

Norfolk Care Association Subgroup Meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 10:00am – 11:30am  
**Day Services**

**Chair:** Michaela Morris – Manager, Glaven Caring

**Facilitated by:** Caitlin Moll – Operations Manager, Norfolk Care Association

**Speakers:** Alice Dyson – Commissioning Project Officer, Norfolk County Council ([alice.dyson@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:alice.dyson@norfolk.gov.uk)) & Elly Goldsmith – Commissioning Manager, Norfolk County Council ([elly.goldsmith@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:elly.goldsmith@norfolk.gov.uk))

For our 2026 subgroups, we're trialling a new, provider and discussion-led subgroup model. We're shifting away from presentations towards peer discussion, shared problem-solving, and direct engagement with commissioners. The intention is to increase participation and value for providers.

## **Summary of discussion**

The meeting focused on celebrating recent successes in day services and exploring the potential for collective purchasing to mitigate rising costs. A significant portion of the discussion centred on the logistical and practical challenges of shared resources, such as policies, training, and collective purchasing agreements. Commissioners joined the latter half of the meeting to provide updates on the upcoming Life Opportunities Framework and "test and learn" provider alliance models. Overall, the group emphasised the need for stability and clear communication from commissioners to sustain innovation amidst financial pressures.

## **Discussion Topics**

### **Collective Purchasing and Resource Sharing**

Participants explored ways to reduce overhead costs by purchasing goods or services collectively or sharing administrative resources.

- Interest in collective purchasing for high-cost items such as training, insurance, HR support, and cleaning contractors.
- The possibility of creating a "policy bank" to share standard operating procedures and reduce the time spent drafting documentation individually.
- The potential for benchmarking suppliers to ensure providers are receiving competitive rates.
- A participant cautioned that collective purchasing could be a "minefield" if not managed correctly, as suppliers might eventually raise prices or profiteer. While

sharing is beneficial, it requires a dedicated person or organization to manage the logistics and administration.

### **Commissioning and Framework Updates**

Alice Dyson and Elly Goldsmith provided an update on the variations to the existing Life Opportunities Framework and the development of a new framework.

- The new Life Opportunities Framework is expected to be in place by April 2027, with tendering activities beginning towards the end of this year.
- New terms and conditions will focus on employment outcomes, life skills, and complex care delivery.
- A "test and learn" provider alliance model will be piloted, starting in Great Yarmouth, to explore trusted assessor models and subcontracting opportunities.

Attendees raised concerns that the long timeframe for the new framework (2027) and current funding "trimming" might stifle innovation and make it difficult to sustain effective service models in the interim. They expressed a desire to begin "test and learn" collaborations earlier and asked if the council was open to discussions outside of the initial pilot area.

### **General feedback**

- Providers overall appreciated the new peer-led meeting format as it allowed for freer discussion compared to previous presentation-heavy sessions.
- There is a clear consensus that the rising costs of training and staffing are significant pressures for small and medium-sized providers.
- Morale is bolstered by sharing success stories but remains tempered by concerns over the long-term sustainability of innovative care packages.
- There is significant interest in exploring external business support through organisations like the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).