

## Safeguarding Briefing for Early Years / 22.05.20

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the second safeguarding briefing for early years providers. Safeguarding challenges us all at the best of times and COVID-19 has certainly made this challenge greater. However, I am aware of your ongoing commitment and dedication to this task and have had some great feedback about work being done by providers to safeguarding children and support families during this difficult time.

I would like to draw your attention to the need for settings to continue keeping in touch / undertaking welfare checks with their children and families, even if closed. If you are open or will be, please keep in touch with the families that have decided that their children will not attend (further information is in the Risk assessments and welfare checks section below).

I referred in the last briefing to the fact we would be re-arranging the safeguarding forum for Early Years and Childcare providers. I am pleased to let you know that this has been confirmed for 7.00pm on 21<sup>st</sup> October. It will be held in Chelmsford and further details will be shared in due course, but hold the date meanwhile!

Best wishes

Jo

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### Risk assessments and welfare checks

Although there is much talk about the re-opening of early years settings, some obviously remain closed or partially closed for the time being. Settings should regularly review risk assessments to ensure they are dynamic and respond to the current needs of individual children and families. Settings should be mindful of the potential increasing pressures on families in terms of financial difficulty, the impact of isolation on mental health and wellbeing

and other safeguarding issues. Discussions with parents should be a general 'check in' on how they are managing, identifying any particular concerns and providing information, for example about keeping their child safe online. Some settings will be picking up concerns from families not previously on their radar and be able to resolve issues before they escalate, perhaps by using the [Early Help](#) procedures. Some concerns may appear to be relatively minor, but could be significant for the child or family involved.

I provided 3 model risk assessments in the CYP Response Plan for EYS settings to use if you wanted to. Model A and B were to inform decision-making about whether a vulnerable child (identified by the government as those with a social worker) or those with an EHCP would be safer in their setting or at home. Model C was a sample risk assessment to use for all children to support decisions about method and frequency of welfare checks and identifying any required support. Settings may prefer to use their own version of a risk assessment document, but the crucial thing is that there has been a risk assessment process around each child, that there are appropriate welfare checks in place for each child and that there is a mechanism in place for reviewing risk assessments to ensure they meet current need.

Our local quadrant team early years colleagues have been phoning settings to check in and offer support with arrangements over the summer term. We hope this has been helpful.

The response plan is attached again here, for your information:



EYS settings -  
Covid-19 Pupil Respo

### Children and Families Hub (C&FH)

Following a significant decrease in contact to the C&FH since March, there has recently been a steady increase in the number of 'Requests For Support' (RFS) received. However, it has been noticed there is not a corresponding increase in the use of the Consultation Line.

The Consultation Line is available for professionals to call when advice is required on how to best support/protect children and young people. Professionals will receive advice, guidance and support from a Social Worker or Senior Practitioner based in the Children and Families Hub during a discussion focused on a child's need and the most appropriate level of intervention. It provides an opportunity to have a hypothetical discussion about how to best support a child and their family, including using a Team Around the Family (TAF) approach, and signposting via the Directory of Services. If needed, the professional will be signposted to the Request For Support (RFS) portal, should a request for support be required. The Consultation Line can help you explore with a Social Worker how best to talk through your concerns with the family, and work with them to identify how to access support that meets their need.

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Where you have concerns about a child, you can contact the Children & Families Hub (C&FH) on 0345 603 7627 - please specifically ask for the C&FH and state you are a professional. You will also have to state if you require the Consultation Line (Social Worker will give advice but not record the call) or the Priority Line (because an immediate response is necessary).

You can access further information and the Directory of Services via the Effective Support portal: <https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/request-support/>

### Model Bereavement Policy

A model Bereavement Policy has been written for settings to use if they wish:



Bereavement Policy -  
11.05.20.docx

### Domestic Abuse

**SafeLives #ReachIn campaign:** Lockdown is difficult for everyone. However, for those living with an abusive partner or family member, it is dangerous, traumatic and relentless. Opportunities to reach out and access support are reduced as making phone calls or visiting services is much harder. Over the last few weeks, there has been a huge community effort to reach people who may be vulnerable, ensuring they have the food and essentials they need.

SafeLives want to help those volunteers and the wider community to be alert to the signs of abuse and to recognise what they can do to help.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the #ReachIn campaign, as well as practical help and guidance on what to do if you're worried about someone you know.

**Online awareness training:** The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) has produced a [basic awareness online training programme](#) for professionals to support understanding of domestic abuse and related processes

### Essex Safeguarding Children Board

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) has a dedicated [Coronavirus hub](#), which aims to provide a single point of access for anyone needing information and resources in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

These pages include:

- [temporary changes to services](#)
- [general information](#)
- [resources for families](#)
- [checklist of symptoms](#)
- [Child Accident Prevention Trust \(CAPT\)](#)
- [ESCB Online safety resources for professionals, parents/carers and young people](#)

### Mental health and wellbeing

Guidance for schools on mental health and wellbeing has been produced, and may also be useful for Early Years settings. The aim of the guidance is to bring together multiple guidance and resources, and the latest version is available on the [Essex Schools Infolink - safeguarding notice board](#).

The government has produced advice for parents on [COVID-19: guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#) and also an information leaflet on [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - an easy read - looking after your feelings and body](#), which settings may find useful to share with parents and perhaps to adapt for use with children.

Several organisations have also produced new guidance to help providers, parents and carers and children look after their mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19. For example the NSPCC – through [NSPCC Learning](#) – and [The Children's Society](#).

### Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings

Where a setting has concerns about a child, an Early Help multi-agency approach can be very helpful. A TAF meeting can pull together professionals to share concerns, identify protective factors and agree support and required interventions to keep the child/ren safe. The TAFSO team have produced a guide on how to hold a virtual TAF meeting. This is available on the [Effective Support website](#).

As a reminder the TAFSOs are continuing to support wider partners who feel that a family could benefit from a virtual TAF, they are contactable using [TAFSO@essex.gov.uk](mailto:TAFSO@essex.gov.uk).

### Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS)

The latest ECFWS bulletin is available here:



2020-M05-D18  
ECFWS Weekly bulletin

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The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS) is also available to support settings with vulnerable children. They will continue to contact settings over this period to discuss vulnerable children (those with and without social workers) and will form part of the safeguarding arrangements for them.

### Essex Welfare Service (EWS)

A reminder of the EWS, a service to help vulnerable people in the community in need of support and unable to access it at this time: <https://www.essexwelfareservice.org.uk/>. It would be helpful if settings could share this with parents for information and / or on the website as they are able to 'self-refer' if they are experiencing difficulties.

EWS Contact: Call: 0300 303 9988

Email: [provide.essexwelfareservice@nhs.net](mailto:provide.essexwelfareservice@nhs.net)

Website: [www.essexwelfareservice.org](http://www.essexwelfareservice.org)

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8am to 7pm Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 2pm