



## Factsheet

# Sibling Support

An information sheet for parents/carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

During our work with families who have a disabled child, many parents have expressed their concern about how their non-disabled children often have to take a back seat and how this may affect them. Most siblings cope very well with their childhood experiences and can have positive and rewarding relationships with their brother or sister.



However sometimes those experiences become difficult to handle and extra help and guidance is needed. There are organisations which can provide support and information to those parents and siblings who may be struggling to cope with their caring role. Sometimes just having someone to talk to about feelings or knowing you are not going through things alone really helps.

Parents sometimes feel it is a difficult balancing act trying to meet everyone's needs, including their own and there are lots of useful hints and tips around which may help you and your family.

**Sibling Support Groups** – these can be run in different ways, depending on the group size, age and experiences of the siblings. Some groups include the disabled sibling and parents, and there can be a mix of individual and group support. Groups can offer the opportunity to meet other siblings and share experiences, can suggest new ways of coping and give strategies, provide activity breaks and offer issue based workshops.

**Barnardo's - Newcastle Young Carers** [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

Tel: 0191 271 4615 / Email: [nyc@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:nyc@barnardos.org.uk)

Supporting those who have caring responsibilities for a family member who has a serious illness or any type of disability. Engages with educational services to reduce the risk of social exclusion or underachieving.

**Contact** [www.contact.org.uk/northeast](http://www.contact.org.uk/northeast)

Tel: 0808 808 3555 or [helpline@contact.org.uk](mailto:helpline@contact.org.uk)

Freephone helpline for advice about any aspect of raising a disabled child, including help with finances, education, emotional and practical support. A useful leaflet is a parents guide: 'Siblings', which you can download or request.

**Pathways 4 All** [www.pathways4all.co.uk](http://www.pathways4all.co.uk)

They run a 'Just 4 Us' siblings group weekly - contact them for more information

Tel: 0191 2665233

**Scope** [www.scope.org.uk/support/tips/family-life/siblings](http://www.scope.org.uk/support/tips/family-life/siblings)

Tel: 0808 800 3333

Tips on managing siblings from their online community, there is a guide for siblings which is available from their freephone helpline number

**Sibs** [www.sibs.org.uk](http://www.sibs.org.uk)

A charity for siblings of disabled children and adults. They run workshops, training and events around the UK. Has support, advice and information for young siblings, parents and professionals

**Over the Wall** [www.otw.org.uk](http://www.otw.org.uk)

Tel: 02392 477 110

They offer a free recreation camps for siblings for a week and a weekend for the whole family which allow everyone to have the same fun experiences.

## Parents – supporting your sibling child

As a parent you may find there are times when you need some extra information and help with parenting siblings.

**Sibs** [www.sibs.org.uk](http://www.sibs.org.uk) has a lot of very useful information and guides including supporting your child with their feelings, giving them attention, talking honestly about their siblings condition and coping with sibling rivalry.



### **Carers Direct Helpline** 0300 123 1053

Offers confidential information and advice for carers and has information about siblings and young carers rights

Web: NHS Choices at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) in care and support section - Young carers' rights

Some siblings may prefer to talk to someone outside of the family. Your GP may be able to refer to a suitable counsellor, or visit the Counselling Directory site:

[www.counselling-directory.org.uk](http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk)

**School Support** – it is worthwhile letting your child's school know they have a sibling with a disability and explain how that may impact on them. For example, some young people have disturbed sleep if their sibling needs care through the night, some may find it difficult to concentrate on school or home work or may be worried about being bullied. School can then offer appropriate support if this is needed, and can take into account any issues which may arise.

**The Children's Society** and **Carers Trust** provide resources for professionals with good practice to help young carers at [www.youngcarersinschools.com](http://www.youngcarersinschools.com)

Support with bullying is available at these sites

**Family Lives - BullyingUK** - [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

**UK Government** - [www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/the-law](http://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/the-law)



## Online Support Forums

### **Young Sibs** [www.youngsibs.org.uk](http://www.youngsibs.org.uk)

Online support service for siblings aged 6 - 18. It has information about different conditions and strategies for coping. It also has a letters section for siblings to receive personalised responses to their questions, and a safe online chat area for siblings to talk to other siblings under 18.

**Sibs** also has support for adult siblings [www.sibs.org.uk/support-for-adult-siblings](http://www.sibs.org.uk/support-for-adult-siblings)

They run a moderated online support and discussion forum for siblings of disabled people aged 18 or over.

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