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family voice norfolk
together improving services

newsletter
October 2026



Save the date for the 2027 Family Voice Norfolk annual conference for parent carers

Keep the date of 27th February 2027 free in your diaries for our annual Conference – a day of all things SEND for parent carers. Bookings will go live in the New Year and we will let you know when you can register.

In the meantime, if you are an organisation, a team from the Local Authority or a team from Health and are interested in having a stand, please let us have your expression of interest on conference@familyvoice.org.uk Please note that expression of interest does not guarantee a space and that we will come back to you in due course.



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Norfolk Home Education Parent Voice Forum

SEND Protect WEBINAR- Protecting Your SEND Child's Financial Future!

Help shape the future of early years SEND provision in Norfolk

Online workshop for Early Years SEND provision in Norfolk

In person workshops in South Creake hosted by Kids

In person workshops in Pickenham hosted by Kids

Breckland carer wellness and information event in Dereham

Unpaid Carers Bi-Monthly Lunch and Learn Webinar: Supporting Young Carers' Mental Health and Wellbeing

What makes a good school? Research project

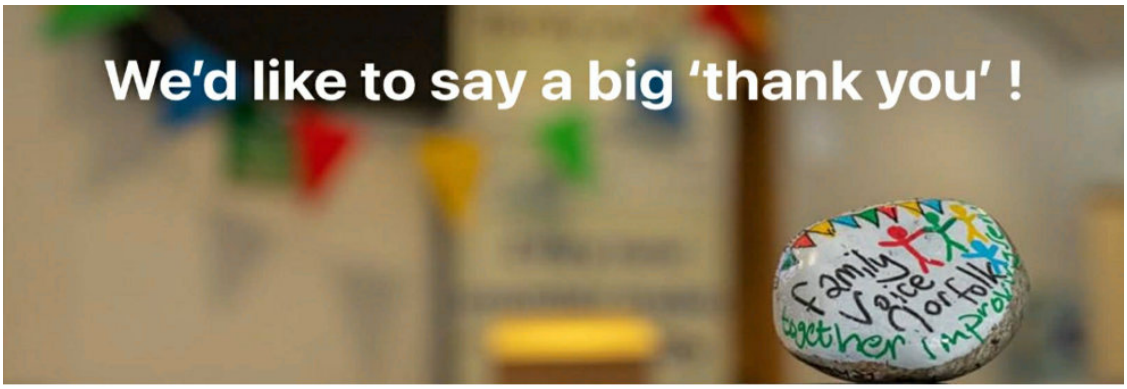
New 24/7 mental health crisis text service

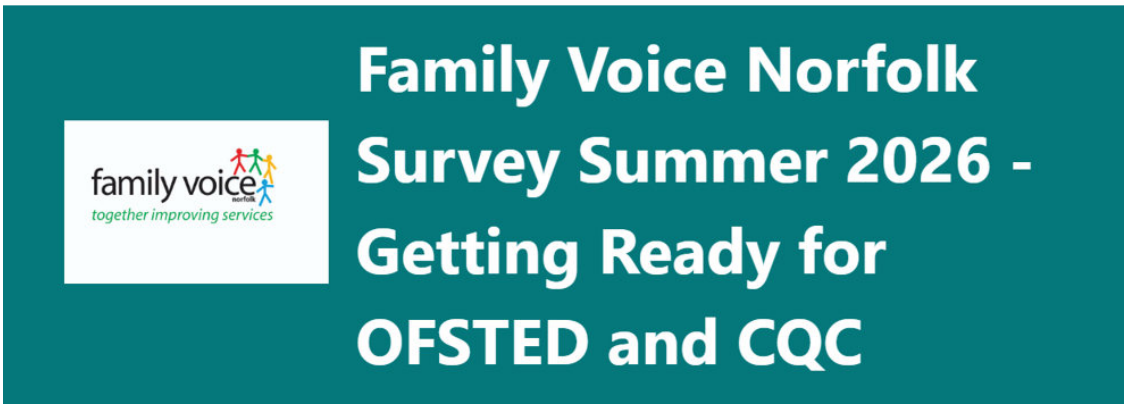
An easy way to share our newsletter



It's easy to read an article that is of interest to you, just click on the blue writing of the title

(under 'in this issue' above) and it will take you directly to that article!





Family Voice Norfolk would like to say a big 'Thank you' to those families who responded to our Big Ask Survey in the summer of 2026

The aim of our survey was to give another opportunity to families to share what is working for them and what needs further improvement within Norfolk's services for children and young people with SEND. At the time of writing, the Local Area Ofsted and CQC SEND Inspection is still awaited. All the lived experience themes you share with us in the many ways you do, in conversations at events, at our conference, via surveys and quick questions and through telephone calls with our membership administrator, will help us better represent what families feel and experience when we have our meeting with inspectors.

Here **is a link to the summary report from the survey but we would like to share with you here just some of the greater detail families gave us.**

Education

We have heard how impactful reasonable adjustments within a place of learning can be, enabling children and young people to access and enjoy their learning, with examples given of smaller class size, being able to take lunch earlier and to not have exam pressure within a

post-16 setting. Conversely, where places of learning have not implemented reasonable adjustments, some children and young people have been unable to continue attending, feeling unsafe and unsupported.

Families have told us about excellent Alternative Provisions and how positive this has been to their child, young person and to the family as a whole.

Whilst some families have shared their experiences of having a supportive and understanding education setting, others have expressed their frustrations at feeling not listened to, not feeling 'believed' and feeling generally that some of the professionals they have encountered 'do not care'.

Some families expressed concern and frustration at EHCPs not being followed, resulting in therapies not being delivered. Others have reported difficulties contacting and receiving responses from EHCP co-ordinators. Whilst some families have felt not enough planning has been made towards transitions for their children and young people, others shared examples of successful and well planned transitions from a mainstream school to an SRB, from a mainstream primary setting to a mainstream high school and from a mainstream school to a specialist setting which has allowed their child to 'thrive for the first time ever'.

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

From those who responded around preparing for adult life, there was a common theme around feeling uninformed and that this subject is left very late.

Transport

Families shared some very positive lived experiences of transport, emphasising the importance and impact having a trusted relationship with a taxi driver for a child or young person and how important consistency is. A frustration shared, however, was that transport arrangements are not flexible for families who co-parent from two different addresses. The option of being able to choose the personalised transport scheme and drive their child themselves has been welcomed by a respondent.

Some families have experienced poor communication between transport provider and themselves, experiencing changes of driver and collection times.

In terms of post-16 transport, communication about how this works was found to be confusing by some families and the charges deemed to be high. There was also mention of young people being crammed into vehicles too small for them and that post-16 transport is not flexible for those young people who are not on a 09.00-16.00 timetable but who start and finish at different times.

Short Breaks

We have heard from some families that Short Breaks have brought very positive outcomes to their child or young person, enabling them to take part in activities such as going to the gym, joining a drama group, having riding lessons, enjoying trips out, attending a holiday camp and a football camp and going to the zoo. For some families, these activities were previously out of financial reach and for others, the financial pressure has lessened if the child or young person has been unable to cope for the entirety of a trip as the cost has been from their Short Breaks.

Concern has been expressed that the new system is not suited to all children and young people and that the old system offered greater freedom and flexibility. A frustration shared was the inability to use Short Breaks within school hours for those who are unable to attend school.

For families trying to access overnight respite, it was shared that this is increasingly difficult to get and is often cancelled.

Families have shared that the Short Breaks website, booking system and means by which they need to upload receipts etc can be unclear, unreliable and challenging.

Health

Family Voice Norfolk has heard from families frustrated by the long wait times for ND diagnosis, sometimes exceeding 6 years, by the long wait for mental health help and intervention (CAMHS) and that often families feel unsupported and alone whilst waiting.

Families have shared also their positive experiences of some health services – GP's that understand and are proactive, 'fantastic' consultants that are supportive and helpful, great learning disability nurses and play specialists and good health transition services with hospital. Some parent carers shared that their GP was not helpful at all. There was an example of inconsistency within an Accident and Emergency environment within 48 hours of very poor understanding of neurodiversity on the initial visit, resulting in a challenging environment to the child, yet at the next visit, there was good understanding and communication.

Dentistry was mentioned by some respondents. Specialist dentistry has been good for those eligible for it but otherwise general dentistry has been difficult.

Helpful sources of information and support

Families have used a whole host of sources of help and guidance including the following:

- Norfolk SENDIASS (sometimes long waits)
- Norfolk SEN Network
- IPSEA
- Local Organisations
- National Organisations
- GP
- Local Offer Website
- Just One Norfolk
- Family Voice Norfolk Newsletter
- Family Voice Norfolk Conference
- Family Voice Norfolk Membership Administrator (for signposting)
- Making Sense of SEND events
- NCC SEND e-bulletin
- NCC SEND and Inclusion Line
- Parent-run Facebook groups

We hope that this brings alive the summary report and reassures you that your voices are heard, that your lived experiences matter and that collective themes are shared. There was a comment within the Big Ask Survey that will make us do better for you – ' Family Voice

Norfolk doesn't feed back on discussions they have with NCC so families really have no clue on what's being said on their behalf'. Moving forward, we will tell you more about what we do and aim for you to feel the value of your input.



Tech Skills for life

Life... Don't miss out because you're not online.

Access tech and learn new skills to make life easier.

Life's easier when you've got the right tech, the right know- how and the confidence to use computers and smart phones.

- Do you need help with using a computer, tablet or smart phone?
- Are you struggling to pay for mobile data or broadband at home?
- Do your kids need to do homework, but you don't have a laptop or the internet at home?
- Do you worry about staying safe online?

We are here to help. Visit your library and talk to staff about being referred to our service.

Click here for more details of Norfolk County Council's Tech Skills for Life



Norfolk Multi- agency Practice Week: 16-20th November 2026

Norfolk County Council are very happy to share with you the brochure for the upcoming Practice Week taking place in November, named by Norfolk young people 'Safe today. Secure tomorrow.'

The programme looks amazing - we are very fortunate to have people from numerous organisations across the county, all working with children, young people and families, delivering some really interesting and informative sessions, as well as a fantastic keynote speaker joining us for the midweek conference.

We'll also have the daily bulletins (Click the link to sign up to them) going out from the Young People's Steering Group, filled with material and resources produced directly by young people which definitely should not be missed.

Parent carers are welcome to attend. The only session that has to be pre- booked is the Norfolk Practice Week Conference - Together for Young Lives online on Wednesday 18 November 3:15 PM - 5:30 PM.

Click here for the November Multi- agency practice week brochure





Have you experienced waiting for children's speech and language therapy?- Parents and caregivers are invited to take part in a doctoral research study

Who can take part?

Parents and caregivers of children and young people who have:

- Accessed services in the last four years
- Experienced waiting for speech and language therapy

What's involved?

- Completing a 15 minute online survey

Why take part?

- Share your experiences
- Help improve services

Important information:

- The survey is anonymous
- Participation is voluntary

- The research has ethical approval

For more information please email Gillian Rudd. Scan the QR code above or click the green button below.

Waiting and Access in Therapy - Understanding Perspectives in Speech and Language Therapy (WAIT-UP SLT). Birmingham City Univerversity.

Click here for more information about the survey





Swan Youth project in Downham Market can help NEET 14-24 year olds

Are you aged 14-24 years of age and not in education, employment or training (NEET)?

The Swan Youth project can support you with:

- Feeling more confident
- Interview preperation
- Preparing a CV
- Applying for jobs
- Work readiness

- Work experience

For more information please contact Louise on 01366 386259 or email.

Click here to see what else the Swan Youth Project in Downham Market has to offer



Norwich Neurodivergent Social Group- Register your interest

Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust Recovery College are introducing their Neurodivergent socials to Norwich soon.

Register your interest on their online portal to get priority booking information.

If you haven't enrolled yet, you can do so here: After you have enrolled you can register your interest in the Norwich Neurodivergent Social Group via the self-booking portal:

If you struggle with the booking portal or enrolment, please email or call us on 0300 303 4419 (lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

To learn more about the Recovery College click here





Supported by Community Development part of Norfolk County Council

BEST START IN LIFE | family hubs

Families on the move- Wellbeing walk Family Hub Norwich

Families on the move on Monday 16th November 9:00am Coffee social, then at 9:45am Walk. Start at the Family Hub, Hunter Road in Norwich, NR3 3PY.

Building Community, one step at a time.

Click here for the Norwich Family Hubs Facebook page



NORFOLK LEARNING DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP

Norfolk Learning Disability Partnership Locality groups

The Norfolk Learning Disability Partnership would love you to join them at one of their upcoming Locality Group meetings this November and December.

The Locality Groups are a chance for people with a learning disability, families, carers and professionals to come together, share their experiences, discuss what matters to them and help shape services and support across Norfolk.

At these Locality Groups we are asking how you would like to be involved in the writing of the next Norfolk Learning Disability Plan.

We have five Locality Groups covering different areas of Norfolk, and everyone is welcome. Your voice matters, and we want to hear from you!

The Different groups are:
-Norwich
-North Norfolk
-Kings Lynn and West Norfolk
-South Norfolk
-Great Yarmouth

To find your nearest group and see the upcoming dates, times and locations click here



Norfolk Infant Feeding Strategy Engagement Survey- Help shape infant feeding support in Norfolk

Norfolk County Council Public Health is developing a new Infant Feeding Strategy for 2026 to 2029 and would like to hear from mothers, fathers, partners and carers about their experiences of supporting infant feeding.

We want to understand what worked well, any challenges, whether fathers and partners felt included and supported, and any suggestions for the future. All feeding experiences are welcome.

The anonymous survey takes around 10 minutes and is open until 8 January 2027. There is space at the end to share any further experiences or comments in your own words.

Click here to complete the infant feeding survey





Bright Sparks- Learn about your amazing brain - for neurodivergent young people in King's Lynn

Bright Sparks is a supportive group designed specifically for neurodivergent children. Run by The Wild hub they focus on helping children understand their own brains, why they work differently to neurotypical brains, and how their nervous systems work so they can find ways to support themselves.

An inclusive, welcoming , neurodivergent -led group.

Young people can:

-Explore how their brains work,

-Build confidence,

-Connect

All in an adaptable low-demand space. We help individual children thrive entirely at their own pace.

The workshop- London Road, King's Lynn PE30 5EZ

One Saturday per month

* 21st November

*19th December

*30th January

*27th February

10.30am-12pm or 12.45- 2.15pm (small group)

£3-£5 per child

To book phone 07762482947 or email.

Boost - Helping young people succeed in West Norfolk

BOOST supports young people aged 16 - 24 across West Norfolk, offering personalised guidance, employability support, skills development and access to training opportunities.

The project is part funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and delivered in partnership with Norfolk County Council and Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

What is BOOST?
BOOST is a person-centred, relationship-based programme for young people who may be facing barriers to accessing work, education or training. Our friendly team works alongside each young person to build confidence, identify strengths and creates a personalised plan.

Since launching in King's Lynn in 2022, BOOST has grown into a borough-wide project supporting even more young people across West Norfolk.

What BOOST offers?
BOOST providers a wide range of support to help young people move forward:

- One-to-one personalised guidance
- Careers information, advice and guidance (IAG)
- Access to youth support services
- A central point for local support and training opportunities
- Connections to employers, training providers and community organisations.
- A person-centred, relationships-based approach

BOOST can help with anything from confidence building to exploring career options – from creative industries to practical qualifications like forklift training.

Get in touch with us if you are:

aged 16-18 and not in education, employment, or training
aged 18-30 and unemployed, looking for work or support

Click the green button below for the BOOST referral form or email the project team directly on boost@norfolk.gov.uk

Click here for the BOOST referral form



Boost your construction skills- in Dereham

To be eligible you must be age 16-24, not in education, employment or training and live in West Norfolk or Breckland.

Are you ready to learn and work on a construction site?

BOOST is offering a tailored training and support package to launch your career in construction- gain the skills, knowledge and onsite know- how you need.

What's it all about?

- Basic understanding of construction site safety and environmental awareness.
- An opportunity to gain a CSCS green Labourer card.
- Site Safety Plus.

All you need to bring...

- Wear sensible clothes and shoes
- Valid Photographic ID
- Bring lunch and a drink

The details..

When: This is a one-day programme

Thursday 12th November 2026 8:45AM to 4:30PM

Where
This course will be held at
NARS-, Norfolk Accident Rescue Service, Millbanks, Hall Lane, Dereham NR20 3GG

Scan the QR code or click the green button below to complete the referral form.

If you have any queries please click here to send BOOST an email.

Click here for the referral form for BOOST



Boost

NPA NORFOLK PLASTERING ACADEMY

2-day Introduction to Plastering

To be eligible you must be age 16 - 24, not be in education, employment or training and live in Breckland

Are you ready to learn about plastering?

BOOST is offering a tailored training and support programme to launch your career in plastering - gain practical skills and knowledge.

What's it all about?

- Learn basic plastering skills - hands on
- Future opportunity to gain a CSCS green Labourer card.
- Site visits and employer talks.
- Connections with employers

All you need to bring...

- Wear sensible clothes and shoes that you don't mind if they get messy
- Your lunch and a drink

The details...

When

Tuesday 24
And
Wednesday 25 November 2026

Where

Norfolk Plastering Academy

TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED FROM DEREHAM

boost@norfolk.gov.uk

BOOST - two day introduction to plastering for those in Breckland

To be eligible you must be age 16- 24, not be in education, employment or training and live in Breckland.

Are you ready to learn about plastering?

BOOST is offering a tailored training and support programme to launch your career in plastering - gain practical skills and knowledge.

What's it all about?

- Learn basic plastering skills -hands on
- Future opportunity to gain a CSCS green Labourer card.
- Site visits and employer talks.
- Connections with employers.

All you need to bring...

- Wear sensible clothes and shoes that you don't mind if they get messy
- Your lunch and a drink

The details...
Tuesday 24 And Wednesday 25 November 2026

Where
Norfolk Plastering Academy
TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED FROM DEREHAM

Click here to email BOOST to find out more

Buttercup Children's Trust – Grants for sensory equipment and toys

Sensory equipment is often treated as an optional extra, and for a lot of children it is the thing that makes a day possible. We fund it for children aged 18 and under with a life-hindering illness or disability, anywhere in the UK.

Sensory equipment is often described as extra, and it is one of the things we are asked about most. For a child with complex sensory needs, autism or a learning disability, the right equipment is not entertainment – it is what makes a day manageable and a house calmer for everybody in it.

What we mean by sensory equipment

- Lighting and projectors – bubble tubes, fibre-optic strands, projectors and colour-changing lights.
- Tactile and resistance toys for children who need physical feedback to regulate.
- Weighted blankets and vests, where these have been recommended for your child.
- Sound equipment – including ear defenders for children who find noise painful.
- Sensory dens, tents and pods that give a child somewhere to go when everything is too much.
- Outdoor sensory play – garden swings, adapted swing seats with harnesses, and equipment that makes a garden usable.
- Tablets and communication aids where a device is being used for communication or for structured sensory work rather than as general entertainment.

Click here to read more about applying for a grant from Buttercup Children's trust







ASD Helping Hands introduces My Autism Passport- a new FREE App

ASD Helping Hands are pleased to introduce My Autism Passport, a new free app designed to help autistic people communicate their needs, preferences and important information more easily.

An Autism Passport can be particularly useful when meeting new professionals, attending appointments, accessing services, travelling, or simply when explaining things verbally is difficult.

With My Autism Passport, users can create a personalised passport covering areas such as:

- communication
- sensory needs
- routines and changes
- things that may cause distress
- things that help
- important information about the individual

The app also includes a Quick View for easily showing key information, communication cards for difficult situations, and private Prepare Me plans that can help someone prepare for an upcoming event or change.

Passports can be shared by email or PDF when the user chooses to do so. Personal information is stored locally on the device.

The app is **free to download and use** and is now available on Google Play and coming to Apple App store shortly.

Click here to find out more and to download the ASD Helping Hands My Autism Passport App



Rail industry extends the Disabled Persons Railcard eligibility to help more people access discounted rail travel

- Disabled Persons Railcard eligibility expands from 30 September, helping more disabled people access discounted rail travel;
- Customers with a long-term impairment, health condition or neurodivergence that has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months and significantly affects their ability to use rail services will be able to apply for the Disabled Persons Railcard;
- Eligibility under the expansion will be based on the impact a person's condition has on their ability to travel by rail rather than a diagnosis alone;
- Part of the rail industry's wider commitment to accessibility and inclusion, putting customers at the centre of decision-making and helping more people travel with confidence.

The rail industry is continuing its commitment to accessibility and inclusion by updating eligibility criteria for the Disabled Persons Railcard. These changes are designed to better support disabled customers who may face barriers to rail travel and form part of a broader effort to create a more inclusive railway, putting customers at the centre of decision-making and helping more people travel with confidence.

From 30 September, customers with a long-term impairment, health condition or neurodivergence that has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months and significantly affects their ability to use rail services will be able to apply for the Disabled Persons Railcard. Applicants will need to provide either:

- a report or letter from a health professional explaining how their condition affects their ability to use rail services; or
- a completed impact declaration form signed by a suitably qualified and regulated health or social care professional.

Eligibility under the expansion will be based on the impact a person's condition has on their ability to travel by rail rather than a diagnosis alone. For some conditions where the impact can vary significantly between individuals, confirmation of diagnosis on its own may not be sufficient. Applications requiring professional evidence will be independently assessed to determine whether the applicant experiences significant disability-related barriers to rail travel.

For more details and how to apply for a disabled persons railcard click here



Healthy dialogues toolkit for parents and professionals

Healthy Dialogues, a free online toolkit developed with Black Thrive, with support from Impact on Urban Health and NHS South East London Integrated Care Board.

It was created first for Black and mixed-heritage children and young people. But it's for every child, whatever their background, and the family pages are for any parent or carer trying to understand what support their child can get, what happens next and how to speak up in meetings.

The Family Navigator explains referrals, meetings, rights and next steps in plain English. It includes an anti-jargon glossary, a tracker for a child's support journey and practical guidance for families waiting for a diagnosis or assessment.

It also covers SEND, neurodiversity, school support and what to do when a referral has been made but a family is still waiting for help. There are activities that families can do together, as well as practical resources for workers supporting them.

It's free to use, you don't need an account and you don't have to sign up. It works on a phone.

Click here to find out more about Healthy Dialogues toolkit



Department for Education

DfE call for evidence- do you have experience of school exclusion?

Do you and your child, children or young person have experience of school exclusion? Here is an opportunity to input your experiences and thoughts to the Department for Education.

The Department for Education has launched a Call for Evidence on the school exclusion reform proposals set out in the Schools White Paper 'Every child achieving and thriving'. The proposals include a national framework for internal suspension, reintegration support partnerships following a suspension, and the provision of schoolwork during the first five school days of suspension or permanent exclusion.

They would very much value your contribution to this Call for Evidence to help them understand how these proposals may affect families, including those who have children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Call for Evidence, which has targeted questions for parents and carers, can be found here and closes on 19 November 2026.

Evidence gathered from this Call for Evidence will inform any subsequent consultation on the implementation of the school exclusion reforms.

For all enquiries about the school exclusion Call for Evidence, please email: exclusion.cfe@education.gov.uk.

Help shape a UK-wide vision for children's palliative care

Together for Short Lives, the leading UK-wide charity for children living with serious illness, their families and the people who support them. is developing a UK-wide National Vision for Children's Palliative Care. As a sector, we are keen to build a shared case for change and set out what excellent care should look like for families of babies, children, young people with serious illness over the next decade.

Please play your part today by telling Together for Short Lives what matters most to you.

Every child deserves many moments of happiness together with their loved ones. But for too many families who need children's palliative care, the system they rely on is at a crossroads. More children with serious illness are living longer with increasingly complex needs, yet access to support remains inconsistent, inequitable and financially fragile.

Together for Short Lives is developing the vision collaboratively, bringing together lived experience, professional expertise, service insight, research evidence and policy perspectives from across the UK. The work is designed to complement wider government and national policy developments, not duplicate them, and to focus on system improvement rather than a one-size-fits-all model.

Phase one, What really matters?, is the first opportunity to hear from families, professionals, services, charities, commissioners, policymakers and partners about the priorities that should shape the vision. Together for Short Lives is running an online survey, workshops and

roundtable discussions to understand what is working, where the system is falling short and what needs to change.

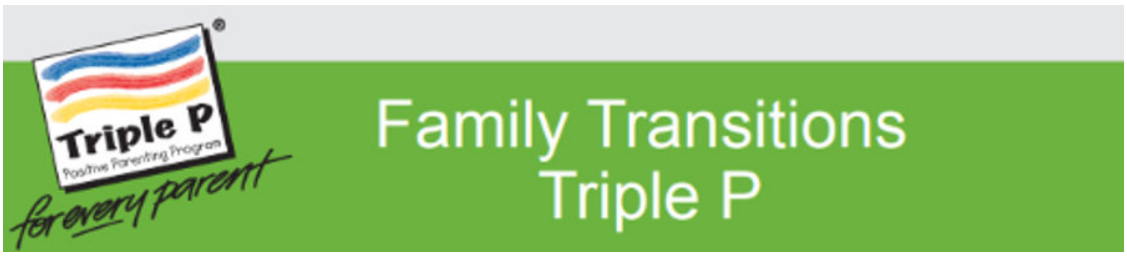
Please take a few minutes to complete our survey by 11:59 PM on Monday 2 November 2026:

Our survey for families is available here.

Our survey for professionals, services, charities, commissioners, policymakers and partners is available here.

Your voice and expertise are crucial. By taking part, you will help shape a stronger, more sustainable and more equitable future for children's palliative care across the UK.

Click here to find out more about Together for short lives



Are you seperated or seperating- and worried about your child getting caught in the middle?

Every Relationship Matters in Norfolk is pleased to be offering two Triple P Family Transitions groups, commencing November 2026.

We are offering a **morning group** and an **evening group delivered online via Microsoft Teams.**

The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program® knows all parents have different needs. That's why Triple P has many different ways for you to get your parenting help. So you can choose what suits you and your family best.

Who is this for?
Parents who are divorced or separated (with children and/or teenagers).

Triple P can help you:

- encourage behavior you like
- deal with problem behavior
- become confident as a parent

- be realistic about parenting
- take care of yourself

Is this you?

You're divorced or separated. Your child is caught in the middle. You may have problems with your extended family, your new partner or your ex. Holidays and birthday cause arguments. You may be concerned about your finances. And you're worried about the impact this is all having on your child's behavior and emotions. If this sounds familiar, Family Transitions Triple P can help.

What is Family Transitions Triple P?
Family Transitions is a group parenting program for divorced or separated parents. It gives you new ways to help protect your child – and yourself – from the fallout from a family split.

What happens at Family Transitions Triple P?
At Family Transitions sessions, you meet other parents going through many of the problems that come with divorce or separation. Your Family Transitions Triple P provider will give you new ideas, techniques and strategies to help you through the day-to-day dramas and ongoing trauma of your situation. These ideas can help you cope with stress, anger and change, resolve conflict, and communicate better with your ex.

Throughout the sessions, you'll also watch the Family Transitions DVD, which shows how other parents have used the ideas to help their families. And you'll also receive the Family Transitions Workbook to support you as you put your new ideas into practice.

How long does it take?
There are five weekly sessions of two hours each. After the five sessions, it's recommended you also do a Group or Standard Triple P program. This will give you a broader range of positive parenting ideas that can help you calmly manage other behavior and parenting issues in the home. When you're finished, you'll feel confident you're doing everything you can for your child.

Does my ex-partner need to attend with me?
No. Family Transitions is not a mediation program so you should attend on your own or, if you want support, with your new partner. If your ex-partner wants to do Family Transitions, you should attend separate groups.

A.M group starts on Thursday 12th November 09:30am-11:30am.

P.M group Starts on Thursday 12th November 18:00pm-20:00pm.

Both Sessions are one session a week for five weeks online via Microsoft Teams.

Any questions please contact roxanne.mcdowell@norfolk.gov.uk

Click here to sign up via clicking the Request Early Help button





Making Sense of SEND is coming to Thetford in November

A free information fair for parent carers who have a child or young person with SEND, and the professionals who work with them.

Join us for our next 'Making Sense of SEND' information fair! This time we're going to be at The Charles Burrell Centre Thetford.

These events are for parent carers who have a child or young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and the professionals who work with them. The aim is to share information with you and enable you to meet the people behind the services.

With over 20 SEND services in one place. Information stands offering advice, guidance and information. An opportunity to speak to services in person, discover new services who may be able to help.

- Listen to an informative talk.
- Opportunities to give feedback on experiences with an EHCP or SEND advisor representative.
- Connect with other parent/carers in a similar position.

Free refreshments will be available.

Making Sense of SEND is organised by the Norfolk SEND Local Offer team in partnership with Family Voice Norfolk.

One of our Family Voice Norfolk Ambassadors Rachel, will be attending this useful event. Please go and have a chat with her and tell her what's working well for you and your family at the moment and whats not working so well. Your voice really does matter to us!

Thursday 19th November, 10am-12noon at the Charles Burrell Centre, Staniforth Road, Thetford, IP24 3LH.

Click here to book a space at MSoS in Thetford



Department for Education

Biggest ever overhaul of SEND teacher training begins

Every single teacher in England will be empowered to better support children and young people with SEND, as government kickstarts the most comprehensive teacher training offer in a generation.

Developed by training experts Ambition Institute, and building on expertise from the sector, the first-of-their-kind, free, adaptable and practical training materials for schools and post-

16 settings are now available to be used in the way that works best for them, throughout the year or on existing training days.

The materials will put inclusion at the heart of every classroom and workshop, giving teachers practical techniques like breaking down instructions into digestible steps, pre-teaching specialist vocabulary, and carving out time for children and young people to practise it.

They will go hand in hand with online training for early years staff, developed and delivered by early years charity Dingley's Promise, supporting staff to use age-appropriate inclusive practices from day one - like using visual timetables to help children with transitions between activities, or adapting environments to reduce unnecessary noise that can be a barrier to communication and emotional regulation.

The move is the first step as part of the government's wider £200 million investment into teacher training to transform support for children and young people with SEND, ending a postcode lottery that has left too many families fighting for support.

- First-of-their-kind training materials published in first step towards every teacher being supported to teach children and young people with SEND
- Marks the start of the government's £200million-backed teacher training offer with practical advice on inclusive teaching techniques
- Dedicated training materials across early years, schools and post-16 settings in a bid to identify and meet children's needs earlier

Click here to read the press release from the DfE in full



healthwatch Norfolk

Help shape the future of hospital care in Norfolk and Waveney

Healthwatch Norfolk has been independently commissioned by the Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group, which brings together James Paget University Hospitals, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals, to hear directly from patients, residents and communities.

The aim is to understand people's experiences of hospital care today, what matters most to them and what they would like hospital care to look like in the future. The feedback gathered will help inform the development of the Group's future Clinical Strategy.

We recognise that completing an online survey will not work for everyone. People can also share their views over the telephone by calling Healthwatch Norfolk on 0808 168 9669. Alternative formats, including Easy Read and large print, are available by contacting enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

This is an important opportunity for local people to tell us what matters to them. No decisions are being made through this survey; the purpose is to listen, understand and make sure people's experiences and priorities help inform the work as it develops.

Click here for the Healthwatch survey



Healthwatch survey on experiences of receiving support from adult social care in Norfolk

This survey is for people currently receiving support from adult social care in Norfolk. Adult social care is support that helps adults who may need extra help because of disability, illness, frailty or other circumstances to live as independently as possible. It can include things like help at home, personal care, supported living, day opportunities, equipment or adaptations, direct payments, short-term reablement, or support from a social worker. It can also include advice and support for unpaid carers.

What is this survey about?
Healthwatch Norfolk is working with Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Care Association on the Norfolk Neighbourhood Learning Partnership (NNLP). The project is exploring how adult social care can work more locally, prevent problems earlier, connect people with community support, and provide more joined-up, person-centred help. This survey asks about your current experience of care and support, so we can compare this with people's experiences as new neighbourhood approaches develop.

The survey will take around 5-10 minutes to complete, although all the questions are optional.

If you have extra feedback you'd like to give, please call Healthwatch Norfolk on 01953 856029, and we will arrange a time to ring you back to gather your views. Alternatively, please email: enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

Who is Healthwatch Norfolk?
Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients, service users and Carers in the county. We gather your views on health and social care services or charities to ensure they are heard by the people in charge.

How will the survey results be used?
Survey responses are being collected and analysed by Healthwatch Norfolk. You can read our full privacy policy here.

All responses to the survey are anonymous, so nobody will know what you have said. The information will be used by Healthwatch Norfolk to make recommendations to adult social care on how services can be improved across Norfolk.

Need help?
If you need any support to complete the survey please contact us and we can arrange a telephone call to discuss how we can support you to complete the survey.

Tel: 01953 856029 or Email.

To complete the survey scan the QR code above or click the green button below.

Click here for the Healthwatch Norfolk survey on adult social care

Norfolk Crucial Crew- Keeping Norfolk safe - sessions for Home Educated children

Crucial Crew is a multi-agency educational project, led by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.

With various partners we engage with Year 6 students across the county delivering safety messages in a fun and interactive way through hazards presented in a safe environment.

Our aim is to help children stay safe and learn valuable life skills. Young people are one of our best communication tools for spreading safety messages. They can share them with family, friends, carers, and the wider community and take forward these life skills into the future.

If you are a home educated family and would like to be involved in one of our specific Home educated community Crucial Crew sessions, please email FireCrucialCrew@norfolk.gov.uk to be added to our HE mailing list.

And this year, the offer is being expanded to SEND pupils with dedicated sessions being held in March at Letton Hall. Crucial Crew has also expanded its offer to align with Norfolk County Council's Flourishing in Norfolk strategy for children and young people -responding to their needs and aspirations and making sure they have access to the services and support to reach their potential.

If your school isn't signed up yet, please email crucialcrew@norfolk.gov.uk

For more information about the Crucial Crew, dates and venues click here



Healthy living event for electively home educated children and families in Great Yarmouth

Norfolk County Council's Public Health and Children's Services teams are delighted to invite electively home-educated children, young people and their families to our Healthy Living Event.

On the day, children and young people can spend time speaking with a range of stallholders and other home schooled children. Parents and carers will have the opportunity to chat with

and explore stalls from local services and businesses, enjoy refreshments, and find out more about immunisations.

9th November 10am-12pm

The Marina Centre, Great Yarmouth, NR30 2ER

Stall holders:

- Matthew project
- iCash
- Tech skills for life
- Menscraft
- NHS Immunisation services
- And more...

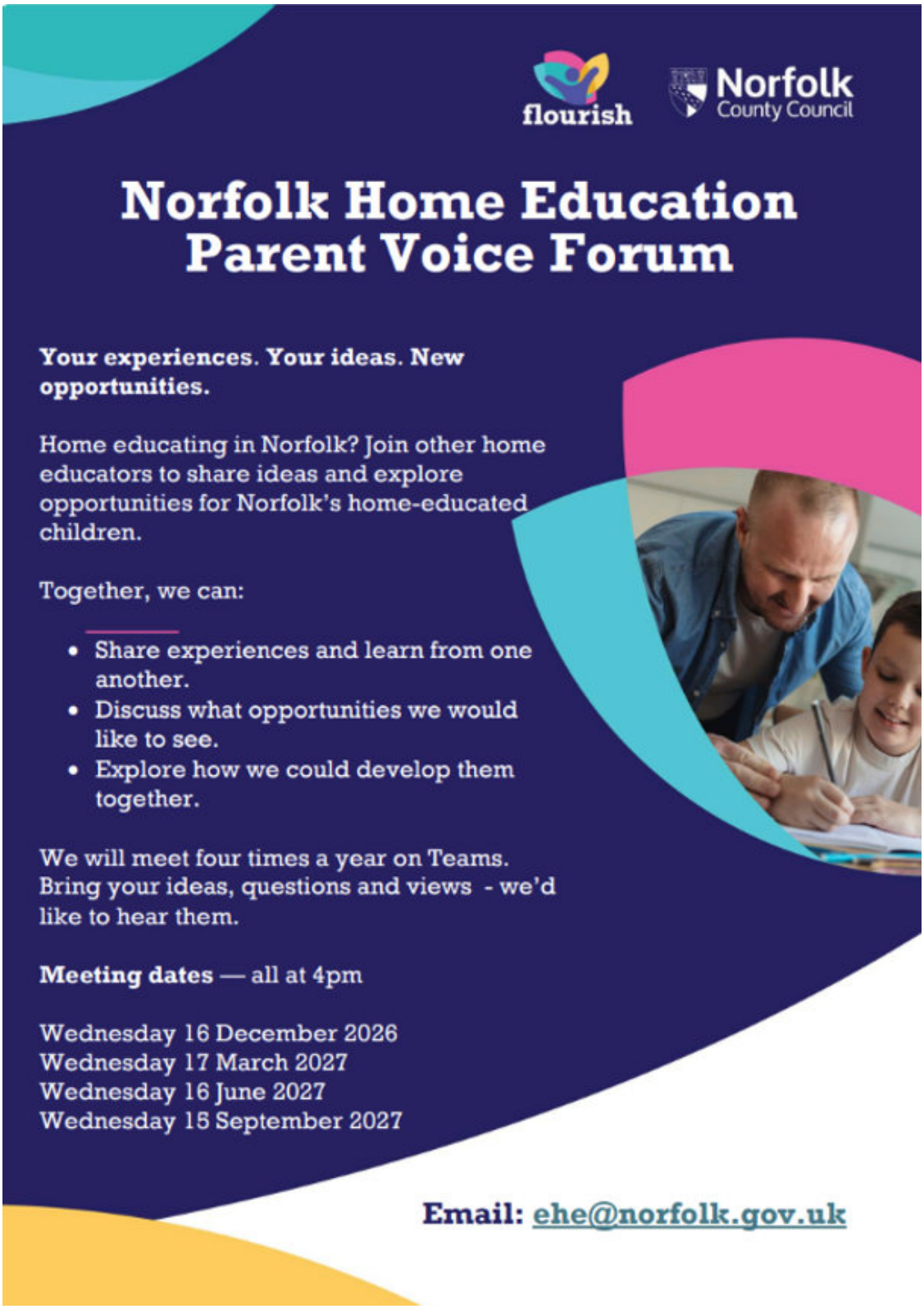
Facilities:

- Parking/ disabled parking
- Toilets/ disabled toilets
- Ramp access
- Light refreshments

For more information email or call 01603 307733

Click here to register for the free prize draw and for more information about the event





Norfolk Home Education Parent Voice Forum

Norfolk County Council have a new opportunity for parents who home educate their children:

Norfolk Home Education parent voice forum. Your experiences. Your ideas. New opportunities.

Home educating in Norfolk? Join other home educators to share ideas and explore opportunities for Norfolk's home-educated children.

Together, we can:

- Share experiences and learn from one another.
- Discuss what opportunities we would like to see.
- Explore how we could develop them together.

We will meet four times a year on Teams. Bring your ideas, questions and views- we'd like to hear them.

Meeting dates- all at 4pm.

- Wednesday 16 December 2026
- Wednesday 17th March 2027
- Wednesday 16 June 2027
- Wednesday 15 September 2027

Click here to email to express an interest



SEND Protect WEBINAR- Protecting Your SEND Child's Financial Future!

Learn all about Wills, LPA's, Deputyships, Trusts to protect means tested benefits, protection and saving tools- FREE online session.

Tuesday 24th November 2026- 8pm (1hour session).

Click here to book a place

Help shape the future of early years SEND provision in Norfolk

Family Voice Norfolk would encourage you to share your experiences and thoughts around early years provision in Norfolk for SEND children by completing this questionnaire or, if preferred, give Shelly a call on the number given or send her an email. It's a great opportunity to share lived experiences of the early years in Norfolk.

Kids has been commissioned by the Department for Education to deliver an eight-week Early Years SEND Sufficiency Support Project with Norfolk County Council.
The project is exploring whether there is enough suitable, accessible and inclusive early years provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It is particularly interested in the experiences of families who may face additional barriers to finding and accessing appropriate provision.

The views of parents and carers are central to this work. We would like to hear from Norfolk families whose child:

- currently attends an early years setting, nursery or childminder;
- has previously attended early years provision;
- has additional needs or emerging developmental concerns, whether diagnosed or not;
- has required additional support or adjustments within their setting;
- has experienced difficulty finding a setting able to meet their child's needs; or
- has been unable to access early years provision.

We want to understand:

- what is working well for children and families;
- how easy or difficult it is to find suitable provision;
- whether children receive the support and adjustments they need;
- the barriers families experience when accessing provision;
- whether some families or communities face greater difficulties; and
- what needs to change or improve locally.

Parents and carers can contribute by completing our short questionnaire, by clicking the green button below.
Families may also contribute through a telephone conversation or written feedback to Michelle Marlow, details as below. We are interested in hearing both positive and difficult experiences.
A child does not need to have a formal diagnosis or an Education, Health and Care Plan for their family to take part.

The project is time limited, so we would be grateful to hear from interested parents and carers as soon as possible. The experiences shared will help inform the local assessment, recommendations and wider learning for the Department for Education.
For further information, please contact:
Michelle Marlow Head of Service Development and Growth, Kids
Email: shelly.marlow@kids.org.uk
Telephone: 07989 809206

Click here to complete Kids- Early Years SEND Sufficiency for parent carers questionnaire

Online workshop for Early Years SEND provision in Norfolk

Kids has been commissioned by the Department for Education to deliver a short Early Years SEND Sufficiency Support Project in partnership with Norfolk.

The project is looking at whether there is enough suitable, accessible and inclusive early years provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. We want to understand what is working well, the practical barriers providers experience and what changes or support would make the greatest difference.

Parent/Carer experiences are essential to understanding the different SEND provisions and their pros and cons. With this in mind we have organised online workshops where you can share your experiences in a safe and relaxed environment. These are open to anyone within the Norfolk area.

We are running two online Teams workshops one during the day and one in the evening, this will hopefully give you a chance to attend and share your lived experiences. We will be asking a few questions about your experience to understand more about people's journeys. These workshops aren't tests, so there are no wrong questions or answers. We are excited to hear all different points of views.

Day time workshop

11:00am – 12:00pm

Thursday 12th November 2026 click link to Join.

Evening workshop

7:00pm – 8:00pm

Friday 13th November 2026 click link to join.

We look forward to seeing you and hearing about your experiences. If you have any questions, please contact:

Michelle Marlow
Head of Service Development and Growth, Kids
Email: or Telephone: 07989 809206



In person workshops in South Creake hosted by Kids

In person workshops in November at South Creake.

- Wednesday 4th November- Introduction to Neurodiversity
- Wednesday 11th November- Behaviour
- Wednesday 18th November- Demand Avoidance (PDA)
- Wednesday 25th November Parental resilience

10:30am-12:30pm

South Creake Village Hall

The Green

Fakenham

Norfolk NR21 9PD

Email Sally at Kids for more information.

Click here to book a place



In person workshops in Pickenham hosted by Kids

In person workshops in November at Pickenham.

- Thursday 5th November- Introduction to Neurodiversity
- Thursday 12th November- Behaviour
- Thursday 19th November- Demand Avoidance (PDA)
- Thursday 26th November Parental Resilience

10:30am-12:30pm

Pickenham Community Hub

South Pickenhem Road

Swaffham

Norfolk

PE37 8DA

Email Sally at Kids for more information.

Click here to book a place





Breckland carer wellness and information event in Dereham

Are you looking after someone?

Then the Carers Voice- Breckland carer wellness and information event is for you.

Wednesday 18th November 2026

10.30am to 1:30pm

Dereham Memorial Hall, 62a Norwich Street, Dereham, NR19 1AD

Come along at a time that suits you.

FREE wellness sessions are available to carers on a first come first served basis.

You can:

Apply for a carers identity passport

Get information and advice

Get local health and exercise information

Have FREE refreshments

One of our Family Voice Norfolk Ambassadors Rachel, will be attending this useful event. Please go and have a chat with her and tell her what's working well for you and your family at the moment and what's not working so well. Your voice really does matter to us!

For more information contact Carers Voice by clicking here or call them on 07932095260



NHS England

Unpaid Carers Bi-Monthly Lunch and Learn Webinar: Supporting Young Carers' Mental Health and Wellbeing

You are invited to register for our Unpaid Carers Bi-Monthly Lunch and Learn Webinar: Supporting Young Carers' Mental Health and Wellbeing – by Kooth taking place on Wednesday 18th November 2026, from 1:30pm to 2:30pm.

Our bi-monthly Lunch and Learn webinars bring together carers and professionals from across the country in an informal setting to share learning, exchange ideas, and explore ways to improve the identification and support of unpaid carers.

Join Julian Bradwell and colleagues from Kooth to learn more about Soluna by Kooth, a digital mental health and wellbeing platform supporting young people aged 10 and over.

Soluna provides a safe, free, private and confidential and flexible space where young people can access mental health and wellbeing support, with no waiting lists and without needing a referral.

The session will explore how digital support can help young people access information, resources and support around their mental health and wellbeing, and consider how services such as Soluna can complement wider support available to young carers and their families.

Join us to learn, share and explore how working together can make a difference to the mental health and wellbeing of young carers and the wider unpaid carer community.

The agenda and joining link will be circulated in due course.

Please note: Registration opens on Friday 9th November at 5:00pm and closes on Tuesday 17th at 5:00pm.

Click here to register a place





What makes a good school? Research project

A collaborative online research project where parents and carers from across England come together to explore and develop their ideas about what makes a good school.

Facilitated by Chiara Behrenroth Trainee Educational Psychologist UCL Institute of Education.

What is This Research?

- 3 core online sessions with a small group of parents and carers
- 50 minutes each
- Once a week
- Starting week of 9th November 2026

Together, we'll explore what should really matter when schools are evaluated.

Who Can Take Part?

We're inviting parents and carers in England who:

Have a child or young person aged 5-16

Whose children attend a state-funded mainstream or special school.

Are interested in sharing thoughts and ideas.

You don't need research experience or specialist knowledge. Your experience as a parent carer are what matter.

Why Your Voice Matters

Parents and carers know schools differently.
You know your child, experience their education over time and notice things that others may not.
Your experiences, insights and priorties in your child's education offer unique knowledge about what makes, a good school.
This research creates a space for parents and carers to come together and explore these different experiences and ideas.

What to Expect
We'll agree on the days and times together
Option to continue after the 3 sessions — entirely your choice
A relaxed, friendly space
No prepartion needed
No right or wrong answers

Your Group, Your Conversations

You won't be given a set of questions

We'll start with what you think matters when thinking about a good school.

As our Conversations develop, we'll decide together what we want to explore further.

Well keep coming back to our ideas so we can question, develop and build on them together.

Your Privacy Maters

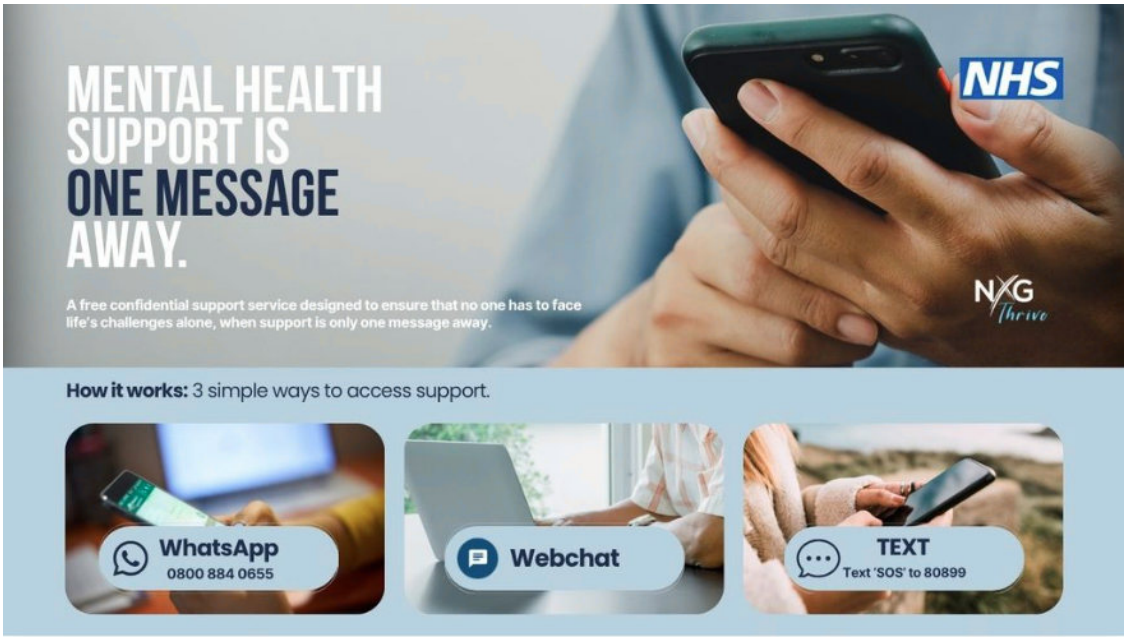
A confidential group space

Your information will be kept securely

Shared ideas, shared decisions. Our conversations will form part of my doctoral research and will help inform my thesis. We'll talk together about how the ideas we develop as a group are shared more widely.

To email Chiara click here.

Click here for more information



New 24/7 mental health crisis text service

Mental health support is now one message away.
If you're feeling anxious, overwhelmed, stressed or low, a new service can help. The East of England Mental Health Crisis Text Service offers free, confidential support from trained mental health professionals, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
You can message about anything that's on your mind. You don't need a referral, and you don't need to give your name to start. The service is open to people of all ages.

Text SOS to 80899, WhatsApp 0800 884 0655 or visit nxgthrive.co.uk/crisis-text-service.
The service is commissioned by the NHS and delivered by NXG Thrive. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999.

family voice norfolk
together improving services

Newsletter

An easy way to share our newsletter

If you would like to share our newsletter with friends, colleagues or other parent carers or professionals click here for a PDF version.

There are so many ways you can get in touch with Family Voice Norfolk...

- You can contact our **Membership Secretary Kate** on **07950 302937** or at membership@familyvoice.org.uk
- Or message us via:
  - www.familyvoice.org.uk
  - FamilyVoiceNorfolk
- Or write to us at Family Voice Norfolk, C/O Larking Gowen, 1st Floor Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE
- Or if you are a family member you can join our Family Voice Members Chat Room on Facebook here

Family Voice Norfolk, C/O Larking Gowen, 1st Floor Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE

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