



Press Release: 01/16

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Essex Charity Leaders express concerns over possible loss of EU funding

Charity leaders in Essex have today written to Leave Campaigners seeking assurances that EU funded employment support programmes will be protected in the event of a Leave vote in Thursday's referendum vote.

Charity Leaders have highlighted the real risk of the loss of the £180m programme of funding to support jobs and skills through the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) may have.

Particular concern was raised about the possible impact on the Building Better opportunities programme in Essex. This is a Big Lottery Fund programme that is matching funds from the European Social Fund (ESF) to invest in local projects tackling the root causes of poverty, promoting social inclusion and driving local jobs and growth.

In Essex there will be six projects, worth approximately £6m, focusing on disabilities and long-term health, mental health, carers, older people, lone parents and those who have experienced difficulty sustaining employment. Development funding has been secured by RRCE, 4SX, the Papworth Trust, Gingerbread, Ixon Holdings Ltd to progress this work.

Christopher Evans, the voluntary sector representative on the ESIF Sub Committee explained these programmes are designed to support employment, helping people to get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities. He added, "As a sector we have invested a significant amount of time contributing to the development of these programmes, including identifying gaps in current provision and highlighting where we as a sector can add value".

He continued, "We have written to pro Leave MP's to seek assurances that steps will be taken to protect these valuable programmes in the event of a Leave vote in the referendum. We are also seeking clarification as to how this will be achieved".

"We have also requested a summit meeting in the event of a leave vote to begin a dialogue on the local implications".

Ends

Notes for editors:

- For more information contact Chris Evans on 01268 294781 or email: Chris@bbwcvcs.org.uk
- Website: www.bbwcvcs.org.uk
- This grant scheme is funded by Essex County Council.

Basildon Billericay and Wickford CVS (Council for Voluntary Service) was formed in 1979 as an independent registered charity that exists to promote, develop, support and represent a thriving, effective, voluntary and community sector in the borough.

We do this by providing a range of [services](#) to meet the needs of voluntary and community organisations, helping those that are starting up as well as organisations that are already established. We support joint working between voluntary and community organisations, with business, and the statutory sector, and help to make sure the interests and concerns of the VCS are well represented.