support in schools.
- Exclusions
- Education, Health & Care Plans
- Annual Reviews
- Transitions
- Transport
- Complaints
- Specialist provision/support services
- Appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability)
- Disagreement resolution & Mediation services



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The referral

- Use of the service is completely voluntary. Service users can choose not to act upon the advice given. Service users can withdraw from the service at any time.
- SSENDIAS has an open door and individuals can refer back at any time.
- At each stage of involvement, the service user will be made aware of the options open to them and provided with information and guidance to enable them to make informed decisions.
- All decisions will be made by the service user without any influence from SSENDIAS.
- SSENDIAS will not express any opinions.
- It is SSENDIAS' aim to empower service users; at all times it will be the service user's responsibility to arrange meetings, speak to LA, schools and other professionals, write letters, complete forms. SSENDIAS will not do this for them unless the circumstances are exceptional, advice and guidance will be provided. This will be discussed on an individual basis.
- SSENDIAS will log all service contacts including details of the query together with responses, information given, and action taken.
- Initial contact with SSENDIAS will be responded to within a maximum of 3 working days.
- When we receive an email requesting information or advice, this will be responded to in line with our tiered level of support (see above). Depending on the nature of the request we may require additional information from you to be able to fully respond to your request. We will respond to your email with the information we need to progress your request. If we do not receive a response, then a reminder email will be sent to you within 2 weeks. If you have not heard from SSENDIAS please call the service on 0114 2736009 as this contact will be closed.
- If 2 unsuccessful attempts are made to return the voicemail message or telephone call, the service user will be informed by email and asked to call again.
- SSENDIAS remit and operating policies will be explained, and verbal consent obtained.
- After the first contact if a referral is opened, an initial information pack containing a consent/permission confirmation form and relevant leaflets will be emailed out.



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Termination of Involvement Service

Users may terminate their involvement of the service at any time.

However, SSENDIAS also reserves the right to terminate its involvement when:

- It is felt that the desired outcomes have been achieved.
- It is felt that no further progress can be made.
- It is felt that there is sufficient support/involvement from other agencies and SSENDIAS is unlikely to bring additional benefit.
- It is felt that further involvement may put staff at risk.
- A service user has been unreasonably abusive or threatening to staff.
- The relationship between SSENDIAS and the service user has irretrievably broken down.

Although any of these instances are highly unlikely, SSENDIAS will always advise service users of alternative sources of advice and support.

Complaints

If any service user has cause for complaint, they should initially contact the SSENDIAS Manager who will investigate the matter and respond to the complaint.

If the outcome is felt to be unsatisfactory, then the complaint can be directed to the local authority officer with line management responsibility for further investigation in line with the local authority's own complaints process.