



Family Action's Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Welcome to our December 2025 Newsletter.

It is important to remember that Christmas, and the build up to Christmas, may have to be managed quite carefully for our neurodivergent children so they get the most out of the festive season. December is a month where good communication between schools and parents of neurodivergent children is crucial. Given the right information at the right time, parents can help to prepare children for the inevitable changes to the school timetable due to parties, Christmas lunches and rehearsals and this is beneficial not just for the children but for the school also. If you have not had any information from your school yet, don't be afraid to ask for it.

And in the same way, it is really useful to think about how well you have communicated to your child or young person about what will be happening at home over Christmas. Who is visiting your home? Will you be travelling to visit relatives? Who will be sitting round the table on Christmas Day? When will they be able to open their presents? Give them all the information they need to feel safe about this hectic time of year.



We have been looking back at old past Christmas editions of this newsletter to collate some of the best advice about preparing for the things which this month of December is likely to throw at you. Planning ahead can help to make Christmas more about peace and goodwill and less about anxiety and meltdowns.

All of us in Family Action's Autism and ADHD Support Service wish you and your family a very happy festive season, however you choose to celebrate it.

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Welcome**
- **December Drop Ins**
- **Christmas is Coming.....whether you are ready or not!**
- **Plan Bee**
- **Puffins**
- **Other News**
- **Norfolk & Waveney NHS Integrated Care**

- **Family Action Website and FamilyLine**
- **About our Service - contact details**

Just as every child is unique, every family's situation is different. We in the Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service are not health professionals but we do speak to many families with children of differing needs. Some of the information contained in this newsletter is anecdotal and some from respected websites. We hope you find the following interesting and helpful.

Our Drop In Support Groups



Our drop-in groups are friendly and informal. Come along, have a tea or coffee, meet other parents in your area. And members of our team will be there to offer advice, support and signposting.

We are running a reduced schedule of drop-ins in December because of the school holidays and just because you are all so busy. Our team in the East have been able to secure some gifts from Family Action's Christmas Toy Appeal, so even more reason to join our drop-ins in Lowestoft and Gorleston this month.

Full service will be restored in January!

Click to enlarge each card.



Christmas Toy Appeal & Lowestoft Drop-In December 2025

Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service are pleased to invite you to our Drop-In Support Group session. This month held in conjunction with the Christmas Toy Appeal.

There will be gifts available for all children.

To ensure that they receive an age-appropriate gift, please register your child/children with us beforehand - see our contact details below.

As usual you can come and join us at any time. We will be there to welcome you, to help answer any questions and support in the way you need - whether that's giving advice, sharing resources or signposting to other services.

**No diagnosis or booking required.
Registration needed for gifts only.**

✉ gorleston@family-action.org.uk

☎ 01493 650220



The Kirkley Family Hub
Kirkley Street
Lowestoft
NR33 0LU



Thursday
4th December 2025
10:00am - 11:30am



family-action.org.uk

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Christmas Toy Appeal & Gorleston Drop-In December 2025

Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service are pleased to invite you to our Drop-In Support Group session. This month held in conjunction with the Christmas Toy Appeal.

There will be gifts available for all children.

To ensure that they receive an age-appropriate gift, please register your child/children with us beforehand - see our contact details below.

As usual you can come and join us at any time. We will be there to welcome you, to help answer any questions and support in the way you need - whether that's giving advice, sharing resources or signposting to other services.

**No diagnosis or booking required.
Registration needed for gifts only.**

✉ gorleston@family-action.org.uk

☎ 01493 650220



Gorleston Library
Family Action Office
Gorleston-on-Sea
NR31 6SG



Wednesday
3rd December 2025
10:00am - 11:30am



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Swaffham Drop-In Group

DECEMBER 2025

Come and join us at our friendly support group.

Family Action Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service. We support families of children with neurodevelopmental differences.

If you have personal experiences with a child with neurodiversity or are waiting for a diagnosis, come along to our 'drop In' session to meet other parents and carers with similar experiences. Speak to our Family Support Workers, who are always on hand to offer support and answer any questions.

No diagnosis or booking required.

✉ norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

☎ 01603 972589



Costa Coffee (Upstairs)
Market Place
Swaffham, PE37 7AB



Wednesday
10th December 2025
9:30am – 11:00am



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A new drop-in for King's Lynn in January - in partnership with Family Hubs





King's Lynn Drop-In Group JANUARY 2026



Come and join us at our friendly support group, in partnership with Family Hubs.

Family Action Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service supports families of children with neurodevelopmental differences.

If you have personal experiences with a child with neurodivergence or are waiting for a diagnosis, come along to our 'drop in' session to meet other parents and carers with similar experiences. Speak to our Family Support Workers, who are always on hand to offer support and answer any questions.

No diagnosis or booking required.

 norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

 01603 972589

New Venue:

 The Activity Room
St. Augustine's
Healthy Living Centre
Columbia Way
King's Lynn
PE30 2LB
-To enter: Please press
the door buzzer
labelled Family Hub

 Tuesday
13th January 2026

9:30am - 11:00am



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Christmas is Coming!



Like many things in life, preparation and planning are key to managing Christmas when you have a child with autism or ADHD. For those with traits of autism it can be really difficult when routines are thrown out of the window, family and friends drop in unexpectedly, you are under pressure to be more adventurous about what you will eat, you will probably be asked to socialise and almost certainly to say something nice about the gifts you receive, even if they are not quite right.

For those with traits of ADHD the whole build up to Christmas will push a lot of buttons. School routines are swept aside for parties and plays and craft activities, more unstructured times can lead to more opportunities to find yourself in trouble for something and the

knowledge that some of those enticing looking gifts under the tree are for you can be just too much for an impulsive child to resist.

You know your child or young person better than anyone else, so who better to think about what aspects of Christmas will be difficult for them and to take some simple steps to avoid difficulties. This is not about cancelling Christmas, especially when you have other children to think about, but about making some reasonable adjustments to make it both fun and predictable for your neurodivergent child. Think about all of the things which will be filling up their 'bucket' and some things you can do to make holes in that bucket. Here are just some ideas:

Plan visits by friends or family in advance rather than allowing them to just 'pop round' and try to put a time frame on visits.

If you are visiting family, keep the visits short, stick to the agreed times and ask them if they can have a quiet space available for your child if they need it.

As soon as any visits have been arranged, get them onto your child's visual timetable.

If Christmas day has been busy with lots of family involved, perhaps plan a very quiet Boxing Day to allow some recovery time.

Try to stick to routines around bath times, bed times, mealtimes and so on as much as you can to reduce anxiety and to make things a bit easier for you when the festive period is over.

Some families opt for a 'one-day Christmas' with lights and tinsel and other decorations up for one day only.

Or they limit those decorations to one room only so that the rest of the house is a Christmas free zone.

Before you start putting up the Christmas decorations, it may be useful to look at photographs of the house from previous years to help prepare your child and to allow them to talk about aspects of Christmas they found difficult.

One small present a day in the run up to Christmas can be worthwhile for children who cannot contain their excitement.

Write some social stories for reading together in the run up to Christmas to help your child with things they might find difficult such as saying thank you even if they do not like a gift or understanding that they will not win every time they play a board game.

Rein in the Father Christmas talk, he can be quite a scary figure for many children. They may still be keeping one eye on the chimney months after Christmas.

Does Christmas dinner have to be turkey? Think about which foods will cause least stress. What is important is eating together and being happy. Who says chicken nuggets dipped in cranberry sauce isn't festive if it works for your child? Christmas is a time when

anxiety is on the rise and feelings of being slightly out of control. No wonder they want to at least be in control of what they put in their mouth.

And think about whether pulling crackers with a loud bang.....really needs to be part of your Christmas? A joke, a hat and a few sweets or a small toy can easily be wrapped up in bit of tissue paper and tied with a bow. Less scary and definitely cheaper. Or start saving the inner tube from your toilet rolls now, fill and wrap.



Think generally about the sensory onslaught of Christmas lights, scents, music, tinsel, noise and extra people and make sure your child or young person knows they have access to a quiet space or ear defenders or that the lights can be switched off for a while to give them a break.

Take a week to decorate the tree with each member of the family hanging just one or two decorations each day.



Christmas fun – go for a night time drive to look at other people’s Christmas lights and decorations from the quiet safety of the car.

Have some time away from Christmas excitement. Plan walks in the park or feeding the ducks at the local pond, baking together, arts and crafts or whatever normally makes holes in their bucket.

Presents can be difficult for some children either because of the uncertainty and surprise or because ripping off the paper can challenge their fine motor skills. Try wrapping loosely in tissue paper, wrapping in see-through cellophane, putting a picture of the gift on the outside of the parcel, leaving some presents unwrapped or opening just a couple of presents a day over the whole Christmas period.

Some parents tell us that it is useful to show an anxious child that you have bought exactly the item they are fixating on before you wrap it up. They can then relax, knowing you got it right.

And don't be disappointed if your child doesn't show excitement about gifts in the way you expect. Remember that they may have difficulty understanding that you do not already know how they feel about the gift, and that they need to show you.

Find out about autism-friendly events. Norwich Theatre Royal has a 'relaxed' production of its pantomime, Cinderella on Friday 2nd Jan at 5pm and a Sensory Adapted Performance on Monday 29th December at 6pm. Book these [online](#).

King's Lynn Corn Exchange has a 'relaxed' performance of Jack and the Beanstalk on Tuesday 30th December at 5:30. You can book online or ring 01553 764864.



Have a look at the National Autistic Society's - [Christmas Tips for Autistic People and Their Families](#).

December in School



Schools 'do' Christmas in such a full on way that it can be difficult with children with a range of additional needs. You know your own child's differences, so think for a moment about:

- All the last-minute changes to routine and timetables.
- Decorations everywhere, changing the look of classrooms and dinner halls, and possibly feeling quite oppressive and overwhelming to some children..
- The pressure to perform in a school Christmas performance of some kind.
- Dressing up in what are sometimes scratchy, musty costumes and coping in a crowded hall for rehearsals.
- The number of craft activities which all seem to include GLITTER.
- School discos, parties, nativity plays and carol services.
- Possible 'treats' such as a trip to a pantomime.
- The complete stranger in a red suit and a scary beard who wants to shake your hand.
- The school Christmas dinner and the pressure to join in with this.
- Increasingly excited children who will be louder and more hyperactive than usual.

It is a lot to cope with and can feel quite overwhelming. If this is worrying your child, or worrying you, do feel that you can approach the school and make them aware of your concerns. The school may be able to help with:

- Regular updates about changes which will be happening in school so that you can help to prepare your child.
- Clear and updated visual timetables in class so your child knows what is happening.
- Social stories about the school play or Santa's visit for example. They are quick and easy to write and a copy can be provided also for use at home so that you can reinforce what the school is doing.

- Preparation and repetition about any changes which are happening to allow them to feel safe about these.-
- Escape routes from the sensory overload. Ask the school to be aware of lights and loud music and the affect this may have on your child. Check that there are safe, calm and quiet spaces to go, even if it is just a blanket thrown over a table to create a den.
- Choices of materials for crafts - your child might prefer to make a Christmas tree out of Lego when others are using glue and glitter which sticks to hands in an unpleasant way. And do they have to take part in every one of these activities?
- A role in the school play or nativity which is acceptable to your child. If standing on the stage is too difficult, they could be a prompter, a set changer, a lighting engineer, show parents to their seats or hand out programmes.....and be credited in the programme! But it should not be *presumed* they cannot manage a speaking role. Just ask children what they can do.
- If eating is an issue, school can be clear that there is no pressure to eat the same as everyone else at the Christmas lunch or party.
- Allowing the child to bring a favourite toy to school or a sensory or fidget toy, anything which helps them to feel calm?
- An adult might be able to collect your child's gift from Santa and take it to them.....all that ho ho ho-ing can be a bit scary!



PLAN BEE COURSES



PLAN BEE – Understanding and Supporting your Child or Young Person with Additional Needs.

‘Plan Bee’ is a FREE 3 week course (2hrs per week) and is aimed at parents or carers of children or young people with additional needs including those with traits of autism or ADHD.

If your child or young person already has a formal diagnosis of autism, please see the information later in the newsletter about the PUFFINS AUTISM PROGRAMME.

You can still access the online videos of our Positive Behaviour Strategies course (now Plan Bee) on the NHS for Norfolk website, Just One Norfolk. Just click here:

<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/child-development-additional-needs/behaviour-sleep/norfolk-positive-behaviour-strategies-pbs/>

See below courses available to attend in January. Click to enlarge



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee King's Lynn January 2026

Understanding and supporting
your neurodivergent child or young person's needs.



A free course for parents & Carers

Plan Bee is a 3 week course (2 hours per week) written by two Clinical Psychologists working in Norfolk Community Health and Care. We have been commissioned by Norfolk & Waveney NHS Integrated Care Board to deliver this course for parents and carers of children who have suspected or diagnosed neurodevelopmental conditions.

All behaviour is a form of communication. Our course supports parents to understand their child's individual needs and how to best support them.

The aim of this course is to help parents and carers:

- Understand why their child or young person might become overwhelmed.
- Reflect on what might trigger certain distressed behaviours and how to implement pro-active and re-active strategies.
- Develop a support plan which they can share with other family members and schools to ensure a consistent approach.
- Meet with other parents/carers for peer support.

Monday 12th 19th & 26th
January 2026

10am – 12noon

St Faiths Community Hub
Gayton Road
King's Lynn
PE30 4DW

For more information contact us Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

01603 972589

NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk

Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

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Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

CONDENSED Plan Bee - Online January 2026

Understanding and supporting your
neurodivergent child or young person's needs.

A free online session for parents & carers

If you have been interested in attending our Plan Bee course but have found it difficult to find the time, we are now offering a condensed version of our Plan Bee course. This will be one three hour session only on Zoom.

We hope this will be more suitable for working parents or for those with preschool children who find it difficult to attend a face to face course.

The aim of this course is to help parents and carers:

- Understand why their child or young person might become overwhelmed.
- Reflect on what might trigger certain distressed behaviours and how to implement pro-active and re-active strategies.
- Develop a support plan which they can share with other family members and schools to ensure a consistent approach.
- All behaviour is a form of communication. Our course supports parents to understand their child's individual needs and how to best support them.

Tuesday
13th January 2026

9:30am to 12:30pm

Online – ZOOM

Joining details will
be provided after
booking

For more information and to book your place contact us Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

01603 972589

norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

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Puffins Autism Programme - for parents or carers of children or young people with a *diagnosis* of autism



Family Action has been commissioned by Norfolk Community Health and Care to continue to run the comprehensive, free, four-week Puffins Autism Programme for Parents/Carers in *West and Central Norfolk* until end of March 2026.

This is a strictly post-diagnosis autism course and includes sessions delivered by Family Action, by Speech & Language and Occupational Therapists from NCH&C clinical teams and by Autism Specialists from within NCC's Educational Psychology & Specialist Services. Do not miss your chance, if you have a child or young person with a formal diagnosis of autism, to attend this well regarded programme.



THE PUFFINS COURSES ARE VERY POPULAR and are mostly FULL. As soon as we hear whether we have been recommissioned to continue delivering Puffins from April 2026, we will of course be planning and advertising new venues for you to book.

See below a flyer for our Feb 2026 course in King's Lynn which still has limited spaces. Click to enlarge

KEEP AN EYE ON THE NEWSLETTER FOR FURTHER ADVERTISING OF COURSES OR CONTACT Sue.killick@family-action.org.uk FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKING A PLACE.



Puffins Autism Programme King's Lynn - February 2026

The Puffins Programme is a FREE, four week programme designed by Norfolk Community Health and Care's Neurodevelopmental Service for parents and carers of children and young people with a diagnosis of Autism.

Family Action are working in partnership with NCHC and EPSS and are currently commissioned to deliver the Puffins course to parents/carers in west and central Norfolk.

Week 1 - Introducing Autism and Understanding Behaviour (Family Action)

Week 2 - Communication - (NCHC Speech and Language Therapy Team)

Week 3 - Understanding Sensory Processing (NCHC Occupational Therapy Team)

Week 4 - Autism in Education (NCC EP & Specialist Support: Autism Support Team)

King's Lynn February 2026

Community Hub
Church Dr
Nxt Gaywood Church Rooms
King's Lynn
PE30 4DZ
(Parking at Gaywood Church Rooms)

Monday 2nd, 9th & 23rd
February & 2nd March 2026

9:30am - 12:30pm

Please note: This course is not suitable for children to attend and no childcare is provided.

To find out more or book a place,
please contact Family Action on:

01603 972589

Sue.Killick@family-action.org.uk



family-action.org.uk

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Other News

Norfolk SENDIASS



Norfolk SENDIASS will be visiting a library near you with their friendly and relaxed Library Drop-In sessions.

Here are some dates for December.

5th December Hunstanton Library 10-30 to 12-30pm

8th December Diss Library 10 to 12pm

10th December Thetford Library 10 to 12pm

10th December Great Yarmouth Library 10-30 to 12-30pm

16th December Millenium Library 10 to 12pm

16th December Long Stratton Library 1-30 to 3pm

17th December Costessey Library 10 to 12pm

Drop in for advice about your child's education, SEN Support, EHCPs and other SEND processes from their expert advisors.

Live in West Norfolk? Click the flyers to enlarge



Family Hub Drop In

Advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people from conception to 19 (25 for young adults with SEND).

Your local family hubs team are ready to help, and this month your Community Worker, Sarah will be at the following venues ready to listen and support you to find the right help.

Family hubs can help with advice and support with:

- health and wellbeing
- mental health
- parenting
- relationships
- finding activities and groups
- infant feeding
- money and work
- housing
- SEND
- support for dads
- substance misuse
- transition to adulthood
- and so much more...

Date	Time	Venue
02 December	9:00 - 11:00	Swan Parents' Group
02 December	15:00 - 16:30	Downham Market library
16 December	15:00 - 16:30	Downham Market library
17 December	11:00 - 12:30	Downham Market library

Start for Life

family hubs



What's on at the King's Lynn family hub in December...

We're closed 22 Dec-4 Jan for Christmas. You can still reach us via our public line or online referral QR code, except on 25, 26 Dec and 1 Jan when we're fully closed.

Mondays

Stephanie from Housing Options will be attending the Family Hub in Kings Lynn on Monday the 8th of December between 10am and 12pm. Stephanie can support parent/carers with Advice on getting on the housing register. Support with applications Guidance around housing banding and the process from applying to getting offered your own property.

On Monday 15 December, Katie from Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS) will be at the family hub for bookable appointments offering free, confidential legal advice for those unable to afford access to justice. Services include:

- Family law & court support
- Welfare benefits
- Debt & money advice
- Immigration advice
- Discrimination & employment

Wednesdays

Chris from BOOST will be attending the Family Hub every Wednesday in November between 09:30 - 11:30. Chris can offer support to young people parent/carers between the age of 16-30 around:

- Career advice and guidance
- Access to local support services
- Free employment support
- Training

Thursdays

Emma from the Department of Work and Pensions will be attending the Family Hub Thursday 18th December between 10am and 2pm. Emma can support parent/carers with:

- Benefit related queries
- Finances difficulties and debts
- Childcare funding
- Opportunities around training, qualifications, or new skills

Fridays

Anna from the Relocations, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion team will be attending the Family Hub every Friday between 12:30 and 16:30. Anna is able to support parent/carers who have relocated to England from another country and who are struggling with barriers to accessing support for their children SEN or Social emotional and mental health needs.

What is coming up in the next few months:

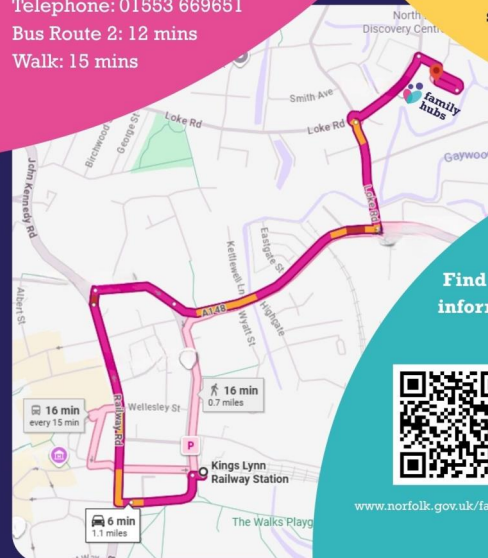
Join Danii from SEN Socials and Early Help Community Worker Georgie on the 12th of January 2026 10:30 to 12:30 for a cuppa and an informal chat about all things SEND parenting. No diagnosis needed! Children are welcome and there will be an activity each session provided by Voices Through Art! Please contact sensocialsdownham@gmail.com for further information or to request a social story and venue walk through.



Finding us from the station
Address: Saint Augustine's Healthy Living Centre, Columbia Way, King's Lynn. PE30 2LB
What3words: //sport.bits.bunny
Telephone: 01553 669651
Bus Route 2: 12 mins
Walk: 15 mins

How to get an appointment:

Call our public line on 01553 669651 and let one of our advisors know the date and time you would like to book in to see us.



Find more information



www.norfolk.gov.uk/familyhubs

Norfolk and Waveney NHS Integrated Care Board

Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service is commissioned by the Norfolk and Waveney NHS Integrated Care Board to provide support and advice, learning, resources and signposting to parents/carers of children or young people either awaiting a neurodevelopmental assessment or newly diagnosed.



Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

"CHILDHOOD IS PRECIOUS BECAUSE IT IS BRIEF: TOO MANY CHILDREN ARE SPENDING TOO MUCH OF IT WAITING FOR CARE."
Daizy, 2024

FIND SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON JUST ONE NORFOLK

WWW.JUSTONENORFOLK.NHS.UK



SCAN ME

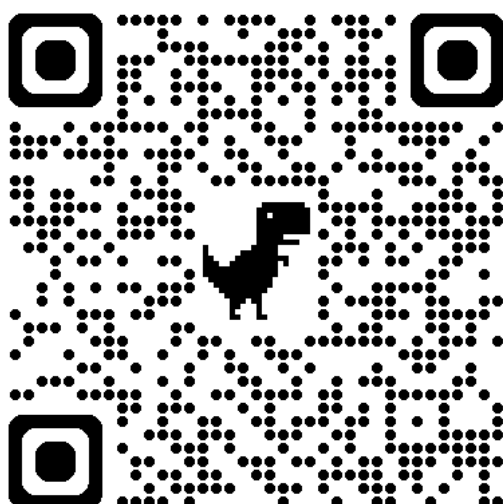


Norfolk and Waveney
Integrated Care Board

Family Action Website



Family Action is a national charity, supporting families up and down the country and has recently updated and relaunched its [website](#).



In addition to being able to search for Family Action services and projects in your locality, you can also now access lots of information and resources on a wide range of topics affecting families today. Have a look for example at a number of [self-help resources](#) around the return to school and preparing your child for the school day, linking nicely in with the topic of our September newsletter.

See also the QR code below which will take you to the home page.

Family Action FamilyLine - for any parenting concerns or crises. We can listen, support, inform and refer to a relevant service.

A graphic with a pink background. The top half features a photograph of a woman with glasses and a grey hoodie sitting at a desk, working on a laptop. A young boy is sitting next to her, also looking at the laptop. The bottom half of the graphic contains contact information for Family Line.

Family Line

- 0808 802 6666
- 07537 404 282
- familyline@family-action.org.uk
- Online Chat



Family Line



0808 802 6666



07537 404 282



familyline@family-action.org.uk



Online Chat

About our Service - Contact Details



For West and Central Norfolk **01603 972589** or email NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk

For East Norfolk and Waveney **01493 650220** or email gorleston@family-action.org.uk

Unsure which area to contact? Use any of the above – we are all here to help you.

If you wish to join our closed Facebook group, go to Facebook and to the Family Action page and then search for Norfolk and Waveney Autism and ADHD Support Service.

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