

# A guide to our services for adults 2010-11



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"A Back-Up course was one of the best achievements of my life" [page 6](#)



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## To people with spinal cord injury and families,

At The Back-Up Trust we know a spinal cord injury can be devastating, but we believe that it shouldn't prevent anyone from getting the most out of life.

Back-Up is for everyone affected by spinal cord injury, regardless of age, level of injury, or background. We are here for family members too. Our services include mentoring, wheelchair skills training and activity courses as well as support in getting back to work or school after an injury. All our services help to build confidence and independence.

We are here to help you get your life back and achieve your goals – whether these are about family, work, lifestyle, social life, travel, or simply to feel positive about the future.

This booklet tells you about our services. Why not get in touch to see what we can offer you – or simply to chat with someone who has first hand experience of life with spinal cord injury.

"Back-Up gave me the impulsion to say, 'Yes I can do it.' My life would have been empty without it. I gained life knowledge and have much more confidence in my ongoing rehab."  
Brian (age 43)

Please don't hesitate to get in touch today on: 020 8875 1805 or email: [admin@backuptrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@backuptrust.org.uk).



Stef Cormack, Services Manager

# Mentoring: A problem shared is a problem halved

When you find yourself unsure of how to move forward or what to expect next in life, getting support from someone you can relate to can help you rediscover a sense of direction.

Talking to someone with experience of life after spinal cord injury can help you overcome obstacles or achieve your goals.

Through our accredited mentoring service, we will link you up with a trained volunteer mentor who is the same gender and a similar age and injury level to you. Our mentors come from all walks of life and we can often link you with a spinal cord injured peer whose life experiences are relevant for you – for example if you want specifically to talk to someone about starting a family or going back to education or work.



**"This was the best support I have had since my accident in 1998. My mentor, Clare, really understood how I felt, the pain, the daily challenges of how to cope, and how empowering it is to be able to focus on the future rather than the present. I have a lot to work on, but I'm tackling every challenge positively now."** (Rudo, age 46 from London)



**"My first impression of my mentor, Dominic, was that he was a genuinely good bloke. We spoke weekly over the phone and via email. I got to know what life has been like for him since his injury and he was able to help me break down what I saw as problems into smaller parts to tackle."**

**"Dominic inspired me with his honesty. I realised no one is going to help me achieve the things I want to unless I try myself. He helped change my attitude. Mentoring was basically the kick up the backside I needed. I've gone from being sulky with no get-up-and-go, to quite bloody minded and determined. I don't tend to let things stand in my way anymore."** (Darren, age 42 from Derbyshire)



Call our mentoring team today on 020 8875 1805 or email [mentoring@backuptrust.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@backuptrust.org.uk) for more details

# Partner and Parent Mentoring Service: Support for your loved ones

## Calling all relatives of people with spinal cord injury...

At Back-Up we recognise that spinal cord injury affects the whole family. In 2010 we interviewed a number of parents and partners to find out what their own experiences have been like coming to terms and adjusting to life after the spinal cord injury of their partner or family member. Many respondents felt there was a lack of specific services to support their needs post-injury and felt they missed out by not having the opportunity to speak to other partners and parents who had adjusted well.

In order to fill this gap, we are developing a new service, which starts in late 2010, to support partners and parents of people with spinal cord injury and complement our existing mentoring service.



**I felt very much on my own. I had day to day things to deal with: work, running a house, looking after our dog, while my husband lay in bed not knowing fully what his life would be like. It would have been really nice to have someone else to turn to.**



**Just speaking to a fellow parent who has had to look after their spinally injured child, chatting just for a few hours, you can learn vast amounts of tips and knowledge that you were totally unaware of.**

**Feel like you need some guidance on accessing relevant information or services for your family? Could you benefit from having someone to listen to you and give input as needed? Being introduced to an experienced mentor parent or partner could help you feel more positive about what the future may hold for you and your family.**

If you're a parent or partner of someone that has sustained a spinal cord injury and would be interested in speaking to one of our trained mentor parents or partners, please call our mentoring team on: 020 8875 1805 or email: [mentoring@backuptrust.org.uk](mailto:mentoring@backuptrust.org.uk)

# Wheelchair Skills Training: Enabling you to lead a more independent life

Getting on the bus, going to the local shops or the pub, playing with your children or grandchildren in the park, or simply safely carrying a cup of tea from the kitchen to your living room – that’s what wheelchair skills training is all about.



80-year old Henry, who developed a tumour on his spinal cord in 2008, explains how wheelchair skills training transformed his life. He said:

“The wheelchair I was first given was one of the older, heavy types – I suppose because of my age, it was probably felt that I would be pushed about. But I always insisted on pushing myself.

“I never would have thought that I had it in me to get down ramps and up kerbs on my own, so it was great. It made me feel more confident and younger.

“In fact I did so well that the Back-Up team recommended me for a lightweight ‘quickie’ wheelchair. I hadn’t even realised that there were lighter chairs that made it easier to push yourself. The wheelchair skills I learned and my new chair have helped me maintain my independence.”



“ It made me realise there is still a lot to learn, but it made me comfortable to know there is a way.

A typical session at a hospital will cover pushing technique, getting over obstacles, tackling kerbs and thresholds, back-wheel balancing and may also cover steps and transfers if time and equipment allows. The sessions are always tailored to the group and we run both manual and power chair training sessions. All our wheelchair skills trainers have a spinal cord injury and can draw from their own experiences to find the best way to teach you.



“ The session took away my fears about falling out of my chair and it was good to learn a proper pushing technique.

**If you are interested in more intensive wheelchair skills training to further develop your skills and confidence, then see pages 6-8 for details of our courses.**

For more information about wheelchair skills, please call the Outreach and Support team on 020 8875 1805.

## Meet our Outreach and Support Team



Mel was in a car accident in 2000 resulting in a complete injury at C7.

After initially being reluctant, she did a ski course with Back-Up. She then stayed involved as a volunteer group leader and mentor and joined the staff team in 2008. "Working at Back-Up has given me the opportunity to meet so many new and wonderful people". When she's not working Mel loves to travel.



Michael broke his neck at C6 playing rugby in 2000. After this he toured the

world playing Wheelchair Rugby for Great Britain. Later he had a son and settled down to family life. He was keen to get back to work and started volunteering. He joined the Back-Up staff team in 2008. "When I first got involved with Back-Up, I learnt loads of new skills and it's great to be able to pass this knowledge on to others".



Stuart has a T5/6 injury from a car accident in 1993. "For the first 6 years

after my accident I didn't really do anything until someone from Back-Up talked me into doing a course and I haven't looked back since". Stuart later got involved with Back-Up as a volunteer wheelchair skills trainer before joining the staff team in 2006. He is now married and enjoys playing basketball and getting out on his handbike.

# Telephone Support Service: It's good to talk

The Back-Up Trust offers a regular telephone contact service which is available to anyone with a spinal cord injury.

Our Outreach and Support Team – Mel, Michael and Stuart plus a team of volunteers – regularly visit each of the 11 spinal centres around the UK to meet patients, lead wheelchair skills training and patient education sessions. You will have the opportunity to give us your contact details at these sessions and one of the team will stay in touch on a regular basis which could be once a month or just a couple of calls through the year, depending on your needs.



I was injured five years ago and found out about Back-Up last year.

I was finding it hard to get used to my situation. Thank you for staying in touch – I found it really helpful. Mel was warm, sincere and not patronising. I felt listened to. It helped me understand that I'm not alone.



It has been really helpful talking to Stuart because he is in the same situation as me. It has given me the confidence to get out more. I first met him at wheelchair skills, but the follow-up calls since leaving Sheffield have been great.

This service offers support and a sympathetic ear during the often challenging transition from hospital back to home and beyond. All of the team are spinal cord injured and can share their experiences on any subject such as travel, driving, bladder management, work or leisure. They can also tell you more about Back-Up's mentoring service and our range of courses and can direct you to other organisations or resources which may help.

# Courses: rediscover a zest for life

**Back-Up has been running courses for nearly 25 years, offering people the opportunity to get “back up and out there” following a spinal cord injury.**

All our courses aim to increase confidence, motivation and independence in a supportive environment. Back-Up courses are for people of all ages, backgrounds and all levels of injury. If you want to make changes in your life, whether by meeting new people, learning new skills, adopting a different lifestyle, or developing a more positive outlook about the future, then we have a course to suit you.

## Which course is right for you?

All our courses provide the perfect introduction to managing away from home, and boosting your confidence in getting around independently. Many of the courses offer the chance to develop your wheelchair skills in a challenging environment. The type of course you are interested in will depend on what you are hoping to achieve. Our programme includes water skiing, scuba diving, skiing, and multi-activity. But there is plenty on offer for the less sporty among you too. Our City Challenge course in Edinburgh combines cultural and social activities with the chance to improve your wheelchair skills and use public transport in one of the most beautiful but inaccessible cities in the UK, while Back-Up to Work is for you if you are considering your employment options. If you want to unlock your creativity and find a new way of seeing the world then the new pilot design training course with the Royal Society of Arts might be for you. Look out too for the return of our drama course in 2012.

## Give us a call

Why not give the team a call to chat through the options – we can support you to work out which course might suit you best. Our course places are popular and places are limited, so we do give priority to people who haven't been on a course before, or who have the most potential to benefit from the course. If you are applying for a second course, please give us a call to discuss what you are hoping to achieve.

• 100% of respondents from 2009 courses would recommend Back-Up to a friend

• 100% of course participants achieved their personal aims in 2009

We do ask participants to make a contribution towards the cost of their course space if possible. Please give us a call to chat about this: we never turn anyone away from a course due to lack of funds.



I began to realise that I could still enjoy life and have fun even if I was in a wheelchair.

On the course your age, gender, mobility level or whether you were injured or not didn't matter. Everyone learnt new things about themselves. *Yasmin, injured at T5, city challenge participant 2009.*



It was one of the best achievements of my life. It gave me the confidence to push my boundaries. *Andy, injured at C4/5, sailing participant 2009.*

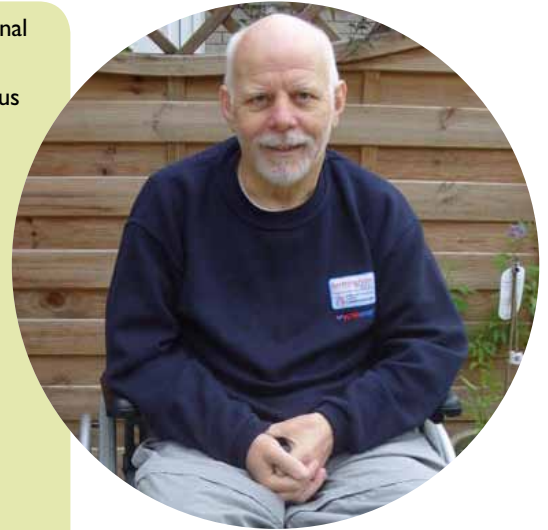


Terry, 59, has a T5 level spinal cord injury and went on a multi-activity course with us earlier this year. Here he explains how Back-Up changed his life:

**“Before the course I didn’t think I could do activities like abseiling, camping and swimming, but trying new things has changed my approach to life. Now I think about how to overcome challenges instead of avoiding them – things like going off kerbs in my wheelchair rather than having to push further to a drop-down kerb. The wheelchair skills I developed on the course have inspired me to get a new wheelchair and I feel more confident getting out and about.”**

**“Before the course I would feel tired and go to bed really early. Now I am staying up later and I’m getting out and about and socialising more. I am trying more activities locally. Although I have a lot of challenges with my health, I feel very positive about the future.”**

**“I recommend people of all ages go on a course. It’s a good confidence booster for older people as well as younger ones. Before the course I would have just watched others enjoy themselves doing the activities but now I know I can join in!”**



Joanne, 25, has a T4 level injury and since her injury has also lost her sight. She attended the Work Skills course, now called The Back-Up to Work course.

**“I was struggling to get into the work system and felt stuck in a rut. I wanted to meet other people with spinal cord injury too.”**

**“I found out on the course what I was worth and it helped me to realise what I am good at.”**

Joanne has grown in confidence since the course. She has realised a passion for developing a career in media and broadcasting and has presented a two-hour radio show on a local community station. She said:

**“Before the Work Skills course I would never have actively applied for any courses, I now know how to write a good application and have enhanced my CV with all the work experience I have done.”**

Jo has since attended a water ski course with Back-Up. She said:

**“The water ski course was another challenge – a great way to meet more people with spinal cord injury and an interesting hobby to put on my CV. I can’t thank Back-Up enough.”**



# Back-Up Adult Courses Calendar 2010/11

<b>November 2010</b>	Tuesday 2nd – Thursday 4th <b>NEW!</b> <b>Creative Design Training Course</b> (Run by RSA supported by Back-Up), London
	Tuesday 9th – Thursday 11th <b>Back-Up to Work Course</b> , London
<b>January 2011</b>	Saturday 8th – Sunday 16th <b>Ski Course</b> , Sweden
	Saturday 15th – Sunday 24th <b>Ski Course</b> , Sweden
<b>March 2011</b>	Saturday 5th – Monday 14th <b>Ski Course</b> , Colorado
<b>May 2011</b>	Sunday 8th – Sunday 15th <b>Scuba Diving Course</b> , Sharm El Sheikh
	TBC <b>Water Ski Taster Day</b> , Heron Lake, Staines
<b>June 2011</b>	TBC <b>Multi-Activity Course</b> , Exmoor
	Saturday 25th – Saturday 2nd July <b>Multi-Activity Course</b> , Lake District
<b>July 2011</b>	TBC <b>Water Ski Course</b> , Heron Lake, Staines
<b>August 2011</b>	Saturday 13th – Saturday 20th <b>Sailing Course</b> , Lake District
<b>September 2011</b>	Saturday 3rd – Saturday 10th <b>Multi-Activity Course</b> , Lake District
	TBC <b>City Challenge Course</b> , Edinburgh
<b>October 2011</b>	TBC <b>Multi-Activity Weekend Course</b> , Exmoor

All dates are subject to confirmation



## HOW TO APPLY

We have spaces for participants, volunteer buddies, nurses and P.A.'s.

To apply for a course give the Courses Team a call on: 020 8875 1805, email: [courses@backuptrust.org.uk](mailto:courses@backuptrust.org.uk) or visit our website and click "apply online" to download an application form.

If you are applying for a course you have done with Back-Up before, please give us a call to chat about what you hope to achieve. We hope to see you in 2011!

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