



SENDIASS update

We hope you all had a wonderful summer break and that the start of the new academic year has gone well for you and your families. As we settle into the autumn term, we would like to extend a warm welcome back to everyone and wish all children, young people, parents and carers a successful and positive year ahead.

While schools may have been closed for the summer holidays, the SENDIASS team certainly did not slow down! We continued to support families through our helpline and had the pleasure of attending some fantastic summer events across the county. It was wonderful to meet so many families, professionals and partner organisations, and to continue raising awareness of the support and information available through SENDIASS.

The new academic year has already brought a busy start for the team. To help manage demand and reduce waiting times on our helpline, we recently implemented a firebreak period which allowed us to focus on providing timely support and reduce our wait times. Although this had a positive impact and we managed to reduce wait times right down to two days they have unfortunately started to creep up again to around a week. We would like to thank everyone

for their patience and understanding as we continue to support as many families as possible.

You may also notice a change when booking appointments with us, we will no longer be requesting consultation forms to be completed, additional information will be confirmed during the booked appointment.

As always, thank you for your continued support of SENDIASS. We look forward to working with you throughout the year and sharing updates, information and resources in future newsletters.

Niamh Keane, SENDIASS Manager



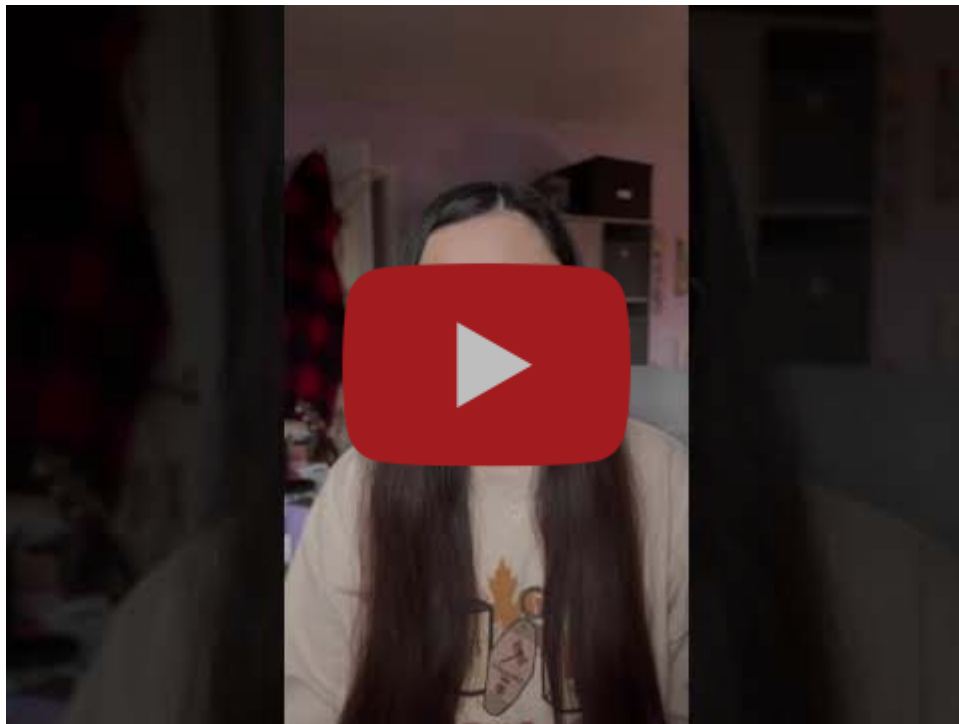
World Mental Health Day - 10th October

We are proud to share a powerful poem written and performed by Katrina who is a young person SENDIASS has been supporting, reflecting on her experiences and thoughts about mental health and the support available in Norfolk.

Every young person's journey is unique, and sometimes it can be difficult to find the words to express how we're feeling. Through poetry, creativity, and self-expression, young people can share their experiences, raise awareness, and help others feel less alone.

This moving piece reminds us why listening to young people's voices matters and why accessible mental health support is so important.

Thank you to Katrina for sharing her words. To find out more about World Mental Health Day, visit [Mind](#) to find out how you can get involved in the 'Do Blue' campaign.



Hi! My name is Katrina and this is a poem I have made to express my experiences with mental health services in Norfolk. All the things I say in this poem are real, word for word things that have been typed out into notes about me, which I have had to read for years. I always felt so misunderstood and started to believe that these things were true about me because they were written by professionals. But I have come to realise they aren't my identity and should never have been made to feel that way.

I hope this poem helps you to understand my perspective of some of the things I have had to go through, and I hope sharing my experiences will help improve the experiences of other young people in the future.



Dyslexia Awareness Week 5th Oct - 11th Oct

As part of **Dyslexia Awareness Week 2026**, we are sharing the personal experience of dyslexia for our Senior Advisor, Leah.

This year's awareness week is an opportunity to increase understanding of dyslexia, challenge common misconceptions, and celebrate the strengths and talents of the dyslexic community. By listening to real-life experiences, we can help create a more inclusive society where different ways of thinking and learning are recognised and valued.

We would like to thank Leah for sharing her experiences and helping to raise awareness. Stories like these play an important role in building understanding, reducing stigma, and encouraging others who may be on a similar journey.

To find out more about Dyslexia Awareness Week and how you can get involved, visit the British [Dyslexia Association's awareness week](#) campaign.



For me, dyslexia is much more than simply mixing up letters or struggling with spelling. It affects the way I process, organise, and retain information. Tasks that can seem straightforward to others, such as reading lengthy documents, writing reports, or following complex instructions, often require extra time and concentration.

However, dyslexia also brings strengths. Many people with dyslexia are creative problem-solvers, think outside the box, and are skilled at seeing the bigger picture. In my role, I often find that these strengths help me approach situations from different perspectives and find practical solutions for the families and young people I support. They also help me think creatively about how we can improve our service, develop new ways of working, and ensure we continue to meet the needs of the families we support.

If you would like to find out more about dyslexia or access support, the following organisations provide information, practical advice, and resources for individuals, families, and professionals.

Dyslexia Outreach Service (Norfolk) provides support, training, workshops, and resources for dyslexic learners, parents, and professionals across Norfolk. The service is part-funded by Norfolk County Council.

[Dyslexia Outreach Support for Schools & Families](#)

British Dyslexia Association (BDA) offers factsheets, workplace guidance, training, webinars, and support for adults, employers, parents, and educators.

[Resources - British Dyslexia Association](#)

Leah Sloman, Senior SENDIASS Advisor

Back to school

A new school year can be exciting, but it can also bring challenges for children and young people with SEND. Good communication between home and school can help make sure the right support is in place from the start.

Whether moving to a new class, year group or school, transitions can take time. Patience, reassurance and consistency can help children and young people feel more confident as they settle into new routines.

Children and young people with SEND may need different types of support to help them thrive in school. If your child has a SEN Support Plan, it can be helpful to review this with the school and discuss any changes that may be needed. If you have concerns, speaking with your child's class teacher or SENCO is often a good first step.

Parents and carers know their child best and can share valuable information about their strengths, interests, needs and what works well at home. Working together with school can help ensure support is tailored to your child.

Most importantly, your child's views should be heard and valued. Their experiences can help adults understand what is working well, what they find challenging and what support may help. Wishes and feelings activities, conversations, drawings and other centered approaches can help children and young people share what matters to them.

Before a meeting, it may help to:

- Note down any questions or concerns.

- Share your child's strengths and interests.
- Tell the school about strategies that work well at home.
- Record any wishes and feelings your child has shared about school or their support.

At the end of the meeting, make sure everyone understands what has been agreed and what will happen next. Arranging a follow-up meeting can help keep support under review.

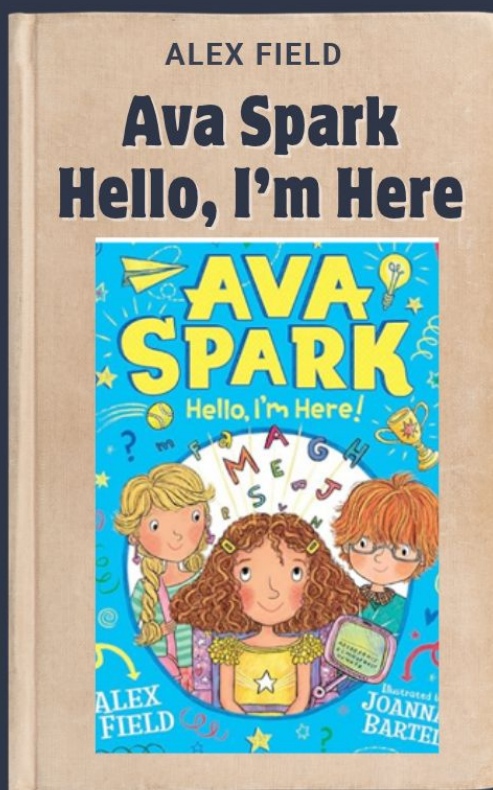
Listening to your child's views and working together with school can help ensure they feel supported, included and able to reach their potential.

SENDIAS Advisor Imogen has based this month's book recommendation on the back to school theme!

Frances Kerry, SENDIAS Advisor

BOOK

RECOMMENDATION



When a new student joins the school, Ava is asked to help her settle in. Together with her friends, Ava comes up with a creative plan to make the newcomer feel welcome.

In this charming chapter book, Ava is wheelchair user and communicates with the help of a communication aid. However, the story explores wider themes of friendship, inclusion and communication, showing the importance of welcoming new people, understanding one another, and supporting friends when they need it.

Imogen Pagendam, SENDIASS Advisor

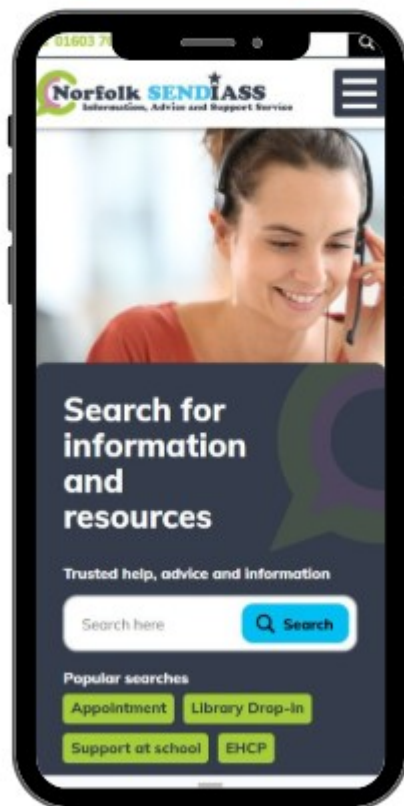
Find your local library

Website information and resources

Our website has a wealth of information and resources including information on SEN support at school, Transport, Suspensions and Exclusions, Education Health and Care Plans, Appeals, Health and Social Care. This short video explains how to navigate the search function and the information zone.

www.norfolksendiass.org.uk

**How do I search for
information on the
website?**



www.norfolksendiass.org.uk

How to use the use the information zone and search function on Norfolk SENDIASS website

Library Drop-in's

The Library drop-in sessions are informal and friendly, our Advisor's can give you next steps advice about your child's education, SEN Support, EHCP and other SEND processes.

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. The sessions will be restricted to 20 minutes during busy times.

Take a look at our online calendar to check where you can find us in October!

Find out where you can find us



UPCOMING

LIBRARY DROP-IN SESSIONS

OCTOBER 26

5

- **DEREHAM LIBRARY**
13:30-14:30

11

- **LODDON LIBRARY**
11:30-13:30

15

- **TAVERHAM LIBRARY**
10:30 - 12:30

20

- **WEST EARLHAM LIBRARY**
14:30 - 16:00

21

- **DOWNHAM MARKET LIBRARY**
11:30 - 13:00

22

- **CAISTER LIBRARY**
12:30 -14:30



Engagement and Advice Team Updates

Over August and September, the Engagement and Advice Team have enjoyed a fantastic couple of months out and about across Norfolk. From community events and college fresher fairs to youth voice activities and coffee mornings, we have loved meeting families, children, young people and professionals and sharing information about SENDIASS and the support available.

August Family Fun Days

The August school holidays gave us a great opportunity to speak to families at a range of exciting family fun days and community events across Norfolk. We loved getting out and about to events at Watton Community Centre, Broadland Country Park's "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" Day, Reepham Stimpson's Piece, and the Community Wellbeing Day at Pilling Park in Norwich.



Article 12 Gaming Cafe - August session

We were delighted to attend the Article 12 Gaming Café, where we had the opportunity to speak with parents, carers and young people. Hosted by the

SEND Participation Team and held each half-term at Albion Games Café in Norwich, these popular sessions provide a fun, inclusive space for children and young people with SEND to socialise, enjoy games, and share their views and experiences.



SEND Youth Voice Day - August

We were thrilled to be part of another successful SEND Youth Voice Day at County Hall. The event was hosted in partnership with a range of services, including the Local Offer, Norfolk SENDIASS, SEND Participation Team, and Norfolk FYI. Throughout the day, we delivered a variety of interactive activities to gather young people's views on the SEND Bulletin, SEND survey and Easy Read resources. It was fantastic to hear the thoughtful views, experiences and suggestions shared by the young people.

Post-16 Events - September

September was a busy month for post-16 engagement, with visits to the College of West Anglia Fresher Fair and the Teen Agency Event at East Norfolk Sixth Form College. These events provided a fantastic opportunity to meet students as they started the new academic year, discuss SEND support, and share information about their rights and the support available through SENDIASS. Through a range of fun and interactive activities, we encouraged conversations about learning and support needs, while hearing directly from young people about their experiences and aspirations.

School Events

We have enjoyed attending a number of school-based events this September, including; King's Lynn Academy Marketplace Event, Fred Nicholson Special School Transition Event and the SEND Coffee Morning at Surlingham Primary School. These events provided valuable opportunities to meet families, answer questions and share information about SENDIASS.

Working together with other services

This month, we were delighted to attend team meetings with the South Norwich School and Community Team and the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) to

provide an overview of the SENDIASS service and the support we offer.

We also attended the Breckland SEND Sub-Group, which brings together local services to share information about the support available to children, young people and families with SEND across the Breckland area and explore opportunities for joint working.

Other events

We were pleased to attend the Steps Community Food Bank at Wymondham Hope Church, where we met local families, answered SEND related questions and shared information about the support available through SENDIASS.

We also attended the Elective Home Education Drop-In Session at County Hall, where we spoke with families who are home educating, or considering home education, and answered questions around SEND related processes.

Looking Ahead to October

We have some exciting events coming up in October!

Making Sense of SEND – Hellesdon Community Centre

 **3rd October, 11:30am-1:30pm**

Come along to meet a range of SEND services, gather information, and find out more about the support available for children and young people with SEND.

Find out more here: [Making Sense of SEND information fair in Hellesdon \(Saturday event\) - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)

NANSA, SENSational Families, Norwich Drop-In – NANSA, 33 Woodcock Rd, NR3 3TT

 **19th October, 10am-12pm**

We are looking forward to attending the NANSA Norwich Drop-In, where families can come along for a chat, ask questions, and find out more about the information and support SENDIASS can offer. It is also a great opportunity to meet other parents and carers in a friendly and welcoming environment.

Norwich Book Festival - SEND Sunflower Snug – The Forum

 **26th & 27th October**

During the October half-term, we will be part of the Norwich Book Festival. We will be based in the SEND Sunflower Snug, located on the top floor of The Forum. A range of SEND-friendly activities will be taking place across both days, creating a welcoming environment for children, young people and

families. Come along to say hello, pick up information, join in with activities, and have a chat with the team in a relaxed and friendly setting.

SEND Youth Voice Day, County Hall

 **Friday 30th October**

We're excited to be supporting another SEND Youth Voice Day at County Hall. This is a fantastic opportunity for young people aged 11-25 with SEND to share their views, have their voices heard, and help shape SEND services across Norfolk. As a thank you for taking part, all attendees will receive a £20 voucher of their choice.

Find out more here: [How children and young people can help shape SEND services - SEND Youth Voice Days - Norfolk County Council](#)

To see all our upcoming library drop-ins and events, you can view our online calendar here: [Library drop-in sessions and outreach | Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

If you would like SENDIASS to attend an event, coffee morning, parent group, school or team meeting, please get in touch at:

[**nsendiassengagement@norfolk.gov.uk**](mailto:nsendiassengagement@norfolk.gov.uk)

We would love to hear from you!

Sally Bailey, Engagement and Advice Worker



Norfolk SEND Youth Forum Update

We were delighted to have eight young people attend our September SEND Youth Forum online meeting. It was wonderful to welcome everyone back after the August break and hear all about their summer adventures, fantastic achievements and exciting news.

Professional Consultation

We welcomed Claire Jones from the SEND Local Offer, who had requested a professional consultation with the Youth Forum to gather their views and opinions on proposed SEND Survey questions for children and young people. During the session, the members were invited to review different question options. Everyone did an amazing job sharing their honest thoughts, ideas and suggestions, providing valuable feedback that will help Claire shape the Children and Young People's SEND Survey. Well done everyone!

Updated Easy Read Documents

We showed the members some of the updated sections of our 'Who Are Norfolk SENDIASS? -Children and Young People's Edition' Easy Read document, which they had previously reviewed at our July meet-up. The updated version now includes the fantastic recommendations made by the members, including some of their photos and quotes. They were delighted to see their contributions included.

Flourish Awards Postponed

The Youth Forum, who we are delighted to say are finalists in the Flourish Awards , have been informed that the awards ceremony has been postponed and is now expected to take place in the New Year. While the celebrations have been delayed, we are still incredibly proud and excited about this fantastic achievement and can't wait to attend the event.

Practice Week

We shared some exciting updates about Practice Week, which will take place from 16th-20th November and will focus on the 'S' in Flourish: Safe and Secure. We let members know that we'll be holding an online preparation session in October, with more details coming soon! This session will give the Youth Forum members the opportunity to share what feeling safe and secure means to them through quotes, artwork, poems and other creative ideas. Their wonderful contributions will be featured in Practice Week emails and daily bulletins throughout the week.

Christmas Get Together 🎄

It may seem early, but as diaries are filling up quickly this time of year, we have already started planning our annual Christmas get-together! We have let the Youth Forum members know that this year's gathering will take place on either 5th December or 12th December. More details will be shared soon.

Next Meeting

Our next Youth Forum meeting will be on Wednesday 21st October, from 6:30pm to 7:30pm. We can't wait to see everyone there!

New Members

If you or someone you know has SEND, lives in Norfolk, and is aged 11-25 we would love to welcome you to the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum. You can follow this link to register [Norfolk SEND Youth Forum - Registration Form | Norfolk SENDIASS](#).

	"Youth Forum has helped with my confidence" - Charlotte
	"Your opinions help the future of young people" - Isaac
	"When I know something, I can talk about my experiences at SENDIASS" - Alec
	"It's amazing" - Sarah



	"We've made great friends here" - Gabriel
	"We make a change for those with SEND" - Reece
	"We are people with SEND trying to make a difference" - Lily



Find out more about the Norfolk SEND Youth Forum



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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