



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

Welcome to our July Newsletter.

We know that many parents and carers worry about their children and young people's interactions and friendships. You may ask yourself questions like;

“Do they have friends?”

"Are they the right friends?"

“Why do social situations seem so hard for them?”

“Do they feel lonely?”

When we think about friendships, it's important to remember that there is no one “right” way to connect. Neurodivergent young people may socialise differently, need different amounts of social time, require more recovery time to recharge their batteries or build relationships around shared interests rather than traditional expectations.

For some, one trusted friend feels safer than a large group. Others may enjoy online friendships, structured activities, or periods of solitude that genuinely feel restful rather than lonely.

This month we are going to think about friendship and belonging and how we can help neurodivergent young people to connect.

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Welcome**
- **Family Action Team Award**
- **Online Workshop for July**
- **Drop-In Groups in July**
- **Friendship and Connecion**
- **Plan Bee Courses**
- **Puffins Courses**
- **Norfolk & Suffolk 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.

Family Action National Awards



We wanted to share our good news with you. Family Action is a national charity, serving and supporting families all over England. Every year outstanding individuals and teams are nominated for awards and.....

Our service, **Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service** has won the Team of the Year Award.

The commendation highlighted what our small team has achieved and the number of parents we have been able to reach and support either on an individual basis or via our groups and courses. It is great to be recognised for our hard work. We love what we do and will continue to offer all the support and advice we can to families in Norfolk and Waveney.

And thank you to you, for reading our newsletter and supporting our online workshops or attending our drop-ins, Plan Bee, Puffins or Snowdrop courses.



Outstanding Team Award

Recognising those people who role-model great teamwork and work collaboratively to produce results

Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service



Online Workshop in July - Surviving the School Holiday

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



Workshop - Surviving School Summer Holiday

Don't just survive the school holidays - thrive!

Join our engaging, neurodiversity-affirming workshop packed with practical strategies, tips and ideas to help children and families navigate holiday routines, reduce stress, build confidence, and create happier, calmer days together.

Join us for this **free online session**.



Wednesday 8th July
10:00am - 11:30am



No need to book.

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

Meeting ID: 966 4447 9930

Passcode: 400275

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



01603 972589



NorfolkandWaveney@family-action.org.uk



Family Action Norfolk & Waveney
Autism/ADHD Support Service.

www.family-action.org.uk

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Registered as a Charity in the Isle of Man no. 1206. Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales no. 01068186.

Our Drop In Support Groups

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 July drop-ins. Click to enlarge flyers.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE REGULAR THETFORD AND SWAN YOUTH PROJECT, DOWNHAM MARKET DROP-INS ARE NOT HAPPENING IN JULY DUE TO THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.



Gorleston Drop-In Support Group JULY 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
1st July 2026

10:00am - 11:30am



family-action.org.uk

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Lowestoft Drop-In Support Group JULY 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.

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
2nd July 2026

10:00am - 11:30am



family-action.org.uk

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Swaffham Drop-In Support Group JULY 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 1st July 2026

9:30am – 11:00am



family-action.org.uk

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Costessey Drop-In Group JULY 2026

Come and join us at our drop-in 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 monthly sessions.

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

Costessey Library Breckland Road Costessey Norwich NR5 0RW

Monday 27th July 2026

9:30am – 11:00am



family-action.org.uk

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BRECKLAND FAMILIES



Dereham SEND Parent & Carer Cafe Monday 6th JULY 2026

Join Amira and Dawn for our 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!

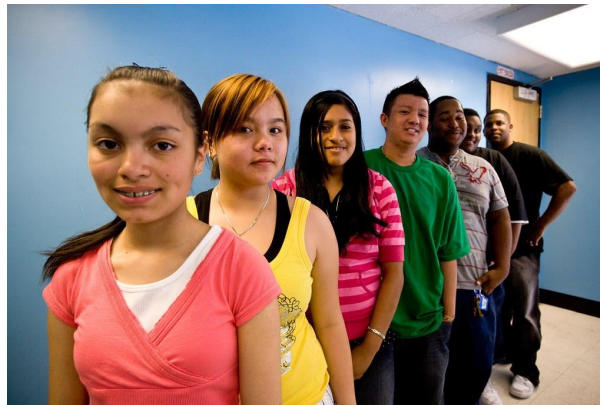
Please contact sensocialsdownham@gmail.com for further information or to request a social story and venue walk through.

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



Friendship and Belonging: Supporting Connection



Connection Can Look Different

Friendship and connection for our young people does not always look the way adults expect it to.

A young person might:

- Prefer spending time with one person at a time
- Enjoy parallel play or shared activities rather than lots of conversation
- Build friendships around shared interests such as gaming, animals, art, trains, coding, or music
- Feel more comfortable connecting online
- Need downtime after socialising

It can be helpful to move away from thinking about how to help your child or young person fit in, and more towards thinking about where they feel safe, accepted and able to be themselves.

Why Friendships Can Feel Hard

Social experiences can be challenging for lots of reasons, including:

Social exhaustion or masking: Trying to interpret social rules, read facial expressions, or “fit in” can feel exhausting.

Sensory overwhelm: Busy playgrounds, noisy dinner halls, or crowded spaces may feel overwhelming.

Anxiety or fear of getting things wrong: Past misunderstandings or experiences of exclusion can make social situations feel risky.

Different communication styles: Some neurodivergent young people communicate more directly, need extra processing time, or struggle with unspoken social expectations.

None of these difficulties mean a young person lacks social interest or empathy, they may simply experience social connection differently.

How Parents and Carers Can Help

Follow their interests

Shared interests often create the strongest foundation for connection. Clubs, hobby groups, gaming communities, creative spaces, or special-interest activities can provide natural opportunities to meet like-minded peers.

Focus on quality, not quantity

One safe friendship can matter far more than a large friendship group.

Avoid putting pressure on

Repeated questions like *“Who did you play with?”* or *“Why aren’t you making friends?”* can sometimes increase anxiety. Instead, try open-ended conversations:

- *“Who did you spend time near today?”*
- *“Did anything feel good or difficult with other people?”*
- *“Did you have any moments where you felt comfortable?”*

Support social recovery time

After school or social events, some young people need quiet time to regulate. Resting after social interaction is not failure, it can be part of how they recharge. Allow this time. Your young person may really need it and it shows they are developing strategies which help them.

Celebrate connection

A friendship based on shared interests, humour, trust, or comfort matters, even if it looks different from typical expectations.

A Gentle Reminder for Parents and Carers

It can be painful to see your child struggle socially, especially if it brings up fears about loneliness or exclusion.

But friendship is not a race, and there is no one “right” way to connect with others.

Many neurodivergent young people find meaningful connection when they meet people who understand and accept them, often in environments where they can be themselves without pressure to mask.

Sometimes the goal is not helping a young person become “more social”, but helping them find spaces where they feel safe enough to belong.

While positive peer relationships help children and young people feel valued and connected, they also need to develop a strong sense of self that isn't dependent on what others think. Building self-esteem from the inside helps them cope better with setbacks, navigate friendships, and celebrate who they are.

You can support this by:

- Reminding them often of all the things you love about them. They don't have to be perfect to be loved. They are enough, just as they are.
- Letting them know the qualities you admire in them, whether that's their kindness, creativity, honesty, determination, curiosity, humour, or unique way of seeing the world.
- Talking openly about difference and acceptance. Every single one of us is wired differently, with our own strengths, challenges, interests, and ways of thinking. Neurodivergence is simply part of the natural variation in human brains.
- Helping them understand that their differences don't make them "less than" anyone else. We all have things we find easy and things we find difficult.
- Encouraging hobbies, interests, and passions that bring them joy and help them experience success on their own terms. Shared interests can also be a wonderful way to build friendships.
- Encouraging regular physical activity, in whatever form feels right for them. It doesn't have to be organised sport—a walk, dancing, swimming, trampolining, cycling, or simply spending time outdoors can all have positive effects on mood and wellbeing.
- Praising effort, perseverance, kindness, courage, and self-expression rather than focusing only on outcomes or achievements.
- Giving them opportunities to make choices, solve problems, and develop independence. Confidence grows when children discover they can cope with challenges.
- Reminding them that everyone struggles sometimes, and that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.
- Reassuring them that when they feel awkward or unsure in social situations, they are rarely the only one. Many children, young people, and adults feel exactly the same.

Social interaction can be difficult for anyone, and it often becomes easier with understanding, practice, and finding people who accept us for who we are.

Suggested groups and organisations:

[Norfolk SEND Youth Forum](#)

[MAP Young People](#) - See MAP flyers below

[YMCA Norfolk Communities](#)

[J-Team Youth Group in Kings Lynn](#)

[Norfolk SEND Event Calendar](#)

[Family Social at Loddon Library](#)

[Little Miracles \(West Norfolk\)](#)

[ASD Helping Hands Groups](#)

[West Norfolk Autism Group](#)

[Autism Explorers \(Norwich\)](#)



New for Dereham, it's...

11-16 group

CHILL SPOT

Games, Music, Snacks & Drinks, Events and much much more -- all **free** of course!

Dereham Rugby Club, Eaglesham Park, Moorgate Road, NR19 1NX

Tuesdays, 5-6:30pm

For ages 11-16

Follow the QR to find out more, or email youthwork@mapyoungpeople.org.uk

Questions & Info:
youthwork@mapyoungpeople.org.uk



Albion Games, Norwich NR2 4PF

Tuesdays 5-7pm

11-16 GROUP

GAMING SPOT

FREE fortnightly sessions only at **ALBION GAMES**

WANNA JOIN?
 We run two age groups on alternating tuesdays
 Follow the QR code to find your next session

📍 Albion Games,
Norwich NR2 4PF
🕒 Tuesdays 5-7pm

👤 16-25
GROUP

GAMING SPOT

FREE fortnightly sessions only at
📍 **ALBION GAMES**



WANNA JOIN?

We run two age groups on alternating tuesdays

← Follow the QR code to find your next session



music spot!

👤 11-25
group

Music Spot is a chill environment for anyone with an interest in music.

→ Write songs

→ Play instruments

→ Record and mix music

→ Lyrics, poetry,
spoken word

📍 Map, Woolgate Court,
Norwich, NR2 4AP

🕒 Mondays 5-8:30pm

👤 For ages 11-25



↗ find dates

map.uk.net



map Sports Spot

**ORMISTON VENTURE ACADEMY,
ORIEL AVE., GORLESTON, YARMOUTH
NR317JJ**

**GET STUCK IN WITH
SOME CHEEKY
FOOTBALL**

**EVERY MONDAY
3:15PM-4:15PM
YEAR 7-8**

**VISIT OUR
WEBSITE TO
FIND OUT
MORE**

What else is happening?

**MAKING SENSE OF
SEND.
FREE INFORMATION FAIR**

**For parents/carers of young people with SEND and the
professionals who work with them.**

Wednesday 15th May 2024 10am-12pm

Knight's Hill Hotel, King's Lynn, PE30 3HQ

**Browse
information stands**

**Listen to a talk on
Early Years at 10.30am**

**Enjoy free
refreshments**

Information stands will include:

- Norfolk SEND Local Offer
- Norfolk SENDIASS
- Family Voice Norfolk
- Vision Norfolk
- Nansa
- Healthwatch
- ASD Helping Hands
- TITAN
- DRAGONS
- Just One Norfolk
- Dyslexia Outreach Service
- West Norfolk Autism Group
- Community and Partnerships team
- Family Action
- Mancroft Learning
- Migliori
- Achieving Aspirations
- Fostering Recruitment
- Family Hubs Norfolk
- Norfolk Library Information Service
- Direct Payment Support Service
- Carers Matter Norfolk
- Newcross Healthcare

Book your place through Eventbrite

Norfolk County Council

PLAN BEE COURSES



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

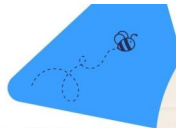
'Plan Bee' is a FREE 3 week course (2hrs per week) and is aimed at parents or carers of children or young people with additional needs including those with traits of autism or ADHD.

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:

This year, to meet demand, we are offering two condensed Plan Bee courses in August. The condensed Plan Bee is one condensed online session on Zoom rather than our usual three week course. One of these sessions is already fully booked but there are still a few places for the session on 4th August. See flyer below for details.

See flyers below for Plan Bee courses available to book. Click to enlarge.



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

CONDENSED Plan Bee - Online 4th 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 4th 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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www.family-action.org.uk



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee King's Lynn September 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.

Thursday 10th, 17th & 24th September 2026

10am - 12noon

**Family Hub
St Augustine
Healthy Living Centre
(Activity Room)
Columbia Way
King's Lynn
PE30 2LB**

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

01603 972589

NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk

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Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee Course THETFORD October 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.

Monday 5th, 12th & 19th October

10am – 12noon

Thetford Family Hub
(Bluebell Room)
Kingsway
Thetford
IP24 3DY

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.

Please use the contact details below for enquiries or booking:

01603 972589

norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

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www.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 EAST OF ENGLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH AND CARE NHS TRUST 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

KEEP AN EYE ON THE NEWSLETTER FOR FURTHER ADVERTISING OF COURSES AS THEY ARE FINALISED OR CONTACT Puffins@family-action.org.uk FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKING A PLACE.

See flyer below for Puffins courses available to book now.



NHS Norfolk Community Health and Care
Educational Psychology & Specialist Support



Puffins Autism Programme KING'S LYNN October 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
October 2026**

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

Thursday 1st 8th 15th 22nd
October

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



family-action.org.uk

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THE SNOWDROP PROGRAMME - A new course for parents of children with SEND



WATCH THIS SPACE FOR DATES AVAILABLE TO BOOK IN THE AUTUMN. SNOWDROP IS CURRENTLY ONLY AVAILABLE IN THE WEST OF NORFOLK AND IS FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN UP TO THE AGE OF 11 YEARS WHO HAVE ANY KIND OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. THE THREE SESSIONS EXPLORE HOW THIS MAY AFFECT EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY AND ALLOWS SPACE FOR PARENTS/CARERS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES, SHARE EXPERIENCES, SUPPORT EACH OTHER AND BUILD RESILIENCE.

FAMILY ACTION HAVE BEEN FUNDED TO DELIVER THE SNOWDROP PROGRAMME BY THE NORFOLK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.



Our Commissioners - Norfolk and Suffolk 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.

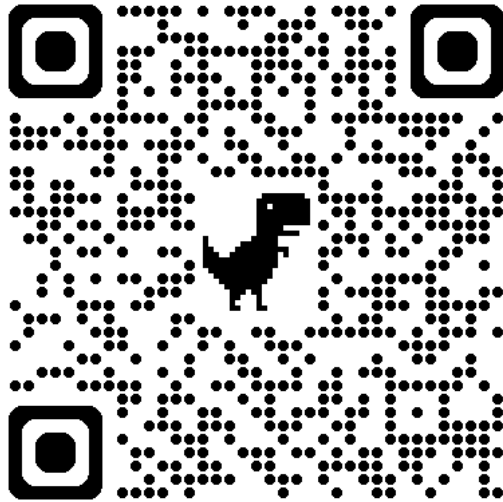


Norfolk and Suffolk
Integrated Care Board

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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