

The Children's Society

TCS East

Monthly News Update

Issue 11
Sept 2026

Summer activity

Its my life festival

Basildon Pride

Youth Fest

Maldon Ufest



Freshers Fairs

Basildon community safety day

Essex Recovery Festival



Welcome

...to a autumnal edition of our 11th newsletter!

As September arrives and schools reopen their doors, many young people find themselves at the start of a new chapter. While January is often thought of as the season of resolutions and reflection, the beginning of a new academic year can feel just as significant. New routines, new expectations, new opportunities, and for some, new challenges.

Before looking ahead, it is also worth taking a moment to reflect on the summer. As you'll see from the highlights alongside this article, our team has been out and about at a wide range of community events, festivals and engagement activities across the region. It has been fantastic to connect with so many young people, families and professionals, and these conversations continue to shape our understanding of the issues affecting young people today.

It is also a time for us, as professionals working alongside children and young people, to pause and reflect. To consider not only what we are seeing, but what we might be missing.

In this edition of our newsletter, we are focusing on boys and young men. Across many of our services and partnerships, we continue to see concerns about male mental health, emotional wellbeing, risk-taking behaviours, and engagement with support. Yet behind the behaviours we notice, there is often much more that remains unseen.

As adults, we can sometimes be quick to respond to what is presented on the surface. A young male who appears withdrawn, angry, disruptive, disengaged or dismissive may be communicating something far more complex. This month, we invite you to take a moment of curiosity. To wonder what experiences, challenges or emotions may sit beneath the behaviour. To consider what opportunities we create for boys and young men to talk, connect and ask for help. And perhaps most importantly, to reflect on how we can ensure that those who are struggling are seen before they reach crisis point.

We hope this edition provides some useful insights, challenges assumptions, and supports ongoing conversations about the wellbeing of boys and young men in our communities.

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Service Spotlight - Boys and Young Men: Are We Seeing the Whole Picture?

Recent months have provided valuable opportunities for learning and reflection. Training exploring anabolic steroids, peptides and the growing influence of "looksmaxxing" trends has highlighted the increasing pressures some boys and young men face around appearance, identity and self-worth.

Alongside this, Prevent training prompted important discussions around online communication networks, including the emergence of spaces often described as the "manosphere", and the influence these environments can have on attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

These conversations have challenged us to think critically about the experiences of boys and young men, and perhaps more importantly, to reflect on what we may be missing.

Do our interventions reflect the lived experiences of boys and young men?

Which boys and young men are not engaging with our services?

Within exploitation services, we work hard to ensure that the young people accessing support are representative of the communities we serve. This includes maintaining an awareness of the balance of males and females accessing our services and continually asking whether there are groups of young people who may be less visible. Through our partnership with Youth Justice colleagues, we seek to better understand the needs of boys and young men whose experiences of vulnerability, exploitation and harm may not always fit traditional narratives.

Are there barriers, intended or otherwise, that make it harder for boys to seek support?

Similarly, through CARE Together and funding from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, we have developed a dedicated Boys and Young Men's Worker role. This recognises a well-established challenge: boys and young men are less likely to disclose certain experiences of harm, including sexual violence and abuse, despite being affected by them. If young men are not coming forward, we must ask ourselves whether they do not need support, or whether we need to think differently about how support is offered.

How do boys communicate distress, fear or vulnerability differently?

While society has, thankfully, moved beyond many of the simplistic notions of "boys will be boys" and "boys don't cry", it is worth considering whether our services have moved far enough. Have we genuinely adapted our approaches to meet the needs of boys and young men, or do we still expect them to engage in ways that work better for others?

How often do we explore what lies beneath presentations of anger, disengagement, risk-taking or bravado?

Are we recognising harmful online influences as potential safeguarding concerns?

The question is not whether boys and young men experience harm, vulnerability or emotional distress. We know they do. The challenge for all of us is ensuring that we are asking the right questions, creating the right opportunities for disclosure, and remaining curious enough to see what may sit beneath the surface.

Because if we are not seeing boys and young men in our services, we should not automatically assume that need is absent. Sometimes the more important question is: what is preventing us from seeing it?

What would a service designed specifically with boys and young men in mind look like?

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Seasonal hampers

As we move into Autumn, we are excited to be bringing together our latest seasonal hampers. If you have a volunteer day you would like to use to help up create these, then get in touch! If you wish to support us with this, please contact **Kathleen.Carter@childrenssociety.org.uk** directly to express an interest and identify how best to organise this.

Essex ActivAte

Bookings for Essex ActivAte October Half term clubs open on Monday 21st September. Funded by Essex County Council and delivered by Active Essex, Essex ActivAte half term programmes run during the February, May and October half term holidays. The programme offers a limited number of free places for children and young people who would benefit most from extra support. **Essex Activate | Active Essex**

Youth Voice Day



Black History Month 2026 in Essex

Check out the regional listings and events for **Black History Month 2026** in Essex to find local celebrations, community gatherings, and cultural exhibitions happening across the county this October.

Opportunities

Vacancies

Boys and Young Mens Worker — View / Apply

(Closes 11th October, 2026)

We wish to recruit a specialist Boys and Young Mens worker to join our established Essex CARE (Child At Risk of Exploitation) Together team, supporting male young people aged 8-25 who are at medium risk of exploitation; criminal, sexual, financial or domestic servitude.

You will provide direct therapeutic support to vulnerable young males and support and signpost families who are affected by exploitation. You will provide professional expertise in various panels that review individual risk as well as offer training and resources for other professionals supporting potentially exploited young people.

Support offered will include one to one face to face interventions, targeted group work & online support across the County as well as consultation with professionals.

For more information and to apply please click on the View / Apply link above.

Training

(Various dates available.)

Child Criminal Exploitation — Sign up

Training delivered through the ESCB, supported by members of our CARE team.

AMBIT — Request contact

Team around the Worker approach. If you are interested in how the AMBIT approach can support your team then get in touch with us.

Services awareness

If you would like us to give more information about any of our services, maybe in a team meeting or at an event please contact us on **01245 493311**.

Feedback — Feedback

Like what you see? Let us know by filling out this short feedback form.

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Contacts / Referrals

Referral Forms
All completed referral forms should be emailed to
EssexReferrals@childrenssociety.org.uk

General Enquiries
Email eda@childsoc.org.uk

Services
For more specific information on any of our services you can contact a member of our team:

Safe Practice Managers
Nina.Allard@childrenssociety.org.uk
Sarah.Simpkin@childrenssociety.org.uk

Service Managers & Lead Practitioners
EYPDAS (Essex Young People's Drug & Alcohol Service)
Andrea.Kerridge@childrenssociety.org.uk
Service Manager

CHHAT (Community Hidden Harm Awareness Team)
Tracy.Page@childrenssociety.org.uk
Service Manager

Safe in Essex
Sarah.Chant@childrenssociety.org.uk
Lead Practitioner

Youth Diversion
Victoria.Purdy@childrenssociety.org.uk
Lead Practitioner

CARE Together (Children At Risk of Exploitation)
Leanne.Fuller@childrenssociety.org.uk
Service Manager

Staying Close
Rebecca.Gentry@childrenssociety.org.uk
Service Manager

Inside Out
Julia.Hillam@childrenssociety.org.uk (Essex)
Kathy.Taylor@childrenssociety.org.uk (Hertfordshire)
Service Managers

Volunteers, Vaping Support & Positive Activities
Lauren.Watkinson@childrenssociety.org.uk
Service Manager



Service Info

Visit our website **here** for more details on all our services section or scan the QR codes below:

Essex Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (EYPDAS)

Community Hidden Harm Awareness Team (CHHAT)

Safe in Essex

Children At Risk of Exploitation (CARE Together)

Family Support

Youth Diversion

EssexReferrals@childrenssociety.org.uk
01245 493 311
childrenssocietyeast.org.uk

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