

Services from Contact A Family

Contact a Family is the only national charity providing advice, information and support for any family with a disabled child, whatever the child's disability.

There are around 770,000 disabled children in the UK, around 5% of all children. Parents often tell us that discovering your child has a disability or rare condition can be a disorientating and lonely experience, and that having timely information and talking to other parents in the same situation is invaluable.

Contact a Family's Helpline, which takes around 18,000 calls a year is there to help parents find the information and support they need. Helpline staff can answer queries on all aspects of raising a disabled child, from providing medical information to claiming benefits, through schooling and obtaining a statement of special educational needs. The Helpline also has an extensive database of local, and rare condition support groups, where parents can meet or talk to, others who are coping with the same issues. Where a child has a very rare condition, where possible, the charity will also link people on an individual basis, or parents can use our dedicated web based linking service.

In addition, the charity's website at www.cafamily.org.uk contains a wealth of information, including a range of factsheets which can be downloaded free of charge, some of which are targeted at particular family members, like siblings, whose needs are not always recognised. Several of the factsheets have been translated into the most widely spoken community languages, so that all members of the community can access our services.

Our network of London projects and regional offices also provide some hands on, practical help, such as running groups and workshops, as well as organising social events, and in some rural areas our social workers work with families on a one to one basis.

As well as working directly with individual families the charity also works with parents and carers organisations, and local and national government, and health authorities to shape local services to local needs. There's lots more information at <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/influence.html> for parents who are interested in influencing services in their area.

The freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 is open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday, and as from this January, will also open from 5.30pm to 7.30pm, to take calls from parents who work, or care for children during the day. The charity has been able to offer this service, thanks to a generous grant from new trust, True Colours.

Tel: 0808 808 3555