At The Children’s Society, we aim to improve the lives of disabled children and their families. Working with local authorities to meet their targets, we deliver services that give disabled young people a voice, and provide support for their families and carers.

Many disabled children have little control over their own lives and feel excluded from mainstream society. Our experience of working with this client group over many years gives us first-hand knowledge of how to tailor services to maximise inclusion.

**Working in partnership with local authorities**

Our Disability Advocacy Programme (DAP), established in 2000, works as a professional partner with several local authorities in the London area. We support disabled children and young people who have complex communication needs and impairments.

Our qualified team of workers offers a full package of services - from direct work with children and young people, to the provision of training courses and web-based resources.

‘I would like to say thank you to my advocate for her help’

One of our advocates worked with a young person to find out his views about his placement, and his feelings about having contact with his parent. By using discussion and symbols, the advocate established that the young person was happy at his placement.

The advocate was also able to gain an understanding of the young person’s feelings on the level of contact he had with the visiting parent. This information was then fed back to the young person’s social worker, helping to enhance the care provision and avoid complaints.

‘I would like to say thank you to my advocate for her help. She came and spent time with me, playing and talking, and she listened to the people that know me to help me get what I need.’ Jamie aged 17
Empowering disabled children in creative ways

Our Reaching Out project in York, established in 2009, provides opportunities for disabled young people (aged 16-25) to gain experience of volunteering with voluntary organisations and local businesses. These experiences help young people to gain confidence and independence. They are learning new skills and developing relationships which can help them to continue volunteering and can help with finding paid employment in the future. As well as working with disabled young people, we also provide support to volunteers who are recruited and trained to work alongside the young people as they volunteer. This helps to ensure that everyone involved has a valued and fulfilling experience.

Travel training

We have been commissioned by Camden Council to provide specialist assessment, practical training and advice to young people age 10 - 19 with special educational needs and disabilities, so that they can travel independently between home and school using public transport. We also provide information, support and advice to parents and teachers about independent travel.

This helps young people to develop independent living skills that can be transferred to social and extra curricular activities, giving them greater freedom and choice.

Each year, The Children’s Society works with 600 disabled children in a one-to-one or small group setting.

Innovative health services in partnership with the DoH

The Department of Health has commissioned us to work with special schools and in residential settings across England to improve access to sexual health information for disabled children and young people. Our aim is to raise their awareness of sexual health issues and to improve their understanding of how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, intimidation, bullying, harassment and abuse.

Training for professionals

DAP has developed a training package called ‘I want to be involved: involving disabled children and young people in review and planning meetings.’

It offers ideas for involvement, and solutions to participation problems, and supports you to create an action plan to apply the learning in your area in practical ways. The package provides:

• information about creative approaches, methods and resources for involving young people in meetings
• practical and cost effective guidance to improve practice
• opportunities to try out a range of methods and approaches
• advice and guidance specific to the situations professionals face in their roles.

Commission The Children’s Society

Are you looking to commission expert services for disabled children?

Call 0845 612 9402, email bdu@childrenssociety.org.uk or visit www.childrenssociety.org.uk to find out more.