

Safeguarding briefing for Early Years Settings

Summer 2025

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Head of Education Safeguarding

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[ESI: safeguarding](#)

[EY website: safeguarding](#)

Agenda

- 1 **Safeguarding Update**
- 2 **Statutory Framework 2025**
- 3 **Training Offer**
- 4 **CP File transfer**
- 5 **Child Safeguarding Practice Review
Child GG**
- 6 **NSPCC – Disguised compliance**

Safeguarding update



- ❖ Over 6500 responses
- ❖ Feedback from settings and Inspectors in 200 test visits
- ❖ Proposal to publish results September 2025
- ❖ New IF from November 2025 – Inspectors to be trained half-term 1
- ❖ mindful of education professionals' wellbeing - considering carefully input from our stakeholders on how to best manage inspections to minimise pressure

HMCI letter to
Education
Secretary:
education
inspection reform

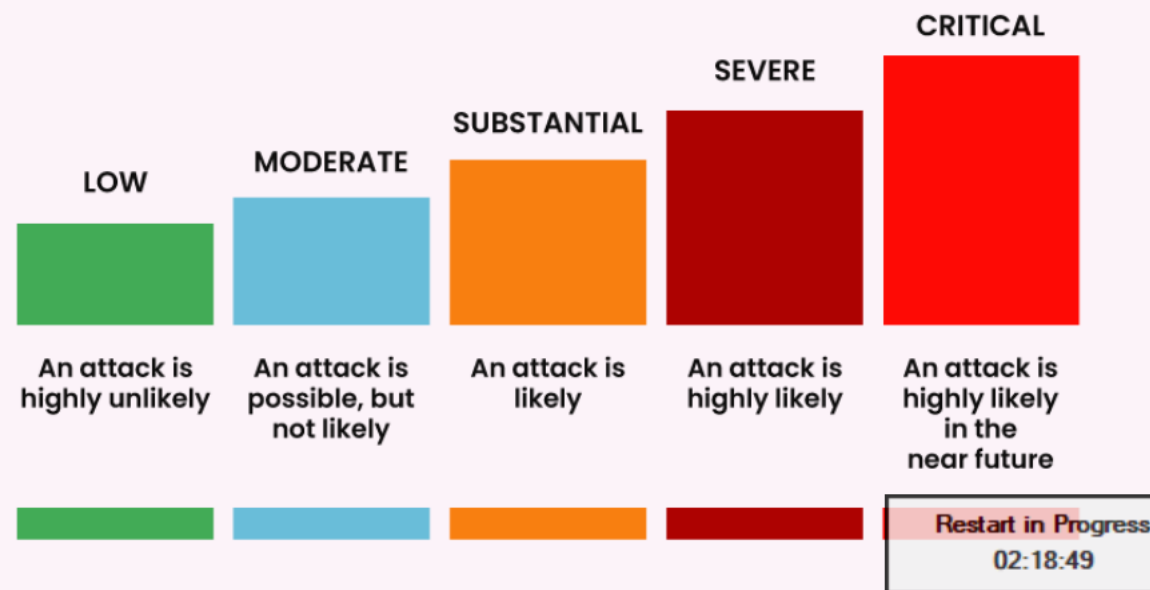
Current UK threat level remains at **SUBSTANTIAL**

Terrorism Threat Levels

The threat level is set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and the Security Service (MI5) and indicates the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the UK.

5 levels of threat:

- ↓
- Low** - an attack is highly unlikely
 - Moderate** - an attack is possible but not likely
 - Substantial** - an attack is likely
 - Severe** - an attack is highly likely
 - Critical** - an attack is highly likely in the near future



Current Threat Levels

- Eastern region is part of CONTEST national review
- Significant increase in referrals (80% on this time last year)
- Significant increase in:
 - ‘no ideology identified’ cases
 - ERW
 - ‘fascination with extreme violence and mass casualty attacks’
- 44% referrals from Education

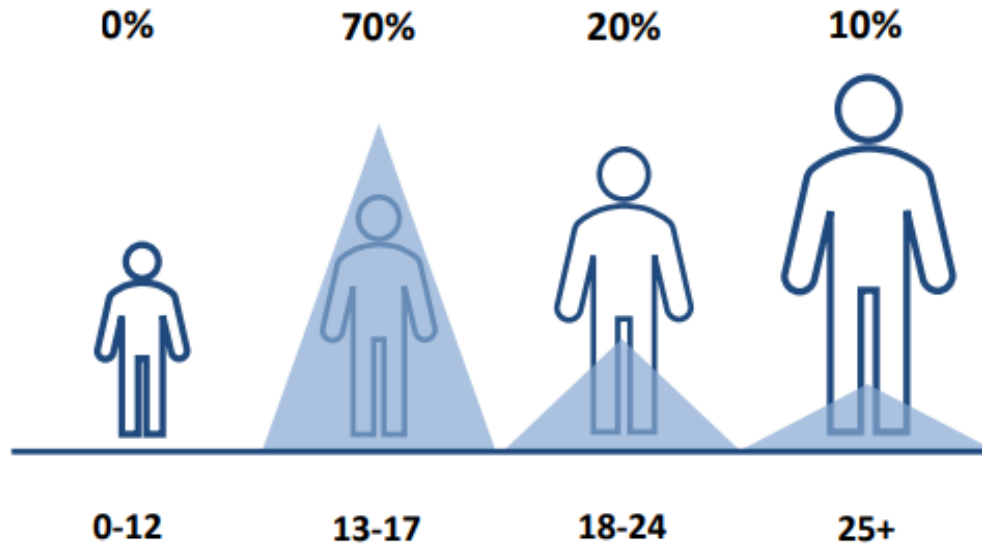
Regional update

Prevent: key messages for Eastern Region

- ❑ Islamist extremism / terrorism continues to pose the main threat to the Eastern region
- ❑ Highly likely grievance narratives related to Israel / Hamas conflict will continue to feature
- ❑ Poor mental health and neurodiversity continue to be seen in referrals – expression of self-harm and suicidal ideations also a recurring theme
- ❑ 4195 Hate Crimes reported across the region (35% from Essex)
- ❑ No ideology is highest referral category, followed by ERW and then 'Fascination with extreme violence or Mass Casualty Attacks'

Regional age demographics

Age Demographics:



Essex data:

- *Highest number of referrals from Education (33)*
- *Over 70% referrals not suitable*

Permissive environments

Radicalisers create and take advantage of permissive environments to promote or condone violence and to spread poisonous ideologies that undermine values and society

- Prevent seeks to tackle ideological causes of terrorism by limiting exposure to radicalising narratives (online and offline) and to create an environment where radicalising ideologies are challenged / not permitted to flourish
- Established terrorist narratives exhibit common themes such as anti-semitism, misogyny, anti-establishment, anti-LGBT grievances and religious or ethnic superiority
- Encouragement of terrorism, including glorifying the commission or preparation of acts of terrorism, fundraising for the purposes of terrorism, and inviting support for a proscribed terrorist organisation, are all criminal offences

Permissive Environments Process In Essex

Essex Prevent Delivery Group

Permissive Environments features as a standing agenda item on the Prevent Delivery Group (PDG), this enable to top level discussions about concerns of extremist activity, material, narrative and recruitment in Essex, but where no specific threat is identified. This will also be reflected as part of the quarterly process to refresh the Situational Risk Assessment.

Essex Permissive Environments Group

The Essex Permissive Environments Group (EPEG) will be called to review any concerns raised by partners that are linked to something locally specific (i.e. an asylum hotel opening in the area, a promoted protest in the area). This may be done virtually via email or through a meeting. The group will consider ways in which to raise awareness or provide support to communities/organisations, and report back to the PDG.

Extraordinary Meeting of Prevent Delivery Group & Safer Essex

If there is an event, or series of events, of immediate concern the EPEG may wish to call a short notice extraordinary meeting of the Prevent Delivery Group members and/or Safer Essex members. This will provide an opportunity for two-way briefing with a wider partnership, including elected members. Depending on the nature of the of the event this may instead be directed through the Essex Resilience Forum structures instead (ERF structures will always have priority).

Prevent training

- ❑ Termly ECC Prevent Awareness and Update 09.12.25 - this can be booked via: Education Essex Online
- ❑ Prevent Duty training –
[The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#)
- ❑ New Home Office Prevent training (replacing WRAP) email:
educationsafeguarding@essex.gov.uk



Statutory frameworks – update

During 2024 the Department for Education consulted on proposals to strengthen the safeguarding requirements in the statutory EYFS frameworks in the following areas:

- safer recruitment
- child absences
- change Lead Practitioner to Designated Safeguarding Lead
- safeguarding training
- paediatric first aid training
- safer eating
- toileting and privacy

Consultation headlines:

- 1470 responses
- Strong support from respondents for all proposals
- Consensus that the reforms will improve children's safety and align with current best practice in early years settings
- All proposals will be implemented, with two additional changes on whistleblowing and employment references



Safer recruitment

There are existing requirements in the statutory frameworks around criminal record checks and the suitability checks carried out by Ofsted and Childminder Agencies.

However, settings are not explicitly required to obtain references before employing a new member of staff or include information on safer recruitment procedures in their safeguarding policies.

The consultation asked if both these requirements should be added to ensure that all settings are robustly and consistently checking the suitability of their staff before employment.

Outcome: both will be implemented. However, as some respondents raised concerns about collecting references prior to interviews, the DfE will also change the wording so references must be obtained **before employment**. It is thought that this will still help to ensure safer recruitment while preventing delays to employment.



Child absences

Children being absent from early years settings repeatedly, or for prolonged periods, may be a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues.

The consultation asked about adding requirements into the statutory frameworks for following up on unexplained or prolonged absences and for settings to have an attendance policy. This would:

- align with what is expected in schools and help keep children and their families safe; and
- help parents and carers to understand the expectations on them to report absences and the procedure the provider would need to follow if a child is absent

The consultation also asked about adding a new requirement for settings to hold more than two emergency contacts for each child. This change aims to support providers to contact someone in an emergency.

Outcome: both will be implemented, with minor amendments to the wording for additional clarity as suggested in responses



Safeguarding Lead – terminology

The consultation asked about changing the title of 'Lead Practitioner' in early years settings to 'Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)'.

The intention is:

- to prevent ambiguity by bringing the language in line with other education settings, including schools; and
- to help prevent confusion as, within other safeguarding documents, 'Lead Practitioner' can mean a different role.

Outcome: to be implemented



Safeguarding training annex

The consultation asked about a proposal to include an annex in the statutory frameworks which sets out the minimum requirements for effective safeguarding training.

The intention is to help settings know what they must be looking for in a safeguarding course and what information a course must contain, should they wish to deliver the training in house.

Outcome: to be implemented, with a change to the criteria for DSL training so that it includes how to ensure internet safety. A training renewal period of every two years will also be introduced, to strengthen safety further while reducing the burden that annual training would put on settings.



Safeguarding training information in safeguarding policies

It is important for all staff within settings to be supported to safeguard children. Safeguarding training gives staff the knowledge, but to implement this knowledge each day requires support from more experienced members of staff.

Therefore, the consultation asked about a proposal to add a requirement for safeguarding policies to include detail of how safeguarding training is delivered and how practitioners are supported to put this into practice.

Outcome: to be implemented



Other consultation areas: Paediatric First Aid (PFA)

The consultation asked about making it explicit in the statutory frameworks that for students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over) to be included in ratios, they will need a valid PFA certificate.

By making this explicit in the EYFS, the DfE aims to increase the number of staff within early years settings that are PFA qualified. This will help ensure the safety of all children and allow any first aid emergencies to be responded to quickly.

Outcome: to be implemented



Other consultation areas: safer eating

Mealtimes and snack times can be a high-risk environment for choking incidents and allergic reactions. Knowing how to prepare food appropriately for each child, working with parents when a baby is being introduced to solid food (or weaning) and how to supervise children whilst they are eating are all important safety issues.

The statutory frameworks require children to be within sight and hearing of a member of staff when eating. However, sector feedback has indicated that more clarity around practices would be welcome.

The consultation therefore asked about the addition of a new 'safer eating' section, including new requirements around allergies and anaphylaxis, introduction of solid foods and choking prevention. The aim of this is to help ensure children are kept as safe as possible when eating in their setting.

Outcome: to be implemented



Other consultation areas: toileting and privacy

Children's safeguarding needs to be balanced with their privacy. When children are having their nappies changed, or are learning to use the toilet, a member of staff must be present.

However, consideration needs to be given to who else is present and what can be seen. It is important to respect children's privacy wherever possible, without compromising on safeguarding.

The consultation asked about a proposal to add wording around considering children's privacy, balanced with safeguarding and support needs, when changing nappies and toileting.

Outcome: to be implemented



Whistleblowing

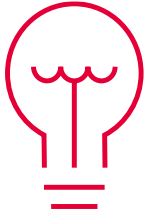
There will also be new whistleblowing requirements. The aim is to make it clearer when and how to escalate safeguarding concerns and support practitioner confidence with regards to whistleblowing to improve child safety.

Respondents asked for clear and comprehensive guidance in the EYFS on whistleblowing procedures to help ensure that all early years practitioners understand when and how to escalate any safeguarding concerns.

This will align with what is expected in schools and support practitioner confidence with regards to whistleblowing to ensure children are kept as safe as possible.

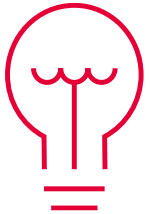


Other bits:



Remember to update any new DSL contact information

[Update Safeguarding Staff details](#)

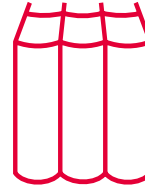


**DSL Supervision
Programme: Sophie Ede**
(Senior Practitioner Social Worker)

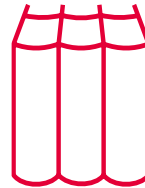
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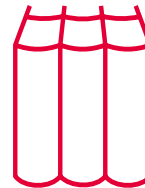
All resources and guidance documents will be updated over the summer



Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service – APP



New Directory of Services
[Directory of Services](#)



Essex Frontline-
essexfrontline.org.uk



Keeping Children Safe In Education Update

September 2025

HOLD THE DATE

KCSiE Update	02.09.25	3.30pm to 4.30pm	Online
KCSiE Update	03.09.25	9.15am – 10.15am	Online

Children's Social Care National Framework

**Children's social care has the power to
transform lives**

***NF brings together the purpose of LA children's
Social Care, principles by which CYP and families
should be supported, enablers that should be
in place so system is effective, and outcomes that
should be achieved so CYP can grow up to thrive***



Children's Social Care National Framework

Statutory guidance on the purpose,
principles for practice and expected
outcomes of children's social care

December 2023

Families First Partnership programme guide was published on 20 March

- ❑ **Sets out expectations and areas of flexibility** for safeguarding partners on implementing Family Help, multi-agency child protection and Family Group Decision Making reforms.
- ❑ **A joint ministerial foreword** which has been signed by Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care and Home Office.
- ❑ **The guide is non-statutory but is underpinned by existing statutory guidance:**
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
 - Children's Social Care: National Framework

The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide

Delivery expectations for safeguarding partners in England

March 2025

Safeguarding Questionnaire

- ❖ Revised content to strengthen self-assessment of safeguarding (opportunity for setting to 'check' arrangements)
- ❖ All settings to complete a questionnaire
- ❖ There is an accompanying action plan to support you in your planning and development of safeguarding in your setting
- ❖ Undertake the questionnaire with proprietors / management committee
- ❖ Report on questionnaire to management committee / proprietors
- ❖ To complete by the end of this term



CP FILE TRANSFER



Child Protection Files

[Essex Early Years and Childcare Website](#)

Guidance for Essex schools and education settings

- Storage systems
 - File access requests
 - Format
 - Accurate recording of concerns and responses
 - Reviewing of files
 - Transferring of files
 - Retention of files
-
- Appendices including templates for front sheet, case chronology, concern reports, body maps, contact forms, review forms and file transfer record and receipt forms.

Child Protection Files

Transfer of Child Protection records

- Record transfer falls under the role of the DSL
- The responsibility lies jointly with both the original and new setting
- This should happen within 5 days (mid-year or from the start of the new term)
- Only Child protection information should be shared in a CP file.

***Keeping
Children Safe
in Education
(DfE 2024)***

Annex C

Best Practice

- ✓ Ensure files are up-to-date, complete, in chronological order and tidy (e.g. remove duplicates)
- ✓ Ensure names of other children are redacted or use initials
- ✓ Paper copies only - make a copy of the file before sending - the original should go to the new setting.
- ✓ DSLs from the two settings should organise transfer electronically, by post or by hand
- ✓ DSL from current setting to consider what is appropriate for sharing prior to the child starting at the new setting. Consider inviting staff from new setting to any relevant meetings

***Preparation prior
to sending the
file***

Best Practice

- ✓ Confirm the child has started at the new setting. Files should not be sent in advance.
- ✓ File should go directly to the DSL at the new setting
- ✓ File must be sent securely whether electronically or by post.
- ✓ If by post call the original setting should notify the new setting that the file has been sent. It should be by recorded delivery FAO of the DSL and should be marked 'Strictly Confidential'. A '*record of transfer form*' should be included with the file.

***Transferring the
file***

Best Practice

- ✓ New setting should send confirmation of receipt to the original setting (either electronically or paper). *'File Transfer, Record and Receipt'* can be found on the [Essex Early Years and Childcare website](#)
- ✓ *Once confirmation of receipt has been obtained the original setting can securely destroy their copy*

***Confirming
receipt of the file***

Safeguarding training

Education Safeguarding Team training offer 2025 - 2026

- ❖ Level 3 Safeguarding training for Designated Safeguarding Leads - in person on various dates, at venues across the county - £95pp all day with lunch!
- ❖ Level 3 in house Trust / Schools and setting
- ❖ Half-termly online Level 2 Safeguarding training for all staff (annual refresher or new staff), governors etc - £25pp
- ❖ Level 2 in house Trusts / schools and settings
- ❖ Termly Safer Recruitment training – in person at venues across the county - £200 pp

Continued regular offer

All FREE

- Safeguarding briefing for new DSL's
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Prevent awareness and update
- J9 Domestic Abuse Awareness
- Briefings - online and in person

The anecdotes
that bring
legislation to life.

I found the entire
day really insightful
and informative.

Understanding the role of a
DSL and the complications of
the job. Also, the information
regarding the different third
parties that can be involved
with any case and the
challenges they face.



There was a good mixture of basic
information as well as questions to
make you think. It was great to have
time to reflect on your procedures and
culture and to have time to share ideas
and practise with colleagues. It was very
focussed on the role of the DSL.

It was great that
references were
made to so many
aspects of
safeguarding.

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references were
made to so many
aspects of
safeguarding.

Time to hear about good
practice in other schools.
Time to talk through
scenarios and hear other
people's professional
opinion.

I've just downloaded Effective
Support for Children and
Families in Essex to my desk
top so it is really handy to get
to.

I felt all of the course was
excellent and a great
refresher. Although the
case studies are upsetting,
it reminds me that anything
can happen in any setting.
To listen to any staff
member that may have a
concern and log everything.

EY Level 3 Safeguarding training for DSL's - Autumn term - 9.30am - 4.00pm

24 September 2025

Barleylands Function room 1

14 October 2025

Colchester Football Stadium

04 November 2025

Hamptons Sports and Leisure

Safeguarding briefings - Early Years – Autumn term 2025

**SOUTH Safeguarding briefing
Barleylands**

19.11.25 9.30am – 12.00pm

**MID Safeguarding briefing
Hamptons**

20.11.`25 9.30am – 12.00pm

**NE Safeguarding briefing
Colchester Football stadium**

24.11.25 9.30am – 12.00pm

**WEST Safeguarding briefing
Latton Bush**

27.11.25 9.30am – 12.00pm

ONLINE Safeguarding briefing

26.11.25 6.00 pm – 7.30pm

Training – Autumn Term 2025	Date	Time	Venue
Safeguarding Briefing for new DSL's	03.09.25	1.00pm to 2.00pm	Online
J9 Domestic Abuse Awareness training	09.10.25	10.00pm to 1.30pm	Online
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	02.12.25	1.00pm to 3.00pm	Online
EY Train the Trainer	04.12.25	10.00am to 11.00am	Online
Prevent awareness and Update	09.12.25	10.00am to12.00pm	Online

Learning

Child safeguarding Practice Review

Child GG

BACKGROUND

☐ CHILD GG

- She was 2 years old when admitted to hospital with a head injury
- Her sibling was subject to CP plan and PLO process

☐ MOTHER

- had a difficult childhood living with her grandparents and then in care
- had several missing episodes and was at risk of exploitation
- struggled to make healthy relationships with men



Child safeguarding Practice Review

Child GG

MULTI –AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ to focus on the children's lived experiences
- ❖ use tools to reflect on inconsistent parental engagement
- ❖ the impact of the extended family and their support of CP plans should not be assumed but reviewed and evidenced
- ❖ promotion of a positive approach to the use of escalation procedures to support creative conversation that improve practice
- ❖ to raise awareness of the Public Law Outline (PLO) process across all agencies
- ❖ consideration of the effectiveness of core group meetings in monitoring CP plans and ensuring progress from the family through interventions
- ❖ consideration of undertaking routine monitoring of all agency attendance and engagement with CP process
- ❖ raise awareness of the Police Protection process
- ❖ consider therapeutic interventions for victims of child sexual abuse or exploitation to address the trauma not just the resulting behaviours
- ❖ Best practice guidance to be developed with hospitals on parental consent where the parent is arrested and the child/ren require ongoing medical treatment



Disguised compliance

Learning from the NSPCC

- ❑ The term often used to describe ways that parents and carers behave in order to make it appear that they are co-operating with professionals and try to put a stop to scrutiny. The term can be:
 - ❖ **MISLEADING** - the term implies the caregivers are 'disguising' their 'compliance' by following plans and arrangements while pretending not to, when in fact they are doing the opposite they are pretending to comply and in fact resisting.
 - ❖ **MISUNDERSTOOD** – It has lost its meaning being used as a general 'catch all' in terms of any problems relating to parental engagement when in fact it needs to be thought about as part of the continuum of unco-operative and resistant behaviours from ambivalence to avoidance, violence and aggression.
 - ❖ **MISPLACED FOCUS** – The term itself implies active deception and labelling the behaviour in this way leads to suspicion rather than collaboration consequently, undermining relationships.



Disguised compliance

Learning from the NSPCC

- ❑ By labelling the behaviour we overlook genuine efforts at change, professionals instead need to look at the underlying causes for this resistance –
 - ✓ trauma
 - ✓ distrust
 - ✓ fear
 - ✓ privacy
 - ✓ denial
 - ✓ lack of understanding of expectations
- ❑ What professionals may see as deliberate acts of resistance are in fact underpinned by pressures and challenges that the caregivers are experiencing.
- ❑ This can also lead to a shift in focus away from the children with professionals becoming preoccupied with the compliance or lack of it.

INSTEAD

- ✓ Use clear objective language outlining what caregivers are or are not doing and the impact this has on the child
- ✓ Engage and build trusting relationships
- ✓ Look beneath the behaviour
- ✓ Keep the children at the centre

