

Cllr Martin Foley – November 2021 Report

I hope this finds you well and in good spirits and looking after yourselves.

First of all, I want to thank you all for the many kind thoughts and wishes sent from parishes all over my county division since my wife Claire went into hospital again. Claire is a stroke survivor, and she is going through a bit of difficult period... but since leaving hospital Claire is gaining strength again. Thank you as well for your understanding if I did not get back to you as quickly as usual recently.

There are a couple of initiatives that I wanted to ensure you were briefed on, so as we receive fuller information, we are able to signpost residents accordingly. These initiatives are supported by the official Independent (which includes R4U) opposition and of course the current administration at ECC.

Many of these are for initiatives are outside our immediate area but it is useful to see how the Household Support Fund is spent.

The first relates to the Household Support Fund and the second to the Essex ActivAte Winter Holiday Activity and Food Programme:

### **£9.4m Household Support fund allocations announced**

In October, the government allocated £9.4m to ECC in order to provide support for families over the winter. Free school meals during the holidays, food for rough sleepers and help for residents in need, with their utility bills this winter, are just some of the key areas where the money will be targeted. The below provides more information.

Allocations in full:

- £3.2m for the provision of food vouchers to those eligible for free school meals for the Christmas 2021, February and Easter 2022 school holidays.
- £2m to supporting vulnerable adults as individuals or with families with food, fuel and essential items.
- £1m for the [Essential Living Fund](#), a scheme managed on behalf of the County Council by Southend Borough Council.
- £630,000 to the [Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service](#), of which £600,000 for a one off fuel voucher to all registered families and £30,000 for food and other essential item vouchers distributed to those in the most deprived areas.
- £240,000 to Community Hubs for food, fuel and essential items split across the CVS but also Nest in Harwich, Happy Hub in Basildon, Ideas Hub in Chelmsford and The Witham Community Hub.
- £200,000 to Voluntary and Community sector organisations for food, fuel and essential items.
- £200,000 to local Citizens Advice.
- £200,000 for families who are just about managing, but who could benefit from a one off fuel or essential items voucher for temporary relief can be accessed through the Essential Living Fund.
- £120,000 direct to District, Boroughs and City for the provision of food for homeless households and rough sleepers.

- £108,000 for Care Leavers for food and essential items.
- £565,000 to deliver a series of programmes focusing on holiday hunger, food education programmes, support for young carers and targeted family support and childcare delivered through locally trusted community organisations and foodbanks to support children and their families (includes money through homestart).
- £200,000 will be used for Administration costs associated with this grant
- £735,000 has been allocated through previous ECC decisions.

A large proportion of the fund has been allocated to key organisations and partners across the county to continue their work in supporting residents in need.

Community Hubs, Voluntary and Community sector organisations and local Citizens Advice will also receive allocations to support residents.

The link to the wide range of support that can be provided to residents is below.

Please circulate and signpost through your contacts:

[Money, debt and benefits: Household Support Fund - Essex County Council](#)

## **Essex ActivAte Winter Holiday Activity and Food Programme**

I am delighted that once again we will be running another Essex ActivAte programme this winter, which aims to support the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people from low-income homes, providing fun, enrichment activities, as well as a nutritious meal.

Across the entire county, there will be over 120 clubs up and running to provide a whole host of enjoyable and educational activities for children to choose from. From archery, arts and crafts, baking, and exploring nature, to animal encounters, mini golf, parkour and bath bomb creation, there's something for every child to enjoy! Every child will receive a school standard meal and nutritious snacks, with many clubs also providing an extra meal during longer sessions.

We are committed to ensuring that clubs and activities in this year's ActivAte Essex winter programme are inclusive and accessible. Active Essex will be providing training for all partners, covering topics such as: inclusive awareness, mental wellbeing, safeguarding, nutrition education and epilepsy and seizure training. All ActivAte clubs will be inclusive, with a trained SEND and Mental Wellbeing ambassador to support our club-goers. We are also working with experienced organisations to deliver dedicated SEND Hubs and Mental Wellbeing Hubs across Essex, offering tailored activities run by specialist coaches.

To get us all in the festive spirit at the most wonderful time of the year, many clubs will be hosting a unique celebration event, which may include special winter experiences such as a Christmas party, Santa's grotto, pantomime show or animal encounter. All activities will differ from club to club, but each one will ensure a wonderful time is had by all who attend.

The winter ActivAte Essex clubs, which will run predominantly between the 20th - 24th of December, are free for all children who are eligible for benefits based free school meals, as well as children from lower income working families and other

eligible families in need of support. Bookings are now live. Please signpost residents through your channels to the link below:

[www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate/bookings/](http://www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate/bookings/)

Kind regards,

**Cllr Martin Foley**  
**Chair – ECC Youth Strategy Group**  
**Uttlesford Area.**