



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

MAY 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to our May 2025 newsletter.

Many parents tell us that dealing with the 'anger' their child or young person displays, often quite explosively, is one of the hardest things they have to face. You will already know that what looks like anger is likely in fact to be frustration, fear, sensory overload, sadness or disappointment. In other words often your child's most challenging behaviour is actually their most distressed behaviour.

We know that for our neurodivergent children and young people, as anxiety and distress increase, their ability to communicate well about what the problem is and how we can help them with it, decreases. The child who comes home from school, throws their bag on the floor, shouts at you and stomps off to their room is unlikely to actually be dysregulated about anything which has happened in the minute and a half that they have been in the house. They may have been told off unfairly in school, not been able to sit on their preferred seat on the school bus, fallen out with a special friend or just be exhausted from masking their differences all day. Those situations would upset any child or young person but for those who have difficulty regulating their emotions, have communication needs and perhaps some natural impulsivity, it will be even harder keep a lid on all the difficult feelings they are experiencing.

We are going to focus this month on distressed behaviours and ways you can support your child when they are feeling like this.

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.

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:

- **Welcome**
- **Zoom Information Session for May**
- **Our Drop-In Groups in May**
- **Anger/Distress**
- **The Bucket**
- **Reactive Strategies**
- **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.

NWAASS Facebook Page



We have a thriving Facebook group where you can get information about any events we are organising like our courses, workshops and drop in groups. We also let you know about other activities happening in Norfolk or Waveney which may be of interest and share new resources we have come across. If you wish to join our closed Facebook group, go to Facebook and search for [Family Action Norfolk and Waveney ASD/ADHD Support Service](#).

ONLINE WORKSHOP IN MAY - Click to enlarge

ONLINE WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Monday 12th MAY 2025 10-11am
No need to book for this friendly and informal session.
Information for parents/carers about how schools can support your child to access their learning.

JOINING DETAILS
Meeting ID: 966 4447 9930
Passcode: 400275
COME ALONG AND MEET US ON ZOOM

family action

Let's Talk About School

Our Drop-In Groups in May



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 MAY. Click on any group below to enlarge and click the arrow to move through.

<p>Please note our change of venue in LOWESTOFT</p>	
	<p>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</p> <p>Come along and join us on Thursday 1st May 2025 from 10:00am to 11:30am NO NEED TO BOOK RING 01493 650220 or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.</p>

Meet our team and other parents in...
GORLESTON

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

WEDNESDAY 7th MAY 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.



Join us in KING'S LYNN

Note our change of venue.

We would love to meet you in MAY 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 13th May 2025 anytime between 9.30 - 11.00am

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

Come and join us between 9:30-11am
on Wednesday 14th MAY 2025

Friendly, informal, no need to book.

Ring 01603 972589 or

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



**NEW - Swan Youth Project
Downham Market**

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, from 9 to 11am.

COME AND JOIN US ON TUESDAY 27th MAY

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



Join us On-line for a Drop-In chat in May

If you have a child with a diagnosed or suspected neurodivergence...	...we would love you to join us online on ZOOM. No need to book, just come along if you can.	NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 28th MAY 10 TO 11AM
JOINING DETAILS Meeting ID: 966 4447 9930 Passcode: 400275	A chance to meet other parents who 'get it', to meet our team and ask for advice or resources.	For more information ring Family Action on 01603 972589

'The Bucket'



If you have been on any of our courses or workshops you will already be familiar with the bucket model of behaviour. This is that idea that every one of us has a bucket inside us which is filling up with all the difficulties, and pressures of the day. When you feel assailed by sensory input, seem to be in trouble in class all the time for fidgeting or calling out, when you feel different from your peers or don't always know what is happening next, then of course that bucket will get full very quickly and begin to overflow, which is when we are likely to see challenging or distressed behaviours. Sometimes one thing can fill the bucket in seconds and at other times it is filling with drip after drip over the course of the day making it difficult to see what finally caused the bucket to spill over. The bucket being full or overflowing will usually mean some emotional dysregulation but can sometimes result in a full fight, flight or freeze response. It is useful to remember that the behaviour you are seeing is very often indicative of much deeper feelings which may have been bubbling up in the bucket for some time.

So before we move on to think about how you react to distressed behaviour, think about how you could proactively make some holes in the bucket on a regular basis. The lower the level of stress in your child's bucket, the more room there is for a few more drips. How you achieve that will be very specific for your child, but you know them best. Think about the barriers they face each day and think of ways you could support with these. Strategies might include:

- Sticking to their favoured routines as much as possible.
- Giving plenty of warning but also lots of information about changes or new situations to help them to feel safe about these.
- Understanding how difficult transitions from one activity to the next may be and doing all you can to help this.
- Being aware of what sensory input is filling the bucket and what are the sensory strategies that can make a few holes.
- Giving plenty of processing time and not bombarding with questions or instructions.
- Thinking about how they like to communicate and noticing how communication changes when anxiety is rising.
- Where demands are an issue, taking a low demand approach. Understand that feeling you have no control, leads to anxiety, leads to distressed behaviours and try to share power and decision making when it is safe to do so.
- Recognising a need for movement and building opportunities for physical activity into the day.
- Developing a toolbox of strategies which work for your child, visuals, timetables, anger scales, dinner menus, social stories, sensory first aid kits and so on.
- Modelling very clearly how *you* deal with stress. "I have had a horrible day, I am going to water the garden before I start making dinner to help me to calm down". You are showing that we all have difficult feelings but find our own ways to manage these.
- Actively teach some strategies for calming down such as square breathing, thinking about blowing out a candle,
- Working in partnership with your child's school to help them understand that this is a child with difficulties and not just a difficult child. Talk to them about the 'reasonable adjustments' they could try for making holes in the bucket, meaning that a calmer child is returning home to you.

- And allowing that decompression time after a day at school which may have been triggering in lots of ways.



Reactive Strategies

Despite your best efforts to be proactive about reducing stress and anxiety, things will go wrong. Plans are cancelled, teachers or friends are off sick, there are no Honey Nut Loops, the car won't start and you are late, changes happen, life happens. There are always going to be times when the bucket overflows. This might result in loud, out of control or fleeing behaviour or in more of a shutdown state which appears quiet, no talking, no engaging but indicative also of a lot of distress. Even when you have been unable to see the trigger for these behaviours, there will always be one, or more, and your child's response is proportionate to how THEY are feeling in the moment.

- Have empathy and understand that you are seeing the end result of other difficult feelings. You can validate the feelings even if you do not like the behaviour. One autistic young person described a meltdown like this. "Inside my brain is exploding and I can't talk and everything everyone does makes me scream and cry and shout." *The Nest Approach - Support Autistic Young People with Meltdowns.
- Stay calm and quiet. You getting angry and raising your voice is the opposite of helpful. This includes slowing down your movements, nothing too fast.
- Recognise that the part of the brain which can reason and problem solve is taking a bit of time off. So try not to take it personally when they say or do horrible things. You just happen to be there when they blow.
- Don't use too many words. Your child or young person will not hear them all. Clear and simple statements if required and allow plenty of processing time.

- Take a step back and give them space. And space will be something different for each child. Time alone in their room, on a pile of cushions down the side of the sofa, gaming, bouncing on a trampoline, walking the dog, riding their bike, having a soak in the bath or listening to music. You may have to take your child to this 'safe' space until they learn this skill for themselves.
- After this level of emotional distress, they may be exhausted. Allow them to sleep if that is what they need.
- If you have a nominated safe space in the house for these times, make sure that it is just that, a safe space to decompress in and not a place to be sent away or punished. Allow them to be safe and alone here, if they need the space. Check they are safe but do not keep popping in and trying to talk. Let them know they can come to you when they feel able.
- Every child or young person is different but be careful with touch unless you know that firm pressure or a massage is helpful.
- Ignore some petty behaviours and focus on praising all attempts they make to calm down. Help your child to make the link between making good choices and your positive attention. 'I am glad you are feeling calmer because I thought we could do XXX together'. You will need to be the bigger person and rise above your own feelings of hurt at times.
- Try distraction where you can, talking about a favourite topic, putting on a much loved movie or some music, offering snacks or drinks. Trying to distract with physical exercise can be really helpful but be wary about giving the impression you are not taking their distress seriously.
- Allow safe stimming behaviours such as rocking, flapping, tapping or repeating noises or phrases as these are the child's own strategies which they know make them feel more calm.
- If out of the house, move an unwanted audience on in a polite but assertive way. If this is happening in school, do not enlist additional adults to get involved. You want them to be back in school the next day or the day after that. The bigger the fuss, the less likely that will be possible for them.
- Think about sensory input. Is it loud, bright, crowded? Reduce sensory overload where you can.
- Demands will trigger more anxiety in this situation. If you have to ask something of the child or young person in order to keep them safe then think about how you could make

it sound less like a demand. 'Try to get up off the floor when you are ready to move.' 'I am here when you feel able to talk about how I can help you.'

- Be prepared with things which you know help your child to calm such as a weighted blanket, comfy pyjamas, black out blinds, a sensory box, a lava lamp, cushions to punch, paper to rip up, colouring-in or a favourite cuddly toy but only when they are ready to access these.
- Let some things go. Swearing might not usually be allowed but this is not a usual situation. Choose your battles.
- Don't try to discuss the reasons for the meltdown too soon after it ends. The emotions are so close to the surface you could trigger more of the same behaviour.
- But do when the time is right have a discussion about what happened and how you can help them to avoid feeling like this again. This is not about punishing them for behaviour they were not in control of. Make that clear. The situation will have been traumatic for them and as much as possible you want to avoid them carrying that trauma with them going forward.
- Help them also to see what the situation was like from your perspective without adding to their guilt. 'It was scary for me because I didn't know how to help you.' 'I was worried about you, can we talk about what happened?'
- Believe them if they say that they have little memory of what actually went on as this is often the case.

Further Reading:

Our newsletter on The After School Effect

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/0cbBcba0aGUT3iex?ref=Link>

Our newsletter on The Low Demand Approach

<https://sway.office.com/ytenzCep1OvtXPjs?ref=Link>

[The Witherslack Group](#) produces webinars for schools and parents some of which are about emotional regulation.

Essex County Council has produced an excellent resource which we are happy to share with you. Access from the bottom of the page when you click here: [Supporting Your Neurodiverse Child](#).

The [National Autistic Society](#) website is packed full of information, advice and guidance. See also [Meltdowns - A Guide](#)

[Just One Norfolk](#) is a highly regarded NHD health and wellbeing service for children, young people and their families in Norfolk which offers online support and advice including ParentLine 07520 631590 a text service for any parenting concerns or worries. JON has recently been expanded to include a service called [FYI](#) which offers trusted advice and support to 11 to 24 year olds.

A new digital resource, [the ND Digital Library](#), has been launched by Just One Norfolk to support families with their child or young person's neurodevelopmental needs.

[The Nest Approach](#) - Support Your Young Person with Meltdowns

A Message from Norfolk Community Health & Care's Neurodevelopmental Services Transformation Project

Norfolk Community Health & Care's Neurodevelopmental Services Transformation Project



Striving to deliver a new model of care to support children, young people, and families through Autism and ADHD assessments.

Norfolk Community Health & Care's (NCH&C) Neurodevelopmental Service is a team of health professionals who assess children and young people for Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Across the country there has been a large increase in the number of children and young people asking to be assessed for neurodivergence. At NCH&C we too have been receiving very large numbers of referrals, and so are looking at how our Neurodevelopmental Service is delivered.

We are working with our system partners (Norfolk County Council, Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board, families, other health providers) to develop a Neurodiversity Transformation Programme which will offer a new way of supporting children, young people and families as soon as they recognise that they may need some support.

To stay up to date with this project, please visit the [Neurodevelopmental Services Transformation Project page](#) on the NCH&C website. Updates will be posted to this page on a regular basis, and it will be the most efficient way to know what changes are happening within the service.

PLAN BEE COURSES



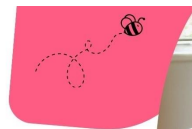
PLAN BEE – Understanding and Supporting your Child or Young Person with Additional Needs.

‘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 - ONLINE May 2025

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.

🕒 **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



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 Course Dereham - June 2025

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.

🕒 Thursdays 12th, 19th & 26th June 2025

10 am – 12 noon

📍 Dereham Library
59 High Street
Dereham
Norfolk
NR19 1DZ

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



01493 650220



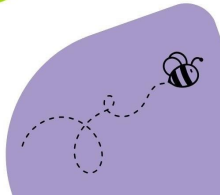
norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk



Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

www.family-action.org.uk

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



PLAN BEE IN GORLESTON LIBRARY IN JUNE

Just arranged - no flyer yet.

THURSDAYS 12TH, 19TH AND 26TH JUNE, 10am to 12noon,

GORLESTON LIBRARY, FAMILY ACTION OFFICE, GORLESTON-ON-SEA, NR31 6SG

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

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

St Faith's Community Hub, 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



The Witherslack Group



Providing support and advice around SEND to parents, carers and professionals. Have a look at the 'Events' section of their website for upcoming webinars:

ADHD - The gender differences - how does ADHD present differently in boys and girls? 22nd MAY

Understanding ODD and Conduct Disorder 11th JUNE

ADHD and Autism - Navigating the Teen Years

[The Witherslack Group - Events](#)

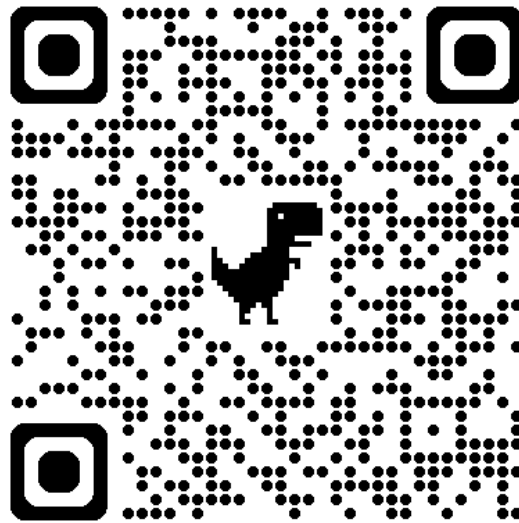
Family Action Website



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



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.

Family Action. Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no: 264713. Registered as a Charity in the Isle of Man no: 1206. Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales no: 01068186.