



PRESS RELEASE

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Assura in groundbreaking deal for South East Essex LIFT

Patients across South East Essex will soon benefit from a range of state-of-the-art new primary and social care centres after a significant contract was signed today forming a new company that will develop up to 11 new health and social care buildings across the region.

South East Essex LIFT Limited is a public private partnership between South East Essex PCT and **gbprimarycare**, a consortium of companies led by Assura Property, with Partnerships for Health and lead contractor Galliford Try Partnerships.

Assura Property is a division of Assura Group, one of the UK's leading investors in LIFT projects and is currently involved in four operational LIFT schemes as well as being preferred bidder at South West Hampshire LIFT.

Contracts were exchanged signalling the start of a significant and unprecedented investment of up to £100 million, beginning with the £8.3 million project to provide a state-of-the-art primary care centre at The Paddocks on Long Road, Canvey Island, which reached financial close today.

The Paddocks scheme plans to bring together five GP practices in high quality facilities with a wide range of community health services such as speech and language services, community nursing services, children's services, a minor operations suite and community pharmacy.

The project forms part of an innovative approach that will see a number of additional schemes provided across South East Essex over the next 25 years where GPs, community nursing teams, therapists, hospital outreach teams, the voluntary sector and social services will be able to offer a variety of services closer to people's homes.

Further schemes are being planned across the rest of the South East Essex area over the next five to ten years starting with centres in Shoeburyness, Westcliff, Rayleigh and a centre in West Canvey.

Commenting on the news, Margaret Hathaway of South East Essex PCT and director of the LIFT project said: "This project represents a significant investment in local health services and we all look forward to the opening of state-of-the-art facilities in 2008 onwards.

"We are committed to developing new types of primary care facilities rather than simply re-providing existing services. Our aim is to develop new and more efficient ways of meeting the health needs of local people and making South East Essex a healthier place to live."

Dr Kamdar of Oak Road Surgery, Canvey Island was delighted by the news. "We are very excited that building work can now be started on the new centre," he said. "We are looking forward to providing our patients and staff with the modern and comfortable facilities they deserve."

Elaine Siew, managing director of Assura LIFT Holdings Limited said:

"Assura is delighted that this exciting LIFT project has reached financial close. We look forward to working with our partners the PCT and other Participants to bring forward more of such facilities which will enhance primary care delivery and benefit the people of South East Essex."

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Notes to Editors:

- Assura Property, which is the leading shareholder in the LIFT Company, is currently over halfway through a £750 million investment programme into new and existing primary care centres across the UK. It has already committed investment in over 120 premises. Assura Property is a division of the Assura Group whose investments also include pharmacies, community hospitals and joint venture partnerships with GPs.
- LIFT is a government based public private partnership scheme that aims to replace existing primary care centres. There are currently over 200 new primary care centres that have been built by this scheme.

- Financial close is the moment at which contracts are formally agreed and construction can begin.
- The NHS LIFT Company is called South East Essex LIFT Limited and involves South East Essex PCT, Southend Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council and the East of England Ambulance Trust. South East Essex Partnership Trust is set to join as joint stake holders.
- Galliford Try plc is the parent company for a group of businesses in construction and house building. It provides construction services across the UK to a wide range of public and private sector clients and has regional house building businesses that specialise in individually designed developments across the UK.



Picture shows: artist's impression of The Paddocks, Canvey Island.