

East Midlands Cancer Alliance (EMCA) Board Briefing

Meeting held Monday 27 April 2026

For the attention of EMCA Board members, Accountable Officers, CEOs, Cancer Senior Responsible Officers (SROs), Cancer Managers and Cancer Leads in ICBs and Trusts:

The East Midlands Cancer Alliance (EMCA) Board met on Monday 27 April 2026 via MS Teams to review the work and progress of partner organisations across EMCA. Richard Mitchell chaired the meeting. The Board has representation from the five East Midlands ICBs across both commissioning, medical and provider organisations. It also has representatives from Specialised Commissioning, Public Health, Workforce Training and Education, Macmillan, and Cancer Research UK. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed contributions from all colleagues.

EMCA Cancer Alliance Update

Vicky Millward, Managing Director of EMCA, presented a strategic update on the Alliance, highlighting strong progress in early diagnosis and programme delivery, including EMCA's selection for a pilot on fit testing and safety netting, and the continued success of Nottinghamshire's lung cancer screening programme, which has detected over 500 cancers over the past five years.

Vicky also acknowledged sustained system pressures, including high demand, increasingly complex diagnostic pathways, and workforce shortages. The focus for the coming year will be on maintaining clarity of priorities, system agility, and strong collaboration to support continued improvements in patient outcomes.

Programme Overview

Gurjit Pahal, Associate Director of EMCA, provided a comprehensive update on programme delivery, highlighting continued progress across early diagnosis, screening uptake and operational improvements. This includes targeted investment in diagnostics, workforce initiatives and the ongoing delivery of the Days Matter programme. Key risks for the year ahead were noted, particularly around workforce capacity, operational performance, lung cancer screening delivery and the rollout of teledermatology.

Performance Update

Yasmin Bhatt, EMCA Operational Performance Senior Programme Manager, and Alastair Simpson, Clinical Director for EMCA, reviewed regional cancer waiting times performance. Improvements were reported in the 28-day and 31-day standards; however, 62-day performance remains a key challenge, with limited improvement overall. Mitigating actions underway include embedded programme management, delivery of the Days Matter campaign, targeted recovery funding, PTL support and pathway redesign.

Yasmin reported strong performance improvements associated with the Days Matter campaign, with significant gains in 28-day and 31-day standards. The programme exceeded its 10% improvement target across several tumour sites. The campaign's methodology, governance and oversight arrangements are now being considered for further expansion, including potential application to support 62-day performance.

East Midlands Radiology (EMRAD)

Emily Meldrum, EMRAD Project Manager, introduced the EMCA-EMRAD breast insourcing scoping project, outlining its feasibility phase, stakeholder engagement, and initial data analysis.

Emily emphasised the project's potential to provide a regional solution to workforce shortages in breast radiology, moving from individual trust efforts to a coordinated, regional approach.

EMCA Annual Plan 26/27

Aisha Minhas, EMCA Early Diagnosis Senior Programme Manager, Yasmin Bhatt, EMCA Operational Performance Senior Programme Manager, and Alison Broughton, EMCA Treatment and Care Senior Programme Manager, presented the EMCA delivery plan for 2026-27.

Within early diagnosis, Aisha highlighted initiatives including targeted case-finding, screening improvement, and innovation pilots. Projects include primary care initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and digital communication models.

For the operational performance and pathway improvement programme, Yasmin described a four-pillar approach: targeted support for bottom quartile providers, pathway improvement plans for key tumour sites, region-wide leadership and collaboration, and data-driven improvement using analytics and benchmarking. Projects include the rollout of non-medical LATP in urology, expansion of one-stop clinics, teledermatology implementation, and improvements in MDT processes.

Within the treatment and care programme, Alison presented interventions for people living with and beyond cancer, experience of care, and reducing unwarranted treatment variation, with a focus on lung, bowel, breast, ovarian, and pancreatic cancers.

EMCA Finance and Investment Report

Vicky Millward, EMCA Managing Director, reported that all memorandum of understandings (MOUs) for service development fund (SDF) allocations has been sent to systems, with indicative costs provided for the year. The finance committee will retain detailed financial oversight.

Life Sciences Hub

Alison Tonge, Executive Director of Strategy, Innovation and Planning at the Arden and Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit, provided an update on the progress with the Midlands Cancer Alliance's Life Sciences Partnership Hub. To date, more than 50 industry partners have engaged with the Hub, resulting in the development of 15–16 live projects aligned with EMCA's annual delivery plan. The Hub has also supported the establishment of an academic consortium bringing together five Midlands universities to drive cancer innovation.

Lung Cancer Screening

Sam Errington, EMCA Early Diagnosis Programme Manager, provided an update on the rollout of Lung Cancer Screening, noting funding constraints, variable ICB readiness, and delivery risks.

Rollout progress varies across ICBs: Nottinghamshire is on track, while Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, and Leicester/Leicestershire & Northamptonshire face mobilisation, procurement, and workforce challenges that may delay delivery.

Sam outlined additional EMCA support for programme management and infrastructure, including the introduction of monthly performance reviews to strengthen governance, improve accountability, and support timely delivery.

EMAP Programme Board

Jodie Waddington, EMCA Treatment and Care Programme Manager, outlined the transition of the oncology programme from the East Midlands Acute Provider Network (EMAP) to EMCA. This transition will provide clearer ownership and governance, with an oncology expert clinical advisory group (ECAG) to oversee delivery and report to the EMAP executive group.

East Midlands Endoscopy Network

Andrew Chilton, Medical Director for University Hospitals of Northamptonshire, presented a proposal for EMCA to host the East Midlands Endoscopy Network, highlighting its critical role in improving GI cancer diagnosis, enhancing performance, and strengthening regional coordination.

Andrew outlined that the network would build on existing governance arrangements, prioritise digital harmonisation, and support workforce development, with the ambition of positioning the East Midlands as one of the highest-performing cancer alliances nationally. The EMCA Board agreed that EMCA would host the East Midlands Endoscopy Network.

Documents for Information

- Screening Report
- Risk Report
- Specialised Commissioning Report
- EMCA Communications Report March 2026
- EMCA Newsletter April 2026

Future Board Meeting Details:

Date: Monday 29 June 2026
Time: 01:00–03:00pm
Venue: MS Teams

EMCA ICB Leads contact details:

East Midlands ICSs	EMCA Board Representative/s ICS Lead
Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland	Adam Andrews, Adam.andrews@nhs.net
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