

Annual Report 2024-25



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Welcome

The past year has been one of change and consolidation for Independence Matters CIC and Home Support Matters CIC.

We remain committed to delivering high-quality personal and community support services across Norfolk and the Waveney area of Suffolk, enabling people with learning disabilities, older people, and people with autism, dementia, and complex needs to live fulfilling, independent, and connected lives.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to listening and learning - ensuring that the experiences of those we support, our staff, and stakeholders shape the services we provide.

For the financial year ending 31 March 2025, the Group achieved a turnover of £19.1 million, reflecting steady growth despite ongoing inflationary pressures.

Our Care Quality Commission ratings remain positive, with nine services rated "Good" and improvement plans in place for the remaining services. Maintaining quality and supporting our 726 employees remain central to our success.

Strategic initiatives this year have included the development of a group-wide digital strategy, a Social Value Framework, and continued engagement with Norfolk County Council to shape sustainable, high-quality care. Listening to the perspectives of customers, colleagues, and partners ensures these initiatives meet real needs and deliver meaningful impact.

Looking ahead, we will continue to focus on sustainable growth, service quality, and innovation. By listening, reflecting, and collaborating, Independence Matters Group will continue to evolve as a connected, learning organisation - ensuring every person we support can live life their way.



Tom Thornley
Chair



Zaliha Williamson
Managing Director

I Matter
Choice Matters
Carers Matter
Colleagues Matter
Excellent Support
Matters

**Independence
Matters**



**Home Support
Matters**



**NORFOLK INDUSTRIES
FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**
Part of Independence Matters

Company Board



Measuring Social Value

We published our first [Social Impact Report](#) in 2025 to communicate the positive impact we're making across our communities, partners, and the planet.

The Report looks at the great work we do across our organisation and the social value we deliver in five key areas – health & wellbeing, independence & confidence, connected & inclusive, skills & employment, and environment & conservation.

It sits alongside our new Social Value Framework that is designed to ensure we remain rooted in our communities and continually measure and improve the wider impact we have - socially, economically, and environmentally. We're excited to build on this foundation and grow our impact year after year.



Leadership and Partnership

2025 saw significant changes to the Board with three long-serving senior colleagues leaving the organisation.

The Board had in place clear succession planning, which ensured a smooth transition in leadership, maintaining continuity and stability during this period of change. We have welcomed new directors to the Board and continue to strengthen governance to support the Group's future direction.

We very sadly lost our Chair, **Karen Hester**, to illness in January 2025. She was a huge character and her belief in our potential was unwavering. Her legacy will live on in the work that we do.



Following the loss of Karen, **Tom Thornley** moved up to become Group Company Chair having joined the Board in 2022. His extensive commercial experience makes him ideally placed to ensure we continue to thrive as a Group.

Stakeholder Director, **Sylvia Barrett-Jones**, stepped down from the Board. She was a huge advocate for customers and family carers, and we will miss the energy she brought to the role.



Our founder and Managing Director, **Sarah Stock**, retired from the Group in 2025. Her leadership and vision were instrumental in creating the trusted and respected organisation we are today.



We welcomed **Zaliha Williamson** as our new Managing Director in addition to her role as Finance Director. With a strong background in financial and business management she is well placed to take us forward as a Group.

Financial Performance

The Group delivered a **turnover of £19.1 million** in 2025, representing a 2.68% increase on the previous year (£18.6 million). Growth was driven primarily by Home Support Matters, whose turnover increased following the commencement of the new East Principal Provider Contract, while Independence Matters experienced a slight reduction, reflecting market conditions and adjustments in service delivery.

Profit before taxation for the year was **£138,988** (2024: £579,699), with Independence Matters contributing **£113,070** and Home Support Matters **£25,918**. The decrease in profitability reflects significant financial pressures across the social care sector, where funding levels often struggle to keep pace with rising staff costs, which represent the largest proportion of our expenditure.

These pressures, combined with operational demands and increased recruitment costs, have impacted margins while maintaining high-quality service delivery.

Despite these challenges, the Group maintains a strong balance sheet, underpinned by cash-backed reserves and no external borrowings. This provides confidence in liquidity, operational resilience, and the ability to reinvest surpluses into staff development, service innovation, and strategic initiatives.

Financial management throughout the year has focused on monitoring key performance indicators, controlling costs, and mitigating risks associated with contract delivery and workforce pressures. The transition from block funding to contract-based arrangements with Norfolk County Council strengthens accountability while providing greater clarity on funding for service delivery.

Overall, the Group remains in a solid financial position, equipped to navigate sector pressures, deliver high-quality care, and continue reinvesting surpluses for the benefit of our customers, colleagues, and the communities we serve.

Financial Overview

For the year ended 31st March 2025

TURNOVER

£19.1M

▲ 2.68%
(£18.6MM)

PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION

£138,988

Independence Matters **£113,070**
Home Support Matters **£25,918**



Strong balance sheet ensures liquidity, resilience and capacity to reinvest

A Digitally Enabled Organisation

Digital Transformation is underway and while the past year has seen continual change, with the main focus for the year laying the foundations for **Project Catalyst**.

Project Catalyst is underway, and we have successfully selected our new digital care platform (**Access**) which will bring together our care plans, rostering, policies and procedures, and much more, to a fully digital first approach.

The work your team has achieved has made the Digital side of the business run much more smoothly

Over recent months we have begun to identify the key requirements and needs of the new platforms while building your project team who will be key to delivering the new system from 2026 and beyond.

Throughout 2024/25, we have completed our transition to **SharePoint**, with our new **Intranet** the central hub for all information and access to our teams' individual areas. We already see on average over 100 colleagues accessing the Intranet daily, providing access to our policies, primary documents, news, and information.

The intranet is so easy to use

We have standardised the way we login to our core applications, including introducing a **Single-Sign-On** approach for **myOracle** and **Access**, reducing the number of separate logins accounts and passwords we all have to remember.

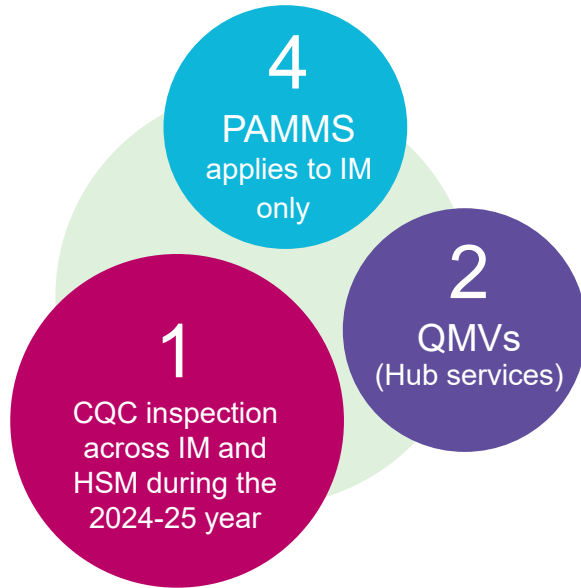
Digital Timecards have been introduced across all of our services, removing a dependency on a paper based, manual process while providing greater access to information, data and trends to understand our resource needs in a way never previously possible.

By putting **data** at the heart of our organisation, we aim to drive efficiency and maintain excellent quality of care. To support this, we've introduced **operational data reports** that give teams access to key performance and service-level insights, helping us understand how the company is performing.

We continue to look at ways to increase access to **digital support**, in 2025 we registered our 10,000th request for digital assistance since we implemented our own internal **Service Desk** in January 2024. This is just the start, having a greater understanding of what, why and how our teams need support will help continually drive change to how we onboard, train and support our teams.

Things have so noticeably changed in IM's Digital World

Training and Quality



The benefits of Power BI

We were keen to learn more about Power BI (Microsoft's business analytics platform) and how it could benefit us and the services we support.

Being able to view real time data and interactive reports means we can efficiently see information to inform how we support, improve training and policies. Having instant insight ensures we make better use of the data available for decision making.



Developing our PBS offer

The T&Q team led a project with an external company, Supporting Positively, to review our approach to Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).

This resulted in the development and implementation of a new PBS referral process, a review of our policies and procedures, and improved our knowledge and skills to complete capable environment audits.

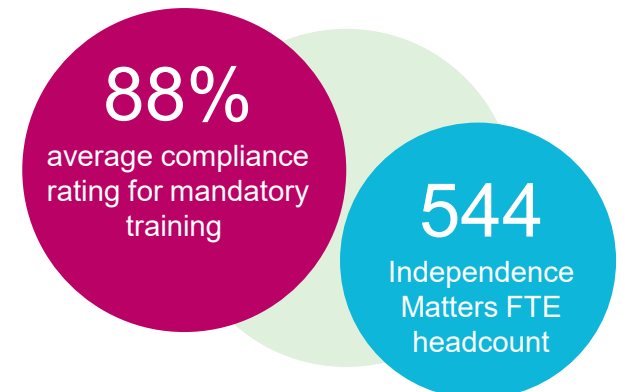
We now have a better understanding of how active support, and the right surroundings can improve quality of life for individuals, with customers and colleagues feeling the benefits.

Delegated healthcare activities

Since joining the team two years ago, Sam Loosely has continued to improve the medication training and policy, developing an enhanced medication training pathway for support workers and managers.

During 2023 there were guiding principles launched regarding delegated healthcare activities and these were refreshed in November 2024.

Sam has been developing an overarching policy as well as policies for each activity which are steadily being issued. The challenge remains with accessing the right training and competence sign off from the delegating health professional. Sam is part of the local authority meetings as well as national groups.



Independence Matters Services

During 2024 – 2025 Independence Matters empowered and well-trained colleagues proudly continued to provide care and support to **767 customers** ensuring active involvement in decision making and delivering many great outcomes tailored to individual needs, preferences and goals.

Health and wellbeing has been supported with customers actively taking part in exercise and movement sessions and attending accessible sporting events. Customers have been supported to learn about individual dietary requirements for health-related conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, and health improvement teams have been promoted and warmly welcomed to our services.

The year has seen an increase in the independence and confidence of many individuals. Our supported living and floating support services have supported people to continue to live independently promoting routine and life skills such as budgeting.

Respite /replacement care services played a key role in supporting individuals on their journey towards independent living. Across all services, we focused on building self-esteem through achievable goals and

celebrating daily successes, recognising that success looks different for everyone.

Linking closely to the increase in independence and confidence the past year has seen customers developing day to day skills, the skills they require to move towards employment or remain in employment.

Some customers shared their own skills by contributing to sessions helping their peers to learn new skills. Others attended training courses to support their own personal development.

Delivering many great outcomes tailored to individual needs

The experiences we delivered fostered adaptability, problem-solving, timekeeping, and task management skills. It has been a pleasure to see customers proudly applying these abilities in meaningful ways - promoting environmental and conservation awareness, collaborating with schools and the National Trust, and participating in community litter-picking initiatives.



Beyond community connection and engagement, it has been a true joy to witness customers actively participating in decisions about their own lives, our services, and their rights and services by attending external forums.

This activity was supported by our Working Together groups, which co-produced and promoted accessible information to aid decision-making. These efforts culminated in an annual celebration of collaboration, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Attleborough Market Stall

Customer and colleagues at Attleborough Community Hub run a stall on the local market, selling handmade items and pre-loved clothes. The market is located at the very heart of the community in the centre of town, and the group attends every week, come rain or shine.

The stall is popular with locals and customers benefit from the social interaction. They also gain experience of handling money and the thrill of making a sale! The Hub's craft group make garden ornaments for sale on the stall with profits going to back to the Hub via their amenities fund.



Celebrating Together

Along with many of our services, our Dementia Community Hubs recognised the 80th anniversary of VE Day with wartime music, dress and an opportunity to dance. Celebrating notable days brings customers enjoyment and engagement and we are proud of the efforts put in by colleagues to make these special.

All Aboard for Wellness

The Wellness on Wheels bus dropped by Great Yarmouth Community Hub in the summer. The bus delivers a health, support, and wellbeing service and is a great way to identify health problems early. Customers enjoyed having a health check done onboard and everyone was given a clean bill of health.

Sporting Day Success

We took part in the 42nd running of the Joan Mann Special Sports Day at RAF Mildenhall USAF base. Customers team up with serviceman at the event, and Dillon from Ohio made sure we had a wonderful day taking part in various sports. Medals were won by Stephen and Simon who got to stand on the podium. Chloe was interviewed by ITV and Justin enjoyed chatting with an officer from Memphis. He was very impressed that she came from the same place as Elvis!



Grease is the Word!

Drama group The TAPS performed 'Grease' to a packed house of family carers and friends at Toftwood Social Club. There were lots of pre-show nerves but with so many experienced performers in the group, and support from colleagues, they put on a great show – their 20th since the group was formed.

Drama is very popular with our customers who love the excitement of being in the spotlight and playing different characters. Learning lines, understanding timing, and performing in public can all be challenging but are a great way to build confidence and boost self esteem.

Case study George: Museum Volunteer

Supported Living customer, George, volunteers every weekend at Flixton Aviation Museum. He loves aircraft and learning about aviation, so this is a dream job for him.

He began volunteering in 2021 and runs the gate at the museum with support worker Tony. He is completely committed to the role and never fails to attend.

Volunteering at the museum provides George with real world learning opportunities, including time keeping, teamworking, and engaging with the wider community.

He enjoys being part of the team at the museum and the interaction he has with the public. He particularly likes sharing his enthusiasm for aviation with the other volunteers and visitors to the museum.



George's supervisor, Gary Stebbing, says he is making very good progress and is always enthusiastic. He confirms the museum is delighted to have George continue with his gate volunteering duties for the foreseeable future.

He is completely committed to the role and never fails to attend



Celebrating 40 years at Dereham

We celebrated the 40th anniversary of Dereham Community Hub with a 1980s themed event that saw customers and their families join colleagues for a day of singing, dancing, dressing up, and having fun.

Officially opened by the Mayor of Dereham, Councillor Ray O'Callaghan, the event was an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of former colleagues who helped shape the Hub into the vibrant, welcoming place it is today. These included the Hub's very first manager, Peter Crate, who helped cut the opening ribbon alongside newly appointed manager, Charlie Collier.



Home Support Matters



Home Support
Matters

We're here because we care

Reablement Tender Successes

Home Support Matters secured two significant contracts, marking a major step forward in our commitment to delivering high-quality reablement care across our communities.

In July 2024, following a competitive tender process, we were awarded a framework contract by **Norfolk County Council** for the provision of reablement care under the **Caring for Better Outcomes** initiative. Referrals began in October 2024, enabling us to support individuals in regaining independence after hospital discharge or periods of ill health.

In January 2025, **Suffolk County Council** invited homecare providers operating under the Suffolk Community Framework to submit bids for **reablement service provision**. We submitted a tender and were successfully awarded the contract for the Waveney lot, reinforcing our presence and impact in the region.

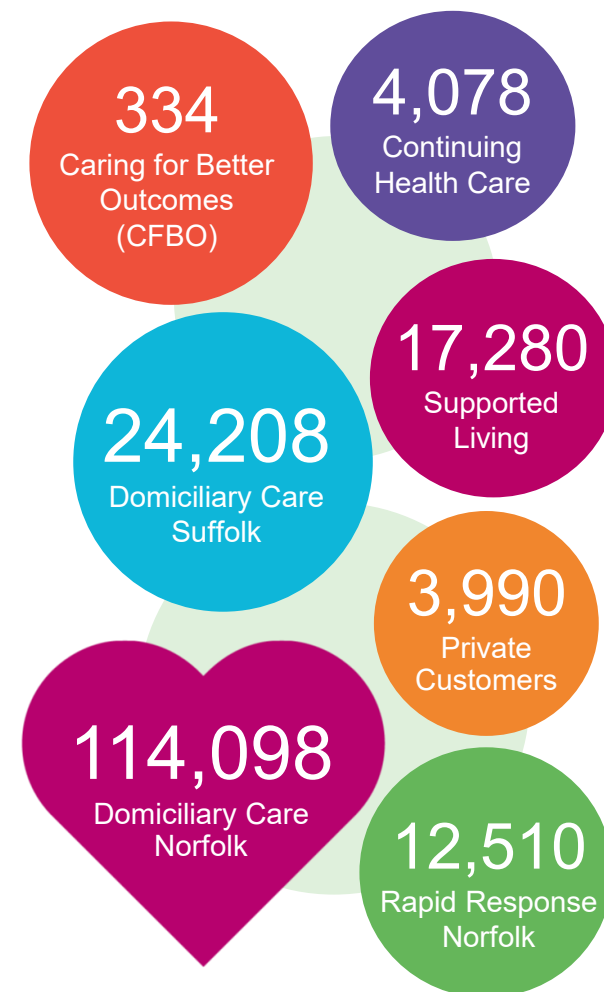
Why Reablement Matters

Reablement is a short-term, intensive support service designed to help individuals regain daily living skills and confidence following illness, injury, or hospital discharge. Unlike traditional homecare, it focuses on enabling people to do things for themselves, promoting independence and reducing long-term care needs.

These tender wins are not just contractual achievements - they represent our ongoing dedication to:

- **Empowering individuals** to live independently and with dignity.
- **Reducing pressure** on hospitals and long-term care services.
- **Improving outcomes** for customers through personalised, goal-oriented support.

By securing these contracts, Home Support Matters can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we support, working collaboratively with local authorities and health partners to deliver compassionate, effective care and support.

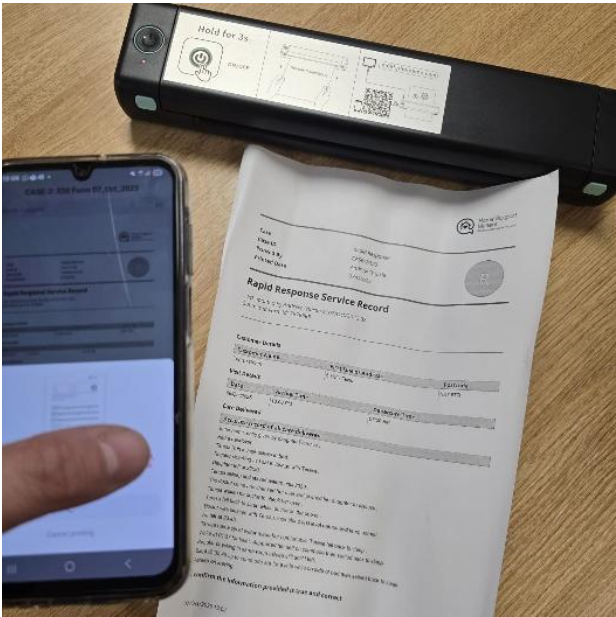


Introduction of Portable Printers

Our Norwich Rapid Response team are deployed as a one-off intervention to provide emergency care to individuals in crisis across Norfolk.

Previously the team has always left a paper report with the individual on the care/support provided and taken a carbon paper copy as evidence of their visit.

Responding to a team member’s feedback, we introduced portable thermal printers enabling reports to be completed on a mobile device and printed on site. The printed report is left in the individual’s home and a copy scanned to the office team.

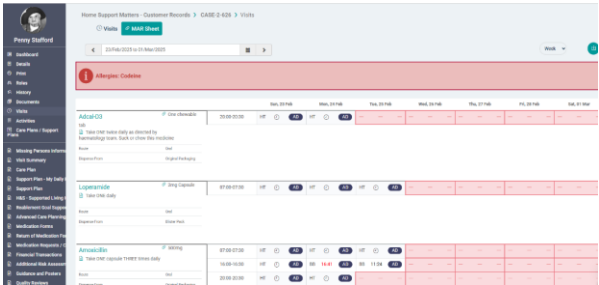


Roll Out of eMARs and Digital Logbooks

We completed the final phase of our digital care plan transformation project by rolling out electronic Medication Administration Records (eMARs) and digital logbooks.

These innovations enhance efficiency, accuracy, and compliance across the business. To ensure a seamless transition, the rollout included comprehensive employee training, a phased geographical implementation, and robust technical support.

Key benefits include reduced medication errors, improved record-keeping, and access to real-time data for better care coordination.



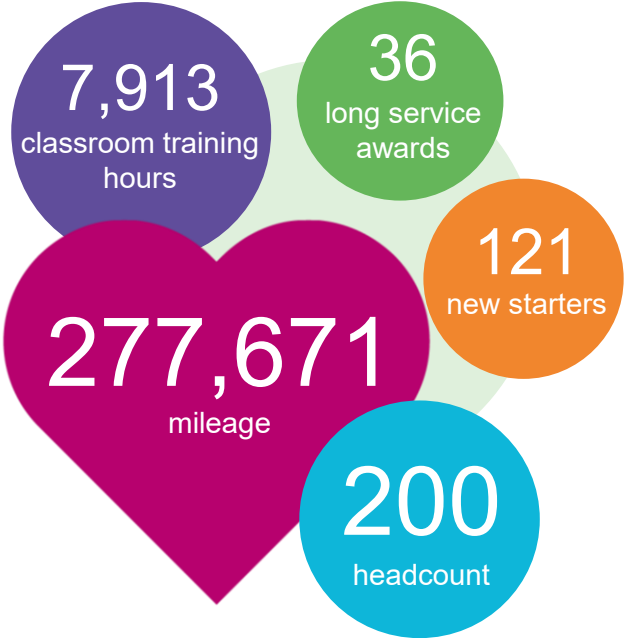
Transitioning to LED Lighting

As part of our commitment to sustainability and efficiency, we transitioned to LED lighting in our Beccles office. LED lights offer significant benefits, including reduced energy consumption, lower maintenance costs, and a longer lifespan compared to traditional lighting.

Electronic ID Badges

It is essential for our care and support workers to identify themselves to customers during their shifts. However, lanyards with ID badges can get in the way when providing care and support and colleagues often remove them whilst with customers.

The introduction of electronic ID badges means this is no longer an issue and makes life easier for everyone. The badge is held on the worker’s mobile device alongside digital care plans and rosters. This change offers greater data protection, reduces cost, and supports Home Support Matters carbon footprint reduction pledge.



Case study Royston – the circle of social care

Former bakery worker, Royston, suffered a motorcycle accident that left him with life threatening injuries and ongoing health problems.

His experiences in hospital, and the care he received during his recoveries, changed his perspective on life and acted as the catalyst for a career change.

Seeking a role that would give back for all the care and support he had received, he applied to Home Support Matters. He joined the team two years ago and hasn't looked back since.

He describes Home Support Matters as the most supportive employer he's ever had and gets deep fulfilment from building meaningful relationships with customers.

His ability to relate to their struggles and sharing his own journey of overcoming adversity is a source of strength for those he supports.

We are proud to have him as a colleague - his story is a testament to the power of resilience and serves as an inspiration to everyone around him.



Norfolk Industries



New equipment supports major contract

We made a significant investment in new machinery to support our business relationship with the UK's largest pet retailer, Pets at Home. The new compressed baler works in conjunction with a new metal detector which ensures the product is safe and contamination free.

Pets at Home branded flaked paper compressed bales are now in stores across the UK. We are also another step closer to meeting our green goals of reducing waste and plastic packaging on our loose fill products.

Developing a flexible skill set

Norfolk Industries manager, Sharon, successfully trained to use the forklift truck and can now carry out loading and unloading tasks in the factory. Having an extra person qualified to operate the truck gives the team greater flexibility and reduces business risk by providing cover for late collections and deliveries as well as absences.

Socially responsible products

We continue to make a positive impact on the environment by utilising recycled and repurposed waste into our products. With growing sales, we recycled a total of 170 tonnes of material into product during the financial year, including teabag and coffee filter paper, recycled newsprint, cleaning cloth waste, and cotton waste.

Farewell to colleagues

It was the end of an era as two long term colleagues retired from the business. They had been with Norfolk Industries for a total of 82 years, one person in the factory and the other in the office. They had seen many changes over the years and will be much missed.



Listening and Learning

At Independence Matters Group, listening and learning are at the heart of what we do. We seek to understand the experiences of the people we support, their families, our colleagues, and other stakeholders, using these insights to shape services that evolve and improve over time.

Engaging with Customers

Our customers' voices guide our work. Through our Working Together Groups, we create regular opportunities for customers to share their experiences and ideas.

Together, we co-create services that meet real needs. Each year, our Working Together Event brings customers and colleagues together to celebrate achievements, exchange learning, and agree on priorities for the year ahead.

Engaging with Colleagues and Stakeholders

Our colleagues are central to our success. We encourage open dialogue through the Colleagues Advisory Board, consultations, and everyday interactions, ensuring that knowledge and insights flow freely across the organisation. We also work closely with key stakeholders - including Norfolk County

Council and Adult Social Services - so their perspectives inform decisions and long-term planning.

Learning and Improving

We turn feedback into action. Data, audits, and Care Quality Commission assessments highlight both strengths and opportunities for growth. Where improvement is needed, we develop targeted plans and share learning across the Group, so positive change spreads throughout the organisation.

By combining listening, reflection, and collaboration, we create a system that adapts and improves continuously. While we are not perfect, every decision and improvement is guided by the experiences of the people we support, our colleagues, and the wider community, helping us grow together as a connected, learning organisation.

Listening and learning are at the heart of what we do



Working Together Groups



Sharing our Easy Read expertise

We continued to develop our understanding of easy read and share our learning with others. Working Together Groups (WTGs) collaborated with NCC and Making It Real Board (MiR) to support their production of easy read documentation. Everyone felt rewarded to have their ideas welcomed and their expertise valued.

WTG Co-Ordinator, Maria, delivered an 'Easy Read Best Practice' training session to NCC colleagues which was really well received.

Supporting others to create accessible information directly benefits people with disabilities and we were delighted to do this.



Celebrating Co-Production Week

We joined other providers and services at The Forum to celebrate Co-production Week. This feel-good event gives us the opportunity to network with other organisations and talk to visitors.

We spoke to lots of people, telling them about what we do, the importance of co-production, and how working in partnership has positive outcomes for everyone. We were proud to give away our handmade merchandise of keyrings and badges with our logo on.

Coming together as one community

The County WT Board organised the annual Working Together Event, which brings together customers and colleagues from across Independence Matters.

Board members Rachael, Jim and Joseph did lots of research, created a checklist of accessibility requirements and visited different venues to find one which best suited our needs.

After nine months of planning, the event was a huge success. 60 colleagues and customers enjoyed a fun and inclusive day of learning, focused on our green agenda and the things we can do to reduce waste and improve sustainability.



Colleagues Matter

Colleague Engagement

Actively engaging with colleagues gives everyone the opportunity to keep connected with the business; providing opportunities to ask questions and influence our future.

Pay award briefings took place across the county to share Independence Matters' pay principles and explain how the annual pay uplift is passed through to the pay award budget.

Our first Management Briefing Day brought together manager colleagues from across the Group to hear about our 'Plan on a Page'. The event included interactive, speed dating style workshops giving everyone a chance to engage with topical projects.



Online GP service

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our colleagues is a key priority. With many of our frontline colleagues working shift patterns, and in the community, we understand that trying to book a GP appointment can be tricky.



A new online GP service was added to our existing range of employee benefits. This gives colleagues access to book online appointments 24/7 with appointments available from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week (excluding UK bank holidays) making it much easier and quicker to get medical advice when needed.

Modernising our recruitment process

After the successful introduction of our applicant tracking system (Logic Melon) in 2023 we have expanded the system and added an Onboarding module.

The new module streamlines the recruitment process further and offers the successful applicant a quick and easy digital platform for completing their compliance checks. The new Onboarding module is faster and allows recruiting managers to track how their new starter is progressing.



The Future Matters

Looking ahead, Independence Matters and Home Support Matters remain committed to delivering high-quality, sustainable care while navigating the ongoing financial and operational pressures affecting the social care sector. The balance between rising staff costs — which represent the largest proportion of our expenditure — and the funding available for services remains a key challenge.

Our strategic focus for the year ahead includes:

Digital transformation: Continuing to implement systems that enhance operational efficiency, workforce planning, and support quality, enabling us to do more with available resources.

Service innovation and commissioning: Working closely with Norfolk County Council to align service provision with strategic priorities, ensuring value for money and sustainable delivery models.

Workforce development: Strengthening recruitment, retention, and training initiatives to address workforce pressures and ensure that staff are supported, motivated, and equipped to deliver outstanding care.

Social value and impact: Embedding our Social Value Framework to demonstrate the measurable benefits of our work for customers, staff, and communities.

The Group's strong financial position, cash-backed reserves, and ongoing partnership with Norfolk County Council provide confidence in our ability to navigate these challenges while continuing to invest in people, services, and innovation.

Despite sector-wide uncertainties, Independence Matters is well-positioned to deliver sustainable, high-quality care, improve operational efficiency, and maintain its role as a trusted and innovative provider.

By carefully balancing costs with strategic investment, we will continue to reinvest surpluses into our services, strengthen our workforce, and maximise positive impact across the communities we serve - demonstrating that the future truly matters.



Well positioned to deliver sustainable, high-quality care



Independence Matters Group

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