



Parents *Connected*



May 2025

INSIDE:

- Body Doubling
- Choosing the Right School
- Supporting Sibling Carers
- and much more...

INTRODUCING...



Michelle Jones is a Project Manager, she is also a parent of three adult children one of which received an autism diagnosis at the age of 19. Michelle has previously worked as a nurse, health visitor and special needs teacher and enjoys being able to utilise her diverse range of lived and learned experience to support families.



Angela is a Family Advisor she has two adult sons, She has previously worked in secondary schools with SEND children, She has also been a foster carer which led to her being a Mockingbird Hub carer where she supported families who had children in care. She has lots of experience working with children with SEND.



Michelle is a Family Advisor, she is Mum to two teenage boys. Michelle's eldest son received an autism diagnosis when he was 6. Now in his late teens they are currently navigating together the transition to college. Alongside her lived experience, she has worked in a primary school and various agencies in Suffolk supporting children, young people, and families.



Robert is a Parent Carer Family Worker. He is an autistic ADHD adult and a parent to three children with a range of support needs, including autism with demand avoidance traits, ADHD, learning disabilities, and a physical disability. With years of lived experience, Robert understands the realities families face and is passionate about equipping parents with the knowledge, strategies, and confidence to support their children and navigate systems around them.



Sheree is a ND Duty Worker. She also works as a Young Carers advisor supporting families whose children have an array of additional needs.



CRAFT, COFFEE AND CHAT

for Parent Carers

This informal group for parent carers hosted by one of our volunteers, Elisa, will take place usually once a month term time.

You will be provided with the equipment and resources needed for the crafts, activities will vary each month and be based on participant's feedback and interests.

Once a month from 10.30am - 12noon
The View - A Space for Carers, Claydon, Ipswich

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES

Your local libraries stock a range of books about Autism and ADHD. You can search the online catalogue or look at the recommendations list. If the book isn't in your nearest library, or is out on loan, you can request it. It is also worth talking to the library service assistants about any future titles you would like to see added to the library catalogue.



CHILDHOOD NEURODIVERSITY PARENT/CARER WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Neurodiversity means that across the population there is variation in people's brains. Having people in society who see the world differently and have unique skills is an important part of life to be celebrated. The term "neurodivergent" refers to people whose brains work differently to the typical cultural standards. Neurodivergence includes conditions that people are born with including autism, ADHD, learning disability and learning disorders.

This programme of free virtual workshops for parents and carers will explore nurturing the unique strengths of neurodivergent children and young people and provide advice on how to support them with the challenges they face. Any parent or carer is welcome to join regardless of whether their child has a diagnosis. The workshops are live on Zoom and are 75 minutes long. Recordings of the workshops and resource packs will be sent after the live event to everyone who has registered.

TO BOOK A WORKSHOP



TIME OUT FOR PARENTS ADHD

Time Out courses are very informal and will provide plenty of time for you to talk to other parent carers.

These courses are suitable for parent carers who have a child with ADHD who is under the age of 11, or working at a primary developmental age. Your child does not need a diagnosis for you to attend this course. The course is run over 4 consecutive weeks, starting on Thursday 5th June.

We will cover, what ADHD is, attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Starting Thursday 5th June from 10am - 12.30pm
The View - A Space for Carers, Claydon, Ipswich

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

BODY DOUBLING

This article was written by Monica Jones, she is a doctoral researcher at the Centre for Autism and Theology at the University of Aberdeen. She was brought up in Suffolk, attending Northgate High School Ipswich and Colchester 6th Form, before completing her undergraduate degree at Cardiff University and her Masters at Durham University. Monica received her autism diagnosis after her first year at University, having spent her childhood as an expert masker. You can find out more about the research that is happening at Aberdeen University [here](#).

Body doubling is quite simple in its concept, and the name really explains all there is to it. The process requires finding another 'body' (person), and then engaging in an activity now there are 'double' the bodies in your space (though this space can be virtual). Through this process of doubling those who struggle with executive function, starting tasks, or states of transition, can find it possible to complete tasks.

How body doubling looks can be quite different for different people; for me, I don't require my body double to do the same task as me to be helpful, but others may find that body doubling only works when it is truly doubling. There exist online communities where you can join body doubling calls with strangers, and some might find this helpful, but for me, this is nowhere near as effective as my body double being someone I know. However, that person doesn't need to be in the room with me, it can be enough to be on a phone call.

So how does body doubling work? In my opinion, a significant portion of this process relies on accountability, though this can be conscious or unconscious accountability. For most people, body doubling works best when you tell your body double what it is you're aiming to do, and even if they aren't checking in on you, you have an awareness that they are holding you accountable. However, there can be an unconscious form of accountability too, where you don't tell your body double that you are using them as such, but simply tell yourself that whilst you're on the phone to them, or whilst they're in the room with them, you're going to complete a specific task.

Body doubling also helps to keep your mind on one task, which is particularly helpful when you have a task you don't want to complete, and so might be inclined to distract yourself. The acknowledgement that someone else is invested in what I am doing is, for me, incredibly useful in helping me complete things I don't enjoy. Chief among these for example is writing job applications, the last three or four jobs I have applied for have required being on a phone call with a body double to write my application. I didn't speak on this call, my body double isn't assisting me with the work, but by being there they help me enter into a state of focus, and keep me accountable to



complete a task I find difficult.

Body doubling is something you can engage in quite unconsciously, you don't always need to be asking someone 'Can I body double with you?'

Going to the coffee shop to work with someone is a form of body doubling. Ringing a family member and telling yourself that whilst you're on the phone you're going to empty the dishwasher is a form of body doubling. Even though you haven't told your body double that you're using them in that way. So if you are seeking to help the kind of people that body doubling would benefit, the best way to do so is to make yourself available to people. We often shy away from sharing the mundane parts of our lives with each other, we feel it would be too boring to invite a friend to come with us while we're doing errands. We try to clean the house before the friend arrives, rather than inviting them into a slightly messy space and tidying whilst they're there. Particularly for those with autism or social anxiety, it can be difficult to initiate behaviour that you haven't seen demonstrated to you. So my suggestion is, even if you don't feel you need a body double, invite someone else to be yours so that they feel comfortable enough to invite you to be theirs.



Ask The Advisor

Free 10 minute advice slots for parent carers

Whether it's a specific behaviour, a tricky transition, or just figuring out how to get five minutes to yourself.

This is your space to ask. Submit a question in advance and book a quick, 10-minute slot to get honest, practical advice from someone who gets it.

Short chats.
Real support.
Zero waffle.

How do I make
transitions
easier?

How do I
stop the
yelling?

How can I help
my child unwind
at night?

When?

Launching 7th May

Wednesdays (fortnightly) | 12–1pm

Thursdays (fortnightly) | 7–8pm

Suffolk Family Carers
Living Fuller Lives

Book a slot via our website
Ask your question
Feel a bit more human

TIME OUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR PARENTS



4-week Support Programmes for those caring for an autistic child or child with ADHD

Both courses provide an opportunity for you to support and encourage

others, helping you share feelings and experiences, and come up with solutions to problems on the basis of what works – not what's meant to work!

Time Out courses are very informal and provide plenty of time for you to talk to other parent carers. Choose from the ASD or ADHD course.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST



A SPACE FOR PARENTS

A Space for Parents is a section on the Suffolk Family Carer website which is set aside for parent carers. We regularly add articles to the site to provide information, advice, support and resources for parent carers.

We are aiming to add a new article each month so do take a look to see if there is anything that might be supportive to you.

VISIT NOW





LOW SENSORY FAMILY FUN SWIM SESSION

Join other SEND families at Fore Street Swimming Pool, Ipswich for a low sensory swim session.

The pool will only be open to families registered on these sessions and is limited to 30 attendees.

Booking is only available a week in advance.

BOOK NOW

Please note: these sessions are only available for families registered with Suffolk Family Carers who have an under 18 with SEND

FOLLOW US

As well as the main Suffolk Family Carers social profiles, there are also specific pages for Parent Carers where we share relevant resources and information. To keep up to date with our events, resources and more, make sure you follow A Space for Parents on Instagram and Facebook.



SIBLING CARERS - PARENT SUPPORT

Juggling time fairly with your children is hard, here are some suggestions below on how to continue supporting your child who is a sibling carer

Sibling to Sibling support

Most of the time young carers want to help their siblings but they don't know how



Use the 'My Sibling & Me' sheet to help work together on some of the worries

Quality time

Young Carers often say they don't want to burden their parents with extra worries.

Organising one to one time to check in with them to hear about their day or worries can make all the difference. Perhaps once a week you could both suggest an activity you can do together.

Condition Glossary

Child friendly explanations are a conscious part of ensuring children are free from worry and concern. If your child is curious or beginning to show an understanding or questioning their sibling's condition, this may be a sign they are worried and are wanting to know more, you may wish to sit with them and explain what their sibling(s) have and how to support them. Click the green tab below for condition specific pointers

[Click Here](#)

Jargon Buster

Words or professional roles may be shortened when referring to services or you may hear terms like 'key worker' or 'paediatrician'. Click below to see what those terms mean:

[Click Here](#)

Further support

Speak to a young carers advisor

Speak to your child's education provision and/ or GP

Find your local carer service

[Click Here](#)

MY SIBLING & ME

Available to Download

Use this section to write about you and your sibling, this may include things that you like to do together, your favourite hobbies or things you are both good at

My Siblings condition:

Write your siblings condition in here

How I can support them

How do you help your sibling?
Write things which you would be comfortable and happy to help them with

How to help myself:

Sometimes it will be difficult to help your sibling they may not want your help, what can you do to for yourself instead?

i.e. Read a book, play a game, see your friends or go for a walk

Who can support me:

Write friends & family or trusted adults who you can talk to if you're worried

Things I worry about or find difficult about my sibling:

"I don't like it when my sibling throws things"

"I worry when they have to go to hospital"

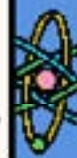
"I worry about them when I am at school"

How to deal with this:

"I can give them space to calm down"

"I can write in my journal or talk to ____"

"I can speak to one of my trusted adults"





TEEN LIFE

Parent Support Programme

Teen Life is a 6-week parent support programme which is accredited by the National Autistic Society.

It is suitable for parents and carers of for a young person between the ages of 10 and 16 who has a diagnosis of autism or is awaiting assessment.

The course is for parents and carers and we would encourage you to attend the course with another adult who carers for your child regularly, although this is not compulsory.

Starting Friday 6th June from 10am - 12.30pm
The View - A Space for Carers, Claydon, Ipswich

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

UPDATE ON PARENT CARER DROP INS

All carers of children and young people with SEND or who are Neurodivergent are welcome at our drop ins (except for Ipswich central which is ND only). Drop ins are predominately for peer support and an opportunity to build relationships with other parents. We believe that those with lived experience have much to offer in terms of advice. There will be a Family Advisor available during the session and sometimes also a volunteer.

If you would like specific advice from the Advisor then this will be possible within the session, however in busy sessions we may need to restrict the time you have to speak with them to 10 minutes to ensure all those who need advice receive it. If we don't run a drop-in in your area, please refer to the comprehensive list of drop in's run across the county by other organisations where you can also seek peer support and advice.

PARENT CARER DROP-INS

Parent Carer Drop ins for those caring for a child with additional needs. An opportunity for peer support and advice from a Family Worker from Suffolk Family Carers.

All Drop ins' are Term Time Only!

Come along for just for a cuppa, or stay for the whole session, talk it through or just listen, gain peer support and build connections

**The 2nd Tuesday of the month
from 10am to 12noon
@ The View - A Space For Carers, Claydon**

CHECK OUT THE FULL DETAILS HERE

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

We hold regular workshops and activities for parent carers as well as the whole family. To be notified about new events that may interest you please register your interest using the button below.

The events include:

- Time Out Support Programmes • Teen Life • Friendship Groups •
- Parent Carer Respite Activities • Whole Family Activities •
- Special Interest Groups • and many more •

REGISTER YOUR
INTEREST HERE





RESTORATIVE YOGA for Parents and Carers

The sessions will help you to learn techniques and exercises which will strengthen your body and mind, enabling you to incorporate self-care

It is suitable for parents and carers of for a young person with SEND.

Tuesday 20th May from 10am - 12.00pm
Scout Hall, Stowmarket

Tuesday 17th June from 10am - 12.00pm
Dumbarton Road Scout Hall, Ipswich

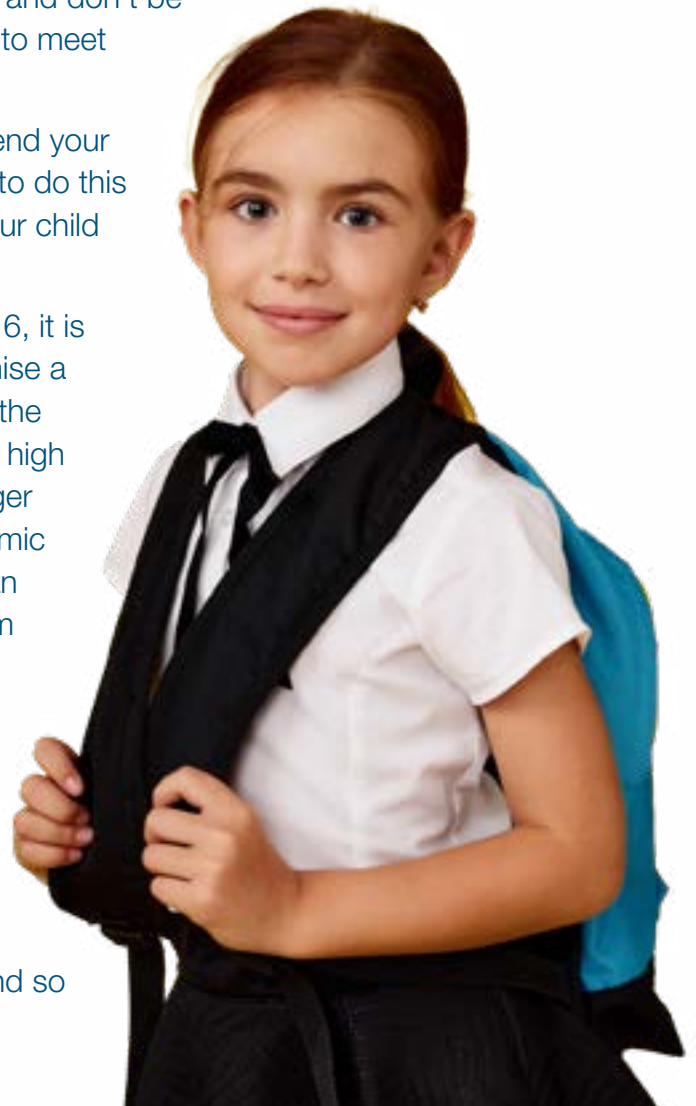
REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

DEAR ADVISER

My child is in Year 5 at school and we are thinking ahead to next October when we have to apply for a place in high school. Myself and my partner are feeling really overwhelmed and don't know where to start and I'm terrified that I will pick the wrong school for him and I'm worried that they may not cope in a mainstream school. What can we do to make an informed choice?

I always feel that this is a really difficult question to answer and I would never tell someone which school to choose because what works for my child may not work for your child. I now have two children in high school both with very different needs. It's important to realise that only you and your child can decide what school is right for them, but there are things you can do to help you choose...

- Look at the schools in your local catchment and surrounding areas, which ones can you get to, if it will add more pressure to your morning routine to drive 20 minutes half an hour to the school of your choice, is it the right one for you?
- Contact the school and see if you can go and visit either by yourself or with your child, a lot of schools now will do SEND tours additional to the open events.
- Contact the SENDCo to discuss your child's needs and don't be afraid to ask questions about how they will be able to meet these needs and what that will look like.
- Once you have an idea of which school you may send your child, take your child to visit the school. It can help to do this after the school day when it is quieter to prevent your child feeling too overwhelmed.
- Once you receive your allocated high school in Year 6, it is important to touch base with the SENDCo to organise a meeting. Yes your primary school will transfer all of the information about your child to the high school, but high schools are receiving a lot of information from a larger number of feeder schools at this point in the academic year. By having a meeting with the SENDCo you can ensure that they have the information that you deem important. It is the perfect opportunity to let them know what your child struggles with, if they mask and so on.
- This sort of meeting can give school a better understanding of how best to support your child whether it is passes to allow them to dodge the busy corridors, take time out of lesson or someone to check in with them throughout the school day and so on.



- Don't be scared to request additional visits and transitions for your child most primary schools will arrange extra transition sessions with their feeder high school if they feel it will be beneficial to the pupil.
- Most of you will have spoken to your child's class teacher in primary school as and when issues arise. In high school your child will see multiple teachers throughout the day it is the job of the SENDCo and their team to ensure the teachers know what your child needs. It is their job to hold the teachers accountable for ensuring your child is supported in their classroom.
- Don't be afraid to get in touch. It's important to remember that communication is the key, it is easier for the SENDCo or school to manage small issues as they arrive rather than waiting for them to escalate in to bigger problems that are more difficult to manage.
- When dealing with the school it is helpful to have any questions written down and remember to approach school in a positive way. Most of us that are fighting our way through the 'SEND Jungle' have had to fight whether that is for an EHCP, and assessment, a diagnosis etc. We as SEND parents we spend a lot of our time in fight mode so it is important to take a moment and switch to the mind-set of 'This is my child and they have these needs how can you support us?' (This can be really difficult to do when you are so used to fighting the system).
- Most importantly speak to your child about their concerns and make their new school aware of these, they may be able to help you and your child feel more comfortable about the change.
- Prepare them during the school holidays take them on the school run, walk it, drive it, and talk through different scenarios so they have thought about what they will do in a certain situation. This will help them to adjust to their new situation.

If your child struggles with change help them to consider the reality of the change. WE often spend a lot of time worrying about things that we have no control over. But taking time to talk about it you can help your child to manage those worries and show them what they can control about the situation, or even show them that change is not always bad and even when it has been bad we are still ok. There are a number of activities that can be used to help, for example the Circle of control – this is where you look at all of the things that you cannot control and write them in the outer circle, then you start to look at all of the things that you can control.

Another activity is the Change Cloud – this can be completed in small groups as well as 1-1. Each person gets a piece of paper or card shaped like a cloud and they are asked to draw or write about a change they have experienced. Once this is done you can ask some reflective questions to help them discuss and think about the changes they have experienced.

To find out more about choosing the right school visit our website.





Supported by **The Boshier Grant Scheme**

Support group for adult siblings of autistic people



*Scan
here!*



**Join our online peer support group sessions
(7pm-8.30pm), run by a trained Sibs volunteer:**

- 13th Feb: Being a sibling vs being a carer
- 9th Apr: Money (mis)management
- 10th Jun: What if your brother/sister doesn't want support?
- 4th Aug: Reciprocity
- 7th Oct: Supporting romantic relationships
- 3rd Dec: Setting boundaries

**Find out more at
sibs.org.uk/autismgroup**

Sibs is the UK charity for brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults.
Registered charity number 1145200. Limited company number 7834303.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

Whether your child receives a diagnosis of autism and/or ADHD, you will be given a plan of care. This plan will include a clear explanation of the assessment results and recommendations for supporting your child's needs effectively.

Suffolk Local Offer are pleased to inform us that Essex Family Forum has created an exceptional resource pack in collaboration with families. This resource pack focuses on supporting neurodivergent children and has been localised to provide Suffolk-specific resources. It offers practical interventions, resources, hints, and tips based on the lived experiences of local families.

We believe that this will be a valuable tool in helping you navigate the support systems in Suffolk and provide you with practical strategies to support your child effectively.

Click the image to view the pack.



PARENT CARER EVENTS CALENDAR

We have upgraded our events calendar to make it easier for you to find events and book on to them.

You'll find training, activity sessions and peer support drop-ins.

Why not check it out and book yourself on to some!

VISIT NOW!

Please note that most of our events are for families registered under the ND Pathway.



Male Parent Carer Virtual Drop In

Space to share. Space to connect. Just for male carers.

Are you a parent carer or supporting someone under 25 with additional needs and need a space to connect?

This online drop-in is for male carers of any kind, whether you're supporting a child, family member, or loved one. Join us for advice, connection, or simply to listen in. Stay as long or as little as you like.

**Launching
Thursday 22nd May**

What to expect

Peer
Support

Quick advice,
real connection

Talk it
through,
or just listen

Stay for 5
minutes or the
whole session

When?

Thursday 22nd May
Thursday 19th June
Thursday 17th July
19:00-20:00 | Online (Teams)

Suffolk
FamilyCarers
Living Fuller Lives

Book via our website
Join us – exactly as you are.

MISSED OUR WORKSHOPS?

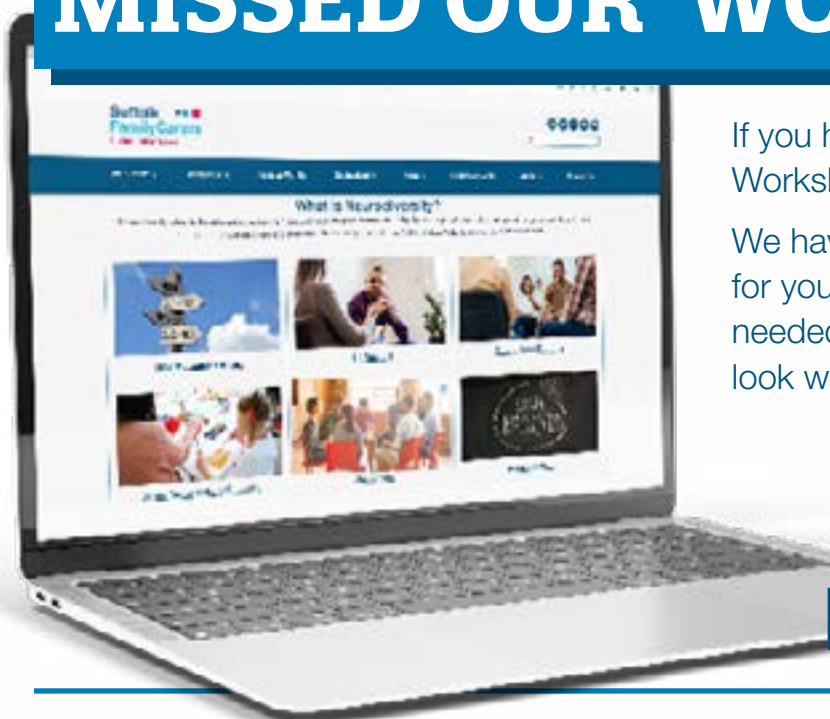
If you have missed one of our Parent Carer Workshops, no need to worry...

We have started to record some of these for you to watch back and refer to when needed. You can find them on our new look website.

PARENT CARERS

ND PROJECT

RECORDED WORKSHOPS



SUFFOLK SENDIASS

Suffolk SENDIASS are trained by IPSEA through the National IASS network. Each of our team members complete an initial 90 hours of accredited legal training, so that we can give you information based on legislation rather than local policy. We regularly receive training updates to ensure that the information we share is correct and current.

We work to a set of national Minimum Standards for services providing impartial information, advice and support relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). The Minimum Standards are developed by the Information, Advice and Support Services Network. Providing unbiased information and advice about the local authority's policies and procedures, about health services and provision in relation to SEND, and about the policy and practice in local schools and other settings.

You may find the answer to some of your questions by looking through the information on our website [HERE](#) or through our social media channels. We have some downloadable leaflets and factsheets. If you can't find the answers to your questions, you can get in touch directly. enquiries@suffolksendiass.co.uk

Text ADVICE4ME to 87007 and we will get in touch with you as soon as we can.

The SENDIASS helpline 01473 265210 is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, and 9am to 4pm on Friday.

We are a small team and the helpline usually has only one operator working at any given **time**.

If you can't get through to someone on your first attempt please do leave your details in a message. Please remember to give your name and your telephone number slowly and clearly on any message you leave.

SENDIASS Online Events

AUTISM CENTRAL

Autism Central is a peer education programme, commissioned by NHS England. It aims to build knowledge and understanding of autism and empower families and carers to advocate for autistic people they support. Local support helps families to get the right understanding and adjustments in place across the services they use.

Everything the programme does is informed by, or co-produced with autistic people, families and carers.

Autism Central hubs deliver the programme in seven regions of England through group and one-to-one sessions, giving information on local services. Each session is delivered by parents and carers of autistic people who are happy to share their knowledge and experience with others. To find out more visit [Autism Central](#) for Parents and Carers.

A DAY OUT AT THE FOOD MUSEUM

FOOD
MUSEUM

THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST

We have two corporate day passes for the Food Museum in Stowmarket that are available FREE for a day to any registered family carer, with each providing free entry to the museum for up to 6 people, giving an opportunity for a fun day out.

**MORE INFORMATION
CLICK HERE**

A DAY AT THE FARM

As part of our Time Out Together project we now have a family day pass for Easton Farm Park.

To have the chance for FREE entry to the farm please click here.

FIND OUT MORE HERE



THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST

REQUEST A PASS HERE



A DAY OUT AT BAYLHAM RARE BREEDS FARM

Parent Carer Virtual Drop In

Space to share. Space to breathe. From your own home.

Join our relaxed online drop-in for parent carers. Whether you want to talk something through, ask a question, meet others who get it, or just take a moment for yourself – you're welcome here.

**Launching
Thursday 8th May**

What to expect

**Peer
Support**

**A listening
ear**

**No pressure
to talk**

**Stay for 5
minutes or the
whole session**

When?

Thursday 8th May

Thursday 5th June

Thursday 3rd July

19:00-20:00 | Online (Teams)

**Suffolk
Family Carers**
Living Fuller Lives

**Book via our website
Join us – exactly as you are.**

**Suffolk
Family Carers**
Living Fuller Lives



01473 835477 | hello@suffolkfamilycarers.org



@aspaceforparents



@A Space For Parents

Unit 6 & 9, Hill View Business Park, Claydon, IP6 0AJ