

**independent  
support**



# **Independent Support**

## **A quick parents guide**

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# Where did *Independent Support* come from?

- The Children and Families Act 2014 will change the way that children with special educational needs and disabilities receive support.
- From 1 September 2014 Statements of Special Educational Need will change to Education, Health and Care plans (EHC).
- An EHC plan brings a child or young person's education, health and social care needs into a single, legal document.



To support this, Edward Timpson MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families, announced additional funding for *independent supporters* to help parents and young people navigate through the new EHC planning process.



# So what are *Independent Supporters*?

## They are...

- individuals that are recruited and deployed by the private, voluntary and community sector or via the Parent Partnership Service (now known as Information, Advice and Support Services);
- there to provide advice and support for parents of children with SEN, and young people with SEN, through the EHC processes;
- there to work alongside parents by offering a range of time-limited support such as liaison across different agencies and advice on personal budgets;
- there to offer support that can be tailored to the particular needs of individual parents and young people;
- to act on behalf of the parent and young person and independent from the local authority.



# But will organisations work together?

Yes...

each Parent Partnership Service and IS agency under contract have been asked to quickly foster good working relationships so that parents and young people have information about, and can access, ***Independent Supporters*** from 1st September 2014 onwards.

This will include making sure that by the end of October 2014 we have in each local authority area:

- A clear local referral protocol that has the support of other local partners, which includes the local Parent Carer Forum;
- A public 'Memorandum of Understanding' that sets out the local offer to parents and young people so there is no confusion on the process to access to ***Independent Support***.



# So how can *Independent Supporter* help me?

## For parents and young people they will:

- help you to understand the local referral process and local offer;
- act as a named contact person throughout the EHC assessment and planning process;
- focus on the main task of helping you to transfer a Statement of SEN or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) to an EHC plan (transfer reviews);
- help you to put together the one page profile for your child or young person;
- work with you if you are new to EHC referrals or if you have had a LDA under the old system;
- liaise across a range of local services and help you to gather the information required for an EHC plan;
- provide you with information to help you understand personal budgets;
- signpost you to Information Advice and Support Services (IASS) when the issue is outside the remit of an *Independent Supporter*.





# What are the principles that underpin the role?

**Section 19** of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), **must** have regard to:

- the **views, wishes and feelings** of the child or young person, and the child's parents;
- the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, **participating as fully as possible in decisions**, and being **provided with the information and support** necessary to enable participation in those decisions;
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them **achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.**



# But doesn't this service already exist?

**Yes...** some support for parents and young people does exist already in the system. And some families are also able to access a key worker to support them.

However, the new SEN arrangements from September 2014 will require local authorities to provide broader information, advice and support across education, health and social care services.

The truth is that the level of support available for families isn't enough to meet the need, and ***Independent Supporters*** will be provided as 'additional support' and aim help to address this shortfall.



# Isn't this encouraging people to just become dependent on support?

## Not at all...

parents and young people do often need help and **Independent Supporters** will offer a range of help, targeted around the assessment and EHC Plan processes.

Although the level and nature of support will be tailored to meet the particular needs of a family, it will be time limited.

At its heart, **Independent Support** is intended to provide targeted support so parents get the right information at the right time to make the choices they need to.



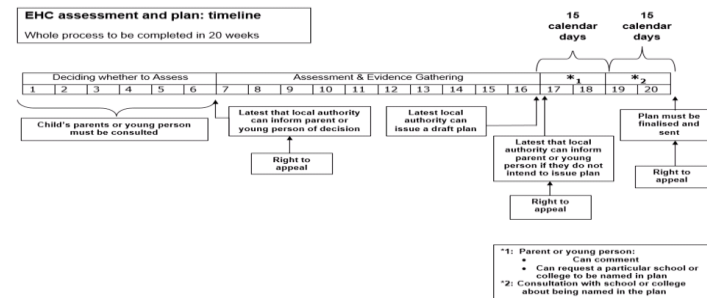


# How will the new EHCP process work?

Many ***Independent Supporters*** will follow a locally agreed process when offering support to a parent or young person.

Support may be designed around a 20 week period and achieved with time limited sessions with the parent or young person.

Parents and young people should first refer to their local referral protocols to understand what their local offer and level of support expected to be provided.



# How can I access an *Independent Supporter*?

You should first contact your local Parent Partnership Service (now known as Information, Advice and Support Services), who will be best placed to tell you of the local arrangement and signpost you to the appropriate 'starting point' of the local referral pathway.

A list of the Parent Partnership Services and IS agencies can be found by local authority area by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/media/638840/listoforgsundercontract-august2014-final.pdf>



# Is there further reading materials available?

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Access the new SEN Code of Practice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

The Children and Families Act 2014:

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/pdfs/ukpga\\_20140006\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/pdfs/ukpga_20140006_en.pdf)

Useful document on Personal Budgets – In Control:

<http://www.incontrol.org.uk/media/161498/support%20and%20aspiration%20personal%20budgets%20oct13.pdf>

