

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2024

### Report to The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>Victim Confidence</b>
<b>Classification of Paper</b>	<b>Official</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>07.0</b>
<b>Chief Officer</b>	<b>T/ACC Lucy Morris 42000436</b>
<b>Date of Paper</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b>
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<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Essex Police</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>Author on Behalf of Chief Officer</b>	<b>PSE Tammy Lucas 42071524 (Victim Services Manager – Essex Police) PSE Lauren Peck 42079209 (Victim Services Team) PSE Greg Myddelton 42076043 (Strat Head of Partnerships and Delivery – PFCC)</b>
<b>Date of Approval by Chief Officer</b>	<b>DCC Prophet – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>COG Meeting Date / Date of Approval (Please indicate whether paper presented to COG or not)</b>	<b>COG - 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>

## 1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide a joint report between Essex Police and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) on the work that has been or is being undertaken to improve levels of victim engagement and confidence, and to reduce disparity between victim satisfaction and public confidence. This includes PFCC victim commissioning work and how agencies such as Victim Support have a role to play.

## 2.0 Executive Summary

This report covers several 'touchpoints of service'; all of which can impact the overall experience of a victim and how they feel about the level of service they have received.

It will also highlight there is not just one concentrated area of work to reduce the disparity shown in the SMSR survey results between the higher level of public confidence in Essex Police, and that of victim satisfaction when that person has been a victim of crime.

There are several key stages and touchpoints to be improved upon, however many of these centre around victim contact and three key areas within this; method used, regularity and the quality of the contact itself.

The Chief Officer Team has set a force-wide action plan. This details a range of short and medium-term interventions designed to improve victim confidence and is complementary to the findings set out in this report. A copy of the plan is included at Appendix 2.

## 3.0 Current Work and Performance

An overview of victim-based data can be viewed in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

### 3.1 SMSR Public Confidence and Satisfaction Survey

The Public Confidence and Satisfaction survey conducted by SMSR on behalf of Essex Police is an independent quarterly survey carried out with residents of Essex. Some additional questions are also presented to individuals who have been a victim of crime in the county. Essex Police and the PFCC have recently recommissioned SMSR to deliver the Public Confidence and Satisfaction Survey for up to four years from October 2024. Ahead of this time, the content is going to be redesigned to ensure we understand the detail behind victim responses which will assist in understanding what actions need to be taken in relation to this. There will also be the option of conducting a 'deep dive' focus on victims in one quarter, where additional questions can be added specific to this area. There is also the option of commissioning a separate victims survey at any point.

### 3.2 Initial Victim Needs Assessments (IVNA)

*Victims' Code Right 4: To be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to your needs.*

Essex Police monitors compliance with Victim Support referrals (number of referrals alongside timeliness), number of victims categorised as enhanced, and more recently, IVNA data.

In 2022, T/ACC Kevin Baldwin instructed Essex Police commands they were to adopt the Initial Victim Needs Assessment (IVNA) however, compliance with this process remains low. The IVNA cannot be accessed via mobile devices. Investment is required to make necessary changes. This work is being prioritised by DCI Clayton Ford.

To mitigate this, Ch/Insp Brett Holliman has trained frontline officers and staff in Direct Entry Athena training across 2023/24, including a specific IVNA input. IVNA compliance significantly increased by approximately 6000% after this time but remains low in comparison to current victim-based crime figures. Compliance data is now captured and displayed via the VCOP Dashboard product from the Performance Analysis Unit (PAU) to monitor use.

Benchmarking data received from another Athena force shows that Essex is behind in compliance figures. At the time of benchmarking, Hertfordshire Police reported its IVNA completion average to be around 86% since introducing the document in January 2024. However, Hertfordshire has achieved this by utilising TuServ – its own mobile platform that feeds into Athena. This has allowed them to mandate the usage of IVNA as they can stop the officer continuing to record their investigation unless this is provided. At this current time, Essex Police does not have a similar product to utilise.

The tables below show Essex Police's current performance in IVNA compliance. In addition to the IVNA being completed as a document and saved on the victim's investigation, Athena also allows victims to be categorised as 'enhanced' (if their needs/vulnerabilities entitle them to an enhanced service). The number of "enhanced" victims has also gradually increased since January 2024, which appears to be a direct correlation with the increase in IVNA completion. It is anticipated with the work ahead on IVNA we should continue to see an increase month on month.

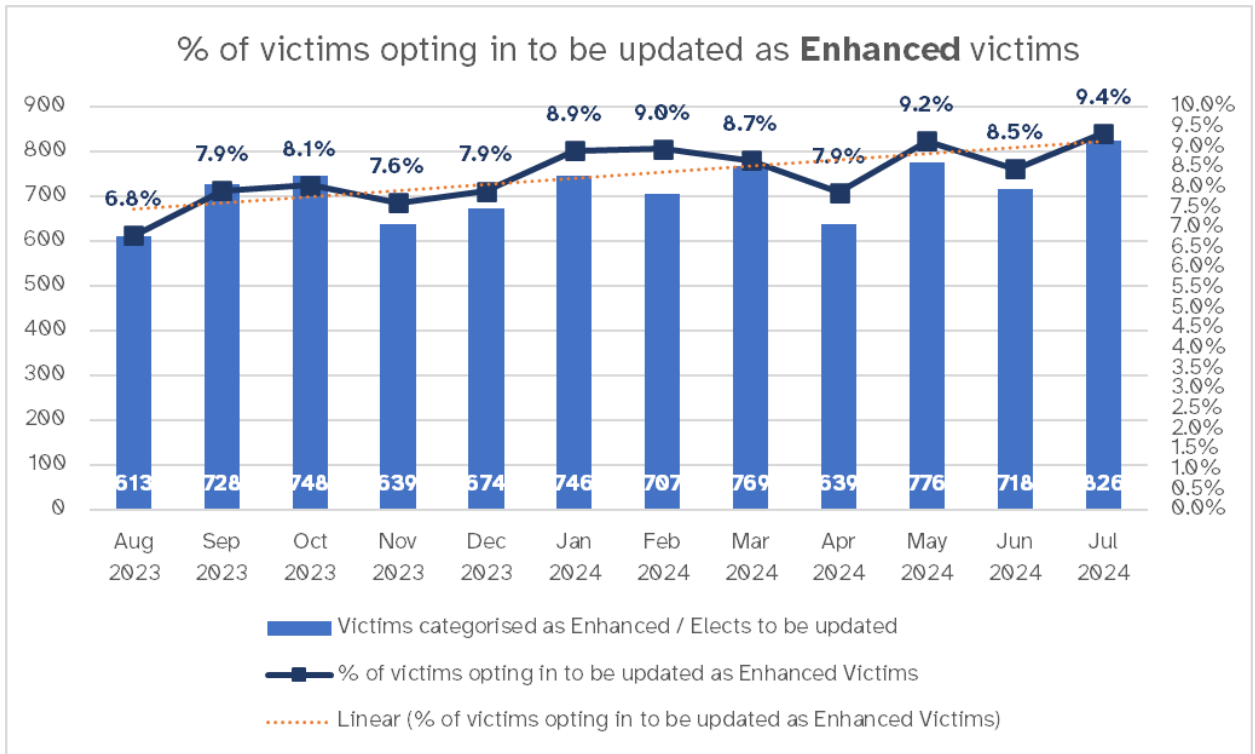
IVNA compliance is now included in the current B0602 Investigation of Crime Procedure. Essex Police's Audit and Inspection team also reviews victims' needs assessments in any victim related audits that are completed.

Under the new Target Operating Model (TOM), the new Manager for the relevant team (Angela Mack) is overseeing and implementing the IVNA.

DCI Clayton Ford has made a request to the Single Online Home (SOH) team that IVNA questions are to be incorporated onto the online victim reporting form, this would allow victims to complete these questions whilst making their initial report. This is awaiting a response from the national SOH team.

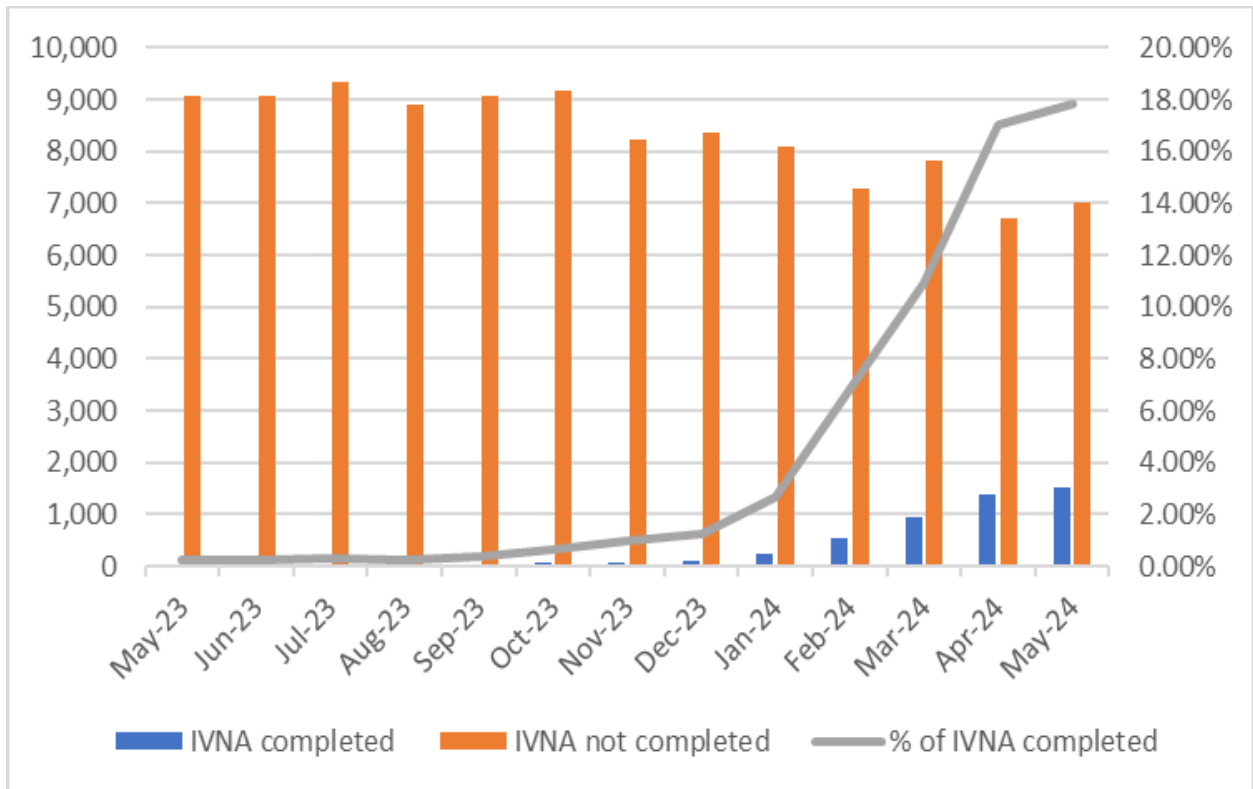
The Chief Officer action plan makes it clear that all supervisors must drive urgent improvement in this area through daily compliance checks.

**Enhanced Victims**



Source: Athena

**IVNA Document Completion**



Source: Athena

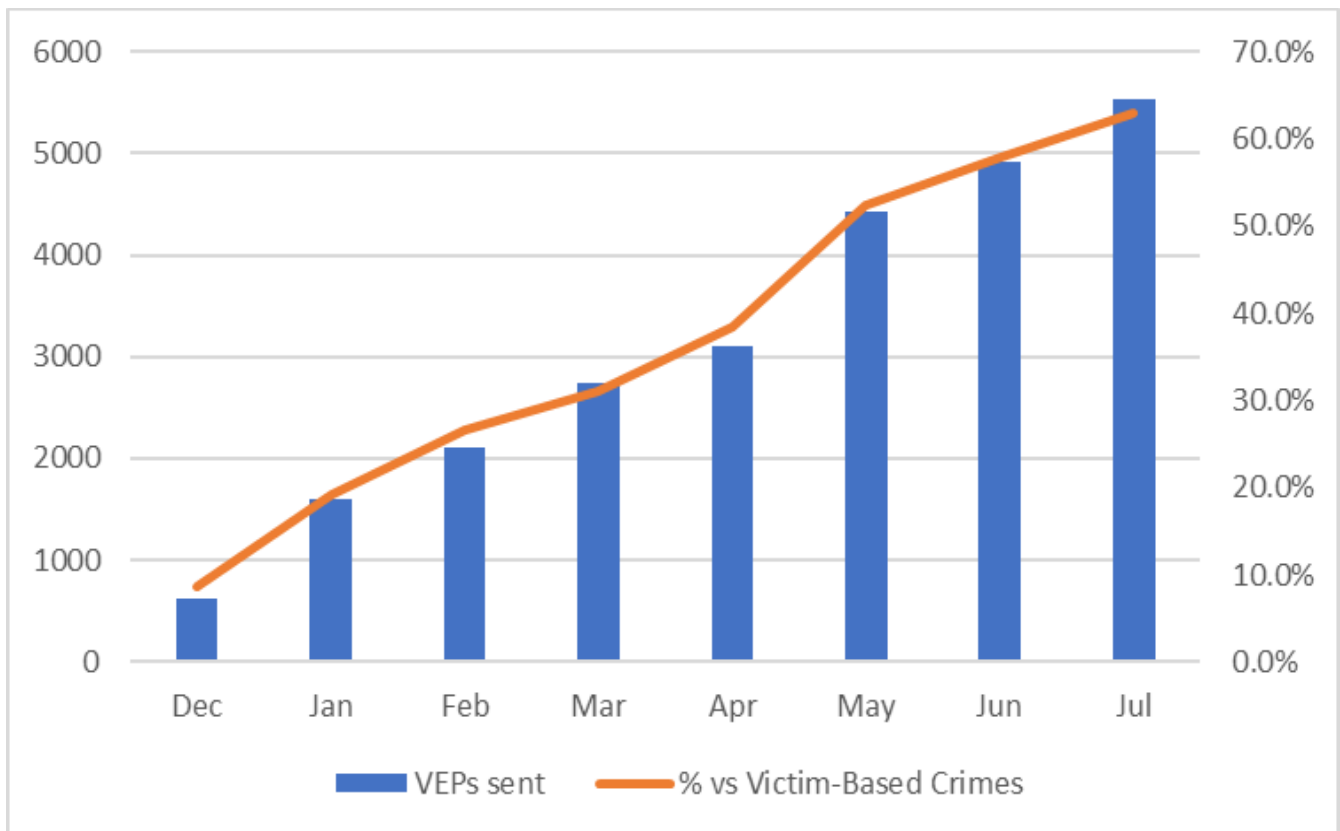
### 3.3 Victim Engagement Portal (VEP)

Launched force wide on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the VEP is built using our O365 platform and the Microsoft Power App application and addresses several needs for both victims and Essex Police. This includes (but is not limited to); initial Victim Care Contacts (VCCs), adherence to the NICE principles, providing additional support options to victims of High Harm offences, lowering of 101 calls into Essex Police and the early sharing of Victims' Code rights and support services available with victims.

The VEP is used by frontline officers when attending a scene (when appropriate). Officers supply their contact details (either as the first attending officer or as the Officer in Case (OIC)), incident number and specific support information to the victim. This can be done prior to the Quality Assurance process by CMC; previously this information was only sent via Victim Letter following the QA processes which could take some days to receive.

The below data shows the amount of VEPs that have been sent by the force since launch against the % of victim-based crimes.

#### **VEPs Sent**



Source: VEP data via Microsoft Power Apps & Athena

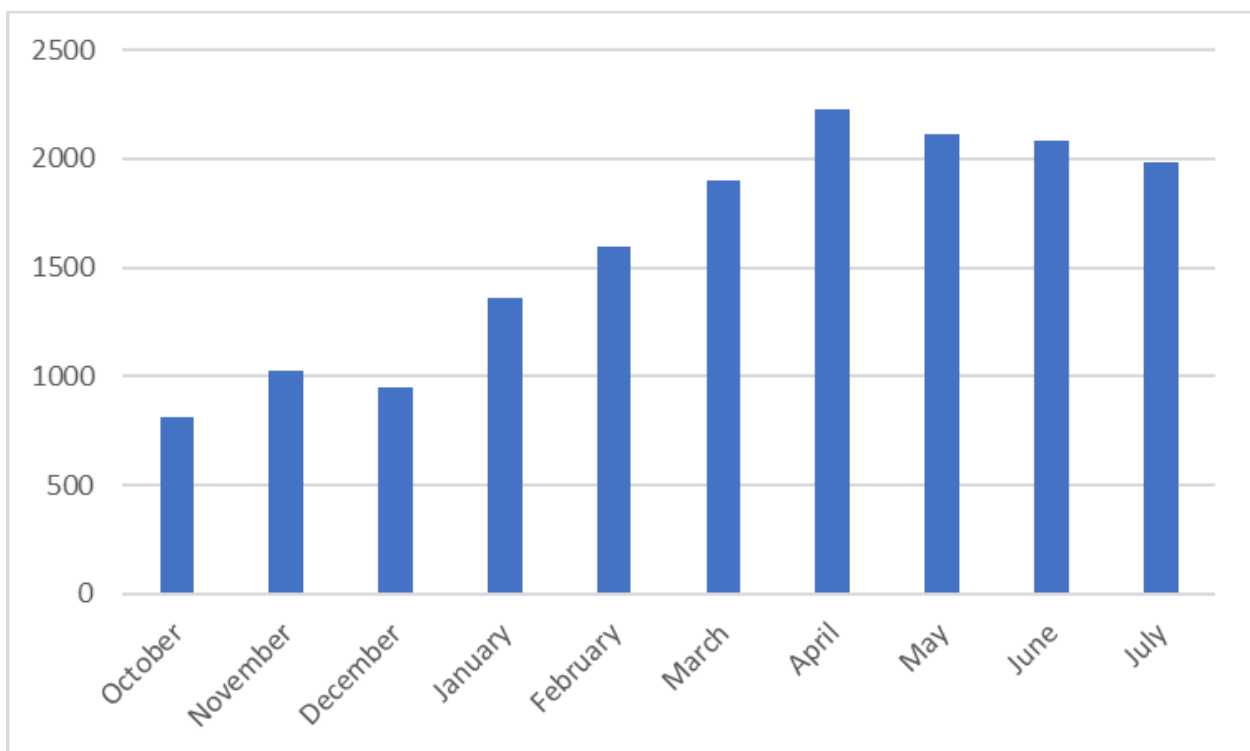
### 3.4 Victim Closure Discussion (VCD)

The Victim Closure Discussion (VCD) was gradually rolled out in the force throughout September 2023. It was mandated by T/ACC Kevin Baldwin that Crime and Public Protection (C&PP) were to use the VCD at the end of all investigations, with Local Policing

Teams (LPTs) and investigation teams (Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (DAITs) and Criminal Investigation Departments (CIDs)) using them for all High Harm offences. The VCD aims to professionalise the finalisation of victim-based investigations by delivering a consistent force-wide approach. The data provided by the VCD is scrutinised at the Victim and Witness Action Group, the Victim and Witness Action Team and relevant victim and investigation boards throughout the force.

The Forms question set was created to cover several areas allowing the force to investigate different areas, including disengagement rates and reasons, referral rates to victim services, Victims' Code compliance and satisfaction figures. It seeks to address the reasons of several recurring areas for improvement, ensure force compliance with its statutory legal duties under the new Victim and Prisoners Act 2024, whilst also promoting a 'victim first' culture in line with the Force Plan.

**VCD Usage**



Source: VCD data via Microsoft Forms

**3.5 Audits and Inspections**

The Audit and Inspection Team has and continues to place a great deal of emphasis on the quality of service that is delivered to victims of crime.

Since January 2023, the Audit and Inspection Team has focused its main effort on those areas within the force which were identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as areas requiring improvement.

At every available opportunity, the Audit and Inspection Team has tested adherence to the Victims' Code. The Victims' Code sets out the services and a minimum standard for these

services that must be provided to victims of crime by organisations (referred to as service providers) in England and Wales.

The results of the team's findings are presented to the Victims and Witnesses Group and the Investigation Improvement Board. It is through this platform that the respective senior command teams are held to account for the performance of their teams.

As of 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, a newly formed team which is known as the Investigation Support and Intervention Team (ISAIT), has been introduced to the force.

The aim of the ISAIT is to build on existing work already completed by the Audit and Inspection Team and the Case Review Team. It is designed to carry out face-to-face work with investigating officers and supervisors already identified as requiring assistance and support in not meeting set expectations for investigation standards and the delivery of service to victims of crime. Through the various interventions that will be implemented, it is highly likely that the quality of service delivered to victims of crime will continue to improve.

The Audit and Inspection Team will act as the Pathfinders for the newly formed team. The team will systematically assess every Local Policing Team (LPT) constable and sergeant across each of the three LPAs. Focussing on recently closed high volume crimes they will supply ISAIT with up to date / current results of their respective audits. They will provide them with the issues identified and the policy / procedure which backs up the findings. This will also lead to direct support and intervention with the relevant OICs.

The work of the team will be closely monitored by Ch/Supt Bradford who now has oversight for the quality of high-volume crimes which are investigated by the respective Local Police Teams. Once again, overall governance will be monitored through the Investigation Improvement Board.

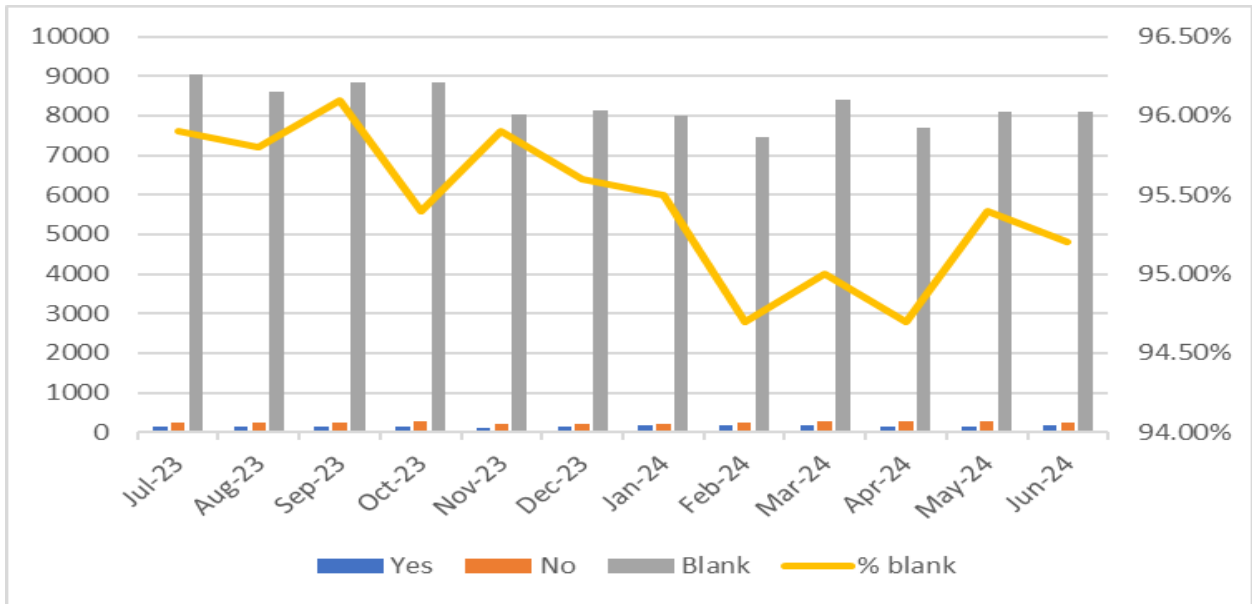
### 3.6 Victim Personal Statement (VPS)

*Victims' Code Right 7: To make a Victim Personal Statement.*

The offering of a VPS remains a key area requiring improvement for the force. The selector for the VPS offering on Athena is a non-mandated field which allows officers to leave this blank in investigations. Despite a strong compliance messaging, many officers appear to misunderstand the importance of discussing the VPS with victims at the earliest possible opportunity and allowing the victim to decide on whether to make one immediately or at a later stage. This is evident in the compliance data which is available through Athena. Additional data is captured post charge, via the Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) spreadsheet - this is at a much later stage of the investigation once a file has been submitted. The Victims' Code Right 7 (7.3) guidance states "*To help you decide whether you wish to make one, you have the Right to be provided with information about the Victim Personal Statement process by the police when reporting a crime*", the data provided by CJU is much further along the victims' journey than is required within this right

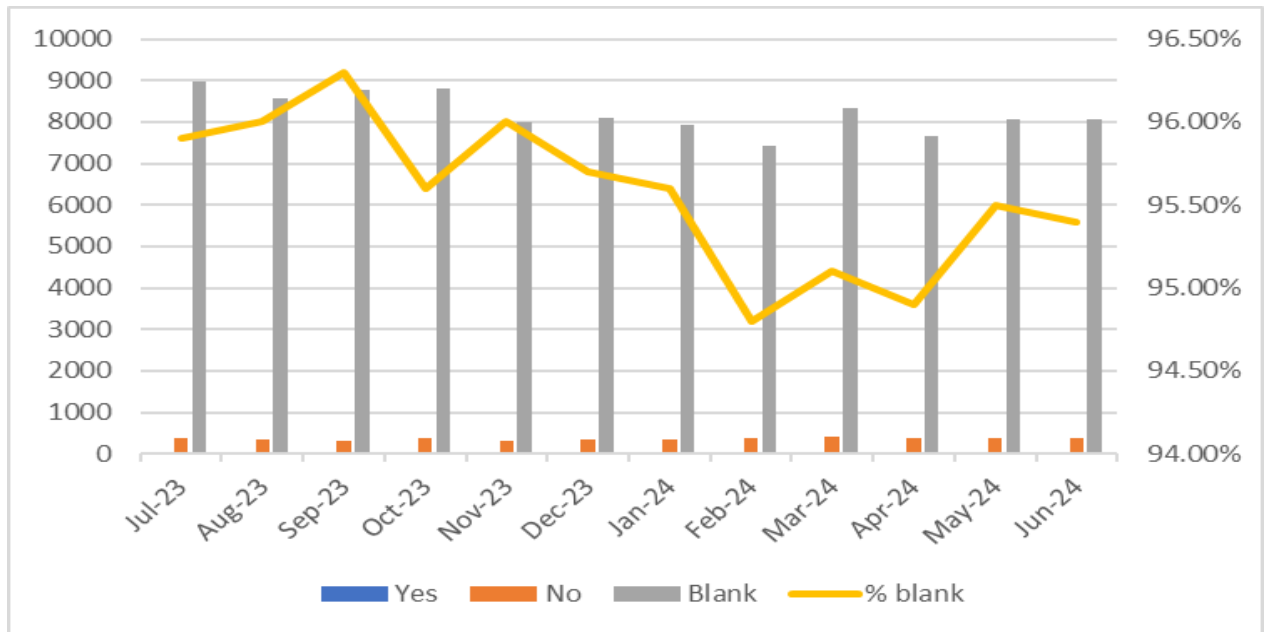
The following graphs show VPS compliance captured via Athena and CJU

**VPS Offered (Athena)**



Source: Athena – VPS offered field

**VPS Taken (Athena)**

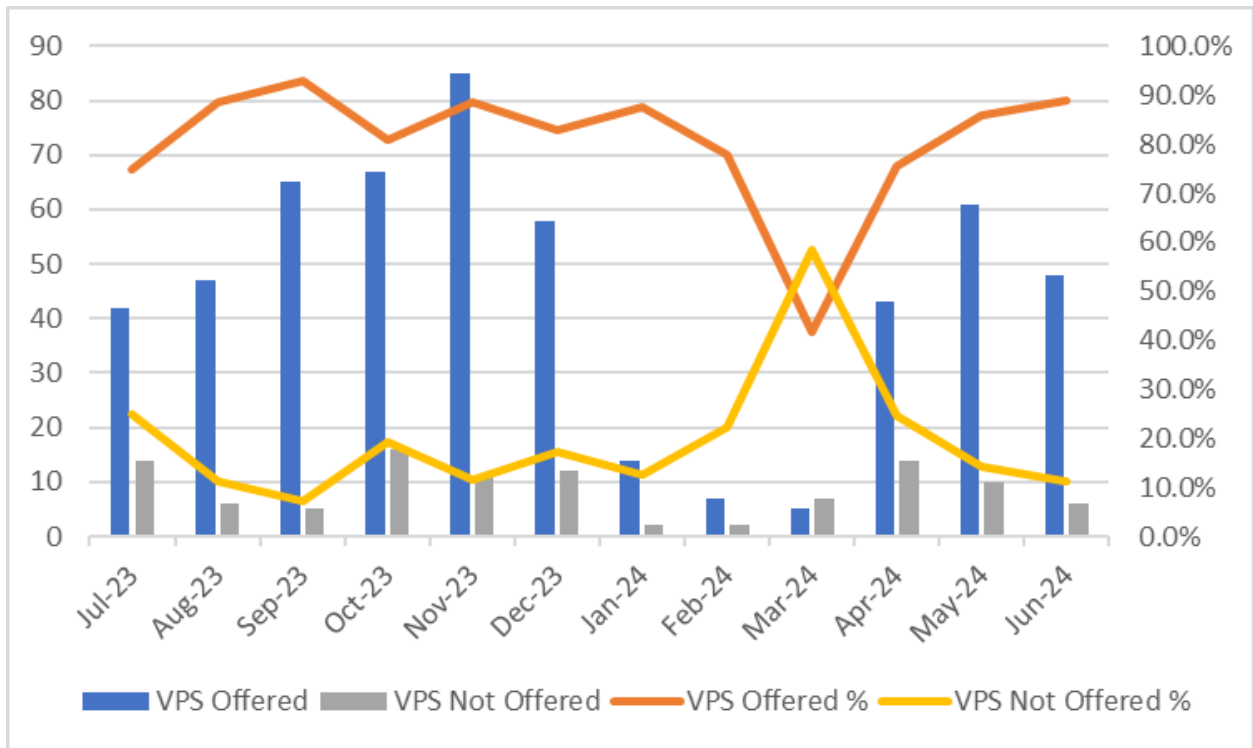


Source: Athena – VPS taken field



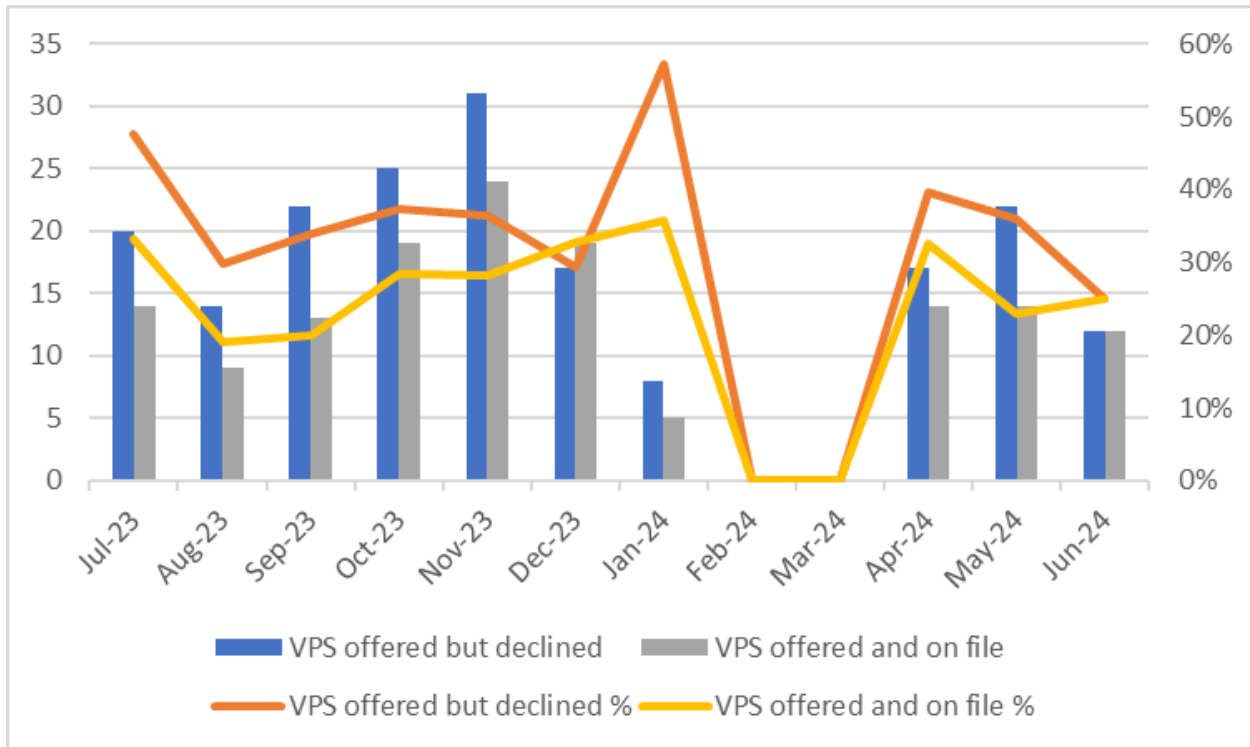
### Completed VPS offered (CJU)

*\*Please note, VPS data captured by the CJU for February and March was affected by changes in recording processes, this was then changed back hence data is missing for these months.*



Source: CJU data

**VPS taken (CJU)**

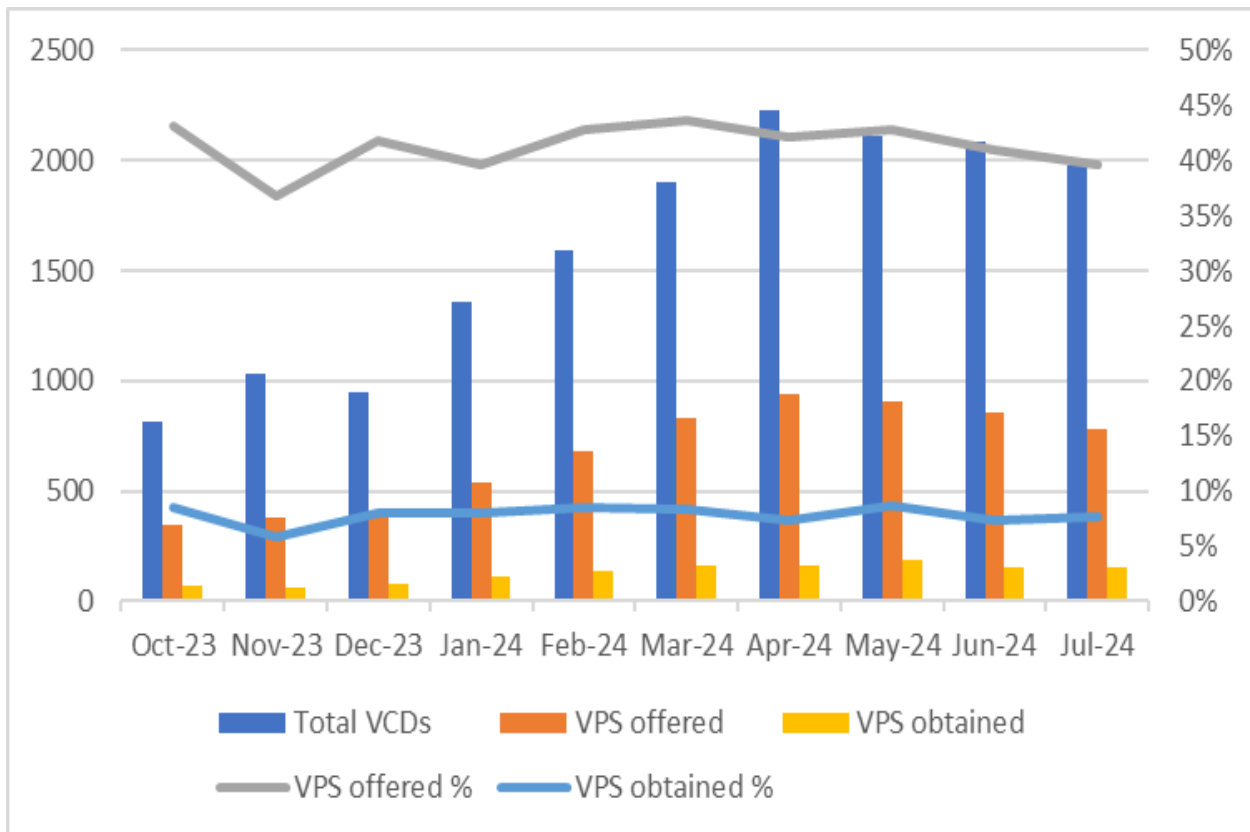


Source: CJU data

Data for VPS from the CJU spreadsheet is captured directly by the CJU. They do not chase up completion of a VPS by officers; they will only capture if one is there at the stage of the investigation that they receive the case details. The WCU will speak with victims to see if they would like to complete a VPS or refresh their existing one if this was taken at an earlier stage. This data is also captured but is recorded via the Witness Management System (WMS).

**VPS Offered and Taken (VCD)**

Data captured from the VCD, completed by officers for offences as described in Section 3.5, shows the difference between the number of officers that are offering a VPS compared to those being completed.



Source: VCD data via Microsoft Forms

All sources of data are showing a disparity between VPS being offered and a VPS being obtained. This is to be expected as many victims do not wish to make one. However, dip-sampling and VCD data has highlighted that some officers do not differentiate between offering and obtaining a VPS, and in practice if they offer a VPS and it is declined they would simply mark both questions as negative. This error would never have been identified had it not been for the VCD, this highlights the value of the VCD, allowing us to now address this issue.

The data being so different from the Athena and CJU figures shows that there are multiple different locations for the force to record VPSs which can cause issues with compliance monitoring. The compliance data around the offering of a VPS is a cause for concern, it is not only affected by officers misunderstanding that offering a VPS involves early discussion and recording via Athena, but the non-mandated fields are being bypassed in general and there is a misunderstanding between what it means to offer a VPS and to take one.

Work is currently being undertaken by the Victim Services team and T/DI Louise Dorling (South Partnership DI) to provide an input to the force on VPS, what good looks like for a VPS, and including a short input with a judge from HMCTS to inform officers how a VPS may influence their sentencing decisions. It is believed this work will help officers understand the importance of a VPS leading to higher use.

To also improve VPS compliance as per the Victims' Code, it is recommended the organisation considers a change request for the Athena fields to be mandatory. To do this, an application would need to be made to the Athena Investigation user group, for discussion with the consortium forces. If agreed by all forces, a change request would be made and costed. This would then enter the Athena change governance process for

funding and scheduling to be agreed. This would greatly improve Essex Police's ability to evidence VPS compliance and would support the work ahead for the proposed metric under the Victim and Prisoners Act 2024.

### 3.7 Restorative Justice (RJ)

Essex Police continues to be the biggest referrer to the Restorative Justice (RJ) service, with 70% of all referrals being made by police. Work in this area has focused on improving offence types referred. It is recognised that using RJ for more serious and complex offences has the greatest impact on trauma reduction and reducing reoffending. This year we have seen improvement in this area with RJ used for burglary, domestic abuse and assaults on officers.

### 3.8 Victim Support Services

The PFCC is responsible for commissioning support services for the majority of local victims of crime. In 2024/25, the PFCC has received grants from the Ministry of Justice of around £4.5m to commission local services for victims. The PFCC has 4 main contracts for victim support services:

- An all crime victim referral, assessment and support service. This service is delivered by Victim Support which provides emotional and practical support for victims of all crimes including burglary, assault, hate crime and theft. It can also support victims of domestic or sexual abuse with emotional support, as well as signposting or referring them on to specialist services.
- Domestic Abuse support services. The PFCC works with local authorities to commission a specialist support service for all victims of all forms of domestic abuse. This is delivered by the Ending Violence in Essex (EViE) partnership of domestic abuse agencies; Next Chapter (operating in the North of Essex), Changing Pathways (South Essex) and Safe Steps (operating in Southend and delivering the COMPASS central point of contact service). This contract provides therapeutic support, counselling, advocacy and IDVA support services.
- Sexual abuse support services. This is a specialist service for all victims of sexual abuse, delivered by the Synergy Rape Crisis Consortium, made up of the Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA) (covering the North of Essex), South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) (South Essex) and Southend-on-Sea Rape Crisis (SoSRC) (covering Southend and South-West Essex). This contract provides ISVAs and community-based counselling, therapy and advocacy services.
- The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at Oakwood Place, Brentwood. Situated adjacent to the Brentwood Community Hospital, the SARC is jointly commissioned by the PFCC and NHS England and allows for forensic examinations of victims of sexual abuse. This supports criminal justice processes and allows victims to receive information and support, and to be signposted to specialist support (delivered by Synergy).

In addition to these main contacts, the PFCC funds additional projects such as domestic abuse awareness programmes, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Teams (MARAT), mental health support projects and a website providing information on support to all victims.

The PFCC holds providers to account for delivery of support services via quarterly performance review meetings. Some examples of recent feedback are included here for reference.

In August 2024, the PFCC reported to the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) that 100% of victims that received support from our specialist domestic abuse service in Q1 of 2024/25 were either 'very happy', or 'happy with the support provided to them'.

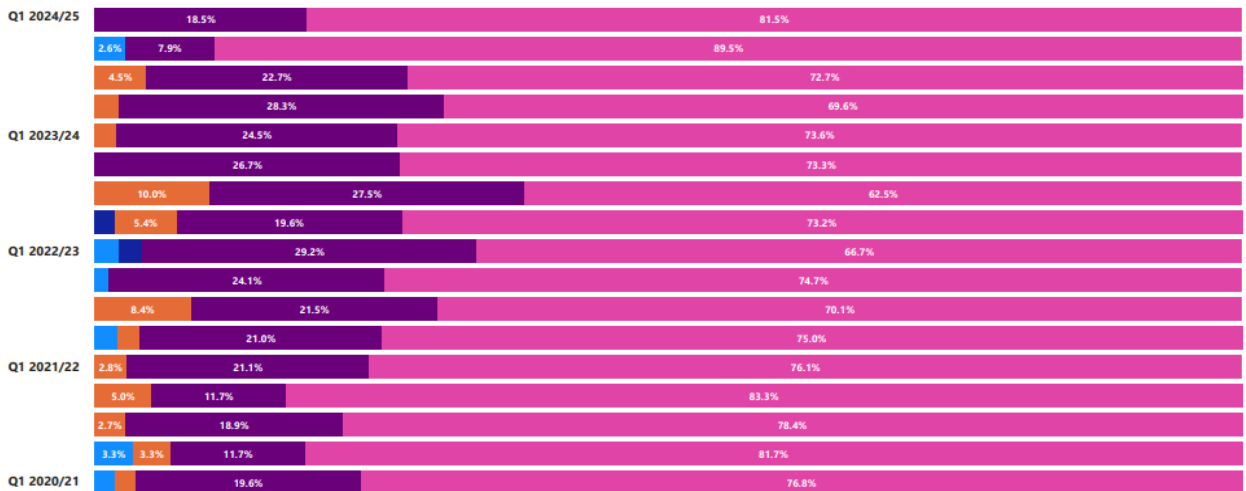
**DA Victim Satisfaction of Service**



- Overall for both agencies combined, the proportion of Rating 5 is high and mostly over 70%. Decreases are seen such as in Q1 and Q3 of 2022/23, and Q2 last year. However, there has been a considerable increase in the last two quarters to 90% and 82% being Rating 5 (although no data available in Q1 this year from NC).
- Decreases can also be attributed to by there being higher numbers of Rating 4, with very low numbers of Rating 1 and 2 over time.
- **Changing Pathways** - Rating 5 has not dropped below 62%, other than in Q2 last year, when it dipped to 48%, but recovering back to 73% and has been 85% and 82% in the last two quarters. Rating 4 has generally increased over time. No Rating 1 or 2 since Q2 in 2020/21.
- **The Next Chapter** - More sporadic, but high proportions of Rating 5; 92% last quarter (data unavailable this quarter). Slight increase in Rating 1 and 2 towards end of 2021, though numbers very small. Five total ratings of 1 (one being in last quarter), and two giving rating 2 in the full period.

Rating 1: Very unhappy  
 Rating 2: Unhappy  
 Rating 3: Satisfied  
 Rating 4: Happy  
 Rating 5: Very happy

Rating of Satisfaction of the Service per Quarter - Changing Pathways and The Next Chapter April 2020 to June 2024



**DA Victims Seeking Support**

At the same time, services have seen substantial increases in the volume of victims contacting them for support.

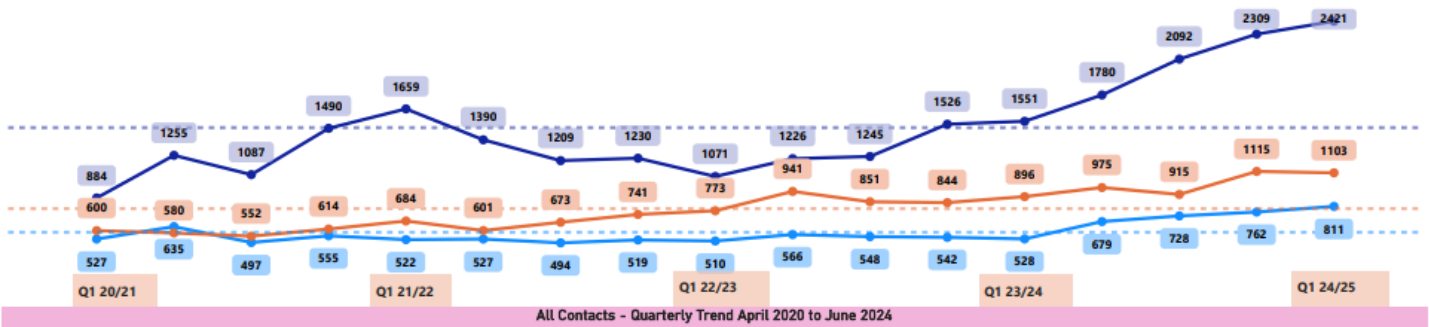
Measure 1

To increase the number of people seeking support from domestic abuse agencies

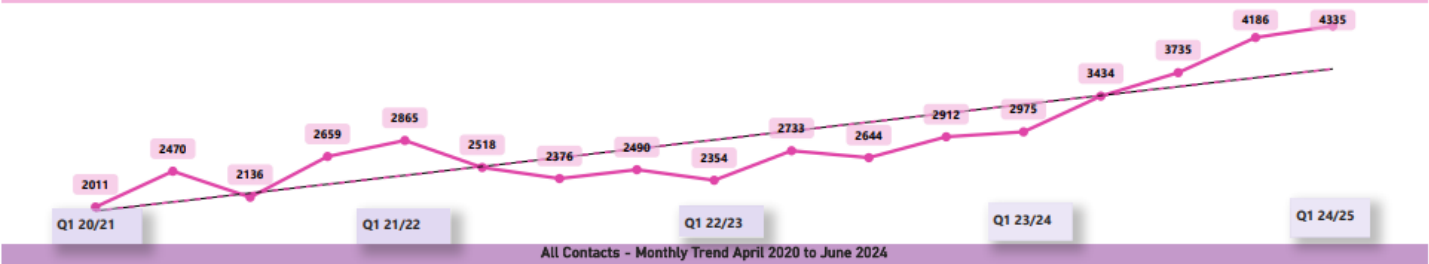
- Contacts are continuing to increase. There were consistent levels during 2022, followed by a rise from Q4 of 2022/23 onwards.
- Compass levels have particularly increased, Q1 has 870 more than Q1 last year. The Next Chapter has increased over time, though with a slight dip in this quarter. Changing Pathways has been increasing over the last year, after having had consistent levels for the three years prior.
- When considering combined contacts in the lower graphs, the quarterly and monthly trends both show a steep increase over time.
- December 2023 saw a dip; this appears to be a seasonal trend.

Number of Contacts per Quarter April 2020 to June 2024 - Changing Pathways, Compass and The Next Chapter

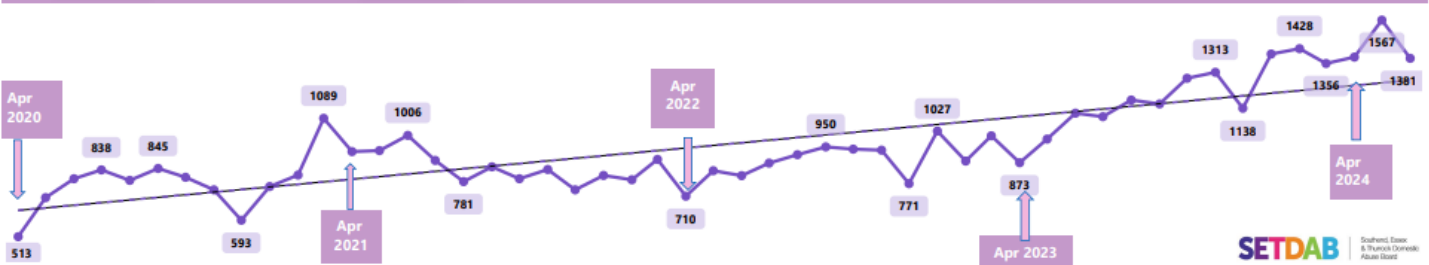
● Changing Pathways ● Compass ● The Next Chapter



All Contacts - Quarterly Trend April 2020 to June 2024



All Contacts - Monthly Trend April 2020 to June 2024

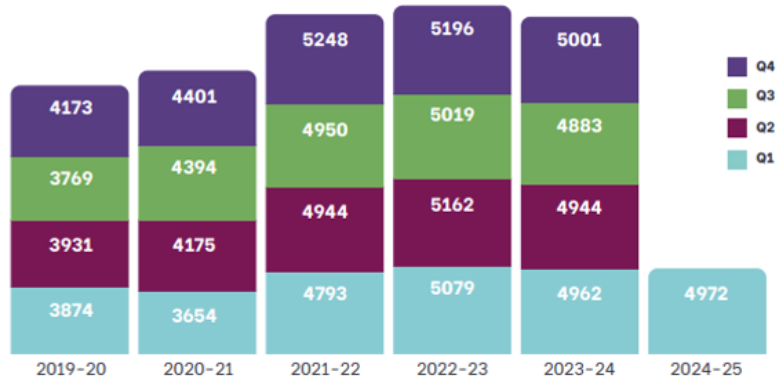


SETDAB South West, Essex & Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board

### Sexual Abuse Support Services

For sexual abuse services, the most recent performance report for Q1 2024/25 also shows a consistent increase in demand for services over recent years.

Number of services requested:



The report also documented very positive key outcome data:

#### Adults's outcomes



##### More in control of their lives

of closed cases said they were now more confident and able to make decisions about their future



##### More able to develop & maintain positive relationships

of closed cases said they felt more able to trust people and build relationships



##### More able to assert themselves

of closed cases stated that they felt more able to assert themselves when dealing with agencies/organisations, or within their personal interactions



##### Better health and well being

of closed cases had better coping strategies and were able to recognise the impact of sexual violence on their lives



##### More able to access further support

of closed cases said they knew of resources and opportunities to access education or employment



##### Satisfaction with the service

of closed cases said they were satisfied with the service and the support was sensitive to their needs and situation



##### Physical environment used felt safe and welcoming

of closed cases stated that the environments in which they received support felt safe and welcoming



##### Valued single sex spaces

of closed cases stated that they valued being in a single sex space (if seen in a single sex space)

The PFCC continues to explore innovative and collaborative ways to improve the offer of support to victims of crime. The recently recommissioned Victim Support Service offers all victims the opportunity to access online recourses that allow them to control their own recovery, with assets and tools available to support them at their own pace. The provision of a webchat functionality is now available with the service following a successful pilot of that offering.

The PFCC is re-procuring the Essex Domestic Abuse service in collaboration with the three upper-tier local authorities of Essex, Southend and Thurrock. This joint commissioning exercise is taking a systemic approach, incorporating prevention activity, accommodation, victim support, and perpetrator interventions into a single contract to maximise the value of links across the domestic abuse system, taking advantage of economies of scale, and avoid duplication and confusion re referral pathways. The new model will go live in April 2025.

### 3.9 Essex Police – Victim Support

To comply with Data Protection Legislation, Essex Police operates on a consent only basis for referrals to Victim Support. This allows Victim Support to provide early support to those who want it. Victim Support were successful in their bid for recommissioning in 2024 and are our PFCC commissioned victim support service for the next four years.

Referral rates have remained consistent, albeit consistently low. Data for the last 12 months shows an average of 25.5% of victims being referred to Victim Support when their crime report is created, however this figure is nearer 30% for the months of May-July 2024. This figure does not include victims who are referred in by officers at another part of their journey, or victims who self-refer.

Work has been completed with the Contact Management Command (CMC) on call scripts to make sure an offering of a referral is made on every appropriate call. The command also has access to information about what Victim Support can provide victims, so is able to confidently assist a victim in any questions they ask. Learning the Lessons bulletins have been disseminated throughout commands and on the force Intranet to make sure that all public-facing officers and staff understand the process for referring a victim to Victim Support and the help it can provide them.

The Victim Support consent marking is mandatory on both Desktop Athena and on officers MDTs, so a crime report cannot be completed until this is either marked yes or no.

### 4.0 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Victims remain at the core of what we do and as such are identified as a priority not only in the PFCC Crime Plan but the Essex Police Force Plan. All the work being progressed within force links to the “we wills” within the PFCC priority of improving support for victims of crime.

The VCD is already proving an invaluable source of data for identifying where to focus on improvements, such as the VPS offer. With the planned relaunch of the SMSR survey, there will be an even richer data picture to identify gaps in support for victims.



We continually work with partners to provide a range of effective support, from point of reporting through to investigation and prosecution. The use of the VEP ensures that we tailor that support by signposting victims to services relevant to the crime they are a victim of.

Both Essex Police and the PFCC work closely with partners proactively to ensure appropriate services are offered at the appropriate time, and this support is utilised to maximum effect.

Recording performance against the Victims' Code will continue to develop as we were work with the MOJ to provide the metrics required. Some of these metrics are more easily measured than others but work will continue with the national team to develop appropriate methodologies for reporting.

## **5.0 Risks / Mitigations**

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024, a new risk regarding Victim Satisfaction was created by DCC Andrew Prophet. This consists of nine mitigating actions and owners with the descriptive of *“There remains a disparity between public confidence and victim satisfaction in Essex Police. Essex Police has seen consistent and stable levels of public confidence over a number of quarters from public survey results, but those same results show less victim satisfaction in Essex Police, which in turn can undermine public confidence in policing.”*

This is a strategic risk which is governed at the Essex Police Victims and Witnesses Group (EPVWAG). The board occurs every six weeks and is chaired by T/ACC Lucy Morris. The risk and mitigating actions are also monitored at the quarterly Risk Star Chamber chaired by DCC Andrew Prophet. The Continuous Improvement team and the risk lead attend the Risk Star Chamber to present and follow up risk reviews / mitigating action updates.

## **6.0 Consultation / Engagement**

### *Essex Police*

PSE Ron Scott – Audit and Inspection Manager

PSE Dr Natalie Mann – Head of Research and Analysis

PSE Becky Lawrence – Senior Performance Analyst

PSE Katie Severn – Head of Strategic Vulnerability Centre

Ch/Insp Brett Holliman – Athena Force Lead

D/Ch/Supt Andrew Waldie – Public Protection Commander

### *Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner*

PSE Greg Myddelton – Strat Head of Partnerships and Delivery

## **7.0 Actions for Improvement**

Two Areas for Improvement (AFIs) relevant to this report were identified from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following their Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) report which was published in October 2022.

The force needs to improve how it records why victims withdraw their support for investigations and should also make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all such cases.

An auditable record of the victim's wishes, such as a signed statement, was rarely obtained in the cases we reviewed. This is important to provide evidence of those wishes and understand the reasons why victims do not support a prosecution. The force should also make sure it documents whether evidence-led prosecutions have been considered in all cases where the victim has withdrawn support. This will help it to fully understand whether opportunities to protect victims from future abuse and bring offenders to justice have been missed.

The force needs to make sure that the requirements of the VCOP are complied with. This includes offering the opportunity to give victim personal statements and completing a victim needs assessment.

Essex Police is not always completing and recording victim needs assessment or taking victim personal statements. These assessments ensure that any special measures required by the victim are established at an early stage, so the victim receives the appropriate support throughout the investigation and subsequent prosecution. Equally, the victim personal statement gives victims the opportunity to explain how the crime has affected them physically, emotionally, psychologically, or financially.

## **8.0 Future Work / Development and Expected Outcomes**

### **8.1 SMSR Public Confidence and Satisfaction Survey Relaunch – Due October 2024**

Brief overview of changes:

- New questions that will delve more into the 'why' behind the responses.
- Existence of a core survey, with the ability to request deeper dives or omnibus surveys on an ad-hoc basis to gather richer information.
- Repurposed free-text boxes with prompts to allow more context to be given.
- Closer contact with SMSR; quarterly updates between SMSR, Dr Natalie Mann (Essex Police, Head of Research and Analysis), representatives from the Performance Analysis Unit (PAU) and Darren Horsman (PFCC, Head of Policy and Public Engagement) to ensure the new product is meeting needs.
- New data dashboard to be provided to PAU so useful reporting can be delivered.
- A "Economically Active" demographic will be added to the information gathered from respondents.
- A new AI tool developed by SMSR will be utilised to code the data thematically.

Changes to methodology, sample size and make-up were discussed; however any of these changes could have a dramatic effect on confidence levels overall, hiding actual changes and key focus points. The Chief Constable of Essex Police and representatives from the PFCC were clear they wanted to retain current levels.

Through the further development of the SMSR survey it is expected that gaps in delivery of a quality of service to victims will be more easily identified with a greater depth of information, to allow intervention and positive improvements to be made.

## 8.2 Audit and Inspection Team and Investigation Support and Investigation Team Future Work

The victim is at the heart of all work that is completed by the Audit and Inspection Team. There is a specific focus on reviewing Case Action Plans (CAPs), VEP and VCD use in every investigation and feeding this back up to the Victim and Witness Action Group and Investigation Improvement Boards. Improvement requirements that are identified here will then be fed through to the Investigation Support and Investigation Team for further research and action.

The Investigation Support and Investigation Team (ISAIT) was launched on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and is headed up by Ch/Supt Chris Bradford. The aim of the ISAIT is to build on existing work completed by the Audit and Inspection and the Case Review teams. The team has been established to carry out face-to-face work with investigating officers and supervisors who have already been identified as requiring assistance and further support with meeting expectations in investigation standards and delivery of service to victims of crime.

One area for improvement that has already been identified is the quality of Case Action Plans and Supervisory Reviews being placed on investigations. All areas are doing something different in terms of Case Action Plans and requirements for victim care before investigation closure. There is no standardisation across the force, and this runs the risk of victims receiving a postcode lottery of service. The idea of templates to assist officers and supervisors is being explored.

Through the various interventions that will be implemented, it is highly likely that the quality of service delivered to victims of crime will continue to improve.

## 8.3 Quality of Service Team Data Capture

The Quality of Service Team (QoS) were aligned to the Contact Management Command (CMC) in June 2024. This has provided the opportunity to maximise the use of the intelligence being gathered directly from victims of crime, to provide an insight into the victim voice and identify gaps in service.

Over the coming months, new ways of working will be introduced to allow this information to flow through to the force, in turn supporting improving victim satisfaction by allowing us to resolve dissatisfactions earlier in victims' journeys.

## 8.4 Ad-Hoc Service Improvements

There is work that is already being completed in force which will continue to support the force in improving victim satisfaction and confidence:

- Full IVNA implementation
- Additional offence types added to the VEP
- VEP and VCD compliance
- Essex Police investigation roadmap creation, pinpointing key victim engagement points
- Measuring of CMC victim satisfaction texts

- The Victim Services team will continue to work with the MOJ regarding the Victim Code compliance metrics. How these are measured and reported is still being developed and as such we do not yet know what improvement opportunities may be uncovered, although it is anticipated that, as a force, we will be able to focus areas of work around these metrics.

### Appendix 1

	Victim based crimes (all)	IVNA completion	VEPs sent	CAP completion (excluding those filed by CMC)	QoS dissatisfaction – No contact	QoS dissatisfaction – No update	VCD satisfaction (High harm victims satisfied)	CMC victim SMS texts sent
Q3 2023/24	26,000	258	-	25,608	40	24	1,666	-
Q4 2023/24	24,879	1795	628	24,131	82	42	2,978	-
Q1 2024/25	24,991	4743	6483	24,769	95	49	3,864	36,612*
Q2 2024/25								

\*Data from 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 to end of July 2024, covering Q1 and Q2

### Appendix 2

See separate document for the Chief Officer action plan.