



11th October 2024

Dear Partner

2025/26 Commissioning Intentions (Part A)

I am writing to you on behalf of the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (MSE ICB). At our September 2024 Board meeting, all members agreed to reaffirm our commitment to working together. We see 2025/26 as a continuation of our positive collaboration since the MSE ICB was established in July 2022.

I wanted to take this opportunity to reaffirm the role of the ICB, to be transparent in how we will engage and work with partners. The ICB provides the engine room function for our system, it sets the strategy and direction for the future of health services for the population we service, informed by our communities, partners, and national policy. The way in which we will achieve this is to:

- Drive forward cross-cutting and cross-organisational change to improve services for communities and taxpayers.
- Facilitate answers for wicked issues and challenges which face healthcare in mid and south Essex today and for the future.
- Support the co-ordination of care to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.
- Hold partners to account and assure ourselves that healthcare delivery is safe, effective and can adapt to future need.

Strategic Direction:

The mid and south Essex System have several important documents that outline our goals and plans, such as the Mid and South Essex Joint Forward Plan and the Integrated Care Strategy., and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Our commitment to these documents remains strong. We will continue to work hard to achieve the ambitions contained within them through collaboration with our partners in health and care to deliver these plans, informed by insight and intelligence. Key to integrated working is that all patient systems connect to and support our shared care record. To improve our future planning and management of services and support aligned approaches to population health management.

The ICB will ensure that any commissioning decisions that impact staff will be considered as part of the National Clinical Expansion and Capacity Programme, for mid and south Essex this is via the Integrated Care System Clinical Capacity and Expansion Delivery Group. The outcome of any decisions will inform future system workforce plans.

Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

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We will keep working with our partners to improve access, waiting times, outcomes, and experiences for our population.

These actions are outlined in our Joint Forward Plan and Operational Planning commitments, with updates expected for 2025/26. Our governance arrangements, partner engagement, and oversight from NHS England's regional team will support this work.

Clinical leadership and engagement are crucial for pathway and service redesign. Our Stewards will lead this, ensuring we also understand and reflect service user needs in line with our statutory duties. Local engagement will continue through our place-based teams (Alliances) to ensure local population needs are considered in our delivery plans. These are detailed in the Joint Forward Plan for Mid Essex, Basildon and Brentwood, Thurrock, and South-East Essex.

Patient safety and the delivery of effective evidenced based care remains a fundamental consideration throughout the commissioning of both new services and the revision of existing services. This commitment continues and is fully supported by the ICB Nursing and Quality Directorate.

Service models and development:

It is our intention to begin the rebalancing of resources away from acute care towards primary and community-based care to support left shift, better outcomes and the sustainability of services and the need to identify and tackle variation in service provision and outcomes for local communities.

A core principle for any service model or development is that this will deliver the same outcome for the population, reflecting local nuance, where applicable but ensuring consistent, equitable offer for our population. Together, we have strengthened our plans to reduce health inequalities, improve our workforce, and enhance infrastructure. We will ensure that any service changes needed are understood, assessed, and mitigated as much as possible to maintain safe, effective, and high-quality service provision.

To achieve this, we will work with partners to jointly commission within our system and beyond mid and south Essex where that is the right thing to do to support service improvement and patient outcomes/experience.

To support our population to be able to have timely access to primary care, we will ensure that we prioritise primary care, so that any service change or development, considers its impact on primary care, general practice, in particular, prior to any change or development in enacted.

The procurements started in 2024/25 to improve services for our population will continue. This includes musculoskeletal (MSK) and dermatology (skin) services.

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Once this work is complete, we will share information about the new providers and service models as they are rolled out.

Since summer 2023, MSE has been considering options for the provision of community services across MSE, specifically relating to intermediate care, community stroke services and midwife-led birthing. MSE ICB sought views on options for changing these services and views on the future provision of ambulatory care services currently provided at St Peter's Hospital in Maldon through a public consultation in early 2024. Once the ICB has decided on the future configuration of care relating to these services, all system partners will need to work together on implementation of future service arrangements.

Sustainability:

To support the implementation of the Greener NHS National Programme and move towards Net Zero we will work with our providers to adhere to the Mid and south Essex Integrated Care Strategy 'Green plan' and CO2 reduction targets. The oversight of progress against this plan will be provided through the Mid and South Essex Greener NHS Programme Board

The mid and south Essex health and care system faces significant financial challenges. To benefit our population, NHS organisations in our area must move towards financial sustainability. Until then we will have limited ability to invest in growth or service improvements unless there is a clear and immediate cost-saving impact.

We began work on financial sustainability and recovery in 2024/25, with support from national and regional colleagues. We have started outlining our Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which will continue into 2025/26.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support and commitment. We look forward to our continued collaboration to improve outcomes for our population in 2025/26, as outlined in the Joint Forward Plan and the Integrated Care Strategy.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Abell
Chief Executive Officer

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