



## Governance and Audit Committee

Item

24<sup>th</sup> November 2020

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Communities</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Joanne Besant (Equality) &amp; Sonia Carr (Safeguarding) ☎ 01206 506943 / 01206 282978</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Equality and Safeguarding - Annual Update Report</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All</b>		

**The Committee is asked to review this annual report on Equality and Safeguarding**

### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The report sets out the Council's duties and updates for Equality & Safeguarding and illustrates the steps the Council has taken to meet these mandatory requirements and specific duties.
- 1.2 This report will also provide a focus on the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact on Equality and Safeguarding since March 2020. This year's events have highlighted the pre-existing inequalities amongst our communities and the disproportionate impact of Covid on our BAME communities, making us all reflect on our response and the communities we serve. We have tried to respond quickly and are looking at ways to increase our understanding, but we are ever mindful of the ongoing impacts of both the virus but the inevitable aftermath that will follow.
- 1.3 The Council will continue to create and build a diverse and inclusive workplace where people are supported to reach their potential. We will refresh our diversity training, introduce staff focus groups to explore and identify how we can promote inclusivity, apply data to understand our workforce and put in place an action plan to address underrepresented areas. The Inclusive objective in the new People's Strategy will compliment and drive this vision.
- 1.4 The Council will increase its commitment to online training, including the launch of a new Safeguarding Level 2 eLearning package (for those frontline staff who may come into contact with a vulnerable adult or child at risk), based on the original Observers scheme.
- 1.5 We will develop our Asset Based approach to Community Development, through more in depth collaboration with our communities and partners to bring about positive change.

### **2. Recommended Decision**

- 2.1 Committee is asked to review the progress made in meeting the Council's legal duties and objectives regarding both Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding, and to endorse the approach set out at paragraph 7 below.

### **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

By reviewing the approach in these key areas, the Committee will assist the Council in meeting its legal duties.

3.1 The following appendices have been included at the end of this report to assist the Committee in its task:

- Appendix A - Key improvements and initiatives

### **4. Continuation of a Combined Approach**

4.1 This annual report continues a combined reporting approach to scrutiny in the areas of Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding, bringing the following advantages:

- The two areas of work are mutually supportive and reinforce the importance of Equality & Safeguarding for staff and residents. There has been an increased focus over the last 12 months as a direct result of Covid19.
- They both involve the principle of proportionality and having “due regard”.
- Each area helps to support and prevent harm occurring to vulnerable groups.
- An approach that reviews these two areas together can help to deliver maximum benefit for customers, the most effective management of risk and the most efficient use of resources.

### **5. National and Local Developments**

5.1 There have been no changes at Essex County Council; David Finch remains Leader of the Council, with responsibility for Equality and Diversity. Louise McKinlay remains Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Susan Barker remains Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate and John Spence remains Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (which includes Disabilities).

5.2 There have been no changes in terms of national Governance; Therese Coffey MP remains Secretary of State for DWP including administration of state benefits and providing support to families and children, disabled people (appointed Sept 2019), Elizabeth Truss MP remains Minister for Women and Equalities (appointed Sept 2019) , Gavin Williamson MP remains Secretary of State for Education(including children's social care (appointed July 2019), Matt Hancock MP remains Secretary of State for Health and Social Care including social care policy (appointed July 2018) and Priti Patel MP remains Secretary of State for the Home Department including security and terrorism (appointed July 2019).

#### Equality and Diversity (Covid-19 Specific)

5.3 The Faith and Communities Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG), a sub-group of the Essex Strategic Coordination Group, was set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The remit of the group was to provide information and advice to faith & community groups and also inform the development of future resilience/recovery/pandemic response work. Working groups have been set up focusing on Faith and Dementia and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the LGBTQ+ community. The TCG brought together faith and community leaders to work with public services in a way that hadn't been seen before.

5.4 Local consultations took place with Colchester's BAME and Faith communities to really understand the direct impact of Covid-19. Feedback showed that residents from these communities did not have access to translated information and guidance, felt extremely

isolated and unable to access some services. A paper was presented to Colchester Borough Council Leadership Team outlining the work of the Communities Team in response to the feedback we had received from these communities.

- 5.5 The Community Response Team was mobilised as part of the Council's response to Covid-19, to support communities and provide them with important information, help and support as the pandemic evolved. The team were able to identify our most at-risk communities and work with partners to ensure residents had the provisions they needed – these included members from our faith groups, BAME communities, older population, children and young families and many more. The team produced (and continues to produce) a Community Response Pack which includes translated information on face coverings and information on the test and trace service.

#### Equality and Diversity (Business as Usual)

- 5.6 The Government Equalities Office took the decision to suspend enforcement of the gender pay gap deadlines for this reporting year (2019/20). The decision meant there was no expectation on employers to report their data. Regardless of this, CBC submitted the pay gap stats to the Government's gender pay gap portal in March 2020 and published CBC's gender pay narrative 2020 on the Council's equality and diversity in employment webpage, showing our commitment to address any gender pay gap issues.

#### Safeguarding (COVID-19 specific)

- 5.7 The Community Safety Team were unable to deliver the Virtual Crew Project into all Colchester Primary Schools (year 6 pupils) in June 2020 as planned due the schools closure from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Instead, the Team ensured that relevant / age appropriate advice and guidance on themes such as internet safety, gangs and knife crime, antisocial behaviour, drugs and alcohol and hate crime were included on the Safer Colchester Partnership website for the children to access from home should they wish. All primary schools in Colchester were notified that the information was available for home access.

- 5.8 During the pandemic, CBC Community Safety Team worked closely with partners to ensure that domestic abuse support services in Colchester remained available for people to access during the coronavirus outbreak. Engaging with Essex Police, Next Chapter, Colchester Borough Homes and ECC ensured that:

- Domestic abuse reports, response rates and emerging trends were monitored, allowing Police to direct resources appropriately
- Increased demand in refuge services was anticipated, additional safe accommodation was investigated and Next Chapter were able to access additional MHCLG funds for increased provision

Attending the the Essex Strategic Group (Domestic Abuse Response to Covid-19) meant a co-ordinated response across the County was followed and ECC are now implementing a centralised process for resourcing/procurement of additional accommodation to ensure equal access/cost for all districts/boroughs in Essex.

- 5.9 CBC Comms Team supported social media posts including those from Next Chapter, Women's Aid, SETDAB and the Essex Police Community Policing Team during the pandemic, to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how to seek help. CBC will continue to support posts/messages whenever possible and have also invited these organisations to highlight any specific messages to convey and any positive/success stories to share.

- 5.10 CBC's website has a Coronavirus section – this was updated with domestic abuse advice under <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/coronavirus/residents/domestic-abuse/>

- 5.11 Safer Colchester Partnership (SCP) website was also updated to reflect this guidance, with a specific section on Coronavirus and Domestic Abuse.  
<https://www.safercolchester.co.uk/category/protect/>
- 5.12 Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) prioritised finding emergency accommodation for 57 'rough sleepers' over a short timeframe (as required by the Ministry for Local Government and Homelessness on 26 March). 'Direct lets' have been made to homeless customers (CBH has the lead within CBC for Homelessness).
- 5.13 Essex Youth Services delivered a number of online activities for young people during the COVID restrictions. A schedule was distributed to partners on a weekly basis.
- 5.14 Safeguarding Adult Leads (SAL) Network, led by Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) met virtually on monthly basis to discuss partner agencies response to COVID-19 and safeguarding. Particular focus was given to some of the hidden harm issues such as Modern Slavery and Domestic Abuse.
- 5.15 Coronavirus Advice page added to the ESAB website: <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/about-esab/coronavirus-advice-page/> to provide latest advice and guidance.
- 5.16 Stay Safe at Home Campaign launched to help keep residents safe while they spend more time at home during the coronavirus pandemic. The Stay Safe at Home campaign focuses on five risks to people during this challenging time: domestic abuse, child abuse, accidental house fires, fraud and bogus callers. The campaign was developed by Essex Resilience Forum, which brings together public sector organisations across Essex including blue light responders, county and unitary authorities, district councils, the voluntary sector, health, highways, to form a coordinated countywide response in times of crisis. ESAB are supporting the campaign by sharing across social media; to follow or support the campaign, search for #ProtectingandServingEssex or #StaySafeAtHome or #StayHomeSaveLives on social media.
- 5.17 Essex Safeguarding Childrens Board (ESCB) adopted a Multi-Agency response to Covid-19: each agency spoke about the challenges within their organisations and how services have had to quickly adapt in order to continue to safeguard children and young people during the pandemic. ESCB launched a dedicated COVID-19 section on the website outlining general advice, temporary changes to services and information for families: <https://www.escb.co.uk/safeguarding-children-during-coronavirus-covid-19/>. Statutory partners across Southend, Essex and Thurrock have weekly online meetings, led by ESCB, to monitor issues around Covid-19 as they arise.

#### Safeguarding (Business as Usual)

- 5.18 SET (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) Exploitation Strategy (2019-2024) was published November 2019. Document can be found here: [SET Exploitation Strategy 2019-2024](#)
- 5.19 SET (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) Missing People Strategy (2019-2024) was published November 2019. Document can be found here: [SET Missing People Strategy 2019-2024](#)
- 5.20 ESCB operates in line with the requirements of the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'. The implementation of the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) in September 2019 led to ESCB will be retaining its name, brand and logo. The seven local safeguarding partners jointly leading the Partnership Arrangements are: Essex County Council, Essex Police and Five Clinical Commissioning Groups. Further information can be found here: [Essex MASA Plan 20-21](#)

- 5.21 The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Adult concern form (SET SAF), used to begin the adult safeguarding process, was updated in June 2020. The latest version can be found here: <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/professionals/reporting-concerns/>
- 5.22 Changes to the Request for Support (RFS) online referral form, used to begin the child safeguarding process, came into effect from August 2020. The latest version of form can be found here: <https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/request-support/>
- 5.23 National Safeguarding Adults Week (NSAW) took place 18-24 November 2019. The NSAW campaign was a great success, seeing a social media reach of over 41k and support from a variety of organisations and partners including other Safeguarding Adults Boards. Over the seven days, seven different safeguarding issues were explored with seven one minute vlogs, based on true stories of real people from Southend, Essex and Thurrock. Further information on the 2019 NSAW can be found here: <https://www.essexsab.org.uk/about-esab/national-safeguarding-adults-week-2019/> NSAW 2020 will take place 16-22 November and will focus on financial abuse.
- 5.24 The Government launched a new online portal in January 2020 to strengthen support to charities handling safeguarding concerns or allegations. To access the portal, please visit <https://safeguarding.culture.gov.uk/>
- 5.25 The Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Service (ADASS) published Adult Safeguarding and Homelessness - a briefing on positive practice, in March 2020. The briefing can be found here: [Adult Safeguarding & Homelessness Briefing](#) CBH lead on the homelessness agenda for CBC.
- 5.26 David Archibald was appointed as Independent Chair of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) in 2019.
- 5.27 Deborah Stuart-Angus was appointed as Independent Chair of Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) in 2019.

## **6. Meeting the Duties**

### Overall Arrangements at Colchester Borough Council

- 6.1 Equality and Safeguarding are both integrated into the day-to-day operations of the Council. However, arrangements are also in place to ensure strategic focus and co-ordination. The Assistant Director for Communities provides the strategic lead, with support from the lead Officers for Equality & Diversity, and Safeguarding.
- 6.2 The relevant Cabinet Portfolio is Cllr Mike Lilley (Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety).
- Equality and Diversity
- 6.3 In the area of Equality and Diversity, the Diversity Steering Group (DSG) provides an active forum for 'advancing equality' for both customers and staff. Its members are service 'representatives' who play a key role in reviewing progress and disseminating best practice.
- 6.4 The Equality Act 2010 imposed a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) upon local authorities including district councils. Under its 'general duty', the Council must "integrate

consideration of the advancement of equality” into its “day-to-day business, and across all functions”. Councillors and staff must have “due regard” to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a ‘protected characteristic’ and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a ‘protected characteristic’ and those who do not

- 6.5 The ‘protected characteristics’ are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but not for all aspects of the duty.
- 6.6 The Equality and Human Rights Commission’s Technical Guidance to the PSED remains the best guide to the practical operation of the PSED. In addition, the Council takes due account of the Government’s Review of the PSED which endorsed the so-called “Brown Principles”. These confirmed that the ‘due regard’ duty must be fulfilled before and at the time that a policy is being considered; it must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind; and that it is non delegable.
- 6.7 The PSED ‘specific duties’ require us to publish information to demonstrate that we are meeting both the ‘general duty’, and one or more published equality objectives. During the period 2019-20 we have continued to meet both requirements. Information published on the Council website includes:
- Equality Impact Assessments
  - The Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-21 and its Year End Performance Report (including its Strategic Plan Action Plan).
  - The Council’s website pages on Equality and Diversity
  - The Council’s Equality Information section contains all required information
- 6.8 The Council remains committed to the use of the Equality Impact Assessment process. Despite not being a legal requirement, these remain a vital framework through which the Council can continue to identify, evaluate, and mitigate against negative impacts upon the ‘protected characteristics. It allows us to make the right judgements based on sound information and data, in an open and transparent way.
- 6.9 The Council works with a host of agencies and organisations in order to meet its duties and advance equality more generally.
- 6.10 Accessibility regulations for websites came into force for public sector bodies on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 – stating you must make your website more accessible by making it “perceivable, operable, understandable and robust.” There is also a need to update an accessibility statement on our website. The accessibility regulations build on the existing obligations for people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.11 CBC’s online team have been working hard to ensure the CBC website meets the accessibility standards as stated in the accessibility regulations. The team have reviewed our website against the new accessibility criteria and made any necessary reasonable adjustments.
- 6.12 Colchester Borough Council’s website is Browse Aloud enabled which means that you can have information on the site read aloud to you for free on a Smartphone, Tablet, PC or

Mac. Browse Aloud is a suite of products that provides website reading support, highlighting each word as it is spoken in a high quality, human-sounding voice.

### Safeguarding

- 6.13 In the area of safeguarding, Designated Safeguarding Officers, who have an enhanced level of training to provide expertise and assistance to officers, attend quarterly workshops (currently virtual) led by the Community Safety & Safeguarding Coordinator and Community Safety Team. The workshops review legislative changes, safeguarding referrals, training requirements for all staff and improve processes. Following a review of the DSO role, in 2020, 5 new DSO's have come on board and will be receiving their Level 3 Training in Sept/Oct 2020 to enable them to carry out the role effectively.
- 6.14 The Council continues to raise safeguarding concerns with Essex County Council via its [Request for Support Portal](#) (in regard to a child) and the [SETSAP](#) form (in regard to an adult). Records of referrals made, and any feedback received, are retained in a secure area of the Council network and are reviewed at quarterly Designated Officer Workshop meetings. Both the online reporting form for child referrals and the SETSAP form for adult referrals have been updated in 2020.
- 6.15 In 2019 (1 January – 31 December), 47 referrals were made to Essex County Council. These referrals related to 39 adults (23 females and 16 males), who were referred to Adult Social Care and 11 children (3 females, 2 males and 6 unknown) who were referred to Children and Families Hub.

For **2020** (1 January – 31 August) 32 referrals (for 35 individuals) have been made to Essex County Council. These referrals related to 29 adults (16 females and 13 males) who were referred to Adult Social Care and 6 children (4 female, 1 male and 1 unknown gender) were referred to Children and Families Hub.

Of the adults, the main type of recorded (or suspected) abuse was self-neglect at 14 reports, followed by neglect (6), domestic abuse (4), psychological abuse (3), physical abuse (2) and financial abuse (1). There were a number of cases (13) where type of abuse was recorded as 'not determined' due to the referring officer being unsure of the main type of abuse. Suicidal Ideation was mentioned in 11 cases.

Of the children, neglect was the only type of recorded (or suspected) abuse at 5 reports, with not determined also recorded for 2 children.

Further training will be undertaken with the Designated Safeguarding Officers in order to increase awareness of types of abuse. Information on types of abuse is also included in the level 1 and 2 Safeguarding training, and in the CBC Safeguarding Policy.

- 6.16 For the period from the beginning of September 2019 to the end of August 2020, Colchester Borough Homes has made a total of 73 safeguarding referrals for 54 adults and 19 children. Child referrals include statutory 'risk of homelessness' referrals. Of the adult referrals, the main type of recorded abuse was: self-neglect (in 63% of cases); financial/ material abuse (17%); physical abuse (7%); psychological abuse (6%); domestic abuse (4%); sexual abuse (2%); and neglect (2%).
- 6.17 The Safeguarding Level 1 eLearning training package was reviewed and updated in April 2020 and is still undergoing some minor changes. This eLearning package is a mandatory requirement for all CBC staff and members, and completion is monitored via the HR Team. Approximately 184 people have completed the eLearning as a refresher up to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. Technical Issues identified by some officers completing the course (due to

the current platform hosting the package) has led to a suggestion of moving to supporting an eLearning platform in-house. Discussions with HR and Community Safety & Safeguarding Team will be taking place October 2020 to agree a plan of action.

Further training delivered/available in 2019/2020 includes:

- Impact of Sexual Violence Awareness and Hate Crime Awareness was delivered via the Member Development Sessions in September 2019 and October 2019
- Modern Slavery Awareness Sessions were organised in partnership with CBH and made available to key CBC staff, in November 2019, delivered by Chief Inspector Rob Huddleston (District Commander for Colchester)
- Suicide Awareness basic eLearning package (via Zero Suicide Alliance) made available for staff to complete
- Domestic Abuse eLearning and workshop sessions (via Alpha Vesta) made available for staff to complete.

- 6.18 Partnership working is key to meeting the Council's safeguarding duties. The Safer Colchester Partnership (SCP) underwent some changes in late 2019/early 2020 and is now led by One Colchester Strategic Board, which consists of Chief Officers representing local statutory partners and non-statutory partners and organisations. It aims to achieve sustainable solutions following the identification of local needs and priorities. It does this by delivering initiatives and engaging with local communities through two Operational groups; these being the Community Safety Delivery Board and the One Colchester Delivery Board.
- 6.19 Colchester Borough Council engages positively with the relevant 'Stay Safe' group which comes under the ESCB's governance. This group helps to put into practice effective partnership working to keep children safe from harm including abuse. The Council also attends local 'MACE 2' (Missing and Child Exploitation) meetings which facilitate joint approaches and key information sharing to help protect children from exploitation. In addition, from 2020, the Council attends the Multi Agency Disruption Panel (formally the Organised Crime Group Disruption Panel) organised by Essex Police, in which disruption strategies and action planning for those individuals at risk of exploitation are discussed.
- 6.20 The Council works closely with both the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) and the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB). Support from, and representation on, both the ESCB and ESAB for District Councils is by way of Board Membership. Colchester Borough Council Executive Director Pam Donnelly sits on the ESAB and feeds back to the Chief Executives Group. The Council is also represented at the Adult Safeguarding Leads meetings by the Community Safety & Safeguarding Coordinator.
- 6.21 Between September 2019 and January 2020, ESAB conducted a staff survey (to replace the existing Section 11 safeguarding audit) where staff from a number of partner agencies within Essex were invited to answer questions about safeguarding adults. In total 2,413 people across Essex completed the survey, which identified a lot of good practice as well as identifying areas that the Board could focus on. 946 people completed the survey across City, District and Borough Councils.

Locally, for CBC, a link to the survey was sent out via internal CBC comms, via Managers Network and DSO's which led to 141 people within CBC completing the survey (16%). A number of recommendations were made by ESAB for Local Authorities and CBC are ensuring all of the recommendations are being considered and actioned as part of a Safeguarding review being undertaken by the Community Safety and Safeguarding Team – further details below:



The recommendations included updating of in-house documents and webpages (CBC documents have been updated and both CBC and SCP websites are being updated), safeguarding leads information circulated (internal comms messages plus clear information now included in CBC documents), increased awareness around reporting to the police (information within CBC documents updated, as well as internal training), gaining consent/talking to the adult (will be included in updated level 1 training), ensuring sufficient safeguarding training is available (level 1 being reviewed and a new level 2 under development), information sharing is clearly stated within organisational policy/safeguarding training (safeguarding policy and training updated) and safeguarding becomes a standard agenda item in team meetings (managers network, internal comms and designated safeguarding officers to help spread this message).

6.22 Modern slavery encompasses sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced criminal exploitation and domestic servitude. To meet its legal duties under Section 43 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 the Council published on its website its fifth Modern Slavery Transparency Statement (and action plan) in September 2020. A workshop to deliver awareness around Modern Slavery supply chain implications will be developed and available to all Contract Managers in the New Year.

6.23 Sec 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a new duty upon local authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.” To assist implementation of the duty in section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, a Home Office Prevent eLearning training package is available. This is introductory training and provides a foundation on which to develop further knowledge around the risks of radicalisation and the roles involved in supporting those at risk. This training package will be available to all staff and Members from September 2020 for mandatory completion alongside the Safeguarding Level 1 eLearning. This Prevent training package is also mandatory for CBH staff.

## **7. Going Forward**

### Equality & Diversity

7.1 CBC will create a diverse and inclusive workplace where people are supported to reach their potential. To do this, we will refresh our diversity training, introduce staff focus groups to explore and identify how we can promote inclusivity, apply data to understand our workforce and put in place an action plan to address areas underrepresented.

7.2 The Council will introduce mandatory Equality & Diversity training for all staff and Councillors every 3 years, starting January 2021.

7.3 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion issues experienced by both staff and residents will be heard and discussed at the Diversity Steering Group quarterly meetings.

7.4 The Community Enabling Team will continue to work with and support all community groups across the borough, including those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

7.5 CBC will continue to support National and Local Awareness campaigns to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the borough.

7.6 The Equality & Diversity Officer will continue to attend meetings such as the Essex Equalities Network, Essex Faith Covenant, Faith & Communities Tactical Co-ordination group meetings.

- 7.7 The new Vision, Values and People Strategy shows how we will recruit, retain and develop staff to help support the delivery of our overall strategic priorities. The Inclusive values of this strategy are Ambitious, Agile, Valued and Inclusive.
- 7.8 CBC will assess existing policies, practices and procedures to ensure they are inclusive and sensitive to all protected characteristics.
- 7.9 CBC are developing an Asset Based Community Development approach to community enabling which will give us a better understanding of our communities, help to reduce inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of residents. ABCD training will be delivered to CBC staff and members.

### Safeguarding

- 7.10 The Council will continue to raise awareness for staff (and highlight its procedures) on key issues including Prevent, modern slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), domestic abuse, criminal exploitation (including cuckooing) and hate crime. To do this effectively, the Council will increase its commitment to online training, including the launch of a new Safeguarding Level 2 eLearning package (for those frontline staff who may come into contact with a vulnerable adult or child at risk), based on the original Observers scheme. This new Level 2 training will form part of a new CBC Safeguarding Training Plan (see 7.10 below).
- 7.10 CBC Community Safety & Safeguarding Team are developing a new Safeguarding Training Plan for all staff, volunteers and members with structured categories into Levels 1, 2, 3 and also a section containing information and training packages that anyone can access to further their knowledge. The Training Plan will be launched in the New Year.
- 7.11 The Level 2 training will also be available, as a revised version called Observers, in the New Year for contractors to utilise at tender stage. External partner agencies will also be able to utilise Observers. This will be accessible via the Safer Colchester Partnership website.
- 7.12 Projects and initiatives to raise awareness in the community of some of the hidden harms will also be delivered or commissioned by the Community Safety Team over the coming year. Projects will include Stop It Spot It Scheme (in partnership with Essex Police) to raise awareness of child exploitation with local businesses including hotels, restaurants and further hate crime awareness sessions to encourage recruitment of Hate Crime Ambassadors within a community.  
  
Hate Crime Awareness/Ambassador sessions will also be offered to Members via the Member Development Sessions on 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- 7.13 CBC will continue to support National and Local Awareness campaigns such as Domestic Abuse Awareness week, Hate Crime Awareness Week, International Anti-Slavery Day, Modern Slavery Action weeks, Online Exploitation Awareness, Stay Safe At Home and Safeguarding Adults week.
- 7.14 CBC Licensing are in the process of developing an online programme of Safeguarding Training for Taxi Drivers to follow the successful sessions delivered in 2019. Safeguarding training for new licensed drivers will be mandatory going forward.
- 7.15 As Community Safety takes on the operational lead on safeguarding, the Council is in a good position to continue to deepen partnership working with agencies and voluntary

organisations, including through the Safer Colchester Partnership and the wider One Colchester Partnership in order to deliver for residents.

## **8. Strategic Plan References**

- 8.1 The Council's Strategic Plan is a key mechanism through which the Council monitors how it is meeting its equality and safeguarding responsibilities. In particular, the Strategic Plan 2018-21 contained the Council's current 'equality objective' of 'Making Colchester an even better place to live and supporting those who need most help' which was an integral part of that Plan under its Wellbeing theme. The priorities which particularly help supported the Council's Equality Objective are: • Work with Essex Police and partners in the Safer Colchester Partnership to make Colchester an even safer place • Targeted support to the most disadvantaged residents and communities.
- 8.2 Looking ahead, the 2020-21 equality and safeguarding report will reflect the themes, priorities and goals of the Strategic Plan 2020-23 which was approved by full Council in October 2020.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 Throughout the Covid19 pandemic, the Community Response Team consulted with and supported many underrepresented groups to understand their need and the impacts and risks they faced. Regular engagement and consultation with these groups made people feel listened to, supported and more valued.

## **10. Publicity Considerations**

- 10.1 The Council's approach to Equality and Safeguarding has the potential to affect everyone who lives, works or visits the borough. It can play a key role in the daily lives of individuals and communities by helping to safeguard vulnerable groups from harm, as well as tackling prejudice and advancing equality of opportunity.
- 10.2 The Equality Information section on the Council's website continues to provide updated information as required by legislation and guidance, along with related content of use or interest to customers, staff and councillors. The Council's website also includes a section dedicated to Safeguarding children and 'adults with needs for care and support' which contains key information for residents along with links for further information.

## **11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1 It is important to understand that our obligation to have "due regard" to the three aims of the 'general duty' does not mean that decisions which have a disproportionate impact upon one or more 'protected characteristics' cannot be taken. The Council must nevertheless always seek to remove or reduce negative impacts.
- 11.2 The Council's approach must continue to be proportionate, with key decisions being given due priority. Equality Impact Assessments must remain an integral part of the decision-making process when addressing changes to policies and practices.

## **12. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

- 12.1 This report is an annual update about Equality, Diversity and Safeguarding, which helps the Council to ensure it meets its duty and protect vulnerable groups.

### **13. Community Safety and Health and Safety Implications**

- 13.1 The Council's approach to Equality and Safeguarding involves working closely with partners and communities. The Safer Colchester Partnership plays a vital role in helping the Council to meet its legal duties around safeguarding.
- 13.2 By meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council will help to ensure that employees do not suffer discrimination, harassment or victimisation. This will in turn create a safer working environment, and one which is consistent with the Council's Health and Safety policies.

### **14. Risk Management Implications**

- 14.1 As an employer and provider of public services, the Council could face legal challenges from individuals or groups who have been unlawfully discriminated against, however unintended. Legal cases brought on grounds of discrimination do not have upper financial limits like those brought through employment tribunals. The Council must meet its responsibilities to ensure it does not discriminate, and this will also help to avoid the potential for significant financial claims.
- 14.2 The Council could suffer significant reputational damage should its staff or councillors fail to comply with their Safeguarding responsibilities. This paper details the Council's strategic and operational approach in this area.

**Key initiatives and provisions**

- The Council distributed £221,000 of Voluntary Welfare Funding to ‘not for profit’ organisations to help the Council meet its equality and safeguarding objectives. In 2019-20, the following organisations received funding:

Age Concern Colchester	15,000
CARA	20,000
Open Road	10,964
Youth Enquiry Service	20,000
Colchester Citizens Advice Bureau	30,000
Colchester Gateway	20,000
Open Door	10,000
Outhouse East	22,834
Colchester CAP Debt Centre	9,237.58
Alfie James Productions	3,250
Refugee Action Colchester	8,000
Dance Network Association	20,000
Hi Tension Trampoline Club	1,714.66
Community360	30,000

- Colchester Borough Council Covid website designed to support residents throughout the pandemic with additional information for our most at risk communities  
<https://www.colchester.gov.uk/coronavirus/communities/support-for-bame-communities/>
- The Community Enabling Team has worked in partnership with Dementia Friends and the Alzheimer Society in order to raise awareness and understanding of Dementia across the Council and our communities. An additional 14 members of staff have completed their Dementia Friends training and 21 members of staff attended the Virtual Dementia Tour training this year. The lead Community Enabling Officer for Dementia completed her Dementia Champions training and is now able to provide Dementia Friends training to staff, members, partners and others.
- Colchester Borough Council remains a key member of the Dementia Action Alliance and provides representation at regular meetings. The Council is heavily involved in the Place Based Social Action project to make Colchester a Dementia Friendly town, which is led by Community360.
- 300 activity packs and 300 library packs were distributed to young people during the summer holidays, to encourage physical activity amongst some of our BAME families and community groups.
- Weekly food parcels were delivered to 173 families during the summer holidays including those families supported by Colchester Borough Homes, the Boaz Project, Refugee Action Colchester, Essex Integrations and the Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service.
- 250 activity packs were created for older people, providing them with information, help and advice on how to be active at home and stay well.
- Colchester Castle was lit up purple in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

- Black History month event at Hollytrees Museum on 19 October welcomed around 50 individuals, many of whom had never been to the museum before. There were local artists and stalls run by people from the African and Caribbean community, as well as objects from Colchester Museums collection for people to look at relating to Black History.
- Colchester Museums has engaged closely with Colchester's LGBTQ+ community and many relationships have been developed. In February 2020 as part of LGBT month, tours of Colchester Castle were offered that showcased hidden LGBT histories. These events were well received, with further demand for more.
- Colchester Museums have been working with Outhouse Youth Project, a group of young people from the LGBTQ+ community in Colchester. The intention is to host an intervention at Hollytrees Museum, where the group can share their stories and experiences within the galleries. So far they have designed a dolls house to reflect the dolls houses currently on display in the museum.
- Colchester Museums contributed to the development of an LGBT walk of the town created by artist Ian Giles as part of the New Geographies Project. Working with artist Ian Giles, the museums consulted on historical sites and stories in the town that relate to LGBT history that could be included on the walk. As a follow up from this, a display was produced at Firstsite and the museums ran a workshop on 21 September to show visitors how objects can reflect a person's identity.
- Snapping the stiletto, a touring exhibition about the hidden stories of Essex Women in museum collections, ran at Hollytrees Museum from 9 November to 18 January. As well as showcasing some of the research that has been going on across the county into women's history, the exhibition showcased some of Colchester Museums' collections that highlight the important contributions women have made to Colchester since the Representation of the People's Act in 1918. Based around an anti-suffrage handkerchief in the museums' collection, local women shared their stories and an object they felt summed up their roles. The aim was to highlight how far we have come in relation to women's rights and how much further we have to go. Visitors were encouraged to share their experiences of gender discrimination on our engagement wall.
- In January 2020, staff in the CBC Customer Support Team received Hate Crime training to become Hate Crime Ambassadors, acting as a point of contact for anyone who is experiencing hate crime.
- 2019-20 has been a successful year for the Council in terms of funding acquired for a variety of services. There have been successful bids to the CCG, North East Essex Alliance, Essex County Council, Active Essex and Sport England, to explore ways for communities to become more active and live healthier lives. Programmes developed within the Colchester Local Delivery Pilot (LDP), will promote increased levels of activity amongst communities, in particular those living in circumstances of deprivation.
- Poor Air Quality disproportionality affects the elderly, the young and those with existing respiratory conditions. To support improvements in the boroughs air quality, temporary signage will be installed for up to 18 months (subject to planning permission) on Brook Street and East Street. The signage aims to increase the number of drivers who 'switch off' their engines whilst stationary. In October 2020, the Council will launch a Defra funded behaviour change campaign, which will also encourage residents to switch off their engines when stationary. All resources will be co-created and tested within the local community.

- The Environmental Protection Team continues to work in partnership with the Essex Countywide Travellers Unit, to help ensure equal and fair treatment for people within Roma Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities.
- Disabled Facilities Grants - Colchester Borough Council provides Disabled Facilities Grants in order to help sustain independent living. In addition, we administer Disabled Facilities Assistance Loans to assist households with works that do not fall within the scope of the mandatory Grant
- The Council recognises that there are strong links between improving Public Health and meeting its objectives around Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding. In order to promote supportive conversations with residents and customers about behaviour change, thereby increasing opportunities to promote health and reduce health inequalities.
- Colchester Leisure World offers a wide range of activities and services to support many protected groups.
  - Discounted memberships for people on low income/ government support status, including accessibility users.
  - Swimming for adults and juniors with physical / learning disabilities, women only swimming sessions (BAME women in particular), learn to swim programme for over 1000 children.
  - Numerous sessions for adults/ children with a physical/ mental disability focusing on physical exercise, fun and inclusivity. (including trampolining and sport play).
  - Racqueteer Club – Badminton players from our Asian Indian/ Bangladeshi communities. Up to 40+ strong membership base.
  - Walking Indoor Football – ACE – private hire. Physical/ mental disabilities.
  - Sport for Confidence. providing inclusive sporting opportunities for people who face barriers to participation, including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues, dementia, autism, physical impairment or disability, homelessness, and many other complex health needs.
  - Activa Gym: - Wheelchair user friendly access/ equipment
  - GP Referral program (LEAP). Physical activity sessions catering for a wider range of patients with complex medical conditions. Activities includes the use of gym/ studio classes (Cardiac/ Vascular Rehab, Osteoarthritic, Back Rehabilitation and Gentle Water Workout).
  - Dementia support sessions: weekly sessions available to anyone living with or have family members directly affected by Dementia.
- During 2019-20, Language Line Solutions Ltd continued to provide telephone interpreting and translation services to Council staff, with most enquiries coming from Customer Services. Language Line help with core language services, telephone translation and provide alternative format translation such as braille, easy read and large print.
- 2020 saw the adoption of version 2 of the CBC Suicide Protocol (on responding to threats or ideas of suicide or self-harm) which includes detailed guidance and procedures as well as contact details of dedicated organisations and relevant agencies. In addition to the Protocol, summary guidance documents on how to respond to threats of suicide and procedure to follow were also made available to staff and members via the CBC intranet.
- 2020 saw the adoption of version 7 of the CBC Safeguarding Policy; a comprehensive guide including information on a number of areas such as roles and responsibilities, recognising and responding to concerns, identifying types of abuse, where to seek help, training, legislation, and many more. In addition to the Policy, summary guidance documents on how to recognise potential abuse, raise concerns and make a referral were also made available to staff and members via the CBC intranet.

- The CBH Safeguarding Policy has been updated and is consistent with 2020 SET (Southend Essex Thurrock) Safeguarding Adults Guidelines. Internal procedures are no longer included within the policy to be consistent with CBH standard approach, and to avoid the need for frequent updates.
- The Community Safety Team were successful in being awarded, as Lead Local Authority, a bid of over £500,000 from MHCLG for delivery of the 'Together We Can' project; a 12 month project to support a recovery refuge (for women with active substance misuse issues), community resettlement programme (supporting women to establish & maintain safe accommodation) and provide specialist support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse (particularly those in families who have fled domestic abuse or remain in the home after perpetrator has left).
- Colchester Borough Council remains a key member of the Keep Safe Scheme, designed to provide a place of safety such a shop, library, fire station, restaurant or CBC building for vulnerable members of the community to visit for help should they be feeling unsafe and need to contact a family member or friend for support.
- Colchester Borough Council remains a key member of the J9 Scheme, designed to provide a place of safety such a shop, library, fire station, restaurant or CBC building for a victim of domestic abuse to visit should they be feeling at risk or in need of help or support. 50 Safeguarding Champions within Colchester General Hospital received the training in 2020, in conjunction with Safer Places.