Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN Impartiality Policy

1. Purpose
1.1 Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN is funded by Middlesbrough Council, but provided under contract by MAIN, an independent Charitable Company, to ensure a totally impartial and unbiased service. This Policy gives more details of how impartiality is ensured in practice.

1.2 Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or Disabilities, and their parents, will be given information, advice and support to enable them to understand options, make decisions, and participate in assessment and planning about education, health and care needs. Their rights of appeal, including available support for appeals, will be fully explained whenever appropriate. The information, advice and support will be provided impartially and will reflect current legislation, regulation and guidance in particular the SEN Code of Practice 2015.

2. Steering Group and Management
2.1 As part of the arrangements for ensuring impartiality and independence from the Local Authority, the Officer tasked to arrange the SENDIASS contract is a Manager who does not have responsibility for the Local Authority SEN Team or for any the services which are likely to be specified as provision in Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.

2.2 To further protect the impartiality of Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN, there is an IAS Steering Group including representatives from Schools, Child Development Centre, Social Care, Health, Parent-Carer Forum, and the Charitable and Voluntary sector.

3. Methodology and Communication
3.1 Where there are disagreements between parents, carers or young people and schools or other agencies, the preferred methodology of Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN is to facilitate direct communication between the parties, with the aim of fostering understanding and reaching agreement on ways of working together in partnership.

3.2 Where direct communication is proving difficult, Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN staff may agree with parents, carers or young people to act as an intermediary by relaying their perspective to schools, other agencies or the local authority. This action does not indicate bias in favour of the parent, nor does it imply that the views expressed are shared by Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN.

3.3 Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN may also agree to relay information and to communicate options to parents, carers or young people. Similarly, this action does not indicate bias in favour of the schools, other agencies or the local authority, nor does it imply that the IAS staff endorse the information or options being relayed.

3.4 The staff of Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN will act professionally at all times, conveying communication diplomatically and effectively, whilst discussing the situation and exploring any alternative options in an unbiased and impartial manner.

3.5 Parents, carers or young people are informed about options for making appeals where they are dissatisfied with the decisions or actions of the Local Authority or other relevant agencies, and are appropriately supported in making appeals regardless of implications for the Local Authority. Referrals to formal Disagreement resolution services are also supported.

3.6 Volunteers working with Middlesbrough SENDIASS at MAIN are trained about impartiality, and supervision is used to ensure that the principles set out in this policy are applied in practice.

v1.1 endorsed by IAS Steering Group 13th July 2016