

PARTNERSHIP POLICY

1. Essex Probation's (EP) approach to working in partnership is based upon:
 - i. a belief that in our task of Protecting the Public, Managing Offenders and carrying forward the work of the Courts in Essex, this is most effectively achieved through working with other partners, both in the public and voluntary and private sectors;
 - ii. a recognition that, as a key public body in Essex, EP has a range of statutory and civic responsibilities that require it to participate in and advance the work of a number of statutory partnerships.
 - iii. Strategic Partnerships
Commissioning Partnerships
Statutory Partnerships
Functional Partnerships
2. In pursuing this approach, EP will ensure that we discharge all of these responsibilities effectively and professionally and that, in doing this, we act as a "good partner", in terms of our working relationships, our support of partnership priorities and decisions and our commitment to achieving concrete and tangible results from partnership activity.
3. In particular, as part of our partnership working, EP will work to bring an awareness and understanding to partners – and to the public – of the issues in relation to offenders and reducing reoffending and to promote with these stakeholders the importance and the value of working jointly to return offenders to their home communities as productive, non-offending, citizens;
4. EP's prioritisation of partnership working within the management of offenders in the community is based upon the simple recognition that, out of the 7 Reducing Reoffending Pathways (originally within the NOMS Reducing Reoffending Action Plan), only 1 - Attitudes, Thinking & Behaviour - falls wholly within the remit of Probation to deliver, whilst the rest – Accommodation; Education, Training and Employment; Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Finance, Benefit and Debt; Children and families - require the involvement and cooperation of other agencies to deliver.
5. EP is committed to working in partnership across the whole of Essex, Southend and Thurrock - and where protecting the public and managing offenders require activity beyond the boundaries of Essex, we will also work in partnerships outside of Essex as appropriate.
6. EP recognises that partnership working can be costly and time-consuming and we are committed to working with our partners to ensure that partnership meetings and commitments should be the minimum required to discharge responsibilities and achieve outcomes.

7. LOCAL COMMISSIONING

- 7.1** EP is clear that a commitment to 'localism' and service delivery through Local Delivery Units (LDUs), does not require the setting up of separate commissioning units in each LDU.
- 7.2** The move to LDUs, however, does mean that local managers and staff do have to take on an increased awareness of and accountability for identifying local needs and contributing to formal needs assessments. They also have a responsibility, led by the LDU Director, for making the central Commissioning unit aware of local commissioning/service development opportunities. The central commissioning unit, in its turn, has a responsibility for both trying to ensure that EP/partnership commissioning across LDU areas is informed by the views/expressed needs of LDU staff and keeping LDU colleagues up to date with commissioning developments/opportunities that are relevant to the LDU.

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

1. APPROACH

Essex Probation's (EP) approach to working in partnership is based upon:

- i. a belief that in our task of Protecting the Public, Managing Offenders and carrying forward the work of the Courts in Essex, this is most effectively achieved through working with other partners, both in the public and voluntary and private sectors;
- ii. a recognition that, as a key public body in Essex, EP has a range of statutory and civic responsibilities that require it to participate in and advance the work of a number of statutory partnerships;
- iii. a commitment, within partnership working, to supporting the wider aims and objectives of the partnerships we are members of as well as taking forward the work of Essex Probation in protecting the public and managing offenders.

2. THE CHALLENGE OF PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN ESSEX

- 2.1. In its implementation of government policy and initiatives EP is clear that one of the key tasks is to enable successful and effective implementation across the whole of the EP area. Essex is an extremely complex administrative area – with 3 first tier and 12 second tier Local Authorities (LAs), 14 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), 3 Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs), 3 sets of Children's Trust (CT) arrangements, 3 Drug & Alcohol Action Teams (DAATs), 3 Youth Offending Services (YOSs), etc. and EP is clear that government policy initiatives, sometimes drawn up with reference to unitary authorities, London boroughs or less complex two-tier authorities, requires, in Essex, an approach that can ensure both 'central' accountability and an appropriate degree of consistency across the whole area with local decision-making, flexibility and innovation. Examples of the importance of this range from the introduction of the Prolific & other Priority Offender (PPO) schemes in 2004 to the introduction of Domestic Homicide Reviews in April 2011.
- 2.3. As a 'central' body, working across the whole of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock ('SET') area, but also a 'local' partner, working in every District/Borough/Unitary authority and every Community Safety Partnership (CSP), EP has an unique insight into the importance of both 'central' planning and oversight and 'local' delivery, responsive to particular local need.
- 2.4. EP is clear that it's partnership working will include involvement in a range of partnerships, including Strategic Partnerships, Commissioning Partnerships (for example, DAATs and Supporting People Commissioning Bodies) and Statutory Partnerships (for example, CSPs and LSCBs) - as well as working within operational 'functional' partnerships, such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Prolific & other Priority (PPO) Offender schemes and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs).
- 2.5. For a summary of the range of Partnerships that EP currently works with and of EP's approach to these, see Appendix A.

3. LOCAL DELIVERY UNITS (LDUs)

3.1. Whilst the strategic development and commissioning of services is often carried out at a County or sub-County level, EP is committed to ensuring that such development and commissioning is based upon clear input from local communities and stakeholders and that services are delivered in and respond to the needs of localities.

3.2. EP's approach to 'localism' was further developed as part of the move to Trust status in 2010 by the development of Local Delivery Units (LDUs). LDUs were implemented in Essex as part of EP's vision that:

the work of all of the staff within our LDUs will be informed by a real, outward looking, focus on local communities, local sentiment and the views of the local public – leading to a greater understanding of the way that our offenders both live in and impact on their communities and the feelings that their activities provoke amongst residents – and victims.

3.3. As of 1st April 2010 Local Delivery Units were established as follows:

- West Essex
covering the Epping Forest District, Harlow Borough and Uttlesford District areas
- Mid Essex
covering the Braintree District, Chelmsford Borough and Maldon District areas
- North East Essex
covering the Colchester Borough and Tendring District areas
- South Essex
covering the Basildon Borough and Brentwood District areas
- South East Essex and Southend
covering the Castle Point District, Rochford District and Southend Unitary areas
- Thurrock
covering the Thurrock Unitary area

3.4. At the core of this LDU vision, is the intention that staff understand the different communities that they serve, the community and partnership issues within these localities and the operational interconnections of offenders living there.

3.5. One of the key features of the LDU development has been the establishing of operational 'patch' working, where EPA's core business – Reports, Offender Management, (some) Interventions, e.g. Unpaid Work – will be allocated on the basis of the offender's home address and the community in which (s)he lives. The intention is that staff will build up a picture of the familial, social, and crucially, offending, links between the offenders they are supervising that will enable them to 'resettle' their offenders more successfully back into their communities.

3.6. As part of the ongoing development of Local Delivery Units and locality partnership working, EP expects staff from LDUs to be fully engaged with the key local partnership

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groupings including relevant CSP sub-groups, DV Forums, Children's Trust/Safeguarding locality groups, Housing meetings, Hate Crime groups (including Racial Incident Panels), PPO Local Action Teams and MARACs. The EP Partnership unit will issue an agreed 'standard list' of local partnership meeting where EP representation is expected and this will be monitored and managed by the LDU Director and Managers.

- 3.7. LDU managers have been identified as Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) in relation to key partnership groups or areas of work in order to facilitate and support contact with key local partners and stakeholders.
- 3.8. Whilst it is not envisaged that individual LDUs will carry out direct commissioning activity, with the commissioning role being located within EP's central Partnership unit, it is expected that LDUs will act as a 'portal'; both for feeding local need and stakeholder data into the EP commissioning process and for flagging up possible commissioning and Business Development opportunities to the Partnership unit. It will be important, as LDUs develop, for all commissioning decisions, or input into partnership or joint commissioning developments, to demonstrate the involvement of the SPOC/LDU Director at all stages.

4. INFORMATION SHARING AND STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1. EP recognises that one of the keys to successful partnership working is effective Information Sharing – both at a strategic level to ensure the comprehensive and effective planning and commissioning of services and at an operational level to ensure the safe and effective management of offenders in the community and in custody. EP is also clear that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that information is shared appropriately.
- 4.2. EP commits itself and its staff, therefore, to the appropriate, timely, accurate and secure sharing of information, underpinned by proper Protocols and agreements and against a background of effective partnership working. EP is also committed to using information effectively, in a way that maximises efficiency, effectiveness and public safety.
- 4.3. EP will consider how it might usefully share Offender Assessment System (OASys) needs information with partners in relation to mental health, substance misuse and accommodation, (PCTs, DAATs, Housing Authorities and Supporting People) in order to assist in needs assessment and service planning.

5. REPORTING / GOVERNANCE / ACCOUNTABILITY

The costs and benefits of EP's involvement in the various partnerships of which it is a member – and how governance issues and associated risks are addressed – are monitored and measured by the Partnerships & Business Development unit and reported back to the SMT and Board.

6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

EP recognises that the 'Partnership landscape' is complex and dynamic, being subject to both local developments and changing central government priorities.

As part of this, therefore, we are currently looking to engage with our partners in introducing and developing imaginative responses to Payment by Results, working with stakeholders and local communities to explore how we might begin to make a reality of the 'Big Society'

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and beginning to anticipate how we might work to support the introduction of a Police & Crime Commissioners in Essex.

In all of this, whilst we are committed to being flexible and responsive to changing needs and priorities we will also remain committed to remaining constant in our core values and our determination to be a 'good partner'.

APPENDIX A

1. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

1.1. Essex Probation supports and is fully committed to developing successful multi-agency commissioning and delivery arrangements to provide public services based on the concepts of “Total Place” (as set out by HM Treasury in 2009) and is equally committed to implementing initiatives that have, to varying degrees, been informed by these ideas and ‘Total Place’ principles such as:

- identifying opportunities for genuine service transformation across organisational boundaries;
- better developing services around the needs of people in the local area, with a more integrated offer for users, especially those with complex and multiple needs;
- identifying efficiencies through collaborative working and redesigned services.
- viewing services provided through the eyes of service users;
- improving local leadership;
- implementing cultural reforms;
- supporting integrated multi-disciplinary teams at the front line;

1.2. In practice, EP’s commitment to ‘Total Place’ approaches will feature in our involvement in the development of such initiatives as Integrated Offender Management (IOM) and Community Budgets and in our looking to realise the potential of ‘Payment by Results (PbR)’ arrangements.

1.3. EP recognises that partnership working can be costly and time-consuming and we believe that a key response to public spending cuts, following the financial crisis of 2009-10, must be to ensure that partnership meetings and commitments should be the minimum required to discharge responsibilities and achieve outcomes. We also feel that there should be a small number of key, truly-strategic, partnerships to analyse strategic need within an area and plan and deliver holistic, joined-up, effective responses, supported by the establishing of good strategic relationships between leaders in Essex Probation and key partner agencies.

1.4. Essex Partnership

The Essex Partnership was established as the overall Strategic Partnership for all public bodies and key 3rd sector providers in the Essex County Council area, charged with agreeing and implementing Essex’s Local Area Agreement (LAA) – a strategic agreement between the partnership and the government setting out the overarching strategic partnership priorities for Essex, as agreed by all of the partner agencies. As part of this, the Essex Partnership agreed ‘Reducing Reoffending by Offenders under the Supervision of the Probation Service’ as one of the key LAA priorities.

1.5. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)

LSPs were also established in each of the Unitary and Borough/District areas. The former, again, were responsible for priorities within the Local Area Agreements, whilst the latter were more informal strategic partnerships.

1.6. Following the change of government in 2010, LAAs have been discontinued and arrangements for Strategic Partnerships in Essex, Southend and Thurrock are currently under review. The new government has announced the creation in each County or Unitary area of a strategic Health & Wellbeing Board and EP has signalled its intention to be involved both in the creation and the operation of these Boards. Whatever the final shape of the new strategic arrangements, EP will ensure that it is represented in order to keep issues of Offender Management and Public Protection on the strategic agendas of Essex (including within Borough and District areas), Southend and Thurrock.

1.7. Safer Essex

1.7.1. Safer Essex was established as one of 6 Thematic Groups within the Essex Partnership to focus on agreed strategic priorities in relation to Community Safety (other Thematic Groups being focused on Children, Community Wellbeing & Older People, and Economic Development) – including the priority in relation to Reducing Reoffending by Probation supervisees. As part of this last priority a Reducing Reoffending Action Plan committed the partnership to:

- Increasing offenders' visible repayment to their communities ; Increasing the involvement of communities in how offenders might make reparation to their community; and maximising public awareness and understanding of the Unpaid work scheme;
- Developing education, training and skills programmes for offenders and developing 'Pathways' to support offenders into employment;
- Promote and support EPA's Bridge Project to reduce the number of Short-Term Prisoners;
- Review and develop substance misuse provision within Essex in relation to adult offenders and agreeing clear 'Pathways' with PCTs, Essex DAAT and treatment providers;
- Increase the number of offenders in stable and secure accommodation;
- Ensure the provision of services to reduce both the incidence of mental health problems and physical health problems within the adult offender population and work with PCTs and treatment and provider agencies to link Care Pathways clearly and effectively with Probation Sentence Plans;
- Increase the safety of communities by reducing high impact crimes through managing the most high risk offenders and the most prolific offenders effectively and as part of a holistic, multi-agency approach.

1.7.2. Safer Essex also prioritised the development of a partnership response to Domestic Abuse, including work to support Perpetrator programmes, develop services for Victims and increase the awareness of Domestic Abuse within partner agencies and the public.

1.7.3. In Southend and Thurrock, these priorities have also been pursued through the Southend Safer Communities Board and the Thurrock Community Safety Board.

1.7.4. Whilst the current partnership arrangements are, again, under review, EP is committed to being part of the revised arrangements and taking forward the above priorities.

1.7.5. Safer Essex provides, in effect, a 'County Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for the Essex County area and as an agency working across the whole of Essex, this role is clearly one that EP recognises as being an important one and one that we support. EP's clear

position is to balance the achieving of an effective level of agreement and consistency between CSPs across Essex, with the principle of local partnership working and local responses to local problems. As part of this, whilst EP representation at Safer Essex is provided by the Partnership unit, representation on local CSPs is provided by staff from relevant Local Delivery Units.

1.8. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)

1.8.1. Originally titled Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), CSPs were established in 1998 to improve Community Safety and provide a multi-agency response to Crime and Disorder in each Borough, District and Unitary Local Authority area, having a statutory responsibility for producing, implementing and reporting performance in relation to Crime & Disorder Strategies. Whilst originally not a statutory 'Responsible Authority', EP has always been a core member of all of the 14 CSPs in the EP area and has worked closely with local partners to agree priorities and implement responses.

1.8.2. As well as being responsible for the operation of Prolific & other Priority Offender (PPO) schemes in there are, CSPs are also important arenas for EP in terms of raising awareness of our work in reducing reoffending and protecting the public and as routes for sharing key 'messages' with partners. They also have a particular interest in EP's delivery of Community Payback and our work in relation to Domestic Abuse (with many providing financial support for the operation of our IDAP Women's Safety Officer service).

1.8.3. In April 2010 Probation Trusts were made statutory Responsible Authorities within CSPs and at the same time CSPs were given a statutory responsibility for Reducing Reoffending in their areas. It is anticipated that a key priority for CSPs in relation to this duty will be the implementation of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) in their localities, working to the criteria agreed by the Essex IOM Board.

1.8.4. In April 2011 CSPs were given the statutory responsibility for carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) within their area. As well as being a key CSP partner, EP also has a statutory responsibility to cooperate with the production of these reviews.

1.9. Essex Criminal Justice Board (CJB)

1.9.1. The CJB is responsible for 'joining up' the work of the key CJS agencies and other partners, so as to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice system in Essex. Priorities have included reducing the time taken to process offenders through the Courts, improving all aspects of the administration of justice in Essex and improving public confidence in the justice system.

1.9.2. The CJB has also prioritised the CJS response to Domestic Abuse, including the introduction of the pilot Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) and has overseen the operation of the PPO schemes in Essex.

1.10. Essex Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Governance Board

EP and Essex Police have agreed to make IOM a joint strategic priority and as well as convening an initial Essex IOM conference and co-funding an Essex IOM Coordinator post, they have taken the lead in establishing the IOM Governance Board with the intention of establishing a common understanding of IOM and common criteria and a consistent approach to the implementation of IOM schemes across each of the 14 CSP areas.

1.11. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

As a Responsible Authority, along with Essex Police and HM Prison Service (represented by HMP Chelmsford), EP is both a statutory member of the MAPPA Strategic Management Board and a key operational partner within the MAPPA in Essex.

2. COMMISSIONING PARTNERSHIPS

2.1. Historically, strategic partnerships have often been split into those that have been made up primarily of agencies representing the Criminal Justice System (CJS) whilst others have been comprised of non-CJS bodies. EP recognises the artificiality of such distinctions and perhaps more importantly, the threat to both efficiency and effectiveness that is posed by them. EP is committed, therefore, to moving from a position where offenders in their home communities are often excluded from 'mainstream' commissioning and services provision and where separately-commissioned and provided 'offender services' are seen as the their only route into provision. The aim is to achieve a position where offenders in the community access relevant services as 'citizens', subject only to the normal criteria for the particular service.

2.2. Notwithstanding the previous paragraph, EP recognises that there are some situations where the peculiar processes and requirements of the CJS/Probation service impose additional and otherwise unnecessary costs upon services generally-provided and in these limited circumstances will look, in its commissioning activity, to ensure that such costs are reasonably met.

2.3. In its approach to the 'mainstreaming' of services for offenders, EP will seek to place an emphasis on agreeing with partners 'Pathways' into mainstream services, using as a basis—whether this is in relation to Health (including Drugs & Alcohol, as well as Mental and Physical Health); Accommodation; Education and Employment; Finance, Benefit & Debt; or services for Children & Families. In developing such Pathways, EP will look to engage with partners to map out current service provision and entry points for service users; map out Offender needs, Offender 'journeys' within the CJS, and points where Offenders might require/access services; and try to bring these together into clear Pathways that can be understood by both service providers and offender managers, so as to maximise both Offenders' access and services' successful engagement with target groups, not least with those groups that are often seen as 'hard to reach'.

2.4. Supporting People (SP)

2.4.1. The Supporting People scheme began in 2003, providing supported accommodation for a wide range of 'vulnerable' groups, including offenders, substance misusers, people with Mental Health problems, young people and victims of Domestic Abuse and services aimed at enabling individuals to maintain their accommodation and wherever possible to live independently, without the necessity of recourse to institutional residential provision. Probation was a statutory partner on the SP Commissioning Bodies until the SP schemes were 'de-ringfenced' in 2010. In Southend and Thurrock, the arrangements for SP have remained largely unchanged but in Essex the SP Commissioning Body has been disbanded.

2.4.2. EP remains committed to retaining a focus on commissioning Accommodation and Accommodation-related support for: Adult offenders under probation supervision; Adults in

contact with secondary mental health services; Adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities; substance misusers; victims of Domestic Abuse; and Care leavers. We will take this forward by continuing to work as part of the SP arrangements where they remain, or by looking to develop with partners new joint commissioning arrangements for these groups and/or as part of new strategic partnerships such as Health & Wellbeing Boards.

2.5. DAATs

DAATs have been responsible since 1995 for commissioning drug services, to support the National Drug Strategy and as part of this, to oversee the Pooled Treatment Budget which funds, amongst other things, services for the provision of Drug Rehabilitation Requirements (DRRs). They also now have a responsibility for the development of Alcohol services. EP has been an active member of the DAAT commissioning bodies in Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Whilst current arrangements are subject to review as part of the new 'partnership landscape', EP will continue to pursue the development of services for substance-misusing offenders through the current or any revised arrangements to ensure continued support for the provision of DRRs and the Testing of PPOs on Licence, but also to ensure that offenders are included within the development of comprehensive Pathways for Drug and Alcohol treatment.

2.6. Alcohol Commissioning Group

With the commissioning of services for Alcohol misusers until recently very much a low priority EP lobbied, with partners, to develop local commissioning arrangements. This led in 2009 to the setting up of a Southend, Essex and Thurrock Alcohol Commissioning Group and EP will continue to support the development of this group and of any partnership responses to the commissioning of services for Alcohol misusers, including offenders and specifically, services that support the provision of the Alcohol Treatment (ATR).

2.7. Children's Trusts

Children's Trusts are multi-agency commissioning bodies charged with the strategic planning and commissioning of all services for Children in a County or Unitary Local Authority area. They were given a statutory basis and significantly expanded responsibilities following the 'Baby Peter' case, but the statutory nature of these responsibilities and statutory prescription was discarded the election of a new administration in 2010. Whilst the precise nature of arrangements differs across the EP area, therefore, EP is committed to participating at an appropriate level in these arrangements and remains committed to:

- The development of an awareness amongst children's services, including commissioning, that one of the most significant ways of improving the safety, well-being and life-chances of children is also to focus on their parents/significant adults and the services that impact upon them;
- The importance of joining-up of 'Children's' and 'Adults' services into services looking at 'Families';
- Working with children's service planners and commissioners to develop services for Given the evidence from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) of particular Safeguarding issues in the case of children of offenders, substance misusing parents, parents who are suffering from a mental health problem and households where there is Domestic Abuse;

- Working with children's service planners and commissioners to develop services for the children of offenders, for substance misusing parents, for parents who are suffering from a mental health problem and for children in households where there is Domestic Abuse, given the evidence (including from Serious Case Reviews) of particular Safeguarding issues in relation to these groups.

2.8. Essex Strategic Domestic Abuse Group (ESDAG)

The Essex Strategic Domestic Abuse Group is a pan-Essex multi-agency group established to take a strategic lead on Domestic Abuse and the Essex response to it. A founding member of the previous Essex against Domestic Violence strategic group, EP is committed to supporting an effective multi-agency response and to establishing, as part of this, comprehensive DV services across the whole of the EP area. Working with the Criminal Justice Board, ESDAG is currently overseeing the implementation of the pilot Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) in South-West Essex, the provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) across the whole pan-Essex area and the operation of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs). EP is clear that our management of DV offenders, provision of the IDAP accredited programme for DV offenders (including liaison with and provision of information to Victims/partners of offenders with an IDAP requirement by EP Women's Safety Officers) forms an important part of the overall ESDAG response to Domestic Abuse.

3. STATUTORY PARTNERSHIPS

3.1. Youth Offending Services (YOSs)

3.1.1. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were established in 1998 to supervise offenders under the age of 18. EP is a statutory member of the governing Boards for the 3 YOSs in the EP area and contributes resources to the YOSs, both in terms of seconding staff and in terms of contributing to core funding.

3.1.2. As well as operational benefits in our formal involvement in the governance of YOSs – not least in terms of maintaining a joint focus on issues of 'transition' in relation to offenders under supervision moving from the YOSs to EP – EP is also clear that we provide an important perspective as the only other 'Offender Management' agency on the Boards and the only other Criminal Justice Agency, apart from the Police. With the YOSs having to straddle the two separate responsibilities of having to supervise young offenders whilst also having to operate in a context of working with children, this provides an important input. EP also provides a Link Manager for each of the YOS secondees who, whilst having no line management or operational responsibility, is available to provide support and updates as to developments in Probation for the secondee and a first point of contact between the YOT team and EP.

3.2. Safeguarding Children Boards (SCBs)

3.2.1. Having been a member of the non-statutory Area Child Protection Committees that preceded them, Essex Probation has been a founding member of Safeguarding Children's Boards in Essex, Southend and Thurrock since their creation by the Children Act 2004. Whilst Section 10 of that Act requires Probation Trusts to co-operate with and actively support the operation of Safeguarding Children's Boards, Section 11 of the Act also requires Trusts to incorporate Safeguarding into all aspects of their work (including not only 'operations', but also recruitment, HR and general 'employee responsibilities').

3.2.2. EP is clear that Safeguarding Children is a key organisational priority and a responsibility of all staff and as part of this commitment, commits both funding to the 3 SCBs in the EP area and staff resources to support the operation of the Boards.

3.3. Vulnerable Adults Boards (VABs)

Although modelled upon Children's Safeguarding Boards, Vulnerable Adult's Boards are not statutory bodies. Whilst EP has a commitment to supporting their work and developing an understanding of Adult Safeguarding amongst EP staff, our involvement within Adult Protection has been much more limited than with SCBs and in the course of 2011-12 we will be reviewing level of engagement.

4. Functional Partnerships

EP recognises the value of formal multi-agency partnership working in relation to the management of offenders who pose a high risk of Harm or whose offending has the biggest impact upon communities and those focused upon protecting potential Victims, whether or not there is a statutory requirement to do so. EP will continue, therefore, to hold as a priority its work with MARACs and with Prolific & other Priority Offender (PPO) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements.