

Profile of Sexual Offences and Responses in Cambridgeshire

June 2019

1. Introduction

This profile is designed to provide an indication of the prevalence of, and context to issues of sexual violence across the police force area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

2. Method

Sections 3 to 7 draw on a range of data collated by Cambridgeshire Constabulary for the period 1 January 2017 to 28 February 2019 from Constabulary records. Section 8 consists of data provided by the current contract holder for Cambridgeshire's sexual violence support services Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership, (CAPRCP) for the period 1 April 2017 – 31 May 2019.¹

We know that the collation of robust data around issues of sexual violence and offending is problematic, and that the majority of these experiences are never reported to the police (ONS, 2018). Subsequently, the police data presented here is *indicative* of the scale and prevalence of sexual violence across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

3. Crime Survey Estimates

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (2018) estimates that 3.4 million females and 631,000 males between the ages of 16 and 59 have been victims of sexual offences since the age of 16 (84% and 16% respectively). The same research found that, in the 12 months prior to interview, 3.4% of females (or 560,000 individuals), and 0.9% (or 140,000 individuals) had experienced some form of sexual assault. The data presented by ONS suggests that there has been 'no significant' change in the estimated prevalence of sexual violence since 2005 (ONS, 2018).

4. Reported Sexual Offences

Between 01/01/17 and 28/02/19, Cambridgeshire Constabulary recorded a total of 4,390 sexual offences – the majority of which (1,721) were rapes. The reporting of sexual offences increased by 6% overall across Cambridgeshire in the period 2017 – 2018, though the reporting of rapes (+20%) and sexual assaults (+11%) showed the most significant change. The trend in increased local reporting reflects national trends (ONS, 2018).

5. Victim Demographics

In Cambridgeshire, Constabulary data shows that 85% of all victims were female. Of these, 91% were 'White'; 3.7% were 'Asian'; 2.2% 'Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups'; and 2% were 'Black'. When set against the broader Cambridgeshire demographic, data supplied by the Sexual Assault Referral centre (SARC) suggests that certain ethnic groups (e.g. 'Indian', 'Chinese'; and 'Other Asian'; and 'Other') are under-utilising SARC services. When set against the frequency of police

¹ Please note that CAPRCP is not directly commissioned via Cambridgeshire Constabulary

reporting (15% of all reports), it would appear that male victims are under-utilising SARC and CAPRCP services (6% and 8% respectively). Females aged 11 – 25 or 31 - 40 were most likely to be recorded by the police as victims of all sexual offences. The local police ethnicity data here is roughly consistent with the broader Cambridgeshire demography (Cambridgeshire Insight, 2019), and with ONS (2018) findings with regards to gender and age. However, there is some variation between the academic literature and police data regarding the local female cohort aged 31 – 40, which suggests that this cohort are more likely to report their experiences in Cambridgeshire than would be expected.

6. Perpetrator Demographics

Cambridgeshire Constabulary data shows that 95% of all sexual offences were perpetrated by males (3,361 of the total), with 5% (or 191 of the total) being perpetrated by women. Unfortunately, local police recording of the ethnicities of perpetrators is incomplete, but is broadly suggestive that the majority of perpetrators (82.3% of the available sample) were 'White'. The data, however, does show that males aged 17 – 50 are most likely to perpetrate across all offence types, whereas females aged 11 – 13 and 31 – 40 are equally likely to be recorded as committing sexual offences. These findings broadly correlate with the most recent ONS (2018) data.

7. Victim – Offender Relationships

Of the 'known' relationships recorded by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 78.5% of victims/offenders were 'closely associated'. In nearly 50% of rapes, the offender was a current / former partner. In 15% of rapes, the offender was a 'friend / associate' whilst in 14.6% of rapes the offender was a relative of the victim. This data is broadly in keeping with ONS (2018) findings, though there is some variation in the local data caused by under-recording.

8. Current Sexual Violence Support Services Demand

For the period 1 April 2017 to 31 May 2019, the Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership had the following demand for commissioned services:

- ISVA service = 1271 clients
- Emotional support to clients = 1148
- Calls to Helpline = 2683.

9. Summary

As stated, there are limitations to the data presented here. We know that *all* sexual violence is under-reported (ONS, 2018, suggests that only 17% of victims ever disclose their experiences to the police), and that there are issues with police recording (ONS, 2018) which can distort perceptions. However, the current police data has, where possible, been compared against national datasets and has been shown to be consistent. This means that the findings here broadly reflect the national picture in terms of demographics, trends, and demand, and that there is nothing 'statistically' unusual regarding the estimated prevalence of sexual violence in the county.