

Essex Safeguarding Children **Board**



**Annual Report
2011/2012**

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Introduction

I am pleased to have the opportunity to report on the Board's important work during 2011/12, and also to introduce myself as the Board's recently appointed Independent Chair.

This has been another challenging year for the Board. Work has continued on the themes initially identified in 2009 to strengthen the capacity of partners to work together in the interests of safeguarding children who live in the county. To this end the Board met on 5 occasions over the year, and continues to enjoy strong support from a widening range of Partners, the majority of whom have been able to contribute to the Board's busy work plan.

Whilst agencies have achieved consistent levels of attendance at Board meetings, new members have joined as a result of organisational changes and turnover. I would like to thank departing members Andrew Geldard, Sian Brand, Stewart McArthur, Wendi Ogle-Welbourn and Lynn Seward for their contribution to the Board and welcome new associate members Paul Abraham, Terry Reynolds, Dr. Susan Humphrey and Detective Superintendent Ewen Wilson. In December 2011 the Board was also able to confirm the appointment of its first two Lay Members and welcomed Helen Hever and Nikki Wilson both of whom will make an important contribution to the Board's work.

The Board continues to maintain a strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and seeks to take account of the diverse needs of all children and young people in the county. All newly developed strategies, policies and procedures are subject to an equality impact assessment. Active steps are taken to facilitate inclusion such as the provision of appropriate support for families attending child protection conferences and representation of young people on the sub-committees.

A significant element of the Board's work over 2011/12 has involved the commissioning and delivery of a major review of Governance. This was considered necessary to ensure that safeguarding arrangements at partnership level could be strengthened and to take account of the considerable organisational change and the improvements being delivered through the Children's Service Improvement Board.

Throughout the year, it has remained important that the Board continued to focus on aspects of safeguarding that better protect children and young people across the county. The Board has therefore continued to support specific areas of activity including:

- Providing oversight as partners worked with Dale Farm and Thorney Bay caravan parks to ensure adequate levels of safeguards for children and young people
- Considering the potential impact of financial pressures within the voluntary and community sector on support arrangements for domestic abuse, seeking to influence commissioning priorities
- Actively contributing to the Local Authority Peer Review as part of a sustained programme supporting statutory agencies in post inspection improvements
- Initiating early discussion in relation to capacity in Essex to mitigate the effects of child sexual exploitation, cooperating with the enquiries of the Children's Commissioner and securing agreement through the Board's governance review that this would represent a priority line of enquiry in the coming year.

The Board has also attached great importance to delivering a range of service audits covering such areas as domestic abuse, mental health, learning disabilities and impact on sibling groups and was also able to complete an extensive cycle of 'Section 11' audits aimed at ensuring that the broadest range of agencies have in place effective safeguarding strategies. The outcome of these audits will be published separately on the Board website.

However, as outlined later in the report much work remains to be done to ensure the most robust scrutiny of multi-agency performance and the newly constituted Performance, Audit and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee will play a vital role in taking this work forward.

The Child Death Overview Panel has matured into a cohesive group and under the continued direction of Alison Cowie, Director of Public Health, will be making its Annual Report later in the year.

The Board has been formally consulted on the development of arrangements for the new Health and Wellbeing Board and at a time when resources in public services are under extreme pressure it will remain important that the Board has the opportunity to support the Essex Partnership at a strategic level.

Sadly it has been necessary to convene 5 meetings of the Serious Case Review Panel, with two Serious Case Reviews, currently being undertaken and which are expected to be completed and published during 2012.

The Board is very aware of the challenges facing statutory services and partner agencies and is confident that the strengthening partnership arrangements in Essex will be able to maintain a focus on priorities and safeguarding in particular. However there remains no room for complacency and the Board will continue to work hard to gather stronger evidence that children and young people in the county are safe.

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) welcomes the findings and recommendations of the Munro Report and the Government's response, with its emphasis on reduced bureaucracy and increased flexibility, a focus on outcomes and what makes a real difference to children, young people and their families, alongside local decision-making. There will be an enhanced role for the ESCB in ensuring the scrutiny and effectiveness of partners' overall safeguarding arrangements and in agreeing local policies, procedures and practice guidance.

Finally, I would like to pass on the Board's appreciation of the commitment shown by our front-line practitioners, police officers and staff working in schools who continue to work diligently in the interests of safeguarding children and young people throughout the county.

Simon Hart
Independent Chair Essex Safeguarding Children Board

Lay Members

As of December 2011, the ESCB has had two lay members, Nikki Wilson and Helen Hever, who are making an important contribution to the Board and helping to better represent voluntary and community organisations in the county.

Nikki and Helen have both spoken about their new roles and the importance of safeguarding from their perspective:

Nikki Wilson

Hi Nikki, tell us about yourself

My name is Nikki Wilson and I am one of the two new lay members on the Essex Safeguarding Children Board. Formally I am qualified as an accountant and I have worked in a variety of finance and broader roles in the not for profit sector for a number of years now. I currently work for Chelmsford Women's Aid and Kids' City – a London based charity providing childcare and out of school activities to children in Lambeth, Merton and Wandsworth. Both are due to end fairly soon so I'm also currently busy applying for jobs!



Why is safeguarding important to you?

Safeguarding is something that I think should be important to everybody. It is especially important to me because I want to do as much as possible to help vulnerable people who often don't have a voice and this applies particularly to children. The more work that I have done with charities, the more I have realised the pervasive nature of child abuse; it is something that goes on in all of our communities and has a terrible impact on children's lives, yet I don't think the size of the issue is recognised as widely as it should be.

What do you hope to achieve with the ESCB?

One thing that I want to achieve is to raise the profile of safeguarding. I want to strengthen people's understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is needed everywhere. I want to build upon existing connections with community organisations and improve the Board's engagement with children and young people. A lot of the work that I have done previously has been in London, so the chance to have an impact on my own community is something that I am looking forward to.

In general though I want to add to many areas of ESCB's work. The role of the lay member is an evolving one and I would like to embrace the opportunity to shape it as an integral role at ESCB.

Helen Hever



Hi Helen, tell us about yourself

My name is Helen Hever and I work for the Essex FA. I enjoy learning and developing new skills as well as returning something back to society.

By volunteering as one of the first two Lay Members for the Essex Safeguarding Children Board, I feel I am continuing to develop my skills; whilst bringing vast experience gained in both employment and volunteering.

Why is safeguarding important to you?

I have recognised for a long time now that I am committed to the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. This has developed into a much deeper passion having worked for the Probation Service for nearly fourteen years and now working with volunteers and young people in football. Both experiences have shown how agencies and partners can be successful in working together but also highlight the gaps.

From my experience volunteers have a limited knowledge of the local safeguarding arrangements and how they fit into the larger picture of safeguarding. I would like to use my experience as a lay member on the Essex Safeguarding Children Board to drive an improvement in safeguarding awareness among volunteers.

What do you hope to achieve with the ESCB?

Ultimately, I want to have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people. Initially I will learn how the Board operates and after gaining a better understanding I want to be proactive in asking questions as well as supporting improved practice.

The work of the Safeguarding Boards is scrutinised by the media – after some very sad cases reported both nationally and locally, I want to make sure that ESCB is adopting the best methods and reviews its delivery, making changes where appropriate.

Local Context

The ESCB and its partner agencies are committed to ensuring a high quality of care in safeguarding the children and young people of Essex. External circumstances have made this a very challenging year, with the economic downturn placing increased pressure on frontline services to provide more for less, while rising unemployment and costs of living make life even more difficult for families and young people in particular.

According to the 2011 Census, Essex (not including the unitary authorities of Southend and Thurrock) has a population of 1,393,600 people of whom 328,200 (24%) are aged between 0-19.

In 2004, 13,926 Essex children came from a minority ethnic background. In 2012, there are now 23,870 pupils from minority ethnic groups in Essex schools representing 12.3% of the pupil population. 9,000 of these pupils have English as an additional language and more than 170 languages are spoken in Essex. Polish is the most commonly spoken language after English in the county. There are 827 Traveller children known to the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service.

With increasing pressure on agencies to deliver more services at greater economy, there will be a growing role for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the delivery of essential services. It is estimated that around 28,000 people are employed in the sector in Essex. VCS organisations are already commissioned to deliver a variety of services and Essex County Council currently spends around £100 million in the sector.

Essex is generally a prosperous, healthy and safe county but there are also areas of deprivation in which quality of life and prospects of improvement are further threatened by the economic climate. While unemployment in Essex (7.1%) was below the UK average (7.6%) in 2010-11, in the poorer areas of the county the figure was notably higher: Tendring (10.9%); Epping Forest (11.2%), and Harlow (11.9%).

Essex has had improving levels of health for the past two decades and high life expectancy for both male and female residents. The good health of Essex residents is supported by a substantial health and care infrastructure. Health and care services employ nearly 63,000 people in Essex, which equates to more than 12% of local jobs and a high proportion of our professional workforce.

However, there are also some very deprived areas in the county. Life expectancy can vary significantly between districts, with the lowest of 70.1 years in Pier ward, Tendring and the highest of 88.7 years in Littlebury, Uttlesford. Jaywick in Tendring has been identified as the most deprived small area in England. Nearly 16% of children in Essex (around 51,000) live in poverty, with four districts (Basildon, Colchester, Harlow and Tendring) having a higher rate than the East of England average.

An estimated 10% of children aged 5 to 19 years have a diagnosable mental health condition and a further 10% have an emotional or behavioural problem requiring targeted support. These children have a wide range of conditions including clinically significant conduct disorders, self harm, depression, hyperactivity and less common disorders such as autistic disorders and eating disorders.

There are around 4,000 children with severe disabilities aged 0 to 19 years in Essex, with 1,200 receiving a service from social care. Around 1,000 have autistic spectrum disorders and just under 3,000 have learning disabilities.

Educational attainment is unevenly distributed across the county and relates closely to deprivation levels. Overall, around 50% of 16 year olds leave school without 5 or more GCSEs, while rates of children leaving school with 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C are lower than national or regional averages. There remains a significant gap between the performance of children receiving free school meals and those who do not, and this is a gap which tends to increase with age.

Prior to the recent recession, the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Essex was comparatively low, but this number has risen since the start of the recession. The level of NEET (3-month average in 2009-10) in Essex (6.9%) was higher than the national average (6.2%) and the East of England average (5.7%).

Essex is a safe place to live, with low levels of crime by national standards. Overall since 2007, crime rates have been decreasing, from 67 per 1,000 to 60 per 1,000 in 2010/11. The latest position is lower than the national average (75 per 1000). The Youth Offending Service (YOS) caseload fell from 1,234 to 1,067, equating to 1,672 young offenders in 2011/12.

As a result of better preventative work, there was a reduction of 43 children in need per 10,000 while with increased family support, there has been a fall in the number of children looked after (1,499 from 1,584). The new and upgraded role of Child Protection Co-ordinators, as well as the employment of new, permanent staff, has led to a much improved approach to assessing child protection cases, leading to a fall in the number of children on a Child Protection plan from 903 to 788.

In relation to children in need, the ESCB will be ensuring that our targeted work focuses on children and young people with significant needs, and will be working to support partners in providing appropriate early help services to children with additional needs.

In light of significant improvements in social care, the Government were able to lift the formal improvement notice taking the County Council out of intervention. It will be important that both the ESCB and elected members through Overview and Scrutiny maintain effective levels of oversight and challenge in the future.

Fostering and Adoption

If you are interested in adopting a child (where you become a child's legal guardian) or providing foster care (temporary accommodation until a child returns to their family) or would like more information or to receive an information pack contact us at:

Email: adoptionandfostering@essex.gov.uk

Telephone: **0800 801 530**

Review of Governance

In June 2011 the Board commissioned a Review of Governance to ensure that the constitution and operating arrangements are up to date and properly reflect the contribution required by the Board to hold safeguarding arrangements in Essex to account.

In commissioning the review, the Board were keen to respond to the encouragement of both the Improvement Board and Peer Review to ensure that the ESCB plays an appropriate role in the future management and scrutiny of children's services. The Board were also grateful for advice received from three separate safeguarding children boards (Hampshire, Devon and Northumberland)

Throughout, the Review the Board also wished to ensure that new arrangements help co-ordinate the work of the ESCB with that of the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB).

Emerging Proposals and Themes

The approach of the review has been to retain elements of the Board's work which have worked well but to strengthen areas where progress requires acceleration. The Board identified that these areas include performance & audit, workforce management, communications & engagement, and commissioning and delivering serious case reviews.

In recognising the increasing workloads of both the ESCB and ESAB, the need to maintain separate Boards at present has been acknowledged as necessary and sensible. However, the opportunity to establish stronger co-ordination and increase areas of joint work where common standards are necessary has been recognised.

Key proposals of the Board's review include:

- Creation of a Safeguarding Leadership Group to support the work of the ESCB & ESAB
- Clarity on the Leadership of the Sub-Committees
- Addition of two Board development sessions per annum to allow stronger focus on strategic priorities, risk and approach
- Arrangements for support and personal development of Board and Sub-Committee members
- Alignment of Board's work to Health and Well-Being Board
- Defining the statutory responsibilities of Essex County Council alongside those of partner agencies
- Clarifying the role and function of the Independent Chair to the Board which will have a clear and strong emphasis on the role of the ESCB as a Partnership
- Strengthening co-ordination through the appointment of a common chair to ESCB/ESAB

Membership & Sub-Committees

During the course of the review, those consulted have suggested a need to ensure that membership arrangements are clarified (albeit with due recognition that the complexity of the partnership means that the Board requires significant representation). The Board agreed therefore to adopt an approach which provides two distinct categories of membership:

- Full members – who will be from statutory partners as set out in national guidance and in addition representation from other agencies whose contribution is considered by the Board to be essential
- Associate Members – nominated by those organisations having important contributions to make but which are not required to be present at all meetings.

Within these arrangements the review recognised the need and benefit of shared representation such as in the case of the NHS, district and borough councils and voluntary and community groups. The Lead Member for Children's Services will remain a 'participant observer', as set out in statutory guidance, and the Board will be supported by a number of specified professional advisers.

An important consideration has been whether or not to develop the Board's Sub-Committee structure with a functional or locality focus. Through its consultations, the Board became clear that a more functional approach would be appropriate to consolidate the workload. However, the Board did agree that this be further reviewed at some point in the future as locality working arrangements mature.

The Board therefore agreed to adopt a Sub-Committee structure with strong leadership, a clear focus on current priorities and is set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Review also identified the need to ensure more effective communication between Sub-Committees, as much of the work is related, and the Board agreed that a regular meeting of all Chairs to ensure cohesion in the allocation of work linked to the Business Plan and its progress.

The review has also identified the need to explore further the possibility of creating a Young People's Forum, directly associated with the Board, which will give young people the opportunity to comment upon and influence safeguarding strategy.

Support to the Board

The Board currently receives dedicated assistance from the ESCB support team which is hosted by the County Council. As part of the arrangements for implementation, the Board has asked the Director of Children's Services to bring forward proposals early in the New Year to ensure capacity to support all of the Board's activities.

The Review began on 10 August 2011 and was approved by the Board on 4 October 2011. The first meeting of the Board under its new arrangements took place on 27 March 2012.

Key Achievements

Training

The ESCB Training Group has worked to improve the delivery and quality assurance of its learning and development programmes, as well as making the process more efficient so that improvements have not put an additional burden on the overall budget.

From April 2011, the ESCB took on the administration of the training for Designated Persons within education settings and made a decision to combine this with the multi-agency designated person training that was already offered.

From April 2011-March 2012 a total of 21 designated person training days were offered (5 of these were education only) to a total of 580 delegates, 378 of these were from education where attendance is a requirement.

During the year the Board has been working closely with the Integrated Working team and Early Years and Childcare Service to develop a consistent approach to measuring the impact of training across Essex. Delegates complete an action plan at the end of the session and four weeks later are surveyed on their progress and learning.

Feedback from 247 delegates attending the training between September and December 2011 shows that:

- 94% said they had a better understanding of their role as a designated person
- 93% said they felt more confident in making safeguarding decisions
- 83% had completed their actions following the training, those who had not had plans in place to complete them.

The survey also gives people the opportunity to leave comments regarding any aspect of the training - some examples below:

“Since undertaking the course I believe I have become a more confident and competent practitioner in identifying and following the procedures relating to child protection concerns.”

(Headteacher, February 2012)

“I found the training course very useful and it helped to assure me that I was carrying out my safeguarding lead role in the right way and also that the council had the right approach to safeguarding and gave it the importance it warrants.”

(Safeguarding lead at a district/borough council, March 2012)

“A very helpful and informative day. Well delivered sessions. Useful interaction between participants.”

(Voluntary sector delegate, October 2011)

Training in partnership with Essex Drug and Alcohol Action Team

In response to previous serious case review recommendations, two training courses were delivered in partnership with the Essex Drug and Alcohol Action Team:

- Assessing the Risk to Vulnerable children and young people where family substance misuse exists (full day)
- Understanding the Links between alcohol use/misuse and suicidal ideation (half day)

As this training was in partnership with the DAAT the courses were offered at a reduced price to the usual ESCB rate as we did not need to cover the cost of the trainer.

For training opportunities with the ESCB please go to:

<http://www.escb.co.uk/>

SET Procedures

It is important to consider those areas where real benefits may arise from consistent approaches. This applies particularly when Essex is working with its near neighbours in Southend and Thurrock and where many services are shared. Accordingly the Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) Procedures Group has a remit to maintain a consistent policy, procedure and practice guidance framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in line with national guidance and best practice.

Following the completion of an update of SET Procedures 2011, the Board worked with the Southend and Thurrock Boards to develop a SET Procedures 2011 update briefing package. The ESCB delivered 18 three hour briefing sessions across the county to a total of 630 people from a wide range of organisations. The presentation was also made available on the ESCB website so that the updates and changes could be easily disseminated within other organisations.

Multi-Agency Audits

A major development for the ESCB this year has been the commencement of multi-agency case audits. The purpose of these audits is to review the quality of practice from a multi-agency perspective which will then inform the ESCB about the areas of strength and good practice in addition to areas for improvement and lessons to be learnt. The audits focus on children who are subject to a child protection plan and involves themes such as domestic abuse, mental health and learning difficulties, and reflects a mixture of ages, ethnicity and categories of abuse, as well as considering the quality of decision making, information sharing, multi-agency working, views of the child, etc. The cases are graded and areas of good practice or learning are highlighted to be addressed in a multi-agency action plan.

Following some initial work in February 2011, eight case audits were completed from September 2011 to March 2012, with two case audits being completed on a bi-monthly basis. This has been a very positive process for the Board, bringing together a variety of agencies (Children's Social Care, Police, Health and Education) from different parts of the county. It has helped tackle the challenges of the size and variety of Essex as well as providing a much more robust approach to quality assuring safeguarding across the county.

Key themes for the audits so far have included complex cases for child protection with facets of domestic abuse, mental health, learning disabilities and impact on sibling groups, as well as the capacity to parent and how well agencies work with parents. These have revealed examples of good multi-agency working and a better opportunity for different agencies to understand how each other work and how effective combined outcomes have been in producing positive outcomes for children. Areas identified for improvement include better communications and sharing information between agencies as well as more consistency in raising safeguarding standards.

Domestic Abuse

In an emergency, you should always dial **999**.

The National Domestic Violence 24-hour helpline is run in partnership with Women's Aid and Refuge and provides advice and support: **0808 2000 247**

The Men's Advice Line provides help and support for male victims of domestic violence: **0808 801 0327** (Monday-Friday 10:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 17:00)

For information and advice about domestic abuse and other contact details, please visit the Domestic abuse pages on the ECC website [here](#)

Health

The health sector has undergone major structural changes. At the time of the 2010 Care Quality Commission (CQC) review there were five Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in Essex. Since the review, the PCTs have joined together to form a North and South Cluster. The North Cluster is made up of Mid, North East and West PCTs and is aligned to the ESCB. The South Cluster includes two unitary authorities (Southend and Thurrock) so reports into three Safeguarding Boards. Health is also undergoing a major transition as part of the national health reforms with the dissolution of PCTs and the transfer of commissioning duties to a range of successor organisations. This includes the establishment of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) which will take the statutory lead for safeguarding children.

The 2010 CQC review highlighted a number of improvement areas for the health sector, which have been addressed effectively. A need to increase the amount and level of senior leadership around the safeguarding agenda led to a single Chief Executive lead appointed for the overall safeguarding agenda in Essex, while each PCT cluster board also identified

a Director and Non Executive Director lead for safeguarding. Issues with inconsistent practice and processes led to the boards of all five PCTs approving the establishment of the Safeguarding Children Clinical Network (SCCN), which has been instrumental in addressing other recommendations, such as filling gaps in capacity around designated and named professionals, increasing numbers of health visitors and school nurses, and increasing the number of staff who have completed level 3 training.

The most significant service issue identified in the review was around the expert paediatric input into the Sexual Assault and Referral Centre (SARC). This proved one of the most difficult recommendations for the health system to address with initial reluctance from some paediatricians to provide this support. The Network has again proved instrumental in addressing this recommendation and has provided support and training to paediatricians to increase their confidence in providing this service. All areas are now actively supporting the SARC rota so that there is full paediatric input into the SARC facility.

The Health Network has functioned as a forum where the many Health agencies across Essex could receive feedback on ESCB work as well as coming together to initiate work in response to national changes to healthcare provision. The Network has provided other agencies with a forum for consultation on changes, such as the review of the Threshold document, and sharing progress on safeguarding reviews, helping to agree a unified approach. The Network also reviewed and revised policies including Drug & Alcohol Misuse on Pregnancy; Pre-birth Assessment Guidance and those concerning Asylum-seeking Children.

Concerned about someone who works with children or young people?

If you have reason to believe that a member of staff has or may have behaved in a way that has harmed a child, you should report this to your line manager as soon as possible and contact the Children's Safeguarding Service within one day of the allegation coming to your attention.

To report an allegation, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Safeguarding Service: **01245 436 744**.

Child Death Review and Rapid Response

Recent local and national learning about the risk of accidental asphyxiation by blind cords prompted an exercise to disseminate materials via the Children's Centres, including a large number of blind cord safety packs from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Materials have also been distributed through Children's Centres regarding safe sleeping advice, while an Accident Prevention workshop was delivered with the assistance of the Child Accident Prevention Trust.

The process for reviewing neonatal deaths has been streamlined, resulting in a reduction in the number of local panel meetings and providing greater opportunities for the local panel to focus on deaths where there is the potential for identifying, learning and formulating appropriate recommendations.

An excellent relationship has been developed with the Essex Casualty Reduction Board and the Essex Police Serious Collision Unit. The work has strengthened the identification of learning and themes from the deaths of children as a result of road traffic accidents.

Two examples are provided below:

Case One

A 10 month old infant was a passenger in a car travelling on a local dual carriageway, which is understood to have collided with a stationary lorry in a lay-by at a moderate speed. An investigation into the case found that the child's seat was being used in a forward-facing position but should have been rear-facing. The seat had been sold at a car boot sale without instructions (which should be stored in the seat), while a sticker illustrating the seat being rear-facing did not contain a warning not to be used facing forward. Clear recommendations have been made about how instructions for car seats should be supplied, illustrated and transferred to a new user.

Case Two

A 16 year old pedestrian was struck by a car that had mounted the pavement, resulting in the death of both the girl and the elderly driver of the car. The driver had been interviewed by the police three days before the collision about an episode of erratic driving and failed an eyesight test at 20.5 meters. However, although the police had notified the DVLA of their concerns, the driver refused to voluntarily surrender his licence and the police did not have the power to take it away. The investigation into this case is being used to inform legislative and policy changes required to allow the police to take earlier action when they have concerns about the competency or capability of a driver.

Summary of Child Death Review Activity 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2012

The table below sets out the data available (including Southend and Thurrock):

Child Death Review Activity	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Child death notification received	118	122	120	112
Notifications for non Essex resident child deaths	10	6	5	1
Rapid responses	5	16	35	18
Child Death Review Findings	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Cases adopted as an SCR	0	3	0	2
Deaths due to external causes	9	11	7	6
Deaths classified as preventable	1	2	29*	21
Deaths classified as potentially preventable	8	18	0	0
Child deaths classified as not preventable*	64	80	95	64

* Change due to reclassification in definition

N.B. Death review findings specify deaths reviewed at panel meetings rather than death notifications – findings may not be presented against the year in which the death occurred.

Child Safety

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSID) is the UK's leading cot death charity working to prevent sudden deaths and promote health. Information is available on their website (<http://fsid.org.uk/>) while a helpline is available 10am-6pm Monday to Friday and 6pm-10pm weekends and bank holidays: **0808 802 6868**

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) promote safety and the prevention of accidents at work, at leisure, on the road, in the home and through safety education. Their website has useful advice relating to child safety, including road and leisure safety: <http://www.rosipa.com/>

Joint Adults & Childrens Groups

It is important that there is good agency liaison when providing support to vulnerable people whether they are adults or young people. Over the course of the year, there has been some effective work developed with the Essex Safeguarding Adult Board, which has included:

Honour Based Abuse (HBA) including forced marriage and female genital mutilation

In response to feedback following events held by the Essex Domestic Abuse Strategy Group, a joint working group was established for the Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards in Southend, Essex and Thurrock. The group meets bi-monthly and has developed an action plan to develop HBA guidance and policy templates, training opportunities and raising awareness of HBA.

Housing Providers Safeguarding Leads

This group was established following feedback from an ESAB housing provider conference to enable the leads to discuss safeguarding issues with the Children and Adult Boards. The group aims to give safeguarding leads within housing organisations an opportunity to share good practice, discuss current issues and a key outcome for this group in its first year is the development of an ESCB and ESAB combined safeguarding audit tool that many housing providers have voluntarily agreed to complete. The audit will be undertaken in summer 2012.

District and Borough Safeguarding Leads Meeting

Following the countywide Section 11 audits for both children and adults, one very positive outcome was the establishment of a new group for safeguarding lead officers from district and borough councils. The group is joint ESCB and ESAB and has been supporting local authorities to develop safeguarding training packages, identify gaps in provisions and share best practice.

Stay Safe Groups

Each quadrant has a Stay Safe group, consisting of operational and strategic managers from core partner agencies, which focus on the arrangements and quality of multi-agency working within local areas. These groups focus on thresholds for service delivery, the principles of sound multi-agency safeguarding practice, training programmes, an overview of performance indicators within each quadrant and the resolution of local differences.

The Stay Safe groups helped to promote awareness of safeguarding issues throughout the county, improving multi-agency knowledge, contacts and skills. Stakeholder events across Essex shared learning and recommendations from serious case reviews, as well as specific issues such as private fostering and missing children.

Examples of work undertaken by Stay Safe groups include establishing task and finish domestic abuse groups, where a mapping exercise identified gaps in provision and used collaborative work to improve member understanding of the services and opportunities available to support families who have experienced domestic abuse. Similarly, the ECC Homeless Response Team developed links with district housing staff and started working from district and borough council offices, this has added a better understanding of agencies and their roles and joint working across agencies for homeless young people.

Much work was also done to promote multi-agency training. Across Essex, 2674 practitioners completed the online safeguarding training, while 561 completed the domestic abuse online training.

715 attended group 3 multi-agency safeguarding face to face training delivered by Catch 22. 80% of participants on the face to face training report their confidence in raising concerns about children and young people has increased and 100% said their ability to understand presenting symptoms and signs has increased. Multi Agency Allocation Groups Awareness sessions have been provided to support practitioner understanding of the process and referral routes, these have been targeted at those submitting few Common Assessment forms. The sessions have been accessed by 70 professionals from Mid Essex.

Serious Case Reviews

Sadly the Board found it necessary to commission two Serious Case Reviews in circumstances where one child was seriously harmed and another lost her life. These reviews will be completed and published later in 2012.

An SCR commenced at the end of March 2011 was completed this year, with four briefing sessions being delivered to 139 practitioners to ensure learning from the case was shared. This was in addition to single agency dissemination events.

However the Board did take steps to ensure improvements to practice arising from recent serious case reviews completed both regionally and nationally and illustrations include;

- Revised guidance for pre-birth assessment
- Making arrangements to ensure greater awareness of parenting capacity
- Creating better understanding of the mental health needs of some young people
- Ensuring commissioners are able to access high quality and stable placements for young people when needed

The Board has also been following the progress of the 'Munro Review' very closely and intends to amend the arrangements for future commissioning of reviews into significant cases in line with revised guidance which is expected from Government during 2012.

Concerned about a child or vulnerable adult?

If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult then you have a responsibility to report your concerns at the first opportunity to Essex Social Care Direct:

- Working hours (9am-5.30pm Monday to Thursday, 9am-4.30pm Friday)
0845 603 7634
- Out of hours (24 hour protection line)
0845 606 1212

If a child or vulnerable adult is suffering immediate harm or abuse which is endangering their life then you should call **999** in the first instance.

Children can contact ChildLine to speak to someone about concerns they may have by calling the helpline **0800 1111** or find more information and contact details on the website: <http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

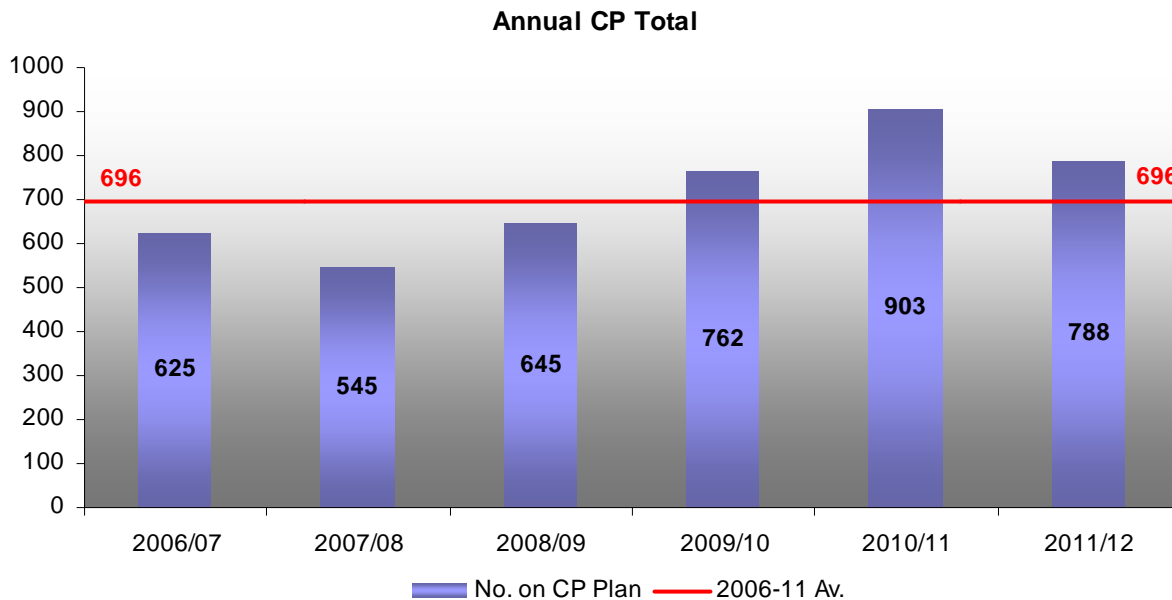
The NSPCC provides advice and support to adults concerned about the safety or welfare of a child. There is a 24-hour helpline: **0808 800 5000** and information on the website [here](#)

If you want information or advice about the abuse and safety of vulnerable adults, call the AskSAL helpline: **08452 66 66 63**

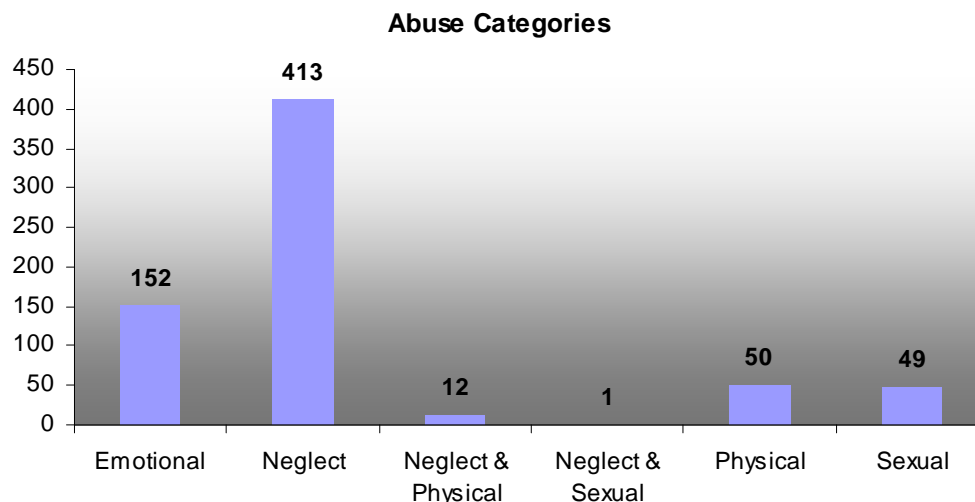
Child Protection Plans

When a child is considered to be at risk of abuse they are made the subject of a child protection plan, whereby a series of actions are agreed between a child's parents and key agencies to ensure that the child is kept safe, their welfare is promoted and their quality of life is improved so that they no longer need to remain subject to a plan.

The number of children on a Child Protection plan fell by 115 in the last year, following three successive years in which the number had risen by at least 100 children per year.



By far the most common abuse category for children on plans was Neglect, with a significant proportion also being for Emotional abuse. Physical and Sexual abuse were at very similar levels, while there were also a small number of combined abuse types.



2012/13 Priorities

In the coming year, the Board will build on its new governance structure to ensure that it provides a more effective challenge to safeguarding provisions across the county and from all agencies. The agreed priorities for 2012/3 are to:

- Develop and manage an effective multi-agency performance framework, maintaining a comprehensive audit and quality assurance programme
- Support a competent and skilled workforce with a comprehensive audit of Chapter 4 responsibilities and the development of a multi-agency training programme
- Continue to develop the approach to reviewing practice in relation to findings from Serious Case Reviews (locally and nationally)
- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy with careful use of social media, including an upgrade of our website and improved communications with partners and practitioners
- Ensure learning and improvement in practice around key issues such as child sexual exploitation and missing children
- Continued multi-agency co-operation is needed to provide a robust and proportionate response to Domestic Abuse and to develop a local Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Review the arrangements for the operation of the Child Death Overview Panel.

Sexual Exploitation

If you are concerned that a child may be, or has been, sexually exploited you have a responsibility to report your concerns at the first opportunity to Essex Social Care Direct:

- Working hours (9am-5.30pm Monday to Thursday, 9am-4.30pm Friday)
0845 603 7634

- Out of hours (24 hour protection line)
0845 606 1212

If a child is suffering immediate harm or abuse then call **999** in the first instance.

Appendix 1: Board Attendance

June to December 2011

There were three regular meetings and one special meeting in October. The table shows the number of representatives per agency and the attendance where agencies were represented in each meeting by at least one person. Professional Advisers (Health) had one vacancy in June, while Schools had one vacancy for all meetings.

Agency	Reps	Represented
Health	6	100%
Professional Advisers (Health)	2	100%
LMC	1	25%
Schools, Children & Families	4	100%
Adults, Health & Community Wellbeing	1	75%
Youth Offending Service	1	50%
Police	2	75%
Probation	2	100%
Schools	3	75%
NSPCC	1	100%
District Councils	2	100%
Military Corrective Training Centre	1	75%
CAFCASS	1	25%
Crown Prosecution Service	1	0%
Fire Service	1	75%
Drug & Alcohol Action Team	1	25%
Voluntary/Community Sector	1	75%
UK Border Agency	1	0%

March 2012

March saw the first meeting under the new structure. The table shows only the attendance of full members as associate members are not required to attend every meeting.

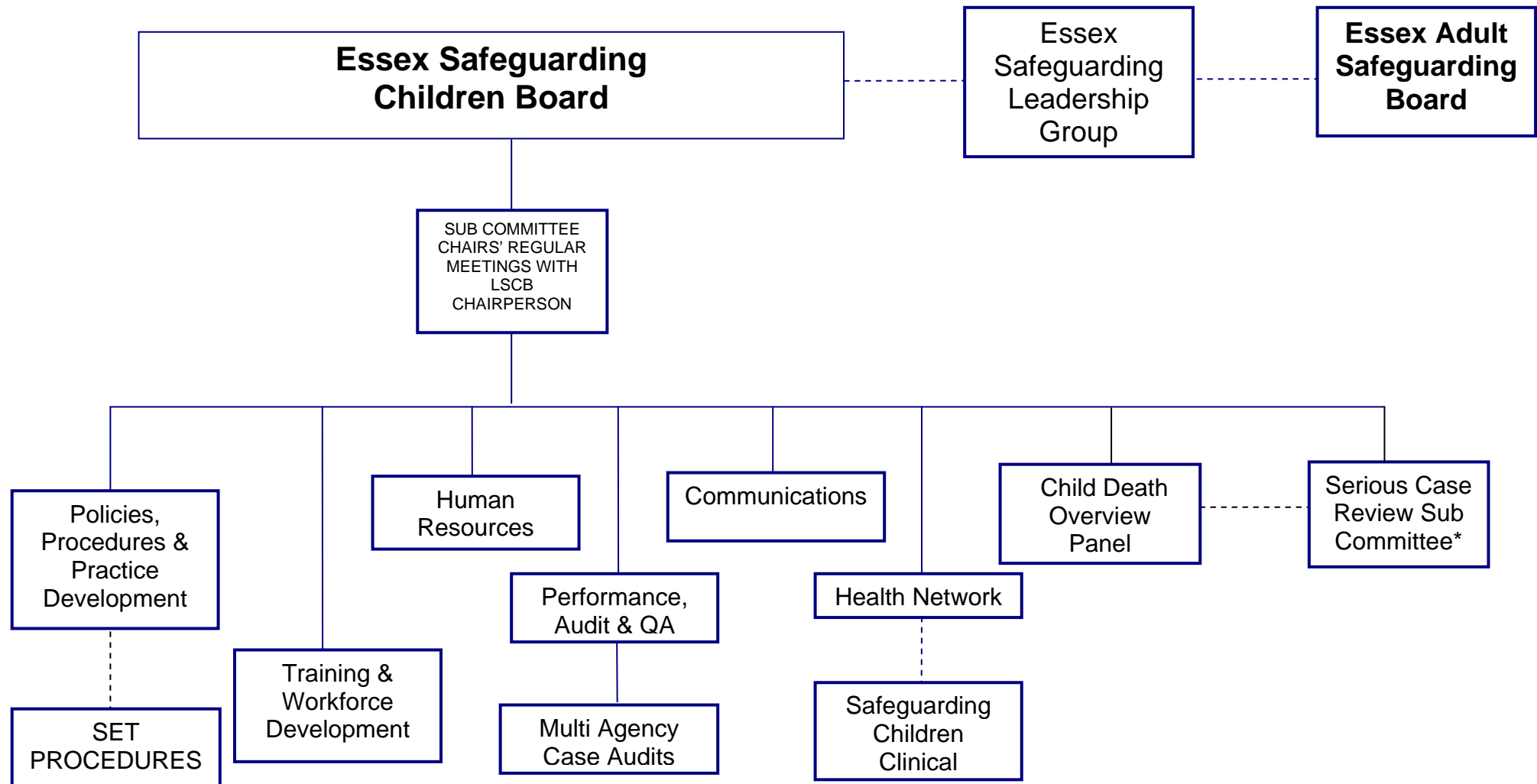
Agency	Reps	Attended
Health	2	1
Schools, Children & Families	1	1
Adults, Health & Community Wellbeing	1	0
Youth Offending Service	1	0
Police	1	1
Probation	1	1
Schools	2	0
District Councils	1	0
Military Corrective Training Centre	1	1
Voluntary/Community Sector	1	1
Lay Members	2	2

Appendix 2: 2011/12 Budget

Income	(£)
SCF	132,853
Health	66,426
Police	66,426
Probation	10,164
District Councils	14,520
CAFCASS	550
Total Contributions	290,939
Training Income	48,720
Contribution to CDR costs 11/12 (Thurrock LSCB)	4,275
Contribution to CDR costs 10/11 (Southend & Thurrock)	6,626
Total Income	350,560

Expenditure	(£)
Staffing & Admin	215,058
Policy & Procedure	0
Communications	4,208
Ensuring Effectiveness	7,191
Training	34,450
Serious Case Reviews	33,417
Development of ESCB Members	2,035
Reserve	54,201
Total Expenditure	350,560

Appendix 3: ESCB Structure Chart (May 2012)



*This is a standing sub committee to ensure the ESCB is best prepared to respond to referrals under Chapter 8, provide advice to the ESCB Chairperson on whether the criteria for conducting a serious case review have been met, and to oversee and quality assure all serious case reviews undertaken by the ESCB. It is distinct from a Serious Case Review Panel which is commissioned by the SCR Sub Committee to manage the process when a decision has been made to undertake a SCR.

If you have any queries in respect of this Annual Report or would like further information about the Essex Safeguarding Children Board please contact:

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