

Winston's Wish is the leading childhood bereavement charity in the UK, helping children and young people rebuild their lives after the death of their mum, dad, brother or sister, and enabling them to face the future with confidence and hope.

Throughout Gloucestershire, Winston's Wish run a unique bereavement support program called SWITCH. The program is aimed at children aged 8-14 who have suffered a close family bereavement which is having a negative effect on their behaviour. The bereavement may not be recent but may still be having an impact on the child. The SWITCH program offers family work, individual work for children and their carers and group work. We end the program with a celebration day. The aim of SWITCH is to provide children and families with the opportunity to work through their experience with qualified professionals and to help them make sense of their emotions and feelings, meet other people in similar situations and provide them with coping strategy to help them reach their full potential.

SWITCH has been running in Gloucestershire now for three years and feedback from both children and their carers has been very positive.

Feedback from a mother after the SWITCH program:

She's like a different girl. I can't explain it – it's like she has grown up. She's excellent. I think being able to talk about her feelings and listen to the others and what they do when they get one on them has really helped her. She still gets grumpy, but now takes herself off to her room and listens to music and when she's calmer, then I go and talk to her!

We would like to reach as many of these children and families as possible in Gloucestershire. If you or you know a child or family who would benefit from the SWITCH program or would like any further information, please contact Sheila Elliott, Family Program Lead for SWITCH: selliott@winstonswish.org.uk / switch@winstonswish.org.uk / or phone the office on 01242 515157 and ask to speak to myself or a member of the SWITCH team.

For further information about other services Winston's Wish can provide for children who have suffered a bereavement, please go to our website www.winstonswish.org.uk