

Thurrock: An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

# Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **4 October 2022**

**Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, RM17 6SL**

## Membership:

Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Daniel Chukwu, Shane Ralph and Sue Shinnick

## Substitutes:

Councillors Steve Liddiard, Augustine Ononaji, Georgette Polley and Lee Watson

## Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2 Minutes</b>	<b>5 - 10</b>
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee held on 23 June 2022.	
<b>3 Items of Urgent Business</b>	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
<b>4 Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>5 Essex Police: Operation Bluebird Verbal Update</b>	
<b>6 SERICC Data Comparison: Presentation</b>	<b>11 - 22</b>

<b>7</b>	<b>Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Update Report</b>	<b>23 - 52</b>
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**Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:**

Please contact Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

Agenda published on: **26 September 2022**

## Information for members of the public and councillors

### Access to Information and Meetings

#### Advice Regarding Public Attendance at Meetings:

If you are feeling ill or have tested positive for Covid and are isolating you should remain at home, the meeting will be webcast and you can attend in that way. Hand sanitiser will also be available at the entrance for your use.

Members of the public have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

#### Recording of meetings

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If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

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- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

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- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

# DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

## Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

## When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

**What is a Non-Pecuniary interest?** – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

### Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

### Non-pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

## Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
  - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
  - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
  - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
  
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
  - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
  - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
  - Fewer public buildings with better services
  
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
  - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
  - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
  - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee held on 23 June 2022 at 7.00 pm

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- Present:** Councillors Gary Collins (Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Daniel Chukwu, Shane Ralph and Sue Shinnick
- In attendance:** Les Billingham, Assistant Director Adult Social Care and Communities (*arrived 7.08pm*)  
Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager  
Janet Simon, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help  
Cheryl Wells, Strategic Lead Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Resilience  
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
- 

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded, with the video recording to be made available on the Council's webcast channel.

### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee held on 17 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.

### 2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

### 4. Unaccompanied Child Asylum Seekers: Verbal Update

The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help stated that Unaccompanied Child Asylum Seekers (UCAS) were categorised as Looked After Children (LAC), and therefore subject to LAC procedures and policies, such as reviews and regular medicals. She stated that an area's UCAS population had to be 0.07% of the overall child population, which meant that Thurrock could receive a maximum of 31 UCAS. She added that Thurrock currently had 28 UCAS; 26 boys and 2 girls ranging from age 13 to 17. She stated that when a UCAS turned 18, they were entitled to a LAC plan and other help if they had been living in the UK for more than 13 weeks.

The Chair asked how UCAS came to England and their reasons for travelling. He queried if there was a commonality between UCAS. The Assistant Director

Children's Social Care and Early Help replied that many UCAS came via the ports in Thurrock, which meant that Thurrock was categorised as a receiving authority and had therefore signed-up the national transfer scheme to ensure that the borough did not exceed the maximum numbers of UCAS. She added that some UCAS came via lorries and were deposited at service stations in the borough. She explained that some UCAS did not have any family in their home countries and others had paid money to be brought to the UK, often embarking on a journey that could take many months.

*The Assistant Director Adult Social Care and Communities joined the meeting at 7.08pm.*

The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help explained that many UCAS feared for their safety in their home countries, as many had come from war-stricken places such as Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, and Syria. She summarised and stated that Thurrock had also received children from Ukraine, but these were handled under a different scheme.

Councillor Ralph queried how many UCAS received the Council's help between the ages of 18-25, and how much this cost the Council. The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help replied that she would find this information after the meeting and send to the Committee. She added that after the age of 18 UCAS were classed as adults and many had access to benefits or the right to work, so therefore contributed to the cost of rent and living. Councillor Shinnick asked if the team tried to reunite UCAS with their parents or other family members. The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help explained that the team did try to reunite families of UCAS, or tried to help the child contact their family at home. Councillor Chukwu asked how the team integrated UCAS into their local communities. The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help explained that the team used interpreters and translated documents so the child could understand what was happening. She explained that UCAS were also enrolled in the appropriate education setting, which helped them improve their English, if English was a second language, and integrate with other local children. She stated that the team also tried to find support within existing communities that were like the child's background, for example the team reached out to different communities in London for support. The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help summarised and stated that the UCAS was provided with legal advice and an advocate that spoke their first language if necessary.

Councillor Abbas questioned if there were currently any missing UCAS. The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help replied that there was currently one missing UCAS in Thurrock. She explained that the team managed missing episodes well by having regular conversations with the child and ensuring they were receiving the right support. She stated that some missing episodes only lasted a few hours, but the team were able to contact the appropriate agencies to ensure the missing child was found.



*The Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help left the meeting at 7.15pm.*

## **5. Communications Strategy in Relation to Prevent (Counter Terrorism and Extremism)**

The Community Safety Partnership Manager introduced the report and stated that it provided an update on the previous Prevent benchmarking exercise that had been presented to the Committee. She explained that the Home Office and Prevent professionals understood that local Councillors could provide the necessary leadership and scrutiny to help facilitate the Prevent agenda, and highlighted the Members handbook and online training listed as appendices to the report. She stated that the Prevent self-assessment highlighted ten key areas, which were relevant to both funded and non-funded areas, and had been agreed upon by the Home Office in February 2022. The Community Safety Partnership Manager explained that Thurrock had shown many strengths in the benchmarking exercise including risk assessments; training; and the multi-agency safeguarding board. She explained that there had also been two areas highlighted for development: communications and engagement. She stated that the team had therefore put together the Prevent Strategy, as outlined in appendix 3 of the report and Communications Plan, which had been tailored to Thurrock. She felt there was still more work to do to improve communications and engagement, for example broader communications with parents and families. She commented that the Home Office had scrutinised the proposed Communications Plan and had felt it was a good resource that made use of national events and national campaign materials. She stated that the team were working to improve proactive communications, for example through social media and newsletters. She asked how the team could support to engage with their networks.

The Chair queried why left-wing extremism was not mentioned in the Prevent Elected Members handbook, as this had been raised at a previous committee meeting. The Community Safety Partnership Manager replied that the Members handbook was produced by the Local Government Association, so Thurrock Council were not responsible for its content. She stated that Members could get in contact with the Local Government Association if they wished this to be amended. The Chair highlighted page 65 of the report and asked how Thurrock were tackling the problem of extremist speakers. The Community Safety Partnership Manager explained that Thurrock had produced a guide for hirers to fill in when hiring out a premises to ensure the team safeguarded against hate speech being delivered in the borough. She explained that this had been shared with PubWatch and would form part of the wider Communications Plan. She added that the Prevent Strategy had also had an Equality Impact Assessment carried out as part of the governance process. The Community Safety Partnership Manager added that the questionnaire could be shared with Members outside the meeting, but highlighted that although extremist speakers in Thurrock was not a high risk, the team remained conscious that it could happen.

Councillor Ralph questioned how the team were working to reduce

radicalisation and extremism via social media, including through Xbox and PlayStation games. He asked if the team could do events in schools or for parents to highlight the risk of radicalisation online. The Community Safety Partnership Manager felt that this was a current gap in the Prevent Strategy. She stated that during the pandemic, advice had been published to schools and parents highlighting this issue, and the Let's Talk About It toolkit had been included in the Headteachers bulletin. She stated that this issue was not currently in the Prevent Communications Strategy, but she would work with the Communications team to see if this information could be added.

Councillor Abbas highlighted the issue of engagement that had been identified as requiring development in the benchmarking exercise. He asked how the team had previously engaged with different groups and if any new methods were being utilised, particularly when engaging hard to reach groups, such as faith groups. The Community Safety Partnership Manager explained that the team engaged with schools through the Let's Talk About It toolkit. She added that schools had recently undertaken their Section 11 Audit, and would respond to any identified areas of need. She stated that the Further Education Lead for the Department for Education sat on the Prevent Board, alongside the Assistant Director for Education and representatives from the two Thurrock colleges, who were very engaged with the Prevent agenda. She explained that schools also regularly received a Prevent briefing and risk-assessments were shared with the necessary groups. The Community Safety Partnership Manager added that the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership were currently working on a contextual safeguarding report that would be shared with headteachers and school safeguarding leads. She summarised and stated that there was still more work to be done, particularly engaging with faith groups, and the team were open to suggestions on how to engage more effectively with these groups.

Councillor Collins asked if the team could reach out to the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to help promote Prevent within a religious education setting. Councillor Abbas agreed with this suggestion and felt that more needed to be done to engage with faith leaders, particularly as some groups had issues with Prevent. He asked if briefings could be provided to faith leaders to open communications and engagement. The Community Safety Partnership Manager stated that the team used the Act Early mechanism to reach out to faith leaders, but would look into the suggestion of utilising SACRE to promote Prevent. The Assistant Director Adult Social Care and Communities stated that the team were working with Essex Police to ensure that the Prevent agenda was promoted across Thurrock. He stated that hard to reach groups would be targeted through the communications plan, which would identify the current gaps.

Councillor Chukwu asked what the early signs of radicalisation could be. The Community Safety Partnership Manager stated that early signs of radicalisations could include increased secretiveness; change in attitudes and behaviour; changes in dress; or name changes. She explained that training was delivered to stakeholders which described the signs in detail, as lots of behaviour changes could be a sign of radicalisation. She mentioned that case

studies outlining the early signs of radicalisation could be found on the Act Early website. Councillor Chukwu asked what the difference was between a hate crime and extremism. The Community Safety Partnership Manager explained that a hate crime was when someone felt victimised due to a protected characteristic. She explained that hate crimes were covered in the Prevent training as victimisation could sometimes lead to extremism.

Councillor Shinnick felt pleased that representatives from Thurrock colleges sat on the Prevent board, and asked how they reached out to college students. The Community Safety Partnership Manager explained that the college representatives were very successful at explaining the Prevent agenda to college students, and Ofsted had recently found that college students were using appropriate language and understood the Prevent agenda. She explained that the safeguarding leads had a good understanding of Prevent and were able to foster conversations and explore problems with the students in a focussed way. The Assistant Director Adult Social Care and Communities added that low-level Prevent concepts were discussed in schools at a young age to raise awareness. He stated that when students reached college, they were therefore able to have a more mature conversations regarding radicalisation and extremism. He felt that colleges in Thurrock had a healthy relationship towards Prevent and freedom of speech in safe spaces.

Councillor Abbas highlighted that he had recently been chosen as Portfolio Holder for Communities and felt that the Council were not showcasing the good work that had been undertaken with communities. He stated that Thurrock was becoming a more diverse place to live and felt that the Council should be talking to different community groups. Councillor Chukwu asked what the current level of terrorism threat in the UK was. The Community Safety Partnership Manager stated that the current threat level was 'substantial', which meant that a threat was likely. She explained that this had been increased in November 2021 to 'severe' following the murder of Sir David Amess MP and the Liverpool Women's Hospital bombing, but this had been downgraded in February 2022. She explained that the threat level was constantly monitored and reviewed, and highlighted that the threat in Thurrock was no greater than anywhere else in the UK. She explained that a member of the Counter-Terrorism police for the Eastern region would be invited to December's meeting of the committee.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Members noted the approach to improve engagement with communities in relation to Prevent.**
- 2. Members agreed to act as key stakeholders in advising the Council on improvements to engagement with our communities.**
- 3. Members agreed to be involved in development of any community projects.**

## **6. Work Programme**

Members asked for the following items to be added to the Work Programme:

1. Department for Education Prevent lead to attend the Committee in December
2. A member of Essex Police or Border Force to attend the Committee to discuss immigration incursions
3. A report on Unaccompanied Child Asylum Seekers in December
4. A member of Essex Police to attend the committee to discuss children and local crime gangs, particularly children as drug runners
5. A report on the level of risk of COMAH sites in Thurrock in December

**The meeting finished at 8.33 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

The logo for SERICC features the word "sericc" in a lowercase, rounded, purple font. A small green dot is positioned above the letter 'i'.

# sericc

Rape and Sexual Abuse  
Specialist Service

SERICC DATA – A COMPARISON

1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2020 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2021

1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2021 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2022

PRESENTED BY REBEKAH BRANT

# BACK GROUND READING

July 2021 – Government – [Tackling Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy](#)

Office of National Statistics - [Women were more likely than men to experience rape or assault by penetration](#) (including attempts)

Definition of Rape: [Section 1 – Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)

(1) A person (A) commits an offence if

(a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis,

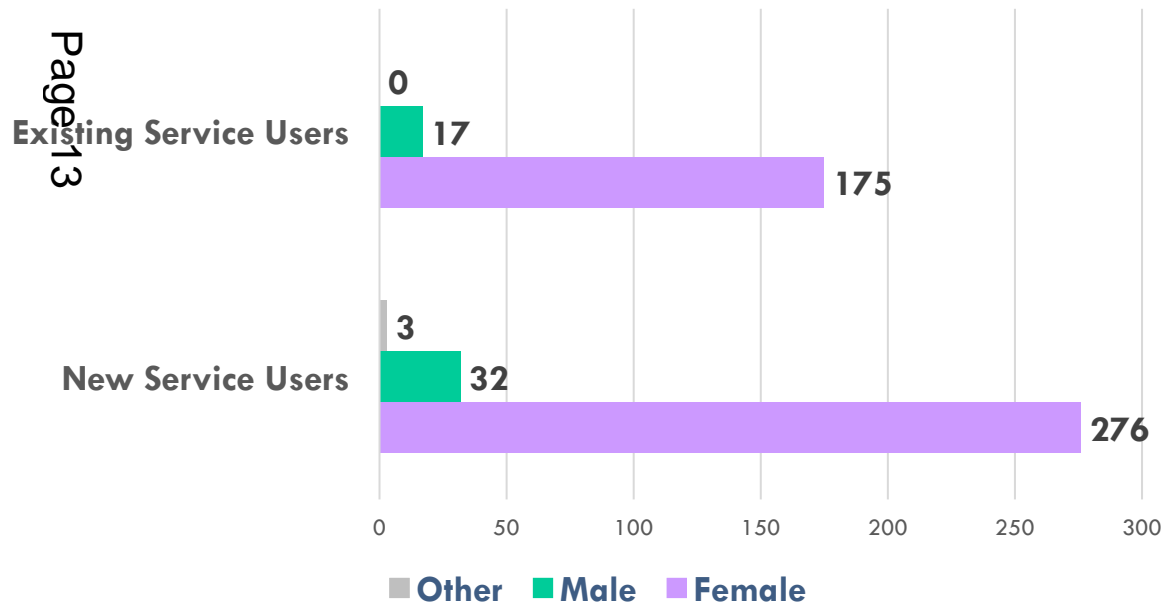
(b) B does not consent to the penetration, and

(c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents

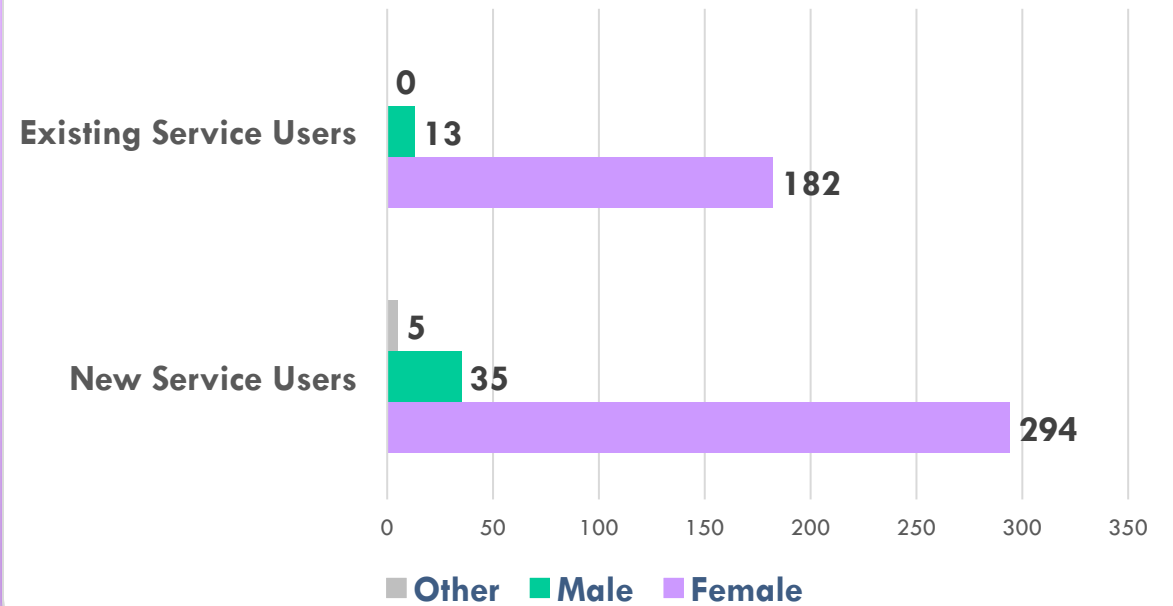
# How many victims and survivors (and their families) in Thurrock reached out for specialist sexual violence and sexual abuse support services

**Number of Service Users - 503 Individuals  
1 Apr 20 - 31 Mar 21**

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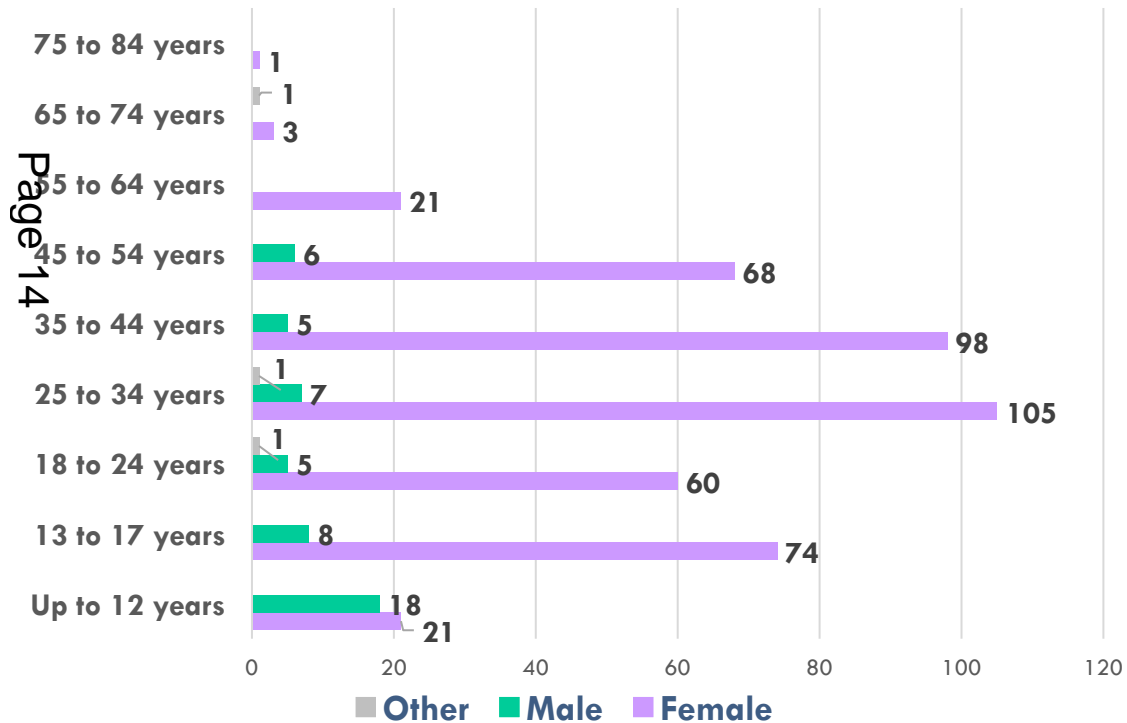


**Number of Service Users - 529 Individuals  
1 Apr 21 - 31 Mar 22**

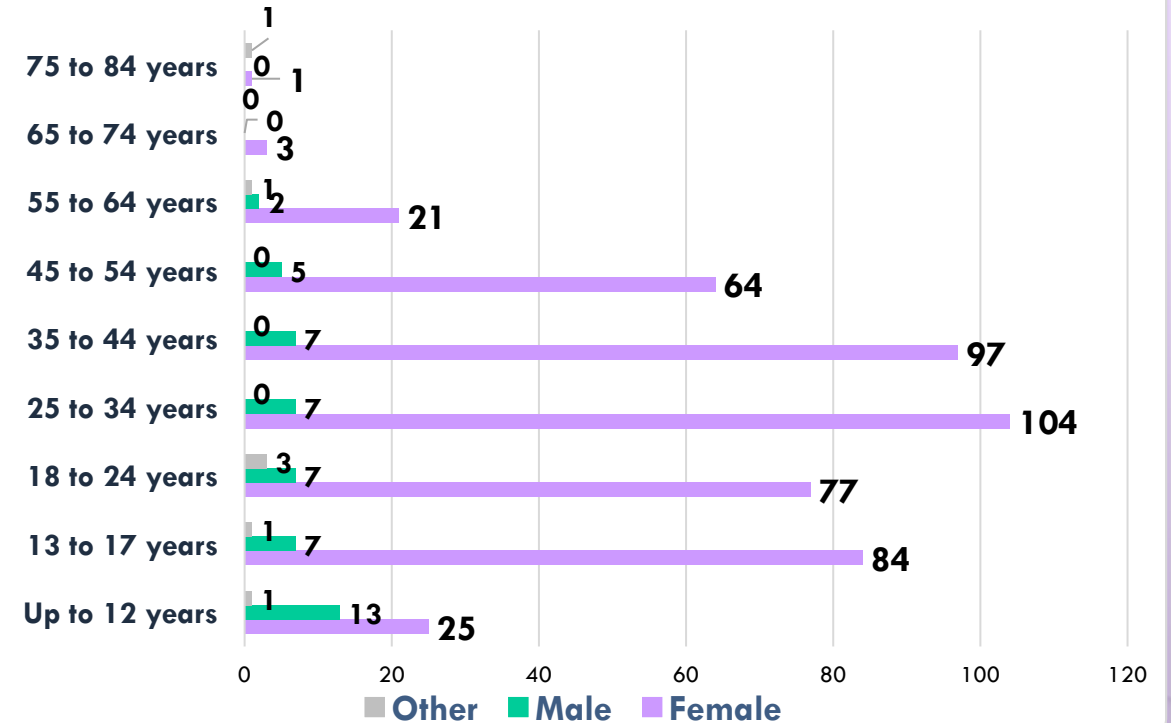


# How old were they?

Age Range of Service Users - 1 Apr 20 - 31 Mar 21



Age Range of Service Users - 1 Apr 21 - 31 Mar 22

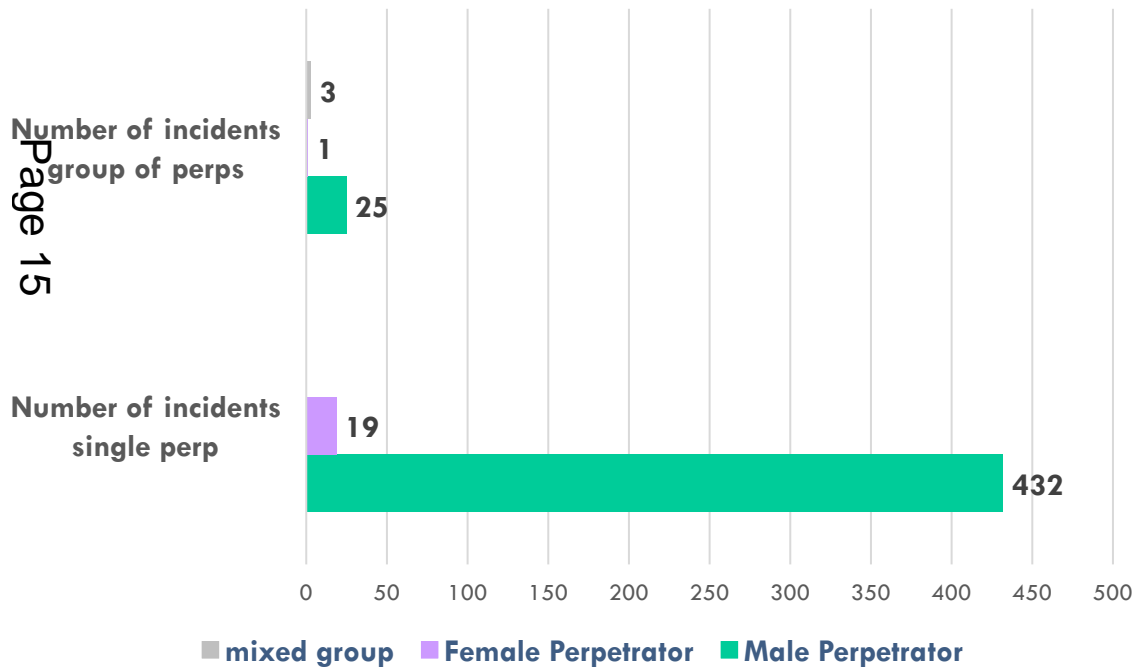




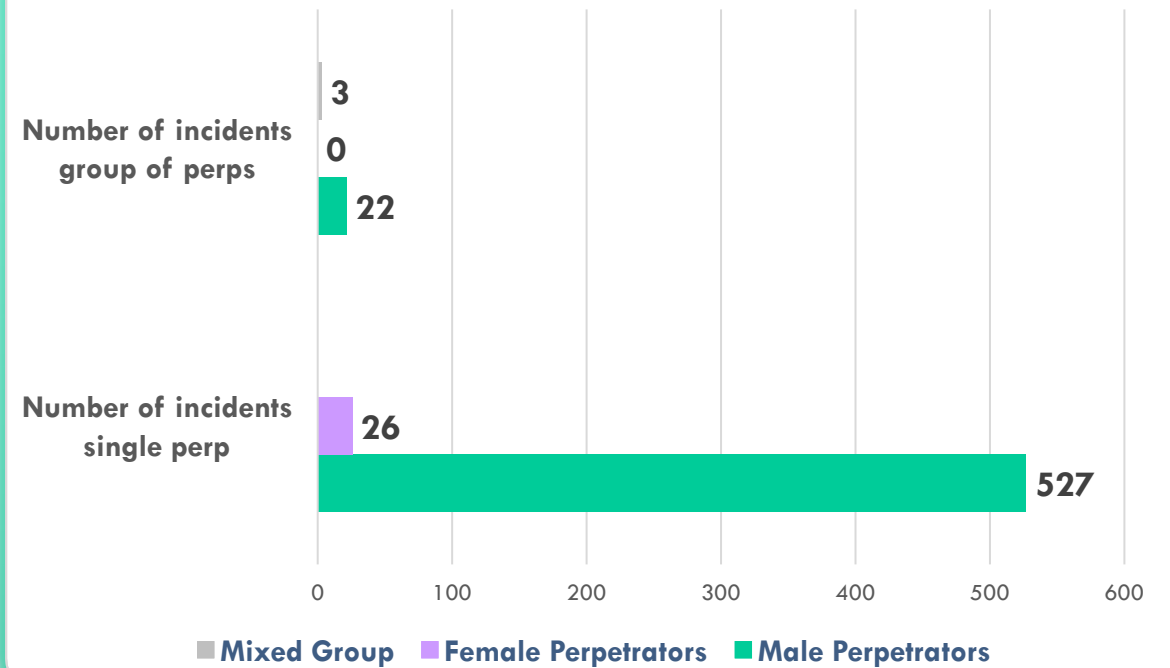
# How many incidents were disclosed & did survivors chose to report to police?

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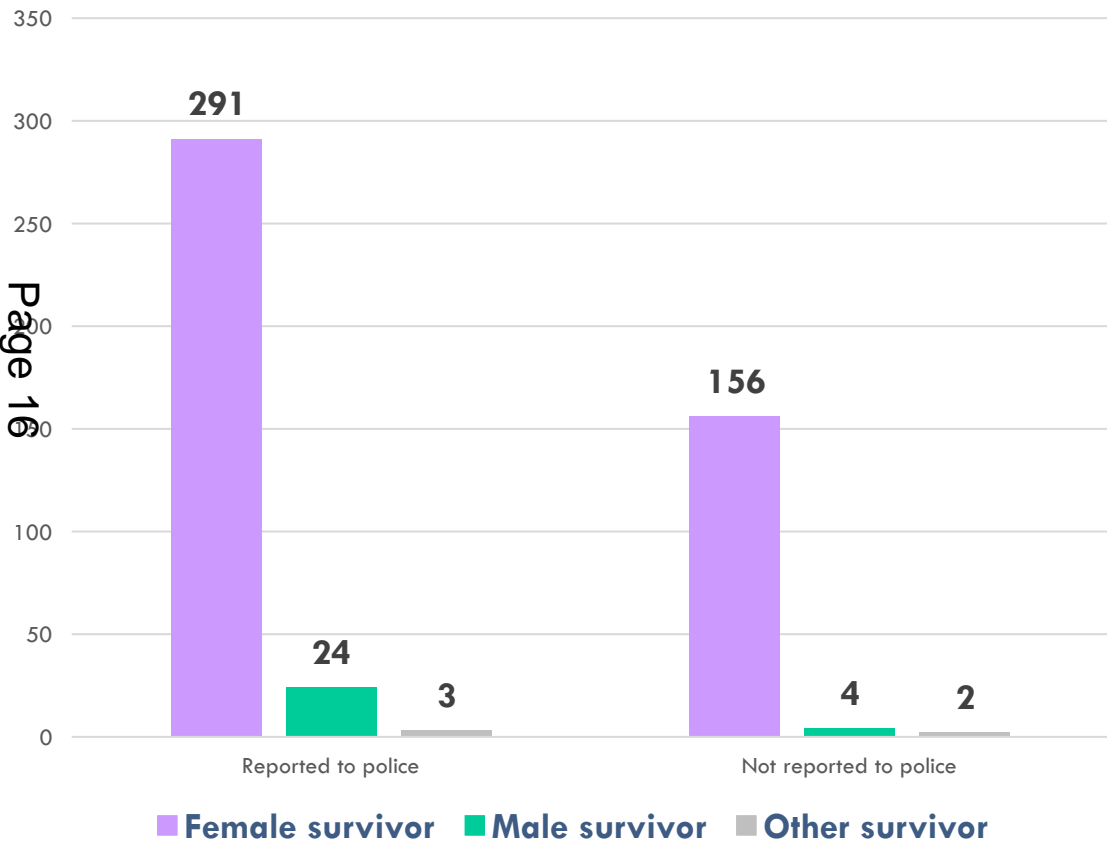
Number of incidents disclosed - 480  
2020 -2021



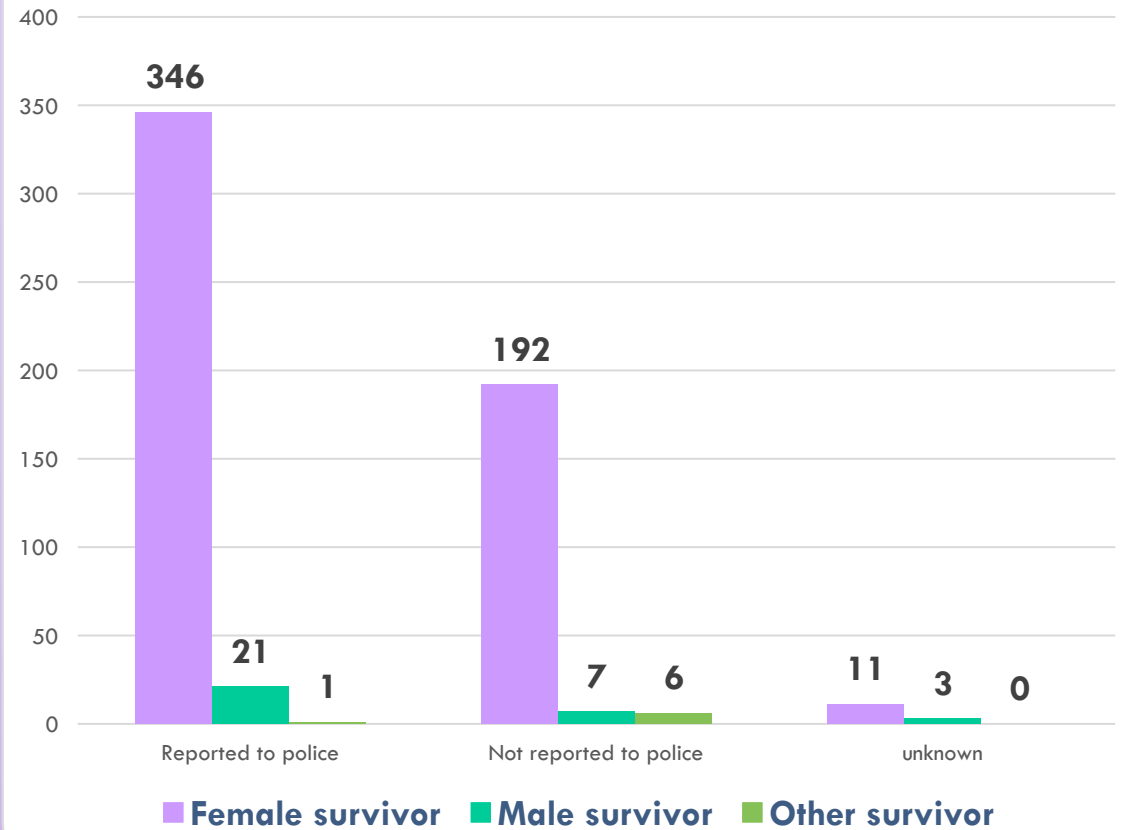
Number of incidents disclosed - 587  
2021 -2022



### Incidents Reported and Not Reported to Police 2020 -2021



### Incidents Reported and Not Reported to Police 2021 -2022



# As a comparison for the same period reports to **Essex Police** were:

Athena Records

Hour/Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
00	0	1	4	1	0	1	2	9
01	1	0	1	0	7	0	0	9
02	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	5
03	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
04	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
05	1	0	1	4	1	0	1	8
06	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
07	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
08	2	0	4	1	1	0	1	9
09	4	3	5	2	2	0	0	16
10	3	2	5	4	3	3	2	22
11	2	9	6	3	3	1	0	24
12	5	3	3	4	3	5	7	30
13	1	5	0	6	5	5	3	25
14	5	10	6	5	11	2	1	40
15	7	4	10	6	1	2	5	35
16	6	3	3	5	6	3	3	29
17	1	6	4	11	1	4	0	27
18	3	5	1	8	7	1	3	28
19	2	0	2	2	1	2	2	11
20	3	2	3	6	6	0	3	23
21	2	2	1	4	6	1	1	17
22	1	3	3	1	0	3	6	17
23	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>401</b>

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10 Top 10%  
20 Top 11%-20%

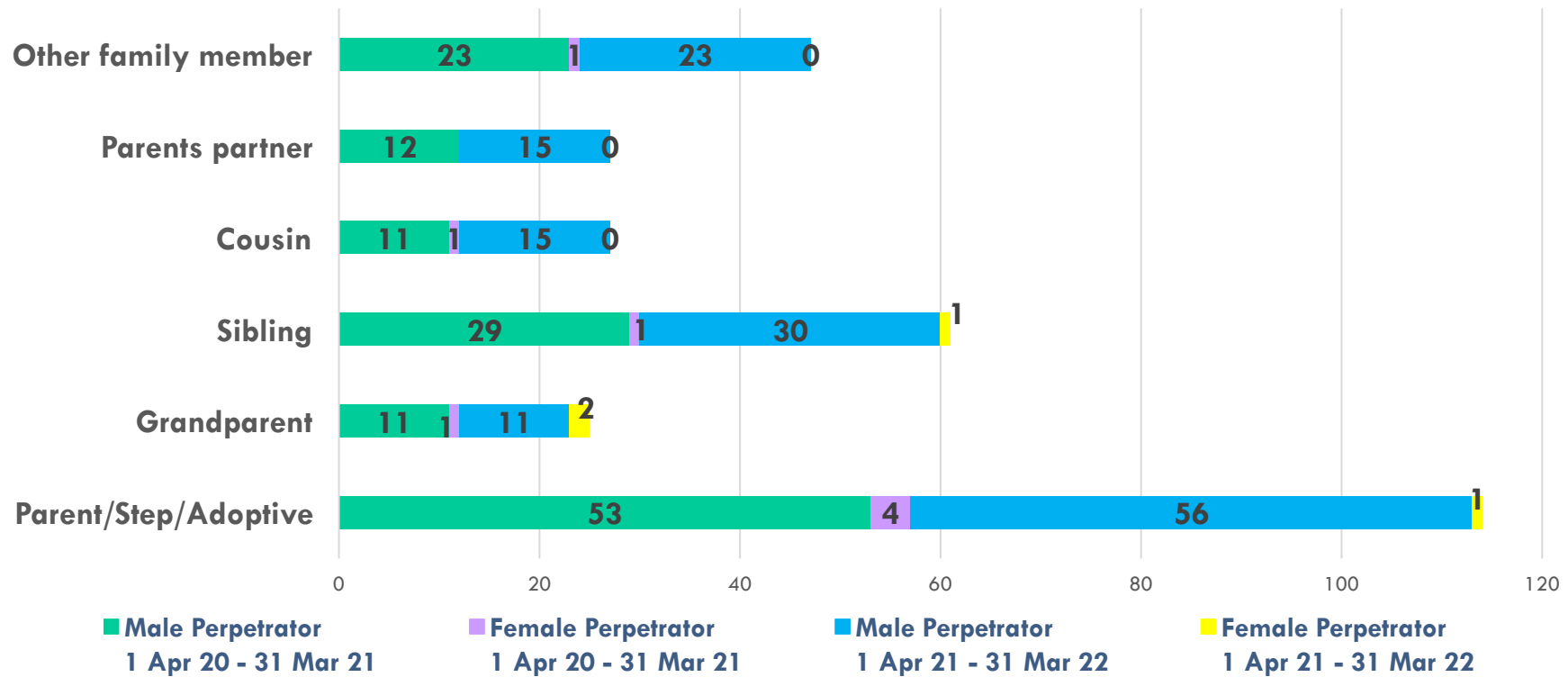
Athena Records

Hour/Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
00	3	4	3	4	0	2	1	17
01	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	6
02	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	6
03	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
04	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
05	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	4
06	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4
07	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
08	2	6	2	6	2	3	0	21
09	4	3	5	3	5	0	5	25
10	7	2	3	8	6	1	0	27
11	3	7	8	9	10	2	1	40
12	9	5	5	8	7	7	1	42
13	5	10	6	4	6	4	2	37
14	10	9	3	6	9	7	7	51
15	3	7	3	14	5	5	5	42
16	4	9	12	6	9	6	2	48
17	7	2	6	1	7	4	2	29
18	2	9	2	8	3	10	2	36
19	1	6	6	4	5	1	4	27
20	8	6	1	14	3	3	1	36
21	2	3	4	7	3	4	2	25
22	2	2	1	1	4	2	1	13
23	3	0	1	1	3	5	5	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>562</b>

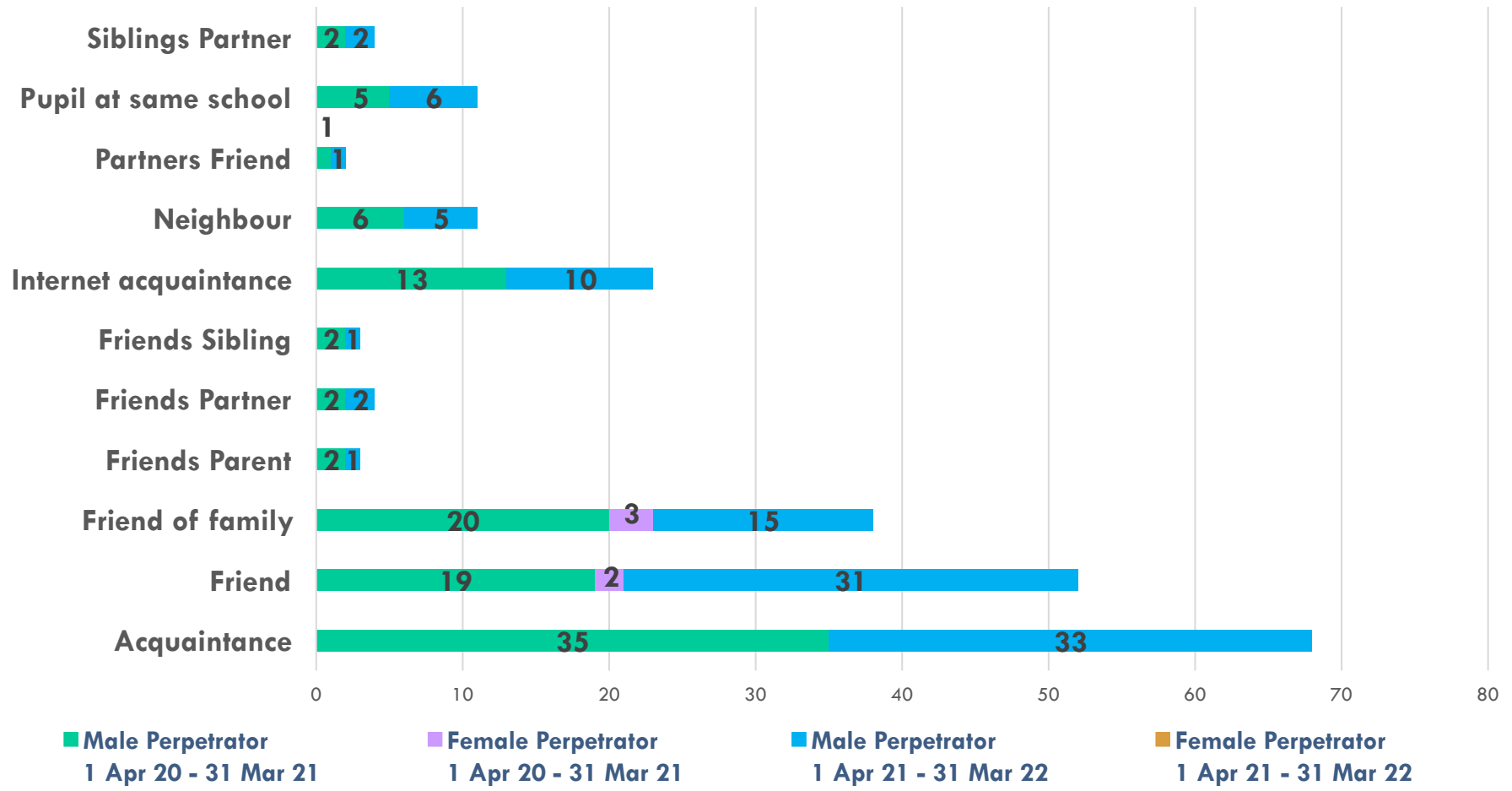
10 Top 10%  
20 Top 11%-20%

# Who are the Perpetrators of Rape and Sexual Abuse against victims and survivors in Thurrock?

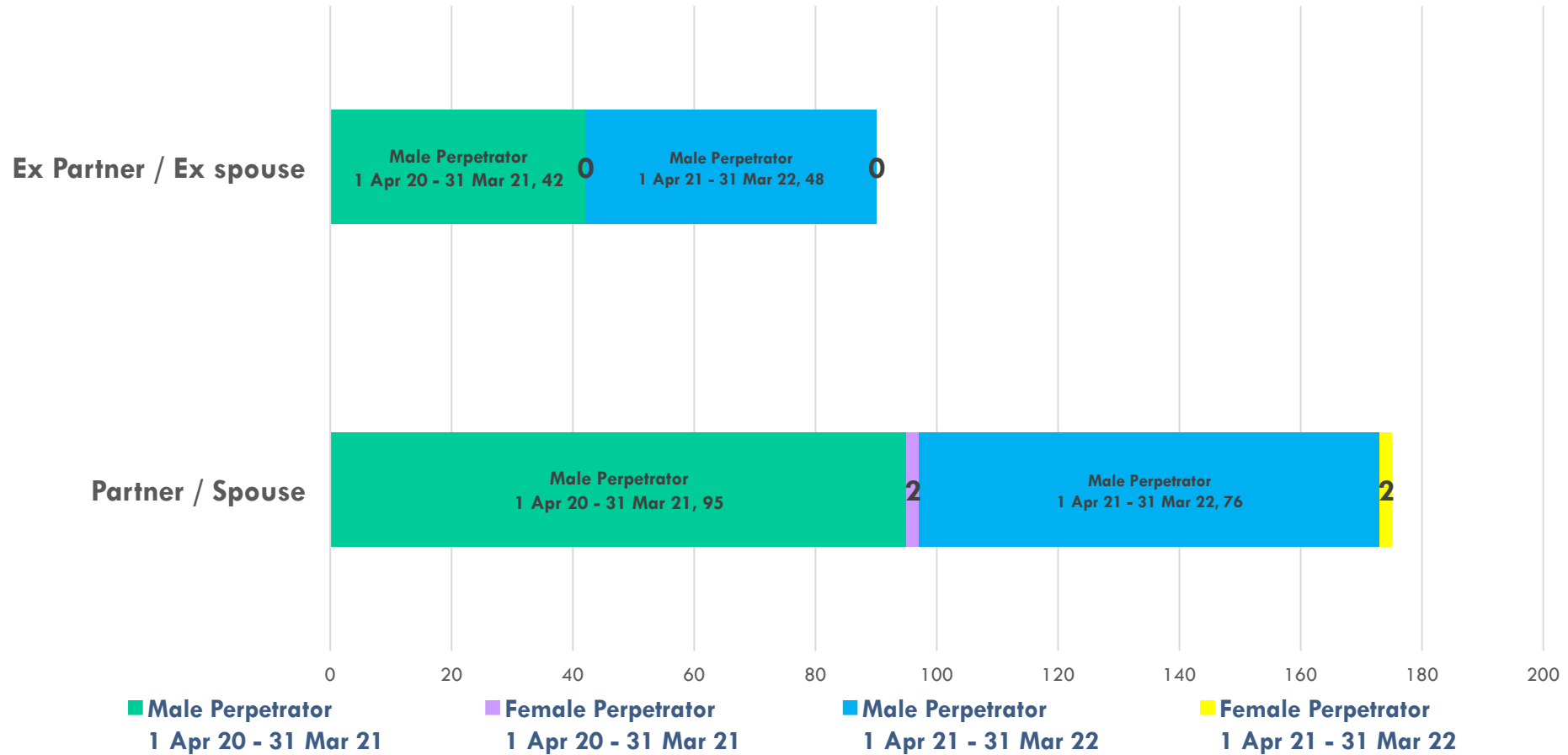
Perpetrator Type - Family Member



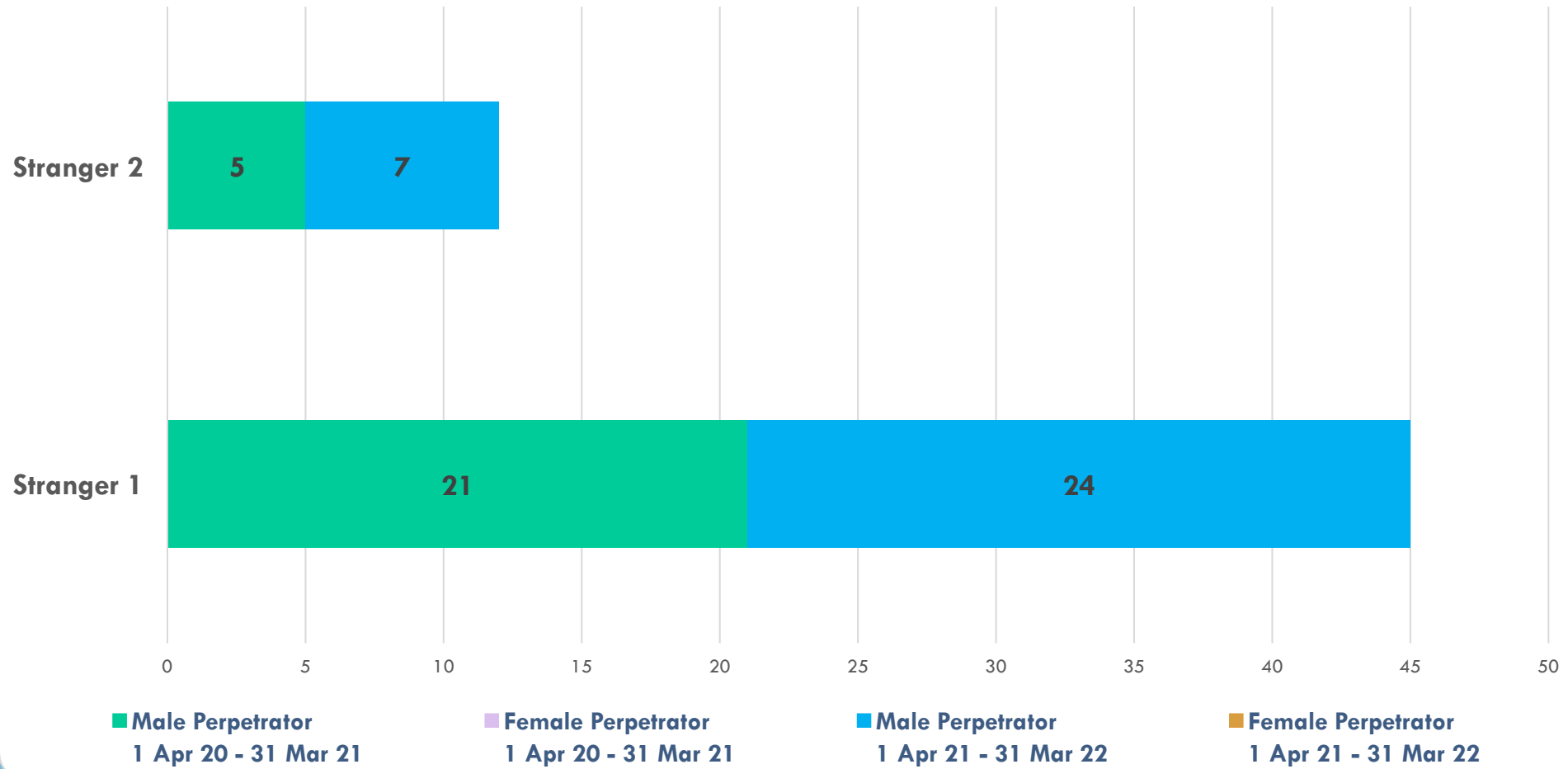
### Perpetrator Type - Friend / Acquaintance



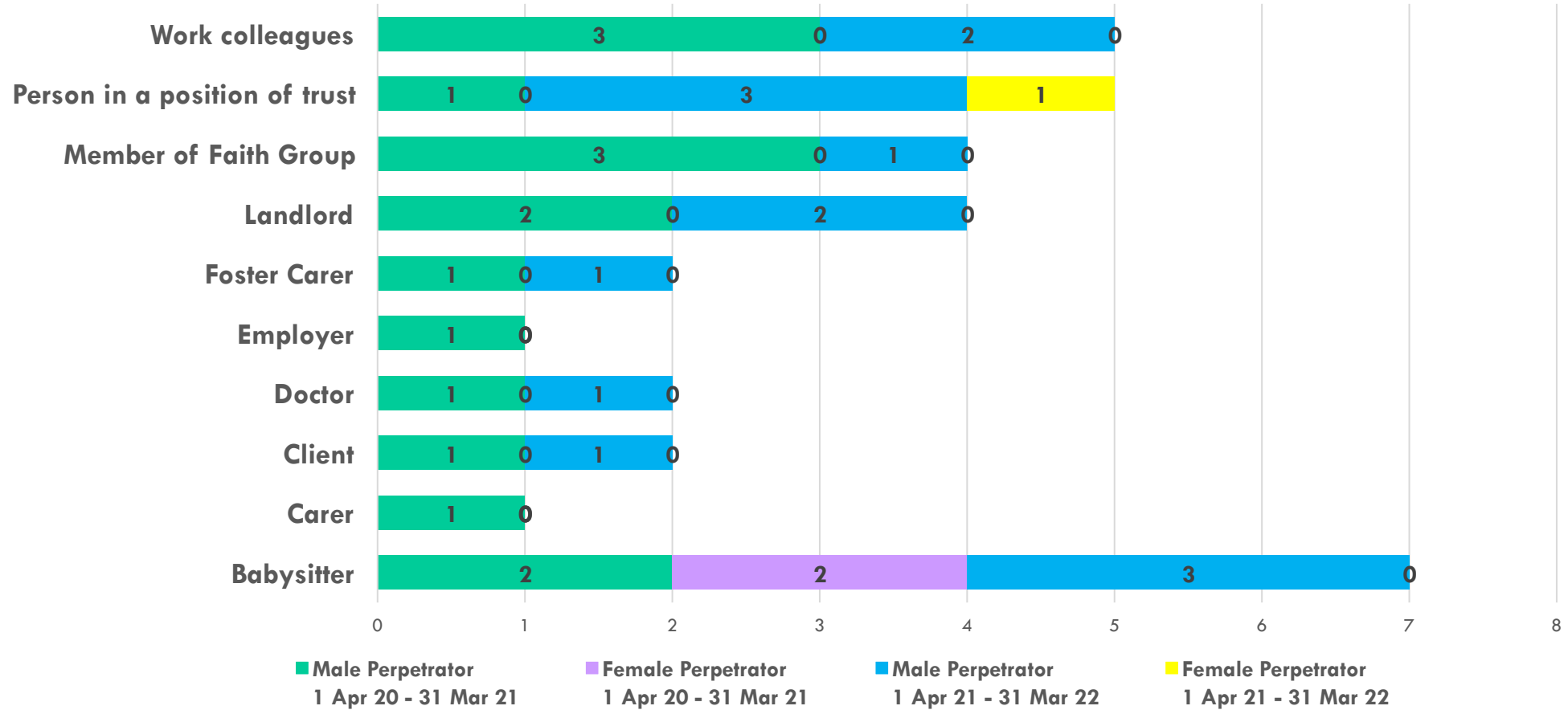
### Perpetrator Type - Intimate Partner



### Perpetrator Type - Stranger



### Perpetrator Type - Person in a Position of Trust





<b>4 October 2022</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee</b>		
<b>Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Update Report</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> N/A	
<b>Report of:</b> Bosa Osunde, Strategic Lead, Social Work Support		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Les Billingham, Asst Director ASC, and Communities		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Julie Rogers, Director of Public Realm		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

## Executive Summary

This report provides members of the Hidden and Extreme Harms Committee with details of Thurrock Council’s response to Modern Day Slavery (MDS) and Human Trafficking (HT). The two are intricately linked, and involve the movement of people through coercion, control, and exploitation for financial gain. People are often trafficked to then become the victims of MDS. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 consolidated slavery and human trafficking offences to ensure that there is enhanced support and protection for victims and that perpetrators can receive suitably severe sentences.

The Act ensures that Police and other law enforcement agencies have the powers they need to pursue, disrupt, and bring to justice those engaged in human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced compulsory labour. Thurrock Councils Social Care and safeguarding teams in both Adults and Children’s Services along with the Community Safety Partnership have a key role to play in preventing, responding, and partnering with our police colleagues to ensure that those suffering exploitation in this way can be protected.

The Act specifies public authorities, including local authorities, are required to notify the Home Office about any potential victims of modern slavery they encounter in England and Wales. This is via the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process. Where adults do not provide consent to be referred there is a Duty to Notify (DtN) placed on the public authority.

Councils are uniquely placed to be at the forefront of the fight against modern slavery, and whilst we are currently under no legal obligation to publish an MDS transparency statement, this will be included in the new provisions of the Modern Slavery Act when it is updated and amended. By voluntarily completing a

transparency statement, we are demonstrating awareness and ethical leadership and following good practice. The statement can be viewed on Thurrock Council's website *Appendix 1*.

Thurrock is not unique and like many other areas will have victims of MDS, and organised crime groups involved in immigration crime are highly exploitative of vulnerable adults and children, charging large sums of money for their illegal services.

As seen in the tragic case of Operation Melrose, which resulted in the death of 39 Vietnamese men, women and children in Purfleet, Organised Immigration Crime in relation to the trafficking of people through our ports can be highly dangerous and ultimately cost lives.

Through the police led Operation Bluebird, the police have sought to disrupt Organised Immigration Crime through establishing links with Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) enabling us to work upstream to prevent further harm.

This paper allows Elected Members the opportunity to scrutinise the implementation of the Modern Slavery Act by Thurrock Council and understand Thurrock's response to Human Trafficking. The LGA (Local Government Association) document "Councillor Guide to Tackling MDS" (*Appendix 2*) identifies the role councillors can play to help tackle this issue and are broadly summed up as the following 2 aspects<sup>1</sup>:

1. Incorporate modern slavery within the Council's work.
2. Scrutinising the work of the council and its partners on modern day slavery and holding them to account.

## **1. Recommendation(s):**

**1.1 That Members approve the 3-year approach and delivery plan.**

**1.2 That Members champion the MDS agenda and act as key stakeholders in being the eyes and ears of our communities and continue to raise awareness of this issue**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 Modern Day Slavery remains a priority of the UK government and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, which is currently in an interim period as we await the appointment of a new commissioner. The government estimated the number of potential victims as 10,000 to 13,000 in 2013. More recently the Global Slavery Index, using a different methodology suggested that there were 136,000 victims of slavery in the UK in 2018.

2.2 The Office for National Statistics recognise that because of its hidden nature, producing an accurate measure of prevalence for these crimes is incredibly difficult. Currently there is no definitive source of data or suitable method

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<sup>1</sup> In forward by Councillor Simon Blackburn Chair, LGA Safer Stronger Communities Board

available to accurately quantify the number of victims of modern slavery in the UK. Instead, they produce a range of data to help better understand the extent and nature of these crimes. According to the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) hospitality, care, construction, agriculture, beauty services and manufacturing are all considered, among others, to be high-risk industries for labour exploitation in the UK.

- 2.3 In 2020 the Modern Slavery Helpline received 6,052 calls, 1,924 webforms and App submissions. From these contacts, 3,481 potential victims were indicated, 1,742 modern slavery cases raised, and 1,582 referrals sent to law enforcement agencies, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and safeguarding teams. A considerable proportion of calls into the Helpline remain related to wider abuse and exploitation, such as labour abuse and domestic violence. The pandemic affected the ability of individuals to reach out for support, as reflected in these figures which are lower than the 2019 statistics. The sharpest decrease in calls coincided with the first national lockdown commencing in March 2020.
- 2.4 The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is used to identify and refer potential victims of modern slavery and make sure they receive appropriate support. The number of potential modern slavery victims who received a positive reasonable grounds decision within the NRM nationally is rising. In 2021, the NRM received 12,727 referrals of potential victims of modern slavery.<sup>2</sup> This represents a 20% increase in referrals compared to the preceding year (10,601). This year saw the highest number of referrals since the NRM began.

Of all referrals this year, 50% (6,411) were for potential victims who claimed exploitation as adults (compared to 48% in the preceding year), whilst 43% (5,468) claimed exploitation as children (Figure 2). The age group at exploitation was unknown in 7% of cases (848).

- 2.5 The priority of modern-day slavery is reflected at a local level within the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership:

**Priority 7: Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime.**

- 2.6 This committee have previously provided direction to this priority which has resulted in the creation of a standalone 3-year strategy for MDS in Thurrock. The Modern Day Slavery Strategy and delivery plan 2022-25 has been agreed across 3 Partnership Boards: CSP (Community Safety Partnership), LSCP (Local Safeguarding Childrens Partnership) & TSAB (Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board). This offers strategic oversight and commitment on the shared interest of safeguarding across the Boards priorities.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2021/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2021#:~:text=2.1%20Number%20of%20referrals%20by,the%20preceding%20year%20\(10%2C601\).](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2021/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2021#:~:text=2.1%20Number%20of%20referrals%20by,the%20preceding%20year%20(10%2C601).)

- 2.7 This refreshed Strategy sets out Thurrock's approach to tackling modern day slavery and duties under the Modern Slavery Act (MDS) 2015. MDS is an umbrella term covering many forms, including Human trafficking, Forced Labour, Domestic Servitude, Sexual exploitation, and Organ Harvesting. The strategy is underpinned by a supporting delivery plan.
- 2.8 The priorities are:
1. Empowered communities to participate and engage in tackling modern slavery and trafficking.
  2. Increased training awareness and understanding of modern slavery, human trafficking, and exploitation.
  3. Strengthened partnerships and outreach to Thurrock businesses to ensure ethical trading practices
  4. Increased support and protection for people who are being exploited, and those at risk of exploitation.
  5. Greater success in detection, disruption, and prosecution.
- 2.9 The strategy adopts the 4P approach to achieve the objectives:
- 2.9.1 Prevent – preventing people from engaging in modern slavery.
- 2.9.2 Pursue – prosecuting and disrupting individuals and groups responsible for modern slavery.
- 2.9.3 Protect – strengthening safeguards against modern slavery by protecting vulnerable people from exploitation and increasing awareness and resilience against this crime.
- 2.9.4 Prepare – reducing the harm caused by modern slavery through improved victim identification and enhanced support and protection.
- 2.10 Thurrock Council have published a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement (*Appendix 1*). The requirement of these statements will only apply to larger businesses with an annual turnover threshold of £36 million or more. Nationally, SMEs (small and medium businesses) make up 99% of all UK businesses and employ 16.8 million people. Understandably, they are more restricted in terms of resources they can dedicate to mitigating the risk of modern slavery in their operations. Our delivery plan outlines how Thurrock Council plan to support these businesses operating in the Borough. Activity examples includes a similar ethos to central government. Working with our communications team we will be encouraging these businesses to sign up to a transparency statement and recognise and celebrate those that do so. Furthermore, we will encourage all to make use of the Modern Slavery SME Toolkit which was designed specifically for this sector.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.stopthetraffic.org/sme-toolkit/>

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 Since the introduction of the new strategy, there have been many achievements to date:
  - 3.1.1 A regular training programme has been scheduled, providing an overview of types and signs of exploitation, what the barriers to reporting maybe for victims and the action required by professionals to deliver an effective response. This is delivered by partners such as Essex Police and Justice and Care - 64 individuals have attended 4 sessions. This includes attendance from adult social care staff. Sessions are currently scheduled until January 2023.
  - 3.1.2 To offer consistency and collaboration across documentation, a Southend, Essex & Thurrock Modern Slavery 1 minute guide has been completed.
  - 3.1.3 In June 2022, a partnership joint operation with Essex Police, and Trading Standards was completed to inspect car washes through Op Aidant. There were no concerns found.
  - 3.1.4 The SME toolkit was promoted in Business Buzz newsletter which has a large distribution list to hundreds of business contacts in the borough.
- 3.2 The delivery plan is a 3-year action plan. Key activity planned to March 2023 is:
  - 3.2.1 A partnership event on 19th October. This event will share the latest updates and guidance from leading experts on tackling modern slavery. It will provide practical information on what to do if individuals come across a case of modern slavery. There will be an opportunity to discuss a case of modern slavery and highlight where victims can access support. The event will also increase awareness of the resources available and provide valuable networking opportunities with colleagues in other agencies.
  - 3.2.2 Communications will be key to get our message out to communities on Anti-Slavery Day – 18 October, providing us with the opportunity to engage with the public during that week at a pop-up event raising the profile within communities.
  - 3.2.3 Develop a draft Thurrock MDS pathway for first responder and professionals who are made aware of a potential victim of MDS/human trafficking.
  - 3.2.4 Promote the Landlord's guide to tackling modern day slavery, to reduce the risk of it in their properties. Private housing teams to carry out checks to properties with partners.
- 3.3 Activity to March 2025 will see a focus on understanding the data and intelligence available to ensure that multi-agency operations are effectively targeted. Focus will also look at policies and resources to ensure they are fit

for purpose. The work in year one on awareness training and engagement with the public and businesses will continue to develop.

3.4 The following risks are highlighted to members for awareness:

3.4.1 As outlined in the Home Office Delivery plan 2021/22 <sup>4</sup>: Police and support services need to be ready to respond to additional demand that could arise from increased reporting of crimes that have been traditionally under-reported, like modern slavery, violence against women and girls, and domestic abuse.

3.4.2 Thurrock has 3 ports and borders national road network and has been identified as a hot spot for Organised Immigration Crime.

3.4.3 There is a continued risk that there are unidentified victims of Human Trafficking within Thurrock.

3.4.4 The current cost of living crisis may exacerbate the number of individuals who unwittingly get caught up in modern day slavery. British victims tend to have fallen on challenging times, making them vulnerable to exploitation, including well-paid work with promises of accommodation, and for young people being caught up in the trafficking of drugs across County Lines.

3.4.5 Without taking the appropriate precautions, modern slavery can occur within local Thurrock businesses without them even knowing. If this happens, the reputation of the businesses can be negatively affected, and they might find themselves caught in a criminal investigation. In 2020, there were alleged cases of modern slavery occurring in Leicester apparel factories, multiple SMEs were caught up in a labour exploitation scandal. Unfortunately, scandals can affect businesses who never intended to cut corners or take advantage of workers but are still unwittingly exposed.

3.5 The Community Equality Impact Assessment (*Appendix 3*) highlights the positive impact that this strategy will have on those that maybe more vulnerable due to their protected characteristic of Age, Disability, Risk of Forced Marriage, Pregnancy, Race, Sex or due to deprivation.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 To enable members to be satisfied with the response to MDS by Thurrock Council through the new dedicated strategy and delivery plan.

4.2 Members are key stakeholders in supporting us to raise awareness of this crime across all our communities.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-outcome-delivery-plan/home-office-outcome-delivery-plan-2021-to-2022>

- 5.1 Our 3 year MDS Strategy has been developed following consultation with this committee
- 5.2 Thurrock Council are key partners within Op Bluebird and professionals from the Community Safety and Emergency Planning and Resilience team, as well as Adult and Childrens Social Care attend the Organised Immigration and Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Professionals meeting, which is chaired by Essex Police.

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 6.1 The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership is central to delivering Thurrock Council's priority of:

**People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live, and stay.

This means:

- High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
- Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
- Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

- 6.2 The Community Safety Partnership has responsibility to deliver on Domain 6 of Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022/26 in relation to **'Community Safety'**.

The aims and ambitions of Domain 6 are:

- **Thurrock is a place where people feel and are safe to live, socialise, work and visit.**
- **We will also ensure that victims/survivors of crime are able to access support to cope and recover from their experiences, should they need it.**

- 6.3 This strategy and delivery plan will deliver on Priority 7 of the Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan 2022/23:  
**Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime**

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**  
**Senior Management Accountant**

There are currently no financial implications, £1,000 has been allocated from the Community Safety Partnership funds for 22/23. Thurrock Adult Safeguarding Board are funding the partnership event in October.

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**  
**Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)**

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is the key legislation relating to the modern slavery and sets out the relevant criminal offences, prevention orders, the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the obligations on organisations. The Act is supported by various regulations and statutory guidance. The Council is under a duty under Section 52 of the Act to notify the Home Office when they come across potential victims of modern slavery. It is also under duties to safeguard child and vulnerable adults who may be involved in modern slavery. There is no current legal obligation to produce a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement, but this may be introduced in legislation in the future.

The report enables the Committee to review and monitor how the Council is fulfilling its duties in relation to Modern Day Slavery.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer**

Due to the very nature of this crime, that of a vulnerable person being exploited and completely controlled by someone else and one which is a global problem that transcends age, gender, and ethnicities all aspects of the delivery of this strategy will support those disadvantaged due to their protected characteristic.

## 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

This strategy will have a positive impact on safeguarding those vulnerable to exploitation

## 8. Background papers used in preparing the report:

N/A

## 9. Appendices to the report



- Appendix 1: Statement
- Appendix 2: Strategy
- Appendix 3: Community Equality Impact Assessment

**Report Author:**

Michelle Cunningham

Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager

Public Realm

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## Thurrock Council Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

April 2022- March 2023

This statement is made in accordance with s.54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and recognises the role that Thurrock Council has in tackling modern slavery and human trafficking. Thurrock Council opposes modern slavery and human trafficking and is committed to ensuring that such practices have no place within our business supply chains or other activities. Modern slavery is a term used to encapsulate both offences in the Modern Slavery Act: slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour; and human trafficking. The offences are set out in section 1 and section 2 of the Act<sup>i</sup>

Thurrock is a local council situated in the county of Essex, located on the north side of the river Thames, immediately to the east of London.

Thurrock is at the heart of global trade and logistics, with 3 international ports along 18 miles of riverfront, and with major road intersections within the borough geographically Thurrock presents an increased risk of exploitation by Organised Immigration Crime in relation to the trafficking of people through borders. As seen in the tragic case of Operation Melrose, which resulted in the death of 39 Vietnamese men, women and children this can be highly dangerous and ultimately cost lives with victims being treated as a commodity.

The population is estimated to be 174,300<sup>ii</sup>. Thurrock Council is a unitary council. It has responsibility to deliver all local government services within a district. Examples of these services include, but are not limited to education, libraries, roads, social care, environmental services, public protection, planning and development and housing.

Local authorities are central to the fight against modern slavery. Modern slavery intersects with many different areas that councils are involved with and a number of different officers might come across it while going about their everyday activities. Examples where officers might come across victims include housing and homelessness services, community safety work, trading standards, licensing services, social services and customer services.

### Due diligence and risk management

The Council continues to strive to enhance its current processes and controls to protect against any form of Modern Slavery within its supply chain. As part of our Procurement process, our Standard Selection Questionnaire (SQ) includes appropriate questions requiring potential bidders to evidence their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act if they are a relevant commercial organisation as defined by Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Failure to evidence compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 results in the potential bidder's SQ being treated as ineligible for the contract opportunity.

The Council requires its contractors and subcontractors engaged in 'regulated activity' for children and adults at risk to have safeguarding policies, procedures and training in place and to comply with the reporting procedures in the SET (Southend, Essex, Thurrock) Safeguarding policies.

### What we expect from suppliers and stakeholders

To continue to improve processes and controls protecting against Modern Slavery we will as appropriate:

- Provide refresher training on Modern Slavery for all Procurement and key staff across the Council
- Work with supplier and stakeholders to identify procurement categories and areas which are susceptible and are at risk of modern slavery to facilitate putting in place appropriate measures to mitigate the risks
- Incorporate performance measures within contracts and monitoring of these particularly in identified high risk procurement categories / areas to enable early resolutions of identified issues

### What we will do to ensure compliance

- Include appropriate clauses in contracts requiring compliance with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 within the supply chain as well as setting out consequences for breaching the clause.

The Council's Whistleblowing Policy is intended to make it easier to disclose information without fear of discrimination and victimisation<sup>iii</sup> and should be used by anyone concerned that reports of MDS are not being taken seriously or are being ignored.

### What we will achieve this year

1. Section 52 of the Act imposes a duty on public authorities, including local authorities, to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking. Thurrock Council will build upon the proactive awareness raising already carried out in 2020. The existing training is primarily for frontline practitioners and is delivered online by an external organisation due to national covid-19 restrictions. The training not only raises awareness of the duty, but also how to identify, refer and support victims.
2. We will continue to review internal documentation to ensure it reflects modern slavery and human trafficking awareness and signposting where appropriate.
3. We will progress the modern slavery actions within our refreshed Modern Day Slavery Strategy 22-25
4. We will continue to explore collaborative communication opportunities with our colleagues and partners across Essex on modern slavery and human trafficking, aiming to provide consistent messaging and response across Thurrock and wider Essex.

This statement will be updated annually: Next statement due April 2023

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157204/report.aspx#tabrespop>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/whistleblowing-201901-web-v02.pdf>

Documents used to inform this statement

[Transparency in Supply Chains etc. A practical guide](#)

[LGA Transparency Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking](#)

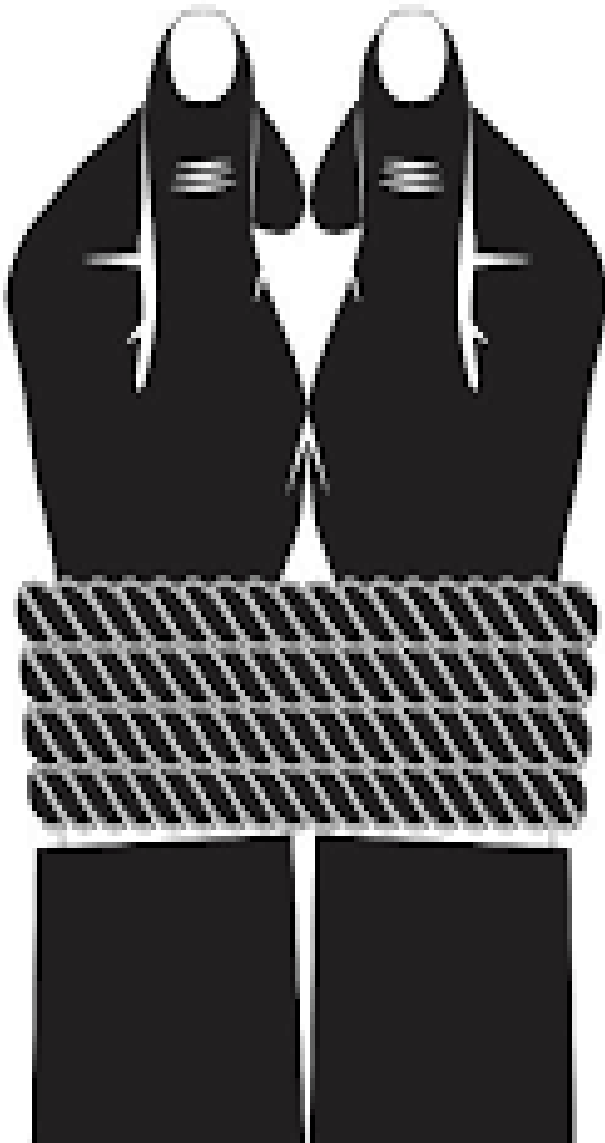
# Thurrock Partnership Modern Day Slavery Strategy 2022-2025

THURROCK LOCAL  
SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN  
PARTNERSHIP



**Fran Leddra**

Principal Social Worker & Strategic Lead  
Safeguarding & Adult Social Care





## Vision and priorities

We believe everyone, everywhere has the right to a life free from slavery. But right now, millions of children and adults are trapped in slavery in every single country in the world. Including ours. Thurrock will strive to ensure our neighborhoods are free from exploitation. We will do this by ensuring:

1. Empowered communities to participate and engage in tackling modern slavery and trafficking.
2. Increased training awareness and understanding of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation.
3. Strengthened partnerships and outreach to Thurrock businesses to ensure ethical trading practices
4. Increased support and protection for people who are being exploited, and those at risk of exploitation.
5. Greater success in detection, disruption and prosecution.

# Introduction

**This refreshed Strategy sets out Thurrock's approach to tackling modern slavery and duties under the Modern Slavery Act (MDS) 2015. This Act imposes an obligation on local authorities to notify the Secretary of State if they have reasonable grounds to believe a person may be a victim of human trafficking or slavery.**

Thurrock has always had a MDS strategy and action plan, and until recently it sat within the Violence against Women and Girls strategy. A decision was taken in January 2022 to refresh and hold separately within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). This new updated strategy will launch a new focus for MDS in Thurrock, ensuring our workforce and citizens can recognise and respond to signs of modern slavery.

Thurrock Council signed up to the Charter Against Modern Slavery which aims to establish ethical labour sourcing practices in our supply chain and establish robust recruitment practices. The annual statement can be found published [here](#). Building on that this strategy sets out Thurrock's approach to effectively tackle the problem of modern slavery and human trafficking. It reinforces our commitment to prevent and reduce modern slavery cases and protect and support victim's reintegration into the society.

This strategy adopts the 4 P's:

1. Prevent – preventing people from engaging in modern slavery.
2. Pursue – prosecuting and disrupting individuals and groups responsible for modern slavery.
3. Protect – strengthening safeguards against modern slavery by protecting vulnerable people from exploitation and increasing awareness and resilience against this crime.
4. Prepare – reducing the harm caused by modern slavery through improved victim identification and enhanced support and protection.

This strategy is interrelated with the following strategic documents and should be read in conjunction with them:

- [SET Modern Day Slavery Guidance](#)
- [SET Modern Slavery One-Minute Guide](#)
- [Priority 7 of the CSP plan 22/23: Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime](#)



# Context

Modern slavery is about being exploited and completely controlled by someone else, without being able to leave. It includes human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Modern Slavery is an international crime, affecting an estimated 29.8 million people around the world. It is a global problem that transcends age, gender and ethnicities.

## Types of modern slavery

**Human trafficking** is the act of moving people to other locations for the purpose of exploitation. Children, young people and adults can be trafficked, from abroad, within the UK, between cities or just from one street to another. Unaccompanied children and young people from outside the UK can be some of the most vulnerable children in the country.

**Forced Labour** is about people being forced to work under the threat of violence and for no pay. They are treated as property and exploited to create a product for commercial sale.

**Domestic Servitude** refers to employees working in private homes who are forced or coerced into serving and/or fraudulently convinced that they have no option to leave.

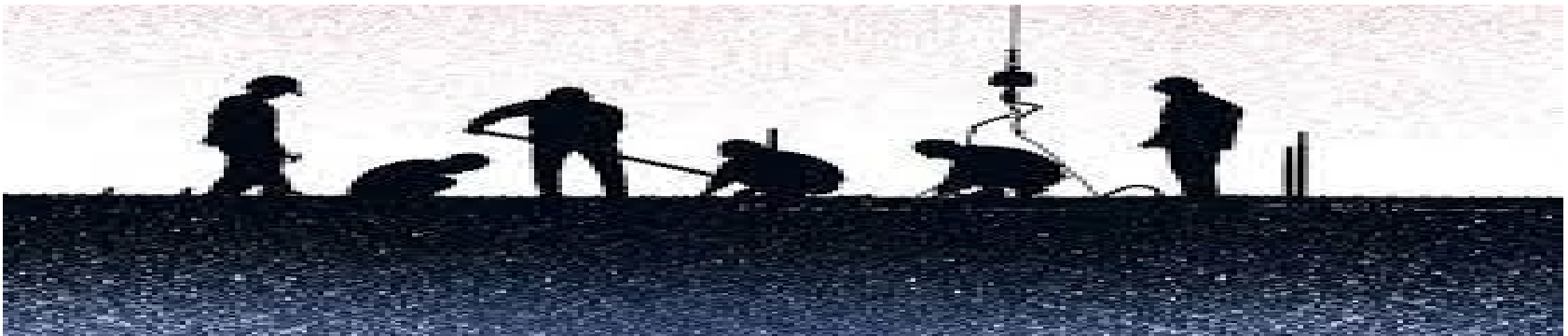
**Sexual exploitation** involves women, men or children that are forced into the commercial sex industry and held against their will by force, fraud or coercion.

**Forced Marriage** is when women and children are forced into marriage for a range of reasons including exploiting the rights conferred on them by citizenship or for domestic servitude. **County Lines or Movement of Drugs** is defined as how gangs and criminal networks from towns, use children,

young people and vulnerable adults to deliver class A drugs to customers in county and rural areas. This often involves vulnerable people being subject to deception, intimidation, violence and grooming.

**Organ Harvesting** This is a lucrative global illicit trade. Organ trafficking holds a critical place with transnational organised crime groups due to high demand. It leaves vulnerable populations also known as “donors”, and first world beneficiaries also known as “recipients” open to severe exploitation and a lifetime of health consequences.

**Street Crime** is when people are exploited to beg or steal for the financial benefit of others





## National Picture

The Office for National Statistics report 2020 states that because of its hidden nature, producing an accurate measure of prevalence is difficult. Currently, there is no definitive source of data or suitable method available to accurately quantify the number of victims of modern slavery in the UK. Instead, they have produced a range of data to help better understand the extent and nature of these crimes. Greater awareness, increases in reporting and improvements in police recording are likely to have contributed to the increases seen in potential victim numbers since the introduction of the modern slavery Acts across the UK in 2015. For example:

- the Modern Slavery Helpline received a 68% increase in calls and submissions in the year ending December 2018, compared with the previous year
- there were 5,144 modern slavery offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019, an increase of 51% from the previous year
- the number of potential victims referred through the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) increased by 36% to 6,985 in the year ending December 2018
- Collecting legal evidence for modern slavery offences can be difficult, and the cases are among the most challenging and complex to prosecute. For example:
  - there were 205 suspects of modern slavery flagged cases referred from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019.
  - over two-thirds (68%) of modern slavery related CPS prosecutions in England and Wales resulted in a conviction in the year ending March 2019
- Modern slavery can affect anyone in society, with victims being exploited in a number of ways. For example:
  - almost a quarter (23%) of the 6,985 potential victims referred through the NRM in the year ending December 2018 were UK nationals.
  - of the 2,251 potential victims supported by The Salvation Army in England and Wales in the year ending June 2019, 48% had experienced labour exploitation and 39% had experienced sexual exploitation.

## Thurrock Picture

Whilst Thurrock has relatively low numbers of referrals into the NRM we believe this is only part of the picture. It is highly likely MDS is going undetected, unreported and emerging threats:

- The impact of COVID-19 across many industries may lead to an increase in opportunities for MSHT offenders to exploit, especially with the shortages of workers in some sectors.
- Potential for increase in labour exploitation as the HGV driver crisis remains unresolved and inexperienced/newly qualified drivers brought in to fill the gaps.
- There have been media reports in the last year regarding exploitation within the low-cost clothing manufacturing industry. This is not a large industry in Essex compared to some other counties but any intelligence received will be acted upon appropriately.
- The political conflict and subsequent relocation of Afghan and Ukrainian nationals to the UK may leave them vulnerable to exploitation incidents where they seek work and stability.
- The prevailing climate. Therefore it was seen that adaptations had to be made for those involved in labour exploitation because of the lockdowns and closures of some sectors.



# Our Priorities

## **1 Empowered communities to participate and engage in tackling modern slavery and trafficking**

Combating MDS is everyone's business. We will start conversations with our citizens. From this we can develop community champions. We will develop community champions through our engagement with organisations.

## **2 Increased training awareness and understanding of modern slavery, human trafficking and Exploitation**

We will support and promote campaigns to raise awareness of modern slavery and trafficking across the borough.

We will work with our partnerships to deliver effective and responsive training and support in this area.

We will develop specific training for relevant professionals in how to support the systemic gathering of intelligence and evidence required to identify, challenge and ensure successful prosecution of criminality.

## **3 Strengthened partnerships and outreach to Thurrock businesses to ensure ethical trading practices**

We will use our influence and contracting to ensure Businesses in Thurrock are trading ethically and mirror the current duties in the MDS Act.

## **4. Increased support and protection for people who are being exploited, and those at risk of exploitation**

Justice and Care have teams in police forces across the UK. They act as bridge between victims, support and police investigations,. They provide independent advocacy to help victims navigate the NRM and services. The teams are committed to identifying victims of trafficking and working alongside police to ensure that victims have end to end support.

## **5 Greater success in detection, disruption and prosecution.**

We will be training recruiters and procurement officers to recognise, prevent and report forced labour, labour trafficking and other hidden third party labour exploitation.



# Action Plan

This 2022 plan will see the start of the refreshed Modern Slavery Strategy. This will be a three year strategy, and it is our opportunity to better understand the prevalence in Thurrock, the nature of exploitation and work closely alongside our communities to prevent and report MDS. We need to ensure that what residents of Thurrock feel are the important are addressed

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p data-bbox="98 611 144 772">Page 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer training to partners on MDS</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop Thurrock MDS pathway</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete an awareness raising toolkit for MDS</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop communications and a consistent message across all sectors and for the public.</li></ul> <p data-bbox="150 639 641 815">Updated information on Modern Slavery on the partners websites</p> <p data-bbox="150 715 641 815">Ensure strategic oversight and joint leadership through the CSP/TSAB and TSCP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage partners to adopt a MDS statement</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Undertake &amp; promote appropriate, targeted MDS campaigns (Make reporting channels easy to use and well known by promoting local and national helplines and services)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to offer training on MDS</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Host Thurrock MDS week - training and awareness for businesses</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Data collection from all Thurrock systems and police systems including qualitative data</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Promote national MDS initiatives for businesses such as Car Wash Scheme</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Posters and awareness to businesses and offer to attend training</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement innovative and shared disruption approaches</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use intelligence to ensure that multi-agency operations are effectively targeted</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to offer training on MDS</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate those businesses that have signed up to the charter</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Promote awareness of Modern Slavery</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review MDS pathway to ensure its embedded in practice</li></ul>

## Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

## About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	<b>Thurrock Partnership Modern Day Slavery Strategy 2022-2025</b>
Lead Officer Contact Details	Michelle Cunningham

Why is this policy, strategy, function, or service development/review needed?
<p>When the previous Thurrock MDS strategy 2017/2019 expired this priority was included was within the VAWG strategy, following consultation with Members it was requested that a new strategy to focus on this priority was developed.</p> <p>This new strategy will be across 3 Boards offering strategic leadership. It will reflect the legislative changes and respond to the concerns that have emerged since the previous strategy. This strategy outlines the Councils' actions to understand and address all potential modern slavery risks in relation to our own business and supply chains and raising awareness within the borough of these crimes. This strategy and subsequent action plan will highlight and address any community or equalities anomalies. These will be incorporated within the three-year action plan.</p>

## 1. Community impact (this can also be used to assess impact on staff although a cumulative impact should be considered)

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function, or service development/review have on communities and workforce?  
Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with 'protected characteristics. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimized or eliminated?
<b>Local communities in general</b>	X			<p>Common nationality of potential victims in 2020 was UK nationals, accounting for 34% of all referrals. The second most referred nationality was Albanian (15%) followed by Vietnamese nationals.</p> <p>Tackling hidden offences across all spectres of society. This strategy has 2 priorities relating to empowering communities and increasing awareness &amp; training for local partnerships. This will help identify and tackle MDS crimes within Thurrock.</p>	Improved engagement and awareness raising, resulting in increased identification of these crimes, empowering communities to be catalyst for societal change.
<b>Age</b>	x			Victims of modern slavery can be any age, gender,	Council is a key partner in terms of statutory safeguarding and

			<p>nationality and ethnicity.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that young males are identified in the NRM process as a result of child exploitation element of MDS. In 2020 criminal exploitation was the most common type of exploitation reported for child potential victims, whilst labour exploitation was most common for adult potential victims.</p> <p>The strategy seeks to support victims of all ages</p>	are First Responders in legislation.
<b>Disability</b>	x		<p>As victims are predominantly the most vulnerable members of society disability can be a factor in some cases – including people with a learning disability or mental health problems. People with learning disabilities are also at risk of being coerced or bullied or groomed into criminal exploitation/ modern slavery. They could also be isolated in their communities or they may be ineligible for support services</p>	The priorities in the strategy will raise awareness of this agenda and we can work in partnership with agencies to address any concerns raised
<b>Gender reassignment</b>		x	<p>No wide evidence that this protected characteristic is specifically affected Individuals themselves might be drawn into MDS.</p>	
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	x		<p>No wide evidence that this protected characteristic is affected. Individuals themselves might be drawn into MDS.</p> <p>Forced marriage is now included in estimates of people in slavery by the International Labour Organization (ILO).</p>	<p>The statutory safeguarding measures apply to all who are experiencing MDS.</p> <p>This strategy will raise awareness of forced marriage as a form of slavery</p>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	x		<p>Research suggests that 1 in four women become pregnant while trafficked<sup>1</sup></p>	Thurrock can engage with local health services to help spot the

<sup>1</sup> Bick, D., Howard, L.M., Oram, S., Zimmerman, C. (2017) Maternity care for trafficked women: Survivor experiences and clinicians' perspectives in the United Kingdom's National Health Service. PLoS ONE12 (11): e0187856.



					signs and offer support.
<b>Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)</b>	x			<p>Anecdotal information suggests that Gypsies, Roma and Travellers could potentially be more susceptible to MDS crimes due to links with labour work which is common amongst this community.</p> <p>Victims of modern slavery can be transported to the UK from all over the world. People with language and cultural barriers, and those with little or no English, may be at more risk of exploitation.</p>	The priorities in the strategy will raise awareness of this agenda and we can work in partnership with agencies to address any concerns raised
<b>Religion or belief</b>		x		No wide evidence that this protected characteristic is affected. Individuals themselves might be drawn into MDS.	
<b>Sex</b>	x			Research suggests that females' victims are forced into sex for payment industry, whilst males are mostly found in forced labour settings	The priorities in the strategy will raise awareness of this agenda and we can work in partnership with agencies to address any concerns raised
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		x		No wide evidence that this protected characteristic is affected. Individuals themselves might be drawn into MDS.	
<b>Any community issues identified for this location?</b>	x			Borough wide project however it is known that low income/deprivation is a factor in becoming more vulnerable to these crimes.	Community awareness raising events will focus in wards of greater deprivation: Grays, Ockendon and Tilbury
<b>Workforce</b>	x			Any member of society could potentially get drawn into modern day slavery if they met some of the vulnerabilities identified in research.	The strategy has a training programme attached to it raising awareness of these crimes. this training is open to staff within the workforce and wider partnerships.



## 2. Consultation, data and intelligence

2.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function, or service development/review e.g., on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: [consultations@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@thurrock.gov.uk)  
***This is a vital step***

Consultation with HEHC committee to develop the strategy

2.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function, or service development/review outlined?

- Modern Slavery Guidance for Wales and England (under s49) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015)
- Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales
- Local Government Association – Modern Slavery guide
- Home Office, National Referral Mechanism Statistics: UK, End of Year Summary, 2020
- Open-source available research, ONS statistics, national crime agency and gov.uk
- <https://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm>

Globally, nationally, and locally due to the hidden nature of modern slavery, its complexity and that it predominately driven by organised crime its prevalence is known to be difficult to evidence. The Office of National Statistics March 2021 concluded that there is no definitive source of data or suitable method available to accurately quantify the number of victims on modern slavery in the UK.

However, greater awareness, increases in reporting and improvements in police recording are likely to have contributed to the increases seen in potential victim numbers since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Acts across the UK in 2015.

The National Crime Agency has suggested that there are tens of thousands of victims in the UK at any one time. We do not have accurate data in relation to some characteristics e.g., sexual orientation

### 3. Monitoring and Review

3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function, or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Implementation of the strategy and delivery plan 2022-25	March 2025	CSP / ASgB / LSCP
Increase awareness across all professionals – in particular those working with our vulnerable residents	March 23 then ongoing	CSP / ASgB / LSCP
Partnership working with other agencies working with those vulnerable to MDS	Ongoing	CSP / ASgB / LSCP
Community awareness raising events will focus in wards of greater deprivation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grays,</li> <li>• Ockendon</li> <li>• Tilbury</li> </ul>	Oct 2022 TBC TBC	CSP
Improved data collection on those at risk of MDS used to inform future activity	March 2025	

## 4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
Due to the very nature of this crime, that of a vulnerable person being exploited and completely controlled by someone else and one which is a global problem that transcends age, gender and ethnicities all aspects of the delivery of this strategy will support those that maybe disadvantaged due to their protected characteristic.

## 5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Head of Service who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Bosa Osunde	Strategic Lead, Social Work Support	14/9/22

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## Work Programme

**Committee:** Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee

**Year:** 2022/23

**Dates of Meetings:** 23 June 2022, 4 October 2022, 15 December 2022, 21 February 2023

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
<b>23 June 2022</b>		
Communications Strategy in Relation to Prevent (Counter Terrorism and Extremism)	Michelle Cunningham	Members
Unaccompanied Child Asylum Seekers: Verbal Update	Janet Simon	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
<b>4 October 2022</b>		
Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Update Report	Iyobosa Osunde	Officers
Essex Police: Operation Bluebird Verbal Update	Michelle Cunningham/Essex Police	Members
SERICCC Data Comparison: Presentation	Sheila Coates/Michelle Cunningham	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
<b>15 December 2022</b>		
Draft Prevent Strategy	Michelle Cunningham	Members
Unaccompanied Child Asylum Seekers: Annual Update Report	Daniel Jones	Members

## Work Programme

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
Essex Police: Operation Raptor Update (children & local criminal gangs)	Michelle Cunningham/Essex Police	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
<b>21 February 2023</b>		
Final Prevent Strategy	Michelle Cunningham	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item

**Clerk:** Lucy Tricker

**Updated:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022