

Support for families

Families provide long term love, care and support for their disabled relatives, and speak up for them. Even when people leave home, they do not leave the family. Families continue to offer a lifetime of involvement and support, and know a great deal about their relative's needs and wishes, likes and dislikes.

When the services and support for a relative go wrong, it can be very difficult for families to deal with. They may be faced with a barrage of information and decisions to take, as well as coming to terms with what has happened.

If you are concerned about your relative's care you should contact your relative's care manager to address issues. Any safeguarding concerns should be raised with your local safeguarding team, who can be contacted via social services.

It is important that families know where they can find impartial information, and find out what support is available to them. There is a list below of organisations that you may find useful.

Organisations providing independent support

Ann Craft Trust: Provides advice to anyone who has a query about the protection of vulnerable children and adults, including professionals, parents, carers and family members. www.anncrafttrust.org. Tel: 0115 9515400 (Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-4pm) or email: ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation: Provides telephone and email support from a Family Support Worker on challenging behaviour associated with severe learning disabilities and related issues. Tel: 0300 666 0126 (Mon-Fri 9-5pm) or email: support@theCBF.org.uk

Free information sheets and DVDs are offered about providing good support for people who have a learning disability and behaviour described as challenging.

www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk

Disability Law Service: Provides telephone or email advice on community care law. Free to disabled people and their family carers. www.dls.org.uk. Tel: 020 77919800 (Mon-Fri 10-5pm) or email: advice@dls.org.uk

Mencap Direct Advice and Information Service: Provides advice and information on all issues relevant to people with learning disabilities and their families in England, Wales & Northern Ireland. www.mencap.org.uk. Telephone advice lines are open from 9-5pm Monday to Friday.

England: 0808 808 1111

Email: help@mencap.org.uk

Northern Ireland: 0808 808 1111

Email: mencapni@mencap.org.uk

Wales: 0808 808 1111

Email: information.wales@mencap.org.uk

National Autistic Society: The National Autistic Society offers advice and information to people on the autism spectrum and their families. www.autism.org.uk.

Autism Helpline Tel: 0808 800 4104 (Mon-Fri 10am – 4pm).

Supporter Enquiries Tel: 0808 800 1050 (Mon-Thurs 9-5pm, Fri 9-3pm) or email: supportercare@nas.org.uk

Hft Family Carer Support Service (FCSS): Provides free information and support to all family carers of people with learning disabilities.

To download Top Tips and an Essential Guide to Making Sure Your Relative is Safe see <http://www.hft.org.uk/safeguarding>. For help or more information call 0117 906 1751; email familycarersupport@hft.org.uk; write to FCSS at Hft, 5 – 6 Brook Office Park, Emersons Green, Bristol BS16 7FL and see www.hft.org.uk/familycarersupport

Respond: Works with children and adults with learning disabilities who have experienced abuse or trauma, as well as those who have abused others, through psychotherapy, advocacy, campaigning and other support. Respond also runs a free helpline: 0808 808 0700. If you call outside opening hours leave a message and someone will get back to you.

For more information visit their website: www.respond.org.uk

Voice UK: Is a national charity supporting people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people who have experienced crime or abuse. www.voiceuk.org.uk. They have a helpline for carers, parents and professionals: 080 8802 8686 (Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm) or email helpline@voiceuk.org.uk

Other useful contacts:

Samaritans: A charity that offers confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to those experiencing despair, distress or suicidal feelings. www.samaritans.org.

United Kingdom Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Republic of Ireland: 1850 60 90 90 or email: jo@samaritans.org

Support Line: A confidential helpline offering emotional support to all ages, on any issue, by telephone, email or post. Website: www.supportline.org.uk. The Support Line number is 01708 765200 and email is info@supportline.org.uk