



## Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service

### **Impartiality Policy**

The Special Educational Needs Code of practice (2001) states that Parent Partnership Services must ensure that parents are provided with: “accurate, neutral information on their rights, roles and responsibilities within the SEN process, and on the wide range of options that are available for their children’s education”

Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service (SPPS) is funded by Staffordshire County Council (i.e. it is an “in house” service). It operates at “arms length” from the Local Authority as an independent and confidential service for parents and carers of children with special educational needs.

SPPS aims to enable parents and carers to become effective partners in their child’s education by providing with impartial information and support to allow them to make informed decisions and to feel more confident in expressing their views.

### **Location**

SPPS occupies its own offices, leased from the County Council, but separate from any other service within the LA.

### **Image/Identity**

SPPS does not have to comply with County Council guidelines in respect of corporate identity; letter heading, logo etc. It has its own logo and strap lines for use on leaflets and other publications.

### **Advisory Group**

An Advisory Group exists to steer and monitor the work of the SPPS and works to agreed Terms of Reference.

The Group has representation from parents and carers as well as professionals and agencies involved with parents and children with special needs. Members of the SPPS staff are also members of the Group. Membership of the Group is reviewed bi-annually.

The Group is chaired by a parent or carer to ensure its impartiality and independence from the LA.

### **Line Management**

The SPPS Co-ordinator is directly line managed by the Assistant Director, School Improvement Division, within the children and Lifelong Learning Directorate. Regular meetings between the PPS Co-ordinator and the Assistant Director allow issues of concern to parents and carers to be raised. However, all information is kept strictly confidential and no names are disclosed unless parents have asked specifically for their named case to be raised.

### **Processes**

SPPS has policies and procedures to ensure that impartiality underpins all its activities and is covered during training and induction for all staff and volunteers.

Information, books and resources on a wide range of groups, voluntary organizations is held in the Parent Resource Room and SPPS Reference Library. This is used in staff induction and IPS training to make sure that the staff and volunteers are able to give impartial and neutral information.

External speakers from non-LA backgrounds are brought in, when appropriate, in input into team training events and IPS training courses. Staff induction will include visits to speak not only with personnel working within Children and Lifelong Learning Directorate but also with local support groups and others.

SPPS maintains subscriptions to various independent organizations to ensure that up-to-date impartial information is received.

Staff and volunteers are aware of the importance of outlining to parents the range of options open to them at a particular stage of their child's education. A system of line management and Personal Performance Review has been established to include observation of practice and a sampling review of casework with all staff and volunteers to ensure that this principle is adhered to.

### **Conflict of Interest**

A member of staff would not, unless unavoidable, work with a parent in circumstances where there could be a potential conflict of interest. If this situation is unavoidable (e.g. no other staff member being available), then the parent is made aware and given alternative options.