



**Norfolk SEN
Network**

Registered charity no. 1044353

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Annual Report & Accounts

2023 – 2024



Breakfast on the Riverbank



Linton Crescent Charity of the Year

Christmas 2023



Brickfest August 23



Christmas Extravaganza 23



Norfolk Cribbage Assn

Trustees Report 2023-24

As we settled into our new home in Portal House we saw the number of Trustees increase to 7;

We are now in our second year of National Lottery funding, whose support has been invaluable. Our new offices have given us the opportunity to give our staff a spacious building to work in and enabled the charity to hold inhouse training sessions and coffee mornings, invite parents in to discuss their child's difficulties and professional partners to discuss our work.

The Fine City Chorus held a spectacular show at St. Peter Mancroft, we attended various Christmas events and together with donations from the Linton Crescent Christmas Lights Switch on, we were able to purchase a large screen on which to hold Tribunals and training sessions. Our heartfelt thanks to the Fine City Chorus and Norwich Harmony and the residents of Linton Crescent for choosing us as their Chairty of the Year.

Thanks also to Norwich Computers, one of our Ambassadors, for their advice on purchasing the screen, setting up our internet and sorting out our IT problems.

We were able to furnish the offices for a few hundred pounds thanks to donations of furniture and purchase of good quality items.

Thanks also to our Landlords NM Finance for their support throughout our tenancy.

Claire Brooks, landlady of The Brickmakers in Norwich continues to be an Ambassador for the charity, have raised several thousand pounds for the charity again this year through Quiz Nights, Musical Bingo and events. She always puts the 'fun' in fundraising.

Thank you to the Paul Bassham Charitable Trust for their continuing support and the Norfolk Community Foundation for being there to advise us.

Thanks to part of the National Lottery grant we were able to bring in a consultant to give a critical eye over the structure and running of the charity, this raised several issues with regard to Governance which we will be addressing over the next year.

Thanks to our staff for their dedication and our Trustees for their guidance.

Pat Brickley

Chairperson

Dated: 6th May 2025

NORFOLK SEN NETWORK

Membership @ 31.10.24 : 71 supported members
 74 free email members

Ambassadors: Claire Brooks of the Brickmakers
 Norwich Computers

Trustees: Pat Brickley (Chair)
 Julie Playford (Joint Vice Chair)
 Lucy Pollard (Joint Vice Chair)
 Tara Durrant
 Chris Jay (Treasurer)
 Clayton Anderson
 Andy Manley
 Danny Fowler (resigned August 24)

Employees: Nichola Corcoran Development Worker
 Karla Cooper Development Worker
 Rebecca Clifton Development Worker
 Melissa Sole Development Worker
 Danielle Cann Administrator/Helpline

Bankers:

Barclay's plc, St. Stephens Branch, Norwich

- ❖ Norfolk SEN Network has been supporting parents of children with special educational needs throughout Norfolk since 1987. Since the changes to the law through the Children & Families Act 2014, we now also support young people themselves (16 to 25) who have special educational needs to find the right educational provision.
- ❖ Our committee is elected in accordance with our constitution from our Membership each year at our Annual General Meeting

Our aims: are to help *all* parents of children with special educational needs to find the education which is right for their child and to support young people 16 to 25 to also find the right provision to meet their needs.

ANNUAL REPORT 23-24

Development Workers

“Your support for Elliott and us is unmeasurable and we are eternally grateful for the difference you have made to us.”

Despite taking on two additional Development Workers in April 2024, we are still working at capacity. They have both completed Levels 1 & 2 of IPSEA Law training. We are still not able to cover the ‘whole’ of the county, more help is needed in the West and North of the county.

This year we have supported families with:

School placements and meetings	12
Applying for EHC assessments	18
Provision in school	9
Early Reviews	3
Annual Reviews	15
Checking draft and final Plans	13
School refusal	7
Fixed Term Exclusions	1
Permanent Exclusions	1
DDA appeals	1
Mediation meetings	3
Tribunals	14

Requests for EHC Plans have trebled this year, as have checking draft and final Plans. The number of Tribunals we have taken is also slightly up.

The children Development Workers supported had a diagnosis of:

ASD/Autism	34
ADHD	17
PDA	11
Dyslexia	4
Dyspraxia	3
Selective Mutism	2
SEMH	2
Anxiety	2
Nonverbal	2
Attachment Disorder	1

Several children have multiple diagnosis

The age range of children supported were:

Age 4	3	Age 13	4
Age 5	5	Age 14	8
Age 6	4	Age 15	2
Age 7	2	Age 16	4
Age 8	5	Age 17	1
Age 9	6	Age 18	1
Age 10	3	Age 19	1
Age 11	6		
Age 12	9		

The number of 14 year olds we have supported this year has doubled..

The ethnicity of families supported this year were:

White British	58
Eastern European	2
Irish	1
Scandinavian	1
Asian	1
Chinese	1
African	2

45 children were boys and 21 were girls.

Tribunals

“You have been amazing in all of this! I’m so glad we found you. You are a shining light in some dark days.”

Tribunals continue to take up a considerable amount of Development Workers time. With 3 Development Workers now having taken tribunals the need for this level of support is still very much in demand and the knowledge expected of our employees continues to increase. Hearings are often deferred or go on to further hearings meaning the time.

Development Workers spend on them is ever increasing.

Helpline open 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday

“Thank you so much for your help. I couldn’t have done it without you.”

We increased the opening hours of the Helpline by an additional hour this year to cover working parents’ lunchtimes, yet the number of out of hours calls still seems to be increasing. This year we took

405 calls - an increase of 150% on last year

Calls were on 14 different subjects:

Tribunal support	60
Mediation support	3
Early Annual Review	13
Annul Review	3
Reading a draft Plan	6
Applying for statutory assessment	18
School not meeting needs	12
School placement	6
School problems/help in school	12
School non-attendance/refusal	7
Secondary placement	6
Post 16 placement	6
Fixed term exclusion	9
Permanent exclusion	6

Social Media

Facebook followers 2412 an increase of 11% on last year

Twitter followers 812 a decrease of -2% on last year

Training

Thanks to a substantial grant from Norwich Freemans we were able to offer training from professional national trainers free to members and at minimum cost to cover lunch and refreshments for non-members. We delivered training on:

EHC Plans with ACE Education of London

Tribunals with Thomas Emmet of Birkett Long Solicitors in Essex

Mediation and Exclusions with Melanie White, a non-practicing Solicitor

Coffee Mornings

Thanks to a donation from Trowse Church Lent Lunches group we also ran several Coffee Mornings open to the general public for free, these were delivered in a more informal atmosphere and appreciated by those who attended. Subjects covered were:

Transition through stages of education

Attendance

Transport

We intend to continue these over the coming year.

Our Office

Having a designated office area means parents can call in and discuss their child's case in comfortable, confidential surroundings. It also means professionals can visit us for meetings.

Newsletter

We continue to produce a bi-monthly newsletter which is full of interesting news articles for parents.

Fundraising

It was another very busy year raising funds to meet the charity's needs:

Breakfast on the Riverbank



Sub zero temperatures! Cliff Oakley and his very brave team raised £142 for the charity. We joined in dressed as elves to support them.

Linton Crescent Christmas Lights raised over £600. Our thanks to the Norton family for nominating us and Tony and Jeanette Fairweather for organising it.

Gorleston Cliff Top Festival raised £145.99 and gave us the opportunity to meet parents in a different part of the county.

Selling donated goods

Several parents donated goods to the charity which we sell on Marketplace and at Garage Sales and Car Boot sales. We also sell books in our office.

Old Catton Garage sale raised £32. Thank you to Mike and Christine Shoot for lending us their garden.

Christmas Fairs

We took part in Christmas Fairs at Lazar House, Acle & Broadland Lions and Barley Court. Thank you to Mike Shoot for making wood carvings for us to sell and to Sue Schutt for Christmas Cards and knitted items, which raised £100.

Norfolk Cribbage Association

Chose us as their charity and raised £185 for us.

The Independent Darts Team based at the Brickmakers also chose us as their charity of the year.

Broadland Heart Lottery

Nominate us when buying tickets for the Broadland Heart Lottery which raises funds towards Independent Reports for parents. We have now raised over £1,000.

Companies who supported us

Mills & Reeve donated £500 towards our work.

The Evening News chose us as their charity of the year and their parent group The Garnett Foundation donated £1,000, which funded our new website.

Other ways to help us

PayPal Giving Fund

Easy Fundraising raised £19.76 for the charity.

Gift Aid your donation gives us an extra 20% on top of your donation.

Collecting tins – do you know an office or shop who would take one of our tins?

The Brickmakers

Special thanks to Claire and Dale Brooks for raising an incredible £1,856.75 for us through BRCKFEST, a Christmas Extravaganza, Quiz Nights and Musical Bingo.



Special thanks to Mikey at FSG Graphics and Andy at Norwich Computers for funding our office sign.

Pat Brickley

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Chairperson

6th April 2025