

WINSTON'S WISH WW

Giving hope to grieving children



 AVIVA

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Introduction to charity

Introducing Winston's Wish

At Aviva, we believe in providing expert support when it matters most, and sometimes it's about **more than just the financial protection**. Whilst it's something most of us don't want to think about, the fact remains that somewhere in the UK **a child loses a parent every 20 minutes**¹ - at least one in every classroom¹. It's one of the toughest things a child will ever have to go through.

Unsupported grief can result in some negative consequences - 41% of young offenders experienced bereavement as a child¹, along with the impact not talking about their feelings can have on trust, relationships and self-esteem as they grow up.

All this makes providing specialist help all the more important for a child's mental and physical wellbeing.

That's why we've partnered with Winston's Wish, one of the UK's leading child bereavement charities.

Since 1992, they've been helping children who've lost a parent or sibling by **listening to their grief, acting when they're needed and knowing what to say when it's time to talk**. Their services support 62,484 young people face the future with hope in 2022 to 2023².

¹ Childhood Bereavement Network, (CBN), November 2022

² Winston's Wish, Facts and Figures 2022/23

Key 2022/2023 Winston's Wish figures²

62,484

Children and young people supported through bereavement services, training and education initiatives.

1,595

Children and young people supported over live chat.

97%

of surveyed service users said they would recommend Winston's Wish to others.

[Read the full report here](#)



Meet Adam and Billy

Case study



Eleven-year-old twin boys, Adam and Billy were supported by Winston's Wish after the suicide of their older sister Lilly, age 17. Lilly died by jumping in front of a train.

The boys' dad contacted the Helpline as he was concerned that they were bottling up their feelings, displaying violent behaviour towards each other and blaming themselves for their sister's death.

A Winston's Wish Bereavement Support Worker started support sessions with the whole family via Zoom, initially to gain an understanding of what the twins understood about Lilly's death. Over several sessions, mum and dad felt able to share the underlying factors that surrounded Lilly's death. This included her ongoing struggle with mental health and how she had made a previous suicide attempt the year before.

This helped the boys see that it was part of a bigger story than their sister ending her life, not just down to the one family argument that took place immediately before she died.

Both boys had been involved in a lot of conflict with friends and peers at school and also with one another. Further sessions focussed on exploring feelings and thoughts and how they can manifest in our bodies, such as anger, guilt, sadness and frustration.

This had the effect of normalising these complicated emotions, and helping the family to break down barriers and understand each other's grieving better. The outcomes of this session then informed further work on coping strategies and how they can look after themselves and each other.

“Thank you for talking to us both about our sister, it's brought us closer as a family and it's been a really big help to hear how each other are feeling, it's been really important.”

“You have helped us go beyond thinking about how Lilly died to being able to think about who she was as a person.”

Winston's Wish real life case study. Names have been changed and imagery shown is for illustration purposes only.

The boys each received a Memory Box from Winston's Wish in the post each to fill, as the final sessions focussed on their special memories of Lilly and celebrating her life. Items that may be used to fill the box might include photos, writing out special memories, a favourite item of clothing, perfume or aftershave, and voice and video recordings and other personal items.

After the sessions, the two boys had a better understanding of what had happened, and how to talk about the fact that their sister had died by suicide without feeling ashamed or guilty.

Although they often experienced similar thoughts and feelings throughout their lives as twins, they were both coping with their grief very differently. Adam was able to sleep better as the sessions went on, and Billy was doing better at school. They understood that they were not to blame for their sister's death and nor were their parents. They also identified some positive outlets and ways to express their grief and they were having fewer physical arguments with each other.

They started to be more considerate to each other's feelings. By the end of the work, the family were now able to enter and spend time in Lilly's bedroom although this was still very difficult.

“I want my brother to know, really know you know? That I am here for him, and that he can just tell me if he is having a tough time.”

Support on offer

How Winston's Wish support bereaved children

Helpline

The **Winston's Wish helpline** is the **first point of call for children in need of support** and it's important to remember that reaching out won't always be from the young person themselves. More often than not it's a close friend or family member who calls in, but other people (like doctors, teachers and insurance professionals) also get in touch looking for advice on how to help a child who's grieving.

Everyone who we protect at Aviva Protection UK Limited has access to the support on offer from Winston's Wish, through our exclusive dedicated support line.

Call: 0333 002 0416

Lines are open 9.00am–5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Think of **the team on the end of the phone as a sounding board** – there to help and guide you through a difficult conversation. They're experts in supporting bereaved children, and will:

- 1 Listen carefully and make practical suggestions
- 2 Offer support and information
- 3 Discuss options on the best way to support the bereaved child

Sometimes another way of getting in touch can feel more helpful, especially if a child's older and wants to talk to Winston's Wish themselves.

Anyone who's in need of support in dealing with a young person's bereavement can also seek advice through the **ASK email service, online chat function or 24/7 crisis messenger**. There's also **further training on offer for professionals** who find themselves working with grieving children on a regular basis.



Where next

We know there might be times where people need some more specialist support. And the good news is Winston's Wish are here to help, whether it's **additional advice** on answering difficult questions, **suggesting strategies** to cope with difficult behaviour or just **extra reassurance** following an initial call.

The Helpline team work with families to identify what approach is going to be most useful, either **working with parents** to help them support their children or **offering support directly to the grieving child** or young person.



Meet Eddie

Aged 13

Case study



Eddie was just two years old when his mum Liz died of cervical cancer. His dad, Barry explains in his own words:

“I first called Winston’s Wish before Liz died. We decided to phone the Helpline together to get some advice on how to help Eddie as he would grow up.”

Eddie is now 13 and Barry has used the Winston’s Wish Helpline and resources multiple times throughout the years.

“As a single parent, it’s reassuring to know that Winston’s Wish is there for us.”

Eddie started secondary school a few years back and I could sense he was struggling. He was excited but also anxious. He was worried that he would have to tell all these new people that he didn’t have a mum and that she had died.”

“As he gets older Eddie has all the questions but sometimes I just don’t have the answers. That’s when Winston’s Wish is a huge help. They can’t bring Liz back but they have reassured him and helped him better understand his feelings and how to cope with them. All of a sudden you sometimes feel overwhelmed by the situation – and they can be a life raft in a whole sea of emotion.”

“When I haven’t known where to turn, Winston’s Wish have always been there...”

Winston's Wish real life case study. Names have been changed and imagery shown is for illustration purposes only.

Final thoughts

WINSTON'S WISH

There are some **key points in the financial protection journey** to make people aware of the help on offer through Winston's Wish. Identifying these moments is important, whether it's right at the **beginning of the process** and you're talking about who a policy is going to provide for or you're further down the line at **claims stage** and there's a bereaved child involved.

If you need more information or resources on the best way to support a child who's grieving, please visit winstonswish.org.



Thank you for reading.

Winston's Wish is a national charity that is accessible to anyone regardless of your insurance policy. The service is available even if your policy ends.



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