

## Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA360187660

Submitted: 01 September 2021 16:17 PM

### Executive summary

**Title of policy or decision:** Essex Domestic Abuse Support within Safe Accommodation Commissioning Strategy

**Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):** The 2021 Domestic Abuse Act places a new duty on Tier 1 local authorities 'to assess the need and prepare strategies to provide support for victims of domestic abuse within relevant safe accommodation'.

The council is in receipt of £2,763,458 new burdens funding from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) to fulfil its statutory commissioning duties.

Our Commissioning Strategy will inform this to ensure the best support to victims and survivors the domestic abuse agenda has been a priority in Essex for several years, both in terms of partnership arrangements and commissioned services.

The council currently provides support to adult victims of DA through its commissioned community services contract. Until now this has been a political decision taken by the council. However, April 2021 saw the introduction of new statutory duties and guidance to combat DA and respond to the need of victims and children who have been impacted by it. The overarching aims of the Act are to:

- Protect and support victims
- Transform the justice process
- Improve performance across agencies
- Promote awareness

We are also key stakeholder on the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB), which is made up of representatives from agencies and organisations across the greater Essex partnership. The work of SETDAB is underpinned by the 2020 five-year strategy which encompassed a significant piece of work and activities to identify key outcomes. There are also a range of other strategies, and plans in place in Essex, and whilst these are not specific to domestic abuse, they do consider outcomes for children, young people, families and adults that are also pertinent to those affected by domestic abuse.

This strategy aims to build on what is already in place, contributing to the SETDAB outcomes whilst aligning our new duties. This strategy will outline insights gained from our needs assessment and how we plan to develop and implement support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse within safe accommodation over the next three years.

**What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?:** Help people get the best start and age well

**Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help people get the best start and age well:** Help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfil their potential

**Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?:** a new policy (or decision)

**Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates:** No documents have been published as of yet, however the draft strategy is attached below

**Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents:** No documents have been published as of yet, however the draft strategy is attached below

## Assessing the equality impact

**Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision):** Overall

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2020, an estimated 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years (2.3 million people) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This survey also shows:

- an estimated 7.3% of women (1.6 million) and 3.6% of men (757,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year
- women aged 16 to 19 years were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year than women aged 25 years and over
- adults who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse compared with those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed

Local data on domestic abuse incidents is slightly outdated, however, more current data will be gathered during the Needs Assessment exercise. This exercise forms part of the duty within the Domestic Abuse Act and will inform the commissioning strategy and spending plan post 2022.

However, we are able to provide data from our commissioned DA services in the community.

In 2020/21 there were 4560 contacts to the community services. Of these, 95% were female and 4% were male. We know from national data that there is likely to be more male victims than we reach and within our work we hope to increase our engagement with this cohort.

### Age

Data from the commissioned community services shows that the majority of contacts to the service are aged 31-35 years (20%). National data shows that in the last year ending March 2020 – women aged 16-20 were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse. Although, our data doesn't show this, the population curve is shifting towards younger victims.

### Ethnicity

The DA providers also report on data by ethnicity. The vast majority of contacts to the service, where ethnicity is recorded, are White. There are very low percentages of contacts from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnic groups. However, the breakdown by ethnicity is similar to the whole of Essex (94% White ethnicity). Under the DA Act, local authorities have a duty to ensure the appropriate and adequate support within safe accommodation meets the needs of all victims including those with relevant protected characteristics such as Black, Asian and Minority ethnic groups. A specific requirement within the grants will be for services and organisations to show how they will meet the needs of victims with protected characteristics.

Data from commissioned DA providers in community broken down by ethnicity for 2020/21

### Ethnic Group Percentage of contacts

White 78%

Asian 3%

Black 3%

Mixed 2%

Other 2%

Not stated 12%

## Disability

According to the CSEW , in the year ending March 2019, around 1 in 7 (14.1%) disabled adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced any form of domestic abuse in the last year in England and Wales, compared with 1 in 20 (5.4%) non-disabled adults of the same age.

Data from commissioned DA providers in community broken down by disability for 2020/21 shows that out of the contacts to the service 28% had a disability, and 58% did not have a disability. Within our services we will continue to ensure that they are accessible for all.

### Percentage by disability status

Has a disability 28%

Does not have a disability 58%

Not stated 13%

## Sexual Orientation

Evidence around domestic abuse in the LGBT+ community is limited, particularly regarding the experience of transgender individuals. A study has suggested that 80% of transgender people experience emotional, physical or sexual abuse from a partner or ex-partner .

### Percentage by sexual orientation

Heterosexual/ straight 82%

Gay / Lesbian 1%

Bisexual 1%

Other 1%

Not stated 15%

Within our services we will continue to ensure that they are accessible for all.

## Does or will the policy or decision affect:

**Service users:** Yes

**Employees:** No

**The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities:** Yes

**Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?:** All Essex

**Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?:** No

**Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?:** No

**Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?:** Yes

**Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?:** No

## Description of impact

**Description of Impact.** If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank.

**You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page:**

Age, Disability - learning disability, Disability - mental health issues, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment, Gender / sex, Gender reassignment, Marriage / civil partnership, Pregnancy / maternity, Race, Religion / belief, Sexual orientation

**I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics:** I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

# Age

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations and services who can provide a variety of evidenced based support to children and young people across Essex affected by DA.

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** Children and young people who need support will be supported by the services provided.

## Disability - learning disability

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations and services who have a proven track record of engaging and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including disability

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations commissioned will seek to engage with marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics

## Disability - mental health issues

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations and services who have a proven track record of engaging and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including disability.

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations commissioned will seek to engage and support marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics

## Disability - physical impairment

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations and services who have a proven track record of engaging and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including disability

**Extent of impact:** High

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations commissioned will seek to engage and support marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics

## Disability - sensory impairment

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for

organisations and services who have a proven track record of engaging and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including disability.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations commissioned will seek to engage and support marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics

## Gender / sex

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Services will be available for all regardless of their gender/sex

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** whilst both men and women may experience incidents of domestic abuse, women are considerably more likely to experience domestic abuse.

## Gender reassignment

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations and services who have a proven track record of engaging and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including LGBTQ+

**Extent of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations and services who have a proven track record of engaging and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including LGBTQ+

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations commissioned will seek to engage and support the LGTBQ+ community

## Marriage / civil partnership

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Services will be available for all regardless of their marital status.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** adults who were separated or divorced are more likely to have experienced domestic abuse compared with those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed.

## Pregnancy / maternity

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Pregnant victims are noted within the DA bill as a protected characteristic. - Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisation who have a proven track record of engaging with these groups.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** data on this cohort is limited, we will be looking at services and organisations commissioned to engage with these groups.

## Race

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Black Asian and Minority Ethnic groups are noted within the DA bill as a protected characteristic. - Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations who have a proven track record of engaging with these groups.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations support all race/ethnic groups.

## Religion / belief

**Nature of impact:** Neutral

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** consideration will be given to religion/belief particularly if facing barriers as a result.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations will seek to involve all religion/belief groups within their services.

## Sexual orientation

**Nature of impact:** Positive

**Please provide more details about the nature of impact:** Our strategy includes funding opportunities for organisations and services who have a proven track record of engaging and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including LGBTQ+.

**Extent of impact:** Medium

**Please provide more details about the extent of impact:** services and organisations commissioned will seek to engage and support marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics

## Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

**Does your EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?:** No

## Details of person completing the form

**I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance:** I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

**Date EqIA completed:** 01/09/2021

**Name of person completing the EqIA:** Seth Hopkins

**Email address of person completing the EqIA:** Seth.Hopkins@essex.gov.uk

**Your function:** Children, Families and Education

**Your service area:** Children and families

**Your team:** Children Families and all age mental health commissioning

**Are you submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?:** No

**Email address of Head of Service:** clare.burrell@essex.gov.uk