

Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: Executive Summary	
1.1	<p>Title of policy (or decision)</p> <p>Decision to extend domestic abuse grants</p>
1.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision)</p> <p>The 2021 Domestic Abuse Act placed a new duty on Tier 1 local authorities '<i>to assess the need and prepare strategies to provide support for victims of domestic abuse within relevant safe accommodation</i>'.</p> <p>In April 2021, Essex County Council (The Council) was awarded £2.763m grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support with fulfilling the functions of the new statutory duty.</p> <p>In order to fulfil the functions of the new duty on the council, grants were awarded to Colchester Borough Council, Basildon Borough Council and Chelmsford City Council to ensure continuity of support to vulnerable victims of domestic abuse which includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist domestic abuse support for recovering addicts/victims in recovery refuge and mirrored specialist support where victims are residing safely in their own home, which includes support for their child/ren. • Support for victims of domestic abuse who are at risk of homelessness, including transitional support in, during and out of safe accommodation. • Support to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation, including access to counselling for adult and child victims, specialist sexual assault counselling and a specialist BAME Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve? Refer to strategic aims / strategic priorities in Organisation Strategy</p> <p>The provision of support to victims through the extension to the grants will contribute to delivering the following outcomes in The Councils Domestic Abuse strategy.</p> <p>For children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better able to maintain positive relationships and safe exit from unhealthy relationships • Have an improved ability to develop healthy coping strategies to prevent reliance on unhealthy strategies (risky behaviours, substance etc) • Have increased access and engagement with education services to help them achieve their potential • Feel safer and better equipped to remain safe

- Have improved mental and physical health, including improved emotional wellbeing

For adults

- Feel safer and better equipped to remain safe
- Where appropriate, and if they want to, supported to stay in their own home safely
- Have improved mental and physical health, including improved emotional wellbeing
- Able to manage financial difficulties; and become financially stable and independent
- Access to opportunities to develop their education, skills and employment opportunities
- Be able to recognise and maintain positive relationships and safe exit from unhealthy relationships

For Families:

- Feel better connected to and safe in their communities
- Have improved relationships and communication with each other
- Have the tools to be better able to manage conflict
- Parents/carers are better able to repair bonds with children and support them in their recovery moving forward
- Will build the resilience needed to recover from the trauma of domestic abuse and start to rebuild their lives

This works links to the following aims in the Essex Vision;

- Enjoy life into old age
- Provide an equal foundation for every child
- Strengthen communities through participation

And links to the following strategic aims in the Organisational Strategy 'Everyone's Essex':

- Health wellbeing and independence for all ages
- A good place for children and families to grow

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

This relates to The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the decision to extend current grant arrangements for support to victims of domestic abuse.

Section 2: Assessing the Equality Impact

Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on equality groups. What is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy (or decision)? Consider any consultation / data as supporting evidence (eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information). An opportunity to explain impacts on specific protected groups is provided later on this form

What does the information tell you about those groups identified?

Overall

According to the Crime Survey for **England** and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2021, the police recorded 844,955 offences (excluding fraud) flagged as domestic abuse-related in the year ending March 2021 and represents a 6% increase from the previous year. Data from victim services suggests that experiences of domestic abuse may have intensified during periods of national lockdown and that victims faced difficulties in safely seeking support under these conditions.

- an estimated 7.3% of women (1.6 million) and 3.6% of men (757,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year¹
- 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 over²
- 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

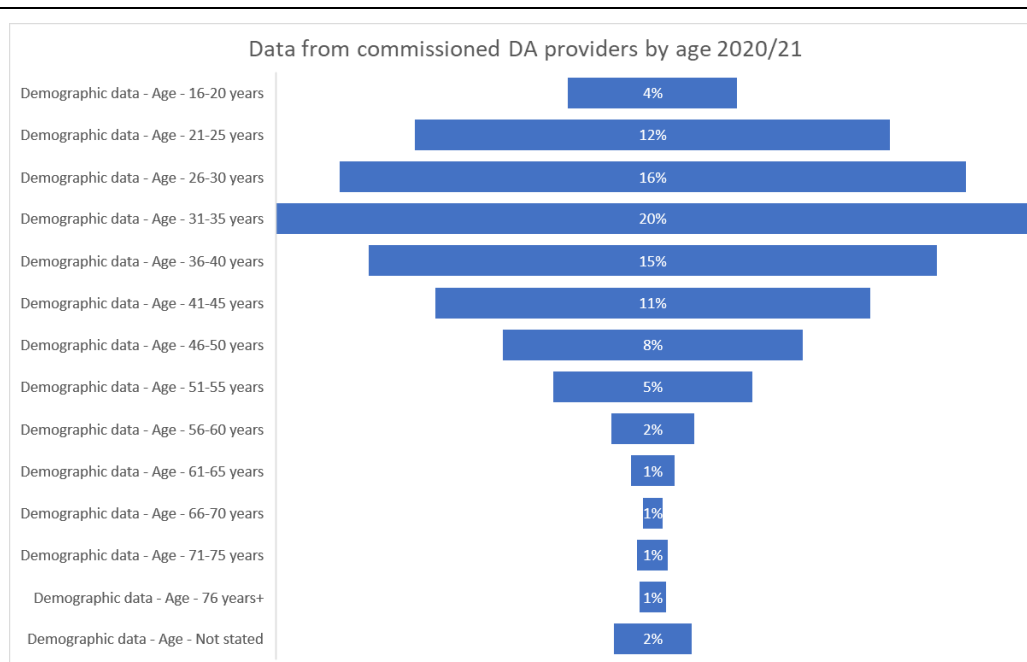
Data provided from our commissioned DA services in the community has highlighted that in 2020/21 there were 4560 contacts to the community services. Of these, 95% were female and 4% were male. We know from national data that there is likely to be more male victims than we reach and within our work and some of the work from the previous year 2021/22 has increased 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. Figure 1 shows data from the commissioned providers broken down by age for 2020/21.

¹ This data is based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2020.

² This data is based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2020.



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 ethnicity³). 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 CSEW⁴, 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.

³ Essex & District Ethnicity Population 2011 Census

⁴<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/bulletins/disabilityandcrimeuk/2019>

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-partner⁵.

	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	Y✓	N
Employees	Y	N✓
The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities	Y☒	N

Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect (e.g. Borough/City/District/All Essex)

All Essex	✓
Basildon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Braintree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brentwood	<input type="checkbox"/>
Castle Point	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chelmsford	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colchester	<input type="checkbox"/>
Epping Forest	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harlow	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁵ Roch et al, "Out of sight, Out of Mind? Transgender People Experiences of Domestic Abuse," LGBT Youth Scotland and the Equality Network, 2010

Maldon Rochford Tendring Uttlesford	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?		Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N ✓
Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?		Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N ✓
Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N

Section 3: Description of Impact

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (please explain your reasons)	Extent of impact Low, Medium, High (please explain your reasons)
Age	Positive – The funded organisations will provide support to children and young people across Essex affected by DA.	High – Children and young people who need support will be supported by the services provided.
Disability – learning disability	Positive - The funded organisations will support marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including victims with disabilities	Medium – marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics will be supported by services commissioned
Disability – mental health issues	Positive - The funded organisations will support victims from marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including disability.	Medium – marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics will be supported by services commissioned
Disability – physical impairment	Positive - The funded organisations will support victims from marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including disability	Medium – marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics will be supported by services commissioned
Disability – sensory impairment	Positive – The funded organisations will support marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including disability.	Medium – marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics will be supported by services commissioned

Gender / Sex	Neutral – Services will be available for all regardless of their gender/sex	Medium – whilst both men and women may experience incidents of domestic abuse, women are considerably more likely to experience domestic abuse.
Gender reassignment	Positive - The funded organisations will support marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics, including LGBTQ+	Medium – commissioned projects will engage and support the LGBTQ+ community
Marriage / civil partnership	Neutral – Services will be available for all regardless of their marital status.	Medium – 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	Positive – Pregnant victims are noted within the DA Act as a protected characteristic. The funded organisations will engage with these groups.	Medium – data on this cohort is limited, commissioned projects will engage with this cohort.
Race	Positive - Black Asian and Minority Ethnic groups are noted within the DA Act as a protected characteristic. The funded organisations will positively engage with victims from this cohort.	High – commissioned projects will continue to support all race/ethnic groups, and particularly emphasis will be made to ensure BAME victims are supported.
Religion / belief	Neutral – consideration will be given to religion/belief particularly if facing barriers as a result.	Medium – commissioned projects will engage with all religion/belief groups within their services.
Sexual orientation	Positive - The funded organisations will engage and supporting marginalised groups and those with protected	Medium – commissioned projects will seek to engage and support marginalised groups and

	characteristics, including LGBTQ+.	those with protected characteristics
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Section 4: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your EqlA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If 'YES', use the space below to describe what mitigating actions you could put in place to address any adverse impacts identified
What are the mitigating actions?		Date they will be achieved?
N/A		

Section 5: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of person completing the EqlA: L.Taylor	Date: 02/02/2022
Names and contact details: Lauren Taylor lauren.taylor@essex.gov.uk	
Your function, service area and team: Children, Families and Mental Health Commissioning Team.	
If you are submitting the EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service or team area	
Signature of Head of Service:	Date: