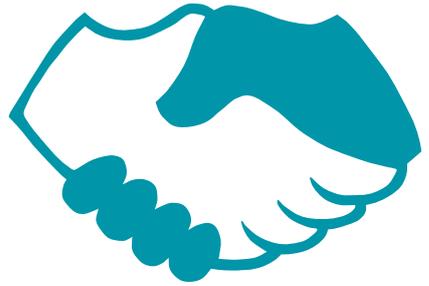


WIAS&S



Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service

Providing an Impartial Service to Children and Young People (aged 0-25)
with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and their Parents or Carers



Data Protection Policy

**CONFIDENTIAL
IMPARTIAL
FREE**

**Information,
Advice & Support
Services Network**
for SEND





Introduction

The Data Protection Act protects individuals with regard to the processing of personal information and their right to see records about themselves. Processing of data means how information is obtained, held and used. Any information that allows a person to be specifically identified (for example, name, address and/or date of birth) should be classed as personal data.

Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service (WIAS&S) provides a confidential, impartial information, advice, and support service to children and young people (0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and their parents/carers. A young person in this case is defined as an individual over compulsory school age (16) and under 25.

Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service's (WIAS&S) Data Protection policy is in line with government guidance on data protection. This policy should be read in conjunction with WIAS&S' Confidentiality Policy. If you would like a copy of this please contact WIAS&S.

Data Protection General Principles

Why data is kept

WIAS&S records information given to them by parents/carers, children and young people who use the service. This is to make sure that families are given the right help and support. The information is only ever used by WIAS&S unless parents/carers and/or young people give permission for the information to be shared with someone else or there is a legal duty for us to do so (please refer to the WIAS&S Confidentiality Policy for more information on the sharing of personal information). The data is also used to monitor aspects of the service that WIAS&S provides to make sure that they are accessible to all families and to see if there are any trends that may suggest different and better ways for the service to be run and delivered.

What information is recorded

WIAS&S only records information that is essential to helping parents/carers, children and young people such as name, contact details, child's/young person's date of birth, details of school/college and information relating to a child's/young person's (SEND). Each time there is contact with a parent/carer, child or young person notes are made of the discussion. This allows WIAS&S staff to use contact history to make sure they are giving the most appropriate help to parents/carers, children and young people and to ensure that they are carrying out agreed follow up actions.



Consent

It is a legal requirement to gain consent from parents/carers, children and young people to store personal data. Before recording any information from a service user WIASS staff request verbal consent from parents/carers, children and young people.

Parents/carers, children and young people are made aware of what information is recorded and how it is used.

WIASS staff inform all users of the service of why information about them is stored, what is done with the information and that this information is needed in order to make sure that they are given the right help and support. New referrals to the service are sent a copy of the data protection sheet along with a welcome letter. The data protection sheet explains what information is kept, why and how it is used.

All parents/carers, children and young people will be asked verbally if they have any objection to WIASS recording and storing information about them when a referral is opened.

Having received and read the data protection sheet, if parents/carers or the young person do not inform WIASS that they have concerns about or do not want WIASS to keep records on their case, WIASS will assume that parents/carers or the young person have no objection to their information to be stored.

Parents/carers and young people will always be asked for verbal permission before WIASS staff speak to anyone else on their behalf or look at reports/ documents held by SNAS or any other service.

WIASS will verbally ask the parents/carers or young person if they are in agreement to disclose their race/ethnic origin strictly for monitoring purposes. Parents/carers and young people will be given the option to decline to provide WIASS with information on their racial/ethnic origin.

WIASS does not record health information about parents/carers as a matter of course, although it does record anything that may have implications for the information and support WIASS will offer the family.

Sharing information

The Data Protection Act prevents personal information that is held on an individual to be shared with anyone else unless the person has given their consent for this to happen. There are some cases, however, where the law says that this should be done. These are when:

- There is concern about an individual (child or adult) being harmed or there is a child or adult at risk safeguarding issue
- The information relates to criminal activity
- The court orders that the information needs to be shared

Where WIASS has a legal obligation to share information with another department or agency, parents/carers and young person will, where possible, be told that this is being done and why.



How WIAS Stores and Retrieves Data

WIAS works with most families until a young person with SEND reaches 25. Information is stored until a young person to whom it relates to turns 30. WIAS files are archived electronically when there has been no contact with the family for six months.

WIAS database

WIAS has a database that is used to record details of parents/carers, children and young people who contact the service. The database is stored on the council's network and it is only accessible to WIAS staff (secured electronically). WIAS also holds other information, such as letters that they have sent to parent/carers, children and young people or to other people on behalf of parent/carers, children and young people who use the service. This is also only accessible by WIAS staff.

Security of information

The council policy on data security says that all computers should be password protected and that staff should not share their password with anyone. Passwords must be changed every four weeks. The council policy also states that staff should use password protected screen savers that automatically come on if the computer has remained idle for five minutes. These measures are all in place to protect data and to make sure that only people who are authorised to view information have an opportunity to do so. WIAS follows all of these data security procedures.

Once information stored electronically is no longer needed it is deleted from the system.

How information should be disposed of

Any paper documents that contain personal data or sensitive information are always disposed of by shredding.

Information stored on computers that is no longer required is permanently deleted by emptying it from the recycle bin area on the computer.

The right to view WIAS files

Parents/carers, children and young people have the right to view any files that WIAS holds about them and their family. To do this a parent/carer or young person will need to put their request in writing to the manager of the service. The data protection sheet explains how parents/carers or a young person can ask to see their files.

It is unlikely that WIAS will hold reports from third parties that the parent/carer has not already seen. However in this event, permission from the relevant third party must be obtained before passing on their reports to parents/carers, children and young people.

Request for information from the local authority data protection team

Parents/carers or young people sometimes request copies of all local authority files via the data protection team and this would include files held by WIAS. To protect the arm's length and confidential nature of WIAS, copies of files will be sent to the data protection officer to be passed on in a sealed envelope, addressed to the parent/carer or young person and marked 'confidential'.



Data Protection and Volunteer Independent Parental Supporters (IPSs)

Volunteer IPSs will have information about families that they are working with. As with WIASS staff, volunteer IPSs will need to keep records containing personal details as well as notes on conversations that have taken place between themselves and parents/carers. This is necessary to make sure that parent/carers are given the right help and support.

What information might be kept by volunteer IPSs

When WIASS links a parent/carer to a volunteer IPS, the IPS is given contact details and the name and date of birth of the child or young person with SEND. Once contact has been made between the IPS and the family, the parent/carer might then give the IPS other information such as copies of statements, letters and reports. Or they may give WIASS permission to pass them on to the IPS. The IPS may make notes about conversations they have had with the family to help them with future support they may offer. The IPS should only keep information that is directly relevant to the issues that they are helping a family with.

How volunteer IPSs should store data

Any information that a volunteer IPS holds about a family whom they are working with will be stored securely. All volunteer IPSs are required to have a lockable drawer/cabinet that only they have access to. If information is being stored on a computer it will only be accessible to the IPS.

Volunteer IPSs' PCs/laptops are password protected or, where there is shared access, individual files will only be accessed with a password that is known only by the IPS.

Volunteer IPSs are particularly aware of maintaining confidentiality around family members and friends who have access to their homes. Records will never be left lying around where other people will have access to them.

Once an IPS has stopped working with a parent/carer or feel that they are not able to offer any further support they will dispose of all records.

How information should be disposed

Once it is no longer necessary for a volunteer IPS to keep information about a family, all paper records and personal information that is still needed is returned to WIASS. Where the information no longer needs to be kept it is shredded. Personal information will never be disposed of in general refuse without being shredded first. Information stored on computer will be deleted making sure that they are also deleted from the computer's recycle bin.

Ensuring the effectiveness of our confidentiality policy

All WIASS staff and volunteer IPSs receive training on WIASS' data protection policy

WIASS only keep personal information for as long as necessary and we always ask permission before storing this information in our secure files.

WIASS ensures that parents/carers and young people are informed about our data protection policy from first contact with our service through our welcome letter and data protection and confidentiality sheet.

The only reason information could be passed on without your permission is if there is a legal requirement or duty for us to do this.

Our data protection policy is reviewed annually by WIASS Advisory Group

This policy was last updated in March 2017

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How to contact us:



Advice line: 020 8871 5237 (school term time only)

Monday: 10am -1pm, Wednesday: 1.30-4.30pm, Friday: 10am-1pm.



Call back service: 020 8871 8065

(24 hour answer machine)



Email: wias@wandsworth.gov.uk



Web: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wias

