

Factsheet

For single parents in England and Wales April 2016

Freephone

0800 802 0925

Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline

Support for children and young people

There may be times in your child's life when they need a bit of extra support. Growing up brings its own worries and your child may experience difficulties at school, at home, or as a result of changing family circumstances. Many single parents contact Gingerbread asking how best to support their children in difficult situations. This factsheet has details of specialist organisations and resources that can help. The information in this factsheet is correct as of April 2016.

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Talking to your child about separation

If you're worried about how your child is coping with a separation or other change in family circumstances, talk to those who come into regular contact with your son or daughter.

Make your child's school aware by having a confidential chat with their teacher. Teachers and teaching assistants can be well-placed to keep a watchful eye and offer reassurance. It helps the school to know if something is troubling a child outside the classroom.

The organisations and resources listed below offer services directly to children and young people, or to the adults supporting them.

Family Lives

0800 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

The helpline provides information, advice, guidance and support on any aspect of parenting and family life. There is also online chat, an email support service, and forums.

My family's changing

These booklets are for children whose parents are separating. There are two versions, one for children under 12 and another for older children. They include stories from children who have been through similar experiences, games, and spaces for children to explore their feelings. Copies can be downloaded on the Cafcass website.

Relate for children and young people

0300 100 1234

www.irelate.org.uk

iRelate is a confidential space for young people to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions. It provides a live chat service to connect to a trained counsellor. Relate also provides counselling for children and young people face-to-face, by phone, and online.

Resolution

01689 820272

www.resolution.org.uk

The Resolution booklet *Separation and Divorce – Helping parents to help children* is a practical guide to handling the emotional aspects of separation or divorce. It covers how children may react at different ages, tips for talking to children about separation, and managing your relationship with your child's other parent. Copies can be downloaded free from the website.

The parent connection

www.theparentconnection.org.uk

This website provides support for separated parents, including forums, videos, and articles to help you to support your child through a separation.

Young Minds

0808 802 5544

www.youngminds.org.uk

Young Minds provides information and advice about mental health and emotional wellbeing for children, young people and their carers. The website provides help and information on how divorce and separation affect children, and parents and carers can call the helpline for free and confidential support.

Supporting your child after bereavement

The death of a partner or loved one can be a devastating and overwhelming experience. As well as sorting out practical arrangements and immediate financial concerns, you also have your child's needs to think about. There are a number of resources to help you support your children:

Child bereavement charity

0800 02 888 40

www.childbereavement.org.uk

Provides support and information to all those affected when a child is bereaved. They also offer support to parents when a child has died.

Cruse bereavement care

0844 477 9400

www.cruse.org.uk/children.html

Provides information on what you can do to help a child or young person who is grieving.

Hope Again

0808 808 1677

hopeagain.org.uk

Hope Again is aimed at young people aged 12-18 and is part of Cruse Bereavement Care. Services include access to support from trained counsellors via telephone and email. The website is designed to help young people find their own way of dealing with the loss.

Winston's Wish

0845 203 0405

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Offers practical support and guidance to bereaved children, their families and professionals. The helpline is there for anyone who needs help to support a grieving child. Other services include residential weekends for children and group support work with parents and carers.

Moving on from domestic abuse

It can be very difficult for parents to explain to children why they have left a relationship following domestic abuse. Your children may have witnessed or been a victim of the abuse themselves and need help and support to move on from this. Equally, your children may not be aware of the abuse you have experienced and you may be concerned about what to tell them and how this may affect their relationship with their other parent.

The organisations below offer services tailored to children or can help parents to support their children.

Childline

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Childline provides confidential support, counselling and information on a range of issues to children and young people. Services can be accessed by phone, instant messenger, and email.

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Information for parents and carers supporting children who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence.

The Hideout

www.thehideout.org.uk

A website for children and young people to help them understand domestic abuse and explain how to take action if it is happening to them or to a family member.

Managing challenging behaviour

If your child displays challenging behaviour there are extra demands on your time and energy. Parenting a child with challenging behaviour can bring up all sorts of issues and you may need some extra support.

If you have friends who are also parents, try to find out how they are dealing with challenging behaviour and what their tips are. You could speak to an organisation such as **Family Lives**, who offer support and advice on a range of parenting issues, including challenging behaviour.

If your child seems troubled by something but is not telling you, it could help to talk to someone else. Sometimes children are willing to confide in another adult. This could be a relative, family friend, teacher or there is also the option of a mentor. A mentor is another adult that a child feels safe with, either a family member or someone from a professional registered mentoring organisation.

Some schools have access to professional support workers or counsellors; speak to your child's teacher or school nurse to access these services. Your GP can also advise you on services available locally, and can make a referral. You may find one of the organisations below useful.

Family Lives

0808 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

Provides information, advice and support for parents on a range of parenting issues including discipline, living with a teenager, relationships, school, bullying and more. The website includes informational articles, blogs, live chat, and confidential email support.

Young Minds

0808 802 5544

www.youngminds.org.uk

Provides a telephone helpline service for parents concerned about their child's behaviour or mental health. The website has resources for both parents and young people, including a parent's survival guide.

Worried about your child's mental health?

Changes in your child's personality, emotional or mental health can be extremely worrying for parents. It is difficult to know how best to react or help your child, and how to spot when their behaviour is a cause for concern. The following organisations provide support and practical information for parents. If you are worried about your child you may want to visit their GP and speak to their school nurse or counsellor to see what support is available locally.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

Produces a range of leaflets on child and adolescent mental health issues. There are leaflets for parents, and children of all ages, including a toolkit for worried parents of adolescent children, dealing with worries about weight and eating problems, depression, domestic violence, drugs and much more.

Youth Access

0208 772 9900

www.youthaccess.org.uk

Youth Access is the national membership organisation for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services (YIACS). The website has a search facility to find local services.

Young Minds

0808 802 5544

www.youngminds.org.uk

Provides a telephone helpline service for parents concerned about their child's emotional and mental health. The website has a range of useful information and resources for both parents and young people.

Support for young carers

If your child is a young carer for you or another family member there is support available for them from a range of organisations. The organisations below provide advice and support for carers under the age of 18 who are caring for someone who is elderly, ill or disabled. Your local council should also support a young person in their caring role to make sure they're not taking on too much responsibility, and their education and wellbeing are supported. Contact your local council to find out what help they can provide.

Carers Trust

www.babble.carers.org

Babble has been created by the Carers Trust as an online space where those aged under 18 who are caring for a family member or friend can chat, share their experiences and access information and advice.

Macmillan

0808 808 0000

www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan has created a handbook called *Let's talk about you* for young people aged 12 to 18 who are helping to look after somebody with cancer. The handbook is based on experiences of young carers and gives advice on coping with feelings, looking after themselves and finding support. Copies can be ordered online, downloaded, or can be ordered from the helpline.

Bullying

Bullying isn't always easy to describe and can take many forms:

- Physical bullying
- Verbal bullying such as name calling and spreading rumours
- Emotional bullying, such as being left out or humiliated by others
- Cyber bullying where attacks are made online, by phone or text, or social networking sites.

If you think your child is being bullied the organisations below can help. There is information on spotting bullying and stopping it, supporting your child, and help if your child is involved in bullying.

BullyingUK

0808 800 2222

www.bullying.co.uk

BullyingUK is part of the charity Family Lives. The website contains separate advice pages for children and parents or carers. Advice for children includes how to deal with an online bully, staying safe on social networking sites, and dealing with bullies outside of school. Information for parents includes case studies, reasons for bullying, keeping your child safe online, dealing with schools, taking action to stop bullying and advice if your child is involved in bullying.

Childline

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Childline provides advice and support to children experiencing bullying. Confidential advice from a counsellor is available via the helpline or through email and web chat. Children can also share their experiences with each other and get support online.

Kidscape

0845 1205 204

www.kidscape.org.uk

Kidscape works to prevent bullying and sexual abuse. The helpline can provide support and advice to parents and carers of children under 16 who are being bullied and there is written information for both children and parents on the website. Kidscape also runs free assertiveness training for children to help them learn ways of dealing with bullying and build confidence.

Issues affecting older children and young people

Beat

Helpline – 0345 634 1414

Youthline – 0345 634 7650

www.b-eat.co.uk

Beat provides helplines, online support and a network of UK-wide self-help groups to help adults and young people in the UK beat their eating disorders.

FRANK

0300 123 6600

www.talktofrank.com

Provides advice and support on drug and alcohol use to individuals and concerned family members and friends.

TheMix

www.thesite.org

Run by Youth Net, TheMix is a confidential website for young people aged 16 to 25 providing guidance and advice on a range of issues. Information covered includes sex and relationships, drink and drugs, work, studying, health and wellbeing. Anonymous live chat and discussion groups are available on the website.

Young Stonewall

Helpline – 0800 050 2020

www.youngstonewall.org.uk

Young Stonewall provides support for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people at home, at work, and at school.

Holidays for children

You may feel your child would benefit from a break away because they are going through a difficult time. There are organisations that arrange holidays or days out for children or young people who may not otherwise get a break. Some offer free or subsidised places to help with the cost.

The Gingerbread factsheet [Holidays](#) lists some of these organisations and details of where you can apply for funding.

Further help and information

Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline

Freephone 0808 802 0925

www.gingerbread.org.uk

Free information on a range of issues including maintenance, benefits, tax credits, debt, employment, education, legal rights and holidays.

One Parent Families Scotland Lone Parent Helpline

Freephone 0808 801 0323

www.opfs.org.uk

Run by our partner organisation, the Lone Parent Helpline provides confidential advice and information for single parents in Scotland.

More from Gingerbread

The following related Gingerbread factsheets for single parents are also available:

- > [Looking after your emotional health](#)
- > [Help when you can't agree](#)
- > [Making arrangements for your children](#)
- > [Holidays](#)

Download them from our [website](#) or call 0207 428 5791 to request them

Become a Gingerbread member

Membership is available to single parents in England and Wales. Join a community of thousands of single parents who benefit from the mutual support, free advice and information provided by Gingerbread. You can also meet other single parents at one of our local support groups.

Visit our [website](#), call 0800 018 4318 or email membership@gingerbread.org.uk

Gingerbread
Single parents, equal families

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www.gingerbread.org.uk

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