

independent support in Cheshire East

A free and impartial service designed to help parents and young people navigate through the Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment Process

What does an Independent Supporter do?

An Independent Supporter provides time limited impartial information and support to families and young people with special educational needs who are going through the process of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment, including a transfer from a Statement of Special Educational Needs.



Who is an Independent Supporter?

An Independent Supporter is someone who has been appointed, supported and supervised by a local service provider or the Information, Advice and Support Service, both under contract with the Council for Disabled Children (CDC). They have completed accredited training provided by the CDC before offering impartial information and support to families and young people. In Cheshire East the organisations are Edge Inclusion Partners and Cheshire East Information, Advice and Support.

When can you use an Independent Supporter?

An Independent Supporter can support you at any stage of the EHC assessment process.

What can an Independent Supporter do to help?

- Explain the EHC needs assessment and how an EHC plan is developed
- Explain who does what and when, for example the Local Authority services
- Help you to recognise the difference between goals, aspirations and outcomes
- Ensure you have all the information you need to make a decision e.g. how to request a personal budget, how to choose a school or setting
- Provide impartial information and support for you to be confident to express your views
- Be a point of contact throughout the EHC Assessment if you wish.

How does an Independent Supporter help?

- They make sure you have all the information you need for the EHC Assessment
- Help to capture the views of the family for section A - parent, child and young person views
- Help you prepare for and support you at meetings during the planning process
- Translate any jargon
- Review a proposed EHC plan with you if one is issued
- Signpost to further advice and support such as the local Information, Advice and Support Service when queries fall outside of the Independent Supporter role.



What can't an Independent Supporter do?

An Independent Supporter cannot prepare your EHC plan for you, the Local Authority decide whether to issue a EHC plan or not at the end of the assessment. An Independent Supporter provide a guidance and support role to help you do this. Parents and young people who require additional support outside the remit of an Independent Supporter are referred to their local Information, Advice and Support Service.

How to access the service

You can choose which service you would like to support you. Please contact EDGE Inclusion or Cheshire East Information, Advice and Support to access an Independent Supporter.

"They (ISs) are on my side ; they are like family members, I can say anything to them" (Parent)

"I understand the process only because [IS] was there to explain language and stages" (Parent)

"We need more information about the importance of the plan. The letter says if you need help you can go to the IS but if you don't know you need it...you don't know what you don't know."



"I find it invaluable. I can't imagine a parent getting through it without support... I'd hate for a parent not to have had the support I've had. I can't imagine going in their [review meeting] without that" (Mother of daughter, age 19 with cerebral palsy)



**Email: is@edgeinc.co.uk
Tel: 07947 100727**

Edge is a Community Interest Company which provides a free and impartial Independent Support service in four North West Local Authorities for children, young people and their families.

We can help with a new Education, Health and Care needs assessment or a transfer from a statement or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) to an EHC Plan and at an Annual Review of a EHC Plan. Our highly trained Independent Supporters can provide support and guidance throughout the process.



**Email: ceias@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 123 5166**

On 1st September 2014, the Parent Partnership Service Cheshire East became the Cheshire East Information, Advice and Support (IAS) Service. Our free service is available to parents, children and young people living in the Cheshire East area.

We can help by providing access to impartial guidance and support on matters relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability, including the law, local policy and practice, the Local Offer, Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and plans and disagreements.