

# FAQ's



## What are some of the topics families might want to talk to SENDIAS about?

- Information regarding the local offer, local policy and SEN/disability law from independently trained staff;
- Advice for parents/carers, children and young people on gathering, understanding and interpreting information and applying it to their own situation;
- Personalisation of personal budgets;
- Information on the county council's processes for resolving disagreements, its complaints procedures and means of redress;
- Signposting children, young people and parents to alternative and additional sources of local and national information, advice and support;

## Can professionals refer a family to SENDIAS?

A parent or a young person (age 16-25) must refer themselves. They can get in touch with us via phone, email or social media or they can consult our website without having to personally contact us at all. Professionals and friends can support the family with making contact but we can only talk about the family with their written consent.

## Can we discuss a family with professionals?

We can give generic advice but we cannot discuss specific cases without written consent from the parent or young person.

## If SENDIAS works with a family will this speed up processes and referrals?

We are an information and advice service and not an advocacy group. We work within the usual timescales of the Code of Practice and we are unable to influence timescales nor waiting list times.

## Does SENDIAS have to be involved?

Many families are able to independently gather the information they need via websites, the school and others. There is no need for SENDIAS to be involved unless a family wants us to be.



Giving  
**disabled children**  
a brighter future

### **Do all families get a case worker?**

Usually it is not necessary to allocate a case worker. We are an information and advice service and often we can answer questions in just one phone call or email. We aim to offer advice, information and support to empower families to make informed decisions and to take action themselves. We can direct them to resources, signpost them to other services and provide them with relevant documentation. In rare cases the situation will be very complex and the family may need long term support. Situations where a case worker may be needed will be discussed by our staff to ensure that case workers are allocated only where needed, and to ensure that the best match of caseworker and family is made. Please do not promise that a family will be provided with a case worker.

### **A child or young person has a new diagnosis. Should they contact SENDIAS?**

Usually at this time families are better placed to seek resources relating to the diagnosis. We can support families with signposting and answer specific questions. There is lots of information on our website <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendias>

### **Can you attend early help meetings?**

Only rarely would we attend meetings as our aim is to provide families with information in order to empower them to articulate their thoughts themselves. In some cases a parent might need support with this, for example, if English is an additional language.

### **Can you attend meetings at short notice?**

The SENDIAS staff have a full diary so it is extremely unlikely anyone could attend. Where a case worker has been working with a family for some time and they are available this may be possible but only in extremely rare cases.

### **Can you suggest alternative schools?**

We are unable to make recommendations because we are an impartial service.

We can inform parents about the admissions process and details of schools. Information can also be found on Warwickshire's local offer page <https://www.warwickshireparentcarerforum.co.uk/Getting-Support/>

### **Do KIDS staff support with Mediation?**

Mediation is provided by mediation services commissioned by Warwickshire County Council.

### **Are there any other services who can support families?**

For high incidence disabilities eg. Autism, Downs' syndrome there are often specialist family support groups, nationally and locally. The local Family Information Service and the Parent-Carer Forum may also be able to support families.

### **Why is it sometimes SENDIAS and sometimes SENDIASS?**

SENDIASS is the national term for our type of service across most local authorities. It stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service. In Warwickshire we use the acronym SENDIAS because we want to highlight our focus on information and advice so that families can self-advocate.