

Comprehensive needs assessment of child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse in London

Young people at VRU event

Key information

Publication type: General

Contents

[The research](#)

[Research questions](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Emerging best practice](#)

[Recommendations](#)

The research

London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) identified increasing concerns around Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) from delivery partners and service users across London. There is a growing evidence base pointing to significance in the UK and internationally, and suggesting increases in frequency, intensity, and severity.

There is limited information about the families in London affected by CAPVA; where they live, their protected characteristics or what support would help them.

This research study addresses this evidence gap and develops a comprehensive needs assessment to explore the scale and nature of CAPVA in London, ensuring services and support for children, young people and families in this area are grounded in evidence.

Research questions

Specifically, the study aimed to:

- improve understanding of the drivers, prevalence, and nature of CAPVA
- provide insight into the experiences of children and families, especially those that are not accessing statutory services

- improve understanding of the range and efficacy of practice models and interventions being used in London
- foster greater understanding of approaches of safeguarding children's and community safety partnerships in identifying, categorising, and responding to this form of harm,
- establish a Community Advisory Group to include community members and practitioners, to facilitate knowledge/data sharing and collaboration
- consider the impact of COVID-19 on CAPVA and service provision.

Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, including a literature review, interviews with strategic stakeholders, analysis of quantitative data from the Metropolitan Police Service and from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, interviews and a survey of frontline practitioners, young people and parents/carers.

In addition, a Community Advisory Group (CAG) was established to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration between professionals and the research team.

Emerging best practice

The report identified several key themes relating to CAPVA in London:

- **Defining CAPVA:** defining CAPVA involves recognising its inclusivity across age groups, understanding its distinct dynamics and the challenges they pose, addressing its hidden nature and underreporting, and acknowledging the diverse perceptions among stakeholders, all of which require tailored interventions and collaborative efforts to effectively address the issue.
- **The drivers and nature of CAPVA:** the drivers and nature of CAPVA are complex, involving intersecting pathways that increase vulnerability, gendered dynamics within familial relationships, and differential responses based on the gender of the perpetrator. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems for both parents/carers and young people affected by CAPVA.
- **The prevalence of CAPVA:** measuring the prevalence of CAPVA is challenging due to underreporting and its hidden nature, with official records likely underrepresenting the true scale. Incidents reported to police predominantly involve physical violence, while non-physical abuse is often disclosed to voluntary support services. Despite fluctuations, reported incidences of CAPVA have generally decreased, with a slight increase observed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Multi-agency responses:** addressing CAPVA requires collaboration across multiple agencies and services, as no single entity holds sole responsibility. However, multi-agency responses face challenges such as underutilization of existing forums like MARAC, lack of formal communication mechanisms, and resulting disjointed approaches to working together. Efforts to improve coordination and communication among agencies are crucial for enhancing responses to CAPVA effectively.
- **Service provision and intervention models:** service provision and intervention models for CAPVA vary widely, with diverse approaches employed across statutory and voluntary services. However, there are inconsistencies in the provision of support services across different areas of London, and a lack of robust evidence regarding the effectiveness of intervention models highlights the need for comprehensive evaluation to inform future interventions and service provision.

- **Accessing support:** accessing support for CAPVA is hindered by stigma and misconceptions, with parents/carers often feeling shame and isolation. While CAPVA affects families from diverse backgrounds, some groups face additional barriers to accessing support due to their specific needs and concerns. Addressing these barriers is crucial to ensuring equitable access to support services for all affected families.

Recommendations

The report sets out several recommendations, including;

- establishing a clear definition and understanding of CAPVA and promoting an understanding of CAPVA both as form of domestic abuse, as well as potentially symptomatic of other child protection/safeguarding issues such as extra-familial harm as well as exposure to abuse and violence in the family home
- furthering our understanding of CAPVA by improving data collection to support the development of a longitudinal dataset on the incidence of CAPVA
- supporting improved responses to CAPVA by promoting multi-agency collaboration, developing expertise and encouraging tailored responses.

The VRU has brought these recommendations forward by designing and commissioning a project related to CAPVA.

[Back to table of contents](#)