

Norfolk Care Association Subgroup Meeting - Day Services

28th July 2026, 10:00am – 11:30am

Facilitated by: Norfolk Care Association

Speakers:

- Simon Kenny – Project Manager, Working Well Norfolk (Norfolk County Council)
- Elly Goldsmith – Commissioning Manager (Day Opportunities), Norfolk County Council

Summary of discussion

The meeting explored employment opportunities for people accessing adult social care through Working Well Norfolk, upcoming changes to Norfolk County Council's Day Opportunities contractual framework, provider experiences of referrals into day services, and collaborative engagement through Human Learning Systems. Providers also shared examples of positive outcomes achieved through day services and discussed priorities for future subgroup meetings.

Discussion topics

Working Well Norfolk

Simon Kenny introduced **Working Well Norfolk**, outlining how the service supports people with disabilities, long-term health conditions and other disadvantaged groups to access and sustain employment.

Discussion covered:

- The voluntary, person-centred approach to helping individuals gain and retain employment.
- Eligibility for a broad range of participant groups, including people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, carers, veterans, care leavers and refugees.
- The "place, train and maintain" model, providing ongoing support for both employees and employers after individuals enter work.
- Opportunities for care providers to work with the programme to recruit staff, improve retention and access support around inclusive employment practices.

Employment Opportunities for People with Learning Disabilities

Providers discussed how the programme could support people with learning disabilities into meaningful employment.

Key points included:

- Confirmation that people with learning disabilities are fully eligible where they meet the programme criteria.
- Self-referral and third-party referrals are both accepted, removing the need for formal social work referrals.
- The importance of promoting careers within adult social care and challenging misconceptions about employment opportunities.
- Interest from providers in continuing conversations around supported employment pathways.

Moments that Matter

Providers shared examples of positive outcomes achieved through day services.

Highlights included:

- A young man with learning disabilities successfully completing independent travel training following a particularly difficult period after the loss of his father and subsequent move into Shared Lives accommodation.
- Positive feedback from the international recruitment support programme, with an overseas worker successfully securing employment and settling into family life in Norfolk.
- Recognition of the importance of celebrating positive stories alongside the operational challenges facing the sector.

Norfolk County Council Day Opportunities Framework

Elly Goldsmith provided an update on Norfolk County Council's new Day Opportunities contractual framework, scheduled to commence in April 2027.

Discussion included:

- The introduction of a single framework covering adults with learning disabilities, autism, mental health conditions and physical disabilities.
- A move from sessional pricing to a more consistent hourly pricing model.

- Greater emphasis on outcomes-focused support, flexibility and consistent review processes.
- Indicative procurement timelines, with the tender expected to open in October 2026 and contracts anticipated to be awarded in early 2027.
- Encouragement for providers to engage with the consultation process and submit feedback before the framework is finalised.

Provider Discussion

Providers discussed concerns regarding referrals into day services.

Key themes included:

- Perceptions that referrals were not being distributed consistently across providers.
- Concerns that some organisations appeared to receive significantly more referrals than others despite the framework operating as a spot-purchase arrangement.
- Examples from providers who reported receiving very few referrals over extended periods.
- Recognition that transparent referral processes remain an important issue for the sector.

Human Learning Systems

Norfolk Care Association introduced ongoing work with Norfolk County Council and Healthwatch to develop Human Learning Systems approaches across adult social care.

Discussion explored:

- The principles of systems thinking, relationship-based working and continuous learning.
- The importance of designing engagement processes that move beyond transactional communication.
- Provider feedback on how collaborative learning should take place, how quickly feedback should translate into action and what meaningful engagement should look like.
- A request from providers for a future dedicated session explaining Human Learning Systems and its practical implications for adult social care providers.

General feedback

- Providers welcomed updates on employment support available through Working Well Norfolk and recognised the value of creating more inclusive employment opportunities.
- Members appreciated the early engagement around the future Day Opportunities framework and welcomed opportunities to influence its development before implementation.
- Concerns around referral equity and transparency remained a key discussion point for providers.
- Attendees supported further learning and discussion around Human Learning Systems and welcomed NorCA's commitment to facilitating future engagement with Norfolk County Council.