



Supporting victims and witnesses

Supporting victims and witnesses of crime

Outcomes 2022-23

Police and Crime Commissioners are responsible for commissioning support services for victims and witnesses of crime. This document provides an overview of the outcomes achieved by each of the locally commissioned services. It should be read alongside the 'The guide to services funded by through the OPCC in 2022/23'

Victim and Witness Hub

- The Constabulary-run **Victim and Witness Hub (The Hub)** received 14,079 referrals including 151 victims who contacted the Hub directly.
- Experienced Victim and Witness Care Co-ordinators provided emotional and practical support to 5,365 victims (that's 103 people a week). This was almost a 15 per cent increase in the number of victims supported in the previous year and the highest level ever. Staff signposted 745 victims to other support services such as mental health support.
- Of the people supported by the Hub staff 2,635 had been the victim of a violent crime, 664 were victims of theft and 228 people were the victim of a sexual offence.
- Of the victims who exited the service, 87 per cent said they felt 'better informed and empowered' as a result of the support provided and more than 900 people said they 'felt safer' as a result of the support they received.
- At any one time, staff in the Hub are supporting 750 trials involving an average of 15,000 victims and witnesses.

Restorative Justice Service

- The RJ Co-ordinator received 72 referrals to contact victims to explore whether engaging with their offender would aid their recovery from the crime they have experienced. The co-ordinator carries out a thorough assessment

to ensure it is safe and appropriate in every case with two full conferences carried out.

Specialist Support Services

- The Bobby Scheme support **elderly victims of property-related crime** by providing advice and fitting security devices (**target hardening**). More than 670 victims were supported including 29 urgent cases where the victim was visited on the same day the referral was received. Victims fed back that the support has 'enabled them to feel safer in their own homes and helps them to sleep better at night'.
- Two **Specialist Victim Care Co-ordinators for Migrant Victims of Exploitation** supported 376 victims, 81 per cent of whom were the victim of violence including domestic abuse and modern-day slavery. Many victims were supported in their first languages of Lithuanian or Romanian. Support ensures the victim's immediate and long-term safety and will continue until the end of any court case.
- Two mental health nurses who deliver the '**Victim Pathfinder Service**' supported 543 victims with their mental ill health, this is an increase of more than 48 per cent on the previous year.
- **Specialist Young Victim Care Co-ordinators** from Family Action supported 127 young people who had been the victim or witness to a crime in three months. After a re-tendering process this service and the dedicated workers transferred to local charity Embrace – Child Victims of Crime (CVOC) in July 2023.
- **Embrace – CVOC** seamlessly continued the work started by Family Action working with 280 victims and their families through their new Specialist Young Victim and Witness Service which provides emotional and practical advice and support.

The charity also provided 363 young victims and witnesses of crime with therapeutic support, one family who accessed this service said: "We still have difficult times and I'm sure we will for a long time to come, but I feel like it would have been a lot worse if it hadn't been for the support we received from Embrace."
- **Choices Counselling Service** were funded to provide symptom management sessions to 60 adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Those who attended

the six-week course said: “it provided a safe space to talk” and gave them the “confidence to tell family members about what happened to them for the first time”.

- **The Road Victims Trust** supported 90 people who had been bereaved or seriously affected as a result of a fatal or life changing road crash. Volunteers donated 591 counselling hours - 66 per cent increase on last year. Feedback from families called the support “outstanding from the beginning to the end” and said it taught them “coping strategies” that they will continue to use forever.
- **Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire (CPSL) Mind** were funded to set up their new countywide mental health well-being service which began in April 2023. The service provides expertise and support for victims and witnesses facing challenges with their mental health after experiencing a crime.

Specialist domestic abuse services

- **Peterborough Women’s Aid** launched a new support service for Lithuanian victims of domestic abuse part way through the year and worked intensively with eight victims ensuring their increased safety and wellbeing. The charity’s also delivered a group work programme, attended by 30 people, to aid their recovery and provided advice and support to more than 320 victims through their advice line.
- Funding for an additional two part time Young People **Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs)** within the Local Authority IDVA service was successfully secured until 31st March 2025. These workers, along with other specialist IDVAs for victims of stalking and harassment and victims from minority ethnic communities supported 245 victims. Of those exiting the service 191 victims said they felt safer as a result of the support given.
- The Local Authority IDVA service also provided support to victims of domestic abuse who were classed as being medium risk. In ten months this service provided safety planning and advice to more than four hundred victims - 79 per cent in a single phone call.
- **Cambridgeshire Deaf Association’s** specialist domestic abuse workers communicate with victims using British Sign Language and other communication methods ensuring that Deaf victims of domestic abuse can

access the support and advice that they need. They have also provided support to other organisations to ensure workers have increased skills and knowledge to support victims.

- **One Voice 4 Travellers** provide support to victims of domestic abuse within the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Support was provided to 66 people; this included enabling some victims to leave the abuse they are experiencing and helping to educate members of the community to try and break the cycle of domestic abuse.
- The Commissioner provided funding to enable **Cambridge-based 'The Meadows Children and Family Wing'** to run group work programmes including the 'Freedom Course' and 'All About Me' programmes for female victims of domestic abuse. Victims described the course as "vital for getting me through my recovery" and said as a result "I know there is hope for the future".
- **Cambridge Women's Resource Centre** were awarded funding to run group work programmes for victims of domestic abuse. They supported 116 victims to access either Freedom or Freedom Forever programmes in Cambridge and Peterborough.
- **Hourglass** were awarded funding to set up a new countywide service to provide support, including individual case work, and training for professionals to support older victims of domestic abuse.

Countywide Support Service for Survivors of Rape and Sexual Violence

- **Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership (CAPRCP)** is commissioned to provide countywide support services to any victim of rape or sexual violence. The service can also support friends and family of the survivor who have been affected by what has happened.
- There were 996 new referrals for emotional support, this is an increase of approximately ten per cent from the previous year. This support includes 1-1 emotional support and counselling as well as a helpline, email support and live chat service run by a team of dedicated volunteers.
- The Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs) provided 1-1 support to survivors enabling them to recover from the abuse they have experienced> The staff also supported them through the criminal justice process which has

seen significant delays. One survivor described her ISVA as her “guardian angel” and said she would “not have made it through my court case without her”.

- The Specialist Ethnic Minority ISVAs have worked proactively with seldom heard from communities to raise awareness of the support available to survivors and to break down barriers to accessing support. This approach has seen an 89 per cent increase in survivors from Asian communities seeking help. Funding was provided to translate key documents into six different languages enabling survivors to be fully informed about the support they are accessing.
- Funding was provided through the Home Officer Safer Streets 4 programme to enable a Sexual Violence Ambassadors programme to be carried out in schools in Peterborough and Wisbech. The programme supports young people to identify what are sexually harmful behaviours, the impacts of these and to support them to challenge the normalisation or trivialisation of sexual harassment.
- The Ministry of Justice Male Rape Support Fund enabled 34 male survivors to access specialist therapeutic support. A further 74 male victims received other forms of support during the year.
- Funding was provided to run two peer support groups for female survivors. The ‘Hold the Hope’ groups brought survivors together and to realise they are not alone. One attendee said as a result of the programme: “I finally let go of the guilt and shame I had been holding for all these years.”