

Essex Safeguarding Children Board

Yearly Report 2024 - 2025



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Foreword from the Lead Safeguarding Partners

We are happy to present the Essex Safeguarding Children Board yearly report for 2024-25 in line with the statutory requirements under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

The partnership has been working hard to ensure the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) are fully embedded. Our local approach to delivering our safeguarding responsibilities are set out in our [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#) which we, the Lead Safeguarding Partners agreed and published in December 2024. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements set out the named Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) as appointed by each Lead Safeguarding Partner.

The partnership has remained committed to ensure effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements continue to be in place against a backdrop of significant reform announcements and challenges for all the Statutory Partners; these challenges will continue into the years ahead and we are keen to ensure a continued focus on safeguarding children.

Southend, Essex and Thurrock were successful in their bid to be part of the Government's devolution priority programme and are working on local government reform which will see the current two-tier (one county council and 12 districts) and two unitary council system reduced to a smaller number of unitary authorities. NHS reforms and significant reductions in budgets have been announced towards the end of this year and this will bring challenges across the health economy in the coming year and beyond but we remain committed to ensuring that safeguarding children remains a priority across the health system.

During this year we have made the following changes to the governance of ESCB:

- We have included the Local Authority's Director of Education as Delegated Safeguarding Partner to ensure that education is represented at a strategic level.
- We, the Lead Safeguarding Partners for Essex met in December 2024 to agree the new MASA, they have agreed to meet in December each year with an additional Summer meeting bringing together the LSPs from Southend and Thurrock to agree shared visions and priorities.
- The Delegated Safeguarding Partners have been working with the Independent Scrutineer to develop a robust scrutiny plan for the coming year.
- Delegated Safeguarding Partners have agreed to chair the partnership on an annual rotation, the role is currently with Suffolk and North East Essex ICB.

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners, alongside education colleagues in Essex, continue to work meaningfully together to fully implement and deliver joint and equal accountability for safeguarding children in Essex and to ensure that all children are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

The refreshed ESCB Effective Support for Children and Families was launched in October 2024, this has been well received and was an excellent example of multi-agency collaboration, feedback on the new format has been very positive.

The partnership and the safeguarding system across Essex has performed very well during this period and is in a very strong position to continue to do so. Essex has equitable funding arrangements and a well-resourced business support team.



Dr Jane Halpin, Chief Executive Officer
Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board



Nicole Wood, Chief Executive Officer
Essex County Council



Dr Ed Garratt, Chief Executive Officer
Suffolk & North East Essex Integrated Care Board



Ben-Julian Harrington, Chief Constable
Essex Police



Tom Abell, Chief Executive Officer
Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

Comment from the ESCB Independent Scrutineer

Since 1 January 2025 (covering the final quarter of the period covered by this annual report), I have been the Independent Scrutineer/Facilitator of ESCB, having previously been the Independent Chair/Facilitator of the ESCB. In common with many other multi-agency safeguarding partnerships, the ESCB is in the process of further developing and implementing the new independent scrutiny arrangements set out in Working Together 2023.

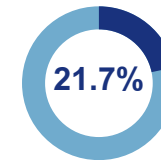
As Independent Scrutineer, I attend Delegated Safeguarding Partner meetings, and Executive meetings, as part of my live scrutiny of the high level executive operation of the partnership. Priorities have been agreed for specific scrutiny exercises for 2025/26, including overall implementation of Working Together 2023, implementation of recommendations from Practice Reviews, and decision-making in cases of intrafamilial child sexual abuse, following the report of the National Panel. Scrutiny will also include engagement with front line staff, through attendance at Stay Safe Group meetings, and ensuring that the voice of the child is heard and acted upon across the partnership.

ESCB continues to work effectively as a multi-agency safeguarding partnership, with strong and effective relationships, constructive and meaningful challenge, and real joint and equal accountability across the three statutory partners. LSP and DSP roles are well established. Education has been effectively included in DSP meetings, to reflect both that sector's important role in safeguarding, and in anticipation of their proposed move to formal DSP status.

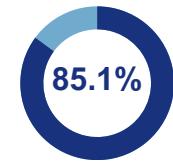
Overall the ESCB is in a strong position, despite significant pressure on services. However partners are aware of the risks associated with firstly the imminent restructuring of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and secondly the reorganisation of local government which is scheduled to be completed by 2028. The partnership is taking steps to ensure that effective safeguarding is maintained during these significant periods of change.

Essex Contextual Information

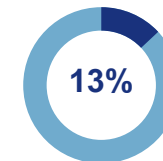
- Estimated population of 1.5 million people.
- Children and young people make up 21.7% of our population (322,812).
- 4.2% of the school population is supported with an Education and Health Care Plan.
- Around 57,218 children are taught in Essex's 208 maintained schools and 165,846 are taught in 343 Academies.
- More than 9 out of 10 of schools are judged as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted (93%).
- 13% of our children are estimated to be living in Relative Low Income households, and this rises to 25% in some locality areas.
- 20% of children at primary school and 19% at secondary school access free school meals.
- 85.1% of the population is White/ British.
- English as an additional language is used by 12% at Primary age and 9.4% at Secondary age. 7 of the top 10 other languages used in Essex are of European origin.
- 143 General Practices across Essex.
- There are five hospitals across the Greater Essex footprint managed by three acute trusts.



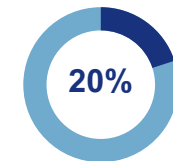
Children and young people make up 21.7% of our population (322,812)



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20% of children at primary school and 19% at secondary school access **free school meals**

Inspections of statutory partners during this period

Focused visit to Essex County Council Children's Services

[Ofsted report](#)

Headline findings: Essex continues to provide high-quality services to help children and their families in need of support and to safeguard children who are at risk of harm or who have suffered harm. The Essex strength-based relationship approach for working with families is supported throughout by consistently good social work practice. Inspirational and dynamic leadership, clear structures and process enable practitioners to work effectively within this framework with children and their families.

Essex continues to provide high-quality services to help children and their families in need of support and to safeguard children who are at risk of harm or who have suffered harm.

Practitioners spend time building trusting relationships with children, parents and their wider family networks. This is evident in the work with children within the pre-proceedings element of the Public Law Outline (PLO). The work with these families has supported many parents to make the necessary changes required to achieve their best for their children and for them to safely remain within their families' networks.

Essex Police-Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection

Essex Police had a PEEL inspection earlier this year and results were published in May 2025. Several areas of the force were inspected, Protecting Vulnerable People being one of them (whilst not wholly child safeguarding, it did include child safeguarding elements).

The force was graded as “requires improvement for this area” and given several Areas for Improvements – in respect of children these are:

- The force should introduce processes to monitor the quality and timeliness of police referrals for all vulnerable children, review these cases for cumulative risk and arrange for strategy discussions to be swiftly convened when necessary.
- The force needs to make sure all personnel working in multi-agency safeguarding roles have suitable training.

There was a wider one around governance structure for all strands of vulnerability. Actions plans are in place around these Areas for Improvements and accountability at Chief Officer level.

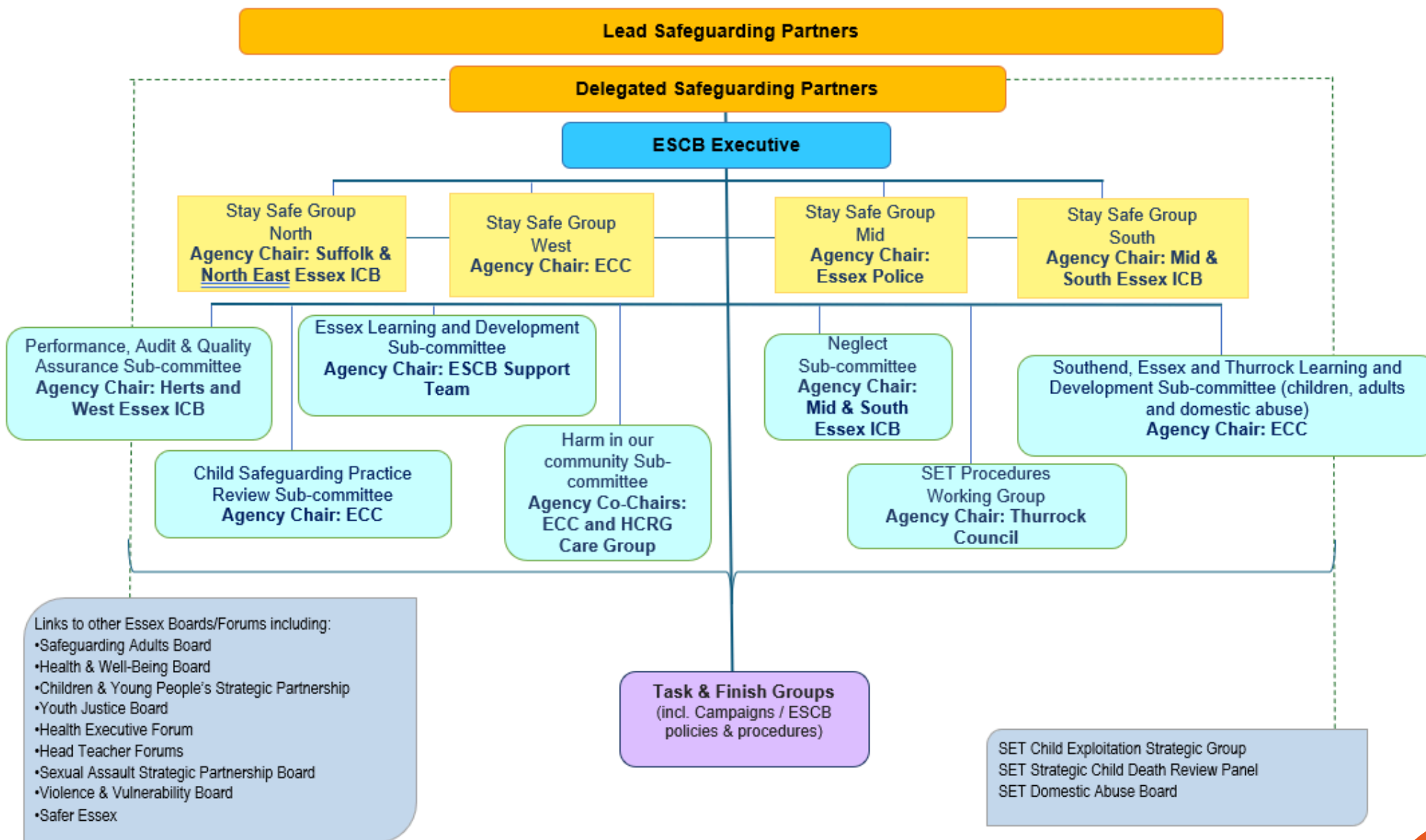
Structure and Governance



A review of governance was completed as part of the implementation of Working Together 2023. It was agreed that the current structure is effective with the addition of the LSP bi-annual meeting, it has been agreed to introduce a Sub-Committee to focus on neglect in the new financial year as there are an increasing number of local reviews that have highlighted areas where multi-agency practice and collaboration in relation to neglect could be improved. The DSPs have met eight times this year, in addition to the wider Executive and additional Executive meetings. Additional Executive meetings are used to present the final report of a review to the wider partnership for sign off.

Work is underway to review the effectiveness of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Learning and Development Sub-Committee, the current proposal being considered is making it a meeting of only representatives from the seven boards/partnerships across Southend, Essex and Thurrock who come together once every four months to reflect on learning from reviews, identify potential areas for collaboration and agree workstreams to take it forward if needed.

There are a number of areas of learning and development that we already collaborate on; we are always looking at maximising this. Examples include an exploitation e-learning package that has been in place for some years, webinars on honour based abuse and female genital mutilation, non-accidental injury conference followed by e-learning package and resources for colleagues to deliver to their teams, professional curiosity e-learning package.



There are many additional workstreams across Southend, Essex and Thurrock including the Strategic Child Death Overview Panel, SET Procedures working group, SET Child Exploitation and Missing Group, the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership, Sexual Violence Scrutiny Panel and Strategic SET Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Board.

An ongoing challenge is ensuring the flow of information across the partnership; this relies on every member of the partnership playing their part in cascading information and receiving feedback within their organisations. The ESCB Support Team attend a range of partnership meetings to try and support the flow of information and to support the joining up of initiatives.

ESCB Executive

The Executive is the name given to the wider partnership Board, the Board has representation from the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, Education, Probation, Community and Voluntary sector, key Health providers and the Local Authority Lead Member for Children's Services. The Board retains an oversight of the Risk in the Community work which is the name given to risks outside the home in Essex, during this year the DSPs have agreed to fund the MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) Coordinator post going forward.

The Executive receive a quarterly ESCB Business Support Team report which highlights the activity across the Sub-Committees, support team and any task and finish groups during the quarter, it also includes an update on all reviews and summarises communication activity over the period.

Stay Safe Groups

The Stay Safe groups continue to be led locally by the Statutory Partner representatives. The local meetings allow an opportunity for local managers to come together to ensure effective operational practice and excellent working relationships. The opportunity to network outside of pressured case discussions allows for more effective working relationships to develop, the opportunity to network cannot be underestimated. Stay Safe Chairs and Vice Chairs meet regularly with the Chairs of the ESCB Sub-Committees, to improve communication and cross working.

Stay Safe groups feed back to the Executive, through the ESCB Support team report, any emerging issues or risks in safeguarding practice, examples of good practice/multi-agency working locally and any local challenges that need support from senior leaders to resolve. A challenge for the partnership is ensuring there is two-way communication between the Executive and the Stay Safe groups. The Statutory Partners continue to being committed to ensuring delegated representatives lead the Stay Safe groups.

The Practice Development Manager provides a significant amount of support to the Stay Safe groups.

Harm in the Community Sub-Committee

This was a new Sub-Committee that was developed to focus on early help in relation to risks outside the home and work is under way to develop resources to support practitioners working with young people and parents/carers around risks outside the home. The Sub-Committee contributed to developing the indicators of need in the updated Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex guidance. The group will begin to focus on online harms once the results of the Relationships, Sexual Health and Education survey are available.

Neglect Sub-Committee

Chairing of the Sub-Committee has now been agreed and the first meeting is planned for May 2025, terms of reference have been drafted, recommendations from reviews in relation to neglect have been collated and the e-learning from the multi-agency thematic audit on neglect shared with members ahead of the first meeting.



Scrutiny and Audit

The ESCB has an Independent Scrutineer in place, during this year they have transitioned from their role as Independent Chair/Facilitator to the role of Independent Scrutineer. The Delegated Safeguarding Partners have made the decision to extend the Independent Scrutineer contract for a further two years, this is to offer stability and consistent oversight of the safeguarding system whilst the significant changes occur in local government, social care reforms and within the health economy.

We believe the best scrutiny of our safeguarding activities come from children and young people themselves - we gather rich information as to what children and young people (both in care and not in care) think about our services and what their own concerns are around being safe. An ongoing challenge for the board is how we collate this and use it to influence the work of the Board and wider partnership.

Young people's voices influencing online safety messages

The Essex Public Health team working with the Essex Youth Service ran an anonymous Relationships, Sexual Health and Education (RSHE) online survey from January to March 2025; there were a range of questions tailored to three different age brackets. The findings from the online safety questions will be shared with the ESCB Harm in the Community Sub-Committee who have committed to taking forward the voices of the young people into their working group for online safety. The results of the survey will be shared at the Sub-Committee meeting in July and work will commence to see how we can incorporate the feedback from young people into our online safety messages. The group have committed to providing "you said we did" feedback to young people by the end of the year.

ESCB recognises that its audience in terms of social media reach and communication is adults, either those working with young people or parents/carers or other family members/trusted adults so we will design messages aimed at adults to support young people.

Our assurance and scrutiny activities include:

- Section 11 Audits follow up in partnership with the Safeguarding Children's Partnerships in Southend and Thurrock
- Section 175/157 (Schools and Education Settings) Audits
- Multi-Agency Thematic Audits
- Multi-Agency Case Audits
- Evaluation of the ESCB Learning and Development offer

We continue to have strong collaborative relationships, at strategic, managerial and operational levels. Our collaborative approach extends to working closely with Southend and Thurrock Safeguarding Partnerships as well as others across the Eastern region and nationally.

Audits

Section 11 audits

We are in the second year of the section 11 cycle, and it was agreed that in the second half of the cycle we would write out to all agencies and ask them to provide an update on any actions they had identified through the audit and to give assurance to ESCB that they were maintaining the fully met standards.

This was the first time we had undertaken a formal follow up exercise following a section 11 audit. Following the updates the overall fully met percentage rose from 96% to 98%. Areas for ongoing improvement across organisations were:

- All staff knowing the procedures for escalating concerns where there are professional disagreements about case management.
- Effective policies and procedures in place in relation to Child Abuse linked to faith or beliefs and honour-based abuse.
- Having an anti-racist statement/policy in place, although many agencies were doing work in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Work is underway to develop a joint Adult and Children Safeguarding Audit for City, Borough and District Councils, this has been developed following feedback from the City, Boroughs and District Councils. A peer review event was held in November 2024 and as we worked through the audit it became clear that there were many examples that could have been added to the audit by the councils and it was sometimes the language used that led to different interpretations of the questions, the aim will be with this joint audit that it will also be sent to Housing providers. Working Together sets out the requirement for partnerships and housing providers to work better together, therefore this will be a good way to improve our engagement with Housing providers and develop relationships further.

Schools and education settings audits-S157/175

This academic year all education settings have been required to complete an audit, the ECC Education Safeguarding Team lead on the audit on behalf of ESCB. The audit was sent out in the Spring term of 2025 with responses due by 31 March 2025. 97.5% of settings returned the audit, this is a slight increase on previous years. Any settings who have not responded will be contacted. Findings from the audit will be presented to the ESCB in Autumn 2025.

Early years settings audit

The ECC Education Safeguarding Team has also undertaken a questionnaire with Early Years settings and received 336 responses. Positive findings from this audit were that all settings had a safeguarding lead and a Child Protection Policy which complied with statutory requirements and SET Procedures. Responses were also strong around Level 3 training for safeguarding leads and knowing how to report concerns about a child. Areas for development identified were:

- Settings having a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (47 did not)
- Training, particularly around induction and Level 2 training for staff
- Review of child protection files
- Transfer of child protection files

Work has been undertaken to address these areas, specifically through the Level 3 training and also via the termly briefings.



Multi-agency audit activity

The Essex County Council Professional Standards and Audit Service (PSAS) undertake Multi-Agency Case Audits (MACAs) and Multi-Agency Thematic Audits (MATA) on behalf of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board. During this year they have undertaken three Multi-Agency Case Audits and one Multi-Agency Thematic Audit on Domestic Abuse in preparation for a possible Joint Targeted Area Inspection with a focus on Domestic Abuse.

Examples of impact from Multi-Agency Case Audits and Thematic Audits

Multi-Agency work from the previous year carried forward into this year.

- Learning from Multi-Agency Case Audits and thematic audits shaped the development of the [Multi-Agency Engaging with Father Figures Practice Tool](#).
- The learning from the Neglect MATA has been fed into the ESCB Neglect Sub-Committee to drive the work of the Sub-Committee.

Following the Multi-Agency Thematic Audit on Domestic Abuse it was identified that there were gaps in the multi-agency understanding of developing safety plans so a multi-agency working group has been set up to develop guidance for practitioners.

The ESCB Support Team have worked with the Essex County Council Professional Standards and Audit Service to develop one page learning summaries following MATAs and MACAs, so far two have been published on the themes of [honour based abuse and domestic abuse](#). This supports the dissemination of the learning across the system.

MAPPA awareness sessions delivered at all Stay Safe groups and there is now a rolling programme of MAPPA awareness sessions offered across Southend, Essex and Thurrock for those working with adults and children.

MACA and MATA learning is shared with Stay Safe groups on a regular basis, and the members of Stay Safe are then tasked with taking the learning back into their agency.

The focus for the Multi-Agency Thematic Audit for 2025-26 will be child sexual abuse, this thematic audit will also take account of the recommendations published in The Child Safeguarding National Panel Report 'I wanted them to notice' (Nov 2024)

Multi-Agency Learning and Development and its impact on practice

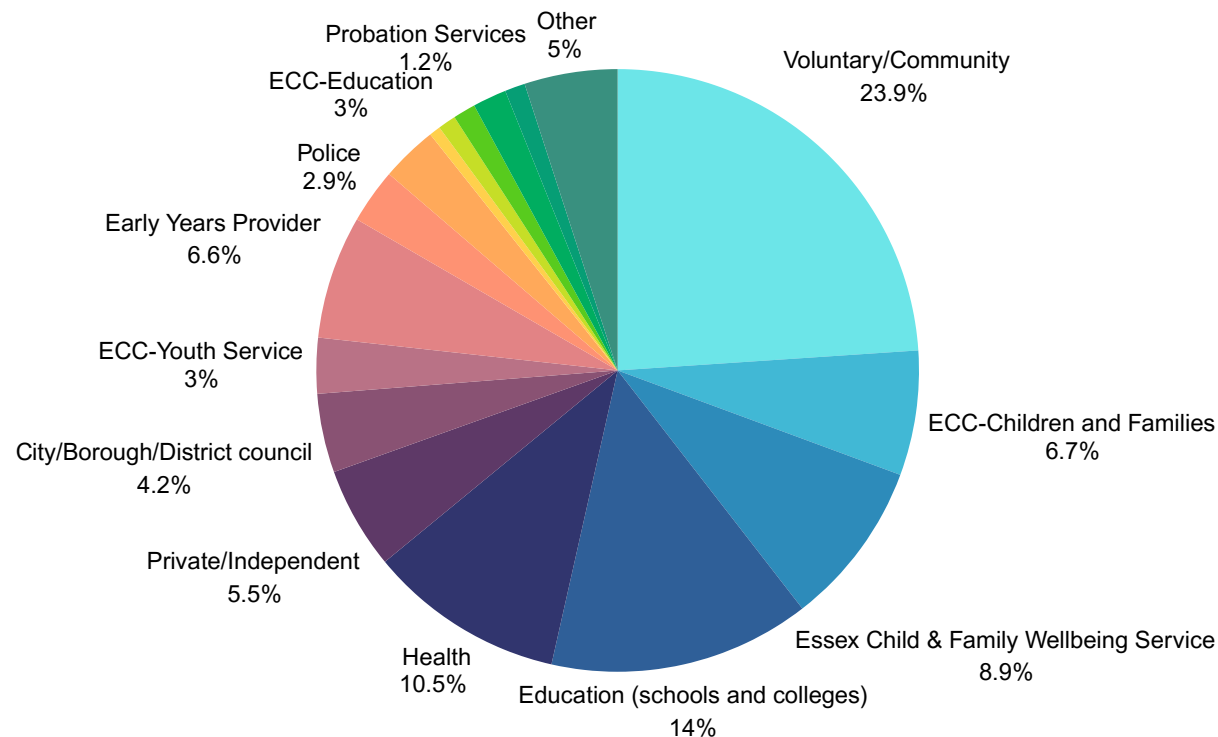
Over 2024-2025 ESCB has offered and worked in partnership with others to offer 94 learning and development opportunities to a total of 2471 delegates, courses have been offered in person and virtually. ESCB courses are delivered through commissioned providers, local practitioners/services and Child Safeguarding Practice Review authors.

ESCB now have four free e-learning packages available; Level 1 safeguarding, SET exploitation, Professional Curiosity and Non-Accidental Injury. A total of 2595 people have completed an e-learning package and gained a certificate in this time.

A wide range of learning and development opportunities are offered to the workforce across Essex including core safeguarding training at level 1,2 and 3 as well as more specific topics such as child protection conference training, drug and alcohol awareness-emerging trends, early help and team around the family, harmful sexual behaviour and trauma awareness training.

The level 2 safeguarding package content has been refreshed.

The chart below shows the organisation types that attend ESCB training. The community and voluntary sector continues to be the biggest user of the ESCB training programme.



Evidencing impact on practice from delegates attending ESCB learning and development opportunities

“This has included looking into the wider team training needs and putting in training requests to begin filling in some of the gaps by identifying additional training. Suite of Safeguarding policies have been updated and re-shared with the wider team.”

Designated Person Training

I’ve been much more intentional in recognising the underlying causes behind a young person’s actions. It’s helped me teach others to shift from a reactive approach to a more empathetic and reflective one. I now take more time to consider what unmet need or past experience might be influencing their behaviour, which has strengthened my relationships with young people and the adults around them and supported more effective, compassionate interventions in my day-to-day work.

Trauma Awareness

“Since doing the training I have used the safeguarding drop in forum on Teams where I could raise concerns about a client keeping their identity protected and getting secure, accurate advice.

It has also given me the tools to evaluate particular cases and circumstances to determine the best outcome for the family in need. This is something I had previously been not confident with due to being fairly new to my role in management.”

Early Help Training



Improved Reporting: The training has provided me with clear guidelines on how to report concerns. I now follow a structured process to document and escalate any suspicions of abuse, ensuring that they are addressed promptly and appropriately.

Level 2 Safeguarding Training



Attending Child Protection Conference will not be a daunting experience as through the training I have a better understanding of what is required from me. I also have a better understanding of the scoring system.

Child Protection Conference



Learning from reviews

Five learning summaries have been published. These are available on the [local learning page of the ESCB website](#).

- Two child safeguarding practice reviews
- One local multi-agency learning summary
- Two learning summaries from multi-agency case audits that focused on domestic abuse and honour-based abuse

Themes across these reviews include:

- Cumulative neglect and the normalisation of neglect
- The impact of trauma both on parents/carers and on children
- Using a whole family approach
- Non accidental injuries
- Parental mental health
- Relationship patterns in cases of domestic abuse



I have shied away from conversations like this before, but I found your training gave me the confidence again to know that difficult conversations are not impossible.

Preparing for difficult conversations

I really enjoyed the study day, so good to be trained by someone who is passionate about their subject. I would never say that I am an expert, but I feel much more qualified to recognise and support young people at risk of exploitation.

Criminal Exploitation

Getting to know your partners

Learning from reviews in Essex highlighted that practitioners do not always understand the roles and responsibilities of the other agencies that they are working with, so ESCB has set up a 'Getting to know your partners' session. These sessions are run for one hour each month with different agencies presenting at each of the sessions. Over the course of this year, nine sessions have been offered and 434 delegates have attended.

“
The facilitator was great, extremely knowledgeable and delivered the session in a clear manner.

Session run by the Child Death Review Team

“ The sessions have been really useful - you don't know what you don't know until you attend and find out! ”

I found this session really helpful to understand what TCS East currently offer. I am aware they have been around for a long time and it can be difficult to keep updated on what services they are offering, as I know it depends on commissioning and funding. Having a session like this and the service pack sent out afterwards is great as I can share this knowledge with colleagues.

Session run by The Children's Society

“
They are great - short, sharp and to the point. ”

“
The delivery and information sharing was fantastic. very informative!
Session run by Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) ”

Getting to know your partners - Essex Safeguarding Children Board (Effective Support Document)

This was the best attended session of the year which demonstrates practitioners wanting to keep up to date with the changes in the new document and how to use it in assessing the level of need for children and their families to find them the right support at the right time.

“

“The session was very informative and do like the flowchart and the link to the windscreen to support understanding as well.”

“REALLY useful training. The examples of referrals with re-worded versions were particularly useful. Thanks so much.”

“Really helpful and the documents should really support processes and decision making in school.”

Working with fathers and male carers

A multi-agency task and finish group from West Stay Safe group have developed a practice tool to support practitioners to focus on the importance of the father figure and ensure he is included when planning for families. The practice tool is available on the ESCB website for anyone to use. [ESCB Engaging with Father Figures Practice Tool](#).



Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

It was highlighted through the strategic management board that the MAPPA coordinator was getting a number of individual agency requests to deliver awareness sessions, and that the wider partnership was not always aware of MAPPA so ESCB supported the MAPPA coordinator to run multi-agency sessions by advertising and managing the bookings for anyone working in Southend, Essex and Thurrock. Two sessions were held this year with 59 people attending, more sessions are planned for 2025-26.

Comments about the impact

“

It was great to have an insight around how someone is categorised in the MAPPA levels, what is considered when classifying someone as a MAPPA nominal and what this looks like. The trainer was friendly and provided a great learning environment where it felt comfortable to ask questions.

Very informative and well presented, I thought the training gave a clear overview of MAPPA and of its purpose.

”

Professional curiosity

Professional curiosity is often identified as an area of development in reviews, additional resources were added to the website and a working group developed an e-learning package which was launched in June 2024, 92 people have completed this course. The slides from the package were also disseminated to the SET learning and development members to use in training with staff within their organisations.

92 attendees
PROFESSIONAL
CURIOSITY
TRAINING

Non-accidental injury

Non-accidental injury was identified as an area of complexity and difficulty for practitioners. Following an initial conference across Southend, Essex and Thurrock, ESCB developed and deliver six monthly training session with presenters from health, social care and Essex police. There have been two sessions this year with 91 delegates and an additional 40 have completed the e-learning package. Some agencies have also incorporated this package into their training.

Feedback from NAI training

Training shared at last staff meeting. Brainstorming types on non-accidental injury, procedures for reporting, recording and referring. Evaluating our practice. Review of CP and safeguarding policies reflecting changes to recent guidance using the ESCB templates.

The training increased my knowledge, & confidence in recognising non-accidental injuries & effective, timely management.

”



Essex Learning and Development Sub-Committee

In addition to the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Learning and Development Sub-Committee it was agreed that we needed a local perspective on learning and development opportunities, some agencies do not work across the greater Essex footprint, the Essex Learning and Development group has been running for about 18 months, it focuses on identifying multi-agency learning and development opportunities including alternative e-learning resources such as articles, podcasts etc. The members of this group also led on delivering the initial getting to know your partners sessions. The ESCB Support Team have been working on updating the ESCB website within the confines of the templates available, this group have been inputting into this work.

Southend, Essex and Thurrock Learning and Development Sub-Committee

The Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Learning and Development Sub-Committee has representatives from all six boards across the three local authority areas and the SET Domestic Abuse Board. It has been agreed that the next meeting in June will just be representatives from the seven boards/partnerships across Essex and they will review the function and purpose of the group going forward.



Impact of the work of the ESCB

The Statutory Partners and wider partnership contribute to the ESCB through developing initiatives and discussions in relation to a wide range of topics, below are some examples:

- **Ensuring the partnership is working collaboratively to ensure children and families get the right support at the right time, this has led to the following outcomes**
 - This work continued from the previous year, the multi-agency strategic and operational groups were set up to oversee this work and plans have been developed to work with those organisations who frequently request support from the Children and Families Hub but the request does not meet the threshold at level 3 or 4 of the windscreen.
 - A multi-agency working group worked hard to re-write the Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex, as part of the process there were three consultation opportunities for the wider partnership and there was good engagement. Following the launch of the guidance a multi-agency session introducing the guidance was delivered and 165 delegates attended the session.
 - The health visiting and school nursing service (provided by HCRG) have a post that works in the Children and Families Hub reviewing all requests for support this has been in place for some time. This year police and a joint ICB post have also started working in the hub.
 - Continue to offer multi-agency early help learning and development through specific courses and within the core level 2 and 3 training.
 - Early help drop-ins are held virtually Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for any practitioner to present an anonymous case to a group of peers from a wide range of agencies who then offer advice and guidance in relation to providing support for the family.
 - When combining all sources of referral in this period the Essex County Council Children and Families Hub, received 54,344 referrals, this an increase in demand of 4.9% since 2023/2024. Of these Requests for Support, Family Solutions teams supported 12.2% of referrals and Assessment and Intervention Teams supported 16.1% of referrals. It was recommended that most children and their families were supported by partner agencies in the community, through use of Team Around the Family or community-based services.
- **Safeguarding in Education**
 - The Executive have received presentations on the Essex Inclusion Strategy and Working Together to Improve School attendance, this guidance clearly sets out the multi-agency responsibility for school attendance.
 - Essex Primary attendance 94.5%, National Primary attendance 94.8%
 - Essex Secondary attendance 89.7%, National Secondary attendance 91.4%
 - ECC Education team presented on the work they have been doing with schools in relation to harmful sexual behaviour including an ongoing training programme, model policy for primary and secondary schools, guidance document with resources for education settings, it is covered in the Designated person training delivered by the team, resources to support the delivery of relationships, sex and health education curriculum. The ECC Education team have a good relationship with Essex Police both strategically and to support the management of individual cases.

• Safer Safeguarding Systems

- Essex County Council presented the new Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy to the Executive and challenged members to ensure they actively support staff and service users in relation to domestic abuse and ensure that staff have access to appropriate learning and development opportunities.
- Presentation of the multi-agency thematic review of teenage suicides in Essex is planned for May 2025; this was the second thematic review covering the period 2018-2022. The thematic review assessed progress against the recommendations from the first review, as well as looking at the individual cases that had happened in the time period of the second review. It was acknowledged in the review that much work had been undertaken since the first review and that the multi-agency partnership needed to continue to build on that. A programme of trauma perceptive practice has been rolled out across a number of agencies. Further work is needed to support practitioners to better understand young people with autism and suicidal ideation.
- The Executive received a presentation on Child Protection Conference data across Essex, this not only focused on the number of children on child protection plans but also the multi-agency participation and contribution to child protection. The picture was positive and overall most agencies contribute well to the multi-agency child protection process and where there are any issues they are dealt with locally. Child Protection Conference training is available to all agencies through the ESCB and delivered by the child protection conference chairs.
- ECVYS have developed a youth map, many young people, parents/carers and those that support them say that they do not know where to go to find activities, the new [youth map](#) has hundreds of activities linked to it and young people or adults can search their location to find activities.



Early Help

Ensuring the safeguarding system has an effective early help offer is a priority for the ESCB, as this will help to ensure that children and families are getting the right support from the right service at the right time. The updating of the Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex guidance focused on strengthening the early help guidance within the document to assist practitioners to identify, understand and consider the appropriate support at the earliest opportunity and lowest appropriate level of the effective support windscreen as soon as a need is identified.

The role of the Essex County Council Team Around the Family Support Officer (TAFSO) is to support the safeguarding system at level 2 of the windscreen, they do not hold individual cases but will support those working with children and families within the early help space. During this year the team continued to have additional funding for TAFSOs to focus on supporting families with specific issues such as parental conflict, risk in the community and young people at risk of entering the youth justice system.

The Essex County Council Team Around the Family Support Officers support the early help system across Essex through offering advice, coaching and guidance to the wider workforce and delivering learning and development opportunities.

ESCB continues to support the TAFSOs to offer a range of learning and development opportunities.

Quote from a child following two Team Around the Family meetings focusing on Reducing Parental Conflict

I was worried about getting my mum and dad in trouble by telling people what was happening, but now I look forward to Miss S coming to speak with me before the meetings because after them things have got better and better. I'm going to keep talking to Miss S, because now I know she can help my mum and dad change things.

270 delegates
270 people attended TAFSO delivered learning and development opportunities (early help workshops, having difficult conversations and completing the early help template.)

304 TAF meetings
TAFSOs facilitated 304 Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings.



2379 views
TAFSO videos have been viewed a total of 2379 times.

1063 early help triage
TAFSOs processed 1063 early help triage steps from the ECC Children & Families Hub which did not meet level 3 or 4 on the windscreen.



Early help case study 1

Family composition

18 year old white/Irish female (L), 12 year old female sibling (A), mother within the home, maternal auntie very supportive and involved in Team Around the Family meetings. Estranged from father, no contact, children have contact with step-father who resides outside of the home.

Outline of concerns

- Family have experienced high level domestic abuse in the past, L has been a victim of a sexual assault and struggles to form healthy relationships where her boundaries are respected. L has moderate learning difficulties and global delay.
- Sibling has ADHD and ASD and is struggling to regulate within school, SEN needs not being met at school, risk of permanent exclusion.
- Both children can recognise the trauma they have been subject to and the domestic abuse witnessed.
- Concerns L has been coerced and is a risk of exploitation due to risks in the community and a lack of understanding of danger.

Outcomes post six months of first involvement

- L has been supported to report and give evidence as a victim of a serious sexual crime, she is receiving victim support and has worked with college nurse around safer sex and consent, mother has supported L with contraception.
- Risk of exploitation or harm outside of the family home has reduced for L- support was agreed in the TAF that college would help L create some flash cards of what to do if she felt unsafe in the community, these include indicators someone may be exploiting her or pressuring her into sexual activity- L uses these often.
- Family have been referred for domestic abuse support.
- A's school have now been advised to start one planning process, to seek urgent support from their Inclusion Partner, they have been allowed fidget toys, classroom pass, regulation space in a regulation room. A was present at the TAF and was able to share her views around school.
- All family members report improvements and feel TAF process and knowledge of service support has improved their overall wellbeing.

Early help case study 2

Family composition

15 year old Black British Male (E), mother and adult female sibling living at home. Infrequent contact with father who lives abroad.

Outline of concerns

- Child at risk of permanent exclusion from school due to persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Concerns for child-parent abuse within the home.
- Concerns around E's emotional regulation and physical responses to life stressors, E can be verbally abusive within school and at home.
- Concerns for parental mental health.

Outcome following support

- E is no longer at immediate risk of permanent exclusion, he is attending the Children's Support Service and receiving a fulltime education.
- E is receiving support for emotional dysregulation.
- Mother is accessing adult mental health support and has reported an improvement in her anxiety and depression.
- Family is waiting for input from an identified organisation in relation to child-parent abuse in the home.



Reviews

There were nine referrals for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in the reporting period, all referrals are triaged by the Statutory Partners. The Statutory Partners agreed that two of the referrals did not meet the criteria for rapid review, they were both deemed to be Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy and will be part of a wider thematic review into SUDIs. Two referrals did not meet the criteria for a rapid review but local learning events will be held.

Five referrals progressed to rapid reviews. Of the rapid reviews:

- one progressed to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review,
- learning from two of the rapid reviews was shared with relevant sub-committees
- one progressed to a local learning review
- one required further single agency action

In addition to the above, reviews that were ongoing over the course of the year were seven Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, six alternative local learning reviews and two thematic reviews; one focused on cumulative neglect and the other on three young people who had been convicted of murder or manslaughter. Many of these have been ongoing for some time this is due to criminal investigations, delays in judicial process, inquests and volume of reviews.

The CSPR roles and process guidance documents have all been updated. The aim of the update was to support the multi-agency partnership in understanding their responsibilities in contributing and coordinating the review on behalf of their agency. The webpages relating to reviews have also been updated in consultation with partners.

Reviews in Essex have included a focus on:

- Decision making at the ECC Children & Families Hub when there have been repeated referrals
- Clarification on the process re escalation and challenging decisions both within agencies and externally
- Cumulative neglect

Impact of learning from reviews

Three reviews (one CSPR and two local learning events) have been published this year, with further publications planned for later in the year. Reviews are published on our website for 12 months, following the publication of each review the author of the review hosts a multi-agency briefing for anyone working in Essex. The author briefing focuses on the learning and how we can all embed it in our practice, a total of 142 people attended the three briefings. Following attendance at an author briefing, delegates can request the presentation to share the learning with their colleagues, the ESCB Support Team then contacts them three months after the briefing to see how they shared the learning and any impact it has.

An example of feedback following an author briefing:

“

We used the slides for a joint team meeting with the other team in our quadrant. Approx. 20 members of staff attended. We talked about Child F. We considered the implications for practice within our service - such as working with neglect, changing the terminology we use (not using low level neglect or non-engagement - but describing what we mean). We also considered the Child Safeguarding Review process as a whole.

”

Agencies are asked to evidence the impact of the learning from reviews, periodically the ESCB requests all agencies to provide examples of evidence of impact. Following the latest request for evidence some examples of the work undertaken is below.

- The learning we have taken from recent reviews has been around the need to better understand and explain the child's experience as a victim of domestic abuse. The impact on children of repeated applications and what this means in terms of our assessment of the situation for the child. Action we have taken has been to strengthen our guidance around children involved in repeat court proceedings and strengthened our Child Safeguarding policy around children who are electively home educated. (Cafcass)
- Cafcass introduced an engaging with Wider Family policy – whilst this predates the Child F review its origin was CSPRs where the child's extended family, if they had been consulted, could have given a clearer picture of what the child's lived experience was actually like. A theme of a number of serious incidents was that wider family were raising concerns but either insufficient enquiries were made with them or their views not given enough weight. Our local and national audits now include an audit question specifically addressing whether wider family have been liaised with. (Cafcass)
- We have obtained a copy of the Home Environment Assessment Tool from the Health Visiting service, which evidences neglect, and we are looking at where we can adapt this for use by Council officers who enter tenants homes. (Borough council)
- Epping Forest District Council is currently in the process of carrying out a full review of Safeguarding, this was prompted by a specific case which has progressed to a CSPR. The review has three elements:
 - A review of the policy, procedure and system for safeguarding, including benchmarking against Essex authorities.
 - A learning and development review.
 - Delivery of learning and developing – identified through the above.

- The Safeguarding Health Liaison Officer has developed a Safeguarding Care Planning and Decision-Making Guide; this has been shared to all colleagues in October 2024 (Includes Professional challenge within the guide) (HCRG)
- We carry out audits of Requests for Support (RFS), particularly where a decision of No Further Action (NFA) has been made. Feedback is routinely provided to colleagues to support continuous improvement in the quality of referrals. Throughout the year, audits are also undertaken, focusing on various aspects of record-keeping and clinical documentation to ensure high standards are maintained. (HCRG)
- In August 2024 Safer Places delivered a session on behalf of Herts and West Essex ICB exploring how we challenge recognising Children as victims of domestic abuse. This was attended by 79 health practitioners in Herts and West Essex ICB footprint.
- A template to support GP Practices complete robust reports for Child Protection Conferences has been developed and added to the IT systems. Child GG review (Herts and West Essex ICB)
- Mid and South Essex ICB Safeguarding team has worked with others to improve the templates for the management of children with significant and complex needs. The new template was designed to collate all the ongoing health services involved into one page to ease communication and multi-professional working. This was developed with a focus of supporting the management of medical neglect concerns.
- Mid and South Essex ICB has updated its current flowchart to support practitioners in recognising and responding to neglect in the management of childhood asthma. This has been completed in line with the new Effective Support Guidance and also focuses on suboptimal asthma. This tool has been shared with all GP Practices across Mid and South Essex.
- EPUT are rolling out a series of Trust wide webinars 'Drugs and Alcohol training' to support staff awareness of substance misuse and services available.
- Perinatal Mental Health Service (PMHS) have updated their SystmOne template and included an assessment template for partners and father's questionnaire. (EPUT)
- Perinatal Mental Health Service social worker will attend Child Protection/Child In Need/Team Around the Family and reports are provided, attendance at child protection conferences has grown significantly. (EPUT)
- Joint supervision is undertaken for both adult and children's staff when involved in the same case. (EPUT)

ESCB Support Team

The ESCB support team has a reach across the partnership through attendance at a variety of forums organised by partner agencies. This includes:

- ESCB support team link with the community and voluntary sector through Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS). The CEO of ECVYS is a member of the Executive Board and the Practice Development Manager attends their quarterly cluster meetings and face to face quadrant meetings to give updates on the work of the Board. An ECVYS representative attends each of the Stay Safe Groups. The ESCB support team gave a brief presentation at the ECVYS celebration event highlighting the importance of the voice of the voluntary sector in partnership work.
- ESCB support team are active members of the Children's Partnership Board.
- Presentations on the work of ESCB have been given to the ECC People and Families Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- ESCB and ESAB statutory partners meet every six months to discuss issues across both boards. The Business Managers of the two teams meet every two months to discuss areas of joint interest.
- The current Southend, Essex and Thurrock child protection procedures were updated ahead of the new web enabled procedures coming online in early 2026 as there were links and documents that were out of date.
- The SET Statutory partners agreed to fund the move of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures from a PDF document to web enabled procedures.
- The ESCB support team are leading on developing resources to support practitioners in relation to physical chastisement and safety planning, both areas of development picked up through multi-agency case audits and feedback from practitioners in Stay Safe groups.
- North Stay Safe group have a working group on vapes and young people, this is linking in with the wider work public health are already doing in relation to vapes and they are working on developing resources.
- The ESCB support team working with ESAB are coordinating resources to support practitioners across Southend, Essex and Thurrock with the whole family approach.

ESCB Communications and Campaigns

Online safety campaign - Quarterly campaign ran July, Oct and Dec 2024 and March 2025 and followed a well-tested format focusing on various aspects of online safety over the course of the week. Social media reach of more than 25,000 during the campaign weeks.

Operation Henderson campaign - Operation Henderson is an outreach and awareness campaign in relation to exploitation aimed at transport hubs such as train stations and bus stations. Professionals including police, youth service, local authorities spend time talking to transport operators, people using public transport, businesses and local taxi drivers to support them to spot the signs of exploitation and report it. The campaign ran twice during this period in April and October. Highlights for the campaign days were: Face to face engagements: 1291, social media impressions: 8894 Webpage hits: 834 QR code scans: 272.



Following consultation with taxi drivers from a variety of companies, the majority said they would be more likely to report concerns if they had a sticker or leaflet in the car with clear reporting instructions. Castlepoint Council licensing paid for a trial of these stickers. The aim of these stickers is to help taxi drivers understand exploitation.

Two radio interviews were conducted by Essex Police on BBC Essex and Greatest Hits Radio.

Taxi good news story

A taxi driver described helping a vulnerable female young person recently abandoned by her friends who was under influence of drugs/alcohol, she didn't know where she lived and when she left the cab with friends who walked off she was stumbling around and lying in the road.

The taxi driver stayed with her and called police, he stayed with her the whole time to make sure she was safe and left when police took over.



Operation Makesafe - A national campaign to test how the hospitality industry respond to a potential exploitation scenario, Essex Police and local councils team up to undertake this operation. It focuses on whether hospitality staff have an awareness of the signs of exploitation and make reasonable steps to safeguard children from this potential harm.

There have been 23 hotels visited as part of the Operation Makesafe deployments during the period. 15 out of the 23 hotels provided a satisfactory response when the process was run. Examples of good practice include staff being aware of Operation Makesafe and challenging the 'customers' or asking for ID of the adult and children and refusing the booking, one establishment called the police during the process as they were so concerned for the persons.

Staff in the chain hotels such as Travel Inn and Travelodge reported they received regular training inhouse to perform their role. There is now (Jan 24) an Operation Makesafe NWG overseen by the CSE Taskforce who hold regular contact with the national hotel chains, and poor Makesafe results are fed back to the hotel leads. Makesafe deployments should be seen as learning opportunities for both the police and businesses. The CSE Taskforce is supporting forces to move away from a simple 'pass/fail' methodology to a graduated scoring system for test purchases to assist hotels in identifying areas for improvement.

There was a national conference last year that was attended by all force leads with a keynote speech by Jess Philips MP in relation to Operation Makesafe. This was led by the main hotel chains in the UK and demonstrated their buy in to Operation Makesafe and educating their staff to the potential risk of exploitation around the hospitality industry.

Future plans for the campaigns - There are plans to amalgamate the current exploitation awareness raising campaigns and initiatives into a week of activity and engagement in June 2025.

ESCB website - Average of 13,000 visitors per month, an 18% increase from previous 12 months.

The reviews section of the website has been improved to include one page learning summaries from Multi-Agency Audits as well as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. Learning themes have been identified and each theme has a dedicated section with relevant resources.

News stories - A commitment to uploading regular information to the ESCB latest news page has been successful. This ensures we can share information with partners outside of when bulletins are scheduled. The news page received an average of 931 views each month in 2024-25, an increase from the previous year where there was an average of 670 views per month. Annual increase in news story views of 39%.

ESCB bulletin - Bulletins are sent the first week of every month and have an average open rate of 33%. In between these a Learning and Development bulletin is shared mid-month to highlight specific training coming up.

These are complemented with targeted emails for specific learning such as author briefings, which have a slightly higher open rate of 38%.



Finance and budget

Funding for the ESCB is split equally between the three Statutory Partners, this has been the case for the last four years, additional contributions come from the Probation Service and the City, District and Borough Councils.

Contributor	Value of contribution	
	2024/25	2023/24
Essex County Council – Children & Families directorate	£134,199	£122,176
Essex Police	£134,199	£122,176
ICBs: - Herts & West Essex ICB - Suffolk & North East Essex ICB - Mid & South Essex ICB	£134,198: - £25,746 - £34,836 - £73,616	£122,175: - £23,439 - £31,715 - £67,021
The Probation Service	£7,497	£7,497
12 local (city, district & borough) councils	£14,520 (£1,210 each)	£14,520 (£1,210 each)
Total income	£424,614	£388,545

The Statutory Partners agreed to increase the budget over 2024/25 and 2025/26 to ensure all ESCB Support Team posts are funded through the main budget and not via the reserves. There was then a subsequent decision to fund the MACE coordinator post which for the first year will be paid from reserves but will need to be included in the main budget going forward which will mean additional costs for statutory partners. This increase will be against a challenging financial picture for all the statutory partners and significant changes to the ICBs in the coming year.

Other than the staffing cost of the ESCB support team, the next largest cost incurred by the ESCB is in relation to securing the services of the Independent Lead Reviewers who are used for the CSPRs or alternative learning events. However, this cost is kept low as the administration and collation of information is managed within the support team.

The ESCB continues to hold a reserve of budget not used in previous years and therefore holds a contingency should costs of reviews substantially increase.

Key data

Safeguarding Area	22-23	23-24	24-25	Narrative / Comment
Number of Child in Need Plans	1587	1447	1460	The number of children with an open child in need plan at year end remains relatively stable when compared to previous years.
Number of Child Protection Plans	688	625	694	The number of children on Child protection plans continues to fluctuate with rates in 2024/25 increasing to similar level seen in 2022/23.
Number of Children Looked After	1164	1149	1139	The number of looked after children at year end has fallen for a second year, driven by the reduction seen in separated migrant children.
Number of Separated Migrant Children within our Looked After population	166	145	90	The number of separated migrant children in care has fallen further in 2024/25 driving down the overall number of children in care.
Numbers of Children Missing from Education	477	545	659	<p>There are a number of reasons behind Children Missing Education, again, not one cause or source. There will be children that are missing because they have been withdrawn from schooling by parents whilst awaiting support within the SEND system.</p> <p>Furthermore, children with anxiety, behavioural issues or other emotional needs may struggle to attend school regularly.</p>
Numbers of Children who are Electively Home Educated	2926	4177	4709	<p>There are a number of reasons for this increase, there is not just one cause.</p> <p>There is a national challenge with the SEND system, and this has seen parents choosing to home educate their child due to frustrations linked with delays in assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's), not receiving a placement in a particular school of choice and therefore believing that home educating would be the best option for the family.</p>

Safeguarding in Education

The Essex County Council Education Safeguarding Team is a countywide team, covering all education settings (schools, colleges, Early Years settings, childminders, Independent schools and alternative provisions, including Pupil Referral Units). There are around 600 schools and settings in Essex, and around 1700 early years settings and other provisions. The team works on a quadrant-based basis and links with the local education teams for that quadrant.

The ECC Education Safeguarding Team provides a wide range of resources and guidance documents for all education settings, including schools, colleges, alternative provisions, Early Years Providers and Independent schools. The team also provides an extensive safeguarding training offer, and this was enhanced this year to include Level 3 training for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) and Headteachers. This means there is a strong, consistent approach to safeguarding across all education settings. The current training offer includes:

- Level 3 training for Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)
- 'It could happen here' – managing low-level concerns and allegations about members of the workforce (termly in-person)
- Domestic Abuse Awareness (termly online)
- Prevent Awareness (termly online)
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour (termly online)
- Briefing for new Headteachers / DSLs (termly online)
- Level 2 (suite of presentations for DSLs to deliver to all adults in their setting)

As well as the above training, the team shares regular safeguarding bulletins containing key information for settings. The team also continues to deliver termly safeguarding briefings, both in-person in each quadrant and also an online version for those that are unable to attend the in-person sessions. These briefings continue to be well-attended and complement the other training offered by the team, providing regular updates on key information to support leaders and DSLs / DDSLs in their safeguarding role. There is also a termly briefing for governors, which is held online.

Safeguarding termly briefings

Schools and settings termly briefings were held in Summer 2024, Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025.

- In person quadrant-based events - 549 attendees
- Online session - 225 attendees

Early years settings were held in Summer 2024, Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025.

- In person session quadrant-based events - 295 attendees
- Online session - 361 attendees

SCHOOLS AND SETTINGS QUADRANT BASED SESSIONS

In person sessions

549 ATTENDEES

Online session

225 ATTENDEES

EARLY YEARS QUADRANT BASED SETTINGS

In person sessions

295 ATTENDEES

Online session

361 ATTENDEES

GOVERNOR SESSIONS

149 GOVERNORS

Two online safeguarding governor sessions were held with 149 governors attending the two sessions.

The ESCB Support Team attended the Autumn briefings to present the updated Effective Support guidance, to talk about the role of the Board and share learning from reviews.

There is also other work undertaken in Essex which links very closely with safeguarding. The Inclusion Strategy is a key piece of work within Education, and this is being promoted and developed across all settings. There are various strands to the strategy and it supports the safeguarding work in settings, specifically around Early Help, inclusion, attendance and wellbeing.

Alongside this is the Trauma Perceptive Practice programme, which is the Essex approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional wellbeing in children and young people. This has been shared with all education settings and the vast majority of settings have now engaged with the training programme in some way. There is a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) team in Essex who work very closely with the Education Safeguarding team and produces a range of resources and guidance documents to strengthen support for mental health and wellbeing in settings.

Trauma Perceptive Practice programme, is the Essex approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional wellbeing in children and young people.

Voice of the Child-Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services Listening Project

For the sixth year the Violence and Vulnerability Unit have commissioned a listening project to enable young people across Southend, Essex and Thurrock to share honestly and openly about how safe they feel in their communities and what could be done to make them feel safer. ECVYS coordinate the listening project through their wide membership of youth organisations. A full copy of the report, which was published in June 2025 can be found [here](#).

A total of 2466 young people aged 10-25 from 74 different youth groups/organisations took part in the listening project.

Knife crime/getting stabbed remains the top concern around youth violence for young people for the sixth year in a row, although the percentage of young people saying this has reduced a little from last year.



Priority areas for the ESCB - 2025/2026

- Support the Social Care reforms and the Family First Partnership programme of work.
- Ensure the system remains focused on safeguarding children amid the raft of changes over the next 2-3 years.
- Development of a robust scrutiny plan for the Independent Scrutineer that ensures they connect with frontline staff, young people and strategic leaders.
- Continue to support the Lampard inquiry-the Independent Statutory Inquiry investigating the deaths of mental health inpatients in Essex. The inquiry has commenced and has started hearing from some of the agencies involved and bereaved families. Partners are responding to requests from the inquiry as needed and it is anticipated this inquiry will be happening for a number of years.
- There will be a need to further update the Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex guidance in line with the requirements set out in the Families First Partnership Programme guidance.
- Reviews continue to be a significant area of work for the partnership and the support team, the focus continues to be on the implementation of the learning and evidencing the impact.
- The Neglect Sub-Committee has commenced and is initially focusing on improving understanding and response to cases where a child's medical needs are being neglected, the recognition of cumulative neglect and developing a framework to support the multi-agency response.
- Developing resources to support all practitioners working with children who may be at risk from harm outside the home.

Challenges

An area of challenge is around data analysis and the collection of meaningful data. The ESCB support team are working with Thurrock and Southend Local Safeguarding Partnerships to look at developing a multi-agency dataset across the Greater Essex footprint.

The flow of information across all levels of the partnership is a challenge. The ESCB support team have increased their communication methods over the last year and have seen positive results with increased traffic to our news story pages and above industry standard for people accessing our bulletin.

A continuing challenge is ensuring that learning from reviews is effectively cascaded to frontline practitioners, and that agencies clearly communicate how changes in practice are directly informed by reviews or a serious incident.

In addition to the above the partnership is aware of the need to ensure robust safeguarding systems are in place during the restructuring of the Integrated Care Boards and their functions going forward, Local Government Reform and Devolution and the social care reforms.

