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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/FamilyVoiceNorfolk)

 [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



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 25 October 10–11am
Monday 29 November 10–11 am

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

Family Voice events for parent carers

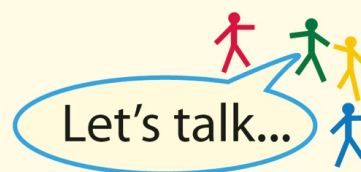
During lockdowns, our online coffee mornings and teatimes gave parents a chance to get together and talk about what life was like for them and their children with SEND. Now we are in a strange period where some things appear to have returned to normal, while others still have restrictions, working at home is still the reality for many, and, of course, all of us are having to deal with our own feelings and make our own adjustments.

During the whole of the past eighteen months, Family Voice representatives have been working harder than ever to raise the concerns of parent carers and make sure your experiences are heard. We would like to tell you more about what we have been working on and, as always, we would like to hear from **you**. Let's continue the conversations of the past months. You will have direct access to representatives who have been voicing your views and can tell them what is important for **you**. Our new sessions are called **Check in and chat**. Details are above. They're relaxed and friendly, but 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.

We use your views and stories (always anonymously) to represent parent carers in the meetings we attend with Norfolk County Council, health services and voluntary partners. The more we hear from you, the stronger our voices can be.





Let's talk... about mental health and wellbeing
for children and young people with SEND

with Lucy North

People Participation Lead for Children's,
Families' and Young People's Service Norfolk & Waveney

- find out about services for your child or young person with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND)
- ask questions about services and share your experiences
- discover how your views can improve existing services and lead to new ones

Join us online on

Tuesday, 26 October 2021
from 10.00am to 12.00pm

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

This event takes place in half term. Young people are welcome to take part.





Let's talk... about autism

with Tom Bassett
Partnership Boards Transformation
Manager

and Ryan Hardy
Member of the Norfolk All-age
Autism Partnership

Further to our popular meeting with Tom and Ryan in June, this is an opportunity to meet with other parent carers in a relaxed setting and gain an overview of autism support in Norfolk.

- learn more about sensory processing
- discover causes of repetitive behaviours and how to respond
- understand more about the experience of your child or young person with autism

Tom will be happy to answer questions and will be interested in your views and experiences

Join us online on

Monday, 8 November
from 10.00am to 12.00pm

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



Let's talk... about Short Breaks

with Colleen Hubbard

Commissioning and Service Development Manager

and Amanda Peart

Commissioning Officer

both from the Health and Disability Integrated Commissioning Team,
Children's Services, Norfolk County Council

If you are not yet accessing Short Breaks:

- find out about the Short Breaks service
- discover who is eligible
- learn how you could use Short Breaks funding

If you already use Short Breaks:

- is the service working well for you?
- are there changes you would like to see?

Join us online on

Monday, 22 November from 10.00 to 11.30am

Tuesday, 23 November from 7.00 to 8.30pm

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



How to find out about Family Voice events and news

Our [Facebook page](#) not only has our own events and information but lots of other news about what is happening in Norfolk for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their parent carers. Also on Facebook, our [Family Voice Members Chat Room](#) is a closed group where you can give your views on whatever is concerning you and discuss issues with us and other parent carers.

Our [website](#) tells you more about how we work and our own events. You can find reports, news and our past newsletters there.

Our [Membership Secretary Kate](#) may email you about special events and surveys.

If you have been handed this newsletter by a friend or know someone else who is not yet a member, it is easy to join on our website at www.familyvoice.org.uk. Membership is **free**. **Full membership** is open to parents, carers and close family members of children and young people (0–25) with SEND. **Associate membership** is for others wishing to support our work, such as practitioners and extended family. **Affiliate membership** is for groups and organisations.

Let's talk... about support for children and young people in mainstream schools

With most children back in school after the summer holiday, it was no surprise that over twenty families joined us to hear about how SEN Support works and what support children and young people can expect in mainstream education without an education, health and care (EHC) plan in place.

Dawn Jones and Alison Toombs from the Virtual School for SEND provided a wealth of information and, most importantly, listened to the concerns and successes experienced by the families that attended.

very informative
needed more on processes
informative
very informative and help
excellent topic needed
important
good discussion
well- rounded

Feedback from parent carers shows how important this topic is. There's no doubt that we will visit it again in the future.

The presentation given by Dawn and Alison can be viewed on our website at <https://www.familyvoice.org.uk/articles-reports/parent-carer-participation-events/>



Newsletter deadlines

The next newsletter will appear around the end of October 2021. Tell us about issues you'd like to see covered by emailing comms@familyvoice.org.uk by **25 October 2021**.



Over the summer we have been working on...

Although meetings tend to be fewer in August, this summer Family Voice representatives have found that many workstreams continued. In particular, work relating to the Written Statement of Action – Norfolk’s response to the three ‘serious weaknesses’ found by the Ofsted/CQC Local Area SEND inspection in March 2020 – has carried on. A re-inspection is expected in mid-2022, so actions have strict deadlines and progress is reported regularly. As one of the areas of concern was communication and co-production, many services have been keen to include Family Voice and other parent carer groups in this work. We also aim to make a difference in ways that you may not realise. Some examples are below and on page 8.

SEND Communication Guide

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 frequently find that there are good intentions behind the documents, but they are written from the point of view of the writer rather than the reader.

We have therefore been very happy to work with the Local Offer team and others to develop a Communication Guide for anyone writing about special educational needs and/or disability (SEND).

The Guide can be seen on the SEND Local Offer website at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/send> by clicking on ‘About the SEND Local Offer’ on the home page. It is in three parts:

- Writing information that is clear and easy to understand
- SEND terms explained simply
- Inclusive language

The first section gives a step-by-step guide to producing a piece of writing. The second is a really useful list of SEND terms with simple definitions that can be used to explain them in any document. We all use acronyms, but families new to SEND can’t be expected to understand the shorthand that professionals often use.

We hope you’ll find this useful, too.

Interviews

When Norfolk County Council, health services and voluntary agencies fill posts that have a direct impact on children and young people with SEND or their families, it is important that as many of these groups as possible have an opportunity to take part in the selection of candidates.

As parent carers, we all know that experience is not the only requirement for many roles – a willingness to listen and learn is equally important, and an understanding that it is vital to use the experiences of families to improve services.

Family Voice representatives have taken part in interviews for some key roles in recent months:

Stakeholder Engagement and Insight Officer

Strategic Commissioners focussed on specialist and complex commissioning

Assistant Director Specialist and Complex Commissioning

Transforming Care Navigators (NHS)

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
Locality Service Leads

Short Breaks Manager (West)

We are shortly also to be involved in interviews for the Strategic Lead for Youth and Participation.



Telling our truth – trauma and challenge

Earlier this year, Family Voice was asked to contribute to training for professionals about the experience of parent carers under the title 'The trauma and challenge of having a child with complex health needs'.

Family Voice representatives, ambassadors and staff – who are all parents of children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) – shared their experiences with Rachel Clarke, one of our Ambassador Leads. Rachel created a very powerful presentation that gave a vivid picture of the many ways in which having a child with complex needs affects the whole family and has unforeseen consequences for everyone.

Rachel's presentation was so successful in giving an insight into our lives that she has been asked to repeat it several times. It has been presented twice at events organised by Norfolk Safeguarding Partnership and three times to the Healthy Child Programme team, and we are still receiving requests for it to be repeated. Feedback on the presentation includes:

'thank you Rachel for sharing your experience ... there were some tears at the end and lovely comments about it being really powerful and emotive and how brave you are to speak so openly and honestly'

'This training should be mandatory to all children services, schools, carers, and other organizations who are involved with children with complex needs.'

'The presentation by Rachel Clarke brought the reality home.'

'hearing from the parent first hand – this had such an impact.'

'The most useful part of the session was ... hearing from Family Voice – hearing the lived experience'

'the presentation by Family Voice Norfolk was amazing and so thought provoking'



Rachel Clarke

Festival of SEND planning group

Earlier this year we publicised a survey from the Local Offer team to find out whether there was interest in a summer event next year that would be both fun and informative for children and young people with SEND and their families. The replies to the survey were very encouraging, so we are working with a group scoping out the possibilities for this event. There is a tremendous amount to think about, if the event is to be welcoming for a wide range of families, but we're excited to be part of something that could be very positive.

Annual SEND survey

Plans for an annual SEND survey, to be co-produced with families this autumn and launched in early 2022, are underway and involving Family Voice representatives. The aim of the survey is to help decision-makers and planners to understand what is working and what needs to improve for children and young people with SEND and their families. The feedback will be used to shape the refresh of the Norfolk Area SEND Strategy (available on the Local Offer at www.norfolk.gov.uk/send). And when the survey is repeated in 2023, we shall all be able to see if real progress is being made.



Family Voice AGM 2021

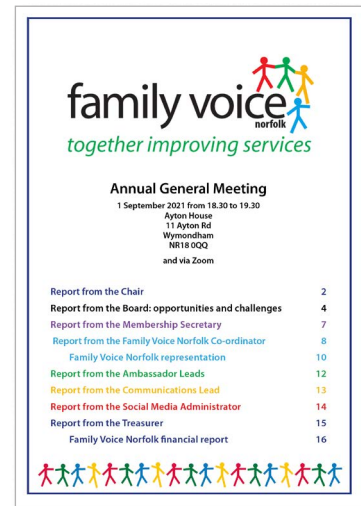
Our Annual General Meeting was held on 1 September 2021 with both in-the-room and online participation. Next year we hope it will be possible for everyone to gather and share refreshments and information together.

The AGM documents are available on our website at <https://www.familyvoice.org.uk/articles-reports/agms/>

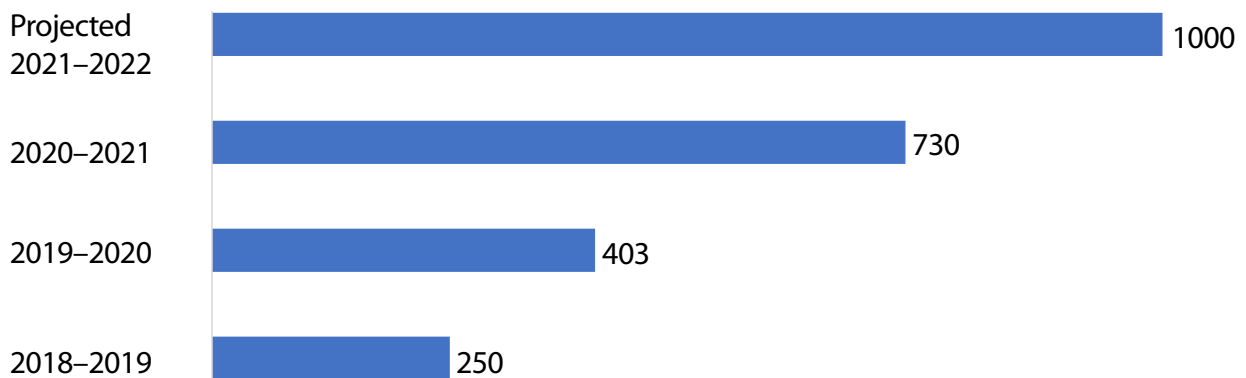
If you don't have time to read the whole document, here are some key messages from the past year:

In 2021 **Family Voice became a Community Interest Company (CIC)**, like many other parent carer forums and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF). This guarantees our not-for-profit status and commits Family Voice Norfolk's assets permanently to be used for the benefit of the community. It also enables us to give our administrative staff the benefits of employment, including paid holidays and pension options.

Our workload is increasing and is forecast to continue to do so. There are many reasons for this – work on Written Statement of Action priorities following the 2020 Ofsted/CQC Local Area SEND inspection; online meetings, for which rooms do not need to be booked and travel time does not need to be allowed; COVID-19 recovery meetings. And national government initiatives, such as Integrated Care Systems, the current Children's Social Care Review and the long-awaited SEND Review, are certain to mean more work for everyone. In May 2021, we passed the 100-meetings-a-month mark for the first time. The graph below shows vividly how our involvement has increased in the past three years, despite a national pandemic and the pressures this has meant for all parent carers.



Family Voice Norfolk meetings



In view of the above, in addition to the grant that we receive (via Contact) from the Department for Education, we are asking for increased funding from Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group.

We also need more parent carers who are able not only to give us their views – vital for our work – but also to join us in representing other parent carers in that work. See overleaf for more information.



Using your expert knowledge – could you help improve services for families like yours?

Family Voice Norfolk is made up of parent carers and those who support our work, but we are all individuals and are able to choose how we can be involved.

Family Voice Norfolk members receive this newsletter and invitations to take part in events and give their views about things that really matter to families. As you are reading this newsletter, you are probably already a member, but just in case you're not, please do join us. Membership is free. The easiest way to join is via our website, at www.familyvoice.org.uk/join

Family Voice Norfolk representatives go to meetings with the local authority, health services and voluntary services and speak up about what parent carers feel and need. It isn't as daunting as it sounds and you will have thorough training and mentoring and the chance to see what the role involves until you feel confident. You can choose the topics that interest you and can turn down any opportunities that don't work with your family life, which always comes first with us. There is also some other work reviewing documents, for example, or attending webinars or talks where you don't need to participate but could usefully feed back to other representatives about what you have learned. You are paid for your time and travel expenses (although most meetings are still online at the moment). You can see our Reward and recognition policy on our website (www.familyvoice.org.uk) at the end of the home page.

Family Voice Norfolk ambassadors tell other parent carers – and sometimes professionals – about our work and listen to the experiences and views of families. In normal times they go out and about to events, such as coffee mornings and exhibitions, where parent carers will be present. At the moment, they meet parent carers online in our **Let's talk...** and **Check in and chat** events. Again, you are paid for time and travel.

Often reps and ambassadors do both roles and some also are:

Family Voice Norfolk Board members, who meet regularly to direct the work of Family Voice and make decisions about our plans and systems. This is a voluntary role.

Family Voice Norfolk staff have regular paid employment with us and tackle necessary administration, membership and co-ordination work. Vacancies like these are always advertised in this newsletter and on our website when they occur.

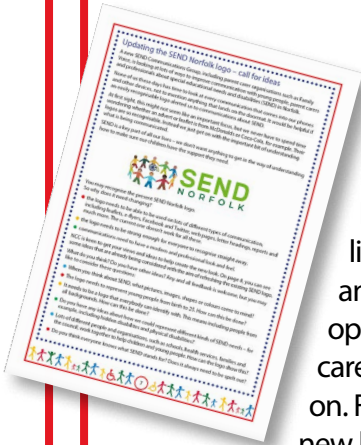
If you are interested in any of these roles, contact Kate, our Membership Secretary, at membership@familyvoice.org.uk

Did you plant Family Voice sunflower seeds?

Earlier this year we sent out sunshine boxes to parent carers who applied for one. They contained, among other things, a packet of sunflower seeds. We were delighted to receive a photo of a magnificent specimen from a family who told us: 'In March you sent an Easter box with sunflower seeds inside. We planted some of the seeds in our garden and now have a very tall sunflower. I'm hoping we'll get some seeds from it to give to our four gerbils! We hope those gerbils are happily chomping by now!'



New SEND Local Offer logo



Back in April, we explained that the SEND Local Offer logo needed to be redesigned and asked for your views. Norfolk County Council listened to what was said and came up with various options, which again parent carers were able to comment on. Finally, in September, the new logo was launched.

The main reason for needing a new logo was that the old one didn't work in all the ways needed. NCC told us:

- the logo needs to be able to be used on lots of different types of communication, including leaflets, e-flyers, Facebook and Twitter, web pages, letter headings, reports and much more.



- the logo needs to be strong enough for everyone to recognise straight away.
- communications need to have a modern and professional look and feel.

The new logo can be used in colour (as above) or in black and white and with or without the words.

It can also be used on a coloured background as on the new version of the Local Offer website (see below).



New SEND Local Offer website

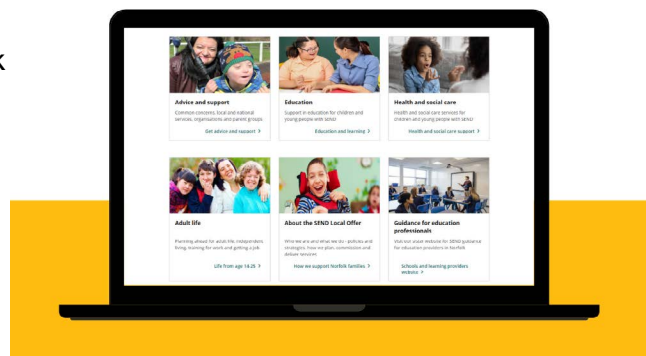
The Norfolk SEND Local Offer team has been busy this summer improving their web pages to make information easier to find.

Following consultation with parent carers and organisations including Family Voice Norfolk and SENDIASS, the content has been edited, refined and streamlined to make it easier to navigate. The section on advice and support for families has been expanded, and the sections on support for learning and the SEN support process have been improved.

Visit this one-stop shop to find all the information you need about education, health and social care, as well as support, advice and things to do.

Take a look at the relaunched SEND Local Offer at: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/send>

Please don't hesitate to let the Local Offer team know if there are things that could work better for you in finding what you need. The Local Offer website is always changing and improving, but your feedback is essential for that. Just click on the little faces at the bottom of each page to give your views.





Norfolk SENDIASS

Information, Advice & Support Service

FREE school exclusion training for parent carers (online)

Thursday, 4 November 10.00am–1.00pm

This training is being run virtually by Norfolk SEND Partnership (SENDIASS) for parent carers wishing to learn more about:

- the types of school exclusions (not Early Years or post-16)
- who can exclude and for what reason
- the impact of exclusions on SEND
- understanding fixed term (suspensions) and permanent exclusions
- appealing exclusions

This training will be hosted on the TEAMS platform and a link will be sent to those who sign up closer to the date of the training. If you are unable to attend the training once booked on, please cancel your ticket so that others have the opportunity to attend in your place.

During the training SENDIASS will not be able to answer any personal questions specific to your situation, you can however contact the service and book an appointment to speak with an adviser.

To book a place, go to the SENDIASS website at <https://www.norfolksendpartnershiass.org.uk> or directly to the booking link at <https://www.norfolksendpartnershiass.org.uk/training-and-info-sessions/training-sessions/>

More about Norfolk SENDIASS

Norfolk SENDIASS provides free and impartial information, advice and support about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for children, young people, parents and carers.

You can contact them on **01603 704070** or by email at sendpartnership.iass@norfolk.gov.uk or via the contact form on their website at www.norfolksendpartnershiass.org.uk

On the website you will find a range of booklets (see some of them opposite). There is also an opportunity to sign up to receive the SENDIASS newsletter, and further information about training events such as the one above.

The website is also where you can find out about the **Norfolk SEND Youth Forum**, where young people share their experiences and work together to improve services for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).



Screen use and your eyes

SeeAbility is a charity that specialises in supporting people who have learning disabilities or who are autistic, who may also have sight loss or complex support needs, to live ambitious lives and achieve things they never thought possible.

During COVID-19, we have all been spending more time in front of our screens than usual.

SeeAbility has produced an easy read guide called **Screen use and your eyes** about how to take care of your eyes when using computers, tablets and phones.

SEE ABILITY



You can download it at :

<https://www.seeability.org/resources/screen-use-and-your-eyes-easy-read>

Then there was silence

The Disabled Children's Partnership (DCP), of which Contact (the charity for disabled children and the organisation that administers Department for Education grants to parent carer forums such as Family Voice Norfolk) is a leading member, has carefully tracked the impact of the pandemic on disabled children and their families over the last six months, regularly surveying a panel of 84 parents and sending Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to NHS Trusts and local authorities.

The stark findings are unlikely to be a surprise to families, and the DCP is urging the government to plug the hole in funding for disabled children's services to tackle the backlog in assessments for physical and mental health support, therapies and equipment.

You can see more information on the findings, including the full report, *Then there was silence*, on the Contact website at <https://contact.org.uk/about-contact/news-and-views/new-dcp-report-disabled-children-and-their-families-still-reeling-from-impact-of-pandemic-18-months-on/>.

Contact has sent an open letter calling on the Chancellor to fund disabled children's



services ahead of the Spending Review on 27 October.

On the Contact website (www.contact.org.uk) you can also find information about their Listening Ear service, which offers one-to-one emotional support by phone.

Beginning at page 18 of this newsletter, you can find out about Contact training that may benefit your family.

contact For families with disabled children



What's new?



Norfolk & Waveney Children's SaLT transferred to Cambridgeshire Community Services on 2nd August making closer working with Health Visitors, School Nurses and other Healthy Child Programme professionals much easier.

The service is being redesigned to better meet the needs for all children and young people in Norfolk and Waveney.

Agreed service priorities for the next year are:

- Reducing the waiting times whilst carrying on with essential work
- Joining speech and language therapy with Just One Number and Just One Norfolk so there is a single place to go for all speech and language therapy enquiries
- Developing the Balanced System® Framework for all speech, language and communication needs in Norfolk & Waveney

Priority changes



What is The Balanced System® framework?

A new way of working in Norfolk & Waveney to support families, caregivers and professionals to develop the skills and confidence needed to support children with speech, language and communication needs. This is a long term plan, developing with your support over the coming months.

Managing the waiting list

We are already working actively with 2400 children, families and the team around the child. There are approximately another 1500 children waiting for advice. The Speech and Language Therapy team will continue to work with children who need specialist support and are working hard to reduce waiting times.



If you are waiting for support, we will be in touch as soon as possible.

Where to go for help:



Visit www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/salt for information and resources to support children's communication development.

If you need more information or advice call Just One Number on 0300 300 0123 to speak with a member of the team.



JustOneNorfolk.nhs.uk



ERPCF website

Family Voice Norfolk is a member of the Eastern Region of Parent Carer Forums. We attend regular briefing meetings and benefit from meeting other forums in the region to share challenges and opportunities and raise these at a national level. The ERPCF now has a new website at: <https://easternregionofparentcarerforums.org.uk>



Tricky Friends animation

Tricky Friends is a short animation developed by the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) to help people to understand what good friendships are, when they might be harmful, and what they can do.



Over the last few years, NSAB has had a number of discussions with groups and organisations in Norfolk who support people with learning disabilities and autism about how to raise awareness of issues like exploitation, county lines, or cuckooing.



It is important that people with learning disabilities and autism, those who have cognitive difficulties, and also children and young adults, have positive opportunities to make and maintain friendships.

NSAB wants to help them to do this, to reduce the risk of harm and exploitation in groups who may be less able to recognise the intentions of others.

NSAB hopes this animation is used as a way to help people to think about the issues, to start those conversations, and keep them safer while enjoying friendships.

It is only three minutes long and can be used with or by anyone – carers, family, organisations, groups.

You can find Tricky Friends on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEx8uFuNZGU&t=200s>

A parent carer told us: My son was rather quiet after we had watched this together. Then he told me that 'friends' had been making sure he always bought the drinks when they were out together. It led to a useful conversation about whether they were 'real friends' and I think made him sensibly wary without being afraid to be friendly.'



Find out about Kooth



You may have been made aware by school or a professional of a service called Kooth. We have also featured it in this newsletter. Kooth is designed to support the wellbeing and resilience of young people and is available for 11–25-year-olds in Norfolk and Waveney. Kooth is running free online parent carer information sessions, designed to help you understand how Kooth can support your child with their mental health and wellbeing.

A short 'bite-size' session will cover:

- a live tour of the Kooth site
- an opportunity for questions and answers about Kooth

This session takes place on **Wednesday, 20 October from 12.00 to 12.30pm**

Register for a place at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/discover-kooth-parent-carer-bitesize-sessions-tickets-163865069835>

The Zoom link for the session is:

<https://zoom.us/j/96248658006?pwd=UXdkQm1ldmlGZWpHaHRIMDhXVnJOZz09>

Or you can choose a longer, one-hour session, which will cover:

- a presentation on Kooth
- a live tour of the Kooth site
- an opportunity for questions and answers about Kooth



You can choose from two dates:

Tuesday, 16 November from 5.00 to 6.00pm

Register for a place at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/discover-kooth-parent-carer-information-sessions-tickets-164152609875>

The Zoom link for the session is:

<https://zoom.us/j/94295360074?pwd=L0xKdzNEM0ZJVAzeE9hUXExYmhFUT09>

and

Tuesday, 14 December from 6.00 to 7.00pm

Register for a place at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/discover-kooth-parent-carer-information-sessions-tickets-164152609875>

The Zoom link for the session is:

<https://zoom.us/j/94874926099?pwd=VHhFQ0tXMzhPTFNJeVFtTHhGYWZxQT09>

Kooth provides a safe, secure means of accessing help via the internet. By accessing Kooth, young people can benefit from a free, confidential, anonymous, and safe way to receive support online. Online counselling from a professional team of BACP qualified counsellors is available via one-to-one chat sessions or messaging on a drop-in basis or via booked sessions. No referral is required.



E-learning for unpaid carers

Health Education England are supporting a free online learning course and resources for unpaid carers to help in their day-to-day caring roles. An unpaid carer is anyone who provides care and support to a family member, friend, neighbour, or someone in their community due to a disability, health condition, frailty, mental health problem or other health and care needs.

This free online resource aims to support you in taking care of yourself and carrying out your day-to-day caring role.

It includes bite-sized e-learning sessions, developed with expert advice from Carers UK, with online links and a downloadable resource guide, which is colour coded by topic. Topics include your rights to benefits, support for carers and caring for those with visual or hearing impairment.

You can find the resources at <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/supporting-unpaid-carers/>

Individual employer funding for training

If you employ your own care and support through a personal budget from social care or health (personal health budget) or using your own money (this is sometimes called being a 'self-funder'), you can apply for funding to train you and your personal assistants (PAs). Visit the Skills for Care website to find out how to apply, what kind of activities the funding can be used for and links to the application form and FAQs:

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Learning-development/Funding/Individual-employer-funding/Individual-employer-funding.aspx>

Closing date for applications is Monday, 28 February 2022.

Training that's successfully funded must be started by 31 March 2022.



Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Norfolk Learning Disabilities Partnership Board is involved in making decisions about local services and support for adults with learning disabilities and their families. The partnership board makes sure that people with learning disabilities and family carers are fully involved in the planning of services.

For more information visit <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/learning-disabilities/learning-disabilities-partnership-board>.

If you would like to receive an emailed copy of the LDPB newsletter each month, please contact Andrew at LDPart@norfolk.gov.uk or phone 01603 223045.

Family Voice Norfolk has representatives on the Board and of course is particularly interested in services for young adults aged 18–25 and how they can be supported to gain increased independence in all areas of adult life. People with learning disabilities themselves (experts by experience) are the most important members of the Board and are supported to contribute fully in all discussions and decisions.



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.

How to handle meetings – for parents/carers of young children with additional needs

It is very natural to feel overwhelmed about attending a meeting to discuss your child's specialist needs and get the right support for them. You may be finding this even more challenging during the disruption of COVID-19.



This workshop will help you to :

- develop your skills for online and face-to-face meetings to help you make the right decisions for your child
- feel more confident and better able to express yourself in meetings with professionals
- understand how to prepare for and how to get the best from a virtual meeting
- recognise your strengths when communicating and remember that you are the expert!

Wednesday, 3 November 2021, 19:30–21:30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginningshandling-meetingsa-contact-workshop-for-parentscarers-tickets-174017851077>

Encouraging positive behaviour in children aged 0 to 5 with SEND

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 some young children to have challenging behaviour. This webinar 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 and help.

Thursday, 11 November 2021, 19:30–21:30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-encouraging-positive-behaviour-in-children-with-send-tickets-174013477997>



Support for parent carers of children with additional needs and anxiety (aged 0 to 5)

- what is anxiety?
- the signs of anxiety and how it can make you feel
- what are the causes of anxiety?
- different types of anxiety
- strategies to help recognise and manage anxiety



Join this workshop to meet other parents and get some advice and support. This workshop will be held on Zoom.

Thursday, 18 November 2021, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-parents-of-children-with-anxiety-tickets-176276366357>

Tuesday, 23 November 2021, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-parents-of-children-with-anxiety-tickets-176311892617>

Toilet training for parents of young children aged 0 to 5

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
- know if your child is ready and how you can prepare them
- know what a plan may look like, when to start it and how
- know where to get support

This workshop will be held on Zoom.

Tuesday, 23 November 2021, 18:30–20:30pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-toilet-training-0-to-5-years-tickets-176396686237>

Thursday, 2 December 2021, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-toilet-training-0-to-5-years-tickets-176470486977>



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

The workshop will be held on Zoom.

Tuesday, 9 November 2021, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-early-years-education-for-children-with-send-tickets-172646198427>

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.

This workshop will be held on Zoom.

Tuesday, 16 November 2021, 18:00–20:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-speech-language-issues-in-young-children-tickets-172035401517>

Wednesday, 1 December 2021, 10:00am–12:00pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/brighter-beginnings-support-for-speech-language-issues-in-young-children-tickets-172052021227>



Cabinet reshuffle

It is early days to know what effect the recent Cabinet reshuffle will have in the area of special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). One result may be a fourth postponement for the publication of the government's SEND Review. The National Network of Parent Carer Forums, to which Family Voice Norfolk belongs, will be meeting the new ministers during October.

Secretary of State for Education is the Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi, MP for Stratford-on-Avon. The Secretary of State is responsible for the work of the Department for Education, including:



- early years
- children's social care
- teacher recruitment and retention
- the school curriculum
- school improvement
- academies and free schools
- further education
- apprenticeships and skills
- higher education
- oversight of the departmental coronavirus (COVID-19) response

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Children and Families) is Will Quince, MP for Colchester. The minister's responsibilities include:



- children's social care
- families
- children in care, children in need, child protection, adoption and care leavers
- early years
- special educational needs, including high needs funding
- alternative provision
- disadvantaged and vulnerable children
- school food including free school meals
- school sport
- children and young people's mental health, online safety and preventing bullying in schools
- policy to protect against serious violence
- Opportunity Areas programme and Opportunity North East programme
- coronavirus (COVID-19) response for children's services and childcare



Autism training for education professionals

You may wish to draw the attention of professionals at your child's place of learning to the training below. They can find out more and book at https://www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/professional-development/training-and-conferences/education-conference?utm_source=nasen_e-newsletter&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=ad&utm_id=education-conference



Autism and education online conference

Autism and education conference

11 November 2021 | online conference

NAS' one-day online conference aimed at education professionals. Increase your understanding and knowledge of autism and best practice in supporting autistic children at school.

Key topics:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Sensory differences
- Exclusion
- Emotional regulation
- Girls in education
- Transition
- Social relationships



Health and Disability Green Paper – consultation

In the July edition of this newsletter, we included an article about the Health and Disability Green Paper, where to find it and how to express comments and concerns. On 8 September, a Family Voice representative attended a consultation event in Norwich, at which Department of Work and Pensions professionals (DWP) led discussions on various aspects of the Green Paper and asked for our experiences and opinions.

The Green Paper states that the ideas, proposals and questions in it were shaped by what was heard from disabled people, people with health conditions, and their representatives in over 40 events before publication. There have been some doubts expressed about whether this engagement was enough, so we were glad to have the opportunity to talk face-to-face.

Our representative spoke about families with young adults and carers who need to help their children with disabilities navigate benefits systems that are complicated and cause anxiety, while knowing that benefits are likely always to be important in their children's future.

After the event in Norwich, the DWP sent us this response to the event:

We know that many people have positive experiences when interacting with us, but it is clear that there is a lot more that can be done. At the event in Norwich we took away many important insights from attendees – we've attempted here to capture the main themes.

We heard that many people feel DWP communications need to be clearer and more accessible. You told us that it would be good to have a choice of how we communicate with you, for example by letter, email, online chat or telephone. Attendees also expressed that DWP venues should be more accessible.

Attendees felt that DWP lack sufficient understanding of specific health conditions, particularly in assessments. We heard that this made people feel uncomfortable in job centres. You also expressed your support for fewer re-assessments for those with unchanging long-term conditions.

It was also clear that many people want more transparency around the benefits system, and would like extra support from us on things like filling in forms and gathering medical evidence. People also felt that DWP forms are too long, and that they fail to properly capture the impact of fluctuating conditions.

There was support in the event for the proposals of the Severe Disability Group and the Employment and Health Discussion. There was the suggestion that health discussions should be informal and held away from the jobcentre.

We will follow up on the responses to the Green Paper consultation with a White Paper in mid-2022. The views you have raised in this consultation event will all contribute towards this White Paper. In the White Paper we will aim to set out how we can better enable people to take up work and live more independently, and outline the changes we want to make to improve the benefits system.

It is disappointing that this summary does not include a mention of the particular challenges faced by young people with SEND and their families, so **we urge you to continue to give your views directly**. You can find the Green Paper and a number of accessible versions, as well as a link to the Citizen Space consultation site, using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/shaping-future-support-the-health-and-disability-green-paper>



More Changing Places for Norfolk – give your views

Respond
by 15
October!

Changing Places are designed for people who cannot, or find it difficult to, use a standard accessible toilet.

The government has £30 million available to district councils to establish more Changing Places across the UK. The focus of this grant is for new Changing Places in existing buildings. Norfolk County Council (NCC) isn't eligible to apply for this grant, but has committed £600,000 to establish up to eight facilities in its own properties, such as some libraries.

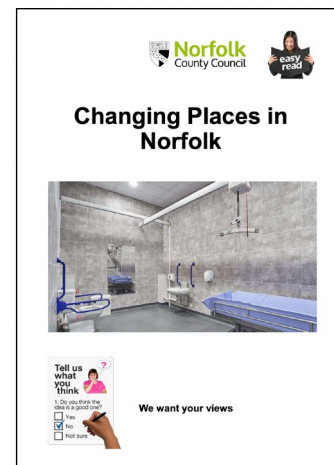
NCC needs help from people who might use Changing Places, and the organisations that support them, to make sure proposals meet local needs and are good practice.

Why your views matter

Your views will help to shape proposals for Changing Places in Norfolk County Council buildings before these are presented to County Councillors so that they can make a funding decision. Norfolk County Council will also use any feedback you give when planning building projects in the future.

You can give your views at <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/community-services/changing-places/>

There is also an easy read version of the survey that you can find at the bottom of the link above or at https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/community-services/changing-places/supporting_documents/Easy%20Read%20Changing%20Places%20FINAL.pdf



Respond now! The deadline for the survey is **15 October 2021**.

New Changing Places website

Changing Places has a new website at <https://www.changing-places.org>

It includes the official Changing Places map, enabling you to find the nearest Changing Places toilet wherever you are in the UK. The map is interactive and suitable for use on your smart phone or other mobile devices.

The website also has lots of helpful information about how Changing Places toilets can be made even more useful with the way they are designed. For example, using different colours to draw attention to particular features, such as painting door frames a darker colour to highlight them and help people locate where the door is.

