

NEWS RELEASE

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ESSEX COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BECOMES BEACON OF EXCELLENCE

Essex Community Foundation is one of the first UK Community Foundations to achieve a new Quality Accreditation standard for UK community foundations. The accreditation process, introduced by Community Foundation Network, involves rigorous independent inspection of community foundations against twenty core standards, which have been endorsed by the Charity Commission.

Geraldine Peacock, Chief Commissioner of the Charity Commission, said, "We've been really pleased to share our experience with CFN - it's a classic example of working in partnership to make the sector more effective. I hope this is just the start of a whole raft of standards which, sector-wide, will ensure charities are beacons of excellence and effectiveness."

Community Foundation Network, has introduced the quality standards to clarify, nationally and locally, how independent community foundations can help individuals, companies and other agencies achieve lasting value from channelling their charitable giving into their own communities. Last year the UK's 56 community foundations gave more than £57 million to over 17,000 charities and community groups, and long-term giving by individuals through community foundations is growing fast at close to 30% per annum.

Essex Community Foundation is celebrating its tenth anniversary and in that time has distributed over £7.5 million to fund charitable projects in Essex. Income for grant making comes from local individuals, families and companies who wish to keep their charitable giving local. Laura Warren, Chief Executive of Essex Community Foundation said: "Our existing donors tell us that community foundations epitomise professionalism. Quality Accreditation is a process that will help and the Charity Commission's endorsement is a real bonus."

Five community foundations have already been accredited in a pilot programme: Devon, Essex, Heart of England, Merseyside and Thames community foundations.

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Note to Editors:

Essex Community Foundation was set up in 1996 and has established a grants programme which has seen more nearly 3000 Essex based charities and community groups receive £7.5 million in grants. Funds are distributed on behalf of a wide range of

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Patron: The Lord Lieutenant of Essex

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donors who want their charitable giving to be accessible to local charities. More information available on www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk