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# Annual Report 2023-24

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## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership



**Cambridgeshire  
& Peterborough**  
Domestic Abuse & Sexual  
Violence Partnership

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# Welcome to the Partnership Annual Report

Welcome to the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Annual Report for 2023/24. As ever it has been an incredibly busy year, as we build on the framework of services that have received additional funding, through successful bids to government departments. Sadly, some of this funding is due to end in March 2025, which will bring challenges in the coming years.

This year saw the completion of the Violence Against Women and Girls Needs Assessment. This was the first time such a needs assessment had been undertaken since 2017 and a lot has changed since then. Some things have stayed the same though with similar gaps identified as previously, such as the inconsistencies in data collection. These will be a focus going forward as we develop the DASV Strategy for 2024-27 and associated action planning. The full needs assessment can be found on our website at [www.cambsdasv.org.uk](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk)

Headlines in 2023/24 include over 3500 referrals to the Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Service and 1956 survivors supported by the Independent Sexual Adviser Service. Safe accommodation to victims of domestic abuse continues to be provided with 95 women housed in refuges across the county and an increase in provision of dispersed accommodation. There have also been over 500 properties that have received target hardening to allow survivors to stay safely in their own homes.

We also continue to pursue perpetrators and this year has seen the continuation of not only the Perpetrator panel but conditional cautions, in the form of the Stepwise Probation programme and CARA intervention, and the Stalking Intervention Project.

More details of all of these can be found within the report and we hope you find it useful.

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# Strategic aims

## 1. Working to prevent people becoming offenders of domestic abuse and reducing victimisation by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it.

### 1.1 Communication and awareness-raising materials and social media campaigns.

The Partnership manages its own communications, and a multi-agency strategy is in place. An events calendar is shared across the Partnership with social media and other communication methods developed and shared in advance. November 2023 saw a campaign tied to the White Ribbon Day theme of 'Change the Story' where plots from four Shakespeare plays were revised to focus on messages highlighting VAWG and familial abuse. Posters were shared across various partners including sixth forms and universities and were also displayed on electronic boards around Peterborough. Peterborough City Council Communications Team developed a short film as part of the Christmas 2023 awareness campaign which was well received. Other events were marked such as Sexual Violence Awareness Week, World Elder Abuse Awareness Week, Learning Disabilities Week and communication plans were discussed with partners including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure a joined-up approach.

### 1.2 Framework and support for Relationship and Sex Education in schools

The PSHE Service has continued to provide support for RSE and wider PSHE development for schools in Cambs. Over 70% of Cambs Primary Schools and around 50% Peterborough Primary Schools access the Personal Development Programme which provided high quality resources for work on personal safety, healthy relationships and anti-bullying. Public Health have funded support for the *Mental Health and Relationships Programme* which supports primary schools to develop skills in conflict resolution, identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships and building empathy and emotional literacy. They have also funded tailored support for primary and secondary schools to develop their confidence in delivering a high quality, spiral RSE curriculum.

### 1.3 Support for schools to access relevant services/signpost

The Education Safeguarding Team delivers Domestic Abuse Lead training with the intention that there is a Domestic Abuse Lead available in every school or college. The training is only open to colleagues who have already undertaken the two-day Designated Safeguarding Lead Training, and this is in recognition of the experience required to manage the complexities and risks associated with domestic abuse.

Over the last year, the Team has trained 105 Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in schools and colleges to take on this vital role, this year, meaning there are a total of 435 Domestic Abuse Leads in place. The Team similarly trained 67 Early Years staff across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (37 in Cambridgeshire and 30 in Peterborough settings).

The team also raises awareness of domestic abuse, its impact on children and families and pathways for support via the statutory Basic Safeguarding training for all staff in schools and colleges and DSL Training and Refresher Training. This includes an awareness of the impact of domestic abuse as well as the vital role education plays as a key partner in the delivery of Operation Encompass and achieving MARAC objectives. Other opportunities to raise awareness of domestic abuse include via our online network meetings where in December, we shared the film "Rattlesnake" which shares two survivors' experiences of coercive and controlling behaviour - over 100 DSLs attended.

Schools and colleges are guided by the Department of Education document Keeping Children Safe in Education that has a full section focussed on "Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment". This covers:

- what schools and colleges should be aware of
- responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment
- ongoing response.

### 1.4 Reducing Parental Conflict programme

Some level of arguing and conflict between parents or carers is often a normal part of everyday life. However, there is strong evidence that frequent, intense and poorly resolved relationship conflict can have a negative impact on children's mental health and long-term life-chances.

The reducing parental conflict programme supports parents whether together, separated or considering separation, who want to find ways to improve their relationship and get on better through the offer of four tailored interventions.

The programme also supports practitioners to enhance their skills and understanding of parental conflict through a variety of training including Reducing Parental Conflict Practitioner Training, Engaging Fathers Training and supporting practitioners to understand the differences between domestic abuse and parental conflict. In 2024, we produced two new screening tools that recognise the difference between domestic abuse and relationship conflict. One is designed for practitioners to support service users when they are unsure if a service user is experiencing domestic abuse or parental conflict. The second is a public-facing document, to help members of the public identify whether their relationship is abusive or not.

Three webinars were held for professionals during the year, with over 450 attendees.

### 1.5 White Ribbon accreditation

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council both have White Ribbon accreditation and an action plan for each council has been delivered over the last three years which has included developing employee support policies, public awareness of White Ribbon at events and recruiting White Ribbon Ambassadors across both organisations. Both are due for reaccreditation in 2024.

### 1.6 Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation for housing associations and providers

Peterborough City Council, East Cambs, Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Councils are all working hard to gain accreditation and the DASV Team have been supporting them with case auditing, training, advice information and resources. When staff identify someone subjected to domestic abuse, they can refer to a Housing IDVA very simply at any level of risk and without a DASH risk assessment.

As part of the accreditation, Peterborough City Council has published a Domestic Abuse Policy for Employees and guidance for elected members, which has been shared across the other areas.

## Local data

Domestic Abuse incidents reported to Cambridgeshire Constabulary have decreased slightly in Cambridgeshire but there is a slight increase in Peterborough. Sexual violence reports to police have declined in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Referrals to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service increased by 10%.

### Incidents of Domestic Abuse reported to Cambridgeshire Constabulary 2023/24

Total for 2023/24	Incidents	Crime rate %	Comparison 2022/23
Cambridgeshire	8084	80%	1.9% decrease
Peterborough	4921	75%	2.5% increase

### Sexual Offences Crimes reported to Cambridgeshire Constabulary 2023/24

Total for 2023/24	Incidents	Change from 2021/22
Cambridgeshire	1658	11.8% decrease
Peterborough	780	11.3% decrease

### Serious Sexual Offences Crimes reported to Cambridgeshire Constabulary 2023/24

Total for 2023/24	Incidents	Change from 2021/22
Cambridgeshire	1264	5.3% decrease
Peterborough	556	21.5% decrease

## Referrals to the IDVA Service 2023/24

Total for 2023/24	Referrals	Total for 2022/23
Referrals	3505	3186

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

### 2.1 Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Champions Network

A network of over 200 DASV professional champions has been operating for several years with quarterly online awareness sessions on specific aspects of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Sessions delivered in 2023/24 covered:

- Family courts
- Young people's ISVAs
- Carers
- Trauma informed practice
- Suicide prevention
- Adult safeguarding
- Deaf survivors
- Tech abuse

### 2.2 Workforce training offer

The Partnership offers bespoke training sessions for partner agencies and in 2023/24 delivered training to GP surgeries, Paediatric Team at Addenbrooke's Hospital, MIND Perinatal Team and DASH risk assessment training for Family Workers at Peterborough City Council. Fenland Community Safety Partnership organised sessions on coercive control and supporting victims from Eastern European communities that were delivered by the DASV Partnership Manager. Bespoke sessions were also delivered to Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, staff and Members of Cambridgeshire County Council. The Partnership also commissioned 4 sessions of one day training on Child to Parent Abuse delivered by the specialist organisation PEGs.

Raising awareness of domestic abuse with employers features in recommendations from local Domestic Homicide Reviews and four free online sessions were held in 2023-24 presented by Sharon Livermore MBE from Domestic Abuse Education, a specialist in educating employers on how to support employees who are subjected to domestic abuse.

North West Anglia Foundation Trust held events at Peterborough City Hospital and Hinchingsbrooke Hospitals throughout 2023-24 and the Partnership joined several of these to share information to the public and professionals.

As part of the Safe Accommodation Strategy, online awareness sessions were offered to private landlords on how to support tenants subjected to domestic abuse. A Domestic Abuse and Housing Day was also delivered to professionals with over 70 attendees, speakers included Luke Kendall from Respect talking about working with perpetrators and counter allegations.

The first Peterborough Domestic Abuse Conference was held in May 2023 with over 180 attendees and speakers on a range of topics. In addition, the Partnership hosted several free webinars for professionals including Coercive Control and Children with Dr Emma Katz and Honour Based Abuse with specialist Bal Kaur. As part of the 16 Days of Action against VAWG, we organised several showings of the film "Rattlesnake" that highlights issues of coercive control.

Continued CPD is important for specialist domestic abuse staff and during the year training was delivered covering:

- Domestic Abuse and Criminal Justice - Centre for Women's Justice
- TIME Trauma Training - My Sisters Place
- Gender and LGBTQI+ - The Kite Trust
- Familial Domestic Abuse - Simon Keress
- Safeguarding Adults and Mental Capacity Act - Christine Jones
- DA Perpetrators and Male Victims - Luke Kendall (for Housing staff)

The Partnership offers two basic awareness online modules covering both domestic abuse and sexual violence and both have been revised and relaunched. In addition, online SWAYS (interactive presentations) have been developed covering Dementia and Domestic Abuse, Unpaid Carers, Completing a DASH Risk Assessment and Domestic Abuse/Sexual Violence and Safeguarding - some of these are hosted by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Boards.

Cambridgeshire County Council’s Learning and Development Team deliver domestic abuse training to CCC employees and attendees for 2023-24 were as below:

Event title	Number of sessions	Number of delegates
ASYE Portfolio Development Session: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV)	1	16
Domestic abuse and the impact on children	2	20
Domestic abuse risk and planning for safety	3	22
Safeguarding Adults and Domestic Abuse (Level 2)	9	68

**2.3 Target hardening to keep victims safe in their own homes**

24/7 Locks are commissioned to provide target hardening for victims/survivors to allow them and their children to remain safely in their home. This includes measures such as window locks, fireproof letter boxes, doorbell cameras. Target hardening is delivered alongside specialist DASV support. During 2023-24, 525 jobs were completed, 98% of these within five days of referral.

**2.4 Specialist IDVAs working with health providers**

Health IDVAs work across the county with professionals in Health agencies, including Addenbrooke’s, Hinchingsbrooke and Peterborough City Hospitals. During 2023-24 419 Health referrals were received by the IDVA Service.

**2.5 Specialist IDVAs working with young people**

Young People’s IDVAs support young people aged 13-19 (up to 24 with additional needs or ex-LAC) who are experiencing abuse in their own intimate relationships. During 2023-24 the Young People’s IDVAs received 144 referrals across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

**2.6 Implementation of DHR recommendations and centralised process**

The DHR Process was centralised in April 2021 with a pooled budget for the cost of chairs.

2021/22: 8 DHRs                      2022/23: 7 DHRs                      2023/24: 5 DHRs

Of the DHRs referred in the last 21 months there were four suicides and one homicide, for one man and four women.

All DHRs published in the last year are listed on the DASV Partnership website, with links to the relevant CSP.

In 2023-24 Domestic Homicide Review Learning Events were held with South Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council and Peterborough City Council.

**2.7 Children’s refuge workers**

All contracts for refuge provision include a dedicated children’s worker in each refuge. During 2023-24, a total of 107 children were supported in refuge accommodation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

**2.8 Flexible funding**

Flexible funding provides support for survivors and their children to be safe and includes funding items such as white goods, carpets, housing arrears to enable moving to safer accommodation. In 2023-24, 108 survivors were supported via flexible funding by the IDVA service with additional flexible funding being provided through outreach support and refuges.

**2.9 Managed reciprocal housing scheme**

As part of *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safe Accommodation Strategies 2023/2*, the *Managed Reciprocals Scheme* offers survivors living in social housing a mechanism to move to another area of

Cambridgeshire, without making a homeless application, and without losing their existing tenure. In addition, they do not have to argue a case for local connection under 'special circumstances' on housing 'lists'. The Scheme can reduce disruption to the survivor, their family and their support services. They are moves outside of usual lettings policies and housing providers participate voluntarily as part of their commitment to assisting domestic abuse survivors in this area.

## 2.10 Mobile advocacy - Impakt Domestic Abuse Support Service

Impakt Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS) are commissioned to provide mobile advocacy (outreach) support to survivors of all gender identities and sexualities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as part of the Safe Accommodation Strategy 2023/24. They welcome self-referrals and also offer support to professionals. DASS supported 553 individuals in 2023-24 across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

## 2.11 Other outreach support

Cambridge Women's Aid and Peterborough Women's Aid have continued to support survivors in the community and supported 452 and 685 individuals respectively.

## 2.12 Peterborough Women's Aid

During the year Peterborough Women's Aid has continued to run several specialist services in Peterborough tailored around the needs of the community.

The Dahlia project was launched in July 2023. The aims of the Dahlia project are to:

- provide specialist support to victims of VAWG from the Asian community with independent translation services
- provide welfare provision and accommodation for those with no recourse to public funds
- increase awareness and specialist training to frontline services of the barriers victims from the Asian community face and how these barriers can be removed to enable effective support
- develop target awareness and messaging for those in these communities.

The Lithuanian Service which was driven by the disproportionate number of domestic homicide reviews in Peterborough with a female victim continues to be well needed. Specialist staff are working with women who have complex needs and support clients emotionally and practically.

*B-United* is a project supporting male victims of abuse across Cambridgeshire. This project launched in June 2023 and since then has received 186 referrals. *B-United* has its own website and referrals are being received from a number of partner agencies.

*E-scape, Supporting Children and Protecting through Education* is PWA's first project focusing on prevention. The *E-scape* project delivers the Healing Together programme in primary schools working with young people who have experienced trauma as victim of abuse. In secondary schools the DAY programme is delivered which is a unique multimedia programme that uses short films, advertisements and chart music to raise awareness and provide education about domestic abuse and exploitation in a relevant and exciting way. *E-scape* opened in April 2023

In January 2023 Peterborough Women's Aid opened Anne's House. This is a community space for women and children to get support. It is the first in the East of England and offers a lounge, internet café, prayer room, library, free shop and conference centre. Anne's House offers *Women Warriors*, which is a group where any women can attend, arts and crafts, and a housing legal drop in.

## 2.13 Housing IDVAs

As part of the *Safe Accommodation Strategies for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough*, there are a team of five (increased in 2023/24) Housing IDVAs. The Housing IDVA role is not that of a housing specialist but to offer a direct link and referral process for housing providers and housing teams to IDVA support for tenants/applicants in housing crisis due to domestic abuse. The Housing IDVAs accept referrals at any risk levels. Housing IDVAs are also regularly co-located in housing teams offices in Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire District Councils as well as Cambridge City Council, and have been able to use the office of Cross Keys Housing Association in Peterborough. Co-Location offers an opportunity for positive joined up working and knowledge sharing between Housing teams and the Housing IDVAs to achieve best outcomes for survivors experiencing a housing crisis due to domestic abuse. During 2023-24 the Housing IDVAs received 176 direct referrals as well as supporting clients referred into the IDVA service through other referral routes.

# Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Victim Services

## 2023-24 headline data

### Restorative Justice

Referrals received: 55  
Victims supported: 68

### CSPL Mind

Referrals received: 488  
Victims supported: 306

### Peterborough Women's Aid

Referrals received: 224  
Victims supported: 171

### Cambridgeshire Deaf Association

Referrals received: 17  
Victims supported: 16

### Serious Violence Non VAWG

Referrals received: 195  
Victims supported: 63

### The Meadows Children and Family Wing

Referrals received: 133  
Victims supported: 203

### Victim and Witness Hub

Referrals received: 14,505  
Victims supported: 6,533  
Victims exited support: 6,377  
Letters and emails sent: 17,510

### Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership

Referrals received: 1,120  
Self-referrals: 389  
Total victims supported: 1,956  
Victims under 18 years: 437

### Choices

Referrals received: 139  
Victims supported: 155

### Embrace Child Victims of Crime

Referrals received: 817  
Victims supported: 803

### Migrant Victims of Exploitation

Referrals received: 216  
Victims supported: 196

### Hourglass

Referrals received: 10  
Victims supported: 6

### One Voice 4 Travellers

Referrals received: 685  
Victims supported: 66

### Shrievalty Trust Bobby Scheme

Referrals received: 933  
Victims supported: 536

### Cambridge Women's Resource Centre

Referrals received: 933  
Victims supported: 536

### Local Authority IDVA Service

	Medium risk DA	Specialist IDVAs
Referrals received:	1,003	329
Victims supported:	608	438
Male victims supported:	63	22
Victims exited support:	301	240

20,295

**Total referrals to victim support services**

20,295  
from 2022-23

12,186

**Total victims supported**

12,186  
from 2022-23

## 2.14 Unpaid carers

As a result of some local DHR themes, in April 2023 a project was developed to look at the complexities around supporting unpaid carers who are subjected to domestic abuse from the person they are caring for. Professional guidance was developed in partnership with local carer support organisations and colleagues in Adult Social Care and online awareness sessions were delivered to professionals including Vulnerability Desk staff at Cambridgeshire Constabulary. This work is now being taken forward as part of the Cambridgeshire County Council Carers Strategy, which has identified domestic abuse as a priority, and the Partnership continues to be involved.

## 2.15 Shared Lives Domestic Abuse Project

This project, using the Shared Lives approach to support survivors with learning disabilities, continues with the first specialist carers being approved in early 2024. Placements have now commenced, and an interim evaluation is being undertaken.

# 3. Perpetrators are appropriately pursued and challenged

## 3.1 Domestic Abuse Perpetrator panel

The Perpetrator Panel is split across the North and South of the county and is held once a month for each area. The role of the Panel is to focus on those domestic abuse perpetrators where the case has been to MARAC and there are concerns about their ongoing abusive behaviours. Cases which are open to MAPPA will not be heard by the panel.

In 2023/24, 123 DA Perpetrators were discussed, with 85 new referrals. Only one was female and there were two male victims. Of the total cohort, 41 spent time in prison over the past 12 months. The increased focus on these individuals by services ensure that information is shared across agencies, and where there are orders or conditions in place, and these are breached in any way this is followed up closely. This panel is co-chaired by the DI responsible for Domestic Abuse and the DASV Partnership Manager. The panel has good representation from police, probation, IDVAs, drug and alcohol services and housing.

## 3.2 Probation Service Interventions

The Stepwise programme delivered by the National Probation Service reported that 30 perpetrators completed the programme in 2023/24. All 18 of the perpetrators who completed feedback at the end of the programme reported that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the following:

*"I have a greater understanding of why I need to change my behaviour to reduce risk to others."*

*"I understand more about the impact of DA on my partner and the wider family and how it can limit their freedoms and choices."*

*"The programme has helped me understand how my behaviour caused harm."*

*"The programme has given me skills to better manage conflict in the family and elsewhere."*

## 3.3 CARA (Cautioning and Relationship Abuse)

CARA is an early intervention for domestic abuse offenders who have received a Conditional Caution. The programme is delivered in partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary and the Hampton Trust. The CARA programme received a total of 146 referrals in 2023-24. This is an increase on previous years.

## 3.4 Multi-agency Stalking Intervention Programme

The multi-agency stalking project consists of a consultant psychologist, dedicated police officer and two specialist IDVAs. The team work closely with a constabulary solicitor and the Probation Service to manage the risks posed by the most high-risk perpetrators and to support victims and help to improve their safety and well-being.

In 2023-24 the team assessed 270 cases of stalking and the psychologist worked on a one to one basis with 20 of the most high-risk perpetrators, looking at their behaviours to reduce the risk they pose and the frequency and gravity of their actions.

## 3.5 Child to Parent Abuse Programmes

The *Family Respect* project has been delivered by YMCA Trinity Group since September 2021

through funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner and through collaboration with the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (DASV) partnership. The focus of the work is on addressing Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and to provide meaningful support to families at the right time.

The current funding period runs to the end of March 2026 because of the impactful work and significant savings to police resources alone. Support for the first two cohorts of families resulted in over £400k of savings to the police and over a 90% reduction in police calls.

YMCA Trinity Group deliver the *Respect Young Peoples Programme* (RYPP) resource which has been developed by Respect who have been a key partner in project implementation. The RYPP resource is a systemic tool which is delivered in a face-to-face setting with families across a period of around 13 weeks; sessions take place with the young person and the parents/carers as well as with other family members where this is appropriate. Referrals are open to families across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and young people should be aged between 10 and 16 years of age. Families must have sought support from the police to qualify for support.

The Family Respect team have been disseminating the knowledge and expertise which has been gained through the project lifecycle by briefing various teams across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. This has extended to speaking at several key conferences in relation to domestic abuse. Another new piece of work focuses on the delivery of training sessions in collaboration with Respect with the intention of upskilling practitioners in their understanding and identification of CAPVA.

Up until the end of March 2024, 259 referrals have been received by the project with a total of 19 referrals were received in the last quarter of 2023/24.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, a total of 17 families completed the full RYPP programme with other families starting the RYPP and disengaging before full completion.

## **4 Through a joint commissioning approach we will ensure all victims have access to appropriate and proportionate outcome-focused support**

### **4.1 IDVA Service**

The Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service received a total of 3505 referrals in 2023-24 which was a 10% increase on the previous year. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings are held three times a week to discuss high-risk victims of domestic abuse – in 2023-24, 946 cases were heard at MARAC.

### **IDVA case study**

**Victim:** Female age 36, no recourse to public funds.

**Situation:** The client was living with the perpetrator; she was pregnant and has one other child. The client disclosed an incident to her midwife who referred into the IDVA service via Health referral. At the initial meeting a DASH was completed, and the case was heard at MARAC on professional judgement of high risk which were that the client had now had her baby, the perpetrator behaviours had escalated, and she decided to leave go to her parents' home. During this time, the IDVA assisted her to make an application for settled status accessing the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession. This was initially rejected due to the length of time she had worked before taking maternity leave. This was then causing an issue for accommodation as she was not entitled to housing support.

IDVA linked in with Citizen's Advice Bureau who supported challenging the decision based on special circumstances, and the application was reviewed. When the client returned to the UK, IDVA provided dispersed accommodation for her and, several weeks later, she was granted settled status and was then entitled to claim benefits. As a result, she was able to apply for housing.

**The IDVA Service provided the following support:** Immigration support, MARAC, dispersed accommodation, foodbank, flex funding for essential items, advocacy with professionals, child arrangement guidance, emotional support, CPSL MIND support, housing support with local authority, DASH, and safety planning.

**Outcome:** Application made for housing, supporting with bidding process and hoping to find permanent accommodation soon.

- IDVA Service responding to notifications of medium risk DA crimes. Since June 2022 the IDVA Service have received these referrals from the police in addition to high-risk referrals. This allows for earlier intervention before risks have escalated. IDVA support is offered and for a number of clients only a short intervention is required. Safety planning is given and IDVAs will ensure clients know where to access support in the future, should they need it. In 2023/24 there were just over 1000 medium risk referrals.
- Specialist IDVAs work with victims from A8 Eastern European communities, in 2023-24 the A8 IDVAs across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough received 271 referrals.

## A8 IDVA case study

Client lived with her ex-husband (perpetrator) who she was recently divorced from and has two children: a 6-year-old son and 1.5 months baby girl. Her ex-husband was trying to force her out of the house in every possible way and had cameras installed in the front, back and the kitchen so he could monitor everything she did when he was not at home. The perpetrator had locked most rooms in the house and kept the key so the client only had access to her bedroom and the kitchen/bathroom in her home and perpetrator wouldn't give access to other rooms.

She tried to turn cameras off, but the perpetrator would show up at the address quickly when she did this. The client had no keys for the house, the house was always locked. The perpetrator was very controlling over food - everything had to be perfect and the client was expected to have everything prepared for the evening meal before leaving the house. The client is not allowed to answer the phone and no one is allowed to call her.

The perpetrator was saying bad things about the client to their 6-year-old son, and the client felt he was trying to turn her son against her by brainwashing him. The perpetrator was manipulative and controlling and things were getting worse with every single day that went by. The victim felt that she had no help and support and nobody to talk to or believe her story. The perpetrator would sometimes speak to the client through the 6-year-old son, and she felt that he was using the son as a weapon. He limited her access to her son, and said that the son was his and their daughter was hers. He also started accusing the client of neglecting the son. The perpetrator was taking their son to sleep with him and was stopping the son from seeing the client when he returned from school and took him straight to his bedroom where their son would spend most of his days away from the client and his little sister. If their son had done something wrong the perpetrator would emotionally be abusive to him. The client wanted the children to be together and felt her son was being controlled by fear. She said the perpetrator didn't know how to play with the children and would leave their son behind when he went out and that was frightening for the client, so she wanted to remain in the property to make sure her son was ok at all times.

She was working two days a week - she had to ask permission from the perpetrator to attend work-related training a month ahead of time and he would only agree if it was on her normal working days - he would not be at all flexible - even when ill. When she had a hairdressing appointment the perpetrator showed up even though she did not tell him where she was.

She was satisfied that the phone was secure but couldn't speak in the house as cameras were everywhere. She was also satisfied that her emails were secure.

Client wanted to end the relationship and escape, but felt she was let down by authorities when she reported the incidents and the perpetrator was never punished for the abuse. She believed that there was no way out and she was continuing in this relationship for the sake of the children to be close to her son and monitor him from the perpetrator.

**Support provided by IDVA Service:** Housing support, safety planning for escape from the family home, financial support with white goods and other furniture, flexible funding and target hardening, support with finances, support around safeguarding and liaising with school re children, support in court re Non-Molestation Order and continued support with the child arrangements order. Client also accepted referral to the Freedom Programme and to Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Mind support for her wellbeing.

**Outcome:** The client fled her family home and took her children with her to a safe place. She moved to a new property provided by the council and received appropriate support. She stopped the child contact

with the perpetrator until the court case and the children were not allowed to see the perpetrator for a few months other than supervised visits until the CAFCASS report was finalised. The client said her wellbeing has improved. She feels safe and free from mental abuse and is concentrating on her children. She is engaging in support provided to improve her confidence and mental health and is pleased with how things are progressing.

## **4.2 Refuge provision across the county**

Cambridgeshire County Council commissions four refuges across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. During 2023-24 the refuges housed a total of 95 women and 107 children.

### **4.2.1 Cambridge Women's Aid**

Cambridge Women's Aid offers a high standard of modern refuge accommodation to women who are at risk of harm due to domestic abuse and are in need of safe and supported accommodation. All women are assigned a Refuge Support Worker on arrival, who helps them settle into the refuge, explore their options, identify their needs and work through a support plan. Women are supported with a wide range of needs, including: accessing basic necessities such as food, clothes and money; claiming the correct benefits; information on legal rights; accessing childcare and enrolling children in school; exploring housing options; keeping safe; and creating a plan for the future. A lot of effort goes into making services as accessible as possible for women with multiple barriers to seeking support: for example, through a designated Access Fund; providing interpreters for non-English speakers; and helping women with NRPF to apply for the destitution domestic violence concession. Highly trained specialist workers regularly develop and strengthen their knowledge through training and good links with other specialist organisations, in order to advise, support and refer women effectively according to their needs and circumstances.

*"Thank you to all the staff who have supported me whilst living here. Everybody is just so lovely I am truly very grateful to you all! Thank you for helping me to see that I can have a better life and future! Thank you so very much for keeping me safe!!"*

*- former refuge resident*

While in refuge, residents can take part in group work led by their interests, for example on topics such as: good relationships, women's health and wellbeing, housing, and family law. CWA receive lots of community support and donations to benefit residents, including: regular fresh fruit and vegetables for families living in the refuge, and donations of Christmas and birthday presents, vouchers and trips out thanks to the unwavering support of the fantastic local community.

CWA offer a dedicated family support and children's service in the refuge, to keep children safe and to strengthen their family. The support includes settling the children into refuge, accessing health services, support into school or nursery, access to community services as well as the provision of play activities, emotional support and family outings. The children's team work hard to put on a packed programme of activities, such as: daily play sessions in the art room; a baby group; fun activities with student volunteers; parties for Eid, Christmas, Hallowe'en and Easter; and holiday activities like trips to the park, cinema outings, bowling, summer camps, sport, group games, cooking and swimming.

When families leave the refuge for their new home, staff continue to offer resettlement support, such as: help with moving; getting furniture and essentials, including carpets which can be a great expense for a family; help with managing the responsibilities of a household; receiving correct benefits and entitlements; staying safe; and being a listening ear. The continuous care women receive through the resettlement project helps women and children to remain safe and rebuild their lives.

### **4.2.2 Peterborough Women's Aid**

Peterborough Women's Aid continue to offer safe accommodation in the form of a refuge which accommodates eight families and has a specialist provision for children and young people.

### **4.2.3 Refuge**

Refuge provide two refuges in Cambridgeshire for women and their children fleeing domestic abuse.

Quotes from women in Refuge refuges:

*"I have my mojo back since coming into Refuge."*

*"You, (Refuge) saved my life."*

*"I can relax. I no longer have to watch my back."*

*"You were there when I needed you."*

*"I am so grateful for everything you all have done for me. If you hadn't taken me in, I honestly would be dead by now and I will never forget that you saved my life. I'm starting to feel like myself again, it's been such a long time since I had the confidence to be myself and let my personality come through. I was ground down for so long I had forgotten who I was deep down and I'm enjoying life again and have so much to look forward to when I move into my new flat. I can't wait, it's going to be great."*

Refuge also run the Own My Life programme for survivors - here are some quotes from women who have participated in Own My Life:

*"Thank you for all of your help the past six months you have taught me a lot of things especially during the Own My Life course!"*

*"In Own My Life I learned I was not being unrealistic or selfish in wanting a partner that would love and support me and be kind"*

*"The last six months have been a journey for me, but I have overcome that journey and have become more confident within myself. I appreciate your help."*

*"I thought that I wouldn't enjoy this programme, but it is so lovely being with other women and understanding that it wasn't my fault."*

*"I am going to use those questions for myself in the 'moving on bit' - it will remind me not to make quick decisions."*

*"It was difficult hearing some of the words and talking about 'what was done'. I didn't feel pressured to talk about myself."*

*"Lovely to have the journal so I could concentrate."*

### 4.3 Specialist support to victims of crime

The Victim and Witness Hub offers support to all victims of crime, including standard risk domestic abuse. During 2023-24, the Hub supported 864 victims of domestic abuse.

#### Case study

Female (63 years old) contacted the Hub following domestic abuse from her now ex-husband. She became very emotional throughout the call and said she is unsure how long she can go on for and feels she has reached a dead end because no one seems to be helping/listening. She said her ex-husband left her to deal with everything on her own, i.e. mortgage, which she cannot pay for and explained he's not paying towards the mortgage which left her in a lot of debt and she cannot afford a solicitor. She suffers with severe depression and anxiety and advised she was in a crisis recently and had to call the police who signposted her to 111 option 2 but they didn't answer.

The specialist call handler encouraged the caller to contact her local Citizens Advice Bureau for support around financial issues. She said she already tried to call but no one is answering so the call handler empowered the caller to continue trying and perhaps send an email too.

She was also strongly encouraged to keep calling 111 option 2 if requiring immediate support as well as the police and provided with the details of local services including the Freedom Programme, Rights of Women Family Law Advice, National Domestic Abuse Helpline. She was also signposted to Anglia Ruskin University's Law Clinic.

The call said she was very thankful for the time and was reassured that she is doing very well, to continue pushing and have hope as there **are** people/services out there that care and will listen. The call handler reassured the caller that this isn't her fault and she's very strong by doing the right thing to leave. She's come out the other side and she is trying her best to reach out.

The call was followed up with welfare check-in call the next week.

#### 4.4 A range of online support offered

The DASV Partnership website provides information for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, their family and friends, and professionals. The site includes information on local services, specialist support for survivors with disabilities and speakers of other languages as well as sections on bystander interventions. The professionals section includes basic awareness online learning modules as well as guidance for specific groups of professionals. The Cambs Victims Services website also offers advice and guidance and links to local specialist support.

#### 4.5 Dispersed accommodation

As part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safe Accommodation strategies 2023/24, there are now nine units of dispersed safe accommodation across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough: two in Peterborough and seven in Cambridgeshire. These properties are provided in conjunction with other Domestic and Housing providers: SADA (Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse), DASS/IMPAKT and PlacesforPeople. The properties are fully furnished and dressed, allowing survivors to move into the properties with minimal possessions. They offer survivors thinking time to consider housing options and provide temporary accommodation with trauma informed domestic abuse focused housing support, through Housing IDVAs. They can provide a housing option to those survivors where they are unable to or there are barriers to accessing refuge and/or local authority temporary accommodation for reason such as: size of family, age of children, NRPF, pets, disabilities, gender, and sexuality. For larger families where the availability of suitable permanent housing is scarce, therefore longer periods in temporary accommodation, they offer properties that can feel more like home. 10 women and 28 children were supported in Cambridgeshire, three women and seven children supported in Peterborough.

#### 4.6 Counselling for children who have experienced domestic abuse

This service is provided by Embrace Child Victims of Crime who are commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. In 2023 - 24 they supported 177 children and young people. As at 31st March, 146 had completed work and breakdown of outcomes was as follows:

Number of victims who reported they had coped and built resilience to move forward with daily life	133
Number of victims who reported feeling more informed (improved sense of empowerment)	137
Number of victims who reported improved health and well-being	132
Number of victims who reported increased feelings of safety	132

### Case study from Embrace

**Victim:** Female Child aged 10 and Male Child aged 7

**Situation:** Siblings 'A' and 'B' fled domestic abuse perpetrated by their father towards their mother. Fled to Peterborough in August 2022 due to physical and emotional abuse along with coercive and controlling behaviour. Family was also experiencing ongoing harassment from the perpetrator despite bail conditions being in place. In December 2023 the perpetrator made a hoax call to Police stating mother had murdered the children. The accommodation where mum and children were staying was stormed by five police officers, causing further trauma.

Experience of domestic abuse and recent incident had left both children very scared, unsettled and struggling to cope. Both children were displaying signs of high anxiety, being unable to eat properly, struggling to sleep, feeling unsafe and panicky and experiencing episodes of anger.

Vouchers from Alfies Hardship Fund were provided due to mum struggling financially

**What support did your service provide:** Both children have been engaged well with counsellors to support them with their needs and outcomes have demonstrated that as the sessions have progressed their outcomes have improved with a reduction in anxiety and an improvement in their ability to cope.

Both children had 10 sessions of trauma informed counselling on a weekly basis.

The children have also benefited from receiving items from the Embrace Toybank and Supermarket

**What was the outcome:** Improved ability to cope and feelings of safety, knowing they can reach out for help. The whole family have also been supported through practical funding and the Embrace toybank so they are feeling overall much more secure and settled both physically and emotionally.

#### **4.6.1 Support for children: Acorn Project**

The *Acorn Project*, supporting children and families that have experienced trauma and abuse in Cambridgeshire, supported 189 children and 31 adults who have been subjected to domestic abuse. The project records topics/issues discussed at drop-in meetings and in 2023/24 they recorded the frequency domestic abuse was discussed at drop-in meetings:

- Huntingdonshire: 58% of all meetings
- City: 58% of all meetings
- East Cambridgeshire: 42% of all meetings

#### **4.7 Specialist Victim and Witness Care Co-ordinators**

Working within Embrace Child Victims of Crime, 315 young victims of crime were supported in 2023-24. In formal feedback 274 young people said the support enabled them to cope and build resilience to move forward with their daily life and to have increased feelings of safety.

## **5. Sexual Violence**

### **5.1 Working to prevent people becoming offenders of sexual violence and reducing victimisation by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it**

#### **5.1.1 Communication and awareness raising**

Campaigns and materials are co-ordinated by DASV Partnership and supported by all agencies including specialist support posts at local universities. The Sexual Violence elearning module was completely revised and re-written in March 2024. In February 2024 messages were shared on social media around Sexual Violence Awareness Week which were coordinated with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership and the Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

#### **5.1.2 Safer Streets campaign work and interventions**

Safer Streets funding delivered initiatives to help improve feelings of safety for everyone within the community, in particular women and girls' feelings of safety in public spaces and the night-time economy. Projects included the expansion of the Businesses Against Abuse scheme as well as Open Space Guardians, Street Chaplains and Taxi Marshals in key areas such as city centres. Funding also enabled the Sexual programme to be delivered to more schools, helping to improve feelings of safety and promote equal relationships to help prevent violence in dating and intimate partner relationships in young people.

## **6. Promoting the safety and protection of victims and survivors.**

### **6.1 The Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)**

The Elms SARC is commissioned by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and provided by Mountain Healthcare. The SARC offers self-referral, forensics, Duty ISVA and counselling for victims. In 2023-24, the SARC received 225 referrals for adults and 102 referrals for children. Survivors receive equitable service whether they choose to report to police or other agencies or not.

### **6.2 Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership**

This is a joint partnership between Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre and Peterborough Rape Crisis Care Group commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide a range of services including, a confidential anonymous telephone helpline, email support service, Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy Service and Children and Young Peoples Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy Service. Survivors receive equitable service whether they report to police or other agencies or not.

<b>2023-24 data</b> Total number of unique individuals	Adult (age 18 years and over)	Young person (age between 13 - 17 years)	Children (age 12 years and under)
Female	1,408	312	78
Male	82	7	25
Transgender	8	9	0
Non-binary	21	6	0
Intersex	0	0	0
Not stated	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,519</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>103</b>

<b>2023-24 data</b> Total number of unique individuals receiving face-to-face in-person and online support (existing and new) This can include, but is not exclusive to, ISVA services, therapy and counselling	Adult (age 18 years and over)	Young person (age between 13 - 17 years)	Children (age 12 years and under)
Female	1,222	309	77
Male	82	7	25
Transgender	7	9	0
Non-binary	21	6	0
Intersex	0	0	0
Not stated	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,332</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>102</b>

<b>2023-24 data</b> Total number of unique individuals requiring assistance from a helpline or online webchat service. This includes individuals who choose to interact through a helpline or online webchat service (not including ISVA services, therapy and counselling).	Adult (age 18 years and over)	Young person (age between 13 - 17 years)	Children (age 12 years and under)
Female	186	3	1
Male	0	0	0
Transgender	1	0	0
Non-binary	0	0	0
Intersex	0	0	0
Not stated	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

### 6.3 Talking Therapies

The *Talking Therapies* service for children, young people and adults who have accessed SARC services is provided by Trauma Recovery. In 2023-24 they received 135 referrals.

## 6.4 Schools and education settings

Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership have worked with schools, colleges and universities on improving their responses to incidents of sexual violence affecting children and young people in education settings, developing zero tolerance policies to sexual harassment, developing reporting mechanisms and support structures. They also delivered a countywide Schools Conference in partnership with County Education Safeguarding Team on tackling sexual violence in schools that was attended by 180 people from primary and secondary schools, academies and independent schools and sixth form colleges.

## 6.5 Guides and fact sheets for victims

In addition to a bank of existing resources for survivors and their supporters this year the Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership have produced a 'Learning to Love Your Body Guide' - supporting survivors to reconnect to their bodies after the trauma of sexual violence and to feel more comfortable to be in their own skin again. The guide includes thoughtful insights into relaxation techniques, fostering mind-body harmony, promoting restful sleep, nurturing intimate connections, and nutrition. They also developed two other guides one on *Making Sense of Trauma* that helps survivors to understand what they are feeling and to normalise their responses to trauma, and a guide on *Understanding Sex and Consent*.

CAPRCP also developed a *Getting to Know You* guide for children and young people who are being supported by a Children and Young Peoples Advocate (ChISVA). The *Getting to Know You* guides support children and young people to better understand the role of the ChISVA as well as space for them to express their likes, dislikes, preferred ways of communicating and their favourite things and people.

## 6.6 Training

The Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership continues to offer training to other agencies, organisations and professionals to increase their understanding of and responses to sexual violence; its causes, consequences and impacts on survivors. Examples of training delivered in the reporting period include:

- *Tackling Sexual Harassment Symposium* at Homerton College, Cambridge
- training sessions delivered to GPs on understanding sexual violence and supporting survivors
- Anglia Ruskin University researcher webinar series: *Sexual Harm Research and the role of Rape Crisis*
- Cambridge City Council training for Councillors on misogyny
- delivering a workshop on the power of peer support at the annual Cambridge Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Conference
- delivering the *Businesses Against Abuse Accredited Training Programme* in partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

## 6.7 Community Inclusion ISVA (Specialist client-based ISVAs supporting Black and racially minoritised and male survivors)

To ensure the accessibility of services, CAPRCP developed a range of core service information that was translated into local community languages. This included *ISVA Service Guide*, *ISVA Support Agreement*, *ChISVA Support Agreement* and *Self-Help Guide for Survivors* that were translated into:

- Arabic
- Thia
- Hindi
- Urdu
- Polish
- Chinese/Mandarin

In addition, community outreach work has included:

- positive engagement with community forums and invitations to events, for example invitation to have a stall at the Women's Health and Well-being event at the Cambridge Central Mosque
- joining women's associations with 5000+ members predominately Asian heritage women
- engagement with Compass and PARCA to build better links with the Eastern European communities.

## **6.8 Communication and awareness raising on social media by the SARC**

The Sexual Assault Referral Centre held four open days for professionals during this period that have been well attended and received positive feedback. They also delivered training to partner agencies to raise awareness and attended a number of events along with raising awareness through social media channels (Facebook, X and Instagram).

## **7 Perpetrators are appropriately pursued and challenged**

Cambridgeshire Constabulary continue to monitor Registered Sex Offenders closely through the MOSOVO (Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders) team. The Constabulary continues to proactively target people who commit offences online and in person and as a result, the number of newly registered sexual offenders continues to grow annually by around 4%. Almost all of these offenders will be issued with a prohibitive order upon conviction – these include Sexual Harm Preventative Orders (SHPO) and Sexual Risk Orders (SRO). Such orders prohibit the offender from engaging in certain behaviours and breaches of orders are punishable by imprisonment. The MOSOVO team form part of a wider group of partners who continually manage risk within the community and will work with Probation, the prison service and the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) to protect the public from harm.

## **8. Ensuring all victims and survivors have access to appropriate and proportionate outcome-focused jointly commissioned support**

### **8.1 SARAC meetings to discuss high-risk victims of sexual violence**

Sexual Assault Risk Assessment Conference (SARAC) meets as required to discuss cases where there is a significant risk of repeat victimisation and the victim is not being supported by other methods (such as MARAC). The SARAC meeting considers all the key risks to the survivor, hears current information held by attending partners and through discussion will agree a safety plan aimed at managing harm and threats.

## **9. Plans for 2024 onwards:**

- a new Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy has been agreed to cover 2024-2027. An associated action plan, with key leads identified from each partner agency, will be developed to sit alongside the strategy.
- recommissioning of services within the future funding envelope
- refresh of the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Safe Lives Review of MARAC
- roll out of DARA (Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment) across Cambridgeshire Police
- development of co-production work with survivors.