

Executive Key Messages 2020-21

March 2021

Local work of Stay Safe groups

All Stay Safe groups in Essex are now established and are developing their work plan with good attendance from partners in all areas. The newly formed group in South first met in September 2020 and identified four key areas of work: early help, child exploitation and online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and homelessness. Recent challenges were acknowledged within Mid but there is confidence that the group have a positive outlook and work plan moving forwards. The groups are guided by the ESCB Business Plan and committed to delivering good outcomes for children and young people across Essex.

Safeguarding Leads from District and Borough Councils are invited to attend Stay Safe meetings across the county. There are also links into Stay Safe through Community Safety Partnerships and community policing. Furthermore, the ESCB City, District & Borough Council Safeguarding Leads Sub-Committee has reformed and will meet in April. Going forward, the Stay Safe Chairs and ESCB Sub-Committee Chairs will be having regular joint meetings.

Housing protocol

When homeless families are placed in Essex they can become disconnected from their support networks and they may also have vulnerabilities. The housing protocol with London will allow conversations to be had between the two authorities to ensure the best support for the families involved. Work will continue to implement the protocol and determine how to work with other neighbouring authorities who may place families within Essex.

Child exploitation during lockdown

A consultation into how service delivery for child exploitation has been impacted by Covid-19 highlighted concerns around the lack of face to face work with children and young people. Whilst the rapid move to a digital service in the first lockdown provided a sense of togetherness, more recent studies have shown a negative impact on working with children and families in this way for an extended period. Consultation will continue over the Covid recovery period to understand the experience of children and families as services begin more face to face work.

Online exploitation awareness campaign

Since the start of the pandemic there has been the misconception that children are safer at home. As we now know, that is not necessarily the case. With children spending more time online and parents trying to manage home-schooling and work, exploitation has simply become more hidden. Young people craving to connect with others, have turned to social media to replace face to face interaction, creating opportunities for exploiters to groom and exploit. The [SET Online Safety Campaign](#) has been raising awareness of these issues to professionals, parents and young people. Alongside this, a new [Exploitation E-learning Package and SET Partnership Child Exploitation Pathway](#) has been launched to support those working with, and identifying, individuals at risk of serious violence or exploitation.

December 2020

Partnership working and Covid-19: Collaborative work between agencies continues in response to Covid. Statutory partner meetings also continue across Southend, Essex and Thurrock in order to monitor the effectiveness of the safeguarding system, share information and take action as required. This coordinated action and sharing of information has been helpful in formulating responses to emerging risks.

The Executive discussed the wider partnership response to Covid. Partnership arrangements are working well and there continues to be a fantastic effort by schools to adapt to an ever-changing situation. There is a focus by all agencies on supporting in particular the most vulnerable children and families and a recognition that supporting mental health and wellbeing remains a priority not only for children and families but also for the staff working in agencies in these challenging times. The considerable and ongoing contribution of the voluntary sector to supporting children, young people and families was also acknowledged.

Stay Safe Groups: The Executive received an update from two of the Stay Safe Groups in West and North. It was very helpful to see how well the groups were progressing and some of the areas of work that were being taken forward. Areas of work include around early help, building partnership working locally and embedding learning from reviews.

Learning and development – Webinars available to book: Following the cancellation of the Stay Safe conferences in March and April 2020, ESCB are now going to run a series of webinars from January through to April 2021.

ESCB have worked with Southend and Thurrock so the webinars are available across SET. The webinars are being funded through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit and are open to anyone working with people up to the age of 25.

The webinars will feature the following speakers and topics;

- Zoe Lodrick Psychology of the Offender
- CYP First Safeguarding in a desensitised world
- NWG Exploitation and the transition into adulthood
- Craig Pinkney Understanding gangs and criminal exploitation

More information on the webinars and booking links can be [found here](#).

Thank you

The ESCB Executive want to thank all staff for their commitment and fantastic hard work over the last year, especially given the extras pressure because of Covid. This has been a challenging year but the professionalism and dedication of staff across all agencies to keeping children and young people safe has been outstanding and much appreciated.

October 2020

Early Help and Effective Support: The Essex County Council Children & Families Hub identified that there were a significant number of requests for support coming into the hub that were more appropriate for level 2/early help services. If the support needs of a child and family can be met at level 2 then these services can be accessed directly by the family without the need to submit a Request for Support (RFS), with support if needed using the

Directory of Services. Early Help Plans and Team Around the Family are ways of working together collaboratively to get children and families the most appropriate help at the earliest possible time.

The Executive therefore agreed recommendations to address early help support. These include ensuring internal safeguarding training includes information on early help, team around the family, ensuring staff are aware of the [directory of services](#) and the [Effective Support document](#). Support for Stay Safe Groups to reinforce messaging and increased communications to the partnership reminding staff of early help and team around the family. If anyone would like more information on team around the family or early help including presentations to team meetings or information for training sessions then please contact alison.duguid@essex.gov.uk

Think Family Approach: Following the findings from recent reviews, the Essex Safeguarding Children Board will work with all partner agencies to agree the principles of a Think Family approach, with a focus on how parental mental health impacts on the child/ren. Partner agencies will then disseminate information to their staff through relevant internal channels.

May 2020

Multi-Agency response to Covid-19: Each agency spoke about the challenges within their organisations and how services have had to quickly adapt in order to continue to safeguard children and young people during the pandemic. The ESCB launched a dedicated [COVID-19 section on the website](#) outlining general advice, temporary changes to services and information for families. Statutory partners across Southend, Essex and Thurrock have weekly online meetings to monitor issues around Covid-19 as they arise.

Options for Sub-Committees and Stay Safe Groups: Discussions were had about how to further improve links between these groups and the Executive Board. Proposals will be taken forward over the coming months.

Collaboration of Boards: There is agreement that there is scope to improve collaboration of different Boards across Essex and work will be progressed. This could involve an annual meeting for all the chairs of the different Boards which will aim to reduce any duplication of work.