

# Suffolk Parent Carer Forum

## Newsletter April 2025



# Welcome

Welcome to the April end of 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 End of Term Closure

We will be closed from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April and return on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April. All the SPCF team are parent carers, and this enables us to meet our caring responsibilities.



# Complaints

Parents and carers have recently told us that they Suffolk County Councils complaints process has deteriorated further. Complaints are not being fully addressed, are neither upheld or not upheld, there's been a lack of apologies and learning not taken from situations to prevent them happening again.

SPCF have requested that this is urgently brought to the Improvement Board.

Did you know you can view outcomes to complaints taken to the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman by signing up here - <https://www.lgo.org.uk/decisions>

## 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](#)

## WHAT WE NEED

Communication

Quality

Coproduction

Support, not fines

No cliff edges

Timeliness / Less waiting

Support whilst waiting

Suitable school places

Fair and compassionate complaints procedure

Easy to find information

## OUR VOICES HEARD





# Coproduction Charter

At the end of February, SPCF co-hosted a coproduction workshop for our members and professionals within this local area partnership. This was held as part of the Department for Education (DfE) Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) work.

The event was well attended and has set the scene for building a coproduction charter in Suffolk. It is hoped that coproduction will be better understood going forward.





# Suffolk Parent Carer Forum



## SAVE THE DATE

## EAST OPEN FORUM EVENT

An opportunity for parents and carers to meet professionals and find out about services, voluntary and support groups.

### **Martlesham Community Hall**

Felixstowe Road, Martlesham, Woodbridge IP12 4PB

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May**

**10:30AM – 1:30PM**

**More information to follow nearer the time**

📞 01473 760933

✉ info@suffolkpcf.co.uk

🌐 www.suffolkpcf.co.uk



**FACEBOOK.COM/SUFFOLKPCF**

# Suffolk Parent Carer Forum



## SAVE THE DATE

## WEST OPEN FORUM EVENT

An opportunity for parents and carers to meet professionals and find out about services, voluntary and support groups.

**Bury St. Edmunds**  
**Abbeycroft Leisure Centre**

Beetons Way IP33 3TT

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June**

**10:30AM – 1:30PM**

**More information to follow nearer the time**

☎ 01473 760933

✉ [info@suffolkpcf.co.uk](mailto:info@suffolkpcf.co.uk)

🌐 [www.suffolkpcf.co.uk](http://www.suffolkpcf.co.uk)



**FACEBOOK.COM/SUFFOLKPCF**



# Travel Training

SPCF are pleased to have been involved with the development of the new travel training resources. These resources don't take away from the original offer but provide tools to support your child or young person to be able to travel independently, should it be appropriate.

Click the picture below to view the website.

**Independent**  
Travel Toolkit



## Teaching young people to travel independently

The Independent Travel Toolkit helps you plan trips, use public transport safely, and travel confidently in Suffolk.

Explore Suffolk with confidence.  
**[Independenttraveltoolkit.com](https://independenttraveltoolkit.com)**





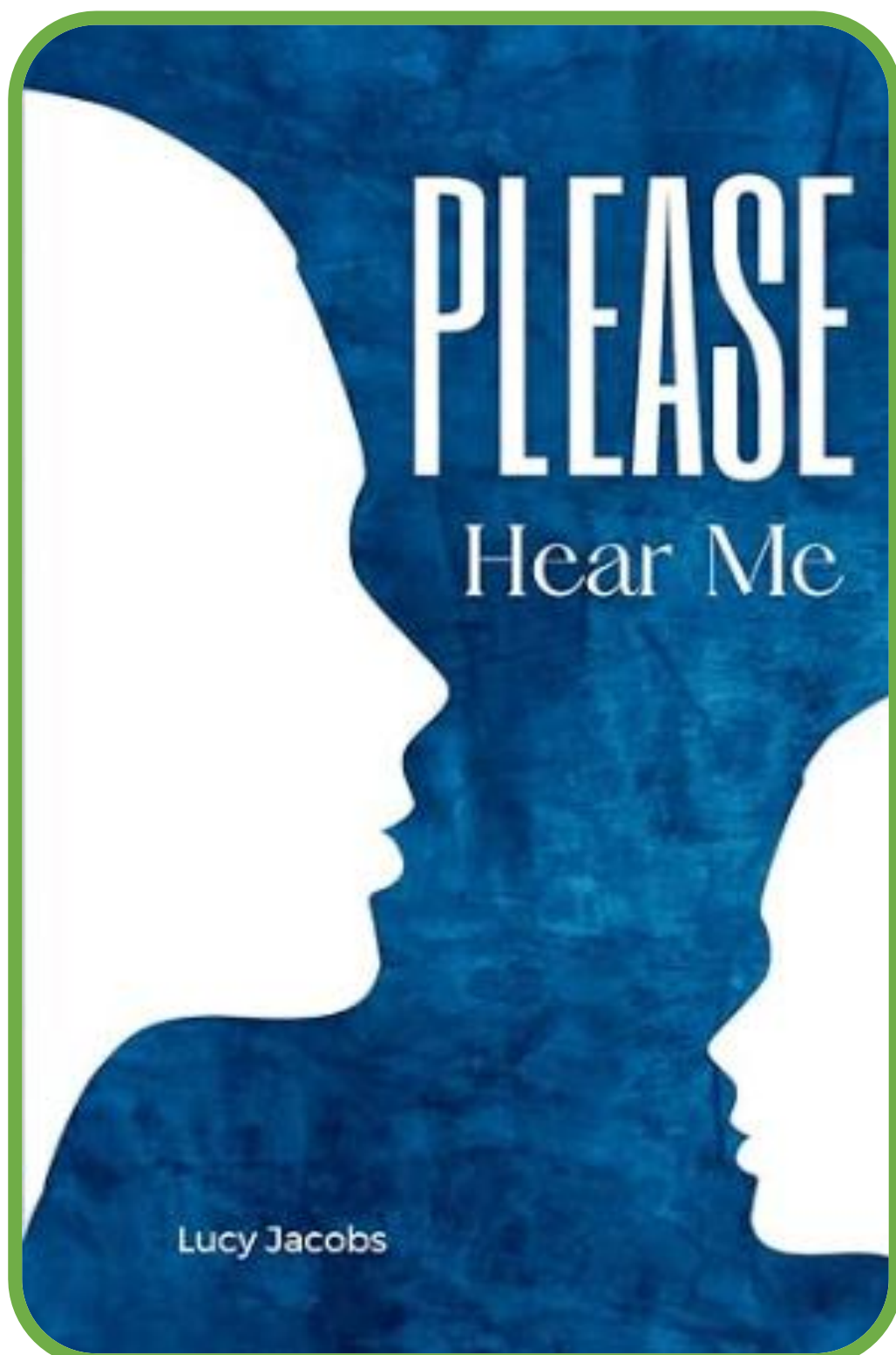
# **Please Hear Us: The Collective Voice of SEND Families in Suffolk**

"Please Hear Us" is compiled by author Lucy Jacobs, a Suffolk based SEND parent who also wrote "Please Hear Me".

This book offers a selection of real, true-life experiences, in the style of poems, letters, written passages and artwork, shared by parents, carers, family members, young people and children living in Suffolk who are affected by SEND and are experiencing the cold, hard impact of Suffolk's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) systems, policies and procedures. Systems and procedures that are currently under scrutiny.

"Please Hear Us " includes a poem written by our Chair, Claire Smith.

You can find Lucy's books on Amazon by clicking the images below.





# Childhood Neurodivergence Parent/Carer Workshops

NHS

Norfolk and Suffolk  
NHS Foundation Trust

Free Upcoming Virtual workshops on Childhood Neurodivergence:

- Understanding and Supporting Sensory Needs
- Supporting planning, organising and remembering
- Supporting your child/young person with low mood
- Understanding and supporting eating difficulties

And more!

Pre-recorded Workshops and Resources

- Childhood Neurodiversity: What you need to know as a parent/carer
- Supporting social relationships
- Supporting your child/young person's education
- Supporting anxiety



Access here: <https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/autism-adhd-and-neurodevelopment/neurodiversity-online-parentcarer-workshops>

## SPCF Website

We are pleased to share that we have created a new 'parent and carer workshops' section on our website, signposting to online sessions, webinars and videos designed by Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and mental health support services in Suffolk, covering topics that parents and carers may find helpful.



Providers include SENDIASS, West Suffolk Neurodevelopmental Support Service and Contact.

You can visit the parent and carer section of our website [here](#)



# Opt-in for school or post-16 travel

## Who needs to opt-in

(You must opt-in each school year)

- ✓ New pupils
- ✓ Returning pupils
- ✓ Post-16 students

## Opt-in deadline

- ⚠ Applications must be received by 31 May 2024



Funded by  
UK Government

# Multiply SUFFOLK



Multiply Suffolk is here to deliver bespoke coaching, training, and mentoring to support you into learning and employment across Suffolk. Multiply Suffolk will provide opportunities for you to improve your knowledge, understanding and use of maths in daily life: at home, in learning and in work.

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Age 19+
- Live in a Suffolk postcode area
- Does not hold a Level 2 qualification or above in numeracy (GCSE or Functional Skills)

### The Multiply Suffolk team can:

- **Support** to engage with education, employment and training
- **Improve** numeracy, money management and budgeting skills
- **Encourage** career progression whilst in or out of employment
- **Promote** independence, choice and wellbeing
- **Empower** you to remove barriers to employment and gain a numeracy qualification



# Home Education Group



## Tuesday 2-3pm

Term Time only

Starting after the christmas holidays , Tuesday 9th January



**Join other home educator families for storytime, crafts, Lego and board games at Gainsborough Community Library**

## Suffolk Libraries Home Education

Suffolk Libraries have resources and advice available online for home educators that you can find [here](#)

## Home Educator Library Card

They also offer a library card for home educators, that allows you to borrow up to 20 books for 12 weeks at a time, to support you to teach your children at home.

For more information and to apply, visit your local library.

## Framlingham Home Education Group

Click [here](#) for information of the Home Education meet and share group, suitable for 5–10-year-olds.

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](http://www.westsuffolkhive.org.uk/homeeducation)

  @westsuffolkhive



## 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



## 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 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*

# Half Term Activities

We have put together a list of free resources, ideas and activities that can be done indoors and outside during the end of term break. All resources are from providers like Crayola, Hobbycraft and Baker Ross. Click the words to view the links.



**Craft Ideas**  
**Colouring Pages**

**Indoor Activity Ideas**  
**Home Made Bird Feeders**

**Outdoor Activity Ideas**







# PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) EASTER HOLIDAYS 2025

[moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free](https://moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free)



## **BURGER KING**

From Monday 7th - Sunday 20th April 2025, Kids Eat Free with every adult meal, via the app.

## **BILLS**

Kids eat free Mondays - Fridays, from Monday 7th - Friday 25th April 2025.

## **FARMHOUSE INNS**

2 kids eat FREE with one paying adult, Monday 7th - Friday 25th of April. Sign Up Required

## **TGI FRIDAYS**

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

## **ZIZZI**

Sunday 6th - Sunday 27th April 2025 kids eat free with every adult main. (excludes Saturdays)

## **CAFE EIGHTY NINE @ THE RANGE**

Kids eat free Sat 5th April - Mon 21st April 2025

## **YO! SUSHI**

Kids eat free all day (monday - friday) during all school holidays, when dining with an adult

## **SIZZLING PUBS**

Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm, kids eat for £1.

## **ASDA**

Kids eat for £1 every, with no adult spend.

## **TRAVELODGE & PREMIER INN**

2 kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast

## **GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS**

Kids under 8 eat FREE all day, every day

## **WHITBREAD INNS**

2 kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast

## **BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE**

2 kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast

## **IKEA**

Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am

## **PREZZO**

Kids receive a free, 3 course kids meal, everyday at Prezzo between 31st March - 27th April 2025

## **COCONUT TREE**

One child (under 10) eats free every day, 12pm - 6pm from Monday 7th - Sunday 27th April 2025

## **PIZZA HUT**

Kids eat free buffet from Monday 7th - Sunday 27th April, after 3pm daily with a £10 spend

## **PRETO**

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

## **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

## **MORRISONS**

Kids Eat FREE all day, every day with a £5 spend

## **LAS IGUANAS**

Kids under 12 eat FREE with 'My Las Iguanas' App

## **TABLE TABLE**

2 Kids Eat free breakfast daily with 1 paying adult!

## **PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM**

Kids eat FREE with every £4 spend after 3pm

## **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.



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](#)

## AU Update

“A message for anyone who has received a NEW Prepaid Card. We are receiving calls from parents querying why there are no funds in the account. Payments will be made from April 2025. A text message will be sent to let you know when a payment has been made to your Prepaid Card.”



## *Easter 2025* Activity Guide





# 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](mailto:localoffer@suffolk.gov.uk)  
[www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk)

## Youth Sailing School

For neurodivergent young people ages 11 to 18 who are NEET, on a part time timetable or home educated

**Levington Marina, Ipswich**

**Wednesday mornings  
Starting 30th April**

**Funded by the Crane Fund**

**Very limited spaces**

**If your child is on role we do require  
the educational establishments  
consent for them to attend**

**To indicate an expression of interest please email  
[michelle.jones@suffolkfamilycarers.org](mailto:michelle.jones@suffolkfamilycarers.org)**



# 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.

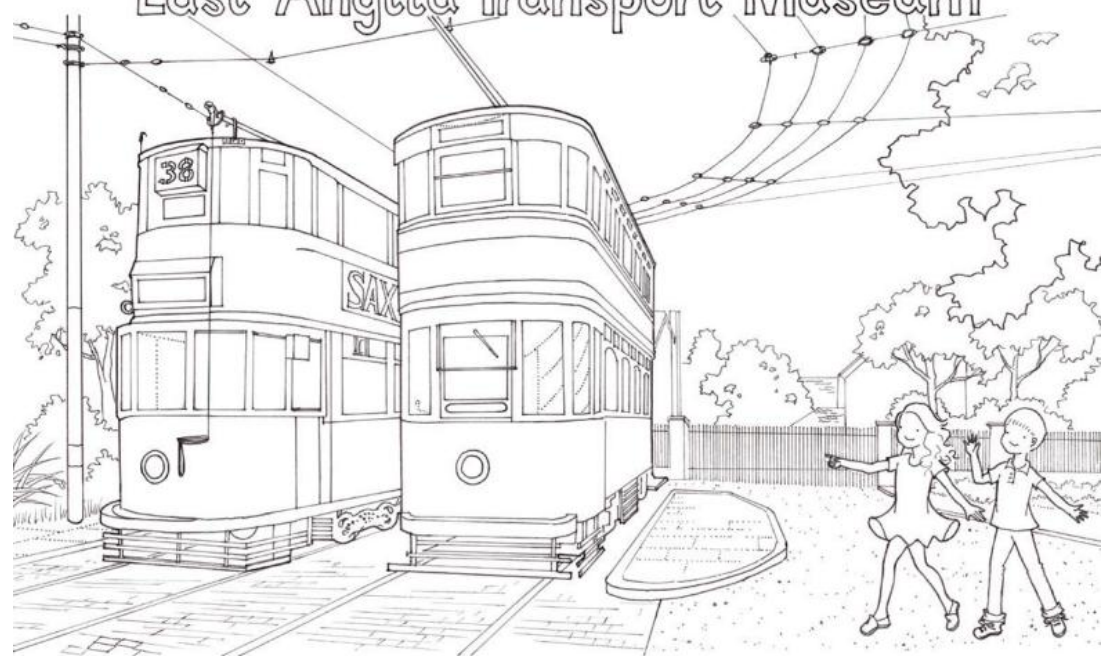
## Framlingham Castle



 Alex and Rosie were excited to visit Framlingham Castle. 

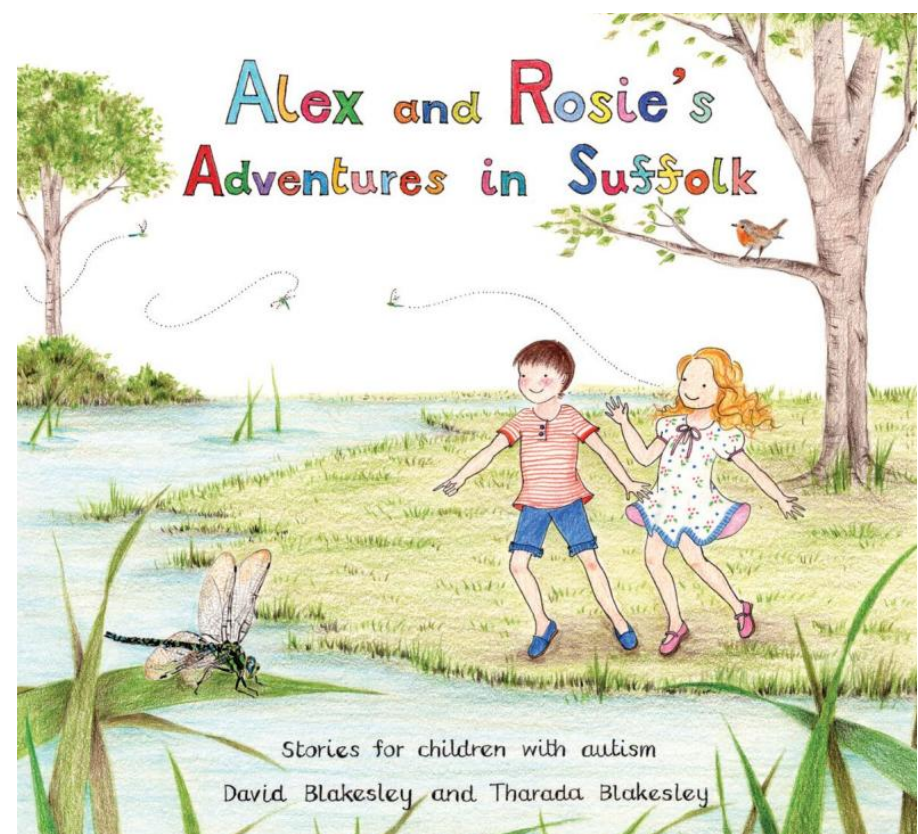
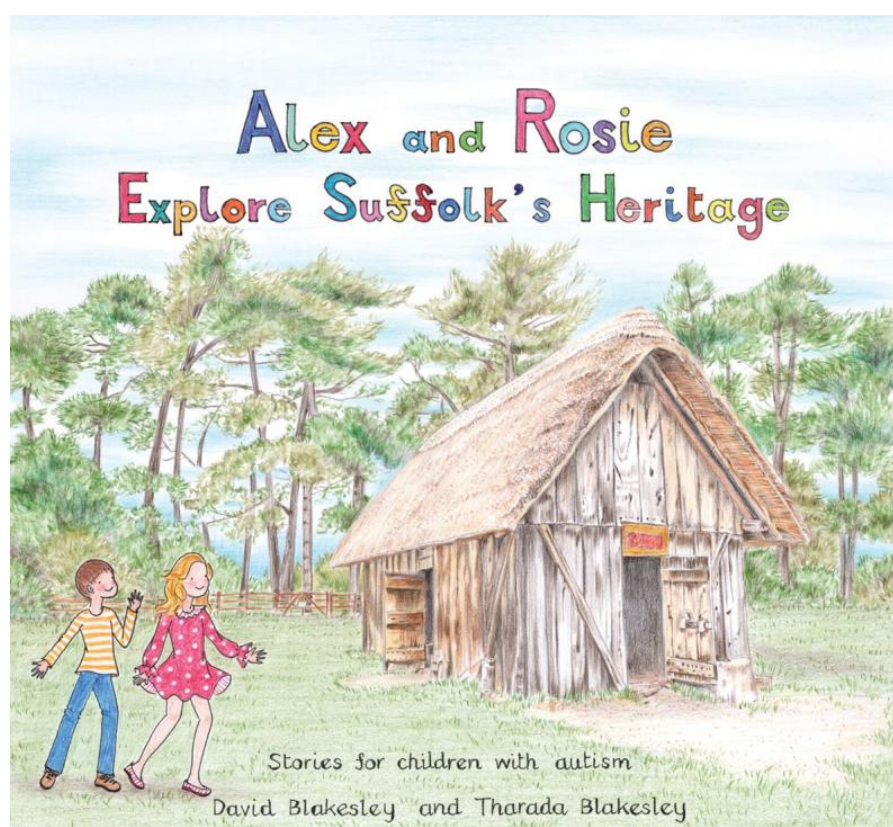
 The castle walls were very tall. 

## 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](#)





# Suffolk User Forum

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is an independent mental health user led involvement, peer support and advocacy organisation. Listening and giving people a voice is central to their work. Their support is designed around people's individual needs, choices, and what matters to them. They promote the mentoring value of lived experience through meaningful coproduction and intervention-based support.

## They Provide

**Advocacy Together** – helping people at a time of mental health crisis to have their voice heard through inpatient mental health, non-statutory, peer-led advocacy, and support for self-advocacy.

**Healthy Together peer support** – helping people living with severe mental illness (SMI) through peer support to achieve personal identified healthcare goals following annual SMI health checks.

**Peer telephone support** – providing support to increase people's mental health and wellbeing, building self-confidence and resilience, promoting connection, communities and reducing isolation.

**Coproduction for suicide prevention** – enabling the lived experience of suicidal feelings and bereavement by suicide to influence strategic plans and practice for suicide prevention and support. By promoting the coproduced crisis care model LISTEN and #kindesscounts promotional campaign, we are changing the language for suicide prevention, building partnerships and support networks.

**Signposting for support** – providing information to navigate and access mental health and community support networks, helping people get the support they need, when they need it.

To find out more about Suffolk User Forum, please click the image below.





# Carers Allowance Increase

Starting from the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025, Carer's Allowance in the UK will increase by 1.7%. This means the weekly payment will rise from £81.90 to £83.30.

In addition to this increase, the earnings threshold for Carer's Allowance eligibility will also rise. The current threshold, which is £151 per week, will be increased to £196 per week. This change means that carers can earn up to £2,340 more annually without their allowance being affected.

For official information on the Carers Allowance benefit please visit the GOV UK website [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



**April is**

# Autism Acceptance month

## Fully funded activities



**Friendship Club**

**2nd & 16th  
April 2025**

**Claydon**

**Science Centre**

**10th April 2025**

**10am to 12noon**

**Claydon**

**Slime making**

**7th April 2025**

**10.30am to  
12noon**

**Claydon**

**Soft Play Session**

**7th April 2025**

**10am to 12noon**

**Ipswich**

To find out more visit our website

[www.suffolkfamilycarers.org/who-do-we-support/parent-carers/parent-carer-events/](http://www.suffolkfamilycarers.org/who-do-we-support/parent-carers/parent-carer-events/)



**April is**

# Autism Acceptance month

## Fully funded activities



**Coffee, Craft &  
Chat for parent  
carers**

**28th April 2025**

**10.30am to 12noon**

**Claydon**

**Art Group for  
ND Teens**

**1st April 2025**

**4.30pm to 6pm**

**Claydon**

**Low sensory  
swimming**

**26th April 2025**

**5.30pm to 6.30pm**

**Ipswich**

Visit the website for booking and further information

[www.suffolkfamilycarers.org/who-do-we-support/parent-carers/parent-carer-events/](http://www.suffolkfamilycarers.org/who-do-we-support/parent-carers/parent-carer-events/)

Activities funded through The Crane Fund



# 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](#)



**The helpful  
podcast for  
families with  
disabled children**







# Suffolk Advocacy Service

Suffolk Advocacy Service is a support provider that offers advocacy to individuals.

The partnership which includes PohWER, Suffolk Family Carers, Ace Anglia and Suffolk User Forum help people to express their views, make informed decisions, and have their voices heard, especially when they might face barriers in doing so themselves.

This could include individuals with disabilities, mental health issues, older adults, or anyone who might need assistance navigating complex systems or decisions.

To find out more information and explore the range of support available click [here](#)

## Carers Advocacy



## Children and Young Persons Advocacy Service



## Community Advocacy





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](mailto: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](http://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







## **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](https://accessct.org)**



# 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

**3<sup>rd</sup> May**



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](mailto:info@suffolkpcf.co.uk) 🌐 [www.suffolkpcf.co.uk](http://www.suffolkpcf.co.uk)