



Counselling support available for young victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence

The Project

Are you working with a young person (aged 13 to 19 or 24 with additional needs) affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence who might benefit from one-to-one counselling support?

Thanks to a successful bid to the Home Office a locally-based national charity Embrace (Child Victims of Crime) is offering free trauma-focused CBT and therapeutic counselling for young people.

The counselling is available to young people who have been victims of, or witnessed domestic abuse or sexual violence and those who may be showing low-level potentially harmful behaviours as a result of what they have been exposed to. It can be delivered at locations across the county through a framework of checked and accredited therapists.

The young person must be safe from the offender and willing to engage.

Referrals to the service can be made via the website www.embracecvoc.org.uk.

Project Lead, Catherine Hardy, [Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist BABCP Accredited and EMDR Practitioner](#), can be contacted on [01480 422 972](tel:01480422972) or [07377 712 817](tel:07377712817).

The three-year project, launched in October 2017, is funded from the Home Office's VAWG Transformation Fund, following a partnership bid by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. It is being supported by a range of agencies including the county's Youth Offending Service, the Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership and Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

How the service will work

- Once a referral is received the young person's parent or carer will be contacted within three days. This enables the service to understand the young person's needs and ensure therapy is appropriate for them at that time.

- The young person will be matched to a therapist and an assessment arranged within 10 working days.
- If therapy is appropriate the first treatment session will be arranged within 10 working days of the initial assessment.
- The young person will be seen at a location and time which meets their needs – therapists are based across the county area.

Eligibility criteria

The young person must:

- have been a victim of/or witness to domestic abuse and/or sexual violence, or showing low-level potentially harmful behaviours as a result of what they have been exposed to;
- safe from the offender;
- aged between 13 and 19, or 24 where there are additional needs;
- be willing to accept the offer of counselling support and engage with it;
- be able to engage in a relationship based on a two-way conversation and an ability to communicate verbally;
- be willing to work towards change, and show some interest in identifying realistic and achievable goals that a counsellor can support and encourage them to achieve.

The young person has a right to access counselling without their parents'/carers' consent or against their parents'/carers' wishes if they are 'Fraser Competent' (capable of understanding their actions). If this is deemed to be so, then they can access counselling without their parents'/carers' knowledge or consent.

However good practice involves a partnership with parents therefore it will be important to explore how the young person could be supported involving parents, if this is appropriate and in line with the young person's wishes.