Sibs
For brothers and sisters
of disabled children and adults

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New Report: "Coming second all the time" Life in lockdown for siblings of disabled children

Sibs supports siblings who have a brother or sister with a disability, SEND or long-term health condition. This report is the result of a survey undertaken with parents in May 2020 to find out more about the experiences of siblings of disabled children, under the age of 18, during lockdown. 876 parents responded. Key statistics are:

75% of parents said their sibling child's mental health had worsened
50% of siblings are providing more care in lockdown
1 in 3 siblings are feeling isolated and missing support from family and friends

"*Growing up with a disabled brother or sister brings unique joys and challenges. Siblings' needs are rarely heard or met by educational and healthcare professionals. The least-studied familial relationship before and during the lockdown is the sibling relationship. This survey shows the huge amounts of labour of love and the great deal of time that siblings dedicate to assist their disabled brother or sister. Most importantly the survey highlights the lack of support for struggles that they face such as loneliness and lack of respite time*.

It is important to hear from parents about how siblings have been coping with the lockdown to enable us to support families better." Dr Georgia Pavlopoulou, University College London Researcher and Sibs' Trustee

Clare Kassa, Chief Executive at Sibs says "*We were hearing from siblings and their families about the enormous pressure they were facing during lockdown. These results show the huge impact the current situation is having on young siblings. Many are providing care and support, others are navigating challenging situations at home and some are being hurt by their brothers and sisters too. Siblings as young as 7 are having to home school themselves because parents are having to spend their time meeting the complex needs of their disabled child, often without any external support. We want the important role that siblings play, especially during the Covid-19 crisis, to be recognised and to ensure that siblings receive the mental health support they need in the months and years ahead."*

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Sibs charity

- Sibs www.sibs.org.uk is the only UK charity dedicated to supporting siblings who have grown up with or are growing up with a disabled brother or sister.
- Children and young people growing up with a disabled brother or sister, often get less attention from parents and have more worries and responsibilities than their peers.
- There are an estimated half a million young siblings growing up in the UK.
- Sibs provides direct support for young siblings through YoungSibs www.youngsibs.org.uk an online support and information service for children and young people aged 7-17 who have a brother who is disabled, has special educational needs (SEND) or a serious long-term condition.
- Sibs relies on the support of Trusts and Foundations and the generosity of individual donations to fund its work – Sibs receives no statutory funding.
- Sibs works towards a vision of a world in which siblings of disabled children and adults are seen, understood and valued.

Full report available: https://www.sibs.org.uk/supporting-young-siblings/parents/how-has-lockdown-affected-your-sibling-child-children/

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