

family
action



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



March 2025 Newsletter



March 17th to 23rd is Neurodiversity Celebration Week.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week aims to bring about worldwide neurodiversity acceptance, equality and inclusion in schools and workplaces.

To access the full schedule of events just click on the link below and take your pick from 24 events over the course of the week.

2025 Events Schedule March 17 - 23

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Neurodiversity Acceptance Week**
- **Our Drop-In Groups in March**
- **Let's Talk about ADHD**
- **Family Voice Conference 2025**
- **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.

As we celebrate Neurodiversity Celebration week this year, we would love to get your children and young people involved.

We are running a colouring competition for a chance to win some lovely prizes.

Age categories:

- ***3-6 years***
- ***6-8 years***
- ***9-11 years***
- ***Over 11's***

Please pick up a colouring sheet at our up-coming drop-in groups (see dates below) or print or draw at home: [Hand template.png \(1414x2000\)](#)

To enter, please take a picture of your child/young person's creation and email it to us at: norfolkandwaveney@family-action.org.uk with their name and age within in the email before 12pm on Monday 24th March.



Drop-In Support Groups



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

See below ALL our drop-ins in MARCH. Click on any of the cards below to enlarge.

Meet our team and other
parents in...
GORLESTON



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

WEDNESDAY 5TH March 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.

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 6TH MARCH 2025 from 10:00am to 11:30am
NO NEED TO BOOK
RING 01493 650220 or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.



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

Join us in KING'S LYNN



Our drop-in support group will meet this month in.....

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

No need to book just come along on.....
TUESDAY 11th MARCH 2025 9.30 - 11.00 am
We will have a Family Action flyer on the table.
RING 01603 972589 or
EMAIL NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk for more information.



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



We meet each month,
In the quiet UPSTAIRS room in
Costa Coffee, Market Place,
Swaffham, PE37 7AB

Come and join us on Wednesday 12TH
MARCH 2025 9:30 – 11:00am

Friendly, informal, no need to book.

Ring 01603 972589 or
Email NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk for more info



And we run an online drop-in on the last Wednesday of each month for parents/carers who cannot make it to a face to face group.

Join us Online in March

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 26 MAR
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

Did you know Emma Watson has ADHD?




"I don't want other people to decide what I am. I want to decide that for myself"

- Emma Watson, Actor / Activist

www.neurodiversityweek.com



**Did you know
Channing Tatum
has ADHD?**



"I've always had way too much energy, so I'm always looking for new things to do, to channel that energy"

- Channing Tatum, Actor

www.neurodiversityweek.com



**Did you know
Billie Eilish
has Tourette's?**



Billie Eilish, Singer / Songwriter

www.neurodiversityweek.com



Let's Talk About ADHD

If your child or young person has ADHD or displays some ADHD traits you will already know that the main characteristics are **attention differences**, **hyperactivity** and **impulsivity** and that these will be impacting them in their learning and in life. Schools should be familiar with these traits and how they will affect a child in the classroom and can employ a whole range of adjustments to support. And of course, a formal diagnosis is not required for some interventions and

adjustments to be introduced to try to meet your child's needs and help them to access the curriculum, the school environment and to reach their potential. If you are worried about how your child or young person is managing in school, then approach in the first instance their class teacher or the school SENCo to reassure yourself that their needs are recognised and being supported.

Although we hear often about these three main traits of ADHD, there are other tendencies linked to ADHD which may or may not be impacting your child and which are less widely known and we will shine a light on just some of these in this issue.

FOOD and EATING

Now is the time to start instilling some healthy eating habits in your children and young people with ADHD which they can take forward into adulthood. There are lots of reasons why snacking and eating less healthily can become an issue.

The impulsivity of ADHD can lead to impulsive and emotional eating.

Hyperactivity can mean for some a restless need to always be doing something and there is a propensity to eat out of boredom or just to pass the time.

A lack of organisational skills might mean grabbing something handy and not necessarily healthy rather than planning ahead.

You can help with this by having healthy options available, fruit, crackers, carrot sticks, low cal ice lollies. Encourage them to drink more water, get more exercise and develop good sleep routines.

As they get older, and maybe head off to university, try to give them some strategies which will scaffold good habits. Show them how to plan meals for the week, shop online to avoid reduce impulsive purchases, to keep healthy ready meals available for those times when they cannot motivate themselves to prepare food, how to cook and freeze in batches when they do feel like cooking. The new meal delivery apps like Hello Fresh (other brands are available!) can be a useful friend.

SLEEP



Children with ADHD can become quite expert at avoiding bedtimes and that is because it is a tricky time for them. They may have an increased sensitivity to the thoughts and ideas swirling in their heads as well as external stimuli such as ticking clocks, rain on the window, the noise of the TV downstairs, scratchy bed sheets, the temptation of having the Ipad or Xbox in the bedroom and even hunger or thirst. It can be really difficult to switch off their brains and soothe themselves for a good night's sleep. And decent sleep has to be a goal because it makes the next day very much better for them....and for you. Children with sleep difficulties have been shown to be more likely to be inattentive, hyperactive, impulsive and oppositional.

So it is really worth persevering with efforts to establish a good sleep routine which should eventually become a comfort. Think about:

- Avoiding screen time for an hour before sleep. You may face some resistance but this is known to make a difference.
- A small snack and drink about an hour before bed can allay some of those internal pangs, but make sure you avoid stimulants.
- Build positive moments into bedtime - story time, doing some breathing exercises together, telling each other about the best part of your day, talking for five minutes about their specialist subject, having a cuddle with the family pet and consistently using the same words as you leave the room– can all help them to make a link between bed time and these comforting routines.
- Conversely, make sure that bedtime is not a time when you allow them to talk about their worries (this can be another stalling tactic), as you do not want to leave a child with an active brain lying alone in bed with difficult feelings. The bedroom should be a stress free zone, but do find another time when they know they can talk about any concerns.
- Think about how to make the bedroom a calm space. Consider the colours, the level of clutter, the textures and weight of quilts, the comfort of PJs, the type of lighting, pictures

of happy times on the walls and look into the apps and technology which might be helpful. Alexa for example can be set to play sleep sounds. More about technology in our newsletter below.

- And really go back to basics. Is the bed still big enough, it is comfy, does it need a new mattress, do the curtains keep out the light, is there too much noise coming from the living room or from older children who are allowed to stay up later?

More Reading – [Understanding ADHD and Sleep](#) (Derbyshire NHS guide)

Family Action newsletter - [Let's talk about SLEEP](#)

SENSITIVITY to REJECTION

There is a tendency for children and particularly teens with ADHD to feel rejection more keenly than their neurotypical peers. And they can see as rejection, words and actions which were not intended in this way.

This can lead your child or young person to:

- Expect rejection
- Constantly look for signs of rejection
- Take rejection very personally
- Often feel that they have disappointed others
- Have strong emotional responses to rejection

This can cause them to either try to be a people pleaser and do everything to avoid those feelings of rejection or the opposite, not want to try in case they try and fail. Difficulties with low self-esteem, lack of resilience and emotional dysregulation can be linked to this sensitivity. And remember that a child or young person with ADHD will hear many more negative than positive comments at home and at school which will feed these difficult feelings.

Take every opportunity to praise for effort and not just achievement, to remind them of all the things they are good at, to tell them how loved they are, to recognise that they are not just being difficult but very often having real difficulties concentrating or doing what they have been asked.

If really significant this kind of sensitivity can be referred to as Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD) although this is not a diagnosis we use in the UK.

More reading:

Family Action newsletter [ADHD and RSD](#)

PROCRASTINATION



Of course, it is not only people with ADHD who procrastinate but executive functioning differences mean that ADHD can lead to some issues with time-management, initiating tasks, problem solving, working memory, planning and organizing. When these functions are even slightly impaired, it can be easy to begin to feel quite overwhelmed by deadlines, stressful events like exams or even routine tasks like homework or household chores. Rather than being lazy or avoidant, it is anxiety which takes hold and fight, flight or freeze thinking begins to arise, aided by a natural impulsivity. Additionally, sensitivity to rejection can lead to fear of failure and of disappointing others and yourself. And having procrastinated and failed to do something, there will be guilt and recrimination.

You can help your child or young person to find ways to reduce these difficulties. Help with planning activities, time-tabling homework and studies, using timers/alarms and reminders on phones or on Alexis type devices. Praise even small achievements, break up large tasks into smaller chunks, reduce the number of steps in instructions, model listing tasks and then ticking them off as they are done and do what you can to reduce distractions. You will be modelling life skills which will be invaluable as they get older.

FRIENDSHIPS and RELATIONSHIPS

There are lots of reasons why those with ADHD are good friends to have. They can often be exciting, spontaneous, energetic, enthusiastic, creative, loving, easy to talk to and good in a crisis. So why then are friendships and relationships sometimes difficult?

If you are impulsive and say things without always giving them a lot of thought.

If you find it hard to focus and are not always entirely listening to other people.

If you have a poor working memory and forget to turn up on time or at all.

If you have so much to say that others can barely get a word in.

If you are only interested in doing the things that you like to do.

Then friendships and relationships can sometimes break down leading to feelings of rejection and a lack of self-worth. And as we have seen above rejection is often felt much more keenly for those with ADHD.

Being open and honest with friends and helping them to understand the traits of ADHD can help them to take things less personally. They can then help by sending reminders about plans, sending information in text messages rather than just verbalising, letting you know that it is their turn to talk, or their turn to choose an activity and making sure that they have your attention before giving you important information. By using some of these strategies in your own relationship with your child or young person you will be modelling good practice for them as they become young adults. Help them for example to be more self-aware in their interactions with others, to use diaries and calendars and notes on phones to keep themselves on track and to become more active listeners

More reading:

Devon NHS [ADHD and Relationships](#)

PLAN BEE COURSES



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

We are pleased to tell you that we have now received confirmation that our service has been recommissioned to continue supporting families after 1st April 2025. If you have been waiting for a place on a Plan Bee course, please know that we will now be organising dates and booking venues. Keep an eye on the newsletters for more information on courses.

‘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/>

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



We have now received confirmation that we will be continuing to run the Puffins Programme in 2025/2026. We are currently planning these and securing venues and will have more information for you in the next newsletter. Thank you for your patience.

Family Action's Autism/ADHD Support Service is proud to be taking part in the FAMILY VOICE CONFERENCE 2025



Booking is now open for parent carers

wishing to attend the Family Voice Norfolk Annual Conference on Saturday 22nd March 2025 at the John Innes Centre, Norwich, NR4 7UH.

Please read the following important information before you access the booking form below:

The Family Voice Norfolk Annual Conference is a **free event**, exclusively **for parents and carers** who have children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The conference is designed to give parents and carers access to information and workshops relating to SEND and **we are therefore unable to accept bookings** from professionals working with children and young people with SEND, such as SENCOs.

We are **unable to offer activities for children** and so would suggest that you bring any fidget toys, books, simple activities, iPads etc. that your child or young person might need. The conference centre is likely to be very busy and can become noisy, but we will have a quiet room available for anyone who needs to use that. **Your children and young people will need to stay with you at all times.**

The John Innes Centre provides ample free parking to all those attending and doors will open to parent carers from **9.30am**. The centre itself provides one toilet with wheelchair access and a baby changing facility. We are also pleased to advise that **a mobile accessible toilet and changing facility provided by [RevolOOtion](#) will be located just outside the conference centre for anyone needing to use this throughout the day.**

On arrival, you will be able to register to meet professionals, on a one-to-one basis for 15 minutes, via our very popular 'Speed Dating' event. The **'Welcome'** and **keynote presentation** will take place at **10.15am** in the Auditorium, following which you will have the opportunity to visit the many information stands with representatives from health, education, social services and voluntary organisations. Workshop/presentations will take place in morning and afternoon sessions and pre-registration for these is not required.

Hot and cold drinks will be provided throughout the day, plus a selection of pastries in the morning. A buffet lunch will follow, but please note that due to high drop out rates at previous conferences **we will no longer be providing individual plates for special dietary requirements.** Vegan and vegetarian options will be provided at the main buffet table and a limited selection of gluten-free options will also be available separately. Quantities of these **will be limited** and so, if you do have special dietary needs, you might like to think about bringing your own lunch rather than be disappointed.

Important: please note that although the sandwiches, crisps, cakes and fruit will not contain nuts, **the centre is "nut conscious", but it is NOT "nut-free" so anyone with a severe nut allergy should bring their own food.**

Please click on the link below to register a **maximum of 5 people.**

[Parent Carer Booking Form](#)

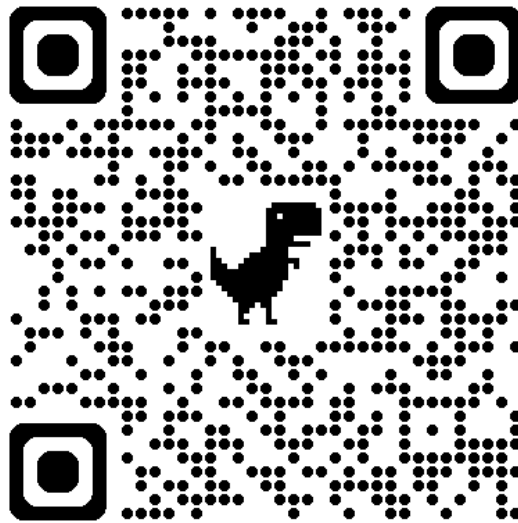
Family Action Website



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.