



Support for working families



Essex County Council

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Cllr McKinlay foreword



The COVID-19 crisis has had a major impact on families, especially those with children, many of whom have not been in school since before Easter. The crisis has created an opportunity for parents to have a greater oversight and more involvement in their children's education and lives in general.

Home-schooling has become a new addition to the day with many parents carrying out lessons alongside their own work. Inevitably, this has brought with it a set of challenges.

Financially, families have been impacted in different ways, with some benefitting from saving derived from travel costs for example, whilst others have had their opportunities to work severely curtailed leading to financial hardship. Whether lockdown has been a positive or negative experience to a family, the world is now a very different place.

The Family Wellbeing Packs are designed to provide families with details and guidance on staying well this summer. The packs include valuable information on some key issues that families may be facing in areas such as mental health, employment, financial support and general family resilience.

Also included are some fun tools and activities for families to keep mentally and physically healthy including recipes for cheap and healthy meals, details on the summer reading challenge and some physical activity ideas for the whole family to enjoy!

We have developed an 'Essex is Supporting Working Parents' Facebook page which will provide information and support to working parents, to help them cope during the crisis.

I hope that you find this information helpful and informative.

Louise McKinlay

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise McKinlay".

Together we can keep a healthy mind

As we find ourselves at home more, with less contact with our family, friends and colleagues, our support system has become compromised. With restrictions and limitations on activities and social interactions, it is now, more than ever, important to take stock of our mental health.

Why is our mental health so important?

We are living in uncertain times. The threat of Coronavirus weighs heavily on our everyday lives and on our minds. We will all, almost certainly, experience levels of anxiety, worries and low moods. This is perfectly natural and with the right help and support we can get through this. Below is some advice on things you can do to keep mentally healthy during this time and provides some useful information on where to go to get extra help if you need it.

Five Ways to Wellbeing

It is normal to feel down or overwhelmed, but there are simple steps you can take to look after your mental wellbeing and help deal with feelings of depression and anxiety.

Be Active:

You should be doing between 30-60 minutes of physical activity for at least 5 days a week. This will help boost your self-esteem, boost endorphins to help positively change your mood and, if you choose an activity to do with a family member or a friend, will give you the opportunity to share the experience. Your food choices each day affect your health — how you feel today, tomorrow, and in the future. If you're having foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar on a regular basis this can affect energy levels and in turn effect your mental health.

Connect to others:

Good relationships are important to our mental health, they will not only provide you with emotional support but also allow you to support others which helps to build a sense of self-worth and belonging. During this time

make the most of technology to stay in touch with friends and family and where you can arrange safe face to face interactions.

Keep learning:

Learning a new skill or building on skills you already have is a fantastic way to boost self-confidence and sense of purpose. Learning a new skill doesn't have to take up a lot of time, start with simple things like taking on DIY projects or learning to cook a new meal.

Mindfulness/Take notice:

Be more mindful of everyday life, take time each day to be in the present moment and appreciate the positives, no matter how small.

Give:

Most people would agree that giving to others is good in itself, but it can also improve your mental wellbeing. Small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones – such as volunteering in your local community – can give you a sense of purpose and make you feel happier and more satisfied about life.

Support your children's mental health

Helping children find positive ways to express feelings such as fear and sadness is crucial to their emotional development. There are many ways to help young people with this but remember every child is different. Engaging in a creative activity, such as playing and drawing, can encourage children to express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.

Maintaining routine in daily life at this time will help reduce stress in young people and provide the opportunity to process and adapt to changes in their environment.

Summary of the Five Ways to Wellbeing





Is there a digital solution?

There are a wide range of apps that have been developed with mental health in mind. There is evidence to show that these apps can be effective in helping those experiencing mental health issues for the first time and those who have self-diagnosed mild anxiety.

Many apps offer mindfulness tools such as breathing techniques and meditation which can help with insomnia, stress relief and focus.

Staying Alive app: This app is a free pocket suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis.

Where can I go for support?

There is lots of help out there to support your mental health needs and we have compiled a list of places you can visit for this. If you or someone you know is having an Urgent Mental Health Crisis Essex County Council give the following advice:

- **call your mental health support worker**, if you have one - this may be your care co-ordinator or key worker
- **call NHS 111:** This NHS service is available 24 hours a day
- **book an emergency GP appointment** - they should be able to offer you an appointment in a crisis with the first available doctor
- call the **Crisis Team at Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT)** (for Adults) or the **Crisis Support Service** (for Young People) on 0300 555 1201
- NHS Choices has a mental health helpline page with a list of organisations you can call for immediate assistance www.nhs.uk
- **Call Samaritans free on 116 123** or visit their website www.samaritans.org

Further support can be found:

- **NHS Foundation Trust** Mental health direct can arrange for you to speak with a mental health professional. They can also advise you about what service to contact to get the support you need. For more information visit: www.nelft.nhs.uk
- **The Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS)** provides advice and support to children, young people and families who are in need of support with their emotional wellbeing or mental health difficulties. For more information visit: www.nelft.nhs.uk
- **For non urgent mental health support** you can contact the Adult Mental Health Wellbeing team. Their email: mentalhealth.wellbeing@essex.gov.uk
Duty number – 033303 22958
- **For access to psychological therapies** To make a self-referral visit: www.northessexiapt.nhs.uk/-MID, WEST, NORTH ESSEX.

For more information visit:

www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk

Support for Children and Young people

Kooth, from XenZone, is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop and free for Essex residents.

More information here www.kooth.com

Childline

- **Contact Childline about anything.** Whatever the worry, it's better out than in. Childline are here to support you and help you find ways to cope. For support call 0800 1111
- **The World Health Organization** offer advice to Parents and Carers of young people. For more information visit: www.who.int

Together we can keep Essex active

As we find ourselves at home more and more or restricted in the activities we are allowed to do, it could have a significantly negative impact on our physical activity levels. Active Essex have compiled resources with lots of ideas for your family to get moving as well as activity packs!

Why is physical activity so important?

Moderately strenuous exercise for about 30 minutes a day can lead to enormous benefits in terms of your mood, health, weight and the ability to live an independent, fulfilling life. Children and young people should engage in physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week. Families should aim to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary and when possible should break up long periods of not moving with at least light physical activity.

I need ideas, where can I go?

It's great to get active together and in doing so you are ensuring that both you and your kids are reaching the recommended daily activity minutes.

The Daily Mile

The Daily Mile continues in schools to keep children active and improve their emotional and mental health. You could complete the 10-15 minute jog and get the whole family involved. Whether that's in the playground, round the house or even in the park.

Keep Essex Active Channel

If you can go to the Keep Essex Active YouTube channel you will find many videos for you to follow. From family karate sessions and Blitzfit sport to Teen Yoga and get fit with Mr Gilder, there is plenty to choose from.

For more information on keeping active at home visit:

www.activeessex.org/keep-essex-active

Check out Active Essex 30 ideas to Keep active as a family

If you want ideas, we've got them. 30 ideas to keep you and the kids entertained and moving. Build a den, play hot potato with a balloon or have active story telling time. These simple ideas will make it feel like you aren't doing any exercise but will help you and your kids get fitter whilst having fun.

We could have made up even more! But you could use your imagination and get household items involved for many activities; by rolling up some socks and getting a washing basket, you can create your own game of netball, or use empty bottles as skittles! There really is something to do whatever the weather, whatever the space.



Here are some fun ideas for families to incorporate into their daily routine. Think active bingo! How many can you do?

- Go on a bug hunt
- Go for a family bike ride
- Create your own PE class or follow a session online
- Climb a hill
- Try a new exercise, like Yoga or Zumba
- Do the chores! Tidy house, tidy mind!
- Act out a story
- Get out in the garden together
- Kids teach adults PE!
- Build a den
- Create an obstacle course in the garden
- Skip around the house
- Put a tune on and dance around
- Everytime you use the microwave, jog on the spot
- Pillow fight!
- Hula Hoop in the garden
- Bounce on a trampoline
- Create your own hopscotch
- Use a balloon or some rolled up socks for indoor catch!
- Make and chase bubbles
- Go for a run together!
- Do keep-ups with a roll of toilet paper
- Grow some fruit and veg in the garden!
- Walk around the house and balance a toilet roll on your head
- Complete your Daily Mile around the house or garden
- Try a salsa dance
- Go for an early morning walk
- Use cans in your kitchen as weights
- Play football in the garden or local park
- Fly a kite



Keep active this summer

Essex County Council and Active Essex are working with a network of locally trusted organisations across Essex to provide opportunities for children to keep active this summer. We are offering free sessions at local summer holiday activity clubs.

More details can be found on the Active Essex website www.activeessex.org



Eat, feel and be healthy

As well as building the right amount of physical activity into your daily routine, it is good to think about what you eat. It's so important that the whole family are eating the right foods, not only will this help physically, but help improve our mood too.

Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. By making smart food choices you can help protect yourself from health problems such as: heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and certain types of cancer.

Dietary habits established in childhood often carry into adulthood, so teaching children how to eat healthy at a young age will help them stay healthy throughout their life. As with physical activity, making small changes in your diet can go a long way and it's easier than you think!

Why is eating healthy so important?

Eating healthy means:

- weight loss
- reduced cancer risk
- diabetes management
- heart health and stroke prevention
- the health of the next generation
- strong bones and teeth
- better mood
- improved memory
- improved gut health
- getting a good night's sleep.

The NHS have 8 tips for healthy eating:

- base your meals on higher fibre starchy carbohydrates
- eat lots of fruit and veg
- eat more fish, including a portion of oily fish
- cut down on saturated fat and sugar

- eat less salt: no more than 6g a day for adults
- get active and be a healthy weight
- do not get thirsty
- do not skip breakfast.

How can my family eat healthy?

Your family can eat healthy by:

- have regular family meals
- serve a variety of healthy foods and snacks
- be a role model by eating healthy yourself
- avoid battles over food
- involve kids in the process
- drink plenty of water to keep hydrated.

Make it fun for the kids to try new fruit and vegetables! You could create a hedgehog with mash potatoes, carrots for the spikes and peas for the eyes! Or let them help you cook! Try eating the rainbow; a fun and tasty way to make sure your family is eating a good variety of fruits and vegetables is to eat as many different colours as you can each day!

Make whole family lifestyle changes and be a good role model for your child. Can you grow some fruit and veg in the garden? It will be great to get the kids involved and they will be more likely to try them if they've grown them!

“Your food choices each day affect your health; how you feel today, tomorrow and in the future.”



Recipe ideas (cheap & healthy!)

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service are pleased to be able to share some quick, easy and cost-effective recipes that you might want to make as a family.

Fishcakes

Serves 4

- 200g fish, cubed
- 200g potato, chopped for mash
- 6 spring onions, finely sliced
- ¼ bunch of Coriander
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- Juice from ½ a lemon
- Small amount of flour, milk and breadcrumbs
- Oil to fry

Method

1. Cook the potato in boiling water in a pan for around 20 minutes or until soft enough to mash. Mash can be lumpy or smooth, whichever you prefer.
2. Add the spring onion and chilli flakes to the mashed potato, along with the raw cubed fish.
3. Add lemon juice and mix together using hands. Portion and shape into 4 balls and then flatten into 1cm deep circles.
4. Coat in flour, gently shake off excess, then coat in a little milk, and finally place in breadcrumbs to cover them.
5. Fry your fishcakes in a frying pan in a little oil until golden, then place on a baking tray in the oven at 180C for 10mins.

Chicken nuggets

Serves 4

- 4 boneless chicken thighs
- Flour
- Milk
- Breadcrumbs
- 1 egg
- Herbs/spices
- Oil for frying



Method

1. Remove skin from chicken thighs.
2. Cut meat into chunks or strips.
3. Get 3 bowls. Put flour in one bowl, egg and milk whisked together in another bowl and breadcrumbs and herbs in the last bowl.
4. Coat each piece of meat first in the flour, then the egg mixture and then in breadcrumbs.
5. Shallow fry in a pan of vegetable oil for approximately 5 minutes each side until coated through. Excess can be stored in fridge or freezer.

Turkey and apple burgers

Serves 4

- 450g turkey mince
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 apples grated
- Breadcrumbs
- 4 burger buns
- Salad
- Vegetable oil



Method

1. Mix the turkey mince, grated apple and chopped onion together in a bowl-using your hands to mix well.
2. Add breadcrumbs as needed, to dry the mixture out a little.
3. Separate mixture and roll into 4 balls, before squashing into burger patty shapes approx. thickness of your thumb.
4. Pan fry in vegetable oil for around 10 minutes on each side (depending on thickness of burger).
5. Serve in the burger bun with salad.

Vegetarian options

Minestrone style soup

Serves 4

- 3 tins of mixed vegetables in water
- 1 tin of baked beans
- 100g pasta
- 1 400g tin chopped tomatoes or passata
- Dried mixed herbs
- Vegetable stock cube

Method

1. Put the tinned vegetables and water in a saucepan, with the stock cube. Add 500ml water and add the pasta.
2. Cook on a low heat until the pasta is cooked.
3. Add the baked beans including the juice and 1 teaspoon of mixed herbs.
4. Add tinned tomatoes or passata and reheat.

If you have any left over fresh vegetables, these can also be used replacing some of the tinned vegetables and adding a little more water. Croutons can be made from sliced bread cut into 1cm and shallow fry until golden.

Vegetable Korma

Serves 4

- 1 onion, cut into small pieces
- 750g fresh vegetables of own choice (carrots, courgettes, peppers, aubergine, cauliflower, sweet potato, peas, sweetcorn). Alternatively you can use tinned (3 tins drained) or 1kg frozen vegetables
- Small thumb of ginger, peeled and grated or finely chopped
- 1 tin coconut milk
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp turmeric (optional)
- Pinch of salt
- 300g rice
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil



Method

1. Fry onion lightly on medium heat in a little oil.
2. Add the spices and cook for 3-5min.
3. Add ginger and cook for around 5 minutes. Keep stirring until it starts to go a golden colour.
4. Add all the vegetables and cook for 15 minutes on a low heat.
5. Add the coconut milk and cook for a further 20 minutes, until sauce has thickened a little.
6. Cook the rice following the packet instruction and serve together.

Caponata

Serves 6

- 2-3 aubergines, cut into 1cm cubes
- 2 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 3 small courgettes, sliced and cut into half moons
- 2 red peppers, sliced
- 1 onion cut into small cubes
- 2 gloves garlic crushed
- Vegetable oil

Method

1. Cook aubergine and garlic in a saucepan in a little vegetable oil on medium-high heat for 10 minutes.
2. Add pepper and onion and continue cooking until softened and a little coloured.
3. Add courgettes and continue to cook for 10 minutes on a low heat.
4. Add tomatoes and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

This can be served alongside any dish, as a main dish for vegetarians option, or blended to make a healthy and sugar free pasta sauce!



Work and financial support

The Government have provided guidance for people who were employed and have lost their job due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

If you have recently lost your job then you are able to apply for Universal Credit, this can be done online

www.gov.uk/how-to-claim-universal-credit.

You can also contact Universal Credit by calling the Universal Credit helpline:

Universal Credit helpline

Telephone: **0800 328 5644**

Textphone: **0800 328 1344**

Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): **18001 then 0800 328 5644**

Welsh language: **0800 328 1744**

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

You might also be able to:

Apply for New Style Jobseeker's Allowance

If you're unemployed or work less than 16 hours a week you may be able to get New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).

New Style JSA is a fortnightly payment that can be claimed on its own or at the same time as Universal Credit.

New Style JSA is a contribution based benefit. Normally, this means you may be able to get it if you've paid and/or been credited with enough National Insurance (NI) contributions in the two full tax years before the year you're claiming in.

If you qualify, you can get New Style JSA for up to 182 days. After this your work coach will talk to you about your options.

If you qualify for both New Style JSA and Universal Credit, any New Style JSA you receive will be taken into account as income for Universal Credit.

Apply for New Style Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

You can apply for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if you have a disability or health condition that affects how much you can work.

You can also apply for ESA if you cannot work while you are self-isolating because of Coronavirus.

ESA gives you:

- money to help with living costs if you're unable to work
- support to get back into work if you're able to

You can apply for ESA if you're employed, self-employed or unemployed.

You might also be able to get New Style Employment and Support Allowance if one for the following applies:

- you or your child might have coronavirus or you're recovering from it
- you or your child are self-isolating because you came into contact with someone who might have coronavirus
- you have been told to stay at home for at least 12 weeks by the NHS because you're at high risk of severe illness.

Foodbank support

There are over 60 foodbanks and food pantries across Essex, who are there to help those who might find themselves in financial difficulty. Although all have seen a significant increase in demand for their services all are there to offer support to anyone who may need it. They are based in the heart of community and are run by local people for local people. Over the past few months families who may have never had to use a foodbank before are finding that they need to use one for the first time and although this can seem daunting, the process is simple and those who run the foodbank are keen to support and help.

For more information and details on your local foodbank you can contact:

The Trussell Trust
www.trusselltrust.org
01722 580 180

The Independent Food Aid Network
www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk

As demand on foodbanks has increased, Essex County Council has been supporting foodbanks and community organisations across Essex and we have seen new food voluntary groups develop.

For more information on your local food bank contact: Essex.Partners@essex.gov.uk

Citizens Advice

Citizens advice is a network of charities who offer confidential advice online, over the phone and in person, for free.

Citizens advice can provide further coronavirus advice including information about being furloughed, support if you are self-employed, if you can not pay your bills, if you are having problems with your rented home and much more.

You can also contact your local citizen advice online www.citizensadvice.org.uk or call their advice line (England) **03444 111 444**

Essex Wellbeing Service

We're here to help

The Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) provides one place to go for your wellbeing needs. As well as practical help, EWS connects people to offer advice and support with:

- feelings of loneliness or isolation
- debt, housing or employment questions
- parenting and family matters
- caring responsibilities
- mental wellbeing
- learning disability/autism
- dementia care
- sensory impairment
- quitting smoking
- keeping physically active.

The Essex Wellbeing Service is just one way that Essex County Council is helping residents.

If you or anyone you know needs support, visit www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk or call **0300 303 9988**.

About the Essex Wellbeing Service

EWS is commissioned by Essex County Council and delivered by Provide CIC in partnership with Priority Digital Health - a truly local service for local residents.

We're here to quickly and safely coordinate your requests or referrals for support.



**Essex
Wellbeing Service**

Essex Youth Service

Opportunities for young people aged 13-19 years

Essex Youth Service is an informal education, personal and social development service providing a wide and diverse offer of opportunities for young people.

This enables them to have a voice in decisions that impact on their lives, to develop skills and capabilities to thrive in education, employment and training and keep them safe from exploitation and harm.

Young people are saying that their mental health and wellbeing has been significantly impacted by COVID-19; they worry about their futures and they feel isolated from their friends. With the usual clubs and activities closed, social contact is more important than ever. Young people need opportunities to take part in activities to reduce isolation and stimulate their thinking and creativity.

An overview of our activities and services are below.

For more information visit:

youth.essex.gov.uk

Online Activities

Connecting through online activities enables young people to be part of a group and make new friends. Essex County Council Youth Service has a wide range of online activities available, such as: sign language, baking, video gaming, science experiments, relaxation, quizzes and chats about football, Disney and life in general.

Additionally, ECC Youth Workers weave topical themes through the activities they deliver, such as the Black Lives Matter, coping with loss and change, good wellbeing and youth crime.

Timetables are released weekly and available on our website:
youth.essex.gov.uk/young-people/online-activities

Would you like to learn more about coding? Find out about our Generation Acceleration Code project.

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and TikTok to receive updates.

National Citizen Service

With the country starting to get back on its feet and lockdown slowly being lifted, everyone - from your neighbours to the local shops - is going to need a little more help to get back to whatever 'normal' is going to be.

NCS is a year 11 and 12 programme and gives young people opportunities to help their local communities, once it's safe to do so. By pledging to give 16 hours of time over July/August through volunteering and social action, young people will pick up new skills, help rebuild local communities and support others by doing something positive with their time.

For more information visit:

www.wearencs.com/keep-doing-good

Young Carers

Anyone under the age of 18 years who provides regular care to another person who is ill physically or mentally, has a disability or misuses substances is a Young Carer. ECC Youth Service provides one to one support, workshops - such as first aid and recreational activities.

For more information visit:

youth.essex.gov.uk

Young Essex Assembly (YEA) Youth Voice Champions

The YEA is an elected group of young people aged 11-19 years who represent the voices of young people in Essex. Elections are being held next year, but in the meantime you can join in their work as a Youth Voice Champion.

Members are currently meeting weekly online, taking part in activities and running campaigns.

Volunteering

Being a volunteer gives you the chance to do something new and make a positive contribution to your community and it doesn't have to take up a lot of your time.

For young people who have an idea of ECC Youth Service offer a range of employability and skills development programmes and projects aimed at supporting young people who have found themselves needing some extra help in getting their training or employment on track.

Virtual Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is the world's leading youth achievement award.

Make friends for life, push yourself mentally and physically, develop your teamwork, communication and leadership skills and experience an adventurous expedition like no other.

See our website for more information, including details of our funded places for young people experiencing disadvantage.

www.youth.essex.gov.uk

Targeted youth programmes

ECC Youth Service offer a range of employability and skills development programmes and projects aimed at supporting young people who have found themselves needing some extra help in getting their education, training or employment on track.

- Plan B and Opportunity Ready help prepare young people by developing skills and networks that get them job/learning ready

- EmpowHer builds confidence and self-esteem in young women through social action
- Goodman and Sisters in Strength build resilience and support for young people to become skilled at developing and maintaining healthy relationships.

More information about all the Youth Services programmes on our website.

Detached and Outreach

Many young people are out in their local communities whilst other activities have been closed. Youth Workers are meeting young people in parks, local streets and shopping centres to ensure they are aware of social distancing whilst participating in activities that keep them physically and emotionally well.

Contact your local youth worker to find out where your local detached team will be via youth.work@essex.gov.uk

Wellbeing

Many of the above activities will support young people's wellbeing.

For more information visit:
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.kooth.com

**YOUTH
SERVICE**

**Inspire
Enable
Achieve**

Online safety

As children are spending more time online, it is vital that parents ensure that they understand the risks and the best ways to protect their children. Below contains some key topics to consider and how you can support your children.

Parental Controls

Parents and carers are encouraged to change the settings of the apps and online games that their children use, as to restrict the ways in which they could potentially be targeted by perpetrators. Many apps are public facing automatically and have to be manually set to 'private' for example.

Parental controls are software and tools which you can install on phones, TV services or tablets, games consoles, or laptops – and even your home broadband. You can also use them to help you block or filter the content your child sees when searching online. And family-friendly public WiFi can help when you're out and about.

Parental controls are also available to help you to:

- plan what time of day your child can go online and how long for
- stop them from downloading apps they're too young for
- manage the content different members of the family can see

Online Sexual Abuse

A child can be sexually exploited through technology without even realising it. Offenders use social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and Snapchat), to identify young people they can groom. When abusive images have been posted or shared online, there is little control over who can access them. This can lead to repeat victimisation. GPS technology can be used to pinpoint (within a few metres) where a photo was taken – revealing a victim's location very easily.

A child or young person is persuaded to post or send images of themselves and these are then used as a bargaining tool by the offenders and threats of violence and intimidation are used as methods of coercion. Offenders may use

technology to exploit children and young people in the following ways:

- harassment and bullying through text messaging
- purchasing mobile phones for victims and sharing their numbers among group or gang members
- randomly contacting children via social networking sites
- using 'friends' lists on networking sites of known victims to target children and young people
- viewing extreme or violent pornography and discussing it during sexual assaults
- posting images of victims with rival gang members to invite a sexual assault as punishment
- filming and distributing incidents of rape
- contact through whatsapp or social media profiles
- contacting and grooming children and young people through online gaming sites.

If you are concerned or would like more information visit:

Essex Safeguarding Children Board
www.escb.co.uk

CEOP for more information or how to report an online concern - **www.ceop.police.uk**

NSPCC - **0800 8005000**

Childline - **0800 1111**

Children & Families Hub (Social Care Essex): **0345 603 7627** or **0345 606 1212** (out of hours)

If you think your child is in immediate danger, then ring 999 or you can report concerns by dialling 101.

Essex Libraries

Whether you are a long-time library user or a recent convert, library services are a bit different at the moment. You can find the latest information you need to know about visiting our libraries on our website: libraries.essex.gov.uk

We also have online services you can use from home including e-books, e-audio, e-comics, e-magazines and e-newspapers. Recently we've added online rhymetimes, crafts and other fun activities for children and families to enjoy together. You can find all the details on our website and catalogue.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook @EssexLibraries to keep up to date with all the latest library news.

Silly Squad, The Summer Reading Challenge 2020 has also moved online

This year we are celebrating funny books, happiness and laughter. Children can sign up at the amazing new Summer Reading Challenge website: sillysquad.org.uk.

Signing up is easy. A child creates their own account and their parent/carer is sent an email to verify it. Children can then choose an avatar, set their own reading goals (which they can change later) and will be given a randomly generated silly name to use on the website.

As they read books towards their own reading goal, children will unlock digital rewards, activities and videos. The Summer Reading Challenge website also offers games, puzzles, quizzes and competitions to keep children entertained all summer long.

Anything they read counts, including comics, magazines, e-books, and – for this year only – your child can read their own books!

Check out our website, libraries.essex.gov.uk, where our online e-library offers a wide variety of e-books, e-audio, e-magazines and e-comics your child can read for their Summer Reading Challenge. These are all available free with your Essex library card, so if you haven't already joined register the whole family free online now.



(Illustrations © Laura Ellen Anderson 2020)

Parenting together support programme

A new programme for parents

Relationships matter

Being a parent when your relationship with your partner or ex-partner isn't going well is even tougher. There are times when we are all under stress but whilst conflict is part of normal family life, sometimes it can become destructive and get in the way of managing everyday life.

Conflict between couples might range from lack of warmth or emotional connection to shouting or swearing at each other. Often this can be frequent, intense and poorly resolved. How parents interact with each other, regardless of whether they are together or separated, has a big impact on their children. Evidence shows that parental conflict has a negative impact on children, particularly in terms of mental health, problems at school, sleep difficulties and poorer health.

How can we help?

The 'Parenting Together' programme may be able to help you if you feel that stress and conflict in your relationship are affecting your family. The programme offers support to suit your circumstances to address conflict within your relationship, as well as strengthening your parenting skills to bring up your children.


Support can be provided individually, with your partner/co-parent, or in group sessions delivered by experienced facilitators who are skilled in encouraging discussion around the modern struggles that parents and couples face.

During the programme, you will work on your relationship, whether you are together or separated, and find ways to manage stresses and disagreements. You will explore patterns of behaviour to develop tools and techniques to improve your parenting skills and help your family succeed.

How to get help?

If you live in Essex you can refer yourself online via the Parenting Together website: **TavistockRelationships.org/p-together**

A parenting practitioner will be in touch to arrange a meeting at a time and place that is suitable, or to arrange an online meeting by webcam. When you meet you'll talk through your needs in more detail and together you will agree a plan to support you, based on your circumstances and the needs you identify.



Deciding to do something about the relationships I care most about has not only supported my own parenting but has made a huge impact on my family



What can I expect?

- Support that is tailored to you
- Support that is proven to improve relationships
- A supportive and experienced professional
- Delivered at a time and place to suit you
- A quick response.

Further information

Programmes are free and support will be offered online by webcam (on your laptop, smartphone, tablet or desktop computer) during times of social distancing measures. Once social distancing is over, where possible, support may be offered in your home or local community.

Parents are encouraged to commit fully to the programme in order to gain the most benefit.

Sessions range from individual one-on-one, to group sessions between 6 to 12 parents depending on your particular needs.

Programmes are open to all eligible parents, mothers and fathers, and same-sex parents. These opportunities are for couples who are together in a relationship or those who are separated.

Privacy

We only share information in accordance with our Privacy Notice and Consent forms which you will be given as part of the referral process.

For more information contact:
referralsbrsf@tavistockrelationships.org
or visit:
TavistockRelationships.org/p-together

Parenting Together
Support Programme



FIF-Xtra

FIF

The current Family Innovation Fund (FIF) is a range of established services for children, young people and parents/carers with low level needs that cannot be supported by services such as Schools and GPs alone. FIF provides that little bit of extra help to support children, young people and parents/carers.

FIF-Xtra

FIF-Xtra services have been set up so there is even more help available during this time, online and via telephone, to support children, young people and their families who are experiencing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Understanding Coronavirus
- Managing and coping with change
- Separation and loss
- Managing and coping with anxiety
- Healthy family relationships
- Staying active and curious.

This support is strictly for those who are not open to specialist or statutory services such as social care or mental health services. Children aged 0-19 (up to 25 with special educational needs and learning disabilities) and their parents/carers can access support; either individually, in groups, as a couple or the whole family.

To make a referral please look at the different services on the following page to see which can best meet the needs of those you are referring. If a family has more than one need, the organisation you do call will be able to help get the right support for everyone.

Family Innovation Fund-Xtra



Wilderness Foundation

Wilderness Foundation offer counselling and therapeutic support and may bring nature, art and other practical & creative tools into sessions.

Appointments available: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Evenings & weekends by appointment.

www.wildernessfoundation.org.uk

0300 1233073

info@wildernessfoundation.org.uk



Open Door

Open Door offer a wealth of experience including coaching, counselling, and mediation.

Appointments available: Monday-Thursday 9am-7pm, Friday 9am-5pm. Saturday and Sunday by appointment.

www.opendoorthurrock.org

01375 390040

Fifxtra@opendoorservices.org



Renew Counselling

Renew Counselling are an experienced and accredited counselling service for all ages.

Appointments available: Monday-Friday 10am-5pm and Monday-Thursday 5pm-8pm. Saturdays by appointment.

www.renew-us.org

01245 359353

hilary@renew-us.org



YMCA

YMCA Family Support team are here to help young people and families to identify beneficial strategies and solutions.

Appointments: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Evenings and Saturdays agreed by appointment.

www.ymcaessex.org.uk

01245 355677

sarah.daniels@ymcachelmsford.org.uk

YMCA ESSEX

Relate

Relate are specialists in offering accredited mediation and counselling.

Appointments available: Monday-Friday 9am-9pm and 9am-5pm on Saturdays.

www.relatelneene.org.uk

01245 676930 or 01708 441722

enquiries@relatelnee.org.uk



Evolve Intervention

Evolve Intervention offer coaching and mentoring to enable people to support themselves.

Appointments available: Monday -Friday 9am-6pm. Some evenings and Saturdays by appointment only.

www.evolve-intervention.com

01245 526069

info@evolve-intervention.com



Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service

On behalf of Essex County Council and the NHS, Virgin Care and Barnardo's provide a range of high quality and easy to access child and family services throughout Essex that are FREE at the point of delivery.

Our aim is to make sure that everyone in Essex has the best possible start in life by meeting the identified needs of children, young people and families. Support is available in the community, school, family home, online, over the phone or at our Family Hubs and Delivery Sites across Essex.

The teams are made up of a range of individuals, including Healthy Family Support Assistants and Workers, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Volunteers and many others!

Support available includes standard visits/ development checks (Antenatal visit, new birth visit, 6-8 week check, 9-12 month development review and 2-3 year development review). We also offer a range of family support services for children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 for those with SEND) and their families.

We can be there for you at any stage throughout your family's journey to offer tailored support.

We offer:

- support for an expectant family, preparing for the arrival of their new baby
- support for new parents with their baby-through group play sessions, 1:1 support and advice, workshops and courses on being a new parent, feeding your baby, baby massage, introducing solid foods
- support around play, child development, toilet training, speech and language, behaviour strategies, school readiness and school transition
- support around your child's anxiety, bullying, low mood, emotional health and wellbeing, physical health, sexual health, healthy eating
- supporting young people with their emotional and physical health needs
- supporting families who are new to the area to make friends and integrate into their local community
- supporting the community to set up groups to help meet local needs (such as support groups).

And much much more!



We encourage and welcome volunteers and parent-led sessions, guiding people to learn new skills, developing their existing experience and knowledge, improving their confidence and self-esteem, whilst giving something back to their local community. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or would like more information about setting up a parent-led group in your area, please give us a call using numbers below.

Our staff are friendly and ready to welcome you and your family, no matter how you choose to access our service.

To access support you can:

- drop in and see us at your closest Family Hub or Delivery Site
www.essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk
- come along to one of our drop-in sessions in the community (view timetable on our website)
- visit our website for a range of health and wellbeing information to support you and your family, including Essex Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme, links to other local services including your local Hub and its Facebook page

- text CHAT Health (school nurse text messaging service) – 11-19 year olds only. The numbers are as follows:

Area - Mid Essex

Support Mon to Fri: 0300 247 0014

Text CHAT Health: 07520615731

Area - North Essex

Support Mon to Fri: 0300 247 0015

Text CHAT Health: 07520615734

Area - South Essex

Support Mon to Fri: 0300 247 0013

Text CHAT Health: 07520615732

Area - West Essex

Support Mon to Fri: 0300 247 0122

Text CHAT Health: 07520615733

ACL family learning

The ACL family learning team works with anyone with caring responsibility for children and young people (parents, carers, grandparents) across Essex, working in partnership with schools, pre-schools, nurseries, community organisations and partners that support families to learn together.

Our aim is to inspire a passion for learning that transcends generational boundaries, by providing a high quality, holistic roadmap for lifelong learning, where every learner is treated as an individual, given the tools for their journey, and confidence to inspire and motivate the children they care for, and help build a productive community ethos. The courses and engagement workshops offered are non-accredited provision that aims to be the link between the community of families and lifelong learning.

In a pre-COVID-19 world, our provision was offered in settings in the heart of the community we serve, working with partners to offer support in collaboration with them. As these settings started to close their doors, we responded quickly to offer our provision through distance learning, we have an extensive range of real-time and virtual courses, a dedicated Facebook group, weekly newsletter and much more.



All our current courses can be found at:
www.aclessex.com/community-family-learning-online/

Our online community support is available at:
www.facebook.com/groups/552150055488898/

For more information visit:
www.aclessex.com

Part of our offer is a one-off workshop called **Healthy Eating and Store Cupboard Cooking**.

Head to our website to register your interest in this **FREE** workshop.



**FAMILY
LEARNING**

Revolutionising Recovery

Do you, a family member, friend or colleague need help with drug and/or alcohol addiction?

Revolutionising Recovery are a charity led by the community, for the community. Their vision is for everybody suffering from drug and alcohol addiction to achieve sustainable recovery. They work closely with Essex County Council and Essex service providers to ensure that the voice of the community is shaping the services available.

If you want to amplify the voice of the people who are suffering from drug and alcohol addiction, to have a say in what services you access and to help break down the stigma around addiction and share positive recovery stories then please get in touch.

If you have questions, comments or experiences you would like to share get in touch at
hello@revolutionising-recovery.org.uk
or visit our website
www.revolutionising-recovery.org.uk



There are many services available in Essex and nationally that could help.

Action on Addiction

www.actiononaddiction.org.uk

01376 349 237

crbraintree@actiononaddiction.org.uk

Helping Hands:

01245 356169

info@hhe.org.uk

www.hhe.org.uk

Open Road

www.openroad.org.uk

Phoenix Futures:

www.phoenix-futures.org.uk

01376 316 126

essex.arc@phoenixfutures.org.uk

Southend Treatment and Recovery Service

www.changegrowlive.org.uk

01702431889

southend.referrals@cgl.org.uk

Essex Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service

www.childrenssociety.org.uk

01245 493 311

choices.referrals@childrenssociety.org.uk

For information and advice

Drinkaware: www.drinkaware.co.uk

Adfam: www.adfam.org.uk

FRANK: www.talktofrank.com

We All Have Arguments

We all have arguments – but do we always feel that arguments are resolved in a way that leaves everyone feeling okay?

Arguments and conflict between parents occur for a number of reasons and when they are managed and resolved there are few, if any, lasting effects on the relationship or on children. However, where arguments are frequent, intense and poorly resolved, children can be affected in many different ways; they may feel responsible, become withdrawn, sad or angry and can impact them in many different ways including their ability to form and maintain healthy relationships of their own.

Often, changing small things or responding in a different way during arguments can help.

- Is the disagreement escalating to a point you are no longer in control of the things you are saying or the way you behave, are you just reacting?
- Take a breath. Take time and assess the situation.

- Try to reflect on why the argument started, is it something you argue about often or is it your frustration about something else?
- How were you feeling before the conversation started?
- Were you feeling anxious or tense already?
- Step back. Is this argument about something important?
- Can you come back to it when you are both calmer? Find time to talk things through and think about compromise.
- Are you both just feeling frustrated with the current situation and venting on one another?

If you would like more information and guidance please visit the 'Healthy Relationships' page at www.livewellcampaign.co.uk



