



Bexley IASS Steering Group Terms of Reference

Introduction

The London Borough of Bexley have a duty to provide a SEND Information Advice and Support Service (IASS). The service is provided at arm's length from Bexley Local Authority and provides Information Advice and Support to children and young people with special educational needs and their parents in line with the Children and Families Act (2014).

The work is guided by the "Minimum Standards for SEND Information Advice and Support Services" (Appendix A) issued by the Council For Disabled Children on behalf of the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care in 2018.

This steering group has been set up to guide the work of the service and to ensure that it develops in ways that ensure it fulfils its duty under these standards.

Purpose of the Steering Group:

The purpose of the Steering Group is to have a strategic overview of Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service (IASS), supporting IASS in the delivery of a high quality service that is both effective and responsive to local needs. Taking into account best practice, both locally and nationally, ensuring the views of children, young people and their parents/carers as well as other key stakeholders' have meaningful representation.

Enabling the service to provide information, advice and support which helps improve outcomes for children and young people up to the age of 25 who have special educational needs and/or a disability.

Identifying and addressing local themes and how we respond to them in partnership rather than leaving to the IASS team.

Role of the Steering Group:

Bexley IASS has a vital role to play in ensuring the 'arm's length' nature of service is genuine in all aspects of service development and delivery.

The members of the Steering Group will provide scrutiny of the IASS team and its impact, working together to ensure that Bexley IASS is not simply a reflection of the policies or wishes of the LA or its schools, or seek to 'smooth out' issues raised by parents/carers, but maintains an impartial viewpoint.

Members will work together with the staff of the service to ensure Bexley IASS provides impartial information, advice, guidance and support to children, young people & parents/carers.

Members are chosen to ensure we have a fair representation of Bexley. promoting the interests of Bexley SEND families, children and young people, reinforcing the principles of the empowering model.

Coming together as a partnership to take a positive solutions focused approach to the shared challenges, the Steering group acting as a critical friend to support the understanding of who IASS is and isn't.

Aims and objectives of the Steering Group:

- To guide and monitor the development of IASS service and ensure compliance with the Minimum Standards.
- To help identify and promote good practice, to raise issues and concerns and pooling knowledge to help resolve them.
- To identify gaps and to work with IASS to identify ways to address these.
- To ensure that IASS maintains, and is seen to maintain, impartiality and that service delivery is seen to be at arm's length from the Local Authority and statutory services.
- To support IASS in identifying ways to provide Information, Advice and Support that meets the needs of Children, Young People and Parents and Carers.
- To act as a critical friend to the IASS service.
- Take an active role in promoting/ increasing awareness of the IASS service.
- To discuss areas of concern raised to the IASS service to inform or influence the service and local policy and practice.
- Monitor and safeguard service impartiality in all service activities
- Ensure Bexley IASS is accessible to all sections of the community
- Hold an annual meeting to review its terms of reference and membership

Membership

The membership of the IASS Steering Group seeks to find a balance reflecting the local area.

Ideally the membership of the group will be made up of a mix from statutory services, in the following way:

The Chair should be independent of Bexley IASS and appointed from within the membership of the group.

Members:

- School Improvement partner
- IASS Coordinator
- 3 parent reps (Including one reserved for Chair of PCF or nomination by them)
- SEND Service Manager
- Other LA Representatives
- EITs Manager
- Education Representatives (SENCO / Inclusion staff)
- BVSC
- A Health Service Representative
- CCG Representative
- A Social Care Representative
- 2 School Representatives (at SLT level, schools to nominate)

Total membership TBC (The Steering Group may invite others relevant to agenda at each meeting)

Those nominated to become members of the Steering Group will do so for one academic year from 1 September until the 31 August in the following year.

All members of the Steering Group will have an equal voting right when such an occurrence is necessary.

In the instance of a deadlock vote, the chair of the Steering Group will have the casting vote.

All members of the Steering Group will, at their first meeting, agree to the code of conduct as set out by the Steering Group.

Frequency and format of meetings:

- There will be one Steering Group meeting quarterly
- Venue to be agreed
- Agenda and all necessary papers will be distributed no later than 1 week before the meeting.
- The IASS Manager will give a short report on the work of the service at each meeting.
- Other presentations will be made about an aspect of the services work. These will be agreed at the previous meeting.
- Minutes will be distributed following the meeting to Advisory group members and shared using the services website

The meetings will ideally be chaired by an Independent Chair, minutes will be scribed and distributed 1 week after the meeting.

Confidentiality:

Each member of the Steering Group must undertake to ensure that all information contained in reports, and that which is shared at meetings is confidential, where stated, either verbally or on materials provided to members, and is not shared with members outside the Steering Group without consent or until such time it is published.

Any member found to be breaching this pledge will immediately be asked to leave the Steering Group.

It is the responsibility of Steering Group members to:

1. Be aware of the contents of the Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service terms of reference document, and any governing law as it applies to Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service.
2. Act in the best interest of Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service as a whole – considering what is best for the organisation and its beneficiaries and avoiding bringing Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service into disrepute.
3. Manage conflicts of interest effectively – registering, declaring and resolving conflicts of interest.
4. Respect confidentiality – understanding what confidentiality means in practice for Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service, the Steering Group and the individuals involved with it.
5. Have a sound and up-to-date knowledge of Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service and its environment – understanding how Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service works and the environment within which it operates.
6. Attend meetings and other appointments or give apologies – considering other ways of engaging with the organisation if regularly unable to attend steering group meetings. Any member who does not attend more than two consecutive meetings, without having given prior notice, will be deemed to no longer want to be a member of the Steering Group.
7. Prepare fully for all meetings of the Bexley SEND Information, Advice & Guidance Service Steering Group – reading papers, querying anything you don't understand and thinking through issues in good time before meetings.
8. Actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings – contributing positively, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
9. Act jointly and accept a majority decision – making decisions collectively, standing by them and not acting individually, unless specifically authorised to do so.

10. Work considerately and respectfully with all – respecting diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoiding giving offence.

11. Steering Group members are expected to honour the content and spirit of this code.

Signed

Name

Date