



Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026

Inspirational Leader Award

Lauren Donkin

Deben Health Group PCN

Lauren is an inspirational leader whose vision and strategic leadership have transformed the scale, capability and culture of her Primary Care Network (PCN) across four GP practices in East Suffolk. Under her leadership, the DHG team has tripled in size and developed into a highly skilled, integrated workforce focused on prevention, innovation and patient-centred care. She has successfully unified teams and systems that previously operated independently, improving resilience, reducing duplication and protecting valuable clinical time.

A key achievement has been the creation of centralised PCN services, including clinical coding, long-term condition management, QOF, enhanced services and medication safety processes. This required significant cultural change, built through trust, collaboration and strong relationships. Lauren also anticipated the importance of integrated neighbourhood working, establishing a shared workspace with the Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) to strengthen collaboration and support innovative services such as the award-winning WHAT Clinic.

She has championed digital innovation, leading initiatives such as Brave AI, Cardisio and KYNOBY to improve patient outcomes, streamline processes and address inequalities. At the same time, she has ensured staff are supported through change, encouraged to work at the top of their skillset, and empowered to contribute ideas and lead improvements.

Her impact is both measurable and sustained. Thousands of patients now receive more accessible care, including home-based services, while operational efficiencies have significantly reduced GP workload. Lauren has also fostered a positive, inclusive culture where staff feel valued and supported. Her leadership has built a resilient, future-focused PCN, improving both patient care and workforce wellbeing.