A young boy with dark hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and black pants, is seated in a wheelchair. He is smiling and looking down at his right hand, which is resting on the large rear wheel of the wheelchair. The wheelchair has a silver frame and black tires. The background is a warm, orange-toned wall. In the top left corner, there is a circular graphic with a blue and orange border containing white text. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark grey rectangular area containing the 'back up' logo and tagline.

The
young
person's guide
to **life** after
spinal cord
injury

back up

Transforming lives after spinal cord injury

Hello

At Back Up we know that a spinal cord injury can be hard for you and for those around you, but we believe it shouldn't stop you living life to the full. That's why we are here.

By reading on, you will hear how children and young people have felt after their injury and how Back Up has made a difference to their lives. Learning new wheelchair skills, pushing your boundaries on activity courses, talking to someone who has been there and feeling happier at school are all the things we can help you with. We are here for your family too.

Wheelchair skills training

Do you want to feel more confident in your chair, learn how to go down kerbs or use your chin control? We run training sessions for children and young people at spinal centres, hospitals and on our courses. Wheelchair skills trainers, who are spinal cord injured themselves, teach you these skills.



I learnt how to do a back wheel balance without falling and how to go over rough surfaces. My tippers are still off!"

Mia, 9, incomplete



It's much better now that I can use my chin control. I am more independent. I'm not getting pushed anywhere by anyone."

Joe, 17, injured at C1

Telephone support

If you are happy for us to contact you, we would like to stay in touch. Tim, Michael, Andy A or Andy M, who are all spinal cord injured, can give you a call every couple of months or a few times through the year to see how you are getting on.



**Bolt
Burdon
Kemp**

Spinal
Injury
Lawyers

Thank you to Bolt Burdon Kemp who kindly sponsor our wheelchair skills

Talking to someone in your situation

We know that after an injury there's a lot to deal with. Thoughts of the future, returning home and to school or relationships with your family and friends.

We can put you in touch with a mentor — someone who has been in a similar situation to you, whether that's injury level or age. You can talk to them every week for a couple of months about anything you are struggling with as Joe, 17 years old, explains:

“ Everything changed when I had my spinal cord injury. I couldn't move at all and needed help to breathe. My day to day routine was not good. Sleep. Watch TV. Try not to get upset. Back Up put me in touch with Matt who had been through a similar experience. He lives on his own, has a good job, and has been skiing. Seeing him gave me and my family hope. I realised that I could do something with my life.”

We can match your parents, carer or sibling with another relative of a child with a spinal cord injury who can offer a listening ear.



Courses

Do you fancy trying exciting new activities like canoeing, climbing, abseiling and wheelchair skills, while meeting new friends? On a Back Up course you can do all this and more, whatever your level of injury. It is a safe, fun and supportive environment to take part in some wheelchair sports and games.

When Ashleigh was 14 she fell from her horse, injuring her spinal cord at T6. At 16 she went on the activity course in the Lake District and doing so made her realise what is possible in life:

After my injury I went through depression. I self harmed. Everything turned upside down. I was angry at myself. I was dependent on everyone. It made me feel useless. Then I went on a Back Up course. It helped me loads. Lots of people were there who were injured longer than I had been. They had been in my position but had made progress and were a lot different. It gave me hope that everything would be OK. Now life feels more normal. It doesn't seem different any more. Back Up was so essential in that. They helped so much."





Back to school

It is your right to be included in everything at school.

We understand it can be scary going back to school and there is a lot to think about. We are here to support you, your family and your teachers to help make it easier. People with spinal cord injury can talk to your teachers and friends to prepare for your return.

Ben (right) contracted Transverse Myelitis when he was 5. He is injured at T2-T8 and is able to walk. He was happy when Back Up visited his school:

“ I’m now less embarrassed about people seeing my foot strap and knowing about my illness because Ella wasn’t worried about people seeing her in a wheelchair.”

We can help you feel more confident at school, make sure your teachers listen to you more and talk to you about what is possible in life.



“ We talked about school, trips, independence and personal care. Kevin was really good. He was backing Mum up as things have been difficult with talking to people and getting stuff done. I feel the meeting went well.”

Callum, 11, injured at C8

“ Back Up visiting my school has made things better. The school know what to do with me now. They didn’t know what to do when I fell out of my chair. They would panic, but now they tip my chair back and help me get in. The school listen to me more now. They understand that things can be hard.”

Kaitlan, 15, injured at C2-C3

Volunteering with Back Up

Often it is best to be supported by someone like you. That's why young people with spinal cord injury help others at Back Up.

When Yasmin, 15, went on our activity course she met Lauren, our young wheelchair skills trainer:

“I found that Lauren was the perfect person to talk about my experience and any problems that could happen in the future because of my disability.”

“Back Up made me more independent by teaching me wheelchair skills. Once you have those skills, they never go. I wanted to give back so now I teach skills to other young people.”
Ashleigh, 16, injured at T6, young wheelchair skills trainer

If you are thinking of taking on a new challenge, learning new skills and helping other young people to get the most out of life contact **Beth** today on **020 8875 1805** or **beth@backuptrust.org.uk**

We want to hear from you! What can Back Up do better for children and young people with spinal cord injury?

Back Up is here to help you get the most out of life. Our partners at Aspire offer practical services which we recommend. Aspire can help with questions about housing and assistive technology. They run a free Welfare Benefits Advice Service and Aspire Grants can help you buy equipment like a wheelchair. With your permission we will put you in touch with Aspire. **www.aspire.org.uk**


Aspire



Are you a
young person
with a spinal
cord injury?

Back Up can help with:

- Wheelchair skills
- Finding someone to talk to
- Going on courses
- Getting back to school

 **Back Up has given me so much confidence and independence. Without them I would not be the person I am today."**

Lauren, 16, injured at C5

Contact **Beth** today to find out more on **020 8875 1805** or **beth@backuptrust.org.uk**

Find us at:

-  backuptrust.org.uk
-  facebook.com/backuptrust
-  [@backuptrust](https://twitter.com/backuptrust)
-  [backupinstapics](https://www.instagram.com/backupinstapics)

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