

Suffolk Parent Carer Forum

Half Term Newsletter

February 2025





Welcome



Welcome to the February half term edition of our newsletter, where you will find Suffolk Parent Carer Forum news, updates and events.

You can provide your feedback on SEND, education and health services in Suffolk at any time [here](#)

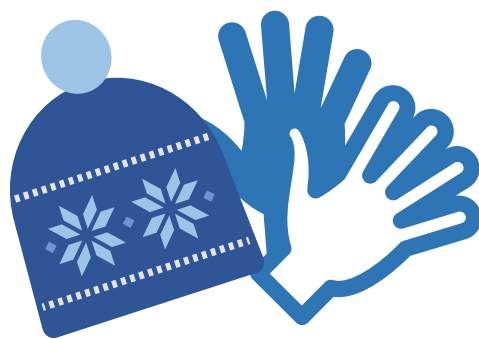
Membership

We always welcome new Parent and Carer membership to capture real experiences of SEND in Suffolk.

If you would like to become a member, please sign up [here](#)

Did you know that we also offer Affiliate Membership at SPCF?

Affiliate membership is designed for practitioners, within both the Voluntary and Statutory sectors. Members will be kept up to date by receiving regular information and news. You can sign up [here](#)



SPCF Half Term Closure

We will be closed from Monday 17th February and return on Monday 24th February. All the SPCF team are parent carers, and this enables us to meet our caring responsibilities over the half term.



Focus Groups



So far this calendar year, we have hosted focus groups with Kathryn Boulton, Home Education, Post 16 and EHCP Quality Assurance.

These groups were shared with all schools across Suffolk and saw new parent and carer participants attend.

We're pleased to confirm the following online meetings will be taking place after half term:

- 1. Suffolk County Council Complaints**
 - 2. Suffolk User Forum**
 - 3. Attendance Difficulties**
 - 4. ND (Autism & ADHD)**
 - 5. Phase Transfers**
 - 6. All Age Carers Strategy**
-

Confirmation of dates and times of these upcoming focus groups will be sent direct to members via email and shared on our social media.

We would like to thank those who have attended and those who have passed on their feedback. We apologise that due to caring commitments, we are unable to host these groups in the evenings.

SPCF News

SPCF have been pleased to share some positive news with families this year.

Families will not receive emails after 3pm on Fridays (unless you ask them to) from Family Services or Complaints. Families tell us how upsetting it is to receive an email late on a Friday and have no one to discuss it with until Monday. SPCF have been asking for this change for a long time. If you receive unwanted contact after 3pm on a Friday, please let us know.

Suffolk County Council have wrongly been telling families that they only have 15 days to make representations on draft EHC plans. SPCF have been raising this for years. This has now been corrected with staff and covering letters to reflect a minimum of 15 days as per legislation.

We are pleased that after sharing your feedback, bullet points are returning to EHCP's. Many found paragraphs, which SPCF didn't agree to, difficult to read and extract information from.

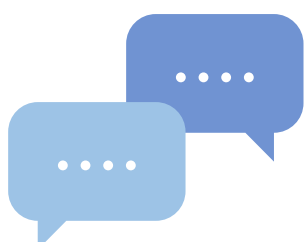
Whilst these things are great, we know that many of you are experiencing difficult times. We are hearing of the impact of phase transfers and not knowing where your child will go to school is having. We continue to hear that section K is being stripped from plans and that family services do not know when drafts and final plans should be sent out. Families are still waiting too long for ADHD assessments and the ARFID pathway and coproduction is not as expected.

We will continue to pass feedback to the relevant professionals and push for more changes. Your feedback is always welcome

You can feed back to us via Facebook Messenger [here](#)

Our website [here](#)

Or by emailing info@suffolkpcf.co.uk

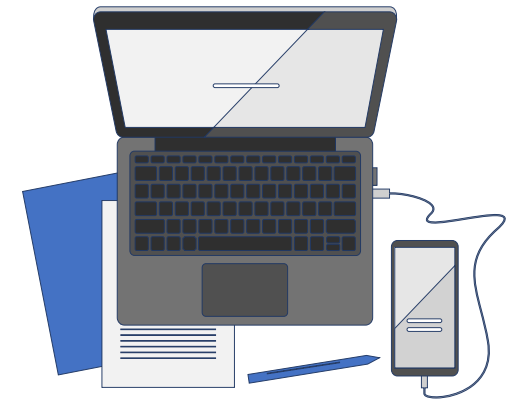


Forum Frustrations

SPCF have again suffered numerous short notice meeting cancellations, despite assurances at the SEND Improvement Board.

This wastes forum time and resources.

Across education we see little value placed on parents and carers time, which is disrespectful.



SPCF Website

We are continuing to work on updating our website.

Recently, we have been adding to our information section, with the view to make information on SEND Education and Health in Suffolk easier to find.

The updates include, applying for an Education, Health, and Care Plan, Right to Choose, the Suffolk ND Resource Pack and the most recent contact information for Family Services staff.

You can view this information [here](#)

Suffolk County Council Meeting Minutes

Suffolk County Council make documents and minutes from their SEND meetings available on the Governance and Oversight section of their website. You can view the documents along with information about the committees, boards and panels [here](#)



DROP-INS

Steam House Cafe, Ipswich

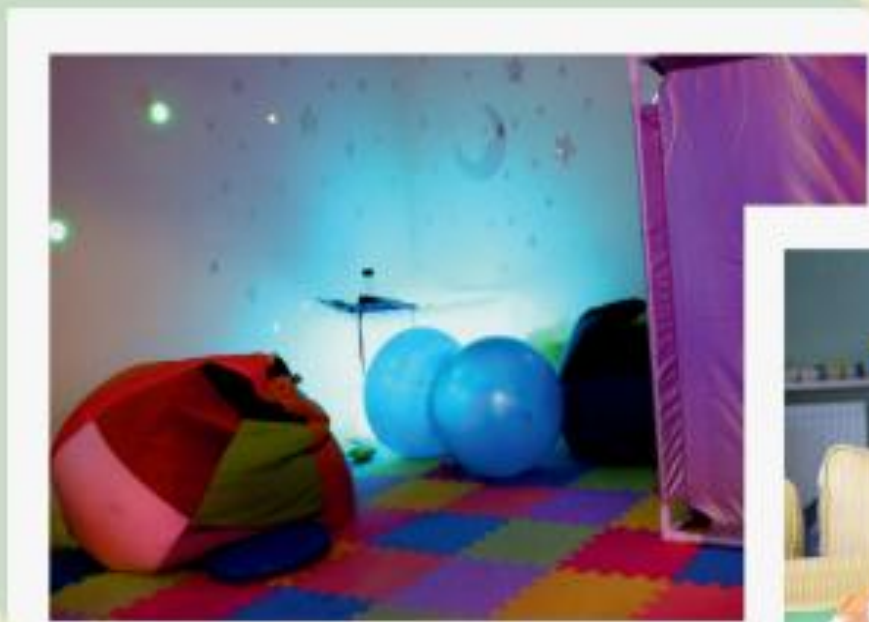
**First Tuesday of the month 10am-12pm
22 Carr Street, Ipswich, IP4 1EJ**

Pavilion Cafe, Woodbridge

**Second Tuesday of the month 10am-12pm
Pavilion Cafe, Jetty Lane, Woodbridge, IP12 4BA**

Linden House, Bury St Edmunds

**Third Tuesday of the month 10am-12pm
147 kings Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3DJ**



A monthly group for parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people to ask questions, raise concerns and receive non judgemental support and guidance.

For more information visit accessct.org



PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) FEBRUARY HALF TERM 2025



moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free

MORRISONS

Spend £5 from the hot menu and get one free kids meal all day, every day.

BILLS

Kids eat free Mondays - Fridays from Monday 17th - Friday 28th February 2025.

PRETO

Kids up to age 10 eat free all day, every day with paying adults at Preto in Half Terms

ASDA

Kids eat for £1 Daily at Asda cafes, with no adult spend required.

LAS IGUANAS

Download the app and join 'My Las Iguanas' for free meals for mini Iguanas under 12.

WHITBREAD INNS

Two kids under 16 eat for FREE with every adult breakfast purchased

BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE

Two children under 16 can get a free breakfast every day with one paying adult!

TRAVELODGE & PREMIER INN

Buy 1 Adult Breakfast from just £8.99 & up to two kids eat breakfast for free

SIZZLING PUBS

Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm, kids' mains are £1 with every adult meal.

TGI FRIDAYS

Kids Eat Free When 'Stripes Rewards Members' purchase any adult meal (Via App)

GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS

Kids under 8 eat FREE all day, every day

IKEA

Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am

BURGER KING

From Friday 14th - Friday 21st Feb 2025, Kids Eat Free with every adult meal purchased via the app.

EMBER INNS

Kids eat for £1 from Monday 21st October to Friday 1st November 2024 (excludes weekends)

COCONUT TREE

One child (under 10) eats free every day Monday 10th - Sunday 23rd February 2025

SAINSBURYS CAFES

Kids eat for £1 with the purchase of an adult hot main. From 11:30am every day.

BELLA ITALIA

Children eat for £1 with any adult main. The offer is valid 4-6pm Sun to Weds. All Day Thursdays

HARVESTER

From Monday 10th - Friday 28th Feb 2025, kids eat for £1 with every adult meal via the app

TABLE TABLE

Two children under 16 get free breakfast daily with one paying adult!

PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM

Kids get 1 mini main, 2 snacks & a drink FREE with every £4 spend after 3pm

BREWDOG

Pre-book online using code: **KIDS EAT FREE** and Kids under 13 eat free (various dates, see link)

HUNGRY HORSE

Kids eat for £1 on Mondays

THE REAL GREEK

Kids under 12 eat FREE Sundays with £10 spend

SA BRAINS PUBS

Kids eat for £1 on Wednesdays

FUTURE INNS

Under 5s eat for free with any adult meal.

EXPLORE AND SPLASH THEIR WAY THROUGH HALF-TERM



Monday 17th February
Sunday 23rd February

*subject dates apply

FREE Soft Play and Lunch offer at
Kingfisher Leisure Centre
(1-11 years of age)

FREE Swim and Lunch offer at
Hadleigh Pool & Leisure

*free for those eligible for free school meals and other hardships

For more info:
haf@acleisure.com
abbeycroft.org.uk/HAF



Abbeycroft
Let's Love Life



ADVENTURE DAYS

AGES 8-12 YEARS



17th – 23rd February

*subject dates apply

08:30–16:30

Come to life in the great outdoors this February Half-term and enjoy fire lighting and cooking in the wild, Archery, axe throwing and swimming, and much more.

With our Adventure Days happening across Babergh, Mid and west Suffolk, your child has the chance to unlock their inner explorer whilst fitting around your working hours.

Breakfast, lunch and snacks provided!

*Free for those eligible for free school meals or meet Suffolk Country Council eligibility criteria

abbeycroft.org.uk/HAF

FREE*
BOOK NOW



Abbeycroft

Let's Love Life





LEVEL TWO

YOUTH PROJECT

Primary provider of Youth services in Felixstowe
Youth sessions and support
Offering free services to young people aged 7-25

Our services include-

Mentoring service
Youth Sessions for Yr6+
Drama Sessions
Community Outreach
Music Studio Sessions and Intervention
Community Allotment
Arts Award Centre
Small Group Support Work in Primary and Secondary Schools
Sexual Health Service

Scan this QR code for more information



Follow us on social media
[Facebook.com/leveltwoyouthproject](https://www.facebook.com/leveltwoyouthproject)
[Instagram.com/level_two_youth_project](https://www.instagram.com/level_two_youth_project)

Home Ed Gardening Club



Starting after February Half-Term!

Join us each week at our community allotment! Transport provided from the Hub and back. Open to Year 6 to Year 11.

What's in it for you?



Take home the produce you help grow



Help design allotment layout & choose what we plant



Learn how to grow your own fruits, vegetables & flowers

Limited spaces available- Email lucindacooper@leveltwo.org to secure your place

We can't wait to get growing with you!



**Thursdays
12-2pm**



Level Two Youth Club

Level Two Youth Club aim to promote the welfare of young people (age 7-25) living in Felixstowe and surrounding villages, through supportive relationships and positive experiences, designed to enhance their personal and social development.

They offer a range of programmes for different age groups including home education sessions and an after-school youth hub which can be found [here](#)



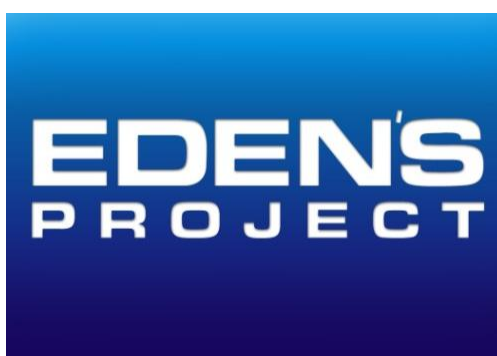
A list of activities funded by Suffolk Family Carers Neurodevelopmental Differences Project happening over end of term can be found [here](#)

Eden's Youth Centre

Eden's Project is a youthwork charity in Sudbury, aimed at Year 11 - 18, that supports all young people and helps them achieve their true potential, through mentoring, support and providing positive opportunities.

They offer weekly term time Home Education sessions, youth drop in and many other supportive services.

You can find out more about their services and the work they do for young people [here](#)



EDEN'S YOUTH CENTRE

Holiday Youth Drop-in

for secondary school age young people,
free admission, free food and drink

Tues 18th Feb

Thurs 20th Feb

2pm-6pm

pool table, table football, gaming, garden,
dancing, spotify music, chat, youtube,

@ Eden's Youth Centre

45 Gainsborough Street, Sudbury, CO10 2EU

www.edensproject.co.uk

Part funded by:

Babergh's Holiday Activities Fund



Department
for Education



2025 *Autism friendly* SEND SESSIONS

SUNDAY MORNINGS

9am - 10am

Jan 5th and 19th

Feb 2nd and 16th

Mar 2nd, 16th and 30th

Apr 13th and 27th

May 11th and 25th

Jun 8th and 22nd

Jul 6th and 20th

Aug 3rd, 17th and 31st

Sept 14th and 28th

Oct 12th and 26th

Nov 9th and 23rd

Dec 7th and 21st

THURSDAY EVENINGS

Feb 20th *6.30pm - 8.30pm*

Apr 17th *4.30pm - 6.30pm*

May 29th *4.30pm - 6.30pm*

Aug 7th *4.30pm - 6.30pm*

Aug 21st *4.30pm - 6.30pm*

Working in partnership with Partyman's Magic
Makers Charity www.partymansmagicmakers.org.uk



West Suffolk Hive CIC  is hosting the

FREE
ENTRY

WEST SUFFOLK HOME ED FAIR

SATURDAY 5TH APRIL 2025

11AM - 2PM

Free activity and information day for
home educating families in
Bury St Edmunds and beyond

www.westsuffolkhive.org.uk/homeeducation

  @westsuffolkhive



The Mix

The mix is a youth work charity-based hub in Stowmarket. They offer a range of clubs and opportunities for young people.

All of the clubs at The Mix are supported by their SEN Youth Worker.

This includes inclusion training, adapting resources, building support networks in the community, and creating bespoke approaches to working with young people with different needs.

More information about their SEND programmes and activities can be found on their website [here](#)



2025 WEEKLY DROP-IN SCHEDULE

HOME ED DROP IN

Fortnightly on Mondays (Years 7 to 11)

The Mix @ 1pm - 3pm

20th Jan // 3rd Feb // 3rd Mar // 17th Mar

MONDAYS

Year 7 and 8

4pm - 6pm

The Mix

TUESDAYS

Ages 16 to 19

5pm - 7pm

The Mix

THURSDAYS

Year 9,10,11

4pm - 6pm

The Mix

FRIDAYS

Years 7-11

4pm - 6pm

The Hut

X-SPACE

4th Wednesday of each month - 18 to 25 Drop In

At The Mix @ 5pm - 7pm

22nd Jan // 26th Feb // 26th Mar

Family Fund Grants

Family Fund Trust offer various grants to families of disabled children and young people to purchase things like Family breaks, Computers and tablets, Sensory toys, Games consoles, Outdoor play, Days out, Games, books and music, Specialist trikes / bikes, Clubs, hobbies and activities.

Eligibility, criteria and application can be found [here](#)



Family Fund

Helping disabled children

Suffolk Local Offer

Suffolk Local Offer provide a range of information and advice for families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Suffolk.

They cover topics including:

- Education
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Care
- Preparing For Adulthood
- Short Breaks & Leisure

You can find them [here](#)

Suffolk Inclusion Support Line

Advice, guidance and information for education settings to help meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).



Call us today on 01473 265502
Email - localoffer@suffolk.gov.uk
www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk

Activities Unlimited is part of Suffolk County Council. They give grants to activity providers around the county, to enable them to put on high quality, inclusive groups, clubs and activities for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities.



To view the providers guide for 2024-2025, click [here](#)

Short Breaks Personal Budgets

A Short Break Personal Budget is a sum of money paid directly to eligible families as a contribution to help your child access short breaks and to give you a break from your caring responsibilities.

You can find out more information and how to apply [here](#)

Half Term Activities

We have put together a list of free resources, ideas and activities that can be done indoors and outside over half term. All resources are from reliable sources like Crayola, Hobbycraft and Baker Ross. Click the leaves to be taken to the free resources.



Autism and Nature

Autism and Nature are a non-profit organisation who aim to improve life for children with autism by engaging them with nature.

believe that contact with the natural world can benefit a child's learning, health and wellbeing, and act to raise awareness of these benefits by developing educational resources in partnership with schools, local authorities, conservation organisations and autism charities.

Their books are designed to help parents, carers and teachers to engage children with autism and related disabilities with the countryside, natural world and rural heritage. Illustrations are accompanied by simple text supported by Widgit symbols.

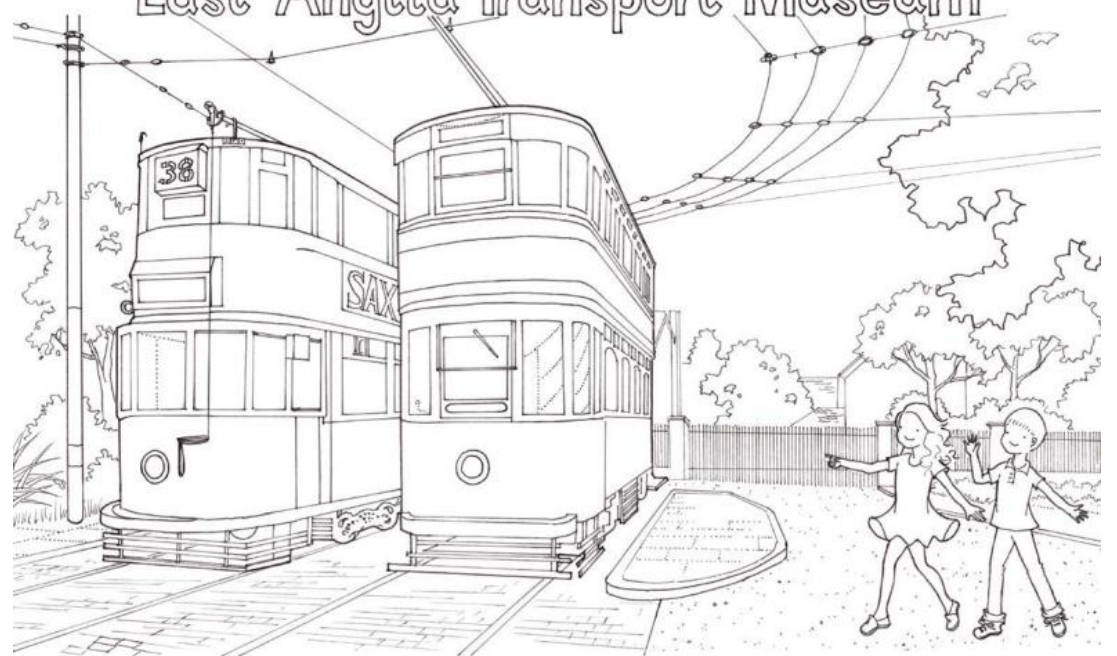
Framlingham Castle



Alex and Rosie were excited to visit Framlingham Castle.

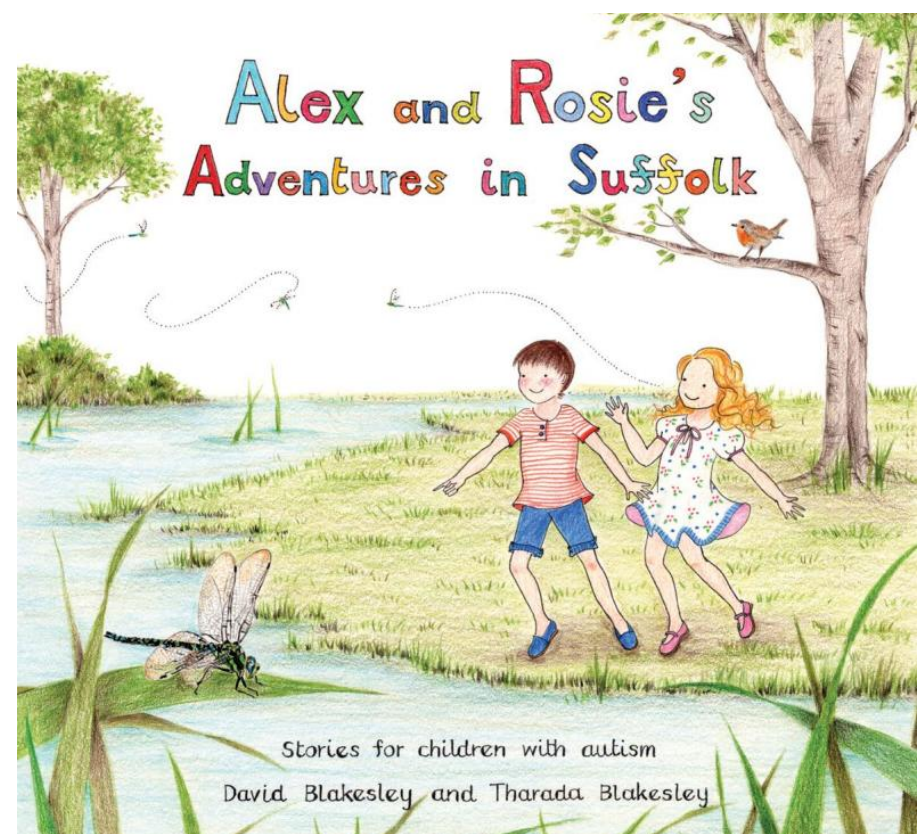
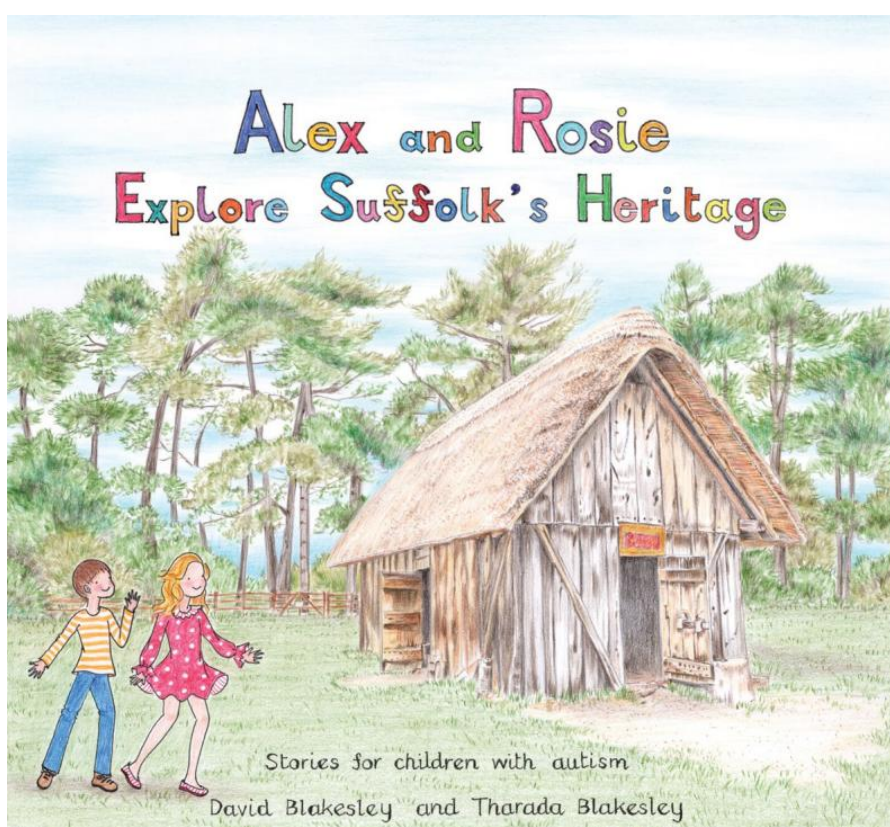
The castle walls were very tall.

East Anglia Transport Museum



Alex and Rosie enjoyed a ride on the tram.

They have kindly made the resources below available for families in Suffolk to download free of charge on the Suffolk Local Offer Website [here](#)



Coffee Crawl Mornings (Ipswich)

Coffee Crawl mornings hosted by Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and are open to all service users, their families, and carers to come together and connect with likeminded people in a relaxed and safe environment.

The mornings support the importance of building strong relationships with wider communities, giving people a true sense of belonging and self-worth. They also provide an opportunity for service users and carers to come together, share lived experience and give each other peer support.

They meet every week on a Wednesday morning 10:30 – midday at a different Ipswich coffee shop.

Feb

- 5 Bon Bon, 19 Buttermarket, Ipswich IP1 1BQ
- 12 Geek Retreat, 41a Upper Brook Street, Ipswich IP4 1DU – Valentines creative activity (optional)
- 19 Honey & Harvey, 4-6 Queen Street, Ipswich IP1 1SS
- 26 Isaacs Coffee Tavern, 7 Wherry Quay, Ipswich IP4 1AS

Mar

- 5
- 12 Fresh Start & Coffee, 29-31 Carr Street, Ipswich IP4 2AD
- 19 Café at the Dancehouse, Jerwood Dancehouse, Ipswich IP4 1DW
- 26 Cosy Club, Buttermarket Shopping Centre, Ipswich IP1 1DT
- The Mix Café, James Hehir Building, University Ave, Ipswich IP3 0BW

Apr

- 2 The New Wolsey Theatre Café, Civic Drive, Ipswich IP1 2AS
- 9 Bon Bon, 19 Buttermarket, Ipswich IP1 1BQ
- 16 Geek Retreat, 41a Upper Brook Street, Ipswich IP4 1DU – Easter creative activity (optional)
- 23 Isaacs Coffee Tavern, 7 Wherry Quay, Ipswich IP4 1AS
- 30 Honey & Harvey, 4-6 Queens Street, Ipswich IP1 1SS

May

- 7 The Hold Café, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LN
- 14 Geek Retreat, 41a Upper Brook Street, Ipswich IP4 1DU – Celebrating World Mental Health Week creative activity (optional)
- 21 Fresh Start & Coffee, 29-31 Carr Street, Ipswich IP4 2AD
- 28 The Mix Café, James Hehir Building, University Ave, Ipswich IP3 0BW

Travel & Transport 16+

There are many resources and tools available for young people to enable them to travel to their education providers independently. Please see below the list of Suffolk services available.

- [SENDIASS – Easy-read Information Leaflet](#)
- [Suffolk On Board – Travel Training](#)
- [Suffolk Local Offer – Travel & Transport](#)
- [GOV UK – Post 16 Transport Statutory Guidance](#)

Depending on eligibility, a young person may also be entitled to a disabled person's free travel bus pass. For more information, criteria and how to apply, please click [here](#)

SENDIASS

Suffolk SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service) is a confidential and impartial information, advice and support service on issues related to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). It is free, easy to access and confidential. They can help children, parents and young people take part in decisions that affect their lives.

They offer information, advice and support to:

- Children and young people (up to 25 years) with SEND
- Parents and carers of children with SEND
- Practitioners (who might support children, young people or parents to access our service)

You can find a list of the SENDIASS online sessions [here](#)

All of the SENDIASS workshops can be viewed after the event on their YouTube channel [here](#)

Special Educational Needs
and Disability Information,
Advice & Support Service

sendiass
in Suffolk

Important notice - current response times

Due to a high volume of calls it is taking us a little longer than we'd like to respond to requests for information and advice.

(currently around 7 working days).



Thank-you for your patience. We are working through the requests in order. In the meantime, you may find the answer to some of your questions online:

www.suffolksendiass.co.uk



Also see above post for information about national organisations that might be able to help.

Important notice - current response times

Special Educational Needs
and Disability Information,
Advice & Support Service

sendiass



Access arrangements for summer exams

Some students with SEN and/or disability may qualify for adjustments with exams. These are known as 'access arrangements'.

Not all of these need to be formally requested by the school but many do, in the spring term. We have information to help you discuss your child's needs with the school SENCo.

Special Educational Needs
and Disability Information,
Advice & Support Service

Click the image for more information

sendiass



Parent support programmes for those caring for a neurodivergent child

TIME OUT FOR ASD
FOR THOSE PARENTING
AUTISTIC CHILDREN
UNDER 11
(CARE FOR THE FAMILY)

TEEN LIFE
FOR THOSE PARENTING
AUTISTIC YOUNG
PEOPLE AGED 10 TO 16
(NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY)

TIME OUT FOR ADHD
FOR THOSE PARENTING
CHILDREN UNDER 11
WITH ADHD
(CARE FOR THE FAMILY)

To find out more information visit
www.suffolkfamilycarers.org/who-do-we-support/parent-carers/neurodevelopmental-differences-project/



contact

Contact are a charity that offer a range of services to support families with disabled children. They give information and advice, run a variety of workshops, provide 1:1 telephone appointments for parent carers needing emotional support and more.

You can find out more about the services they provide [here](#)

Their workshop calendar can be viewed [here](#)

Contact have also launched a free helpful guide which is an all-in-one book full of the information and help you need to enjoy family life.

You can order a copy [here](#)

What is a Health Passport?



The health and care passport is designed to be a quick and easy way to give health and social care professionals more information about your child, to help them provide right care and treatment. It should help them to understand what reasonable adjustments they should make for you and how to communicate effectively so their voice is always heard.

This can include information about your child's needs, what treatments they're receiving and from which different professionals.

The passport is also useful in explaining what might upset your child, how they express themselves, routines they follow and how to tell if they're in pain. You can bring this to GP or hospital appointments.

Download a hospital passport template on the Mencap website [here](#)

More support from Contact on appointment tips can be accessed [here](#)

Home Library Service

If you or someone you know can't make it to the library, Suffolk's Home Library Service can deliver titles to homes and care homes. If health or mobility problems are preventing you or someone you know from visiting a library branch or mobile library, our Home Library Service volunteers are here to help. The service is free and available from most libraries.

Their volunteers visit you in your home to discuss which books you are interested in, including audiobooks. You can tell them about your favourite authors, genres or non-fiction subjects, and they will choose a selection of books and order them from the library on your behalf. They then collect the books from the library and deliver them to your door and return any books you've finished.

Many titles in their catalogue are also available in Large Print and audiobook form for those who are visually impaired.

All our Home Library Service volunteers undergo an enhanced DBS check.

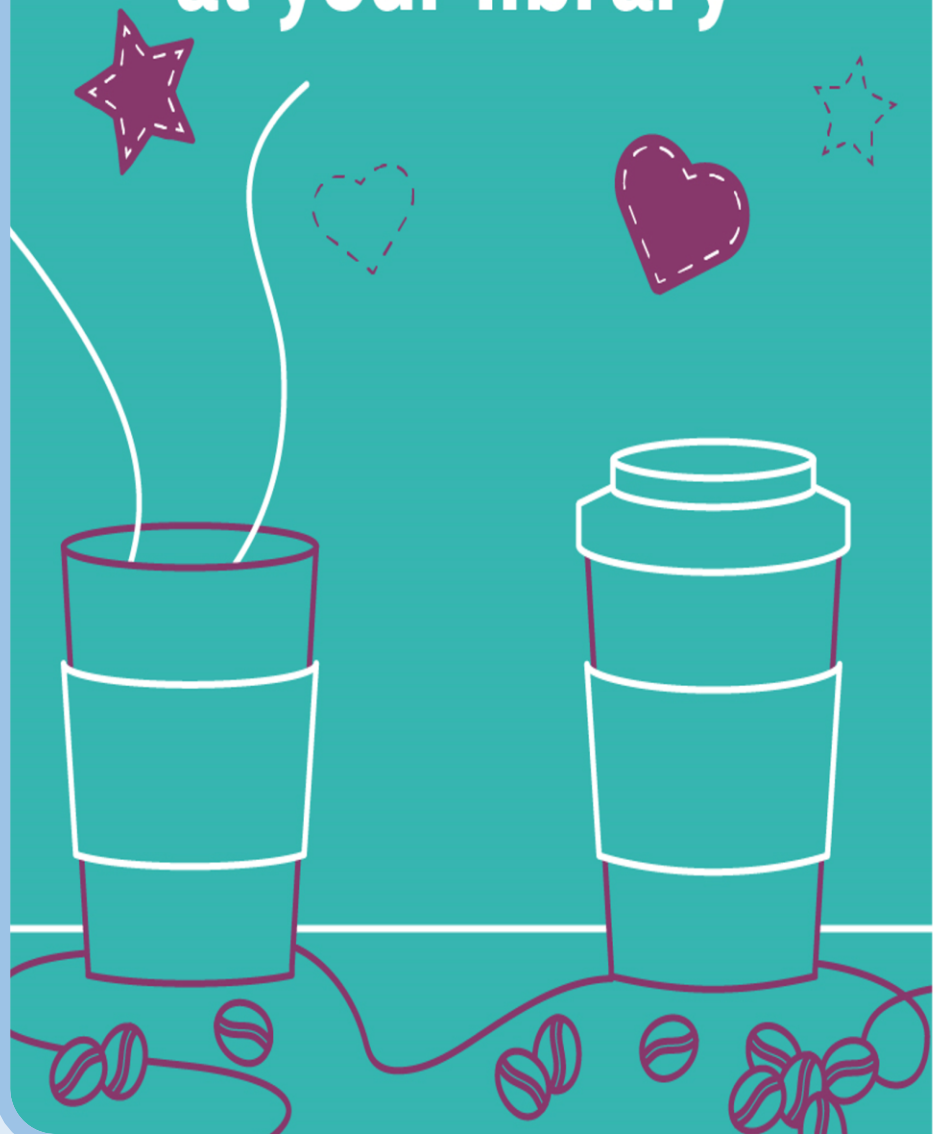
If you think this might be right for you, you can visit their website [here](#)

**SUFFOLK
LIBRARIES**

Contact your local library [here](#)

Email: hls@suffolklibraries.co.uk

Enjoy a free hot drink at your library



Anyone is welcome to visit a Suffolk Library to find help and support. They have always been warm spaces where you can come and relax with no expectation to spend money or join in with activities. Their staff are available if you need to speak to someone and be signposted to other resources. The libraries offer free WiFi and computer access, free period products, free events and activities for all ages, and free books, including our extensive eLibrary services.

During these cold months, you can also visit the library to:

- Enjoy a free hot drink
- Pick up some warm clothes
- Charge your devices
- Collect free essential items

Different services will be available at different libraries depending on space and staff capacity. We advise you to contact [your local library](#) to see what support will be available to you.

**SUFFOLK
LIBRARIES**

PACT offer non-clinical peer-led support and resources for parents and carers. Their vision is to reach parents and carers across Suffolk who are caring for a child or young person with mental health issues. They offer support (face to face meetups, online, and our outreach 1:1 service), training (including Youth Mental Health First Aid and parent guided CBT) and tools/resources to help both with a parent/carers wellbeing and via them, their child/young person too.



You can contact PACT at parentsandcarerstogether@gmail.com



**"Supporting you,
supporting your child"**

Suffolk Support for parents and carers of children and young people with mental health issues

www.parentsandcarerstogether.uk

Helpline number (07856) 038799 (not 24/7)

Support group for parents and carers of children and young people with mental health issues

 **@pactenquiries**

 **/parentsandcarerstogether/**

#LiftLoudForDanny Groups

Monday Drop ins 10.30am to 12.30pm, pop along for as little or long as you like for any of our sessions.

1st Monday of the Month, Time for You for those struggling with their mental health and/or their carers. Mini mindfulness with Stacey, cuppa and chat.

2nd Monday, Heart of the Matter with Stacey Richards, a wellbeing drop-in for those experiencing mental health difficulties or their carers.



3rd Monday, PACT for parents/carers of young people 0-25 who may be struggling with their wellbeing.



4th Monday, Time for You for those who may be struggling with their mental health and/or their carers. Mini mindfulness with Stacey, cuppa and chat.

Thursday Night Drop In 7.30 until 9pm, Cuppa and chat for those who experience mental health issues, loneliness or isolation. Somewhere to support each other through kindness, empathy and understanding. Table top activities/puzzles/games.

1st Tuesday SEND Drop in 10 until 12 for parents or young people 16+ who may need support with Special Educational Needs or just join others who understand for a cuppa and chat. Third Tuesday Zoom online, contact us for details.

You will find us at Push Forward, 113-114 High Street, Lowestoft, NR32 1HN



Help and advice



Find information on:

- financial support
- practical support
- health and wellbeing
- work and career



Friends of **S.E.N.D**

Lowestoft Library

Every Saturday 9:00 - 10:00

Browsing - Sensory Play - Chat
Exclusive to S.E.N.D Families

22nd March & 3rd May



Warm Spaces

A Suffolk charity have created a map of warm spaces in Suffolk to support families and individuals that may be struggling with the cost-of-living crisis and loneliness in winter months.

To view the map, click [here](#)



Working towards a brighter future for Suffolk's children and young people

🏠 Suffolk Parent Carer Forum, Brightspace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH
☎ 01473 760933 ✉ info@suffolkpcf.co.uk 🌐 www.suffolkpcf.co.uk