

# Delivering Physical Activity in Norse Care Residential Settings

## PROJECT PROFILE

Responding to Norfolk County Council's designated priorities of improving independence in later life, Active Norfolk has worked closely with Norfolk's largest care provider to implement a series of practices to increase residents' activity levels. As a result of the project, many residents' have reported an upturn in mobility and mood, while Norse Care has put procedures in place to ensure physical activity becomes a key part of care provision for residents.



### Identifying the need in Norfolk

Nationally the ageing population is putting pressure on health and social care services. In Norfolk specifically, the population is ageing at a greater rate than the rest of England. It was therefore highlighted as a countywide priority in Norfolk County Council's Corporate Strategy to improve people's ability to maintain independence in later life.

A 2013 study from the National Institute for health and Care Excellence (NICE) looked at loneliness and isolation among older people and found that engaging with meaningful activity and maintaining relationships are key factors in improving the wellbeing of older people.

### Norse Care - Norfolk's largest care provider

Norse Care is the largest residential care provider in Norfolk with 35 settings across the county. Their model of care is to offer high quality care and support which enables people to be as independent as possible and remain healthy, active and engaged with their community.

Norse Care actively promotes independence among its residents and therefore was a perfect partner for the Mobile Me campaign in residential settings.



### Findings from the Mobile Me Project

The Mobile Me project is an award-winning initiative which aims to help older people remain active and independent in later life. Findings from this project have enabled the success of the work conducted in Norse Care residential settings. Through Mobile Me, Active Norfolk learned that 94% of the people who were engaged in the project had a disability or long term health condition, with a high proportion of people having multiple conditions. By working in residential settings, Active Norfolk is able to reach people who stand to benefit significantly from physical activity based interventions.

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## Establishing Physical Activity in Residential Care Settings

In order to make a significant impact in care provision practices in Norse Care, Active Norfolk used ongoing findings from the Mobile Me project to implement the following procedures:

- As a key part of the sustainability of the Norse Care project, Active Norfolk delivered Benefits of Physical Activity Training sessions for senior staff members and delivery staff members at Norse Care residential settings. This increased knowledge and awareness of the role of physical activity in maintaining independence in later life.
- Active Norfolk, in cooperation with each Norse Care residential location, wrote physical activity into each homes' Wellbeing and Lifestyle Action Plan. These action plans are the basis for the care service provided by homes and are reviewed every six months to see how homes are achieving against their targeted outcomes. Active Norfolk supported the appointment of an exercise and wellbeing co-ordinator within the Norse Care organisation to oversee activity services.
- While the Mobile Me programme was originally trialled in 10 Norse Care sites, the success of those sessions meant the programme was scaled up to be made available to residents in all 35 Norse Care locations. The Dance to Health programme, a pioneering falls prevention initiative, has also been delivered within a Norse Care site.
- Active Norfolk provided part-funding to train 14 members of Norse Care staff to deliver seated exercise sessions, to be delivered across schemes.
- The project has drawn interest from the University of East Anglia which has worked closely with Active Norfolk to use dementia care mapping as an evaluative observational tool to research best practice delivery of physical activity for people living with dementia. Once research is completed by the UEA and the report becomes available, there are plans for a physical activity section to be written into the Norse Care Staff online training portal.



## Outcomes and Findings

Through the work Active Norfolk did in conjunction with Norse Care, the organisation has made long-term changes to its organisational practices by bringing in permanent measures to ensure physical activity remains a key part of its care provision. Residents' behaviour has indicated the following benefits:

The Norse Care Dementia Care Lead, Kate Grange, reported the increase in physical activity lead to widespread improvements in residents' confidence and wellbeing. She also reported that there were several new social

groups formed as a direct result of the physical activity implemented into residential settings.

Ms Grange also indicated in her report that through the dementia mapping process conducted by UEA, Norse Care was able to clearly see the positive impact physical activity was having on people living with the condition. The company has subsequently purchased sporting equipment to place in all 35

Norse Care settings to offer all residents the chance to enjoy the same benefits.

Along with the benefits to those living with dementia, activities leaders in a number of settings reported positive mood changes displayed by many residents as a result of the sessions. Staff at centres indicated traditionally reclusive residents were actively involving themselves in physical activity sessions and benefitting enormously from the social, physical and mental health positives that physical activity offers.

“Even tenants who are usually very reluctant to join in with anything have taken part, smiling and communicating with others.”

**A Residential Setting Manager**