



Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026

Treatment to Prevention Award

Rosie Welch

Public Health, Communities, and Public Safety, Suffolk County Council

Rosie is recognised for her outstanding leadership in addressing air pollution as a critical and often overlooked public health issue, shifting the focus from treatment to prevention. With air pollution contributing to around 30,000 deaths annually in the UK and asthma rates in Suffolk higher than the national average, Rosie identified a clear gap: patients wanted trusted advice on the health impacts of air pollution but were rarely receiving it. She also recognised that healthcare professionals often lacked the confidence and tools to initiate these conversations.

In response, Rosie co-led the development of an innovative training and information package in partnership with Colchester City and Essex County Councils. The intervention adapts the well-established Very Brief Advice (VBA) model used in smoking cessation, making it practical, accessible and easy to integrate into routine care. Training can be completed in under 10 minutes, while conversations with patients can take as little as 60 seconds, supported by clear resources and signposting.

Rosie has demonstrated exceptional leadership by taking this work from initial insight through to system-wide implementation. She has brought together partners across Suffolk and Essex, ensuring a consistent yet locally tailored approach, and embedding the intervention into respiratory and wider healthcare pathways.

The programme is now being piloted across Suffolk, with strong early feedback. Evidence suggests such interventions can significantly influence behaviour change and improve clinician confidence. With a planned Suffolk-wide launch in June 2026, Rosie's work offers a scalable, sustainable model that integrates prevention into everyday healthcare, improving population health and reducing long-term demand on services.