

## Community Insight: Umbrella

Recently celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Umbrella is a registered charity working to improve services for disabled children, from birth to 19 years, and their families living in Southern Derbyshire.

Beginning in 1986 with one part-time worker, the organisation has grown to over 60 members of staff and 120 volunteers, working on a variety of projects and currently supporting over 400 families and carers across Derby City, Amber Valley, South Dales, Erewash and Derby City.

Umbrella's information service includes an information pack introducing their services, a membership scheme, telephone advice line open five days a week, and a handbook of services available.

Their Family Support Team provides support via telephone and support groups, which offer parents and carers the chance to meet up and openly discuss how they are feeling in a safe environment. Parents also enjoy meals out and other leisure opportunities, offering time for relaxation, conversation and friendship.

Umbrella's volunteer service recognises that parents and carers need to take a break. Volunteers offer support on a one-to-one basis, ensuring they build up good relationships with both the child and their family.

Alongside an education advisor, based at the Umbrella Information Office for half a day a week, staff and volunteers are able to provide information, advice and support on education provision, as well as accompanying parents on visits to schools



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and meetings with education officers and other professionals.

The Children's Services Coordinator works with parents, carers, young people and leisure providers to establish new clubs and activities, promote inclusive play activities, support new and existing play schemes and provide fun family opportunities, including sailing and discos.

The Bilingual Project helps families from ethnic minorities to empower themselves through face-to-face communication, a support group, expansion of culturally appropriate services, overcoming cultural and language barriers and additional family support.

Umbrella's Side-by-Side group provides young people aged 10 to 18 with the opportunity to experience social activities with their peers, away from their parents and carers. This leads to friendship and improved self-esteem, confidence, social, communication and life skills, and most importantly fun.

Through Aiming High, a government initiative to provide short breaks for disabled children and young people, their families and carers, Umbrella offers up to 100 hours flexible support to those referred by a professional to the service. This support can include after school, weekend and holiday clubs, day trips, befriending, and one-to-one support.

Umbrella also hosts two services for disabled young adults aged 18 to 25. T.E.A.M. (Transition, Education and Mentoring) aims to promote wellbeing and develop life skills through a support development programme and personal mentoring. I.N.D.E. provides young people

*“If Umbrella did not exist there would be times I would be at the end of tether!”*

*“I feel Umbrella provides an invaluable service for children and families.”*

*“Umbrella has provided life saving respite during holidays”*

with the opportunity to be independent within a social environment.

Following their eviction from their base of 15 years, Umbrella raised £250,000 to purchase and renovate a new fully-accessible base, which with the help of Derby City Council and Business in the Community's Pro Help, they moved into in February 2011.

During February 2011, Umbrella also became one of only 14 organisations to receive funding during the first round of the Government's transition fund.

Umbrella continue to work with commissioners in both Derby City and Derbyshire County Council and the NHS and PCT's, contributing at a strategic level to decision making and consultation on service design and development, whilst providing an invaluable service to families, despite competition from national and regional providers.

For further information on Umbrella visit [www.umbrella.uk.net](http://www.umbrella.uk.net).