



3. Practising inclusive education

3.2c Support from spinal cord injury charities

Introduction

There are four national charities in the UK dedicated to providing services for people affected by spinal cord injury; they are Back Up, Aspire, Spinal Injuries Association and Spinal Injuries Scotland. Below is a synopsis of the services each charity provides and contact details.

Back Up

At Back Up we understand a spinal cord injury can be devastating, but we believe it shouldn't prevent anyone from getting the most out of life.

Back Up is for everyone affected by spinal cord injury, regardless of age, level of injury, or background. We are here for family members too.

Our services include mentoring, wheelchair skills training and activity courses as well as support in getting back to work or school after an injury. All our services help to build confidence and independence.

Outreach and support

Our Outreach and Support Team – Melissa, Michael and Stuart plus a team of volunteers – regularly visit each of the 11 spinal cord injury centres around the UK to meet patients, lead wheelchair skills training and patient education sessions. They also offer a regular telephone contact service which is available to anyone with a spinal cord injury.

Schools and families inclusion service

Back Up's schools and families inclusion service aims to support children and young people to be fully included in mainstream education.

The support we offer for parents includes:

- 1** Liaising with hospital staff and offer support about educational issues when their child is preparing to start, return to, or change schools.
- 2** Help to work effectively with community based education, health and therapeutic professionals to make sure their child's return to education goes as smoothly as possible.
- 3** Matching them with a trained volunteer mentor who is also a parent of a child or young person with spinal cord injury
- 4** Advice about talking to their child about changes to their body

Support for children and young people

- 1.** We can organise for someone to visit the child or young person at school, to talk through any problems they might be having
- 2** We can link the child or young person up with someone who has a spinal cord injury to chat informally about school
- 3** We can support the child and their classmates to make sure they are fully included in everything when they return to school
- 4** We can do a presentation about spinal cord injury to people at the school. This can

be done with the child/ young person or they be part of the audience depending on how they want to be involved.

Support for schools:

1 We can help schools access the information, advice and support they need to ensure a child or young person with spinal cord injury is able to be fully included at school.

2 We can speak to or arrange a visit to schools to help the teachers to prepare for the child's return after their injury, and help make sure that they are included in everything at school.

Mentoring

Our accredited mentoring service links people with a trained volunteer mentor who is a similar age and injury level to them or a family mentor whose relative has a similar injury. Once we have matched people up with a mentor they will call them on the telephone to arrange how often they make contact and whether they speak regularly over the telephone, or if possible meet up. Most mentoring relationships take place over 10 contacts and can cover issues including the following:

- Adjusting to life with spinal cord injury
- Going back to education or work
- Finding out about activities and sports
- Being a parent with spinal cord injury
- Starting a family

Wheelchair skills training

We run wheelchair skills training at all eleven spinal cord injury centres across the UK. The sessions are always tailored to the group and we run both manual and power chair training sessions. A typical manual wheelchair session will cover pushing technique, getting over obstacles, tackling kerbs and thresholds, back-wheel balancing and may also cover steps and transfers if time and equipment allows. A typical powerchair skills session will focus on spatial awareness, how each powerchair is different and what techniques might be achieved by different models. All our wheelchair skills trainers have a spinal cord injury and can draw from their own experiences to help participants develop a vision of what is possible to achieve.

Courses

Our residential activity courses aim to increase confidence and independence. We run two courses for under 18's for people of all backgrounds and all levels of injury. The course for under 13's is five days long and children are accompanied by a parent, there is often space for families to bring other siblings along too. Both courses provide under 18's with a spinal cord injury with the opportunity to meet other children or young people both with and without spinal cord injury, and try lots of different activities like canoeing, climbing and abseiling in a safe, fun and supportive environment.

www.backuptrust.org.uk

020 8875 1805

admin@backuptrust.org.uk

Aspire

Through its projects and programmes, Aspire offers practical support to people living with a spinal cord injury in the UK so that they can lead fulfilled and independent lives in their homes, with their families, in work places and in leisure time.

Aspire's core services provide the practical support needed by those who sustain spinal cord injuries. Aspire services cover a range of areas and are available to new patients in the NHS Spinal Cord Injury Centres, to those who have just been discharged from hospital and to people who have been living with their injury for years.

Aspire's services include: Aspire Housing, Aspire Independent Living Advisors, Assistive Technology and Aspire Grants. Their housing programme provides fully accessible properties around the UK that can be used on a short-term basis whilst someone is adapting their own property or hunting for a permanent home. The Aspire Independent Living Advisors work in the Spinal Cord Injury Centres, providing advice and guidance to the patients and ensuring they get the support and services they need. Aspire's Assistive Technology facilities in the Spinal Cord Injury Centres ensure that everyone, regardless of the level of their injury, has independent access to a computer. Aspire Grants gives funds to people to help them buy the specialist equipment they need to live a more independent life.

Aspire also provide opportunities for everyone to take part in sport, exercise and activity at the Aspire National Training Centre and in schools, through their Sports Development Programme. This includes integrated leisure activities such as going to the gym and swimming, and getting people involved in sports like Wheelchair Rugby, Powerchair Football and Wheelchair Basketball. Aspire firmly believes that there should be no barriers to participation in sport.

<http://www.aspire.org.uk>

020 8954 5759

info@aspire.org.uk



Spinal Injuries Association (SIA)

SIA offers a pathway of support by aiming to be there for a newly injured person from the time of injury and for the rest of a person's life.

Their support is given by spinal cord injured people, all of whom can offer their lived experiences of spinal cord injury.

Support starts in the early days during hospital treatment, whether at a specialist Spinal Injuries Centre or at a District General Hospital where patients can access their peer services. Following discharge they offer a range of other services and publications to provide information to people, including free courses and a Freephone Advice Line.

SIA's Telephone Counselling service gives people the chance to talk in complete confidence, free of charge, to a suitably qualified professional. Sessions can be booked with the Telephone Counselling service by calling the SIA Advice Line.

Other SIA services include support in: claiming compensation, finding a solicitor,

employment and further education advice, support for family members.

The SIA Freephone Advice Line provides:

- Confidential Advice
- Information
- Support
- Letters of support for members pursuing complaints against poor treatment or inaccessible services.



<http://www.spinal.co.uk>

Advice Line: 0800 980 0501

sia@spinal.co.uk

Spinal Injuries Scotland (SIS)

Spinal Injuries Scotland is a voluntary organisation concerned with new and long-term spinal cord injured people, their relatives and friends, along with those involved in the management, care and rehabilitation of the injury.

SIS provides immediate support through the office based Information Service and operate a self-referral information line. They also provide a legal and welfare rights advisory service. Their representatives, who are able to discuss all aspects of living with a spinal cord injury, undertake weekly visits to the Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Unit.

The SIS Freephone Line offers information to new and long term spinal cord injured, their families and friends.

Spinal Injuries Scotland Peer Support Volunteers come into the spinal unit in Glasgow to speak to in-patients, their families and friends. The Peer Support team is made up of people who have the injury as well as relatives of those who have the injury.

SIS provides outreach support to people in general hospitals throughout Scotland. The Liaison Sisters from the Glasgow spinal unit travel around Scotland carrying out review clinics in other hospitals and SIS go along to offer Peer Support to those attending these clinics.

SIS Link Scheme offers assistance and advice to people in their own area. The link scheme is designed to put people together in different areas so they can find out what is accessible to them and also others.

<http://www.sisonline.org>

Freephone Line: 0800 0132 305

info@sisonline.org

