

Norfolk Care Association Subgroup Meeting (Home Care)

16th July 2026, 10:00am – 11:30am

Chair: Christine Futter – Chair, Norfolk Care Association

Facilitated by: Norfolk Care Association

Speakers:

- Lisa McLean – Senior Commissioning Manager, Norfolk County Council
- Mandi Syrett – Head of Apprenticeships, University of East Anglia

Summary of discussion

Attendance at this meeting was lower than usual, prompting discussion around reviewing communications and engagement ahead of future subgroup meetings.

The meeting focused on two key themes: updates from Norfolk County Council on provider engagement and the Principal Provider model, and opportunities to strengthen the home care workforce through apprenticeships with the University of East Anglia. Providers welcomed the opportunity for open discussion and shared constructive feedback on communication, partnership working and the practical impact of current commissioning arrangements.

Discussion topics

Principal Provider Model and Provider Engagement

Lisa McLean outlined Norfolk County Council's intention to strengthen engagement with home care providers through more collaborative discussions from October onwards.

Providers welcomed this commitment but highlighted that any future engagement should be integrated into existing subgroup meetings where possible, recognising the limited time available to attend multiple meetings.

Discussion also explored experiences of the Principal Provider model, with providers highlighting several recurring themes:

- Communication around service transitions could be clearer and more collaborative.

- Earlier engagement with providers would help minimise disruption during transitions.
- Smaller providers continue to play an important role in delivering personalised, community-based care.
- Continuity of care and maintaining trusted relationships remain important considerations for people receiving support.
- There is value in reviewing how providers, commissioners and Principal Providers work together throughout the transition process.

Norfolk County Council acknowledged the feedback and confirmed there is a commitment to improving communication and provider engagement as the model continues to develop.

Apprenticeships and Workforce Development

Mandi Syrett provided an overview of apprenticeship opportunities available through the University of East Anglia.

Discussion included:

- Current apprenticeship programmes, including Nursing Associate and Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeships.
- Future apprenticeship development in areas including AI, data analytics and service design.
- Opportunities for employers to work with UEA to shape future apprenticeship and training provision.
- Support available for both levy and non-levy paying employers.

Providers welcomed the opportunity to strengthen links with UEA and discussed the importance of ensuring apprenticeship programmes reflect the realities of adult social care, particularly home care.

There was also discussion around raising awareness of career opportunities within social care and improving understanding of the sector amongst higher education providers.

General feedback

- Providers valued the opportunity for open discussion with commissioners and sector partners.

- There was broad agreement that improving communication and collaboration across the sector remains a priority.
- Attendees highlighted the importance of recognising the contribution of smaller home care providers alongside larger organisations.
- Workforce development, recruitment and creating clear career pathways continue to be key priorities for the sector.
- Members welcomed continued opportunities to share experiences, influence future developments and shape discussions through the Home Care Subgroup.