

On the road

The newsletter of Open Road published for staff, volunteers, service users, partners and supporters

Brand New SOS Bus Launches! | Celebrating our Staff and Volunteers | Recovery Stories



**Well done
to our 2024
winners!**





Welcome from the Chief Executive

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2024.

We have had an exciting start to the new year, launching our brand new SOS bus in Colchester High Street in early February. The event was supported by a number of partners, including Colchester Bid, The Mayor of Colchester, John Jowers and Charles Bishop the High Sheriff of Essex, Trustees, Patrons, staff and volunteers. Please see highlights from the event on page 19. A very big thank you to all our funders; Steve and Olly Wright who built the bus, Alex from Chassis Cabs who provided the cab and chassis, along with the Open Road team who oversaw the project, especially our longest servicing volunteer, Dennis Barnett MBE.

We were delighted to hear that we had won the drug and alcohol contract for Thurrock in partnership with Forward Trust. Following implementation, the new service went live on 1st April. Open Road will work with young people up to the age of 29 and our Forward partners will work with adults.

Funding Spotlight – a big thank you to Karen Loweman, Director of Operations for Colchester Borough Homes for all her support for Open Road – please see page 4.

Spotlight – thank you to Jeff Keating, our IT Co-ordinator for his article on what he does at Open Road – see page 3.

Our young people's service in Gillingham recently moved from our current site in Green Street, to new serviced offices at Kent Space in Chatham. A big thank you to Laura, Lucy and Katie for organising the move and finding new premises.

Our Chatham Wellbeing Service in Chatham High Street, is undergoing refurbishment in April/May as it was looking very tired and shabby. A big thank you to our funders for supporting this.

In Harlow, we are currently working out of the Derwent Centre with our partners EPUT. However, due to lack of space, we have now located a new site in The Harvey Centre. There is much work to be done, but we hope to complete this early in the new financial year so that we have moved in by the summer. A big thank you to our Trustee, Bob Kilvington for supporting this project along with the Chatham refurbishment.

We have a busy calendar of events for 2024. Our Quiz Night at Colchester's Mercury Theatre on 27th February quickly sold out and was an amazing success – see more on page 10. Our Rewards & Recognition event on 22nd March, celebrated our amazing teams, staff and volunteers who consistently go above and beyond, supporting clients, families and local communities on their journey to recovery – more on page 20. This year, we are also thrilled to host a musical performance 'One Night Only' by renowned soprano, Laura Wright at the Mercury Theatre on 24th July; our annual Charity Ball at The Talbooth on 12th October and our AGM on Friday 1st November at Colchester Community Stadium. Concert and Charity Ball details can be found on pages 22 and 23. For further information, please contact Nici Hardie – nici.hardie@openroad.org.uk or go to our website – www.open.road.org.uk. We do hope you will be able to support some of these events.

Our next newsletter will be published in early summer so please do let Nici or myself have any articles you would like published.

Sarah Wright, Chief Executive

Make a donation!

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or please call: **01206 369782**

Open Road Spotlight - Jeff Keating, IT Coordinator

In the fast-paced world of Information Technology, adaptability and a passion for innovation are paramount. As a seasoned IT professional with a rich history spanning two decades, I started my journey in the industry as a salesperson and have since climbed the ladder to become the IT Coordinator at Open Road.

While I entered the IT realm with a sales background, my journey developed due to a keen interest in technology, combined with a knack for building relationships. Recognising the need for technical expertise, I transitioned into support roles which honed my troubleshooting skills, addressing day-to-day IT issues for colleagues. It served as a valuable bridge between sales and the technical intricacies of IT, allowing me to understand both the internal customer's perspective and the IT-focused operations. As years progressed, I ventured into various IT management roles, overseeing support teams and leading projects, which proved instrumental in shaping my ability to navigate complex IT landscapes.

When I was looking to change roles and reduce my hours to part time, I came across Open Road who had an IT vacancy. I didn't know a great deal about the charity, so I went onto their website and realised what a great opportunity it would be to work for them. The charity has multiple frontline sites, which presents lots of IT tasks and projects - every day is different, which I love. As Open Road's IT Coordinator, I have embraced the responsibility of managing



Jeff ready to take on a New Zealand Luge

the charity's IT equipment, mobile phones and office phones. My day-to-day routine involves providing tech support to co-workers, ensuring seamless IT operations, and staying abreast of the latest technological advancements. It's a busy role which I relish, where I'm often found on my work mobile or office phone supporting colleagues and resolving a variety of IT queries, so that the organisation can run as smoothly as possible. IT often has a mind of its own so it can be tricky sometimes, but I love what I do.

Open Road embraces investment in technological opportunities that will support our people and our clients as fully as possible. Recently, we launched a LiveChat facility on our website, incident reporting is via a bespoke database and our centres are increasingly working 'paper free', utilising online treatment systems. In 2024, we will launch a hybrid phone system, allowing our teams to support incoming calls and be fully contactable while they work remotely as well as on site.

Going forward, focus continues to be on managing the delicate balance between addressing immediate IT needs and planning for the future. My proactive approach to technology helps to ensure that the charity remains ahead of the curve, ready to embrace challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. With the charity's forward-thinking technological outlook, I'm excited for what lies ahead for Open Road as we continue our work, supporting vulnerable people in local communities.

SOS Paw Patrol Dog Bandanas – Now in Stock!

Have the best dressed dog on the street and support Open Road! We are really pleased that our fantastic SOS Paw Patrol dog bandanas are now available for £8.50 (small) or £9.75 (large).

To get yours, please go to our website – www.openroad.org.uk or email us on Info@openroad.org.uk

Alternatively, please ring us on 01206 369782 for details. All sale proceeds help vulnerable people in local communities.



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Funders and Supporters Spotlight

In supporting local communities, we embrace opportunities to partnership work with corporate organisations based in those communities, to learn more about our work and be a part of what we do. We are delighted to welcome Karen Loweman, Director of Operations at Colchester Borough Homes as this edition's funder in the spotlight.

My role as Director of Operations at Colchester Borough Homes, keeps me in touch with many of our housing applicants and tenants who need support to navigate and manage complex systems and their lives.

I enjoy our partnership with Open Road, who are well placed to provide a range of services to support people. The flexibility that Open Road provides helps us to work together to find solutions for some really tricky situations.

One of our priorities is to help people sustain their tenancies – housing is such a precious resource but sometimes managing a home can be overwhelming. I have witnessed many times the patience and support that Open Road have delivered to help people to keep their home and stay safe and well. The support delivered is literally life changing to many.

Having support delivered through a partnership not only provides an advocate for our tenants, but also helps us to develop services with better understanding of needs and barriers that people face in a digital world.

How did you find out about Open Road?

I have worked with Open Road in Colchester for many years and have witnessed their flexibility to develop treatments and support as society has changed.

What is the background to your funding/donation to Open Road?

Colchester Borough Homes provides funding to provide support work for our tenants who have an addiction to drugs and alcohol.



“Every day is a journey and an opportunity to make a difference for someone. Together we can help people take a step toward making their life more rewarding”

Our partnership has prevented a number of people from losing their home and acts in a positive way to help people value their home and themselves.

This work delivers way more than the value of the grant that we provide and the bond that we have developed through working together and networking in Colchester helps make a difference to many people.

We are part of the Safer Colchester Partnership and work together with Open Road to reduce nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Our work with people who are homeless or may have been sleeping on the street, demonstrates some of the best examples of people who have welcomed our interventions and now live more settled lives with improved health and life chances.

What impresses you most about Open Road?

Everyone who works and volunteers at Open Road is positive and engaging and are committed to the values of the organisation.

The volunteering is so positive, and I've met some lovely volunteers from a range of backgrounds and each one of them has enjoyed the experience with Open Road.

What do you envisage is next for Open Road?

I hope that our partnership will continue in the future. I was pleased to attend the launch of the new Open Road SOS bus and am keen to see this used extensively in the Community to provide a lifeline of support and advice.

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Our Fundraising

Our Fundraising Manager, Leah Slator tells us more about how funding helps Open Road's services and how we interact with fellow organisations. Leah also lets you know about Open Road's 2024 fundraising and how you can help us, sometimes without costing you a penny!

Frontline Successes

The Recovery Refuge in Essex is set up to help women fleeing domestic violence, who also have substance misuse issues. Funding from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) supports this service. This service is one of only two running in the country, who offer specialist drug and alcohol interventions in a refuge setting. Our unique partnership with Next Chapter, has Open Road staff providing all the drug and alcohol recovery interventions, alongside Next Chapter providing the domestic abuse interventions.

Below, one of the refuge residents shares her positive story of successfully completing her time in the refuge, and continues to receive support from our recovery worker as part of their aftercare support:

"When I went into Next Chapter my self-esteem was on the floor and I felt worthless. I am 41 and since I was 17, I have been in addiction and abused in my relationships. So, when I was given the chance to change my life, I took it. Next Chapter treated me with kindness and much needed support. They helped build me up again also made me believe I deserved more from life. When I left, they continued to help me going back into the community and continue to do so. I don't know where I would be without them. If you get the opportunity to go there, I would take it. I think I would be dead without them. They gave me the skills for a fresh start and helped me believe in myself. I will be forever grateful to them,".

The Big Love Charity deliver a group called Hope for us and the ethos of the course is to equip women to know their self-worth and value, to build them up and help them to understand who they are and who they can become. The course aims to encourage women to encourage them to lift their heads to see a new path in life, the bigger picture. We are working closely with this charity and our clients are engaging with their programme and helping to build a peer support group. It will provide them with a safe environment to be free to speak openly or quietly absorbing course information and group discussions. We are proud to support this initiative; the course has real meaning, giving the ability to change lives little by little.

Fundraisers & Cheque Presentations

Colchester Round Table Cheque Presentation

Our Regional Manager, Claire Beacham and SLT Support Officer, Tim Young attended a January event at Colchester Round Table to receive a cheque for donations raised from the local Santa sleigh rides. Open Road received over £660 of the proceeds, very generously given to Santa by the general public. Claire, Scarlett and Tim from



Mayor & Mayoress of Colchester, left; Claire & Tim middle right with Round Table members



Open Road Team with Father & Mother Christmas

Open Road walked the route with Santa and Mother Christmas in December and Claire and Tim attended the Race Night at Colchester Rugby Club in January to accept the cheque from Colchester Round Table and the Mayor & Mayoress of Colchester. Our many thanks to the Round Table members and the Mayor & Mayoress of Colchester for their kindness and hospitality.

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Mersea Island Lions Cheque Presentation

SOS Bus Manager, Stacey Banner received a fundraising cheque for £500 from Mersea Island Lions which will fund bleed kits for clinical use on the SOS Buses in Essex. Bleed Kits are used in the event of a stabbing or puncture injury and are proven to save lives and staunch the loss of blood until an ambulance arrives. Our many thanks to Mersea Island Lions for your generosity and for making us so welcome at the presentation event.



Stacey and a generous Mersea Island Lions Cheque

CVS Tendring generously awarded us £2,500 to go towards refurbishing our drop-in at our Clacton centre. The drop-in was in desperate need of new furniture and flooring to be a welcoming space for all of our visitors in Clacton – thank you to CVS Tendring, we are really grateful to you for helping us in this goal.

Essex poet and singer, Martin Newell hosted a fundraising afternoon of Songs, poems and yarns on 3rd March, at The Minorities in Colchester. A highly entertaining live act, Martin tours infrequently nowadays but completed some one-man shows in 2023 including sold out London performances, and so we were delighted when Martin offered to host this amazing fundraiser. It was a great afternoon enjoyed by all. Huge thanks to Martin for his time and support to us, we are incredibly grateful.



Martin Newell - image courtesy of Martin Newell

Upcoming Fundraising Events

Come and join us, it would be great to see you!

Concert by Renowned Soprano, Laura Wright

Wednesday 24th July 2024
Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Tickets from Mercury Theatre direct - www.mercurytheatre.co.uk or 01206 573948

Charity Ball

Saturday 12th October 2024
Le Talbooth, Dedham

Tickets from Open Road, please ring 01206 369782 or email info@openroad.org.uk

Other ways to help Open Road?

There are lots of options - some won't even cost you a penny!

Essex Lottery is BACK!

The Essex Lottery is an exciting weekly lottery that raises money for good causes in Essex. Tickets for the lottery cost just £1 per week, with 60p going to your chosen local charity. Top prize of £25,000!

www.essexlottery.co.uk/support/open-road



www.openroad.org.uk donation page

Scanning the QR code will take you directly to our website where you can make a one off donation, or set up a monthly direct debit



www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Donate for free as you shop online with hundreds of brilliant High Street and well-known retailers. It's easy to download the EasyFundraising's app. Just chose 'Open Road' as your charity of choice and, without any cost to you, Easyfundraising will donate a percentage of each purchase to your chosen charity. It's as easy as that!



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www.forgoodcauses.org

This is a great site where you can donate your retail reward vouchers to your chosen charity, which could be us! On their website, just click the 'Donate My Rewards' button and search for 'Open Road'.



How can you help?

Giving back to your community, either time or money can boost your self-esteem. There is nothing more self-affirming than knowing you are doing something good and supporting others. You and your loved ones can give back by either making a monetary donation, host a fundraising event, or volunteer your time.

www.makingadifference.cards/supporting/Open-Road-Visions



Making a Difference charity cards is an online card shop where you can purchase all your celebration cards while raising funds for the charity.

• **Volunteering**

There are many volunteering opportunities within Open Road, such as...

- Supporting the night-time economy on the SOS Buses.
- Becoming an Appropriate Adult within the criminal justice system.
- Become a Digital Fundraiser or Events Champion.
- Become a frontline volunteer with our centres across Essex and Medway.

www.charity.ebay.co.uk/charity/Open-Road-Visions/



ebay for Charity has partnered with the PayPal Giving Fund to make it easy for sellers to donate anything from 1% to 100% of your item's final sale price to a certified charity. Or you can make a one-off donation when you make a purchase.

• **Hosting a fundraising event**

Create a fundraising event where you can set yourself a challenge or arrange a coffee morning to raise funds for Open Road, get in contact with our fundraising team for your fundraising pack today.

• **Monetary donations**

Donations are our lifeblood. We rely on donations to continue providing support to those in need. You can either give a one-off donation, set up a direct debit for monthly donations or leave a gift in your will, which is called a Legacy donation. To donate, simply scan the QR code, log into our website, visit our JustGiving page or pop down to your local Open Road centre.



**Donate £3 by texting
'OPENROAD' to 70085**

Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, **text OPENROADNOINFO to 70085**

www.openroad.org.uk
<https://www.justgiving.com/openroad>

A massive thank you from us to all our supporters, funders and donors - you are amazing and are a vital part of our charity.

For anyone who would like to fundraise for us, hold an event or support our charity in any way, we would love to hear from you - please contact Leah on Leah.Slator@openroad.org.uk. If you are a business who would like to help us, please do also contact Leah - we are always keen to discuss opportunities and embrace new partnerships.

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Springtime in Harlow Walled Garden

Throughout a chilly, damp and sometimes stormy winter, our Harlow Walled Garden client volunteers, led by project volunteer Anita Bailey, have been busy in the gardens. Harlow Town Park has a proactive bee project, which our team's work supports. Anita tells us more about what the team have been up to.

"We have made protective 'Air Bee and Bee' hotels for the bees to shelter in while it was cold, over winter and spring. In the past few weeks, we have planted rocket, sunflowers, wildflowers for the bees and as well as starting the tomatoes."

"We have also been busy, tidying up the borders and this work goes towards Harlow Town Park's Green Flag Award."

Thanks so much, everyone, for everything you do on this amazing project - your hard work will be paying dividends in a few months. We thank Harlow Council for their unstinting support to us and all the voluntary groups who help in the gardens. If you are visiting Harlow town, do please also pop into the park gardens, they are a beautiful space for the public to enjoy.



Green shoots



Spring colour



New season colour



Tidy borders ready for planting



Anita busy potting up seeds



Bee Hotel Production



Air Bee & Bee Hotels ready for residents



Baby plants getting ready for summer



Tomato seeds bedded in

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Winter & Spring Networking

As with any charity, networking is incredibly important to Open Road. It allows us to meet new partners and supporters to ensure that we provide the best services and 'value for money' to our clients and all stakeholders. We also connect to new funders and commissioners, with the end goal of increasing and developing services that not only build on existing services but also help fill identified gaps in service provision.

Our Chief Executive, Sarah and management team have been busy throughout Winter / Spring, networking and also meeting donors and funders, as can be seen elsewhere in the newsletter.

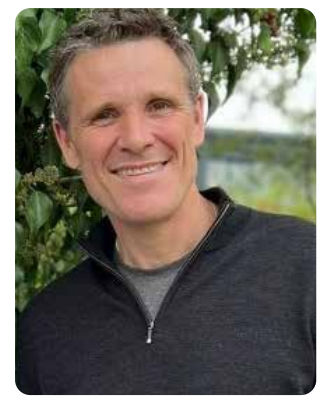
In late 2023 Sarah met Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Colchester, Professor Pam Cox, who is a strong supporter of our work. Also, Colchester City Councillor Martin Goss visited our head office and met with Sarah about our work and goals going forward. Colchester City Council is an ardent supporter of our SOS Buses and other projects and we always welcome meeting with members of the council. Latterly, Sarah was delighted to meet Colchester's Conservative Parliamentary Candidate, James Cracknell and Colchester Conservative Association's David Lingham-Baker and discussed our work, which they were very interested to hear about. James also joined our Colchester SOS Bus team for a shift, which you can read about on page 17.

Sarah and Senior Leadership Team Support Officer, Tim, met with Cllr Chris Vince from Harlow District Council recently to discuss partnership working and improving and developing our services in Harlow. It was a productive meeting at The Harvey Centre and we look forward to further collaboration in the future.

Thank you to everyone for taking the time to meet with us and we look forward to keeping you updated on everything Open Road is up to.



Professor Pam Cox - image Courtesy of Pam Cox Facebook



James Cracknell - image courtesy of Cracknell4Colchester.com



Left to right; Tim, Councillor Chris Vance and Sarah



Sarah and Colchester Councillor Martin Goss

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Quizzers raise money for Open Road

Open Road held a very successful fundraising Quiz Night at Colchester's Mercury Theatre on 27th February. 16 teams of up to six members racked their brains under the masterful stewardship of ace Quizmaster, James Burton. The event was supported by Our Colchester Business Improvement District.

Our very own SLT Support, Tim Young was Quiz Organiser and said of the event, "It was a wonderful and fun evening and we are so grateful to James Burton for setting the questions and being a superb Quizmaster. The atmosphere in The Mercury's café bar was perfect and we thank them for letting us have the venue at zero cost. We raised £700 for Open Road from the entry fees and the raffle, which will go towards our family support service for those with drug and alcohol addiction issues."

Tim and his team were runners-up in the quiz and the winners were 'The Libertarians' who won



Tim Young's Quiz Team

complimentary tickets to a show of their choice at the Mercury Theatre.

Huge thanks to Mercury Theatre and all of our raffle donors, to Tim for organising the event and everyone who came along for a great evening of FUNdraising.

Open Road on the Radio

In February, Open Road was really grateful to local, community radio station Gateway 97.8 FM, who are based in Basildon, for asking us to record a free advert to be broadcast over the coming weeks explaining the services that we offer and support that we can provide to individuals and families with addiction issues. Colchester-based actress and voiceover artist, Nicola Goodchild, voiced the recording also giving her services free of charge. If you live in the Basildon area listen out for the advert; you can also listen to Gateway 97.8 FM online at www.gateway978.com.

Our many thanks to Gateway 97.8 FM for their generous offer. Also, thank you to Nicola for giving



Gateway 97.8 FM welcoming Nicola to the studio

her valuable time and experience, in support of Open Road helping local vulnerable people in the Basildon areas.

You can make a difference!



Did you know you can donate on our website?

It's really easy to help us help a vulnerable person in your community.

Scanning the QR code will take you directly to our website where you can make a one off donation, or set up a monthly direct debit.

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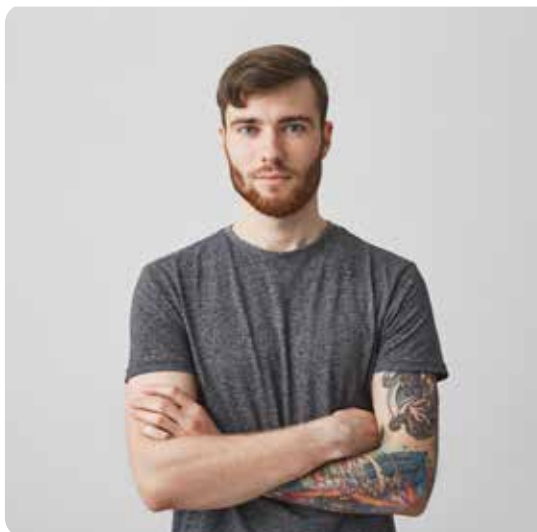
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Recovery Stories

Our Essex All Age Recovery Coordination Service (AARCS), in partnership with The Children's Society, supports vulnerable people throughout Essex. The team offers accessible, confidential support and advice to young people and adults who need help with drug or alcohol problems, to get their life back on track. Here, we hear how client SR is turning his life around, through his own hard work and by engaging with our team.



Posed by model

SR was using cocaine daily. He had a history of criminal offending, was seeing his Probation Officer and was on Integrated Offender Management (IOM); he was massively depressed. SR managed to work full time and was seeing Open Road for psychosocial interventions and other support.

SR was reducing cocaine use and working to improve his health, mentally and physically. SR's biggest worry was that his mum wanted him to move out of her house as she had, had enough of him, and this affected his mental health hugely.

SR's Open Road key worker managed to get SR housed at the local homeless support project and

this really boosted him. He reduced his use to occasional use and stated his mental health was, "the best it's ever been".

His recovery worker says, "SR thanked me and told me that I was the only person who has ever really believed in him and that if I hadn't have helped him, he believed that he would have ended up dead."

"The day that SR moved into his own place, his mother came in and asked to talk to me. She took my hand and looked at me deep into my eyes and said "Thank you, why are there not more of you in the world. It's taken years to get these results and you have accomplished more with S than anyone else has ever done." I told S's Mum that all I did was believed in him and she looked very tearful."

A massive well done to SR for all you are achieving on your journey to recovery. We are really pleased to be able to support you in making the positive changes you have, thank you for trusting us. A massive thank you too to our amazing team members who constantly go the extra mile to support our clients to be the best they can be.



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Peer Mentoring – A Case Study



Posed by models

Our Medway team share a case study to show the positive impact of our Peer Mentoring programme in supporting vulnerable clients.

Client A's journey with the Peer Mentoring Project at Open Road has showcased the incredible impact of personalised support on mental health. Before joining the project, Client A struggled with profound anxiety and depression, primarily stemming from the challenges related to their gender identity.

Open Road's approach to mentorship extended beyond conventional speech therapy and counselling by focusing on Client A's interests and passions. Recognising their love for history, Open Road took proactive steps to expose Client A to new environments, such as the Royal Engineers Museum. This tailored approach started a sense of belonging and allowed Client A to feel understood and appreciated.

Furthermore, the consistent engagement over several months, ranging from casual outings like coffee meetings, to walks through the community, allowed Client A to gradually build confidence. These opportunities allowed for social interaction and exploration in a supported environment. Client A has stated that "Open Road has helped me identify the greater things in life and has helped me find happiness in myself and the world".

The difference from the start of Client A's journey to today, from a young person struggling with mental health challenges and struggling with their identity, to a confident, strong-willed individual proved the importance of community – based approaches in supporting young people. The Peer Mentor Programme successes can be identified with not only addressing mental health concerns but also empowering individuals by acknowledging their interests and providing a supportive network.

The Peer Mentor Programme has proven the ability to assist and support the confidence in young people allowing them to strive harder in future aspects of their lives.

James Ruse, Medway Young Person's Team

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Frontline News

West Essex

Emma Luck from our Harlow team updates us about a busy time of networking and a recent Harlow catch up.

Since commencing in my role as Engagement Coordinator, over the last couple of months, I have been getting out and about getting the Open Road name out in the community by attending various networking events, including health & wellbeing events and job fairs.

I went to the Harlow Walled Garden yesterday and we had a volunteer catch-up. I think it's really important that the volunteers feel valued and it gave me the opportunity for see our project lead volunteer, Anita showcase what she does there and to get involved with some seed planting.

We recently received our own banner and tablecloth which we have proudly showed off in a team photo.



Emma & some of our Harlow team

International Women's Day 2024

Across all our sites, Open Road supported International Women's Day (Friday 8 March) in our own unique style – hand love heart photos all round Essex and Medway and posted on our social media platforms! A few pics are here.

This year's theme of Inspire Inclusion (#InspireInclusion) corresponds with our core values. Inclusion, Diversity and Equality are something we shout about loud and clear in our charity. Women play a big part at Open Road in our staff (with our all female Senior Leadership

Team), management, volunteers and service users. We asked our teams throughout Essex and Medway to send in photos demonstrating Open Road's support for International Women's Day. You can find out more at www.internationalwomensday.com and www.openroad.org.uk.



Make a donation!

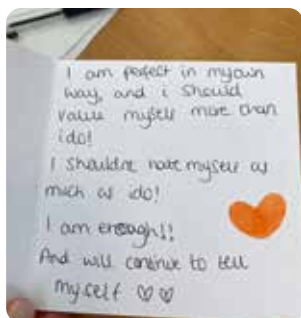
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Big Love for IWD 2024

To celebrate International Women’s Day ‘Inspire Inclusion’ our fantastic Hope course for women run by Big Love Charity shared some of their work. The ethos of the programme is to equip women to know their self-worth and value, to build them up and help them to understand who they are and who they can become. To encourage them to lift their heads to see a new path in life, the bigger picture.

Ladies engaged from Week 1 and feel a sense of belonging as they mix with the other women taking part and build a peer support group. It provides them with a safe environment to be free in speaking openly or quietly absorbing. A course with real meaning and the ability to change lives little by little.

We have included a photo of the group and some of their stunning and thought provoking work. We, at Open Road, are delighted to work with and support the Big Love Charity and International Women’s Day.



Medway Yoga Classes



Yoga at Open Road

Our Medway Senior Recovery & Wellness Coordinator, Jason Carlow tells us all about the newly launched yoga classes for clients.

Fundraising Manager, Leah Slater has done a fabulous job and secured us funding for 36 weeks of Kundalini Yoga, which supports recovery and helps with trauma. The funding has made it possible to have 3 lots of 12 week sessions of Kundalini yoga.

Medway Voluntary action also provided us with funding for a 6-week session at the end of the year.

See client feedback below;

"The yoga sessions helped reduce my back pain & anxiety."

"My energy levels have improved."

"It improved my flexibility."

"I have reduced stress levels."

Well done, Leah, for securing such fantastic funding and thank you to Jason and the Medway Wellbeing team for facilitating this brilliant group that our clients clearly love. A final thank you goes to Medway Voluntary Action for generously supporting funding for a six week session at year end, which we are incredibly grateful for. Absolutely, a 'win win'

Donate £3 by texting 'OPENROAD' to 70085

Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text **OPENROADNOINFO to 70085**

Make a donation!

Text: **OPENROAD 70450** to donate £5

Online: **openroad.org.uk/donate**

or please call: **01206 369782**

Medway 12 Days of Christmas

Young Persons' Team Senior Lucy Trewin shares a brilliant campaign they supported helping vulnerable people over Christmas 2023.



Medway 12 Days of Christmas

Over Christmas, myself and James Ruse contributed to the 12 Days of Christmas appeal by donating clothes, shoes, toys and food to be distributed out to local organisations. We worked in partnership with agencies such as social services, youth service, sexual health, MSCP etc to all collect donations and donate ourselves to the cause.

The team received a lovely thank you from the organisers:

"Dear Child Exploitation Champions,

Firstly, thank you to those who contributed to our 12 days of Christmas appeal. We were thrilled by the donations of quality second hand clothes, shoes and toys as well as food and chocolate treats. We were able to get these out to local organisations in time for Christmas and we shared these with Street Angels, The Salvation Army, Medway Foodbank and HMYOI Cookham Wood.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and happy new year. On behalf of the Medway Child Exploitation Champions."

Medway Young People Exploitation Conference

We were delighted that James Ruse from our Medway Young People's team was invited to address delegates at the recent Medway Young People Exploitation Conference. It was a great event and James caught up with plenty of colleagues and partner agencies during the day. Thank you, James, for being a great ambassador for our service.



James ready to present to delegates



Conference ready!



James with colleagues and partners

Mid Essex Salvation Army Food Parcel Drive

Mid Essex Centre Manager, Leigh Harvey and the team who are based in Chelmsford supported a vital food drive last Christmas, Leigh tells us more...

At the beginning of December, we were fortunate to collect food parcels and toys from the Salvation Army to distribute to some our clients. Major Tracy Mountford and her team had put together a thousand parcels for those needing support in the community. We have fostered a relationship with the Salvation Army for many years now and we are always grateful for their kindness and support.



Food Drive Image

BC, who had said he would be totally alone for Christmas, when I asked if he would like a food parcel/hamper, his face lit up and said he would really like one.

HH, was also given one and she said she was so pleased with the bags as her fridge was empty and felt that this would make her flat more Christmassy.

JT, had no money for food or gifts for children and was overwhelmed with the parcels and toys donated and the people cared.

Make a donation!

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South Essex Workshops, Radio Time and Gardening Day

Our South Essex Team, based in Vange, share what they've been up to - Engagement Coordinator, Jamie McLennan explains more...

At Open Road Vange we wanted to start 2024 by bringing daily workshops to our centre. So far, we've started the Peer Support Workshop (facilitated by Dev), Creative Art Workshop (facilitated by Sian) and the Relapse Prevention Group (facilitated by myself). We plan to have groups running daily at the centre by the summer. As the Engagement Coordinator, I have linked in with Superstore Community Champions and Small Business Owners to donate food for our workshops. Please see attached photos of Me and Dev collecting food from these good people.

We arranged to record an advert with our local radio station Gateway FM to promote and raise awareness to Open Road's Service, which you can read about on page 10. This was officially recorded on the 19th Feb by Colchester-based actress and voiceover artist, Nicola Goodchild. Once the editing has been completed, the advert, will be on commercial break rotation daily. On the 12th March, I appeared on the Radio Station to conduct an interview to raise awareness of all things related to the charity. I've attached a photo of Nicola Goodchild in the studio ready to record the advert.

On the 21st March, we collaborated with Essex Recovery Foundation (ERF) to hold a gardening day to renovate the garden at our Vange Centre. Once complete, the aim is to keep it maintained as it has the potential to be beautiful. The garden space potentially has room for vegetable patches and seating areas and the maintenance of it could create further workshop opportunities. Also with the decking space, there will be room for staff to have outside/garden breaks in the summer or even hold appointments with clients outside. The potential it has is endless. Please see a poster that was posted on social media regarding the day.



Make a donation!

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SOS Bus News

James Cracknell visits Open Road's SOS Bus

Having met with our CEO, Sarah, to hear about Open Road's work, James Cracknell was keen to visit our Bus and meet the team.

As part of his parliamentary candidate campaign, on 23rd December, we welcomed James to the bus and he observed an SOS Bus shift, took part in a training session and interacted with the team. Thanks to James for visiting during a doubtless busy diary period, we hope you enjoyed your time with our team.



James, centre, with the SOS Bus team



James attended a training session during the team shift

Brand New SOS Bus Launches!

Open Road launched our new SOS Community Bus on Friday 2 February in Colchester High Street.

There was a great turnout from VIPs and invited guests and considerable interest from the public and the media. It was great to welcome High Sheriff of Essex, Charles Bishop; The Mayor of Colchester, Cllr John Jowers; Colchester's High Steward, Sir Bob Russell; Leader of Colchester City Council, Cllr David King, along with other City and County Councillors, representatives of businesses and community groups alongside Open Road patrons, trustees, staff and volunteers.

Thanks to all those funders and sponsors who have helped get our new bus on the road. It was straight into action at the weekend offering safety, support and advice to Colchester's nighttime economy.



CEO, Sarah at the launch



Not just a bus!



Some of our bus team at the launch



Colchester's new SOS Bus

Make a donation!

Text: **OPENROAD 70450** to donate £5

Online: **openroad.org.uk/donate**

or please call: **01206 369782**

Open Road attends launch of ERF Recovery Spaces

We were absolutely thrilled that members of our senior team and frontline staff were able to attend and support the recent launch of Essex Recovery Foundation (ERF) Recovery spaces throughout Essex.

In their recent online partner news about the launches, ERF said, "We were thrilled to have representation from many Drug and Alcohol treatment service providers, including Phoenix Futures, The Children's Society, Open Road, Forward Trust, EPUT (Stars), and Futures in Mind."

"We had an amazing turnout, with plenty of community members coming by to support the events and chat with those attending for the first time. It was exactly the warm welcome we hoped for, showing off how special these places really are. Across the four launches, we welcomed about 150 people, which was awesome!"

The photo taken at the Colchester Recovery Space features (left to right) Laura (ERF), Grazia, Julie, Stuart, Megan and Tim (Open Road) and Sally (ERF). Thanks to The Mercury Theatre for hosting the Recovery Space in Colchester.

Open Road's team really enjoyed meeting with ERF and fellow agencies and supporters of these innovative spaces which embrace recovery. We thank ERF for inviting us and we look forward to continuing our partnership, supporting vulnerable clients on their journey to recovery.



ERF Colchester Recovery Space Event





WE'VE LAUNCHED OUR LOTTERY PAGE

Buy Your Tickets From Our Page - We Get 50%

- We now have a page on The Essex Lottery!
- Support local causes and win prizes of up to £25,000!
- 50% of all tickets sold from our page go to us!
- PLUS 10% goes to other good causes in Essex!
- Tickets only cost £1 per week!
- Support us and win prizes - WIN WIN!

To Start Supporting, Visit:
www.EssexLottery.co.uk

And Search For:
Open Road



Supporters must be 16 years of age or older.

You've Got To Be In It To Win It!

The Essex Lottery is giving everyone the chance to win up to £25,000 and support our amazing local charity at the same time. Tickets are just £1 per week, 50% of all ticket proceeds bought on our page go to us, with 10% also going to other worthwhile local charities. It's a WIN WIN!! To get your tickets, please go to -

<https://www.essexlottery.co.uk/support/open-road>



Or even easier, if you have a QR phone app, scan this code to access our page!

Make a donation!

Text: **OPENROAD 70450** to donate £5
 Online: openroad.org.uk/donate
 or please call: **01206 369782**

High Sheriff of Kent Visit

Our Medway teams were delighted to welcome 2023/24 High Sheriff of Kent, Mrs Nadra Ahmed DL to our young people's centre at Kent Space in Chatham in March. We were one of Mrs Ahmed's final appointments as High Sheriff before handing over to Dr. Gill Fargher in April.

Mrs Ahmed was able to meet with and chat to members of all our Medway teams who support young people and adults in Medway as well as young people returning to their local communities after release from Cookham Wood. Mrs Ahmed is very kindly arranging an award, post visit, for three of our hard working Medway staff, Kevin Ubaka, Lucy Trewin and Katie Power, to thank them all for everything they do for Open Road's clients and in supporting their local communities through the charity.

We thank Mrs Ahmed for her time to visit us. We were thrilled that she was able to come and see us before her tenure as High Sheriff ended and hope her year has been a fun, interesting and inspiring one.



Award Winners, Kelvin & Lucy with Mrs Ahmed, middle



Staff and Patron, John Weir, right, at High Sheriff event



Colchester's new Patron Charles Gratwicke and Criminal Justice Worker Kelvin Ubaka new SOS Bus

Make a Difference - Be The Difference!

Open Road's goal is to improve the lives of people in our local communities, free from addiction, offending behaviour and disadvantage. Every one of our funders, donors and supporters help to fund increasingly vital services and support for our clients. We can't do what we do without donations and fundraising. Can you help?

- **Fundraising** - Whether running a half marathon, holding a sponsored sporting event, coffee morning, quiz or other amazing event for Open Road, we would love to hear from you. Please email us on - info@openroad.org.uk.
- **Donate Online** - You can donate a one-off amount or set up a regular donation via our secure online form on our website - www.openroad.org.uk/Appeal/donate. Setting up a regular donation provides a steady income for Open Road to provide help and support to individuals and families affected by drugs and alcohol.
- **Donate £5 by Text** - So simple to do - just text OPEN00 £5

Regular donations help Open Road to provide sustained support to individuals and families towards full recovery from the many problems they face. They also save on administration costs - so that more of your money can be spent on crucial services.

One Person can make all the difference to Open Road!



Make a donation!

Text: **OPENROAD 70450** to donate £5
 Online: **openroad.org.uk/donate**
 or please call: **01206 369782**

Celebrating our Staff and Volunteers

In March, we held our annual Awards & Recognition event attended by our staff and volunteers from all of our services, coming from all over Essex and Medway. The day is all about celebrating our people, also giving everyone getting a chance to come together and meet colleagues from other teams and hear about their services.

We were delighted that Patron Simon Brice, Chair of Trustees Nick Alston and Nick's wife Pippa and Trustee Tim Field were all able to attend, along with our senior team plus head office and frontline teams. In all, over 90 people attended.

The day started with ice breakers; 'pass the parcel' and a music quiz, both of which were hotly contested (who knew we had such brilliant singers in our midst!!) and prizes were awarded, including raffle tickets, sweets and some lucky staff winning an extra day's annual leave! Attendees heard about the charity's successes over the last year from Clinical & Business Development Director Joni Thompson; new contracts won, developing services, new IT developments, our new SOS Bus, centre moves and the charity's goals for the future.

Our Regional Managers Corinne, Claire and Matt gave thought-provoking presentations about their roles and what Open Road means to them. Long service awards were presented to colleagues for being with Open Road for 5, 10, 15 years and longer. Next came the awards where people and teams are nominated by their peers for going above and beyond in their roles - they didn't know they'd been nominated so every award was a surprise. Our very deserving winners this year are:



GEM Award for Staff (Go the Extra Mile)

- Lucy Trewin
- Clare Brookes
- James Ruse
- Amy Castles
- Chloe Lucas
- Jeff Keating
- Kelvin Ubaka
- Lauren Cox
- Loren Harvey-Smith
- Megan Benfield
- Rebekah Lane
- Rebecca Drage
- Stuart Braybrooke
- Sarah Ellis

PREMIER Award for Teams

- Chelmsford Team
- Essex Employment Team
- Southend Young Person's Team

STAR Awards for Volunteers

- Abigail Brown
- Cass Piero
- Christiana Nicolaides
- Dennis Barnett
- Ellen Friend
- Esme Sawyer-Mitchell
- Glenn Wootton
- James Bell
- John Sherman
- Karen Smith
- Maria Langford
- Mehryar Marjani
- Riley Davies
- Peter Olawale
- Richard Brett
- Roheet Ramesh
- Stephen Cruddas
- Sue Thomas
- Winter Wilmot
- Wilderness Welfare Team

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The final award of the day was the big one – the 'Chief Executive's Award' where Sarah chooses the winner from all 2024's worthy winners. This year's 'Chief Executive's Award' winner was the Southend Young Person's Team – well done to you all!

The day finished with an amazing lunch – a tasty and warming baked potato buffet enjoyed by all on a chilly March day. Everyone then headed off home to enjoy an afternoon off as a thank you for everything they do, both for Open Road and for their unstinting support to our clients.

Thank you to our Chair of Trustees, Nick for closing the event, our HR team of Nicola, Shannon and Kara for your amazing planning and prep (especially Shannon who worked incredibly hard), IT Coordinator Jeff for helping with the tech on the day and Sarah and our senior team for presenting talks and awards. Last, but not least, a huge well done to every single one of our winners – you all totally deserve your awards. Thank you to everyone who came to the event and thank you to all our people for your hard work, day-to-day, we are really grateful to every single one of you.



Chief Executive's Award - Southend Young Person's team

Make a donation!

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 or please call: **01206 369782**



One Night Only - Laura Wright

7:30pm | £25 – £40

ONE NIGHT ONLY - Laura Wright and special guests will put on a spectacular show featuring music from hit shows for local charity **Open Road**.

Laura shot to fame as Young Chorister of the Year at 15 and is one of our biggest selling classical artists, having also sung at almost every major UK sporting event.

Join us for this Gala performance and help transform lives.

Sponsored by **Streets Whittles**.

Tickets

Tickets are already selling, don't miss out if you would like to see Laura. To buy, please contact Colchester's Mercury Theatre on 01206 573948, or book online - www.mercurytheatre.co.uk

Make a donation!

Text: **OPENROAD 70450** to donate £5
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Open Road

Charity Ball

Saturday
12th October 2024

Join us for an evening of excellent fine dining,
followed by a charity auction and raffle,
winning some top of the range prizes.
Then dance the evening away to The Jentones.
Reception drinks start at 7pm

See you there!

Drinks Reception 7pm Carriages at 1am

Le Talbooth, Gun Hill, Dedham CO7 6HP

**£90 per ticket / £900 for a table of ten or
£1080 for a table of 12**

Contact us for information on individual tickets

Dress Code: Black Tie

To book your tickets contact:

01206 369782 / info@openroad.org.uk

12 North Hill, Colchester, CO1 1DZ

All proceeds will go towards supporting Open Road's projects
to reduce the harmful impact of drugs and alcohol

Registered Charity No. 1019915

open road
your journey to recovery

EVERYBODY! *knows* SOMEBODY!

Life is challenging and everybody knows somebody who is struggling. For over 30 years, Open Road has helped thousands of people in Essex, when things get tough. We love to help people be the best they can be, in work and in life, and are really successful at what we do.



- **Businesses work with us to help their people;** with training, advice, one to one staff support



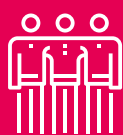
- **We help people in recovery to get that dream job** with a network of dedicated, local employers



- **We walk with people as they journey to recovery,** to healthier, happier lives. Our teams support families too, as substance misuse affects everybody.



- **We keep people safe at festivals** and community events



- **We support people who have lost their way in life,** helping them maintain productive, non-offending lives in their local communities



- **Plus our SOS Buses are in local communities** providing welfare advice services and at weekends in Colchester and Chelmsford, helping vulnerable members of the public

Our IPS employers network can help fill those vacancies. Our other services could also proactively support your business. Or are you looking for ways to directly give back to your local community?



Make us a part of your Corporate Social Responsibility goals – Corporate Volunteering lets your staff volunteer with us. We have lots of opportunities, offering a fantastic chance to give back, meet new people and learn new skills, all benefitting the local community.



Charity of the Year – be a corporate fundraiser and choose us as your charity of the year. We would be delighted to work with you, to proactively champion your fundraising events and goals.

'Everybody knows Somebody!'

Team Open Road needs your help! We would love to have a chat about what we do and how we can do more by working together - **01206 369782** or **info@openroad.org.uk**

Find out more about us

01206 369782 / info@openroad.org.uk

12 North Hill, Colchester, CO1 1DZ

www.openroad.org.uk

open road

your journey to recovery

Registered Charity No. 1019915



Forthcoming Events with Open Road:

Fundraising Concert by World Renowned Soprano, Laura Wright

Wednesday 24th July 2024
Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Charity Ball

Saturday 12th October 2024
Le Talbooth, Dedham

AGM

Friday 1st November 2024
Colchester Community Stadium

We are planning various fun and exciting events throughout 2024, please follow our social media platforms for more details.

Head Office

12 North Hill, Colchester
Essex, CO1 1DZ
01206 369782

Open Road is a trading name for Open Road Visions
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New starters

We would like to extend a warm welcome to:

- Eleanor Harris
Recovery Worker, Colchester
- Evelyn Ogle
Recovery Worker, Colchester
- Lisa-Dee Partner
Administrator, Vange
- Christian Reeves
Recovery Worker, Vange
- Sintija Utane
Recovery Worker, Chelmsford
- Lottie Weston
Recovery Co-ordinator, Southend
- Jamie McLennan
Engagement Co-ordinator, Vange
- Tracey Elliott
Targeted Opiate Worker, Harlow
- Daniel Harris
EAA Pager Holder
- Martin Jones
EAA Pager Holder
- Temitope Ogungboyege
Data Analyst, Head Office
- Nicholas McGrego
YP Criminal Justice Worker, Medway
- John Mills
Prescribed Medication Intervention Worker
- Nicky Justice - Vange Team
- Shelley Abraham Aharon - Harlow Team
- James Bell - Southend Young People

Our Leavers

We bid a farewell and thank you to:

- Joseph Deally
- Charlotte Price
- Vicki Burbidge
- Siphon Pugen
- Benny Grant
- Faye Hudson
- T Lyon
- Reema Haque
- Kerry Mead-Farmer
- Trevor Beckett
- Laura Craig
- Louise Taylor
- Luisa Ramos
- Asia Khan Kitchen

The next issue of *On the Road* will be published in Summer 2024. Please send any articles, ideas and comments to sarah.wright@openroad.org.uk

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