



Cambridgeshire  
County Council



# East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership

2016/17  
BRIEFING THREE  
DOMESTIC ABUSE

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## PURPOSE

The content of this briefing paper is intended to support the conversation that the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) needs to have around domestic abuse, with respect to its position in the partnership priorities, and on the decision of whether to adopt the recommendations of the 2016 VAWG action plan. The main purposes are to:

- Provide a brief picture of domestic abuse in East Cambridgeshire
- Examine and compare domestic abuse-focussed actions of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) against the expectations of what the district CSPs are undertaking by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership
- Introduce the guidance of the new Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership (DASV), Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) CSP action plan

## DOMESTIC ABUSE IN PERSPECTIVE

Domestic Abuse has been a national priority for a number of years and there have been substantial changes to how it is viewed by the public and legal system, from legislation to enforcement and in the judicial process in response to: the focus on DA; several changes to the legal definition<sup>1</sup>; and the launch of the Violence Against Women and Girls Priority (see Appendix A for some key milestones).

A combined public health, local authority and criminal justice needs assessment for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is currently in progress which is due for release in April 2017. As such, the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) decided that another strategic assessment on domestic abuse was not needed. Instead the Research Group have produced this briefing paper for the CSP to review if there are gaps in the domestic abuse related activities in East Cambridgeshire compared to County level expectations of what districts are currently undertaking.

## DOMESTIC ABUSE IN EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

In 2016 there were 8,445 police recorded DA incidents reported in the County and 906 in East Cambridgeshire. As shown at Figure 1 overleaf, there have been gradual increases in the rate of domestic abuse incidents reported over the past five years that are greater than those seen for the county as a whole. In 2016 East Cambridgeshire had a rate of 10.6 incidents per 1,000 population, which is lower than the County rate of 13.3. As in previous years, due to the under-reporting associated with domestic abuse, awareness campaigns and training for front line staff have focused on increasing reporting. There it is not unexpected to see an increase. It is noted that East Cambridgeshire has the second lowest rate of DA incidents, with South Cambridgeshire the lowest.

The Crime Survey of England and Wales (March 2016)<sup>2</sup> reported a prevalence rate for domestic abuse of 17.8 per 1,000 population using police recorded incidents and crimes. The methodology used to determine this was different from what we have used to calculate local figures so is not directly comparable and should only be used as a ballpark comparison.

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<sup>1</sup> The current UK definition of domestic abuse (appendix G in full) includes a range of behaviours including coercion, threatening behaviour, violence or sexual abuse. Domestic abuse can include some or all of these behaviours over time can vary.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendinmarch2016>

**Figure 1: Rate of police recorded domestic abuse incidents 2012-2016, East Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire**

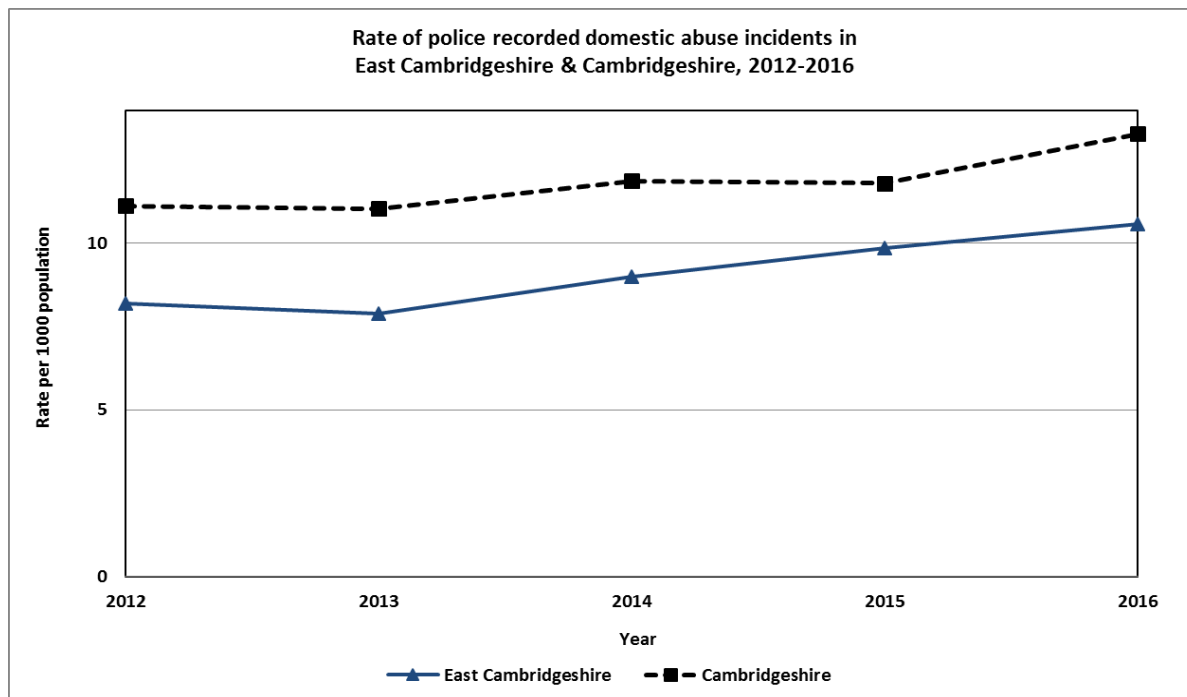


Table 1 below shows a count of crimes with a DA marker<sup>3</sup> for East Cambridgeshire. The number of recorded domestic abuse crimes has increased by 100% from 2012 to 2016, but as expected there are far more DA incidents than Crimes with a DA marker. As a proxy for conversions of incidents to crimes we have represented the proportion of incidents made up by total crimes with a DA marker (Table 1). Over the same five year time period this proportion has increased from 29% to 45%. This is a positive outcome for East Cambridgeshire as the proportion reported for England and Wales is 41%<sup>4</sup>. The increases in both DA incidents and DA marked crimes, is believed to indicate improvements and increases in awareness about and recording of DA rather than increases in prevalence and the increase in the proportion of crimes to incidents supports this.

**Table 1: Police recorded crimes (with a domestic abuse marker) and incidents for East Cambridgeshire 2012-2016**

Year	Domestic abuse crimes (marker)	Domestic abuse incidents	Proportion (crimes/incidents)
2012	204	694	29.4
2013	200	675	29.6
2014	278	771	36.1
2015	302	844	35.8
2016	409	906	45.1
<b>Increase 2012-2016</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>54%</b>

<sup>3</sup> When recording crimes officers can use a 'marker' to indicate that the 'domestic abuse' was occurring when the crime took place. However this relies upon the individual officer recognising that the offence occurs in accordance with the government definition of domestic violence and abuse, and that they remember to use the 'marker', so statistics from the application of the DA marker may not capture all crimes that are DA related as may not always be obvious that DA was a factor e.g. theft offences.

<sup>4</sup>CSEW Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2016

Also of note here is the finding that around 40% of all VAP recorded in East Cambridgeshire was categorised as some form of domestic abuse; this is higher than the proportion of 33%<sup>5</sup> reported for England and Wales. This may be due in part to lower night-time economy related violence.

Domestic abuse incidents have risen by just over 30% from 2012-2016, the explanation for this is generally accepted to be that this is an improvement resulting from increased reporting, increased recording, and changes to the law resulting from changes to the definition of domestic abuse, rather than increases to actual prevalence. The impact of the 2014 HMIC Report: Making the victim count<sup>6</sup> on police recording practices has been well discussed in Briefing Paper two for 2016/17<sup>7</sup>, and also applies here. In addition to this explanation, and further support for it are the very slight but statistically significant decreases in domestic abuse prevalence reported by the Crime Survey of England and Wales survey results (7.0% decreasing to 6.1% over five years). It is however, still important that the local Partnership has a clear and coherent approach in place to tackle DA, in keeping with the Countywide strategy.

## COUNTY STRATEGY - DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP (DASV)

Domestic abuse has been a national priority for a number of years. More recently this priority has been expanded so that domestic abuse is just one facet of the strategy to eliminate VAWG.

In April 2013, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership met with lead officers from each of the district CSPs and agreed a course of action for activities intended to combat domestic abuse. Three years later it is clear that there is a disconnect between these expectation and actions.

In December 2016, the DASV Partnership released the preliminary findings and recommendations from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough VAWG Needs Assessment, commissioned by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner. The full report will be released in April and emphasises the need to integrate the wider issues of VAWG into the understanding of the local picture context in order to contribute to a coordinated response. A suggested action plan for CSPs was also provided, which we have referred to as the 2016 VAWG (Draft) Action Plan. Currently this action plan is for guidance purposes and has not been finalised or agreed by CSPs, it is the most recent set of actions provided at a County level. Therefore we have incorporated it into our review of actions and gaps for East Cambridgeshire, to provide a forward looking perspective of what the CSP could take action on.

Table 2 compares the actions from the 2013 DASV action plan and the 2016 VAWG (Draft) Action Plan, and details where there has been a lack of activity (gaps), achievements, and opportunities. Overall there appears to have been a lack of emphasis on domestic abuse in East Cambridgeshire since the release of the 2013 DASV action plan, as evidenced by which actions have been met. Specifically of the four actions:

- two have not been met (White Ribbon Status and Annual Awareness Events),
- and two have been partially met but supporting evidence is lacking (promoting training and Awareness raising).

Looking forward to the 2016 action plan of six actions, one action has been met already (focus on school based preventative work). The other five actions, if they remain after the full needs assessment is released, will need the attention of the Partnership, but there are some really clear opportunities where action can be taken and the Partnership can add value to the County strategy.

<sup>5</sup> CSEW Crime in England and Wales: Year Ending September 2016

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/community-safety/CSP/east>

Table 2: Comparison of Domestic Abuse and VAWG action plans for Community Safety Partnerships from 2013 and 2016. Equivalent actions and comments are coloured similarly.

Action achieved
  Action yet to be achieved
  Action not met and not planned

Actions for CSPs from:		Actions that have been, or are being, met and future implications of the new action plan	Opportunities for the Partnership
DASV 2013 plan for CSPs	VAWG 2016 plan for CSPs		
Seek White Ribbon Status UK branch of a global awareness campaign to ensure men take more responsibility for reducing the level of violence against women <a href="http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk">www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk</a>	<i>No equivalent recommendation in 2016</i>	East Cambridgeshire District Council are going to seek White Ribbon Status later in 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As part of this the ECDC Housing team will be hosting market stall days which will include the eyes and ears scheme and domestic abuse awareness during 2017/18.</li> <li>- There will be further training delivered as part of this, however a detailed plan was not available at the time of writing</li> </ul> Council will need to meet certain criteria, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- displaying posters in all public areas, and promote DA related work</li> <li>- provide DA information in at least 3 community languages/formats</li> <li>- provide DA information on council website</li> <li>- ensure DA policy for staff is in place</li> <li>- nominate a specific DA lead person to work with the White Ribbon organisation</li> <li>- conduct networking and awareness raising, including work with sports clubs</li> </ul>	Training opportunities should be explored in detail.
Facilitate and run annual awareness event with matched funding contribution from CCC Safer Communities Team.	<i>No equivalent recommendation in 2016</i>	This action was recommended by the DASV based on the success of an event held in East Cambridgeshire in 2011. That event invited front line practitioners with involvement in handling DA cases to a best practice and policy/strategy themed seminar on DA issues. There were keynote speakers delivering presentations as well as break out workshops in the afternoon.  Although these annual events ran for several years in a row, unfortunately no event has been run since 2011 before the 2013 action plan was released.	The opportunity here is to reinvigorate these annual events using them as a forum to share local knowledge of context, help identify gaps locally and disseminate key messages to stakeholders.

<p>Promote and support DASV delivered training</p>	<p>Ensure staff in contact with VAWG victims receive training</p>	<p>Promoting and supporting relevant training continues to be a major theme of the action plan, but there appears to be an emphasis on taking greater responsibility to ensure that training is received by those that should.</p> <p>Awareness of available training may be an identified gap. Representatives of the Soham and Ely locality teams have indicated they are not aware of online training for DA abuse.</p> <p>ECDC staff do attend training on domestic abuse, but there is no regular monitoring</p>	<p>There is an opportunity here to be more proactive about monitoring which staff have and/or should have training in Domestic Abuse to ensure that all staff who need the training are receiving it. This applies to all stakeholders partners. Investigate further training opportunities for front line staff</p>
<p>Coordinated Communications / Awareness in partnership with constabulary</p>	<p>Raising community awareness of VAWG via communication campaigns, tying in with new countywide coordinating communications group.</p> <p>Linking with community groups and special interest groups to raise awareness of VAWG and to develop communication and awareness plans.</p>	<p>Awareness raising for domestic abuse is an ongoing activity for the CSP and is listed in the three year plan as focussing on key calendar events, such as: at the time of major sporting events (Olympics, football tournaments), also when family tensions may be heightened for example Christmas and New Year's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2016 domestic abuse posters were distributed to licensed premises across the District during the Euro 2016 tournament. PCSOs visited the main pubs and engaged with licensees to display the posters.</li> <li>- As part of this the ECDC Housing team will be hosting market stall days which will include domestic abuse awareness during 2017/18.</li> </ul> <p>In the 2016 action plan the scope has broadened to include raising community awareness of ALL VAWG, not just domestic abuse. Ending VAWG is a national priority, and therefore the Partnership should aim to broaden its contextual understanding of VAWG in East Cambridgeshire to ensure that awareness raising around these issues can be targeted and effective.</p>	<p>There is no indication in the action plans in how much community awareness raising on domestic abuse is considered enough, but the Partnership could consider setting a target to perform an agreed number of awareness campaigns each year.</p> <p>Coordinating with the Community Hub project to be run in conjunction with the Rosmini Centre would likely open up opportunities to connect with local community and special interest groups, for the aim of raising awareness around DA (and VAWG).</p>
<p><i>No equivalent recommendation in 2013</i></p>	<p>Bystander interventions such as Safe Spaces which will involve linking with local businesses and support services to offer places where victims of VAWG can make safe disclosure and contact support services.</p>	<p>Safe spaces has run elsewhere in the County for a number of years and is planned to continue as it is deemed effective.</p> <p>'Ask for Angela' is also being launched in Feb 2017, an initiative to keep people safe while dating.</p> <p>East Cambridgeshire is not currently running any bystander intervention campaigns specific to DA or VAWG, but has successfully launched the more broadly aimed 'Eyes and Ears' project. This project effectively trains members of the public, especially from local businesses, to sign post and refer individual that may be in need of assistance for any issue.</p>	<p>An opportunity exists here to extend 'the Eyes and Ears' project to encompass 'Safe Spaces' under the same umbrella. However it is critical that a full review of how this could be achieved safely for victims would need to be conducted in the first instance.</p>

<p><i>No equivalent recommendation in 2013</i></p>	<p>Where local areas identify knowledge gaps within the VAWG agenda these are highlighted at a county-level</p>	<p>East Cambridgeshire CSP need to review links between the Partnership Board and the County-level to ensure a collaborative approach, and maintain lines of communication. Representation on the East Cambridgeshire CSP Board by the County has been lacking for some time.</p> <p>The Partnership may benefit from having a formal lead for 'VAWG' to help drive the relationship with the County-level VAWG focussed partnerships. Published strategic assessments highlight knowledge gaps. The East Cambridgeshire CSP is currently reviewing its strategic assessment process. These opportunities to identify knowledge gaps need to be kept in mind while finalising the new schedule of assessments.</p>	<p>The Partnership may benefit from having a formal lead for 'VAWG' to help drive the relationship with the County-level VAWG focussed partnerships.</p>
<p>No equivalent recommendation in 2013</p>	<p>Focus on school-based VAWG preventative work such as healthy relationships and staying safe</p>	<p>Chelsea's Choice was delivered in 2016 to secondary students and professionals, and Tough love will be performed in 2017</p>	
<p>No equivalent recommendation in 2013</p>	<p>Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is shared across the county. Local areas will be responsible for driving forward actions across their partnerships.</p>	<p>CSP to ensure that any lessons learned from DHRs are shared across the county, and that locally necessary changes are actioned to reduce future risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There have thankfully not been any DHRs in East Cambridgeshire</li> </ul>	<p>Prepare for the eventuation of a DHR. Consider cost and means of ensuring learning is shared</p>

## HURDLES TO ACHIEVING ACTIONS

There are a number of obvious barriers to ensuring that the knowledge and conversation about domestic abuse in East Cambridgeshire is current and relevant, and these therefore are hurdles to achieving actions, recommended or otherwise:

- *DA is not featured specifically as a partnership priority.* Domestic Abuse therefore has received minimal partnership attention in the past few years. This background focus on domestic abuse has seen conversation about domestic abuse dwindle. However, the VAWG action plan assumes VAWG (and therefore DA) is a priority, and national strategy implores that to make a difference to DA it must become 'Everybody's business'
- *Lack of representation from the DASV at the CSP Board meetings.* There has been no attendance or feedback about what the County are doing that could be supported by the Partnership. This limits the capacity of the Partnership to have conversations about local gaps, and perpetuates the assumption that everything is being covered.
- *Lack of attendance by County board member at the CSP Board meetings.* Absence by the County Board member also limits the conversation about DA (and other VAWG) between the county and district levels.
- *Funding arrangements.* The new method of attributing funding allocations to Community Safety Partnerships in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by the Office and Police and Crime Commissioner jeopardises the ability of the partnership to implement additional initiatives. However, the Governments VAWG Strategy offers a substantial transformation fund for VAWG initiatives and may provide an alternative avenue for funding<sup>8</sup>

## SUMMARY

The purpose of this document was to provide a brief overview of domestic abuse in East Cambridgeshire and assess the gaps in CSP activities against the expectations of County DASV Partners. Locally in the last five years:

- There have been gradual increases in the rate of police recorded DA incidents (per 1,000 population) in East Cambridgeshire. The increase may indicate greater confidence by victims to report, which is positive. However with greater reports there is greater resource pressure on local policing pressure as the volume of medium and high risk cases also increase.
- The number of police recorded crimes with a domestic abuse marker has doubled. Further work at the Police is ongoing to improve data quality<sup>9</sup>.
- The proportion of DA incidents that have been converted to crimes (using a proxy) has increased by 54%, which is higher than the proportion reported for England and Wales but is lower than the county average.
- In 2013 the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Partnership released action plans for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CSPs on domestic abuse which provided a basic guide for the actions that CSPs should take, and used an East Cambridgeshire activity as an example of best practise.
- In 2016 the DASV produced an updated action plan to accompany the Violence Against Women and Girls Assessment for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and in response to the

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-service-transformation-fund>

<sup>9</sup> T/Detective Chief Inspector Bryan Driver



Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy published by the Home Office in the same year. This has greatly broadened the focus for attention.

- An analysis of the actions of the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partners against the 2013 and 2016 action plans shows that current activities have only partially achieved the expectations of the action plans and highlights that there is room for further attention on DA and VAWG by the Partnership.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Partnership

- Determine to lift the focus of domestic abuse through commitment to the Home Offices VAWG strategy (March 2016), making domestic abuse CSP business.
- Central Government released its 'National VAWG Statement of Expectations'<sup>10</sup> in December 2016, which incorporates Domestic Abuse, and *the Partnership should be sighted on this* as it sets out "what local areas need to put in place to ensure their response to VAWG issues is as collaborative, robust and effective as it can be so that all victims and survivors can get the help they need".
- In light of the above, the Partnership may benefit from having a formal lead for 'All VAWG' to help drive the relationship with the County-level VAWG focussed partnerships.
- Investigate funding opportunities provided by the VAWG transformation fund to look for opportunities to future-proof initiatives locally
- Actively encourage attendance by DASV representatives to CSP Board meetings, *or vice versa*
- Re-establish regular representation by the County Board Member at CSP Board meeting

### Action plans

- Reinvigorate annual awareness events, using them as a forum to share local knowledge of context, help identify gaps locally and disseminate key messages to stakeholders.
- Actively monitor which staff have and/or should have training in Domestic Abuse to ensure that all staff who need the training are receiving it. This would provide a performance measure that could be used for evidencing funding allocations from the OPCC and to all stakeholder partners.
- Consider setting a target to perform an agreed number of awareness campaigns each year. Meeting these targets could also be used as a performance measure.
- Coordinate with the Community Hub project to be run in with the Rosmini Centre. This should provide opportunities to connect with local community and special interest groups, for the aim of raising awareness around DA (and VAWG), and may be especially useful for reaching victims in minority groups, that exhibit higher than average levels of under-reporting.
- Consider how the 'Eyes and Ears' project could be expanded to encompass 'Safe Spaces'. A full review of how this could be achieved safely for victims would need to be conducted in the first instance.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/violence-against-women-and-girls-national-statement-of-expectations>

**APPENDIX A - TIMELINE OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL CHANGES AROUND DOMESTIC ABUSE BOTH SUBSTANTIAL AND RELEVANT TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE CSPS**

