



Parent Partnership Service – Refresh Review

1. Purpose of this review paper

This review has three aims:

- a) Refresh our shared understanding of the Parent Partnership Service (PPS) in Brighton and Hove
- b) Give an update about how the PPS is currently performing
- c) Enable discussion about what is wanted from the PPS for the future, including a first look at the shift to the Information, Advice and Support (IAS) service outlined in the Children and Families Bill and draft Code of Practice

2. Background:

Amaze has held the Parent Partnership Service (PPS) contract for Brighton and Hove since the unitary authority was established in 1997. The foundation of Amaze as a parent-led charity serving parent carers in Brighton and Hove was closely inter-connected with the wish of the LA to place their PPS in the voluntary sector to demonstrate its independence and impartiality, whilst maintaining strong partnership with LA services. The aim was to promote good practice and offer value for money, whilst giving scope for the development of more holistic “one-stop” information and advice for parents alongside the statutory obligation for PPS. Children’s social care and health proved willing to support the wider information and advice role from the start – innovative at the time and something other LAs might now have to follow suit if Code of Practice’s notion of IAS is carried forward.

Over the years the main SLA with BHCC has developed along these lines e.g. the children’s disability register contracted out to Amaze as the basis for The Compass; agreement to fund a transition worker jointly between SEN, children’s and adult social care. Alongside the core contract Amaze has been commissioned by BHCC, health and others to carry out various more short-term projects. It has developed its engagement/parent participation role, most recently by hosting PaCC (the parent carer forum for the city). We have also been successful at attracting other (non-statutory) grant and trust funding to boost council investment, meaning we can offer more support for local families.

This quote from a grandparent carer illustrates the impact of this holistic approach.

‘My thanks for the prompt home visit and all the guidance received regarding the proposed and now in place statement for my grandson that I care for. I was also made aware of DLA that I didn’t know I could apply for, and now do. Also the many Amaze emails offering other events and activities available along with the Compass Card offers.’ Parent responding to IPS user survey 2013

Overall it is clear that the original intention to use the PPS contract to leverage better help for families of children with SEND in the city has proved successful. Parents have confidence in the independence of the service but close and cooperative working with statutory agencies and specifically SEN services and schools has been key. Amaze’s commitment to offer an excellent PPS is undiminished. However it is arguable that the relative size and significance of the PPS within this overall picture has reduced. An illustration of this trend is that for the first decade of Amaze’s existence the Head of SEN was a non-trustee member of the Amaze Board of Trustees, whereas in recent years the review of the (PPS included) holistic contract has been led by the Integrated Children’s Disability Team.

It is therefore healthy for Amaze and the LA to look at how the PPS operates and to what extent it meets both the national expectations of a quality PPS and the current requirements of Brighton and Hove. Given that it is many years since we have reviewed the PPS together, we have written quite

a comprehensive report which we hope can facilitate a partnership review and an agreed, updated and renewed contract.

3. Scope of the PPS in the existing contract and national guidance

Amaze has had the same current contract and service specification since Apr'2009. The current contract value for the PPS element is £58,783 p.a. broken down as:

- Parent Partnership Service - £50,700 (this includes a contribution towards the addition to the SLA of an evening helpline once a week in term time)
- Transition Worker - contribution from LEA £8,083 (this goes towards Sue Winter's transition development role rather than the helpline/IPS service directly, but supports the PPS function in terms of transitions advice in the Through the Next Maze handbook, support to parents and schools to follow good practice with regards person centred transition planning etc.)

The service specification for the PPS includes in summary:

- a helpline (30%)
- an IPS service (100%)
- information/publications (Through the Maze, newsletter, factsheets etc) (50%)
- workshops and training for parents and professionals;
- contributing the parent perspective and parent feedback to service and policy development.

The PPS budget above contributes to each of these service budgets by the % marked in brackets. The current budget doesn't currently stretch to the final two elements. It must be noted that elements of this specification have always depended on the PPS being part of a wider contract i.e. a five session a week helpline relies on funding from social care and health for parent support alongside the contribution from the PPS budget.

There has been no revision of content or value since 2009. In real terms, with no cost of living increases, there has effectively been an 18% reduction in the contract value during this period. Contract review meetings have recognised that Amaze has worked hard to maintain key elements of the service as set out in the service specification within the constraints of a frozen budget and rising costs. A degree of prioritisation has been needed and within the PPS the focus has been on maintaining parent's access to information, advice and support, reflecting what the 2001 SEN Code of Practice sets out as the core aim of a PPS:

2:19 The aim of parent partnership services is to ensure parents of children with additional needs – including the very young – have access to information, advice and guidance in relation to the special educational needs of their children so they can make appropriate, informed decisions.

Nevertheless Amaze has continued to deliver a service that meets all aspects of the minimum standards for PPS set out in the Code, including a degree of work with schools, LA staff and other agencies on good communication and positive relationships with parents. In 2007 the then DCFS, (now the DfE) expanded on the minimum standards with a set of exemplifications, revised in 2010 against which a PPS may be rated as Non-Compliant, Good Practice or Best Practice. Of the 34 elements, Amaze has no areas of Non-Compliance, is at Good Practice for nine and Best Practice in 25.

4. Current service design/offer:

Brighton and Hove are providing parents with a good practice PPS, through their outsourcing arrangement with Amaze. We understand from families that the independence from the Local Authority is valued and it is interesting that the draft version of the new Code of Practice advocates this model of CVS delivery. However sitting the PPS within Amaze offers a standard of service to parents that goes beyond the PPS exemplifications because it gives parents a wider package of information and support, which promotes good outcomes for children and families.

It means Amaze covers the age range 0 to 19 and offers support that encompasses parents of children with BESD, health needs including mental health and many children that are looked after or adopted. Amaze's other services such as help with disability benefits and the Compass Card encourage strong community awareness of Amaze and lead to referrals from a wide range of practitioners and services. We also believe that the breadth of the Amaze offer is also a reason for Amaze's good reach in the more economically deprived areas of the city and amongst BME parents, unlike some PPS who find it is the better resourced parents who are more likely to seek out the service.

i. Reaching the PPS

Parents are informed about Amaze as the PPS in LA letters and documents linked to the Statementing process and LA casework officers actively ensure parents are aware of the service. Some parents contact us as a result, but most families hear about Amaze much earlier in their journey from other parents, health visitors, pre-school workers, teachers, social workers, Presens, Seaside View, CAMHS, Job Centre staff, other voluntary organisations etc.

'From first contact all Amaze staff were interested, supportive and gave me hope that there could be a positive outcome to my problem.' Parent responding to IPS user survey 2013

A new parent will typically begin by calling the Amaze helpline either with a specific enquiry or because they have been told Amaze is a good contact for all parents of children with additional needs. The helpline aims to offer parents a empathetic response along with holistic information specific to their needs covering a range of topics likely to include education but also health, social care (respite and needs of the carer), inclusive leisure, parent groups, parenting and behaviour. The helpline adviser will check on potential eligibility for DLA (disability living allowance) and The Compass. If appropriate they will offer the parents individual support to take these up. The adviser will look at their wider information needs, may offer a copy of Through the Maze (or Next Maze), sign the parent up for the newsletter and point them to the website and factsheets. These publications include impartial but parent-friendly information on SEN and local education services.

As a SEND Pathfinder, BHCC has had to develop a Local Offer already and this will further extend the range of information available for parents. It is recognised that many parents will need support to make use of the LO which is web-based. We feel it is inevitable and appropriate that the Amaze helpline will have a central role in offering this support in future and we would like to discuss this additional role with the Council.

ii. PPS individual support

The service aims for minimum intervention if a parent is able to self-support with access to the right information and basic advice. Where education is identified as a key issue in a first or subsequent helpline call, impartial PPS advice from the helpline might include explaining SEN processes, the child's rights, local policy and procedures. The adviser may help a parent think through what to raise in a meeting with the school or help them understand what would be a reasonable expectation about the level of support for their child's needs. But where parents are identified as needing individual follow up in relation to SEN support for the child, communication with the school, the statutory assessment process, school placement, exclusions, attendance or bullying, the parent carer will be referred to the IPS Scheme Manager (Janet) for a more in depth IPS service. This could be because of the complexity of the issue or because of the parent's needs and circumstances.

We tailor the support offered to maximise our impact within the limited resources of the service i.e. 14 hours of Janet's time. Judicious use is made of phone, email and text by Janet, as well as deploying the small team of trained volunteer IPSs (independent parental supporters) that she manages and a social work student on placement for part of each year. The current Code of Practice directs that PPS should endeavour to provide IPSs for parents who want one. Recruiting, training and supervising a team of volunteers is a significant task in itself and some cases are too complex or sensitive to be given to a volunteer so this can lead to pressure on the service. Parents of 15 year olds and above may be offered help from the Preparing for Adulthood support service which is managed by the Transition Development Worker but funded until the end of March'14 from a non-statutory funder at present after which is vulnerable.

Support from Janet or a volunteer can include a visit to talk through the parent's concerns and identifying desired outcomes, support at school meetings (including TAF meetings in some cases), follow up phone calls and or text messages/emails. Parents may be helped to understand paperwork or to contribute their own views in writing. They may be assisted to manage their own communication with school or LA more appropriately.

'I continually faced large meetings of professionals due to my three adoptive children's complex needs. Despite being prepared and a generally confident person I really needed the calm support and knowledge as I didn't appreciate the politics that were often behind the situation.' Parent responding to IPS user survey 2013

iii. Partnership approach to casework

The PPS offers an 'Early Help' approach in working with families to improve communication and resolve issues within the existing placement wherever possible. The IPSs and Janet aim to work in partnership with BHCC or school colleagues based on a shared focus on good outcomes for each individual child. This involves developing constructive relationships with individual SENCOs and school pastoral support leads, as well as CWOs and other key LA personnel. At times it is part of the PPS role to help a parent challenge the school or LA but the aim is to handle this as an informal part of the disagreement resolution process. Thus the role should encompass both explaining the parent's perspective to school or LA and the school or LA position to the parent and looking for ways forward. We find that most schools have grown to trust the service and welcome our involvement to 'oil the wheels of communication' in trickier cases or support their more vulnerable parents. We also believe that the LA casework team value the contribution made by Janet and the IPS service but we would like to seek their feedback more formally as part of this review.

'I don't know what I would have done without Amaze. My son is now happy at mainstream school and receiving all the support he requires.' Parent responding to IPS user survey 2013

iv. Appeals

In some cases parent will seek help in more formally challenging decisions made by the school or LA, making use of complaints and appeals processes including the SEN Tribunal. Amaze as a PPS will make sure parents are able to make informed choices by being clear about their rights. Amaze can support parents to prepare for appeals, but in the case of appeals to Tribunal we will actively signpost to legal help e.g. from national organisations or through legal aid. We will continue to offer background support but we do not represent parents at Tribunal, although the DfE exemplifications suggest it is best practice for a PPS to offer support before, during and after appeals.

v. Wider PPS role

The Code of Practice suggests that the individual information, advice and support work of a PPS should be actively supplemented by wider or more strategic work and Amaze endeavours to do as much of this as capacity allows. Amaze represents the parent perspective and brings parent feedback to various strategic groups and partnerships, mostly now through the work of PaCC which has some separate funding (mainly from the CCG, but also some from the Council).

However this may be seen as having less of a partnership style than a more traditional PPS. Amaze is keen to discuss how to distinguish the differing roles of PaCC and the PPS in future and bring a wide parent perspective to the table through both. Janet and Ros (Operations Director) also aim to meet termly with the Head of SEN to discuss key operational themes/policy and problem solve jointly.

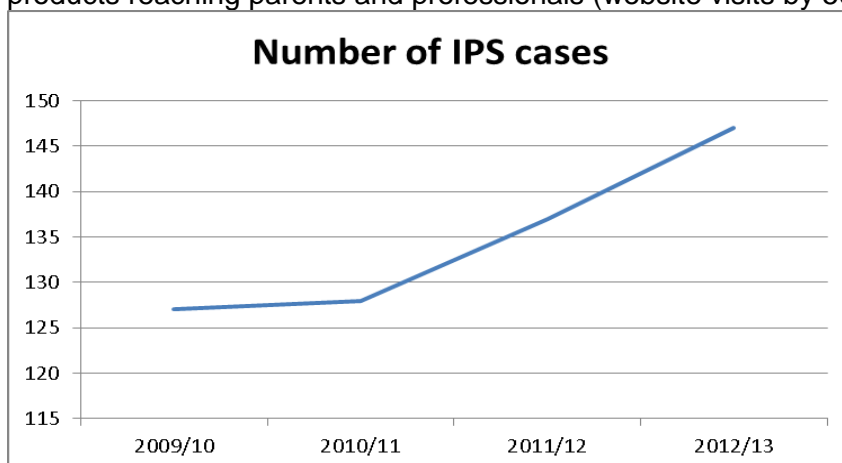
Janet or Ros as Operations Director normally contribute to the induction training for SENCOs. We can and do offer other training for school staff on request, but we find this element is being squeezed from limited capacity. We also offer workshops and training for parents. This includes the annual information fair (although we currently have to seek additional funding for this), transition planning information sessions and occasional workshops on themes such as bullying or making the most of meetings.

Amaze seeks through its publications and events to keep parents informed about developments in the LA and areas where the LA would welcome parent feedback. For example, over the past couple of years the new SEN Strategy and the SEND Pathfinder have been covered extensively in the newsletter. We profile BHCC staff and services, for example in the "Day in the Life" feature and see these opportunities to focus on local good practice as part of our partnership approach.

5. Current outputs, outcomes and impact

We hope BHCC will agree that Amaze is offering excellent value for money currently especially when compared to the PPS of our statistical neighbours. We have attached statistical neighbour charts from the annual NPPN benchmarking exercise as an appendix, but in summary of these ten LAs, Amaze has the second lowest level of funding per head of population 0 to 19 but the fourth highest number of parent service users. We have the highest number of trained IPS volunteers and the highest proportion of users relative to paid PPS staff hours. This is achieved partly by efficient working, partly by synergies achieved with other Amaze activities. We are particularly fortunate in having an IPS Scheme Manager who is willing to work her part time hours flexibly across the week.

Despite a real reduction in the budget for delivering PPS, over the past 4 years the service has managed to increase the number of parents supported with an IPS by 16%; increase the number of helpline calls classified as an education enquiry by 73%; increase the number of information products reaching parents and professionals (website visits by 56%; newsletter circulated by 26%).



This is not at the expense of quality. As outlined above Amaze is offering best practice against most of the standards for PPS and at least good practice throughout. Year on year our annual stats show that parents who use the IPS live predominantly in the areas of the city with higher numbers of children and/or greater social deprivation. Parent users have children across the age range, but the highest percentage have a school age child. The children's needs cover the spectrum of SEN, but parents of children with challenging behaviour amongst their needs are particularly likely to use the IPS service.

We believe our PPS delivers significant outcomes for parents and children. We are developing our ability to identify and report on outcomes. As part of this process we seek feedback from users. The most recent survey in December 2013 asked parents what issues they presented with and if support from the IPS service had helped them change their child's situation/achieve other outcomes.

Issue	% of parents reporting this issue	Outcomes achieved for these parents after receiving IPS support
Admissions/school choice	44%	53% of parents have changed their child's placement 87% of parents feel better informed about education services 80% of parents feel more confident about sorting out their child's education needs
Attendance	15%	60% of parents report that their child's attendance has improved 80% of parents feel that their child is better supported at school

		<p>100% of parents feel better informed about education services</p> <p>80% of parents feel more hopeful about their child's opportunities at school</p>
Bullying	15%	<p>80% of parents report that bullying has reduced</p> <p>80% of parents feel more confident about sorting out their child's education needs</p> <p>80% of parents feel more able to work together with their child's school</p>
Communication with preschool, school or college	29%	<p>50% of parents feel that communication with their child's school has improved</p> <p>90% of parents feel better informed about education services</p> <p>80% of parents feel more confident about sorting out their child's education needs</p>
Complaints and appeals	38%	<p>85% of parents feel better informed about education services</p> <p>77% of parents feel more confident about sorting out their child's education needs</p>
Exclusion (formal & informal)	24%	<p>50% of parents report that their child's exclusions have reduced</p> <p>75% of parents report better communication between home and school</p> <p>88% of parents feel more about to work together with their child's school</p> <p>75% of parents feel more hopeful about their child's opportunities at school</p>
Statutory Assessment	44%	<p>60% of parents report that their child is better supported at school</p> <p>53% of parents report that their child now has a statement of SENs</p> <p>87% of parents feel better informed about education services</p> <p>87% of parents feel more confident about sorting out their child's education needs</p>
Statement management	44%	<p>87% of parents report that their child's statement of SENs has been finalised or amended</p>
Support at preschool, school or college	24%	<p>75% of parents report that their child is better supported at school</p> <p>75% of parents report better communication between home and school</p> <p>100% of parents feel more confident about sorting out their child's education needs</p> <p>75% of parents feel more able to work together with their child's school</p>
Transport	15%	<p>80% of parents say they now know where to access the information they need</p> <p>100% of parents feel better informed about education services</p>
Transition from primary to	24%	<p>75% of parents feel better informed about education services</p>

secondary school		63% of parents feel more able to work together with their child's school
Transition to college or adult services	9%*	67% of parents feel better informed about education services 67% of parents feel more confident about sorting out their child's education needs 67% of parents feel more hopeful about their child's opportunities at college

*If a parent carer accessing the IPS service was to report that transition to adult services was an issue, they might then be offered support from a Preparing for Adulthood volunteer, rather than an IPS volunteer, which might help to explain this low figure. We know from anecdotal evidence that the transition to adult services can be a huge issue for families. (Please note, the

We also know that parents are supported to access other (non-education) services for their child and themselves, and their sense of isolation is reduced. Amaze would be pleased to discuss whether these are the range of outcomes that BHCC hope to achieve through funding their PPS. Are there others that the LA would like to see?

Despite tight resources meaning that we cannot offer such fast or open-ended support as parents might desire, it is clear that parental satisfaction with the PPS is high. Again this is best expressed by users of the service in comments from the 2013 service evaluation:

'This incredibly complex and emotional process is full of barriers that would defeat the most competent parent. Having Amaze to offer help and advice is invaluable.'

'Without Amaze I would have mentally collapsed, my children would definitely have gone back into care and my marriage would have broken down. The pressure over the years has been almost unbearable.'

'Very important support at meetings - felt the professionals can be intimidating and just support each other. Amaze didn't do this. I felt supported and understood. Been really fantastic help to me. Main thing having mutual support in force, being there to help me say what I wanted.'

'There are a lot of caring people working in education but my children were challenging on many levels. I regret to say that I encountered aggressive bullying attitudes on several occasions and without the support of Amaze I would not have been able to deal with this.'

'Very helpful, knowledgeable and non-judgemental and I do not think I would have managed without.'

6. Changes in need/emphasis:

Why has the number of users of the PPS increased when Brighton has good SEN provision, there is a high level of good practice within schools and SEN services and the LA's approach to working with parents emphasises good communication and negotiation?

We believe this is a false dichotomy; BHCC's open, child-centred approach to SEN that respects and welcomes parental involvement has the effect of encouraging parents to take up services like the PPS and feel it is worthwhile to express their views individually and collectively. This should be seen as healthy and desirable, a positive reflection on good relationships and sound policies. It goes alongside low levels of tribunals and increased parental confidence across the system.

In the early days of PPSs, parent tended to take up the service as they approached the Statutory Assessment process. Now we are more likely to work with parents at the school-based stages. Many of the parents we work with will never come to the attention of the SEN team. A typical caller to the helpline will say someone has told them they "must get a Statement" and we are able to give

impartial reassurance that this is not needed in their child's circumstances. But they may need advice or help to understand or improve the support their child gets at school.

The pattern of referrals to the PPS has changed. As noted above, Amaze has built up a reputation locally that means parents are signposted to us earlier and by a very wide range of services as well as by word of mouth amongst parents. We have worked on close and positive relationships with CWOs, SENCOs, head teachers etc who are more likely to encourage families to access Amaze's PPS and invite our attendance at school meetings. We find ourselves having to turn down requests to attend CAF meetings unless there is a clear need for IPS support.

We have explained that Amaze's other work such as benefits advice draws in more users for the PPS service. Similarly every time Amaze runs a Triple P positive parenting course this will generate some IPS casework as parents identify that all is not going smoothly at school as well as at home. Amaze's success in reaching the full range of Brighton residents means that many of the parents who use the PPS have their own needs (disability, learning difficulties, English not first language, mental health issues). This is welcome but increases pressure on the service.

We have also seen a trend to more complexity in the IPS work. We are more likely in recent years to be working with families there is also a child protection or child in need plan. Adoptive parents account for a disproportionate percentage of the IPS casework.

The SEND Pathfinder and looming change to the SEN system have also generated more activity for the PPS. Although these are in many respects positive developments, they have also brought uncertainty to parents (and indeed schools) prompting more enquiries. We anticipate more casework as the changes bed in, even if it leads over time to less conflict in the system. It also means updating the knowledge and training of staff and volunteers, and re-writing of all our SEN information materials (website, Through the Maze etc). In particular we would hope the Through the Maze and Through the Next Maze could be developed in partnership to be the 'hard copy' versions of the local offer.

We feel the increase in our work reflects our success as a PPS and supports Brighton and Hove's overall good performance on SEN, but it has meant we have had to prioritise casework with families over some more strategic or pro-active aspects of the PPS role.

7. If we had more capacity now we'd like to be able to..:

Having had an initial conversation with the Head of SEN, we are aware that the local authority would be keen for our PPS to contribute/be more involved in service and policy developments and strategic planning.

We would really like to offer this and have more time for working with LA partners but would need to negotiate an uplift in the PPS contract to cover this. If we had more capacity some of the things which we would like to offer are:

- Closer working with SEN team, shared training, attendance at/contribution to SEN team meetings
- Monthly summary of key issues/hot topics including ideas for improvements/solutions
- Input to reviews of local issues and pressures i.e. out of city agency placements or other placement breakdowns (with view to learn from and reduce)
- More work to help parents understand the LA's strategy and provision
- PPS voice/knowledge input into SEN PSB & Behaviour Attendance Partnership
- More involvement in training for SENCOs, attendance at SENCO forum meetings
- Annual input into SEN Governor training and information materials
- More training and workshops for parents and professionals
- More capacity to attend TAF/CIN/LAC meetings
- Outreach to academies and free schools to ensure parents there are getting equal access to the PPS

Even an additional 10 hours per week of casework officer (plus some strategic input) time we think it could have an appreciable impact on our ability to pursue these above options or others that the LA may identify. An additional 10 hours would cost the BHCC around £15k p.a. We hope this added investment would also help manage the increasing pressure on the PPS and may deliver savings in terms of reduced staff time and costs spent on disagreement resolution, tribunals and failed placements. Could the council consider this additional provision from now until September'14 i.e. the next 8 months (£10k), whilst we await the changes to the Code and its implications as set out below?

8. Looking ahead at the impact of the new Code of Practice:

We are all aware that this is a time of change for SEN. We have an opportunity now to look ahead and start thinking about how to be ready for this September. We can consider what is currently in the Children and Families Bill and the draft Code, although we know this is not the final version. Clause 32 of the Bill has been amended to read:

32 Advice and information for parents and young people

(1) A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people for whom it is responsible, and the parents of children for whom it is responsible, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the special educational needs of the children or young people concerned.

(1A) A local authority in England must arrange for children and young people in its area with a disability, and the parents of children in its area with a disability, to be provided with advice and information about matters relating to the disabilities of the children or young people concerned.

(2) The authority must take such steps as it thinks appropriate for making the services provided under subsection (1) known to—

(a) the parents of children in its area;

() children in its area

(b) young people in its area;

(c) the head teachers, proprietors and principals of schools and post-16 institutions in its area.

(3) The authority may also take such steps as it thinks appropriate for making the services provided under subsection (1) and (1A) known to such other persons as it thinks appropriate

The NPPN has helpfully summarised how this compares with the existing PPS role:

Who should receive info and advice	Type of info and advice	Currently required from PPS/LA
Parent of child with SEN	Matters relating to SEN	Yes
Parent of child with disability	Matters relating to disability	No
Child with SEN	Matters relating to SEN	No
Child with disability	Matters relating to disability	No
Young person with SEN	Matters relating to SEN	No
Young person with disability	Matters relating to disability	No

The draft Code supplements the clause by including a requirement for impartiality and for the provision of 'support' including case work for parents and young people on education and related health and social care. The final Code will have to make clear whether these requirements also apply to children and whether the 'matters related to' describes provision beyond education, health and social care, i.e. independent living, housing, sex and relationships etc. The draft Code is clear that information, advice and support (IAS) for all groups should be accessed through a single point of access, able to provide information, advice and casework support and the Minister has subsequently stated that this service will be built on existing PPS (reply to Steven McCabe December 10th).

We have the advantage in Brighton and Hove that Amaze is already offering information and advice to parents of children with SEN and disability on wider matters relating to disability, not as the PPS but through other aspects of the SLA. Other aspects of the IAS service will involve changing and

extending the service. The detail of what will be required will be clearer when the Bill receives Royal Assent and the final Code is published. But we would suggest that contracting out all this role to Amaze will offer the smoothest and most cost-effective way of meeting the new duties and guidance. The “new” elements are likely to be:

- **Extending information and advice to parents of young people aged over 18 -25.**
- **Adding “support” on related health and social care to existing information and advice.**

Both of these are an easy fit with our existing work, although they will involve training up staff and volunteers, updating all information for parents and an increase in capacity.

- **Provision of IAS to young people directly age 16-25.**

This would be a new area of work for Amaze, although the work of our Transition Development Worker and our Preparing for Adulthood support service mean we have some of the necessary information and contacts to extend into this. We acknowledge we do not have the experience necessary in house currently to provide this as it is recognised that work with disabled young people requires specific skills, but we would be keen to host this service as part of the one-stop-shop model described. We could work with another partner or develop the necessary skill set to deliver this and we would be keen to start discussions on how we could approach this as soon as possible.

- **Potential provision of Disagreement Resolution**

The information in the draft Code on Disagreement Resolution, Mediation and then the various appeals and complaints processes that parents and young people can follow was quite confused. The overlap with the IAS service was far from clear. Nevertheless we would be happy to discuss how Amaze can work with the LA on making sure there is a local process for disagreement resolution that works well for all parties, building on our existing informal role in this work, the good relationships we have built up and the confidence parents have in us as an impartial service.

- **Independent Supporter role**

Most recently there has been an announcement of government funding until March 2016 for a new role the “Independent Supporter” to give dedicated support to parents during the development of their child’s EHC plan. The implications of this are not yet clear. Amaze is likely to seek to take on this role, as it seems likely it will fit with our overall service and ethos. But it seems to be separate from the IAS service that is to be built on existing PPSs. It also appears to be limited to the period of assessment and production of the EHCP.

This is a discussion paper but we can come up with provisional estimates of costing for the new IAS service if this would be helpful.