



Independent Support Update

In 2014 The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) secured government funding to deliver the Independent Support Programme (ISP). This was always meant to be a short-term piece of funding to help support the introduction of the SEND reforms (Children & Families Act 2014).

Grants were awarded to both the Voluntary Sector and to existing Information Advice and Support Services (previously Parent Partnership Services) to provide Independent Support to families. In Norfolk funding came to the SENDIAS service and to SCOPE. Independent Supporters were trained nationally by the CDC and their role was to support Parents/carers and Young People through the Education Health and Care Assessment process. The role of the Independent Supporter finished once the final draft of the Plan was agreed. All other SEND Information Advice and Support continued to be delivered by SENDIASS staff.

The Independent Support Programme has now finished and funding has ended for both SENDIASS (end of June 2018) and SCOPE (end of July 2018). SENDIASS in Norfolk are holding a carry-forward amount from this grant (mainly due to post vacancies at various points during the contract) and are, therefore able to continue to offer the Independent Support Service until the end of the financial year. Niamh Keane will remain with the team in this role for three days a week.

SCOPE will no longer be able to offer an Independent Support Service. Families who require support through the EHC assessment process can contact SENDIASS.

The government have announced further funding for SEND. CDC and Contact are now working in partnership to deliver the Information Advice and Support Programme (IASP), including a national SEND Helpline (the helpline is not new and has been delivered by Contact, previously Contact a Family, for some years). Information Advice and Support (IAS) services have been invited to apply for funding to carry out a 'Review and Planning' process. Targeted funding may be available from April 2019 to IAS services to enable them to implement their plans and ensure compliance with the new minimum standards (due September 2018).

Local Authorities and CCGs will be expected to continue to fund IAS services now and into the future and will be expected to ensure that services are resourced sufficiently to meet identified need in the area.