

ECC Report September 2025

Statement from Essex County Council



The Cabinet at Essex County Council is demanding answers as to how an email was sent from its Children's Services to staff about concerns they could have around flying the Union and St George's flags.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Kevin Bentley, said: "At no time was this discussed with politicians at Essex County Council which has infuriated the Leadership. It is not the policy of the Council.

"We have been clear that we support people who wish to raise the two flags, and they will not be removed unless there is a hazard to motorists or pedestrians."

The investigation will report directly back to Cabinet when further actions will be considered.

Clacton Library redevelopment receives planning permission



Planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of Clacton Library.

The redevelopment will bring together reading, learning and essential services under one roof.

The new multi-storey building will be built on the existing library site. It will include:

- a modern library
- a centre for Adult Community Learning (ACL)
- local registration services

The new building will include more functional and modern spaces. The number and variety of books will be maintained. Residents and businesses helped shape the plans during a public consultation. Temporary arrangements will be put in place to maintain services during the redevelopment.

Full details will be announced in advance of construction.

The redevelopment is part of a wider programme of regeneration projects in Clacton town centre. Last year, Tendring District Council, supported by Essex County Council, was awarded almost £20 million in government funding for these improvements.

In March, Tendring District Council was granted planning permission for the neighbouring site. Plans include a new car park, modern homes and a vibrant mixed-use community space.

Find out more about [the library redevelopment and wider regeneration plans](#).

Childcare Reforms Expansion: upcoming changes to accessing early years and childcare places



The Department for Education (DfE) Childcare Reforms Expansion has been designed to better help parents and carers manage childcare alongside their work responsibilities. These changes are part of the government's ongoing commitment to support families

and enable parents to return to or remain in the workforce, while ensuring their children receive the care they need.

What's changed?

Expansions to the current Funded Early Education Entitlement. Funded Early Education Entitlement hours can be used over 38 weeks of the year during school term time or, depending on the provider, up to 52 weeks as a stretched offer.

April 2024 Since

Working parents have been eligible for up to 15 hours of funded childcare per week in term time, over 38 weeks, starting from the term after your child's second birthday.

Since September 2024

Eligible working parents have been entitled to up to 15 hours of funded childcare per week in term time, over 38 weeks, available from the term following your child turning nine months old.

From September 2025

The support extends further, with up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week in term time, over 38 weeks, available from the term following your child turning nine months old.

Parents of 2-year-olds that are not eligible for the working parent entitlement should check their eligibility for the 2-year-old entitlement for families receiving government support. Read more about [funded childcare for 2-year-olds](#).

How do families apply?

To apply for funded childcare, eligible parents need to register for a code by the end of the month before a new term starts. For the autumn term families should have applied and received an approved code by Sunday 31 August 2025.

[Check your eligibility and apply on the UK government's dedicated childcare support page.](#)

For the spring term families need to apply and have an approved code by Wednesday 31 December. Once you receive the code (usually beginning 50) please share this with your childcare provider.

For more information, [please visit our Family Information Service page.](#)

Wraparound childcare for parents and carers of primary school-aged children

From September 2024, the national wraparound childcare programme commenced with the ambition that by September 2026 most working parents will be able to access wraparound childcare that is either on their school site or within the local community. This wraparound childcare offer will be available during term time for parents with primary school-aged children.

What does this mean for you?

Wraparound care hours

During term time, parents of primary school-aged children can pay for their child to access childcare from 8am to 6pm. This includes breakfast clubs and after-school care.

Providers

These services can be offered by schools or private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) providers like childminders, out of school and early years settings.

Wraparound care can take place either on school premises or at another suitable location within the local area. For more information and to wraparound provider near you, please visit: <https://secureapps.essex.gov.uk/fis>

Register for the Essex Energy Switch to save money



The [Essex Energy Switch](#) is about helping local residents save money on their gas and electricity bills. The more people that register, the bigger the potential saving per household. In the last scheme, participants who decided to switch saved on average £200 on their energy bills.

By registering with Essex Energy Switch, you can ‘group buy’ with other people in your local area. This allows energy companies to offer competitive prices. Prices are often better as a group rather than to individuals.

Registering for the Energy Switch is quick and easy. Joining the scheme saves the hassle of searching for the best deals as all the hard work is done for you.

We know some people in Essex are struggling to afford their energy bills. The Essex Energy Switch scheme is one way of addressing the issue.

Residents have until Friday 29 September to register their interest. It's a free, easy and secure way to cut energy bills without wasting time on comparison sites.

All residents need is a recent gas and electricity bill. There is no obligation to switch supplier or tariff once registered. Spread the word to friends and family and help more people see if they can save.

Everyone who registers will receive a personalised offer. The offer details how much they could save by switching energy supplier. It's up to you if you choose to accept the offer and switch.

After the registration period closes, energy companies will compete in an auction to offer the lowest tariff. Once the winning bidder is selected, anyone who has registered will be sent an offer. If they choose to switch our trusted partner will take care of the entire switching process. [Find out more about how Essex Energy Switch could help you](#) get a better energy deal.

Councils launch new LGR website



A new website is available to help people understand possible changes to local government in Greater Essex.

Councils across Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock have launched essexlgrhub.org. This is a central, impartial hub for updates on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Greater Essex.

By 2028, the number and structure of councils may change. The Government is encouraging simpler, more efficient local services that bring decision-making closer to communities.

The website includes:

- an overview of LGR
- a short explainer video
- the latest news and FAQs
- Government aims for LGR

Councils are currently developing business cases that explore options for unitary arrangements. These business cases will also be added to the website as they are finalised before being submitted to government. The deadline for submission is 26 September 2025.

Following this, government will run a public consultation. This is anticipated in the autumn. A recommendation to the Minister on a final proposal is expected in March 2026. [Visit the Essex LGR Hub](https://essexlgrhub.org) to find out more.

Praise for students on A-level results day



On Thursday 18th August Students across Essex collected their A-level, vocational and technical results.

This year is the first time formal exams have taken place for two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The previous two year's grades were based on teacher assessment drawing on a range of evidence, including mock exams, coursework and in-class assessments.

Cllr Tony Ball, our Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, has praised young people for their efforts.

He said: "Although exams have taken place this year as normal, students have still faced significant disruption to their education as we continue to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Their results are even more impressive when taken in the context of these difficult circumstances. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to all those receiving their results and wish them the very best of luck for the future, whatever path they are now pursuing.

"I would also like to thank all our teaching and school colleagues from across Essex for their ongoing hard work and dedication throughout the last year. These results are also a testament to them."

We will not be publishing our usual headline figures this year and will not be making judgements on performance based on 2022 results data.

[The National Careers Service](#) - telephone 0800 100 900, open 16 to 30 August from 8am to 10pm - and school or college career advisers can provide information, advice and guidance to students.

For any questions students have about university admissions or higher education courses, they should contact the university or college directly. They can also contact UCAS on 0371 468 0 468 for more information.

Until 18 October students can apply for a course using [Clearing](#) if they have missed out on an offer - or have declined their firm choice.

If a student is not happy with their results in some subjects, they have the options to appeal their results or retake their exams in those subjects.

Young people who are feeling worried about what to do next or overwhelmed by leaving school and starting university, are encouraged to [find out about the local wellbeing support available](#).

Students across Essex praised for hard work on GCSE results day



Thousands of students in Essex received their GCSE results on Thursday 21st August.

This will mark a big step forward in their lives, with many students moving on to sixth form, college, apprenticeships, or other training and work opportunities.

Councillor Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability, said: “I would like to congratulate every student who has collected their GCSE results today.

“GCSEs mark a significant milestone, reflecting years of hard work and commitment. Not only from students, but also from families and school staff.

“Today is not just about results, it’s about the doors they open. Whether you’re heading to sixth form, college, an apprenticeship, or exploring other paths, this is the beginning of exciting new opportunities.

“This year, Essex County Council has launched the Essex Year of Opportunity, a campaign opening doors to essential skills through exciting new projects and partnerships with local businesses.

“As a council, we remain committed to ensuring all young people in Essex have access to high-quality education and the support they need to thrive in whatever they choose to do next.”

Roy Blatchford, Chair of the Essex Education Task Force, said: “The Essex Education Taskforce has been collaborating with schools since the pandemic to support students in achieving their very best. We congratulate all GCSE students on this year’s excellent results across the county.

“The Essex Year of Numbers continues, and benefits will no doubt be felt by the students taking GCSEs in 2026. And we have now launched a third campaign - The Year of Opportunity - to promote careers, skills and employability for all Essex young people.”

Adult learners at ACL Essex also received their GCSE results today.

New ACL Essex courses start in September. English and Maths GCSEs are free for those who don't already have a grade 4 (C) or above. [Find out more at ACL Essex.](#)

- **Need help deciding what to do next?** Students can get advice from the National Careers Service (0800 100 900, open 8am–10pm) or speak to career advisers at their school or college.
- **Feeling unsure or overwhelmed?** [Local wellbeing support](#) is available for young people who need help.
- **Not happy with your results?** You can appeal or retake exams. Your school or college can explain how.