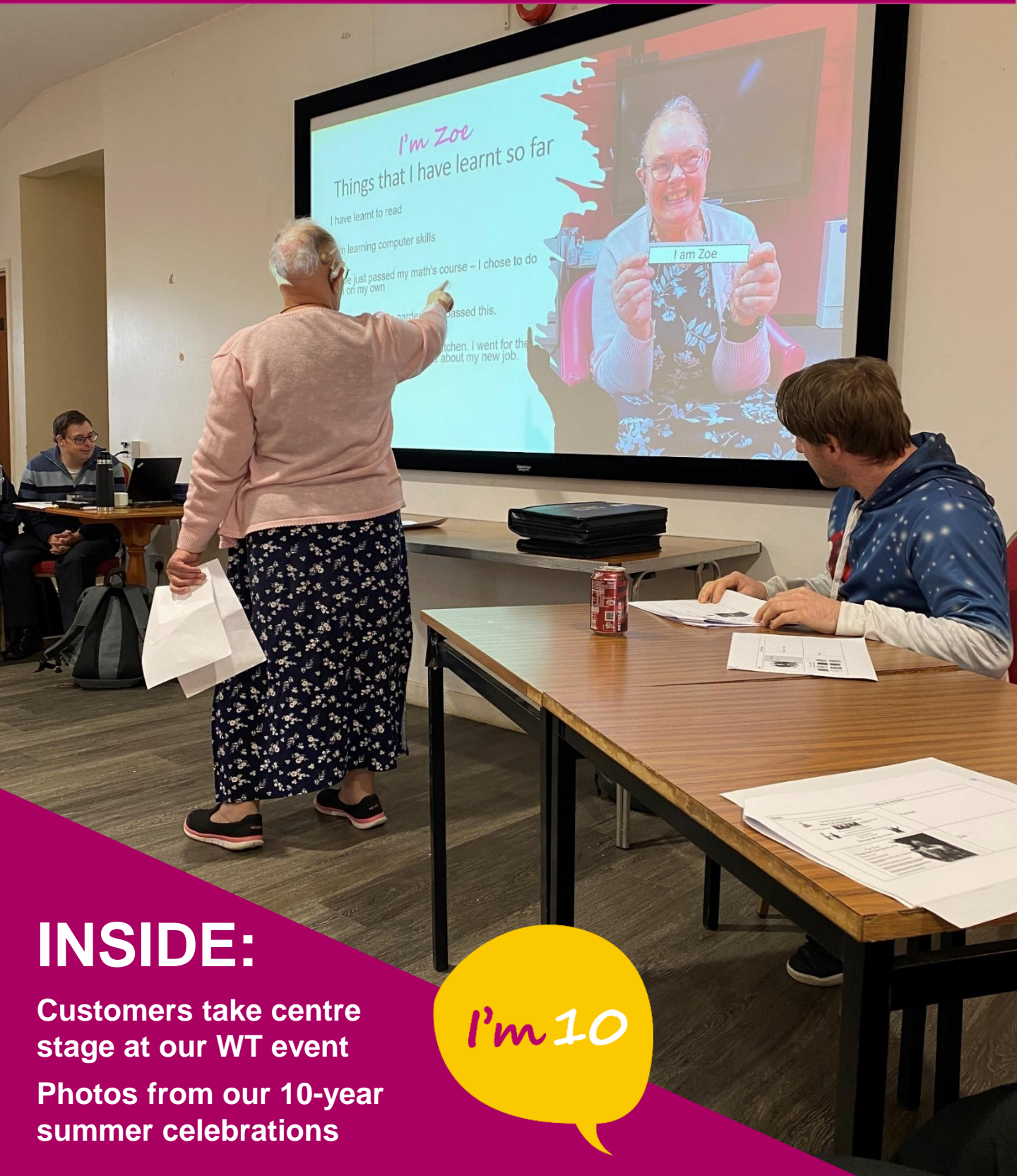


# News Matters

Autumn 2023

Independence  
Matters

*'the life you choose...'*



## INSIDE:

Customers take centre stage at our WT event

Photos from our 10-year summer celebrations

*I'm 10*

# Welcome to News Matters



Hello everyone and welcome to the Autumn edition of News Matters.

What a fantastic edition this is. It is packed full of our customers stories, voices and achievements. It is just brilliant that people are being supported to be the best that they can be and as independent as possible through learning new skills. Wonderful to read all about Harry's independence journey.

Talking of journeys, I do hope that the Adventure for Dementia gang are fully recovered, thank you for flying the pink flag for such a great cause ☺

The Working Together Event this year was inspiring, it takes courage to stand up in front of others and as part of the audience it was both informative and just joyous to watch. I also know how much work goes into putting on events such as these to ensure that they run smoothly so everyone who participated should be very proud of themselves; it really was a joint collaborative effort.

We are also great at having fun together and this shines through in the Halloween pictures and the amazing 10-year celebration fetes that took place over the summer. It was a privilege to be part of them, lots to be proud of and lots to look forward to.

Finally, it is good to see that Norfolk Industries got its resurfaced forecourt, it was worth the wait!

Sarah Stock, Managing Director

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## News in Brief



Norfolk Industries is now selling its small and medium animal houses through online selling platform Etsy. These make the perfect gift for small pets and are a good fit with Etsy's target market.



Colleagues from Holt attended an event run by Volunteering Norfolk to promote volunteering opportunities in our Community Hubs. Despite attendance being impacted by bad weather, it was a great opportunity for networking and to meet other service providers that may benefit our customers,

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# Our AGM and Annual Report

Around 40 colleagues joined the Independence Matters Group's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 16 November.

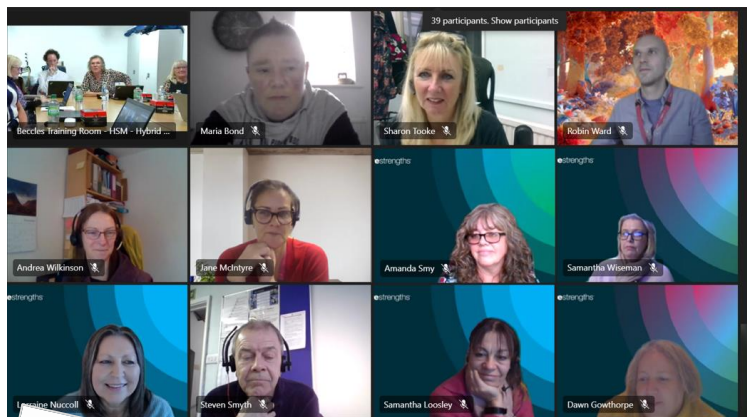
The Board met at Home Support Matters offices in Beccles and made full use of the new hybrid meeting room technology, with colleagues joining online via Teams for the AGM.

The AGM gives colleagues an opportunity to hear directly from the Board to learn about our last 12 month's performance, as well as sharing in celebrating the year's successes and ask any questions and it was lovely to see it so well attended with colleagues from across the Group.

Our Annual Report is published to coincide with the AGM and provides a look back at the highlights and achievements for the year.

It's a great way to reflect on the year gone by and be proud of everything we have achieved. If you've not already seen it, it's available to view online.

[\*\*VIEW THE 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT HERE\*\*](#)



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# Working Together

## 2023 event



Customers, colleagues and invited guests came together on 10 November for our annual **'Working Together Event'**. Held at Dereham Town FC the event was led by customers from our Working Together groups (formerly stakeholder groups).



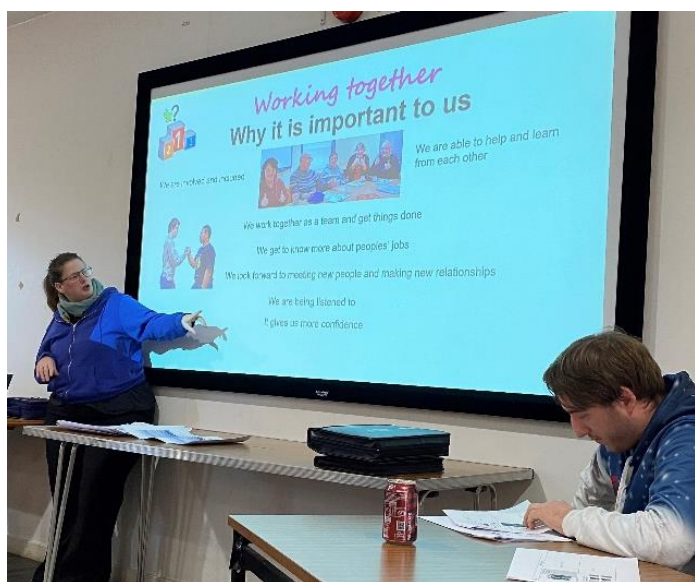
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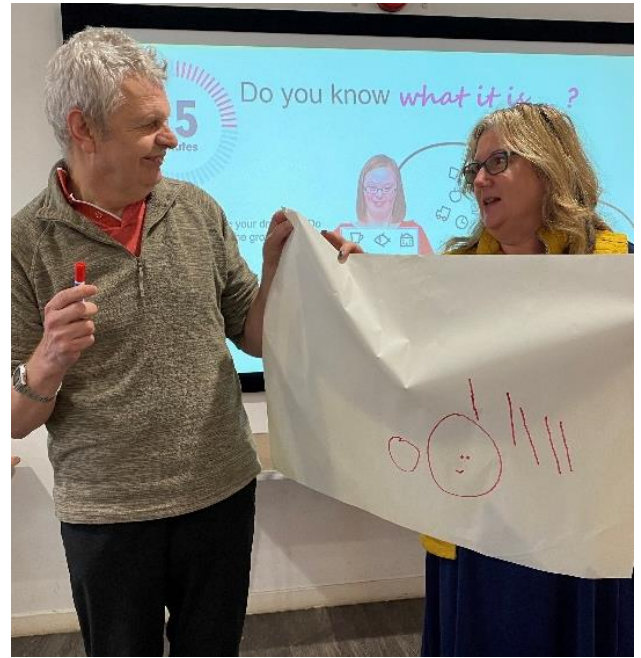
The presenting team of Braedon, Stephen, George, Rachael and Zoe (pictured above) led the morning sessions to an audience of over 50 people. They talked about why working together is important to them, with a strong emphasis on having their voices heard and feeling valued and respected.

They also shared their goals and visions for the future, one person shared that cage shark diving is on their 'Bucket List'! Everyone did a fabulous job, and their individual stories were so inspiring that many people were crying happy tears!



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Attendees were invited to take part in a customer-led 'Easy Read' activity to show people how difficult this is and how hard people work to create these documents. Everyone agreed that there is 'nothing easy about easy read'.



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The event concluded with an opportunity for everyone to network and visit the various stands. A big thank you to all our guests; Amanda from Community Dental Services, Sharon Hester from IPRS and Heidi from Victim Support.

Thank you also to our trainers Kev and Phil for providing fun ways to learn about hand cleaning and how far a sneeze can travel!



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Our Working Together Co-Ordinator, Maria Bond, worked with customers ahead of the event and supported them on the day. She said: "Presenters George, Rachael, Zoe and Braedon, along with Stephen who operated the laptop, all did an absolutely fabulous job and should be incredibly proud of themselves.

"You could see each individual's confidence grow as the day went on, they showed great teamwork and gave each other peer to peer support when they were feeling a bit nervous. I am totally amazed by the group and I think that everyone who attended the event will be 'buzzing' for quite some time to come, a brilliant day. THANK YOU and well done Working Together groups, you are all stars!!"



**Working Together**  
2023 event

## Dereham Working Together Group

Customers from Dereham's Working Together group participated in the event supported by Assessment Support Officer, Ruby Winnifriith. They showcased their Gateway learning achievements through a group presentation and manned a display stand they put together themselves.



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# Enjoying the late sunshine

Summer took a long time to arrive this year, but hot weather finally arrived in September! Customers at William Day Centre made the most of the sunshine playing games in the garden and enjoying an ice cream under their new pink gazebo.



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## Beach Clean Up

Back in September we teamed up with colleagues from Home Support Matters to host clean up events on the beaches at Pakefield and Gorleston.

The events took place on National Clean Up Day and support our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and protecting the environment.

Colleagues from across the IM Group were joined by friends, local residents and canine companions as well as Scouts and Brownies working towards their community badges. Over 25 individuals took part and enjoyed lovely weather, with fish & chips and swimming in the sea after the litter picking was done.

Big thanks go to local company Radical Waste for their support in disposing of all the bags of rubbish collected on the day. We couldn't have done it without you!

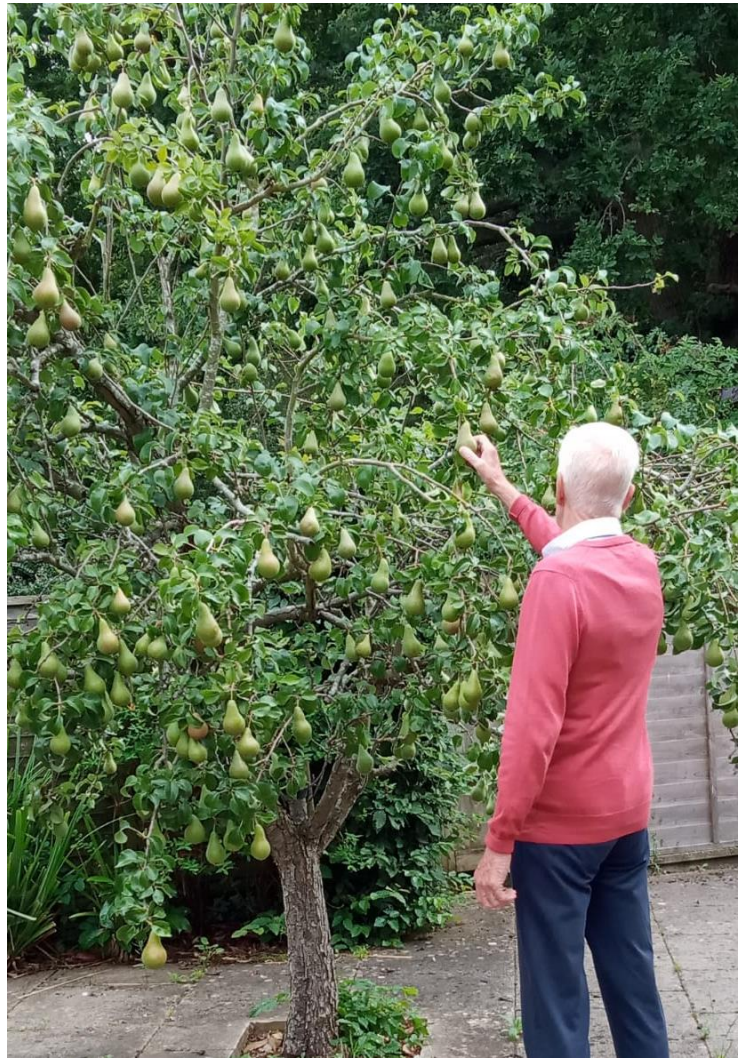


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# Harvesting a bumper crop

Customers at Crossroads have been making the most of their garden space during the summer and using it to grow their own produce. Clearly the crops have enjoyed the wet weather more than we did - just look at the bumper crop of pears on that tree!



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# Adventure for dementia

A team linked to Independence Matters has taken on the Three Peaks Challenge in aid of dementia. The challenge requires the highest mountains in Scotland (Ben Nevis), England (Scafell Pike) and Wales (Snowdon) to each be climbed within a 24 hour period.

The team, led by Rosewood support worker Shani's husband, attempted the feat back in August and were suitably turned out in pink Independence Matters t-shirts and equipped with an Independence Matters flag to fly from the top of each peak.

Shani told us: "The boys started with the highest mountain, Ben Nevis, in awful conditions but powered through to the top. However, when they got to Scafell Pike a severe weather warning was in place and they were told no climbing, which put a big dampener on everything."



"They then travelled to Snowdon where two of the lads got injured, one made it 800 meters up before also getting injured. The travelling between each mountain was a feat in itself as their van broke down - it was like everything was against them."

Despite the setbacks, an amazing £3,785 was raised and the team would like to thank everyone for their support including Bar 1 in Gorleston whose donation bucket raised £250, and Daniel Sheales who matched this to make it £500. Thanks also go to Norfolk Vehicle Hire and Rex Camper Rentals for their support, fuel and transport, plus all the numerous friends and family members who donated via their Just Giving page. Amazing! 😊

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# Harry's independence story

**We love this story shared by PAS customer Harry who takes us on his journey towards greater independence**

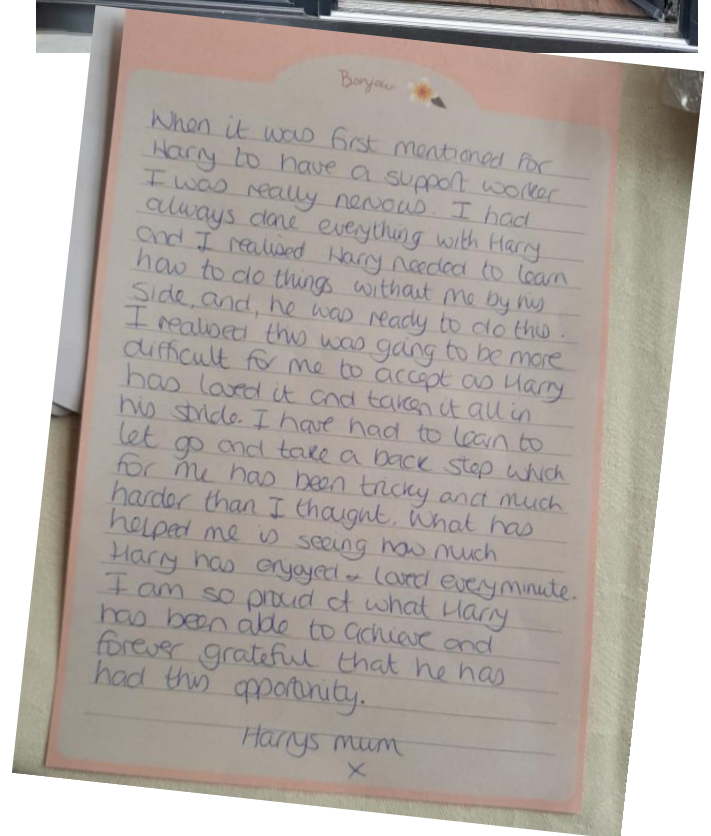
Before starting with Independence Matters, I was at Easton college studying animal care for three years. I had a meeting with my social worker Sue and my family, we talked about my future and my need to learn life skills and independence.

I was introduced to Lena from the PAS team. She came to my house and explained what the members of staff would do with me and how my days would look. I would have someone come to my house once a week and we would go out in the car to do activities. I felt excited and nervous about starting.

A few weeks later Lena introduced me to Andrea. Andrea spent time with me getting to know what things I'm interested in; I was very excited to meet someone new. I enjoy trying and learning new things. We plan what we are going to do next week so I have time to prepare myself. I am always ready for Andrea to come in and look forward to our days. I'm always happy and tired at the end of our days out.

I spent a few weeks getting to know Andrea, on some of our days out we tried to do activities, but it was card payment only. We talked about getting me my own bank account as I only had a savings account at this point. We checked online what I needed to take to the bank to open up a new account.

I found my passport and a letter with my name and address on which we needed as proof of ID. Andrea, and I talked about what type of account I would need and how I would use it.



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As I had never paid a bill or managed any money before we decided having two current accounts would be best. One named bills where my money would go into and bills come out, and the second and best one would be called Fun Stuff.

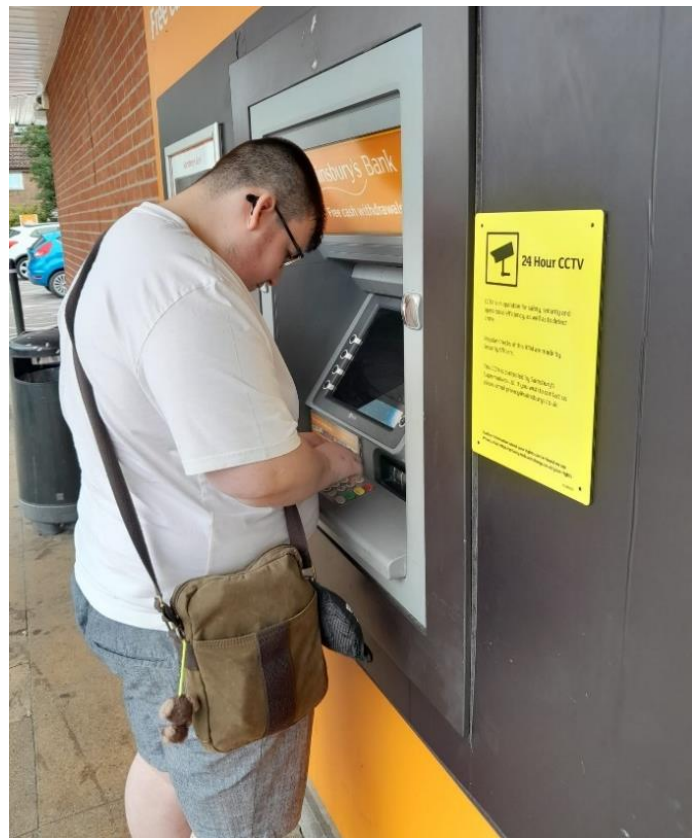
We took the bus into Norwich and went into Lloyds bank; the staff were very helpful and showed me how to apply for two new accounts. When filling out the form my birth date was wrong, so we had to do it all again. The staff were very kind and showed me the mistake.

Once I had done my part the staff had to scan my passport as proof ,then that was us done. The staff in the bank also helped me sent up online banking on my phone. When we looked at the clock, we saw it had taken us an hours and a half, thankfully we only had to do it once.

We rewarded ourselves with lunch. I then waited five working days for my cards to come in the post with the pin numbers. I keep my bills card at home and only use my fun stuff card. Once I had both cards and checked the pin number in the cash machine, I was happy to use them.

I have since moved money between accounts to make sure I have the money in the fun account for my days out. I have also gone online, booked and paid for a ticket for activities I want to do. Just last week I called up and paid my first mileage bill.

Andrea and I spent time talking about being safe with my cards and pin number by not sharing them with anyone and only using my banking app on secure internet. I enjoy having my own money and not having to ask mum and dad for cash all the time. My family are very proud of my me for going to the bank and sorting this all out. I also feel proud as this was something very new and has allowed me more independence.



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Part of becoming independent is to understand bus and train timetables and being able to use them safely. I have not used them before, so it was exciting and a little nerve racking to start with.

We planned the bus first, we looked online at the timetable and where it picked up, we worked out what time we could be at the bus stop and picked the best time for us. Waiting at the bus stop we saw people we know and had a chat. As the bus arrived everyone waiting started to move to the door, we waited a little because other people need to get off first.

I stepped on first and asked for two adults please as I don't have a bus pass yet, I use contactless to pay and took the tickets. We sat upstairs as we could see more and look in people's gardens. Andrea pointed out when to press the button to let the driver know we wanted to get off.

Once off the bus we looked round to find the bus stop we needed to be at for the journey home as it was on the other side of the road. I had worked out from the timetable which was the best time for us to get back on the bus and set an alarm on my phone to remind me 20 mins before we had to go back to the stop.

The timetables are difficult to understand, and I am still learning how to use them. We did the same for the train. I enjoy traveling by both and look forward to planning more trips. As part of getting round I am starting to use Google maps on my phone.



Andrea and I used it to find the bank but did get a little lost, we have practiced a few times and we are getting much better. While I was away on holiday, I showed my mum how it works by going to the library on my own.

Andrea and I have talked about safety when out and about and how to use location on WhatsApp. I also used this on holiday to find my way back to my mum and dad while they were shopping. I use my new skills all the time and my family feel a little safer now I have ways of finding my own way around.

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## Online publications spread the word

Our new contract with Bestpets got some great online coverage over the summer, being picked up by publications Pet Business World and Business & Industry Today, who each featured an advertorial.

Bestpets also showed their support by running a promotional banner on their website. As one of the UK's leading pet wholesalers, we are both proud and delighted to have Norfolk Industries branded products join the 8,000 lines they hold in stock.

Norfolk Industries also featured in an advertorial for PATS tradeshow at Telford in another online publication Products & Services Review. It's great to get exposure in this way and helps to spread the word about Norfolk Industries with pet trade suppliers and across the wider the business world.



## New air benches

Following an air quality survey, two new air benches (pictured left) arrived at the factory in September to improve the table extraction in our recycled production area.

Although the dust from recycled newsprint isn't harmful, it does settle onto surfaces and needs to be cleared away regularly. We already have overhead extraction in place as well as extraction directly over the shredding machines but wanted to improve the environment for our staff and people on work placements.

The air benches take dust away from the packing process and clean the air through filters fitted below the table surface. This ensures that the dust is not extracted past operatives faces and will reduce the amount of dust in the air within the enclosure. These are great extraction systems and we have already had one for our cotton production area for some years.



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The forecourt at Norfolk Industries has had a transformation over the summer.

We had been experiencing an increasing number of problems due to people parking on the forecourt in the evenings and at weekends. These ranged from leaking oil, to blocking the roller shutter door, and even dumped cars.

Our solution was simple – we purchased five one-tonne blocks to put in place and prevent access when we are not there. The blocks are moved in and out using the fork truck and so far, have proved 100% effective!

And with the forecourt now reserved for Norfolk Industries use only, we were delighted when, after many months of negotiating and planning, we got the go ahead for the surface to be completely re-laid. This was a major operation as you can see, but what a massive improvement!



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# Halloween Spooktacular!

It wouldn't be our autumn edition without a roundup of Halloween activity at our services.



Dereham Hub held a Halloween party with face painting and a best dressed competition.



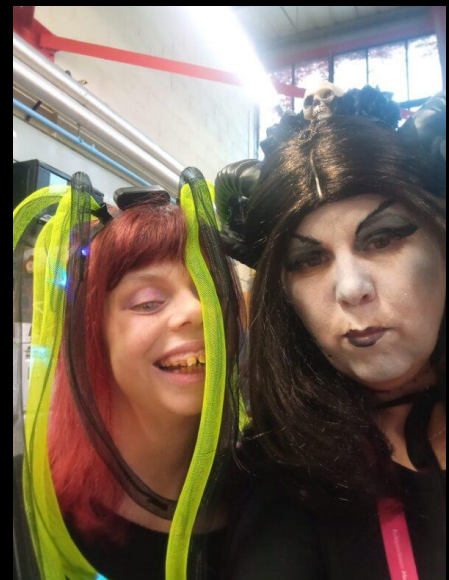
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The Studio group grew their own pumpkins in the garden this year. As well as being carved into lanterns, the pumpkin flesh was saved and made into pies for sale in Daisy's café.



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# Thank you to Tesco!



Great Yarmouth Hub would like to say a big thank you to their local Tesco for donating this huge trolley load of pumpkins for our customers to celebrate with.

The Hub held a Halloween party on Tuesday 31st October and everyone had a great time!



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# Halloween At Holt



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# Jason's blog

Hello everyone – I'm back! Sorry I have been gone for far too long, I have been working at Tesco again this summer, then a surprise trip to Shropshire for my Mum's birthday which was really lovely. We had all the family come and my Mum didn't know anything about it.

Speaking of birthdays, Independence Matters had its 10th birthday back in the summer. I did attend it after my shift at Tesco. It was really enjoyable, I dressed up for a photo and also water sprayed a car with the fire department – that was fun.

Sheringham and Cromer had their carnivals during the summer and I attended them both with a few friends. It was so good but a shame that the Red Arrows weren't there – hopefully next year they'll be back.

Sheringham had its 1940s weekend and that was really good. I enjoyed it especially when the iconic Lancaster flew over – it was amazing (and no, I didn't dress up this year). That's pretty much my summer, hope you all had a great summer too.

I promise I won't leave it so long next time.

Keep well and stay safe, Jason



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# Teams get together!

Colleagues at Great Yarmouth Community Hub held a team bonding day in September, renting a boat and having a meal out in the evening. Colleague Rachel said 'was lovely seeing colleagues have some fun as a team'.



*A big well done to...*

Trainer, **Kevin Hines**, on passing his Level 5 Learning and Skills Teacher / Practitioner qualification, with a distinction. This is a challenging course and distinctions are rare. The Training and Quality Team are very proud of him and this is a well-deserved success.

**Sam High** on achieving a Level 7 Advanced Diploma in Strategic People Management – an amazing and well-deserved achievement.

**Marcia Taylor** at Norwich Supported Living, who has passed her Level 5, Leader in Adult Care Diploma, with a distinction. As we've already said, distinctions are not easy to come by (although our learners are increasingly achieving this standard lately) and Marcia has worked really hard to obtain it. We also wish Marcia the very best in her new role. Formerly a Team Manager, she has now moved to a zero hours contract support worker role.

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## VOLUNTEERING MATTERS



**Cherry** from King's Lynn got a certificate and a medal for her work with Volunteering Matters. She told Maria that this is her biggest achievement this year.

Cherry really helped make a difference in the 'Match and Mentor' sessions. Superb, well done Cherry!

Some people in the Working Together Groups chose to spend their meeting time to draw their entries for the 'Thank You Card' competition.

Here's **Suzanne** getting creative. The winning designs have been judged and chosen and will be announced very soon.



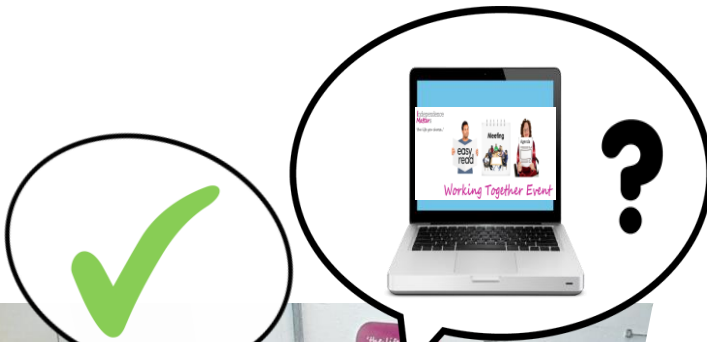
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For 'Hate Crime Awareness Week' the Working Together Groups invited Heidi from Victim Care and Support along to their meetings on a Teams call.

Heidi talked about what hate crime is and what support their service can give if people have been victims of crime.

**Stephen** took the opportunity to ask Heidi for some easy read leaflets about their service.



Maria worked alongside groups across Independence Matters to make a plan for what people would like to present at the Working Together Event on 10th November.

Maria noticed that **Stephen** had great computer skills and asked him if he would be willing to be the 'IT man' on the day ... he said yes!! Brilliant, thank you Stephen.

Stephen now also proudly features in the new easy read service packs which he is really pleased about.

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# We celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday!

We celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July with themed summer fetes at our larger hubs and smaller events at our other services.

Friends old and new came together for our first event at Dereham. Entertainment included a singer, line dancing and a performance by The TAPS. Our travelling pink gazebo offered free cake and raffle tickets to all guests and everyone had a huge amount of fun with our selfie frames and dressing up props. A truly fabulous way to kick off our celebration events.

Celebrating 10 years of

I'm 10  
Independence Matters

12 July  
Dereham

Celebrating 10 years of

I'm 10  
Independence Matters

Celebrating 10 years of

I'm 10  
Independence Matters

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I'm 10

Click to see more [photos](#)  
from the [Dereham event](#)

Celebrating **10 years** of  
**Independence Matters**

**13 July**  
**Crossroads &  
William Day  
Centre**

Celebrations took place simultaneously at Crossroads and William Day Centre with colleagues travelling between King's Lynn and Tilney to take part in both.

Guests at WDC's event included old colleagues, drivers and escorts from NORSE and members of the original Committee. The cake was cut by the centre's original manager back in July 1998 – who also happens to be the mother of current manager, Sherralyn! She was thrilled to take part in the celebrations and is pictured (right) cutting the cake with our MD Sarah.



**Independence Matters**  
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Click to see more [photos](#)  
[from the William Day  
Centre event](#)

Celebrating **10 years** of  
*Independence Matters*

**19 July**  
**Holt**

Holt Community Hub put on a brilliant event with lots to see and do. Thanks go to everyone who came along and made the day so special, including Norfolk Fire Museum, Cuddly Cavies, Norfolk Constabulary and the Muckleburgh Collection. Huge thanks also to everyone who donated to what was possibly the world's biggest raffle! A great time was had by all ☺



**Independence Matters**  
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Click to see more [photos](#)  
from the [Holt event](#)

Celebrating 10 years of  
Independence Matters

20 July  
Sprowston

Sprowston Community Hub held a fabulous event with everything from traditional wet sponge throwing to live music, dinosaurs and yes, a dalek!

We're not quite sure how a dalek got on the invite list, but it was quite grumpy and not at all pleased to find itself being dressed in a feather boa! We are pleased to report that the day ended well without anyone getting 'ex-ter-min-a-ted' 😊



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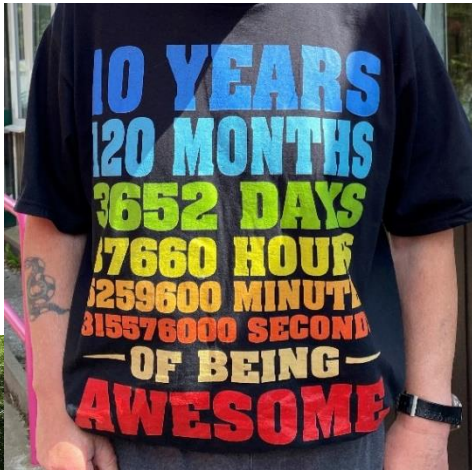
Click to see more [photos](#)  
from the [Sprowston](#)  
[event](#)

Celebrating 10 years of Independence Matters

21 July  
Great Yarmouth

Great Yarmouth's event was blessed with perfect weather for everyone sit outside and enjoy the BBQ and entertainment in the sunshine.

And thanks to this customer for wearing the perfect t-shirt for the occasion. We have to agree it's been AWESOME. Here's to the next 10 years!



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Click to see more photos from the [Great Yarmouth event](#)

Celebrating 10 years of Independence Matters

27 July  
Attleborough

Attleborough Community Hub celebrated with a hippie-themed event. A great day despite the wet start, with everyone getting into the spirit of the event by dressing up and getting their groove on!



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Click to see more photos from the [Attleborough event](#)