



# South Provider Forum

Thursday July 20<sup>th</sup>




A recap.....

At the March face to face south provider forum, we divided into groups to discuss four key questions. These were:

- 1- What are your biggest challenges with the cost of living?
- 2- What would we all do differently this winter?
- 3- How could ECC better support its providers?
- 4- As providers, if you had a magic wand- how would you use it to better support your local communities and help your adults to remain independent?

Today we wanted to feedback on some of your thoughts after discussing your reflections with the relevant teams.



## Provider thoughts from March

## Follow up ...

Adults are having to prioritise what they spend their money on and not managing to pay for some of the most basic of needs like food.

- There is already a community supermarket open in Basildon (At the Laindon community centre), and a new contract has just been awarded to open a community supermarket in Canvey Island. This will be delivered via a bus, with facilities to store fresh/ freezer and non perishables to the local community. It will be opening in September 2023.

For direct payment users-their staff are passing on increased costs- it is difficult for these adults to meet these rises, so they cut vital support.  
Tight budgets/ rise in wages/ discrepancies for weekend, bank holiday rates for those on direct payments.

- A new process has been designed to simplify requesting a change to the personal budget as a result of increased costs.
- The DP ready reckoner tool with guide rates for different types of services is being updated. This is being included in a cabinet paper on market pressures, which is going to cabinet at the end of July. This will see a significant increase in the guide rate for those employing PAs.

Providers struggling to pay for training time and associated costs – particularly for bank staff.

- ECC have opened a consultation for a care worker charter as it is considering whether to introduce a charter which suppliers of care services would need to agree to as part of ECC contracts. Such a charter could include expectations around care worker access to training, expenses, leave and pay (Open now until August 1st)  
<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/procurement/d6c5a7be/>

International recruitment of staff is expensive for a small provider.

- A regional centre of excellence for international recruitment launches on 25<sup>th</sup> July. This will fund a suite of activities and resources for providers to access free of charge, such as training assessments and development programmes for providers, care associations and international recruits.
- There will be a launch event which will be held virtually on the 25th July. If you are not already attending, then ECC will post updates from the event via the hub [Consent to receive ECC Provider Bulletin](#)

Get our citizens 'winter ready' much earlier in the year and wrap some project resource around this so it is better coordinated. This should incorporate good advice and information resources and utilising the voluntary sector / community hubs/ warm hubs/ setting up slipper banks.

- Summer wellness' events have been trialled over SEE during summer, in 5 community locations, where ASC have been talking to people on the street about prevention. Plan to roll these out in autumn to promote winter wellness.
- There is a strengthening Communities Virtual Coffee Catch up every Friday at 9am, hosting an open invite check in with members of the VCS, sharing updates from ECC and then opening the floor for organisations to share challenges/learning/opportunities etc.
- Essex Is United VCS Facebook Group is used share opportunities, spotlight on organisations etc <https://www.facebook.com/groups/eiuvcs/>
- Infrastructure Organisations (VCS's) are commissioned by ECC to represent and act as a conduit for opportunities to the VCS. There is currently one in each district although this is due for recommission come April 2024.
- CareNav+ partnership- This is a group of providers who are signed up as a provider on the Priority System through the Essex Wellbeing Service. There is a digital platform allowing easy cross-referral and anyone can be a member.
- Front line [Frontline | \(essexfrontline.org.uk\)](https://www.essexfrontline.org.uk) commissioned by MSE FT allowing local organisations (incl providers) to view what support may be available locally and also acts as a referral platform to connect people with other services.

There are lags with the safeguarding process – issues around closure and communication with providers that would benefit from being streamlined

- ASC is working with operational teams to ensure that communication with providers about safeguarding referrals or enquiries is more timely and appreciates the challenges this can cause providers.
- ASC will be undertaking more practice audits in the autumn which will identify how we are improving.

Use funding to create more community groups for adults with Huntingdon's, ABI, MS etc.

- ECC has employed a temporary commissioning manager who has been in post for 6 months to work across systems (Health, Social care and VCS) to look into some of the gaps we have for people with ABI. From this a business case has been completed. It is likely that creating community treatment options/ community groups will be one of the recommendations. We can update on this at future forums.

Quality team – PAMMS audit – needs improved continuity of process.

- The Provider quality team have offered to attend the next forum and there will be an opportunity for providers to ask questions/ provide feedback.

Encourage employment for all, to give people purpose and improve people's outcomes

- ECC launched a Disability Strategy (May 2023), 'being active' is a key commitment, which includes promoting employment and volunteering. We continue to work with partners on growing our inclusive employment offer for adults with disabilities, we will be launching a second service in the summer of 2023.
- Commissioning teams are encouraging other areas of ECC to lead by example and increase our own employment numbers.
- ECL inclusive employment offer to adults with autism or a learning disability [Inclusive Employment | Essex | ECL](#) to support getting into and staying in work



Thank you for your feedback and for listening today.



Any further questions/ reflections?



Any other areas of potential follow up?