

## What our Members Say

"FUN makes a massive difference to me and my family – the holiday clubs and trips are great and really take the pressure off over the holidays"

"The new teenage project is really exciting and will be a fantastic opportunity for my son to get the support he needs to help him become more independent"

"It took me four years to join but once I did I wished I had joined and got involved so much earlier!!"

It's great to have the opportunity to do things and not attract strange looks or even irritation from other people.

My son has challenging behaviour and I know people think I am just a bad parent when he kicks off in public.

## FUNdraising and Volunteering Doing it for FUN!

**FUN is a local organisation which relies heavily on local support to do what we do. We need your help and support to continue to provide our existing services and to expand them over the next few years**

### How can you help

#### Make a regular donation!

Just a few pounds every month will make a huge difference to us. You can subscribe via the website or give us a call.

#### Do it for FUN!! Get involved in one of our fundraising events – or organise your own.

We have a list of all sorts of things you can take part in: from cycle rides & runs to skydiving, abseiling & trekking to quiz nights and our annual dinner. Or tells us what event you want to run and we'll give you all the help we can. Check out the website for more details

[www.familiesunitednetwork.org.uk](http://www.familiesunitednetwork.org.uk)

#### Be a collector for us for our collecting box programme.

You can choose your area and it will raise additional money and awareness about the Charity.

#### Volunteer for FUN

We need volunteers to help with our clubs and activities; we need volunteers to support events and conferences; we need volunteers to help with fundraising; and so on... sounds like you can help? Get in touch via the website or call the office on 01582 420800;

**email [info@familiesunitednetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@familiesunitednetwork.org.uk)**

#### Share the FUN!!

Stay in touch; and tell others!!

Become a member; subscribe to our regular newsletter; join our facebook group; become a follower on twitter. Please tell everyone you know about FUN and what we do. We want to hear from people who need our services, people who want to support us - and people who like FUN! Join in the FUN today!!



## Working in Partnership

As an organisation we are very much committed to partnership working and to building effective partnerships that will benefit families, children and young people living with disabilities – especially across the region we work in.

We are part of the Luton Consortium of Short breaks providers and we work closely with other charities and providers across Bedfordshire.

## Disability Awareness Training

Our Disability Awareness Training provides a general introduction to disability for professionals and support staff working with disabled people, and for employers and other public service providers. Our training has a strong emphasis on real life experiences and solutions. All our training is delivered by parents of disabled children and young people who can offer firsthand experience of what it is like to access educational, health and other services while living with a disability; both from the perspective of the disabled person themselves and their family members and carers.

## Contact details

For more information see our website

[www.familiesunitednetwork.org.uk](http://www.familiesunitednetwork.org.uk)

or contact us by calling:

**01582 420800**

or e-mailing:

[info@familiesunitednetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@familiesunitednetwork.org.uk)

## Families United Network

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# Families United Network

Supporting children and young adults with additional needs and disabilities.



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Telephone: **01582 420800**

facebook

[facebook.com/familiesunitednetwork](https://facebook.com/familiesunitednetwork)

twitter

[twitter.com/FUNBedfordshire](https://twitter.com/FUNBedfordshire)



## Families United Network (FUN)

was established as an independent charity in 2002 by a group of parents needing support and services for their children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). **FUN** provides advice, support and services to SEND children, young people and their families living in Bedfordshire and surrounding counties. **FUN** is the largest pan-disability charity within Bedfordshire and supports children and young adults living with many different types of physical and/or learning disabilities.

**FUN** supports the whole family, including siblings and parent carers, and we work across a whole range of disabilities. Most of the work we do focuses on supporting families with children and young adults aged from birth -25 yrs.

**FUN** believes that every young person should have social and educational opportunities available to them that enable them to reach their full potential **FUN** aims to provide our young people with the same social and leisure opportunities that their non-disabled peers enjoy, but within a more supportive and accepting environment. **FUN** staff are trained to understand the needs of the children and young people and to respect their dignity, wishes and aspirations.

**FUN** is a membership led organisation. Membership is free and is open to any family caring for a child or young adult with a disability or additional need.



## What we offer

### FUN Activity Centre

The FUN activity centre is designed to meet the needs of children and young people with all types of additional needs and disabilities. All internal and external doors have been widened for wheelchair access, and there are fully accessible changing facilities with an overhead hoist and full sized changing table.

The activity centre offers structured and free play activities for all of our members and their families.

The main activity hall offers:

Ball pond, bouncy castle, soft play, pool table and air hockey table, together with the following themed play areas:

- Home corner • Dressing up & theatre • Books & stories
  - Arts & crafts • Trains & vehicles • Wildlife/soft animals
  - \* Building blocks (including lego) • Sensory play
- There are further separate rooms offering musical equipment, computer games, a training room, an IT suite, 'The Lounge' chill out area with TV and computers, a coffee shop and a fully equipped sensory room.

### Holiday Clubs

Holiday clubs are a lifeline to many families during school holidays, and offer a range of stimulating activities for children and young people within a safe and non-judgemental environment. The idea is that members of the family can attend and have the opportunity to take part in the activities together. This also gives parents and carers the opportunity to share advice and information in a place where everyone is facing similar challenges. Whilst parent carers remain on-site and are responsible for their own children, there are staff and volunteers available to supervise, support and encourage the young people to take part in the activities on offer.

### Trips and Attractions

Having the opportunity to visit new places, knowing that any potential difficulties for the children and young people have been considered; and that there are other people available for help and support makes a huge difference to families.

From a bowling trip to a visit to a wildlife park or to the Christmas pantomime, these occasions are a real break and support for families under pressure

### Swimming

Swimming is a fantastic activity for children and young people with disabilities – and great fun for all the family! We provide fortnightly swimming sessions at Keech Hospice in their adapted hydrotherapy swimming pool.



### Saturday Club

Saturday Clubs can be accessed by SEND young people aged from 10 to 17 years. Full support is provided to allow the young people to attend the club without their family carers. This provides opportunities for them to spend time with their peers whilst their parents and siblings have the opportunity to take a break from their usual caring responsibilities. The young people are able to participate in activities with the help of a one to one support worker. Providing this support allows the young people to try new activities that would otherwise be difficult for them. Regular off-site trips into the community encourage independence and confidence, and the opportunity to practice important life skills.

### FUN Youth Club

Youth Club is held on a Monday night (during term time) from 6.30pm to 8.30pm for young people aged from 10 to 17 years with additional needs or disabilities. There are a range of activities on offer each week, such as computer games, arts & crafts and music, to name just a few. This is a great opportunity for the young people to establish friendships, improve confidence and increase their self-esteem.

### Young Adult Club

Young Adult Club is held on a Tuesday evening throughout the year for young adults aged from 18 to 25 years with additional needs or disabilities. The young adults choose what they would like to learn and take part in at the club. These activities include independent living skills, cooking, budgeting and other life skills. As well as a safe space for chilling and making new friends in a calm environment there is music, air hockey, pool, coffee shop and more.

### FUN Opportunity Play

FUN opportunity play is for children from birth to 5 years with a diagnosis of disability or additional need, as well as for those that are going through the diagnosis process or have been referred to specialist services.

The aim is to offer families the support and guidance that they need that is crucial to them at the early stages of referral or diagnosis. There is opportunity for parents to build new friendships, and gain support from others, within a non-judgemental environment.