

RAINBOW Guide

DURHAM'S GUIDE TO SEND SUPPORT BY
PARENT CARERS FOR PARENT CARERS

2024/2025

Hello!

The Rainbow Guide is here to be your one-stop-shop for all the resources and information you need. We have carefully curated a wealth of organisations who will help you navigate through the challenges of parenting and caring for your child. From finding the right educational resources to accessing healthcare services, our guide covers it all.

Every piece of information in the Rainbow Guide has been created by fellow parent carers who have walked in your shoes. We understand the unique needs and concerns you may have, and we have tailored our content to address them specifically.

Our goal for this guide is to be a go-to resource during what may be a difficult period and to remind you that you are not alone in your journey. We want to empower you with the knowledge and resources you need to provide the best possible care for your child. We believe that with the right support and information, you can overcome any challenge that comes your way.

So, we invite you to dive into the Rainbow Guide and discover the wealth of information waiting for you. Whether you need advice on managing your child's behaviour, or finding support groups in your area, we have it covered. Our guide is updated with the latest information, ensuring that you have access to the most relevant resources.

Welcome to the Rainbow Guide!

Don't let the challenges of parenting and caring for your child overwhelm you. Join the Rainbow Guide community today and let us guide you towards a brighter and more fulfilling journey. Remember, you are not alone.

We can't wait to have you on board!

With Love & understanding,

Another parent carer

"You'll never find a rainbow if you're looking down." - Charlie Chaplin



Little SENDsations



Little SENDsations is a parent-led charity providing a range of support to families of children with all disabilities. The organisation offers accessible play and leisure activities for SEND children and their families, aiming to eliminate barriers and reduce social isolation. Little SENDsations prides itself on being an empowering, inclusive, and non-judgemental group where everyone feels welcome.

Founded in 2023 by parents of children with disabilities, Little SENDsations was born out of a need for more accessible activities, particularly on weekends and during school holidays. These parents experienced isolation due to the lack of suitable leisure activities for their children. Little SENDsations was established to address this gap and to educate society, ensuring an inclusive and accessible future for all children.



What They Do:

Support for Families: Providing various support services to families of children with all disabilities.

Accessible Activities: Offering enriching play and leisure activities tailored to the needs of SEND children.

Inclusive Environment: Creating a welcoming, non-judgemental space for all families.

Community Education: Promoting awareness and understanding within society to foster inclusivity.

Little SENDsations invites families to join their efforts in creating a supportive and inclusive community for all SEND children.

Contact information:

Email:

wslittlesendsations@gmail.com

Website:

www.littlesendsations.org

Phone: 07534527397





Durham SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service) offers vital information, advice, and support on SEND policies, processes, and law. This service is designed to assist young people aged 16-25, as well as parents and carers of children who have or may have special educational needs or disabilities.

Who They Support:

Parents and carers of children with SEND,
Young people (16-25 years) with SEND,
Practitioners and Professionals.

Key Features:

Free and Impartial,
Confidential Support,
Collaborative Approach,
Empowering Decision-Making.

Information and Services Provided:

Identifying and Assessing SEND,
Contact Information,
Graduated Approach to SEND,
Legal Rights and Responsibilities,
Meetings and Reviews,
Dispute Resolution.

Durham SENDIASS is dedicated to ensuring that all children and young people with SEND are supported, understood, and provided with the best opportunities to succeed.

Contact information:
Phone: 0191 587 3541
Email:
sendiass@durham.gov.uk
Website:
www.durhamsendiass.info/



County Durham's Local Offer



Who we're here for:

- Children and young people with a special educational need or disability
- Their parents or carers
- Professionals working with them

Our website holds lots of information including advice and guidance about the services and support available across education, health and social care, whether or not you have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

We're here because we want all children and young people to...

- be safe
- be part of their community
- have the best start in life
- have good physical and mental health
- gain the education, skills and experiences to prepare them for adulthood.

scan me



www.durham.gov.uk/LocalOffer





Family Hubs provide support to families from pregnancy to the age of 19, or 25 if your child has special educational needs and/or disability (SEND).

www.durham.gov.uk/HelpForFamilies
www.facebook.com/CountyDurhamFamilyHubs

Family Hubs offer a range of programmes and sessions for parents/carers whose child has SEND. This includes:

- Support for parents and carers of pre-school children through the Portage Service
- Programmes and courses to help you understand your child's needs and how best to support them
- Drop-in sessions where you can speak to SENDIASS about your child's education and how their needs can be met
- Informal peer support groups where you can meet other parents and share experiences
- Advice from Educational Psychologist at drop-in sessions Workshops offering advice and support around your child's health and development, such as eating, sleeping and continence delivered by the 0-25 Growing Healthy Team

Our website also has links to:

- The Local Offer with information, advice and guidance about the types of services and support available to you
- Online workshops and elearning programmes
- MCT DURHAM PCF (Durham's official parent carer forum) Training and Workshops



[www.durham.gov.uk/
FamilyHubsSENDGroups](http://www.durham.gov.uk/FamilyHubsSENDGroups)





I Offer:

**Sensory and Developmental
Occupational Therapy Assessments**

Report writing

Family support

**Fine motor/handwriting assessment and
intervention packages**

LAURA ELLIOTT

*Independent Occupational
Therapist*

Sensory Integration
Practitioner

I am an Independent Occupational Therapist and Sensory Integration Practitioner with over 20 years of experience as an Occupational Therapist across a variety of settings. I am a parent carer to neurodivergent children. Passionate about conducting sensory and developmental assessments for children and young people, providing recommendations for educational settings and home environments. This helps adults around the child understand how sensory processing differences affect physical, social, and academic development.

Assessments involve home and/or education setting visits and a mixture of standardised, non standardised assessment tools as well as clinical observation. I cover all of County Durham and the surrounding counties.

Intervention packages are offered using Ayres Sensory Integration, and bespoke assessment packages are created to meet the needs of each family.

Contact Information:

- Email: info@laurasensoryot.co.uk
- Phone: 07548966360
- laurasensoryot.co.uk
- Instagram [laurasensoryot](https://www.instagram.com/laurasensoryot)
- Facebook page [Laura Elliott Independent Occupational Therapist](https://www.facebook.com/LauraElliottIndependentOccupationalTherapist)



SEN Magazine, the UK's leading magazine for special educational needs, is essential reading for Head-teachers, SENCO's and teachers in special and mainstream schools. It is also widely read by parents, carers and professionals who work with children and young adults with SEN. The Magazine includes expert articles by leading SEN specialists, alongside opinion and interest pieces written by teachers, parents and professionals.

SEN Magazine is distributed to all special schools and colleges in the UK and is available on subscription to mainstream schools. Copies are also mailed directly to our ever-growing list of subscribers and to key decision makers in local education authorities.

5 things we do:

1. Distributed free of charge to all SEN Schools & Colleges in the UK
2. Publish articles written by leading experts on all aspects of SEND. Publish "Point of view" & "Personal Stories" articles written by parents, carers, young adults with SEND.
3. Offer excellent rates on subscriptions to the print & digital magazine
4. Offer advertisers excellent packages in both print & online
5. Publish a free, informative monthly newsletter to our subscribers

5 things we don't do:

1. We do not offer free promotional articles (only non promotional independent articles)
2. We do not pressure sell
3. We do not offer "Guest/Blog" posts on the website
4. We do not offer a promise we can't fulfill
5. We don't make advertisers pay upfront for the printed magazine (payment is 30 days after the publication date)

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Durham Sensory Team



Durham Sensory Team provides assessment, support, advice and direct intervention for children and young people with a sensory loss and their families.

The team comprises the Deaf and Hearing Support Team and the Vision/Multi-Sensory Support Team and includes Qualified Teachers of the Deaf, Qualified Teachers of Children and Young People with Vision/Multi-Sensory Impairment, a Specialist Speech Therapist, a Habilitation Specialist, a Communication Support Worker, a Deaf Worker, and Specialist Support Workers.

We offer support from the point of diagnosis (often at birth or a very young age) and work with children and young people from birth to twenty-five. We work in homes, family hubs, nurseries, schools, and other educational establishments and provide a flexible service according to a child's age, developmental stage, additional needs (if any) and setting. Our pre-school team can provide home visits as well as group sessions in sensory rooms and other settings across County Durham, enabling families to provide mutual support for one another.

Our aim is to help parents and carers and educational settings to understand the impact of a child's sensory loss and offer advice and support to maximise inclusion. We also help children and young people to develop language and communication skills, social and independent living skills, and other compensatory skills to enable them to access education. However, we are mindful that the challenges are not restricted to the classroom and work closely with other agencies to encourage participation in the wider community.

Contact information:

Email: CYPSSensoryTeam@durham.gov.uk

Phone: 03000 264530



Your local charity supporting carers



County Durham
& Darlington
carers support

Durham County Carers Support is a voluntary organisation dedicated to offering free, high-quality services to unpaid carers over the age of 18. These carers support individuals living in County Durham and Darlington. As a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, the organisation works closely with carers to provide the information, resources, and support needed to manage their caregiving roles while also looking after their own well-being.

Durham County Carers Support serves as a one-stop shop for carers, providing a wide range of support services, including:

One-to-One Tailored Support
A Listening Ear
Help with Completing Forms
Access to Grants and Funding
Respite Support
Signposting to Relevant Organisations
Groups and Events
Training on Various Topics
Counselling Sessions
Carers Discount Card
Carers Emergency Card

Tel: 0300 005 1213
Email: admin@dccarers.org
Text: 07800 005830
Website www.dccarers.org





MCT Durham PCF CIO, formerly known as Making Changes Together, is a group of experienced parent carer volunteers from County Durham. The forum represents the interests of parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities within the Durham Local Authority area.

MCT work in partnership with the Local Authority, Health and Social Care, and other groups and organisations at local, regional, and national levels to influence service provision and highlight the issues and needs of the families we represent.

Services

- Partnerships: Collaborating with the Local Authority, Health and Social Care, and various organisations to influence service provision.
- Parent Participation: Funded by the Department of Education via the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) to coordinate, promote, and deliver parent participation locally.
- Workshops and Conferences: Organising workshops, bi-annual parent carer conferences, and various events within County Durham to gather views from parent carers and advocate for changes.

Contact information:

Email: info@mctdurham.co.uk

Facebook:

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

DURHAM Website: <https://www.mctdurham.co.uk/>



**DAISY
CHAIN**
Autism & Neurodiversity

If you live in Sunderland, the Family Support Service, delivered by Daisy Chain, is here for you. The team supports young people aged 0-18 years and their families, no matter where they are on their autism, ADHD, sensory processing or Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) journey. This means that your young person does not need to have a diagnosis or be on the neurodevelopmental pathway to access support from the service.

What do we offer?

- Bespoke 1:1 support in a format that works for you e.g. telephone, online, in-person
- Peer support sessions
- Multi-agency drop-ins
- Sessions for children and young people
- Free learning workshops for parents/carers

How can I access support?

Email: sunderlandfamilysupport@daisychainproject.co.uk
or call 01642 531248 (option 1)

If you'd rather not contact us direct you can ask the school, your health visitor or any other professionals involved in your family's care to share your details with us via the methods above, then we will contact you.



Join our Facebook Group:
www.facebook.com/groups/familysupportservicesunderland





Family Fund

Helping disabled children

Family Fund is the UK's largest grant-making charity. We support families raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person, and living on a low income, with grants and practical services alongside providing ways for them to share their experiences.

What we do:

We give grants for of essential items such as kitchen appliances, furniture, bedding, tablets and more

We provide eligible families raising a child under three years old with a car-leasing package.

We support young adults with grants to enhance their life and increase their independence

We offer services and practical workshops and e-courses to parents and carers

What we can't offer:

Help with the cost of energy bills

Support with home improvements

Grants for boiler replacement

Driving lessons for parents

Find out more:

www.familyfund.org.uk

www.facebook.com/familyfund

Get in touch:

01904 550055





SEND Friendly North East

About Us

SEND Friendly North East was established in October 2023 by SEND parent Candice Burton. The aim was to create a digital hub for North East parents and carers to share accessible events, activities, venues, and days out for SEND children.

Community Growth

What began as a Facebook group has quickly expanded into a community of over 3,000 members. This community includes SEND parents and carers, as well as SEND-friendly charities, organisations, community groups, and businesses, all collaborating to ensure SEND children have equal opportunities for a happy and fulfilling childhood.

Invitation to Join

SEND Friendly North East welcomes new members to the community and hopes they find it very useful.

Contact information:

Email: SEnDFriendlyNorthEast@outlook.com

Instagram: [@SEnDFriendlyNorthEast](https://www.instagram.com/SEnDFriendlyNorthEast)

Facebook: [SEND Friendly North East](https://www.facebook.com/SEND-Friendly-North-East)



County Durham and Darlington's Children's Physiotherapy Team operates across the county in special schools, community settings, and clinics. The team treats children with a range of neurological, genetic, and musculoskeletal conditions to help them achieve their physical potential. Services include physiotherapy assessments, interventions, and 24-hour postural management.

The team collaborates closely with Occupational Therapists to set up 24-hour postural management, which may involve the provision of specialist equipment such as walking frames and standing frames. Additionally, the team works with Paediatricians, Orthopaedic Surgeons, Orthotists, and other members of the multidisciplinary team to ensure comprehensive care for each child.

Referrals to the service can be made by Paediatricians or GPs, but self-referrals from parents and carers are also accepted. The referral form is available on the County Durham and Darlington - Children's Physiotherapy website or by contacting the admin team. The team is based throughout County Durham and Darlington, working in clinics, the community, and schools.



Contact information:

Phone: 0191 3876436

Website: <https://www.cddft.nhs.uk/our-services/community-services/children's-services/children's-physiotherapy.aspx>





TREE TOPS
Children's Occupational Therapy

Tree Tops Occupational Therapy specialises in Sensory Processing Difficulties (SPD) and Sensory Integration (SI) in Newton Aycliffe and Stockton. Since 2002, they have been working with families, schools, and health professionals to assess and treat individuals, raise awareness, and train Occupational Therapists for effective support in clinics and schools.

Children, young people, and adults with various difficulties and conditions can receive support through:

Interventions (sensory integration),
Training for parents and schools,
Sensory processing support,
Handwriting support,
Extreme behaviour support,
Food therapy,
Sensory diets,
Motor skills support,
Parent support group.

Contact information:

Email: hello@treetopsot.co.uk

Website:

www.treetopsoccupationaltherapy.co.uk

Phone: 01325 304411





The Learning Library is a registered charity offering a unique service by loaning specialist resources to individuals with additional needs in County Durham, completely free of charge on a short-term basis.

Our Resources

The Learning Library provides a wide variety of resources tailored to various themes and needs, including:

- Weighted Resources: Lap pads, shoulder snakes, and vests.
- Spinning Resources: Egg chairs, whizzy dizzies, and carousel seats.
- Motor Skill Resources: Games and themed discovery boxes for fine and gross motor skills, with themes such as circus.
- Sensory Lights: Bubble tubes, fibre optics, and smaller handheld lights.
- Outdoor Games: Various outdoor games and specialist tricycles.

With over 4000 resources available, our catalogue offers extensive options. Our service is facilitated by a dedicated team of four Outreach Workers who operate throughout County Durham. Each member is assigned an Outreach Worker, allowing for consistent support and relationship-building.

Our Outreach Workers collaborate with members to identify the most suitable resources for their individual needs and provide expert advice. Resources are delivered directly to members' homes, ensuring a convenient and personalised service.

Contact information:
Phone: 01388 420267
Email: info@learninglibrary.org.uk
Website: www.learninglibrary.org.uk



Stacey's Barbers offers private, tailored sessions for individuals of all ages and abilities by appointment only, ensuring each person's unique needs are met. With over seven years of experience and five years of using sensory room facilities, this inclusive service benefits individuals, parents, and carers.

She aims to make haircuts a comfortable and routine experience. By adapting the process to each individual, the service helps educate families, transforming a potentially stressful task into an enjoyable experience.

Stacey also provides haircuts during school hours at SEND schools and colleges across the North East. This takes place in a safe, inclusive, and familiar environment, ensuring students feel comfortable and supported.

Contact information: Stacey's Barbers Ltd
12 Newmarket Street, Consett,
Co. Durham.
DH8 5LQ. 01207775769



Stacey's Barbers New (Facebook)
Stacey's barbers (Instagram)
Staceysbarbersdh8 (TikTok)



About Us



The Sensory Place is a parent-led organisation offering a network of support to families of children with all disabilities aged 0-18 years. We are all parents of a disabled child or children and we felt that there were just not enough places to go or things to do when you have a child who has additional needs as mainstream activities are not accessible for many different reasons. We also experienced judgement and isolation as other people do not always understand the difficulties families like ours face. We knew we weren't alone in thinking this and so The Sensory Place was born in 2019 with a view to changing this for the better.

Since then, we have provided a huge range of activities for families to enjoy. These sessions give the children the opportunity to relax and be themselves in an environment that is safe, relaxed and free from judgement. It also gives parent carers the chance to socialise with other like-minded people, picking up tips and tricks along the way to make their parenting journey a little easier.

What we do

- We offer inclusive, sensory friendly events and activities designed with the whole family in mind as well as working with a variety of organisations and services to make mainstream events accessible to all.
- We provide information, advice and guidance to parent carers in the form of courses based on the needs of their child. We also run parent carer coffee and craft sessions as well as mindfulness and wellbeing sessions.
- Whatever your circumstances, we will never judge you or your child. We know from personal experience how hard it can be to attend activities when you have a child or children with SEND so we plan a range of SEND friendly events where there is hopefully something for everyone to enjoy.
- We know how hard it can be to make that first step through the door to try something new as we have been there too. We provide safe and non-judgemental spaces where everyone can be themselves and relax. We keep our numbers as low as we possibly can so we can get to know each individual.

We would love it if you would like to come along and join us one day.
To have a look at what we do and to see what we have to offer, please take a
look at our website

thesensoryplace.net or give us a follow on our Facebook page
[Facebook.com/thesensoryplaceopenpage](https://www.facebook.com/thesensoryplaceopenpage)



Heel & Toe Children's Charity provides free and subsidised therapies to children and young people with a range of disabilities across the North East. These are delivered by our specialist therapists in two centres in County Durham.

In 2024/2025 we are able to offer the following therapies FREE to families;

Conductive Education – which is a holistic therapy based on principles of education and learning

Hippotherapy – which is horse riding as a physiotherapy treatment.

Occupational Therapy – Sensory skills for parent pilot project.

We also offer the following therapies at a subsidised cost to parents;

Physiotherapy

Speech & Language Therapy

Massage Therapy

Hydrotherapy – Using the properties of warm water for physio treatment



Parents are able to refer their children by contacting us through our website.

www.heelandtoe.org.uk





Founded by a mother navigating the challenges of raising an autistic child, SENDelight Gifts is committed to simplifying the gifting process for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our platform offers handpicked, affordable sensory products that not only support but enhance children's development.

What We Offer:

Curated Sensory Toys and Products: Each product is selected to aid in the development of children with SEND.

Exclusive Discounts for Parent Carers for FREE:

Registered parent carers in our website access discounted prices across our entire range, making our products even more accessible.

Affordable Quality: We believe in providing high-quality products at family-friendly prices.

Developmental Support: Our range includes products that support speech, language, cognitive abilities, motor skills, sensory processing, and social interaction.

Commercial Orders for Sensory Bags: We offer custom sensory bags filled with fidgets and sensory toys for schools, clinics, and other commercial entities, tailored to meet specific sensory needs.

Community Connection: We actively engage with our community through social media and events to listen, learn, and evolve based on the needs and feedback of our customers.

What We Do Not Provide:

Therapy Services: Our products complement therapeutic activities but do not replace professional services.

Custom-Made Toys: While our selection is broad, we do not offer custom-made toys.

Medical or Developmental Advice: Our focus is on toys, not medical consultations.

Large-Scale Educational Equipment: We specialise in products for individual and home use.

Diagnostic Services: We provide supportive toys and tools, not diagnostic services.

Stay Connected and Supported:

Website: www.sendelightgifts.com

Email: info@sendelightgifts.com

Social Media: Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok
[@SENDelightGifts](#)

Contact Number: 07455178011

Join Our Mission: At SENDelight Gifts, every purchase comes with a promise of quality and a commitment to supporting every child's journey towards greater learning and interaction.



Durham Area Disability Leisure Group (DADLG) is a family focused charity, established in 1989, to provide sports, leisure and social opportunities for children and young people with disabilities and their immediate families, living within Durham and the surrounding areas.

DADLG have a fundamental belief that leisure is an important part every young person's life and is vital to the process of human development. It provides a mechanism for individuals to explore the world around them and a medium through which skills are developed and practiced.

Services

Day trip · Theatre · Cinema · Pool Parties · Go Karting ·
Adventure Days · Bowling · Quad Biking · Laser Quest · Roller Skating
· Sensory Room · Picnics · Parties ·
Weekly clubs · weekend activities and summer holidays.

Family membership **includes** the disabled young person, their brothers and sisters and parents/carers.



Contact information:

Email: dadlg08@googlemail.com

Phone: 07592366454

Website: www.dadlg.org



The Chronicle Sunshine Fund is a local North East charity that provides specialist and adapted equipment to children aged 0-19 living with disabilities, additional needs, chronic and terminal illness. The types of equipment we can fund are not available through statutory services like the Local Authority or NHS; yet they are vital to the daily life of our Sunshine kids. These specific pieces of equipment enrich quality of life for not only the children, but their wider families and communities.

We are immensely proud to make a difference to the lives of local disabled children and their families through funding life-changing, specialist and adapted equipment; however, our support and service goes far beyond this.

What we do

- We can help you apply for equipment that otherwise could not be funded by the NHS
- We create multiple events throughout the year for families to get involved in.
- We have the junior and mini GNR that is ran every year to raise vital funds for Sunshine Fund
- We offer opportunities to get involved and volunteer!

What we don't do

- We do not means test or ask for any financial information on our application forms.
- We don't support individuals outside of the Tyne and Wear, Northumberland. and County Durham area.
- We do not deny individuals, charities, and community groups from making applications with us.



For more information go to:
www.thesunshinefund.org
or Call us on:
Families and Applications line
07593 298541
Main Office
0191 201 6289





The Senses Wellbeing Centre offers an accessible, affordable, and welcoming space for the entire community to come together, lifting both hearts and spirits.

The centre hosts a full timetable of fitness sessions designed for everyone, including adults, children, active seniors, and individuals with Special Educational Needs, Additional Needs, and Disabilities. The family fitness sessions are designed to eliminate the cost of childcare and inspire positive behaviours through shared activity.

Thanks to incredible community support, they have transformed their spacious multi-use main hall into a Sensory Play environment. This space features sensory lighting, projectors, blackout tents, and a variety of sensory equipment and toys.

These resources are available for 1-hour sessions, which can be booked for exclusive use. They also offer sessions specifically for SEND adults and children, including their family members, siblings, and support workers, with activities like monthly discos, themed events, and SEND parties. Private sessions, such as glow-in-the-dark family fitness, are also available.



Contact information:

Email: karen@senseswellbeingcentre.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Senseswellbeingcentre

Website: <https://senseswellbeingcentre.co.uk/>





Learning a New Way CIC is a community organisation based in South Durham. It provides a variety of community activity groups aimed at improving the wellbeing of families and offering meaningful opportunities to those who may not otherwise have access. The organisation specialises in supporting neurodivergent families but also works with other SEND conditions such as cerebral palsy, Prader-Willi syndrome, and global developmental delay.



- Inclusive Activity Groups,
- Drop-off Sessions,
- Family Wellbeing Group,
- SEND-Only Groups,
- Holiday Activity Clubs,
- Support for Ages 4-16,
- Neurodivergent Family Support,
- Support for PECs and AAC Devices,
- Courses for Autism & ADHD,
- Parental Wellbeing and Social Events,
- Monthly Peer-Support Coffee Mornings,

Contact information:

Email:

admin@learninganewway.co.uk

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/learninganewwaycic



T H E A T R E



The Hullabaloo provides inclusive, neurodivergent-friendly performances and free Creative Play sessions for children and families. Activities include sensory installations like Bloom and Dreamland, tailored for neurodiverse children. Families can book exclusive or small group sessions for a more personalised experience.

The Theatre Hullabaloo is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where every child and their family feel welcome. They offer various opportunities for families with neurodivergent children or those with additional needs to participate in a way that suits them best, whether that means attending events with fewer people, enjoying a more relaxed pace, or having a familiar face present.

Neurodivergent Friendly (NDF) Performances

While The Hullabaloo maintains a relaxed atmosphere at all times, they also offer specific Neurodivergent Friendly (NDF) Performances. These performances are open to everyone but are particularly designed to make families with additional needs feel more comfortable.

At these performances:

Pre-show information is available to help families prepare for their visit.

Guests can preview the theatre before the show begins.

It's perfectly fine for attendees to get up, move around, and respond to the show in their own way.

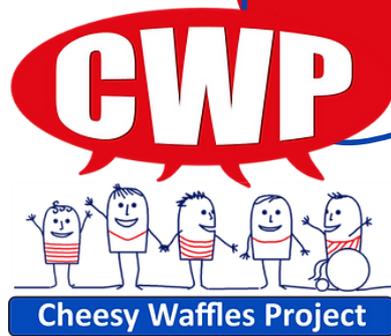
Contact information:

Email: info@theatrehullabaloo.org.uk

Phone: 01325 405680

Website: www.theatrehullabaloo.org.uk





The Cheesy Waffles Project, established in 2004, is a registered charity dedicated to changing the lives of children, young people, and adults with additional needs in County Durham. While primarily focused on individuals with learning disabilities, the project is inclusive and welcomes everyone. We offer a variety of clubs and educational activities, ranging from dance and fitness to cooking and residential trips.

Cheesy Waffles provides a comprehensive range of clubs and activities from Monday to Saturday, catering to mixed ages both onsite and offsite. These activities aim to develop independent and personal skills, introduce new experiences, and ensure members have fun.

- **Offsite Visits and Residentials:** These trips, including overnight stays and residentials, allow members to enjoy social time without family and carer support, providing respite and fostering positive transition development.
 - **Varied Programs:** Members can participate in sports and wellbeing activities, cookery programs, performing arts, social activities, shopping trips, and more, benefiting in numerous ways.
 - **Community Involvement:** Members are encouraged to assist with local community projects, promoting disability awareness positively.
- Cheesy Waffles aims to provide enriching experiences and opportunities for personal growth and community engagement for all its members.

Contact information:

Email: Cwyproject@gmail.com

Phone: 07808 842205

Website: www.cwyproject.org.uk/

THE SPECIAL LIONESSE

Who Are We?

Making Special Memories with Special Families

The Special Lioness is a trusted charitable organisation founded in 2017, we, as four mums of children with profound disabilities found that we had no-where to turn for honest advice for products, medical issues, and found this journey utterly lonely and exhausting. So, after meeting through a Portage sensory group, we realised that we had something to offer other families and that's where our journey began.

Over the years, we have strived to become a social, friendly, welcoming, slightly bonkers place for parents/carers to come together and share our knowledge and contacts that we have built up over the years.

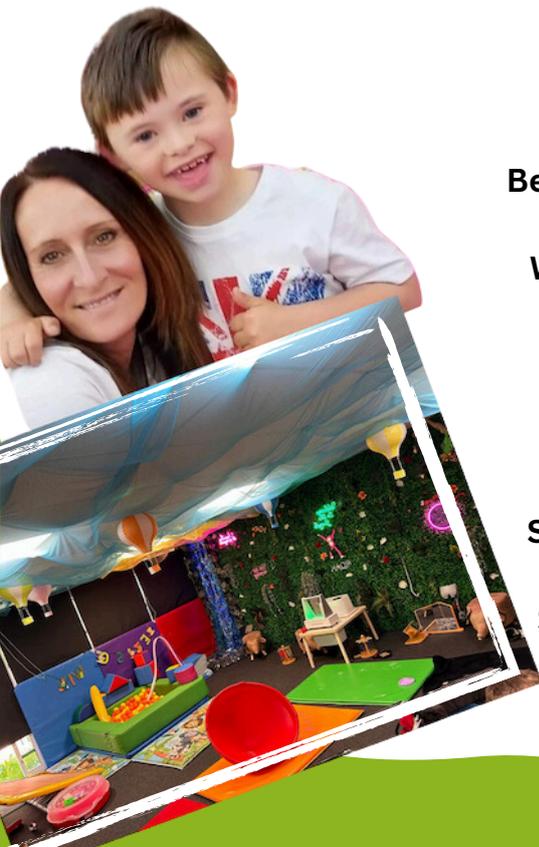
Our main goal is to not only help create strong friendships for other parents/ carers but for their children too. We have a passion for fundraising to give our families one-off experiences, filled with fun and laughter to make life-long memories as a family, particularly as some of our children have life limiting conditions, so we believe we should give them as many opportunities as possible to make memories, while our children are well enough to experience them!

A diagnosis not required to access our services. We have an open door policy and will never ask for personal information. All our sessions are accessible, age and ability appropriate and open to all children with disabilities/ additional needs together with their siblings aged 0-18.

For information on our services and events please visit our website
www.TheSpecialLioness.com.

Our Services

- Bespoke Sensory Room - The Roaring Rainforest
- Weekly Pre-School Sensory Group
- Monthly Support Group
- Accessible & Inclusive Events
- Inclusive Day Trips
- Sensory Parties
- Parents / Carers Training
- Special Bonds Group, for cared for families
- Supportive and non-judgemental community on our Facebook Page





JULIE TARN

MAKATON TUTOR & AMBASSADOR

Julie Tarn is an experienced Makaton Tutor and Ambassador with over 20 years of experience working in special education settings. She offers sign and symbol advice, support and training and has seen the positive impact Makaton has had on those who use it daily to communicate their needs.

Makaton is a language programme that uses speech, signs and symbols to enable those with a learning or communication difficulty to understand and be understood. It is inclusive, supports learning, enhances communication and gives an alternative means of expression.

Julie offers training for families, organisations, education and health settings as well as in the community.

These sessions include:

- Levels 1-4,
- Using Makaton with singing,
- Makaton signing for Babies and Families,
- Taster sessions,
- Makaton Friendly Support,
- Makaton signed story, song and activity sessions,
- Special Events,
- Plus many other services.



Contact information:

Email: info@julietarn.com

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/juliemakatontutor





Haystax Hub is a community interest company run by Sue, an experienced teacher with a passion for supporting young people with diverse needs. The Hub offers a wide range of inclusive educational, vocational, and well-being opportunities for young people. Each of these is designed to meet the needs of the individuals involved and offer meaningful experiences. For some, this will be a one-off session that helps them connect with nature. For others, it may be a long-term program designed to teach vocational skills, helping them access meaningful employment when they leave education.

The vision for Haystax is to create a peaceful retreat for the entire family, where individuals with additional needs are welcomed and understood, allowing everyone to relax and enjoy quality time together.

The offering includes:

Family and Volunteer-Run Coffee Shop: A welcoming environment with picture menus, optional blended food, allergen options, breastfeeding and tube feeding-friendly spaces, and dog-friendly areas – truly everyone-friendly.

Outdoor Inclusive Play Area: Featuring sensory equipment and sensory rooms.

Events Lodge: Available for private bookings and school visits.

Woodland Nature Trail and Wild Wood Outdoor Play Area: Offering a natural, engaging environment for exploration and play.

Family Toilets and a Changing Places Toilet: Ensuring accessibility and comfort for all.

Forest Sessions, Parties, and Shared Events with Noo Noo's CIC: Providing various activities and events to bring families and the community together.



Contact information:

Email:

enquiries_haystax@outlook.com

Phone: 07596856654

Website:

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





The SENse HUB, located in Newton Aycliffe, is a new SEN assessment and intervention centre designed to offer alternative educational provision. Catering to primary and secondary age students, the Hub provides up to 15 hours of education per week in a supportive, home-like environment. It features versatile learning spaces, including a fully-equipped studio and sensory room, to promote recovery, exploration, and curiosity.

The SENse HUB aims to empower students and families, ensuring that every child's voice is heard and their needs addressed comprehensively.

The SENse HUB also provides comprehensive support, advice, and advocacy services, including:

- School Support and EHCP Reviews,
- Tribunal Work,
- SENCO Assessments,
- Educational Psychology,
- Bespoke Action Plans,
- Consultations with Professionals,
- Advocacy.

Key Features of The SENse HUB:

- Small Group Ratios,
- Flexible Sessions,
- Specialist Staff

Contact information:

Email: admin@sensesupport.org

Phone: 0191 367 0634

Website: www.sensesupport.org/





All Disabilities Matter was established to support individuals with disabilities and mental health concerns by providing a welcoming and understanding space. The organisation is committed to offering a supportive environment where people with disabilities and their caregivers can find a listening ear to help them navigate life's challenges. By fostering a community built on shared experiences and the exchange of helpful resources, All Disabilities Matter aims to strengthen connections and create a more inclusive society. The group is composed of everyday individuals who face a range of challenges in today's world. By expanding this community, the organisation seeks to raise awareness and drive positive change for all involved.

All Disabilities Matter hosts two weekly support groups on Wednesdays and Fridays for parents, carers, and individuals with disabilities. These sessions provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences, seek peer support, and enjoy a chat over coffee—often with some cake.

Additionally, the organisation runs a SEND social club on Monday evenings at Café HQ in Newton Aycliffe. Here, participants can engage in crafts, games, and music sessions, fostering a lively and social atmosphere.

The monthly discos at the Phoenix Club are a major highlight, offering a fantastic opportunity for everyone to come together and have fun.

Contact information:

Email: admin@alldisabilitiesmatter.com Website:
<https://alldisabilitiesmatter.com/>





Established in 1986, Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) is a voluntary and charitable organisation led by disabled people. Its mission is to promote independence and choice by providing services, support, and information to disabled people and carers, while addressing issues both locally and nationally. DAD advocates for the social model of disability, promoting disability equality and awareness of anti-discrimination legislation.

DAD's Children and Young People's Service (ChYPS) offers high-quality services and support for children and young people aged 3 to 25 years. The team ensures that children and young people have opportunities to play, have fun, try new activities, spend time with friends, meet new people, and have their views and ideas heard.

- **Play, Leisure, and Social Opportunities:** Providing various activities and events to encourage play, leisure, and social interactions.
- **Voice and Advocacy:** Offering platforms for children and young people to share their views, opinions, and ideas, ensuring their voices are heard.
- **Courses:** Conducting courses on Life Skills, Confidence Building, Disability Equality, and Independent Living Skills, such as cooking, budgeting, and travel training.

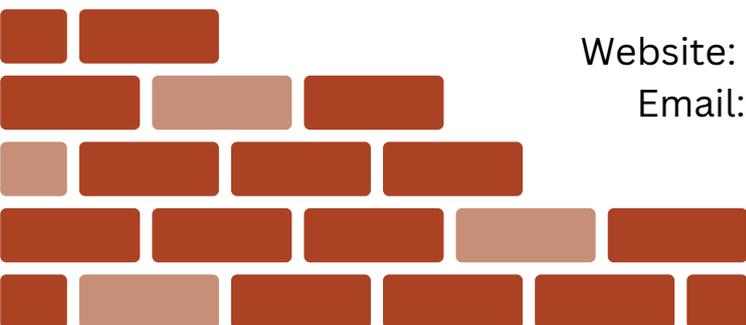
DAD is dedicated to empowering disabled individuals and their families by fostering an inclusive and supportive community.

Contact information:

Website: www.darlingtondisability.org/

Email: mail@darlingtondisability.org

Phone: 01325 489999





At Five Acres, the mission is to create a safe and inclusive environment where young people, referred to as "Champions", can achieve their full potential. As a bespoke Day Centre for individuals aged 16 and above with special needs and learning difficulties, Five Acres offers a unique approach to learning and personal development.

Key Opportunities at Five Acres Community Garden:

Skill Development: Champions are provided with opportunities to develop skills essential for independent living and employment.

Specialised Learning: The centre offers a range of subject areas to help improve basic literacy, numeracy, and communication skills.

Work Experience: Participants can engage in work-related activities, gaining practical experience that prepares them for future employment.

Sports and Social Activities: A variety of sports, leisure, and social activities are available, promoting physical well-being and social interaction.



Community Involvement: Champions play an active role in the Five Acres Community Family, fostering a sense of belonging and contribution. Five Acres is dedicated to empowering its Champions, ensuring they have the tools and opportunities needed to thrive in an engaging and supportive environment.

Contact information:

Email:

info.fiveacres@gmail.com

Phone: 07425779502

Website: <https://fiveacres.uk/>



The A Game



The A Game is an online community group for autistic young people aged 13-17 in the North East. It offers a safe, inclusive space for members to connect, make friends, share experiences, and find support.

Recognising the unique challenges of being a neurodivergent teenager, The A Game provides guidance, understanding, and friendship, fostering a sense of belonging where members can express themselves authentically.

The A Game are dedicated to ensuring an inclusive, safe, and respectful environment for everyone. We chat and share information about neurodiversity, promoting understanding, positivity, empathy, and kindness in our servers. The A Game is a place where members can have a laugh and engage in discussions that matter to them. Whether it's sharing hobbies and interests, finding others to game with, having a rant, or just joking around, we're committed to building a community where our young people can thrive.



PLAY

What they offer:

- Opportunities to connect with other autistic teens both online and locally.
- Access to a private Discord server for activities, text chat, voice chats, and live streaming.
- Up-to-date resources on autistic characteristics and co-occurring conditions.
 - A private Minecraft server for members to enjoy.



Contact information:

Email:

thegamecommunity@gmail.com

Phone: 07396723896

Website: www.the-a-game.co.uk/





Unique abilities SEND group is a leisure and support group based in Durham. Unique Abilities SEND is a non profit organisation created to help people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

Life can feel like a very lonely, difficult and an isolating place for someone with SEND as well as members of their families. Often people struggle to know which way to turn to ensure they are receiving the correct help, as well as feeling like they do not have anybody who truly understands what they are going through.

Unique Abilities aim to eliminate social isolation so people don't feel alone.

They run sensory session support groups every third Saturday of the month. They have several sensory based activities. The sessions are for all ages and allows people to be themselves around people who truly understand how you feel, whilst engaging in activities you can make friends with like minded people who understand what you are going through as well as giving you the opportunity to receive advice support and guidance from a member of our team.

They also run a youth abilities session every first Sunday of the month which offers not only activities for older children to enjoy but helps to teach life skills such as cooking to help prepare for adult life.

Contact Information:
Charlotte Abbott
07402269197
uniqueabilities-
send@hotmail.com





Down's Syndrome North East
www.dsne.org.uk

We are a parent carer led charity supporting children and adults who have Down's syndrome and their families living in the North East of England. We run events from Teesside to Northumberland to enable families to get together, establish friendships, provide peer support, promote awareness of Down's syndrome and build a strong community. We provide antenatal peer support for expectant parents and new parents whose baby has a confirmed result of having Down's syndrome. All North East hospitals stock our new baby gift boxes which include signposting to local and national organisations.

For families with younger children, we offer play groups, sensory room visits, music classes and soft play sessions. Our events suitable for children and adults of all ages include forest schools, swimming, crafts, sports and games, swimming, parties and theatre visits. The teenagers and adults take part in discos, watersports, online pilates, bowling, residential weekends, art workshops and performing arts. For parents and carers, we offer wellbeing sessions, peer support, Makaton training and information-sharing sessions including wills and trusts, and EHCPs.

We are proud to be advocates for the Down's syndrome community and we work to raise awareness about stereotypes, inclusion, language used about Down's syndrome, and what people who have Down's syndrome can achieve. A recent project we worked on has been our 'Look At Me' photograph exhibition and accompanying book which aims to raise awareness, promote understanding and celebrate people who have Down's syndrome in our region.



To find out, more follow us on Facebook-
<https://www.facebook.com/www.dsne.org.uk/>
Follow us on Instagram- [downs_syndrome_north_east](https://www.instagram.com/downs_syndrome_north_east)
Visit our website- <https://www.dsne.org.uk/>
Sign up to be a member-
<https://www.dsne.org.uk/membership/>

Get in touch-
New Parent Support -
support@dsne.org.uk
Email - contact@dsne.org.uk
Phone - 0870 765 2121





Intertwined was established in September 2023 and reaches out to an array of people (all ages and abilities) within the North East. Providing a range of inclusive, engaging sessions which focus on increasing wellbeing, whilst also having excellent health, social and developmental benefits

Intertwined always aims to...

- Be as **Accessible** and **Inclusive** as possible
- Make sessions **Challenging** and **Rewarding**
- Create a **Friendly** and **Supportive** environment.

Intertwined can offer a range of sessions both group and 1:1, some examples of sessions are:

**Dance · Makaton · Fitness · Mind and Mobility
Yoga · Relaxation**

Intertwined also works with different groups to put on performances throughout the year.

I have a wealth of qualifications, experience and a passion to help everyone recognise and achieve their full potential whilst having lots of fun along the way.



To find out more, you can:
Visit: www.intertwinedNE.com
FOLLOW us on social media
@intertwinedNE
Contact via email:
intertwinedNE@gmail.com



It would be really great to hear from you!

Stacey 😊





SPEECH BUDDIES

Supporting your child's needs

Speech Buddies is a team of passionate Independent Speech and Language Therapists serving the North East of England, founded in 2017 by Clinical Director and Speech & Language Therapist Emma Harrison. Offering:

- Family Support: Offering vital assistance to families in need.
- Collaboration: Working in sync with NHS Speech and Language Therapy Services.
- Innovation: Staying at the cutting edge of developments in Speech and Language Therapy to provide the most up-to-date support.
- Technology: Utilising evolving technology to enhance Speech Therapy services.
- Client-Centered Care: Prioritising clients in all aspects of care.
- Offer Speech and Language Therapy in the form of:
 - Assessment
 - Therapy
 - Advice and Support

Speech Buddies believes that communication is a crucial part of life and aims to unlock this potential for the children they work with.

They strive to empower the adults around a child to understand communication needs and address any difficulties in

a cohesive, strengths-based way. Their goal is to ensure effective communication for all and to support children, parents, carers, and professionals in all areas of speech, language, and communication.



Contact information:

Email: emma@speechbuddies.uk

Phone: 07792 597121

Website: www.speechbuddies.uk





Founded by Kate Grayson, Specialist Occupational

Therapist and Nicole Bateman, teacher and mum of neurodivergent child who are both passionate about making sensory processing information accessible to children, parents and professionals. The Super Sensory Squad has been designed to promote inclusion, enhance regulation and increase understanding for the children and network.

We strive to empower all children and their support network to understand, regulate and advocate for children's sensory preferences to promote positive mental health and well-being.

What we do:

Free support 'Sip and Sensory' sessions online once a fortnight.

Self paced course for children and their families : Understanding Sensory Processing through stories. (Developmental age 4-12 years)

Be a strong sensory advocate programme: Empowering parents to advocate for their child's sensory preferences.

Resources: fun ways to empower your child's sensory awareness.

The Sensory Detective Academy : Sensory regulation programme for any environment.

Bespoke inclusive packages

What we don't do:

1:1 assessment or intervention packages.
Require a diagnosis to access our support.
Restrict our service to a local area.
In person programmes.

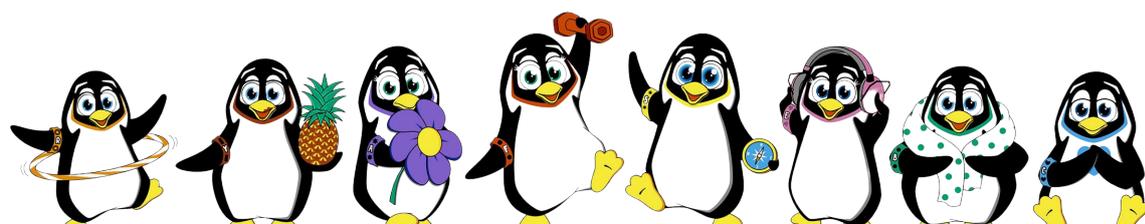
Contact us:

www.thesupersensorysquad.com

hello@thesupersensorysquad.com



thesupersensorysquad





Therapeeze THERAPY TOOLS TO THRIVE

Therapeeze provides specialist sensory therapeutic approaches to support families and professionals in effectively managing day-to-day life challenges. Their focus is on utilising therapeutic knowledge to make interventions accessible and beneficial in developing essential skills like self-care, play, social interaction, and school-based activities. Therapeeze has expertise in the body-mind connection, fostering social connections, and bonding through a nurturing sensory environment. Our online courses, workshops, and resources are designed to nurture both the learner and their support network, ensuring that they support not just the child, but the entire family.

Who We Support:

- Parents of neurodiverse children,
- Fostering/Adoptive parents,
- Professionals working with neurodiverse and attachment/trauma children.

Children We Support:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder,
- Attention Deficit Disorder,
- Learning Disabilities,
- Trauma and Attachment issues,
- Specific Learning Difficulties,
- Anxiety and mood disorders.

Additional Support:

- EHCP support/evidence/documentation,
- Tribunal support and virtual attendance,
- Training and workshops.



Contact information:

Website:

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

Email: Hello@therapeeze.com



Noo Noo's Forest School delivers outdoor, holistic experiences for all ages and abilities, allowing individuals to immerse themselves in nature. These experiences promote knowledge, physical development, social togetherness, and a sense of safety within the natural environment. Using the Forest School approach, Noo Noo's provides educational experiences both in your setting and offsite at locations such as Haystax Inclusive Farm Experience, King George V Woodland Site in Framwellgate Moor, community sites and school settings.

What We Offer:

- **Bespoke Sessions:** Tailored to the needs of the learners, ensuring everyone can engage, accomplish, thrive, and participate.
- **Variety of Locations:** Primarily delivered within the Durham area, but the team is willing to travel across the North East.
- **Flexible Services:** One-off sessions, long-term projects, PPA cover, staff training, and advice on developing natural learning outdoor environments.

By offering these flexible and inclusive opportunities, Noo Noo's Forest School aims to foster a deeper connection with nature while supporting individual growth and development.



Contact information:

Email: Experiences@noonoos.org Phone: 07792649297

Website: www.nikkinoonoos.co.uk





TimbaDash Theatre is a multi-sensory theatre company dedicated to producing immersive storytelling experiences for young people with complex and additional needs. The company's work is vibrant, fun, and accessible, with a strong emphasis on collaboration. At TimbaDash Theatre, each young person is placed at the heart of the creative process, ensuring that their needs and interests guide the development of every performance.

What We Do:

TimbaDash Theatre combines sensory play, storytelling, music, and a touch of magic to create immersive theatrical worlds. These experiences provide opportunities for interaction and engagement, making each performance a unique and personal experience for the audience. The company's approach is rooted in the belief that arts and culture are fundamental rights and essential needs for young people with disabilities. Through their work, TimbaDash Theatre aims to connect all individuals to the world, to each other, and to themselves, using art as a powerful tool for self-expression, communication, learning, and improved health and well-being.

Contact information:

Email: timbadashtheatre@gmail.com

Website:

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





Pendragon

COMMUNITY TRUST



Pendragon Community Trust is a fully inclusive sensory soft play centre located in Northallerton. The centre welcomes everyone from babies to adults, providing a supportive and friendly environment with experienced staff in SEN and family support.

Facilities include:

- Sensory Room: The sensory room is fully padded and features a ball pool, waterbed, interactive floor and wall, bubble tubes, fibre optics, and a slide.
- Accessibility: The centre has a changing places toilet, hoist in the sensory room and toilets, and a lift for upper floor access.
- Café: The on-site café offers drinks, homemade cakes, crisps, sweets, and sensory toys.

Pendragon Community Trust is open 7 days a week, offering sessions for sole users, shared groups, or larger groups. All sessions must be pre-booked.

Contact Information

Follow on Facebook and Instagram at Pendragon Community Trust for updates and session availability.



Contact information:

Email: julia.downes@pendragon-ct.org

Phone: 01609 760330

Website: www.pendragon-ct.org/





RAINBOWS

Sensory Space Ltd

Founded by Fiona Pattison in 2020 in remembrance of her late brother David who suffered from a rare form of Alexanders Leukodystrophy. Rainbows Sensory Space Ltd is a small multi-sensory centre located in Seaham, County Durham. It has been specifically designed to support children, young people and adults with special needs and disabilities, their families, schools and groups.

We provide opportunities for bridging the barriers that disabled people often face by creating an accessible, inclusive and non-judgemental environment where children and adults can control a variety of sensory experiences in a safe space. Rainbows Sensory Space has access to ceiling track hoists, a disabled toilet with hand rails and height-adjustable changing bed.

We use a combination of light, sound, touch and smell to provide a unique sensory experience for stimulation, de-escalation or relaxation purposes. The sensory environment can be adjusted to fit the motivation, interests and individual needs of the user.

Our facilities can be used for a variety of purposes. We offer private hire to families, schools and groups, coffee mornings, SEND support groups, SEND social opportunities (after school clubs), playgroups, baby sessions, home education peer support, training events for parents/carers and birthday parties available on request. Specialist therapy sessions available: TACPAC music therapy, story massage and sensory stories.

We do not provide childcare or respite and parents/carers must remain in the centre at all times during each session and are responsible for those in their care at all times.

No diagnosis needed to attend.
Pre-booked sessions only, no drop-in sessions available.

Contact information:

Email: hello@rainbows-sensoryspace.com

Telephone: 07968314561

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram





GENETIC ALLIANCE UK

Genetic Alliance UK is an alliance of over 200 charities and support groups working together to improve the lives of people in the UK with genetic, rare and undiagnosed conditions. Our membership includes representatives from many of the 7,000 conditions that are genetic and rare, and new conditions are regularly identified through scientific progress.

Genetic Alliance UK's purpose is to work together to improve the lives of the 3.5 million people in the UK living with lifelong and complex genetic, rare and undiagnosed conditions.

5 things we do:

1. Genetic Alliance UK produces accessible resources called Rare Resources for those affected by genetic, rare and undiagnosed conditions and the people they interact with to help explain the impact of the condition, what to expect when it comes to care and where they can find support.
2. We signpost individuals affected by genetic, rare and undiagnosed conditions to appropriate support organisations and networks.
3. We provide information on various topics for people with genetic, rare and undiagnosed conditions including genetic testing and services, insurance, screening, genes and genomics.
4. Genetic Alliance UK leads SWAN UK (Syndromes Without A Name), the only UK support community for families with children who have a genetic condition so rare that it does not yet have a name.
5. We campaign on a national level for timely diagnosis, better coordinated care, and improved screening, testing, services and treatment. Genetic Alliance UK amplifies the voices of the genetic, rare and undiagnosed community with the NHS, policy-makers, researchers, parliamentarians and the government.

5 things we don't do:

1. We do not provide genetic testing services. Genetic Alliance UK gives information on how to access genetic testing and guidance on securing the right genetic testing for individuals. However, we do not have laboratory or clinical facilities and do not provide genetic testing services.
2. We do not provide medical advice on diagnosis, care and treatment. Our team does not receive medical training and are not in the position to provide opinion or judgement on diagnosis, care plans or treatment. We signpost questions about care to appropriate organisations or explain how to approach this issue in the NHS.
3. We do not provide individual advocacy. Genetic Alliance UK do not act as advocates for individuals. We cannot attend appointments or speak to health professionals on behalf of individuals. We do, however, work to address systemic challenges via our national campaigning.

Contact Us:

Website: <https://geneticalliance.org.uk/>

Social media

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GeneticAllianceUK>

X: https://twitter.com/GeneticAll_UK

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rarediseaseuk/>

Email address: contactus@geneticalliance.org.uk

Contact number: 0300 124 0441



SWAN UK is the only dedicated support network in the UK for families affected by a syndrome without a name – a genetic condition so rare it often remains undiagnosed.



The aim of SWAN UK is that every family gets the support that they need, regardless of whether or not they have a diagnosis. Our work involves:

- **Developing and supporting the undiagnosed community.** We focus on building and nurturing a community for families of children with undiagnosed genetic conditions
- **Providing high-quality information and services.** This ensures that families have access to the best possible support and information
- **Raising awareness of syndromes without a name.** We work to increase public and professional understanding of the unique challenges that families face



SWAN UK community membership is completely free, with registration quick and easy.



The aims of Rare Disease UK are to:

- Raise awareness of all rare conditions across the UK, pushing for lasting change that improves the lives of everyone affected by a rare condition.
- Capture the experiences of living with a rare disease, meaning that the challenges of living with rare conditions can be better understood and better interventions and policies developed as a result
- Provide a voice for the rare disease community, bringing together charities and support groups representing people living with rare conditions.
- Support everyone affected by a rare condition with providing information and signposting so everyone in the rare disease community can find the support they need

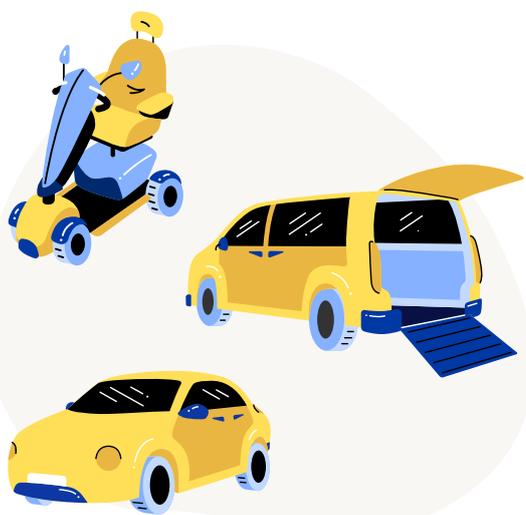
<https://geneticalliance.org.uk/campaigns-and-research/rare-disease-uk/>





How the Motability Scheme works

Exchange your qualifying mobility allowance, awarded with DLA (Disability Living Allowance) for a brand-new car or Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) depending on your families needs.



Which type of vehicle suits my family best?

Different vehicles suit different people, so we'll help you decide between our vehicle types and any adaptations. We'll help you make sure you're making the right choice for your needs.

How do I apply and order?

You can start applying online if it's a car or a WAV. Once you've found a vehicle you like, and had a test drive, visit a Motability Scheme dealer and they'll order it for you. Most dealerships will have a specific person on site to help you with this.



How do I pay?

We'll receive your payments straight from your allowance provider, to make paying simple.



What is an Advanced payment?

It's the amount you need to pay upfront for some of the larger or more expensive vehicles. It's a one off payment made by **you** before or on the day of collection.

It is not a deposit and it's non-refundable.

There are also some vehicles which have no Advance Payment, or cost less than your weekly allowance, which means you'll still get the rest of your allowance to spend however you choose.

What you'll get with the scheme

A brand new vehicle

Whether you choose a car or a WAV it'll arrive new and adapted, if you need it.

Insurance cover

You can add up to three named drivers and can change these at any time.

Servicing and MOT

We'll cover your regular services and routine repairs.

Breakdown cover

We'll give you breakdown cover so you can travel with peace of mind.

What if i cannot afford the advanced payment?



Making all journeys accessible

Depending on your circumstances, Motability Foundation may be able to support you with a Scheme-Related Grant. This grant can help cover both advance payments and adaptations made to vehicles.

The charity can also offer Driving Lessons Grants, Transitional Support Grants, Additional Transitional Support Grants and Access to Work Grants.

For more information on the Motability Scheme or the Foundation please head to :

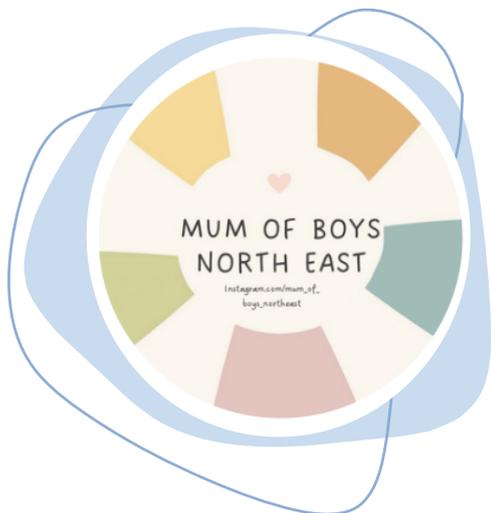
<https://www.motability.co.uk/how-it-works/>

Or use the QR Code provided



Blogs

We all know what it is like, to be mindlessly scrolling our phones for that few moments of respite from the world. Then, in that moment we see something so poignant, someone that gets it, and they don't even know you. These pages become our safe haven, our new home, our reality.



A wonderful mam of two boys shares their SEND adventures in the North East and posts about upcoming events and activities that other SEND families may find useful.

Instagram - [mum_of_boys_northeast](#)

The SEND World According to Me is a fun blog with the hopes of empowering parent carers and families of children with additional needs.

Facebook & Instagram - [TheSENDworldAccordingtoMe](#)



Elaine writes about being a parent carer to a child with complex, life-limiting needs. Her writing has been called 'utterly heart-wrenching, but also warm and funny and tender'.

Instagram - [@elainegwrites](#).



Nic writes a monthly column called SEND and The City. It talks about all things special educational needs and disability as well as her life with her autistic son; Walt.

TikTok - [@findingwaltsvoice](#)





About Us

CWS was established in February 2023 by parent carers, for parent carers. We were aware of the need for mental health care and support in the Sunderland area specifically post diagnosis. With this in mind, we wanted to ensure that all parents carers had access to an individually unique support service.

What We Do -

- Offer a non judgemental space for those caring for children with additional needs, with or without diagnosis.
- We want you, the parent carer, to be able to choose you.
- We offer a space for others, practitioners and more to gain a better insight.
- We aim to offer impartial advice and guidance where possible.
- A safe space for mental health support, including counselling and a holistic support service with our wellbeing practitioners.

What We Don't Do -

- We can't affect any decisions made by other organisations or services in the area.
- We can advocate, but we can't be YOUR voice.
- We do NOT pigeon hole, we want your experience here to be individual to you.
- We can't change the weather, and we don't hold a magic wand.

You can find more information about our service at -

www.choicewellbeingsservice.org

or

Via Facebook @choicewellbeingsservice





Changing Places

Radar Key Required in most cases to access these changing facilities.

To find more changing places country wide, check out-

www.changing-places.org/find

Hopetown /Head of Steam
Museum, McNay Street,
Darlington, Durham, DL3 6SW

Durham Bus Station, 28
North Street, Durham,
DH14SG

Durham University, Stockton
Road, Durham, DH1 3LE

Freeman's Quay Leisure
Centre, Walkergate, Durham,
DH1 1SW

The Story, South Road,
Durham, DH1 3TQ

Elmore Park and Garden,
Elmore Lane, Houghton-le-
spring, Sunderland, DH5 0QS

Spennymoor Leisure
Centre, High Street,
Spennymoor, Durham,
DL16 6DB

Bernard Park, Hetton Le
Hole, Tyne and Wear, DH5
9LZ

Chester Le Street Leisure
Centre, Burns Green,
Chester Le Street,
Durham, DH3 3QH

Morrisons, Dalton Park
Church St, Murton,
Seaham. County Durham,
SR7 9HU

Hardwick Park,
Sedgefield, Co Durham,
Durham, TS21 2DN

Beveridge Arcade, Newton
Aycliffe, Durham, DL5 4EH

Locomotion, Dale Road,
Shildon, County Durham,
DL4 2RE

Tesco Stockton-on-Tees
Extra, Durham Rd,
Stockton-on-Tees, County
Durham, TS21 3LU

The Hope Centre, Ragpath
Lane, Stockton on Tees,
Durham, TS19 9AD

Tesco Billingham
Superstore, Leeholme Rd.,
Billingham, Durham, TS23
3TA

ARC Arts Centre, Dovecot
Street, Stockton-on-Tees,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18
1LL



Carers Concessions, Reduced Rates & More

What are carer concessions and how do you get them?

Some local carer services have discount cards for carers registered with them that so they can get money off at local businesses. Multiple locations across the country offer different reduced rates, concessions, and passes to families who have individuals with additional needs.

We advise before your trip, check the locations website, and read their concession rates usually within the ticket info area. Some sites also offer access to sensory rooms, quiet spaces, and options to queue jump, so it is always worth contacting them before your visit. Your local council may offer discounts for leisure activities, such as swimming.

How do I prove disability or that I am a carer?

Most sites and bookings that offer concessional tickets or bookings usually ask for proof of need upon admission. Usually, this would be a form of physical evidence that you can show to the check in/host.

We would advise you to have on hand a DLA award letter, Blue badge, Medical letter (hospital letterheaded) or an disability registered card available in some areas. Keep these items in a safe space, in their own plastic wallet, as sometimes places offer discounted rates without advertisement. This will allow you to have them on hand for spontaneous visits/days out.

*When using blue badge as evidence, once checked, they do allow you to return it to your vehicle for parking.



What else can i do for discounted rates?

There are multiple sites that offer reduced rates on experiences such as Groupon or Wowcher. There is also multiple discounts available on websites such as www.discountsforcarers.co.uk.

You can also receive discounts on occasion when using your Max card, a discount card available to families who have children on the SEND register, cared and looked after children.



The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed for UK cinemas. The card enables a disabled cinema guest to receive a complimentary ticket for someone to go with them when they visit a participating cinema. If you require an adjustment to visit a cinema because of your disability, cinema staff should make them for you whether you have a CEA Card or not.

There is also reduced rates through Kids Pass website. For just £1 you can access the discounts for a full 30 days, with apparently over 1000+ discounts across theme parks, zoos, cinemas, and more.



Grants and Funding

Guide Dogs -
www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support

Smile For Life -
www.smileforlife.org.uk

Carers Allowance -
www.gov.uk/carers-allowance

Disability Living Allowance -
<https://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children>

Disability Facilities Grant -
www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants/what-youll-get

& Many more can be found at -
www.disability-grants.org

Also in the area

Contact, for families with disabled children -
www.contact.org.uk

Fledglings -
www.fledglings.org.uk

Sunshine Support -
www.sunshine-support.org

Rainbows Sensory Space -
facebook.com/Rainbowssensoryspaceltd

We have more guides and information on our website at www.choicewellbeingsservice.org



RAINBOW Guide

SUNDERLAND'S GUIDE TO SEND SUPPORT
BY PARENT CARERS FOR PARENT CARERS

This copy was made in collaboration with:



“Try to be a rainbow in someone’s cloud.” – Maya Angelou

We hope that this booklet has given you a little idea of some of the services in the area.

We are always looking to grow and expand our knowledge of the services in the area, please contact us if you know of any!



Choice Wellbeing Service

HOLISTIC SUPPORT *Service*

A safe, non-judgemental space, specifically for parent carers



Delivered with funding from

We are currently in Sunderland and South Tyneside but do offer phone call appointments currently for anyone in the Durham/Darlington area



COMMUNITY FUND



Firstport



Self Referral available via our website
www.choicewellbeingservice.org

