



Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026

Supporting Young People Award

Breaking Barriers

Ormiston Families

Breaking Barriers provides vital support to children and young people affected by the imprisonment of a family member—an often hidden and deeply distressing experience. Through specialist one-to-one support, the service helps young people understand the complexities of the criminal justice system, process difficult emotions, and develop healthier coping strategies during times of uncertainty and disruption. Over the past 12 years, the programme has supported more than 1,000 young people across East Anglia, including 85 in Norfolk and Suffolk last year alone, delivering 945 tailored sessions.

What makes Breaking Barriers exceptional is the expertise and compassion of its practitioners, recognised by a University of Cambridge evaluation. Their unique understanding of both the justice system and the emotional needs of children enables highly personalised, effective support. The service extends beyond direct work with young people by helping parents communicate openly, advocating within schools, and delivering training to professionals to improve awareness and response.

Co-production is central to the programme. Young people have shaped the service through initiatives such as “walk and talk” sessions and the creation of accessible storybooks and resource packs now used in schools, libraries and prison settings. The programme also strengthens wider systems of support, bringing professionals together to improve understanding of this often-overlooked group.

The impact is clear and measurable: 91% of young people improve emotional wellbeing, 95% reduce negative behaviours, and 96% strengthen relationships with imprisoned family members. Many remain engaged in education and report feeling safer, more confident and understood. Breaking Barriers is making a lasting difference, helping children navigate trauma and build resilience for the future.