

Adolescent to parent violence and abuse (APVA)

Child on parent violence (CPV) or adolescent to parent violence and abuse (APVA) is any behaviour used by a young person to control, dominate or coerce parents. It is intended to threaten and intimidate, putting family safety at risk. This short [video](#) explains more.

Like other types of domestic abuse, CPV can manifest as violent, emotional or financial abuse and control. This type of child on parent abuse can begin at any age but most commonly sets in when children are between the ages of 12-14.

It is difficult to count the number of reported cases on a national level, as APVA is not specifically flagged on all police or health and social care databases. To give some context, the Family Lives helpline received 22,537 phone calls in a two year period from parents reporting aggression from their children.

Risk Factors

Certain factors can increase a child's risk of exhibiting violent behaviour towards their parents, this includes:

- Witnessing domestic abuse
- Special Educational Needs Disability such as ADHD
- Exposure to adverse childhood experiences (see newsletter 4)
- Substance abuse issues
- Living in a single-parent household

Adoptive parents report a higher incidence of CPV attributed to their child's previous experience of trauma. A [report](#) by the Home Office states that up to 30% of adoptive parents experience APVA.

Barriers to reporting

Families often report they have waited until breaking point before seeking help because they fear criminalising their child, being labelled a "bad parent" or experiencing feelings of shame.

Schools may be a comparatively safe space for parents and guardians (or siblings) to disclose issues with their child's behaviour at home.

Definition of adolescent to parent violence and abuse

There is currently no legal definition of adolescent to parent violence and abuse. However, it is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic violence and abuse. Depending on the age of the child, APVA may fall under the government's official definition of domestic violence and abuse.

77% of all parent victims were female

87% of all perpetrators were male

66% of cases involved son to mother

(APV key findings for Youth Justice Service, September 2013)

Adolescent violence is not just against parents. Many adolescents can also be violent towards their siblings or pets.

Adolescent violence exists across all sections of society.

Support available

Respect UK - APVA Respect respect.uk.net

Useful service to contact if you have any concerns

Family Lives

Tel: **0808 800 2222** (helpline)
www.familylives.org.uk

Childline

For help and advice about a wide range of issues

Tel: **0800 1111**
www.childline.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline

24hr service offering advice and support to anyone experiencing domestic violence and abuse

Tel: **0808 2000 247**

Northumbria Police

Tel: **999** emergency/**101** non-emergency
Website: www.northumbria.police.uk

Victims First Northumbria

Tel: **0800 011 3116**
Website: victimsfirstnorthumbria.org.uk

Guidance and Advice

[Family Lives](#) have advice for parents coping with abuse from their children. It is important to remind parents to keep themselves safe and reassure them that the situation is not their fault. Ignoring the behaviour won't make it go away, but there are programmes available locally and nationally that can help:

- GPs can make referrals to local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) where children can receive counselling or therapy to help them manage their feelings.
- Youth Offending Services offer help to young people at risk of offending.
- The Family Lives helpline offers non-judgmental support to parents experiencing CPV (see support available).
- Respect UK have an intervention programme for families where children or young people aged 10-16 are abusive.

Further reading

Adolescent Violence to Parents - [A resource booklet for parents and carers](#). This is published by Kent & Medway

Click [here](#) for Home Office research and practice pointers that have been developed by practitioners specialising in bespoke interventions for families experiencing CPV/APVA.

For the Northumberland APVA approach, click [here](#). You can find Northumberland County Council's seven step guide to APVA by clicking [here](#). Please refer to your own local authority for their approach to APVA.

[Home Office Information guide: adolescent to parent violence and abuse](#).

Follow this [link](#) to read a mother's personal account of adolescent to parent violence and family breakdown.