



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

APPG on Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse – open hybrid meeting

24 March 2026

Post meeting briefing

Speakers:

Chair: Jess Asato MP

Justine Dodds, Head of Respect Young People’s Service (RYPS), Respect

Donna Mills, Specialist Team Manager, Therapeutic Service, Norfolk

Children's Services

Jennifer Daw, Senior Research Analyst, SafeLives

This APPG meeting discussed the issue of children and young people who cause harm to their parents and carers. This included an overview of the work of the Respect Young People’s Service (RYPS), which supports professionals to respond effectively to young people’s use of violence and abuse in family and intimate relationships. Other panellists spoke about research and work being delivered in partnership with Respect around children and young people causing harm.

Addressing Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) will contribute to the VAWG Strategy’s Prevention and Early Intervention pillar, which also commits to creating a national definition of child to parent abuse.

Key points from guest presentations:

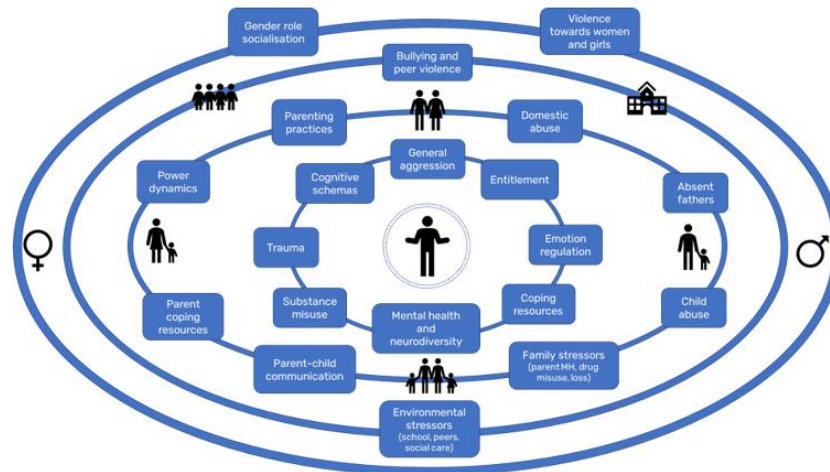
Justine Dodds, Head of Young People’s Services, Respect: a background to CAPVA

- The term “CAPVA” describes the dynamic where a young person 8 to 18 years engages in abusive behaviour. This age range is used to align with the Respect programme.
- These behaviours are not a one off “meltdown,” rather it is a repeated pattern of harmful behaviour that covers all forms of abuse as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Why does CAPVA happen?

Justine Dodds demonstrated how CAPVA happens, through the ecological model developed by Dr. Vic Baker and Dr. Helen Bonnick (Fig 1)

Fig 1



There are a whole host of reasons as to why CAPVA might happen, and it is rare that there will be just one. Some of the reasons may be:

- An issue with the young person's coping resources
- A struggle with emotional regulation
- Previous trauma previously
- Substance misuse issues
- Neurodiversity - between 30 to 60% of practitioners' caseloads have the young person displaying some level of neurodiversity.

Taking a whole system approach, the Respect Young People's Programme takes a systemic approach, working with parents and children to de-escalate risk and complete restorative work. The intervention includes awareness raising, police response, early intervention, systemic family intervention and implementation support.

Donna Mills: The Norfolk CAPVA Partnership

The Norfolk Partnership is focused on training the local workforce, raising awareness of CAPVA, and looking at referral routes.

Practice support was provided by RYPS, the team supported the Partnership with engaging young people.

The University of East Anglia has been collecting data, working mostly with mothers and female carers. Some of the key findings from the data reveal that:

- Sons causing harm to a parent are predominant
- In a significant number of cases, the young person has experienced domestic abuse between their parents or in their home
- Most CAPVA occurs in single parent families.

In 2025, 25% of families completed the RYPP in Norfolk with positive outcomes. For example, returning to education, with the young person being able to regulate their emotions and feeling able to manage being back in school.

For those families that do not complete the programme, the progress that they make is sufficient in addressing some of the harm, and there is increased harmony within the family. When the young person feels heard and can express their point of view, things improve markedly for the family.

Jennifer Daw: An overview of the Verge of Harm(ing) project

Jennifer Daw described the Verge of Harm(ing) project, Phase 2, of which Respect was a partner, leading on the creative workshops with young people.

The 19 research participants were aged 10-18 and took part in a series of focus groups and interviews. The research team also spoke to four frontline services, and undertook follow up interviews with professionals and young people.

Risk management safeguarding was a key consideration, with safety planning built in, open discussions and alternative options offered to participants, and including a risk assessment tool to ensure that frontline workers not at risk.

Many of the themes resonate with the reasons that CAPVA happens set out above. Practitioners reported young people with poor mental health, that they are witnesses of domestic abuse in the home, are neurodivergent and/or have special educational needs.

Questions and Discussion

Questions from attendees covered measurement of success, how effective interventions are, where services can be found across the country, funding, the timeline for the Home Office to begin work on the definition of child to parent abuse as set out the VAWG Strategy, and the extent to which CAPVA is recognised by health. The question of risk and how young people can withstand the pressure of the manosphere, and misogyny was also raised.

It was agreed that there is more work to be done around outcome and impact. For example, if children are less likely to be in care if CAPVA is addressed, or whether they are continuing in education can be good indicators of impact.

Services are patchy, there is a need to better understand where there are no referral routes to services in local areas.

Funding comes from local areas that are self-funding the work. The Norfolk CAPVA Partnership is also funded by the OPCC, and it is fortunately being extended.

Home Office officials were in attendance but at present there is no timeline for the work on the definition.

The Child to Parent Abuse (CPA) Strategic Group was also represented at the meeting, setting out some of the cultural background; CAPVA has often been seen as an adolescent issue, however there are children as young 3 or 4 years old using harmful behaviours in a way not seen before. There has been a shift; CAPVA is at a point that is similar to where domestic abuse was in the 1980s. It is important that we change how we see, talk about and address this form of abuse. The CPA Strategic Group has expressed their interest in being part of discussions on the definition, when these commence.

A short presentation was also provided by Respect Accredited Member Talk, Listen, Change, with a description of a case study of a young person's journey through a CAPVA programme.

An academic perspective was given by attendees from the University of Manchester, around the importance of taking a decriminalised response to young people causing harm, including moving away from calling young people *perpetrators*. Taking a holistic approach is key, working with care services, schools, social services and looking at ways to embed funding can all be helpful.

Recommendations and areas to monitor

- CAPVA needs to be recognised and defined by the Government
- This work must be linked with Family Hubs; staff in these settings should be trained in CAPVA
- Health pathways and links to supporting young people with neurodiversity should be considered
- Practitioners need training to understand the underlying concerns, and how to support young people struggling with their emotions.
- The government must take a holistic approach to CAPVA, ensuring that the care system, education, social care services are integrated in order for young people and families to be supported in a joined-up way.

Secretariat, All Party Parliamentary Group on Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

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