



Violence & Vulnerability Unit Newsletter

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Understanding County Lines in Essex

We have been overwhelmed by the support shown for our campaign to raise awareness of County Lines in Essex. Thank you to all who have provided feedback on the films and who have taken the time to visit www.essexcountylines.co.uk to find out more.

Featuring real experiences and real conversations from our Essex young people, the films show situations that young people are experiencing every day. However, the films also show that young people are strong, determined and resilient and with the right support and strength of character can navigate a positive path to adulthood.

If you've not yet visited the website please take a look at www.essexcountylines.co.uk and learn more about how to spot the signs of county lines and protect those you love.

Happy outcomes thanks to Proximity Schools

Back in November, we told of how [Proximity Schools](#) were working with young people in the south of the county. Thanks to funding from the Violence and Vulnerability Grant Fund the organisation has been able to work with a further 90 students with identified concerns; 15 of whom were known to be at risk of offending.



One of the ways Proximity provide support is by offering primary pupils, who are vulnerable and at risk, one to one reading, coaching and mentoring. This one on one attention gives children a safe space to express themselves, share their feelings and have fun. Two children Proximity supported had witnessed domestic abuse, and as a result were displaying concerning behaviour. The trauma of what they witnessed, and what they had been exposed to, had significant repercussions on their mental health. Witnessing domestic abuse is recognised as an adverse childhood experience (ACE), which can be linked to far poorer outcomes in adult life.

Proximity supported the children and their mother over lockdown and built a relationship with the family. Recently the children moved house and Proximity helped the children work through this move – a move which carried lots of emotional implications.

Testament of this, is that one of the children wished that an ice cream van would park outside the new house on moving day. It was just a wish and one the child didn't think would happen, but

thanks to the creativity and support of the child's mentor, Proximity was able to provide an ice cream van which parked right in front of their new front door on moving day. A moment to watch!

The family have now settled in their new home and are feeling very much at peace. Mum knows there are people around her that are looking out for her and her family and doesn't feel alone. The time spent with the children, where they have been truly 'seen and 'heard' will help them understand they are incredible individuals with a purpose and a future.



Preventing exploitation on public transport

Train stations across Essex were the focus of [Operation Henderson](#) last week (1-7 July), a partnership campaign to raise awareness of child exploitation at stations and transport networks in Essex.

The campaign was a huge success with many young people and adults engaging with outreach workers from local charities, youth groups, police and safeguarding boards to talk about the risks of exploitation on public transport.

The outreach workers were raising awareness of the signs of exploitation, supporting young people to recognise these signs in their friends, and also providing advice on and where to go if people need help. They also spent time speaking to adults and those who work at the stations. Important safeguarding messages were also shared across social media.

Research and local data shows transport networks are used by vulnerable young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and trafficking. Young people often gravitate towards stations because they are anonymous places that also provide some form of shelter and access to food and drink.

Concerns about child exploitation can be reported to the Police on 101 or anonymously via Crimestoppers. If there are concerns about suspicious activity in the train station grounds the British Transport Police text line number can also be used 61016.

Apply for grants up to £10k with the Essex Community Initiative Fund

The £350k Essex Community Initiative Fund (CIF) is now open, offering grants up to £10k to individuals, groups and voluntary organisations working in the Essex County Council administrative area.

The £350,000 fund offers two levels of grant:

- £300,000 is for grants up to £10,000 towards capital or revenue projects that benefit the wider community
- £50,000 is for micro grants up to £500 to help grassroots groups reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing or help communities connect.

It is administered by Essex Association of Local Councils on behalf of Essex County Council. Applications are invited from town and parish councils, community groups, social enterprises or individuals in the Essex County Council area.



Projects should have community backing and show that they help meet a real community need. Previous projects have included money for a children's playground, an IT system to manage substance misuse cases; support for project work with Y12 and Y13 pupils and upgrades of community facilities including village halls for community use.

The deadline for expressions of interest is 5 July and full applications must be in by 15 August. For more information visit [Community Initiative Fund](#) or contact the Funding Officer Louise Gambardella on louise.gambardella@ealc.gov.uk

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 Follow us on Twitter [@EssexVUU](https://twitter.com/EssexVUU)



Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex

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

