

County Council report for May 2022

Violence Against Women and Girls funding announced

On April 4th, Suffolk County Council announced £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022.

This fund has been provided by Suffolk County Council to support the work of the strategy in preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

Organisations will be able to apply for this funding to support initiatives that are synonymous with the objectives of the strategy and aim to stop violence against women and girls.

‘Just say hello, just listen, just reach out’

A new film featuring various partners from across Suffolk has been released which aims to prevent suicide.

The ‘Just Say Hello’ campaign aims to raise awareness of how a simple ‘hello’ can make the difference to a person’s mental wellbeing, whether it be a loved one or a stranger.

With evidence suggesting that 75% of people who die by suicide have no contact with mental health services, or even their GP within the 12 months preceding their death, it is important that everyone knows they can play their part. Simply reaching out and starting a conversation can be enough to help someone or by interrupting their thought process and encouraging them to get further help.

Featured in the film is Terry Waite who used to work as a hostage negotiator in some of the most dangerous parts of the world and unfortunately was captured and spent almost five years in strict solitary confinement. He says, “Each year in Suffolk alone, 65 people die this way. And those figures are frankly tragic and unacceptable.”

This video highlights suicide being the biggest killer for men under the age of 45, with 3 in 4 deaths by suicide being men.

99% of pupils receive a preferred primary on National Offer Day

This year 99.22% of children were offered a place at one of their parents’ three preferred schools and 95.6% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 7144 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2022.

Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email with details of the school place offered.

Fire service delivers much-needed equipment to Ukraine

It was announced on April 19th that Staff from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service embarked on a 1,000-mile journey to transport vital firefighting kit to help their counterparts in Ukraine

The deployment team, consisting of six volunteers, will drive across Europe to deliver Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's donation of two fully operational fire engines and accompanying equipment, which forms part of the wider National Fire Chiefs Council and Fire Aid initiative.

Their journey will see them travel to Kent to join the national convoy of vehicles departing for Ukraine. From there, they will head to Poland, where they will hand over the vehicles and kit to the Polish Fire Service, who will distribute the items to the Ukrainian fire stations most in need.

Suffolk County Council to freeze post-16 travel costs to schools and colleges

It was announced on April 28th that Suffolk County Council is to freeze charges for travel for over 16s to schools and colleges from September.

The council's Cabinet agreed fares should remain at 2021/22 levels for another 12 months to help families faced with soaring living costs. The decision means costs for the 2022/23 academic year will remain at £930 per year for mainstream transport and £750 for SEND pupils.

Councillor Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for Education, SEND and Skills, said:

"With the fuel, energy or other price rises at this time, Suffolk County Council does not feel it would be appropriate to ask families to pay any additional charge. We are particularly concerned that any uplift would affect less well-off families. We are also concerned that any increase might be considered unaffordable and may limit post-16 options for students, which absolutely is not an outcome desired by Suffolk County Council."

The decision will be reviewed in 12 months' time.

The Post-16 Travel Policy applies to full-time learners aged 16-18 years, and those aged 19 years and over if they are continuing the same course started before their nineteenth birthday. It also applies to continuing learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 19-25 years.

To qualify for funding under the scheme young people need to continue to study or train in one of three ways:

- Study full-time in a school, college or with a training provider (at least 540 hours of planned learning per year)

- Full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more per week) combined with part-time education or training leading to relevant regulated qualifications (at least 280 hours of planned learning per year)

- Be working in an apprenticeship, supported internship or traineeship

The council is not required by law to fund Post-16 Travel and does not receive any funding from central government to fund it.