



Building
stronger
families



Norfolk & Waveney Autism and ADHD Support Service July 2023 Newsletter

**NORFOLK & WAVENEY AUTISM/ADHD SUPPORT SERVICE HAS A NEW,
DEDICATED TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR WEST AND CENTRAL NORFOLK**

For information, advice and support, booking a place on our courses, enquiring about a drop-in group or making a referral. Please now ring us on **01603 972589**



1 - 01603 972589

For East Norfolk and Waveney our number remains 01493 650220

For our West Suffolk ND Support Service the number is 01284 636655

Welcome to our July 2023 newsletter.

You have nearly made it through another school year. Even if school is very supportive of your child or young person's needs and they enjoy school, it can be bit of a grind getting everyone awake, dressed, fed and out the door in the mornings. So enjoy the long summer break when it arrives, whether you are getting involved in one of the summer activities we will be telling you about later in the newsletter, or if you are just mainly chilling and recharging all of your batteries. For many children and young people with additional needs, and their parents or carers, school can be a challenge for lots of reasons, and concerns about school and learning are brought up a lot when we are talking to parents. We will be discussing some of the main questions which parents and carers ask us in this month's newsletter.

Our teams do not run their usual drop-in support groups during August because you all have your children at home with you..... but our Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service does not take a holiday. We continue to run our pre and post diagnosis courses on Zoom and of course we are still available to offer advice and support over the phone as well as resources and signposting. See our new phone number above and all our contact details at the end of the newsletter.

The newsletter contains this month:

- **School - Questions and Answers**
- **SEND Forum**
- **Summer Activities**
- **Resources and Events**
- **Upcoming Courses, Workshops and Support Groups**
- **Family Action 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 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.

School Questions and Answers



Here are just a few of the questions we are asked by worried parents.

"My child is so emotional and angry when he gets home from school but the school tells me that they just do not see this side of him during the school day so cannot help."

We know that a lot of children with additional needs will 'mask' when away from the home, particularly in school and schools are definitely familiar with the concept. We also know that staff in classrooms are under a lot of pressure and have to prioritise where to put their time and effort. It is quite a lot to ask that they spend more time supporting children who are not demonstrating clear difficulties. But we also know that looking okay and being okay are often very different things, and what parents can be dealing with is the emotional toll of suppressing difficult feelings for most of the day. What looks like anger can be frustration, exhaustion or anxiety. Clearly communicate with the school that your child is distressed after the school day and, if they can verbalise some of what is difficult for them in the class, pass that on. With more information the class teacher may be able to make some small adjustments to support your child when they are planning the lesson and these do not have to be costly. If your child has been accepted onto the Neurodevelopmental Assessment pathway, given the demands of the service, the referral has shown clear evidence that this is something which needs to be investigated. The advice from the Neurodevelopmental Service is not to wait for diagnosis but to start making some adjustments to support the child and that applies to schools also. Allowing more movement, following through on promises, providing ear defenders, allowing processing time, providing more scaffolding for attention difficulties, a time-out card, or reducing the amount of homework are just a few examples of small adjustments that may make a big difference to your child.

"My child can be quite aggressive with her siblings after school but doesn't want to talk to me about her feelings."

We know that for children who have been containing a lot of difficult feelings all day, these are likely to bubble over when they find themselves in their safe space again. And in this situation, **you** may be their safe space. Seeing you can trigger this response immediately and then you have the difficulty of getting a distressed child safely home. And once at home the feelings can spill over again resulting in a loss of control. Recognising that this quite challenging behaviour is actually distressed behaviour is key. As their anxiety rises and more adrenaline flows, the top part of the brain which reasons and problem solves and uses language to resolve disputes begins to no longer be in charge and the bottom part of the brain takes over and is really only responsible for those survival reflexes of fight, flight and freeze. When it is SAFE to do so, so not next to the busy road, you need to give as much space as you can. She is feeling under attack so take a step back. Do not try to reason with her, she is beyond reason. The part of the brain which reasons is not available at the moment. Do not ask what the problem is, she is not capable of formulating the language to explain her feelings. Once you are home, encourage your child to go to their safe space. This will be different for every child. It may be their bedroom but it could equally be a pile of cushions down the side of the sofa, or a tent, or a big cardboard box or on their trampoline or may involved them kicking a ball in the garden or sitting stroking the dog. If they are inclined to be destructive when in their safe space, give them things they can safely be destructive with, paper to rip up or to scrunch into a ball and throw, or cushions to punch or throw and some parents provide children with bubble wrap to pop. Remember that it is a 'safe space' and not a punishment for behaviour they have little control over. Ask them to come back to you when they feel calmer and when they do, take this opportunity to help them to make a clear link between that calm behaviour and your POSITIVE attention. You may not feel like being kind to them when they have appeared so unkind ten minutes earlier but think of it as a strategy and name and then reward the calmer behaviour. "I am glad you have calmed down because now I can make a drink and snack for you." It takes practise but is worth the effort. And you can talk to them about what came before but not right now because talking about difficult things so soon can trigger another emotional outburst. Take the win, they calmed down and you are praising the calm behaviour and you can tackle the issues around what triggered the behaviour at another time.

"What kinds of adjustments could the school be making to support my autistic child in the classroom?"

There is no easy answer because every child is unique and so will require an individual approach. And of course every school environment is different, with its own unique ethos, and different staff with varying experiences of teaching children with autism. There will be some very general approaches such as visual timetables, lots of structure and routine and consistency, the use of quiet spaces in the classroom, nurture groups, play therapy, sensory awareness and sensory circuits, which should in fact be beneficial to most children in the classroom. But making those further small, 'reasonable adjustments' to support an individual child will require communication between home and school, and adults in school really getting to know them and recognising when they are finding things difficult. We have already talked about masking but there are usually some signs that anxiety is rising. Chewing sleeves of school jumpers or their own fingernails, putting their head down on the desk, asking to go the toilet too often, hair pulling, rocking, making noises, low self-esteem, lack of resilience (choosing to not try rather than try and fail), putting hands over ears, not volunteering answers to questions, friendship difficulties or isolating themselves at playtimes, can all be signs that

they are finding things difficult. A trial and error approach may be needed to find some adjustments which work for your child.

For those who just find the classroom environment quite overwhelming at times in terms of noise or numbers of children, a time out card can help. This allows them a set time in a calm zone inside the classroom or, for older children, perhaps in the library or another room nearby. For older children who may feel self-conscious about asking for time out, this can take the form of a card with red on one side and green on the other which they just leave on the desk green side up until they start to feel anxiety rising and then they can turn it over to show adults they need to leave. In primary school it can be useful to have some ear defenders hanging up for 'anyone' to use, so that your child is not made to feel different, and it would be great if the teacher or TA sometimes wore them. For children in primary who regularly get overwhelmed some schools have begun to ask only for 15 minutes of work from them at a time and then allow 5 or 10 minutes of colouring-in (or some other activity which they find calming and soothing). Access to a sensory box full of interesting textures and shapes and colours can be helpful as can some time with a weighted lap blanket or heavy toy on their lap. We know that proprioceptive, weight bearing exercise, can be soothing and this can be camouflaged as a classroom job of moving books from one place to another or rearranging chairs. Support to remember a task and then start that task will reduce anxiety as will allowing more processing time. Our courses recommend that parents give their children at least 12 seconds of processing time before repeating a question or instruction and this would be so beneficial also in schools. We do hear quite often about young people who get detentions for not answering teachers straight away and yet the parent tells us that at home they have to allow them a lot of processing time before they get a response. And when young people with autism think they have been treated unfairly it can easily lead to school reluctance or school refusal.



"What should a school's approach be to a child with ADHD?"

If you received last month's newsletter, you will have read that there is a movement towards ADHD-friendly classrooms for all children because so many children and young people, whether they ever get a formal diagnosis or not, have tendencies towards inattention and hyperactivity. Building more movement into teaching has been shown to be beneficial for all children, so stand up rather than hand up, making a few standing desks available, acting out situations in Literacy and physically adding and removing objects in Primary level Maths, involving everyone in classroom jobs and making sure that teaching is delivered in time-limited chunks. Similarly, to support poor focus, paper copies of the teacher's instructions for an independent task, already given verbally, can be made available to pick up on the way back to your desk or similarly, pre-printed worksheets with the key instructions highlighted. They could be encouraged to use the classroom I pads to take a

photographs of key instructions from the board, not only will they have it to refer to but getting the photograph involves more movement and we know that copying from the board can be quite difficult for children with neurodiversity. Or let them take a video and listen to it, through ear phones, as often as they need before starting the activity. The beauty of these general class approaches, is that they allow children to access these types of support without feeling any more different from their peers than they already do.

SEND Forum is coming to THETFORD



If you live in, or near, Thetford and you have concerns about school and learning, make a date in your diary for 11 July 2023.

The latest SEND Forum has been organised by SENDIASS and Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service will be one of many services there to give advice, resources and signposting.



Making Sense of SEND

FREE INFORMATION FAIR

 **Tuesday 11 July 2023**  **10am-12pm**

 **Charles Burrell Centre, Thetford**

For professionals and for parents and carers of children aged 0-25 with SEND. Information stands will include:


















Optional talk from 10.30am: Early Years Advisors Lindsey Symington & Carla Ward will be giving an overview of Early Years Transitions!



SCAN ME

Free refreshments will be provided, and you are welcome to stay for as long as you'd like.

For more info and to book your free place through Eventbrite, scan the QR code

Summer Activities for the Family





Go to [The Norwich Mumbler](#) for lots of information about what is going on in Norfolk during the summer holiday holiday including this selection of free activities:

[Holt Country Park](#)

Norwich Road, Holt, NR25 7SR

Holt Country Park, which is just a short drive from the Georgian town of Holt, is a wonderful escape from the hustle and bustle of the North Norfolk coastline.

Here you can totally escape and go deep into the pretty woodland, meandering along one of the coloured trails which can take you on a varying lengths of walks.

Free admission but there is a charge for parking.

Contact 01263 516062 for more information.

[Norwich Munzee Trail](#)

The world of Munzee

Munzee is an exciting 21st century scavenger hunt for everyone to enjoy and it's a great way to explore Norfolk.

Have fun competing with your friends and family to hunt and capture a trail of QR codes hidden in the surroundings.

Answer our quiz questions and score points for each Munzee you capture while discovering places you never knew existed and is absolutely free.

How to play Munzee:

- 1) Download the free Munzee app to your smartphone from Google Play Store, iPhone App Store or Windows Store and sign up for a free account. Visit the Munzee website for more information
- 2) Visit the links on the NCC website to find out all you need to know about our current Munzee Trails including trail maps, top tips, instructions and prizes you can win.

mail norfolktrails@norfolk.gov.uk if you would like any more help or advice. Happy Munzee-ing!

[Ranworth Broad](#)

NR13 6HY

Ranworth broad is brilliant and pushchair friendly. Car park near the staith, near Norfolk wildlife trust office where you can buy a boat trip if you wish. The Maltings pub has been recently totally renovated and we had a great time the last time we went. Then you have a walk pushchair friendly

to the actual reserve, which starts with an amazing gigantic tree. Then you have a short walk on a wooden path through wet land and reeds to get to the visitor centre where there are activities for kids, binoculars, ice creams and hot drinks from a machine.

The only thing is the lack of toilets. From the visitor centre, you can have a 45min boat trip around the broad to see the terns, gulls, cormorans, crested grebes and more sometimes. All our family love it! And if you feel like it there is the possibility of climbing to the roof of the nearby church. I would say for kids 4yo and over. C H-B, Apr'17



[Sheringham Park](#)

Visitor Centre, Upper Sheringham, NR26 8TL

(whatthreewords: hacksaw.lessening.titles)

Spend a day here exploring 1000 acres of varying habitat including woodland, parkland and cliff top. Look out for wildlife, 3 species of deer can be seen alongside a wide variety of birds and butterflies.

Free admission but there is a charge for parking (unless a member of The National Trust)

Contact 01263 820550 for more information.

[Sloughbottom Park BMX](#)

Sloughbottom Park, Drayton Road, Norwich, NR3 2PW

The world class BMX track at Sloughbottom Park is open to the general public free of charge all year round.

The track is also home to Norwich Flyers BMX Club which runs regular training sessions and local/regional competitions.

The club, run by volunteers, is open to people of all ages and caters for beginners through to World Championship finalists.



[BIG NORFOLK HOLIDAY FUN](#) IS BACK.....and you can get booking now by clicking the link. **GET BOOKING - SPACES FILLING FAST**

The Big Norfolk Holiday Fun activity programme provides holiday activities for children and young people aged 5-16 (or 4 if your child is slightly younger but in school) throughout the holidays.

Those who claim means-tested free school meals can claim free spaces on the activities, whilst paid spots are available on many activities for those who don't.

Activities are as inclusive and as accessible as possible. This includes those with special educational needs or disabilities. Please contact the activity provider directly in advance with any queries or concerns so we can ensure your child has a fun and enjoyable experience.

PLEASE NOTE THAT BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE YOUR CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON CAN TAKE PART.

AND THAT THERE IS A COST FOR CHILDREN NOT ON FREE SCHOOL MEALS.

There are too many great activities to include everything here so go to the website for more information. Here is just a selection of what is on offer.



Fun Zone with Banana and Muffin Workshop in Buxton on Wednesday 9th August

Come and make chocolate and banana muffins. As well as taking part in this activity, children will be able to play with games, take part in quiet activities and play outside (weather permitting).

Running for over 30 years, Tots2Teens offer a wide range of outreach sessions in all school holidays for children living in or attending school in the Broadland District Council area.

This activity is for 5 - 12 year olds.

Please note, booking is mandatory. Visit <https://t2t.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/login.aspx>

Get Set for Paddleboarding - Monday 7th August in Norwich

Come and get 'ready to ride' on a beginner paddleboard session. This adventure is the perfect introduction for those who have little or no experience. Packed lunches will be provided

This activity is for those aged between 10 and 16 only.

Adventure Sessions in Thetford - Separate sessions for 7-11 year olds and 12-16 year olds on various dates

Our awesome instructors will deliver a range of challenging, fun and exciting activities such as climbing, zip wire, archery, canoeing etc. A hearty and healthy lunch is provided for all participants.



Football Fun Camps - Wymondham - Various Dates

The Football Fun Factory's Camps are open to boys and girls aged 4-12 of any ability or experience level. The FFF offers a range of fun and exciting inflatable football activities which your child will love and no previous experience of playing football is needed to attend.

Each Camp we operate has an inflatable football pitch, giant inflatable goal and inflatable football dartboard, giving your child the chance to take part in some incredible football-related experiences and activities.



Essex County Council, in partnership with NHS and local SEND agencies has produced a resource for parents and carers

We think it is comprehensive and accessible and wanted to share it with you.



[SUPPORTING YOUR NEURODIVERSE CHILD](#) click on this link

OUR Upcoming Courses, Workshops and Support Groups



Drop-in support groups - Come along and meet other parents/carers to share similar experiences.

Friendly and informal, No need to book. Just come along for a tea/coffee, meet other parents and members of our team.

KING'S LYNN

DOBBIES, next to TESCO HARDWICK, KING'S LYNN PE30 4WQ

Come along and join us on..... Tuesday 4th July - 9.30 am - 11.00 am, FIND US IN THE COMFY, SOFA AREA.

RING **01603 972589** or EMAIL Swaffham@family-action.org.uk for more information.

SWAFFHAM

UPSTAIRS IN COSTA COFFEE, MARKET PLACE, SWAFFHAM, PE37 7AB

Come along and join us in the quiet, upstairs room in Costa Coffee on **Wednesday 5th July - 9.30 am - 11.00 am.**

RING **01603 972589** or EMAIL Swaffham@family-action.org.uk for more information.

GORLESTON

AT THE STEAM HOUSE CAFE, 139 HIGH STREET, GORLESTON-ON-SEA, NR31 6RB

Come along and meet our team and other parents on **Wednesday 5th July** from 10:00 to 11:30am

RING **01493 650220** or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.

LOWESTOFT

AT THE RIVERSIDE FAMILY HUB, 6 CANNING ROAD, LOWESTOFT, NR33 0TQ

Come along and join us at this new venue on **Thursday 6th July** from 10:00 to 11:30am

RING **01493 650220** or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.

AYLSHAM

NEW VENUE - NORFOLK & WAVENEY MIND, 1 RED LION STREET, AYLSHAM, NR11 6ER - NEW VENUE

Come along and join us at a new venue on **Tuesday 18th July** from 10.00 - 12 noon

RING **01603 972589** or EMAIL Swaffham@family-action.org.uk for more information.

WE ARE SO LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO ONE OF OUR SUPPORT SESSIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE - Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service Team.

PLAN BEE



2 - When a flower is not growing, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower. AD Heijer

Plan Bee – Understanding and supporting your child or young person with additional needs

‘Plan Bee’ is a FREE 3 week course (2hrs per week) written by two Clinical Psychologists working in Norfolk and is aimed at parents or carers of children or young people with additional needs including suspected or diagnosed Autism or ADHD.

During the three week course, we will explore:

- Behaviour as communication.
- Understanding the full range of needs your child may have.
- Developing a plan to support behaviour in difficult situations which can then be shared with grandparents, schools and others.
- Strategies for creating an environment in which your child or young person can thrive.
- Sharing experiences, challenges and successes with other parents experiencing similar issues and learning from these.

JULY - Tuesday 4th/11th/18th July from 10-12 noon - via Zoom - FULLY BOOKED

JULY - Wednesday 5th/12th/19th July from 10-12 noon at Gorleston Library - spaces available

AUGUST - Thursday 10th/17th/24th August from 10-12 noon via Zoom - spaces available

RING 01603 972589 or EMAIL Swaffham@family-action.org.uk FOR MORE INFORMATION or to book a place

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



Family Action is working with Norfolk Community Health and Care to run the Puffins ASD Programme for Parents/Carers of children or young people **with a diagnosis of Autism**. This is a free, comprehensive, four week course with sessions led by Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy professionals from within the Neurodevelopmental Service and by the Autism Specialist Educational Team.

The Puffins course running in New Costessey in July is now fully booked.

What? Puffins Autism Programme - AUGUST 2023 - only a few spaces remaining

Where? ZOOM on-line course

When? Mondays 7th/14th/21st AUGUST 4th SEPTEMBER 9:30 am to 12:30 pm (apart from first session 9.30 am - 1.00 pm)

Contact? Call us on 01603 972589 or email swaffham@family-action.org.uk

CYGNETS Course

Please call 01493 650220 if you would like to be placed on the waiting list.

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.

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

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

Family Action FamilyLine



[FamilyLine](#) is a service for adult family members that aims to:

- provide both immediate and long-term support
- help with practical information and guidance
- provide emotional and listening support
- help with understanding and accessing relevant services and information
- provide regular one-to-one befriending
- support to service users feeling isolated
- access to short term telephone counselling
- a referral into our many projects across England and Wales, where relevant.

Family members aged 18 years old and over from anywhere in England, Wales and the Isle of Man can get in touch with the service for free via telephone, text message, web chat or email, using the details below.

Opening times: Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm

Contact details: Telephone: 0808 802 6666

Text message: 07537 404 282

Email: familyline@family-action.org.uk

Live web chat

Contacting FamilyLine out of hours

Do you need FamilyLine but it's out of our operation hours? You can either call back in our opening hours, leave a message on our voice mail for a call back in our operation hours or if you're in crisis you can contact our crisis line to get in touch with a trained professional.

Text FAMILYACTION to 85258

Our crisis messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. We know that getting the correct support at the correct time is so beneficial which is why we've introduced our crisis line. This service is delivered in partnership with [Shout](#).

About our Service - Contact Details



To contact us for advice and support, or to book a place on one of our courses or information sessions, please use the details below.

For West and Central Norfolk **01603 972589** or email swaffham@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.