



**Making your
voice heard-
co-producing
confidently for
SEND
parents/carers**

Recorded version of this webinar

[FACT Bucks/SENDIAS Getting Your Voice Heard
webinar January 2022](#)



**SPEAK
UP
AND
BE
HEARD**

Programme

- What the law says
- Coproduction charter
- You are the expert
- Getting the best out of meetings about your child
- How to influence paperwork about your child
- What to do if things go wrong
- What about helping with improving the system?



↑ Slides with this symbol tell you about the law and statutory guidance

What are your legal rights?

Find out about SEND law, guidance and local policies



**Links to
the law
and
statutory
guidance**

[Children and Families Act 2014](#)

[SEND Code of Practice 2015](#)



**Links to
websites
explaining
your rights**

**(IPSEA) Independent Provider of
Special Education Advice**

Child Law Advice

**Contact - for families with
disabled children | Contact**



Law trumps policy

Law is **must**

Guidance e.g. SEND Code of Practice is **should**

Policy is local way of doing something – ‘**how we do this here**’



Links to
Buckinghamshire
SEND policies and
guidance

[Bucks SEND Local Offer](#)

[Bucks Schools Web SEND and Inclusion](#)

[Buckinghamshire Council
Aylesbury, Chiltern, South Bucks,
Wycombe](#)

e.g. [Bucks Ordinarily Available
Provision](#)



What does
the law
say?

Do my views count?

YES

The Local Authority must have regard to:

the views, wishes and feelings of the child and their parent, or the young person;

the importance of them participating as fully as possible in decisions

the importance of them being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions;

the need to support them, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help him or her achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes

Involving children, young people and parents in decision-making

- 9.21 Local authorities **must consult** the child and the child's parent or the young person **throughout the process** of assessment and production of an EHC plan.
- They should also **involve the child** as far as possible in this process. The needs of the individual child and young person should sit **at the heart** of the assessment and planning process.
- Planning should start with the individual and local authorities must **have regard to the views, wishes and feelings** of the child, child's parent or young person, their **aspirations**, the **outcomes** they wish to seek and the **support** they need to achieve them.
- It should enable children, young people and parents to have **more control** over decisions about their support including the use of a Personal Budget for those with an EHC plan.

Support for children, young people and parents

- 9.27 Local authorities should have **early discussions** with parents or the young person about what the EHC needs assessment process and development of an EHC plan will involve, and the **range of options** that will be available, such as different types of educational institution and options for Personal Budgets and how these may differ depending on the type of educational institution for which the parents or young person express a preference.
- 9.28 Local authorities **must** work with parents and children and young people to understand how best to **minimise disruption** for them and their family life. For example, multiple appointments should be co-ordinated or combined where possible and appropriate.
- 9.29 Local authorities **must** provide all parents, children and young people with **impartial information, advice and support** in relation to SEN to enable them to take part effectively in the assessment and planning process.

Coordination

9.30 Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that there is effective **co-ordination** of the assessment and development process for an EHC plan. The co-ordination should include:

- planning the process **to meet the needs** of children, parents and young people
- **timing meetings to minimise family disruption**
- keeping the child's parent or young person informed through a **single point of contact** wherever possible and
- ensuring relevant professionals have **sufficient notice** to be able to contribute to the process

Coproduction Charter

- **Buckinghamshire's SEND Co-production Charter**
- Co-production puts the needs of the individual at the heart of all the decision making processes and the support and services that are provided..
- **Our Principles:**
- Everyone is welcome and treated with care and respect.
- Everyone's opinion is not only listened to, but is **equally** valued and included.
- Everyone communicates respectfully and in a timely fashion.
- Everyone works together to achieve the best outcome, offering compromise where necessary.
- Everyone acts with trust and transparency.

Coproduction Charter

- **Coproduction will be conducted at all levels:**
- **Individually** – where an individual can influence the support and services they need. Their voice is heard, and they feel empowered about the decisions being made about their future.
- **Collectively** – where two or more people influence the way services are designed, commissioned and delivered.
- **Strategically** – where co-production is an embedded culture of inclusion. Individuals, families, groups and organisations can influence equally services, commissioning, monitoring and new projects.

You are the expert - Don't forget the 'p' word



Language – a barrier or an aid?

My disabled child

- Has a placement
- Uses special transport
- Accesses a mainstream activity
- Is in transition
- Has annual reviews
- Has siblings
- Requires intervention
- Has peers

My non disabled child

- Goes to school
- Gets the bus
- Goes swimming
- Is moving up to college
- Has parents' evenings
- Has brothers and sisters
- Requires help and support
- Has friends



Points to Consider

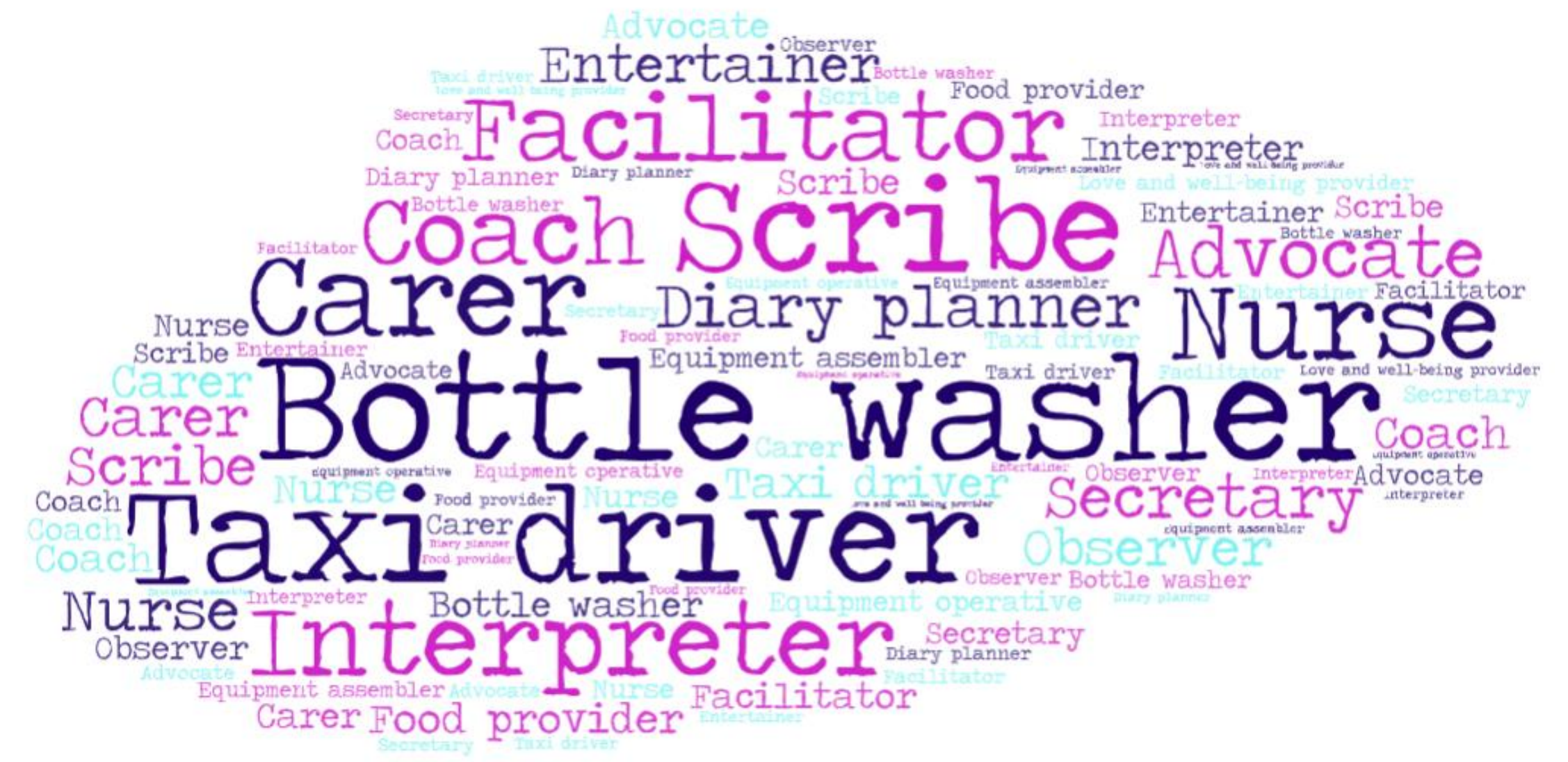
How can the language we use serve as:

- A barrier to people's understanding of your child?
- An enabler to get the support your child requires?



Parents as experts- Parents with skills





Parents as experts - Parents with lives



- Empathy
- Diplomacy
- Assertiveness
- Resilience
- Organisational skills
- Making sense of paperwork

Getting the best from a meeting

- **Before the meeting**
- Is the date right for you?
- Do you know what format the meeting is, who is coming, what the meeting is for?
- Do you want someone to attend with you?
- Will the arrangements suit you?

Getting the best from a meeting

- **Preparing for the meeting**
- Have you been given the paperwork?
- Make a list:
 - What questions do you have?
 - What key problems can be solved at the meeting?
 - What problems are less important?
 - Is there law, guidance or policy which might help you?
 - What will be a good result from the meeting?
- Use tools and prompts to help you

Meeting / Negotiating Preparation Checklist

Feeling calm and confident

Use visualisation

Practicalities

Preparing for a difficult meeting or a negotiation

- Venue?
- Time?
- Map?
- Is remit or power to Act clear?

My Interests

- What am I concerned about?
- Have I prioritised important issues?
- What are the desired outcomes?

Others' Interests

- What are their wants/needs?
- What would I want if I were in their shoes?
- What might their hopes and fears be?
- How might they be feeling and how might this affect their behaviour?

Fixed Points or Standards

- External and Internal
- Legislation
 - Policy
 - Guidance
 - Funding
 - Practice

Options

- What are possible agreements?
- Can we achieve a win / win?
- Have all avenues been explored?
- Have we been creative and flexible?
- Have we reached a stalemate?
- Do I feel I must reach an agreement – do I assume they have to?
- Do I know what they will do if we don't reach an agreement?

Communication Check

- Am I ready to listen actively?
- Are the messages I want to deliver clear?
- Have I thought about how to say it in a way that they will want to listen?
- How will I handle objections?
- How will I establish and maintain a rapport?

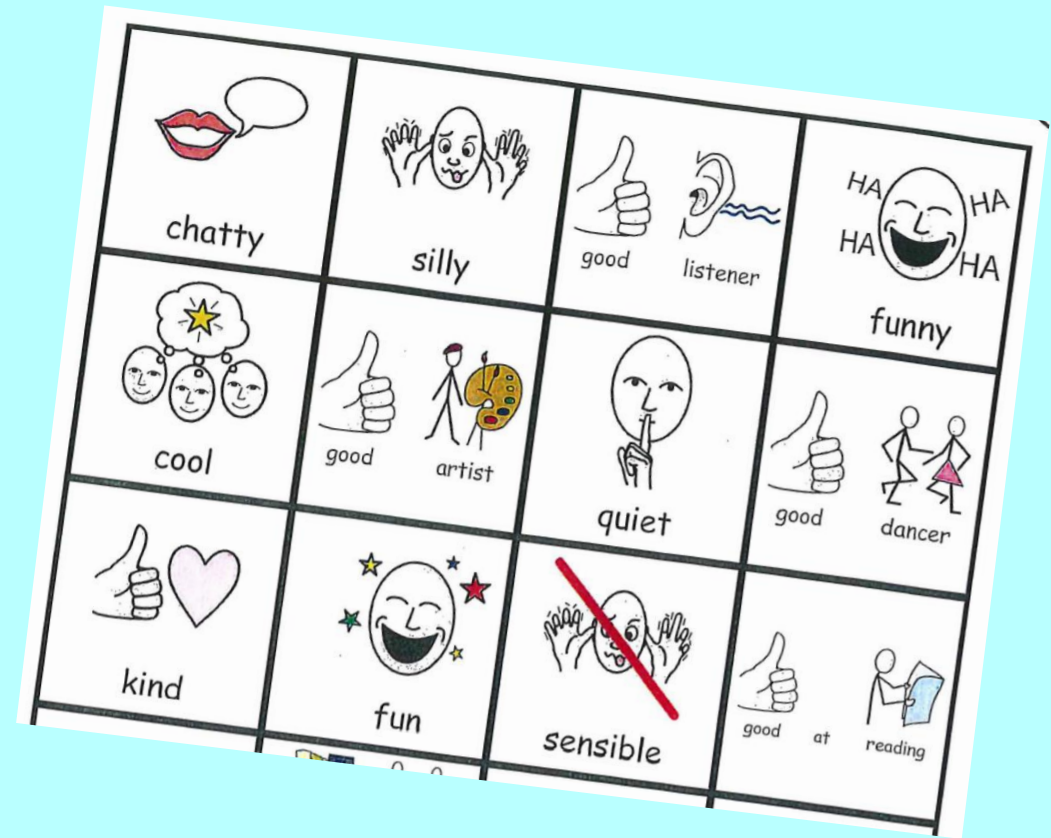
Prompts for you to prepare a meeting about your child



- What do you appreciate, like and admire about your child?
- What does he/she like about him/herself?
- What is important to your child now?
- What is important to your child in the future?
- What support does your child need to keep healthy and safe?
- Questions to answer/issues we are struggling with
- What is working and not working from different perspectives?

Capturing your child's views




- Speech
- Open questions
- Closed questions
- Sounds
- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Artwork
- Mark-making and writing
- Choosing pictures
- Photos and videos of your child or by your child of their world
- Codes and symbols
- Alternative and augmentative communication devices



What would a perfect week look like?



Perfect Week

	Mornings 	Afternoons  	Evening
Mon			
Tues			
Wed			
Thurs			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Getting the best from a meeting

- **At the meeting – getting the facts straight**
- Who is there?
- How long is the meeting?
- Any new reports?
- Do you understand any jargon?
- What has been decided?
- How will you keep in touch?
- When is the next meeting?

Getting the best from a meeting

- **At the meeting – getting your views across**
- Stay calm
- Tone of voice/ body language/ eye contact
- Listen well
- Don't be afraid to speak up
- Refer back to your child's needs and views
- Give specific examples
- Choose your words carefully
- Ask open, non-confrontational questions to help you to understand
- Repeat back what you have understood – 'so I think you are saying . . .'
- Make suggestions
- Refer to the law/ guidance gently
- Look to the future, not to the past
- Ask for actions to be recorded as you agree them
- Use the time wisely – stay relevant; If you can't agree, ask for this to be noted and move on to the next issue

Getting the best from a meeting

At the meeting – non-confrontational questions

- Start with something positive if you can
- Show you are willing to work together with the professionals
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure
- Suggest alternatives
- Look for points of agreement
- Compromise only if you can

Getting the best from a meeting

- **At the meeting – dealing with difficult situations**
- The help you want is too expensive
- Your child doesn't need any help or more help
- We have other children with more needs than yours
- We don't see your child's problems at school

Getting the best from a meeting

- At the meeting – choosing the right words
- *Perhaps . . .*
- *Could we look at . . .*
- *What if we . . .*
- *I wonder if we could consider*
- *It might be an idea to . . .*
- *May I suggest . . .*
- *I can see why that's important to you . . .*
- *Let's look at some alternatives*
- *What else is important to you?*
- *I'd like your opinion on . . .*
- *I appreciate your point of view*

Getting the best from a meeting

- **At the meeting – avoiding the wrong words - argumentative**
- *But*
- *However*
- *I'm afraid*
- ***But*** can always be avoided by using short sentences.
- *I see your point, but . . .* becomes
- *I see your point. The effect it would have on us is . . .*

Getting the best from a meeting

- **At the meeting – avoiding the wrong words - rejecting**
- *Can't*
- *No way*
- *Impossible*
- These can be replaced by phrases such as:
- *The problems that would create for us . . .*
- *That's clearly very important to you. The difficulty from our point of view is . . .*

WHAT GREAT LISTENERS ACTUALLY DO

JACK ZENGER, JOSEPH FOLKMAN

1 ASK QUESTIONS THAT PROMOTE DISCOVERY and INSIGHT

TWO WAY DIALOG

CONSTRUCTIVE

2 INTERACTIONS THAT BUILD SELF ESTEEM

CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

TO OPENLY DISCUSS ISSUES/DIFFERENCES

3 A CO-OPERATIVE CONVERSATION

FEEDBACK FLOWS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS

CHALLENGE/DISAGREE WITHOUT MAKING OTHER PERSON DEFENSIVE

4 MAKE SUGGESTIONS SKILLFULLY

THAT OPEN UP ALTERNATIVE PATHS

GOOD LISTENER IS NOT A SPONGE THAT ABSORBS BUT A TRAMPOLINE TO BOUNCE IDEAS OFF!

LEVELS OF LISTENING

- 1** CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO DISCUSS
- 2** CLEAR AWAY DISTRACTIONS AND MAKE EYE CONTACT
- 3** UNDERSTAND THE SUBSTANCE ASK QUESTIONS, CONFIRM
- 4** OBSERVE NON-VERBAL CLUES
↳ 80% OF COMMUNICATION
- 5** UNDERSTAND EMOTIONS & FEELINGS ABOUT TOPIC
↳ EMPATHIZE
- 6** HELP OTHER PERSON TO SEE ISSUE IN DIFFERENT LIGHT

Getting the best from a meeting -

Getting the best from a meeting

At the end of the meeting

Which actions have been agreed? Who will be responsible?

Make sure any actions agreed are recorded by the organiser and will be shared with you.

Does there need to be a follow up meeting?

Thank the host for the meeting

Getting the best from a meeting

After the meeting

Give a reasonable time for actions agreed to be done and to take effect.

Follow up in writing if you still have concerns.

Ask for advice from Bucks SENDIAS Service if you need it.

Getting the best from a meeting – helpful links

- [Preparing for a meeting - Bucks SENDIAS Service](#)
- [Expert tips for health appointments - Council for Disabled Children](#)

How to influence paperwork about your child

- What is the purpose of the paperwork?
- Be as brief and clear as possible
- Include only relevant information
- Give examples including impact, frequency and scale of any difficulties
- Quote professional advice
- Quote your child
- Clearly state:
 - any questions you have
 - what you expect to be done
 - when you expect a response
- Try to avoid blaming individuals if possible
- Make sure you send it to the right person or team – email is best.

How to influence paperwork about your child

- SEN support plans
- EHC needs assessment
- Professional reports
- EHC plans
- Annual reviews



Section A – your child’s views and your views

All About “Me”

Section A: The views, interests and aspirations of the child and their parents or young person.

What’s important to me:

- My family
- Listening to music
- My dog
- Studying to the best of my ability
- Being honest

How best to support / communicate with me:

- Help with my social skills
- Routines in my educational setting so I know what is happening.
- Support to become independent.

What people like and admire about me:

- My commitment to a task or activity
- I am very reliable
- I am friendly and kind

Section A (continued): The views, interests and aspirations of the child and their parents or young person

How do I know who to contact?

- Special Educational Needs Coordinator at your child's mainstream school or class teacher at your child's special school.
- [SEND support services | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](http://buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
- [Special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND Local Offer\) | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](http://buckinghamshire.gov.uk) - simplified SEND information including relevant contact details
- [SEND and Inclusion | SchoolsWeb \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](http://buckscc.gov.uk)

What's reasonable to expect?

- Expect to be listened to and responded to.
- Expect respect for you, your child and your circumstances.
- Allow professionals at least 5 working days to respond to you.
- Expect help to be put in place within at least 3 weeks of it being agreed.
- Expect to be invited to a meeting about your child with SEND 3 times a year.

What to do if things go wrong

- **Complaints**
- **Appeals**
- [Making a complaint or challenging a decision | \(IPSEA\) Independent Provider of Special Education Advice](#)
- [Top tips for making a complaint - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)
-
- [Practical-tips-for-accessing-public-services.pdf \(cerebra.org.uk\)](#)

Who to contact if things go wrong

- **Who to contact if things go wrong**
- **Try to sort things out informally before making a complaint.**
- SENCO/ Headteacher
- Complaints process for setting, school or college

- Education, Health and Care Coordinator if your child has an EHC plan
- Contact area hub if necessary

- **Buckinghamshire – complaining about education**
- [Complain about our services | Buckinghamshire Council](#)
-
- If your concern is about the integrated SEND (iSEND) team and you are happy for it to be investigated and chased on your behalf instead of a complaint you could try contacting the SEND Resolutions team – please email sendresolutions@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
-
-
- **Buckinghamshire – complaining about children’s social care**
- This is the form for complaints about children’s social care: [Children and young people social care compliments, complaints and comments | Buckinghamshire Council](#) This link may help you to structure your complaint: [leap infographic a3.indd \(cerebra.org.uk\)](#)
-
- **Buckinghamshire – complaining about adult’s social care**
- [Adult social care compliments and complaints | Buckinghamshire Council](#)
-
- **Buckinghamshire – complaining about health**
- [Making a complaint about health or social care in Bucks — Healthwatch Bucks](#)
- If you need help making a complaint about an **NHS service** you can get support from The Advocacy People: <https://www.theadvocacypeople.org/nhs-complaints-advocacy>

What about helping with improving the system?

- Change only happens when people turn up
- Being a member of FACT Bucks – surveys; feedback
- Joining a Parent Dialogue Group
- Representing other families at a local strategic level
- Becoming a parent governor; joining a support Group

Useful links

- [Secret life of us](#) A campaign from Disabled Children's Partnership giving families with disabled children an opportunity to have their experiences heard

Bucks SENDIAS Service

- [Bucks SENDIAS | Buckinghamshire Council \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](https://buckscc.gov.uk)
- [Bucks SENDIAS Service Video](#)

Bucks SENDIAS Service Online Form

- [Bucks SENDIAS Contact Form](#)
- For enquiries from new and existing service users
- Sign up for our email updates

Bucks SENDIAS Service

Live Web Chat



If you require general advice from one of our advisers, we invite you to use our live web chat service that is accessible via our website

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/sendias

There will be one adviser available for each 2 hour session, every week (term time only):

- **Monday 13:00 – 15:00**
- **Friday 10:00 – 12:00**

To access the live chat, please click this button that appears on any of the Bucks SENDIAS web pages.



Please have any relevant supporting documentation in electronic format available to share via the chat.

Alternative contact options

If not possible to use the form, please contact us by email sendias@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

We do have a voicemail service 01296 383754 – this is not answered, you will need to leave a message.

We triage our enquiries- if you have not heard from us within 10 days of your query, please contact us again.

FACT Bucks

<https://www.factbucks.org.uk/>



Families And Carers Together
in Buckinghamshire

Home

About Us

Events

Information

Getting Involved

News & Newsletters

Links

Contact Us



We help children and young people with additional needs
and disabilities in Buckinghamshire.

LEARN MORE