



LeadingLights

**The YOU Trust:
PARAGON Dorset, Hampshire
and Isle Of Wight**

**Accreditation Report
May 2024**

Leading Lights

Leading Lights is an accreditation programme which recognises and rewards good and safe practice in community based domestic abuse services across the UK. The programme offers services, partner agencies and commissioners a set of standards for supporting victims of domestic abuse through a risk led response and is designed to ensure that survivors of domestic violence receive the same level of service, regardless of where they are in the country.

The programme covers the core aspects of running a community based domestic abuse service – from case management to strategy and governance – offering guidance to the entire service team. Organisations demonstrate their commitment to supporting good and safe practice by meeting the Leading Lights standards which can be summarised in four main blocks:

- Service Provision
- Multi-Agency Work
- Human Resources
- Governance

The standards for Leading Lights were initially drawn from the work of IDVA services but they have now been developed to meet the requirements of other domestic abuse services providing a risk led response to all levels of risk.

Leading Lights supports services to reach accreditation through an accredited Service Manager's training course, self-assessment and ongoing telephone and email support. At the end of the accreditation process, services are evaluated by a SafeLives internal accreditation panel.

Once accredited, services provide annual reports to show that they continue to meet the standards, with reaccreditation assessments taking place every three years.

There are currently over 50 accredited Leading Lights services.

Organisation Information

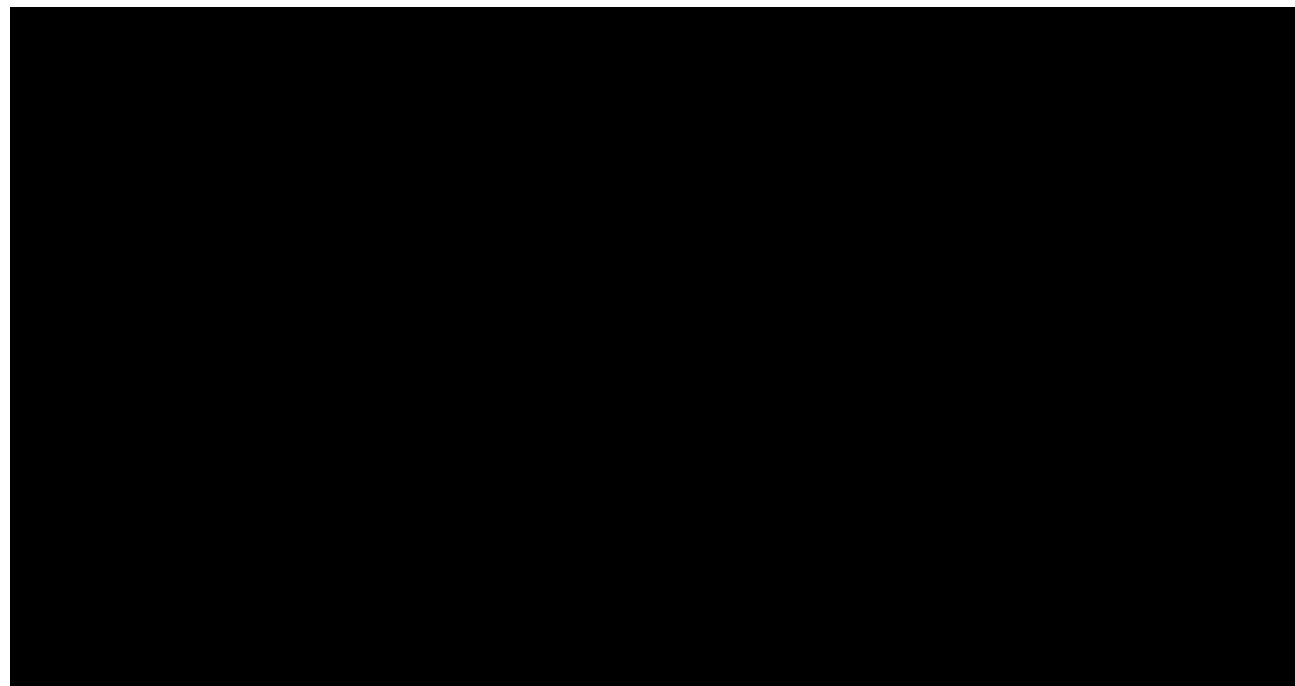
Organisation overview	
Organisation Name	The YOU Trust
Year organisation established	1985
Website	https://theyoutrust.org.uk/
Total # staff	Circa 940
Brief description of agency and governance structure	The YOU Trust is a charity that has been supporting vulnerable people across the UK since 1985. We work across a wide range of specialist areas including Learning Disabilities, Mental Health, Domestic Violence and Abuse, Stalking, Sexual Crime therapeutic services, Counselling and Homelessness. YOU is led by the Chief Executive, who leads the Directors, who in turn manage and lead the Assistant Directors and Area Managers who are responsible for the delivery of community and accommodation based services. YOU staff are further supported by a Human Resource team, an IT team, and a Training team.



Service(s) overview	
Please include info for each service undergoing accreditation	
Service(s) undergoing accreditation	Paragon Hampshire
Year service(s) established	2015
█	█
█	█
Geographic areas covered	North Hampshire
Co-located?	Our Hospital Advocates are based within Hampshire Hospital Foundation Trust
Risk levels supported	All risk levels

Service(s) overview Please include info for each service undergoing accreditation	
Service(s) undergoing accreditation	Paragon Isle of Wight
Year service(s) established	2018
██████	██
██████████	██
Geographic areas covered	Isle of Wight
Co-located?	Only our hospital advocate is co located within St Mary's and 1 IDVA works from the local police office 1 morning a week.
Risk levels supported	Medium and High risk

Service(s) overview Please include info for each service undergoing accreditation	
Service(s) undergoing accreditation	Paragon Dorset
Year service(s) established	2010
██████	██
██████████	██
Geographic areas covered	Dorset County Council Area
Co-located?	Our 3 health advocates are co located within Dorchester, Bournemouth and Poole Hospitals and our 3 Safeguarding families advocates are co located within Dorset Children services dept.
Risk levels supported	Medium Risk



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Assessment Summary

The YOU Trust was established in 1985. It is a registered Charity and governed by a Board of Trustees. The YOU Trust created domestic violence and abuse services in 1992 – these services are known nationally as PARAGON. Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight are undergoing re-accreditation of their Leading Lights status. PARAGON Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight have chosen to be accredited jointly; therefore although at points certain information relates to a specific service and is highlighted as such, overall ratings are for the services combined.

PARAGON Dorset was established in 2010. They are commissioned / funded to provide Health IDVAs, CYP workers, Refuge, safe houses, outreach, recovery groups, counselling and behaviour change for those who use harmful behaviours. The service is independent and creative in their approach to ensure sustainability. The majority of referrals PARAGON Dorset receive are medium risk and generally via the police. PARAGON Dorset is very well established in the community and has great links operationally and strategically throughout the county of Dorset, including pro-active attendance at multi-agency meetings and delivery of training.

PARAGON Isle of Wight (IOW) was established in 2018 and are commissioned by the Isle of Wight Council to deliver the Integrated Domestic Abuse Services. The service provides IDVAs, Outreach, Refuge and Safe Houses, CYP workers and Whole Family support. They also provide recovery groups and counselling services. The majority of referrals PARAGON IOW receive are high risk and generally from the police / HRDA / MARAC. PARAGON IOW is well established on the island and has good links strategically and operationally. The service plays a key role within the co-ordinated community response and attends multi-agency meetings. Several staff are co-located several hours a week at the police station to support these relationships.

PARAGON Hampshire was established in 2015. The service provides health IDVAs co-located in Basingstoke Hospital, safe houses, target hardening, counselling, isolated community's worker and the Dragonfly project, which offers free workshops for professionals to become champions. Champions are able to act as signposts for people experiencing domestic abuse in the community. The majority of referrals are from Health and are all risk levels. PARAGON Hampshire is well established in the county of Hampshire, maintaining good links operationally and strategically attending multi-agency meetings.

The Assistant Director and Area Managers took the lead in preparing the services for re-accreditation. The Area Manager for IOW completed the Accredited Service Managers training in 2022, and Area Manager for Hampshire in 2023. The Assistant Director completed the training in 2016. The 3 teams of frontline staff are managed by the Service Managers, who reports to the Area Manager. The Area Manager is managed by the Quality and Operations Director, who reports to the CEO who reports to the Board of Trustees.

It is clear from the assessment that all 3 PARAGON services have worked hard to maintain their standard of practice since their last assessment. Their service provision is of a particularly high standard, with an excellent standard of case file recording across all files reviewed, and clear evidence of the range and quality of support offered to all clients, particularly those that are harder to engage or are still in the abusive relationship.

All staff job descriptions are in place and for the ones reviewed are appropriate for the roles. The Health DVA workers support all levels of risk, but most staff / roles predominantly support high or non-high risk cases. All staff prioritise cases by risk, are proactive in their approach and work with clients according to their needs – an approach which is reflected in the policy documents. Case notes evidenced that staff empower the clients to act for themselves, and that client safety is central to their work.

The Charter

The spirit of the charter underpins the work of PARAGON Dorset, Hampshire and the IOW. They are independent services with a strong focus on empowerment and quality. The case management system, Advice Pro, is robust allowing the staff and the service manager to ensure their service is of high quality. Casework evidenced that clients are supported by knowledgeable staff, risk identification is the focus and safety is central. Clients and staff of the service are respected and at every opportunity clients are empowered to act for themselves. It was clear from the case audits and interviews that all staff have a non-judgemental approach and will work hard to walk alongside their clients, providing support at their pace.

Caseload

PARAGON IOW combined services receive an annual staff caseload of 1310. The average engagement rate is 60%. The referral source data remains consistent each quarter with police being the highest referral source. Through partnership work with schools and mental health services there has been an increase in referrals over the last year. Referrals sources are monitored each quarter and discussed with commissioners.

PARAGON Dorset combined services receive an annual staff caseload of 1416. The average engagement rate is 70%. The referral source data remains consistent each quarter with police, HRDA/MARAC and self-referrals being the highest sources. Referrals sources are monitored each quarter and discussed with commissioners.

PARAGON Hampshire combined services receive an annual staff caseload of 234. The average engagement rate is 88%. 2.8 FTE staff are health advocates based within Basingstoke hospital, which is why the majority of referrals come from health. The other staff member is the Isolated Communities DA worker who also delivers The Dragonfly Project. Many of those referrals come from agencies who have been trained and are Dragonfly champions.

Overview of Ratings

Service Provision								
S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9
Multi-Agency working								
M1	M2	M3	M4					
Human Resources								
H1	H2	H3						
Governance								
G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7		

Service Provision

Summary of assessment:

Service Provision was an area of strength for all 3 PARAGON Services. Clients are assessed and supported across different risk levels, with the majority of referrals coming through the local HRDA / MARAC / police. All teams work face to face with clients as well as providing phone support. The case file audit and interviews evidenced that all staff are creative and flexible in their work. There is a clear referral process and allocation system to ensure referrals receive immediate support. All cases are risk assessed on referral and during the initial intake process. All files demonstrated good practice in place in relation to the service provision. There are clear policies and process in place that are embedded in practice.

All 3 PARAGON services provide effective and comprehensive safety and support planning work, although some (30%) did not demonstrate SMART actions. Following this assessment, training, advice and guidance is being rolled out to all staff. For all cases reviewed the client had an ISSP, which is thorough and detailed, with the majority reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The ISSPs demonstrated great empowerment of the client.

The staff benefit from committed and knowledgeable senior management. Case management processes from intake to closure are extremely robust and used to ensure clients are supported appropriately, and this is embedded into practice. A performance management framework has been implemented through regular case management and 1:1 supervision sessions which ensures that errors are picked up and addressed quickly. Case audits and staff observations form part of an annual review process. Cases are generally reviewed on a regular basis, although there were some delays in IOW and Dorset. Dorset described having struggled to keep within the timeframes due to staff sickness and absence. Case management follows a clear process, where all open cases are discussed at length and actions are recorded within the case files. Case management is delivered by senior team leaders / managers.

Case file recording is of a high standard. The case files were extremely easy to navigate, detailed meeting legal and best practice duties to the client. Confidentiality agreements, consent to share and access to client's files were explained during initial assessment. Case files are secure on the case management system Advice Pro, only accessible to authorised staff / persons. Encouragement and support for clients to act for themselves is of high priority and another area of strength across all 3 PARAGON services. It is clear through case notes that staff have an empowering approach when working with clients. Policy and process demonstrate The YOU Trust's commitment to empowering clients.

All 3 PARAGON services are clear on the services they provide and to whom. Promotional materials define service eligibility, and this is available / shared with potential clients and professionals. On referral to the service the SPOC worker will be clear on what the service can provide, which is reiterated on allocation to a worker. Website and promotional materials are of a high standard and available in various languages.

All 3 PARAGON services are very aware of their demographic and population. The YOU Trust proactively identify gaps and address under-represented groups to ensure service is accessible to all. Across all 3 PARAGON services there are a range of roles that specifically work with under-represented clients. The Isolated Communities' workers identify under-represented groups and proactively engage with communities to increase awareness

of DA and the support available. The health advocates support inclusion from people who attended health provision but had not engaged with DA support. The IOW service has an Older Person's DA worker included in the new specification as a need was identified due to the Island demographics, and last quarter saw an increase in the number of referrals for the over 66 age range.

Strengths

- Policy clearly demonstrates referral pathways into and out of the service.
- There is a clear duty and allocation system in place ensuring that referrals are responded to quickly, new referrals are contacted within 48 hours, the audit demonstrated that the majority were within 24 hours.
- Work is risk led and risk assessments are thorough, detailed and regularly reviewed with clients, 100% of case files evidence risk assessment on intake.
- Individual Safety and Support Plans are client focused with creative, pro-active and empowering actions.
- The audit demonstrated that case file recording was of a high standard across all files. Information is consistently recorded on Advice Pro, the case management system.
- The service has implemented audit processes to identify missing information with actions given to staff.
- The approach with clients is empowering and supportive. Working with them at their own pace to achieve independence.
- The service monitors client demographic data. On the 50 files reviewed 100% of the demographic data was completed.
- Managers are very aware of their demographic and population data. Which they use to identify gaps and have put appropriate actions in place.
- The service is flexible and responsive to the needs of clients.
- Staff interviewed emphasised the importance of empowering clients to act for themselves and engage with services.
- Promotional materials and policies clearly define who the service is for, and staff clearly explain to clients the service they can provide on initial referral and through the assessment process.
- Policy confirms that annual review meeting is held to review long term goals, based on the business plan, and quarterly updates are provided regarding the progress against the plan.

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Multi Agency Working

Summary of assessment

Multi-agency working is a real area of strength across all 3 PARAGON services. The YOU Trust is well established in local forums and strategic groups, attending and contributing regularly at various meetings across Dorset, Hampshire, and the IOW. Staff were able to give detail on a wide range of multi-agency working and partnerships in which the service is represented with the primary role / focus being on client safety.

PARAGON Hampshire work in partnership with Hampshire Police to implement and embed the authentic voice meetings where clients are supported to attend and provide feedback to Police about the service they received, in a safe environment. The YOU Trust are currently in discussions with Dorset Police to implement a similar model.

Hampshire & IOW Police implemented the scrutiny panel as part of their response to a super complaint. The panel meet monthly and robustly review all cases where members of staff are victim's or perpetrators of DA to identify learning. The panel has been noted as an area of best practice by the college of Policing as it has led to some fundamental changes in practice to improve their responses. PARAGON won an award in 2023 for their engagement with the panel.

PARAGON are active members of the Crown Prosecution Service Wessex IDVA forum which meets quarterly to discuss issues and identify learning to improve victim's experiences of the Criminal Justice System. PARAGON also provide support to the CPS RASSO panel and review victim letter templates to ensure letters are trauma informed and do not contain any victim blaming language. PARAGON Managers sit on DHR panels and attend any local safeguarding workshops to identify learning for YOU and other agencies.

All 3 PARAGON services deliver regular training to professionals to raise awareness of DA and improve the response locally. The YOU Trust has clear policy and processes in place for staff to only work with agencies / teams and organisations that are identified as excellent. No staff member will refer to an unknown organisation until basic due diligence checklist has been completed.

The YOU Trust and all 3 PARAGON services have appropriate policies and procedures in place for identifying any safeguarding concerns, meeting their legal duty. Local safeguarding procedures are clearly outlined, with staff reporting confidence to report and work closely with local child and adult safeguarding teams. Staff have regular mandatory training on these procedures.

All 3 PARAGON services engage with High Risk Domestic Abuse (HRDA) meetings and local MARACs in line with their remits. HRDAs are multi-agency family focused meetings led by the police that address high risk domestic abuse incidents on a daily basis, with the exception of IOW where they are held bi-weekly. Staff attend and engage with these meetings. The case notes demonstrate referrals of appropriate clients to HRDA / MARAC, the views of the client are represented with agreed actions from the meetings being completed and cross referenced in the case notes. There is some discrepancy with the risk thresholds and decisions that come out of the HRDA meetings, with PARAGON Hampshire working with high risk clients that are not being represented at the MARAC due to the

decision made at HRDA. The YOU Trust and PARAGON Hampshire are working closely with partners to rectify this issue.

Strengths

- The case file audits evidenced excellent multi-agency working including institutional advocacy and working with a range of services to ensure client’s needs were met.
- Policy is clear that the service’s commitment to client safety is central when working within a multi-agency environment.
- Staff are confident in representing the views of the victim in multi-agency working and ensure that victim safety is central in these settings.
- Frontline staff and managers gave detailed examples of joint working and partner agencies.
- Policy and practice evidence that the service is committed to a multi-agency response to domestic abuse.
- The PARAGON management team are active in local forums and strategic groups and contribute to the development of responses across Dorset, Hampshire and the IOW.
- The YOU Trust has robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place and the case file audit evidenced these are followed in practice.
- The YOU Trust and PARAGON services deliver a range of training and awareness events to multi-agency partners.
- Staff are confident to challenge and support other agencies where there are concerns about practice.

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Human resources

Summary of assessment:

The YOU Trust have robust processes in place to support and develop the staff teams, with staff reporting in interview that they feel very supported in their work. It was clear from the interviews that the staff work well together, and many have been together for several years. They provide support to each other and benefit from accessible service managers.

All staff experience a thorough and comprehensive induction and probation period. During this time and continually throughout their role all staff have access to mandatory training, as well as role specific training and up to date resources. The YOU Trust deliver a host of training packages and PARAGON staff have access to all internal training as well as external opportunities. Staff reported having the opportunity during supervision and annual appraisals to request additional training pertinent to their role.

All staff receive regular case management, 1:1 supervision and access to quarterly clinical group supervision. Clinical supervision isn't mandatory, but all staff are encouraged to attend. Although generally staff can opt out of clinical supervision, it is mandatory that those working with high risk clients attend at least bi-annually. There are also other areas of support available to all YOU trust staff such as wellbeing, bereavement, financial and menopause support.

The YOU Trust and all PARAGON services manage the risks staff face in their work on a proactive and detailed basis. Home visit / lone working risk assessments are completed at initial assessment and updated as required, both are completed before visits are conducted. Policy outlines actions to ensure safe working practices, with staff's whereabouts monitored effectively which is evidenced throughout the case file audit and interviews.

The YOU Trust is appropriately prepared to address the situation of employees as victims and as perpetrators of domestic abuse. During the interviews staff demonstrated awareness of the DA policy, knew how to access it and were confident in what they would do if they had concerns of staff experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse.

Strengths

- There is a thorough induction in place for all new staff, several staff explained the induction process.
- All levels of management ensure they are accessible to the team and staff have access to a range of support such as, line management supervision, regular team meetings, clinical supervision, and the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Staff feel supported in their roles.
- Clear policies are in place in relation to lone working and these were followed in practice and clearly demonstrated in case notes.
- There is a clear DA policy in place outlining approach to supporting staff and responding to perpetrators of abuse.
- Staff have access to a wide range of training and learning opportunities to increase their skills.

Governance

Summary of assessment

The YOU Trust benefit from a committed, engaged and passionate Board, with clear governance structures and robust policies in place to guide the Board of Trustees in its role.

The Board have separated into several committees, which meet monthly, with the focus on continuous development, ensuring services continue to run safely and effectively, and that staff are well supported. During the interview the Board members spoke about how important it was to support the service and staff to be able to continue to support the clients in creative and empowering ways. Both were encouraged by their recent service visits, seeing great practice, speaking with staff to understand what else can be achieved in order to support clients, and speaking with clients to see what areas can be improved.

The staff spoke of how they celebrate good performance, outcomes and achievements. Trustees and senior management talked passionately of how they ensure that feedback from stakeholders was fed back to the staff. Staff talked about how this sharing of good practice motivated team morale and ensured that staff felt valued and recognised.

All 3 PARAGON service are based within a sustainable organisation, The YOU Trust, with a clear strategy for maintaining its activities. There is a clear and detailed operational plan that includes service targets (KPIs). The plan is reviewed quarterly at SMT / Board level. Due to the multiple services that The YOU Trust has, there is also a service plan that links to the operational plan.

Quality assurance is an area of strength and gathered in various ways. There are detailed reports and analysis from the finance team on performance against contract. Strategic reports for Trust Board Committees focus on Performance, and Quality Reports on feedback and complaints (including clients and stakeholder feedback and survey results), quality audit visits, safeguarding register, contract performance and housing management indicators.

Regular reviews and support sessions (with clients and staff) and appraisals focus on quality of support and contribution towards achieving positive outcomes for people.

There is a robust framework with clear lines of accountability between all staff and between the executive management and the Board. During interviews, staff were able to explain these clearly, demonstrating good understanding. There are appropriate job descriptions in place.

All governance responsibilities are documented. The Board has regular, clearly minuted meetings. The Board has several sub committees, finance & commercial; organisational; and quality assurance. The sub committees meet quarterly (a mix of online and in person), and the full Board meets quarterly with the executive committee meeting regularly also. The risk register and operational plan are standing agenda items. Each subcommittee reviews their own relevant risks. Policy is clear and outlines the approach to organisational risk management.

The Board monitors appropriate data to measure the performance and outcomes of the service and ensures that corrective action is taken when required. Data is collected and reported on regularly to SMT and the Board. This data includes referral, engagement, demographic and outcome information. Gaps are identified and actions are carried out to address these, this is evident with the relatively new role of the Isolated Communities worker.

PARAGON offer a non-discriminatory service to all eligible clients, and ensure they continue this by collecting equality data, which is analysed and compared to local demographics. Action plans are developed to address any identified gaps there may be in provision. The data and action plans are reviewed regularly at SMT and Board level. Policy outlines The YOU Trusts approach to ensuring the service is accessible.

Feedback data is collected and analysed to inform service development. Policy and processes outline the commitment to soliciting stakeholder feedback and using it to develop the service. One method of gathering feedback is for staff to ask for feedback at case closure. During interviews some staff reported feeling uncomfortable in collecting data verbally at this time, especially with questions regarding their own performance, and question whether the client would feel able to answer honestly; this is a fair observation and it is advised that PARAGON reflect on this process.

Strengths

- The service is governed by a pro-active Board of Trustees who ensure appropriate oversight of the organisation.
- There are clear policies in place outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Board.
- There is a clear risk register in place that is reviewed through regular Board meetings.
- There is a robust strategic plan in place, and this is regularly reviewed by the senior management team and the Board.
- The service has a clear framework that shows the structure and governance of the service and operational and management functions, and this is followed in practice.
- Board meetings are held regularly, and minutes are detailed. There are clear lines of accountability in place.
- The Annual report evidence detailed data monitoring and case files show recording of data is of a high standard.
- Demographic data is recorded and monitored to identify gaps. Actions are put in place to address the gaps, such as the health DVA worker and Isolated Communities worker.
- Front line staff benefit from clear policies and procedures. This provides a clear framework for staff to follow. The consistency in practice across all service areas evidence that policies are embedded in practice.
- Stakeholder feedback is gathered in a variety of ways and staff and clients' voices are heard and used to improve services.

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Recommendations and Outcome

Recommendation of the Assessor:

The YOU Trust PARAGON Dorset, PARAGON Hampshire and PARAGON Isle of Wight have worked hard to maintain Leading Lights standards.

It is the recommendation that the YOU Trust PARAGON Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight are re-accredited by Leading Lights.

Decision of the Leading Lights Accreditation Panel:

The Panel recognised the strengths and skills demonstrated by PARAGON Dorset, PARAGON Hampshire and PARAGON Isle of Wight throughout the accreditation process.

The Panel noted that they had seen a wide array of good and excellent practice. They reflected that PARAGON Dorset, PARAGON Hampshire and PARAGON Isle of Wight had come across in all standards as a strong and dedicated service who are committed to making a real difference to those impacted by domestic abuse.

The Panel made the unanimous decision to award Leading Lights re-accreditation to PARAGON Dorset, PARAGON Hampshire and PARAGON Isle of Wight. The Panel reflected that the staff teams should be commended for their achievement, and for their dedication and hard work to get to this point.