



Welcome to October's edition of the SENDIASS Spotlight!

SENDIASS UPDATE

It has been a busy few months for us here at Norfolk SENDIASS, unfortunately our wait times on our Helpline rapidly increased again over the first few weeks of September. To reduce these wait times once again, from the week beginning the 3rd November we have added an additional 25 helpline calls a week bringing us to around 45 every week. We are hoping that this will have a positive impact and reduce those wait times again.

From this week we will be slightly changing how we offer case work support, this is to try and reduce the wait list we currently have and stop it from increasing in the future. Families who come to us and need more support than our Helpline can offer may be offered one-off support to help move them forward, if an Advisor feels that the family need more intense support due to their own needs then they will put them forward for longer term casework support. Not every family that comes to the service will be offered or provided

with one-off support and not every family that receives one-off support will be given longer term casework support, but we are hoping that this will help us to become a more responsive service.

Earlier this month we said goodbye to Hayleigh one of our SENDIAS Advisors, we wish her the best with her move and all future endeavours! This does mean we will be recruiting for two SENDIAS Advisor roles, keep an eye on our website over the coming weeks for more information on how to apply!



Who are Norfolk SENDIASS?

SENDIASS stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service. We are legally required to be free, impartial, and confidential as per our Statutory Duties.

We provide support to children and young people (up to age 25) with a special educational need or disability (SEND), and their parents and carers.

We help families understand the law around SEND and navigate the education and health and social care systems, when it impacts on education.

What does a SENDIASS Do:

- **Offers information and advice:** They provide information on the law and options available for a child's or young person's education, and health, and care when it impacts on education.
- **Provides support:** They help families and young people voice concerns, make decisions, and play a key role in the SEND process.
- **Helps with procedures:** They can support with specific issues such as annual reviews, exclusions, complaints, and appeals.
- **Connects families with services:** They can direct people to appropriate resources, services and help

What can we help with?

Library Drop-in's

Our Library drop ins around the County have become very popular and we have received positive feedback about these. Due to their popularity, they are becoming busier, with this in mind on occasions when there are a lot of parent/carers waiting to speak with an Advisor we will putting a 20-minute time limit on how long we spend with each person. This is so that everyone that attends one of our drop ins gets to speak with an Advisor and go away with some information and advice.

Find out where you can find us



Join Us for Drop-In Sessions

We will be here to answer any questions you may have, advice and signposting to further support.

All sessions are subject to change, and any changes will be advertised on our Facebook page. Please be aware these sessions do not offer a private room to talk, we will be based in main areas of the library. As we are not taking bookings, we will do our best to speak to you on a first come, first served basis.

Find out more

Date of Library drop in	Library	Time
31 Oct 2025	Mile Cross Library	10:30-12:00
04 Nov 2025	Earlham Library	13:00-16:00
11 Nov 2025	Gorleston Library	13:00-15:00
14 Nov 2025	Wymondham Library	13:00-15:00
19 Nov 2025	Millennium Library	10:00-14:00
27 Nov 2025	Downham Market Library	11:30-13:30
05 Dec 2025	Hunstanton Library	10:30-12:30
10 Dec 2025	Thetford Library	10:00-12:00
16 Dec 2025	Millennium Library	10:00-12:00

We can give you advice, information and support about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in relation to education.

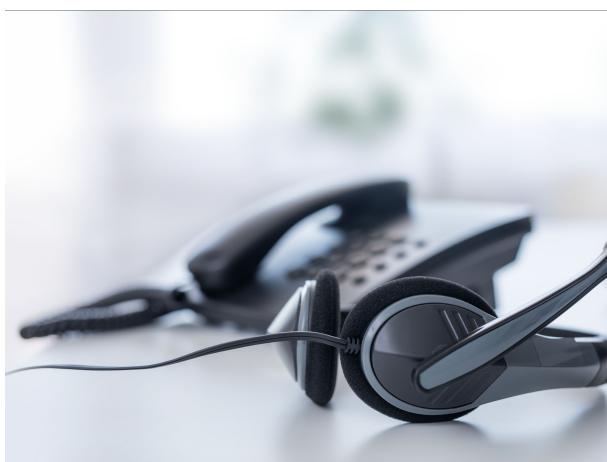
We work with children, young people (0-25 years) and their parent/carers. We can give you information about SEN Support, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's), mediation, appeals, exclusions and suspensions, and other SEND processes.



The role of the Norfolk SENDIASS Senior Advisor



As the Senior Advisor at Norfolk SENDIASS no two days are the same! The role includes line management duties, attending strategic meetings when the service manager is unable to do so and providing families with casework support. Due to changes in the way our service works my diary now also includes some Helpline calls every week, so you may speak with me if you have an appointment.



Lack of communication with EHCP Co-ordinators

A common thing we are hearing on the Helpline at the moment is that sometimes parents, carers and young people can struggle to contact their EHCP coordinator. The EHCP team is a large team and there is bound to be members of staff on annual leave and sometimes not at work due to sickness. Our advice, if a parent, carer or young person is having difficulties contacting their EHCP coordinator, is to call the dedicated phone line on 01603 679183. The phone line will be able to update parents, carer and young people if their coordinator is unavailable and who to go to if this is the case.

SEND Reforms

As some of you may have seen already, it was announced on the 22nd October that the School's White Paper which included plans for SEND reform has now been delayed.

It was due to come out this term but will now come out 'early next year', we understand how frustrating this is for families and professionals, and we share those feelings as well, as we were hoping to get clarity around potential changes.

If you would like to read Bridget Phillipson's full letter to the Education Select Committee, please follow this link:

[SEND reform: Education Secretary writes to the Education Select Committee - GOV.UK](#)



Naming a setting during the phase transfer process

When a child or young person has an EHC plan and is due to move to a new phase of education (such as from primary to secondary education), their EHC plan must be reviewed and amended well before they move to their new education phase.

IPSEA state that your LA (Norfolk County Council) must start the review process within 12 months of your child or young person moving to a new education phase, no earlier and no later.

This means that discussions about transfer need to begin early in the autumn

term of the year before transfer (such as year 6 or 11) to allow plenty of time for the review and amendment process to happen.

The process the LA must follow is the same as the annual review process. Find out more in our [EHCP Annual Review booklet](#).

You have a right to request any of the following types of nursery, school or college is named in the EHC plan:

- a maintained school or nursery (mainstream or special)
- an Academy (mainstream or special)
- an institution in the Further Education sector
- a non-maintained special school
- a section 41 school.

These are listed in section 38(3) of the Children and Families Act (CFA) 2014.

This means there is no law, legislation or guidance that states that the parent, carer or young person must name a mainstream setting when choosing which setting the name during phase transfer.



Norfolk SEND Youth Forum update

In our October meeting, we heard from two members about their experience of attending the Flourish Awards ceremony, where the group were finalists in the “Understood Award”. They had a great time, and they were wonderful ambassadors for the group.

We also heard from four young people who made up a recent young people’s panel, when we were recruiting for a new Engagement & Advice Worker.

These young people wrote their own questions to ask the candidates, based on issues which matter to them. They told us that they liked all the candidates and were in agreement with the final decision.

We were joined by Claire Jones, NCC, who told us all about the SEND Local Offer, and a new project to invite young people to work with her to develop and improve the information made available to young people. To have a look at this please click on the link <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/40393/SEND-Local-Offer>

If you are a young person who would like to find out more about how to join, or you are a professional seeking to consult with our “Experts by experience” please get in touch!!

Bridget Robinson, Engagement and Advice worker

CLICK TO REGISTER ONLINE

Engagement and Outreach Update



It's been a busy and exciting month!

Hope Initiative Community Event

We had a wonderful time at the Hope Initiative SEND event at Proclaimers Church on Saturday 25th October. We hosted a fun and informative table for families. Children enjoyed activities like spin the wheel, colouring, and making their own fidget toys, while parents accessed helpful information and resources.

If you know of an event that you would like SENDIASS to attend, please contact: nsendiassengagement@norfolk.gov.uk

Everyone Has the Right to Play

We were delighted to attend the "Everyone Has the Right to Play" event at Sprowston Manor on Friday 17th October, hosted by MAP and the Broadland Youth Advisory Board. This youth-led campaign, first launched in February 2024, promotes inclusive and accessible playgrounds for all children across Norfolk.

Inclusive play is a cause close to our hearts. We've proudly supported The Hamlet Centre Charity in launching their Youth Forum, the 'Reckie Ramblers,' whose first campaign tackled the lack of accessibility in local parks. Their passionate advocacy has reached key decision-makers, including the Local Parks Development Officer and Clive Lewis MP.

You can read more about it here: [We were thrilled to welcome Clive Lewis MP to The Hamlet Adult Centre! | The Hamlet](#)

SENDIASS are proud to have signed the Everyone Has Right to Play pledge, and you can too! Learn more and get involved here: [Everyone Has The Right To Play | MAP Norfolk](#)

School Support

This month, we have supported several schools with parent coffee mornings and parents' evenings, including Mile Cross School and Angel Road School. These events have been a brilliant way to connect with families and share helpful information.

If you would like SENDIASS to attend an event at your school, please contact: nsendiassengagement@norfolk.gov.uk

New Parent Drop-in at Family Hub

We're excited to announce a new regular drop-in at Thetford Family Hub which we launched on Wednesday 8th October! Join us every 2nd Wednesday of the month from 1:30–3:00 pm. We look forward to meeting more families and

offering information, advice and support.

Library Drop-ins

We've had fantastic turnouts at our recent library drop-ins, including Dereham and Mile Cross. It was wonderful to meet so many parents for friendly chats, advice, and support in a relaxed setting.

To view our upcoming library drop-ins and events, see the link below:

[Engagement and Advice Library drop in sessions and outreach | Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

'Time Out' Course

The Family Hubs have launched the '*Time Out*' course for parents and carers of children with additional needs, running on Mondays since 22nd September in Thetford Library. SENDIASS were delighted to join the session on 6th October to offer tailored advice and support to attending families.

Books are a great resource from local libraries in Norfolk. They can help and support children and young people with SEND, whilst creating a safe space for family communication. There are many books that can support this. Below are a few examples, and you can discover even more for free, from your local library.

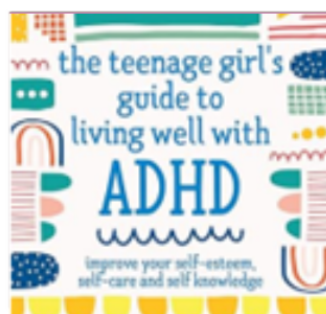


BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

ADHD AWARENESS MONTH



ADHD: My Busy Brain (A First Look At) – Pat Thomas



The Teenage Girl's Guide to Living Well with ADHD – Sonia Ali



ADHD is our SUPERPOWER! – Soli Lazarus

The "A First Look At" series offers supportive picture books that help children, parents, and teachers explore emotional and social topics. This book introduces ADHD in a simple, child-friendly way, encouraging understanding and conversations among children with ADHD and those around them.

A supportive guide for girls with ADHD, designed to boost self-awareness and confidence. It explores the strengths and challenges of ADHD—like emotional regulation, sensitivity, and mind-wandering—while offering practical tips, visuals, and self-reflection activities. Ideal for use with parents, mentors, or teachers.

This illustrated book helps children view their ADHD diagnosis in a positive way. Each character represents a different ADHD trait—like hyper-focus or inattention—and highlights the unique strengths that come with it. The book also includes links to helpful resources and support.

QUESTION &



ANSWER



How do I know if my child's draft EHCP is ok?

The important thing to know about an EHCP is that the section about your child's needs (section B) and the provision to meet those needs (section F) have to be backed up by professional evidence – for example from the Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist or Speech and Language Therapist. If your child has health and social care needs as well, this might also apply to other sections.

Because of this, to check the draft, you also need to look at the professional advice that has been used to make the plan (the K documents). You should have been sent these along with the draft. Have a look through the documents, highlighting all the recommendations and any other comments that affect the provision. You can then read through the EHCP itself and make sure all the recommendations are there. This is a legally enforceable document so they should be worded clearly and need to be specific. For example about:

- How often something should happen or how long for
- Training or experience of staff needed
- Number of children in a 'small group' etc.

You need to be careful of things being left for the teacher/SENCO to decide if that doesn't seem right or the professional has said something more specific. If the professional hasn't been specific enough, you can ask the coordinator to clarify point with them.

Section I will be left blank on a draft plan and this is your opportunity to request the school you want for your child. Bear in mind that the school named in Section I should be able to do everything in Section F.

There's more information about this on our website [here](#)
You can read more about naming a school [here](#)



Feedback

The Advisor was very helpful and knowledgeable. She gave really good advice and was supportive. I now have a good understanding of the next steps I need to take to hopefully secure a positive outcome.

Parent/Carer

Important Mediation update



Important Update on Mediation and Disagreement Resolution (MDR) Services in Norfolk.

The provider of MDR services has changed. The new provider is Anglia Care Trust (ACT) Mediation Service, which will continue offering high-quality, impartial support to families.

What you need to know

- If you already have an open case with the previous provider KIDS, it will continue to be handled by them until your case is resolved. There will be no disruption.
- From 1 September 2025, all new MDR cases will be supported by ACT.
- The process and level of support will stay the same. Whether your case is with KIDS or ACT, you'll receive the same trusted, impartial help to navigate disagreements and find a way forward.

This change is about continuing to provide the best possible support for families. The service remains voluntary, free, and focused on your needs.

The provider of the service has changed because Norfolk County Council has recommissioned the contract. It's normal for councils to review and update service contracts regularly.

For more information on mediation you can visit our [website](#).



Contact provide 1-1 telephone appointments with a family support adviser for parent/carers looking for a listening ear, reassurance and practical and emotional support. Appointments are 45 minutes long and it's important that you book a time and date that you know you will be free to talk, are somewhere that you feel safe and is quiet so that you can get the most out of the time you have.

If you would like to use Contact's listening ear service, please follow the link below to book an appointment.

[Listening Ear | Contact](#)



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