 **Amaze Strategy 2025-2030 – stakeholder engagement report  
‘You Said, We Did’**

*We are very grateful to the 200+ young people, parent carers and colleagues from partner organisations who shared their thoughts and ideas on Amaze’s future plans. We carefully considered all the feedback when writing our new strategic plan and set out below some of the key messages and how we have taken them on board, or if we haven’t been able to, we explain why.*

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| **Stakeholders said ..** | **What our strategy says/what Amaze will do …** |
| Amaze needs to be for everyone and help navigating the maze is needed more than ever | * Continue to emphasise that no diagnosis is needed to access Amaze * Strengthen our focus on, and support for, parents of children and young people with severe and multiple learning disabilities and welcome diverse young people into our youth activities * Strengthen outreach/partnership working. We will ideally work towards funding a staff role dedicated to outreach * Develop equalities, diversity and inclusion targets to challenge ourselves on our reach and measure our progress * Seek to answer questions such as ‘When I’m lost, where do I go?’ and have clearly marked information on different stages families face (eg early years, diagnosis, transitions) * Be clear about and support parent carers and young people on navigating pathways out of Amaze (eg into the carers centres and for young people into adult services) |
| Connection, belonging and emotional support are as important to parent carers and young people, as Amaze providing information and advice services | * Recognise the journey is constant for SEND parent carers and brings a stressful mental load, which means ongoing emotional support and compassion is key. Talk to this and developing trauma-informed approaches * Sustain as many parent support groups and youth groups as we can, focusing our fundraising efforts on these areas of our work * Involve and support volunteers with lived experience to help us have the capacity to run groups and to provide meaningful volunteering opportunities to parent carers and young people |
| Manage demand for our advice services better to reduce waiting times | * Continue to streamline our registration processes and increase digital access (while being alert to risks of digital exclusion) * Provide clear and regular communication on waiting times so we are transparent about issues when they occur. Continue to ensure enquiries are acknowledged within 2 working days. * Maintain our current approach of prioritising target groups for 1:1 advice and explain our rationale for this, eg we prioritise those who face additional barriers to accessing help or risk tipping into crisis * Deliver advice as efficiently as we can eg record workshops to make them available online and trial podcasts * Continue to develop volunteer roles and grow our volunteer base, while also recognising we can’t replace paid roles with volunteers and we need the capacity to appropriately support volunteers * Some stakeholders suggested we introduce paid-for advice services but this is not compatible with us being commissioned by local authorities to provide the SENDIASS contract * Expanding our services to offer more advocacy or independent support Is not something we can currently consider, unfortunately, due to limited resources and fundraising capacity * We will explore using more AI while not compromising the quality of our independent and impartial advice. We do not think using live online chat / chat bots to access advice is compatible with our current approach / resources, pending further work on our digital strategy |
| Expand offer in schools / for professionals | * Create partnerships that build capacity, improve understanding of SEND and Amaze, shape services and grow our reach in Sussex * We don’t have resources or capacity to work in all schools, or to develop as a training or information hub for professionals. This is unlikely to change in the 5 years ahead. We will however respond to partnership opportunities as they arise, where the outcome of any collaboration will benefit families of children and young people with SEND. |
| Amaze is confusing and difficult to navigate | * Have clear information and guidance on what parent carers can expect and ask for from Amaze. Use pictorial / accessible resources to strengthen visual representation of support pathways within Amaze. We will look to do this with flowcharts on our website/infographics/podcasts * Continue efforts to explain how we communicate eg [Amaze INFO, RESOURCES & CHANNELS](https://amazesussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/lana-downloads/2024/01/Amaze-INFO-RESOURCES-CHANNELS.pdf) * Strengthen communication with practitioners (schools, health visitors, GPs) to ensure they have an accurate understanding of our work * Have a simplified webpage to recommend services |
| Expand Amaze’s offer for young people | * Young people voice groups are working with Amazing Futures staff to decide on which activities are prioritised in our social groups and youth clubs. This includes embedding learning/training opportunities and maintain focus on wellbeing * Produce more resources for our new young people’s website, including videos eg on themes such as ‘accepting your diagnosis’, or showing stories eg of young people who transitioned into adult services * Young trustees at Amaze, in collaboration with young people, volunteers and staff, are writing a youth strategy during 2025/6 and refreshing our youth participation policy * We are already stretched fundraising for Amazing Futures for 14-25 year olds. We sadly can’t stretch capacity to develop Alternative Provision to education, or to work with under 14 year olds or 25+, and this would risk diluting our focus on preparation for adulthood. |
| Expand Amaze activities to include more fun days or nights out, trips, soft play, silent discos, trusted trader marketplace etc | * Recognise ‘fun’ is important to families as part of what Amaze offers. Build fun into our activities as much as possible * Maintain Family Fun Days and the Compass Card discounts * Diversify our fundraising events to be more inclusive/accessible to all * Running anything more than this needs capacity we don’t currently have and risks diluting our focus * Provide information on SEND friendly activities via a SEND Noticeboard * We cannot provide a PA or trusted traders’ service. This would be too much a stretch and is beyond our charitable objects |
| Introduce charging for services | * We already raise funds from our community, via individual donations, events and other activities. We risk losing this income if we were to charge families to access our help * Parents are overwhelmed and already have high costs, so we are reluctant to add to this, especially in the current financial climate * We will strengthen our ask for donations around benefits advice, when families might have more capacity to give to Amaze after a successful DLA/PIP claim, and we will encourage ‘paying it forward’ for others * We will be creative in combining inclusive community fundraising / support |
| Shout louder for SEND change | * Raise awareness of and talk to how hard life is for families. This is important for influencing and to validate experiences/build solidarity * Ensure parent carers’ views are always kept at forefront of commissioners’ and decision-makers’ priorities by highlighting challenges. * Take on board specific asks from the community raised during the consultation eg advocate for better SEND training for teachers, advocate for inclusive curriculum which educates CYP on disabilities/difference/being mindful etc, and produce resources for parent carers on working with schools * Work with and host the Parent Carer Forums |
| Address staff overload | * Strengthen the core of Amaze, eg admin, finance * Look at our structure and ensure we’re as well organised as we can be * Complete an IT audit and develop a digital strategy in year 1 of the strategy * Strengthen priority setting, work planning, team meetings/structures and effective supervision * Enhance our staff wellbeing offer eg subscribe to an Employee Assistance Programme * Be clear what are highest impact interventions and who how we are measuring impact and demonstrating benefit to families |