



## Impartiality Policy

All Local Authorities must provide a information, advice and support service for children and young people with Special Educational and Disabilities and their parents.

The information, advice and support provided "should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups" (SEND Code of Pracrice 2015 2.8).

The role of the Liase service is to ensure that children and young people with SEND and their parents are enabled to recognise their rights and take part in decisions that affect themselves or their child/young person. (Section 19, Children and Families Act)

In Lincolnshire, this Information Advice and Support Service is provided by Liase, which is an "in-house" Service – that is, wholly funded by Lincolnshire County Council. Liase maintains an "arm's length" position in the following ways:

- Having an independent Strategic Board, with a Chair from the voluntary sector and significant parent/carer involvement to agree strategic direction of the service
- Measuring the organisation against nationally (DfE) agreed standards, rather than locally agreed parameters
- Line management of Liase staff is not the same as other teams making decisions about children and young people with SEND
- Liase staff do not take part in any Local Authority decision-making processes for children and young people – for example decisions concerning Education, Health and Care Plans, although they would support children, young people and parents to take part

Information and Advice is impartial and Liase ensure this by:

- Providing information leaflets on key aspects of SEND that are written by the IASS national network and legally checked.

- Having a separate client record keeping system, only accessible to the Liaise team.
- Having nationally provided training which ensures that Liaise Specialist Advisers have knowledge and understanding of SEND law and guidance as well as local policy and procedure
- Signposting to other sources of advice, information and support that may be available locally or nationally
- Providing representation or advocacy where the child, young person or parent is unable to do this for themselves.
- Occupying separate offices to Local Authority SEND teams
- Maintaining their own website

The Liaise service also provides support to ensure that the views of children, young people and their parents can be heard and included in decision making, by providing individual ***casework and representation for those who need it***; (SEND Code 2.19). This may include:

- Support with early disagreement resolution
- Support in managing mediation, appeals to the First Tier Tribunal, exclusions and complaints.
- Support in accessing the Local Authorities formal Disagreement Resolution services and on routes of appeal and complaint (SEND Code chapter 11)

At all times, Liaise seeks to ensure it is the views of children, young people and their parents that are heard. Liaise staff will provide information, advice and support on rights under SEND Law and guidance and possible options but:

- Will recognise a child's, young person's or parents' right to make their own decision and will not make a judgement on that decision
- Will not direct CYP or parent in a certain course of action
- Will provide any information, advice or support the CYP or parent needs to carry out their chosen decision
- Will liaise with other teams and professionals as directed by CYP or parent but will only express the views of CYP and parent and will share all information given by professionals with the CYP or parent.
- Liaison with Healthwatch on health and social care issues.