



COVID-19 & DOMESTIC ABUSE: SUPPORT & RECOVERY FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

THE IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN ON CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE

Increased risk of harm & trauma

Increased risk and increased intensity of domestic abuse during lockdown, as reported by child protection data and specialist services

Children and young people living with perpetrators during lockdown with no/very limited access to support

Perpetrators are using child contact arrangements put in place post-separation to continue to abuse children, young people and women

Sustained trauma from current/previous experiences of domestic abuse impacts on mental health and wellbeing

Lack of access to services & support

Barriers to accessing virtual support e.g., lack of safe/private space, lack of access to technology

Difficult to engage very young children or children with additional needs virtually

Schools closed and reduced access to other services results in many children's experiences of domestic abuse being 'hidden'

WHAT WE EXPECT TO SEE NEXT

Both specialist and universal services expect a significant increase in disclosures and identification of domestic abuse as lockdown measures lift and schools return



Increased trauma

Domestic abuse can be deeply traumatising for children & young people. The impact of lockdown measures, including being cut off from support networks, has resulted in elevated and sustained levels of trauma for many children & young people in Scotland.



High levels of risk

Women, children & young people may be planning to leave their abusive partner as lockdown measures lift. This is the time that women, children & young people are most at risk of serious physical harm and domestic homicide.



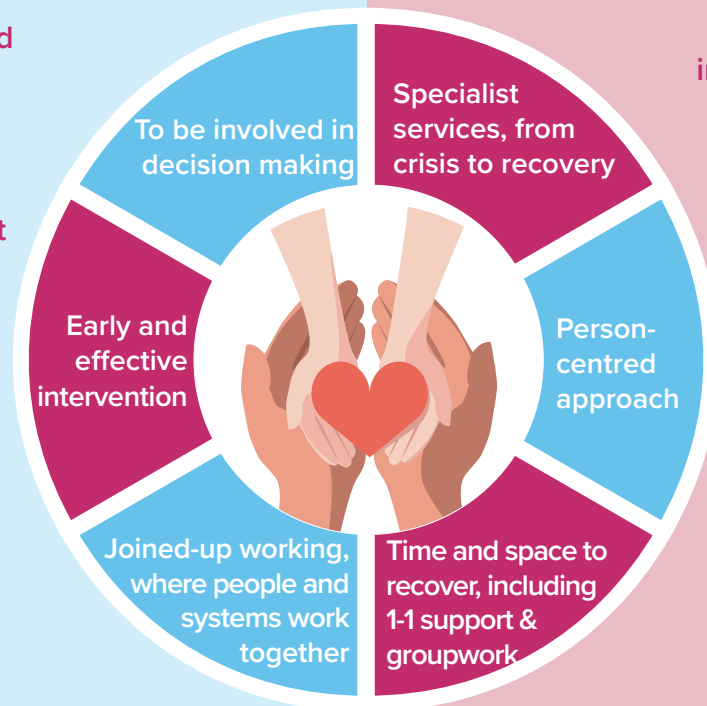
Increased demand on services

Increased numbers of children & young people seeking/ requiring crisis and recovery support will lead to increased waiting lists and strain on specialist services. Not being able to access services exacerbates the already increased risk and impact of trauma for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

KEEPING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE AND SUPPORTED

WHAT HAVE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US THEY NEED?

Domestic abuse-informed processes and systems that recognise the impact of domestic abuse on children & young people and hold perpetrators to account



Specialist crisis & recovery support to improve children & young people's safety and wellbeing and mitigate the long-term effects of domestic abuse

Supporting children and young people is an integral part of Scotland's recovery and renewal. Support and recovery from domestic abuse requires both collaborative, multi-agency, trauma-informed systems and processes and high-quality, sustainable specialist services.

NEXT STEPS FOR SCOTLAND'S RECOVERY AND RENEWAL



Prevention and early intervention

Investing in prevention and early intervention services/approaches for children and young people affected by domestic abuse is key to ensuring they can access the right support at the right time. Evidence shows this will help manage demand on services and reduce long-term costs.



Building back better

A whole systems approach to tackling domestic abuse is vital for children and young people's safety and wellbeing, in both potential future lockdowns and in our commitment to building back better. This cost-effective approach improves outcomes for children and young people by strengthening multi-agency collaboration, developing workforce resilience and wellbeing and placing the child at the centre of decision making.



Long-term outcomes

Evidence shows that to improve long-term outcomes for children and young people, systems must recognise the impact of domestic abuse and provide access to safe, effective, trauma-informed support. This helps children and young people realise their potential and helps Scotland achieve national outcomes for children's rights and wellbeing.

FURTHER INFO

- [What lockdown is like for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse: animations co-produced by young survivors and Scottish Women's Aid \(2020\)](#)
- [Cedar blog on domestic abuse recovery and children and young people \(2020\)](#)
- [Young people's recommendations for improvements to services, justice and societal attitudes towards gender-based violence: Everyday Heroes reports \(2018\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Children, young people & families evidence & intelligence reports \(Scottish Government & SOLACE, 2020\)](#)
- [COVID 19 Justice Analytical Services report on domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG \(Scottish Government, 2020\)](#)
- [Supplementary National VAW Guidance \(Scottish Government and COSLA, 2020\)](#)