



# Implementing Safe & Together in Scotland: Creating Domestic Abuse-Informed Workforces, Services and Systems

Year Three Learning Report - 2023/24

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# Introduction and aims of this report

The [Safe & Together Model](#) is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help social workers and other key professionals to engage with families experiencing domestic abuse in a child-centred, strengths-based way.

In October 2021, the Scottish Government provided dedicated funding through the Delivering Equally Safe (DES) Fund to support 12 local authorities/partnerships<sup>1</sup> to progress activities to embed the Safe & Together Model between October 2021 and March 2025. At the same time, the Scottish Government provided funding to the [Improvement Service](#) to work alongside these 12 local authorities/partnerships to support them in their improvement journey, with a particular focus on generating learning on the impact that this work is having on the long-term ambition to ensure that the systems, services and workforces in place across Scotland support the best possible outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse.

This report marks the third in a [series of reports](#) from the Improvement Service highlighting key learning about the activities that these 12 local authorities/partnerships are progressing to embed the Safe & Together Model, the impact

this work is having and any enablers or barriers to embedding domestic abuse-informed practice and processes identified by those organisations.

Findings within this report have been drawn from:

- Information shared via an online survey<sup>2</sup> with the 12 organisations/partnerships that have received funding through the DES Fund to embed the Safe & Together Model;
- Focus groups and one-to-one interviews with social workers and multi-agency practitioners applying Safe and Together in their work with families experiencing domestic abuse in one of the DES-funded local areas;
- Learning generated from the Scottish Safe & Together Implementation Forum, which provides regular opportunities for professionals across Scotland working to implement the Safe & Together Model to



come together to share information, learning and resources; and

- Evaluation feedback from professionals who have undertaken Safe & Together training on the impact that the training and Model is having for practitioners, systems and services.

Given the focus in the [year two report](#) on enablers, barriers and recommendations for effectively and sustainably embedding Safe and Together, some of which is now in progress across Scotland, this report focuses primarily on showcasing some of the available evidence of the impact that implementing the Safe & Together Model in Scotland is having on creating domestic abuse-informed workforces, services and systems.





# Key findings

The Scottish Government has provided funding to 12 local authorities/partnerships across Scotland to support them to implement the Safe & Together Model across their local areas and/or organisations. Significant progress has been made since the Year Two report, and there is emerging evidence that this is having a positive impact on the longer-term ambition to embed domestic-abuse informed systems, services, and workforces. For example, of the 12 local areas/partnerships:

- **100%** report that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities have gained an **increased understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and families**;
- **100%** report that practitioners are **more skilled in partnering with the adult survivor and identifying their strengths and protective efforts**;
- **92%** report that practitioners are **more effective in assessing perpetrators' patterns of coercive control**;
- **83%** report practitioners are **more likely to create documentation which outlines the perpetrator's patterns and survivor's strengths**.

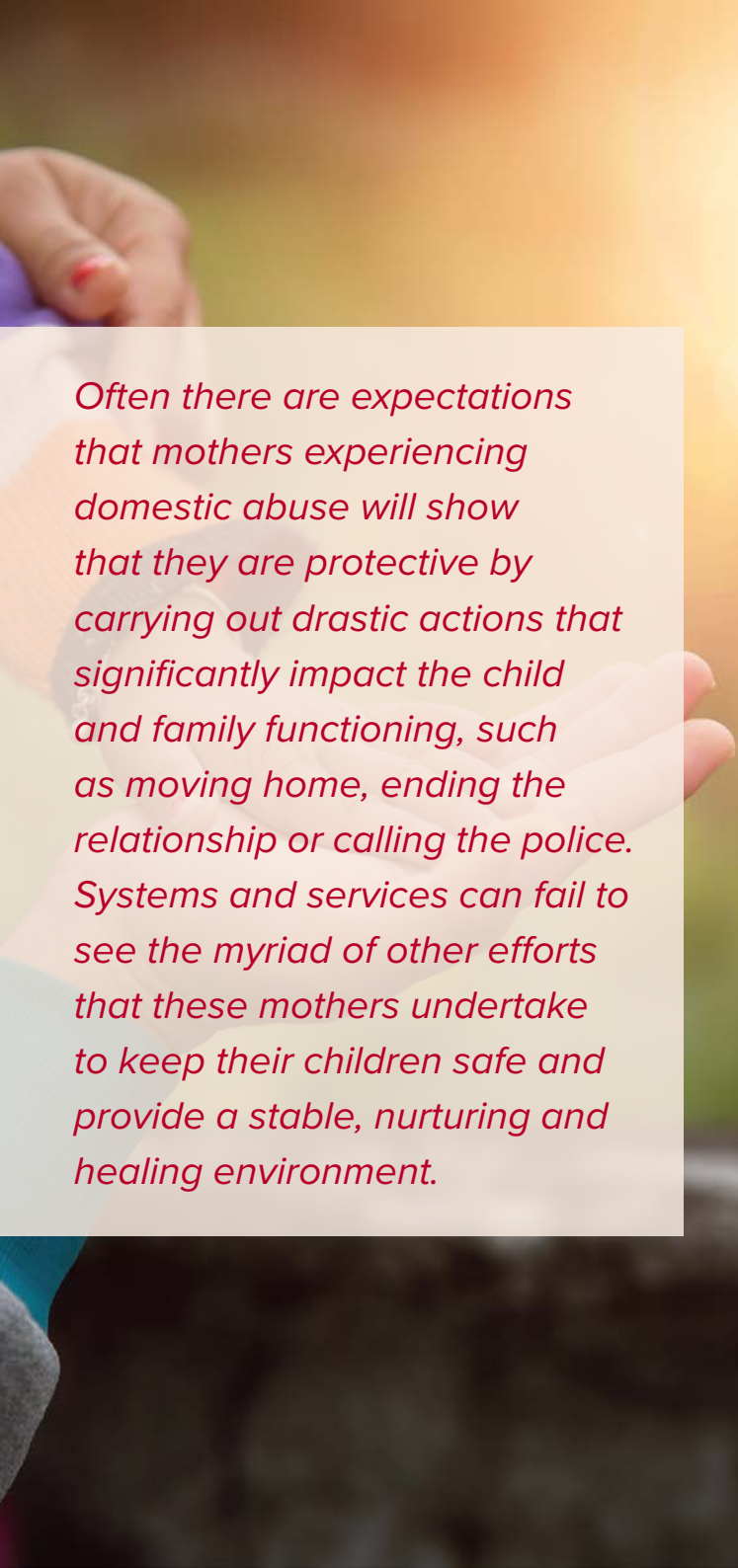
Local areas reflected on the shift in language and practice observed locally and improved practice and confidence in holding perpetrators accountable and framing domestic abuse as a parenting choice. However, local areas are still at a relatively early stage of implementation, and much of the early focus of work has been on rolling out training to priority teams and services. The 12 local authorities and partnerships reflected on this in their responses, often highlighting that although some positive change is underway, more work is needed to fully embed this.

Looking ahead, local authorities/partners have identified a number of critical components needed for a Scottish Safe & Together Model and what support is needed to sustainably embed domestic-abuse practice across systems, services and workforces in Scotland. This includes continued, dedicated and sustainable funding for Safe & Together roll-out, including resources for local implementation leads, national coordination and oversight of Safe & Together training and integration of Safe & Together into local and national policy to support an integrated, joined-up approach to support better collaboration and outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse across Scotland.

“ I ask them what their day looks like, and there was one family [that I worked with], and she would always on a Friday, she would always put the children to her mother's. And for me that was a great strength because that was her recognising that what was gonna [sic] happen at the weekend and her protecting her children and even pushing that back to her and saying 'Look, that's a great strength. Look what you've done: you protected them'. She couldn't see it, but it's just about ensuring that that is positive: 'Your children were your first foremost in your mind, and you did an action to safeguard them'. So, it's just about highlighting [...] their strengths.

I think their strengths can get lost [...] through the abuse and sustained power and control their strengths get really minimised. So it's just about pinpointing them and saying 'Well, no, this, this and this is a strength' even something simple as 'You still got up in the morning after having a hell of a night before, you still got up in the morning and the children have been to school every single day'. That is a great strength.”

**Social Worker**



*Often there are expectations that mothers experiencing domestic abuse will show that they are protective by carrying out drastic actions that significantly impact the child and family functioning, such as moving home, ending the relationship or calling the police. Systems and services can fail to see the myriad of other efforts that these mothers undertake to keep their children safe and provide a stable, nurturing and healing environment.*

# Background

## Domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces

Both in Scotland and across the world, domestic abuse victims and survivors, usually women, have traditionally been held responsible for the impact of that abuse on their child. Despite significant efforts in recent years to address this, there can still be a tendency for systems and services to focus on domestic abuse victims and survivors' decision making, rather than the perpetrator's pattern of coercive control, as being the primary risk and safety concern for children.

Often there are expectations that mothers experiencing domestic abuse will show that they are protective by carrying out drastic actions that significantly impact the child and family functioning, such as moving home, ending the relationship or calling the police. Systems and services can fail to see the myriad of other efforts that these mothers undertake to keep their children safe and provide a stable, nurturing and healing environment. Conversely, there has been a lack of accountability in our systems for fathers who perpetrate domestic abuse, both for the harm they cause to the adult victim/survivor and for the impact this harm has on the child(ren) within the family. This gender double standard of parenting reinforces gender stereotypes as it

places the majority of parental responsibility with the mother.

Research suggests that creating domestic abuse-informed services, systems and workforces within local authorities across Scotland could help to:

- Partner with victims/survivors and recognise their strengths and protective efforts;
- Place greater accountability on the perpetrator for their choices and their role within a family unit; and
- Improve outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse.

In addition, embedding domestic abuse-informed systems and services provides opportunities to develop systems that:

- Strengthen competencies in the child protection system;
- Increase worker safety, satisfaction, organisational stability and improve cross-system collaboration; and
- Increase consistency of service delivery across Scotland.

Ultimately, this shift will help achieve Scotland's vision of ensuring all women, children and young people are equally safe, and that children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they are able to realise their full potential.



## Understanding the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse in Scotland for women and children, services and systems

The impacts of domestic abuse can be wide-ranging and can have a long-term impact on the lives of those affected, as well as on their families and communities. Without access to the right support and the right time, women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in Scotland are at increased risk of experiencing inequality of outcomes throughout their lives, including physical and mental health problems, homelessness, drug and alcohol support needs, reduced education and employment opportunities, injuries and even death.

While it is difficult to calculate the exact scale of domestic abuse in Scotland because it is often under-reported and misunderstood, current statistics show that there were 61,934 incidents of domestic abuse [recorded by Police Scotland in 2022/23](#),<sup>3</sup> of which 81% involved a female victim and a male perpetrator. Research repeatedly shows that [the majority of domestic abuse continues to go unreported](#)<sup>4</sup> with 1 in 3 women in Scotland estimated to experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives and 1 in 5 children in Scotland estimated to have experienced domestic abuse by the time they reach 18. [Figures for 2023/24](#) show 2,042 crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act, a 15% increase compared to 2022/23.<sup>5</sup> Of those crimes, 94% involved a female victim. Women are most likely

to be killed by a partner or ex-partner compared to an acquaintance for male victim.<sup>6</sup> The most recently available [national homicide statistics for Scotland](#) reported that, in 2023/24, five out of the 13 (38%) female homicide victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner. A statutory child aggravator was recorded in 21% of the [cases prosecuted under the Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2018 \(DASA\) in 2023/2024](#). Living in a household where domestic abuse is taking place was identified as the most common concern in [Child Protection Case Conferences in Scotland in 2022/23](#) and continues to be one of the primary reasons why children are taken into care.

Failing to address the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse is estimated to cost Scotland £2.3 billion each year, while the financial cost of responding to all forms VAWG is estimated to be close to £4 billion.<sup>7</sup> This includes direct costs relating to women, children and young people accessing healthcare, criminal justice proceedings, housing and social care services, as well as indirect costs related to accessing support with mental health and trauma, drug and alcohol use, welfare support and costs associated with victims and survivors' loss of economic productivity. Dealing with the consequences of domestic abuse places a significant burden on public services. Police Scotland report that managing incidences of domestic abuse is the



greatest single demand on their time, with an average of one incident being reported to them every nine minutes.

When initially seeking support, the [majority of victims and survivors of domestic abuse](#), and VAWG more generally, “do not use specialist third sector organisations”. Rather they interact with mainstream services, seeking access to a range of support including, but not limited to, accommodation, health, criminal justice, social care, education, financial assistance, and legal advice [...] Upstream early engagement and intervention through universal services can prevent the entrenchment of serious harms that require complex and resource intensive intervention. The disproportionate level of presentations related to VAWG in Child Protection and Adult Support & Protection systems, Alcohol and Drug Support Services, Housing and Homelessness Support Services, Mental Health Services and Community Justice Services demands a more coherent approach to early identification and intervention that recognises the complexity of support required”. At a time of immense financial challenge, taking a domestic abuse-informed approach will significantly reduce the burden being placed on these services to provide crisis support to women, children and young people and free up resources that can be used to improved outcomes for society as a whole.

## How Safe & Together helps to create domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces

The Safe & Together Model aims to help change how practitioners work with families impacted by domestic abuse. It is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help professionals become domestic abuse-informed. It is an evidence-based practice that can help improve competencies and cross-system collaboration.

The Safe & Together Model aims to support workforces, systems and services across Scotland<sup>8</sup> to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse. It does this through promoting a model of culture and system-change that supports best practice, and which:

- keeps the child safe and together with the non-offending parent;
- partners with the non-offending parent as the default position; and
- intervenes with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child.

The Safe & Together Model supports a number of national and local priorities, and policy and practice agendas contributing to whole system change in relation to domestic abuse in Scotland. The logic model on the next page has been developed to highlight the inputs, activities and outcomes associated with Safe & Together Model in Scotland, and to highlight how it contributes to and support longer-term outcomes and ambitions around domestic abuse and other related policy agendas.





## INPUTS

Financial investment in the Safe & Together Model

Time and engagement from practitioners who come into contact with children and families affected by domestic abuse

Development of implementation support and structures

Leadership from Senior Managers and Decision-Makers

Commitment to continuous improvement and system change

## ACTIVITIES

Rolling out Safe & Together training to targeted groups and key workforces

Undertaking of Trainer Certification and becoming a Partner Agency

Providing support to practitioners to embed learning into practice e.g. practitioner forums, coaching, supervision

Developing implementation supports to embed the Model into your systems and strategy e.g. implementation leads and plans, strategic groups

Use Safe & Together tools, resources and events to support practice and implementation

Attending network and learning events to connect to other local area leads, groups and stakeholders

Self-evaluation activities to monitor progress and inform future planning e.g. self assessments, case file audits, stakeholder engagement

Establishing or continuing to work with strategic implementation groups to support a whole systems, joined up approach

Improvement of organisation and system context e.g. revision of policy and processes, improved data collection

## SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Practitioners are more effective in assessing perpetrators patterns of coercive control

Practitioners have increased understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and families

Practitioners are more skilled in partnering with the adult survivor and identifying their strengths and protective efforts

Practitioners are more likely to recognise the intersections between domestic abuse, substance use, mental health, power and privilege and/or other support needs

Practitioners are more likely to create documentation which outlines perpetrator's patterns and survivor's strengths

Practitioners across organisations and systems are more likely to have a shared approach to the families they work with

## MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Policies and practices are more likely to focus on child safety and well-being, recognise survivor strengths and hold perpetrators accountable

Perpetrators are more likely to be held accountable for their behaviours and receive engagement around their parenting choices

Managers and Senior Leaders are more likely to promote a whole system approach to supporting children and families experiencing domestic abuse

Cross system collaboration is improved through common frameworks and language between practitioners and within systems

Adult and child survivors are more likely to report having positive experiences of engaging with social work and other statutory services

Systems and services are more likely to support actions that keep the child safe and together with the non-offending parent

Policies and practices which reflect domestic abuse competency and approaches are consistent and dependable and utilised throughout the child welfare system, locally and nationally

## NATIONAL PRIORITIES

### CROSS CUTTING AGENDAS

#### NATIONAL OUTCOMES

We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential.

We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered resilient and safe.

#### EQUALLY SAFE

Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people.

#### NATIONAL TRAUMA TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Supporting the Scottish Government and COSLA ambition to develop a trauma-informed and responsive workforce and services across Scotland.

#### THE PROMISE

Scotland's route map to transformational change across Scotland's care system from children and young people

#### UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Scottish Government's commitment to incorporate the treaty setting out the rights that all children and young people have to given them the best chance of growing up happy, healthy and safe.

# Implementing Safe and Together in Scotland

Throughout the third year of the DES Fund, the Improvement Service has consulted with local authorities/partnerships funded through the DES Fund to gain a better understanding of the work they are undertaking to embed the Safe & Together Model and the impact this is having for systems, services, and workforces. Significant progress has been made to implement the Safe & Together Model across the 12 DES-funded local areas and partnerships, and there is emerging evidence that this is having a positive impact on the longer-term ambition to embed domestic-abuse informed systems, services, and workforces.



## Progress against short-term outcomes

Over the course of the third year of implementation, the 12 local areas and partnerships have identified encouraging signs of progress towards the short-term outcomes in the logic model. Additionally, there has been significant progress across most outcomes compared to the year two report.

- **100%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities have gained an **increased understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and families**;
- **100%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities are **more skilled in partnering with the adult survivor and identifying their strengths and protective efforts**, an increase from 67% in the Year Two report;
- **75%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities are **more likely to recognise the intersections between domestic abuse, substance use, mental health, and/or other support needs** victims/survivors may experience, an increase from 60% in the Year Two report;
- **92%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities are **more effective in assessing perpetrators' patterns of coercive control**, an increase from 55% in the Year Two report;
- **75%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities are **more likely to create interventions and plans which focus on the perpetrator's behaviours**, an increase from 50% in the Year Two report; and



- **83%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities are **more likely to create documentation which outlines the perpetrator's patterns and survivor's strengths**, an increase from 60% in the Year Two report.

The only area where there has been a reduction in the number of areas who have identified signs/evidence of progress, is the **adoption of a shared approach to the families they work with across their organisation**, where **67%** (compared to 82% in the Year Two report) have identified signs/evidence of progress towards this outcome. Feedback from practitioners who took part in the focus groups and interviews suggest that there can sometimes be a perceived tension between the Safe & Together Model and the 'rigidness' of the Child Protection system, and they also spoke of pressures on the workforce and limited capacity of teams and services, which may have contributed to this finding and are explored in more detail later in the report.

Positively there has been significant progress against all of the short-term outcomes since the start of this work, and local areas reflected on the shift in language and practice observed locally. This was also reflected by practitioners themselves who highlighted how the Safe & Together Model was supporting them to reflect on their own and colleagues' practice and recognise where this has not always reflected domestic abuse-informed practice. A shift in language and

confidence in holding perpetrators accountable for their behaviour is evident both in the reflections by local practitioners and implementation leads/ key contacts.

“ It's given me a new thought process, especially when writing reports. When I look back now I think, “oh, why would I write that?” [...] It's not enough to say there's domestic abuse in the house. You actually **need to name what that is and how it impacts the family.** ”

Social Worker

“ It has changed my thinking with things, and I'm glad I've had the training because now I'm more confident working with families and [...] how to support them better. ”

Social Worker

“ That's what I loved about the Safe and Together; it had the **specific tools and the sort of recording and, and encouraging workers to ask the questions**, [...] actually saying I need to get answers in my own mind to these. And that's **allowed me to go back to social work when I've had reports and say, well, tell me, you know, why are you thinking that**, or I need more information about this. ”

Children's Reporter

“ Feedback from our workforce indicates a **significantly improved understanding of the impact of domestic [abuse]** and we see this in their day-to-day practice through a **change in language within reports, in meetings and when assessing need.** [...] The feedback from training and practitioners' forums consistently states that an improvement in workers understanding has occurred as a result of the training. ”

“ The impact of the training has been evident in practice, with **teams and practitioners reporting significant changes in their approach.** Participants have begun to implement the Safe and Together model in their work, leading to **improved report writing, observation skills, and communication with survivors.** They have become more aware of the language used around domestic abuse, advocating for survivors' strengths and challenging victim-blaming narratives. Furthermore, practitioners have actively applied the model in various scenarios, such as reframing reports to highlight survivors' experiences and confronting perpetrators about their parenting choices related to domestic abuse. ”

“ These changes have translated into **tangible improvements in participants’ work with families affected by domestic abuse**. A majority of participants have made documentation, assessment, interview, and case planning changes based on the knowledge gained from the training. The high satisfaction rate among participants, with 100% recommending the core training to colleagues, underscores the effectiveness and relevance of the training in enhancing practice and promoting survivor-centred approaches. Overall, the training has **empowered practitioners to adopt more empathetic, informed, and effective strategies in supporting survivors** and addressing domestic abuse within their communities. ”



## Progress against medium—long-term outcomes

The 12 local areas and partnerships have also identified encouraging signs of progress towards the medium- and long-term outcomes in the logic model. Similarly to the short-term outcomes, there has also been progress across a number of the longer-term outcomes compared to the year two report. Given the long-term nature of these outcomes, and systems and culture change programmes more generally, it is likely it will be some time until these are fully met. Nevertheless, the 12 local authorities and partnerships have identified a number of positive outcomes as a result of the work undertaken to embed the Safe & Together model.

- **75%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that their **organisation’s policies and practices are more likely to (i) focus on child safety and well-being, (ii) recognise survivor strengths and (iii) hold perpetrators accountable**, an increase from 55% in the Year Two report;
- **67%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that **perpetrators are more likely to be held accountable for their behaviours and receive engagement around their parenting choices**, an increase from 37% in the Year Two report;
- **75%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that **managers and senior leaders are more likely to promote a whole system approach to supporting children and families experiencing domestic abuse**, an increase from 64% in the Year Two report;
- **59%** have identified signs/ evidence to suggest that **cross system collaboration is improved through common frameworks and languages between practitioners and within systems**, similar to the Year Two report;<sup>9</sup>
- **59%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that **local systems and services are more likely to support actions that keep the child safe and together with the non-offending parent**, similar to the Year Two report;<sup>10</sup>
- **17%**<sup>11</sup> have identified signs/evidence to suggest that **adult and child survivors are more likely to report having a positive experience of engaging with social work and other statutory services**;<sup>12</sup> and
- **33%** have identified signs/evidence to suggest that **policies and practices which reflect domestic abuse competency and approaches are consistent and dependable and utilised throughout the child welfare system, locally and nationally**.<sup>13</sup>



Local areas shared examples of evidence from a range of different sources to support and demonstrate the progress being made as a result of work being undertaken to embed the Safe & Together Model in their area or partnership.

“ [Domestic Abuse] service alongside survivors of domestic abuse have been working with Domestic Abuse Court Advocacy, housing, and child protection reviewing officers; to **design standards, policies and use of language to implement change** to keep the child safe and together with non-offending parent. ”

“ The [Local Authority] Pre-birth Pathway now reflects the principles and components of the model, which highlights the challenges mothers face while noting **the need for the team around the (unborn) child to focus accountability with the adult causing harm.** This sets the scene for assessment from the outset and appears to be a positive practice influence according to anecdotal information. This will be more formally scrutinised in an impending Case File Audit activity. ”

“ Building relationships across the system and services has been imperative for embedding the model, and that has taken time and persistence given all the other demands services are juggling and the hybrid nature of work post-Covid. The model appears straightforward but **many new considerations arise as practitioners work through the model, particularly in respect of vicarious trauma and what this means for practitioners' lived and living experience,** given the increased understanding of women and children's situations the [Safe & Together] Model supports practitioners to achieve. [The Safe & Together] Model implementation is a labour-intensive activity in which values and culture require challenge on a number of levels from the individual to the service, and **although this is harder to measure than numbers attending training, this is where the real work to embed the model lies.** ”

“ Our Child and Adult Protection Officers are part of the planning around roll out of Safe and Together and also attend other training. Police colleagues are also looking at undertaking the Core training etc. **Child protection procedures and meetings are informed by Safe and Together and our Reviewing Officers are trained in it.** ”

“ Workers have been invested and supportive of the Safe and Together Model of working. This has clearly helped in the change of approach. We have seen a **significant improvement in the language that is used** when referring to perpetrators as well as survivors of [domestic abuse]. We see far less victim blaming and a **greater understanding coming through all our assessments of the impact of [domestic abuse] upon children and the non-offending parent.** ”



Local areas are still at a relatively early stage of implementation, and much of the early focus of work has been on rolling out training to priority teams and services. The 12 local authorities and partnerships reflected on this in their responses, often highlighting that although some positive change is underway, more work is needed to fully embed this. There were also reflections from local areas on the need to embed more formal processes to measure and evidence the change taking place.

“ There is **still quite a considerable way to go to influence policy and procedures**. For example, I couldn't say that the Child Protection IRD process is domestic abuse competent. Social work colleagues share it can be difficult in these discussions as the other agencies involved are still working to the failure to protect discourse. ”

“ I don't feel that we know enough about **the views of adult and child survivors** although through anecdotal evidence, primarily as a result of discussions with practitioners, we can assess an improvement from previous ways of working [but] I **would like to see more joined up working with partner agencies**. ”

“ We know what practitioners tell us in their feedback - so far **there is little evidence collection on the objective impact this has** on survivors & other agencies. ”

“ There is some positive feedback and [domestic abuse] is appearing in policies in a more informed way. [...] To date there has only been anecdotal feedback e.g., seeing less woman blaming language in referrals. **This has not yet been formally assessed.** ”



## Survivor and practitioner feedback

A number of areas shared feedback from survivors and practitioners, which demonstrate the changes happening in practice:

“You’ve helped me become stronger as a person and **reminded me daily that I’m a good mum.**” **Survivor**



“The service has helped me become a better person and a better mum. [Service name] showed me that regardless of people’s opinion **I am important too.**” **Survivor**

“I think with other agencies it feels like they treat us as a problem that needs a service to solve the problem but with [Service name] it feels like you’re a person. It feels **like there’s someone joining you on this stretch** of your life whose saying: ‘**You’re not crazy, this situation is crazy, and I believe you** and believe you can come through this and there’s a better future.”

“[The training] has really challenged my practice and given me practical ways to improve how I work. “ **Practitioner**

“I feel **more confident in my practice** and feel a greater sense of hope for survivors of domestic abuse and their children I thoroughly enjoyed the training and at the end of the 4th day I made a phone call to a perpetrator, I was able to use Safe and Together language in my call regarding his parenting and felt more confident.” **Practitioner**

“This process has been such a benefit to my family. Before the input from [service name], I was unable to negotiate a lasting custody agreement with my children’s father. We now have a custody agreement that works for both my children, **ensuring their voice was heard and their wishes respected**, which is beneficial to both of their wellbeing. They now feel **safe and respected**. [...] I feel as though **I have more control and freedom over my own life**. I would like to add that without this input, I do not feel as though we would be in such a positive space, and I strongly hope it continues this way despite our case being concluded. **Survivor**

“I have had conversations with a perpetrator about his **parenting choices around [domestic abuse]**. This was a big change as no one had ever confronted him in this way. I have also supported a survivor to see her strengths and everything she has done to protect her child/function.” **Practitioner**

“[The training has] **changed the way that I write about domestic abuse** and also how I speak to survivors. Whenever I am reading reports/plans it makes me question what was actually going on when only ‘domestic abuse’ is written, and question who was the perpetrator and who was the survivor.” **Practitioner**

## PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

### North Lanarkshire Council



North Lanarkshire Council first started to roll out Safe & Together training in 2015 following a consultation with staff on whether the model should be adopted locally. In this early stage of implementation training was largely funded through contributions from the Violence Against Women Partnership, Child Protection Committee and Early Years Collaborative. In 2021 North Lanarkshire was one of the 12 local authorities and partnerships to receive dedicated funding the DES Fund to embed the Safe & Together model locally. This dedicated funding enabled North Lanarkshire to take a more strategic approach to implementing the Safe & Together Model across teams and services, including the appointment of a dedicated Implementation Lead, implementing a Champions model to support implementation and various practice supports for practitioners to support them to implement the training into their practice.

During the summer 2024 the Improvement Service supported the North Lanarkshire Safe & Together Implementation Group to understand some of the impact of the roll-out so far, for practitioners and families experiencing domestic abuse across North Lanarkshire. The evaluation included interviews with individual social workers, multi-agency focus groups and data from a local case file audit, and focused on capturing

learning around the progress and impact that implementation of the Safe & Together Model across the three key principles of the model:

1. Keeping children safe and together with the non-offending parent
2. Partnering with the non-offending parent as the default position
3. Intervening with perpetrator(s) to reduce risk and harm to the child

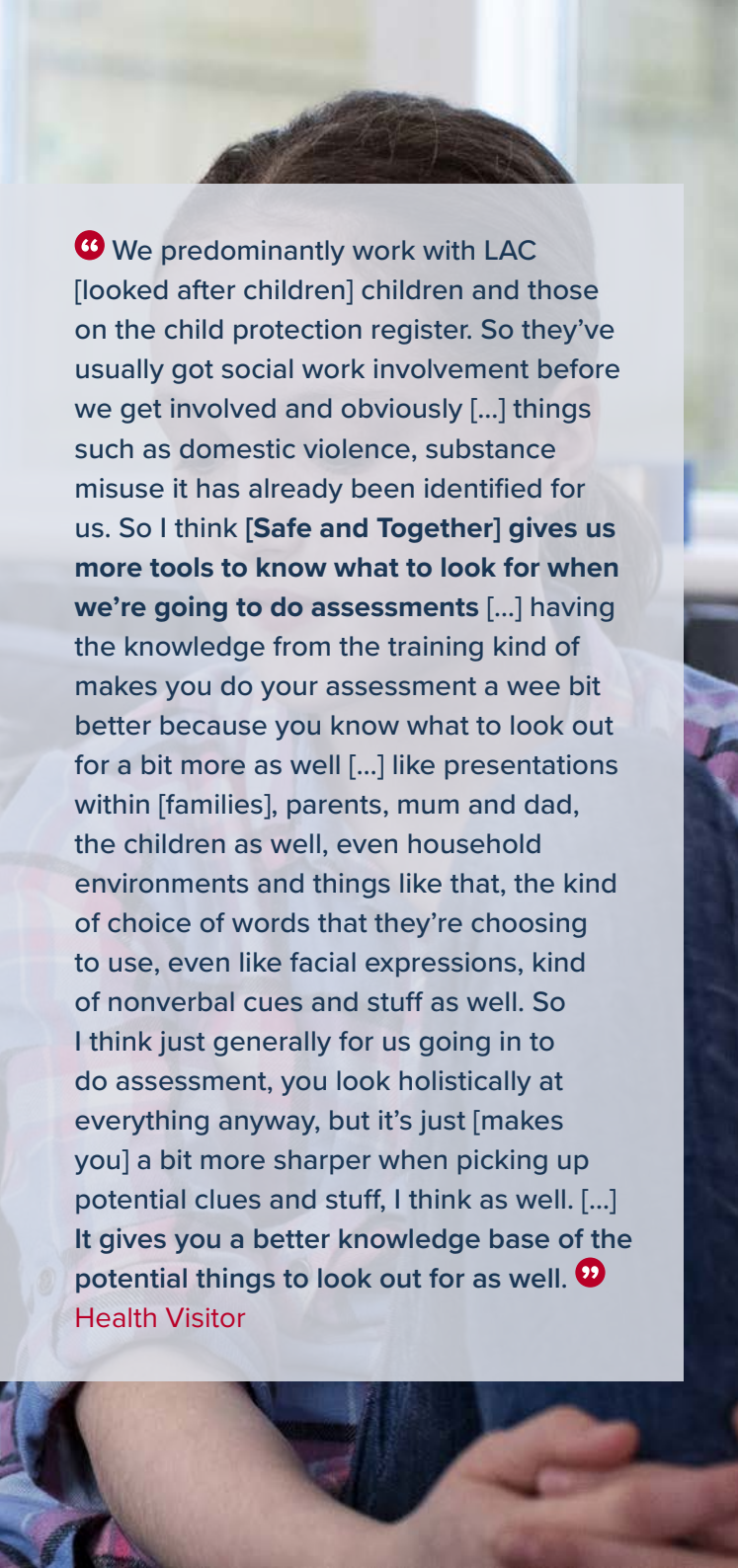
The engagements highlighted increased positive engagement with families experiencing domestic abuse across North Lanarkshire, increased confidence in practitioners engaging with and holding perpetrators accountable for their behaviours and the impact of this on family functioning, and improved collaboration within and across agencies and services through shared language. Some of the practice findings are included below, alongside quotes and reflections from North Lanarkshire practitioners.

#### Keeping children safe and together with the non-offending parent

Safe & Together has supported an increased understanding of domestic abuse and the direct

“ When you are actually having to say [to a perpetrator]: ‘Your children are at risk of being accommodated as a result of your behaviour’ they [sic] can be difficult conversations to have, but when you’re having it in a way that is [...] allowing them to understand the impact of their behaviour on the children [it has an impact]. [In] the case I’m working on at the moment [...] there has been, [a] significant history of domestic abuse, physical, emotional, financial, the whole works, the children have been exposed to that. And **you can see the impact**. So, the children are then modelling the behaviour of their perpetrator. So, these are the conversations that myself and my colleague are having with the perpetrator [when] he’s like, ‘Oh, we only argue because the kids are out of control’, ‘We only argue because their behaviours are unmanageable’. And we’ve had to have the frank conversation by saying, ‘These children are behaving in [that] way, **because they are witnessing what you are doing to their mother**’.”

Social Worker



“ We predominantly work with LAC [looked after children] children and those on the child protection register. So they’ve usually got social work involvement before we get involved and obviously [...] things such as domestic violence, substance misuse it has already been identified for us. So I think [Safe and Together] gives us more tools to know what to look for when we’re going to do assessments [...] having the knowledge from the training kind of makes you do your assessment a wee bit better because you know what to look out for a bit more as well [...] like presentations within [families], parents, mum and dad, the children as well, even household environments and things like that, the kind of choice of words that they’re choosing to use, even like facial expressions, kind of nonverbal cues and stuff as well. So I think just generally for us going in to do assessment, you look holistically at everything anyway, but it’s just [makes you] a bit more sharper when picking up potential clues and stuff, I think as well. [...] It gives you a better knowledge base of the potential things to look out for as well. ”

Health Visitor

impact on children and wider family functioning. There was clear evidence that social workers are now considering the impact of perpetrator patterns of behaviour on the safety and wellbeing of children, and clearly framing domestic abuse as a parenting choice on the part of the perpetrator. The Safe & Together Model provides practitioners with a helpful framework and language to work together to keep families safe.

### Partnering with the non-offending parent as the default position

There were clear examples of how the Safe and Together model is supporting better partnership with survivors, building trust and empowering survivors to recognise their own strengths and efforts to keep their child(ren) safe. All social workers emphasised how using the Safe & Together model was providing them with tools to partner with the adult survivor more effectively, and almost all highlighted examples of how doing this work also benefits survivors rebuild their confidence and recognise their strengths.

“ So when we write a report from a Safe and Together perspective the family are going to read that and then you know, and the mum and the survivor, in this case, is going to read that, and they’re going to **feel protected and heard** in that kind of way. ”

Social Worker

“ I think after doing the training I did have a bit of **light bulb moment**, especially in terms of how I write reports. I think maybe before I would maybe have wrote [sic] that, you know, “the relationship is characterised by domestic violence”, but actually from the training I’ve been really conscious in what I write, that actually that, you know, “it’s the domestic violence within the relationship **perpetrated by dad** towards mum by doing X, Y and Z and this **impacts the children**, you know, X, Y and Z. ”

Social Worker

### Intervening with perpetrators to reduce risk of harm

Social workers consistently highlighted the strengths of the Safe and Together model in relation to mapping perpetrator patterns of behaviour and framing this as a parenting choice. Practitioners provided multiple examples of how the model provides useful tools for mapping perpetrator behaviour and holding them accountable for the risk they pose to children and the non-offending parent. Throughout the interviews there were examples of increased confidence in practitioners in holding perpetrators accountable for their abuse and framing this as a parenting choice. It was also clear that this is also extending to the visibility of perpetrators in the child protection system.



“ I would never have said to a perpetrator ‘listen, **this is a parenting choice**’ I would never have used that language. So I think when you are able to say that, it can be quite humbling to the perpetrator because they might not even see that the behaviour is having a detrimental impact on the development and the wellbeing of their children. So, using that language, having these conversations can be quite difficult as well. So, knowing that **you have confidence in your approach to domestic abuse**, through the training makes it easier to have those difficult conversations with the perpetrators. ”

Social Worker

“ I think in a few of the cases that I’m thinking about **the perpetrators wouldn’t even attend meetings previously**. Whereas now that you’re going in and holding them accountable and saying, well, unless you start to engage with this process, we’re not- like one of the dads that was wanting contact with his child, I’m saying, ‘That’s not going to happen **until you engage in this process and we do some work around your behaviour**’ and try to get them to see that you can’t hide from this. You need to kind of face it to move forward. And again that comes back to that whole holding them accountable and telling them **it’s a parenting choice** and using that language that things aren’t going to change unless you kind of start doing these things. So yeah, that’s certainly something that some of the dads have not engaged at all with social work, not attended meetings. And that has changed, I would say in some of the cases. ”

Social Worker



# Looking ahead: A Scottish Safe & Together model

In the year two learning report, local areas called for the development of a bespoke Safe & Together in Scotland Model to be developed. In August 2024, the Scottish Government and COSLA published a new [Equally Safe Delivery Plan](#), which sets out a commitment to exploring and implementing options for a bespoke Safe & Together model in Scotland.<sup>14</sup>

The publication of this report therefore comes at a critical time in sharing learning that can help to inform what this model should look like in the future. The 12 local authorities/partnerships funded through the Delivering Equally Safe (DES) fund to embed the Safe & Together Model have identified a number of critical components for a Scottish Safe & Together delivery model, and what support is needed to sustainably embed this across Scotland. These are explored in more detail below and include: continued, dedicated and sustainable funding; a national delivery model; integration of the Safe & Together Model principles into national and local policies and systems; and national and local leadership and commitment to the continued roll-out of Safe & Together in Scotland.



## Continued, dedicated and sustainable long-term funding for Safe & Together

Continued sustainable funding for the continued roll-out of the Safe & Together Model was consistently highlighted by local areas and partnerships as crucial to successfully embedding domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces across Scotland. Local areas and partnerships reflected on the importance of the dedicated funding provided through the DES fund to enable them to take forward the work to embed the Safe & Together Model in their local areas and highlighted the importance of continued long-term sustainable funding to continue this work. This includes both funding for training itself but also dedicated resource for implementation and coordination. Beyond the funding received from the DES fund, most of the 12 local areas/partnerships have also provided additional investment into the implementation of Safe & Together in their local area(s) and organisations.

“ The DES Fund monies are vital to the much-needed roll out of Safe and [sic] Together as we are in an environment where budgetary cuts are dominating the HSCP and Council landscape. Statutory work is required to be prioritised and it is unlikely that the Safe and Together development would be funded. ”

“ Additional financial investment, together with the DES funding, has enabled our service to train the vast majority of Social Workers, Team Leaders, and Senior Social Care Officers in the full Safe and Together model. A number of other staff have completed the one day overview course. Work is underway currently to identify which staff still require to be trained in Safe and Together. The senior management team is committed to ensuring that the entire staff group has undertaken either the full, or the overview training, depending on people’s individual role. ”

The uncertainty around continued VAWG funding post March 2025 to support this work longer term was noted as having a detrimental impact on local areas ability to plan for continued delivery of training and other workforce development.

“ Funding – if [Safe & Together] is used in its current form there are ongoing significant costs e.g. even when areas have their own trainers (identifying significant commitment of staff time to become trainers) there are still costs. **If external funding does not continue much of the progress will be lost.** ”

## Importance of the lead role to support implementation

Across our engagements with both implementation leads/key contacts and practitioners across the 12 local authorities/partnerships the importance and impact of having a dedicated implementation lead in post was highlighted as one of the key supports enabling them to put learning into practice. Local areas and partnerships highlighted how having a dedicated lead role in post has supported developments beyond training delivery, including ongoing practice support and quality assurance activities.

“ Having a dedicated position enabled the project to progress beyond the initial expected activity. This includes supporting [Safe & Together] Champions in their voluntary role, scheduling training, carrying out a case file audit, establishing [Safe & Together] Workshops to support workers to take learning into practice, attending national meetings, writing progress reports presenting updates and challenges to the VAW partnership. ”

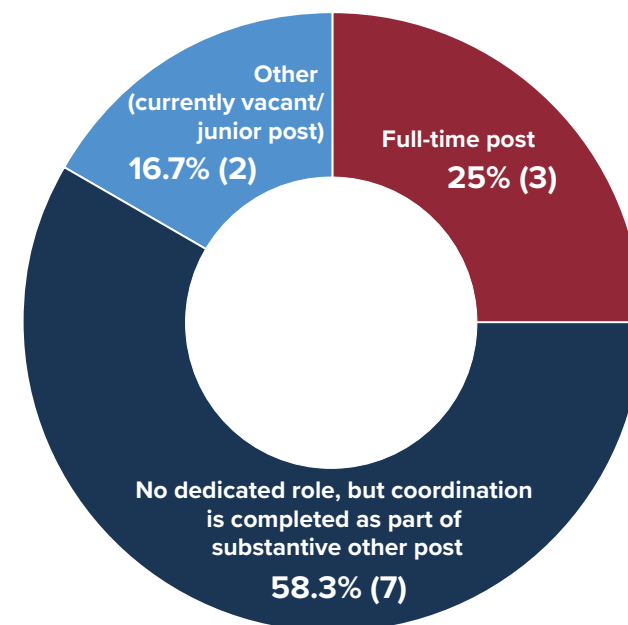


“ [Having a dedicated Safe & Together lead role] has contributed, working alongside the local authority workforce development leads, to have a clear implementation plan in the delivery of Safe and Together CORE training, roadshows, overview days, lead on the community of practice which meets quarterly, and the roll-out of Safe and Together supervisors training. Our lead has [also] helped with raising awareness of using the mapping tool by co-designing a video with a survivor [...] this has been used at training and conferences [...] to [show] the impact of Safe and Together in practice. ”

“ The Lead Officer role has been imperative to the implementation plan for the three [local authorities] - initially to develop the strategic plan but **crucially for the development of practice and culture change within services to build on and maintain the learning from training**. Practitioners are in the process of developing confidence and competence as time goes on. This means that various themes and issues arise as the model beds in which requires consideration and resolve by the Lead to maintain the progress. Quality assurance is a key task, and activities such as case file auditing would have unlikely been pursued due to resource and knowledge implications. Learning from these activities, including from [survivors] themselves, has been instrumental in ensuring that implementation has stayed on track and not stalled or deteriorated as **we learn what is and is not working**, [...] as evidenced in domestic abuse-informed case files within the audit. ”

Over half of the local areas or partnerships do not currently have a dedicated lead role in post, instead the coordination of training delivery is completed in addition to or as part of other substantive post elsewhere. Local areas without a dedicated lead in post highlighted the challenges around this, including managing competing demands and the lack of capacity to take forward development and implementation activities beyond training delivery.

**Does your local area, partnership or organisation have a dedicated Safe & Together lead role?**



“ The **difficulty of not having a dedicated lead role is that other work often needs to be prioritised**, however we have been able to maintain a strong focus on [Safe & Together]. ”

“ The lead role is currently taken by a very busy senior manager; funds for a **dedicated post would make a considerable difference both to the detail and the speed of the roll out**. ”

“ The person leading is doing this in addition to a substantive post - unfortunately this does not always take priority and has led to long gaps in the Strategic implementation group meeting. Much of the service improvement and training has continued with plans in place however audit work etc has not been completed. ”

## National delivery model & coordination

Local areas and partnerships highlighted the importance of a coordinated approach to continued roll-out of the Safe & Together Model, ensuring a consistent response for families experiencing domestic abuse across Scotland and maximising the resources available. Local

areas and partnerships noted that a national delivery model would have the potential to simplify the current local resource requirements for training coordination and delivery.

Local areas and partnerships recognised the context of limited resources for public services, and emphasised the potential for a national delivery model to use current resources more effectively and creatively to improve outcomes across systems, services and workforces.

## Policy integration and multi-agency, whole systems approach

Throughout our engagements with the 12 DES-funded local authorities and partnerships, the need for an integrated approach across teams, services and policy areas was highlighted consistently.

Several of the local areas and partnerships funded through the DES fund also emphasised the importance of a multi-agency roll-out of Safe & Together, and the importance of this being integrated into practice not just within social work, but wider to support the creation of domestic abuse-informed systems. In engagements with both individual social workers and multi-agency practitioners the shared language provided by Safe and Together was highlighted as supporting better joined up working and collaboration across agencies. Stakeholders noted the importance of closed multi-agency working across the system, including with Police, NHS, Education and the Judiciary.

“ Where specific local challenges exist between services and bodies such as SCRA [Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration], it is particularly challenging to introduce the model as it requires self-reflection and an acknowledgement that change is needed. A national approach [...] is required to address these very structural challenges and create consistency for children across Scotland. [However], given the natural demographic and service structure differences [...] I would highlight caution in too prescriptive a national approach. Ultimately, there is a need for a national approach to influence change and introduce the model to national bodies, however, there will need to be elements of local space for action. ”



“ Processes and documentation for **child protection need to be domestic abuse informed** and the VAW sector will have limited influence over this. If you read child protection or adult protection learning reviews where domestic abuse is a feature the domestic abuse is skimmed over. It doesn't detail the perpetrator's pattern of coercive control and how this is impacting family functioning or the harm that it is causing. The **Care Inspectorate need to be more critical of these reports, but I don't believe they will be until the organisation itself becomes domestic abuse informed.** ”

“ We need to identify a way of Police Scotland to incorporate Safe and Together into their basic training, support them to recognise coercive control and help them to understand the evidence they need to get the conviction over the line. ”

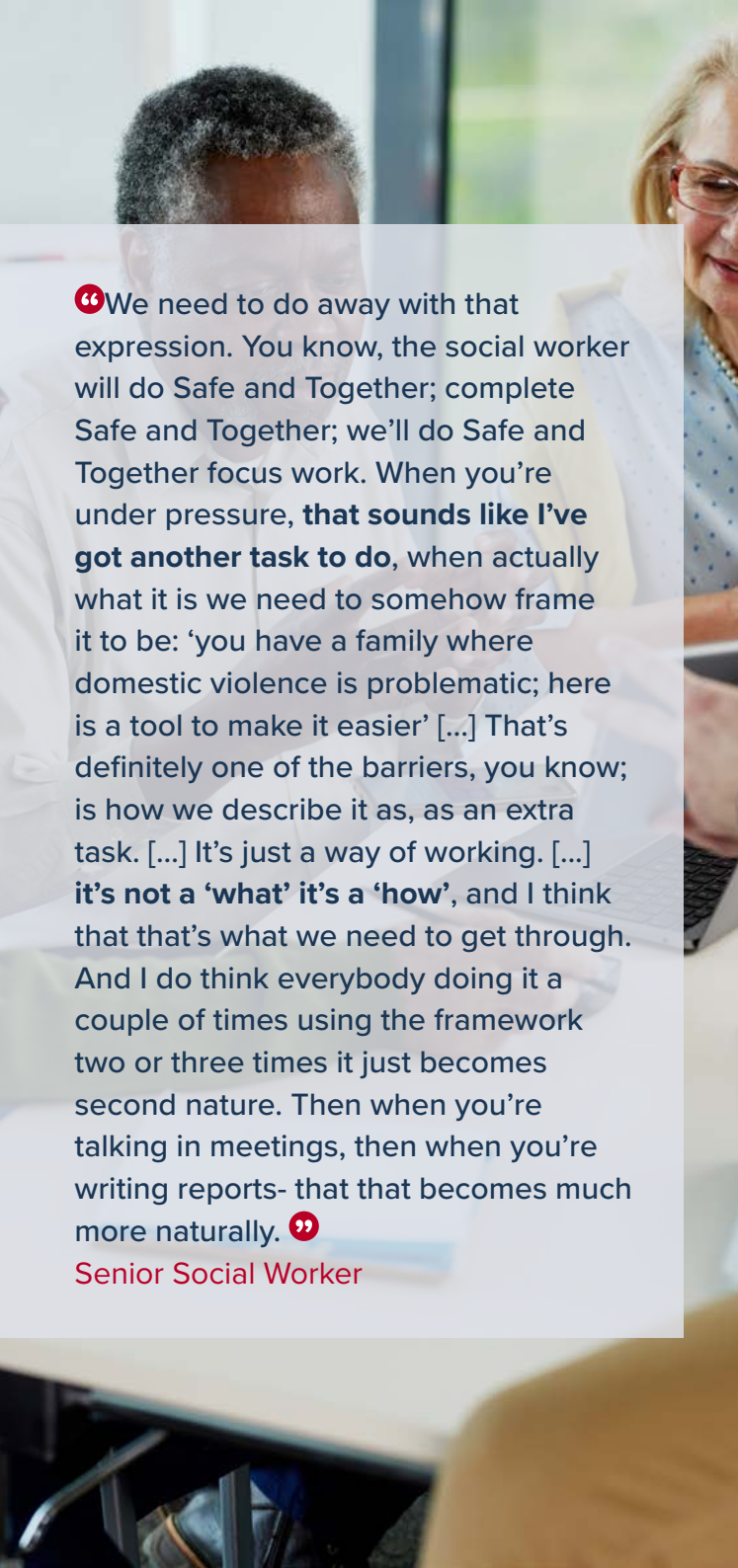
“ We actually work with domestic abuse every day, so it's our bread and butter, so we come across a lot of agencies. I would say for us it depends on the worker and their training, how they deal with a case. And I think **you can tell the difference of the ones who have been trained in Safe & Together compared to the ones who haven't**, because we're still finding, we're getting reports and referrals that are quite negative towards mum and the perpetrator is not visible at all in any of these things. So I think it does depend on who the worker is and where they're coming from. ”

Domestic Abuse Service Manager

“ Positively also, because we're all coming from different backgrounds and we are all multi agency working, **it is very heartening to see everyone you know more collaborative working, shared language, with a focus on partnering with the non-offending parent**, and also you know the training does give **an opportunity to positively challenge negative language** around the non-offending parent with colleagues or other agencies that that haven't you know they're not safe and together trained, or, they've done it, but it's not getting put into practice. ”

Health Visitor





“We need to do away with that expression. You know, the social worker will do Safe and Together; complete Safe and Together; we’ll do Safe and Together focus work. When you’re under pressure, **that sounds like I’ve got another task to do**, when actually what it is we need to somehow frame it to be: ‘you have a family where domestic violence is problematic; here is a tool to make it easier’ [...] That’s definitely one of the barriers, you know; is how we describe it as, as an extra task. [...] It’s just a way of working. [...] **it’s not a ‘what’ it’s a ‘how’**, and I think that that’s what we need to get through. And I do think everybody doing it a couple of times using the framework two or three times it just becomes second nature. Then when you’re talking in meetings, then when you’re writing reports- that that becomes much more naturally.”

Senior Social Worker

The engagement with local practitioners also highlighted a sometimes-perceived tension between the Safe and Together model and the ‘rigidness’ of Child Protection policies and frameworks and a misconception of the Safe and Together model as something additional by some social workers, rather than as something supporting best practice and decision making when working with families experiencing domestic abuse. Supporting successful continued roll-out and commitment of the Safe & Together model should take this potential tension into account, and consider how the model is framed, both to practitioners and policy makers, not as something additional but as something that will support us to achieve the ultimate ambition of supporting the best possible outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse.

## National leadership commitment

Several stakeholders, including practitioners, also highlighted the importance of local and national leadership and commitment to the Safe & Together Model. As highlighted in the Year Two Learning Report, leadership support from both strategic and operational leaders is vital to support long-term culture and systems change. This was echoed again by local areas and partnerships, who welcome the commitment in the Equally Safe Delivery plan to exploring a Scottish Safe & Together delivery model, but highlighted the need for this to be supported long-term by visible leadership commitment to be successful.

“Continued sustainable funding to implement and embed Safe and Together is required for local authorities and workforces to continue to be domestic abuse-informed. **Commitment from the Scottish Government for this to [be] delivered in all areas of Scotland is needed for there to be a consistent approach across the country.**”

“I think if everyone was trained in it, and everyone maybe had the same kind of outlook on it then it would certainly be easier to implement as a team or as a Council.”  
Social Worker

“If the Seniors and Managers were trained [...] in Safe & Together and were trained in this way of thinking, [...] or given the opportunity of that way of thinking, it would make it so much easier for ourselves to look at domestic abuse cases. **So that we’re all singing from the same hymn sheet.**”  
Social Worker



# Summary and next steps

The investment through the Delivering Equally safe (DES) fund since October 2021 has allowed the 12 local authorities/partnerships to make significant progress towards embedding Safe & Together in their local areas. The implementation of the Safe & Together Model is contributing to the creation of domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces across Scotland and is having a positive impact for both professionals and families experiencing domestic abuse. Evidence and feedback from stakeholders across Scotland who have engaged with this programme of work, demonstrate strong evidence in achieving the short-term outcomes associated with the Safe & Together Model. Additionally, there is also evidence of progress against medium- and long-term outcomes beginning to emerge in some local authorities/ partnerships.

Critical work is taking place across Scotland to embed domestic abuse-informed systems that support professionals and deliver the best outcomes for families experiencing domestic abuse. However, we are now at important cross-roads to ensure the continued delivery of Safe &

Together and sustain the changes that are already taking place to create the systems and cultures required to support professionals to feel safe and supported to keep the child with the non-offending parent, partner with the survivor and hold perpetrators accountable.

Over the next 18 months, until summer 2026, work will continue to explore and test options for a Safe & Together Model for Scotland. It is crucial this work is informed by the knowledge and experience already developed across the 12 local authorities/partnerships, and beyond, to embed the Safe & Together model across their systems, services and workforces.

## APPENDIX A - Safe & Together Training and Workforce Development Offer

Local authorities/partnerships funded through the Delivering Equally Safe (DES) Fund to implement the Safe & Together Model are engaging with a number of training and workforce development opportunities offered by the Safe & Together Institute:



### Safe & Together Model Overview

This training provides participants with an introduction to, and overview of, the Safe & Together Model. The course provides participants with information about creating a domestic abuse-informed systems, the principles and components of the Safe & Together Model and information about the framework behind competency-building in child and family serving systems around domestic abuse.



### Safe & Together Model CORE Training

This training is designed to provide a skills-oriented foundation for domestic abuse-informed practice and create opportunities for professional behaviour change.

The course provides training focused on the following foundational practice areas: assessment, interviewing, documentation and case planning. CORE Training explores the importance of:

- Identifying the impact of domestic abuse on children and family functioning.
- Fact-based assessment of the perpetrators' behaviour patterns.
- Partnering with adult survivors of domestic abuse.
- Intervening with perpetrators.
- How domestic violence intersects with other issues like substance abuse and mental health.
- How intersectionalities like race, immigration status or a disability impact the perpetrator's pattern of behaviour and the vulnerability of the survivor and the children

Participants of the CORE Training will learn to use practice tools that can be implemented right away to improve assessment of risk, impact on children, survivor protective efforts and essential case decisions. Participants are encouraged to apply the concepts to their own current or past cases and explore how the Safe & Together Model could be implemented in their personal practice and in their agency or system.







### Safe & Together Supervisor and Manager Training

This Supervisor Training is designed to build upon prior training on Safe & Together Model CORE concepts and to provide a skills-oriented foundation to domestic abuse-informed supervisory practice. While the training is designed to increase knowledge, the goal is to change professional behaviour. Supervisors and managers learn key skills to help their workers apply a perpetrator pattern-based approach to casework. The training is organised into three critical supervisory skills:

- Assessing and supporting the quality of their workers' practice
- Decision making and worker guidance
- Managing worker safety



### Trainer Certification Programme

This comprehensive program offers support, direction, mentoring, discovery, and a deep understanding of the Safe & Together Model. Partner Agencies in the programme train their own staff to become Certified Trainers. The agencies have an ongoing relationship with the Safe & Together Institute to implement the Model and embed and sustain long term systems change.



### Safe & Together Model e-learning modules

Safe & Together foundational self-paced e-learning includes training and live video discussion sessions on the application of specific Safe & Together Model concepts and skills and is focused on equipping learners for more domestic abuse-informed practice.



### Web Based Perpetrator Pattern Mapping Tool

The web-based Perpetrator Pattern Mapping Tool is a virtual practice tool for improving assessment, intervention, and outcomes through a perpetrator pattern-based approach. The tool allows practitioners to apply the Model's critical concepts and principles to their current case load in real-time.



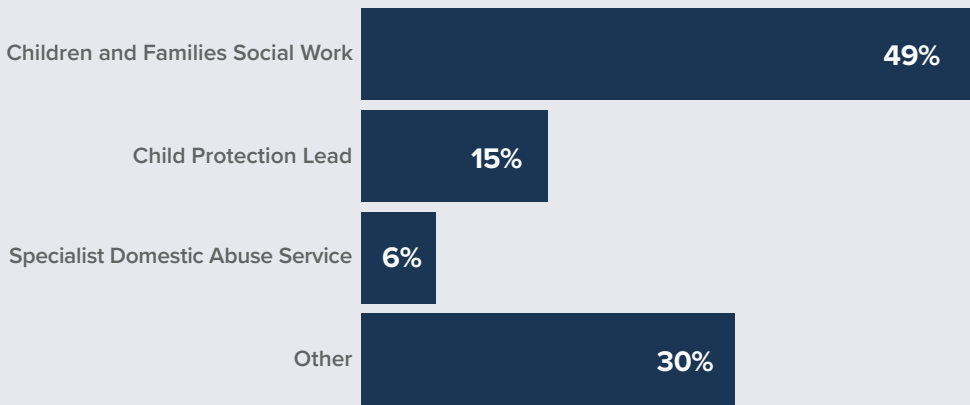
### Resources to deepen practice and learning

The Safe & Together Institute provides resources and events at no cost which deepen the development of domestic abuse informed practice and support localisation of the concepts to Scotland. These include toolkits to engage with perpetrators, family and friends; webinar series on in-depth topics related to the Model, implementation forums, white papers, blogs and podcasts.

# Appendix B – Safe & Together CORE Training Outcomes and Feedback

24 CORE Training sessions were delivered across the 12 DES-funded areas in Scotland from October 2023 to September 2024 to upskill professionals in the Safe & Together Model. Participants were asked to complete a pre-test prior to the training and a post-test after the training to measure impact. A total of 445 participants completed a pre-test and 165 participants completed a post-test. A summary of evaluation results from these trainings are highlighted below.

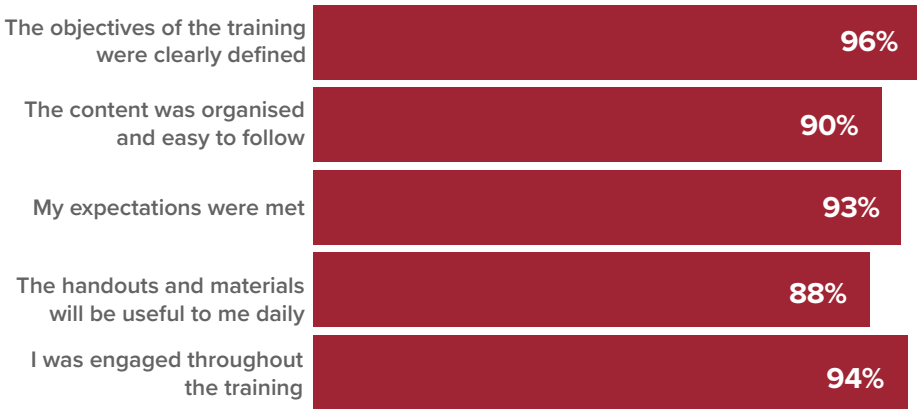
## Who attended the training?



CORE Training participants were from a variety of different sectors. Of the 17% of professionals from ‘Other’ sectors shown in the chart above, these included professionals from: Mental health services, Addiction services, Caledonian and/or Criminal Justice services, and the Police.

## Satisfaction with training

Percentage of professionals who attended Safe & Together CORE training who noted they were ‘very much’ or ‘completely’ satisfied with the following aspects of the course.



## Pre- and post-test scores – Safe & Together CORE Training

Professionals across Scotland who attended Safe & Together CORE training were asked about their levels of knowledge and confidence in working in a domestic abuse-informed way before and after training. The following results show the change in their knowledge and confidence before and after training.

**Pre-test Score**

**77%**

**Post-test Score**

**87%**

### Knowledge of Each Skill

Skill	Pre-training Score	Post-training Score	Score Change
Working with domestic violence perpetrators	2.1	3.4	<b>+1.3</b>
Working with adult domestic violence survivors	2.6	3.7	<b>+1.1</b>
Working with child domestic violence survivors	2.2	3.4	<b>+1.2</b>
Domestic violence informed assessment	2.0	3.6	<b>+1.6</b>
Domestic violence informed engagement and interviewing	1.8	3.5	<b>+1.7</b>
Domestic violence informed documentation	1.9	3.7	<b>+1.8</b>
Domestic violence informed interventions and case planning	1.8	3.6	<b>+1.8</b>



1. No knowledge



2. A little knowledge



3. Some knowledge



4. Very much knowledgeable



5. Complete knowledge

### Confidence in Applying Each Skill

Skill	Pre-training Score	Post-training Score	Score Change
Describing aspects of the Safe & Together Model and domestic violence informed practice	1.6	3.6	<b>+2.0</b>
Working with families where there are domestic violence issues	2.6	3.8	<b>+1.2</b>
Explaining why domestic violence perpetration is a parenting choice	2.1	3.8	<b>+1.8</b>
Explaining the intersection of domestic violence and other issues, such as substance abuse	2.3	3.8	<b>+1.5</b>
Describing the impact of perpetrator's behaviours on child and family functioning	2.6	4.0	<b>+1.4</b>



1. Not at all confident



2. A little confident



3. Somewhat confident



4. Very much confident



5. Completely confident

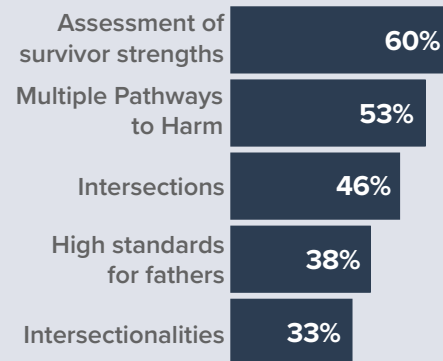


## Follow-up survey

Professionals who attended the Safe & Together CORE training across Scotland were followed up 3-6 months following the completion of the training and asked about changes they have made to their practice when working with families experiencing domestic abuse. Follow-up surveys were completed by 136 CORE participants, a summary of these results are outlined below.

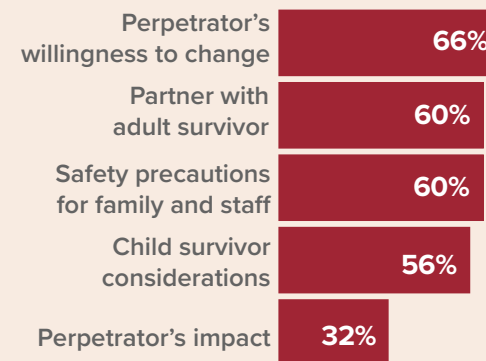
### Assessments

78% of participants made assessment changes.



### Engagements/interviews

89% of participants made interview changes.



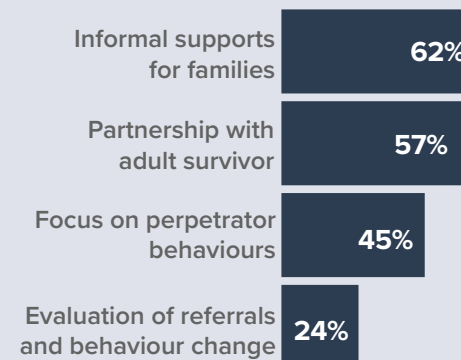
### Documentation

73% of participants made documentation changes.



### Interventions/case planning

86% of participants made case planning changes.



## Feedback from professionals who undertook CORE Training

Below is a sample of feedback from professionals across Scotland who undertook the Safe & Together training supported through the Delivering Equally Safe (DES) Fund:

“ [The training] was an eye opener & useful for my practice and future work with domestic abuse survivors and perpetrators. ”

“ This was a thought changing, practise enhancing training course which I am very grateful for as it will definitely improve my work on a whole.. ”

“ There has been improved sharing of information with children and families social work which I believe has stemmed from the roll out of this training. ”

“ The training was validating to how all professionals should be approaching families when we are working alongside them. This will also allow confidence to challenge other professionals where they are not working within the Safe & Together model. ”

“ Our team work to this model everyday. I have used the Safe & Together Model through consistently identifying the impact the perpetrator's behaviours have had on children and young people I work with, and therefore implemented ways in which I can support them. ”

“ I think using this way working with the first family and seeing how much better it is has given me a passion to continue to work this way. Also having more colleagues trained has made it a talking point in our office and we will discuss how to use the model when we are allocated a case that there has been domestic abuse. ”



# Notes

- 1 These include: Aberdeen City Council; Argyll and Bute Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Partnership; Dumfries and Galloway Council; East Ayrshire HSCP (Pan-Ayrshire partnership); East Lothian Council; Midlothian Council; Barnardo's Equally Safe Partnership with Aberlour and Falkirk Council; Highland Child Protection Committee and Highland Violence Against Women Partnership; Moray Council & Women's Aid Partnership; North Lanarkshire Council; Perth and Kinross Council; and South Lanarkshire Council
- 2 This survey largely repeated the questions from previous year's survey and report, allowing for direct comparison of progress made since the publication of the [Year Two Learning Report](#)
- 3 The most recent year for which data is available at the time of writing this report
- 4 The 2018/2019 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey suggested that Police came to know about just under one-sixth (16%) of incidents of partner abuse
- 5 This figure relates to crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 only and do not include all crimes relating to domestic abuse in Scotland during this period
- 6 [Homicide in Scotland 2023/24 statistics](#)
- 7 Equally Safe (2014)
- 8 More information about the specific training modules and other supports offered by the Safe & Together Institute, are included as an appendix to this report.
- 9 64% of local areas/partnerships had identified signs/evidence of improved cross-system collaboration in the Year Two report
- 10 64% of local areas/partnerships had identified signs/evidence that local systems were more likely to support actions to keep the child safe and together with the non-offending parent in the Year Two report
- 11 The majority of respondents (73%) responded 'Don't know' to this question
- 12 No comparison figure available from Year 2 Report
- 13 No comparison figure available from Year 2 Report
- 14 Action 8.4: We will explore and implement options for a Safe & Together Model for Scotland. Scottish Government, Safe & Together Institute, Social Work Scotland, Improvement Service and COSLA, 2024-2026.



