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Out of Amaze - December 2022



Welcome to our 25th anniversary Amaze newsletter

This December we are celebrating 25 years supporting families with children and young people with SEND in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex. You can read about:

- Our 25th birthday event and fundraising campaign
- Videos from young people and parent carers about our impact

****PLUS****

- Amaze's cost of living statement and local support
- SEND tribunals
- Updated DLA and PIP resources
- East Sussex SEND strategy
- Becoming a parent befriender
- Support groups for parent carers and young people
- Amazing Futures success story, Molly
- Festive offers from i-go
- ESPCF round-up
- FREE Amaze SENDIASS workshops and courses



Support our 25th birthday fundraising campaign

We're celebrating 25 years supporting families in Sussex with a [festive fundraising campaign](#) that aims to raise £5k to help more disabled young people get specialist careers support.

You can buy a brilliant recipe book, Amazing Bakes, plus beautiful cards and tote bags (all created with young people from Amazing Futures) at various venues through December or via our fundraising team. Just email fundraising@amazesussex.org.uk

Find out [more about the appeal](#) or donate directly via the button below. Even a small contribution can make a big difference.

[Donate now >](#)



Our Amazing impact

As part of our birthday activities, we wanted to celebrate the impact Amaze has had on the lives of local families over the last 25 years. So, we made a series of videos with young people and parent carers we have helped and created a special 25th anniversary edition of our [annual impact report](#).

[Watch our 25th birthday videos >](#)



Best 25th birthday ever!

What a [wonderful day](#) we had celebrating **25 years of Amaze** on Saturday 26 November! Thanks to everyone who came along to Moulsecoomb Leisure Centre to have fun and support us on the day, especially our patron, **Julia Donaldson**, pictured here getting a bouquet from regular Amaze poster girl, Audrey. Here's to the next 25 years!



New East Sussex SEND Strategy

East Sussex County Council has launched its new **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2022-2025** after consultation with key partners across the East Sussex SEND community, including East Sussex Parent Carer Forum (ESPCF). The strategy will be used as a framework to plan and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. More detail about the planned improvements will follow in a further SEND inclusion plan. Read the full SEND Strategy here:

<https://localoffer.eastsussex.gov.uk/send-information-and-services/isend/east-sussex-send-strategy> and ESPCF's statement about the strategy via their section below.

Help with the cost of living



How Amaze is supporting families this winter

We know that these are difficult times and Amaze wants to support families as much as possible. Read about the practical measures we are taking in terms of our events and meetings to make your lives that bit easier.

[Read Amaze's statement >](#)



Where to get help as the cost of living crisis continues

Amaze has researched and written up all the ways you can get financial support during these difficult times. We share the latest on disability benefits and grants, help with utility bills, debt advice, food banks and more.

[More cost of living advice >](#)



DLA and PIP advice

Thinking about claiming disability benefits but don't know where to start? Amaze has lots of expert advice on claiming Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment for a child or young person on our website, and we've just updated all our benefits advice fact sheets (written by DLA & PIP service manager Lizzie Batten) to include Sussex-wide support.

[Download fact sheets >](#)



NEW parent carer support groups in East Sussex

Amaze Face 2 Face is expanding rapidly in East Sussex with three new **'NDP' groups**, held monthly in **Lewes, Hailsham** and **Uckfield** and a fourth group due to start in the new year. These social support groups are for parents and carers who have children on the neurodevelopmental pathway (NDP) for conditions like autism, ADHD, FASD or tics/Tourette syndrome. To find out more, email ruth@amazesussex.org.uk

Our popular **Cuppa, Cake and Chat** sessions in **Hastings** and **Eastbourne** continue to run monthly and our WhatsApp groups provide a supportive online space in which you can share, signpost and network with other parent carers. For more information on our Cuppa, Cake and Chat or WhatsApp groups just email kathy@amazesussex.org.uk and she will add you to the most appropriate group.

Could you be a befriender?

Our **Face 2 Face** service needs more **befrienders** - could you share your knowledge and experience of being a parent carer with other parents? Our **training** programme will build your listening skills, help you to identify and develop the qualities of a befriender and establish boundaries. It's also great for your confidence and mental health. You can find lots of information about befriending, including the benefits for our volunteers, on the [Face 2 Face befriending webpage](#). Contact Marie Baker on 07484 051755 or email marie@amazesussex.org.uk.

"They say volunteering is a service for the benefit of others, but I find, more often than not, I'm the one benefiting from it."

Find out more about

Mental health 'room' and workshop

Amaze Face 2 Face will be hosting **mental health and wellbeing workshops** in the new year, starting off with a session with Dr Pooky Knightsmith. Alongside this we'll be running a new **'Mental Health Room'** WhatsApp group, to provide peer support to families who may be struggling with their own, or their child's, mental health. To join the WhatsApp group email zoel@amazesussex.org.uk



SENDIASS guide to SEND tribunals

Our SENDIASS team know that families are currently waiting a long time to have an appeal heard by the First-Tier (SEND) Tribunal. With waits of around 50 weeks for face-to-face hearing dates, we thought it would be the perfect time to provide some SENDIASS advice about the tribunal process. Read our [SENDIASS guide to SEND tribunals](#)

Molly's success story

Molly has come a long way since she started attending our **Amazing Futures** groups for young people with SEND over three years ago. Since then, she's volunteered as an Amazing Futures peer supporter, graduated from Brighton University and run 5k to raise funds for Amaze. We couldn't be prouder.

[Read Molly's story >](#)





Festive fun with i-go

There are loads of opportunities for cheaper festive fun with the East Sussex i-go card this Xmas, including a discount on a [relaxed performance of Aladdin](#) on Tuesday 10 January at 5pm at Devonshire Park Theatre Eastbourne and a multi-sensory performance of [Beauty and the Beast with Head2Head Sensory Theatre](#) at multiple venues on various dates.

[Check out more i-go offers >](#)

Free SENDIASS workshops



How to claim PIP

This free workshop led by Lizzie Batten will help you identify whether your child is likely to get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and help you make a strong claim. The Zoom workshop takes place on **Tues 13 December** from **7pm to 9pm**.

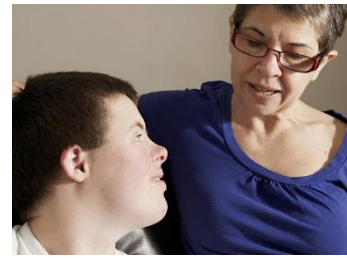
[Book now >](#)



Getting support for your child in school

A free SENDIASS Zoom workshop for parents who are worried about the progress their child is making at school (where the child doesn't have an EHC plan). The session takes place on **Mon 23 January** from **10.30am to 12.30pm**.

[Book now >](#)



Getting the most out of your child's EHCP

This free SENDIASS Zoom workshop helps you prepare for the next annual review of your child's Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. It takes place on **Tues 10 January** from **10.30am to 12.30pm**.

[Book now >](#)

For a full list of Amaze SENDIASS workshops, visit [Eventbrite](#).

East Sussex Parent Carer Forum



Latest news

What we've been up to

The bigger picture

Who are ESPCF

Get involved

East Sussex Parent Carer Forum (ESPCF) update

East Sussex Parent Carer Forum (ESPCF) has just published its latest newsletter, packed with news and info for parent carers in East Sussex. Highlights include: strong messages from families about short breaks & respite provision; new guidance on emotionally based school avoidance; the forum's statement on the new East Sussex SEND strategy; mental health support, cost of living help; and a full round up of the new support service for families with children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD, autism, and sensory processing disorder.

[Read ESPCF's update >](#)



Amaze festive opening hours

Amaze's **SENDIASS advice line** will be closed from Friday 23 December for the festive season. We **will reopen Tuesday 3 January 2023**. If you need information and advice over the holidays, please visit our [website](#). If you need support with mental health and wellbeing, visit the [Sussex Mental Health Line website](#).

Enjoyed this newsletter?

If the newsletter has been a good read, and you can afford to give back, please make a donation and 'pay it forward' so we can help another family. Thank you.

Donate online: www.justgiving.com/amaze/donate

Donate by text: To donate £5, please text AMAZE 5 to 70085 (texts cost £5 + one standard rate message).

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A proud member of the [East Sussex Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise \(VCSE\) Alliance](#) sharing the same values and principles; connecting and supporting people and communities

This is the East Sussex version of our newsletter. If you would prefer to receive the Brighton & Hove version, please email charlotte@amazesussex.org.uk



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