

Report title: Essex Partnership Data Declaration	
Report to: Essex Health and Wellbeing Board	
Report author: CC Harrington/ ACO Henderson. Essex Police	
Date: 19 July 2023	For: Discussion
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to raise awareness of the 'data declaration' which has been developed between Essex Police, Essex County Council and the University of Essex to facilitate better sharing of information for understanding and addressing system-wide problems effectively. This is with a view to securing further support from wider board members. The high-level overview in this report will be accompanied by further detail at the meeting itself.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Our primary recommendation will be for Health and Wellbeing Board members to consider signing up to the data declaration so that we can extend the benefits of enhanced data sharing even further across the system.
- 2.2 Matters for which discussion or decision is required are as follows:
- 2.3 Agreement in principle, for additional interested parties to support the data declaration and work together to signing a declaration ahead of the next board.
- 2.4 In due course, committing to sharing assets (knowledge, resource, skills etc.) so that projects supported by the data declaration can be effectively developed and implemented. These skills might include those of information management, information security, analytical, data science or IT personnel.
- 2.5 There are no anticipated expenditure implications. By signing up to the data declaration, parties are not making a financial commitment.

3 Background and Proposal

- 3.1 Recently, the ECDA¹ consortium has secured unanimous support from Chief Executives of borough, city and district, and unitary authorities in Essex to improve our use of data and information across the system, formalised through their recognition (via the data declaration) of the growing need to be data driven.
- 3.2 Without this formalised support we are likely, as a system, to continue to face practical and ethical barriers in our efforts to better understand complex system-wide challenges.
- 3.3 Already, we have seen the benefits of ‘daring to share’ through one-off, successful projects. This gives us confidence that by formalising partnership support we will eventually make progress with system-wide challenges.
- 3.4 Illustrated by the national data and digital strategies, data sharing between public sector agencies is being discussed at a national level with growing vigour, and the progress made by other regions in advanced sharing (West Midlands, for instance) will provide helpful insight we can learn from.
- 3.5 In addition, the private sector are increasingly choosing to support their public sector colleagues by providing access to skills and expertise which will support this ambition. Already, Essex Police are in a strong collaboration with BT and other private sector companies (an initiative known as the ‘Hot House’) where much of this activity can be realised.
- 3.6 Having developed the declaration to its current position within the ECDA consortium, we have been able to address common anticipated challenges and are now at a point where we are clear in the proposal we can extend further to our partners. However, we would welcome further engagement with interested parties before formalising additional support so that we can understand and address any new challenges which might arise.
- 3.7 With agreement we can develop some pathfinder proposals that can be discussed, agreed and sponsored by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

4 Options

- 4.1 Option 1: Agree and formalise wider partnership commitment to enhanced data sharing by signing up to the data declaration as new signatories. By increasing the number of signatories there will be a stronger foundation for routinely facilitating better data sharing, and for ensuring the benefits are felt as widely as possible.
- 4.2 Option 1 is the ECDA preferred option, on the basis that formalising additional support means we can develop working practices which can be implemented

¹ Essex Centre for Data Analytics

widely and avoid the need to generate agreement for each individual work stream. Strategic agreement on any commissioned work would always be sought to ensure suitability and to address any risks or challenges.

- 4.3 Option 2: Agree to the principle of enhanced data sharing, with the intention of supporting where possible, but without formalising this through the data declaration. Whilst this will still enhance the quality of our capabilities, and our understanding of complex issues, without signing up to the declaration itself we will not benefit from having agreed protocols and practices which are what will ultimately drive our capabilities.
- 4.4 Option 3: Acknowledge the benefit of enhanced data sharing but consider options on an ad hoc basis when the need arises. Whilst the ECDA consortium will still strive for collaborative sharing across the system in these instances, the practicalities of navigating challenges and barriers on an ad hoc basis is likely to restrict the ease with which we can do so.

5 Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 No financial implications for the board to consider. Any financial impact brought about by specific workstreams will be addressed at the point of strategic agreement. However, the purpose of the data declaration, and ECDA more widely, is to be able to share information *without* financial implication.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 Legal implications are most likely to centre around safe and ethical sharing of information which is what has underpinned the formation of the data declaration and is addressed through its content and ongoing discussion.

6 Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 6.3 The Equality Comprehensive Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

7 List of appendices

Presentation to be distributed in due course, outlining further detail on the above proposal and on possible future work streams.

8 List of Background papers

ECDA data declaration (on request)
National Data Strategy (GOV.UK)
National Digital Strategy (GOV.UK)