

TRAUMA INFORMED POLICY TOOL

A one page guide



SAFETY ■ TRUST ■ EMPOWERMENT ■ CHOICE ■ COLLABORATION ■ EQUALITY

POLICIES AND PROCESSES shape what it is like for people who work in, or use services from, the Council and HSCP. When they are designed using a trauma informed approach, they help people feel safe, respected and able to take part. When they are not, even skilled and compassionate staff can be limited by rules that may cause distress, reduce trust or make it harder to work in a trauma informed way.

A trauma informed policy review looks at the words and tone used, as well as the impact the policy may have on people. Not all policies need to mention trauma, but they should follow key principles such as safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment so they support trauma informed practice. It may not be possible to change every part of a policy, but everyone has a part to play in making trauma informed improvements wherever we can.

SAFETY	• Provide clear steps so people know what to expect • Use respectful, non blaming language • Make sure people know where to find help, reassurance and information THINK: Is anything in the policy confusing, worrying or upsetting?
TRUST	• Be clear about what the policy does and does not cover • Avoid language or processes that feel secretive, unfair or unpredictable • Make sure roles, decisions and expectations are easy to understand THINK: Does the policy reduce confusion and avoid hidden expectations?
COLLABORATION	• Recognise that effective policies are developed with the people affected by them • Think about how differences in power are noticed and addressed THINK: Are people with lived experience involved in a safe and meaningful way?
CHOICE	• Allow for people's different needs and circumstances, as far as possible • Avoid rules that make people feel forced, controlled or powerless • Clearly explain when choices are limited and why THINK: Could any part of the policy be made more flexible?
EMPOWERMENT	• Avoid language that labels people as having something wrong with them, instead promoting a focus on wellbeing and strengths • Recognise that many behaviours are ways of coping, and respond with compassion rather than judgement THINK: Does the policy give clear information that helps people feel confident, informed and prepared?
EQUALITY	• Use inclusive language and avoid making assumptions about identity, culture, gender, faith or ability • Promote fairness, belonging and dignity across all interactions THINK: Who could be disproportionately impacted by this policy, and what unintended consequences might arise?

More information, including who to contact for support with a policy review, can be found here: [Trauma Informed and Responsive Practice – Forth Valley Practitioner Page](#)

FALKIRK COUNCIL

