If you would like further information about Parent Partnership Services, visit the NPPN (National Parent Partnership Network) website: www.parentpartnership.org.uk
The Service has a multi-agency Steering Group representing the various agencies and groups who work with children with special educational needs and their parents in London Borough of Havering. These include Parents, Early Years, Voluntary Sector, Health, Social Care, Schools and LA. It meets once a term.

The Steering Group meets termly, or occasionally more often when necessary, to guide the production of an annual Service Development Plan, recommend new initiatives and monitor the work of the Service by means of regular reports on the progress towards meeting the objectives set out in the plan.

PiPS belief

It is the belief of PiPS that we should focus on asking ourselves and others the following question:

“What are we educating this child, or young person for, that will equip them with the skills, they as an individual will need, for living their future?”

We also believe that this supports Every Child Matters i.e.

**Being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle

**Staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect

**Enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood

**Making a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour

**Economic well-being:** not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

Steering Group Membership and Function

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Information Leaflets produced by PiPS

- Early Years
- Pre-School Provision
- How to Decide on a Suitable School
- Moving from Primary to Secondary
- Request for a Statutory Assessment
- Timescale for a Statutory Assessment
- Decision Whether to Issue a Statement
- Annual Reviews of Statements
- Transfer to Secondary School for Statemented Children
- Bullying
- Additional Education Advice and Support
- Local Support Groups
- National Associations
- School Action
- School Action Plus
- Changes to Special Educational Needs Funding
- Individual Provision Plan
- Transition Plans 14+
- TransPlan 14+ (leaflets 1-3) Young Person’s Guides
- TransPlan 14+ (leaflets 4-5) Parent’s Guides
For complaints made against PiPS, either service issues or against individual members of staff, parents will continue to be offered the choice of either Local Authority (LA) complaints procedure or PiPS own complaints procedure. Whichever route the complaint takes it will be necessary for it to be logged on the Corporate Complaints System.

PiPS will only log complaints made against other LA depts on the Corporate Complaints System, if the parents give a clear agreement for this to be done, ideally in writing. This ensures that neither PiPS Confidentiality Policy or Impartiality Policy will be breached.

Information Leaflets produced by PiPS

Parents in Partnership Service leaflet including
Confidentiality Policy
Parents in Partnership Service leaflet Policies and Guidelines

A Guide to Assessments and Reports
Guide to Terminology
Who's Who
Mediation

Steering Group Membership and Function

The PiPSCo is required to provide termly reports which are circulated to the members of the Steering Group prior to the meeting. They also support and review the annual self-evaluation that the service undertakes.

Members of the Steering Group have different knowledge, expertise and experience to offer. They are asked to advise, contribute their views on the formulation of policies and drafts of documents, assist in prioritising the work of the Service and support partnership work in practice, enabling the mutual informing of good practice and providing valuable multi-agency feedback.

The Steering Group has a responsibility to follow the principles of partnership in its operation. Within the Steering Group all members are equal partners, and the individual views and skills that each member brings to the Group are recognised and equally valued.

Decision making

It is expected that most of the agenda of the termly meetings of the Steering Group will involve discussion of the ideas and views of all members, and agreements will be reached on the action to be taken without the need for more formal decision making.

Chair

Meetings of the Group will be Chaired by the parent representative.
Aims of the Parents in Partnership Service

Local Authoritys (LAs) have a legal duty to make arrangements to provide information and advice on SEN matters to the parents of children with SEN in their area via a Parent Partnership Service.

LAs and Parent Partnership Services are expected to meet minimum standards that are set out in the SEN Code of Practice 2001 and in addition, from February 08, the Exemplification of Minimum Standards. These standards make up the core activities of the Parent Partnership Service and include:

- working with parents
- information and publicity
- training, advice and information
- networking and collaboration
- helping to inform and influence local SEN policy and practice.

The Service also aims to promote effective partnership working by:

- assisting parents and carers to have their views heard and valued by professionals
- working with schools and the local authority so that parents and carers are more involved and better informed when their children’s special educational needs are being assessed and reviewed

Terms of Reference for PiPS Steering Group

Arrangements for access to PiPS files

There is no arrangement or agreement for anybody else to access PiPS files. They are for kept PiPS staff and PiPS alone. They are kept locked unless PiPS staff are in the office. On occasions it may be helpful to share information with others but this will only be done with parents prior knowledge and permission.

Notes taken on behalf of PiPS for parents at meetings, are for PiPS files and may be copied to parents if they request. If others present at the meeting request a copy this will only be done with the permission of the parent.

A copy of PiPS confidentiality agreement is sent to every new referral and parents are informed that their details are held on a database.

The only exception to confidentiality is in regard to information which PiPS staff may believe indicates a child may be at risk; All professionals, regardless of who they work for, have a legal obligation to pass on concerns regarding child protection.

NB Parents have a right to request any copies of any files by any dept. kept on their child unless by doing so it is thought that the contents may cause harm or distress to either the parent or child.
**Arrangements for accessing SEN Section files**

PiPS staff have open access to all the pupils files held by the SEN Section and may photocopy specific documents or reports held in such files but only with prior permission of the parent and the caseworker or another member of the SEN staff on a higher grade.

PiPS staff may also temporarily remove the file to their own area but only with the knowledge of the caseworker or another member of staff.

PiPS staff will not discuss the file or any of its contents with anybody who is not directly connected with the case and only then if parental consent has been given.

On certain occasions including Secondary Transfer and Transition Planning, PiPS will ask the SEN Section to print labels with the names and addresses of the relevant parents so that they can be invited to the annual meetings that PiPS hosts for these topics. This may also occasionally happen for other events.

**Arrangements for accessing the Child & Community Psychology Service (Educational Psychologist– EP) files**

PiPS staff may not access the EP files directly. They may ask the EP whose case it is to check the file for them. It is up to the EP if they choose to share or copy the report or document with PiPS staff.

PiPS staff who wish to view a Note in Lieu (NiL) may ask a member of the SEN Section to retrieve it from the EP file if there is nobody from EPS available to do so. A photocopy of the NiL may be taken.

**Terms of Reference for PiPS Steering Group**

- encouraging co-operation and effective working between statutory agencies and the voluntary sector
- working with schools, the local authority and other agencies to find ways to improve the partnership with parents and carers. This involves supporting opportunities for all partners to put forward their own views, listen to the views of other partners, increase their understanding of the issues and to work more closely together to provide better support for all those concerned with special educational needs.

To achieve these aims, the Service works with:

- parents and carers
- children and young people with special educational needs
- schools and pre-school services
- voluntary organisations - both local and national
- parent organisations and self-help groups
- Havering Children's Services
- Health Services
- other Parent Partnership Services in the region and nationally.
PiPS views impartiality as one of the essential requirements of the Service. It is also a requirement of the Dept for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) for all Local Authorities to ensure a Parent Partnership Service is available and that it is able to work in an impartial way i.e. at arms length from the LA.

PiPS provides an impartial service to all who use it. By impartial, PiPS understands the meaning to be:

- not favouring one side over another (neutral)
- to assist parents* in having their views heard and valued by professionals
- to assist parents* in gaining a better understanding of the views and decisions taken by professionals and schools
- fairness for all (seeing that a consistent approach is taken)
- treating all parties respectfully and not judgementally; and not having a vested interest in the outcome of any discussions (not benefiting in any way from what happens or follows afterwards).

All PiPS staff and volunteers know they must be impartial, whether they are providing information, advice or acting in a mediation role. Therefore, PiPS staff or volunteers would not openly make judgements on the views, behaviour or beliefs of any party.

In order for PiPS to be sure that it is able to meet the requirements of this policy, it will always try to attend training being offered by independent providers such as IPSEA, ACE, NPPN, Napps etc. as well as gaining an understanding of the LA’s view on SEN matters, for example assessment and how needs will be met, so that it can reach a balanced view.

PiPS understands the reasons for, and importance of, equal opportunities and does everything it can to make sure the Service is available to as many parents* as possible who need it, or are likely to need it.

All information leaflets produced by PiPS must also meet the requirement for neutrality i.e. giving a balanced view. This is also true when delivering training.

*Parent is used to describe all adults involved with the care of a child but when somebody in their capacity as carer contacts PiPS for advice i.e. they are not the parents (eg grandparent, aunt etc), they can still be advised in the same way that a parent or legal guardian can as PiPS is only giving guidance, advice, information etc that is already in the public domain and not providing confidential information relating to the child. However, when providing advice regarding statutory procedures such as requesting a statutory assessment of a child’s special educational needs, the carer must be advised that only a parent or legal guardian can make such a request. If they believe they are the guardian, when they contact LBH they will be asked to provide evidence or proof of their status.