

**Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Essex Police Strategic Board**

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Author on behalf of Chief Officer	ACC Baldwin
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Date Approved by Essex Police Finance Department	N/A as continuing with current contract.

1. Recommendations

This paper advises the PFCC (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner) that Essex Police will continue with the current custody healthcare provision while exploring the option of creating a new in-house healthcare provision.

2. Executive Summary

The current contract for custody healthcare provision is provided through an integrated health and justice service delivered by Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT). The Custody Healthcare element of the service is subcontracted by EPUT to CRG (Castle Rock Group) Medical Services, who provide all HCPs (Healthcare Professionals) and FMEs (Force Medical Examiner) to the custody suites within Essex Police.

Additionally, CRG provide Mental Health Triage capacity and a drug rehabilitation programme through a three-way contract negotiated in 2018 by Essex County Council (ECC).

Having surpassed the original 3 year set contract, Essex Police is currently mid-way through a 2-year agreed extension which, unless we give notice to leave in early 2024, continues until March 2025.

As such Essex Police are reviewing future delivery options for when the extension concludes.

3. Background

Since 1st April 2018 Essex Police have received 24-hour HCP (Healthcare Provision) cover for its custody suites alongside FME cover through a contract organised by the Office for PFCC with Essex County Council. The contract is with EPUT (delivered via their subcontractor CRG Medical Services).

This provision covers all the basic medical needs that detainees might require whilst in custody; provision of prescribed medication, onward referral to mental health services, welfare checks on arrested juveniles etc and procedures such as the taking of forensic samples.

The current contract with CRG has been extended beyond its initial term expires on 31st March 2025.

Since 01/04/2019, Beds / Herts / Cambs and Norfolk & Suffolk have also contracted CRG to provide healthcare services in their custody suites. Although operating under a slightly different set-up to Essex Police, the basic provisions catered for are the same between all the forces.

Kent Police have for at least 15 years employed their own healthcare staff to provide healthcare within the custody environment. This position is also in place in the Metropolitan Police Service.

All six forces who are currently contracted to CRG are experiencing problems with the cover CRG are providing; there are repeated, and ongoing instances of full HCP cover as specified by in the contracts not being fulfilled by CRG.

The contract between CRG and Beds / Herts / Cambs and Norfolk & Suffolk does have a service credit mechanism attached to it whereas the current contract between CRG and Essex does not. The credits paid by CRG so far for the contract have been significant.

The situation with HCP gaps is the same within Essex Police, with regular lack of full cover and increasing instances of extremely limited HCP cover across the seven custody blocks. This inability to provide full cover has continued during periods when only 5 or 6 custody blocks have been open in Essex and this would suggest that CRG have insufficient staff on their books to be able to provide their contracted cover.

It is reported that the healthcare employment market is challenging with both NHS and private providers struggling to recruit and retain staff. This is understood to be affecting CRG in a comparable way.

The consequence of this is CRG failing to fulfil its contractual obligations but with no option for Essex to recover costs and Police resources being diverted to either look after or transport detainees to receive medical treatment.

4. Options and analysis

7 Forces Commercial Services have been working on a regional contract proposal to maximise efficiencies and cost. The new contract with a new supplier has a different employment model and a more realistic service credit mechanism. We also must consider the CRG contract is linked to the triage car and drug rehabilitation services so we are mindful on the impact that immediately leaving CRG would have for our partners.

Essex Police's plan is to continue with the current contracted extension with CRG, while producing a working model for proposing an in-house service in line with Kent Police.

5. Risks and Mitigations

There are risks associated with remaining in the current contract as outlined in section 3 where forces are receiving a poor service. Essex Police will review the option of its own in-house service as outlined in section 4.

6. Links to the Police and Crime Plan

In line with the Police and Crime Plan with a focus on tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, arrests will be made and therefore once in Police detention, Police are obligated to manage the health and welfare of persons detained and so a custody healthcare provision is a requirement.

7. Financial Implications

There are no current cost implications as it is Essex Police's intention to remain in the existing Healthcare contract currently. Financial implications will be included with any future contract proposals.

8. Legal Implications

There are no current legal implications as it is Essex Police's intention to remain in the existing Healthcare contract currently. Legal implications will be included with any future contract.

9. Staffing Implications

The current plan is to continue with business as usual. Staffing will be considered as part of the re-model plan for an in-house healthcare service.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no E&D implications currently as Essex Police do not propose to make any amendments to the current contract in place. Once an in-house model has been produced, this will be reconsidered, and EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) completed.

11. Police Operational Implications

There are no current implications as we propose to continue as we currently are, accepting that the service received is far from acceptable, we can continue to manage it until a more suitable option is available.

12. Governance Boards

Reviewed by Essex Police's Criminal Justice management.
Sponsored by T/ACC Kevin Baldwin – Essex Police.
Approved at Essex Police Chief Officer Group – Chaired by CC BJ Harrington. (1 November 2023).

13. Future Plans (long-term strategic direction)

While continuing with the current custody Health Care provider, Essex Police will seek to formulate a new in-house option, employing our own HCP and managing staff.

14. List of background papers and appendices



TACC Baldwin COG
Custody Healthcare Pr



10. Custody
Healthcare Provision.c