

Norfolk County Council: Norfolk - an Autism Friendly County

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Date: Tuesday, 2 April 2019, 12:03 BST

02 April 2019

Norfolk - an Autism Friendly County

**Event and Activities celebrating World Autism Awareness Week
(1 – 7 April)**

Release issued on behalf of the Norfolk Autism Partnership Board

Norfolk is part of the global move to increase public understanding of the needs of autistic people as part of World Autism Awareness Week.

Norfolk County Council is supporting the Norfolk Autism Partnership Board in coordinating an event on Friday 5 April at the Forum, Norwich. This event will demonstrate the scope of support and information available for people to learn more about autism, with the aim of making Norfolk a more inclusive and respectful place for autistic people, their families/carers, to live.

Around 1.1% of the population in the UK are living with Autism – that's 700,000 people, including around 100,000 children. Autism is a lifelong neurological condition, and is also a spectrum condition, which means it presents differently in every autistic person. Autistic people can have additional needs - including learning disabilities and mental or physical health conditions - just like anyone else.

Mark Rushen, Co-Chair of the Norfolk Autism Partnership Board, says: "The author Dr Stephen Shore famously summed up the condition – if you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism. Throughout Awareness Week and at the event at the Forum on 5 April, we are looking to inform the general public on what it is like to live with autism, and what we can all do to be more conscientious about the needs of autistic people and their families in communities across Norfolk."

James Bullion, Executive Director of Adult Social Services at Norfolk County Council, outlines the importance of this event and the ongoing development of the autism strategy: "The Norfolk Autism Partnership Board have worked hard over the last year to coproduce an Autism Strategy – My Autism, Our Lives, Our Norfolk – and continues to work closely and engage autistic people and their families/carers to ensure it reflects their true experience of living in Norfolk."

"My Autism, Our Lives, Our Norfolk describes what we will do to make the county more inclusive and accessible for autistic people – making sure autistic people and families are supported from a young age and are given the right support at the right place and the right time."

The Norfolk Autism Partnership Board influences commissioners from Norfolk County Council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups in Norfolk and Waveney with the aim of developing improved services for children, young people and adults who may have autism. Autistic people, their families and carers are invited to apply to join and be part of the work of the Board by emailing autism@norfolk.gov.uk

Autistic people, carers and support groups and organisations are also encouraged to attend the Norfolk Autism Partnership Group, which meets four times a year across the county. The Group is an open forum for autism conversation and wider engagement with the autism community, and a chance to get updates from the Norfolk Autism Partnership Board. More information is available here: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/all-age-norfolk-autism-partnership-board>

Notes for Editors

The Norfolk Autism Partnership Board - Autism Awareness Event takes place on Friday 5 April, 10 am to 4pm in the Atrium, the Forum, Millennium Plain, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1TF

For more information about the Norfolk Autism Partnership Board visit
<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/all-age-norfolk-autism-partnership-board>

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