



Implementing Safe & Together – Creating Domestic Abuse Informed Systems, Services and Workforces

Year Two Learning Report - 2022/2023

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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 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 workforces, systems and service in place across Scotland support the best possible outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse.

This report marks the **second in a series** that the Improvement Service will produce over the life of the DES Fund to highlight 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.

Given the long-term nature of culture and system change programmes, the year two report primarily focuses on the activities that have taken place over the first 24 months of the DES Fund and the emerging learning from this work.




Findings within this report have been drawn from:

- Information shared via a survey and focus groups from the 12 organisations/ partnerships that have received funding through the DES Fund to embed the Safe & Together Model.
- Learning generated from the National Safe & Together Implementation Forum, which provides regular opportunities for professionals across UK working to implement the Safe & Together Model to come together to share information, learning and resources.
- Evaluation feedback from professionals who have undertaken Safe & Together training, and learning reports produced by local leads on the impact that the Model is having for systems, services and workforces.

It is intended that the final report in this series (due to be published in Autumn 2024) will build on this learning, with a particular focus on understanding the impact that implementing the Safe & Together Model in Scotland is having on creating domestic abuse-informed workforces, services and systems.





“I’ve had staff getting in touch with me about cases. Asking how they can approach them in a Safe & Together way and how they can be supportive of the survivor. I do think these sort of conversations would never have happened before. And I hear about changes in language in IRD reports with people being less mother blaming. And so yes, I do feel we’re on the road to a bit of a culture change.”

Overview of key findings

- The Scottish Government has provided funding to 12 local authorities/ partnerships across Scotland to support them to implement the Safe & Together Model. These include: Aberdeen City Council; Argyll and Bute Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Partnership; Dumfries and Galloway Council; East Ayrshire HSCP; 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 Women’s Aid Partnership; North Lanarkshire Council; Perth and Kinross Council; and South Lanarkshire Council.
- This funding is supporting local areas to create domestic abuse-informed workforces, systems and services by providing resources that allow organisations to roll out Safe & Together training and ongoing support required for workforce development and system change.
- There has been substantial progress made in delivering workforce development programmes across local authorities/ partnerships funded through the DES Fund. In addition to delivering training, local areas have developed structures and mechanisms aimed at supporting partnership working at a leadership level, facilitating knowledge exchange and providing ongoing support for practitioners to embed learning into practice.
- There is emerging evidence of the positive impact that the activities being undertaken locally to embed the Safe & Together Model are having on creating domestic abuse-informed workforces, systems and services. For example, of the 12 local authorities/ partnerships funded through the DES Fund to embed the Safe & Together Model:
 - **100%** report that practitioners who have undertaken Safe & Together training and other workforce development activities have **gained an increased understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and families**;
 - **67%** report practitioners are **more skilled in partnering with the adult survivor and identifying their strengths and protective efforts**; and
 - **64%** report that local systems and services are **more likely to support actions that keep the child safe and together with the non-offending parent**.

- Local authorities/ partnerships working to embed the Safe & Together Model have identified a number of key enablers that have helped to support their work to create domestic abuse informed workforces, systems and services. These include support from strategic leaders, a joined-up approach across key agendas/ priorities/ services and continued implementation support for practitioners.
- Local authorities/partnerships have also identified a number of barriers that have created challenges to creating domestic abuse informed workforces, systems and services. These include competing demands placed on both practitioners and managers/ leaders, challenges around organisational and individual capacity to engage with training and implementation, short-term funding timescales and the impact of costs and copyright of Safe & Together materials on sustainable implementation.
- Looking ahead, local authorities/ partners have highlighted the following actions that are needed to help fully embed culture and system change programmes like the Safe & Together Model, in order to it achieves its ambition of creating systems, services and workforces that deliver the best possible outcomes for children and families

experiencing domestic abuse in Scotland. These include adopting a long-term, cross-policy approach to investing in the Safe & Together Model to ensure best use is made of available resources and the necessary leadership is in place to drive forward progress; strengthening links between this work and other systems change programmes such as the Promise and the National Trauma Transformation Programme; and ensuring workforces are supported to implement change at a time when they are facing unprecedented pressures.

“We have received contact from parents to comment on the change in practice and how it has changed things for them for the better. One mother reported that this is the first time her partner has been approached as a father, and had previously been entirely omitted from assessments even in respect of his abusive behaviour. However, the Social Worker tapped into his role as a father and what that meant in terms of his abuse, which has resulted in changes on his part that have never been experienced by the mother.”



Domestic abuse-informed workforces, services and systems

Both in Scotland and across the world, domestic abuse victims/ 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, research suggests there can still be a tendency for systems and services to focus on domestic abuse victims/ 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 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, it is hoped that this shift will help to 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 for women and children in Scotland

Domestic abuse can be defined as a pattern of persistent and controlling behaviour by a partner or ex-partner which causes physical, sexual, financial and emotional harm to adult and child victims/ survivors.

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 64,807 incidents of **domestic abuse recorded by Police Scotland in 2021/22**, of which 81% involved a female victim and a male perpetrator. Research repeatedly shows that the majority of domestic abuse continues to go unreported 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 2022/23** show 1,781 crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act, a 1% increase compared to 2021-22. Of those crimes, 95% involved a female victim. The **most recently available national homicide statistics for Scotland**

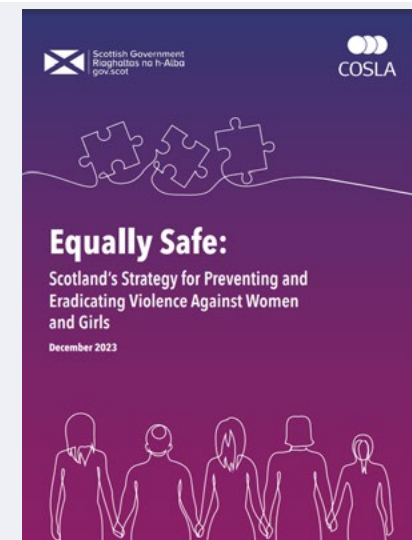
reported that, in 2022/23, almost half (46% or 6 victims) of the 13 female victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner.

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 2021/22** and continues to be one of the primary reasons why children are taken into care. **Recent research published by Public Health Scotland** highlights that of the people who died of drug deaths in 2017/2018, 15% and 11% respectively (**82% women**), had experienced domestic abuse as a child or adult. **A recent study by the Agenda Alliance** highlights that women who have experienced domestic abuse as an adult or child are three times more likely to have made a suicide attempt in the last year than women who have had not had this experience.

Understanding the impact of domestic abuse for professionals in Scotland

Domestic abuse can be one of the most difficult and complicated issues for professionals working across public protection and other agencies. Professionals directly supporting women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse, or who work with perpetrators, face an increased risk of experiencing vicarious trauma. Moreover, there is no “them” and “us”—given the prevalence of domestic abuse, we know many practitioners will also be personally affected by domestic

abuse. **At a time where** 43% of social work professionals in Scotland are considering leaving social work based on their experiences during the pandemic and where 57% say their mental health has gotten worse, without high quality domestic abuse-informed policy, practice support and standards of collaboration, domestic abuse cases will continue to leave professionals disconnected from their values as practitioners and can impact their wellbeing.

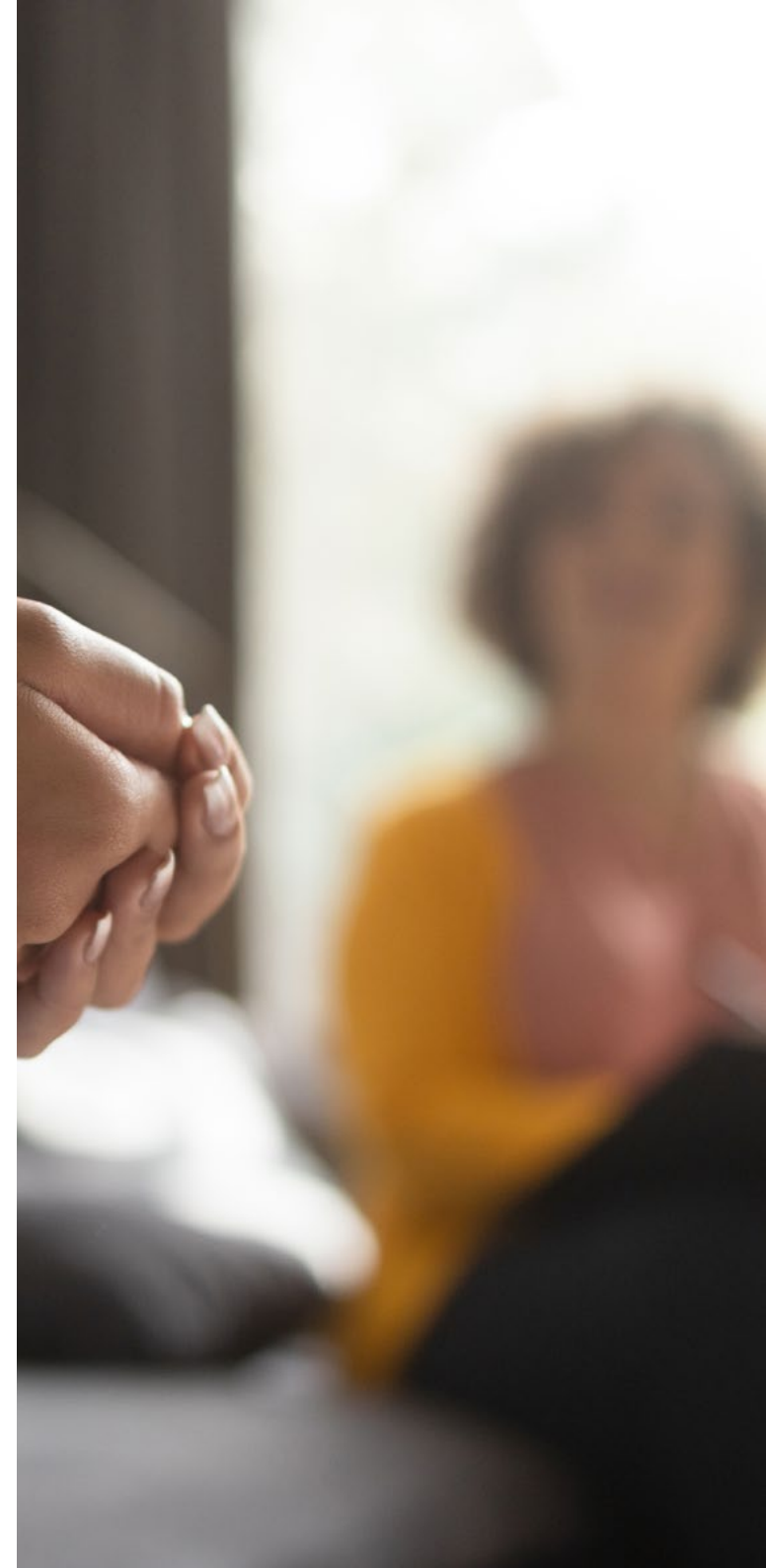


Understanding the impact of domestic abuse on Scotland's services and systems

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. 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 victim/ victims/ 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 victims/ 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.



Key legislative and strategic drivers

Given the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse on women, children and families in Scotland, creating domestic abuse-informed services, systems and workforces are vital if we are to meet our range of existing national strategic ambitions, deliver on our local priorities and fulfil our statutory duties to keep women, children and families safe and supported.

While not exhaustive, the diagram below provides an overview of the policy and legislative context for creating domestic abuse-informed services, systems and workforces.



The local and national ambition is to develop domestic abuse-informed services, systems and workforces that keep the child safe and together with the non-offending parent, partner with the non-offending parent as the default position and intervene with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child.

This ambition is framed within the context of

Promoting Human Rights

Tackling inequalities

Reducing the prevalence and impact of trauma and adversity

Public service reform

It is underpinned by our six public health priorities

A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities

A Scotland where we flourish in our early years

A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing

A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all

A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

It is reinforced by current and forthcoming legislation, including

Human Rights Act

UNCRC

Istanbul Convention

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

Supported by number of long term strategies and action plans to help tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for all, including:

Best start, bright futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan

National strategy for community justice

The Promise

Rights, respect and recovery – alcohol and drug treatment strategy

Mental health and wellbeing strategy

Ending homelessness together

Equally Safe

It is reinforced within a range of national policy and practice guidance including:

GIRFEC

National principles of holistic whole family support

Children's Services Planning Guidance

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) standards

National Guidance for Child Protection

Trauma-responsive social work services

Adult Support and Protection Code of Practice

The impact on outcomes will be measured in line with our National Performance Framework, in particular:

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

We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilience and safe

We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

How does the Safe & Together Model help to create domestic abuse-informed services, systems 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 in child and family serving systems become domestic abuse-informed.

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Continuously refined through years of experience of implementing the Model across the world, 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 to operate in a way that achieves the best possible outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse. It does this through promoting a model of culture and system-change that support practice which:

Keeps the child safe and together with the non-offending parent

Partners with the non-offending parent as the default position

Intervenes with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child

The following diagram outlines the inputs, activities and outcomes associated with the implementation of the Safe & Together Model in Scotland. More information about the specific training modules offered by the Safe & Together Institute, are included as an appendix to this report.



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 & Together: progress, barriers and enablers to creating domestic abuse informed systems, services and workforces

Throughout the second 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 workforces, systems and services.

Progress against short-term outcomes

Key findings from these consultation activities highlight that significant progress is being made against the short-term outcomes shown in the above logic model. Specifically, of the 12 local authorities/ partnerships working to embed the Safe & Together Model locally:

- **100%** have identified signs/ evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities being progressed locally have gained an **increased understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and families;**
- **67%** have identified signs/ evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities being progressed locally are **more skilled in partnering with the adult survivor and identifying their strengths and protective efforts;**
- **60%** 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;**
- **55%** 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;**
- **50%** 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;**
- **60%** 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;** and
- **82%** have identified signs/ evidence to suggest that practitioners who have engaged with Safe & Together workforce development activities are **more likely to adopt a shared approach to the families they work with across their organisation.**

It is important to note that where local authorities/ partnerships reported that they had not identified signs/ evidence of positive changes being achieved in relation to the above outcomes, many caveated that response by saying it was not that this change hasn't occurred but rather they do not currently have processes in place to measure whether it has or not. However, while the majority of organisations/ partnerships noted that they are still at a relatively early stage with putting in place robust processes to evidence the short-term outcomes being achieved in relation to this work, stakeholders highlighted evidence from a wide range of sources including post-training evaluations, feedback from practitioners and changes in attitudes and behaviours observed within organisations to demonstrate examples of impact.



“Our audit activity/evaluation to date has evidenced an increase in practitioners’ understanding of the impact of domestic abuse and risk to the non-offending parent and child(ren) resulting in assessments and planning being considered through a domestic abuse lens. There is evidence of a language change and practitioners partnering with the non-offending parent.”

“The people who have went through the CORE training years ago, we’re seeing that still infiltrate people’s practice. And when we’ve done audits of files, we’re definitely seeing there is a change from before the training”.

“There’s a change in language. And I think there’s a change in the default position. Even people who maybe don’t have as in depth understanding of the Model are seeing that the baseline is to partner with survivors. We’re seeing that when people do utilise the full mapping of a survivor’s experiences that has a really powerful impact on how people are able to evidence their concerns. And we’ve seen that be powerful in child protection case conferences or child protection planning meetings. We’ve seen that be powerful when that’s been presented to a Children’s Hearing.”

“It’s kind of having a knock on effect within teams. So even if the whole team hasn’t undertaken the training, they’re still seeing how their colleagues are now doing children’s plan as a result of the training and that’s really having a knock on effect on the rest of the team.”

“A positive we’ve seen is the confidence that staff now have to challenge other staff’s language and behaviour, during Looked After Children (LAC) Reviews and those kind of different meetings. It’s been really positive in terms of staff having the backup from this training to say ‘this is what the model looks like and this is how we should be approaching these types of cases.’ So as much as we’ve had staff in the past maybe trying to challenge some language, Safe & Together training has given them that backup to say ‘this is the Model that we’re taking forward from a local authority perspective.”

“I think now with that whole ‘failure to protect’ narrative, if somebody was talking about that as a CPM they wouldn’t get away with it. They would be challenged by somebody else going ‘No, wait a minute, with whom does the responsibility lie?’”

Progress against medium- and long-term outcomes

As part of the consultation activities, local authorities/ partnerships funded through the DES Fund were also asked to reflect on any evidence they had that the work being undertaken to embed the Safe & Together Model was contributing to the medium- and long-term outcomes shown in the above logic model. While the long-term nature of culture and system change programmes means many of these outcomes are difficult to evidence only 24 months into the programme of work, a number of positive outcomes were identified. Specifically, of the 12 local authorities/ partnerships working to embed the Safe & Together Model locally, as a result of the activities that have been undertaken to embed the Safe & Together Model:

- **55%** 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;**
- **37%** 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;**
- **64%** 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;

- **64%** have identified signs/ evidence to suggest that **cross system collaboration is improved through common frameworks and language between practitioners and within systems;** and
- **64%** 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.**

As with progress against the short-term outcomes, stakeholders highlighted evidence from a wide range of sources to demonstrate progress against the programme's medium- and long-term outcomes. Examples highlighted included:

"We have seen, in one team in particular, one practitioner who undertook CORE training really influence not only their own practice change but the rest of their teams. They have begun to implement not only the Safe & Together principles but the practice elements of the CORE Training into the forming of the Child's Plan when working with families where domestic abuse is present."

"The Safe & Together lead is able to input to all ongoing and new policy and procedural reviews and refreshes to ensure that they are domestic abuse informed."

"The last overview session that we ran had several elected members on it which was really helpful and we've had senior managers all across the council come in and I think it's raised the conversation, and the profile of domestic abuse... One of the things that I'm really conscious of when we're talking about Safe & Together is that we think about it in terms of service users. But what we learned through our staff going through the training was that we had lots of people who actually come to us and go 'this has been my experience of domestic abuse in my life.' As a council, we're the biggest employer locally so we need to have a better domestic abuse informed strategy for our staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse or perpetrating it. So I think that Safe & Together has raised the conversation. I think it's really helpful in terms of reminding us that the people that we work with aren't 'the other', they are 'us'. I think that's a really positive thing to have come out of this work."

"We have included Safe & Together within local Child Protection Procedures and within local assessment and planning guidance... Discussions are ongoing about including Domestic Abuse Informed Practice guidance within Social Work Information System."

“A few weeks ago, I was doing some training for Children’s Panel members. As I was explaining what the Safe & Together Model was, and what its aims and objectives were, several panel members said, ‘Oh, that makes sense’ and then they started to say that over the last few years they had seen changes in the reports that they were reading that were reflecting the core components of Safe & Together, which was brilliant. They’d never heard of Safe & Together before, they had no idea that colleagues in their local authority area had been investing in the Model but they were saying they had definitely seen the results of that.”

“We’ve had some really good pieces of work in terms of synergy with other organisations that we probably have had more to do with and developed much stronger links. Women’s Aid are running a training course for us and in turn, we put them all on the Safe & Together course. I think this wouldn’t have happened without Safe & Together. It’s given a good opportunity for joint work and seeing where we are collectively.”

“An example was a situation in which there was a revision of an assessment by a recently Safe & Together trained social worker in respect of a child living with a coercively controlling parent who had pushed the child’s mother to numerous suicide attempts. The assessment and plan changed with the child returning to his mother’s care. The mother emailed to say that she had been given her life and her future back”.

Key Activities Undertaken

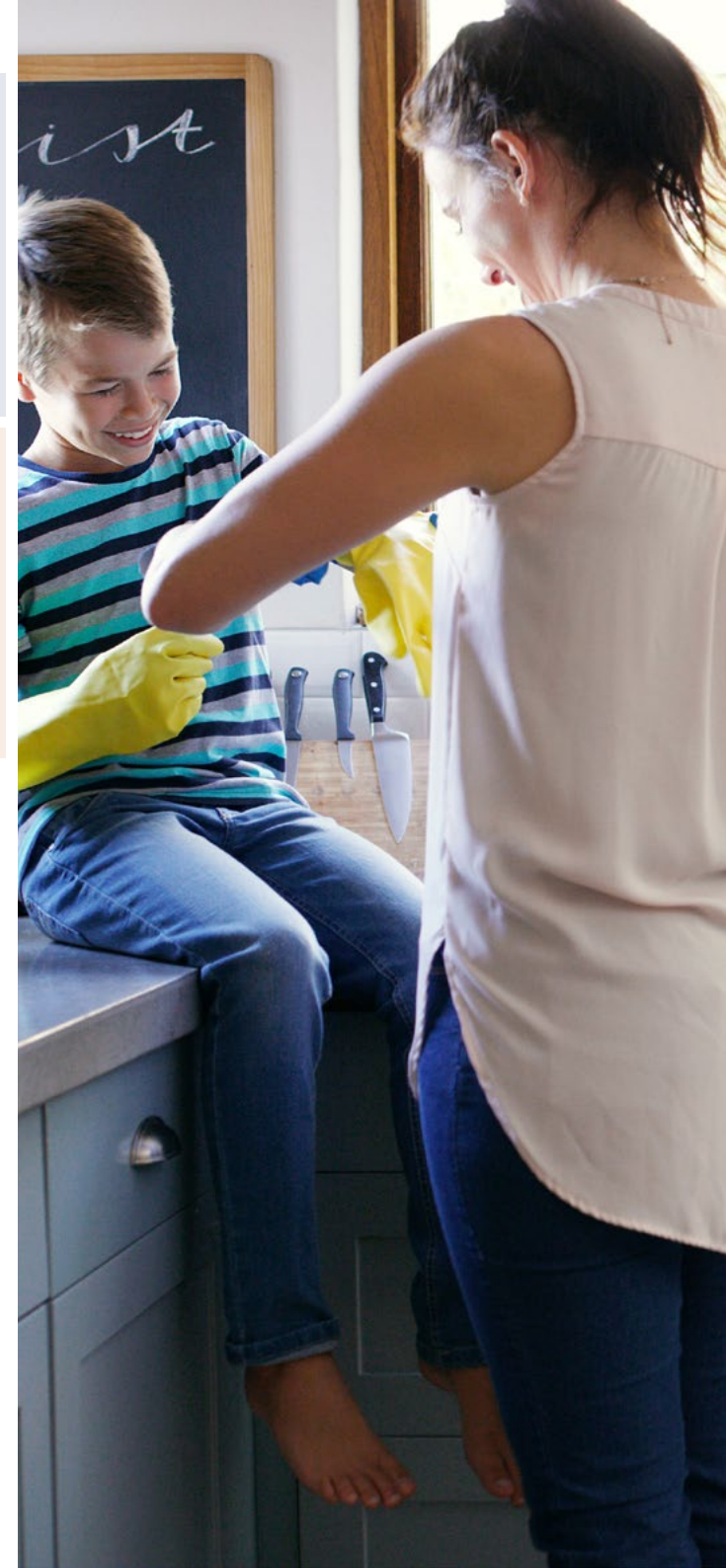
Consultation with the 12 local authorities/ partnerships funded through DES-funded to embed the Safe & Together Model has highlighted that they are all at different stages of creating domestic abuse-informed workforces, service and systems due to a number of factors including levels of funding received, prior knowledge and engagement with the Safe & Together Model, the capacity for the workforce to engage and the capacity for leadership to support strategic development. The purpose of this report is not to assess the best use of investment but rather to highlight the different ways the DES Fund is being used to implement the Safe & Together Model across Scotland, to

share emerging learning about the impact this work is having and to share information about any barriers and enablers reported by individuals and teams co-ordinating this programme of work locally.

Below are some of the ways that DES funding is being used to support key activities required to embed a domestic abuse-informed approach.

Building leadership capacity and developing strategic implementation support

The majority of local authorities/ partnerships who have received DES funding to embed the Safe & Together Model have set-up **multi-agency steering and project groups** to provide leadership, develop strategic and sustainable



implementation plans and to ensure links are established across different policy and practice areas. Others are using the increased capacity following funding to develop these structures and to develop the tools and resources required for them to function meaningfully and effectively. Where dedicated resource is in place, local authorities/ partnerships have reported that this has allowed progress to be made and has created opportunities to **review and strengthen strategic plans for the long-term sustainable implementation** of domestic abuse-informed workforces, services and systems.

Local authorities/ partnerships have also reported **engaging with leaders** to support increased buy-in and commitment. This includes organising Safe & Together Leadership Events to raise awareness of domestic abuse-informed practice, engaging with senior decision makers to **promote long-term sustainability** and integration of the model into practice, and working with senior managers to ensure an **ongoing commitment to champion a domestic-abuse informed approach and support their staff** to engage with training and implementation.

A number of local authorities/ partnerships reported facilitating regular **awareness raising activities**, such as briefings and roadshows, both around domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG. These have been developed for leaders, managers and practitioners.

Ongoing workforce training, implementation support and self-evaluation

Local authorities/ partnerships reported delivering briefings, CORE and Overview Safe & Together **training to a range of policy areas/ agencies**, including colleagues from across social work, Police, health, procurator fiscal, substance use, housing, educational psychology, children's reporters, children's panel members and specialist VAW third sector organisations.

Local authorities/ partnerships highlighted a range of implementation activity to support embedding a domestic abuse-informed approach into practice. These activities include **practitioner forums, case consultations/ coaching sessions** and a **programme of reflective practice learning** to support practitioners to apply the model and practice a change in language to influence culture change. Some local areas also noted they were looking to strengthen Safe & Together Champions' skills and confidence, to **build capacity** for case consultations.

A number of local areas reported completing **case file audits**, which has helped to develop understanding of current strengths and areas for improvement. Strengths often include use of language and partnering with the non-offending parent, while areas for improvement often include working with the perpetrator, understanding patterns of behaviour and understanding intersectionality. The case file audits often reveal significant differences in knowledge and

awareness of domestic abuse and coercive control across different agencies.

Improving organisation and system context

A number of local authorities/ partnerships noted they have **developed a range of tools and resources** to support continued implementation and improvement in policies, systems and organisational change, including **interim guidance** to support practitioners to apply the Safe & Together Model, the development of a **domestic abuse-informed practice policy and standard** that aligns with existing practice models (e.g., Signs of Safety, The Promise and GIRFEC) and a **quality assurance tool** to support services including education, children's health and justice.

One local area highlighted that work had been done to embed **Safe & Together principles within local Child Protection procedures**, within local assessment and planning and guidance and are aiming to include domestic abuse-informed practice guidance within their local social work information system. Another local area noted that updated guidance/ protocols/ audit tools within Children's Services and Justice Services now reflect Safe & Together practice and language.

Several local authorities/ partnerships reported collaborating with specialist services and survivor-led groups to ensure the **voice of lived experience of women and children affected by domestic abuse** informs training, practice learning sessions and wider implementation plans.

Barriers and Enablers Identified

Local authorities/ partnerships funded through the DES Fund to embed the Safe & Together Model identified a range of learning around what has supported and challenged progress with outcomes and activities, as outlined below.

Key enablers

Local authorities/ partnerships highlighted that **strong support from strategic leaders** from the outset has been vital, and that senior decision makers need to be actively engaged from the start. Local authorities/ partnerships also highlighted that it is important that senior leaders understand that this work is **about long-term culture change**, so requires a long-term commitment in terms of resource and capacity.

Local authorities/ partnerships noted that they have found key opportunities to demonstrate how

a **domestic-abuse informed approach supports existing local and national strategic priorities**, such as delivering the Promise, Equally Safe, and embedding a trauma-informed approach, as well as supporting existing practice models such as GIRFEC and those within child protection.

Local authorities/ partnerships emphasised that **positive collaboration** within and across services, strategic partnerships and agencies has been vital in helping to develop a shared understanding and language around domestic abuse, developing a joined-up approach to training and implementation and bringing professionals from across teams together to improve practice.

Trainers, practitioners and managers all identify the need for **reflective spaces and practice follow-up** post training. This helps with practice improvements, strengthening teams and developing wider communication skills. **Follow-**

up group sessions that focus on assessing and effecting change with the offending parent, and understanding how to engage positively with the non-offending parent, are key to ensuring practitioners strengthen their confidence in upholding the principles of Safe & Together. Having this time and space for reflective discussion supports professionals to deal with the complexities of domestic abuse.

Some local areas highlighted the value of **multi-agency individual case consultations**, which take a coaching rather than decision making focus. This has supported practitioners across agencies to work together to adopt the same language and response to domestic abuse and for bringing people together to improve practice. Wider resourcing is needed to expand their reach, however.

“It’s frontline managers that we have as members of the Steering Group but what we’ve done is we’ve targeted specific managers who have responsibility for domestic abuse within each of their services... It was a challenge at the beginning to get that set up - it took us a good six months - but now we have key managers from health, social work, early education, police and our women’s aid services all involved.”

“We’ve started to offer a session six weeks after training, just to catch up with those that have been on the course and to see how things have gone in practice. And just to give them an opportunity to ask questions and go back over anything. I think that otherwise people may come away from training, and then go straight back into their cases and feel a bit overwhelmed without support to fully put what they’ve learned and practice. I think workers really do need a lot of support after they’ve attended the training just to fully implement it into practice as domestic abuse cases can be really complex.”



Key barriers

A number of local authorities/ partnerships noted the need for initial awareness raising activities and **strengthening managers' and leaders' knowledge of domestic abuse and coercive control** and the key principles of a domestic abuse-informed approach. Local areas also highlighted that managers and leaders often face competing demands for their time and resource, meaning they may not be able to engage as fully as would be helpful.

The majority of local authorities/ partnerships emphasised the current post-COVID **challenges around organisational and individual capacity** and the impact this has had staff being released to access training and implementation support. Many highlighted the **negative impact of reduced staffing levels and increased workloads**. Some respondents highlighted the additional challenges

of competing pressures on staff to undertake training in other practice approaches, and the majority of local authorities/ partnerships said that competing local and national priorities/ agendas was impacting progress with embedding a domestic abuse-informed approach.

The majority of local authorities/ partnerships highlighted that **short-term funding timescales** do not mirror the long-term culture change needed to properly embed domestic abuse-informed services, systems and workforces. Some respondents also highlighted that the geography/ demographics of the local authority area in which the Model is being implemented can also bring its own specific set of challenges. For example, challenges with implementing the Model across a large and rural local may require additional time and capacity to engage all relevant workforces.

Some local authority areas/ partnerships also highlighted the Safe & together business model as a barrier in the Scottish context and suggested a different delivery model could be considered by the Institute and the Scottish Government. While there was strong support for the vision to create domestic abuse informed systems, services and workforces, areas highlighted that the current copyright and license fee structure seems at odds with the scale and ambition of this vision and creates significant barriers to embedding the Safe & Together Model in local policy and practice.

“We started [training] with children and families, workers and managers. But people struggled to find the time to do the training, given all the other demands, staff shortages. All of that which are only getting worse.”

“We’ve been trying to create a Domestic Abuse policy, including Safe & Together principles, but the difficulty is so much of the materials and tools are copyrighted. And it’s very difficult to put those materials into a core training for people who haven’t done the training. But if you’re trying to bring about a cultural change, whereby Safe & Together is absolutely embedded, then we really need to be able to embed these tools across the board and give access to other people who haven’t done the CORE training.”

“I’m very conscious that whilst there’s a lot of good evidence around the impact Safe & Together has on practitioners, there is an almost complete absence of evidence around impact on children and families. I’ve managed to persuade senior management here that that’s something that we need to be focussing on and I’m working to develop a comprehensive evaluation process. But it comes back to capacity because, in order for us to do that, I’m going to have to go out to get frontline practitioners to do audits to on top of an already pressured day job.”



Looking ahead: What support is needed to create domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces

This year two learning report comes at a critical time as the Scottish Government and COSLA have recently published a refreshed version of *Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls*, and will also respond to the recommendations set out in the *Independent Review of Funding and Commissioning of Violence Against Women and Girls Services*.

In preparing this learning report, we were particularly mindful of the Independent Funding Review's key finding that Scotland is currently failing to meet the needs women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of Violence Against Women and Girls and that mainstream services play a crucial role in responding to victims/ survivors and need to be better supported to do so. Specifically, the Independent Funding Review sets out the following recommendations:

- Develop a whole system, intersectional, gendered, child rights response to VAWGCYP as a prerequisite to achieving the transformational shift required, including training for staff in mainstream services, delivered through a national training strategy. On the evidence gathered by the Review,

specific attention needs to be given to training on advocacy for sheriffs, and on disability, particularly learning disability.

- Safe & Together training should be mandatory for all staff working with children and families.
- Local investment in leadership and management to support a whole systems approach to VAWG.

The remainder of this report outlines a number of key messages that local organisations/ partnerships working to embed the Safe & Together Model have shared, that offer important learning both in terms of the support needed to embed Safe & Together moving forward, but also the infrastructure that needs to be put in place to meet the above recommendations outlined in the Independent Funding Review.

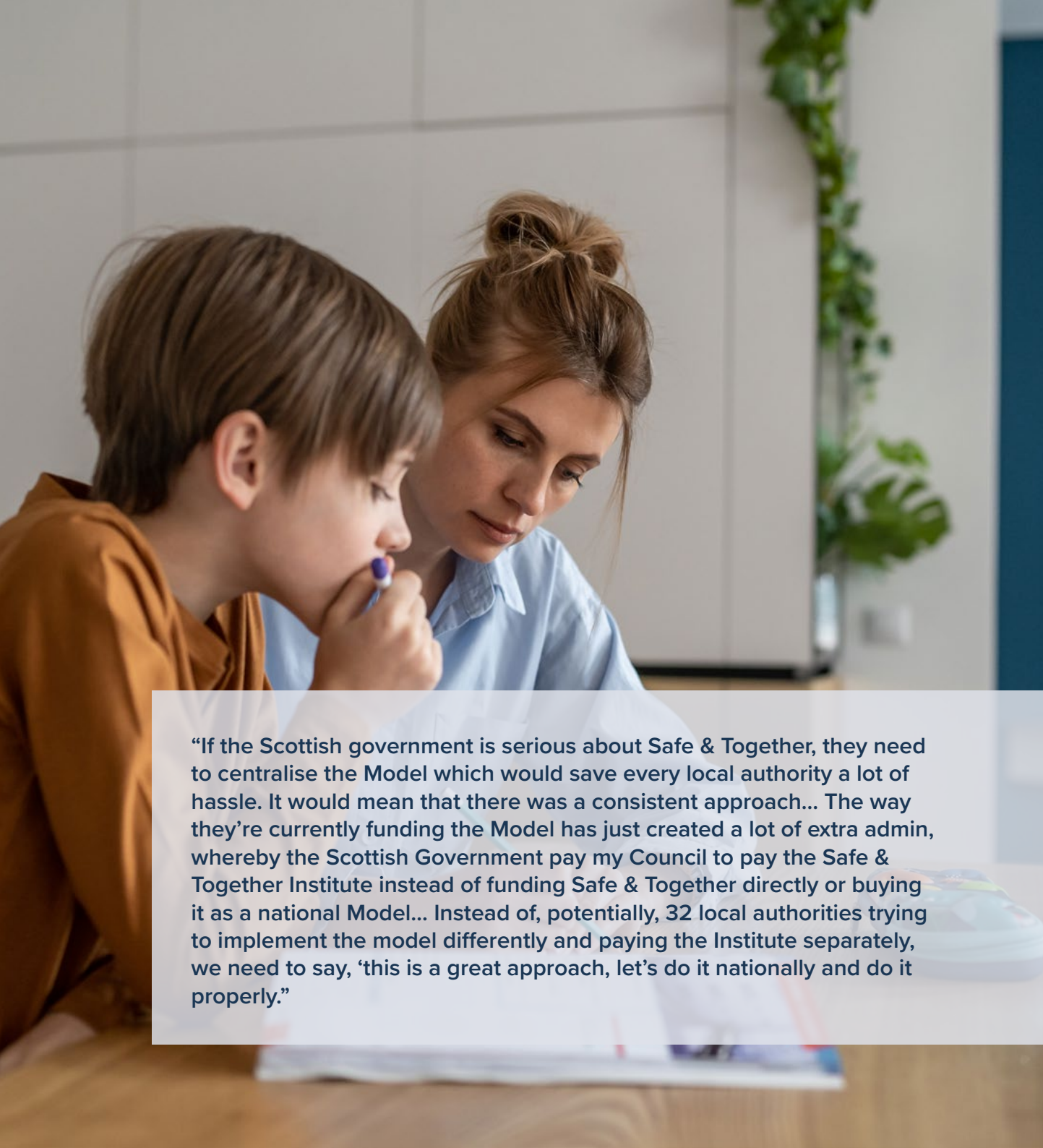
"We need Scottish Government to lead on Safe & Together if it is to be successful - without that leadership there is a real risk this work is just going to fizzle out. Before the DES Fund, I had been banging on about the need to roll-out Safe & Together for years but I couldn't get anyone in my local authority to take it forward because we just don't have the resources. We're starting to see real culture change locally as a result of Safe & Together and I'd love to be reassured that this is going to continue. But that requires a national commitment to this approach, rather than local authorities being left to scrape little bits of funding together to keep it going."

Making Best Use of Available Resources

While welcoming the Scottish Government's investment in the Safe & Together Model through the DES Fund, a number of local authorities/ partnerships noted frustrations that they have each been funded individually to undertake this work rather than an investment being made in embedding the Safe & Together Model at a national level.

It was noted that coordinating this work at a national level, in a similar way to other culture and system change programmes such as the **National Trauma Transformation Programme**, would have significantly reduced the pressures/ asks being placed on individual local authorities/ partnerships to progress this work themselves, reduce the duplication of effort and bureaucracy involved around stakeholder engagement, delivering training and monitoring and evaluating progress, and would support consistency. It was also noted that investing in the Model at a national level would have sent a strong message that creating domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces is a priority for the Scottish Government, which would have strengthened engagement and buy-in with key public sector and third sector partners at a local and national level.

A number of local authorities/ partnerships also noted that embedding the Safe & Together Model at a national level could lead to significant cost


A photograph of a woman with brown hair tied in a bun and a young boy with brown hair looking down at a book or document on a table. The woman is wearing a light blue shirt and the boy is wearing an orange shirt. They are both focused on the material in front of them. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a white wall and a green plant.

“If the Scottish government is serious about Safe & Together, they need to centralise the Model which would save every local authority a lot of hassle. It would mean that there was a consistent approach... The way they're currently funding the Model has just created a lot of extra admin, whereby the Scottish Government pay my Council to pay the Safe & Together Institute instead of funding Safe & Together directly or buying it as a national Model... Instead of, potentially, 32 local authorities trying to implement the model differently and paying the Institute separately, we need to say, 'this is a great approach, let's do it nationally and do it properly.'”

savings due to the economy of scale it would involve. Given the significant pressures that local government budgets are currently under, stakeholders note the importance of the Scottish Government and the Safe & Together Institute working together to agree a more cost-effective model for embedding Safe & Together moving forward so that all key workforces, systems and services across Scotland can benefit from the opportunities it provides.

A Long Term, Cross Policy Approach to Investing in Culture and System Change Programmes

While welcoming the Scottish Government's investment in the Safe & Together Model through the DES Fund, local authorities/ partnerships funded through DES noted significant concerns and frustrations about such an important programme of long-term system change being funded through short-term, competitive funding arrangements. Specifically, local authorities/ partnerships noted challenges they continue to face in securing buy-in from senior leaders across their own organisations and other key community planning partners. They highlighted challenges around gaining strategic commitment to a long-term programme of work to transform how their local systems, services and workforces respond to children and families experiencing domestic abuse within the context of a lack of certainty around whether resources to support this work will exist in 18 months' time.



"I don't think there is a proper appreciation at government level that Safe & Together is a whole system approach that requires significant cultural and organisational change across multiple agencies and multiple services. If we're serious about creating system change, then it does need some leadership from the centre."

"We have the organisations ready to commit, and it's not that they're not wanting to commit, but they're under huge amounts of pressure. This will take a lot longer than we thought it would to embed. And we won't stop pushing for it because it's so important, but it will take longer. And, for me, I think that needs to be reflected in the way this is being funded. System change is a long term thing."

"If we're serious about wanting to embed this way of working and have that cultural shift that we need around, working with perpetrator and keeping the survivor with the children, then why aren't we doing this at the level of social work students at university...? If we're actually serious about implementing this and funding this in the most effective way, let's capture people when we can. At the moment, we're focusing on children and families and criminal justice social work - which is absolutely where that training needs to be - but there are other areas of social work where victims/ survivors will be going, and potentially getting a really negative response from professionals. But if everybody has knowledge in Safe & Together, before they even start their career, then I think that can only be a positive."



A Bespoke Safe & Together in Scotland Model

Local authorities/ partnerships funded through the DES Fund highlighted that the Safe & Together Model provides a 'gold standard' model for developing systems, services and workforces that meet the needs of children and families experiencing domestic abuse. However, they noted frustrations that despite the level of funding that has been invested in the Model locally and nationally, these materials have not yet been tailored for a Scottish context. Local authorities/ partnerships noted that the American terminology included in some of the Safe & Together materials can create a barrier for Scottish audiences and risk them becoming disengaged. Several stakeholders noted the urgent need to ensure Safe & Together materials are adapted for a Scottish context and can more clearly highlight how progressing activities to create domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces

contributes to wider local and national drivers that stakeholders are working to, such as the implementation of GIRFEC, UNCRC, the Promise, National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland and the National Trauma Transformation Programme. It was noted that social work and other key professionals are currently operating in an incredibly challenging environment, where they risk being overwhelmed by different asks/ requirements across different policy frameworks and that having bespoke materials that allow professionals to recognise the Safe & Together Model as a tool to deliver these different drivers, rather than being seen as an additional 'ask' on professionals, is critical to professionals engaging with the Model.

"Given the amount of resources we are investing in the Safe & Together Model as a nation, we really need to update the materials to reflect Scotland's Child Protection legislation, our Human Rights legislation, GIRFEC, the Promise. We need to stick a kilt on everything, essentially."

"I've sat in on every training that we've done - and we've done about 12-13 programmes of Overview, CORE and Managers training now - simply to put the local spin on it. With the best will in the world, the trainers we've had have been from North America or from south of the border in the UK, and what's made the difference to getting people to participate is helping them gain an understanding of how the Model is going to fit with our priorities locally."

Prioritising Workforce Care, Support and Development

Local authorities/ partnerships funded through the DES Fund repeatedly stressed the challenges involved in trying to embed culture-change and system-change programmes such as the Safe & Together Model in the current environment. Specifically, stakeholders noted the significant pressures that the public sector workforce generally, and the social work profession specifically, are currently facing, with many local authorities experiencing real challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. It was noted that across Scotland, public sector workforces are feeling overwhelmed and are often experiencing severe burnout and vicarious trauma, making it incredibly challenging for them to fully engage with training and implementation and wider workforce development opportunities.

Despite these challenges, workforces are still hugely committed to creating systems and services that produce the best possible outcomes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse. However, the importance of taking a trauma-informed approach to embedding Safe & Together, that prioritises support and care for workforces from the start and sets realistic expectations in relation to progress, was stressed by all local authorities/ partnerships as helping to create the right conditions for this work.

“The public sector is dealing with severe burnout, that’s just the reality of where we are at the moment. Staff can hardly do their day jobs because of competing demands. Managers are encouraging staff to undertake the training but the things coming in the door left, right and centre mean staff have to respond to much more pressing things than completing training. It’s really hard to bring about system change and a new way of working when people are already beyond capacity.”

“I genuinely, genuinely believe this isn’t about buy-in. People really want Safe & Together and when they go on the course they really enjoy it and they want to implement it. But when you think about an active implementation science approach - a key part of that is staffing. You can’t get off the blocks, when you’re constantly trying to recruit and retain social workers... When you have the sort of recruitment crisis, as we all have across Scotland, everything has to go at the sharp end. We can’t make progress on Safe & Together, without making progress on recruitment and retention”.

“Our Chief Social Worker Officer is very keen for this to happen. They’ve given their commitment to this and recognise that Safe & Together is something we need, but having the time and the headspace to really lead and promote this with their staff is hard. It’s a very crowded headspace where there’s all these competing demands from the Scottish Government. The Promise, the Care Review, Trauma Training... They seem endless. Having the same people try to cope with all these competing demands, doesn’t make it easy. It’s quite challenging at times. But that’s not to say that people aren’t motivated and trying.”



Summary and next steps

In the 24 months since the Delivering Equally Safe (DES) Funding has been made available to local authorities/ partnerships working to embed the Safe & Together Model across Scotland, significant progress has been made in creating domestic abuse-informed systems, services and workforces. As part of this investment, all 12 local authorities/ partnerships who received funding have now rolled-out a programme of training and wider workforce development support to key professionals who come into contact with children and families experiencing domestic abuse to engage with victims/ survivors in a strengths-based, child-centred way. Critical work has also been undertaken by the 12 local authorities/ partnerships to begin to create the systems and cultures within organisations that are required to support professionals to feel safe and supported to keep the child with the non-offending parent, partner with the survivor and hold the perpetrator accountable.

Initial evaluations 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 early evidence of progress against medium and long term outcomes beginning to emerge in some local authorities/ partnerships.

Over the final 18 months of the DES Fund, the Improvement Service and the Safe & Together Institute will continue to work closely with the 12 local authorities/ partnerships to support them in their journey to embed the Safe & Together Model with a particular focus on helping them to measure the impact that this work is having on creating domestic abuse informed systems, services and workforces. A key part of the next phase of this work will be supporting these organisations to measure and demonstrate the impact that this investment is having for children and families experiencing domestic abuse in local communities across Scotland, and to identify opportunities to ensure this work is sustained in the longer term.

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

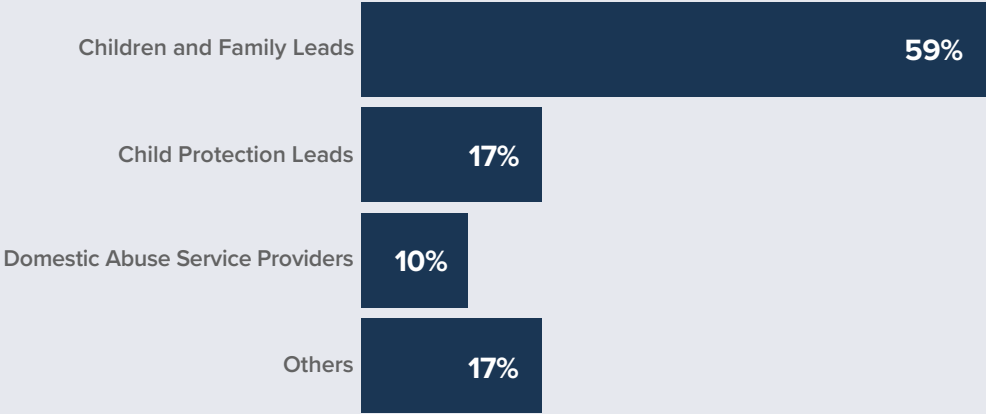
This comprehensive program offers support, direction, mentoring, discovery, and a deep understanding of the Safe & Together Model. Partner Agencies in the programme train their own staff to become Certified Trainers. The agencies have an ongoing relationship with the Safe & Together Institute to implement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



APPENDIX B - Safe & Together Core Training Results

25 CORE Training sessions were delivered across Scotland from 1 October 2022 – 30 June 2023 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 500 professionals across Scotland completed a pre-test and 398 professionals completed a post-test. A summary of evaluation results from these trainings are highlighted below.

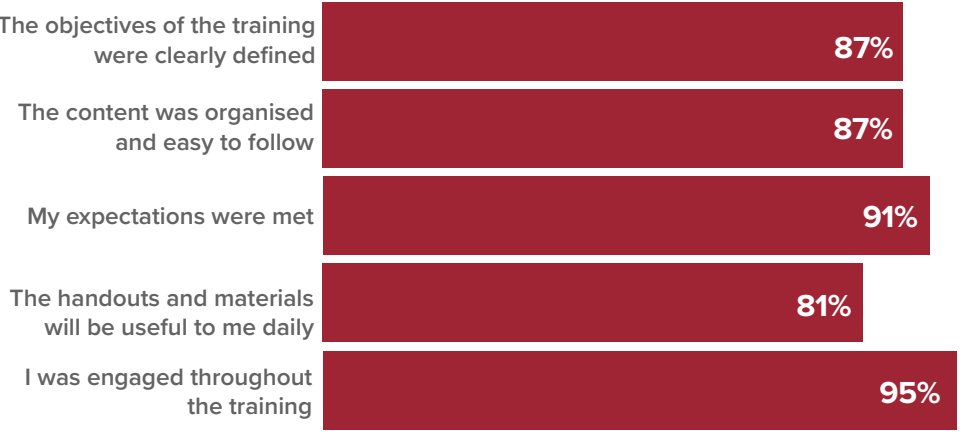
Who attended the training?



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: the Police, Mental Health Services, Criminal Justice and Perpetrator Intervention programs.

Satisfaction with the training

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



Test Scores Before & After Safe & Together CORE Training

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

Pre-test Score

75%

Post-test Score

91%

Knowledge of Each Skill

Skill	Pre-training Score	Post-training Score	Score Change
Working with domestic violence perpetrators	2.2	3.5	+1.3
Working with adult domestic violence survivors	2.6	3.7	+1.1
Working with child domestic violence survivors	2.4	3.6	+1.2
Domestic violence informed assessment	2.2	3.7	+1.5
Domestic violence informed engagement and interviewing	2.0	3.6	+1.6
Domestic violence informed documentation	2.0	3.7	+1.7
Domestic violence informed interventions and case planning	2.1	3.6	+1.6



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	1.7	3.7	+2.1
Working with families where there are domestic violence issues	2.6	3.9	+1.2
Explaining why domestic violence perpetration is a parenting choice	2.2	4.0	+1.9
Explaining the intersection of domestic violence and other issues, such as substance abuse	2.4	3.9	+1.6
Describing the impact of perpetrator's behaviours on child and family functioning	2.8	4.1	+1.3



1. Not at all confident



2. A little confident



3. Somewhat confident



4. Very much confident



5. Completely confident

Feedback from professionals who undertook Safe & Together 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 fantastic. I’ve really reflected on my own practice, recognising my use of mutualising language and failure to hold the perpetrator responsible. It is so refreshing to be supported to really highlight survivor strength and to partner with them. This training has really prompted my thought process with assessing and planning where domestic abuse is being perpetrated.”

“Excellent training. I really learned a lot that I will take forward into my practice, especially the shared language and domestic abuse informed documentation. Prior to training it thought I was practicing within the Safe & Together Model. However, after attending, I recognise that I wasn’t. Going forward I feel confident enough to support and challenge fellow practitioners adopting and practicing within Safe & Together.”

“Although I have attempted to make contact with perpetrators in the past, this has not been a priority and this training has highlighted that perpetrators should be made accountable and the different ways I can go about engaging with the perpetrators and having the confidence to ask the right questions. I also learned so much about language and naming what happened, instead of simply writing there was a “domestic incident”.

“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 & Together language in my call regarding his parenting, and felt more confident.”

Useful resources

National policies and strategies as key drivers for embedding domestic abuse-informed workforces, services and systems

For a full list of national and international policies and strategies that domestic abuse-informed workforces, services and systems contribute to please refer to pages 33-38 of the **assessment and evaluation toolkit**.

The Safe & Together Model

Model Overview | Safe & Together Institute

Safe & Together in Scotland

Safe & Together Approach | Iriss

Safe & Together Scoping Report | Social Work Scotland

Other resources

Children, young people and domestic abuse: impact, support and recovery | Improvement Service

Tackling Inequalities, Trauma and Adversity across the Lifespan: Mapping Cross-Cutting Agendas | Improvement Service

Companion Document: The Safe & Together Model and Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes | Safe & Together Institute

Companion Document: Domestic abuse and trauma informed practice | Improvement Service

Families Affected by Drug and Alcohol Use in Scotland: A Framework for Holistic Whole Family Approaches and Family Inclusive Practice | Scottish Government

Implementing Safe & Together in Scotland: Creating Domestic Abuse-Informed Workforces, Services and Systems - Year One Learning Report



