

UK Funding & Grants for SEN Equipment, Therapy & Family Support

A practical list of where to apply, what to ask for, and how to win.

Why this guide exists

Families of disabled children spend an average of **£4,800 per year** on disability-related costs beyond what the state provides. Equipment (wheelchairs, sensory gear, communication aids), therapy (speech, OT, physio), respite, home adaptations — most of it is not free. But there is funding out there. You just need to know where to look, and how to ask.

This guide is a starting point. It is not legal or financial advice. Always check each funder's latest criteria.

1. Statutory funding (from your local council or the NHS)

a) Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children

- **What:** Weekly, tax-free payment to help with the extra costs of disability.
- **Rates (2025/26):** Care component £28.70 (low) / £72.65 (middle) / £108.55 (high). Mobility component £29.20 / £75.95.
- **Who can claim:** Any child under 16 with a disability or health condition needing more care or help getting around than a child of the same age.
- **How to claim:** Call 0800 121 4600 or apply online at gov.uk/dla-child.
- **Tip:** The form is long. Keep a "care diary" for 2–4 weeks before applying. Note every night wake-up, every medication, every bit of help with dressing, eating, toilet, behaviour.

b) Personal Independence Payment (PIP) — for over-16s

- **What:** Replaces DLA once the child turns 16. Same idea, different assessment.
- **Tip:** Claim before 16th birthday — transitioning to PIP is smoother if DLA is already in place.

c) Local authority SEN transport

- **What:** Free or subsidised transport to school for children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) who can't walk or get public transport safely.
- **How to apply:** Through your SENCO or local council's SEN transport team.

- **Tip:** Ask for a transport assessment as part of the EHCP review. It's a legal right.

d) NHS Continuing Care

- **What:** For children with very complex health needs. Funds a package of care including nursing, equipment, and respite.
- **Who qualifies:** Children with needs that go beyond what a typical local authority would provide. Often children with multiple disabilities, feeding tubes, seizures, or technology dependence.
- **How:** Ask your GP, paediatrician, or hospital social worker for a "continuing care assessment."
- **Tip:** Many families miss out because they never ask. Always ask.

e) Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

- **What:** Up to £30,000 in England for home adaptations (ramps, stairlifts, wet rooms, door widening).
 - **How:** Apply through your local council's housing team. An OT (Occupational Therapist) assessment is required.
 - **Tip:** There is a 6-month+ wait. Start early. Don't be put off by the means test — most families on low income pass.
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2. Charitable grants (UK-wide)

a) Family Fund

- **What:** Grants of £200–£3,000 for items like washing machines, bedding, sensory toys, days out, laptops, holidays.
- **Who:** Low-income families with a disabled child under 18.
- **How:** familyfund.org or call 01904 550 055.
- **Tip:** Apply multiple times for different items. Many families get grants every 2–3 years.

b) Caudwell Children

- **What:** Funding for equipment, therapy, and family support services. Up to £5,000+.
- **Who:** Families with a disabled child under 18, household income under £45,000.
- **How:** caudwellchildren.com

c) Newlife Foundation

- **What:** Equipment grants for disabled children — wheelchairs, beds, car seats, sensory equipment.
- **How:** newlifecharity.co.uk

d) Whizz-Kidz

- **What:** Wheelchairs, mobility training, work experience for young people.
- **Who:** Under 25 with a mobility need.
- **How:** whizz-kidz.org.uk

e) React (Rapid Effective Assistance for Children with potentially Terminal illness)

- **What:** Emergency grants for families in crisis — equipment, holidays, funeral costs.
- **How:** reactcharity.org

f) Make-A-Wish UK

- **What:** "Wishes" for children with life-limiting conditions — trips, experiences, special items.
- **How:** make-a-wish.org.uk

g) Together for Short Lives

- **What:** Information, grants, and advocacy for families of children with life-limiting conditions.

h) Sense (for deafblind / complex disability)

- **What:** Grants, information, holidays, communication support.

i) Contact (for families with disabled children)

- **What:** Free helpline, benefits advice, legal advice, parent support groups.
- **How:** contact.org.uk — 0808 808 3555.

3. Equipment-specific charities

Need	Charity	Website
Wheelchair	Whizz-Kidz, Newlife	whizz-kidz.org.uk
Sensory equipment	Sensory Trust, Newlife	sensorytrust.org.uk
Communication aids	Ace Centre, AbilityNet	acecentre.org.uk
Specialist beds	Newlife, React	newlifecharity.co.uk
Car seats / harnesses	Newlife, Radian	radian.co.uk

Hearing aids / FM systems	NDCS, Hearing Dogs	ndcs.org.uk
Visual impairment	Guide Dogs, RNIB	guidedogs.org.uk

4. Therapy & education

a) Free NHS therapy

- **Speech and language therapy (SLT), occupational therapy (OT), physiotherapy** — all available free via the NHS, but waitlists can be 6–12 months.
- **Tip:** Ask your GP for a referral in writing. If the wait is over 18 weeks, you can ask to go on the "NHS choice" framework and go private at NHS cost.

b) School-based support (via EHCP)

- An EHCP can fund 1:1 support, specialist equipment, therapy in school, transport, and even placement in an independent specialist school.
- **Tip:** Always get a "named person" in writing. Don't accept "we'll see what we can do."

c) Free / subsidised short breaks

- Every local authority has a "Local Offer" listing free or low-cost activities and respite for disabled children and their siblings. Search "[your council] Local Offer."

5. Tips for a winning application

Whatever you're applying for:

1. **Read the criteria twice.** Most rejections are because the family doesn't meet a basic rule (income, postcode, age, diagnosis).
2. **Tell a story, not a list.** "My son can't sleep without a weighted blanket, and the only safe one is £120 we don't have" beats "we need a weighted blanket."
3. **Attach professional letters.** A one-line note from your OT, GP, or SENCO can turn a "no" into a "yes."
4. **Quote real prices.** Get an actual quote and include it.
5. **Be polite but persistent.** Follow up. Most funders check in weekly.
6. **Apply to multiple funders at once.** It's not cheating — it's how the system works.
7. **Keep a "funding folder"** with your child's diagnosis, EHCP, OT letter, and a recent photo. Reuse it for every application.

About DCF

Disabled Children Fund BD is building a world-class disability centre in Sylhet, Bangladesh — for children who currently have nothing.

Our founder, **Mohammed Eijaz**, runs **TeslaRides** in the UK and is a former social worker. We sponsor equipment, therapy, and education for children in Bangladesh and connect UK families to UK funding sources like this guide.

Donate: www.disabledchildrenfundbd.org

Volunteer: raise £1,500 for a trip to Sylhet — we cover flight logistics, accommodation, food.

Contact: hello@disabledchildrenfundbd.org

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