

DIAS Volunteers and How They Can Support You



A Guide for Parents, Carers and Young People

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www.devonias.org.uk
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DIAS volunteers work with staff at Devon Information Advice and Support (DIAS) to offer support, information and advice for parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs, as well as directly with young people with Special Educational Needs.

The SEND code of Practice says:

Local authorities **must** ensure that children, young people and parents are provided with the information, advice and support necessary to enable them to participate in discussions and decisions about their support. (1.9)

What does Devon Information Advice and Support (DIAS) do?

DIAS is a confidential and free service that provides impartial information and support for parents and carers of children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN), as well as directly for young people who have SEN.

Children and young people with SEN include those with:

- communication & interaction needs
- cognition and learning difficulties
- social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- sensory and/or physical needs

Who are DIAS volunteers?

DIAS volunteers are from a range of backgrounds and offer a great depth of experience and knowledge to our service. They work with us to support parents and young people, under the supervision of DIAS Officers. They are:

- trained in SEN and supporting parents and/or young people
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked
- supervised and supported
- impartial
- committed to keeping information confidential
- available by arrangement with DIAS
- assigned to you by a DIAS officer for the support you need

Who can access volunteer support?

Support for parents of children with SEN

As a parent you have a wealth of knowledge and understanding about your child that could help schools to achieve the best educational outcomes for them. However it can be confusing to understand how schools should support children

with SEN and sometimes daunting to be a partner in your child's education. A volunteer can support you to navigate this journey.

Support for young people with SEN

When a young person reaches the end of compulsory school age, some of the rights for decision-making in the SEN process transfer from the parent to the young person. Some of our volunteers have been specifically trained to work directly with young people to provide advice and support. Volunteers who work with young people will be trained to support them to participate in decision-making to reach the outcomes they wish to achieve.

How can our volunteers help you?

DIAS volunteers can support with:

- providing information
- preparing for and attending meetings, if capacity allows it
- explaining and helping to fill in forms and documents
- working in partnership with schools
- exploring options and choices
- the statutory process
- understanding the Devon Assessment Framework (DAF)

A DIAS volunteer **will not**:

- talk to anyone else about you or your child unless asked to by you
- make decisions on your behalf
- act as a lawyer or an expert
- babysit or childmind

Independent Supporters

Some of our volunteers have had additional 'Independent Supporter' (IS) training which will enable them to support you with the Education Health and Care assessment and plan processes, as well as with the transfer review process.

A full list of how we can help is shown in our leaflet: **A guide to Devon Information Advice and Support**. Ask your school or us for a copy, or look on our website at: www.devonias.org.uk

How is the quality of our volunteer support checked?

We monitor and supervise our volunteers and provide on-going training.

We will contact you soon after you have received support from a volunteer to ask for your feedback.

How can Devon Information Advice & Support help?

If you would like more information about anything you have read in this leaflet or would like to ask for support or to find out how to apply to become a DIAS volunteer:

- Ask your SEN Co-ordinator (SENCo) or other professional to pass on your contact details and we will get in touch
- Write to **Devon Information Advice and Support (DIAS), Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Sowton, Exeter EX2 7NL**
- Find more information at: **www.devonias.org.uk**



Contact Devon Information Advice & Support on **01392 383080** or email **devonias@devon.gov.uk**

We have further leaflets and information online at:
www.devonias.org.uk

You can also find us on Facebook

If you would like this document in another language or format, or you need an interpreter please call **01392 383080**