



Harlow Strategic Assessment 2020-21

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Aim & Purpose

The aim and purpose of this document is to assist the Harlow Community Safety Partnership (CSP), known as the Safer Harlow Partnership (SHP), 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 6th February 2020 was published shortly before the pandemic restrictions were implemented on 23 March 2020. In this circumstance, the Partnership has agreed to adopt the priorities identified in the previous assessment for the year 2021-22. Therefore, as last year, the priorities for the coming year will be as below -

 ASB & Crime

 Domestic Abuse

 Hate Crime

 Gangs

 Permitted Development Housing

2 THE PARTNERSHIP

In addition to the statutory partners of Harlow Council, Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Essex Community Rehabilitation Company, the Partnership has maintained the list of previously engaged additional 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 SETDA 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 1000 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 2017/18. Hospital admissions across Essex were 1935.7, considerably lower than the national average of 2224.8 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 Covid19 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 Covid19 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 ASB and 63% felt the same partners were working to prevent crime.

Essex residents who think crime and 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: Youth and Citizenship Team

The SHP has focussed its efforts on the following five priorities:

- ASB and Crime
- Domestic Abuse
- Gangs
- Hate Crime
- Permitted Development Housing

The work of the Partnership is supported by multi-agency priority sub-groups, each with their own Action Plan. By utilising the OPFCC annual grant and working effectively in partnership, the following activity has taken place in 2020:

- Purchase of portable CCTV units that can be placed in crime and antisocial behaviour hotspots to help protect vulnerable households and members of the community.
- Improvement and extension of CCTV in the town centre area to assist in identifying and tackling crime, antisocial behaviour and gang related activity and increase residents' confidence in the town centre being a safe and pleasant place to visit.
- Purchase of Crime and ASB resources to support crime prevention and reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in the community i.e. purple bells, shed/garage alarms, light timer switches, safety wallets and crime prevention posters and leaflets.
- Purchase of promotional resources to raise awareness and understanding of Hate Crime and ensure residents know how to report issues and access support. Plans are in place to train existing and new Youth Councillors as Hate Crime Ambassadors.
- Delivery of a 'Bang Out Of Order' social media campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of fireworks and the impact of antisocial behaviour during the bonfire night and Halloween period. This campaign reached over 23,000 people through Facebook; more than 2,200 on Instagram and over 5,700 people on Twitter.
- Delivery of four 'Domestic Abuse Co-ordinated Community Response' (DACCR) training webinars to over 120 Harlow based professionals across a range of agencies. These 'Masterclasses' aim to increase professional's understanding and awareness of the DASH Risk Assessment, Stalking, Coercive Control and a Whole Family Approach to working with Domestic Abuse.
- Delivery of Harlow's first ever 'Blooming Strong Woman' awards as part of a range of activity to raise awareness during Domestic Abuse Awareness Week. These awards celebrated Harlow women who have shown great personal strength either by surviving in an abusive relationship; leaving a relationship and starting out again; working to support victims of

Domestic Abuse or those that have shown great strength and courage in response to other significant challenges in their life.

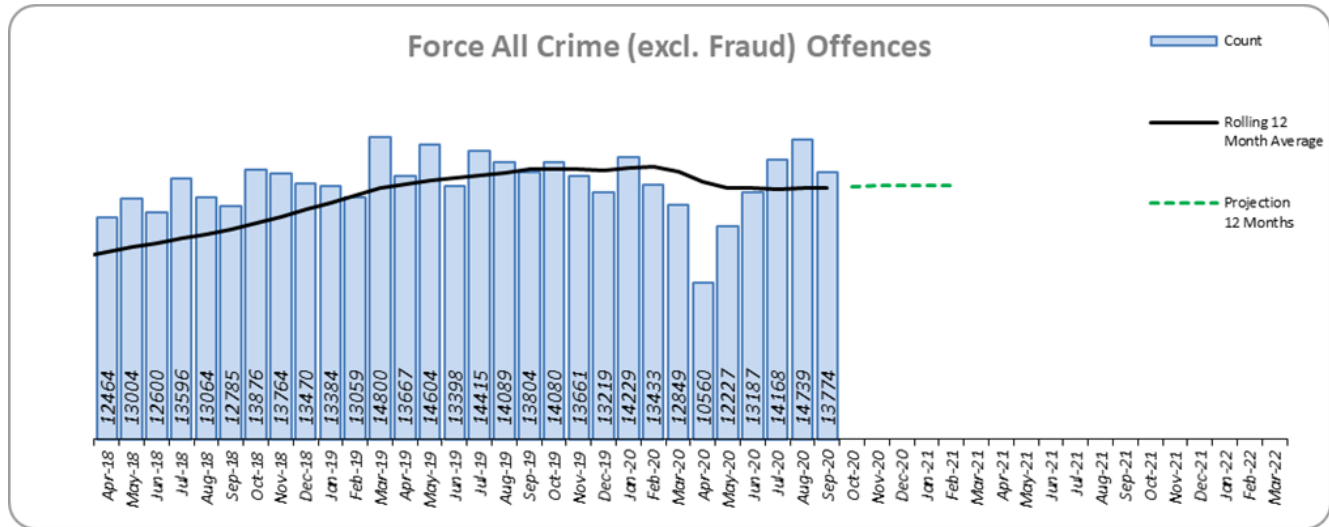
- Purchase of promotional resources to raise awareness of the valuable support delivered by Victim Support. These resources aim to ensure that residents know how to access relevant support if they have been a victim of crime.
- Delivery of a Crucial Crew event which is aimed at all Year 6 pupils in Harlow to raise awareness and understanding of a range of personal and community safety issues that may affect them now or in the future. This initiative supports pupil's transition from primary to secondary school when they are more likely to be at home, out in the community or accessing services without adult supervision. This event is delivered in March each year and due to the Pandemic, this year's event was unfortunately interrupted so not all schools were able to attend but feedback from those that did attend was very positive.

Throughout the year, partners have been proactive in finding different ways to deliver community safety initiatives despite the restrictions that Covid-19 has placed on us all. The Partnership will continue to utilise PFCC funding effectively, using it where it is most needed and will have the greatest impact.

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)	-	-	3075	3427	352	11.4	-
All Crime (excl. Action (NFIB) Fraud)	1762	17.4	10210	10126	-84	-0.8	100.0
Violence Against the Person	1405	33.1	4041	4240	199	4.9	41.9
Sexual Offences	70	22.2	287	316	29	10.1	3.1
- Rape	53	37.9	131	140	9	6.9	1.4
- Other Sexual Offences	17	9.7	156	176	20	12.8	1.7
Robbery	1	1.1	129	92	-37	-28.7	0.9
- Robbery of business property	0	0.0	7	1	-6	-85.7	0.0
- Robbery of Personal Property	1	1.1	122	91	-31	-25.4	0.9
Theft Offences	54	2.0	3053	2658	-395	-12.9	26.2
- Burglary	5	1.0	483	513	30	6.2	5.1
- Burglary Residential	5	1.4	316	362	46	14.6	3.6
- Burglary Business & Community	0	0.0	167	151	-16	-9.6	1.5
- Vehicle Offences (incl. Interference)	8	1.0	933	803	-130	-13.9	7.9
- Theft from a Vehicle	0	0.0	484	447	-37	-7.6	4.4
- Theft of a Vehicle	8	3.5	290	228	-62	-21.4	2.3
- Vehicle Interference	0	0.0	159	128	-31	-19.5	1.3
- Theft	41	3.1	1637	1342	-295	-18.0	13.3
Criminal Damage inc. Arson	129	13.3	1010	968	-42	-4.2	9.6

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- <i>Criminal Damage</i>	128	15.0	895	853	-42	-4.7	8.4
- <i>Arson</i>	1	0.9	115	115	0	0.0	1.1
Racial/Religiously Aggravated Offences	1	0.8	127	122	-5	-3.9	1.2
Hate Crime HO Definition	3	1.3	225	225	0	0.0	2.2
Domestic Abuse	1762	100.0	1842	1762	-80	-4.3	17.4
- <i>High Risk Domestic Abuse</i>	186	100.0	136	186	50	36.8	1.8
- <i>Medium Risk Domestic Abuse</i>	241	100.0	315	241	-74	-23.5	2.4
- <i>Standard Risk Domestic Abuse</i>	1251	100.0	1269	1251	-18	-1.4	12.4
- <i>No Risk Assessment</i>	84	100.0	122	84	-38	-31.1	0.8
Drug Offences	0	0.0	390	497	107	27.4	4.9
- <i>Trafficking of Drugs</i>	0	0.0	86	101	15	17.4	1.0
- <i>Possession of Drugs</i>	0	0.0	304	396	92	30.3	3.9
Possession of Weapons	0	0.0	87	86	-1	-1.1	0.8
Public Order	76	7.1	1028	1074	46	4.5	10.6

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%, 48233 calls in this period compared to 43158 the previous year. In comparison Harlow increased by 11.32%.

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

New categories	No	Explanation
Covid breach	42	Includes premises open when prohibited, failure to wear masks etc
Covid Quarantine	14	Persons not quarantining on return from listed countries
Social distancing	279	Dwelling, business and public spaces where Social Distance guidelines are not met
Rule of Six	18	Groups/gatherings in excess of 6 permitted persons

Overall, there were 3423 ASB incidents in the District and the highest ASB types, excluding Covid specific types, were Disturbance (845) and Nuisance (712). There were 157 Nuisance Neighbour calls.

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 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 -24). 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 -24 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

- Dwelling Burglary and Street Robbery
- Domestic Abuse
- Mental Health
- Prevent
- 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 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 SERP.

6.4 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 (4000 in the community approx in March – 3600 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 NPS in July 2021.

7 HIDDEN HARMS

7.1 Domestic Abuse

Source: Essex Police

Across Essex there were 41834 DA Investigations (Crime and Non-Crime) in the year ending September 2020 compared to 42857 in the previous 12 months. This was a decrease of 2.39%.

In Harlow there were 2298 DA Investigations in the year ending September 2020 compared to 2641 in the previous 12 months. This was a decrease of 12.99%.

During lockdown that commenced 23 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 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 17/09/2020, 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.

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 MOs and health and care implications for any victims who have contracted Covid19. 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 3767 Hate Crime incidents in the year ending September 2020 compared to 3395 in the previous 12 months. This was an increase of 10.95%.

In Harlow there were 259 Hate Crime incidents in the year ending September 2020 compared to 260 in the previous 12 months. This was a decrease of 0.38%.

The pandemic restrictions saw slight increases in Hate Crime where the victims were from the Chinese and Thai 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.

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 ASB.

7.4 Child Exploitation

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 Exploitations (CSE) of 6% and a slight reduction in Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) of 6% of all young people with 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.