

ECC Report June 2019

New Domestic Abuse Helpline to access Community Based Services and Specialist Accommodation in Essex

A new helpline has been launched to help people in Southend, Essex and Thurrock who are victims of or who have experienced domestic abuse.

COMPASS went live on Monday 1st April 2019 and is the new point of access for victims of domestic abuse across Southend, Essex and Thurrock; providing information, advice and guidance and, where appropriate assessment and access to specialist services. Its function is to increase accessibility to ensure victims of domestic abuse get the right support at the right time.

COMPASS is funded by Essex County Council in partnership with the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex to support victims of domestic abuse across Southend, Essex and Thurrock.

It will help women, men and young people aged over 16 to access specialist support including community-based services and specialist accommodation to help them recover and move on from domestic abuse.

COMPASS will be accessible 24hrs a day. Callers can speak with a trained member of staff and there will also be an online form for both public and professionals wishing to make a referral via the website and it will be delivered by Southend on Sea Domestic Abuse Projects. The telephone number is 0330 333 7 444. The website is www.essexcompass.org.uk

Community services and specialist accommodation will be delivered by SOS Domestic Abuse Projects, Changing Pathways and Next Chapter. These community-based services are local hubs incorporating specialist accommodation such as refuges, IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) and outreach work.

Greg Myddelton, Assistant Director for Commissioning at the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, said that it is vital that all victims of domestic abuse are able to access support to help them feel safe and to move on from an abusive situation. This new service uses local specialist organisations to deliver timely, expert help and support to those in need. If someone knows of anyone who may be experiencing domestic abuse, there is help out there which can be accessed by this new single phone number.

Assistant Chief Constable Andy Prophet at Essex Police, and Vice Chair of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board, said that the new Compass contact number will help victims of domestic abuse speak to the specialists in their

area to get the support they need. Essex Police is committed to breaking the cycle of domestic abuse and working with our partners across the county to protect victims of domestic violence and keep them safe.

Cllr Dick Madden, who was Cabinet Member for Children & Families at Essex County Council for 7 years said he was delighted to be able to offer one point of contact for people where they can access good quality information, advice and guidance, and most importantly to access the right support in a timely way to prevent or minimise the devastating impacts domestic abuse can have on people's lives.

A120 campaign for £2.2bn economic boost

The campaign to secure investment to dual the A120 has been reignited at a major stakeholder meeting headed by Witham MP Priti Patel and Essex County Council Deputy Leader Kevin Bentley.

With the Government set to make key decisions in the autumn on future investment in major roads, Priti and Kevin are calling on all communities, businesses, elected representatives and local councils to come together and send a strong unified message in support of the A120.

Dualling the A120 along a new route between Braintree and the A12 could provide the region with a £2.2 billion economic boost supporting businesses, job creation, inward investment and housing.

The scheme, to replace the current single-carriageway stretch, would also dramatically improve safety and reduce journey times during rush hour by an estimated 19 minutes, equating to a saving of ten days over the course of a year.

The A120 is a major economic corridor connecting businesses to hubs but for years it has been unsafe and the cause of accidents, congestion and delays. The stretch between Braintree and the A12 has not been fit for purpose for far too long; ten years ago the then Government scrapped a dualling scheme but there is now a new pot of money available from central Government which can be tapped into. ECC has put forward a strong and compelling case, but with competition from across the country this renewed campaign needs to be hard and water tight to secure Government funding.

Addressing a meeting at County Hall in Chelmsford, Cllr Kevin Bentley, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, said that the current A120 with only single-carriageway road which connects a major airport at one end and a major international seaport at the other it's simply not fit for purpose. This renewed push for dualling the carriageway between Colchester and Braintree will address this and unlock economic growth and other benefits to businesses and local communities equating to £4.5 million for every £1 million spent.

Because of the importance and popularity of the project, DfT and Highways England are being urged to provide funding for the scheme through the Road Investment Strategy programme.

If this is agreed in the Autumn, it is hoped construction, which would take three years, could start as soon as 2023.

Supporting Children Services in Blackpool

On the back of the recent Ofsted success of achieving an Outstanding rating, and an acknowledgement from the Children's Minister Nadhim Zahawi that the Essex model needs to be rolled out countrywide, Essex County Council has been chosen to support Blackpool in making improvements to their children services. Helen Lincoln our Executive Director for Children, Families and Education, and her team have been handed the role of Commissioner for Children's Services in Blackpool.

An Ofsted inspection in January in Blackpool Children Services found that some of the most vulnerable children were living in "chronic neglect" and was critical of the council which received an "inadequate" rating for the second time in six years.

It is fantastic news that again the government have recognised Essex as one of the top performing children services in the country. Helen's role will be to ensure that there is vast improvement at the council, utilising her skills and talent to turn around a failing service

Youth Offending Service (YOS)

As outlined previously, County Lines activity and its impact on young people and communities continues to dominate the caseloads of the YOS teams. However, small steps are being made towards creating a more coherent strategic response. The fledging Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VaVu) has now been set up with currently a Team Manager from the YOS and Detective Inspector from Essex Police working in collocated environment (hosted by Chelmsford City Council Community Safety Hub).

As you may be aware violent crime is on the rise in Essex and there is a definite lack of a coordinated multi-agency approach to dealing with the issues of gangs and county lines.

The Office of the Police, Fire Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) have the strategic lead and the small team will be joined by a coordinator who will work across the whole area to bring some synergy to our response to serious violence. A Strategic Board composed by Chief Executives and Directors, and supported by an Operations Board, will be chaired by the PFCC and will be also be attended by Cllr McKinlay,

the New Cabinet Member for Children Services, and Cllr Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education, as well as our director for Children Services Helen Lincoln. I'm sure Cllr McKinlay will keep you all informed around how this goes.

ECC pledged £500k in the February Budget to help bolster funding for developing multiagency solutions to these issues.

A Task and Finish Group, led by me will also be looking at drugs, gangs, knife crime and county lines, and inform the Strategic Board of its findings; it will also contribute to the multi-agency strategy, gain assurance that there is an organised and robust system country-wide, whose aim will be to challenge and reduce the destructive impacts of gang culture.

Cllr Madden's next position

Cllr Dick Madden has moved on to a new Cabinet position of Performance and Partnership

He came into the role when ECC's Children's Services were rated by Ofsted as inadequate and through the hard work of officers and of course the strong leadership of Helen Lincoln the service was completely turned around and it is now regarded nationally as one of the best performing Children's Service in the country with the lowest spend.

He has been involved with Children Services for the past 7 years and the portfolio has now been transferred in the safe hands of Cllr Louise McKinlay.

Too good to throw away?

There are renewed efforts to get people to recycle and if they are thinking of disposing of equipment to give ideas of how to do this in a way that will benefit others.

The links below will take you to the perfect place to find out how to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle your waste.

<http://www.lovessex.org/news-and-ideas/too-good-to-throw-away-pass-on-your-furniture-electricals-and-other-items/>

<http://www.lovessex.org/>

