



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

January 2025 Newsletter

We hope that the holiday season was all that you wanted it to be and wish you a very happy 2025. Some of you will be already worrying about the return to school and for others it cannot come soon enough. Raising children with any kinds of additional needs can be isolating, worrying, tiring, rewarding and uplifting - all at the same time. We hear from many parents that they are dealing on a daily basis with children or young people who seem unable to do what they are asked to do, no matter how simple the request may be. A certain amount of resistance to demands is quite typical for any child or young person but sometimes it becomes clear that there is something more going on. In some cases, you may be told during the assessment process that Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) or Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) are part of your child's profile. Read on for more discussion of PDA and ODD, how they differ and what it means for your child and for your parenting.



This month's newsletter includes:

- **Some Dates for your Diary**
- **PDA**
- **ODD**
- **Our Upcoming Courses**
- **Other Services**
- **Link to FA's West Suffolk Service Newsletter**
- **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.

Some Dates for your Diary

Making Sense of Send.....in CROMER



Norfolk County Council and The Local Offer are holding their next

MAKING SENSE OF SEND event in CROMER

on Thursday 23rd January 2025 10am to 12noon

Family Action's Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service will be attending, so come and meet our team and many other services which provide support and advice to families of children with SEND.



We would love you to join us at
The Parish Hall, 65 Church St,
Cromer NR27 9HH

Our First Online Workshop for Parents in 2025 - click to enlarge.

Neuro-divergence and School Q & A Session

Monday 20th January 12 to 1pm

No need to book for this friendly and informal session. We will be discussing what makes a good school, reasonable adjustments and the services which can support you further when things are going wrong.

JOINING DETAILS

Meeting ID: 966 4447 9930

Passcode: 400275

SEE YOU THERE.



Drop-In Support Groups



Our Drop-In Groups are friendly and informal. No need to book. They are a chance to meet our knowledgeable team as well as other parents and carers who are facing similar challenges.

See below ALL our drop-ins in JANUARY. Click to enlarge.

Meet our team and other parents in...

GORLESTON

We meet at.....
GORLESTON LIBRARY, FAMILY ACTION OFFICE, GORLESTON-ON-SEA, NR31 6SE

Wednesday 8TH JANUARY 2025
from 10:00am to 11:30am

No need to book, friendly and informal, but if you do want more information then please

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



Why not join us in LOWESTOFT?

We have a regular drop-in support group...

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

Come along and join us on Thursday 9TH JANUARY 2025 from 10:00am to 11:30am
NO NEED TO BOOK

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



If you have in the past attended our drop in group at Dobbies, next to Tesco, Hardwick, King's Lynn, please note that Dobbies has now closed and so we would love to meet you in Costa Coffee, next to Boots the Chemist, Hardwick, King's Lynn for the time being.

Join us in KING'S LYNN

Our drop-in support group will now be meeting each month in.....

COSTA COFFEE, next to Boots, HARDWICK, KING'S LYNN, PE30 4NA

No need to book just come along on.....
TUESDAY 14th JANUARY 2025 9.30 - 11.00 am
We will have a Family Action flyer on the table.
RING 01603 972589 or
EMAIL NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk for more information.



We would like to meet you in..... SWAFFHAM

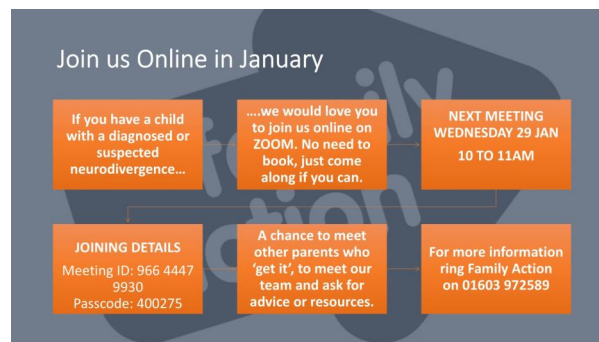
We meet each month, UPSTAIRS in Costa Coffee, Market Place, Swaffham, PE37 7AB

Meet us Wednesday 15TH JANUARY 2025 9:30 – 11:30am
Friendly, informal, no need to book.

Ring 01603 972589 or
Email NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk if you want more information.



And for those of you who are unable to make it to a face to face drop-in during the working week, we have a regular online drop on ZOOM on the last Wednesday of each month. Click to enlarge.



Defiance, Avoidance, Anxiety....A lot to think about!

Although parents dealing with PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) and ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder) may be dealing with lots of similar behaviours, the root causes are thought to be different. And while we tend to associate PDA predominantly with autism and ODD with ADHD, this is too simplistic. In fact you can be autistic and also be diagnosed with ODD. However neither PDA nor ODD are considered to be stand-alone diagnoses but are co-occurring with other differences or conditions.

Pathological Demand Avoidance

None of us particularly like demands being made on us and many children and young people who are neuro-divergent experience some anxiety when they feel that others are in control or that they may not be able to manage a situation they are being put in. They may really benefit from a low demand approach. Read our newsletter on [Demand Anxiety and Low Demand](#).

But this does not mean they have Pathological Demand Avoidance which is only considered when it reaches a level where the sufferer is being triggered by even the seemingly small demands of every day life and affecting them significantly. PDA is believed to be very much anxiety based. "I know that I find some things difficult and I like to be in control in order to manage my anxiety about those things. Your demands and expectations can feel really overwhelming to me."



'Can't not won't' is a phrase used to explain that those affected by PDA are not avoiding demands because they won't but because they can't. Some of the things a person cannot do link to a lack of the necessary skills. Some of these skills may be teachable and others may always be problematic because they relate to inherent autistic differences in areas such as social interaction or sensory processing. The anxiety around social situations or around food and eating or noisy environments may be so crippling that in the moment your child or young person is unable to obey you no matter how much they would like to.

Sometimes anxiety is triggered by direct demands such as asking your child to come with you to a restaurant to have a meal with friends. Direct demands like this you can mask a bit, find different language and so on. You can also try to mitigate the anxiety by giving your child plenty of time to get used to the idea, providing all the information they need to feel safer about the situation and with enough input they may or may not then be able to access the activity. But indirect demands also trigger demand anxiety and can be harder for you to manage as a parent. These types of demands might include peer pressure to fit in with a friendship group but not really understanding the rules, school bells ringing every 40 minutes telling you to transition to somewhere else, social pressure to wear particular clothes or expected standards of hygiene when you find showering and tooth brushing difficult.

Traditional parenting techniques with stricter rules and clearer consequences are considered counter-productive when anxiety is at the root of the problem. A child in fight/flight/freeze mode is not hearing you after a certain point. [The PDA Society](#) has great idea for parents and reminds us that your approach has to be as unique and individual as your child. They recommend trying to remove the triggers by helping to improve life/social skills, by disguising demands, by supporting sensory needs, by negotiating a path suitable to both of you and by accepting that sometimes they are just unable to do what you asked. Click on the link above for more information about their recommended PANDA approach.



Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Oppositional behaviours are not intentional even if it sometimes feels very much that way. Experts now think that ODD, where ADHD is also part of the mix, is linked to intense impulsivity. The stress, frustration and anxiety of living with your ADHD challenges, the belief you will fail and disappoint and the inability to manage your impulses can result in a strong dislike of authority figures leading some children to lash out physically and verbally and part of this lashing out can be a whole range of defiant behaviours. To be diagnosed with ODD the symptoms must persist for more than 6 months and significantly impair the child's daily functioning across home, school and other settings. You may see:

- Frequent temper tantrums
- Arguing with adults
- Refusing to comply with rules and requests
- Deliberately annoying others
- Blaming others for their mistakes or misbehaviour
- Easily annoyed or angered
- Vengeful or spiteful behaviour



Some of these behaviours can be seen from quite an early age and can be very difficult and divisive for families.

Clear, consistent and fair rules and consequences combined with praise and rewards and with loving and empathic parenting seems to be the way forward. Parents are encouraged to change a child's behaviour by changing their own. Here is some of the key guidance:

- Try never to punish for ADHD symptoms. They will find it difficult to sit still and focus on what you are saying through no fault of their own and the sense of unfairness will trigger the oppositional behaviours.
- Stay calm and try not to take their defiant behaviour personally, they will pick up on adult anger and raise the game. Repeat an instruction and disengage. Remember to model the behaviour you want to see in them.
- Do not turn everything into a power struggle. Give choices. Allow them some of the power over methods and timeframes for a task so that they do not feel they have to fight for control. You don't have to prove you are bigger, better or wiser. And try to rise above the judgement of others.
- Be very clear about rules and consequences and then be fair and consistent. Make sure you are using language they understand and that they have taken it all in. They are attention-challenged after all.
- Actively seek out good behaviour to praise or reward and boost self-esteem. Praise even the smallest efforts. "You hung up the wet towel - great job!"
- Let go of as much of the defiant behaviour as you can, if it is safe to do so. Name the behaviours you like and help your child to link this behaviour with your positive attention.
- Consistency from all adults will improve the chances of success. Parents need to support each other and be on the same page. Grandparents and extended family should be told diplomatically that you have a plan and you are not to be undermined.
- Start fresh every day. Children with oppositional behaviours need to know that every day is a clean slate or why would they bother to try.
- Give them happy experiences, don't make quality time with family a bargaining chip for good behaviour.
- Find an outlet for anger and frustration such as running, martial arts, writing a journal, a punch bag or screaming into a cushion.
- Try to get on top of ADHD symptoms as much as you can including exploring medications available which will help some children.
- Being tired, hungry or thirsty seem to exacerbate ODD behaviours so plan for success.
- Keep a diary of behaviours to help you identify triggers and patterns.

- Be empathic. Your young person may firmly believe that they are rubbish, useless and that no one really likes them and it may be this self-loathing which is underpinning much of their behaviour.



Further Reading:

Education Gateshead have produced a guide - [Supporting ODD in the Classroom](#) which we think is also useful for parents.

ThePathway2Success - [Strategies for Oppositional Kids](#)

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.


SEE FLYER BELOW FOR OUR JANUARY NEW COSTESSEY COURSE. [Click to enlarge.](#)

WE ARE IN ACLE IN FEBRUARY AND KING'S LYNN IN MARCH. MORE INFO TO FOLLOW.

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

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

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



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee Course - New Costessey January 2025

Understanding and Supporting Your Neurodivergent
Child or Young Person's Needs.

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 ICB 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 to:

- 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.

When?
Tuesdays 14th, 21st & 28th January 2025
10.00-12.00 noon

Where?
Breckland Hall & Owen Barnes Room
Breckland Road
New Costessey
NR5 0RW

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

☎ 01603 972589
✉ norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk
📘 Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

www.family-action.org.uk

Family Action. Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no: 264713.

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



PLEASE SEE BELOW DETAILS OF COURSES PLANNED FOR 2025. JANUARY IN NEW COSTESSEY NORWICH, FEBRUARY IN THETFORD AND MARCH IN KING'S LYNN. PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION ON 01603 972589 OR EMAIL Sue.Killick@family-action.org.uk.

Click to move through the flyers below and click on the arrows bottom right to enlarge.

Puffins ASD Programme

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 ASD**.

Family Action are working in partnership with NCHC and EPSS to deliver the programme to families in Norfolk.

Week 1 – Introducing ASD 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)

NB: Session 1 only in each course is just a little longer, 9:30am to 1:00pm

Norwich 2025

Thursdays 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th January
9:30am to 12:30pm (apart from 1st session – see above)

Queen's Hills Community Centre,
Poethlyn Drive, Queens Hills, NR8 5BP

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

Family Action on 01603 972589 or email sue.killick@family-action.org.uk

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Thetford 2025

Mondays 3rd, 10th 24th & 27th February
9:30am to 12:30pm (apart from 1st session – see above)

Charles Burrell Centre, Staniforth Road, Thetford IP24 3LH

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

Family Action on 01603 972589 or email sue.killick@family-action.org.uk

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NB: Session 1 only in each course is just a little longer, 9:30am to 1:00pm

Kings Lynn 2025

Mondays 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th March

9:30am to 12:30pm (apart from 1st session – see above)

**St Faiths Community Hub, Church Drive, Kings Lynn
PE30 4DZ**

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

Family Action on 01603 972589 or email sue.killick@family-action.org.uk

What else is going on?

[Norwich Mumbler](#), the parenting magazine, has ideas for clubs, events and activities. Click to see their page about clubs for 4-12 year-olds and move around the site for other age groups.

The Psychology in Schools NSFT Team have lots of free upcoming workshops for parents, follow the link to find out more and book a place. [NSFT Workshops](#)

The Witherslack Group have lots of free webinars coming up to book a place follow the link [Witherslackgroup](#)

Empowering ND tweens teens group January 2025 - click the document below to enlarge.



Empowering Neurodivergent tweens/teens

Are you feeling misunderstood?

Are you struggling to adapt to Secondary School?

Are you Neurodivergent e.g. Autistic/ADHD, or wondering if you might be?

Are you age 11-14?



If so, you're invited to join this wonderful weekly group
We will be using creative ways to help us find our:



VOICE - expressing ourselves through art/writing/other ways



CALM - exploring things that help us feel calm



POWER - exploring ways we can speak up for our needs



JOY - sharing what makes us happy/brings us joy



LOVE - celebrating ourselves and how well we are doing

5 x group sessions, every Wednesday starting 15th January 2025

5.30pm-6.30pm

at The Ash Tree, 90 Plumsted Road, Norwich

£60 for the full 5 sessions

6 spaces available

For more information or to book - please email
vikki@divergentskies.co.uk
www.divergentskies.co.uk @divergent_skies

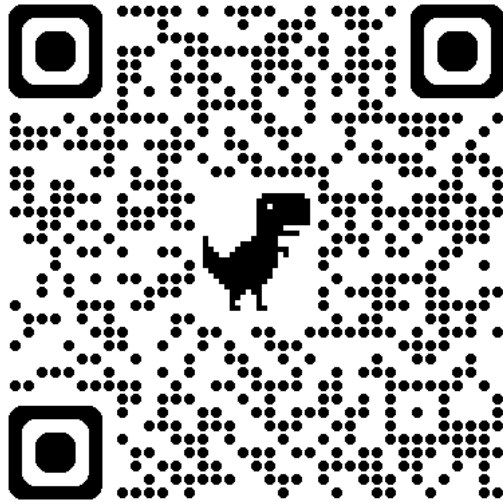
Family Action Website



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

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

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



Family Action also serves families in West Suffolk





For more information about what the West Suffolk team can offer, and to read their January newsletter with guidance on helping your child or young person to develop new skills, just click the link below.

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allow-orientation-lock allow-popups allow-same-origin allow-scripts" scrolling="no"
style="border: none; max-width: 100%; max-height: 100vh" allowfullscreen
mozallowfullscreen msallowfullscreen webkitallowfullscreen></iframe>

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.