



**Brighter  
Futures for  
Children**

# SEND Guide for Parents

**A quick and easy guide for  
parent carers of children with  
special educational needs  
and/or disabilities (SEND)**



# Information, help and support

## 1. Where do I go for information and support?

Start with your child's health visitor, a consultant if you have one, or the special educational needs co-ordinator at your child's nursery or school. You can also contact one of the following organisations:



The **SEND Local Offer** helps you find information about local services, support, activities and events for children and young people aged 0-25 years who have SEND.

Email: [localoffer@reading.gov.uk](mailto:localoffer@reading.gov.uk)

Phone: 0118 937 3777 (option 2), Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm

Web: [www.readingsendlocaloffer.org](http://www.readingsendlocaloffer.org)



**Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC)** delivers children's social care, early help and education services in Reading. It supports children and young people with SEND up to the age of 18 and carries out specialist assessments. Over 18s are supported by Reading Borough Council's adult social care.

Phone: 0118 937 3641

Web: [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities)



**Reading Information Advice and Support Service for SEND (Reading IASS)** provides confidential, free and impartial help for children with or without an education, health and care plan (EHCP) from 0-25 years old.

Email: [iass@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:iass@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

Phone: 0118 937 3421

Web: [www.readingiass.org](http://www.readingiass.org)



**Reading Families' Forum (RFF)** is an independent charity run by parents of disabled children and young people. We act as a voice of local families of children with SEND to co-produce local services.

Email: [fran.morgan.rff@gmail.com](mailto:fran.morgan.rff@gmail.com)

Phone: 07516 185380

Web: [www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk](http://www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk)



**Reading Mencap** offers a family support service for children and adults with learning disabilities in the areas of social care, housing, benefits, health and transition.

Email: [communications@readingmencap.org.uk](mailto:communications@readingmencap.org.uk)

Phone: 0118 966 2518

Web: [www.readingmencap.org.uk](http://www.readingmencap.org.uk)

# Information, help and support



**The Berkshire West Autism and ADHD Support Service**, run by Autism Berkshire and Parenting Special Children, provides support for families while you are awaiting an assessment at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as well as if your child is diagnosed with autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

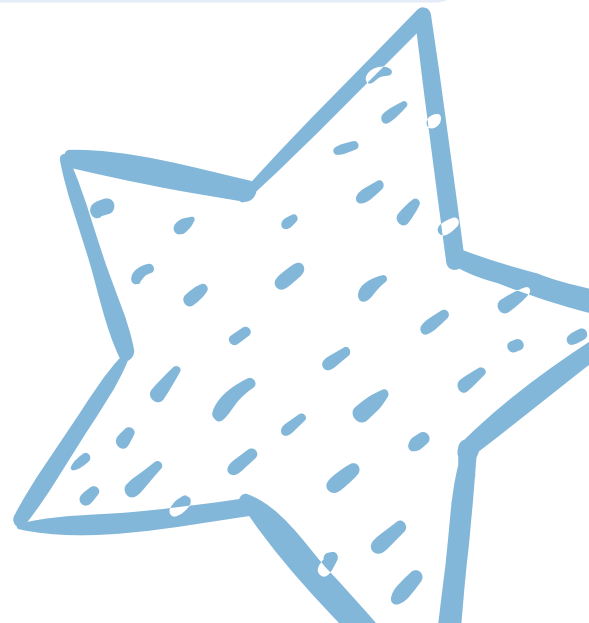
Web: [www.autismberkshire.org.uk](http://www.autismberkshire.org.uk)



**The Health Visiting service** works in partnership with children (0-5 years) and families, as well as other professionals and voluntary organisations to provide health support tailored to individual needs. Call the service for advice or support on 0118 933 1191 (Monday-Friday, 9am-4.30pm), or visit [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-visiting](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-visiting).

**The School Nursing service** works in partnership with children, young people (5-19 years) and their families, as well as other professionals and voluntary organisations to provide health support tailored to individual needs. Call the service for advice or support on 0300 365 0010 (Monday-Friday, 9am-4.30pm) or visit the School Nursing web pages at: [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/public-health-nursing-health-visiting-school-nursing-immunisation/school-nursing/](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/public-health-nursing-health-visiting-school-nursing-immunisation/school-nursing/).

The BHFT website contains lots of advice, support and information in relation to both physical and mental health at: [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/support-and-advice](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/support-and-advice).



# Information, help and support

## 2. My child, and/or their sibling, is struggling emotionally. Where can I get support?

Talk to your child's **nursery or school** as they may be able to provide support for your child.

There is a variety of support available, including **Parenting Special Children** ([www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk](http://www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk)) and **Swings and Smiles** ([www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk](http://www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk))



BFFC has **primary mental health workers** to support families, which they can access through the Children's Single Point of Access (**CSPoA**). Referrals are also received from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (**CAMHS**) and the BFFC-based multi-agency safeguarding team, which also handles requests for support for children with disabilities. BFFC's Mental Health Support Team offers support to children and young people with emerging, mild or moderate mental health difficulties. Visit: [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/mental-health-support-team/](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/mental-health-support-team/).

## 3. We have just moved to Reading and our child has SEND, which was diagnosed outside the area. What do I do and how do I get support in place?

Contact the **SEND team** at BFFC by calling **0118 937 2674**, email [sen@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:sen@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) or visit [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities).





## Childcare support



### 4. Who can help me find childcare that caters for my child who has additional needs?



Visit the **Childcare** section of the **Family Information Service (FIS)** website at: [www.readingfis.org](http://www.readingfis.org).

The **BFFC Portage Service** is a home teaching programme for families in Reading who have a pre-school child (0-4 years) who has been recognised as needing additional support with their development due to a significant developmental delay. Visit [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/early-help/support-we-offer](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/early-help/support-we-offer) for details. Referrals to the service can be made by parents and/or professionals through **CSPoA**.

### 5. Will my child get extra help at a childcare setting?

You can find information about the **Disability Access Fund** (for three and four-year-olds) at: [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=myVTywwh2SM](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=myVTywwh2SM) and information about **Early Years Inclusion Funding** at: [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=oeI4dFGrQZ0](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=oeI4dFGrQZ0).

### 6. How do I get help for my child at school/nursery? What is an EHCP and why might my child need one?

The first step to getting extra support is to talk to your child's nursery or to a class teacher, or someone you trust at school, who can liaise with the school's **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)**. If your child is not at nursery yet and you feel they will need substantial support to attend nursery, please contact **BfFC's SEND team** to discuss.

Brighter Futures for Children has **Early Years SEND Advisors** who provide support and guidance to childcare settings in Reading. For further information email: [fis@reading.gov.uk](mailto:fis@reading.gov.uk).

Most children or young people with SEND will have their needs met within local mainstream early years settings or schools but a small number may require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

If a child or young person needs support beyond what is ordinarily available in a mainstream school or early years setting, please speak to your school about how your children's needs could be met and the option of an EHCP needs assessment.



The Ordinarily Available document sets out what is expected in Reading settings, schools and colleges for children with SEND aged 0 to 25 years [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=vNYSbVE3mws](https://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=vNYSbVE3mws).

You can also view the Graduated Response Documents for Early Years & Schools at [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=YU16\\_nsBEBQ](https://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=YU16_nsBEBQ).

Reading's **SEND Local Offer**, which is managed by RBC on BfFC's behalf, has information about what support to expect from nurseries, schools and colleges and how to seek additional support. You can also contact **Reading IASS** for advice and support (see contact details in Q1).

### 7. How can I find out if I'm eligible for help with school transport and costs?

Visit the BfFC website for information: [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/schools/transport](https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/schools/transport)

## At home



### 8. How do I get help for my child at home (equipment, behaviour, sleep etc)?

**Parenting Special Children** runs courses for parents of children with additional needs, including sleep and behaviour.

For specialist equipment related to posture or safer manual handling, and for advice and support with specific adaptations at home, contact **CSPoA** ([cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)) who will assess for eligibility, subject to current BFfC criteria, and if appropriate, they will refer to BFfC's **Children and Young People's Disability Team's Occupational Therapy (OT) service** for a specialist assessment.

For equipment at school or nursery, if your child **does not** have an EHCP, **children's OT at the Royal Berkshire Hospital** ([www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/childrens-occupational-therapy.htm](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/childrens-occupational-therapy.htm)) will accept referrals from a GP or consultant.

If your child **does** have an EHCP, **Berkshire Health Foundation Trust (BHFT) Healthcare OT service** ([www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/3373](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/3373)) will accept referrals from parents and carers, teachers, SENCos, GPs and other healthcare professionals.

**Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies (CYPIT)**, provided by BHFT, support children up to the age of 19 with Occupational Therapy (OT), physiotherapy and speech and language therapy. Call the Triage line for advice and information on 0118 974 0506. For further information on the referral process, visit [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/referrals/](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/referrals/).

If in doubt, contact **SEND Local Offer** or **Reading IASS** (see contact details in Q1).

## Welfare benefits

### 9. Can I get help with the additional costs of caring for a child with additional needs? What is DLA and how do I apply for it?

You can claim benefits for your disabled child, such as **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)** and grants for specific items.

**Reading Mencap** ([www.readingmencap.org.uk](http://www.readingmencap.org.uk)), **Stepping Forward** ([www.steps-forward.org.uk](http://www.steps-forward.org.uk)) and **Autism Berkshire** are local charities that can assist with benefit advice and help with completing forms, as well as a range of other support.

The charity **Contact** has useful guides and factsheets for parents about DLA ([contact.org.uk](http://contact.org.uk)). You can also contact the **SEND Local Offer** (see contact details in Q1).



### 10. Can I get a blue badge for my child?

You can find out who is entitled to a blue badge and how to apply for one on the **Reading Borough Council website**: [www.reading.gov.uk/transport/parking/blue-badges](http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport/parking/blue-badges).

## Role of professionals

### 11. I don't understand the different roles and responsibilities of those who are working with my child - can you explain?

It's not surprising if you're confused about the roles of the different people you meet. There can be a lot to take in, so don't be afraid to ask them. Your school or nursery should also be able to help, or you could contact the **SEND Local Offer** or **Reading IASS** (see Q1 for their contact details).

You can take a friend or family member to appointments with you to support you and help you remember what you want to ask and what is said.





# Support for parent carers

## 12. How do I get support for me?



**TuVida** provides support to parents who care for their children with additional needs. They carry out a parent carer needs assessment and, if you need it, refer you to Brighter Futures for Children for an assessment of all your family's needs.

Visit: [www.tuvida.org/berkshire](http://www.tuvida.org/berkshire)

Parents of disabled children are entitled to a parent carer assessment. This assessment must consider your physical and emotional wellbeing, including participation in work, education, training or recreation.

Caring for a disabled child can be extremely rewarding but also demanding. If you need a break and/or your child needs fun activities away from you, look at **short breaks** on the **SEND Local Offer** (see contact details in Q1).

It is worth considering asking your **GP** to record that you are a carer. This means that you will be offered annual health checks and a flu jab, plus more convenient appointments.

You could also contact **NHS Berkshire Talking Therapies** which can help with common mental health problems: [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing/talking-therapies-berkshire](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing/talking-therapies-berkshire)

Many parents find it helpful to talk to other parents of children with SEND. Both for advice and emotional support. See the **Parent to Parent section** on the **Local Offer** for details at:

### Do you feel your child needs more support?

Contact your school or childcare setting, SEND case officer at BFfC if you have one, social worker or health professional. Otherwise, Reading Mencap, Autism Berkshire, IASS and Stepping Forward can all give advice if you feel more support is needed.

### Confused by technical terms and struggling to understand what people are talking about?

Don't be afraid to ask people what they mean. You can also find a **SEND Dictionary** on the **Reading IASS** site: [www.readingiass.org/factsheets-and-iass-documents](http://www.readingiass.org/factsheets-and-iass-documents) and SEND definitions at [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=MFHv1jQxyoo](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=MFHv1jQxyoo).

# Contact information

Autism Berkshire: [www.autismberkshire.org.uk](http://www.autismberkshire.org.uk)

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust physical and mental health support: [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/support-and-advice](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/support-and-advice)

Berkshire Health Foundation Trust (BHFT) Healthcare Occupational Therapy service: [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/3373](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/3373)

Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC): [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities)

Brighter Futures for Children Portage Service: [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/early-help/support-we-offer](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/services/early-help/support-we-offer)

Children's Occupational Therapy at the Royal Berkshire Hospital: [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/childrens-occupational-therapy.htm](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/childrens-occupational-therapy.htm)

Contact: [contact.org.uk](http://contact.org.uk)

CYPIT (Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies): [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-integrated-therapies-cypit](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-integrated-therapies-cypit)

Early Years Inclusion Funding: [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=oeI4dFGrQZ0](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=oeI4dFGrQZ0)

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment: [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/family.page?familychannel=3-15](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/family.page?familychannel=3-15)

Disability Access Fund: [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=myVTywwh2SM](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=myVTywwh2SM)

Dingley Child Development Centre: [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/dingley-child-development-centre\\_2.htm](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/dingley-child-development-centre_2.htm)

Family Information Service (FIS): [www.readingfis.org](http://www.readingfis.org)

Health Visiting Service: [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-visiting](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-visiting)

NHS Berkshire Talking Therapies: [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing/talking-therapies-berkshire](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing/talking-therapies-berkshire)

Parent to Parent support: [servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/family.action?familychannel=3-17](http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/family.action?familychannel=3-17)

Reading SEND Local Offer: [www.readingsendlocaloffer.org](http://www.readingsendlocaloffer.org)

Parenting Special Children: [www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk](http://www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk)

Reading Families' Forum (RFF): [www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk](http://www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk)

Reading Information Advice and Support Service for SEND (Reading IASS): [www.readingiass.org](http://www.readingiass.org)

Reading Mencap: [www.readingmencap.org.uk](http://www.readingmencap.org.uk)

School transport: [brighterfuturesforchildren.org/schools/transport](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/schools/transport)

School Nursing service: [cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/public-health-nursing-health-visiting-school-nursing-immunisation/school-nursing/](http://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/public-health-nursing-health-visiting-school-nursing-immunisation/school-nursing/)

Stepping Forward: [www.stepping-forward.org.uk](http://www.stepping-forward.org.uk)

Swings and Smiles: ([www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk](http://www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk))

TuVida: [www.tuvida.org/berkshire](http://www.tuvida.org/berkshire)

# Glossary of abbreviations & acronyms

**ADHD** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

**BFFC** Brighter Futures for Children

**BHFT** Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

**CAMHS** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

**CSPoA** Children's Single Point of Access

**DLA** Disability Living Allowance

**EHCP** Education, Health and Care Plan

**FIS** Family Information Service

**IASS** Information Advice and Support Service for SEND

**OT** Occupational Therapy

**RFF** Reading Families Forum

**SENCo** – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

**SEND** – Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities



Brighter Futures for Children  
co-produced this guide in collaboration  
with the following:



and SENCOs at  
Federation of Oxford Road and Wilson School  
and  
Christ the King Catholic Primary School  
in Reading

Brighter Futures for Children is a not-for-profit company, wholly owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council.

© Brighter Futures for Children 2021

Registered company in England & Wales: 11293709

Version 1.0