

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

It is important to note that family carers **must be consulted and involved in key decisions** about the care and support of a relative who is unable to make these decisions (unless you have specifically asked not to be involved). There is a proper legal process that must be followed, under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. For example, your relative cannot be moved to another service without involving you, and others who know your relative well, in the decision-making process. For more information about this, see "Making Decisions: A guide for family, friends and other unpaid carers" Copies available by phoning 0300 456 0300 or download from www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/protecting-the-vulnerable/mental-capacity-act/index.htm

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. Tel: 0115 9515400 (Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm, Fri 9am – 4.30pm) 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. 0845 6027885 or email: info@theCBF.org.uk

Free information sheets and DVDs about 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 e-mail: advice@dls.org.uk

Mencap Learning Disability Helpline: Provides advice and information on all issues relevant to people with learning disabilities and their families in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

England: Telephone: 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: If your relative has an Autistic Spectrum Condition you can contact the National Autistic Society which offers advice and information to people on the autism spectrum and their families: Mon-Fri, 10am – 4pm. www.autism.org.uk Tel: 0808 8004104 or email: autismhelpline@nas.org.uk

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

Other useful contacts:

Samaritans: Confidential emotional support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to those experiencing despair, distress or suicidal feelings. Tel: 08457 909090. Email: jo@samaritans.org