

# **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Needs Assessment**

**Cambridgeshire and Peterborough  
Executive Summary**

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## 1. Introduction to the Executive Summary

Violence and abuse can happen to people of all ages, sexualities and cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds, which is why it is imperative for services to meet the diverse needs of victims and survivors. Abuse should also be understood as a cause and consequence of gender inequality, and as a result, impacts disproportionately on women and girls. At any stage of life it causes varying degrees of harm, vulnerability and disadvantage in a number of overlapping ways. This includes impacts on physical and mental health, damage to self-esteem and confidence, isolation, homelessness, and reduced economic prospects<sup>1</sup>.

'Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is internationally defined as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women'. Please note that this needs assessment includes information about VAWG related issues towards men and boys.

The most universally common forms of VAWG include:

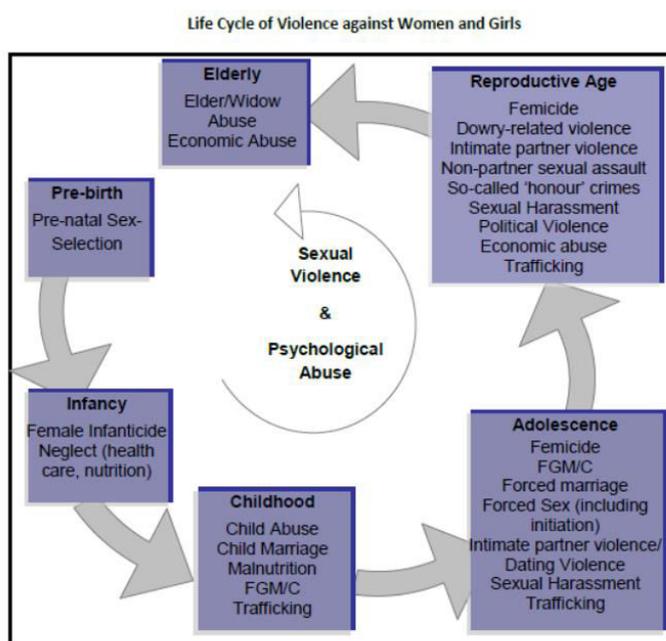
- domestic and intimate partner violence
- sexual violence (including rape)
- sexual harassment and;
- emotional/psychological violence

Other widespread forms of VAWG include: sexual exploitation, sexual trafficking, and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), forced and child marriage.

On the understanding that VAWG is a global and multi-faceted issue, capturing and quantifying the lived experience of the issue is problematic, and is, perhaps, best understood as a continuum (Kelly, 1989), with an identifiable 'life cycle'. The model above (UN, 2013) is illustrative of this cycle of violence.

The consequences of VAWG are wide ranging. Efforts to measure these consequences (WHO, 2016) show that:

- Violence against women can have fatal results like homicide or suicide
- It can lead to injuries, with 42% of women who experience intimate partner violence reporting an injury as a consequence of this violence



<sup>1</sup> Violence Against Women and Girls Services: Supporting Local Commissioning (2016)

- Intimate partner violence and sexual violence can lead to unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, gynaecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- Intimate partner violence in pregnancy also increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies
- Sexual violence, particularly during childhood, can lead to increased smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, and risky sexual behaviours in later life. It is also associated with perpetration of violence (for males) and being a victim of violence (for females)
- Children who grow up in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioural and emotional disturbances. These can also be associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life
- Intimate partner violence has also been associated with higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity (e.g. diarrhoeal disease, malnutrition)

In addition to the negative health and social impacts of VAWG, the financial costs of violence and abuse to the economy can be calculated and are considerable. In November 2009, a report from the University of Lancaster estimated that providing public services to victims of VAWG, and the lost economic output of women affected, **costs the UK £36.7bn annually**<sup>2</sup>.

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

There were almost 7,900 VAWG related crimes recorded in 2015/2016 across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. 60% of these were domestic abuse related and 17% were for sexual offence crimes<sup>3</sup>.

- An estimated 6.5% of women and 5.2% of men have been victims of domestic abuse in the last year, with the highest prevalence in 16-19 year old females, and in more urban and deprived areas (Cambridge City, Fenland and Peterborough)<sup>4</sup>
- One in ten of all crimes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are domestic abuse related,<sup>5</sup> and 80% of cases go un-reported to the police
- There were 1,260 sexual offence crimes in 2015/16. The highest prevalence is in 16-24 year old females<sup>6</sup>
- The majority of perpetrators of domestic abuse are male (82%) and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of offences took place between current or ex intimate partners<sup>7</sup>
- One in ten Year 10 girls report that they have been put under pressure to have sex or do sexual things with a previous or current boyfriend or girlfriend<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Violence Against Women and Girls Services: Supporting Local Commissioning (2016)

<sup>3</sup> Cambridgeshire Constabulary (2016)

<sup>4</sup> Crime Survey for England and Wales (2016), Cambridgeshire Research Team (2016)

<sup>5</sup> Cambridgeshire Constabulary (2016) and CSEW (2016)

<sup>6</sup> Cambridgeshire Constabulary (2016)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Cambridgeshire Health-Related Behaviours Survey (2016)

There are a range of services available across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support the victims of VAWG-related offences. Services appear to provide support for victims across all levels of need and these services are well valued by those who use them. Feedback from service users suggest that support services ‘made them feel safer’, ‘provided emotional support’ and helped people to better ‘understand abusive behaviour’.

Geographical mapping suggests that there is generally good coverage of all levels of services for domestic abuse and sexual violence across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. However, without further information about those accessing services it is difficult to provide a clear picture of unmet need. For example services may be open and available to all individuals across the county, but if there are external barriers to prevent use (e.g. rural transport links), help and support may not be there for those who need it.

Police-recorded data currently shows a higher incidence of both domestic abuse and sexual violence in Peterborough than in other areas of the county. This suggests that the withdrawal of Specialist Abuse Services Peterborough (SASP) does pose a risk of unmet need (though this has been met in the short term via the current Department of Communities and Local Government award). In addition to this, there is currently no access to the one specialist ‘Health’ Independent Domestic Violence Advisor’ (funded by the Public Health team at CCC) in Peterborough Hospital (current provision covers only Addenbrookes and Hinchingbrooke hospitals), or to other specialist IDVAs provision such as that for young people (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner), or those from A8 Eastern European nations (funded by CCC). Feedback from service user events suggests that lack of support from both health and social care staff is a barrier to accessing support earlier in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

There is a comprehensive four-level workforce development programme in place across Local Authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough based on relevant NICE guidance (2014). In addition, the LSCBs deliver a broad multi-disciplinary VAWG training offer which includes a Level 3 training especially designed for GPs and those working in their practices.

## 2. Purpose and Scope of Needs Assessment

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In response to the current national Home Office VAWG strategy (2016-2020) and requirements established in the related National Statement of Expectations (NSE) (2016), the Cambridgeshire Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) commissioned a countywide, joint (with the Public Health Team at Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council) VAWG needs assessment in June 2016. It is expected that the findings of this assessment will inform a revised domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Subsequently, the findings and recommendations arising from the assessment have been linked to the relevant NSE. The NSE 'expects' that local partnerships will develop their responses according to best practice established by NICE (2015) and the Home Office ahead of developing inspection processes by HMIC, HMCPSI, CQC and OFSTED.

The methodology employed to inform the needs assessment included:

- Seeking relevant quantitative and qualitative data from key stakeholders (June 2016 – July 2017) via a data capture form
- Service-user feedback (where available) from agencies and relevant events
- Stakeholder (agency) feedback on perceived priorities via the data-capture form, and consultation workshop

In June 2017, it was announced by HM Government that a new office for a national domestic violence and abuse commissioner would be created to 'stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of statutory agencies and local authorities and hold the justice system to account in tackling domestic abuse'. It is expected that the VAWG needs assessment and future associated strategies will contribute to evidencing Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's response.

The aims of this needs assessment are to:

- provide context to the issue of VAWG
- collate and present the prevalence of VAWG across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- map current services to support victims of VAWG
- explore the evidence-base of what interventions are effective in preventing and responding to VAWG
- evaluate the local response to VAWG
- suggest evidence-based recommendations for future strategy, policy, commissioning, and practice across the county.

It is expected that the findings of the assessment will be used by key local partners (e.g. the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Adult Safeguarding Boards, etc.) to further enhance coordinated, multi-agency responses to VAWG, and to inform the development of a new domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The

assessment will also be integral to the development of Cambridgeshire’s local Crime and Policing Plan (2017).

### 3. Key Findings and Recommendations

The key findings and draft recommendations emerging from this needs assessment are shown below. These are grouped according to the Home Office VAWG National Statement of Expectations<sup>9</sup>.

<b>National Statement of Expectation 1 – The Victim at the Centre</b>	
Every victim, whether adult or child, is an individual with different experiences, reactions and needs. Local areas should ensure that services are flexible and responsive to the victim’s experience and voice.	
<b>Needs assessment finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
The majority of VAWG issues do not come to the attention of statutory agencies or the Criminal Justice System (CJS)	Review current service provision to ensure those not reporting/disclosing issues to the CJS/statutory agencies still have access to support/interventions. This review should include feedback from service users, especially children, young people, older people, and those from minority groups (such as BME, LGBTQ).
Timely, voluntary, and self-directed engagement with VAWG services is most effective at securing and maintaining engagement with survivors  There is a high degree of variation in the types and quality of information and signposting available to potential service users	Review and improve signposting information available to victims and survivors of VAWG coming into contact with CJS and safeguarding agencies. This should explore the development of tailored interventions regarding issues of Honour Based Violence (HBV) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) within specific communities.
Psychosocial support, including advocacy and counselling, can have clear outcomes for those impacted by VAWG. These are currently geographically limited across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	Improve the provision of psychosocial support, especially for children and young people, women, and older people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and work to increase levels of engagement with these services.

<sup>9</sup> Violence Against Women and Girls, National Statement of Expectations, December 2016, Home Office

<p>There appears to be low levels of disclosure/reporting of VAWG-type issues from male victims and minority groups (LGBTQ, those with disabilities, black and minority ethnic groups and those with no recourse to public funds)</p>	<p>Review the provision of services and potential barriers to accessing these for male victims and minority groups.</p>
<p>Access to the county's single specialist 'Health' IDVA post (commissioned by CCC) is limited to Addenbrookes and Hinchingsbrooke Hospitals A&amp;E and Maternity departments. There is currently no provision of a health IDVA post in Peterborough via the North West Anglia Foundation Trust</p>	<p>It is recommended that work be progressed to address issues with accessibility and resource regarding the specialist Health IDVA post.</p>
<p>There is a disparity regarding approaches to tackling domestic abuse across providers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough</p>	<p>Ensure service provision is equitable across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</p>

## National Statement of Expectation 2 – A Clear Focus on Perpetrators

In order to keep victims safe, local areas should ensure that there are robust services in place which manage the risk posed by perpetrators and offer behavioural change opportunities for those willing and able to engage with them.

Needs assessment finding	Recommendation
<p>Although there are positive developments at a national and local level with regards to the successful prosecution of more VAWG offenders, the rate of attrition between the volume of VAWG incidents reported to the police and the volume of cases being brought before the courts by the CPS is of concern</p>	<p>Current work between the police and CPS to increase the volume of VAWG cases brought before the courts should be evaluated. This work should directly engage with service users to facilitate a better understanding of their experiences of the CJS.</p> <p>The CPS provides representation to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership.</p>
<p>There are inconsistencies in availability and approach of specialist programmes to support perpetrators to change behaviour</p>	<p>Current arrangements are reviewed to ensure that the county provides a range of accessible and evidence-based interventions to prevent VAWG from occurring, and to tackle the behaviour of those who perpetrate it. This should include provision for young people who use violence and abuse.</p>
<p>There is a disparity regarding approaches to tackling domestic abuse across substance-misuse providers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough</p>	<p>Review domestic abuse practice and policies within the drug and alcohol services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</p>
<p>Little data was provided to this assessment by relevant healthcare providers (including mental health services)</p>	<p>Relevant local providers of health services develop and implement a policy which incorporates agency-wide responses to, and data capture about, perpetrators of VAWG (according to relevant NICE guidance).</p>

### National Statement of Expectation 3 – A Strategic, System-wide Approach to Commissioning

Good commissioning always starts with understanding the issue and the problem you are trying to solve.

Needs assessment finding	Recommendation
<p>There is currently no joint commissioning arrangement for VAWG in the county (recommended by NICE (2015) and Home Office (2016)), despite evidence suggesting that this would be the most effective way to deliver prevention and response measures</p>	<p>A joint commissioning structure, according to NICE and Home Office guidance for VAWG is developed.</p>
<p>The governance of activities responding to VAWG across the county is fragmented. The range of multi-agency input to the agenda should be seen as a positive development. However, responses to VAWG issues do not feature in many relevant local strategies (such as the HWB), policies, assessments of need, and/or commissioning activities</p>	<p>It is recommended that a review be undertaken to ensure that governance structures are appropriate, and that activities are coordinated to ensure best value</p> <p>The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) should facilitate senior officers to develop a countywide commitment to VAWG and develop a strategic action plan reflecting VAWG needs. This should be regularly monitored in order to hold key individuals/ agencies to account.</p>
<p>Relevant local datasets are missing (e.g. healthcare providers), or incomplete. This is problematic in establishing local need, and the efficacy of response</p>	<p>Work should continue locally to establish a meaningful and coordinated VAWG dataset. This should be centrally coordinated and collated by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership</p> <p>Key partners (e.g. healthcare providers) are supported to develop good recording practices around <u>all</u> VAWG issues</p> <p>A full countywide assessment of VAWG need is undertaken and published every four years (in line with the Home Office strategy, 2016-20).</p>
<p>All VAWG issues are under-reported / disclosed. However, where data is appropriate and of good quality, local trends show a significant increase in demand for</p>	<p>Local resource and capacity should be reviewed to ensure appropriateness for current need and future demand</p> <p>A coherent local VAWG risk register should</p>

<p>all relevant services. This increase is especially evident through the data provided by relevant specialist services</p>	<p>be established, and monitored quarterly by the OPCC to ensure appropriate commissioning of victims' services</p> <p>Potential barriers to the reporting of VAWG should be reviewed in order to inform future service planning.</p>
<p>There has been an increasing volume of domestic homicide occurring across the county</p>	<p>A review of the learning, and of relevant actions arising from previous Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs), is undertaken.</p>
<p>Service-user satisfaction is routinely gathered by specialist VAWG services. However, the Constabulary currently cannot differentiate between crime types when seeking data on service-user satisfaction</p>	<p>The Constabulary establishes a process for capturing the experiences of victims of VAWG-type crimes.</p>

**National Statement of Expectation 4 – Locally Led and Safeguards Individuals at Every Point**

Commissioned services should make use of local initiatives and services already in place to utilise resource, share best practice and ensure that there are coordinated pathways of support.

<b>Needs assessment finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
There is currently no joint commissioning / pooled budget arrangement for VAWG in the county (as recommended by NICE (2015) and Home Office (2016))	A joint commissioning structure for VAWG is developed according to NICE / Home Office guidance.
Emerging work to synergise 'Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)' and 'Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)' functions and processes is encouraging	Processes across MASH and MARAC are developed and implemented.
Work has been undertaken to embed an enhanced VAWG Workforce Development (WFD) 'offer' (based on NICE Guidance, 2014) across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's local authorities. However, it is not clear at this time what activities other key partners have undertaken to develop their WFD programmes to reflect the VAWG agenda	Multi-agency best practice is shared across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough  Agency activities with regards to embedding WFD best practice in this area are monitored.
Encouraging developments have been made to service standards across the Local Authorities to ensure appropriate responses to VAWG. However, it is unclear how services are developing more generally across the county	Service standards across all agencies supporting the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 'Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence' (DASV) delivery group should be reviewed and developed to ensure that they appropriately address VAWG.

**National Statement of Expectation 5 – Raises Local Awareness of the Issues and Involves, Engages and Empowers Communities to Seek, Design and Deliver Solutions**

Commissioners should work with local partners to provide a multiplicity of reporting mechanisms to better enable victims to come forward and access the support they need.

<b>Needs assessment finding</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
<p>There is a need for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to more consistently develop activities and interventions to prevent VAWG from occurring, and to develop community responses to the issue. Evidence suggests that one of the best ways to do this is to plan and deliver school-based programmes to reduce intimate partner violence</p> <p>There is some good work occurring in parts of the county with regards to ‘Healthy Relationships’ school-based interventions (across some sites in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough), and community resilience activities (City – ‘White Ribbon / Domestic Violence Forum’ and Fenland – ‘Advice Chain’). However, these activities are limited in scope and accessibility</p>	<p>A common and coordinated approach and guidance to school-based VAWG prevention interventions, in accordance with best practice and Home Office recommendations should be developed and implemented</p> <p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s Community Safety Partnerships adopt a standardised and coordinated approach to developing community capacity and resilience to prevent VAWG from occurring.</p>