

Benefits, Help, Assistance and Leisure Activities For SEND Families

- P1. Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- P2. Fightback4Justice, Motability, Disabled Blue Badge, Radar Key & Carers Allowance
- P3. Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCHPs)
- P4. Social Care Support & Chicken Pox Vaccination
- P5. Free School Transport, Larger Bins, Watersure Special Dental Care
- P6. Financial Grants & Assistance - 1
- P7. Financial Grants & Assistance - 2
- P8. Support Organisations & Charities – 1
- P9. Support Organisations & Charities – 2
- P10. Support Organisations & Charities – 3
- P11. Support Organisations & Charities – 4
- P12. Support Organisations & Charities - 5
- P13. Discount Cards
- P14. Facebook Groups
- P15. SEND Dedicated Leisure Activities & Respite Care – 1
- P16. SEND Dedicated Leisure Activities & Respite Care – 2
- P17. SEND Dedicated Leisure Activities & Respite Care – 3
- P18. SEND Dedicated Leisure Activities & Respite Care – 4
- P19. Leisure Activities That Offer Specific SEND Sessions – 1
- P20. Leisure Activities That Offer Specific SEND Sessions – 2
- P21. Leisure Activities That Offer Specific SEND Sessions – 3
- P22. Assistance For Children With Life Limiting Conditions – 1
- P23. Assistance For Children With Life Limiting Conditions – 2
- P24. SEND Specific Holidays – UK
- P25. SEND Holidays Abroad

As parents, when we first found out that our son had special needs, we really had no idea what help was available to us and how to access it. Over the years we've found out ourselves about some of the assistance that is out there and we've been told about much more by other parents.

Some of this we only became aware of after several years of missing out on help that we would have been entitled to (it's estimated that every year in the UK there are £15 billion of unclaimed benefits that people are entitled to), so we've put together this document with the hope of helping other SEND families to make sure they're accessing all of the help and resources that they're entitled to. There's lots of information readily available on the internet about everything we've listed, so this isn't meant to be a detailed guide on any of them, more to signpost assistance that people may not even realise is out there.

We hope that someone will find this useful.

Adrian & Tracey

(This is all totally unofficial! If you know of anything else that you think would help others that we could include, or if you spot anything we've got wrong, please let us know).

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[Disability Living Allowance – DLA](#)

DLA is a benefit available to children under the age of 16. It pays from £24.45 to £156.90 a week and is dependent on the level of help the child needs. It is not means tested, which means you can claim regardless of what your income is. You don't need diagnoses to claim DLA, it's based on your child's needs (but obviously the more evidence you have the more it will help your claim). DLA is divided into two components, one based on the level of care the child needs (Care Component) and the other on the mobility needs of the child (Mobility Component). The mobility component is only available to children aged 3 and over (ages 3 to 5 can only be awarded high rate mobility). For those aged under 3 with the highest needs, you can apply for discretionary grant from the Family Fund Motability Scheme to lease a vehicle through the Motability scheme:

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/mobilitysupport>

DLA Website: <https://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children>

Eligibility criteria can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/eligibility>

Claims Form and Guidance notes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-living-allowance-for-children-claim-form>

GOV.UK

[Home](#) > [Benefits](#) > [Carers and disability benefits](#)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children

If any part of your claim is going to be based on your child having a brain condition (eg Autism, developmental delay etc) I would highly recommend downloading this guide and reading it before you fill in your application.

<https://cerebra.org.uk/download/disability-living-allowance-dla-vc/>

The [Contact.org.uk](https://www.contact.org.uk) website is also very good and they publish two really useful information sheets:

<https://contact.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/DLA-guide.pdf>

https://contact.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/dla_for_children_with_autism_and_learning_difficulties.pdf

It can take several months for DLA applications to be processed, but any award you receive should be back dated to the date they received your application, and you will initially receive a lump sum payment for this period.

It's important that you understand their criteria fully and include as much information and supporting evidence in your application as you can. It's also a good idea to use the DLA's own wording regarding eligibility as much as possible when completing the application. (I'd also recommend keeping a copy of your completed application so you've got this to refer to should you need to challenge their decision).

High Rate Mobility Component (which is the only mobility rate you can be awarded for children under 5 years of age) is available to some children that can walk if they meet certain criteria, but these are notoriously hard to prove. On the DLA's Eligibility Website it says you are only entitled to High Rate Mobility if your child *“cannot walk, can only walk a short distance without severe discomfort, could become very ill if they try to walk or they're blind or severely sight impaired”*. However, if you look into it in more detail, **you should also be entitled to High Rate Mobility “If your child has severe behavioural problems and a severe mental impairment (SMI), or regularly refuses to walk due to a neurological condition (VUW)”**. If you believe your child meets these criteria I'd highly recommend reading the guides I've linked to above. One thing I've seen recommended is videoing such behaviour and then asking a healthcare professional to review your videos and to write a supporting letter based on that evidence. The guides I've mentioned are very good, but if looking to claim under SMI or VUW criteria I would also suggest that you look at the relevant sections of the Decision Makers Guide (VUW P37-48, SMI P52-59):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1092571/dmgch61.pdf

And it's also worth looking at your child's condition in “Medical Guidance for DLA and AA Decision Makers (child cases): Staff Guide”:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1054301/a-z-child-medical-conditions.pdf

If you're not awarded what you believe you should be entitled to, in the first instance you can ask for Mandatory Reconsideration of your case, where your application will be looked at again (you must request this within one month of the date on your decision letter). If your Mandatory Reconsideration is unsuccessful, you are then able to formally appeal to the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal. You will get a chance to attend your tribunal in person and to present your evidence. Your case will be heard and decided by an independent judge.



[Fightback4Justice \(Advocacy for Disabled People\)](#)

Founded in 2013, Fightback4Justice is an award winning, non-profit organisation, providing specialised, expert advice and help on various welfare benefit claims; from advocacy and representation at court to guidance with forms for PIP, ESA, DLA & UC. They are highly recommended by many people for helping with DLA mandatory reconsiderations and tribunals.

<https://www.fightback4justice.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FightBack4Justice>



[Motability Scheme](#)

If you are awarded the High Rate Mobility Component of [Disability Living Allowance](#), you have the option of using some or all of it to lease a car through the Motability scheme. The price of a lease is all inclusive (insurance servicing, maintenance, breakdown cover, tyre replacement and windscreen repairs).

For more details see: <https://www.motability.co.uk/>

They also offer some charitable grants for Cars and Adaptions, Wheelchair Accessibility, Complex Solutions, Driving Lessons, Additional Support, Access to Work, Stopped Allowances and Special Grants. For details see:

<https://www.motability.org.uk/charitable-grants/>



[Disabled Blue Badge](#)

These are available to more people than you might think. Eligibility is not only for those who cannot walk or have difficulty walking, but you could also be entitled to one should your child have behavioural difficulties due to for example being Autistic or having a developmental delay and being unaware of danger around them, or if they need to be near your vehicle when out due to a health condition. If your child receives the high rate mobility component of [Disability Living Allowance](#) they'll automatically be entitled to a Blue Badge.

More details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge>



[Radar Key \(For Accessing Disabled Toilets & Accessible Play Equipment\)](#)

A radar key is a large skeleton key that opens over 10,000 locked disabled toilets around the UK. They also unlock accessible play equipment in some parks and playgrounds. They're easy to apply for through your local district council:

<https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/579-radar-key>

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/community/accessible-toilets>

Or Google search for your local council and radar key, or you can buy one for £ 5 from Disability Rights UK:

<https://shop.disabilityrightsuk.org/products/radar-key>

Changing Places has a directory of toilets for those that require a bench or hoist <https://www.changing-places.org/find>

Apply for Carer's Allowance

GOV.UK



[Carers Allowance](#)

Carers allowance is a benefit available to you if you care for someone for at least 35 hours a week (you do not get paid extra if you care for more than one person. If someone else also cares for the same person as you, only one of you can claim Carer's Allowance). The current rate for Carers Allowance is £69.70 a week. To be eligible for carers allowance you must care for your child for at least 35 hours a week and the child must be in receipt of the middle or highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance.

You can only claim if your income after Tax, National Insurance and Expenses is £132 a week or less.

For more details see: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance>

[Education, Health And Care Plans \(EHCPs\)](#)

“An Education, Health and Care plan (“EHC plan”) is a legal document which describes a child or young person’s special educational needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.” Once in place an EHCP can allow your child to access specialist support, schools and therapy and will put in place the funding for this.

<https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help>

To set up an EHCP you need to apply for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment from your Local Authority. You can make this application yourself or it can be done by your child's school, nursery, doctor, health visitor etc

The process is a lengthy one and you need to convince the local authority in the first place that they actually need to assess your child, so it's important to include as much evidence as possible in your application. There are some really good guides on the internet which I would recommend studying before applying.

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/pages/category/education-health-and-care-plans>

<https://westsussexsendias.org/education-health-care-plans/>

IPSEA have a template letter to use when requesting a needs assessment:

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/model-letters>



[SENDIAS](#)

West Sussex SENDIAS (SEND Information, Advice and Support) Service provides confidential and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and to their parent carers. They are mainly focussed on accessing education and EHCPs. Their website has a number of really good guides, factsheets and leaflets.

<https://westsussexsendias.org/>



[IPSEA \(Independent Provider of Special Education Advice\)](#)

Help children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and their families and carers, to get the appropriate education, training and support to which they are entitled under the law. As well as having an advice service, their website also offers a number of guides on things like choosing schools, EHCPs, SEN Law, transport to school etc

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>



Apply For A Needs Assessment by the Children With Disability Services (Social Care Support)

You can do this in West Sussex by emailing wschildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk stating that you wish to apply for an assessment by the Children with Disabilities Service and detailing a brief summary of your child's needs, or call the Integrated Front Door on 01403 229900.

Nationally, enter your details here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services>

After applying they'll normally get back to you within 48hrs, telephoning to discuss why you think you need an assessment and telling you the next steps. If it's determined that you meet the eligibility criteria to have a full assessment, a social worker will arrange to visit you within 10 working days to complete the assessment (it is a requirement that they see your child as part of the assessment). The social worker will meet with you to discuss your situation, what help you would like and what they might be able to provide you. They will discuss things like your child's care needs, the affect this has on your life and the support network you have. They will complete the assessment within 45 days. Their report will be shared with you and any needs Identified will be developed with you into a child and family support plan.

To many the idea of volunteering to be assessed by a social worker might seem strange, but they can be an excellent way of accessing support services and finding out about assistance that you didn't even know was available. (Support available can include support from an allocated social worker or a child & family worker (CFW), direct payments that enable parents and carers to employ a personal assistant (PA) to support their disabled child and allow some breaks from caring, home care support or support to access the community through a specialist care agency, overnight short breaks, specialist assessments and behavioural support through organisations such as Aspens, access to targeted short breaks provisions across the county, including after school clubs, Saturday clubs and holiday play schemes). Also your report from this assessment can be helpful when applying for other support,such as in a [DLA](#) application.

https://westsussex.local-offer.org/information_pages/151-children-and-family-assessment-towards-getting-a-social-worker-social-care

Independent Lives

Is a charity that supports families that employ Personal Assistants (PAs). They can help with recruiting a PA, managing their payments and they can help to source training for them (such as tube feeding, dealing with epilepsy etc)

<https://www.independentlives.org/>

Chicken Pox Vaccine

This won't be for everyone, but we were concerned that our son wouldn't cope well if he were to get Chicken Pox, so we decided to get him vaccinated. The vaccination isn't available on the NHS, but you can get it through [Boots](#) and other private healthcare providers. It isn't that cheap, Boots currently charge £140 for a full vaccination, but we decided it was worth paying, compared to if we and our son were to have to deal with him having Chicken Pox instead.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/chickenpox-vaccine/>

<https://www.boots.com/services/health-pharmacy-advice/vaccinations/chickenpox-vaccination-service>



[Free School Transport / Claim Mileage For Taking Your Child to School](#)

If your child has an EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs and you live 2 or more miles away from their school if the child is under 8, or 3 or more miles away if your child is 8 or over, you should be entitled to be provided with free transportation for them to and from their school. (For more information on eligibility see: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/pages/category/transport-to-school-or-college>)

Something that seems to be not so well known is that if you decline this offer and elect to take your child to and from school yourself, you are entitled to claim the return mileage from your house to the school twice a day (some authorities only seem to cover one return journey a day), for every day they have attended at a rate of 25p per mile.

If this applies to you, you can request a claim form by emailing: school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk

They'll need your child's name, DOB, your address and a brief explanation that your child has an EHCP (or Statement of SEN), which school they attend and that they were entitled to free school transportation which you chose not to use. The form then has to be signed by the school to confirm your child's actual attendance.

For more information see: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/>

Nationally look here:

<https://www.gov.uk/free-school-transport>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-school-transport-for-child-with-special-educational-needs-sen>

[Larger General Waste Bins](#)

You can apply for a larger household general waste bin (wheelie bin) for your house if you meet the following criteria: Households with five or more permanent residents, households with three or more children in nappies, households with medical needs. Medical needs could be for example having an older child who still wears nappies. Once you've applied the council will ask you to prove you need the larger bin by leaving all your extra rubbish that will not fit in your regular sized wheelie bin by the side of your bin for two consecutive bin collections. The bin collectors are supposed to assess this, but I would recommend that you take pictures of what you've left out as we initially had our application refused (apparently due to no extra rubbish being left out), but as soon as I provided them with pictures of what we had left out, we had our application approved.

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/waste-recycling-and-bins/household-bin-collections/apply-for-a-larger-general-waste-bin>

Or do a Google search for applying for a larger bin in your local council area.

[Watersure](#)

Is a scheme which caps your water bills. To qualify you need to be on a means tested benefit, have a water meter, and need to use a large amount of water either for medical reasons or because you have 3 or more school age children in your household. Different water companies have slightly different eligibility, with some, being on DLA will make you eligible (not Southern water though).

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/water/water-supply/problems-with-paying-your-water-bill/watersure-scheme-help-with-paying-water-bills/>

[Special Care Dental Services \(SCDS\)](#)

Is a dental referral service for patients with special needs and those who have difficulty accessing General Dental Services. We also provide dental treatment on a domiciliary basis for housebound people and training in Oral Health Care.

<https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/services/special-care-dental-services-scds/109057?ignore=special-care-dental-services-scds&postid=109057>



Grants

30 years
2022



[AFK Charity \(National Charity\)](https://www.afkcharity.org/)

Celebrating their 30th birthday in 2022, AFK supply specialist mobility equipment that isn't available on the NHS for children and young people up to their 25 birthday. Equipment they can supply includes wheelchairs, buggies, walkers, mobile hoists, power packs (to add power to a manual wheelchair), car seats and harnesses etc. They can also offer help and support with life and work skills.

<https://www.afkcharity.org/>

[Caudwell Children](https://www.caudwellchildren.com/)

Is a national charity based in Staffordshire “at our state of the art facilities which are dedicated to improving the lives of disabled and autistic children”. They offer Autism Assessments, Occupational Therapy, Equipment, Sensory Packs and various other forms of support. For families with a household income of under £45,000 they can fund up to 80% of the costs for the assistance they provide.

<https://www.caudwellchildren.com/>



[Crackerjacks Children's Trust](https://www.crackerjacks.org.uk/what)

Offer grants of up to £700 for specialist equipment/sensory toys and also for respite breaks.

<https://www.crackerjacks.org.uk/what>

**DISABLED
FACILITIES
GRANTS**



[Disabled Facilities Grant](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants)

If you or your child are disabled and need to make changes to your home you can apply to your council for a disabled facilities grant of up to £30,000. These could be for things such as widening doors or installing ramps, stairlifts, downstairs bathrooms or adapting heating and lighting controls to make them easier to use etc.

If you receive a disabled facilities grant it won't affect any benefits you're on.

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants>

[ELIFAR \(National Charity\)](https://www.elifarfoundation.org.uk/)

ELIFAR is a small charity which aims to help improve the care, facilities and equipment available to profoundly disabled children and young adults both at home or in residential care. They provide grants to fund the purchase of a wide range of highly specialised equipment, which would otherwise be unavailable because of a lack of funds or because there is no statutory provision, for children and young people up to the age of 28.

<https://www.elifarfoundation.org.uk/>

[Family Fund](https://www.familyfund.org.uk/)

Is a charity that aims to improve the lives of low-income families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people. They offer grants for short breaks, essential items and services (eg washing machines, toys, furniture, tablets / computers, Bedding, clothing etc) and their website also has a series of guides on various types of support that is available.

To be able to apply for a grant you must meet certain criteria, which are basically that your child must have a high level of additional support needs arising from a long term disabling condition or a serious or life limiting illness and you must be in receipt of a means tested benefit.

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>





[Independence At Home \(National Charity\)](#)

Founded in 1965, Independence at Home is a charity that provides grants to people of all ages who have a physical or learning disability or long term illness and who are in financial need. They may be able to help you if you, or a member of your family, have a long term illness or disability and need financial help towards the cost to improve your independence, comfort, safety and quality of life at home.

<http://www.independenceathome.org.uk/>



[Newlife Charity](#)

Primarily offer non-means tested equipment grants or loans. They have a national helpline that provides information and support to families and professionals who are caring for terminally ill or disabled children. As well as offering access to larger equipment, they also free 12 week loads of play therapy pods. Each pod contains a range of toys specifically tailored a certain age group and certain needs.

<https://newlifecharity.co.uk/>



[The Newman Holiday Trust](#)

Provides holidays at various locations across the UK for children with disabilities and special needs aged 4-16, who due to the high level of skilled care they require or their financial circumstances, the children selected for these breaks would not otherwise receive a holiday.

<https://www.newmantrust.org/about>



[The Nihal Armstrong Trust \(National Charity, Grants for Children with Cerebral Palsy\)](#)

Is a small charity that provides essential pieces of equipment, communication aids or specific services that their local authority does not provide to children with cerebral palsy.

<https://www.nihalarmstrongtrust.org.uk/>



[Strongbones \(National Charity\)](#)

Helping families and disabled children with complex needs alongside scoliosis, spina bifida, brittle bone disease or any other bone condition. They provide advice and support. They can also provide grants for young people under the age of 21 for upto 70% of the cost for disability/sensory equipment, manual wheelchairs, supportive seating, acheeva learning stations, portable hoists, educational resource packs, skoog musical interface and communication aid, adapted trikes and hand cycles and smart home technology

<https://www.strongbones.org.uk/>

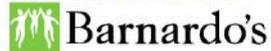
Support Organisations & Charities



[ARFID Awareness UK \(National Charity\)](https://www.arfidawarenessuk.org/)

Avoidant / Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) is an eating disorder characterised by anything from a limited diet (refusal to eat certain groups or types of food) to a complete refusal to eat. ARFID Awareness UK are the UK's only registered charity dedicated to raising awareness and furthering information about Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder. <https://www.arfidawarenessuk.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431391660626919>

Believe in
children



[Barnardo's \(National Charity\)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/)

Is a national charity that provides support and advice to vulnerable children, their families and carers. Their website has a search function to find support in your local area. They also offer short breaks (respite care) for children with disabilities.

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/>



[Beacon House \(Therapeutic Service for those coping with Trauma - West Sussex\)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk/)

Beacon House is a specialist, innovative and creative therapeutic service for young people, families and adults. With a special interest in working with individuals of all ages who have experienced trauma and loss, they are passionate about offering safe and effective therapies in a way that enables people to re-build their lives following stress and adversity.

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/>



[Carers Support West Sussex](https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/)

Offer various support services to carers in West Sussex, including counselling, equipment, financial etc. You can register with them and receive a Carer's Discount Card that offers discounts at a wide variety of local businesses. As a carer you can apply for a grant from their Carer Health and Wellbeing Fund which are designed to enhance your health and wellbeing (they can be used for things such as pamper days, gym memberships, short breaks etc) They've also been known to provide occasional one off benefits such as free supermarket vouchers to those that are signed up.

<https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/> or nationally do a Google search for your County and Carers Support.



[The Children's Trust \(National Charity for Children with Acquired Brain Injury\)](https://www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/)

Is a national charity that provides help and support for children with acquired brain injury (ie that they were not born with). At their headquarters in Surrey they have a special school, residential rehabilitation centre and they offer affected children short breaks and camps and clubs during the school holidays.

<https://www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/>



[Contact For Families With Disabled Children \(National Charity\)](https://www.contact.org.uk/about-contact/)

Is a charity that provides support and advice for families of disabled children. Their website is full of useful information and advice and they offer a "listening ear service" for parents and carers who are looking for emotional support.

<https://www.contact.org.uk/about-contact/> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ContactFamiliesGroup>



[Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity](#)

Is a charity based near Haywards Heath that supports under 5's with Cerebral Palsy and other motor learning impairments to realise their full potential. They provide an early intervention service based on the methodology of Conductive Education. Specific services include small group conductive education sessions, music therapy, swimming, sensory sessions and messy play, portage home play, parent support.

<https://dvlcc.org.uk/our-services/>



[Equine Partners \(Wisborough Green\)](#)

Offers a unique combination of experiential equine learning techniques, horsemanship and NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) specialising in helping families, individuals and groups overcome life's challenges.

<https://www.equine-partners.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/equinepartnerscic/>



[Happy Days Children's Charity](#)

Helps families and groups by organising and funding special days and holidays such as trips to the seaside, theatres, zoos, museums, outdoor activity centres, sporting events and other educational and cultural activities for children in the UK living with mental, physical and emotional difficulties.

<https://www.happydayscharity.org/>



[Lifeline4Kids \(National Charity\)](#)

Founded in 1961, is a charity with one purpose, to provide equipment to help improve the quality of life for children with disabilities and special needs irrespective of race or creed. For the individual child they provide the full spectrum of specialised equipment such as electric wheelchairs, mobility aids and items including specialised computers and sensory toys. They also help Schools, children's hospices, respite care homes and support centres throughout the UK with a variety of items including playground equipment, soft play and multi-sensory rooms and special beds.

<http://www.lifeline4kids.org/>



[Mencap \(National Charity\)](#)

Is a large national charity that provides a wide range of support and advice for those with learning disabilities.

<http://www.lifeline4kids.org/>



[Merlin's Magic Wand – One Off Free Entry To A Merlin Attraction](#)

Merlin's Magic Wand is a charity run by Merlin Entertainments, who operate some of the biggest attractions in the UK (Sea Life Centres, Chessington World of Adventures, Alton Towers, Thorpe Park, Legoland etc). As a family of a SEND child you may be able to apply for free entry for your family to one of their attractions.

<https://www.merlinsmagicwand.org/apply-for-a-day-out/making-an-application.aspx>

Merlin also offer a "Ride Access Pass" which is a virtual queuing system, so that those who would struggle with queues can turn up to a ride at an assigned time and get straight on.

<https://www.merlinannualpass.co.uk/important-information/passholder-help/passholder-accessibility/>



[PACE \(Charity, Therapy Service, Special School, based Buckinghamshire\)](https://thepacecentre.org/)

PACE is a charity that “aims to change the lives of children with neurodisabilities”. They run a therapy centre and special school based in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire and they also provide online resources and support. They provide very reasonably priced multi-disciplinary assessment and therapy (specialising in Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and Conductive Education) and are able to fund this for some.

<https://thepacecentre.org/>



[PACSO – Parent And Carers Support Organisation \(Chichester\)](https://pacso.org.uk/)

PACSO is a West Sussex based charity serving families of children and young people aged 0-25 with additional needs and disabilities in the Chichester and Arun districts. PACSO provides recreational activities including Saturday Clubs, After School Clubs, Trips out and a Summer Playscheme.

<https://pacso.org.uk/> <https://www.facebook.com/pacsouk>



[Portage](https://www.portage.org.uk/about/what-portage)

Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with SEND and their families. They offer advice, support and learning through structured play. They're very highly regarded, but as with lots of support services they can often have quite a long waiting list.

<https://www.portage.org.uk/about/what-portage>



[Reaching Families \(West Sussex, but information largely applicable to the whole of UK\)](https://www.reachingfamilies.org.uk/guides.html)

Is a West Sussex organisation that aims to “empower, inform and support parents and families of children and young People with special educational needs and disabilities in West Sussex”. They offer a number of services including benefits advice, fact sheets, training workshops, support groups and a Facebook group.

They also publish the excellent “Making Sense Of It All” which is available to download for free as an ebook via this link:

<https://www.reachingfamilies.org.uk/guides.html>

It's a lengthy publication, but it covers in detail everything from the first time you think your child may be having difficulties, getting a diagnosis and then finding the help they need, right through to growing up to becoming an adult with special needs.

[Sandcastle Trust](https://sandcastletrust.org/about-us/what-we-do/)

Supports families living with a rare genetic condition. They offer bespoke family respite, wrap around fun family engagement activities and peer support.

<https://sandcastletrust.org/about-us/what-we-do/>



[Selective Mutism Information & Research Association \(SMIRA\)](http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/)

Selective mutism is a communication anxiety disorder. SMIRA is a charity which supports families with selectively mute children and provides information to health and education professionals.

<http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SMIRASelectiveMutism>



[The Sunflower Lanyard Scheme for Hidden Disabilities](#)

The Sunflower Scheme aims to bring awareness and visibility to non-visible disabilities. By wearing a Sunflower Lanyard you can easily make others aware that you are someone you care for has a hidden disability. We have found that this can make you feel much more comfortable when out and about and that you don't feel the constant need to be explaining yourself to others and some settings will have staff who are specially trained to offer extra assistance to those who need it.

You can also enter your postcode on their website to find local places with people who are trained to recognise and support those wearing a Sunflower Lanyard who have hidden disabilities:

<https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/find-the-sunflower/>



[Super Siblings](#)

Super Siblings UK is a charity that supports siblings who have brothers and/or sisters with additional needs. Their aim is to build a strong, kind, caring and supportive community for all families who understand what it's like to live with, and support a child that has additional needs, as well as extending our support to all parents, grandparents and guardians.

<https://www.supersiblings.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Supersiblingsuk>

Time Aside

[Time Aside](#)

Offer sensory art sessions for children with additional needs and family fun days. Their website seems not to have been updated in a long time, but their Facebook page is kept up to date.

<https://www.facebook.com/timeasidesensoryart>



[Tourettes Action](#)

Tourette Syndrome is an inherited, neurological condition, the key features of which are tics, involuntary and uncontrollable sounds and movements. Tourettes Action offers news, information, advice and support.

<https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/> <https://www.facebook.com/TourettesAction>



[Variety Children's Charity \(National Charity\)](#)

Variety provide practical help that makes an immediate difference to disabled and disadvantaged children and young people under the age of 19, allowing them to live their best lives. They offer equipment grants (including hoists, beds, car seats, sensory and play equipment, assistive and medical technologies) and wheelchairs for children. They also offer Sunshine Coaches to support transport needs of SEND Schools and other non-profit organisations and through Variety Great Days Out they provide day trips for children and young people. In addition to all of this they also run several specialist hospitals.

<https://www.variety.org.uk/>



[Understand Me – The Communication Library](#)

Anyone who needs help with communication can borrow a range of free resources from any West Sussex library – all you need is a library card. Many resources are available to support effective communication. These include simple flashcards and devices for recording personal messages, and specially adapted toys to help young children learn through play. Some of these resources support people who use Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC).

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/libraries/more-library-services/understand-me-the-communication-library/>

[Toy Libraries](#)

Operate in a similar way to book libraries; you can borrow from a large selection of toys and resources to support your child’s developing needs and interests. There are toys aimed at children under the age of 5 and sensory toys or equipment for children and young people aged 0-19 with disabilities. The toy libraries are based in some family hubs and libraries.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/support-for-families/toy-libraries/>



[West Sussex Local Offer](#)

Has a database of over 1,000 local services, events and information for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years who have special educational needs or disabilities. It doesn't seem to be kept that up to date as I found quite a few listings that are not current, but it can be a good place to start. They also have a Facebook page where they regularly post new local events.

WEST SUSSEX

<https://westsussex.local-offer.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/westsussex.localoffer/>



[Whoopsadaisy](#)

Is a charity that provides conductive education to children with physical disabilities from Brighton & Hove and the surrounding area.

<http://whoopsadaisy.org/about-us/>



[West Sussex Parent Carer Forum](#)

“WSPCF is a community of parent carers who all have a child (aged 0-25 years) with SEND. Our mission is to offer information, support and training. By sharing our experiences and knowledge, we aim to build your confidence as you navigate your own ‘special needs’ journey.” By registering with them you gain access to free events and training courses.

<https://www.wspcf.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/WestSussexParentCarerForum/>

Discount Cards

Access Card

Described as a “Disability Passport”, Access Cards are widely recognised across the UK and can serve as proof of disability when requesting concessionary ticket prices. They cost £15 for a card that is valid for 3 years. You can apply for one through their website, you'll need to provide a description of your needs and also some documented proof of these.

www.accesscard.org.uk/



CEA Cinema Card

Enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema.

<https://www.ceacard.co.uk/>



Discounts For Carers (National Cashback Card)

The “Ode Card” is a prepaid Visa debit card (£2.99 per year) that pays you cashback of upto 15.5% when you use it to shop in store or online. It can be used a wide range of stores, including big supermarkets such as Asda, Sainsbury's and Waitrose. They also have a smatphone app to let you check your card balance and see how much cashback you've earned.

<https://discountsforcarers.com/carers-cashback-card>

discountsforcarers

Max Card

The Max Card offers discounted entry to a wide range of attractions nationwide for foster families and families of children with additional needs. The Max card has recently replaced the Compass Card as West Sussex's offering for SEND children.

<https://mymaxcard.co.uk/>

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/new-look-disability-register-for-under-25s-to-launch/>



Facebook Groups

There are many national and local Facebook groups focussed on SEND children and their carers. Just search for the relevant condition and add your town or area if you want to find one that's more locally focussed. Facebook is then pretty good at recommending other relevant groups. They can be a great place to ask questions as there will normally be someone who has already been through what you are going through to offer advice. It can also be really useful to see what other people are saying / asking so you can learn from their experiences and if nothing else, just realise that there are others out there going through similar things to you. They're normally well moderated and are usually private groups, so you'll have to apply to join and have your membership approved by a moderator before being able to access them. Here's a few examples:

ARFID Support For Parents & Carers In The UK/Ireland
 Autism & ADHD Parent Support UK
 Autism and ADHD Support Group
 Autism and Sensory Processing Support UK
 Autism Parent Carer Group West Sussex
 Autism Support Crawley
 Autism Support UK
 Contact – For Families With Disabled Children
 EHCP/SEND Help
 EHCP For Parents/Carers In West Sussex
 Fightback4Justice
 Mid Sussex Parents of Children with Autism (MSPCA)
 PACSO – Parent & Carers Support Organisation

Parenting Picky Eaters
 PATH – Parenting Autism Together In Horsham
 Reaching Families
 SMIRA - Selective Mutism Information and Research Association
 Southwater area parents and carers for children and young people with SEND
 SPCS & Sensory Ideas @ Play Happy
 Super Siblings
 Tourettes Action
 UK Autism Spectrum Parents Support Group
 UK Sensory Processing Disorder Support
 West Sussex Parent Carer Forum

There are also quite a few groups dedicated to special needs equipment and people selling equipment that they no longer need. Some of this equipment can be extremely expensive to buy new and you can save a lot of money when buying second hand. Just search for “Special needs equipment UK” and select the relevant group.

SEND Dedicated Leisure Activities & Respite Care



[Adur Special Needs Project \(Respite Day Care - Shoreham\)](#)

Is a charity based in Shoreham that provides respite care and play schemes on Saturdays for children aged 5-15 years.

<https://www.adurspecialneedsproject.org.uk/about/>



[Aldingbourne Trust & Centre \(Activity Centre - Chichester\)](#)

The Aldingbourne Centre is located between Arundel and Chichester. It is a large, modern centre designed specifically for young people with special needs. It offers an open farm, large grounds with outdoor play areas, a maze, sand and water play area, a woodland walk, ride on mini tractors, mini golf, a soft play area and a cafe. The trust itself aims to support young people with learning disabilities and autism across Sussex, it provides them with training and many of the people who work at the centre are these young people.

<https://www.aldingbournetrust.org/>



[All Aboard Club \(Stay and Play - Horsham\)](#)

All Aboard Club runs play sessions for autistic and ADHD children, where they can build their confidence, develop their social skills and just be themselves. Based in Horsham, sessions are based around playing with toy trains.

<https://www.allaboardclub.com/play-sessions/>



[Aquamovers - Charley Heritage Foundation \(Childrens Group, Hydrotherapy + Overnight Respite Breaks - Sussex\)](#)

Is a weekly group for children under 5 years. Aquamovers is a combination of expert therapy and socialising, with the added opportunity to use their hydrotherapy pool. Sessions are lead by a specialist Paediatric Physiotherapist and Speech and Language Therapist.

<https://www.chf.org.uk/aquamovers.html>

Charley Heritage School is a non-maintained special school. The foundation also offer short breaks/respite for ages 3-19.



[Aspens \(Childrens Groups, Family Support - East + West Sussex\)](#)

As well as providing a wide range of support services to people on the autism spectrum and who have learning disabilities, Aspens also offer groups for children and young people (aged 8 and over) in various locations across West Sussex from Worthing to Crawley. In addition to this they also host family fun days.

<https://www.aspens.org.uk/childrens-services-in-west-sussex>



[Camp Mohawk \(Activity Centre + After School / Holiday Clubs - Berkshire\)](#)

Based in Wargrave (Between Henley-on-Thames and Maidenhead), Camp Mohawk is a charity that offers an activity centre for children and young people with disabilities. They also offer a number of after school and holiday clubs. Facilities include art room, soft play, sensory room, playroom, swimming pool, wildlife area, games field, archery, sensory garden, adventure play, circus skills and many others.

<https://www.campmohawk.org.uk/>

[CFYT – Chichester Festival Youth Theatre](https://www.cft.org.uk/take-part/children-young-people/chichester-festival-youth-theatre)

Offer sessions for young people with additional needs, these groups are CFYT Wednesday in Horsham and CFYT Friday in Chichester.

<https://www.cft.org.uk/take-part/children-young-people/chichester-festival-youth-theatre>



[East Park Riding For The Disabled \(Horse Riding - West Sussex\)](https://eastparkrda.org.uk/)

Little Brook Equestrian is home to the East Park Riding for the Disabled Group. The Group hosts 7 lessons per week for 6 children each, allowing 42 disabled children the opportunity to ride each week. The Group also offers carriage driving lessons for ambulant and non-ambulant disabled adults and children.

<https://eastparkrda.org.uk/>



[Extratime \(After School / Holiday Clubs + Family Fun Days - Berkshire\)](https://www.extratimebrighton.org.uk/)

Based in Portslade and Shoreham, Extratime offer several School Holiday schemes and Term Time Clubs as well as regular Family Fun days (normally at weekends) for kids with SEND.

<https://www.extratimebrighton.org.uk/>



[Guildcare – Ashdown Club \(Respite Day Care + Youth Club - Worthing\)](https://www.guildcare.org/pages/category/children-with-disabilities)

Based in Worthing, Guildcare's Ashdown Club offers short breaks on Saturdays and school holidays for children aged 5-12 with learning disabilities and other complex needs. They also offer a youth club for children aged 12-18 with learning disabilities and complex needs.

<https://www.guildcare.org/pages/category/children-with-disabilities>



[Head2Head Sensory Theatre \(South East\)](https://www.h2hsensorytheatre.com/)

Is an inclusive theatre company that puts on special sensory shows across the South East of the UK for those with special needs.

<https://www.h2hsensorytheatre.com/>



[Kangaroos Fun Disability Clubs \(Stay and Play, After School Club, Day + Overnight Respite - Haywards Heath\)](https://www.kangaroos.org.uk/6LcVpUEdAAAAABtk-Pnyx70_XeQG1WkK6k0E8SNv/get-our-help/younger-children/)

Based primarily in Haywards Heath. Kangaroos offer stay and play sessions on Saturdays for children aged 0-5 with additional needs. For 6-14 year olds with SEND they offer various clubs, including Saturdays, after school and school holidays. They also offer social clubs for adults with special needs and disabilities.

https://www.kangaroos.org.uk/6LcVpUEdAAAAABtk-Pnyx70_XeQG1WkK6k0E8SNv/get-our-help/younger-children/



[London Zoo Relaxed Openings](https://www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/whats-on/relaxed-openings)

London Zoo offers special "Relaxed Openings" outside of the normal zoo opening hours, to provide quieter than usual access for those with special needs. These take place either from 0830-1000 or 1830-2000. Tickets have to be booked in advance specifically for these events.

<https://www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/whats-on/relaxed-openings>

They also offer free entry for one carer when accompanying a paying disabled visitor and wheelchair hire with a £25 deposit. You can download a visual story and a sensory story here:

<https://www.zsl.org/education/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send-at-zsl-london-zoo>



[National Autistic Society Social Groups](#)

Offer social groups for autistic children and young adults aged 5-18. The groups offer a relaxing space for people to meet and socialise and participate in a variety of activities.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/support-in-the-community/social-groups/surrey-west-sussex-social-group>



[Reaching Higher Project Horsham – Arts And Sports Programmes](#)

Various organised activities for children and young people aged 5-25 including Athletics, Digital Video Production, DJ'ing, Inclusive Football, Karaoke, Rebound Therapy and Sports.

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/sport-and-leisure/accessible-and-inclusive-activities/reaching-higher-project>



[Springboard \(Respite Day Care - West Sussex + Activity Centre - Horsham\)](#)

Is a charity that has an inclusive stay and play centre in Horsham that has a sensory room, soft play area, a garden full of activities and other general play indoors. They also offer short breaks, activities and outings for young people with disabilities aged 0 – 25 out of locations in Crawley, Horsham, Worthing and Sutton

<https://springboardsupport.org/>



[Swimming - Inclusive Swimming Lessons \(Swimming Lessons - Horsham\)](#)

The Disability Swimming Programme is a partnership between Horsham District Council, Places for People and Christ's Hospital Enterprises. The programme provides a range of disability swimming sessions across Horsham District to enable those wishing to experience the benefits of water who may have found it difficult in the past to do so.

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/sport-and-leisure/accessible-and-inclusive-activities/inclusive-swimming-lessons>



[Swimming - Sunbeam Swimming Club Horsham](#)

Is a swimming club for people with disabilities aged 8 to adult, with weekly sessions most Fridays at the Pavilions in Horsham. (Note this is a swimming club, not swimming lessons)

<https://www.facebook.com/SunbeamSC/>



[Swimming - Arun Dolphins Swimming Club \(Swimming Club - Littlehampton\)](#)

Affiliated with the National Association for Swimming Clubs for People with Disabilities, based at the Littlehampton Wave, run sessions every Wednesday from 1830-1930, open to people with all types of disabilities and of all ages.

<https://arundolphins.co.uk/>



[Thomley \(Activity Centre + Camping Pods - Buckinghamshire\)](#)

Based in Buckinghamshire, between Oxford and Aylesbury, Thomley is a charity that runs an activity centre for people with disabilities. Set on a 9 acre site, facilities include a soft play area, two sensory rooms, play rooms and open soft play, art room, imagination room, construction room, music room, teenage den, cafe and a variety of outdoor play activities. They also have three camping pods.

<https://thomley.org.uk/>



[Thames Valley Adventure Playground \(Activity Centre + Respite Day Care - Berkshire\)](#)

Based near Maidenhead, TVAP is a charity that provides stay and play and respite play sessions for both children and adults with special needs. The playground is set in large gardens by the side of a lake and features a massive outdoor play area that includes a splash area, zip line, various ride on toys, picnic areas and lots of other playground equipment. Inside there is a small soft play area, a sensory room, a music room and many other activities. The staff are all incredibly friendly, well trained and massively experienced dealing with people with SEND.

<https://www.tvap.co.uk/>



[YMCA \(Respite Day + Overnight Care, Rebound Therapy – Crawley, Reigate, Epsom\)](#)

Offer a number of disability services including a short break playscheme for children aged 5-11, a short break activity youth club for young people aged 12-18, rebound therapy and various other activities.

<https://www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk/children/disability-activities/>

[Other SEND Discounts For Leisure Activities](#)

Many children's leisure activities offer reduced or free admission for children with SEND and/or their carers. It's worth checking their websites prior to visiting and always taking a copy of your Carers Allowance and DLA award letters as proof of entitlement.

Leisure Activities That Offer SEND Sessions

The logo for JumpinFun, featuring the word "JUMPINFUN" in a stylized, blocky font with a blue and green color scheme.

[JumpinFun Burgess Hill \(Inflatables + Soft Play – Burgess Hill\)](#)

Is a warehouse full of inflatable and soft play equipment. They offer special sessions for SEND children only. These sessions are operated at half the normal capacity with the volume of the music reduced. One carer gets free entry with each paying child. At the moment sessions are every other Tuesday from 1630-1730, but they vary during school holidays.

<https://jumpinfun.co.uk/burgess-hill/events/jumpin-inflatable-fun-opened-its-doors-on-aug-1st/>

The logo for SkyHigh, featuring the word "SKYHIGH" in a stylized, bubbly font with a green and purple color scheme.

[SkyHigh Trampoline Park Peacehaven](#)

Host special SEND sessions on Tuesdays from 1800. In these sessions there's there's no music, they don't use the whistles and there is a reduced number of people in the park. Lighting is standard (no disco/coloured lighting). Sessions are for ages 5 and over.

<https://skyhightrampolinepark.co.uk/activity/send-bounce/>

The logo for Lets Explore, featuring the words "LETS EXPLORE" in a colorful, playful font with various icons like a rocket, a globe, and a magnifying glass.

[Lets Explore Horley \(Softplay, Horley\)](#)

Lets Explore is a large soft play venue, they offer SEND only sessions the first Tuesday of every month from 1600-1800 Reduced entry fee for children and free entry for carers.

<https://lets-explore.com/news/sen-session>

The logo for Places Leisure, featuring a stylized orange and blue icon next to the words "Places Leisure".

[Triangle Leisure Centre Burgess Hill](#)

Offer special SEND swimming sessions Saturday mornings from 0800-0900. The centre also features a kids soft play area.

<https://www.placesleisure.org/centres/the-triangle/centre-activities/swimming/pool-information/>

[Broadbridge Heath Leisure Centre](#)

Has a small sensory room: <http://www.placesforpeopleleisure.org/centres/broadbridge-heath-leisure-centre/>

The logo for Treasure Chest, featuring a golden treasure chest with a pink and blue character inside.

[Treasure Chest \(Soft Play – Crawley\)](#)

Have a monthly SEND only session, normally on a Monday 1630-1900.

<https://www.treasurechestindoorplay.co.uk/events/sen-evenings/>



[Marwell Zoo](#)

Is a large zoo located between Southampton and Winchester, it has hundreds of animals and 5 adventure playgrounds. It's quite well set up to help with accessibility needs and carers can get free entry when accompanying a SEND child..

<https://www.marwell.org.uk/plan-your-visit/guests-with-accessibility-needs/>
<https://www.accessibilityguides.org/content/marwell-zoo>

They also offer some resources to help you plan a visit for someone with SEND:

<https://www.marwell.org.uk/education/free-resources/special-educational-needs/>



[Air Arena Chichester](#)

Is a trampoline fun activity centre, they offer "Helping Hands" sessions which are designed to encourage learning and exercise for children and adults with learning difficulties. Sessions are every Sunday 0900-1000 during term time.

<https://airarena.co.uk/parties/>



[Cineworld Cinemas](#)

Most Cineworld cinemas offer Autism friendly screenings in which there are no trailers, the lights and volume are turned down, you can take your own food and drink.

<https://dimensions-uk.org/get-involved/campaigns/autism-friendly-cinema-screenings/autism-friendly-screenings-cineworld/>



[The Capitol Cinema Horsham – SEN Showings](#)

Blue Oasis Club film screenings are for people with learning disabilities and on the autistic spectrum and their friends. "Lights up, sound low with no trailers and the freedom to move around the cinema".

<https://www.thecapitolhorsham.com/information/about-us/autism-friendly-screenings/>



[Drusillas Park](#)

Is a small Zoo located near Eastbourne. As well as the animal attractions it also offers theme park style rides, playgrounds, soft play areas, a splash area and **SPARK – a special sensory room**, which is available for a small extra charge. SPARK offers SEND only sessions, currently 1030 on Wednesdays, Fridays, Weekends and school holidays. One carer is entitled to free park entry per paying guest with proof of **DLA** (including an unnamed carer pass if purchasing an annual entry pass). You can also apply for a **Ride Access Pass** to allow you to skip queues for those who queueing would be a issue. You also normally seem to be able to buy tickets using Tesco Club Card points (in advance through the Club Card website).

<https://www.drusillas.co.uk/>



[Fishers Adventure Farm Park](#)

Located just to the West of Billingshurst, Fishers Farm offers close up access to a wide variety of farm animals. In addition it also has a massive selection of outdoor play activities, seasonal events and several indoor play areas, including soft play and a variety of slides. While they don't offer any SEND specific activities or ride access pass (entry queues to the park can be lengthy at peak times), they do have a small sensory room, offer free entry to one carer with proof of **DLA** and many of their attractions and activities are suitable for SEND.

<https://fishersfarmpark.co.uk/>



Merlin Attractions

Merlin operates some of the UK's largest attractions including Alton Towers, Thorpe Park, Chessington World Of Adventures, Legoland, Sea Life Centres, Madame Tussauds Warwick Castle, The London Dungeon etc. They offer free entry for a carer accompanying a paying disabled visitor and at their theme parks they offer a Ride Access Pass – a virtual queueing system for those that would find queueing difficult, that lets you get straight onto the rides. The theme parks offer free wheelchair hire (with a refundable deposit) and Legoland also has a sensory room.

They offer various annual passes, which although expensive, work out much better value than buying individual tickets. (After you visit one of their parks, even if using a free ticket from Merlin's Magic Wand, you'll be sent a discount code to reduce the price of an annual pass even more). Once you've purchased an annual pass for your SEND child, you can then apply for a free carer's annual pass (carer's annual passes don't have a name on them, they can be used by one person who is accompanying the child, it does not always have to be the same person).

<https://www.merlinentertainments.biz/>

Assistance For Children With Life Limiting or Life Threatening Conditions



Barretstown

Offers free, specially designed camps and programmes for children and their families living with a serious illness – supported behind the scenes by 24 hour on site medical and nursing care. Based in County Kildare, Ireland, transport to the camps is also free.

<https://www.barretstown.org/>

The Charlie & Carter Foundation (National Charity)

The Charlie & Carter Foundation (CCF) provides financial support to parents of seriously ill children with life limiting conditions that require 24 hour nursing care or specialist nursing facilities. Their services will directly pay your mortgage, rent, gas, electricity, provide food vouchers, petrol card, basically help with your day to day living expenses. The foundation will cover a period of three months within our one payment budget

<https://thecharlieandcarterfoundation.co.uk/>

Chestnut Tree House Hospice

Offer support to the whole family of children with a life limiting or life threatening condition, including respite care. You can self refer through their website:

<https://www.chestnut-tree-house.org.uk/>

Dreams Come True

Make dreams come true for children and young people with life-limiting and serious illnesses living in the UK's most disadvantaged communities as they believe that every child has the fundamental right to dream.

<https://www.dreamscometrue.uk.com/>

Fulfil The Wish

Fulfil the Wish is a registered charity which was founded in 2000 to provide activity and sightseeing holidays for children and young people who have lifelong and life-limiting disabilities.

<http://www.fulfilthewish.org/about-us/>

Make A Wish

Make a Wish are a charity that creates life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.

<https://www.make-a-wish.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/>

The Oliver Curd Trust

Offer holiday accommodation to families affected by childhood cancer and other life threatening and life-limiting conditions, including those experiencing bereavement. They own two mobile homes on holiday parks in East Sussex.

<http://www.theolivercurdtrust.org/>



[The Rainbow Trust](https://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk/about/what-we-do)

Rainbow Trust Children's Charity supports families who have a child aged 0-18 years with a life-threatening or terminal illness. Each family with an expert Family Support Worker who enables them to make the most of time together, giving them practical and emotional support, whenever they need it, for as long as is needed. Help can include listening to a family's fears and anxieties, helping to explain illnesses, diagnoses and treatments, keeping a seriously ill child company during hospital stays, driving families to medical appointments to help save time and money, organising fun activities to help sick children, their brothers and sisters and support through bereavement and grief.

<https://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk/about/what-we-do>



[Rays Of Sunshine](https://raysofsunshine.org.uk/)

Rays of Sunshine is a charity that brightens the lives of seriously ill young people and their families by granting magical wishes, hosting interactive hospital activity days, granting hospital ward wishes and providing ongoing support within hospitals

<https://raysofsunshine.org.uk/>



[REACT \(National Charity\)](https://reactcharity.org/)

React – Rapid Effective Assistance for Children with potentially Terminal illness is a dynamic charity working to improve the quality of life for children with life-limiting illnesses living in financially disadvantaged households throughout the UK.

<https://reactcharity.org/>



[Together For Short Lives](https://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/)

Together for Short Lives is the UK registered charity for children's palliative care. Together for Short Lives' vision is for children and young people in the UK with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions and their families to have as fulfilling lives as possible, and the best care at the end of life. They offer a support helpline and various support services

<https://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/>

SEND Specific Holidays - UK



Calvert Trust Exmoor

The Calvert Trust offer all inclusive exciting breaks for people with physical, learning, behavioural and sensory disabilities at their fully accessible activity centre in the heart of North Devon. Activities include horse riding, canoeing, sailing, abseiling, archery, climbing etc all with qualified instructors.

<https://calvertexmoor.org.uk/>



Spectrum Breaks at The Hartlands

Is an Autism friendly holiday centre in Shanklin on the Isle Of Wight. It has 4 fully equipped self contained apartments and features free access to a number of activity rooms including pool tables, music equipment, cinema, IT, sensory, art, gym & sauna and a private indoor heated pool.

<https://www.spectrumbreaks.co.uk/>



Spectrum Holidays

Offers autism friendly holiday homes to families with autistic dependants, with accommodations across the UK. They work with existing holiday home owners to help make their properties more accessible to families with autistic children. they also have 2 Sensory Caravans that we have set up to cater for the sensory needs of those on the autism spectrum, complete with sensory area, themed bedrooms, free WIFI and lots more. Every property comes with a "Spectrum Pack" that includes: A selection of handheld fidget toys, light projectors, easy hold mirrors, sensory light toys, fibre optic plume, a range of sensory tactile toys, visual resource pack, stair gate and bed guard (if applicable).

<https://www.spectrum-holidays.com/our-spectrum-pack/>



The Thomas Centre

Set on a dedicated 25 acre site in Lincolnshire, the Thomas Centre offers self contained accommodation (3 houses & 5 bungalows). They offer a range of onsite activities including an indoor swimming pool, play barn, outdoor play park, go-karts, bicycles, trampoline, football pitch, sensory area and gym.

<https://www.thethomascentre.co.uk/>



Homelands

Offers award winning self contained custom built, fully accessible holiday accommodation in Fife, Scotland.

<https://www.homelands-fife.co.uk/>



Isle Of Wight Ferry Discounts

Wightlink - Offer up to 25% discount on ferries to the Isle of Wight for Blue Badge holders.

<https://www.wightlink.co.uk/tickets/accessible-travel>

Red Funnel Ferries – Offer a 20% discount to disabled passengers on their sailings from Southampton.

<https://www.redfunnel.co.uk/en/isle-of-wight-ferry/fares/ferry-passenger-fares-to-southampton/disabled-persons-discount/>



Send Holidays Abroad



[Autism On The Seas \(Cruises, Worldwide\)](https://autismontheseas.com/)

Autism On The Seas offers staff assisted cruises designed to accommodate adults and families living with children with Special Needs, including, but not limited to, Autism, Aspergers Syndrome, Down Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and all Cognitive, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. They book rooms on specific cruises with regular cruises lines (Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Norwegian, Disney and Carnival Cruise Lines). On each cruise they take their own specially trained staff who offer assistance and respite care throughout the cruise. They also book out most of the entertainment venues on the ships at specific times for the exclusive use of Autism on the Seas guests, so that they can be enjoyed in a more relaxed atmosphere. Amongst other services they also offer reserved seating for shows so guests do not need to arrive early, private muster drill, expedited boarding and disembarkation and reserved seating for all meals.

They also offer a free cruise assistance package for guests who wish to go on a cruise which which they do not offer their full services on.

<https://autismontheseas.com/>



[Morgan's Wonderland \(Theme Park, USA\)](https://morganswonderland.com/)

Located in San Antonio, Texas, USA, Morgan's Wonderland was created by the father of a girl with special needs. It is the first theme park in the world to be designed for individuals with special needs. In 2018 TIME Magazine named it on it's list of the "World's Greatest Places"

<https://morganswonderland.com/>



[We Rock The Spectrum \(Kids Gyms, Worldwide mainly USA\)](https://www.wrtsfranchise.com/our-story/)

We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym is a sensory soft play franchise designed specifically for kids with special needs. It has 114 locations open or opening soon, mainly in the USA, but it's expanding worldwide, with centres now in Australia, Canada, Egypt, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia with more opening soon in Dubai and also their first UK location in Belfast.

<https://www.wrtsfranchise.com/our-story/>



[IBCCES - Autism Travel Guide and Access Card \(Worldwide mainly USA\)](https://autismtravel.com/)

Autism Travel was created to provide families and individuals easy access to destinations and attractions that are trained and certified in Autism and special needs care. They have a directory of certified attractions and accommodations where staff settings are trained and equipped to deal with Autism. They offer an "Access Card" to help you easily gain access to special accommodations at attractions.

<https://autismtravel.com/>

They also publish the Autism Adventure Guide, a digital magazine for individuals, families and travel professionals that highlights industry leading organizations who have gone above and beyond to certify their destinations and make them more accessible for autistic guests and those with other cognitive disorders.

<https://autismtravel.com/autismadventureguide-signup-2022/>