

Essex Countywide Traveller Unit

Joint Committee Report – 22nd October 2013

The following report covers the first full year of operation, including the updated position from the first joint committee presentation in May 2013.

Health

Health outreach continues to work on a 3 stream approach:-

- Direct one to one work with families
- Utilising national campaigns for focus/resource support
- Utilising existing resources – SOS Bus, Essex Young Peoples Drunk & Alcohol Service Bus, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service bus (Thurrock) as a focal point to promote campaigns/issues.

Inoculations/Immunisations (May 2013 reported figure in brackets)

Primary

- MMR outreach to 180 families
- 5 Children (from 11 identified) on a unauthorised encampment received primary Immunisations
- 17 teenagers identified to receive diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus, Human Papillomavirus immunisations previously missed
- 2 received boosters
- 20 Human Papillomavirus jabs for young girls organised for domiciliary team to carry out on SOS bus – lower turn out due to rumour being spread linking the jab to contraception. Hopefully will pick up more with second jab/booster.

Flu

- Outreach to 30 sites, 291 families including 2 pregnant women and 5 people with Long Term Conditions

Primary immunisations on-going, and Flu campaign to be repeated in October 2013

GP / Dentist Registrations (May 2013 reported figure in brackets)

- 170 families have been confirmed registered with GP
- 16 (13) new registrations
- 1 temp registration with Long Term Condition
- 6 families referred to Health Visitors re health and ante natal care issues
- 4 new families registered to dentists.

Long Term Conditions

8 supported with accessing/maintaining appointments

53 identified to date with LTCs including diabetics, asthmatics, arthritics, heart, cancer etc. There are high levels of stress/depression in the community, although these figures only identify more extreme cases.

Case Study - Visit to a Long Term Health Client who cannot read. I went through all of her hospital appointment letters and put all the dates in my diary. A few days before each appointment, I have rung to remind about the appointment so that it was not missed. This has proved successful and the client has been to all appointments so far.

First Aid Training

12 adults and young people signed up to courses, plus families/children given basic first aid, resuscitation training at Health Days see below.

National Campaigns

Child Safety Week

Outreach re child safety and reduction of Childhood Accidents delivered across 20 sites.

Direct participation by 70 families, including 126 children

National Smile Month



Outreach re oral health to 71 families, 90 children*

Case Study - On a return visit to one family, the mother said how using the star charts to encourage her daughter to brush her teeth had really made a difference, and she had been buying more stickers to continue using the chart.

EYPDAS Bus – Multi Agency Health Day on Hovefields site in Basildon



Utilising the Drugs and Alcohol bus, advice was dispensed on Drugs, Alcohol awareness including the use of “Beer Goggles”, glasses that highlight the effects of drinking on your ability to co-ordinate your limbs, stop smoking, First Aid Training to Children and Adults by the Red Cross, and Health Trainers carrying out health checks.

Packs handed out included the information on the drug & alcohol as above, meningitis and breast cancer information. This was attended by over 30 people including children and pregnant women – this will be rolled out to other sites in the near future.

Expectant mum learns how to clear an obstruction from a young infant



The national stop smoking campaign is running throughout October, and is being promoted to the community using resources / promotional material supplied from the national campaign site. Participants will be linked to further support if required.



Health checks - Facilitated over 3 sites where 32 people visited the health bus, with 26 having full health checks and the remainder taking information on health issues and the checks.

Indicator	Sub Division	May 13	October 13	Total
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Facilitated to received primary Immunisation		50	180	230
	Through domiciliary team	11*	20	31
Facilitated to receive the flu jabs		291	n/a	291
Pregnant women facilitated to access Ante-Natal	Under 12 weeks	Not reported	0	0
	Over 12 weeks	Not reported	4	4**
Identified as having Long Term condition (LTC)		8	45	53
LTC's receiving flu jab		5	n/a	5
Number assisted to register with GP	Permanent	13	3	16
	Temporary	1	0	1
Health checks facilitated		Not reported	26	26
Number referred to stop smoking		Not reported	6	6
	Pregnant		n/a	n/a

* 11 referred to domiciliary, but were unable to fulfil due to lack of availability of domiciliary service
will be raising effort/focus in this area

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Education (May 2013 reported figure in brackets)

Education is cyclical, in that there are certain time frames for completing various school applications. In addition to the main figures below, work is carried out around school appeals and working with Educational Welfare Officers around attendance issues.

191 (162) children supported into school

46 (40) 2yr olds funded and placed in pre school

32 (28) new families register with Childrens Centres

31 (28) School Transport applications

14 (9) young people supported into further education/apprenticeship

Home Education Data

Total children referred to Home Education Service (HES)

Romany Gypsy = 46, 4.25% of total referrals to service

Traveller of Irish Heritage = 30, 2.77% of total referrals to service

Total children recorded as ethnicity not obtained but referred by EMTAS = 3

For info the total number of HES referrals across all ethnicities = 1082

It is preferable for Gypsy/Traveller to attend schools in terms of receiving appropriate level of education, and integration. Home education is often not the ideal solution as parents may not be literate themselves, hence low rates are preferable.

Indicator	Sub Division	May 13	October 13	Total
Number of Children accessing pre-school /school 2 – 16		162	29	191
Number of children transferring from primary to secondary			Not yet available	
Number of young adults accessing further education		9	5	14
Number/%of children referred to Home Education		0	76 (7%)	76

Case study - A message received by the Outreach Worker from a mother who is moving area. A home visit, to complete school application forms to a new school for the 3 children, had already taken place. The mother said that the family had to move out of their present address in 3 days and the

Fire Safety (May 2013 reported figure in brackets)

Fire safety checks continue to be carried out around the county. There has been additional effort in promoting the Home fire safety visits which has should a significant increase in take up and will continue to expand.

- 38 (2) Home Fire Safety visits completed
- 40 (24) Site Fire Safety checks carried out

Thurrock - targeted campaigns have been carried out through direct liaison with 60 families on Thurrock sites working with Thurrock's Traveller Education and EFRS to delivered fire safety advice

EDF East of England Awards 2010

“ACT NOW OR ELSE CHILDREN COULD DIE”

A COUNCILLOR has made an impassioned plea for authorities to act quickly or risk having the death of children on their conscience.

Thurrock Deputy Mayor and Belhus ward councillor Wendy Curtis is leading a campaign to improve safety standards at a caravan site that has grown to host around a 1,000 people - many of them children.

And some of those children have already come close to death after being literally dragged away from flames through the windows of their mobile homes.

■ Cllrs Charles and Wendy Curtis, Essex Countywide Traveller Unit officers Nikki Coates and Gill Nelson and Thurrock Traveller Achievement Service's Sue Firth.

Cavectra

**WALK IN -
APPROVED FINA
TYPICAL FINA
£3995 - N
CREDIT FACII
£108.30 PER MONTH
APR 15.3% NO DEPOS
COMPLETION FEE £0**

A strong message reflected in the local press

Indicator	Sub Division	May 13	October 13	Total
Home fire safety Visit	by ECTU	2	36	38
	Referred to ECFRS	0	11 identified with risk score of 50+ which are being referred to ECFRS	11
Note: Approx. 75% of those assessed require a smoke alarm; these have been ordered and are currently going through internal processes to distribute.				
Site Fire Safety Visits incl. access, water supply, spacing, Gas Cylinder storage, Hazardous Materials	by ECTU	24	16	40
	Referred to ECFRS	0	0	0

Police Report

Introduction

T/Police Sergeant Steele joined the ECTU on 15th July 2013 on a six months secondment.

The initial period of her secondment has predominantly been concerned with attending and dealing with unauthorised encampments across Essex and ensuring that a consistent and proportionate approach, in line with policy, has been applied.

As a result, this function supports local officers with understanding the issues and legislation in relation to unlawful encampments and subsequent eviction criteria. The postholder has been able to examine the wider issues that surround these encampments and has been quick to deal with any criminal offences and antisocial behaviour identified.

During the preceding six months the total number of unauthorised encampments, during which Section 61 notices were served by the police, was 21.

Case study (what works well)

An example to illustrate this relates to a Traveller family, who occupied a number of unauthorised encampments in Essex during the 2013 summer period.

As a result of their behaviour and fly tipping on the Towerlands Equestrian Centre in Braintree, they were evicted by police using Section 61 Powers. Each encampment was visited by the ECTU police officer and she conducted all relevant assessments. Before and after photographs of the sites were taken. This photographic evidence was

used as justification for subsequent evictions. The reasons for the eviction were explained to the Travellers and owing to the previous knowledge and evidence already secured Section 61 notices were served. The result being, that subsequent sites occupied by this particular family were litter free.

Engagement

With the end of the summer period, the ECTU police officer was able to dedicate more time to community engagement. Through regular contact with the residents of our council run sites, the level of engagement and acceptance has increased. This engagement has been facilitated by partnership working with other members of the ECTU. For instance, the Outreach workers were able to introduce the police officer onto sites and allay any concerns regarding the purpose of her presence.

The view has been taken that the policing of a Traveller community should not differ to community policing in general. There must be a balance of community engagement, crime prevention and the enforcement of the law.

Therefore, engagement has been made with partner agencies such as the RSPCA – with regards to encouraging Travellers to take responsibility for their animals, in particular horses. The ECTU's ability to engage with the Traveller community in Essex means that we have access to sites where the RSPCA would not routinely go. We were able to assist with raising awareness amongst the Travellers with regards to a horse worming, chipping and passport day being held in Tilbury earlier this month. We look forward to further partnership working with the RSPCA with regards to this matter. Work has also commenced with Trading Standards, in regards to 'rogue trader' issues and Environmental Health in regards to scrap metal dealing / collecting.

Indicator	Sub Division	October 13	Total
Increased knowledge and understanding of Gypsy/Traveller Communities	N/A	Qualitative data as detailed in narrative above. Plus 10 sessions of cultural awareness have been held	N/A
	Number of hate crimes reported by Gypsy/Traveller community	1	1
Number of UE's recorded	S61 applied	21	21

Unauthorised Encampments (May 2013 reported figure in brackets) (

The following is based on unauthorised encampments from the 1st January 2013 to current date. This is not necessarily comprehensive in that we may not have been advised of all encampments in Essex, especially if on non-partner or private land. There will be some occasions where we have made an initial visit to establish location/position but not pursued if found to be non-partner/private land.

77 (13) unauthorised encampments recorded by ECTU (we may not have recorded / been made aware of unauthorised encampments in non-partner/private areas)

- 51 managed/visited by ECTU
- 17 non partner sites
- 9 private sites

Of the 77 reported encampments, there were **61** separate identifiable groups of Traveller involved.

1 departed after section 77 eviction through to court order

2 departed on issue of section 77 direction to leave

48 negotiated departures.

As previously reported, several challenging encampments stopped in non-partner areas

Echo

Travellers pitch up on to Labworth car park

2:00pm Tuesday 10th September 2013



Travellers pitch up on to Labworth car park

TOWN leaders are furious "naive" council and police officers did not act firmly to move on Travellers who ruined trade on the last busy weekend of summer.

Dave Blackwell and Ray Howard are demanding answers from Castle Point Council and Essex Police after Travellers allegedly broke a shop window, stole food and frightened off customers from Canvey.

early season. This trend has continued with an encampment at the Brentwood Centre which had issues with the legal process, as both Brentwood and their partner authority did not have the available resources to progress through the appropriate court process. Castle Point had an encampment arrive on a Thursday evening at a key seaside car park in the last weekend of the main season on Canvey Island which they were unable to move till the Monday.

Indicator	Sub Division	May 13	October 13	Total
% of encampments where ECTU are involved		54%	66%	
% visited within 1 working day		100%	97%	
Number of encampments	Partner land	7	44	51
	Non-partner land	2	15	17
	Private	4	5	9
Number of encampments resolved	Through negotiated departure	7	41	48
	Through section 77 enforcement	0	3	3
% s77's completed within 10 working days		n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of pt 55's issued		0	0	0

Police have reviewed their policy with regards to the management of unauthorised encampments, last issued pre the Dale Farm actions. Awaiting formal publication.

Statistics do not always fully reflect the time, effort and outright passion involved in carrying out the roles in an ECTU officer's daily life. Working with the Gypsy / Traveller community is often not a career path of choice, and our officers come from a wide variety of back grounds, but the more you work with, and learn about this community who's history in the UK dates back to the 1400's, the more it becomes a true vocation.

To give an idea of what can happen in a typical day:-

8:00 **Office**

- e mails, admin,
- contact school to discuss alternative education for pupil at risk of dropping out
- Researched courses for a young person I am supporting to find apprenticeship, I had booked her in for support to register and apply for apprenticeship with support worker at job centre, she had then been offered an interview last week but this had not gone well, I think she needs something like employability skills training. Over 1:30 hour on phone trying to find appropriate course, various people to send me details of possible courses.
- Contact from pre-school re safeguarding concerns

10:00 **site visits**

- Support to mother re options for daughter who is at risk of dropping out, of school, discussed options that school had offered, explained them to the mother along with explaining changes in timetable, what this would mean etc, agreed to discuss meeting in school to finalise/enable choice to be made.
- Supported family re child to be accessing pre-school place, discussed 2 year funding, agreed I will contact pre-school to put on list. Discussed older child's school transport was due to start reception in September, but mum refused school space offered. I had supported re visit to school and mum has agreed to send but transport still not been put in place.

11:00 – 12:30 **Play Bus outreach on site**

- Attended by 5 adults at different points and 9 children.
- Discussed accessing health care and anti-natal appointments with one mother who is registered out of county, advised about temporary registration at local surgery to access checks etc. Also dealt with a benefits query.
- Spoke to 2 mothers about the stop smoking promotion, gave resources and advised re support available.
- Discussed with mother accessing health care and updating immunisation for her child, they are registered out of county, has been accessing walk in centre. Phone the local surgery arranged for her to go and make temporary registration so can discuss immunisation and access for health care.

1:30 Home visit Brentwood area.

A resident contacted me for support re her nephew accessing course/education, as I had previously supported her son into school (year 10) a year ago and who I continue to support.

She is currently caring for sister who is seriously ill. When I arrived, she told me that her sister was not well enough to see me, she became very distressed/tearful, the illness is very serious and the family do not know, she is finding it very stressful also discussed historic domestic abuse that is effecting her emotionally again, discussed support for her to enable her to provide on-going care, agreed I would refer to McMillan Care. Also to support re hospital appointments for her.

She agreed to pass on my number to her nephew, who can ring me if he wants support re options (Education), or situation.

3:15 Home Visit to family referred by CME (Child Missing Education), family was not on plot, spoke to men who were there who said that they had gone away.

Back to office

- Admin
- Referral to McMillan care
- Contact to refer to pre-school x 2
- T/C to Queens Hospital

Key elements

Home visits, the bread and butter of our operations, where relationships are built, and services delivered around; education including school issues, bullying, school applications, non-school attendance, pre-school. Housing, benefits, health and long term health problems, fire safety issues, school transport applications and issues, adult education, literacy issues and domestic violence issues.

Joint home visits to support access to the community for other agencies - Teachers, to carry out assessments on new intake, Social Services Teams, Libraries, School Nurses, Children Centre Nurses, Education Welfare Service, Community Fire Officers, Police as many other agencies who find the community difficult to access.



Meetings - community engagement meetings, traveller forums, careers events, training, support parents in school meetings, pre-school and children's centre events. Support the different services on the SOS bus. Support a young person at a careers/apprenticeship/college meeting. School's pupil support meetings, supporting families at Education Welfare Service meeting etc

Challenges - for some of the team, part of the day will be spent visiting sites, carrying out fire safety surveys and offering advice, hence a positive and welcoming environment, part will be spent telling a group of Travellers that they have not camped in an acceptable place and will have to move, hence less welcoming.

We can be met with fear, mistrust, hostility, threats and anger – both from the community, and their pets – but we can equally be met with a welcoming smile, appreciation, gratitude and relief that someone is showing an interest in them and care – whatever the reception we continue to strive to ensure the community gets the access to the things they need/are entitled to, and equally that they live responsibly in pursuance of their culture/lifestyle. Safe to say, no 2 days are the same, and that there continues to be a surprise/challenge around every corner – but we have an excellent team to meet those challenges.

General Liaison/Site Management

Supported Police and Crime Commissioners public meeting in Rochford in September, to field any questions around the building of a new caravan site based on Severalls Lane case study and any other generic issues.

Horse issues – there are nationwide issues around the keeping / security of horses, and recent incidents in the Basildon area have highlighted this issue. Norfolk/Suffolk are creating a county wide policy following similar issues resulting in a fatality just before Christmas. There is an opportunity to roll this out/resource a similar policy in Essex.

Site licencing – initial discussions have taken place with Epping with reference to Site Licence monitoring/enforcement, which may be of interest to our partners