

# Safe and Together (S&T) Audit

## 7-minute briefing



### 1 – Context

Falkirk Child Protection Committee (CPC) regularly collects and scrutinizes data regarding our Child Protection Activity.

Nationally, Domestic abuse is recognised as the most common concern identified for children on the Child Protection Register (CPR). This trend is reflected locally in Falkirk. In January 2025 just over 84% of the children on the CPR had domestic abuse recorded as a risk to their development, wellbeing and safety.

We know from national and local research that the reported figures do not capture the true 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.

### 2 –S&T Approach

The Safe & Together Model is a framework designed to improve responses to domestic abuse, particularly where children are involved. It emphasises:

-Perpetrator Accountability: Focusing on the actions of the person causing harm.

- Survivor Strengths: Recognising and supporting the protective efforts of the non-abusing parent.

- Child-Centered Approach: Prioritizing the safety and well-being of children.

We know that using this model can enhance family safety and functioning.

### 3 – What we did

The Improvement & Quality Assurance Group is a Subgroup of the CPC and their role is to ensure that multi-agency contributions are in place to improve practice and to achieve better outcomes for children. As part of the group's audit plan, a multi-agency audit of the S&T approach took place over two days in October 2024. Cases were identified from Children placed on the Child Protection Register with Domestic abuse being an area of concern. The cases were selected at random from across the locality areas and a variety of age ranges. The Care Inspectorate self-evaluation tool was adapted to gather information relating specifically to the Safe and Together model.

### 4- What's going well

The audit showed that we are following procedures outlined within the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland with Inter Agency Referrals taking place where there are potential risks of significant harm. Assessments and plans were available for the cases reviewed.

There was evidence of interventions with perpetrators from a variety of different professionals.

Clear decisions were made at the initial multi-agency meeting in 100% of cases. Where the child's views were recorded, they were well evidenced and responded to. There is evidence of the child's remaining at the centre

### 5 – Areas for improvement

The audit showed that our use of the Safe and Together model is not consistent across the partnership. We need to improve how we assess risk, using the tools available in the model.

The language used in assessments and plans should hold perpetrators to account for their parenting choices. There needs to be a clearer focus and expectation in the child's plan for the perpetrator to change their behaviour. There needs to be improvement in how we accurately record children's views, this includes the views of very young children; they tell us how they are feeling through their behaviour and interaction with others.

### 6- What will we do?

To facilitate continuous improvement, we will:

-Enhance participation in S&T training and engagement with communities of practice.

-Deliver focused CP Practitioners forums which will be available across the workforce.

-Identify good practice examples and share to facilitate learning.

-Gather the views of survivors and we will use this information to inform improvement activity.

-We will take opportunities to review our policies and procedures to align them with the S&T principles, working collaboratively with the Gender Based Violence partnership.

### 7- Why does it matter?

The impact of domestic abuse on children is profound, even if they are not directly harmed. Witnessing or experiencing abuse can affect their emotional, psychological, physical and social development and these impacts can be experienced across the lifespan.

Using the safe and together model helps children stay with their non abusing parent, putting the child in the centre and focusing on supporting families. Safe and Together encourages systems to focus on stopping perpetrators behaviour rather than expecting the survivor to fix the situation alone and finally, promotes healing and stability, helping families rebuild after abuse.