



Welcome to February's edition of the SENDIASS Spotlight!

SENDIASS UPDATE

It feels like Spring is in the air with this lovely weather, lets hope it continues!

Some great news, earlier this month we had Meriel start with us as one of our new SENDIAS Advisors, she's started her training and is shadowing at Library Drop ins and will be up and running supporting families in the coming months.

As always, the team continues to be busy supporting children, young people, parents, and carers. Remember -if you're looking for information or guidance, our online resources are available anytime. We have spent some time lately amending our online resources into more accessible formats and adding more resources than ever, please have a look at our website as the information on these pages may answer your questions or support with filling out forms: [Information zone](#) | [Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

You can also come and chat with us in person at one of our library drop-ins or outreach events. We'd love to see you! You can check out where we are by

following this link [Library drop-in sessions and outreach | Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

We are continuing our push to gather testimonials from parents, carers, young people and professionals. These voices are incredibly powerful in helping us demonstrate the real-world difference SENDIASS makes. Hearing these allows us to show decision-makers – both locally and nationally - the impact of our support, the gaps that still exist, and the value of investing in accessible SEND information, advice, and guidance. If there is anything you would like to send us now, please send it to norfolksendiass@norfolk.gov.uk or add it to our pin board via this link [Feedback and parent/carer pinboard | Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

Niamh Keane, SENDIASS Manager



Welcome

To The Team



Mez Whitty

SENDIAS Advisor

Hello, my name is Mez and I joined the wonderful SENDIASS team this month as the new Advisor. I am looking forward to speaking to children, young people and families in this role and offering support within the service.

My background is in SEND teaching, where I've spent several years supporting children and young people with a wide range of needs. That experience has given me a real passion for advocating for children and Young People and helping ensure that they receive the support they deserve.

Outside of work, I'm a keen gardener—there's nothing better than getting out in the fresh air and growing something! My favourite things to grow are purple flowers and things that climb!

Norfolk SENDIASS
Information, Advice and Support Service

SEND REFORMS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Government is preparing major changes to the SEND system as part of the Schools White Paper, but the law has NOT changed. Existing rights under the Children and Families Act 2014 remain fully in force.

THE CONSULTATION PERIOD

When the White Paper is published, there will be a 12-week consultation where families and professionals can share views. Importantly, the proposals can be amended before anything goes to Parliament.

Because a White Paper is only a proposal, any legal changes would still require a Bill and full Parliamentary scrutiny – a process that usually takes a few years, during which current SEND law stays the same.

IN SHORT

- ✦ No legal changes yet
- ✦ Consultation first, amendments likely
- ✦ Your voice can shape what happens next

Understanding the SEND Reforms: What they are, what they mean, and the role of the consultation period

The Government has been preparing significant reforms to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system in England. The full school's white paper has now been released, we already know several important points about what the reforms aim to do - and importantly, what they do not change at this stage.

What the SEND Reforms are

The reforms are part of a wider Schools White Paper, setting out the Government's future for legislation affecting education and the SEND system. A White Paper outlines proposals but does not change the law by itself.

What the Reforms mean and what they do not mean

At this stage, the law has not changed. Existing legal duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 remain fully in force, and families retain the same rights to assessments, EHCPs, and appeals.

When the White Paper is published, any legal changes would require:

- A formal consultation period
- Draft legislation (a Bill)
- Parliamentary scrutiny in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords
- Further amendments throughout the process before any new law takes effect.

This entire process typically takes a few years, during which current law and rights remain unchanged.

The Consultation Period

There is a 12week consultation period, giving families, professionals, and organisations the opportunity to respond to the proposals.

During this period:

- Anyone can submit views, concerns, or suggestions.
- Stakeholder events and listening sessions may run alongside the consultation.
- Responses can lead to the White Paper being amended before it is formally presented to Parliament.

Additionally, the Department for Education has confirmed that a formal consultation on aspects of SEND reform will be launched later in 2026.

Could the White Paper change?

Yes. The White Paper is not final. It is explicitly open to change based on:

- Public consultation responses
- Feedback from listening sessions with parents, professionals, and expert groups
- Parliamentary debate and amendment processes

The Government has already indicated that it intends to “test policy options” and “seek views” widely before finalising the proposals.

This means that the proposals presented in the White Paper could be revised - potentially significantly - before any legislation is drafted or introduced.

In Summary

- The SEND reforms are proposed changes outlined in a Schools White Paper.

- The law has not changed; existing SEND rights and legal duties remain fully in place.
- The White Paper will be subject to a 12week consultation, during which changes can and likely will be made.
- Only after consultation and parliamentary scrutiny could any new legislation come into force - a process that typically takes a few years.

Complete the consultation form

Phase transfer update

If your child is moving to a new phase of education, you should receive their phase transfer notice by:

- **15th February** for all school-age transfers
- **31st March** for post-16 transfers

If your child should have received their notice by 15th February but hasn't, please contact your EHCP Coordinator as soon as possible. You can reach them directly or by calling the EHCP helpline on **01603 679183**.

If you are unhappy with the placement named in the phase transfer, you have the right to appeal. Our service can offer information, advice, and support to help you understand your options.



Library Drop-in's

We will be at Library's 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. The sessions will be restricted to 20 minutes during busy times.

These 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. We will be in the main areas of the library, just look out for our banner!

Don't forget to follow our Facebook page (just search for Norfolk SENDIASS) so that you can keep up to date with where we will be.

The Engagement and Advice Team also attend a variety of local outreach events.



Norfolk SEND Youth Forum update

In this month's meeting we had a professional consultation postponed; so the SENDIASS Advice & Engagement Team used this opportunity to seek members feedback about how they use websites and social media to access information.

As a service we are keen to develop our resources, and we are keen to find out how young people with SEND may seek these out, which platforms they use, and how they prefer information to be shared. Their feedback will help us redesign information to stay relevant and accessible!!

We were also able to start planning our next social activity, and through discussion we have a shortlist of options and the group will be making their final decision, and this will take place after Easter! These meet ups are an important aspect of the Youth Forum, where members get to meet up in person, build their friendships, and to have fun!!!

We are always keen to welcome new members, so please do get in touch if you are interested in joining this brilliant group!!

Bridget Robinson, Engagement and Advice Worker

[CLICK TO REGISTER ONLINE](#)



Norwich Science Festival:

A highlight of the month was our week at the Norwich Science Festival, where we were based in The Sunflower Snug from the 16th to the 20th February. The space offered a calm and welcoming environment for children and young people with SEND. Families joined us throughout the week for advice, information and plenty of creative fun. On the Tuesday, we led the art and craft activities, giving children and young people the chance to design and paint their own new worlds and create fidget toys using recycled materials. It was wonderful to see so many families enjoying the festival in such a relaxed, accessible and inclusive setting.



Schools and Education Engagement:

We've been out and about in lots of schools this month. We attended the Open Academy Year 7 Parents' Evening, offering guidance on SEND processes and next steps for families. We also visited the Parent Cafés at Bignold Primary, Manor Field Infant, Magdalen Gates Primary and Aslacton Primary School, to chat with parents about their children's needs and how schools can support them. In Sheringham, we took part in the Primary School Marketplace SEND event, connecting with families and local services in a lively and well-attended setting. These school-based visits gave us valuable opportunities to speak directly with families, helping them feel more informed and confident as they navigate SEND support.

Community Groups:

We enjoyed spending time with several welcoming community groups this month. At the Nansa Parent Support Group in Gorleston and the New Life Parent Café in North Walsham, we had the opportunity to offer advice and information to parents and carers in relaxed and friendly settings. These sessions gave families space to ask questions, explore SEND support and share experiences with others who understand the journey.

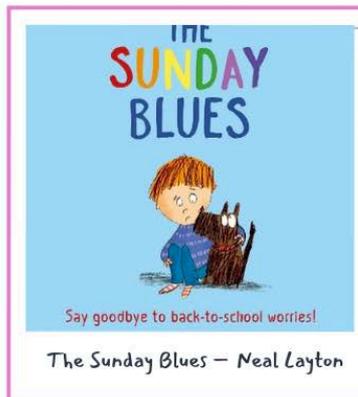
Stay Connected:

If you would like the SENDIASS Engagement and Advice Team to attend your event, group, school or college, we would be very happy to hear from you.

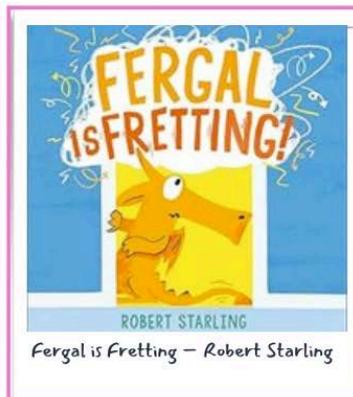
[✉ nsendiassengagement@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nsendiassengagement@norfolk.gov.uk)

Sally, Engagement and Advice Worker

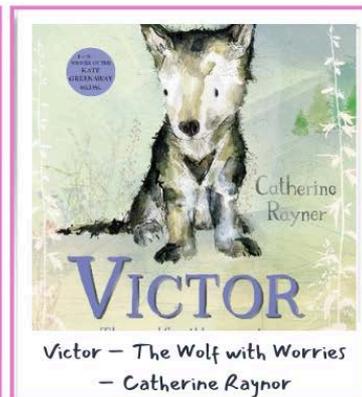
BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



What's great about Sundays? Walking the dog, splashing in puddles, visiting Auntie Vera, and eating delicious food! So why does Steve get the Sunday Blues? Maybe it's because Monday morning is creeping closer. This gently funny story about easing back-to-school worries is perfect for anyone who finds Mondays a bit daunting.



It's been such a long time since Fergal saw his friend... what if things feel different? Whenever he thinks about his friends visit, his face gets hot, he can't sit still, and he keeps feeling like he needs the toilet. Fergal soon discovers there's a simple mindfulness trick that can help his worries melt away. Join Fergal as he learns an easy, trusted mindfulness technique to help children manage all kinds of anxiety – including worries about seeing friends and social situations!



Victor the wolf worries about everything – that he's not brave, not big, and not fierce enough. But when he talks to his best friend Pablo, he starts to feel lighter. With Pablo's help, Victor learns new ways to manage his anxious thoughts, and as his worries shrink, he begins to feel braver, stronger, and more confident inside.

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.

Imogen Pagendam, SENDIAS Advisor



Family Voice Norfolk Conference 2026

Saturday 14th March 2026
John Innes Centre, Norwich, NR4 7UH

Norfolk SENDIASS will be attending and offering consultation slots and a speed dating session (bookable on the day)

-  Information stands
-  Presentations and workshops
-  Chat with professionals



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK A PLACE VISIT THE FAMILY VOICE NORFOLK WEBSITE OR SCAN THE QR CODE
www.familyvoice.org.uk

We're excited to be at the Family Voice Norfolk Conference on Saturday 14th March!

Come and see us for:

- 1:1 consultation slots (bookable on the day)
- Speed-dating style mini sessions

There will be:

- Lots of information stands, workshops & presentations

- Opportunities to chat with professionals

Find out more & book your place here 🙌

https://www.familyvoice.org.uk/conference-2025-3/Family_Voice_Norfolk

If you are a professional seeking information:

- You are welcome to explore **all publicly available guidance and resources** on our website.
- These cover SEND law, rights, processes, and support available to families.

If you need further support or have a query you can book a [Professional Referral](#) via our website. These are strictly for Professionals. Please be aware as a confidential service we do not discuss individual circumstances without permission.

contact *For families
with disabled children*

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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