



SEND PARTNERSHIP SERVICE (SPS) POLICY ON IMPARTIALITY

The role of SPS is to ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disability, and their families, have access to confidential and impartial information, advice and support so that they can make informed decisions. SPS seeks to empower families by providing information, advice and support that relates to relevant legislation, and its application through local policies, as well as understanding the pros and cons of any decisions they ultimately take to ensure the best outcome.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015) states that:

The information, advice and support should be impartial and provided at arm's length from the local authority and clinical commissioning groups

The Code also states that:

Young people are entitled to the same quality and level of information, advice and support as their parents. Young people must have confidence that they are receiving confidential and impartial information, advice and support

SPS is an 'in-house' service that operates at 'arm's length' from the local authority and the clinical commissioning group. In complying with the Minimum Standards 2018, as defined by the Council for Disabled Children, staff and volunteers aim to be impartial in all dealings, not favouring any person or party more than another, striving to be fair and unbiased, whilst presenting factual legal information. Information, advice and support is delivered with due regard to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and local policies, in order to bring about a resolution to the issues with which it is presented.

The SPS Advisory Group has a responsibility to ensure that SPS is compliant with the Minimum Standards 2018 and delivery of the service meets the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 2015. The Group comprises a range of professionals, partners and service users who receive reports from SPS, monitor the effectiveness of service delivery and through in depth questioning provides a source of accountability.

Demonstrating Impartiality

SPS delivery

- Reflects the perspectives and wishes of children and young people with SEND and their parents. Children and young people are entitled to information, advice and support in their own right and can expect to receive this
- Ensures not to have a vested interest in the outcome of any discussions

- Ensures that staff and volunteers are trained to use legislation and policy to underpin any information, advice or support given
- SPS delivery is quality assured by the Operational Lead

Practical support

- At the beginning of any contact with children, young people or parents staff, or volunteers, will state the impartiality of their role
- At any meeting with families, professionals and partners staff, or volunteers, will state the impartiality of their role
- Staff and volunteers will record case outcomes confidentially, factually and impartially
- Staff and volunteers who hold positions associated with a school or other setting (such as School Governor, Trustee of an Academy) will not work with families at the same school/college
- Staff and volunteers will not assist families who are family, friends or members of their extended family
- Volunteers will work in areas just outside their own residential area in an endeavour to ensure that their personal lives and volunteer role are not in conflict

Feedback about the Service's Impartiality

Regular feedback is sought from service users to test their confidence that SPS delivery is impartial. The results of feedback are included in the SPS Annual Report and presented to the SPS Advisory Group

Staff Training and Supervision

Staff and volunteers all receive training relating to the principles of service provision, including impartiality and at arm's length delivery. This is reinforced regularly in practice and quality assurance through case discussion and feedback from interventions further embeds the ethos

Impartiality challenged

Where impartiality of SPS is challenged service users are invited to make contact with the Chair of the SPS Advisory Group to discuss prior to any formal action via the Complaints Procedure