

Victim Commissioning Report

Title of Report:	Victims Commissioning 20/21 update
Classification of Paper:	Official
Agenda Number:	
Date Paper was Written	18 June 2021
Report from:	Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Office
Date of Meeting:	
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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. Members are asked to note the performance of PFCC commissioned services

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. Overall, the total number of victims the PFCC commissioned services have supported has increased 12% compared to 2019/20. The increase is due to the impact COVID restrictions has had on victims and the increase in the needs of victims which require additional time to be supported. The delays in criminal justice proceeding (court) has also meant that victims are needing to be supported for longer.
- 3.2. Additional funding has been secured in order to respond to this increase on services and to ensure they can meet the ongoing needs for victims. Where additional funding has been secured Essex PFCC is working with Essex Police leads to explore if there are further opportunities for improvement for example, how we utilise IDVA for domestic abuse
- 3.3. Two new risks have been raised in regard to Mountain Healthcare who provide SARC services which have been assessed as low with current mitigation. There is a current issue with the paediatric service and victims who are under 13 and pre-pubertal being seen. Temporary solutions have been found but commissioners are seeking a longer-term solution. The second risk is the resignation of the SARC manager and the impact that an influential figure will have on the delivery of the SARC. Assurances has been received by Mountain Healthcare to ensure smooth transition
- 3.4. During 2020/21 the PFCC has improved data demographic information. Data shows improve male engagement with support services. Areas of focus for the coming year representation of the BAME communities decreased. As restriction start to lift community engagement will increase with a focus on underrepresented communities.

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

	2019/20	2020/21	Difference %
Number of new victims Synergy Essex supported	3676	3462	- 5.8
Number of individuals Synergy actively engaged as of 31 st March	2991	3244	+ 8.5

The number of new individuals Synergy Essex supported for 2020/21 is slightly lower than last year. However, the number of individuals actively being supported in service has increased. The increase is due to the impact COVID, there is a reduction of individuals moving on and have additional needs increasing the length of time victims require support. The increase criminal justice proceedings are also having an impact on the length of time victims remain in service.

Synergy Essex provides counselling services to victims in order for them to cope and recover. The waiting list for 21/22 has doubled for this service. This is due to

- Circa 300 victims did not wanting/unable able to engage due to the impact of COVID including not wanting to complete counselling virtually and/or increase complexities
- Victims increased complexity

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Waiting list	666	1001	1136	1274

Essex PFCC was successful in obtaining additional funding for the Synergy Essex Service. Funding will be predominantly focused on reducing waiting times as well as supporting the increased volume of victims who are being supported within the service.

	2020/21	2021/22

Contract Value	1,091,331	1,091,331
Talking Therapies (NHS England)	178,125	178,125
6fte Additional ISVA	246,840	246,840
Rape Support Fund	147,709	
MoJ Victims Uplift	139,778	
4.5 fte ISVA	179,965	176,476

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

	2019/20	2020/21	Difference %
Number referrals into the SARC	527	496	- 5.8

SARC volumes has started to return to a 'typical' volume at the end of 20/21. The SARC has continued to deliver their vital service and adapted to COVID restrictions.

Mountain Healthcare who manage the SARC have some senior members of management leave due to due to resignation/retirement, including the SARC manager leave shortly. Essex PFCC have been assured that there will be minimal impact from these changes and that all SARC staff are being supported during this transition. DI Caroline Williams is the SARC SPOC and is actively engaged in conversations in regard to Mountain Healthcare management.

Commissioners and Mountain Healthcare are also in ongoing discussions in regard to the paediatric service at the SARC. There is currently an issue being resolved for services that support child victims who is under 13 and pre pubertal. The issue is having a minimal impact on Essex Police. However, in the event where a child requires an immediate examination and is under 13 and pre-pubertal, arrangements may have to be made with other SARCs / Havens in neighbouring counties. Using previous data this scenario is a rare occurrence. This is a temporary fix and commissioners are actively seeking a more sustainable solution. Again, DI Williams is fully engaged and continuing to brief Essex Police teams.

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

	2019/20	2020/21	Difference %
Number of calls and online referrals Compass answered	5944	7931	+33

Compass has seen a significant increase in calls compared to 2019/20. It is not believed this is solely to do with COVID but also a reflection of the service being embedded across the county. Increased funding was provided, and additional staff have been recruited to respond to the increase. There were no reports of the increase impacting victims with no reports of victims waiting unnecessarily and all response times have been met by Safe Steps.

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

	2019/20	2020/21	Difference %
Number of victims referred to IDVAs, community outreach and refuge services	4017	4560	+13.5

Changing Pathways and Next Chapter during the lockdown period have had a 13% increase. A hybrid model of face to face support and virtual will be adopted coming out of COVID. The time saved from not travelling to appointments and meetings allows the extra time needed to be spent with clients and create capacity to respond to the increased victims.

Essex PFCC was successful in obtaining additional funding from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ).

	2020/21	2021/22
MoJ Victims Uplift	230,291	
9 fte IDVA	181,644	204,461

MoJ Victims Uplift funding is primarily being used to respond to COVID with additional COMPASS staff but funding is also being used to respond to additional needs that have been developed including a stalking advocate role and a para legal role to support with applications to court for the victim.

The increase IDVAs will primarily focus on ensuring there is enough staff to respond to victims and to reduce the average caseload per IDVA. Currently IDVAs manage on average 96 cases against the Safe Lives recommended 60. However, Ch Supt Mariner and Essex PFCC are exploring opportunities whilst we have the additional IDVAs to look at how we can better bring together IDVAs and Essex Police DA teams.

4.5. **Non-Specialist support Victim Support**

	2019/20	2020/21	Difference %
Number of victims referred to Victim Support	35222	34760	-1.3
Number of victims supported	5891	6732	+14%

Number of new individuals for 2020/21 is slightly lower than last year but this expected inline with volumes of crime reported. As a similar pattern to other support services the number of victims supported has increased by 14%. Increase has been seen in crime types of harassment which includes domestic abuse related but also neighbour disputes.

Essex PFCC also commissions other smaller services that support other victims of crime. Future reports will include comparable figures.

	2020/21
BRAKE – Road safety charity	120 support packs distributed 11 Families supported*
StopHate – number of contacts	168
Modern Slavery Helpline – number of contacts	124

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. During 2020/21 the PFCC has improved data demographic information being provided by the support organisations with data reported detailing the demographic information of the number of referrals below.

	2019/20	2020/21	Benchmark ¹
Gender:			
• Female	72.64%	63.87%	51.03%
• Male	27.11%	35.83%	48.97%
• Nonbinary	0.25%	0.30%	-
Ethnicity:			
• White Grouped	87.85%	92.94%	87.33%
• BAME	12.15%	7.06%	12.67%
Disability:			
• Yes	26.3%	21.7%	22.7%
• No	73.7%	78.3%	77.3%
Sexual Orientation:			
• Heterosexual / Straight	89.80%	92.25%	94.60%
• Gay / Lesbian	3.55%	2.54%	1.40%
• Bisexual	5.21%	4.14%	0.90%
• Other	1.44%	1.07%	0.60%

9.2. The above data highlights

- The PFCC has improved male engagement with support services. Victim Support launched an online support space and live chat service. Data from this service shows that men are proportionately higher to engage with support.
- Those with a disability engaging in support services has decreased slightly from the previous year. There has been some improved reporting in capturing disability. It is believed that there is a higher percentage with individuals who are being supported have a disability particularly in regard to mental health. However, this is not always disclosed and/or not captured accurately. For 2021/22 the PFCC is seeking additional funding for complex needs roles to provide additional support for those that require it within domestic abuse services.
- Representation of the BAME communities also decreased. Whilst this is a decrease there was a significant increase in the accuracy of this data. The data set reviewed in 2019 was 10,959 and in 2020 it was 21,711. This provides a better understanding of those accessing the service. The only changes to services over the last year was the restrictions placed due to COVID. For support services this has meant that community workers who engage local communities and raise awareness reduced significantly. The PFCC is working with commissioned providers to re-introduce community engagement work as soon

¹ Based on ONS figures

as it is safe to do so. The Community worker has made particularly poorly engaged ethnicities that include African and Indian as a priority to improve for 2021/22. In preparation for the 2021/22 the PFCC through a small grants programme sought applications for specialist organisations that support those from underrepresented communities

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 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 has been raised with Mountain Healthcare in regard to the impact of issues around the paediatrician service. Mitigation has been put in place to ensure the risk remains low to the force and victims. An additional risk also has been added to the concerns around the SARC manager leaving and the impact this may have on the service. Again, at this stage Mountain Healthcare have provided assurances that staff and service will

11. Background papers and appendices