

DIAS Information Principles

The principles that underpin the development and production of information resources and services for parents and carers

Be clear

- Put the most important information first, and tell parents/carers clearly what they need to do and when.
- Use conversational, everyday language – no educational jargon. Any special terms should be explained.
- Present information in small chunks and summarise with key points where relevant.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs, with one idea at a time.
- Cut out unnecessary information.
- Use tools like bullet points, sub headings and flow charts to make information more readable.

Be accurate

- Use reliable, high-quality sources when producing information.
- Involve subject matter experts.
- Put a production and review date on information.
- Review information regularly.

Be accessible

- Have alternatives to written materials which meet the needs of people with low levels of literacy, English as a second language, comprehension or communication difficulties, visual or hearing impairment.
- Ensure that there are alternative information sources available for those without access to the internet.
- Put your information in the places where your users go.

Be empathetic

- Be reassuring, realistic, positive and supportive.
- Always keep in mind that there are people, some of whom are under considerable stress, at the receiving end of any information or service.

Be Honest

- Acknowledge difficulties and uncertainties.
- Be clear what parents/carers can realistically expect.
- Have transparent processes, accountability and feedback mechanisms.

Be relevant

- Know your audience well.
- Involve users in information development as much as possible.
- Create information with various levels of detail to meet a range of abilities and needs.
- Use service user experiences and real people to explain and illustrate the facts.
- Model productive, constructive communication and relationships. Follow a partnership, shared decision making approach to information and advice: both parents and professionals are experts.
- Give real life information and examples that empower and build confidence.