



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

Welcome to our July 2025 newsletter.

This month, as we come to the end of the school year, we are thinking generally about why change and transition might be difficult for our neurodivergent children and young people and more specifically about what schools can do to help with the transition to a new year group or new school.

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 Workshop for July**
- **Our Drop-In Groups in July**
- **Change and Transition**
- **School Transitions**
- **Our Upcoming Courses**
- **Neurodevelopmental Services Transformation Project**
- **Other News**

- **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.

ONLINE WORKSHOP IN JULY - [Click to enlarge](#)

**School Holiday Survival Guide –
A Toolkit for Parents/Carers**

Monday 14 July 2025 10 to 11am
No need to book for this friendly and informal session.

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

Our Drop-In Groups in JULY



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

Come and Join us in GORLESTON in July

<p>If you have a child with a diagnosed or suspected neurodivergence...</p>	<p>....we would love you to come along to our Gorleston drop-in. No need to book, just come along.</p>	<p>NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 2nd July 10 TO 11:30AM</p>
<p>RING 01493 650220 or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information</p>	<p>A chance to meet other parents who 'get it', to meet our team and ask for advice or resources.</p>	<p>Join us at Gorleston Library, Family Action Office Lowestoft Road Gorleston-on Sea NR31 6SG</p>

Please note our change of venue in LOWESTOFT



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 July 2025 from 10:00am to 11:30am
NO NEED TO BOOK
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 JUNE 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 8th July 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 9th July 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

Usually the last Tuesday of each month, but different in July due to school holidays, we would love to meet you 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 15th JULY

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



Swan Youth Project

Drop-in Support Group in July New Costessey

Come and join us....

Wednesday 16th July 2025 anytime between 10am to 12noon

At Costessey Library, Breckland Road, New Costessey, NR5 0RW

No need to book, friendly and informal.

Come along and meet our team and other parents for chat and information on all matters linked to neurodivergence of children and young people.

Ring 01603 972589 or

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



Change and Transition

Every single one of us will sometimes find changes and transitions difficult. For children and young people with neurodivergence there may be additional issues which make transition to new tasks or new situations more difficult to manage and sometimes feel impossible.

Transitions or changes can be big or small, planned or unexpected but they have the potential to cause real fear and anxiety. Remember, that your child's reaction to a situation is proportionate to how THEY are feeling about it even if WE do not fully understand. Never tell them they are being silly. The fear is real to them. So, what are some of the reasons why your child finds change or transition difficult?

Executive Functioning is the brain's management system and we know it may work differently for those with autism or ADHD or who have traits of neurodivergence. This part of the brain organises, plans, problem solves, sequences, prioritises, multi-tasks, reasons, communicates as well as many other functions. It is what allows us to think flexibly about new situations, work out solutions to problems, remember what we did the last time this happened, communicate our needs effectively and grasp the important meaning in a mass of information. Differences in executive functioning linked to neurodivergence mean that there can be greater difficulty in accessing these tools when you really need them. This can lead to a reliance on the known, the familiar, the routine, the certain.



Linked to the differences in executive functioning is a need for much **more information** about a change, transition or new situation than a neurotypical peer might need. Difficulties with sequencing for example might mean that I do not understand that only one thing is changing. I may not fully understand that having to take a different route to school due to roadworks will not actually affect my school day once I get there. In every situation give your child as much information as *they* need in order to feel safe. 'Yes, your teacher is leaving and a new teacher is starting soon BUT you will be in the same classroom, with the same friends, I have asked that you stay in the same seat and still have access to your fidget toys.' When you talk about what is changing, talk also about what is staying the same.

When sticking to what you know and what you like is so important to you, it can lead to **demand anxiety**. I know that certain things are difficult for me. If adults at home or at school are making the decisions about what I must do then I may find myself in situations which will distress me. I can feel more in control by saying NO when plans change or you want me to transition to a new situation. See our newsletter on [Demand Anxiety](#).



Anxiety in general is the enemy. It makes things worse for every single one of us. None of us function well if anxious. And children and young people with the executive functioning difficulties

described above, children with a need for certainty and routine in an uncertain world, will feel more anxious more of the time. Not only will they be less able to think through the changes calmly and plan properly what they now need to do or say in the new situation, but we know that as anxiety rises, the ability to communicate well declines. So the more help they need, the more they panic and the less able they are to ask for what they need. Eventually those executive functions can become unobtainable and the lower part of the brain takes over and can lead to fight, flight and freeze responses. See our newsletter on [Anxiety](#).

Autism leads often to real differences and difficulties in **social communication and interaction**. I may find it difficult to know what other people are thinking, be unable to read their facial expressions and body language. I may not understand their jokes and sayings or be able to think of anything to say when meeting new people for the first time. This makes me happier to interact with people I already understand a little and avoid transitions to situations where I may have difficulties with communication. You can help to take some of the anxiety out of social situations by modelling social interaction, by teaching scripts for using in different situations and by using characters on TV or in movies to talk about how people are feeling and how you can tell from their facial expressions or body language. See our newsletter on [Communication](#).

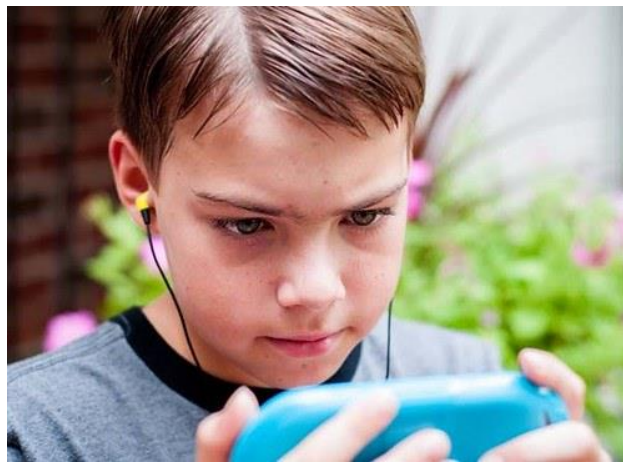
Sensory Issues can be really significant for children and young people with neurodivergence. If transitions are already difficult for the reasons described above and a classroom gets noisy, or the dinner hall smells of boiled cabbage, or the label in your school shirt has been feeling like a razor against your neck all day then it is going to be even more difficult to find and use those tools which help you to manage changes or new situations. Some of the most rigid and inflexible thoughts and behaviours your child may display will be around sensory issues. They can find certain sensory input so overwhelming that they have built up a whole range of routines to make them feel more safe and more in control. Avoidant routines and practices around bedtime may be less to do with bedtime and more about a difficulty with showering or toothbrushing for example. And touches, smells and noises can trigger memories of previous difficult encounters, causing anxiety to rise and reasoning to go out the window. See our newsletter about [Neurodivergence and the Senses](#).

Inattention can mean that you have not always taken in everything which may have been explained to you about changes which are happening resulting in you feeling a little surprised or scared by them. And conversely, **hyper-focus** also can work against ease of transition. Attention differences linked to ADHD make it difficult to concentrate on things your child is not interested in but they may develop absolute tunnel vision on subjects, books, cartoons or computer games which interest or excite them, making it incredibly difficult for them to move on from these things when you need them to. A child who has struggles with attention all day

but is now totally focused on a computer game may resist your efforts to get them in the shower or at the table eating with the family.

And children with autism will very often have a specialist subject or hobby which can lead to some **fixated thinking**. Because of their keen interest and due to their familiarity with the subject building up over time, there will be a comfort and a routine in focusing on this, helping them to feel safe, calm and regulated. Being asked to move away from this to the next thing can be difficult.

For all or some of the reasons above, your child or young person may find changes, new situations, or transitions to new tasks difficult and even frightening while structure, repetition, familiarity and routine feel safe and comforting.



School Transitions

Even what you consider may be a good transition such as breaking up from school for the summer holiday can be difficult for some children. The summer break upsets that routine and structure which we have been describing, which has become familiar and comforting to them. And then in September every child and young person has some kind of transition back into the school routine but may also have to deal with a new teacher, a new classroom, a new year group or a change of school.

If you know that transition in September is likely to be difficult, you now only have a few short weeks to ask the school about how they are going to support your child to access that transition in the best way they can. Do not leave it until September. If your child is on the school's SEND record, they should already have been thinking about transition and making plans. Your child may need more visits to the new classroom, more opportunities to talk to the new teacher and get to know them, to be shown exactly where they will be sitting and who will be sitting next to them. They could be given a booklet to look at over the school holidays with photographs of

the new setting to help them get used to it. Adjustments which were already being made and which helped your child should be available in the same way or in some modified way in the new classroom or setting. They should not just disappear at a transition without any discussion.

A move to High School is huge. All of a sudden you are expected to transition through busy corridors at the ring of a bell and deal with a different classroom, different subject, different teacher and different children. In many cases the High School SENCo will have come to the primary school to meet and assess children in Y6 who are on their school's SEND Record. They should then be offered more opportunities than their peers to visit the new school, familiarise themselves with the environment and get to meet the teachers. Extra transition days may be offered. Sometimes there is an offer to visit the school after the school day when it is quiet. Information which might not be available to others until September should be made available wherever possible before the summer holidays including timetables, maps of the school layout, lists of teachers with photographs, names of children already known to them from primary school who will be in the same tutor base and guides about where they can eat lunch, what happens at breaktimes, rules around going to the toilet and so on. Your young person will often meet or be given the name of an adult who will be their 'go-to' person.



And during the holidays try to make the time to walk or drive what will be the regular route to the new school, regularly look through any information provided so they can start to feel familiar with the changes and aim to keep up connections with any special friends who are making the transition with your child and will make them feel safer about it. Social stories and comic strip conversations can be useful for preparing your child or young person for this transition. See also our newsletter on [Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations](#).

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/>

Our Plan Bee courses are in high demand and our July Norwich course is already fully booked.

To try to meet demand we are planning to trial something different; a condensed Plan Bee on Zoom. Just one, three-hour session summarising the information provided in the full course. This is something which parents have been asking for. So join us on Thursday 17th July 9:30am to 12:30pm on ZOOM. Joining details provided on booking. For more information and to book your place please ring 01603 972589 or email us at Norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk

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 in *West and Central Norfolk* 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.



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 programme.

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)

THE PUFFINS COURSES ARE VERY POPULAR AND OUR COURSES IN JULY AND SEPTEMBER ARE ALREADY FULL

SEE BELOW COURSES AVAILABLE TO BOOK LATER IN THE YEAR.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE NEWSLETTER FOR FURTHER ADVERTISING OF COURSES OR CONTACT Sue.killick@family-action.org.uk FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKING A PLACE. Click on any of the flyers below to enlarge.



Puffins Autism Programme Thetford - October 2025

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 programme to families in Norfolk. Puffins is currently available to parents & carers who live in West and Central areas of 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 October 2025

Charles Burrell Centre
Staniforth Road
Thetford IP24 3LH

Thursday 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd
October 2025

9:30am - 12:30pm*

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

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



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

☎ 01603 972589

✉ Sue.Killick@family-action.org.uk

family-action.org.uk

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Educational Psychology
& Specialist Support

NHS
Norfolk Community
Health and Care
NHS Trust

family
action

Puffins Autism Programme King's Lynn - November 2025

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 programme to families in Norfolk. Puffins is currently available to parents & carers who live in West and Central areas of 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)

King's Lynn November 2025

Community Hub, Church Dr,
Nxt Gaywood Church Rooms,
King's Lynn, PE30 4DZ
(Parking at Church Rooms)

Monday 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th
November 2025

9:30am – 12:30pm*

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

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



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

01603 972589

Sue Killick@family-action.org.uk

family-action.org.uk





Puffins Autism Programme Online - December 2025

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 programme to families in Norfolk. Puffins is currently available to parents & carers who live in West and Central areas of 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)

**ZOOM
December 2025**

Monday 1st, 8th, 11th & Thursday 18th
December 2025

9:30am - 12:30pm*

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




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

01603 972589

Sue.Killick@family-action.org.uk

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Neurodevelopmental Services Transformation Project

A message from Norfolk Community Health and Care

A major project is underway to review the way that support, assessment and diagnosis of neurodivergence is managed in Norfolk.

You are invited to be part of the conversation to shape how we organise support for our communities in Norfolk and to discuss our routes to diagnosis.

PLEASE NOTE THAT SOON AFTER THIS NEWSLETTER WAS CIRCULATED I RECEIVED CONFIRMATION THAT NCHC HAD DECIDED TO CANCEL THE ADVERTISED WORKSHOPS IN JULY AND PLANS TO RUN THEM NOW IN OCTOBER INSTEAD. APOLGOIES TO ANYONE WHO WAS INTERESTED IN ATTENDING AND HOPEFULLY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS A SESSION IN OCTOBER.



NEWS FROM NORWICH THEATRE ROYAL

Introducing Our New Sensory Toolkits!

We're delighted to announce our Sensory Toolkits are now available! These kits are designed to help neurodivergent audience members and anyone with sensory processing differences feel more comfortable during their visit.

Each toolkit includes ear defenders, fidget items, and visual supports, all in a discreet, easy-to-carry bag. Anyone who feels they might benefit is welcome to use them. There's also a feedback slip inside, as we're always listening and evolving our accessibility offerings.

James MacDonald, our Head of Visitor Services, said: "The Sensory Toolkits are about offering choice, comfort, and control to our audiences, and we're excited to see how they're received."

[Find out more](#)



DAD'S FAMILY FUN DAY - click on flyer to enlarge - we found this hard to read especially the part in yellow - so just to clarify - this event is on Saturday 5th July, at The Nest, Holt Road, Norwich, NR10 3AQ, 11am to 3pm - FREE ADMISSION, FREE PARKING, ALL WELCOME,



**FREE access to
Challenge
Woods
1.30pm -
2.30pm!**

DAD'S family FUN DAY



Dad - this one is for you!!
Get Me Out The Four Walls invites you to bring your whole family along for a FREE day of fun to celebrate YOU!

FREE Activities for the whole family including:

- ✓ Dad's Gaming Room
- ✓ Crafts, toys & games
- ✓ Men's Wellbeing and family organisation stalls

When: Saturday 5th July 2025

Where: The Nest, Holt Road, Norwich, NR10 3AQ

Times: 11am - 3pm

FREE Admission!
FREE Parking!
ALL Welcome!

For more info, please contact
Manager@getmeout.org.uk



Start
for Life

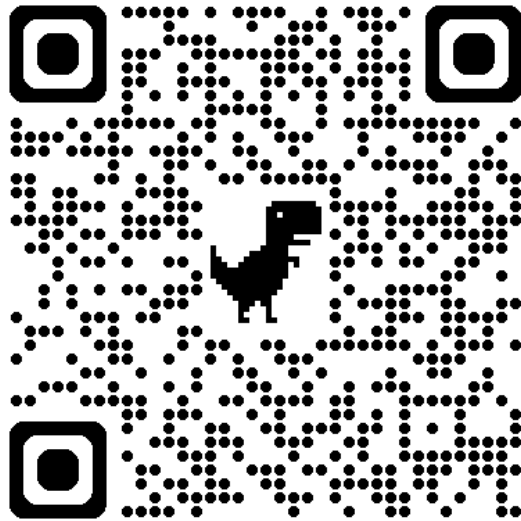
With thanks to Norfolk's Start for Life and Family Hub approach, which is funded through the national Government Family Hubs and Start for Life programme



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 - their July newsletter will be added below as soon as available. Watch this space.



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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