

Briefing Pack for Scrutiny Members

12th September 2019



E S S E X
Safeguarding
Children
B O A R D

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ESCB Annual Report 2018-19 Summary

The Annual Report covers the main areas of work carried out for the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Essex Overview – Local Context

How safe are children in Essex?

The vast majority of the 308,000 children in Essex led healthy, safe lives in 2018-19, but a small minority faced challenges in their life and family circumstances which puts their wellbeing and safety at considerable risk. For example:

- 8872 children were referred to Children's Services during the year because someone had a concern about a risk of abuse or neglect. Police (25%) and health services (15%) were most notable in making these contacts. 88% of those cases (7,776) were felt to need a Child and Family Assessment by Children's Services.
- Children are at risk of exploitation and harm when they go missing from home. Across the year 1120 children open to Essex County Council Children and Families service were reported missing, with 15% of them identified as at risk of exploitation. 197 were recorded as missing from care.
- Work with young people by the Essex County Council involvement team highlighted some of the reasons for children and young people going missing as including:
 - wanting to get out of the house or away from home; young people describe many difficult relationships and wanting to get away from arguments,
 - being unhappy at or having difficulties in school
 - having low emotional health; these young people describe having suicidal thoughts and thoughts of self-harm.
 - feeling bored and wanting to be on their own.
- National estimates show 1 in every 5 children is exposed to domestic violence by the age of 18. Within Essex, police officers recorded over 26,000 domestic abuse offences in the year, many will have involved children as witnesses or in the household at the time of violence.

These risks are considered by the ESCB during the work carried out over the year and also in cooperation with other Boards as appropriate e.g. Domestic Abuse Board. Such risks are discussed regularly in the relevant sub committees and action is taken as required.

Role of the Board

The role of the Safeguarding Children Board is to have an independent coordinating and challenge role around safeguarding practice across its partner agencies.

ESCB Strategic Priorities – what we did in 2018-19

The priorities agreed by Board are based on themes arising from local practice, case reviews, and national priorities. Under each of these priorities the ESCB has carried out particular areas of work as listed below.

Strategic Priority 1: The Local Safeguarding Context

- Updating the Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) Child Protection Procedures
- Working with other Boards on issues affecting families that had arisen from reviews carried out by the ESCB, Essex Safeguarding Adult Board (ESAB) and Southend Essex & Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SET DAB).
- Child exploitation – ‘Parents, did you know?’ campaign to raise awareness of child exploitation amongst parents and carers
- Assessing the responsibilities of schools and other agencies to carry out their safeguarding duties via Section 11 and Section 175 audits. These audits showed that agencies and schools overall were meeting their safeguarding duties with a high level of compliance.
- Working with District, Borough and City Councils to support local safeguarding initiatives

Strategic Priority 2: Early Help and Early Intervention

The ESCB continues to highlight the importance of early intervention and early help across agencies, including raising awareness of the Effective Support for Children & Families thresholds document.

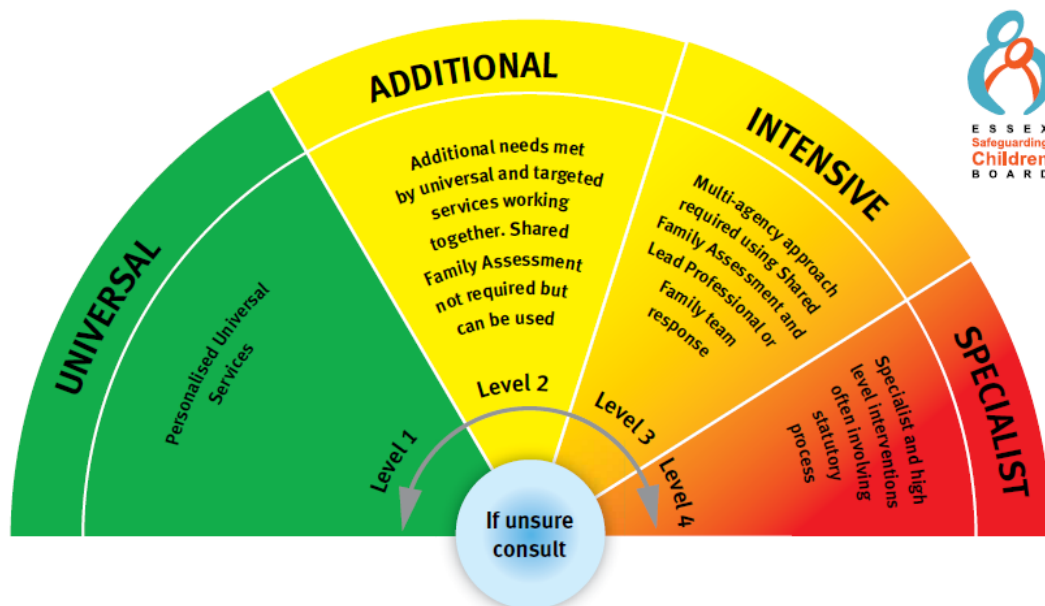
Under this priority the focus in 2018 - 19 has been on supporting staff with their learning and development needs and the ongoing work of the Stay Safe Groups to support early intervention. This has continued to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early intervention amongst those working with families

Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex

The Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex guidance is for everyone who works with children and young people and their families in Essex. It is about the way we can all work together, share information, and put the child and their family at the centre, providing effective support to help them solve problems and find solutions

at an early stage to prevent problems escalating. There may be times when the needs of the family are such that intensive or specialist statutory intervention is required.

The Effective Support Windscreen- The conceptual model and windscreen is a way of developing a shared understanding and explaining the Essex approach across all our services and partnerships, ensuring a consistent approach is applied by all practitioners and managers. The model illustrates how we will respond to the requirements of children and families across four levels of need (**Universal, Additional, Intensive and Specialist**).



All partners working with children, young people and their families will offer support as soon as we are aware of any additional needs. We will always seek to work together to provide support to children, young people and their families at the lowest level possible in accordance with their needs.

More information on the effective support windscreen and document can be found at the following link: <https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/> .

Strategic Priority 3: Emotional Health and Wellbeing

This has been an important area of work for the Board in 2018 –19 building on the work that was done the previous year reviewing teenage suicides in Essex. The focus has been on broadening awareness of how to support positive mental health and well-being amongst those working with children, young people and their families. This was carried out primarily via the Stay Safe conferences across the quadrants in Essex which were well received.

Strategic Priority 4: Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership

In addition to preparing for the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, other key activities focussed on the Board's statutory duties around Serious Case Reviews and reviewing child deaths.

Serious Case Reviews

This year the ESCB published new guidance around the Serious Case Review process to ensure that it meets the requirements of the new National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to review any serious incidents within 15 days. This was implemented in June 2018 and the ESCB has been able to achieve the new timeframes due to excellent cooperation from all partners. Details about these processes can be found on the ESCB website at the following link:

<http://www.escb.co.uk/working-with-children/serious-case-reviews/>

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

The CDOP continues its campaigns aimed at raising awareness with parents and carers of safeguarding issues.

Ongoing campaigns this year have focussed on safer sleeping, water safety and also a leaflet around worsening signs of a sick child which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.escb.co.uk/parentcarer/sick-child-when-to-seek-help/>

Future issues

The main challenge for the ESCB moving forward will be ensuring that we fully implement the new safeguarding arrangements (MASA) from September 2019, and in doing so maintain a particular focus on ensuring that:

- the voice of the child is at the heart of everything we do
- there is effective independent scrutiny of our new safeguarding arrangements
- safeguarding partners are committed to equitable and proportionate funding of the work of the ESCB

Examples of ESCB work carried out in 2018 – 19 (since previous Scrutiny)

Stay Safe Conferences – emotional health and well being

A fundamental part of the review into the tragic suicides of young people in Essex (completed in early 2018) has been sharing key findings and establishing how the learning can be implemented and embedded. This included raising awareness around risk factors, possible triggers for suicide and how to better talk with young people about mental health.

Stay Safe Groups worked with ESCB colleagues to develop and deliver quadrant-based conferences that provided time and space for colleagues across the partnership to hear, digest and discuss key issues that came out of the review. The conferences also provided an opportunity for national organisations such as Papyrus and Hectors House to share their experiences and strategies for supporting young people and families including those bereaved by a young family member taking their own life. All attendees found the experience thought provoking and with examples from cases which were at times difficult to hear, but also felt that the conferences provided the opportunity to start meaningful discussions on how to work collaboratively to address the issues raised.

An important part of this work was to involve young people in the conferences to hear their perspectives.

Colchester sixth form college asked a group of students if they would be interested in developing a workshop for the North East Essex conference, they had an overwhelming response from young people and 19 young people from the college who were involved in designing and delivering an excellent workshop on the impact of social media on young people.

Some feedback given to the young people on their evaluations included

“The activity was very powerful. We hear a lot and read a lot about young people and social media, but I have never experienced the pressures/anxiety/helplessness that constant social media interference brings. Thank you.”

The other conferences used three different case studies based on real life scenarios. These also worked well and gave people the opportunity to network and share information on the organisations and support that was available locally. Further training around will be provided in 2019 following on from feedback from these events.

Impact of the conferences

One of the results of this work was an upsurge in young people accessing online counselling services. The post for Kooth, the online counselling service for young people, reached over 222,000 people on Facebook.

One of the main aims of the conferences was to support people to feel more confident to talk about suicide, and to try and dispel the myth that talking about it (if it is done in a supportive and sensitive way) does not encourage people to consider taking their own life. On average 8 out of 10 people who answered this question said they were confident to talk to a young person about suicide and 92% of those who answered this question said that felt more confident as a result of the conference.

Comments from attendees included:

Much more confidence in phrases to avoid and that it's ok to talk about it
(Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service)

Really glad we are all talking about this issue!
(Voluntary/Community organisation)

I have come away with a different outlook which will be a great help
(ECC Youth Service)

It has helped to lessen my worry of potentially doing harm by discussing suicide with a young person
(Private/Independent provider)

I have recently had a young person who was suicidal and felt I was better equipped to have a conversation following the conference
(Voluntary organisation)

Working with other Boards to identify cross-cutting issues – Learning from Reviews

ESCB, supported by the Essex Social Care Academy (ESCA), worked with Essex Safeguarding Adult Board and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board to deliver 5 very successful 'Putting the learning from multi-agency reviews into practice' events with 294 delegates attending from a range of agencies across the children and adult workforce.

The events considered the learning from the various children and adult case reviews that are undertaken across Essex, including Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Serious Case Reviews, Multi Agency Case Audits and

Partnership Learning Reviews. With the overarching theme being around professional curiosity, the learning outcomes for the events were to:

- Influence practice especially in improving risk assessment
- Share where a positive difference has been made and what best practice looks like
- Have an opportunity to share and discuss ideas
- Offer practical tips
- Encourage a holistic 'Think Family' approach.

The feedback from the events was very positive. Those attending developed a greater awareness of the importance of having a 'Think Family;' approach in their work. They also were able to make contact with other agencies and understand what support was available locally for families. As a result, further events will be developed in 2019.

In addition, 20 delegates requested the training pack that was shared at the workshops to use further within their own organisations, including a request from one agency to adapt it to use nationally as part of their training programme for health personnel.

Summary of Working Together 2018 Statutory Guidance

The Children and Social work Act received Royal Assent in May 2017.

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/childrenandsocialwork.html>

It removes the statutory framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards, replacing it with new requirements for specific partners to establish Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements – 'MASA'.

Supporting regulations and "Working Together 2018" statutory guidance were published in June 2018 : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Under the new legislation, three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups) must make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies (as they consider appropriate) to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.

The geographical footprint for the new arrangements is based on local authority areas.

Timescales

Safeguarding partners had to agree and publish their local arrangements by 29 June 2019.

Following publication of their arrangements, safeguarding partners have up to three months from the date of publication to implement the arrangements. **All new local arrangements must be implemented by 29 September 2019.**

The published plan for the Essex MASA - which will continue to be known as the Essex Safeguarding Children Board - is attached in this briefing pack. It can also be found on the ESCB website at: <http://www.escb.co.uk/media/2038/essex-masa-plan-2019-20-updated-280619-v1b.pdf>

Safeguarding Partners

The safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents.

To fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies.

All safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

It will be for local areas to decide what their arrangements should look like, how they will work in practice; and what geographical area they will cover (although a local authority area cannot be covered by two sets of overlapping arrangements).

Funding

Safeguarding partners and relevant agencies are responsible for funding their arrangements. While a set funding formula is not being prescribed, funding contributions should be equitable and proportionate. The guidance states: -

‘The safeguarding partners should agree the level of funding secured from each partner, which should be equitable and proportionate, and any contributions from each relevant agency, to support the local arrangements ‘

Independent Scrutiny

Safeguarding partners will be responsible for publishing reports at least once in every twelve-month period which set out how effective their arrangements have been in practice

Whilst the decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is to be made locally, safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection to drive continuous improvement.

The independent scrutineer should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported.

Essex is in the process of recruiting an independent facilitator to take on the role of independent scrutiny as well as continue to chair the ESCB Executive.

Relevant agencies

Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. For local arrangements to be effective, they should engage organisations and agencies that can work in a collaborative way to provide targeted support to children and families as appropriate. The safeguarding partners in Essex have set out in their published arrangements which organisations and agencies they will be working with to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Schools, colleges and other educational providers

All schools, colleges and other educational providers have duties in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The safeguarding partners should make arrangements to allow all schools (including multi academy trusts), colleges and other educational providers in the local area to be fully engaged, involved and included in the new safeguarding arrangements

In Essex, the safeguarding partners have named schools, colleges and other educational providers as relevant agencies and they are all under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

New national and local “Child Safeguarding Practice Review” procedures replace the existing Serious Case Reviews from 29 September 2019. The guidance sets out the process for new national and local reviews. The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and at local level with the safeguarding partners.