



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

It appears the weather has finally taken a long-awaited turn for the better.

We can all begin to think about doing more outside on these warmer days and lighter nights.

In this newsletter we want to reinforce the benefits of exercise and activities, indoors or outside, which can support the wellbeing of all children and young people in ways that reach far beyond physical fitness.

It can be difficult sometimes to introduce a new hobby or activity to a child or young person who is neurodivergent. The thought of mixing with new people can cause some anxiety.

Perfectionism might mean that competition and the idea of occasionally losing may be hard to handle. Attachment to the established routine of the week may prove to be a barrier.

But watching your child find an activity they genuinely enjoy can be transformative. For neurodivergent children, the right sport or movement-based activity can become far more than just a hobby—it can be a place where they feel confident, capable, regulated, and understood.

Read on for further discussion of the benefits of exercise for neurodivergent children.

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Welcome**
- **Online Workshop for May**
- **Drop-In Groups in May**
- **Meet the NWAASS Team**
- **Exercise and Neurodivergence**
- **Plan Bee Courses**
- **Puffins Courses**
- **Norfolk & Waveney NHS Integrated Care Board**
- **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.

Online Workshop in May - Supporting Post-16 Options

No need to book - note the joining details and we will see you there. [Click to enlarge.](#)



Workshop - Supporting Post 16 Options

Join us for this [free online session](#).

Do you have a child who will soon be leaving school? Are you concerned about what choices there are available to your neurodivergent young person?

Join us at our workshop, where we will be discussing the options and support available to post 16 year olds.



21st May 2026
10:00am – 11:00am



No need to book.

Just join us on the day via Zoom using the following details:

Meeting ID: 977 1551 4948
Passcode: 003345

For more information you can contact us Monday to Friday 9-5pm on:



01493 650220



NorfolkandWaveney@family-action.org.uk



Family Action Norfolk & Waveney
Autism/ADHD Support Service.

www.family-action.org.uk

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Our Drop In Support Groups

Please note that our drop in group in **Downham Market, at the Swan Youth Project**, will NOT happen in May due to falling in the school half-term holiday.

All other regular groups are happening as usual.

Our drop-in groups are friendly and informal. No need to book. 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.

See details below of all our May drop-ins. [Click to enlarge flyers.](#)



Gorleston Drop-In Support Group May 2026

Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service would like to invite you to come and join our informal drop in session.

Our sessions are designed for you to pop in at anytime, with no need to book. We will be there to welcome you, help answer any questions and support in the way you need - whether that's giving advice, sharing resources or signposting to other services.

There will be other parents and carers who are living with their child or young person's autism or ADHD who really 'get it' and will likely be happy to share their experiences.

No diagnosis or booking required

01493 650220

Gorleston@family-action.org.uk

Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

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

Wednesday
6th May 2026

10:00am - 11:30am



family-action.org.uk

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Lowestoft Drop-In Support Group May 2026

Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service would like to invite you to come and join our informal drop in session.

This session, we will be joined by Sendiass, Suffolk. If you have any questions relating to education and SEND, their representative will be available to speak to you. Consultations will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Our sessions are designed for you to pop in at anytime, with no need to book. We will be there to welcome you, help answer any questions and support in the way you need - whether that's giving advice, sharing resources or signposting to other services.

Meet other parents and carers living with their child or young person's autism or ADHD who really 'get it' and will likely be happy to share their experiences.

No diagnosis or booking required.

01493 650220

Gorleston@family-action.org.uk

Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

The Kirkley Family Hub
Kirkley Street
Lowestoft
NR33 0LU

Thursday
7th May 2026

10:00am - 11:30am



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BRECKLAND FAMILIES



Dereham SEND Parent & Carer Cafe Monday 11th MAY 2026

Join Amira and Dawn for a monthly Drop-In.

FREE, friendly and open to all SEND parents and carers.

Monthly themed discussions and support.

Join our Facebook Group and check for any updates: [Breckland Family Hubs](#)

For more details email us at: communityfocusbreckland@norfolk.gov.uk

Hosted by: Breckland Family Hub and Family Action – Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service.

 Dereham Library
59 High Street
Dereham
NR19 1DZ

 1:30pm – 2:30pm

Please note that all children remain the responsibility of their parent/carer and must be supervised at all times.



SEND Café




Join Danii from SEN Socials and Early Help Community Worker Georgie, and Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service each month for a cuppa and an informal chat about all things SEND parenting. No diagnosis needed!

Children 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.

12th January
9th February
9th March
13th April
11th May
8th June
13th July
10:30AM-12:30PM

 Family Hub, St Augustines
Healthy Living Centre
Columbia Way, King's Lynn PE30 2LB





Costessey Drop-In Group MAY 2026

Come and join us at our new support group, in association with Costessey Library.

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

If you have personal experiences with a child who is neurodivergent or have a child still awaiting assessment, come along to our 'drop in' session.

Come and meet our Family Support Workers who are happy to give you the time and space to bring any concerns you may have and can offer advice and support.

No diagnosis or booking required.

norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

01603 972589

New Group in Norwich:

Costessey Library
Breckland Road
Costessey
Norwich
NR5 0RW

Monday
18th May 2026

9:30am - 11:00am



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Swaffham Drop-In Support Group MAY 2026

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 care for a child who is neurodivergent or on the pathway for a diagnosis, come along to our 'Drop-In' session to meet other parents/carers with similar experiences. At least one of our team is always on hand to offer support and answer your questions.

No diagnosis or booking required.

01603 972589

norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Costa Coffee (Upstairs)
Market Place
Swaffham
PE37 7AB

Wednesday
13th May 2026

9:30am - 11:00am



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Meet the Family Action NWAASS Team

Meet Mary

Hallo, I am Mary, and I work for our service mostly in West Norfolk and Breckland areas. You may have spoken to me on the phone as I make a lot of our 'welcome calls' to families. I also help to deliver our Plan Bee course and can usually be found at the monthly drop in group at St Augustines in King's Lynn.

I have worked for Family Action for about seven years, first as a volunteer then as an employed member of staff. I am passionate about helping families to understand and support their children and young people with autism and/or ADHD. It is so rewarding to talk to parents and to offer a listening ear and some information and advice.



We definitely have neurodivergence in my family to varying degrees and I have one granddaughter who was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. So I hope that my lived experience makes me empathic and insightful when speaking to families.

I also have extensive experience of working in this field over many years. I was Head Coach for Special Needs Gymnastics and Trampolining at Lynnsport in King's Lynn for many years and a number of my young gymnasts had either autism or ADHD. Later I worked for 12 years for Action for Children supporting families with neurodivergence. I have also worked as a Young Carers Support Worker.

I love being part of the Family Action team and making a difference for parents and carers.

The Benefits of Exercise for Neurodivergent Children



Finding the Right Activity for Your Child

For many children with autism and ADHD, physical activity can be a powerful tool for wellbeing, confidence, and self-regulation. Whether it's sport, dance, gymnastics, swimming,

or musical theatre, movement-based activities can support both physical and emotional development while helping children discover their strengths and interests.

Every child is different, so the key is finding an activity that suits **your child's personality, sensory profile, and interests**. No child should be excluded from trying a sport or activity, and many organisations now offer inclusive or specialist support for children who need additional understanding or adjustments.

Before You Sign Up

When choosing an activity, it helps to speak with the coach or instructor beforehand.

Consider asking:

- What experience do you have supporting children with autism or ADHD?
- What adjustments can you make if my child needs additional support?
- May I stay nearby, especially for the first few sessions?
- Do you offer trial sessions or quieter/smaller classes?

Being open about your child's needs can help set them up for success from the start.

Why Exercise Helps Neurodivergent Children

Physical activity can support:

- **Sensory regulation**
- **Improved concentration and focus**
- **Reduced anxiety and stress**
- **Better sleep**
- **Increased confidence and self-esteem**
- **Development of social skills**
- **Improved coordination, balance, and motor skills**

Many children also benefit from the structure, routine, and clear rules that sports and organised activities provide.

Activities to Consider

Swimming



Swimming is not only an essential life skill but also an excellent activity for neurodivergent children. It focuses on individual achievement, reducing the pressure often found in team sports while still offering opportunities for social interaction.

Benefits include:

- Calming sensory input through water pressure and resistance
- Breathing regulation that can reduce anxiety and improve sleep
- Improved coordination and strength

Tip: Swimming pools can be noisy and echoey, so look for quieter sessions or consider private pool hire if your child is sensitive to noise.

Cycling

Cycling helps develop:

- Balance
- Coordination
- Stamina
- Independence

It can also become a fun family or group activity, making exercise more social and enjoyable.

Gymnastics

Gymnastics requires children to focus on body movements and routines, which can support concentration and memory.

Benefits include:

- Improved core strength
- Better balance and coordination
- Increased body awareness

- Sensory input similar to occupational therapy equipment

Trampolining

Trampolining provides powerful vestibular and proprioceptive input, which can help children regulate sensory needs.

Benefits include:



- Calming overstimulation
- Improving focus and self-regulation
- Supporting core strength and coordination
- Enhancing spatial awareness

Many children with ADHD also find trampolining helpful for releasing energy and improving concentration afterwards.

Tennis

Tennis is fast-paced and engaging, making it ideal for many children with ADHD.

Benefits include:

- Releasing excess energy
- Improving hand-eye coordination
- Encouraging focus and reaction speed
- Building teamwork through doubles play

Athletics

Athletics offers variety, which can appeal to children who become bored easily.

Benefits include:

- Opportunities for personal improvement rather than direct competition
- Exposure to running, jumping, and throwing
- Development of discipline, pacing, and routine

Football



Football remains one of the most popular team sports and can offer valuable opportunities for social development.

Benefits include:

- Teamwork and communication
- Learning social cues in a structured environment
- Improved cardiovascular fitness
- Enhanced coordination and balance

Football can be especially beneficial for children with dyspraxia or difficulties with motor planning.



Jiu-Jitsu and Martial Arts

Martial arts can be highly beneficial for neurodivergent children, particularly those with ADHD.

Benefits include:

- Promoting discipline and respect
- Supporting impulse control and emotional regulation
- Improving focus and attention
- Building confidence and resilience

Dance and Musical Theatre

Dance provides a creative and expressive form of movement, while musical theatre combines movement, music, and acting.

Benefits include:

- Emotional expression through movement
- Improved balance, flexibility, and body awareness
- Reduced stress and sensory overload
- Increased confidence and memory skills
- Opportunities for imaginative play and role exploration

These activities can be enjoyed individually or in groups, making them highly adaptable.

Final Thoughts

There is no “best” activity for every neurodivergent child—only the activity that is **best for your child**. Sometimes it may take trying several options before finding the right fit, and that’s completely normal.

The most important thing is to focus on enjoyment, confidence, and participation rather than performance.

There are many inclusive sports clubs, dance schools, and activity providers offering opportunities for neurodivergent children. Check your local directory or contact your nearest sports centre to explore what is available in your area.

Have a look at these ideas....

Riding for the disabled

Magpie Centre, Wallington Hall, Lynn Road, South Runcton, Kings Lynn PE33 0EP

Tel 01553 810202

Email: magpiecentrewnrda@hotmail.co.uk

<https://rda-westnorfolk.org.uk>

Inclusive dance and musical theatre

The Workshop, London Road, King's Lynn, PE30 5EZ

Telephone/Box Office: 01553 277919 **Email:** info@theworkshop.org.uk

Mailing List: [Sign-up here](#)

Lavender Hill Theatre Mob Company Inclusive for all ages

SOUTH WOOTTON VILLAGE HALL, CHURCH LANE, SOUTH WOOTTON. KL, PE30 3LJ.

<https://www.lhmtc.co.uk>

Tel: 07769 177501 **Email:** info@lhmtc.co.uk

Norwich Performing Arts

The Garage

14 Chapel Field North, Norwich' NR2 1NY

01603 283382 www.thegarage.org.uk

Community Sports Foundation

<https://www.communitysportsfoundation.org.uk>



Norfolk SEND Local Offer

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/40393/SEND-Local-Offer>

Norfolk Community Directory

<https://communitydirectory.norfolk.gov.uk/>

Sportspark UAE

Has an inclusive club. Read more at <https://www.sportspark.co.uk/sports/inclusive-sport>

ACTIVE NORFOLK

<https://www.activenorfolk.org/organisations/children-young-people/norfolk-school-games/>

NORWICH MUMBLER

<https://norwich.mumbler.co.uk/kids/playgroups-classes/additional-needs/>

NORFOLK SHORT BREAKS - Read about how you can access some funding to pay for activities for your child.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/shortbreaks>

The Waveney Gymnastics club in Lowestoft offers SEND sessions and have a disabilities gym group.

[Home — Waveney Gymnastics Club](#)

Waterlane Leisure Centre has a climbing wall and offers swimming lessons as well as offers Inclusive indoor soft play sessions

[Waterlane Leisure Centre | Gym & Swimming Pool | Everyone Active](#)



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:

As ever our Plan Bee course is proving very popular and our condensed course in May and Costessey course in June are now fully booked. Keep an eye on the newsletter each month for details of further courses which have been arranged.

See flyers below for Plan Bee courses in the next few months still available to book. Click to enlarge.



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee Course SWAFFHAM JULY 2026

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

A FREE course for parents & carers (booking essential)

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.

Please use the contact details below for enquiries or booking:

01603 972589

norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Wednesday 1st, 8th & 15th July 2026

10am - 12noon

**Community Centre
Campingland
Swaffham
PE37 7RB**
Week 1 & 3: Bishop Room
week 2: Dickens room




To book a place, please provide the following:

Your name
Child's name and DOB
Address
Telephone number
Email address

Please note that we cannot book places for children on this course.

www.family-action.org.uk

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Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

CONDENSED Plan Bee - Online AUGUST 2026

Understanding and supporting your neurodivergent child or young person's needs.
A free online session for parents & carers (booking essential)

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 18th August
9:30 to 12:30
Online - ZOOM

To book please provide the following details:
 Your name
 Child's name & DOB
 Postcode
 Telephone number
 Email address

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 is commissioned by Norfolk Community Health and Care to to run the comprehensive, free, four-week Puffins Autism Programme for Parents/Carers in *West and Central Norfolk*.

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.



**Educational Psychology
& Specialist Support**

THE PUFFINS AUTISM PROGRAMME FOR PARENTS AND CARERS IS VERY POPULAR and June and July courses in Downham Market and Norwich are already full. We do still have some spaces on our May course in Thetford. See flyer below.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE NEWSLETTER FOR FURTHER ADVERTISING OF COURSES OR CONTACT Puffins@family-action.org.uk

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKING A PLACE.



Puffins Autism Programme THETFORD - MAY 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)

Thetford May 2026

Charles Burrell Centre
Staniforth Road
Thetford
IP24 3LH

Thursday 7th 14th 21st &
Monday 18th May

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

Puffins@family-action.org.uk



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Are you a young person 11-25 years with SEND?



SEND Youth Voice Day



Friday 29 May 2026, 10am
to 3pm at County Hall

Come and give it a go!

- We want to hear from children and young people with SEND about how your experiences and information can be improved.
- We are looking for young people aged 11-25 to take part.
- We value your time and you will receive a £20 thank you voucher of your choice for each workshop attended.



We need your input to make positive changes.
Your voice matters!



For any enquiries, contact the team on
send@norfolk.gov.uk
Scan QR code to sign up and find out more.



Our Commissioners - Norfolk and NHS Integrated Care Board

Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service is commissioned by the newly formed Norfolk and Suffolk 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.

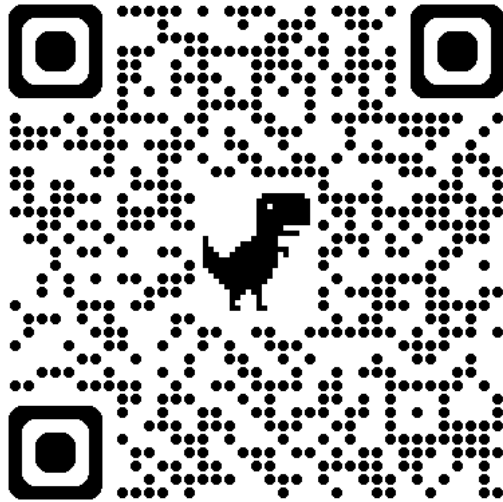


Norfolk and Suffolk
Integrated Care Board

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.

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.



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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