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INDEPENDENT SUPPORT: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Did you know that there is support to assist parents through the new SEND assessment and planning process?

The Children and Families Act 2014 has introduced new laws for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). From 1st September 2014, local authorities have a duty to replace statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) with a new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan as well as 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.

How can an Independent Supporter help you?

An Independent Supporter can support you by:

- acting as a named contact;
- helping you to understand how to access services;
- helping you with an assessment to move you from a Statement of SEN to an EHC plan;
- helping you put together a one page profile;
- working with lots of different services to help you collect all the information needed for your EHC plan;
- giving you information to help you understand personal budgets;
- telling you how to get more information if you need it, or your Independent Supporter is unable to help you.

How good has 'Independent Support' been so far?

Although Independent Support is a new programme, the service provided is now embedded locally and works in partnership with the local authority, Information, Advice and Support Service and Parent Carer Forum.

In fact, based on the first 100 independent evaluation responses received 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



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- 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 service
- 92% were very or completely satisfied with the support received through IS

*results from the first 100 respondents to user survey.

Thinking of getting in touch with your local Independent Supporter?

There are a number of different ways in which parents can find out more about your local independent support service, for example –

- Visit the Council for Disabled Children's website by using the following link to find out who your local Independent Support provider is and how you can get in touch with them.
<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/news/january-june-2015/getting-in-touch-with-your-local-independent-supporter>
- Visit your local authority website and search for the 'Local Offer' where information on the services available to you can be found.
- Phone your local 'Information, Advice and Support Service' (IASS) or find them at
<http://www.iassnetwork.org.uk/find-your-iass/>

If you experience difficulties in finding your local service; please do not hesitate to get in touch with the IS team at: independentsupport@ncb.org.uk



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