

Our funders

We'd like to thank all the agencies, organisations and individuals who helped to fund us in 2015/2016.

Statutory funders

Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group, Department for Education, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council.

Grants and other funders

Albert Hunt Trust, Bridging Fund Charitable Trust, Brighton & Hove Community Works, Charlotte Marshall Charitable Trust, Community Foundation for Surrey, Doris Pacey Charitable Foundation, Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, Heathwatch Brighton & Hove, Henry Smith Trust, Ian Askew Charitable Trust, J C Robinson Trust No 4, Kathleen Laurence Trust, National Children's Bureau, Same Sky, Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, Sobell Foundation, Sport England, Tyldesley Charitable Trust, University of Brighton CUPP, Woodroffe Benton Foundation.

Donations & Events

Brighton and Hove City Athletics Club, Ladies' Section of East Brighton Golf Club, Renaissance Legal, Stiles Harold Williams, Wellesley Charitable Foundation.

Individuals

Thank you to all our wonderful Amaze runners, fundraisers and sponsored event participants.

Get in touch:

Call us: 01273 772289 (Helpline)

Email us: info@amazebrighton.org.uk

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Tweet us: @AmazeBrighton

Youtube: Search "Amaze Brighton"

Website: www.amazebrighton.org.uk



Amaze, Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG
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A huge thanks

Amaze could not do the work we do without our brilliant staff and we thank them for their time, expertise and ongoing commitment. We'd also like to say a huge thank you to all our many varied project and office volunteers who give their time and expertise for free to help us reach more families with disabled children.

Our patrons

Julia Donaldson, Annabel Giles, Henry Normal and Angela Pell and our good friends Lindsay Hughes and Joe Wilkinson.

Our trustees

Hugh Clench (Chair), Ian Gillett (Treasurer), Karen Smith, Sally Howell, Debby Norris, Fungi Woolnough-Murau, Ian Elwick, Siobhan Cox and Ray Knight.

PaCC steering group members /parent representatives

Amanda Mortensen, Helen Arnold-Jenkins, Jade Duffill, Lisa Russell, Marian Tipler, Martin Jones, Philippa Hodge and Sally Howell.

Photographer Dawid Pietraszewski and **Scope**.

Impact Report 2016



"Amaze offers such fabulous support and is a real asset to families in this area. We are all so lucky to have you."

How Amaze improves the lives of families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Who is Amaze?

Amaze is a Sussex-based charity that gives information, advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We also support young people with SEND up to 25.

Most of our services are for families in Brighton and Hove but we offer Independent Support services to both parent carers and young people up to 25 in West Sussex and since July'16 this has extended to East Sussex. In April 2016 we also extended the Compass scheme into West Sussex.

The problem we address

Children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs and their families often:

- Live in poverty, in overcrowded housing or housing not suitable for their needs
- Are socially isolated from their peers
- Have poorer educational outcomes or employment/training opportunities
- Are more likely to live with a single parent
- Have siblings who are overlooked and need support
- Have parents who suffer from poor physical and mental health
- Struggle to find out what's out there to help
- Have more than one child with additional needs or a



Our vision

We want to see a world where families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities feel valued, included in their community and supported to thrive.

What we do

We give young people with SEND, or their families, the information they need to make the best choices for their lives and give them direct support where and when they need it most. We do this via the following services:

- Helpline.** Run by trained advisers our helpline is the gateway to all our services or just someone to talk to when things are tough.
- One to one support.** Ongoing casework with parents and young people on education, health, social care and transition to adulthood issues.
- Publications and online resources.** Handbooks, factsheets, newsletters, e-bulletins, online content and websites providing information about SEND issues, services and developments.
- Courses and workshops.** On many aspects of caring for a disabled child, practical strategies for improving resilience and wellbeing and building peer support networks.
- DLA and PIP.** Our project provides practical and emotional support in claiming Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments through a volunteer team.
- Compass Database and Card.** Amaze manages the Brighton and Hove and West Sussex registers of disabled children aged 0-25, which informs service planning. Registered children get a Compass Card with discounts and free offers at a huge range of leisure facilities.
- Independent Support with EHC Plans.** Now offered across Brighton and Hove, West Sussex and East Sussex, providing young people and parent carers support while they go through the process of getting an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Community outreach coffee mornings.** In Moulsecoomb, Hangleton & Knoll and Whitehawk to reach more isolated families.
- Hosting the Parent Carers' Council (PaCC).** The local forum for parent carers of disabled children in Brighton and Hove, which ensures that parent's voices are heard by service managers and commissioners
- Self-advocacy group for young people.** Amaze co-facilitates a self-advocacy group for young people with learning disabilities aged 16-25.
- Sibling support group.** Giving siblings the opportunity to come together, share their experiences, build their confidence and have some fun.

Financial Summary

For the year ended 31 March 2016 (including income and expenditure account)

	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds 2016 (£)	Total Funds 2015 (£)
Income and Endowments From				
Donations and Legacies	58,907	58,547	117,454	135,519
Investment Income	339		339	354
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities				
Grants	335,158		335,158	400,541
Services	344,471		344,471	240,804
Total incoming resources	738,875	58,547	797,422	777,218
Resources expended				
Raising Funds	53,562		53,562	47,084
Charitable Activities	705,985	50,324	756,309	611,306
Total resources expended	759,547	50,324	809,871	658,390
Net incoming/(outgoing)				
Resources for the period	(20,672)	8,223	(12,449)	118,828
Accumulated funds at 31 March 2015	402,707	22,061	424,768	305,940
Accumulated funds at 31 March 2016	382,035	30,284	412,319	424,768

Our Trustees believe it is important to hold enough financial reserves to ensure an ordered and proper closing of Amaze if this was ever necessary. The reserves cover three months operating costs, any redundancy payments , support to employees in finding alternative employment and the termination of service contracts.



“Having your support has been invaluable; your knowledge of the whole process hugely helped us navigate our way through it and understand what was expected of us, who would be involved at different stages etc. We feel so lucky to have had Amaze on hand to provide such a wonderful level of support during a pretty stressful time for our family.”

What help from Amaze means

We gave 699 families face to face support last year. Most of these first make contact via our helpline. They speak to an adviser and if they need more ongoing specialist support then they might be referred on to one

of our case workers for help with things like school, EHC Plans, benefits, getting a break or preparing for adulthood. The personal story below shows just how much of a difference this can make to a family.

Case study - Growing up with Amaze

Sam first got in touch when her son Chris was having difficulties at primary school and was excluded by other children who saw him as different. Sam is a parent who likes to sort things out for herself, but she realised the value of getting advice and support with the confusing world of SEND. An advisor from the Helpline talked things through and helped her work out what to do next.

Over the years Sam dipped in and out of support from Amaze.

"It has been very comforting to know that Amaze have been there for families like us, offering support and expert advice."

We advised about getting a Statement of SEN and choosing a secondary school. We suggested that Chris could be entitled to Disability Living Allowance and helped her claim.

"The help we have received from Amaze in respect of disability allowance has been excellent."

They were able to use the Compass Card to involve him in more activities. We were there with advice when Sam needed to decide if Chris should move to a full-time place at a specialist school for children with additional needs. Sam has come to Amaze workshops and courses which provide useful information but also a chance to meet other parent carers.

As Chris has grown up, he has started to use Amaze for himself. He was a founder member of our self-advocacy group for young people with SEND. He was involved in his own DLA claim when he was 16 and had advice alongside his mum about support at college and getting an Education Health and Care Plan. Sam explains what Amaze has meant for Chris:

The Power Group has been wonderful for Chris and has given him great confidence in himself as well as learning empathy for others with needs of some kind.

Amaze have helped open a number of doors for Chris including Street Dance Classes with PJ which have led to him developing his own dance style and recently winning the talent contest with the National Citizen scheme – a scheme for young people for which Amaze held an information evening. Chris has also taken up the opportunity to learn Kayaking, an art class and has participated in the Ofsted visit which took place earlier this year representing other young people with SEND."

It has been a privilege for Amaze to walk alongside Chris and Sam on their SEND journey, sometimes smoothing the path and sometimes helping open new doors for them.

We'll give Sam the last word: *"I think the work of Amaze offering support and guidance, expert help and workshops for parents of children and young people with special needs is outstanding."*



What is distinctive about us

We believe that children and young people with SEND and their parents are the experts in their own or their child's care and we put their views and experience at the heart of everything we do. We employ a young person intern and over half of Amaze's 37 staff are parent carers themselves. Of the 50 volunteers and Trustees who support our work, about half have direct experience of caring for a disabled child. And many of these parent carer volunteers or board members move into paid work with us.

Since 2008, Amaze has supported the Parent Carers' Council (PaCC), the local forum for parent carers of disabled children who work together to help improve services and support in Brighton and Hove.

Welcome from Rachel & Hugh

Families with disabled children tell us that life is complex and they can feel like they're in a 'maze' as they try to find out about their child's disability and the support available for them. Young people with SEND tell us they can feel isolated, experience bullying and want more accessible information about their mental health and wellbeing, inclusive activities and opportunities for making friendships and healthy relationships. Amaze is here to help them feel **more informed, well supported and more able to deal with issues** arising from their additional need or disability and to have a better **sense of being included** and that their **voices are heard** in their community.

It's been another busy year as we have extended services across **West Sussex** and more recently **East Sussex** and as we build up our **direct work with disabled young people**. We have also had to reapply for all our core statutory contracts but we are delighted to have retained all of these, shoring up our finances for another year. But competition for funding and reducing public spending means that we need to continue to diversify and innovate in our fundraising.

We are immensely grateful to all our funders and our committed team of staff, volunteers, trustees and patrons who work with such dedication and flexibility so that Amaze can continue to support so many families who report having still to 'fight' for services and are struggling to cope.



Launching the Compass West Sussex in April 2016

"Over the years I have turned to Amaze for your invaluable service and your help and kindness has made and continues to make a big difference to our lives. Thank you."



Amaze CEO, Rachel Travers and Chair of Trustees, Hugh Clench

Our work and its impact 2015-16

Parent carers were **more informed** about their child's additional needs and the support and services available to them

1,927 children and young people aged 0-25 now on the Compass Brighton and Hove Register (6% increase on the year)

2,100 visitors per month to the Amaze website

3,587 incoming calls and messages received by the Helpline



53% of helpline callers reported that their knowledge of local services had increased by the end of the call

“Just wanted to say thank you SO much for the chat the other day. Your kind voice at the end of the phone was just what I needed to hear...and guess what he has been accepted today to attend Brighton University to study Photography...the child who the specialist doctor said ‘don’t expect much of him academically!’”

Parent carers felt **well supported** in relation to their child's additional needs

297 parent carers and young people received info, advice and support (IAS) via ongoing casework in Brighton and Hove

429 parent carers and young people received casework support from the Independent Supporter (IS) Services in Brighton and Hove and West Sussex

301 families helped by DLA service to make Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment claims



Parent carers felt **more able to deal with any issues** that arose from their child’s additional needs

276 parent carers attended Amaze workshops and courses

21 coffee mornings held by our Community Outreach Project attended by 137 parent carers

“The DLA Project should be considered by commissioners as a highly effective mental health intervention” University of Brighton independent evaluation report

“I’d like to thank Debbie who without her I would not been able to achieve the help my son Liam is now getting. She has been amazing not just her help and support, but a shoulder to lean on and I really needed



We helped more families to have a **sense of being included, understood or connected** to others in a similar situation and to their wider community



“The course was outstanding and I feel I learnt so much about the education system and resilience and so much more about myself. Maybe most importantly I learnt about other parents experiences and it was a stark reminder that when you meet someone for the first time in whatever capacity that is you really have no idea about what they go through in their personal life or the reasons why someone might not be attentive to your every whim when you deem that they should be.”

69 professionals received SEND training from Amaze staff

19 siblings supported in pilot sibling support groups

15,774 copies of our newsletter were distributed

We made sure that the **voice of parent carers and young people was heard** and their views were taken into account on issues relating to their family’s needs

286 members in the Parent Carers’ Council (PaCC)

30+ strategic boards, groups or forums attended by Amaze staff or PaCC representatives



130 people attended PaCC events over the year

9 members in the young people’s advocacy group, co-run by Amaze with Speak Out