

What do we mean by impartial information, advice and support?

This information is about the impartial information, advice and support required by the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

What does the SEND Code of Practice say?

The **Children and Families Act 2014** says local authorities **must** provide information advice and support about special educational needs (SEN), disability, health and social care for children, young people and parents.

The [SEND Code of Practice](#) says:

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)

This means that every local authority should provide a service that is free, easy to access and confidential and that can help children, parents and young people take part in decisions that affect their lives.

The **Local Offer** must include information about the sources of information, advice and support for parents, children and young people and how this is resourced.

In Reading this service is provided by [Reading IASS for SEND](#) which offers free confidential advice and support to Reading parents/cares who have children with special educational needs. The service is funded by [Brighter Futures for Children \(BFfC\)](#) but operates as an arms-length service.

What do we mean when we say we are impartial?

The [SEND Code of Practice](#) says:



The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups (2.8)

This means that the information, advice and support that we offer are firmly based in the law and the [SEND Code of Practice](#).

We provide unbiased information and advice about [BfC's](#) policies and procedures and about the policy and practice in local schools and other settings.

We do not give priority to any particular impairment, disability or special educational need, nor do we campaign for any particular approach to education.

By being impartial we aim to help parents, children and young people have clear, accurate and relevant information that will help them take part in decisions about their lives.

You can read our Impartiality Policy on our [website](#)

How do we know that we are impartial?

It is very easy to be biased. Everyone has opinions about most things! Sometimes people can be biased without even realising it.

That is why we really value your opinion about the information, advice and support we offer. We want you to tell us if you think we are not impartial. To help us check that we are impartial we routinely ask those who use our service to say whether they think we have been biased one way or another.

At [Reading IASS for SEND](#) we follow a national set of [Minimum Standards for services providing impartial information, advice and support](#) developed by the Network of Information, Advice and Support Services. This helps us to monitor the effectiveness of our service we provide and ensure that it is 'at arm's length' from BfC. By this we mean that we act, and are seen to act, separately and impartially, with no undue influence or control from either BfC or the Clinical Commissioning Group in our area.

We also publish an [Annual Report](#) that includes information on what people tell us about our service.

What information, advice and support do we offer?

We offer accurate, up to date and impartial resources and information about the law on special educational needs and disability. This covers:

- education, health and social care
- national and local policy
- the Local Offer
- your rights and choices
- your opportunities to participate
- where you can find help and advice
- how you can access this support.

We provide information in many ways, including our [website](#) and social media, training and other events.

Sometimes information alone is not enough. You may want help to gather information, make sense of it and apply it to your own situation. We call this advice and we offer this service by email, on the telephone, face to face and through work with groups or in training.

We can also offer more intensive support if you need it. This can include helping with letters or emails, attending meetings with you or supporting you in discussions with BfFC, school or other setting. We may be able to offer you a trained volunteer to support you.

When we are not able to help we will do our best to tell you about, or put you in touch with, other groups or organisations that can help. We call this **signposting**.

Is the service confidential?

YES!

We will not share your information with anyone unless you tell us we can. The only exception to this would be because we have a specific concern about a child's safety or a legal requirement.

You can find our [Confidentiality Policy](#) on our website.

We will often work with parents and children or young people together. Sometimes we will work with them separately. When we do this the same confidentiality rules apply.

Where can I find out more?



You can read about impartial information, advice and support in the [SEND Code of Practice](#) Chapter 2.

The [Local Offer](#) includes details of the BfC arrangements for providing information, advice and support.

Look at the [Reading IASS for SEND](#) website for information about our services, copies of our publications and contact details.

Disclaimer: Reading IASS for SEND has made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate and up to date at the time of publication. It does not constitute legal advice and Reading IASS for SEND cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or damage suffered as a consequence of any reliance placed upon it.