

HOSC/16/17

Committee Health Overview and Scrutiny

Date 20 March 2017

Autism services in Essex

Action required

- (i) To consider the updates received for the three contracts providing autism services across Essex; and
 - (i) To consider any further monitoring and/or updates required which the newly constituted HOSC, post-May elections, should be recommended to build into its future work programme.
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Background

At the July 2016 meeting of Full Council a question was raised about access to autism services in Essex and, as part of the Cabinet Member response, the Cabinet Member agreed to bring the issue to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Commissioners and providers of autism services attended the November 2016 HOSC meeting for a discussion about the diagnostic pathway and the significant, and different, waiting times for assessment across the county. An extract of the minutes of that meeting recording the conclusion reached by the Committee is reproduced overleaf. The Committee specifically requested an update on waiting times after 3-4 months and the two providers of the three services across Essex (Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust provide services for the North East Essex area and Mid and West Essex areas under separate contracts) have been asked to provide short reports updating on waiting times for assessment:

The following update reports are attached for consideration:

- a) North East Essex Service Area
- b) Mid and West Essex Service Area
- c) South Essex Service Area

Extract minute from 9 November 2016 meeting of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Minute 13: Autism services

Conclusion:

HOSC Members felt that the profile of the particular issues about referral routes and waiting times had been raised by the discussion at the HOSC meeting.

The HOSC was satisfied that commissioners and providers had now been made aware of the concerns around referral routes and excessive waiting times for assessment. The HOSC was satisfied that, notwithstanding all the current pressures on the health service, that some extra attention and resource was now being given to improving the consistency of service in the county and reducing waiting times.

The Committee **agreed:**

- a) That HOSC be provided with a further written update on performance and next steps in early 2017.
- b) That the Commissioners/Providers would provide a co-ordinated response to the public questions asked at the meeting by Pat Smith.