

## **ERF weekly briefing note**

### **Wc 8 June 2020**

The Essex Resilience Forum Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) was put into action to provide coordination and alignment for member services in Essex.

The SCG is chaired by Chief Constable BJ Harrington and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Rick Hylton. The two Chairs rotate responsibility to provide resilience.

#### **Current SCG Chair – BJ Harrington**

The purpose of the SCG is to:

- Minimise the risk to the public by assisting Public Health to contain the spread of the virus and to support the contact tracing.
- Maximise, where practicable, the safety of our staff and partners by providing advice and appropriate PPE where necessary.
- Ensure business continuity plans are in place to enable the provision of key services and continued delivery of essential services to the public.
- To reassure the public by supporting Public Health guidance and Public Health messages.
- To ensure that community tension and intelligence/information is being effectively managed through the strategic co-ordinating group and existing structures.
- To support Local Resilience Forum partner agencies and local communities to mitigate the impacts of the virus.
- To ensure a coordinated approach to any arrivals to UK (By Air or Sea) of persons who pose a Public Health risk arising from Covid-19.
- To promote a return to business as usual and restoration of disrupted services at the earliest opportunity.

To support the work of the SCG and provide consistency of messaging a Multi Agency Information Cell has been formed which provides daily updates from all of the services on who COVID-19 is impacting in Essex. The report covers a UK update, health, East of England Ambulance Service, Essex Police – including community tensions, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, ports, Southend Borough Council, Essex County Council (covering all 12 districts) and Thurrock Council.

We have an established joined up multi-agency approach in place, that is delivering against the expectations of the government. Our SCG is meeting twice-weekly, and coordinating the plans and response for Essex. This means we are working together, keeping everyone across Essex as safe as we can, and providing the most up-to-date information as possible.

## SCG work streams/ tactical groups

Five streams continue to be the core focus for the SCG – notes/ issues as below.

- **Excess Death Planning** – the temporary mortuary site at Chelmer Valley Park and Ride will be decommissioned following a decision by the SCG, and will be taken down by the end of June.
- **Shielding the vulnerable** – Essex residents have come out in their thousands to volunteer to help shield the vulnerable. Essex County Council have now recruited around 3,000 volunteers via Essex Welfare Service. The service continues to make emergency food deliveries, give help with essential supplies to people who have asked for help.
- **Care Provision – Adults & Children** – The Every Family Matters Campaign, which provides advice on children’s health and wellbeing, continues.
- **PPE** – We are receiving deliveries each week and have shared the new guidance around its use from Public Health England.
- **Volunteers** – Good practice guidance continues to be available. Volunteers can also continue to find support via the **Facebook Coronavirus Action Group**. The group is a collaboration between Essex County Council, the Essex Public Health team, and local Facebook group owners.

## Key updates from the Chair

**Schools** – On 28 May the government announced that primary schools, nurseries and early years settings can begin to open to more pupils from Monday 1 June. Secondary schools and colleges will be able to open to more students from 15 June. This is possible because the [government’s 5 tests](#) have been met.

In Essex, we have been supporting schools and settings to develop their plans for wider opening. Each school has made their own decision on how they will respond based on the completion of a thorough health and safety risk assessment.

This means that not all schools and settings have opened full time to all pupils who are now eligible to return from 1 June. Our current indications are that between 75 and 80 per cent of Essex primary schools have opened to more pupils in some form from 1 June, while 20 per cent are indicating they have not.

**Recovery** - The LRF is planning for return to normal, with specific TCGs being set up across the agencies to approach this in a joined-up way. Recovery will recognise the sovereignty of our local authorities and will be led and shaped by our political leadership. We are working to establish this independence from the SCG whilst retaining the important mechanisms to best enable this to occur.

**Testing** - There are a number of ways people can be tested across Essex. These testing sites are to enable key workers to return to work and keep vulnerable and older people safe. Anyone wanting to be tested must meet the eligibility criteria, pre-book an appointment and travel to the centre by car – i.e. not on foot or by public transport.

Mobile testing units are at various locations across Essex. They are run by the Ministry of Defence and tests are by appointment only.

You can [apply for a coronavirus test](#) if you meet the [criteria for testing](#). Find out more about how the [NHS test and trace scheme](#) works.

Saturday 6 June 2020

Long Stay Car Park 3, Southend Airport, Southend on Sea, SS2 6YE

Sunday 7 June 2020

Dovercourt Bay Lifestyles, Low Road, Dovercourt, CO12 3TA

Monday 8 June 2020

Basildon Sporting Village, Basildon, SS14 3GR

The Civic Hall, Grays, RM16 2JU

Tuesday 9 June 2020

Rayleigh Leisure Centre, Rayleigh, SS6 9NF

Clacton on Sea Leisure Centre, Clacton, CO15 6DB

Long Stay Car Park 3, Southend Airport, Southend on Sea, SS2 6YE

Wednesday 10 June 2020

Harlow Football Club, Harlow, CM19 5BE

The Jobserve Community Stadium, Colchester, CO4 5UP

Thursday 11 June 2020

Basildon Sporting Village, Basildon, SS14 3GR

Friday 12 June 2020

Harlow Football Club, Harlow, CM19 5BE

Rayleigh Leisure Centre, Rayleigh, SS6 9NF

The Civic Hall, Grays, RM16 2JU

Saturday 13 June 2020

Long Stay Car Park 3, Southend Airport, Southend on Sea, SS2 6YE

Clacton on Sea Leisure Centre, Clacton, CO15 6DB

Sunday 14 June 2020

The Jobserve Community Stadium, Colchester, CO4 5UP

### **Care homes and testing**

Care homes can now request courier service for tests to be delivered directly.

### **Chelmer Valley Temporary Mortuary Site**

The temporary mortuary at Chelmer Valley, outside Chelmsford is to be taken down. It was built in case there were more deaths during the coronavirus pandemic than hospitals and funeral directors in Essex, Southend and Thurrock could cope with. The Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) has managed the countywide work around the greater-Essex fight against Covid-19 and established the site at the park and ride.

The site has been on standby since 27 April but has not been needed. Essex County Council commissioned the temporary mortuary as part of the emergency plan for responding to the pandemic. It was set up at the closed park and ride site at Chelmer Valley. Specialist disaster recovery firm, Kenyon International built the space and was ready to run it if needed. It will be taken down by the end of June.

### **Test and Trace**

The government has announced £300 million additional funding for councils in England to support the new Test and Trace Service and to develop tailored outbreak control plans. Work on the plans will start immediately. Plans will focus on identifying and containing potential outbreaks in places such as workplaces, housing complexes, care homes and schools.

Essex plans are being developed between Local Authorities, NHS England and Public Health England with the support of the ERF.

## **Wider partner updates**

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/coronavirus>

[www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus)

[https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About\\_Us/Coronavirus/](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About_Us/Coronavirus/)

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/government-and-health-information>

<https://www.essex.police.uk/news/essex/news/news/2020/march/keeping-you-safe-in-challenging-times/>

## **Key Focus Areas for communication**

The proactive communication of the ERF will focus on four main strands:

- **Protecting the vulnerable;**
  - Community Shield;
  - Engaging volunteers;

- **Staying safe in the home;**
  - Tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims;
  - Prevention and tackling fraud;
  - Preventing exploitation;
  - Fire safety in the home;
- **Social cohesion and communities together;**
  - Paying tribute to frontline workers keeping people safe;
  - Activities which bring people together – volunteering, acts of kindness, community spirit, cultural activity, support to others;
  - Recognising those staying at home and following restrictions;
  - Visible policing in our communities;
  - Accessible and available fire and rescue services;
  - Emergency services working together;
- **Health and social care;**
  - Building capacity within our health service;
  - Keeping frontline worker safe;
  - Maintaining frontline services.

This briefing will focus on providing detail and messaging to help support and amplify these strands of work as the fight against the pandemic continues.

### **Building on communications content**

The ERF comms group will be building out the communications content already issued over the last 12 weeks to include content which will be useful to partners, including local business, to encompass themes of respect and courtesy for others – to include retail staff as well as other shoppers and users/operators of public transport including busses and taxis.

-Non-essential retail plans (encouraging considerate and safe Stay Alert behaviours)

-Moving around the county – PPE on public transport, taxis are running (linked into the above - encouraging considerate and safe Stay Alert behaviours eg be nice to bus drivers if they ask you to wear a mask)

-Return to places of worship – where the buildings are adaptable

## **Protecting the vulnerable**

### **Shielding**

The Essex Welfare Service (EWS), established by Essex County Council, is now enabling access to more support services across the county.

The county council service, delivered by Provide, was set up to help those most vulnerable during the Coronavirus pandemic and has so far seen almost 9,000 vulnerable people across the county receiving support and over 3,000 volunteers helping to make this happen.

Despite the easing of some Covid-19 restrictions the Essex Welfare Service (EWS) is still available to those who need to shield or might need to self-isolate over the coming months.

There is no change to the service the EWS is providing and vulnerable residents are encouraged to still access the support available if required.

Covid-19 is unlikely to just disappear and although restrictions are being eased for those shielding, residents are reminded to follow guidance safely and responsibly in order to protect each other and the most vulnerable.

The EWS is there to provide support around daily living tasks for those who are shielding, such as shopping and collection of prescriptions. In addition, the service has also expanded to meet a wider range of needs. Residents feeling isolated or vulnerable, regardless of their age, health or circumstance, can now access support on:

- Dementia care
- Mental health
- Parenting and family matters
- Learning disability/autism
- Caring responsibilities
- Physical wellness

You can register for support at [www.essexwelfareservice.org.uk](http://www.essexwelfareservice.org.uk) or call 0300 303 9988.

Thurrock Coronavirus Community Action (TCCA) has recruited 520 volunteers who between them have given thousands of hours of their time, taken over 3,000 calls to their helpline and delivered essential packages to over 800 people. Following relaxation of lockdown restrictions this week [a press release](#) was distributed reminding residents that TCCA is still there to help those that need it.

## **Community Engagement**

### **Funding provided to Citizens Advice**

Essex County Council is providing £250,000 of funding to the local Citizens Advice network in Essex to help it in its response to individuals and small businesses in the county following the COVID-19 lockdown.

Each year, local Citizens Advice in Essex support thousands of people in financial difficulty and in recent year's this has increasingly included sole traders and small business owners

Most businesses in Essex are small – 91% have between 1 and 9 employees. Many small businesses, whether sole traders or limited companies, will have been hit by a loss of income during the COVID-19 lockdown and this will have an effect on many other areas of the business. The need for operational business support is expected to rise as the country comes out of lockdown.

The funding will be utilised in a number of ways, tailored to the needs of the locality. Firstly, all local Citizens Advice will be able to maintain or increase their overall service provision. Secondly, in addition to support to access operational help, local Citizens Advice will be on hand to also support smaller businesses, especially sole traders, to better manage their personal finances more effectively.

There are national support structures in place for small businesses but many directors of small firms and sole traders, working hard on their core business, may need help and expertise in accessing the help that is out there – that's where the Citizen's Advice service comes in.

The funding from Essex County Council will support Citizens Advice to offer additional capacity and more legal advice, such as specialist level employment advice, to small businesses.

The money will be provided to local Citizens Advice in Colchester, Basildon, Chelmsford, Braintree, Tendring, Epping Forest, Harlow, Uttlesford, Rochford, Brentwood and Maldon.

## **Thurrock**

Thurrock Council is continuing to send twice weekly email newsletter to a mailing list of over 100,000 residents updating on health advice, council service updates and other news related to the pandemic and what it means for the borough's residents

Since social distancing measures came into place Thurrock Council has shared 1,200 social media messages relating to coronavirus. These have appeared on 2.6 million screens and have been interacted with over 19,000 times.

Preparations are well underway for the re-opening of non-essential businesses on the borough's high streets on 15 June. This will include a major publicity campaign including outdoor signage, pavement stencils and significant digital and online promotion.

Thurrock Council held its first 'virtual' council meeting this week. The meeting took place following the councils usual municipal calendar. All of Thurrock Council's

virtual meetings are available for residents and the press to view on council's YouTube channel, [YouTube: Thurrock Council](#)

Thurrock Council has [restarted weekly bidding cycles](#) on Thursday 11 June for those on the housing register.

### **Safer, greener and healthier town centre streets**

Business leaders and health experts have welcomed ambitious plans to improve the safety, the environment and people's health in Chelmsford city centre.

The project has been drawn up as a direct result of the COVID 19 pandemic to allow people to travel safely by walking and cycling over short distances.

New lanes for cycling and walking are to be introduced to Chelmsford from Monday 8th June to ensure those areas of the city centre with some of the highest footfall are safe and healthy places to move through, following the easing of lockdown restrictions and the re-opening of shops and businesses.

Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council have been working together to design and implement one of the first projects to make city/town centre public spaces safer for people. Called 'Safer, Greener, Healthier', the schemes aim to provide bigger, safer spaces for city centre shoppers, residents, workers and visitors to maintain social distance.

Health experts and leading cycling and walking campaigners have welcomed ambitious plans to make Colchester town centre streets safer, greener and healthier.

Responding directly to the current COVID 19 pandemic the plans allow people to self-distance and still travel safely by creating new lanes for cycling and walking in Colchester.

The launch date for this revolution in motion is set for Monday 15th June, with activity taking place in the town from Tuesday 9th June. The project will ensure areas of the Town Centre with some of the highest footfall are safe and healthy places to move through, following the easing of lockdown restrictions and the re-opening of shops and businesses.

Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council have taken their lead from many hundreds of people who have been cycling and walking more on short distances.

As a result, teams from the two councils have been working together to design and implement one of the first projects to make town centre public spaces safer for people. Called 'Safer, Greener, Healthier', the schemes aim to provide bigger, safer



spaces for city centre shoppers, residents, workers and visitors to be able to social distance.

## **Libraries**

Like many other council services, Essex County Council is now preparing a phased approach to re-open libraries in line with Government guidelines.

From Monday 6 July, sixteen sites will re-open; Basildon\*, Billericay, Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Dunmow, Epping, Harlow, Harwich, Maldon, Rayleigh, Rochford, South Benfleet and Witham. The initial sixteen sites re-opening were selected as they also provide Registration Services, and therefore allow this important service to be more easily delivered too.

Essex Libraries initial site re-openings are in line with other Counties, and the schedule avoids the initial expected increase in travel as non-essential shops begin to open during Mid-June.

Further library sites will re-open as they are made safe and ready, staff are available, given shielding and support requirements, and they have finished assisting with vital redeployment activities being provided to the most vulnerable people; with as many as possible opening by mid-August 2020.

## **Engaging volunteers**

Essex County Council continues to support the **Facebook Coronavirus Action Group**. This involves close working with local community Facebook group administrators to create a group of volunteers willing to help those in need. The group is a collaboration between the council, the Essex Public Health team, and local Facebook group owners.

### **Essex unites to thank volunteers who are helping the vulnerable**

The Covid-19 pandemic may have shut shops, kept families apart and stopped fundraising events but the community of Essex has gone the extra mile to look out for one another in all parts of the county during the lockdown.

Last week was Volunteers' Week, running from 1 June to 7 June, and EWS thanked the residents of Essex who signed up in lockdown to help others in their time of need.

As the county faced many different challenges during Covid-19, communities, the voluntary sector and public sector services have come together and stepped up to help our residents.

From firemen being redeployed for charity work, to police officers stepping into many new roles and local authority workers giving a diverse range of essential support, everyone has worked together and risen to the challenge of the pandemic.

## **Excess death planning**

The temporary mortuary at Chelmer Valley, outside Chelmsford is to be taken down. It was built in case there were more deaths during the coronavirus pandemic than hospitals and funeral directors in Essex, Southend and Thurrock could cope with. The Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) has managed the countywide work around the greater-Essex fight against Covid-19 and established the site at the park and ride.

One of the joint chairs of the forum, Essex Police Chief Constable BJ Harrington, said: “The combined work across greater Essex from those working in the NHS, in care homes and as carers, has meant that this county has not seen the worst possible impact of this dreadful disease coming to pass so this means the necessary preparations at the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride site have not been needed.

The site has been on standby since 27 April but has not been needed. Essex County Council commissioned the temporary mortuary as part of the emergency plan for responding to the pandemic. It was set up at the closed park and ride site at Chelmer Valley. Specialist disaster recovery firm, Kenyon International built the space and was ready to run it if needed. It will be taken down by the end of June.

## **Social cohesion and bringing communities together**

On Friday 5 June, Cllr Susan Barker, was interviewed as part of BBC Essex’s Essex Unites interview series, highlighting the following:

- This Volunteers’ Week (1-7 June) Essex County Council would like to thank the residents of Essex who volunteer their time to help others.
- We want to highlight the good work of Essex Welfare Service and United in Kind. We are also appealing for more people to sign up for support from Essex Welfare Service.

### **We’d like to thank every volunteer in Essex, not just this week, but always**

- We would like to thank the residents of Essex who signed up in lockdown to help others in their time of need.
- We have been overwhelmed by how communities, the voluntary sector and public sector services have come together and stepped up to help.
- From fire fighters being redeployed for charity work, to police officers stepping into many new roles and local authority workers giving a diverse range of essential support, everyone has worked together and risen to the challenge of the pandemic.

### **Volunteers have been vital to our response to COVID-19 to date**

- The Essex Welfare Service has been commissioned by Essex County Council and delivered by local community interest company Provide in response to covid-19.
- It is built around an army of volunteers and anyone feeling isolated or in need of some extra help is being encouraged to come forward, so they can be helped
- The service is now assisting people of all ages and circumstances whatever their need - from a telephone chat to keep someone company or arranging delivery of food or medicines, to more individual help for people with disabilities, dementia, sensory loss or health conditions.
- Support is also available for those feeling isolated or lonely through United in Kind, the social movement bringing together hundreds of community, charity, and voluntary groups from around Essex.

### **Volunteers remain available to support Essex residents**

- We remain committed to supporting Essex residents if they are struggling at this time
- Anyone who needs support is encouraged to contact the Essex Welfare Service [www.essexwelfareservice.org.uk/](http://www.essexwelfareservice.org.uk/) or find out more about United in Kind <https://www.unitedinkind.org/>

### **Supporting examples of volunteering include:**

- Volunteers supplied food boxes to a 90-year-old deaf, blind man from Chelmsford who was rationing food and had not eaten for 2 days.
- Volunteers arranged for an 87-year-old in Danbury who was feeling isolated to receive a regular socially distanced morning chat which has given them hope of celebrating their 88<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Volunteers are helping in the village shop at Castle Hedingham in a bid to keep it stocked and deliver those self-isolating with food and medicines. They are also decorating the shop windows to bring some cheer.
- Plume Academy in Maldon are making face visors for local keyworkers. A volunteer is delivering goggles, gloves and facemasks for them.

## **Staying safe in the home**

### **Mental Health Awareness**

In the current climate it is so important to take the time to look after ourselves and our loved ones. Many people are missing their friends and family, their hobbies and interests, their routine and their work.

Changes and loss can have a profound impact on our wellbeing – be this loss of a loved one, the change in our relationships – including at home – loss of work and therefore routine or financial stability. Prolonged isolation and limited contact with

others can negatively affect our moods and outlook.

These changes to our “normal” will almost certainly influence our mental health, maybe making us anxious, apprehensive and unsure about the future. This is perfectly understandable but there is no reason to suffer alone.

Take time to check in – virtually – with each other, get outside and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine, and if you need further help and support then there is a wealth of resources and organisations out there that have experience in all sorts of aspects of mental health. It’s been said that it is “ok to not be ok”. This message is so important as long as we all recognise when we aren’t ok and seek help.

The [Staying well](#) page includes information and advice on:

- looking after your mental health when you are social distancing
- online counseling and mental health services
- national and local organisations providing support
- things you can do to stay active at home
- how to work safely and comfortably from home

If you need support with mental health for yourself or someone you know, the Essex Welfare Service (EWS) is working with organisations across the county to provide support to people regardless of age, health or circumstance.

For anyone without help from family, friends, neighbours or the local community, EWS can connect them to Action for Family Carers, Summit, Sport for Confidence and other organisations.

If you or someone you know needs support you can [request support](#), [refer someone for support](#) or phone 0300 303 9988.

## **Education**

On the 28 May, the government announced that primary schools, nurseries and early years settings can begin to open to more pupils from Monday 1 June. Secondary schools and colleges will be able to open to more students from 15 June. This is possible because the [government’s 5 tests](#) have been met.

The week beginning Monday 1 June, the government allowed primary schools to reopen to pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Special schools and early years settings were also permitted to open to more pupils. This wider opening is in addition to settings accommodating vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.

In Essex, we have seen a return to primary schools and settings begin to take place on a gradual, phased and small-scale basis. This is in line with the advice and support we issued in the run up to 1 June.

## **Schools**

This information on figures for school opening or attendance is collected by the Department for Education (DfE) and shared with us, usually the following day. The DfE have said they will be able to share figures until 9 June at the earliest.

Indications prior to 1 June were that between 75 and 80 per cent of Essex primary schools would opened to pupils in some form last week.

The priority is the health and safety of children, families and staff. As set out by the DfE, each school and setting has undertaken their own risk assessment bespoke to their setting / community to determine their response to wider opening being possible. This means arrangements in settings vary. For example, some have initially opened part time to eligible year groups, others have initially opened only to some eligible year groups.

Key factors in the decision-making of schools have been the physical space they have available to them and the capacity of their staff. The necessarily low number of children in each 'bubble' means twice the classrooms are needed for each year group, sometimes more. This in turn means twice the staff to lead groups. School staff must also plan lessons, maintain remote learning, and maintain contact with all children not in school for safeguarding reasons.

As more children attend school, the availability and increase in cost of home to school transport will become more of an issue. This will become a concern firstly for those children who are entitled to transport, but also in relation to social distancing on vehicles.

The protocol for schools in the event of a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting is defined by the government and supplemented by advice we have sought from Public Health England. ECC continue to work closely with schools as cases are identified or suspected, and will communicate the impact of Test and Trace as we know more.

## **Early years settings**

Early years settings were permitted to open more widely for non-keyworker children from 1 June. On 4 June, 29% of settings in Essex were open. This is up from 19% in the week prior to half term (18 to 22 May). Of these, 49% were day nurseries and pre-schools, 50% childminders and 1% out-of-school providers. The sector has been supported throughout and prior to reopening by the Early Years Team, with regular advice, checklists, FAQs and information for parents.

Initial demand for childcare, as expected, is lower than pre-coronavirus levels. Some settings are reporting that there is currently insufficient demand to make it financially viable to reopen. ECC have been working closely with the district and borough

councils on their administration of the financial support packages the government have made available for early years settings.

Out of school childcare providers are only able to open if they are operating on a school site and working in line with the school's risk assessment, such as keeping children in the same bubbles they are in during the school day where possible. We are expecting an update from the DfE at the beginning of July on whether holiday provision will be able to run.

We have recently had clarity from the DfE on the guidance around the opening of community and church halls for childcare providers and are encouraging local councils and parishes to support any of our childcare providers in community and church halls to reopen if they want to.

We are providing bespoke childcare brokerage support for parents who need help in finding alternative childcare if their usual setting is either closed or unable to provide the hours parents need to work.

For more information, visit our page on [Schools opening: guidance for parents and carers](#).

### **Every Family Matters campaign**

Covering children's mental health and wellbeing, social distancing and young people and online safety, the campaign supports parents/carers and sign-post to relevant resources that can help them help their children.

In the last month, the campaign has reached 70,034 people on Twitter and 84,182 people on Facebook.

3,093 users, with 4,117 pageviews, have visited the new [Staying well](#) page.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including emotional, physical and sexual. If being at home doesn't feel safe right now, or you're concerned about someone you know, please contact [Essex Compass](#) who will be able to help you.

### **Fire safety:**

#### **Essex County Fire and Rescue Service staff volunteer their time during pandemic**

More than 90 ECFRS members of staff have offered their assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jo Turton, Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive said: "I am so proud of the varied and valuable work we do to make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel."

Full press release: <https://www.essex->

[fire.gov.uk/news/Essex County Fire and Rescue Service staff volunteer their time during pandemic/](https://www.fire.gov.uk/news/Essex-County-Fire-and-Rescue-Service-staff-volunteer-their-time-during-pandemic/)

### **Firefighter helps to welcome baby girl into the world**

An ECFRS firefighter who has been working as an ambulance driver with the East of England Ambulance Service helped to welcome a baby girl into the world.

Scott Draper has been an on-call firefighter at Billericay Fire Station for 15 and half years and for the last 7 and a half weeks, he has been driving ambulances during the pandemic.

Jo Turton, Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, said:

“I’m delighted that Scott has been part of such a wonderful experience and this little girl will one day be proud to find out that a paramedic and firefighter both helped to welcome her into the world.

“Our firefighters have gained so much experience while supporting the Ambulance Service and other emergency service colleagues while they serve those who live, work and travel in Essex.”

Full press release: [https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighter helps to welcome baby girl into the world](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighter-helps-to-welcome-baby-girl-into-the-world)

### **On-call firefighter celebrates 45 year milestone**

Watch Manager Derek Whitbread from Epping Fire Station is one of the Service’s longest ever serving on-call firefighters having begun his career with the Service in June 1975 at Epping Fire Station.

Jo Turton, Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive said: “Derek is quite rightly something of a legend within our Service – his amazing dedication and commitment to the people of Epping and Essex over the last 45 years is unparalleled in our Service.

“Derek deserves the utmost thanks for this amazing achievement, and so does his wonderful family that have supported him over the years and throughout his career.”

Full press release: [https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighter celebrates 45 year milestone/](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighter-celebrates-45-year-milestone/)

### **Volunteers at the Essex Fire Museum help to look after 6,000 artefacts**

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has six dedicated volunteers who help to run the Essex Fire Museum in Grays alongside two staff members, working to accession new artefacts to the museums existing collection of 6,000 artefacts and help preserve the history of the Service.

In 2019, the volunteers gave 1,138 hours to the museum for research, maintenance and open days. Jo Turton, Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive said: “As a service, we are really blessed to have our volunteers who help us day in, day out, year in and year out. “They could be doing so many more things with their time but they choose to give their time with us to help make their communities as safe as possible and we are truly grateful.” Full press release: [https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighter helps to welcome baby girl into the world](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighter-helps-to-welcome-baby-girl-into-the-world)

### **Firefighters help otterly cute Essex residents**

Colchester Zoo’s otters have had a helping hand from Essex firefighters while the Service was on site to discuss their emergency fire plans.

Station Manager Danny Partridge from Colchester Fire Station said: “We’ve developed a really close working relationship with the management at the zoo and part of that working relationship has been their effort to create a fire plan. “When they asked for our assistance if it was possible, it was nice to reciprocate that effort.

Full press release: [https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighters\\_help\\_otterly\\_cute\\_Essex\\_residents/](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Firefighters_help_otterly_cute_Essex_residents/)

### **Fire Service gives advice on storing rubbish following house fire**

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has issued advice on storing rubbish after a fire spread to a house in Shoeburyness.

Watch Manager Mark Crouch, Operational and Community Risk Officer said: “Place the refuse outside on the collection day, ensuring this is in line with local authorities and do not store rubbish in corridors and stairwells. You need to keep your escape route in your home clear.”

Full press release: [https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Fire\\_Service\\_gives\\_advice\\_on\\_storing\\_rubbish\\_following\\_house\\_fire/](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Fire_Service_gives_advice_on_storing_rubbish_following_house_fire/)

## **Health and social care**

### **North East**

Volunteers continue to play such an important part in our system’s response to COVID-19. We have seen a great outpouring of kindness by people of all ages. Volunteers for the Essex Welfare Service, in addition to the many hundreds of people who give their time to charity and community groups across the county, have ensured that our most vulnerable have received essential support. The same has happened in Suffolk – amazing generosity from so many people. Below are two videos of local leaders thanking those who give up their time to help others in Essex and Suffolk, as part of national Volunteers Week. Please click [HERE](#) for the Essex video and [HERE](#) for the Suffolk recording.

Getting young children active and keeping them entertained during this pandemic is no easy task and can be stressful for many families. Many local groups have produced activity packs for children. Colchester Museums has launched theirs this week.

### **Mid and South Essex**

Antibody testing or serology testing as it’s also known– has launched for NHS staff across mid and south Essex on Friday 5 June. All provider, CCG and primary care colleagues have received communication via their organisations with details of how to book an appointment to go to a designated phlebotomy centre to have the blood test. The testing is part of a national research project and will give Public Health England a better understanding of how many people across the country have



already had the virus. Staff are being advised that the test will confirm whether they have had the virus – but if they do have antibodies detected it's important to remember that they are still required to observe all national guidance as there is no clear evidence that they will be immune from either catching the virus again, or from passing it on.

All 28 primary care networks across mid and south Essex are committed to deriving forward local plans that will see increased investment to expand the local workforce and deliver more coordinated health and care services. Networks are now eligible to receive funding for around seven full time equivalent (FTE) staff, through an average reimbursement pot of £344,000 in 2020/21. This rises to 20 FTE staff and an average reimbursement pot of £1.13 million in 2023/24. Mid and south Essex CCGs are holding a virtual road show next week to support all PCN Clinical Directors on workforce planning. This investment is a further boost to deliver more 'out-of-hospital' care and will support expanded neighbourhood teams comprising of a range of staff including GPs, clinical pharmacists, district nurses, community geriatricians, dementia workers, physiotherapists and podiatrists/chiropractors, and joined by social care and voluntary sector colleagues.

System partners have worked together to support national Volunteers Week and highlight the incredible contribution of volunteers across our Partnership, now more than ever. The response from our communities has made a difference to so many of our residents and staff. Many of the stories shared have been truly inspiring. For example, in Thurrock, the 465 residents who signed up as volunteers have delivered on almost 700 requests for help received by Thurrock CVS – an estimated 3,150 hours of donated time. EPUT have paid tribute to volunteers who distributed around 2,500 sets of scrubs to approximately 910 staff at sites across Essex and Bedfordshire. There are many other stories of how residents have rallied together and we have been sharing these and pictures across our social media channels this week including the transformation of our community services where teams consisting of colleagues, partners, contractors, suppliers and volunteers to name a few came together to mobilise significant changes to meet the demand to treat more patients. Watch the video here

Colleagues in NELFT have taken to film to express how the pandemic has impacted them and how they have worked with partners to respond to the changing needs of patients. This moving account of the huge changes to services, care and workforce made in a matter of hours, days and weeks no doubt resonates with us all. Click here to view the film

Alongside the launch of Virtual Views our partnership wide citizens' panel as highlighted last week, we are inviting all local people, including staff and their family members to share their experiences of health services during the Coronavirus pandemic and beyond. For example from March 2020 through until the end of May 2020 GP practices across mid and south Essex have carried out just over 23,000 video consultations. The results of the survey will help us to assess the impact of the

changes to services we have adopted as a result of Coronavirus and to understand how we can make sure services meet the needs of the local population we serve.

Feedback can be provided via the following link:

[https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ServiceChanges\\_Cov19](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ServiceChanges_Cov19) Printed copies can be requested by emailing: [meccg.incident.essex.comms@nhs.net](mailto:meccg.incident.essex.comms@nhs.net)

This week it is Carer's Week - an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. The theme for Carers Week 2020 is Making Caring Visible and we are working with partner organisations on a shared social media campaign to highlight the local and national support available and capture insight from people who provide care.

## West

The CCG has developed content for a testing-specific web page on Essex County Council's Coronavirus Hub which is updated weekly with the venues for the following week. Thurrock and Southend Councils both display a link from their websites to this one for their residents to access further information on testing.

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/getting-tested-for-covid-19>

### COVID-19 testing in under fives

All regional testing sites, including Stansted, and all mobile testing units are now ready for parents to administer COVID tests to children aged under five (including children under two years).

### Volunteers' Week

The CCG focussed on the invaluable contribution volunteers have made to NHS services and within the community in West Essex. Good news stories were shared via social media, internally and via the CCG website.

## LOCAL MEDIA INTERVIEWS – ERF

Representatives of the ERF have been giving regular media interviews on BBC Essex local radio from Tuesday 7 April.

A regular schedule has been established to ensure local residents are updated on the work of the ERF and the county to help keep them safe in uncertain and challenging times.

Tuesday 9 June – Rochford/Southend CCGs supplying medical professionals to thank volunteers

Friday 12 June – tbc but on National Carers Week theme – concluding the week and saying thank you.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US

Volunteering – Essex County Council [Coronavirus Action Group](#) – Facebook

Essex Community Shield – The message will set out the instructions for those people who do not have the support of friends, families and neighbours to register with the Essex Welfare Service (EWS), part of PROVIDE (a health and social care provider), should they need food deliveries. [www.essexwelfareservice.org](http://www.essexwelfareservice.org)

Good news – Please flag any good news with your local communications colleague for potential highlighting in media opportunities.