

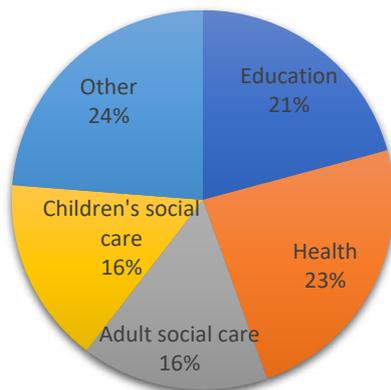
Thank you!

for helping us speak up for families with children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). In 2021 we attended:

1,074 meetings

to represent the views of parent carers. These covered the areas in the chart below.

We couldn't have done it without you...



'Other' includes regional and national meetings, and meetings with voluntary sector partners.

- ★ sharing your stories with us, so that we can tell planners and decision-makers what families like ours need and deserve.
- ★ replying to our surveys, joining us on Facebook, coming to our online **Let's talk...** sessions, visiting our website and reading this newsletter – we know how busy you are.
- ★ tirelessly supporting and championing your children and helping them to look forward with confidence even when the future is uncertain.

As this second year of the pandemic comes to an end, it seems right to acknowledge that we have all faced struggles and anxieties that we could never have foreseen, but let's also celebrate the courage and resilience that has brought us to this point.

All of us at Family Voice Norfolk wish you and your families a safe, fun-filled and (occasionally) peaceful festive season and a happy and healthy New Year.



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Newsletter deadlines

We are sorry that there has been a gap in our newsletters. Covid-19 finally caught up with our editor in November. She is now back in business and the next newsletter will appear in January 2022. Tell us about issues you'd like to see covered – or send us an article or your comments on any topic to do with SEND – by emailing comms@familyvoice.org.uk by **25 January 2021**.

There are so many ways you can get in touch with Family Voice Norfolk...

- You can contact our **Membership Secretary Kate** on 07950 302937 or at membership@familyvoice.org.uk
- Or message us via:
 -  www.familyvoice.org.uk
 -  [FamilyVoiceNorfolk](https://www.facebook.com/groups/674209366743395/about/)
 -  [familyvoicenfkc](https://twitter.com/familyvoicenfkc)
- Or write to us at Family Voice Norfolk, c/o Ayton House, 11 Ayton Rd, Wymondham NR18 0QQ
- Or join our **Family Voice Members Chat Room** on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/674209366743395/about/>



together we are stronger





Let's talk...

family voice
norfolk
together improving services

about TITAN

(Travel Independence
Training Across Norfolk)

with Sophie Allan TITAN Family Engagement and Primary Coordinator

and Karl Chapman TITAN Lead Locality Coordinator

Does your young person (age 10–25) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need support to become a safe and confident independent traveller?

- Learn more about how TITAN works to build skills step by step
- Find out about TITAN's range of services: TITAN Primary, Ready to Go! and TITAN+ (one-to one community-based training)

Join us online on

Monday, 24 January
from 10.00am to 12.00pm

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



Let's talk... about early help and prevention

with Letasha Reeve/Philip Beck

Heads of Communities and Partnerships, Norfolk County Council

When children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and their families need support, the sooner it can be given the better.

Early help and prevention is about linking families with services and support at the earliest opportunity.

Letasha/Philip will outline:

- what they are doing to ensure support can be offered sooner
- how they support families and link them with other services that can help
- how they are working with partners across Norfolk to help families like yours at an earlier stage

Letasha/Philip will be happy to answer your questions and would welcome suggestions from parent carers

Join us online on

Monday, 7 February 2022 from 10.00am to 12.00pm

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





family voice **check in and chat**

norfolk

together improving services

is anyone doing anything about this?

am I the only parent worried about this?

why can't this work better?

how can I get people to listen?

If you have more questions than answers about services for your child with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), come and talk to us.

We are all parents like you. We understand.

Find out how we can make sure your voice is heard and what we are working on right now.

Monday 17 January 2022 10–11 am

No need to book – just drop in on <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83006703755>

Family Voice events for parent carers

We use your views and stories (always anonymously) to represent parent carers in the hundreds of meetings we attend with Norfolk County Council, health services and voluntary partners. The more we hear from you, the stronger our voices can be. During the whole of the past year, Family Voice representatives have been working harder than ever to raise the concerns of parent carers and make sure your experiences are heard. All meetings have been online, and without the need to travel, we have been able to attend more meetings than ever before.

As we are all parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) too, when we speak we do so with commitment and passion.

We would like to tell you directly about what we have been working on and, as always, we would like to hear from **you**. The more conversations we can have with you, the better our conversations with professionals. You will have direct access to representatives who have been voicing your views and can tell them what is important for **you**. These sessions are called **Check in and chat**. Details are above. They're relaxed and friendly, but recognise that the issues we all have are serious. We look forward to working with and for you.

Our online **Let's talk...** events give you a chance to hear directly from professionals on subjects that are important to families with children and young people (CYP) with SEND. There is always an opportunity to ask questions, or to find out where to go next if there are subjects that you are not comfortable with raising during the session. If you have ideas for future **Let's talk...** topics, please let us know by telling Kate on membership@familyvoice.org.uk.



Would you like to work with the Family Voice Norfolk team?

Administration Manager



Family Voice Norfolk is the parent carer forum for Norfolk.

We are a group of parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND) in

Norfolk. Our aim is to improve services for our children and young people (0–25) by ensuring that families' voices are heard by planners and decision-makers.

Through our membership of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums we are also able to ensure that the views of Norfolk families are heard by national government.

Further information about our work can be found on our website at www.familyvoice.org.uk

This is a new post, reflecting our increasing workload and the additional administration required now that we are a community interest company.

Responsible to: the Board

Hours: 35 hours per week. The role will be carried out mainly in weekday office hours, but there may be occasional evening meetings and very occasional Saturday events.

Salary: £27,300 per annum (£15.00 per hour)

Annual leave: You will be entitled to four weeks paid leave per annum, plus public holidays.

Place of employment: The role will mainly involve working from home. Equipment, such as mobile phone and laptop, will be supplied. When meetings, such as Board meetings, cease being solely online, some travel within Norfolk will be required. A mileage allowance will be paid.

Role purpose:

- To ensure effective day-to-day administration of Family Voice Norfolk in line with priorities agreed by the Board.
- To oversee the work of two part-time staff and ensure adequate cover for absences
- To ensure compliance with Family Voice Norfolk's policies and review and update them as necessary.
- To report regularly to the Board about administrative issues and achievements.

You will find **a full job description** on our website [here](#).

Applicants are invited to email a CV and covering letter, including details of two referees, to our Chair Tracey Sismey at tracey.sismey@familyvoice.org.uk by **Friday 14 January 2022**.

Interviews will be held w/c 24 January 2022.



Recently we have been working on...

As you will have seen on page 1, Family Voice representatives attend on average over 20 meetings a week, speaking up for parent carers of children and young people with SEND.

The meetings cover a huge range of topics and may be regular and ongoing, such as the various boards that direct workstreams and to which these report, or shorter pieces of work, sometimes called 'task and finish groups' to fulfil a particular need.

All Family Voice representatives are parent carers themselves and have useful insights even if they are attending meetings outside their own family's experience, but on the whole our Coordinator, Emma, aims to place reps in meetings where they have useful knowledge and interest.

At the moment, many meetings that we attend are focussed on various aspects of preparing for the revisit of Ofsted/CQC following their inspection of Local Area SEND services in March 2020. The revisit is likely to take place in mid-2022. We also, of course, attend meetings about the effects of the pandemic on families with children and young people with SEND and how they can be supported. It is nationally recognised that they have been particularly badly affected in the past 20 months. Finally, there are meetings that the local authority sometimes terms 'business as usual' – the continuing attempt to improve education, health and social services for our young people.

Advising on content

As we reported in the last newsletter, Family Voice Norfolk is often asked to look at leaflets, letters and surveys for parent carers to advise on whether the content is as clear and straightforward as possible. We also advise on website content and contribute to discussions about how to publicise new services or requests for parent carer views (often called 'engagement').

Professionals who use specialist words every day in their working life sometimes need to be reminded that parent carers do not. No one really wants the way something is written to add to parents' anxiety. We aim to prevent this.

In recent weeks we have helped redraft a leaflet about Early Identification of Need, which in other words means making sure that parents are happy for information about their young child to be shared between health services and education services (NCC) so that they can be well supported when they enter a nursery, preschool or school.

There has been an emphasis within health services for some time about 'transition' –

the time when a young person moves from children's (paediatric) services to adult ones. We have advised on some materials being produced, but this is an example of an area that is very tricky to get right.

Young people with SEND are very varied in their needs. The aim always is to help them to have as much independence as possible, while checking that they will still be safe and will be able to be supported when necessary. But producing materials that will work for any individual is very difficult.

You may sometimes see the Family Voice logo on publications from the local authority (NCC) or health services. This means that we have worked with others to make the document as useful as possible, but it doesn't mean that we endorse every part of it. We aim to work in 'coproduction' – on equal terms with others – but we don't have control over how or when a document is used and although we will have done our best to make it as useful as possible, we may still have reservations about it. Our logo on someone else's document never ever means that we are recommending a service or an approach. That's not what we are here for.



Telling our truth – employment

Family Voice representatives have recently been taking part in workshops about employment for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the last workshop, Tracey Sismey and Nicola Baxter were asked to give a presentation outlining 'the parent carers' perspective'. Their first point, as you can imagine, was that the title needed to be 'parent carers' perspectives' (plural), as we all have different views and expectations for our young people.

Before the presentation, Family Voice members were asked for their views. Thank you to everyone who replied. What you told us was enormously helpful, and anonymous quotations from your replies formed a strong strand in what was said.

One point that was clearly made by our representatives will be obvious to you but is not always clear to professionals. It is the degree of uncertainty with which we live daily. As parent carers, we rarely know for sure what the future holds for our children. We hope for the best and prepare for the worst, constantly revising our ideas about what is going to be possible and what we need to do to support our young people. Although all parents have these anxieties, for us they are a huge part of our lives.

Planning for the future is not an easy thing to get right. As parent carers we walk a tightrope between encouraging our children to be aspirational – to follow their dreams, as we are so often told – and trying to manage their expectations of what will be possible. By the time our young people reach services that aim to support their employability, we have been walking this line for fifteen years or more. Sometimes this means that it is hard for us to be enthusiastic and positive about the next steps, when we have years of experience of the difficulties our children have faced.

Our presentation was well received, and the workshops have revealed that there are far more services working with young people than most of us are aware of. Most of these services are already working together. Family Voice spoke up for even closer coordination, so that a young person could swiftly be directed to the very best support for them individually.

Annual SEND survey

We reported in the last newsletter about the plans for a yearly survey of parent carers, professionals and children and young people themselves about their views on the services they access or wish they could access. The first survey will be launched early in 2022.

Family Voice representatives attend meetings at which the survey is planned and progressed. It is interesting work. It's essential that parent carers tell Norfolk County Council and health services what they think and what they need. That, of course, is what Family Voice does all the time. In this work we find that there is a real balance to be struck

between including questions that will give NCC and health services the information they need and including questions that will enable parent carers to say what is most important to *them*. Which questions are chosen and how they are worded is critical.

Even a word such as 'services' – used so often – may not be clear. Is education a 'service'? A local tennis club or Scouts group would be called 'universal services' by NCC, but is that term 'universally' understood?

There is a lot of work still to do, but it is worth persevering. The yearly survey could become a very useful snapshot of how things are for our families and highlight priorities for the SEND Local Area Strategy.



Do you use a Personal Assistant?

Has this been difficult since March 2020?

People who use Personal Assistants (PAs), and groups who support them, have worked together with the Local Government Association and Think Local, Act Personal to design a survey to understand the challenges people who use PAs have been facing since March 2020, particularly in finding and keeping Personal Assistants.

The survey is aimed at all people who employ Personal Assistants (PAs), or who are supported by a self-employed PA, and who pay for their PA with a Direct Payment, Personal Budget, Personal Health budget or from their own money.

A 'Personal Assistant' or 'PA' is a person who provides support services but is not provided through a care agency. Private support workers and private care assistants are also types of Personal Assistant.

The Local Government Association needs your help. It wants to know how easy or hard it has been for you to find or keep Personal Assistants since March 2020. You can help by doing [this survey](#).

When the Local Government Association has listened to what people have said, it will write a report. The report will share what it has learned.

Your answers are confidential. You don't have to give your name.

Doing this survey will not affect the services or support you receive.

This survey closes at midnight on **Sunday, 23 January 2022.**



Siblings and Christmas

The text below, for young siblings of children and young people with SEND, comes from www.sibs.org.uk, a charity for people who grow up with or have grown up with a disabled brother or sister. There are over half a million young siblings and over one-and-a-half million adult siblings in the UK.

Christmas is just around the corner and things might look a bit different this year. This might be because

- You can't visit your brother or sister if they live in a residential or care setting because of Covid restrictions
- You can't travel to see family who live a bit further away
- You might not be able to spend time with friends outside of school

We know that some siblings can find this time of year a bit hard for other reasons too. Maybe you've had to do things differently at Christmas because your brother or sister finds the excitement too much to cope with? Or maybe you feel like they get more attention than you – even if you understand why.

We've got lots of useful information on [tough stuff at home](#) if you think that you might find Christmas hard.

However, we also know that siblings still think Christmas is a really special time and if you click on the links we have some ideas for how you can still try to to have [fun with your family](#) or [play games with your brother or sister](#).

There is lots more information for young siblings on the YoungSibs website www.youngsibs.org.uk



Safer sleep for babies

At Christmas we enjoy eating and drinking more than usual, visiting friends and family, or perhaps having them visit us. It's easy for this kind of thing to affect your baby's sleep routine. Safe sleep guidelines are really important to help keep your baby safe.



For more information, call 0300 300 0123, text 07520 631590, visit [JustOneNorfolk.nhs.uk/SaferSleep](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/SaferSleep) or search for Safer Sleep Norfolk on the internet.

'What good looks like' survey

The government wants to improve the lives of **people with a learning disability** and **autistic people**.

This work is called, 'Building the Right Support'

The Norfolk Autism Partnership Board and the Norfolk Learning Disability Partnership Board would like your help.

They want to find out what people in our community think good support looks like.

They are asking **autistic people** and **people with a learning disability** about this.

They are also asking **family carers** to respond with the person or from their own point of view.

You can help by doing this survey. Just click [here](#).

When the government has seen what people have said they will write a report.

The report will share what they have learned. They will share how good services and support were made so that other areas can learn how to do it.

If you like, you can ask a friend, relative or an advocate to help you with the questions. They should support you to tell us **your** views.

You can find the information above in Easy Read on the Norfolk Autism Partnership Board website ([norfolkautismpartnership.org.uk](https://www.norfolkautismpartnership.org.uk)) and you can click to go to the survey there too.

The survey ends on **11 January 2022**.



Have
Your
Say...

Autism Peer Support

Have a say in the future of peer support for Autistic people

Health Education England (HEE) are exploring what capabilities are required for people that become peer support workers for autistic people. These capabilities will cover the skills, knowledge and values that Peer Support workers must have to do the job.

Autism Peer Support is where autistic people use the lessons learned from their own experiences to support other autistic people. As well as their own experience they also need the knowledge skills and values to understand other people's needs and give good support. The aim is to improve the quality of community-based support for autistic people.

Skills for Care, the National Autistic Society, together with Sussex Ehlers-Danlos Syndromes & Hypermobility Disorders CIC (SEDS) and Resolve Development, which are both autistic led organisations, are leading the project for HEE.

We need to find out what autistic people, families and other key stakeholders think those capabilities are.

To do this, we will be holding 12 online/virtual meetings in December 2021 and January 2022. There will be a maximum of 12 people per meeting to ensure everyone has a chance to have their say.

Each session will last 1 hour, and each will be jointly co-produced by an autistic person. Depending on the size of the group attending the meeting, you may be asked to participate in small group discussions. Information will be provided in advance.

Participants can be paid £15 per hour. Information about what will be discussed will be provided before the meeting. The following options are offered to anyone who finds virtual meetings challenging or who would prefer a 1:1 chat.

- 1:1 phone call or virtual meeting
- Fill in a questionnaire

Those who use alternative communication methods will be supported to do so.

To take part, please contact Skills for Care by emailing policy@skillsforcare.org.uk or visit our web page [SkillsforCare](#) for dates & times of the meeting for you to choose and a link to the online questionnaire.



Understanding Disability Related Expenses (DRE)

If you are assessed as having to pay towards the cost of your care, Disability Related Expenses (DRE) can be taken into account. This may mean that you have to pay less. During the past year, people who pay towards their care, and organisations such as **Family Voice Norfolk**, have told adult social services that claiming DRE often seems difficult to understand and feels unfair.

As a result, a new Disability Related Expenses (DRE) Team has been set up. You can speak to the team or email them. See Easy Read details below.

	<p>We have set up a new team to help you with Disability Related Expenses. They are called the DRE Team.</p>
	<p>You can call them on 01603 222133 option 2 and asking to speak to the DRE Team.</p>
	<p>They can also be contacted by email. The address is DRE@norfolk.gov.uk</p>
	<p>They can answer your questions about Disability Related Expenses.</p>
	<p>They can also tell you whether something you pay for could be included in your claim.</p>
	<p>The team can help you if you are unsure about anything relating to Disability Related Expenses.</p>
	<p>You can call or email between 8:30am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday.</p>
	<p>They will try to get back to you within 2 working days.</p>



**COVID-19 booster vaccines
are now available for those
aged 18+**

Booked appointments only

18+

**Book your
COVID-19 booster
via the National
Booking System or
call 119.**



Covid-19 boosters

From 15 December 2021, those aged 18+ can **pre-book** a COVID-19 booster vaccination from 3 months since their second dose. New appointment slots continue to be added to the national booking system across Norfolk and Waveney so please keep checking if the first sites and times don't suit you.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to increased demand for boosters, walk-in boosters at vaccination sites have been paused and you will not be able to get a booster without an appointment.

Please only attend a vaccination site for a booster if you have booked an appointment. Book on the national booking system or ring 119.

Learn more and keep up-to-date with changes at: <https://www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk/vaccinations/covid-19-vaccines/booster-third-dose-covid-vaccinations>

If you haven't had your first or second vaccination

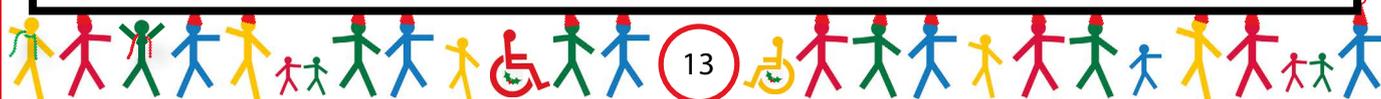
There are some local vaccination sites that can administer jabs without an appointment – search here for a local site for a first or second dose: <https://apps.norfolk.gov.uk/WalkIn/>

Adult social care white paper

In September 2021, the Prime Minister announced £5.4 billion for adult social care reform over the next three years. At the Autumn Spending Review 2021, it was confirmed that £1.7 billion of this funding would be for major improvements across the adult social care system.

This white paper sets out how some of this money will be spent to begin to transform the adult social care system in England, including investments in housing and home adaptations, technology and digitisation, workforce training and wellbeing support, support for unpaid carers, and improved information and advice.

You can learn more about the reforms on the [Transforming Social Care website](#).



SEN Support research findings

The term 'SEN Support' describes the actions taken to support pupils and students in mainstream settings who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), but who do not have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Pupils receiving SEN Support comprise just over 12% of all pupils in England. This report presents findings from a study conducted with mainstream primary and secondary school leaders and teachers to explore their approaches to identifying the needs of pupils receiving SEN Support, how they meet these needs, and how they evaluate the effectiveness of the support provided. Find the report [here](#).



Looking after someone – advice for the Christmas season

For many of us there may be a sense that Christmas is a time to have a break and enjoy yourself. But for some people, including carers, the festive period can bring its own challenges.

If you are a carer it may be that you and/or the person you care for are affected by:



Carers Matter Norfolk
0800 083 1148

- not being able to have your normal routine of activities and support or not being able to get a break from your caring role
- spending time with friends and family being more challenging due to your caring responsibilities or the needs of the person you care for
- feeling added pressures through the Christmas and New Year period.

Carers Matter has put together some steps you can take to help with this, and to know where the right support is available if you need it. Go to <https://carersmatternorfolk.org.uk/looking-after-someone-advice-for-the-christmas-season/>

Young people's participation group

Are you a young person aged 14–25 and live in the Norfolk and Waveney area?

Would you like to get involved in [improving your mental health service?](#)

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) invite you to join their Young People's Participation Group.

They meet fortnightly on Tuesdays from 7pm via Microsoft Teams.

People participation is about everyone working together. It is about listening to and embracing the expertise of all people with lived experience as equal and valued partners in driving the design and development of better mental health services. By working together, NSFT will be able to provide the best possible mental health services for all.

Email Lucy.North@nsft.nhs.uk or call her on 07818 537990.



NHS
Norfolk and Suffolk
NHS Foundation Trust



WELCOME TO FAMILY LEARNING



WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

We are Family Learning. We run **FREE** and **FUN** sessions for you to enjoy with your children aged 0-11 years. Our sessions can be anything from sensory play to helping with homework and are delivered by an expert and friendly tutor who will provide a relaxed and supportive environment. The aim is to explore and discover fun and creative ways to help with children's development and wellbeing and ultimately build happy families.

In response to Lockdown we are offering courses such as "Lockdown babies" and "Helping your child manage anxiety".

We are part of Norfolk County Council and work independently of Adult and Children's Services so please come and see us and take part in our online or face to face sessions! We are passionate about helping you and your child learn and grow together and would love to see you! **We welcome SEND families**

Find out more:

www.norfolk.gov.uk/familylearning
0344 800 8020 (option 5)





HELPING YOUR CHILD MANAGE ANXIETY

Discover how to help your child with anxiety. Working with the tutor and other parents and carers, you will increase your understanding of anxiety in children, and learn new ways to help them manage it. This **FREE** course is for parents and carers of children aged 4-11 years.

10.00 am to 12 noon

5 weeks from Tuesday 11th January to 8th February 2022

Online Delivery
We welcome SEND families.

**This is an online course that will take place on Microsoft Teams.
Further information will be emailed out after booking your place.**

To book your place:

Visit:

<http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/familylearning>

Telephone: 0344 800 8020 option 5



SAINSBURY CENTRE

Children and Families
Spring 2022

scva@uea.ac.uk



Holiday Studio

Something special for 7-16-year-olds during February Half Term. Delve deeper into the wonderful artwork, architecture and natural surroundings at the Sainsbury Centre. This time we will consider the theme of *Imprints* with associate artist Anna Brass. Each half day workshop finishes with a picnic lunch at the gallery.

15th February 10.30-1.30 7-11-year-olds

16th February 10.30-1.30 12-16-year-olds

Free Family Sundays

Drop in on the dates below between 11am and 12.30 pm to look, explore, draw and more with a different theme each month. Suitable for all ages. No need to book.

January- Movement

2nd January In the Gallery with Annie Brundrit

16th January Outdoor Explore with Genevieve Rudd

February- Imprints

6th February In the Gallery with Paul Patrick Fenner

20th February Outdoor Explore with Marnie Hardy

March- Celebrating Global Recycling Day

6th March In the Gallery with Rose Feather

20th March Outdoor Explore with Caitlin Howells

April- Renewal

3rd April In the Gallery with Sorrel Muggridge

24th April Outdoor Explore Artist TBC

May- Mazes and Pathways

1st May In the Gallery Artist TBC

15th May Outdoor Explore Artist TBC

Mini Studio

Relaxed, multi-sensory fun for under 6's led by one of our associate artists. Each workshop includes exploration in the gallery and open-ended play in the Studio. Suitable from birth. Pay what you can (suggested donation £7). Booking opens 3 weeks in advance on our website.

3rd February 10.30-12.30 Artist TBC Stamp and Print

21st April 10.30-12.30 Artist TBC Round and Round

Saturday Studio

Explore new materials and concepts together as a family. In this 2-hour workshop you will learn more about an aspect of the Sainsbury Centre collections, exhibitions or building. Then get making using specially selected resources, supported by one of our associate artists. Aimed at 5-11-year-olds and their families. Pay what you can (suggested donation £7). Booking opens 3 weeks in advance on our website.

22nd January 10.30-12.30 Ian Brownlie. Theme is Movement

26th March 10.30-12.30 Genevieve Rudd. Theme is Reuse and Recycle

21st May 10.30-12.30 Artist and theme TBC



All Age Carers Strategy – your views are needed

Carers Voice Norfolk & Waveney is delighted to be leading on co-producing the initial stage of the first All Age Carers Strategy for Norfolk & Waveney 2022–2025. This is to find out what carers see as the priorities to support them and how they should be delivered, so that carers receive the services they want and need. A variety of ways of doing this are being used, including the [survey](#) below.



Carers Voice have worked with carers (including **Family Voice Norfolk**) to coproduce the questions for the survey.

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support.

All responses are anonymous and cannot be identified to you as an individual. They will only be used to make recommendations to health and social care providers in Norfolk and Waveney. Please do not put any personal information in your responses to the survey (e.g. name or contact details).

If you would like help to complete the survey or have any other questions please contact Carers Voice by emailing info@carersvoice.org or by calling 07932 095312.

Please do fill in the survey if you can. It is important that the voices of carers of younger people are heard.

Find the survey at <https://www.carersvoice.org/carers-strategy/>

Norfolk and Waveney Children and Young People's Health Service (CYPHS) Additional Needs Survey

The aim is to gain ongoing feedback from families with children with SEND about Norfolk and Waveney CYPHS and the annual contact it offers all children with SEND.

The survey is short and can be found at <https://www.oc-meridian.com/cambCommunityServices/completion/custom/default.aspx?slid=1665&did=>

School uniforms – guidance

In November, the Department for Education updated its guidance regarding school uniforms, with the aim of supporting schools in the development and implementation of their uniform policies. The guidance is not statutory – schools do not *have* to follow it – but it does include terms such as 'strongly recommend' and reminds schools that they must 'comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 and take into account key considerations such as safeguarding requirements and the health and safety of their pupils.'

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums, to which Family Voice belongs, offered advice when the guidance was being prepared. See more at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform/school-uniforms>



Making Sense of SEND

The Norfolk SEND Local Offer team is hosting their next Making Sense of SEND event on **12 January 2022 from 10am–11.30am** on Microsoft Teams. It's for parents and carers of children or young people with SEND and is free to attend. **Family Voice Norfolk** ambassadors will, as usual, be available to talk with parent carers.

This event's guest speaker is Michael Bateman, who will be giving an update on the SEND transformation project and Norfolk County Council's progress on its Written Statement of Action following Ofsted/CQC's Local Area SEND inspection in March 2020.

There will also be an opportunity to ask an expert panel your questions about SEND.

Book your ticket today by scanning the QR code, or searching on Eventbrite as suggested in the flyer below, or click on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/making-sense-of-send-wednesday-12th-january-2022-tickets-139450260483>

MAKING SENSE OF SEND

Michael Bateman will be joining us to provide an update on Norfolk County Council's SEND transformation project and our progress towards Ofsted's Written Statement of Action.

Wednesday 12 January
10.00–11.30am



Search for 'Making Sense of SEND' on Eventbrite or scan the QR code to book your free place



in partnership with



The importance of parent carer forums (such as Family Voice Norfolk!)

At the recent National Network of Parent Carer Forums/Contact online conference, Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education said:

"Parent carer forums play such an important role. As the parent carer forums and through the NNPCF you bring the voice of parents to the table at all levels of government and you make a real difference. You deserve your place around that table and you will always be welcome."



Free workshops for parent carers

Contact, the charity for families with disabled children, is running further virtual workshops for parent carers. All are accessible online via Zoom. These are stand-alone events – alternative dates are just that, not continuations of a course. Full instructions for using Zoom and accessing the workshops, together with booking forms and further information, is available if you click on the links below.

Speech, language and communication workshop for families of children of primary school age

Virtual workshops on speech, language and communication for parents of children with communication difficulties associated with hearing impairment, language impairment and autism.



These workshops are delivered in partnership with ICAN. They are all run with additional support from a Contact Family Support Adviser so that you can benefit from additional information and support about caring for a child with an additional need.

Join these virtual workshops and meet other parent carers experiencing similar issues, with the benefit of an expert speech and language therapist.

The workshops currently cover:

- Understanding the communication chain and which part is not working for your child
- How you can support your child
- Your role
- Key strategies
- How to work with others supporting your child so you all have a common approach to supporting communication development
- Resources and where to get more support

Tuesday, 18 January 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/speech-language-and-communication-workshop-tickets-204986759917>

Monday, 24 January 2022, 19:30–21:30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/speech-language-and-communication-workshop-tickets-204987221297>

Speech, language and communication workshop for families of children of secondary school age

Thursday, 13 January 2022, 19:30–21:30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/speech-language-and-communication-workshop-tickets-204985285507>



NEW! Brighter Beginnings – Early Years entitlements for children with SEND

This workshop will give you advice and support on the following topics:

- Childcare – what your options are and how to find suitable childcare
- Help with childcare costs – what is available
- Early Years education – what you can expect from an Early Years provider, how children with special educational needs are supported in Early Years settings, and what you can do if you are worried about your child’s learning and development.
- What help is available – we will discuss how you can be supported if you are struggling to find suitable childcare or if a setting is not providing suitable support for your child
- Benefits and grants – DLA for under-5s and a brief overview of benefits/grants



Friday, 28 January 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-early-years-entitlements-for-children-with-send-tickets-209197414097>

Tuesday, 1 March 2022, 19:30–21:30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-early-years-entitlements-for-children-with-send-tickets-209215468097>

Thursday, 17 March 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-early-years-entitlements-for-children-with-send-tickets-209214465097>

NEW! Brighter Beginnings – Support for parents/carers of children with anxiety (aged 0 to 5 with additional needs)

The workshop will cover:

- What is anxiety?
- The signs of anxiety and how it can make you feel
- The causes of anxiety
- Different types of anxiety
- Strategies to help recognise and manage anxiety



Thursday, 27 January 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-parents-of-children-with-anxiety-tickets-208646676827>

Thursday, 10 February 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-parents-of-children-with-anxiety-tickets-208656165207>



NEW! Brighter Beginnings – Toilet training for children with additional needs (0–5 years)

All children learn to use the potty or toilet at a different stage in their life. Most children start to show an interest in moving on to a potty or toilet at about two years old. Children with additional needs may not be ready to start until they are older. This workshop will help you to understand when they are ready and how to start. You will learn:



- What it means to be toilet trained, inside and outside the body
- How to tell if your child is ready and how you can prepare them
- What a plan may look like, when to start it and how
- Where to get support

Wednesday, 19 January 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-toilet-training-0-to-5-years-tickets-208633998907>

Thursday, 24 February 2022, 19:00–21:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-toilet-training-0-to-5-years-tickets-208622323987>

Wednesday, 23 March 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-toilet-training-0-to-5-years-tickets-208636586647>

Encouraging positive behaviour for children 0–5 years with additional needs

During the disruption of Covid-19, it can be extra challenging to manage the behaviour of your child. This online workshop gives the opportunity to hear other parents' experiences, learn new strategies and share as much or as little of your story as you wish.



It is common for young children to have challenging behaviour. This online workshop will explore some of the issues around behaviour and will look at ways of supporting and encouraging your child. Participants will gain a better understanding of why children behave the way they do and learn ways to handle difficult situations in a calm, stress-free manner. Group discussions will explore what might help and how to get support.

Tuesday, 1 February 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-encouraging-positive-behaviour-in-children-with-send-tickets-209152078497>

Wednesday, 2 March 2022, 19:30–21:30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-encouraging-positive-behaviour-in-children-with-send-tickets-208682684527>



Educational support for young children with additional needs (aged 0 to 5)

It is very natural to be concerned about getting the right educational support for your young child, particularly if they have additional needs.



This workshop will help you to understand:

- how an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) could benefit your child
- how to apply for one and what is involved in the assessment process and the timescales involved
- when an EHC plan is not appropriate and what support is available for children who do not have an EHC plan
- how to challenge decisions about your child's educational support

Wednesday, 2 February 2022, 19:30–21:30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-early-years-education-for-children-with-send-tickets-208524922657>

Speech and language for parent carers of young children aged 0 to 5 with additional needs

If your child has additional needs, it can often be challenging to cope with their communication needs, with or without a diagnosis. Here is your opportunity to hear other parents' experiences, learn new strategies and share as much or as little of your story as you wish.



This workshop will help you to think about how you can best communicate with your child and how you can share this knowledge with those in their early years and school settings.

Written and delivered by a very experienced speech and language therapist and advisor to the children's communication charity, I CAN.

Tuesday, 11 January 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-speech-language-issues-in-young-children-tickets-208449326547>

Wednesday, 23 February 2022, 18:00–20:00

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-speech-language-issues-in-young-children-tickets-208468664387>

Wednesday, 16 March 2022, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-speech-language-issues-in-young-children-tickets-208466909137>



Brighter Beginnings – Helping your young child sleep

Having difficulties getting your child into a sleep routine? Do they keep waking up? Is it a challenge to get them to sleep at all?

If your child can't or won't sleep, it can affect the whole family. Many children have sleep issues, but this is much more common for children of all ages with additional needs. This online workshop will explore some of the issues around sleep and will look at ways of supporting your child, raising awareness of the importance of sleep and the effect on the whole family.

Gain a better understanding of sleep processes and why sleep problems may occur. Examine possible causes. Explore what might help. Find out where to get support.



Wednesday, 2 February 2022, 10:00am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-helping-your-young-child-sleep-a-contact-workshop-tickets-208519656907>

Listening Ear service

contact For families with disabled children

One-to-one telephone appointments for parent carers looking for emotional support

You might be struggling emotionally and looking for strategies to help you cope. Or maybe you just need to talk to someone who understands the extra challenges you face and who can point you in the right direction to get the support you need for your family.

To help, Contact offers one-to-one telephone appointments with a family support adviser for parent carers looking for a listening ear, reassurance and practical and emotional support.

Making an appointment is simple: visit their [Eventbrite page](#), choose the day (morning, afternoon or evening), and when you register choose the time slot you want. Appointments are regularly updated and are subject to availability.



Other Contact services

As well as the above training and listening services, the Contact website has a wealth of other useful information and advice. Topics featured include:

- Early years support
- Benefits and tax credits advice
- Introduction to SEN
- Extra support in schools
- EHC plans and assessment
- Education beyond 16
- Exclusions
- Dealing with bullying

Find out more at <https://contact.org.uk>



Breckland mental health support project

Breckland Council and Breckland Youth Advisory Board are jointly funding a £35,000 programme of mental health support – contributing £20,000 and £15,000 respectively. The support will be delivered by [Cup-O-T: Wellness and Therapy Services](#).

The programme has been in development and will start offering support in January, until September 2022. The project will offer support to Breckland families with young people aged 11–18 (or up to 25 for those who have a disability) who are awaiting treatment from, or on a waiting list for, an NHS mental health service; or those not attending school or at risk of not attending school due to their mental health.

The project will run over 12 months and offer support through activity- and skill-based Family Workshops, online Peer Support Sessions, and one-to-one sessions with mental health professionals. Sessions will be held in Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton, as well as online.

Young people and their families awaiting clinical interventions through CAMHS and Youth NHS mental health services will be prioritised for referral to the project, with further referrals coming through schools, social prescribers and GP services. You can read more about this by clicking this link:

[24/11/2021: New mental health support for young people & families in Breckland - Breckland Council](#)

Norfolk SEND Youth Forum

In 2021, the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum has enjoyed meeting up, supporting each other, making friends, and talking to representatives from the local authority, to provide the views and experiences of young people with SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities).



They are actively seeking new members as they want young people's voices to be heard and listened to. The key aim of the Youth Forum is to make real change for young people with SEND. As one of the members said,

"the youth forum is an empowering place to be...people listen to us."

So, if you are 11–25 years, and want to be part of this amazing group of young people, please sign up by completing the online registration form on the Forum's [website](#), and they will send you an invite to the next meeting.

If you are interested in what they do, but do not want to attend meetings, you can still register, and they will provide you with access to their online pinboard, where you can still be part of the conversation.

If you would like an informal chat with Bridget, the Forum's Children and Young Person Adviser, please phone 01603 704070 or click [here](#) and leave her a message.



New rules preventing Universal Credit claims by most disabled students

On 15 December 2021, the rules about disabled students claiming Universal Credit changed. Disabled students already getting Universal Credit are not affected.

It is no longer possible for a disabled student to qualify for Universal Credit by undergoing a work capability assessment while on their course to prove they have a limited capability for work.

Instead, someone who is treated as 'receiving education' will only be able to claim Universal Credit if they have previously established a limited capability for work before they started receiving education.

The intention of the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) seems to be that a disabled student will only be able to claim Universal Credit if they are someone who had been previously claiming benefits as an adult who is unfit to work, and who then subsequently moved back into education at a later date.

As a result of these changes, most disabled students won't be able to get Universal Credit.

Exceptions

There are some exceptions to this. Part-time students may still be able to claim (but remember that three days a week counts as full time in most cases), as might young people who remain in full-time non-advanced education (like school or a college course) beyond the August after their 19th birthday. But this is only if they can convince the DWP that there is no conflict between their attendance on their course and any work-related conditions attached to their claim.

Young people in full-time non-advanced education who haven't reached the September after their 19th birthday, alongside students in full-time advanced education, will no longer be able to claim Universal Credit unless they fall into certain limited categories. This includes students who have a child of their own and some students aged under 21 without parental support.

Find out more at <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/benefits-financial-help/benefits-and-tax-credits/universal-credit/universal-credit-for-young-people/>

Lack of consultation

Contact's benefits expert Derek Sinclair said: "Contact believes it is unacceptable to make such important changes to financial support available without any consultation on the impact of disabled students and their families. Especially since it was relatively easy for disabled students to claim means-tested benefits before Universal Credit was introduced.

"The DWP says that preventing claims by disabled students has always been a long-standing policy intention under Universal Credit. But if that is the case, they should have consulted on such fundamental changes — something that appears not to have happened when Universal Credit was introduced."

Contact and other organisations have continually raised concerns about these new rules and will continue to do so. If you've been affected, Contact would like to hear from you. Email una.summerson@contact.org.uk



Getting help in difficult times

As we all know, news about new Covid-19 variants is worrying. You may be concerned about how your children will be affected if you become ill yourself. The possibility of more schools closing because of Covid outbreaks or staff illness causes anxiety for parents and children. And on top of that, Christmas is a stressful time for many families.

We have put together contact details for some sources of help. If you find or have in the past found one of these helpful, or know of other good sources of support, do let us know. We can share information with other families via social media.

Get urgent help at home (Norfolk Swift Response Team)

Norfolk Swift Response is a free 24-hour service you can call if you have an urgent, unplanned need at home but don't need the emergency services.

Who can get assistance from Norfolk Swift Response?

This service is for people who are over 18, living at home and require physical or practical support with daily living tasks.

This includes:

- People with physical illness or disabilities
- People with learning disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- Carers

Norfolk Swift Response is a free service for people living in Norfolk.

Contact

Call Norfolk Swift Response on **0344 800 8020** and select option 1.

Urgent out-of-hours help from Norfolk's Emergency Duty Team

The team deals with social work emergencies outside working hours. This means at night, weekends and public holidays. An emergency is something that cannot safely wait to be dealt with until the next working day. They work with other emergency services including the health services and police.

The team helps:

- Children and their families
- People with mental health problems and disabilities
- Older people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect

What happens when you call?

Your call will be answered by a call handler. They will take your details and discuss the reason for your call with you to find out how urgent it is. If necessary they will pass your details on to a qualified social worker from the Emergency Duty Team. Alternatively they may signpost you to other agencies or refer your situation to one of the daytime social care teams for follow up at a later date.



People in high risk situations will always receive a priority service. At busy times there may be a delay before someone gets back to you.

Contact

Monday to Thursday, 5pm–9am the following morning.

From 4.35pm on Friday through to 9am the following Monday morning.

All day (24 hours) on Bank Holidays.

Families in emergencies.

Telephone: **0344 800 8020**

Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS)

The Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS) helps people who are in financial hardship and cannot pay their living costs. There are many reasons why this might happen to you:



- Redundancy
- Work hours have been cut
- On a low income or benefits
- Waiting for Universal Credit payments
- A home emergency such a fire or flood
- Have a special educational need or disability
- Have mental health issues or in ill health
- Have left an abusive relationship
- Have dependent children
- In a resettlement scheme

If you are eligible the scheme can:

- Provide emergency financial help
- Supply essential household goods and furniture
- Give support, guidance and advice

For example, it might be able to:

- Pay for petrol or your transport costs to enable you to get to work
- Give you a food voucher to spend at a supermarket
- Give you a voucher to buy school clothes from a uniform supplier
- Make a gas or electricity meter pre-payment via Paypoint if you have run out
- Help with moving and storage costs if you have to set up a new home
- Provide an immediate small cash payment for daily expenses in an emergency

You will need to complete an application with evidence of your financial situation.



NAS can also put you in touch with organisations that can offer support in many different ways.

Contact

For further details, go to: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/norfolk-assistance-scheme/how-to-apply>

Food for people having to self-isolate

If you need help with registering for an online shop or if you cannot access food then you can get help. Please call 0344 800 8020. Select option 1, then option 4, then option 2.

Community hubs

Community hubs have been set up across Norfolk to help people who are feeling vulnerable and need support during the coronavirus situation.

If you are finding one or many aspects of life difficult to manage, or know someone who is, the community hubs will link you up with voluntary or community organisations that can help you with a range of tasks and support.

If you or someone you know needs any of the above help, phone **0344 800 8020**. There is help with:

- Necessities
- Accessing food and deliveries
- Getting your prescriptions
- Advice on benefits and other financial support
- Wellbeing
- Arranging weekly check-ins or telephone befriending service
- Support to register as 'vulnerable' with council services
- Contacts for local community groups
- Advice on how to stay well and active
- Arranging emergency home and heating repairs
- Advice on keeping warm and heating your home efficiently
- Ensuring your home is safe and secure
- Arranging assisted bin collections
- Advice on housing and homelessness
- Employment support and rights
- Issues relating to self-isolation eg MOT delays
- Accessing online services for people without internet access
- Acquiring documents or NHS numbers
- Support with debts and budgeting
- General information and advice



To contact your local community hub, click the links on <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/coronavirus/community-support-for-people-at-home/community-hubs>

Caring for someone who's self-isolating

If you're a carer for someone who is self-isolating, the most important thing is to follow NHS advice for reducing transmission.

Carers Matter Norfolk remains open for all carers' concerns and tailored advice on particular circumstances. Go to <https://carersmatternorfolk.org.uk> or call **0800 083 1148**.

Age UK, Carers UK and other local agencies all have information online and helplines you can call.

Carers UK advise you should [create an emergency plan](#) and [sign up for a carer's emergency card](#).

What to do if you're a carer who's self isolating

If you normally care for a family member or loved one but are self-isolating or have Covid-19 symptoms, contact **0344 800 8020** to discuss all options.

If the care is essential, for example personal care and/or meals, Norfolk County Council will find someone to provide this. There is always a risk when there is contact, so they will evaluate what will pose the greater risk to the carer and cared for.

If you temporarily stop providing care for someone

If unfortunately either you or the person you care for has to go into hospital or be cared for elsewhere, you can still get Carer's Allowance if you temporarily stop providing care. This means any period when you spend less than 35 hours a week caring for the other person.

The person you care for must still receive their disability benefit.

However, you must tell DWP if you temporarily stop providing care and:

- you or the person you care for will be in hospital, a nursing home, or respite care for more than 12 weeks
- you stop caring for more than 28 days for any other reason.

Mental health and wellbeing

There are lots of links and suggestions on <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/adults-health/mental-health/mental-wellbeing>

and on the Just One Norfolk website at <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk>

