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

Welcome to our October Newsletter.

We hope that the transition back to learning has been going smoothly for your family. Whether your child goes to school or is home educated there can be many challenges around settling into the 'new normal'. The summer holiday is long; long enough for a child or young person to create new routines which they may have become quite seriously attached to. They have had time to get really used to having longer in bed in the mornings, not having any homework and concentrating only on the things they enjoy doing. Expect that there will be bumps in the road as they adjust.

This month's newsletter is taking a look at Tourette's Syndrome (TS). Even without this diagnosis you may see that your child or young person displays vocal or motor tics, which could be quite regular or only evident when they become stressed or upset. TS often exists alongside other neurodevelopmental conditions.

Family Action's Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Service is commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Integrated Care Board.

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Welcome**
- **Contents**
- **October Online Workshop - Neurodivergence and Girls**
- **Come to a Drop-In this October**
- **Let's Talk About Tourette's**
- **Plan Bee Courses**
- **Puffins Courses**
- **The Snowdrop Programme**
- **Teen Life Suffolk**
- **Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Integrated Care Board**
- **Family Action Website and FamilyLine**

- **About our Service - contact details**

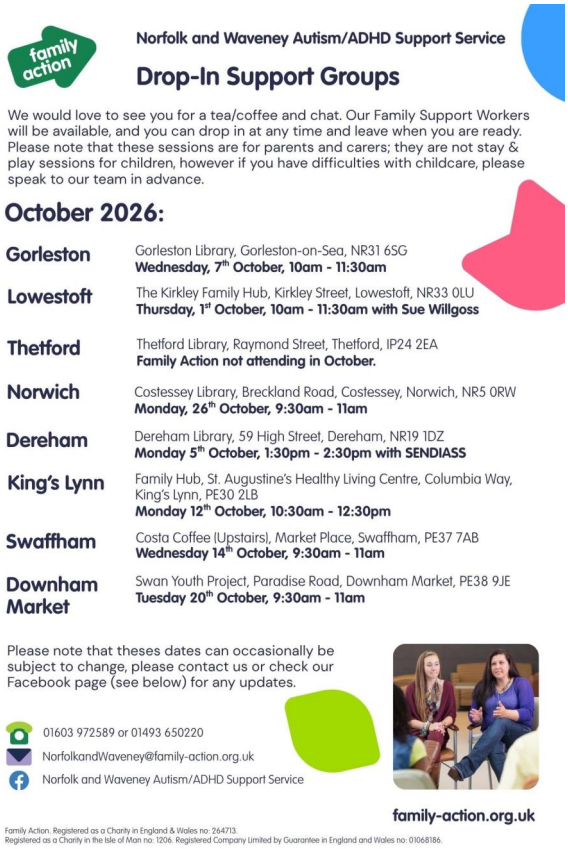
Just as every child is unique, every family's situation is different. We in the Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service are not health professionals but we do speak to many families with children of differing needs. Some of the information contained in this newsletter is anecdotal and some from respected websites. We hope you find the following interesting and helpful.

Online Workshop in October - SEEING HER CLEARLY
Girls, Neurodivergence & the Hidden Signs

There is no need to book for this online session. Just note the **ZOOM** joining details and come along on the day.

Kerry and Amira look forward to welcoming you. Click to enlarge flyer.

Our Drop In Support Groups in October click to enlarge flyer.



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Drop-In Support Groups

We would love to see you for a tea/coffee and chat. Our Family Support Workers will be available, and you can drop in at any time and leave when you are ready. Please note that these sessions are for parents and carers; they are not stay & play sessions for children, however if you have difficulties with childcare, please speak to our team in advance.

October 2026:

Gorleston	Gorleston Library, Gorleston-on-Sea, NR31 6SG **Wednesday, 7th October, 10am - 11:30am**
Lowestoft	The Kirkley Family Hub, Kirkley Street, Lowestoft, NR33 0LU **Thursday, 1st October, 10am - 11:30am with Sue Willgoss**
Thetford	Thetford Library, Raymond Street, Thetford, IP24 2EA **Family Action not attending in October.**
Norwich	Costessey Library, Breckland Road, Costessey, Norwich, NR5 0RW **Monday, 26th October, 9:30am - 11am**
Dereham	Dereham Library, 59 High Street, Dereham, NR19 1DZ **Monday 5th October, 1:30pm - 2:30pm with SENDIASS**
King's Lynn	Family Hub, St. Augustine's Healthy Living Centre, Columbia Way, King's Lynn, PE30 2LB **Monday 12th October, 10:30am - 12:30pm**
Swaffham	Costa Coffee (Upstairs), Market Place, Swaffham, PE37 7AB **Wednesday 14th October, 9:30am - 11am**
Downham Market	Swan Youth Project, Paradise Road, Downham Market, PE38 9JE **Tuesday 20th October, 9:30am - 11am**

Please note that theses dates can occasionally be subject to change, please contact us or check our Facebook page (see below) for any updates.

01603 972589 or 01493 650220
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Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

family-action.org.uk

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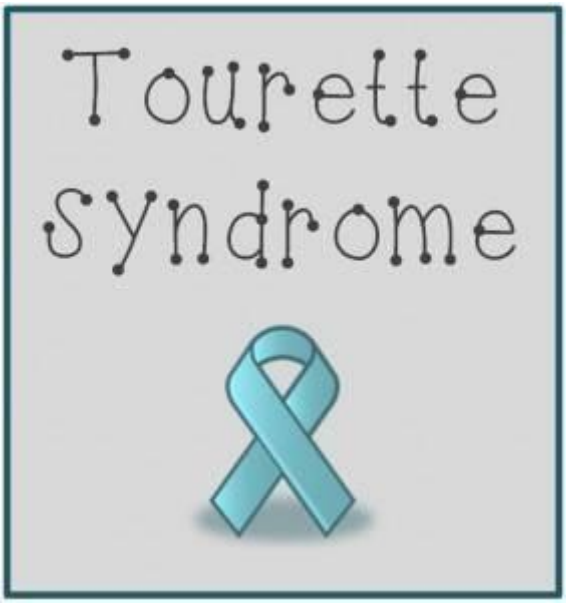
Let's Talk About Tourette's



Tourette syndrome was named in 1885 after Georges Gilles de la Tourette who was a French neurologist. There had been very little research done until 1960s -1970s and this

predominantly focused on boys which appears to have been a common feature of research into neurodivergent conditions.

What is Tourette's

- It is neurological condition affecting one child in every hundred
- It is much more common in boys but it is thought that girls may be under-diagnosed.
- The main features are tics, involuntary sounds or movements which usually start between the ages of 3 years – 9 years
- These must be present for at least 12 months for a diagnosis of Tourette syndrome
- Tourette's is a lifelong condition although symptoms can lessen with age.

Symptoms of Tourette's There are five common symptoms linked to Tourette's, and these can be loosely categorised as:

Motor Tics (Body movements)

- Eye Blinking: Rapid, repeated blinking or eye rolling
- Shoulder Shrugging: Uncontrolled lifting of the shoulders
- Head Jerking: Sudden movements of the head or neck **Vocal Tics (Sounds)**
- Throat Clearing: Frequent, repeated coughing or throat clearing
- Grunting: Making short, low pitched noises from the throat

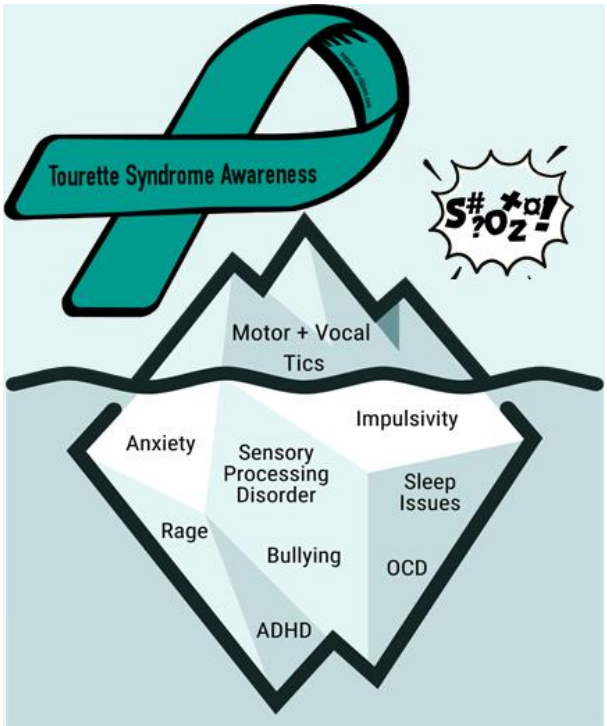
We probably all associate Tourette's with involuntary swearing. This is coprolalia and it is in fact far less common than the media may lead you to believe. Only 10% - 20% of those with Tourette's will present in this way. Tics can change and will increase or decrease without sometimes any clear pattern.

What causes Tourette's?

Doctors do not agree about the exact cause of Tourette's. It is thought to be a complex mix of genetics, brain differences and environmental factors. Around 85% of those with TS will have some kind of co-occurring condition also such as ADHD, OCD or Dyspraxia.

How does Tourette syndrome link with other types of neurodivergence?

It is important not to treat a tic in isolation. For some children it may be a co-occurring condition which is impacting them the most. And other difference and difficulties a child or young person is dealing with can increase the frequency and intensity of tics.



There is considerable overlap with:

- **ADHD** – probably the most commonly recognised co-occurring condition. A child may have difficulties with attention, impulsivity, inhibition, organisation and regulating their movements. Often behaviours which are seen as challenging can be a combination of ADHD and TS.
- **Autism** – TS and autism can co-occur. Where both are present, it is useful to understand which difficulties relate to autistic differences, which relate to tics, and which arise from anxiety. This is particularly important around sensory overload, rigidity, social communication and distress.
- **Dyspraxia** – motor tics may compound existing difficulties with handwriting, PE, dressing and other motor tasks.
- **Emotional regulation difficulties** – a child who is holding in tics, coping with sensory overload, managing ADHD impulsivity and dealing with anxiety may eventually reach a point where they become extremely dysregulated.
- **Sleep difficulties** can impact tics mainly because tiredness can make controlling tics and coping with other neurodevelopmental differences harder.
- **Anxiety** – anxiety can increase the intensity or frequency of tics, while the tics themselves can cause anxiety because the child worries about being noticed, teased or unable to control their body. We will come back to anxiety as it is a major factor for many.

Stress

Stress and anxiety do not cause Tourette Syndrome but it is a major trigger that significantly increases the frequency and severity of tics. Tics naturally worsen when a person is experiencing stress, anxiety, excitement or tiredness, as emotional stress triggers chemical changes in the brain that amplify physical movements and vocalisations.

How can you support?

It is important to remember that the tics are involuntary and not chosen behaviour. Try to avoid asking a child to stop a tic as it is stressful and can actually make them tic more. Some children can suppress a tic for a period of time but it takes considerable effort and can leave a child exhausted. Some children therefore appear relatively settled at school and then have a dramatic increase in tics once they get home because they finally feel safe enough to release them.

Ignoring tics as much as possible is recommended although if the child is embarrassed or distressed by a tic you can be reassuring.

"I know your body is doing a tic. You're safe. You don't need to apologise."

It is not always easy to ignore when a child is being very loud and drawing attention to themselves and especially if there is swearing involved. Keep reminding yourself that this is not chosen but involuntary. And if this is difficult for you to ignore, think how challenging it is for the child who wants to stop but cannot in that moment.

Tourettes action

Tourettes Action advises strongly that children should not be punished or told off for their tics. If you feel that a specific tic is harmful or distressing you may want to talk about it in a sensitive way. The more supportive the environment, the more that challenges of co-occurring conditions are addressed, the more relaxed the child is likely to be, leading to lower anxiety and fewer tics. A healthy lifestyle including a balanced diet, regular exercise and being out in nature can all help reduce stress and improve well-being.

Advice for Schools

The advice for schools is not too different from the advice for parents.

- Treat the child as an individual. Don’t just write ‘has TS’ on their SEND record.

- Identify the specific tics and any known triggers.
- Don't try to stop tics. Ask how you stop the tics from affecting learning, participating, developing friendships and feeling good about themselves.
- Reduce the pressure to suppress by offering a time out card, a quiet space to tic, movement breaks and allowing fidgets/doodling.
- Do not ask for apologies for tics and don't keep a child back in breaks to complete work disrupted by tics.
- Think about the impact and not the tic itself. How is it making things difficult for the child and how can we help? Is the TS affecting writing, sitting still or causing fatigue?
- Take a neurodivergent-aware approach. Think about supporting ADHD/autistic traits. Consider sensory input, support for transitions and emotional regulation.
- Because a child's presentation may be the result of several things interacting at once.Tourettes Action has useful education guidance for families and schools, including information about reasonable adjustments, EHCPs, exams and transition.

"Having Tourette's is not a choice, how you respond is." Tourettes Action website

Useful links

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icn_wL_K-Vs

https://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/

Tourettes Action holds in-person meetups at the Catton Grove Community Centre (Jewson Road, Norwich, NR3 3RD) for adults and families in the tic community.

https://www.facebook.com/tourettes.eastanglia/

https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/nd-digital-library/understanding-neurodiversity/tourettes-syndrome/

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. **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU CONTACT US TO BOOK A PLACE FOR THIS COURSE AS WE MONITOR THE NUMBERS CAREFULLY.**

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.

Our upcoming Thetford, Great Yarmouth and Beccles courses are already fully booked.

See flyers below for our online Zoom Plan Bee in November and our November/December course in Costessey, Norwich. These courses still have some places available. We will shortly be advertising a condensed one session version of Plan Bee on a Saturday morning in early December. Watch this space.

Click to enlarge flyers.

Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee - Online November 2026

A FREE course for parents & carers (booking essential)

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

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 and Suffolk NHS Integrated Care Board to deliver this course for parents and carers of children who have suspected or diagnosed neurodevelopmental conditions.

All behaviour is a form of communication. Our course supports parents to understand their child's individual needs and how to best support them.

The aim of this course is to help parents and carers:

- Understand why their child or young person might become overwhelmed.
- Reflect on what might trigger certain distressed behaviours and how to implement pro-active and re-active strategies.
- Develop a support plan which they can share with other family members and schools to ensure a consistent approach.
- Meet with other parents/carers for peer support.

Tuesdays 3rd 10th & 17th November

10am -12noon

Online - ZOOM

To book please provide the following details:

Your name
Child's name & DOB
Postcode
Telephone number
Email address

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

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Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee Course New Costessey November/December 2026

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- Develop a support plan which they can share with other family members and schools to ensure a consistent approach.
- Meet with other parents/carers for peer support.

Monday 30th November, 7th & 14th December 2026

10am - 12noon

Jerningham Room (First floor - lift available)
The Costessey Centre
Longwater Lane
NR8 5AH

To book a place, please provide the following:

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

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

Please use the contact details below for enquiries or booking:

01603 972589
norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk
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Puffins Autism Programme

For parents or carers of children or young people with a *diagnosis* of autism.

Family Action is commissioned by EAST OF ENGLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH AND CARE NHS TRUST Care to to run the comprehensive, free, four-week Puffins Autism Programme for Parents/Carers in *West and Central Norfolk.*

This is a strictly post-diagnosis autism course and includes sessions delivered by Family Action, by Speech & Language and Occupational Therapists from NCH&C clinical teams and by Autism Specialists from within NCC's Educational Psychology & Specialist Services. Do not miss your chance, if you have a child or young person with a formal diagnosis of autism, to attend this well regarded programme.

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

See flyer below for Puffins courses available to book now. Click flyer to enlarge.

Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust

Educational Psychology & Specialist Support

family action

Puffins Autism Programme THETFORD November 2026

The Puffins Programme is a FREE, four week programme designed by Norfolk Community Health and Care's Neurodevelopmental Service for parents and carers of children and young people with a diagnosis of Autism.

Family Action are working in partnership with NCHC and EPSS and are currently commissioned to deliver the Puffins course to parents/carers in west and central Norfolk.

Week 1 – Introducing Autism and Understanding Behaviour (Family Action)

Week 2 – Communication – (NCHC Speech and Language Therapy Team)

Week 3 – Understanding Sensory Processing (NCHC Occupational Therapy Team)

Week 4 – Autism in Education (NCC EP & Specialist Support: Autism Support Team)

Thetford November 2026

Charles Burrell Centre
Staniforth Road
Thetford
IP24 3LH

Thursday 5th 12th 19th 26th November

9:30am - 12:30pm

Please note: This course is not suitable for children to attend and no childcare is provided.

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

01603 972589

Puffins@family-action.org.uk

family-action.org.uk

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The Snowdrop Programme

GET IN TOUCH NOW TO BOOK A PLACE ON OUR NEW SNOWDROP PROGRAMME IN NOVEMBER WHEN WE WILL BE IN THETFORD.

Snowdrop is currently only available to parents/carers who live in or around King's Lynn, Thetford, Dereham and Swaffham and have a child up to the age of 11 years with *any* kind of special educational need or disability.

The three sessions explore how raising a child with SEND can affect the whole family and allow space for parents/carers to express themselves, share experiences, make connections and build resilience.

Family Action is commissioned to deliver this programme by the Norfolk Community Foundation.

For more information you can contact snowdrop@family-action.org.uk or phone 01760 725801

1 - Click to enlarge

NEW: SUFFOLK Teen Life Programme for Parents and Carers of Autistic Young People

We are pleased to be able to offer The National Autistic Society's **Teen Life Programme.** A free six-week course designed for parents and carers of autistic young people aged 10–16 years with a confirmed diagnosis received within the last two years, who live in Suffolk.

The **FREE** programme aims to help parents and carers gain a better understanding of autism and explore practical strategies to support their teenager.

The course is open to parents and carers of autistic young people aged 10–16

See flyers for courses available to book. Click to enlarge.

To find out more or book a place, please email **teenlifesuffolk@family-action.org.uk** or scan the QR code on the flyer. Click to enlarge.

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National Autistic Society | Teen Life Licensed

Online Teen Life Programme

Course accredited by The National Autistic Society

For parents/carers of young people with a confirmed autism diagnosis.

The National Autistic Society's Teen Life Programme aims to empower parents/carers to understand more about autism and to discuss useful strategies in how to support their young person.

Topics covered include:

- Understanding autism
- Puberty
- Education & Transition to adulthood
- Health & Wellbeing
- Stress & Anxiety

The course is open to parents and carers of young people (aged 10-16 years) with a confirmed diagnosis of autism, living in North East Essex and Suffolk.

The course involves attending six sessions:

11 ,18, and 25 November, and 2, 9, and 16 December 2026

Online, Link to be sent upon booking

Scan to join:

Booking is essential, please email or scan the QR code:

teenlifenortheastessex@family-action.org.uk

07717 807 727

family-action.org.uk

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National Autistic Society | Teen Life Licensed

Teen Life, Ipswich

Course accredited by the National Autistic Society

For parents/carers of young people with a confirmed autism diagnosis.

The National Autistic Society's Teen Life Programme aims to empower parents/carers to understand more about autism and to discuss useful strategies in how to support their young person.

Topics covered include:

- Understanding autism
- Puberty
- Education & Transition to adulthood
- Health & Wellbeing
- Stress & Anxiety

Booking is essential, please email or scan the qr code:

teenlifesuffolk@family-action.org.uk

01603 363013

The course is open to parents and carers of young people (aged 10-16 years) with a confirmed diagnosis of autism, living in Suffolk.

The course involves attending six sessions:

Mondays 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th November and 7th Dec from 10.30am – 1pm

Suffolk Family Carers Offices, Hill View Business Park, Old Ipswich Road, Claydon, Ipswich, IP6 0AJ

Scan to join:

Suffolk Family Carers
Living Fuller Lives

family-action.org.uk

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What else is going on?

HOME START is looking to recruit volunteers. Click to enlarge flyer.

Family Action Website

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

In addition to being able to search for Family Action services and projects in your locality, you can also now access lots of information and resources on a wide range of topics affecting families today.

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

Family Action FamilyLine - for any parenting concerns or crises. We can listen, support, inform and refer to a relevant service.

About our Service - Contact Details

For West and Central Norfolk **01603 972589** or email NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk

For East Norfolk and Waveney **01493 650220** or email gorleston@family-action.org.uk

Unsure which area to contact? Use any of the above – we are all here to help you.

If you wish to join our closed Facebook group, go to Facebook and to the Family Action page and then search for Norfolk and Waveney Autism and ADHD Support Service.

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