

# ECC December Report 2021

## *Essex County Council wins Social Work Employer of the year and Essex Social Worker wins National Adult Social Worker of the Year Gold Award*

Essex County Council has won Social Work Employer of the Year at the prestigious Social Work Awards covering both Adult Social Care and Children and Families services and a social worker from Essex has won the national accolade of Adult Social Worker of the Year Gold Award.

The judges praised Essex County Council's "focus on transforming outcomes for people and communities, with social work at the centre."

Melanie Noel, who works for Essex County Council, won the top prize of Gold Award Winner at the virtual awards ceremony which took place on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November.

Social Worker of the Year Awards is a registered charity aiming to recognise and celebrate excellent social work in England.

Councillor John Spence, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, said: "Social work is a challenging and diverse profession, but it is also one of the most rewarding.

"It is often misunderstood and that is why it is so important that we recognise the hard work and positive impact that social workers have on the lives of vulnerable children, families and adults."

"We do not hear enough about the wonderful work of social workers, and their hard work and dedication in helping to transform people's lives – and never have their challenges been tougher than during the covid period, so to win it this year feels very special."

"We are very pleased and proud on an individual level for Melanie's award and on a team level for Essex County Council winning Social Work employer of the year. It's recognition from social work professionals from across the country."

Melanie Noel, Social Worker at Essex County Council, said: "When I work with people who have had difficult lived experiences, but you're still able to make them feel special, that's my proudest achievement."

The judges praised Melanie for having an exceptional depth of social work practice, adding she 'comes alongside people, they trust her and she's genuine, and they can develop a relationship with her to address their mental wellbeing goals.'

Since 2006, Social Worker of the Year Awards has celebrated the outstanding achievements of social work practitioners and teams up and down the country. It recognises and celebrate the challenging work that qualified social workers do day in, day out, and highlights their achievements.

Picture Caption: Melanie Noel, Social Worker at Essex County Council, winner of Social Worker of the Year Gold Award at the national Social Worker of the Year Awards.

Melanie Noel - Social Worker of the Year 2021.jpg [Melanie Noel - Social Worker of the Year 2021.jpg](#)

### **Small and medium-sized businesses have until 31 December to apply for an ECC Business Adaptation Grant.**

With the Business Adaptation Grant scheme due to end on 31 December 2021, ECC is urging any small and medium-sized businesses that have yet to bid for funding to apply. Businesses can receive up to £5,000 to adapt how they operate and help to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spreading.

Essex County Council's business grants have proved highly successful, with over £10m of the allocated £14.4m funds being awarded to over 4,000 businesses to date.

SMEs are encouraged to apply through their city, district or borough council, before the funding runs out [Coronavirus support for businesses: Apply for a grant - Essex County Council](#)

In the run up to Christmas, more businesses, particularly those requiring additional support in the crucial hospitality sector can apply for funding, to invest in seating, shelter, and lighting, to enable outdoor trade.

Ella Martin, co-owner of the coffee shop Table in Earls Colne, received the Business Adaptation Grant. She commented: "We used the grant to buy tables and chairs for outdoor seating, a protection screen for the counter area and a bespoke Perspex screen for our main doorway, which has a takeaway hatch."

Other businesses have used the grant to:

- Install signage, sanitation, and ventilation equipment
- Promote outdoor dining, including tables and chairs
- Set up contactless payments
- Enable home working
- Increase an online presence

Any businesses that have previously been awarded a grant from ECC's Business Adaptation Grant scheme can apply again, provided they have not received a grant within the last two months.

## *New chair of Essex Climate Action Commission signals action to reduce emissions in county*

An internationally recognised Professor of Environment to be chair of Essex Climate Action Commission.

Professor Jules Pretty of the University of Essex is announced as new Chair of the Essex Climate Action Commission, the independent, voluntary body set up as part of Essex County Council's commitment to tackle the climate crisis and become a net zero emissions county.

The announcement coincides with a further round of funding under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme. Essex residents with combined household incomes of below £30,000 can access a grant of up to £10,000 to upgrade the heating and insulation in their homes. This grant means residents can cut their fuel bills and their carbon emissions at the same time, while keeping their home warm and comfortable.

Professor Pretty, Professor of Environment and Society at the University of Essex, succeeds Lord Randall who has chaired the commission since it was first set up by Essex County Council in May 2020 to advise on how best to take meaningful action in tackling climate change.

The Commission provides expert advice and up-to-date recommendations to move Essex to net zero by 2050. Over 30 commissioners represent a wide cross-section of people and organisations from private, public and voluntary sectors. Its 2021 report 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral' sets out a plan for climate action across the county.

Speaking of his appointment as the Chair of Essex Climate Action Commission, Professor Jules Pretty said: "We have achieved a great deal in the first year, with the Net Zero report and its recommendations, but we have much still to do. I am focused on helping our Net Zero report come to life and demonstrating how our recommendations can be implemented by the people and institutions of Essex. The new funding for the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme is a good step in the right direction, helping people cut emissions from their homes and save money at the same time.

"COP26 in Glasgow has focused people's attentions locally and internationally on the pressing and interconnected priorities arising from the climate crisis. In Essex, the Essex Climate Action Commission has been both ambitious and realistic and is leading the way in showing how commitments to reducing carbon-equivalent emissions by a half in each of the next ten-year periods will contribute to averting the climate crisis."

Cllr Peter Schwier, Essex County Council's Climate Czar, said: "I am delighted to welcome Professor Pretty as the new chair of the Commission and would like to thank the outgoing chair, Lord Randall for all his hard work in getting the Commission established and its report published. We look forward to seeing Professor Pretty take the reins and lead the Commission into its second year as it focuses on green growth and finance."

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme offers funding for people on lower incomes and is designed to reduce people's heating bills, increase energy efficiency and cut carbon emissions.

Homeowners with a combined household income below £30,000 and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D, E, F or G may be eligible for funding of up to £10,000 to install energy efficiency measures in their homes.

The new funding can go towards installing solar panels as well as renewable heating systems, insulation, heating controls, ventilation, hot water systems and lighting.

Residents who have unsuccessfully applied for government grant funding in the past may still qualify for this scheme. All homeowners are therefore urged to come forward and check the qualifying criteria.

Social and private landlords are also invited to apply for subsidised funding as part of the scheme. Private tenants are encouraged to speak to their landlord and highlight how the grant could improve the rental property's energy efficiency, making it more attractive to rent.

For more information complete a simple questionnaire to check eligibility for Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme funding.

To view the 'Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral report', visit

[https://www.essexclimate.org.uk/sites/default/files/DS21\\_7178%20ECAC\\_Commission\\_Report-Final.pdf](https://www.essexclimate.org.uk/sites/default/files/DS21_7178%20ECAC_Commission_Report-Final.pdf)

Professor Jules Pretty, Chair, Essex Climate Action Commission

*Professor Pretty is Director of Public Policy and Engagement in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Essex. His many regional, national and international roles include being President of the Essex Wildlife Trust, a Trustee of WWF-UK, advisory committees for BBSRC and the Royal Society, and former Deputy-Chair of the Government's Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment. His award-winning books on nature, wildlife and sustainability include The East Country (Cornell Univ Press, 2017), The Edge of Extinction (Cornell University Press, 2014) and This Luminous Coast (2011, 2014). His two forthcoming books are Sea Sagas of the North (Hawthorn, 2022) and The Low-Carbon Good Life (Cornell, 2022).*

Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme

Homeowners with a combined household income below £30,000 and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D, E, F or G may be eligible for funding of up to £10,000 to install energy efficiency measures on their homes.

The eligible measures are insulation (cavity wall, solid wall, loft and room in roof insulation), renewable heating solutions, heating controls, ventilation, hot water systems, solar thermal, solar PV and lighting.

Grant funding is calculated using Ofgem deemed savings scores. Grant funding will differ between property types, property size, fuel types and installation.

Private and social landlords may be eligible for a £5,000 grant to cover two-thirds of works.

The link for the questionnaire on the scheme is

<https://surveys.est.org.uk/s/GreenHomesGrantSchemeLAD/>

Happy fourth birthday to the Essex Lottery!

### **Essex Lottery celebrates four years of supporting good causes across the county.**

The Essex Lottery is celebrating four years of helping local charities access funding from residents who want to support their county community.

The Essex Lottery is an online lottery created by Essex County Council to support local causes across the county.

Since the Essex Lottery launched four years ago in 2017 over £340,000 has been donated to good causes in the county. This is thanks to the thousands of players who buy a weekly £1 ticket – with 60p of every ticket they purchase going to good causes.

Many of the good causes supported by the Essex Lottery have done great work supporting communities during the lockdown, but at the same time are now struggling due to events being closed down by social distancing protocols.

Currently more than 314 charities and good causes are signed up to benefit from The Essex Lottery – supporting a diversity of causes across Essex from animal welfare, education and arts groups to organisations supporting children, disadvantaged groups and the elderly. Local good causes include community groups, sports clubs, brownies or scout's and school PTAs. Players are able to select the good causes they wish to support.

Now is the time to support these charities and good causes by buying tickets for the Essex Lottery.

One such charity supported by the Essex Lottery is Lexden Springs Residential Special School in Colchester. This school caters for pupils aged 3-19 years of age who have complex or profound learning difficulties.

A spokeswoman for Lexden Springs said: "We were thrilled to have another £250 winner on the Essex lottery, this is our third since we joined in February 2020.

"One of our winners generously donated the whole amount back to us which has gone towards the purchase of a wheelchair accessible minibus for our special needs school.

"The lottery helps us in between our main events to top up our fundraising which we use to give our pupils opportunities, experiences and equipment that cannot be funded from the schools limited budget. We really appreciate everyone who purchases tickets in support of our cause Lexden springs appeal fund."

Cllr Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, said: "For four years the Essex Lottery has grown - more residents than ever are making the choice to buy a weekly ticket and support charities and good causes within Essex. Many thanks to all the players who have supported the lottery from the start.

“The rising number of people who are playing the Essex Lottery each week proves that Essex people want to help. The lottery is making a difference, please sign up and make every penny of your lottery ticket money count!”

Prize draws take place every Saturday night when a 6-digit winning combination is picked. Prizes will be given to players with tickets that match the first or last 2-6 numbers from the winning combination. Match all 6 and you win the £25,000 JACKPOT.

Every week there are prizes to be won of free tickets and cash prizes of £25, £250, £2,000 and £25,000 - to players whose numbers match the winning number combination.

To play the Essex Lottery, or apply for Essex Lottery funding, visit: [www.essexlottery.co.uk](http://www.essexlottery.co.uk) or call the Essex Lottery support team on 0300 302 32 32

A total of 20p from each £1 ticket goes to the prize, with 60p going towards funding good causes (nominated causes receive 50p from each £1 ticket brought via their page on the lottery with a further 10p funding local good causes and initiatives via the Central Fund). The remaining 20p is used to administrate the lottery.

- Picture caption: A picture, attached to this release, is of the wheelchair accessible minibus which Lexden Springs Residential Special School was able to purchase with money partly raised from The Essex Lottery
- Lexden Springs School.jpeg [Lexden Springs School.jpeg](#)

### **Seven Essex community renewal projects receive £4.4m in Government Levelling Up funding**

ECC has secured £4.4 million in funding for seven successful projects from the Government Community Renewal Fund.

At the beginning of November, the Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove announced funding for locally-led, innovative projects that will help breathe new life into towns, villages and coastal communities across the UK. Among these projects receiving funding were seven Essex projects. Full details of this funding can be found here: £200 million boost to help level up communities across the UK - GOV.UK [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

The projects in Essex, and funding they have received, are:

- Pathways to Diagnostics Trailblazer has been awarded £480,807 and will be delivered by **Colchester Institute & East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT)**. This project will provide residents of Tendring with skills to support local job opportunities created within the new Community Diagnostics Hub at Clacton Hospital.
- **Planting the seeds for Growth in Tendring** is a project which has received £510,313. Delivered by Abberton Rural Training it will provide residents of Tendring district with access

to support and training to overcome the negative impact of Covid 19 on their work and physical and mental health.

- Harlow & **Tendring** Retrofit Pipeline for Economic Renewal has been awarded £717,060. This project will be delivered by The Retrofit Academy Community Interest Company (CIC) in partnership with Essex County Council and will support residents and businesses to create jobs and growth from making private properties more energy efficient.
- Digital Skills Transformation for Essex's High Streets has received £756,560. This project, delivered by Maybe Solutions Limited, will provide accelerated digital learning for staff of independent High Street Businesses.
- Essex IAG Connect has been awarded £720,541 and will be delivered by Adult Community Learning at Essex County Council. This project aims to provide Information and Guidance to help local people across Essex into employment within growing sectors of industry.
- Harlow College and Enable East Skills Pilot has been awarded £779,537. This project delivered by Harlow College & Enable East will offer a range of employment support to unemployed and employed residents in Harlow, while a second base in Tendring will aim to support Year 11-13 pupils and their teachers.
- Harlow Local Procurement Portal has been awarded £476,001 and will be delivered by Harlow District Council. This project will support Harlow based Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to supply larger companies in the district, increasing local purchasing and supply of services to grow the district economy.

Cllr Louise McKinlay, Deputy Leader of Essex County Council and Cabinet Member for Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance, said: "This announcement means our ambitions to level up Essex are off to a flying start, driving our aim to create prosperity across all of our county.

"It's great news for the businesses and residents of Harlow and **Tendring**, particularly the local people who will benefit from the opportunity to gain the skills they will need to secure the jobs of the future."

Cllr Tony Ball, ECC Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said: "One of our strategic priorities at Essex County Council is to help people prosper by increasing their skills and this Government funding will help residents of all backgrounds get the training to secure good jobs in growing industries."

Cllr Lesley Wagland, ECC Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning, said: "Economic development needs to be targeted to areas of opportunity. Government funding for projects such as these will deliver skills to enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries, such as the digital and green energy sectors."

Cllr Neil Stock OBE, Leader of Tendring District Council, said: "This funding will really help us to better connect and support our community in a range of ways – from apprenticeships in horticulture, to building careers in healthcare and upskilling businesses.

“The fact the Government has pledged £2.6 million to our district is recognition of the existing fantastic work we do, and how we can do even more with the application of extra funding.

“We look forward to getting moving on these projects working closely with our partners, especially Essex County Council.”

### **More homes found for Afghan families in Essex**

Further homes for families from Afghanistan have been identified in Essex thanks to the ongoing work of the Afghan Refugee Task Force.

A further four new housing offers are in the process of being made to families from Afghanistan thanks to the continuing efforts of the Afghan Refugee Task Force.

These housing offers are in Epping Forest, Chelmsford, **Tendring** and Uttlesford.

Councils across the county are continuing to make positive progress in securing suitable housing that meets the needs of Afghan families.

Partner city, district and borough councils are now proactively working on four new offers in Essex.

If approved, these properties could be available later this month and will be prioritised for the remaining families in the three bridging hotels.

Anyone wishing to make an offer of a property can contact their local council responsible for housing or alternatively access the Government Afghanistan Housing portal.

Chaired by ECC’s Leader, Cllr Kevin Bentley, the Task Force was set up last month to ensure that suitable, sustainable housing is found for Afghan families in Essex. It also has oversight of the Essex, Southend and Thurrock response to the Government Afghan Citizens’ Resettlement Scheme.

Cllr Bentley said: “This is a great example of all partners within Essex working together. No one authority can solve this issue on its own or overnight. Only through working together are we going to ensure the individuals who have risked so much to support the UK and other people who had to flee Afghanistan can get the best possible start to life here.”

More information is available at the Government's Afghanistan Housing portal at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-housing-portal-offers-of-support](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-housing-portal-offers-of-support)