



for disabled children
and young people in Sussex

Amaze Level of Service Policy

Amaze endeavours to offer all its users the level of service that they seek and to look for ways to develop new services that our users would like us to offer. Nevertheless, there will be times when decisions have to be made about who gets a service or what level of service to offer. This may be to achieve our equal opportunities aims i.e. identifying individuals who need a greater or lesser degree of input from Amaze to achieve equivalent outcomes. It may be because demands on our services exceed our capacity at a given time and choices have to be made in prioritising the support we can give. Many Amaze staff are part-time, volunteers' availability will vary and funding is always tight. Many of our services can be offered at different levels and Amaze staff need to routinely assess the level to offer i.e. we can post out a Compass form, complete it over the phone or do it face to face; we can give education advice through email, a telephone conversation or by offering face to face support.

Making a decision about the service we offer an individual involves a number of considerations outlined in this policy. Amaze aims to be transparent and open with parents in how we apply this policy. An underlying principle for Amaze is that we should work in ways that build resilience in the long term for individuals and for the community of families who include a disabled child or young person.

1. Basic eligibility for an Amaze service

To get an Amaze service a parent, carer, child or young person must fall within our remit. They must meet both of the following criteria:

- Child/young person has special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or they or their parent or carer has reason to think that they may
- Child/young person is under the age of 25.

We define parents as anyone who has a parental role in the care of a child or young person. We can only offer generic advice and signposting to other family members or carers. We work with foster parents whilst bearing in mind that parental responsibility lies with the local authority.

Each Amaze service may have additional criteria which are recorded on a table (Appendix 1). Criteria for the same service may be different in each of the Amaze geographical delivery areas.

Most Amaze services are primarily aimed at parents, carers and/or young people. Some are also aimed at professionals e.g. training or publications. Some services may work with the young person alongside their parent. We offer some services direct to a young person alone e.g. help with PIP for a young person not living with a parent/carer or a Compass Card for over 16s who self-register. The minimum age for young people to access services varies e.g. the Amazing Futures project is for young people aged 14+. SENDIASS can work with children and young people but it is unusual for the service to work directly with children aged under 13.

A few services such as training and publications may be provided to people outside our area at a cost, but all other services are free to access for parents and young people. When groups linked to Amaze meet in a social setting or for an outing or event participants may need to pay their own costs e.g. for travel or refreshments.

When we are approached for help by anyone who falls outside our remit we will try to offer basic signposting to a more appropriate service e.g. to the SENDIAS service in their area, or a Carer's organisation for carers of adults.

2. Funding

Amaze has a contract to provide some services, has grant funding for others and has fundraised for others as identified in Amaze's strategic plan. We can only commit to provide services for which we have funding and resources. Some of our services are funded sufficiently to allow us to offer a higher level of service to individual parents in some areas.

Services may expand or contract due to funding changes and levels of funding may vary between geographical areas for the same type of service. At times we may target a particular group or area to fulfil the aims or requirements of specific grants or funders.

Occasionally we may choose to give a service for which we do not currently have full funding to pilot new ways of working or demonstrate need.

Changes in the service we can offer due to changes in funding will be approved by the Trustees and must be clearly communicated to all staff/volunteers and to families/service users.

3. Referrals and signposting

Amaze is an "opt in" service; we work with parent carers and young people at their request. This means we do not offer a service solely on the basis of a referral from another agency and encourage referrers to help the parent carer or

young person make contact with us themselves. We make exceptions to this if the referrer has the parent carer or young person's permission to speak to us and any of the following applies:

- it avoids a barrier to the parent carer or young person taking up our service e.g. English is not their first language or they are anxious about contacting new services
- it gives the parent carer a more effective and supported experience because they have just explained their situation to another agency and do not have to repeat it immediately
- it is part of an agreed referral system for a specific service and this is specified in the funding or partnership agreement for that service

We will also take into account the professional opinion of referrers and may use this to give additional priority to a parent carer or young person.

If we receive an invitation to attend a meeting organised by another agency e.g. a Team Around the Family meeting or an Annual Review, we will consider whether this will enable us to support the parent carer or young person more effectively. If this is in an area where we have funding that allows for face to face work, we may be able to attend if the parent carer or young person requests this and it forms a useful part of an active process of casework with them.

In some cases, we may decide that another service can better help the individual because they offer greater expertise than Amaze on a particular issue or a different form of support. In this case we will refer or signpost. We may do this instead of or in addition to offering information or support ourselves. We will explain this and make a record of the person or organisation that we are suggesting can offer the right support or advice instead of or as well as Amaze. We will also endeavour to give the person adequate information about how to reach that service e.g. contact details; any eligibility criteria; whether they can self-refer or need to go via a professional such as their GP.

We may signpost to a specific service e.g. give contact details of a specialist advice service on debt or housing issues. We may suggest that a parent carer or young person could take up other help and suggest options e.g. parent groups, local counselling services or national advice lines. In appropriate circumstances we may make a referral using the relevant process and with the parent carer or young person's permission. We will liaise with the other service if appropriate and with the user's permission.

Before signposting or referring to another service or organisation Amaze staff should consider the individual's ability to follow this through and give additional support to help them do so if possible. Referral or signposting should only be made to services and organisations that we are confident are reliable and competent. Many of these will be listed in Amaze publications or on the Local Offer for their area. If we give someone details of an organisation that we do not

know well, we must make this clear. Occasionally the nature of an enquiry may mean it is appropriate to give information about a private or “for profit” service e.g. a hair dresser who welcomes disabled children or a therapist in private practice. But this must not be in the form of a recommendation i.e. we might say “other parents have told us this was helpful”.

4. Use of waiting lists

Amaze uses date order or waiting list systems to give fair access to services where demand exceeds immediate capacity and it would be difficult to apply another form of prioritisation fairly or accurately. The SENDIASS advice line is a universal services in high demand and information in initial messages will be limited. Therefore, messages and emails to the helplines are responded to in date/time order unless the message suggests an overriding need to give an exceptional priority. Compass registration forms are normally processed and Compass Cards issued in the order in which they were received, with some discretion in exceptional circumstances. Compass renewals are dealt with in order of expiry date of current card. Amaze courses can only be run as funding allows so for some courses waiting lists are held and parents/carers or young people on these lists are given first chance to book a place when courses are advertised.

5. Decision-making about the level of service offered

Many Amaze services can be offered at different levels, perhaps varying from “self-service” resources, through brief phone advice to intensive one to one help. Staff may also have to prioritise the timing of support. For these services, the factors Amaze staff should take into account to help them decide how urgent or how intense a level of service to offer include:

i. Issues affecting the parent/carer/young person/family

Are there factors that would mean the parent carer or young person would have increased difficulty in understanding available information or communicating their views/needs? Or that mean the family is at risk of experiencing discrimination or difficulty in accessing services? This could include:

- The physical, mental or emotional health and wellbeing of the person accessing the service
- The learning difficulties, literacy skills or other additional needs of the person accessing the service
- First language of the person accessing the service is not English
- No access to the internet
- Young person living alone or without family support
- Foster or adoptive parents including kinship carers

- Families affected by domestic violence
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Families that are homeless or living in temporary accommodation
- Travellers
- Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic community families
- LGBTQ parents
- Families where more than one member of the family has SEND
- Families who have to interact with several services due to the complexity of the child's needs
- Families who have had negative experiences of services in the past

ii. Impact on the child/young person and family

Is there a risk of harm to the child/young person e.g. bullying, risk of family breakdown, child protection?

Is the child/young person missing out on entitlements or services where this is likely to cause significant disadvantage e.g. not receiving fulltime education, risk of exclusion, not receiving benefits and family living in poverty?

Urgency of the situation e.g. will an opportunity/deadline be missed if support is not given now?

iii. Empowering for the future

What level of support will best enable this individual to deal with a similar situation in the future? Sometimes this will mean Amaze staff doing less e.g. telling them where to find out information rather than finding it for them; talking through preparing for a meeting rather than offering to attend with them. At other times it may mean extra input at a certain point so as to share skills or knowledge that a parent or young person can use these in the future e.g. doing a "model" first adult PIP with a parent carer and young person of 16. Where we are offering a more intense level of support, we should always be looking at how to step down from this in a way that leaves the parent or young person able to go forward by themselves.

iv. Access to other sources of support

Where a parent/carer or young person already has access to alternative advice or support with this issue or on this occasion, we will consider whether this alternative will be adequate and whether having multiple supporters may be inefficient or confusing. In these circumstances we will explain this to the individual and make a record of the person or organisation that we expect to be providing support or advice instead of Amaze. We will liaise with this other service if appropriate and with the person's permission. This could include

providing the other service with information or advice based on our experience or expertise.

v. Effective working

We will always consider whether our input can have a useful outcome e.g. we would not give extensive help with a DLA claim where we are clear that the child does not meet the criteria for this benefit. But we may support a parent through an education appeal that we feel is unlikely to succeed because we can help them make informed choices at all stages and reduce distress or anxiety.

Offering a higher level of support in some situations may use a disproportionate amount of our resources e.g. a meeting for a young person at a college far from Sussex or translating the whole of a longer resource into another language. An alternative level of support would be offered e.g. a conversation to prepare for the meeting; a meeting with an interpreter to discuss issues needing to be addressed for the family.

We may want to offer a higher level of support than other factors would indicate if this gives us the opportunity to do some valuable networking or fact finding e.g. doing a DLA claim for a parent who is in a position to signpost other parents to us subsequently, or attending an event at a school where we want to build relationships with the staff and parents. Or we may offer an enhanced service to encourage use of Amaze services in areas or amongst groups that we have identified as having low take up of our services relative to need.

vi. Supporting Amaze volunteers

As part of our appreciation for the time volunteers and trustees give Amaze we aim to give them active support if the need arises for them to use an Amaze service.

Amaze staff will often need to use their own judgment about applying this policy but should make use of management, supervision and team meetings to explore any issues and maintain fairness and consistency.

Responsibilities and Breach of Policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. For staff, breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue. Please refer to our **Disciplinary Policy** for further information on disciplinary procedures. Staff who are unsure about whether something they propose to do might breach this policy, should seek advice from their manager or the policy owner.

Communication of the Policy

This policy will be available in the policies folder and hard copies will be available on request. New staff and volunteers will be made aware of the policy during their induction with their manager. Training will be available on request. Reminders will be given at staff meetings.

Related Forms / Associated Documents

Criteria to access Amaze services (see below)

Related Policies

Please also see the following related policies:

- **Disciplinary Policy**

VERSION CONTROL / RECORD OF CHANGES

Review date	Version	Section	Changes/Comments
August 2017	2	All	Full Review of Policy
December 2017	3	All	Updated
February 2018	4	All	Approved by Management Committee
March 2022	5	All	Full Review of Policy; Approved by Management Committee April 2022

Appendix 1

Criteria to access Amaze services

There are two criteria for ALL Amaze services for children and young people and their parents/carers in parental role:

1. Child/young person has special educational needs or disabilities or they/their parent think that they may.
2. Child/young person is under the age of 25.

Each service may also have additional criteria which need to be checked on the table below:

Service	Brighton and Hove	East Sussex
SENDIASS (Information Advice and Support)	Family lives in Brighton and Hove (B&H) or child/young person attends pre-school, school or college in B&H or is a B&H looked after child.	Family lives in East Sussex (ESx) or child/young person attends school, pre-school or college in ES or is an ESx looked-after child
Workshops and training	Individual conditions will apply for each training offer	Individual conditions will apply for each training offer
Compass Card & Register	Child/young person lives in Brighton and Hove (B&H), or attends school or college in B&H, or is a B&H looked-after child. Child/young person would usually be in receipt of DLA/PIP or have an EHC Plan but not always if there is evidence that they have a disability or special educational need that significantly affects their daily life	Service not delivered by Amaze
DLA & PIP Support	Family lives in Brighton and Hove (B&H) or child/young person attends school in B&H or is a B&H looked-after child or is a long-term in-patient at RACH.	Family lives in East Sussex (ESx) or child/young person attends school in ESx or is an ESx looked-after child

Amazing Futures peer support and careers support	Family lives in Brighton and Hove (B&H) or child/young person attends school or college in B&H or is a B&H looked-after child. Young person must be 14+	Family lives in East Sussex (ESx) or child/young person attends school or college in ESx or is an ESx looked-after child. Young person must be 14+
Face 2 Face groups and befriending	Family lives in Brighton and Hove (B&H) or child attends school in B&H or is a B&H looked-after child . For 1:1 befriending: there should be a recent diagnosis or significant change.	Family lives in East Sussex (ESx) or child/young person attends school in ESx or is an ESx looked-after child. For 1:1 befriending: there should be a recent diagnosis or significant change.
NDP Family Navigation and Training	Family lives in Brighton and Hove or has B&H GP and child up to 18 is on B&H neurodevelopmental conditions pathway (ADHD, autism, Tics/tourettes only).	Family lives in East Sussex or has E Sx GP and child up to 25 is on B&H neurodevelopmental conditions pathway
Parent Carer Forum	PaCC hosted at Amaze but own criteria	ESPCF hosted at Amaze but own criteria