

EARLY YEARS SEND

FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS



Sendias Bathnes offers free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support to children and young people between the ages of 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers. This leaflet answers some of the frequently asked questions we receive from parents who have a young child (0-5 years) with SEND.

Our website has lots of information and resources plus details on how to contact us:

sendiasbathnes.org.uk

Every Local Authority is required to publish information about the services and provisions available across education, health and social care to young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is called a SEND Local Offer.

Bath and North East Somerset's SEND Local Offer can be found on the Live Well B&NES website:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

[BANES SEND local offer video](#)

Some of the answers in this leaflet contain useful links to the B&NES Local Offer.

What are the early years?

The term “early years” covers the early years of a child’s development, from birth to five years old.

What are early years settings?

Early years settings can include childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools, holiday playschemes and childcare in your own home.

Contents

[4. General questions about SEND](#)

[6. Support for Parents and Carers](#)

[13. Questions about Nursery/Pre-school](#)

[21. Groups and Activities for Young Children](#)

[23. Questions about Professional Services](#)

[28. Questions about School](#)

[32. Questions about Short Breaks](#)

[34. Useful websites](#)

General questions about SEND

What does SEND mean?

SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN):

A child has special educational needs if both parts of the following 'test' are met:

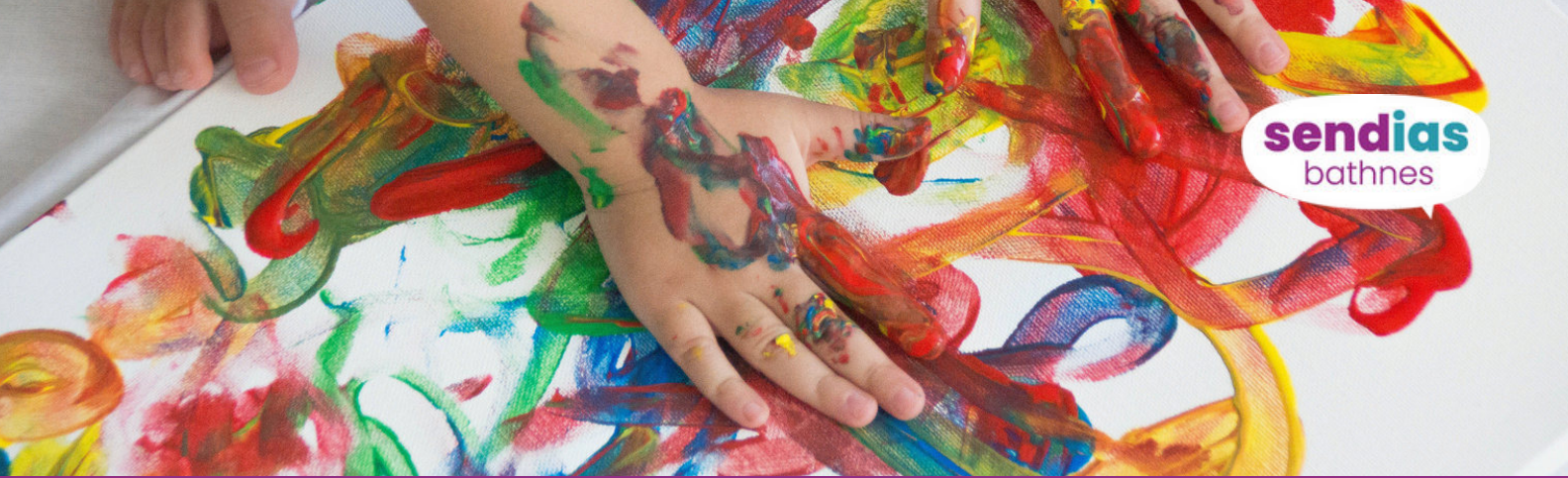
1. They have a learning difficulty or disability. This means:

- **they have 'significantly greater difficulty' in learning than most of the other children in their age group or class; or**
- **they have a disability which prevents them making use of what's on offer in a mainstream school.**

AND

2. Their learning difficulty or disability means they need educational or training support that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children of the same age in a mainstream setting.





Special educational provision:

Special educational provision is provision that is different from or additional to that normally available to pupils or students of the same age, which is designed to help children and young people with SEN or disabilities to access and engage in education or study.

What is a disability?

This is defined in the the The Equality Act 2010.

Someone has a disability if they have a:

- physical or mental impairment
- which has a substantial (more than minor or trivial) and
- long-term (lasting more than one year or likely to last more than one year)
- adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Not all children with a disability will have special educational needs and not all children with special educational needs will have a disability but there is often some overlap between the groups.

ipsea.org.uk

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

Support for Parents and Carers

Who is a parent carer?

A parent carer is anyone who looks after a child with additional needs.

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk



I'm feeling isolated and/or overwhelmed – what support is there for parents and carers?

Across B&NES, there are a variety of groups and services that provide support for parents and carers, offering coffee mornings, telephone support lines, information sessions, stay and play sessions and social media groups.

BANES Parent Carer Forum

is a group run by parent carers of children and young people from birth to 25 years living in BANES. They hold events such as coffee mornings and pub gatherings where parent carers can meet up and have the opportunity to talk, share experiences, ask questions and make new friends. They also have a helpline and a Facebook page.

banespcf.co.uk

Butterflies Haven

provides support for parents of children and teenagers who are living with autism or any developmental delay, whether diagnosed or not. They hold stay and play sessions and youth groups, where parents can come along and meet other families.

butterflies-haven.com

BANES Carers' Centre

is a local charity whose mission is to enable people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them to others, and by helping them to take control of their caring role.

banescarerscentre.org.uk

Bristol Autism Support

is a charity which provides support, advice and information to parents and carers of autistic children, diagnosed or suspected, in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and BANES. They have a Facebook group, coffee mornings / meet ups, a Dads group, helpline, webinars and information sessions.

bristolautismsupport.org

The Specialist Autism Support Service (SASS)

supports autistic children and young adults up to the age of 25. The young people they support must have a diagnosis of Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder. They have a telephone support line (a diagnosis is not needed to call this), run training sessions and hold regular coffee mornings.

fossewayschool.co.uk

Southside

Southside supports individuals and families living in Bath and North East Somerset to make positive changes in their lives.

south-side.org.uk

Contact

is a national charity for families with disabled children. As well as providing information, advice and support, they run a free helpline and offer a Listening Ear support service

contact.org

Please visit the BANES SEND Local Offer for further details about support groups:
livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

Are there parental courses that I can do?

Children's Centres run groups to support child and family development and home-based family support:
livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

The Step-by-Step parenting programme is a 6-week programme designed to support parents/carers of a child with additional needs.

Step into School is a 4-week course for parents or carers of a child with special educational needs or disabilities and is due to start mainstream school.

Theraplay Home Learning is a play-based intervention which supports a child and carer to form positive and healthy attachments and relationships.

The Specialist Autism Support Service (SASS) provides training for parents/carers on a variety of subjects connected with autism.
fossewayschool.co.uk

Bristol Autism Support put on a range of webinars and other informational sessions. They run a monthly All About Autism session, and sessions on supporting distress, food issues, sleep, supporting non-verbal children and more. Visit their What's On page for more details.
bristolautismsupport.org

Ambitious about Autism has an online parent community and delivers workshops.
ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

Sendias Bathnes deliver online training courses for families throughout the year on a range of SEND topics.
sendiasbathnes.org.uk/events

Can social care services be of help?

If your child is disabled, they may qualify for services from the local authority's children's social care department that could benefit the whole family. This might include short breaks, help with a child's personal care or adaptations to a home.

You can ask for an assessment to be completed to work out whether services are needed and what these are.

You may also be eligible to receive services as a carer and can ask for a carers assessment to be completed.

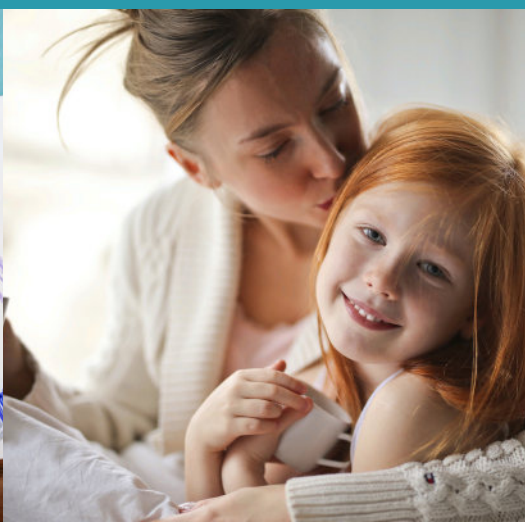
To request an assessment, you can contact the duty social worker at Bathnes Disabled Children's Team

Contact details for the disabled children's team can be found by visiting the link below:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

Further information about social care can be found here:

contact.org.uk



What is the Disabled Children's Register and the Rainbow Resource Scheme?

As part of the Children's Act 1989, all Local Authorities in the UK are required to keep a voluntary register of children and young people from birth to 18 years old who live in their area and have a disability or special educational need. This is known as the Children's Disability Register. In Bath and North East Somerset, you can join the register by signing up to the Rainbow Resource Scheme.

The Local Authority offer a Rainbow Resource card to all children and young people aged between 0–25 years, with a Special Educational Need and/ or Disability (SEND) or an additional need, living across Bath and North East Somerset. The card may entitle you to access an existing concession on offer at venues across B&NES and the wider area.

Rainbow Resource Scheme

Am I entitled to any benefits?

You may be able to claim Disability Living Allowance for your child, which is non-means tested. You may also be able to claim Carer's Allowance for yourself as a carer and/or other benefits. There is an online benefits calculator for information about eligibility on the UK Government website. Further advice can be sought from the Citizens Advice Bureau or Contact. Please see details on the websites below:

gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children

gov.uk/browse/benefits/help-for-carers

citizensadvicebanes.org.uk

contact.org/help-for-families/information-advice-service/benefits-financial-help



Questions about Nursery, Pre-school and Childminders

How do I choose a nursery or pre-school for my child?

There are a number of things to consider when choosing the right childcare setting and the link below may help you to think about this:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

A list of nurseries and pre-schools in BANES can be found on the Live Well website:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk



Who do I speak to if I have concerns about my child's development / behaviour?

For any concerns about your child, speak to the staff at your child's setting. Every early years setting which receives government funding will have a SENCO which stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator. Arrange to have a meeting with your child's keyworker and /or SENCO to discuss any concerns about your child's development.

There are so many different people involved, I feel really confused.

The link below provides some information about support services and teams you may encounter, as they support children aged 0-5 years with SEND around their early years education.

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk



What areas of need are there?

The SEND Code of Practice sets out four broad areas of need for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). They are designed to be used as a basis for understanding and supporting a child's individual needs. Many children will have needs that fall within several areas. Settings should be flexible in understanding the whole child, using whichever parts of the different areas are relevant.

The areas of need are:

Cognition and learning

which may include mild learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) where children may require varying support to access their learning as well as specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia

Social, emotional, and mental health

which may include a range of mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders or physical symptoms which are medically unexplained – this could include behaviour you may find challenging, as well as conditions such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder

Sensory and or physical needs

which may include a physical disability (PD) which hinders ability to access standard provision – this may also include visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI)

Communication and interaction

which may include difficulties speaking, understanding or communicating as well as autism spectrum conditions

What can my child's nursery or pre-school do to help?

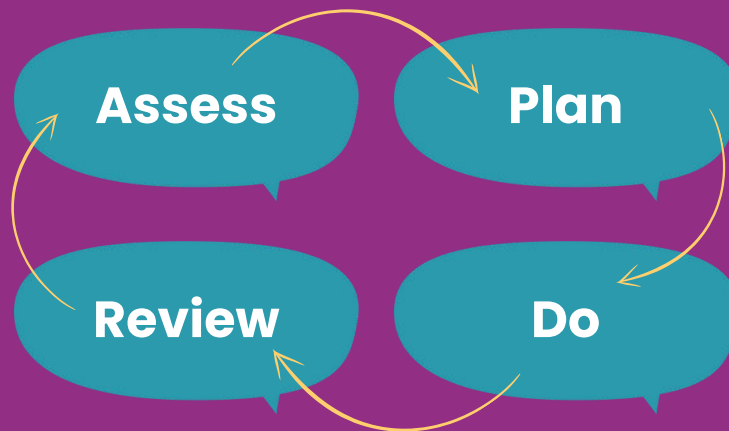
All children learn and develop at different speeds and staff will put in place measures to address this. However, if your child has special educational needs, they may need more individualised support. This is called **SEN support** and is provision that is additional to or different from the support generally given to most of the other children of the same age. If staff at your child's pre-school, or nursery have identified that you child has special educational needs they must tell you and must work in partnership with you to support your child's needs.

To understand your child's needs and work out what support, equipment, resources or staffing is needed to support your child, the graduated approach must be used by the setting.



What is the graduated approach?

The graduated approach involves a four-stage process, based on a cycle of:



The nursery, should:

- **ASSES** what support your child needs
- **PLAN** the support
- **DO** or implement the support set out in the plan and then
- **REVIEW** how well it's working.

Information about your child's needs, support and goals should be written down in a plan called a SEN support plan.

More detailed information about SEN support can be found in the link below:

councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

What is a SEN Support Plan?

A SEN Support plan may also be called a 'my plan', a learning plan or an individual Education Plan (IEP). The plan should set out the outcomes that are sought, the interventions and support to be put in place, the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, and a clear date for review

What is an EHC Plan?

An Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. It explains the extra help that is required to meet those needs and how that help will support the child or young person to achieve what they want to in their life.

EHC plans are for children and young people whose special educational needs (SEN) require more help than would normally be provided in nursery, at college or through SEN support at school.

The Local Authority, (Bath & North East Somerset Council), has a duty to make sure that the support detailed in the EHC plan is secured and delivered.

sendiasbathnes.org.uk/ehc-plans

ipsea.org.uk

You or your child's nursery or school can apply for an EHCP at any time and the process for this is detailed here:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk



What if my child behaves differently at home compared to Nursery?

It is not uncommon for children to behave differently at their early years setting than at home and it is good to make your child's keyworker and/or the SENCO aware of this. Keeping a diary of your child's behaviour can be useful for these discussions.

What is early intervention?

Early intervention refers to the process of providing support and services to children and their families as early as possible when developmental delays or other issues are identified. The aim is to address these concerns before they become more significant problems. Early intervention is based on the understanding that the earlier a child receives help, the better their chances are for achieving optimal development and overall well-being.

What if I am unhappy about how my child is being supported in their nursery or pre-school?

If your child has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability and you are unhappy with the support your child is receiving, you should speak to the nursery staff, explain your concerns and see if matters can be resolved. If after a meeting, your concerns have not been resolved, you may want to seek advice.

Sendias Bathnes can offer support around this:

sendiasbathnes.org.uk

What is BOP?

Bath Opportunity Pre School (BOP) is a specialist setting providing early years education and therapeutic services to children with additional needs from Bath and North East Somerset. Please visit their website for further information:

firststepsbath.org.uk



Groups and Activities for young children

What groups might be suitable for my child?

Please visit the BANES Local Offer website for Information about groups and activities for children and young people with SEND:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

Support groups and services for children and young people with SEND can be found here:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

BANES libraries offer sensory spaces, sensory explorer bags and quieter spaces for families.

bathnes.gov.uk/library

Youth Connect South West run Southside Youth Hub which has a community cafe and soft play area for under 10's. This is free to use, they just ask that you buy something from the cafe.

They also offer room and facility hire, including a sensory room.

youthconnectsouthwest.org.uk

What do Children's Centres offer?

Children's Centres offer a range of activities and support to help all parents with children aged 0-4 years. They provide support for families with children who have special educational needs and disabilities or where there are concerns around a child's development or behaviour. Please visit the link below to find out more:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

What is portage home learning?

A ten-to-twelve-week home programme, for children with special needs and disabilities, that offers one to one support in your home with a Portage trained Family Support Worker. Your child will be supported through play activities to learn and develop.

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk



Questions about Professional Services

Who do I speak to about my child's sleep / eating / toileting / speech / behaviour?

Your GP, Health Visitor or nursery staff may be able to offer advice, and they can also refer on to the relevant department or professional.

Please refer to the following link for more information:

bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk

How do I get a Paediatrician appointment? What will this involve?

Your GP, Health Visitor or nursery can refer you to the community paediatrics team. Initially the paediatrician will ask lots of questions about your child's development from birth to date and any particular behaviours you have noticed. Please visit the HCRG Care Group (BANES Community Health Services) website to find out more:

bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk

What is Speech and Language therapy?

Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) help children and young people between the ages of birth and 18 years who have communication difficulties that affect their ability to engage in daily life. They evaluate, diagnose and treat children and young people with communication and swallowing problems. A therapy session with your child will often just look like playing. Read more here:

bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk

What does an Occupational Therapist do?

Children's Occupational Therapists (OT) work with children and young people who have a functional difficulty with activities of daily living. They look at areas including self-care, nursery/school activities and play, with the aim of ensuring that your child is as independent as they can be. The assessments and therapy will often just look like games/playing with toys.

[children's occupational therapy](#)

What is the neurodevelopmental pathway?

This is an assessment service for children and young people who are showing possible signs of autism and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Find out more here:

bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk

What if my child needs specialist equipment or clothing?

If your child requires certain aids or equipment, such as a mobility aid or tools to help with eating and drinking, you can find out more information about this in the link below:

[contact.org.uk](https://www.contact.org.uk)

What is an Educational Psychologist?

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) provides psychological advice to schools, early years settings and other providers, for children and young people with complex educational needs.

They become involved with children and young people between 0 and 25 years of age through the Education, Health and Care needs assessment process and, when appropriate, for those with Education, Health and Care Plans.

[livewell.bathnes.gov.uk](https://www.livewell.bathnes.gov.uk)



What is ELSA?

ELSA stands for Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. ELSAs help children to meet their potential socially, emotionally and academically. They understand the barriers to learning that some children and young people might have and can help them with this.

ELSAs can support children's emotional development and help them to cope with life's challenges. They will also help children to try and find solutions to problems they might be facing.

What is thrive?

The THRIVE Approach is where practitioners assess and then support a child's emotional health, wellbeing and social skills.

Activities might include playing in the sand, cooking, painting, exploring difficult situations through role-play or comic strips, or projects focusing on the child's own interests. Parents are encouraged to do some of the activities at home with their child.

Speak to your child's setting to find out if they have a THRIVE programme.

thriveapproach.com

How do I get a diagnosis for my child?

You can ask your GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse for a referral to a Paediatrician or any other service.

There is more information about the Community Paediatric service here:

bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk

ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/autism

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/attention-deficit

What if I don't receive a diagnosis for my child?

If your child does not receive a formal diagnosis, they can still access support and nurseries and schools will work to meet needs. You may wish to liaise closely with professionals who have been involved so far.

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/autism-assessment-and-diagnosis



Questions about School

When do I need to think about school for my child?

What is the process for applying?

Children in England usually start school in the September after their fourth birthday.

The deadline for applying for a mainstream primary school is 15 January, for admission in September of the following year.

Applications can be made online through Bath and North East Somerset Council's website:

[**bathnes.gov.uk**](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk)

If you want to submit a paper application instead, you can request one from the council.

Each year a helpful booklet is published by the local authority giving you all the information you need.

[**bathnes.gov.uk**](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk)

To find out about deferred and delayed entry:

[**www.bathnes.gov.uk/deferred-delayed-and-accelerated-school-admissions**](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/deferred-delayed-and-accelerated-school-admissions)

How do I apply for a school when my child has an EHCP?

If you have applied for an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan needs assessment but have not yet been issued with a final plan, you should make sure that you submit an application through the normal school admissions procedure. If your child already has an EHC plan, at the point of issue or in the annual review which takes place before moving onto school, you should be asked about your preferred choice of school. The local authority will then consult with this school to see if it can meet your child's needs. The local authority may consult with several schools and may wish to consult with mainstream and specialist schools.

What is the difference between a mainstream and specialist school?

At a mainstream school, your child will meet children with and without additional needs. They will be taught the national curriculum. Mainstream schools may offer a wider range of academic subjects.

Specialist schools have expertise in teaching disabled children and/or children with special educational needs. They will usually have smaller class sizes and more specialist equipment than mainstream schools. The focus of learning may be on practical life skills rather than academic attainment.

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can go to a mainstream or a specialist setting. To go to a specialist setting, a child must have an EHCP.

Where do I find information about schools?

All schools must publish a SEN information report, which contains key information about the support and adjustments they offer. The SEN information reports for schools in Bath and North East Somerset can be found through the local Offer, Livewell:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

For lists of schools the following links can be used:

bathnes.gov.uk/find-school

get-information-schools.service.gov.uk



What is the Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disability Inclusion Panel (SENDIP)?

The Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disability Inclusion Panel (SENDIP) supports children in their early years by arranging and implementing a package of support for a child. Settings or other professionals can make a request for certain types of funding to the panel, including transition funding to support a child's move from a nursery or early years setting into school.

The link below explains more about this and any professional who wishes to make an application on behalf of your child will discuss this with you:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

What is SASS?



SASS is the Specialist Autism Support Service. It has been commissioned by Bath and North East Somerset Council to support autistic children and young adults up to the age of 25. The young people they support must have a diagnosis of autism and have a B&NES home address.

SASS can support autistic children and young people, their parent carers and any professionals working with them. To find out more about how they can support and to access their resources visit their website at:

[Specialist Autism Support Service](#)



Questions about Short Breaks

What is a short break / respite?

A short break is when children and young people with additional needs or disability participate in activities that they enjoy in their leisure time (outside school hours), for example playing sport, spending time with friends, joining a club or spending a few days away from home. Children and young people are eligible for short breaks if they have a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.” (Source: The Equality Act 2010). Find out more here:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

Holiday playschemes for children and young people with SEND are co-ordinated by Bath Area Play Project and run during the school holidays at locations across Bath & North East Somerset. For more information and how to book please visit:

livewell.bathnes.gov.uk

What are Direct Payments?

A direct payment is an amount of money paid to the parents or carers of a disabled child, by the Local Authority. Direct payments enable parents/carers to purchase and arrange their own support to meet their child's needs. For example, they may use direct payments to employ a Personal Assistant to support a child to access the community, or to provide care in the home. Read more about direct payments here:

[contact.org.uk](https://www.contact.org.uk)

www.ipsea.org.uk

Contact the BANES Disabled Children's Team to find out more:

liveswell.bathnes.gov.uk



Useful websites

Sendias Bathnes

Live Well Banes

Banes Parent Carer forum

Dingley's Promise

Contact

**Council for
Disabled Children**

IPSEA

HCRG

