

A warm welcome to Includes Us Too



Who are we?

- We are a small charity that supports the needs of a child with any type of disability or Special Educational Need (SEND), from the ages of 0-25 within the Ashford, Shepway or Dover/Deal area.
- Unlike other agencies and organisations who may support just the child, siblings or the parents, we support the *whole* family in a number of ways.
- As employers, volunteers and trustees, we have lived experience and understand the joys and challenges of raising a child with additional needs. We get it, we understand the frustrations, the isolation and the highs of being a parent.



What do we need from you and your child?

- We don't ask for any type of evidence of your child's additional need, and you can be anywhere on the diagnosis/ SEND journey. By completing our membership form, you are agreeing that your child does genuinely have SEND.
- We don't charge for membership; this is completely free. You can join our charity and begin accessing our services here [Membership Application Form \(jotform.com\)](https://www.jotform.com) once this form has been received and processed by us.
- As per GDPR guidance, part of membership process will ask you for some information about your child and their needs/age/gender etc which we store securely. We only ever share your child's information with our funders, but you can opt out of this information sharing if you want to.



What do we offer?

Our universal offer for all members:

- Free membership
- Weekly coffee mornings across three locations in Ashford, Folkestone or Dover. These provide a safe space for you to share your experiences, stories as well as asking questions (there's no such thing as a silly question) with other parents who are experiencing the same as you.
- Training on specific issues or area of need through our workshops. We're able to meet the needs and ideas of our parents in a timely manner, equipping you with knowledge and information you need, at the right time. For example, we have held workshops on the EHCP process, supporting challenging behaviour and preparing your child for Christmas to name but a few.
- We can also support parents to complete DLA applications with our helpful information and informative resources. In complex cases, we're able to help you complete the form with one of our very experienced volunteers.
- We're able to signpost you to other agencies, networks and information that are specific to your needs.
- Subsidised family days out during school holidays, across all locations. We don't want finance to be a barrier for you and your family to access inclusive days out, so through funding, we subsidise trips, events and excursions across the year, where we meet a range of different needs and interests. This ranges from cinema trips, soft play centres, craft and Lego activities, swimming, forest school, going to the zoo and

even Santa's grotto. Every year, we offer a wealth of activities with some firm favourites as well as new ones too.

- Zoom groups for those who are unable to access face to face coffee mornings for any reason. We offer these in the day and in the evenings to ensure we capture everyone.
- A WhatsApp group, a space for any parent to ask anything at all, a safe place where at least one other parent will have experienced the same or similar to you and will be able to offer support. This has been a fast-growing area of support for our parents, and it continues to be very successful.
- Our Facebook page, where we advertise our family days out and coffee mornings as well as signposting you to other helpful organisations and agencies.



For those who have more complex needs:

- We can offer 1:1 family support for 6 weeks for families who find themselves in a tricky spot and need additional support. This is undertaken without judgement as we understand only too full well that sometimes, life can be a struggle. This may involve further signposting, providing support and coaching to meet your specific needs (depending on your self- assessment) or just being a listening ear. You can access this support here: [Family Support Partnership- Self referral \(office.com\)](https://www.includesus2.org.uk/family-support-partnership-self-referral-office.com).
- We're unable to offer family support to families who already receive support with another agency (eg: Early Help) but you can still access our universal offer during this time.
- All of our support is via Zoom or by phone, we're unable to offer home visits.



Access Group

- We are offering weekly groups in the Ashford area for children and young people that do not have access to a suitable school placement or are on a part-time table due to their disability.
- Some sessions will be based at the Rainbow Centre, others we will be out at different locations such as the Library, Forrest School, Farm visits etc. (For some of these activities there maybe a small cost but families will be notified in advance).
- The aim of this group is to give our families and their children skills, confidence and support. It is not designed as a replacement for Education but we hope that it will help towards a return to education in the future.
- Groups in Folkestone and Dover are to follow.
- To register an interest in these groups email info@includesus2.org.uk



How can we achieve all this?

- We may be a small charity, but we have a big heart and we're able to achieve all that we do by submitting bids to funders. We are not supported automatically by national or local government in any way, we rely purely on what our funders will donate and by the small contribution that parents make towards our family days out.
- This funding pays for everything, from staff salaries, to training, to paper, and our broadband. The list is long as I'm sure you can appreciate.



What do I need to do now?

- Complete the membership form first.
- Tell us a little bit about your child and your situation, we can then assess and triage what kind of support you may or not need.
- Please note, we are a part time charity, so it may take a few days for us to get back to you.