

Independent Parental Supporters



What is an Independent Parental Supporter?

The Special Educational Needs revised Code of Practice recommends that all parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) should have access to an Independent Parental Supporter (IPS) if they would like one. An Independent Parental Supporter is a person who can support parents of children with special educational needs in making decisions concerning their children.

What can an Independent Parental Supporter do?

Independent Parental Supporters are independent of the decision making professionals. This means that there will be no conflict of interest that could influence their ability to give parents unbiased, neutral information.

An IPS can offer support by:

- Providing information or helping parents to locate information.
- Helping parents to express their views about their child's needs.
- Attending meetings with parents.
- Visiting schools with parents.
- Helping parents to talk through the options available for their child.

An IPS does **NOT**:

- Make decisions for parents
- Tell parents what they should do
- Attend meetings or write reports in parent's absence
- Help parents with issues unrelated to your child's special educational needs.

Who might the Independent Parental Supporter be?

An IPS is someone who parents are able to trust. It is someone who can support parents in an objective way and who can help them make their own decisions.

An IPS could be:

- a friend, relative or neighbour
- a professional with knowledge of special educational needs but who does not have a conflict of interest.
- a parent of another child with special educational needs who can draw on personal experience of the process.
- a representative of a voluntary organisation, parent group or other support group.
- a trained volunteer from the Parent Partnership/IPS Scheme.

Parents are encouraged to suggest their own IPS but they can ask for a volunteer from the Parent Partnership Independent Parental Supporters Scheme if they wish.

How long will the Independent Parental Support be able to provide support?

That depends, some parents/carers feel that an initial visit and occasional telephone contact provides the level of support they need. Other parents/carers need regular visits and ongoing support, particularly when their child is undergoing a statutory assessment of special educational needs.

How can I access an Independent Parental Supporter through the Parent Partnership Service?

You can telephone, write or email to the Parent Partnership Officer at the address below.

The Parent Partnership Officer will allocate you an Independent Parental Supporter as quickly as possible and arrange for her/him to make contact with you.