

Season's Greetings to all our readers!
Wishing you a happy end
to this extraordinary year
and a safe and healthy 2021.

Thank you for helping us speak up for families with children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND).

Thank you for sharing your stories with us – the good and the bad – so that we can tell planners and commissioners what families feel and need.

Thank you for replying to our surveys, joining us on Facebook, coming to our online coffee mornings and speaking up at our Let's talk... sessions.

Thank you for coming to our Conference, on the eve of lockdown, and celebrating our 10th year of representing your views and experiences.

Thank you for being such courageous and steadfast champions for your children.

Thank you for everything you do for your families in the most difficult times.

*As you carry on supporting those you love,
please take care of yourselves, too.*

Together we are stronger.



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If there are issues you would like to see in future newsletters, or if you would like to contribute an article, comment or even an illustration, contact comms@familyvoice.org.uk.



Support to children, young people and their families – NHS advice regarding redeployment of health professionals

Suzanne Rastrick, the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer (England), on behalf of NHS England & NHS Improvement, Health Education England and the Department of Health & Social Care, has written to health professionals to provide advice in respect of management of services to children, young people and families. She writes:

The unfortunate reality is that the indirect impact of COVID-19 has been significant for pregnant women, children, young people and families. ... The restoration of children's services is imperative for identifying, mitigating and preventing short- and long-term harms including sustaining wider support to families and carers.

I am therefore advising that Allied Health Professionals supporting children, young people and families, and specifically children with SEND, should not be redeployed to other services and should prioritise the provision of children's services (0–19) and services to the most vulnerable families.



You're invited to a coffee morning...

We may all be in the final run-up to Christmas, but a few minutes with a friendly group of parents may be just what you need. You'll find other opportunities to join us online on pages 4 and 5.



Give yourself a present ... you deserve it!

Being a parent carer can mean that other parents don't always understand what life is like for you. Why not join other parent carers for coffee* for an hour?

[*or whatever you fancy!]

- ❄ Share top tips for surviving Christmas
- ❄ Talk about your concerns with parents who really understand
- ❄ Celebrate what is going well for your family



There's no need to book as long as you are a parent carer of a child or young person with SEND – and it's fine if they want to say hello too! Just click on the link below when you are ready to join.



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83006703755>

**Monday 21 December
from 10:00 to 11:00am**



We want our coffee mornings to be a safe, friendly place for parent carers to spend time together. We know this works best when everyone knows what to expect. So it may help you to know that:

- We will aim to start and finish on time.
- The session will be recorded automatically. This recording will be kept securely and will not be viewed except in the unlikely event that a concern about the session is raised by someone present. It will be destroyed after two weeks.

Newsletter deadlines

The next newsletter will appear at the end of January 2021. To tell us about issues you'd like to see covered, or to contribute yourself, email comms@familyvoice.org.uk by **25 January 2021**.





School or home ... you need a cuppa!

It's a new year and we're all hoping 2021 will be easier than 2020.
Give yourself an hour to join other parent carers to share:

- how Christmas was for your family
- what you feel looking back on 2020
- what you're hoping for the year to come
- or anything else that's on your mind!

There's no need to book if you are a parent carer of a child or young person with SEND. Just click on the link below when you're ready.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83006703755>

Monday, 4 January 2021
from 10:00 to 11:00am

We want our coffee mornings to be a safe, friendly place for parent carers to spend time together. We know this works best when everyone knows what to expect. So it may help you to know that:

- We will aim to start and finish on time.
- The session will be recorded automatically. This recording will be kept securely and will not be viewed except in the unlikely event that a concern about the session is raised by someone present. It will be destroyed after two weeks.

Training for carers

Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support are running three training sessions in December. The sessions run from 11am to 12pm and are open to all carers. The sessions are as follows:

- 22 December: Finances and benefits
- 29 December: Choosing and paying for care

To register for the training or if you have any questions, please email saraho@norfolkandsuffolksupport.co.uk.



Let's talk...

Our Let's talk... online sessions are a chance to look more closely at an issue that may be relevant to your family. Often, a professional joins us, both to give information and to hear directly from parents how well services are working or what needs to happen to improve families' experiences.

Keyworking is something that Family Voice has been championing for a long time. As parent carers ourselves, we know only too well how hugely helpful it would be to have someone to help you navigate the services available to your child or young person – someone who knows your family and understands what you need.

The keyworking project being discussed in our next Let's talk... (below) is one part of what we would love to see as a wider service.



Let's talk... about keyworking

- Are you the parent of a child or young person with mental health needs, who also has ASD and a learning disability?
- Could a keyworker help you and your child avoid crisis?

Clare Angell

Senior Manager for Children, Young People & Maternity,
NHS Norfolk and Waveney CCG

is working on a pilot scheme in Norfolk
and is keen to hear the views of parent carers.

Join us on

Monday, 11 January 2021
from 10:00am to 12:00pm

This is a real opportunity to influence services that could help families like yours.

Email events@familyvoice.org.uk for booking and joining instructions.



2020 – experiences of our families

This year we have all had to face the unexpected. We have been uncertain about the future. We have felt isolated and often had to rely on our own resources.

We commented earlier in the year that in many ways this reflects ordinary life for parent carers. We are always facing the unexpected. We are always uncertain about the future. And we often feel isolated and unable to rely on others.

But just because we all have children or young people with SEND, it doesn't mean that we have experienced lockdown and other aspects of this year in the same way.

All of us who work in Family Voice Norfolk – our administrators, our ambassadors, our representatives and our steering group – are themselves parents of children or young people with SEND aged 0–25.

We asked three of them to look back on their experiences this year, which were very different.

We are grateful to all parent carers who have been in touch with us this year and told us what is working and what is not working for you and your family. It doesn't matter if your experience is different from others'. We represent many diverse views and experiences. Deep down, what we all have in common is wanting the best for our families, especially our children with SEND.

We frequently remind service planners and providers that there is no such thing as 'SEND children'. The range of abilities and challenges that our children have is huge. One service or one approach can never fit them all. We hear a lot about person-centred planning and see less of it in practice, but it really is the only way. Our children should never have to fit into a service or system. The service or system should fit *them*. Difference should be our strength, not our problem.

As a parent of young people with SEND, I felt incredibly isolated before the first coronavirus lockdown. I felt that parents of non-SEND children just don't get our lives – and why would they? Even our own family members sometimes don't.

When lockdown happened the isolation I felt was amplified massively. I still had to carry on working from home, with all my family there, every day all day.

Family Voice Norfolk has been even busier than normal this year. Downstairs my partner was teaching online (loudly!), while upstairs my trusty broadband booster and ethernet cable stopped me sounding like a dalek.

My youngest didn't cope well with being at home all the time. She missed her classmates and the structure of school. Since March she has had only one month of full-time school.

This has had a knock-on effect – my juggling skills are so stretched. I had to mute myself in one meeting, for example, when my daughter asked Alexa to play Christmas songs. (That was in September!)

I am tired and I am frazzled but I will keep on doing what I am doing as I am so passionate about making things better for our children and young people.

My boat is bobbing along in these uncertain waters, and we are heading the right way. I am hopeful for a brighter 2021 – for us as parents and for our children and young people. We all deserve it.



As a parent of a young person studying away from home, I spend most of my time feeling completely cut off from his mental health and wellbeing. It's a constant anxiety. I have no legal input as he's an adult and yet we have to finance him, all the while not being able to speak to anyone about our concerns for his health and wellbeing.

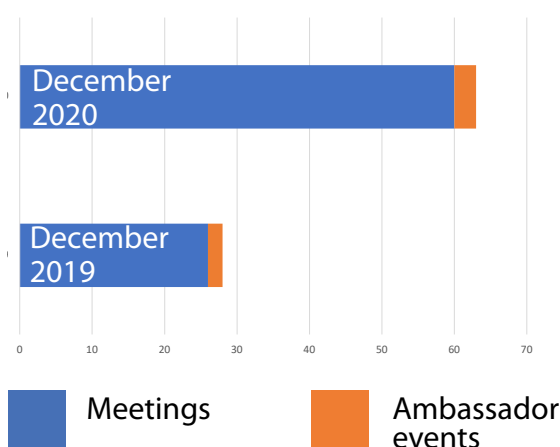
We understand why we need his written permission to be able to speak to his clinician or GP (which is something I haven't yet arranged for him to do). I understand that he needs to stand on his own two feet, but I'm the one who gets the panic messages from him and need to send him daily reminders to take his meds, re-order his meds, eat, change his sheets etc.

If his mental health becomes such a worry that support is required, I don't know who I would need to contact.

My 'job' as a parent carer didn't stop when he moved away from home. In some ways it became more difficult. I can't wait to see him at Christmas but not only for the pleasure of seeing him. I also need to see how he really is. No one else is doing that.

And in the meantime, at Family Voice we are busier...

A snapshot of our work this month:



Both my children have additional needs and are at home with me, although they are young adults now. My daughter is designated clinically extremely vulnerable this time.

The first lockdown was actually really helpful to us as a family. The pressure was off, in a way, and we spent time quietly together. I can't say we used the time to learn or develop independence skills as some of our more organised friends did. There was a lot of silly TV, jigsaws, eating and chatting. The sofa looks to have aged several years.

But it was brilliant. Instead of all dashing off in different directions (with my 'independence for all, including me' mantra ringing in my ears), we simply spent a lot of time quietly together. In order to do this, I had to give up exhorting, encouraging, guiding, advising and simply concentrate on being kind to all of us – me included.

Honestly, it was a bonding experience. As my son and I began to move out into the world again, in the second half of the year, we did so from a firmer base. It's hard, but I try not to give advice now until it's asked for. And more often than not these days, it is. That's a huge change from me being the grumpy, chivvy mother and him trying to escape my wise words...

For my daughter, the future is very uncertain. She has lost confidence hugely this year, retreating to her room. Like me, she has benefited from a better relationship with her brother, but she tells me she feels safe at home and doesn't want to go back to outside activities even when she can.

Normally I would lie awake about this (the independence mantra ringing in my ears again), but at the moment there is little I can do. I've decided to have faith in all the foundations we have built over the years since she was born. When we can, we will work this out. In the meantime, I will love and support her until she is ready to fly free again.



January schools opening guidance – some points to note for pupils with special needs and/or disability (SEND)

For the full government guidance, go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021> (Schools and childcare settings: return in January 2021)

Key points are:

This week the government announced that the physical return to school in January for secondary school pupils will be staggered from 4 January to 11 January 2021. Education will be provided remotely during this period.

All students in primary, special and alternative provision schools and colleges will return at their usual start of term.

Students in exam year groups, vulnerable children and children of critical workers will all attend school or college in person from the start of term. The definition of “vulnerable” for these purposes includes children with EHCPs. Unlike in the first lockdown, the availability of a school place will not be dependent upon a risk assessment for vulnerable pupils.

All vulnerable pupils will be able to attend school. Please note that this is different to the definition of “clinically extremely vulnerable” for shielding purposes.

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums (of which Family Voice Norfolk is a member) has asked for clarification of attendance expectations for vulnerable children in year groups that are out of school for this week. They have requested that in these cases parents should be allowed to make a choice based on the needs of the family and the child as to whether their vulnerable child attends school or not.

NNPCF will announce on their website over the Christmas period if there is any movement on this issue. Keep an eye on <http://www.nnpf.org.uk> for updates.

Lateral flow COVID-19 testing will be rolled out to staff in secondary schools and secondary age pupils (including those in specialist and Alternative Provision (AP) settings).

Testing will not be mandatory and **parental permission will be required**. Students who receive positive test results will be asked to retest in three days and will be required to self-isolate in line with existing guidance

If a child is unable or unwilling to take a test, this will not impact their return to school with other pupils.

Contact us...

- You can contact our **Membership Secretary Kate** on 07950 302937 or at membership@familyvoice.org.uk
- Or write to us at Family Voice Norfolk, PO Box 1290, Long Stratton, Norwich NR15 2HD



www.familyvoice.org.uk



[FamilyVoiceNorfolk](https://www.facebook.com/FamilyVoiceNorfolk)



[familyvoicenfk](https://twitter.com/familyvoicenfk)

- Or join our **Family Voice Members Chat Room** on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/674209366743395/about/>



Help improve nurses' understanding of children with SEND

We are partnering with the University of East Anglia to design the new Children's Nursing MSc course to ensure that all nurses are taught about SEND and especially how to support children with hidden disabilities when they come into hospital. They have asked what areas of research you feel are important that could be used as dissertation topics and subsequently put into practice when training staff. We have talked about research into rare conditions; living with complex needs and SEND, ADHD, and hidden disabilities and the challenges they bring, especially when attending appointments or clinical procedures.

Any feedback you can share with us on experiences you have had and how you feel issues could have been avoided or minimised if staff had awareness and training would be greatly appreciated and valued.

Please send all your ideas to us by **Friday, 8 January 2021** so that we can forward them (anonymously) to the course designers.

You can email us at admin@familyvoice.org.uk, comment on our Facebook page at [FamilyVoiceNorfolk](https://www.facebook.com/familyvoicenorfolk), or head over to our closed **Family Voice Members Chat Room** on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/674209366743395/about/>.

Thank you to the members who have already shared their comments and experiences. Helping to improve training for health professionals is a very rewarding part of what we do. In our work representing families' views, we so often find that professionals genuinely want to improve services but simply don't know what is important to us as parent carers of children and young people with SEND. This year we have all felt the importance of sharing our lived experience. We were proud to receive a lovely holiday message of thanks from the children's nursing team.

Keeping children safe online

With all of us spending more time online and the possibility for some of new phones or devices for Christmas, this seems a good moment to remind you of the advice being given by Norfolk Safeguarding Partnership.

Page 10 (overleaf) is a summary of their advice to parents, while page 11 gives advice to children and young people. You may wish to share these in your family.

There is further information and advice at:

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership,
www.norfolkscb.org 0344 800 8020

Norfolk Constabulary online reporting, www.norfolk.police.uk/contact-us.

In an emergency, you should call 999. For non-emergencies, please dial 101.

The Just One Norfolk support and advice line for families can be contacted on 0300 300 0123 or log on to www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk.

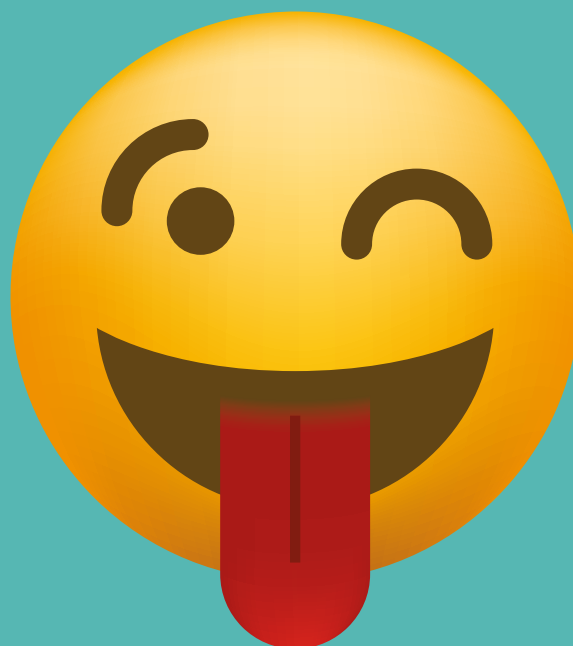
Lucy Faithful Parents Protect www.parentsprotect.co.uk 08081000900.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command also has a wealth of online information and advice at: www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

The National Crime Agency's website also includes advice about online safety and activity packs for children aged four and over. Visit here: www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/



WHO ARE YOUR KIDS TALKING TO?



Here are some top tips to help;

- Only allow your child to watch or read online content that is age appropriate. This also goes for phone or tablet apps.
- Don't allow your child to isolate themselves while they're using the internet.
- Young people can take risks and make their accounts public to get more likes.
- Make sure their account is private and encourage them to always think about who they're adding as friends.
- Know who your child is communicating with.
- Teach them the difference between safe secrets and unsafe secrets.
- Be aware of any images they may be sharing online and their behaviour during online video chats.
- Help to keep them in contact with a trusted adult you have met and know well.
- Be aware of any subtle changes in your child's demeanour or behaviour that makes you feel uneasy or suspicious.
- If you feel that someone has inappropriately communicated with your child, don't pressurise your child or young person into giving you more information. Tell the police immediately. They have dedicated officers ready and waiting to help.
- Don't delete any messages, images or other material that you discover on your child's device as it may help a subsequent police investigation. Call the police and let them take it from there.

If there is an emergency call **999** or call **101** for non-emergency.

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) is here to help you keep children safe at home. The partnership includes Norfolk Constabulary, Norfolk County Council's Children's Services and Norfolk Children and Young People's Health Service.

You can also find more support and advice at:

norfolkscb.org | norfolk.police.uk | parentsprotect.co.uk | thinkuknow.co.uk |



Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership



THINK BEFORE YOU POST



Here are some top tips to help;

- Keep your device secure –do not share log-in information or passwords and check your settings and who can view your content
- Don't share your personal details like your name, date of birth, age, address or school and think about posting content with school logos or door number in the photo
- Think about who you are sending requests to and receiving them from – do you know them in real life? Only add people you know in real life.
- Think before you post – once the content is in a public space it can be shared with anyone
- Think about who you are talking to – people can trick you into trusting them and sharing your information
- Fake accounts – You may be asked to meet up with someone who is pretending to be someone else. Don't arrange to meet anybody you've only spoken to online.

If you need us

We have launched a new phone line and text message service for you to use. We hope you are feeling happy and safe at home, however if you're feeling unsafe or scared, then don't keep it to yourself. We're here to help you!

Text on: 07480 635060

Call on: 0344 800 8029

Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) is here to help keep children safe at home. The partnership includes Norfolk Constabulary, Norfolk County Council's Children's Services and Norfolk Children and Young People's Health Services.

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 Norfolk Safeguarding
Children Partnership



New Children's Commissioner with Norfolk connections

Children's
COMMISSIONER

In the last newsletter, we reported on the most recent publication from the Children's Commissioner for England, Anne Longfield OBE.

Independent of Government and Parliament, the Children's Commissioner has unique powers to help bring about long-term change and improvements for all children, **particularly the most vulnerable**.

She does this by first gathering evidence: talking to children and young people, requesting information from public institutions and then carrying out research and compiling information on the wide range of things that affect children's lives.

Anne Longfield has been in post since 2015 and finishes her term at the end of February 2021. On 17 December, the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, announced Dame Rachel de Souza as the next Children's Commissioner for England. She will take up her post in March 2021.



Dame Rachel de Souza has more than 25 years' experience working in education and has been at the heart of delivering academic and organisational changes across a multitude of different schools. She is currently the Chief Executive at Inspiration Trust – a multi-academy trust based in Norfolk and north Suffolk, including 14 academies – which is recognised as one of the country's best comprehensive schools' groups with a reputation for turning around underperformance. She was appointed a Dame in 2014 for her services to Education.

Dame Rachel de Souza said:

It is a great honour to be the next Children's Commissioner for England. For many years I've been a passionate advocate for children and young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Inspiration Trust has done some fantastic work to support young people in Norfolk and north Suffolk, delivering an excellent education so that they can achieve their potential and flourish. As Children's Commissioner I'm looking forward to standing up for children across England.

We all know just how difficult Covid has been for children and families up and down the country, I am going to play my part in helping level up opportunities for children, and ensuring their welfare everywhere, as we come through this difficult time and look towards a more positive future.

I'm going to miss leading the Inspiration Trust – we've achieved so many fantastic things in the last eight years. From turning Great Yarmouth Charter Academy around and developing a nationally-recognised curriculum to opening the first maths and science specialist sixth form. We've also faced a number of challenges, which we came together as a family of schools to overcome. I'm proud to have witnessed the community spirit of Norfolk and Suffolk – it's a time in my life that I will truly treasure.

The Inspiration Trust will be seeking a new Chief Executive.



National award for KIDS SEND service



KIDS SEND Mediation Service, which is jointly commissioned by NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Norfolk County Council, has recently been announced as winner of the prestigious National SEND Mediation Award 2020.

KIDS SEND Mediation Service is an independent mediation and disagreement resolution service, which is free of charge for parents/carers and young people. The service helps to settle disagreements between parents or young people and local authorities and schools or other education providers. These disputes are often about the special educational needs and disability (SEND) of children and young people and how best to meet their needs.

Mark Gower, Designated Clinical Officer (SEND) for Norfolk and Waveney CCG, said: "We are pleased that we have commissioned KIDS to help resolve SEND related disagreements between families, schools and commissioners, the level of satisfaction among service users has been consistently very high."

SEND Mediation is free of charge for families and can be arranged quickly. Going to mediation does not take away your right to make a tribunal appeal. This means that in the few cases where agreements are not reached in mediation, an appeal can still be lodged.

Read more about the Norfolk and Waveney SEND mediation service at <https://www.kids.org.uk/>.

Remember, too, that Norfolk SEND Partnership Information, Advice and Support Service provides free and impartial information, advice and support about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for children, young people, parents and carers. Find them at <https://www.norfolksendpartnershiass.org.uk>.

Survey about ceased EHC plans

John Cadman, who is completing a doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at the Institute of Education, UCL, is exploring the experiences of professionals and parents when a child's Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is ceased before the age of 25. No research to date has explored the cessation of EHC plans or how the EHC cycle comes to an end.

He wishes to gather the views of SEN Officers, parents, and SENDCos through a short online questionnaire (approximately 10 minutes). Only he and his research supervisors will have access to the data files, all of which will be anonymised.

If this situation applies to a child or young person in your family, you can access the questionnaire at: https://uclioe.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6VeDZmzYmpZV4Db.

John Cadman can be contacted at j.cadman@ucl.ac.uk. The purpose of the research is to try and understand how decisions are made to cease an EHC plan, so that factors can be identified to support and promote the successful transitions of children and young people.



New EHCP county contact number goes live

The new EHCP customer contact telephone number is: 01603 679183.

The phone line is open between the following times:

- 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Thursday
- 09:00 and 16:00 on Friday

This phone number can be used by any family that has a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a child or young person having an assessment.

Parent carers have reported frustration at not being able to contact EHCP Co-ordinators or other staff. The number should improve the ease and speed of contact. If a question cannot be answered straight away, someone from the team will aim to get back to you within 48 hours.

The county phone number has been set up as part of NCC's aim to build better communication between all concerned with improving provision for children and young people with SEND. 'Communication and co-production' was one of the three areas of significant weakness highlighted following the Ofsted/CQC Local Area SEND Inspection in March this year.

Important High Court ruling regarding charges for care

As this newsletter goes to press, news has come through that a 24-year-old woman with Down's syndrome has succeeded in her claim that Norfolk County Council's decision to increase her care charges is discriminatory.

The implications for others whose care charges have increased since NCC lowered its Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) have yet to be clarified. We will report further developments as soon as we can.

Mencap Big Social Care Survey 2020

The Care and Support Alliance (CSA) is running The Big Social Care Survey to find out what social care has been like for people with a learning disability during the coronavirus outbreak. Mencap is part of the CSA. To take part you need to be 18 or over and live in England.

The survey is in easy read and should only take a few minutes to complete online.

You can find it at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BigSocialCareSurvey2020>.



Help in difficult times

Norfolk County Council, alongside local councils across Norfolk, is aiming to support as many residents as possible this winter to access financial and other support if they are facing hardship.

For many people this winter will be challenging for a variety of reasons, and there will be a lot of people who will need help with things like paying their bills, keeping warm and buying food – many who have never needed help before.

To make sure people can access help and support where they need it this winter, NCC has implemented the Norfolk Winter Support Offer.

Families can apply for the support offer online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/covidwintersupport using a simple form.

Help is also available to those suffering hardship because they are having to self-isolate or support their child or vulnerable family members to self-isolate.

Norfolk Assistance Scheme

The Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS) already provides hardship support to Norfolk residents, and this offer is being extended to reach more people where needed over the winter period. The offer uses an additional government grant that is primarily aimed at families with children.



For the first two weeks, provision includes:

- Morrisons food boxes
- additional support with household essentials such as nappies, formula milk and cleaning products
- Paypoint top-ups for gas and electricity
- daily living allowance for living expenses and household bills where needed.

From week three onwards the offer includes:

- support with broadband and help to get online
- additional support with household items such as washing machines and fridges.
- if further food and essential support is needed after the initial two-week period, then this will be implemented by NAS for as long as is required.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/norfolk-assistance-scheme>

Pink Orange – ingredients boxes

Pink Orange will provide ingredients boxes including recipe guides to eligible families across Norfolk. NAS is able to refer to Pink Orange or families can request a box themselves on the website:

<https://www.pinkorange.co.uk/>

or by texting or calling 07553 894233.



Free school meals vouchers

All schools and educational establishments in Norfolk will have received communication about ensuring that all children who are eligible are signed up for free school meals (the means tested element and not the universal free school meals that all children in reception to the end of Year 3 are entitled to). Schools are then able to provide a link and code for EdenRed which is the chosen provider of supermarket vouchers to the value of £15 per child per week, for two weeks over Christmas and a week at February half term. These vouchers can be used at all main UK supermarkets.

Students not on school rolls

Students that would be eligible to receive vouchers but are not on school rolls (for example, those that are with post-16 training providers and children that are home educated), so cannot receive vouchers via that route, will still have the opportunity to apply for vouchers that will be administered by staff in the NCC Finance and Business Services Team. Families can contact:

finance.support@educatorsolutions.org.uk

Self-isolation support

Some residents are also entitled to a self-isolation support payment of £500. The scheme runs until 31 January 2021. To apply for this, or to find out more, please visit:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus/community-support-for-people-at-home/test-and-trace-support-payment>

SEND Family Roadshows

These Local Offer events were held last year at various places around the county, specially for parent carers with children or young people with special educational needs and/or disability. This year the events will continue online so that representatives of the Local Offer can have regular conversations with parents and carers about:

- actions that will be taken to address the three serious weaknesses identified by the Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection
- progress on the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Transformation Programme
- priorities that have been written into Norfolk's refreshed Area SEND Strategy.

Everyone who books a ticket for this Zoom event will receive the agenda and joining instructions nearer the date. Family Voice will be there, too! Planned dates are:

- Wednesday 27 January 2021, 10:30am–1:00pm via Zoom
- Wednesday 17 March 2021, 10:30–1:00pm via Zoom
- Wednesday 5 May 2021, 10:30–1:00pm (TBC – Pensthorpe Nature Reserve or Zoom)

Find out more at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/about-the-local-offer/news-views-and-reviews/views/get-involved/send-family-roadshows>



Library services for young people

Themed collections

The Young People's Services (YPS) team have a wide selection of books available to settings, home educators and the public. Settings and individuals can get in touch via their public library or by emailing libraries.youngpeopleservices@norfolk.gov.uk to request a themed collection of books – they'll be sent to your nearest branch to pick up and loaned for up to 12 weeks with no overdue charges.

Special collections

Need books about a specialist subject, including those to do with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)? The YPS collection includes books featuring all kinds of families, medical conditions and additional needs. Special collections include:

Large print

Ask about the large print collection, which contains many popular titles, including *Going on a Bear Hunt* and series such as Harry Potter and Tom Gates.

Bag books

These are sensory book experiences, allowing story sharing for children with additional needs in an unusual way.

Dual language picture books

These are available in a range of languages for families and settings to borrow.

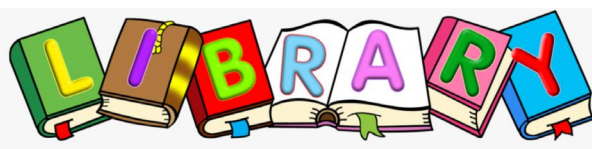
Dyslexia collections

All Norfolk libraries stock a range of dyslexia-friendly stock, but if you'd like an additional choice, the YPS team have a wide selection available. Many new titles have been added during 2019 and 2020.

All of these collections can be requested via your local library or via the email address above.

Homework collection

Need books on Romans for a project? Home educating and learning about volcanoes? Raising a child who is super-interested in wartime life? You can request books from our homework collection, which will give you lots of detail on any curriculum topic you can think of. The YPS email is the place to start for this, too.



Free infection control e-learning course

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has supplied a link to some free e-learning about Infection prevention and control – essential to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). This video-based course is intended for care providers in care homes and home care, but it may well contain useful information for parent carers about what you can do to protect both yourself and the people you care for, especially if you or they are clinically vulnerable.

You can access the course free of charge on the SCIE website at <https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/infection-control>.



Accommodation plans for young people with SEND

Many of you supported your young people earlier this year to fill in a questionnaire about what kind of accommodation they would like as they move into adult life.

At a recent meeting with Adult Social Services, we asked what developments were underway following the survey.

We were told:

Over the past few years young people and their families have shared with adult social care the importance of having choice about where they live and who they live with. In response to the feedback, adult social care is developing new "enablement" supported living schemes across the county. These are a new type of supported living service for Norfolk. The service will focus on developing skills and maximising independence for up to two years. The service will work with each person to agree the right type of longer term housing and support and it is already being effective in supporting many of the people who use the service to move on to their own independent home (with support if needed).



The ambition is to have an enablement service in each of the five localities across Norfolk, with an additional service in Norwich to have a particular focus on meeting the needs of young people.

There are already three services in place:

King's Lynn (7 places)

Norwich (12 places)

North Walsham – due to open in January 2021 (12 places)

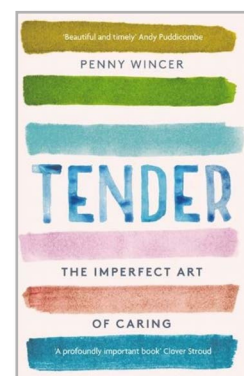
We are working with developers and landlords to explore the options for other localities and expect those new services to be opening in the next 18 months.

Tender: the imperfect art of caring

It's traditional in December publications to feature book lists from the great and good. I'm not a celebrity, but as the newsletter editor I'd like to strongly recommend *Tender: the imperfect art of caring* by Penny Wincer. Some of you may have seen or heard it reviewed this year.

She is a single parent to her two children, one of whom has a diagnosis of autism. But Penny had been a carer before, for her mother when she was very young. That experience, and talking to many other carers, including parent carers, has given her a real insight into the positives and challenges of caring, and the fact that we can hold contradictory views and feelings about it at the same time, which I think would feel familiar to many of you. In particular, the book shows how looking after oneself is a fundamental part of caring for someone else.

I'd recommend giving yourself this book or ordering it from the library, or if you would like to borrow my copy, contact me at comms@familyvoice.org.uk. Are there other books that you would recommend? Let me know, if so, and I'll make this a regular feature.



Parental survey of physical activity levels in young adults (13–25 years) with autism

Parents and carers of young adults with autism aged 13 to 25 years are being invited to take part in a new research study. The survey consists of 30 questions and should take less than 15 minutes to complete. Once the deadline for survey submissions closes, results will be released for participants to view. The direct link to complete the survey can be found by clicking here:

<https://kent.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/asd-physical-activity>

The research is being carried out by Medway School of Pharmacy, part of the University of Kent. The aim of this study is to investigate the views of parents on how active young adults with autism are, and what support families may need to allow healthy engagement in exercise.

Support for parent carers whose children and young people have mental health needs



Young Minds is a charity that has the aim: 'To make sure all young people can get the mental health support they need, when they need it, no matter what.' They say: 'Every young person whose mental health ends up in crisis is a young person who has been failed. We know that the earlier young people can access the right help, the more likely it is that they can avoid these crises.'

Their website <https://youngminds.org.uk> has a range of resources and a parents helpline accessible by phone, email or webchat. The charity says:

Supporting you to support them

This year has been extra stressful, especially if you're a parent. With so much uncertainty, it's entirely normal for your child to be finding things difficult, and for you to be unsure how best to look after their mental health and wellbeing, as well as your own. It's not easy, but you're doing the best you can and you deserve credit.

But whatever you and your child are dealing with, you are not alone. We're here for you and we have lots of advice and practical tips that can really help. Use our new Supporting Parents Helpfinder to find the support that is right for you and your child, whatever they've been going through during the pandemic. You can find the Helpfinder at <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>





get
connected



Norfolk County Council



Get connected with our free digital equipment scheme

Does this sound like you?

- On a low wage, or recently been furloughed?
- Claiming universal credit or other benefits?
- Struggling to apply for jobs without access to a laptop?
- Is your child finding it difficult to do home learning without a computer?



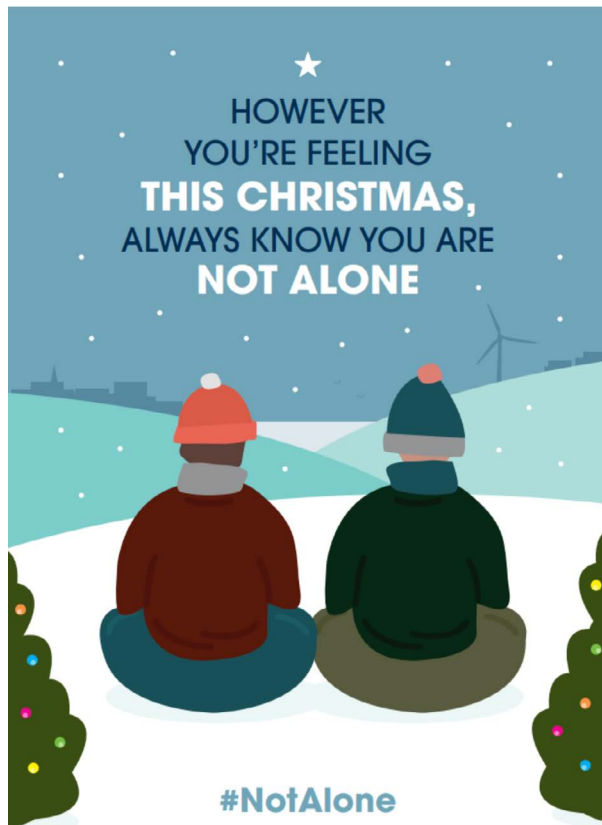
Reconditioned laptops, access to wifi, broadband dongles are just some of the items being distributed to families like you unable to access the internet during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Getting online at home can help with home learning, job applications and helps you to connect with friends and family.

**Find out what help is available from the Norfolk Assistant Scheme,
give us a call on 0344 800 8020**



You're not alone this Christmas: mental health campaign



A new mental health campaign, Not Alone, has been launched to help people who will find this Christmas particularly difficult to deal with.

Norfolk County Council, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, local mental health charity Norfolk and Waveney Mind, and the county's NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are working in partnership with the support of Archant to encourage people to reach out to those who may be struggling.

Christmas is often a difficult time of year for people and, with measures in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus, we may not be able to do the things we normally do and to be with friends and family, especially if they are vulnerable and feel they need to be alone to be safe, this year.

The campaign offers support and advice via

an e-card. This digital card can be sent to people who may be struggling to show that they are being thought of and to signpost them to a range of services that can give them some extra help and support.

You can send a Not Alone e-card here: <https://t.email.archant.co.uk/lp/notalonethischristmas>

One of the available services is the **NHS Wellbeing Service**, which offers a range of talking therapies, employment support, peer support and social activities by telephone, video call, instant messaging and webinars. The service is for anyone experiencing common mental health and emotional issues, such as low mood, depression or stress. People can self-refer by visiting www.wellbeingnands.co.uk or calling 0300 123 1503.

Across the festive period the Wellbeing service is holding a variety of online social events, including mince pies and chat, crafts and a quiz, all designed to improve your wellbeing and help you connect with others. Events are open to everyone and to find out more, go to the Wellbeing Norfolk and Waveney social events page.

There is also a brand new podcast looking at how to stay well during the festive period, by staying connected, engaging in self-care and reaching out for support when you need it. Visit the Wellbeing Norfolk and Waveney website to download or stream the podcast and find out more.

If you start to feel unsafe, distressed or worried about your mental health, you can call the First Response helpline on 0808 196 3494 – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all through the festive period.

Turn to page 22 for some practical tips for looking after yourself this Christmas.



Tips for looking after yourself this Christmas

- If you're feeling overwhelmed this festive season by a stressful situation, try to take a break. Think about what helps you relax and make time to do something just for you. For example, this could be having a bath, listening to music or reading a book.
- Connecting with others can help us have a greater sense of belonging and reduce feelings of loneliness. If you are unable to see friends or loved ones in person this Christmas, organise a phone call, send a text or catch up online.
- Try to be mindful and think about balance and moderation when it comes to food and alcohol over the festive period as this can help your mood and energy levels.
- It's tempting to stay indoors, curled up on the sofa watching a film over the festive period. However, spending time keeping active can help improve your health and wellbeing. Try to build physical activity into your daily routine, if possible. You could try going for a walk or doing some work in the garden.
- It is OK to ask for help. Remember people care about you and there is always someone there to listen, even over the festive period. Sharing your feelings with someone else can help you feel supported and less alone.

Do you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccination programme?

Public Health England has published a series of guides for people who will receive the COVID-19 vaccine first. Take a look at the guides if you are in one of the following groups, or share them with family members and friends who are, as well as any community groups or networks you belong to:

- COVID-19 vaccination: guide for older adults
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-guide-for-older-adults>
- COVID-19 vaccination: guide for healthcare workers
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-guide-for-healthcare-workers>
- COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for social care staff
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-a-guide-for-social-care-staff>

Public Health England has also produced information for women of childbearing age, those currently **pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding** about the COVID-19 vaccination. Again, please share this with anyone you know who would find it helpful.

They have also set up a page with the answers to some frequently asked questions, which are updated regularly – take a look: www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccination-programme.



Free Family Learning Courses



What is Family Learning?

Family Learning covers a whole range of activities, 'come & try' sessions and courses that involve all family members exploring, discovering and learning together.

Benefits of Family Learning

- An opportunity to try new things together
- Increase your skills and knowledge
- Improve your understanding of how to support your child's learning and development
- Enhance your confidence and self-esteem
- An opportunity to try other Family Learning courses
- All of our Family Learning courses are FREE

Our courses are currently delivered online and we will return to face to face delivery when conditions allow. We would be happy to set up a course in partnership with an Early Years Setting or School; please email us on family.learning@norfolk.gov.uk



@norfolkadulthoodlearning



@norfolklearn

