

Memorandum of Understanding

The context for our agreement

This is an agreement setting out how we as the following organisations and individuals can work together: -

{insert name} Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS),

{insert name} the Parent Carer Forum (PCF)

The purpose of our joint agreement is so that families of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities who use our services benefit from the best support, advice and meaningful participation opportunities possible enabling them to achieve the best outcomes.

The overarching principles we share are:-

{insert agreed principles between parties based on local strategies and/or co-production charters}

The principles we agree to are: -

{insert agreed principles between parties based on discussion. As an example these could include:

- Clarity over each other's respective roles and responsibilities
- Commitment to working together to support, train and empower parents to be their own voice
- Acknowledge the development of each other's practice
- Communication is open and honest and solution focussed
- Publicly promoting, supporting and championing each other.}

PART ONE

Our Common Goals and Values are: -

{insert agreed common goals and values between parties based on discussion. As an example these could include:}

1. We agree to work together to identify and resolve shared concerns and improve outcomes.
2. We agree that events and co-production activities planned together are timely and positive for parent carers and young people.
3. We agree to plan our shared activities so that all parent carers, children, and young people feel involved appropriately, respectfully, and meaningfully.

Our common code of conduct is: -

Individuals and our organisations agree to:

- Behave with respect and professionalism towards each other as per the expectations and standards set in the Nolan Principles of public life.
- Communicate in an open, constructive and honest way that is diplomatic and not personalised, being mindful of **{insert any individual organisation's policies that need special consideration such as SENDIASS confidentiality and impartiality function and PCF local commitments to co-production charters or local MOUs}**
- Agree to be honest when there are challenges or differences to enable us to find a useful way forward that best enables parent carer voices to be heard.

Building positive working relationships

We acknowledge the importance of partnership working and the maintaining of professional relationships and as such agree to resolve and mitigate any mistakes, tensions, and disagreements as soon as they arise.

We agree the following:

{Through discussion agree what is important for you in building positive working relationships. The following list is an example list of things to consider but is not exhaustive}

- We will meet **{insert number}** times per calendar year (face to face where possible) so that we can best understand each other's work and capacity issues, priorities, and plans - to coordinate our efforts, plan ahead and work jointly when needed. This can be meetings or phone conversations.
- We acknowledge that SEND is a complex arena and there are a range of views, passions and capacities.

- We agree to talk and find a solution at the earliest opportunity and put any learning into place so that when the issues arise again we know how to avoid problems escalating.
- Do our best to share and promote information on each other's events.
- Advise each other of potential duplication or conflicting work or events as soon as possible.
- Make contact with one another to discuss any potential areas of disagreement if they arise to consider our concerns and discuss a way forwards.
- Be respectful of volunteer time.
- **{Insert organisation or agree how this will be managed}** agree to act as Secretariat for the thrice-annual "MOU" meetings in as much as they will arrange the meetings and take minutes, but where there is additional work or cost involved this will be shared on an equal basis and agreed beforehand.
- We will only use each other's branded logos if we are holding a joint event unless we request a prior agreement for an individual event. We agree to signpost to each other's services via the use of logos on each other's website.
- Commit and encourage other organisations to keep the PCF updated on experiences of parent carers they are working with, to feed back into the collective voice of parent carers that the PCF represents locally at a strategic level.
- Commit to being accessible in our service delivery as a joint commitment and will endeavour to working together in our access arrangements for parent carers, children, and young people.

PART TWO

Our organisation specific goals and values and responsibilities

{insert name} Parent Carer Forum

{insert summary of PCF goals, values and responsibilities. This may include but is not limited to:}

- Hosting free information events (including information, training and engagement), coffee mornings and social groups where parents can meet and talk in relaxed surroundings.
- Listening to parents and gather their opinions.
- Share these views and opinions with decision makers in the local authority, education and health commissioners and providers.
- Make those views count when decisions on services and provisions are made.
- Provide an informative website and social media presence where parent/carers can chat with one another.

- Publish news and information in all media so parents stay informed.
- Keep parents connected with each other and to groups that can help them.

{insert PCF name} will be Responsible for:

- Representing the collective voice of Parents and Carers within **{insert local area}**
- Recruiting and training Parent Reps to ensure our Reps are representing the wider community and needs of families
- Reaching out to as many parents as possible by linking with other parent groups, organisations and settings to encourage families to join our database
- Listening, Collecting and Collating the views and experiences of Parents and Carers, both directly and from other organisations working with them, so that Parent Reps can better represent families at strategic meetings
- Co-producing at a strategic level across Education, Health and Social care informing and influencing local and national policy
- Running networking, Information and Participation events to help inform our families and members
- Providing support to our members through various means depending on what our members ask of us (i.e. Support Groups, Information Events, Counselling, Wellbeing, workshops / Training, Peer Support)
- Signpost families requiring support for SEND related questions and processes only to organisations that have trained advisors.
- We will actively signpost and advertise families requiring this support to the local SENDIAS service
- We will maintain open and honest communication with all parties
- The responsibility to coordinate Consultations falls within the PCF remit but we acknowledge that ALL parties will need to support the PCF to carry out that responsibility.
- Publicising the work of SENDIAS including key projects and events via our social media platforms, in line with our policies and practice.

{insert name} SENDIAS Service

{insert name} SENDIAS Service provides the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) in **{insert local area}**

{insert summary of SENDIASS goals, values and responsibilities. This may include but is not limited to:}

{insert name} SENDIAS Service is free, impartial, confidential, and independent. Our role as a SENDIASS is to help parent carers, children and young people build their knowledge,

understanding and confidence in SEND procedures, policies, practices, and law. In doing so, we want to enable people to communicate their own needs, wishes, aims and rights during their own journey.

We aim to empower parent carers, children and young people to play an active, informed role in making decisions about their education, health and social care. Professionals can use the SENDIASS to build their own knowledge and understanding. They can enable the people they work with to access SENDIASS.

We cover: -

- SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support in early years, school, or college
- Improving communication with educational settings, local authority, health, and social care
- Transition between educational settings, phased transfer or moving between Children's and Adult's services
- Transport to educational placement
- Annual Reviews of Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) EHCP Application and Needs Assessment
- Appeals to Tribunal for refusal to assess for an EHCP, refusal to issue an EHCP, contents of an EHCP, ceasing to maintain an EHCP, and placement
- Exclusions and part-time timetables
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Disability Discrimination
- Making a complaint
- Health and social care queries related to the child or young person's disability.

{insert name} SENDIAS Service will be Responsible for:

- Providing trained staff to deliver free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support (IAS) to children, young people and their parents with any type of special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25 years, in line with the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014
- Offering an all-year-round service with a dedicated information advice and support line, including a 24-hour answerphone service within the current expectations of our contractual agreement
- Supporting a young person to access the service when they request as a separate service to their parent/carer
- Feeding back to PCF on key issues and themes arising from service users and providing further information and data at the trustees' discretion.
- Publicising the work of PCF, including key projects and events via our social media platforms, in line with our existing policies and practice.

- Signposting people who use SENDIAS and PCF based on individual enquiries.
- Maintaining open and honest communication with all parties.
- Sharing knowledge of Local and National SEND developments and the work of the service.
- Help represent the legal backdrop behind health and social issues and support PCF in raising concerns with the LA and offering challenge where this is appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with PCF in emphasising and maintaining good practice and policies to the LA to ensure positive impact can continue.

Accessibility

{insert SENDIASS and PCF name} agree to do our best to ensure that people know how to find and access our services, ensuring we plan and make adjustments to support individuals.

Agreed by:

Signature.....On Behalf of:

Signature.....On Behalf of:

To be reviewed on:

Date: