



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

March 2018

Dear Partners

March was a busy month with a number of events taking place. To coincide with International women's Day, the Government launched a consultation on domestic abuse, seeking new laws and stronger powers to protect and support survivors. You can read more about the proposals on page 6 and you can access the consultation at this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-takes-action-to-tackle-domestic-abuse>

Vickie presented to Addenbrooke's staff on 8th March about the prevalence of domestic abuse across the county, and discussed the impact that it has on victims, what they can do to support people experiencing domestic abuse and about the services available to support victims. Resources were then provided to take back to their work areas and share with colleagues

To coincide with Safeguarding Awareness Month, we have released two short films about support available to survivors of domestic abuse in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The films are available in English, Urdu, Punjabi, Polish, Russian, Lithuanian and British Sign Language via our You Tube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvA8lxUtXHpYnOADUxUA-7g>

The latest Safe Lives Spotlight is looking into support available to LGBTQ victims and our IDVA service is supporting them specifically with regards to LGBTQ MARAC. See page 8 for more information about the research.

Looking ahead to April, the MARAC process will be changing to a countywide MARAC and more details about this can be found on page 12.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and remember that you can submit articles to Amanda.warburton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Vickie Crompton & Julia Cullum
Partnership Managers



Training update

LGSS Learning and Development have integrated their booking system to a different Learning Management Systems (iLearn) for all the Social Care Workforce Development including Domestic Abuse training. You can now view and book the full offer available from LGSS Learning and Development on iLearn <http://lgss.learningpool.com/>

If you do not already have an iLearn account, you will need to create one to book a course. In order to do this simply select the course you want to book, click 'Create new account' and follow the instructions. By doing this you will now have access to your personal learning record which will include all eLearning and face to face courses. Social Care courses will only be included for attendance from the 19 February 2018.

If you need any further information, help or support please contact the Learning and Development team at LGSSLearning@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Please note that as the Council's Workforce Development Team has now moved to LGSS, courses are only free to employees of Cambridgeshire County Council. LGSS charge £75 per day for all other attendees.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Board have launched their new Training Brochure which runs up to December 2018 and can be accessed [here](#).

Against Violence and Abuse (AVA) run CPD accredited training throughout the year. There is a charge for these courses <https://avaproject.org.uk/events/>

Inquiry into the impact of social media on young people

The Science and Technology Committee launches an inquiry into the impact of social media and screen-use on young people's health. The Committee would particularly welcome the perspectives and experiences, and details of any initiatives taken, by children, schools and youth organisations. Closes 6th April.

Other issues the MPs would welcome thoughts on include:

- the wellbeing benefits from social media usage, including any apps that provide mental-health benefits to users
- the physical or mental harms from social media use and screen-use, including safety risks and the extent of any addictive behaviour
- any measures being used, or needed, to mitigate any potential harmful effects of excessive screen-use
- what monitoring, controls or regulation are needed and where responsibility and accountability should lie for such measures
- areas that should be the focus of any further research

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/science-and-technology-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/impact-of-social-media-young-people-17-19/>

New sentencing guidelines for Domestic Abuse

The Sentencing Council for England and Wales have released new guidelines around domestic abuse that will take effect in May. The guidelines say that domestic violence and threats should be subject to greater punishments than if the offence occurred outside of a relationship. “The domestic context ... makes the offending more serious because it represents a violation of the trust and security that normally exists between people in an intimate or family relationship,” the six-page document states.

Courts have been told that offences that take place in the home should be considered more serious than similar offences that take place elsewhere.

Non-physical forms of abuse - like threats on social media - will also now be taken into consideration.

- Provocation will not be considered as a mitigating factor in sentencing, except in rare circumstances
- The penalty for domestic abuse should be determined by the seriousness of the crime - not by the wishes of the victim
- Magistrates' and Crown Courts should take "great care" where the offender or victim requests a less severe sentence in the interests of any children

For the first time, sentencing guidelines also explicitly recognise the growth of domestic abuse perpetrated through technology - including email, text, social networking and tracking devices

It also suggests that pleas for clemency by the victim should generally be disregarded because there is a risk these may have been induced by threats or volunteered through fear.

Government plans to extend special measures currently used for rape and modern slavery victims

Domestic abuse survivors will not have to come face-to-face with their former partners in court under new government proposals aiming to help victims come forward.

Special measures already afforded to rape and modern slavery victims, who are allowed to give evidence from behind a screen or via video link, could be extended in the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd has not set a timeline for the draft to be published but said survivors and their children would be at the heart of a public consultation. She also told MPs in the House of Commons that she hoped the move could increase convictions for domestic abusers.

“The purpose is about making sure that victims have more confidence to come forward, more confidence about feeling safe, and we can be more certain of getting the convictions that they expect and we all want,” she said.

Campaigners called for protections to be rolled out in family courts, which are charged with ruling on parental disputes, divorces, child protection cases and access by domestic abusers.

Feature: Serious and Organised Crime officer, Billy Bremner

WITH County lines being made a police force strategic intelligence requirement Cambridgeshire Constabulary's DI Billy Bremner explains a bit more about what county lines are and what we can do to help the police tackle this problem.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about the Serious and Organised Crime Department?

A. Cambridgeshire has a small dedicated team of officers working specifically on tackling the threat, risk and harm that organised crime presents. The team comprises of PIP Level 2 investigators who have a range of skills and attributes enabling them to operate within a covert environment – including working alongside the Force Surveillance Team.

Q. What is a county line?

A. A "county line" is the method used by an urban organised crime group (OCG) to extend their drug dealing into new locations. This is due to the fact that urban areas have become more hostile environments for them to operate in, because of law enforcement.

These groups typically exploit young people by recruiting them to deal drugs – often on the promise of significant financial incentives. The 'dealers' then travel between urban and county locations to deliver drugs and collect cash on behalf of criminals higher up the food chain.

Young dealers are set up in a property in the county they are operating from, usually belonging to a vulnerable person, often users themselves and usually against their will. This is a process termed as "cuckooing".

Adult drug and substance users and vulnerable young girls are also exploited and forced to assist with the running of the line. They may 'swallow' or 'pack' the drugs in order to avoid police detection.

The groups will utilise a telephone number, known as a "drugs line", to market their business and contact customers to sell them class A drugs at street level.

County lines is a national issue affecting the majority of force areas and poses a significant threat through the groups use of violence, exploitation of vulnerable adults and children and the associated criminality linked with class A drug use.

Q. So are the 'dealers' victims or offenders?

It is vital to ensure that individuals are treated appropriately, taking into account their role within the criminal business.

Often individuals are coerced through threats and the use of physical violence to deal on behalf of the group. Where this is happening and individuals are exploited they are victims – and as such need to be appropriately dealt with.

We are experiencing more child exploitation offences associated with county lines criminality in Cambridgeshire. Those running county drug lines will often target vulnerable people, including children, and exploit them in order to help run their drugs business.

Human trafficking forms another element of this criminality. Dealers will use threats and coercion against the young and vulnerable in order to use them to store, run and supply drugs on their behalf.

These organised groups recognise indicators of vulnerability and specifically target those they can easily exploit, taking the risk of being caught with drugs away from themselves. Indicators of vulnerability are children in care, absent from school and missing from home and single parents on low incomes.

Unfortunately there have been cases where vulnerability issues have not been identified and individuals have been wrongly prosecuted, which is why it is crucial we recognise vulnerability.

Q) What is “cuckooing”?

A. “Cuckooing” is the term used when a vulnerable person’s home is taken over by criminals who exploit, threaten and coerce the occupier, who is a potential victim themselves, to assist them with their criminal enterprise. The consequences of resisting this is the use of high levels of violence, sometimes resulting in life changing injuries.

The occupants are often pressured into becoming drug dealers and convinced or forced into allowing their home to become a drug den. The occupants can also become involved in thefts, burglaries and other crimes such as using their home for child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Cuckooing provides criminals the opportunity to gain a foothold in a town or area and then seek to take over the local drugs market, often using extreme violence.

Q) What should you do if you suspect county lines criminality?

A. If you encounter anybody you suspect of county lines criminality you must take positive action and submit intelligence to the force referencing Project Virginia. You can do this online at <https://www.cambs.police.uk/report/Report>

Remember in an emergency or if a crime is taking place call 999.

GOVERNMENT TAKES ACTION TO TACKLE DOMESTIC ABUSE

Once-in-a-generation opportunity for new laws and stronger powers to put safety and support for survivors at the heart of Government efforts to stamp out Domestic Abuse

- First ever statutory definition of Domestic Abuse recognising the many kinds of abuse suffered – from psychological, physical, sexual, economic and emotional.
- New Domestic Abuse Protection Orders to allow police and courts to act earlier and more effectively when abuse is suspected.
- The creation of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner to stand up for victims, monitor the provision of domestic abuse services, and hold the Government to account.
- Tougher sentences for domestic abuse cases involving children.

Domestic Abuse comes in many forms, shattering the lives of victims and their families, and in recognition of this the Government has put forward proposals for new laws which would transform our approach to this terrible crime.

[The consultation launched](#) on Thursday 8 March by the Prime Minister Theresa May, Home Secretary Amber Rudd and Justice Secretary David Gauke, will seek views on measures to be included in the Government's draft Domestic Abuse Bill.

To ensure we get this landmark legislation right we now want to hear from all those who have been affected by abuse, from survivors, frontline professionals, charities and the public, to gather views on how, together, we can best put a stop to it once and for all.

Our tough new approach includes new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders to better shield victims against further abuse by enabling courts to impose a range of conditions on abusers. These could be compulsory alcohol treatment, attending a programme to address their underlying attitudes or addictions, and using electronic tagging to monitor them. Under the proposals, breaching the order would become a criminal offence.

We have also proposed the creation of a statutory aggravating factor in sentencing, similar to those already in law for hate crimes, for domestic abuse to toughen sentences when it involves or affects a child, and the creation of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner to hold the Government to account.

Economic abuse will be recognised for the first time as a type of domestic abuse, covering controlling circumstances in which victims have finances withheld, are denied access to employment or transport, or are forced to take out loans and enter into other financial contracts. Our recognition will improve understanding among frontline professionals, law enforcement officers and prosecutors so we can take action more quickly and effectively to better support victims.

Yesterday changes also came into effect making it easier for the estimated 12,000 survivors of domestic abuse living in refuges to register to vote anonymously. They will now be able to register to vote without their name and address appearing on the electoral roll, and without the fear of their former partners finding their address.

Refuge responds to launch of Domestic Abuse Bill

Details of the Domestic Abuse Bill announced so far are promising. Refuge believes that putting survivors at the heart of efforts to stamp out domestic abuse is crucial and applauds the aim of the Bill in this respect. Refuge also welcomed the chance to discuss it in more detail with the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and survivors of abuse at an event at Downing Street to mark International Women's Day.

"Meeting survivors acknowledges their experiences and helps ensure their voices are heard. We truly hope that the final Bill delivers on the promise to protect and support victims of domestic abuse," said Sandra Horley, CBE, chief executive of Refuge.

Refuge has worked closely with the Government up to this point and looks forward to continuing to do so.

"I really do hope the Bill leads to more victims coming forward," said Hollie, a survivor of domestic abuse, who Refuge is supporting as she awaits the sentencing of her abuser. "I suffered in silence for years before finding the courage to seek help and leave my abusive ex. This must change. The Government needs to make sure that the right level of support and funding for services and refuges is in place for domestic abuse victims so they can access safety and have the best chance possible to rebuild their lives."

A view echoed by Mel, who was also supported by Refuge and is now in a new relationship and expecting a baby. "As a survivor of domestic abuse, I know just how vitally important it is that, first and foremost, victims can access support and feel protected – but also if they do go to the police or to court, that they know they will be taken seriously and believed.

"It will be good if the police give women a bit more support when they are in the situation of a domestic abuse relationship, even if it is just sliding them a card with details for a women's support group. That is something that will go a long way.

"Through my involvement with Refuge, I know many victims do not go to the police – on average, a woman will be attacked 35 times before she will call the police for the first time. On too many occasions, complaints are not taken seriously or acted upon by the police. The response of the police, magistrates and judges to domestic violence needs to be improved, but the Bill needs to support to all women – not just those who report the matter to the police."

Euleen, another survivor of domestic abuse supported by Refuge's expert staff, was encouraged that the new definition proposed in the Bill acknowledges its many forms. "People think that domestic abuse is always violent but it isn't. It can be emotional, mental and financial abuse too. It will be good to have a broader definition of domestic abuse to take into account economic abuse, because I was the breadwinner in my relationship but money was used as a way of controlling me."

Refuge also applauded the Government's announcement on a new national model for refuges and commitment to sustainable refuge funding.

Women's Aid (2018) Survival and Beyond: The Domestic Abuse Report 2017.

Women's Aid have released their latest report focusing on the financial year 2016/17, and including the results of a census day and week in July 2017 (called the Day and Week to Count). In addition, this report examines some data from previous years to draw out any trends between 2010 and 2017.

Over the year 2016/17, Women's Aid estimate:

- refuge services supported a total of 13,414 women with 14,353 children and young people across all services in England.
- 154,306 women used community-based services during the year 2016/17 across all services in England.

The report also includes age and ethnicity information and concludes that, to fully understand the impact of domestic abuse, there needs to be more focused research into the experiences of certain groups of survivors who are often under-represented in reports on domestic abuse, including lesbian and bisexual women, trans women, older women, disabled women and women from some minority ethnic groups.

<https://1q7dqy2unor827bjls0c4rn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Survival-and-Beyond-FINAL.pdf>

Spotlight on LGBTQ Victims

Over 7 weeks, SafeLives is shining a spotlight on Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans plus people experiencing domestic abuse. The recent second annual health week focused on the health inequalities of Lesbian, Bisexual and trans women, and other women who have sex with women. Research shows that Lesbian and bisexual women are particularly at risk of domestic and sexual violence. They are also experiencing much higher levels of mental health problems compared to heterosexual women, 3 times higher for lesbian women and 5 times higher for bisexual women. At the same time, L&B women are often invisible to health providers. 36% of L&B women report that health professionals have assumed them to be heterosexual and 37% have been told that they do not require cervical screening tests due to their orientation. With this in mind, Collette Eaton-Harris has been to Public Health England to meet with Dr Justin Varney, National Lead for Adult Health and Wellbeing and co-author of a new report that explores, amongst other issues, how domestic abuse is a serious and under researched health issue for L, B, & T women and other women who have sex with women. You can listen to a podcast of the interview at

<https://soundcloud.com/domestic-abuse-podcast/justin-varney-public-health-england-lesbian-and-bisexual-women-experiencing-domestic-abuse>

Prison Reform Trust report

A new report from the Prison Reform Trust highlights that many women in prison have been victims of much more serious offences than the ones they are accused of, with a growing body of research indicating that women's exposure to physical, emotional and sexual abuse, including coercive control, is for some a driver of their offending. A key difference between women and men in prison is that family relationships tend to be a protective factor for men whilst, for women, relationships are more often a risk factor. The purpose of this briefing is to highlight the links between women's victimisation and their offending and make recommendations that will help break the cycle.

http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Domestic_abuse_report_final_lo.pdf

Summary of recommendations

1. The Home Office and Ministry of Justice should work closely together, in consultation with the Welsh Government, to ensure the women offenders strategy and victims strategy address the links between domestic abuse and women's offending. Clear expectations must be placed on criminal justice agencies to improve their response to women offenders affected by domestic abuse.
2. The police, prosecutors, probation services and the courts should adopt the practice of routine enquiry into women's histories of domestic abuse at each stage of the criminal justice process to ensure informed decision making.
3. The UK Government should invest in problem solving, whole systems approaches to support early diversion and effective community solutions for women offenders affected by domestic and sexual abuse, including out of court disposals.
4. Police guidance and training must include a specific focus on the links between domestic abuse and some women's offending. Police forces should work with the CPS and local domestic abuse specialist services, and where possible enable co-location of domestic abuse specialists in police stations.
5. Police triage and diversion schemes for women involved in low level offending should not automatically exclude women accused of domestic abuse offences.
6. As part of their commitment to tackle violence against women and girls, Police and Crime Commissioners should ensure they place clear expectations on the police to improve their response to women offenders affected by domestic abuse, including through out of court disposals, and should monitor performance.
7. The Crown Prosecution Service should work with specialist domestic abuse agencies to develop guidance, training and monitoring to ensure that women whose alleged offending may be driven by domestic abuse are identified. The public interest may be better served by their diversion into support services.
8. The Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill should include provision for an effective defence for women whose offences arise from coercion within an abusive relationship, and where women use reactive violence against a primary aggressor.
9. The Sentencing Council should consider how best to ensure sentencers take account of the particular vulnerabilities of women affected by domestic abuse and the impact of imprisonment on them and their families.
10. The Judicial College should review the availability and effectiveness of information and training for the judiciary in this area, including judicial directions regarding the treatment of women defendants affected by domestic abuse.
11. The National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies should adopt a practice of routine enquiry about histories of domestic abuse, supported by training about barriers to disclosure and other relevant factors. Pre-sentence reports should always include information about whether or not a woman's offending is linked directly or indirectly to domestic abuse.

12. HM Prisons and Probation Service and Ministry of Justice should work with women's prison governors, probation services and community agencies to ensure that there are programmes of information and support funded for women offenders affected by domestic abuse, including victim support services, both in prison and on release.

13. The Ministry of Justice should work with the Department for Communities and Local Government, local authorities and the voluntary sector to ensure that women leaving prison are provided with safe accommodation with appropriate support, including specialist refuge accommodation where this is needed.

14. HM Prisons and Probation Service must ensure that safe and effective, accredited programmes aimed at changing the behaviour of male perpetrators of domestic abuse and preventing further abuse are available in all suitable cases, in prison and in the community, and monitor take-up and outcomes.

Survivor's Justice

Victim Support have published a new report called Survivor's Justice - How victims and survivors of domestic abuse experience the criminal justice system

https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/sites/default/files/VS_Survivor%E2%80%99s%20justice.pdf

Key recommendations

- The CPS should work to improve communications and publicity around successful prosecutions of domestic abuse, including locally, to send a message that it is taken seriously.
- All front line police officers should undertake training on domestic abuse delivered by specialists, such as SafeLives' Domestic Abuse Matters training.
- In order to deter perpetrators from breaching a DVPO and to provide survivors with better protection, breaching a DVPO should be made a criminal offence, and the police should monitor perpetrator compliance with DVPOs throughout the duration of the order.
- All criminal courts in England and Wales should be equipped with separate entrances, facilities and waiting rooms to ensure that survivors do not have to have any unnecessary and unwanted contact at court and the scope of those eligible for Special Measures should be increased from vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and specifically include victims of domestic abuse.
- All judges and frontline professionals in domestic abuse cases should receive specialist training in domestic abuse.
- Court ordered compensation should not result in an ongoing relationship between survivors and perpetrators for the purpose of receiving compensation. The Government should pay all compensation owed to survivors of domestic abuse up front in a single payment and then recover the funds from the offender.
- The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme is not fit for purpose and is in urgent need of clarification and change. The 'October 1979' rule must be abolished and the 'unspent convictions' rule must be made more proportionate to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse get access to the redress that they deserve.
- The two year time limit of applications as well as the length of time taken to process criminal injuries compensation claims must be re-examined.

No better time for housing organisations to commit to tackle domestic abuse

Elinor Crouch-Puzey details the work the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance is doing to help housing organisations tackle the problem.

With CIH president Alison Inman and now **vice president Jim Strang making a commitment to tackling domestic abuse** there is no better time for housing providers to join in and commit to tackling abuse in their own communities.

As Alison herself says, housing organisations have unique access to their communities. We build, manage and maintain homes and we provide something most people would consider to be their most important possession – a home. And what is a home if it doesn't provide safety and security?. One way providers can do this is via the **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)**.

It's been a busy time at DAHA HQ – we've recruited three new development managers focused on taking the work forward with Housing Providers. The alliance is about supporting housing providers in their response to domestic abuse through an accreditation process. DAHA is offering **FREE** workshops on the eight key priority areas of our accreditation and providers can **sign up for free**.

Since coming to post, the development managers (one focused on working across London, one supporting providers in Cambridgeshire and the third working across the UK), have been setting up and delivering workshops all over the country. Areas to host workshops so far include; Aylesbury, Stockton on Tees and the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Waltham Forest, and Camden.

Momentum is building with more workshops planned for 2018. We're also seeing providers sign-up for the **FREE** online toolkit – this is the first step in becoming DAHA accredited. As mentioned, there are eight areas to work through from policy, to training, case management and publicity – each clearly laid out with plenty of hyperlinks and examples of good practice around the country to help you through the process. Once the self-assessment is complete, DAHA will visit you to review, evaluate and award accreditation which lasts for three years once the eight areas have been met.

We've also very recently recruited a private sector development coordinator, Victoria Watts, to work on bringing the private rented sector into the conversation about housing's response to domestic abuse. She is brand new in post but we look forward to updating on her work once she's had a chance to settle in.

Finally, as if that wasn't enough; DAHA recently hosted the first National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group which saw representatives from housing, homelessness, domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) get together for the first time to improve partnership working. Representatives include DAHA, AVA, Homeless Link, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA), National Housing Federation (NHF), Shelter, Crisis, Stonewall Housing, Resolve ASB, Agenda, Safelives and Women's Aid.

We can all play a role in tackling domestic abuse.

Elinor Crouch-Puzey is housing development manager at Standing Together, a DAHA partner.

New Countywide MARAC

The following arrangements for the Daily Marac meetings have been agreed with effect from Tuesday 3rd April 2018:

- Daily Marac meetings will commence at 9.30am Monday-Friday (except for Bank Holidays).
- We will endeavour to put a ceiling of 8 cases per meeting and for the meeting to finish at around 11.30am. This will depend on volume of cases, it may be sooner.
- Dial- in arrangements to the Marac and administrative processes with agenda time slots, will remain the same. Essentially, there will be just one meeting, instead of two.
- Cambridgeshire Police will remain the primary chairs for the daily Marac meetings
- Meetings will be held and administered from the Mash at Chord Park by the Marac co-ordinators.
- All cases with children or unborn children in the household, countywide, will be heard first, followed by cases that do not have children in the household.
- A countywide DV Perpetrator Panel meeting will be held monthly on a Wednesday or Thursday at 1pm. Any referred Marac Plus cases will be incorporated into this meeting. This will be chaired by Vickie Crompton. Marac co-ordinators will administer this meeting from Chord Park.
- Any complex Marac cases that require an earlier hearing than monthly, will be managed by way of a Professionals Meeting, arranged by the primary safeguarding lead for the victim. IDVA led cases will be chaired by Deirdre Reed.
- The countywide Operational DASV group have agreed to a 12 month pilot for Marac Plus Meeting for SARAC cases (sexual violence risk assessment conference). It is anticipated there will be no more than one case per month. This meeting will be chaired by Deirdre Reed. This meeting will be heard at Chord Park and administered as per Marac Plus meetings.
- Log-ins and access to Modus will remain the same for all partners.

A Marac Development Day will be planned for July 2018, in order to facilitate feedback and any necessary changes.

Commissioner awards grants to groups across Cambridgeshire to fund projects with young people.

Jason Ablewhite, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, has today (March 23) awarded more than £11,000 in grants towards projects for young people.

Six community groups from across the county have been awarded funding from the Commissioner's Youth Fund in the latest round. The groups will share £11,404 of grant funding for community projects, meaning that over £50,000 was awarded by the Commissioner over the year.

Managed by Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, the Youth Social Action Fund made grants available to help young people engage in positive activities and promote youth social action.

By contributing to the fund, the Commissioner secured match funding, doubling the amount of funding available to support youth social action projects in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Groups that were awarded funding are:

- The Froglife Trust to run a 10 week course for young people and families to attend activities and volunteer at wildlife projects;
- The Green Backyard CIO to provide volunteering opportunities for young people at the community garden by developing a site in Peterborough;
- Stretham Youth Club to provide social and volunteering opportunities for young people living with a disability;
- Fusion Youth Projects to run a weekly youth club in North Huntingdon to raise awareness amongst vulnerable primary school children;
- The Kite Trust to run a peer group promoting understanding of healthy and consenting relationships; and
- Young People of the Year to recruit 30 young people to do weekly visits to a care home local to their school.

In the last year, a host of projects have benefitted from the fund, including Peterborough Bangladesh Welfare Association UK, who received funding to run regular sports training sessions for disadvantaged young people and Ramsey Neighbourhood Trust, who used the funding to enable youth group members to run projects building links with other community groups.

By taking part in positive social action, young people will engage more with their communities and benefit from reduced vulnerability and a reduced risk of becoming involved in crime.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Jason Ablewhite said:

"I am delighted to award these funds to support young people as they participate in their local community. It is heart-warming to see how a small amount of money can make such a significant difference and lead to long term benefits for both young people and their communities"

Public awareness of violence against women (VAW) is, arguably, greater than it ever has been

While the #MeToo campaign has highlighted the prevalence of abusive behaviour of men towards women, research shows that over 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. This has led to VAW being called a 'public health epidemic'.

Campaigning for Awareness

The energy around VAW issues, borne of the frustration of victims and campaigners, continues to increase and build momentum. Campaigns and movements such as #MeToo and Time's Up have gained traction; reports, such as *Femicide Census*, which lists women killed by men, have been produced; the red carpet at the BAFTAs was stormed by *Sisters Uncut* to highlight the issue; and in the House of Commons on International Women's Day 2018, Jess Philips MP read out the names of all women in the UK killed by men over the past year.

These very public acts have brought the issue of VAW to the fore and prompted a serious and determined discussion around methods of prevention. While this is clearly essential, victims of VAW and those working with them also highlight the importance of providing effective support for those who can find themselves in a whirlwind process, being dragged from one service to the next at a time where they are likely to be experiencing trauma.

Fragmented Nature of Support

On International Women's Day 2018, a group of senior representatives from parliament, NGOs, the police, academia and local authorities, met in the House of Lords for a seminar to discuss a report, '*Violence Against Women: Towards an Integrated Approach*'. The report was the result of a conference, '*Violence Against Women: A Determinant of Health*', convened by Cumberland Lodge in 2017 in association with the Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Dame Sally Davies. A key issue highlighted by the report is fragmented nature of the support offered to many victims of VAW. Another concern was the quality of support, particularly within the healthcare system where many caring for victims of VAW lack specialist training.

The Need for Integrated Support Services

At the seminar it was reported that since the Cumberland Lodge conference there has been significant progress in training for healthcare professionals to help them improve their response to cases of VAW. However, despite these training programmes, designed for both GPs and medical schools, what healthcare professionals can offer is still limited. With GPs already stretched for time, it is difficult for them to receive comprehensive training or, significantly, to spot the signs of VAW during patient appointments.

Speaking after the seminar, author Winnie M Li, who wrote of her own experience of having been raped in her book *Dark Chapter*, reflected on the challenges she faced while navigating the complex system between healthcare workers, law enforcement and the judiciary. Li's experience highlights the importance of an integrated support system for victims of VAW. Her experience of stranger rape also highlights the disadvantage of focusing solely on domestic abuse which the government is currently pursuing through the domestic violence bill.

'Slipping Through the Net'

Another concern is the unwillingness of some victims of VAW to disclose their experience. In order to prevent such women from *'slipping through the net'*, Dr Neera Dholakia insists that a positive and helpful first response to disclosure is vital, whether this be to a GP or a receptionist in a hospital. Ellie Ball, an independent sexual violence advisor (ISVA) at Cambridge Rape Crisis, believes in the importance of specialist training for health professionals in order to *'bring professional responses into line with those that exist for domestic abuse currently'*. Ball is referring to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines which exist for health professionals to follow when they suspect, or are informed of, incidences of domestic abuse, but as yet, there are no such guidelines for VAW more generally.

Government Must Act to Ratify Istanbul Convention

After the seminar, Baroness Butler-Sloss argued that in order to take a step in the right direction the UK Government must act to ratify the Istanbul Convention, which, since its adoption, has been ratified in 28 European countries. The Convention outlines several ways to prevent and combat violence against women. It insists that countries who have ratified the Convention *'train professionals in close contact with victims; regularly run awareness-raising campaigns; take steps to include issues such as gender equality and non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships in teaching material; set up treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and for sex offenders; work closely with NGOs; and involve the media and the private sector in eradicating gender stereotypes and promoting mutual respect.'*

Chairing the seminar, Baroness Butler-Sloss highlighted the opportunity for Cumberland Lodge and others to contribute to the consultation process for the forthcoming domestic violence bill. There has been talk that this bill could be the defining feminist moment of Theresa May's premiership. As participants at the seminar noted, while the bill is an important step in the right direction, it is nevertheless a missed opportunity because of its narrow focus on domestic violence, rather than violence against women as a whole.

Recommendations for the Consultation Process

As a result of the seminar, the following recommendations will be fed into the consultation process:

- As well as the guidelines already in place for domestic violence, NICE should establish guidelines for health professionals when working with all cases of sexual violence.
- The number of specialist workers (ISVAs) should be increased to support victims of VAW
- Cross agency communication should be improved so as to make the process of reporting and receiving support less fragmented and easier for victims to navigate
- Implement preventative education within schools, with an emphasis on good relationships and consent within sexual relationships

Police Commissioner partners national charity to improve support for victims of stalking

VICTIMS of stalking and harassment in Cambridgeshire are set to get an enhanced offer of support following an innovative partnership between Police and Crime Commissioner, Jason Ablewhite and national stalking charity **Suzy Lamplugh Trust**.

The move will see the charity, who run the National Stalking Helpline, provide specialist training for a new post holder in Cambridgeshire's Victim and Witness Hub. The post holder will provide dedicated support to victims of stalking and harassment.

The new support worker, known as an *Independent Domestic Violence Advocate* (IDVA) will get hands on experience working alongside staff at the London-based National Stalking Helpline before providing the service locally. The knowledge and experience they gain will enable them to better support and keep safe any Cambridgeshire victims seeking emotional and practical support. The post is being recruited on the Commissioner's behalf by Cambridgeshire County Council and will also be supported by the existing team of experienced IDVAs.

The initiative will also help officers and staff understand the complexities of stalking and harassment, the experience of a victim and how to address risk and create effective safety planning. This will be delivered through a series of events for officers and local victim support service providers.

Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, stalking and harassment is both a criminal offence and a civil action. It is illegal for a person to pursue a course of conduct which they know, or ought to know amounts to stalking. A course of conduct means two or more incidents which cause alarm, distress or fear of violence.

Suzy Lamplugh Trust was founded by Diana and Paul Lamplugh in 1986 following the disappearance and later presumed murder of their daughter Suzy. Suzy Lamplugh Trust receives calls nationwide from victims of stalking and harassment. To date, the National Stalking Helpline has responded to over 23,000 calls and emails. Through advice and advocacy, their stalking specialists make a real difference to the lives of victims.

This initiative is all part of Police and Crime Commissioner Jason Ablewhite's commitment to enable victims of crime to access appropriate support. Jason said:

"Stalking is a very serious problem which can have a devastating effect on victims. Long term effects can include depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, paranoia and post-traumatic stress disorder. By working in partnership with the national experts in stalking and harassment, I can ensure that support is in place for local victims when and where they need it. Any learning gathered from this will be shared with colleagues involved in providing relevant support services."

Rachel Griffin, Chief Executive of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust said:

"The collaboration between our charity and the Police and Crime Commissioner is an exciting development that going forward will enable victims to receive improved support from police. It is encouraging that the Constabulary see the invaluable insight that our service can deliver to improve police response to stalking and harassment. We hope that more police forces follow their lead and work with us."

The charity will also be sharing their knowledge and expertise on stalking and harassment at an event being held at police headquarters in July. Details will be posted on the Police Commissioner's website in due course.

The advert for the new post in the Victim and Witness Hub, based at Copse Court in Peterborough, will be going out on the Cambridgeshire County Council website: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/jobs-&-volunteering/> in the coming weeks. The IDVA will be part of the wider Domestic Abuse Team employed and managed by the County Council.

Calls to the National Stalking Helpline, **0808 802 0300**, are free from all landline telephones and also from mobiles using the *O2, Orange, T Mobile, Three (3), Virgin, and Vodafone* networks.

VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

Technology-facilitated Domestic Abuse and Control

Thursday 10 May 2018

This half day conference will bring together multi-agency practitioners, academics and students in order to raise awareness of technology-facilitated abuse, advance understanding around the digitalisation of abusive relationships and to discuss approaches moving forward.



Featuring:

Laura Higgins
Revenge Porn Helpline

Professor Andy Phippen
University of Plymouth

Professor Emma Bond
University of Suffolk

Victoria Green
Marie Collins Foundation

Ben Clark
Suffolk Constabulary

Richard Baldwin
Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership

Heather Hunt
Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre

and much more!



For more information and to book visit:
<https://virtualviolence.eventbrite.co.uk>