

## Young people with disabilities Understanding not sympathy

Young people with disabilities are exactly the same as young people without disabilities, however, having a disability could mean they are unable to do the things that other people can do. They may face more challenges, but life can still be as fun and full of achievement.

*“Being a teenager can be a tough time, sometimes it’s even harder with a disability.”*

Everyone wants to fit in and it can be easy to feel they are alone. Remember they don’t have to go it alone - there’s loads of support, practical and financial help out there for them.

This can be an exciting time. Up until now, their parents have probably made all their decisions - now they can start to make some choices for themselves.

Whether they’re at a special needs, mainstream school or college, a good education can improve their chances later in life, education is important for everyone. Just because they have a disability of some sort does not mean they can’t live a full and exciting life.

### **When they’re 16**

#### **If they have a disability, these things can change:**

- They can choose where they live for example, they might want to stay at home with their parents or apply for sheltered housing.
- They can leave school and start work if they want to. Disability employment advisers at their local job centre can help them.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can be paid directly to them.
- They may get Employment and Support Allowance if they can’t work.
- If they want to continue with their education, they may get extra money with a Disabled Students’ Allowance.

### **Healthcare**

In healthcare, the word 'transition' is used to describe the planning, preparing and moving on from children's healthcare to adult healthcare. It's a gradual process and gives everyone time to talk about what healthcare they will need as an adult, choose which adult hospital or services are best for them and make sure they are ready for the move.

Most young people move on to an adult hospital and adult hospital services between 16 and 18 years old. Sometimes, young people move from a children's hospital to an adolescent unit at 13 or 14 years old, instead of moving straight to an adult hospital. They can ask the consultant or clinical nurse specialist about when they will be making the move.

Young people will be given a lot more independence, where appropriate and will be encouraged to learn about their condition, so that they can be more involved in their care and decision making and take responsibility for their medicines.

Try to keep a list of important emergency telephone numbers. They may find an 'Alert' bracelet useful, if they have a condition that may change suddenly. Think about making their own appointments. At the adult service, during appointments or admissions, doctors, nurses and other staff will spend more time talking to the young person than their parents, although they are still encouraged to attend the appointments. If they are not able to make their own decisions after the age of 16 get them to talk to their personal adviser or social worker for advice on mental capacity and the role of deputyship in regards to health matters.

## **Contacts**

### **Whizz-Kidz**

020 7233 6600

[www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/get-our-help/youngpeople](http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/get-our-help/youngpeople)

Email [info@whizz-kidz.org.uk](mailto:info@whizz-kidz.org.uk)

### **Barnardos**

[www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/)

[our\\_work/disability](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/our_work/disability)

Short breaks for disabled children

[www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/  
our\\_work/disability-short-breaks.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/disability-short-breaks.htm)

**Action for Kids**

020 8347 8111

[www.actionforkids.org](http://www.actionforkids.org)

**Scope**

0808 800 3333

[www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

**Sibs**

For brothers and sisters of disabled children  
and adults.

01535 645453

[www.sibs.org.uk](http://www.sibs.org.uk)

Email [info@sibs.org.uk](mailto:info@sibs.org.uk)

**PAPYRUS** (Prevention of Young Suicide)

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

National Confidential Helpline -

HOPELineUK 0800 068 41 41

(Mon-Fri 10am to 10pm; Weekends 2pm to  
10pm; Bank Holidays 2pm to 5pm)