





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

April 2025 Newsletter

APRIL IS WORLD AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH.

And Wednesday 2nd April is World Autism Awareness Day.



The aim of these events is to raise the profile and understanding of autism and promote fairness, acceptance and inclusion.

Every one of us is unique and different in what we can contribute to the world and that is something to be valued and celebrated.

You can join in by:

Doing a bit of fundraising by [walking 5k in April](#).

Asking your child's school about what is happening in April to raise awareness of autism for children and parents.

Learning more about the characteristic traits of autism and thinking about how to make your own approach more inclusive.

Family Action's Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service is commissioned by the Norfolk and Waveney NHS Integrated Care Board to provide support and advice, learning, resources and signposting to parents/carers of children or young people either awaiting a neurodevelopmental assessment or newly diagnosed.

We have recently been recommissioned from 1st April 2025, and we thank the ICB for its continued support.

Read on for information about how we can be there for you with our help-line, newsletters, free courses, online workshops and drop-in support groups.




Norfolk and Waveney **Integrated Care Board**

This month's newsletter includes:

- **World Autism Acceptance/Awareness**
- **Zoom Information Session for April**
- **Our Drop-In Groups in April**
- **Communication**
- **Double Empathy**
- **Our Upcoming Courses**
- **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.

ZOOM INFORMATION SESSION IN APRIL FOR PARENTS/CARERS - [click to enlarge](#)



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Neurodivergence & Early Years Workshop

A free workshop for parents and carers.



Our workshop will provide information for parents carers on the early signs of neurodivergence, and how early years settings can support your child.

No need to book a place for this friendly and informal session

Just join us on the day via Zoom, using the meeting ID and passcode.

Meeting ID: 966 4447 9930
Passcode: 400275

Tuesday 22nd April 2025
10am - 11am
Zoom - Online

 NorfolkandWaveney@family-action.org.uk
 01603 972589

[family-action.org.uk](https://www.family-action.org.uk)

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Drop-In Support Groups



PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME OF OUR DROP-IN GROUPS IN APRIL HAVE HAD TO CHANGE FROM THEIR USUAL SCHEDULES TO ALLOW FOR THE SCHOOL EASTER HOLIDAYS SO CHECK OUT WHEN YOUR USUAL GROUP IS MEETING.

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 APRIL. Click on any of the cards below to enlarge.

Join us in KING'S LYNN

Note our change of venue.

We would love to meet you in April in...

DeeDee's Cafe, Upstairs in The Range,
Hardwick Retail Park, KING'S LYNN, PE30 4NA

No need to book just come along on.....

TUESDAY 1st April 2025 (to avoid school hols) 9.30 - 11.00

We will have a Family Action flyer on the table.

RING 01603 972589 or

EMAIL NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk for more information.



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Meet our team and other parents in...
GORLESTON

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

WEDNESDAY 2ND APRIL 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.



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

We meet each month,

In the quiet UPSTAIRS room in
Costa Coffee, Market Place,
Swaffham, PE37 7AB

Come and join us on Wednesday 2nd
APRIL 2025 9:30 – 11:00am

Friendly, informal, no need to book.

Ring 01603 972589 or

Email NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk for more info



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Please note our
change of venue in
LOWESTOFT



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This change is temporary.....the warm welcome remains the same.
Until further notice join us at:
The Kirkley Family Hub, Kirkley Street, Lowestoft, NR33 0LU.
10am-11.30am

Come along and join us on

Thursday 3rd APRIL 2025 from 10:00am to 11:30am

NO NEED TO BOOK

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

AND NEW FROM APRIL

NEW - Swan Youth Project Downham Market



Starting in April, on the last Tuesday of each month, one of our team will now be joining parents at the regular weekly parent group run at The Swan Youth Project, Paradise Rd, Downham Market, PE38 9JE.

No need to book, friendly and informal, just come along for coffee/tea and a chat. We are there for any questions you have about autism or adhd and to offer some support/advice or signposting.



For more information you can ring us on 01603 972589 or
EMAIL NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk



Communication

If your child or young person is autistic or is displaying traits of autism, then you are likely to have noticed some differences in the way they communicate. Everyone is an individual but you may be familiar with some of the following:

- A delay in the development of speech.
- Choosing not to speak in certain situations.
- Taking longer to process questions and finding the right words to answer.
- Difficulty with understanding idioms and sayings - "I do not have an uncle called Bob."
- Repetition of favourite words or lines from movies or books.
- Untypical pitch, speed or intonation of language.
- Difficulties with the reciprocal 'rules' of conversation' such as allowing the other person time to speak.
- Sometimes using noises instead of words when anxiety is rising.
- Difficulty reading body language/facial expressions/emotions of the other person.
- Focusing on a favourite topic or special interest.
- Honest, direct and sometimes undiplomatic language. "Yes, your bum does look big in that!"
- Dislike of unnecessary social 'chit chat.'

- Difficulty moving on from one thread of a conversation and being rather rigid.

The Double Empathy Problem

It has been thought that people who are autistic have a weaker 'theory of mind' than their neurotypical peers. Theory of mind is our ability to recognise and understand the emotions and intentions of other people or put ourselves in their shoes. It can make communication and interaction more difficult if you are not reading people well. Are they angry with the situation or angry with me, are they getting louder because they are cross or because they are enthusiastic, are they quiet because they are really listening to me or because they are bored, are they laughing with me or at me?

Double Empathy theory however suggests that empathy and good theory of mind cuts both ways, with effort being required by both parties. It is also the responsibility of the neurotypical person to use their own theory of mind and work harder at understanding the emotions and intentions of the neurodivergent person. Rather than difficulties with communication being entirely due to the autistic person, they are due to a mutual failure to understand and empathise with each other. One way of thinking is not better than another, just different.

And Damian Milton's theory goes on to explain that autistic people are much better at understanding the emotions and intentions of other people who are autistic, just as neurotypical people are much more able to empathise with others who think in a similar way to them. We like this visual demonstration of the problem.



in a nutshell.



NeuroWild

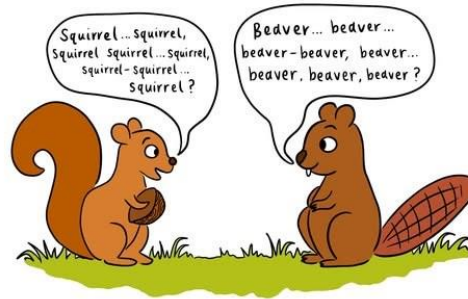
SQUIRRELS have NO PROBLEM
communicating and making friends with
other SQUIRRELS.



And BEAVERS have NO PROBLEM
communicating and making friends with
other BEAVERS.



BUT when SQUIRRELS and
BEAVERS try to communicate...

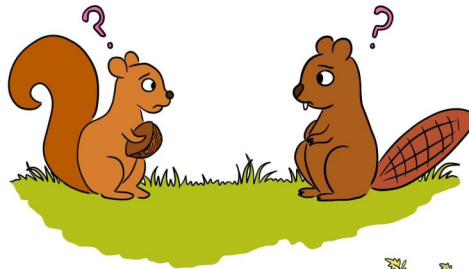


NeuroWild

MISCOMMUNICATION
OCCURS.

Whose fault
is it?

Who is responsible
for fixing it?



NeuroWild

Curiously, society decided that it's ONLY the SQUIRRELS' job to repair any miscommunications.



How very
STRANGE.

Does anyone else
feel like that's a
MISTAKE?



How about we SORT IT OUT.



1. Recognise that Autistic people have their own communication style.
2. Miscommunication occurs because of MISMATCHED communication styles – not because Autistic people have delayed/disordered skills.



3. Stop teaching Autistic kids social skills – they don't have to learn to be beavers.

4. Teach all kids that communication is a 2-way street. Be kind and learn about how others communicate.



5. Ensure neurodivergent kids have opportunities to hang out with other neurodivergent kids. They should relax and have fun with other squirrels.



Further reading:

National Autistic Society - [The Dougle Empathy Problem](#)

Reframing Autism - Double Empathy - [A Summary for Non-academics](#).

Top Tips for Communicating Better

So, we know that we all have to make an effort rather than expecting the autistic person to be the only one trying to adapt. As we keep saying, everyone is an individual and will require a different approach.

But here are a few things to think about:

- Try to be clear and concise and avoid sayings and idioms.
- Allow some extra processing time. Silence may mean they are thinking through their answer so give them time.
- Think about alternative ways to communicate. Would they prefer to have a text conversation with you?
- Would a visual be useful to get the message across?
- Could you agree a hand signal to use when you have something to say, acknowledging the fact that you recognise that your body language may not be enough?
- This about whether your language could be taken very literally. "I will think about that and get back to you in a minute."
- Limit your use of questions. How or why sentences can be difficult.
- Try to be led by the child or young person.
- IT IS ABSOLUTELY KEY THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THAT AS ANXIETY RISES, THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WELL DECLINES.
- When you recognise this is happening you need to take steps to help.
- You may need to use fewer words, give more processing time, take a step back and give more physical space or add visual supports.
- You could think about the environment and try to reduce any distractions which may be overwhelming. Is the washing machine on its final spin? Are you trying to have a conversation in a noisy school dinner hall?
- Be accepting of stimming behaviours which are helping with self-regulation.
- If you know that demands can be triggering, use your low demand approach and try to recognise the things which could be perceived as a demand. "Tell me about your school day?"

- Accept also that there will be days when this conversation is just going to be too hard and will have to wait.

PLAN BEE COURSES



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

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

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

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

<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 - 2025 New Costessey April/May

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

A free course for parents & Carers

Plan Bee is a 3 week course (2 hours per week) written by two Clinical Psychologists working in Norfolk Community Health and Care. We have been commissioned by Norfolk 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:

- 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**
29th April &
6th & 13th May 2025
10.00-12.00 noon

 **Owen Barnes Room**
Breckland Road
Norwich
NR5 0RW

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



01493 650220



norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk


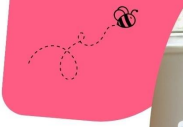



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

www.family-action.org.uk

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



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee - ONLINE May 2025

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- Meet with other parents/carers for peer support.


 **Thursdays
8th, 15th, 22nd
May 2025**


10.00-12.00 noon

 **Online – Zoom**

To book your place, contact us Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm:


 01493 650220

 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 has been commissioned by Norfolk Community Health and Care to continue to run the comprehensive, free, four-week Puffins Autism Programme for Parents/Carers until end of March 2026.

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.

To book your place contact Sue.killick@family-action.org.uk



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 to deliver the

Week 1 – Introducing Autism and Understanding

Behaviour (Family Action)

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

Week 3 – Understanding Sensory Processing

(NCHC Occupational Therapy Team)

Week 4 – Autism in Education (Educational Psychology & Specialist Support)

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

01603 972589

Sue.Killick@family-action.org.uk

AVAILABLE TO BOOK NOW:

May 2025 - NEW COSTESSEY, NORWICH

Thursday 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd May

Breckland Hall, Breckland Rd,

New Costessey,

Norwich NR5 0RW

9:30am - 12:30pm*

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

June 2025 - KING'S LYNN

Monday 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd June

Gaywood Church Rooms, Gayton Road,

King's Lynn, PE30 4DZ

9:30am - 12:30pm*

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

July 2025 - Online via ZOOM

Monday 30th June, 7th , 14th and 21st July

Joining details confirmed on booking.

9:30am - 12:30pm*

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



What else is happening?

Our friends at the West Norfolk Autism Group would like us to share a couple of upcoming events.



Coffee morning at KING'S LYNN LIBRARY - London Road.

Thursday 3rd April - Drop in between 11am and 1pm.



AUTISM ACCEPTANCE WEEK

Together, we can make a difference!

Embrace uniqueness, spread awareness, and promote inclusion.

Come and join the West Norfolk Autism Group.

And you can also still book on Eventbrite for a talk by local Occupational Therapist, Lynda Niles.

Thursday May 8th 10am to 12noon.

12th King's Lynn Scout Group

Beulah Street King's Lynn PE30 4DN

[A BASIC INTRODUCTION TO SENSORY PROCESSING.](#)

Everyone welcome.

Norfolk & Suffolk Music Hub - click the poster to enlarge



The poster is for a 'Free Flow Friday' event. It features a white background with a blue diagonal banner in the top right corner. The banner contains the 'Norfolk & Suffolk Music HUB' logo. The main title 'FREE FLOW FRIDAY' is in black, and 'AUTISM-FRIENDLY LIVE MUSIC' is in pink. Below this, a paragraph describes the event: 'SING ALONG TO YOUR FAVOURITE POP AND MUSICAL SONGS AND JOIN IN WITH A LIVE BAND & DANCERS IN A SAFE, FAMILY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.' To the right of this text is a pink sun icon. The date 'Friday 4th April' is in pink, followed by the venue 'East Point Pavilion' and 'Lowestoft, NR33 0AP' in black. At the bottom, there is a photograph of three children (two girls and one boy) with their arms raised, smiling. To the left of the photo is a pink treble clef and two musical notes. In the bottom left corner, the text 'EAST POINT PAVILION' is written in white on a blue background.

Norfolk & Suffolk Music HUB

FREE FLOW FRIDAY

AUTISM-FRIENDLY LIVE MUSIC

SING ALONG TO YOUR FAVOURITE POP AND MUSICAL SONGS AND JOIN IN WITH A LIVE BAND & DANCERS IN A SAFE, FAMILY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.

Friday 4th April
East Point Pavilion
Lowestoft, NR33 0AP

EAST POINT PAVILION

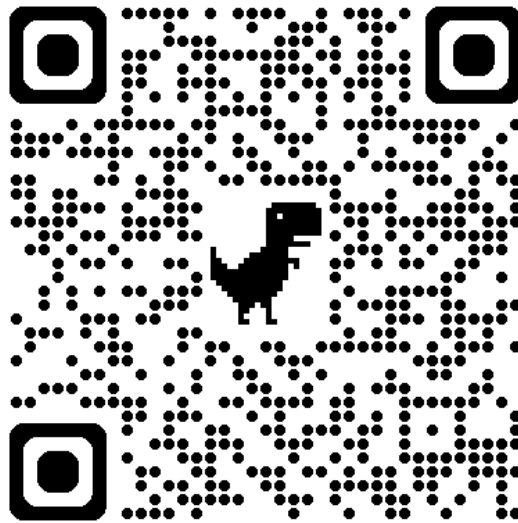
Family Action Website



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



You can have a look at the West Suffolk April newsletter below. This will be added as soon as it becomes available.

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



Family Line



0808 802 6666



07537 404 282



familyline@family-action.org.uk



Online Chat



Family Line



0808 802 6666



07537 404 282



familyline@family-action.org.uk



Online Chat

About our Service - Contact Details



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

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

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

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

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