



Domestic Abuse - Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire

2025

Final V1.0

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1. Executive Summary

This Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire 2025 has been produced by the Policy, Performance and Intelligence Service on behalf of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Service. It fulfils the statutory duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 for Tier One authorities to assess the need for support for victims of domestic abuse, including children, for safe accommodation. The assessment aims to provide an evidence base to inform local strategy, commissioning decisions, and service development, ensuring that provision is responsive, inclusive, and adequately resourced.

This needs assessment draws on national prevalence estimates, local administrative data, and stakeholder insight to identify demand, gaps in provision, and barriers to access. It also reviews progress against recommendations from the previous Cambridgeshire and Peterborough assessment and sets out recommendations for future work in Cambridgeshire.

1.1. Key Findings

Context

- By applying the national prevalence estimate to the latest Cambridgeshire population estimates (CCC mid-2023 population estimates), we estimate that 45,200 people aged 16+ would have been the victim of a DA in 2023/24. Of these, an estimated 35,500 would have been victims of partner abuse.
- In Cambridgeshire, the number of police recorded DA incidents have increased by 13% in the last year (2023/24 to 2024/25) and is up 15% compared to 2022/23. DA crimes saw a smaller decrease in the last year of 7% and have decreased slightly compared to 2022/23 (-4%).
- Population forecasts show a 10% increase in the Cambridgeshire population by mid-2031. According to CCC mid-2031 population forecasts, there is expected to be notable growth in the 65 to 69 age group (25%, +8,685 residents); the 80 to 84 age group (+44%, +8,250 residents); and the 85+ age group (+31%, +5,620 residents).
- Language, ethnic, and religious minorities encounter distinct risks and barriers regarding domestic abuse (DA). Census figures for these characteristics are provided for Cambridgeshire in this assessment. It should be noted that the most common languages in Cambridgeshire, other than English, are Polish, Lithuanian, and Romanian. Cambridge City is also notably more ethnically diverse compared to the national average and other local districts.
- 42% of Cambridgeshire is classified as rural, presenting challenges around isolation, transport, and access to services.

- In 2022/23, 11% of families with dependents (under 16-year-olds, or under 19 and in full time education) in Cambridgeshire, were living with “relative low income” (Poverty Strategy Commission, 2025, p. 12). 19% of children were reported as living in poverty (after housing costs).

Specific Need Groups

- Children are now legally recognised as victims of domestic abuse. Local figures for this group of victims are difficult to ascertain. Service data shows an increase in Cambridgeshire Children's Social Care assessments recording domestic abuse in recent years and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough MARAC records highlighted 1,405 children lived in households affected by high-risk domestic abuse in 2024/25.
- Applying national statistics to local population figures, an estimated 18,400 men in Cambridgeshire have experienced DA in the last year. However, there is very limited male only safe accommodation nationally. In 2024/25, 14 male adults were supported in safe accommodation (1% of the total supported).
- Whilst gathering data for this needs assessment it became evident that the care experienced status is not routinely recorded in safe accommodation service data, forming a gap in the evidence base.
- Annual location statistics for April 2025 indicated that 1050 individuals in the UK regular armed forces had Cambridgeshire as their permanent stationed location (this includes people deployed on operations or on temporary assignments elsewhere) (Ministry of Defence, 2025). The majority of these (86%, 900 individuals) were based in Huntingdonshire. Statistics from Census 2021 indicated that there were approximately 22,600 veterans residing in Cambridgeshire. Armed forces status does not appear to be routinely recorded in DA service data locally to understand specific needs of this group.
- The proportion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population in all Cambridgeshire districts is higher than England and the East of England, with the exception of Huntingdonshire. Rates of referrals to specific DA support for the GRT community has varied across the Cambridgeshire districts.

Provision

- Council of Europe guidance suggests Cambridgeshire should have 70 refuge spaces, based on population size; currently, there are 32 refuge bed spaces

and 16 dispersed accommodation spaces, with no second-stage accommodation available.

- The limited accessibility of safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire has become evident. This assessment outlines some examples of accessibility provided within safe accommodation locally, however there is scope to improve the accessibility of safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire.

Demand

- Safe Accommodation service figures indicate a substantial increase in the number of referrals for Safe Accommodation over the last 3 financial years; however, this data is likely an incomplete picture of demand due to the way referral processes operate when refuge spaces are unavailable.
- Homelessness applications due to domestic abuse have increased across most districts since 2021/22. More recent figures show how perpetrators form a component of homelessness related demand in Cambridgeshire.
- National figures reflecting co-occurring support needs in households that were recorded as homeless in 2023/24 highlights how history of mental health problems frequently co-occurs with households identified as 'At risk of/ has experienced domestic abuse'. Multiple co-occurring needs i.e. complexity of need is seen in this data.
- It should be noted that there may be a safe accommodation need among those rough sleeping in Cambridgeshire that is neither easily quantified nor readily addressed through existing processes.
- Local housing register (Home-Link) data showed that in mid-2025, an estimated 2.1% of live and offered applicants in Cambridgeshire were recorded as experiencing domestic abuse, this equated to 214 households and represents an increase since 2022.

Barriers

- There were 457 instances in the year ending March 2025 in which a household was unable to be supported in safe accommodation. The most common reason that a household was unable to be supported was that the service was unable to meet the households needs, with 115 instances. Of those needs unable to be met, drug support needs (27 instances), followed by the household having no recourse to public funds (21 instances) were highlighted. Needs relating to Mental Health, Alcohol, Disability and Family

size or children's age were also unable to be met to varying extent. The data does not clearly reveal cooccurring needs for households, so the complexity of need cannot be quantified at this time.

- There were 85 instances in 2024/25 where capacity constraints meant that a household could not be supported. This goes towards showing the level of demand is not met by existing safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire.
- Some other barriers to safe accommodation were raised in the process of writing this needs assessment. These are not always captured in standard data recording. For example, while pet ownership is relatively common, safe accommodation for survivors with their pets is very limited (i.e. dispersed accommodation). This presents another common barrier to accessing safe accommodation.

Survivor Voice

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires Local Authorities to ensure the voice of survivors is included within a strategic board, with oversight of the safe accommodation for victims/survivors of domestic abuse duty. Recruitment is currently underway to appoint a Domestic Abuse Co-production facilitator, who will work with survivors to gain feedback on all parts of the system and will develop a co production panel to drive forward improvements.
- Some initial survivor feedback sought for this needs assessment highlighted inconsistent support during move-on, concerns about staff training, and the importance of maintaining confidentiality in court processes.

1.2. Recommendations

The table below summarises recommendations arising from this needs assessment.

| No. | Topic | Recommendation |
|-----|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Care Experience | In the process of developing this needs assessment, it has been identified that there is not consistent recording of IDVA clients and other funded services where individuals are care experienced. Therefore, it is recommended that this data is recorded and then utilised to assess needs specific to those individuals in the future. |

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 2 | Armed Forces | In the process of developing this needs assessment, it has been identified that there is not consistent recording of IDVA clients and other funded services where individuals have an armed forces connection. Therefore, it is recommended that armed forces connection data is recorded and then utilised to help assess needs specific to those individuals in the future. |
| 3 | Sanctuary Scheme/ Target Hardening | When recommissioning target hardening services, the service needs to include a requirement for enhanced recording of data and to include children supported via this service. For example, this could be carried out via changed information gathering on the referral form. |
| 4 | Managed Reciprocals Scheme | The managed reciprocals scheme will need to be reviewed in light of national policy changes. |
| 5 | Second Stage Accommodation | Consider the provision of Second Stage accommodation in Cambridgeshire. |
| 6 | Flexible Funding | To continue to offer flexible funding in Cambridgeshire as part of the Whole Housing Approach to safe accommodation. |
| 7 | Accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Clearly there is scope to improve the accessibility of safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire. Future developments in discussion include: CDA (Cambridgeshire Deaf Association) has been looking into whether they could develop a small refuge for survivors who are deaf. The DASV service is seeking to establish at least one unit of safe accommodation which is fully wheelchair accessible. ii. Specifically in relation to disability, the recording of types of disability and the adjustments that are required forms a data gap locally. iii. Given the high level of housing growth locally, there is opportunity to encourage local authorities to use planning obligation agreements (i.e. Section 106) to create accessible temporary accommodation which could also be accessed by survivors of DA. |
| 8 | Homelessness-perpetrators | Link with systems and processes to understand how perpetrator access to stable accommodation affects risk to victims/ survivors locally. |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 9 | Homelessness-co-occurring needs | Explore making analysis of co-occurring needs possible with local data in future, to understand local patterns among households owed a homelessness duty. |
| 10 | Rough Sleeping | To develop processes to support those rough sleeping in Cambridgeshire experiencing domestic abuse to access support appropriate to their safe accommodation needs. |
| 11 | Capacity constraints and level of provision | To record patterns of occupancy in safe accommodation locally and review processes. This can help ensure occupancy rates are maximised. |
| 12 | Drug and Alcohol related needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To seek way to support consistent recording where clients do disclose drug and alcohol use to IDVAs. ii. Professional feedback alongside local data indicates that providing suitable support for survivors with substance use issues is problematic. Whilst the scale is unknown it remains clear that more could be done to provide consistent and co-ordinated timely interventions for those survivors in need of drug and alcohol support and safe accommodation. |
| 13 | Pet Ownership | Explore how pet ownership can become less of a barrier to accessing safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire. |
| 14 | Victim Voice | This needs assessment recommends services carry out a journey mapping exercises with both clients and professionals to gain more detailed insight. Journey mapping is a reflective practice used to map an individual's journey through various systems and services; this provides the opportunity to capture barriers and facilitators of support beyond existing data recording." |
| 15 | Upcoming national changes | The upcoming renters reform bill is likely to have an impact on the housing landscape locally and nationally. Services will need to work to respond to this once more clarity is available. |

Table 1: Recommendations and conclusions from the 2021 safe accommodation needs assessment, comments, and updates

| Recommendation from 2021 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) | Comments from authors of 2025 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire only) | Update as of May 2025 (Cambridgeshire only) |
|---|---|---|
| <p>The process of completing this needs assessment has highlighted that inconsistent data collection is a key concern across relevant local agencies. This is in particular relation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability • Occupation • Sexual Identity | <p>Lack of high-quality data remains an issue both locally and nationally. Either because data is missing (not recorded), because it could not be shared in time for the publication of this report or because the inconsistencies meant that insights could not be drawn from it. MHCLG no longer ask for Occupation data.</p> | <p>Inconsistent data collection continues to be an issue. Further work to develop ongoing data sharing would enable a more effective evidence base for decision-making. Specifically in relation to disability, the recording of types of disability and the adjustments that are required as a result is lacking locally. This is an area that requires further development.</p> |
| <p>A spectrum of response is required to meet varied needs of clients, dependent on their risk, household structure, occupation and tenure of property.</p> | <p>The observation of the authors is that this remains the case. Survivors are not a homogenous group and should be treated as such. Individuals and families have a range of needs which can co-occur and, in some cases, might be complex and require specific bespoke responses.</p> | <p>A Whole Housing Approach needs to be taken locally to address this.</p> |

| Recommendation from 2021 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) | Comments from authors of 2025 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire only) | Update as of May 2025 (Cambridgeshire only) |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Services need to ensure there is focus to meet the needs of some groups in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having staff who are able to communicate with Lithuanian and Polish women in their native language. • Enabling those from gypsy/traveller communities to access support • Ensuring services reach older people and provide an accessible service which meet specific needs. | <p>Ensuring a complete evidence base would allow for a clear description of service needs. Issues of language and location (e.g. rurality) remain in Cambridgeshire.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post of 'A8' IDVA has been deleted since restructure, as demographics are changing in Cambs and it is felt there is less need for support in first language (Polish). There is a remaining Minority Ethnic IDVA (who speaks Urdu*). • Future work to develop community links with GRT community in FDC and SCDC, to deliver DA awareness in a way which can reach/works best for s/v in that community. • Older Person DASH developed. • Developed links and older person DA awareness, linked in with DA Champions HourGlass |
| <p>A high proportion of victims identified by the data gathered are living in social housing. This highlights the importance of housing providers and associations are working towards DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation.</p> | <p>This was examined in detail due to local changes in approach such as more Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridge City, South Cambs have been DAHA re-accredited. • Hunts, East Cambs are now DAHA accredited • Fenland is going through accreditation. • Other housing associations such as CHS and Cross Keys are also DAHA accredited. |

| Recommendation from 2021 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) | Comments from authors of 2025 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire only) | Update as of May 2025 (Cambridgeshire only) |
|--|--|---|
| <p>There is currently a lack of supported safe accommodation for men, women with teenage boys (including teenage children) and for others where shared refuge accommodation wouldn't be appropriate.</p> | <p>Work was undertaken by the service and the authors to consider the local picture and good practice elsewhere in the formation of this report.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a still a lack of this type of accommodation. • The dispersed accommodation has provided larger safe accommodation but due to lack suitable move-on accommodation, this accommodation can be occupied for long periods of time, reducing availability. |
| <p>Mental health and substance misuse are the most common needs of women in refuge accommodation. They are also a key reason in women not being able to access refuge accommodation. There is a need for specialist refuge support for those women where there are complex needs and shared accommodation with children would not be appropriate, as well as requiring more support from staff.</p> | <p>The authors met with WHAG and others in Cambridge, looking to address gaps in knowledge and pathways for complex needs s/v often unsafely accommodated or rough sleeping.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still lack of available refuge spaces for victims/survivors with Drug support needs. • Refuges often requiring evidence of TierIV support before they will accept a victims/survivors. • No provision in Cambs. • Hard to reach high-risk group, high rates of re-victimisation, less likely to consider court injunctions or CJS steps. • Still need to gain more information from agencies such as: CGL, Aspire, ITAC, HFirst either about victims/survivors they know experiencing DA or how best that data could be included in future. |

| Recommendation from 2021 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) | Comments from authors of 2025 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire only) | Update as of May 2025 (Cambridgeshire only) |
|--|---|--|
| <p>The number of children living/fleeing with victims of DA is not accurately recorded. This creates difficulties in ascertaining the need for suitable space for victims with child dependents</p> | <p>Authors consider this to still be a problem within the data.</p> | <p>Data recording is still an issue but better with IDVA-Refuge and L.A homeless data (or was*). Protected characteristics of children often not recorded</p> |
| <p>There is a need for flexible support to ensure victims are able to live in safe accommodation – which may include increasing the safety of their own home, or alternative accommodation. Those suffering domestic abuse must be able to have choice and control of where they live and are able to maintain social capital (e.g. employment, schools, community support), for them and their children.</p> | <p>This recommendation still remains pertinent, particularly as it has been difficult to assess all potential needs of cohorts due to data availability issues.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More work to be done with housing teams, housing associations to improve response to s/v at the early intervention stage, target hardening, support with court injunctions etc so that victim/survivors can remain in their home. • Referral for DA support at the ‘homeless’ stage can reduce options for flexible support. • HRD (Housing Related Debt) policies in Cambs, which can penalise or complicate the potential support for victim/survivors, particularly those who have experienced financial abuse. |

| Recommendation from 2021 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) | Comments from authors of 2025 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire only) | Update as of May 2025 (Cambridgeshire only) |
|---|---|---|
| <p>There is often a need for emergency/temporary accommodation whilst other accommodation is arranged – this could be days or months, depending on a range of factors.</p> | <p>Given the nature of domestic abuse emergency/temporary accommodation will continue to be needed.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still a need for S188 emergency TA, despite changes following DA Act 21 to homeless applications and the COG. Examples of victims/survivors and their families been housed in B&B/Hotels, Hostels*B&B (privately owned ‘supported housing’). This accommodation is mixed gender and often used by a variety of agencies-Housing-Probation-Social Care to accommodate people with a variety of needs from across Cambs. Victims/survivors have spoken of being fearful and re-traumatized by this type of accommodation. • Significant demand on TA, social housing and lack of stable affordable PST, is one of the reasons for the use of this accommodation. |

| Recommendation from 2021 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) | Comments from authors of 2025 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire only) | Update as of May 2025 (Cambridgeshire only) |
|--|--|---|
| <p>No recourse to public funds and uncertain immigration status can be particular issues, where there can be huge barriers in accessing accommodation, and there is need to ensure they are support whilst applying for any relevant concessions.</p> | <p>As there was little evidence of a change this document only considers this briefly.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDVA support offered to NRPF clients. • Support for NRPF highlighted in SAS.2024-27 • Using FF to support NRPF clients for limited periods of time. • Building knowledge and resources for DA support services, to enable them to find by & for organisations, low-cost Immigration advice and more pathways to support. |
| <p>There is a need to ensure support is made available for those who are in local authority temporary accommodation due to fleeing domestic abuse.</p> | <p>This continues to be appropriate when considering the development of a support offer.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of DA support in LA temporary accommodation is not measured. Anecdotally some LA housing teams refer more s/v who are in TA for DA. • Providers of TA are often a separate Housing Association. Housing IDVAs want to gain more links with housing associations providing TA for the LA. • Lack of evidence/information that work is done with victim/survivors in TA to explore returning home safely if possible. |

| Recommendation from 2021 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) | Comments from authors of 2025 needs assessment (Cambridgeshire only) | Update as of May 2025 (Cambridgeshire only) |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Relevant recommendations of the A Refuge for All project (Shaping Our Lives A Refuge for All Project and Findings Report – Shaping Our Lives) should be implemented including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refuge spaces that are accessible for a range of disability needs not just wheelchair access, • using the Social Model of Disability over other models, • - considering personal care needs of women in refuges and how these can be provided safely. | <p>The authors were unable to find evidence that this recommendation had been achieved.</p> | <p>It could not be evidenced that this had happened.</p> |
| <p>Ensure there are suitable accommodation options for victims over 60, with or without care and support needs, where residential or respite care would not be appropriate and including where the victim needs domiciliary care.</p> | <p>The authors were unable to find evidence that this recommendation had been achieved.</p> | <p>Not available</p> |

2. Introduction

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) requires Tier 1 local authorities to carry out a Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment for their area every 3 years. A Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment should provide an evidence base to inform the development of a local strategy and commissioning decisions. This needs assessment has been produced by the Policy, Performance and Intelligence Service in partnership with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Service. This document is structured in response to respond to the key areas outlined in central government guidance: (Home Office, 2025)

- Domestic Abuse occurring locally and the local population (context).
- Specific needs groups in the local population.
- Provision of safe accommodation in the area.
- Demand for safe accommodation in the area.
- Identifying barriers to safe accommodation.
- Victim/ Survivor experience and needs locally.

In Cambridgeshire the needs assessment was delayed in order for the separation of shared arrangement of Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to be completed. Therefore, this needs assessment focuses solely on the geographic boundary of Cambridgeshire County Council. This document also considers changes since the last assessment and reviews the earlier recommendations and any progress made towards them.

3. Context: Domestic Abuse in Cambridgeshire and the local population

3.1. Domestic Abuse in Cambridgeshire

3.1.1. Prevalence

National prevalence estimates for domestic abuse (DA) are available from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) based on questions to respondents about whether they have been a victim of DA in the previous year. These estimates provide the best indicator of the current scale of domestic abuse nationwide and are available for the survey period ending March 2025 (ONS, 2025, p. A9b). These CSEW estimates indicated that 9.1% of women (aged 16+) had experienced DA within the last year; higher than the 6.5% estimated for men (aged 16+).

Applying national prevalence estimates to the local population does not represent a perfect measure, as such, figures have been rounded to the hundred and should be treated as indicative only.

By applying the national prevalence estimate to the latest Cambridgeshire population estimates (CCC mid-2023 population estimates), we estimate that approximately 45,200 people aged 16+ would have been the victim of a DA in 2023/24. Of these, an estimated 35,500 would have been victims of partner abuse.

Table 2: Estimated prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year, in Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire districts, aged 16+, 2024/25

| Local Authority | Any domestic abuse (all) | Any domestic abuse - women | Any domestic abuse - men |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cambridge | 10,100 | 5,900 | 4,200 |
| East Cambridgeshire | 5,800 | 3,500 | 2,400 |
| Fenland | 6,800 | 4,000 | 2,700 |
| Huntingdonshire | 11,900 | 7,000 | 4,900 |
| South Cambridgeshire | 10,600 | 6,400 | 4,300 |
| Cambridgeshire | 45,200 | 26,800 | 18,400 |

Source: Estimates created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using prevalence estimates from CSEW for domestic abuse experienced in the last year for the period ending March 2025 (ONS, 2025, p. A9b).

Table 3: Estimated prevalence of partner abuse experienced in the last year in Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire districts, aged 16+, 2024/25

| Local Authority | Any partner abuse (all) | Any partner abuse – women | Any partner abuse - men |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cambridge | 7,900 | 4,700 | 3,200 |
| East Cambridgeshire | 4,600 | 2,800 | 1,800 |
| Fenland | 5,300 | 3,300 | 2,100 |
| Huntingdonshire | 9,300 | 5,700 | 3,700 |
| South Cambridgeshire | 8,400 | 5,100 | 3,300 |
| Cambridgeshire | 35,500 | 21,600 | 14,000 |

Source: Estimates created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using prevalence estimates from CSEW for domestic abuse experienced in the last year for the period ending March 2025 (ONS, 2025, p. A9b).

3.1.2. Police recorded domestic abuse

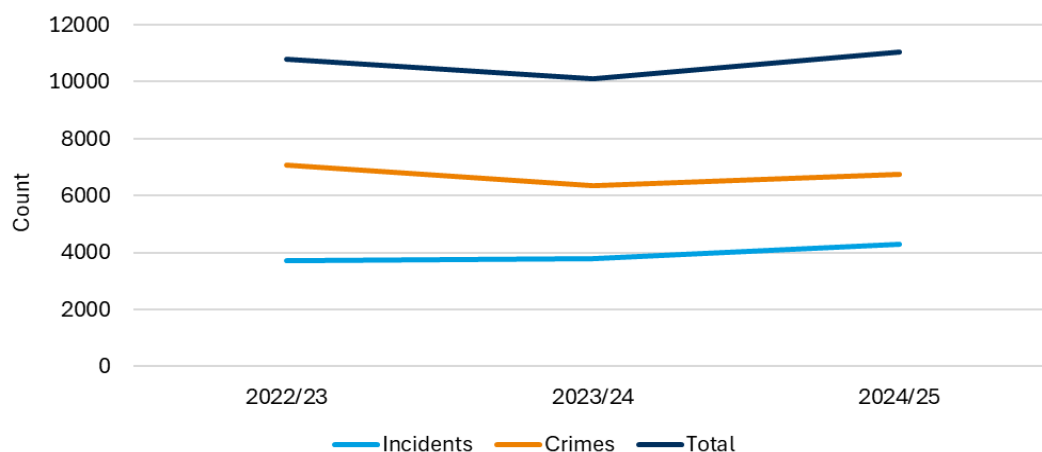
Nationally, there has been a 4% decrease in police recorded offences flagged as domestic abuse (DA) related between the year ending (YE) March 2024 and the YE

March 2025. This was said by the ONS to mainly be driven by a decrease in violence against the person (VAP) offences. Whilst the volume of these offences decreased, there was no change in the proportion of VAP offences flagged as DA related (33%). As noted by the ONS, it cannot be determined to what extent this reflects a true decrease in volume, and the extent to which it reflects recent changes in recording practices for conduct crimes (see Appendix A: Technical notes) (ONS, 2025).

Police recorded data is available on local domestic abuse (DA) that is known to the police. DA reported to the police can be recorded under two different data sets; DA incidents and DA related crimes. A DA marker can be applied to any crime type. DA incidents may or may not result in a crime being recorded. Therefore, the number of DA crimes, and the number of incidents that were not crimed, totals the amount of DA known to the police. It should be noted that due to under-reporting, the true amount of DA occurring locally will be higher than the number of crimes and incidents recorded.

The number of police recorded DA incidents has increased by 13% in the last year (2023/24 to 2024/25) and is up 15% compared to 2022/23. However, as shown in Figure 1, this increase in incidents over the last 3 years has not been reflected in an increase in DA crimes being recorded. DA crimes saw a smaller decrease in the last year of 7% and have decreased slightly compared to 2022/23 (-4%). The percentage of incidents that are being crimed has seen incremental decreases over the last 3 years, from 55% (2022/23), to 53% (2023/24), down to 51% in 2024/25.

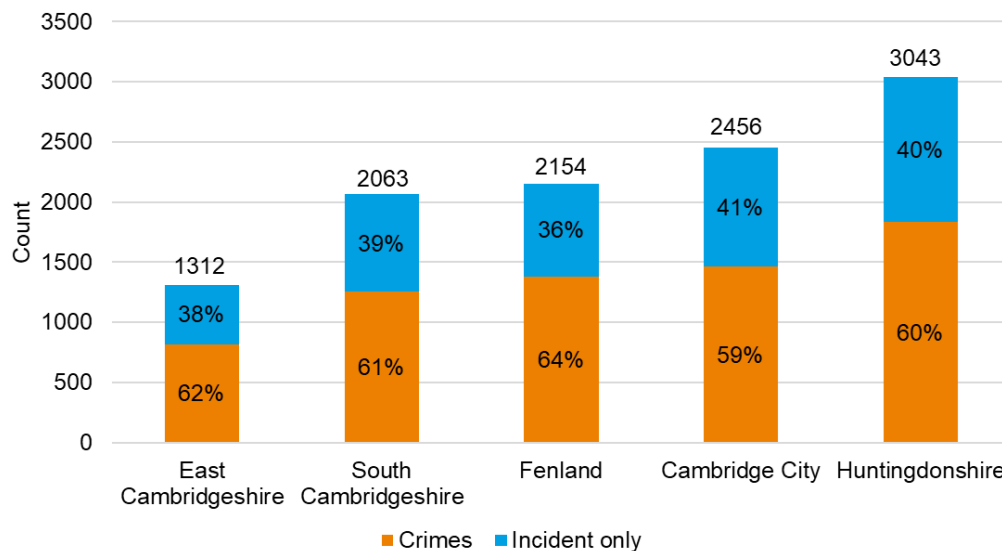
Figure 1: Annual number of police recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes in Cambridgeshire, 2022/23 to 2024/25



Note: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from Cambridgeshire Constabulary

In Cambridgeshire, 61% of police recorded DA was from crimes, and 39% from incidents. As shown in figure 2, Huntingdonshire had the largest number of police recorded DA in Cambridgeshire; both in terms of crimes, and incidents, with 3043 in total. Whilst Fenland had the median number of police recorded DA (2154 crimes and incidents), it had the highest proportion of DA that were crimes (64%).

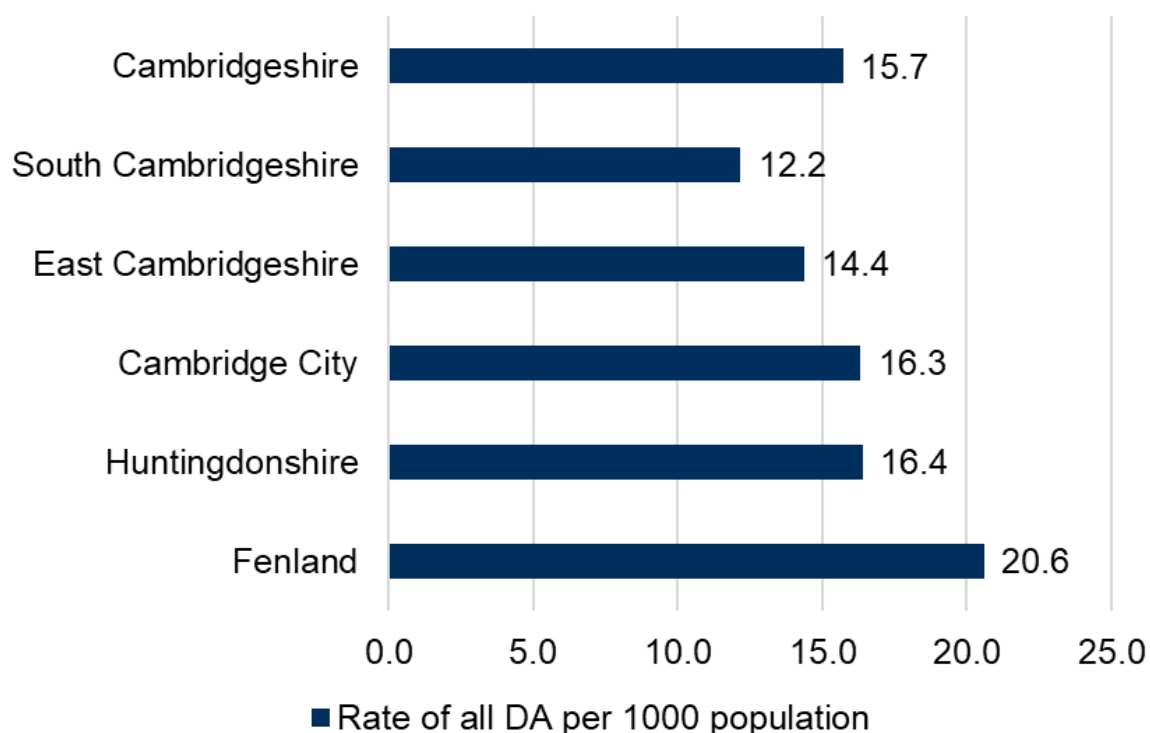
Figure 2: Number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes, by the proportion that were incidents and crimes, in Cambridgeshire districts, year ending March 2025



Note: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using domestic abuse incident and crime data from Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

The overall rate of police recorded DA in Cambridgeshire is 15.7 per 1000 population. Whilst Huntingdonshire had the highest count of DA, as shown in figure 3, it was Fenland that had the highest rate, with 20.6 per 1000 population. Huntingdonshire had the next highest rate, with 16.4. South Cambridgeshire had the lowest rate, at 12.2 per 1000 population. This indicates that both Fenland and Huntingdonshire present the most concern. However, as noted by the ONS, police recorded figures represent only a portion of the domestic abuse that is present in the area, due to low levels of reporting (ONS, 2024, p. 3). It cannot be determined whether these reflect higher levels of domestic abuse relative to other Cambridgeshire districts, or better reporting.

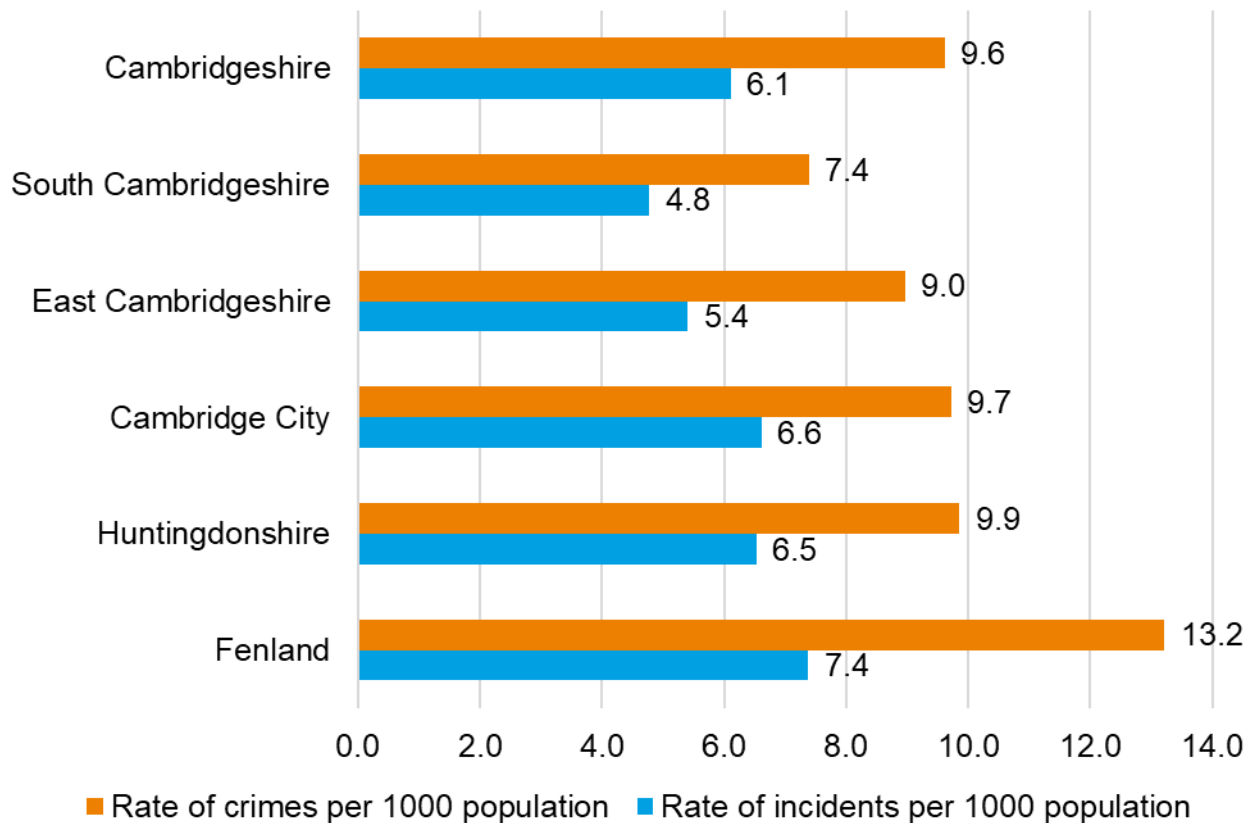
Figure 3: Rate of all police recorded domestic abuse in Cambridgeshire, and Cambridgeshire districts, per 1000 population, year ending March 2025



Notes: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data domestic abuse and crime data from Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Rate is based on CCC mid-2023 population estimates (Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, 2025).

Districts with higher rates of police recorded incidents also had higher rates of crimes. However, the difference between Fenland’s and Huntingdonshire’s incident rates (7.4 and 6.5 respectively), was smaller than the difference in crime rates for the two districts (13.2 and 9.9 respectively) (See figure 4). This indicates that the domestic abuse reported to the police in Fenland was more likely to be classed as a crime.

Figure 4: Rate of domestic abuse crimes and incidents in Cambridgeshire, and Cambridgeshire districts, per 1000 population, year ending March 2025



Notes: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data domestic abuse and crime data from Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Rate is based on CCC mid-2023 population estimates (Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, 2025).

3.2. Local Population Growth

Increases in population can lead to increases in the need for provision. A summary of local population changes over the last decade and forecasted increases are shown in the following section.

CCC population forecasts are now available for mid-2031, based on mid-2023 population estimates. South Cambridgeshire is expected to see the most growth over this period, with a 16% increase; followed by East Cambridgeshire, with an 11% increase (see Table 4).

Table 4: Population growth in Cambridgeshire, and Cambridgeshire districts

| Area | CCC mid-2023 population estimate | Forecast population increase, mid-2023 to mid-2031 |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| South Cambridgeshire | 169,425 | +16% |
| East Cambridgeshire | 91,305 | +11% |
| Fenland | 104,595 | +9% |
| Huntingdonshire | 185,750 | +8% |
| Cambridge City | 150,390 | +7% |
| Cambridgeshire | 701,460 | +10% |

Note: Mid-2023 population estimates are rounded to the nearest 5.

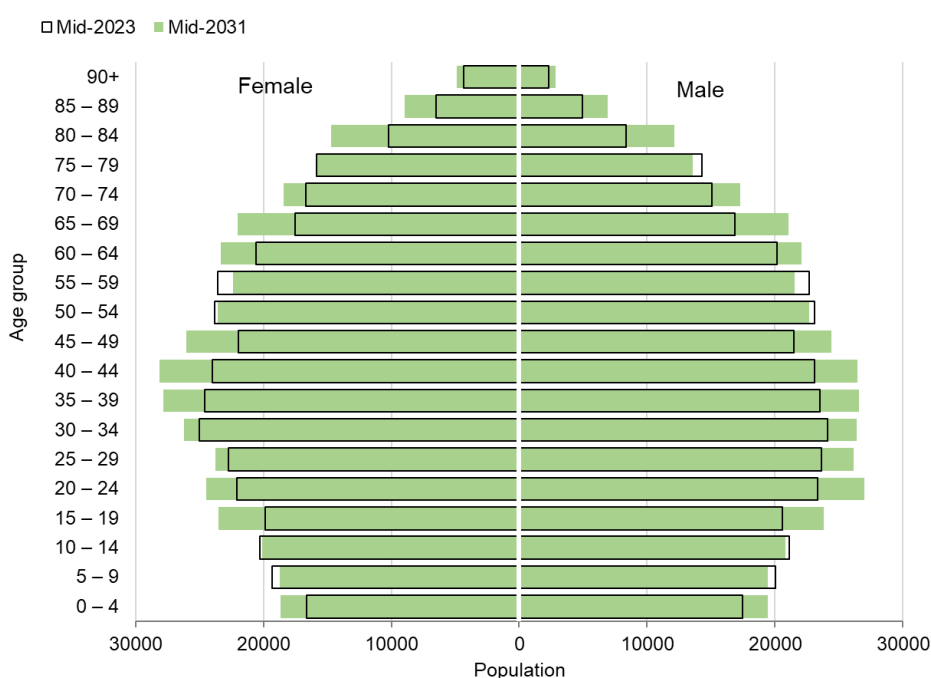
Source: Table created by CCC PIT, using CCC population estimates and forecasts, available on Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Insight (Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, 2025).

Broken down by age group, CCC mid-2023 population estimates indicate that 61% of the Cambridgeshire population are aged 18 to 64.

According to CCC mid-2031 population forecasts, there is expected to be notable growth in the 65 to 69 age group (25%, +8,685 residents); the 80 to 84 age group (+44%, +8,250 residents); and the 85+ age group (+31%, +5,620 residents).

Broken down by sex, mid-2023 population estimates indicate that overall, there is a relatively equal share of males and females in Cambridgeshire (51% female, 49% male; according to mid-2023 population estimates).

Figure 5: Cambridgeshire County Council's mid-2023 population estimates and 2023-based population forecasts for mid-2031 by sex and age group

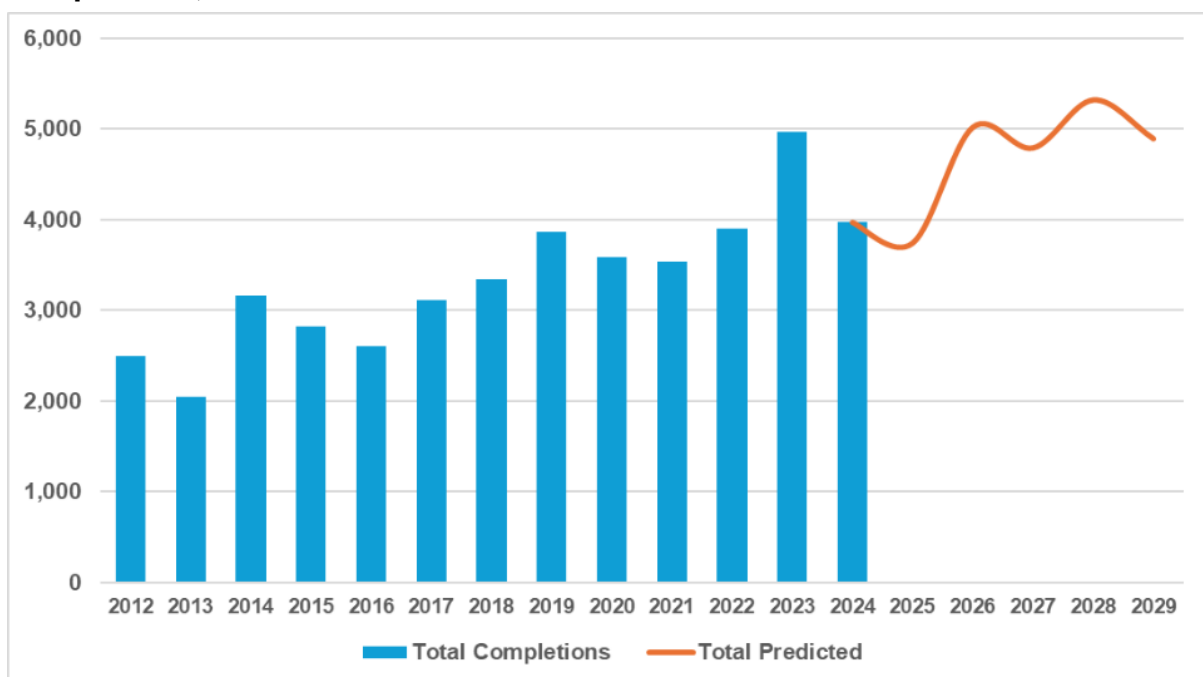


Note: Chart created by CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using CCC mid-2023 population estimates, and CCC mid-2031 population forecasts.

3.3. Local housing supply and forecasts

Local Housing completions and supply data indicate that 43,000 dwellings have been completed in Cambridgeshire since 2011. Completions have been highest on Cambridge Fringe Sites (Great Kneighton, Trumpington Meadows, Marleigh and Eddington) and major development sites (Northstowe new town, Alconbury Weald). 23,000 further dwellings are predicted to be completed in the next five years with further development on Northstowe and Alconbury Weald and new major sites Wintringham Park, Cambourne West, Waterbeach new town and Ely North.

Figure 6: Total number of housing completions and Total predicted housing completions, 2012-2029

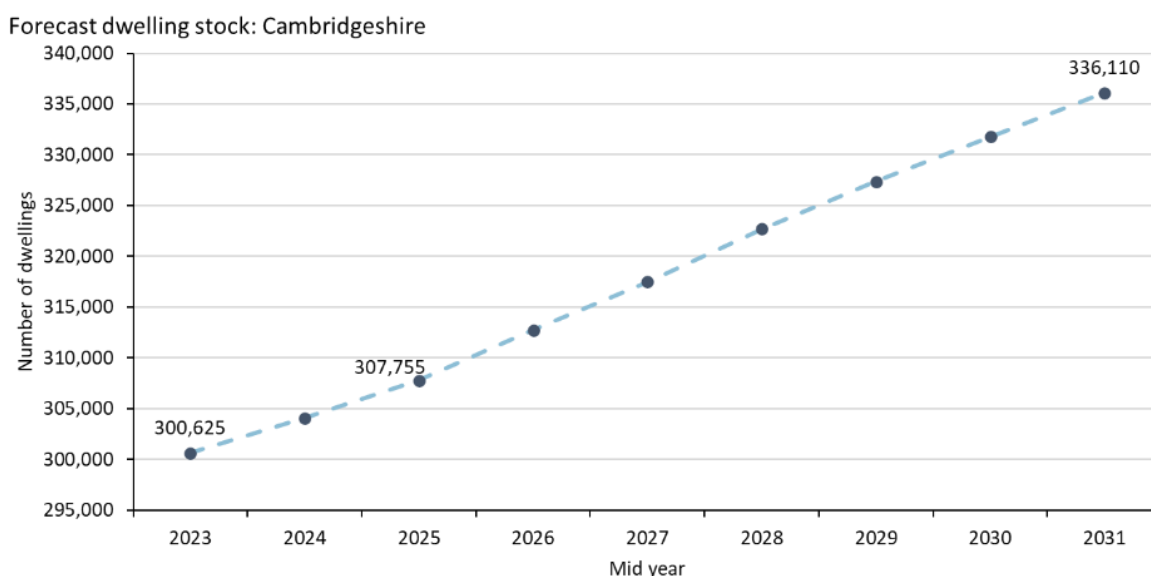


Source(s): Policy and Insight Library Records - Policy and Insight Housing completion data 2024 (Greater Cambridge, FDC, HDC), East Cambridgeshire Housing Development Report 2024 and 2024 Five Year Housing Land Supply Publications.

Cambridgeshire’s dwelling stock is forecast to increase by 35,490 between mid-2023 and mid-2031, a rise of 11.8% (based on current Local Plans).

The number of dwellings completions is forecast to be highest in South Cambridgeshire, with 12,415 dwellings forecast to be completed, followed by Huntingdonshire, where 7,630 dwellings are forecast to be completed. In Cambridge just over 4,500 dwellings are forecast to be completed, almost 5,000 in Fenland and approaching 6,000 in East Cambridgeshire.

Figure 7: Number of dwellings forecast, 2023-2031



Data source: Cambridgeshire County Council's 2023-based dwelling stock forecasts: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Population – Local Population Estimates and Forecasts

3.4. Language, ethnic group, and religion

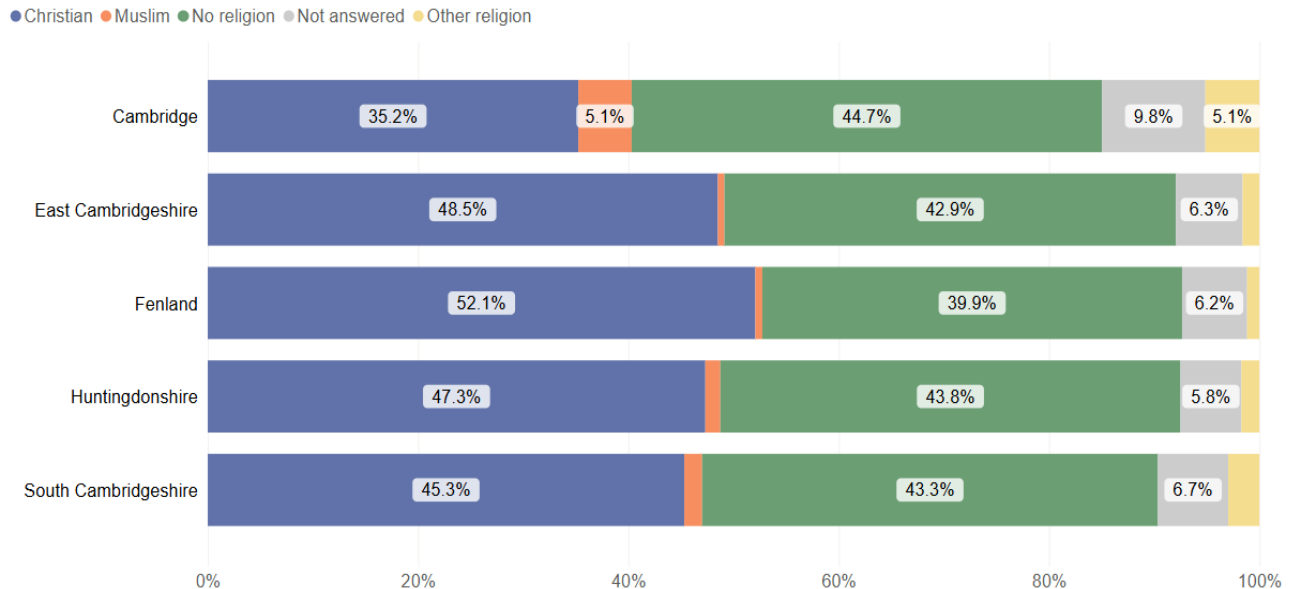
People from language, ethnic, and religious minorities face unique risk factors for DA, and barriers to support services. This can include:

- Fear of deportation,
- Lack of awareness of services tailored to ethnic minorities,
- Fear of being misunderstood,
- Distrust of services
- Shame, and cultural norms to prioritise preservation of family over safety of the victim, which may be reinforced by religious mediators (IDVRM, 2025).

Whilst so called 'honour-based' abuse, and forced marriage is not exclusive to any particular religion or culture, and can be experienced by anyone, there are particular risks for those linked with some overseas communities. In the year 2022/23 Karma Nirvana, a specialist charity for victims of honour-based abuse, reported 176 cases where an individual was at threat of forced marriage overseas (Karma Nirvana, n.d.)

According to Census 2021 data, the majority of the population identified themselves as being either Christian (45.1%) or having “no religion” (43.2%). Cambridge City has the lowest proportion of Christian residents (35.2%), and highest proportion of Muslim (5.1%), and residents with an “other religion” (5.1%) (see figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentage of residents in Cambridgeshire districts by religion, Census 2021, by district

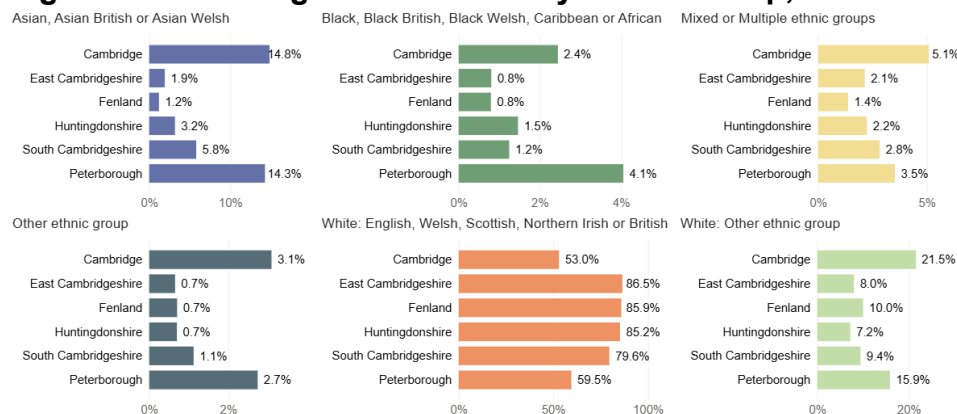


Note: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2023)

A district breakdown of the most common ethnic groups for residents in Cambridgeshire at the time of Census 2021, is shown in the figures below.

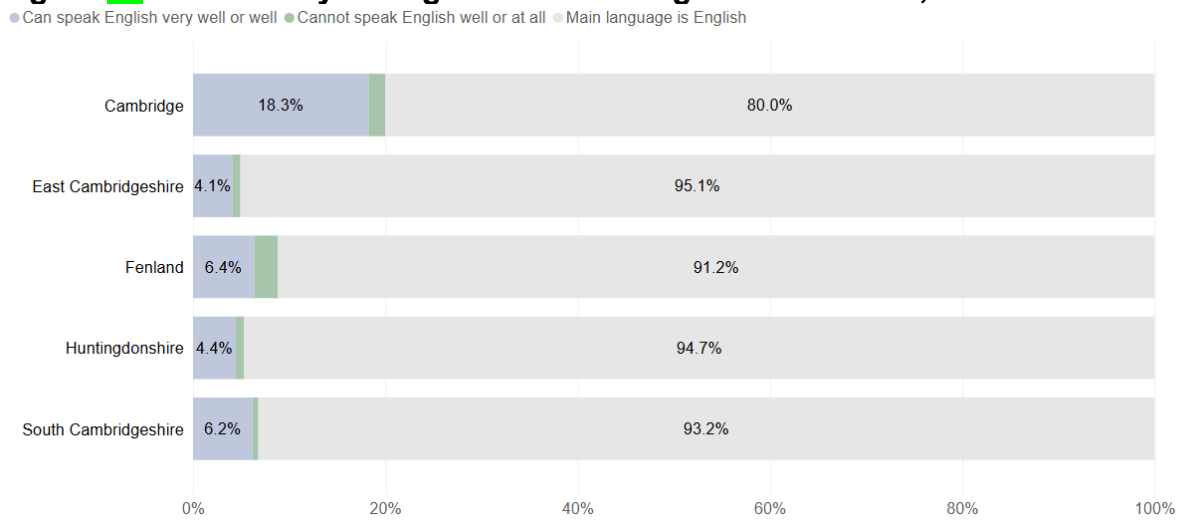
Cambridge City is a more diverse population than the national average and other districts locally.

Figure 9: Percentage of Residents by Ethnic Group, Census 2021



Those with low proficiency in English have another barrier in accessing support; in terms of their ability to identify support services and communicate their difficulties; and in terms of the ability for practitioners to identify them as victims/survivors. According to the Census 2021, the majority of Cambridgeshire’s population (aged 3 and over) has English as their main language (90.7%), with 1.2% unable to speak English well, or at all. Broken down by district, Fenland (2.5%) and Cambridge City (1.8%) have higher proportions of residents who cannot speak English well, or at all (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 10: Proficiency in English in Cambridgeshire districts, Census 2021

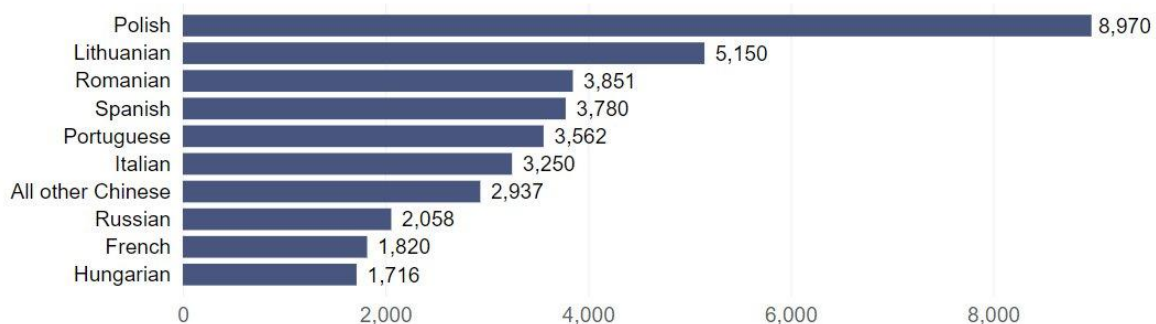


Note: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2023)

The next most common main languages in Cambridgeshire were Polish, Lithuanian, and Romanian (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Top 10 main languages in Cambridgeshire

Top 10 main languages in Cambridgeshire by number of residents, Census 2021

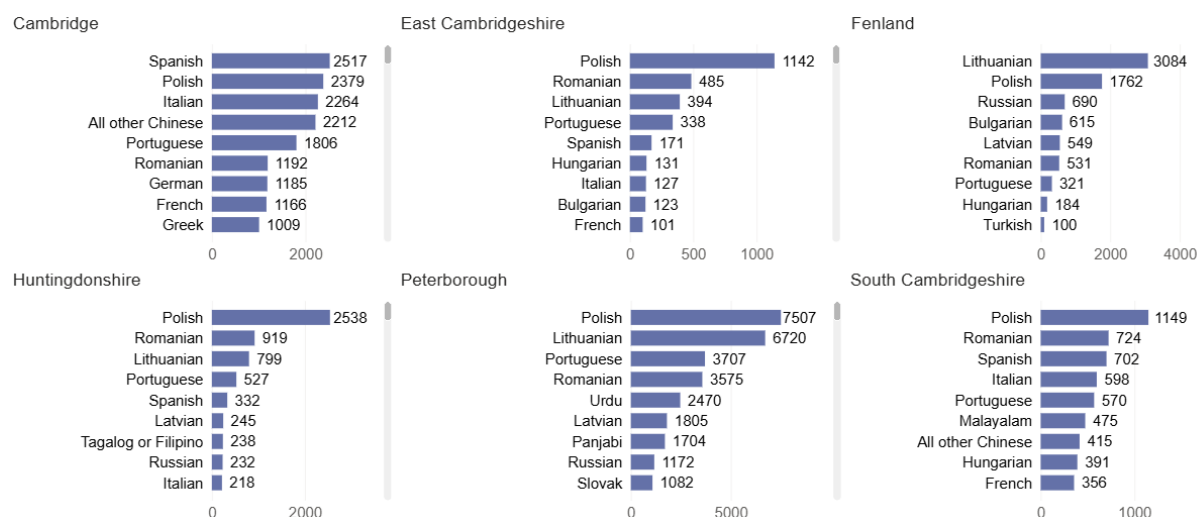


Note: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2023)

A district breakdown of languages spoken in Cambridgeshire is shown below.

Figure shows English proficiency of Cambridgeshire residents by district.

Figure 12: Most common languages other than English, by district, Census 2021



Note: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2023)

More information is available from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Insight website: [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Population – Census 2021 – Topic Summaries – Ethnic Group, National Identity, Language and Religion.](#)

- Language, ethnic, and religious minorities encounter distinct risks and barriers regarding domestic abuse (DA), including fear of deportation, limited awareness of tailored services, risk of being misunderstood, distrust of services, and cultural or religious pressures to prioritise family over personal safety.
- ‘Honour-based’ abuse and forced marriage are not confined to any religion or culture but pose particular risks for some overseas communities; in 2022/23, Karma Nirvana reported 176 cases of individuals at risk of forced marriage overseas.
- According to Census 2021 data, most Cambridgeshire residents identify as Christian (45.1%) or as having “no religion” (43.2%); Cambridge City has the lowest proportion of Christians (35.2%) and the highest proportions of Muslims (5.1%) and those with “other religion” (5.1%).
- Cambridge City is notably more ethnically diverse compared to the national average and other local districts.
- Low English proficiency presents an additional barrier to accessing support for DA victims; 90.7% of Cambridgeshire residents (aged 3+) speak English as their main language, while 1.2% cannot speak English well or at all. Fenland

(2.5%) and Cambridge City (1.8%) have higher rates of low English proficiency.

- Besides English, the most common languages in Cambridgeshire are Polish, Lithuanian, and Romanian.
- District-level breakdowns are provided for ethnicity and language, with figures illustrating local variations in English proficiency and the most common languages spoken.
- Further details are available from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Insight website: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Population – Census 2021 – Topic Summaries – Ethnic Group, National Identity, Language and Religion.

3.5. Health and disability

As explained in a 2015 report by Public Health England, disabled people are often more vulnerable to domestic abuse (DA) than non-disabled people. Disability may impact a person’s ability to defend themselves, recognise that they are experiencing abuse, report, access support, and escape that abuse. They reported that disabled people experienced higher rates of domestic abuse (DA). Moreover, they reported that disabled people experience DA for longer, more frequently, and at higher levels of severity than non-disabled people (Public Health England, 2015). Data from domestic abuse charity SafeLives reported that disabled clients waiting on average 3.3 years before accessing support, compared to 2.2 years for non-disabled clients (2016 to 2019 data). Disabled clients were also more likely to have been abused by a current partner (37%), compared to non-disabled clients (28%) (SafeLives, n.d.).

According to Census 2021 data, 4.1% of Cambridgeshire residents reported having bad, or very bad health; whilst 16.2% reported being disabled under the Equality Act; and 6.0% reported their day-to-day activities were limited a lot. Of the districts, Fenland had the highest levels of residents who reported bad or very bad health at 6.4%, the highest percentage of disabled residents, at 20.3%; and the highest percentage of residents that reported their day-to-day activities are limited a lot, at 8.8%. A more detailed breakdown of health in Cambridgeshire, and Cambridgeshire districts is provided in

Table 5 below.

Table 5: Health and disability in Cambridgeshire residents, Census 2021, by district

| Geography | Bad or very bad health | Disabled under the equality act | Reported their activities are limited a lot (% of residents) |
|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Fenland | 6.4% | 20.3% | 8.8% |

| Geography | Bad or very bad health | Disabled under the equality act | Reported their activities are limited a lot (% of residents) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Huntingdonshire | 4.2% | 16.4% | 6.1% |
| East Cambridgeshire | 4.1% | 16.1% | 6.0% |
| South Cambridgeshire | 3.4% | 14.7% | 5.2% |
| Cambridge | 3.2% | 14.7% | 4.9% |
| Cambridgeshire | 4.1% | 16.2% | 6.0% |

Source: Table created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2023; NOMIS, 2023).

More information on health and disability in Cambridgeshire is available on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Insight website: [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Population – Census 2021 – Topic Summaries – Health, Disability and Unpaid Care](#).

3.6. Sexual orientation and gender identity

Whilst the majority of people who experience domestic abuse (DA) are women, and the majority of perpetrators men, people of all sexualities and gender identities can experience DA and be in need of safe accommodation. Therefore, men, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community who are in need of safe housing may require specialist services.

Galop, the national helpline for LBGT+ Victims and Survivors of Abuse and Violence, has joined LGBT+ sector leaders in expressing concern about the recent change of the legal definition of a “woman” (Consortium for stronger LGBT+ communities, n.d.). This change will impact who can access single sex spaces, impacting a wide variety of organisations, including refuges, and counselling services (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2025).

According to Census 2021, 1.8% of Cambridgeshire residents aged 16 and over were bisexual, and 1.5% were gay or lesbian. This is slightly higher than the percentage for the East of England region (1.1% bisexual, and 1.2% gay or lesbian). Broken down by district. Cambridge City has the highest percentage of bisexual (3.8%), and gay or lesbian (2.7%) residents compared to other Cambridgeshire districts (see Table 6).

As shown in

Table 7, Fenland and Cambridge had the highest percentage of residents aged 16 and over who reported having an unspecified gender identity, which was different than that registered at birth, at 0.4%, and 0.3% respectively. Cambridge also had the highest percentage of non-binary (0.3%), and “all other gender identities” (0.2%).

The percentage residents who reported being trans men and trans women were similar across all districts at 0.1%.

Table 6: Sexual orientation of Cambridgeshire residents, Census 2021, percentage of population aged 16+, by district,

| Geography | Bisexual | Gay or lesbian | Not answered | Heterosexual |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Cambridge City | 3.8% | 2.7% | 11.9% | 80.6% |
| South Cambridgeshire | 1.2% | 1.1% | 7.2% | 90.0% |
| Fenland | 1.0% | 1.1% | 7.5% | 90.0% |
| East Cambridgeshire | 1.2% | 1.1% | 6.9% | 90.5% |
| Huntingdonshire | 1.1% | 1.3% | 6.2% | 91.1% |
| Cambridgeshire | 1.8% | 1.5% | 8.0% | 88.3% |
| England Average | 1.3% | 1.5% | 7.5% | 89.4% |

Note: Sexualities with percentages accounting for less than 1% were not included in this table. Other categories included: asexual, pansexual, queer, and all other sexual orientations. The full results can be viewed on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough website: [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Population – Census 2021 – Topic Summaries – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)

Source: Table created by the Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2023).

Table 7: Gender identity of Cambridgeshire residents, Census 2021, percentage of population aged 16+, by district

| Geography | Gender identity different from sex registered at birth – unspecified | Trans woman | Trans man | Non-binary | All other gender identities | Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth | Not answered |
|----------------------|--|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|---|--------------|
| Cambridge City | 0.3% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.3% | 0.2% | 89.7% | 9.3% |
| Fenland | 0.4% | 0.1% | 0.1% | <0.1% | <0.1% | 93.1% | 6.3% |
| South Cambridgeshire | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | <0.1% | 94.3% | 5.3% |
| East Cambridgeshire | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | <0.1% | 94.5% | 5.2% |
| Huntingdonshire | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | <0.1% | <0.1% | 94.9% | 4.7% |
| Cambridgeshire | 0.2% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 93.3% | 6.2% |
| England Average | 0.2% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | <0.1% | 93.5% | 6% |

Source: Table created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2023).

3.7. Rurality

According to the recent Resolve Poverty report for Cambridgeshire, concerns of those in rural areas included:

- geographical isolation,
- the limited availability, unreliability, and high cost of public transport,
- digital exclusion,
- access to services (including healthcare and support services),
- access to valuable training opportunities,
- access to amenities,
- access to information,
- access to food. (Resolve Poverty, 2024)

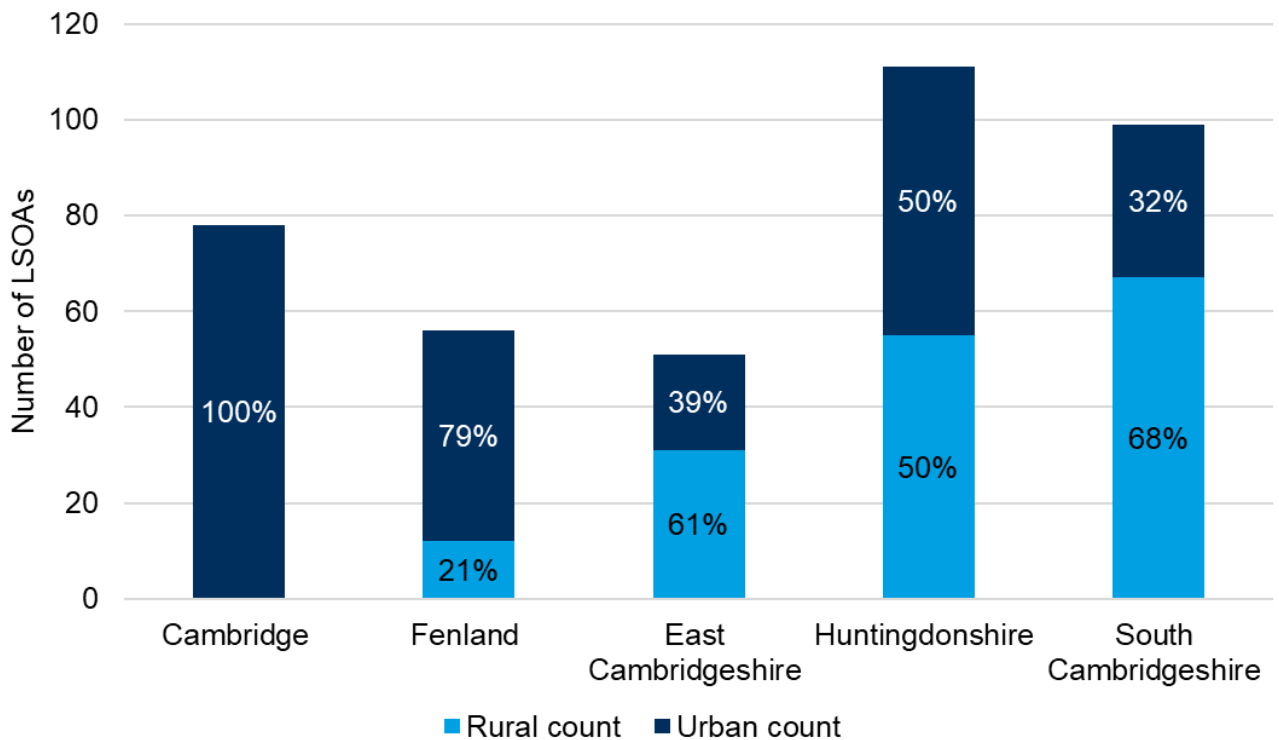
These factors could have a clear impact those experiencing DA; including social support; access to information about support services; ability to engage with support services; and ability to live and thrive independently.

To understand the potential impact of rurality for Cambridgeshire the following section summarises classification of small geographies in the county. Using the ONS classifications of LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) as either urban or rural is shown that 42% of Cambridgeshire is rural (according to the latest data from the ONS for 2021). A breakdown by district shows the variability of that with;

- South Cambridgeshire having the highest number, and proportion of rural LSOAs in Cambridgeshire, accounting for 68% of the district's LSOAs.
- East Cambridgeshire has the second highest proportion of LSOAs which are classed as rural (61%) (ONS, 2025).
- Cambridge City being classified as 100% urban.

However, the sizes of LSOAs are influenced by the number of people living in an area and can vary considerably in the amount of land covered. Therefore, it is important to note that higher numbers or proportions of rural LSOAs, do not necessarily equate to larger areas of rural land, or proportion of land, which is rural, but will be more relevant to the number of people living in each area.

Figure 13: Number of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in rural and urban areas in Cambridgeshire, by local authority



Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from ONS on 2021 Rural Urban classifications (ONS, 2025)

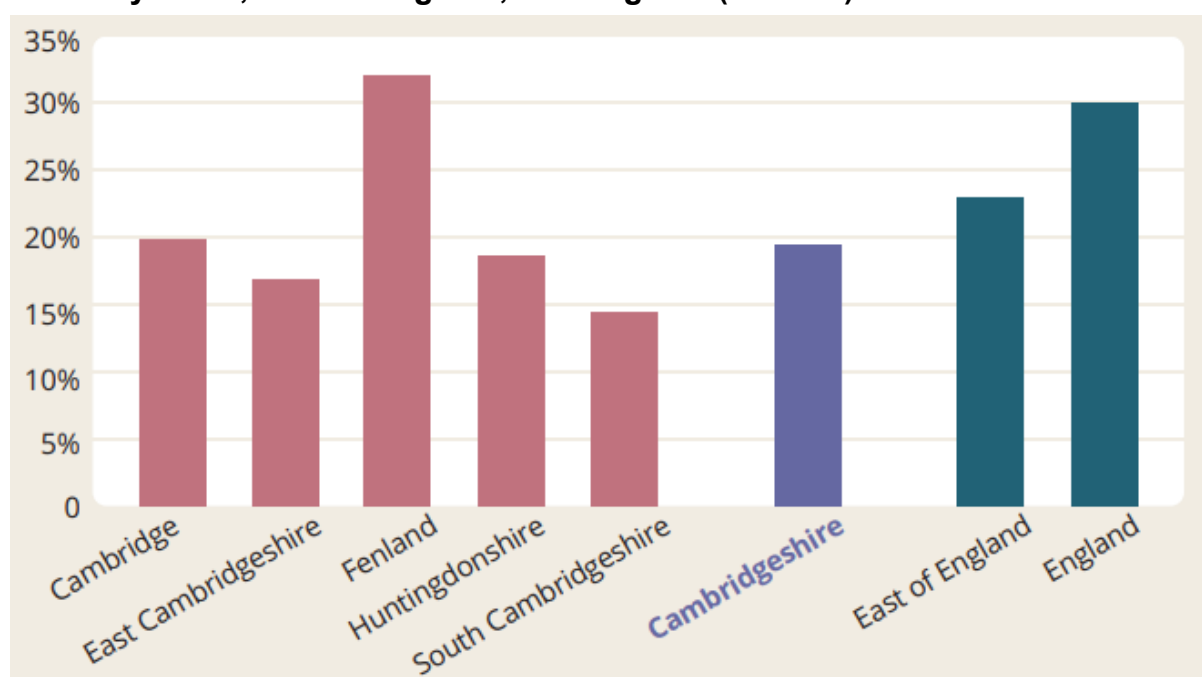
3.8. Poverty

Research published last year, which surveyed 5000 children in Scotland, indicated that mothers living in poverty were the most likely to experience domestic abuse (DA). (BASW & The University of Edinburgh, 2024). Poverty also acts as a barrier to leaving perpetrators of DA, and the financial assistance available to victims/survivors looking to leave abusers is likely to be insufficient in covering the associated costs (BASW & The University of Edinburgh, 2024, p. 11).

According to the Cambridgeshire quality of life survey for 2024, 87% of residents are concerned about increases in the cost of living, with women feeling more concerned than men (90% of women compared to 84% of men). Respondents reported having to cut back on necessities, including heating (44%), nutritious food (25%), and prescription medication (6%). More than a third (37%) of respondents reported feeling like the cost-of-living crisis has affected their mental health.

The Cambridgeshire poverty strategy commission reported that in 2022/23, 11% of families with dependents (under 16-year-olds, or under 19 and in full time education) in Cambridgeshire, were living with “relative low income” (Poverty Strategy Commission, 2025, p. 12). 19% of children were reported as living in poverty (after housing costs) in 2022/23; with Fenland seeing the highest proportion at almost a third (32%); exceeding the percentage for the East of England region (23%), and England as a whole (30%) (End Child Poverty, 2024; Stone, 2024, p. 2; Poverty Strategy Commission, 2025, p. 12). Flexible funding forms part of the provision for victim/survivors in Cambridgeshire who may also be experiencing poverty. More information about this is included in a later section on provision.

Figure 14: Percentage of children in poverty (after housing costs) by local authority areas, East of England, and England (2022/23)



Source: Figure 1 in Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Report, End Child Poverty 2022/23 data (Poverty Strategy Commission, 2025, p. 12).

4. Specific Need Groups in the local population

4.1. Children affected by Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children under the age of 18 years who see, or hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, as a victim of domestic abuse if they are related or have a parental relationship to the adult victim or perpetrator of the abuse. It is difficult to ascertain local figures for the number of children who are

victims of domestic abuse. The figures below are provided to indicate the scale of child victims known to services.

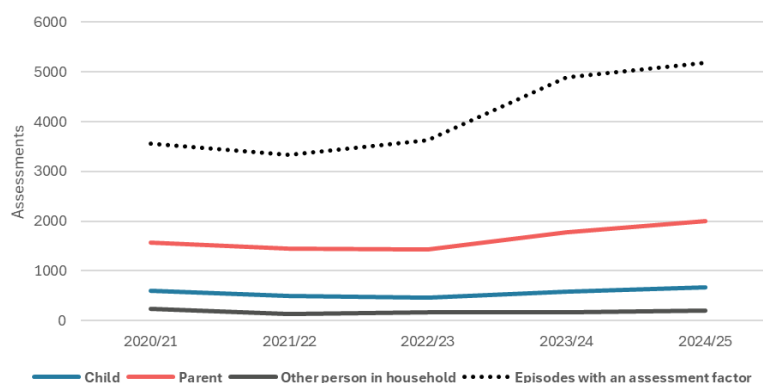
The Children's Social Care assessment process takes place after a referral has been received and records concerns by a number of categories. There are three categories relevant to domestic abuse. Those being;

- 3A Domestic abuse: concerns about the child being the subject of domestic abuse.
- 3B Domestic abuse: concerns about the child's parent(s)/carer(s) being the subject of domestic abuse.
- 3C Domestic abuse: concerns about another person living in the household being the subject of domestic abuse.

It should be noted that children can have more than one category of concern noted and therefore the categories cannot be added together. Further all children in a household would have individual assessments and therefore whilst the number of children within each category is unique it might include data on the same household more than once. It is also possible that a child might be assessed in more than one year.

The figure below shows there has been an increase in the number of assessments in Cambridgeshire where domestic abuse concerns (particular in relation to the child's parent(s)/carer(s) being the subject of domestic abuse) are recorded.

Figure 15: Number of children's social care assessments in Cambridgeshire by domestic abuse related concern, 2021 – 2025 (financial year)



CSC assessment data may also capture whether a child is homeless at the time of assessment, however this falls within a broad recording category of 'Family in Acute distress'. This means we cannot ascertain local figures for children known to CSC as experiencing both homelessness and domestic abuse.

The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a meeting in which local frontline services share information and work out how best to help domestic abuse victims at risk of significant harm or homicide. MARAC data records the number of

children in the household for each case. As such this gives indicative figures for children (known to services), in households impacted by high-risk domestic abuse. Figures are published by police force area (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined). The table below shows the total number of children each year in relation to MARAC cases in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with a peak of 1405 children recorded in the most recent year.

Table 8: Cases discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (police force area), 2021/22 - 2024/25

| | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Count of cases discussed at MARAC | 1074 | 1077 | 929 | 1159 |
| % repeat cases | 33% | 33% | 36% | 38% |
| Total Count of children in households discussed at MARAC | 1198 | 1047 | 1113 | 1405 |

Source: [Our quarterly Marac data - SafeLives](#) (SafeLives, 2025)

4.2. Care Experience

"Care experience" describes the lives of people who, as children, were placed in the care system because of circumstances beyond their control. These individuals may encounter both direct and indirect discrimination at various points in their lives. Legally, "care experience" refers to anyone cared for by the state as a corporate parent under a care order established by the Children Act 1989 and its subsequent amendments.

Whilst gathering data for this needs assessment it became evident that the care experienced status is not routinely recorded in safe accommodation service data, forming a gap in the evidence base.

Recommendation: In the process of developing this needs assessment, it has been identified that there is not consistent recording of IDVA clients and other funded services where individuals are care experienced. Therefore, it is recommended that this data is recorded and then utilised to assess needs specific to those individuals in the future.

4.3. Male Victims/ Survivors and Safe Accommodation

As noted in section 3.2.1, estimates from the CSEW for the period ending March 2025, indicated that 6.5% of men (aged 16+) had experienced DA within the last

year (ONS, 2025, p. A9b), and an estimated 4.9% had experienced partner abuse (ONS, 2025, p. A9a).

This could mean an estimated 18,400 men in Cambridgeshire have experienced DA in the last year (see Table 6), and an estimated 14,000 have experienced partner abuse (see Table 7).

Based on CSEW estimates for the period ending March 2025, more 21.8% of men are estimated to have experienced DA nationally over the course of their lifetime (since age 16); compared to 29.6% of women (ONS, 2025, p. A9a).

Nationally (England and Wales), more than a quarter (27.5%) of recorded victims of domestic abuse (DA) related crimes recorded by the police in 2023/24 were male (ONS, 2024, p. 15).

Furthermore, annual snapshot figures from the ManKind Initiative for the years 2019 to 2023 (March), showed that there were no refuges or safe houses offering support to male victims in the East of England until 2023. This indicated there were only 2 refuges or safe houses servicing the East of England region and 41 in England as a whole (ONS, 2023, p. 7).

Figures from domestic abuse support services commissioned within safe accommodation by local authorities in England show that in 2023/24, 3% (1,830) of individuals supported in safe accommodation were men (MHCLG, 2024). In Cambridgeshire for the same period 14 male adults were supported in safe accommodation (1% of those supported).

4.4. Armed forces

Annual location statistics for April 2025 indicated that 1050 individuals in the UK regular armed forces had Cambridgeshire as their permanent stationed location (this includes people deployed on operations or on temporary assignments elsewhere) (Ministry of Defence, 2025). The majority of these (86%, 900 individuals) were based in Huntingdonshire.

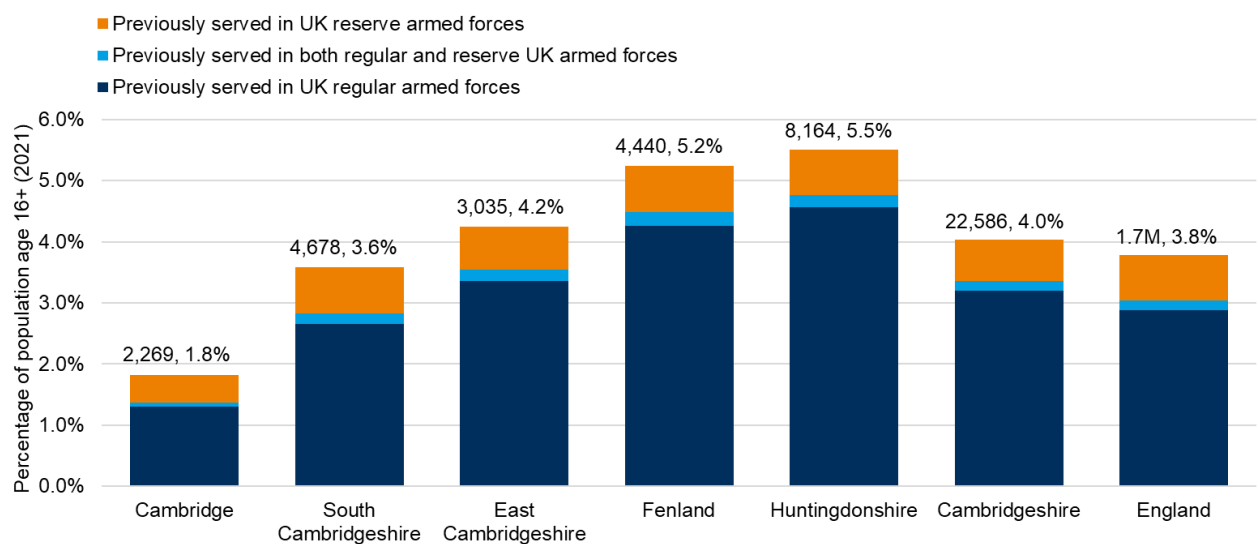
Based on CCC mid-2023 population estimates this would account for 0.6% of the Huntingdonshire population aged 16 years and over. (CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, 2024) A further 13% (140 individuals) of individuals in the armed forces are based in South Cambridgeshire (0.1% of the South Cambridgeshire population), and 2% in Cambridge (20 individuals, 0.02% of the

Cambridge population). Please see technical notes on armed forces and population statistics in section Appendix A: Technical notes.

Statistics from Census 2021 indicated that there were approximately 22,600 veterans residing in Cambridgeshire.

As shown in Figure 16, Census 2021 data indicated that Huntingdonshire also had the highest number of veterans, at 8,164 individuals. This accounted for 5.5% of the Huntingdonshire population (age 16 and over) at that time, higher than any other Cambridgeshire district, and higher than the 3.8% seen for England overall. Fenland had the next highest proportion of the population who were veterans, at 5.2%.

Figure 16: Number, and percentage of district residents that had previously served in the UK armed forces, Census 2021



Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using Census 2021 data (NOMIS, 2022).

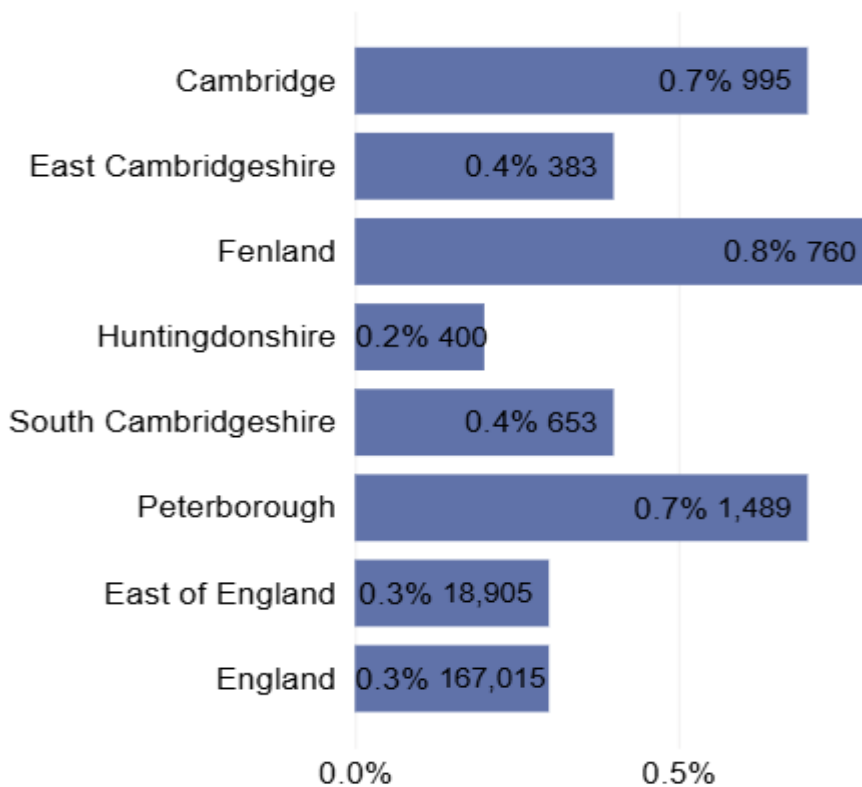
Recommendation: In the process of developing this needs assessment, it has been identified that there is not consistent recording of IDVA clients and other funded services where individuals have an armed forces connection. Therefore, it is recommended that armed forces connection data is recorded and then utilised to help assess needs specific to those individuals in the future.

4.5. Gypsy/Roma/Traveller (GRT) community

Like other communities, the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller community also experiences domestic abuse. Members of the GRT community historically report a range of barriers to services including bias and discrimination. Therefore, assessing safe accommodation needs in this context for this community may present specific and/or additional considerations that services and commissioners should take to fully meet the local needs. Census 2021 figures provide an indication of the local picture of the numbers living across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The proportion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population in all Cambridgeshire districts is higher than England and the East of England, with the exception of Huntingdonshire.

Figure 17: Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma by percentage of population, Census 2021

Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma



One Voice 4 Travellers is a charity that supports people from the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community across East Anglia. This includes supporting those experiencing domestic abuse (One Voice, n.d.). Data has been provided by the OPCC of referrals for victims/survivors received by One Voice, and the number of victims/survivors supported for the last financial year (2024/25).

There were 80 new referrals to One Voice for domestic abuse support in 2024/25 across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Referrals can lead to support, however, there are instances where someone has been referred and support is declined.

There were 83 people in total receiving support in 2024/25, 5 of which had been receiving support the previous year. Of the 80 new referrals, 2 people could not be contacted.

The below table shows the number of referrals received by One Voice by each individual's district of residence. This includes those who were referred but who did not receive support.

Fenland had the highest number of referrals, followed by South Cambridgeshire, and East Cambridgeshire. East Cambridgeshire had a disproportionately high number of referrals relative to the number of people from the GRT community recorded as residing in that district during Census 2021, with a rate of 41.8 referrals per 1000 people. Cambridge had the lowest rate of 6.0 referrals per 1000 people. However, due to the time since Census 2021, it cannot be determined whether this is due to changing populations, higher demand, or less engagement with the support service in this area.

Table 9: Referrals to One Voice 4 Travellers for domestic abuse support (DA) in the year ending March 2025, and number of Gypsy/Roma/Traveller (GRT) residents in each district as at Census 2021

| District | Number of referrals to One Voice | Number of GRT residents in district (Census 2021) | Estimated rate of referrals per 1000 GRT population |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Fenland | 22 | 775 | 28.4 |
| South Cambs | 17 | 656 | 25.9 |
| East Cambs | 16 | 383 | 41.8 |
| Huntingdonshire | 8 | 401 | 20.0 |
| Cambridge | 6 | 998 | 6.0 |

Note: The latest population data available on the number of residents in each district in the GRT community is from Census 2021. Populations are likely to have changed since this date, so the estimated rate of referrals should be treated with caution.

5. Provision of safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire

5.1. Suggested baseline provision

The UK ratified the Istanbul Convention in July 2022, which is the Council of Europe's convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Article 23 of the Istanbul Convention requires signatory countries to establish appropriate, easily accessible shelters to provide safe accommodation for victims of violence, particularly women and their children. Council of Europe resources include recommendations for baseline safe accommodation provision and suggest there should be "one family place per 10 000 head of population" (Council of Europe, 2008). Using the Cambridgeshire (CCC) mid-2023 population estimate, that would equate to 70 spaces.

Using the MHCLG return figures for Cambridgeshire, we can get an overview of different types of safe accommodation bed space and sanctuary scheme (target hardening) activity, as outlined below.

5.2. Refuge

MHCLG defines Refuge accommodation as follows:

“Refuge accommodation: A refuge offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.” (MHCLG, 2024).

As of 2024/25 there were 32 refuge bed spaces funded by the Cambridgeshire DASV service, these are spread across 3 different locations (and 2 different providers). Referrals to Refuges in Cambridgeshire can be made via the National DA Helpline or directly.

5.3. Dispersed Accommodation

MHCLG defines Dispersed Accommodation as follows:

“Dispersed accommodation: i. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with a similar level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge with

communal spaces, and/or where peer support from other residents may not be appropriate, due to complex support needs, or where older teenage sons cannot be accommodated in a women only refuge, for example. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex.

ii. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained 'semi-independent' accommodation which is not within a refuge but with support for victims who may not require the intensive support offered through refuge, but are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator/s. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex."
(MHCLG, 2024).

Dispersed Accommodation increases the options and choice for survivors across Cambridgeshire. The accommodation is primarily for residents in this area who are subjected to domestic abuse and being supported by the Cambridgeshire IDVA service. Dispersed Accommodation provides an option for survivors who are not able to live in or access a "traditional" refuge, or temporary accommodation provided by local councils. This includes survivors with more than three children; those with disabilities; survivors with pets; families with teenage boys (many refuges will not allow boys over the age of 12); people from the LGBT QA+ community; and survivors who have no recourse to public funds. Survivors can still access their existing support network if safe to do so and domestic abuse focussed housing support is provided by the Housing IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisers). Housing IDVAs will explore trauma informed safe housing options available for the survivor. These could be moving back to their original home with safety measures in place, for example occupation orders, non-molestation orders, restraining orders, and target hardening where this is safe to do so. The Housing IDVA will provide support and advocacy if the survivor cannot return home and is seeking alternative permanent accommodation via a homeless application with a local council. As of 2024/25 there are 16 bedspaces within Dispersed Accommodation in Cambridgeshire, spread across 6 properties. Referrals to Dispersed Accommodation can be made for clients of the IDVA service.

5.4. Sanctuary Scheme (Target hardening provision)

MHCLG defines Sanctuary Schemes as follows:

“Sanctuary schemes: A Sanctuary scheme enables victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation, by providing additional security measures. Crucially here we are interested in victims who receive on-going support in a sanctuary scheme. The end of a

sanctuary scheme bedspace is considered when support ends, not when the installation is removed.” (MHCLG, 2024).

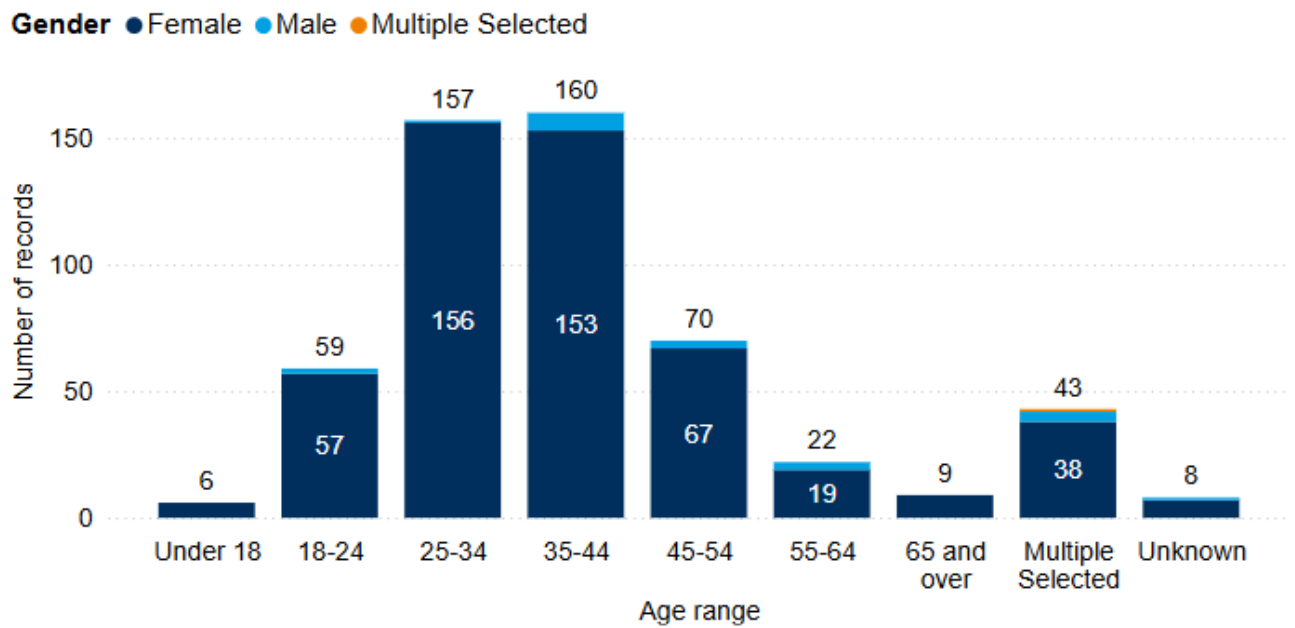
24/7 Locks is the current commissioned target hardening provider for specialist DASV services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Please note that this service has rebranded and from 1st October 2025 their new name is Secure Horizon. The new provider from January 2026 will be ‘Safe Partnership’.

Referrals to the service can be made by the IDVA service, Outreach services, and other VAWG services. Target Hardening can be provided across tenure and to all types of property/accommodation. Referrals are made with the clients consent via a secure online form providing details of accommodation type and current risk/safety concerns. Target hardening is ‘bespoke’ to each survivor/clients’ needs and type of accommodation.

Additional target hardening measures can be provided to very high-risk clients, those where staking and harassment is a factor, or where arson risk is a factor.

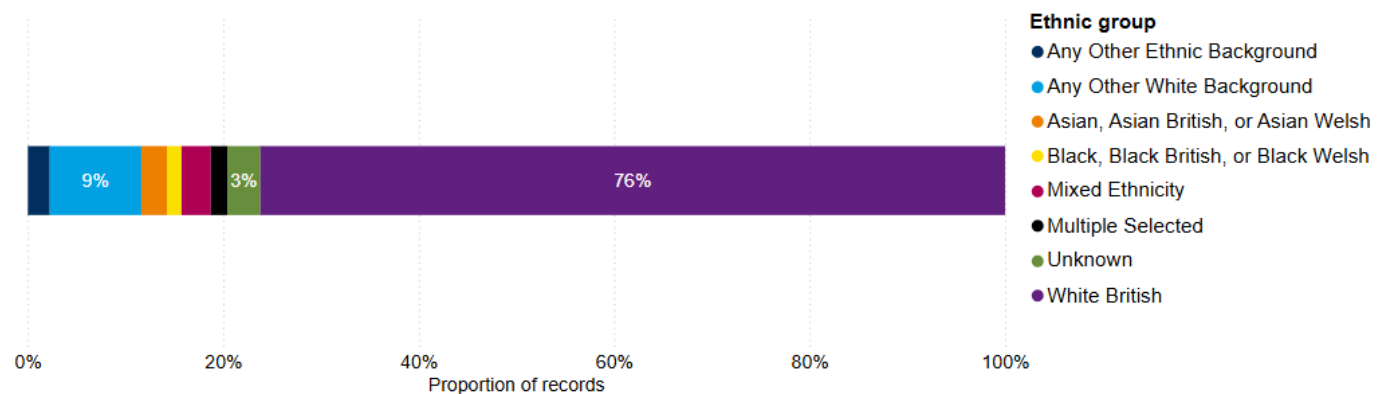
- 535 referrals were received for target hardening between April 2024 and March 2025.
 - There were 41 referrals declined, cancelled, or withdrawn within this period.
- 482 homes were supported between April 2024 and March 2025 (see technical notes in Appendix A: Technical notes).
- As shown in
- , the most common age groups (where specified in the data) were 25-34 (accounting for 29% of records), and 25-44 (accounting for 30% of records).
- 76% of referrals were White British, 9% were “Any other White background”, and 3% were of unknown ethnicity (see Figure 19).

Figure 18: Number of records, by age and gender, year ending March 2025



Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from Target Hardening Service (24/7 locks).

Figure 19: Proportion of records, by ethnicity, year ending March 2025



Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from Target Hardening Service (24/7 locks).

Recommendation: When recommissioning target hardening services, the service needs to include a requirement for enhanced recording of data and to include children supported via this service. For example, this could be carried out via changed information gathering on the referral form.

5.5. Managed Reciprocals Scheme

Since 2019 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has had a managed housing reciprocal scheme coordinated by the DASV Service. This allows individuals and

families at risk of domestic abuse with a social tenancy to move safely within Cambridgeshire or Peterborough while keeping their tenancy. The scheme also provides the option of relocating the perpetrator if it is deemed safe to do so. This allows the victim/survivor to remain in their home, and it is often quicker to identify a property for a single person than a family-size property. This scheme would not be suitable as an “emergency response”, as it could take some time to identify an alternative home. To be considered for a move under this scheme, a victim/survivor must be working with a domestic abuse specialist to ensure all relevant safety measures are in place and that the proposed new home would be suitable for their needs.

14 survivors successfully moved via this scheme during 2022/23. However, since the scheme was established, there has been a decoupling of the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire IDVA service and changing landscape in terms of providers. Additionally, in July 2025 central government made changes to local connection criteria for the allocation of social housing for survivors of domestic abuse and looked after children. While the new criteria may potentially impact the relevance of the reciprocal scheme outlined above, it is still too early to determine whether any local modifications have occurred as a result. (MHCLG, 2025)

Recommendation: The managed reciprocals scheme will therefore need to be reviewed in light of these changes.

5.6. Second Stage Accommodation

MHCLG defines Second stage accommodation as follows:

“Second stage accommodation: Accommodation temporarily provided to victims, including their children, who are moving on from other forms of safe accommodation, but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse specific support for a period before they move to fully independent and settled accommodation. Where second stage accommodation is in shared housing it should be single gender or single sex.”

At present, second stage accommodation is not available in Cambridgeshire.

Recommendation: Consider the provision of Second Stage accommodation in Cambridgeshire.

5.7. Accessibility features of safe accommodation provision in Cambridgeshire

Enquiries were made to local refuges regarding the availability of wheelchair-accessible accommodation and other potential adaptations or support services that may be offered to improve accessibility for survivors seeking refuge.

As of September 2025:

- Cambridgeshire has only 1 unit that provides fully wheelchair accessible accommodation, in local refuges.
- Refuges have proactively sought items to support children in refuge with neurodiverse needs as and when required.
- Cambridge Women's Aid emphasised collaborative efforts with local services (Technology Enabled Care Services (TECS) through Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC); Cambridge Deaf Association (CDA) to support deaf survivors. This ensured access to appropriate practical resources and tools within the refuge setting e.g. vibrating pillows and flashing emergency lights in rooms.

A case study was provided to demonstrate the impact of a lack of wheelchair accessible safe accommodation locally.

Case study: An IDVA Client in their 30s needed safe accommodation to move into urgently, after a period in hospital. Their support needs included wheelchair-accessible housing and care package from Adult Social Care (ASC). No local or national refuge could meet the client's accessibility and care needs. Dispersed accommodation available in Cambridgeshire was found to be suitable internally, but unfortunately the external entryway for this property was inaccessible for the client. In addition, no suitable temporary accommodation could be sourced in Cambridgeshire. As a result, the client had to be placed in a residential care home to meet urgent need for safe accommodation. This placement was required for over a year. The difficulties in accessing safe and stable accommodation had a substantial emotional and physical toll on the client. The need to utilise a residential care home to provide urgent safe accommodation (and for an extended period) also came at a high financial cost to services (estimated at ~£99,000). Ultimately permanent housing was secured for the client with further safety planning in place, but it took a long time to reach this outcome.

In terms of dispersed accommodation locally, none of the properties are currently specifically 'disabled adapted/accessible'. However, examples of changes and temporary additions to the properties to meet accessibility needs of survivors are provided below:

- One property housed a survivor with mobility needs who required predominantly ground floor accommodation. Changes were made within the

property i.e. relocating the bed to a downstairs room and rearranging living areas downstairs. This provided the necessary facilities to meet their needs. The client also had access to the upper floor of the house for additional space and amenities as their mobility varied i.e. the property space was used flexibly.

- A survivor with a child who has learning disabilities relocated to dispersed accommodation where limited space necessitated that the child shares a room with a sibling. To address behavioural concerns, CCC/IDVA provided funding for a room divider to enhance privacy.

Recommendation: Clearly there is scope to improve the accessibility of safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire. Future developments in discussion include: CDA (Cambridgeshire Deaf Association) has been looking into whether they could develop a small refuge for survivors who are deaf. The DASV service is seeking to establish at least one unit of safe accommodation which is fully wheelchair accessible.

Recommendation: Specifically in relation to disability, the recording of types of disability and the adjustments that are required forms a data gap locally.

Recommendation: Given the high level of housing growth locally, there is opportunity to encourage local authorities to use planning obligation agreements (i.e. Section 106) to create accessible temporary accommodation which could also be accessed by survivors of DA.

5.8. Flexible funding

As part of the Whole Housing Approach to safe accommodation, flexible funding supports victim/survivors to achieve or maintain safe and secure housing. It is low barrier and does not require victim/survivors to provide evidence of abuse and is not means tested. Unlike most other funding sources, there is no set list of what will be funded, and victims/survivors are encouraged to ask for whatever will make the most difference to their housing situation and their lives, in order that the victim/survivor and their children can stay safe. This will only be offered in conjunction with working with a domestic abuse specialist. In 2024/25 130 survivors were supported in Cambridgeshire through flexible funding. Some Flexible funding supports victim/survivors to achieve or maintain safe and secure housing. It is low-barrier and does not require victim/survivors to provide evidence of abuse and is not means tested. Unlike most other funding sources, there is no set list of what will be funded, and victims/survivors are encouraged to ask for whatever will make the most difference to their housing situation and their lives, in order that the victim/survivor and their children can stay safe. This will only be offered in conjunction with working with a domestic abuse specialist. Some common examples include provisions of white goods, furniture, security equipment, removal/transport costs, clothing or food

but any request can be considered. In 2024/25 flexible funding was also used to purchase bicycles as a means of transport, replacement birth certificates, air fryers and car MOT and insurance.

Recommendation: To continue to offer flexible funding in Cambridgeshire as part of the Whole Housing Approach to safe accommodation.

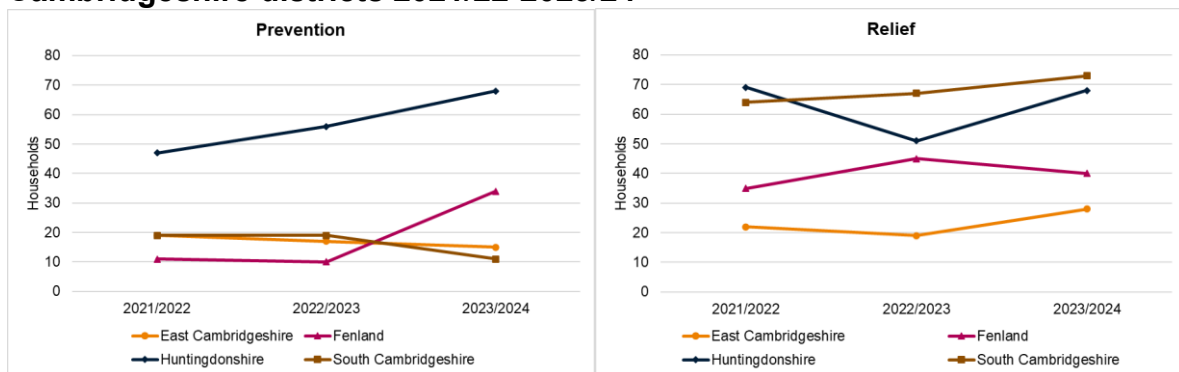
6. Demand for Safe Accommodation in Cambridgeshire

6.1. Homelessness Applications due to Domestic Abuse

Statutory homelessness duties require local authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness to eligible households. Data on households seeking support is collected by local authorities and submitted to MHCLG, who publish summary statistics nationally. Households can be assessed as threatened with homelessness (owed prevention duty) or homeless (owed relief duty). Recording also includes categories to reflect the reasons for homelessness occurring. This includes domestic abuse, as shown in the figures below.

The figures below show the last 3 financial years of published data for households who were owed homelessness prevention or relief duties due to domestic abuse. (Figures for Cambridge district are unavailable).

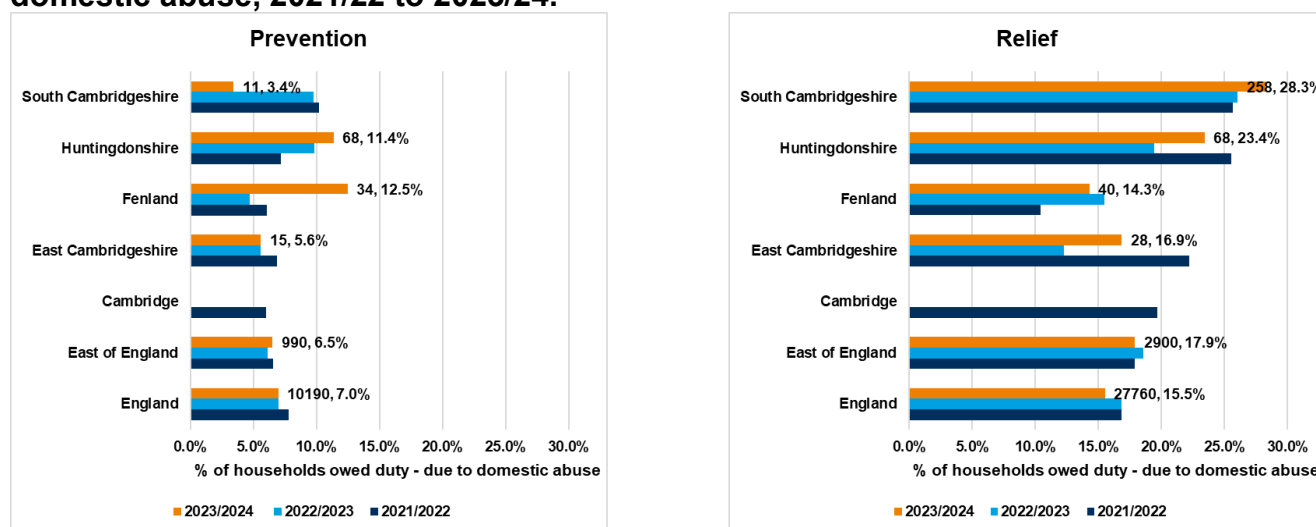
Figure 20: Households assessed as owed prevention or relief duty in Cambridgeshire districts 2021/22-2023/24



Huntingdonshire has had both the highest number and most consistent increase in the number of households owed homelessness prevention duty due to domestic abuse since 2021/2022 (up to 68 households in 2023/24).

East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire all had an overall increase in the number of households owed homelessness relief duty due to domestic abuse since 2021/2022. Huntingdonshire figures in 2023/2024 remained similar to 2021/22). South Cambridgeshire had the highest number in 2023/24 with 73 households owed homelessness relief duty due to domestic abuse.

Figure 21: Households owed homelessness prevention or relief duty due to domestic abuse, 2021/22 to 2023/24.



Figures from the most recent year show that Huntingdonshire (11.4%, 68 households) and Fenland (12.5 %,34 households) both had a higher proportion of households owed prevention duty due to domestic abuse than the East of England or England.

In the most recent year South Cambridgeshire had the highest volume and proportion of households who were owed homelessness relief duty due to domestic abuse, with 28.3% (258) of households owed a relief duty being recorded as requiring homelessness relief due to domestic abuse.

The figures published for 2023/24 included an additional breakdown of whether the domestic abuse reason for homelessness applied to a Victim or Alleged perpetrator ('Alleged' being the terminology used in the MHCLG publication). This reflects that a minority of those recorded were Alleged perpetrator households as shown in the figure below.

Figure 22: Households owed a homelessness relief duty due to domestic abuse- of which Victim or Alleged perpetrator, for Cambridgeshire districts 2023/24.

| District | All Households owed a relief duty | Households owed relief duty due to Domestic abuse | Households: Victim | Households: Alleged perpetrator* |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cambridge | - | - | - | - |
| East Cambridgeshire | 166 | 28 | 28 | 0 |
| Fenland | 280 | 40 | 35 | 5 |
| Huntingdonshire | 290 | 68 | 59 | 9 |
| South Cambridgeshire | 258 | 73 | 70 | 3 |

*'Alleged' being the terminology used in the MHCLG publication

DAHA recommends addressing the housing needs of perpetrators in order to better manage risk and support behaviour change (DAHA, 2023)

Recommendation: Link with systems and processes to understand how perpetrator access to stable accommodation affects risk to victims/ survivors locally.

MHCLG have recently published data dashboards to explore co-occurring support needs in households that were recorded as homeless in 2023/24. The dashboard provides data visualisations where one need can be selected and the number of times it co-occurs with other need categories is displayed. The figures below are what is reflected when the need 'At risk of/ has experienced domestic abuse' is selected. Whilst this is national, not local data, this provides insight into the sheer variety of co-occurring needs and so is summarised for this needs assessment below. For household recorded as 'At risk of/ has experienced domestic abuse', a history of mental health problems is the most frequent co-occurring need according to this data. It should also be noted that Physical ill health or disability is a frequently co-occurring need shown in this data, underlining how important accessibility of safe accommodation is.

Recommendation: Explore making analysis of co-occurring needs possible with local data in future, to understand local patterns among households owed a homelessness duty.

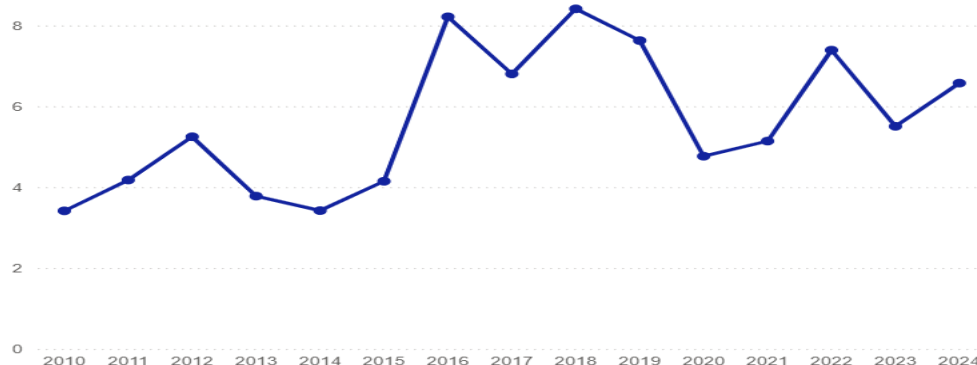
Summary - Top 5 co-occurring support need (quick summary of different cohorts owed a prevention or relief duty) where household recorded as 'At risk of/ has experienced domestic abuse', England 2023/24

| All households owed a prevention or relief duty | Households with Children owed a prevention or relief duty. | Single households (households without children) owed a prevention or relief duty | Households that were sleeping rough in the judgement of the assessor owed a prevention or relief duty |
|--|---|--|---|
| History of mental health problems (47%) | History of mental health problems (33%) | History of mental health problems (57%) | History of mental health problems (71%) |
| Physical ill health or disability (25%) | Physical ill health or disability (18%) | Physical ill health or disability (31%) | History of sleeping rough (52%) |
| History of repeat homelessness (13%) | Learning disability (11%) | History of repeat homelessness (18%) | History of repeat homelessness (43%) |
| At risk of/ has experienced sexual abuse/ exploitation (12%) | Access to education, employment and training (9%) | At risk of/ has experienced sexual abuse/ exploitation (15%) | Physical ill health or disability (39%) |
| Learning disability (12%) | At risk of/ has experienced sexual abuse/ exploitation (8%) | Offending history (14%) | Drug dependency needs (32%) |

6.2. Rough sleeping and Domestic Abuse

The national statistics on rough sleeping are based on an annual snapshot, used to estimate the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn each year. This snapshot can be used to assess changes in the number of people sleeping rough over time. The 2024 snapshot estimated 46 people sleeping rough on a single night in Cambridgeshire, with an estimated rate of 6.6 people sleeping rough per 100,000 population. The estimated rate of rough sleeping by this measure has seen a long-term increase for Cambridgeshire as shown in the figure below.

Figure 23: Estimate rate of people sleeping rough in a single night per 100,00 population in Cambridgeshire



Source: Microsoft Power BI; Dashboards on rough sleeping - GOV.UK (MHCLG, 2025)

It has been recognised that the above official statistics on rough sleeping are likely to undercount women. An alternative census has been carried out in recent years: Women's Rough Sleeping Census - Solace Womens Aid. (Solace Womens Aid, 2024) This was prompted by the fact that women sleeping rough are usually located in different spaces so may be less visible to the usual rough sleeping census processes. The Women's rough sleeping census report highlights how women sleeping rough often have experienced domestic abuse, but also domestic abuse may influence how they access accommodation (or ultimately do not).

As outlined above, national co-occurring support needs analysis highlights that the overlap between a history of sleeping rough and having experienced domestic abuse is evident in administrative data.

Initial discussions with local professionals on the issue of rough sleeping and safe accommodation highlighted that existing processes often do not work for clients who are rough sleeping. Additional overlap with substance misuse issues adds further challenges here. As a practical example, arranging meetings with individuals who are rough sleeping and simultaneously experiencing domestic abuse as well as substance misuse issues is particularly difficult.

As such this means there may be a safe accommodation need among those rough sleeping in Cambridgeshire that is neither easily quantified nor readily addressed through existing processes.

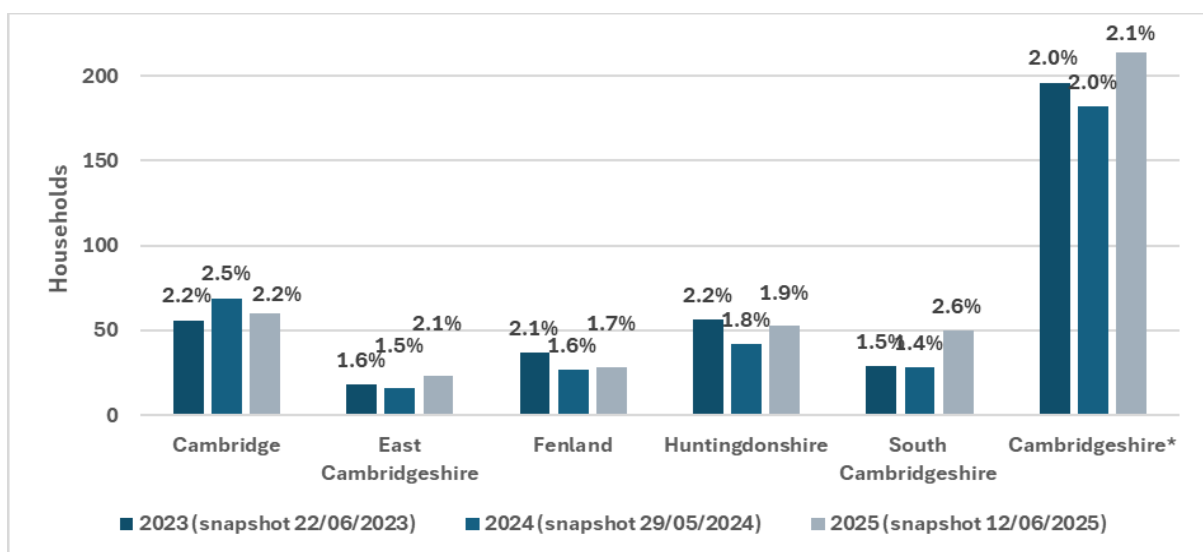
Recommendation: To develop processes to support those rough sleeping in Cambridgeshire experiencing domestic abuse to access support appropriate to their safe accommodation needs.

6.3. Demand reflected in the local housing register (Home-Link)

Home-Link is the scheme through which people can apply for the housing register and bid for council and housing association properties across Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. Applicants can disclose vulnerabilities, including whether they are experiencing domestic abuse. In mid-2025, an estimated 2.1% of live and offered applicants in Cambridgeshire were recorded as experiencing domestic abuse, this equated to 214 households and represents an increase since 2022. However, the pattern of increase did not occur across all districts, as shown in the figure below.

Domestic abuse is not recorded as a separate priority banding category in the home-link system but is grouped within a broad category of ASB and harassment. For this reason, only the specific vulnerability category of ‘experiencing domestic abuse’ is included below (not available by priority banding). It should be noted that the below figures are based on self-reported vulnerabilities, and it is likely that not all present vulnerabilities are disclosed to service providers.

Figure 24: Count and Percentage of Home-Link register of live and offered applicants, who self-recorded as experiencing domestic abuse, in 2024 and 2025



Note: *estimated figure. See Appendix A: Technical notes for information on Home-Link figures, including how the Cambridgeshire estimate was calculated.

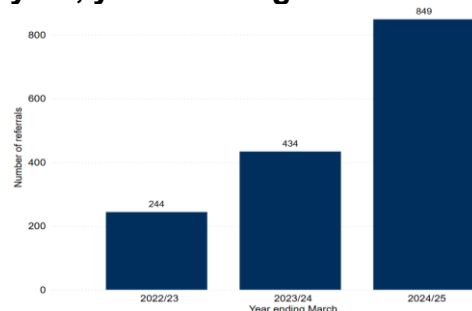
Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service using data provided by Home-Link. Data for 2023/24 is available from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Insight (The Housing Board, 2024).

6.4. Demand reflected in referrals for safe accommodation

Figures on referrals should be treated with caution, due to the potential for double counting (i.e. re-referrals of individuals). In addition, it should be acknowledged that referrals coming from the National DA helpline are not passed on to refuges that are already at full capacity. However, the number of referrals not passed on to Cambridgeshire refuges in these circumstances is not recorded, forming a data gap.

From the data we do have available regarding referrals, in Cambridgeshire there has been a substantial increase in the number of referrals for Safe Accommodation over the last 3 financial years. The year 2024/25 had 849 referrals, up 96% from 2023/24, and up 248% since 2022/23 (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Number of safe accommodation referrals in Cambridgeshire per year, years ending March 2023 to March 2025



Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from CCC DASV service MHCLG Statutory Return for Cambridgeshire (2024/25), and central government support in domestic abuse safe accommodation statistics (DLHC, 2023; MHCLG, 2024).

6.5. Who was supported in safe accommodation?

1049 individuals (adults and children) were supported in Cambridgeshire safe accommodation 2024/25. 57% of those supported were children, 41% were female adults, 1% were male adults, and <1% were trans or non-binary adults. (DLHC, 2023; MHCLG, 2024)Of the 1049 individuals supported in 2024/25, the majority (82%) were supported via the sanctuary scheme (target hardening)4% of supported individuals were in refuge accommodation. Those in dispersed accommodation accounts for a small share of those supported (4% in 2024/25), however there are relatively fewer spaces, and longer term stays in this safe accommodation type. No

individuals were provided specialist accommodation or second-stage accommodation as these are not available in Cambridgeshire.

14% (152) of individuals supported came from outside of the Cambridgeshire area. However, it should be noted that as Cambridgeshire covers a large area geographically, there will be service users who are not classed as “out of area”, but who relocated a significant distance to safe accommodation within the county. (DLHC, 2023; MHCLG, 2024).

14% (152) of individuals supported came from outside of the Cambridgeshire area. However, it should be noted that as Cambridgeshire covers a large area geographically, there will be service users who are not classed as “out of area”, but who relocated a significant distance to safe accommodation within the county. (DLHC, 2023; MHCLG, 2024).

6.6. Specialist characteristics of those accessing safe accommodation

The most common specialist characteristic recorded in 2024/25 was “black and minoritised individuals”, accounting for 18% of service users in 2024/25. See technical notes regarding statistics on those with specialist characteristics Appendix A: Technical notes).

Table 10: Number of people supported in domestic abuse safe accommodation, by specialist characteristics recorded, 2024/25

| Specialist characteristic | 2024/25 count | 2024/25 % of all supported |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|
| Total individuals with specialist characteristics (adults and children) | 298 | 28% |
| Black and minoritised | 185 | 18% |
| Disabled | 44 | 4% |
| LGBTQ+ | 2 | 0% |
| Ex-offenders | 0 | 0% |
| Drug support needs | 3 | 0% |
| Alcohol support needs | 6 | 1% |
| History of mental health | 35 | 3% |
| Younger individuals (16-25) | 14 | 1% |
| Older individuals (over 65) | 0 | 0% |
| Other specialist characteristics | 9 | 1% |
| Total people supported (with or without specialist characteristics) | 1049 | 100% |

Note: **These figures should be treated with caution.** There is the potential for double counting in some categories, and not all individuals with specialist characteristics may be included in these figures. For more details, please see Appendix A: Technical notes. Source: Table created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from MHCLG Statutory Return for Cambridgeshire (2024/25), and central government support in domestic abuse safe accommodation statistics (DLHC, 2023; MHCLG, 2024).

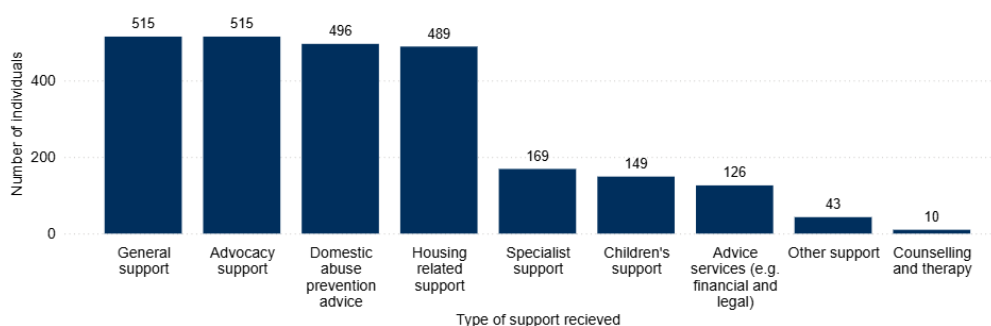
Other types of specialist characteristics supported have included:

- maternity/postpartum (2024/25)
- marriage (2024/25)
- NRPF (2023/24)
- English not as a first language (2023/24)
- maternity care (2023/24)
- long-term health condition (HIV & cancer) (2023/24)

6.7. Types of support

Individuals can receive multiple kinds of support. The most common types of support commissioned in 2024/25 were advocacy support (515 individuals), general support (515 individuals), domestic abuse prevention advice (496 individuals), and housing related support (489 individuals). An explanation of the types of notes Appendix A: Technical notes^[08]. A breakdown of the support received in 2024/25 is shown in the figure below. (Please note that the total will exceed the number of people receiving support, due to people being able to receive multiple kinds of support.)

Figure 26: Number of individuals supported in safe supported accommodation, by type of support received, year ending March 2025



Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from MHCLG Statutory Return for Cambridgeshire (2024/25).

As noted in the latest Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Monitoring Data return for Cambridgeshire, “Other” types of support include:

- Education
- Looking for work,
- In-person support in Court proceedings
- Rehoming animals,
- adoption support,
- relocation support,
- financial support via flexible funding.”

For reference, previous years outline the following ‘other’ types of support:

2022/23

- Support with child protection
- Children services
- Immigration support
- Lifestyle/social activities

2023/24

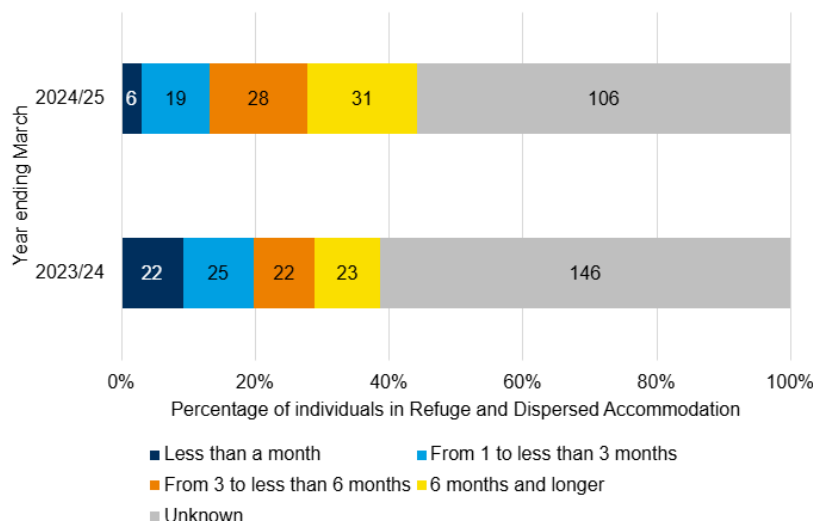
- NRPF
- Immigration support
- Flexible funding
- Resettlement support
- Interpreting services
- Support with CJS/Family Courts
- Maternity care

6.8. Length of stay in refuge and dispersed accommodation

Of the 190 individuals in refuge and dispersed accommodation in 2024/25, the length of stay was unknown for 56%. There was also a high proportion for which length of stay was recorded as unknown in previous years, and this figure was reported differently in 2022/23 so is not included here. **Due to the high percentage of those with an unknown length of stay, the following figures should be interpreted with caution.**

Where known, the most common length of stay in 2024/25 was 6 months or longer, accounting for 16% of those in refuge and dispersed accommodation.

Figure 27: Length of stay for individuals in refuge and dispersed accommodation, 2023/24 - 2024/25



Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from MHCLG Statutory Return for Cambridgeshire (2024/25), and central government support in domestic abuse safe accommodation statistics (DLHC, 2023; MHCLG, 2024)

. Note: For technical notes on MHCLG length of stay figures please see Appendix A: Technical notes.

A lack of suitable accommodation to provide move-on opportunities has been cited as a difficulty by service leads, which may partially explain the longer stay periods

shown above. This is particularly applicable to larger families and those with No Recourse to Public Funds.

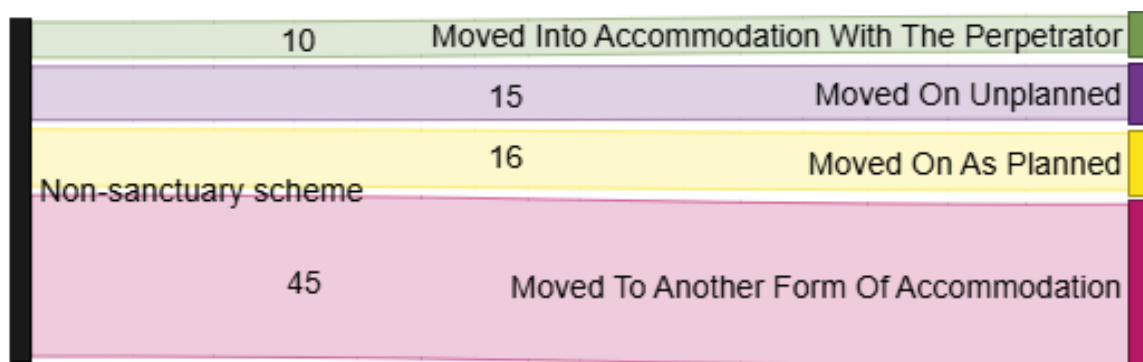
6.9. Households who stopped receiving support

Although this data was first introduced in 2021-22, changes to reporting in later years means some sections cannot be directly compared. As such analysis of data here focuses on the most recent complete financial year of data available for non-sanctuary scheme accommodation. Reasons for households stopping receiving support are outlined in the figure below.

Whilst 10 households were recorded as having moved in with the perpetrator following support in non-sanctuary scheme accommodation, it should be acknowledged that survivors do not always disclose that they have returned to live with the perpetrator. This is likely to be an underestimate.

Please note that a further category not included in these figures was “asked to leave/evicted”. This category has not been included in the chart as no households were asked to leave or evicted in the year ending March 2025.

Figure 28: The number of households in non-sanctuary scheme accommodation who stopped receiving support, by reason, year ending March 2025



Source: Table created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from MHCLG Statutory Return for Cambridgeshire (2024/25), and central government support in domestic abuse safe accommodation statistics (DLHC, 2023; MHCLG, 2024).

Other reasons recorded in 2024/25 include:

- Moved to another area
- Moved into another refuge
- Moved into a refuge from dispersed accommodation

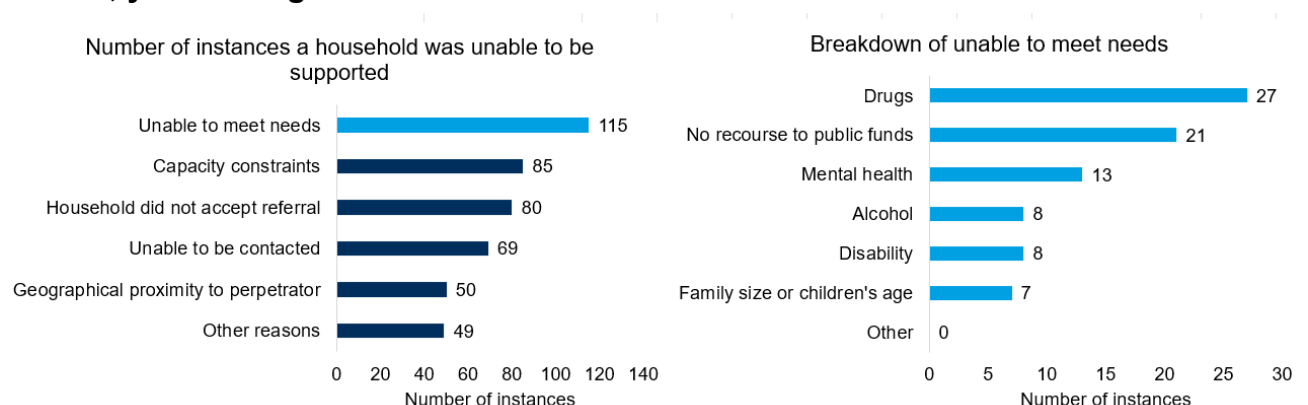
7. Identifying Barriers to accessing safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire

7.1. Households unable to be supported as shown by Safe Accommodation service data

There were 457 instances in the year ending March 2025 in which a household was unable to be supported. The most common reason that a household was unable to be supported was that the service was unable to meet the households needs, with 115 instances.

Of those instances where the safe accommodation services were unable to meet a household's needs, the most common reason was being unable to meet drug support needs (27 instances), followed by the household having no recourse to public funds (21 instances).

Figure 29: Number of instances a household was unable to be supported by reason, year ending March 2025



Note: See technical notes in Appendix A: Technical notes.

Source: Chart created by the CCC Policy, Intelligence and Performance Service, using data from MHCLG Statutory Return for Cambridgeshire (2024/25).

Other reasons why a household was unable to be supported in the most recent year include:

- been in a refuge before;
- geographical proximity to family (perpetrator & client)
- arson
- offending history
- referred from area where current resident occupy

- been evicted from previous accommodation run by provider
- not domestic abuse
- refusal to share risk related information.

Other reasons noted in 2023/24 were as follows:

- Complex needs
- Offending history, including arson
- Violence
- Child protection concerns
- Presence of pets
- Fleeing an area where existing residents are already accommodated
- Employment considerations

Other reasons in 2022/23 included:

- Survivor changed mind or found alternative accommodation
- Knowledge of refuge - support needs of existing residents

The most frequent reasons a household was unable to be supported in 2024/25 are explored further below. Issues of accessibility of safe accommodation, which could restrict the ability to meet disability needs is also outlined in more detail in the provision section of this document.

7.2. Capacity constraints

Services have reflected households being unable to be supported due to capacity constraints were due to refuges being full or rooms being unavailable, sometimes because of maintenance issues or a lack of suitable space for women with children.

Whilst MHCLG do not require specific reporting on occupancy rates, local refuges kindly shared their figures for this needs assessment.

- Cambridge Women's Aid refuge reported 83% occupancy for the year 2024/25 and 90% across April-Sept 2025. They have worked proactively to improve the occupancy rate (which was in part constrained in 2024/25 due to maintenance issues that needed addressing in the building).
- Refuge reported 83% occupancy for the year 2024/25. This figure includes rooms which were unlettable whilst awaiting essential repairs in this period.

Recommendation: To record patterns of occupancy in safe accommodation locally and review processes. This can help ensure occupancy rates are maximised.

7.3. Drugs and Alcohol

The above figures highlight households unable to be supported in safe accommodation due to drug and alcohol needs. The most recent drug and alcohol needs assessment for Cambridgeshire acknowledges the frequent overlap between drug and alcohol needs and those with experience of domestic abuse. It also notes that it can be harder for clients with complex needs to access support. Drug and alcohol services do identify clients at risk of domestic abuse. According to the latest drug and alcohol needs assessment, 4-16 people were referred annually to DA support services since 2018. (More detailed insight into the trends and demographics of general Drug and Alcohol needs in Cambridgeshire is available from this needs assessment (Middleton, 2025).)

However, the full scale of this overlapping need in Cambridgeshire is not clear. In the process of completing this needs assessment, it was recognised that drug and alcohol use is not being recorded consistently in existing DASV support service systems. This makes it difficult to identify the scale of this need among clients (including those with specific safe accommodation needs).

Whilst figures are not available across all drug types, needs are anticipated to increase as the population of Cambridgeshire grows. In this context, with feedback from professionals about the suitability of current support for victims/ survivors with drug and alcohol needs, this suggests an area for development.

Recommendation: To seek way to support consistent recording where clients do disclose drug and alcohol use to IDVAs.

Recommendation: Professional feedback alongside local data indicates that providing suitable support for survivors with substance use issues is problematic. Whilst the scale is unknown it remains clear that more could be done to provide consistent and co-ordinated timely interventions for those survivors in need of drug and alcohol support and safe accommodation.

7.4. No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

The number of people with NRPF is not monitored nationally or locally and there is considerable difficulty in generating reliable estimates. It is difficult to gauge the potential scale of need as a result, however NRPF is highlighted in the figures above

and has been reflected upon as a concern for unmet need by professionals working locally. (Johnson-Hunter, 2025)

For those experiencing Domestic Abuse who have NRPF options can be limited as victims/ survivors would not be able to apply for social housing. They would also not be able to access refuge accommodation without being in receipt of housing benefit, unless another agency is able to guarantee funding. Where a victim has children, Children's social care has some responsibilities (Cambridgeshire County Council, 2025)

A victim may be eligible to apply for the MVDAC (Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession) but will need legal advice to do so. If they are not eligible for this there are some limited agencies nationwide who are able to provide support such as Southall Black Sisters.

7.5. Pet ownership

In written evidence provided to central government by the Dogs Trust, concern for a pet can present a barrier to accessing safe accommodation. Refuges rarely allow pets. Victims/survivors are afraid to leave their pet with the perpetrator, due to fearing for their safety (Dogs Trust, 2019). Whilst the MHCLG figures do not reflect this unmet need, it has been raised by professionals and victims/ survivors locally as a barrier to accessing safe accommodation.

Authors of this needs assessment checked with Cambridgeshire refuges who confirmed current policy is not to accept pets. They do however signpost survivors to pet fostering support as well as dispersed accommodation options (which allow pets) as appropriate.

A locally sourced case study highlighting the difficulties of pet ownership when seeking safe accommodation is shown below:

Case Study: Client accessing dispersed safe accommodation with a pet dog.

The client was first referred to the IDVA service following a MARAC referral, after the perpetrator was admitted to hospital. Anticipating the perpetrator's discharge back to their home, the client grew fearful of being forced to share the joint tenancy again. The client had a pet dog which they were not prepared to leave. This meant that they could not access standard temporary accommodation provided by the local authority.

To address the risks, a referral was made for the client to move into dispersed safe accommodation in another part of Cambridgeshire, where they could keep their dog. The Housing IDVA worked closely with P3 to provide practical support, including help with applications for benefits, which the client

struggled with. The IDVA service also coordinated with the council’s housing team to assist the client’s homeless application.

Eventually, the client was offered permanent accommodation in a secure environment. Additional support, such as target hardening, referral to further voluntary sector support, and help with moving, ensured the client’s transition went smoothly. Settled in their new home, the client expressed immense relief and gratitude, describing it as “my place, where I can be happy and not be frightened.

Data is not available to assess pet ownership specifically in Cambridgeshire; however, an estimate can be made using national survey figures. A survey by pet charity PDSA, in conjunction with YouGov indicated that in 2024, 28% of adults in the UK own a dog. When applying this percentage to the Cambridgeshire population, this could mean an estimated 157,800 people (18+) in Cambridgeshire are dog owners (based on CCC mid-2023 population estimates). In terms of other pet ownership, the same survey indicated that 51% of the UK population (aged 18+) own a cat, dog, and/or rabbit (PDSA, 2024). This could mean an estimated 287,400 people (18+) in Cambridgeshire own at least one of these pets (based on CCC mid-2023 population estimates).

As such this shows that while pet ownership is relatively common, safe accommodation for survivors with their pets is very limited (i.e. dispersed accommodation).

Recommendation: To explore how pet ownership can become less of a barrier to accessing safe accommodation in Cambridgeshire.

8. Victim/Survivor Experience and Needs

8.1. Approach to gathering survivor voice in Cambridgeshire

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires Local Authorities to ensure the voice of survivors is included within a strategic board, with oversight of the safe accommodation for victims/survivors of domestic abuse duty. In the past this was met through commissioned feedback from Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse but more recently it has been agreed to take a different approach. Recruitment is currently underway to appoint a Domestic Abuse Co-production facilitator, which will sit with the Cambridgeshire County Council Changing Futures team. The post will

work with survivors to gain feedback on all parts of the system and will develop a co production panel to drive forward improvements.

Guidance for the completion of Safe Accommodation Needs Assessments indicates that understanding the victim's journey should be a component. As such this needs assessment recommends the above post undertake journey mapping exercises with both clients and professionals to gain more detailed insight. Journey mapping is a reflective practice used to map an individual's journey through various systems and services; this provides the opportunity to capture barriers and facilitators of support beyond existing data recording.

8.2. Insight from survivor group

As part of the development of this needs assessment, a set of questions were shared with a local DA survivors' group to begin to gather informal insight locally. (Please see Appendix for list of questions used as discussion prompts). Whilst this cannot be treated as representative of all survivor experiences, it highlights potential challenges to explore in future feedback processes. Thank you to the Meadows in Cambridge for providing opportunities to speak to survivors.

Survivors raised concerning experiences of family courts disclosing addresses to perpetrators and therefore escalating risk. They found that such protections in place while in refuge were lost once they moved on.

One individual reported a negative experience at a refuge where staff lacked adequate training in specific areas of need, notably regarding NRTPF (No Recourse to Public Funds). Additionally, they shared concerns about the professionalism of staff and instances of racist behaviour.

Survivors reflected that the level of support provided by refuges during the move-on process varied considerably. In one case, a woman received minimal assistance; after securing her own property, she did not receive help with practical arrangements related to the move. Conversely, a positive example involved comprehensive support, including assistance with relocation, furnishing the new home, and follow-up check-ins post-move.

Feedback also indicated that housing services do not always understand the implications of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). For instance, a woman awaiting Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and holding the Domestic Violence Concession faced challenges due to a lack of understanding by housing services regarding her status.

Nonetheless, opportunities to participate in group programmes such as "Own My Life" within refuges were identified as a positive aspect of the support offered.

8.3. Insight on needs from professionals working locally

A brief survey was circulated to IDVAS in the CCC DASV service to ask for their insights on safe accommodation needs for this needs assessment. Whilst this is not an extensive survey it does provide examples of the concerns professionals working in Cambridgeshire have.

When asked what the most common barriers were to accessing safe accommodation, CCC IDVAs highlighted the following.

- Over half of the respondents mentioned clients did not want to leave their pets.

“Pets are also a major restriction as they are part of the family and many safe accommodation options will not accept pets.”- a CCC IDVA

- Shared accommodation was noted as a barrier; something that clients found unsuitable for families or struggled with.

“Survivors do not want to share facilities due to trauma” - a CCC IDVA

“Older Clients struggle with shared temporary accommodation” - a CCC IDVA

- IDVAs raised the impact of moving away from support networks, impacting the client’s mental health and feeling social of isolation.
- Different eligibility for support among student victims/survivors had been encountered by IDVAs, including access to benefits. This may indicate challenges in accessing safe accommodation for full-time students.
- No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) was also highlighted as a barrier to accessing safe accommodation.

IDVAs were also asked about impacts they often see when clients experience barriers to accessing safe accommodation. 10 out of the 12 responses stated that the client remained in the unsafe relationship/ environment due to barriers to safe accommodation, underlining how barriers to safe accommodation can really change outcomes.

“some clients remain in the relationship due to no suitable options available” - a CCC IDVA

IDVAs were also asked what kind of additional safe accommodation they felt is needed in Cambridgeshire, highlighting the following safe accommodation types:

- ‘dispersed accommodation’.
- ‘refuge for clients with drugs issues/substance abuse’
- ‘Self-contained safe accommodation - no shared facilities’
- NRPF safe accommodation

“Safe accommodation/ respite home for DA victims with NRPF. Where anyone with NRPF status can access safe accommodation. Where they can get space away from the abusive situation, where they can cherish the feeling of being safe in a place.” - a CCC IDVA

Lastly, IDVAs noted that positive experiences when helping clients were enhanced by collaboration with district council housing teams. In a couple of answers, it was highlighted how experiences were more positive when there was knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse among housing team colleagues:

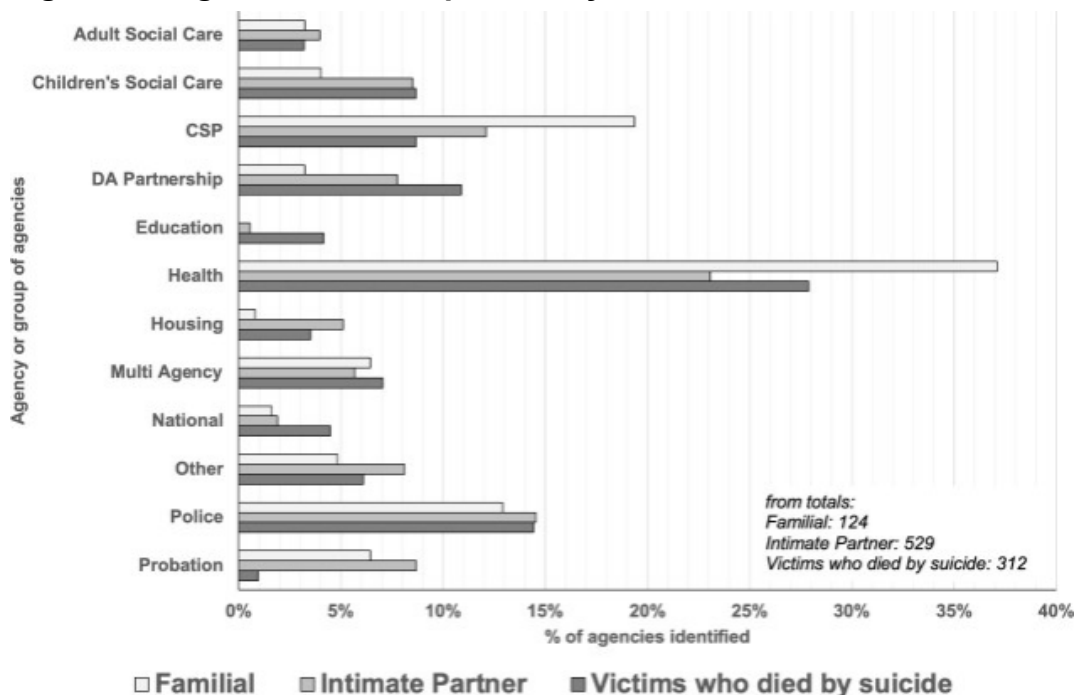
“Those that are positive is often when the individual team member from housing that is supporting the client (whether that is housing options, advisors etc) have a genuine understanding of DA”- a CCC IDVA

8.4. Housing related recommendations from DHRs in Cambridgeshire

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review carried out when somebody dies as a result of abuse, violence or neglect by a relative, intimate partner or member of the same household.

National analysis of DHR themes indicates that a small proportion of recommendations arising are aimed at housing organisations (as shown in the figure below).

Figure 30: Agencies with responsibility for recommendations



Source: Figure 19 in “Key findings from analysis of Domestic Homicide Reviews: September 2021 to October 2022” report (Home Office, 2024).

The table below shows Cambridgeshire DHRs since 2021 where specific housing related recommendations were made.

Table 11: Cambridgeshire DHRs/ published since 2021 with housing related recommendations

| Pseudonym | District | Review Published URL | Date review completed | Date of Death | Housing Related Recommendation | Update on actions as of September 2025 |
|-----------|----------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------|---|---|
| Jasmin | South Cambridgeshire | Executive summary Cambridgeshire DHR Final | May 2021 | Dec 2018 | Local Recommendation: "To publish and disseminate the Home-Link scheme and lettings policy to partner agencies, together with the referral mechanism for the Residents at Risk group and the Problem-Solving Group." (South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership, 2021, p. 32) | The policy has been updated and shared with partner agencies. It has also been added to the CCC webpage for guidance. |
| Emily | Fenland | DHR Overview Report - Emily.pdf | Sept 2022 | Feb 2022 | National Recommendation: "A database for research on safeguarding matters in order for Housing departments and associations to ably risk assess suitability of accommodation for applicant to be explored for feasibility. As housing issues are now an intrinsic part of the Domestic Abuse Act, this will allow both the local council housing departments and housing associations who are commissioned to accommodate on their behalf, the ability to have access to information for informed decision-making taking regards of vulnerability and risk " (Fenland Community Safety Partnership, 2022, p. 58). | This issue was taken to the national Domestic Abuse and Housing National Policy Group (DAC). The DAC agreed to take this forward in January 2024. |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | | <p>Local Recommendation: “Clarion Housing to revise the Home-Link housing application to include the applicant to comment on ‘You or a member of your household needs to move away from another area to escape violence or harm.’ This will then reflect the Fenland Housing application form and identify if there are ‘risk’ issues that need to be explored further before deciding on the suitability of where to re-locate” (p. 59).</p> | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|

9. Glossary

Table 12: A glossary of terms related to the MHCLG data

| Term/abbreviation | Definition/description |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Advice service | “Including financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements.” |
| Advocacy support | “Development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers).” |
| Counselling and therapy | “Counselling and therapy (including group support) for both adults and children, including emotional support.” |
| Domestic abuse prevention advice | “Support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.” |
| Specialist support for victims | “(i) Designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics (including ‘by and for’), such as faith services, translators and interpreters, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims (not limited to). (ii) Designed specifically for victims with additional and / or complex needs such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support (not limited to), including sign posting accordingly.” |
| Children’s support | “Play therapy, child advocacy or a specialist children worker (for example, a young people’s violence advisor, independent domestic abuse advisor or outreach worker specialised in working with children).” |
| Housing-related support | “Providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently” |
| No Recourse to Public Funds | “Not entitled to claim the majority of benefits including housing benefit.” |

| Term/abbreviation | Definition/description |
|--------------------------|--|
| MVDAC | Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession |

Source: The definitions provided in this table are direct quotes from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, available in the recent Support in Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation report for 2023/24 (MHCLG, 2024, p. 12).

Table 13: A general glossary of terms and abbreviations used in this document

| Term/abbreviation | Definition/description |
|--------------------------|--|
| CCC | Cambridgeshire County Council |
| MHCLG | Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government |
| ONS | Office for National Statistics |
| OPCC | Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner |
| PDSA | A pet charity (The People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals). More information can be found on their website: The vet charity for pets in need - PDSA |
| Section 106 Agreements | A Section 106 (S106) agreement is a legal contract formed between a local authority and a developer as part of planning permission. Also known as planning obligations, these agreements require developers to help offset the impact of their projects on the surrounding community. This can involve contributing funds for infrastructure or services such as affordable housing, schools, or roads. Since the agreement is attached to the land itself, it may include financial payments, limitations on development, or requirements to undertake certain works or activities. Planning obligations - GOV.UK |

Appendix A: Technical notes

Target hardening - homes supported

The number of homes supported cited in this report is based on the count of individual addresses for target hardening jobs recorded by the service. Homes can have multiple jobs associated. Jobs with a status of “cancelled” were excluded from the count. Some jobs were excluded from KPIs, but will have been included in this count, due to not having an official status of “cancelled”.

MHCLG figures for safe supported accommodation

Potential for double counting

The service provider has given information on the potential for figures on referrals to include double-counting in the following ways

1. Referrals to Refuges in Cambs can be made via the National DA Helpline as well as direct referrals to refuge. There is the possibility of duplication if a survivor or organisation contacts National DA helpline and also contacts local refuges directly. (2023/24, 2024/25)
2. Referrals to Dispersed Accommodation are via IDVAs and other DA services completing referral form. (2024/25)
3. Referrals to Sanctuary scheme are made to provider via a CJSM system- Largely IDVA referrals but other DASV services can refer. (2024/25)

Those with specialist characteristics

1. 2024/25 – The question regarding ex-offender status is only asked only if it is relevant to risk/safeguarding. (2024/25)
2. 2024/25 - “As mental health can be deemed a 'disability', there is the possibility of double counting for individuals in this category. (2024/25)
3. 2024/25 – There is potential that not all data on children and all protected characteristics for survivors in target hardening/sanctuary scheme is being recorded. There is a need to collect detail relating to children separately, rather than as a 'household'. (2024/25)
4. Development is underway to ensure that drug and alcohol needs are included in data for 2025/26. (2024/25)
5. Specialist characteristics information from local refuges may only represent a subset of those with specialist characteristics, due to differences in recording practices between refuges, as well as a focus on recording referrals as a

whole, rather than those who stayed or moved on. In 2023/24, the recording methods were updated to ensure this information is recorded accurately, and protected characteristics are highlighted (2022/23).

6. The current recording mechanism for target hardening/sanctuary schemes does not collect data regarding children and all specialist characteristics. This is to be addressed going forward 2024-25 (2023/24).

Length of stay

1. As noted by the service provider for the year 2024/24, large families, those with NRPF, and those with specific needs for support or protection, stay 6 months or more in refuge dispersed accommodation. The housing crisis also impacts the opportunities for people to move on from refuge accommodation.
2. As noted by the MHCLG, “not all local authorities have been able to provide length of stay data for every individual who stayed in safe accommodation, so the lengths of stay do not equal the total number of individuals supported in safe accommodation.” (MHCLG, 2024, p. 6)

Reasons for moving on from safe supported accommodation

The following caveats have been provided by the service provider:

- The reasons for support ending are not currently linked to target hardening. Work is in progress to see how to record approach this (2024/25).
- The service provider is currently endeavouring to see how to record the number of households who have stopped receiving support under sanctuary and target hardening schemes, as well as outcomes, specifically related to target hardening when support is ending, or has ended.

Those unable to be supported

As noted by the MHCLG:

“There may be multiple reasons why a household cannot be supported due to being unable to meet needs, therefore the sum of the individual reasons households needs were unable to be met (columns I to O) does not need to equal the total households unable to be supported due to being unable to meet needs.” (MHCLG, 2024)

Other technical notes/caveats

1. Referrals have been difficult to count, as referrals coming from the National DA helpline are not passed on to refuges once they have reached full capacity (2023/24, 2024/25). This was flagged as a particular concern after a refuge with a high profile locally, received a high number of direct contacts from survivors and referrals from local police and children's services in emergency situations (2023/24).
2. Data for sanctuary schemes, such as on outcomes and demographics, were not recorded separately for target hardening referrals, and so this data should be treated with caution (2022/23).
3. The service provider has noted that refuges are concerned about not being made aware of those seeking refuge via the National DA helpline, as they would not be contacted when at full capacity. This means that the true number of those seeking refuge may be higher. (2024/25)
4. More data is needed regarding the kinds of support provided to survivors receiving sanctuary scheme support/target hardening. (2024/25)
5. As Confirmed with Delta/DHLUC, target hardening provided under SAS have been considered as sanctuary schemes (2023/24).
6. Commissioned providers include DASS outreach, and housing IDVAs (under C&P IDVA service) commissioned as part of SAS.

Police data

“Changes in recording practices have led to discontinuity in police recorded crime figures, especially for violent crime over the last 10 years. Most recently, in May 2023, changes were made to the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) for conduct crimes (stalking, harassment, and coercive and controlling behaviour).

The requirement to record two crimes, reported at the same time by a victim involving the same perpetrator, when one of them was a conduct crime, was removed. However, the police continue to investigate all offences. This has led to a reduction in offences often associated with conduct crimes, such as malicious communications, and an increase in offences such as stalking and harassment. The impact of these changes on statistics is difficult to measure, as compliance in crime recording in this area has been inconsistent across policing.” (ONS, 2025, p. 19)

“Conduct crime is defined as stalking, harassment, or controlling and coercive behaviour, which are offences where there has been unwanted or unwarranted behaviour which amounts to a course of conduct. The course of conduct or behaviour must comprise two or more occasions or events for an offence to be recorded by the police.” (ONS, 2025, p. 18)

For more information on the strengths and limitations of police recorded data, please see the “Strength and limitations” section in the CSEW report for the year ending March 2025: [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

CSEW

Information on the strengths and limitations of CSEW data can be found in the “Strength and limitations” section in the CSEW report for the year ending March 2025: [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

Home-link

Data caveats

3. The figures presented on Home-Link are mid-year snapshots of the live and offered applications on a particular date for the corresponding year.
 - The 2024 values are from a snapshot of the register on 29/05/2024.
 - The 2025 values are from a snapshot of the register on 12/06/2025.
4. Annual reviews are carried out for home-link figures, which requires information to be provided by service users. Numbers will be affected by service users who have not responded to review reminders. Customers who do not respond will have their application marked as hibernated and then removed after a set period of time. The figures provided should therefore provide an accurate snapshot of demand. (The Housing Board, 2024)

Cambridgeshire estimate

Home-link has publicly available data on the percentage of live and offered applicants, as well as the number of members for each district. These figures were used to calculate an estimated number of applicants with each vulnerability, so that the number of applicants in Cambridgeshire districts could be summed from district figures. These figures, along with the number of members in each district, were used to calculate an estimated percentage of applicants who were experiencing domestic abuse in Cambridgeshire.

Children as victims of domestic abuse

The following wording is given in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 on children as victims of domestic abuse:

“Section 3: Children as victims of domestic abuse

- 1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.
- 2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who—
 - a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and
 - b) is related to A or B.
- 3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if— a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or b) the child and the person are relatives.
- 4) In this section—
 - “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
 - “Parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
 - “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.” (Legislation.gov.uk, 2021, p. 3).

CCC mid-2023 population estimates

1. The total population figures are mid-year estimates of the resident population. The definition of the resident population used for our mid-year estimates is the same as that used in the 2021 Census as all students who intend to stay regularly at a term-time address (and school boarders who stay at their term-time address for four or more nights per week) are counted as resident at their term-time address. The population estimates include persons living in communal establishments as well as those in private households. Certain parishes and wards, particularly those with large numbers of armed forces or students, are more difficult to estimate in terms of population size and figures are also likely to fluctuate more.
2. All data is presented rounded to the nearest 5.

Armed forces based in Cambridgeshire

- "Military Personnel deployed on operations and temporary assignments are shown against their permanent stationed location." (Ministry of Defence, 2025)
- Data has been rounded according to the Ministry of Defence disclosure control and rounding policy. This means that the sum of the number of individuals based in Cambridgeshire districts exceeds the number of individuals reported to be based in Cambridgeshire overall.

- Figures of people based in each district, and in Cambridgeshire, were calculated by summing the number of people in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, the number of people in the Army, and the number of people in the Royal Air Force, as reported by the Ministry of Defence.

Homelessness figures

The following caveat has been provided by the MHCLG on main duty statistics:

“Data in each new release is provisional and subject to revision in future quarters. Local authorities may add new cases late or revise previous data submissions where mistakes have been spotted.

Where revisions to earlier quarters are made, these will be incorporated into the dataset at the end of the financial year. “ (MHCLG, 2025)

Appendix B: Questions/ Discussion prompts for survivor feedback

These questions are about how easy it is for survivors of domestic abuse to find safe places to live. This includes things like refuges, different types of safe housing, making your own home safer, or moving to a new home.

1. **How easy was it to learn about your options when you were in an abusive relationship?**
2. **Did you have any problems trying to keep yourself safe from the person who hurt you?**
3. **What helped you the most? What support did you find useful?**
4. **Did you face any extra difficulties because of your own needs?**
5. **What more support or information would have made things easier for you?)**

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