

# ECC Report October 2017

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## **Priority groups urged to book in for flu vaccination from today**

The Public Health team at Essex County Council is today urging those at highest risk of flu to get vaccinated ahead of the winter period, when the virus is most common.

The national flu vaccination programme is now available nationwide to all eligible people. New this year, children in school year 4 will also be offered the vaccine in a school setting for the first time, along with children in reception and years 1, 2 and 3.

The national drive marks the start of Stay Well This Winter, an initiative from Public Health England and NHS England to help the most vulnerable people prepare for winter and avoid having to visit hospital due to common winter illnesses.

Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care said that it is crucial for people in the priority groups to get their flu vaccination as soon as possible, to not only protect themselves, but those around them too. It's free for priority groups because they need it.

Mike Gogarty, Director of Wellbeing, Public Health & Communities at Essex County Council stated that flu and complications associated with it cause around 8000 deaths on average a year in England so if anyone is at risk, I can't stress enough how important the flu vaccination is.

Many people don't realise they are in a priority group, so please think about whether you qualify and if you are eligible for the free vaccination and have not had it, then contact your GP, pharmacist or midwife to arrange your vaccination.

Those in priority groups and eligible for the free flu vaccine include:

- Adults over 65
- Pregnant women
- Children aged 2 and 3 as well as pupils in reception class and school years 1 to 4
- People with long-term health conditions (including asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and cardiovascular issues)

Another way of protecting vulnerable adults is to vaccinate children, who are 'super-spreaders' of the vaccine.

For healthy children aged 2 and 3 the flu vaccine is in the form of a nasal spray, administered by a health professional. Nationally, parents of over three million children in reception class and school years 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be asked to agree to have their children vaccinated in school.

According to Public Health England, last year's flu vaccination programme reduced the risk of flu in children who received the vaccine by 63% compared to those that didn't.

The vaccine is the best form of protection against flu. Vaccinating those who are most likely to get flu also offers a protective effect for the rest of the population by reducing the overall spread of the virus.

To book your flu vaccination, please contact your GP.

For more information on the flu vaccination take a look at [www.nhs.uk/staywell](http://www.nhs.uk/staywell)

### **Rock the tower**

The Jaywick Martello Tower will be hosting free music sessions for young people aged 8 to 18 years old.

The music sessions will be held at the Jaywick Martello Tower every Tuesday from the 7 November during term time running hourly between 5pm and 9pm.

There will also be a drop in session on Saturday 28 October from 12-3:30pm for those interested to come along and meet the organisers as well as play some instruments.

Young people will have the opportunity to have music sessions in the historic Jaywick Martello Tower, which produces a varied programme of successful heritage and art exhibitions, talks and theatrical events throughout the year.

The sessions have been provided by Harwich based charity, 'We Are Music,' which helps young people to engage in the community through popular music, and have the chance to play alongside others in a band.

Essex County Council recently awarded £1,500 via the Cultural in Essex Small Grants Scheme to help support young musicians and promoters in the area.

The project has been funded by Essex Music Education Hub (using funding from Arts Council England) and Essex County Council.

Cllr Susan Barker, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Customer said that through joint funding from Arts Council England and the Music Hub, Essex County Council has been able to facilitate music sessions for young people at the Jaywick Martello Tower. The contribution will enable ECC to work with young people to increase opportunities for them, and give them the chance to perform and be seen by a larger audience.

It is hoped that the music sessions will inspire young people to engage in the community with popular music

If you would like to know more details about the free music sessions, contact the Jaywick Martello Tower on [jaywickmartellotower@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jaywickmartellotower@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 01255 822783.

### **New GCSE data shows Essex pupils achieved higher grades than national average**

Essex County Council is congratulating secondary schools after GCSE statistics published today showed the county again performed above the national average in the majority of measures.

About 15,000 young people were entered into GCSEs at schools in Essex this year, which was the first since the Government introduced a new numerical (9 to 1) grading system.

Provisional figures published for the first time by the Department for Education today show that Essex is performing above the national average under the Attainment 8 measure (average grade across the same suite of eight subjects) and broadly in line with the national average for Progress 8 (average of all students' progress across eight subjects between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4).

The percentage of pupils achieving a standard pass at GCSE (9-4) in English and maths is also above the national average (64.9 per cent compared to 63.5 per cent).

The new data means Essex is ranked 57<sup>th</sup> of all 151 local authorities under Attainment 8 and 72<sup>nd</sup> under Progress 8.

English language, English literature and maths were the only subjects to be graded under the new 9 to 1 scale, with others continuing to be graded A\* to G.

Most other subjects are expected to adopt numerical grades by 2019.

Cllr Ray Gooding, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "Secondary schools in Essex continue to perform well and I am proud to hear that the county is again performing above the national average in the majority of measures.

"Not only do 95 per cent of secondary pupils now attend a school rated as good or outstanding, but young people in Essex are also achieving higher grades than many of their peers elsewhere in the country.

“I know that the new GCSE grading scales presented schools with an additional challenge this year and I would like to once again congratulate the teachers and young people on their achievements.

“As a council, we remain committed to ensuring all pupils in Essex receive the best possible education and continue to work very closely with schools.”

All statistics contained within this release relates to Essex state schools only and has been sourced from the provisional data published on the DfE website on 12/10/17.

For more information, please visit [www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4)

Essex performance:

- Attainment 8 score is slightly above national average: 46.4 per cent compared to 46.1 per cent nationally.
- Progress 8 Score is similar to national average: -0.04 compared to -0.03 nationally.
- Standard pass at GCSE (9-4) in English and maths is above the national average: 64.9 per cent compared to 63.5 per cent nationally.
- Essex’s national ranking for Attainment 8 is 57 and for Progress 8 is 72 (out of 151 local authorities).

Direct comparisons with last year’s results are not possible due to the new numerical grading system.

### **BBC micro:bit lending at Essex Libraries**

Essex could soon become home to the coders, programmers and digital pioneers of the future as part of an initiative to lend pocket-sized computers to library visitors.

From 23 October, library members will be able to borrow BBC micro:bit computers free of charge.

The tiny computers, launched last year as part of the BBC Make it Digital initiative, allow people to get creative with technology, whatever their experience, and aim to build a new generation of digital pioneers.

Over the past year they were given to all Year 7 students across the UK who turned them into simple games, smart watches and even fitness trackers, by using one of the code editors at [www.microbit.co.uk](http://www.microbit.co.uk) and connecting them to other devices and sensors.

Coding skills are vital for many jobs in flourishing high-tech industries, as well as being great fun for all ages to learn.

ECC believes that everyone in Essex is being given the chance to explore the vast potential of these computers for themselves. Along with the Makerspaces and Code Clubs, this is another example of the innovative work Essex Libraries is doing to spread digital expertise.

The device has a lot of features, such as 25 red LED lights that can flash messages, and there are two programmable buttons that can be used to control games or pause and skip songs on a playlist.

They can also detect motion and tell you which direction you're heading in, and use a low energy Bluetooth connection to interact with other devices and the internet.

If you have a micro:bit you can bring it along, but there will be ones available to use also. Children must be accompanied by an adult and booking is essential.

Micro:bits will be based initially at Chelmsford, Colchester, Rayleigh, Witham, Harlow, Basildon, Braintree and South Woodham Ferrers Libraries, but customers will be able to request them to pick up at any Essex library as they can with other items.

There are currently weekly [Code Clubs](#) for 9-13 year olds in Chelmsford, Colchester, Rayleigh, Witham and South Woodham Ferrers Libraries.

**Essex families encouraged to consider adopting siblings this National  
Adoption Week**

Families in Essex are being encouraged to consider adopting brothers and sisters this National Adoption Week.

Essex County Council helps find families for dozens of children every year, with a large number of them siblings who the council want to keep together.

Of the 41 children in Essex currently awaiting adoption, 23 are part of sibling groups of two or three children.

Unfortunately these children often have to wait much longer until a loving home can be found for them.

Among them are brothers Justin, Jacob and James, who love spending time together and playing outdoors.

Justin, eight, enjoys riding his bike and camping in the back garden. Jacob, five, is very cheeky and loves going on walks with his foster carers' dogs. Youngest brother James, one year of age, likes anything musical and splashing around at bath time.

Sisters Evie and Sophie are also waiting for their forever home and need an adoptive family who will give them the opportunities they need to thrive and reach their potential.

Evie, five years old, likes dressing up and doing arts and crafts. She is sociable and loves going to school, where she has made lots of friends and is doing very well. Sophie, three, is active and enjoys exploring the outdoors. She also likes nursery rhymes, soft toys and playing with bubbles.

National Adoption Week, which takes place from October 16 to October 22, is an ideal time to consider whether you could give children like these the love and care they need.

Cllr Dick Madden, Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Children, said: "We are committed to ensuring all children in Essex get the best start in life and our adopters play a key part in that.

"Many of the children in Essex who need adopting are part of sibling groups and wherever possible we look to keep them together.

"Unfortunately brothers and sisters can often face a much longer wait to find a loving home and we are desperately in need of families who can help change that.

"Siblings have a special bond and our adopters regularly tell us they feel it made the transition into their family easier.

"I would encourage anyone who is considering adoption to get in touch with us this National Adoption Week and find out more."

Essex County Council also needs adopters for children aged between four and eight years old, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

Being an adopter in Essex means you become part of a large, supportive adoption community. Adopters receive extensive local support, not only during the adoption process but throughout the young person's childhood. Finances don't have to be a barrier either and support can be made available.

Adopters come from various backgrounds and there are very few barriers, but you must be capable of parenting a child into adulthood.

The council is hosting special sibling-themed adoption information events at County Hall in Chelmsford on 24 October and 7 November.

To find out more or reserve a place, call 0800 801 530, email [adoption.recruitmentteam@essex.gov.uk](mailto:adoption.recruitmentteam@essex.gov.uk) or visit [essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk/adoption](http://essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk/adoption)

