



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

From Neil O'Brien MP  
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Peter Aldous MP  
By email to: [peter.aldous.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:peter.aldous.mp@parliament.uk)

24 January 2023

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 December, co-signed by Daniel Zeichner MP and Councillor Matthew Hicks, about your report *Levelling Up the East of England 2023-2030*.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) works on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care to minimise preventable ill health and reduce health disparities so that everyone can live more of their life in good health. A healthy and resilient population reduces pressure on the NHS and wider public services and supports a strong economy through increased productivity and labour-market participation.

The work of OHID across the East of England directly supports the goals of the Levelling Up Mission for Health that by 2030 the gap in healthy life expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and that by 2035 HLE will rise by five years.

OHID East of England takes a regional systems-leadership role across a number of programme areas that seek directly to address disparities in health and wellbeing outcomes:

- wider determinants: disseminating data to local areas to illustrate the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, noting the increasing numbers of those who are economically inactive;
- health and work: leading system-level collaboration across local authorities, the NHS and the Department for Work and Pensions, to improve employment outcomes for those with mental health conditions;
- suicide prevention: supporting the development of local real-time suicide surveillance systems to inform local strategies and plans to reduce the prevalence of suicides;
- tobacco control: supporting local authority commissioners to develop and deliver effective stop-smoking services, to reduce the overall prevalence of smoking and to focus on specific populations for which a higher smoking prevalence and higher levels of smoking-related ill health are observed;

- drug and alcohol treatment services: total investment in drug and alcohol treatment has increased, with local authorities across the East of England receiving funding to expand treatment capacity for adults and young people and to improve continuity of care for those in the criminal justice system. Several local authorities are receiving funding, and being directly supported by OHID, to improve access to housing for those with substance addiction, to improve access to treatment for those sleeping rough, and to provide access to specialist employment advisors for those in structured treatment and recovery for addiction;
- Start for Life family hubs: the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme, funded through OHID's National Start for Life Unit and the Department for Education, will see five local authorities in the East of England deliver core services, having been selected based on a range of criteria including deprivation;
- delivery of the Healthy Child Programme: OHID continues to support the commissioning and delivery of the Healthy Child Programme, to ensure timely delivery of public health and prevention services to all children and young people and the delivery of enhanced service provision where indicated by need;
- Core20Plus5 for children and young people (CYP): OHID regional colleagues contribute to the regional system response to disproportionately poor health and developmental outcomes and delivery of CYP transformation programmes including NHS England's CORE20plus5 for CYP; and
- CYP mental health and wellbeing: improving public mental health is a priority within the region, and recent work on an East of England regional health needs assessment has provided clarity to inform integrated care systems' prioritisation of prevention within their CYP plans.

In March, the East of England Population Research Hub and the Centre for Science and Policy at the University of Cambridge will host a regional workshop on HLE, bringing together relevant academics and policy makers from national Government departments and local government to inform regional public health strategy and actions to improve HLE, and to share learning with other regions.

I hope this reply is helpful and I would be grateful if you would share it with your co-signatories.



**NEIL O'BRIEN**