

CASE STUDY

Trauma Awareness Week



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Overview

From the 15th to the 19th of September 2025, Midlothian Council celebrated Trauma Awareness Week, a series of community events to raise awareness of trauma-informed practice. This aimed to start the local conversation about what is happening nationally, what is being done locally, showcase examples of good practice, and act as a platform for community partners to present how they are implementing trauma-informed practice.

Midlothian Council committed to raising awareness of and supporting trauma-informed practice as part of their 2025 strategic plan. The main aim of the week was to raise awareness of what their local authority and community partners are doing to embed trauma-informed practice, what trauma means and the impact of trauma, whilst incorporating the voices of lived experience safely and respectfully. The series of events intended to offer an experience for local partners to showcase what they are doing to take this work forward.

Outline of Project

The series of events ran for one week, Monday to Friday, with each day highlighting one of the five key principles of a trauma-informed approach: collaboration, safety, trust, empowerment, and choice.

For each day, one internal Midlothian Council service and one third or community sector organisation were represented, alongside the voice of lived experience. Approximately 150 people attended the sessions throughout the week, with 58 people attending the in-person event held on the Monday.

The in-person event on Monday was used to encourage leaders to sign the pledge of support, with elected members and council leaders present. Third sector and voluntary organisations were also represented, along with police and fire services. The event included guest speakers to share good practice and encourage knowledge exchange, including representatives from Midlothian Women's Aid who highlighted the importance of collaborating meaningfully with victim/survivors of domestic abuse.

The day also featured the Chief Executive of Play Therapy Base, where she presented a trauma-informed engagement tool that had been designed in collaboration with young people who use their service.

Another notable speaker included John Brown, who leads on the House Project in Midlothian. The project is dedicated to moving young people into independent living situations and employment, whilst striving towards positive outcomes for care experienced young people.

Physical event packs containing the leadership pledge of support were also featured, along with an action pledge of commitments attendees were going to take forward in their own services and organisations, offering an effective way to evaluate progress being made.

Results

The week of events resulted with a range of positive outcomes, all contributing to raising awareness of and embedding trauma-informed practice across the local authority. For example, there has been a significant rise in demand for trauma-informed training and the uptake of participants taking part. Staff development days have been held for housing associations across the local authority, in the residential children's team, and for Midlothian Sure Start.

Moreover, when giving feedback after each event, attendees noted a significant increase in confidence in implementing trauma-informed practice in their own roles.

Another key output from the week was a significant increase in leadership support, with pledges of commitment signed by council leaders and elected members.

Each event received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, including:

“Just wanted to say a huge congratulations on the Midlothian Trauma Awareness Week! I can't imagine how much organising and work that must have been involved! I was able to attend 3 of the webinars this week and really enjoyed them – I thought the range of speakers was fab and I loved [the TPTICs] presentation style!

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“I had asked if anyone from our TIP steering group could attend the Thursday session as I was busy and...she ended up attending all of the webinars as she enjoyed them so much and she thought the 1-hour format was perfect. She asked me to say thank you to you and the speakers.” – Trauma Lead officer from another local authority.

“It was a very validating experience for me today in positive ways, that are still landing with me. And I am allowing myself to embrace them. Thank you for all your hard work. You had a room full of people (people standing at the doors to listen). That is really brilliant! Enjoy this week, if you can, we are doing something powerful!” – Steering group representative with lived experience

The series of events also presented a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of the impact of embedding trauma-informed practices across workforces and services after the week concluded. Ciara Burke, Trauma Lead Officer for Midlothian, took part in the Taking Action podcast, a podcast dedicated to building healthy connections and helping others to overcome trauma. Ciara was invited on to the podcast to discuss Trauma Awareness Week, her work on implementing trauma-informed principles across Midlothian council, and showcase multiple examples of good practice.

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Learning

One action that worked well when facilitating the week of events was promoting the week well in advance. Actively promoting each event and giving attendees ample time to set aside the event in their diary allowed attendees, particularly council leaders and elected members, to join, which resulted with a large number of pledges of support from leadership. A key area of learning included the need to put more robust measures of evaluation in place throughout the week. Although a mentimeter poll was used to capture the views of attendees, more measures to follow up with participants would be a useful action to reinforce the importance of trauma-informed practice.

Next steps

The overwhelming success of the week has resulted with appetite for a trauma awareness week to be repeated in 2026. There will be a joint Trauma Awareness Week held in collaboration with Midlothian’s Public Health Team which will promote World Suicide Prevention day at the beginning of September this year.