



Recognising Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children and Young People

Learning and Development Framework

April 2024

Introduction

The SBNI has adopted a strength-based, trauma-informed approach to safeguarding children and young people, underpinned by research relating to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). As part of this, the SBNI in its Strategic Plan 2022-2026 has placed specific focus on ACEs for children and young people living in Northern Ireland including domestic violence and abuse. The SBNI has committed as a strategic priority to:

- to hear and respond to the voices of children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse
- to work with government departments and their agencies to prevent domestic violence and abuse (DVA) from occurring
- to work with member and partner agencies engaged in the DVA arena to raise awareness among parents/carers and professionals of the impact of DVA on children and young people
- to work with member and partner agencies to provide training resources and expertise in how to improve the recognition, assessment, and responses to children, young people and families experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021

The SBNI Domestic Violence and Abuse Committee has worked with the Stakeholders Assurance Group (SAG) to support the development of the new Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act 2021. Significantly, the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act Commencement Order 2022 provides for a new domestic abuse offence for Northern Ireland which criminalises coercive controlling behaviours, as well as recognising children and young people and the impact that coercive and controlling behaviour has on them as individuals through the Child Aggravator Clause (Section 8). The section acknowledges that children do not have to be present or witness the domestic violence for it to have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing. The legislation also supports a statutory rule enabling information-sharing from the police to an education provider about an incident of domestic abuse concerning a child who is a pupil or a student of that provider. The SBNI published a report 'Equally Safeguarded' in March 2020 which scoped the extent and availability of service provision in relation to children and domestic violence. It assessed training provision highlighting extent, availability and gaps in current training provision, recommending the development of a standardised framework for training and development that recognises different levels of training required at varying points of support intervention. This recommendation has been implemented by the SBNI's Domestic Violence and Abuse Committee and a task and finish group was established to assist in the development of this framework which will:

- reflect the voices and needs of children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse
- seek to increase knowledge/understanding and improve skills and competence of staff and volunteers

- build upon best practice training available which is quality assured
- set out minimum learning outcomes which should be achieved by staff and volunteers who access training
- provide a sound and robust baseline for training providers and commissioners, ensuring quality assurance and standardisation of training provision
- be informed and influenced by relevant strategic drivers such as the legal and policy context, recommendations from case management reviews, new and emerging trends and needs and ongoing training needs analysis
- build upon training currently available and will also address gaps identified in SBNI's Equally Safeguarded Report 2020 and be based upon the premise that everyone can do something to prevent and address domestic violence and abuse
- be based upon a continuum of levels which differentiates between skills and knowledge required in different remits and contexts.

Definition of Domestic Abuse

The draft Department of Justice and Department of Health Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy defines domestic abuse as: threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.

Aim

This Domestic Abuse Learning and Development Framework will contribute to the improvement in recognition and support for children, young people and their families affected by domestic abuse.

Objectives

- to provide a guide for domestic abuse training which is responsive to the voices of children and young people affected by abuse
- to provide a guide for domestic abuse training with respect to the impact on children, young people and their families including safety and risk, through a child protection and safeguarding lens, which takes account of single and multi-agency training, including its planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation
- identify opportunities for developing and enhancing multi-disciplinary/multi-agency domestic abuse education and training strategies across all sectors

- improve the competence of staff and volunteers involved in working with children and their families
- provide minimum learning outcomes which should be achieved by staff/volunteers in any learning and development activity
- identify different levels of training commensurate with the level and nature of contact with children and young people, which take account of uni- and multi-agency planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation
- inform commissioners, policy makers and those developing and providing education and training programmes, plus organisations and individuals to ensure that relevant, consistent and quality assured programmes are in place, accessible and delivered at the right level.

Values and principles

It is intended that learning and development delivered under this framework will reflect the following principles:

- responsive to the needs and voices of children and young people affected by domestic abuse
- a rights-based approach to safeguarding children's learning and development in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and the Human Rights Act 1998
- safeguarding and protecting children and young people is everyone's business and all activity should be child-centred
- a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach to meeting individual and/or organisational learning and development needs is recommended where appropriate and relevant
- learning and development opportunities must be fit for purpose and have agreed learning outcomes as identified in this framework
- organisations have the responsibility to ensure that all learning and development is related to and demonstrated in practice
- learning and development will support improved performance in safeguarding children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse
- learning and development is not a one-off event, each organisation must take responsibility to understand and develop strategies which will help support staff volunteers and seek to identify the most appropriate and relevant opportunities to develop staff confidence and competence in their role
- learning and development with respect to domestic abuse and safeguarding children and young people is a developmental process and requires the investment of time and resources within organisations to create a competent workforce. It should also be responsive to different working practices that may evolve
- this framework is accompanied by a document developed by children and young people in collaboration with Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland. The document 'Having Our Say' contains young people's thoughts on professional learning and development and should be consulted when considering trauma informed response/practice/environments. The young

people who created this document for the SBNI are experts by experience. The information and guidance they have so thoughtfully provided is informed by their unique experiences and should be accorded due weight and consideration when considering professional development and trauma informed provision.

Target audience

The framework is aimed at all SBNI member agencies and any agencies providing services to a member agency under a contractual/service level agreement. It is also applicable and relevant to all organisations and individuals who come into contact with children and young people and their families. It also includes those who work with adults who are parents or have contact with children and young people through the course of their work and/or service users who have contact with children. Safeguarding and protecting children and young people is the responsibility of every individual in Northern Ireland across all disciplines and sectors.

This framework has been developed in conjunction with the SBNI's Learning and Development Framework designed in four levels which are not incremental but offer a continuum of learning and development where an individual may move between levels. **Each organisation should determine the level, developmental requirements and appropriate timescale for staff/volunteers to undertake the training.** The appropriateness of the medium of training for a varied workforce should also be considered. The framework does specify some broad timescales but each organisation is responsible for determining if staff/volunteers require a certain level within a specific timeframe from date of appointment, for example. Where possible, organisations/individuals should take a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to accessing learning and development.

Level 1 All staff/volunteers within the organisation

Level 2 All staff/volunteers who have direct contact with:

- children and young people
- adult carers/parents and those who have regular contact with children
- adults known to pose, or suspected of posing, a risk to children and young people.

Level 3 All staff/volunteers who:

- could contribute to assessing, planning, intervening and evaluating the needs and risks for children and parental capacity where there are safeguarding issues

- includes those who have a managerial or supervisory role.

Level 4 All staff/volunteers who:

- are involved in the complex safeguarding decision making/case management processes addressing domestic abuse.

Level One
All Staff/Volunteers within the SBNI member and partner organisation.
Target Audience
All staff or volunteers in the organisation

Knowledge and Skills To understand	Learning Outcomes Ability to:	Development Requirements / Frequency of Delivery	Organisational Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is domestic abuse • Definition and types of domestic abuse • Prevalence • Signs and Indicators • Impact of domestic abuse on children • What is coercive Control • Importance of organisational care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and respond appropriately to domestic abuse • Knowledge of appropriate referral and signposting processes. • Understand own role and the role of others within their organisation's policies and procedures • Awareness of children's experience and impact of domestic abuse • Recognise that children and young people at all stages of development can be affected by domestic abuse • Awareness of impact of trauma upon staff in this area of work 	<p>Minimum of access to training and learning and development activity every three years which enables them to develop their awareness at Level 1</p>	<p>Determined by the individual agencies and can take the form of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a leaflet on induction or in other refresher training requirements • an e- learning programme • corporate or departmental induction programmes • face to face awareness sessions • updating through information sharing within organisations.

Level Two
Target Audience
Staff and volunteers who have direct contact supporting adult children and young people using services within the statutory, voluntary and community sector

Knowledge and Skills	Learning Outcomes	Development Requirements / Frequency of delivery	Organisational Responsibility
<p>Level 2 will build on the skills of Level 1 and provide enhanced understanding and knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognition of domestic abuse as a safeguarding concern • warning signs and indicators of abuse • different types of abuse and family dynamics (familial abuse, child to child abuse, child to parent abuse). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of assessment Tools 	<p>Building on the learning outcomes of Level 1, Level 2 will have the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise and respond to children and young people’s safeguarding issues using a trauma informed approach • recognise signs and indicators of Domestic Abuse and respond to disclosures and non-disclosures appropriately. • understand own role and the role of others. • contribute to the assessment and management of risk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of appropriate tools of the appropriate Domestic Abuse Screening tools, including UNOCINI, 	<p>Face to face or online formal training every three years</p>	<p>Determined by the individual agencies and can take the form of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face to face • online e learning • eLearning modules applicable to need. • accessing relevant articles in professional journals etc.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation Encompass • Knowledge of NI legislation • Online abuse • Signposting for onward assistance • Staff Support 	<p>DASH, MARAC referrals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop awareness of this model of intervention • Awareness of NI domestic abuse legislative framework • Awareness of use of digital technology in domestic abuse • Increased knowledge of appropriate referral and signposting processes • Develop understanding of secondary and vicarious trauma and need for organisational care 		
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Level 3 Target Audience All staff/volunteers who: contribute to assessing, planning, intervening and evaluating the needs of children and parental capacity where there are safeguarding issues and/or have a managerial or supervisory role			
Knowledge and Skills	Learning Outcomes	Development Requirements	Organisational Responsibility
<p>Level 3 building on Knowledge and skills from levels 1 and 2, participants will have knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reporting pathways legislation domestic abuse within the familial context and the ways in which the perpetrator's abuse can compromise parenting 	<p>In addition to learning outcomes of Level 1 and 2, participants will have the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive oversight of reporting pathways and support services that are available to children and young people who are victims of domestic abuse awareness of legislation in NI in respect of domestic abuse understand the application and impact of child aggravator clause understand the impact of domestic abuse for mother/ father (primary care giver) and child understand the emotional relationship between the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of face to face and eLearning Needs to involve experts by experience Support workers based in GP practices, in A&E and in police stations Build on good practice pilots already in place (e.g., IRIS) Use of case study examples for reflection and to inform practice development 	<p>Determined by the individual agencies and can take the form of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> face to face online eLearning eLearning modules applicable to need. accessing relevant articles in professional journals etc domestic abuse champions to take forward training in their organisation nominated specialists within each organisation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the impact of trauma across the lifespan 	<p>perpetrator, victim and child(ren)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of safety planning signposting and support pathways • manage disclosures • listening and responding to needs and voices of children, young people and families • barriers to disclosing domestic abuse. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perinatal period/early years/adolescence/transgenerational • Experiences / environments/interventions necessary to help mitigate impact of trauma • Understand the impact of trauma potentially resulting in the child displaying abusive behaviours to others • Recognise that the perpetrator's behaviour can deliver repeated traumatic experiences for children and victims both directly and indirectly • Supporting staff to understand trauma informed inquiry • Develop trauma informed responses on a case by case basis that recognise and 		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal and cultural risk • Awareness of Coercive control. • Awareness of risk assessment tools; • Awareness of Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process • Understand the importance of safety planning for children and young people and their families • Staff support 	<p>respond to the impact of trauma for families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners attuned to impact upon children considering; brain development and subsequent attachment relationships • Awareness of FGM, forced marriage & honour based violence • Recognition of indicators of coercive control • Tools - Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA), DASH, MARAC, DARAC, Storyboard Framework • Awareness of DHR process • Ability to assist in developing safety plans for carer and child • Develop a deeper understanding of secondary and vicarious trauma and need for organisational care 		
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Level 4 Target Audience All staff who are involved in complex safeguarding decision making/case management processes addressing domestic abuse			
Knowledge and Skills	Learning Outcomes	Development Requirements	Organisational Responsibility
<p>Building on Knowledge and skills from Levels 1, 2 and 3, participants will have knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding of domestic homicide reviews including agencies roles and responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased knowledge of impact of Trauma of Domestic Abuse 	<p>In addition to learning outcomes of Levels 1, 2 and 3, participants will have the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding of domestic homicide review process and purpose and its relevance to working with families who are experiencing domestic abuse (including managerial oversight where applicable) eight stage homicide timeline understanding the role of the domestic homicide review participant how to write the DHR Individual Learning Review (ILR). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and respond to patterns of behaviour and potential risk indicators initiating safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of Face to Face and on-line platform Use of case study examples for reflection and to inform practice development Build on good practice pilots already in place e.g., IRIS) 	<p>Determined by the individual agencies and can take the form of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> face to face online e learning eLearning modules applicable to need. accessing relevant articles in professional journals etc domestic abuse champions to take forward training in their organisation nominated specialists within each organisation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• work with perpetrators	<p>responses through a trauma informed lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop trauma informed responses on a case by case basis that recognise and respond to the impact of trauma• adapt responses that will effectively meet the needs of the children and families impacted by domestic abuse• understanding the impact on behaviour and context of relationships for children and young people who are victims of domestic abuse. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding presenting risk including: the impact working with perpetrators may pose with respect to professional judgement, professional grooming, emotional and physical safety for the professional and support workers• understanding impact perpetrators may pose in respect to safety planning for families and associated trauma this may present for families, and staff involved		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide leadership and support to staff who are dealing with domestic abuse, being proactive and responsive in addressing secondary traumatisation• staff support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• implications for practice when working with perpetrators, (including access to information, assessment. Referral pathways and interagency working and roles).• ensure appropriate supervision, support and governance in respect of staff working in this complex area.• recognise and respond effectively to staff including an appreciation of diversity, prevalence and difference in life experiences for staff• promotion of wellbeing throughout the organisation, including responding and signposting to appropriate support pathway• ensure adherence to work based policies to safeguard staff in high risk environments, such as lone worker policy• commitment to development of trauma informed workplace.		
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Legislative Framework supporting victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse

- [Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2021](#)
- [Domestic Abuse \(Safe Leave\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#)
- The Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2009
- Sexual Offences and trafficking Victims Order 2022
- Sexual Offences Order 2008
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
- [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#)
- [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009](#)
- [Education and Libraries \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1986 Schedule 13](#)
- [Safeguarding Board Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#)
- [Children's Services Co-operation Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#)
- [Family Homes and Domestic Violence \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1998](#)
- [Child Abduction \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1985](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015 \(sections 72 and 73\)](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#)
- [Forced Marriage \(Civil Protection\) Act 2007](#)
- [Protection from stalking Act NI 2022](#)

Policy Framework

- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017
- [Protocol for Joint Investigation by Social Workers and Police Officers and Alleged and Suspected Cases of Child Abuse \(Northern Ireland\) April 2013](#)
- Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy 2016 - 2023
- [Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care – Standards and Guidance for Safeguarding Children and Young People – November 2016;](#)
- Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020-2030 Northern Ireland Executive
- [Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy consultation launched 18 October 2022 – Long | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Getting it Right: Standards of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People – Third Edition August 2009 \(Updated February 2011\).](#)
- [Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland \(UNOCINI\) framework; first published 30 June 2011, last updated December 2023](#)
- [The Right to Choose: Statutory Guidance for Dealing with Forced Marriage – Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Home Office; updated 13 April 2023](#)
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Procedures Manual [SBNI Procedures](#)
- Public Prosecution Service (PPS) policy on Prosecuting DA [PPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Abuse - NI Direct - Citizen Space 22 February 2014](#)
- Working arrangements for the Welfare and Safeguarding of Unaccompanied and Separated Children and Young People: Guidance Document Health and Social Care Board 2018
- Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Protection of Adult Victims and Potential Victims of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Guidance Document DOJ, PSNI, Health and Social Care Board 2018
- Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Safeguarding of Child Victims and Potential Child Victims of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Guidance issued by The Health and Social Care Board and The Police Service for Northern Ireland 2018