

**Minutes of the meeting of the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board held at in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Chelmsford at 10:00am on Wednesday 24 November 2021**

**Present:**

**Board Members (Statutory)**

Cllr John Spence	Essex County Council ( <b>Chairman</b> )
Dr Hasan Chowhan	North East Essex CCG
Cllr Peter Davey	Essex Association of Local Councils
Cllr Beverley Egan	Essex County Council
Dr Rob Gerlis	West Essex CCG
Dr Mike Gogarty	Essex County Council (Director, Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities)
Clare Kershaw	Essex County Council (substitute for Helen Lincoln, Director of Children's Services)
Nick Presmeg	Essex County Council
Cllr Mike Steel	Essex County Council
Dr Boye Tayo	Basildon and Brentwood CCG

**Board Members (Other)**

Georgina Blakemore	Borough/City/District Councils
Paul Burstow	Independent Chair, Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS
Cllr Graham Butland	Borough/City/District Councils
Ian Davidson	Borough/City/District Councils (ECEA Rep)
Gavin Jones	Chief Executive, Essex County Council
Neill Moloney	Essex Acute Hospital Trusts (substitute for Nick Hulme)
Professor Mike Thorne	Independent Chair, Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership
Elizabeth Wells	Essex Mental Health and Non-Acute Providers (substitute for Paul Scott)
Alison Wilson	Voluntary Sector
Cllr Simon Wootton	Borough/City/District Councils

**Co-opted Members**

Jane Gardner	Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (substitute for Roger Hirst)
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**Other Attendees**

Tricia D'Orsi	Castle Point and Rochford CCG
William Hooper	Senior Strategy Adviser, Essex County Council
Anthony McKeever	Partnership Executive Lead and Joint Accountable Officer for Mid and South Essex CCGs
Peter Wightman	Hertfordshire and West Essex CCG (substitute for Dr Jane Halpin)
Judith Dignum	Democratic Services Officer, Essex County Council

## 1. Membership, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

Apologies for absence were received as set out below:

### Board Members

David Archibald	Essex Safeguarding Children Board
Dr Anna Davey	Mid Essex CCG
Roger Hirst	Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (substitute Jane Gardner)
Professor Will Pope	Independent Chair, Suffolk and North East Essex ICS
Paul Scott	Essex Mental Health and Non-Acute Providers (substitute Elizabeth Wells)
Deborah Stuart-Angus	Independent Chair, Essex Safeguarding Adults Board
Simon Wood	NHS Commissioning Board

### Other apologies

Dr Jane Halpin	Hertfordshire and West Essex CCG (substitute Peter Wightman)
Susannah Howard	Suffolk and North East Essex ICS

## 2. Minutes and progress report on actions arising: 15 September 2021

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 15 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record and a progress report on the agreed actions was noted.

Updating the Board on progress regarding the emerging Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Mike Gogarty advised that a workshop would be held following the January meeting to allow discussion of the priority areas. Noting that the content of the Strategy would be informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Chairman commented on the importance for the Strategy's content to be owned by all parties.

## 3. Questions from the Public

The Board welcomed Mrs Wendy Daden, who asked a question as summarised below:

### Publicity for Vitamin D

In introducing her question Mrs Daden referred to research findings on the function and effectiveness of Vitamin D and highlighted the provision by the Government of free vitamin D to certain groups of vulnerable individuals. She commented that, despite this, there is no reference on the Essex County Council Coronavirus Hub to the importance of Vitamin D, nor are residents alerted to the possibility of taking supplements.

Mrs Daden called for the County Council to consider broad publication of the information to which she had referred:

- As a standard addition to literature
- Prominently on the ECC Coronavirus Hub
- With any further information deemed appropriate to fully inform all residents regarding the function and importance of Vitamin D.

In Mrs Daden's view, this would fulfil the purpose of the government and local authorities to provide the tools for members of the public to make their own decisions based on information provided.

### **Response by Dr Mike Gogarty, Director, Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities, Essex County Council**

Thanking Mrs Daden for her questions, Dr Gogarty confirmed his agreement with her view on the importance of Vitamin D. However, NICE guidance did not currently recommend its offering for either the prevention or treatment of Covid-19, even while acknowledging the potential benefits. In these circumstances, the most important course of action was to continue to promote the importance of vaccine boosters.

## **4. Verbal Updates**

### **Covid in Essex**

The Board received an update from Mike Gogarty on the latest position, noting the critical importance of vaccines and boosters given that the effectiveness of the Astra Zeneca vaccine was known to decline after five months. The NHS had been working particularly hard with the over 70s population group to promote the booster programme and assist people in accessing appointments where necessary.

### **Integrated Care Systems/Health and Care Partnership**

The Board received and **noted** updates from the ICSs and HCP as set out below, focusing particularly on progress towards recovery from Covid:

- Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS: Peter Wightman
- Mid and South Essex HCP: Anthony McKeever
- Suffolk and North East Essex ICS: Neill Moloney

There followed a discussion on system pressures in general, with a view to identifying any potential action at Board, County Council or system level which may help to ease the situation. A number of main points arose:

- Patient frustration with issues such as lack of access to care was increasing and was being expressed through rudeness and lack of respect for healthcare staff in all settings. It was agreed that a multi-channel publicity campaign would be helpful in terms of explaining the variety of professional healthcare roles available to assist with health issues, the importance of demand-management and reinforcing the 'zero tolerance of abuse' message. Communications messages needed to avoid blaming any single part of the system for the issues being experienced by patients. The Chief Executive of Essex County Council agreed that the Council would take forward the issue of the publicity campaign.

- The voluntary sector could be encouraged to offer activities to help prevent people from acquiring certain medical conditions, thereby mitigating future demand. The sector also had an important role to play in reducing the incidence of mental illness.
- Recognising that tolerance levels were known to drop during a crisis, it was important to treat people with compassion. For example, taking time to understand that those resisting vaccines and boosters may be concerned about a single issue such as potential side-effects and providing an opportunity to overcome their resistance by offering information and reassurance.
- The Board received an update from Nick Presmeg concerning the position in Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education, noting his confidence that the services would cope in spite of the challenging circumstances. It was agreed that updates on these services should be included as part of the regular 'Updates' item on Board agendas.

In closing the discussion on this issue, the Chairman thanked everyone for a valuable discussion and commended all concerned for their success in working together.

The updates were **noted**.

#### **Action**

- | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Lead / Comments</b>                 |
|--|--|
| 1. Initiate a multi-channel publicity campaign to communicate roles of healthcare professionals (i.e. why it is not always necessary to see a GP), explain the importance of demand management and reinforce the 'zero tolerance of abuse' message | Essex County Council<br>(Mike Gogarty) |
| 2. Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education to be included in the regular 'Updates' item on Board agendas.   | Board Secretary                        |

#### **5. Better Care Fund Plan 2021-22 (HWB/19/21)**

The Board considered a report seeking its endorsement for the spending plans agreed by the Better Care Fund Partnership and developed by Essex County Council in conjunction with health partners.

During consideration of the report, the Chairman expressed his congratulations to Nick Presmeg and Helen Lincoln on the success of Essex County Council in being recognised as Social Work Employer of the Year at the Social Worker of the Year Awards, and to Melanie Noel in receiving the award for Adult Social Worker of the Year.

**Resolved:**

1. To endorse the Better Care Fund Plan for Essex in the form appended to report HWB/19/21.
2. To note that agreement will be sought from the Essex County Council Cabinet to authorise the Executive Director for Adult Social Care to vary the existing Section 75 agreements to reflect the agreed Plan.

**6. Early Years and Childcare strategy 2022 (HWB/20/21)**

Carolyn Terry, Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency and Sustainability Manager (Essex County Council) was present during this item.

The Board received a report seeking its endorsement of the Essex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022, as appended to report HWB/20/21. The Board was also requested to support the implementation of the Strategy by working in partnership to support the agreed outcomes and to agree to receive updates on delivery of the Strategy aims at future meetings.

In voicing her support for the Strategy, Tricia D'Orsi thanked Essex County Council for involving her in the consultation and noted that recent developments in partnership working could be built on at pace to deliver the agreed outcomes.

**Resolved:**

1. To endorse the Essex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022 as appended to report HWB/20/21.
2. To support the implementation of the Strategy (due for publication in January 2022) by working in partnership to support achieving the agreed outcomes.
3. To receive updates to future Board meetings on the delivery of the Strategy aims.

**7. Learning Disability Issues**

- a. Southend, Essex and Thurrock Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR): Action Plans Update (HWB/21/21)**
- b. Learning Disability Mortality Rates**

Rebekah Baillie, Integrated Learning Disability Health Commissioner (Essex County Council) was present during this item.

The Board received updates on the following issues:

- Delivery of action plans agreed as part of the Annual LeDeR Mortality Review and progress in developing a three-year deliverables plan.

- Progress on work to consider the challenges and identify improvements in relation to the high incidence of conditions usually managed through public health interventions but which contribute to high rates of mortality in those with learning disabilities.

The following issues arose from consideration of the updates:

- The intention to report the three-year deliverables plan to the Board towards the end of the current financial year was noted.
- The Board's expectation was that any targets contained within the deliverables plan would be ambitious, with a focus on the levelling up agenda. In addition, targets should be measurable and include a specific action around screening rates. It would also be important to ensure that the plan content reflected the findings of the LeDeR report.
- Nick Presmeg highlighted the challenges inherent from the plan's dual role in terms of comprising a practical action plan to improve the lives of those with disabilities while having at the same time a responsibility to promote societal change through implementation of the social model of disability.

The Chairman thanked Rebekah Baillie and all concerned for their ongoing work, following which the updates were **received and noted**.

### Action

Action	Lead / Comments
3. Update Forward Plan to include submission of LeDeR three-year deliverables plan towards the end of the current financial year	Board Secretary

## 8. Updates

### a. Improving the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) System in Essex – update on progress (HWB/22/21)

Ralph Holloway, Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation (Essex County Council) was present during this item and presented the report in association with Clare Kershaw.

The Board received a report on the progress made against the written statement of action following the SEND Care Quality Commission (CQC) Ofsted inspection in October 2019, together with progress made against other areas of SEND improvement discussed at the meeting on 28 April 2021.

In response to a question concerning insufficient availability of speech and language therapists, the Chairman advised that Essex County Council had made representations on this issue to the Department for Education. He

also referred to the anticipated Department for Education SEND review, due to start soon following a delay, commenting that any changes being made in Essex at present were being designed with the review in mind.

The Board was pleased to note the excellent progress which had been made, particularly in terms of moving to a more collaborative approach.

The progress update was **noted**.

**b. Specialist Sensory Services in Essex**

**i Thinking ahead**

**ii Specialist Sensory Services Strategy Discussion (HWB/23/21)**

Lisa Wilson, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Policy and Rajkumar Samsonraj, Commissioning Manager (Essex County Council) were present during consideration of this item.

The Board received an update following evaluation of a pilot project which expanded the current Sensory offer. Consideration was also given to a strategic report reflecting the vision for people with sensory impairments, inviting discussion on how the system could work to address the gaps that exist and remove barriers to enable people with sensory impairments to lead the lives they wish.

In introducing the item, Lisa Wilson commented that the pilot project had been well-received and a decision had been made to recommission the service in 2022, reflecting an increase in demand.

The Board's discussion centred around an assessment of current performance, with a view to identifying areas for improvement and development. The following main issues were highlighted:

- An analysis of the data in relation to increased demand would be helpful in order to establish the drivers, in particular whether it was associated with an ageing population. This would assist GPs in the management of patients.
- The importance of state of mind and attitude in living positively with a sensory impairment should not be ignored, and the voluntary sector had a key role to play in this aspect.
- With regard to the effective deployment of new technology, it would be helpful to make healthcare professionals aware of the local arrangements in place for testing new technology from across the UK and the World. In addition, a rapidly evolving technological environment meant it was essential for services to have the capability to adapt, and this must be reflected in the design of emerging partnerships and integrated strategies.

- There was a need to educate the population about sensory impairment. Healthwatch Essex offered to share outcomes from work they had done with the Collaborate Essex Disability and Carers Forum around the challenges of living with a sensory impairment during Covid-19. Examples included the abuse of visually impaired people for failing to abide by instructions shown on signs they were unable to read.
- Any plan for delivering Sensory services should identify intended impacts and ensure measurable outcomes.

The Chairman thanked members for their contributions and stated that the County Council would continue engagement on this issue with the ICSs and HCP.

Noting that Lisa Wilson would soon be leaving the County Council to take up a more senior role elsewhere, the Chairman and Nick Presmeg thanked her for her excellent work, acknowledging that she would be a great loss to the organisation. Ms Wilson thanked them for their remarks.

#### **9. Building Links between the Board and the Essex Centre for Data Analytics (HWB/24/21)**

The Board received a presentation by David Caplan, Head of Essex Centre for Data Analytics (ECDA), designed to increase awareness of the work of the Centre and promote a discussion of how it could assist with the work of the Board. Mr Caplan advised that the Centre was seeking to develop its role through the development of projects involving a wider range of parties, as opposed to being based on a single organisation.

Board Members representing the County Council and partners (including Children's Services and Education, Mid and South Essex HCP and Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust) identified a range of potential opportunities for collaboration with the ECDA and undertook to contact Mr Caplan.

The Chairman commented that the service offered by the ECDA may also be helpful in furthering work on issues considered by the Board recently, including learning disability mortality rates and suicide prevention.

Mr Caplan thanked Members for their comments, stating that he would welcome direct approaches from within the County Council and from partners.

#### **Resolved:**

1. To note the work of the Essex Centre for Data Analytics, as set out in Appendix 1 to report HWB/24/21.
2. That Board members arrange to follow up with the ECDA their ideas for potential collaboration, as appropriate.



## 10. Health and Wellbeing Board Forward Plan 2021-22

Members noted the content of the Forward Plan. The Chairman emphasised that the Board should be considering agenda items proposed and initiated by all partners and he called for suggestions accordingly.

## 11. Date of Next Meeting

It was **noted** that the next meeting of the Board would take place on **Wednesday 26 January 2022 at 10.00am** in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Chelmsford (see Secretary's Note below).

The meeting closed at 12.10pm

**Councillor John Spence**  
**Chairman**

**26 January 2022**

### Secretary's Note

Arrangements for Board meetings in January 2022 were subsequently clarified as follows and circulated to members:

1. An informal workshop will be held on **Wednesday 19 January 2022 at 10am**. This will take place in private **online via Zoom**, with the purpose of considering the outcome of the Board review and agreeing proposals for recommendation to the Board at a formal meeting the following week.
2. A brief formal meeting of the Board will take place **in person** at **10.00am on Wednesday 26 January 2022**, with content limited to the usual updates plus the final report on the Board Review.
3. This formal meeting will be **followed by a workshop** to discuss the emerging Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to which partners who are not members of the Board will also be invited.