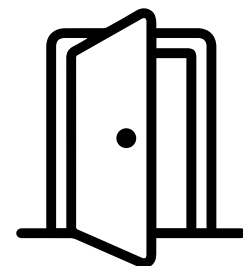




This month's newsletter is all about opening doors to opportunity — from Supported Internships and travel training to inspiring events like United in Diversity, which brings young people together to explore creativity, careers and new experiences. We're also championing the importance of young people having their voices heard, ensuring their experiences shape the support and opportunities around them. Across every story, the focus is on helping young people build confidence, gain independence and take their next steps into adulthood.



Launch of the Preparing for Adulthood: Parents and Carers Guide to Post-16 Opportunities

LATEST NEWS

We are delighted to announce our new guide is now available to help families understand the full range of options available to young people after age 16. The guide brings together clear, accessible information on post-16 education and training routes, employment pathways, Supported Internships, apprenticeships, travel training and wider Preparing for Adulthood support. It also includes practical tips, timelines and questions to support informed decision-making.

Access the guide via the web link or QR code (our QR code collects basic anonymous data to help ECC understand how the guide is accessed)



<https://www.essexopportunities.co.uk/post-16-parents-carers-guide/post-16-parents-carers-guide/>



Printed copies will soon be available in all Essex libraries (for reference only)

As part of our commitment to promoting shared language and shared understanding across Essex, this guide is intended for use by both practitioners and families to ensure everyone is working from the same information and messaging.

Please share this resource widely with families and carers!

This guide has been produced with the support of Essex Family Forum



Supported Internships

Supported Internship Celebration Event at Basildon Towngate Theatre

The annual Supported Internship Celebration Event brought together providers, employers, families, schools and young people at the Basildon Towngate Theatre to recognise this year's achievements.

One of the highlights was hearing directly from the interns themselves. Several young people spoke about their placements, the skills they've developed and how their confidence has grown. For some, the experience has already led to paid employment — a milestone they were clearly proud to share. Their reflections offered an honest and encouraging insight into the difference Supported Internships can make.

The event offered a positive snapshot of the progress young people have made and the growing opportunities available to them, reinforcing the important role Supported Internships play in helping them move toward meaningful work and greater independence.

To find out more about Supported Internships contact your local FE college or email: targetedemployment@essex.gov.uk



Celebrating Success: Tyler's Supported Internship Journey!

We are delighted to recognise Tyler, whose remarkable progress on his Supported Internship has led to an exciting new chapter in his career.

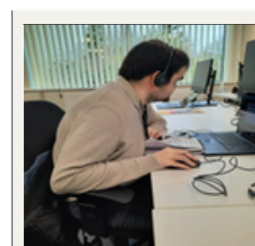
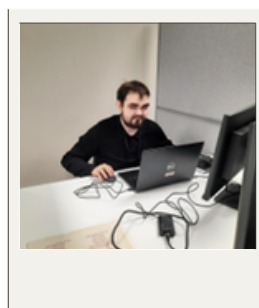


Over the past six months, Tyler has shown incredible determination, resilience, and a real eagerness to learn. From building confidence in communication to mastering complex internal systems, Tyler has embraced every challenge with a positive attitude. He became a valued team member during his Business Support placement at Ely House in Basildon - supporting real tasks, learning internal ECC IT systems, completing essential training, and steadily growing in independence.

Tyler's hard work has truly paid off - not only has he developed impressive skills in business support and IT, he has also grown in confidence - so much so that he has successfully secured a L3 Business Admin Apprenticeship with Essex County Council!

His manager praised his consistent communication, willingness to learn, and the clear growth in his engagement with colleagues. Tyler's journey is a shining example of what Supported Internships can offer: real experience, real growth, and real opportunities.

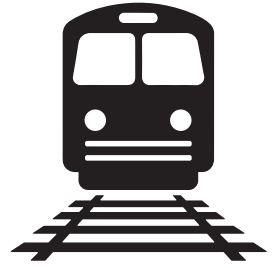
Congratulations, Tyler - your dedication and positivity have opened the door to a bright and exciting future. We can't wait to see where your career takes you next!



Supported Internships

Greater Anglia Supported Internship: New Opportunities!!

South Essex College is excited to announce its growing partnership with Greater Anglia to deliver a high-quality **Supported Internship Programme** for young people with additional needs. This host-site programme offers fantastic opportunities for real work experience across several **South Essex train stations**.



Interns take part in meaningful workplace rotations, including:

- Gate Line support – assisting customers with ticket scanning and queries
- Ticket Office shadowing – learning customer service and station operations
- Station Care – developing skills in safety checks, presentation, and creating a welcoming environment

Alongside hands-on experience, interns receive **dedicated mentoring, job coach support, travel training**, and regular **6-weekly review meetings** to monitor progress and build confidence. Interns spend three to four days each week on placement, with an additional classroom day focused on employability, English, maths, and personal development.

This is an exciting and expanding opportunity, and South Essex College looks forward to offering even more placements in the coming year.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa from SEC directly via email:



supportedinternship@southessex.ac.uk



**SOUTH ESSEX
COLLEGES GROUP**

greateranglia

Taking Flight: Vinny's Supported Internship at Southend Airport



Vinny has been a Supported Intern with USP College at Southend Airport. He's been working at the Fuel Centre but hopes to also gain experience in the Fire Department, Jet Centre and Engineering.

Vinny loves the “hands on” element of his work and being able to apply this to his placements. Southend Airport have also been “delighted to support Vinny with his Supported Internship ...especially for young people who have a passion for aviation”

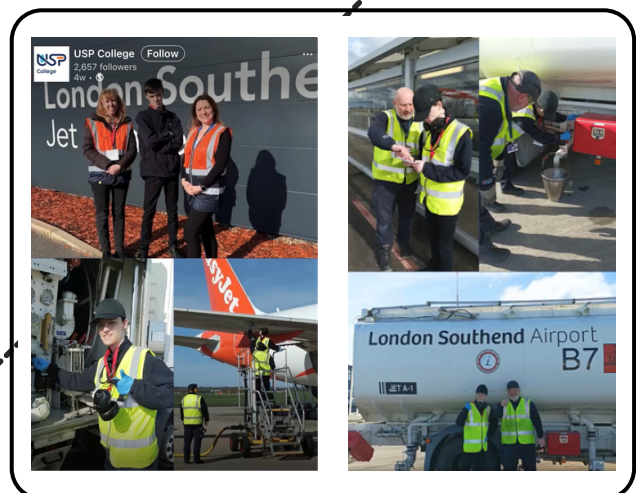
Click [here](#) to find out more about Supported Internships at USP or email:



julie.clark@uspcollege.ac.uk



Unified Sevic Palmer's



United in Diversity: Pathways to potential

Braxted Park, 10 June 2026 (10.00am - 2.30pm)

“Helping to raise aspirations, understand employment options and take positive steps towards adulthood!”

United in Diversity offers settings supporting SEND learners aged 11+ a valuable opportunity to strengthen careers education and preparation for adulthood.

‘**Pathways to potential**’, the event’s **Employment Zone**, gives learners the chance to engage with inclusive employers, training providers and supported employment organisations in an accessible, supportive environment. Young people can explore real employment pathways, build confidence and understand how their strengths link to future work, Supported Internships, apprenticeships and further learning.

Attendance directly supports the **Gatsby Benchmarks**, particularly encounters with employers, experiences of workplaces and personal guidance, while also providing **clear evidence for Ofsted around high aspirations, careers education and preparation for adulthood** for SEND learners.

The event is open to **mainstream, special, FE and independent education settings. Young people who are not currently in school full-time** (for example EBSA, part-time timetables or alternative provision) **but who are still on a school roll, can attend with a tutor** to ensure inclusive access for all learners.

Spaces are limited and filling up quickly! Please email:

 amy.gair@essex.gov.uk if you would like to attend

Returning Employers!!



Childcare



Catering



Careers and aspirations



Police Service



Fitness activities



Disability equipment



Health & Care



Bricklaying



Retail



Social Enterprise

New to 2026! We are delighted to welcome the following organisations this year:



Animal Care



Construction



Travel & Tourism



Hair & Beauty



Construction & PPE



Fire Service



Library Service



Engineering



Construction



Facilities

**stay
TUNED**

We are currently in discussion with a local bus company to attend alongside our Essex Travel Training team so watch this space!!



United in Diversity: Pathways to potential

Exciting News: All Things Alpaca to join us at United in Diversity!

We're delighted to share that All Things Alpaca will be joining us at this year's United in Diversity event — and they're bringing their pygmy goats for an engaging, hands-on animal care experience!

Young people will have the chance to meet and learn about the personalities, origins and care needs of pygmy goats whilst providing them a unique opportunity to build confidence, explore new interests and gain an insight into what's involved in animal care within a calm and friendly environment.

All Things Alpaca **also provide education packages designed to support learners from EYFS through to KS4, including those with SEND.** These can take place on the farm or in your school/setting, offering hands-on learning, wellbeing benefits, and opportunities for students to explore nature and animal care safely and interactively.

This interactive session will be a wonderful addition to the day, and we are thrilled to welcome the All Things Alpaca team — and their charming pygmy goats — to Pathways to Potential!



<https://www.allthingsalpaca.co.uk/>



Author Announcement:

Inbali Iserles & Anurag Aggarwal to join us for 2026!

We are thrilled to welcome two inspiring creatives to United in Diversity this year

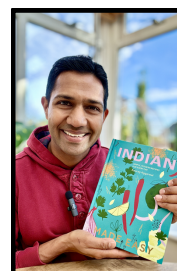
Inbali Iserles

Inbali is a million-copy bestselling author, celebrated for The Tygrine Cat, which is named as one of “50 books every child should read.” Her love of wildlife inspired the bestselling FOXCRAFT trilogy, and Inbali will be speaking to young people about writing as a career, including how to structure a story, the editing and publication process, and what it really takes to bring a book to life.



Anurag Aggarwal

Anurag is a 2023 MasterChef UK finalist and author who brings creativity and passion to food. Reaching the final helped him realise his true calling and led him to leave a successful career in finance for food, writing, and motivational speaking. Anurag will be inspiring young people by sharing his MasterChef journey, how he found the courage to change careers, and how he turned his passion into a profession by encouraging them to believe in their creativity, work hard, and follow what truly inspires them.



This year's event offers young people the chance to learn directly from two remarkable storytellers - one through books, one through food - both showing that creativity can shape exciting, meaningful careers!

Preparing for Adulthood opportunities



SEDNFest at Colchester Zoo

The Independence Project is bringing back SENDFest - an event that gives young people with SEND a relaxed, accessible space to explore animal encounters, outdoor areas and sensory-friendly activities across over 60 acres of parkland.



Colchester Zoo, Stanway



Saturday 30 May, 6–9pm

SEDNFest isn't just a great night out — it also **supports key Preparing for Adulthood outcomes**. Young people can **build confidence and independence** by navigating new environments, develop social skills and friendships in a calm setting, and **enjoy meaningful community participation** through a fully inclusive event that celebrates their strengths.

Tickets start from £10 + booking fee, and families can book online at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/send-fest-at-colchester-zoo-essex-2026-tickets-1981700283895>



Summer Reading challenge volunteers needed!



Essex Libraries are inviting young people aged 14 and over to volunteer for the Summer Reading Challenge 2026 to encourage children to enjoy reading over the summer holidays. Volunteers will support library staff by chatting with children about the books they've read, helping with activities, and handing out rewards as young readers progress through the challenge.

Volunteering is a great way to gain confidence, build customer service and teamwork skills, and make a positive difference in your local community. It's also ideal for anyone looking for work experience or volunteering, including those working towards awards or future careers with children and young people.

If you enjoy reading and working with people this could be the perfect summer opportunity!

To find out more or apply go to:

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/news/summer-reading-challenge-volunteering>



Essex Local Offer Roadshows: new dates for 2026!

Essex Local Offer Roadshows bring together education, health, and social care practitioners under one roof to help parents and carers of children with SEND access advice, support, and local resources (no diagnosis required). All run from 9.30am to 12.30pm across various locations in Essex as below:

1 July 2026 - West Essex (Foakes Hall Dunmow)

15 June 2026 - South Essex (Mill Arts, Rayleigh)

17 June 2026 - Mid Essex (Silver End Village Hall)

22 June 2026 - NE Essex (Venture Centre, Manningtree)

If there is information you would like included in future newsletters please email us at:



targetedemployment@essex.gov.uk

Preparing for Adulthood opportunities

Library Enterprise Project: Empowering Futures Together



We're proud to introduce the **Library Enterprise Project**, an exciting new partnership between Essex Library Service and Targeted Employment, created to open doors and build meaningful opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

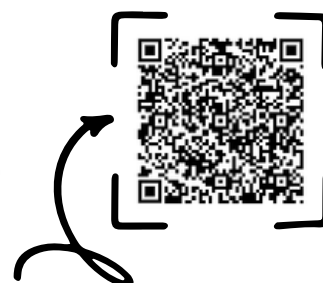
At its core, the project brings together enterprise, skills development, and practical, real-world experience to support young people's futures. By using our libraries as welcoming, inclusive community spaces, SEND young people can **build confidence, develop employability skills, and explore pathways into work and enterprise**. From hands-on activities to supported engagement with local employers, the focus is on turning potential into possibility.

This is a journey built on collaboration...

We're inviting **local businesses, employers, and partners across Essex to play a part in this inspiring initiative**. Whether you can offer careers insight, workplace experiences, volunteering opportunities, or potential employment pathways, your involvement can make a lasting difference to a young person's future.

Do you own, work for, or know a business that could support SEND young people?

Simply scan the QR code to join The Bridge – our online platform connecting businesses with inclusive opportunities and emerging talent.



Together, we can strengthen communities, champion inclusion, and help young people thrive.



Supporting Independence for young people with SEND



Essex's **Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT)** service, including **DigiGo**, offers flexible, on-demand travel with no fixed routes or timetables – giving passengers greater control over their journeys and improving access to education, employment, health appointments and social opportunities.

This flexibility makes DDRT an excellent tool for **travel training**, helping young people with SEND learn core skills such as using public transport safely, planning journeys, building confidence, and developing independence for school, college and everyday life. Travel training supports young people to overcome barriers to employment, social inclusion and independent travel.

DDRT and travel training create valuable real-world opportunities for young people with SEND to practise safe, supported, and progressively independent travel across Essex.

Careers and Employability updates

Support in understanding workplace etiquette and expectations

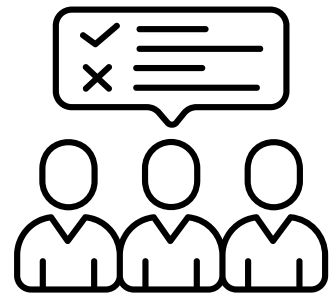


Starting a new job or work placement can feel overwhelming — especially when no one explains the “unwritten rules”. Knowing how to communicate professionally, what good workplace etiquette looks like, and what employers expect isn’t always straightforward.

To support young people stepping into work, the Employ Autism team has created a clear and accessible new guide to help make sense of it all.

Inside the guide, you’ll find:

- what workplace etiquette means
- tips for understanding and navigating unwritten rules
- practical strategies to use in real-life situations
- reflections from young people who’ve experienced these challenges themselves



You can download the full guide now on the [Youth Network](#). It’s a great resource for building confidence and understanding what helps workplaces feel easier to navigate.

Careers & Enterprise Company Podcast: Let’s Make It Work

The latest episode of Let’s Make It Work: The Podcast is now live — and it’s a powerful conversation about how modern work experience can open doors for young people.

This episode explores how a **whole-school approach** can transform work experience into a driver of engagement, attainment, and long-term destinations. Guests discuss securing leadership buy-in, embedding careers across the curriculum, and building on existing good practice to ensure every experience is meaningful.

Listen or watch now on: [The Podcast](#) | [CEC Corporate Web](#)

Episodes 1 and 2 can also be found [here](#)



THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Spotlight on Youth Employment UK Free Career Resources for young people and Employer Guides

Youth Employment UK support young people with free skills and careers resources, help employers develop youth-friendly practices, and provide expert insight across UK youth employment policy. They have created:

- [NHS Careers Resources](#) to help students explore a wide range of roles through real case studies and clear pathways
- A wider [Career Guide](#) which offers sector-by-sector insights, explaining what different jobs involve, the skills needed, and routes to get there

They have also produced some best practice Employer Guides including:

[How to Reduce Hidden Recruitment Costs](#)

[Pre-Work You Can Do Before Onboarding](#)



Careers and Employability updates

We Rise – Supporting young people to shape their future

We Rise is a youth-led programme supporting young people aged 16–25 across Essex to build confidence, develop skills and connect with employers. Through mentoring, events and hands-on experiences, young people are supported to explore their options and take positive steps towards work, training or further learning.



We Rise also promotes the Essex Careers Padlet, an easy-to-use online hub bringing together careers information, local opportunities and employer insight. The Padlet has a current focus on highlighting growing industries across Essex, helping young people learn more about where jobs are emerging and what pathways could be right for them.

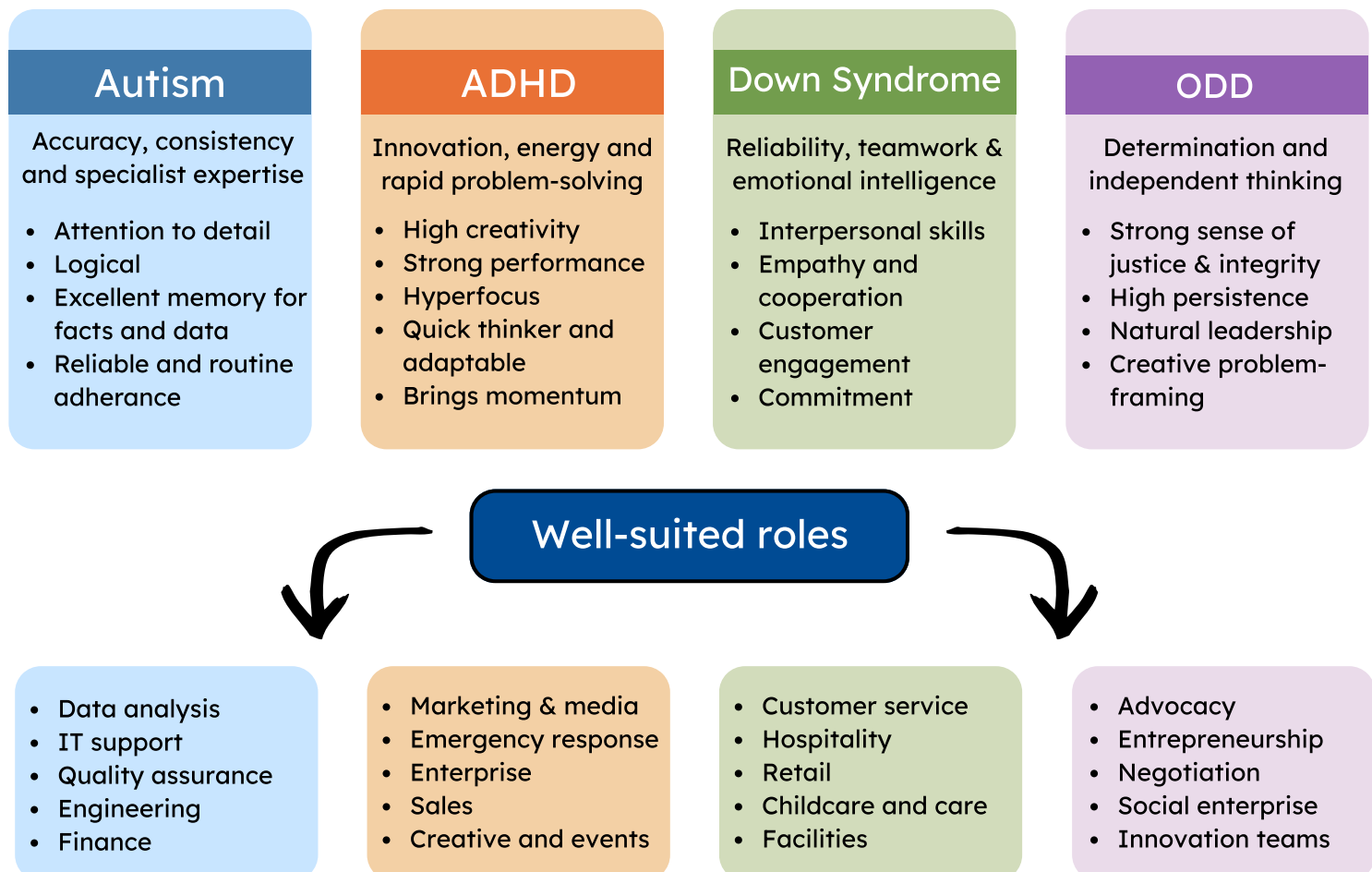


For more information visit: www.essexopportunities.co.uk/we-rise/

Preparing for Adulthood and employment: Recognising strengths



Different ways of thinking, learning, and interacting can bring valuable skills into the workplace. **By focusing on strengths, interests, and personal qualities** rather than difficulties, **we can support positive conversations, early planning, and meaningful pathways into employment and adulthood** that build on what young people can do well.



Other news...



Check our post-16 opportunities Events Calendar!

Our Post-16 Opportunities Events Calendar offers a year-long guide to careers fairs, college open days, skills shows and transition events to help young people and parents/carers prepare for their journey into adulthood.

There are lots of careers events and college open days and evenings taking place throughout April and May, making this a great time to explore post-16 options and plan next steps.

Stay updated and plan ahead by checking the calendar regularly or by contacting:

 targetedemployment@essex.gov.uk



<https://essexcc.pagetiger.com/calendar2526>

World Autism Acceptance Month: Free School Resources



The National Autistic Society has created a set of free resource packs to help schools develop understanding, acceptance and inclusion for autistic children and young people.

Resources are suitable for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, with materials that can be used in classrooms, assemblies or as part of a whole-school focus. Each pack includes lesson plans, assembly slides, activity sheets and discussion resources, all designed to be age-appropriate and easy to use.

The packs support positive conversations about autism, promote empathy and help create learning environments where autistic pupils feel valued, understood and accepted.

Practitioner, parent and home-education resources are also available to encourage wider inclusion beyond the classroom.



[WAAM School Resource Packs - National Autistic Society](#)



Vocational Profiling training

We have commissioned Vocational Profiling training for **whole teams, available to ECC colleagues and education settings.**

The training will help staff better understand young people's interests and aspirations, so they can support them to find the best possible match to realistic and sustainable employment or training opportunities.

To discuss further, please email:

 targetedemployment@essex.gov.uk

YOUTH VOICE CENSUS 2026

The Youth Voice Census survey is live for 2026! This is the opportunity for young people across the UK share their experiences of education, work, and life - and ensure their voices reach those who can create real change.

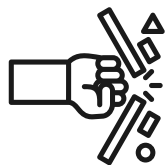
The survey is for individuals aged 11 - 30 in the UK and responses are completely anonymous.

Click below for more details or to complete the survey:

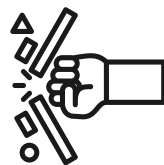
[Youth Voice Census 2026](#)



Other news...



Sensory-friendly practice: reducing barriers



Sensory processing differences can affect how autistic people experience their surroundings, which in turn impacts wellbeing and participation at work or on placements. The **National Autistic Society** have produced guidance explaining sensory sensitivities and overload, and offers simple, practical strategies to make environments more accessible and supportive.

By reducing sensory barriers — such as noise, lighting and unpredictable spaces — **employers and placement providers can help autistic young people feel safer, more confident and better able to succeed.**



<http://www.nas.org.uk> Autism and sensory processing

Supporting inclusive journeys at London Stansted Airport



London Stansted Airport are committed to making travel as welcoming and comfortable as possible for everyone.

To help support passengers who may find the airport environment overwhelming, sensory support kits are available throughout the airport. These are designed to assist passengers who may experience sensory overload in busy or unfamiliar surroundings.

The airports trained staff can offer individual sensory items, such as fidget tools or noise-reducing aids, tailored to each passengers needs. Small supports like these can make a big difference in helping journeys feel calmer and more manageable.

If you, or someone you're travelling with, may benefit from sensory support, simply speak to a member of the airport team.



Save THE Date

FE College
Open Days
across Essex
May/June 2026

SEND Fest
Colchester Zoo
30 May 2026
[Eventbrite](#)

United in
Diversity
10 June 2026
Braxted Park
Amy.gair@essex.gov.uk

FE College
Open Days
across Essex
July 2026

The information provided in this newsletter about various organisations and services is intended to be impartial and informative. We do not endorse or favour any particular organisation over others. Our goal is to present a balanced view to help readers make informed choices; opinions and views expressed are those of the respective organisations. If you would like information included in our next newsletter please email us at:



targetedemployment@essex.gov.uk