

YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK GUIDE



West Midlands



A network of people and partners for
everyone affected by spinal cord injury

GET INFORMED

USING YOUR GUIDE

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“The booklet is very informative... our go-to book.”

Family member of SCI person



INSIDE THIS BOOKLET

Your Support Network Guide summarises the services SIA offers as a charity and highlights our partnerships with key trusted organisations. We've handpicked them as partners because we know they can help meet your immediate and longer-term needs as you rebuild your life after spinal cord injury, whether you're newly injured or at any time afterwards.

SPECIALIST SPINAL CORD INJURY CENTRES (SCICs)

SIA works closely with the national Spinal Cord Injury Centres. Currently, only one spinal cord injured person in every three gets admitted for specialist care and rehabilitation at one of these centres. We're campaigning to change that. But you do have the right to be referred to your local spinal cord injury centre for an appointment with a spinal consultant, although this doesn't guarantee you'll be admitted for rehab there. Give your doctor this link to the National Spinal Database so they can find out more about your local SCIC: www.nscisb.nhs.uk/

YOUR LOCAL SPINAL CORD INJURY CENTRE (SCIC)

Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries
The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Oswestry
Shropshire
SY10 7AG

SCAN THE QR CODE



For more information about your SCIC just scan this QR code.

GET INFORMED

WHAT IS SPINAL CORD INJURY?



Around 50,000 people are living with spinal cord injury (SCI) in the UK. Each year, another 2,500 people are injured or diagnosed – one every four hours – through accident, injury, or health conditions such as a tumour or spinal compression.

Spinal cord injury is life-changing, causing paralysis and loss of sensation below the level of damage to the spinal cord. You might not be able to walk, or you might lose control of your bladder and bowel function.

If you have a higher-level injury, you may also have limited or no hand and arm function or rely on a ventilator to breathe. Some people might still be able to walk but experience other complications because of their injury.

A spinal cord injury can be hugely traumatic – for both the person directly affected and their family. The news that you may never walk again, or can no longer control your bladder or bowels, is devastating. The physical and psychological impact of sustaining a life-changing disability that affects every aspect of your own life, and the lives of those closest to you, is undeniably huge.

But you're not alone. This guide is your first step to building a network of practical, emotional and psychological support to help you lead an independent and fulfilled life.

Turn over to find out more about how SIA – and our network of trusted partners – can help you rebuild your life after spinal cord injury.



GET SUPPORT

HOW SIA CAN HELP

Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) is the UK's leading organisation for the 50,000 people living with a spinal cord injury – as well as the hundreds of thousands of people who are their families, friends, carers and healthcare providers.

We'll help you build a network of support so you and your family can adapt to every aspect of life with spinal cord injury.

We've split your guide into three sections, to help you navigate the challenges you may face.

SIA's services are offered to you and your family completely free of charge, to help equip you with the knowledge, skills and support you'll need to lead a fulfilled life.

Body matters: practical advice from a peer on sensitive, must-know topics such as bladder and bowel management, self image, relationships and sexual function, plus expert advice from clinical specialists. Our SCI clinical specialists can work with anyone involved in your healthcare needs to make sure your care is always safe, appropriate and right for you.

Mind matters: emotional support from peers who've been there, and a unique peer-led counselling service to help you and your family adapt to life with spinal cord injury.

Life matters: an experienced team with a proven track record of success in advocating and campaigning for the rights of people with spinal cord injury. From helping you secure funding, access benefits and get back to work, we can also signpost you to help with wheelchair skills, transport, holidays or starting a family. Whatever you need to lead the life you want.

GET SUPPORT

A NETWORK OF TRUSTED PARTNERS



As well as the services SIA can offer you, at no cost to you or family, we know you'll need more than we alone can offer to achieve a fulfilled life with spinal cord injury.

So, we're working with an ever-increasing number of local and national partners, creating the best network possible, so that we can serve, support and fight for every aspect of what defines your fulfilled life.

Because we understand that a fulfilled life looks different for each of us. And we know it could be a range of hopes, dreams and aspirations that are important to you. Retaining a job, having children, going to the shops – not just the all-important basics such as good bowel management and skin care.

How we choose our trusted partners

Our trusted partners are organisations that you, our members, recognise as the best. They have the skills, knowledge and understanding to help you not just adapt to injury, but also to thrive. We don't just mean an estate agent with a wider door, but one that goes further, prioritising a portfolio of appropriate, accessible housing. Not just a legal firm that can hunt down a personal injury claim – but one that understands the diversity of legal needs throughout your life with a spinal cord injury.

The support, advocacy and advice we provided last year

Membership of nearly
14,500



Around 400

healthcare professionals received training and education from our expanded clinical specialist team



More than
3,000 enquiries

handled by our support line



Over 1,400

support sessions delivered to meet practical and emotional needs of SCI people



Over 12,300

subscribers received our monthly e-newsletter



Over 300

connections enabled between our members and partnership organisations



Our trusted partners are organisations that you, our members, recognise as the best.

All our trusted partners:

- ✓ commit to SIA's values and code of conduct
- ✓ are recognised as industry leaders
- ✓ offer initial advice free of charge with no obligations
- ✓ are accredited by their relevant regulatory body
- ✓ undergo due diligence processes before joining our network
- ✓ commit to regular reviews, training and feedback meetings

GET SUPPORT

BUILDING YOUR NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Our support starts when you're newly injured and continues throughout your life. SIA's regional support coordinators, assisted by a set of dedicated volunteers, all live with spinal cord injury themselves. They're uniquely qualified to support you, and in addition they'll connect you to trusted partners and signpost all the other services that can help you.

As your first main point of contact with SIA, your support coordinator offers a positive insight into life beyond injury. As well as hope for the future, they'll impart practical advice on topics as diverse as managing continence, transferring safely, getting back to work, raising a family, driving, holidays, and being an active member of society.

We've split the country into ten regions to ensure that everyone gets the network of support they need within their local community.

YOUR SIA SUPPORT COORDINATOR

Brendan Fitzgerald

Support coordinator
West Midlands

T. 01908 208537

M. 07496 951 117

E. b.fitzgerald@spinal.co.uk



"Thank you for giving me hope and making me aware of help out there. I've struggled alone for a long time. After today I know that with help my future is worth living and I can still achieve life goals."

SCI person

"Brendan took the time to come and visit my son in hospital. He was very professional and calm, even when we got upset. He spoke to my son in a calm and confident way that made my son comfy in asking questions he would not ask the nurse. We were not rushed and his knowledge is vast; he also suggested things we could do to prepare more for the future. He is coming back soon and we are all so grateful for what he has done for us already. Bless you all."

Parent of SCI person

GET SUPPORT

SUPPORT FROM A PEER

SCAN TO BOOK



Brendan Fitzgerald - Support coordinator West Midlands

Hi – I'm Brendan, your support coordinator. If you've recently become injured or you're already living with a spinal cord injury, or are close to someone who is, you're in the right place.

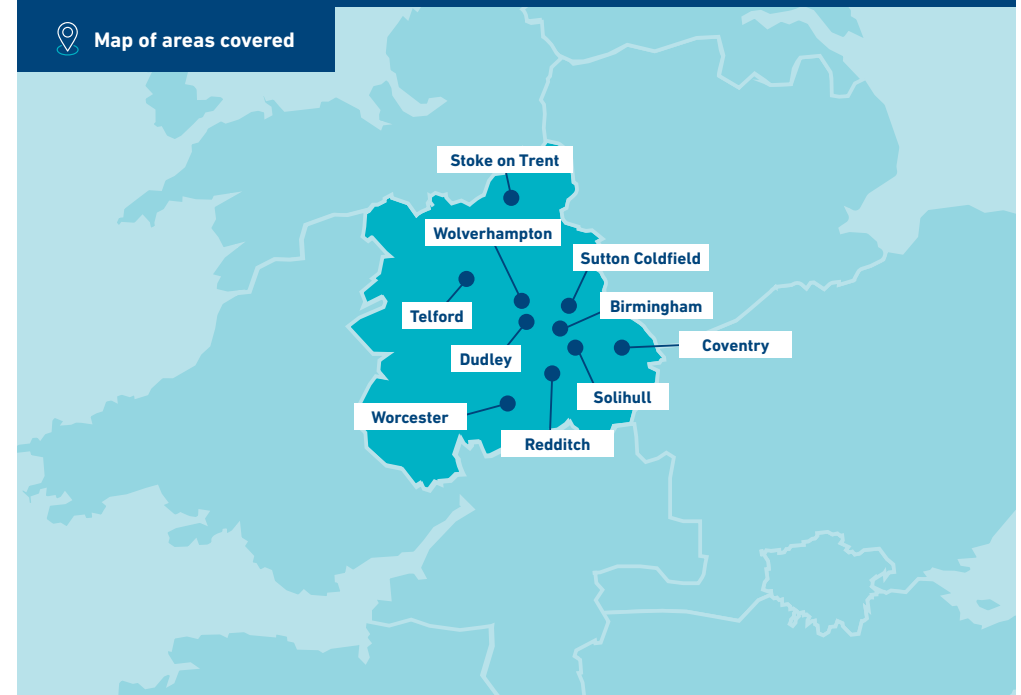
I was injured in 1998 as a result of a fall from a wall. I sustained a C5/6 spinal cord injury and spent a year at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. It's left me with limited mobility and sensation from the shoulders down.

Book an appointment with me here and I can refer you to the most suitable services available locally and nationally.

From counselling to rehabilitation and medical support, to legal advice and benefits expertise, the help is out there. I'm trained to offer support and advice for your circumstances. And I can offer my insight and experience into life with a spinal cord injury.

I look forward to speaking with you soon. To book a virtual appointment with me, scan the QR above.

Map of areas covered



GET SUPPORT

BODY MATTERS

However you sustained your spinal cord injury, your body has been through immense trauma. By helping you understand your body now, we can support you to lay down the building blocks for a fulfilled life with spinal cord injury, whatever that means for you personally.

“SIA’s clinical specialists put me at my ease, gave me clarification where I’ve struggled to find answers, spoke to me in language I could understand.”

SCI person

SCI clinical specialists

SIA has a team of specialist clinicians – including nurses and an occupational therapist – who all have a wealth of knowledge and experience in the clinical aspects of living with a spinal cord injury.

Learn more about dealing with your bladder, bowel, skin and other SCI body matters at www.spinal.co.uk/get-support



CLINICAL SPECIALIST IN YOUR REGION

Karen Biggs
SCI clinical specialist
Midlands Region

E. SCINurseSpecialists@spinal.co.uk

ARRANGE A CALL



To arrange a call with me or one of my colleagues, scan the QR code above.

SCI emergency care plans

Your clinical specialist can complete an emergency care plan with you. This is a very useful document detailing your individual care needs should you require a future hospital admission.

Scan the QR code above to book an appointment to complete your emergency care plan.

SCAN TO BOOK



No matter where you are – hospital, home or community care facility – your clinical specialist can discuss with you how you may be able to better manage your bowel, bladder, skin, pain and all other physical aspects that you may experience following a spinal cord injury.

They can also negotiate with – and provide training for – the medics, district nurses or care teams involved in your care.

“The nurses really paid attention to my SIA emergency care plan and I received much better care than on previous hospital admissions.”

Jane, C5 tetraplegia

BODY MATTERS

EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Our SIA Academy training is available to PAs and carers as well as people working in more formal healthcare settings.

Our specialist clinicians facilitate virtual and face-to-face sessions, which give an insight into the complex and sometimes unique issues that affect people living with spinal cord injury.

If you think someone involved in your care could benefit – please get in touch. Please note we do charge for most of these sessions. See www.spinal.co.uk/healthcare-professionals/courses/ for full details.

SIA Academy programme

Good clinical practice in SCI – a face-to-face session and in-house study day covering different aspects of SCI care. Ideal for larger groups within their workplace, usually 20 people or more.

Managing SCI – the virtual version of our good clinical practice session, this can be tailored to individuals’ needs. Ideal for the district nurses, carers or PAs involved in your care.

Managing the neurogenic bowel after SCI – care providers can gain the knowledge and practical skills to support SCI people with their essential bowel care.



FIND OUT MORE



Scan the QR code to find out more or book a session.



Karen Mikalsen
Health and care quality
team coordinator

E. academy@spinal.co.uk

“This was the best study day I have attended.”

RGN working in the community

Under pressure: the neurogenic skin – virtual sessions on understanding skin care for SCI people – including the causes, impact, treatment and prevention of pressure ulcers.

To breathe or not to breathe: respiratory issues in acute SCI – a virtual session on how SCI impacts the respiratory system and appropriate care to prevent complications.

SCI management for therapists – a session for therapists on rehabilitation and maximising function for SCI people.

A fulfilled life – the final chapter – an online resource detailing appropriate care for SCI people at end of life.

BODY MATTERS

HELPING YOU FIND THE RIGHT CARE OPTIONS



Selecting good quality care that's right for you is essential to leading a fulfilled, independent life with spinal cord injury.

It's an important decision and we're here to help. Your local SIA support coordinator and our advocacy team work together to explain different care options and the funding possibilities. But here's a brief overview...

Applying for funding

There are two main sources of funding for the care you may need:

NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC)

This is paid to your care provider through your local integrated care boards (ICB). Your ICB decides how NHS services are delivered in your local area. This funding isn't means tested, so you won't have to pay towards the cost of your care package if your application is successful.

Social services through your local authority

This funding is based on how much money you have, which means you'll have to contribute to your care if you have savings or assets of £23,250 or more.

Whether your care is funded by the NHS or your local authority, they have a legal duty to meet your needs.

Completing a care assessment

You need to carry out a care assessment to find out who is responsible for your care. This splits your care needs into either:

'health care' needs – tasks that help you manage your injury, such as bowel management

'social care' needs – like supporting you to get out to meet other people.

If most of your care needs are 'health', you'll get funding through NHS Continuing Healthcare. If they are 'social', your local authority is responsible for funding.

The assessment process is time-consuming and complex. If you want to apply for funding for your care, get in touch with our advocacy team who can support you with your application. Just scan the QR code to contact us.

To find out more, contact your local SIA support coordinator, or:

- call our support line on **0800 980 0501** to speak to our advocacy team
- visit www.spinal.co.uk/carefunding - where you can try our online learning tool and download a template case assessment

SCAN TO CALL US



ONLINE LEARNING

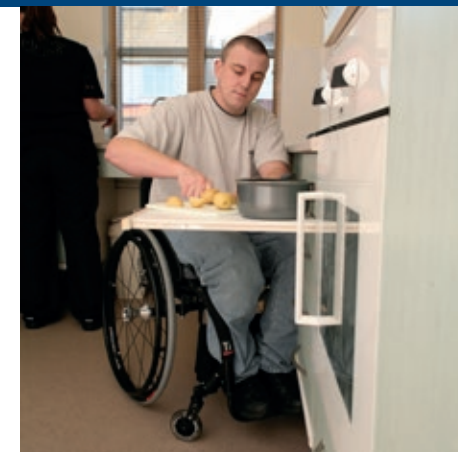


Selecting good quality care that's right for you is essential to leading a fulfilled, independent life with spinal cord injury.

Our trusted care partners

Over the next few pages, we've featured our trusted care partners, experts in supporting spinal cord injured people with all their care needs. They work with you to assemble a team of carers and the right healthcare products for your specific needs and wishes. They'll provide initial advice free of charge and guide you through the range of services available.

Find out more at www.spinal.co.uk/partners



BODY MATTERS

HEALTHCARE
PARTNER

SIA Healthcare



A dedicated home delivery service for spinal cord injured people

SIA Healthcare is a dedicated home delivery service that provides spinal cord injured people with all of their urology and stoma products and prescription medication efficiently and discreetly to their door.

“Your service has been impeccable. All I can say is thank you, you’ve made my life so much easier”

SIA Healthcare user

Company information

Locations

Offering support across the UK.

Contact details

T 0800 470 4576 E enquiries@siahealthcare.com W www.spinal.co.uk/get-support/sia-healthcare

Meet the team

SIA Healthcare is a dedicated home delivery service that provides spinal cord injured people with all their urology and stoma products, and prescription medication efficiently and discreetly to your door or to a place that is convenient for you.

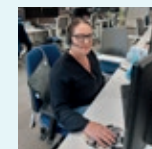
SIA Healthcare was built on a long-standing relationship between SIA and Bullen Healthcare to establish an industry-leading delivery service for spinal cord injured people, their families and the wider spinal cord injury community.

It’s really easy to register for SIA Healthcare and the service is completely free! Just tell us what you need, and we’ll take care of the rest - including talking to your GP about your prescription.

Call us today on **0800 470 4576**

or email enquiries@siahealthcare.com

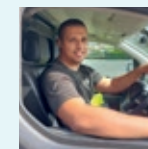
Hear what some of the SIA Healthcare team say



Maxine – Personal advisor

I really enjoy working at SIA Healthcare. For me, it is the day-to-day contact with our customers that is the best bit.

As well as taking their orders, I get to hear about what they are up to, things that are happening in their lives, and that gives me such a great feeling.



Lewis – Driver

In most delivery jobs you just turn up, hand over the parcel and off you go, not with SIA Healthcare. I deliver to the same people every month so

you get to know them. Sometimes they might ask for help getting their parcel into the house, or they might take the mickey out of me for the football result at the weekend!



96% of SIA Healthcare users find our service ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ reliable



97% of people using the service would recommend it

SIA Healthcare is a service set up by Spinal Injuries Association and operated on its behalf by Bullen Healthcare Group Limited and Pharmore Plus.



BODY MATTERS

TRUSTED CARE PARTNERS

completecare
amegreen

Complete Care Amegreen



Complete Care Amegreen can support and empower you to realise your health outcomes and goals, achieve your personal ambitions and to live your life your way. Their nurse-led, affordable homeware services enable spinal cord injured people to live independently at home, take part in family life, stay in work and education, and have active and fulfilling social lives.

Complete Care Amegreen specialises in complex healthcare at home including long-term ventilation, tracheostomy care, gastrostomy, management of medication and bowel and bladder care, providing up to 24-hour care as hourly packages.

Company information

Locations

Offering support across the UK, based in Telford, Shropshire

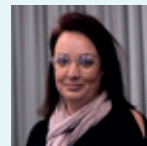
Contact details

T 0333 121 5301 W www.completecare.co.uk/what-we-do/spinal-cord-injury

“This company really understands the term ‘person-centred care’. I feel respected, listened to and treated like an equal person. I am encouraged to verbally direct my care and achieve maximum independence to achieve a great quality of life.”

C Simcock, Complete Care Amegreen client

Meet the team



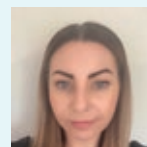
Lynsay Beckett
Head of operations

Experience: 25 years of care experience across hospital and home settings.



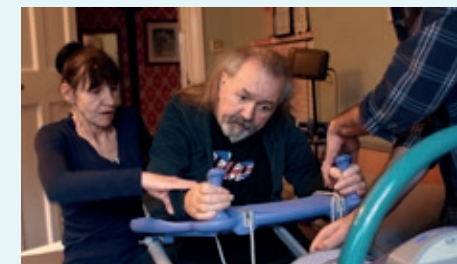
Christine Brookes
Chief nurse

Experience: 10 years in ICU; Eight years in complex care.



Jody Tierney
Care service manager

Experience: 12 years working in care, including recruitment, client manager and branch manager.



Complete Care Amegreen were amongst the first UK Care Providers to enable a ventilated client to live independently in their own home and have been supporting SCI clients for over 20 years

MORE INFO

To find out more information on our trusted partners scan the QR code to visit our website.

VISIT US



BODY MATTERS

TRUSTED CARE PARTNERS



Premium Care Solutions Ltd

Premium Care Solutions (PCS)



Premium Care Solutions (PCS) are recognised nationally for their expertise in planning and providing the very best complex care for spinal cord injured adults and young people. They have over 20 years' experience supporting SCI people to regain their independence and lead the best possible life after injury.

PCS recognises that every client is different, and each of their care packages is designed specifically for each person, with tailored 24-hour support seven days a week (or less as required) from their nurse-led care services.

Company information

Locations

Offering support across the UK, based in Kettering, Northants

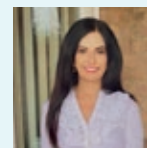
Contact details

T 01536 213680 E sia@premium-care.co.uk W www.pcs.uk.com

"We talked about being discharged from hospital and everything that would need to be in place before I could go home. PCS took all the stress away from me by sorting out my care package, which is tailored to me and delivered by carers local to where I live."

Laura, 23, C2-C6 incomplete spinal cord injury

Meet the team



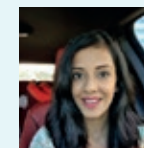
Jin Garcha
Clinical director and co-founder

Experience: 30 years' nursing: 10 in ICU, 20 setting up tailored care packages for SCI people

Areas covered: East of England, East Midlands, West Midlands, Wales

T 01536 213 681

E jgarcha@premium-care.co.uk



Neelam Kaur-Gupta
Head of business development

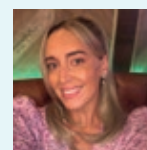
Experience: working with people with complex care needs, their care professionals and the commissioners of

care packages

Areas covered: London, South East, South West

T 07736 884 564

E nkgupta@premium-care.co.uk



Kelsey Byers
Regional manager – North

Experience: hands-on experience supporting SCI people, including ventilated clients; working with

commissioning services and case managers on hospital discharges and establishing complex care packages

Areas covered: North East, North West

T 07809 207 113

E kbuyers@premium-care.co.uk



Tailored 24-hour support seven days a week (or less as required) from PCS' nurse-led care services

MORE INFO

To find out more information on our trusted partners scan the QR code to visit our website.

VISIT US



BODY MATTERS

WORKING TOGETHER

neuro
kinex

Neurokinex



The Neurokinex programme for spinal cord injury is one of the leading activity-based rehabilitation programmes in the UK, helping you become fitter, stronger and more independent.

Whether you're looking to continue with your rehabilitation, maximise your fitness or improve your overall wellbeing, Neurokinex can create a programme unique to your needs.

Company information

Locations

Hemel Hempstead, Gatwick, Bristol

Contact details

T 0300 77 77 188

E info@neurokinex.org

W www.neurokinex.org

“The Neurokinex programme can help you adjust from the highly structured hospital routine to life back at home. The momentum you gain from having those initial six free sessions is vital to ensure ongoing rehabilitation gains.”

Damian Riley

250

The Neurokinex team carries out around 250 hours of therapy each week

GET SUPPORT

MIND MATTERS

Having a spinal cord injury is a sudden and devastating change. You may find it hard to take in what has happened and to understand what you're being told by health professionals.

Adjusting to your new life can feel daunting and overwhelming. There's no set rule about how you should respond. If you're feeling depressed, you're not alone. There is support available.

Look after your mental health

Try to follow the advice from health professionals about how to manage your injury. This will make things easier and help you feel more positive about the future. For example, establishing a bowel and bladder routine will make you feel more confident to go out.

A balanced lifestyle is also important. A spinal cord injury doesn't have to stop you from being active. Getting plenty of exercise and eating well will support your mental health.

Talk about your feelings

Coming to terms with your spinal cord injury can take time. There's a lot to get your head around, from managing your bowel routine to losing your sense of purpose. You may find yourself feeling depressed. It's when you feel persistently sad for weeks or months, rather than just a few days.

This is a natural and understandable response, and part of the grieving you'll go through as you process the loss of your ability to do many of the things you used to.

If you feel depressed for a long time or start to feel worse, do seek help. Talk to your GP about treatment options which include medication, lifestyle changes and talking therapy.

On the next page, find out how to book a call with our counselling and wellbeing manager, Ian Younghusband, who has a spinal cord injury.



2-3
in 10

Between two and three in 10 spinal cord injured people show significant signs of depression, according to the World Health Organisation

GET SUPPORT

MIND MATTERS

SIA has a unique in-house counselling service offered by trained counsellors who live with a spinal cord injury. Talking to someone who has experienced a similar journey and challenges can help provide an extra level of insight and support. Free-of-charge to anyone affected by spinal cord injury – those injured as well as their family members – the service offers support with issues



IN-HOUSE COUNSELLING

ARRANGE A CALL



To access this service and book a call with one of our counsellors:

- Scan the QR code
- Call SIA's support line on 0800 980 0501 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Ian Younghusband

Ian Younghusband is our in-house counselling and wellbeing manager. Ian has a C5 complete injury following an accident 21 years ago. He is a registered member of the British Association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) and operates within their ethical framework to ensure a safe and professional service.

“You’re not alone in how you’re feeling. Speaking to somebody who has gone through the same thing and can share similar experiences can help.”

Ian Younghusband, our counselling and wellbeing manager

SUPPORT LINE
0800 980 0501

affecting mental health and wellbeing. These can include aspects such as relationships, work, socialising and the psychological impact of living with a spinal cord injury.

We offer six, 50-minute sessions of telephone counselling, with the potential to offer ten sessions altogether.

MIND MATTERS

WORKING TOGETHER



Breathe and Recover

“Yoga sessions during my time on the ward were an essential part of my rehabilitation as the breathing techniques were beneficial for dealing with pain, stress, anxiety and confusion. Being taught to breathe properly is still useful today after returning home and coming to terms with home life.”



Breathe and Recover is based on the Living Yoga Method™. They use the power of breathwork and yoga to get the most out of the respiratory and nervous systems which govern so much of our physical and mental health. Breathing is one of the most overlooked tools after a spinal cord injury has happened that we can use to create energy and health in our systems.

Meet the team

The Breathe and Recover team is made up of Living Yoga Method trained teachers with first-hand long-term experience of working with people who have experienced trauma and specifically spinal cord injury, including a paramedic, charge nurse at a spinal rehabilitation centre and a clinical project officer and trauma-informed breathwork and yoga teacher.

Company information

Locations

Based in Southampton, delivering online group classes

Contact details

T 07743 396 551

E contact@breatheandrecover.com

W www.breatheandrecover.com



breathwork and yoga works for everyone, whatever your age

GET SUPPORT

LIFE MATTERS



In this section of your guide, we're looking at services that can support you with every aspect of leading a fulfilled life with spinal cord injury, whatever that means to you personally.

Adjusting to life with spinal cord injury – understanding and looking after your body and your mind – is the all-important foundation to leading your fulfilled life. Now you can focus on what you like to do, and how you'll go about doing it.

This section covers everything from addressing your legal needs to managing your finances, so that you can have accessible accommodation, get back to work, play sport, start a family, socialise with friends or go on holiday.

First, we'll tell you a bit more about how SIA fights for your rights to a fulfilled life. Then we'll introduce you to our trusted partners in law, finance and accessible housing. Then we'll signpost you to services in your local area that can help you get where you want to be, doing what you like to do best.

SIA advocacy team – fighting inequality and exclusion

As with other disabilities, SCI people can find themselves facing inequality and exclusion in their daily lives. Employment discrimination, poor care packages and an assumption of mental incapacity are just a few of the challenges faced by SCI people every day.

Our advocacy team has an enviable track record of success. If you need information, support or advice, or are experiencing injustice, discrimination or exclusion, then please contact us on the freephone SIA support line number from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

—  —
SUPPORT LINE
0800 980 0501
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LIFE MATTERS

FIGHTING FOR YOUR RIGHTS

As the national patient representative body, we are committed to fighting for everyone touched by spinal cord injury to receive the treatment, support and care that best meets their needs.

Just one person in every three who sustains an SCI will get care and rehabilitation at one of the UK's specialist NHS spinal cord injury centres.

We know many SCI people struggle to get the long-term care and support they need after being discharged from hospital, with funding for care often difficult to secure, even for those who need it most.

With years of advocacy and campaigning experience across an array of policy and societal challenges, our team will work hard on your behalf, challenging barriers to support and services that you have a right to access.



FIND OUT MORE



Find out more and get involved at www.spinal.co.uk/all-party-parliamentary-group/

Additionally, the daily support we offer you informs how we campaign to influence public policy, engage with politicians and decision makers and secure positive changes in health and care provision. For example, we're campaigning hard in the following areas.

Ensuring access to specialist health services for all spinal cord injured people.

Increasing capacity in the system, coupled with improved access for spinal cord injured ventilated patients.

Ending unacceptable admission delays to specialist SCI services.

Keeping the needs of SCI people high on the agenda in Parliament, by administering and working closely with the cross-party and influential All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Spinal Cord Injury.

Improving local health services, so SCI people have access to ongoing treatment and support closer to home.

LIFE MATTERS

GETTING LEGAL SUPPORT



Getting expert legal and financial advice is something we strongly recommend to anyone who has sustained a spinal cord injury. Over the next few pages, we'll introduce you to your local trusted legal partners as well as SIA's trusted financial partners.

Your local trusted legal partners

We're confident our trusted legal partners are among the most qualified and experienced legal professionals out there. Crucially they've also assisted many SCI people on the road to recovery after injury, and they know from that experience – and through their work with SIA – the unique nature of the support and advice you'll need, whether it be supporting you with a potential compensation claim or answering your general legal queries relating to life after injury.

Find out more and meet the team on pages 28 – 31.

We're confident our trusted legal partners are among the most qualified and experienced legal professionals out there.

LIFE MATTERS

MANAGING YOUR FINANCIAL SECURITY



Our trusted financial partners

We've handpicked three specialist financial advisers and investment managers who all have experience of supporting SCI people with financial matters after injury.

The support they can offer you ranges from advice on managing compensation from a legal claim or settlement, to private wealth and investment management tips, accessing disability and care benefits and assistance with setting up trusts and pensions.

They can help plan your finances to support any immediate financial needs such as adapting a house, buying a car or fitting specialist equipment in your home, alongside providing assistance with funding to support you long term.

Find out more about our financial partners on pages 32 – 34 and get in touch for your free, no-obligation consultation.

Aspire welfare benefits advice

We can also refer you to Aspire for welfare benefits advice.

Aspire's benefits advice team can help with benefit checks, completing forms and online applications and preparing evidence, as well as advocacy should you need to appeal. Tailored to provide appropriate advice and support for SCI people, the service can help you ensure you're getting all the help you're entitled to. Read more on page 35.

Need further financial advice? Contact our advocacy team

Alongside the expert advice offered by our trusted financial partners, SIA's advocacy team offers information to support you in managing your finances after injury, including advice on Disabled Facilities Grants, Access to Work and other schemes to help you get the financial support you need.

For further information, visit www.spinal.co.uk/finance/ or call 0800 980 0501.



SUPPORT LINE

0800 980 0501

LIFE MATTERS

TRUSTED LEGAL PARTNER

HIGGS^{LLP}

Higgs LLP



Higgs are committed to helping you achieve the best possible results. And securing the best financial settlement to provide security for the future. Their lawyers will meet with you or your family free of charge, either at home or in hospital, and carry out a comprehensive assessment of your claim. If you instruct them, they will act on a 'no win, no fee' basis.

Higgs work with industry-leading case managers, consultants and therapists to

support all of your needs. The advantages for their spinal injury clients include:

- a proactive approach to planning for early discharge from hospital
- an early clinical assessment of rehabilitation needs
- early access to interim payments when liability is accepted
- securing the best rehabilitation and treatment, both now and in the longer term

Company information

Locations

Based in Dudley, West Midlands; one of SIA's trusted legal partners in the West Midlands.

Contact details

T 0345 111 5050

WEBSITE



Higgs have been helping spinal cord injured clients to recover compensation and get the support they need for over 30 years

FIND OUT MORE



Meet the team



Andy Shaw

T 01384 327 200

E andy.shaw

@higgsandsons.co.uk

Andy handles a wide range of personal injury claims, has a special interest in spinal cord injury and considerable experience in dealing with catastrophic injuries.



Clare Langford

T 01384 327 198

E clare.langford

@higgsandsons.co.uk

Clare leads the clinical negligence team at Higgs LLP and has over 16 years' experience in dealing with complex claims, including spinal cord injury.



Charlotte Measures

T 01384 327303

E charlotte.measures

@higgsandsons.co.uk

Charlotte joined Higgs LLP in July 2021 and brings over 20 years' experience in handling clinical negligence claims.



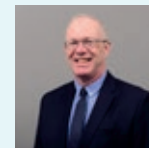
Claire Burnell

T 01384 327 193

E claire.burnell

@higgsandsons.co.uk

Claire is a Principal Associate in the personal injury department, with more than 23 years' experience handling serious injury claims, including spinal cord injury.



David Erwin

T 01384 327221

E david.erwin

@higgsandsons.co.uk

David has 25 years of wide-ranging experience in representing clients who have sustained life-changing injuries, including complex orthopaedic, psychiatric, brain and spinal injuries.



Steven Santy

T 01384 327210

E steven.santy

@higgsandsons.co.uk

Steve is a consultant in the personal injury department, with over 25 years' legal experience, and specialise in complex injury claims, including spinal cord injury.

LIFE MATTERS

TRUSTED LEGAL PARTNER

HUGH | JAMES

Hugh James



Hugh James have extensive experience in handling compensation claims for people who have sustained spinal cord injuries. Their solicitors have been consistently ranked in the top tiers by the independent legal guides, Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners and are recognised as leaders in the field of personal injury and specifically spinal cord litigation.

Their specialist solicitors can advise on the following:

- The Hugh James Emergency Fund and how it can help you

- private rehabilitation
- compensation
- interim payments while waiting for a settlement
- welfare benefits and access to additional funds e.g. charities
- employment
- wills, trusts and powers of attorney
- dealing with mortgage, credit card and loan providers
- investigating any potential insurance cover
- social services and local authority funding for care and equipment
- human rights and disability rights

Company information

Locations

Offices in Cardiff, London, Southampton, Plymouth, Manchester; one of SIA's trusted legal partners in the West Midlands and in South Wales & West of England.

Contact details

T 0808 501 6982

WEBSITE



"[Hugh James] explained the most complex issues in a straightforward manner and negotiated an outstanding settlement for us."

Mrs Y, a client

Meet the team



Cari Sowden-Taylor

T 029 2267 5875
E cari.sowden-taylor@hughjames.com

Cari represents claimants who've sustained catastrophic spinal and brain injuries.



Ciaran McCabe

T 029 2267 5886
E ciaran.mccabe@hughjames.com

Ciaran specialises in assisting those who've sustained life-changing brain injuries (adults and children) and spinal cord injuries.



Rhian Parsons

T 029 2267 5350
E rhian.parsons@hughjames.com

Rhian specialises exclusively in clinical negligence – with a focus on spinal cord medical negligence claims.



Ruth Powell

T 0808 501 6960
E ruth.powell@hughjames.com

Ruth has specialised exclusively in clinical negligence for over 25 years and is the head of the clinical negligence department. She focuses mainly on maximum severity claims including spinal cord and brain injury cases.

VISIT US



MORE INFO

To find out more information on our trusted partners scan the QR code to visit our website.

LIFE MATTERS

TRUSTED FINANCIAL PARTNER

evelyn
PARTNERS

Evelyn Partners



Evelyn Partners' team of specialist financial planners, investment managers and technical specialists are all dedicated to working with clients affected by serious injury or clinical negligence. They want you to benefit from the best possible advice, so you feel informed and in control of your financial future.

Services include:

- Lifetime financial planning
- Trusted investment services
- Periodical payment checks
- State benefit assessments

“Evelyn Partners helped me and my family move on from the accident itself and concentrate on getting on with our lives knowing that the money was being looked after the way it needed to be.”

Andrew Russell, Evelyn Partners serious injury client

Company information

Locations

UK-wide support, based in central London

Contact details

Joe Goddard-Howe - Financial planner

Region: Midlands

T 07803 183 382 E joe.goddard-howe@tilney.co.uk W www.evelyn.com



Evelyn Partners has over 180 years of experience helping clients to achieve their goals

LIFE MATTERS

TRUSTED FINANCIAL PARTNER

IM irwinmitchell

Irwin Mitchell



“They’ve given me great financial advice... Irwin Mitchell were like a breath of fresh air, looking at the entire picture. I feel much better informed and in control of my finances.”

IM client Nathalie McGloin

Irwin Mitchell have been providing financial advice to people who have sustained a spinal cord injury for over 20 years, and they've developed their services so they can give you and your family all-round financial planning advice. Their goal is to ensure that your money looks after you now, and in the future, so you can focus on what really matters.

Their financial planners understand how much of an impact a serious injury or illness can have on you or your loved one's finances. Whether you're recently injured or have had your injury for some time, they

can guide you through adapting your finances to your situation and keeping them on track, so you get stability and peace of mind.

Services include:

- Making new budgets and cutting down costs
- Benefits and tax reliefs
- Reviewing your existing investments and financial products
- Managing debt
- Releasing money from pensions
- Tax-efficient investments

Company information

Locations

UK-wide support, based in Sheffield

Contact details

Steve Balmer - Financial planner

West Midlands and the South West

T 07802 869 976 E steven.balmer@irwinmitchell.com W www.irwinmitchell.com/wealth-management



Irwin Mitchell builds long-term relationships with their clients – 99% of their clients stay with them

LIFE MATTERS

TRUSTED FINANCIAL PARTNER



Adroit Financial Planning



Adroit's financial consultants are recognised throughout the legal industry as experts in advising injured clients. They've also advised Government on the structuring of personal injury awards and several members of the Adroit team form part of an expert panel that regularly advise and serve the personal injury legal community.

80
125

The Adroit team has around 80 years' experience in personal injury and over 125 years' experience in financial planning and wealth management

Company information

Locations

UK-wide support, based in Manchester

Contact details

T 0800 884 0006 E enquiries@adroitfp.co.uk

W www.adroitfp.co.uk/financial-planning-services

"Adroit gave us great ideas and investment opportunities and we're now planning for, and looking forward to, the rest of our lives ahead."

Mr and Mrs B, Adroit Clients, Manchester

LIFE MATTERS

WORKING TOGETHER



Aspire



Many people who've sustained a spinal cord injury find themselves discharged somewhere totally unsuitable, such as an un-adapted house or a care home. This robs people of their independence at a time when they should be ready to rebuild their lives.

The Aspire accessible housing programme offers an alternative. It provides homes located around the UK for use on a short-term basis while a permanent housing solution is found. It might be that your own property is being adapted, or you're waiting for your local authority to find you something suitable. Meanwhile, in an Aspire house you can be back

among friends and family, getting on with your life. Get in touch direct at housing@aspire.org.uk.

For information and advice about accommodation and adaptations to your home following a spinal cord injury, you can also contact Aspire's free-of-charge housing advice service at housingadvice@aspire.org.uk

Aspire welfare benefits advice

Aspire also has a free-of-charge, dedicated welfare benefits advice service. Find out more on page 27 of this guide, or get in touch at welfarebenefits@aspire.org.uk

Company information

Locations

UK-wide support, based in Stanmore, North London

Contact details

T 020 8954 5759

W www.aspire.org.uk

Aspire's benefits advice team supported almost 300 clients last year, helping them claim a total of £560,000.

LIFE MATTERS

SUPPORT
FOR LIFE

Whether you're fighting to keep a job, starting a family or tackling new health challenges, your needs will evolve and change over the years. We'll be there to find you the right people and partners to support you, whatever stage you're at.

Your local SIA support coordinator is here for you at any point. See pages 6 – 7 of this guide for their contact details. Or visit our website to get in touch at www.spinal.co.uk/find-support-now/

Employment and careers

Being treated unequally because of your spinal injury at work can feel degrading, unjust and humiliating. Most importantly, it should not happen. The Equality Act 2020 for disability protects you from any discrimination because of your injury. Find advice and support at www.spinal.co.uk/employment.

4.1m

Over 4.1 million disabled people in the UK are employed – so there's no reason why you can't be part of the workforce too



SIGN UP NOW

**STAY CONNECTED**

Follow SIA on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram to stay up to date with news from us, our trusted partners and other SIA members.

When you join us as a member free of charge, you can choose to receive our monthly news update The Voice. It features news, stories, reports and special offers especially relevant to the SCI community. Scan the QR to sign up now.

Finding community groups in your area

Local community groups are a great way of connecting to other SCI people, their friends and families and they offer regular opportunities to socialise. To find a group near you, contact your local support coordinator.

Social networks

There are also SCI-related private Facebook groups you can join. Find ours at www.facebook.com/groups/supportnetworkteam and also check out the SCI Owners Club Facebook group. It has around 2,000 members and is open to every SCI person. These groups are an excellent way of connecting and a great source of information and support.

FACEBOOK



Scan the QR code to find our Facebook group.

LIFE MATTERS

SUPPORT
FOR LIFE**Driving after injury**

Getting back behind the wheel helps with regaining independence and makes daily living much easier. We have a wealth of knowledge on driving with a spinal cord injury – from the practicalities of adaptive vehicles to registering your disability. You can also find out more about driving and getting out and about at www.motability.co.uk/

Public transport

By law, it's a requirement for all public transport to be fully accessible to wheelchair users. For example, a ramp and priority spaces on buses. On trains, someone to assist you on and off, typically with a ramp. Find out more at www.spinal.co.uk/transport/

Sporting sessions and getting active

Many spinal cord injured people play sport recreationally and competitively. Speak to your support coordinator to discover what sports you can get involved in locally and further afield. We also refer members to Back Up for wheelchair skills and other activity courses.

Disability-friendly venues

Check out websites like www.accessibleGO.com and www.AccessAble.co.uk for help with planning trips out. And read more on our website at www.spinal.co.uk/accessibility/ or contact our advocacy team for advice and support with access issues on 0800 980 0501

Holidays

Going on holiday after an injury can be daunting, but it's worth making the effort. You're bound to have questions about travelling and we can help. We also feature travel inspiration from SIA members in our quarterly magazine FORWARD. See page 38 for details of how to subscribe.

SCAN TO BOOK



Scan the QR to see our holiday guide to help you plan your travels.

GET IN TOUCH TODAY

If you have questions about any of the topics we've listed on these pages – or any other aspect of life with a spinal cord injury – please don't hesitate to get in touch. Your local SIA support coordinator will always be happy to help. And our support line can inform, advise and signpost you to services that could help you lead your fulfilled life.

Call us on the freephone number 0800 980 0501, Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR FORWARD MAGAZINE TODAY

Regular features include:

news • health • daily living • research • interviews



**SUBSCRIBE
ONLINE TODAY**



For more information, email Klaudia Ochman, our member engagement officer, at k.ochman@spinal.co.uk or call 01908 604191 (ext:166)



www.spinal.co.uk/subscribe-forward

Registered Charity No 1054097

GET INFORMED IN YOUR WORDS

“I just wanted to say thank you SIA, for helping me find – not just the words – but the courage to ask for help and to not just accept that things are what they are.”

SCI person

“The patient met with the support coordinator from SIA on his own and didn't give me very much information about the content of the meeting. However, there appeared to be a marked difference to his approach to and engagement with his rehab sessions afterwards.”

Healthcare professional

“My son can now see some light at the end of the very dark tunnel. We wish we'd been told about you sooner. The open and honest conversations we've had have been so helpful. We know our boy will be in a better place soon and with the help on offer he will do well.”

Parent of newly injured person



GET INFORMED

IN YOUR WORDS



My name's Tina. My lovely dad, David, was a fit, active 83-year-old. Laying decking, directing traffic at Scouts' fundraisers, president of the local classic car club. Until blood cancer began attacking his kidneys and his bones.

Having walked into hospital for a few tests – he was discharged in a wheelchair, paralysed from the chest down, with a T4 spinal fracture.

When someone you love comes home with a spinal cord injury, it can feel a bit like being handed a new-born baby. That same huge sense of responsibility. The same overwhelming fear you'll do something wrong. Except, as a parent, you've got family, friends, books you can refer to. You know where to go for help. We were lost – had no idea where to turn to help our dad. Until we found SIA.

"Teresa was, quite literally, a lifesaver. She referred us to our local SIA support coordinator. It was such a relief to hear him say 'I've got an injury very much like your dad's'".

Tina



We were lost – had no idea where to turn to help our dad. Until we found SIA.

Compassionate, personalised support – from experts and peers

Teresa – on the charity's support line – was my first port of call. She was, quite literally, a lifesaver. She referred us to our local support coordinator. It was such a relief to hear him say "I've got an injury very much like your dad's". And to see that he was living his life. And everything I mentioned – catheter, pressure ulcers, wheelchair, mental health – he said yes, SIA can help with that. Can you imagine the relief as I reeled off my long list of worries and fears – and he checked off each one?

Emergency care plans put together by SCI specialists

For example, Dad had to go back into hospital with suspected septicaemia. With help from SIA's clinical specialists, we'd made an emergency care plan. It's just a paper form, downloaded from SIA's website, but it contains all the information about Dad's injury, his medication, the risks of autonomic dysreflexia (AD) and skin damage. And I can't tell you the peace of mind I got from handing it to the paramedics who picked him up that night. The feedback from A&E was – "this is brilliant."

As well as creating an emergency care plan with our clinical specialists (see page 8), Tina and David used several SIA services, including:

- training for carers (page 9)
- CHC funding advice and advocacy (page 10)
- counselling (page 22)

Get in touch with your local support coordinator (pages 6 - 7) or call us on 0800 980 0501 to access any or all of these services.

VISIT US



GET INVOLVED

CAN YOU HELP OTHERS AFFECTED BY SPINAL CORD INJURY?

GET INVOLVED



With your support we can help more people rebuild their lives after spinal cord injury. There are loads of ways to get involved – all of them can change lives.

- Make a one-off or regular donation.
- Support SIA as you celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, weddings and anniversaries.
- Fundraise for us by taking part in an event or hosting your own.
- Encourage your club or workplace to select SIA as their charity of the year.
- Make a gift in memory of a loved one so that their lifetime achievements can live on.
- Remember SIA in your will and help spinal cord injured people for generations to come.



How your support helps

£10 could help towards the cost of a telephone consultation with one of our clinical specialists on topics such as bowel and bladder care. Just one 30-minute conversation could save a life.

£20 could help towards the cost of a support network session. Families tell us they wouldn't have coped without this positive insight into life after injury.



“SIA members say raising funds has helped with their rehab. Setting goals, getting active, meeting people and feeling good.”

Jo Neale, head of investments & partnerships

Help us change more lives

To make a donation call 01908 604191 (option 3), visit www.spinal.co.uk/donate or email fundraising@spinal.co.uk

GET INFORMED

CHANGE LIVES

Remember us in your will

Gifts in wills have helped us become the national charity we are today, providing life-saving clinical, practical and emotional support to thousands of spinal cord injured people every year.

Your gift will help us keep growing, reaching more people with vital information, advocacy, support, confidence and hope to adapt to life after injury.

To find out more about leaving a gift in your will, contact supportercare@spinal.co.uk or visit www.spinal.co.uk/wills

Take part in an event

We have a wide range of accessible events on our website and can offer support with training as well as advice and inspiration to help make most challenges accessible. And if you can't find something that takes your fancy, we can help you create and organise your own event instead!

Volunteer for SIA

We're actively recruiting for support network volunteers – people with lived experience of spinal cord injury who can support others, providing practical advice and a positive insight into life after injury.

Complete our volunteering form if you'd like to be considered for this role – or if there's another way you'd like to volunteer that isn't currently listed.



How to fundraise for us

1. Visit www.spinal.co.uk/get-involved for information about events, fundraising ideas and to download a fundraising pack.
2. Choose what you're going to do for your fundraising event.
3. Contact SIA's fundraising team or talk to your local support coordinator for advice.
4. Set up an online giving page – you can find top tips on how to do this in the fundraising pack.

Then you're all set to start sharing your fundraising story.

Want more info?

Scan the QR to complete our volunteering form.

GET INVOLVED



Get in touch

Our fundraising team is always happy to talk about any fundraising ideas. They'd love to hear from you at fundraising@spinal.co.uk or 01908 604 191

SIGN UP TODAY

SCAN TO JOIN



Sign up today – join as a member for free and get a lifetime of support – whenever you need it.

www.spinal.co.uk/joinus



“I would highly recommend ANY SCI person to join SIA. The advice and support my wife and I received was most helpful and informative. THANK YOU, SIA, for being so supportive, professional and empowering.”

SIA member

spinal.co.uk

Spinal Injuries Association

SIA House, 2 Trueman Place, Milton Keynes, MK6 2HH

Tel: 01908 604 191

Freephone support line: 0800 980 0501

sia@spinal.co.uk

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