



Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026

Hospital to Community Award

West Suffolk Virtual Ward, Heart Failure and Community Nursing Integrated Teams

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

This nomination highlights an innovative heart failure pathway at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust that has successfully shifted specialist care from hospital settings into patients' homes. Through close collaboration between the cardiac team, virtual ward, and community nursing services, patients who would traditionally require hospital admission for intravenous diuretic therapy can now safely receive treatment at home. Community nurses have been upskilled to deliver intravenous therapies, supported by specialist cardiac input and virtual ward monitoring, ensuring safe and effective care delivery outside hospital.

The pathway reflects a strong commitment to the Hospital to Community model by providing personalised, convenient care in familiar surroundings. It demonstrates effective partnership working, with acute and community teams sharing expertise, building trust, and redesigning services around patient needs. This integrated approach has broken down traditional service boundaries, empowering community staff while maintaining robust clinical oversight from specialists.

Impact has been significant for both patients and the wider system. Patients benefit from improved comfort, independence, and the ability to maintain daily routines, while avoiding risks associated with hospital stays, particularly for those who are frail. The pathway consistently supports 8–10 patients per week, with an average virtual ward stay of eight days, reducing admissions and improving patient flow. It has also strengthened workforce capability and created a scalable, sustainable model for delivering high-quality, joined-up care closer to home.