



Community Grant Fund launches

Last week we launched our Violence and Vulnerability Community Grants Fund. The fund is designed to support work with children and young people that relates to the dangers of County Lines, Drugs, Gangs and Knife Crime.

Eligible groups in Southend, Essex and Thurrock can apply for up to £10,000 to support either existing activity that has been impacted on during Covid, or a one-off project or event where a need has materialised due to Covid.

Applications need to be in by 19 November and more information can be found at www.ecvys.org.uk. After shortlisting, the Violence & Vulnerability Voice of Communities working group will make the final decisions, with input from young people.

We know there is so much great work happening across Southend, Essex and Thurrock, so we look forward to receiving the applications and ensuring we support even more children, young people and their communities during this difficult time.

Support for Waltham Abbey young people

Waltham Abbey Youth (WAY2000) provides leisure facilities for the young people of Waltham Abbey, together with a highly acclaimed confidential counselling facility based at King Harold Academy, the local secondary school.

When lockdown began in March 2020, all facilities had to stop; plans for the year put on hold.



But there was still a need to support the town's young people, and so the group's counsellor established a programme to keep in touch with those who were not only having to cope with the stress of lockdown, but issues such as trying to study at home and managing a change in family life. Vulnerable young people, and those considered at risk, were also referred to the service by the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Lead at King Harold Academy.

The young people were given booklets to record their thoughts and feelings about COVID19, and a second workbook to keep them motivated and to encourage positive activities that would provide a sense of achievement.

Using emails, phone, text and letters the young people were contacted regularly, and given activities to

work through to keep their aspirations alive and to promote relaxation and exercise as crucial in dealing with stress and anxiety.

From the start of lockdown to the end of September, 41 students were supported, with over 1300 contacts made. This was made possible by extending the hours of the WAY2000 counsellor thanks to funding from sources including the Home Office Vulnerable Children's Charity distributed via the VVU.

WAY 2000 has continued this extra provision into the start of the 2020 school year and will keep up the increase in service while there is demand.



Healing Connections for young people

We are pleased to share with you news that a new therapeutic service, funded by the [Youth Endowment Fund](#), for 10-14 year olds based in Essex is ready to take referrals. Healing Connections is a specialist service, aimed at young people at risk of being drawn into violence or crime.

Children's mental health charity Kids Inspire is offering referred young people (and by approach, their parents/ carers too) 20 to 30 weekly one-hour online sessions of the Healing Connections service. It will offer space to understand and explore what lies beneath behaviours that can

lead to crime and violence.

Kids Inspire anticipate that referrals into this service will come from Essex Police, GPs and schools, but if you know of any potential young people that could benefit from this service please contact clinicaladmin@kidsinspire.org or call 01245 348707.

MJ Awards: changing lives in Southend

We want to say a huge congratulations to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, as their County Lines campaigns, and the programme developed by the Children's Services team in Southend, has achieved "Highly Commended" in the MJ Awards' Transforming Lives category. The award praised the work of the children's services team, and their dedication to the children they support.

Three separate campaigns sought to educate Southend's parents, teachers, children, and workers in the community including over 1000 taxi drivers and hotel staff, and in doing so elicited significant intelligence on county lines activity, helping the team support children who needed their help. The campaigns were run jointly with Essex Police and supported by a range of partners.



The campaigns were run under the SeeTheSigns branding, and a website was created so people could report concerns anonymously. Some of the results of the campaigns included: When surveyed, 75% parents remembered seeing the #SeeTheSigns campaign and were confident in knowing what signs to look out for; over 7,000 children attended workshops run by children's services professionals; campaign messages were viewed over 426,000 times in the borough digitally; 72,000 attendees to films at the Southend Odeon cinema were shown the seethesigns video and over 2,400 children clicked through to the dedicated website from social media ads www.SeeTheSigns.org.uk

Southend's Children's Services team were kept busy as they worked with key schools to implement a programme of activity including diversionary activities, which increased school attendance by 15% The team also followed up, and acted on, every piece of intelligence received into the campaign and as a result worked with individual children to create plans to help them exit county lines activity.

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



Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex

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