

Commissioners Commitment to Providing Vital Support Through Victims' Services

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Police and Crime Commissioner
CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

Ensuring victims and witnesses of crime receive the support they need and are entitled to under the Victims' Code is a top priority for my team and our many partners. This is why Supporting Victims and Witnesses is one of five pillars in my Police and Crime Plan.

Here in Cambridgeshire, we have an established integrated model of free support services which centre around the Constabulary-run Victim and Witness Hub. The Hub offers phone-based emotional and practical support to victims and witnesses to help them cope, and where possible recover from the impact of crime.

We have gone to great lengths to listen to victims and act on their recommendations. And we are continually evaluating and enhancing the support which is available especially when their recovery journey includes the criminal justice system.

Listening to victims and those that support them is vital to improving criminal justice outcomes. Only this week a super-complaint, filed against police forces in England and Wales found inhumane delays in investigating sexual offences. Campaigners including Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre raised concerns that these



delays breach survivors' human rights. The complaint sought to address systemic issues within policing and ensure that survivors receive timely justice.

Between April and September this year, I funded support for more than 6,000 victims of crime across all crime types. More than 1,300 of those who received help reported improved health and wellbeing as a direct result of the support they received, while more than 1,500 reported increased feelings of safety. Supporting people during their darkest moments really does transform lives and is crucial for building safer and stronger communities.

I am happy to confirm that for the next two years I will be providing funding totalling £4.4 million to ensure people living in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can access help whether the crime they have experienced is reported to police or not.

Working with our partners, I am committed to do all I can to seeing our judicial system through the eyes of victims and witnesses, and to ensure they have the support they need.

Darryl Preston

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner

Victim and Witness Hub

The ten-year-old PCC-funded Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Victim and Witness Hub is integral to the delivery of locally based support services for all victims and witnesses across the force area.

Acknowledged as good practice by the College of Policing, victims can access help at any time of their journey regardless of whether they have reported the crime to the police or not and can self-refer to access support quickly. This 'report to court' service has been made possible by pooling PCC and Constabulary funding and ensures victims can access trauma-informed phone-based emotional and practical support.



Support is provided by a dedicated team of Victim and Witness Care Coordinators with in-depth knowledge of the local area, its partnerships, and the community services available. The staff are supported by specially trained Victim and Witness Hub Community Volunteers who carry out face-to-face visits. When people require further help, the Hub connects people seamlessly to a broad range of partnership and community services including The Bobby Scheme and mental health care providers through CPSL Mind.

The Hub employs a Specialist Serious Violence Outreach Worker for victims of non-VAWG (violence against women and girls) serious violence who are aged 18 and over. This role supports the PCC's work to prevent and reduce serious

violence following the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty nationally. Between April and September this year, 94 victims were supported.

Supporting survivors of sexual violence



Two locally based specialist services work in partnership to ensure victims and survivors of sexual violence can access the support they need. Funded by the PCC, Peterborough Rape Crisis Care Group and Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre provide an equitable service wherever a survivor lives in the county.

In the first six months of 2025/26, the service supported 378 survivors through their Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) service, and 296 survivors with emotional support. ISVAs offer practical and emotional support to anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted, recently or in the past including at court.

This year, the PCC has awarded funding to the partnership for the delivery of the SENSE model – a framework of enhanced emotional trauma-informed support interventions that help up to 100 people over the next 12 months.

Funding has also contributed to an Emotional Support and Advocacy Worker within the health-funded counselling service CHOICES to provide specialist support to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Helping victims of VAWG and domestic abuse to recover

Support services funded by the PCC play a vital role in enabling the Constabulary to respond effectively to VAWG, placing the survivor, no matter their age, at the heart of decisions made.

We know VAWG primarily addresses the disproportionate prevalence of men's violence against women and girls, however we also know that men and boys can also be affected by these crimes.

That's why a new countywide pilot service launched on 1st April 2025 for all adult victims of domestic abuse who have reported their experience to the police.

Delivered by staff from domestic abuse charity Peterborough Women's Aid, and co-located within the Victim and Witness Hub, the service ensures those who are assessed as what is referred to as 'medium risk of harm' and who have given consent for support, are contacted within 48 hours. In its first six months, the service received 742 referrals and supported 588 victims – 100% of which were contacted within agreed timescales.

"Thank you so much for your call, I am really grateful for the check-in, and I am doing much better right now after having spoken to you." - Survivor of Domestic Abuse

Victims of stalking can also access help and advice from a countywide Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC) Service. The service, which shares expertise and learning with criminal justice colleagues, has supported 89 people in the past six months alone, safeguarding victims and appropriately risk managing their perpetrators. This post has been made possible because of continued funding from the PCC.

Supporting Victims of Business Crime



Addressing the crimes that impact businesses is a key commitment in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan including shoplifting, fraud and violence towards shop workers.

The Victim and Witness Hub has a dedicated Business Crime Champion responsible for reviewing business crime reports to ensure support is offered to

anyone impacted. Ongoing engagement with businesses is also helping the PCC and partners to understand problems and tailor future support for victims.

The 'champion' has been out in city and town centres speaking to retail staff. Businesses are also being offered free training to identify predatory behaviour to protect women from VAWG as part of the hugely successful Businesses Against Abuse (BAA) programme.

To learn more about BAA and find out where sessions are happening near you, visit: [Businesses Against Abuse | Cambridgeshire Constabulary](#)

Grassroots support

Alongside the Victim and Witness Hub, the PCC invests significant funding into grassroots charities to strengthen support for victims of crime. This includes The Meadows Children and Family Wing where he funds a Freedom programme and emotional and practical support for female victims of domestic abuse.

The PCC also contributes funding to Cambridgeshire Deaf Association to enable victims of domestic abuse with a hearing impairment to access help using their preferred communication method such as British Sign Language. Funding is also provided to One Voice 4 Travellers to enable specialist 'by and for' support for victims from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

He also recently ran a small grants fund for local voluntary organisations which saw ten local charities provided with grants of up to £5k. Together, these charities aim to support 150 victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.



Further Information

If you or someone you know has been impacted by crime as a victim or a witness, or to find out more information on the services listed in this newsletter please visit the Cambs Victims Services website [here](#).

Support can be found regardless of the type of crime, when the crime occurred and whether or not you have reported to the police.

Thank you for reading my newsletter

Darryl Preston, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.



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