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**September 2023**

**Media Release**

**Key Essex and Hertfordshire buildings and landmarks to be lit up in September to encourage people to talk about preventing suicide.**

From the 4th to the 10 September, organisations, people and communities across Essex and Hertfordshire are lighting up buildings and landmarks green, as part of the **‘Creating hope through light’** event for World Suicide Prevention Day.

The ‘Creating hope through light’ week-long event, hopes to raise awareness of suicide prevention and challenge Essex and Herts residents to take the FREE suicide prevention training, which can be accessed on [www.letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk](http://www.letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk).

It’s a joint initiative from Mid and South Essex and West Essex and Hertfordshire Integrated Care Boards and Thurrock and Brentwood Mind as part of their #LetsTalkAboutSuicide campaign. It’s aimed at reducing the stigma around talking about suicide and encourages people to take the free online suicide prevention training, as well as highlight the other mental health resources available in Essex and Hertfordshire.

The suicide prevention training focuses on three key elements See, Say, Signpost.  See the problem, Say the words, Signpost to support and it gives people the knowledge and the confidence to talk to someone who might be at risk of or thinking about suicide.

**Alfred Bandakpara-Taylor, Deputy Director of Mental Health at NHS mid and south Essex ICB, said:**

*‘We want people from across mid and south Essex to challenge their friends, family, work colleagues, their communities, and the organisations they work for to become a part of our****‘Creating hope through light’****event this****September****to help prevent and reduce suicides. Whether it is lighting a building green, talking to other people about preventing suicide or taking the training - you may help save someone’s life.’*

So far, the following places will be turning green:

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| Clacton Pier |
| Brentwood Town Hall |
| Maldon District Council Office |
| Civic Offices - Epping |
| Bennetts Funeral Home, Brentwood |
| Colchester Castle |
| Colchester Town Hall |
| Craig Tyler - Pitsea Leisure Centre |
| Southend City Beach |
| Southend Porters Offices |
| Southend Civic Offices |
| County Hall, Chelmsford |
| Civic Centre, Harlow |
| Clacton Town Hall |
| Essex County Cricket Ground |
| TB Mind - Thurrock Hub |
| Tb Mind - Brentwood Hub |
| TB Mind Charity Shop, Grays |
| TB Mind Head Office, Grays |
| South East and Central Mind Office, Southend |
| Herts County Hall |

The list is continuing to grow and the most up to date roadmap can be found here:

<https://letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk/world-suicide-prevention-day/>

**Lynne Morgan, CEO, Thurrock & Brentwood Mind said** *‘We are deeply humbled by the response from organisations that have already stepped up by supporting the ‘Creating Hope through light’ campaign, as well as challenging their own staff to take the training. This is the third year we have run this campaign and every year we hope more people and organisations will join us and get as many people as possible taking the suicide prevention training. The past few years have been challenging for everyone off the back of COVID and the cost of living crisis, now more than ever we think this kind of training is vital for everyone to help spot someone who may be struggling.’*

People can also take part by joining the social media campaign on #CreatingHopeThroughLight, as well as upload personal messages and videos using the campaign resources available on [www.letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk](http://www.letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk) You can also follow the campaigns on Instagram [@talksuicideessex](https://www.instagram.com/talksuicideessex/), Twitter [@talksuicidesx](https://twitter.com/TalksuicideSx) and Facebook [@letstalkaboutsuicideessex](https://www.facebook.com/letstalkaboutsuicideessex).

In Essex, in 2021, 115 people took their own life.  In 2022 Hertfordshire 88 people lost their life to suicide. Suicide is in fact the leading cause of death in the United Kingdom in men under 50. Thousands of people experience suicidal thoughts and feelings every single day and coupled with COVID-19, we are now amidst a mental health crisis.

Suicide is a preventable and avoidable death, and we believe everyone should know how to talk and support someone who is having suicidal thoughts.

Could you spot the signs of someone who is struggling with their mental health? Would you know how to have the conversations with someone? Would you feel comfortable saying the word suicide to a loved one or colleague?

If you would like to find out more about how to get involved visit <https://letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk> for more information.

For press enquiries please contact:

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Our communications toolkit and digital assets for the campaign can be found:

<https://letstalkaboutsuicide.co.uk/world-suicide-prevention-day/>