



Falkirk  
Health and Social Care  
Partnership

Safe Together.



## **Domestic Abuse informed service provision Bringing the Safe and Together Approach to Falkirk**

### **Why do we need to make changes to our current service provision?**

Whilst we have made significant progress in Falkirk in identifying and addressing the impact of domestic abuse the reporting of incidents remains high and we continue to sit above the national average of recorded incidents.

We know from national and local research that the reported figures do not capture the number of incidents of domestic abuse as many go un-reported, nor do they capture the patterns of behaviour that impact on children, young people and families – what we now describe as coercive control.

As part of our Child Protection Committee programme of self-evaluation we carried out a multi-agency audit of practice in response to situations of domestic abuse during 2015. This revealed some areas of good practice in relation to communication between services and with families and the benefits to our involvement in the Scottish Government supported Domestic Abuse Pathfinder project was acknowledged.

However this audit also indicated that our response to domestic abuse, similar to many other areas across Scotland, has a number of characteristics:

It has an over-emphasis on singular incidents of physical violence, rather than recognition of a wider pattern of abuse; it assumes separation or removal of the perpetrator will automatically reduce risk; it places responsibility for care of the children and for ending the abuse primarily with the victim, whilst superficially engaging with perpetrators; it explicitly encourages separation, without addressing risks around safe contact or on-going disruption to family life.

The audit identified six areas for improvement:

1. Improve practitioner understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people to ensure children receive the appropriate response, including how practitioners understand and use chronologies as a tool to identify a pattern of concern and to inform assessments.
2. More effective challenge of perpetrators of abuse and increased support for practitioners to build confidence to have the necessary 'difficult conversations' with families.
3. Improve data accuracy / recording upon receipt of a police concern report to ensure that children do not 'slip through the net'.
4. Consideration to be given to the development of multi-agency guidance for the follow up of police concern reports which would support a consistent approach.
5. Better recording of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people – *their lived experience*- as this is not well documented within agency records.
6. The need to update local guidance to provide clarity on what is expected of practitioners when responding to domestic abuse concerns.

A practitioner engagement event was organised in January 2016 to compare and contrast two evidence based approaches in support of improved practice. The *Safe and Together* approach was identified as the preferred option for Falkirk.

The audit findings, improvement actions and an outline of the findings from the practitioner event were presented to the Falkirk Child Protection Committee in February 2016 along with the recommendation to invest in training and implementation of the *Safe and Together* Model. Our aim: to promote multi agency domestic abuse and trauma informed service provision through culture, systems and practice change.

Funding was secured to take forward this approach in April 2017 supported by Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership through the services for survivors of trauma development work.

### **What does the Safe and Together approach provide?**

An approach to intervene successfully with domestic abuse victims (survivors)

- creates non-blaming partnership
- recognises the victim's strengths and parenting capacity
- Strengthens the relationship between the non-abusing parent and child

An approach to intervene successfully with perpetrators of domestic abuse

- to assess their risk
- their impact on children's wellbeing
- their capacity to change
- hold them to a high standard of parenting
- ensure they are visible within child protection processes and the Child's Plan

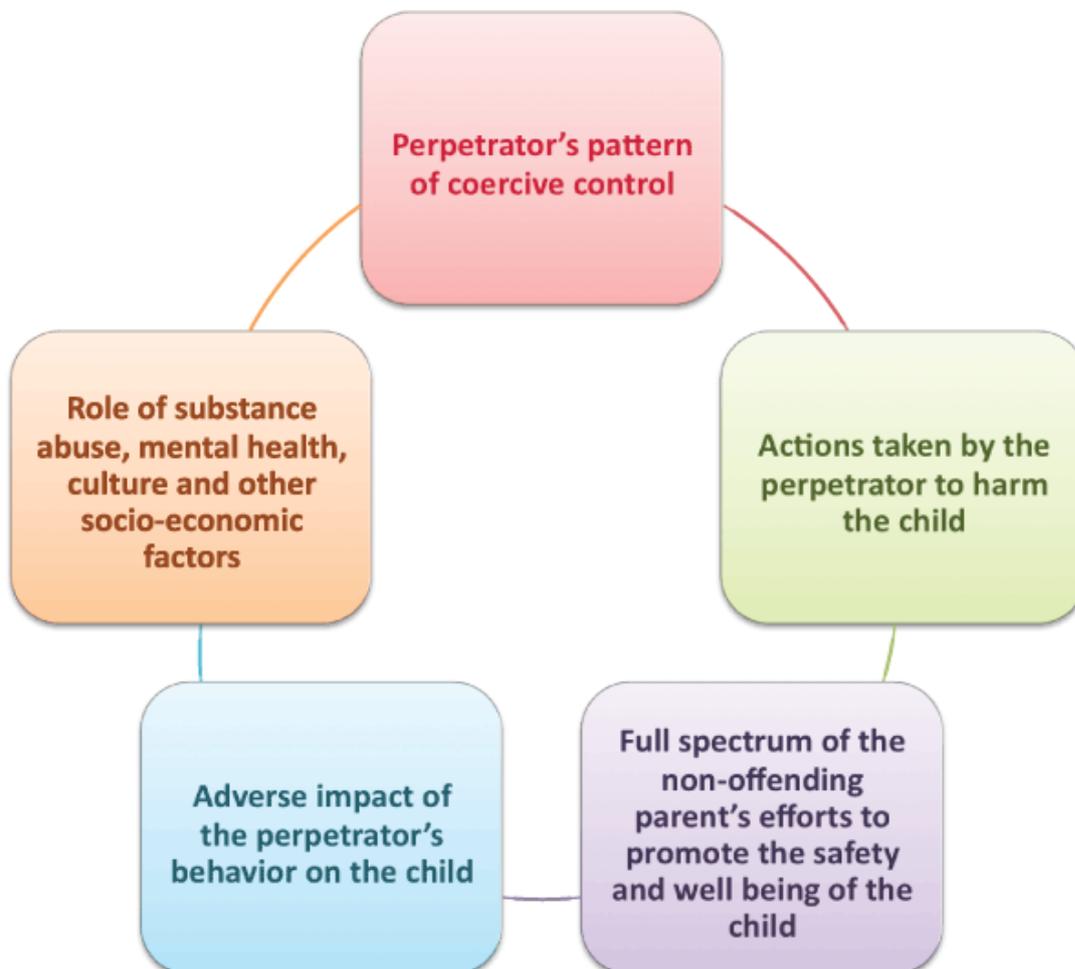
A means of assessing and describing the impact of domestic abuse on family functioning and children's wellbeing and development

- to move away from a broad recognition of how domestic abuse tends to impact on children as a group, to an understanding of how the *specific* abuse within that *particular* family has impacted on the *individual* child's wellbeing

## Safe and Together Principles



Implementation of the principles and approach in practice is supported by a focus on identifying the following **Critical Components**:



## How will the Safe and Together approach be implemented in Falkirk?

We **ALL** need to change the way we view domestic abuse; to think differently about how we currently respond and what we do in practice.

To support us towards achieving the required culture, systems and practice change in Falkirk we plan to:

- Raise awareness of the approach across all relevant services
- Identify practitioners to attend the core training; who once confident in using the model and practice tools will go on to help deliver briefings / input to training in their local area to help embed Safe and Together principles; mentor and carry out consultations
- Provide training for line managers / supervisors to ensure consistency of approach and support.
- To develop a local Safe and Together practitioner's forum to share practice experience, inform future training, learning and development and support implementation.
- To carry out an evaluation of culture, systems and practice change with a specific focus on outcomes for children, young people and families impacted by domestic abuse.

### Raising awareness and training dates

Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> pm – Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
Raising awareness, ½ day morning session, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm *	3 ½ day core training for practitioners (Mentors) 1.30 – 4.30 pm **	1 day training for supervisors / line managers 9.30 am – 4.30 pm
Falkirk Lesser Town Hall	Falkirk Lesser Town Hall (Monday pm) and Camelon Education Centre	Camelon Education Centre
140 participants	40 participants	40 participants
<p>Overview of the Safe and Together Model.</p> <p>What this training means to everyone? And what practice change might look like? For example, shared language, improved recording of information, case and safety planning.</p> <p>This provides the opportunity to set the stage for culture, systems and practice change through improved collaboration when domestic and child abuse and neglect are the concern.</p>	<p>The Core 4 Day Practice Training prepares practitioners to make significant change in their practice and to influence other workers' and systems' practice. It will provide practitioners with an improved understanding of:</p> <p>perpetrators' behaviour patterns and their impact on child and family functioning, partnering with adult survivors of domestic abuse and interventions with perpetrators; the expertise and material to facilitate the use of the tools with others.</p>	<p>Line Manager and Supervisor training to ensure a consistent approach is taken in practice and to support casework practice and embedding the approach within team and service.</p>

Who is this session aimed at:	Who are these sessions aimed at	Who is this session aimed at
<p>Elected Members, Chief Officers, Heads of Service, Service Managers, Strategic Lead Officers, Review Coordinators, Children’s Reporter and Children’s Panel members.</p> <p>Team Managers, Line Managers and Supervisors who will also attend Line Manager / Supervisor training on 17/11/17</p> <p>Frontline practitioners who will also attend core training on 13/11 pm – 16/11/17</p>	<p>Frontline practitioners who work with families impacted by domestic abuse.</p>	<p>Team Managers, Line Managers and Supervisors of practitioners who attend core training.</p>

\*For the raising awareness event places will be allocated to ensure good representation from across all relevant services.

\*\*For the core practitioner training, applications will be invited from practitioners, counter signed by line managers /supervisors and assessed against desired criteria to fulfil the role of Mentor post successful completion of the training. This process also includes pre and post evaluation and a knowledge test.



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## **Falkirk Safe and Together Approach: Mentor Recruitment Information and Application Form**

We are looking to recruit “Mentors” to help us make the shift to domestic abuse informed culture, systems and practice.

Mentors will receive Safe and Together model four day intensive skill based multi-agency training. They will be expected to use this in direct practice in their assessments with families and from this direct experience and deeper understanding of the model, Mentors will be equipped to become advocates within their teams and local area.

Mentors will be expected to disseminate information to their colleagues to support a consistent response and shared language and to enhance the competencies of practitioners who did not attend the training.

Mentors could, for example,

- present at staff meetings / during learning and development activities and provide information on the Safe and Together approach, it’s components and principles; assessing the strengths and protective capacities of domestic abuse survivors; intervening with perpetrators and the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.
- disseminate information about Safe and Together approach in agency newsletters, on webpages or through other means of agency wide communication.
- focus on identifying domestic abuse when a case is presented with other issues such as substance misuse or mental health.
- begin coaching colleagues on developing clear expectations, safety plans, interviewing perpetrators, partnering with survivors and articulating the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.
- contribute to the review of current in-service training on domestic abuse, ensure consistency with the model and support new workers introduction to Safe and Together approach.
- help to connect Safe and Together approach to other agency initiatives such as engagement with fathers, trauma informed practice and addressing childhood neglect.
- Contribute to developing criteria for standard setting and identifying strengths and deficits in practice.

Mentors will also be expected to attend regular Safe and Together practitioner’s forum meetings (monthly in the beginning) to support their practice by recognising their enhanced skills, supporting their identification with the model and providing peer support to help each other to implement the model. These meetings will also provide insight into systemic changes that need to be made to support embedding and sustaining the approach.

### **What kind of skills and experience do you need to become a mentor?**

We want people who have a passion, interest and commitment to preventing and challenging all forms of domestic abuse and achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families.

We welcome people who:

Have an awareness and understanding of domestic abuse within the wider context of gender based violence and its effects on our communities

Have experience of working with children, young people; parents and carers and /or vulnerable adults

Have some experience of presenting information to groups and /or facilitating group work discussion.

Have confidence to deliver information and awareness raising sessions.

Have experience of peer support and contributing to the learning and development of others.

### **If you are interested – what to do next?**

It is essential that you have the support of your line manager to enable you to take part in this training and implementation of the approach.

It is also essential that you are available to take part in the full four days training 13-16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and can attend the post training practitioner forum meetings.

As places are limited it is necessary to have an application process. We also need to ensure that we have a spread across agencies.

If you wish to be considered for a place, please complete the application form and return to Evelyn McGregor, Training Administrator by 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

[evelyn.mcgregor@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:evelyn.mcgregor@falkirk.gov.uk) or Evelyn McGregor, Training Administrator Camelon Social Work Office, 108 Glasgow Road, Camelon FK1 4HS

If you have any queries, please contact: Leni Rademacher, Training Manager (Children and Families) Children's Services: Tel: 01324 590 367 or [leni.rademacher@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:leni.rademacher@falkirk.gov.uk)