

INDEPENDENT SUPPORT

<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/independentsupport>

What is Independent Support?

“72% found the support they received from Independent Support had a positive impact”

- based on the first 100 independent evaluation responses received directly from parents and young people

The Children and Families Act 2014 has introduced new laws for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). From September 1, 2014, local authorities have a duty to replace statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) with a new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. In addition, they have a duty to publicise a Local Offer of the services and activities that are available to parents and young people. To support this change, government are funding an Independent Support service to assist parents through the new SEND assessment and planning process. This service will provide Independent Supporters in each local area as an additional resource for a time limited period to work directly with young people and the parents of children being assessed for an EHC plan.

Independent Supporters are individuals who are recruited and managed by the private, voluntary and community sector. They provide advice and support for parents of children with SEN, and young people with SEN, through the statutory assessment and EHC plan processes. Independent Supporters offer a range of time-limited support such as liaison across different agencies and advice on personal budgets. The level and nature of that support will be tailored to the particular needs of individual families. This service is independent from the local authority. Independent Supporters are recruited by the private, voluntary and community sectors and via the IAS Service.

Independent Support Providers are contracted through the programme which is managed by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC).

Find my Independent Support provider

Independent Support is funded by the Department for Education and currently operates across local authorities in England. Independent Support is not available to parents and young people who live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. However, ‘IS agencies’ can offer advice to help those families and young people who plan to move from Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland to England.

Independent Support is provided by both an Independent Support agency and the local Information Advice and Support Service (IASS) in each local authority area. Details of all IASS providing Independent Support can be found through the local offer links listed or alternatively visit: <http://www.iassnetwork.org.uk/find-your-iass/>

If advice is required then families and young people should first contact the IS agency in the local authority area they intend to move into. Alternatively, families and young people can contact the 'Information, Advice and Support Service' also located in the local authority. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at: independentsupport@ncb.org.uk.

[If you don't know which local authority you live in you can find out on the www.gov.uk website.](http://www.gov.uk)

Independent Support FAQs

What is Independent Support?

Independent Support is a government funded programme over 18 months to provide additional support to young people and parents during the implementation of the SEND reforms. It will provide Independent Supporters in each local area as an additional resource, for a time limited period. They will work directly with young people and the parents of children being assessed for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Independent Supporters are individuals who are recruited and managed by the private, voluntary and community sector. They provide advice and support for parents of children with SEN, and young people with SEN, through the statutory assessment and EHC plan processes. Independent Supporters offer a range of time-limited support, such as liaison across different agencies and advice on personal budgets. The level and nature of support will be tailored to the particular needs of individual families and this service is independent from the local authority. The Information Advice and Support (IAS) service recruits Independent Supporters and the contract is managed centrally by CDC.

What can they do for me?

An Independent Supporter can assist you through the transition from a statement (Statement of SEN and Learning Difficulties Assessments for children and young people with special educational needs) towards an EHC plan. The level and nature of that support will be tailored to the particular needs of individual families.

What can't an Independent Supporter do?

An Independent Supporter cannot prepare your EHC plan for you. They provide a guidance and support role to help you do this. This includes:

- Helping the parent or young person understand the local referral process and local offer;
- To act as a named contact person for the parent or young person during the EHC assessment and planning process;
- Supporting the parent or young person through the transfer of a Statement of SEN or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) to an EHC plan (transfer reviews);
- Working with parents of children who are new EHC referrals, and/or young people (and their parents) who are coming up to school leaving age and would have had a LDA under the old system;
- Helping a parent or young person understand the range of local services and supporting the parent or young person to decide who should contribute the information required for an EHC needs assessment and plan;

- Provide information to parents and young people on personal budgets;
- Signpost parents and young people to local IAS services (formerly Parent Partnership Service), when the issue is outside the remit of an Independent Supporter.

How do I find Independent Supporter?

Independent Supporters are recruited and managed locally. A full list of Independent Support providers can be found [here](#).

What is the Council for Disabled Children's role?

Independent Support is Government funded and CDC will manage the process and oversee an independent evaluation. Governance information and IS board meeting minutes can be found under the [Resources](#) section of this website.

How are you going to measure your success?

The Department for Education have commissioned the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to evaluate the programme from the start. They are developing, with CDC, a set of success criteria to address a range of issues. These include the number of IS recruited, geographical spread, and parents or young people supported and family experience and quality of EHC plans. The evaluation will run from 2014-2016.

Do we have any early indicators on how Independent Supporters are being received to date?

Based on the first 100 independent evaluation responses received on the 'user survey' directly from parents and young people, we know:

- 98% said the support was available when they needed it
- 72% found the referral process extremely easy
- 72% found the support they received from IS had a positive impact
- When asked about their experience of EHC assessment or moving from Statements to an EHC plan 76% said they felt fully able to express their views and felt listened to
- 93% found the Independent Support service very or extremely useful
- 90% would like further support on EHC planning in the future
- 80% would recommend IS services
- 92% were very or completely satisfied with the support received through IS