

Norfolk Health Overview Select Committee

The Norfolk Health Overview Select Committee met on 24th July 2025 to elect a chair and vice chair for the coming year and to receive more information about the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Transition. A report was presented by Norfolk and Waveney ICB.

Cllr Brenda Jones was appointed Chair of the NHOSC Committee

Cllr Pallavi Devulapalli was appointed Vice Chair of the NHOSC Committee

Cllr Jill Boyle was appointed link member for Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)

In March 2025, the Government announced that it would be abolishing NHS England and, over the next two years, transferring its responsibilities to the Department of Health and Social Care. This has resulted in the need for significant changes to the role, functions and budgets of integrated care boards (ICBs). Following discussions between the six ICBs in the East of England, it has been decided to reduce the number of ICBs in the region from six to three, one of which will cover Norfolk and Suffolk.

The Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (N&WICB) set out the local response to these changes and outlined how it will transition to this new model over the coming months.

Across the region N&WICB have agreed that the most workable model for ICBs in the East of England will see the current six ICBs reduce to three ICBs. Following a period of engagement with colleagues and key stakeholders, as well as our ICB partners across the region, they reached a consensus around a single option, which has been agreed by NHS England. This will see the creation of three new ICBs for the East of England:

- Norfolk and Suffolk
- Greater Essex
- Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; and Hertfordshire

For our area, it means that NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB initially clusters with NHS Suffolk and North East Essex ICB. However, the plan is to create a Norfolk and Suffolk ICB, with North East Essex becoming part of the Greater Essex ICB.

It is expected that rather than retaining one of the legacy ICBs, it will be preferable to take the following approach:

- NHS England abolishes the ICBs and establishes the new successor ICB (this would need to happen with effect from 1 April of the relevant year)
- Staff assets and liabilities transfer to the new ICB (via transfer scheme made by NHS England)
- A new ICB board will be appointed
- The legacy ICBs will be closed down.

Six months is needed before 'go live' to implement technical transition (for example of digital and data and finance), so a final decision to proceed must be taken by 30th September 2025 or 2026 depending on whether a merger would be on 1 April 2026 or 2027. The current expectation is that ICBs are in their new form by 1 April 2026.

Concerns were raised at the 50% reduction in staff of the ICB's and the effect of wellbeing of the staff. Assurances were given that there was no reduction in the funding of care.

The transition is happening rapidly and the members of the ICB gave their assurances of a full commitment to the rapid transition taking place.

The NHOSC Committee agreed to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Housing regarding the disbanding of Healthwatch following deep concerns raised by all members of the committee. The invaluable work of Healthwatch was recognised by all committee members.