

## Partnerships and Networks

**Anglia Care Trust:** Our chair, Graham Walker, is a recent past chair also of ACT who occupy space in the same building. They provide us with free use of their conference room for MC meetings. We have discussed partnership working options and subsequently had lined them up for a joint venture with East of England Probation Service (see below). This may still proceed under a different model.

**BSC Multicultural Services:** We liaise on helping clients who do not fit into their catchment group e.g. people who are not from the sub-continent. They will also provide help should we need a translator. We continue exploring further cross-fertilisation to our mutual benefit and that of our respective clients.

**Centre of Networking:** This informal gathering of local business people (attendance 20-40) is organised by the Kesgrave War Memorial Community Centre where it comes together bimonthly. It is a useful opportunity to get the DAS name out amongst businesses from various points of view and we gave a presentation in June on being a DAS Trustee.

**Citizens Advice:** We have a formal liaison with CAB East Suffolk for referrals both ways.

**Disability Advice (North East Suffolk):** More friendly and productive relations resumed at the beginning of 2023. We have worked together in navigating the change of SCC department controlling our grant from Adult Care Services to Public Health and we had them lined up for the Probation Service project (see below). We also brought them into our project working with the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (see below).

**East of England Probation Service:** In March, we commenced a six-month pilot of our outreach service at its Ipswich centre to help ex-offenders (70% of whom have at least two mental health diagnoses). The feedback from EEPS has been very positive. Discussions are ongoing about a possible extension to the end of the year but the plan for the pilot to be rolled out across Suffolk with our partners (mentioned above) is now unlikely in its envisaged format. Local arrangements are about to be subsumed by a contract for "community services" won under tender by a nation-wide provider – we will learn more in August when this due to be announced and will investigate the possibility of contracting with the national provider to cover our area.

**East Suffolk Council:** We are participating in their current "[Ease The Squeeze](#)" initiative and are part of the current initiative feeding in information, for instance, on what more could be done for people in rural communities. We work closely with their Disability Lead and we are a Trusted Partner for the Household Support Fund scheme.

**Engaged Communities Network (Suffolk County Council):** We were invited to join this group in October 2022 pursuant to getting the voice of the disabled heard in its deliberations.

**Equity In Mind Fund:** We were successful in joining 18 other charities selected by this joint initiative between the clinical commissioning groups from East Suffolk & Ipswich and West Suffolk NHS trusts. We are one of only two advice agencies to participate.

**Families In Need (FIND Foodbank):** We have a working relationship with this Ipswich-based organisation which is willing to make deliveries of food parcels to our clients who are in more remote, hard to reach rural areas. Many of these clients do not have transport, or the money for public transport even where this exists, and so are unable to attend a foodbank in person. We have made an approach to ask them to consider delivering or giving out our flyers and/or make referrals without success.

**Hollesley Bay Prison:** We had an approach that led to discussions on the provision of our services at the prison for inmates who are scheduled for release, with a view to getting their PIP submissions sorted out to minimise the gap between release and an award. This should help with re-offending.

**Home-Start In Suffolk:** We work with this organisation on identifying qualifying families for the distribution of our grants from the Household Support Fund.

**Income Maximisation Task and Finish Group (Suffolk County Council – Poverty):** We were invited to join this working group in July 2023 along with four other advice agencies across Suffolk in order to determine recommendations on how best to implement this stream and its funding in SCC's poverty strategy.

**MS Society:** We have had a service contract in place for several years to take on their members across southern Suffolk who require our services. Unfortunately, the organisation is running out of funds and is having to close down.

**National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA):** We are members and a trustee led two workshops at its last in-person conference in Nottingham on quality management in reference to the DAS journey.

**Pride In Practice:** Many LGBT people worry about accessing services for fear of experiencing discrimination or even hostility on the grounds of their sexual orientation, gender identity or trans status. The Pride in Practice training programme we are undergoing will lead to a recommendation that DAS is a safe space for them to make a referral.

**Suffolk Advice Network:** A county-wide network, led by Suffolk County Council's Financial Inclusion and Advice Service. It meets regularly to share best practice, relevant updates and promote collaborative working across the county's advice agencies. We attend these meetings and are significant contributors.

**Suffolk Association of Local Councils:** Initially via my role at Kesgrave TC, I arranged for SALC to give DAS publicity with parish and town councils across East Suffolk and brought in DANES to benefit too. This comprises having a page on their [website](#), mention in a weekly bulletin, publication in the July periodical magazine and our manager, Steve Race carried out a podcast ([listen to it here](#)) that is linked on the website.

**Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum:** We are members, attend the network's periodic meetings and provide its banking facilities.

**Suffolk Constabulary Disability and Carers Network:** We presented to 14 members of the network across the force in Suffolk about our services in late June and answered questions on how to make a referral. We are to be invited to establish a stall at their Family Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

**Suffolk Family Carers - Connect for Health:** Social prescribing – connect people to community groups and agencies for practical and emotional support. We attend their meetings and are in communication with the organiser and wider team regularly.

**Suffolk GP Federation:** We attended a very positive meeting with them in June and are setting up a trial to provide outreach in two surgeries, and have the surgeries advertise our services and see what response we might get, they are happy to select the surgeries and approach them with our proposition.

**Suffolk Information Partnership (SIP):** We belong to this network and participate in the warm handover scheme.

**Suffolk Libraries:** We have reached out to introduce our services and are developing with them a proposal to trial an outreach in two libraries in deprived areas.

**Suffolk User Forum:** We met with their CEO in March 2023 and created the basis of a relationship with them going forward.

**Suffolk Voluntary and Statutory Partnership (VASP):** This is a network for organisations with an interest in mental health. One of our Senior Advisors attends their meetings.

**Survivors in Transition:** focuses on supporting people who experienced childhood sexual abuse. Our chair attended their conference in January which was a joint effort with University of Suffolk. We are arranging for a representative to give a briefing to our team and will discuss ways in which referrals can be made to DAS.

**University of Suffolk:** We have attended student fairs and are the go-to organisation for student referrals. We have also had dialogue on matters where we could assist in their undertaking research. As a result, we have agreed to provide access for a graduate student to undertake interviews with DAS clients with the objective of "Examining the reality of disability in the age of Universal Credit".

**VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network:** is co-ordinated by Community Action Suffolk and their meetings our attended by our chair and/or secretary.

**Youth Outreach for LGBTQ+:** We have had discussions on how we might be able to help members of this group access the benefit system in a safe place. A visit to our office is planned and we have appointed an LGBTQ+ champion.

**Yoxmere Benefice:** Together with a growing list of associated benefice organisations we are developing contacts to obtain free advertising of DAS services in parish newsletters etc and will be setting dates to attend meetings to give in-person presentations.