

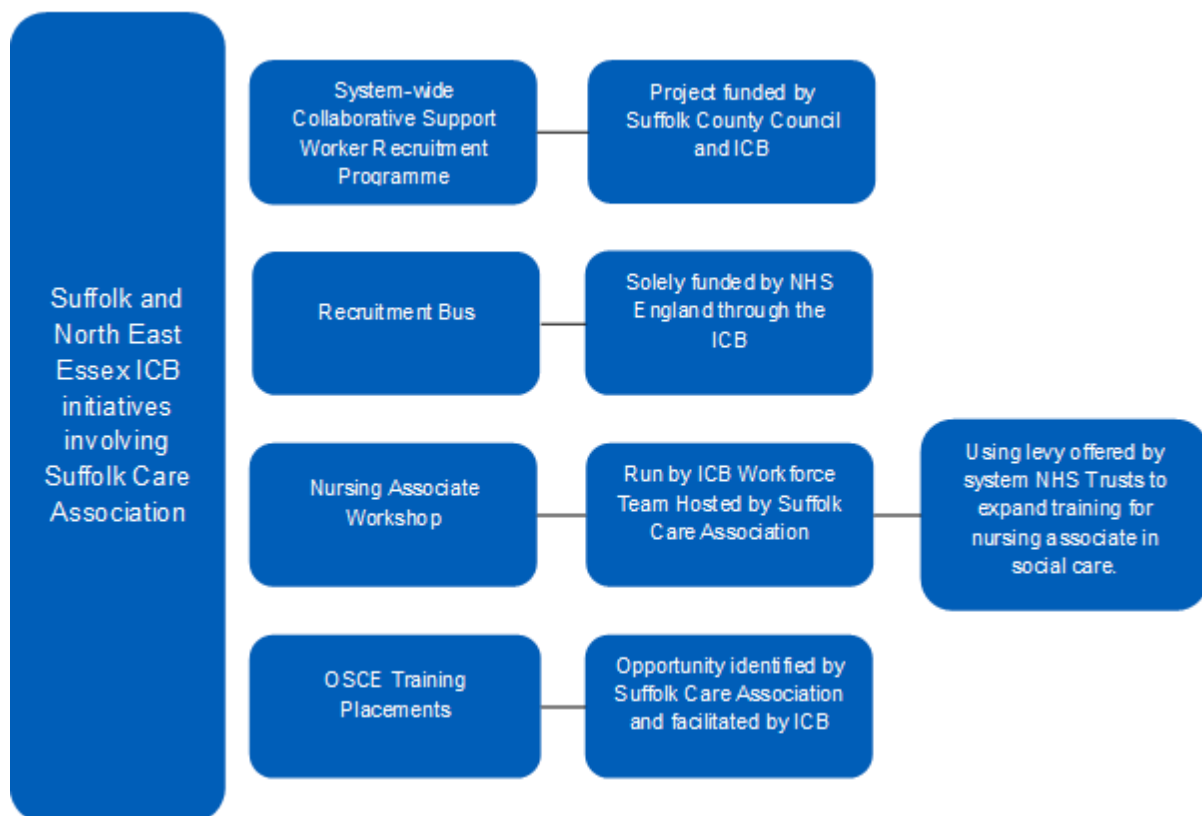
Recruitment and Retention with Suffolk Care Association

Suffolk Care Association represents over 200 social care employers. They are involved in several important integrated initiatives with health, including recently:

1. ICB healthcare support worker recruitment.
2. Recruitment drives, including a 'Recruitment Bus'.
3. Nursing placements, including an ICB-run Nursing Associate Workshop for local care providers hosted by Suffolk Care Association.
4. Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) training opportunities.

This case study:

- showcases the power of sharing resources to find creative solutions to problems
- is based on conversations with Emma White, Skills for Care Locality Manager, Sandie Oxborrow, from Suffolk Care Association, and Adelaide Appiah, ICB Clinical Workforce Programme Lead.



Developing integrated recruitment support initiatives

Suffolk Care Association approached the ICB Workforce Team to address the challenge faced by overseas care workers in being able to access and afford OSCE training. Suffolk Care Association recognised that there were large numbers of people who were nurses in their own country but unable to serve in the same role here due to barriers in the training pathway.

Suffolk Care Association agreed with the ICB that vacant hospital OSCE training places could be offered to social care workers. This has already enabled two care workers who

have moved to the UK to become registered nurses, and resulted in connecting many more internationally recruited healthcare workers to new sponsors.

When the ICB Workforce Team received funding through the Healthcare and Support Worker Joint Recruitment Programme, they extended this to involve social care – which was unusual amongst ICBs who received the funding. As a result, in early 2023 a ‘Recruitment Bus’ toured Suffolk promoting careers in both health and social care to a diverse region.

The bus signposted people to information about careers in healthcare and held spaces for people to learn more. They engaged around 300 people over the three days of running the bus, which is a huge testament to their collaborative work.

Separately, Suffolk Care Association have held a ‘Supporting Learners in Social Care’ programme to help providers to understand how to help shape the future of the workforce. Their webinars, and a dedicated recruitment app, are open to people from across the system; while their in-person Nursing Associate Workshop saw six providers go through the process of becoming a nursing associate employer.

“Without social care the NHS can’t function – we’re very interlinked. For that reason we are very proactive about engaging with the ICB in Suffolk.”

- Sandie Oxborrow, Suffolk Care Association

The impact of Suffolk Care Association’s recruitment and retention work

Supporting people and providers to navigate the UK training system is invaluable, and Suffolk Care Association are successfully identifying people who are at risk of falling out of the social care workforce and supporting them to be retained. This demonstrates the power of resource-sharing and finding solutions within the resources available.

The work in Suffolk is highly important to help to keep nurses in the healthcare sector. This is against a backdrop of pressures on student nurse retention, and the impact of this on the wider workforce. By giving people the opportunity to experience nursing in care homes and other non-clinical or ward-based settings, Suffolk Care Association and the ICB Workforce Team are helping to show a rewarding and skilful side of nursing that may not have been considered. At the same time, they are raising awareness of a career in healthcare.

“Suffolk Care Association are really integral. They have a really excellent relationship with the ICB, and act as a representative voice for providers – we work really closely with them. It’s all about spotting where there’s capacity and sharing resource, based on the understanding that we are all part of the same sector.”

- Emma White, Skills for Care

Next steps

Suffolk Care Association are hopeful that the success of the initiatives will lead to developing greater understanding of the different parts of the system for people, and lead to more integration. For example, by joining social care nurses up to do refresher training with the NHS. They are now looking at developing apprenticeships pathways and ensuring that social care partners understand the opportunities available to them.

“Collaborative working with system partners across health and social care is vital to improving productivity and care. Health and social care services are interdependent, and so joint working to increase capacity, resources and share best practice to tackle system challenges in recruitment and retention should be encouraged. The success yield by working together in the last couple of years is evidence to consider new ways of working across both sectors.”

- Adelaide Appiah, ICB Workforce Team.