

PLYMOUTH INFORMATION ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR SEND



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PIAS Service Users' Advisory Group

Alan Ebbens, March 2019

Role of the Service Users' Advisory Group

The PIAS Service Users' Advisory Group has an essential role in ensuring that the DfE Quality Standards for IASS are adhered to and that the 'arm's length' status of the service is genuine and demonstrable in all aspects of development and delivery. The group will also promote the function of PIAS and the range of work it undertakes.

It is essential that PIAS maintains an independent, impartial and neutral position in the information, advice and support it gives to parents, children and young people (CYP). This includes enabling parent participation and conveying the views of individual parents, CYP, issue-based groups of parents, or more formally constituted parents' organisations in the third sector to public sector service commissioners or service providers. The Service Users' Advisory Group will contribute to monitoring the impartiality and neutrality of this work.

The Service Users' Advisory Group also monitors the relationship between PIAS and schools, the Local Authority and all agencies with regard to transfer of information about individual parents, families and CYP and ensure that the confidentiality policy reflects best understandings and interpretations for data protection and information sharing.

The membership is chosen to represent key stakeholder groups with the expectation that they will:

- give feedback to PIAS on issues being raised in their own settings
- raise issues for PIAS in their own organisations.

Parent and CYP members are asked to represent their own views and to represent the views of groups of parents/CYP they have contact with or who they directly represent.

Membership of the Service Users' Advisory Group

The choice of members for this group seeks to achieve:

- compliance with the requirements of the DFE Minimum Standards
- representation from a wide range of service users
- a balance between parents, CYP and professionals
- a small enough total number to enable group discussion
- safeguarding the impartiality of the service

The proposed membership includes:

- *Five parents, to represent Early Years, Primary, Secondary , Post 16 and Specialist Provision*
- *Two young people to represent secondary and Post 16 phases*
- *Primary Head teacher representative*
- *Secondary head teacher representative*
- *Special School head teacher representative*
- *Parent carer voice representative*
- *Early Years provider representative*
- *Local Authority Representative*
- *Health Representative (designated medical officer)*
- *PIAS Service manager*
- *PIAS minute taker*

Chairperson to rotate between service user agencies on a meeting to meeting basis

New members will be given written information about the service in general and details of how the Service Users' Advisory Group operates.

Any member not attending, and not giving apologies in advance, for two consecutive meetings will be assumed to wish no longer to be member.

Membership will be regularly reviewed.

Structure and format of PIAS Service Users' Advisory Group meetings

This group tries to get the balance right between an informal atmosphere that welcomes the contributions of all its members and an effective use of time to get through the business arising. Wherever possible, an agenda and any written reports for the meeting will be circulated two weeks in advance by PIAS. Informal networking will be encouraged and support given to help explain any of the items to any members in preparation for a meeting should they wish.

Meetings will take place every six months. Timings may vary but meetings will be held outside core school hours to allow young people to attend.

The meetings will be chaired on a revolving basis as detailed above. Minutes will be taken by PIAS staff and normally circulated within two weeks of the meeting.

The PIAS Manager will attend each meeting to report on the work of the service and answer any questions arising.

Decisions taken by the meeting will, whenever possible, be reached by consensual agreement. If this is not possible the chair will deem a majority decision to be carried. PIAS staff, including the Service Manager, cannot vote in such circumstances. Similarly, and because the statutory element of PIAS relates to parents'/CYP confidence around impartiality for SEND issues the Local Authority representative cannot vote in such circumstances.

Meetings will be deemed quorate only if at least 5 of those eligible to vote are present. This must include at least 3 parents and 1 CYP representative members and at least 1 non-parent representative member. This will apply equally to decisions arrived at by consensual agreement or by majority vote.

Terms of reference for the Service Users' Advisory Group

- Monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of PIAS in relation to the DfE Minimum Standards
- Discuss and prioritise PIAS initiatives to be developed.
- Check carefully and with rigour that PIAS provides neutral and impartial information and advice to parents and when doing so differentiates Local Authority policies from existing legislation, available government guidance or independent advisory organisation guidance.
- Ensure PIAS is accessible to all sections of the community in Plymouth.
- Take an active role in promoting the work of PIAS.