

**Independent Support Service (Southend)**

Scope  
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Dear Denise

The Independent Support Service managed by Scope in Southend on sea has been operational since September 2014. In this time we have supported over 50 families in a 1-2-1 capacity and shared information regarding the Education, Health and Social Care process to hundreds of parents, young people and professionals. Whatever the circumstances of the engagement, there is always an emphasis on how to incorporate "wider outcomes", beyond that of educational attainment, for the child or young person, so that they can live fulfilling lives.

We use person centred approaches to understand what is important to and important for the young person and child, ensuring that the process of EHCP is personalised and forward thinking. Frequently as part of the process we identify that friendships and socialising are pivotal points that underpin where they want to go, and who they want to be.

It can be captured or categorised as a need for independence; the independence is so that they can have friends, see friends, meet friends. The overarching term independence can lose the impact of what a young person, child is saying. It isn't necessarily about getting married, having a job or children. It is about being included, feeling liked, having fun, laughing and making other people laugh; having a sense of self-worth and value.

However where a young person has complex needs or is educated outside of the borough or comes from a chaotic family, anything that has an influencing factor on them achieving this through 'normal' routes makes this harder and harder to take beyond lip service. It may be that they have spent many years feeling lonely that knowing how to initiate friendship is extremely hard because they have not developed those skills and require an intermediary to support this.

In our role we share information and offer support we also signpost families to other services that could support them. We frequently refer families to Friends and Places.

Yours Sincerely



**Shelley Johnson**  
**Independent Support Service (Southend)**