

Child to Parent Abuse: The impact during school holidays



**A survey carried out by social enterprise
PEGS during the 2023 England summer
holidays**

About PEGS:

Parental Education Growth Support (PEGS) are a social enterprise, set up in 2020 to help parents experiencing Child to Parent Abuse (CPA).

CPA comes in many forms; verbal, physical, emotional, financial, coercive control, digital and sexual.

PEGS is a lived experience organisation. Our founder Michelle found no support when she needed it, and has now turned her pain into power by creating an organisation that has helped over 3,500 parents so far.

We offer a variety of services to parents, including one-to-one support sessions, online group drop-in sessions and a variety of wellbeing and advocacy workshops.

We provide training for professionals to recognise and effectively respond to CPA, and work with national and regional organisations to develop and implement specific CPA policies. So far we have trained & upskilled over 1500 professionals from various sectors.

PEGS has four core areas of focus when it comes to reducing the individual, family and societal impact of CPA:

- Raising awareness
- Supporting parents
- Training professionals
- Influencing policy

You can find out more about us at
www.pegssupport.co.uk

Email: admin@pegssupport.com

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @ [peggs_support](#)

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The Survey:



PEGS heard from some of those we support that during the school holidays there was an increase in incidents. We also heard that in some instances, the abusive behaviours stopped during the holidays.

We wanted to look at this in more detail to get a better understanding of parents experiences so we asked those who were experiencing CPA to complete an anonymous survey about how the school holidays affected their situation.

We wanted to look at what further support both us, and other services could provide, and to inform the relevant sectors such as education, social care, police and health about the risks during the school holidays.

Key Findings:

100%

of parents reported that they were verbally abused by their child

8/10

parents reported that they were experiencing emotional abuse from their child

Half

of parents reported that the severity and frequency of their child's abusive behaviour increased during the school holidays

14%

of parents have received warning letters of intended fines from local authorities about their child's absence from school

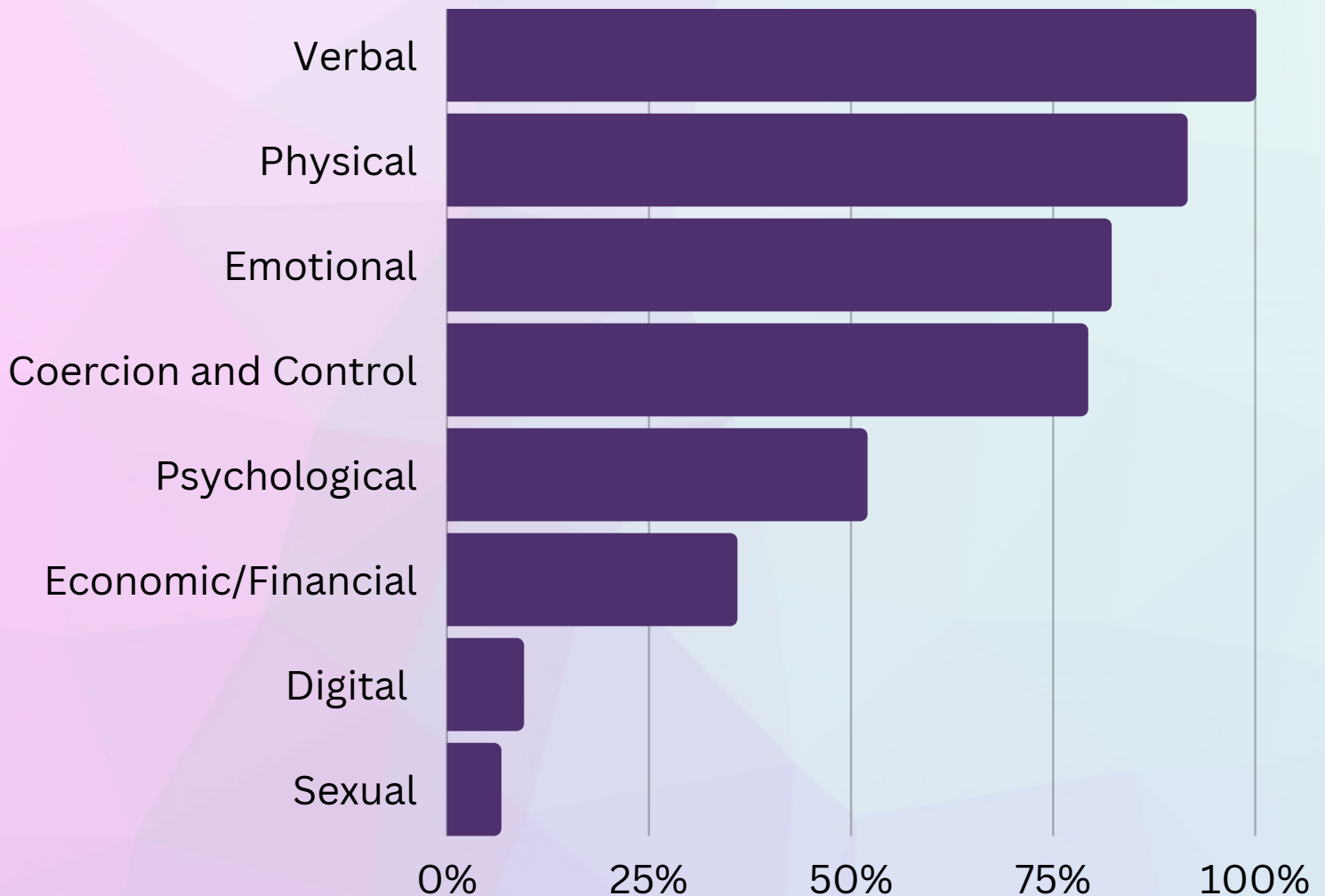
1/5

parents have had to go to A & E due to physical abuse from their child

23%

of parents have had to see their GP due to physical abuse from their child

We asked parents what form(s) of abuse they were experiencing during the school holidays:

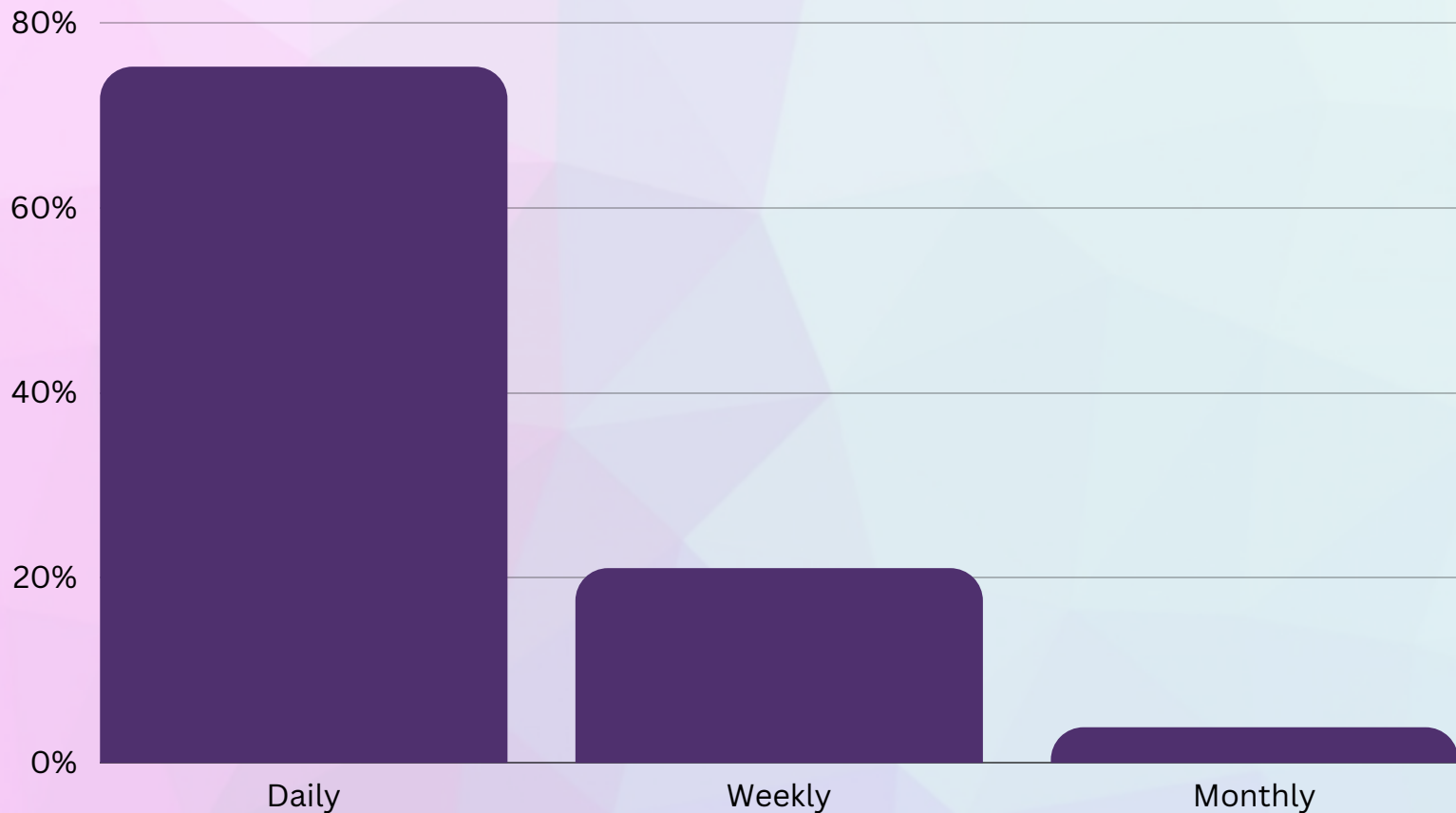


CPA comes in an array of different forms. **100%** of parents who participated in the survey said that they were experiencing verbal abuse from their child.

Physical, emotional and coercive control were all in the high majority with over **3/4** of parents experiencing these forms of abuse.

Psychological abuse was happening in more than half of cases.

Our parents provided the following answers regarding how often abuse is occurring during the school holidays:



CPA, for the most part, isn't something that comes in waves for the parents who completed our survey. **Over 3/4** of the time, parents are experiencing CPA on a daily basis during the school holidays. It can be a relentless struggle, something that has a hugely damaging and detrimental affect on parents lives.

This can often be difficult for people to process and understand. However, when we see data like this, it makes it much easier to see why CPA has such a huge impact on the lives of the parents who experience it.

Frequency and Severity of incidents during the school holidays:

We asked parents to inform us of how the school holidays affected the severity and frequency of abusive behaviours:



50% of parents reported that **both** the frequency and severity of incidents increased during the school holidays

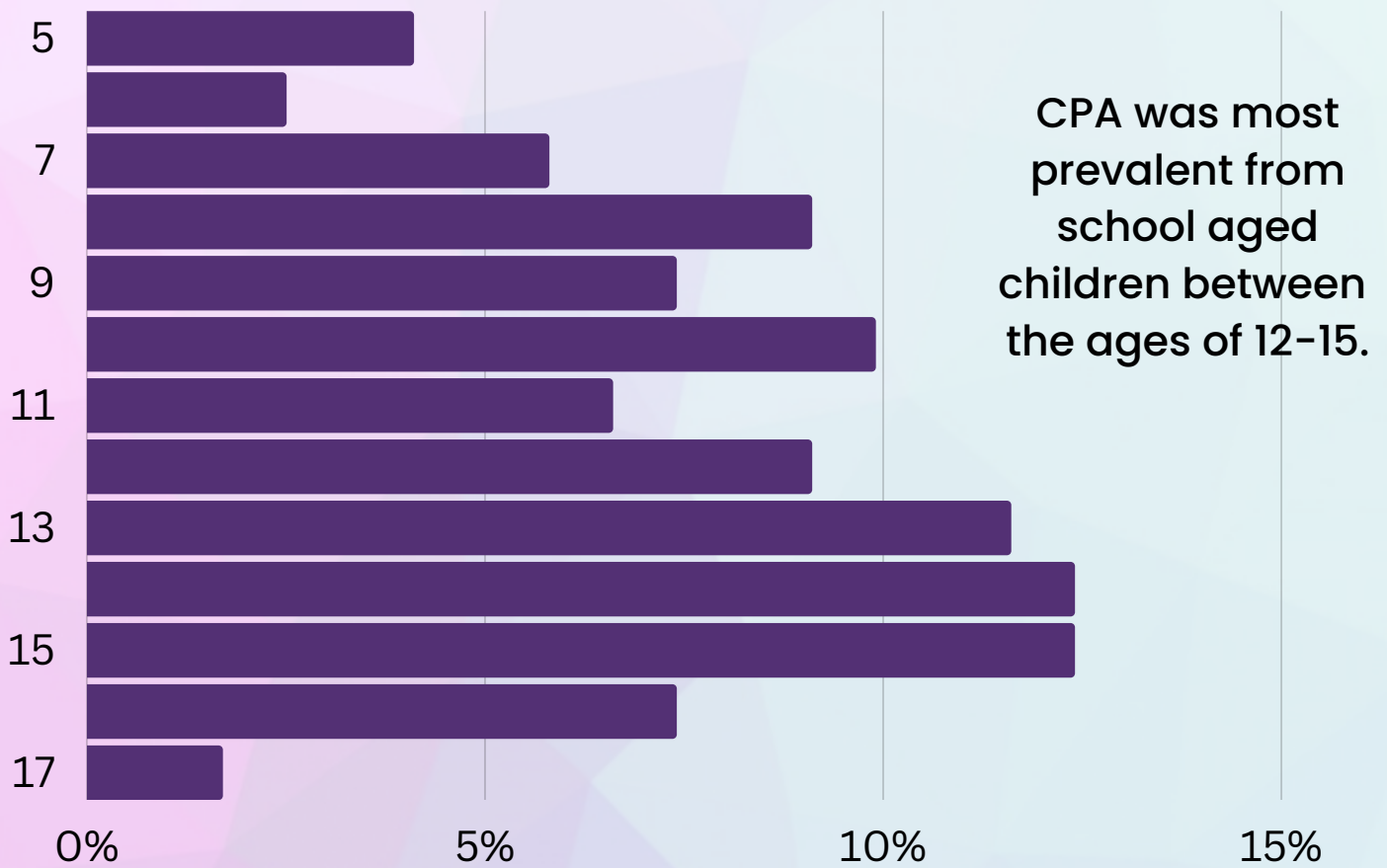
11% reported that there was just an increase in frequency of incidents, while **6%** reported that there was just an increase in severity of behaviour

13% of parents reported that **both** the frequency and severity of incidents decreased during the school holidays

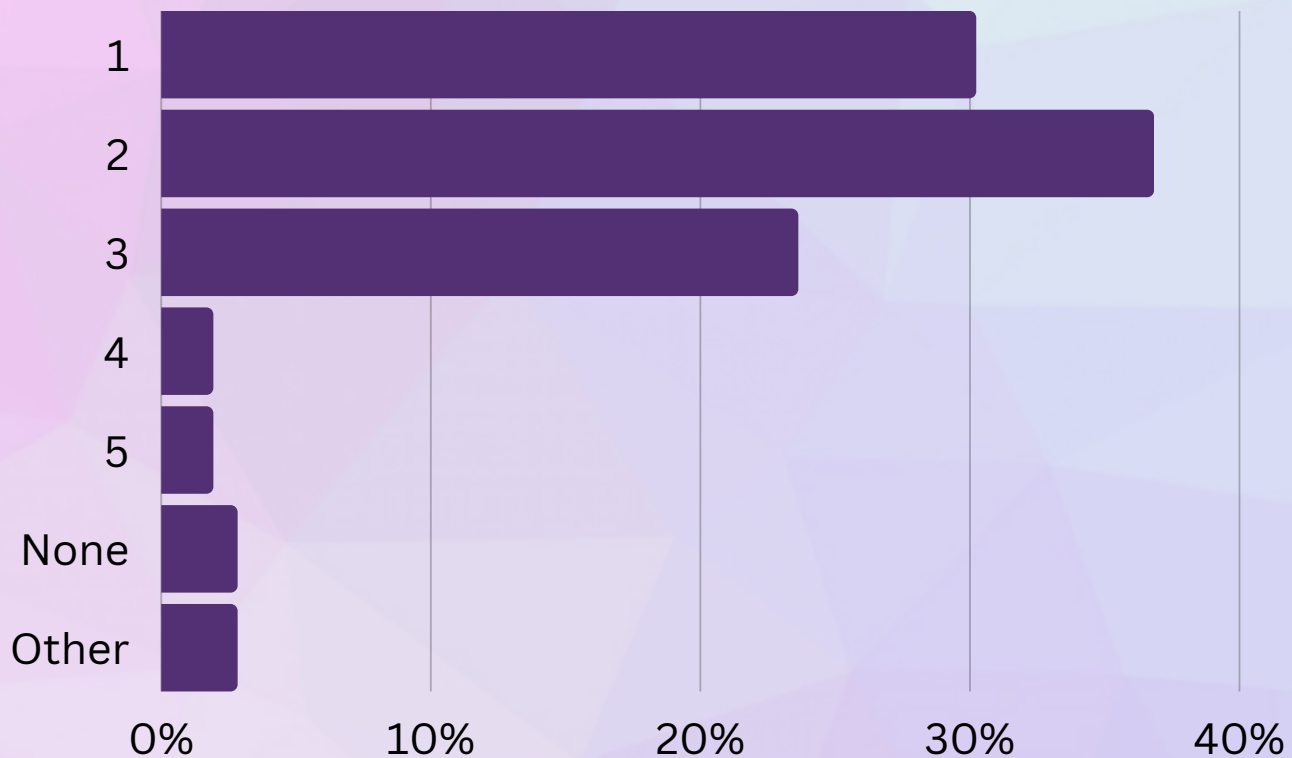
5% reported that there was just a decrease in severity of incidents, while **1%** reported a decrease in frequency of incidents

14% reported that there was no change

Age of child displaying behaviours:



How many children (under 17) are there in your family?



In over **60%** of cases, there is more than one child present in the household.

Are other children in the household affected by the abuse?

In **50%** of cases, there are other children in the house who are being directly impacted.

In **22%** of cases, there are other children in the house who are being indirectly impacted.



Examples of siblings experiencing indirect and direct abuse:

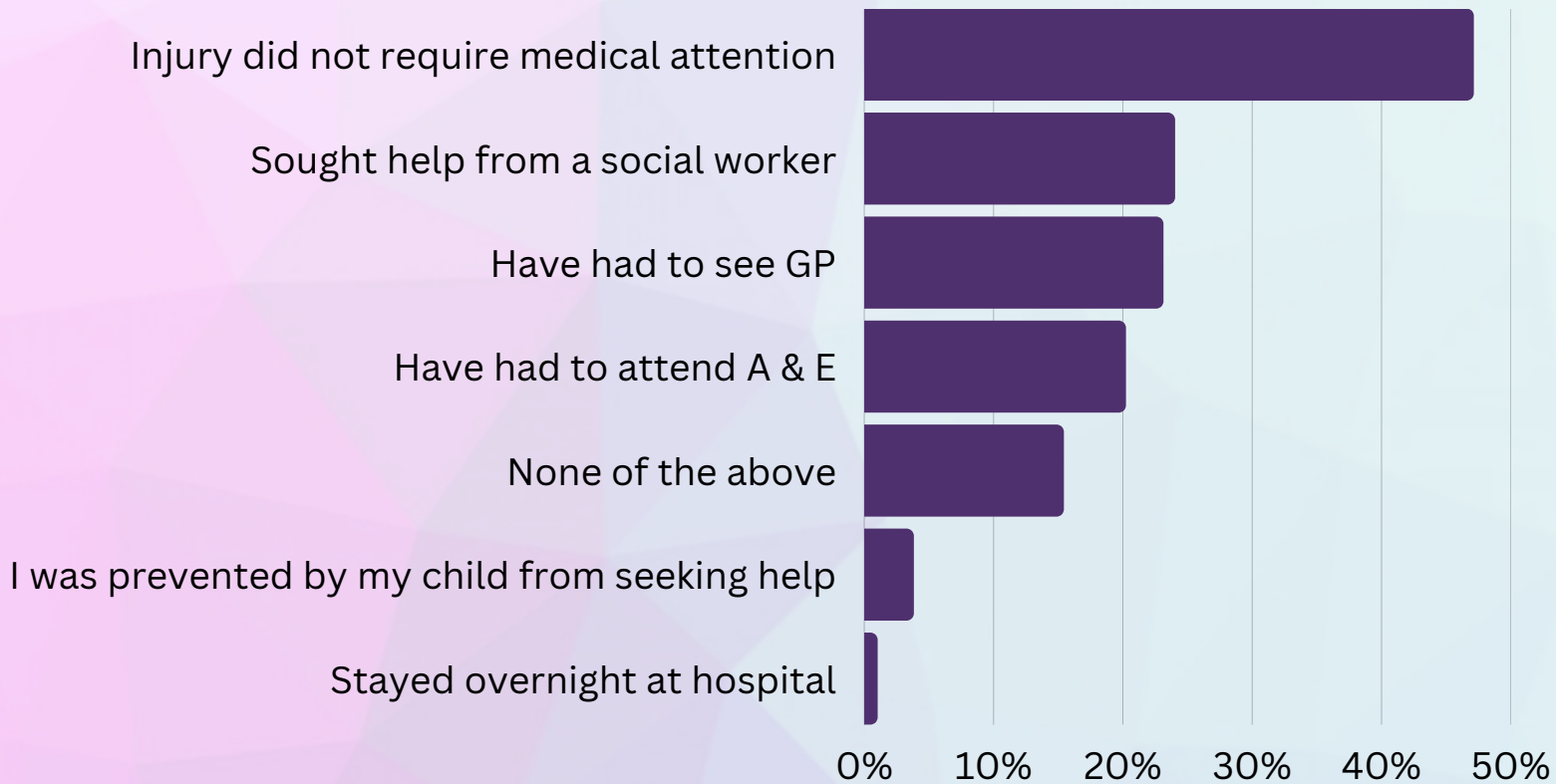
Indirect: Siblings present during incidents of abusive directed to the parent(s)

Direct: Siblings being on the receiving end of abusive behaviours

It is also important to remember children are now recognised as victims of abuse in their own right. As stated in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

In **half** of households, abuse is not only being directed at a parent, but at another child in the house. There has been a recurring theme of high reported abuse being directed towards a sibling (as well as the parent) in the last 3 parental surveys we have conducted.

We asked: If you have ever been physically harmed by your child and have you had to receive any medical attention?



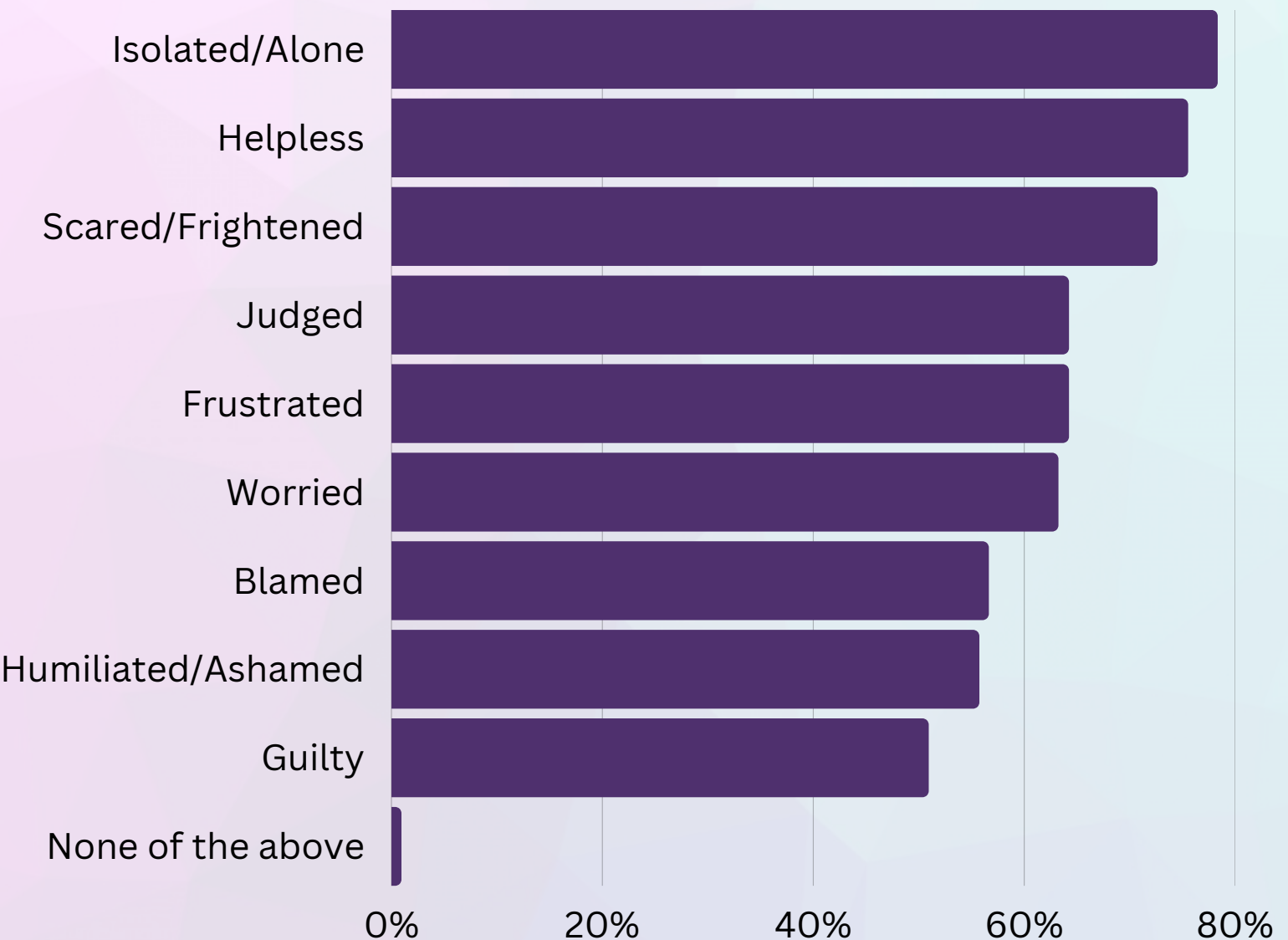
As seen earlier, physical abuse is one of the most common forms of CPA.

1 in 5 parents have had to go to A & E as a result of physical abuse from their child.

Almost a quarter have had to see a GP as a result of the abuse.

Almost 5% of parents were prevented by their child from seeking help. Often CPA is dismissed, parents regularly tell us they feel unheard. They regularly say that even if they have been physically harmed or are at risk of injury, there is a general expectation that they should ensure their child attends school. **14%** have received warnings letters of intended fines from local authorities despite making the school aware of their situation.

We asked parents which emotion(s) resonated with them in regard to how CPA left them feeling:



More than **half** of parents feel blamed:
CPA is never the parents fault

Feelings of isolation and helplessness were the most common emotions parents felt: They aren't alone. We want parents to know there is always someone advocating for them

More than **60%** of parents feel scared: We want to carry on providing the support to help improve their emotional well-being and safety

Sadly, speaking out about CPA doesn't always mean parents are seen:

88% have made professionals/local authorities aware

79% have made their child's school aware

72% have made friends aware

69% have made a family member outside of their household aware

100% of the parents who participated in our survey said that someone else was aware of their situation.

Unfortunately, **43%** said that, despite others being aware of their situation, no one other than PEGS had offered them any help or advice.

We then asked if there were any professional services they felt like they would benefit from:

61% said they would benefit from support from social care

48% said they would benefit from charities/ domestic abuse organisations

25% said they felt they would benefit from support from a GP

Quotes from parents about the impact of CPA during the school holidays:

"As a single parent there is no let up. The behaviours leave us very socially isolated as our professional network is inaccessible during school holidays."

"It's mentally and physically draining. It's difficult to go out and do things as his behaviour just gets worse, and when we're out the level of violence I experience is embarrassing. His violence is so bad that he's not allowed to attend local holiday clubs so I get no break at all from him."

"The usual days out are stressful and often not as pleasant. There's not downtime, no chance to recharge before the next outburst. Everyone is always on edge."

As a family we can't go out. If we try and talk we get screamed at, if we do anything we get screamed at. We constantly walk on eggshells. We have to be mindful of what we say and do. I just sit there and cry most days due to the control my daughter has on me and us. As a mum I don't go anywhere or have friends."

"I've been signed off work with stress, I'm struggling to do basic tasks such as house shopping and feeling more isolated than ever."

What next?

Statistics around CPA can often be thought-provoking, upsetting and shocking. This makes it all the more important that they become the backbone for national and regional policies, by creating effective practices for frontline professionals. It is important that there is a heightened sense of knowledge and understanding among all of us in regards to CPA.

Based on the responses from the survey and hearing from parents, we now have a good insight into how the school holidays affect situations where CPA is occurring. We are disappointed to see that some parents have received warning letters of intended fines despite making schools aware of the situation. PEGS see this as punitive and secondary victimisation to those experiencing abusive behaviours from their child.

These surveys help us to pinpoint specific actions which need to be put in place, ask specific questions which need resolutions. Specific work we would like to undertake with the help of the fantastic organisations we work alongside.

The next steps:

Finding: Education settings are often one of the first points of call for parents experiencing CPA.

Our plan: We aim to increase awareness and understanding to education settings, through training and upskilling professionals within this sector.

Finding: Parents receiving warning letters and fines.

Our plan: To talk to local authorities and criminal justice services about parents receiving warning letters of intended fines and the impact to them.

Finding: Parents often have to go to A&E or their GP due to physically abusive behaviour.

Our Plan: To communicate with NHS Safeguarding, IRISi and other health services, as well as upskill healthcare professionals.