

ESSEX SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements 2019-20



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1. Introduction

There are many agencies in Essex supporting children and young people, and it is very important that they all work together as a partnership to ensure they are keeping children safe.

Some changes are being made to the way these agencies work together to keep children safe, because of new government guidance set out in Working Together 2018. The main changes are that:

1. There are now seven organisations in Essex who are jointly responsible by law for the partnership arrangements for keeping children safe:
 - Essex County Council
 - Essex Police
 - Five of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups covering the county of Essex

These are known as the Statutory Partners

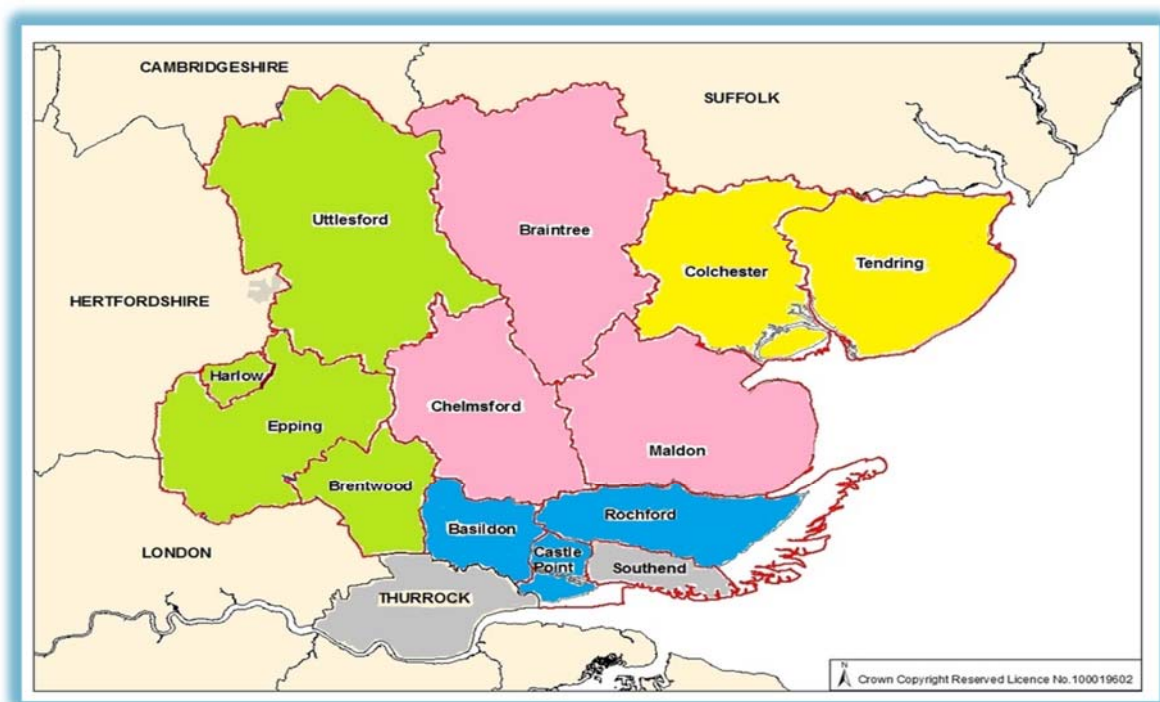
2. The Statutory Partners have identified relevant agencies which are legally required to cooperate with the new safeguarding arrangements (listed in the Appendix).
3. These new partnership arrangements will continue to be referred to as the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) keeping its name and identity as it is a well-known and trusted brand.
4. While the ESCB will retain parts of its structure that are known to work well, it will also make further changes which includes learning from best practice.
5. This Plan sets out the detail of how the new ESCB will operate from 29 September 2019. It will be supported by an ESCB Constitution document which will contain the governance details.

At the heart of the arrangements is a commitment from all agencies to work together to keep children safe and to continuously improve and learn how to best do this.

Background

Essex has a complex set of partnership arrangements to support a population of 1.468 million, of which 308 thousand are children and young people under the age of 18.¹ It has one of the largest local authorities in the UK, plus twelve district and borough councils and 5 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across 3 sustainability and transformation partnerships, two of which overlap with other counties.

In addition, within the geographical county of Essex there are two unitary authorities (Southend and Thurrock).



¹ 2017 ONS Mid-Year Estimate

2. Developing new child safeguarding arrangements in Essex

The Wood Review 2015 and the subsequent government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' required all local areas to review their safeguarding arrangements.

In conducting this review, the ESCB involved a wide range of partner agencies, not just the three Statutory Partners and used evidence-based learning from the multi-agency safeguarding (MASA) pilots, as well as partners' views of what works well locally.

The initial principles and considerations of the review:

- Aims to reduce duplication across partnerships
- Champions the interests and rights of children and young people
- Ensures accountable oversight and feedback on performance and outcomes
- Scrutinises and improves practice
- Ensures partnerships are proportionate, efficient, effective and adequately resourced

New child safeguarding arrangements for Essex

The Statutory Partners have agreed that the new arrangements will be named the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) as it is a successful and well-known brand widely used in Essex to deliver learning to a very large number of professionals. In the remainder of this document, ESCB is used to refer to the new partnership.

The ESCB will operate in line with the requirements of the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and will cover the same geographical area of Essex, as defined by the local authority boundaries. The safeguarding partners and relevant agencies included in these arrangements will fulfil their statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children from Essex who live or are placed outside of our local authority area.

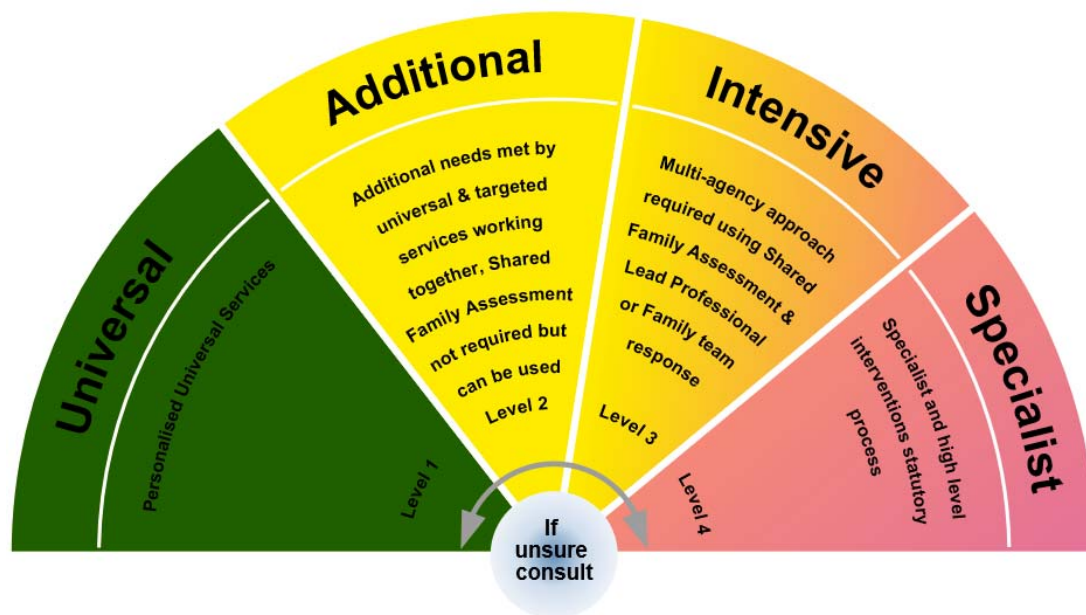
The seven local safeguarding partners jointly leading the Partnership Arrangements are:

- Essex County Council: represented on the ESCB Executive Board by the Director of Children's Services
- Essex Police: represented on the ESCB Executive Board by the Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing
- Five Clinical Commissioning Groups: represented on the ESCB Executive Board by the three Directors of Nursing covering the local sustainability and transformation partnerships across Mid and South, North East and West Essex.

Thresholds and levels of need

The Board will oversee the multi-agency safeguarding of children with a range of levels of need, as shown by our local threshold document Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (link to document):

<http://www.escb.co.uk/media/1488/effectivesupportbooklet2017v5-final.pdf>



(The Essex Effective Support Windscreen)

This forms an integral part of Essex’s approach to supporting children, ensuring the right support is provided by the right agency, based on the child’s level of need. The approach also promotes earlier support for families to address issues before they escalate to crisis point and ensure that children are kept safe from harm.

3. Essex vision and values

Vision

The ESCB's vision is that multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements in Essex are of the highest quality, with the child at their heart; and that practice continuously improves and evolves across all agencies to reflect changing needs and circumstances

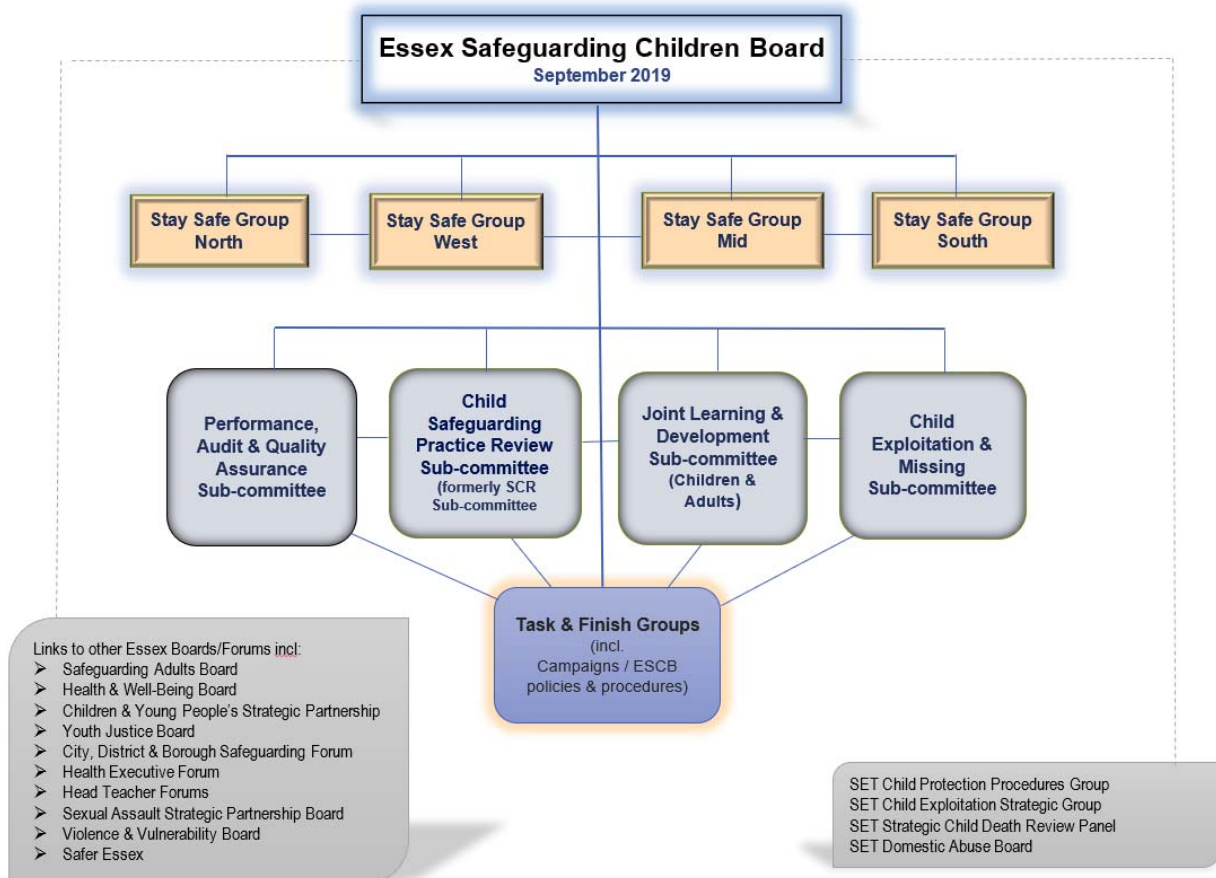
Values

Safeguarding partners in Essex are committed to delivering their vision according to a set of agreed values and principles, and these govern the work of the whole partnership:

- The child is at the heart of everything we do
- Sharing information between partners, and operating with trust and openness
- Continuous learning and the flexibility to evolve the partnership
- Ensuring everyone has a voice, including children and families
- Partners taking ownership and responsibility
- Strong communication and engagement within partners, with clear roles and responsibilities
- Excellent integration between adults and children's safeguarding
- Ensuring a balance of respect for individual organisations and appropriate challenge
- Ensuring alignment, connection and learning across the partners - a golden thread from the Strategic Board, through the sub-committees to the front line
- Ensuring involvement and focus on front line practitioners
- Keeping a preventative mind-set and adopting a 'Think Family' approach
- Joint priority setting across partner agencies

4. Structure of the ESCB

As a result of the review the number of sub-committees reporting to the ESCB has reduced, with the focus on groups that are strongly focussed on improving practice and ensuring an emphasis on learning, enabling a feedback loop across partner agencies and the front line.



Executive Board

The Statutory Partners have agreed for the ESCB Executive Board to be chaired by an Independent Facilitator, a role which does not hold any statutory responsibilities.

The three Statutory Partners have agreed to each lead on specific priority work areas and have the option of rotating annually (refer to Appendix).

The Executive Board membership will include the Statutory Partners along with representatives from Education, Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS), District, City & Borough Councils, Office of Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company. It will meet 4 times a year with meetings themed around ESCB business plan priorities, national safeguarding priorities and areas identified through data and performance, to provide a learning model that is focussed on outcomes.

- **Stay Safe Groups** x 4 across Mid, South, West and North quadrants (chaired by various representatives from across the partnership). Coordinates and leads the local safeguarding agenda focusing on improving local outcomes and highlighting emerging issues and risks so that they can be appropriately addressed at operational level. They also act as learning hubs to ensure effective sharing of learning and practice and a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children. They provide quarterly updates to the ESCB Executive via a combined report.
- **Performance, Audit, and Quality Assurance sub-committee** (chaired by National Probation Service representative. Vice chair from CCG). Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of what is done by the ESCB partners (including findings from multi-agency case audits) to inform the Board of relevant trends any risk to performance, who can then in turn agree appropriate strategies and actions on ways to improve.
- **Child Safeguarding Practice Review sub-committee** (chaired by Essex County Council, Children's Social Care representative). Oversees and monitors the review of serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to Essex with a focus on identifying learning to help organisations to change, and become environments in which both the systems and practice can be safely challenged and improved
- **Child Exploitation & Missing sub-committee** (chaired by Community Rehabilitation Company representative). Delivers the SET Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy in Essex by, coordinating partnership work, sharing learning and evaluating the impact of the work carried out by the partnership and individual agencies.
- **Joint Learning and Development sub-committee (Children & Adults)** (chaired by Essex County Council, Head of Workforce Development). Identifies multi-agency safeguarding learning needs that require addressing to ensure partner agencies develop their workforces to a high-quality standard and are keeping children / adults safe.

Task and Finish Groups e.g. Communications/campaigns (Children & Adults), ESCB policies and procedures.

The Statutory Partners will come together 4 weeks in advance of each ESCB Executive Board meeting to assure themselves that the work of the partnership is heading in the right direction and agree the draft agenda of the next Executive Board meeting.

ESCB Assembly Meetings

In order to ensure coordination with other partnership arrangements in Essex, there will be an Assembly twice a year with representatives from other Partnership Boards/Forums with a safeguarding remit for vulnerable children and adults that operate across the county:

This includes:

- Essex Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
- SET Strategic Domestic Abuse Board
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Essex Adults Safeguarding Board
- Youth Justice Board
- City, District & Borough Safeguarding Group
- Health Executive Forum
- Head Teacher Forums

These links will promote effective communication and engagement and ensure not only that "safeguarding is everybody's business" but also synergy of work

5. Relevant agencies involved

The strength of local partnership working is dependent on safeguarding partners working collaboratively together with relevant agencies, whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In addition to the three main statutory safeguarding partners, a number of other relevant agencies will also be required to work with the ESCB, reflecting the strong partnership relationships already built up in Essex over many years. Specific relevant agencies will have a representative member of the ESCB Executive Board. In addition, some of these members may sit on ESCB sub-committees, the Assembly or be part of Stay Safe Groups.

Schools – with 552 settings, Essex schools are vital safeguarding partners. Schools will be engaged as part of the ESCB Executive and sub-committees to ensure joint working to safeguard children within a multi-agency shared approach. The ESCB will aim to build on established relationships with schools and education providers to ensure they remain a key partner agency when the landscape of school organisation

is changing. There will also be a focus on exploring how schools can contribute to ensuring the voices of children and young people contribute to safeguarding developments and priorities. Schools will have Headteacher representatives from, Primary, Special Education and Secondary education. In addition, the Essex CC Director for Education will sit on the ESB Executive Board. Other members (including those from colleges) may sit on ESCB sub-committees, the ESCB Assembly or be part of Stay Safe Groups

Early Years Settings – with approximately 2123 settings in Essex including private and voluntary sector providers, childminders and after school clubs, this is a large but important sector. Settings will be engaged through the Stay Safe Groups to ensure effective sharing of learning and practice and a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children.

Probation – both the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company will continue to be key partners within the new arrangements, being designated as relevant agencies and contributing to the ESCB Executive Board, sub-committees and Assembly.

District councils – Essex as a two-tier authority, has 12 city, district and borough councils who are crucial for delivery of services to families with the county and have specific responsibilities for Community Safety. Each is designated as a Relevant Agency of ESCB. The Chelmsford City Council Chief Executive will sit on the ESCB Executive Board as their representative. Other members may sit on ESCB sub-committees, the Assembly or be part of Stay Safe Groups.

CAFCASS – will remain a partner within the new arrangements and will be invited to attend the Assembly and provide an annual update to the ESCB Executive Board.

NHS Trusts and Providers

Key partners within the new arrangements will contribute to the ESCB Executive Board, sub-committees and Assembly.

Other providers of commissioned services to Essex County Council Children, Families & Education and Clinical Commissioning Groups - representatives from these services will be invited to contribute via Stay Safe Groups or the Assembly where relevant.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex – will remain as a key partner as the lead agency for coordinating community safety across Essex and a senior OPFC representative will contribute to the Board through the ESCB Executive Board and Assembly.

Voluntary and Faith Groups sector – will continue to be involved with the partnership arrangements and a senior representative will be invited to the ESCB Executive Board and there will be voluntary sector representation on the local Stay Safe Groups.

Joint work across Southend, Essex and Thurrock:

Whilst Southend, Essex and Thurrock (referred to as SET) will each maintain its own independent multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, they already have strong collaborative working arrangements and have agreed to develop this further through a “Working Across SET” strategy, supporting those areas of safeguarding that can be tackled most effectively and have the greatest impact on practice and services for children across the SET area.

They have also agreed areas of cooperation for business planning when developing their individual plans and prioritise which are the key areas of a focus for the planning period.

Existing SET Groups (identified as good practice):

- Strategic Child Death Overview Panel
- SET Child Protection Procedures Working Group
- SET Child Exploitation Strategic Group
- SET Domestic Abuse Board

6. Local safeguarding practice reviews and embedding learning

The responsibility for how the system learns lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and at a local level with the safeguarding partners via the ESCB Child Safeguarding Practice Review Sub-committee.

The three safeguarding partners have made arrangements to:

- identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area
- ratify the decision making of the ESCB Child Safeguarding Practice Review Sub-committee
- commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken

There is an ongoing commitment to continuous learning and improvement leading to enhanced practice, improved outcomes and experiences. Safeguarding partners will continue to take account of the findings from all local and national reviews with a view to considering how identified improvements should be implemented locally. This includes the way in which organisations and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

We will look at using different methods including appreciative enquiry to undertake and learn from these reviews of practice. Findings from the local reviews undertaken in Essex will be shared with relevant parties locally through the Stay Safe Groups and there will be regular monitoring to ascertain progress on the implementation of recommended improvements.

The Stay Safe Groups are frontline learning hubs which aim to improve local safeguarding practice and are linked via two-way feedback loop between front line practitioners and the ESCB Executive Board, ensuring learning on priority local issues is shared and acted on at all levels in a timely way.

7. Independent scrutiny arrangements

It is the responsibility of the Statutory Partners to put in place an independent scrutiny process to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases (Working Together 2018).

A multi systems approach will be taken to the independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the new arrangements. This will comprise of a number of functions which will include scrutiny through, multi-agency cases audits, a stocktake of what we know already and what agencies' independent Inspections have already told us. Peer reviews (for example across the ESCB Stay Safe Groups as well as external MASA peer reviews with comparable counterparts in the Eastern region) and ensuring the voice of children, young people and families is heard.

These functions will:

- Consider how effectively the new arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners;
- Ensure the Statutory Partners are providing strong leadership
- Provide reports to the Statutory Partners on relevant areas of safeguarding;
- Review the ESCB Annual Report before publication;
- Promote an effective strategic safeguarding challenge and reflection to drive continuous improvement

8. Voice of children and families

The voice of the child is at the heart of our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Involving children and families is essential to safeguarding in Essex both in contributing to delivering the ESCB's vision and in helping to scrutinise and review the partnership arrangements themselves.

The ESCB will make use of the many existing arrangements in place across Essex to regularly involve children and families in its work and hear their voices. These include:

- Multi-agency case audits
- Schools councils, youth groups, support groups
- Service user panels

This will be supported from information directly from Data sources such as:

- The Children & Young People's Involvement Team (Essex County Council)
- Performance teams across the partnership
- Commissioning

9. Dispute resolution and escalation process

Transparency, openness and a willingness to understand and respect individual and agency views are a core aspect of multi-agency / inter-agency working. However, there may be occasions where individuals / agencies working with children and families disagree on how best to keep children safe and promote their welfare, and therefore all partner agencies have a responsibility to resolve any professional disagreement between them promptly and amicably in accordance with the SET Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures.

In the unlikely event that a disagreement cannot be resolved at local level by senior managers within the respective agencies, it can be escalated to the three ESCB Statutory Partners.

The ESCB Constitution and SET Procedures will be revised accordingly to take account of these changes from 29 September 2019.

10. Implementation

The new ESCB multi-agency partnership arrangements will commence 29 September 2019.

11. Funding and business support

The work of the ESCB (under these new arrangements) will be supported by a business unit hosted by Essex County Council and will involve the existing staff assigned to the local safeguarding children board in its previous form.

New Child Death Review arrangements are scheduled to take place from September 2019, and whilst the statutory partners have agreed to retain the existing SET Child Death Review process, it will not sit under the ESCB new safeguarding arrangements. Going forward the child death review partners will be the local authority and clinical commissioning groups for the local area as set out in the Children Act 2004 (the Act), as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The safeguarding partners are committed to equitable and proportionate funding of this business support and the work of the ESCB as a whole. Contributions from relevant agencies to support the local arrangements have therefore been agreed for 2019/20. These include the cost of local safeguarding practice reviews (aka serious case reviews) and partnership learning reviews.

Funding for 2019/20 is as follows:

Contributing Partner	£
Essex County Council	213,166
Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	66,426
NHS North East Essex CCG	17,337
NHS Mid Essex CCG	16,142
City, District and Borough Councils (£1,210 each)	14,520
NHS West Essex CCG	12,687
NHS Basildon & Brentwood CCG	12,555
NHS Castle Point & Rochford CCG	7,705
Community Rehabilitation Company	5,082
National Probation Service	2,415
CAFCASS	550

These arrangements will be reviewed annually.

Designated Relevant Agencies

The Safeguarding Partners have selected those agencies in Essex which are to be relevant agencies and members involved in the new safeguarding arrangements as shown below. These have been determined as those partners which have regular contact with children or have responsibility for services to them in the local area. (Local Safeguarding Partners Relevant Agencies Regulations 2018):

- All Primary Education Establishments including maintained nursery schools
- All Secondary Education Establishments
- All Special Schools
- All Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision Providers
- All Further Education Colleges
- Early Years Settings
- Voluntary Sector
- Adults Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Local Authority Housing
- District, City & Borough Councils
- Youth Offending Service
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service
- NHS England
- NHS Basildon & Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Castle Point & Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
- Basildon & Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (BTUH)
- Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust (MEHT)
- Southend Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust (SHUFT)
- East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT)
- North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT)
- Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH)
- Anglian Community Enterprise Community Interest Company (ACE)
- Emotional well-being and mental health service (EWMHS)
- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT)
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST)
- Provide
- National Probation Service

- Essex Community Rehabilitation Company
- Essex Police
- Essex Fire and Rescue Services

Statutory Partners lead areas (with the option of rotating annually):

1. Clinical Commissioning Group Lead to cover the ESCB Executive Vice Chair role.
2. Assistant Chief Constable for Essex Police will ratify the decision making of the Serious Case Review Panel.
3. Dispute resolution and escalation process will be overseen by the Clinical Commissioning Group leads to determine a way forward.
4. The Director of Children's Services will oversee the development of the independent scrutiny arrangements.



This information is issued by:
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