

Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Newsletter A monthly newsletter brought to you by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership

December 2023

Hi All

We are grateful to Peterborough City Council's Communications Team who have created our first ever Christmas campaign video! Look out for it on our social media over the next couple of weeks or share it on your social media Domestic Abuse Support This Christmas | Peterborough City Council - YouTube. All the actors are members of the comms team, and what an amazing job!

The 16 Days of Action began with a Flag Raising and Reception at the Mayors Office in Peterborough Town Hall and there were a number of events, including the conference in Cambridge (see page 11 for more on this), DHR Learning events in Fenland, South Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and showings of the "Rattlesnake" Film which was incredibly powerful and thought provoking.

In January, the DASV Champions sessions have speakers from the Deaf Association and Refuge, speaking about Deaf Survivors of Domestic Abuse and Tech Abuse respectively. If you are not yet signed up as a champion, please get on board by visiting Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - DASV Champions (cambsdasv.org.uk)

Finally, A series of new posters have been developed by DASS to encourage survivors across the county to seek support. The new posters reflect the fear that abusive behaviours cause by highlighting sounds that often precede abuse. The new posters were shared with survivor groups who fed back that they reflect their own experiences well and would encourage people to seek help.

The posters are available to download from our website at Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - Posters for free download (cambsdasv.org.uk)

If professionals would like hard copies, please contact DASSreferrals@impakt.org.uk to request them.

Have a safe and relaxing Christmas and New Year, and we look forward to working with you all in 2024. Thanks for everything you have done this year to reduce the harm of domestic abuse, we will only make a difference if we all work together.

Víckie & Julia

Vickie Crompton & Julia Cullum DASV Partnership Managers





Free mental health text message support

A new mental health free text messaging support service has launched in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to help those who are struggling to cope.

Launched by NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and in partnership with the national service SHOUT, the free to use text service HEAR 85258 provides real-time support to people of all ages who are struggling with their mental health. When texting the word HEAR to 85258, the person will be connected to a trained volunteer who will take them from a place of crisis to a place of calm. During the confidential and anonymous conversation, the texter will be supported and signposted to local and national mental health services.

Texting HEAR to 85258 is free, discreet and runs 24/7. It won't appear on any bills and requires no app, data, password, or registration. It is available for anybody who lives, works, or studies in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Unpaid Carers & Domestic Abuse – new elearning module

Following several Domestic Homicide Reviews in the county involving a caring relationship, a multi-agency project has been running for the last six months to look into some of the issues and lead on improvements. Professional awareness raising is a key part of the project and, following delivery of awareness sessions to DASV Champions earlier this year, a SWAY has been developed by the DASV Partnership with input from carer support organisations and partner agencies.

The SWAY (online elearning presentation) explains some of the complexities around domestic abuse when there is a carer/cared-for relationships and offers guidance for professionals on supporting survivors and reducing risk.

Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - Domestic Abuse Awareness (cambsdasv.org.uk)

News from the Police and Crime Commissioner

Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston has secured £1m from the Home Office to fund a raft of improvement projects to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour including safety training for day/night-time economy workers and taxi drivers to identify predatory behaviour, specialist posts to root out nuisance behaviour,

New figures from Cambridgeshire Constabulary have evidenced the effectiveness of the Respect Young People's Programme, an intervention designed to address child and adolescent to parent violence and abuse (known as CAPVA). In Cambridgeshire, the programme is funded by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston and delivered by YMCA Trinity. Based on delivery in Cambridgeshire, for every £1 invested in CAPVA, up to £8.30 in police resources could be saved if similar families engaged - which doesn't account for further savings made by other public sector organisations as a result of the programme – the pilot also showed significant reduction in truancy from school. The programme also saw a 94% reduction in police callouts for the cohort of families engaged with the programme.

New guidance on Counter Allegations

Counter allegations, where both parties allege abuse, are a common challenge for professionals encountering domestic abuse. Prevailing misconceptions about the nature of domestic abuse and counter allegations can result in increased risk for victims and children. For example, victims may be unable to access services, risking further isolation and victimisation. They may even lose care of their children and suffer psychological impact from not being believed. Concerningly, if such cases are not identified and resolved properly, agencies' actions may inadvertently help the perpetrator to isolate and control the victim further.

SafeLives' guidance explores the different ways in which counter allegations present and describes how multi-agency professionals can work together to confidently identify perpetrators and support victims. While pertinent for frontline professionals involved in Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (Marac), the guidance is designed to support all professionals in a position to identify domestic abuse as part of their role.

The guidance also challenges the continued use of judgmental language and attitudes towards domestic abuse. This includes the narrative that parties in these cases 'are both as bad as each other'. By addressing these issues professionals are supported to correctly establish who the primary victim and primary perpetrator are, as early as possible.

You can find the full guidance here: "Responding to Counter allegations: Guidance - A review of practice"

Cats Protection Lifeline

Cat's Protection Paws Project has now been re-named Lifeline and has relaunched with a new short film. Lifeline is a free and confidential fostering service for cats whose families are fleeing domestic abuse so they can rest assured their cat will be taken care of until they can be safely reunited. Cat's Protection work closely with the Dog's Trust Freedom Project.

The new video is available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/rbJzjDbbff4

Contacts: Lifeline | Cats Protection

Freedom Project | Dog Fostering Support | Dogs Trust

New guidance for writing IMRs

When a person is murdered, or takes their own life, in the context of domestic violence or abuse, a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is usually carried out. The responsibility for DHR's sits with the relevant district Community Safety Partnership (part of the District Council). The DASV Partnership coordinates the DHR process in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to ensure quality and consistency.

If you are asked to be part of a DHR Panel, you may be asked to write an Independent Management Review of your agency's involvement with the victim or abuser. To assist in this process, we have added guidance for professionals who are asked to write an IMR for a Domestic Homicide Review to our website.

The guidance can be accessed at Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - Domestic Homicide Reviews (cambsdasv.org.uk)

DHR Summaries to improve learning

As part of our work to ensure learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews is shared with local partners and other agencies, we have held some events during December to help embed the knowledge and learning from local DHRs. We now have summaries of all published DHRs on our website that highlight the key themes and explain how actions have been taken forward to improve responses to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The summaries can be found at: Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - DHR Summaries (cambsdasv.org.uk)

Commissioner praises new service supporting male survivors of domestic abuse and violence

POLICE and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston has praised the impact of a unique service supporting male victims of violence as the UK marks International Men's Day. Since launching in June this year, B-United has received 75 referrals – 36 of which were in October alone. The service, managed by Peterborough Women's Aid, provides emotional and practical support to male victims of domestic abuse and violence across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and Fenland.

In its first six months, the service has seen significant month-on-month increases in referrals. Funded by the PCC until March 2025, B-United is one of very few dedicated male domestic abuse support services in the country, offering a full-time Male Specialist Community Worker to provide ongoing support to victims.

The Commissioner has reached out to male victims in Cambridgeshire to remind them they are not alone, and that specialist help is available. Darryl said: "I am proud to fund this specialist service for male victims of violence and abuse. This project is unique and expands support beyond the boundaries of helplines, enabling male victims in Cambridgeshire to receive help from a dedicated key worker who understands their trauma and is trained to respond. We know that male violence and abuse is often not reported, with as many as half of all victims suffering in silence. Many of those men who have already received support through B-United admitted they didn't think they would be believed, and it has been reassuring for them to have access to the same support worker, continuously. I want every victim of sexual abuse or sexual violence to know that we care deeply about what they have gone through and will do everything possible to help them move on." Mandy Geraghty, Chief Executive of Peterborough Women's Aid, said: "Demand for this service is increasing. Since we started, we've received 75 referrals and 36 of these were in October alone. We have supported men from all cultural, professional and educational backgrounds – violence doesn't discriminate. The more we raise awareness of the project, the more referrals we receive. Traditionally, support provided to male victims of abuse has been via helplines or from within existing domestic abuse services. This project is unique in the sense that help is provided is faceto-face and through a dedicated key worker. This means the survivor returns to the same person week after week and doesn't have to retraumatise themselves by sharing their story with multiple professionals, multiple times.

Alongside the B-United service, the PCC has also commissioned Peterborough Rape Crisis Care Group (PRCCG) to provide specialist support for male victims of sexual violence. This is one element of a countywide support service for victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence cofunded with the local authority and NHS England.

New film highlights sharing of intimate photographs

Trafford Domestic Abuse Services have released a short form aimed at raising awareness of sharing intimate images without consent. "Too Far"was made in Collaboration with young people to explore issues they are seeing such as consent, peer pressure, objectification, trust and isolation.

You can watch the film at Too Far - YouTube

New animation highlights older survivors of domestic abuse

The Dewis Choice Project in Wales have teamed up with the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board to develop a short animation highlighting some of the particular issues experienced by older people who are subjected to domestic abuse.

The short film can be viewed at Hidden Harms (English) - YouTube

SARC Open Days 2024

After some very successful events in 2023, The Elms Sexual Assault Referral Centre have announced details of open days for 2024. These give professionals the chance to visit the Elms and see how a SARC works and how they support survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

The links to book are below, please note these events are for professionals only.

Feb 2nd – The Elms SARC open day Tickets, Fri 2 Feb 2024 at 10:00 | Eventbrite

April 12th - The Elms SARC open day Tickets, Fri 12 Apr 2024 at 10:00 | Eventbrite

July 5th - The Elms SARC open day Tickets, Fri 5 Jul 2024 at 10:00 | Eventbrite

Sept 13th - The Elms SARC open day Tickets, Fri 13 Sep 2024 at 10:00 | Eventbrite

Embrace Therapeutic Counselling for Children Affected by Domestic Abuse

Due to exceptionally high demand for Embrace support provision this year, we are now no longer able to accept new referrals from schools for our therapeutic support, as our Local authority funding capacity has now been reached.

Please visit the Cambridgeshire victim services website for details of alternative support services at https://www.cambsvictimservices.co.uk/

If you have children that you feel need Embrace therapeutic support our services may also be independently commissioned on an individual basis by your school. Please contact jenny.raine@embracecvoc.org.uk for further details and fees.

If a child you hoped to refer (or their family) is open to other professionals, such as a social worker or IDVA, they may still be able to refer for appropriate support.

Consultation on definition of Child to Parent Abuse

The Government are seeking views on the definition to Child to Parent Abuse, which will apply to children aged under 16.

The key aims of an agreed definition are:

- to establish a common language around CPA
- to support identification by frontline professionals and parents and caregivers of this type of abuse, in order to make it easier to seek and offer support

This consultation seeks views on both the headline terminology for, and descriptors of, CPA which will together make up the definition. The definition will be agreed first then used as the basis for the guidance for frontline professionals which will follow. The guidance will provide an opportunity to provide further detail on the definition and consider some of the complex issues surrounding this type of abuse, for example the challenges faced by a child or their special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

This consultation will be open for 10 weeks, closing on 7 February 2024, and can be found at Defining child to parent abuse - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Family Respect Project - News on Referral Pathway

The current referral process only allows the police to refer to The Family Respect project when the police attend an incident at a family home relating to Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA).

For a limited period, we are opening an additional referral pathway - specifically for <u>Early Help</u> services. This additional referral process will enable family workers from the Early Help Service to make referrals.

This additional pathway will be in place to the end of March 2023.

To make a referral by this new pathway, the following criteria must be met:

- ✓ Family must have had police contact in the last three months (2 or more incidents).
- ✓ Family must consent to us obtaining information about the incidents from the police.

If the above criteria are met, please follow the steps below:

- Request a telephone call or online meeting to discuss a potential referral with us. You can
 do this by contacting us via familyrespect@ymcatrinity.org.uk.
- If the referral is accepted, we will provide you with a link to complete a referral.

New Women's Self Defence class in Yaxley

A free women's self-defence class takes place every Friday between 6pm – 7pm at Thrive Jiu Jitsu Academy, 6, Nene Court, Enterprise Way, Enterprise Park, Yaxley, Peterborough PE7 3TJ.

The instructor of the class is named Naomi. She is a highly experienced martial artist who is a purple belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

The intention of the class is to teach women situation awareness, how to defend themselves, what to do if someone grabs you, if you are taken to the ground and how to fight that person off and get yourself to safety. She wants the class to be a safe space for women. There will be no men present at the class and no photography.

Ladies who attend do not need a 'uniform'. However, Naomi advises to wear a top and leggings or whatever is comfortable. The class is accessible for any lady aged 13 or above.

There is a limit to the number of spaces available in the class, so anyone interested will need to contact Naomi to reserve a place.

If you have any questions, please email naomi@trainprogressthrive.co.uk for further information.

You can also visit their website at https://trainprogressthrive.co.uk



Sibling Sexual Behaviour resource

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse has recently produced a number of practice resources. One of these practice resources is: CSA Sibling sexual behaviour: A guide to responding to inappropriate, problematic and abusive behaviour Sibling sexual behaviour: A guide to responding to inappropriate, problematic and abusive behaviour (csacentre.org.uk)

Sibling relationships are complex, and their influence on development and psychosocial functioning can be significant and complex. Sibling relationships are also likely to involve complex power dynamics that are influenced by a range of gender and cultural differences. Aim of the publication: The aim of the recently published guide is to help professionals navigate important decisions at different stages of a case where there are concerns about sexual behaviour involving siblings. This newly published resource CSA Sibling sexual behaviour: A guide to responding to inappropriate, problematic and abusive behaviour should not be viewed as a standalone document. It is meant to be read alongside CSA Centre's Sibling Sexual Abuse: A Knowledge and Practice Overview, published in January 2021. Part A of the guide covers the identification and understanding of sibling sexual behaviour, presenting it as a continuum from developmentally appropriate to abusive behaviours. Part B of the guide covers professional responses to sibling sexual behaviour and provides details on best practice responses to inappropriate, problematic and abusive sibling sexual behaviour.

Concerns about access to NHS Medical Records

Twenty-three organisations have publicly raised concerns that patients' new right to have access to their NHS medical records could put domestic abuse survivors at greater risk.

The main fear is perpetrators may obtain the data by coercing their victim to share access to the website or app. Refuge, one of the organisations which has raised the concerns, described that as perpetrators weaponising information for abuse. The charity's interim CEO Ellen Miller said: "Our message to survivors is simple: call your GP surgery and ask that access to your records be switched off, so that they cannot be viewed in the app."

Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, chair of the British Medical Association's GP Committee for England, is concerned for some categories of patients. "This could be a woman who tells her abusive partner she has a GP appointment when in fact she is seeking support with her domestic situation, a parent whose abusive spouse may use sensitive clinical information to undermine legal cases of custody of dependents in the family courts, patients requesting covert contraception forbidden in their home or relationship, or those disclosing abuse from others who may have access to their smartphone," she said.

Other organisations raising concerns include Surviving Economic Abuse, the Independent Domestic Abuse Services, Respect, Women's Aid, SafeLives and the Centre for Women's Justice.

An NHS England spokesperson said it takes patient safety seriously and worked with organisations representing survivors of domestic abuse over the last 18 months to develop guidance for GP practices to ensure patients can decline access to the information.

The Royal College of GPs has produced a toolkit that includes a section on managing safeguarding issues in relation to online access GP online services toolkit: Working with online record access - the challenges | Home (rcqp.org.uk)

Assessing data protection practices of UK tracing agents

Concerns were raised earlier this year about perpetrators' uses of a 'tracing agents' to track down survivors of domestic abuse. In one case a perpetrator managed to trace the survivor to the refuge they were staying at.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) carried out some enquiries which did not reveal evidence where tracing agents had been involved with the sharing of victims' details. However, the ICO has highlighted that abusers are turning to readily available and affordable technology themselves to trace ex-partners. This includes inserting air tags into cuddly toys given to children at supervised visits, as well as tracking victims via smart phones and watches and through searches on social media profiles. The ICO have written a blog about their findings, including recommendations for the tracing agent sector. Read more in this blog

Preventing DA related deaths of Black and Minoritised Women

A partnership project between Imkaan and the Centre for Women's Justice has resulted in new research around preventing domestic homicides and suicides of black and minoritised women. The research analysed 44 deaths and the report makes 14 recommendations for improvement which include:

- National policing bodies to identify the intersection between gender and race as it affects
 victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and set out plans for how police forces should
 ensure that their work on 'race/ethnicity' addresses the issues raised in this research.
- Public bodies should develop and deliver trauma informed training for all employees that work with survivors of VAWG that includes the specific intersectional and the cultural contexts for Black and minoritised women.
- Improvements to data collection.
- Improvements around the use of interpreters by police and other agencies.
- The Home Office should implement the recommendations of the HMICFRS in the supercomplaint on data sharing with immigration enforcement to create a 'firewall', enabling victims-survivors of domestic abuse to report abuse to the police within a 'safe space'.
- Using cultural experts in Domestic Homocide Reviews involving bacljk and minoritized women

You can read the full report at Life or Death Report Summary Nov-2023.pdf (squarespace.com)

Vacancies at IMPAKT - DASS

Impact Domestic Abuse Support Service are looking for passionate and hard-working individuals to join our growing domestic abuse outreach team covering Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. If this sounds like you and you would like further details please do get in touch via email laura@impakt.org.uk or visit our website www.impakt.org.uk

Children in Need Emergency Essential Programme re-opens

The BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials Programme supports children and young people who are facing exceptionally difficult circumstances and is delivered by Family Fund Business Services. The programme provides items that meet a child's most basic needs such as a bed to sleep in, a cooker to provide a hot meal and other items or services critical to a child's wellbeing.

The Essentials Programme has now reopened and is inviting referrals. Referrals must be from a registered referrer who is part of an organisation that is supporting the family or young person and capable of assessing their needs. The referrer's organisation should also be able to administer and supervise the grant on our behalf.

Referral criteria:

- Children and young people up to and including the age of 17 who are experiencing a crisis or emergency and live in the UK
- Only one application per household within a 12 month period

For more information, please visit BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials Programme - Family Fund Business Services (familyfundservices.co.uk)

Amazing feedback from a user of dispersed accommodation

We have received some feedback from a survivor who used the new dispersed accommodation recently:

I'm messaging to say a huge thank you for everything you do as an organisation and from the kindness of your hearts. I wanted to be settled and on a good solid path before I sent this message but not feels like the right time. The safe home you provided for me and my kids was indescribable, I had no idea any support like you gave me was out there and it still brings a tear to my eye thinking about how broken and scared I was that day turning up at the house with a few black bags. We're now thriving in our own home and the kids are all settled back to school. I'm back to work and gaining my identity and independence back and enjoying finding out who I cam again – everyone says I have my sparkle back! There have been some very challenging times over the past few months but we got there and I just want to say a big heart felt thank you.

We were overwhelmed to receive this and so pleased that this survivor felt able to share her thoughts and feelings with us – this is why we're all doing what we do and it's fantastic to know we are making a difference.

Cambridge City Council Domestic Abuse Conference 2023 Report by Louise Walker

On 4th December, a Domestic Abuse Conference to celebrate 25th November – White Ribbon Day and the United Nations International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women, which starts 16 Days of Action to 10th December, Human Rights Day – was hosted by Cambridge City Council at The Meadows Community Centre, which has recently re-opened in a brand-new two-storey building in Cambridge.

Jane Wilson, Acting Chief Executive of Cambridge City Council, opened the conference, which was attended by over 100 people consisting of members of the public, survivors, service providers, and professionals.

Alice Gilderdale, Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety, Cambridge City Council, provided an introduction of the work being undertaken in the city as a strategic priority. Together with Mike Davey, Leader of the Cambridge City Council, they co-hosted the event. The conference was supported by two British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters.

Guest Speakers

There were a range of guest speakers to provide insight in their area of expertise:

- Firstly, there was an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Violence Against Women And Girls (VAWG) Needs Assessment by Julia Cullum, Manager of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Partnership.
- Next, attendees could choose one of three breakout sessions led by
 - 1) Norah Al-Ani, MBE, Director of Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre on "The Power of Survivors Peer Support Spaces and Group Work".
 - 2) Dr Mirna Guha, Senior Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University on "Gossip and domestic abuse: Experiences of Asian women in Cambridgeshire".
 - 3) Sophie Meuwissen Development Manager of Cambridge Women's Aid on "What works for Women?"
 - *The Cambridge Women's Aid 'What Works for Women? Survivors of Domestic Abuse Responses in a Crisis' artwork is pictured below with copyright.
- The breakout sessions were followed by finding out how The Kite Trust is supporting LGBTQ+ communities by Bethan Rees, Programme Manager (Schools & Training) of The Kite Trust.
- Before a networking lunch provided by the social enterprise, The Edge Café, it was wonderful that the Mayor of Cambridge, Jenny Gawthrope-Wood, had time to provide her support for the conference and work being carried out.

In the afternoon, there was:

- An update on Operation Soteria Bluestone by Detective Superintendent Sherrie Ward of Cambridgeshire Constabulary.
- The Dahlia Project Supporting South Asian Victims by Mandy Geraghty, Chief Executive
 Officer of Peterborough Women's Aid, followed by a Panel discussion on domestic abuse
 vulnerabilities of Asian-origin women in the East of England with Mandy Geraghty, Dr Mirna
 Guha, Senior Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University, and a Peterborough Women's Aid
 Community Engagement worker.

Before the close of the conference, Leader of Cambridge City Council, Mike Davey, provided an overview of the 'White Ribbon Campaign' and the 2023

theme of #ChangeThe Story. Together with the council's Chief Executive Robert Pollock, they had made a 30 second video to add to the national White Ribbon Day's content, which is available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/PgidD4Ex060

Feedback

Comments from the conference attendees included:

- "Loved being at a community centre, the breakouts, and music!"
- "I thoroughly enjoyed the conference; the speakers were very informative, and I got to meet some great people from other working areas other than my own."

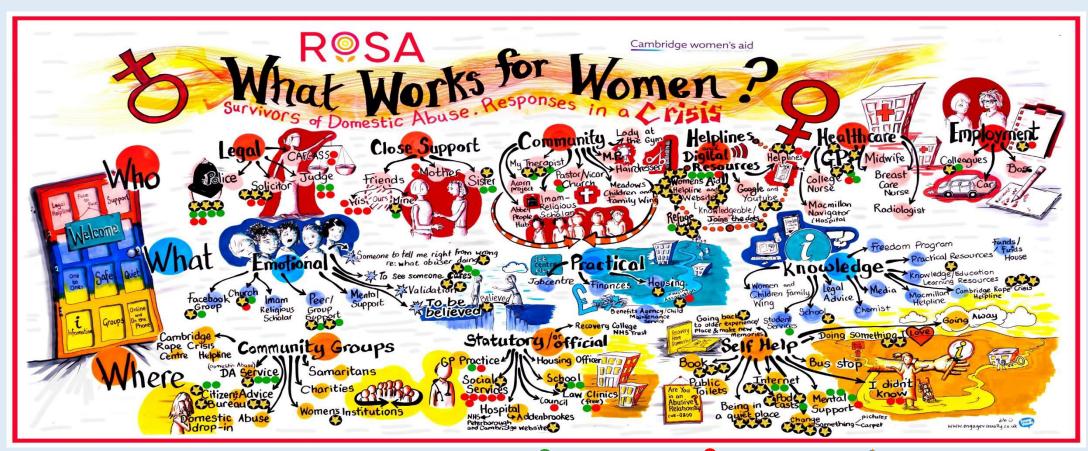
Guest speakers had enjoyed being involved as well and thanked Cambridge City Council for inviting them; comments included:

- "Thank you for putting on another brilliant conference and for focussing time and energy on this incredibly important issue and helping to keep it in the spotlight."
- "It was an absolute honour to be involved in such an important event. It makes a world of difference to feel not only welcomed, but supported."



the Mayor of Cambridge, Councillor Jenny Gawthrope-Wood, and Councillor Alice Gilderdale





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Key: = Positive experience = Negative experience = Especially