



4. Support for young people

4.3 Finding and using support networks

Introduction

There are many organisations that help children and young people with disabilities. You can also use your friends, family and your school for support.

Help from outside of school

Back Up

Back Up is great place to start and we are always happy to talk with you and give advice.

We can support you to be fully included at school and with your friends. We can speak to or arrange a visit to your school to help your teachers to prepare for your return after your injury, and help make sure that you are included in everything at school. Talk to Beth to find out more on 020 8875 1805, or email her at: beth@backuptrust.org.uk

Our mentoring service

A mentor is someone who can help you deal with any issues you might be facing following your spinal cord injury.

Back Up can match you with someone who has a spinal cord injury like yours, and was injured when they were young.

The mentor will talk to you about your experiences and theirs, and answer any questions you might have. They will be there to encourage you to find solutions to your problems.

You might want to talk to them about things like:

- School/college/university
- Work (jobs and careers)
- Driving
- Friends, relationships
- Leisure interests – travel, sport, music etc
- Aspirations

Talk to Kyra to find out more on 020 8875 1805 or email her at: kyra@backuptrust.org.uk

Laura's story

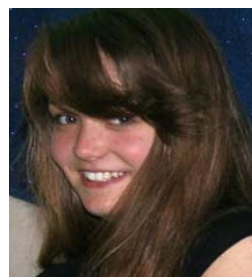
Is there any information or support network that helped you?

Back Up helped me immensely. Going on a course boosted my confidence. I was with people my own age and I could talk to them about different aspects of being in a wheelchair, and I didn't feel lonely anymore. That whole week was quite a big moment in my life when I realised that I could be like any other teenager. The



My mentor helped me realise that life doesn't stop, that it keeps going and that I shouldn't stop myself doing anything, as I can do anything I want to do, just adapted in different ways.

Danielle, 17



mentoring that I had through Back Up was also really crucial. I did a presentation in front of my class at school when I was in year eight. I explained about spinal cord injury, a little bit about Back Up. From then people were more willing to understand it made a difference, as people thought oh she's just like us but sat down. It gave me the inclination to be open about things and break down barriers that disability sometimes causes.

Was there any support you wanted but couldn't find?

One of the huge things that I couldn't find for a long time was someone to talk to who was in a similar situation. When you don't know anyone who's in a wheelchair that is a really horrible situation to be in, and I didn't find anyone to help me with that for the first two years after my injury. Facebook is a great network of support, I've been added by loads of people, and talk to people who are newly injured.

Laura, 18

Whizz Kidz

Whizz Kidz is a charity that helps disabled children throughout the UK. They can:

- Help get you a new wheelchair
- Train you in wheelchair skills
- Offer work placements and life skills
- Offer you advice

Check out their website [here](#)

Cybermentors

CyberMentors is all about young people helping and supporting each other online.

If you're being bullied, or are feeling a bit low, or are maybe troubled by something and you're not sure what to do or who to talk to, then you could go to CyberMentors for help. It doesn't matter how big or small you think the problem is, or whether you're being targeted online or offline, CyberMentors is there to listen and support you.

Check out their website [here](#)

Help in school

At school you can get help from different people. These people include:

- Your teacher (s)
- Teaching assistant (s)
- Support worker (s)
- Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Connexions Personal Advisers
- Your friends
- Your parent or carer (s)

Leaving School, what's next?

If you are about to leave school or would like more advice on careers and what happens next the [transitions network](#) is a great website with loads of advice

[Skill](#) is another great website giving advice about school and careers. They have written a leaflet that can help you think about your [options after school](#).

Resources

- Blueprint guide '[Going Back to School](#)'
- [Ability Online](#) – free online community for disabled children and young people
- [Spinal Injuries Association](#) – organisation that offers support and information for people with spinal cord injuries. Section specifically for young people