



## Norfolk Parent Partnership Impartiality Policy

Norfolk Parent Partnership (NPP) will deliver a service that places an equal value on the views of all stakeholders; it will ensure that when conveying the views of others it is accurate regarding content and source. The service is provided in-house at “arms length” from the Local Authority.

### Role of NPP

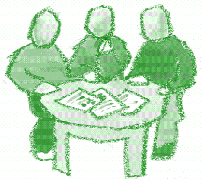
*“The role of Norfolk Parent Partnership is to ensure parents have access to confidential and impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions about their child’s special educational needs. This is achieved by working in partnership with parents, providing information, services and training, working with relevant agencies and ensuring parents’ views influence local policy and practice.”*



Norfolk Parent  
Partnership

## Norfolk Parent Partnership Impartiality Policy - Summary

*“The role of Norfolk Parent Partnership is to give parents confidential and impartial information, advice and support so they can make decisions about their child’s special educational needs. We work in partnership with parents, providing information, services and training, working with other agencies and to make sure parents’ views are heard.”*



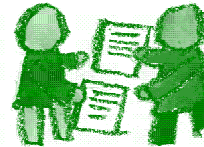
We have a steering group which includes people from local voluntary groups, parents, Children’s Services (Education and Social Care) and Health.



We work together with parents, not on their behalf, to help them to be able to be fully involved in their child’s education.



We take part in local and national training courses to make sure that the information parents are given is accurate and impartial.



We never take sides, we give factual information based on government guidance, the law and local policy.



When parents contact us, they are told that we work in a confidential and impartial way.



We will always listen to parents’ comments and use them to help plan the services we offer.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that Parent Partnership Services (PPS) must ensure that parents are provided with:

*“accurate, neutral information on their rights, roles and responsibilities within the Special Educational Needs process and on the wide range of options available, to enable them to make informed decisions.”*

The Parent Partnership Practice guide (Stone 2004.p20) states that a PPS adopts an impartial stance by:

- Reflecting the perspectives and wishes of parents
- Being seen not to have a vested interest in the outcomes of any discussions
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers who attend decision making meetings are clear whether their role is
  - To support an individual family
  - To contribute to discussions on strategic issues
  - To participate in making decisions.

We work in partnership with parents and carers towards ensuring that children reach the ‘every child matters’ priorities.

The Steering group has a responsibility for ensuring and monitoring the impartiality of the Parent Partnership Service. (exemplification of minimum standards)

<p>Physical relationship between Norfolk Parent Partnership Service and the Local Authority</p>	<p>NPP will be physically situated away from the authority's decision-making processes. In a building which does not impact on any perceived partiality and has private meeting rooms.</p>
<p>The Norfolk Parent Partnership Steering Group</p>	<p>Membership of the steering group will be of an equal balance between parents and professionals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chair will be independent of the Local Authority or schools. They will be elected by secret ballot.</li> <li>• The duties and roles of the chair and vice chair will be set out in writing and agreed to when accepting the role</li> <li>• The dates of all meetings will be published on the website and in the newsletter.</li> <li>• The mechanisms to raise issues will be made clear in a NPP leaflet – The Steering Group.</li> <li>• Outcomes of steering group meetings will be freely available through published minutes, on the PP website or upon request.</li> <li>• The steering group monitors resources to ensure that the service is able to meet the needs of parents and carers in Norfolk and raises concern to the local authority if necessary.</li> <li>• All members will agree to adhere to the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the role description, if a member steps outside this remit membership may be terminated.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group will ensure that there is a well-defined relationship between NPP and the Local Authority that encompasses a clear understanding of impartiality and the arms length position of the service.</li> <li>• The steering group will monitor that the service does not take decisions on behalf of the parent, give directive advice or act on behalf of the local authority or other agency through termly evaluation reports.</li> <li>• Training will be available from the Parent Partnership Officers in one hour slots delivered at the end of Steering Group meetings by arrangement with the chair at the previous Steering group meeting.</li> <li>• Block voting will be used so that no sector will be able to outvote another by weight of numbers</li> </ul>
<p>The Terms of Reference for the Norfolk Parent Partnership Steering Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of reference will be given to all steering group members.</li> <li>• The terms will be reviewed bi-annually through a sub-group of the steering group.</li> <li>• The terms will give action to direct the service to safeguard service impartiality in all activities.</li> <li>• The terms will check and compare NPP with other local or national, independent and authority-controlled organisations for the impartiality of information given.</li> </ul>
<p>Training, Supervision and Practice Development</p>	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff and volunteers will take part in, and complete, the IPS training course.</li> <li>• All members of the steering groups will have access to a place on the IPS</li> </ul>

	<p>training course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IPS training course will encourage ongoing thought on communication skills whilst acting in the role expected by the service.</li> <li>• A sub-group of the steering group will monitor the impartiality of the IPS training course.</li> <li>• Training for staff will be undertaken at local and national level linking into both authority run and independent courses.</li> </ul> <p>Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision for parent partnership staff and volunteers will be in house by staff trained in impartiality through the IPS training course.</li> <li>• Staff will be supervised for employment purposes by a local authority representative whose role has an element of impartiality reflected within it.</li> </ul> <p>Practice Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice development is prepared by NPP staff and discussed by the steering group reflecting on its impartiality.</li> <li>• All new information leaflets will be presented to a sub-group of the steering group for verification of the impartiality of the information presented.</li> </ul>
<p>Norfolk Parent Partnership promotes opportunities for all parents and carers of children with SEN to have their views heard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPP will endeavour to remove barriers for parents and carers to access and benefit from the service it offers within its own budgetary constraints.</li> <li>• Parents and carers will be encouraged to take part in questionnaires and consultations from all local and national organisations with information given in its newsletter and online as appropriate.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPP will consult with the authority in order to present information within SEN and education in a parent friendly, neutral and impartial manner.</li> <li>• NPP will offer consultancy to those groups or organisations that record the parent's views to influence service developments.</li> <li>• NPP will, through its best endeavours, reflect the views and concerns of parents and carers to the local authority and other relevant agencies.</li> <li>• NPP will ensure staff and volunteers are well trained and able to support the parent partnership ethos when attending meetings with parents, carers and professionals enabling everyone to be heard.</li> <li>• informing all parents of the impartial nature of the PPS;</li> <li>• being clear with parents that the role of the PPS is to help them participate in their child's education and advise them on their rights, not to advocate on their behalf or take sides with the Local Authority;</li> <li>• empowering parents to speak for themselves and make their own decisions, rather than pushing them towards a particular course of action;</li> <li>• always respecting parents' decisions without making a judgement, irrespective of your views as individuals;</li> <li>• providing factual information and advice based on what the guidance and legislation says, not offering your own opinions or reflecting local policy;</li> </ul>
<p>Norfolk Parent Partnership supports impartiality in staff and volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective practice will be encouraged and supported through all areas of supervision.</li> <li>• A wide range of information organisations will be made available to those employed or volunteering in the service, being supported by it or gathering information from it.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service user evaluations will reflect on the impartiality of the support and information given.</li> <li>• It will be recognised that for some service users a volunteer or member of staff may need to speak on their behalf. Before this happens the views and wishes of the parent or carer must be understood so that these can be accurately conveyed.</li> <li>• NPP will ensure parents, carers and practitioners clearly understand that the role of the service is to provide impartial, neutral and objective support and information.</li> <li>• It is the responsibility of staff, volunteers or any member of the steering group to declare any vested interest in the outcome of a decision taken with regard to any individual, child or family, or any personal or voluntary roles which may impact on their role within parent partnership.</li> <li>• NPP will ensure a wide range of literature from both local and national organisations is available to send to parents and carers along with that produced by the service itself.</li> <li>• There will be established links on the NPP website to a wide range of local and national organisations that offer advise, support and information regarding SEN and disabilities.</li> <li>• N.P.P. will represent staff and volunteer concerns and ensure these are taken to the appropriate level, either locally or nationally by partnership staff or by the steering group.</li> </ul>
<p>Norfolk Parent Partnership recognises the partiality of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training given through the IPS training course reflects on the agendas from individuals, agencies and sectors, considering the background to any</li> </ul>

<p>others</p>	<p>information given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in communication reflects on messages given and received through verbal and non-verbal means.</li> <li>• When giving open, impartial and neutral information, background information will be reflected where a bias is perceived and reasons discussed if requested. Best practice is to be taken into account both locally and nationally.</li> <li>• Whenever possible, Sub groups will reflect a balance of sector representatives.</li> <li>• making it clear that the best educational outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities are the ultimate aims of PPS, and their role is to support parents to achieve this.</li> <li>• informing Local Authorities, education settings or any other agency of the impartial nature of PPS, and making them aware of this policy;</li> <li>• being clear that PPS do not undertake Local Authority functions, or act on behalf of Local Authorities, educational settings or any other agency;</li> <li>• being clear that PPS do not take sides.</li> </ul>
<p>Norfolk Parent Partnership gains feedback from service users and other to include how impartial it is.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The views of service users, both of the Helpline and the support of an IPS, will be gained through questionnaires, which include targeted questions on the impartiality of information and support given.</li> <li>• The steering group will offer support and advice that will inform practice within the service, to monitor the effectiveness of the service through questions, comments and suggestions.</li> <li>• Membership of the steering group will include a number of representatives involved in providing support to parents in an alternative capacity.</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All PPS staff and Independent Parental Supporters (IPSs) receive a copy of the Impartiality Policy and it is explained to them.</li><li>• The policy is shared with the Local Authority and other agencies so they are aware it exists and they understand it fully.</li><li>• The policy is published on the Parent Partnership Website.</li><li>• The policy is reviewed bi-annually and amendments made as they arise.</li></ul> |
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