



Essex County Council

## People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

09:30	Thursday, 14 March 2024	Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
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**For information about the meeting please ask for:**

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3	<b>Questions from the Public</b> A period of up to 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any item on the agenda for this meeting.  Please note that members of the public wishing to ask a question must email <a href="mailto:democratic.services@essex.gov.uk">democratic.services@essex.gov.uk</a> by noon on Wednesday 13 March and that questions must relate to an item on the agenda for the meeting.	
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9	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b> To note that the next meeting will be held on Thursday 11 April 2024, in Committee Room 1, County Hall.	
10	<b>Urgent Business</b> To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.	

### **Exempt Items**

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

**That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.**

11	<b>Urgent Exempt Business</b> To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.	
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## Agenda item 1

**Committee:** People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

**Enquiries to:** Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer

### **Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

#### **Recommendations:**

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Cllr Ray Gooding	Chairman
Cllr Marie Goldman	
Cllr Ian Grundy	
Cllr Carlo Guglielmi	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Eddie Johnson	
Cllr Daniel Land	
Cllr Sue Lissimore	
Cllr June Lumley	
Cllr Peter May	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Aidan McGurran	
Cllr Mark Platt	
Cllr Mick Skeels	
Cllr Wendy Stamp	
Cllr Mike Steel	

Co-opted educational representative members may advise and vote on all matters relating to children's services in schools. Two places are available for church Diocesan representatives. Two further places are available for parent governors at maintained schools in Essex (one primary and one secondary school). All places are vacant but a new nomination for a church Diocesan representative has now been received.

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**Minutes of the meeting of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held at 9.30am on Wednesday, 14 February 2024 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford.**

**Present:**

Cllr Ray Gooding (Chairman)  
Cllr Marie Goldman  
Cllr Carlo Guglielmi (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Eddie Johnson  
Cllr Daniel Land  
Cllr Sue Lissimore  
Cllr Peter May (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Ross Playle (left the meeting during item 5 at 12.22pm)  
Cllr Lee Scordis (substitute)  
Cllr Michael Skeels  
Cllr Mike Steel

**In virtual attendance via Zoom:**

Cllr June Lumley  
Cllr Wendy Stamp

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Gemma Bint, Democratic Services Officer and Sharon Westfield de Cortez were also present throughout the meeting.

**1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

The report on Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations was received and noted.

Apologies had been received from Cllr Ian Grundy, Cllr Aidan McGurran for whom Cllr Lee Scordis was substituting, and Cllr Wendy Stamp and Cllr June Lumley who both joined via Zoom instead.

**2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**3 Questions from the public**

There were questions from two members of the public relating to agenda item 4. The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, to defer public questions received until later in the meeting and that they were asked and recorded in the minutes as part of agenda item 4.

**4 SEND Sufficiency Briefing**

The Committee considered report PAF/05/24. The following attended the meeting to introduce the item and respond to questions:

- Cllr Andrew Sheldon - Deputy Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability
- Clare Kershaw - Director, Education
- Ralph Holloway – Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation.

As part of introducing the update, the following was highlighted:

- The number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) had significantly increased.
- There had also been growth in the special school population with the rate of growth larger in certain parts of Essex than others. The increase in the number of young people in special schools in Mid Essex had been a 32% increase while in North-East Essex there had been a 91% increase.
- Set out in the SEND Sufficiency plan were four intentions to address the challenges being faced, these were represented in a form of a pyramid. The four intentions were outlined:
  - 1 – Ensure Inclusive Mainstream Provision
  - 2 – Enhance the Mainstream Offer for Children and Young People with EHCPs
  - 3 – Review and Redesign the Enhanced Provision Model in Essex
  - 4 – Enhance Special School Capacity Appropriately
- Enablers to achieve the intentions were highlighted.

The following questions from two members of the public were asked on their behalf at the end of the introductory presentation:

First Public Question: Deborah Nye

Q1 - Page 3 of the paper, step 1 and 2, refer to more inclusive mainstream provision. How will this be implemented in the real world when the attitude of some schools is often just as much of a barrier to SEND provision as funding? When SEN parents challenge the LA on this topic they have been told the LA cannot compel any school to do anything and there appears no robust checks and balances in place that are being used effectively by the LA to guarantee legal and statutory duties are being discharged correctly by schools regarding SEND provision and EHCPs. How will the LA improve this issue?

Q2 - Page 3 point 2 - many mainstream schools turn away parents from visiting a school if their child has an EHCP. Then if the school allow a visit they explain they will be contesting the placement and its rare the child is welcomed. Meanwhile specialist provisions heavily restrict visitors to their schools too. How can parents access placements with this kind of reception from the provisions themselves?

What are the LA doing to ensure specialist and mainstream placements allow more timely access for parental visits and less refusals at consultation? In this answer, please provide the numbers of refused consultations per year for the last 5 years in mainstream and specialist placements.

Q3 - Financial landscape - page 4 - this omits reviewing current expenditure and if it's necessary. For instance, some cases request their own medical experts to review a child when the child has already been reviewed privately, and more in depth. This is surely a waste of taxpayer's money. Medical professionals doubling up on reports is a waste of money. Will this be reviewed and stopped?

Second Public Question: Catherine Pope

My understanding of this paper is that it appears to set out how the council intend to ensure there is sufficient provision in both mainstream and specialist schools for children and young people with SEND in Essex. Also within this same paper it is reported that there is a strain on SEND funding and mentions exploring where savings can be made against current spend. Therefore it is highly relevant I ask how much money has been spent yearly for the last five years by ECC on Judicial Review cases brought by families against the council (and council-maintained schools) regarding SEND education issues? In answering this I would like the total cost and a breakdown of the total cost to include (amongst other costs) ELS's costs, barrister costs and costs awarded to families or made to families by the council. Also costs incurred by the LA defending LA-maintained provisions. This question should also be applied to Tribunals similarly.

My second question is that within this same paper I can't identify how or to what extent parent/carer's voices of SEND children and young people have played an active part in the formation of this plan as it stands currently. Or how it addresses the current failures in SEND provision at ECC highlighted by Ofsted and reported to ECC by SEND parent/carers and their advocates such as solicitors or advocate groups. Then also why the compilation of this plan and all ECC's SEND plans are not advertised directly to SEND parents (eg via a letter to schools) as many parents are not represented by advocates and remain unaware of such plans or that they have a chance to ask a question.

Following the presentation and in response to the Public Questions, the following was highlighted, raised and/or noted:

- (i) The levels of Inclusivity in schools varied across Essex. ECC were working positively with schools to further improve this and the most inclusive schools were key partners in this for peer to peer support. The mainstream sector would struggle if inclusivity was not comprehensive across the sector.
- (ii) There was positive engagement from schools particularly in response to the Inclusion Framework and Inclusion Reviews. ECC was looking to increase the number of Inclusion Reviews undertaken each week.

Positive and constructive feedback had also been received from schools on the Sufficiency Plan.

- (iii) If schools were directed to admit then they would be expected to do their best to meet that young person's needs. This was a challenge but it was one ECC would work within the system to help address.
- (iv) The named Inclusion Partner could draw on resources either within the quadrant team or reach out into SEND Strategy and Innovation to help schools provide the SEND support. Schools were encouraged to involve their Inclusion Partner at the earliest opportunity to see what support was available to help with SEND provision.
- (v) It was suggested that special schools may refuse parental visits due to capacity concerns. Mainstream schools refusing parental visits was likely to be because the school did not feel they could meet the young person's need.
- (vi) It was noted that there was no data on the number of refused consultations in mainstream and specialist placements due to the large number of schools that were consulted each year at once. A record was kept of what school was named on the EHCP that agreed to admit the child.
- (vii) The local authority could not direct a parent towards a particular mainstream school and could not suggest that one mainstream school was better at meeting need than another. There was also limited capacity to have individual conversations. If a young person's statutory assessment said they were appropriate for mainstream education, then they should be appropriate for any mainstream school in Essex. If a young person needed enhanced provision that would be a different conversation to understand what was available locally.
- (viii) If a school was reluctant to accept a child with SEND they would need to demonstrate that it was inefficient use of resources. If the child had been assessed as mainstream, it would be unlikely that a mainstream school was going to meet the threshold to say they could not admit that young person. If the school cannot meet the threshold then they were expected to accept the child.
- (ix) ECC would accept an Independent Educational Psychologist report to help complete a needs assessment. This did not necessarily mean that every recommendation that an Independent Educational Psychologist made would be accepted.
- (x) The SEND budget was not spent on defending cases at Tribunals or defending judicial reviews. There had only been two cases that proceeded to Judicial review in the last five years, one ECC conceded costs and the other the cost were made against the family. A case could not go to Judicial review if the decision could be settled through a



Tribunal. The national Tribunal system was overloaded which meant delays and placed additional strain on parents.

- (xi) A Member reported that data released by the Ministry of Justice showed that Essex was the fifth worst county in terms of percentages for numbers of SEND and EHCP appeals going to Tribunal. Lack of special school provision, and parents wanting a place at a particular school were common reasons for appeal. 3.8% of all decisions made on SEND support were then appealed by parents in Essex.
- (xii) Some members highlighted their concern that nationally 98% of appeals were lost by local authorities and won by parents and wished to understand more as to why this was the case.
- (xiii) A tribunal judge made a decision on the basis of the needs of the particular child named in the appeal and not significantly consider local capacity issues.
- (xiv) An Ofsted revisit of SEND services took place in 2022 and ECC had made significant progress against the previously identified areas of weakness.
- (xv) Engagement with parents was primarily through the Parent/Carer Forum and the Essex Family Forum and other parent support groups.
- (xvi) The Parent/Carer group extended their reach through Family Champions, and utilised the voice of different support groups across Essex. The Group were always looking to expand how they reached hard-to-reach parents.
- (xvii) One of the biggest improvements since the SEND inspection in 2019 had been increased health input to the EHCP process. There were significant challenges around recruitment in Essex for Educational Psychologists and there was currently a business case being processed for additional capacity.
- (xviii) Inclusion reviews were launched in September and looked at the culture of inclusion and vulnerable groups in that school. A SEND child should have equal access to all the opportunities any other child had in that school and adjustments should be made to enable them to have those same opportunities. A zero-tolerance approach to bullying was taken
- (xix) Members encouraged work that further developed support for those leaving school settings. A targeted employment team worked with businesses to develop new employment opportunities for young people with SEND.
- (xx) Members encouraged consideration of any appropriate vacant sites for change of use to help increase capacity and support services. Some examples of where this was already happening were given including a

special school taking on a shop front in a local area and developing provision to prepare for adulthood and some Adult Community Learning sites.

- (xxi) One effective way to engage with harder to reach schools had seemed to be via successful conference held last year in Chelmsford focusing on neurodiversity in schools and members encouraged consideration of holding further similar events.
- (xxii) The high ambition in the Sustainability Plan was ensuring that more pupils were supported within the mainstream sector and giving parents the confidence that needs could be met in mainstream. It was noted that assessing provision for SEND children was part of an OFSTED school inspection process.
- (xxiii) It was reported that further work was being undertaken on developing the banding matrix, which determined the level of need and funding for each child being funded. Some mainstream schools considered that there should be one to one support for all children with SEND and there was not enough funding in the system to do that.
- (xxiv) Members encouraged demonstrating more outcomes within the Sustainability Plan citing the Market Fields a barista van, selling coffees around the community as an example.

### Conclusion

It was agreed to provide further information on:

- (i) work being done within the Education and Skills portfolio in terms of skills training and support that made it as easy as possible for those people who wanted to qualify to become Educational Psychologists.
- (ii) What is being done to further improve the communication between ECC and schools and parents.  
and
- (iii) A full breakdown response to Catherine Pope's first question to be provided.

[Clerks note: responses to some of the detailed data requests within the Public Questions were being prepared under the Freedom of Information process and would be sent direct to the questioners]

## **5 Essex Youth Service – follow up**

The Committee considered report PAF/06/24. The following attended the meeting to introduce the item and respond to questions:

- Cllr Mark Durham - Cabinet Member for The Arts, Heritage and Culture
- Julie Auger – Youth Services Manager
- Hannah Thurston – Business Development Manager

As part of introducing the update, the following was highlighted:

- How closer links were being built between Councillors and young people was outlined.
- The Violence and Vulnerability unit had funded the Youth Worker in Hospital pilot project and this would now be expanded.
- The measures put in place for hard-to-reach individuals was outlined, with examples highlighted such as The I CAN Project for young people experiencing social isolation, and Sisters in Strength, a healthy relationships mentoring programme.

Funding was often fixed or short term meaning uncertainty about planning long-term provision. Mapping the data on a district basis was also currently a challenge and had historically been mapped by service but this continued to be further developed.

- Currently the voluntary sector had over 200 partnership provisions across Essex, not including the scouts/guides, but this needed to be more fully understood and mapped.
- The DCMS revised statutory guidance was being used for youth work as a template to further develop the structure of youth services.

Following the presentation, the following was highlighted, raised and/or noted:

- (i) One of the main concerns expressed by young people was the underage supply of vaping and vaping in schools. This highlighted that their needs and concerns often changed year by year. Training for staff was being arranged in conjunction with Public Health on how to work with and support young people.
- (ii) Members welcomed the suggestion that Essex Youth Assembly members link up with their respective matching Divisional Councillor and suggested that they contacted Councillors directly.
- (iii) Members welcomed the opportunity to establish district focussed youth forums if there was support for them locally
- (iv) External funding and grants were also available although often with conditions including fixed time periods for funding to be allocated and/or spent.
- (v) Members questioned whether further flexibility could be built into the eligibility and timescales for funding under the Members Locality Fund and Community Fund.

- (vi) The Scouts, Guides, Sports Associations and other organisations were part of the local youth services offer. As they were all independent groups with majority of them volunteering there was no legal requirement for them to provide information to the Essex Youth Service.
- (vii) A Member raised their concern on whether some areas of high deprivation in the Colchester area were getting enough support from youth services. It was suggested the Member met with the local team to talk through concerns raised and discuss provision in the area.
- (viii) A virtual youth club had been launched and this was welcomed by members.

### Conclusion:

It was agreed:

- (i) To suggest to Young Essex Assembly representatives that they could write to their local Councillors and invite them to YEA events with an appropriate rota to be put in place to control numbers.
- (ii) To provide data on the Youth Worker in Hospital A&E pilot along with some anonymised case studies demonstrating impact.
- (iii) To provide some feedback on the recent Youth Takeover Day.
- (iv) The recent Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee agenda papers updating on the Community Fund and Levelling Up Fund would be circulated to Members.

## **6 Work Programme**

The Committee considered and discussed report PAF/07/24 comprising the work programme for the Committee.

Members discussed further possible work on SEND, which might include looking at parental appeals and tribunals, and delivery of Education Health and Care Plans and whether the needs were being met and delivered as specified in the EHCPs. Members expressed that it may also be helpful to hear directly from parents. Further consideration would be given to establishing a Task and Finish Group. There was a further session on SEND at the next meeting which may answer some of the outstanding questions.

A presentation on the virtual school had been well received in another forum and it was suggested that the same briefing be arranged for the Committee.

## **7 Matters Arising**

The Committee considered and noted report PAF/08/24 comprising outstanding matters arising from previous meetings.

**8 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 14 March 2024.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.58pm.

**Chairman**

<b>Report title:</b> SEND Update Part 2: Next steps, improvement work underway and progress since regulatory inspections	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Cllr Tony Ball – Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability	
<b>Date:</b> 14 March 2024	<b>For:</b> Information and Discussion
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Ralph Holloway - Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation <a href="mailto:ralph.holloway@essex.gov.uk">ralph.holloway@essex.gov.uk</a>	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The report (Appendix 1) covers an update on the next steps, improvement work that is underway, as well as progress since the regulatory inspections.

## **2 Action required**

- 2.1 To consider the SEND Update 2 report (Appendix 1).

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 Following the February item engaging on the SEND Sufficiency Plan, this paper provides an update on progress and improvement work since the Local area SEN inspection in October 2019, and the SEN revisit in May 2022, as well as next steps.

## **4. Update**

See Appendix 1 for update paper.

## **5. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - SEND Update Part 2: Next steps, improvement work underway and progress since regulatory inspections.

# People and Families Scrutiny Committee

## SEND Update Part 2: Next steps, improvement work underway and progress since regulatory inspections

Cllr Tony Ball  
Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong  
Learning and Employability



## A quick recap

- Local area SEN inspection in October 2019 – three areas of significant weakness (joint commissioning; over-identification of moderate learning difficulties; quality of education health care plans);
- Local area required to produce a joint written statement of action;
- SEN revisit in May 2022 – sufficient progress against all three areas;
- ECC's new SEN structure operational January 2020 (just in time for Covid);
- SEN Strategy launched Autumn 2022;
- Inclusion strategy launched Autumn 2023;
- SEND Sufficiency Plan – engagement Spring 2024



# National context

- Local area inspections under the new framework;
- High Needs Block accumulated deficit amounting to tens of millions of £££ in numerous LAs;
- Safety valve and delivering better value;
- Continued rise in the number of requests for assessment and new Education Health Care Plans;
- DfE improvement plan;
- ISOS LGA work on sustainable SEN systems.

# LGA on SEND (Isos partnership)

- Reform of SEND policy / arrangements (and other policies / arrangements that relate to young people with SEND) is essential ... SEND arrangements are not working – the SEND reforms have not delivered better outcomes, a less adversarial system, financial sustainability. Strong view that the system is incentivising the wrong outcomes – should focus on inclusion, preparing for adulthood.
- ... and urgent. The issues within the SEND system are unavoidable (choice of when, not if, reform is needed) and existential (costs and cumulative deficit continues to rise; risk of increasing numbers of councils becoming insolvent if issues not addressed.)
- The root causes are systemic in nature – national reform is required. Must acknowledge poor practice (of which there are many examples). Equally, avoid blaming individual actors – local government, schools, health service, parents. All reacting to a system that incentivises the wrong things. Addressing these requires fundamental national reforms that foster partnership between professionals and families.

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What  
difference  
are we  
making?

IMPACT

IMPACT

IMPACT

We know that too many children, young people and their families are yet to feel the benefit of the improvement work that we are undertaking across the local area. Until this changes, we know that some children, young people and their families will not receive the level of service we would expect to deliver for them.

Four yellow curved lines are located in the bottom right corner of the slide, arranged in a slightly curved pattern.

## Our partners in the SEND local area

- **Health transformation** from five Clinical Commissioning Groups to three Integrated Care Systems with additional resources jointly funded to support coordination and delivery of the SEND agenda with a nominated CCG lead.
- We share our health partners with other local areas which makes prioritization more difficult (MSE – Southend and Thurrock; SNEE – Suffolk; HWE – Hertfordshire).
- The financial commitment from health partners has become ever more challenging with some in ‘triple lock’ which fetters their ability to contribute to the improvement programme.
- However, their commitment as strategic partners leading improvements in diagnostic timescales (ADHD and ASC) and therapies (OT, PT and SALT) remains strong.

# Our partners in the local area – schools and settings

- There are over 550 schools in Essex; over 1700 pre-school settings and 8 FE colleges;
- We know that a lot of parents and families report variable experiences for children and young people with SEN; however, 91.8% of schools inspected by Ofsted are rated good or outstanding and SEN is very often referred to positively in reports:
- *Southview School is a thriving, joyous place to learn. Pupils are inspirational, happy and delightful to speak with.*
- *Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all aspects of learning. Staff make skilful adaptations to the curriculum that help all pupils to succeed. Leaders identify pupils with SEND early and work with parents to ensure success.*
- *Teachers skilfully adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND so that they become increasingly confident and knowledgeable.*

# Governance

- **SEND Improvement Board** established (2019) by health, social care, education, public health, the Essex Family Forum and key providers. This led development of the **Joint Written Statement of Action** and establishment of the **SEND improvement programme**.
- JWSOA agreed as **fit for purpose** in April 2020 and by this time the improvement workstreams were established with agreed scopes, plans and representation in place.
- SEND was made a **key priority** of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (2020).
- Wider SEND Governance landscape including operational oversight reviewed and resulted in:
  - The SEND Improvement Board and SEND Strategic Governance Group combining, under new Terms of Reference as the **SEND Partnership Board** to oversee all SEND improvement and business as usual activity re SEND
  - SEND Partnership Board reports into Health & Wellbeing Board and Children and Young People's Partnership Board
  - Health sub-group was created with a specific remit to bring together health partners across Essex on health specific SEND matters
  - SEND Quadrant Joint Working Groups were reviewed and terms of reference strengthened
- The **Essex Family Forum** are represented at all levels of the governance structure
- Regular updates provided to **Scrutiny committees**

# Financial sustainability – and why it is important

- In 2018/19 the High Needs Block was in a deficit position with a projected forecast accumulative deficit of £40 million;
- This necessitated a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block which affects all schools and all children who attend them (including those with SEN);
- Special school banding was set at a default level depending upon the type of school;
- The HNB is now in an accumulative surplus which has enabled us to unfreeze special school top up, make no further transfers from the Schools Block and invest in SEN – early intervention, outreach and the workforce.
- Other large shire authorities (Devon, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk etc) have enormous accumulative deficits which puts them into a position where cuts to services are inevitable.
- Essex has exercised careful financial management which protects services and ensures we make decisions about spending locally.

# **Working and Innovating as a System**



# Local Area SEND Strategy

Equity, inclusion, ambition

Ordinarily Available  
Universal

TPP

Inclusion  
Framework

Local  
Offer

Overarching strategic vision, commitments and outcomes for the SEND system as a whole.

Inclusive ethos, culture and consistent, high quality universal level support. Self-care and self-help.

Inclusion Framework - Level 2/ Triage

Ordinarily Available  
Targeted

Recommended Assessments  
SEMH, SLCN +

Through profiling and recommended assessments, understand barriers and individual's/ cohorts needs. Plan additional targeted support and intervention.

Inclusion Framework - Early intervention

One Planning - SEN Support

Focus on effective reviews

Delivery of creative solutions, early intervention through assess, plan, do review cycle linked with One Planning.

EHCNA

Statutory assessment as appropriate

# SEND data headlines EHCPs

- In 2016 Essex was responsible for 7550 children and young people with an Education Healthcare Plan; in January 2024 the number has risen to 13,228 – a 75% increase.
- In 2015/16 we received 1638 requests for assessment and agreed 58%; in 2022/23 we received 3986 requests for assessment (an increase of 143%) and agreed 56%.
- In 2015/16 56% of requests were from schools and 27% from parents; in 2022/23 68% of requests were from schools and 30% from parents.
- Requests for assessment from 2018/19 (the last full school year before the pandemic) have risen by 69%.

# Supporting Inclusion



## Inclusion Strategy

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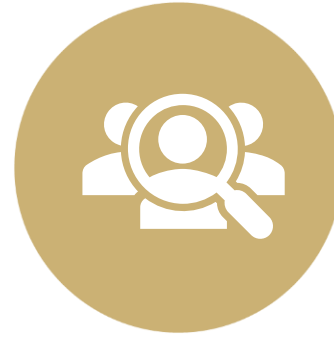
Our vision and commitments, for equity and excellence in education for all children and young people.



## Inclusion Framework

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Enabling early intervention and inclusion in mainstream schools through the principle of Lives without Labels.



## Inclusion Reviews

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Supporting schools to review and reflect on their culture, provision and practices.



## Resources & Learning

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Research visits, gathering and sharing intelligence and best practice, as well as professional learning programmes.

# Position



## Progress

In 2022, overall progress and attainment of Essex pupils was too low.

Spotlight on SEND and disadvantaged pupils.



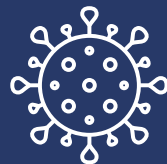
## Attendance and participation

Continued increase in absence, persistent absence, suspensions permanent exclusions and children removed from roll for home education.



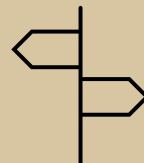
## Wellbeing

Concerns over pupils' social, emotional, and mental health are rising, and becoming increasingly complex.



## Impact of the pandemic

Impact of the pandemic on schools; real term reductions in education funding, recruitment challenges, staffing shortages, and rising pressure on school staff.



## Rising demand and a complex system

Unprecedented demand for mental health, Social Care and SEND services

Most Essex schools are committed to inclusion and success of all pupils, but find the landscape difficult to navigate.

# Vision

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Positive, mutually respectful **relationships** underpin and support the inclusion of all pupils and their families, and promote equality and diversity.

The **wellbeing** of all members of school communities is well-supported.



All pupils enjoy school and have high levels of **attendance**.

All pupils are empowered and eager to **participate** in all aspects of school life.



An equitable, high-quality curriculum supports all pupils to **achieve** well, from their different starting points.

All pupils are well-supported to **move-on** to appropriate next steps.

# Education Health Care Needs Assessments

We fully recognise that the current timescales for completion of assessments fall significantly short of the 20 weeks set out in the SEN Code of Practice and understand the impact that this can have for children and young people being assessed, their families and their educational setting; we take this matter very seriously and improvement is our main priority.

- The recruitment and retention of Educational Psychologists is a major problem for Essex County Council and other LAs. We are working hard to recruit EPs. We are developing our approach to using 'virtual assessments' where appropriate, which is a piece of work that has been led by Essex CC on behalf of the East of England, as well as increasing our associate EP pool, which is our independent EP workforce.
- The number of requests for assessment has risen sharply since the Covid lockdowns ended; we have over 3,500 a year with the largest number being from schools. This has placed additional significant strain upon our SEND teams. In order to ensure that we have sufficient capacity we have recently invested additional funding to expand our teams by 46 FTEs.
- Parents have shared a lack of confidence in the offer from some mainstream schools which is driving both requests for assessment and requests for special school places. With special schools being full or over capacity this provides additional challenges for the SEND teams which must be addressed at the same time as undertaking an increased number of assessments.
- We put into place an extensive improvement plan to improve the quality of assessments and plans which was recognised in May 2022 when Ofsted and CQC revisited Essex and found that this was no longer an area of significant weakness. We make no apologies for continuing to focus on the quality of advice, assessment and the plan but will be working to do this in as timely way as possible.

# **Co-ordination and Oversight Groups (COGs) & Examples**

# Co-ordination and Oversight Groups (COGs)

Delivery of strategy, transformation and continuous improvement under the inclusion umbrella.



\*COG with additional governance/working arrangements



# Quality of EHC Plans COG

Objective: To improve the quality and timeliness of new EHC Plans and the planning process, including quality of requests and advice.

**EHCNA Guidance  
and Quality of  
Requests**

**Decision Making  
Structures, Roles  
and Processes**

**Quality Assurance  
Process/  
Framework  
(new EHCPs)**

**Evidence Writers  
Guidance**

**Learning from the  
QA activity, &  
Exemplar Plans**

**CPD for Plan  
Writers &  
Contributors**

**Way Forward  
Meetings/  
processes**

**Post 16 plans/  
Reassessment**

**Digital  
Opportunities**

**Timeliness**

# Annual Review COG

Objective: To improve the quality and timeliness of the Annual Review process and resulting amended plans.

**Updated process  
for ARs (working  
document)**

**AR Paperwork**

**AR Guidance  
/ bitesize training  
videos**

**Lead SENCOs  
Coaching: Improve  
end to end Annual  
Review cycle**

**Co-ordinating AR  
Info  
(dates) with  
Schools/Health/ SC**

**ARs for EHE  
children and young  
people**

**EOTAS**

**Quality Assurance  
of amended plans**

**Data / Reporting -  
response times and  
amendments**

**Facilitation Skills  
Training**

**Ordinarily Available  
provision in plans**

# Sufficiency & funding COG

*SEND Sufficiency strategy for places, provision, skills etc for the next 5 years. Delivery plan and strategy business case to achieve strategy aims.*

*Main links: SEND Strategy, Workforce development, School place planning, Early Years, Mainstream and Post 16, OA*

SEND  
Sufficiency  
Plan

SEN Top-Up  
Funding  
Framework

HNB Spending  
Plan

Enhanced  
Provisions  
Review

SEND  
Forecasting

Personal  
Budgets

Special School  
Capacity  
Assessments

SEND Capital  
Programme

# SEND headlines - provision

- In 2015 there were 2293 Essex pupils in maintained special schools in the county; in 2023 that figure had risen to 3498 – an increase of 53%.
- Since 2015 four new special schools have opened in Essex (Chatten, Greenwell, Grove House and Hawthorns) with Sir Geoff Hurst in construction, and a consultation open for a new special school in Rayleigh.
- We have invested in expansions and improved facilities at Cedar Hall, Glenwood, Harlow Fields, Kingswode Hoe, Langham Oaks, Lexden Springs, Market Field, Oak View, Ramsden Hall and Southview.
- Development of Market Field Farm – a unique and innovative new provision funded via a developer's enabling contribution.
- New PRU builds in North-East and South with Mid PRU in development (the first time there has been investment in our provision for children and young people who have been excluded or medically unable to attend school).
- Investment in specialist provision in mainstream schools (Grow/SEMH provision, autism support centres, new provision for children with severe learning difficulties).
- An overall capital investment of over £110 million and rising.

# Engagement, advice and support for parents and families

- The newly launched and improved local offer;
- SEND roadshows;
- SEND newsletter;
- Strengthened and expanded SENDIASS.

Visit the [Essex Local Offer](#) website to find out more.

Find out about  
help available  
for children and  
young people  
(aged 0-25).

This is called  
the Local Offer.



# Family Feedback COG

Graffiti Wall  
Feedback Loop

Family Impact  
Survey

Task & Finish  
Group re  
Communications

Ofsted/CQC  
revisit/ inspection  
feedback to  
families

Individual & Team  
feedback

# Preparing for inspection

- The new inspection framework launched in 2023 and Essex could be inspected at any time;
- We are working with health partners and the Essex Family Forum on our self-assessment;
- We have taken part in a 'courageous conversation' (a peer review) to help us understand and mitigate delays in assessments and diagnosis;
- We have held workshops both across the local area and regionally.

# Our priorities

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We have a series of immediate and longer-term initiatives in train to address the challenges of increased volume of need and requests for support, alongside the limited ability to increase capacity in specialist provision:



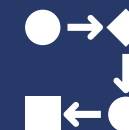
## Increased funding and operational capacity

Investing in increased top-up funding for schools, back-dated support for those assessments that take longer than 20-weeks and permanent additional capacity in the LA SEND operational teams.



## Sufficiency Plan

Over the course of this academic year, we will launch the new SEND Sufficiency Plan, including the review of the Enhanced Provision model in Essex and continue the work on the new SEND Top Up arrangements.



## Continuous Improvement

Pilot a new approach to Annual Reviews; update resources and support around One Planning; and increase the workforce development offer.



**Reference Number: PAF/10/24**

<b>Report title:</b> Current support for victims of domestic abuse and the recommissioning of Services that aim to prevent, reduce and respond to Domestic Abuse	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Clare Burrell, Head of Commissioning Children and Families	
<b>Date:</b> 14 March 2024	<b>For:</b> information and discussion
<b>Enquiries to:</b> <a href="mailto:Clare.burrell@essex.gov.uk">Clare.burrell@essex.gov.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:Gaynor.sproul@essex.gov.uk">Gaynor.sproul@essex.gov.uk</a>	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Countywide	

## 1. Introduction

In October 2022, the Committee was updated on the new duties incumbent on Essex County Council following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act April 2021. These duties being to provide support to victims residing in safe accommodation. Since that time officers have been increasing and enhancing the offer for victims residing in safe accommodation, as well as ensuring maintained focus on early intervention and prevention.

Officers are now planning for the recommissioning of support for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse post 2025, with our partners across Southend and Thurrock Councils and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. This report, and the information appended to this report, set out the progress made since 2021 and the planned intentions for post 2025.

## 2. Action required

**The Committee is asked to consider:**

- (i) The actions the Council has taken to support victims of domestic abuse since the new duties came into force April 2021
- (ii) The plans for the recommissioning of services 2025
- (iii) Identify any follow-up scrutiny actions.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to provide support in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, which includes children and young people. Since 2021 the council has received central government funding to support that work. This in turn has meant that a proportion of the Public Health grant, until 2021 the only source of funding for Domestic Abuse victim support, has been released and enabled us to extend our offer to victims beyond the required duties. It has also enabled a broadening of our early intervention and prevention offer to those at risk of domestic abuse.

- 3.2 The Council also contributes funding to the current support offered to perpetrators of domestic abuse. We, along with our statutory partners, have an ambition to increase our focus on perpetrators to intervene earlier to stop abuse and/or prevent escalation or risk to their victims.
- 3.3 Over the past 12 months partners have been acting on the recommendations from jointly commissioned 2022 research report into domestic abuse in Essex. The purpose of the research was to explore how we can improve the system of support for victims and perpetrators post 2025. As a result there is now a Pan Essex Commissioning Collaborative working together on joint commissioning arrangements.
- 3.4 The intention is to commission:
- a) One central point of contact for victims and perpetrators.
  - b) Support for victims residing in safe accommodation.
  - c) Community based support for victims (including children).
  - d) Early help whole family working (including the perpetrator).
  - e) Community based support for perpetrators.

Expected attendees to support the discussion:

Clare Burrell, Head of Commissioning for Children and Families  
Gaynor Sproul, Commissioning Manager Children and Families  
Chris Martin, Director for Commissioning Children and Families

## **5 Appendices**

- A. Report for People and Families Scrutiny Committee 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Children and Families: Recommissioning of Domestic Abuse Services
- B. Power Point: Domestic Abuse position and intentions post 2024. To be introduced and presented at the meeting by staff representatives.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Report for People and Families Scrutiny Committee 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024**  
**Children and Families Update of Domestic Abuse and Commissioning**  
**Intentions**

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Lead: Clare Burrell, Head of Commissioning Children and Families

## **1. Introduction**

This paper and the accompanying slide pack outline the progress made in the Council's statutory duties since the introduction of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act, and the commissioning intentions for post April 2025.

## **2. Background**

Since 2016 the Public Health grant of £1,644m p.a. enabled the council to deliver support to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation and wider community settings. It also contributes to support for perpetrators. This support is jointly commissioned with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner until 2025.

In April 2021, as a result of the Domestic Abuse Act, it became incumbent on Tier 1 Local Authorities to provide support for victims of domestic abuse (including children and young people) who are residing in safe accommodation, e.g. refuge. Following representation from Essex County Council and other councils this was extended to mean victims' own homes where additional security measures and a robust safety plan is in place.

Since 2021 the council has been in receipt of a further £2,790m per annum from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to deliver its duties. This has meant we have been able to extend our offer to victims, including for the first time to children and young people.

The Public Health Grant and DLUHC Duties monies combined means we have been able to continue to build on our offer for victims, but also importantly our early intervention and prevention offer in pursuit of preventing and reducing domestic abuse.

## **3. Redesigning a holistic approach for Domestic Abuse post 2025**

The way in which the domestic abuse offer has developed since the introduction of the new duties is that, albeit commissioned against a thorough needs assessment, it is responsive and added to enhance the existing offer rather than purposefully designed as a holistic offer. This was the same for Southend and Thurrock Councils.

In 2022 the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (SETDAB) commissioned research that reviewed the current domestic abuse support and intervention offer with a view to developing a set of recommendations that would inform future partnership delivery plans and commissioning of support.

As a result of the research recommendations a joint commissioning group was formed across SET Partners to lead the redesign of the SET wide domestic abuse victim and perpetrator response in time for recommissioning 2025. The research report highlighted:

- The Southend, Essex and Thurrock response to domestic abuse has many strengths, including the delivery of high-quality core services for victims, survivors and perpetrators.
- The system is underpinned by a strong and mature model of partnership working across three local authorities and multiple agencies which is led by the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board.
- Now is the opportunity to build on these foundations and take the local response to the next level in order to build and consolidate the vision for a whole system approach that breaks the cycle of domestic abuse.

The report recommended that in consolidating and building a whole system approach commissioners should ensure that they continue to develop on:

- Preventing underrepresented groups, such as age, gender, disability, sexuality, or ethnicity, from falling through the gaps and by not coming forward or not able to access specialist support.
- An approach to long term recovery, especially for those victims and perpetrators with complex needs.
- Increasing support and programmes to focus on the behaviour change of perpetrators.
- Continuing to foster better understanding of domestic abuse, in particular coercive control and psychological abuse which are less well understood than other types of domestic abuse.

#### **4. The Pan Essex Domestic Abuse Commissioning Collaborative**

The Pan Essex Domestic Abuse Commissioning Collaborative (PEDACC) formed in 2023. Partners are the SET Local Authorities, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Essex Police and Essex Probation.

The group has led extensive work with stakeholders, including front line practitioners and those with lived experience, to co-design a holistic offer of support that would be commissioned post 2025 and which will embed the findings from the research report i.e.. equality, diversity, inclusion and equity, understanding of abuse, perpetrator support and appropriate response and support for those with complex needs.

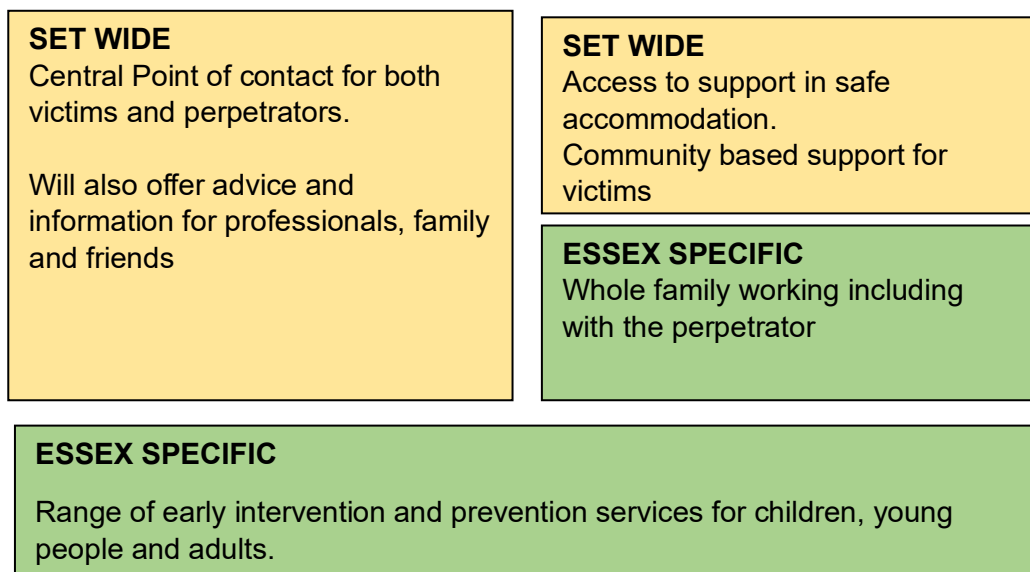
The details of the proposed model are now being considered and it consists of 5 key component parts that are:

- a) One central point of contact for victims and perpetrators
- b) Support for victims residing in safe accommodation
- c) Community based support for victims (including children)
- d) Early help whole family working (including the perpetrator)
- e) Community based support for perpetrators

The model is underpinned by a range of early intervention and prevention programmes and support services.

It has been agreed in principle that PEDACC will commission elements of the model together, for example the Central Point of Contact and the support in Safe accommodation. However, due to local variances (finance and delivery models), partners have agreed service standards so that victims can expect the same quality of service pan Essex

### The model from Essex Perspective



The advantages of this approach for Essex are that it

- Ensures we are meeting the requirements within the Domestic Abuse Act and complying with national guidance.
- Will achieve efficiency savings through aligned budgets and joint commissioning
- Will improve pathways to support for all those impacted by domestic abuse, including perpetrators.
- Will ensure consistent service offer and quality standards pan Essex

- Achieves improved co-ordination of services supporting transitions across greater Essex where victims are fleeing the perpetrator yet need to keep local safe connections
- Provides a whole family approach, outside of statutory services, to domestic abuse

#### Next steps

1. Each authority is obtaining their governance approvals
2. The model elements are being finalised in detail
3. The procurement approach is being considered
4. The procurement is anticipated to be launched in summer 2024
5. New offer will go live April 2025

# Recommissioning of Domestic Abuse Services

Clare Burrell, Health of Strategic Commissioning and Policy, Children and Families, Essex County Council

# Background

- Current services last commissioned and effective from April 2019 and end 2025
- Jointly commissioned with the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner
- ECC Public Health investment £1,644,000 p.a.
- PFCC investment £493,000 p.a.
- Compass front door for victims
- Community based support for adult victims
- Accommodation-based (refuge) support for adults
- Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors specialist support for high-risk domestic abuse victims
- Stand-alone early intervention programmes
- 2021 Domestic Abuse Act resulted in new duties for the Council
- Additional services commissioned



# 2021 New Duties

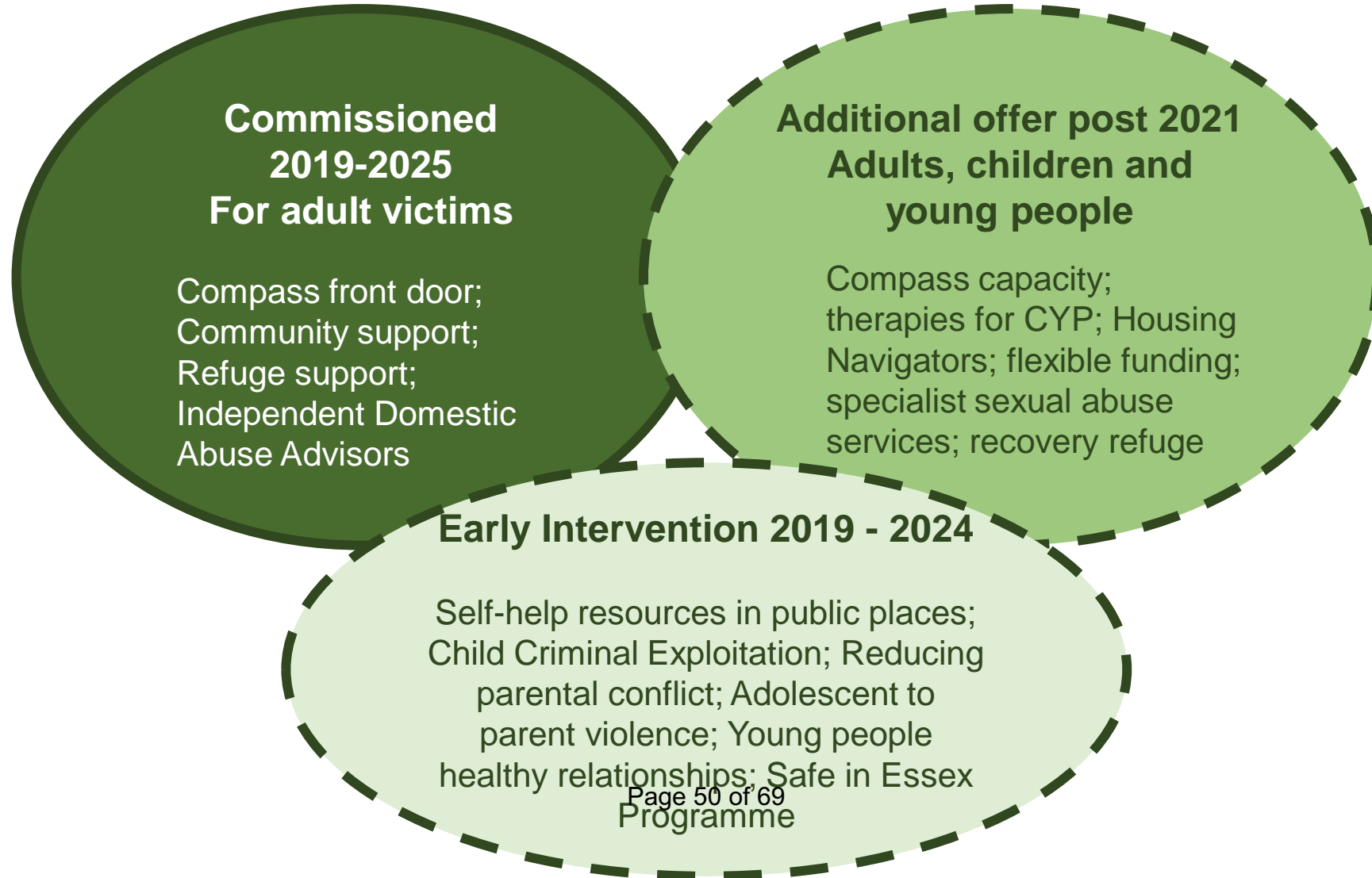
## 2021 Domestic Abuse Act new duties for ECC

- Establish a local Essex Board
- Produce a needs assessment
- Publish a domestic abuse commissioning strategy

Additional £2.890m new burdens funding for 3 years to support to victims **and their children** residing in refuge, specialist, dispersed and sanctuary accommodation, also in second stage accommodation (excluding Independent Domestic Violence Advisors)

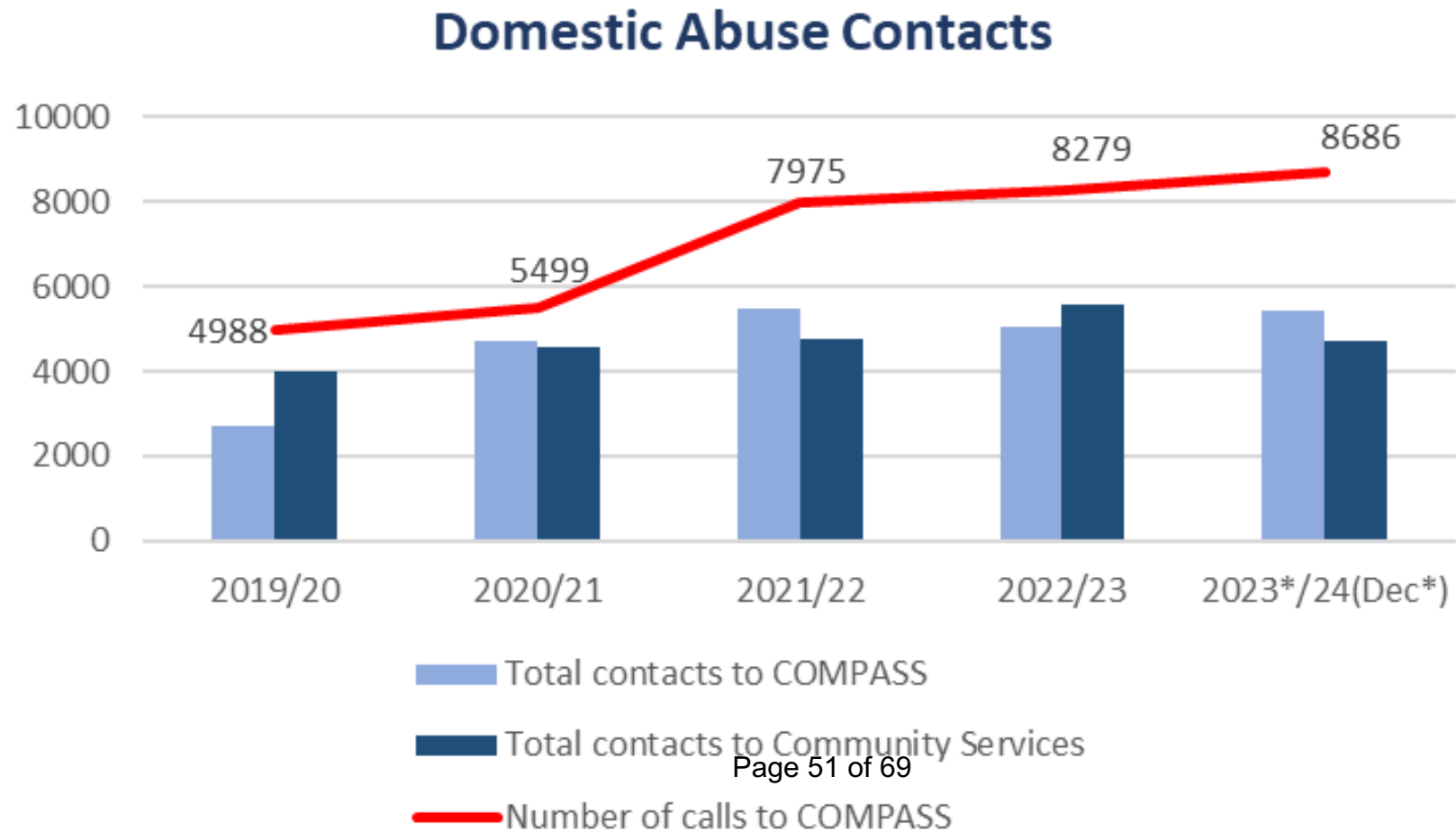
- Advocacy support
- Prevention advice
- Specialist support for those with protected characteristics/complex needs
- Children's and young people's support including therapies and advocacy
- Housing-related support and advice
- Resettlement support

# Current Domestic Abuse Offer



# Then 2019 and now 2024

## High level demand



# Then 2019 and now 2024

## Trends

In 2019 Colchester, Basildon and Chelmsford accounted for the top 3 areas for victims seeking support. In 2023/24 Colchester and Basildon remained the top 2, with Tendring at number 3 (previously 6th) and Chelmsford at number 4

4% (153) of victims in the community in 2019 were men. The numbers have increased slowly year on year, with men representing 6% (281) in 2023/24

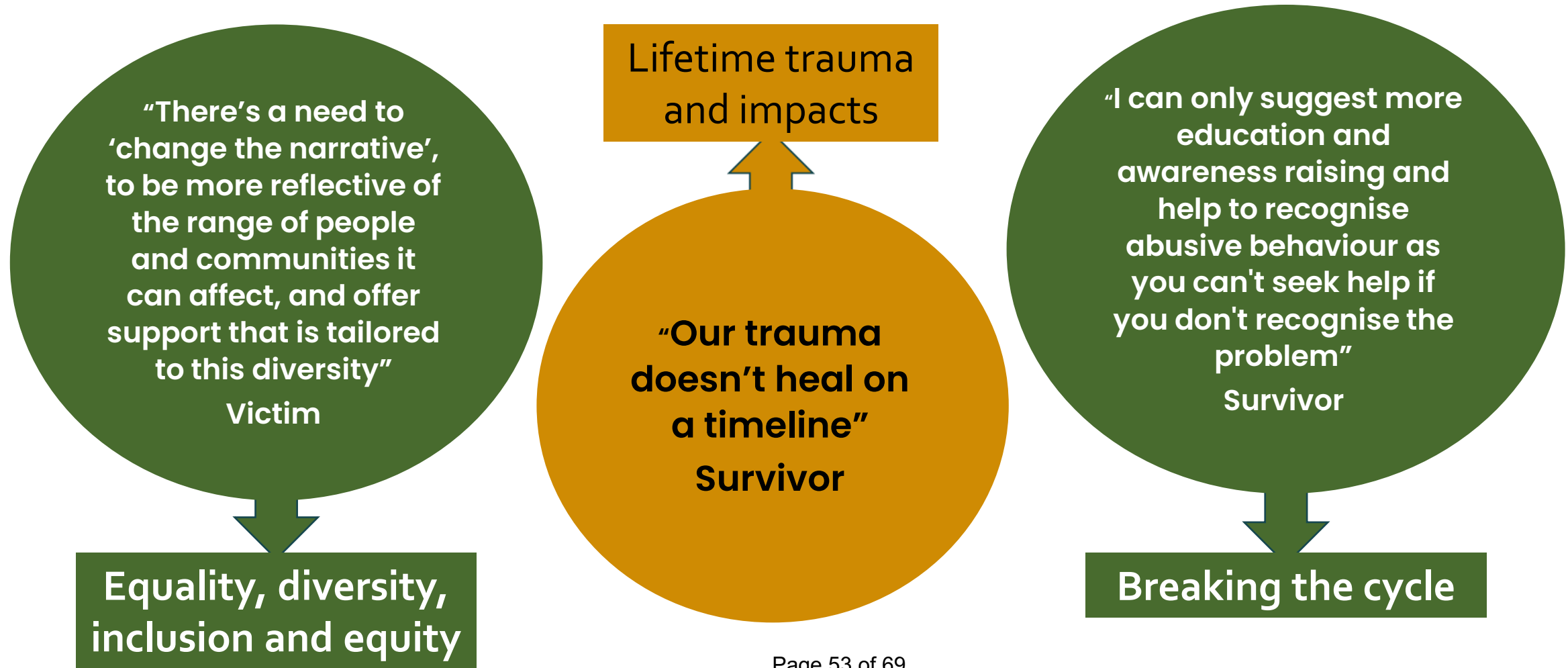
10% (472) of victims in the community in 2023/24 were Black African/Caribbean, Asian and other multiple ethnic groups. These demographics have been consistent since each year since 2019

22% (1,036) of victims in the community in 2023/24 identified as having a disability. This is consistent with previous years

31 – 35-year-olds are the primary age group each year, with 65+ years the lowest represented group; no significant changes each year

In 2019 the average case length for high-risk victims was 3 months, this has increased to an average of 6 months in 2023/24, primarily due to the increase in complexities and the backlog in cases going to court

# 2022 Research Insight



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Essex County Council

Probation  
Service



**ESSEX  
POLICE**  
Protecting and serving Essex



Southend-on-Sea  
City Council



thurrock.gov.uk

**PFCC**  
POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME  
COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

# Pan Essex Domestic Abuse Commissioning Collaborative

## PEDACC Team

- **Essex County Council – Lead Commissioner**
- Southend City Council
- Thurrock Council
- Police Fire and Crime Commissioner
- Essex Police
- Probation
- SETDAB Partnership Lead

# The co-designed model for Pan Essex

Early Intervention and Prevention (Essex) preventative programmes of work to ensure de-escalation of conflict and aggression within households and positive behaviour programmes for young people.

## Central Point of Contact (SET)

for anyone with concerns of domestic abuse, including professionals, victims, survivors, and perpetrators. It will offer triage, information, advice, guidance and where needed onwards referral for support.

### Support in Safe Accommodation (SET)

Specialist support for high risk victims

### Community Based Support (SET)

for victims Safety planning, practical and emotional support

### Programmes and support for perpetrators (SET)

both early help and specialist support

### Early Help Whole Family Working including the perpetrator (Essex)

# Benefits of model and joint approach

- Meets the requirements within the Domestic Abuse Act and national guidance
- Efficiency savings through aligned budgets and joint commissioning
- Improves pathways to support for all those impacted by domestic abuse, including perpetrators.
- Consistent service offer and quality standards across greater Essex
- Co-ordination of services supporting transitions across greater Essex where victims are fleeing the perpetrator yet need to keep local safe connections
- Provides a whole family approach, outside of statutory services, to domestic abuse





**Reference Number: PAF/11/24**

<b>Report title:</b> Performance Monitoring falling within Committee's remit, as reported to the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 14 March 2024	<b>For:</b> Consideration and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Chairman and Vice Chairmen to reflect on the latest performance update for the *Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025* strategy which are considered quarterly by the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman and Vice Chairmen may then wish to highlight any issues arising that may be relevant for the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee to pursue and scrutinise in further detail.

## 2. Action required

**The Committee is asked to consider:**

- (i) **The attached update; and**
- (ii) **Identify any follow-up scrutiny actions**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The *Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025* strategy was adopted by Full Council on 12 October 2021. The link to the Strategy is [here](#).
- 3.2 Each scrutiny committee has been asked to be mindful of the strategic ambitions (and associated commitments and performance measures) in the Strategy which are most relevant to the work of the Committee when work planning. Every effort is made to align every item on each iteration of the work programme of each scrutiny committee with the relevant ambition in the Strategy.
- 3.3 The Scrutiny Board, which has management oversight of the scrutiny work of the four scrutiny committees, determined that the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny

Performance Monitoring falling within People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee remit, as reported to the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Committee (CPSC) should take the lead on receiving broad quarterly performance updates across the whole Strategy and for all strategic ambitions, which it has done since 2022. To support that process and recognise that the Strategy had cross-committee relevance, the Chairman and Vice Chairmen of the other three scrutiny committees have been invited to attend and participate at all the quarterly performance updates considered by the CPSC. The last update considered by the CPSC was on 4 March 2024.

- 3.4 The Scrutiny Board is keen to further increase the profile and dissemination of these performance reviews with the broader membership of each scrutiny committee and further help facilitate the identification of possible future scrutiny work from that process. Therefore, it has instigated this formal process for feedback and reflection of the CPSC discussions at each of the other scrutiny committees on a regular basis.

#### **4. Update and Next Steps**

A link to the relevant agenda paper updating on Everyone's Essex performance is below. Draft minutes of the discussion will follow.

Next steps are as proposed under Action Required.

It is anticipated that the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman will lead the discussion for this agenda item.

#### **5 Relevant links and Appendix**

Links below to 4 March 2024 CPSC agenda papers updating on Everyone's Essex performance.

[Performance Discussion - covering paper](#)

[Appendix - Quarterly Corporate Performance Report Q2](#)

Appendix – Extract of the draft minutes of the CPSC meeting held on 4 March 2024 – **TO FOLLOW**

<b>Report title:</b> Matters Arising	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 14 March 2024	<b>For:</b> Consideration and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

## **1. Introduction**

This separate item was requested by the Committee on 14 September 2023 (see Background below).

## **2. Action required**

**The Committee is asked to consider:**

- (i) The attached update; and**
- (ii) Reflect on the current process and approach and any steps to help facilitate closure on outstanding matters arising**

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Ordinarily the Committee receives, attached to the draft minutes from the previous meeting, the outstanding Matters Arising from previous meetings. Whilst some entries are closed quickly, other entries are more longstanding.
- 3.2 Matters Arising are communicated to witnesses soon after the date of the meeting as part of the process to draft the minutes.
- 3.3 In some cases, matters arising can be addressed when witnesses are returning to further present to the Committee. However, the nature of the committee's work, and its wide remit, does mean that there are not really any regular "standing" updates scheduled and there can be a significant gap before some witnesses return to provide subsequent updates.
- 3.4 Increased efforts are being made to close more of these items. Updates received will appear for one meeting on this report and then the Matter Arising entry will be removed. This will enable the focus of attention to be on those few significantly outstanding matters.

## **4. Update and Next Steps**

## **Matters Arising**

The latest table listing Matters Arising is attached in the Appendix to this report.

Entries have now been categorised as follows to facilitate discussion and to help identify follow-ups:

- Actions from recent meetings – updates awaited.
- Overdue Matters Arising

## **5 Appendix**

Matters Arising as at 14 March 2024.

### MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

#### ACTIONS FROM RECENT MEETINGS - UPDATES AWAITED

Date	Item	Action	Status
14 February 2024	SEND Sufficiency Plan	Information on work being done within the Education and Skills portfolio in terms of skills training and support that made it as easy as possible for those people who wanted to qualify to become Educational Psychologists	TBC
		What is being done to further improve the communication between ECC and schools and parents	TBC
	Essex Youth Service – follow-up	To suggest to Young Essex Assembly representatives that they could write to their local Councillors and invite them to YEA events with an appropriate rota to be put in place to control numbers	TBC
		To provide data on the Youth Worker in Hospital A&E pilot along with some anonymised case studies demonstrating impact.	TBC
		To provide some feedback on the recent Youth Takeover Day	TBC
11 January 2024	ASC Priority Area of Focus - EDI	There should be clear identification and explanation of Jewish by race as well as religion, as a protected characteristic, in documentation and recording on Mosaic and any other appropriate systems.	In progress
		In terms of the zero-tolerance policy, to consider further explanatory wording on the risk-based approach taken when applying the zero-tolerance policy to ensure safeguarding both the service user and support staff	In progress
		Members would consider further their conclusions on the five discussions on the ASC Priority Performance Areas and respond formally to the Cabinet Member.	In progress

Date	Item	Action	Status
7 December 2023	ASC Priority Area of Focus – People Waiting	Faith based reviews to be included on the definitions page in future reports.	In progress
		That the challenges ASC faced should be highlighted within the executive summary of future reports such as 1 in 5 adults in Essex were 65 and people with learning disabilities and autism cohorts was expected to grow significantly by 2025	In progress
		It was highlighted that the 3 year overdue reference within the report related to Care Act reviews and not initial assessments. Members were concerned this could be misleading and suggested it was made clearer in future reports	In progress
7 December 2023	ASC Priority area of focus – Co-production	The ‘Statement of Intent’ referred to during discussion be brought to the Committee once developed for comment and review and to understand any actions that arose from it.	In progress
14 September 2023	Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022-23	To include more prominent reference to the financial challenges being faced by the Board in the finalised annual report and the development of risk register work.	Both of these have been included in the Annual Report
		The Essex Covid-19 Care Home Report which had been endorsed by ESAB to be presented to the Committee.	TBC
		More information on safeguarding referrals received from asylum and refugee holding centres.	In progress
		The passing reference to the recent Dispatches television programme in the draft annual report be expanded to include more background and context.	Additional information on this has been included in the annual report.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
14 September 2023 cont...	Adult Social Care Priority area of focus: Safeguarding Adults	Whether fast-track health and care training being developed at Essex University could be extended and applied to safeguarding training.	In progress
		If some further narrative to explain the proportion of outcomes where safeguarding risk had been reduced or removed (bullet point VIII above) could be included for future reports.	In progress
		To provide further narrative in future reports on the statistics being presented more generally to give further context, refer to any relevant changes in process and/or recording that might be causing statistical change and indicate if trends were positive or negative.	This has been confirmed as noted for future reports.

## OVERDUE MATTERS ARISING

Date	Agenda item	Action	Status
9 March 2023	ACL Strategy	Further information would be provided on the efficacy of outcomes for apprenticeships and specifically what percentage successfully completed their end point assessment	TBC
		There would be a scrutiny briefing and a consultation process to consider all options before a decision was taken on removing the nursery provision for ACL learners	To be scheduled in due course - TBC
15 February 2023	Disability Strategy	The final Disability Strategy should be clear that it supported the current Market Fields School project, and other similar schemes which provide work experience and job opportunities for local people with disabilities and further utilises the potential of local people.	To be addressed and updated at July 2024 meeting
		A further update would be given providing a Delivery Plan and identified actions after the formal launch of the Strategy.	To be addressed and updated at July 2024 meeting
		District/borough councils should be encouraged to include provision for supported housing in their Local Plans; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate specifications and provision for supported housing to be reflected in the County Council's own Design Guide;</li> <li>- Representation be made on the increasing need for supported housing within the National Planning Policy Framework;</li> <li>- Essex Housing consider if there is a role for it to further promote and influence the increase in supported housing provision.</li> </ul>	To be addressed and updated at July 2024 meeting
		Request the Scrutiny Board to consider further scrutiny arrangements for the planning for future housing provision particularly in relation to supported housing for disabled and other vulnerable people.	TBC
11 January 2023	Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026	To provide amended trend data and charts that compared to periods/years before the pandemic and not just 2021	TBC



# OVERDUE MATTERS ARISING continued...

11 January 2023	Everyone's Library Service 2022-2026	That, as part of a future scrutiny session, and further to an upcoming public consultation, to include more information on what users and potential users want from their libraries and what matters to them	To be picked up at the next update on libraries.
		To invite the Chairman of the Education Task Force and appropriate Cabinet Members and officers to discuss concerns about current performance on literacy	To be included as part of scheduling broader education updates
	HCRG Contract for the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service	A table showing all 22 Outcomes and target outcomes with all KPIs would be produced	In progress
		More information on the Affinity Programme to be provided to Members	In progress
		Further information on the rate of the contract to be provided to Members	In progress
		Clarification on the availability of statistics measuring reach, and the number of hard-to-reach families missing out on the early years services who were then later identified needing additional support in later life	In progress
14 April 2022	Essex Safeguarding Children Board update	Information on accessing services in the Dengie area to be provided	TBC
		More knife bins should be placed in smaller towns, including placing them within Essex libraries to prevent vandalism	TBC

<b>Report title:</b> Work Programme	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
<b>Date:</b> 14 March 2024	<b>For:</b> Discussion and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at <a href="mailto:graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk">graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk</a> .	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Not applicable	

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work programme for the Committee continues to be developed and the current position is outlined below and overleaf. A private session of the Committee was held on 11 May 2023 to discuss and reflect on the work and organisation of the Committee in the last two years and future approach.

### 2. Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider this report and issues under consideration in Appendix 1 and any further development or amendments.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Board has asked scrutiny committees to also give consideration as to which work programme items may benefit from communications activity in order to promote the work of the scrutiny function both internally and externally. Members are asked to consider this during discussion on this agenda item.

### 3. Background

The Terms of Reference for the Committee is defined in the County Council's Constitution and the relevant extract is reproduced below:

#### 9.5.2 People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee:

- Education (other than skills and apprenticeships)
- Childrens' Services
- Youth Services
- Services relating to support for the community safety and the reduction of offending
- Adult social care, including the support of and assistance of people with learning or physical disabilities or sensory impairment and older people and the homeless
- Sport and physical activity including Active Essex (the Health Overview, Policy and Scrutiny Committee to be included on healthy lifestyle matters)
- Transport services relating to any of the above services.

Work has continued to identify priorities and future agenda items. This has included discussions with Committee Members, Cabinet Members and Officers. This work has reflected the adoption of the Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025 strategy at Council on 12 October 2021.

#### **4. Everyone's Essex**

The Committee should take account of the Everyone's Essex – Our Plan for Levelling Up the County: 2021-2025 strategy when considering the work programme and future items. Particular attention should be paid to the strategic ambitions (and associated commitments and performance measures) most relevant to the work of the Committee: 'Health Wellbeing and Independence for All Ages', and 'A Good Place for Children and Families to Grow'. A link to the Strategy is here - [Everyone's Essex: our plan for levelling up the county 2021 to 2025: Foreword from Kevin Bentley - Essex County Council](#)

#### **5. Update and Next Steps**

##### **5.1 See Appendix 1 for current work programme**

See Action Required (above) for next steps.

#### **6. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Current work programme.

**APPENDIX****People and Families Policy and Scrutiny - Work Programme as at 14 March 2024**

<b>Provisional Date</b>	<b>Topic Title</b>	<b>Lead Contact</b>	<b>Purpose and Target Outcomes</b>	<b>Everyone's Essex reference</b>	<b>Cross-Committee</b>
14 March 2024	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – Part 2	Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning and Employability/ Head of SEND Strategy/Innovation	Next steps, improvement work and progress being made since OFSTED/CQC inspections	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety /Education Outcomes	Not applicable
14 March 2024	Domestic Abuse	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Early Years	Overview of current commissioning work ahead of Cabinet decision.	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
11 April 2024	Education Attainment and Exclusions	Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning and Employability/ Director: Education	To consider an update on attainment, attendances, exclusions and children missing education.	Education Outcomes	Not applicable
9 May 2024	Education Capital Programme	Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning and Employability/ Director: Education	To consider component parts, developer contributions, and school places planning	Education Outcomes	Not applicable
Spring 2024	Essex Children's Safeguarding Board – follow up	Independent Chairman, statutory partners and the Board Manager	To consider actions arising from last discussion and consider annual report	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
TBC 2024	Lifelong Learning and Belonging Plan	Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning and Employability	Follow up on draft plan considered by the Committee on 9 March 2023	Education Outcomes / Levelling Up /Jobs/ Infrastructure	TBC – PSEG Members

<b>Provisional Date</b>	<b>Topic Title</b>	<b>Lead Contact</b>	<b>Purpose and Target Outcomes</b>	<b>Everyone's Essex Reference</b>	<b>Cross-Committee</b>
11 July 2024	Disabilities Strategy Update	Cabinet Member Health, Adult Social Care and ICS Integration/Executive Director ASC	To consider a follow-up on the previous discussion and pick up outstanding matters arising	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable
Summer 2024	Adult Social Care update	Cabinet Member Health, Adult Social Care and ICS Integration/Executive Director ASC	To consider follow-ups to the sessions on the five priority performance areas	Family Resilience and Stability, and Safety	Not applicable

**Issues not currently scheduled:**

Everyone's Essex Theme: Family Resilience and Stability, Education	Childcare and Early Years' Strategy County Lines and Drug Gangs Children in care being placed outside Essex Backlog in Courts and Justice System Suicides in Essex
Everyone's Essex Theme Promoting Independence, Healthy Lifestyles	Houses for Life

**Private briefings:** A schedule of briefings continues to give background to issues and subjects ahead of formal agenda items.