



## **Amaze Impartiality Policy**

Amaze aims to provide an impartial service to all parent carers, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and others who use our services. To this end we endeavour:

- To give fair representation to the views of all children and young people with SEND and parent carers
- To offer impartial information, advice and support throughout our work
- To ensure that information we give about the services, policies and responsibilities of other bodies is accurate and unbiased.

### **Governance and funding**

Amaze is an independent charity run by a management committee of trustees of whom at least 50% are parent carers. Amaze is committed to remaining true to our mission and values by only seeking and accepting funding that is compatible with being an independent, user-led organisation. Amaze gets funding from a variety of sources including national and local government and local health services; grant making bodies (e.g. the Big Lottery) and charitable trusts, as well as raising funds through community and corporate fundraising.

Amaze reports to our funders according to the terms of funding agreements but remains independent and separate in operation and governance. We are clear with funders and potential funders that we will not compromise our commitment or ability to be impartial.

Amaze is committed to being transparent about our sources of funding. Our annual report gives details of our funders and more up to date information about our current funders is available on request. Significant parts of Amaze's funding are through:

- A service level agreement with Brighton and Hove City Council to provide information, advice and support to parent carers, including the SENDIAS service for the city and the register of disabled children.
- A service level agreement with West Sussex County Council to manage the register of disabled children and provide the Compass card.
- A service level agreement with East Sussex County Council to provide the SENDIAS service for the county.

These three service level agreements include reference to our impartiality. All SENDIAS services are required to meet the national quality standards approved by the Department for Education which specifies providers must act independently, impartially and confidentially with no unnecessary influence or control from the local authority, the local clinical commissioning group or any other organisation or individual.



## **Partnership**

Amaze works in partnership with other organisations that provide services to children and young people with SEND and their parent carers including Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, local NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups. Amaze aims to help parent carers and children and young people communicate with services well and work together to promote the best interests of children and young people with SEND. Amaze works to ensure services hear and take account of the voice of parent carers and children and young people with SEND both individually and collectively. Amaze works to help parent carers and children and young people with SEND understand and work with services and professionals. Where a parent carer or a child or young person with SEND wishes to exercise their right to complain or appeal about a public body or service provider, Amaze will offer the information and advice they need to enable them to do so.

## **Parent carer and child/young person involvement and representation**

Amaze aims to represent the range of views held by parent carers and children and young people with SEND and take an active part in communicating and representing these messages. Amaze serves parent carers and children and young people with SEND from all parts of the community and we work to ensure our services are accessible to all. This enables us to draw on the views and experiences of a wide range of people and to be as representative as possible when reporting our understanding of the views and experience of parent carers and children and young people with SEND and when supporting them to be part of strategic or consultative groups.

Amaze hosts and supports the Brighton and Hove parent carer forum PaCC and the East Sussex parent carer forum ESPCF to be a voice for parent carers, to bring parents together to express their views and to identify and support individual parents to act as parent representatives in other forums. We will support each PCF to be open and transparent about how parents take on roles as representatives or in consultations. We will monitor whether our users, and in particular parents who take on roles representing other parents through each PCF and Amaze, reflect the wider community of parents. And we will work to improve this if necessary. Amaze also aims to work with and listen to the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum and to parent carer groups in all the areas where we operate.

Amaze is committed to further strengthening our practice around seeking the views of children and young people with SEND and supporting them to be involved in consultation and co-production both within and beyond Amaze, for example through our Amazing Futures projects and our internships for young people with SEND.



Amaze will base the messages it gives about SEND issues and services on a range of sources of information including the Compass, parent surveys and consultations, parent carer forum (PCF) activities, feedback from young people's advisory groups and parent carer support groups, and intelligence drawn from Amaze's direct work with children and young people with SEND and parent carers.

## **Information and advice**

The aim of Amaze's information, advice and support services is to help children and young people with SEND and parent carers make informed decisions, take advantage of services and rights for themselves or for their children and to promote equality and inclusion in its widest sense for disabled children and young people. Amaze will not try to influence individuals in their choices and decisions. We will make sure children and young people with SEND and parent carers are made aware of their options and the implications of their choices. Amaze will support a parent carer, child or young person to follow through their chosen course of action. The only exception would be where a course of action risks significant harm to a child or vulnerable adult; in this situation we would inform the parent carer, child or young person of our concern and endeavour to keep working with them.

Amaze's information, advice and support services are based on the Law and the SEND Code of Practice 2015. We provide unbiased information and advice about local authorities' policies and procedures. We are not biased towards or influenced by any particular party, point of view or policy, including local authorities, schools, education ideologies and campaigns. We do not give priority to any particular impairment, disability or special educational need over another.

Amaze will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the information we give about parent carers', young people's and children's rights and entitlements and the services offered by other organisations are accurate and up to date. We will endeavour to check factual accuracy with the services and organisations we describe. Where we also give information about parent carers' and children and young people's views of or experiences of using services, this will be fair and based on accumulated information from children, young people and parents as described above.

Providing impartial information to enable children and young people with SEND and parent carers to make informed choices can include providing information about services outside the public or community and voluntary sectors, including from independent or private sources where relevant and appropriate e.g. non-maintained schools or inclusive leisure activities. Sharing recommendations from other parents or young people about helpful services e.g. a barber or a shoe shop, will not be a breach of our policy of impartiality. However Amaze will not as a rule promote or recommend more commercial or



high cost services and will always make it clear if there is a route to a free, low cost or publically funded alternative.

### **Information sharing**

All information parent carers, children and young people share with Amaze is treated as confidential as outlined in the Amaze Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy. Amaze will only share information about individuals with other services with the express permission of a young person with capacity or a parent carer unless this is over-ridden by a safeguarding issue. Amaze does not have access to records about children and families held by other services such as the City or County Councils, nor do they have access to Amaze's records. Data about families who use Amaze or are registered on the Compass will be shared anonymously and only in such a way that there is no risk that information about an individual child, young person or parent could be deduced from the data given.

### **Staff and volunteer training**

All Amaze staff, volunteers and parent representatives are given guidance and training about impartiality and confidentiality. Staff, volunteers and parent representatives are encouraged to reflect on their own views and experiences and how to ensure these do not impair their ability to provide impartial advice, support or representation.

### **Identity and accessibility**

Amaze has and promotes its own identity and we use our own logo, branding and style across our information, advice and support services. This is an important illustration of our independence and impartiality from other services.

Amaze staff, volunteers and parent representatives have their own confidential email addresses and telephone lines which can only be accessed by our team.

We are based in an accessible building, and are situated away from the SEND services of local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, schools and other agencies.