

# Norfolk Industries for Disabled People



## VOLUNTARY WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS



95 Oak Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 3BP

Tel : 01603 667957 Fax : 01603 624265

Website : [www.norfolkindustries.co.uk](http://www.norfolkindustries.co.uk) Email : [sales@norfolkindustries.co.uk](mailto:sales@norfolkindustries.co.uk)

## Business History

Norfolk Industries is part of a Community Interest Company called Independence Matters.



Employing people with various disabilities, as well as providing work placements to others with disabilities we have worked hard to improve the reach of our service delivery across Norfolk and Suffolk.

We attempt to assist individuals to reach their goals and aspirations to the best of their ability through meaningful work, which our logo attempts to portray.



Caring about people,  
caring about nature.

## The Team

As a Community Interest Company our most important asset is our staff. We have a small number of core staff, at least 50% of which have various disabilities.

Core staff are employed on good terms and conditions of service, with pay above minimum wage levels and generous sickness and pension schemes. The National Joint Council for Workshops terms of employment are also adhered to.

Customers purchasing from us can be assured that they are directly contributing towards the employment of people with significant barriers to work, who may find it difficult to sustain alternative employment, particularly in today's employment market.



## **Voluntary Placements Programme**

**We have worked hard over recent years to develop our business structure so that we are able to provide an employment service to a wider number of disadvantaged people within the local community. This has been achieved by offering Voluntary Work Experience Placements.**

**As we already employ people with disabilities, there is an understanding and empathy for others strengths and weaknesses which provide a supportive environment suited to people with disabilities who are attempting to get back into work.**



**Some work processes are manual only and do not involve machinery, others require straight forward training to enable the use of basic machinery.**

**The voluntarily programme we offer is flexible, in that hours can normally be arranged to suit, although we do like to agree times and days that individuals will attend so that we can fit them into our production scheduling.**

**However, things like bus timetables, stamina, confidence and what time of day people are at their best can all be taken into consideration when deciding hours.**



**Also, the number of hours worked is flexible. We have some people who volunteer 2 hours per week and others that volunteer 30 hours per week.**

**People can be referred in a number of ways – via the Job Centre, Seetec, Meridian East, Shaw Trust, Norfolk County Council or just by contacting us and offering your time!**

## The Work - Manufacturing

The work we offer is light weight, repetitive and requires little instruction, it is suitable for both men and women. Being a team based activity this also ensures that support is available from other members of staff at all times.

This particularly suits people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities such as visual and/or hearing impairment, skeletal deformities etc. Other disabilities would also be assessed for their suitability to our environment.

Norfolk Industries manufactures a range of small animal pet bedding products aimed at rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, rats and mice. These products are made in large numbers and to the customer's specification. Quality is very important to us and is core to the success of the business.

The products include paper flaked products, viscose fibre products and Snooze Tubes.



## The Environment

This is a factory environment and some processes can be a little dusty, but extraction is provided.

Some processes are noisier than others, due to machinery running and the forklift etc, but the factory is warm and dry, and a canteen is available for lunch and tea breaks.

Protective clothing can be provided; steel toe-capped shoes, warehouse coat, dust mask etc. or if you already have them you can bring your own.

## Eligibility Criteria

Unfortunately, the work and the environment are not suitable for everyone. Bear in mind that this is a factory environment, noisy at times, dusty in certain areas and there is a requirement to actually work! It is accepted that individuals have their own abilities and capacities, but we expect people to work to the best of their ability.

There is a requirement to stand for long periods, and be able to take in basic instruction. Possessing good use of the arms and having some manual dexterity is also a requirement.



It is also important to be aware of Health and Safety requirements and have a basic understanding of what this entails, i.e. working in a safe and consistent manner.

Being team based work, it is essential that individuals aim to work alongside each other in a respectful way and accept that everybody may have a differing opinion at times!



The work ethic is a difficult thing to define, but in general an acceptance of the fact that we are producing an item for the customer, to their required specification and that this product needs to be of good quality and design to sell.

A 'no care' attitude to the work results in low standards of quality and will create a negative atmosphere within the team. It is very important that any individuals considering this programme understand that the customer's requirements are the most important element of the business.

## Benefits of the Programme

It is our aim to provide a safe and relatively low stress working environment for people with barriers to work, who may struggle in other work places.

There are many benefits to the programme including –

- building confidence
- developing time keeping skills
- improving social skills through work
- understanding the work ethic
- engaging people in a productive manner
- learning to receive and interpret instructions
- gain general work experience such as packing, filling, boxing and palletising product for the customer.

Some elements of machinery maintenance can also be taught if this is something that the individual is interested in.

## Feedback

Here are some of the comments made by other people who have used this service –

*'I have settled quicker here than in all of the other jobs I have had. The people here are very nice, they support each other and work as a team. I have gained confidence in the weeks I've been here. I feel like a piece of jigsaw that finally fits.'*  
Penny Taylor - Volunteer

*'I would love to come back. I enjoyed my time at Norfolk Industries and would really like to work there in a paid job.'*  
Christine Clarke - Volunteer

*'It's brilliant! I enjoy the work.'*  
Chris Worbey - Volunteer

## **Next Steps**

We can offer a visit to the factory so that anyone interested can take a look at the work and the environment and decide whether they feel it will be suitable for them. This appointment can be booked with Sharon Tooke via telephone – 01603 667957 or via email [sales@norfolkindustries.co.uk](mailto:sales@norfolkindustries.co.uk).

We would also provide some advice on whether we feel that the individual would benefit from the programme and more importantly whether the environment is suitable for their Health and Safety.

If all parties are happy, we would then arrange an Induction which would cover the start up paperwork (support can be provided), Health and Safety requirements, the hours of work would be agreed, the length of the programme would also be discussed as well as the objectives of the programme for that individual. A locker is provided to keep belongings in.

At this point, the individual could go onto the factory floor for a short period if they wish or an alternative start date would be arranged.

### **Exiting the Programme**

At the end of the programme, an exit interview would be carried out to gain feedback from the volunteer.

It is important to us that every person is treated with respect and is given the support that they need. We like to learn from the exit interview if there have been any issues with the work, the environment or the staff so that we can learn from this in the future.

We also like to find out if the individual has gained what they hoped to from the programme.

If you have any questions with regard to this programme, please call Sharon Tooke on 01603 667957.

