



Essex Caring Communities Commission Report

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Chair's Foreword



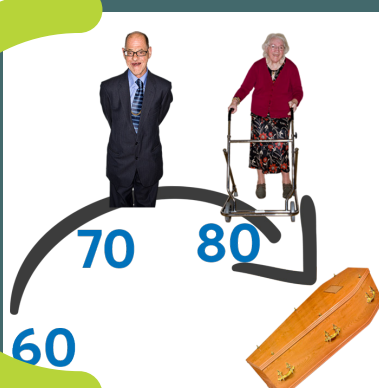
My name is Councillor Beverley Egan.

I am Chair of the Essex Caring Communities Commission.



We are facing an increase in demand for public services. These are things like health and social care.

This is because:



- People are living longer - to 87 years on average.

This means more people need support.



- At the same time, more of our children need support.

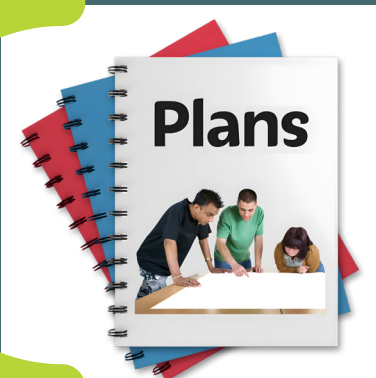
1 in 4 children need support from social care.



To meet this demand we must work closely with our communities.



I am very proud of the work the Commission is doing.



This document tells you about our promises and plans.

Executive Summary



The Essex Caring Communities Commission started in September 2024.



It has 12 members from a range of backgrounds including:

- Health.



- Social care.



- Education.



- Local government.



- Voluntary sector.



The Commission works independently. It is sponsored by Essex County Council.



The Commission was asked:

- to suggest ways to reduce the demand for public services.



- to look at the role people and communities play.



As part of its work the Commission found 5 main areas of focus:



1. Using the strength of our communities.



2. Working together to improve health.



3. Focusing on preventing problems.



4. Changing how public services work. This means not just what they do, but how they do it too.



5. **Devolution** and reforming local government in Greater Essex.



Devolution means moving power to local areas.



This report tells you about the challenges we face.



It then tells you what we plan to do to overcome these challenges.



Chapter 1



We need to change because:

- Demand for services is increasing faster than we can keep up with.



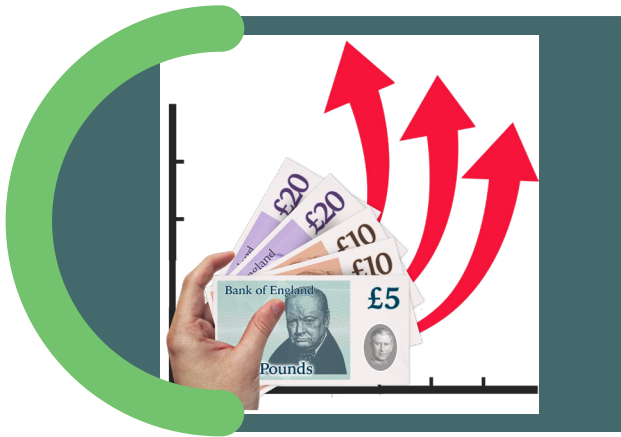
Between January 2020 and January 2024 the number of children in Essex with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) went up from 9,361 to 13,035.



Between October 2022 and October 2024 the number of people who needed emergency treatment in hospital went up from 124,820 to 151,050.



In the same period the number of adults who need long-term social care support went up from 15,257 to 16,783.



- Costs are rising faster than we can keep up with.



- Too many people are not receiving the care and support they need.



- Health and social care staff have too much work because there are too many unfilled jobs.



- In 2024 only 21% of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) children reached the expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths.



- 40% of young people in Essex who were in the care of the Council are not in education, employment or training.



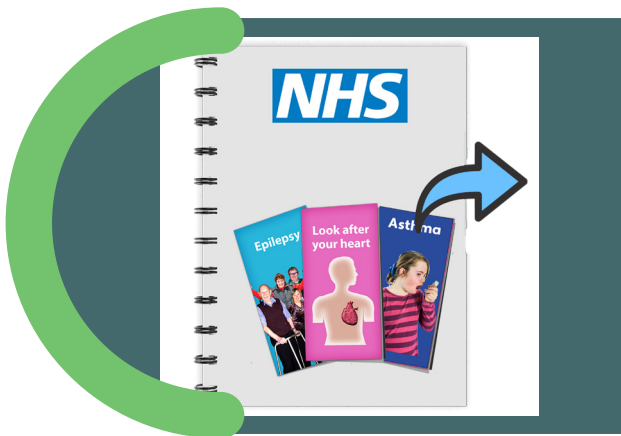
- 68% of adults in Essex are overweight or obese.



- Only 24% of people are satisfied with health services.



- Only 13% of people are satisfied with social care services.



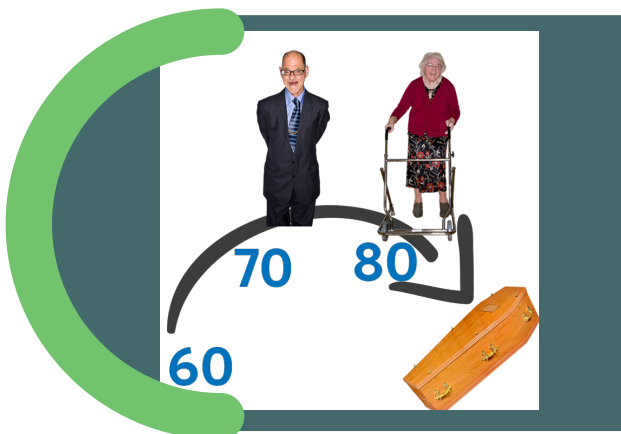
- 309,000 people in Essex have long-term health conditions.



- Rich and poor communities in Essex have very different health outcomes.



For example, **life expectancy** varies by up to 17 years for men and 14 years for women between richer and poorer communities.



Life expectancy means how long we think people will live.

Chapter 2



We all have a role to play in building a better future:



- As individuals we can make healthier choices to improve our health and wellbeing.



- Our older people give a lot to our communities:
 - People in their 50s and 60s provide most of the unpaid care for disabled or elderly family members and neighbours.



- People between 65 and 74 years are most likely to volunteer.



- Voluntary organisations run community activities and local services.



- Businesses can help by:
 - Supporting their staff when they have caring and volunteering responsibilities.



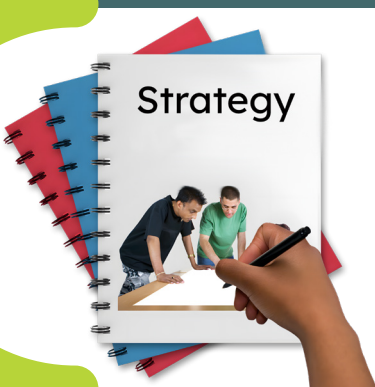
- Providing jobs to people from poorer communities.



- Providing training for their staff.



- Local government can help by:
 - Providing leadership and making sure things are done fairly.



- Writing strategies to let communities know what local government is doing.



- Involving communities and residents to make decisions that affect them.



- Central government can help by giving local government the money, control, and choices they need to make things better.



Chapter 3



The Essex Caring Communities Commission is making plans for the future. It is bringing different groups together to create lasting positive change.



We talked to communities in Essex and they told us that to be successful they need:



- Healthy lives.



- The power to make their own decisions.



- An inclusive society.



- Access to jobs.



- Social connections.



- Access to green spaces.



- Access to good housing.



To meet these needs we have asked leaders in Essex to make the following **5** promises:



1. Our places: we will take away barriers to wellbeing and opportunity.



2. Work: we will improve access to training and jobs.



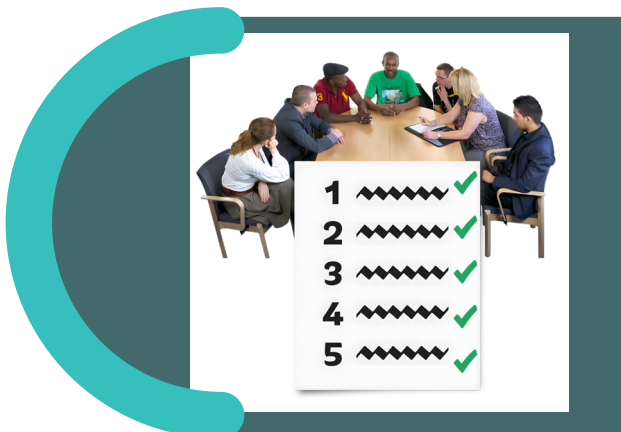
3. Stronger communities: we will help people to work together and use their skills.



4. Community influence: we will help communities to be involved in decisions that will affect them.



5. Prevention: we will focus on stopping bad things from happening.



We will achieve these promises by following the 23 actions set out in the next pages.

Chapter 4

1

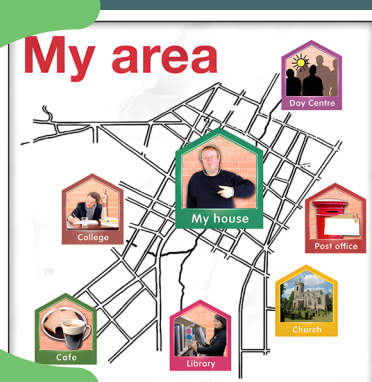


We will create a **Caring Essex:**

Wellbeing Transport Fund.

This will improve transport in isolated areas, and help people to travel to work and social activities.

2



Local Transport Plan.

This will improve connections between communities and public services.

3



Social Networking Programme.

This will provide more social and economic opportunities in poorer communities.

4



Retirement Service.

This will help retired people to stay active and involved in their communities.



5



School Ready Task Force.

This will help to make sure that children are ready to start school so that they achieve better results.

6



Housing Board.

This will help to build specialist housing for vulnerable people.

7



Youth Activity Guarantee.

This will help young carers and young people from poorer communities to access social and learning activities to move more and feel part of their community.

8



Apprenticeship Programme.

This will provide training and job opportunities for young people with disabilities and care leavers.

9



Over 50s Task Force.

This will help people over 50 get local jobs by offering more training, support, and flexible working hours.

10



Decade of Opportunity.

This will expand on projects that help people of all ages learn new skills and try new experiences.

11



Essex Employers Care Partnership.

This will improve support for carers and foster carers at work.

12



Challenge £2 billion.

This aims to raise more money for community groups from Government, businesses and people who want to help.

13



Civil Society Leadership Programme.

This will help community leaders learn the skills they need, including business and new technology.

14



Volunteering Olympics.

This will give more chances for people to help in their community, especially in poorer communities.

15



Library of Things.

This will give people access to equipment that they can borrow to use at home and in their community.

16



Community Asset Map.

This will show people what is available in their community.

17



Celebration Festival.

This will recognise and celebrate how people and projects are helping others stay healthy and happy in their communities.

18



Residents Assembly.

This will give local people a real say in how we plan for the future. This will include making some difficult choices together.

19



Bold Commissioners Group.

Communities and local providers will work together to co-design more services.

20



Public Services Experience.

This will give young people an opportunity to see how local services work and how decisions are made.

21



Health at Home Programme.

This will help people over 50 and vulnerable people to do their own health checks so they can plan future health support.

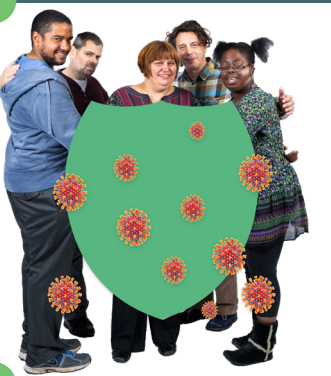
22



Multi-Agency Triaging Hubs.

This will bring services closer together and make it easier to get support without needing to go to the doctor too soon.

23



Office of Prevention.

This will work across Essex public services to focus on preventing ill health.



What next?



Year 1 of the Commission's work focused on engaging with our communities.



We then used what they told us to make our promises and list of actions.



Year 2 of our work will focus on promoting working in partnership to achieve our goals.



This will help us carry out our actions and make them work for our communities in real life.



We will support devolution and reforming government in Greater Essex.



We will help to shape national policy and decisions to make things better for everyone.



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