East of England Family Compass – Navigating Diabetes

Annual Report 2025

Charity Number: 1200362

The charity exists to support children and young adults with diabetes in the East England through the provision of education and support services such as adventure camps, activity days and support groups for the young people and their families.

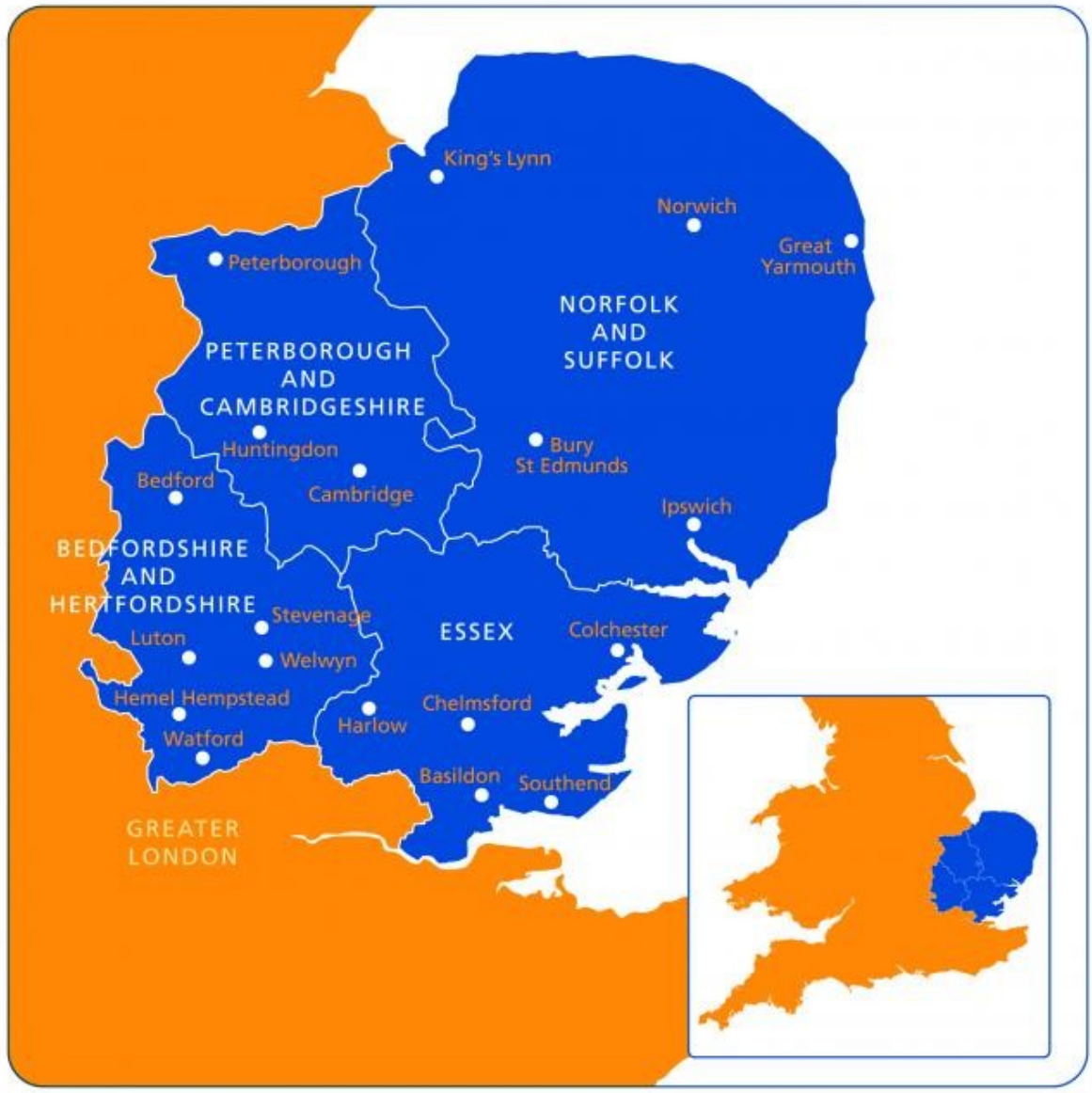


Figure 1: Map of the area covered by East of England Family Compass – Navigating Diabetes.

Introduction

Matt Williams
Network Chair – April 2026

Background

The East of England Children and Young Adult's Diabetes Family Support Network was set up and registered with the Charity Commission in 2022 to work alongside The East of England Children and Young People's Diabetes Network to support the work of the diabetes network and to provide peer/family support, education (both formal and informal) and fun activities for children, young adults and their parents or carers. The charity changed its name in 2025 to 'East of England Family Compass – Navigating Diabetes' as it was felt that this was more descriptive of the work that the charity does and helped to differentiate it from the clinical network.

The support network is managed by six trustees (listed below)

Trustee	Role
Matthew Williams	Chair
Claire Moon	Treasurer
Kate Wilson	Secretary
Tracy Assari	Trustee
Jane Baillie	Trustee
Paula Olsen	Trustee

The work of the family compass is reported on at every meeting of The East of England Children and Young People's Diabetes Network. The trustees of the charity meet four times a year via Microsoft Teams.

We have a Facebook page for families from across the region which currently has over 1400 members. We use this page to advertise the charities event events to families and to seek their opinion on service developments and future events and projects that we might wish to organise and deliver. We encourage all regional diabetes units to tell families about the work of the charity and to advertise our events to their caseloads.

Education

Facilitating and delivering education for diabetes health care professionals, patients and their families form a huge part of the work of the charity.

In 2025 these have included:

1. 2 introductory sessions about diabetes technology for those new to working in diabetes.
2. An advanced technology study day for health care professionals from across the region.
3. A training day on how we can poverty proof our diabetes services to enable us to better support families from low income and marginalised groups.
4. A type 2 diabetes study day.
5. A study day for families on diabetes technology.
6. A masterclass on lowering blood glucose targets led by the team from UCLH.
7. A seminar on the new Medtronic simplera sensor.
8. A study day for ICB commissioners on diabetes technology.
9. 2 seminars looking at current developments in diabetes research.
10. A mental health first aid course for staff from across the network

For 2026 we have the following study days in the pipeline:

1. A transition study day for health care professionals.
2. A transition study day for young people and their families.
3. Study sessions on how we manage the early diagnosis of type 1 diabetes
4. Another technology education day for families,
5. A study day for families on the opportunities we have to get involved in diabetes research in the East of England.

Diabetes Adventure Camps

When we started our network diabetes adventure camps in 2013 we had no idea quite how popular they would become. Initially we thought we might have enough demand to run one every other year. However, demand is now so great that we run 3 camps a year for the 3 different age bands: 8- 10 years of age; 11-13 years of age; 14+ age group.

Each year we have up to 75 children across all three age ranges attend the camps. Over the course of the weekend the young people make new friends, try new activities and learn how to become more independent with the management of their diabetes. Our amazing team of volunteers support them through this process while also educating themselves about what it is really like to live with diabetes 24/7.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers who give up their weekends to make these camps happen. They would not be possible without you, and the experience that you help to bring to our young people is invaluable.

Our camps continue to be incredibly popular with spaces selling out within days of going on sale. We make sure to offer priority booking to those who have not attended before as we want as many young people as possible to benefit from the diabetes camp experience.



We have been asked by the National Children and Young People's Diabetes Network to put together a training guide about how to organise and run a diabetes camp, as we are the only region in the country who offers this unique experience to our children and young people.

Network Family Events 2025

The main feedback that we receive from families is that having a diagnosis of diabetes makes them feel very isolated and alone. They are very keen to have opportunities to meet with other families living with diabetes so that they can make new friends and build a support network of like-minded people who can support them to navigate life with diabetes.

For this reason we try to organize a wide range of activities that enable families to come together to meet each other and to feel that they are not alone.

In 2025 we held:

1. An introduction to squash session accompanied by an education session on diabetes and sports.
2. 3 diabetes camps
3. A network ski trip to Bulgaria
4. A fundraising hike along the Norfolk Coastal hike that raised £17.5k for the charity.

5. A family ice skating event at the ice rink in Peterborough.



All of these events have received very positive feedback with families very keen for us to organize even more events in the future.

Cape Town Diabetes Partnership Project

In the summer of 2024, we started the recruitment process for the next phase of our Cape Town Diabetes Partnership Project.

We have selected 11 young people with diabetes and 10 diabetes health care professionals from across the region to join the team that will be travelling to Cape Town at Easter 2026.
In 2025 we continued to meet regularly to have planning and team bonding sessions. The fundraising really took off with the young people and health care professionals hosting a wide range of fundraising activities across the region. They used these events as an opportunity to raise awareness about Type 1 Diabetes and the work of the network and the charity.
We have continued to liaise with our colleagues in Cape Town, who have started to recruit the young people that will join us on camp from their caseload at Tygerberg.
We are all very excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for us a project team as we move into the final stages of planning in 2026.

Matt Williams, Kate Wilson and Jane Baillie– co-leads of the Cape Town Diabetes Partnership Project 2026



East of England Mobile Phone Project

A big focus nationally within the CYP diabetes community this year is on how services that are delivered to all families with diabetes living in England and Wales can be 'poverty proofed'. We know that children with diabetes who live in poverty are far more likely to experience poor diabetes outcomes than their more affluent counterparts. This is reflected in the low levels of diabetes technology take up in the poorest centiles within society.

The North-East Children and Young People's Diabetes Network have been working with a local charity to look at what can be done to better support these families. From the work they have done together they have come up with the concept of 'poverty proofing' the care that we deliver to all out children and young people with diabetes.

From this work they found out that one of the biggest barriers that these families faced when they were offered CGM, pumps and HCL was the fact that they could not afford a mobile phone (a device which many

of the systems on the market require the family to have) or any device through which they could upload their child's diabetes data.

They have set up a recycled technology project across the North-East and Cumbria through which one NHS trust passes on mobile phones and tablets from the trust when they have reached the end of their 3-year period of usage. These phones are then totally reset and refurbished and delivered to a local diabetes charity. Teams can refer families who are in need of a mobile phone to support diabetes management to this charity and the charity will then provide the family with a suitable mobile phone. The project has been able to access free sim cards from vodaphone. These are loaded into the mobile phones before they are given to the family. If needed a family worker from the charity will support the family to set up the phone and make sure that they know how to use the diabetes management apps that they need access.

In 2025, we started work on our own mobile project for the East of England. We were lucky to be awarded a grant from Diabetes Norfolk, to try out and pilot the scheme there.

We are in negotiations with a number of mobile phone providers and companies who refurbish phones, to assess what the possible options might be for us.

We will update you once we have more to report on the roll out of this project.

Fundraising

One of the top priorities for us as a charity is to make sure that the services that we provide such as our camps and our activity days are accessible to all regardless of their financial circumstances.

We have worked very hard to make sure that we are able to provide free places at these events for those who would not otherwise be able to afford to attend.

In order to do this we need to make sure that we have the funds available to pay for these subsidised places.

For the past 4 years the money to do this has been raised through annual fundraising hikes, where families and health care professionals from across the region have come together to take on hiking challenges across the country to raise as much money as possible for the support network. So far, we have taken on the three peaks over three years and raised £30k for the charity in the process. In 2024 we took on a 2-day hiking challenge along part of the route of Hadrian's Wall – our first multiday fundraising event as a charity.

2025 saw us stay closer to home and take on 24 miles of the Norfolk Coastal Path from Hunstanton to Wells. We had over 100 walkers join us for this event, who between them raised a staggering £17.5k.

This money will mean that we can offer even more subsidised places on our camps and activities so that they are accessible to all regardless of income.

We would like to thank the walkers and all those who sponsored them for their support.



Accounts

The network uses Barclays Bank, the details of which are registered with The Charity Commission. With accounting services provided by Hannah Elsom Consulting (35 Glover Street, Over, Cambridge, CB24 5PQ). Our accounts can be viewed by opening the links below:



These have been reviewed and certified by the charity chair and treasurer:

This is to confirm that we are happy with the supplied documentation of financial history as trustees of **East of England Family Compass – Navigating Diabetes. Charity Number: 1200362.**

Our bank account on 31st December 2025 showed us being **£48,135.70** in credit.





Claire Lynn Moon
Treasurer

Matthew Williams
Chair

Thank you

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported the work of the network this year and made all of the achievements highlighted in this report possible.

Thank you to everyone who attended any of our network events both in person and virtually over the last year. These would not be possible without the input of all members of the network who work together and support us so brilliantly in all that we do.

'If you want to go fast; go alone. If you want to go far; go together'