



Brief 4

Children, Young People and Families (Service Brief for children and young people affected by domestic abuse)

1.0 Introduction & Background

1.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the policy driver Getting it Right for Every Child inform service development and delivery across the partnership in Fife to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Fife. Central to this is a focus on children's rights within the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the requirement for public bodies to report back every 3 years on steps to embed key elements in practice.

1.2 Fife's Violence Against Women Partnership Strategy, details how services will work together to prevent and aim to eradicate violence against women and children. The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 recognises domestic abuse as a crime and emphasises the negative impact on children and young people. A child being adversely affected through a lived experience of domestic abuse is now seen as an aggravating factor

1.3 Equally Safe: Scotland's national strategy promotes collaborative working of key partners in the public, private and Third sector to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls. Key objectives within the context of national outcomes include:

- promotion of positive gender roles
- respect and equality for women and girls
- children experience safe, health and positive relationships from an early age
- violence and abusive behaviour are challenged by individuals and society
- equality of rights, power and access to resources
- children, young people and women have access to effective integrated services
- violence against women and girls is identified early and responses including justice responses are robust, speedy, consistent and well-coordinated
- Services are effective in identifying and responding to violence against women and girls including children /young people who are affected.
- men are supported to change their behaviour

- voices of women, children and young people are heard

1.4 The Safe & Together, Domestic Abuse Informed Continuum of Practice illustrates the shift required in service planning, development and delivery within adult and children services for women, children and young people affected by

domestic abuse. This requires a whole systems approach driving improvements through:

- collaborative practice
- common frameworks and language
- trauma informed interventions
- workforce development and training

1.5 The Safe & Together model promotes changes in practice moving away from:

- survivors blamed for the violence and seen as having the power to be able to stop the violence by making 'better choices'
- the role of the perpetrator is actively or consistently ignored with limited specialised engagement or assessment
- no links made between the perpetrator's behaviour and the children's symptoms, needs and experience
- no connections made between the intersecting issues, such as substance abuse, and trauma caused by perpetrators
- no skills-based training on how to work in a domestic abuse informed way or how to engage with fathers

1.6 The Safe & Together framework offers a change in language, thinking and practice in Fife increasing accountability for perpetrators as parents, reducing victim blaming leading to improved outcomes for children and families. The focus on patterns of behaviour and impact on children, young people and the family is an integral part of assessment and core components of assessing wellbeing within the context of needs and risks. In Fife this programme is becoming embedded in practice to improve outcomes for some of the most vulnerable women, children, young people and families.

1.7 The Good Practice in Commissioning Specialist Domestic Abuse Services (COSLA and Scottish Woman's Aid) provides guidance for commissioners of services underpinned by an understanding of long and short terms needs of women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse. This has been fully considered in the development of this brief.

1.8 Domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people who may be affected by multiple adverse childhood experiences. Research confirms children living with domestic abuse have much higher rates of depression and anxiety, trauma symptoms, behavioural and cognitive problems than children and young people not living with these issues. Stability and security within the home environment for children and young people is unpredictable. The psychological impact on children and young people can include:

- behavioural disturbance in pre-school children
- high levels of anxiety and mood swings
- low mood and depression
- self-blame, fearfulness, suicidal feelings
- Disengagement from peers, school, wider networks

1.9 Domestic abuse can impact on the capacity of mothers in a range of ways including attachment relationship which are critical to children's life chances. Research confirms perpetrators deliberately target women's care giving role and capacity as part of abusive strategies, this can involve:

- undermining the mother
- regulations and rules forced on the mother
- children being incited against their mother
- children forced to participate in the abuse

1.10 The Plan for Fife and the Children's Services Partnership Plan set out partnership objectives and priorities for improvement. Domestic abuse was a key priority within the Children's Service Plan 2017-20 to improve outcomes across the continuum of need. Data confirms domestic abuse is a risk factor in over half of the children and young people subject to child protection registration.

1.11 The Children's Services Partnership agile action plan (2020-21) re-confirms these priorities:

- **Safety** – by working together we will protect our children and young people
- **Wellbeing** – by working together we will support and promote the health and wellbeing our children and young people
- **Opportunity**-by working together we will improve the life chances of our children and young people
- **Poverty** -by working together we will mitigate the impact of poverty on Fife families

1.12 Education & Children's Services and specifically the Children & Families Social Work Service has a key responsibility for improving outcomes for Fife's most vulnerable children and families. Objectives for phase 3 of the Children and Family Strategy 'Belonging to Fife' include:

- The voice of children and young people must be at the heart of practice, supported by a right to live within their families and community
- Shifting the profile of care away from high cost placements towards better support for children and young people at home or wider family
- Better alignment of services for all including care experienced children, providing a 'scaffolding' of support around needs
- Services need to be agile, responsive, family focused and community facing
- Support to all children but with a priority for those in most need due to risk and adversity to prevent the possibility of family breakdown and need for formal care.

1.13. The Children & Family Strategy is informed by the recommendations within the Independent Care Review and the importance on help and support being readily and locally available; maintaining connections within the family and wider networks; focusing on relationships; building resilience within families and communities.

1.14. The contribution of the Third sector in achieving these objectives is important alongside a requirement for review and system redesign across current delivery models. The independent review of Third sector services in 2019 provided

recommendations which have been considered within wider strategic re-commissioning plans for E&CS to achieve the above priorities.

2.0 Service Model

2.1 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.

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

2.3 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.

2.4 This service should work in a domestic abuse informed way; critical features of this service include:

- assessment practice focusing on the wellbeing and safety of women, children and young people
- knowledge, skills and expertise to mitigate against adverse childhood experiences
- safe, effective and trauma informed interventions for adults and children
- a model which is evidence based and improves children and young people's wellbeing and safety mitigating the effects of domestic abuse
- 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
- an approach which is underpinned and informed by the safe and together model
- agile and adaptable model working collaboratively with statutory and other specialist services
- contributes to multi-agency care planning processes as part of a team around the child /young person
- 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

2.5 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 and young people
- direct support to adults, children and young people on a 1-1 basis/group

- interventions which support recovery, are inclusive and person centred

3.0 Outcomes

3.1 To deliver this brief the service will require an outcomes/performance framework with tools to evidence the progress of children, young people and families based 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

4.0 Eligibility of Service Users

4.1 The service will be provided to families, children and young people throughout Fife within the features outlined in section 2.0

4.2 Access to the service will follow a similar process to other scarce 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.

4.3 It is anticipated that the service will work with between **250-300** children, young people and families per year and that the exact number will be monitored and managed through performance reporting in the Service Level Agreement

The model of delivery will inform the number of service recipients within the budget envelope

5.0 Networking and Communication

5.1 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

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

6.0 Continuity of Care

6.1 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.

7.0 Risk Management

7.1 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.

7.2 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 accident and incidents
- Handling challenging behaviour
- Protection of vulnerable groups including both an Adult and Child Protection policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Training and staff development
- Job descriptions and details of duties
- References and enhanced disclosure check for staff
- Procedures for the supervision, appraisal and disciplinary of staff
- Whistleblowing Policy

8.0 Recording and Monitoring

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

8.2 Information regarding the overall service provided may be requested by Fife Council and 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.

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

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

8.5 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

9.0 Service support and development

9.1 Fife Council will identify an appropriate officer to link with the service provider in relation to ongoing support and development of provision.

10.0 Complaints Procedure

For 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

11.0 Fife Council Education & Children Services has set a 2021/2022 budget for this service at between £450,000- £500,000