

Shaping a Care Association for Norfolk - Report on Consultation Events

Purpose:

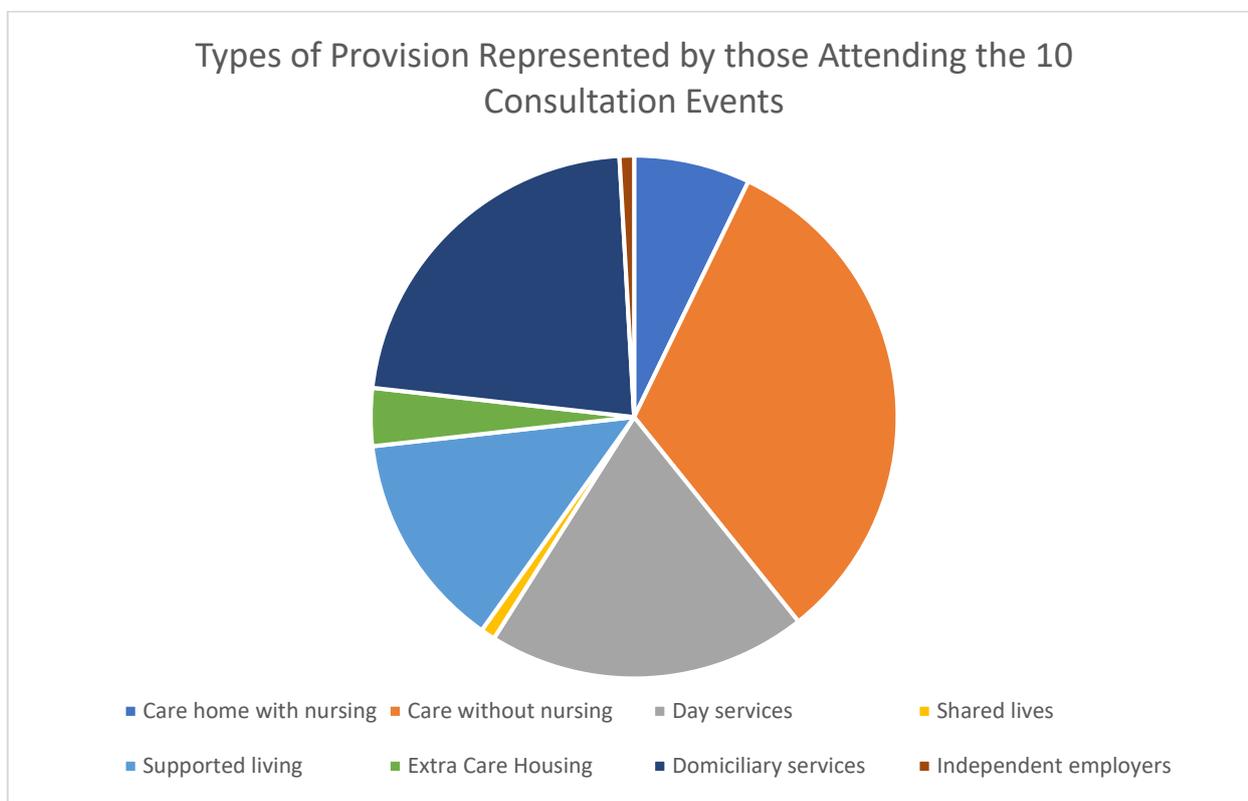
Having been commissioned to carry out a sector-wide consultation within Norfolk which is being facilitated by the Executive Steering Group for the Care Association for Norfolk Consultation, a team from the University of East Anglia and the University of Suffolk designed a series of discussion-based activities to be used at a series of consultation events across Norfolk. These events were held in order to gain insight from stakeholders as to the main issues which would be important to them regarding the purpose, functions and form of a Care Association for Norfolk. Data gathered is being used to directly inform the content of an online questionnaire to be completed by representatives from the social care sector throughout Norfolk (800-1000 people and organisations).

Attendance:

A total of ten consultation events were held; two in each of five locations throughout Norfolk. Each of the events had the same structure and used the same trigger materials, consisting of a range of interactive activities designed to engage participants and to offer opportunities for the expression of personal and organisational perspectives and opinions.

A total of 78 people attended across the 9 consultation events. Participants represented organisations providing the following types of services:

Care home with nursing	8	Care home without nursing	36
Extra Care Housing	4	Domiciliary services	25
Shared Lives	1	Supported Living	15
Day Services	22	Independent Employers	1



Customer groups of those attending the consultation events included:

- Older people
- Young adults with physical disabilities
- People with neurological conditions
- Children, young people and adults with mental health conditions
- People with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorders.
- People living with dementia

Overall Impression of the Sector Gained from the Events

Organisations and businesses working in the social care sector appear to be experiencing a sense of threat and uncertainty due to financial and regulatory pressures, as well as historic events and relationships in the county which have left a widespread legacy of dissatisfaction with the status quo. During the consultation events, Market Connectors worked effectively to generate constructive discussions, with almost all participants demonstrating an interest in a potential Care Association for Norfolk, and a willingness to work together for the common good.

Functions and Form of a Care Association – Priorities

During the events, there were high levels of engagement by participants, who were involved in discussing the potential priorities of a local Care Association in terms of purpose, priorities and services. One activity involved rating the relative importance of a range of possible benefits and functions which those attending the events would like to see come from a Care Association.

Of the list provided, the top ten scoring potential functions and benefits of a Care Association in Norfolk, as expressed by participants at the Consultation Events, were as shown in Box 1 below. There appears to be a particularly strong appetite for an organisation which can be a voice for the sector.

Box 1. Top Ten Priorities of a Care Association for Norfolk

(as expressed in consultation events)

1. Advice on CQC Inspections
2. Improved communication within the sector
3. Widening recognition of the value of the sector's work
4. Increasing the confidence of the sector to speak up and be heard
5. Information
6. Being able to fill job vacancies swiftly
7. Advice
8. Playing a part in shaping the agenda for the sector
9. Access to key experts – for individuals and organisations

Of the options presented at the events, those of least importance to those attending included a 'Social Care in Norfolk magazine' and 'free business listings'.

Further analysis has yet to be carried out to determine whether people from particular service types, had similar or different perspectives on the potential role and usefulness of a Care Association in Norfolk. The prioritising of form and function for a Care Association will also be subjected to further analysis through the online questionnaire, which is currently being put together based on the data generated by the consultation events.