

Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities

Helping residents live longer, healthier lives and reducing
avoidable demand on council and NHS services.

Healthy lives.

Healthy communities.

Sarah Muckle – Director of Public Health

Outline of the session

By the end of this introduction, you will:

- Understand what Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities do in Essex
- See some of the key health challenges in your communities
- Understand some of the ways we influence and support improvement in resident's lives

What is Public Health

Key areas of public health

Health protection: Protecting the community from immediate threats like infectious diseases, environmental hazards.

Health improvement: Promoting healthier lifestyles and addressing the social and environmental factors that cause illness, such as poor housing or education.

Healthcare public health: Improving the quality and effectiveness of health and care services, ensuring services are based on evidence, are accessible and meet needs.

Public health is the science of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health. It does this by focusing on the health and wellbeing of populations and not just individuals

Delivering Public Health

2 overarching outcomes:

Increased healthy life expectancy

Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities

Underpinned by:

75 high level indicator categories

161 individual indicators

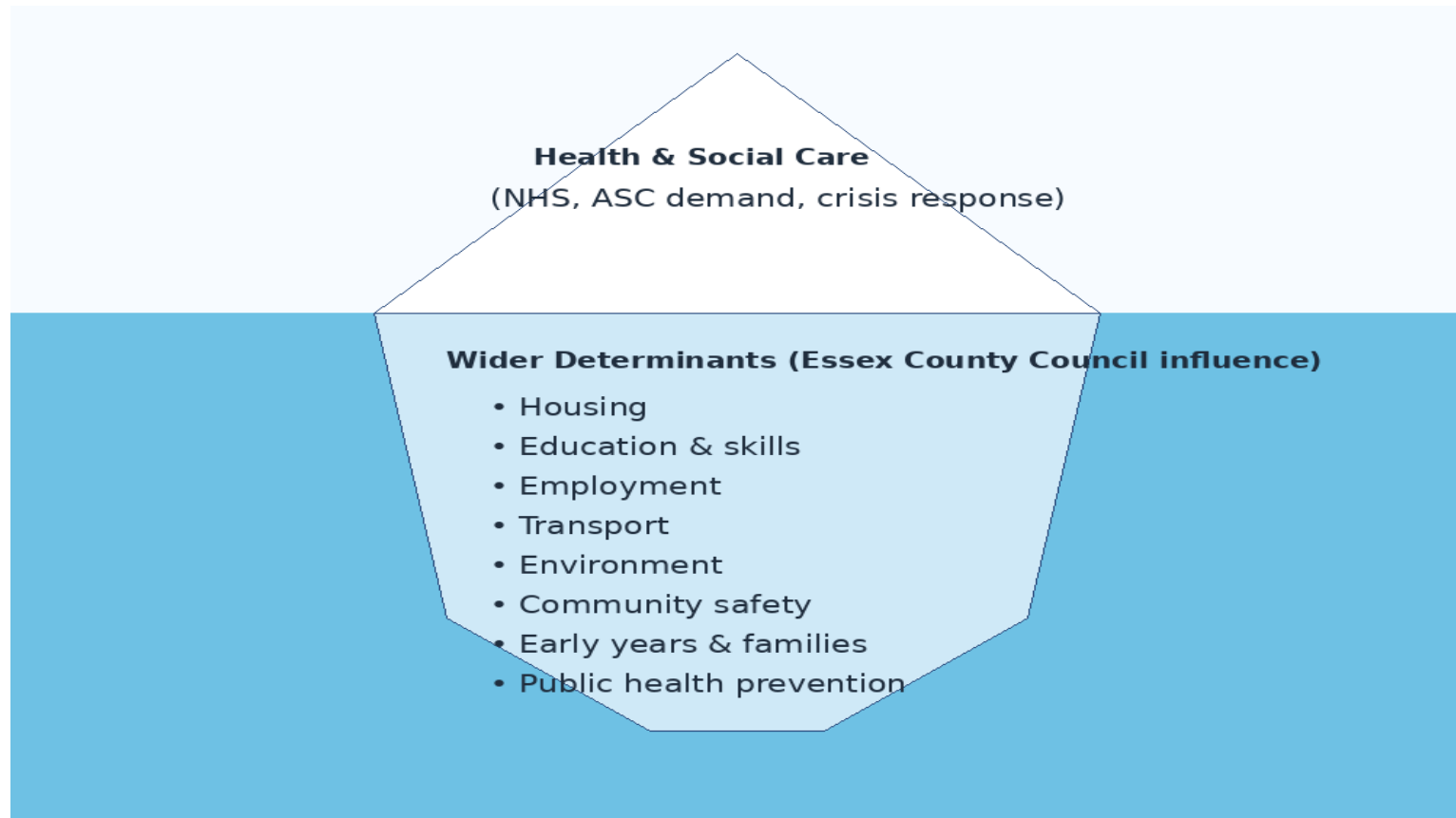
Essex:

At County level almost all are green – except road accidents and suicides

Significant pockets of variation across all domains within Districts that can be overlooked

Areas that are significantly worse – reflect areas experiencing poverty and deprivation, these areas have multiple competing needs

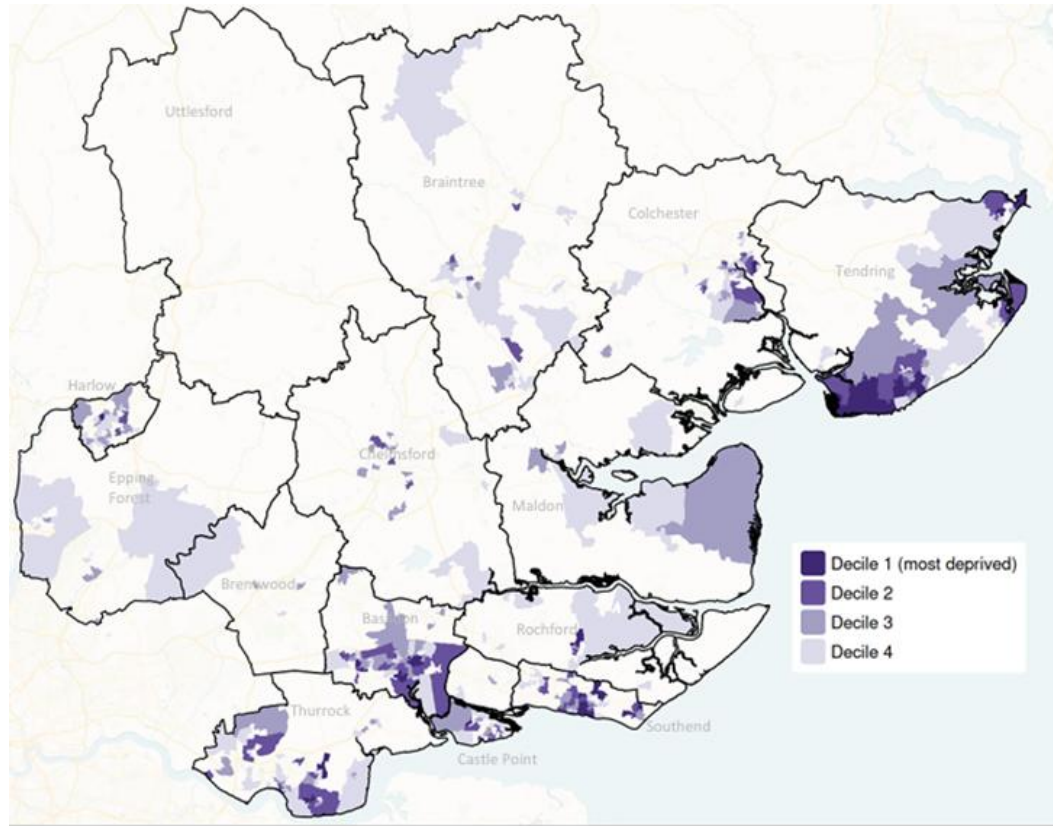
Health is shaped more by where and how people live than healthcare alone.



Framework

Healthy People	Healthy Communities	Healthy Places
Physical activity	Community safety	Air Quality
Smoking cessation	Social cohesion and interconnectedness	Housing
Sexual Health	Access to public services	Planning
CYP and best start	Road Safety	Air Quality
Diet	Trading standards	Homelessness
Weight management services	Social isolation and loneliness	Access to green and blue spaces
Drugs and alcohol services	Anchors	Economic investment
Public mental health and suicide prevention	Civic engagement	Healthcare infrastructure
Adult skills and education	VCS infrastructure	Transport and active travel
Long term conditions	Health protection and EPRR	Economic growth
Health checks	Environmental health	Licensing
 Data, Intelligence, research and evaluation 		

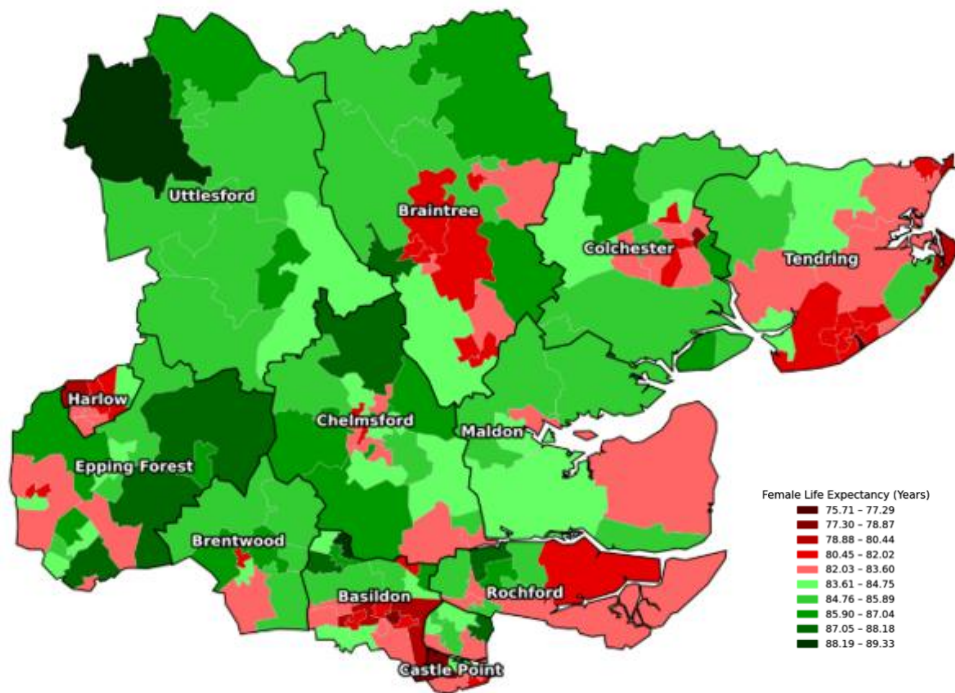
Deprivation



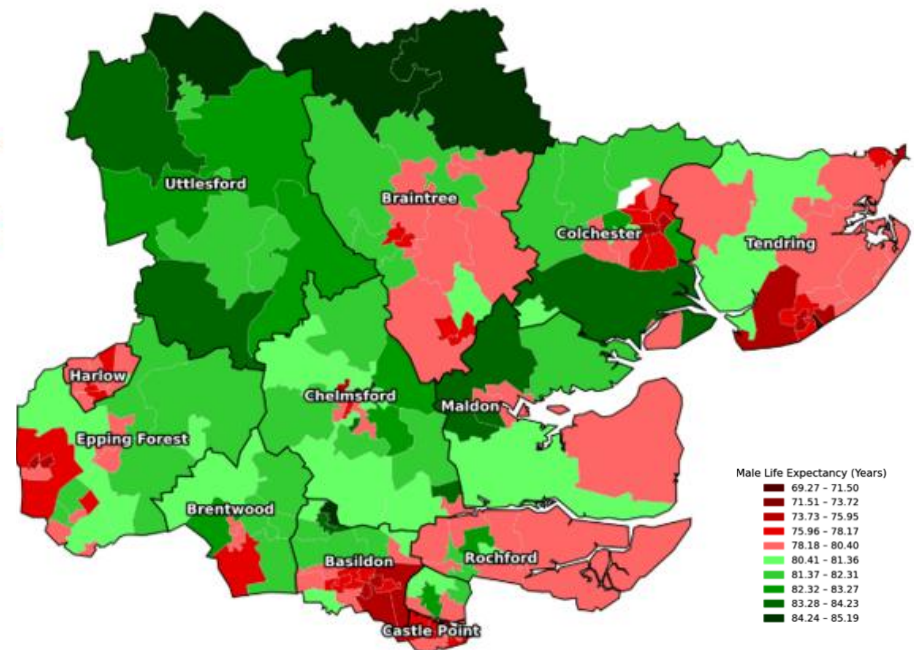
Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025, Greater Essex

Life Expectancy in Essex

Life Expectancy at Birth (Female) 2019 - 2023 at MSOA Level



Life Expectancy at Birth (Male) 2019 - 2023 at MSOA Level



The average life expectancy for females in Essex is 83.6 years, while that of males is 80.4 years (2019 - 2023).

Another way to look at differences across Essex...

Healthy life expectancy estimates

District	Place	Lowest	Place	Highest	Miles	Difference
Basildon	Chavelton	56.29	Billericay North East	75.23	7.4	18.94
Braintree	Bocking	61.66	Panfield , Finchingfield, Bardfield	71.08	2.0	9.42
Brentwood	Brentwood South and Warley	67.37	Brook Street and Pilgram Hatch	72.67	1.4	5.3
Castlepoint	Canvey Island North West	60.06	Thundersley Glen	71.58	6.2	11.52
Chelmsford	Melbourne	60.05	Springfield South and Coronation Park	73.67	2.7	13.62
Colchester	Greenstead	56.53	Wivenhoe	71.57	3.7	15.04
Epping Forest	Waltham Abbey North	63.09	Chigwell	71.98	7.5	8.89
Harlow	Potter Street	61.48	Old Harlow and Newhall	68.68	2.7	7.2
Maldon	Maldon North	66.2	Gt Totham , Wickham Bishops and Woodham	72.37	3.8	6.17
Rochford	Rochford Town and Canewdon	63.1	Rayleigh South	72.36	5.9	9.26
Tendring	Clacton Central	51.74	Arlesford	68.86	9.5	17.12
Uttlesford	Takeley, Airport and Mountfinch South	70.31	Audley End, Asdon and The Chesterfords	74.74	13	4.43
England	65.8 years average					

Healthy life expectancy is the average number of years a person is expected to live in "good" or "very good" health, free from limiting illness or disability

Across the county this varies, and within some districts the difference can be over a decade just a few miles down the road.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-29

Previous Strategy saw the following achievements and challenges, which are informing the next iteration of the strategy.

Achievements

- Suicide rates now below national average.
- Tackled obesity with Healthy Weight Strategy and Active Essex.
- Improved independence and community support.
- Expanded substance misuse services and early cancer checks.
- Stronger system coordination and partnerships.

Challenges Ahead

- Strengthen partner roles for better collaboration.
- Improve performance monitoring and transparency.
- Focus more on wider determinants of health.
- Local Government and NHS reform

Supporting Strategy

The Overall Challenges

Healthy life
expectancy

Ageing
population

Child
poverty

Housing
instability

Employment
gap

Access

Areas of Focus

1

Improving life
chance for
children and
young people

2

Helping more
people into work
and stay in work

3

Building health,
resilient,
connected
communities

4

Creating
opportunities to
improve health
and reduce poor
health

Some of Our Services

Chris French

Assistant Director of Public Health.
Head of Essex Trading Standards

Essex Wellbeing Service. First Four years



142,357 referrals

27,000 vulnerable residents supported in their homes by Community Agents, helping them to avoid the need for adult social care support and enabling them to live independently.

14,280 residents supported to quit smoking, thus reducing long-term health risks.

183,600 NHS Health Checks delivered, including 3,000 via self-service digital stations in Essex workplaces.

530 Essex businesses will be supported by Working Well and the workplace wellbeing programmes.



**Case Study: Helping a Couple Navigate
Life After an Alzheimer's Diagnosis**

Transforming workplace health across Essex

Part of the Essex Wellbeing Service, Working Well provides Essex workplaces (excluding Southend-On-Sea and Thurrock) with free workplace health and wellbeing support.

This support, commissioned by Essex County Council, consists of our main offer the Working Well Accreditation, alongside three other options.



Workplace Health Checks



Steve – late 30s

'I load lorries for a company that distribute construction equipment. I had been on blood pressure tablets for 5 years due to kidney issues. The side effects were rough, and I didn't feel unwell, so I stopped the medication. When I used the Mini™ machine, I found out my blood pressure was 210/110. I followed the advice and went to hospital – the A & E consultant said I was in immediate danger of a stroke – so glad I did the check!'

Nicki - early 30s

'Working in a call centre I have been tired a lot recently but had put it down to juggling my kids and work...I used the Mini™ machine in my lunch break - in just 5 mins found out my blood pressure was really high and I was 2 stone overweight – now I am on tablets, and it is well controlled – I have also started 'Couch to 5k' and eating more vegetables – so pleased my company got the machine for us to use'



Harry – mid 20s

'I'm a binman for the council and walk 18 miles a day on the job AND go to the gym so thought I was really fit. I loved doing the Maxi™ check as my body composition was just 12% but my dad had a heart attack at 45 and my mum has angina and when I did the stroke test (QRISK3) I came out high!?? I was told to go to the GP, and I have high cholesterol – they say I got it from my parents, and it is not my fault'

Holiday Activity and Food Programme - ESSEX ACTIVATE

Funded by the Department for Education, Essex ActivAte offers engaging physical, enrichment and food activities as well as a nutritious meal, for children and young people who receive income-related free school meals.



The clubs help so much, especially having a child with SEND, as it helps her to burn off energy, as well as staying in a bit of a routine outside of school.

Basildon
Parent

Essex ActivAte also provides specialist clubs that support mental wellbeing, outreach programmes and dedicated SEND provision.

I think the programme is such a lifeline, and our local holiday club is a special place for children to be.

Rochford
Parent



Essex programme support:

35,000

children and young people

230+

clubs taking place during the main holidays, across the county.

5,841

specialist SEND spaces offered through Essex ActivAte.

£278

worth of work time per week, at minimum wage, was achieved by each parent whilst children attended a club.

£1,303,944

estimated total value related to children's life chances for 2024.

Tobacco



Sexual Health

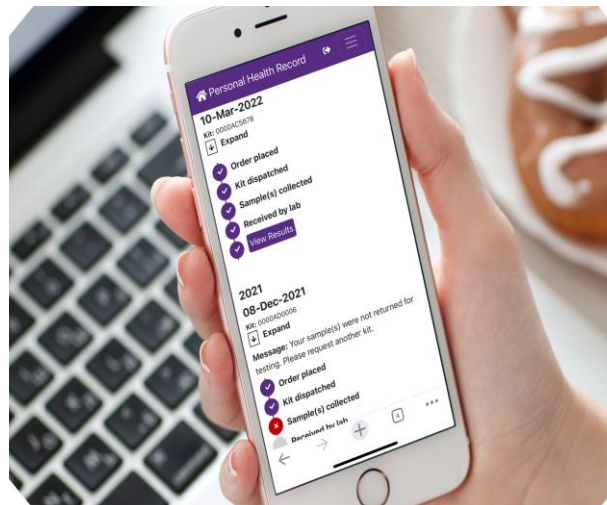
Your one-stop-shop for sexual advice



Sexual Health | STIs | Contraception | Pregnancy
Sexuality | Know-how | Performance



Moving the sexual health service from one of shame, mystery and dependency, to a culture of normality, transparency, and independence whilst preserving central tenets of confidentiality and open access.



TikTok

Welcome to Moulsha...

Voluntary & Community Sector: Creating the Conditions for Collaboration



Find information, advice and resources online



Community participation

We believe that great things happen when people come together. We also believe that your involvement is essential in building stronger, more connected communities across Essex.

Our Community of Practice offers a growing platform of online resources and information. It demonstrates the benefits and approaches to getting your community involved.



Countywide online learning series

Our learning seminars support you and your organisation to build capacity and upskill.



Place-based support & insight

Since launch we have been continuously working closely with local partners to identify strengths, key needs and gaps in provision. The insights gathered have shaped our approach and continue to guide our work.

Children, young people and families

Tracey is a mum of three: a 6 week old, 2 year old and 6 year old.

The family is in temporary accommodation, a bedsit with an ensuite.

There are no laundry or cooking facilities.

Dad is a kitchen porter so works long unsociable hours. Tracey isn't currently working and is finding it a struggle to make ends meet.

The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing service has been able to help Tracey:

- The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing service has helped Tracey:
- Access the Mothers in MIND sessions to connect her with other parents and support her with her mood.
- Get a free air fryer so she can cook hot meals for the family.
- Access the food bank and the Healthy Start offer.
- Identifying that the children had no books or toys to support development and learning and supporting her with access to resources and providing ongoing support with parenting.
- By providing free school uniform.
- By writing to the district to advocate for Tracey and her family to have more suitable accommodation and training housing officers on sleep safety so that they don't place families with babies in inappropriate temporary accommodation.



Healthy Weight Update



**Nurseries/
early years
settings**



SCAN ME



**“This project you have all been working on
its absolutely brilliant, this is something
that’s been needed for a very long time”**

Essex Day Nursery

**Food hospitality
environment -
cafes, restaurants,
takeaway**



**“We have customers
now who weren’t
coming in before,
with these
alternative things on
offer, we are getting
more customers”**

TuckIn Business



SCAN ME



**School food &
physical activity
environment**



SCAN ME



**“Since starting Bite Back in
Schools, we’ve already
made huge improvements
around the canteen. Most
importantly, the student
voice has stayed at the
centre of every decision
we’ve made”**

Chloe, Bite Back
Ambassador

**Maternity
and pre
maternity**



SCAN ME



**Children, young
people and
families**



SCAN ME



**Physical and
developmental
conditions,
and learning
disabilities**



SCAN ME



"Bump to Baby blends expert advice, movement, nourishment and real-life support to help pregnant women thrive – one step at a time"

DDM Health, provider for NE Essex



"Jamie's vision is motivation, his passion for helping children and families to understand the importance of food and cooking helps us to deliver the programme to inspire future generations"

Julie, Child Weight Management Service Manager, HCRG



"It brought a real sense of community and renewed energy into the home. Residents were smiling, sharing stories about food and really engaging in ways we don't always see"

Essex Learning Disability Care Homes

Marginalised Groups

Domestic Abuse Liaison

Providing dedicated support to link PH initiatives to Domestic Abuse support systems and services

Homelessness Prevention

Commissioning a system to support individuals at risk of homelessness (including those experiencing homelessness and in crisis)

Essex Recovery Foundation

A Charity built and supported by this team to effectively engage the community to develop as the lead commissioners of drug and alcohol provision

Drug/Alcohol Substance Use

Commissioning an All-Age balanced Prevention, Treatment and Recovery System

Complex Needs

Commissioning a system to support people who have or currently are involved with the criminal justice system, also experiencing poor mental health, substance use, accommodation issues, and other need, that if left unsupported could lead to reoffending

Individual Placement Support

Provides employment support for adults with drug and alcohol issues or Complex Needs who are in structured treatment or support using a set of 8 principles designed to help people into employment rapidly and maintain support once they are employed

Water Safety

Working together:



SAFER ESSEX
Water Safety Forum

Activity and Achievements

2025

Training

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) Waterside Responder Scheme

An additional **13** Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) Prevention staff received Water Safety Training to deliver the Waterside Responder Programme.

A further **45** people trained across 7 Essex businesses in how to deploy a throw line to help prevent drownings.

Essex Activ8 (Holiday Activity and Food Programme)

21 Essex Activ8 organisations attended RNLI training, enabling them to promote water safety messages to children attending summer activity clubs.

Events

Between February and October, ECFRS Road & Water Safety Team attended 57 water safety themed events, reaching a total of **4,396** people with water safety messaging and attended a further 45 events where water safety was promoted.

Essex County Council Public Health, ECFRS, and RNLI attended the National Water Safety Conference to showcase our collaborative approach in Essex.

Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership organised **2** 'Seaside Special' summer train events, enabling over 200 people to receive water safety information.

Education

Engagement with schools

83 water safety education packs distributed to primary schools where reported swimming attainment is lower.

From January to October, ECFRS delivered **153** water safety education sessions and **190** summer safety sessions, which included key water safety messaging, to schools.

Essex Activ8

33 water safety education packs were distributed to Essex Activ8 (holiday Activity and Food Programme) for use as part of summer activity clubs.

538 children attended water safety workshops through Essex Activ8 (Holiday Activity and Food Programme).

Swim Safe

Over **500** children and young people attended Swim Safe sessions in Clacton and Harwich over the summer, learning how to stay safe in and around open water.

SAFER ESSEX
Water Safety Forum

Priorities for 2026

Suicide prevention

Development of a water safety contact information card to guide waterside and emergency responders dealing with water-related incidents, as part of our work on suicide prevention.

How you can support:

If you would like more information on this work or would like to request a supply of water safety contact information cards, please email PublicHealth@essex.gov.uk

Water Safety Ambassadors

Increase the number of RNLI Water Safety Ambassadors across Greater Essex.

Additional resources will be allocated by ECFRS over the coming months to support with this, targeting key locations to increase sign-ups.

How you can support:

Promote and sign up to the free RNLI Local Ambassadors scheme. You will receive information and resources about water safety to share with customers and members of the public, helping to raise greater awareness within your local community and save lives.

Become a local ambassador sharing Water Safety advice.

<https://nli.org/support-us/volunteer/volunteering-opportunities/rnli-local-ambassador/local-ambassador-sign-up#contact-details>

Swimming provision

Explore opportunities with key stakeholders, including schools and leisure centres, to increase access to swimming and raise swimming ability of children and young people.

How you can support:

Support the work of the swimming subgroup by sharing ideas, helping to trial approaches in local areas to increase access to swimming, optimise resources, and share examples of good practice and any lessons learnt. If you have any suggestions, please contact cyp@activeessex.org