

Victim Commissioning Report

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1. Purpose of the report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the PFCC Victims Commissioning programme.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Performance and resources members are asked to note the performance of PFCC commissioned services

3. Executive Summary

3.1. Overall referrals to PFCC commissioned services have increased 31% compared to quarter one of 2020/21. This increase is following a 6% decrease last quarter. The increase is due to the easing of lockdown restrictions and more victims seeking help.

3.2. A significant increase has been seen in support provided by Mountain Healthcare in the Sexual Abuse Referral Centre (SARC) and Safesteps who deliver the COMPASS domestic abuse helpline. The increase was seen July and August once lockdown restrictions had lifted.

3.3. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions upon support networks are starting to be seen within the reported outcomes of victims when leaving the support service. A 19% reduction was seen in the number of sexual abuse victims that was able to access further support and domestic abuse victims who say their support networks have improved upon exiting the service reduced by 4%. This reduction reflects the COVID-19 restrictions and the difficulties in accessing support networks such as friends and family but also accessing other services which may include mental health, housing and financial.

4. Background and proposal

The PFCC has a responsibility to commission services that support victims to cope and recover from the impact of crime. The PFCC commission four main contracts for victim support services. All victim support services are accessible to all and cover all of Essex. Performance data is presented quarterly and discussed in performance meetings with the providers and commissioning partners.

4.1. Sexual Abuse Performance
Synergy Essex – Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and community support







	2018/19				2019/20				2020/21		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number of victims Synergy Essex supported	691	713	703	895	936	904	881	955	711	909	
All sexual offences reported to police					1,288	1,269	1,229	1,247	1,013	1,265	
Percentage of victims supported against sexual offences reported					73	71	72	77	70	72	

Synergy Essex referrals has increased by 28% and returned to typical pre-COVID volumes. Synergy Essex has re-introduced a limited number of face-to-face sessions for clients unable to access remote support, this has included children under 12. All face to face support has been delivered from specially adapted COVID compliant rooms.

	2019/20				2020/21		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number of individuals Synergy working with	2739	2807	2853	2991	2756	3003	


Whilst the number of new referrals has returned to a volume that is typical the data shows that less victims are exiting the service. In Q1 2020/21 there were 506 victims accessing the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service. In Q2 2020/21 this has risen to 532. Synergy Essex is expecting this figure to continue to rise based on the ongoing COVID restrictions and the back log within the CJS. In Q1 2020/21 Synergy Essex were awarded additional funding for six ISVAs which have all been recruited and are currently being trained. Due to the length of training it isn't expected that they will be holding a full case load until early next year.

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Outcomes: Percentage of victims reporting improvements from ISVA service	2018/19				2019/20				2020/21		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
More confident In communicating needs	93	89	98	98	98	97	99	93	99	100	
More confident about personal safety	91	81	94	98	98	99	99	93	98	100	
Is aware of options and resources available	99	97	96	100	100	100	99	97	98	96	
Outcomes: Percentage of victims reporting improvements from community support											
More in control of their lives	92	96	95	95	95	95	95	95	97	93	
Better health and wellbeing	94	94	97	97	97	96	96	96	98	95	
More able to access further support	97	98	98	98	98	98	99	97	100	81	



The COVID restrictions has started impacting outcomes for victims. In Q2 2020/21 there was a reduction of 19% of victims reporting that they are more able to access further support. Due to COVID restrictions victims feel that they cannot access their usual support networks which includes family, friends and their local community.

4.2. Mountain Healthcare – Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

	2018/19				2019/20				2020/21		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number of referrals into the SARC during the reporting period	119	131	105	106	133	136	118	140	79	172	

The SARC have seen a significant increase in referrals. On closer inspection of the data the increase has been within non-forensic contacts. Mountain Healthcare are contacted by individuals and professionals seeking support and advice particularly for historic sexual abuse cases. Anecdotal information suggests the increase is due to victims having the time and space to reflect on past incidents during COVID restrictions and are seeking support because their typical coping strategies e.g. work, and friends are no longer available.

**4.3. Domestic Abuse
Safesteps (previously Southend On Sea Domestic Abuse Partnership) – Compass Domestic Abuse Helpline**




	2019/20				2020/21		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number of calls and online referrals COMPASS answered	1,417	1,596	1,350	1,581	1,342	2,185	
Number of DA individuals	598	617	658	836	674	1,255	

*Prior to Q2 2020/21 there are data accuracy concerns due to technical reporting. Q2 2020/21 is an accurate reflection of volumes

In Q1 2020/21 it was reported that Safesteps had some technical challenges during lockdown that impacted data reporting which was resolved. Q2 2020/21 shows a more accurate picture of the current volumes. The data shows calls answered as this demonstrates the overall number of contacts with the service and those that are unique contacts. Similar to the trend seen within the SARC, Compass also answered a significant number of calls where more information and advice was provided. In July NHS sent a text with Compass details which we believe drove a lot of the contact to this service.




In Q1 2020/21 Safesteps highlighted an emerging issue with regard to sustainability of their current operation to deliver the Compass helpline. Commissioners worked with Safesteps and through a change of working hours and working patterns has resolved this issue. Staff are reporting an improved working environment. Additional temporary staff has also been recruited in order to continue to meet the increase demand for services.

4.4. Changing Pathways and Next Chapter – Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), community outreach and refuge

	2019/20				2020/21		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number of victims referred to IDVAs, community outreach and refuge service	1,025	967	1,028	997	1,127	1,270	
Next Chapter	470	499	529	464	600	580	
Changing Pathways	555	468	499	533	527	635	




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Changing Pathways and Next Chapter during the lockdown period have had a 13% increase in referrals compared to quarter one of 2020/21, this increase has been managed by the organisations.

	2019/20				2020/21		
Outcomes: Percentage of victims reporting improvements for IDVAs, community outreach and refuge service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Feel better able to recognise abusive behaviour				96	99	93	
Feel more confident about asking for help when I need it				96	98	98	
Support networks have improved				79	93	89	

Changing Pathways and Next Chapter have continued to provide a good service and the outcome data is not showing any issues with the service.

4.5. Non-Specialist support Victim Support

	2018/19				2019/20				2020/21		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
Number of victims referred to Victim Support	17,541	11,258	10,027	9,525	8,556	8,107	8,604	10,279	8,659	9,889	
Number of victims supported by Victim Support	1,662	1,612	1,424	1,434	1,349	1,073	1,487	1,982	1,647	1,950	
Percentage of victims supported to victims referred	9	14	14	15	16	13	17	19	19	20	

Victims are referred to Victim Support predominantly by Essex Police. The significant reduction in referrals at quarter two of 2018/19 and the continuing reductions was due to the implementation of GDPR, with Essex Police changing to an opt-in consent based model. Victim Support and Essex Police have been working together to improve the quality of referral in order to improve

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the number of victims that are supported. Q2 2020/21 is evidence of this work, Victim Support supported 20% more Victims compared to Q2 2018/19.

	2018/19				2019/20				2020/21	
Outcomes: Percentage difference increase of victims reporting improvements for Victim Support service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Outcome - Ability to cope	59	83	70	50	80	80	70	48	75	62
Outcome - Perception of safety	47	87	80	47	82	98	59	54	86	87
Outcome - Feeling Informed	125	46	43	41	58	71	38	36	32	57

Victim Support monitor victims’ outcomes using a distance travelled model. They ask victims to score their ability to cope when they are first referred, and this score is reviewed upon exit. Victim Support consistently demonstrate that people leaving the service have improved their ability to cope, since the initial crime of which they were a victim

5. Link to Strategic Objectives

5.1. The Police and Crime Plan commits to ensuring victims are at the heart of all we do. To deliver this commitment, we must ensure that every victim receives the services they are entitled to and the PFCC commissions the right services driven by the needs of the victim.

6. Financial implications

6.1. All providers are delivering services within contract value and there is no risk to the budget.

7. Legal implications

7.1. There are no legal risk or issues.

8. Staffing implications

None

9. Equality and Diversity implications

9.1. All victim support services must be open and accessible to all. As part of the contract monitoring, some demographic information is captured including sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, age and gender shown in appendix A.

9.2. Between April – Sept 2020/21 data showed

- Of the victims that disclosed their ethnicity 88% identified as White, 12% had an ethnic minority identity. The population of Essex according to the 2011 census shows 90.8% identify as White British and 9.2% have a minority ethnic identity including White Non-British
- Women are more likely to seek support than men 83.64% of victims identified as female, 16.21% male, less than 1% were non-binary. Office of National Statistics (ONS) estimates the population of Essex 51% female. The crime types predominantly supported by victim support services are gendered towards females including domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- 8% identified with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. This is higher than the ONS estimates of 3% for Essex.

9.3. At this very basic level the data shows proportionality however it has identified areas in which improved focus could be applied for male victims of crime particularly male victims of domestic abuse. The PFCC is working with partners to seek opportunities to improve the volume of male victims accessing support services.

10. Risks

10.1. All contracted services continue to proactively manage risks in relation to ongoing COVID restrictions to minimise their impact. The themes of the risks include the availability of staff due to COVID isolation or sickness, the increase in demand for services and the ability of victims to be able to partake in revised delivery pathways.

10.2. A new risk raised in Q1 2020/21 is still a concern due to the back log of cases that lockdown within the criminal justice system. This puts increase pressure on ISVA and IDVA services who will have to support victims for longer whilst awaiting trial, which, is an unexpected demand on resources. This risk is being monitored within the Essex Criminal Justice Board and its subgroups

11. Background papers and appendices

This paper was presented to Essex Police Victim and Witness Action Group on 23rd November

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Appendix A

Demographic data capture from all victim support services between April – September 2020.

