



Dorset's Disability Charity

# STARs

Supporting SEN siblings



## Supportive ★ Thoughtful ★ Resilient

It's tough being an SEN sibling, as well as the usual challenges of growing up, they also often receive less attention from parents and have more worries and responsibilities than their peers.

STARs provides them with support and advice, as well as the chance to make friends and have fun.

### What to expect...

We provide a 12-week programme for children to come along and meet others in the same boat. We help to reduce the pressure they're under by providing an environment where they can access support and advice, but also take part in fun activities, make friends, and be themselves.

Sessions will take place every fortnight at The Families Centre in West Moors, and we'll provide a series of activities, as well as the support and friendship.

Everyone is also more than welcome to stay for longer after the programme if desired!

### How to access

Your child can access this service if they are aged between eight and 16 and are the sibling of a child with special educational needs.

To register for the service, please visit [diverseabilities.org.uk/stars](https://diverseabilities.org.uk/stars) for more details.



## How we can help

*We're really pleased with how STARs has helped children and young people so far, but don't just take it from us, read Matilda's story.*

Matilda was anxious when first joining STARs, unsure what to expect, but we took her off on her own for the first 10 minutes of each group for a chat so she could relax slightly before joining in.

During one chat, we explained that it was great to have her as part of the group and important for her to attend, even if it was difficult. She replied: "I will keep coming because I like it here, it's my time to be listened to."

Slowly over time Matilda has integrated herself into the group and joins in with more group discussions - and this was evident on our trip to Chessington. After bouncing off of the pirate ship she said: "That is the craziest thing I have done in like 5 years! I don't get to do things like this with my family as my sisters wouldn't cope." The joy you could see in her body language and the smile on her face was wonderful to witness. Matilda and her mum provided feedback after their sessions had come to an end, and are a testament to how important it is to the young people who attend.

"I am really relieved that there was finally a special place for siblings, I have been looking for years. Life-changing for Matilda. She had a lovely bond with some of the adults and the support she needed was there for her. School commented that Matilda would practically bounce into school the morning after her STARs session. For the first time, Matilda had something special to be part of, where her thoughts and feelings were recognised and supported."

Matilda describes STARs as safe, fun, and friendly.



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**STARs**

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