



Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership

Annual Report

2025/26

Working Together to Tackle Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Across Peterborough

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Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership

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Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (DASV) Annual Report 2025/26

Introduction

The 2025/26 Annual Report for the Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Team provides a summary of the work that has been happening in Peterborough over the last year. This has been a pivotal year of change, marked by the decoupling of arrangements across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with separation in May 2025. As a result, this is the first report that solely reflects work in Peterborough. Within the report, you will find updates across all areas we are responsible for under the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy, alongside updates on the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service, Domestic Homicide Reviews, and the excellent work of agencies across the city.

Throughout the report you will find case studies illustrating the work that has been undertaken which have been anonymised to protect identities.

Please contact me if you have any feedback or ideas about how services and work can be developed to support this work in Peterborough.

Vickie Crompton, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership
Manager, Peterborough City Council

Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Service

The IDVA Service supports victims of domestic abuse that have been referred by a professional. The service takes referrals for:

- High Risk Victims: MARAC level or those scoring 14-16 on DASH Risk Assessment with consent
- Housing IDVA: Referrals from housing providers and associations at any risk level
- Eastern European IDVA: Victims at any risk level, from Eastern Europe
- Young People: Aged 13-17 experiencing domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships – IDVA support provided via Cambs IDVA Service
- Stalking: High risk domestic abuse related stalking and non-domestic abuse related stalking at any risk level – IDVA Support provided via Cambs IDVA Service

In 2025/26 the service received a total of 927 referrals and supported 665 clients. The engagement rate for clients throughout the year ranged from 56.15% at its lowest to 83.75% at its highest.

Eastern European IDVA

Peterborough City Council has an Eastern European IDVA, which is a key strength, supporting Eastern European communities and helping to address language, cultural and access barriers to specialist domestic abuse support. The need for additional domestic abuse support for individuals who are Lithuanian in Peterborough has been evidenced by DHRs and local demographics, 3.6% of Peterborough's population were born in Lithuania. The IDVA will speak Lithuanian as their first language. There were 124 Eastern European referrals throughout 2025/26.

There has also been a total of 30 referrals (in 2025/26) to the Lithuanian Project run by Peterborough Women's Aid, which provides tailored support, advocacy, and safety planning for Lithuanian women in Peterborough and Fenland experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Case Study: Eastern European client

Female, 30 years old, Eastern European, non-English speaker. Victim is an orphan with no familial support in the UK or her country of origin. She has been enduring severe psychological and physical abuse from the perpetrator for almost six years, beginning during her pregnancy. Perpetrator repeatedly threatened to kill her or drive her to suicide, reinforcing the idea that no one would miss her since she's an orphan. He continuously threatened to take their daughter away from her, hoping that this would further drive her to suicide. He kept telling their daughter 'that mummy does not love you' and called the victim a bad mother in front of their child. He spread false claims to mutual friends that the victim is a mentally unstable alcoholic, who wants to take her own life. His public persona was one of discipline, strength, and success, which made the victim fear that his respected reputation would overshadow her voice and undermine her credibility. She worried that professionals and community members would dismiss her allegations or view her as unstable or vindictive. This made extremely difficult for the victim to seek any help as she feared not to be believed. The victim separated from the perpetrator for over a year ago but maintained contact with him due to the informal child contact arrangement they had in place. Perpetrator used this to further abuse the victim.

Support from the IDVA Service

IDVA assisted the victim in applying for non-molestation and prohibited steps orders as well as a formal child arrangements order. IDVA advocated on victim's behalf at MARAC, ensuring additional offences were formally raised. Supported the victim through multiple court hearings, police interviews, meetings with Cafcass, and social services. **IDVA provided the support in victim's native language, ensuring she fully understood her rights and options and the processes involved.** Once the victim lost her job due to the fear of leaving her young daughter in someone else's care, IDVA assisted her in getting benefits and secured "3-month breathing space" from the Job Centre, which meant that she did not need to search for a new job or attend any appointments. IDVA liaised with the Embassy of victim's country of origin in London to secure a new passport for her daughter, after the original was burnt by the perpetrator. Due to increased risk IDVA liaised with social services and jointly facilitated victim's and her daughter's urgent departure from the UK prior to the court hearing. IDVA liaised with the UK courts and requested and secured a remote court hearing, resulting in indefinite permission for them to remain abroad. IDVA liaised with the domestic abuse services in the victim's country of origin to secure continued support post-relocation.

Feedback from IDVA clients

“Jenny was fantastic with her support and kindness. She made me at ease and more confident”

“Thank you for being my voice when I didn't feel safe or like I had a voice to share.”

“My key worker who was managing me was very patient, happy, polite and always made sure they took their time to make sure I was well and happy! I had a lot of life changing things happening, coming out of domestic abuse, moving home, moving children's schools and many other things and my key worker was very supportive!”

“My IDVA helped and guided me in very difficult time of my life she listened to me and advised me in very professional way I'm very thankful her for making me so brave and gave me so much information about lots of things. I really appreciate her efforts and support throughout my difficult time. She is amazing lady and so kind heart person I ever met.”

“Val was very supportive and very helpful. She was near all of the time I was in need. Sometimes, I got more than expected. It was easier to pass through all of the problems knowing that someone cares about you and your needs. I'm very thankful for all support ❤️”

“I'm so grateful for everything my idva has done for me I feel more confident in myself and a lot safer”

“Kat was a friend from beginning to end, she was there to hold my hand through dark days and was someone I could rely on to understand my feelings”

“Without Misba I would not have survived the last three years. She has been by my side every step of the way and has gone above and beyond to protect my family and I. Her role as a police liaison was crucial throughout my extremely dangerous and complex situation. I owe her everything.”

“My support worker, listened, she didn't judge, she gave advice, sent helpful information over for other services and help.”

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

MARAC meetings are held in Peterborough on Tuesdays, with additional meetings scheduled during periods of increased demand. MARAC Plus meetings are convened for particularly complex cases where more than the standard twenty minutes is required to develop a comprehensive, risk-led action plan.

MARACs are chaired on a rotational basis by managers from the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Partnership and Police Inspectors.

In 2024, the DASV Partnership commissioned SafeLives to undertake an independent review of MARAC, with the findings shared in late 2025. Recommendations have been considered at both operational and strategic levels, with many already implemented through the service improvements outlined below.

The MARAC is governed by the MARAC Steering Group which meets quarterly and continues to provide strategic oversight, driving development and improvements to the effectiveness and performance of MARAC arrangements. Findings and recommendations from the Safe Lives review have been considered by the Steering Group including reviews of risk thresholds, format and frequency of meetings. The Steering Group addresses attendance issues and monitors performance data.

Over the past 12 months, a comprehensive review of the processes underpinning MARAC has been undertaken. This has included revisions to the Operating Protocol, Closed Case Protocol and Information Sharing Agreement. [Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - Strategic Documents](#),

MARAC Survey

A MARAC survey was undertaken and had responses from 19 individuals/agencies. Most respondents rated their experience of MARAC 8-10 out of 10 with a score of 10 being the most positive result.

The strongest themes throughout the responses included particularly the quality of partnership and multi-agency working, and effective information sharing and coordination. Respondents described MARAC as well organised, supportive and effective in improving understanding of risk and safeguarding.

Some of the aspects that could be improved included ensuring actions are consistently SMART and tailored to individual cases, reducing repetition of information, strengthening focus on lived experience and trauma-informed practice, and continuing to challenge language that may inadvertently place responsibility on victims. These

findings align with learning from the SafeLives review and continue to inform ongoing MARAC improvements.

MARAC Survey Responses

“Always planned well with good concise supportive partnership working to enable to best outcome”

“Co-ordinators are approachable, meetings are productive and even if not all onward actions are successful the liaison with professionals/partner agencies is always helpful”

“Useful for multiagency working and for developing plans, however sometimes actions do not get followed through”

“Overall good, good attendance from agencies, good information being shared by agencies, good opportunity for joint working and a multi agency response. Not all actions are SMART or victim focused. I’m unsure if actions that have not been completed are very chased up. Doesn’t always feel like there is a clear action plan or that anything has improved.”

“Any meetings I have attended I have been welcomed and encouraged to input. The meetings have been well run and organised”

Several service improvements and new processes have been introduced during the year to strengthen the effectiveness of MARAC. These include earlier circulation of agendas to allow partners sufficient time to prepare, clearer and more consistent recording of children listed on agendas, and the development of an acronyms list. [Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - MARAC](#).

The Safe Lives review suggested a focus on structured risk identification, SMART action planning and bespoke timescales. MARAC meetings, led by the Chairs, are now focused on supporting partners to practice and implement these recommendations.

Earlier this year, a MARAC Case Audit process was introduced. Core partner agencies meet quarterly to evaluate the effectiveness of multi-agency contributions throughout the MARAC pathway, from initial referral through to the completion of agreed actions.

The audits aim to identify strengths, gaps and shared learning opportunities to enhance partnership working and improve outcomes for victims.

MARAC Data

Throughout 2025/26 there were 54 standard MARAC meetings and 2 MARAC Plus meetings throughout the year with 12 being closed. The total of cases heard at MARAC was 427. The Safelives recommendations, based on population would be 440 cases heard for Peterborough.

Most referrals were received from the police (355 referrals), with additional referrals from IDVAs (10), other DA services (23), housing (6), children's social care (5) and other partner agencies.

The reasons for referral included:

- 49 were for visible high risk
- 129 were from professional judgement
- 193 were repeat
- 61 were from escalation

Analysis of gender shows that there were a small proportion of male clients (31 in the last year), although most referrals continue to involve female victims (398 in the last year), as well as 30 female perpetrators and 385 male perpetrators.

Data also shows that of the referrals within 2025-26, 279 had children and there was a total of 579 involving children.

There were 351 clients recorded to be heterosexual, 8 who were homosexual, and 71 clients where they were not asked or it wasn't known about them.

129 referrals were identified as having a disability, 194 as not having a disability and 108 where they were not asked or it was not known about them.

The largest age group discussed at MARAC was those aged 31-40 years (168 victims), followed by those aged 21-30 years (96 victims) and 41-50 years (93 victims).

The largest ethnic groups represented within MARAC cases were British (133 victims) and White British (119 victims). A further 104 victims were from racially minoritised communities, including Eastern European (43), Other ethnic backgrounds (45), Asian (27), African (10) and Gypsy/Traveller communities (2).

MARAC Co-ordinators

MARAC Coordinators are the central coordinating hub. Working at the heart of the MARAC process, they ensure that information flows smoothly between partners and cases move efficiently from referral through to coordinated multi agency action.

Key Responsibilities:

- Manage referrals efficiently, working to ensure a smooth and timely journey from cases arriving in the inbox to being scheduled on MARAC agendas and distributed to partners, including responding flexibly when last minute changes are unavoidable.
- Work closely with partner agencies to gather and share information in advance of meetings, enabling thorough research to be completed and ensuring the right professionals can attend and contribute on the day.
- Plan and coordinate attendance for each case, keeping oversight of partner participation so that meetings can progress as smoothly as possible.
- Monitor timing carefully, recognising that MARAC don't always run to schedule.
- Accurately capture and record the information shared during meetings, including risks identified and actions agreed.
- Monitor and record action completion outside of MARAC meetings, including issuing reminders for outstanding actions after two months.
- Maintain the wider MARAC infrastructure, ensuring information sharing agreements are in place, transferring cases into and out of area where required, and contributing to ongoing development and scrutiny activity.

Supporting partner agencies to participate in MARAC is at the heart of the MARAC co-ordinator's role, aiming to reduce administrative burden and stress, offering practical assistance wherever possible and making participation in MARAC as straightforward and accessible as it can be.

They are readily available to:

- Answer questions
- Share information
- Troubleshoot issues
- Provide guidance on process and expectations

As Coordinators, they are grateful for the strong commitment shown by MARAC partners, whose active participation is key to the effectiveness of the process. They also appreciate the understanding and collaboration shown when, despite everyone's best efforts, meetings do not always run entirely to plan. This collective approach is fundamental to delivering an effective, responsive MARAC that keeps survivor safety at its core.

MARAC Development Day

A MARAC Development Day was organised on 9th July 2026 at the Lady Olivia Centre, Brampton, Huntingdon. This event provided an opportunity for partners to get together to share knowledge, reflect on learning and strengthen best practice across the partnership, specifically relating to MARAC.

Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs)

DHRs are co-ordinated across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by a central lead in Cambridgeshire County Council.

In the last year there have been one referral for a DHR in Peterborough and one report published. All published Peterborough reviews can be found at [Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews | Peterborough City Council](#)

Work is currently ongoing to complete a review of DHRs commenced since the DASV partnership took over the co-ordination of the reviews in April 2021. The aim is to look for recurring themes and recommendations of the 26 reviews - 14 relating to homicides and 12 to suicides.

Recommendations from the reviews are constantly being implemented across all agencies involved and learning events held in various formats.

Safeguarding Conference

The Safeguarding Children's Conference was organised on 21st April 2026 at The Fleet, Italian Community Association Fleet Way, Peterborough. It was to understand more about the impact of neglect and domestic abuse on children and young people.

Feedback from an individual with lived experience of domestic abuse, who had their story read out at the Safeguarding Conference:

"Attending the conference was an honour and I am so grateful to all the attendees. It was a serious subject, contributions heard were hard hitting and upsetting.

Hearing my feedback read aloud was both surreal and deeply moving. My lived experiences were dismissed by so many, so to feel genuine acceptance from such an engaged and invested audience was incredibly reassuring. It reminded me that meaningful change is not only needed — it is possible.

I shared my story with a simple hope: that one person might leave with a better understanding of the complex realities faced by individuals and children rebuilding their lives after abuse. This includes recognising the challenges of supporting children, particularly in situations involving court-ordered contact, where the emotional and practical difficulties can be profound.

Opportunities like this conference matter. They help bring hidden experiences into the open, encourage understanding, and support better outcomes for families. I will always value the chance to contribute, because knowledge is power — and abuse too often hides in silence."

DASV Conference

Peterborough City Council have organised a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Conference over the years. The fourth conference took place on 24th June 2026 at the Engine Shed, Sand Martin House, Peterborough, PE2 8TY.

Topics from some of the speakers this year included: Daphne Franks on Predatory Marriage, Michelle John on Child to Parent Abuse, Caroline Deeprose on Furniture Poverty, Amanda Geraghty on Safe Accommodation, and Rizwan Rahemtulla on the White Ribbon Campaign, among many others.

The purpose is to knowledge share, reflect on the work of different organisations over the year and to have an opportunity to get together and meet.

Feedback from the DASV Conference 2026

“It was a really empowering and informative day”

“Thank you so much and to the external guest speakers who came from far to share their expertise”

“The speakers were excellent, and it was well balanced with both professional perspectives and lived experience”

“The guest speakers you selected, and the powerful presentations they delivered were thought-provoking, impactful and truly inspiring.”

DASV Partnership Manager

The DASV Partnership Manager supports the effective day-to-day operation of the partnership, ensuring that partners remain connected, informed, and able to work collaboratively. This includes coordinating meetings and events and creating opportunities for professionals to come together to share learning, address challenges,

and maintain a collective focus on improving outcomes. A key aspect of the role is communication, including the development of a monthly newsletter, the dissemination of key information, and supporting efforts to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence across communities.

The role also involves supporting and developing the Domestic Abuse Champions network, working closely with members to strengthen their confidence, knowledge, and engagement within their respective organisations.

In addition, the DASV Partnership Manager contributes to partnership reports and provides quarterly data to support the monitoring of progress and the identification of emerging themes, helping to ensure that the partnership's work remains evidence-informed and responsive to need.

Overall, the role plays a vital part in enabling collaboration and maintaining momentum across the partnership, supporting its continued ability to respond effectively to those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

White Ribbon

The DASV Partnership is responsible for co-ordinating Peterborough City Council's White Ribbon Accreditation. White Ribbon is a global movement and ethos focused on ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) by engaging men and boys as part of the solution.

Peterborough City Council (PCC) has been White Ribbon Accredited since 2021 and has continued to support the White Ribbon UK campaign since that time. PCC was successfully reaccredited in June 2024 to June 2027, as accreditation lasts for three years, and demonstrates a genuine organisational commitment to preventing VAWG.

White Ribbon Accreditation shows that an organisation takes VAWG seriously and holds leaders accountable for modelling respectful behaviour. It requires active senior leadership involvement, clear governance, and evidence of action, not just statements of intent.

Rizwan Rahemtulla has facilitated sessions for men working at Peterborough City Council "It Starts with Men" – as men need to be at the core of challenging male violence.

In July 2025, the DASV Team and Peterborough Women's Aid attended PRIDE with information to spread awareness of White Ribbon and its aim.

Ambassadors and Champions

There are over 50 PCC White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions. Each has taken a pledge to actively promote the White Ribbon ethos and help prevent men's violence against women and girls through everyday leadership, influence and action. Champions and ambassadors uphold White Ribbon values, encourage respectful behaviour and challenge harmful attitudes and norms that contribute to VAWG.

White Ribbon Day and 16 Days of Action

White Ribbon Day takes place each year on 25 November, marking the start of the 16 Days of Action against gender-based violence. On this day, the White Ribbon flag was raised at Peterborough Town Hall as part of the campaign. This was followed by a speech from the Mayor of Peterborough Cllr Judy Fox, as well as poem readings by Alex Tyler, the city's Poet Laureate and Charis from Living Keys.

Together, these actions reflect Peterborough City Council's ongoing commitment to creating a respectful, supportive workplace and playing an active role in ending violence against women and girls.

Businesses Against Abuse

Funded by the OPCC, delivered by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and hosted by Peterborough City Council,

BAA (Businesses Against Abuse) is a scheme in which businesses across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough can prove themselves to be safe spaces for customers in need. [BAA Businesses](#) are committed to challenging Violence Against Women and Girls and have a zero-tolerance policy on any person displaying predatory behaviour.

Businesses within the scheme make a commitment to being a safe space for all customers, in particular women and girls, and their staff are trained in spotting predatory behaviour.

There were 8 sessions held, with 94 people attended from a range of businesses, including leisure, coach and taxi drivers, libraries and licensed premises.

Safe Accommodation Strategy (SAS)

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

In 2025/26 the DASV team undertook a Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment for Peterborough. This is a requirement of Tier 1 local authorities from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and follows the previous needs assessment in 2021.

The main recommendations from the needs assessment are:

1. Disability and Accessibility

Review the accessibility and suitability of safe accommodation options for people with disabilities and complex health needs – This needs assessment identified that people with physical disabilities, mobility issues, sensory impairments, mental health needs and other complex health conditions can face additional barriers when seeking safe accommodation. Consideration should be given to increasing awareness of accessible accommodation options, strengthening referral pathways, and ensuring that accommodation and support services are able to respond effectively to a wider range of needs. Future service development should continue to consider accessibility, reasonable adjustments and the provision of self-contained accommodation where appropriate.

2. Guidance for Individuals Who Are Working or in receipt of Capital/Assets

Develop and promote guidance for professionals supporting people experiencing domestic abuse who are employed, self-employed or have access to capital/assets – This needs assessment identified that employment does not necessarily equate to financial independence or access to safe accommodation. Economic abuse, inaccessible income, ownership of assets, and uncertainty around eligibility for welfare support can create significant barriers. Accessible guidance should be developed for professionals to support informed decision-making, improve understanding of housing and benefit options, and reduce inconsistencies in advice provided to those seeking safety while remaining in employment. There is also a recommendation identified from a DHR – South Cambs CSP to write to the DA commissioner and request they identify a relevant body to complete research for publication into domestic abuse within affluent relationships. This will assist with professionals' knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse within affluent relationships and would also ensure the correct support and safeguarding measures are utilised.

3. Pets

Strengthen awareness of pet-related barriers and identify opportunities to increase access to pet-friendly accommodation pathways – The needs assessment identified that concerns regarding pets can significantly influence decisions about leaving an abusive relationship. Increased awareness should be promoted amongst housing professionals, domestic abuse practitioners and accommodation providers regarding available options and support for pet owners. Partnership working should continue to explore opportunities to minimise situations where individuals feel forced to choose between their own safety and the wellbeing of their pets.

4. Housing Response and DAHA Accreditation

Peterborough City Council should continue to provide training, support and quality assurance activity to promote consistent housing responses to domestic abuse and support progress towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation – The needs assessment identified examples of positive practice across housing services, alongside occasions where differing approaches and levels of understanding may impact the experiences of those seeking support. Continued investment in training, case audits, quality assurance processes and partnership working will help ensure a consistent, trauma-informed and survivor-centred response across all housing functions. Progress towards DAHA accreditation should be maintained as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement. We continue to build on our relations with local Housing Advice Teams and Housing Associations.

5. No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

Strengthen awareness and understanding of pathways available to people with NRPF experiencing domestic abuse – Individuals with NRPF can experience significant barriers when trying to access safe accommodation and housing support. Continued partnership working should seek to improve professional understanding of immigration-related pathways, available support mechanisms, referral routes and funding options. This should include ongoing promotion of specialist advice services and improved guidance for frontline practitioners supporting individuals with complex immigration circumstances. New dispersed accommodation can also aid this.

6. Awareness of Financial and Practical Support Available

Ensure that professionals supporting people experiencing domestic abuse understand the full range of financial, practical and welfare support available locally – The needs assessment identified that access to practical support can play a significant role in helping people establish and sustain safe accommodation. Professionals should be supported to understand and promote available assistance and where to go for what type of support. This includes support such as flexible funding, furniture and white goods schemes, charitable grants, food vouchers, travel costs and tenancy sustainment support. Improved awareness will help professionals provide more holistic and effective support.

Housing IDVA

Peterborough City Council has a Housing IDVA, which offers direct referral service for housing teams and social landlords. This post is co-located within Peterborough City Council Housing Teams. Cross Keys Housing Association also provides office space for the Housing IDVA to facilitate meetings with their tenants and the IDVA in a safe space. Housing IDVAs also offer case management support and deliver awareness raising

training to staff based in housing departments. The Housing IDVA has developed a greater understanding of housing processes and the local challenges for housing teams and social landlords.

Additionally, if the Housing IDVA is not available or at full capacity, then other IDVAs can take on those cases, ensuring consistent touchpoints with the Housing Teams. There have been positive outcomes for those in housing crisis with this joint working approach.

DA awareness sessions and DAHA support

Peterborough City Council has achieved a Bronze DAHA Accreditation in 2026 and is working towards achieving Silver or Gold. Support to Housing Teams throughout this have been via case audits, DAHA meetings and providing a review of housing services DA policies and procedures at their request.

Within Peterborough, 19 training sessions were delivered by the DASV Service throughout 2025/26, which included a total of 442 individuals receiving training. Furthermore, 86 Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Board Training sessions were held across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, throughout 2025/26. Domestic Abuse training has also been embedded throughout all council Housing Teams with the help of the coworking of the Housing IDVA.

Target hardening

Target hardening continues to provide clients of the IDVA service and Domestic Abuse services, across Peterborough, a very swift sense of safety by ensuring their homes are made more secure. This is achieved by:

- Bespoke safety assessments of survivors' properties
- Lock Changes
- Window and door alarms
- Door / letterbox security features
- Video Doorbell (VDB) and response lights for high-risk clients

In 2025/26 show that there were 145 homes provided with additional security, in which lived 212 children.

Case Study: Target hardening

Client 'L' was referred to the IDVA Service in summer 2025; she and perp share a 5-year-old daughter. L had recently ended the relationship with perp who she is married to due to his controlling and emotionally abusive behaviour. Perp refused to accept the relationship was over, he repeatedly returned to the family home and made numerous calls to L, she therefore self-referred to DASS for support, they subsequently referred L to the IDVA Service having scored 14 on the DASH. L shared that the house is mortgaged in both names, she wanted to put the house on the market and move somewhere closer to school for her child. Additional security was provided in the meantime as L felt very exposed due to the location of the property and perp constantly turning up.

Support from the IDVA Service

The IDVA made a referral for target hardening and a Ring Doorbell via flexible funding which was agreed and installed within days a safety plan was agreed which included checking her car, as well as the boot and underneath before entering then locking the doors immediately once inside. Her car is parked in her car port which is attached to the side of the house. The car port is very dark at night and had no lighting, so a referral to flexible funding for a camera to be installed, this was agreed and installed in August. L commented that she feels so much safer and robustly adheres to the agreed safety plan. L is always saying how thankful she is to the IDVA Service and the support she has received, that she doesn't think she would be where she is today without them.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

Those subjected to domestic abuse with NRPF encounter significant barriers in finding safe accommodation and culturally appropriate domestic abuse support. Survivors are supported with short-term emergency accommodation funded through flexible funding. Clients are sign posted to appropriate immigration advice in regards applying for visa changes such as the MVDAC (Migrant Visa Domestic Abuse Concession), or organisations advising people with pre-settled status about changes to DWP rules for survivors of domestic abuse.

Refuge Monitoring data for 2025-26 shows that 5 women and children with NRPF had been supported, and their funding source was Social Care – these women and children came to Peterborough from out of area, with the original area social care funding the refuge placement.

Those with NRPF are unable to access emergency accommodation funded through housing benefit, but IDVAs can provide support through measures such as hotel accommodation while awaiting an MVDAC decision, alongside outreach, flexible funding, target hardening, food provision and, in some cases, refuge placements or social care-funded accommodation.

Case Study: Client with NRPF

Client arrived from Pakistan on a spousal visa in 2021. She was married to perp for 5 years and lived with him and his family. She has NRPF and worked full-time to support herself financially. Client left the matrimonial home following perp's arrest and fled to Peterborough. He was arrested for rape, sexual offences and CCB and was released with bail conditions. Client confirmed relationship over, no intention of returning to perp and she was supported to apply for MVDAC so that she can apply for an independent visa to remain in the UK in her own right. Client was subjected to sexual abuse from day one of the marriage from perp. She did not realise that what she was experiencing was sexual abuse. She was told by perp and made to believe by him that it was his right as her husband to have sex with her and that he was exercising his marital rights. He sexually and physically abused her. She felt too ashamed to tell anyone or seek support, as she felt humiliated and embarrassed to get medical help because of the injuries being in around her private parts. Client was also sexually abused by her father-in-law and emotionally and verbally by her mother-in-law. There was pressure on the client to get pregnant. Her mother-in-law believed that she had fertility issues and was putting pressure on her to have IVF and go for other treatments. She disclosed controlling and coercive behaviour from perp and his family. They put restrictions on what clothing she wore and expected her to dress in Asian attire; she was not allowed to wear or style her hair in the way she wanted. She was isolated from her family in Pakistan. She was financially abused. They took her wages and expected her to pay for a house they were building in Pakistan. Client initially sought support from her GP who referred her to the IDVA service. She was then supported to report the abuse to the police and upon perp being arrested, client was relocated to Peterborough for her safety.

Support from the IDVA Service

Client was supported to apply for MVDAC, which was approved and allowed client to access public funds for 3 months. Client was supported to move to refuge out of area for her safety as perp's family were aware of her links to Peterborough. IDVA liaised with police to keep client up to date with the investigation and encouraged client to support prosecution. Client was given safety advice, and a safety plan was discussed with her. Client was unaware of the criminal justice process in the UK, and this was explained to her. She was given reassurance regarding her safety and that she had done the right thing in reaching out for support. Client was provided emotional support. IDVA liaised with several refuges as it was challenging to get a refuge to accept a client with MVDAC. Client was accepted into refuge out of area – transport was arranged and she was safely moved. MARAC transfer was completed. Case closure call to client – she confirmed she felt safe in refuge and appreciated all the support she received.

Dispersed Accommodation

There are 2 dispersed houses in Peterborough provided in conjunction with DASS/Impakt and are viewed as 'temporary accommodation' to give people more 'thinking time' while they decide on safe housing options available to them, without having to make a homeless application or flee. It is also accommodation for people that cannot stay in Refuge, including larger families, families with teenage boys, those with pets, those with disabilities, and male victims, for instance. Those living in the properties receive support from Housing Support Workers and IDVAs. This increases the options and choice for those subjected to domestic abuse across Peterborough, while still being able to access their support network or have the support to move back into their homes with safety measures in place, if safe to do so. The cost of stay is paid by Housing Benefit and is calculated on an individual's income and circumstances.

Refuge

Peterborough's refuge accommodation provision includes spaces for 8 women and up to 18 children. These are available to those fleeing from out of area.

Refuge also has access to "Flexible Funding", to support those moving on from refuge, who will need resources to support their new home. Referrals to Peterborough refuge come from national refuge helplines, self-referrals, other refuges, housing referrals, police, Domestic Abuse support services and other agencies. Additionally, the national referral database is also used to identify available refuge vacancies and facilitate access to services across different geographical areas. Referrals are typically assessed against individual needs, including financial circumstances, support requirements, and risk factors, to determine suitability for placement.

Refuge also encourages people who have stayed there and started to stabilise to look at various volunteering opportunities. The refuge also has links to the City College in Peterborough and can support people to start online courses. There is no timescale for people staying in a refuge in Peterborough, unlike other refuges across the country. The time in which people stay there can vary depending on individual circumstances and local policies.

Outreach Services

Peterborough Women's Aid have received funding from Peterborough City Council to provide community outreach support for victims of domestic abuse in Peterborough; this is done through The Peacock Project.

The Peacock Project is available for anyone, of any sex, gender or sexuality, who thinks they might be being subjected to domestic abuse from a partner, ex-partner or family member. The service can support with:

- Safety planning
- Risk assessment
- Counselling and emotional support
- Finding a refuge
- Housing support
- Legal advice and support in court
- Advocacy

There were 129 referrals to IMPAKT outreach (Q1 and Q2) and 263 into the Peacock Project (Q3 and Q4) in Peterborough across 2025/26.

Peterborough Women's Aid delivered two Own My Life courses, funded by the OPCC, supporting ten women to access the programme, a further 18 women accessed drop-in sessions focussing on relaxation and physical well-being.

Peterborough Women's Aid piloted a countywide short-term support service providing phone-based emotional and practical support and safety planning to all adult survivors of domestic abuse who have reported to police, and been assessed by police, as medium risk through the DARA (Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment) process and a crime has been raised. In the first year the service, funded by the OPCC, supported 523 victims from Peterborough.

Peterborough Rape Crisis Care Group were awarded funding by the OPCC to deliver a post support group to female adult survivors of sexual violence. The group was designed to bring survivors together in a way that reduced isolation, strengthened peer connection, and normalised shared emotional experiences, without placing any expectation on participants to disclose or revisit the details of their abuse. Feedback from some of the 20 people who accessed the group included "I don't know what I would have done without the group." And "I love attending the group."

Specialist support

Cambridgeshire Deaf Association were co-funded by the OPCC, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to enable adult members of the Deaf community who have, or who are experiencing domestic abuse, to access specialist support in their chosen form of communication, including British Sign Language. In 2025/26 seven victims from Peterborough accessed this support.

One Voice 4 Travellers were funded by the OPCC to deliver a countywide service to enable adult members of the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Community who have, or who

are experiencing domestic abuse, to access specialist 'By and For' support from members of their own community. In 2025/26 eight victims from Peterborough were supported by this service.

In 2025/26 CHOICES Counselling supported 18 adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse in Peterborough to access emotional support and advocacy.

Sexual Violence Support

Emotional support – 219 of the 631 victims supported in 2025/26 were from Peterborough

ISVA service – 341 of the 1,052 victims supported in 2025/26 were from Peterborough

SENSE enhanced emotional support - 37 of the 95 victims supported in 2025/26 were from Peterborough

Domestic Abuse Advice Line

We run a telephone helpline for victims of domestic abuse or professionals seeking advice. The advice line operates throughout the week and is run by our team members who support our community service. The advice line is available to anyone seeking support from domestic abuse in the Peterborough area and onward referrals will be made if required. In addition to the helpline, we host a 'chat function' on our website which is another source of information, advice, and guidance on the support options available to victims of domestic abuse.

Group Work

Women Warriors continues to provide support to all women in Peterborough with a weekly group focusing on well-being, increasing confidence and reducing isolation. This year, due to demand we now facilitate women warriors twice per week with one session focusing on arts and crafts.

We ran monthly culturally specific coffee mornings working in partnership with the Raham Project and Peterborough Women's network.

Prevention

We continue to deliver the E-scape Project (Supporting Children and Protecting through Education) focuses on preventing domestic abuse by ending the cycle of abuse. Through this project we deliver the Healing Together Programme which supports primary school children who have been affected by domestic abuse and the DAY

Programme which helps young people in secondary school and six form colleges recognise unhealthy relationships.

Through the Dahlia Project, we facilitated training sessions for professionals on honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation, breast ironing and forced marriage.

Through the Peacock Project we have facilitated domestic abuse awareness training to partners including health, education and social care.

Anne's House

Anne's House is a dedicated space in central Peterborough where women can meet with staff and volunteers from the charity to get the help and support they need. Anne's House has a lounge, prayer room, internet café, library, free shop and conference centre. We have made Anne's House available to partner organisation supporting vulnerable women. These include the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Probation services and Cambridge Deaf Association.

Achievements and Performance

- During the year we supported 26 women and 37 children through our refuge service
- Our advice line and webchat received 628 referrals from victims seeking support.
- Anne's House continues to be a safe place for families to access support and services. This year we have had 1500 visits from women and children. All families in need have access to our free shop which provides clothes, toiletries and food.
- We continued to support women from the Lithuanian Community and have had 54 referrals into the project over the last year. This is an increase of 17% increase on last year.
- The Dahlia Project received 169 referrals and out of these supported 29 families with no recourse to public funds. 30% of referrals did not speak English as their first language. Safety, Housing and emotional support were the top needs for clients accessing support through this project. This project will be funded for the next 2 years through the Community Lottery Fund.
- Through the Dahlia Project we trained 315 professionals on Honour Based Abuse, FGM and Forced Marriage
- Women Warriors continues to be a success. On average we have 15-20 women and pre-school children attend the group weekly where they enjoy a number of wellbeing activities. Feedback from this group is that it

reduces isolation, increases confidence and provides a safe space to access specialist support. We have subsequently began delivering this group twice weekly.

- The E-scape project delivering preventative programmes is well established within schools. The Healing Together Programme has received 100 referrals from 27 primary schools in Peterborough. We reached over 3000 young people delivering sessions from the DAY Programme in Secondary schools and Sixth Forms.
- Our bi-weekly show on Salaam FM is the most watched show on the station.

We have started a monthly podcast to raise awareness of the different forms of domestic abuse.

Coproduction

Claire Thatcher started in the new role of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Coproduction Facilitator in November 2025. The focus of the role is to ensure that people with DASV lived experience have meaningful opportunities to influence and contribute to shaping service design and delivery and informing professional practice.

Claire has been networking with specialist DASV services, statutory partners, and community organisations across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to raise awareness of coproduction, build relationships, and ensure services are aware of how coproduction can contribute to and enhance the valuable work already being delivered. Claire has met DASV survivors who courageously shared their experiences'

These conversations explored both their experience of abuse and their attempts to access support, including challenges faced and examples of good practice. With consent, four lived experience accounts have already been shared across relevant forums to raise awareness and inform ongoing developments.

The first women-only coproduction forum was held in Peterborough on 5 March 2026 and explored:

- What support people found helpful
- Ideas for how support available can be improved
- What people found unhelpful or created barriers to accessing support.
- What they treasured or found protective during their experience
- Promises they could make to themselves around self-care

This feedback has been shared across a range of professional and partnership forums to raise awareness of lived experience-led learning.

In addition, coproduction work has supported guidance for parents who, due to child contact arrangements and family court processes, must continue to parent alongside an abusive ex-partner. People with lived experience have shared what helped and what caused harm, and this insight supported to inform and develop guidance for both professionals and parents navigating these systems, which has also been created by Lydia Mack and Vickie Crompton.

Support for children

Peterborough Women's Aid provides therapeutic support for children experiencing domestic abuse in Peterborough, through a combination of refuge-based children's services, Healing Together and the E-Scape Project. Specialist children's workers provide trauma-informed emotional support. Within refuge settings, support includes creative and play-based interventions, after-school emotional support sessions, and therapeutic programmes such as Healing Together, which supports children to understand how their brain and body respond to trauma. Furthermore, there is a full-time children's worker funded as part of the Refuge contract to support children in the refuge. There are also school staff trained in "Healing Together" to support children in their school. 108 children were supported by this programme in 2024-25.

E-Scape supports children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse and those seeking to understand healthy relationships, offering structured group-based interventions informed by trauma-informed principles. The project includes age-appropriate programmes delivered in educational and community settings, supporting children to explore emotions, understand the impact of domestic abuse, and develop strategies that help them to feel safe and supported.

The Embrace Victims of Crime charity operates across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and supported 30 children with counselling and emotional support throughout 2025/26, and Peterborough Women's Aid supported 26 children over 2025/26.

Progress from 2024/25

Peterborough's work during 2025/26 should be viewed within the wider context of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough DASV Strategy 2024-2027 and the Year One progress update in 2024/25. While it reflects activity across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and not all developments are directly relevant to Peterborough, they provide a useful benchmark.

- In 2024/25, survivor voice was identified as a key area across the partnership; in 2025/26, Peterborough strengthened this through the appointment of a

dedicated DASV Coproduction Facilitator and the establishment of local coproduction forums.

- In 2024/25, the partnership highlighted the importance of awareness raising and professional engagement; in 2025/26, Peterborough continued this through the DASV Conference, White Ribbon activity, awareness campaigns and regular engagement with professionals and partner organisations.
- In 2024/25, significant investment was made in workforce development and professional training; in 2025/26, Peterborough built on this through targeted DASV training, housing-based awareness sessions and continued support for Domestic Abuse Champions.
- In 2024/25, domestic abuse training had been embedded across housing services and progress was being made towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation; in 2025/26, Peterborough achieved Bronze DAHA Accreditation and continued work towards higher accreditation levels.
- In 2024/25, housing responses were identified as a key area of partnership development; in 2025/26, Peterborough further strengthened this through the Housing IDVA role, closer partnership working with housing providers and the development of housing-specific domestic abuse guidance.
- In 2024/25, the importance of strong organisational commitment to tackling domestic abuse was recognised across the partnership; in 2025/26, Peterborough continued to demonstrate this through White Ribbon accreditation, ambassador and champion activity, and ongoing awareness raising across the council and wider community.
- In 2024/25, multi-agency partnership working was highlighted as a core element of the DASV Strategy; in 2025/26, Peterborough strengthened this through MARAC developments, partnership events, improved governance arrangements and implementation of learning from reviews and audits.
- In 2024/25, the partnership identified a need to continue improving support pathways and accommodation options for survivors; in 2025/26, Peterborough expanded safe accommodation planning, including new dispersed accommodation proposals, accommodation options for those with additional needs, and a continued focus on reducing barriers to safety.

Future Planning 2026/27

DRIVE Programme

Cambridgeshire Constabulary will be launching the DRIVE perpetrator programme during 2026. Peterborough City Council will have a dedicated post within the IDVA Service, who will be supporting victims of perpetrators who are part of this programme, funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

Co-Production Forums

Co-production forums will run six weekly throughout the year at the following locations:

- Anne's House, 32-34 Cromwell Road Peterborough, PE1 2EA
- Living Keys, The George Alcock Centre, Whittlesey Road, Stanground, PE2 8QS
- The Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Road, Cambridge, CB4 2JL

Work is ongoing to establish forums in Fenland, Huntingdon, and East Cambridgeshire.

Groups and Workshops

Workshops and groups available throughout 2026/27, have been listed below:

Living Keys:

- Cherished Support Group for all women – Monday's 9:30-12:00pm – Kingsgate Church, Murray Room, 2 Staplee Way, Peterborough, PE1 4YT
- Drop-In service – Monday's 1pm-17:30 – offering emotional support, 121 support, arts and crafts, little pamper sessions, referrals to food bank or Carezone, refer to other agencies.
- Domestic Abuse Recovery Course (closed group) – Tuesdays – Referrals now being received for the next course starting in May 2026.
- Freedom Programme – (rolling course – providing not full, we can accept and invite at any point) – Wednesdays.
- Domestic Abuse Recovery Toolkit (closed group) – Thursdays.
- Family Support Group for families that have adult children who are going through abuse and may need support with refreshments – Every Last Wednesday 18:30-20:00. Next one is March 25th, then 29th April. And May 27th.
- Poetry and Journal sessions to express themselves after experiencing domestic abuse – every 4th Monday (starting in April).
- "Co-parenting with an abusive partner". (still being worked on) – End of May/beginning of June – 6-week course. (on a Friday)
- Linda will be completing a charity event to raise funds for Living Keys, for the Freedom Programme to continue to run – April 1st – 30th April. Starting at 5,000 steps per day for a week, 6,000 the next week, 8 the week after and then 10,000 on the last week.
- SWAP SHOP – 1st May 1200-3pm (women only) £6 entry fee which includes a buffet. Women are invited to clear out their wardrobes of anything that is in good condition and swap them for items they like at the swap shop. We also

have children's toys, household items (not electrical) toiletries, and sanitary wear to give away, also handbags, shoes etc.

- Rum & Reggae evening – 18th July – Dance the night away to the sounds of Bob Marley, Marcia Griffith, sang by the band “FYR” £15 entry with a free raffle ticket and a free Rum Punch on arrival.

Barnardo's:

- Dad's Matter (free peer support for dads) – fortnightly on Wednesdays 6pm-8pm at Honeyhill Family Hub, Chadburn, Paston, Peterborough, PE4 7DR.
- Dad's Matter (free peer support for dads) – fortnightly on Mondays 10am-12pm – Orton Family Hub 74 Herlington, Peterborough, PE2 5PW.
- Peterborough Mindful Mums (support mums to share wellbeing skills and build ongoing friendship and peer support, delivered in Child and Family Centres that offer a safe, open-minded environment with suitable play spaces for children during sessions): Fortnightly on Mondays - 10.00am - 12.00pm – East Child and Family Centre

Peterborough Women's Aid:

- Bums and Tums 1pm Mondays – Anne House
- Women Warriors – 10.30am Tuesday – Anne House
- Women Warriors (with aprons) – Friday 10.30 – Anne House
- Women Warriors Wisbech – Thursday 10am – Queen Mary Centre Wisbech
- Women's Warriors March – Thursday 1pm George Campbell Centre
- Men's monthly drop-in – Online beginning 15th June and then every other week
- OML – one per year in Fenland and Peterborough – not timetabled in yet but people can refer via our website

Bretton Baptist Church:

- Seedlings play group – Wednesdays 1:00-2:30pm.
- Bretton Lounge – Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-12pm.

DASV Champions Online sessions

DASV Champions sessions will continue quarterly. Future topics planned include:

- Barriers to support for Minority Ethnic Survivors
- Supporting Older Survivors of Sexual Violence – barriers and good practice
- Learning from DARDR's

- Victim Blaming

Review of Strategies

During 2026/2027 the partnership will be reviewing both the DASV Strategy and Safe Accommodation strategies, in preparation for the end of the existing strategies in 2027.

DASV Conference

The Fifth DASV Conference will take place on the 5th of May 2027 at the Engine Shed, Sand Martin House, Peterborough, PE2 8TY.

Is It Normal? Campaign

The 'Is It Normal?' campaign is designed to help people recognise the early signs of abuse by reflecting the quiet questions many already ask themselves, often through Google or AI tools. What may begin as small doubts about a partner's behaviour, a family situation, or peer pressure can grow into more serious concerns over time. It will consist of weekly social media posts for 52 weeks, presenting relatable, real-life style questions like 'Is It Normal...?'. By doing this, the campaign reassures people that they are not overreacting, that abuse is not always physical and that it's okay to question situations that don't feel right. The campaign supports a wide range of audiences through clear, inclusive and accessible messaging. This includes adults, young people, older adults, LGBTQIA+ individuals, cultural communities, and people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It helps people feel less alone, encourages them to trust their instincts, and provides a safe starting point for seeking support and directs people to the PCC domestic abuse website.

Expansion of Safe Accommodation and Housing Responses

Throughout 2026/27, Peterborough City Council will drive a strategic expansion of safe accommodation provision. This includes 8 new units of dispersed accommodation, of which 2 units will be for people with NRPF. The dispersed accommodation will also include self-contained accommodation for men, or others who may not be able to share accommodation, as well as pet-friendly options to address common barriers to access.

Peterborough City Council have also commissioned 5 women-only units of accommodation, supported by Peterborough Women's Aid. This will help to strengthen specialist support and ensure a broader, trauma-informed response.

Guidance is being developed to eventually be embedded for housing staff on available housing options for people fleeing domestic abuse, particularly in cases where individuals are employed. This should support staff to provide consistent, informed

advice that considers the interaction between employment, income, and eligibility for accommodation and financial support.

There will be a continued focus on improving the quality and consistency of the housing response within Peterborough City Council. This includes ongoing review mechanisms, such as DIP checks and sampling of cases, alongside targeted training where required, to ensure that domestic abuse is appropriately identified and responded to within housing services.

Flexible funding within housing responses will look to be strengthened to better support those subjected to domestic abuse. This may include emergency phones, supermarket vouchers, and travel costs, helping to remove immediate barriers to safety and enabling more timely access to accommodation and support.