**Brief 4: Children & Young People affected by Domestic Abuse**

1. **Introduction:** 
   1. Commissioning practice within Education & Children Services is aligned to Fife Council’s Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. The Framework is clear that any organisation in receipt of a recurring grant in excess of £10K must make a fresh application every three years. The current commissioning cycle is due to conclude in April 2024, at which point a new cycle shall begin.
   2. Commissioning priorities for 2024-27 have emerged from a high-level Strategic Needs Analysis (SNA), which reaffirms existing commitments to support families to remain safely living together through the provision of early intervention supports at the additional stage of the Child’s Wellbeing Pathway and targeted supports at the Intensive stage.   The SNA comprised three distinct elements (1) Policy Mapping & Analysis (2) Population Needs Assessment (3) Resource Analysis.
   3. Combined, these activities have helped to establish that poverty in the early years, unsupported caring responsibilities, disability, domestic abuse, mental health and substance use are the main vulnerabilities which cause suffering and distress within the family unit, lead to family breakdown and fresh experiences of trauma and loss. The work detailed within the SNA establishes that recovery is best supported through models of support which are family inclusive, rights- based, and which focus upon and promote the ‘wellbeing’ of the whole family unit.
   4. This brief sets out Commissioning priorities in regard to children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

1. **National & Local Drivers, Legislation, Best Practice …**

2.1 UNCRC:

The Convention contains 54 articles which set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. The Convention recognises the family unit as the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and especially children. The Convention provides clear parameters about the responsibilities member states have to protect and support the well-being of children within the family unit, and the measures that must be taken to promote their voice within all decisions which affect them.

Core Articles which are relevant to this brief include, one, three, five, six, seven, nine, twelve, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-three, twenty-five, twenty-seven, thirty-three, thirty-four and thirty-nine.

2.2 Children & Young People Scotland Act (2014):

The Children & Young People Scotland Act (2014) is a key part of the Scottish Government’s strategy to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up and is underpinned by the UNCRC, the Alternative Care Guidelines and GIRFEC National Practice Model. Part 12 of the Act places a duty on Local Authorities to provide services for Children who are at risk of becoming looked after and stipulates that this must include support services for parents in their care giving role. Part 18 of the Act incorporates the definition of wellbeing established within GIRFEC (SHANARRI) onto a statutory footing.

2.3 The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018:

The Act recognised Domestic Abuse as a crime for the first time within Scottish Law. The Act recognises abusive behaviour as including psychological and emotional abuse as well as acts of physical violence. The Act also recognises the harm that can be caused to children when growing up in an environment where domestic abuse takes place.

2.4 Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC):

GIRFEC is The Scottish Government’s National Practice Framework designed to support the ‘wellbeing’ of children and young people within the family unit. GIRFEC contains a definition of Well-Being as Shared, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. The Framework provides services and practitioners with a shared language for assessing, promoting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children & young people against these eight indicators.

2.5 The Promise:

The Promise articulates the findings from the Independent Care Review. It describes the vulnerabilities which drive children, young people and families into the care system in the first instance and the ensuing trauma, loss and adversity they often experience whilst in receipt of services. The Promise is clear that more must be done to support children to remain within the family unit through the provision of family inclusive, rights- based supports which focus upon and promote the ‘wellbeing’ of the whole family unit.

2.6 Equally Safe: Scotland’s strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls:

Scotland’s national strategy promotes collaborative working of key partners in the public, private and Third sector to precent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls. The strategy contains four priority areas, which are …

1. Scottish Society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls
2. Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically
3. Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and well being of women, children & young people
4. Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

Core actions for priority number 3 include …

1. Justice responses are robust, swift, consistent and coordinated
2. Women, children & young people access relevant, effective and integrated services
3. Service providers competently identify violence against women and girls, and respond effectively to women, children & young people affected

2.7 Fife Violence Against Women Partnership Action Plan:

Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP) co-ordinates activity towards ending violence against women across statutory and third sector agencies. The partnership is committed to the four priorities outlined in ‘Equally Safe: Scotland’s strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls’.

Core actions in terms of delivering the 4 priorities locally includes an endorsement of the Safe & Together practice model in direct work with children & young people. The Safe & Together model is built upon three core principles, which are …

1. Keeping children safe and together with the non-offending parent.
2. Partnering with non-offending parent as a default position
3. Intervening with perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child.
4. **Service Model**

3.1 The service model should be cognisant of recent evidence and research based on improving outcomes and minimising the impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and their mothers.

3.2 The service should be Fife wide and support children, young people and their main care giver which for the majority will be mothers

3.3 This service is focused on prevention and crisis support for families where there are indicators of significant vulnerability which if not addressed will lead to breakdown, crisis and statutory measures.

3.4 This service model should be aligned to the Safe & Together Practice Model, GIRFEC National Practice Model and also the National Framework Principles for Holistic Whole Family Well Being; critical features of this service include:

* assessment practice focusing on the wellbeing and safety of women, children and young people
* a range of support options including 1 to 1 and group work
* knowledge, skills and expertise to mitigate against adverse childhood experiences
* safe, effective and trauma informed interventions for adults and children
* an understanding but non-restricted bias of the gendered nature of domestic abuse and perpetrators use of coercive control on adult victims, children and young people
* agile and adaptable model working collaboratively with statutory and other specialist services
* contributes to safety planning and risk assessment processes
* ability to collate and analyse data to inform service improvement for domestic abuse and recovery services
* contributes to the outcomes within the FVAWP strategy
  1. The components of the services delivery model should evidence and include:
* Systems and processes to respond effectively and efficiently to crisis situations.
* Refuge support in the community for women, children and young people
* Assessment and safety planning frameworks
* Information and advice which is readily available
* Advocacy support to women, children & young people
* Direct support to adults, children & young people on a 1-1 & group basis
* Interventions which support recovery are inclusive and person centred

3.6 Fife Council has commissioned Fife Voluntary Action to lead on a review of existing children and families support which is aimed at establishing the conditions where the views and experiences of children, young people and families are central to system transformation and funding of future children’s services in Fife so that in turn children and families in Fife experience better outcomes and are able to thrive.

3.7 This work is being undertaken using a co-production approach with the involvement of children, young people, and families alongside both third sector and statutory sector providers. The project is in its early stages but is expected to produce recommendations in March 2024. Commissioned Services will be expected to align their own models to the findings from this work as it emerges and adopt recommendations aimed at informing the future planning, design, delivery and commissioning of family support services in Fife.

1. **Outcomes**

4.1 To deliver this brief the service will require an outcomes/performance framework with tools to evidence the progress of children, young people on the impact of interventions. The Outcomes for this service are …

**Outcomes for Children and Young People**

* improvement in children, young people and their mother’s safety (reduction of risk)
* improvement in children and young people’s wellbeing
* improvement in family relationships and attachments
* improvement in family circumstances (e.g. housing, networks)
* improvement in children and young people’s confidence and resilience
* improvement in children and young people’s understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships

**5. Eligibility & Referral Criteria**

5.1 The service will be provided to families, children and young people throughout Fife within the features outlined in section 3

5.2 Access to the service will follow a similar process to other scare resources and include referrals from multi-agency Child Wellbeing meetings Child Protection Case Conferences, Looked After reviews. The service will also consider direct referrals within the context of the service model and target group to ensure a timely response to needs and risk.

**6.Scale & Cost**

6.1 Drawing upon service levels established for the current commissioning cycle (2021-24) and routine monitoring data, it is anticipated that the service will provide supports for between 250-300 children, young people and families per year.

6.2 The budget envelope established for the delivery of the Brief is £500,910

**7. Networking & Communication**

7.1 Collaborative working to improve outcomes is a key requirement and the service should have a proven track record of working effectively on a multi-agency basis building strong relationships with a range of statutory and non-statutory services

7.2 The service should be visible and have a community presence across the 7 localities in Fife, contributing to local networks, sharing good practice and influencing service delivery and development both at a local and strategic level.

7.3 The service should provide detailed information on the service model and interventions raising awareness of provision and the ability to work in a flexible and agile way.

**8. Continuity of Care**

8.1 The service provider will be expected to provide consistency of staffing both in levels and personnel for children, young people and families, particularly through periods of absence, sickness and holidays. The service will share their organisation’s comprehensive recruitment, induction and workforce development programme for staff members of this service. This should evidence capacity building with the staff team to use effective evidenced based interventions for the specified groups.

**9. Risk Management**

9.1 For each service user, identify all situations which involve elements of risk to themselves or others, and evidence the planned response which attempts to reduce and control the risk/s.

9.2 To manage risks effectively the service must have policies and procedures on the following:

* Operational policy reflecting equalities legislation
* Staff absence and management policy
* Recruitment policies and procedures
* Procedure for lone working and working in service users’ homes
* Use of volunteers
* Risk assessment and management
* Dealing with accidents and incidents
* Responding to distress related behaviours
* Protection of vulnerable groups including both an Adult and Child Protection Policy
* Confidentiality Policy
* Training and staff development
* Job description and details of duties
* References and enhanced disclosure check for staff
* Procedures for the supervision, appraisal and disciplinary of staff
* Whistleblowing policy

**10. Recording & Monitoring**

10.1 The service must have a record management system in place compliant with GDPR guidelines with a workforce who are knowledgeable and competent to record accurately in respect to direct contact and reports for all groups.

10.2 Information regarding the overall service provided may be requested by Fife Council at any time for example, how many hours have been worked, the type of contact that took place, the work involved, changes to service plans/interventions, complaints, successful/unsuccessful outcomes and the reasons for these.

10.3 Records kept should ensure that information on the outcomes for the service can be collected for evaluation and analytical purposes

10.4 An Agreement Monitoring Meeting will be held every quarter and a report submitted to the meeting by the service.

10.5 The grant will be monitored via Fife Councils Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, a Link Officer will be appointed to work closely with the service. The Link Worker will be supported by the Social Work Service Monitoring Officer

**11. Complaints**

11.1For each quarterly Agreement Monitoring Meeting the service provider must provide a report detailing the following information:

* The number of complaints the service provider has had during the previous quarter, by type of complaint
* The number of complaints in respect of service provision funded by Fife Council
* The outcome of the service providers investigation
* The number of complaints which were upheld and details on complainants who were satisfied/unsatisfied with the outcome
* General changes to the service providers policies and procedures as a result of complaints and progress with implementing any changes
* The service provider will be required to co-operate in any investigation of a complaint as requested by Fife Council and to remedy any concerns that Fife Council has regarding the provision of the service