

Public Health: Current developments and looking ahead.

ECC Members Briefing session

17th November 2025

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What is Public Health

Key areas of public health

Health protection: Protecting the community from immediate threats like infectious diseases, environmental hazards, and chemical incidents.

Health improvement: Promoting healthier lifestyles and addressing the social and environmental factors that cause illness, such as poor housing or education.

Healthcare public health: Improving the quality and effectiveness of healthcare systems themselves, ensuring services are based on evidence and are accessible to all.

Public health is the science of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health. It does this by focusing on the health and wellbeing of populations and not just individuals

Public Health in Local Authorities

The Local Authority, via the Director of Public Health, has a duty to improve public health under Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This duty is expected to be executed via the delivery of mandated and non-mandated functions that best meet the needs of the local population (including having regards to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy)

Mandated functions include:

- Weighing and measuring of children at reception and year 6 (i.e. the National Weight Measurement Programme)
- NHS Health Check assessment and delivered, offered every 5 years to eligible residents who meet criteria
- Provision of open access sexual health services
- Provision of Public Health advice to the NHS via Integrated Care Boards
- Health protection, including prevention, planning for and responding to emergencies;
- Oral health

Non-mandated functions that have to be delivered:

- Drug and alcohol provision
- Children and young people (Health Visiting and School Nursing)

Delivering Public Health

2 overarching outcomes:

- Increased healthy life expectancy
- Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities

Underpinned by:

- 75 high level indicator categories
- 161 individual indicators

Essex:

- At County level almost all are green – except road accidents and suicides
- Significant pockets of variation across all domains within Districts that can be overlooked
- Areas that are significantly worse – reflect areas experiencing poverty and deprivation, these areas have multiple competing needs



- Our health and wellbeing is influenced by many factors.
- Around **80%** of these are not from the NHS.
- Only **20%** of our health is impacted by healthcare services like GP's and hospitals.
- Most of our health is driven by factors such as where we live, how much money we have or how we behaviour.
- We refer to these factors as the building blocks for creating health.
- If one building block is weak or missing, our health is impacted which then can negatively impact on health.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute in US to rank countries by health status.

Devolution and LGR

The road ahead from 2026

NEW SHADOW UNITARY AUTHORITIES

April 2027

DECISION ON NEW UNITARY AUTHORITIES

Spring 2026

NEW ICBs

April 2026

NEW UNITARY AUTHORITIES

April 2028

MAYORAL ELECTIONS

Expected May 2026



HEALTH & CARE ACT AMENDMENTS

- NHS England
- Healthwatch
- ICPs

ENGLISH DEVOLUTION & COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT BILL

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

The building blocks of health



www.health.org.uk/what-makes-us-healthy

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A new statutory duty to have ‘regard to the need to’ improve the health of the population in the geography and reduce health inequalities between those living within the geography. This is specific to the functions that the MCCA covers.

It specifically refers to the life expectancy or general state of health that are all or partially attributed to the ‘general determinants of health’

This means that the Mayor is responsible for overseeing the building blocks that support creating health which were in the previous slide.

Potential health functions within the new system

Health Determinants and Inequalities –functions of the Mayoral Combined Authority

Strategy and policy – incl. support and co-ordination for public health input into wider Determinants (Economics/skills, Environment, Housing, Transport, public safety, public service reorganisation)

Data, research and evaluation functions

Support to Mayor for central investment and additional powers

Alignment to NHS and Office of Police, Fire and Crime across a Greater Essex Footprint on complementary agendas

Powers of Mayor to convene

Public Health- functions of the unitary authority

Health and Wellbeing Boards

Statutory duties and functions

Health protection

Commissioning of local wellbeing and public health services

Delivery of local population health need agendas

Joint working with the NHS and voluntary community sector on neighbourhoods

Others to be defined

NHS Reform



NHS

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

**10 Year Health Plan
for England**

NHS

Integrated Care Board and NHS Change

Integrated Care Boards
East of England



East of England

- 1 Greater Essex
- 2 Suffolk and Norfolk
- 3 Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; and Hertfordshire

Integrated Care Boards are NHS organisations that plan and then buy healthcare services. They are responsible for the local NHS budget and work with Primary Care, Community, Mental Health and Acute Hospital Providers. They also work with Pharmacy, Dental and Eye care providers.

Earlier in 2025, ICB's were told to reduce their running costs by 50%. This has meant a change in the local ICB structure for Essex.

From April 2026, instead of having 3 ICB's, Essex will have one ICB that matches the new mayoral combined authority geography.

Across the East of England, 3 ICB's will now form/cluster rather than the previous 6.

At the same time but taking longer, changes are happening to NHS England at region and nationally so similar savings can be found.

The 3 Fundamental Shifts

- Hospital to Community
- Analogue to digital
- Sickness to Prevention



Sickness to prevention

Tackle childhood obesity through new junk food advertising restrictions and improving food in schools



Ensure people have the information they need to make healthier choices on alcohol



Refresh the government ambition on air quality to protect everyone from the health impacts of air pollution



Create the first smoke-free generation and crackdown on vaping amongst children



Millions more people will be encouraged to move and exercise regularly through a new national campaign



Work with businesses to help children and families make the healthy choice

Opportunities for Prevention at different levels

Aimed at those with diagnosed conditions who would benefit from interventions to support them to be as healthy as they can be (e.g. pulmonary or stroke rehabilitation). Tertiary prevention is the current mainstay of NHS services.

Tertiary Prevention
Condition Management

An approach used to help treat, delay or reduce any disease symptoms or care needs. An underlying disease or need exists, but is amenable to intervention to avoid escalating treatment/care (e.g. basis of screening).

Secondary Prevention
Early Detection

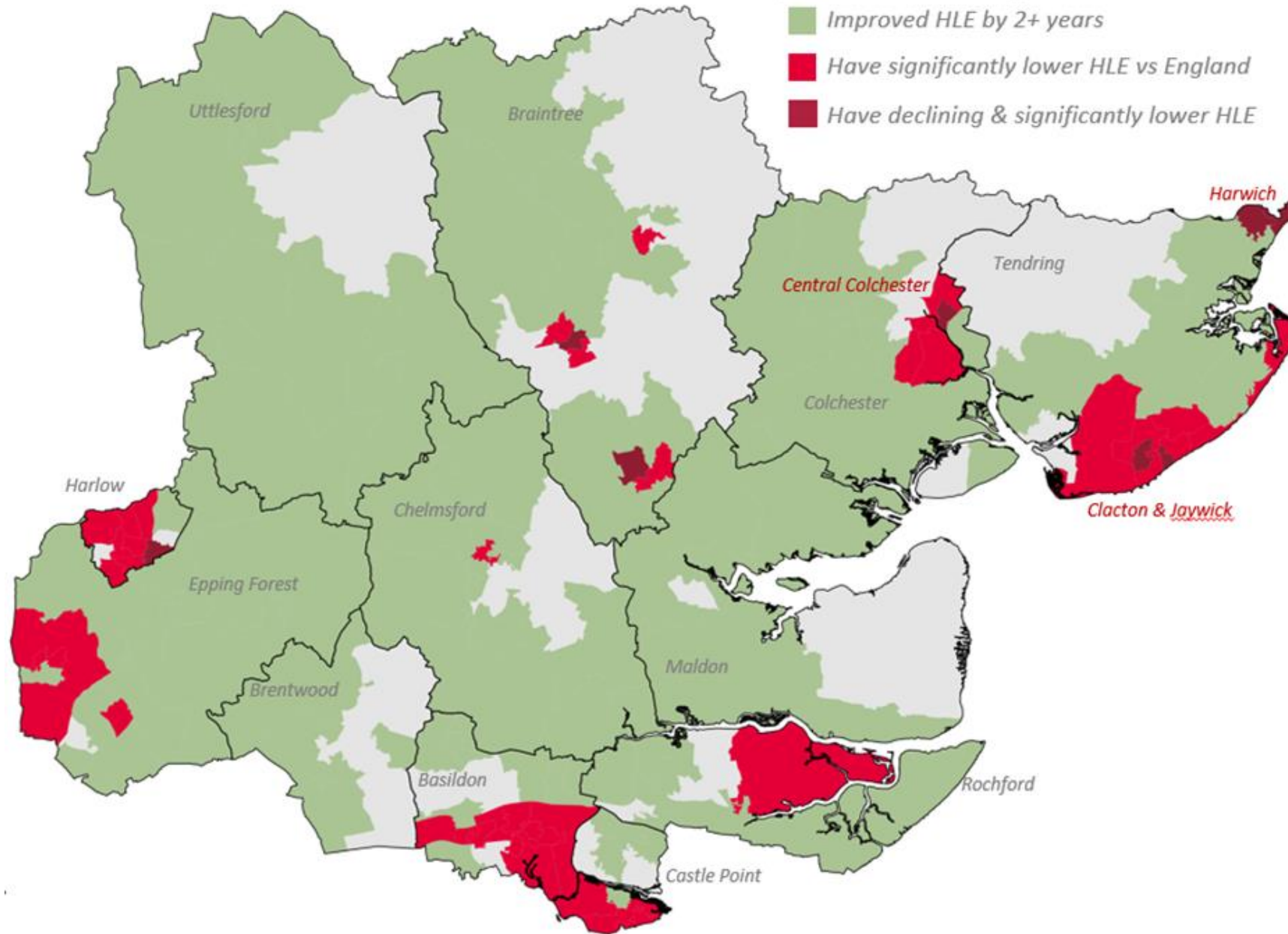
A programme of work to identify disease risk factors to inform preventative action before a disease is present (e.g. smoking cessation/weight management services).

Primary Prevention
Risk Factor Reduction

An approach to better understand and address what makes communities or individuals susceptible to poor health. This helps strengthen population health opportunities and capitalise on community assets.

Primordial Prevention
Wider Determinants

HLE across Essex, 2018-22. Focusing on areas which...



Supporting people to be healthy in Essex



Essex Wellbeing Service

“Your wellbeing, your way”

“From GP front door to Bingo on a Friday night”

The Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) is an alliance of partners working together to deliver a range of health and wellbeing support. This includes lifestyle services, such as NHS health checks, stop smoking services, and weight management courses, as well as community support to help people make positive social connections, including our volunteering programme and befriending service.





EWS Essex Wellbeing Service

2024-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Essex Wellbeing Service provides holistic support for residents, through lifestyle services and community support to help people make positive social connections.

EWS Single Point of Access

45,000+ calls taken **80+** partnership organisations



75,000+ enquiries "no wrong door" approach



"We use Priority Digital Health, a powerful tool that helps our team assess each person's needs and match them with the right resources. The PDH system ensures they're sent to the right place. It also helps us track progress, so we can ensure no one falls through the cracks."

Elijah Lyttelton
EWS Single Point of Access Manager
Lead Provider - Wellbeing & Community Support

Community Agents delivered by RCCE



7144 enquiries
1095 helped with debt management
1559 avoided Social Care input
679 carer breakdowns avoided
707 referrals for Careline or Assistive Technology
1650 referrals for home adaptations/equipment



Celebrated 10 years in 2024

"I would like to thank you for providing my equipment and particularly to Community Agent Lauren. I am very pleased with everything provided which will help me enormously." Mrs G

Kinder Essex

3,089 initiatives

21,000 people supported

100 new groups

United in Kind brand transition to Kinder Essex marking 5 years of Kindness initiatives across the county.



"I cannot believe how lovely everyone is - everyone is so kind - I live by myself so it's a great way of meeting people and some are becoming friends"

Hug in a Shrug Facebook page risen to 2700 followers



Weight Management

There has never been more choice for people of Essex wanting to lose weight.

6,000+ offered weight management support

15% increase in self-serving using the AmaraHealth™ app



"I was referred via my GP after blood test showed I was in the diabetic range. With the support of Mel I have lost nearly 2 1/2 stone- she has answered all my questions and explained portions and food moderation" Paul

NHS Health Checks

50,000+ health checks - which makes it highest in East of England



Befriending

Matching clients with trained volunteers.

506 individuals supported

10,500 hours of companionship

"my life has been made much brighter, partly from my weekly visits from Sue"



Children and Families

62 families self-reported their post programme measurements

116 families completed programme and moved to follow-up

84% reported a BMI reduction and a positive change in growth trajectory



"I don't know what you have said to Z but mum is seeing lots of changes. She is going to the gym at school, cut down her portion sizes, tried wholemeal pasta and liked it. Mum said that she is not buying the high sugar foods and her mood has lifted and she is more polite to mum."

Smoking Support

5,513 supported to quit smoking

4,174 quit smoking



Cygnet Hospital supported to go Smoke Free!



Community Outreach

48 clients coached
42 Health Checks and 119 Lifestyle checks
19 referrals made outside of EWS and their partners
1,868 people engaged with throughout the communities within North, South and West Essex



Followers

3072

Reach up

114.7% ↑
188,300

Link clicks up

42.3% ↑
4,800

Followers

420

Content interactions

100% ↑

Page views

7,416



Essex Working Well

Followers

+95 674

Total

Delivered by



Commissioned by





Essex Working Well

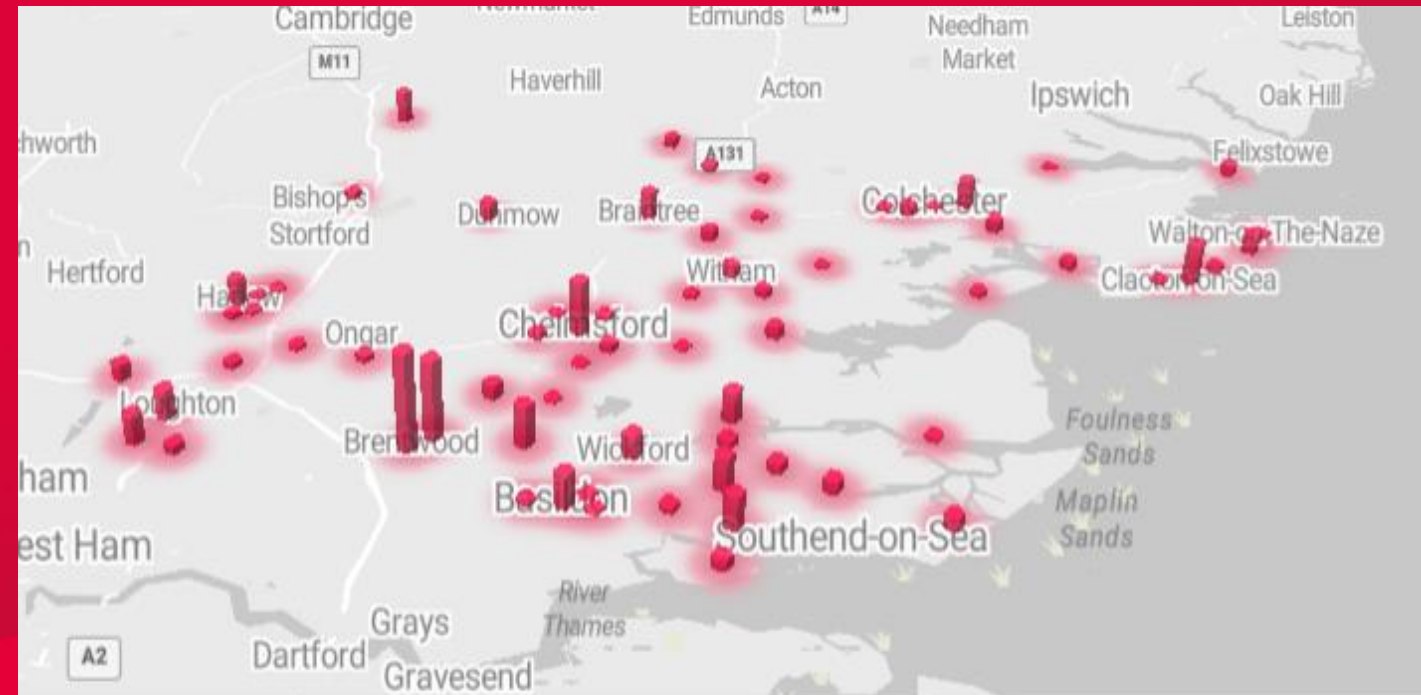
Building a Healthy Essex workforce to help our businesses thrive!



Blood Pressure Monitor Library Loan Scheme

Geographical Heat Map of loan across Essex County Council Libraries

- **495** blood pressure monitors borrowed by residents within first **8 weeks**.
- Blood pressure monitors have been loaned out from from **92% of Essex County Council Libraries** covering all areas and districts across Essex.
- Walk-in freestanding monitors have recorded, over **4,000 blood pressure checks** undertaken within libraries.



Children and Young People

In 2024/25:

- Over 56,000 healthy child checks were delivered by the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing service.
- 47 Schools across Essex received the healthy schools award.

In 2025/26 we are:

- Working with 20 schools on an emotional wellbeing pilot and 10 schools on an outdoor learning project.
- Working with 45 schools to deliver a peer led oral health project.
- Acting on the findings of our school survey to pilot a vaping service for young people in up to 35 schools.
- Offering Healthy Schools to enable action on food and nutrition and/or emotional wellbeing.
- Aiming to deliver an early years language and literacy initiative Making it REAL in 199 early years settings.
- Enabling 199 early years setting to deliver supervised toothbrushing.



Better food choices for young Children

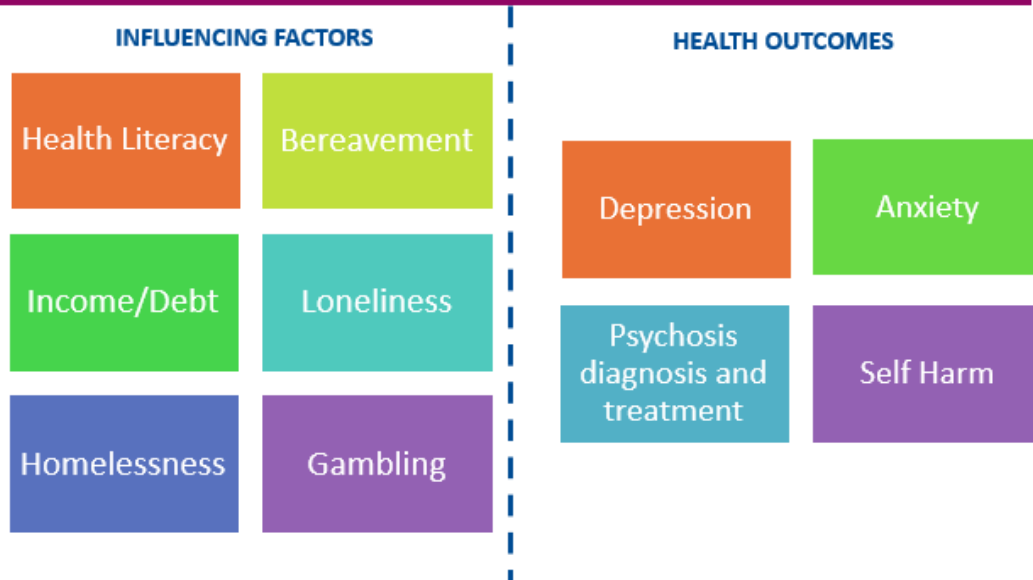
- Initially a research project, ECC & Anglia Ruskin University to understand what food provision looks like in early years settings in Essex.
- Now an innovative collaborative work programme ECC PH, ECC Education, ARU, local early years sector, and national experts to improve early years food and nutrition in Essex
- We've recently launched the Nourishing Our Future Award for early years and have had 63 settings sign up reaching 2806 children.
- Influencing national change: NOF project lead invited to sit on APPGs for early years nutrition as result of NOF work

nourishing
our future 



All Age Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

People: Men, Carers, Marginalised groups, Severe Mental Illness



Places: Basildon, Harlow, Tendring, Colchester, Chelmsford, coastal communities

- We are developing a range of new modules on factors that cause poor emotional wellbeing as part of the Working Well programme.
- Scoping a social marketing campaign on emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- We are partnering with Men's Sheds and Fella's Forums to bolster their networks to our priority places.
- We are exploring opportunities to work through the Your Essex programme to support VCSF organisations with developing emotional wellbeing awareness among their volunteers.
- We are exploring opportunities for a digital approach to supporting all residents with their emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- We continue to support the work of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock suicide prevention group and are working with partners to refresh the current action plan

Working in Essex Communities



Your Essex Community

Supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector

Aims of Your Essex Community support offer:

- A thriving equitable and collaborative VCS system
- VCS communities are empowered and resilient
- There are sustainable, inclusive and standardised support structures across Essex that are adaptable using a place-based approach
- System-wide recognition and equitable investment into the VCS

E-Portal

450 users

Community Participation

160 members of the community of practice

4 showcase days delivered

Place-Based Working

13 place plans reflecting local needs

20 community partners onboarded to deliver peer support

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR HEALTHY, THRIVING COMMUNITIES

A shared vision and agreed priorities for that place, that aligns efforts across different sectors

Place Partnership expansion and deepening provides a great example of this, where we work with a wide range of partners from across the local system, including statutory, private, VCS partners and local communities.

Understand the unique local conditions and local needs, barriers and enablers using a bottom-up approach

Asset-based community development is an approach we utilise to ensure local solutions are developed by local people

Tackling inequalities using the principles of proportionate universalism

Our work provides universal access to physical activity and support, across Greater Essex, whilst targeting additional support and resources to communities facing the greatest inequalities. Our work through the Active Essex Foundations, youth mental health programme is a good example of this.

Collaboration between local residents, local voluntary and community organisations that hold trusted relationship

The Your Essex Community VCS support looks to build on the strengths and passions of the local VCS, understand and support the local ambitions and provide a wide range of training, workshops and share and learn networks.

Influencing the system to support active communities and create environments conducive to physical activity

Essex Pedal Power saw the influence of sustainable transport and active travel teams, and we work locally to support and implement active design.

Health creation locally - enabling individuals and communities to take control of their health and wellbeing

Working with a wide range of VCS partners and locally trusted organisations who take an ABCD approach in order to create a sense of belonging and purpose for local people and ensure that their voice is heard.

Being committed to the long-term and sustainability, avoiding short-term fixes

Ensuring that through our organisational development and funding support, local organisations are able to sustain their work longer term and ensure that their support and physical activity provision is consistent and sustainable and that their approach provides resilience building and wider holistic support.



CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Sport/ leisure/ physical activity opportunities

Positive impact seen for Holiday Activity and Food programme, Essex ActivAte.

Essex Pedal Power, free-bike scheme that is now had community drive initiatives like the Bread Pudding Club

Park and Green Spaces

Areas of green space un-maintained for years improved and made usable for the community. Active Park improvement plan, being co-designed with the community.

Educational settings

Tendring Primary Schools utilising initiatives like The Daily Mile and Barclays Girls FA Football Festivals, as well as encouraging students to take part in the School Games and Invincible Games events.

Voluntary and community organisations/services

Family support service embedded physical activity promotion into what they do.

- Lads Needs Dads are an informal dads group using physical activity.
- Holy Trinity Church host activities and opportunities.
- Staying Well Community Programme promote physical activity and are trained in active conversations.

Walking and cycling infrastructure

Active travel neighbourhood, co-designed with the community and being delivered, as well as school streets.

Health and Social Care

- PCN Social Prescribing link workers
- Ageing well practitioners
- Adult social care long-term support community team
- Community mental health and wellbeing workers
- North East Alliance.

Integrated and embedded physical activity promotion processes and practices. All trained in moving medicine active conversations.



Built environment

MUGA on school site, opened to the community, activities co-designed with the community

Workplaces

Tendring District Council integrated physical activity as part of their culture.

Adult social care hosted staff activities and challenges.

Let's Move!

ESSEX

Less than half of children (48%) in England meet the Chief Medical Officer's daily exercise recommendation of 60 minutes*, with activity levels lowest among 7-9 year olds (41%) and 9-11 year olds (46%).

To tackle this issue, the DCMS is piloting a hyper-local physical activity campaign as part of the Health Mission. The campaign targets parents/carers of 7-11 year olds from Black and Asian ethnicities, lower socioeconomic groups, and girls, due to their lower activity rates.

In partnership with



A campaign that started in 2023, powered by Active Essex and supported by the Children's Partnership Board, inspires young people across Essex to get moving in a way that suits them.

Driven by youth voice, the campaign includes young people, especially through the ambassador scheme to ensure the opportunities across Essex are right for the young people we serve.

Funded by
UK Government

#MOVE WITH US

Move. Dance. Play. Jump. Stomp. Ride.

Skip. Slide. Bounce. Dance. Hop. Skate. Scoot.

When children move, they feel happier and healthier. It can start with just **10 minutes**.

Find simple ideas to get active together at www.nhs.uk/LetsMove

Let's Move!
ESSEX

Food Insecurity

- **Fourteen** Community Supermarkets now open across Essex - brings at least one Community Supermarket to every Essex district
- **£465,000** invested from ECC and **£682,945** leveraged into Community Supermarkets from District, Borough and City Council partners,
- Supporting **20,117** individuals to access affordable food.
- Average spend just **£11.03** per visit a saving of between 30%-35% per visit
- Secured investment of just over **£1m from PH** over three years to grow an Affordable Food Network for Essex to further impact food insecurity in a sustainable way for our most vulnerable residents



Bringing Community
Supermarkets to Essex:
**Sustainable Community Assets
for Social Support and Care**

AUTHORS:

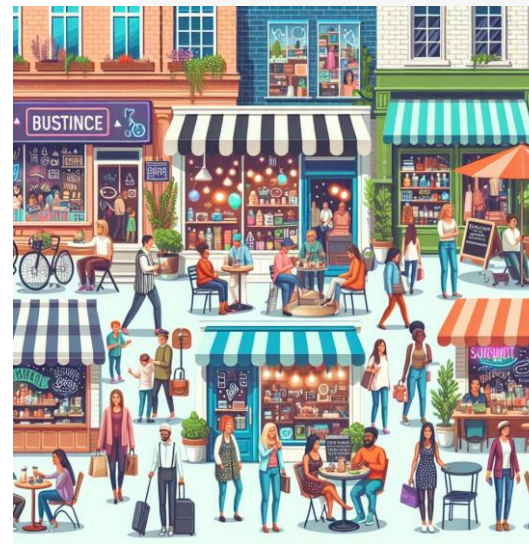
Dr. Konstantinos Roumelis, Dr. Julian Schwerdt, Dr. Rebecca Warren, and Dr. Joyce Bennett

Creating Healthy Places

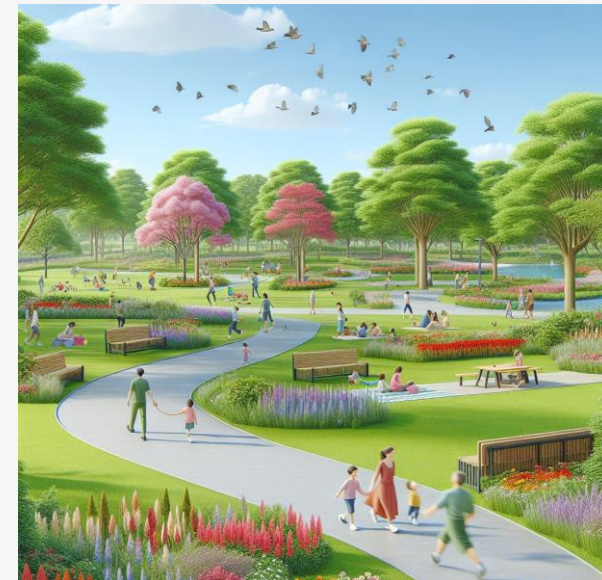
Place Based Public Health

Place based public health is critical going forward because:

- The problems we work on are complex with lots of things that determine the outcome (e.g. economic and social determinants of health, healthy life expectancy, obesity, inclusive economic growth)
- We need to better align our efforts around ALL the things which impact on the outcome in the same places otherwise we only look at one part of the problem



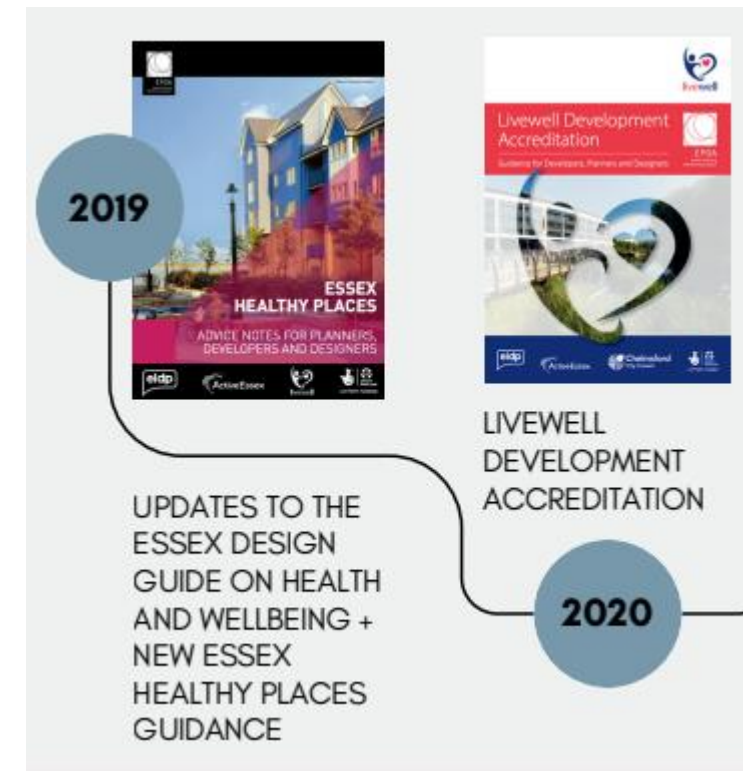
"To tackle many complex public health issues such...health inequalities, there is a need to intervene at a system level, considering the contribution of, and relationship between, all aspects of place including services, civic organisations and policy makers, and communities themselves" *Public Health England. 2021.*
"Place-based approaches to reducing health inequalities"



Planning and health protocol

- A protocol enabling planning and PH officers to work together to deliver healthier environments in Essex
- Developed with all Greater Essex LAs, 3 x ICBs and national expert consultants eg Quality of Life Foundation
- Focused on a health impact assessment process, the protocol explores areas of national and local planning policy where planning policy and PH functions can best align
- PH practitioners in all 12 districts trained in health impact assessment process and work with district and county planners to maximise population health impact of tier 2 LA Local Plans and Spatial Greater Essex Development Strategy
- Post jointly funded, joint work programme and jointly managed by both ECC PH and Planning
- Work is recognised nationally in this field and regularly present at national conference

Greater Essex Planning and Health Protocol



Air Quality is the biggest environmental risk to health

By improving air quality, we can improve our health

Poor air quality affects vulnerable members of our society the most

New developments and infrastructure have the potential to affect air quality

The importance of indoor air quality is not widely understood



Essex Air Quality Strategy

Draft document for public consultation

January 2025

Thank You