



for disabled children and young people in Sussex
impact report 2018-19



“Ella loves the group - it’s encouraged her to come out of her shell and speak up a bit more which she really struggles with. It stops her feeling so socially isolated and she really looks forward to seeing her friends. Without meaning to sound too cheesy this charity/group really is amazing and makes a massive difference to Ella’s life.”

Welcome

We are delighted to share our 2018-19 Impact Report with you and hope you will enjoy reading about what we have been up to in the first year of our new strategic plan (2018-21). It has been another incredibly busy year for Amaze, supporting disabled children and young people and their families across Sussex.

Whilst we are trying to increase the number of families we can help, and the range of services, across Sussex, **our funding is limited**. So we continue to seek new funding partners and look for new and innovative ways to work.

This year we have particularly focused on developing our **peer support** approaches: we train and support both parent carers and young people with their own lived experience to support others in a similar situation.

With new funding from East Sussex County Council we extended our **Amazing Futures** project into Eastbourne, where young people with SEND have been meeting fortnightly, since the end of 2018.

In West Sussex, Amaze has worked in partnership with Reaching Families to establish a new **Face2Face** project, training groups of parent carer befrienders in Worthing and more recently in Crawley. They are now being paired up with other parent carers at the start of their caring journey.

We have also been working hard to influence and improve local, regional and national policy and strategy. We host and support the Brighton and Hove **PaCC** and Amaze has been an active member of the Disabled Children’s Partnership – attempting to increase government spending on health and social care services for disabled children.

Our range of services aims to build families’ knowledge, confidence and resilience to help them secure better outcomes in the future. These are all described in more detail in the coming pages.

Rachel Travers (CEO) & Hugh Clench (Chair of Trustees)



“I highly recommend the Face2Face programme - I met with my buddy today - needed it badly and it felt good to talk to someone who gets it.”

The needs we address

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their parents and carers, face multiple challenges: navigating the world of assessments, diagnoses, services and support requirements, and possible treatment or medication.

Statistically they stand a much higher chance of being excluded from school, being bullied, having mental health problems, having parents who split up and not moving into paid employment. They might be working with a range of different professionals from across health, education and social care and their needs might change depending on their age, disability or transition stage.

This complex world can feel incredibly lonely and many families tell us they feel 'lost in a maze', and they are desperate for high quality, impartial information, advice and support to help them navigate their way through it.

Amaze is here to address this and work with young people and parent carers to guide them through what can be, for some, a difficult journey.



Our strategic priorities 2018-21 are:

- **Increase knowledge to empower** families and young people by providing a range of high quality **information, advice and support** services.
- Improve family and young person **wellbeing and inclusion** in their community by increasing **access to disability benefits and to group/social/leisure and work** opportunities
- **Improve policy, practice** and services across Sussex by providing **intelligence from Compass Registers, service delivery** and **engagement work**.
- Build Amaze's **organisational and financial resilience** by developing and supporting our staff and volunteers and diversifying our income.



Our values

Listening is at the heart of all we do - on our helpline, in our benefits advice work and peer support work, and also in the way we plan and develop our services according to what families tell us they need. It also encapsulates our values.

LOCAL AND LIVING IT

We are local people who know our area and understand how to support families in Sussex. Many staff, volunteers and trustees are carers or are disabled.

INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL

We are an independent charity, and any information or advice we provide is impartial.

SUPPORTIVE

We support everybody we can; making the best of our resources, developing peer support and being more hands-on for those that need it most.

TOGETHER

The needs of disabled children and young people and their families are at the heart of all that we do. We work together with families and SEND professionals, to plan, develop and improve services.

EMPOWERING

We empower disabled children and young people and their parent carers by building their confidence, knowledge, skills and resilience.

NON-JUDGEMENTAL

We listen and offer advice without criticism, prejudice or judgement.

Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)



“I felt so much better after I spoke to you yesterday so thank you for being so lovely and kind. I was feeling overwhelmed and oppressed by the responsibility of trying to get things put right but now I feel like I don't have to do this alone. It means a lot.”

SENDIASS provides support on a wide range of issues to children and young people with SEND, and their families, in **East Sussex**, and **Brighton & Hove**.

Topics range from education, health, social care and leisure, to preparing for adulthood and finances.

Open from 9.30 to 2.30, Monday to Friday, the **SENDIASS helpline** gives high-quality individual advice that people can act on for themselves. Our advisers receive expert training and many have “been there” as parents, so they are both realistic and empathetic. We often have a very high demand on the helpline and can take a few days to call people back so we try to signpost to other sources of support while you wait.

Our website is packed with **online information** and **downloadable resources** such as fact sheets, leaflets and step-by-step guides. We also send a termly **newsletter** to more than 6,000 homes and organisations and communicate with parents via Facebook and Twitter.

Our **one-to-one casework** supports parents and young people whose situation is very complex or who are less able to advocate for themselves.

We also run **workshops** and **courses** on key topics as we know that sharing learning with peers can feel extra supportive.

This year:

We have been working on new ways to get information and advice to everyone who needs it through developing more video content, texts and outreach.

“Massive thank you! Really complex case - everyone has been amazing. Couldn't have done this without you.”

30,000

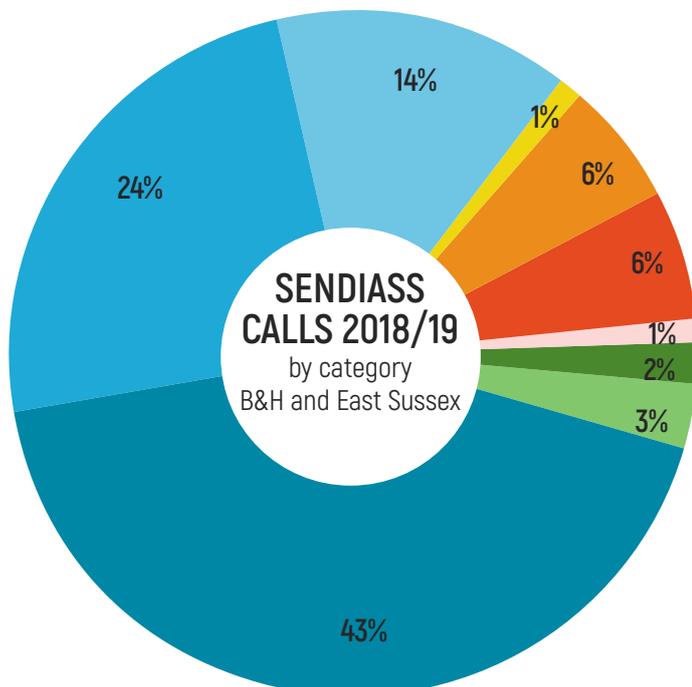
WEBSITE VISITORS

2,497

PEOPLE ADVISED BY HELPLINE

249

SUPPORTED BY CASEWORKERS



- Education
- Money & Benefits
- Health
- Housing
- Social Care
- Compass & Carers Card
- Employment
- Leisure
- Amaze Workshops & Training



Leanne's story

"During a very difficult time in my life having lost my dear partner and father to my children I had to try to sort out the right school for my young son. I felt pushed into sending him to a very specialist school but in my heart I knew it wasn't the right place for him.

"I contacted the Amaze Helpline as I didn't really know who else to turn to. I didn't understand the complexities of the UK school system as I had been brought up outside of the UK. I built up a really positive relationship with Gaynor from the Helpline. She was genuinely interested in our family and helping us get the right education for my son. Gaynor really believed in us and stepped in and picked up the pieces when I couldn't cope. Amaze also told me about other places where I could get more information and support.

"My son started a new school in September and is absolutely thriving. Just a year and a half ago he was non verbal - now he communicates with me and is reading. He still has difficult days but he is enjoying his life so much better since starting a new school. I just cannot thank Amaze enough for the help they have given us."

20

TRAINING EVENTS
& WORKSHOPS

98%

SERVICE USER
SATISFACTION



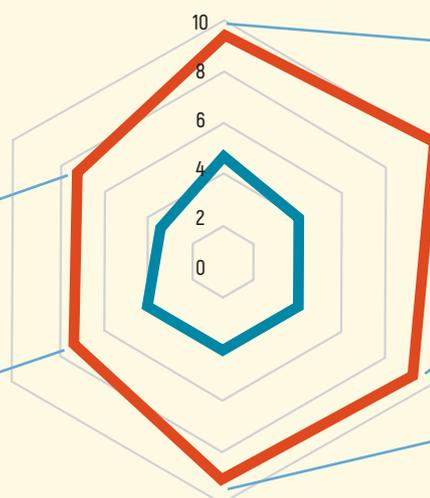
Our impact

We know that Amaze services can help people feel more 'empowered', 'listened to' and 'accepted'. This consolidated outcomes star for all our services to parent carers presents an average change against each of our core indicators.

OUTCOMES FOR ALL CASEWORK SERVICES 2018/19

— Start — End

- Parent carer feels that their voice is heard and their views are taken into account about their child's needs
- Parent carer feels included, understood or connected to others in a similar situation



- Parent carer feel well-informed about their child's additional needs and the support and services available to them
- Parent carer feels supported in relation to their child's additional needs
- Parent carer feels able to deal with issues or problems that arise from their child's additional needs
- Parent carer feels emotionally strong, resilient and good in themselves



“James loves his time at Amazing Futures. He enjoys socialising and contributing to discussions as well as the games, activities and trips. For us, we can see he has grown in confidence meeting new people, feeling he has a voice and view that matters and trying different things.”

Amazing Futures:

Amaze works with young people with special educational needs and disabilities to help them make new friends and **develop their self-confidence**. We also support young people to think about their future, and access volunteering and employment opportunities.

We work with young people in **Brighton & Hove** and **East Sussex**.

Our Amazing Futures project is all about peer-to-peer support. We have a trained team of young people, with and without additional needs, who act as **volunteer peer supporters**. They help run **activity sessions** in both

areas, as well as a group for young women and non-binary people, and a drama group in Brighton.

Amazing Futures belongs to our young people – they co-produce the project and we hold regular engagement sessions where they can tell us what they want. We also offer them leadership courses, training and volunteering opportunities, and **paid internships**.

125

YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED

31

PEER SUPPORT
VOLUNTEERS

56

PEER SUPPORT
SESSIONS



Fahmina's story

"I have got a learning disability and have struggled with this since my childhood. I wasn't doing well at primary school and struggling with maths and English and I was very behind. The school suggested a special school and then Amaze got involved. Amaze helped me move to a special school and helped my mum claim for Disability Living Allowance (DLA)."

"When I was in my early teens I was depressed and had anxiety and felt not everyone understood me and I needed somewhere where people could understand me. Then I heard about Amazing Futures, I've joined a woman only peer support group and the Power Group."

"I really like the women's group as I feel more confident there and I enjoy the activities they do like arts and crafts. The Power Group really listen to me and help me find solutions to my problems. They make me feel confident. You get to socialise and talk about good and bad things. They keep you updated with information and activities I can get involved in."

"I've always wanted to live independently and the group has helped me do this. I live in Shared Lives which means I live independently but I still have support and it's working out well for me."

"As I've been part of an Amaze group for about a year I decided to volunteer and be part of the peer support programme. Since being in the Amaze groups I now feel 9 out of 10, I used to feel really low about myself but the Amaze groups let me express how I feel."

Looking Forward:

This year, in March 2019 we launched a new **Looking Forward** project to support young people to aim high and identify their next steps in **education, employment** and **training**.

As well as working one-to-one with young people to develop a career plan, we are offering career skills training sessions and online resources.

In addition, we are working hard to develop more resources for young people, including **videos** and a young people's **e-zine** and we are setting up a new group for young people with Autism, in Bexhill.

"My organisation skills have got far better and it's all things I can apply to jobs later on, and it looks good on your CV as well."

90%

MADE NEW FRIENDS

90%

FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES

73%

LEARNED NEW THINGS



Face2Face

“After your visit I couldn’t stop smiling - you made me feel I could do things myself without being judged. Now I have more hope for the future. Thanks so much.”

Many parents of children with additional needs and disabilities can feel lonely and overwhelmed. Our **Face2Face** project offers **emotional, peer support** to help reduce that isolation and help them face the future more positively.

The Face2Face project provides one-to-one befriending and social groups, delivered by a team of trained parent volunteers. The one-to-one support is flexible and can be provided for up to six months. Our groups in Brighton & Hove include a dads group, a breakfast drop-in and an autism group for under 8s.

Face2Face one-to-one support is available in **Brighton & Hove** and is being piloted in **East Sussex**. We also work in partnership with Reaching Families who deliver the project in **West Sussex**.



80
PARENTS RECEIVED
ONE-TO-ONE
SUPPORT

179
FAMILIES REACHED
THROUGH OUR
GROUPS

19
NEW BEFRIENDERS
TRAINED IN
SUSSEX

In the coming year:

Amaze’s Face2Face pilot in East Sussex will focus on those “most in need”, referred by the local social care team. We also hope to further our work with other disadvantaged groups such as refugees.



Willow’s story

“The autism group is a place where I can be more relaxed than usual simply because everyone understands my kid’s behaviour. It’s very relaxed and it’s great for Sami to be able to play in a supportive environment. For my children it’s great because my boys get to meet other kids, especially for Aidan my eldest one who doesn’t really know about Sami’s autism. It makes him more tolerant and patient with kids with disabilities.

“Before we found the group we would often be at places where Sami would have a tantrum or something would happen and we would end up leaving straightaway. The group has definitely helped us feel less isolated.

“I also have a befriender Carole. My befriender has been a brilliant support to me. We both have two children and have been through the same thing. She has been able to give me such great advice about things like OT (occupational therapy) and how EHCPs (education, health and care plans) work. She has been through the same thing and knows how things are.”

Support with claiming disability benefits

"I found the forms stressful and overwhelming. The support from Amaze was a godsend - so helpful and reassuring. I'm not sure if I would have been awarded the benefit without help, and getting it has had a huge impact. Thank you."

A successful claim for DLA or PIP can generate between £7k and £13k in benefits for families on low incomes. The extra money helps parents and young people **afford the additional costs of care**. Having enough money to make **better choices**, improves families' **mental health** and **well-being**.

Our disability benefits work offers young people and parent carers the expert advice and support they need to make a successful claim for DLA or PIP. The support includes phone advice, written resources, regular workshops and practical one-to-one support for families or young people who are really struggling.

Our DLA/PIP project is available in **Brighton & Hove** with some support available in **East Sussex**.

HELPED
275
PARENTS
CLAIM DLA

HELPED
71
YOUNG PEOPLE
CLAIM PIP

OVER **£2**
MILLION
IN EXTRA INCOME
FOR FAMILIES

In the coming year:

We will increase our team of volunteers so we are able to offer more direct support to parents and young people facing the biggest challenges.



The Compass

"We can't thank you enough for the amazing memories you've created for us. Since gaining a Compass Card you can see the sheer enjoyment when I take him bowling, trampolining, swimming, or to our local farm. We feel that we're back in the community!"

The Compass Card helps disabled children and young people have more fun for less money - which has a positive impact on the whole family's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The Compass Card provides discounts at around 300 leisure venues in and around Sussex, as well as regular freebies and special offers. Families get the card in exchange for providing detailed information about their child's needs which is used to help plan local services.

The Compass Card is available to 0 to 25s with significant additional needs who live or go to school in **Brighton & Hove** or **West Sussex**, or who are looked after by social services in these areas.

In the coming year:

We will continue to increase Compass Card membership, to provide a full range of leisure discounts and free opportunities and to provide powerful, meaningful data to inform the delivery of SEND services in Brighton & Hove and West Sussex.

300+
LEISURE
DISCOUNTS

4493
COMPASS CARD
HOLDERS





Community Outreach Project

“Fantastic to meet other parents and carers to share knowledge and info”

Our Community Outreach Project (COP) creates **safe and supportive spaces** for parent carers in **Brighton & Hove** to **get together**, find out more about services available in the city and meet professionals in their local neighbourhoods.

We run coffee mornings during term times in Moulsecomb and Bevendean, in partnership with the Sunflower Support Group, in Hangleton & Knoll in partnership with the Hangleton & Knoll Project and in Whitehawk.

Through our COP groups, some families are able to access Amaze's and other organisation's services, for the first time. They **feel less alone**, their confidence grows and they have the information they need to be **empowered** to expect and ask for more for their children.



Parent Carers Council

“With a continually positive slant and collaborative working, we will get even better at what we do! Simply carry on the good work guys!”

The Parent Carers' Council (PaCC) is a forum that gets parent carers involved in the strategic co-production and delivery of services for children and young people with SEND in Brighton & Hove. With support from Amaze, PaCC ensures that the parent voice is heard when decisions are made that directly affect their children.



This year, PaCC

- Represented the SEND community at planning meetings for the development of the new SEND Strategy (to be launched 2020)
- Facilitated meetings, informing the SEND Review to merge the city's six special schools into three hubs (work ongoing)
- Wrote a hard-hitting report into the experiences of families trying to access mental health and wellbeing support for their children and young people with SEND

PaCC will carry on working to raise the issues, and inequality, that families with disabled children face and strive to identify ways to improve policy and practice, with the Local Authority, local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), SENCOs forum and other services.

Our funders

We'd like to thank all the agencies, organisations and individuals who helped to fund us in 2018/19.

Statutory funders

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

Grants and other funders

CM Keyser Charitable Trust, Downlands Educational Trust, Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, Global's Make Some Noise, The Henry Smith Charity, Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation J C Robinson Trust No 4, Lady Eileen Joseph Foundation, Masonic Charitable Foundation, The National Lottery Community Fund, Noel Bennett Fund, Pannett Charitable Trust, Truemark Trust.

Donations and events

Acorn Financial Solutions Limited, Albion Inn, Air Stream, Bewilder Box Escape Rooms, Gayatri News, Hangleton Primary School, Mr Eric James, Ottaway, Peggs and Sons, Persel, Poets Corner Pub, Sainsburys, Semolina, Staff Now, The Geese Pub, Uckfield Rotary Club, Waitrose and Wellesley Charitable Foundation.

Corporate Partners

Brighton & Hove Buses, Currys PC World Hove, Madison Solutions, Picture Exchange Communication System PECS.

And thank you to all our wonderful Amaze runners, cyclists, fundraisers and sponsored event participants.



FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2019

| | Unrestricted funds (£) | Restricted funds (£) | 2019 Total funds (£) | 2018 Total funds (£) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| INCOME & ENDOWMENTS FROM | | | | |
| Donations and legacies | 68,764 | 153,099 | 221,863 | 244,540 |
| Charitable activities | | | | |
| Grants | 330,829 | 19,925 | 350,754 | 300,304 |
| Services | 426,302 | - | 426,302 | 560,058 |
| Investment income | 594 | - | 594 | 32 |
| Total | 826,489 | 173,024 | 999,513 | 1,104,934 |
| EXPENDITURE ON | | | | |
| Raising funds | 71,316 | - | 71,316 | 64,402 |
| Charitable activities | | | | |
| Project costs | - | - | - | 854 |
| Staff costs | 646,312 | 124,092 | 770,404 | 730,870 |
| Property costs | 41,496 | 9,716 | 51,212 | 42,834 |
| Administrative costs | 74,169 | 23,013 | 97,182 | 96,281 |
| Other costs | 11,923 | 23,283 | 35,206 | 60,328 |
| Total | 845,216 | 180,104 | 1,025,320 | 995,569 |
| NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) | (18,727) | (7,080) | (25,807) | 109,365 |
| Transfers between funds | | | | |
| | (114) | 114 | - | - |
| Net movement in funds | (18,841) | (6,966) | (25,807) | 109,365 |
| RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | 509,169 | 58,738 | 567,907 | 458,542 |
| TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD | 490,328 | 51,772 | 542,100 | 567,907 |

To see our full accounts, please email zoe@amazesussex.org.uk





Thank you

Our volunteers

Apart from our brilliant staff, Amaze is very lucky to be supported by a large family of volunteers who give us their experience, expertise and commitment for free.

This year, over 6,500 volunteer hours were given to Amaze at a value of over £81,000! Though we can't thank all our volunteers individually, we are truly grateful.

Our patrons

Angela Barnes, Julia Donaldson, Annabel Giles, Henry Normal, Angela Pell, Joe Wilkinson and our good friends Andrew Short and Sue Fry

Our trustees

Hugh Clench (Chair), Debbie Norris (Treasurer) Shelley Bennett, Siobhan Cox, Ray Knight, Sue McMillan, Fungi Murau, Debbie Tuesley, Alison Plant



Our contacts

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