

Essex Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

2024-25

FOREWORD

All those working and volunteering with children and families in Essex do an incredible job ensuring children and families receive the help and support they need.

As the Lead Safeguarding Partners, we would like to thank everyone working, volunteering and supporting children and families in Essex.

We want all children in Essex to be happy, healthy and safe; to feel listened to, and to have the maximum opportunities to be ambitious. If children or their families need help and support it should be at the right time, by the right person and in the right place for them.



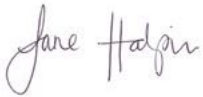
Gavin Jones - Chief Executive of Essex County Council



Tom Abell – Chief Executive of Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board



Dr Ed Garratt – Chief Executive of Suffolk and North-East Essex Integrated Care Board



Dr Jane Halpin – Chief Executive of Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board



Ben-Julian Harrington - Chief Constable for Essex Police

CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Introduction	3
Essex Vision and Values	6
Structure of the ESCB	8
Relevant agencies	12
Local safeguarding practice reviews and embedding learning	14
Multi-agency learning and development	15
Independent scrutiny arrangements	16
Dispute resolution and escalation process	17
Funding and business support.....	17

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements for Essex. This document sets out how the Safeguarding Partners in Essex, alongside the relevant agencies, (listed in section 4) work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Children and Social Work Act and its accompanying guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) place a shared and equal duty on the statutory safeguarding partners to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in the local area.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 set out updated requirements for all Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASAs). The key changes introduced by Working Together 2023 were:

- The introduction of Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) and their responsibilities as defined in Working Together 2023
- Each LSP to nominate a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (in Essex they were formally known as the Statutory Safeguarding Partners)
- The nomination of a partnership chair from the Delegated Safeguarding Partners
- Independent scrutiny role
- LSPs to give consideration to naming all local education settings as relevant agencies, in Essex this has been agreed and includes early years settings, schools, colleges and alternative provisions
- Publication of these arrangements and a yearly report

The partnership arrangements in Essex are referred to as the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) and this Plan sets out the detail of how the ESCB operates. ESCB covers 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.

Safeguarding Partners

As defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) for ESCB are:

- Gavin Jones - Chief Executive of Essex County Council
- Chief Executives for the Integrated Care Boards covering Essex
 - Tom Abell - Mid and South Essex ICB
 - Dr Ed Garratt - Suffolk and North-East Essex ICB

- Dr Jane Halpin - Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB
- Ben-Julian Harrington - Chief Constable for Essex Police

In Essex, the Lead Safeguarding Partners have appointed the following people as their Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs):

- Essex County Council - Helen Lincoln, Director of Children's Services
- Essex Police - Lucy Morris, Assistant Chief Constable
- Suffolk and North-East Essex ICB - Lisa Nobes, Chief Nurse
- Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB - Natalie Hammond, Director of Nursing
- Mid and South Essex ICB – Dr Giles Thorpe, Executive Chief Nursing Officer

In line with the recommendations in *Working Together 2023*, Essex Safeguarding Partners have invited the Director of Education from the local authority to attend the Delegated Safeguarding Partners meetings. Education is already represented at all other levels of the partnership.

The Chair of Essex Safeguarding Board Executive meetings for 2025 is Lisa Nobes, Suffolk and North-East Essex ICB, this role will rotate on an annual basis between the delegated safeguarding partners. The Vice Chair role will be covered by the current independent facilitator/scrutineer.

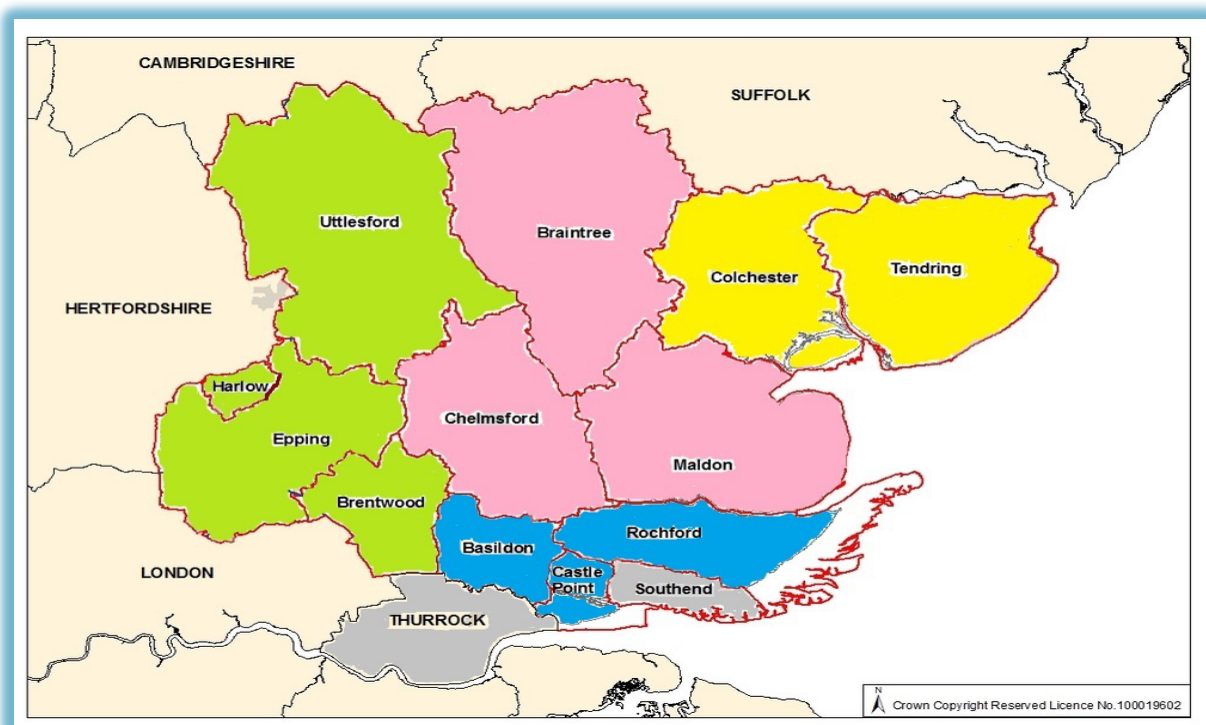
The Lead Safeguarding Partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements which is underpinned by equitable and proportionate funding between the Statutory Safeguarding Partners with additional contributions from relevant agencies. The Delegated Safeguarding Partners have the responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the safeguarding arrangements. Although the Lead Safeguarding Partners have delegated their responsibilities to those named above, they remain accountable for any action or decisions taken on behalf of their agency.

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.

The Essex Context

Essex has a complex set of partnership arrangements to support a population of 1.5 million, of which 311,000 are children and young people under the age of 18. Essex County Council is one of the largest local authorities in the UK, there are twelve city, district and borough councils and three Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), all of which overlap with other local authority areas.

In addition, within the geographical county of Essex there are two unitary authorities: Southend and Thurrock. Essex Police cover the geographical area of Essex.



ESSEX VISION AND VALUES

Vision

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board'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 continually improves and evolves across all agencies to reflect changing needs and circumstances.

Values

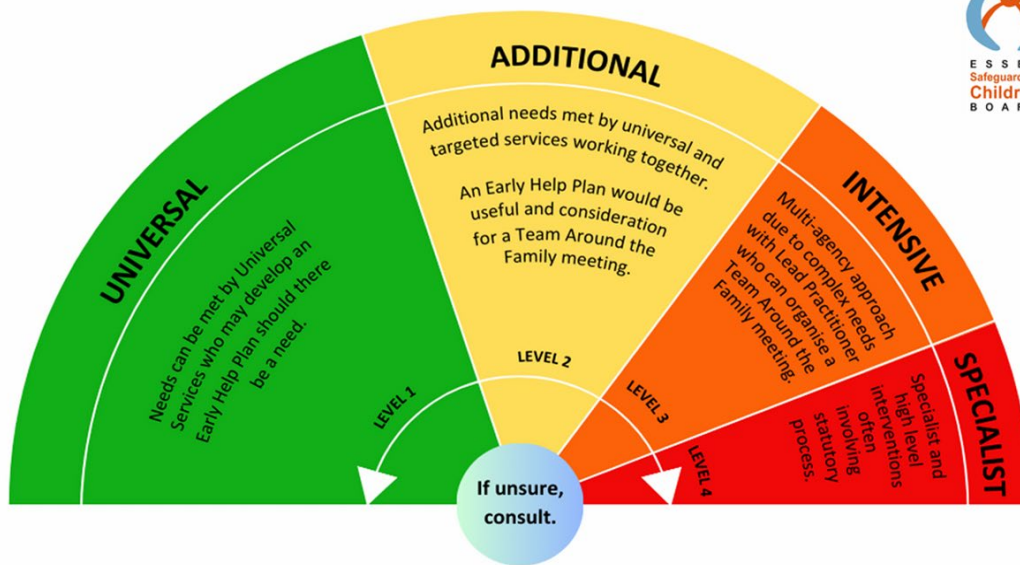
Safeguarding Partners in Essex are committed to delivering their vision according to a set of agreed values and principles, and these govern the work of the whole partnership:

- 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 adult 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 Executive, through the sub-committees and stay safe groups to the frontline
- Ensuring involvement and focus on frontline practitioners
- Keeping a preventative mind-set and adopting a Whole Family Approach
- Joint priority setting across partner agencies

Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board is responsible for our local threshold document, Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex, the latest version was published in October 2024. The Effective Support guidance was written by representatives from the Safeguarding Partners including Education and with a number of consultation opportunities.

The 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, at the right time, based on the child’s level of need. The approach also promotes earlier support for families to address issues before they escalate.

STRUCTURE OF THE ESCB

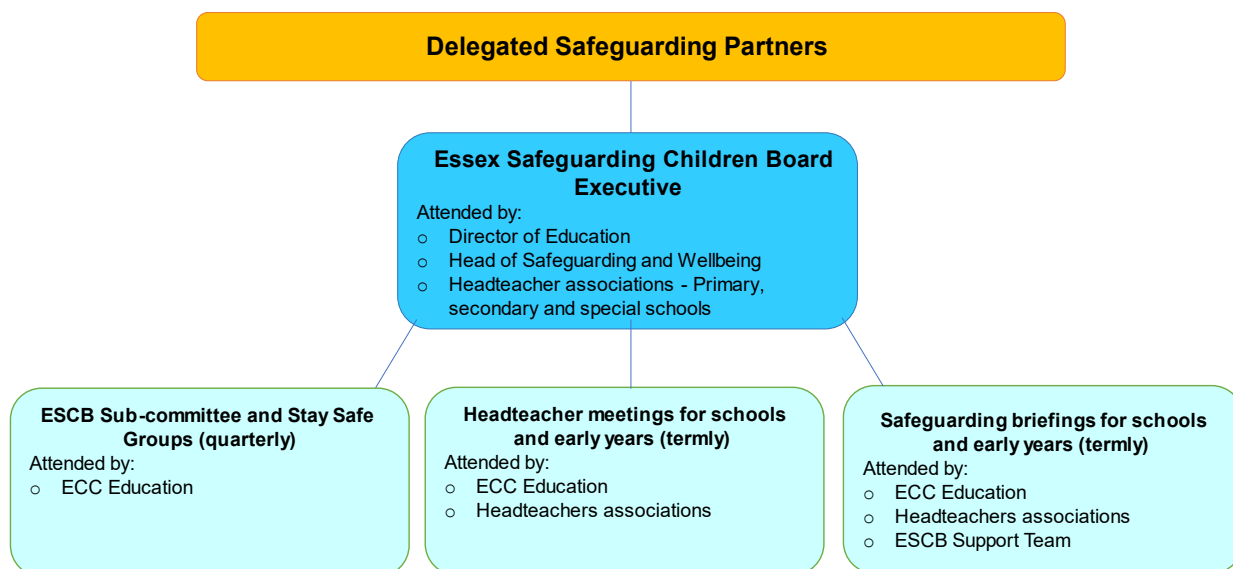
The work of the ESCB is delivered through sub-committees and stay safe groups that are strongly focussed on improving practice and ensuring an emphasis on learning, enabling a feedback loop across partner agencies and the frontline.

The following structure diagram outlines our approach and how the partnership will link across to other strategic partnership and work areas.

[ESCB Structure chart](#)

Education representation

Essex has over 600 schools including primary, secondary, special and independent schools, approximately 1600 early years settings as well as numerous alternative education providers and further education colleges. Essex Safeguarding Children Board has always had strong education representation across the layers of the board. Moving forward Education will now be represented at the Delegated Safeguarding Partner meetings. The structure chart below shows education representation across the partnership.



Lead Safeguarding Partners

The Lead Safeguarding Partners have agreed to meet annually, they will oversee the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, plans for independent scrutiny, yearly report, business priorities for the coming year and learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews.

Delegated Safeguarding Partners

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners meet regularly throughout the year and will ensure the lead safeguarding partner for their agency is sighted on the work of the Board between the annual meetings. The Delegated Safeguarding Partners are responsible for:

- The delivery and monitoring of multi-agency priorities and procedures.
- Close partnership working and engagement with education and other relevant agencies.
- Implementation of effective information sharing arrangements between agencies including data sharing.
- Delivery of high quality and timely rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews.
- Provision of appropriate multi-agency safeguarding professional development and training
- Seeking of, and responding to, feedback from children and families about their experiences of services.

The Delegated Safeguarding Partners through the ESCB Executive Board ensure the relevant agencies are fully engaged in undertaking and participating in the functions set out above.

Executive Board

The Executive Board will be chaired by Health for 2025 and will rotate annually amongst the Delegated Safeguarding Partners. The membership of the Executive Board consists of the Delegated Safeguarding Partners along with representatives from Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS), District, City & Borough Councils, Office of Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, 0-19 service (HCRG), CAMHS (NELFT) and The Probation Service.

The Executive meets four 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.

Supporting the Executive are a number of sub-committees and working groups. All groups and sub-committees are chaired by a nominated representative of the delegated safeguarding partners.

- **Stay Safe Groups** x 4 across Mid, South, West and North quadrants (chaired and vice chaired by Delegated Safeguarding Partner representatives).
These groups coordinate and lead 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.
- **Performance, Audit, and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee**
Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of what is done by the ESCB partners to inform the Board of relevant trends and any emerging risks, who can then in turn agree appropriate strategies and actions on ways to improve.
- **Child Safeguarding Practice Review Sub-Committee**
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.
- **Harm in the Community Sub-Committee**
This sub-committee focuses upon developing and increasing awareness about early intervention and prevention work linked to a range of extra-familial harms including online harms.
- **Southend, Essex and Thurrock Learning and Development Sub-Committee (Children, Adults & Domestic Abuse)**
Identifies common learning themes from reviews conducted by all six Boards¹ across Southend, Essex and Thurrock and produces resources and learning opportunities for all to access.
- **Neglect Sub-Committee**
This is a newly formed sub-committee to take forward learning from reviews, multi-agency case audits and a multi-agency thematic review of neglect.

¹ The six Boards are Essex Safeguarding Children Board, Essex Safeguarding Adults Board, Southend Safeguarding Partnership, Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnership, Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board and Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board.

- **Essex Learning and Development Group**
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.
- **SET Procedures Working Group**
Coordinates all work in relation to the SET Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures including the move to web-enabled procedures.
- **Task and Finish Groups** e.g. Communications/campaigns (Children & Adults).

The chairs and vice chairs of stay safe groups meet quarterly with the independent scrutineer and sub-committee chairs to share and support the flow of information across all groups.

All sub-committees and groups provide an update for the quarterly business support team report that is shared with the Executive.

RELEVANT AGENCIES

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.

Specific relevant agencies have a representative member on the ESCB Executive Board, as well as on ESCB sub-committees, stay safe groups or task and finish groups.

There are additional relevant agencies that may not sit on the ESCB Executive but may have sector representation or will be involved in the work of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board through sub-committees, stay safe groups or task and finish groups.

When identified by the Lead Safeguarding Partners as a relevant agency, an organisation must act in accordance with these local safeguarding arrangements. As part of this, all relevant agencies should:

- Have a clear understanding of its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children locally, and how it will discharge them.
- Co-operate with safeguarding partners to improve, implement, and monitor effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements.
- Share information and data about safeguarding issues and concerns affecting the children involved in their organisation to contribute to local priorities.
- Ensure local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are fully understood, and rigorously applied within their organisation.

Relevant Agencies represented at the Executive

- **Probation Service**
- **City, Borough and District councils** - The Chelmsford City Council Chief Executive sits on the ESCB Executive Board as their representative.
- **NHS Trusts and Providers** - NELFT who provide the CAMHS service across Essex and HCRG who provide the 0-19 Service across Essex attend the ESCB Executive Board.
- **Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex**
- **Voluntary and Community Sector** – A senior representative from Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS) attends the ESCB Executive Board.

- **Public Health** - The Director of Public Health is invited to attend the ESCB Executive.
- **Youth Justice Service**
- **Representatives from Essex Primary Heads Association, Association of Secondary Heads and Essex Special Schools Education Trust**

Additional Relevant Agencies

In addition to the Relevant Agencies listed above who are required to attend the Essex Safeguarding Children Board Executive, the Safeguarding Partners have selected the following agencies to be relevant agencies. Representatives from these agencies may be members of sub-committees, stay safe groups or task and finish groups.

Where relevant, other providers of commissioned services to Essex County Council Children, Families & Education and Integrated Care Boards are invited to contribute to the partnership through stay safe groups and specific task and finish groups.

The other relevant agencies are:

- 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 and childcare providers

Education settings - Essex uses a model of representation as described earlier in the document for all education settings. However, all individual education establishments, multi-academy trusts and childcare providers working with children up to the age of 18 are relevant agencies.

- Adult Social Care
- Local Authority Housing
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- NHS England
- Mid and South Essex Hospital Trust which covers Basildon, Broomfield and Southend hospitals
- East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT)
- North-East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT)

- Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH)
- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT)
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST)
- Essex Wellbeing Service
- Essex Fire and Rescue Services

Representatives should be able to promote the effectiveness of the partnership through their responsibility and accountability for the services their agencies deliver to children and families through their ability to influence the effectiveness of their agency's contribution to multi-agency safeguarding.

Joint work across Southend, Essex and Thurrock

Whilst Southend, Essex and Thurrock (referred to as SET) each maintain its own independent multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, they have strong collaborative working arrangements, 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 also have 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.

SET Groups:

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

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 National 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 from the partnership to continuous learning and improvement leading to enhanced practice and improved outcomes for children and families. Safeguarding Partners continue to take account of the findings from specific 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.

Findings from the reviews undertaken in Essex are shared with relevant agencies through author briefings, individual agencies sharing the learning internally and through discussion at stay safe groups. The ESCB Business Support Team regularly request information from agencies to evidence the impact of the learning from reviews and 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 frontline practitioners and the ESCB Executive Board, ensuring learning on priority local issues is shared and acted on at all levels in a timely way.

MULTI-AGENCY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The partnership in Essex work together to develop and commission a comprehensive multi-agency learning and development programme.

The learning and development programme is informed by the Board priorities and takes into account practice issues arising from local safeguarding practice reviews, multi-agency case audits, inspections, local and national priorities, section 11 audits, feedback from the partnership and emerging issues.

The method of delivery of multi-agency training is based on what is most appropriate and effective and includes e-learning, face to face training, virtual training, conferences, case studies and action learning activities via the local stay safe groups. The ESCB will continue to be creative and innovative in developing learning interventions.

The ESCB learning and development offer is based on a cost recovery model, if ESCB pay for a facilitator there is a cost per delegate to attend the learning and development opportunity. Where there is no facilitator charge or ESCB has been given funding from an

external source then the learning and development opportunity is offered at no charge to delegates.

The impact of learning is monitored under the wider performance framework of the ESCB, and the findings reported back to the ESCB Executive annually.

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

Ultimately, we believe that children are our independent scrutiny and the ESCB has a reinvigorated scrutiny plan to ensure that we bring together the wealth of valuable information from various young people's groups in Essex to help raise new and important questions to enable the ESCB to understand what we are doing well and what we need to do better through the lens of children.

Essex Safeguarding Children Board has an independent facilitator/scrutineer who provides rigorous and effective support and challenge at a strategic level. The independent scrutineer ensures that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place and are effective, and local safeguarding child practice reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.

ESCB has a multi systems approach to the independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of our local safeguarding arrangements, it comprises a number of functions which includes scrutiny through learning from:

- Inspections and Peer Learning Reviews across the statutory agencies
- Best practice as identified through The Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP)
- Children and families feedback throughout the safeguarding system
- Independent Scrutineer
- Section 11 audits, Section 157/175 audits for schools, alternative provision, colleges and pupil referral units and safeguarding audit for early years settings

The ESCB scrutiny functions support the following:

- Consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners.
- Ensure the Lead Safeguarding Partners and Delegated Safeguarding Partners are providing strong leadership.
- Review the ESCB Yearly Report before publication.
- Promote an effective strategic safeguarding challenge and reflection to drive continuous improvement.

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 working. However, there may be occasions where practitioners / 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 appropriately 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 delegated safeguarding partners.

FUNDING AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

The work of the ESCB is supported by a business support team hosted by Essex County Council.

The safeguarding partners are committed to equitable and proportionate funding of the business support team and the work of the ESCB. Funding for the ESCB is split equally between the five Safeguarding Partners with additional contributions coming from the Probation Service and the City, District and Borough Councils. This funding includes the cost of child safeguarding practice reviews.