

Partnerships and Networks

Anglia Care Trust: Our chair is a former chair of ACT who occupy space in the same building and provide us free use of their conference room for our 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).

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 benefit 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 2023 on being a DAS Trustee.

Citizens Advice: We liaise with them on referrals both ways.

Deanery Synod (Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham): We have presented to this gathering which *"consists of representatives, and clergy, from twenty-two Church of England churches across our area which stretches from Glemham across to Aldeburgh, up to Dunwich and across to Peasenhall"* and anticipate working with them on communications and referrals.

Disability Advice (North East Suffolk): We have friendly relations and worked together in navigating the change of SCC department controlling our grant from Adult Care Services to Public Health. Similar to ACT, 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 2023, we ran a successful pilot of our full outreach service at its Ipswich centre for 8mths. This helped ex-offenders (70% of whom have at least two mental health diagnoses) to navigate the welfare systems with a view to improving their financial standing and reducing the likelihood of reoffending. The feedback from EEPS was very positive, however, the project was overtaken by a national initiative in "community services". Relations remain friendly and we continue to deal with referrals in the normal way.

East Suffolk Council: We participated in their "[Ease The Squeeze](#)" initiative for instance feeding in information on what more could be done for people in rural communities. In Q3 2023, we represented "the voice of the disabled" giving a presentation to an internal EDI workshop attended by 40 staff. This focused on what the everyday experiences are of disabled workers. We are co-organising a Spring Event with the Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum facilitated by the ESC Disability Lead.

Equity In Mind Fund: We were successful in being selected to join 18 other charities in 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 in the community of organisations created to work with the NHS in our area providing support to patients with Severe Mental Ill-health.

Families In Need (FIND Foodbank): We have an ongoing working relationship with this Ipswich-based organisation which 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. However, our efforts to encourage FIND to pass on our flyers and/or make referrals have been without success.

HM Prisons: We had an approach from *HMP Hollesley Bay* to discuss the provision of our outreach service 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. We are also liaising with Councillor Lee Reeves who is East Suffolk Council's Armed Forces Champion and a member of the Veteran's Forum at *HMP Warren Hill*. He is discussing with the prison staff the potential for us providing our services on outreach.

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

Leiston Family/Well-being Hub: We have established an outreach service here holding sessions fortnightly.

National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA): We are members and a trustee led two workshops at its in-person conference in Nottingham in 2023 on quality management in reference to the DAS journey.

Pride In Practice: Many LGBTQ+ 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 undertook led to us being awarded the Gold Standard in record time and a recommendation that DAS is a safe space for help and referrals.

Steam House Café - Essentially an arm of [Access Community Trust](#) in Lowestoft, this is a "safe cafe-styled space with a fully-trained multidisciplinary team, offering holistic support to adults experiencing mental health crisis". We are trialling a monthly outreach service in the Ipswich café.

Suffolk Advice Network: This is 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 Advocacy Service: We are in preliminary discussions with a view to the possibility of joining this partnership.

Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC): Initially via our parish/town council contacts, we arranged for SALC to provide DAS publicity within parish and town councils across East Suffolk and we brought in DANES to benefit too. This comprised having a page on their [website](#), mention in a weekly bulletin, publicity in their periodical magazine and our manager carried out a podcast interview with the SALC CEO that is linked on the website ([listen to it here](#)).

Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum: We are members, attend the network's periodic meetings, provide its banking facilities and work with its organisers on relevant initiatives such as the Spring Event (see above).

Suffolk Community Foundation: We are a Trusted Partner for the government's Household Support Fund scheme which they administer. This has generated over £50,000 in individual hardship awards since late 2021 which we have passed onto the beneficiaries of our Crisis Service.

Suffolk Constabulary Disability and Carers Network: In 2023, we presented to members of the network across the force in Suffolk about our services and answered questions on how to make a referral. We had a stall at their Family Day later in the year in their well-being section and this has led to referrals of serving police officers.

Suffolk County Council We receive a grant each year in return for a service agreement and we provide regular impact reports. We meet Public Health management half-yearly for a productive exchange and review of issues of common interest.

Suffolk County Council - Engaged Communities Network: We joined this group in October 2022 pursuant to having the voice of the disabled heard in its deliberations. This has been useful to get the message out about DAS across a wide span of third sector organisations in our area.

Suffolk County Council - Income Maximisation Task and Finish Group: 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. We were influential in setting the parameters and eligibility criteria for the available funding and were successful in gaining a significant award.

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

Suffolk GP Federation: Suffolk GP Federation: We had a positive meeting with them in 2023 and agreed to trial outreach in two surgeries which would advertise our services and monitor the response. However, the SGF has not yet identified volunteer surgeries willing to participate in this initiative.

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

Suffolk Libraries: We reached out to introduce our services and are now trialling our outreach service beginning with Felixstowe.

Suffolk User Forum: We liaise with their CEO having created the basis of a relationship with them in Spring 2023.

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: This organisation focuses on supporting people who experienced childhood sexual abuse. Our chair attended their conference organised in conjunction with the University of Suffolk in 2023. We decided that any cases arising would be referred to the manager to handle given the difficult and delicate nature of such clients' circumstances.

University of Suffolk: We have attended student fairs and are the go-to organisation for their 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: This is co-ordinated by Community Action Suffolk and their meetings are attended by our chair 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 took place and we appointed an LGBTQ+ champion in conjunction with our Pride In Practice award.

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.