

MEDIA RELEASE

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Major plans announced to improve services - and bring more doctors to mid and south Essex

Primary Care Strategy unveiled as leading doctor says: “Patients told us they wanted change”

AN INNOVATIVE new strategy aimed at solving some of the biggest challenges facing the NHS in mid and south Essex have been unveiled by a group of GPs today. The proposals have been published by the five Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the area and aim to:

1. Make it quicker and easier for patients to be seen locally by NHS professionals
2. Reduce pressure on GPs so they can focus on patients with the greatest need
3. improve the recruitment of GPs and other healthcare professionals to mid and south Essex

The proposals build on the development of localities/hubs within each CCG area, which has seen GP practices working together to improve the range of services available to local patients and the hours those services are available. The proposals have been developed by local GPs and other NHS and social care staff.

The strategy will also see the primary care workforce expand to include a wider range of expertise, making it quicker for patients to be seen locally by the right health and social care professionals including physiotherapists, mental health and social care professionals.

The proposals have been developed by GPs across the area through a steering group chaired by Dr José Garcia Lobera from the Pall Mall practice in Southend-on-Sea. It draws together work currently underway in each CCG area with the aim of investing up to an additional £30m in primary care by 2020/21.

Dr Garcia said; “Patients have told us through previous consultations and engagement work that they want change as many struggle to get an appointment to see their GP. At the same time, we know GPs are under enormous pressure and are often seeing more patients during the course of a day than they should.

“Whilst we appreciate many patients consider their local GP to be a first port of call for an illness or condition, it is often not a GP that a patient needs to see. By expanding our primary care workforce to embrace a much broader range of expertise we can ensure patients are seen more quickly by the right team so that GPs can focus on patients with the greatest need.”

As well as improving local primary care services for patients, the proposals play a key part in managing concerns about the number of GPs who could retire in the area over the next few years.

Dr Brian Balmer, Chief Executive of the Essex Local Medical Committees (LMCs) which has supported the development of the strategy, said; “We know that we have a large number of older GPs in mid and south Essex and are facing exceptionally high levels of retirement in the years to come.

“A key part of our proposal is to improve the work/life balance for GPs in mid and south Essex and provide greater opportunities to support their training and development. This will help us retain vital clinical staff and attract new recruits. We want to demonstrate that working as a GP in Essex is an attractive proposition and as such we are developing an exciting and positive plan for the future for our primary care services.”



The Governing Body of each CCG is being asked to consider the plans in the coming weeks before returning for a final discussion with the Joint Committee of the CCGs.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The five clinical commissioning groups which have developed the strategy are:

1. NHS Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group
2. NHS Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group
3. NHS Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
4. NHS Southend Clinical Commissioning Group
5. NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group

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