

Questions from the public

Question 1:

The post-hospital reablement service at Benjamin Court was closed in July 2023 with no consultation, and the site remains in great condition, albeit empty and ‘mothballed’. This unit served the whole of North Norfolk with bed-based care closer to home, freed up ward space in acute hospitals and offered a cost-effective local pathway for a successful return to home.

There is mounting evidence of the huge cost, both financially and in human terms, of delayed discharges of patients from hospital.

In one month alone (September 2025), some £2.3 million was spent on keeping patients in hospital who were ready to be discharged, at the three district general hospitals in the Norfolk and Waveney area. This, of course, has a knock-on effect on hospital admissions; in just one week (ending February 15th 2026) 83 ambulance shifts were lost at Norfolk and Norwich Accident and Emergency, due to delays in transferring patients. In the twelve months from April 2025 to March 2026, delays at N&N resulted in an extraordinary 2328 lost ambulance shifts – by far the worst figures in the whole area covered by the East of England Ambulance service.

Questions from the public

Norfolk and Waveney
Integrated Care Board

Question 1 (contd):

The huge pressure on hospitals nationally, as well as regionally, has prompted the head of NHS Providers to call for the government's much-vaunted policy of neighbourhood health care to be 'turbo-charged' – a call we fully support. Yet Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board – shortly to be merged with their sister organisation in Suffolk – has up to now refused to look at an obvious solution right in their patch – Benjamin Court!

We understand from our local MP that government ministers are taking an interest in health services in North Norfolk – which has the oldest demographic in the country – and in particular the future of Benjamin Court.

Accordingly we call on the ICB to follow the lead taken by University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, who have opened a 25-bed post-hospital rehabilitation unit to ease pressure on beds. We would ask that in any review of neighbourhood health services in North Norfolk that you urgently look again at Benjamin Court and reopen it as an NHS hub to ease the crisis in hospital discharges and provide a vital health facility for the people of North Norfolk. We would also ask that you fully engage in a meaningful way with the local community about the way forward; the Save Benjamin Court campaign stands ready to fully contribute to such discussions.

Questions from the public



Norfolk and Waveney
Integrated Care Board

Answer 1:

Thank you for your question. We remain committed to working with partners organisations and the community to improve the health, wellbeing and care of people living in north Norfolk. Specifically, we agree there is more we can and want to do to prevent frailty and to support those are frail.

We are very supportive of the government's ambition to shift care out of big acute hospitals and into the community, and to create a neighbourhood health service. Benjamin Court has provided good services in the past that we know have been valued by local residents. However, our view is that the priority is to build on the services operating out of Cromer Hospital, which is an excellent facility and has potential to do even more for the local community.