

**Reference Number: PAF/14/24**

<b>Report title:</b> Current support for victims of domestic abuse and the recommissioning of Services that aim to prevent, reduce and respond to Domestic Abuse	
<b>Report to:</b> People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
<b>Report author:</b> Clare Burrell, Head of Commissioning Children and Families	
<b>Date:</b> 11 April 2024	<b>For:</b> information and discussion
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Countywide	

## 1. Introduction

In October 2022, the Committee was updated on the new duties incumbent on Essex County Council following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act April 2021. These duties being to provide support to victims residing in safe accommodation. Since that time officers have been increasing and enhancing the offer for victims residing in safe accommodation, as well as ensuring maintained focus on early intervention and prevention.

Officers are now planning for the recommissioning of support for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse post 2025, with our partners across Southend and Thurrock Councils and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. This report, and the information appended to this report, set out the progress made since 2021 and the planned intentions for post 2025.

There was a brief initial discussion on this topic at the last meeting of the Committee on 14 March 2024 but, due to time constraints, it was agreed to defer the substantive discussion until the April meeting. Points raised in the initial discussion last month have been reflected in updated paperwork for this item with some specific additional disclosure at the end of Appendix A.

## 2. Action required

**The Committee is asked to consider:**

- (i) The actions the Council has taken to support victims of domestic abuse since the new duties came into force April 2021
- (ii) The plans for the recommissioning of services 2025
- (iii) Identify any follow-up scrutiny actions.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to provide support in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, which includes children and young people. Since 2021 the

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council has received central government funding to support that work. This in turn has meant that a proportion of the Public Health grant, until 2021 the only source of funding for Domestic Abuse victim support, has been released and enabled us to extend our offer to victims beyond the required duties. It has also enabled a broadening of our early intervention and prevention offer to those at risk of domestic abuse.

- 3.2 The Council also contributes funding to the current support offered to perpetrators of domestic abuse. We, along with our statutory partners, have an ambition to increase our focus on perpetrators to intervene earlier to stop abuse and/or prevent escalation or risk to their victims.
- 3.3 Over the past 12 months partners have been acting on the recommendations from jointly commissioned 2022 research report into domestic abuse in Essex. The purpose of the research was to explore how we can improve the system of support for victims and perpetrators post 2025. As a result, there is now a Pan Essex Commissioning Collaborative working together on joint commissioning arrangements.
- 3.4 The intention is to commission:
  - a) One central point of contact for victims and perpetrators.
  - b) Support for victims residing in safe accommodation.
  - c) Community based support for victims (including children).
  - d) Early help whole family working (including the perpetrator).
  - e) Community based support for perpetrators.

### Expected attendees to support the discussion:

Clare Burrell, Head of Commissioning for Children and Families  
Gaynor Sproul, Commissioning Manager Children and Families  
Chris Martin, Director for Commissioning Children and Families

## 5 Appendices

- A. Report for People and Families Scrutiny Committee 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
Children and Families: Recommissioning of Domestic Abuse Services
- B. Power Point: Domestic Abuse position and intentions post 2024. To be introduced and presented at the meeting by staff representatives.