

For Essex organisations

# Cost of Living Support

We know people are worried about rising costs and may be struggling. This document outlines a range of services, resources and additional information to help the county during this difficult time.



# Keeping Warm

## Community Winter Warmth and Welcoming Spaces

Essex County Council have provided funding to community organisations across Essex to provide a range of activities and support in warm and welcoming spaces.

Libraries across Essex will offer extra opportunities for residents to visit them in order to keep warm, participate in activities, get advice and information and stay connected with others this winter.

✦ [Explore the Essex Libraries page here.](#)

As well as Essex Libraries, there are many community organisations providing similar support. You can find out where your local warm and welcoming space is in the table below. There are lots of free activities taking place at these spaces as well as support and sign posting for families and individuals.



**Basildon** ✦



**Braintree** ✦



**Brentwood** ✦



**Castle Point** ✦



**Chelmsford** ✦



**Colchester** ✦



**Epping Forest** ✦



**Harlow** ✦



**Maldon** ✦



**Rochford** ✦



**Southend** ✦



**Tendring** ✦



**Thurrock** ✦



**Uttlesford** ✦

## Winter Warmth investment

Through the Household Support fund, Essex County Council has launched a food support and winter warmth essentials fund. They're providing funding for local food banks and community organisations so that they can support families and individuals struggling with the cost of living with food and winter warmth essentials such as hot water bottles, hats, gloves, hand warmers and draft excluders. If you're in need of this support then visit your local food bank. A list of organisations offering support will be published on the Essex County Council facebook page.

# Eating Well



## Foodbanks

Foodbanks give free food to people who are struggling financially.

✦ [Visit the Trussell Trust to find your local foodbank here.](#)

There are also lots of independent foodbanks, which your local Council or CVS team can signpost you to.



## Full Time Meals

Full Time Meals is a programme set up by chef Tom Kerridge and Marcus Rashford to provide low cost, hearty meals for families to cook at home, and produced cost-of-living tips around storing and cooking food.

✦ [For more information and links to recipes see the Active Essex support hub.](#)



## Healthy Start Vouchers

With Healthy Start you may be able to get free vouchers every week to spend on milk, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, and infant formula milk. You can also get free vitamins for yourself and your child.

If you are pregnant and/or have children under the age of four and are on benefits, you could qualify.

✦ [Find more information on eligibility and how to apply here.](#)

## FUNDING SUPPORT

### Food support and winter warmth essentials:

This funding is managed by EALC on behalf of ECC and you can apply for up to £3000 for food support, and up to £1000 for winter warmth essentials.

✦ [Find out more](#)

### Food education programme:

Active Essex are managing a funding programme that gives community organisations, clubs and groups the opportunity to provide food education programmes for families. As well as providing cooking sessions on creating healthy, low cost family meals, partners can provide cooking equipment such as slow cookers, air fryers and soup makers.

✦ [For more information and to apply, click here.](#)

✦ [For guidance notes, click here.](#)



# Support & Provision Of Essentials



## Salvation Army

The Salvation Army also offers emergency assistance to people in need.

[Read more.](#)



## Support with Travel

Get unlimited bus travel in Essex for £10 a day with the Essex Saver ticket and £4.30 a day with the Sunday saver ticket, discounted season tickets for secondary education pupils and free home to school transport for eligible children of compulsory school age.

[Explore the Essex Highways website here.](#)



**COMPASS**  
Essex Domestic Abuse Helpline

Contact us via the online forms at  
[www.essexcompass.org.uk](http://www.essexcompass.org.uk)  
0330 333 7 444

Logos: evie, Essex County Council, PFCC (Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex), Safe Steps, and a quote: 'Full & Brighter Futures. Free from abuse.'

Delivered by Safe Steps | Registered Charity Number: 1177687

## Domestic Abuse

With extra pressures on households we often see incidents of domestic violence increase and so we want to increase awareness of the support available.

Essex County Council is working with a range of partners to ensure that support is available through the COMPASS domestic abuse helpline.

[Find further information on the Essex Compass website.](#)

☎ 03303 337444

# Money Management

## Household Costs

### The Essential Living Fund

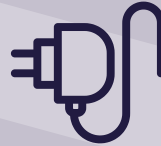
Essex County Council have set up The Essential Living Fund, which can help to pay for:



Furniture



Clothing



Fuel Connection Charges



Food and Toiletries

Adults and families can use it to help pay for bills and essential household items if they are struggling. You must live in Essex and apply through Southend Borough Council, no matter where you live in Essex.

✦ [For more information, click here.](#)

### Budgeting Loans

Budgeting Loans are only available to people who have been on certain benefits for at least 6 months, and can help to pay for:



Rent



Home Maintenance



Furniture



Travel Costs



Clothing

✦ [Apply for a budgeting loan through the government website here.](#)

### Financial Advice

Citizens Advice offers free and impartial advice on a wide range of financial issues, and can point you towards more specialist advice if necessary. You can also visit your local Citizens Advice branch – find your local one by looking on this website.

✦ [Explore more here.](#)

### Money Helper

Money Helper is an independent service set up by the government that helps people manage their money by giving free and impartial advice on all money matters.

✦ [Read more here.](#)

### Household Support Fund

The Department for Work and Pensions allocates the Household Support Fund to the council to distribute to those households in most need. Much of the funding for Essex is distributed through schemes mentioned above such as the Essential Living Fund, Citizen Advice, Foodbanks and Free School Meal Vouchers for the holidays.

✦ [Funding has been given to other organisations which can be found here](#)

These partners can provide financial assistance for energy bills, food and essential items including things like boiler repairs, Calor gas and oil. They include [Carers First](#), [Peabody Housing](#), [Home-Start Essex](#), [Home-Start Colchester](#) and Home-Start Harwich.


## Available Funding

Essex County Council (ECC) have a range of funding opportunities and support for partners to provide support to those most in need in their local community.



### **Essex County Council Community Challenge Fund:**


You can apply for up to £5000 but the project/work must be based in the ECC levelling up areas (Clacton, Harwich, Canvey, Harlow, Rural Braintree and parts of Colchester/Basildon.)

 [Find out more.](#)



### **Community Chest Fund (micro grants):**

Managed by EALC on behalf of ECC. You can apply for up to £500 to provide a service that supports the local community.

 [Find out more.](#)


ECC have also announced how they will be allocating the Household Support Funding (which includes some of the above funding).

 [For more information, click here.](#)

### **Active Essex Together Fund:**

Active Essex has received funding from 'Sport England's Together' fund to support communities who have been most affected by Covid or the cost of living crisis, and found it difficult to become or remain active. This includes four target groups which are ethnically diverse communities, disabled people, people with long term health conditions and lower socioeconomic groups.


The funding is for not-for-profit organisations and groups that want to find ways of getting/keeping their target audience (one of the above groups) active. We expect most awards to be between £1,000 to £4,000 depending on the need demonstrated.

 [For more information and to apply, click here.](#)



### **Active Essex - Find Your Active fund:**

The RideLondon-Essex mass participation cycling event, which took place in May 2022, has led to a new strategic funding partnership between Active Essex, the Active Essex Foundation and London Marathon Charitable Trust (LMCT). As part of Active Essex's successful Find Your Active campaign, LMCT is powering a small grants programme to support Essex-wide projects that help residents lead active and healthy lives. Any organisation from Essex, Southend, or Thurrock can apply for this funding and the money can be used to start up new activities or increase the numbers attending existing activities, all with the aim of getting more people active. In light of the growing cost-of-living crisis, we're offering this funding to clubs and groups who can help get residents to be active in these challenging times and welcome organisations to inform us of the support they need. The fund is for organisations who are willing and able to take immediate action, and all activities will need to be completed by May 2023 or earlier.

 [Head to the Active Essex website for more information.](#)

# Information, Advice & Guidance

## Local Support



**Essex County Council**  
COL support

Each of the 14 local authority areas across Essex have a range of support and signposting in place for those who are struggling with the cost of living increases. Most include information, guidance and support around bills and money, finding work, food and essentials, wellbeing, warm spaces, free activities and childcare costs. Each local authority area also has community and voluntary organisations, which are set up to support local communities and community organisations. You can find more information about local support and CVS teams below.



**Basildon**  
COL support  
CVS



**Harlow**  
COL support  
CVS



**Southend**  
COL support  
CVS



**Braintree**  
COL support  
CVS



**Maldon**  
COL support  
CVS



**Tendring**  
COL support  
CVS



**Brentwood**  
COL support  
CVS



**Rochford**  
COL support  
CVS



**Thurrock**  
COL support  
CVS



**Castlepoint**  
COL support  
CVS



**Uttlesford**  
COL support  
CVS



**Chelmsford**  
COL support  
CVS



**Colchester**  
COL support  
CVS



**Epping Forest**  
COL support  
CVS





**Safeguarding:**

With extra pressures on households, we often see an increased need to protect the welfare of children and families. If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child, please seek advice and report concerns.

🔦 [Advice and guidance on the Essex Safeguarding Children Boards Website](#)

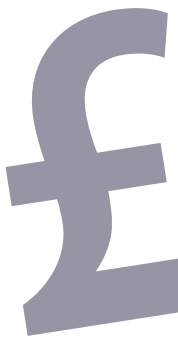
🔦 [Sport & Physical Activity organisations - Safeguarding](#)



**Club Matters:**

Access our wide range of tools, guidance and resources that cover all aspects of running a sports club or group – everything's free, bitesize and simple to use. They're running new workshops looking at 'Dealing with Increasing Costs' and 'Raising Money to Sustain Your Club'.

🔦 [Find out more here.](#)



**Sport England:**

Guidance for sports clubs and organisations around the cost of living increases which includes information about the impact on activity levels, cutting energy costs of clubs and managing the impact of higher energy costs on community leisure providers.

🔦 [Find out more here.](#)



[Click here for NCVO useful guidance to support charities](#)



# Mental Wellbeing Support



## NHS 111 Option 2

A new crisis mental health phone line has launched across Essex. The 24-hour service, launched by Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT), offers immediate and specialist support to adults experiencing mental health crisis.





Anyone in need can dial 111 at any time and select the option for mental health crisis (option 2). Callers will be connected to trained staff at EPUT who can provide timely and appropriate support and advice.

The service is for people aged 18 and over and aims to ensure those in need of support can access it quickly when they need it most.

**If you just need to talk, any time of day or night.**

## Free Listening Services

These services offer confidential support from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult:

-  Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans
-  Email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) for a reply within 24 hours
-  Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line  
Text "YM" to 85258 if you're under 19
-  If you're under 19, you can also call 0800 1111 to talk to Childline. The number will not appear on your phone bill.

## Coping During a Crisis

The mental health charity Mind has information on ways to help yourself cope during a crisis.

 [For calming exercises, and tools to get you through the next few hours, click here.](#)

## Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service brings together a range of children's community services. It's provided by HCRG Care Group in partnership with Barnardo's on behalf of Essex County Council, West Essex CCG and the NHS. They ensure that families have free and easy access to local health services in the community; whether in a local clinic, Children's centre, or in a family's home.

 [For more information, check out their website here.](#)

 Call 0300 303 9509



# Free Activities Across Essex

We know that a boost of energy and movement can benefit our mental wellbeing but recognise the increased worry among residents around how to deal with what life throws at you. You may be having to make difficult decisions about paying for activities for you and your family, so below we have shared some information about a range of activities you can take part in free of charge around the county. For all things active then make sure you take a look at the [Active Essex website here](#). There are also a range of free activities taking place at our warm and welcoming spaces so make sure you check out those taking place nearest to you.



## Essex ActivAte - Holiday and Food Programme

Essex ActivAte is funded through the Department for Education with the aim of providing free holiday activity and food clubs during the Easter, Summer and winter school holidays, for young people who are eligible for benefits based free school meals, there are also funded spaces for families who are struggling, but not in receipt of free school meals. Through the programme we provide free activities during each holiday period alongside a healthy meal, nutritious education and support for the whole family. We provide up to 200 clubs during each of the main school holidays. Each club delivers for at least 4 hours a day and includes at least 60 minutes of fun physical activity. In addition, Essex County Council fund places during the half term holidays.

🌱 [For more information and to find your local clubs then have a look at our website here.](#)

## parkrun

Do you know that all across Essex thousands of people head to their local park to walk or run at their local parkrun? Parkrun is a free event that takes place every Saturday, run by volunteers, it gives local people the opportunity to take part in a 5k community event. There are 27 Parkruns across Essex that provide a positive, welcoming and inclusive experience where there is no time limit and no one finishes last. Everyone is welcome to come along, whether you walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate. There are also 14 Junior park runs taking place across the county.

🌱 [For more information and to find your local parkrun then take a look at their website](#)





## ParkPlay

Did you know that there is 14 ParkPlay groups that take place every Saturday across Essex?

ParkPlay runs every Saturday, in local parks from 9-11am. Every ParkPlay is responsive to its local community but all sessions follow the same #MeetMovePlay structure. Activities are relaxed and give those taking part access to a range of fun, accessible sports and physical activity for the whole family, and even better it is completely free to join!

👉 [To find out more head to the ParkPlay website here](#)

## GoJauntly

Go Jauntly is a free community-based walking app that aims to help people discover new walking routes, connect with nature and enjoy outdoor adventures. It also aims to get people outside, explore their surroundings and live more healthily. The walking map also helps you to find the greenest routes while out and about walking.

👉 [Download the app now, and take a look for yourself](#)

## Country Parks

Discover some of the best country parks and places for a great family day out in Essex. The mix of open spaces, kids play areas, lakes and woodland in the Essex Country Parks provide the perfect spaces to walk, run and play whatever your age.

👉 [Find your local park here.](#)

## The Library of Things

Why not visit your local library? As well as the opportunity to access thousands and thousands of books and providing a warm and welcoming space, did you know that Essex Library Service provides many other activities and services to help you.

Have you heard about the library of Things? You can borrow a range of household equipment and as part of Find Your Active, you can also hire sports equipment to use at home or in a local park with friends.

👉 [Check out their website to find out what is on offer](#)

## Find Your Active

### Find Your Active YouTube Channel

The Find Your Active YouTube channel, hosts over 300 free activity and workout sessions for residents to do in the comfort of their own home, or as part of a group. There is an emphasis on activities that support mental wellbeing, low impact, family activities and quick workouts for those who are strapped for time.

From yoga and swing dance to family football and HIIT, we're sure there is something for everyone to enjoy. We welcome you to share these videos far and wide!

👉 [Explore all of the videos here.](#)

### Find Your Active 4 Freel

Find Your Active want to support residents in Essex, Southend and Thurrock to still remain active, in a free and fun way. On the link below you will find a number of resources and opportunities which will help us all move more, without breaking the bank. We have highlighted many activities across Essex that you can take part in for free!

👉 [Take a look at our resources and ideas here.](#)

### Find Your Active Community Connectors

Each of the community connectors are the eyes and the ears on the ground and are aware of the many opportunities available within our local communities, but they're also here to facilitate where physical activity doesn't exist and help find a solution.

The community connectors have joined the Find Your Active team to help ensure physical activity is a top priority for everyone and support residents who need it the most. We know for many, achieving 150 minutes of physical activity a week just isn't possible, however any small increase in movement will go a long way and have huge benefits.

Therefore, our community connectors are here to direct you into opportunities in your local area, as well as the small changes you can make to your lifestyle to benefit your physical and mental health and wellbeing. In each local community, you'll find a Connector who is always willing to help.

👉 [Find your local community connector on the Active Essex Website](#)

**FIND  
YOUR  
ACTIVE**



From walks in the park...



and free activities in your local area..



...it's a great time to Find Your Active!



For more resources, guidance and links, visit the Active Essex Website and the Cost of Living Support page.

[www.activeessex.org/cost-of-living-support/](http://www.activeessex.org/cost-of-living-support/)



Essex County Council