



How can we work together to support my family member or friend?

It is an enormous privilege to be supporting your family member or friend; it's an important role and one we take very seriously. In order to make certain your family member or friend has a great life, there are things we absolutely need to get right and we always welcome your help with this.

Getting to know you and your family member

It's important we get to know each other first. Here are some things we will do to achieve this:

1. Ensure that you meet us and we introduce ourselves to you to make sure you know everyone involved in the care of your family member or friend.
2. Meet you and talk through the Better Together pack at the beginning of our relationship with you.
3. Make sure you know what we will do, and how we will do it when we provide support to your family member or friend.
4. Make sure you have important contacts, including the contacts of the managers who have responsibility for overseeing the service.

You can help us by:

1. Always telling us what you expect from us to ensure we are the right organisation to provide for your family member or friend.
2. Spending time getting to know us, getting involved in meetings and conversations to tell us as much as possible about your family member or friend.
3. Helping us to develop a one-page profile for your family member or friend to provide us with a good understanding of what your family member needs. An example of one of these can be found in the *How does Mencap support people in a person centred way?* document in the Better Together pack.

4. Helping us to maintain up to date records about your family member or friend, and inform us about any changes to your own details.

You could also

Write your own family/friend one-page profile to tell us more about yourself, which we can help you to do.

Communicating with you

We know that communication is key to getting things right. In order for us to effectively communicate with you as we support your family member or friend, we will:

1. recognise the value of informal conversations and always remain open to talking and listening to you in this way
2. ensure we understand what communication is important to you, and that you are able to communicate with us when you need to
3. invite you to participate in surveys and reflection events to share your views about Mencap and the support we provide
4. invite you to the meetings and appointments you wish to attend
5. treat and speak with you respectfully, and with patience and empathy.

You can help us by:

1. telling us the types of communication you would like to receive from us, and how you prefer us to contact you eg by email or phone
2. telling us what you are happy about or what we could do better
3. using our formal compliments and complaint process to give compliments or make complaints, and letting us know as soon as possible of any concerns (see the *How can I tell Mencap what I think about the support my family member or friend receives* document for more information)
4. treating, and speaking to our teams with patience, respect and empathy.

You could also

Get involved in 'What Matters Most' including reviews and reflection events. See the *How does Mencap support people in a person centred way?* document in the Better Together pack, for more information.

Providing personalised support

In order to remain personalised, and ensure your family member is living the life they choose, we will:

1. provide support to your family member or friend that is personalised to them
2. always work in line with the Mental Capacity Act, 2005 and ensure that you understand the act, and what it means for your family member or friend
3. ensure that you are involved in developing and reviewing support plans for your family member or friend
4. meet our commitments to your family member or friend by:
 - always asking what is important to them
 - making sure that we know who they want to be part of their life
 - always listening to them
 - acting on the things that they, and those closest to them, tell us
 - supporting them to make sure others hear what they have to say.
 - respecting their privacy and confidentiality and not disclosing information they do not want us to share*.

You can help us by:

1. getting involved in developing and maintaining the support plans from which we work
2. helping us to learn from you, and your family member or friend about their background, experiences, wishes, wants and need.
3. sharing any further information about your family member or friend's history that might be important for us to know.

You could also:

- Tell us about any changes in your circumstances to keep us up to date.
- Help us to develop a family tree or an overview of your family member or friends life.



Supporting decision making

The people we support are encouraged to make their own decisions about their care and support where possible. We will support them to do this in line with The Mental Capacity Act 2005 by:

1. providing you with information about the Mental Capacity Act and how we use this in our work
2. supporting your family member or friend to make their own decisions where possible (even if those decisions are different to those that we would make ourselves) and give them the right support to be as independent as possible
3. being honest with you if we are unable to continue supporting a family member eg due to illness or changes in support needs, and provide support to you as we discuss options for the future
4. discussing any important decisions with you and making sure that your views are heard.

To help us, you can:

1. Attend meetings about your family member or friend where possible, or agree how we can hear what you would like to share, in your absence.
2. Help us to maintain your family member or friend's independence and involve them in making decisions.
3. Tell us how we can make the decision-making process easier for your family member or friend from your own experience.
4. Talk to us if there is anything you don't understand.

For more information, read the *How does Mencap support people to make decisions?* document in the Better Together pack.

Supporting people's health

We are committed to the health and wellbeing of the people we support. In order to ensure they are able to have happy, healthy lives we will:

1. ensure you are involved in the development of information relating to the health and safety of your family member or friend, such as a Health Action Plan, Health Passport and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans
2. share a copy of the health passport with you in case you need it

3. discuss communication around health appointments, and invite you to attend those you would like to
4. inform you, within 24-hours, of safeguarding incidents involving your family member or friend and ensure that anything urgent is communicated to you at the earliest available opportunity.

To help us you can:

1. Share contact details to use in case of emergency.
2. Help us to develop a health action plan and hospital passport about your family member or friend's medical information and family history.
3. Share with us how your family member or friend communicates their anxiety and/or ill health.
4. Tell us any anxieties your family member or friend has about health interventions.
5. Let us know if you have any concerns, however small, about your family member or friends health.

You could also

Get involved, and encourage others to get involved, in our *Treat me well* health campaign.

***Please note:** In very rare circumstances, the people we support may ask us not to share certain information with their family. We know this can be concerning for families and friends so we will always discuss this decision with you and give you the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have. We take our guidance from the Mental Capacity Act to ensure that the decision making process is supported at every stage. You can read more about this in the *How does Mencap support people to make decisions?* document.