



## **Amaze Business Plan 2012-15**

### **Amaze – who we are and what we believe**

“Our vision is that all children with disabilities and special needs and their parents are able to flourish and thrive, as they are respected, included and supported in the wider community in which they live.”

“Amaze’s mission is to inform, support and empower parents of children with disabilities and special needs. We want parents’ voices to be heard and to build their confidence and resilience so they can support their children to lead happy and integrated lives, fulfilling their potential.”

### **Amaze’s values**

#### **a) Parents are the experts**

- We want to engage parent carers from all parts of the City and develop their voice to understand what they really need and how it should be delivered
- Parents should be engaged to find creative solutions for, and make decisions about, their child’s care
- Amaze is parent-led and responds to their needs

#### **b) Holistic approach to family’s needs**

- We try to consider the needs of the whole family when advising a parent (including the parents themselves)
- Amaze provides a link between parents, children, services and the wider community (knowledge exchange)
- Our services aim to simplify things for parents and provide a way through the confusing and difficult journey

#### **c) Developing Resilience**

- We build the confidence and skills of parents, so they are then better placed to build their child’s resilience
- We support our staff and volunteers to be resilient and ensure our work develops in a resilient way
- We strive for a funding base that is diverse and resilient

#### **d) Approachable and trust worthy**

- Accessible, quality services provided in friendly manner and delivered in utmost confidence
- We really care

## Amaze's financial position and forecast

After a very successful three years (2009-12) where Amaze turnover increased 48% from £333k to £493k (largely in part to the Aiming High programme) we anticipate the next three years to be tougher as public service cuts continue to hit. In addition, ART activity will be reducing in 2012 due to the ART Director's retirement so our turnover is expected to drop to £400k in 12/13 then drop further to £320k for 13-15.

We need to continue to invest in diversifying our income, raising as much unrestricted income as possible and support staff to prioritise their work to those families in most need as we simply won't have capacity to do it all.

This will be a period of consolidation yet we hope to be able to continue to deliver services at current levels. In addition, we are keen to engage groups of under-represented families e.g. living in more deprived neighbourhoods or from different faiths/cultures and provide services that meet their needs as well as better represent their views and needs across the City.

Internally, we need to debate where we can most effectively put our energy and resources and determine to what extent we limit our reach to services within Brighton and Hove and what we can influence on a regional and national basis.

## What Amaze wants to focus on over the next 3 years

### GOAL 1:

**Maintain current services and manage the increasing demand, by prioritising access to families most in need and those who have not accessed Amaze before.**

We will aim to continue offer our core services, at current levels, over the next 3 years. This will involve lobbying to protect our core grants and fundraising to fill the projected gaps in income to allow us to do this. However, as demand increases we will need to prioritise families most in need, or most at risk of falling into crisis.

In addition, we know there are many families in the City with a disabled child who don't currently use Amaze services so we want to engage with them and understand what they need from us and hopefully end up increasing the membership of the Compass and the PaCC.

Key Activities/Outputs	Key Outcomes
<p><b>Compass:</b> Currently 1500 children and young people with disability or special need with record (created or updated in last 2 years) – aim to increase by 3% per year.</p> <p>Estimated financial savings for families in city = £677,000.</p>	<p>Compass families receive information about events across the city which can provide opportunities for them to meet other families in similar situations to them, helping them to feel less isolated and more socially included.</p> <p>Increases the child's access to leisure and social activities thereby improving physical and mental health as well as social inclusion.</p> <p>Increases the family's disposable income by £670 per year (estimate).</p> <p>Provides respite time for the carers.</p>
<p><b>Helpline:</b> Currently 3,934 calls per year to the Helpline – a 7% increase on the previous year and an 86% increase over 5 years – aim to respond to 4,000 per year.</p>	<p>Parents report they are able to take action or feel differently about their situation following a helpline call because of the impartial information given and as advisers really understand the issues they face.</p>

	Parents get a holistic response from the helpline that increases their resilience by building their knowledge, confidence and sense of belonging.
<p><b><u>DLA:</u></b> Aim to assist 275 families to make DLA applications per year, bringing in extra £3m to the City in DLA/other passported benefits.</p>	<p>Extra income generated per family is £8-12k per annum which alleviates child poverty, fuel poverty and other risk factors such as family breakdown.</p> <p>Working with a volunteer can help parents better understand their child's needs and think about practical strategies that make life easier. They may help identify other issues e.g. problems at school or difficulties accessing leisure etc.</p>
<p><b><u>IPS:</u></b> Aim to support 125 families with education casework and advocacy.</p>	<p>This independent support helps alleviate tensions between parents and schools allowing communication to flow and parents to feel informed to make choices for their child.</p> <p>Overall parental confidence and satisfaction with their child's school placement increases.</p>
<p><b><u>Transition:</u></b> Provision of high quality, transition information for parents with teenagers – in variety of formats – website, factsheets, newsletter, handbook, 'get togethers', information briefings etc.</p>	<p>Parents of teens in transition come together to share experiences, information and support in a variety of ways - increasing social interactions, parental confidence and social inclusion.</p> <p>Parents' resilience through their teenagers' transition to adulthood is bolstered.</p>
<p><b><u>Workshops/training:</u></b> Provision of 3 Insider Guide courses, 3 Triple P courses, 3 Looking After You courses plus additional on off workshops and events.</p>	<p>Parents are equipped with extra skills and knowledge that support them in parenting their children and getting the best out of life for their children and themselves.</p> <p>Parents have opportunities to learn alongside and share experiences with other parents, reducing isolation and stress, and leading to greater resilience.</p>
<p><b><u>Information/Publications:</u></b> Continue to develop website – aim to get 35,000 visits to Amaze website per year.</p> <p>Distribute 11,000 copies of Out of Amaze newsletter.</p> <p>Distribute 500 Through the Maze and Next Maze handbooks.</p>	<p>Parents are better informed and therefore can take up services and opportunities for themselves and their children. Better informed parents are more confident, more able and more resilient.</p> <p>Parents get timely information relevant to their family (e-bulletin, Out Of Amaze newsletter, website "news and events") and so don't miss out on opportunities and events; this enhances the family's social inclusion and helps them get the best out of local services.</p> <p>Parent-friendly publications and information written from the parent perspective give</p>

	parents validation of their experience and a sense of belonging.
--	--

## GOAL 2:

### Seek funding to develop some new services

Amaze will consider the implications of the SEN Green Paper and SEN pathfinder including what role(s) we could have in supporting families with their single Education, Health and Care Plans and those opting for an individual budget.

We will develop the Carers Card offers and deliver the new Compass Card Activities project.

Key Activities/Outputs	Key Outcomes
<p><b><u>Supporting families with individual budgets and single plans:</u></b> Aim to provide new service during SEN pathfinder</p>	Parents choosing to trial new assessment, planning and budgeting processes will feel well and independently supported by Amaze.
<p><b><u>Compass Activities:</u></b> Aim to offer 6 new activities per year.</p>	<p>Increases the child's access to leisure and social activities – improves physical and mental health of child and increases social inclusion.</p> <p>Provides respite time for the parents/carers.</p>
<p><b><u>Carers Card:</u></b> Aim to increase menu of offers by 3 each year.</p>	<p>Increases the parent/carers' access to leisure and social activities – improves physical and mental health of carer and increases social inclusion.</p> <p>Positive impact on disposable income of family.</p>

## GOAL 3:

### Support city-wide engagement of parent carers. Amplify the voice of parent carers with respect to their own child's care as well as the development of services and policy within Amaze, across the city and nationally.

Amaze will ensure parents are central to decision making about their child's care by lobbying politicians and service providers and consulting with them about the development of services, using evidence collected from specific cases as well as aggregated data from the Compass database.

We will continue to support the membership of the Parent Carer Council, helping to engage a wide-cross section of families and feedback to them what impact their engagement is having.

Using the evidence we collect on the ground in Brighton and Hove we can develop best practice which feeds into our training and research programmes.

Key Activities/Outputs	Key Outcomes
<p><b><u>Parent Participation:</u></b> Current membership 180 plus 7 partner organisations – aim to increase by 5% each year.</p>	<p>Increased parental influence over how decisions are made within services.</p> <p>Communication with parents about service developments, they have helped to change, increases parental satisfaction with services their children receive.</p>
<p><b><u>Strategic Representation:</u></b> Amaze and PaCC reps attend 15 key strategic/decision making boards and</p>	Raises the profile of children with disabilities and their needs and those of their carers.

subgroups across City.	
------------------------	--

**GOAL 4:**

**Diversify our funding, focus on raising unrestricted income and creating more sustainable income streams**

Having recruited a fundraiser 3 years ago, Amaze’s finances are more diverse than ever before. However, our core services are still too heavily reliant on our core grant from the local authority. During the course of this plan we want to develop new areas of income over which we have more control.

We will continue to build on our annual calendar of events e.g. The Big Cheer and Brighton Marathon.

We will evaluate each of our core services so we can properly demonstrate the impact of the work we are doing. That way we can see where we are doing well and where we need to improve and also better communicate our impact to our funders.

<b>Key Activities/Outputs</b>	<b>Key Outcomes</b>
<b>Fundraising:</b> Aim to bring in £60k unrestricted income per year.	Diversifies Amaze’s income so less reliant on small number of statutory sector funders.  More local residents recognise the ‘Amaze’ brand and choose to raise money and support our cause.
<b>Finance:</b> Complete annual audit and accounts and comply with all relevant legal and quality frameworks and charity commission guidance.	Amaze is a resilient organisation which utilises public funds appropriately, offering value for money, quality services.

**GOAL 5:**

**Support and develop our staff and volunteers to maximise their potential, develop their expertise and skills and build their resilience.**

Amaze has a team of highly dedicated staff and volunteers. We want to continue to build their resilience, skills and confidence to ensure maximum job satisfaction and to empower them to develop their area of work.

We want to look at how we can support more volunteers to deliver more direct services to parent carers, wherever possible offering parent carers a route back to work by volunteering with Amaze.

<b>Key Activities/Outputs</b>	<b>Key Outcomes</b>
<b>Staff/volunteers:</b> Regular supervisions, appraisals and team building days.	Good staff and volunteers feel valued, well managed and supported and select to stay at Amaze.