



**Date of issue: 6 July**  
**For immediate release**

## **Thousands of young people to be empowered by anti-violence monument's Chelmsford visit**

Chelmsford is launching an innovative programme of events to support the arrival of a huge anti-violence sculpture in the city this September. The 27ft National Monument Against Violence and Aggression, known as the Knife Angel, is made from 100,000 blunted blades and it travels around the country warning communities of the terrible consequences of knife crime and aggression.

The sculpture arrives in [Central Park](#) on 6 September and education, outreach and workshops to spread its anti-violence message are already underway.

The visit to the city has been organised by youth organisation [Keep It 100 Essex](#) with the support of a wide range of partners, including [Chelmsford City Council](#) and the [Violence and Vulnerability Unit](#), a national team of community safety experts.

### **Youth violence focus of city's visit**

The sculpture represents intolerance to all forms of violent behaviour and is the only monument to travel the whole of the UK with a commitment to bring about social change. Locations hosting the Knife Angel must agree to 28 days of intensive youth anti-violence education.

The focus of its stay in Chelmsford is a celebration of positive youth culture, empowering young people to reject violence long before they might consider picking up a knife. School pupils and young people across Essex will be encouraged to become anti-violence ambassadors, with a pledge not to use aggression to solve disputes.

### **Events to run throughout September**

The sculpture, created by the [British Ironwork Centre](#) and artist [Alfie Bradley](#), will be the focus of activity for a month-long series of events throughout September, including workshops for schools and youth groups, and a vigil for the victims of knife crime.

A special youth awards has also been made possible by the angel's visit. The first K1100 Awards this September will recognise young creative talent across the county, with a range of categories from best entrepreneur and tech skills, to awards for artists and lyricists. The event will be held in the [Civic Theatre](#) just before the Knife Angel leaves the city.

### **Special performances of R4J**

R4J, Chelmsford City Theatres' modern take on Romeo and Juliet, will be running in September, with outdoor performances planned in front of the Knife Angel. The theatres will also deliver sessions for schools, along with KI100 Essex founder Luisa Di Marco, exploring the theme of conflict resolution through violence and its terrible impact.

Luisa Di Marco says the city's focus on youth violence for the Knife Angel's visit is a chance to make a difference.

"The Knife Angel's first visit to our county is an opportunity to educate young people on alternatives to violence and criminality and a time for adults to be educated on the reality of what our young people are being subjected to.

For many, youth violence will become a normal part of life, but young people are not born violent. Tackling youth violence in all its many forms and providing inspiration to take a different path is what Keep it 100 Essex is all about. Our young people deserve so much more, with earlier interventions and support to prevent future lives being lost.

I hope the Knife Angel programme will empower our communities in Chelmsford and Essex to help our children and young people, giving us all a much greater understanding of the signs of exploitation and how to stop it."

### **Knife amnesty planned**

A key part of the Knife Angel's national campaign is the message '[Save a Life, Surrender Your Knife](#)' and throughout September there'll be a knife amnesty in the city. New, discreet knife bins will be placed around Chelmsford so that anyone with a weapon may dispose of them safely and without fear of prosecution. Details of where to find these permanent knife banks will be available on the [KI100 website](#) in the lead-up to the Knife Angel's arrival in Central Park.

### **Thousands of pupils reached in coming months**

In addition to activities and events planned for September, an extensive programme of outreach developed by Knife Angel partners is already underway across Essex. Around 16,000 year 6 pupils are receiving free virtual immersive theatre sessions from [Crucial Crew](#), exploring the themes of grooming, county lines and knife crime.

Year 7 and 8 pupils will also have an opportunity to take part in an innovative project about knife crime and exploitation. Anglia Ruskin University's [StoryLab research institute](#) has been working with students from two Chelmsford secondary schools to develop an immersive project using VR headsets which is planned for the start of the new school year.

Chelmsford City Council's Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford, Cllr Rose Moore, says this anti-violence programme will have a lasting legacy.

"It's an honour for Chelmsford to host the Knife Angel; this stunning sculpture and its powerful anti-violence message will be a symbol of hope for our city and its presence in Central Park a sign that we want much more for our young people.

This programme of positive action created with KI100 Essex and other partners who are working hard on this project is a great start, with valuable opportunities for empowerment, mentoring and reconciliation. It's vital that we listen to young people. We need to learn more about the challenges they're facing locally, and their aspirations for the future, so we understand how to provide effective support and resources - now and in the years to come."

### **Key Dates**

- Knife Angel arrives 6 September
- KI100 farewell vigil 25 September
- KI100 Awards 26 September

- R4J performances and workshops throughout September
- Knife amnesty throughout September
- Knife Angel leaves in early October

## Full programme online

The full line-up of activities and events can be found on the [KI100 Essex website](#), along with details about how to sign up as an anti-violence ambassador and take part in workshops and the KI100 Awards.

There'll be more information about the Knife Angel programme in the coming weeks and if you'd like to hear the latest, sign up for updates on the Chelmsford City Council [Festivals and Events mailing list](#) and keep an eye on the [KI100 web page](#).

ENDS



## NOTES TO EDITORS

**The British Ironwork Centre's Knife Angel**, the National Monument Against Violence and Aggression, is coming to Chelmsford as part of its National Anti-Violence Tour.

For more information about its history, journey and objectives, visit:  
<https://www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk/show-areas/the-knife-angel-official>

## Keep it 100 Essex youth CIC

[KI100 Essex](#) is a platform for under-25s who live, work or study in Essex, which supports young people in finding opportunities in the digital, media, arts, music and sports sectors. KI100 works to educate young people on alternatives to criminal activities, promoting positive lifestyles and strategic thinking so that anyone can become the best versions of themselves. KI100 and its founder Luisa Di Marco are leading the Knife Angel's visit to Chelmsford.

For further information and to arrange interviews about the **Knife Angel's visit** to Chelmsford, contact Julie Weight in the Chelmsford City Council communications team:

[Julie.Weight@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.Weight@chelmsford.gov.uk) or on 01245 606984.

## Full programme details

### KI100 'Press Pause' digital workshops Various age groups across Essex July 2021 - March 2022

KI100 digital workshops focus on letting young people know about support opportunities available in Essex, tailored to whatever audience they are delivering to. These innovative workshops encourage strategic thinking, with guest speakers whose lives have been impacted by youth and street violence.

**Partners:** Keep It 100 Essex, The National Lottery Community Fund, Essex County Council

---

**Knife Amnesty  
 September**

Throughout September there'll be a knife amnesty in the city. There will be details of new, discreet knife bins and where to find them so that anyone with a weapon may dispose of them safely and without fear.

**Partners:** British Ironworks Centre, Chelmsford City Council, Keep It 100 Essex

---

## **Welcoming the Knife Angel**

### **6 September**

There are plans to welcome the Knife Angel to Central Park, which will be revealed in the weeks to come. Find out the latest on the KI100 website.

---

## **R4J 'Take ACTION' workshops**

### **Essex secondary schools, September**

Chelmsford City Theatres will be running free 'Take ACTION' workshops in association with Keep It 100 Essex. The theatres and the play's director Mike Dodsworth will work alongside KI100 founder Luisa Di Marco to explore the themes within R4J, a modern take on Romeo and Juliet. Although Shakespeare's play is more than 400 years old, the core theme of conflict resolution through violence and its terrible impact on young people is depressingly familiar today. These workshops for secondary schools are planned to take place in person, depending on whatever Covid-19 guidance is in place at the time. Schools can book sessions and performances by contacting [civic.theatreemail@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:civic.theatreemail@chelmsford.gov.uk)

**Partners:** Chelmsford City Theatres, Keep It 100 Essex

---

## **R4J**

### **September**

Outdoor performances of R4J, [Chelmsford City Theatres'](#) contemporary take on Romeo and Juliet, will be taking place in the city in September, including directly in front of the Knife Angel itself. Many of the cast are up-and-coming local actors, some in their first professional engagement. It's free to attend thanks to funding from [Arts Council England](#) and further details will be on the Chelmsford City Theatres website.

**Partners:** Chelmsford City Theatres

---

## **Workshops for victims' families**

### **Dates TBC**

These will run before the Knife Angel vigil and will give affected families some time to meet, empower, and support each other in preparation for the event. There will also be an opportunity to make lanterns for lost loved ones with the assistance of a local artist.

**Partners:** Keep It 100 Essex, National Lottery Community Fund, Xplore Arts

---

## **KI100 Knife Angel Vigil**

### **Saturday 25 September**

A simple farewell vigil will be held to honour those lost to knife crime and other forms of violence. There'll be more details about this event soon, including how to sign a book of remembrance. If your family would like to take part, please contact [hello@knifeangelchelmsford.com](mailto:hello@knifeangelchelmsford.com)

**Partners:** Keep It 100 Essex, Chelmsford City Council, National Lottery Community Fund, CVSA Chelmsford, Essex Violence & Vulnerability Unit, Chelmsford Drama Centre

---

## KI100 Awards

### Sunday 26 September

The Knife Angel's legacy is one of the most important aspects of its visit to any new place and a KI100 youth awards in Chelmsford has been made possible thanks to this visit. Celebrating positive youth culture and showcasing the amazing talent in our county is what #knifeangelchelmsford is all about.

The awards will take place this September and they'll provide opportunities for personal and professional development for 18 to 30-year-olds that money can't buy with mentors lined up to help the winners realise their potential. Nominations open from 23 July. Go to the [KI100 Knife Angel web page](#) to find out more about the categories and how to nominate.

**Partners:** Keep It 100 Essex, Chelmsford City Theatres, The Panic Awards, Kaos Photography Essex, Essex Youth Services

---

## National Knife Angel Photography Competition

### From September 6

This national competition run by the [British Ironwork Centre](#) allows everyone, whatever their background in photography, to get behind the lens and submit a photo of the Knife Angel. Entries can be posted on social media and shared using the hashtag #KnifeAngelPhotoCompetition.



## Partner outreach and events

Even before the Knife Angel arrives in Chelmsford, education and outreach is already underway across the county. Pupils and young people throughout Essex have been taking part in workshops and sessions since April, with activities planned right through until March 2022.

### Crucial Crew

#### Year 6 pupils, across Essex, April - July

Crucial Crew is brilliant immersive theatre created by [TIC Box Productions](#) which explores the difficult issues that can affect young people, giving a rehearsal for real life. The theme for 2021 is child exploitation, including a focus on grooming, county lines and knife crime.

Around 16,000 Year 6 pupils across 9 Essex councils will have the chance to take part in these free workshops, which are being delivered remotely this year and will reach more people than ever. A pre-recorded performance is sent out to schools and this is followed by an hour-long session with a facilitator and actor.

**Partners:** Chelmsford City Council, Maldon District Council, Violence and Vulnerability Unit

---

### StoryLab

#### Year 7 & 8 pupils – September 2021

Anglia Ruskin University's StoryLab research institute specialises in immersive storytelling. Their team has been working with students from two Chelmsford schools to create an immersive virtual reality experience about knife crime and exploitation. School pupils have been collaborating with the ARU team at their

Cambridge campus to co-create this innovative project which will be delivered using VR headsets. It's planned to start in September.

**Partners:** Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford City Council, Essex Police, Violence and Vulnerability Unit



## Knife Angel Chelmsford Partners

### Sponsors

Keep It 100 Youth CIC  
British Ironwork Centre  
Chelmsford City Council  
National Lottery Community Fund  
Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit  
Starz League  
Persimmon Homes Community Fund  
Stansted Airport Community Fund

### Delivery Partners

Alfie Bradley  
Chelmsford Centre Supporting Voluntary Action  
Chelmsford City Theatres  
Essex Police  
Essex Youth Services  
Kaos Photography Essex  
The Panic Awards  
Xplore Arts  
YMCA  
Young Essex Assembly





ESSEX

**VIOLENCE & VULNERABILITY**

UNIT

