

## Health and Social Care Integration – Why it matters

By making reference to the Health and Care Act 2022, Tom explained why integration is important and really matters.

He set the scene by highlighting a list of benefits to integration which included using resources jointly for better health outcomes, working more collaboratively, pooling resources and challenging legislation and cultures.

He emphasised that a key aspect and solution is to treat people and not conditions by putting in place tailored treatments which would result in efficiency, and savings in time and costs. He touched on a personal case study of a family member who was suffering from multiple conditions which resulted in numerous different appointments with no joined-up approach to treating them as a person.

He talked about:

- providing better care and gave examples of how other factors can affect our wellbeing such as living conditions
- how in some cases individuals currently have to hit a crisis point to access care which doesn't make sense, and
- how the pandemic put a spotlight on gaps in provision and the reliance on carers

He acknowledged that the system is complicated and provided an overview of the new Integrated Care System and how the Integrated Care Board (ICB) do the commissioning and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) will develop a strategy for Herts and West Essex. Please refer to the King's Fund model attached.

He commented that the legislation wants decision makers both NHS and local authorities to come together and pool resources under section 75 which is a legal framework .....emphasising *'it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we include those broader set of voices and this is where **Healthwatch** has a **massive** role to play – they will be sitting on the Board and it is Healthwatch's role to be challenging of both the Local Authority and the NHS – to say 'this is what we are hearing from our partners and the public and this is where changes need to happen'.*

The Strategy is due to be finalised by March 2023 and we have an opportunity to influence decisions until December of this year.

The ICB launched on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 with the ICP having its first meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022. He said that the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Partnership are, in his opinion, ahead of the game and we should maximise what we already have – we already have a good track record of working together.

He identified the five Government expectations for Integrated Care Partnerships which include being rooted in the needs of people, communities and places and developing and overseeing population health strategies to improve health outcomes and experiences.

Governance arrangements are set up for the ICP and significant cross sector engagement took place with VCSFE, Healthwatch, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Councils in shaping their role which includes agreeing population health outcomes for the strategy, pooling resources and agreeing priorities. A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be their areas of focus.

Thinking about our approaches to working together, he talked about a long list of things to tackle and invest in that affect health conditions such as employment and education and that we need an 'all age' approach ensuring that children and young families live healthy independent lives.

He referenced having an overview of system wide strategies for conditions such as dementia and ageing well whilst focusing on priority areas where significant improvements can be achieved through partnership working. He then focussed on the enablers to success including:

- joint workforce planning and how to sustain a viable offer
- sharing data (there is a target to share care records from 2023)
- having informed discussion for shared services

His key messages were about the challenges that people currently face on a daily basis and the importance of treating people and not conditions. He gave examples of how multiple conditions could be treated with other solutions for example using pharmacies for advice and health checks and ended with this statement ***“We cannot afford not to do this!”***