



Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategy 2024-2027

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership works to reduce the harm, risks and costs associated with domestic abuse & sexual violence and to prevent these crimes happening across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Introduction

This strategy follows on from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategy; Core and Enhanced offer 2021- 2024 and is informed by the Violence Against Women and Girls Needs Assessment, 2023.

The Strategy is cognisant of the following legislation:

- Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
- Violence Against Women & Girls, National Statement of Expectations (2016)
- Tackling Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy (2021)
- Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act (2022) (Serious Violence Duty)
- A public health approach to ending domestic abuse for the whole family. Findings and Recommendations for Best Practice, SafeLives, (2023)
- Victims and Prisoners Bill 2023

Domestic abuse and sexual violence are highly gendered issues, with the majority of perpetrators being male and the majority of those subjected to these crimes, female.

The partnership is mindful that these issues can impact on anyone regardless of sex, gender or sexuality and all services must respond appropriately and effectively to those subjected to domestic abuse or sexual violence, but this strategy acknowledges for the majority of domestic abuse and sexual violence, this is perpetrated by men against women and girls.

The Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership (the Partnership) exists to facilitate agencies to work together to:

- safeguard victims and bring perpetrators to account;
- collaborate in their responses to domestic abuse and sexual violence ensuring the “system” responds effectively to secure the safety of the survivor and hold perpetrators to account.

This is a model known as a ‘Co-ordinated Community Response’.

This strategy sits alongside the following:

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Board Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2025
- Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategies for Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Plan.
- All Age Carers Strategy

This strategy includes, but is not limited to:

- Domestic Abuse
- Sexual Violence
- Stalking
- Honor Based Abuse

- Coercive and Controlling Behaviour
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage

This strategy is mindful of the VAWG National Expectations, which will be reflected throughout this work and:

- Put the victim at the centre of service delivery.
- Have a clear focus on perpetrators in order to keep victims safe.
- Take a strategic system-wide approach to commissioning.
- Is locally led and safeguards victims at every point.
- Raises local awareness of the issues and involves, engages and empowers communities to seek, design and deliver solutions.

This strategy is reliant on all of the organisations which form the DASV Strategic Board to develop their responses to DASV in line with this work. Some of these aims will be dependent on additional funding or resources throughout the period of 2024/2027, which at the time of writing are largely unknown.

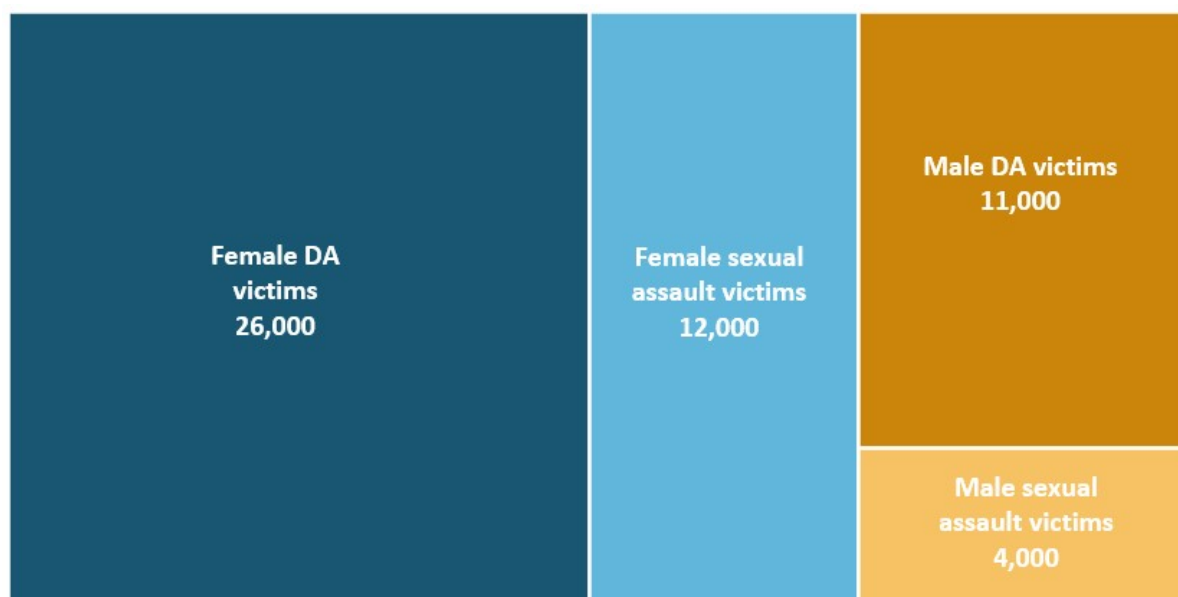
An action plan will be linked to this strategy, which details the relevant inputs from all constituent organisations to the partnership.

Prevalence of Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

In 2023, the Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team completed a VAWG Needs Assessment, this can be found at: [Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - Strategic Documents \(cambsdasv.org.uk\)](https://cambsdasv.org.uk)

This needs assessment illustrated the highly gendered nature of the issues, as seen in the following tables:

Estimated number of victims (age 16+) in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2022/23 – *this is a synthetic estimate based on the Crime Survey for England & Wales data.*



Perpetrators – Domestic Abuse

There were 21,263 suspects associated with domestic abuse related offences recorded by the constabulary in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough between April 2019 and March 2023. The majority were male (70%). For both male and female suspects 30-39 years of age was the most common age. Males aged 30-39 accounted for just over a fifth of all suspects.

Perpetrators – Sexual Violence

There were 4,921 suspects associated with sexual offences recorded by the constabulary in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough between April 2019 and March 2023. Men accounted for almost all of these suspects (90%). Over the same period, 85% of perpetrators of all sexual offences for crimes recorded between April 2019 and March 2023 associated with a single offence in that four-year period. Most suspects of a sexual offence were known to their victims (97% for offences of rape and 91% of other sexual offences).

Men aged 30-39 accounted for the largest proportion of suspects for both rapes and other sexual offences. Female suspects of other sexual offences tended to be younger

with under 16s accounting for 37% of all female suspects. Under 16-year-old males accounted for 16% of suspects of other sexual offences and 10% of suspects of rapes.

Female Genital Mutilation

Local Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) data has begun to be shared, however, this area requires further development. This is important to be able to understand the prevalence and needs of the victims but also to establish if the right services are available.

Assessing Need - Data

It is important to note that a needs assessment can only tell part of the story of need. Locally, as seen in other areas across the country, the quality and nature of data available to be analysed has affected the ability to tailor the specific actions in the strategy. This is because:

1. Data does not exist locally (i.e. information is not asked for from victims/survivors, perpetrators or families or not recorded)
2. Data exists but not in an easily accessible and sharable format (case management systems or service data is not always easy to extract)
3. Data can be shared but quality is poor (information is recorded inconsistently or with missing information).

Cross Cutting Themes

Victim/Survivor Voice
Awareness
System Wide Collaboration
Trauma Informed Provision
Data

Victim/Survivor Voice

Every victim's experience is different, and their views must shape the delivery of local services and support in a way which meets their needs. Developing further opportunities to capture, and listen to, the feedback from victims and survivors and then co-produce services with them and members of the partnership will be a future workstream. This will help inform partnership and agency responses.

What we will do:

1. Champion a partnership-wide culture of actively seeking the views of victims and survivors at every opportunity.
2. Ensure there are processes in place to enable survivors to easily and anonymously feedback on their experiences with any agency.
3. Secure a commitment from all partners that they will listen to the views of victims and survivors and take them into consideration when they are designing new services or reviewing existing processes and ways of working.
4. Explore opportunities to co-produce services with victims and survivors.
5. Provide methods to feedback to victims and survivors so they can see the impact of their contribution to improving the experience.
6. Ensure those with lived experience are able to feedback in a way that is safe, comfortable and accessible to them.
7. Arrange for victim/survivor representation at the Strategic Board – for both children and adults –and enable them to have a meaningful role in discussions.

Awareness

Feedback from specialist services highlighted the importance of continuous awareness raising, around what DA & SV is and how to respond (by the partnership and agencies sitting underneath the partnership) across a wide range of services, and for staff to have access to training. All agencies across the DASV Partnership should have policies and procedures for those they serve and their staff.

What we will do:

1. Ensure all agencies who make up the partnership have domestic abuse and sexual violence policies and procedures in place for clients and staff.
2. Support agencies in their efforts to enable their staff to access the available training in relation to DASV.
3. Maintain and support the existing DASV Champions Network for professionals, and encourage all agencies nominate DASV Champions across their organisations
4. Support the DASV Partnership to develop a range of awareness raising materials for professionals including the DASV monthly newsletter and share this for all agencies to access.
5. Support the development of tailored awareness raising materials which can be shared or accessed direct by communities in an accessible format. This will include private landlords and employers.
6. Provide support to partnership agencies who are exploring gaining White Ribbon Accreditation

Trauma Informed Working

In 2022, the Partnership agreed the principles of Trauma Informed Working that services should be working to:

- **Safety** – the physical, psychological & emotional safety of service users and staff is prioritised
- **Trust** – transparencies in policies & procedures, building trust among staff, service users and the wider community
- **Choice** – Shared decision making with service users, joint goal setting, not imposing solutions
- **Collaboration** – valuing staff and service user experience in overcoming challenges and improving systems
- **Empowerment** – efforts made to share power and give individuals a strong voice at an individual & organisational level
- **Cultural Consideration** – move past stereotypes and biases based on gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, geography, race or ethnicity

What we will do:

1. Take personal responsibility, whether commissioner or provider, to ensure all local service provision is delivered in line with these principles.

2. Promote the use of “Trauma Information Cards” across partnership agencies.
3. Collaborate with all partners and sectors to ensure that Trauma Informed Practice is delivered as a system wide approach.

System Wide Collaboration

To respond effectively to the challenges presented to individuals and agencies from domestic abuse and sexual violence, all parts of the system need to work effectively together, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Family centred response across the system, which responds effectively to all those affected by the abuse.
- Clear processes and seamless pathways across organisations
- Open and transparent systems which are aiming to continuously improve.
- Strong working relationships of professionals across services

What we will do:

1. Embed a culture of continual professional development across all agencies which is informed by: survivor voice and feedback, multi-agency case audits and formal recommendations from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews and other statutory reviews.
2. Audit processes within partnership organisations to include responses to DASV.
3. Encourage each agency to appoint dedicated staff to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence and act as a single point of contact for other services.
4. Share details of opportunities to bring additional resources into the system and collectively consider responses to ensure they contribute to the core model and avoid duplication.
5. Agencies ensure that staff leading on DASV within their organisation have dedicated time and capacity to make improvements in relation to DASV.
6. Participate in cross sector programmes to reach the most marginalised victims and survivors who face multiple disadvantages.
7. Actively participate with the Changing Futures programme to ensure that victims and survivors who face multiple disadvantage, and are most excluded, are represented

Data

All agencies record different information about domestic abuse and sexual violence which prevents the partnership from developing a true picture of need. Gaps in knowledge have been identified where these crimes affect minority communities and children and young people.

What we will do:

1. All partnership agencies to commit to a local dataset that aims to meet the national ‘VAWG Data Landscape’ standards that is shared routinely. ([Violence against women and girls: Data landscape - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#))

2. Commission further research regarding the impact of DASV on children, the extent of the issue and agency responses across the area.
3. Ensure we better understand (through engagement and research) the impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence on victims and survivors within minority communities and to gain a greater understanding on the impact of intersectionality on a victim's experience across the area.
4. Review local Information Sharing Agreements to ensure they enable the partnership to have access to the data required.
5. Secure a commitment from all members of partnership to champion the importance of collecting good quality data within their own agency.

Strategic Vision for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

To reduce the harm, risks and costs associated with domestic abuse & sexual violence and to prevent these crimes happening across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Aims:

Working to prevent people becoming offenders of domestic abuse and reducing victimisation by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster domestic abuse & sexual violence

Reducing the risk to victims and intervening to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.

Perpetrators are appropriately pursued and challenged.

Ensure all victims have access to appropriate and proportionate outcome-focused support whether they have reported the crimes to police or not.

Aim: Working to prevent people becoming offenders of domestic abuse through early intervention work and reducing victimisation by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster domestic abuse and sexual violence

What we will do

1. Take an early intervention approach by supporting schools to deliver consistent messages to children and young people about healthy non-abusive relationships.
2. Explore opportunities to raise awareness of harmful sexual behaviours in a range of educational, workplace and community settings.
3. Work with communities to increase awareness and challenge attitudes which foster domestic abuse and sexual violence

Aim: Reducing the risk to victims and intervening to prevent it from continuing, recurring or escalating.

What we will do

1. Hold Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences held in line with Safelives guidance including Sexual Assault Risk Assessment Conferences as required.

2. Continue to fund a dedicated Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Service for high-risk victims of domestic abuse.
3. Ensure all victims and survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence can easily access support, whatever the level of risk, without having to be referred by an service.
4. Ensure agencies can refer victims to support services which have the skills and experience to meet their needs, with accreditation where appropriate.
5. Maintain the provision of refuge spaces across the county area.
6. Continue to develop and invest in 'Safe Accommodation provisions' – further detail in the Safe Accommodation Strategies.
7. Work in partnership with statutory and non-statutory colleagues, retail and community services to facilitate the provision of safe spaces to support disclosure and enable access to support from trained staff.
8. Ensure the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is available for the public and professionals.
9. All agencies to agree in an equality of approach whether the domestic abuse has been committed by a family member or classed as intimate partner violence.
10. Strive to ensure there is an individualised response to members of specific communities reporting DA/SV

Aim: Perpetrators are appropriately pursued and challenged.

What we will do

1. Continue to champion the use of Civil and Criminal Orders to deter abusive behaviours.
2. Appoint specialist police investigators for rape and sexual violence.
3. Effectively manage Registered Sex Offenders.
4. Continue to hold Perpetrator Panels to ensure information is shared and acted upon for those causing greatest harm or risk of harm, which don't meet the criteria for MAPPA.
5. Invest in behaviour change programmes for domestic abuse offenders at medium and standard risk of harm.

Aim: Ensure all victims have access to appropriate and proportionate outcome-focused support.

What we will do

1. Collaboratively develop core models of support for all victims of domestic abuse and rape/sexual violence and agree to prioritise ringfenced funding for this purpose, to ensure all victims can access support.
2. Continue to fund a dedicated Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) Service for the county for adults and children.
3. Retain a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) within the county to ensure it is available to offer support and help for everyone who needs it.
4. Strive to offer specialist child-specific support for young people who are subjected to domestic abuse in peer relationships and therapeutic provision

for young people who have experienced domestic abuse, whether they are in safe accommodation or living in the community.

5. Ensure support is provided to victims, where possible, in their first language, through appropriate translation and interpretation services
6. Ensure specialist support is accessible to all those who require it, in line with the Equalities Act.
7. Through Operation Encompass, inform schools where there has been police involvement in relation to domestic abuse and a pupil has been present.
8. Demonstrate routine professional curiosity with those who are carers or cared for in relation to domestic abuse, and ensure people are directed to appropriate support.

Agencies Committed to this Strategy as Members of the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategic Board

Cambridgeshire County Council

Peterborough City Council

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

IMPAKT Housing & Support – Domestic Abuse Support Service

Cambridge Women's Aid

Peterborough Women's Aid

Refuge

Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership

The Elms Sexual Assault Referral Centre

National Probation Service

Integrated Care Board

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

North West Anglia Foundation Trust

Cambridgeshire Community Services

Cambridge City Council

Fenland District Council

East Cambridgeshire District Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Huntingdonshire District Council

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Boards

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