

National Domestic Abuse
Delivery Plan
for Children and Young People



Protection
Provision
Prevention
Participation

National Domestic Abuse
Delivery Plan
for Children and Young People



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FOREWORD

Domestic abuse is a blight on the lives of many thousands of Scotland's women, children and young people. Its effects can be seen in children's reaction to the violence and emotional abuse they witness and to which they may be subject. Significantly it impacts upon their emotional and mental health, which in turn may have a continuing effect throughout childhood and into adulthood, potentially affecting the most important relationship of all, that between a parent and a child.

If we are to give our children the best start in life and enable them to be the individuals they have a right to be we must combine our resources and look to all agencies to work together towards early identification of domestic abuse, effective intervention and support, and the reduction of new and repeat offences. We believe that we can significantly reduce both the impact and the incidents of domestic abuse over time.

This Delivery Plan signals our commitment to get it right for children and young people affected by domestic abuse, their families and communities. It details thirteen Priorities for Action under the key themes of protection, provision, primary prevention through education, and participation. In taking this work forward, we are adopting a holistic approach to addressing domestic abuse, recognising that measures to improve outcomes for children and young people include achieving better outcomes for all involved. This means addressing the needs of the non-abusing parent, which will most often be the mother, and dealing effectively with the perpetrator.

We would like to thank the members of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group who have helped shape this document. In particular we are enormously grateful to the remarkable children and young people who have drawn from their experience of domestic abuse to provide us with direction on what needs to change.

Our agenda is an ambitious one and we have allocated £10 million over the next three years to support the delivery of this Plan. We look forward to the continued involvement and commitment of all key partners and the ongoing participation of our children and young people, whose current and increasing contribution to this agenda is critical to our success.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scottish Government's Purpose and the focus of public services is to make Scotland a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth. Investing in our people and our communities and laying foundations for the wellbeing and achievement of our children and young people will enable us to deliver on our five Strategic Objectives – to create a wealthier & fairer, smarter, healthier, greener, safer & stronger society.

This is an ambitious agenda and one which is supported by a new relationship between national and local government based on mutual respect and partnership. Foundation for this relationship is commitment, set out by the Concordat between the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Scottish Ministers, to work together towards shared National Outcomes for Scotland's people. There are three National Outcomes that relate specifically to children and young people –

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

We want to give all our children opportunities to thrive and ensure that the environment they grow up in, their homes and their communities, and the relationships they form are safe, nurturing and enable them to realise their enormous potential. We recognise that many thousands of children and young people in Scotland are affected by domestic abuse, in their home or in their own young relationships, and as a consequence, face significant obstacles to realising their potential. Improving outcomes for these children and young people, and taking action to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on future generations is a vital priority if we are to deliver on our National Outcomes and Strategic Objectives.

Our most significant challenge lies in the acknowledgement that some obstacles children face can be exacerbated by the many different, and sometimes conflicting, ways that individuals, agencies and communities work to tackle domestic abuse. We believe that a robust response to children and young people affected by domestic abuse requires a common framework of action, based on partnership and a shared understanding of the needs, views and wishes of children themselves. It also requires a commitment, at a local and national level, to challenge and change the ingrained culture, systems and practices within agencies, as well as the individual attitudes or preconceptions about domestic abuse which can further disadvantage children, young people and families at risk.

The **National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People**¹ signals our intention to drive forward the agenda for change, in the context of the new partnership environment between Government and local government, and improve outcomes for children and young people affected by domestic abuse, their families and communities. The Delivery Plan sets out a common framework based on *Getting it right for every child* principles and values and the aims of the *National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland* (2000). The framework recognises Government's definition of domestic abuse as 'gender based abuse', requiring a response that takes into account and addresses the persistent inequalities between men and women in Scotland.

The Delivery Plan sets out thirteen Priorities for Action we will resource and progress with our partners over the next three years, to enable more effective protection, provision, prevention and participation for all children, young people and their families affected, or at risk of being affected, by domestic abuse in Scotland.

Our Priorities for Action include:

PROTECTION

1. Improve the National Health Service (NHS Scotland) identification of and response to the needs of women and children affected by domestic abuse.
2. Develop a universal, systematic approach to information gathering and decision making that will place children's needs and wishes at the heart of agencies' response to domestic abuse.
3. Develop interventions targeted at perpetrators of domestic abuse which are integrated with appropriate support services for women and children.
4. Further develop specialist approaches to the handling of domestic abuse cases within the criminal justice system.
5. Ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse do not experience additional physical, emotional or psychological harm as a consequence of contact arrangements (both court and privately arranged) with the abusive parent.

PROVISION

6. Ensure all children and young people affected by domestic abuse have access to specialist services that meet their needs.
7. Develop and pilot a community-based model of groupwork intervention for children and their mothers affected by domestic abuse.
8. Reduce the risk to women and children of becoming homeless as a consequence of domestic abuse and ensure, whenever necessary, they are supported to make the move into safe and suitable accommodation without facing additional emotional, economic or social disadvantages.
9. Ensure a consistent, holistic approach to children and young people affected by domestic abuse through the development of skilled workforces and robust inter-agency working.

¹ Also referred to in this document as the Delivery Plan.

PREVENTION THROUGH EDUCATION

10. Improve the way that schools and school staff respond to domestic abuse and to the additional support needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse.
11. Support individuals, organisations and communities across Scotland to engage in local action aimed at preventing and reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse to children, young people, their families and communities.
12. Ensure the general public understands the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people from the perspective of children and young people, and ensure children and young people themselves know what to do and where to get help if they are affected by domestic abuse.

PARTICIPATION

13. Ensure the ongoing participation of children and young people affected by domestic abuse in developing policy and practice to address domestic abuse.

Further information on the Priority Areas for Action and on how these will be delivered can be found in the main body of this document.

Each Priority Area has been identified and developed by the **National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group for Children and Young People² (NDADG)** in consultation with children and young people affected by domestic abuse. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the NDADG, especially the children and young people whose tremendous expertise, insight and enthusiasm has been, and will continue to be, the driving force behind our work. Their views and experiences, as well as the views of the broader NDADG membership, are reflected throughout the body of this document.

The development phase of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People is complete with the publication of this document. It will now enter a three-year implementation and review phase (2008-11). We recognise that much of the work we have committed to take forward under the thirteen Priority Areas is 'unchartered territory' and will require people to maintain a broad outlook and a willingness to test new approaches. There will undoubtedly be challenges, but there will also be many exciting opportunities to learn how we can do things better. We see value, therefore, in a step approach to implementing the Delivery Plan, with inbuilt mechanisms to review progress at every step. To support this approach, we have put in place structures that will enable the NDADG to map out the direction and pace of change based on emerging evidence and in line with progressive capacity building of services and agencies across Scotland.

² Also referred to in this document as the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group.

A key structure for the Delivery Plan implementation and review process is the **Getting it right Domestic Abuse Pathfinder**. Pathfinding activity centers around developing a *Getting it right* response for all children, focusing initially on children affected by domestic abuse, by testing new joined-up approaches, including common risk assessment and information sharing across agencies, to improve early identification of domestic abuse and early interventions for children, young people and their families. It is particularly looking at –

- ensuring children get the help they need when they need it,
- an appropriate, timely response in place of automatic referral to the Children’s Reporter,
- placing a child’s needs, interests and views at the centre of agencies’ response, and
- embedding action to support the non-abusing parent and to tackle the perpetrator into a child’s plan.

Learning from the Pathfinder will feed into and help shape the direction of a number of the Delivery Plan Priority Areas.

We are in a good place to begin the implementation phase. Like the Domestic Abuse Pathfinder, the Delivery Plan builds on a wealth of successful local developments that have previously been undertaken across Scotland to improve the lives of children affected by domestic abuse, and many more which are still ongoing. At policy level, it interacts with and complements a number of farsighted agendas including the *Early Years Strategy* and *Violence Against Women Strategic Framework* (both forthcoming), the *Curriculum for Excellence*, *Additional Support for Learning Act*, *Getting it right for every child*, “*It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright*” and *Action on Violence in Scotland*.

We recognise, however, that we have a long way to go to improve the life chances of all our children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse. The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People is by no means our final response to this issue. Instead, it provides the foundation for real, sustainable change in the way that all of us, as individuals, agencies, communities, local and national government, take collective responsibility for ensuring our children and young people grow up in safe, nurturing homes and experience healthy relationships, based on respect and mutuality.

At the conclusion of this first Delivery Plan (2008-11), we want to have a robust understanding of the needs, views and wishes of all children and young people affected by domestic abuse, including those from particular groups such as very young children, disabled children, black and minority ethnic children and those living in rural areas. We want to have evidence of the effectiveness of a broad range of delivery approaches at local level, which focus provision on the needs of children and adult victims of domestic abuse, and hold perpetrators to account, and we want agencies and communities across the whole of Scotland to have the skills and resources to implement these approaches. At a national level, we want to have evidence of the synergy, in real terms, between emerging policy agendas and improving outcomes for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Finally, we want to have a clear strategy for the future that builds on our Framework and the progress achieved throughout the Delivery Plan's implementation and review phase.

As individual members of a child's community, as policy makers and practitioners in statutory, voluntary and private agencies providing services for children and their families, we look to you to help us progress our work and secure better outcomes for children and young people affected by domestic abuse in Scotland. We are confident that together we can make this journey possible.

Ultimately, though, we will continue to look to children and young people affected by domestic abuse to tell us what difference we have made in their lives and to help us make the changes that are still needed.

THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE DELIVERY PLAN

The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group

The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group for Children and Young People (NDADG) was established in 2006 as a partnership between the Scottish Government's Equality Unit and the *Getting it right for every child* Team. It brings together work previously progressed by the National Group to Address Violence Against Women and the Better Outcomes for Children Working Group. The NDADG has four specific aims –

- Review current policy and practice in relation to children and young people affected by domestic abuse in Scotland.
- Develop and implement an integrated package of measures to improve outcomes for these children and young people, their families and communities.
- Oversee the implementation of the *Getting it right* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder in four local authority areas across Scotland – Dumfries & Galloway, Clydebank, Falkirk and North Edinburgh.
- Report to Ministers.

The NDADG is chaired by Colin MacLean, Director of Children Young People & Social Care Directorate, Scottish Government. Membership of the NDADG includes representatives from –

- Education, Justice and Health & Wellbeing Directorates – Scottish Government
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)
- Association of Chief Police Officers of Scotland (ACPOS)
- Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA)
- NHS
- Scottish Women's Aid
- Children in Scotland.

The full membership list (including, where relevant, networks of stakeholders each member represents) may be found in Annex A.

Members of the NDADG are organised into four Subgroups with the following remits –

- 1. Protection Subgroup** – to identify Priorities for Action to ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse are *safe*.
- 2. Provision Subgroup** – to identify Priorities for Action to ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse are *nurtured, healthy, respected, active* and *included*.
- 3. Primary Prevention through Education Subgroup** – to identify Priorities for Action to ensure *all* children and young people are *respected* and *responsible* – to prevent abuse in the future and in their own young relationships – and that children and young people affected by domestic abuse are *achieving*.
- 4. Participation Subgroup** – to identify Priorities for Action to ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse are *included* in developing policy and practice.

The organisational structure of the NDADG recognises that there will be overlaps between the four Subgroups' Priority Areas, and that these overlaps are desirable and will contribute to building a holistic, integrated response to domestic abuse across all agencies and sectors.

The Priorities for Action are set out in the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children & Young People.

Consultation Process and Evidence Base

The NDADG has supported members to consult their organisations and stakeholder networks on the Delivery Plan Priorities for Action. This has involved a number of issue-specific and multi-agency events and activities, enabling better mapping of current service provision for children affected by domestic abuse, as well as improving understanding of the issues faced by practitioners and agencies working to address the agenda.

Key to the Delivery Group's consultation process has been engagement with children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. The Participation Subgroup was set up to specifically focus on enabling the participation of children and young people in the development and implementation of the Delivery Plan.

Further evidence to inform the development of the Delivery Plan's Priority Areas for Action has been drawn from a range of relevant national and local statistical sources, academic research and pilot evaluation findings on Scottish initiatives to address domestic abuse.

A literature review of national and international research, legislation, policy and practice in the field of domestic abuse was commissioned from a small team of researchers to provide specific recommendations and directions for good practice within the broad scope of each of the Subgroups' remits. The literature review, authored by Professor Cathy Humphreys, Claire Houghton and Dr Jane Ellis, has been drawn on extensively in the Rationale for each Priority Area.

All key publications on which the Delivery Plan is based are listed in the References. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the Priority Areas and can be found online at www.scotland.gov.uk.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Overview

The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People considers how best to improve outcomes for all children and young people affected by domestic abuse, drawing on *Getting it right for every child* principles and values and the aims of the *National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland* (2000).

The cross-cutting nature of the issues surrounding domestic abuse is reflected in the breadth of policy links that will be built on throughout the Delivery Plan implementation phase. The Delivery Plan will sit alongside and interact with the *Violence Against Women Strategic Framework* and the *Early Years Strategy* (both forthcoming) as well as a number of other health, justice and education policy agendas.

Our approach to addressing domestic abuse and its impact on children and young people is developed in the context of the new National Performance Framework, which is set out in the *Government Economic Strategy*. It is also underpinned by legislation. The *Gender Equality Duty*, which came into force in April 2007 as part of the Equality Act 2006, requires public sector bodies in Scotland to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Domestic abuse, children and young people in Scotland

The *National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland* (2000) has united parliamentary agreement for its approach and its wide ranging actions. The Strategy, which will be taken forward in the context of the forthcoming *Violence Against Women Strategic Framework*, states that:

Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse) can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threat, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends).

Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women. The existence of violence against men is not denied, nor is the existence of violence in same sex relationships, nor other forms of abuse, but domestic abuse requires a response which takes account of the broader gender inequalities which women face.

In accepting this definition, it must be recognised that children are witness to and subjected to much of this abuse and there is a significant correlation between domestic abuse and the mental, physical and sexual abuse of children.

It must also be recognised that it is not necessary for children to directly witness or be subject to abuse to be affected by it. Domestic abuse can result in profound disruption to the stability and nurturing environment of a child's home, impacting on their physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, it must be recognised that young people may experience domestic abuse in their own relationships.

Despite many excellent policy and practice initiatives over the past decade, domestic abuse remains a serious, widespread and pervasive social problem in Scotland –

- The Police recorded 45,796 incidents of domestic abuse in 2005-6. Of these incidents, 87% involved a male perpetrator and female victim.
- An ACPOS snapshot survey, carried out in November 2006, revealed that 45% of incidents reported to the police over a two-week period had children in the family, (54% aged 0-4, 33% aged 5-11), that children were present in 70% of these incidents (with 55% of those witnesses) and that 91% of children were referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).
- In 2006-7, over 1,060 mothers & children sought refuge from Women's Aid organisations.
- There were 66,785 non-offence related referrals to SCRA in 2006-7, out of which at least 18,004 were for domestic abuse.

We know, however, that most cases of domestic abuse go unreported and the figures we have do not reveal the true extent of the problem. The lack of accurate national data and of the systematic collection of information about domestic abuse at a local level will be addressed in tandem to, and as part of, work taken forward under the implementation of the Delivery Plan. This work will be undertaken in collaboration with the National Group to Address Violence Against Women and colleagues in Community Planning Partnerships. It will support evidence-based policy making and ongoing service development at national and local level.

Our understanding of the complex impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and their families is also incomplete. Consultation with women, children and young people will therefore underpin both research and the evaluation of initiatives at local level. Already, listening to children and young people who have been involved in the NDADG, as well as findings from the literature review, has given us vital insight into their experiences, their views and needs.

Children and young people trying to cope with the fear and uncertainty of domestic abuse describe their needs in simple but absolute terms. They want the abuse to stop, they want to be safe and they want their non abusive parent, most frequently their mother, to be safe. One of the things they value most is having someone who will listen to them without making assumptions about their situation, someone who they can trust to help them make decisions when they are ready and someone who will help them overcome the many disruptions to their lives, such as moving house, difficulties at school or separation between their parents. Many children and young people do not know where they can turn to if support is not available through their immediate networks of friends and family. Many children too, live with the constant anxiety of what will happen to them, and their families, if other people find out about the abuse and try to get involved.

A key focus of the Delivery Plan is early identification and intervention for families who are at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse, or in need of additional support to prevent domestic abuse from becoming a risk. In this context, it will sit alongside and interact closely with the *Early Years Strategy*.

Crucially, the Delivery Plan sets out to build children and young people's trust and confidence that agencies will place their best interests, and the interests of their non-abusive parent, at the heart of their response to domestic abuse. We believe it is important to recognise that children affected by domestic abuse demonstrate remarkable resilience, and that the emphasis of any sustained intervention should be to strengthen their resilience and, where possible, enable them to secure their own outcomes. This means listening to children and, where appropriate, including them in any decision-making processes that affect them.

Undoubtedly, though, tackling the root causes of domestic abuse is the only way to eradicate it. *Preventing Domestic Abuse: A National Strategy* (2003) highlights the importance of a sustained and strategic approach to challenging society's attitudes, behaviours and the values that perpetuate gender inequality and male violence against women or children. The Delivery Plan seeks to identify and support action which will contribute to strengthening this approach, focusing on interventions targeted at and involving children and young people themselves.

We expect our children to develop, as they grow up, into confident individuals who have respect for self, respect for difference, and act responsibly and compassionately towards those they form relationships with. There is a crucial role for everyone who comes in contact with children and young people – within their family, their community or the services they access – to promote positive values which do not condone violence or abuse. Our aim is to build community capacity as well as the capacity of agencies, especially those involved in delivering *A Curriculum for Excellence*, to empower children and young people by providing them with the skills, knowledge and understanding which will enable them to develop positive relationships based on equality and respect and, in children's words, 'make domestic abuse a thing of the past.'

Getting it right for every child affected by domestic abuse

Getting it right for every child is a national programme that is changing the way adults think and act to help children and young people grow, develop and reach their full potential. *Getting it right* is about all children, not just children 'in need' or those most 'at risk'. The programme seeks to enable parents, families, practitioners and communities to identify, at the earliest possible stage, where support is needed for a child and to provide that support at the earliest opportunity.

Getting it right for every child experiencing domestic abuse asks how agencies can best work together to ensure that children and young people affected by domestic abuse are:

Safe: protected from abuse, neglect and harm by others at home, at school and in the community.

Nurtured: living within a supportive family setting, with additional assistance if required, or, where this is not possible, within another caring setting, ensuring a positive and rewarding childhood experience.

Healthy: enjoying the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy choices.

Achieving: supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, at school, and in the community.

Active: having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport which will contribute to healthy growth and development, both at home and in the community.

Respected: having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions which affect them.

Responsible: having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in their schools and communities and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision and being involved in decisions that affect them.

Included: having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

Getting it right Domestic Abuse Pathfinder

Delivery mechanisms which will support the *Getting it right* approach for children affected by domestic abuse are being developed in four Pathfinder areas across Scotland: Dumfries & Galloway, Clydebank, Falkirk and North Edinburgh.

This approach will require universal services and agencies –

- to be proactive about identifying risk associated with domestic abuse,
- to work together,
- to provide support for children that meets their needs in a holistic way, and respect their right, where appropriate, to confidentiality and to participate in any decision-making processes that affect them,
- to integrate support for children with support for their mothers,
- to put in place interventions for perpetrators, which hold them accountable for the abuse and place expectations on them to address their abusive behaviour.

We recognise that there are considerable workforce implications to enabling agencies deliver a personalised response for each child or young person affected by domestic abuse. The *Getting it right* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder is exploring ways to build on the many excellent resources that already exist at local level, including the Violence Against Women Training Consortia and the Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships, to help agencies deliver this response. Our work is carried out in accordance with the *Child Protection Audit and Review (2002)*, which recommends agencies move away from rigid child protection procedures in cases of domestic abuse, to ensure the needs of the 'whole child' are met in the context of their family and their environment.

Delivery Plan Framework

The Delivery Plan Framework has been used to guide the development of our Priorities for Action and will guide the future direction of the Delivery Plan implementation and review phase. We expect that our partners involved in the implementation phase, at national and local level, will work within this Framework to achieve better outcomes for all children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

The Framework recognises:

- The gendered nature of domestic abuse which locates domestic abuse within the context of broader inequalities between men and women in Scotland, and places responsibility for prevention and opportunities for action at individual, community and service level.
- The right of children and young people affected by domestic abuse to identify their needs, have their needs addressed and participate in developing services which aim to address their needs.
- The need for agencies to work across service boundaries; to place a child's safety and wellbeing at the heart of their response to domestic abuse and, in parallel, to ensure any action they take empowers and protects adult victims of domestic abuse, and holds perpetrators accountable for their abusive behaviour.
- The need for agencies and planners to take into account the experiences of specific groups of women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse who may face additional discrimination to ensure any action is relevant and appropriate to them.

DELIVERY PLAN PRIORITIES FOR ACTION



PROTECTION OVERVIEW

Children and young people affected by domestic abuse are safe

Children and young people living with domestic abuse are at increased risk of significant harm both as a result of direct abuse from the perpetrator and from witnessing harm to their non-violent parent or their siblings. It is not necessary, however, for children to directly witness or be subject to abuse to be affected by it. Domestic abuse can profoundly disrupt the stable and nurturing environment of a child's home, affecting their physical, mental and emotional health.

Clearly, domestic abuse can impact on every aspect of a child's wellbeing,³ however, the impact on any one child's wellbeing will vary. A number of protective factors, including the frequency, severity and length of exposure to abuse and the non-abusive parent's ability to maintain their parenting skills under such adverse conditions, are brought to bear on a child's resilience and ability to cope with the fear and uncertainty of living with domestic abuse. Research tells us that if the non-abusive parent, most frequently the mother, is not safe then it is unlikely that children will be. Indeed, children frequently come to the attention of child protection agencies at a point when the severity and length of exposure to abuse has had detrimental impact on the wellbeing of their mother, and has compromised her ability to nurture and care for them.

Focus on early identification, assessment and intervention through the provision of skilled and attentive universal services is therefore undoubtedly the best way to keep both children and their non-abusive parent safe. Given, however, what we know about the high degree of under-reporting of domestic abuse and the reticence of women to come forward unless directly questioned, it is crucial that practitioners in universal services routinely enquire about domestic abuse. The Delivery Plan's **Priority Area 1** sets out the development and implementation strategy for a programme of routine enquiry across a range of NHS Scotland health services. The programme implementation will be targeted at services where women who have experienced domestic abuse are likely to be disproportionately represented such as A&E, mental health and addiction services, community nursing, sexual health and maternity services.

No single agency or organisation is responsible for keeping children safe. **Priority Area 2** details plans for the development of a *Getting it right* approach which aims to improve all agencies' assessment and planning processes for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. The *Getting it right* approach, which is delivered through a Common Assessment Framework and supports agencies to share information and plan jointly for each child, will be tested in the four Pathfinder areas. The approach is based on recognition that protocols which recommend 'automatic referral' for all children living with domestic abuse to the Reporter are not effective, that a personalised approach to assessment and planning is required to meet individual children's needs, and that children and young people have the right to be involved, as far as possible, in any decision-making processes that affect them. Indeed, many children affected by domestic abuse may safely be supported through universal services and community-based provision. There will, though, undoubtedly be children whose needs are complex or who are at risk of serious harm. Referral to the Reporter, who will determine whether compulsory measures of supervision are necessary, is clearly appropriate in these cases.

³ The components of 'wellbeing' in the context of *Getting it right for every child* illustrate intended outcomes for any child. These components (safe, healthy, nurtured, active, achieving, included, respected, responsible) are therefore connected areas for consideration by all concerned in the support, assessment or plan of intervention for a child.

When undertaking assessment or planning for any child affected by domestic abuse, it is crucial that practitioners recognise that domestic abuse involves both an adult victim, most frequently the mother, and a child victim. The impact of domestic abuse on a child should be understood as a consequence of the perpetrator choosing to use violence in the environment of the child, rather than of the mother's failure to protect. Agencies should therefore work to ensure that they address the protection of children in parallel to the protection of their mothers, and that perpetrators are held accountable for the impact of domestic abuse on their families. The Delivery Plan **Priority Area 3** outlines measures that will support agencies address the perpetrator's actions and behaviour and safeguard children and their mothers from further harm. Key to this is the development of both court mandated and non-court mandated men's behavioural change (perpetrator) programmes with associated services for women and children.

Such measures, however, will only be effective within the context of an integrated criminal justice response to domestic abuse which sets and enforces sanctions against those who abuse their partners and children, and protects the victims of such abuse. **Priority Area 4** focuses on using learning from the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Pilot to inform future developments in the way that courts, and services linked into court processes, handle cases of domestic abuse.

Protection needs to be long-term and should not cease after separation between the abuser and the child's mother. Indeed, separation is frequently a time of increased risk for children and their non-abusing parent, when violence may escalate rather than abate. One area of critical concern is child contact where perpetrators may use contact to continue abuse of children and their mother. The recent amendment to the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 places a duty on courts to take domestic abuse into account when making orders about future contact or residence arrangements for children. It is too soon, however, to evaluate the impact of this legislation. Action to be taken forward under **Priority Area 5** will focus, in the short-term, on collecting evidence to improve current understanding of the issues surrounding contact, both privately arranged and court authorised, for children affected by domestic abuse. Building on this evidence base and on findings from the evaluation of the amendment to the Act (when this becomes available) we will consider whether future action is necessary to improve assessment, decision-making and planning in contact cases involving domestic abuse, and to ensure appropriate facilities and resources are available to women and children which mitigate the potential risks of contact with the abusive parent.

Priority Area 1

Improve the National Health Service (NHS) identification of, and response to, the needs of women and children experiencing domestic abuse.

Commitment	We will work in partnership with colleagues in the National Health Service (NHS) Scotland to build the capacity of Health Boards and health practitioners to implement a programme of routine enquiry of domestic abuse across specific health services by 2011.
Rationale	
<p>The financial costs of domestic abuse to the NHS are huge; a national study estimated the cost of domestic abuse to the NHS in England to be £1.2 billion per year (<i>Walby, 2004</i>). In Scotland, Health Boards and health practitioners have long been key allies in tackling domestic abuse. Women and children experiencing domestic abuse will present, often repeatedly, across the whole range of health services including accident & emergency departments, mental health and addiction services, sexual health and maternity services.</p> <p>Women's experience of violence during pregnancy is a case in point. A third of domestic abuse starts or escalates during pregnancy. This 'double intentioned violence' is both a form of child abuse and a serious aspect of domestic abuse and is supported by data which shows that abuse during pregnancy is linked to increases in risk of miscarriage and preterm birth. (<i>Humphreys et al, 2008</i>)</p> <p>Significant research has been undertaken about the response of pregnant women to routine questioning about domestic abuse. Evaluations have shown that most pregnant women do not object to being asked about domestic abuse (<i>Stenson et al, 2001</i>). However, the evaluations are also clear that the introduction of routine enquiry needs to be supported by training for health professionals involved, both to ensure they feel comfortable about asking women questions and to ensure appropriate follow-on intervention should women disclose abuse (<i>Taft, 2002</i>). The effectiveness of the programme therefore depends on robust joint-working arrangements between health services and other agencies which contribute to providing a holistic package of support to women and children, while ensuring perpetrators are held accountable for their abusive behaviour.</p> <p>The implementation of routine enquiry has been advocated at a UK level by the Home Office and the Department of Health. Professional bodies, including the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Psychiatry, also endorse this approach.</p> <p>The <i>Responding to Domestic Abuse in NHS Scotland: Guidance for Healthcare Staff</i> (2003) is being reviewed at present. Guidelines and assessment tools on routine enquiry will be part of the revised document. These will address the issues of <i>who should implement enquiry, when to do so, how to conduct routine enquiry, and where</i>. Guidance on recording and handling disclosure will also be included.</p> <p>A National Coordinator has been appointed to take this work forward and to direct and oversee the implementation of the programme of routine enquiry across Health Boards. Implementation will focus on specific services in which women affected by domestic abuse are likely to be disproportionately represented, including A&E, maternity services, mental health and addictions services, sexual health services and community nursing. Key considerations include fostering organisational change across health services to embed the programme into mainstream practice, the deployment of a robust workforce development strategy to ensure health practitioners are skilled and confident to undertake routine enquiry of domestic abuse, and the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the programme.</p>	

Priority Area 1 – continued

What children and young people have told us

Children and young people commenting on this Priority Area had diverse views about doctors or nurses and the extent to which they should try to obtain information. Whereas some doctors were perceived to be “nice”, others would not make the effort to speak to patients; it depended on the individual doctor.

Some young people thought that doctors did not need to know about a domestic abuse situation. For others, it was important that a doctor knew about the situation to understand what was wrong with a mother or child. Indeed, some of the children talked about this in terms of a child experiencing domestic abuse being “hurt” (*Smith et al, 2008*).

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will work with colleagues in the NHS and the National Coordinator to identify and set up implementation structures, including a National Steering Group, to coordinate the progressive introduction of a programme of routine enquiry across Health Boards and health services in Scotland.
- We will fund the appointment of a dedicated staff team, managed by the National Coordinator, to support Health Boards develop and implement an Action Plan for the introduction of routine enquiry across key services.
- We will work with the National Steering Group to ensure that Health Boards have resources in place, including a framework for evaluation, to support the effective implementation of these Action Plans. As part of this process, we will work with the National Group to Address Violence Against Women and maximise the contribution of the Violence Against Women Training Consortia to taking forward a sustainable workforce development strategy for practitioners involved in routine enquiry.
- We will use learning from the four Domestic Abuse Pathfinder areas to identify the barriers to, and outcomes of, use of health services by women and children affected by domestic abuse and to explore effective approaches to multi-agency involvement in routine enquiry processes.

Actions: Future Work

- We will work with the National Steering Group and with Health Boards on an ongoing basis to support them in taking forward their Action Plans and progressively introduce a programme of routine enquiry into key health settings, including A&E, maternity services, mental health and addictions services, sexual health services and community nursing.
- We will monitor and evaluate the programme implementation on an ongoing basis and use learning from the evaluation to inform the future direction of this work.

Key Outputs

- Increased capacity across Health Boards to implement a programme of routine enquiry for domestic abuse in key health settings, including better joined-up working between health services and other agencies to ensure timely and effective packages of support for women and children identified as experiencing domestic abuse.
- Development of workforce training initiatives aimed at improving healthcare providers' knowledge, skills and attitudes around domestic abuse, leading to increased proportion of providers able to undertake routine enquiry and provide appropriate follow-on support to women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the routine enquiry programme implementation.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will build the capacity of NHS Scotland to contribute to the early identification of and early intervention for children, young people and women affected by domestic abuse through implementing a programme of routine enquiry across key health services by 2011. Learning from developing and implementing the programme of routine enquiry may also be applied to improve NHS Scotland's response to other complex problems which impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and families, such as childhood sexual abuse or substance misuse.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support Health Boards and health practitioners across a range of services to –

- Improve the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- Ensure Scotland's people live longer, healthier lives.
- Provide a high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive service according to local people's needs.

Lead Government Division: Child & Maternal Health Division

Priority Area 2

Develop a universal, systematic approach to information gathering and decision making that will place children’s needs and wishes at the heart of agencies’ response to domestic abuse.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>Through the <i>Getting it right Domestic Abuse Pathfinder</i>, we will develop and test a range of tools that will enable a systematic approach to gathering information and decision making about children across the range of agencies. We will use learning from the Pathfinder to inform the development of a robust, national solution to risk assessment, risk management and safety planning for children affected by domestic abuse informed by <i>Getting it right</i> principles and values.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>A problem has arisen in many Western countries responding to domestic abuse whereby the safety of children is considered to have been secured by a referral or notification to the statutory child protection authority. In Scotland, the high number of referrals to the Reporter, and small proportion of those children referred going to a Children’s Hearing, suggests that concerns could be dealt with more quickly and appropriately through earlier action by agencies that provide help directly, unlike the Reporter who determines whether the child needs help <i>compulsorily</i>. (<i>Humphreys et al, 2008</i>)</p> <p>A more comprehensive and unified approach to identifying and meeting children’s needs and wishes should remove the need for automatic referrals to the Reporter of cases of domestic abuse. <i>“It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright”</i>, the Report of the Child Protection Audit and Review (<i>Scottish Executive, 2002</i>) states that ‘agencies and professionals need to exercise greater levels of judgement, in consultation with others, about the best approach to securing a child’s welfare’. This approach, to be shared across agencies, is based on recognition that ‘protecting the mother may be the best way to protect the children’ and that ‘more emphasis on working with men to challenge them about their behaviour and to assist them in changing it’ is necessary.</p> <p>Differentiating children who require statutory welfare or protection measures from others who can be safely supported in the community is not, however, straightforward. It will require agencies to develop shared risk assessment, risk management and safety planning processes which focus on the dangerousness of the perpetrator and take into account children’s own views, the environmental factors which contribute to their welfare, and the protection, needs and views of the non-abusive parent. (<i>Humphreys et al, 2008</i>)</p> <p>The implementation of a shared, systematic approach to information gathering and risk management can help bring about a cultural and practice shift, through enabling the transfer of knowledge, skills and resources across the range of agencies. In turn, this will result in the development of high levels of multi-agency cooperation which will ensure responses to children affected by domestic abuse are appropriate, proportionate and timely. This approach is supported through the <i>Getting it right for every child Domestic Abuse Pathfinder</i>.</p>	

Rationale – continued

Activities within the Pathfinder areas currently focus around developing and testing tools, including a Data Capture Form for adult victims and a Child Concern Form, which will improve consistency of information gathering where domestic abuse is reported or disclosed and where there are concerns about the welfare of a child. In parallel, the Pathfinder is supporting the development of information-sharing protocols and procedures across all agencies, including the police, education, health, the voluntary sector and Children’s Reporters to streamline communication and the decision-making process. To achieve this, each Pathfinder is drawing on local resources as well as identifying technological solutions to assist agencies to gain skills and develop capacity to work in this new multi-agency context.

What children and young people have told us

Children’s fear as a result of living with domestic abuse is frequently compounded by their fear of what will happen if an agency finds out about the abuse. Children, perhaps echoing their mother’s fears or their father’s threats, are likely to see telling a professional as inevitably leading to a child protection referral and therefore, putting themselves at risk of being taken into care. (Alexander et al 2005, Barron 2007, Stafford et al 2007)

“It’s like if social workers get involved, and then me, my brothers, would get taken off my mum and she’d be all on her ‘ain, so you cannae speak to, like teachers about it.” (Girl 13 in Stafford et al, 2007)

Children consulted on the Delivery Plan put forward different opinions about the extent to which specific agencies could help keep them safe. Many had personal experience of the negative impact of agencies intervening too much or not intervening enough in their home situation. For example, one young person talked about the police letting another incident happen by not doing anything the first time or said that calling them meant a worse attack when they’d gone (Houghton, 2008a). Another young person, though, had very positive experiences of police interventions –

“I think the reason that they [the police] did it so well was because they weren’t taken aback by the fact that ‘oh no there’s domestic abuse kind of thing going on here’ they just treated it as an assault– just that there’s an assault happened here, what you would normally do was remove that person from the situation, away from the situation, that’s why it worked so well.” (Girl in Houghton, 2008a)

Lack of communication between agencies was also an issue repeatedly highlighted –

“... law enforcement are usually the first on the scene when there’s an incident of domestic abuse and they communicate information about what’s happened to other agencies so I think the communication needs to improve between law enforcement and school. So if there’s been an incident of domestic abuse then the school knows about it but its still private enough that it’s confidential...” (Boy in Houghton, 2008a)

The same young person, also in Houghton (2008a), explained he didn’t think the council “had any idea what happened in our house” despite law enforcement involvement and complained about the need for Women’s Aid to “pester” housing departments constantly for them to be rehoused (8 months later). He agreed that links between police and schools, health and housing could be improved.

Priority Area 2 – continued

All children, however, were clear that improved communication or services should not come at the expense of their right to privacy and confidentiality. This went beyond seeking children’s agreement before sharing information between agencies. One child, for example, recommended that when police visit a home, they should make sure that their ‘panda car’ is not parked right outside the door because then the neighbours will know that there is a problem. (*Smith et al, 2008*)

Despite concerns about agencies’ involvement, all children’s headline message to other children is to speak to someone about the domestic abuse, because talking to someone will help stop the abuse –

“others will help you, you don’t have to do it alone, there are people to help you get over it” (Child in Stafford et al, 2007)

“I got help and now I am happy” (Child in Houghton, forthcoming)

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will complete Business Process Mapping in each Pathfinder area and establish baseline data.
- We will set up a timescale for the development and consultation process for the Data Capture Tool and Child Concerns Form.
- We will pilot the Data Capture Tool and Child Concerns Forms.

Actions: Future Work

- We will further develop the Consultation Framework and Communications Strategy.
- We will agree an Evaluation Framework for the Data Capture Tool and Child Concerns Form and publish outcomes.
- We will review existing *Getting it right* Project Plans and publish revised versions.

Key Outputs

- Development and piloting of a number of tools, including a Data Capture Tool and Child Concerns Form, specifically developed to support the *Getting it right* approach.
- Single system approach to children and young people affected by domestic abuse developed and implemented within each Pathfinder area.
- Publication of the evaluation of the current *Getting it right* Pathfinder programme.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will support the range of agencies involved in the *Getting it right* Pathfinder areas to improve the standard and quality of information gathering and decision making about children experiencing domestic abuse and to identify and eliminate any barriers that get in the way of helping these children. It will also ensure that learning from the Pathfinder is captured and disseminated in a way that enables local authorities and key service providers across Scotland to develop and adopt effective local approaches to implementing *Getting it right for every child*.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support practitioners across the range of services to –

- Improve the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- Provide a high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive service according to local people's needs.

Lead Government Divisions: Safer Children Stronger Families Division, Equality Unit

Priority Area 3

Develop interventions targeted at perpetrators of domestic abuse which are integrated with appropriate support services for women and children.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>We will build on the positive momentum driven by the accreditation process of the Caledonian Men’s Programme to ensure integrated and appropriate support provision for victims of domestic abuse and to improve the way perpetrators are currently dealt with by agencies both within and outwith the criminal justice system.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Child protection intervention has been the subject of extensive criticism for its focus on women as mothers rather than men as fathers (<i>Scourfield, 2001</i>). This problem takes on particular significance in the domestic abuse situation where there is both an adult victim, who is usually the child’s mother, as well as a child victim. The lack of intervention with the perpetrator – allowing perpetrators to remain ‘invisible’ – not only puts the burden for change on victims of domestic abuse but also places them at significant risk of continuing harm. (<i>Humphreys et al, 2008</i>)</p> <p>The need for multi-agency interventions which focus on protecting the child and adult victims while, in parallel, placing expectations for change on the perpetrator is a constantly repeating theme in literature on domestic abuse. Key to such an approach is the development of court-mandated men’s behavioural change programmes, referred to as ‘perpetrator programmes’, with associated support services for women and children. (<i>Humphreys et al, 2008</i>)</p> <p>Dobash et al’s (1999) Scottish study using partners’ accounts concluded that perpetrator programmes are the most successful criminal justice disposal in reducing men’s violence and abuse. Their effectiveness, however, depends greatly on the strength and consistency of the whole criminal justice response to perpetrators, including the policing, prosecution, court processes and probation services (<i>Gondolf, 2002 & 2004; Holder, 2001</i>). There is also some suggestion that an enhanced criminal justice response is equally dependent on the availability of a perpetrator programme as many judges want a suite of sentencing options available to them. (<i>Humphreys & Holder, 2001</i>)</p> <p>In Scotland, a number of Community Justice Authorities (CJAs) are currently supporting the delivery of different models of court-mandated domestic abuse perpetrator programmes, several of which have no associated victim support services. A move towards ensuring the consistency and quality of programmes is underway with the development of the Caledonian Men’s Programme. It will be road-tested in Edinburgh and submitted to the Scottish Panel for Accreditation of Offenders Programmes in Autumn 2008. The Programme has a strong emphasis on abusive men as fathers. Whether and how violent fathers can be part of children’s ‘healing process’ whilst maintaining safety of women and children is a dilemma of progressive perpetrator work at present (<i>Houghton, 2008b</i>). It is recognised however, that for many men who abuse, understanding the impact of their violence on children can be a key incentive towards changing their behaviour. (<i>Humphreys et al, 2008</i>)</p>	

Rationale – continued

If accredited, a multi-agency implementation group will be set up to assess applications from CJAs to run Caledonian. Though the provision of associated victim support services will be a fundamental pre-requisite for Caledonian, the Panel itself is not able to accredit services for victims. Parallel work is therefore necessary to support the replication of effective practice in this area. Funding for men's programmes is available to CJAs through Section 27 of the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act. This funding stream is specific to work furthering the supervision and care of persons put on probation or released from custody and cannot be used to set up support services for children and their mothers who are victims of domestic abuse.

Programmes for men in Scotland, outwith those offered through the criminal justice system, remain scarce and quality of practice is inconsistent. In many cases, interventions focus on addressing 'generic' anger management issues, an approach which is clearly inappropriate in domestic abuse situations. Literature on non-court mandated programmes highlights the fact that relatively few men who abuse go through the full court process to sentencing and argues for services that are open to referrals from other practitioners who may encounter domestic abuse, especially health practitioners and child protection workers. The development of effective non-court mandated programmes is recognised as a step towards giving practitioners the confidence to engage with perpetrators; to make them and, in consequence, the domestic abuse situation visible. (*Humphreys et al, 2008*)

Clearly though, making programmes open to referral from different agencies is not enough. Without adequate awareness, training and support practitioners are likely to 'avoid' identifying and engaging constructively with violent men (*O'Hagan & Dillenburger, 1995*). A key objective of the *Getting it right* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder is to build on existing workforce development initiatives, such as the Scottish Working With Men project in Edinburgh, to help bring about a shift in culture and practice so that all agencies have the capacity to develop interventions that hold perpetrators to account. This approach is supported by Respect, the national association of perpetrator programmes and partner support services, which provides a range of capacity building services for practitioners working in this field. Respect has a UK-wide membership but most of its funding is specifically to provide these services in England and Wales.

Priority Area 3 – continued

What children and young people have told us

Literature on children's perspectives of their domestically violent father, of what he could do to repair the damage he has caused or, even more specifically, of whether different interventions that help him change would make them feel safer or better about having a relationship with him, is limited. This is due to researchers' reticence about raising this very sensitive issue with children but also it is symptomatic of the invisibility of domestic abuse perpetrators as violent fathers in children's services, child protection and domestic abuse agendas. (*Houghton, 2008b*)

The most overwhelming feeling children express about their abusive father is being frightened of him and feeling sad (*Morrison, forthcoming; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al, 2002*). Children reveal complex emotions, almost all negative – sad, angry, loss, including the extremes of emotion – hate, and (far less commonly in children's accounts) love (*Morrison, forthcoming; McGee, 2000; Alexander et al, 2005; Mullender et al, 2002*). For all children and young people, and especially for children who blame themselves for the domestic abuse, it is important that agencies hold perpetrators openly accountable for the impact of their behaviour on their families.

Many of the children and young people consulted on the Delivery Plan were supportive of making programmes available to men to help them 'control their anger'. They were very clear, however, that men should want to go on these programmes and should want to change, otherwise it could just make things worse. (*Smith et al, 2008*)

In Morrison's study on contact arrangements (*forthcoming*) children were asked if fathers could do or say anything to make them feel better about the domestic abuse they had experienced. This question elicited three clear messages from children: nothing he could do, stop being abusive, apologise for what he had done and be sincere in his apology. For other children talking to him was futile "what difference would saying anything make?" (*pupil in Alexander et al, 2005*). Indeed, children in Morrison said fathers lied about changing to get what they wanted, for example so as not to be charged, or that he could change but doesn't want to –

"If you've always been violent you can't just stop, cos that makes you feel good it makes you feel big and strong." (Child in Morrison, forthcoming)

"If somebody's violent then they can always go and get help, like anger management an' that. But sometimes it's their will power and they don't want to stop." (Child in Morrison, forthcoming)

To date there have been no evaluations of perpetrator programmes that have drawn directly on the views and experiences of children and young people whose fathers are attending the programme. This lack of knowledge will be addressed through action taken forward over the next three years.

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will support the development and pilot, and explore options for the accreditation, of a Woman & Children's Manual which will outline minimum standards expected of practitioners and agencies delivering associated victim support services.
- We will work with colleagues in Government and local government to build the capacity of integrated support services for children, young people and women whose partners are taking part on court-mandated perpetrator programmes and identify sustainable funding arrangements for such services. Subject to the successful accreditation of the Caledonian Men's Programme, this programme of work will be closely linked to the roll out of Caledonian across Community Justice Authorities.
- We will work with key training providers, including the Violence Against Women Training Consortia, to ensure that initiatives that build the capacity of workforces to respond appropriately to domestic abuse encompass action to support agencies to develop interventions to hold perpetrators to account and place expectations on them to change.
- To further support improvement in the way perpetrators are currently dealt with by agencies both within and outwith the criminal justice system, we will explore the need for a Scottish base for Respect.

Actions: Future Work

- Subject to successful accreditation of the Caledonian Men's Programme, we will explore the feasibility of adapting the Caledonian guidelines and protocols for non-court mandated programmes and of piloting and evaluating this approach with partner agencies.

Key Outputs

- Publication of practice tools and guidance to inform the development of accredited court-mandated perpetrator programmes and of integrated, high quality partner support services across Community Justice Authorities in Scotland.
- Increase in funding available at national and local level to support the development of accredited, court-mandated perpetrator programmes which have associated, high quality support services for adult and child victims of domestic abuse, with a corresponding increase in such programmes and services across Scotland
- Increase in availability of training and workforce development opportunities which aim to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of practitioners outwith the criminal justice system to identify and engage with men who are violent or abusive towards their partners and children.
- Publication of practice tools and guidance to inform the development of high quality, effective non court-mandated perpetrator programmes with integrated partner support services across local authorities in Scotland.

Priority Area 3 – continued

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will support Community Justice Authorities and local authorities to design and deliver services which improve the way male perpetrators are currently dealt with by agencies both within and outwith the criminal justice system, while increasing the safety and wellbeing of women and children affected by domestic abuse.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support Community Justice Authorities, local authorities and practitioners across a range of agencies to contribute towards –

- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.
- Ensuring both child and adult victims of domestic abuse are able to live their lives safe from crime, disorder and danger as a result of ongoing abuse from the perpetrator.

Lead Government Divisions: Effective Practice Division, Equality Unit

Priority Area 4

Further develop specialist approaches to the handling of domestic abuse cases within the criminal justice system.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>We will take forward Ministers’ decisions on the report of the Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group. Using a toolkit approach, we will use learning from the Glasgow experience and elsewhere to support and encourage criminal justice agencies across Scotland to review their practice and improve handling of domestic abuse cases in court.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Swift and effective action within the criminal justice system to deal with violent and abusive behaviour remains the most effective child protection strategy. This involves high quality policing, consistent prosecution, efficient case management, appropriate judgments, and strong support for adult victims within the justice process. (<i>Holder, 2001</i>)</p> <p>The evaluations of specialist domestic abuse courts suggest that these courts can make a difference to the effectiveness of criminal justice and the satisfaction of victims with the process. The response is complex and dependent upon good quality policing, evidence gathering and strengthening victim support (<i>Cook, 2003; Stubbs, 2005</i>). Scotland’s Pilot Domestic Abuse Court, which currently serves Glasgow’s G division, was set up in October 2004. The pilot evaluation evidenced an increase in guilty pleas, quality of evidence, fast tracking and, crucially, safety and participation of the victim (<i>Reid-Howie, 2007</i>). Integral to the court pilot is a specialist victim service (ASSIST – Advice, Support, Safety & Information Services Together) which includes a specific child/young person’s advocacy and support service and the development of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) approach including professionals related to children, women and perpetrators.</p> <p>Although the pilot evaluation did not examine the experiences of children and young people in detail, almost all victims (91%) who identified that their children were involved in a case stated that they were happy with the way they were treated. (<i>Reid-Howie, 2007</i>) A separate evaluation of ASSIST found that reports from the children that were referred to the ASSIST project were ‘overwhelmingly positive’, with improved wellbeing and school performance seen to be linked with attending sessions with the Children and Young Persons’ Advocacy Worker (CYPAW). (<i>Robinson, 2006</i>)</p> <p>The Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court pilot has been extended until Autumn 2008. The Glasgow Domestic Abuse Court Feasibility Study Group has been formed with multi-agency participation to assess the feasibility of alternative options for a Domestic Abuse court for the whole of Glasgow. The report of the Group was submitted to Ministers in Spring 2008.</p> <p>In parallel, a ‘toolkit’ has been commissioned by the Criminal Procedure Division in the Scottish Government to support self-assessment by local criminal justice agencies across Scotland and to encourage innovative approaches to the handling of domestic abuse cases in court.</p>	

Priority Area 4 – continued

What children and young people have told us

Children and young people consulted on the Delivery Plan expressed diverse views on courts, stemming mainly from direct experience of being involved in court cases (it is important to note that, when discussing this Priority Area, children and young people did not identify whether their experience stemmed from being involved in civil or criminal cases). For some, if a court could deal more rapidly with the case, with less “palaver” and with people feeling safer, this was positive. For others, though, it was doubtful whether improving court processes could actually stop the abuse and if it didn’t, they thought it would have little point. (*Smith et al, 2008*)

During the same consultation event, general discussions around courts raised complicated issues. Some children did not know who to believe when parents were saying different things in court. There seemed to be little information and understanding about what was going on generally. But it was also important to some that those in court understood the position of families and that young people should have the opportunity to give their views. Attendance at court could be frightening. One participant stated they were scared of being left alone in a room but felt more secure due to the presence of an armed police officer. It was also suggested that a special room for children and a support worker would help. (*Smith et al, 2008*)

There exists very little research on the court experiences of children affected by domestic abuse (*Houghton, 2008b*). This issue will be addressed in action taken forward under the Delivery Plan.

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will work with colleagues in relevant Scottish Government Divisions, the Scottish Court Service, Crown Office, Strathclyde Police, Glasgow City Council and other stakeholder agencies to implement Ministers’ decisions on the report of the feasibility study on specialist domestic court provision for Glasgow. As part of that, we will work with partner agencies – national and local – on the provision of victim and family support services.
- We will reflect the lessons learned from the evaluation of the pilot court in Glasgow, and from other research and practice innovations, in a toolkit for local criminal justice agencies in order to support their self-assessment and practice development.

Actions: Future Work

- We will explore and support professional development opportunities for all those engaged in the handling of cases.
- We will ensure that the approach adopted in Glasgow is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Key Outputs

- Implementation of Ministers' decisions on the Feasibility Study Group report, leading to an increase in the number of domestic abuse cases that are processed through specialist court arrangements in Glasgow and an increase in the number of child and adult victims of domestic abuse who are able to access support services linked into such court arrangements.
- Production of a toolkit to inform practice development across local criminal justice agencies and the adoption of effective approaches to court handling of domestic abuse cases.
- Increase in availability of training and workforce development opportunities which aim to build the capacity of agencies involved in or linked to court services across Scotland to identify and implement changes that improve local approaches to court handling of domestic abuse cases.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will support the range of agencies involved in the Glasgow pilot to build on their approach to the specialist handling of domestic abuse cases in court and the provision of integrated advocacy and support services, thus increasing the safety and wellbeing of child and adult victims. It will also ensure that learning from the Glasgow model is captured and disseminated in a way that enables criminal justice agencies and key service providers across Scotland to develop and adopt effective local approaches to the courts handling of domestic abuse cases.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support the Scottish Court Service, Crown Office and agencies involved in or linked to court services across Scotland to contribute towards –

- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.
- Ensuring both child and adult victims of domestic abuse are able to live their lives safe from crime, disorder and danger as a result of ongoing abuse from the perpetrator.

Lead Government Divisions: Criminal Procedure Division, Equality Unit

Priority Area 5

Ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse do not experience additional physical, emotional or psychological harm as a consequence of contact arrangements (both court and privately arranged) with the abusive parent.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>We will address the lack of Scottish research on contact arrangements in cases involving domestic abuse (court and privately arranged). From this evidence base, we will identify such measures as necessary to improve assessment, decision-making and planning processes in contact cases involving domestic abuse, and ensure appropriate facilities and resources are available to women and children to mitigate the potential risks of contact with the abusive parent.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Provisions made in Sections 1 and 2 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 state that contact is both a parental right and a responsibility. It goes on to articulate that these rights should be fulfilled where they are in the ‘best interests’ of the child. Children’s ‘best interests’, however, are generally defined by adults (<i>Archard, 2004</i>) and there exists a social, political and legal sensibility that contact with both parents is always beneficial to children.</p> <p>Positive outcomes through contact are inextricably linked to the quality and nature of the relationship between children and the non-resident parent, rather than to contact per se (<i>Lamb, 1997</i>). ‘Unsophisticated’ and universal approaches to contact fail to take into account the fact that, in the context of domestic abuse, one parent is a threat to the other parent and to the child, and that this threat often increases after separation.</p> <p>In Scotland, contact in cases involving domestic abuse was an issue keenly debated during the progress of the Family Law (Scotland) Bill as it progressed through Parliament in 2005. As a result, section 11 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 was amended to provide the factors that a court must take into account in determining the child’s welfare when making orders about future contact or residence arrangements for children. These factors include –</p> <p><i>Any domestic abuse, including its impact on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the safety of the child and other family members</i> • <i>the ability of the person who engaged in domestic abuse to care for and meet the needs of the child;</i> • <i>and the appropriateness of making an order that would require the parents to cooperate on issues affecting the children.</i> <p>It is too early to evaluate the amendments to the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and knowledge in relation to contact, domestic abuse and court processes, including the outcomes of court-arranged contact for children and their mothers is limited. Concerns have been raised by Scottish Women’s Aid and other service providers that women and children are often disadvantaged by being unaware of their rights under section 11. Their disadvantage can be compounded by a lack of awareness amongst court practitioners of the nature of domestic abuse and of the relevant legislation, leading to solicitors not adequately representing women or children and contact being awarded to the abusive parent.</p>	

Rationale – continued

Equally, very little is known about the processes and outcomes of privately arranged contact in cases where there is a history of domestic abuse. As the majority of cases involving issues about contact are negotiated privately, this is an area which clearly requires attention.

Frequently, an outcome of negotiations, both in court arranged and privately arranged contact, involves referral to family contact centres. The volume of referrals far exceeds centre capacity across Scotland, with some rural areas offering no contact facilities at all (*McGuckin et al, 2004*). Furthermore, concerns have been raised with respect to the capacity of centres to provide a safe environment for families affected by domestic abuse, especially when women and children are at high risk of repeat victimisation from the abusive parent. Confusion about the services centres offer – mainly around the difference between ‘supervised’ and ‘supported’ contact – can lead to both legal practitioners and families having unrealistic expectations of how contact visits will be managed. (*National Centre for Scottish Research, 2004*)

What children and young people have told us

Children and young people affected by domestic abuse have very different views about whether and how they want contact. After separation children’s fear of their father is often compounded by fear of what might happen if they see him again. (*Morrison, forthcoming; Mullender et al, 2002*).

“I am very scared and frightened of my daddy. I am mad with my daddy for hurting my mummy and me and my sisters and brother, I want my daddy to stay out of my life but he is taking it to court to see us... I am very scared in case no-one listens to me, I want to be heard what if they don’t listen? I don’t want to be made to see my dad please help me and my family.” (Tara, 8 years in Barron, 2007)

“...sometimes it starts off like that (contact with fathers) and then they’ll hold them (the children) hostage and want custody.” (Child from Morrison, forthcoming)

Other children report feelings of loss and confusion, of hating the violence but also of wanting him to remain part of their lives

“I kind of missed my dad when my mum and dad split up. But I kind of didn’t cause of all the things he did. Once they get in contact with you, you just act all weird. Cos like you’re happy and sad at the same time. You go depressed.” (Child from Morrison, forthcoming)

“He hurt my mum, so I don’t know what makes me want to keep seeing him” (Child in Morrison, forthcoming)

Children consulted on the Delivery Plan felt strongly that the violence should stop for there to be contact and that they should be safe, and the vast majority of children were very sceptical about violent fathers ever changing (*Smith et al, 2008*). Children also feel that they should be consulted on whether they want contact in the first place and, if they do want contact, on how it should take place –

“Do something fun, something safe. Something like where there are CCTV cameras or guards. Something that someone could see what was happening.” (Child in Morrison, forthcoming)

Priority Area 5 – continued

One child in Morrison (*forthcoming*) was particularly frustrated that their opinion was not considered because of their age: 'you've got to be over twelve to decide.'

Children's accounts across studies showed the ongoing manipulation and abuse of both women and children through contact (*Houghton, 2008b*) Many children give vivid examples of abusive contact and the distressing effects of contact calls, visits and using contact centres.

"Because if you're scared, they might scare you over the phone – like say I'm coming to get you. And if you say you don't want to go they might say I'm going to get your mum arrested and say it's her that's been hitting you. Sometimes he'd tell my sister to tell my mum stuff to scare her." (Child in Morrison, *forthcoming*)

One child described her father using contact as an opportunity to "pump her for info" (*Girl aged 12 in Mullender*) about the mother and her movements while another child described the disappointment of the father not turning up at a contact centre for an arranged visit.

INT: *How does it make you feel when he doesn't turn up?*

RES: *Quite sad cos we only get to see him once a week and he doesn't turn up, cos he does not like doing it with social workers. Cos he doesn't like getting listened to.* (Child in Morrison, *forthcoming*)

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will develop a greater understanding of contact cases involving domestic abuse (both court and privately arranged) by engaging with, and drawing on the experience of, parents, children legal practitioners and others.
- We will work with colleagues in Family Mediation Scotland, other contact centre providers and relevant agencies to explore the contribution of centre services to providing a safe environment for contact between children and the abusive parent.

Actions: Future Work

- Drawing on the evidence base from research into contact and from the work outlined above, we will work with partners in Government and relevant organisations to identify and test such measures which are necessary to improve decision-making in contact cases (both court and privately arranged) involving domestic abuse.
- Building on work with Family Mediation Scotland and other centre providers, we will identify and develop such measures that are necessary to improve contact centre provision for children affected by domestic abuse.
- We will ensure that findings from research and knowledge gained from the work outlined above is captured and disseminated in a way that is accessible and of value to relevant stakeholder groups, including practitioners in legal agencies, organisations working with women and children affected by domestic abuse and the general public.

Key Outputs

- Increase in knowledge around the issues surrounding contact arrangements in cases involving domestic abuse (both court and privately arranged) and corresponding increase in awareness amongst relevant stakeholder groups.
- Increase in knowledge around issues surrounding contact arranged through family contact centres in cases involving domestic abuse and corresponding increase in awareness amongst relevant stakeholder groups.
- New measures, identified based on evidence of need, developed and tested to assess effectiveness in improving contact arrangements and provision for children affected by domestic abuse.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will enable Government, local government and other key delivery partners including the range of practitioners involved in civil court proceedings, the Law Society, Scottish Women's Aid and Family Mediation Scotland, to develop shared understanding of the issues surrounding contact for families affected by domestic abuse and work collaboratively to design and put in places measures which help ensure that contact arrangements do not compromise the safety and wellbeing of child and adult victims of domestic abuse.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support Government, local government and the range of delivery partners to contribute towards –

- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.
- Ensuring both child and adult victims of domestic abuse are able to live their lives safe from crime, disorder and danger as a result of ongoing abuse from the perpetrator.

Lead Government Divisions: Family Law Division, Equality Unit, Safer Children, Stronger Families Division

PROVISION OVERVIEW

Children and young people affected by domestic abuse are nurtured, healthy, respected, active and included

Protection without healing does not fulfil the purpose of keeping children nurtured and safe. Living with domestic abuse, witnessing the abuse of a parent or being directly abused themselves, can be a profoundly traumatic experience for children and young people. The many disruptions to their environment as a consequence of domestic abuse, including the need to move accommodation or school and the loss of friends and possessions, are also likely to impact on their health, their wellbeing and their educational attainment.

Research reveals that, compared to their peers, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse show much higher rates of depression, anxiety and behavioural and cognitive problems which may continue to affect them throughout their adult lives. The immediate impact of domestic abuse is found to vary according to a child's development stage and their vulnerability, as well as the severity and length of exposure to abuse. Children who are unable to vocalise their feelings, such as very young children, tend to be the group who show the most apparent behavioural disturbances, including loss of previously acquired development skills, sleep disturbance, separation anxiety and repeating themes of trauma incidents in their play.

Whilst the impact of domestic abuse on a child's or young person's physical, psychological and emotional health can be both profound and enduring, long-term damage is not inevitable. The right kind of support, provided at the right time, can reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children's present and future wellbeing. It can enable them not only to survive their experiences but, as exemplified by the children and young people who have lead the work of the NDADG, it can also empower them to become compelling activists and effective change-makers in their own rights.

Even in the absence of support from agencies, it must be recognised that many children still demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of their circumstances and can develop complex survival strategies in order to cope with the levels of violence at home. Factors which contribute to a child's resilience include the strength and stability of support through their networks of family and friends, from sources in their wider community and, crucially, from their non-abusive parent. Practitioners need to respect and build on children's own survival strategies, recognise their resilience and enable them, where possible, to secure their own outcomes. This means listening to children and helping them identify themselves the best ways to support them.

Children and young people consulted on the Delivery Plan Priority Areas have clear views about the full range of support that should be available for all children affected by domestic abuse. Opportunities to talk to children in the same circumstances and to become involved in activities that can take their minds off things were seen to be important. However, access to a dedicated support worker, someone they can trust and confide in for as long as they need, was explicitly identified by almost every single child as having the most immediate, positive impact on helping them through their experiences. The Delivery Plan **Priority Area 6** takes forward their recommendations to improve the availability, quality and range of local, specialised domestic abuse services for children and young people. It seeks to build on and sustain progress achieved through the implementation of the Children's Services Women's Aid Fund, recognising that, demand for services still exceeds current availability and more must be done to ensure specialist support provision meets the needs of particular groups of children and young people including very young children, children with complex needs, from minority ethnic backgrounds or from rural areas and young people with experience of domestic abuse in their own relationships.

One of the most detrimental effects of domestic abuse is the potential for the abuse to significantly undermine the relationship between children and their parents. Support services for children should be separate but integrally linked with support services for the adult victim, most frequently their mother, and interventions with the perpetrator. Interventions for men who use violence are explored in Priority Area 3. **Priority Area 7** looks at ways that agencies providing therapeutic interventions for victims of domestic abuse can offer structured opportunities for children to communicate with their non-violent parent about what has happened and to rebuild their relationship, if this has been damaged. It supports the development of a Community Groupwork Programme pilot across three Scottish local authorities. The programme, based on a Canadian model, has proven international effectiveness. It is designed around separate but concurrent groupwork sessions for children and their mothers affected by domestic abuse, with opportunities for joint sessions as the programme progresses.

The provision of emotional support and therapeutic interventions to reduce the impact of domestic abuse on the wellbeing of children is undoubtedly important. Equally of importance, however, is the provision of practical assistance to ease the difficult transitions children, young people and their non-abusive parent may face as a consequence of domestic abuse. Of these transitions, moving out of their home because of risk of harm from the perpetrator and, in some cases, the necessity to keep 'on the move' frequently leads to a spiral of homelessness, poverty, disruption to schooling or employment and loss of contact with friends, family and communities. Action under **Priority Area 8** will focus, in the short-term, on improving understanding through research of the barriers which prevent women and children from accessing appropriate levels of coordinated support to stay safely in their own homes or to make the move into alternative accommodation without facing additional economic or social disadvantages. From this evidence base, future action will focus on developing measures which enable local authorities and relevant agencies to deliver better joined-up responses to the housing and support needs of those affected by domestic abuse.

The themes of workforce development and interagency working, both at a strategic and operational level, in order to deliver better joined-up responses for children and families cut across the entire Delivery Plan. Action under each Priority Area takes into account the need for specific workforce interventions to achieve each Area's discrete outcomes. **Priority Area 9** recognises, however, that a consistent approach to workforce development across different sectors and agencies can best be supported through a common framework of action, identified through partnership at a national level, and a shared understanding of the needs, views and wishes of children affected by domestic abuse.

Priority Area 6

Ensure all children and young people affected by domestic abuse have access to specialist services that meet their needs.

Commitment	We will take action to ensure that progress establishing a range of specialist domestic abuse services for children and young people across Scotland is built upon over the next three years and we will work with key service providers and Children’s Planners to ensure the long-term sustainability of high quality specialist support services for all children and young people affected by domestic abuse.
Rationale	
<p>It cannot be underestimated that children affected by domestic abuse need an adult they can trust other than their family to speak to. Indeed, they need to speak <i>about</i> their mum/family and may also need help in speaking <i>with</i> their mum. (Houghton, 2008b) Clearly, children can be supported in many ways by the range of professionals involved in their lives, including teachers, youth workers or social workers. However, in children’s own words, what they benefit most from is ‘their own worker’, who understands their situation without judging and who is there for them ‘all the way through’. (Fitzpatrick, 2003)</p>	
<p>Children and young people in Scottish Women’s Aid’s <i>Listen Louder</i> Campaign ensured that children’s need for support workers was recognised by the Scottish Parliament. The Campaign resulted in the launch of the Children’s Services Women’s Aid Fund 2006-08 (CSWAF06), enabling each Women’s Aid group in Scotland to set up a minimum standard of two refuge/follow-on children’s support workers and one outreach children’s support worker.⁴ (Houghton, 2008b)</p>	
<p>The interim evaluation of the CSWAF06 evidenced the emergence of many effective models of provision across Women’s Aid groups which enable interventions to be tailored to meet individual needs. Such interventions include innovative approaches to keyworking, work around building children’s resilience, intense post-crisis counselling, combinations of individual 1-to-1 and groupwork support, and offering a range of therapeutic activities. The evaluation report concluded that diversified approaches to specialist provision which increase choices for children and young people on the type of support they receive should become more widely implemented. (Stafford et al, 2007)</p>	
<p>Key to children’s resilience in the face of domestic abuse is not only for them to have a strong relationship with the non-abusing parent but also that they see this relationship as having authority. Specialist support provision for children should therefore be separate but linked to provision for their non-abusing parent, usually their mother, so there is the capacity to strengthen the mother-child relationship. Provision for children should also be linked to interventions for the abusive parent, where such interventions seek to hold the abusive parent accountable for their behaviour and to keep women and children safe from further harm. (Humphreys et al, 2008)</p>	

⁴ Where Women’s Aid groups have not had the capacity to manage these posts services have been delivered through the local authority.

Priority Area 6 – continued

Despite direct funding to Women's Aid groups and the recent establishment of specialist domestic abuse services through other fund sources,⁵ there are still children without access to support. A significant number of Women's Aid groups report waiting lists and capacity issues which prevent them reaching out to all children, especially those in remote and rural areas of Scotland. (*Women's Aid –CSWAF Grant Monitoring Reports*) Particular gaps have been identified in community-based outreach services (*Women's Aid –CSWAF Grant Monitoring Reports*), in 'in depth' mental health support including counselling (*Houghton, 2008b*) and in services for young people with experience of domestic abuse in their own relationships. (*National Children & Young People's Network, 2007*) Gaps in service provision for children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities have also been highlighted by Shakti Women's Aid and Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid.

What children and young people have told us

Without exception, children consulted on the Delivery Plan Priorities describe the help they have received from specialist children's workers (mainly through Women's Aid but also through other statutory and voluntary sector organisations) as crucial to enabling them, and their mothers, survive their experience of domestic abuse. One child in *Stafford et al (2007)* saying it was matter of life or death, and many children wishing it was available earlier. (*Houghton, 2008a; Houghton, 2008b; Stafford et al, 2007*)

"I always felt like I wanted somebody to speak to because I was feeling like I was just piling and piling it all on myself. ... I couldn't really talk to my mum about things no matter how close we were, because it was her that I was trying to protect, it was all to do wi' her that I was wanting to talk to somebody about." (Girl in Houghton, 2008a)

"Support workers don't just help children they also help the adults, however they are mainly there for children which is the most important thing ... [support workers] would take me and my mother out and we would discuss problems from both ends – my mothers point of view and mine as well." (Boy in Houghton, 2008a)

What children appreciate is getting to know someone (crucially *one named person*) in a relaxed atmosphere, where children set the pace and content, and where innovative ways of communicating are found – from computer work, talking about whatever's important to the child or about 'anything but', going out, eating out, drawing, writing. (*Houghton, 2008b*) Children's support workers are valued both for the emotional and the practical assistance they provide –

- Being there when a child needed them; even making time in a busy schedule if necessary.
- Listening and understanding the children and their feelings.
- Keeping children informed about *what* is happening and helping them to understand *why*.
- Providing advice, including how the children can keep safe. (*Smith et al, 2008*)

Four key interlinked issues for children accessing support are repeatedly highlighted – *trust, confidentiality, sharing information* and *not being identified*. (*Houghton, 2008b*) As such, for children the most important qualities in a support worker is that they are able to trust them and that support workers will keep things in confidence throughout. Though children and young people are mostly clear about the limits of confidentiality, they feel that they should be more involved in deciding what information should be shared and with whom.

⁵ For example Barnardos' Tayside Domestic Abuse Initiative and the Children 1st Shine Through project funded through the Violence Against Women Fund 2006-08.

What children and young people have told us – continued

"[Support workers] would keep it all confidential and if they think it's really serious they would speak to you about it and see if you wanted to speak to someone about it or if you wanted them to do it on your behalf" (Boy from Houghton, 2008a)

Equally, it is vital for children that the support they receive does not identify them as 'experiencing domestic abuse' to others, including their peers, or brand them as having some sort of problem. Being referred to counselling services can be perceived as a case in point –

"Counselling is kinda branding that there's something wrong with you, but there's nothing wrong with you, you're just been through an ordeal." (Girl in Houghton, 2008a)

How we will take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- Taking into consideration learning from the past two years and the findings from the interim evaluation, we will review the current resources and support offered to Women's Aid projects through the CSWAF06 and make dedicated funding and support, including appropriate workforce development opportunities, available for Children's Workers across Scotland over the period 2008-11.
- We will use findings from the final CSWAF06 evaluation report (due in summer 2008) to gain children's views and the views of practitioners on the impact of the CSWAF 2006-08 at local level and we will use both the evaluation and feedback from projects, to inform the ongoing development of services for children affected by domestic abuse.
- In partnership with key delivery agencies and colleagues in local authorities, we will develop a national picture of the range of local services, both specialist and generic, which provide support to children, young people and their mothers affected by domestic abuse.
- In partnership with local and national service providers, we will take action to facilitate the replication of effective practice, to identify and address gaps in service provision and to ensure services for children are integrated with services for their mothers and interventions with the perpetrator.

Actions: Future Work

- We will actively encourage and support awareness-raising activities at local level, especially the involvement of children and young people in these activities, which aim to increase understanding of the value of specialist support services to improving outcomes for children affected by domestic abuse.
- In partnership with local and national service providers, we will explore how we achieve the future sustainability of specialist services for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Priority Area 6 – continued

Key Outputs

- Increase in funding available at national and local level to build the capacity of key service providers in the statutory and voluntary sectors enabling them to provide high quality specialist domestic abuse services for children and young people. This will lead to an increase in the number of children and young people supported through specialist domestic abuse services across Scotland, with particular focus on an increase in the number of children and young people supported in the community.
- Increased knowledge of the support needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse, (especially of those children and young people facing additional discrimination or whose needs are complex) with parallel, ongoing mapping of the range of local services, both specialist and generic, which provide support to children, young people and their mothers affected by domestic abuse.
- Development of workforce training and awareness-raising initiatives for practitioners working with children and young people affected by domestic abuse, aimed at improving knowledge, skills and attitudes around domestic abuse and its impact on children and young people and leading to increased proportion of practitioners across the range of services able to plan and provide appropriate, high quality specialist support for this group.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will support Children's Services Planners and key service providers in local government and the voluntary sector, including the network of Women's Aid groups, Children 1st, Barnardos and others, to build the capacity of local services for children and young people affected by domestic abuse and ensure that all children and young people across Scotland have access to specialist services that meet their needs no matter where they live.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support local government and the range of service providers to contribute towards –

- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.
- Ensuring young people affected by domestic abuse are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Lead Government Division: Equality Unit

Priority Area 7

Develop and pilot a community-based groupwork intervention for children and their mothers affected by domestic abuse.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>We will support the development and implementation of a National Community Groupwork Programme pilot across Edinburgh, Fife and Forth Valley Councils and work with the National Partnership Group to disseminate findings from the ongoing evaluation of this pilot. Subject to positive findings of the evaluation, we will consider ways of supporting the replication of the community groupwork model across Scotland.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Group intervention strategies with children and young people have the benefit of addressing the issues of secrecy, supporting children to feel less isolated and strengthening their peer relationships (<i>Mullender et al, 2002</i>). Evaluations of groupwork models of support highlight a range of benefits for children including: positive changes in children’s aggressive behaviour; greater knowledge of safety; changed attitudes to violence; strengthened relationships between mothers and children; reduction in feelings of shame or guilt and helping them deal with their emotions towards the abusive father (<i>Sudermann et al, 2000; Debbonaire, 2007</i>).</p> <p>Clearly though, group intervention strategies need to be carefully planned and structured around the needs, interests and abilities of young participants. Different sessions for different age-groups, for example, are a pre-requisite for children and young people getting the most from their experience. (<i>Smith et al, 2008</i>) Equally, it must be recognised that many children may benefit best from ongoing one-to-one support or may not even wish to participate in a group. (<i>Houghton, 2008b</i>)</p> <p>A community-based groupwork model developed in Ontario, Canada has been widely disseminated and built upon in both England and Australia. The Canadian model allows for a concurrent approach to groupwork, whereby both children and their mothers are supported in parallel but separate sessions with opportunities for joint sessions as the programme progresses. The pre and post test results showed significant positive changes as well as high levels of satisfaction reported by both children and their mothers. (<i>Debbonaire, 2007</i>)</p> <p>Currently there is no consistent groupwork provision available to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse in Scotland. The Children’s Service Women’s Aid Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Reports show that while some groupwork is carried out, this is patchy across the country and the approach is not as rigorous as the Canadian model. Furthermore, this work has not been formally evaluated to date.</p> <p>Since November 2006, Scottish Women’s Aid has been developing work with experts from Canada and colleagues from the Stronger Families Project in the London Borough of Sutton, with the view to piloting the Canadian model and approach in Scotland. As a result, a National Partnership Group has been set up to develop a National Community Group Work Programme, the Cedar Project (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) – which will be piloted across Edinburgh, Fife and Forth Valley. Each area has a Local Partnership Group with representation from key service providers involved in the pilot.</p>	

Priority Area 7 – continued

What children and young people have told us

Overall, most children and young people are positive about participating in groupwork sessions. They feel groupwork offers a real opportunity to understand what has happened to them, have fun and make some friends –

“I think it’d be better than one-to-ones, cos then it’s like, then I really know that it’s not just me, d’you know what I mean? Cos, like, when other people say ‘I’m like this because this happened’ and I’ll go ‘well that happened to me as well’ or ‘I know where you’re coming from’.” (Girl 14 in Stafford et al, 2007)

“An ‘after support groupwork session’ – it would take a number of individuals who have been experiencing support after domestic abuse and we’d meet together and just have a good time kinda like a club – but we’d be able to talk serious if we needed to and you ended up trusting this group of people too and that really helped, being able to go out and do extra curricula activities but having this group of trusting friends really helps you get on the right track after such a low point in your life.” (Boy in Houghton, 2008a)

Children have a number of recommendations to ensure groupwork sessions are always enjoyable and meet their needs. They should be organised by age-group and both boys and girls should be in the same group. They should be very activities-based and, crucially, nobody should be expected to contribute if they don’t want to. Groups for mothers are also viewed as positive. They are seen as a space for mums to be able to talk and improve understanding of their children, behaviour, emotions and improve communication between mothers and children. (Smith et al, 2008)

However, some children and young people have concerns, especially about issues surrounding confidentiality –

“depends on the person [if they want to take part] I think, cos obviously not everybody, not many people want to go to a group and make it [domestic abuse] be identified” (Girl in Houghton, 2008a)

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will provide funding to support the development and implementation of a three-year National Community Groupwork Programme pilot across Edinburgh, Fife and Forth Valley.
- We will work with the National Partnership Group to develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation arrangements and to ensure learning from the pilot is disseminated to relevant agencies across Scotland.

Actions: Future Work

- Subject to positive findings of the pilot evaluation, we will work in conjunction with the National Partnership Group, colleagues in local authorities and key delivery partners to identify mechanisms, including the development of an ‘implementation toolkit’, that facilitate and support the replication of the community groupwork model across Scotland.

Key Outputs

- Funding provided for the development of a robust and fully evaluated community-based model of therapeutic groupwork that is relevant to the Scottish context of interagency work to address domestic abuse and the experiences of women and children affected by domestic abuse in Scotland.
- Increase in the number of practitioners across different agencies trained and supported to deliver the community-based model of groupwork, leading to an increase in the number of women and children accessing community-based groupwork initiatives across Scotland and reporting positive experiences from their involvement.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will support the range of agencies across Edinburgh, Fife and Forth Valley represented on the National and Local Partnership Groups to develop and pilot a community groupwork model of intervention, enabling increased choice and personalisation of local support services for children, young people and women affected by domestic abuse. It will also support the capture and dissemination of learning from the Community Groupwork pilot in a way that enables colleagues in local government and agencies across Scotland to develop and adopt effective approaches to implementing the model according to local needs.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support local government and the range of service providers to contribute towards –

- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.
- Ensuring young people affected by domestic abuse are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Lead Government Division: Equality Unit

Priority Area 8

Reduce the risk to women and children of becoming homeless as a consequence of domestic abuse and ensure, whenever necessary, they are supported to make the move to safe and suitable accommodation without facing additional emotional, economic or social disadvantages.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>In partnership with the Domestic Abuse Accommodation & Support Provision Action Plan Implementation Group, we will work to identify and break down the barriers that place women and children affected by domestic abuse at risk of homelessness, to ensure women and children have access to a range of safe and suitable accommodation options, including the right to remain in their own home, and are supported, both in practical and emotional terms, throughout every stage of the housing transitions they make.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Historically, it has been women on whom expectation is placed to move out of the family home in domestic abuse situations. The circumstances surrounding their first move and, in many cases, the need to keep ‘on the move’ can result in women and their children ‘leaving everything but the abuse behind’; their possessions, pets, employment or school and their most valued networks of support – their family, friends and community. It places them at significant risk of experiencing an enduring cycle of financial hardship, homelessness and social isolation. (<i>Houghton, 2008b</i>)</p> <p>Developments around the use of exclusion orders (under the <i>Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981</i> and the <i>Children (Scotland) Act 1995</i>) that allow women and children to stay in their own homes and require the perpetrator to leave is one example of how this trend is being challenged. Clearly, the use of exclusion orders in domestic abuse situations will only be effective as part of coordinated interventions which provide women and children support in their own homes, including higher levels of house security,⁶ as well as monitor the perpetrator to guarantee compliance. In some cases, local authorities will need to consider appropriate accommodation options for the perpetrator, ensuring that he is not re-housed in the vicinity of the family home. (<i>Humphreys et al, 2008</i>)</p> <p>In reality though, relocating somewhere the perpetrator cannot find them is the only safe option for many women and children or, most importantly, the only option that makes them feel safe. Access to appropriate refuges, housing and support services is therefore key to ensure the safety and wellbeing of women and children affected by domestic abuse. (<i>Stafford et al, 2007</i>)</p> <p>A survey of refuge spaces in Scotland, carried out between September and December 2007, found that a total of 520 households could be accommodated by Women’s Aid groups. In many areas women and children can be in refuge for up to 2 years. This extended length of stay in what is intended as short term temporary accommodation is largely due to the shortage of housing for women to move on to. This in turn results in many women and children being unable to gain access to refuge when they need to. The same survey highlighted that that only 23% of women requesting refuge in 2006/07 were able to be accommodated by Women’s Aid groups. (<i>Scottish Women’s Aid, 2008</i>)</p>	

⁶ Such as security improvements on offer through Edinburgh’s ‘Safe as Houses’ Pilot as part of the Scottish Government’s Innovation Fund in avoiding homelessness. (evaluation forthcoming, 2008)

Rationale – continued

In 2006, the National Group to Address Violence Against Women set up the Domestic Abuse Accommodation & Support Provision Action Plan Implementation Group (DAASOAPIG). The Working Group has developed a comprehensive Action Plan which sets out recommendations, at a strategic level, to improve accommodation and associated support provision for women and their children affected by domestic abuse. The Action Plan focuses recommendations on five key areas: Training & Regulation, Funding Framework, Strategy Framework, Joint Working and Homelessness Prevention & Community Services.

Two priorities in the Action Plan are (1) establishing a timescale for the removal of the exception to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and (2) developing a programme for re-provision or replacement of unsuitable accommodation currently used as refuge. The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 was introduced to stop the use of accommodation defined as unsuitable for families with children or pregnant women, such as accommodation that obliges shared living arrangements. At the time the Order was introduced, however, much accommodation which provides enormous benefits to families, including 43% of accommodation provided to Women's Aid groups by local authorities, would have failed to meet required standards and it was decided that to prevent its use would unnecessarily disadvantage those families.

What children and young people have told us

The first move, particularly if unplanned, can be a traumatic and confusing experience for children. Many report not being fully informed of what was going on at the time and having to leave all their most treasured possessions behind, including pets –

“No, I didn't know we were moving, because my mum told my dad we were going to the chippy for his dinner...” (Girl, 14 from Stafford et al, 2007)

Children express great relief to have escaped the abuser and 'proud of my mum for getting away from him' (Girl, 13 from Stafford et al, 2007). In fact, most children cannot conceive of a situation where staying in their own home, even with the perpetrator gone, would make them feel safe. (Smith et al, 2008).

“My father received a court order that he wasn't allowed near us. He came back the next day anyway.” (Boy in Houghton, 2008a)

However, they also feel their losses acutely. Some children describe leaving home as being doubly 'punished' due to being 'dumped' in one room in a refuge (Houghton, forthcoming) whilst father is in a nice middle class house. The importance of ensuring women and children have access to high quality and suitable accommodation, both temporary and permanent, has been repeatedly highlighted by young people –

“All refuges should be up to the same high standard such as the new refuge in Stirling. There are still lots of underprivileged refuges all over Scotland.” (Boy from Houghton, 2008a)

“It is imperative that the child or young person and parent can be re-housed fairly quickly so they can get on with their life and not be stuck in a refuge.” (Girl from Houghton, 2008a)

Priority Area 8 – continued

There are many things which help ‘make moving home smoother’ for children (Girl from Houghton, 2008a) such as mums actively including them in planning the move and help to replace or regain the possessions they have left behind. Support from Women’s Aid Children’s Workers, or from another trusted adult, can enable them to overcome the disruption to their lives. Teachers understanding their situation and the impact it might have on their schooling is also important. Crucially too, for many children, being able to keep in touch with friends or being helped to make friends in their new area is cited as one of their biggest priorities.

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will work with the Domestic Abuse Accommodation & Support Provision Action Plan Implementation Group (DAASOAPIG) to review the Action Plan in light of the changing relationship between Government and local government, and to ensure the Delivery Plan feeds into and helps progress key Action Plan recommendations, including taking forward work to address the need for improved refuge accommodation for women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- The existing Code of Guidance on Homelessness will be expanded with new information on the prevention of homelessness, particularly for those people known to be at risk of homelessness such as women and children fleeing domestic abuse. In partnership with the DAASOAPIG, we will contribute to discussions in this new guidance about how local authorities and their partners can do more to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are able to access help on housing before they reach crisis point.
- To further existing work on the prevention of homelessness, we will commission research to examine the barriers to accessing housing and housing-related services that victims face. From this evidence base, we will work with the DAASOAPIG and relevant government bodies and service providers, to identify measures which can be implemented, at local or national level, to break down these barriers.
- We will commission research looking at possible options for removal of the perpetrator from the family home (including examining the use of exclusion orders in domestic abuse situations) and consequential re-housing, and we will include extensive discussions with local authorities and other stakeholders on the viability of these options.
- The results of the evaluation of the Scottish Government-funded Innovation Fund ‘Safe as Houses’ project in Edinburgh will be considered and disseminated as appropriate to other local authorities.

Actions: Future Work

- We will work with children, young people and agencies, focusing on those working in the Criminal Justice, Education, Homelessness and Violence Against Women sectors, to ensure practitioners and organisations have the knowledge and resources to provide both practical and emotional support to children, young people and their mothers to help them during housing transition phases.

Key Outputs

- Review of the Domestic Abuse Accommodation & Support Provision Action Plan.
- Expansion of the Code of Guidance on Homelessness completed and disseminated to local authorities.
- Increase in knowledge and awareness amongst local authorities and key agencies of the housing and support needs of women and children affected by domestic abuse and corresponding increase in the effectiveness of coordinated, multi-agency responses to meet these needs, leading to a decrease in the number of moves women and children need to make to stay safe and to a decrease in waiting times to access appropriate accommodation.
- Linked to the output above, an increase in knowledge and awareness amongst local authorities and key agencies of the issues surrounding women and children remaining in the family home without the perpetrator, and a corresponding improvement in the delivery of joined-up interventions to ensure the safety of women and children in this situation.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will enable Government, local government and other key delivery partners including the Women's Aid network, the Scottish Housing Regulator and Housing Associations, to develop shared understanding of the housing and support needs of families affected by domestic abuse and to work collaboratively to develop strategic, local approaches to ensuring these families are housed in the right type of accommodation with the right package of support.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support Government, local government and the range of delivery partners to contribute towards –

- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.
- Ensuring both child and adult victims of domestic abuse are able to live their lives safe from crime, disorder and danger as a result of ongoing abuse from the perpetrator.
- Tackling the significant inequalities that impact upon families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as a consequence of domestic abuse.

Lead Government Divisions: Homelessness Legislation Division, Equality Unit

Priority Area 9

Ensure a consistent, holistic approach to children and young people affected by domestic abuse through the development of skilled workforces and robust inter-agency working.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>We will use the training infrastructure to deliver an increasingly common set of skills across the broad range of workers. We will encourage employers to use and share the learning from good practice in terms of different delivery models and joint working. We will ensure that the increased expectations of the public and the needs of children affected by domestic abuse are congruent with the skills, flexibility and capacity of the workforce.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Responsibility for improving outcomes for children and young people affected by domestic abuse does not lie with any one agency alone.</p> <p>Action to implement the Delivery Plan recognises that tackling domestic abuse will require interventions to be systematically planned and coordinated at local level. It will also require practitioners across many different sectors to have the knowledge base, skills and capacity to provide support through their own agencies and, where necessary, engage fully in a multi-agency response to address the complex issues facing children, young people and their families as a consequence of domestic abuse. This approach demands a change of culture in many organisations who have traditionally had a ‘siloes’ or specialist focus on perpetrators, adult survivors (usually women), or children. <i>(Humphreys et al, 2008)</i></p> <p>The process of shifting organisational cultures has already begun and is being tackled through a number of emerging policy drivers. <i>For Scotland’s Children (Scottish Executive, 2001)</i> highlighted the need for agencies to integrate their services more around the needs of children. Since then, local agencies have made good progress towards this goal and programmes such as <i>Getting it right for every child</i> will ensure that progress continues.</p> <p>Cultural issues, by their very nature, take years to change but there are actions that can be taken now, at a national level, to complement this long term agenda. The implementation of the <i>Domestic Abuse – A National Training Strategy (2003)</i> led to the establishment of Domestic Abuse Training Consortia in each of the fifteen Health Boards across Scotland. The Training Strategy, which will be reviewed and taken forward under the emerging <i>Violence Against Women Strategic Framework</i>, provides a key mechanism to build the capacity of workforces across the range of sectors to meet the needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Action at national level will be further informed by local developments in the <i>Getting it right</i> Domestic Abuse Pathfinder areas.</p>	

What children and young people have told us

Children's 'headline message' is that they want to be safe and to be listened to (*Mullender et al 2002, echoing children's postcards headline messages to the new Scottish Parliament 1999, Scottish Women's Aid*). The most common reason that children cite for not talking to anyone is fear of their father finding out and the backlash – hurting them or their mother especially –

“RES: *He threatened to kill me if I told anybody... I kept it quiet to every single person...*

INT: *What was it like not being able to tell?*

RES: *I just felt angry and half sad.”* (Boy 10 in Stafford et al, 2007)

Children, in the main, do not trust in agencies to respond appropriately to their needs. They lack confidence in practitioners ability to keep them and their mother safe and fear the consequences of being referred to the Children's Reporter (*Mullender et al, 2002; McGee 2000; Houghton, 2008a; Houghton, 2008b; Stalford et al, 2003; Stafford et al, 2007*) Reassuring children and their mothers that the optimum outcome is for them to be safe and together, and that professionals will be allies of the non-abusing members of the family, is a shared challenge for all agencies. A priority is also reassuring children that their views and rights, especially their right to confidentiality and privacy, will be respected. (*Houghton, 2008a*)

Children and young people themselves are clear that their mistrust stems in part from a belief that the basic understanding and “knowledge” of domestic abuse is missing in many adults. Only Women's Aid support was rated highly, other professionals and support staff were not deemed to have “the knowledge or experience” to help, with some professionals particularly inflexible and lacking understanding of domestic abuse and children's situations. Social work support, for example, was not rated highly leading to the conclusion that the government needed “to make sure social workers actually help”. (*Houghton, 2008b*)

Young people speaking to Scottish Ministers highlighted that systematic training for teachers, as well as other professionals, was really important, and that if all agencies (such as the Children's Panel) didn't get training then they would 'miss' domestic abuse as adults would not pick up what children were going through –

“M: *I've always said that if you're gonna go into work like that, its not just about going to uni or college or anything, its actually having some knowledge about the whole thing, such as the social worker me dad's got – she doesn't really understand it all, so if you're going to go into it make sure you understand...*

J: *so that they're sensitive to it, not expecting too much of children to speak about it.”* (M, boy, J, girl in Houghton, 2008a)

Equally important for professionals is to understand the cultural and religious context of children's experiences. Asian children in Mullender et al (2002) highlight the concepts of *izzat* (honour, reputation) and *badnamni* (get a bad name) and their fear of bringing shame (or being seen to bring shame) on the family.

Priority Area 9 – continued

“If you speak to adults make sure they understand about your family and religion and they don’t take things the wrong way. Like, sometimes, gora [white people] will not know about izzat and shame and they can make you do things that bring shame on the family. You are left without any help or support from the community, if they feel you have gone against the religion. I don’t say it is always right, but sometimes we have to sort things out in our own way – white people can never really do things in the same way if they don’t understand.” (16 year old South Asian girl in Mullender et al, 2002)

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- Through consultation with key employers in the voluntary and statutory sectors, we will create a common set of Core Messages about children and young people affected by domestic abuse which will form the backbone of new standards, guidance and training developed by the broad range of agencies. These Core Messages will also form a framework for planning and commissioning services and coordinating multi-agency initiatives for this group of children and young people.
- We will work with the National Group to Address Violence Against Women to ensure the common Core Messages are embedded into guidance for Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships.
- We will work with the National Training Consortia Steering Group to ensure the common Core Messages are translated into a consistent approach to developing and ensuring the quality of training around domestic abuse and children enabled by the Violence Against Women Training Consortia.
- Through the *Getting it right* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder, local Consortia and training providers across different sectors we will learn about opportunities to support and promote multidisciplinary training initiatives, where domestic abuse is addressed as part of building workers’ capacity to meet the needs of the whole child. One early example is Children at the Centre training where social workers received training around the interface between drugs and alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, mental health and the impact on child protection. We will commission STRADA to re-develop the training materials to be suitable for a wider range of practitioners than social workers. We will encourage employers to use the materials once developed.
- Through the *Getting it right* Pathfinder we will also continue to test and refine the role of the ‘lead professional’ in ensuring that in cases where a number of agencies are delivering services to a child, there is a professional with a clear responsibility to co-ordinate support.
- Through existing practitioners forums and networks of communication, we will establish sustainable methods for capturing and sharing good practice across in terms of successful skills and resource mixes in multi-agency teams and joint working arrangements.
- At national level, we will work closely with colleagues taking forward relevant policy areas such as the *Early Years Strategy*, to strategically align the domestic abuse agenda with other long-term national workforce development strategies which aim to deliver greater integrated working, earlier intervention and more personalised services for children and their families.
- Through supporting a programme of analytical activities at national and local level, we will develop an evidence base to address key knowledge gaps in relation to domestic abuse, in particular the prevalence of domestic abuse and its impact on children and young people from a child’s perspective. We will focus on understanding the experiences of children who may face additional discrimination or disadvantage, including black and minority ethnic children, children from rural areas and children with disabilities or multiple and complex needs. We will also focus on enabling communities themselves to identify local needs.

How will we take this work forward – continued

Actions: Future Work

- Workforce development strategies are long-term, cumulative processes. Apart from the development of common Core Messages, all of the activities in Year 1 will be continued over the course of the three-year Delivery Plan implementation phase.
- Building on progress achieved in Year 1 in terms of increasing professionals' ability to help children and their families, we will identify and develop work which focuses around promoting an associated increase in public confidence, especially children's confidence, in the approach agencies will take to address their needs and the needs of their families. This work, which will complement activities outlined in Priority Area 12 (public education campaign), will aim to build employers' capacity to directly engage with children and the public, to share views and expectations. It will also aim to increase all practitioners' understanding of and confidence in their helping role.

Key Outputs

- Development and dissemination of a common set of Core Messages on children and young people affected by domestic abuse
- Publication and dissemination of the Guidance for Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships.
- Review and implementation of the National Training Strategy to Address Violence Against Women.
- At policy and practice level, there is strategic alignment between the domestic abuse agenda and other long-term workforce development strategies.
- Continuation and increase of funding to support progressive capacity building of local Violence Against Women Training Consortia, leading to an increase in the number of practitioners across the range of agencies taking part in domestic abuse training initiatives and associated improvement in practitioners' understanding of domestic abuse, and capacity to help children and their families through single agency responses and interagency working.
- Appropriate, consistent training on a multidisciplinary basis (and underpinned by appropriate policies and procedures) is available on an ongoing basis to staff working at all levels and tiers of intervention to enable them to appropriately identify and support children affected by domestic abuse.
- Increase in public confidence in the quality of services for children, young people and their families affected by domestic abuse.

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will support progressive capacity building across the voluntary sector and all mainstream services, including the police, health, judiciary, education and social work, to enable agencies develop practice that meets the individual needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse, leading to an increase in entry points for these children and young people to access appropriate packages of support.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support the voluntary sector and all mainstream services, including the police, health, judiciary, housing and social work, to contribute towards –

- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.
- Providing a high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive service according to local people's needs.

Lead Government Divisions: Safer Children, Stronger Families Division, Equality Unit

PRIMARY PREVENTION THROUGH EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

All children and young people are respected, responsible and achieving

For children and young people living with domestic abuse, school is often their one place of safety. Without a doubt though, the stress and instability in their home environment can prevent them from getting the most from their educational experience. They may struggle to concentrate and meet the demands of the curriculum. They sometimes exhibit serious behavioural disturbances, leading them to be labeled as 'troublesome' or 'disruptive' in class. Their attendance can also be erratic. Many children have to move house and school, sometimes more than once, to get away from the perpetrator. Young people will often truant in the hope that staying at home with their mother will help keep her safe.

Furthermore, children and young people are likely to blame themselves for the violence at home with detrimental effect on their confidence and their self esteem. They may find it difficult to form friendships and they are at increased risk of being bullied. Fear and stigma associated with disclosing domestic abuse adds to their vulnerability. Children learn from an early age that domestic abuse must be kept secret. Their silence is a coping strategy but one which isolates them further from their peers and from adults in their lives.

As universal services, schools can play a crucial role in the early identification and support for children and families affected by domestic abuse. The whole school community is uniquely positioned to break down the silence and stigma surrounding domestic abuse and to help these children achieve their full potential. It is also uniquely positioned to challenge the attitudes and behaviours that give rise to discrimination or abuse, and to ensure children and young people have opportunities, through the curriculum, to develop empathy, resilience and respect for self and others. These two activities are interlinked. Where schools are successfully engaged in challenging and preventing violence or abuse, children in those schools will have the confidence to talk about their own experiences knowing that they will be respected and supported.

There already exist a number of prevention education initiatives which can help schools in Scotland foster a culture that promotes equality for everyone and empowers children and young people to take responsibility for their actions and negotiate their relationships without using violence or abuse. The Delivery Plan **Priority Area 10** builds on these existing initiatives and on recent policy developments, including *Happy, Safe & Achieving their Potential* and *A Curriculum for Excellence*. It aims to ensure that schools and school staff are sufficiently skilled and resourced to contribute to the prevention of domestic abuse and to the early identification and support of children affected by such abuse. It outlines action to increase education professionals' understanding of the nature and impact of domestic abuse and to help them integrate work to promote gender equality and healthy relationships across the curriculum.

Schools, however, cannot work in isolation to improve outcomes for children living with domestic abuse or to prevent domestic abuse in the future. They are only one element, albeit a crucial one, within a child's wider network which includes the child's family, friends and the services or facilities they access. A holistic approach to children affected by domestic abuse, underpinned by *Getting it right* principles and values, requires many different agencies and individuals working together to ensure that interventions are both proportionate and responsive to their needs. Equally, it is the personal responsibility of everyone within a child's network to act as a role model and help children learn skills to develop healthy relationships in preparation for their future roles in society. Messages about gender equality, respect and non-violence – if they are to be effective – should be reinforced across the whole community. In particular, they should be reinforced across services designed to provide children and young people with positive learning opportunities. These include statutory or voluntary youth projects and organisations working with 'at risk' groups such as young people excluded from mainstream education, young parents or young offenders. Research also shows that, where possible, involving parents in the relationship education of their children, greatly enhances children's learning experience. In turn, this may contribute to increasing parents' own understanding and ability to respond to the issues.

At local level, a strategic community-based approach to domestic abuse prevention education should seek to build schools' capacity to respond holistically to the support needs of children affected by domestic abuse, through strengthening the links between schools and networks of services for children and families. It should seek to support the extension of prevention initiatives beyond schools to other settings, including youth projects. Finally, it should promote opportunities for whole communities, both children and adults, to become involved, collectively and individually, in action to end domestic abuse and other forms of violence or discrimination.

Many local authorities in Scotland are already leading in the development of coordinated community-based approaches to domestic abuse prevention education, often within a broader agenda to tackle all forms of violence against women and linked into the provision of services for victims of abuse and interventions that hold perpetrators to account. Other local authorities, however, still have some way to go. Action under **Priority Area 11** focuses on improving the consistency of community-based domestic abuse prevention education across Scotland, drawing on learning from those areas where progress has been most marked to identify the most appropriate resources and guidance needed to support local practice. Key to this is creating robust networks which promote information-sharing and joint-working opportunities between practitioners involved in prevention initiatives locally, and enable constructive dialogue between these practitioners and policy makers in government.

Without a doubt children and young people themselves are the most effective change-makers. Research shows that the majority of boys and girls think that domestic abuse is not acceptable, and that their views can have a positive influence on the attitude and behaviour of their peers and adults. They understand that domestic abuse is a widespread and serious social problem and want opportunities to take responsibility for preventing it. Equally, they want the knowledge and skills to help their friends who may be experiencing domestic abuse within their home environment or their own relationships. **Priority Area 12** explores ways that will enable children and young people to take a lead in raising awareness about domestic abuse, through national public education campaigns and initiatives, recognising that children's voices and views are different and, in many ways, more powerful than adults'. It also looks at ways to develop, in partnership with children and young people, resources such as websites and phone-lines, which will enable them to independently access information and advice, so that they know what to do and where they can get help if they, or their friends, are affected by domestic abuse. The provision of anonymous, confidential sources of information and support is especially important for children and young people who are themselves living with domestic abuse and who are likely to fear the stigma and consequences of directly disclosing abuse to others.

Priority Area 10

Improve the way that schools and school staff respond to domestic abuse and to the additional support needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>We will identify and take forward action to ensure schools – including pre-school – and school staff are skilled and resourced to contribute to the prevention, understanding and elimination of domestic abuse through the curriculum, including as it does the teaching, the culture and ethos of a school and the support for learning provided to children, young people and their families.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Education represents the principal mechanism by which society is able to influence future generations. Prevention work with children and young people is not just about changing attitudes and influencing behaviour, although that is its main focus. In raising the issues, it also produces a need to support children and young people who may have been abused themselves or witnessed the abuse of their mother. (<i>Preventing Domestic Abuse – A National Strategy, 2003</i>)</p> <p>The “Raising the Issue of Domestic Abuse in School” Study revealed that 32% of pupils in one secondary school in Scotland disclosed anonymously that they were currently experiencing domestic abuse. (<i>Alexander et al, 2005</i>)</p> <p>A recent Scottish study involving 1395 young people aged 14-18 found that a third of young men and a sixth of young women thought that using violence in intimate relationships was acceptable under certain circumstances. The same study found that 17% of young women had experienced violence or abuse in their own relationships with a boyfriend. (<i>Burman & Cartmel, 2005</i>)</p> <p>To address these attitudes and behaviours, a whole-school approach to promoting healthy relationships will ensure the work is embedded in the curriculum and wider school activities, and will aim to develop a non-violent school culture. Proceeding from the bottom-line value of respect, domestic abuse prevention education initiatives should focus on attaining equality and respect for everyone whilst acknowledging gender inequality and making the links to other forms of violence reduction in areas such as homophobia, racism and bullying. Education on these issues should start early and be reinforced at all stages of the curriculum. (<i>Ellis, 2008</i>).</p> <p>A robust approach to improving the way schools respond to domestic abuse will involve ensuring school staff have the knowledge base, skills and resources to take ownership of delivering prevention education initiatives and to provide a caring and nurturing environment for pupils with experience of such abuse. Key to this approach is linking schools into a network of external specialist agencies able to meet the continuing professional development needs of school staff and to contribute to the holistic support of children, young people and their families. Also key is providing children and young people themselves with the skills and understanding to support their friends and peers who are affected by domestic abuse. Building on existing programmes in schools, such as peer mentoring or befriending initiatives, is an effective way of achieving this. (<i>Ellis, 2008</i>)</p>	

The delivery of prevention education around domestic abuse will support better outcomes for children, young people and their families under a number of Scottish policy initiatives including the *Curriculum for Excellence*, the *Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007*, the *Additional Support for Learning Code of Practice*, the *Gender Equality Duty*, *Restorative justice in schools*, *Happy, Safe & Achieving their Potential* and *Healthy Respect*, the National Demonstration Project on Sexual Health & Relationships.

Because of the relatively high parent-staff contact time in nurseries, and because it is often the mother who becomes more involved in the child's pre-school education, pre-school staff tend to receive a significant number of disclosures. Awareness-raising amongst nursery staff, including providing them with information leaflets they can pass on to parents, is likely to be an important mechanism for early identification of domestic abuse. (*National Children & Young People's Network, 2007*)

What children and young people have told us

Children vividly describe how living with domestic abuse affects their experience of life in school. Some children were scared to even go to school –

"Because I was scared in case, like, he battered her and she went away and then I went home and she wasn't there and it was just me left and him." (Girl 13 in Stafford et al, 2007)

Others spoke of being bullied or of difficulties maintaining friends, and about their schoolwork suffering –

"I went from a straight 'A' student to failing every class because I was concentrating on what was going on at home" (Girl in Houghton, 2008a)

All children and young people consulted on the Delivery Plan felt that a priority should be "making more help available at school" (*Houghton, 2008a*) as children's own experience of getting help in school was not always positive –

"When you're at school, teachers don't always understand, they don't know how to react to you, sometimes some of them get it, some of them don't. So I think we need to teach teachers how to respect the pupils experiencing (domestic abuse) situations, maybe make allowances, now that sounds like an excuse but if you've got a big homework assignment and you're sleeping on a floor they don't get it and you try to explain it to them and they just say right that's an excuse, 'whatever', they won't believe you." (Boy in Houghton, 2008a)

As well as teachers, children felt that other pupils should know more about domestic abuse –

"Not only is teachers an issue it's also students at the schools they sometimes won't treat you very nicely at all and I've personal experience of this, and this all over can lead to students being very depressed and not wanting to go to school, at all, so it's important that we change that and get students and teachers and staff to understand this." (Boy in Houghton, 2008a)

The children that did mention positive support from school spoke about the teachers being nice, keeping things confidential, making a cuppa and dealing with any problems with lessons straight away "because of what we've been through" (*Girl 14 in Stafford et al, 2007*). As one child put it – "the best help I got was from there (from school)" (*Child in Stafford et al, 2007*)

Priority Area 10 – continued

Crucially though, children were clear that comfort and support wasn't always enough. What they needed in many cases was help to stop the abuse, not just for themselves but also for their mothers –

“I used to tell teachers and my friends at school what he (the father) was like and they, I could see they believed me but they couldn't do anything about it. ... it didn't really help me a lot because they didn't really help me help my mum” (Jackie aged 19 in McGee, 2000)

One of the recommendations put forward by young people to Ministers was that there should be trained support available in school – “somebody in the school that can actually help”, who they felt could also help teach the teachers (*Houghton, 2008a*). This recommendation is mirrored in the accounts of other children – for example one ten year old girl valued the fact that she could visit a special childworker once a week in the school who “speaks to people and sort of just checks out how you are feeling” (*Stafford et al, 2007*).

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will support the development of a toolkit for school staff linked into the Personal Support in Schools online resource. The toolkit, which will draw on existing practice examples from across Scotland, including practice in the *Getting it right* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder areas, will provide comprehensive information and advice on delivering prevention education initiatives and supporting children affected by domestic abuse.
- We will support the completion of a review of existing resources which can help schools progress work to address domestic abuse through the curriculum and include this review in the toolkit.
- In conjunction with colleagues in Learning & Teaching Scotland, in the *Personal Support in Schools* Network and local schools and specialist domestic abuse service providers, we will commission a pilot and evaluation of the toolkit implementation. An integral element of the pilot design will be identifying how best external specialist organisations may contribute to supporting school staff, through the provision of training and through interagency working, to deliver prevention education initiatives and meet the needs of children affected by domestic abuse.
- We will work with colleagues in Government and Learning & Teaching Scotland taking forward the development of *A Curriculum for Excellence* to ensure domestic abuse prevention education is embedded into relevant strands of the curriculum and we will work with colleagues in the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMiE) to ensure that schools are supported and recognised for the work they do to address domestic abuse.
- In partnership with children and young people, Learning & Teaching Scotland, the Violence Reduction Unit and external experts involved in developing or delivering prevention education initiatives, we will contribute to the development of cross-curricular, ‘thematic’ resources which will enable school staff in primary and secondary schools to address domestic abuse as part of an integrated response to violence prevention, equalities and healthy relationships at all stages of the curriculum.

How will we take this work forward – continued

Actions: Future Work

- We will use knowledge gained through developing and piloting the *Personal Support in Schools* toolkit to inform the ongoing improvement of provision for school staff delivering prevention education initiatives or supporting children affected by domestic abuse. A key focus will be ensuring all school staff in Scotland have access to high quality continuous professional development opportunities through training offered by external specialist organisations or through online resources such as GLOW.
- We will work closely with colleagues in Learning & Teaching Scotland and relevant agencies to ensure that the toolkit itself continues to be a valuable, up-to-date and accessible resource.
- We will continue to learn from pupils and staff in schools and from external professionals to identify emerging practice, for example curricular resources or peer support programmes, which improve the way that schools respond to domestic abuse and we will support the replication of this practice across other schools in Scotland.
- We will continue to build our relationship with colleagues in Government and Learning & Teaching Scotland involved in developing *A Curriculum for Excellence*, as well as other emerging education policy areas to ensure that addressing domestic abuse is embedded into day-to-day school practice.
- We will work in partnership with Learning & Teaching Scotland and colleagues involved in pre-school education provision to adapt the *Personal Support in Schools* toolkit on domestic abuse and its implementation approaches for pre-school settings.

Key Outputs

- Production and dissemination of the domestic abuse toolkit linked into the *Personal Support in Schools* online resource.
- Review of existing resources and production of new resources based on evidence of need, clearly linked into the emerging *Curriculum for Excellence*, the *Health Promoting Schools* agenda and other relevant Education policy initiatives.
- Development of workforce training initiatives aimed at improving school staff's knowledge, skills and attitudes around domestic abuse, leading to increased proportion of schools engaging in domestic abuse prevention education and a corresponding increase in number of children and young people across Scotland gaining skills and knowledge to develop healthy, non-violent relationships based on respect and mutuality.
- Linked to above, increase in the knowledge base, skills and confidence of school staff to provide support to children and young people affected by domestic abuse and better joined-up working between schools and external specialist agencies, leading to improved outcomes for this group of children and young people.

Priority Area 10 – continued

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will support Local Education Authorities, schools and schools staff, to mainstream domestic abuse prevention work into the curriculum within a broader equalities and healthy relationships agenda, and to provide support for children and young people identified as being affected by domestic abuse where appropriate through linking up with external specialist organisations. It will also build the capacity of the range of education bodies, including the Educational Institute of Scotland, HMiE and Learning & Teaching Scotland, to support schools in taking this work forward.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support Local Education Authorities, schools, schools staff and education bodies, including HMiE and Learning & Teaching Scotland, to contribute towards –

- Ensuring all young people, including young people affected by domestic abuse, are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Developing strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- Tackling the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.

Lead Government Division: Support for Learning Division

Priority Area 11

Support individuals, organisations and communities across Scotland to engage in local action aimed at preventing and reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse to children, young people, their families and communities.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>In partnership with the National Group to Address Violence Against Women and colleagues in relevant national and local organisations we will identify and take forward action to build the capacity of agencies and practitioners working across relevant sectors – in particular the education, youth, community and violence against women sectors – at local level to develop and implement strategic, community-based approaches to domestic abuse prevention education.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>A community-based approach to domestic abuse prevention education supports practice which promotes and enables individual or collective action to end abuse. The main vehicles for this approach are schools. However, employing a wider community-based strategy to domestic abuse prevention education is viewed as greatly enhancing the outcomes of work in schools and is also effective in mobilising the community so domestic abuse is seen as and responded to as a social issue of collective concern. (<i>Ellis, 2008</i>).</p> <p>A community prevention strategy would, in the first instance, place schools within a robust network of external organisations working together to ensure the quality of curriculum-based domestic abuse prevention education work and to meet the needs of children, young people and their families affected by such abuse. It would seek to support the delivery of prevention education initiatives in organisational settings other than schools, and to enable the community itself to identify and take forward action to address domestic abuse. To be effective, such a strategy would also seek to make the links between the prevention of domestic abuse and broader equality or violence reduction agendas. (<i>Ellis, 2008</i>).</p> <p>Over the past few years, a wealth of innovative local initiatives has emerged in Scotland, including examples of progressive partnerships between schools and local specialist organisations such as Women’s Aid or Rape Crisis, curriculum resources developed by children, peer education or support and parenting initiatives, prevention programmes targeted specifically at men and whole-community campaigning activities around domestic abuse or broader violence against women issues. Lack of robust information-sharing networks between practitioners involved in domestic abuse prevention means, however, that opportunities to learn from and replicate such initiatives across different organisations and local authorities are consistently missed (<i>National Children & Young People’s Network, 2007</i>).</p> <p>Despite the fact that all local authorities are taking steps towards developing a community-based strategy to preventing domestic abuse, practice, including take-up of prevention initiatives from schools, remains patchy and inconsistent across Scotland. A number of factors have been identified which can support local practice, including the existence of a national strategic framework such as that provided by <i>Preventing Domestic Abuse – A National Strategy</i>, and of local Violence Against Women Multi-Agency Partnerships (VAW MAPs) which place priority on resourcing this area of work and have strong links into Council Education Departments and community planning structures. In certain areas, the existence of a dedicated post-holder whose role it is to coordinate the development, delivery and evaluation of prevention initiatives across schools and other organisations has been highlighted as particularly crucial in establishing and sustaining progress. (<i>Ellis, 2008</i>)</p>	

Priority Area 11 – continued

What children and young people have told us

This Delivery Plan section looks at capacity building activities to support the development of schools and community-based prevention work and local campaigning activities. Most of what children and young people have said about these areas has been highlighted in relevant sections.

The headline message from all children and young people is that tackling domestic abuse is a community responsibility and that everyone can play a part in helping people who have been affected by domestic abuse (*Houghton, 2006; Houghton, 2008a; Houghton, 2008b*). For many children, relatives can be an important source of help –

“Mum’s family – they could have supported us more and told Mum, ‘If you break up with him we will look after you.’ But, this didn’t happen. One uncle really helped and looked after us. They were there for her and for us.” (14 year old South Asian boy in Mullender et al, 2002)

For children, though, friends can be their greatest support. McGee (2000) suggests that children are clear that their friends can meet their emotional needs, it is for the adults to sort out the problem and give practical help.

“I feel more happier when I talk about it, than keeping it inside. It helps because they know what I’ve been through and they know what me mum’s been through and it helps a lot” (Kara age 10 talking about her friends in McGee, 2000)

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will work with the National Group to Address Violence Against Women to ensure VAW MAPs have the guidance and information they need to develop local prevention education strategies which are consistent with the new National Performance Framework and with the theory and principles of the *Preventing Domestic Abuse – A National Strategy*, the *Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children & Young People* and the forthcoming *Violence Against Women Strategic Framework*.
- In partnership with the National Group to Address Violence Against Women we will also ensure that the ongoing implementation of the *Domestic Abuse – A National Training Strategy* takes into account the workforce development needs of practitioners and agencies involved in developing or delivering prevention education initiatives at local level.
- We will work closely with colleagues taking forward *Respect and Responsibility*, the *Early Years Strategy*, the *Youth Strategy* and *Action on Violence in Scotland* to ensure that community based approaches to preventing domestic abuse are integrated, at policy and practice level, with broader community-based violence and abuse prevention initiatives and initiatives that promote equality and healthy relationships.
- We will identify, strengthen and support structures and mechanisms which facilitate information-sharing and partnership working between professionals developing or delivering domestic abuse and violence against women prevention education initiatives in schools, youth and community settings across Scotland. In particular, we will build the capacity of the emerging National Children & Young People’s Network and we will ensure that the Network develops robust lines of communication with national policy making forums.

How will we take this work forward – continued

Actions: Year 1 – continued

- We will consult with each local authority to identify strengths, opportunities and requirements to developing community-based domestic abuse prevention initiatives, recognising that the strengths and requirements in each area will be different. Drawing on this consultation, we will work intensively with agencies that form VAW MAPs and with other relevant local government structures and departments to put in place the resources needed to develop, implement and evaluate local approaches to preventing domestic abuse.

Actions: Future Work

- Through the National Children & Young People’s Network, we will continue to map out emerging initiatives on an ongoing basis and we will identify opportunities to support the replication of effective practice across different local authority areas of Scotland.
- We will continue to work with the National Group to Address Violence Against Women, local community planning and safety partnerships to evaluate progress taking forward a strategic approach to community-based domestic abuse prevention education and to work towards ensuring that progress is sustainable beyond the Delivery Plan’s implementation phase.

Key Outputs

- Development of workforce training initiatives aimed at improving practitioners’ knowledge, skills and attitudes around domestic abuse, leading to an increase in the number of practitioners across the informal youth and community sectors in Scotland who have the knowledge, skills and resources to develop and deliver domestic abuse prevention education initiatives.
- Increase in the number of practitioners actively involved in the National Children and Young People’s Network and reporting positive outcomes from their involvement.
- Progressive increase in capacity across local authorities in Scotland, through the provision of guidance and resources including funding, to develop and implement a strategic, community-based approach to preventing domestic abuse.

Priority Area 11 – continued

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will help build the capacity of local authorities, community planning/community safety partnerships and the range of local agencies to make demonstrable progress towards developing and implementing a strategic, community-based approach to preventing domestic abuse, leading to greater awareness of domestic abuse and understanding of its impact on children and families among agencies and communities. It will also lead to increased community involvement in effective action to prevent domestic abuse.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support local authorities, community planning/community safety partnerships and the range of local agencies to contribute towards –

- Developing strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- Tackling the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- Ensuring all young people, including young people affected by domestic abuse, are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.

Lead Government Division: Equality Unit

Priority Area 12

Ensure the general public understands the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people from the perspective of children and young people, and ensure children and young people themselves know what to do and where to get help if they are affected by domestic abuse.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>With children and young people, we will develop a national public education campaign on domestic abuse targeted at children and young people and linked into community-based education initiatives at local level. We will develop a range of national and local communication resources for children and young people affected by domestic abuse (and their friends and peers).</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	
<p>Due to Government’s high-profile public education campaigning activities around domestic abuse, the majority of adults in Scotland will be aware that domestic abuse affects children too. Where many adults lack understanding, however, is about the impact of domestic abuse on children from children’s perspectives and about what children say will help them cope with and survive their experiences.</p> <p>Children and young people themselves lack knowledge of what to do when there is domestic abuse, how to talk about it, what help is available and how to be ‘a good friend’ for their experiencing peers. (<i>Houghton, 2008b</i>) Public education campaigns targeted at children and young people rarely employ TV ads but focus instead on using platforms that are age appropriate and that children and young people feel a degree of ownership of, including locations in child friendly settings such as schools or virtual media settings such as websites. Evidence suggests that these campaigns are significantly more effective if high profile media activities complement community-based education initiatives that directly engage children, young people and their communities. (<i>Ellis, 2008</i>)</p> <p>Children who fear the stigma or consequences of disclosing domestic abuse need sources of information or support they can access without being identified (<i>Houghton, 2008b</i>). There is currently no dedicated national domestic abuse website or helpline for children and young people in Scotland though a number of national websites including www.domesticabuse.org.uk carry information about domestic abuse targeted at young people. Statistics from the Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline indicate that around 5% of callers are under the age of 16.</p> <p>At a local level, several Women’s Aid groups and other agencies working with children currently offer email-based support services as well as less interactive forms of communication for children affected by domestic abuse (or children concerned about friends) such as information leaflets or posters. A number of organisations, such as Children 1st, also run websites, help-lines/text-lines or email-based support services for children. None of these services, however, are specifically targeted at children affected by domestic abuse.</p>	

Priority Area 12 – continued

What children and young people have told us

Many children do not know what to do if they, or their friends, are affected by domestic abuse (*Smith et al, 2008; Houghton, 2008b*). As one of the young people advising Ministers in Scotland said –

“It’s about getting it out, let people know that the help is there, and it can be accessed through schools and other organisations. Not a lot of children and young people that go through domestic abuse know where the help is and how to access it, and you need to let them know. Some that don’t go through domestic abuse but know someone that is going through it might want to seek help so that they could help their friend so therefore they could get as much information as possible and so they could pass it on.” (Boy in Houghton, 2008a)

Support for campaigning and advertising activities, to get the message out to people, was almost unanimous amongst the children and young people consulted on the Delivery Plan (*Smith et al, 2008*). Children felt strongly that these activities should be developed by children and young people with children in mind, that campaigns shouldn’t be dark but should be associating ending abuse and getting help. Crucially, they should also employ language that children can understand *and can use*. (*Houghton, 2008a*)

Websites were seen as a potential way of enabling people to access information when they needed it and without anyone knowing although some children had little faith in security of websites and believed they could be “hacked into” by anyone. (*Smith et al, 2008*)

The lack of trust about being able to maintain confidentiality with regard to websites was echoed in relation to email. Many felt the ‘human element’ was also problematic – if a young person did not know the individual at the other end of the email they would not trust them and so would not use the service. Similar issues were raised about helplines. There were anxieties about a different person answering the helpline for each call and the importance of being able to talk to the same person was raised. However if the child or young person could contact their support worker via the helpline many of these points would be addressed. (*Smith et al, 2008*)

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will ensure that the annual Scottish Government Domestic Abuse Campaign (targeted at adults) accurately reflects the perspectives and experiences of children and young people where appropriate, that it improves the general public’s understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and increases public (especially adult victims’) confidence in the approach services will take to help children affected by domestic abuse.
- We will set up a programme of participation to enable children and young people to contribute to the development of the national public education campaign and website, and we will provide children and young people with the support and resources they need to make the most of their involvement in this work.
- In partnership with children and young people we will develop a three-year programme of national campaigning activities. The campaigning activities will aim to raise awareness about the impact of domestic abuse on children; about sources of help and support and about ways in which children, families, communities and agencies can address the harm that arises as a consequence of domestic abuse.

How will we take this work forward – continued

Actions: Year 1 – continued

- We will communicate this programme to local partners and work with them to ensure they have the support and information necessary to enable planning for community-based education initiatives linked into the campaign, and for potential increases in demand for services as a result of the campaign activities.
- We will commission an annual evaluation of the national campaign and we will use findings from this evaluation to inform campaign development over the three years.
- Working with children and young people, we will develop and pilot a national website linked into other communication resources (e.g. helpline) for all children and young people to coincide with the launch of the first campaign theme, which will include information and resources on addressing domestic abuse experienced in the home and in young people's own relationships.

Actions: Future Work

- We will continue to take forward the implementation of the three three-year programme of national campaigning activities, ensuring that these activities encourage and enable the development of local community-based domestic abuse prevention initiatives.
- We will explore options to further develop sources of confidential, accessible support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse, such as developing a national email-based service and strengthening the links between the website and local virtual and helpline support services.

Key Outputs

- Development and implementation of a three-year campaign action plan, leading to an increase in the general public's understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people from the perspective of children and young people and greater awareness of sources of help and support for children affected by domestic abuse.
- Development of a range of communication resources for children and young people leading to an increase in children and young people's understanding of the nature and impact of domestic abuse and greater awareness of sources of help and support they can access if they (or their friends) are affected by domestic abuse with a corresponding increase in the number of individuals accessing the national domestic abuse website for children and young people and associated support services.

Priority Area 12 – continued

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will enable Government, local authorities and key national and local organisations to raise awareness amongst the general public of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people, and build the capacity of individuals and communities to provide advice and support to children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support Government, local authorities and key national and local organisations to contribute towards –

- Developing strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- Tackling the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- Ensuring young people affected by domestic abuse are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.

Lead Government Division: Equality Unit

PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

Children and young people affected by domestic abuse are *respected, responsible and included*

It is the right of all children to be active participants in the decisions and actions that affect their lives, in ways and at a pace which suit their age, stage and circumstances. The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan Framework reflects this fundamental principle recognising that, as one young person put it, 'an adult's point of view isn't always a child's perspective' and that children have an enormous capacity to influence and shape events around them. They can and want to be part of making a difference.

Each of the thirteen Priority Areas has been defined and developed in partnership with children and young people from across Scotland who have themselves experienced domestic abuse. Their perspectives on living with domestic abuse and on the services they have been in contact with have provided vital insight into the changes in culture and practice both agencies and communities need to work towards.

Children and young people have driven forward the agenda

They have –

- Given presentations and led discussions at National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group meetings.
- Input into emerging practice in the *Getting it right* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder.
- Contributed to research projects, such as Scottish Women's Aid's *Moving House* (Stafford et al, 2007) where they were involved in the commissioning, design and dissemination of the research as well as being research participants.
- Met with Ministers to put forward their concerns about services supporting children affected by domestic abuse, their experiences of services and their recommendations for improvement. A report from this meeting is available, titled *Making a Difference: Young People Speak to Scottish Ministers about their Priorities for the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People* (Houghton, 2008a).
- Taken part in consultation on the Delivery Plan Priority Areas. A report from this consultation is available, titled *Consultation with Children and Young People with Experience of Domestic Abuse on Scottish Government National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group Draft Proposals* (Smith et al, 2008)

Key to the Delivery Plan implementation over the next three years will be the participation of children and young people affected by domestic abuse. As such, specific provisions have been made under each of the Priority Areas to put in place structures and resources necessary to enable the participation of children and young people at every level of practice, from collectively taking a lead in developing or evaluating policy and services to individually having a say on how practitioners, agencies and communities should work together to meet their support needs and the needs of their family.

Priority Area 13 seeks to support the ongoing improvement of this area of work through addressing the knowledge and skills needs of practitioners and policy-makers to enable the effective and safe participation of children and young people affected by domestic abuse. It also looks at ways to build on the Delivery Plan's participation process to date and ensure children and young people continue to be a driving force behind the three-year implementation and review phase.

Priority Area 13

Ensure the ongoing participation of children and young people affected by domestic abuse in developing policy and practice to address domestic abuse.

<p>Commitment</p>	<p>We will work with children and young people affected by domestic abuse to ensure that their needs, views and wishes drive the Delivery Plan implementation and review process. We will develop mechanisms to facilitate their involvement in the ongoing design of policy initiatives and the improvement and evaluation of children’s services at both local and national level.</p>
<p>Rationale</p> <p>It is vital for policy makers, practitioners and adults to uphold children’s right to participate in decisions that affect them, particularly as they tell us that active participation – being listened to and taken seriously, being involved in solutions and decisions – helps children affected by domestic abuse to cope. (<i>Houghton, 2008b</i>)</p> <p>The recent inclusion and involvement of children in various research studies around domestic abuse has resulted in an emerging consensus that “children alone are able to provide first hand information about the awareness of their parent’s conflict and the meaning they attach to it” (<i>Skopp et al, 2005</i>), children are “agents of their own lives” (<i>Moss, 2002</i>) sharing their own knowledge of the situation and exploring their own “nuanced and contextual decision-making processes” (<i>Mullender et al, 2002</i>).</p> <p>Their own unique perspective on what it’s like to live with an abusive father or father figure, to move house or school, to maintain contact with the perpetrator and to be the recipient of services from a range of agencies should frame all policy initiatives which aim to improve outcomes for children affected by domestic abuse. Their perspective on what it’s like to experience abuse in their own young relationships must also be understood and taken into consideration when developing policy and practice to address domestic abuse. (<i>Houghton, 2008b</i>)</p> <p>Many of the young people involved in the Delivery Group’s work have previously taken part in initiatives, including Scottish Women’s Aid’s <i>Listen Louder</i> campaign, which have been instrumental in setting the political agenda and improving provision for children affected by domestic abuse. (<i>Houghton, 2006</i>) The Scottish Parliament praised a young person representing children’s <i>Listen Louder</i> appeal as ‘as good a petitioner as we have seen’ (<i>Scottish Parliament 2002, col 2432</i>), an expert witness to the lives of children experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>The vital contribution of children and young people to developing the Delivery Plan has also been acknowledged with current Ministers assuring Parliament that “their priorities and views have shaped the development of the plan” (<i>Scottish Parliament 2007, col 3471</i>) and because of this experience “we are now working to increase involvement of children in that work” (<i>ibid</i>).</p>	

Priority Area 13 – continued

What children and young people have told us

Young people with experience of domestic abuse discussed why it was important for adults to listen to young people in the recent project for Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group – "Making a Difference: Young People Speak to Scottish Ministers about their Priorities" (Houghton, 2008a):

J: *I think they should listen because an adult's point of view isn't always a child's perspective, so they should listen just to get a child's point of view.*

M: *yeah, getting the view from a child is probably more clearly than getting it from an adult as well, cos the child knows...*

J: *knows it directly, not like from a parent that's sort of taken it for what they think that the child would think...*

M: *that way you're getting the child's feelings as well about it all. (J, girl, M, boy from Houghton, 2008a)*

Their views mirror the expectations of all children to have their opinions taken into account and respected and to have their helping role acknowledged –

"Grown ups think they should hide it and shouldn't tell us, but we want to know. We want to be involved and we want our mums to talk with us about what they are going to do – we could help make decisions." (group interview in Mullender et al, 2002)

Children and young people are also clear about their role as advocates on behalf of other children, because children 'do not often get heard', and about their role as change-makers. Their enthusiasm to become involved in the Delivery Group's work stems from their wish 'to make things better' for other children and families and, crucially, from their knowledge that they can make things better. Children and young people know what needs to change but also, they know how things should change. As one young person put it, "we've had the support, we've seen what's right and what's wrong so we would have the best perception of how to improve it". (Houghton, 2008a)

How will we take this work forward

Actions: Year 1

- We will set up a robust participation process for young people to continue to provide advice to Ministers of children's current priorities and concerns, as quality assurance for the Delivery Plan. This process will be linked into a programme of local engagement activities across Scotland which will enable children and young people affected by domestic abuse to feed in their views, ideas and perspectives on the implementation of the Delivery Plan's Priority Areas.
- We will work to increase our understanding of children's perspectives of domestic abuse and of effective participation processes with children and young people affected by domestic abuse, especially with those children who are harder to reach. We will ensure that gaps in our knowledge are addressed through research or participation activities under relevant Delivery Plan Priority Areas. We will also work with research commissioners to ensure, where possible, that research methodologies are designed around innovative ways of working with children and young people, including consideration of children as research advisors and researchers.

How will we take this work forward – continued

Actions: Year 1 – continued

- We will develop Guidance for practitioners and agencies on good practice engaging with children and young people affected by domestic abuse and we will pilot this Guidance in the *Getting it right* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder. As part of this pilot we will we develop training opportunities for practitioners to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to undertake effective participation work which improves outcomes both for children and agencies.
- We will ensure that information and learning around children’s perspectives of domestic abuse and participation of children affected by domestic abuse is centrally available to all practitioners through relevant websites and we will ensure this information is updated regularly.

Actions: Future Work

- We will continue to support the participation of children and young people affected by domestic abuse in informing and developing policy. As part of the Delivery Plan review process we will organise a national event involving children and young people, Ministers, the Scottish Parliament, COSLA, the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group and other stakeholders which will provide an opportunity and platform to mark progress in relation to the Delivery Plan implementation and set the agenda for future work.
- We will continue to maintain strategic oversight of the Delivery Plan programme to ensure that, where our knowledge about children’s perspectives or processes of engagement is incomplete, this is addressed through research or through participation activities involving children and young people.
- We will review the Guidance and training initiatives on an ongoing basis in light of emerging research findings, outcomes of participation activities and feedback from practitioners, children and young people.

Key Outputs

- Increase in the number of children and young people affected by domestic abuse across Scotland who are actively involved, through the Advisory Group or through local engagement activities, in the work of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group.
- Development of guidance and workforce training opportunities, leading to an increase in the number of practitioners who have the skills, knowledge and resources to engage with children and young people affected by domestic abuse.
- Linked to the above, an increase in opportunities for children and young people to be actively involved in policy and practice development, in service delivery, activism and research across Scotland.

Priority Area 13 – continued

Outcomes

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will enable Government, local authorities and service providers working with children and young people to develop more responsive policy and practice informed by the needs, views and wishes of children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Action taken forward under the Delivery Plan will therefore support Government, local authorities and service providers working with children and young people to contribute towards –

- Providing high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive services according to local people's needs.
- Ensuring young people affected by domestic abuse are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk as a consequence of domestic abuse.

Lead Government Division: Safer Children, Stronger Families Division, Equality Division

ANNEX A – Membership of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group

Chair	
Colin MacLean	Director of Children, Young People & Social Care Directorate, Scottish Government
Protection Subgroup	
Roma Menlowe (Subgroup Chair)	Deputy Director of Criminal Procedure Division, Scottish Government
Bill Barron	Criminal Procedure Division, Scottish Government
Isabel Drummond-Murray (link to National Group to Address Violence Against Women)	Violence Against Women Team, Scottish Government
Lindsay Ferguson	Lead Nurse Consultant, Child Protection, Scottish Government
Maggie Tierney (link to Child Protection Committee Chairs)	Child Protection Policy Team, Scottish Government
Mark McSherry	Effective Practice Unit, Scottish Government
Ian Turner	Family Law and Administrative Justice Team, Scottish Government
John Froggatt	Child and Maternal Health Division, Scottish Government
Rod Burns	Support for Children and Families Team, Scottish Government
Fiona Holligan	Principal Procurator Fiscal Depute, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service
Fiona Eadie	Principal Procurator Fiscal Depute, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service
Beverley Hart	Service Manager, Social Work Dept, Dundee City Council
Detective Superintendent David Leitch (link to ACPOS)	Family Protection Coordinator, ACPOS
Rory MacRae (link to Scottish Practitioners Forum – perpetrator programmes)	Senior Social Worker, Domestic Violence Probation Project
Fred McBride (link to Association of Directors of Social Work)	Head of Children and Families Service, Dundee City Council
Margaret Small	<i>Getting it right</i> Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Coordinator, Clydebank
Eleanor Stenhouse	Head of Midwifery, NHS Greater Glasgow
Alison Wright (link to SCRA)	Head of Practice, Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration

Provision Subgroup	
Claire Monaghan (Subgroup Chair)	Depute Director of Children, Young People & Social Care Directorate, Scottish Government
Pippa Goldschmidt	Homelessness Legislation Division, Scottish Government
Jason McDonald (link to CoSLA)	Policy Manager, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Eileen Flanagan	Violence Against Women Team, Scottish Government
David Purdie	Workforce Issues, Scottish Government
Heather Coady (link to Women's Aid network)	Children's Policy Manager, Scottish Women's Aid
Dr Jonathan Sher (link to children's voluntary sector)	Director of Research, Policy and Practice Development, Children in Scotland
Rory Farrelly	Nursing Officer, Women and Children, Health Directorate, Scottish Government
Catriona Grant	<i>Getting it right</i> Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Coordinator, Edinburgh
Anne Neilson	Nurse Consultant for Vulnerable Children, NHS Lothian
Primary Prevention through Education Subgroup	
Mike Gibson (Subgroup Chair)	Head of Support for Learning Division, Scottish Government
Yvonne Strachan	Head of Equality Unit, Scottish Government
Richard Foggo	Community Safety Unit, Scottish Government
Maria McCann	Support for Learning Division, Scottish Government
John Davidson	Community Safety Unit, Scottish Government
Jennifer Milligan (link to Scottish Child Health Commissioners Forum)	Child Health Commissioner, NHS Dumfries & Galloway
Veronica Rankin	National Officer (Education & Equality), the Educational Institute of Scotland
Graham Abrines	<i>Getting it right</i> Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Coordinator, Dumfries & Galloway
Jenny Kemp (replacing Artemis Pana) (link to the National Children & Young People's Network)	Prevention and Education Officer, Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust

ANNEX A – Membership of the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group – continued

Participation Subgroup	
Rod Harrison (Subgroup Chair)	Head of Children, Young People and Social Care Unit, Education Analytical Services, Scottish Government
Jennifer Crowson	SWIA Inspector
Jan McClory	Assistant Director, Children 1st
Fiona Morrison	Children’s Policy Worker, Scottish Women’s Aid
Douglas Howie	<i>Getting it right</i> Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Coordinator, Falkirk
Support Team	
Claire Houghton	Children’s Policy Manager, Scottish Government
Jim Carle	National Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Manager, Scottish Government
Boyd McAdam	<i>Getting it right for every child</i> Team, Scottish Government
Mairi Tulbure	<i>Getting it right for every child</i> Team, Scottish Government
Artemis Pana	Children’s Policy Assistant Manager, Scottish Government
Callum Hendry	National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group Policy Officer, Scottish Government
Kate Walshaw	National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group Policy Officer, Scottish Government
Catherine Muir	National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group Policy Officer, Scottish Government
Sophie Bigg	National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group Policy Officer, Scottish Government

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