

Norfolk Care Association Subgroup Meeting (Residential Care (Older People 65+) & Nursing Homes)

14th July 2026, 10:00am – 11:30am

Chair: Anne Riches – Sutton Healthcare

Facilitated by: Norfolk Care Association

Speakers:

- Pauline Shaw OBE, Employer Link Service Adviser, Nursing & Midwifery Council
- Chris Jones, Assistant Director, Commissioning & Care Markets, Norfolk County Council (standing in for Claire Dixon)

Summary of discussion

The meeting focused on strengthening the residential and nursing care workforce, updates from Norfolk County Council on commissioning and funding arrangements, and provider discussion around system collaboration and operational challenges.

Providers also shared examples of good practice from across the sector, highlighting successful workforce initiatives, dementia training opportunities and collaborative working. Throughout the meeting there was a strong emphasis on improving communication, supporting professional development and ensuring providers continue to shape future service developments across Norfolk.

Discussion topics

Moments that Matter

Providers shared positive examples of innovation and workforce development taking place across the county.

Discussion highlighted:

- Positive feedback from providers who attended the Dementia Bus experience, with many recommending the training as a valuable way of improving understanding of the lived experience of dementia.
- Free dementia training and communication champion programmes available across Norfolk, with providers encouraging wider uptake.

- Successful examples of supporting people into careers in adult social care through work experience, placements and Disability Confident recruitment initiatives.
- The importance of collaborative working across organisations to strengthen recruitment, workforce development and dementia care.

Nursing & Midwifery Council Employer Link Service

Pauline Shaw introduced the Nursing & Midwifery Council's Employer Link Service and outlined the support available to providers employing registered nurses.

Discussion included:

- Free learning sessions covering professional standards, leadership, delegation, record keeping and regulatory responsibilities.
- Support available through the NMC Advice Line for employers managing concerns about registered professionals.
- The importance of addressing concerns locally wherever appropriate, while understanding when regulatory referrals may be required.
- The NMC's increased focus on supporting nurses working within adult social care.
- Discussion around promoting nursing careers within social care and recognising the value of the sector in attracting and retaining registered nurses.

Norfolk County Council Updates

Chris Jones provided updates on several commissioning developments affecting residential and nursing care providers.

Topics included:

- The updated Norfolk County Council Choice Policy and how it supports informed decision-making for people accessing commissioned care.
- Changes to payment arrangements for additional one-to-one care provision through the payment portal.
- Early information on the recommissioning of residential and nursing care contracts ahead of the current framework ending in 2028.

- Guidance for providers supporting self-funding residents whose financial circumstances change.
- Opportunities for providers to engage in future commissioning discussions as new arrangements are developed.

Provider Discussion

Providers shared experiences of current operational challenges and opportunities for improving partnership working across the system.

Key themes included:

- Feedback on the current e-brokerage process, with providers highlighting challenges around communication, referral information and response times.
- The importance of timely assessments and effective discharge planning to support safe admissions into care homes.
- A desire for stronger relationships between providers and local authority teams alongside digital processes.
- Discussion around Human Learning Systems and how providers can contribute to continuous improvement through collaborative learning and shared feedback.
- The value of creating regular opportunities for providers to influence future developments and improve services across the sector.

General feedback

- Providers welcomed the opportunity to hear directly from national and local partners on issues affecting residential and nursing care.
- Members valued the open and constructive discussion, particularly around commissioning processes and operational challenges.
- Workforce development, professional support and collaborative learning were recognised as ongoing priorities for the sector.
- Attendees welcomed NorCA's commitment to ensuring provider feedback informs future discussions with Norfolk County Council and wider system partners.