# CARING & SHARING Stories from Stow







Dear Reader,

It's an honour to be compiling the opening lines for the next edition of Caring and Sharing. As the new CEO, I understand I have big shoes to fill to continue the great work Roger and Ruth began over 15 years ago. I want to express my gratitude to them both for their unwavering support, they've been by my side every step of the way during my first few weeks here, and I'm sure I speak for us all when I say we wish them every success in the next chapter of their lives.

My vision for the business is simple: put the residents at the heart of everything we do and continue to offer the highest standard of care that everyone expects from Stow. In parallel to great resident care, I believe it's crucial to foster an ethos of looking after our colleagues and providing them with the tools they need to excel. We can't expect our teams to deliver exceptional care, if they're not cared for themselves.

I very much look forward to meeting everyone over the coming weeks and months, and if there's anyway I can be of service, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Best wishes,



, 0 0 0

Kay Cox

## Included in this Issue

A View into Homes

Page 2	Introduction	Directors' Welcome
Page 3	<b>Group News</b>	Spotlight on New Ceo, Kay Cox
Pages 4-5	<b>News From Homes</b>	Renovations, New Staff & Reflections
Pages 6-7	Visits	RCN Visit Stow Healthcare
Pages 8-9	Celebrations	<b>VE Day Events Across the Homes</b>
Pages 10-11	Information	Recent Data on our Falls Prevention Work
Pages 12-13	Staff Spotlight	Nikki's Crufts Journey
Page 14	Spotlight on Homes	Visit Horkesley Manor!
Page 15	Resident's Corner	The Pot Gang!
Pages 16-17	Information	Montessori Living in our Homes

**Springtime Fun!** 

Pages 18-19

## Group News

## We welcome CGEN Care and new CEO Kay Cox

Stow Healthcare is stepping confidently into an exciting new chapter, as we welcome new ownership under CGEN Care – a well-respected, US-based provider beginning its UK journey with our award-winning group. As part of this positive transition, we're thrilled to introduce Kay Cox as the new Chief Executive. This marks a fantastic opportunity to build on all that makes Stow Healthcare special, with our values, teams, and commitment to excellence continuing stronger than ever.

### Spotlight on Kay Cox, new CEO

For the past six years, Kay Cox has been a key figure at Signature Senior Lifestyle, joining as Chief Operating Officer in 2018 and serving as Chief Executive Officer from August 2023 until early 2025. Her time at Signature was defined by a strong commitment to delivering the highest standards of care, championing improvements in pay and recognition for care staff, and driving innovative solutions to challenges faced across the sector. Arguably her most significant contribution has been in resident safety and safeguarding—introducing cutting-edge technology that enhanced safety, built family trust, and boosted team training and recognition.



Kay also successfully steered Signature through major changes and challenges, including the global Covid-19 pandemic, acquisitions, divestments, and the opening of several new homes. Before joining Signature, Kay was Managing Director for Southern & East England at Bupa UK from 2013 to 2018, where she oversaw 52 care homes, more than 2,600 residents, and a workforce of around 5,000.

Kay is genuinely looking forward to working with the teams, residents, and families across Stow Healthcare. "Joining the organisation has been a hectic but enjoyable first few weeks. I've visited every care home, met wonderful residents and team members, and spent time with people at the Support Office to understand how their role supports the business. I want to express my gratitude to everyone for such a warm welcome. I'm very much looking forward to being of service to you all!"

Over the next couple of months, she will be working closely with outgoing directors Ruth French and Roger Catchpole to ensure a smooth transition and continued success for everyone involved.

## Halstead Hall Works Complete!

In the last edition of Caring and Sharing, we mentioned that the Halstead Hall building works were nearing completion. We're thrilled to announce the extension and associated works are now fully complete! This major project has provided residents with much-needed outdoor space, a new salon, medication room, and four beautiful new bedrooms.

Recently, decorators have been busy adding vibrant colours to the corridors, dining room, and activities lounge. We extend heartfelt thanks to everyone for their patience during this project. We're confident these improvements will enhance life for everyone living and working in our home.

As part of the project, we installed our first walk-in refrigeration and freezer space in the kitchen. This has been a tremendous success, making storage much more efficient for our catering team. We were so pleased that we replicated the setup at Horkesley Manor during their kitchen refurbishment. Similar upgrades are now being considered in other homes.

Investing in our homes to benefit residents and staff remains a top priority. So, don't be surprised if you see contractors busy with new projects throughout 2025!





## Welcome Back Andreea!

We're delighted to welcome back Andreea Sisestean to the Stow Healthcare team! Many of you will remember Andreea from her time at Horkesley Manor, and we're thrilled to have her return in a new role. She has now joined the Head Office team as Operations Lead, taking over from Alex.

#### Andreea says:

I'm truly delighted to be returning to Stow Healthcare, even after a short three-month absence. It feels great to rejoin such an amazing company one that has always stood out to me for its strong values, collaborative culture, opportunities to progress and inspiring leadership.

This organisation has always held a special place for me, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute once again. I'm looking forward to reconnecting with familiar faces, meeting new colleagues, and continuing the journey we started together!

Welcome back, Andreea!



## Regional Managers Reflection

2025 also began with an exciting milestone as we welcomed two new team members to our head office support network. Now three months into their roles, our two new Regional Managers are taking a moment to reflect on their journey so far. Their positions have added a valuable layer of support to our home management teams—an important step in Stow Healthcare's ongoing growth and success. In the reflections below, they share their experiences, insights and what they're looking forward to next.

### Sarah Godfrey, Regional Manager for the Southern Homes and Clinical Lead

Reflecting on the last three months since starting at Stow, I have been blown away with the welcome I have received from the company, especially from the four care homes I am supporting – Melford Court, Halstead Hall, Cedars Place and Horkesley Manor. The staff strive to find activities and interactions that are meaningful and enjoyable for residents and families.

As a nurse myself of several decades, I am enjoying seeing our nurses at work. Coming from the Hospice sector, I was not fully aware of the care that is provided by staff within the care system. I have been impressed with how our staff trouble shoot any challenges and navigate the complex health and social care system. They really are focused on ensuring that our residents are provided with a person centered approach addressing their wants and needs.

I am looking forward to continuing to learn more about the Care Home sector and sharing my own knowledge, experience and skills in relation to palliative and end of life care. I am excited to help our staff and our homes to continue to develop and provide outstanding services for the residents in our care.

## Helen Garfoot, Regional Manager for the Northern Homes and Operations Lead

They say time flies when you're having fun, and the last three months have flown by! The Northern homes have all been incredibly welcoming, it's been a pleasure getting to visit you all. I've especially enjoyed chatting with residents and seeing how happy and settled they are.

What really stands out is the passion, care, and enthusiasm shared across all of the teams. I've really valued attending staff and resident meetings and hope to do even more of this moving forward. I'm excited to see how our teams continue to grow over the coming months, with new recruits joining and plenty of fantastic activities and events planned for residents over the summer.

In May, I headed down South to visit all of our Southern homes. It was lovely to put faces to names — at least now I'll know who's calling when I'm on call! It's also given me a much clearer picture of each home's layout. Please feel free to approach me with any questions or suggestions when you see me in the homes, or just drop me an email — I'm always happy to hear from you.

## Royal College of Nursi

## RCN President Visits Stow Healthcare Homes to Celebrate Nursing Excellence

We were delighted to welcome Bejoy Sebastian, President of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and a senior critical care nurse, to Stowlangoft Hall and Ford Place this month. His visit shone a spotlight on the incredible work being done by our talented nursing teams in both Suffolk and Norfolk.

Mr Sebastian, who took up his role as President in January 2025, is passionate about recognising and supporting nurses working in both social care and the NHS. During his time with us, he visited both homes, meeting nurses, residents, and teams who help make our homes the warm and welcoming places they are.

As someone who started his nursing journey in India, Mr Sebastian was especially interested in meeting both home-grown and internationally educated nurses. He spent time learning about our award-winning work in areas such as falls prevention, hospital admission reduction, and the care of younger adults with complex needs. He was also joined by Sarah Seeley who started her career in Stowlangtoft Hall 41 years ago, calling her visit a 'powerful and emotional experience'.

During their visit, Mr Sebastian also learned more about how we work hand-in-hand with the NHS to improve care for residents while easing pressure on local hospitals—a partnership that helps ensure people get the care they need, when and where they need it most.

He praised our teams for their compassion and professionalism, saying:

"I am deeply inspired by the kindness, expertise and commitment demonstrated by the nursing staff at Stow Healthcare. Their collaborative work with NHS partners, alongside their ability to translate integrated care can transform outcomes for residents and communities alike."

"Through close partnership with acute trusts, they are not only improving patient flow and easing pressure on NHS services but also ensuring that care is delivered in the right place, at the right time, and tailored to each resident's needs. Their innovative approaches are already delivering measurable improvements



## ng - President's Visit

reducing patient harm and setting new benchmarks for patient safety in nursing homes. At the Royal College of Nursing, we are proud to support our members as they rise to meet the demands of increasingly complex care. I am also grateful for the opportunity to hear some of the inspiring career journeys shared by their staff members."

We're proud sharing just a snapshot of the dedication and innovation that goes into everyday life at Stow Healthcare. A heartfelt thank you goes to all the staff at Stowlangtoft Hall and Ford Place who made the RCN team feel so welcome. Their enthusiasm, professionalism, and warmth were clear to see and made a lasting impression. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the values we live by every day—and we're so pleased to have celebrated our nursing teams in such a meaningful way.



## Visit our Memory Centres





## **Exceptional Memory Care at the Maple & Aspen Memory Centres**

The Maple Memory Centre at Brandon Park and the Aspen Memory Centre at Horkesley Manor provide industry-leading memory care in beautifully designed, tranquil settings. We are committed to delivering exceptional care, comfort, and dignity for those with memory challenges.

Our centres offer premium accommodation with high-quality furnishings, spacious suites that can be personalised to feel like home with access to communal facilities and stunning gardens. Residents benefit from expert, compassionate support in a safe and welcoming environment, ensuring the highest quality of life.

For more information or to arrange a visit, call **0333 241 9707** or email **admissions@stowhealthcare.co.uk**.

## Joyful Celebrations fo

Across our family of homes, residents and staff came together to mark the anniversary of VE Day in truly heartwarming and memorable ways. From nostalgic music and street parties to thoughtful reflection and lively entertainment, each home found its own unique way to honour this important day.

## **Stowlangtoft Hall**

The team embraced the spirit of the 1940s with a celebration full of music, vintage fashion, delicious food and drinks, and even a visit from a classic wartime vehicle. The day was a wonderful blend of remembrance, laughter and community spirit.









### **Melford Court**

Melford Court residents enjoyed a street party-themed lunch followed by music, a quiz, and reminiscing. The home was filled with gratitude for all those who helped make the day so special.

## **Memory Centres**

Our Memory Centres also joined in the commemorations. At Brandon, residents at the Maple Memory Centre joined the choir in Santon Downham for a singalong and helped with shopping and preparations. At Horkesley, Aspen Memory Centre hosted an afternoon of performances from a visiting choir and a spectacular flyby.







### **Cedars Place**

The wonderful Roy Lodge came to perform old-time classics, much to the delight of residents. A traditional fish and chip lunch served in newspaper cartons added an authentic touch, followed by traditional games and a homemade buffet.

## r VE Day

### **Ford Place**

VE Week was filled with games including bingo, arts and crafts and quizzes. Residents sang old favourites, enjoyed a tea party, and ended the week with a cheerful pub afternoon.













### Halstead Hall

Residents enjoyed a street party with wartime music from one of their own care staff, who sang classics.

Party food and a traditional trifle added to the celebration.

## **Horkesley Manor**

Horkesley Manor was filled with the nostalgic sounds of Hollie-Blue Huntsman performing songs from the 1940s and 50s. Her performance brought smiles, singing, and fond memories to everyone in attendance.









### **Manson House**

Manson House pulled out all the stops with a fantastic street party lunch. The home looked amazing thanks to everyone who got involved, creating a festive and heartfelt celebration of the day.

### **Brandon Park**

The home was beautifully decorated for the occasion, creating a joyful atmosphere. Residents took part in a range of fun, themed games and activities that brought everyone together in high spirits to celebrate the day.





## Fewer Falls, Safer Care

## How common are falls in care homes?

In the UK, there are between 270,000 and 1.6 million falls in care homes every year, this is about three times more than falls reported in the general community. Falls can lead to serious injuries like fractures, especially hip fractures, causing distress to residents and family members. The NHS spends 2.3 billion pounds a year on the treatment of falls.

Even if a fall doesn't cause a physical injury, it can still be very scary. This fear can make people less active and more isolated, which isn't good for their physical or mental health. At Stow Healthcare, our Head of Care and Compliance Helen Hill, has been working with all homes to review the falls that took place last year to see what we can learn and look at ways that we can try and reduce falls during 2025.

## **Key Findings from 2024**

706 falls were reported throughout the year

**57%** of falls occurred in female residents

60% of falls occurred in residents over 85 years

76% of falls occurred in resident bedrooms

74% of falls did not result in physical injury

5% of falls resulted in serious injury

48% of falls occurred overnight



## Homes

## Successes

#### **Decaf Drinks**

We offer decaffeinated drinks as standard in all our homes as it's been shown that caffeine acts as a diuretic and can therefore make us rush to the toilet to avoid accidents. We recognise it's important to keep everyone informed about this so they understand why decaf helps prevent falls and we will be doing more to support awareness this year.

### **Injury Prevention**

Most falls didn't result in injuries, and only a few led to serious injuries.

### **Managing Fall Risks**

We regularly assess residents' risk of falls and make referrals to other healthcare professionals for support and advice to help reduce the risk of frequent falls.

## **Areas for Improvement**

#### **Falls Reduction Champions**

We will be supporting staff to become Falls Reduction Champions through training and development and aim to have a Falls Reduction Champion in each home.

### **Strength and Balance Activities**

Some homes have introduced exercise activities and we will be working with all homes this year to help staff feel more confident in delivering these.

#### Communication

We aim to improve how we communicate with families after a fall regarding changes in health or wellbeing. Family members can offer encouragement to their loved ones to maintain mobility or provide suitable footwear. We will be reviewing the way we communicate with families after a resident falls.

## **Learning Opportunities**

Frequent Fallers

Identifying residents who fall often and taking extra steps to keep them safe.

Spotting things like low blood pressure early could help reduce falls.

Assistive Technology

Looking into things like acoustic sensors to help us spot risks early.

Access to specialist falls training for our staff will make a big difference.

Falls are a big challenge, but with the right strategies and teamwork, we can make a huge difference. Let's keep learning, improving, and doing everything we can to keep our residents safe and happy.

11

## Nikki's Crufts Journey

### By Nikki Humphries, Activities Coordinator at Brandon Park

"I'm Nikki, the Activities Coordinator here at Brandon Park, where I've proudly worked for nearly eight years. Outside of work, my heart belongs to my French Bulldogs – a passion I've cherished for over 12 years. I even have my own kennel name, "Crackatari" – a unique blend of our first Frenchie's name and a nod to my husband's favourite song!"







"My journey into the dog show world began with Diesel, a Staffordshire Bull Terrier who first gave me the show bug. Since then, I've travelled the country, made lifelong friends, and created countless memories in the show ring.

My first home-bred Frenchie, Ebony, opened the door to Crufts for me. I still remember the nerves as we stepped onto that famous green carpet for the first time. She didn't place in her class of 26, but simply being there felt like a huge accomplishment. Ebony is now seven and occasionally visits Brandon Park, where she's especially adored by our nurse, Carol – the two share a special bond!"

"Then came Mr Rigsby, Ebony's beautiful son, who quickly became part of the Brandon Park family. From just eight weeks old, he joined me at work daily, eventually earning the title





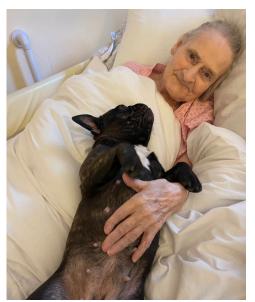
of our Resident Liaison. Rigsby brought so much joy to our residents – always ready with cuddles and charm. At Crufts, he made me beam with pride, earning a Very Highly Commended (5th) and later a 3rd place in a tough Limit class. Tragically, we lost him at just three and a half years old to a sudden brain haemorrhage. His memory lives on in a beautiful memorial garden here at Brandon Park, a space created by the team to honour the joy he brought to everyone he met."

"Today, Miss Shelby – Rigsby's best friend – has taken up his mantle as Resident Liaison. She joined the Crackatari family as a puppy three years ago and has already made her mark in the show world. She placed 3rd in both the 2024 and 2025 Crufts shows, competing in large, competitive classes. I'm incredibly proud of her.

Shelby is a familiar face around the home – always on someone's lap, especially if there are biscuits involved! She has a few favourite wheelchair-bound residents who are very generous with their treats, and her beloved giraffe toy can usually be found somewhere in the home (most often in the manager's office – she likes to leave it there for safekeeping!).

I'm truly grateful to the team at Brandon Park for welcoming my dogs so warmly. The happiness and comfort they bring to our residents is beyond words. Pet therapy really does make a difference – especially when Shelby visits our bed-bound residents. Seeing their faces light up makes every moment worth it."







At Stow Healthcare, we recognise the incredible value animals bring to our homes. Whether it's a regular visit from therapy dogs, resident pets like Miss Shelby, or animal-themed activities, our residents light up whenever animals are involved. Animal-based activities are consistently among our most popular and well-attended sessions and, for many of our residents, time spent with animals is not just an activity—it's a highlight. Thank you to Nikki for sharing her inspiring journey and for the incredible joy she and her beloved Frenchies bring to life at Brandon Park!

## **HORKESLEY MANOR RESIDENTIAL HOME**



## An industry leading private nursing facility

Situated in the charming village of Great Horkesley near Colchester, Horkesley Manor offers premium residential and nursing care in beautifully landscaped surroundings.

The home features a choice of spacious, well-furnished bedroom suites, each with Wi-Fi, optional private telephone connection and the opportunity to be personalised for a true home-from-home feel. Residents also enjoy stylish communal areas and peaceful garden spaces.

Horkesley Manor is proud to run the **Aspen Memory Centre**, providing dedicated support for those living with memory challenges—delivering comfort, dignity, and outstanding care in a tranquil setting.







For more information or to book an appointment please contact our Admissions team on 0333 2419707, admissions@stowhealthcare.co.uk or visit www.stowhealthcare.co.uk



## Residents' Corner

## The Pot Gang: Growing Green Thumbs and Smiles

What started as a small seed of an idea has truly blossomed! Around six months ago, the Pot Gang gardening club was formed at Horkesley Manor with just one or two residents keen to get their hands dirty. Since then, the group has flourished, now welcoming 5–6 regular members, with even more residents popping out to the courtyard to admire the plants and help with watering.

Everything the Pot Gang has grown has been started from seed — allowing everyone to witness the incredible germination process right from the beginning, even from the comfort of indoors. Watching those first tiny shoots appear has been a joy for all involved.

So far, our green-fingered gang has successfully nurtured potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, chillies, courgettes, and cucumbers. To top it all off, we've planted a vibrant selection of sunflowers for a bit of friendly competition.

It's been wonderful to see the courtyard come to life and even more wonderful to see how this little club has encouraged connection, care, and curiosity in our home. Here's to the next season of growth!









## Purposeful Living in our Memo

Daily life in the Maple Memory Centre at Brandon Park and the Aspen Memory Centre in Horkesley Manor, is a mixture of enjoyable social events and peaceful relaxation striving to maximise independence for those living there. In our centres, we give people back daily, independent activities they were once used to. We put meaningful things in their hands, whether a broom to sweep the floor, a trowel to weed the garden or a paintbrush to create a picture. Giving people something to hold that connects them to their own life experience can help connect people back to the wider world again.

## Montessori at the Heart of Care

#### What is Montessori?

Montessori is a person-centred approach originally developed for children, which has been thoughtfully adapted for dementia care. It focuses on promoting independence, choice, and meaningful engagement through hands-on activities in a calm, supportive environment.

Our methods are firmly based on 'Montessori methods for care', which aim to promote a non-clinical and homely feel. Staff known as 'Homemakers' support those living in the Memory Centres and help to maximise their independence and find real purpose and joy in each day. The Homemaker may accompany residents to the kitchen to make a cup of tea and butter some toast, or enjoy a game with them whilst listening to the radio and singing along. There are no set activities because everyone joins in and the day is full of meaningful things, whether pottering in the garden, baking some cakes or enjoying a story together.

## **Restoring Purpose Through Daily Tasks**

When caring for someone living with dementia, it's essential to consider every aspect of their well-being. Psychologist Thomas Kitwood, through his pioneering work, developed the 'Flower' model highlighting the core psychological and social needs of people with dementia. These needs include identity, comfort, and occupation, and are vital in maintaining a sense of self and overall well-being.

By recognising and responding to these needs, we can help individuals live with dignity, purpose, and joy. Providing meaningful occupation—through familiar, hands-on tasks—helps people feel valued, included,



and engaged in daily life. As Alzheimer's.net explains, "What we're increasingly learning is that those with dementia can come to not only enjoy the process of participating in something they used to regularly do, but also come away with a definite sense of accomplishment that can help improve their quality of life."

## ry Centres

## **Putting Montessori into Practice**

Activities with meaning and purpose are put back into people's lives, based on their needs, interests, skills and abilities. People with dementia often feel they are always being told what to do. Keeping someone occupied will help them feel like they have worth and purpose in life. By giving them occupation, through tasks that are meaningful to them, it will ensure that they avoid isolation or feel excluded from daily life.

## Different ways caregivers can put Montessori into practice:

• For advanced dementia, holding dolls, maintaining a series of dolls or handling doll clothes.



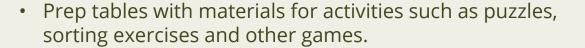
• Baking or cooking, baking ingredients and a safe kitchen environment can bring comfort.

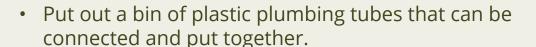


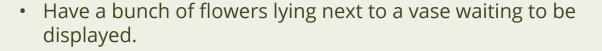
 Have a basket of clean socks that need to be matched and folded.



- Lay out a basket of clean towels to fold.
- Lay out cutlery on a table waiting to be set.









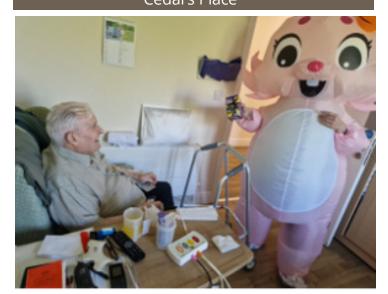
## Springtime Fun!

#### Brandon Park and the Maple Memory Centre



Brandon Park's Easter Eggstravaganza was a great success and raised £160 towards their seaside trip! Families participated in an Easter Egg hunt in the garden winning prizes generously donated to the home.

#### Cedars Place



The residents at Cedars Place had a busy Easter weekend. They made chocolate Easter eggs nests to decorate a big Easter cake and enjoyed making centre pieces for the tables, Easter bonnets and wreaths. The Easter rabbit helped deliver all the chocolate eggs for each of the residents.

#### Ford Place



Ford Place celebrated the 100th birthday of Peggie! It was a fantastic day filled with music and celebrations. The wonderful Charlie from Down Melody Lane performed for the residents and Peggie's family joined to celebrate her life.

### Halstead Hall



Halstead Hall had a wonderful therapeutic experience with miniature donkeys! Everyone was able to stroke them and the residents asked lots of interesting questions to the handlers.

#### Manson House



Residents and staff at Manson House had a fabulous afternoon when 'Birds & Falconry' came to visit! Everyone was able interact with the larger than life birds and learned a lot!

### **Melford Court**



Melford court had a surprise visit from a shepherd with her little lamb from Kentwell Hall. Residents enjoyed the little lambs company, had lots of cuddles and some even managed to feed her!

#### Horkesley Manor and the Aspen Memory Centre



Residents at Horkesley Manor have been busy incubating and subsequently, looking after new little fluffy arrivals! The chicks hatched after 22 days in incubation and have brought such joy to the whole home!

#### Stowlangtoft Hall



The hall was very fortunate to have the Year 2 class from Old Buckenham Hall visit. The interaction between the children and residents was wonderful with meaningful conversations and cherished memories of VE Day shared across generations.



## Word Search



#### **It's Puzzle Time!**

Test your knowledge! Can you find all of the words relating to Summer?

Sunshine Beach Barbeque Swim

Vacation Ice Cream Flip Flops Picnic

Sunglasses

If you have an interesting story, news or an announcement that you would like to share in the next edition of Caring & Sharing, please email us at enquiries@stowhealthcare.co.uk















www.facebook.com/stowhealthcare



instagram.com/stowhealthcare



x.com/stowhealthcare



linked in. com/stowheal th care group



youtube.com/stowhealthcaregroup



www.stowhealthcare.co.uk

#### STOW HEALTHCARE GROUP

The Brew House, Stowlangtoft, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 3JY

0333 2419707 enquiries@stowhealthcare.co.uk

