

Who else can help?

Some families will receive support from an Independent Supporter as they go through the EHC plan process. All parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can also use their local **Information Advice and Support Service** (IASS) at any time. In West Sussex this is provided by West Sussex Parent Partnership Service. If you don't have an Independent Supporter, you can contact them for impartial information and advice during the EHC plan process. The IASS can also help with other things including:

- SEN support at school/preschool/college
- How to request assessment for an EHC plan if your child needs one
- Issues once you have an EHC plan i.e. appeals, annual reviews
- Health and social care
- Support groups and leisure activities

Young people will also be able to get information, advice and support soon. Details about where to get this service should be available shortly.

Another place to find out information about what is available for children and young people with SEN and disabilities in your area is the **Local Offer** published on line by the local authority www.westsussex.local-offer.org

Contact details:

For Independent Support (Amaze):

0300 123 9186

independentsupportWSx@amazebrighton.org.uk

For Information, Advice and Support (West Sussex Parent Partnership Service):

0845 075 1008

parent.partnership@westsussex.gov.uk

About Amaze

Amaze is an independent charity that offers information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities. We offer a range of services in Brighton and Hove. In West Sussex we only provide the Independent Support service.

Amaze

Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton BN1 3XG
Tel: 01273 772289
Email: info@amazebrighton.org.uk
www.amazebrighton.org.uk



Independent Supporters



For parents carers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

in West Sussex

What is an Independent Supporter?

An Independent Supporter is someone to offer parents and young people extra advice and support while they go through the process of getting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. From September 2014, EHC plans are replacing Statements of special educational needs.

Independent Supporters have been introduced to help with new plans and transfers from Statements, to add to the support from Plan Coordinators. The Independent Support service in West Sussex is provided by Amaze with funding from the government. The service is independent but works in partnership with the local authority, schools, colleges and other services. Young people (16 to 25) can have Independent Support with their parents or separately.

All of the Independent Support team have a DBS (formerly CRB) check and complete accredited national training.



What does an Independent Supporter do?

An Independent Supporter works alongside a parent and/or young person during the weeks when they are being assessed for an EHC plan, the plan is being written, discussed and then finalised. They will not take over, but will give a helping hand. They can:

- Explain what is happening and how you should be involved
- Make sure you feel able to get your views across
- Check you have the information you need, including on the Local Offer and Personal Budgets
- Attend meetings about the plan with you
- Look through reports with you to be sure you understand them fully
- Ensure you know when you have choices or decisions to make about the EHC plan
- Help you check through the EHC plan to see if you are happy with it.

Who can have an Independent Supporter?

Over the next couple of years a large number of families will be going through the EHC plan process and we cannot provide everyone with intensive support from an Independent Supporter. The aim is to offer advice and information to everyone who wants this, but extra help to parents and young people who might not be able to be properly involved in their EHCP plan without this. We will be honest and open about how we decide who gets what level of Independent Support.



How to ask for an Independent Supporter

Parents and young people can contact Amaze themselves to ask about getting an Independent Supporter. Or they can be referred by someone working with them such as the SENCO from their school or Plan Coordinator from the SEN team at the local authority.

Parents and young people in West Sussex can email independentsupportWSx@amazebrighton.org.uk or leave us a message on 0300 123 9186. We'll call you to offer advice and support over the phone, whilst working out with you whether you need the extra help of an Independent Supporter. If so we will match you up with one of the team.

If a practitioner working with you wants to make a referral they should get your permission first and then fill in the referral form available on the Independent Support West Sussex page of the Amaze website (amazebrighton.org.uk).