

Consultation on the future of Priorsmead

Background

Norse Care is Norfolk's largest care home provider, managing residential care homes and housing with care schemes across the county. We are owned by Norfolk County Council.

We regularly review how we work to make sure that we are providing excellent care while being as efficient as possible. So that we can focus our time and money on caring for the people who live in our homes and housing with care schemes, we have made all sorts of changes to make our services more efficient over the past few years. These changes have included making sure we get the best value for money when we buy things and making sure that we have the right number of staff, with the right mixture of skills.

However, Norfolk County Council and Norse Care are currently operating in a particularly challenging financial environment. We are both faced with rising costs, such as the national living wage, and we are affected by the reductions in public spending.

So Norse Care has recently reviewed the costs of its 19 residential care homes for older people to see what we can additionally do to make sure we are providing good, sustainable and affordable care. Norse Care has used the results of this review to consider how we could care for the residents of Priorsmead Care Home in a more cost-effective way. This document sets out Norse Care's proposal for how we could achieve this. Norfolk County Council must agree any of Norse Care's proposals before they can be implemented.

Our objectives

The objective of our proposal is to find ways to continue to care for people, but in a more cost-effective way.

When we are considering making changes to how we care for people we want to make sure we understand what impact they would have on the

care and wellbeing of our residents. We know that making decisions about changing how we care for people are important and we take these decisions seriously.

So we need you to:

- Tell us what you think of the changes that Norse Care are proposing.
- Help us understand what the impact would be on residents of Priorsmead and their families.
- Share your thoughts about any other options that we might not have considered that would help us meet our objective of continuing to care for people, but in a more cost effective way.

Review of Norse Care's residential care homes

Norse Care has reviewed the costs of its 19 residential care homes for older people. The review looked at the costs of providing care to people living in each care home, the costs of running and maintaining each of the care homes, and the costs of staffing each care home. The review worked out the average cost of caring for a person, for a week in each care home.

Priorsmead Care Home

The review of Norse Care's residential care homes identified that a place in Priorsmead Care Home costs more than a place in any of Norse Care's other residential care homes for older people. This has led us to look at why Priorsmead is more expensive.

Priorsmead is Norse Care's smallest residential care home for older people. It has 16 rooms and is located in Thetford, South Norfolk. Residents and families are positive about the care provided and people enjoy living there.

However because it is a small building the overheads are high. For example, we know that for a home to run safely and well it needs to have certain equipment, as well as a manager and a deputy manager, regardless of whether a home has 15 people living in it or 30. This is why a place in Priorsmead costs more than a place in any of Norse Care's other residential care homes for older people.

We also know that the layout of Priorsmead and the size of some of the bedrooms is not ideal, because it means that some specialist moving and handling equipment cannot be used.

Taking all of this into account, Norse Care has considered how we can continue to care for the residents of Priorsmead, but in a more cost-effective way.

When reviewing Priorsmead we looked at the care needs of the people living in the home, whether we could make changes to the building and the care market.

When assessing different options for how we could care for residents in a more cost-effective way, Norse Care considered:

- The impact of each option on residents, their families and staff
- Whether it would reduce the cost of care
- How achievable each option would be.

Our review tells us that Priorsmead is a small care home, on a site where there is not enough space to expand the building to create more rooms.

We could improve the layout of the existing building and modernise the bedrooms. However, in order to do this we would need to reduce the number of bedrooms, which in turn would make it even more expensive to run per person. It would also be costly to do the work and we'd have to borrow a significant amount of money to do this. So refurbishing the building would not meet our objective of providing care in a more cost-effective way.

Making improvements to the building would also involve considerable disruption for residents living at the home if work was undertaken. For example, some residents would need to be moved out whilst the building work was completed, or if people remained at the home whilst the work was being undertaken they might not have full use of the home's facilities.

We have considered whether we could gradually close Priorsmead, by not admitting any more residents and allowing the home to close over a number of years. This would mean that the current residents could stay living in the home.

However, we know that closing a home over several years is likely to be a negative experience for both residents and staff as the number of people living in the home reduces. It would be difficult to retain staff during this process because of the home closing, so there might be many staffing changes. It wouldn't be cost-effective to run and maintain a home that wasn't fully occupied, so closing Priorsmead gradually would not meet our objective.

We have looked at the care market and considered whether we could sell Priorsmead to another care home provider. We know that the size of the building makes it expensive to run as a care home. We think that other care home providers would also be concerned about the cost of running a small home and so we think it would be difficult to sell.

If it were difficult to sell, then that would cause a long period of uncertainty which would be unsettling for residents and staff. It may be difficult to retain and recruit staff if the future of the care home was unclear. We don't want to put our residents or staff in this position. If we could not sell Priorsmead to another care home provider then we would not achieve our objective of caring for people in a more cost-effective way.

Our proposal

This has led us to conclude that the best way to continue to care for Priorsmead residents, in a more cost effective way would be to close Priorsmead and to offer residents a place in another care home or housing with care scheme.

We are proposing to do this because we need to find ways to provide care for our residents in a more cost-effective way. We have compared Priorsmead with all our care homes that look after people with similar care needs and, per place, it is Norse Care's most expensive residential care home for older people.

What would this mean for residents and their families?

If we decide to go ahead with this proposal, all Priorsmead residents would be assessed individually by Norfolk County Council and supported to move to another care home or housing with care scheme that meets their individual needs.

There are a range of care services in and around Thetford. We would aim to support residents to remain living in the area close to friends and relatives if they want to, however this would depend on each individual's care needs and the vacancies available at the time. Alternatively, residents would be offered the opportunity to move to another Norse Care home which is able to meet their individual care needs and where there are vacancies if that is what they would like.

We know that the layout of Priorsmead and the size of some of the bedrooms is not ideal, because it means that some specialist moving and handling equipment cannot be used. Moving to another home or housing with care scheme may mean residents would be able to benefit from specialist moving and handling equipment if their care needs change.

We recognise that the idea of potentially moving to another care home might be unsettling for some residents and their families. Our proposal could mean that some families may have a longer journey to visit their relatives. We have lots of experience in assessing the impact on people of such a move, making sure that any move is handled carefully and sensitively, and that residents are fully supported.

Our consultation

Norfolk County Council must agree any of Norse Care's proposals before they can be implemented. Norfolk County Council and Norse Care are therefore carrying out this consultation together to find out what people think about the proposal before any decision is made.

Throughout the consultation, Norfolk County Council and Norse Care will support residents, their families and Norse Care staff. If you are a staff member, resident or relative, meetings are being set up to discuss our proposal further. Alternatively you can contact Karen Knight, Norse Care Ltd or Ann Reynolds, Norse Care Ltd by calling 01603 894366 or by emailing info@norsecare.co.uk.

Who are we consulting?

We are consulting with:

- Residents living at Priorsmead
- Relatives of residents living at Priorsmead
- All staff working at Priorsmead

- Trade Unions
- Norfolk County Council:
 - County Councillors
 - Group Leaders
 - Local Members
 - Adult Social Care Committee
 - Other members
- Breckland District Council
- Thetford Town Council
- South Norfolk District Council
- MPs
- Age UK – local branch
- Alzheimer’s Society
- Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust
- GPs
- Local Clinical Commissioning Group
- Local residents
- Staff at other NorseCare homes
- Norfolk Older People’s Forum

How are we consulting?

- Through this consultation document
- We are also holding face to face meetings with current residents and their families
- We are holding separate meetings with the staff that would be affected by the proposal.

When are we consulting?

Our consultation starts on Wednesday, 23 August 2017 and will run for 8 weeks until Wednesday, 18 October 2017.

What do we want to find out?

We need you to:

- Tell us what you think of the changes that Norse Care are proposing.
- Help us understand what the impact would be on residents of Priorsmead and their families.

- Share your thoughts about any other options that we might not have considered that would help us meet our objective of continuing to care for people, but in a more cost effective way.

How you can respond to the consultation

You can fill in our online feedback form at:

<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/priorsmead>

You can send back a paper feedback form to:

Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

However, if you want to help the council save money please use a stamp and send to this address: Stakeholder and Consultation Team, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, NR1 2DH

We need your consultation feedback by Wednesday, 18 October 2017.

How will we feed back to you?

In October 2017, we will hold meetings for staff, residents and relatives to tell them the results of the consultation and what has been decided. We will let other interested people know directly by letter or email. We will publicise the results in the local media for the wider audience.

How will the final decision be made?

We will feed back the findings of the consultation to the Norse Care Liaison Board. Taking the feedback into account, the NorseCare Liaison Board will then make a recommendation to Norfolk County Council and to the Board of Norse Care.

If following the consultation Norse Care recommends closing Priorsmead and Norfolk County Council approves the proposal, Norse Care would make the decision to close the home. Norse Care would then put plans in place to ensure that residents and staff are fully supported throughout the process. We would anticipate that residents would move over the following few months. Residents would be assessed by Norfolk County Council and be offered care and accommodation that meets their needs.

Priorsmead consultation – feedback form

Please answer the following questions. If there is not enough space for you to give us your views, please do feel free to write on another piece of paper and attach it.

If you currently live in the home and you need support to fill in this survey, please call Norse Care on 01603 894366 and we will find someone to help you.

Q1. What do you think of Norse Care’s proposal to close Priorsmead and offer residents a place in another care home or housing with care scheme? Why do you say this? How would this proposal affect you if it went ahead? Please write in the box below:

Q2. Are there any other options that we have not considered for Priorsmead that would help us to achieve our objective to continue to care for people, but in a more cost-effective way? If yes, please tell us about these by writing in the box below:

Please place a tick against the descriptions that apply to you:	
I live at Priorsmead	
I am supporting someone who lives at Priorsmead to respond to this consultation	
I have a relative who lives at Priorsmead	
I work at Priorsmead	
I live in or around Thetford	
I represent people living in or around Thetford	
I represent older people	
I provide health or social care to older people living in or around Thetford	
Other (please state)	

About you

Norfolk County Council and Norse Care want to make sure that our services are open and accessible and that our consultations are representative of the community we serve and the people that use our services. Please help us measure how far we are achieving this by answering the following questions.

Please note: You do not have to give us this information but it will help us if you do. We will keep this information confidential and not use it for any other purpose.

1. How old are you?

2. Are you ...? (Please tick one box only)

Male Female Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe

3. How would you describe your ethnicity? For example white British / black British

4. What is your first language?

5. Would you describe yourself as having a sensory disability (affecting your sight or hearing), physical disability, learning difficulty or long-term illness? Please tick one box only.

Yes No Prefer not to say

Personal information, confidentiality and data protection

Norfolk County Council and Norse Care will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that we will hold your personal data and only use it for the purpose for which it was collected, being this consultation.

We will also, under normal circumstances, not pass your personal data on to anyone else. However, we may be asked under access to information laws to publish or disclose some, or all, of the information you provide in response to this consultation, including any personal information. We will only do this where such disclosure will comply with such relevant information laws which include the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You may wish to keep a copy of your response to our consultation for your own records.

Thank you for your help.

You can fill in our online feedback form at:

<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/priorsmead>

You can send back a paper feedback form to:

Freeport Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

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We need your consultation feedback by Wednesday, 18 October 2017.



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.