

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 June 2026

COUNCILLOR JILL BOYLE - CABINET MEMBER FOR PEOPLE SERVICES

For the period up to 31st May 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Benefits

Housing Benefit Accuracy Award

We are now beginning the seventh year of the Housing Benefit Accuracy Award (HBAA), a national Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) initiative with the aim to reduce the amount of fraud and error in the Benefits system. During 2026/27, we are required to review 654 Housing Benefit claims for pension age customers who are **not** in receipt of a passported benefit (i.e. pension credit), to ensure they are receiving the correct entitlement. A letter will be issued to customers, providing full details of the initiative and information on how to contact us for support in completing the online review form.

Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery – PaymentPlan pilot

We have partnered with PaymentPlan on a three-month trial to support the ongoing recovery of outstanding Housing Benefit overpayments and sundry debts. As the trial is now coming to an end, we are reviewing the outcomes and feedback to determine whether this method of recovery will continue beyond the pilot.

Pension Credit Take-Up Campaign

During 2025/26, we continued to run Pension Credit take-up campaigns. This resulted in a further **83 households** being awarded Pension Credit. These awards provide a total annual value across the households of **£212,250.56** and an estimated lifetime value of **£1,576,316.48** for our residents. We will continue to run take-up campaigns in 2026/27 to identify households that may be missing out on benefits and to help maximise household income.

Housing Options and Homeless Prevention

Demand for the Housing Options Service remained high throughout May 2026, with continued pressure across homelessness presentations, temporary accommodation and access to settled housing.

Your Choice Your Home

A total of 82 new housing applications were received in May. Over half of all applications were from households in Band E (42 applicants, 51%), indicating a high volume of lower-priority housing need entering the system. Demand was most concentrated around 2-bedroom homes, which accounted for 36 applicants (44%)

However, the profile of higher-priority need continues to present a challenge. Within Band A, 6 of the 11 applications related to a need for 3-bedroom accommodation. During the same period, 26 social homes were let, predominantly 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom properties, with only 7% of lets being 3-bedroom homes. This continues to demonstrate a significant mismatch between the type of housing required by households in greatest need and the homes available.

Homelessness Approaches

During the month, 81 approaches of which 12 cases escalated to full assessment. At month end, 75 statutory homelessness cases remained active across prevention and relief duties. The most common reasons for presentation were family or friends no longer willing to accommodate, and private tenancy ending.

During the month, homelessness was successfully prevented or relieved for 8 households, primarily through access to social housing, with a smaller number securing accommodation in the private rented sector. However, 21 households could not have their homelessness prevented or relieved, underlying the ongoing constraints within the local housing market and the limited availability of suitable accommodation.

Main duty decisions continue to be driven predominantly by applicants assessed as homeless, in priority need and unintentionally homeless.

Temporary Accommodation

During May, 5 individuals were identified as sleeping rough in North Norfolk at various points in time. At the end of the month, 4 individuals remained sleeping rough. While overall numbers remain relatively low, the persistence of rough sleeping highlights the need for continued outreach, engagement and access to appropriate accommodation and support pathways.

Housing Strategy

Temporary Accommodation units

At the 31st May 2026 the Council has 31 units of Temporary or other homeless accommodation (including five units of move on accommodation for ex-rough sleepers) with one more purchase to complete in July 2026 – bringing the total up to 32.

We have received confirmation from MHCLG that we have also been successful in our bid and will receive £1,345,143 of LAHF grant in 2026/27 to help with the purchase of a further nine homes. Offers have been accepted on three of these, and we anticipate the purchase of all nine will complete in 2026/27 to bring our total stock to 41 homes.

New Affordable Homes

We have a healthy affordable housing scheme pipeline, many of which are 'rural exception' housing sites at various points in the development process. There are eighteen at application stage. These sites will deliver more than 600 new affordable homes. There are a further 13 earlier stage projects where we are expecting planning applications or have available land which is being explored for development – and project the delivery of over 260 new affordable homes on these sites.

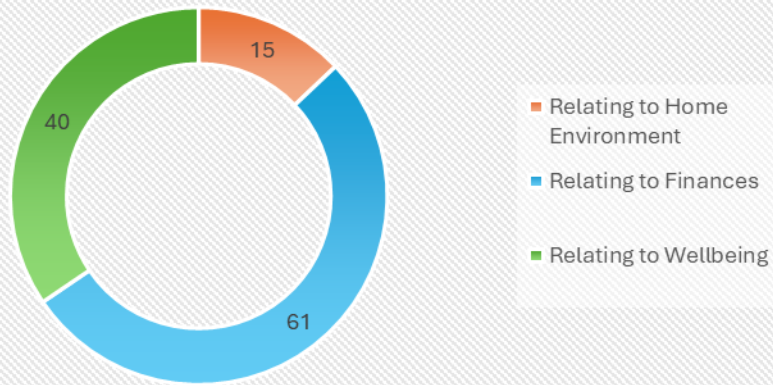
Current schemes include the following:

- Flagship Housing Association have submitted a planning application for 9 affordable homes in Pudding Norton at Green Lane which hope will receive planning consent in the coming few weeks.
- Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society continues to work in partnership with Broadland Housing Association to deliver 8 affordable homes. This planning application has now been given approval.
- In Bacton, 47 new affordable homes are at an advanced build stage, 19 of which are for sale as Shared Ownership – these are currently being marketed. Completions of the new first homes are expected in June with following phases being delivered through to October 2026.
- Building of the 61 extra care apartments in Stalham is progressing well. The work on site has commenced for the 34 affordable homes on the adjoining land, with expected delivery starting in March 2027.
- Swanton Novers – Community Land Trust project will be celebrating the completion of 7 new affordable rented homes on the 11 June.
- In North Walsham on the former Paston Fields, work on site will be commencing in the next couple of months. This site will deliver 54 affordable homes.
- In Little Snoring work on a rural exception site is well underway and will deliver 10 new affordable homes.
- In Ludham a planning application is now well advanced, and subject to consent, is expecting to deliver 26 affordable homes with a mix of rented and shared ownership properties.

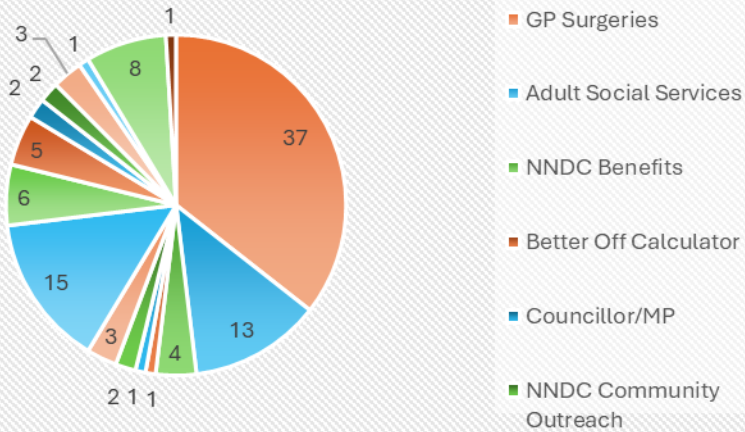
Early Help & Prevention

Total individual referrals received: **104**

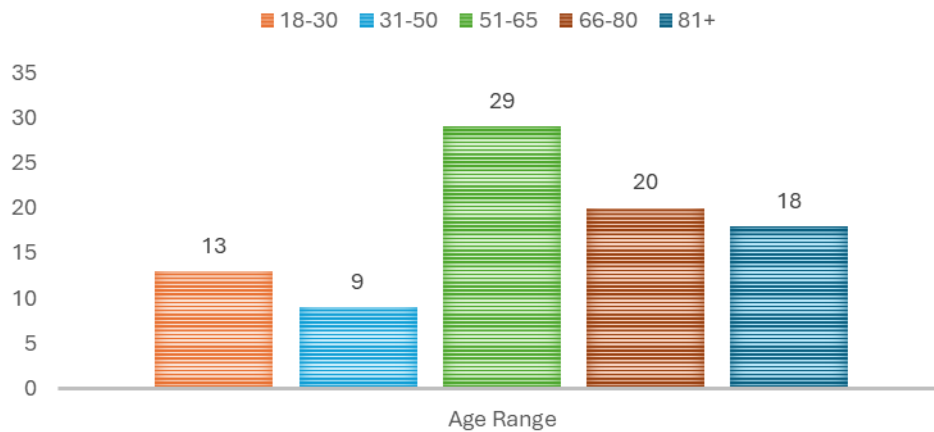
Referrals into Early Help & Prevention



Referral Sources



REFERRALS BY AGE RANGE



Case Study

Ms W has experienced significant challenges, including childhood trauma, complex mental health needs and recent involvement in a criminal court case, in which she was the victim. She required support to make claims for PIP and Universal Credit limited capability for work payments, including gathering evidence to support these claims.

A Social Prescribing officer arranged face to face meetings to support Ms W, recognising the need for sensitive, compassionate and trauma-informed engagement. The officer allowed time to build trust with Ms W, and was led by Ms W's comfort, working at a pace that was manageable for her.

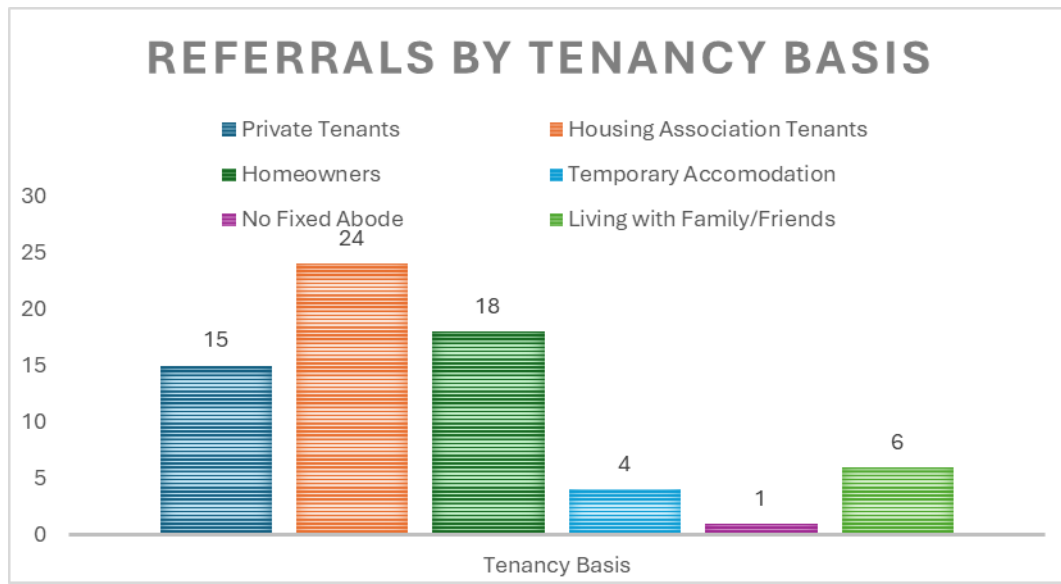
During the period of support, Ms W's rent increased significantly, and so supermarket vouchers were provided to ease financial pressure during this period of transition and while benefit applications were still in progress.

The Social Prescribing officer also took time to talk through what would happen in any assessments Ms W would need in relation to her PIP and Universal Credit Claims.

Final outcomes for Ms W are still pending at this point, however, she has expressed feeling supported and more confident in getting through the process, knowing that she has ongoing support from the team as she moves through the next stages of her support.

The Social Prescribing officer has provided Ms W with the reassurance that she is supported and by fully informing her of what to expect and what the processes are, Ms W is better equipped to manage her own wellbeing

whilst applications are progressed.



Number of Referrals where children live in the home:

10

Food Support:
Foodbank Vouchers Issued: 27
Supermarket Vouchers Issued: 7

Energy Bank:
Referrals Made/Support Provided: 7

Alongside managing their caseloads, during May, members of the team have attended a number of events.

- North Norfolk Foodbank event 'Hope Happens Here'.
- The annual Dementia Fayre at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital – the team were able to network with charities, voluntary groups and other organisations providing information and advice, strengthening collaborative connections and increasing the team's knowledge of support for those who are living with Dementia or caring for someone living with Dementia.
- Change Grow Live Substance Abuse and Harm Reduction Training.

Homes for Ukraine

There are currently forty-one Ukrainian guests being supported in North Norfolk, of which twenty-three are adults and thirteen are under the age of eighteen. These guests are accommodated over nineteen host

arrangements.



Due to the Government announcement the Ukrainian Permission Extension Scheme (UPES) will be extended by a further 24 months (UPES phase 2). There will be no 'thank you payments' for hosts during this extension.

Because of this, Norfolk County Council is going to send letters to the hosts and guests advising of this. For our District this means that from October 2026 we will have hosting arrangements coming to an end.

Therefore, our Ukrainian guests and their hosts will need to start thinking about different kinds of arrangements (private rent, switching to lodging, etc.) Our People from Abroad Support Officer will be carrying out welfare visits to talk to the guests and their hosts about upcoming changes, and to advise on other financial arrangements between both.

Support continues with help with applying for visa extensions, housing applications, council tax support, tenancy support and dealing with HMRC and DVLA issues on behalf of our Ukrainian guests.

IHAT

The Council has a statutory duty to provide financial assistance to those who qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to contribute towards adaptations which help them to safely access their home and the facilities within it.

The funding is provided as a capital grant from the government via the Better Care Fund. Total budget made available for DFG Adaptations & Discretionary grants for 2026/27 is **£1,828,729.30**.

Due to the nature of the DFG and cases continually progressing throughout the year, some cases may have grants approved during one financial year

period, however these will not complete and be paid within the same financial year. We therefore record “brought forward” approvals as these grant awards remain within the system until completion.

Brought forward grant approval values to date:

- 2023/24 – 1x outstanding case with a total outstanding approved value of £6,822.15
- 2024/25 – 3x outstanding cases with a total outstanding approved value of £50,585.11
- 2025/26 – 41 outstanding cases with a total outstanding approved value of £424,000.71

The total brought forward outstanding value is £481,407.97 for 45 cases.

The actual spend to date for the 2026/27 financial year, including partially completed adaptations against the budget is **£78,522.27** in mandatory DFG’s and Discretionary Grants. A total value of **£161,625.39** has been approved for adaptations to date for 2026/27, this relates to a total of 21 cases.

For the period 01/05/2026 – 31/05/2026 the total mandatory DFG spend was **£47,362.20** and a further **£7,434.54** was spent on Discretionary Grants.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

3 Meetings attended

Benjamin Court Meeting with ICB
BBC Radio Norfolk, Cromer Pier 125
LGR Preparation. LGA webinar
Discussion on North Norfolk’s Older Persons care and Supported Housing
Home Safe for new Renter’s Rights legislation
Homes for Cathy Seminar
Topping out Ceremony Broadland Housing Little Snoring
Cabinet Meeting
Business Planning
Meetings with local businesses
Topping out at Albion Gardens Stalham
Visit North Norfolk Networking Event

