



Somerset SENDIAS
Special Educational Needs and Disability
Information, Advice and Support (0-25)

**A free impartial service for children and young people with SEND
(aged 0 – 25) and their parent carers**

Complaints Policy

Introduction

1. Any information shared with the service is treated in confidence and regulated in accordance of the General Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2020.
2. The role of Somerset SENDIAS is to ensure that children, young people and their parent carers have access to confidential and impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions about their own or their child's SEND.
3. This policy acts as a guide to service users, staff and volunteers of Somerset SENDIAS to ensure best practice when dealing with complaints to the service.

Section 1 – Complaints process

4. Somerset SENDIAS complies with the Information Advice and Support Service Network National Minimum Standards. Somerset SENDIAS offers the opportunity to comment on the service provided through the 'Feedback Form' which is sent to young people and their parent/carers and practitioners.

What is a complaint?

5. For the purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction (which is not immediately resolved) with the actions or inactions of the service or its staff or volunteers, either by a member of the public directly affected or by someone acting on their behalf. A complaint will result in a formal response from the service.
6. The Somerset SENDIAS 'Feedback Form' must not be used for formal complaints as this form does not generate a response.
7. A formal complaint should be submitted in writing, with the heading 'Formal Complaint' by:
 - a. Letter
 - b. Downloading the Somerset SENDIAS Complaint Form (Annex A) which can be emailed directly to the SENDIAS Manager (details in Section 4).



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8. A complaint should be addressed to the Manager of Somerset SENDIAS marked 'Private and confidential'.

9. If a complaint is against the SENDIAS Manager of the service, it should be addressed to the Participation & Business Partnership Manager – Children's Services.

Stage 1

10. The complaint must be acknowledged in writing within 14 working days by the Somerset SENDIAS Manager.

11. The acknowledgement must state:

- a. Who is dealing with the complaint (normally this would be the Manager of Somerset SENDIAS. In the case of a complaint against the SENDIAS Manager, the Participation & Partnership Manager – Children's Services (The Hollies Children's Centre, South Road, Taunton, TA1 3AG)
- b. A contact telephone number and an email address;
- c. A date by which the complainant can expect to receive a response following investigation. **This is 15 working days.**

12. In the case of a complex complaint requiring lengthy (more than 15 working days) investigation, the complainant will be informed.

13. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, they must be informed of their right to take the complaint further to Stage 2.

Stage 2

14. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, the matter will be referred immediately to the Participation & Partnership Manager – Children's Services who will review whether correct procedures have been followed and statutory regulations have been adhered to and respond fully (including action to be taken).

15. The Participation & Partnership Manager – Children's Services will consider whether a meeting with the complainant would help to solve the problem.

16. The Participation & Partnership Manager – Children's Services will consider whether to advise the Director of Children's Services.

Somerset SENDIAS

The Hollies Children Centre, South Street, Taunton, TA1 3AG
01823 355578 SomersetSENDIAS@somerset.gov.uk www.somersetsend.org.uk



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17. Unless there are sound reasons for not doing so, the Participation & Partnership Manager – Children’s Services will reply within 10 working days of the complaint being referred to him/her. If this is not possible, an explanation and a new date for reply will be sent.

18. The response will refer to the availability of the Stage 3 of the procedure, should the complainant be dissatisfied. The complainant will be reminded of the need to explain the reason for continued dissatisfaction.

19. Should the complaint involve actions taken by the Participation & Partnership Manager – Children’s Services, he/she will seek the Director of Children’s Services ruling on how the complaint should be dealt with.

Stage 3

20. If the complainant still feels that the matter has not been dealt with fairly, the complainant can contact the:

Local Government Ombudsman:
The Oaks
2 Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
COVENTRY
CV4 8JB

0845 602 1983

www.lgo.org.uk

Section 2 - Monitoring Satisfaction of the Service:

21. In order to monitor satisfaction and evaluate the service provided, feedback forms are sent to service users (Annex B and C). These forms are sent on a regular basis. An electronic feedback form is available on the SENDIAS website.

Section 3 – Complaints process (Staff and Volunteers)

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Staff

23. Somerset SENDIAS staff who have concerns or complaints relating to the Service should follow the Grievance Procedure of Somerset Council, details of which can be found on the Somerset Council intranet.

Volunteers

24. If any volunteer wishes to make a formal complaint about any aspect of Somerset SENDIAS, Stage 1 of this Complaints Policy should be initiated.

Whistleblowing

25. This confidential Reporting Code is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns within Somerset Council rather than overlooking a problem. This Code makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The Council is committed to listening to concerns, taking them seriously and ensuring that they are dealt with promptly and fairly.

26. The Whistleblowing Code applies to all employees, contractors, agency staff, trainees on vocational/work experience, consultants, builders, drivers and also to volunteers within Council services.

27. Full details on the Whistleblowing Code can be found on the County HR intranet or by contacting Somerset Direct - 0300 123 2224

Section 4 – Contact details

Somerset SENDIAS
The Hollies Children's Centre
South Road
Taunton
TA1 3AG

01823 355578
sometersendias@somerset.gov.uk
www.sometersend.org.uk

SENDIAS Manager – Helen Leach
Helen.Leach@somerset.gov.uk

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Section 5 – Administration

Date written: September 2023
Review date: September 2024

To request this Policy in Easy Read, Braille, Large print or translated into other languages, please contact Somerset SENDIAS on 01823 355578 or email somersetsendias@somerset.gov.uk

Section 6 – References

GDPR 2020

Somerset Council Grievance Procedure

Somerset Council Whistleblowing Code

Annex A – SENDIAS Complaints Form

Annex B – SENDIAS Feedback Form – parent carers



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My complaint is: (In your own words please summarise the issues which are of a concern. Please use another paper if you need to. It would be helpful if you give dates, times and who was involved).

Please describe what you would like to happen as a result of raising this concern.

Annex B – Online access:

[SENDIAS Parent/Carer Feedback \(office.com\)](https://office.com)

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