

WIA&SS

Wandsworth
Information,
Advice &
Support Service



The local SENDIASS working in partnership with Children and Young People (aged 0-25) with SEND and their parents



ARM'S LENGTH POLICY

CONFIDENTIAL • IMPARTIAL • FREE

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



ARM'S LENGTH POLICY



■ Introduction

Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service (WIASS) provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to children and young* people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs or disability/s (SEND) and their parents.

*A young person in this case is defined as an individual over compulsory school age (16) and under the age of 25 years old.

■ Arm's Length from the Local Authority

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that an information, advice and support service should be impartial and provided at "arm's length" from the local authority and clinical commissioning groups (now referred to Integrated Care Boards (ICB)).

This is achieved by offering a confidential, impartial (neutral/ objective) service to you, your child or young person.

Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service (WIASS) is funded by Wandsworth Council (Local Authority and ICB) and is located within the Childrens Services department. WIASS is part of the National Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) Network.

ARM'S LENGTH POLICY

■ What is Working at Arm's Length?

A service is at arm's length when it is able to act impartially, with no influence or control from the local authority or Health services, in which it is based in.

We achieve the requirement to be arm's length by:

- Having a separate office base used only by WIASS staff and is located in a different building from other education and social services teams.
- All WIASS files are stored on a secure network and can **only** be accessed by WIASS staff.
- A confidential dedicated phone line for parents, children and young people, with a 24 hour answering machine.
- A dedicated confidential email facility.
- Having a referral systems to signpost you, your child or young person to voluntary sector organisations where we are unable to help.
- Attending legal and other training provided by external agencies, for example, Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA).

We are not involved in any decision-making processes for example, SEN support, Education, Health and Care(EHC) Needs Assessments or EHC Plans. Therefore we can be completely impartial (neutral/objective) in discussions with you, your child or young person.

Information given to you, your child or young person by WIASS is based on national SEND legislation (law) and guidance.



■ Identity

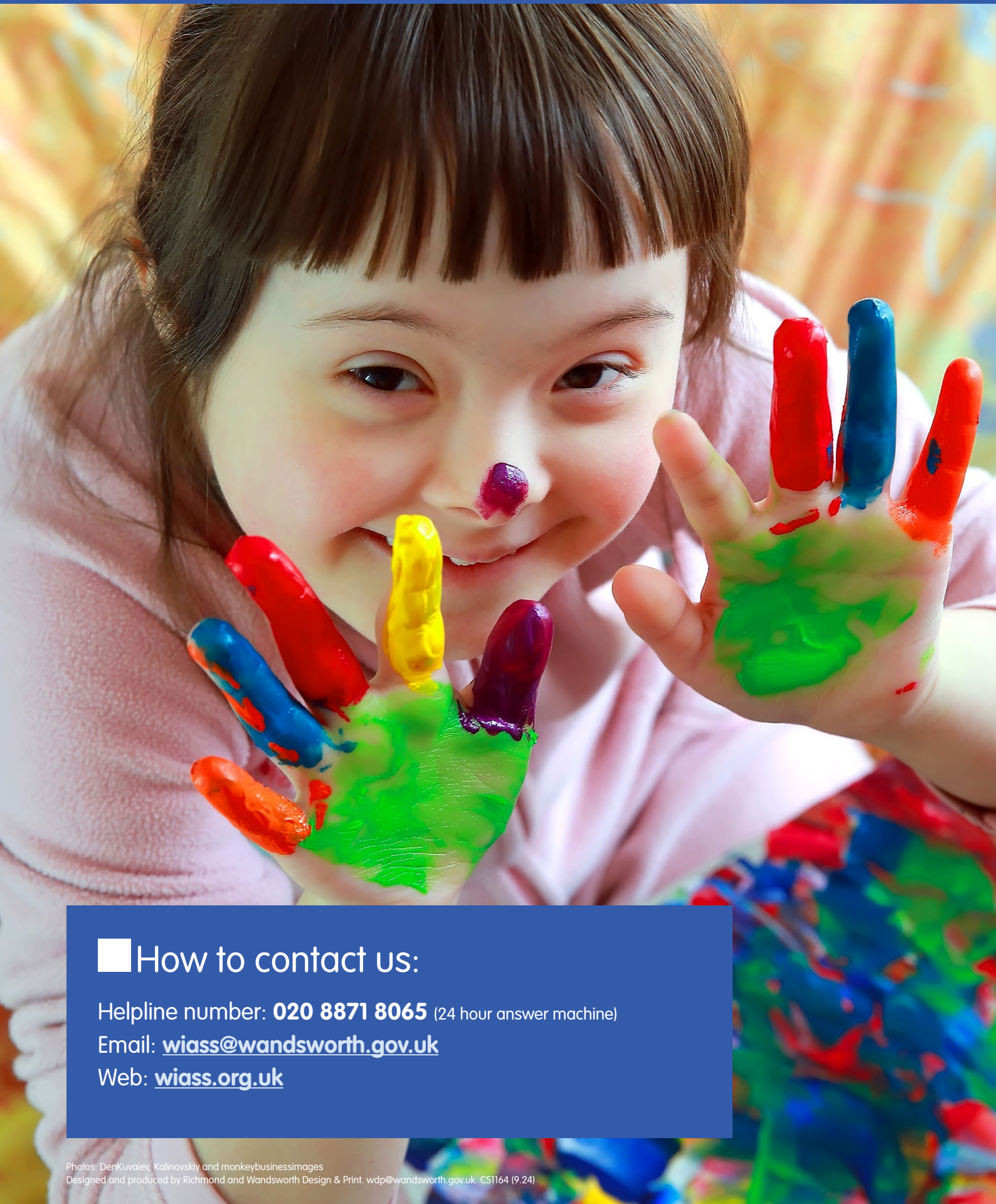
WIASS has its own distinct identity and logo which is used on all WIASS information sheets, publicity and the service website.

■ Ensuring the Effectiveness of our Arm's Length Policy

- All WIASS staff receive training on this policy.
- WIASS staff are trained in SEND law by external agencies.
- WIASS staff are clear that the service does not undertake local authority functions or take sides with the local authority, education settings, health services or any other agency.

This policy was last updated in August 2024.

ARM'S LENGTH POLICY



■ How to contact us:

Helpline number: **020 8871 8065** (24 hour answer machine)

Email: wiass@wandsworth.gov.uk

Web: wiass.org.uk