

East Midlands Cancer Alliance (EMCA) Board Briefing

Meeting held Monday 22nd September 2025

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 22nd September 2025 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 Progress Overview

Vicky, Managing Director of EMCA, provided an update on progress against the Cancer Delivery Plan Objectives. Vicky reported that the EMCA team received an overall green RAG rating for quarter one assurance, indicating national and regional confidence in adherence to cancer plan objectives. Vicky also verified the recent announcement from the Treasury, confirming approval for a three-year cancer funding settlement, with details pending, allowing for potential long-term investment and stability.

Additionally, Vicky announced the launch of the Cancer Alliance Life Science Partnership hub, with a launch event scheduled on 8 October in Birmingham. This Hub aims to foster collaboration between NHS clinicians and pharmaceutical industry to accelerate transformation across cancer pathways.

Performance Update including GIRFT Update

Yasmin Bhatt, Operational Performance Programme Manager at EMCA, presented the Operational Performance update. There have been improvements within the 31-day and 62-day metrics, however a drop in the 28-day FDS has also been noted.

Targeted funding is being provided to systems for challenged pathways, and ongoing support discussions are underway to help mitigate risks in these pathways.

Programme Overview Update

Gurjit Pahal, Associate Director of Programmes at EMCA, provided a summary of the month five highlight report, with four programmes highlighted as amber rating due to associated risks:

- Operational performance
- Skin pathway
- Lung cancer screening
- Liver surveillance

Mitigation actions for these challenged pathways are underway, including:

- Funding improvement leads
- Deployment of Service Development Funding (SDF)
- Development of business cases for teledermatology
- Engagement of finance directors in Lung Cancer Screening discussions

Recommendations for ICB engagement to support bringing amber-rated programmes back to green, and a paper on Lung Cancer Screening will be presented at November's Board Meeting.

EMCA Finance & Investment Update

April Davis, Associate Director of Corporate at EMCA, presented the month five finance and investment report, outlining the:

- Breakdown of allocations by targeted funds and SDF
- Use of ring-fenced funds
- Establishment of monthly finance and delivery meetings, with an investment committee maintaining oversight.

April also summarised the key risks, all of which are being monitored and managed through established processes.

Centre of Psychosocial Excellence Update

Adam Andrews, Associate Director of Planned Care at LLR ICB provided an update on the process that ICB's are taking to determine future commissioning arrangements for the Centre for Psychosocial Excellence pilot. Outcomes of the internal ICB governance processes will be collated and shared with EMCA for next steps.

EMCA Annual Planning Governance Process

April Davis, Associate Director of Corporate at EMCA, presented the annual planning governance process for 2025/26, describing:

- The timeline for investment case submissions.
- The plan for early engagement with systems and providers.
- The alignment with national and provider planning processes.

This process includes clear criteria for scoring investment cases, with an emphasis on alignment with national cancer objectives, patient benefit, and support for priority pathways.

ICB Update

ICB Leads from Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Derbyshire provided updates on their respective regions, highlighting key achievements, ongoing challenges, and collaborative efforts to improve cancer care.

Good news stories shared included:

- Lincolnshire: Progressing well with the Lung Cancer Screening (LCS) programme. Procurement has been completed, and the contract award is on track.
- Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR): LCS spend review panel has been convened, with input from the Assistant Commissioning Group and the Board. Final sign-off is expected by the end of the month, enabling rollout to begin in March 2026. Radiotherapy services are also on track for improvement.
- Nottinghamshire: The Lung Cancer Screening programme has so far diagnosed over 400 lung cancers, and early diagnosis rates for lung cancer are currently at 71%. The third lung cancer screening round is underway in Mid-Notts, with expansion continuing at pace. The Cancer Board has approved amendments to Lower GI and Upper GI referral pathways to help reduce demand.

Strong engagement from Sherwood Forest Hospitals (SFH) and Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) in AI initiatives for managing urgent cancer referrals, with a pilot set to launch next month.

- Northamptonshire: The skin cancer pilot is scheduled to go live within the coming weeks.
- Derbyshire: A system-wide agreement has been reached to initiate teledermatology pilots in the community. Collaboration between primary and secondary care is ongoing to refine referral templates and improve quality.

Any Other Business

Vicky, Managing Director of EMCA, closed the meeting by expressing heartfelt thanks to EMCA's patient representative, who shared their personal cancer journey. Their story set a powerful tone for the session and highlighted the vital role of lived experience in shaping cancer care. Vicky went on to share her vision for the future of EMCA's patient representatives, emphasising how their insights and experiences will be instrumental in co-designing cancer services and pathways. This collaborative approach will help ensure continuous improvement in the quality of care we deliver.

She also underscored the importance of maintaining strong collaboration and mutual support in the months ahead, particularly as performance remains a key focus. By sharing learning across providers and other Cancer Alliances, we can collectively meet the standards set by the National Team and drive meaningful progress.

Documents for Information

- Specialised Commissioning
- Screening Report
- Specialised Commissioning Report
- EMCA Communication Report
- EMCA Newsletter - [September 2025](#)
- [Primary Care Newsletter September 2025](#)

Date of next Board Meeting:

Monday 24th November 2025 from 1:00-3:00pm in-person at County Hall, Leicestershire, room to be confirmed.

EMCA ICB Leads contact details:

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