

Who else can help?

Independent Supporters are only for families as they go through the EHC plan process. Parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can also use their local **Information Advice and Support Service** (IASS). In Brighton and Hove this is also provided by Amaze. You can contact our IASS Helpline for impartial information and advice during the EHC plan process, if you don't have an Independent Supporter. The IASS can also help with other things including:

- SEN support at school/preschool/college
- How to request assessment for an EHCP if your child needs one
- Issues once you have an EHC plan i.e. appeals, annual reviews
- Health and social care
- Disability benefits
- Support groups and leisure activities

Young people will also be able to get information, advice and support soon. Details about where to get this service should be available shortly.

Another place to find out information about what is available for children and young people with SEND in your area is the **Local Offer** published on line by the local authority at:
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/localoffer

About Amaze

Amaze is an independent charity that offers information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs. We aim to help parents work in partnership with the professionals and services that are involved with their child. We also offer:

- Helpline/IASS
- Publications and website
- Help with making claims for DLA
- Workshops and training
- Support with the transition to adult services
- The Compass leisure discount card

Helpline: 01273 772289

Open Monday to Thursday, 9.30am to 12 noon
plus in term-time: Tuesdays 12 noon to 5pm *and* Thursday evenings 5.30 to 8pm. You can leave a message or email helpline@amazebrighton.org.uk at any time.

Amaze

Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton BN1 3XG
Tel: 01273 772289
info@amazebrighton.org.uk
www.amazebrighton.org.uk



Delivering
**independent
support**



Independent Supporters



**For parents carers and young people with
special educational needs and disabilities**

in Brighton and Hove

What is an Independent Supporter?

An Independent Supporter is someone to offer parents and young people extra advice and support while they go through the process of getting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. From September 2014, EHC plans are replacing Statements of special educational needs.

Independent Supporters have been introduced to help with new EHC plans and transfers from Statements, and to add to the support from Casework Officers. The Independent Support service in Brighton & Hove is provided by Amaze with funding from the government. The service is independent but works in partnership with the local authority, schools, colleges and other services. Young people (16 to 25) can have Independent Support with their parents or separately.

All of the Independent Support team have a DBS (formerly CRB) check and complete accredited national training .



What does an Independent Supporter do?

An Independent Supporter works alongside a parent and/or young person during the weeks when they are being assessed for an EHC plan, the plan is being written, discussed and then finalised. An Independent Supporter will not take over, but will give a helping hand. They can:

- Explain what is happening and how you should be involved
- Make sure you feel able to get your views across
- Check you have information you need, including on the Local Offer and Personal Budgets
- Attend meetings about the EHC plan with you
- Look through reports with you to be sure you understand them fully
- Ensure you know when you have choices or decisions to make about the EHC plan
- Help you check through the EHC plan to see if you are happy with it.

Who can have an Independent Supporter?

Over the next couple of years a large number of families will be going through the EHC plan process . The aim is to offer advice and information to everyone who wants this, but provide more intensive individual support to parents and young people who might not be able to be properly involved in their EHC plan without this. We will be honest and open about how we decide who gets what level of Independent Support.



How to ask for an Independent Supporter?

Parents and young people can contact Amaze to ask about getting an Independent Supporter. Or they can be referred by someone working with them such as the SENCO from their school or Casework Officer from the SEN team at the local authority.

Parents and young people can call our helpline on 01273 772289 or email

helpline@amazebrighton.org.uk. One of our advisers will call you to offer advice and support over the phone, whilst working out with you whether you need extra help from an Independent Supporter. If so we'll match you up with one of the team.

If a somebody working with you wants to make a referral they should get your permission first and then fill in the referral form available by emailing independentsupportBH@amazebrighton.org.uk