

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- The Essex Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory committee of Essex County Council
- The Board comprises representatives from all parts of the Essex health and wellbeing system including Essex County Council, Essex district councils; Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), local alliances and district/borough and city-level Health and Wellbeing boards.
- The purpose of the Board is to play a pivotal role in all parts of Essex to enable residents to lead healthy lives in ways which extend life expectancy and minimize differences in life expectancy between places. It does this through delivering, supporting and influencing within the complex local system addressing the wider determinants of health.
- Full details of the Board's role are set out in the Council's Constitution.
- The Board welcomes public interest in its business. Most meetings are open to the public and the Board's papers are published on the Council's website
- The Board also welcomes public questions and has adopted the procedure set out below to ensure that these are responded to effectively.
- Questions must relate to the Board's role as set out above. Other questions will not be accepted
- Questions relating to the performance of individual health service providers are not appropriate and should be addressed to the relevant commissioner.
- For further information or advice on the work of the Board or the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee or their procedures for public questions please contact the Democratic Services Team at Essex County Council: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

Essex Health and Wellbeing Board

Public Questions Procedure

(a) General

At every meeting of the Panel there shall be a period of up to 15 minutes to enable members of the public to ask questions of the Chairman of the Board. Written statements and documents including photographs may not be circulated at the meeting by a member of the public asking a question.

(b) Notice of questions

(i) A question may only be asked if notice has been given to the Secretary to the Board either

- by email to democratic.services@essex.gov.uk; or
- in writing c/o Democracy and Transparency, P O Box 11, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1LX

by no later than 10.30 am on the third working day before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.

(ii) The Chairman may exercise discretion and allow an urgent question to be raised and asked, provided that written notice of the question is delivered to the Secretary to the Board by 17:00 on the day before the meeting. The notice shall contain a request for the Chairman to exercise his discretion and specify the grounds upon which the matter is urgent.

(iii) Any question received after the deadline at (i) above or in the event of the Chairman declining to exercise his discretion to allow an urgent question at (ii) above will be held over until the next meeting.

(c) Number of questions

At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of the same organisation. Where in the opinion of the Chairman two or more questions are in similar terms, they will be grouped together.

(d) Order of questions

Questions will be dealt with in the order in which notice of them is received, except that the Chairman may group together similar questions.

(e) Scope of questions

A question may be rejected if it:

- (i) is not about a matter for which the Board has a responsibility, or which does not affect the area covered by the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (ii) relates directly to a Health operational matter;
- (iii) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (iv) is substantially the same as a question asked at a meeting in the past six months;
- (v) will require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or
- (vi) would be more appropriately dealt with by another organisation or an individual partner of the Board.

(f) Notification of rejected questions

Notification of rejected questions will be given at the earliest opportunity in the written form in which the question was received. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection in accordance with (e) above.

(g) The Secretary to the meeting will maintain a record of each question which will be open to public inspection as soon as the first question is received and will immediately send a copy to the Chairman.

(h) Question paper

- (i) The Secretary to the meeting shall set out in the agenda for the meeting the questions submitted, including urgent questions where the Chairman has exercised his discretion to allow the question to be put, in the order received. This shall be circulated to Members, the public and the press at the meeting.
- (ii) Only those questions appearing on the order paper and supplementary questions asked under (k) shall be dealt with at the meeting.

(i) Asking the question at the meeting

The Chairman will invite the questioner formally to put the question to the meeting. If the questioner is unable to be present a written answer will be provided in the written form in which the question was received within 10 working days of the closure of the meeting.

(j) Response

An answer may take the form of:

- (i) A direct oral response;
- (ii) where the desired information is in a published form, a reference to that publication; or
- (iii) a written response.

Where, at the discretion of the Chairman, it is not an efficient use of time or is otherwise inappropriate for the question to be dealt with during the period allocated for questions, it will be dealt with by a written answer.

Save for the Member replying to the question, no other Member shall be permitted to speak to the questioner, unless the question is such that it has to be answered by more than one member of the board.

(k) Supplementary Questions

A member of the public who has put a question in person may without notice ask a supplementary question. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chairman may reject the supplementary question on any of the grounds in (e) above.

(l) Withdrawal of question

Any question may be withdrawn by the person submitting it at any time before the question is answered.