

BACKGROUND

Child to Parent Abuse (CPA) is a hidden and stigmatised form of family abuse. It's often misunderstood by agencies and professionals. CPA is also vastly under reported due to the stigma felt by parents living with an abusive child. Parents and carers often feel guilt and shame when their child is abusive and violent towards them. In Sandwell CPA has been featured in a number of Domestic Homicides.

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WHAT IS CHILD TO PARENT ABUSE

There is no current legal definition of CPA. It can be categorised as any behaviour used by a child or an adult child in a family to control, dominate, threaten or coerce a parent or carer. It is a recognised form of domestic abuse and is referenced in the Home Office draft statutory domestic abuse guidance. Depending on the age of the child, CPA may fall under the government's official definition of domestic violence and abuse. Identification of a child under the age of 18 involved in CPA should warrant a referral to children's social care as a safeguarding precaution. Either through Sandwell Mash or Via an Early Help Assessment.

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WHY IT MATTERS

The impact is extremely severe, debilitating, isolating and often parents and carers do not know how to start to tackle it. Emotional and physical abuse are both part of the picture. Parents often feel ashamed of the situation which can also prevent them from reporting. They often see it as *their* failure to control the child.

CPA can be experienced by mothers, fathers, siblings and carers from daughters and sons. However, studies and statistics show that women and mothers are most at risk. Whilst girls and boys use CPA, boys are most likely to use physical violence.

It is predominantly mothers, lone parents and those parents facing significant social and family stressors who are most likely to experience abuse from their children.

The majority of cases are in birth families, but there is a higher prevalence in fostered and adopted children since the latter are more likely to have disruptive behavioural needs.

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND READING

Sandwell Child to Parent Abuse Information Guidance and Flowchart

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WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE

CPA will always require a multi-agency response to ensure effective intervention.

A referral into Inclusion Support (through child's education provision) should be considered and a referral into CAMHS to support the child and Black Country Women's Aid to support the adult victim.

Richmond Fellowship and Women's Aid have developed an intervention on CPA called YUVA (Young People using Violence and Abuse) Programme. The referral needs to come through children's services, so it is important that a referral is made to the Children's Trust either via an Early Help referral or into MASH via a MARF referral.

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7 Minute Briefing *Child to Parent Abuse*

RISK FACTORS

There are a number of risk factors which make abusive behaviour more likely. There are many reasons why children and young people can become abusive. There may be a combination of issues or no explanation at all.

Witnessing family violence. Trauma, loss and disruption. Substance misuse. Mental Health.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. It is likely that children displaying violent or aggressive behaviours will have an ACE score of at least 4 and in most cases higher.

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WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS

CPA is likely to involve a pattern of behaviours which can include physical violence towards a parent or carer and other abusive behaviours such as emotional abuse, damage to property, financial/economical abuse.

Abusive behaviours can include but are not limited to, humiliation, threats, stealing, heightened sexualised behaviours. Siblings may also be abused or be abusive.

Children may present with (not exhaustive) problematic behaviour towards peers or other adults, non-attendance or non-engagement with school, substance misuse, bullying or depression.

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