

FREE

October 2015 Edition

A Parent's Guide to Understanding Teenagers



South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board

Contents

■ Introduction	3
■ What makes teenagers special?	4
■ Communication, Communication, Communication	6
■ Relationships and Sexuality	9
■ Different and Equal	12
■ School	13
■ Further Education, Training and Careers Advice	15
■ Bullying	17
■ Involvement in Anti-Social and Criminal Behaviour	20
■ Physical, Mental and Sexual Health	22
■ Additional Needs and Disabilities	26
■ Alcohol and Drugs	27
■ The Internet, Social Networking, Mobiles and Other Technology	31
■ How Old do they have to be?	34
■ Help for Parents of Teenagers in South Norfolk / Contacts	37
■ Notes	46



Introduction

Being a parent or carer is one of the most fantastic and rewarding things that we ever do, but without a doubt it can also be one of the most difficult. Almost all parents will have times when they worry about their children and their own ability to support and guide their child. This is certainly the case for the parents of teenagers.

As parents and carers, we have a huge influence on young people's lives and the ability to shape their values and aspirations. Our impact on young people, and our ability to support and help them to develop, will be shaped by our own strengths, experiences and limitations.

Knowing how to respond to the needs of teenagers isn't always easy and there are no 'right' answers. Every teenager and every family is different from the next. Having said that, it can help all of us in our role as parents to find out more about teenagers, to reflect on how we interact with them, and where necessary to seek more information, advice and support. We hope that this guide will help.

This guide addresses the issues that parents have said they would like more information about and the issues that teenagers want their parents to understand. The guide won't and can't answer all your questions but it will get you at least one step closer to understanding your teenager and the world he or she lives in. Fortunately there is a lot of help available if you want further information, advice or support with parenting, or with wider family issues.

USING THIS GUIDE

We have split the guide into chapters and included a contacts section at the end of each, to highlight some relevant organisations and services. The contact details for these and many others are listed in the 'Help for Parents of Teenagers' chapter starting on page 37.

WHAT IS A PARENT ?

This guide is written for anybody who looks after and is a role model for teenagers. Throughout this guide we use the term 'parent' and we refer to 'your son/daughter' etc. In this guide, the term 'parent' means all carers of young people including foster carers and adoptive parents, stepparents and grandparents. We use the terms 'son', 'daughter', 'child' and 'young person' to refer to the teenagers that you are caring for.



What makes teenagers special?

Between the ages of 13 and 19 young people are developing physical, emotional and sexual maturity. They are also establishing an individual identity separate from their family. Teenagers and their families are of course all different from each other depending on their background, ethnic origin, family culture etc, but there are some things that they have in common.

ALL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Young people may be juggling many pressures and at the same time they will be experimenting with relationships, behaviour, tastes and lifestyles. Often this is a time of increasing pressures at school and college, when decisions need to be made about work, careers or training. All of this can make teenagers anxious and stressed. Teenagers have entered a potentially exciting time of their life – with many new horizons opening up and personal choices to make – but it can also be frightening and confusing and may make them feel insecure.

During puberty many changes happen to a teenager's body. It grows rapidly in height and weight, sexual organs develop and the body's production of sexual hormones soars. These changes affect teenagers' behaviour and attitude, and can lead to wild mood swings. While this is normal, it can be very confusing and sometimes even frightening for both you and your teenager.

Important changes are also happening inside a teenager's brain. Throughout adolescence, brains change in a way that involves the breaking and reforming of connections and pathways within the brain. During this period young people may find it hard to recognise emotions in other people. Other changes in the brain make it hard for teenagers to make mature judgements about the consequences of their actions. (*National Institute of Mental Health "The Teenage Brain: Still Under Construction"*)

Some typical behaviours and characteristics identified by teenagers about themselves include: 'know it all', increased interest in sex, rebellious, stressed, insecure, lazy, argumentative, challenging authority, mood swings.

PEER PRESSURE, RESPONSIBILITY AND INFLUENCE

Teenagers can sometimes be very self-conscious and worry a lot about fitting in. They compare themselves to their peers and are often influenced by how others see them. Along with this they have a desire to be noticed and recognised. This can be perfectly acceptable or not depending on how they choose to get recognition.

Parents are extremely important too. Teenagers may seem to reject or dismiss your views and values, but your influence, interest and support continue to be crucial.

Although they are always pushing the limits, teenagers need boundaries. When setting rules and boundaries, try to involve your teenager in recognising the consequences of overstepping them. Remember, they are becoming young adults and as such should expect to take responsibility for their actions. One of the most difficult things about parenting teenagers is knowing when to allow them to make their own mistakes and when it is necessary to step in to avoid disaster.

Adolescence is a time when many young people are idealistic. Because of this they often find themselves impatient and at odds with the adult world. They also tend to believe that they have all the answers while most adults have none. While this can be very irritating, it will work better if you join in the discussion and explore each other's beliefs rather than ignore the teenager or put their ideas down. It's all part of finding out who they are and what they believe.

HOW ARE TEENAGERS PORTRAYED?

The media and commercial world strongly influence all of us; many of us will be influenced by common views of young people and youth culture which portray teenagers in a negative light. Young people on the other hand may feel that society judges all teenagers to be 'trouble' – a judgement that they feel is unfair. As a parent you will have to take account of the wider social pressures that impact on your teenager and realise that these will influence all of your views.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Understanding what teenagers are going through can help us to understand their behaviour**
- **Remember the things that teenagers say they need: 'acceptance', 'responsibility', 'respect', 'privacy', 'not to be stereotyped', 'to be listened to'**
- **Don't assume that your son or daughter knows how you are feeling – you need to explain your feelings to them**
- **Give young people a say in deciding rules and boundaries – the more investment they have in drawing up an agreement with you, the more likely they are to stick to it**
- **Be patient and listen to your teenager's views – most of all be encouraging and show that you care unconditionally.**

CONTACTS

- **Children's Centres**
- **NSPCC**
- **Norfolk County Council Children's Services**
- **thesite.org**

Communication, Communication, Communication

Living with teenagers is all about communication and much of the information in this guide is about making the most of communication with teenagers. This is not always an easy task. However, if you talk with and listen to teenagers, they will at least know that you are interested in them and in what they have to say. This can be very important if they want to talk about something that is difficult for them, perhaps to ask for help with a health or relationship issue, or to tell you that they are being bullied.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PARENT?

Some of the things teenagers say about what makes a 'good parent' include:

- “someone who listens”
- “someone you can talk to”
- “someone who can talk to young people and other parents about setting limits”
- “patience”
- “someone who can compromise with the child and give reasons for setting limits”.

EXPRESSING THEMSELVES

At this time of physical and emotional change, teenagers often find it hard to express their feelings. They may slam doors or pick fights because they don't know any other way to deal with a problem.

Sometimes they answer back because they feel that they aren't being heard. As a parent you can help by not taking things personally, and avoiding arguing back. Describing what you see – e.g. “You look fed up” – can sometimes help to start a conversation. Talk to them about alternative ways to deal with their frustrations and don't be afraid to tell them that you still expect to be treated with respect.

Teenagers have said that the way that parents may know that they are “not OK” is if they:

- “didn't speak”
- “trashed the place”
- “shout”
- “got very drunk”
- “often cut my arms”
- “was quiet”
- “told you to leave me alone”
- “was being horrible to you or someone else”.

Many of these don't involve words, but they may be signs that that they need your attention and support.



LISTENING

Listening can be a surprisingly difficult skill for parents to develop; it's easy to miss opportunities for communication. Young people may give up quickly if we are not receptive or if we frustrate them by not taking their views seriously. Try actively watching your behaviour. Are you talking over your teenager? Are you noticing when they want your attention? Try listening to what your teenager has to say without arguing with them. This shows that you respect what they have to say. You don't have to agree with their views; indeed it's important that teenagers know what your values are.

BEING POSITIVE

Above all you will need to be positive about your teenager. This means spotting the good things about them and looking for the best in everything they do. Teenagers, like the rest of us, need to feel valued and cared for. Even if they have done something that they know you will disapprove of, the message that they need to hear is "I love you even if I don't like what you are doing". Sometimes teenagers need to be able to say "I hate you". This probably means that they're fed up with their lives, their friends, or something you've said or done. Try not to get hooked into this – they need the freedom to be able to express their frustrations and you may be the safest person to do this with. Remember, in spite of how it may seem, young people want their parents to be happy too.

OTHER IMPORTANT ADULTS

As your teenager grows older it is natural that there will be times when they choose to talk to someone else. This could be a peer, another parent or a worker. The important thing is not how you feel about this, but that they have been able to talk things through with someone. Professionals working with young people will encourage them wherever possible to talk to their parents, but they will also need to respect the confidentiality of the young people that they work with.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **It can be difficult for teenagers to express their feelings. You may learn more about how they feel from what they do rather than what they say**
- **Talking to your teenager, even about difficult issues, will help them to be safer, feel less anxious and make up their own minds**
- **Be open with your teenager – tell them what you think about things, and what is going on in your life**
- **Offering choices or a compromise can work better than making demands, e.g. "If you tidy your room, I'll clear the kitchen"**
- **Try not to judge, but to understand and show you care.**

Here are some tips for opening up communication:

- Spend time just being with or near your teenager as well as doing things together. Aim to give them your time rather than just your advice
- Tell them things about themselves that you appreciate, e.g. “I like the way you...”
- Acknowledge their feelings without judging, by saying “You look as if you feel unhappy, upset, angry etc.”
- Ask questions that can't be answered with a 'yes' or 'no', but be careful that it doesn't come across as an interrogation.

CONTACTS

- Children's Centres
- Norfolk County Council Children's Services
- NSPCC
- thesite.org



Relationships and Sexuality

Relating to other people is important to teenagers. Although you are still very important in your teenager's life, he or she is probably trying to alter the relationship you once had into one that is more adult to adult. At the same time, young people will be starting to relate with other significant adults, such as teachers and youth workers, as well as their peers. Teenagers will also start to seek and explore sexual relationships.

CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS

There's a lot going on for teenagers in terms of relationships and inevitably things will go wrong from time to time. All of this can cause stress for parents, as well as the teenagers themselves. As parents our role in modelling positive relationships with friends, family, and our partners is vital.

If your teenager feels able to talk to you about what is happening in his or her life, you stand a chance of being kept informed about their various relationships. Remember that however much you may want to protect them, one of the lessons they'll probably learn during this stage of life is that some relationships don't work out. Try not to be judgmental – it's not going to help your own relationship if you say “I told you so” when things go wrong. Just allow them some freedom and let them know that through your unconditional love for them you are there to support them.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

A healthy relationship is one in which two people treat each other as equals: they trust each other and treat each other with respect. In a healthy relationship young people should feel respected, happy, cared for, supported and safe. Teenage relationship abuse happens when one young person hurts or bullies another young person whom they are going out with/in a relationship with. It can happen between young people of any nationality, race or family background, in same-sex relationships as well as heterosexual relationships.

Teenage relationship abuse consists of the same patterns of controlling behaviour as domestic abuse. These patterns might include some of the following: sexual abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse, emotional abuse and psychological abuse. Abuse within relationships is often a repeated pattern of behaviour, which is used to control the other person. Teenage relationship abuse can also happen after a relationship has finished.

There is a lack of recognition of the seriousness of teenage relationships because they are

more likely to be short-lived. Talk to your teenagers about how to work out what they think constitutes a healthy relationship. This sort of conversation can spark a discussion about preventing abuse and can give you a chance to talk to your teenagers about healthy and equal relationships. Ensure that your teenager understands that they are never to blame if someone tries to make them do things (either sexually or emotionally) that they don't want to do.

PEER PRESSURE

Belonging to a group is often really important to teenagers. Friendship groups help teenagers to form an identity. They can provide support, and they are important for learning about new experiences. For teenagers the pressure to act in certain ways can be very powerful. Teenagers may want to be part of a group because their friends are, even if they feel uncomfortable with some of the things the group are doing.

You will probably prefer some of your teenager's friends to others. Your teenager will sense this and part of their desire to experiment and push boundaries may attract them to the very friends you like least. If you can, try to make their friends welcome in your home; that way you can get to know who your teenager is having relationships with and keep some influence on what's going on.

SEXUALITY

Teenagers are discovering their own sexuality which means they will be experiencing strong feelings and emotions, which can be both exciting and daunting. It is during the teenage years that they may discover and identify their own sexual orientation and learn to develop meaningful relationships, even though some of these could be short lived.

It is important, as a parent, to recognise that every new relationship will be very important to your teenager, even though you may not approve of their choice of partner. It is very difficult for some teenagers to cope with these new sensations, especially if they feel they may be different in some way from others in their peer group. They may be experimenting with different types of relationships to see what feels comfortable for them.

Sexual orientation is who we are attracted to and is not a choice we make. Your teenager may be heterosexual and attracted to people of the other sex, or she/he may be bisexual and attracted to people of both sexes. She/he may be homosexual (often called lesbian or gay) and attracted to people of their own sex. Whatever sexual orientation they are, they all deserve acceptance and respect for their feelings.

INFORMATION ABOUT CONTRACEPTION AND SEX

It's easy to assume that teenagers know all about sex and contraception. Schools do have certain responsibilities to inform young people about sex and relationships, but parents also have responsibilities to ensure that young people are as well informed as they can be to cope with the adult world. As parents, we may need to offer appropriate practical support such as access to contraceptive and sexual health services. Be open about the subject and offer your support, so that they feel more able to include you in this part of their lives. Keep a balance between sharing your experiences and encouraging them to make their own decisions; for example a form of contraception which didn't suit you might be a good choice for them. Offer to look at the options together online to get the most up to date picture.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Family support and relationships are important, but don't expect teenagers to come to you first**
- **Teenagers will experience deeper and more complex relationships and will want to have relationships with a wider range of people as they grow older**
- **As they become sexually aware and active, teenagers need to be well informed in order to make responsible choices. There is plenty of help, information and advice out there. Offer them your help and support in accessing it.**

Here are some tips for talking to your teenager about sex:

- **Talk about feelings and relationships, not just the physical facts**
- **Use everyday media (such as TV shows, magazine articles) to start a conversation**
- **Ask your child what they think about specific issues**
- **Find out what they are learning about sex and relationships at school, and use this as a basis for wider discussion.**

CONTACTS

- **After Adoption**
- **Bish UK**
- **BLAH**
- **British Pregnancy Advisory service**
- **Brook**
- **Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**
- **Family Planning Association**
- **iCASH**
- **Marie Stopes**
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline**
- **NHS**
- **Norfolk LGBT Project**
- **Youth Access**

Different and Equal

Whatever your culture, whether you are a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, or of any other religion, or even of no religion, your experience of other cultures may be quite limited. It is sometimes easier to ignore what you don't know, but it is important in today's multicultural society that you try to instil in your child a sense of equality and understanding.

Your teenager will be learning at school about other cultures and mixing with others from different backgrounds from their own. You can help them in their understanding of others by encouraging them to take an interest in those people who don't always look or behave as they do.

We are all judged by what we are, sometimes in a positive way and other times in a negative way. We are judged for our similarities and differences, for example according to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, ability or disability, levels of income and politics. For young people, when belonging to a peer group is extremely important to them, these differences or similarities become more basic. They can be part of, or excluded from a group because of the length of their hair, their choice of clothing or by music they listen to. It isn't easy for them to understand that it is okay to be different. Therefore it is important in everyday home life that parents can talk about differences and what makes people special and lead by example in celebrating diversity and equality.

EXPERIENCING PREJUDICE

If your teenager is experiencing some form of prejudice, such as racism, then do talk to social services or the police. If they are facing prejudice at school, talk to their teacher, Headteacher or Principal to try to sort out the problem. Ask your teenager to log down the incidents so that these can add weight to their statements.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Lead by example. Show your teenager that just because somebody looks or behaves differently from them, it doesn't mean that they are worse or better than themselves. Encourage learning and development as a family activity**
- **Try to make sure your views and opinions are unbiased and non-judgmental. Always explain that these are your personal beliefs and try to give the other side of the story too**
- **Give your teenager opportunities to spend time with others who may not be part of their normal social mix. This will encourage them to understand that being different should not be a barrier.**

CONTACTS

- **BLAH**
- **Bullying UK**
- **Equality and Human Rights Commission**
- **Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**
- **Norfolk Racial Equality Council**

School

School plays a very important part in your teenager's life, both socially and educationally. For most teenagers, time at school is happy and rewarding. For parents too, involvement in school life can be fun and rewarding. However many teenagers may encounter some problems at school from time to time. Some parents may find school to be a source of tension and concern.

You may worry about your teenager's attitude to school, their willingness to attend and the demands that school places on them, or the quality of the education or other provision. There may also be social issues to deal with, such as bullying and troublesome friendship groups. School remains one of the most emotive subjects between parents and teenagers. Whatever the problem, remember you are probably not alone. Talking to other parents can be a great support.

The law requires that you, as a parent or guardian, ensure that your child is educated either at school or by other means acceptable to your local authority.

ADVICE ON EDUCATIONAL CHOICES

There are educational choices to be made all the way through the teenager years. It is helpful to talk these through with your teenager at every stage. Schools can provide relevant and personalised curriculum opportunities for young people. Schools have the responsibility to deliver impartial careers advice and guidance and this will support your teenager to make choices suitable to their needs and aspirations.

SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

Schools want the best for their students, and they should always encourage parent and student involvement. Having said this, the relationship between school and parents can also be tense. If you are worried or have a concern about your child at school you should talk to school staff in the first instance. They should be able to provide support for you and your teenager, ensuring access to a range of services, including information, referral to specialist sources of help and parenting support. This support is also available through the 'Extended Services in and around Schools' programme.

If you do approach the school there may be counselling or other health related services for example; school nurses may be a good starting point. If the school has a peer mentoring system you could encourage your teenager to use that. Teenagers can sometimes feel comfortable with the most unlikely people and if they can use a mentor to begin the process of talking about the things that are bothering them, this may prevent the need for further help. Alternatively you can start by making direct contact with the school via the pastoral support worker, form tutor or year head. After that you may choose to speak to the Headteacher, Principal or a school parent governor.

SEEKING OTHER HELP

It is also worth bearing in mind that the solution to the problem may not lie with the school; there may be a range of issues that could be impacting on your child's experience at school such as peer pressure, family problems or parenting issues.

If your teenager's behaviour is causing concern to the school, the staff will contact you to discuss the problem. The school may offer support, such as a referral to an education social worker or an educational psychologist. If the situation doesn't improve the school may consider other measures such as a behaviour contract, a pastoral support plan or other school specific interventions. In these situations you will need all the information and support you can get in protecting your child's interests. Find out what support is available through Norfolk County Council's Family, Children and Young People Support service.

MANAGING CHANGE

Just as the teenage years are a time of growing independence at home, at school more and more emphasis is placed on taking responsibility for oneself and one's own learning. This means that just when you may be anxious about your teenager's school work and progress, they may want to make their own choices about homework, revision, free time and part-time jobs. As a parent it can be a difficult balance to make.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Help your child to be happy at school by letting them know that you think education and school life are important. Take an active interest in your teenager's school work and activities**
- **Talk to the school about education and career choices and how you can best support your teenager**
- **If you have a concern about your child at school, talk about it with the school as soon as possible. Involve your teenager in these discussions if you can**
- **Remember there can be many reasons why your child seems to be unhappy at school which may or may not be related to their school life – seek help to find out about the range of support and services that are available.**

CONTACTS

- Apprenticeships
- Early Help Hub
- Education Otherwise
- Norfolk County Council Children's Services
- South Norfolk Council

Further Education, Training and Careers Advice

Until fairly recently, most teenagers in the UK left school at 16 to go directly into employment. Now, competition in the global market has changed that trend as employers need workers who are more highly trained. In Norfolk, 85% of young people stay on at school or college to study for more qualifications, while a further 10% continue learning at their workplace, or through an apprenticeship.

In England, the leaving age depends on when young people were born. They can leave school on the last Friday in June as long as they'll be 16 by the end of that year's summer holidays.

They must stay in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday if they were born on or after 1 September 1997.

Their options are:

- full-time education - e.g. at a school or college
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time education or training - as well as being employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

Options for full-time education include a school sixth form or a college of further education. Students can opt for academic or vocational courses or both – see the www.helpyouchoose.org website for information on what is on offer.

ADVICE AND FUNDING FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

Information and advice about courses and career pathways is available from your teenager's form tutor, subject teachers, the school's careers coordinator and any Guidance Advisers who may be based in the school/college. There are also good websites available – see Contacts. Depending on circumstances, a bursary may be available to help with education related costs if the student is aged 16 to 19 and

- Studying at school or college (not university) in England
- On a training course, including information on unpaid apprenticeships.

Norfolk County Council will provide information about the services, discounts and concessions available in relation to transport.

Young parents and care leavers may be entitled to additional financial support to cover study related costs. For more information see contacts overleaf.

One of the main forms of training for young people is through an apprenticeship. An Apprenticeship is a real job with training so young people can earn while they learn, as well as gaining some recognised qualifications. As long as your child lives in England, is over 16 and is not in full time education, they can apply. A Traineeship is an unwaged education and training programme with work experience that is focused on giving young people the skills and experience that employers are looking for. At its core are work preparation training, English and maths for those who need it, and a high quality work experience placement.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- It's important for young people to continue their learning and gain as many qualifications and skills as they can
- Encourage them to think about what they like doing and what they are good at when thinking about training and careers. Discuss ideas and explore careers information with them
- Attend parents' evenings and careers events with your child
- Norfolk County Council has produced two new publications for all Year 11 students. The first is "What Next for 16-18? The Parents and Carers Guide to Post-16 Options 2015-16" The booklet provides parents and carers with information and advice about the post-16 options/choices available to young people in Norfolk, together with a 'things to do' calendar and information about transport, financial support and sources of careers information and advice. The second publication is a leaflet called "Search and Apply through Help You Choose" providing young people with information on how to use Help You Choose to search and apply for post-16 opportunities, including how to set up an account and register on the Help You Choose website.
- Youth projects provide information, advice and support for teenagers on a wide range of issues from courses and careers to health, housing, money and relationships.

CONTACTS

- Apprenticeships
- Early Help Hub
- Gov.uk
- I can be a...
- I could
- National Careers Service
- Norfolk County Council
- South Norfolk Council

Bullying

Although many teenagers will not be directly affected by serious bullying, they may be sufferers or perpetrators of bullying and they are likely to be aware of bullying going on around them in one form or another. Unfortunately bullying is common, and it causes a huge amount of unhappiness for teenagers. One in twelve children is badly bullied to the point that it affects their education, relationships, and even their work life later on.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is any deliberate aggressive behaviour that is carried out to hurt another person. It can take many forms such as:

Physical – e.g. pushing, kicking

Verbal – e.g. rumours, threats, name calling, sarcasm

Emotional – e.g. humiliation, ridicule, exclusion from others

Racial – e.g. gestures, taunts, graffiti

Sexual – e.g. homophobic abuse, unwanted physical contact etc.

Online/cyber – e.g. misusing photos, sending hate texts etc.

Bullying reduces the self-confidence of those affected, and leaves people feeling alone, guilty and vulnerable. Bullied young people may feel that they are to blame, they may not understand what is happening to them, and if they do, they may not be able to express it. Your teenager may be ashamed of admitting to being bullied, or afraid that if he or she does talk about it, they will not be taken seriously. Teenagers say that they have often had a negative reaction from adults when they have tried to talk about it.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

The signs that your teenager is being bullied can be wide ranging. They could include withdrawal from friends and family, being very secretive on the subject of friends, disliking an activity that has previously been enjoyed, not wanting to go to school or work. There may also be physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomach aches, underachievement and loss of interest in school work. They may also become anxious or insecure and experience nightmares or have problems sleeping. In addition to the above, missing or damaged belongings, or unexplained cuts and bruises, could be the result of bullying.

TAKING ACTION

You can help your teenager most by recognising bullying, and believing what they tell you if they do admit there is a problem. Always treat allegations of bullying seriously. In the

first place talk with your teenager about ways that they can deal with the bullying themselves. If this does not work you may want to encourage your teenager to keep a diary of incidents to take to the school. Make the school aware of the bullying as soon as you can.

By law schools must have an anti-bullying policy – this should include cyber-bullying. Most schools do put a lot of effort into preventing and dealing with bullying. Schools should make their bullying policies public, and welcome suggestions from parents for improving the way that bullying is dealt with. Having said this, parents often feel that schools are in denial when bullying occurs.

Parents whose teenagers have experienced bullying have found the following things helpful in reducing the problem:

- Support from other parents
- Peer support/mentoring schemes at school
- The establishment of safe places at school, and confidential systems to report bullying
- Communication between schools and parents when the bullying is happening
- Help from schools for bystanders to condemn the behaviour and isolate the bully
- Strong leadership from school Headteachers to deal with bullying in school.

If your teenager is being bullied at school, and they are not able to deal with it without your intervention, arrange to meet the staff concerned and make it very clear that you want the bullying to stop and that you are prepared to work with them to help stop it. Try to get a commitment from them to review the situation regularly with you and your teenager.

WHAT ABOUT THE BULLIES?

While young people who are bullied deserve our full attention, so do the bullies themselves. Some parents will have to face up to the uncomfortable reality that their own children are bullying others. Sometimes young people bully because of their own insecurities or anger. They may be being bullied themselves, or their behaviour may be due to problems at home, or peer pressure. This too will require open communication and support as well as firm boundaries. Staff at the school or workplace will need to be involved in helping to stop the bullying.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- Let your child know how he/she should treat other people. You are your teenager's best teacher, so set an example through your own behaviour. Let your child see you be kind, speak well of others, solve problems without getting angry, be accepting of differences between people such as race, religion, attitudes and so on
- Talk about bullying at home. Look out for signs of bullying. Treat allegations of bullying seriously
- Teenagers will need help admitting that they are being bullied. If you suspect that there is a problem try asking them if they know of anyone being bullied, or what happens if bullying is discovered at their school
- Bullies need help too – let them know that what they are doing is harmful, discuss ways that they can change their behaviour and ask the school for guidance.

CONTACTS

- Bullying UK
- ChildLine
- Early Help Hub
- Kidscape
- Norfolk Parenting Pathways



Involvement in Anti-Social and Criminal Behaviour

As they become independent and spend more time out and about, young people will have increasing contact with other adults in authority and they are likely to encounter the police in one way or another. While teenagers may feel antagonistic towards adults in authority, adults can be intolerant and judgemental of young people. Teenagers often feel “criminalised” by the adult world. At the very least, young people will often say that they don't feel their parents trust them.

Although young people from the age of 10 are broadly considered responsible for their own behaviour, teenagers may get caught up in negative, antagonistic or antisocial behaviour when they are part of a group. The events going on around them may well feel out of their control.

Discovering that your son or daughter has been arrested for committing a crime can be upsetting and scary for a parent. Teenagers are also much more likely to be the victims of crime than any other age group.

ARREST AND DETENTION

If your teenager is arrested and detained they are likely to be very daunted by the experience. Young people have rights designed to protect them from unreasonable treatment. If he or she is under the age of 18 you, another adult, or an 'appropriate adult' such as a social worker, must be present at the police station before any questioning can take place. You are entitled to receive free legal advice from a solicitor. This can be the 24-hour duty solicitor or a solicitor of your choice. Wait to see the solicitor before talking to the police, and neither you nor your teenager should sign anything until you have spoken to the solicitor.

If your teenager is detained, he or she should be offered a copy of the Code of Practice to read. This explains the procedures the police should follow when questioning. Suspects must give their name and address, but do not need to answer other questions. However, the court will be told of this if the case goes to trial and it may strengthen the case against them. During questioning the police should not put unreasonable pressure on the suspect. Someone who is deaf or has difficulty in understanding English should be given a signer or an interpreter. While in detention, it is likely that your teenager will be held in a cell. He or she should be offered food at mealtimes and drinks as reasonably requested. Suspects are normally not held for more than 24 hours without being charged.

After your teenager has been interviewed, the police will decide whether they have enough evidence to charge him or her with an offence. They will also decide whether they are going to bail your teenager or to charge him or her straightaway. They may also ask the Youth Offending Team to make an assessment to help them reach a decision. If this is the first or second time your teenager has been in trouble, the police may decide to issue a caution called a Youth Caution or a Youth Conditional Caution. If the crime is more

serious or your teenager has had a Youth Conditional Caution already, then it is likely that they will be charged and have to go to the Youth Court. If your teenager hasn't admitted the offence and the police have enough evidence, your teenager cannot be cautioned and will most likely go to court. The courts have various options open to them in passing a sentence that directly affects the parents of teenagers, e.g. they can make parents responsible for paying any fines.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND PARENTING

Parents are not held directly responsible for crimes committed by their children, but these days there is a belief that parenting has an important role to play in the behaviour of teenagers. If a young person is involved in criminal or antisocial behaviour it is important that they are supported. Feelings are likely to be running high all round; it can be a frightening time for everyone. It is important to remember that young people who are supported by their parents are less likely to re-offend. Having said that, it is important the whole family gets support. Services for young people who are offending will not want to look at the young person's behaviour in isolation.

Parenting programmes are available to provide help to parents who are concerned about their young person's behaviour, particularly those whose children are in the criminal justice system. These programmes give parents a chance to explore, in confidence, difficulties they may be experiencing with their children and to look at ways of managing their teenagers positively. The Youth Offending Team has parent workers who run groups for parents and who also offer one-to-one support by phone or home visit. Parents who are concerned should contact the Youth Offending Team directly. Where the courts believe that parents would benefit from this support to help stop their children from offending, they may either recommend that parents attend on a voluntary basis or make it a requirement by making a Parenting Order, which requires the parents to attend parenting provision.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Teenagers experience crime both as offenders and victims, but most offenders don't get caught up in a life of crime**
- **Watch out for warning signs such as stealing, having unexplained amounts of money, truanting and substance misuse**
- **Get help to explain to your teenager the consequences of future criminal behaviour**
- **Work with the Youth Offending Team and other agencies to support the young person and yourself.**

CONTACTS

- **Citizen's Advice Bureaux**
- **Early Help Hub**
- **Local Police on 101**
- **Norfolk County Council Children's Services**
- **South Norfolk Council**
- **Youth Offending Team**

Physical, Mental and Sexual Health

Age 13-19 is a time of major physical, mental and sexual change that can be a great source of interest, pride and excitement for all. All this change takes place in its own time, which can be earlier or later, faster or slower than you or your teenager expect. Changing body shapes, periods, pubic and facial hair and all the rest can be a source of concern or even embarrassment for teenagers.

On top of the physical change, teenagers have all the pressures of growing up, experimentation, sexual development and exploration. All of this can at times feel overwhelming for young people – causing stress and sometimes more serious mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders.

Many teenagers worry greatly about aspects of their physical and mental health and development. A certain amount of concern may encourage them to take good care of themselves, but as their parent, you will need to be involved too. Young people will need you to help them understand what is happening to their bodies and to keep a sense of perspective about their physical and mental health concerns. Teenagers also need help from adults to access information about physical, mental and sexual health. They may need your support to access services such as contraception, sexual health services, and counselling. School nurses are available for students in most secondary schools and academies, and health visitors (at most local health centres) provide an excellent resource for anything to do with children and young people's health.

MOOD AND MIND

Mood swings and behaviour changes are inevitable – stay in touch with your teenager and don't overreact. Occasionally these can be symptoms of more serious problems. At least 1 in 10 young people are affected by mental health issues which can vary from mild to severe. As with all problems, the warning signs are wide ranging. You may be concerned if your teenager shows signs of severe tension, irritability, aggression, hopelessness, and withdrawal from family and friends. Other signs are an inability to concentrate, changes in sleep patterns, and either a lack of appetite or bingeing. Some young people may self-harm or use alcohol or drugs as a way of dealing with their feelings, or get into dangerous situations. Many young people blame themselves for emotional or mental health problems, but the causes can be wide ranging and they may need help to deal with the underlying problem.

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

More common mental health problems include depression and anxiety, obsession, compulsion and eating disorders. Depression is not always easy to spot; it occurs when difficult emotions become overwhelming. It can be triggered by a number of things such as conflict at home, stress or not being listened to. Depression commonly appears for the first time in people aged 15-19. The good news is that whilst depression is a serious illness, it can be treated with medication and/or counselling.

It can be very difficult for parents to come to terms with the fact that there may be a problem with their child's mental health. It's important to remember that, even though it must be taken seriously, many teenagers overcome mental illness. As parents we need to encourage teenagers to use the information and services that are available to help them. You may want to talk to the school to find out if they have noticed any changes in behaviour. Let your teenager know what your concerns are and if you feel that it's appropriate, try to get their cooperation in asking your GP to take a more detailed look at what's happening. Look for other counselling services. Getting agreement to seek solutions together may take some time, so don't delay raising your concerns if you are worried.

Anxiety is excessive fear and worry. Teenagers may demonstrate this by having panic attacks or being frightened of leaving home for example. Obsessions are intrusive thoughts or ideas that often feel silly or unpleasant. Obsessive compulsive disorder occurs as a result of deep anxiety, when young people feel compelled to do something even when they don't want to do it (for example repeatedly checking that a door is locked). Often people try to stop themselves from doing these things, but feel frustrated or worried unless they can carry them out.

Eating disorders such as binge eating, anorexia and bulimia are becoming more common, and they affect young people of both sexes and of every age and background. In anorexia the sufferers have a distorted image of their own bodies and constantly attempt to get thinner, sometimes to the point of starvation. Symptoms include cessation of menstrual periods, lethargy, depression, mood swings and intense fear of becoming fat. Between 4 and 10 per cent of women are afflicted by bulimia. Bulimics may be about average in weight and in public appear to eat normally, so the disorder can be difficult to spot. The fear of gaining weight leads to a cycle of binge eating followed by vomiting and/or the use of laxatives.

Self-harm can be very hard to understand, but it is much more common than we think. One in ten children undertakes some form of self-harm. Often the behaviour will be hidden and secretive. Self-harm can take many forms including cutting the arms or legs with a knife or razor, burning, biting, hitting themselves or taking overdoses. Luckily most people who self-harm do not want to kill themselves, or even do lasting damage to their bodies. Teenagers may hurt themselves to help with negative feelings, to punish themselves or to feel more in charge. Self-harm can be a way of relieving overwhelming feelings when they feel alone, angry, guilty or desperate. Some teenagers self-harm over a period of years, while others do it just once or a few times. *(Royal College of Psychiatrists - "Improving the Lives of People with Mental Illnesses")*

SEXUAL HEALTH

According to a recent survey*, around 30% of British teenagers report having sex with someone of the opposite sex before turning sixteen, and whether this figure is higher or lower than you expected hopefully it highlights the importance of raising the topic of safer sex. Given that nearly two thirds of Chlamydia cases detected at Sexual Health Clinics are in the 15-24 age range, we can see that young people are at high risk of catching this usually symptomless sexually transmitted infection. Although it can be easily tested for (using a urine sample) and treated with antibiotics, if left untreated it can lead to infertility. Your teenager may be sent a screening kit by their GP, or they may order one themselves, and should be praised for taking the test if they feel they need it as this helps develop a sense of responsibility for their own health, an essential part of growing up. Teenage pregnancy is another concern as it can turn young lives upside down and although the teenage pregnancy rate in Norfolk is dropping, the UK rate is still one of the highest in Western Europe. Teenage parenthood can disrupt plans and lead to poor outcomes both for the parents and for the child unless they are lucky enough to have a strong support network. There are agencies which can help young parents who choose to start a family, both during pregnancy and once the baby is born. *NATSAL 3 (*National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyle*) released 2013.

Discussing how to avoid pregnancy and STIs with young people and supporting them to use contraception and sexual health services (see iCASH) helps them to develop a sense of responsibility and decision-making. Exploring what a healthy relationship is like, how to say 'yes' or 'no' and how to cope with feelings will help young people to make smarter choices when they begin having relationships. Try to start these conversations before puberty arrives, using natural cues like soap opera plots, celebrity news etc. In spite of the fact that teenagers nationally say that they want their parents to be the main source

of information about sex, it can feel awkward on both sides to get started. As the parent it falls to you to create an atmosphere where it's OK to talk and ask questions. Avoid assumptions about any young person's sexual orientation (whether they fancy males or females or both) or whether they are sexually active as they may already be feeling under pressure to behave a certain way in order to fit in and please other people. Think about the words you use to make sure no-one feels left out.

A word on the law. Young people under sixteen (aged 13-15) are legally able to access confidential information, advice and treatment (such as getting an implant fitted) without parental consent as long as they can show they are mature enough to understand what is happening. However the professional will always encourage the young person to talk to their parents or carers about what is going on, and offer to help them have this conversation if they wish. By keeping the atmosphere at home open and tolerant you can encourage young people to share this part of their life with you, even if it takes them a while to get over their nerves! Sharing personal information is a big deal for teenagers and however surprised or angry you might feel by some news, try to respond in a way which keeps communication possible.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Teenagers need information about all aspects of their health, and they rely on adults to access it**
- **If you think your child is becoming mentally stressed, listen to them and find out if there is any way you can help. Be patient and understanding – what may seem like a minor problem for you may be overwhelming to them**
- **Some anxiety states can become dangerous. Consult your GP or seek alternative professional help if you are worried**
- **Young people who are well informed wait longer before trying sex, and are likely to be safer once they do become sexually active.**

CONTACTS

- **Beat – beating eating disorders**
- **Bish UK**
- **British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas)**
- **Brook**
- **CAMHS**
- **Early Help Hub**
- **Family Nurse Partnership**
- **Family Planning Association**
- **iCASH**
- **NHS**
- **Youth Access**

Additional Needs and Disabilities

Some young people need extra support and help, particularly when it comes to education and learning. This can be because of many things including having a particular need, missing schooling or undiagnosed conditions.

Some young people have special educational needs (SEN) but do not necessarily have a disability, and some disabled young people do not have special educational needs. A young person has special educational needs if they need extra support because they find it harder to learn than the majority of other young people of the same age. Examples of this include:

- Speech, language and communication needs
- Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
- Autistic spectrum conditions
- Specific learning difficulties, such as Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Moderate learning difficulties
- Profound and multiple learning difficulties
- Multi-sensory impairment

A young person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial or long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Research suggests that about 6-7% of children are disabled. Young people with the most complex needs will require specialist services. They will require support with their health, education or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development due to disabilities including:

- Multiple and complex health needs or chronic illness
- Sensory impairment such as hearing loss, visual impairment or deafblindness
- A significant and long term learning difficulty
- A physical disability
- Autistic spectrum disorder
- A severe communication disorder

If you think that your teenager needs extra support, you should firstly talk to their school. However, there are other professionals that can help, and approaching the South Norfolk Early Help Hub for advice may also be useful.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Teenagers develop and learn at different rates – there is not always an issue.**
- **Talk to them about any difficulties that they may have at school, and find out what would be helpful to them.**
- **Consult your GP and other professionals if you have developmental concerns.**

CONTACTS

- [Early Help Hub](#)
- [NHS](#)
- [Norfolk SEND Partnership](#)

Alcohol and Drugs

Most teenagers are exposed to drugs in one way or another and many young people will experiment with drugs. With all the risks involved, it is not surprising that most parents worry about teenagers using drugs. It's worth remembering that in spite of the exposure that young people have to drugs and alcohol, most of them do not become problem users.

In South Norfolk, 16% of young people have tried cannabis, 50% have been drunk at least once, and 30% have tried smoking tobacco (Young People in Norfolk, Drugs and Alcohol Survey 2012). Young people take drugs for many different reasons. Although illegal, drugs are widely available, but only a very small percentage of young people end up as problematic users. You may think that experimenting with cannabis is bound to lead down the path of being addicted to heroin, but the evidence just does not back this up.

GET INFORMED

As a parent, you can help yourself by finding out about drugs – what they are called, the effects and the risks. If you can do this with your teenager so much the better, you can learn together and you can also see what information they already have. Don't jump to conclusions if your child seems to know a lot about drugs, it doesn't necessarily mean that they have been using them. From your point of view, knowing more about drugs will make it easier for you to recognise the signs if there is a problem.

Talk openly about drugs with your teenager. Talking about drugs does not encourage young people to use them, but it will help them to make safer choices. Discuss the risks and the effects of different drugs. You also need to talk about the illegal nature of drugs and what it would mean to your teenager if they got caught – their police record, the impact this would have on school, jobs and careers. Research shows that those who are well informed about sensible use and the potential dangers of drugs are less likely to develop a serious problem. You can get more information about drugs by using the contacts listed on page 37.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Encourage your teenager to discuss their experiences of drugs with you. Be careful not to judge them. It's natural for a parent to want to protect their child, but you can't watch them 24 hours a day. Don't over react if they tell you, or if you find out, that some of their friends have tried illegal substances. Whilst their use of drugs may be a problem for you, most teenagers will not see drinking or occasional drug use as a problem. Remember, teenagers are constantly testing boundaries, experimenting, and responding to peer pressure. As always, communication is important. Your child needs to know that you are there for them no matter what. If the police are involved you will need to support your child through the process whilst continuing to point out the seriousness and consequences of the situation.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS AND GETTING HELP

Often parents ask “How can I tell if my teenager is using drugs?” Spotting the signs will

be easier once you know more about drugs, but look out for these possible signs:

- Mood swings
- Being confused, irritable, or aggressive
- Showing anxiety
- Lots of energy, or no energy at all
- Secretiveness
- Loss of appetite.

All of these can be usual teenage behaviours, and this can make drug use difficult to spot. If your teenager's drinking or drug use is becoming more serious, there may be more worrying symptoms such as stealing, truanting and changes in behaviour where the teenager becomes more aggressive or agitated.

If your teenager is using drugs, there are many helplines and information websites available for both you as a parent, and for your teenager. Counselling, health services, treatment and support are all available. Remember, you may need to be patient; it could take your teenager a while to seek help.

COMMUNICATION

You might find the following advice helpful to start with:

- Try not to accuse your teenager as this will probably start a row; and if you are wrong, they may lose trust in you. Ask them to talk about their views and try to listen with respect to what they say
- Don't try to discuss their drug use with them while you believe they are under the influence of a drug
- Decide in advance how you want to react if your teenager tells you that they have used drugs
- Make sure they know that you will be there to help them through any difficulties they come across and show that your main concern is their health and well-being
- Make clear to them what behaviour is acceptable to you, and what is not. Young people need to understand that they are responsible for their actions and the consequences that follow
- Try not to threaten them with punishment – this might seem to offer a quick solution, but it's unlikely to give the results you are looking for.

LEGAL DRUGS

Although we tend to concentrate on illegal drugs, legal drugs are more common. Both alcohol and tobacco are used to experiment, to relax or to be seen as part of the group. Excessive use of alcohol may well be a greater threat to the health than illegal drugs.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is the most commonly abused drug. Drinking by young people tends to increase between the ages of 15 and 17, but binge drinking reduces as young people become more mature. Young people are more likely to be in danger when they are drunk. The likelihood of them being involved in risky sex and violence, for example, increases

significantly. Make sure your teenager understands the risks involved in misusing alcohol. You can help by recognising that as a role model you need to show them how to use alcohol responsibly.

SMOKING

Smoking is the largest avoidable cause of death and serious disability in the UK. Around one in five adults, or about ten million people, are current smokers, five million of whom are expected to die prematurely from smoking, losing a total of around 100 million years of life. Smoking currently accounts for around 100,000, or about one in six, deaths each year in the UK.

Someone who starts smoking at 15 is three times more likely to die from cancer than someone who starts smoking in their mid-20s.

In 2014, less than one in five 11 to 15 year olds (18%) said that they had smoked at least once. This was the lowest level recorded since the survey began in 1982, and continues the decline since 2003, when 42 per cent of pupils had tried smoking.

There are many useful and helpful websites and support services to help you encourage and support your child in ceasing smoking – see Contacts on page 37.

e-CIGARETTES

Electronic cigarettes typically comprise a re-chargeable lithium ion battery, and a battery powered atomiser which produces vapour by heating a solution of nicotine, usually in propylene glycol or glycerine, held in a (often refillable) cartridge in the device. Drawing air through the e-cigarette triggers the heater to create vapour which contains nicotine and is inhaled by a smoker the same way as smoke from conventional cigarettes. Producing nicotine vapour from a solution rather than by burning tobacco means that electronic cigarette vapour is free from almost all of the many toxic chemicals that accompany nicotine in cigarette smoke.

The principal addictive component of tobacco smoke is nicotine. However, aside from minor and transient adverse effects at the point of absorption, nicotine is not a significant health hazard. Nicotine does not cause serious adverse health effects such as acute cardiac events, coronary heart disease or cerebrovascular disease, and is not carcinogenic. The doses of nicotine delivered by electronic cigarettes are therefore extremely unlikely to cause significant short or long-term adverse events. A recent analysis by Liverpool John Moores University showed that 19% of teenagers had tried "vaping". E-cigarettes were used by 5% of teenagers who had never smoked, 50% of former smokers and 67% of light smokers. The link was even stronger in children who drank alcohol or whose parents smoked.

LEGAL HIGHS / NPS

'Legal Highs' are now called New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). This is due to the fact that quite a few are now not legal. Mephedrone is now a class B, BZP is class C, GBL is class C and Naphyrone is class B. People have died from the use of AMT (Class A) and

Nitrous Oxide (This cannot be sold to under 18's or anyone who may be suspected of abusing it). The main issue with NPS is that they are new. There is very little information about them. Even if any substance is legal it could be cut with illegal substances. When people use them they are effectively guinea pigs, testing the substances. As with any substance, if someone falls ill when using it, put in the recovery position and call an ambulance and tell them what the person has used.

Although these drugs are marketed as legal substances, this doesn't mean that they are safe or approved for people to use. It just means that they've not been declared illegal to use and possess. They are still normally considered illegal to sell under medicines legislation. Some drugs marketed as legal highs actually contain some ingredients that are illegal to possess.

NPS can carry serious health risks. The chemicals they contain have in most cases never been used in drugs for human consumption before, so haven't been tested to show that they are safe. Users can never be certain what they are taking and what the effects might be. Most problems with short-term use of NPS will settle after you stop taking them. However, the negative effects of some NPS can take a few days to wear off completely, just like the comedown from stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Many young people will experiment with drugs, alcohol and tobacco as part of the process of growing up. In most cases this will not lead to long term problems. Having said this, a person who decides to take an illegal drug (or to abuse alcohol) is taking some very serious risks. The risks include: prosecution and a criminal record, immediate health issues, overdose, accidents and dangerous behaviour, mental distress**
- **You can help yourself and your teenager by being informed about drugs, looking out for the signs, talking to your teenager, being supportive and keeping the communication open between you and them**
- **Parents of substance abusers will need help and support from professionals and other parents who understand. There are many sources of information, confidential advice, and support for you and your teenager.**

CONTACTS

- **ADFAM – Families Drugs and Alcohol**
- **Alcoholics Anonymous**
- **Drinkaware**
- **Drinkline**
- **Early Help Hub**
- **Families Anonymous**
- **FRANK (National Drugs Helpline)**
- **Matthew Project**
- **National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA)**
- **Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership**

The Internet, Social Networking, Mobiles and Other Technology

The Internet has a lot going for it. It's fun, creative and informative. Nowadays it plays an increasingly important part of teenagers' educational and social lives. It's a resource where teenagers can broaden their knowledge, share information and communicate with friends.

Young people conduct an increasingly large part of their social life using technology through different formats such as texting, microblogging (e.g. Twitter), online social networking services (e.g. Facebook), communicating in chat rooms, email and multi-user online games. The Internet has many attractions for teenagers including the fact that they can use it without involving adults. In addition, communication is instantaneous, and the anonymity that it allows enables them to communicate more freely than perhaps they could face to face.

One of the great things about the Internet is that it's very creative – all young people should be able to use it in ways that suit them. Young people who do not have access to computers at home may feel very disadvantaged in comparison to their peers.

WE ALL USE THE INTERNET...BUT

It's worth remembering that use of online Information Communication Technology (ICT) tends to be different for adults and teenagers. For a start, adults often consider themselves to be inexperienced at using ICT, while teenagers are much more likely to be confident. Teenagers' use of the Internet tends to be more inter-active, makes use of a variety of different media and involves more uploading of information than it does for adults.

As a parent you need to understand as much as possible about how your teenager is using the Internet so that you can support them to use it safely, and avoid some of the risks associated with online activity.

MOBILES AND SMART PHONES

As with computers and tablets, parents need to learn about how their teenager uses their mobile or smart phone. These can include applications such as a camera, video, online chat facilities, moblogging, MP3 player, TV, radio, email, and downloading. Teenagers tend to have their devices on all the time and they are usually used away from supervision. As a parent, you will need to encourage balanced use and set rules around bills and appropriate use of the online facilities.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking sites focus on building communities of people who share interests and activities. Most social networking services are web based and provide a variety of ways for

users to interact, such as messaging, email, video, voice chat, file sharing, blogging and so on. In general, social networking services, such as Facebook, allow users to create a profile for themselves on their own mini-webpage. They can then become 'friends' with other users. It is worth remembering that chat-rooms can be accessed on mobiles and smart phones as well as computers and other online devices.

SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH TECHNOLOGY?

Overuse of the Internet can be a problem. The Internet provides 24/7 entertainment, interaction and communication and it can become addictive. Teenagers can become immersed in their online world so that it takes over their lives. Hours spent on the Internet may mean that your teenager leads an unbalanced lifestyle. It may make it harder for you to communicate with them and inevitably it will become a distraction from other activities or aspects of their life. As parents we need to set clear rules with our teenagers about the amount of time that they spend online.

Most use of the Internet by young people is unsupervised. You need to know what your teenager is using the Internet for and they need to know about the dangers of viewing inappropriate websites. The Internet may blur the distinction between advertising and information; young people can suffer from invasion of privacy, unwanted contact, extreme views, and pornography.

Although you can apply filters which block access to websites with a sexual content, it may be more effective for you to take an active interest in the sites that your teenager is browsing and discuss with them the type of websites that are appropriate for their age.

Teenagers, like other Internet users, may be vulnerable to people who use shared personal information for fraudulent use. Remind your teenager that they must never give out any personal details such as contacts, school name, passwords.

If they are using social networking sites, or creating their own websites, teenagers need to be careful about what they put on their web spaces and they need to be aware about the whole concept of their cyber footprint – it may be difficult or impossible to ever remove things that they upload to the Internet. Websites, including social networks are not private and they are increasingly being used by the police in criminal investigations, by college and school administrators, and by future employers in order to find out more about individuals who post information about themselves on the Internet. Teenagers need to think carefully about how they portray themselves online. They also need to be aware of cyber-bullying and ensure that information that they are sending out is not damaging to anybody else. Teenagers also need to be warned about getting involved in creating and distributing potentially illegal images on their mobile phone.

Many young people will experience bullying through mobiles and the Internet at some time. Cyber bullying is very powerful as it potentially intrudes 24/7 into home and other spaces that may have previously been considered safe by a young person. In addition the audience can be very large and reached quickly. The impact of cyber-bullying on

teenagers will be similar to any other bullying. You will need to look out for signs of bullying in your teenager, encourage them to talk about it and then take the necessary action to protect your child and stop the bullying. Fortunately there is a lot of helpful advice for parents available. Although some instances of cyber bullying can be unintentional, be aware that your child may be bullying online, or retaliating.

Some young people have been hurt when they have formed relationships, or gone to meet 'friends' that they have made online.

INTERNET SAFETY

Grooming is a process of manipulating a child to gain control over them. If you are concerned about someone's behaviour towards your child, you can report this directly to CEOP. Parents should set rules around internet use and help their child to understand that strangers online are still strangers and they need to keep their personal information private. Help them understand that it is never a good idea to meet someone in the real world who they first meet online but, if they do, then they should take a parent or trusted adult with them.

Adults with a sexual interest in children and young people do use chat rooms and other interactive areas online to befriend children. Harmful, inappropriate contact may be carried out online, but abuse also includes adults manipulating young people, and 'grooming' them to meet up. It is important that young people understand that people that they chat to online may not be who they say they are and that they are reminded to be cautious in their online communication. CEOP (www.ceop.police.uk) is a good resource for young people and parents to help them to keep safe online.

SUMMARY & PRACTICAL TIPS

- **ICT is a key part of teenagers' education, individuality and an increasingly popular and cheap way of communicating with their peers**
- **There are risks, but it is important that you do not ban access to the Internet or over react in other ways**
- **Keep informed – become confident at using the Internet and get your teenager to show you what they do online**
- **Set up some ground rules and revisit these as your teenager gets older**
- **Talk about the risks and help your teenager to take appropriate action to protect themselves**

CONTACTS

- **Bullying UK**
- **CEOP**
- **Childnet**
- **Think u Know**

How Old do they have to be?

Generally, a 'child' is a person under the age of 18 and people from the age of 18 are treated legally as an 'adult'. Parents are responsible for their children until they are 18. The age at which children can be left alone is a matter for parental judgment. The following is a guide to legal age limits...

MARRIAGE AND SEX

People can get married or form a civil partnership at 16 with parental permission, or at 18 without permission. The age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual sex is 16.

MEDICAL CONSENT

At 16 teenagers can register with a GP and they can consent to treatment – i.e. they do not need parental consent to receive treatment. They have the right to confidential consultation under the age of 16 and they can receive medical treatment without their parent's permission if they are judged to be mature enough to understand all the issues involved. Doctors must honour their duty of confidentiality to their patients and so they will not tell parents of teenagers under 16 about treatment without permission. Medical practitioners are likely to encourage teenagers to talk to their parents if they are younger than 16.

BODY PIERCING AND TATTOOS

There is no minimum age for body piercing, but without parental consent the person must be considered mature enough to understand the consequences. Some places will insist that young people are accompanied by their parents. It is illegal to tattoo anybody under the age of 18.

SMOKING

At 18 young people can buy tobacco and cigarettes. Smoking cannabis or weed is illegal. It is illegal to sell cigarettes to under 18s. The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 places a duty on police officers and authorised PCSOs in uniform to seize tobacco or cigarette papers in the possession of a person apparently under the age of sixteen found smoking in any street or public place. Tobacco, products and papers will be destroyed and safely discarded in the presence of the person from whom they were seized, if practicable.

Tobacco is defined as any product containing tobacco, including cigarettes, and tobacco substitute smoking mixtures. Cigarette includes tobacco rolled in paper or any other material (for example, cigars) capable of immediate use for smoking.

From 1 October 2015 it became illegal for retailers to sell electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or e-liquids to someone under 18 and for adults to buy (or try to buy) tobacco

products or e-cigarettes for someone under 18, and illegal to smoke in private vehicles that are carrying someone under 18.

ALCOHOL

The legal age of drinking on licensed premises is 18. Sixteen and 17 year olds can drink beer or cider or wine with a meal on licensed premises if accompanied by an adult. It is an offence to sell alcohol to someone under 18 on licensed premises. It is an offence to buy alcohol for anybody under the age of 18. For children who are five or over, and under 16, there is no legal restriction on them drinking alcohol at home or on other private premises.

GAMBLING

There are some limits on people under 18 gambling and playing on fruit machines. Purchase of lottery tickets is restricted to those 16 and over. Young people under the age of 18 cannot go into a betting shop.

LEAVING HOME

Parents can't stop a child leaving by physically restraining them. Parents can apply to a court for an order for their teenager to return home, but in the event of family breakdown it is unlikely that a court would force an older teenager to return home.

WORKING

The rules are complicated around part time work for teenagers. With some exceptions the minimum age of employment is 13. Fourteen year olds can do light work, for not more than 2 hours on a school day and no more than 25 hours per week. They are not allowed to work before 7.00am or after 7.00pm. Working hours for 15 and 16 year olds are also restricted unless they are 16 and have left school. Sixteen year olds who have a National Insurance number and who have left school can work full time. The minimum wage applies from the age of 16. The minimum wage level increases for 18-21 year olds. There is no minimum wage for under 16s. There is no minimum age for babysitters, however it is an offence to leave a child alone when doing so puts him or her at risk.

POLICE AND CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

The police have powers to stop and question young people at any time - they can search them depending on the situation. A police community support officer (PCSO) must be in uniform when they stop and question young people. A police officer doesn't always have to be in uniform but if they're not wearing uniform they must show their warrant card.

Stop and question – police powers: A police officer has powers to stop young people at any time and ask them: what they're doing, why they're in an area and/or where they're

going. However, they don't have to answer any questions the police officer asks them.

Stop and search - police powers: A police officer has powers to stop and search young people if they have 'reasonable grounds' to suspect they are carrying: illegal drugs, a weapon, stolen property, something which could be used to commit a crime, e.g. a crowbar.

They can only be stopped and searched without reasonable grounds if it has been approved by a senior police officer. This can happen if it is suspected that: serious violence could take place, they are carrying a weapon or have used one, they are in a specific location or area.

Before you're searched the police officer must tell young people: their name and police station, what they expect to find, e.g. drugs, the reason they want to search, e.g. it looks like they are hiding something, why they are legally allowed to search the young person, that young people can have a record of the search and if this isn't possible at the time, how young people can get a copy.

Removing clothing - police powers: A police officer can ask young people to take off their coat, jacket or gloves. The police might ask young people to take off other clothes and anything they are wearing for religious reasons – e.g. a veil or turban. If they do, they must take the young person somewhere out of public view. If the officer wants to remove more than a jacket and gloves they must be the same sex as the young person.

From the age of 18 young people can be interviewed by police without an adult present. The age of criminal responsibility is 10. Civil injunctions related to anti-social behaviour can be made against anyone over 10. These are civil orders and if breached the young person will be dealt with in the Youth Court. With the exception of small pocket knives, shops must not sell knives to people under 16. Carrying a knife or a similar object in a public place is an offence.

SCHOOL

Young people can leave school on the last Friday in June as long as they'll be 16 by the end of that year's summer holidays. They must stay in some form of education or training until their 18th birthday if they were born on or after 1 September 1997.

BANKING

Many banks offer accounts to young teenagers and issue bank debit cards for 13 year olds. Credit is not available until the age of 18.

ARMED FORCES

16 year olds can join with parental consent and 18 year olds without.

Help for Parents of Teenagers in South Norfolk

All parents of teenagers are likely to need help at some time – this may be just talking things through with a friend, or becoming part of a parent support group, or you may want to get help from a statutory or voluntary service. You may also want to attend a parenting programme, such as Norfolk Parenting Pathways.

If you want further help you can get in touch with any of the organisations listed in the contacts section of this guide – see below.

In addition you could start by contacting your health centre, your GP, your teenagers' school, academy or college, or Norfolk County Council Children's Services.

CONTACTS

The contacts below include local and national services, information sites and helplines. For additional family information contact Norfolk County Council's Children's Service.

Action for Children is a provider of family and community centres, children's services in rural areas, services for disabled children and their families, and services for young people leaving care. Tel: 01923 361 500 Email: ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk
www.actionforchildren.org.uk

ADFAM – Families Drugs and Alcohol A national organisation working with families affected by drugs and alcohol. Provides direct support to families through publications, training, prison visitors' centres, outreach work and signposting to local support services. Tel: 020 7553 7640 Email: admin@adfam.org.uk **www.adfam.org.uk**

Adoption UK National charity run by and for adopters, providing self-help information, advice, support and training on all aspects of adoption and adoptive parenting. Tel: 0844 848 7900 **www.adoptionuk.org**

After Adoption A voluntary adoption agency providing information, support and advice to all those affected by adoption. Tel: Action Line 0800 0 568 578
Email: information@afteradoption.org.uk **www.afteradoption.org.uk**

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) A worldwide 'fellowship' open to alcoholics and their families and to anyone interested in solving a personal drinking problem or helping someone else to solve such a problem. For details of local meetings or to speak to a volunteer call the national helpline. Tel: 0800 9177 650 **www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk**

Apprenticeships give you the opportunity to work for a real employer, earn a real salary and gain a real qualification whilst gaining valuable workplace skills and experience. Anyone living in England, over 16 years old and not in full-time education can apply to be an apprentice. There are three types of Apprenticeship you can apply for depending on your current skills and qualifications: Intermediate Level Apprenticeships, Advanced Level Apprenticeships & Higher Apprenticeships. Tel: 08000 150 400 or 08000 150 600 www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Are You Getting It C-Card condoms, chlamydia screening and sexual health information for young people in Norfolk Tel: 01603 226666 www.areyougettingit.com

Autism A charity for people with autism (including Asperger syndrome) and their families providing information, support and pioneering services, and campaign for a better world for people with autism. Tel: 020 7833 2299 www.autism.org.uk

Beat – beating eating disorders Information, help and support on all aspects of eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder and related eating disorders. Tel: Youthline 0345 634 7650 Adult Helpline 0345 634 1414 Email: help@b-eat.co.uk www.b-eat.co.uk

Benjamin Foundation A Norfolk charity that supports homeless young people, works to improve family relationships and supports children and young people in schools with issues such as bullying, etc. Tel: 01603 615670 www.benjaminfoundation.co.uk

Bish UK Sex and relationship info and advice for over 14s. Straight-talking and thought-provoking website covering lots of teenage dilemmas. www.bishuk.com

BLAH Local support and youth groups for young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their sexuality. Tel: 01603 624924 www.blahyouth.co.uk

Break Break's core business is the provision of children's homes for Looked After Children plus a Therapeutic Fostering Service offering single placements, and the provision of young carer's projects. Tel: 01263 822161 www.break-charity.org

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas) A charity with consultation centres and clinics throughout the UK offering pregnancy testing, emergency contraception, counselling, abortion care, sterilisation and vasectomy. bpas works with the NHS and provides a range of reproductive health care services, free of cost to the user, on behalf of the NHS where local arrangements allow. Tel: 03457 30 40 30 www.bpas.org

Brook A national charity providing free and confidential sexual health advice and services specifically for young people under 25. Text helpline 07717 939023 www.brook.org.uk

Bullying UK Practical information and advice to young people and their parents, through the website and by email. It includes work with schools, youth organisations, police forces and health trusts, running workshops and speaking at conferences. Tel: 0808 800 2222 www.bullying.co.uk

CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) offer a range of services which support children and young people who are at risk of, or are experiencing, mental health issues and problems. See website for local telephone numbers
www.whatsthedealwith.co.uk

CEOP works with child protection partners across the UK and overseas to identify the main threats to children and young people, and coordinates activity against these threats to bring offenders to account. We protect children from harm online and offline.
Tel: 0870 000 3344 **www.ceop.police.uk** or **www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents** for more information.

Childnet A non-profit organisation working with others to 'help make the Internet a great and safe place for children.' Tel: 020 7639 6967 Email: info@childnet.com
www.childnet.com

ChildLine ChildLine is the UK's free, 24-hour helpline for children in distress or danger. Trained volunteer counsellors comfort, advise and protect children and young people who may feel they have nowhere else to turn. The website also has useful information on a variety of topics for children and young people. Tel: 0800 1111 **www.childline.org.uk**

Children's Centres provide information for parents and carers with children and teenagers
Bowthorpe 01603 594030, **Diss** 01379 651786, **Harleston** 01379 854794,
Hethersett 01953 713896, **Loddon** 01508 521849, **Long Stratton** 01508 536399,
Wymondham 01953 713896 **www.childrenscentres.info**

Children's Commissioner A website with advice and information on children's rights, for children and young people living in children's homes, foster care, boarding schools, residential special schools, or FE colleges or going through adoption.
Tel: 020 7783 8330 **www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk**

The Children's Legal Centre provides free, independent legal advice, information and representation to children, their carers and professionals throughout the UK. (Please note that the Children's Legal Centre does not provide advice on criminal offences/juvenile justice). **www.childrenslegalcentre.com**

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) a service that provides independent advice on your rights and information. Go to **www.norfolkcab.org.uk** to find your local CAB

Contact A Family Provides advice, information and support to the parents of disabled children. Also enable parents to get in contact with other families. Tel: 0808 808 3555 (Freephone helpline) Email:info@cafamily.org.uk **www.cafamily.org.uk**

Crossroads Care East Anglia Provides a range of services and support for carers in their homes or in the community. Offers trained professional carer support workers and provides flexible services to people of all ages. Tel: 01603 424098
www.crossroadseastanglia.org.uk

Disabled Parents Network (DPN) A national organisation of and for disabled people who are parents (or who hope to become parents), their families, friends and supporters. The organisation provides information, advice and peer support.
www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk

Drinkaware works to reduce alcohol misuse and harm in the UK. An independent charity, they are supported by voluntary donations from the drinks industry and from major UK supermarkets. They provide people with evidence-based information about alcohol and work with the medical community, third sector organisations, government and the drinks industry to achieve their goals. www.drinkaware.co.uk

Drinkline A national helpline service offering information, support and advice to callers worried about their own drinking or the family and friends of people who are drinking. The service can advise callers on where to go for further help and has a database for referrals to local services. Tel: 0300 123 1110

Early Help Hub Services that provide activities and support to people living in South Norfolk and making sure that they receive help as soon as possible if they begin to experience difficulties. Help Hub services might include; housing, health visitors, children centres, support through schools and youth workers, employment and money advice and more. Tel: 01508 533933 Email: earlyhelphubsouth@s-norfolk.gov.uk
www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/community

Education Otherwise provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school. Tel: 0845 478 6345 www.education-otherwise.org

Equality and Human Rights Commission The commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society. Tel: 0808 800 0082
www.equalityhumanrights.com

Families Anonymous A worldwide 'fellowship' of relatives and friends concerned about the use of drugs or related behavioural problems. Group meetings aim to help the family and friends of people with a current, suspected or former drug problem by providing mutual support and to offer a forum where experiences and anxieties can be shared. For details of local meetings contact the helpline or view through the website.
Tel: 0845 1200 660 www.famanon.org.uk

The Family and Childcare Trust aims to make the UK a better place for families, through research, campaigning and information provision, and working with government, employers and parents to reduce pressures on family life.
www.familyandchildcaretrust.org

Family Lives is a charity with over three decades of experience helping parents to deal with the changes that are a constant part of family life. Tel: 0808 800 2222
www.familylives.org.uk

Families need Fathers Information is a charity chiefly concerned with the problems of maintaining a child's relationship with both parents during and after family breakdown. They offer information, advice and support services to help parents to achieve a positive outcome for their children. Tel: 0300 0300 363 (national helpline) www.fnf.org.uk

Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG) Provides information and local contacts to support parents and their gay, lesbian and bisexual children. Tel: 0845 652 0311 www.fflag.org.uk

Family Planning Association (FPA) National charity providing information and advice on contraception, abortion, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy choices. The helpline and website have information regarding local clinics including NHS emergency contraception, genitourinary medicine (GUM), sexually transmitted infection, family planning and young people's services. www.fpa.org.uk

Family Nurse Partnership is a voluntary home visiting programme for first time young mums, aged 19 or under (and dads). A specially trained family nurse visits the young mum regularly, from early in pregnancy until the child is two. Ask your midwife or GP to be referred. www.fnp.nhs.uk

FRANK (National Drugs Helpline) A national drug helpline offering free, confidential advice, information and support to anyone concerned about drugs and solvent/volatile substance misuse, including drug misusers, their families, friends and carers. Advisers are professional trained to give straight, unbiased information. Tel: 0300 1236600 www.talktofrank.com

Gov.uk The place to find out about government services and information, including benefits, business, citizenship, justice, law, learning, employment, jobs, etc. www.gov.uk

Help You Choose is the information, advice and careers guidance website for young people in Norfolk www.helpyouchoose.org

I can be a... ICanBeA.org.uk is a website designed to educate you in the massive spectrum of opportunities we have in Norfolk and Suffolk. Providing you with Information about all the most important Industries in the East as well as a direct link with the key companies in them. www.icanbea.org.uk

iCASH (Integrated Contraceptive and Sexual Health Services) iCASH brings together family planning and GUM clinics under one roof to provide a range of free and confidential services including all methods of contraception, pregnancy testing and testing for sexually transmitted infections. iCASH clinics are in Norwich, King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth. Central booking line Tel: 0300 300 3030. www.icash.nhs.uk/our-services/norfolk iCASH clinics are also in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft. Central booking line Tel: 0300 123 3650. Website www.icash.nhs.uk/our-services/suffolk

I could is a small, dynamic charity, providing career inspiration and information for young people. They show what is possible in work and offer different ways to think about careers through free access to over 1000 personal video stories, detailed job information, plus practical tips, insight and advice. www.icould.com

Kidscape Charity committed to keeping children safe from abuse by preventing bullying and child sexual abuse. Kidscape works, with children and young people under the age of 16, their parents/carers, and those who work with them, to provide individuals and organisations with practical skills and resources necessary to keep children safe from harm. Tel: 020 7730 3300 www.kidscape.org.uk

Know Your Limits An information website about alcohol www.knowyourlimits.info

Leeway Their service was set up by a group of women who recognised the need for a refuge in Norwich and this became just the third such service of its kind in the country. They have since expanded the services they offer to meet the needs of all women, men and children who experience domestic abuse. Domestic Violence Helpline 0300 561 0077 www.leewayssupport.org

MAP Map has advisors, counsellors and youth workers who work with young people to provide the best help they can in a way that makes sense to young people. They also provide education and training for young people, parents and carers. Tel: 01603 766994 Email: info@map.uk.net www.map.uk.net

Marie Stopes offers sexual health screening, counselling and treatment around unplanned pregnancy. Helpline available 24 hours a day Tel: 0845 300 8090 www.mariestopes.org.uk

Matthew Project The Matthew Project's Under 18 Service is the Norfolk Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service Tel: 0800 970 4866. www.matthewproject.org/unity

MIND When you're living with a mental health problem, or supporting someone who is, having access to the right information, about a condition, treatment options, or practical issues, is vital. www.mind.org.uk

Missing People Offer support, advice and guidance, and practical help to families of missing people. Also runs 'Message Home', a confidential service that can provide a vital link to those left behind. Tel: 116 000 www.missingpeople.org.uk

Momentum (Norfolk) Momentum is a membership based charity that acts as an umbrella organisation to those working with young people within the voluntary and community sector in Norfolk. Tel: 01603 819135 www.momentumnorfolk.org.uk

MTM Youth Services CIC MTM is a Community Interest Company that runs youth services and clubs throughout Norfolk. Details of their current projects can be found on their website. Email: info@mtmyouthservices.org.uk www.mtmyouthservices.org.uk

National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA) A charity offering information, advice and support to children of alcohol dependent parents of all ages to address the needs of children growing up in families where one or both parents suffer from alcoholism or a similar addictive problem. Tel: 0800 358 3456 www.nacoa.org.uk

National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential and impartial advice. This is supported by qualified careers advisers. Tel: 0800 100 900 www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline A national 24-hour service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf. Tel: 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

National Self Harm Network (NSHM) A forum providing support and information for those people who self-harm, their family and professionals. Tel: 0800 622 600 www.nshn.co.uk

Nelson's Journey A local charity offering a range of services to meet the needs of children and young people affected by bereavement. Child Bereavement Support Workers work with the family to decide which services are the most beneficial. Tel: 01603 431788 www.nelsonsjourney.org.uk

Net Mums Read about your local Netmums site, and how it works, the core values that they believe in and the campaigns they've spear-headed over the years. You can also find out about their Parent Support Service and how they help thousands of mums each month. www.netmums.com

NHS A 24-hour service providing information and advice about health, illness and health services – including listings of local GP surgeries, dentists, pharmacies and opticians. www.nhs.uk

Norfolk and Suffolk Relate offers relationship counselling for couples, individuals, families and young people, as well as psychosexual therapy. Tel: 01603 625333 www.relate.org.uk/norfolk-suffolk

Norfolk Association of Disabled LGBT People is run for disabled LGBT people, or LGBT people with a long-term illness, to socialise at regular events, and also delivers training about removing the barriers disabled LGBT people face every day. www.disabledlgbt.org.uk

Norfolk Carers If you live in Norfolk and are looking after a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who is ill, frail, disabled or has a mental health or substance misuse problem, then this service and website is for you. Tel: 0808 808 9876 www.norfolkcarersinfo.org.uk

Norfolk County Council provide a range of services: keeping children safe, schools, special educational needs, young people in care, fostering and adoption, looked after children, activities for young people, family information services, home education, school travel, etc. Tel: 0344 800 8020 www.norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk LGBT Project A community based service run by and for the LGBT community, using advice, peer-support and information. They provide a wide range of support services that are relevant to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Tel: 01603 219299 www.norfolklgbtproject.co.uk

Norfolk Parenting Pathways supports families with children aged 0-14 in parts of South Norfolk. Their services include One to One Support for parents and cover various aspects of everyday parenting. This can include understanding challenging behaviour, establishing routines and boundaries, managing feelings and other challenges. The service can support families within their own homes or in a community setting. www.norfolkparentingpathways.org.uk

Norfolk Racial Equality Council is an independent charity working to address issues of inequality and discrimination. Tel: 01603 611644 www.nnrec.org.uk

Norwich and Central Norfolk Mind makes effective support available to people with, and at risk of, mental ill-health and in doing so, improve individual and community resilience to stress. Tel: 01603 432457 www.norwichmind.org.uk

NSPCC The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) is the UK's leading charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. Tel: 0800 800 500 (Adults Helpline) Tel: 0800 1111 (Children and Young People Helpline) www.nspcc.org.uk

Ormiston Families is a charity for children and young people in the East of England who provide services to support children and young people from disadvantaged communities who face the very real dangers of social exclusion. www.ormistontrust.org/ormiston-families

Samaritans support anyone in distress, around the clock, through its branches across the UK. Their service can help people before it's too late. Tel: 08457 90 90 90 www.samaritans.org

SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) Practical and emotional support to recover from rape and sexual assault whether recent or in the past. For men, women and children of any age. Norfolk SARC: The Harbour Centre Tel: 0845 456 4810 (24 hr) www.theharbourcentre.co.uk Suffolk SARC: The Ferns Tel: 0300 123 5058 (24 hr) www.theferns-suffolk.org.uk

SEND Local Offer A 'one stop shop' for all the information you need about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Norfolk. Tel: 0344 800 8020 Email: send@norfolk.gov.uk www.norfolk.gov.uk/send

Smokefree Norfolk offers stop smoking advice and support to smokers from across Norfolk who want to quit, including intensive support, group sessions, one-to-one appointments and drop-in sessions. Tel: 0800 0854 113 www.smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk

South Norfolk Council Everything you need to know about living, education and working in South Norfolk Tel: 0808 168 2000 or 01508 533633 www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

Stop It Now! Aims to protect children and prevent child sexual abuse, by raising awareness, changing attitudes and behaviour, so that people take appropriate action to prevent abuse, and seek help if they are worried about themselves or others. Tel: 0808 1000 900 (freephone helpline) Email: help@stopitnow.org.uk
www.stopitnow.org.uk

thesite.org is the online guide to life for 16-25 year-olds in the UK. They provide non-judgmental support and information on everything from sex and exam stress to debt and drugs. www.thesite.org

Think U Know The latest information on the sites you like to visit, mobiles and new technology. Find out what's good, what's not and what you can do about it. There is also a place which anyone can use to report if they feel uncomfortable or worried about someone they are chatting to online. www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Time to Change is a website with information on talking about Mental Health and explains in detail what mental health is and how it affects people/families. www.time-to-change.org.uk

Transition Information Network A website for parents, carers and people who work with and for disabled young people in transition to adulthood. Has a separate section for young people. www.transitioninfolnetwork.org.uk

Voluntary Norfolk exists to promote, support and develop volunteering and the work of the voluntary organisations, encouraging recognition and understanding of the value of volunteering. Tel: 01603 614474 www.voluntarynorfolk.org.uk

Youth Access Provides information, advice, counselling and support services to parents and young people, including drop-in, befriending and sexual health. Visit the website for information on local services. www.youthaccess.org.uk

Youth Offending Team Their aim is to prevent children and young people from offending and to help them restore the damage caused to their victims. They supervise and support young people aged 10 to 17 years who have committed offences and have received a Youth Caution, Youth Conditional Caution or an order from the Court. They also offer prevention work with young people aged 8 to 16 who have not yet offended. Tel: 01493 448120

Notes

Funding for this guide has been provided by the South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board.

The South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board (SNYAB) was established to enable local communities to meet young people's needs. With membership drawn from all the key agencies locally, together with young people themselves, SNYAB has a role in pulling together a clear picture of young people's needs across South Norfolk.

Based upon these needs, SNYAB members are currently working together to build the capacity of the local communities to respond effectively towards young people. With an emphasis on understanding all age groups and community cohesion, the goal is to enable young people to feel positive about the communities in which they live and, equally, for these communities to feel positive about their young people.

The engagement of young people themselves within SNYAB helps ensure there is adequate and sufficient local provision for young people.

Young People can get involved through their school, Youth Club or by contacting their Youth and Community workers by emailing info@mtmyouthservices.org.uk or by visiting:



South Norfolk YAB

Thanks

The South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board's 'A Parent's Guide to Understanding Teenagers' is based on a previous publication called 'A Parent's Guide to Understanding Teenagers' that was written by Oxfordshire Children's Information Service (OCIS) in conjunction with Oxfordshire Parenting Forum.

We extend our thanks to the parents, young people, youth organisations and practitioners living and working in South Norfolk and Norfolk for their help and expertise in updating the guide, and ensuring that the information is relevant to young people and parents/carers in South Norfolk. Much of the current information has also been drawn from popular websites and recent publications.

This version was edited and produced in good faith by MTM Youth Services CIC, in partnership with the South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board and its partner organisations.

The photos used throughout this guide are of actual youth projects run in South Norfolk by MTM Youth Services CIC, and the young people featured in them have given consent for their usage in publishing the positive activities available for teenagers in South Norfolk.



South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board

