

# Commissioning Locality Plans

February 2026

# Introduction

The Care Market Shaping Strategy 2023-30 vision is:

**Enable people to live their lives to the fullest through a vibrant and sustainable care market, supporting residents to develop their strengths and personal independence.**

Aligned to the Adult Social Care Business plan priorities, our Market Shaping aims are:

- Reduce reliance on residential care
- Increase provision for complex care
- Increase and evolve community-based services
- Develop a wider range of accommodation options
- Increase choice and control using Personal Assistants, Micro-enterprises and Individual Service Funds
- Improve our short term and early help service offer

Our Market shaping strategic deliverables and commissioning intentions have been converted into the 5 locality plans, providing a detailed reflection of local priorities and focus for the next few years.

# Market Locality Plans

# What are we trying to do

We are addressing the key challenges facing the care market through a multi-dimensional approach.

Firstly, we are delivering on our countywide commitments and strategic intentions. A number of programmes exist on this wider footprint.

Secondly, there are elements of consistency we are seeking to achieve even with systems and solutions which are locality orientated. Actions to achieve this are common to each area.

Lastly, we are identifying and responding to challenges that are specific and local to individual areas, districts, or localities.

This overarching approach enables us to implement commissioning strategies that reflect the unique needs and circumstances of each community, ensuring that our interventions are both relevant and impactful.

## **Countywide Commissioning**

- Strategic planning across the entire county or region
- Ensures consistency, equity, and efficiency
- Aligns with statutory duties and county-wide priorities
- Supports market sustainability and integrated care

## **Specific Locality-Based Challenges and Solutions**

- Tailored to specific community needs and assets
- Responsive to particular issues and opportunities in a place

## **Relationship Building with providers in localities across health and care**

- Supporting providers to respond to specific local needs
- Including providers as part on neighbourhood health planning

# Countywide commissioning summary

The countywide commissioning approach is designed to address systemic challenges across Essex through consistent, strategic market shaping.

Below some of key strategic countywide programmes, but should be considered along the Strategic commissioning intentions:

<b>Financial Sustainability</b>	Ensure a viable care market through planned provider payment uplifts starting Summer 2025.
<b>Day Opportunities</b>	Deliver coaching, service quality standards, and outcome-based pricing for adults with disabilities and older adults
<b>Supported Living</b>	Apply accommodation standards, reopen frameworks, and enhance provider engagement.
<b>Carers &amp; unpaid carers</b>	Personalised support for carers, improved referral pathways, and mediation awareness.
<b>Advocacy</b>	Efficiency improvements, reduced Relevant Person's Representative processing time, and streamlined reporting.
<b>Mental Health Services</b>	Co-design recovery services, expand digital support, and launch IPS SMI employment service in Oct 202
<b>Mental Health Accommodation</b>	Conduct strategic reviews, develop category plans, and improve move-on pathways with councils

# Individual Locality Plans

Tailored to the needs of each locality, clear measurable objectives

# Mid Essex Locality Plan

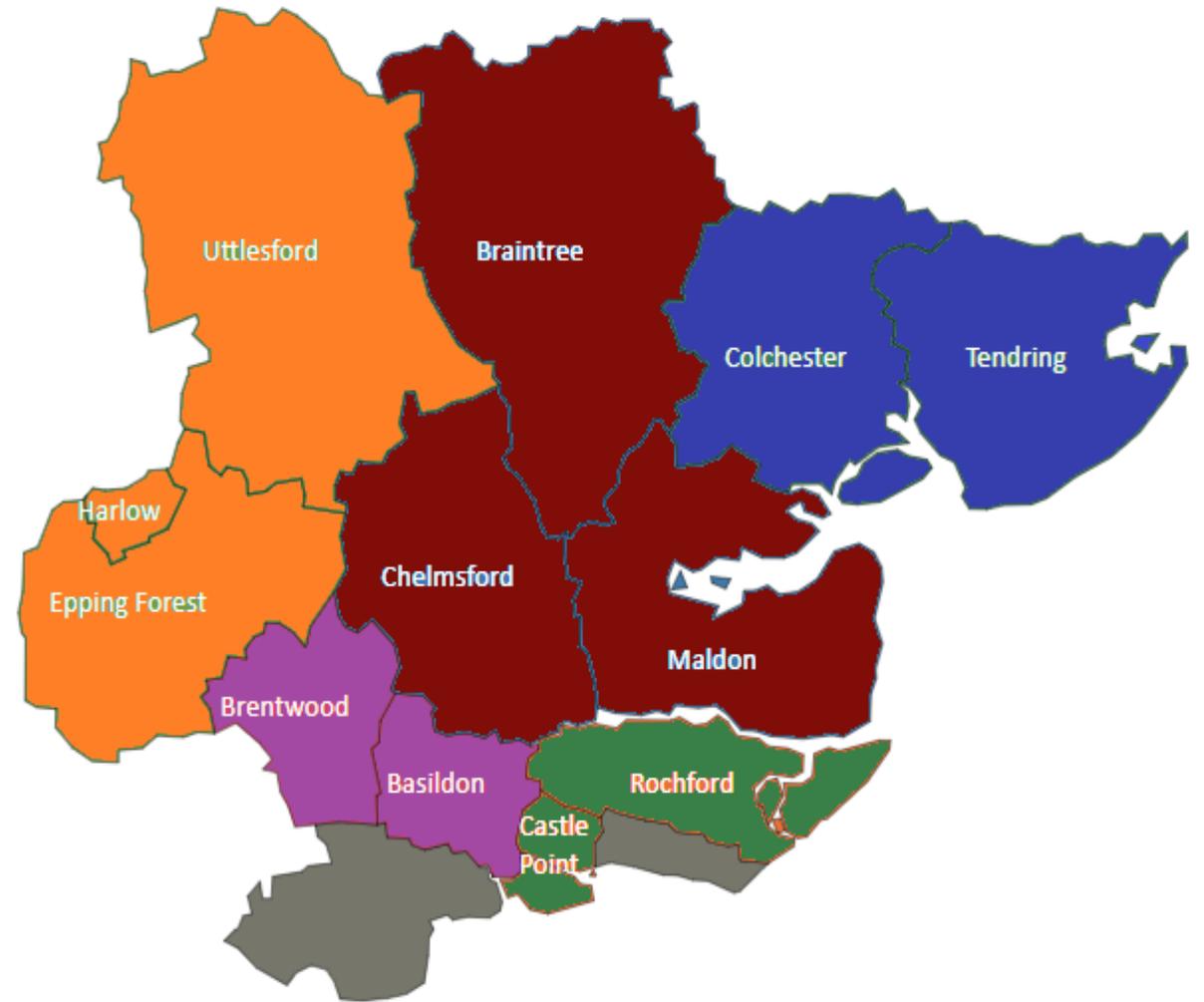
Adult population - 235,620 (18.2%)

Number of adults in commission services - 4,294

CQC registered provider - 209

Provider workforce - 3,390

Residential care beds capacity – 3,176 (85% occupancy)



# Locality-based commissioning

Here are the key challenges facing Mid Essex and the specific actions being taken locally to address them.

Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<b>Intermediate care</b> – continual pressure on capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure correct balance of supply against other areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisit modelling and analysis of system supply and performance in advance of ECL review meeting September 2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce reliance on SPOT</li> <li>Expand Home to Assess</li> <li>Better relationships between ECL and providers</li> </ul>
<b>Older person care homes</b> Placing into residential and residential with nursing care homes at Integrated Residential and Nursing (IRN) Framework rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More care home placements at the IRN Framework rate.</li> <li>To minimise funds drop placements by fostering stability and provider engagements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis on the pricing, and the quality issues</li> <li>Collaborate with providers to establish a shared understanding of the fund drop placement process</li> <li>Collaboration with the NHS to ensure they are holding clear, timely conversations with adults and families regarding eligibility thresholds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A higher % of placements at IRN rates versus spot rates for both residential and nursing placements.</li> </ul>

# Locality-based commissioning

Here are the key challenges facing Mid Essex and the specific actions being taken locally to address them.

Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<b>Care Tech</b> – low order numbers from partner organisations and high waitlists for Assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased trained prescribers and order numbers for Mid Essex</li> <li>Utilise Technology to support Assessment waitlists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit Digital Champion from incoming team in Mid.</li> <li>Additional Education and learning sessions including TEC flat visit with incoming team.</li> <li>Utilisation of Short-term assessment equipment to support assessments.</li> <li>Reaching out to Neighbourhood contacts listed on the network spreadsheet.</li> <li>Employing a Health TEC role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orders placed</li> <li>People trained</li> <li>Waitlist reduction</li> </ul>
<b>Extra care (EC)</b> – insufficient supply to meet need in the right places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase supply of well designed, accessible and adaptable EC schemes</li> <li>Make best use of existing EC schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to engage with the market through SMT and update meetings to ensure a successful procurement outcome.</li> <li>Re-procure on-site care and support contracts at Helen Court (go live, September 2026), Great Bradfords House and Polly’s Field (go live, January 2027)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning permission secured</li> <li>New care contracts live and working well.</li> </ul>

# Appendix

## Single Locality Plan

(Shared Local issues addressed consistently across all localities)

# Shared Local challenges summary

This refers to challenges that, while present in multiple localities, are tackled using same commissioning approach. These issues may vary in scale or intensity by locality, but the response model, tools, and strategic actions remain consistent across Essex.

**Intermediate Care:**

Intermediate Care remains a system-wide priority across Essex, with a strong emphasis on embedding the Home to Assess model and ensuring adequate capacity in every locality. Key priorities include the mobilisation of a new provider by November 2025, strengthening collaboration between ECL, ARC and Adult Social Care, and reviewing the balance of services by mid-2026. Progress will be measured through improved partnership working and the consistent adoption of best practice.

Intermediate Care			
Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Intermediate Care;</b> ensure people return home from hospital with the right service at the right time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed Home to Assess model and ensure appropriate capacity in place for each area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilise new Home to Assess provider November 2025</li> <li>Develop local relationships between ECL, ASC provider</li> <li>Review balance across ECL &amp; ARC Reablement and H2A provision by locality by April-June 2026</li> </ul>	

# Shared Local challenges summary

## Live at Home:

Essex's domiciliary market shows strong overall capacity, with 92% of provision sourced through the framework.

Live at Home			
Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<b>Live at Home;</b> ensure sustainable good quality supply in each area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implement new framework in each area</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mobilise new LAH providers from October 2025</li><li>Develop local relationships with ALH Tier 1 providers, locality team and NHS community health service provider</li><li>Design "test and learn" approaches and establish project plans</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>New LAH providers have been fully on-boarded, and engagement with the top tier new providers has been completed.</li></ul>

# Shared Local challenges summary

## Community Equipment service:

Community equipment services need greater visibility to support independent living and hospital discharge. Essex is partnering with Medequip and health services to develop an engagement plan and regularly share performance data with senior stakeholders. Success will be measured through collaborative service improvements, cost savings, and integration of equipment into the Early Help Offer.

Equipment			
Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Equipment:</b> Making equipment offer more visible within local communities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A service that helps to support people to stay living independently in their own homes and return home following a hospital admission.</li><li>• Ambition to ensure community equipment is embedded in the Early Help Offer.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with Medequip and health partner on and engagement plan.</li><li>• Ensuring performance data and narratives are regular provided to senior stakeholders</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engagement with other health partners and local government organisations to determine current solutions and pursue best practice and innovation.</li><li>• Working collaborative with all partners to identify savings, continuous improvement and innovation.</li></ul>

# Shared Local challenges summary

## Supported Living:

Essex faces varied pressures in **supported living** across its localities. West Essex has the fewest services and lowest vacancy rate (9%), making placements difficult. Mid Essex relies heavily on spot provision, especially in Maldon. North Essex has the highest placements and spend, with a substantial spot market and higher costs due to complexity. South-East maintains stable demand, while South-West has strong framework coverage. Countywide, there is a lack of supported living for adults with physical or sensory impairments. To address this, Essex is reopening the Supported Living Framework in Autumn 2025 to boost capacity and reduce spot placements. Improvements in data and targeted development will support better financial analysis and placement decisions.

## Supported Living

Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<b>AWD Supported Living</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is growing demand in line with demographic increases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure accurate demand information is communication to providers on the Supported Living framework on a regular basis</li> <li>To ensure that existing voids are used where possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular demand bulletin emails is agreed by ECC stakeholders and sent out to Supported Living provider on a regular basis</li> <li>There is consistent response from ECC to development proposals from providers and landlords</li> <li>Consistent follow up work on new developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That new schemes are developed in areas where there is current or near future demand</li> </ul>

# Shared Local challenges summary

## LD Accommodation:

LD residential services face uneven capacity across Essex, with high reliance on spot placements and limited provision in West and South-East. To address this, the Complex Residential Framework is being reopened with updated pricing and criteria. Efforts include guiding market development through demand bulletins, reviewing spot placements for value, and improving placement practices. The aim is to expand complex provision, especially for younger adults, and establish a long-term strategy for spot procurement

LD Accommodation			
Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<b>LD Accommodation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supply and type of residential services needs to meet current demand and modern service expectations standards</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To ensure that any changes of LD residential services reflect the needs of a locality, county and modern service expectations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any new proposal for a new residential home is reviewed, if the proposal proceeds the home goes through an on-boarding process, which is similar to the Supported Living process</li><li>Changes to existing residential are reviewed and appropriate feedback given.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>That new residential home proposals match current demand and modern service expectations.</li></ul>

## Older People Care Homes:

West Essex faces challenges placing individuals into care homes at Integrated Residential and Nursing (IRN) Framework rates, particularly for complex cases. In response, the IRN Framework was uplifted and relaunched in 2025 with enhanced pricing and a new matrix. The strategy promotes consistent use of assessment tools, streamlined approval for 1:1 care costs, and collaboration with providers to expand nursing care capacity. Success will be measured by increased IRN-rate placements, reduced delays, and more nursing care rooms available at framework rates.

OP Residential			
Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<p><b>Older person care homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placing into residential and residential with nursing care homes at Integrated <b>Residential and Nursing</b> (IRN) Framework rates can be a challenge across the county, this can be particularly challenging in West Essex.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More care home placements at the IRN Framework rate.</li> <li>To minimise fund drop placements by fostering stability and provider engagements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The IRN Framework pricing matrix rates were uplifted in April 2025 to encourage more placements at IRN rates.</li> <li>The New IRN Framework went live in June 2025 with a new pricing matrix and higher rates in West.</li> <li>Collaborate with providers to establish a shared understanding of the fund drop placement process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A higher % of placements at IRN rates versus spot rates for both residential and nursing placements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Older person care homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care homes accepting placements for adults with higher levels of complexity.</li> <li>High rates requested by care homes for people with higher levels of complexity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent use of the IRN Need Assessment Tool for all new placements at IRN rates and when reviewing existing placements.</li> <li>A consistent approach to 1-2-1 requests adopted across the County, ensuring the least restrictive and most person-centred practice is adopted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the consistent use of the Need Assessment Tool for all residential and nursing care home placements through the IRN Framework.</li> <li>Agree with system partners a consistent approach to follow for 1-2-1 requests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less delays in sourcing care home placements for people with higher levels of complexity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Older person care homes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Securing nursing care home capacity across the County.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased nursing care home capacity at IRN rates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with existing care homes to encourage the provision / increase in provision of nursing care rooms.</li> <li>Using the Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Need Assessment (SSHANA) evidence when responding to planning application consultation requests for new care home provision, recommending the development of nursing care homes as required, with a proportion of rooms at IRN rate, to meet forecast need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A higher number of nursing care home rooms at IRN rates.</li> </ul>

## Mental Health Accommodation:

West Essex continues to face significant gaps in complex mental health accommodation, with limited provision outside North Essex and a shortfall in the South. This has led to ongoing reliance on spot placements for individuals requiring long-term or complex support. In response, the countywide strategy aims to transform the mental health supported accommodation offer by expanding local, recovery-focused services, improving system flow, and ensuring placements meet individual needs. Key actions include reviewing demand, re-admissions, and quality, while developing new models and partnerships to support independence, reduce out-of-area placements, and prevent avoidable admissions.

### Mental Health Accommodation

Challenges	Market Shaping		
	Ambitions	What actions are we taking	Measure of success
<p><b>Mental Health Accommodation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation in <b>West Essex</b> for Complex element of the MH Supported Accommodation pathway.</li> <li>Shortfall of accommodation <b>in South</b> against anticipated volumes.</li> <li>Lack of specialist MH Residential and Nursing Accommodation in all localities aside from <b>North Essex</b>.</li> <li>Ongoing spot placement activity outside of the pathway across Essex for adults needing longer-term or more Complex Accommodation and/or support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform MH Supported Accommodation offer.</li> <li>Adults supported to recover from mental ill health.</li> <li>Improve flow and capacity across whole Mental Health system.</li> <li>Adults provided with Supported Accommodation suitable to their care and support needs located in area of connection.</li> <li>Improve health and social care outcomes.</li> <li>Where appropriate, ensure long term provision.</li> <li>Adults supported to move through pathway and into independence in the community.</li> <li>Avoid preventable admissions including re-admissions.</li> <li>Reduce out of area placements where possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviews of Need and Demand.</li> <li>Reviews of Re-admissions.</li> <li>Review of Move on working in partnership with City, District and Borough Councils to support delivery of move on provision from MH Supported Accommodation.</li> <li>Accommodation Quality Compliance and quality reviews.</li> <li>Development of Category Plans.</li> <li>Development of model for MH Residential and Nursing Accommodation.</li> <li>Development of MH Residential and Nursing EQIA.</li> <li>Review of Community Accommodation model and pathway.</li> </ul>	

This information is issued by:  
Essex County Council

Contact us:  
[market.shaping@essex.gov.uk](mailto:market.shaping@essex.gov.uk)  
ASC Market Shaping - Kirti Makwana

Adult Social Care  
Essex County Council  
County Hall, Chelmsford  
Essex, CM1 1QH

 [Essex\\_CC](#)

 [facebook.com/essexcountycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/essexcountycouncil)

The information contained in this document  
can be translated, and/or made available in  
alternative formats, on request.