

Braintree District
**Community
Safety
Partnership**

Braintree District
Strategic Assessment 2020-21

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Date: **9th February 2021**

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Aim & Purpose

The aim and purpose of this document is to assist the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to determine the strategic priorities for the financial year of 2021-22.

These priorities will inform the Partnership's 2021-22 Action Plan, which will assist in the allocation of appropriate resources to tackle the issues identified.

1.2 Data Parameters

Unless otherwise stated all data will be 01/10/2019 – 30/09/2020.

Section source will be identified under the section heading.

Data has been taken from the following sources (any open source data will be referenced) –

- Essex Police's crime recording system, Athena
- Essex Police's incident reporting system, STORM

1.3 Strategic Priorities

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places responsibility on the Community Safety Partnership to annually review levels and patterns of crime and disorder. This will support local communities to counter the perception, threat and consequence of criminal and anti-social behaviour by striving to reduce both crime and the fear of crime, and to reduce reoffending.

Community Safety work encompasses Anti-Social Behaviour, disorder and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

Covid-19 Restrictions

The pandemic restrictions have impacted on crime committed and reported in 2020 resulting in crime types experiencing unprecedented significantly reduced or increased levels. As restrictions have changed, crime levels have continually readjusted. As the data set significantly reflects crime within a pandemic environment the data may not accurately inform priorities for the following year where similar restrictions may not be in place.

The previous Strategic Assessment dated 31st January 2020 was published shortly before the pandemic restrictions were implemented on 23rd March 2020. In this circumstance, the Partnership has agreed to adopt the priorities identified in the previous assessment for the year 2021-22 as there has not been an opportunity to address them. Therefore, as last year, the priorities for the coming year will be as follows -



Tackle the Trafficking of
Drugs in the
community



Increase confidence in
identifying & reporting
Hidden Harms



Driving down both Violent
& Acquisitive Crimes within
the community

2 THE PARTNERSHIP

In addition to the statutory partners of Braintree District Council, Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Essex Community Rehabilitation Company, the Partnership has maintained the list of previously engaged additional Partners.

In this year the Partnership has also welcomed Eastlight Community Homes (Housing Association – previously known as Greenfields Community Housing, which merged with Colne Housing) as new partners.

To increase support to Community Safety Partnerships, Essex Police have introduced Community Safety Engagement Officers to each district. The first 10 officers were introduced in July 2020 and a further 10 arrived in October 2020.

Their main responsibilities include the following:

- To build relationships within and as part of the Community Safety Hub, enhance and strengthen information sharing between agencies and ensure a more comprehensive and joined-up operational approach is taken to crime reduction, public safety and enhancing community trust and confidence.
- Work with partners to identify and understand the public's community safety concerns undertaking community engagement to capture community intelligence.
- Evaluate the level of public confidence and reasons for it from feedback obtained from public engagement activities and CSP/Police activity. Liaising with partners and internally within Essex Police to identify themes/trends and actions to address and improve trust and confidence.
- Communicate with local communities and hard to reach diverse groups to encourage their engagement and inclusion, demonstrate that public concerns are understood and describe how they are being addressed/resolved within the partnership.
- Develop, improve and promote CSP media channels and Police channels in support of CSP objectives. Manage public facing websites and use social media as appropriate to support the work of the CSP and Community Policing Team to improve public confidence. Conduct face-to-face outreach with diverse groups and communities where appropriate to build trust and unity with those groups.
- Actively seek to coordinate and align Public Engagement, Communications and Inclusion strategies with those of the CSP, and activity undertaken in support of them, to improve trust, confidence and credibility in the CSP and Essex Police.

2.1 Police Fire and Crime Commissioner

Source: Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

The PFCC has extended his Police and Crime Plan following the delay in the PFCC election due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Extended Plan builds on the priorities set out in the 2016 Police and Crime Plan and sets ambitious new goals. While significant progress has been made there is still more to do and of particular focus in the next year will be our joint efforts to reduce violence and violent crime in our

communities. This is being led by the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership and involves strong preventative action to stop young people and the vulnerable being drawn into a life of crime. Another increasing area of focus in the Extended Plan is the need to break the cycle of domestic abuse. We are working hard through the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) partnership and with Essex Police to achieve this by preventing it happening in the first place, supporting victims, and bringing perpetrators to justice. We continue to prioritise this work and are looking to CSPs and Community Safety Hubs to work with our Violence and Vulnerability Unit to ensure a consistent, targeted, and evidence-based approach to tackling this issue.

Our approach will continue to be based on building positive local relationships and to collaborate with our key partners to deliver collective success against our shared priorities.

3 PUBLIC PERCEPTION & HEALTH

3.1 Health Profile

Source: Essex County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Based on 2016 population projections, there are an estimated of 335.6 people aged 65+ per 1,000 working age people in Essex. This is higher than the England rate of 286.8. This demonstrates a potential vulnerable population requiring support and advice.

In 2018 there were 1.08 rough sleepers per 10,000 households in the county. This was nearly half the national average of 2.01 and considerably below the regional average of 1.88 per 10,000 households.

Alcohol related measures for Essex reflected figures below the national average per 100,000 population in 2017/2018. Hospital admissions across Essex were 1,935.7, considerably lower than the national average of 2,224.8 and alcohol-related mortality was estimated to be 41.90, lower than the England average of 46.15.

The age-standardised mortality rate from drug misuse per 100,000 population across Essex was 3.63 over the period of 2015 – 2017 compared to the England rate of 4.33.

3.2 Public Perception

Source: Essex Police Performance Analysis Unit

Essex Police regularly survey county residents to gather and evaluate public perception of crime and efforts to address crime.

Responses to Quarter 1, 2020/2021 survey which include the initial pandemic lockdown provide the following insights –

80% of countywide respondents agreed that the police understood community issues.

In addition to the regular questions the survey asked Covid-19 specific questions. 73.3% of those surveyed have confidence in the approach Essex Police is taking in pandemic policing. 78.5% fully support the Essex Police approach to the pandemic.

Complaints about police in relation to Covid-19 were led by lack of face coverings and social distancing by Essex Police officers.

69% of respondents felt that Essex Police and partner organisations were dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and 63% felt the same partners were working to prevent crime.

Essex residents who think crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has become more of a problem continued to decrease significantly from 27% in the same quarter 2019/20 to 20% in 2020/21.

4 2020 COMMUNITY PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

Source: Braintree Community Safety

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Community Safety Partnership has continued to work towards delivering against its three strategic priorities.

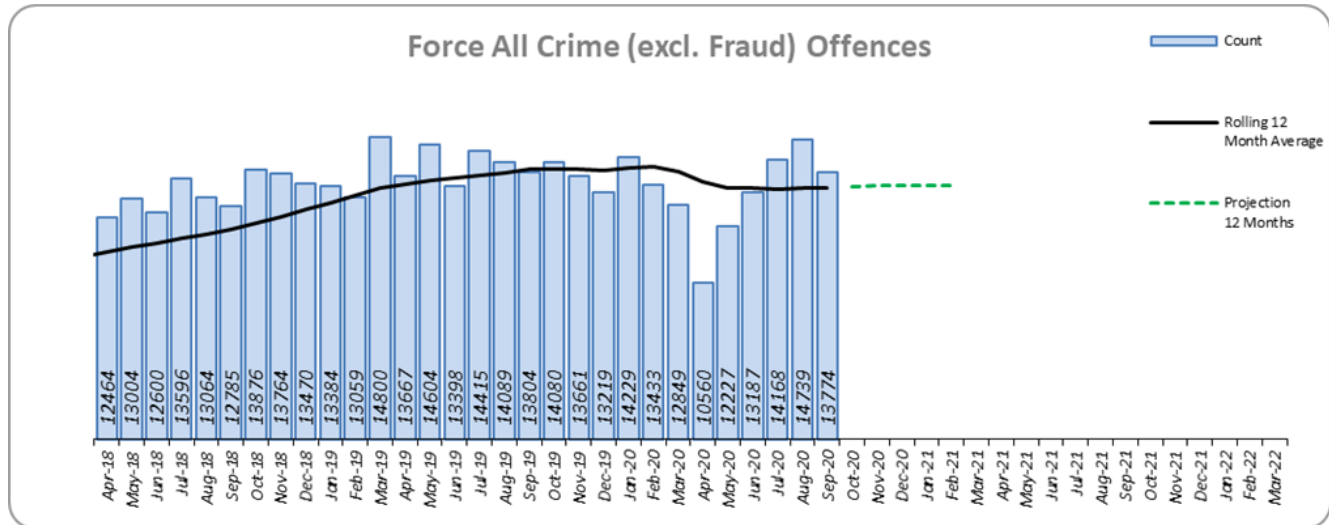
As experienced elsewhere both nationally and countywide, some projects that were scheduled to be delivered within schools have been postponed until such a date when it is safe and practical for them to take place. However, despite this the partnership is keen to explore and utilise technologies and social media to deliver 'virtual' educational sessions and awareness raising, targeting both children and young people, and their parents and carers.

The Partnership has seen an increase in complex cases being discussed at multi-agency Community Safety Hub meetings regarding anti-social and nuisance behaviour, individuals suffering mental ill health, increased substance and alcohol misuse, and homelessness or risk of homelessness. There has also been a reported increase in child exploitation which has led to the formation of a new Local Exploitation Group to help identify individuals and prevent escalation of risk. The group will aim to highlight potential areas of concern across the district where young people congregate and, if intelligence suggests exploitation is taking place, help to deliver education and awareness campaigns to both children, young people, parents and carers and the community as a whole.

5 CRIME

5.1 Essex Trends

Source: Essex Police Performance Analysis Unit.



5.2 District Level Police Data

Source: Essex Police Performance Analysis Unit.

Crime Type	Offences						
	DA	% DA 2020	2019	2020	# diff.	% diff.	% All 2020
Anti-Social Behaviour (incidents)	-	-	2554	3022	468	18.3	-
All Crime (excl. Action (NFIB) Fraud)	2300	21.0	10609	10941	332	3.1	100.0
Violence Against the Person	1829	38.4	4104	4766	662	16.1	43.6
Sexual Offences	80	23.1	339	347	8	2.4	3.2
- Rape	58	45.0	125	129	4	3.2	1.2
- Other Sexual Offences	22	10.1	214	218	4	1.9	2.0
Robbery	2	4.0	62	50	-12	-19.4	0.5
- Robbery of business property	0	0.0	10	7	-3	-30.0	0.1
- Robbery of Personal Property	2	4.7	52	43	-9	-17.3	0.4
Theft Offences	93	3.2	3466	2864	-602	-17.4	26.2
- Burglary	10	1.5	821	665	-156	-19.0	6.1
- Burglary Residential	10	2.2	537	464	-73	-13.6	4.2
- Burglary Business & Community	0	0.0	284	201	-83	-29.2	1.8
- Vehicle Offences (incl. Interference)	12	1.7	764	707	-57	-7.5	6.5
- Theft from a Vehicle	4	1.0	413	385	-28	-6.8	3.5
- Theft of a Vehicle	7	3.3	226	209	-17	-7.5	1.9
- Vehicle Interference	1	0.9	125	113	-12	-9.6	1.0
- Theft	71	4.8	1881	1492	-389	-20.7	13.6
Criminal Damage inc. Arson	159	14.5	1134	1097	-37	-3.3	10.0

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- <i>Criminal Damage</i>	158	15.4	1084	1029	-55	-5.1	9.4
- <i>Arson</i>	1	1.5	50	68	18	36.0	0.6
Racial/Religiously Aggravated Offences	2	2.5	71	80	9	12.7	0.7
Hate Crime HO Definition	8	4.8	139	166	27	19.4	1.5
Domestic Abuse	2300	100.0	1913	2300	387	20.2	21.0
- <i>High Risk Domestic Abuse</i>	154	100.0	153	154	1	0.7	1.4
- <i>Medium Risk Domestic Abuse</i>	306	100.0	334	306	-28	-8.4	2.8
- <i>Standard Risk Domestic Abuse</i>	1737	100.0	1304	1737	433	33.2	15.9
- <i>No Risk Assessment</i>	103	100.0	122	103	-19	-15.6	0.9
Drug Offences	0	0.0	273	376	103	37.7	3.4
- <i>Trafficking of Drugs</i>	0	0.0	32	62	30	93.8	0.6
- <i>Possession of Drugs</i>	0	0.0	241	314	73	30.3	2.9
Possession of Weapons	0	0.0	76	85	9	11.8	0.8
Public Order	97	8.6	915	1127	212	23.2	10.3

6 PARTNERSHIP DATA

6.1 Anti-Social Behaviour – Essex Police

Source: Essex Police Storm system and Essex Police ASB Manager

Across Essex, ASB reporting increased by 11.76%, there were 48,233 calls recorded in this period compared to 43,158 the previous year. In comparison Braintree increased by 18.11%.

ASB levels in Braintree were affected by the 4 new ASB categories recorded by Essex Police.

New categories	No	Explanation
Covid breach	56	Includes premises open when prohibited, failure to wear masks etc
Covid Quarantine	24	Persons not quarantining on return from listed countries
Social distancing	278	Dwelling, business and public spaces where Social Distance guidelines are not met
Rule of Six	15	Groups/gatherings in excess of 6 permitted persons

Overall, there were 3,019 ASB incidents in the District and the highest ASB types, excluding Covid-19 specific types, were Disturbance (494) and Nuisance (507). There were 131 Nuisance Neighbour calls.

Drug related calls increased to 386 this period compared to 274 in the previous year, equating to a rise of 40.87%.

Essex Police have developed an **Anti-Social Behaviour Development Plan** which is aimed to reduce the impact on victims, especially the most vulnerable and to provide a visible deterrent to such behaviour and thereby improving the public perception that this is being effectively tackled using a partnership approach.

The Plan has five objectives:

- **Victims:** Providing a greater focus on the impact of anti-social behaviour on victims and their needs.
- **Data Collection and Accuracy:** Utilising data to target resources and for preventative methods to be adopted to protect communities.
- **Training:** Ensuring officers are equipped with the knowledge and tools to be proactive when dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- **Collaborative Working:** Working together with partners to ensure the best results for victims.
- **Internal and External Communications:** Using communication both internally and externally to combat anti-social behaviour.

The Development Plan provides a comprehensive package which encompasses a progressive approach to tackling the complexities of Anti-Social Behaviour which is constantly reviewed in order to provide the best service to the community and victims.

ASB data is regularly reviewed as regards to the escalation of incidents and this was evident recently when there was an increase of reports which were primarily online. This was mainly due to the pandemic where there has been a rise in complaints of ASB. These have been in relation to breaches of Covid-19 rules and this is anticipated to continue as new restrictions are imposed there will be further complaints of individuals failing to comply.

6.2 Crime Prevention

Source: Essex Police Local Policing Support Unit

Essex Police are committed to develop a stronger new Crime Prevention Strategy (2021-2024). The dedicated Superintendent and Local Policing Support Unit in collaboration with thematic leads have progressed to schedule the delivery of an ambitious programme to be launched in January 2021.

Utilising insight and analytical predictors it has been possible to identify cross command and partnership thematic areas which are anticipated to cause the biggest threat, harm and risk to Essex communities from 2021 onward; these are the strands for the Crime Prevention Strategy 2021-2024 and are grouped as Serious Violence, Organised Crime and Complex Needs.

Serious Violence

- Knife Crime
- Rape
- Night-Time Economy

Organised Crime

- Cyber Crime and Fraud
- High Impact Organised Crime
- County Lines

Complex Needs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwelling Burglary and Street Robbery • Domestic Abuse • Mental Health • Prevent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate Crime • Child Sexual Abuse/Child Sexual Exploitation • Drugs |
|--|---|

There is clear synergy between the Strategy and the priorities identified by each of the Community Safety Partnerships. Essex Police will continue to work in partnership with our partners in order to deliver this plan across Southend, Essex and Thurrock.

6.3 Local Authority data

Source: Braintree District Council Streetscene Enforcement

During the period January - October 2020 Streetscene Enforcement received various reports/complaints including those categorised as 'Noise'. The complaints relating to noise nuisance are usually investigated by the Housing and Pollution Team under the Environmental Protection Act and include noise from development or other commercial activity, DIY or amplified noise such as music, TV or musical instruments.

The 'ASB' (Anti-Social Behaviour) category covers a wide range of noise or nuisance not covered under S79 Environmental Protection Act Part III such as screaming, shouting, banging or odour from cannabis.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
ASB	22	15	16	45	31	51	65	32	32	27
Burning	3	8	8	80	50	20	16	19	11	10
Noise	12	14	13	49	49	46	64	70	30	36
Fly tipping	28	51	15	34	51	55	26	35	20	33
Litter	12	21	18	11	32	34	34	16	10	44

6.4 ECFRS

Source: Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

District	Home Safety/Safe and Well Visits	Safeguarding referrals	Firebreak	Cadets
Basildon	441	37	1	
Braintree	347	45		
Brentwood	157	16		
Castlepoint	319	16		
Chelmsford	467	45	1	28
Colchester	837	79	1	
Epping	258	26		
Harlow	211	48	1	22
Maldon	241	19		
Rochford	228	18		
Southend	624	123		31
Tendring	872	83	1	53
Thurrock	375	58	3	20
Uttlesford	187	23	2	
Total	5564	636	10	154

During the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions all Firebreak and Cadet interventions ceased. Safeguarding referrals continued to be received, actioned and signposted. Internal safeguarding interventions moved to phone calls rather than face-to-face, however those most at risk and needing smoke alarms received visits as necessary.

Current recovery plans involve the approval of risk assessments to restart delivering Firebreak and Cadets with the use of operational staff and premises, ensuring the safety of participants and staff. ECFRS have reviewed education packages for schools and have continued to deliver education activities utilising technology and virtual sessions.

ECFRS continued to deliver Road Safety Activities in partnership with Safer Essex Road Partnership (SERP).

6.5 CRC

Source: Essex Community Rehabilitation Company

Essex CRC have continued to strive to deliver the best possible service to the most people despite the Covid-19 landscape. ECRC continued to deliver throughout lockdown but had to change its mode of delivery where possible. In September 2020 close to 20% of cases were face-face, as were interventions such as Building Better Relationships and the Unpaid Work scheme. Remaining work was conducted remotely.

Due to Covid-19 the court service significantly reduced also, and a period of limited new sentences occurred. This impacted on the CRC where there was a drop in overall caseload (4,000 in the community approx in March – 3,600 in the community approx September 2020). However, these numbers are expected to rise as court work returns to previous levels and resumes sentencing. There will be a period of increased and quicker sentencing which will require close management. Because of the impact on the courts, it is not possible for CRC to identify trends in offending or sentencing at this current time. The CRC remains committed to its partnership commitments across the next year as we move towards unification with the National Probation Service (NPS) in July 2021.

7 HIDDEN HARMS

7.1 Domestic Abuse

Source: Essex Police

Across Essex there were 41,834 DA Investigations (Crime and Non-Crime) in the year ending September 2020 compared to 42,857 in the previous 12 months. This was a decrease of 2.39%.

In Braintree there were 3,191 DA Investigations in the year ending September 2020 compared to 3,025 in the previous 12 months. This was an increase of 5.49%.

During lockdown that commenced 23rd March 2020, DA incidents reported to the police decreased noticeably. This was anticipated as whilst the abuse may occur there were reduced opportunities for the victim to report it outside the presence of the perpetrator.

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline reported an 80% increase in calls in June 2020. Women's Aid Survivor Survey reported in April 2020 that 67% of respondents felt that abuse levels had escalated during lockdown whilst 78% also reflected restricted opportunities to seek assistance. Reported incidents to Essex Police have not increased by similar levels.

It is anticipated that opportunities for reporting abuse incidents may increase as restrictions alter and as children return to education and therefore reporting rates may increase significantly over subsequent months. Any increased restrictions may hinder delayed reporting.

The Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 is currently processing through government stages and will introduce various strategies to tackle this crime. This will include monitoring of local authority and agency responses and placing a duty on local authorities to support victims and families, including provision of accommodation and refuge.

7.2 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)

Source: Essex Police Modern Slavery Team

In the year to 6th December 2020 there were 80 referrals into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) by Essex Police. In addition to that, 228 MS1/DTN (Duty to Notify) forms were completed. The MS1/DTN form serves to notify the Home Office of a suspected victim of MS/HT who is, however, not engaging with the NRM process.

Nationally, there was a 33% increase in referrals in Quarter 1 2020 in comparison to the same period in 2019. The top 5 nationalities were British, Romanian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Polish and the top types were Criminal, Labour and Sexual Exploitation.

Pandemic Restrictions did impact this vulnerable group as restrictions affected the prevalent business types i.e nail bars and building/home renovations. In some cases, victims may have increased acceptance of unsafe work and home conditions or decreased pay or received no pay at all.

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Exploitation probably continued but changed operational methods or exploitation types, such as exploitation of the Furlough scheme where exploiters may have claimed grants but passed this onto workers.

On the 17th September 2020, the Home Office published the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Statistics for Quarter 2 2020 (1 April to 30 June).

For the UK in Quarter 2 2020, 2,209 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the NRM; a 23% decrease from the preceding quarter, and a 5% decrease from the same quarter in 2019.

In 2019, there were 10,627 people across the UK referred into the NRM which is a 52% increase on the 6,986 referrals made in 2018, and the largest recorded year-on-year increase of NRM referrals.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and partners have responded to the pandemic impact by moving support online and utilising technology where possible. However, there are still gaps in understanding the impact of the pandemic on victims, such as displacement to new work/living conditions and arrangements, changes to existing exploitation Modus Operandi (MO) and health and care implications for any victims who have contracted Covid-19. Ongoing restrictions are likely to hinder understanding of the changing MSHT landscape.

7.3 Hate Crime

Data Source: Essex Police Hate Crime Officers.

Across Essex there were 3,767 Hate Crime incidents in the year ending September 2020 compared to 3,395 in the previous 12 months. This was an increase/decrease of 10.95%.

In Braintree there were 191 Hate Crime incidents in the year ending September 2020 compared to 160 in the previous 12 months. This was an increase of 19.37%.

The pandemic restrictions saw slight increases in Hate Crime where the victims were from the IC5 (Chinese, Thai, etc) community. However, anecdotally this community are less likely to report crimes and so the true level of Hate Crime affecting them may actually be higher. It may be advisable to engage with the East Asian communities to promote trust and encourage crime reporting.

Hate Crime associated to Night-Time Economy has decreased understandably as many premises have been closed, alcohol consumption has increased at home and as the public when gathering have done so in open spaces rather than licenced premises.

In addition, there has been an increase in neighbour on neighbour Hate Crime incidents. This is in line with a cross county increase in Nuisance Neighbour category Anti-Social Behaviour.

7.4 CSE

Source: Essex Safeguarding Children Board

During lockdown the number of children reported as missing decreased, however levels are now returning to pre lockdown levels. During lockdown, risk assessment levels changed as many children were reassessed by Social Care from High to Medium and Standard risk levels as the opportunity for them to be at risk diminished in the restrictions.

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Exploitation types have also altered in levels and types. There has been a slight increase in Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) of 6% and a slight reduction in Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) of 6% of all young people with Child Exploitation (CE) Social Care flags.

Social media and online contact are increasing in levels, both in CSE and CCE, where online contact can be a recruitment avenue and facilitation of the crime. For CSE this can be sharing of images and content and in CCE as a cyber enabled crime to exchange funds etc. Year on Year it has increased and in the last year CSE technologically based investigations increased by 16%.

There is an increase in peer on peer exploitation where over the last three years half of suspects have been under 18 years old.

To tackle this ECSB, in conjunction with partners, is running an online awareness programme to inform parents and children from preschool to teenagers to inform and support safe online behaviour.

Anecdotally, females were found to be less likely to be challenged in using public transport during lockdown and it is possible that they will continue to be groomed into County Line networks.

As a result, ECSB will be running a campaign throughout 2020 to raise awareness in transport hubs for partners to identify potential exploitation victims and for victims to be aware of support opportunities and contacts. There are 4 initial hubs for the campaign, but other districts are also encouraged to take part.