ESSEX CHILD EXPLOITATION & MISSING ARRANGEMENTS

Authors	Sally-Ann Millar, CE Project Manager, ESCB Shane Thompson, Missing Coordinator, Children & Families, ECC Darren Ryan, Operations Centre Triage Team, Essex Police
Publication Date	September 2018
Review Date	September 2022

Contents

1. Introduction 2

2. Definitions 3

3. Models of exploitation 5

3.1 Online 5

3.2 Peer on peer 5

3.3 Organised crime networks (including trafficking and modern slavery) 5

3.4 Trafficking and modern slavery 6

3.5 Sexual Exploitation 6

3.6 Child Exploitation process 8

4. Missing Children 9

4.1 Missing Chats 10

4.2 Children In Care Who Go Missing 11

4.3 Children Missing from Education 11

4.4 Missing Person Liaison Officers (Essex Police) 12

4.5 Missing Children Process 13

4.6 Essex Child Exploitation Overview 14

5. Essex Safeguarding Children Board Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee 15

6. MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation Meetings) 1 & 2 16

6.1 Terms of Reference 16

6.2 Governance 18

6.3 Impact measurement 18

6.4 Membership & Representation 19

6.4 Borough, City & District Council's Role 22

6.4 Lead for Partnership Delivery role 23

6.5 Additional Support, Agenda & Frequency 23

6.6 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) 24

6.7 Stay Safe Groups 25

6.7 Information Sharing & Confidentiality 26

7. Professional Disagreements 26

APPENDIX 27

1. Introduction

In Essex it is recognised that child exploitation cannot be dealt with by individual organisations working alone and that a multi-disciplinary commitment is required to tackle and respond to child exploitation. This paper outlines the operational arrangements made by a wide range of partners across Essex for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people from exploitation and those young people who regularly go missing from care, home and education. These arrangements equally consider the efforts required by a range of partners to detect and disrupt at the earliest possible stages and to fully support in the identification of perpetrators, and where possible, subsequent prosecutions. Close working between partner agencies (including non-traditional safeguarding partners), as well as ensuring parents as partners and working alongside vulnerable young people is crucial to building intelligence which can support in later prosecutions.

These arrangements are agreed as a means of complementing and strengthening current safeguarding processes and procedures and are not to be considered in isolation or as a replacement to Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Child Protection Procedures. Child exploitation is closely entwined with other forms of abuse such as emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. Therefore, where there are concerns that a child or young person is being exploited or at high risk because of missing episode(s), then formal child protection processes must be adhered to through the use of referrals to Essex County Council (ECC) Children and Families Hub, strategy discussions/meetings and Section 47 investigations, as per SET Child Protection Procedures, Child Exploitation and Missing Children processes.

This paper is intended as guidance and reference for Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting Chairs, agencies and practitioners to ensure that there is clarity and consistency around Essex arrangements. The paper sets out the overall structure, introduces the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee which has the overarching strategic lead, and for operational groups describes the terms of reference and purpose, governance arrangements, core membership and representatives, plus information sharing requirements to support all meetings and provide clarity over how information will be best utilised by differing bodies across Essex in tackling child exploitation.

2. Definitions

The last revised definition for child sexual exploitation was launched in February 2017 alongside a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation. This definition and guide replaces the 2009 guidance 'Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation'.

The arrangements outlined within this document, use the 2017 revised definition for child sexual exploitation:

"*Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology*." (HM Government, 2017)

The last updated definition for child criminal exploitation by the Home Office was outlined in the guidance on criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines document in February 2020 as:

"Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines, and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft." (HM Government, 2020)

The statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, 2014 set out expectations for Local Authorities, local safeguarding partners and multi-agency working in respect of children missing from home or care.

For the purposes of these Essex Child Exploitation & Missing arrangements, the definition of Missing assumes that outlined by Essex Police. Essex Police will not treat any persons under the age of 18 as ABSENT and must be treated as MISSING PERSONS only.

- "*Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another*."

The above definition is therefore applicable to children missing from home, care and education. Missing children cannot be treated as 'standard' risk within Essex, but will be assessed as medium or high risk.

- High Risk: “*a risk that is immediate and there is substantial grounds for believing that the subject is in danger through their own vulnerability; or may have been the victim of a serious crime; or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.*”

- Medium Risk: “*the risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others*.”

3. Models of exploitation

The methods used to exploit children and young people can be seen in varied forms, these are sometimes described as 'models'. It is important to recognise that these methods do not necessarily work in isolation and various methods can be operating concurrently. Exploitation will overlap with other types of crime; which include: child trafficking; domestic abuse; sexual violence in intimate relationships; grooming (including online grooming); abusive images of children and their distribution; drug-related offences; gang-related and county lines activity; immigration-related offences; and domestic servitude.

Understanding and recognising how a child is being exploited is a crucial part of enabling appropriate disruption techniques, support and whole planning around the child and family. As research and problem profiling develops nationally and locally methods can expand and contract.

In Essex, we currently focus on the following methods in MACE:

3.1 Online

Online grooming is the act of developing a relationship with a child to enable their abuse and exploitation both online and offline. Online platforms, such as social media, messaging and live streaming, can be used to facilitate this offending. Live streaming can be used to incite victims to commit or watch exploitative acts via webcam. Offenders may stream live contact abuse and direct facilitators to commit acts against the victim. Online coercion and blackmail of a child by technological means can include using sexual images and/or videos depicting that child for the purposes of sexual gain, financial or other personal gain.

(CEOP, https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/what-is-online-child-sexual-abuse/)

3.2 Peer on peer

Peer-on-peer abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- physical and sexual abuse
- sexual harassment and violence
- emotional harm
- on and offline bullying
- teenage relationship abuse

It can even include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation (OFSTED, 2019; What is peer-on-peer abuse? (blog.gov.uk))

3.3 Organised crime networks (including trafficking and modern slavery)

The most common levels of organised crime networks are:

Organised criminal group − A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most, however, crime is their 'occupation'. These groups operate almost exclusively in the grey and illegal marketplace where market transactions are totally unregulated by the law.

Gang − Relatively durable group who have a collective identity and meet frequently. They are predominantly street-based groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

Peer Group − A relatively small, unorganised and transient group composed of peers who share the same space and a common history. Involvement in crime will be mostly nonserious in nature and not integral to the identity of the group. School children will usually be part of a peer group (HM Government, '*Safeguarding Children & Young People who may be affected by gang activity'*, 2010)

County lines - County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons (HM Government, '*Guidance on criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines',* February 2020).

3.4 Trafficking and modern slavery

Trafficking - "The act of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation" (from Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children by United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, 2000).

Modern Slavery - The Modern Slavery Act 2015 categorises modern slavery as offences of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. This includes holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after. It is possible to be a victim of modern slavery within a person's own country and therefore applies to UK and non-UK resident children (Modern Slavery Act, 2015).

3.5 Sexual Exploitation

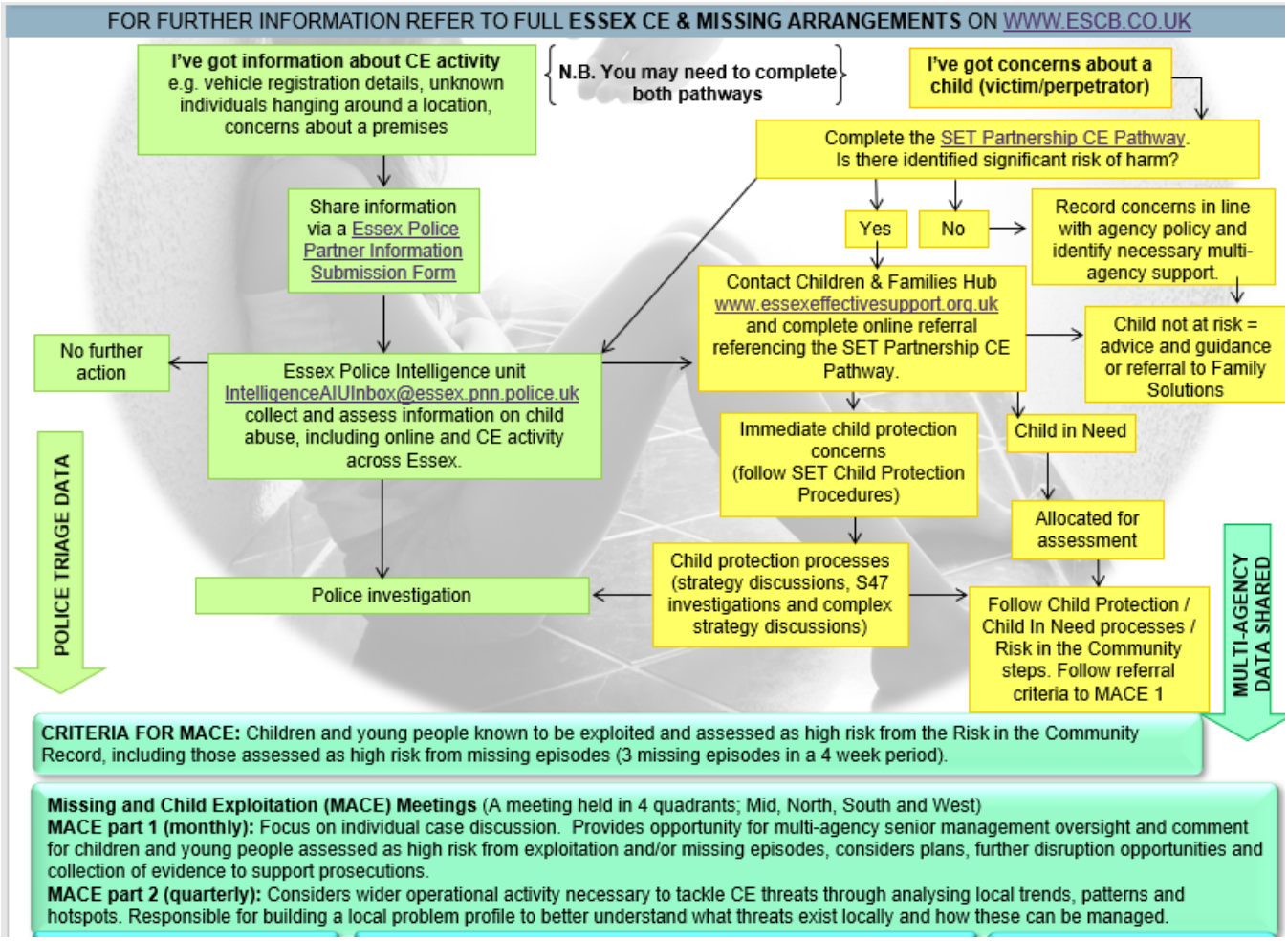
There can be different types of sexual exploitation, most commonly;

Older boyfriend or girlfriend - A child is groomed by an adult to believe that they are in a loving relationship. The adult may entice, coerce or force the child to have sex with them, and sometimes also with the adult's friends or associates.

Organised or networked - In this form of Child Sexual Exploitation, children are passed through networks of perpetrators, sometimes over geographical distances and between different cities. They may be forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple adults. They may also be used to recruit other children into the network.

Position of responsibility - As stated in the 2017 definition, Child Sexual Exploitation involves an imbalance of power. Some perpetrators may be in positions of responsibility – such as teachers, religious leaders, sports coaches – and manipulate this in order to sexually exploit children (Community Care Inform Practice Guidance, Forms of child sexual exploitation, 2016).

3.6 Child Exploitation process



This flowchart should be read in conjunction with S.E.T Procedures Chapters 24, 25 & 28.

4. Missing Children

The Children Act 2004 and DfE Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care 2014, requires local authorities and other partners to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes planning to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do. Local authorities must ensure that all incidents where children go missing are appropriately risk assessed, and record all incidents of looked after children who are away from placement without authorisation, missing or absent.

Children who go missing may be at greater risk of harm as a consequence of their basic need for food, safety and shelter and/or from the people with whom they may come into contact with. Risks can also include physical harm, self-harm by virtue of poor mental health, vulnerability to sexual or criminal exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, radicalisation, drugs and alcohol or involvement in a range of other criminal activities including gangs. Additional risk and vulnerability may also be present in relation to age, level of understanding or the significance and seriousness of the circumstances that led to the child going missing.

Essex 'Missing Chats' (previously known as Independent Return Interviews) are a standard response to all children who go missing. All children aged ten years and over returning from missing are offered a Missing Chat. Missing Chats provide an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect a child from the risk of going missing again, from risks they may have been exposed to while missing or from risk factors in their environment. Missing Chats can be conducted by professionals who are independent of any statutory role. ECC Children & Families make this offer to all children over the age of 10 who go missing however agencies can support this by checking with the child whether they have had, or would like, a missing chat. In Essex Missing Chats are a voluntary activity and children have the choice to accept or decline, and therefore need to be given clear information in regards to how the Missing Chat could support them.

A multi-agency approach is required to reduce the risk of children going missing and to effectively manage the coordination of multi-agency responses, covering the following:

- Agencies must be alert and competent to identify and act upon concerns where a child has been missing.
- Share responsibility across all agencies to identify children and young people who are vulnerable and to oversee what plans are currently in place to manage the risk.
- Review safety plans to ensure that practitioners and partner agencies are responding appropriately to children and young people who are frequently running away from home or care.
- Provide the allocated worker with guidance and advice around responding to missing episodes and possible preventative measures that can be put in place
- Effective use and analysis of data for missing children, analysis of ECC Children & Families missing prevention plans and Essex Missing Chats to better understand the needs of children who go missing.

- Ensure consistent and robust information sharing and utilisation of relevant and appropriate resources to provide support to children and their families, including Essex Missing Chat offers.
- All agencies participating in learning and development activities to develop a shared understanding about the roles and responsibilities to protect children from going missing and how to best support them to prevent further missing episodes.

Essex Police provide notifications of all children who go missing in Essex to Essex County Council, Children & Families. The ECC Children & Families response includes a number of standard procedures including:

- Automatic triage of the circumstances where there have been 3 missing episodes in 90 days to assess increased vulnerability or risk of harm.
- Automatic triage where there is information contained within missing episode/s that indicates that the child may have suffered harm.
- ECC Children & Families, Involvement Service, will also offer every Essex Child a Missing Chat.

4.1 Missing Chats

A 'Missing Chat' is an opportunity for a child to talk freely about how they are feeling and the reasons they went missing and what help and support might be needed. It is an opportunity to explore the Push/Pulls by talking about what is going on for the child, what caused them to go missing on that occasion and may cause them to go again in the future. Exploring and understanding the Push and Pull factors around a child's missing episode, rather than just focusing on the Missing Episode itself is important in supporting the child to access appropriate support and professionals to create safety plans. To further support the inclusion of the valuable conversations had through Missing Chats in children and young people's plans, Push and Pull Factors are now identified as a part of the Missing Chat and included in the synopsis shared with police and social care. They are also included in a case note for those children with a social worker to make the information easily accessible and useful in decision making. Feedback from this change has been positive, particularly from Missing Persons Liaison Officers within the police. Missing Chats are offered to all children and young people from Essex, age 10 - 17 yrs. returning from a missing episode. The number of Missing Chats offered will not exactly match the number of missing episodes dependent on the regularity of Missing episodes and also due to criteria of age. Where a child had had multiple missing episodes in a week, one offer may cover all episodes.

Sometimes young people choose to take up a missing chat when they feel no one else will listen, this provides a valuable opportunity to raise their concerns to a wider audience and challenge practice where appropriate. Sometimes young people can raise issues that may appear unrelated to their missing episodes, however through demonstrating that their view is

being listened to and responded to, we are able to start to explore some of the wider issues that impact on their feelings and behaviours. In following up support for young people, Missing Chats workers liaise with a variety of staff and services, supporting young people and parents to engage in services. Young people have been supported with issues around education and to attend CAMHS and other medical appointments. Where young people have built a relationship with Missing Chats worker, joint visits with social workers or other professionals have been arranged to facilitate relationship building. Some young people engaging in Missing Chats and or Choices have started to recognise the dangers of missing episodes and poor relationships and have supported other young people to engage in support or contacted Missing Chats staff to share concerns or worries about friends.

Parental missing chats provide an opportunity for the parent to share their views and concerns when they can sometimes feel very isolated, blamed, and judged for their child's missing episodes. A parental missing chat can be an opportunity to provide information about other support services to help the parent feel more able to manage and understand the processes, but also to understand how to respond to their child, what signs to look for and what to report. Providing a listening ear can also help them to build their relationship with social workers where relevant. For some parents knowing that someone is trying to support and listen to their child but has no role in decisions or their care is important. Parents are regularly referred to Barnardos Parents Support Project, and PACE helpline.

4.2 Children In Care Who Go Missing

Children in Care report specific vulnerabilities in relation to missing episodes than the wider cohort of children who go missing. Evidence indicates factors such as placement location and/or stability and contact with family and friends can be present. Children who have care experience can be additionally vulnerable to all forms of exploitation. Children and young people in residential care and semi-independent accommodation are at greater risk (APPG for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, 2012).

4.3 Children Missing from Education

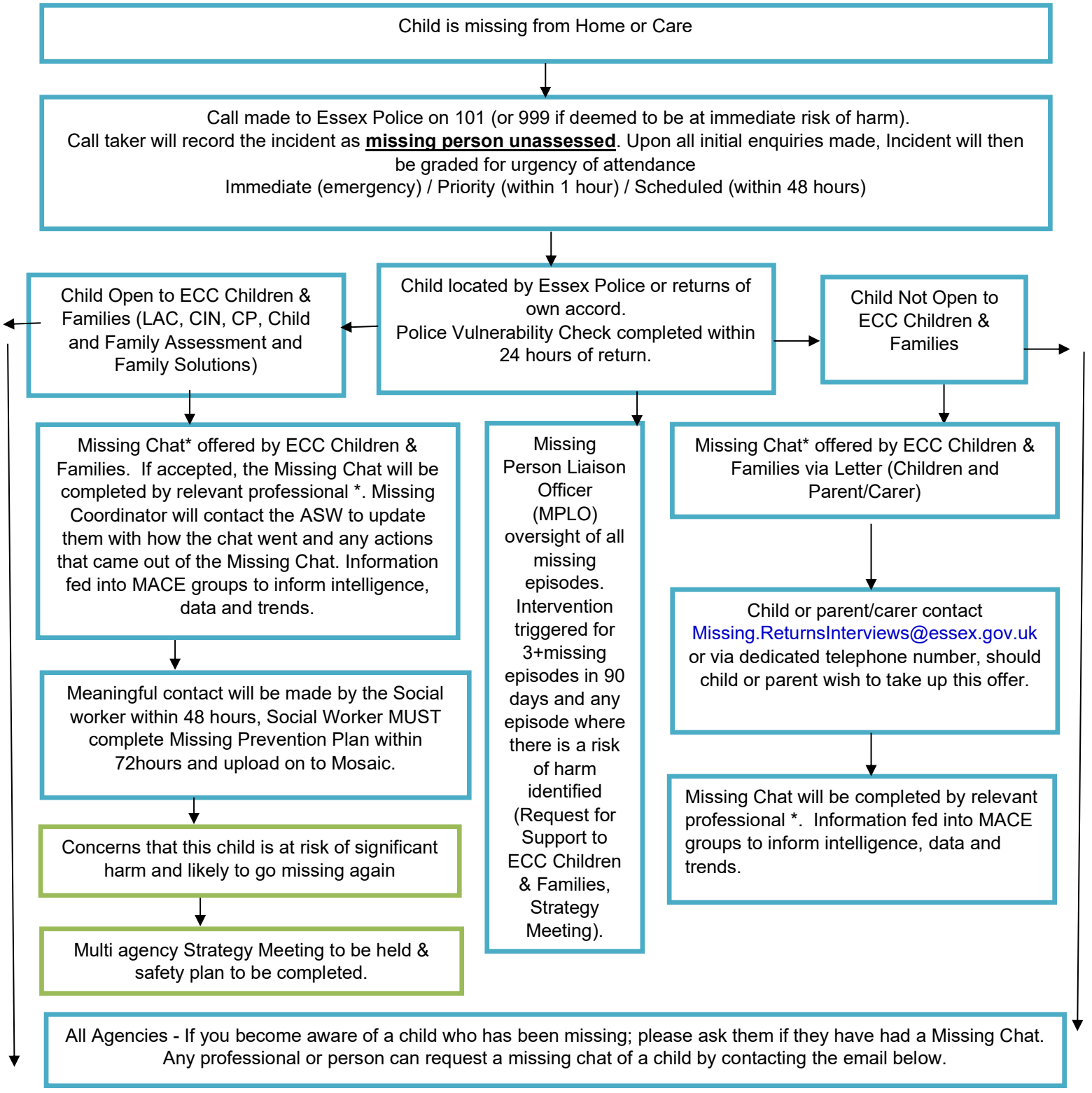
Children and young people on reduced timetables, exclusions and not on a school role are particularly vulnerable to missing episodes. Possible underlying causes of challenging behaviour and disengagement from education can be rooted in experience outside of the school setting. Not being in school can increase vulnerability, boredom, isolation from the usual circle of peers and can become a push for young people to escape the problems at school or a pull for young people to seek out other relationships or experiences that may not necessarily be safe.

For further information relating to Children Missing Education, reference should be made to the 'Missing Education and Child Employment Service – Guidance for all Essex Schools and Academies' (November 2016).

4.4 Missing Person Liaison Officers (Essex Police)

The responsibility of the Missing Person Liaison Officers (MPLO) is to maintain a comprehensive overview of missing people within a defined area in order to identify those who are at risk of significant harm and to co-ordinate the response from Essex Police and its partners, so as to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring to vulnerable people. There are 10 MPLOs; one for each Essex Police District Policing Area.

4.5 Missing Children Process

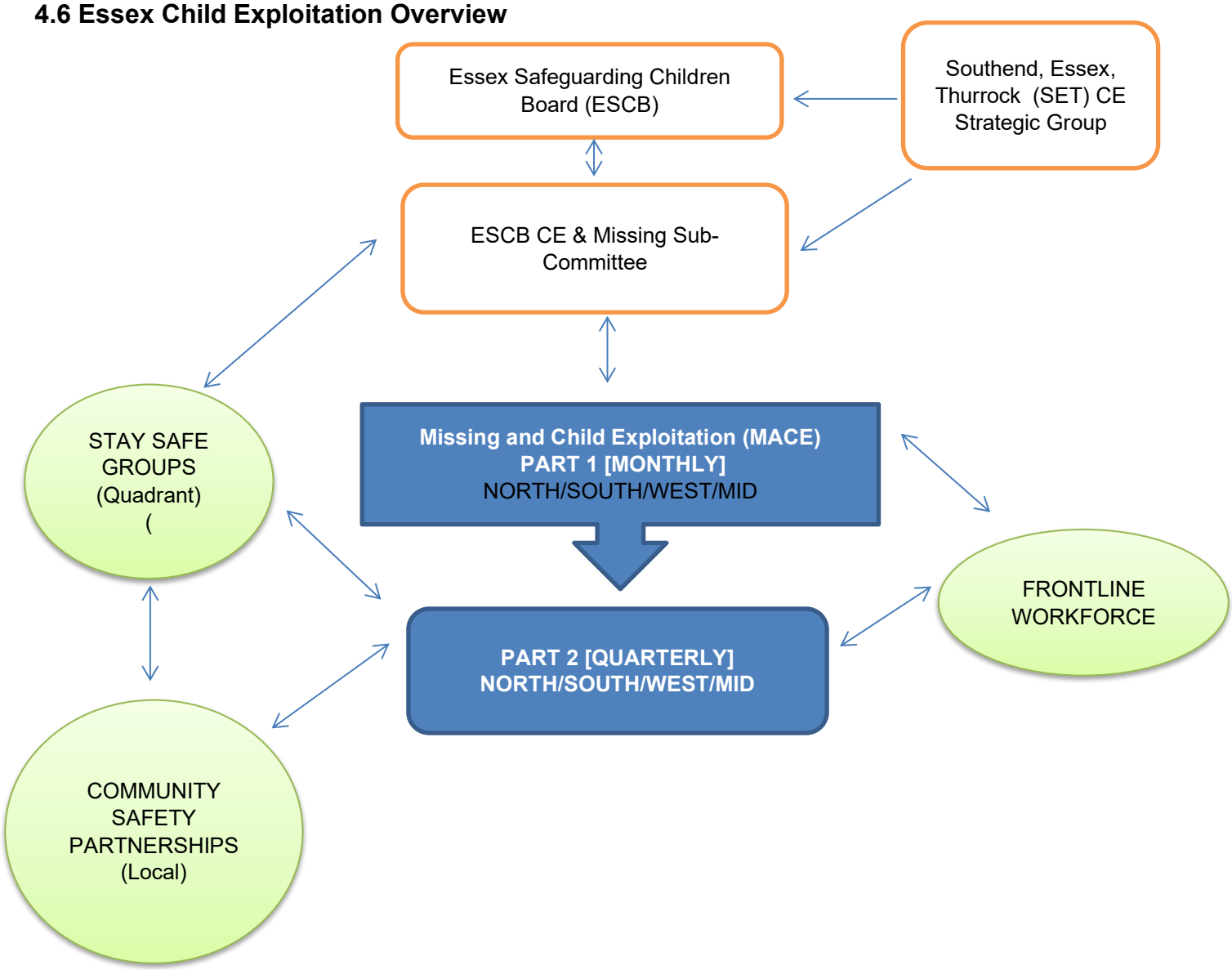


This flowchart should be read in conjunction with S.E.T Procedures Part B Chapter 20.

Missing Chats: Missing.ReturnsInterviews@essex.gov.uk

Relevant Professionals: Involvement Team, B DIT Worker, Youth Offending Service Worker, Children's Society Worker, Missing Persons Liaison Officer or Children and Young Person's Police Officer

4.6 Essex Child Exploitation Overview



5. Essex Safeguarding Children Board Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee

This strategic Sub-Committee reports directly to the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Executive Board and oversees the statutory and non-statutory functions of local agencies to drive forward work around all forms of child exploitation and children that go missing within Essex across the four quadrants and twelve District, Borough and City Councils, this includes being responsible for writing, reviewing and overseeing an Essex multi-disciplinary *Child Exploitation & Missing Action Plan*. The group meets quarterly and provides a minimum of yearly reporting to the Board. The Sub-Committee also utilises and feeds into other ESCB Sub-Committee's as required which equally report to the ESCB; for example, Learning & Development, Performance Audit & Quality Assurance Sub-Committees. As required the Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee will share local Essex activity with the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Child Exploitation Strategic Group, which is responsible for coordinating any activities around child exploitation that sit across the three areas - for example the SET Child Exploitation Partner Pathway and awareness campaigns.

The Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee provides oversight and scrutiny to the local quadrant Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings. The ESCB Child Exploitation Project Manager attends quadrant MACE meetings to provide expertise, oversight and feeds learning/understanding to the Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee. Chairs from the MACE meetings are responsible for providing two reports a year to the Sub-Committee. These reports are vital for ensuring that the Essex multi-disciplinary Child Exploitation & Missing Action Plan is driven and informed by local needs and priorities, plus the impact of MACE activity is shared with the Sub-Committee.

6. MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation Meetings) 1 & 2

6.1 Terms of Reference

The MACE meeting is one meeting but in two parts:

MACE 1 - oversight of plans for individual victims of child exploitation assessed as high risk of exploitation and/or missing episode(s) at a strategic level,

MACE 2 - identifying trends, vulnerable locations/hotspots and coordinating the multiagency response to disrupt or prevent exploitation occurring.

It is recognised that representatives attending MACE 1 and MACE 2 may differ (see *Membership & Representation* below). MACE monitors and reviews multi-agency activity and responses to known and potential child exploitation, child missing and trafficking across Essex within the four quadrants. Not all missing children are exploited but would be vulnerable to being targeted for exploitation whilst missing. Missing children are assessed as high risk and included in MACE 1 meetings if they have had three missing episodes in a four week period.

The lead agency for MACE 1 and MACE 2 meetings is ECC Children & Families Social Care.

MACE 1

Chaired by ECC Children & Families, Vice Chaired by the district Community Policing Team Inspectors. MACE 1 provides strategic oversight of plans for children assessed as high risk from exploitation and/or missing episodes.

Initial Case Selection & Preparation:

- The risk levels outlined in SET Procedures Chapter 24 (Safeguarding Children from Exploitation and Trafficking) are used by partners to assess risk consistently. Where there are indicators that child exploitation is occurring a child should be assessed as high risk and referred to ECC Children & Families.
- Social Workers complete a Risk in the Community (RIC) record to assess the risk level, if it is known the child is being exploited they will be assessed as high risk. Also, they are assessed as high risk if they have three missing episodes in a four week period.
- Following the social worker assessment of high risk using the Risk in the Community Record, a Risk in the Community (RIC) meeting should be convened, chaired by ECC Children & Families. Information is shared about vulnerabilities and risks from exploitation and/or missing episodes, plus strengths of the child and who is best placed to support them. A plan is developed to increase the child's resilience and reduce their vulnerabilities, plus to increase their safety in the community and collate evidence to disrupt exploiters/locations of harm. If partners agree the high risk threshold is met, a referral to MACE 1 meetings will take place.

- The MACE 1 plan created in the RIC meeting is presented to MACE 1 meetings for oversight as the referral. This plan will also be weaved into the child's statutory Child In Need, Child Protection, Looked After Child Reviews or Pathway Plans for review by operational partners working with the child.
- The allocated social worker sends the agreed MACE 1 plan from the RIC meeting to the MACE 1 inbox (mace1.information@essex.gov.uk) for referral into MACE 1.

Review Case Selection & Preparation:

- Following initial presentation of the MACE 1 plan in the meeting, the child is returned for discussion in three-monthly intervals and until the risk reduces.
- The child will continue to be heard at these intervals at MACE 1 until the risk reduces or a multi-agency decision is made they no longer require MACE 1 discussion.
- The social worker team will provide an updated plan (formulated through their statutory reviewing processes) for discussion at the review presentations at MACE 1 meetings.
- Business Support maintain a tracker to indicate relevant dates for review.
- It is the responsibility of all agencies attending to bring verbal updates to the meeting in respect of ALL cases being discussed whether Initial or Review.

The aims of MACE 1 are to:

- Provide strategic partnership oversight of the plans for children identified as high risk from exploitation and/or missing episodes,
- share relevant information,
- agree any further actions required to safeguard the individual child,
- agree any required or additional disruption activities,
- consider any additional support required,
- consider any further activities to support in building of evidence and the prosecution of offenders.

<u>MACE 2</u>

Chaired by ECC Children & Families within each ECC quadrant. MACE 2 will explore the current local picture of exploitation through analysing trends/patterns and identifying vulnerable locations (suspected exploitation occurring) and hotspots (known exploitation occurring). MACE 2 provides a district to countywide oversight of exploitation.

It should be focused on:

- Establishing exact nature of concerns (e.g. models of exploitation, victim & suspect profiles, specific trends),
- safeguarding victims,

- identifying vulnerable populations and locations,
- working with Community Safety Partnerships to utilise governance and regulatory powers to investigate and disrupt exploitation,
- increase community awareness for the prevention and reporting of exploitation,
- gathering information regarding links between suspected offenders and movements across areas and out of county,
- targeting venues/locations identified as hotspots or vulnerable locations,
- ensuring information is recorded, exchanged and disseminated appropriately,
- providing information to inform local problem profiles to develop action plans and impact measures.

6.2 Governance

This is a multi-agency meeting with overall governance provided by ESCB Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee. MACE 1 and 2 is led and chaired by ECC Children & Families, MACE 1 is Vice Chaired by Essex Police. However, as a multi-agency group it will require commitment by all its core members.

To enable scrutiny and oversight by the ESCB Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee, which in turn reports annually to the ESCB, the Chairs for each quadrant are required to submit a report twice a year. It is preferable for one report to be completed to cover both Part 1 and Part 2.

6.3 Impact measurement

Each representative will complete the one-page update template prior to the meeting which includes activity since last meeting and forward planned activity, plus any key trends/issues requiring discussion. This will support the collation of activities and impact by the partnership for oversight by the Sub-Committee in MACE Chair reports.

MACE Trackers provide a mechanism for MACE 1 Chairs to report on the impact that the multi-agency meeting is having on outcomes for children presented at MACE 1 meetings. The tracker can provide aggregated data on the numbers of children discussed, type of education establishment, model of exploitation, place of exploitation, period of time open to MACE, outcome and/or reason for reduction in risk.

The Bi-Annual report (author, ECC Intelligence & Insight Team) provides trend data twice a year that is used to develop local action plans for each MACE 2. The Chairs provide an update on the measures of success for these action plans, alongside impact from the MACE 1 trackers, in their reports to the ESCB Child Exploitation & Missing Sub-Committee.

MACE 2 also reviews key reports produced by partners focusing on the experiences and views of children and families affected by exploitation and/or missing. This includes information on missing from Independent Return Interviews (Missing Chats) plus consultations on community safety. Trend analysis from these reports based on the voice of children, families and our communities, is also considered alongside the Bi-Annual

reports to support formulation of action plans and are a means of providing impact data on measuring our success.

MACE Chair reports to the Sub-Committee should also include:

- Disruption activities
- Prevention activities
- Identified gaps in service provision
- Areas of vulnerability/risk for strategic consideration

The ESCB and its partner agencies have oversight of missing children in adherence with responsibilities set out in paragraphs 48-49 of the *Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home and care* (DfE, 2014); and 3.17 of *Safeguarding Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation* (DCSF, 2009). This includes the following:

- The number of children and young people missing and how many episodes.
- Times and durations children are missing
- Where children run away from
- Where children are located
- Information from Independent Return Interviews
- Absence data from schools
- The prevalence of child sexual exploitation
- Any other data that will enable the group identify local 'hotspots' of activity
- The response and outcomes for children.

6.4 Membership & Representation

MACE 1: Core Membership	
Chair: Service Manager, Children & Families (C&F) **Vice Chair:** Inspector, Community Policing Team (local districts)	
Agency:	Designation:
Children & Families	Team Manager (for child's allocated team)
Children & Families	Risk in the Community Practitioners
Children & Families	Missing Coordinator
Essex Youth Offending Service	Team Manager
Education Access Team	Education Access Coordinator
Specialist Education Services	Education Employment and Skills Advisor

Youth Service	Youth Worker Commissioner
The Children's Society	Exploitation Practitioner, CARE Team
Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service	LAC Safeguarding nurse
SET CAMHS	Named Nurse Safeguarding
Borough, City & District Council	Safeguarding Lead/CSP Lead
Probation Service	Senior Probation Officer
MACE 1: If child known to service only	
Family Solutions	Team Manager
Child's education provision	Identified education rep
Involvement Team	Senior Coordinator for Specialist Involvement
Integrated Sexual Health Team	Team Leader
MACE 1: From child's 17th birthday	
Adult Social Care	Designated Service Manger

MACE 2: Core Membership	
Chair: Director of Local Delivery, C&F **Vice Chair:** TBC	
Agency:	Designation:
ECC, Children & Families	Service Manager, MACE 1 Chair
ECC, Children & Families	Service Manager, Hidden Harm/Missing Practice Leads
ECC, Children & Families	Partnership Lead for Delivery
ECC, Children & Families	Gateway Manager
Essex Youth Offending Service	Team Manager
Essex Youth Service	Senior Youth and Community Commissioner

Family Solutions	Team Manager
Essex Police	Inspectors Community Policing Team (each district)
Essex Police	OC Triage Team
Essex Police	CSE Proactive Team
Essex Police	Prepare, Prevent & Protect Team
ESCB/Involvements Team	CE Project Manager
British Transport Police	Public Protection & Vulnerability Unit
ECC, Education	Education Safeguarding Adviser
ECC, Education	Education Access Manager
Health CCG	Designated Nurse
Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service	Manager for Safeguarding & LAC
Community Safety Partnerships	Community Safety Managers/Safeguarding Lead (each district)
Probation Service	Senior Probation Officer
The Children's Society	CARE Practitioner
Youth Service	Representative
National Probation Service	Senior Probation Officer
Part 1: By Formal Invite Only	
ECC, Intelligence & Insight Team	Performance Officer

Each member will have the appropriate skill base/managerial responsibility required to effectively execute activity agreed by the group.

Members will take the responsibility for attending meetings, fully contributing by bringing expertise and updates on their contribution and information of their agency. Members should use the agenda items circulated in advance to fully prepare for their contributions prior to the meeting including completion of the one-page update; this may involve arranging formal methods of communication within your agency to ensure you are briefed appropriately and have relevant information to share and cascade post the meeting. Members will ensure appropriate cover via representation should they be unable to attend, this representative must be fully briefed and able to actively contribute and update as required.

6.4 Borough, City & District Council's Role

Borough, City & District Councils are responsible for delivering a range of statutory services and discharging regulatory functions and their involvement with MACE Part 1 and MACE Part 2 will enable intelligence to be considered on a range of functions including:

- Housing
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Nuisance
- Licensing
- Revenues and Benefits
- Council Tax
- Animal Control and Welfare

Involving local Council's as core members of MACE will enhance the forums' ability to consider multiple pieces of intelligence, enabling a more robust risk assessment to be undertaken of the child, family and known associates. Inclusion will provide local authorities with an oversight of local cases, and enable them to identify and determine what 'high risk' looks like locally.

Officer(s) attending is required to be of sufficient seniority within the Council to make decisions and commit resources on its behalf.

Sharing of information and intelligence will increasingly support the identification of possible perpetrators and vulnerable locations; for example, if perpetrators hold local authority tenancies there is potential for enforcement action against this tenancy.

Their governance and regulatory powers through housing, licensing, environmental health, fire and fraud, allow for a suite of powers and tools to enter premises to investigate possible exploitation. Gaining further information this way can provide intelligence and supplement information from victims and families.

Examples:

- Licensing enforcement passed information to police about a taxi driver handing out cards to kids looking for photographic 'models'. Licensing records showed the driver had previously been investigated for inappropriate comments; police then dug deeper, found CSE victims and built a criminal case against him.

- Following a number of anonymous calls about school children gathering at a particular takeaway, environmental health officers gained access to a room upstairs which had a sofa and condoms, leading to a conviction for sexual offences.

Casey, L. (2015) Reflections on Child Sexual Exploitation: A report by Louise Casey CB. Dept. for Communities and Local Government.

Local authority designated safeguarding leads also attend Stay Safe Groups and attend Essex Borough, City & District Designated Safeguarding Leads meeting held on a quarterly basis.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 made provisions for the establishment of Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) in each local authority area, providing statutory responsibilities to develop and produce crime and disorder reduction strategies. Responsible authorities of each CSP are:

- Borough, City or District Council
- Essex Police
- Integrated Care Board
- Essex Fire and Rescue Service
- Essex Community Rehabilitation Company; and
- National Probation Service.

Other members vary dependent on each CSP, but generally there will be links to Victim Support, Synergy (SERICC & CARA) Women's Aid, Safer Places, The Children's Society, Drug and Alcohol agencies such as Open Road, STARS and Housing Providers. Young people who have been sexually exploited and are involved in a police investigation against the perpetrator will be referred for an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) by the police who offers them support through the proceedings and further counselling. Young people who are suspected victims but have not disclosed their experiences can be supported by The Children's Society who can liaise with police and prepare the young person for any ABE interview, as well as further therapeutic support.

Attendance to MACE Part 2 allows for the development of medium and long-term strategies to reduce the risk and likelihood of exploitation, alignment of resources to target vulnerable locations and places of interest identified on local problem profiles. Local problem profiles shared within MACE Part 2 will be shared during CSP Tasking meetings or similar means within the local partnerships for the purposes of targeting resources specifically on local needs and developing local responses. In turn these responses will be updated to the MACE Part 2 meeting to ensure duplication is minimised and targeted work is understood by the wider membership.

There is the potential within CSPs to access various funding streams enabling the development and delivery of bespoke awareness raising activities, early intervention and prevention, training for local schools, residents, practitioners and parents.

6.4 Lead for Partnership Delivery role

This role has oversight into local partnership arrangements and can effectively link county and local strategic plans to activity and the delivery of services on the ground. Their attendance provides the wider partnership perspective and they attend Stay Safe Groups which provide the mechanism to train, develop and support the wider workforce in emerging issues that are being presented at a local level and identified through MACE 2.

Stay Safe Groups through Essex Safeguarding Children Board would be able to support MACE in identifying gaps in service delivery across the quadrant. Stay Safe Groups also provide MACE with an already established structure to effectively consult, and advise front line designated safeguarding leads on emerging issues in their area.

6.5 Additional Support, Agenda & Frequency

MACE 1 meetings occur monthly across all four quadrants.

MACE 2 meetings occur quarterly across all four quadrants.

MACE meetings are supported by quadrant Leadership Assistants provided through Business Support, Corporate and Customer Services, Essex County Council. MACE business standards set out the requirements and responsibilities of this role, updated annually.

For the purposes of building problem profiles, MACE meetings are supported by a Bi-Annual report produced by the ECC Insight & Intelligence Team with contributions from Essex Police, ECC Education and Essex Youth Offending Service. This report provides trend data which is used to formulate action plans for each MACE 2, in turn these plans provide a set of requests for specific impact data from partner agencies to measure success. There are also requests made by the MACE 2 Chairs for partners to contribute to the meeting with specific information/reports for further discussion. A hotspot tracker is updated at each MACE 2 meeting with new hotspots/vulnerable locations nominated by attendees, plus updates on plans to tackle existing hotspots/vulnerable locations.

Agenda for MACE Part 1 is the responsibility of the Chair, supported by; ECC I&I, Children & Families Risk in the Community Practitioners and Missing Coordinator. The agenda is circulated one month prior to the meeting to ensure that members have sufficient time to prepare, through gathering relevant information as required. Core members are to ensure that any relevant information in respect of children, young people and locations being discussed is shared within the meeting.

There is a standardised agenda for MACE Part 2 (see *Appendix*) and additional items for discussion can be requested by the Chair, it is circulated two weeks prior to the meeting to ensure that members have sufficient time to prepare for the meeting through gathering relevant information as required. Members are asked to provide an update on their actions/hotspots one month prior to the meeting so this can be added to the embedded documents in the agenda.

6.6 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)

CSPs are local partnerships made up of responsible authorities, elected members and voluntary sector organisations. In the Essex County Council districts there are twelve local CSPs who each have responsibility to formulate a strategy to reduce crime and disorder, combat substance misuse and reduce re-offending, taking into consideration local, county and national priorities.

CSPs have a range of statutory responsibilities which include to:

- consult and engage with the local community on issues of concern in relation to community safety
- undertake an annual strategic assessment of crime and disorder data to identify local priorities
- prepare plans to identify how national, county and local priorities can be addressed
- reduce re-offending

- Conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews in the event of a domestic homicide occurring in their local area.

CSPs will make their own arrangements to best support their local picture and functions of MACE, some areas have chosen to convene local 'CE Working Groups' which will be represented by local members only who are in a position to support and drive local work, primarily in the areas of community safety and the prevention of crime, others may choose to incorporate in local tasking groups. Whatever arrangements are made locally are clearly acknowledged and represented within MACE groups so that localised responses are understood by the quadrant MACE members.

6.7 Stay Safe Groups

The purpose of Stay Safe Groups are to coordinate and lead the local safeguarding agenda focusing on improving local outcomes and highlighting emerging issues and risks to relevant forums so that they can be appropriately addressed.

Membership of Stay Safe groups are drawn from appropriate local practitioners in each quadrant (usually Designated Leads for Safeguarding) in their respective organisations, supplemented by individuals holding appropriate Essex-wide responsibilities.

The key responsibilities of the group are to:

- Enable local coordination of partners' contribution to safeguarding children, young people and their families, identifying and implementing where appropriate, delivery and/or training opportunities for improving local and Essex-wide safeguarding outcomes.
- Gather intelligence to monitor impact identify emerging risks issues and practical solutions for escalation to the ESCB Executive or Chair and/or Local Children's Partnership Board if they cannot be resolved at a local level.
- Be the local Subject Matter Expert Forum, supporting and challenging the work of the ESCB, quadrant-based Children's Partnership Boards and other relevant forums
- To lead a collaborative approach with key local forums e.g.
    - CE Champions Forums
    - Schools Safeguarding Network
    - Early Years Forums
    - MACE
    - ESCB Sub committees and learning and development Programme
    - Local Community Safety Partnerships
    - SET Domestic Abuse Strategic Board
- Coordinate locally the delivery of key messages from
    - Serious Case Reviews (SCR)
    - Multi Agency case Audits (MACA)

    - ESCB Policies and Procedures and SET Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures
    - Partnership Learning Reviews
    - Domestic Homicide Review
- Identify and disseminate best practice
- Work in line with the ESCB Principles

6.7 Information Sharing & Confidentiality

The arrangements outlined within this document adopt the overarching Pan Essex 'Information Sharing Protocol for Safeguarding' (Safeguarding ISP), which is owned by the Whole Essex Information Sharing Framework (WEISF). The Safeguarding ISP contains a Pan Essex Child Exploitation Standard Operating Procedure. The document sets out the operating procedure for sharing information in relation to 'potential' threats and low level intelligence and concerns relating to child exploitation which may occur across the boundaries of Southend Borough Council, Essex County Council and Thurrock Council. All partners across Pan Essex will have signed up to this protocol and Local Authorities have agreed local Community Safety Partnership Data Sharing Protocols as part of the statutory responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

All information discussed is considered to be strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties unless authorised by the Chairs. All documents circulated in connection with MACE are to be considered Official Sensitive documents and must not be disclosed to third parties without the agreement of the Chairs. The retention of all documentation in a secure location is the responsibility for the receiving agency. The disclosure of information outside of the MACE, without prior permission from the Chair, will be deemed to be a breach of the subject's confidentiality and a breach of the confidentiality of the agencies involved. An 'Information Sharing Statement' (see *Appendix*) is available to members at MACE meetings and is embedded in every agenda to members.

7. Professional Disagreements

If an agency does not agree with a decision or recommendation made at a MACE, their professional dissent will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the first instance disagreements should attempt to be resolved by the Chair. The Chair should ensure that rationale on decision making is clear and communicated to partners.

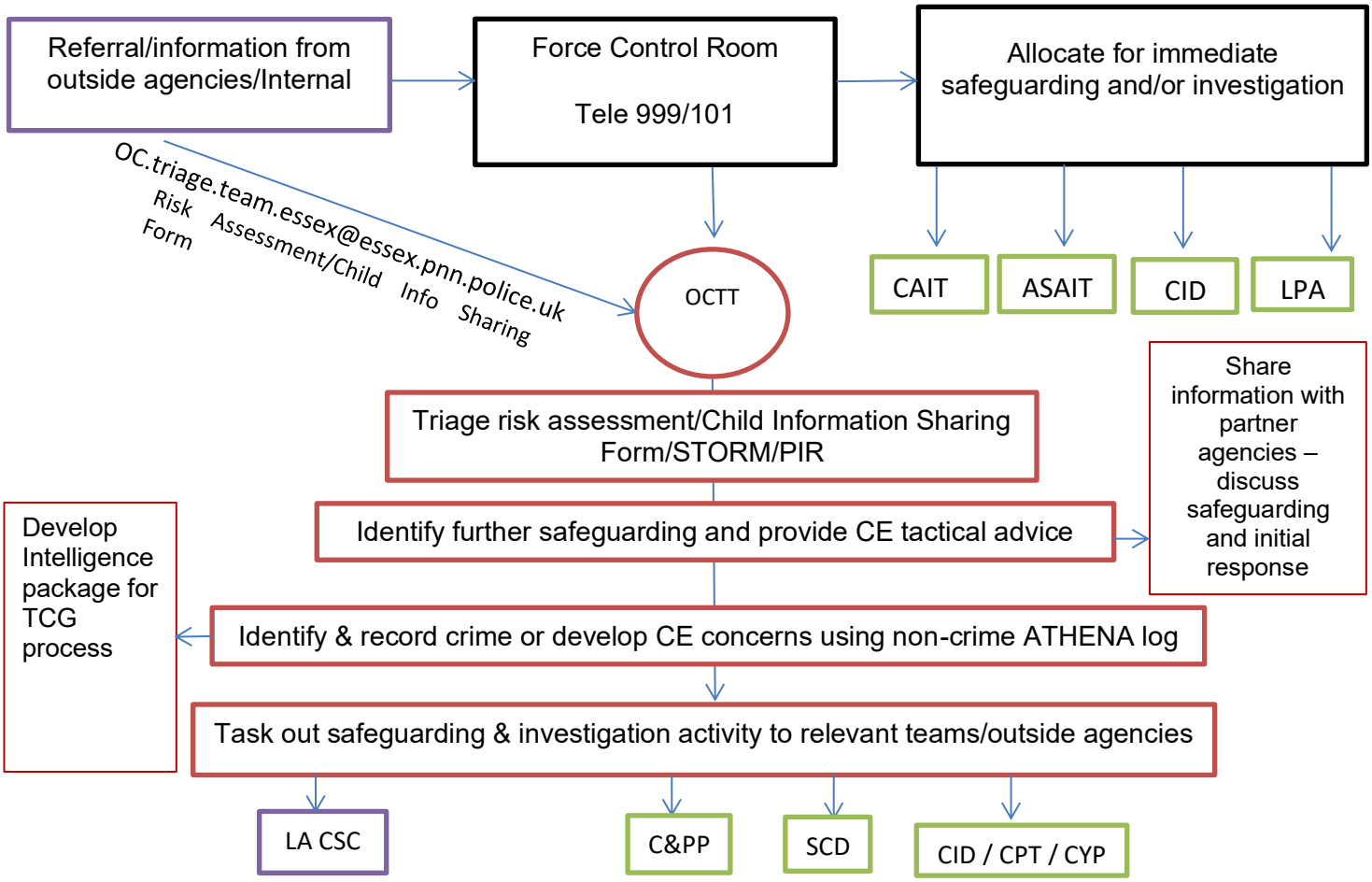
In respect of proposed cases for discussion where agencies outside of the lead agency are requesting that a child or young person placed on an agenda for discussion, this should be discussed with the relevant ECC Children & Families Team Manager, any disagreements can be escalated to the Service Manager.

Should there be continued concerns or disagreements then the agencies own escalation process for professional disagreements should be implemented. Guidance on 'professional conflict resolution' may be found within the SET Child Protection Procedures.

APPENDIX

Appendix	**ALL FORMS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE ESCB WEBSITE:**
1	OCTT Business Processes Overview
2	Principal Contact List
3	Information Sharing Statement
4	MACE 2: Meeting Agenda

OC Triage Team (OCTT) Business Processes - Overview



The business processes provide a robust gatekeeping service which ensures risk assessments, intelligence and referrals received, direct from partner agencies or internally, are correctly recorded and routed to the most appropriate department within Essex Police.

Information submissions into OCTT are acceptable in only the following formats:

1. If it is a Child Protection Referral then the referrer (referring agency) must use the established Child Protection pathway (i.e. refer to the Social Care Children & Families Hub and to the Essex Police CAIT & OCTT). A Child Protection referral would be required where there is concern that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

2. If referral has an urgent safeguarding requirement or it is believed criminal offences have been disclosed, then the referral route is through the Essex Police Force Control Room. The Storm Command and Control process will be used to allocate the referral for progression by the appropriate team. OCTT will be made aware of the referral through a tag to the Storm incident record.

3. All other forms of information can be submitted to OCTT through use of dedicated OCTT email address: OC.triage.team.essex@essex.pnn.police.uk.

Where information is non-evidential, or offences have not been disclosed but there are potential interventions available, or the meaning / value of information is not yet understood, OCTT will create a record for each child at risk of exploitation and log any activity. These enquiries will be recorded on a non-crime Athena investigation log. All identified or suspected criminal offences will be recorded on Athena as a crime record.

PRINCIPAL CONTACT LIST

Details of all MACE Meeting dates, times and locations are held on the following link

Mid Quadrant (Chelmsford, Braintree, Maldon)	**MACE 1**		**MACE 2**	
Chair:	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Ruma Saha Stephens** **ECC Children & Families Service Manager** **Ruma.Saha-Stephens@essex.gov.uk**	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Sukriti Sen** **ECC Children & Families Director for Local Delivery** **sukriti.sen@essex.gov.uk**
North Quadrant (Colchester, Tendring)	**Part 1**		**Part 2**	
Chair:	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Janine Dawson** **ECC Children & Families Service Manager** **Janine.Dawson@essex.gov.uk**	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Nicky O'Shaughnessy** **ECC Children & Families Director for Local Delivery** **nicky.o'shaughnessy@essex.gov.uk**
South Quadrant (Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford)	**Part 1**		**Part 2**	
Chair:	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Rachel Fairall** **ECC Children & Families Service Manager** **Rachel.Fairall@essex.gov.uk**	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Gaye Cole** **ECC Children & Families Director for Local Delivery** **Gaye.Cole@essex.gov.uk**
West Quadrant (Harlow, Brentwood, Uttlesford, Epping Forest)	**Part 1**		**Part 2**	
Chair:	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Bianka Lang** **ECC Children & Families Service Manager** **Bianka.Lang@essex.gov.uk**	**Name:** **Agency:** **Job Role:** **Email:**	**Michelle Hayden-Pepper** **ECC Children & Families Director for Local Delivery** **M.Hayden-Pepper@essex.gov.uk**
Business Support	**MACE 1**		**MACE 2**	
Business Support:	**Secure Email:**	**mace1.information@essex.gov.uk** **Please use this email address to submit documents of a sensitive nature**	**Secure Email:**	**mace2.information@essex.gov.uk** **Please use this email address to submit documents of a sensitive nature**

Missing & Child Exploitation (MACE) Meetings

INFORMATION SHARING STATEMENT

- Any agency in attendance or in receipt of information for the purposes of this meeting will have signed the *Essex Information Sharing Protocol for Safeguarding* which is owned by the Whole Essex Information Sharing Framework (WEISF), a copy of this protocol may be accessed via http://weisf.essex.gov.uk. The Information Sharing Protocol includes the Pan Essex Child Exploitation Standard Operating Procedure which outlines the sharing of any information relevant to safeguarding as allowed by legislation and refers specifically to data required for Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) groups and Child Sexual Exploitation Triage Team (CSETT) meetings.

- The *SET Procedures 2022* sets out the legal principles and obligations of all partner agencies in relation to information sharing, which includes reference to the statutory guidance on s10 of the *Children Act 2004* making it clear that effective information sharing supports the duty to co-operate to improve the well-being of children. This includes the expectation that all practitioners comply with HM Government guidance on information sharing.

PREPARATION REQUIRED BEFORE THE MEETINGS:

- All Core members are identified as the single point of contact for their respective agency.
- All Core and Invited members are responsible for collating and sharing any relevant information known to their agency on the templates provided, as applicable, or through verbal updates within the meeting.
- All Core and Invited members are responsible for progressing, and updating the group with any information pertaining to actions tasked to them at previous meetings.
- Templates must be completed ahead of the meeting and sent to the Chair via secure means at least 48 hours before the meeting.
- If a Core or Invited member is unable to attend a meeting then apologies must be provided to the Chair and details of alternative representative attending in their absence.
- Information for MACE 1 to be sent to; MACE1.information@essex.gov.uk
- Information for MACE 2 to be sent to; MACE2.information@essex.gov.uk

DURING THE MEETING, all members/representatives attending this meeting agree that:

- All documentation provided will be marked **Official Sensitive**.
- The minutes and documents of this meeting should not be photocopied or the contents shared outside of the meeting without the agreement of the Chair. Minutes should be kept in the Official Sensitive, RESTRICTED or CONFIDENTIAL section of agency files.
- If further disclosure within your organisation is identified as essential, permission should be sought from the Chair. Their decision on what information can be shared will be founded on considerations of necessity and proportionality.
- All information discussed is considered to be confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties unless authorised by the Chair.

PURPOSE

MACE 1: To provide senior management oversight and support to children and young people known to be being exploited and/or meeting threshold for high risk missing in each ECC quadrant. To ensure all information between agencies is reviewed and further support or disruptions considered and prosecutions pursued where possible.

MACE 2: To consider operational and tactical activity necessary to tackle child exploitation threats throughout the quadrant. To consider aggregated data from across a range of agencies, including Essex Police and Children & Families in respect of (but not exclusively) indicators of child exploitation, scope and form of child exploitation activity, missing episodes and information regarding missing, vulnerable populations and locations. It will support the targeting of hot spots, trends and patterns associated with child exploitation.

Updated June 2022

MACE Part 2 – [Insert] Quadrant

Meeting Agenda

Date/Time:

Venue:

[Add link showing direction to venue]

Information Sharing Statement

MACE 2 One Minute Guide

No.:	Item	Responsible Officer
1 Add time	**Welcome, Introductions and Apologies:** (5 mins)	Chair
2	**Minutes of Last Meeting/Matters Arising:** (5 mins) **Previous approved minutes**	Chair
3	**Review Action Log:** (10 mins) **[Action log**	Chair
4	**Review Action Plan** (15 mins) **Action Plan** *NB: Please bring impact data required from your organisation and updates on your actions*	Chair All
5	**Community & Neighbourhood: locations** - *Vulnerable locations (suspected CE occurring)* - *Hotspots (known CE occurring),* - *T&F Updates (persistent and complex hotspots)* - *MACE 1 locations* (20 mins) **[Hotspot Tracker**	MACE 1 Chairs Essex Police local Inspectors, CSPs & Youth Service All

6	**Community & Neighbourhood: trends and disruptions** - *Emerging trends* - *Disruption orders* - Prevention activities - T&F groups (20 mins)	Essex Police – OC Triage, CSE Proactive Team All T&F leads
7	**Education:** - *Overview of emerging trends* - *Prevention work* - *Safeguarding responses* (10 mins)	Education leads
8	**Health:** - *Overview of trends in A&E* - *Affinity Programme data* - *Exploitation themes from school nurses, sexual health services, and EWMHS* (10 mins)	CCG reps ECFWS reps
9	**Guest Speaker** **Guest presentation** (20 mins)	Guest
10	**AOB, Forward Plan and Date of Next Meeting:** *Key speakers and areas for further exploration and discussion* (5 mins)	All