

June 10, 2020

## **New online support for families of children with additional needs**

A new online course has been developed to support families of children with additional needs in Norfolk and Waveney.

The Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) online course helps families to understand the messages their child is trying to communicate and offers some practical skills and strategies that can be used to help manage behaviours that challenge.

The PBS video sessions, normally available through face to face workshops for families of children awaiting assessments by specialist teams, have been produced during the Covid-19 outbreak to offer support to all families.

The videos have been produced by Family Action, Norfolk Community Health and Care Trust (NCH&C), Norfolk SEND Partnership and Norfolk Children and Young People's Services (CYP).

Parents can access any or all six video sessions at times convenient to them at <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/pbs>.

Tracy Mclean from NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which commissions the service, said: "With school closures and families living with lockdown restrictions, the ways that families access support has changed.

"The CCG's Children, Young People and Maternity team have been working with colleagues to look at creative ways of providing information differently to make it more accessible during these challenging times.

"Some children with neurodevelopmental needs will find the change in routine to be particularly difficult and this may be having a significant impact on family life.

"Social distancing means that the 'offer' has to be a virtual one for now and therefore the benefits of peer to peer support and access to supportive workshops has paused until it's safe to resume.

"Family Action, the Starfish+ team and the neurodevelopmental service at NCH&C and the Norfolk SEND Partnership have risen to the challenge of providing support differently. With the support of Norfolk CYP, who provide the Healthy Child Programme and JustOneNorfolk.nhs.uk, we have managed to produce this innovative online course.

“This has been a multi-agency effort which has not only resulted in the course being available during this difficult time, but also into the future for families who are unable to access a course or want a refresher.”

Clinical Psychologist Dr Melanie Bruce from NCH&C said: “Thank you very much to Family Action, the Norfolk SEND Partnership and Norfolk CYP for enabling this to be available.

“We hope the course will highlight how each and every child is an individual, and enable families to understand that all behaviour has an important meaning. The course is based on understanding and meeting the needs of children and focuses on both changes we can make and ways to support children in developing new and helpful skills.”

Clare Peak, Norfolk Projects Manager from Family Action, said: “We are so excited about this new development and enjoyed working closely with NCH&C, Norfolk CYP and the Norfolk SEND Partnership. We particularly appreciate the creativity of Susan Wood to produce the videos for families at home during lockdown. Susan (one of the co-ordinators of Family Action’s Norfolk and Waveney ASD/ADHD Support Service) was able to bring her experience of delivering the course and supporting parents to focus on the issues we hope parents and carers will find useful.”

Sian Larrington, Head of Service at Norfolk Children and Young People’s Services, said: “As a service we are always looking to work with our colleagues and partners to provide the best resources for families in Norfolk. The PBS online course will give families of children with additional needs quick, readily available information that is accurate and easy to understand. These sessions were made with the help of Norfolk families and now they are live, we’ll be looking to gather feedback on a regular basis to make sure they fit the needs of local families.

“To help keep online learning social, whilst working through the course we are encouraging families to try our online parent forum, which can be accessed on any of the Positive Behaviour Support pages. It will give them opportunity to connect and share their experiences with other families so that their learning experience is interactive.”

The videos can also be accessed via YouTube and via the Norfolk SEND Partnership website [here](#).

**ENDS**

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