# Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

# April 2024 Info Round Up

## Local news

### Anti-Spiking Intensification Week

March 18th – 24th marked Anti-Spiking Intensification Week, during which James Cleverly MP visited the county to see what is working well here.

Katy Bourne, Sussex’s Polie and Crime Commissioner, showed the Home Secretary how several initiatives are being implemented so that police and partners do not become complacent in addressing this abhorrent crime. These included the police’s use of dogs to sniff out drugs when people are queuing to enter night-clubs; increasing engagement through mobile Police Hubs; and initiatives that the OSPCC has supported with funding, like Brighton’s Night Marshals scheme.

[Home Secretary visits Sussex during Anti-Spiking Intensification Week (sussex-pcc.gov.uk)](https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/news/home-secretary-visits-sussex-during-anti-spiking-intensification-week/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=IJHS%20visit&utm_content=IJHS%20visit+CID_5d83cafaf94c179d9670706dee2e1b70&utm_source=Email%20Newsletter&utm_term=Sussex%20approach%20online)

### An announcement from Lotus (formerly Home-Start East Sussex)

‘Home-Start East Sussex changed its name to Lotus on 1st April 2024. For almost 28 years, we ran a hugely successful local Home-Start and have enjoyed being part of the wider Home-Start ‘family’ of charities. However, departure from the federation feels like the right time for us and will allow us to further develop services outside of those for which Home-Starts are renowned. We are now known as Lotus (full name Lotus Families) **a family charity with a specialism in domestic abuse**. You can find our website including referral form for our various services at <https://lotus-families.org.uk> or contact us at hello@lotus-families.org.uk.’

Kate Lawrence, Chief Executive

## Events

### PLEDGE: Committing to best practice against gender-based violence

East Sussex County Council and the East Sussex Practice Network are uniting to bring frontline workers from across East Sussex together in a safe space.

PLEDGE is an in-person/hybrid event that unites DA (Domestic Abuse), SVA (Sexual Violence and Abuse) and VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) frontline workers to share their stories and learnings.

The event will be held at All Saints Church, Eastbourne, from 10am on Wednesday 5th June. For more information, and to sign up to attend either in person or virtually, please follow this link: [PLEDGE: Committing to Best Practice Against Gender-Based Violence Tickets | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pledge-committing-to-best-practice-against-gender-based-violence-tickets-878014082757?aff=oddtdtcreator)

### East Sussex SAB Lunch and Learn Sessions: Older Victims of Domestic Abuse

In partnership with SAB, Hourglass are delivering two 30 minute free virtual Lunch and Learn sessions in June, focusing on raising awareness of older victims of domestic abuse.

‘Introduction to Hourglass and Older Victims of Abuse’ will be held on Tuesday 11th June at 12:30. ‘Dementia Awareness and Domestic Abuse’ will be held on Thursday 13th June at 12:30.

Please see attached leaflet for further information and how to book.

### Capa First Response training – Strategies for Working with Families

This online training will be held on Tuesday 11th May from 09:30 – 16:30. £70 Early Bird tickets are available until 27th May.

If you want to attend and an invoice is needed, please contact admin@capafirstresponse.org. For more information and to sign up, please follow this link: [Child to parent abuse - Strategies for Working with Families | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/child-to-parent-abuse-strategies-for-working-with-families-registration-872796085587)

## Sector news and updates

### Prison sentence in first ‘cyber-flashing’ case

Following the creation of a new offence for cyber-flashing as part of the Online Safety Act, a male from Essex has received a 52 week [prison sentence for committing an offence.](https://www.cps.gov.uk/east-england/news/prison-sentence-first-cyberflashing-case)

Victims of cyber-flashing and image-based abuse receive lifelong anonymity under the Sexual Offences Act from the point they report the offence.

[Gun licensing: Partners to be quizzed in new screening - BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm5rljxy3p5o)

The partners of all gun licence applicants are being asked questions for the first time as five police forces in England and Wales seek to strengthen licensing processes. The forces are testing a questionnaire designed to build a more detailed picture of anyone who wants to own a gun, with a particular focus on domestic abuse.

The initiative, Project Titanium, has been developed by Gwent Police with the help of domestic abuse survivors. It has already resulted in some applications being refused or existing licences being revoked.

[Fears over rise of ‘sexsomnia’ defence in rape cases | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/14/fears-sexsomnia-defence-in-cases)

Experts and lawyers involved in sexual offence cases in Britain have warned that suspected rapists are evading justice by claiming to have a rare sleepwalking disorder that causes them to engage in sexual activity while asleep.

They said there had ‘definitely” been cases where guilty people had been found not guilty, and warned of the potential for further miscarriages of justice – and harm to the public – without more robust challenges to “sexsomnia” claims put forward by defendants.

The warnings come after an investigation uncovered a rise in the use of “sexsomnia” as part of defence cases in criminal trials. It found 80 cases over the past 30 years where defendants accused of rape, sexual assault or child sexual abuse claimed to have been sleepwalking or suffering from sexsomnia at the time.

## Reports, publications and resources

### Government accepts all recommendations made by Angiolini Inquiry

The Angiolini Inquiry was commissioned to uncover the circumstances and failures that led to the abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a police officer in 2021.

The Angiolini report, published last month, highlighted significant opportunities that were missed by multiple police forces that could have stopped Wayne Couzens before his heinous crime, and called for an overhaul of police vetting and recruitment.

Further information about the report and recommendations can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-accepts-all-recommendations-made-by-angiolini-inquiry).

### Veritas Justice launches new online referral form

This new [referral form](https://veritas-justice.co.uk/referrals/) can be used by an individual experiencing stalking, a friend or family member, and professionals, and aims to streamline the process for referrals to Veritas’ advocacy service.

### Recruitment and retention in the VAWG sector

Women’s Aid, alongside 57 sector colleagues, have issued an [urgent letter](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/leading-violence-against-women-and-girls-organisations-issue-urgent-joint-letter-to-government-highlighting-the-ongoing-recruitment-and-retention-crisis-in-the-sector/?dm_i=7NA3,2MGK,1HY996,AQ9B,1) to the Government highlighting the deepening recruitment and retention crisis within the sector. The letter is urgently calling on the Government to create an independent task force that would work with specialist services and survivors to gather evidence and understand how the current retention and recruitment crisis is affecting them, with the aim of publishing recommendations to ensure a long-term and sustainable future for the VAWG sector.

## Vacancies

Veritas Justice are recruiting a **Stalking Advocacy Caseworker** to join their team based in Brighton, Sussex. If you are passionate about supporting survivors of stalking by providing them with help and advice and you have relevant experience, then Veritas would love to hear from you.

Further information can be found at [Veritas Justice | Vacancies](https://veritas-justice.co.uk/job-vacancies/).