



## **Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026**

### **Inspirational Leader Award**

## **Kate Ward**

### **East Coast Community Healthcare CIC**

Kate is an inspirational leader who successfully led a complex transformation at Carlton Court Hospital, transitioning three wards from acute hospital management under JPUH to a 33-bedded Integrated Care Unit operated by ECCH. Over a six-month period, she ensured a seamless transfer, including the TUPE transition of 64 staff, ward refurbishment, and the introduction of new systems and training. This transformation established a reablement-focused, nurse-led model of care, supporting patients transitioning from hospital who are not yet ready to return home independently.

Kate played a pivotal role in embedding a multi-disciplinary approach, working closely with nurses, therapists, GPs, local authorities, mental health services and transfer of care teams. She successfully supported staff through a significant cultural shift—from consultant-led acute care to community-based, GP-supported care within an employee-owned organisation focused on empowerment and innovation.

Championing a 'home first' ethos, Kate has driven improved patient outcomes through reablement, helping around 80% of patients return home, with fewer than 10% requiring long-term care. She has embraced digital innovation, introducing electronic patient records, e-prescribing and piloting AI monitoring technology to proactively track patient wellbeing and identify early signs of deterioration.

Kate also prioritised staff wellbeing and engagement, maintaining morale throughout change and creating a supportive working environment. Staff feedback highlights high levels of satisfaction, with strong endorsement of her leadership. Her work has been recognised as best practice regionally, demonstrating her significant and lasting impact on patient care, workforce culture and system transformation.