

Support Services fact sheet



This fact sheet aims to provide information about the support we offer and how you can access it.

Further information can be found at www.MeningitisNow.org.

Why do we provide support?

Whatever the experience of meningitis*, we know that it can change people's lives forever. For some, the support of family and friends will get them through; for others, having a listening ear, day or night, is vital.

We never want anyone to suffer alone. Emotional support can come in many forms and you can choose which suits you – talking on the phone, counselling, speaking to someone who's been there too, or sharing your experience online. We are here for you and those close to you.

Who can we help?

We provide support to UK residents, whose needs are a result of their own experience of meningitis or that of a family member or close friend. All support is completely free of charge and available throughout the UK, including Northern Ireland, whenever it's needed and for as long as it's needed.

Many people turn to us months and sometimes, years after their experience of the disease and we are here to help whenever the trauma of the disease is still causing distress.

What we can help with?

Meningitis can change lives in many ways. Don't hesitate to call us to discuss what would help you most. For example, we've recently provided the following support:

Our **meningitis helpline** provided the first vital contact for a family whose baby was in hospital fighting the disease.

Home visit to a family on the Isle of Bute to reassure them of the support they can access to help in the care of their severely disabled son.

Community support from one of our regional team for a gentleman struggling with feeling isolated following the disease.

Counselling for a father whose child had meningitis as a baby and is now a teenager. Dad wants space and time to talk about the full impact of the disease.

Bereavement support for a lady whose 72 year old husband recently died from meningitis. Her plans for old age have now changed.

Music therapy for an 18 year old who, due to meningitis, has severe brain damage and now benefits from gentle, sensory activities.

Art therapy for two children who recently lost their father to meningitis. Sessions are giving them time to remember dad and explore how it feels now he's not there.

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*Meningitis refers to meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia

Play therapy for a 5 year old with behavioural problems following meningitis. Sessions are helping him express his frustrations and are improving his relationships with his peers.

One-to-one support by email and telephone, for a man who has been unable to return to work following viral meningitis. Contact with a volunteer who has been through a similar experience has helped him understand that recovery and return to work can take time.

Family days, like the one held recently at the Thinktank in Birmingham, where 17 families attended. The day enabled 14 children who have had a meningitis experience and 21 siblings to get together to share experiences, meet new friends, grow in confidence and have fun.

Believe & Achieve weekends, like the one held recently at PGL Liddington in Swindon, where 10 children and young people attended with one parent/carer. The weekend provided an opportunity to try adrenaline filled, challenging activities, increase confidence, meet others affected by meningitis and make new friends.

How can these help?

Home visits are offered by a member of our community team who can answer your questions about meningitis and its impact, listen to how it has affected you and talk about all the services we offer – whenever the experience occurred.

Counselling and bereavement support gives time and space to explore feelings and thoughts with a counsellor. Counselling requires a commitment by the client to attend regular appointments and be willing to engage in the interaction with the counsellor. Talking with someone in this way can help you make sense of your situation and identify possibilities to move forward at your own pace. You will not be judged or offered 'advice', but given confidential support to help you to make any changes you want to make.

Creative therapies such as art, music or play therapy can offer a child or young person time to explore their thoughts and feelings away from the pressure of family, friends or school. Working with paints, sand, figures, clay or music can help them express any worries and concerns and develop ways to manage emotions and relationships in a positive way. We aim to work alongside school and other professionals so that together, we can help to make a real difference to a child or young person's wellbeing.

Family days are a great way for the whole family to meet others in their local area for a day of fun and information. You can also find out about the support available from Meningitis Now if, or when, it's needed. These days offer an opportunity to share experiences, learn from others in a similar situation and gain reassurance that you are not alone. We know that siblings of children who have had meningitis are helped by meeting other brothers and sisters.

Believe & Achieve weekends are a unique opportunity for children and young people aged 11-18 who have experienced meningitis to have fun, whilst mixing with other children who have also had a personal experience of the disease. We encourage children and young people with a variety of after-effects to challenge themselves through participation in challenging and fun activities and give parents/carers the opportunity to share experiences and gain support from others in similar circumstances, and to find out more about the support available from Meningitis Now.

One-to-one support relies on the voluntary input of people who have had an experience of meningitis offering emotional support, by email, SMS or telephone. Contact with someone who has 'been there' themselves helps to provide reassurance, answers to practical questions and may reduce the feeling of isolation that many people experience after having meningitis. Whilst the match may not be exact, it will be with someone who is a registered volunteer and has had a similar experience to your own.

How to access support

Please call our freephone Meningitis Helpline on **0808 80 10 388** and speak to a member of our support team, or send an email to info@MeningitisNow.org. More information is available on our website and you can also complete an enquiry form here:

www.MeningitisNow.org/how-we-help

To be referred to **counselling** or one of the **creative therapies** we will ask you to send us written confirmation of the diagnosis of meningitis from your doctor or health professional. **This isn't needed for a home visit, one-to-one support or an invite to a family day.** When we receive your request we will answer any of your questions, ensure we have all the information we need and then make the referral to the most appropriate service

We do not have a waiting list and we aim to make referrals promptly so that you can access support when you need it. Remember, we offer support to family members and close friends, not just the person directly affected by meningitis.

Find out more

Art therapy – www.baat.org

Counselling – www.bacp.org

Music therapy – www.bamt.org and www.apmtorg and www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk

Play therapy – www.bapt.info and www.playtherapy.org.uk/index.html

Meningitis Now is the UK's largest meningitis charity and is here to help you, when you need us and for as long as you need us. We are saving lives and rebuilding futures through awareness, research and support.

We offer on-going support for all those living with the impact of the disease. We support individuals, and their families, including those who have been bereaved, helping to rebuild lives after meningitis and septicaemia.

We can:

- Listen; and answer your questions about meningitis and septicaemia
- Talk to you about your individual experience and how we can tailor our help to you
- Provide support locally to you
- Put you in touch with others who have been through it too
- Support you and those closest to you; children, teenagers and adults

If you have any questions, or are interested in finding out how we can help, please get in touch.

Meningitis Helpline: 0808 80 10 388 (UK)

Email: helpline@meningitisnow.org

We are proud of the work we do, but we can't do it alone. We rely on voluntary donations and need help from people like you. Every penny, pound, hour and day given makes a big difference. Find out how you can help www.MeningitisNow.org



Meningitis Helpline
0808 80 10 388 (UK)

Meningitis Now

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References for the content of this fact sheet are available on our website.