



annual report 2011

Helping parents of children with special needs in Brighton and Hove

Chair and CEO's report 2010/11

Families with disabled children face many challenges: higher rates of family breakdown, poverty and social isolation; difficulties in finding relevant information; and challenges in getting their voices heard by professionals and decision makers. Amaze helps families to meet these issues head on and our range of services aims to ensure they're better informed, more confident about their own knowledge and skills and better able to cope.

Over the last year we helped more parents than ever before. They come back to us time and time again and recommend our services to friends. Our staff team continued to provide high quality services, despite facing a difficult time at the end of the year when we had to issue 'risk of redundancy' letters to everyone, following delays in budgets being agreed by core funders.

During this period, we reduced our administration costs and overheads by 27% and diversified our funding base by employing a part-time fundraiser who raised £80,000. We're confident Amaze has become a more resilient organisation as a result.

At the end of the day, we secured the majority of our core funding. We're grateful for the public support and lobbying from our supporters and

thank our key funding partners in the Council and NHS Brighton & Hove for their ongoing support – as well as the trusts, companies and individuals who've helped us reach our ambitious fundraising target.

Amaze knows parents are the key to improving the life chances of their disabled children and that they can bring their unique knowledge and experience to the table. That's why we have parent carers sitting on our Board of Trustees, why we employ parent carers in our staff team and why we support the parent carers who make up our Parent Carers Council (PaCC). There's now recognition of the need for parent carers to be equal partners in the decision-making process when developing services for disabled children and we'll work to ensure this continues.

2010/11 saw the final year of the national Aiming High programme which has funded many excellent, much needed, short break services across the city for families. It's positive Michael Gove has highlighted short breaks as one of the priorities he sets out for the expenditure of the new Early Intervention Grant (EIG) and we'll campaign for the maximum amount of Brighton

and Hove's EIG to be allocated to short breaks for disabled children. We will highlight to city decision makers how possible 'savings' to budgets for things like respite provision can end up costing more if families can't cope and need more expensive residential care support as a result.

The next few years will be difficult for families with disabled children, since public sector cuts and the rising cost of living affect them disproportionately. Over the coming year, Amaze will scrutinise potential changes from the recent SEN Green Paper and continue to provide local families with excellent impartial advice about their child's special educational needs. We'll press for more work to reduce levels of child poverty (half of disabled children live in or on the margins of poverty) and increase the level of financial inclusion for all families in the city through our DLA Project. As Contact a Family reports, families with disabled children are going without essentials like food (17%) and heating (23%). Statistics like these motivate us all at Amaze to push on with our vital work.

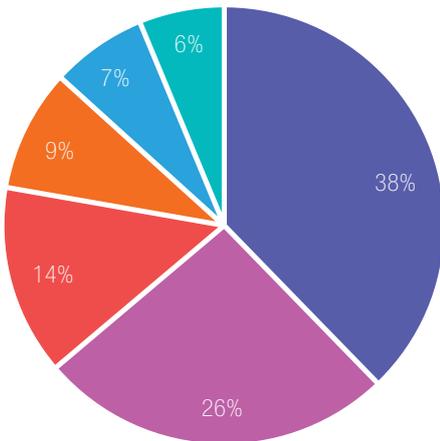
Rachel Travers, CEO
Hugh Clench, Chair of Trustees

'Trampolining did him the world of good – he absolutely adored it'

Parent commenting on Compass Card Activity



Subject of helpline calls



- Finance and Benefits
- Education and Transition
- Courses and Workshops
- Compass and Leisure/Respite/Childcare
- Publications and General Information
- Health, Social Care, Housing

'I felt more able to deal with it knowing there were such kind, caring people out there giving support.'
Parent commenting on the Amaze helpline

'It is absolutely fab and I don't know where I would be without it. It is hard to get through sometimes - but that's because it's very good!'
Parent commenting on the Amaze helpline

Helpline

Parents call the Amaze helpline for many reasons. Their child may have just been diagnosed and they want to know what it means and who can help. They may want to book an Amaze course, or get help with a DLA application. Perhaps they're anxious about a school meeting and want to talk it through. Or they could be having a tough week and need to talk to someone who understands. Whatever the reason, the helpline adviser listens and offers impartial information and advice. We know how important the helpline is by the numbers who call - so many, it's a challenge to respond to them all.

Key achievements in 2010/11

- Calls went up again this year: we had 3691 calls, 574 of which were from new callers. Calls have risen by 75% in the past four years
- Parents across the city use the helpline. This year most calls came from Moulsecoomb, East Brighton, Hangleton and Patcham
- Money or benefits and education issues are by far the most popular topics (see chart above)
- Parents report they're able to take action, or feel differently about their situation, following a helpline call

Transition Development

Many parents of young disabled people say the transition from childhood to adulthood is the most stressful time for them and their child. Amaze works with parents and professionals to try to improve this in Brighton and Hove and make transition a more positive experience for families.

Key achievements in 2010/2011

- Amaze ran a range of training courses and information sessions for parents, many of which were co-delivered with parents: Transition Information Sessions; Insiders Guide to Bringing up Teens with Special Needs; Planning for the Future (Wills and Trusts); Parents of Teens Get Together. These provided much-needed information, as well as an informal space for parents to meet others in a similar situation

Your expertise is always appreciated. I'm sure if I hadn't got you involved I would not have had the positive result.'

Parent after advice on transition issue

- We provided information to parents about the transition from childhood to adulthood by sending them our Through the Next Maze handbook and through up-to-date information on our website
- We gave individual advice and information to parents about transition-related issues

'She asked curious questions... but written down, it was just what I had wanted to say but could not on my own. Some things are hard to share, so it's important to be believed. When life seems a battle, this was an unexpected surprise.'

Parent commenting on the DLA project

The Disability Living Allowance (DLA) project

Hands-on help from an Amaze volunteer is often the only realistic chance parents have of claiming the extra benefits their child's entitled to. The extra money reduces stress and improves life chances and social inclusion for families with disabled children. But it's about more than just money; a volunteer offers parent carers an opportunity to talk to someone about the everyday challenges of bringing up their child, without feeling judged.

Key achievements in 2010/2011

- Amaze drafted 267 new DLA claims, an increase of 9% on last year. We calculate annual income generated from our DLA work is over £2 million, with a further £1 million through passported benefits like Carers Allowance. The extra income helps alleviate child poverty and other risk factors like family breakdown
- We reached the most disadvantaged families in Brighton and Hove: 40% were living on benefits; 45% were lone parents
- We continue to reach families most at risk of social exclusion. 22% had two or more disabled children; 21% had at least one parent with mental health problems; 15% had at least one parent managing their own physical disability or chronic illness. This year we supported 15 parents to claim DLA for themselves, as well as their children

The Compass and Compass Card

The Compass is Brighton and Hove's database of children with significant special needs and disabilities. It's held independently by Amaze on behalf of Brighton & Hove City Council. Registration is voluntary and all information created from it is anonymous. The Council and other local service providers use the data to plan and deliver services.

The Compass allows us to keep parent carers up to date on issues and services that matter to them. Every child on The Compass gets a free Compass Card, a leisure incentive card that provides discounts and special offers across the city.

Key achievements in 2010/11

- The number of children on The Compass rose by 7% to over 1450
- Compass Card offers increased by 63%. New offers include: two new soft play facilities; two new gyms; and Early Learning Centre discounts
- Our regular e-bulletin to Compass Card families took off, with around 900 families subscribed
- We ran a special needs area, the 'Amazing Zone', at TAKEPART Launch Day in June 2010, which was attended by over 500 people. We also produced a city-wide leisure guide for the event called 'Amazing Stuff' for children and adults with special needs
- We introduced three new Compass Card Activities: table tennis, trampolining and karate and kickboxing

Courses, workshops and events

Parents love Amaze courses and events because they know they offer relevant information and ideas; an opportunity to meet other parents in similar situations; and that they will be delivered in a parent-friendly style, usually with parent trainers taking the lead. This year we put on a regular programme of courses. We ran workshops in partnership with local professionals, including a Wills and Trusts seminar with a local solicitor and a Dyslexia workshop with the Language and Literacy Support Service. And we spoke at, or took our information stall to, all sorts of events to extend our reach to parents and professionals.

Key achievements in 2010/11

- Our three 'Triple P' positive parenting courses were much appreciated by parents who wanted

fresh ideas to help their child with their behaviour that take their special needs into account

- Our three 'Insiders Guide' courses built parents' resilience in bringing up disabled children, mixing practical knowledge with a look at the emotional journey they travel
- We ran two new courses. 'Ready Steady Secondary' dealt with the transition from primary to secondary school and 'Looking After You' got to grips with parental stress using pilates and relaxation techniques
- 'High Time for Parents', a major information event run with Aiming High and the Integrated Children's Disability Service, attracted hundreds of parents in November 2010
- After our courses, participants showed changes in parenting style, confidence and mental wellbeing.

'I know I'll take things I have learnt here with me into my family's future'

Parents commenting on Insiders Guide teens course

Publications and website

Being a parent of a child with special needs can be isolating and leave parents wondering what's out there to help their child. Amaze's range of publications helps parents feel connected and in control by opening up new opportunities and providing the right information at the right time.

Amaze information

- [Through the Maze handbook for parents](#)
- [Through the Next Maze handbook for parents of teenagers](#)
- [Out of Amaze termly newsletter](#)
- [Factsheets](#)
- [Amaze website www.amazebrighton.org.uk](http://www.amazebrighton.org.uk)
- [Compass Team News, an e-bulletin for parents of children on The Compass](#)

Key achievements in 2010/11

- Through the Maze is a bible for parents of children with special needs. We surveyed parents and professionals to check it's still a good way to make information available. After a resounding yes, a group of parents and professionals helped give it a thorough revamp
- We punch above our weight for a local website with 33,117 hits this year. A third organisation

bought content from our website to provide a similar site for parents in their area

- Our newsletter, 'Out of Amaze', now has an annual distribution of 12,000
- We added a new factsheet, 'Choosing Childcare', written in partnership with City Early Years and Childcare teams and parents. 'Fun Things to do for All Ages' and 'Tips for Claiming DLA' are our most popular factsheets

'It really delivers that sense of being part of a community, that this is 'typical life' for lots of other families.'

Parent commenting on Through the Maze

Independent Parental Supporter (IPS) Scheme

Education is fundamental to the wellbeing of all children and there can be extra worries and complications if a child has special needs. The IPS scheme plays a vital part in Amaze's role as the Parent Partnership Service for Brighton and Hove. The IPS Coordinator and volunteers offer parents one-to-one support to make sense of the education system and work through difficulties. They can support parents at meetings, help them understand reports and get their views down in writing. The support of an IPS is particularly appreciated when things are tricky - perhaps when a placement seems to be breaking down, or a child is at risk of exclusion. We help parents advocate for their child and encourage partnership with schools and services.

Key Achievements in 2010/2011

- We provided one-to-one support on education issues to 128 new families and gave ongoing help to many others
- We trained five new Independent Parental Supporters who joined our team of volunteers.
- We trained staff and volunteers to offer parents more advice and support on transition to secondary school and issues around the statementing process

'Thank you so much for our conversation. I felt really understood and supported by you.'

Parent who had IPS help



“We are in a very different place than we were two weeks ago”

Parent after urgent IPS casework

ART - Amaze Research and Training

ART offers a training, research and consultancy service by linking theory, research findings and the experience of parent carers and practitioners, to promote best practice locally, regionally and across the UK.

Key achievements in 2010/11

- 13 workshops, 'Good Practice Working with Parents of Disabled Children', delivered to professionals
- 10 local authorities commissioned ART to train parent groups in participation work
- Two Training4Trainers courses held in East Sussex and Calderdale so parents and

professionals can deliver Amaze's Insiders' Guide parent support course

- 'Money Matters' consultancy and workshop for professionals provided in Southampton and Kent
- 'Understanding the Parent Journey' delivered to Early Years Teachers, Health Visitors, Nurses and Social Workers studying at the University of Brighton
- Contributed to national 'Functional Map Expert Reference Group' to complete basis for standards and qualifications for the Work with Parents Workforce
- Work to integrate and share research and practice that promotes resilience building approaches to child and family support work continued to grow

- Two Resilient Therapy Communities of Practice completed. Inclusion of parents seen as one of the most valuable aspects of the programme
- Three 'Understanding Resilience' and three 'Becoming a Resilient Practitioner' sessions delivered to parent and professional groups
- ART organised a successful international 'Resilience Why Bother?' conference with the University of Brighton and parents co-delivered workshops at two other major conferences
- Senior ART Associate co-chaired the National Parent Carers Forum Network to take the parent participation agenda forward

Statement of financial activities

(Including income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2011

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2011 £	Total funds 2010 £
Incoming resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Grants	18,503	40,000	58,503	84,900
Donations	2,325	-	2,325	7,914
Bank interest	141	-	141	95
Fundraising	32,039	-	32,039	4,313
Incoming resources from charitable activities				
Grants	270,305	-	270,305	239,978
Services	37,860	-	37,860	91,628
Total incoming resources	361,173	40,000	401,173	428,828
Resources expended				
Fundraising costs	23,557	-	23,557	4,837
Charitable activities	306,489	56,562	363,051	411,238
Governance costs	2,059	-	2,059	1,939
Total resources expended	332,105	56,562	388,667	418,014
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the period	29,068	(16,562)	12,506	10,814
Accumulated funds at 31 March 2010	87,889	25,723	113,612	102,798
Accumulated funds at 31 March 2011	116,957	9,161	126,118	113,612

All amounts relate to continuing activities.

There have been no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the year and all surpluses or deficits have been accounted for on an historical cost basis.

A BIG THANK YOU...

To our funders

Grants and other funders

Brighton & Hove Advice Partnership, Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton & Hove Learning Disability Partnership Board, CUPP, Department for Education, NHS Brighton & Hove, Scottish Power Energy People Trust, Skills South East, Social Care Contracts, South Downs Health NHS Trust, University of Brighton

Donations and events

Baby Cow Productions, Breaking Trends Ltd, Mr & Mrs Briscoe, Charity Chuckle, Dean Wilson LLP, Elwood Wines, Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, Ferrero UK, Freemasons, Robert Griffin Photography, Hobbs Brighton, Miss S McDonald, Pete Ramskill, Rotary Brighton & Hove Breakfast, Rotary Club of Brighton, Sainsbury's New England Street, Soul in the City Choir, Waitrose Ltd, WeBop choir

Comedians: Steve Coogan, Simon Evans, Noel Fielding, Andi Osho, Count Arthur Strong and Seann Walsh

Marathon Runners: Micheal Bolland, Peter Brett, Julius Brinkworth, Noah Brinkworth, Neil Childerley, Alessandro Colombo, Mark Cooksley, Richard Cowper, Cliff Dargonne, Jake Hubbard, Kerry Mason, Alick Mighall, Kate Moore, Darren Packam, Mikyla Price, Jamie Prior, Andy Pumpphrey, Miles Raybould, Frank Swaisland, Alice Teahan, Jon Trigg, Paul Waltho, Fungi Woolnough-Murau

In addition, Amaze would like to thank all the fundraisers and donors who raised vital funds and increased awareness of our work. Although we cannot mention you all by name, we are so grateful for your continued support.

And to all our supporters

Amaze relies on the support of many different people and organisations. We're particularly indebted to those who have given their time, expertise and support. Limited space means we can't thank everyone individually, but the following deserve a special mention for their support in 2010/11.

Patrons

Henry Normal and Angela Pell

Trustees

Karin Smith, Chair person to Nov 11
Hugh Clench, Chair person from Nov 11
Ian Gillett, Treasurer
Diana Boyd
Kaye Duerdoth resigned Nov 11
Susmitha Gadiyar
Sally Howell
Carl McAdam resigned Nov 11
Debby Norris
Fungi Woolnough-Murau

Co-opted non-voting members

Jenny Brickell BHCC
Linda Hill

Staff

Rachel Travers:	Chief Executive Officer
Joanna Martindale:	Interim Director
Kim Aumann:	Director ART
Ros Cook:	Operations Director
Nicky Bagilhole:	Fundraiser
Lizzie Batten:	DLA Project Co-ordinator
Ann Blackburn:	Compass Development Worker
Zoe Brinkworth:	Finance Manager
Tina Brownbill:	Database Manager
Debbie Collins:	Parent Participation Worker
Nicola Keene:	Database Administrator
Charlotte Moroney:	Publications & Website Manager
David Natha-Gregory:	Helpline Advisor
Janet Poole:	IPS Project Co-ordinator
Holly Watson:	Database Administrator
Sue Winter:	Transition Development Worker

Freelance workers and parent trainers

Karin Anjos:	Parent trainer
Helen Arnold Jenkins:	Parent trainer
Carrie Britton:	Consultant and Senior ART Associate
Sandra Chitty:	Parent trainer
Professor Angie Hart	
Shirley May:	IT Support worker
Josie Melia:	ART Associate
Emma Parker:	Parent trainer
Claire Peligry:	Parent trainer
Samantha Selway:	Parent trainer
Kim Smith:	Parent trainer

PaCC steering group members and parent representatives

Nicola Gibson and Ruby Kearns: PaCC Co-Chairs
Sam Bayley, Chrysi Brown, Susmitha Gadiyar, Sharon Garcia, Martin Jones, Gillian Kitchener
Amanda Mortensen, Sarah Pickett, Juliette Teague
Marian Tipler, Doreen Wallace, Jill Weeks

Social work student

Jess White

Volunteers

Zara Arnold, Beth Bagilhole, Vivian Barton, Keilly Blann, Natalia Borg, Linda Clapham, Oswald Corke, Alison Field, Clare Galler, Karolina Grabowska, Brenda Hinchliffe, Hannah Jeffries, Julia Konig, Paula Little, Brenda Mann, Jane Martin, Wendy McCarthy, Lisa Mitchell, Bruce Piper, Kamela Ram-Henman, Lorraine Roberts, Sharon Rose, Susan Rosenfield, Samantha Selway, Joanne Shannon, Audrey Sharma, Alison Sheen, Julie Stokes, Becky Street Hartfield, Edward Street Hartfield, Caroline Slater, Lynne Swaisland, Sue Timpson, Dr Bob Towler, Jill Weeks, Ann Wilkinson, Helen Wyatt

Community partners

Bandbazi Circus Theatre, Brighton & Hove libraries, Brighton Bowlplex, Brighton Dome and Festival, Brighton Marathon, Brighton Science Festival, Circus Starr, City College Hair and Beauty Salon, Community Base, Deans Leisure Centre, Duke of York's Cinema, Early Learning Centre, Funplex, The Gallery Restaurant at City College, Hollingbury Table Tennis Club, Kidz Stuff Festival, King Alfred Leisure Centre, Komedia Brighton, Monkey Bizness, Moulsecoomb Community Leisure Centre, Odeon Brighton, Prince Regent Swimming Complex, Right Here, Royal Pavilion and Museums, Sama Organisation, Sea Life Brighton, Spring Barn Farm Park, St Luke's Swimming Pool, Sussex Central YMCA, Stanley Deason Leisure Centre, Stoneywish Nature Reserve, Sussexsport, Theatre Royal Brighton, The Latest, The Triangle, Toddlers' Gym, Washbrooks Family Farm, Westow's World of Play, ZT Kids Fit Skool

'Amaze volunteering is the best. I really enjoy meeting parents. A successful claim can generate £8,000 to £12,000 a year and families spend it on what matters most to them.'

Parent commenting on DLA project volunteering.



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