



Advisory Group – Terms of Reference

SENDIAS BATHNES ADVISORY GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

All Local Authorities in England have a statutory duty to ensure that parents, carers and young people have access to accurate and impartial information advice and support.

Sendias Bathnes (SB) delivers this service and operates at “arms-length” from the Local Authority (LA) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) across Bath and North East Somerset.

SB must comply with the Minimum National Standards 2018 (Departments of Education and Health and Social Care), Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

SB is confidential and offers impartial information, advice and support to children and young people (0-25 years) with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and their parents/carers.

Sendias Bathnes offers:

- Access to information to help children and young people and their families make informed decisions about their education and future outcomes.
- Support for children and young people and their families to understand and contribute to SEND processes and procedures, including appeals. This could be by telephone, email or face to face with one of the SB team.
- Help with preparation for SEND related meetings, including attendance at some meetings.
- Signposting to useful information, advice, legal and advocacy services.
- Planned training for professionals and families related to SEND and additional needs.
- Consultation opportunities for children, young people and their parents/carers to influence policy and procedure related to SEND locally, regionally and nationally.

Minimum Standards for Delivery

SB complies with the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and the Department for Education and Council for Disabled Children approved Minimum Standards 2018. The requirement for compliance is:

1.7 The Governance arrangements outline a clear management structure, encompassing a **strategic manager** within the IASS and a steering group or **advisory body** which includes representatives from service user groups and key stakeholders from education, social care and health.

Being monitored by an **independent** Advisory Group enhances the service's impartiality and at arm's length operation from the LA/ICB. The Advisory Group has a role in challenging the service's delivery to ensure that it has strategies in place and evidence of being at arm's length, confidential, accessible and impartial. It is also a group that can represent, champion and promote the role of SB.

Aims and Purpose of the Group

The aim and purpose of the Advisory Group is to ensure that Bath and North East Somerset SB delivers a high quality, compliant service that is responsive to local need, taking into account best practice and resource allocation.

Functions of the Group

- Monitor service delivery and governance and ensure that it is compliant with the legal framework, the Code of Practice 2015 and the Minimum Standards for SENDIASS Delivery 2018, especially regarding impartiality and 'arm's length' delivery
- Monitor the performance of the service to ensure that sufficient resources are available for the delivery of an efficient and quality service
- Promote positive relationships and work in true partnership with a wide range of parents/carers, education providers, LA, ICB and other services regarding special educational needs, including families who have used the service
- To seek solutions for improvement in a positive and constructive way. Offer support to the staff team as necessary
- Influence service development and identify and promote good practice both nationally and locally
- Receive and ratify the SB Annual Report and Operational Plan. Make reasonable requests for other reports as required.
- Oversee activities and discuss key issues that are relevant to the work of SB
- Provide a clear and identified written pathway for regular feedback to the LA and ICB to raise items and influence decisions on local services, policies, practices and procedures and ensuring that there is clear understanding with the LA on the role of the service
- Be a key partner for service user consultation and representation in relation to the development of SEND services/initiatives.
- Ensure that SB is engaged as a key partner in relation to Children's and Adult Service Development
- The Advisory Group is not designed to discuss or champion individual concerns, or case management, but examples can be used as illustration for good practice and for improvement and learning in relation to SEND. The Advisory Group enables a collective approach to feedback to the LA and ICB

- Actively seek parent/carer, children, and young people's views in relation to their SEND to provide an opportunity for consultation and feedback to promote both service development and engagement with other key service providers

Role of the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board

- To ensure that the Advisory Group is informed of LA and ICB planning priorities, strategic updates and significant developments relating to children and young people with SEND
- Maintain a clear and identified written pathway for regular feedback from the Advisory Group to influence decisions on local services, policies, practices and procedures.
- Recognise SB as a key partner for consultation and representation in relation to the development of SEND
- To proactively promote, and raise awareness of, the service to a wide range of potential service users, professionals and stakeholders

Membership

The group will comprise representation from a range of statutory services e.g. health, social care and education (Early Years, Schools and FE/HE), the service commissioners, a representative of the parent carer forum and voluntary and third sector organisations that can represent the voice of children and young people with SEND.

Meetings and reporting

Meetings are held at least bi-annually during the academic year.

To strengthen the impartiality of SB chairing of the meetings will be undertaken by an Independent Chair who has a role in supporting the manager of SB throughout the year

Advisory Group Accountability

The SB Advisory Group reports to the LA and ICB's SEND Strategy Board — the multi-agency group that discusses all matters relating to SEND for children and young people including funding, policy and provision.

This document can be made available in a range of community languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats.