

# ANNEX B

## Reducing the risk and impact of Hidden Harm

Reducing Hidden Harm is a new area of focus within the Police and Crime Plan for Essex for April 2015 onwards. It builds upon the Tackling Domestic Abuse area of focus that is within the existing Plan, and extends it to include wider forms of harm that are hidden from the public view - harms such as sexual violence, child sexual exploitation and elder abuse. Many are often not recognised or reported. The emphasis is very much on spotting the signs early and helping to prevent escalation of risk.

This supplementary section of the Plan summarises what we mean by this new priority area, and sets out what has been achieved to date, together with plans for the future. Reducing the level and risk of such hidden harm is an increasing priority for the PCC, as it is for partners across Essex, Southend and Thurrock, including the Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards.

The following non-exhaustive list captures some of the types of situations that could be termed 'hidden harm', and some of the people most likely to be victims:

- **'Modern slavery' - slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude**
- **Sexual violence and abuse**
- **Domestic Abuse**
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**
- **'Honour' based violence (HBV) and abuse (HBA)**
- **Faith based abuse**
- **Forced marriage**
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
- **Abuse of vulnerable people, eg those with physical, learning and/or sensory disabilities, those with mental health problems**
- **Abuse of vulnerable older people, i.e., elder abuse**
- **Abuse of children and young people**
- **Fraud and financial abuse targeting elderly or vulnerable people**
- **Discriminatory abuse/Hate crime**
- **Online abuse eg cyber bullying, grooming**
- **Stalking and harassment**



**Awareness is growing and reporting increasing for some harms:**

**Sexual Violence**

Police figures show there were 2,170 victims of notifiable sexual offence crimes in Essex in the calendar year 2014. This is 26.5% more than in 2013 and 54% more than in 2012. Yet even with this increase we know that significant numbers of victims – both women and men, still don't report sexual offences.

Adult survivors of child sexual abuse make up around 29% of the caseload of Rape Crisis Centres in Essex, with the numbers seeking help growing. Most victims self-refer to Rape Crisis Centre, with many presenting with mental health concerns and other issues. Most incidents happen in the family home, involving a male relative or acquaintance.

**Domestic abuse**

The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Essex Police for the 12 months to February 2015 has increased from 27,848 to 28,051 and the number of offences has increased from 9,444 to 10,999. It is likely that this reflects an increased confidence in victims reporting domestic abuse to police and the rise in the proportion of incidents resulting in charges suggests a greater effectiveness in bringing perpetrators to justice. With other types of hidden harm, it is anticipated that the number of offences reported to police will increase in the short term, but it is anticipated that this will lead to a decrease in the amount of harm caused in the medium term.

**Hate crime**

1,145 victims of 'notifiable' crime in Essex in 2014 were considered to be hate crime-related. However, Home Office and Ministry of Justice figures suggest that only around 40% of victims of hate crime report the matter to police. 81% were racially motivated, 9.3% sexual orientation motivated. Most were public order offences (58%) followed by violence against the person (30%).

**Elder abuse**

A widely accepted definition of elder abuse describes it as a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to a person over the age of 65 years old. Many cases of elder abuse occur in the victim's own home or in a care home.



**We don't yet know the scale of the problem of hidden harm in Essex.**

The UK Trafficking Centre received 2,340 referrals of potential victims of trafficking in 2014, a 34% increase on 2013 – believed to represent a fraction of the problem

Research presented to Parliament in 2014 suggests an estimated 65,000 girls aged 13 and under in the UK are at risk of Female Genital Mutilation, and 170,000 are estimated to be living with FGM.

The government's Forced Marriage Unit supported 1,267 cases of possible forced marriage in 2014; 21% involved male victims.

## AREAS OF PROGRESS INCLUDE:

### Sexual violence

The PCC successfully bid for £276,000 from the Ministry of Justice to help build capacity during 2014/15 in services for victims of sexual violence. The PCC is also supporting applications to the £4.85m Home Office Fund for victims of Child Sexual Exploitation. Plans are in hand to commission services from 2016/17 onwards, jointly where possible. In the interim the PCC is grant funding Rape Crisis Centres during 2015/16, including supporting new outreach services for victims in Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford (a gap identified in the Profile of Victims' Needs and Services).

### Domestic abuse

An Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) service for high risk victims has been commissioned, with the PCC contributing £450,000 a year. PCC Pathfinder funds provided a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) Co-ordinator, and funding has been extended for 2015/16. Pathfinder funding was also given to Safer Places to research the needs of older victims of domestic abuse, and there is an increasing focus on identifying risk earlier.

### 'Honour' Based Abuse (HBA)

A task group to help prevent HBA and ensure that appropriate support is available to victims is being led by the PCC's Office.

### Elder Abuse

The PCC funded a dedicated Crimestoppers Hotline for the anonymous reporting of elder abuse. Launched in February 2015 with Essex Police and Safeguarding Adults Boards, the Hotline will be piloted for 9 months.

### Young victims of crime

Children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to hidden harms, and are also less likely to report to the Police. The PCC commissioned the youth charity Catch22 to help us understand more about children and young people's perceptions of victimisation, what it means to them, and how best to support young victims.

### Hate Crime

The PCC provided Pathfinder Funding for the extension of the Hate Incident Reporting Centre (HIRC) and Hate Crime Ambassador (HCA) model during 2014/15, and 'Pathfinder' support to a project on hate crime in targeted schools.

### Modern Slavery

Essex Police has agreed a Modern Slavery Action Plan based on the national model. The PCC has supported a Conference in Thurrock on this topic.

The issue of 'hidden harm' is implicit in the work of the Essex, Southend and Thurrock Safeguarding Boards for adults and children, their new guidelines and procedures. The PCC's Office is represented on the Boards and contributes financially to them.

## Work planned for 2015/16 and onwards includes:

### West Essex Hidden Harm Pathfinder

A 'Roundtable' of senior representatives from health, police, social care and the voluntary sector with a shared commitment to addressing hidden harm was held in West Essex in early 2015. Co-chaired by the PCC and the Chief Executive of West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the session focused on how agencies could work together to tackle hidden harm. An action plan is being developed, with the proposal that this joined up approach is tested in West Essex through a pathfinder model.

### Hate Crime Strategy

The PCC is working with Essex Police and partners to develop a Hate Crime Strategy, including further development of the Strategic Hate Crime Prevention Partnership.

### Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Abuse/Neglect

Child Protection will form part of the PCC's routine scrutiny of Essex Police. Plans to commission services for victims of sexual violence from 2016/17 will include provision for victims of Child Sexual Exploitation and adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

### Commissioning local services to support victims of hidden harm

£100,000 has been earmarked by the PCC for strategic initiatives to address 'hidden harm' within local communities. Community Safety Partnership (CSPs) are invited to submit proposals that will help address known issues within their areas, supported by evidence of need. The emphasis will be on prevention, awareness raising, education, and promoting reporting with clear advice on routes to support.

### Victims Gateway

The website already includes advice on aspects of hidden harm and details of services that can provide support, but will be further developed so that it is relevant to a wider group of potential victims, for example making it more accessible and interesting to young people.

### Performance

The PCC will continue to work with Essex Police, Safeguarding Boards and partner agencies to understand and identify the nature and level of hidden harm across all of its strands in Essex, and to ensure that the risks are reduced and those who have suffered harm are supported. We will work across the partnership to develop a small set of outcomes supported by key indicators of performance, which we will publish so that the public can see evidence of impact.