

LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION NORTH EAST AREA

WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2025

MEETING SUMMARY: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Agendas and minutes for these meetings available at www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk

Attendance List	
DISTRICT AND EPHA AGENDA (a.m.) (Notes below) Nick Hutchings, Chair	Welcome to the following Headteachers: Mark Sawtell Hazelmere Juniors Alison Clark Tendring Primary Farewell to the following headteachers: Hannah McCann Gosbecks Primary Susan Shipp Friars Grove Primary
Apprenticeship Levy update Smartphone Free Childhood	Allison Aargaard, ECC Apprentice and Employer Engagement Officer Jordana Lynch and Geoff Woolgar
NEEPHA meeting and AGM Election of Officers and Local Delivery Group representatives EPHA updates	Nick Hutchings Chair Nick Hutchings (Hamilton Primary) Vice-Chair Richard Potter (Home Farm Primary) Colchester West Nick Hutchings (Hamilton Primary) Colchester East Mark Millbourne (Prettygate Schools) Colchester South Carl Messer (St George's Primary) Tendring Mid Ian MacDonald (Elmstead Primary) Tendring North Becky Keitch (St George's CE Primary) James Newell (Wix and Wrabness Primary) Tendring South Sue Bardetti (Holland Haven Primary) Harwich & Dovercourt Liz Bartholomew (The Mayflower Primary) North East Partnership Lead heads Nicky Patrick (Spring Meadow Primary) Kerry Malcolm (St Lawrence CE Primary)
AREA AGENDA LA updates on current priorities including:	
p 1-6 • Director's welcome and view from the Bridge	Clare Kershaw
p 6-7 • Send Banding update	Ralph Holloway
p 7-8 • Stay Project	Ondrea Bloom and Carly Clarke
p 9 • Essex Air Ambulance CPR training	Adam Carr, Jenna Casey
p 10 • Update on Educational Psychology in Essex	Steve Whitfield
p 10-11 Key dates	NORTH EAST headteacher meetings 2025/26 Wednesday 12 November 2025 Wednesday 11 March 2026 Wednesday 17 June 2026 Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2025 Friday 10 October 2025 Colchester Football Stadium Headteachers' Annual Conference 2026 Friday 20 March 2026 Chelmsford City Race Course
*Page numbers refer to the full minutes (posted on the EPHA website) of the Summer term Area meetings with LA Officers and Headteachers.	

LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION NORTH EAST AREA
DISTRICT AND AREA MEETING
WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2025
ATTENDANCE

Present

Sue Bardetti	Holland Haven Primary
Liz Bartholomew	The Mayflower Primary
Aaron Battersby	All Saints CE Primary, Great Oakley
Simon Billings	St John's Green Primary
Toby Bull	The Bishop William Ward CE Primary
Mark Carter-Tufnell	St Osyth CE Primary
Alison Clark	Tendring Primary
Tracy Cooke	Brinkley Grove Primary
Hannah Coyle	Fingringhoe Primary
Margaret Coxhead	Milldene Primary
Lotte Cumming	Monkwick Infants & Nursery
Judith Dale	Baynards Primary
Sophie Denyer	Roach Vale Primary
Ellie Eames	White Hall Academy
Nikki Emrich	St James CE Primary
Tara Finney	Great Clacton CE Juniors
Clare French	Kendall CE Primary
Donna Gaffney	Layer-de-la-Haye CE Primary
Alison Grigg	Broomgrove Infants

LA Officers

Clare Kershaw	Director of Education
Dan Gee	Assistant Director, North East
Stephen Chynoweth	EY and Education Manager, N East
Jo Barclay	Head of Education Safeguarding
Ralph Holloway	Head of SEND Strategy and Innovation
Ondrea Bloom	SEND Strategic Lead - Autism
Carly Clarke	Stay Project
Janine Hanson	SEND Quadrant Manager, North East
Kevin Wilby	ECC
Emily Marks	ECC
Sarah Aldorino	ECC
Cecely Manners	ECC
Nicky Everett	School Effectiveness Partner
Kerry McGrory	School Effectiveness Partner
Carole Farrer	School Effectiveness Partner
Sue Thomas	ECC
Allison Aargaard	ECC

Nick Hutchings
Ellie Jaggs
Chris Joy
Kerry Malcolm
Rebekah May
Carl Messer
Rebecca McCutcheon
Mark Millbourne
Claire Newson
Mark Sawtell
Susan Shipp
Adam Squirrel
Steven Turnbull
Craig Twin
Karen Wright
Tania Wright

N East Chair/ Hamilton Primary
Boxted St Peter's CE Primary
Engaines Primary
St Lawrence CE Primary Rowhedge
Birch CE Primary
St George's Primary
Monkwick Juniors
Prettygate Infant and Juniors
Parsons Heath CE Primary
Hazelmere Juniors
Friars Grove Primary
Stanway Fiveways Primary
Hazelmere Infants and Nursery
St John's CE Primary
Broomgrove Juniors
Mersea Island School

In Attendance

Pam Langmead
Bridgette Gough
Claire Arnold
Jordana Lynch
Geoff Woollgar
Jenna Casey
Adam Carr
Lizzie Mooney
Jon Stevens

EPHA Professional Officer
St Andrew's/Feering Primary
Home Farm Primary
Smartphone Free Childhood
Smartphone Free Childhood
EYEP (Mid)
Essex Air Ambulance
Essex Air Ambulance
Essex Air Ambulance

Apologies

Ceri Daniels
Gemma Chester
Abbie Fairbairn
Tara Marshall
Richard Potter

Holy Trinity CE Primary
Dedham CE Primary
Lawford CE Primary
Highfields Primary
Home Farm Primary

Note: If your attendance or apologies have not been noted please contact the EPHA Professional Officer at pam@langmead.me.uk for amendment.

NORTH EAST EPHA AREA MEETING MINUTES 11 JUNE 2025

1. WELCOME

Nick Hutchings, the North East Area Chair welcomed headteachers to the meeting.

Welcome to the following Headteachers:

Mark Sawtell	Hazelmere Juniors
Alison Clark	Tendring Primary

Farewell to the following headteachers:

Hannah McCann	Gosbecks Primary
Susan Shipp	Friars Grove Primary

If you are leaving please make use of the EPHA new heads' checklist, and complete it for your successor. This is available on the EPHA website at

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/good-practice/>

2. APPRENTICESHIP LEVY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOLS

Allison Aargaard was welcomed to the meeting. She works within the Business and Skills Unit at ECC and manage the apprenticeship levy pot for the county council. This includes the management of the apprenticeship levy for those maintained schools that do not have their own bank account, who can tap into the extensive funds that are held by ECC.

Allison noted that quite a high percentage of schools have used apprenticeships, and the levy funding has become easier to access since it was first introduced 7 years ago; there are also a number of grants available to support the costs of the process.

Allison gave a brief explanation of apprenticeships: this is a paid job combined with training, so that employees can "earn as they learn". They range from a Level 2 qualification, equivalent to GCSEs, up to Level 7, equivalent to a Master's Degree. The length of time varies, from 12 months to up to 5 years.

There is no upper age limit, and apprenticeships are suitable for new entrants or members of the existing workforce who are looking to upskill or even change careers.

ECC holds an apprenticeship levy pot, which is accessible by maintained schools that don't have their own bank account. There is no limit to the claim on the pot for these schools.

It was noted that, if a school doesn't pay into the levy at all (because their workforce is too small), they can still take on apprentices aged 16-21, paid for by the Government.

In Essex there is an Apprentice Levy Transfer Service, and employers and businesses are often willing to fund apprenticeships in schools using this levy services.

A Government incentive to use the levy pays £1,000 to any employer taking on a 16-18 year old apprentice, and will pay the employment costs for 19 – 24 year olds who have an EHCP or are Looked After.

The Government has simplified the process somewhat by making the "functional skills" element optional for those over 19, unless the employer wants to include that as a requirement. There is more flexibility around off-job hours, which may be helpful when taking on an apprentice.

The ECC team provides a number of apprenticeships, for example, a new course which is proving popular: the Specialist Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship, at Level 5. There is a requirement that the teaching assistant will have Level 3 so that they have a basic understanding of the skills needed in the role, but this specialist course develops skills around SEND, interventions, teaching support and so on. [Specialist Teaching Assistant / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

As providers the team will do all the paperwork and can even find apprentices (if the school is not using a member of their own workforce).

The Level 6 teacher apprenticeship is not delivered by ECC but schools can still access the levy pot for this course. Other apprenticeships may be suitable for business administration, IT and early years practitioners, for example.

There is an Apprenticeship Support Fund for new apprentices. This is a grant to incentivise employers to take on apprentices of £2,000 (up to two per employer). If the apprentice is a young person, there is the additional payment of £1,000.

It was confirmed that the employer must offer a contract for the length of the apprenticeship but does not have to continue the employment after the apprenticeship. The team will also support both the employer and the apprentice if it isn't working out and can move apprentices to new employers if needed.

Allison stressed that the team is always happy to have a one-on-one discussion with anyone who would like more information or support re accessing their levy account.

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Hannah O'Brien
Sector Skills and Growth Coordinator
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3. SMARTPHONE-FREE CHILDHOOD

Jordana Lynch and Geoff Woollgar joined the meeting to talk about their mission, to make schools Smartphone free. Heads and teachers have a uniquely powerful role to play in changing the norm in their school communities. They asserted that when schools act, parents listen. And when schools go smartphone free, it benefits children not just during the school day, but in their wider lives too. Because childhood is too short to be spent on a smartphone.

Smartphones weren't designed with kids in mind – but they've reshaped childhood almost overnight. In the UK, 89% of 12-year-olds now own one, and so do a quarter of children aged 5 to 7. On average, kids get their first smartphone aged nine.

Instead of growing up slowly, children are being pulled into a digital world built to keep them hooked. The impact on their development, mental health and relationships runs deep – and we can't afford to look away any longer.

Compared to any other generation in history, children growing up in the smartphone era spend less time outdoors, less time playing, less time reading, less time moving and more time scrolling, alone.

Just as worryingly, Smartphones mean explicit, violent, and extreme content is only ever a few clicks away, often served up by algorithms when kids aren't looking for it. Once children see these things, they can never be unseen.

Teenage anxiety, depression and self-harm rates have skyrocketed since 2010 – when kids started getting smartphones. Evidence shows a direct link between early smartphone use and declining mental health. The tech giants' business model is simple: the longer kids stay on their platforms, the more money they make. That's why apps are packed with addictive features – and why kids find it so hard to put them down.

The average teen now receives over 200 notifications a day – fragmenting their focus and making it harder to concentrate on schoolwork, hobbies or real-life friendships. Constant distraction is the new normal. Smartphones' addictive design means they can quietly start to take centre stage in family life – causing arguments, battles over screen time, and making it harder to share real, uninterrupted time together. The blue light from screens disrupts melatonin, making it harder to fall asleep, while endless scrolling and late-night notifications keep kids wired when they should be resting.

Arguments and fallouts used to end at the school gate. Now they follow kids home, lingering on their screens day and night – with no safe space to switch off, process or recover. TikTok, Snapchat, and Roblox aren't just playgrounds for kids – they're hunting grounds for predators. They're often used by sexual predators to target children with their first smartphones

Smartphone Free Childhood advocates the following and wants parents, and schools, to sign up to their pact.



Everyone with a stake in the future of the next generation has a role to play to play in this movement. Parents, teachers, health professionals, grandparents, politicians – and young people themselves. Together we must reject the broken narrative that childhood mediated by screens and algorithms is the only way forward.

And the more of us who join the movement, the faster we'll reclaim childhood for kids everywhere.
<https://smartphonefreeschools.co.uk/>

4. NORTH EAST EPHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

a) CHAIR'S REPORT

Nick Hutchings, Chair of North East EPHA, gave the following report.

Review of the year

Happy Summer everyone! What a year we have had. I can't wait for September to come around already! I'm looking forward to the new Ofsted Framework, a further consultation on a changed curriculum, the

oodles of cash that the government are going to give us and of course the lowering number of SEND children in mainstream education!

Now for something more serious!

EPHA has worked tirelessly again this year to support Headteachers, sit on working parties, provide conferences and run up-to-the-minute training sessions on everything from exclusions to the latest DfE missives. EPHA can't do all of this without the representatives from the local areas, which allow us to spread the workload across many people. At this point I would like the members of the Executive to stand up. Please give them a round of applause for the work that they have undertaken on all our behalves this year.

Now to Pam! Well, this year it really was 20 years of service for EPHA. Not many of you will know this, but at our AGM this year, Pam produced a set of minutes from the first meeting that she attended. What was staggering was that the subject matter being discussed in 2005, was very similar to today, showing that if you stand still long enough in education, you become an innovator! EPHA would not run without Pam and her tenacity in meetings to challenge the orthodoxy, her brilliance in summing up mindless conversations and the joy with which she carries out her job. We are incredibly lucky to have Pam working with us, and I would like us all to show our appreciation to her now. Thanks Pam!!!

Last year EPHA took a lead in challenging the poor Level 3 DSL training for schools and as a result of this we now have Dida Burrell running training at White Court and Jo Barclay is now running training on behalf of Essex. Both of these new training courses have significantly improved the offer to DSLs. We have also spent time supporting Essex with the Year of Number, and we have worked very closely with Ralph Holloway and his team to try and help make small improvements to the world of SEND and mainstream schools. The ESSET Outreach service is now live, but there is still a great deal of work to do to get the best outcomes for children and schools.

This year we have again placed SEND at the forefront of our minds and made it the number one EPHA priority. Our second priority has been the curriculum. We have encouraged heads to provide feedback via the consultation. Our final priority has been Headteacher well-being, and Pam recently sent out a booklet on what Heads may want to do when considering improving their well-being.

Headship is a hard job. We all chose to do it, so we can't moan too much! Those moments of brightness in a school play, or when a child or family that we have been working with have a positive outcome, are the things to hold on to. We decided to become teachers because we wanted to make a difference. We must not lose sight of the positive differences we make each day to the children and staff that are part of our community.

What is to come?

This year is anyone's guess! We know about Ofsted, we know there will be a 'new curriculum', still with too much to do in too little time. I guess AI might play a role for better or for worse and we will probably have more issues to deal with regarding pupil interaction on social and messaging media.

SEND will continue to place a massive strain on school staff and their ability to carry out their job, whilst ensuring excellent results for all children. We know that there are whole cohorts of children in our school that should be attending a setting that frankly hasn't been provided yet. We will all continue to draw support from each other to make sure children AND staff get the best deal.

I would like to thank you all again for allowing me to chair the North East group. I feel very privileged to be able to represent you at both local and county levels. As with every year, I am very happy to step down if another colleague would like to take over and move the North East EPHA group forward. So if you are fed up with me droning on, please let Pam know!!

b) ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND LOCAL DELIVERY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Chair	Nick Hutchings (Hamilton Primary)
Vice-Chair	Richard Potter (Home Farm Primary)
Colchester West	Nick Hutchings (Hamilton Primary)
Colchester East	Mark Millbourne (Prettygate Schools)
Colchester South	Carl Messer (St George's Primary)
Tendring Mid	Ian MacDonald (Elmstead Primary)
Tendring North	Becky Keitch (St George's CE Primary)
	James Newell (Wix and Wrabness Primary)
Tendring South	Sue Bardetti (Holland Haven Primary)
Harwich & Dovercourt	Liz Bartholomew (The Mayflower Primary)
North East Partnership Lead heads	
	Nicky Patrick (Spring Meadow Primary)
	Kerry Malcolm (St Lawrence CE Primary)

The officers and Local Delivery Group representatives were thanked for the hard work that they do on behalf of headteachers in the North East Area and for agreeing to continue in their roles or taking on new positions.

4. EPHA UPDATES

- a) The Summer term EPHA newsletter**, including dates for the 2025/26 school year, was circulated to headteachers in advance of the meeting -these can also be found on the EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk.

b) EPHA County Annual General Meeting

The EPHA county AGM will be held on Thursday 2nd October at the Lion Inn, Boreham.

c) Conferences

Headteachers were reminded that the Deputy Headteachers' conference will be held on Friday 10th October 2025, at the Colchester Football Stadium and next year's annual Headteachers' conference will be held on Friday 20th March 2026 at Chelmsford City Race Course.

The programme and booking form for the Deputy Conference will be emailed to schools at the end of June.

There will be a conference for the Small Schools Support group on Wednesday 15th October 2025 at the Lion Inn, Boreham.

EPHA will be running a wellbeing conference for headteachers, with presenter Dr Emma Kell, focusing on "avoiding the risk of burnout". This will be held at the Lion Inn, Boreham, on Wednesday 22nd October 2025.

6. FUTURE DATES

NORTH EAST headteacher meetings 2025/26

Wednesday 12 November 2025

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Wednesday 17 June 2026

Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2025

Friday 10 October 2025 Colchester Football Stadium

Headteachers' Annual Conference 2026

Friday 20 March 2026 Chelmsford City Race Course

Small Schools headteacher conference

Wednesday 15th October 2025 The Lion Inn, Boreham

Headteacher wellbeing conference

Wednesday 22nd October 2025 The Lion Inn, Boreham