

What is Parent Partnership?

The Parent Partnership Service was created up to support families whose children have, or may have, Special Educational Needs (SEN). In particular, the service aims to explain the processes and procedures associated with special educational needs, and offers information and advice to help families understand, and navigate their way through the system.

The service offers support independently from the Local Authority, and its primary aim is to empower parents to manage the processes for themselves. However, many parents find the process difficult, confusing and consequently daunting. Under these circumstances, the service aims to offer more support, and can provide assistance with writing letters, attending meetings, contacting other sources of information, as well as the personal aspect of listening and helping parents to clarify their thoughts and understand the processes.

Some, or all, of the above support can be provided by trained volunteer Independent Parental Supporters (IPS), via the Parent Partnership Service, to help parents through school-based and statutory procedures.

Volunteering

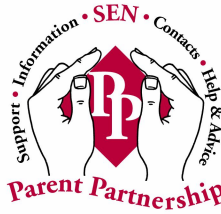
The assistance provided by the volunteer Independent Parental Supporters requires knowledge of special educational needs processes and procedures, a range of skills, and the willingness to help. Consequently, the Parent Partnership runs a training programme which serves both to develop the knowledge and skills required, but also to ensure that those who become Parent Partnership volunteers are suited to the task.

Is volunteering for you?

Acting as a volunteer Independent Parental Supporter may bring you into contact with a wide range of people including parents/carers and professionals. In order to be effective, you will need to be comfortable in the role, and be able to provide the confidence that parents often feel they lack in dealing with sometimes complex procedures, professionals or 'the Authority'.

In doing so you will need to be:

- confident
- a good listener
- a good communicator
- a good negotiator
- patient
- honest
- able to respect confidentiality
- available for a reasonable amount of time
- able to be contacted easily
- committed to putting the best interests of the child first
- willing to be trained for the job
- free of any potential conflict of interest
- willing to accept that, during the training period, it may become apparent that you are not suited to the role



What will a volunteer Independent Parental Supporter actually do?

No two situations will be the same, and so it is only possible to indicate the general range of requirements which a volunteer Independent Parental Supporter may be called upon to deliver.

As a Volunteer, you may be asked to:

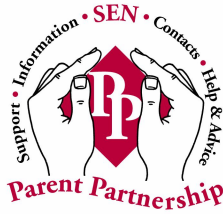
- listen to parents/carers;
- encourage parents to say what they think and feel, and to do so with confidence;
- provide information about Special Educational Needs processes and procedures;
- provide information about, or make contact with, other appropriate sources of information;
- explain terminology;
- assist with writing letters, reports or completing forms;
- assist with reading and understanding letters and reports;
- assist with telephone calls;
- accompany parents to meetings with professionals such as teachers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo), psychologists and Local Authority officers; and be prepared, when necessary, to speak for parents;
- provide parents with information to enable them make appropriate, informed choices regarding their child's education.

The Parent Partnership volunteer Independent Parental Supporters are a group of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds and experience.

If you feel that you would like to join our next training programme, please complete the attached application form and return it to:

Milton Keynes Parent Partnership Service
Galley Hill Education Centre
Galley Hill
Stony Stratford
MILTON KEYNES
MK11 1PA

We will then contact you to attend an informal interview.



**MILTON KEYNES PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE
INDEPENDENT PARENTAL SUPPORTER (IPS)
APPLICATION FORM**

Name:	Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other:
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Any other names used (i.e., maiden name if married):
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Address:

Telephone number	Home:	Work / Mobile:
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Date of birth:

Relevant qualifications or training:

Relevant experience:

First language:	Other(s):
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Referees:	
1	2

Statement to support application:

Due to the nature of this work, upon completion of training, applicants will be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check.

At the end of the training course, you will be asked to sign an agreement which sets out the range of responsibilities and the limits on activities which volunteer Independent Parental Supporters will be able to carry out. These will have been clarified during the training course.

Signed:

Date:

Please return the completed form to:

Milton Keynes Parent Partnership Service
Galley Hill Education Centre
Galley Hill
Stony Stratford
MILTON KEYNES
MK11 1PA



INDEPENDENT PARENTAL SUPPORTER AGREEMENT

Accountable to: Parent Partnership Officer	Based at: Galley Hill Education Centre
Purpose & Objectives of Post: To act as the Independent Parental Supporter for parents/carers who have a child with special educational needs. To work towards empowering parents/carers to pursue what <u>they</u> feel is appropriate for their child in educational terms.	
Responsibilities: To keep accurate records of meetings both with parents and other agencies. To dispose of confidential papers via the Parent Partnership Officer. To keep accurate records of allowed expenses.	
Conditions of Service: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To attend the initial training programme and subsequent training/support sessions whilst acting as an Independent Parental Supporter. 2. To treat information about families gained whilst training, or working as a volunteer, as completely confidential. 3. To maintain contact with the Parent Partnership Officer and inform the officer of any situation in which they are acting as a volunteer Independent Parental Supporter, even if the referral did not come via the Parent Partnership Service. 4. To be actively involved in group support meetings. 5. To treat all parents with courtesy and understanding and give the same level of support regardless of ethnic origin, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status or family responsibility. 6. To agree to a Criminal Records Bureau check being carried out. 	
I understand the information above and agree to abide by the conditions for volunteering.	Signed: Date: