

Who are Winston's Wish?

Winston's Wish (<http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/>) is the leading childhood bereavement charity in the UK, offering the widest range of practical support and guidance on bereavement to children, their families and professionals.



Founded in 1992 by Julie Stokes OBE, after her work in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital's Palliative Care Team led her to believe that the needs of children were being overlooked when a parent was dying. After visiting the USA and Canada on a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship and inspired by the services she saw, Julie decided to replicate this model of bereavement support especially for children and their families.

They help over 30,000 children every year through their helpline, numerous weekly groups, support programmes and one – to – one support services.

How we support Winston's Wish

As a company that provides life insurance we know that the cover we provide can help bereaved families lift the financial burden following a death, but there is so much more for bereaved families – especially children – to handle. We therefore wanted to provide an emotional support service to our customers and we decided to partner with Winston's Wish as we believe the support they offer to children and their families, is the very best available.

Whenever there is a death claim under our group life policies, we provide information to the deceased member's family, via the scheme trustees, which introduces the national helpline service provided by Winston's Wish.

For every death claim we receive we donate £100 to Winston's Wish. We are also a named sponsor of the specialist work Winston's Wish provides to families bereaved by suicide.

The services Winston's Wish provide

Winston's Wish helpline – 08452 03 04 05 (Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm, plus Wed 6.30pm - 9.30pm)

The Helpline offers support, information and guidance to anyone caring for or supporting a bereaved child or young person.

Who calls?

Everyone and anyone who is supporting a grieving child can call the Helpline. They have calls from parents, grandparents, step-parents, carers, aunts, uncles, friends, teachers, health visitors, faith leaders, police officers, doctors and almost anyone else you can think of. About 55% of their calls come from family members and about 45% from professionals seeking advice and guidance. If a young person you know is finding it hard to cope with their grief and you want to help them, then please call.

Who will answer my call?

Your call will be answered by people who are professionally trained with the knowledge and experience to provide support services to children and their families.

Why do people call?

People call to discuss a wide range of issues and concerns. They will take the time to listen carefully to your worries and questions and help you to work out how best to support the bereaved young person. They won't tell you what to do or what not to do. However, they will share their knowledge of bereavement and their experience of working with bereaved children.

'Ask' email service

If an individual is looking for more information or has a specific question and would prefer not to call, they can email Winston's Wish via their website and they will respond directly.

<http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/supporting-you/ask-a-question/>

Face to face bereavement support

Is offered to children and families bereaved through accident and illness from their regional hubs in Gloucestershire, West Sussex and Greater Manchester. Additionally they run specialist programmes to support children and families bereaved through suicide, homicide and military, around the UK.

Face to face support includes:

- Individual work
- Group work
- Regional drop-in service

In addition to the above support, Winston's wish provides online resources for parents, professionals and children and publications.

For more information on any of these services, please click [here](#).

Case study – How Winston’s Wish helped a family after suicide

Laura was 10 when her Mum ended her life by hanging at the family home following a number of years suffering with depression. Laura's Dad contacted the Winston's Wish Helpline, worried because Laura felt she was to blame for her Mum's death.

A Winston’s Wish practitioner began supporting Dad through several therapeutic phone calls, then met Laura with Dad at their home. They mapped out their family tree which helped Laura recognize a close support network of people. Laura has since developed her relationship with her Mum's older sister who has shared some lovely stories of growing up with Mum.

Time was spent creating a safe environment for Laura to share her memories of Mum before she died. Together they recognized difficult times as well as fun times and everyday memories.

Laura and Dad, supported by our practitioner, worked through the story of what happened when Mum died, which was the first time Laura had explained what she remembered. Dad was able to answer some of Laura's questions. They talked about Mum's illness and the effect it had on Mum and the family and also talked about what life is like now without Mum and the changes that have taken place - some challenging and others that have brought Laura and Dad closer.

Our practitioner offered Laura and Dad individual time to talk about their thoughts and feelings as well as talking through ways of coping with bereavement together. Laura wanted to find out how she could make herself feel less sad, angry and sometimes jealous of other people at school when they talked about their Mums. Laura felt isolated because she didn't know anyone else who had had a parent end their own life.

Laura attended the residential group for children bereaved by suicide. She was able to share her thoughts, feeling and memories with other children. She participated in group work that helped her build her confidence in talking to others when they might ask difficult questions.

During a follow up meeting after the residential group Laura shared that she had been able to tell one of her friends that her Mum had died. Her teacher has noted that she cries less when others talk about their Mums, and seems happier to share memories of her Mum. She has joined some clubs at school. Dad said it was invaluable to meet other parents on the residential group and he learned how to relate to Laura and share feelings. Laura said she was scared to talk about Mum before as she didn't want to upset Dad. Now she knows that it is okay for Dad to be upset sometimes and Dad cries because he misses Mum not because Laura is upsetting him. The family share more stories and enjoy memories as well as finding ways to make themselves happy when they feel sad. Laura and her Dad have found it helpful to think that Mum would want them to be happy and have fun – this has given them permission to look to a future that contains happiness and fun rather than letting them be consumed by grief.