

Welcome...

You may have seen newspaper headlines recently or listened to radio debates about what the future holds for our local hospitals here in Chelmsford, Basildon and Southend.

Some headlines have talked about A&Es being “downgraded” or closed and other media has carried stories about how the hospitals may change the way they work in the next few years.

These stories relate to the draft Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) that sets out options for how local NHS and social care could develop over the next five years and beyond.

There are 44 STPs across the country. Ours covers future care for 1.2 million people living in mid and south Essex.

A summary of the proposed STP has been published – find out more at www.successregimeessex.co.uk – but it’s fair to say that there’s still much work to do on proposals. Any proposals that may change the way our hospitals work in Chelmsford, Basildon and Southend will be shared with local people as part of a full and active public consultation with lots of opportunity to get involved and have a say.

This consultation is expected later in the year. In the meantime, you can follow the latest updates on Twitter: [@successessex](https://twitter.com/successessex).



Dr Caroline Dollery
Chair, MECCG

What exactly is an STP anyway?

If you can explain Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) to a 10-year-old, you can explain it to anyone. That’s the thinking behind a film from Healthwatch Essex – the independent charity that listens to and represents the voice of users of health and care services in Essex.



“Over the coming year’s health and care services will be changed in a really significant way,” explained Tom Nutt, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Essex. “But unsurprisingly when you say ‘Sustainability and Transformation Plan’ to someone they generally glaze over.

“So, we felt there was a real need to help explain just how important they are and why people should have their say about what they want to achieve.”

Take a look at the film, about our neighbouring STP covering north east Essex and Suffolk on the Healthwatch Essex website at <http://bit.ly/2mfegVh>.

The latest on...

Medicine Waste in mid Essex



The cost of wasted medicine here in mid Essex is currently at £2 million each year – it's a serious and growing problem within the NHS as a whole, too – but the good news is it's something that you can help tackle!

We launched our Medicines Waste Toolkit in October 2016, giving our GP practices and their patient participation groups (PPGs) the chance to develop a local campaign focused on reducing the amount of medicine waste in their own communities.

We'll be bringing you updates, in future editions, on individual areas and how things are progressing. In the meantime, when you collect a prescription always check the contents are correct. After leaving the pharmacy, any returned medicines will have to be incinerated and wasted – but if you return your unwanted medicines while you're still on the premises, they can be kept and reused. Just something small and simple like checking your meds before you leave the pharmacy will help save £'s.

You can find more information and tips at www.medicinewaste.com/help and in the next issue of Engage we'll be talking with Marian Redding, who chairs Fern House PPG in Witham, about the work they are doing to inform patients about self-managing their medicines.

Back by popular demand...

Childhood Illness Workshops

Due to the success of our childhood illness workshops in November, we were back by popular demand with phase two of our events from Thursday the 2nd of March.



Local GPs and community pharmacists ran the free workshops, which focused on a series of common scenarios around child health. They offered advice on what to do and when and also give parents an opportunity to ask any questions they might have.

Over 120 local parents attended across four workshops and although survey results haven't been officially collated yet, verbal feedback was really positive. We have also been contacted by a couple of schools asking if we can do some bespoke events, so watch this space!



Why we engage

with mid Essex CCG's Lay Board Member for Patient and Public Engagement

Little did I know back in 2012 when I first started my role as a Lay Board Member for Mid Essex CCG that I would add a new string to my bow as a columnist for Engage.

It's really exciting to have an opportunity every month to share how we as a CCG meet our commitment to keep in touch with you, our patients and public.



Anne-Marie Garrigan

Being the Lay Board Member for Patient and Public Engagement (PPE) is my first role within the NHS but like you, I live in this area and use our local NHS health services. I had always worked closely with health colleagues on initiatives around improving services for children and now have the chance to keep building on the high quality of healthcare we have in mid Essex.

It is always good to have participation from patients and the public in how we do that and being a Board member offered me the chance to work for and with them through GPs, clinicians, executives and my fellow lay members in one team to achieve it. We've trialled a few ways of doing so over the years, some more successful than others, but what has always shone through is the support from our patients and public and the fact they like us to engage with them.

Whilst the Government may have ordered CCGs to do this, there is already a natural enthusiasm at Mid Essex CCG to hear the patient and public voice because engaging is the right thing to do.

Time-wise it may only be a couple of days a month for me but they're always different, interesting and worthwhile. I chair the CCG's Patient Reference Group and attend the main Board meetings as well as a range of sub-groups. Recently I have also been chairing the Primary Care Commissioning Committee which I'm pleased to say is held in public with a number of mid Essex people coming along to each meeting.

I will carry on working with the patients and public of mid Essex to make sure people can participate and look forward to bringing you updates on how we do that in future editions.

Anne-Marie Garrigan

Stay connected ...

As always, we want to hear your views on the work we do here in mid Essex, so please continue to share ideas and thoughts with us. To submit a story for Engage, please email jennaward@nhs.net. To get more involved with local healthcare, contact paul.gilham@nhs.net.



MECCG 100

Days
100
Ways



Mid Essex CCG (MECCG) has embarked on a 100 day challenge to highlight how its staff are embodying the 'Live Well' ethos.

For 100 days, from the 1st March, one member of MECCG staff will be a 'Live Well Ambassador' for the day, sharing one thing they enjoy that helps them to Live Well.

Running alongside this is a virtual Walk the World 100 day challenge! CCG staff are collectively aiming to achieve 25 million steps in 100 days and to make it more interesting we're starting the challenge at the southern-most point of New Zealand's South Island – a place called Slope Point. We'll keep you updated with how the CCG is doing!

New pilot launched to improve early diagnosis of cancer

A new pilot scheme aimed at improving early diagnosis of cancer launched across mid Essex this month.

The 'vague symptoms' trial has begun in the following seven GP practices across mid Essex:

- Whitley
- Melbourne
- Baddow Village
- Brickfields, Greenwood, Wyncroft and Kingsway
- Moulsham
- Little Waltham and Great Notley
- Beacon Health - Danbury and Mountbatten

We are also talking to other surgeries to come on board over the coming months.

Throughout the next year, doctors from the practices involved in the pilot will work closely with a clinical nurse specialist and consultants at Mid Essex Hospital Trust (MEHT) to identify patients who may have symptoms of cancer.

This pilot will be nationally evaluated to measure any impact it has on early cancer diagnosis.

GP Online services could help

A new campaign targeting people who don't cancel their unwanted GP appointments has been launched across mid and south Essex as more than more than 12,000 appointments are wasted every month due to people failing to show up.

Missed GP and practice nurse appointments are estimated to cost the NHS about £160m per

year and aside from the cost, cancelling an appointment which is no longer needed will free it up for someone else who may need it urgently.



“I really needed the appointment that you didn't turn up to...”

12,000 GP appointments are missed each month in Mid & South Essex

One thing the campaign encourages patients to do is to register for online GP services. These allow people to easily book and cancel appointments on their PC, laptop, tablet or mobile. The service is free. Everyone who is registered with a GP can use their practice's online services.

Here's Trevor Fernandez, PPG Chair at Blackwater Medical Centre in Maldon and community champion for the CCG, telling us a little more about how accessing online GP services could help you. You can view the video youtu.be/IC7bO5Lhba4