

# News Matters

Spring 2023

Independence  
Matters

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## INSIDE:

We celebrate with  
our Class of 2023  
'Gateway Graduates'

# Welcome to News Matters

Hello everyone and welcome to our Spring editions of News Matters.

Spring is traditionally the season of new beginnings and hope.

There is so much happening across the Group, that it is really difficult to single out any one story or item - so I will not attempt to do that. I am proud of every one of our colleagues and customers, they are all amazing!

All of the articles and photos are so happy and feel so joyful, there is a real buzz back which is brilliant to see and feel when I go out and about.

There is lots to celebrate and be thankful for, lots of opportunities for colleagues and customers, lots of kindness and support of others. Lots of cake being consumed ☺.

Looking forward, this year is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence Matters and so we are planning a number of events in July, fingers crossed for the weather. Look out for the dates and an event near you, as it would be wonderful to see lots of you there. You are all part of our IM family and success.

After the last three years of Covid challenges it feels special and a privilege to be able to come together, and we are making the most of it. The future is exciting and I want you all to be part of it.



Sarah Stock, Managing Director



## Colleague Gary stars in recruitment video

We've been working with Norfolk County Council to create a video that highlights how people with a background of working in retail, leisure or hospitality have excellent transferrable skills for the adult social care sector.

The video is part of the Norfolk Care Careers recruitment campaign and stars Gary Buckle, a support worker in our Personal Assistant Support (PAS) South service.

Gary joined Independence Matters in 2022 with no care work experience or qualifications but is now in a role that gives him job satisfaction and makes a difference to people's lives. Colleague, Dawn Banks, describes him as "a great, person-centred, proactive and flexible support worker, who has been complimented by our customers on several occasions".

We are delighted to have him feature in this video and hope that he inspires others to consider switching to a role in social care.

[Watch Gary's video story here.](#)



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## Well done to Adam on his long service award

The new year brought a cause for celebration for PAS North customer James Flatman who was presented with a long service award from the British Heart Foundation.

James has volunteered as a cleaner at their city centre furniture and electrical store for the past five years, only breaking during the pandemic. He would like to share his award with his beloved Hettie, the Hoover!

Colleague Adam Hollings said "We are all hugely proud of him!"



## Local MP visits Dereham Community Hub

Colleagues and customers welcomed George Freeman, MP for Mid Norfolk, to the Hub on 4<sup>th</sup> February. The visit, which included a tour of the Hub's facilities, was attended by service manager, Robin Ward, managing director, Sarah Stock and non executive director Tom Thornley.

## And congratulations to...

A big well done to Matt Fulcher, Service Manager at Sprowston Community Hub, who has passed his Level 5 Leader In Adult Care Diploma this month.

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# Congratulations to our Class of 2023



Customers at Dereham Community Hub, who had been taking part in our Gateway Accredited Learning Programme for over 12 months, celebrated their achievements with a graduation event on 19th January. Over 20 customers walked the red carpet to receive a certificate and a 'Class of 2023' badge from our managing director Sarah.



**Justin**



**Pam**

The turnout for the event was brilliant - the Hub's main hall was packed out with colleagues, customers, parent carers, commissioners, and our ex-colleague Alison Holmes who was instrumental in setting up the Gateway Programme.

As well as huge congratulations to our graduates, we'd like to say a big thank you to colleagues, Gavin, Claire and Ruby, who have worked hard to get Gateway off to such a great start.

After the awards were presented, everyone celebrated with fizz and a specially decorated cake. It was a great event and one that we plan to do at other Hubs as their customers reach their own 12 month learning milestones.



**Craig**



**Thomas**



**Stephen**

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Peter



Jasmine



Justin



Craig



Lucie



Stephen



Tim



Tom



Shirley

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# GATEWAY GRADUATION



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COMIC RELIEF  
**RED NOSE DAY**  
**17 March**

Holt Community Hub celebrated Red Nose Day with an event arranged by customer Rachel with the help of her friends and colleagues at the Hub. The fun included best dressed, best Red Nose picture, best cake picture, name the teddy, pin the nose, and hunt out the 17 Red Noses - look for Hub colleague Wally! 😊

A huge thank you and well done to all involved - everyone had such a great day full of fun and laughter. Oh, and not forgetting LOTS of cake!

£20.80 was raised for this good cause and everyone is super proud as (to quote a famous store) every little helps!



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## It's good to be back!

With the pandemic behind us it's good to be able to get out to events again and we made a successful return to PATS Sandown at the end of March.



We had a great show with some promising leads made, and many kind words said about our work with disabled people.



## Vets show support for Furry Friends Farewell

Our Trade Show attendance at PATS Telford last September highlighted an alternative target market for newly-launched Furry Friends Farewell.

Veterinary nurses were really impressed with the product, prompting us to send out emails to veterinary surgeries across the UK. As a result three orders have been despatched and a further two enquiries received from Veterinary Surgeries which is great news.

It's always difficult getting responses from cold calling emails, so we are delighted to have had success with this.



## EVOLVE candidate sends a big thank you

We love it when we are able to make a difference, so we were delighted to receive these lovely chocolates (right) and the wonderful compliment (below) from our EVOLVE candidate who exited the programme in February:

"Having finished the placement and the programme, I'd sincerely like to thank you for letting me work in your factory. You have shown both kindness and patience with me and I'd like to indicate my gratitude and appreciation for your assistance and help."



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## Visual awareness training

Back in February the IM training team's Lorraine and Kevin visited the factory to give the whole Norfolk Industries team some visual awareness training.

The aim was to give us a better understanding of what it's like to have a range of visual conditions. Everyone tried on special goggles designed to demonstrate what the different conditions 'looked' and 'felt' like.

We then tried to walk through the factory (with an aide of course!) to show how this impacts on your mobility, confidence and general awareness of the environment around you. We all agreed this was very enlightening indeed!

We then we heard from a colleague how his visual impairment affected his everyday life and work and what he did differently to compensate. We all found it very useful and everyone was really engaged with this. Thanks to the trainers for delivering a great session that was anything but 'death by Powerpoint'!!



## New bedding bales for puppies

We currently have some additional capacity on our 10kg bales production line. These bales are aimed at the dog breeding and kennels market. Made from food-grade paper that's dust and allergy free, it's a great option for whelping boxes – and super comfy as our model demonstrates!



**we're waiting for you to order our dog bedding bales!**

  
**01603 667957**

  
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## Birthday celebrations for Ali at Holt

Colleague Ali Pawley celebrated her birthday at the beginning of February and our customers wanted to make her day even more special.

Amy, who loves to bake cakes, presented Ali with a lovely red velvet cake that she made at the Hub that day. Ali received another cake covered in marshmallows from another customer.



Everyone gathered to sing Happy Birthday to her and what a lovely moment that was!



## New Handbooks for our CQC registered services

We've been busy creating Handbooks for our PAS, Supported Living and Replacement Care services. Available in PDF format to view online or download and print, they will be available on our website shortly.



## Guide Dog Sponsorship

Well done to Stephen at Great Yarmouth Hub, who is [sponsoring guide dog Basil](#) as a way of giving back to others.



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# Keeping up to date with your training matters!

Colleague Donna Luxton joined our PAS East service around six months ago. Described as very customer focused, professional and 'happy-go-lucky', she recently found herself tested in a way she wasn't expecting.

What started as a normal day, supporting a customer in Gorleston library, took a very quick turn when a member of the public was found unresponsive on the floor.

“ I was aware of the library staff trying to rouse a man, telling him he can't sleep inside the library and asking him to move on. I then heard a defibrillator saying 'no rhythm detected' and looked up to see two staff members looking confused and one saying something about 'not being sure'. I asked if all was OK and she said "No, he's stopped breathing". I explained who I was and that I couldn't leave my customer unattended so we agreed to swap places.

I knelt beside the man and tapped hard several times on his collar bone, I felt for a pulse and watched his chest. There were no signs of life, so I tilted his head to check his airway. As I did this he inhaled loudly and seconds after his eyes flickered.

With his breathing shallow but visible I decided not to use the defibrillator. Instead I rolled him into the recovery position and stayed beside him with one hand on his chest where I could feel him inhale and exhale, albeit slowly. The fast response paramedic arrived and asked me to help. She wanted her defibrillator on him in case he stopped again, so I set up the pads and machine while she put a tube in his mouth and I did breath pumps. I cut his upper clothing free of his chest, put pads on, and the pulse detector on his finger. After this two more paramedics arrived so I left them and returned to my customer.”



The patient was taken to hospital and discharged themselves the following day. Meanwhile, Donna credits Independence Matters training team for giving her the confidence to deal with the situation.

“I am grateful that first aid training is part of my job and that it was well explained to me – not just how to do it, but also why. I remember specifically asking the trainer why it's important to TILT the head back whilst carrying out the observations. They replied that this frees the airways and stops the tongue from being swallowed. I reflected on this after the incident and realised that if I hadn't asked that question, the gentleman could've died!”

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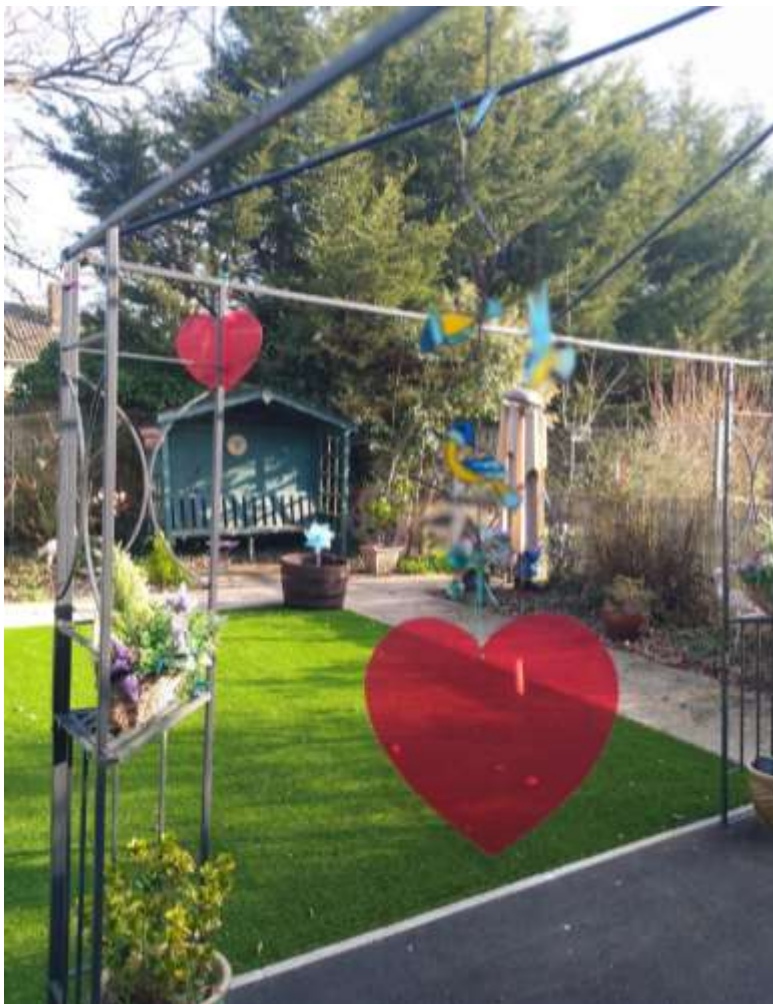
# We ♥ Valentine's Day

Love was definitely in the air at our Hubs this Valentine's Day. Colleagues and customers at **Crossroads Community Hub** created this lovely display which showcases their crafting skills. And we love the poem below, shared by a customer, it really made us chuckle!

I love you, I love you  
I love you almighty  
I wish your pyjamas were next to my nightie  
Don't be mistaken and don't be misled  
I mean on the washing line and not in the bed!



Colleagues at **Harford Hill** decorated the garden with hearts, including the washing line, which looked great in the sunshine. The new 'lawn' has made a big difference to the garden which attracts plenty of wildlife including lots of birds and three greedy squirrels.



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**Rosewood Community Hub** held a Valentine's Ball with a tea party and a singer who performed songs from the 50s and 60s.

The decorations were all made by customers and colleagues, and with family and friends invited, everyone had a lovely time.



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**Dereham Community Hub** celebrated Valentine's with a day of fun and festivities. Daisy's Café was opened up for a coffee morning and sold a selection of Valentine-themed cakes and scones as well as tea and coffee.



The event was really successful and raised over £50 for the entertainment kitty. It was followed by a Valentine's quiz, a disco, and an opportunity to have your picture taken at the Valentine's day table.



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# Customers promote Hub at school event

Holt Hub colleagues Clare and Gloria have attended a transition event at Sheringham Woodfields School, along with customers, Danny and Steven, who had been students at the school themselves over 10 years ago.

Steven is proud to have a bronze certificate in horticulture from our Gateway Assured learning programme and created a lovely poster to promote this at the event. Danny was excited to see his old school sign at the entrance to the hall and also recognised teachers from his school days.

As well as reconnecting with old friends the pair were happy to speak to other services and students about their time at the Hub. It was wonderful to watch them laughing with each other; Steven said of the experience: "I loved it, I want to volunteer again" with Danny adding, "Next one now, come on!"

Following the event, the Hub hosted a 'classroom visit' on 28<sup>th</sup> February where colleague Gloria showed a group of students and their teachers around. The laughter, games and interactions between all filled the Hub and hopefully, the time spent here was so enjoyable that they will really want to join us at the Hub in the future.



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# Studying to be a support worker – Racheal's story

Holt customer Racheal is studying for her Care Certificate with the aim of becoming a support worker at the Hub. Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator, Maria Bond, caught up with her for a chat and to find out more.

## What made you want to become a support worker?

I decided when I was about 12 that I wanted to be a support worker. I wanted to do this as you find out things that other people are not aware of. For example, people generally don't know my background of why I want to become a support worker.

In school I didn't get the help that I needed that other people with special needs got. When I saw that some people were in the same situation as me, this made me realise that I wanted to help and support people. I was thinking that 'I have been in their shoes, so would like to help them get the help that I didn't'.

I went to City College to study health and social care however I was unable to finish so I didn't get my qualification. I originally wanted to be a PE teacher for people with special needs but I injured myself so I couldn't continue, but while at Easton College I gained my Level 1 & 2 Sport, Level 1 Gym Instructor and Level 1 in IT.

Then I went on to volunteer at 'Maltings' which is a day service for people with learning disabilities. I was there for 2 years before I left to go to 'About With Friends' where I worked in the shop and café. I was there for 4 years. I then went to Thornage Hall which is a farm which has residential care and day services. Then I came to Holt Hub as a customer, I have been coming to Holt for 6 months and 8 days.



## Tell me about how you came to want to do the Care Certificate?

When I met Clare (Team Manager) she recognised something in me, I was having doubts about being at Holt Hub and I took some time out before I decided I would like to keep attending. I met with Sylvia (Non Executive Stakeholder Director) who talked to me about the Care Certificate. I then met with Lorraine from the training team who told me what it involved. I was signed up very quickly from the first discussion about it! I started my Care Certificate on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023.



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## How far are you along with your Care Certificate now?

I am currently 6 weeks in and I have completed 4 ½ standards so far out of 15. I am able to take my time and I don't need to complete it within 12 weeks as I am not yet a staff member and I am still a customer.

## How are you finding the studying?

I find the Care Certificate hard but I use my phone so that when there is a word that I don't understand, I look up the meaning and then I write it in my book in case the word comes up again so I know what it means.

I am enjoying it even though it's hard work. The further I go through it the harder it's getting. I have been asking some of the support colleagues for some help. All of the work that I do is done online using a laptop.



## What have you gained since you started the Care Certificate?

From doing the Care Certificate I have gained a lot of confidence. I feel proud of myself, and looking back at the work I have done, I am getting more and more proud the further I get into it.

## So what will you do when you achieve your Care Certificate? What are your hopes?

When I finish the Care Certificate I hope to get a support worker job here at Holt Community Hub. I haven't had an interview myself for a long time but as I have been helping out with interviews here, I have a good understanding of what is required so I feel quite confident.



**Superb Rachael, really well done, we are all very proud of you for following your hopes and dreams!  
Maria Bond**

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# Easter craftwork at *William Day Centre*

Customers at the William Day Centre have been hard at work making seasonal craft items. This lovely butterfly wall hanging (right) is made out of old plastic bottle tops - we're told everyone had been saving their milk and water bottle lids for months!

Their Easter craft project this year was to make Easter bunnies from felt, each with a pouch for holding a Cadburys crème egg. Who wouldn't love one of those!



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# Wildlife Update

**Our TAPS Wildlife watchers report on some very special seasonal visitors!**

Hello everyone, the TAPS Wildlife team are here again. Spring is in the air and we start with a special rescue story.

Back in February, the grounds people here at the Hub found a baby rabbit. It was a cold day and no sign of mum, so we brought it in to warm up, and phoned PACT animal sanctuary who asked us some questions.



After coming off the phone the grounds people brought us three more, so Peter now had a Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail for company. Usually you shouldn't move baby rabbits, as their mother will come back for them. But because it was really cold, about -2, no mother in sight and their burrow collapsed, we had to intervene. Luckily PACT came to the rescue and collected our little family. They should now have gone into the big wide world alone, to hopefully have a long, happy, safe life.



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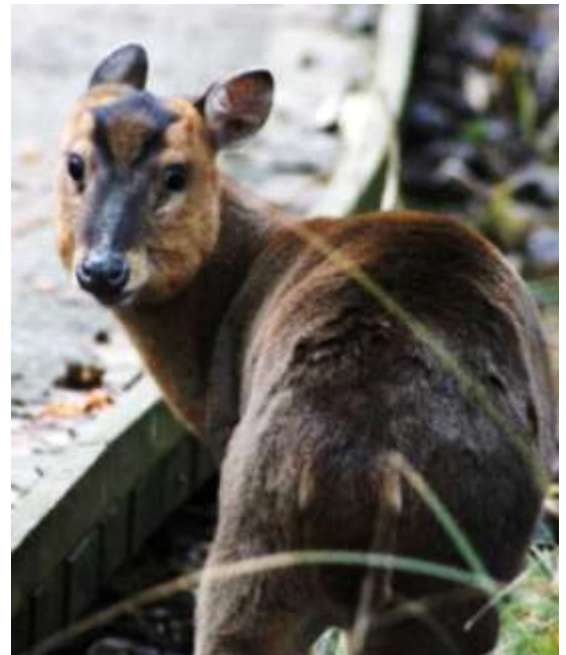
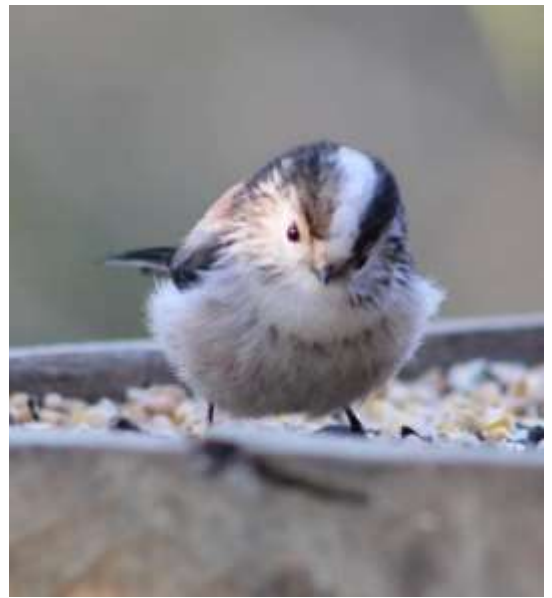


We've also seen an increase in the raptors here with buzzards and red kites visiting regularly. Butterflies will now be appearing, so look out for brimstones and commas. Birds will be beginning to nest from March to July although some begin as early as February.

Long tailed tits start at the beginning of April and can have between 6-8 eggs. Their nests are shaped like a bottle in the fork of a tree, well camouflaged with lichen and interwoven with cobwebs, lined with up to 1,500 feathers, some of which they collect along the way or take from dead birds. They are a comical little bird and you can often see them doing their acrobatics on your bird feeder, watch out for them.

We have all been enjoying watching the new David Attenborough Wild Isles series on the BBC. If you have missed an episode, it's available on iplayer. It was three years in the making and the first time Sir David has made a series on British wildlife. It's amazing, the camera work is breath taking. If you love your wildlife as much as we do, you'll love to watch this!

Until next time, keep watching wildlife and help where you can. Tim, Lucie, Justin, Mark, Jasmine, Helen, Stephen and Claire



All the brilliant photos here were taken by Claire 

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# Hello to spring!

Customers at Church Green Lodge have been out and about enjoying the spring sunshine. It might still be cold but it hasn't put them off!



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# Getting creative in the garden

Holt Community Hub customers have been getting creative with their recycling, turning unusual items into planters.

Milk cartons and tired old welly boots have been used to plant seeds, and they've created amazing indoor gardens in bottles and plastic trays. These look great around the Hub, and for those who haven't yet made it out to the garden - the garden has come to them! Great ideas and fantastic results from our customers 😊💚



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# Gateway success at the Equal Brewery

Our managing director Sarah visited the Equal Brewery on 29 March and was delighted to present Gateway certificates to students Emma, Samuel, Donna and Matt. A big well done to the group who have been working hard on their Gateway units and received certificates for baking bread, teamwork, conduct at work, communication in the workplace and keeping safe at work.

Samuel, Donna and Matt have achieved Bronze Gateway status for completing 5 modules, and Emma has completed over 20 so has a Platinum award! They have all become skilled at making a variety of different types of bread and rolls, that are now going to be supplied weekly to the cafe at Whitlingham Country Park. Fantastic work everyone!



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