



Welcome to March's edition of the SENDIASS Spotlight!

SENDIASS UPDATE

The weather has certainly been a bit up and down lately, but we're keeping our fingers crossed that the sunshine sticks around in the lead-up to the school break!

We've recently seen a significant increase in Helpline appointment bookings, which means our waiting times have grown. We're working hard to reduce the delay by offering additional Helpline calls whenever we can. We know the wait can be frustrating, and we really appreciate your patience.

Because of the longer waits, some people may no longer need their appointment by the time we call. If that's you, please cancel so we can offer the slot to someone else. You can cancel via the Timely email you received, or by calling or emailing us.

Remember—if you're looking for information or guidance, our online resources are available anytime. We've recently updated lots of our content into more

accessible formats and added even more resources. Please take a look at our website, as these pages may answer your questions or help with completing forms: [Information zone](#) | [Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

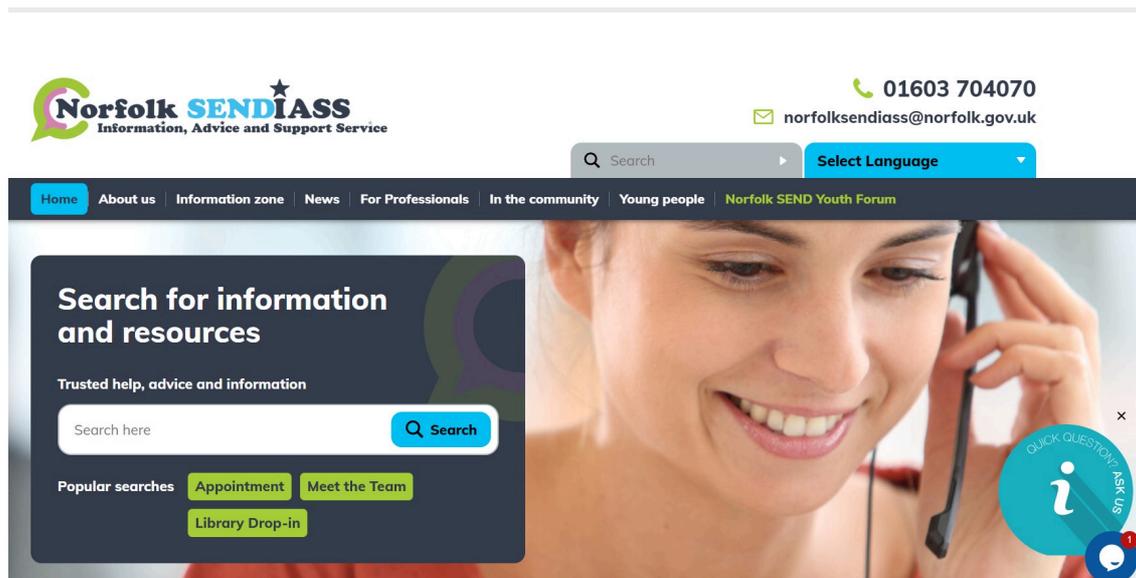
You can also come and chat with us in person at one of our library drop-ins or outreach events—we'd love to see you. You can find out where we'll be here: [Library drop-in sessions and outreach](#) | [Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

We're also continuing to gather testimonials from parents, carers, young people and professionals. These voices are incredibly powerful in showing the real-world difference SENDIASS makes. They help us demonstrate to decision makers—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 you'd like to share feedback, please email us at norfolksendiass@norfolk.gov.uk or add it to our pinboard here: [Feedback and parent/carer pinboard](#) | [Norfolk SENDIASS](#)

Finally, a quick reminder: we're still in the consultation phase of the SEND reforms announced by the Government last month. If you'd like to have your say, please complete the consultation by 18 May using the link below.

[SEND reform: putting children and young people first – Department for Education \(Citizen Space\)](#)

Niamh Keane, SENDIASS Manager



WEBSITE UPDATES

We've been busy updating and expanding the information available on our website.

You can now access a wide range of clear, accessible guidance on SEND topics, including support in educational settings, exclusions and suspensions, transport, Education Health and Care Plans, Post-16 options, and much more.

Our new search function is now live, making it easier than ever to find the information you need.

If you have a question, our online chat is also available to provide quick support and guidance.

Norfolk SENDIASS

ADVISOR UPDATES Amy-Lou Mulligan, SENDIAS Advisor



We have been supporting a number of families who have submitted phase transfer appeals and are unhappy with the dates that they have received for their tribunal hearing.

In this situation, you can use a SEND7/ Request for Change form. A SEND7 form is something you can use if you feel your appeal needs to be heard sooner. For example, if your child's needs are urgent or their current situation isn't working, you can explain this on the form and ask the Tribunal to bring the hearing date forward.

You don't need to use complicated language—just clearly describe what's happening, how it affects your child, and why waiting longer would make things harder for them. The Tribunal will then look at your reasons and decide whether an earlier date can be offered.

You can find a link to the SEND7 here; **[Request for change: Form SEND7 - GOV.UK](#)**



Link to SEND7 Form - Request for change



Mediation

When looking to appeal:

- a refusal to assess for an EHC Needs Assessments
- a refusal to issue an EHCP
- B and F of a final EHCP

parent/carers or a young person must consider mediation.

A parent/carer or young person can request mediation for Section I of a final EHCP if they want to but it isn't compulsory.

To consider mediation a parent/carer or young person must call **Anglia Care Trust** on:

01473 618675

They will then be booked in for a mediation information awareness session (MIAS) call where an independent mediator will explain the process of mediation and their options.

Following the call the parent/carer or young person will then decide to either go to mediation and have the meeting or proceed straight to Tribunal.

If they choose to go straight to Tribunal they will be issued a mediation certificate within 3 days of the call. This certificate will be needed to lodge the appeal.

Mediation is free and can be a useful tool to use before having to go to tribunal.

It is quicker and less formal than a tribunal hearing and can help to resolve problems without having to lodge an appeal

At the mediation there will be the parent/carer and/or young person, a representative from the LA (usually the EHCP coordinator) and an independent mediator.

The parent/carer or young person can also ask for the place of learning to attend if they wish.

The mediator will ensure that everyone has a say, there is a focus to the meeting and there is some kind of outcome at the end.

Where possible the parent/carer or young person should bring evidence to the mediation that backs up their point.

At the end of the mediation meeting the Local Authority representative will either fully agree, partially agree or not agree at all.

If they fully agree, then the parent/carer or young person doesn't need to pursue an appeal.

If they partially agree or don't agree at all then the parent/carer or young person has a right to appeal this to the First Tier Tribunal.

To appeal this to the Tribunal the parent/carer or young person will need the mediation certificate which will be issued within three days of the mediation meeting.

Read more about Mediation and Tribunal



Library Drop-in's and outreach

Since October 2025 we have organised and attended 29 library drop ins across Norfolk. During these library drop-in's we have spoken with 168 parent/carers and young people. We have also spoken to 8 professionals at the libraries 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.

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

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

Find out where you can find us

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun is back for the holidays!

Looking for fun, active and inclusive things to do over the school break? Big Norfolk Holiday Fun has **121 activity options**, including **special SEND sessions**, so there's something for every child to enjoy.  

- ✓ Free places available for children who receive benefit-related free school meals
- ✓ SEND-friendly options
- ✓ Short Breaks funding can be used to cover costs
- ✓ Personal Assistants can also be supported through BNHF

Before booking, remember to contact the activity provider to chat through your child's needs and make sure the session is right for them.

Scan the QR code on the poster to find out more and start planning your holiday fun!

 - [Big Norfolk Holiday Fun - Active Norfolk](#)



Big Norfolk Holiday Fun

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun is back for the holidays

Everyone can join in with the fun!

- 121 options and special SEND sessions are available.
- Always contact the activity provider to discuss your child's needs before you book to see if their activity is suitable.
- When booking, always provide detailed information to ensure the provider can plan the session to best suit your child's needs.



Short Breaks and BNHF

If your child receives benefit-related free school meals and has a Personal Assistant through Short Breaks, you can access BNHF provision for your PA to support your child at no cost to you.

Scan to find out more



Short Breaks activity funding can be utilised to cover the costs of providers offering paid places too.





Norfolk SEND Youth Forum update

We had eight young people attend our March online meeting, and this month we welcomed Ryan from the University of East Anglia, who had requested a consultation with our “Experts by experience”. Ryan trains future Educational Psychologists and was keen to find out from our members their experiences of working with professionals in education, whose role is to support young people with SEND.

He was keen to find out examples where this had felt helpful, or unhelpful for them, and to identify what the young people want professionals to be mindful of and understand. Our members were very forthcoming and insightful, and below is a flavour of their feedback.

Can you think of a time when someone from outside your school - like a specialist or an expert - came in to work with you or talk about you, and it felt helpful? What made it feel that way?

- *I think for me, when they actually do listen and give feedback rather than just agreeing to what I'm saying I find helps me know they are taking in the information!*
- *I had someone come with me throughout High School, and what helped was they were patient and allowed me to be myself and talk more honestly about me.*
- *When they remember important details and they actually go out of their way to make changes to help me. When I see actual action after, then I know they aren't just ticking a box and forgetting about me.*

What do professionals sometimes do that makes it harder - or makes you feel like they are not really listening?

- *I'd say making assumptions, or putting words in my mouth*
- *A problem that happened to me was that they would talk to me and get my views but then write completely different things in the report*

- *When you don't feel listened too. When they don't explain why they have come to see you.*
- *When people assume I know what they do and they ask me what I want them to do without actually giving me options .*

If you were training someone who was going to work with young people like you in schools, what is the one thing you'd really want them to understand?

- *We aren't just 1 more person on your list - for every person you truly listen to and take action to help, you are making us feel heard and make us feel like we belong, one person at a time. And that is monumental for people who feel like they are never heard*
- *To be helpful, don't rush and take time.*

Ryan has accepted the groups invitation to come back and tell them how their feedback has informed him and the training he delivers to his trainees.

Bridget Robinson, Engagement and Advice Worker

[CLICK TO REGISTER ONLINE](#)



Family Voice Conference

We were proud to be part of the Family Voice Norfolk Annual Conference, a free event for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. Held each year in Norwich, John Innes Centre, the conference brings together workshops, information stands and opportunities to talk directly with professionals.

Throughout the day, we met lots of wonderful families from across the county, listened to lived experiences, and shared information to help make navigating SEND a little easier.



Visible Festival

Another highlight of the month was hosting a stand at the Visible Festival in the Forum. The Visible Festival is a 2-day, vibrant, joyful celebration of neurodiversity led by NANSAs. The event was full of creativity, inclusivity and connection, and we loved being part of such a buzzing, positive atmosphere. It was a great opportunity to meet young people, families and professionals, all passionate about shaping a more inclusive Norfolk.



Schools and Education Engagement

We were especially proud to help organise the SEND Marketplace event at Eaton Primary School this month, which brought together services including SENDIASS, Family Hubs, Family Action and the School and Community Team. The event was well attended and created a welcoming space for families to connect with professionals, ask questions, and gain helpful information and support.

This month also included Parents' Evenings at Open Academy for Year 9, Mile Cross Primary and Ormiston Herman Academy. We really enjoyed supporting families with advice about SEND processes, school support and next steps.

At East Harling Primary School, we took part in a small but brilliant SEND marketplace event. The event was well attended, and families could explore a range of services and speak with us directly.

It was also wonderful to be part of the parent surgeries at Great Hockham Primary School, offering calm, one-to-one conversations around SEND, tailored to each family's needs.



Community Groups and Charities

Our community work continued to grow this month. In collaboration with Family Hubs, we spent a lovely morning at Stalham Baptist Church for a Family Drop-In. It was a welcoming and friendly session, giving us the chance to chat with families about SEND support, answer questions and offer helpful local signposting.

It was great to return to the Nansa Parent Support Group in Norwich, where families shared experiences, asked thoughtful questions and created a really supportive atmosphere.

We also enjoyed delivering a short presentation about SENDIASS at the friendly and welcoming Able2Be Coffee Morning, held monthly- good coffee, great conversations and lots of SEND advice shared throughout the session.

If you'd like the SENDIASS Engagement and Advice Team to come along to one of your groups, events or meetings, we'd be delighted to hear from you at: nsendiassengagement@norfolk.gov.uk.

Looking ahead to April....

We've got some exciting things lined up for next month!

Thetford Family Hub Drop-In

Join us on 8th April from 13:30–15:00 for a relaxed drop-in session, perfect for

parents and carers who want to ask questions and gather SEND information.

👦 KIDS – Viking Centre

On 15th April from 10:30–12:30, we'll be delivering a short presentation about SENDIASS followed by supportive conversations with families.

🌟 Now That's What I Call Autism Festival – The Forum

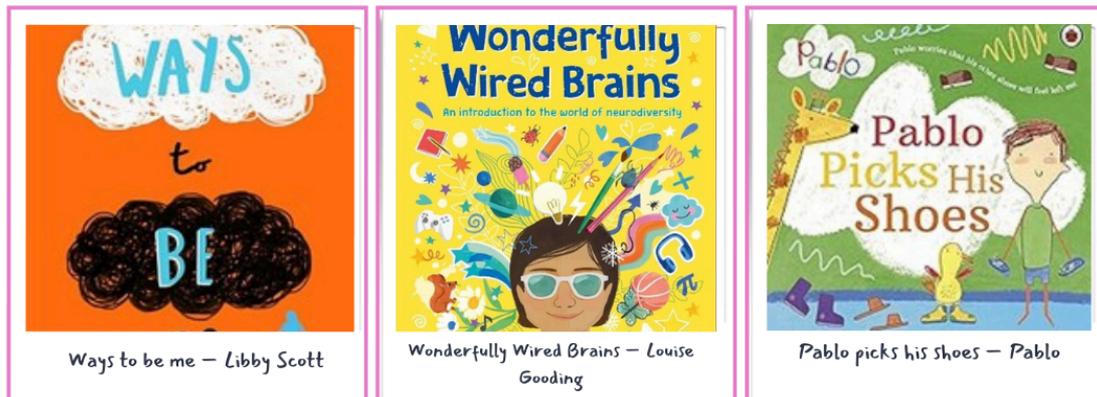
We're thrilled to be part of this uplifting, inclusive festival on 23rd April, where we'll be offering information, support and plenty of friendly conversation.

Sally, Engagement and Advice Worker



What is an Engagement and Advisor Worker within SENDIASS

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



Ten-year-old Tally can't wait for Year 6, especially the school play – she's sure this is her chance to get the lead role. But at home, things feel overwhelming. Her parents' expectations leave her upset and frustrated, and she wishes she didn't react so strongly. Then her mum and dad tell her something new – something called autism – and suddenly everything starts to make sense.

A friendly and inclusive guide to neurodiversity, this book helps children understand that every brain works in its own unique way. Written by neurodivergent author Louise Gooding, it explains what neurodiversity means, challenges, common myths, and celebrates the strengths of neurodivergent people. Aimed at ages 7–9, *Wonderfully Wired Brains* introduces inspiring role models, highlights extraordinary abilities, and offers a safe, welcoming space for children to feel understood and accepted.

As part of a series – Pablo sees the world differently. He has autism and uses his imagination to make sense of things. He draws the Book Animals, who help him face challenges with confidence. When Pablo and his friends worry that his shoes will feel left out during a trip to Granny's house, they come up with a clever solution – as they always do.

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

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 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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