



Violence & Vulnerability Unit Newsletter

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Knife bins and knife amnesty

Last week (Monday 9 May) saw the start of a two-week knife amnesty across Essex, which coincides with the rollout of new knife bins at 14 sites across the county.

The knife bins now feature the artwork of three secondary school pupils who won our competition to design an anti-knife poster for display on the bins. The designs are below.

- Thurrock competition winner: Rachida (12yrs old), from Hathaway Academy, pictured top left with Patrick Green, CEO of Ben Kinsella Trust outside Grays Police Station.
- Southend competition winner: Dexter (11yrs old) from Eastwood Academy, pictured top right with Roger Hirst, PFCC for Essex outside Southend Police Station.
- Essex competition winner: Bethany (13yrs old) from Cornelius Vermuyden School, pictured bottom (L-R) with Essex County Councillor Beverley Egan; Chief Constable BJ Harrington; Head of Art at Cornelius Vermuyden School Mark Standen and Inspector Cathy Calder, Castlepoint & Rochford Community Policing Team outside Canvey Police Station.

The knife amnesty allows anyone who wants to dispose of bladed weapons to do so safely and without fear of prosecution. The priority is for as many knives as possible to be taken off the streets of Essex.

These bins are just one element of the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership's wider approach to tackling knife crime. Essex Police use other initiatives such as 'hotspot' policing, intelligence gathering, knife arches, and utilising additional powers such as dispersal orders and Section 60 powers, which are an extension of the stop-and-search activity which takes place every day.

The V&V Partnership also brings together partners to drive the multi-agency response, with a focus on early intervention, preventing and education. Helping to divert people who are involved in - or at risk of being involved in - knife and violent crime away from this lifestyle and into areas such as sports, education, volunteering, rehabilitation.

Roger Hirst, PFCC for Essex and Chair of the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Partnership said: "We know knife bins do a great job in taking thousands of knives off our Essex streets each year, but what is equally important is the role of education and information.

"Teaching our young people why you don't need to carry a knife, why they should tell their friends not to carry a knife and why being knife free is the positive life choice to take. That's why I'm delighted to be unveiling the new knife bins in Essex, the bins that young people themselves have designed. Young people who, like me, want their County to be a safe place to play, study, work and grow up in."

As well as having their artwork featured on the knife bins the competition winners have also secured a class trip to the Ben Kinsella Trust "Choices and Consequences" exhibition. The exhibition

highlights the dangers of knife crime, challenges attitudes to knife crime and debunks the myth that carrying a knife will protect you.



The work of U Turn

On our travels to see the work the VVU helps fund, we popped to visit U Turn in Tendring.

U Turn offers support and practical help for young people aged 10 – 18 years old who may be experiencing personal and socially challenging life situations as consequences of violent crime. The project integrates sport and physical activity with mentoring. The purpose of the project is to reduce offending, victimisation and reoffending behaviour.

With a Hub based in Clacton Coastal Academy, U Turn supports young people struggling with issues such as school attendance, making positive life choices and difficult family circumstances by providing one to one mentoring, group support sessions and informal drop-in sessions.

The team currently work with 72 young people in Tendring providing them with a safe place to talk and work through their problems. They also support with activities such as boxing, martial arts and gymnastics.

The team also offer alternative provision to young people at risk of exclusion. They also offer First Aid qualifications and are now an accredited centre for ASDAN qualifications.

On our visit we got an understanding of how much the team love their work. The staff go that extra mile to support the young people who attend – be this by spotting a passion and nurturing this, supporting them to gain apprenticeships, taking them to after school clubs, or ensuring holiday clubs are filled with fun and new activities.

The success of UTurn has led to enquiries on how this model could be replicated further in the county.

Essex County Council opens applications for new Community Challenge fund!

Funding is now available from Essex County Council for a new Community Challenge Fund, to enable direct investment in our local communities.

Sometimes it only takes a small amount of money to bring to life a good idea and the new fund is designed to help exactly that. With a simple and quick application and decision process, bids will be awarded to small scale projects between the value of £300- £2,000 to fund a new, not for profit scheme, group, initiative or idea.



The funds will support local people to connect and give them the power to make a real difference in improving their own neighbourhoods

Ideas might include setting up a food growing initiative in the local community to create a garden and social space, or perhaps creating an informal childcare club of likeminded parents in the local library. Or money might be needed for training and equipment to share skills; printing for a local event or newsletter; hosting and promoting an online magazine for young people; setting up a local community seed exchange; providing taxi or licenced hire vehicles to bring isolated residents together or maybe setting up a clothes swap in the village hall.

Applications are open now and are the fund is specifically targeted at communities in the identified levelling up areas of Clacton, Harwich, Canvey, Harlow, Rural Braintree and parts of Colchester and Basildon.

Applications can be made via www.essexfuture.org.uk/boards-networks/communities-mission-network/community-challenge-fund-applications



Active Essex seeks new Chair

Active Essex is recruiting for a new Chair, to join their fantastic Board and help evolve the organisation going forward.

Active Essex's current Chair has reached the end of his full term and is retiring after six years. Recruitment now begins for a new Chair, to help define the direction of the organisation and to take strategic leadership of the Board.

The Board provides leadership, takes into account partners interests and sets high standards for the organisation. The new Chair should have the ambition to play a major role in growing physical opportunities, whilst helping to achieve the Fit for the Future vision of creating an active Essex to improve everyone's health and wellbeing.

If you want to make a difference to the lives of people in Essex, have a passion for physical activity and sport, and feel you have the skills to support Active Essex's mission – they'd like to talk to you! <https://www.activeessex.org/chair-recruitment/>

Deadline for applications is 5 June.

If you would like to find out more about any of the items in this newsletter please get in touch katie.canning@essex.gov.uk Visit our website www.essexvvu.co.uk or follow us on Twitter [@EssexVVU](https://twitter.com/EssexVVU)



Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex

Victims of crime can access support [here](#)
Book your free Home Fire Safety Visit [here](#)

