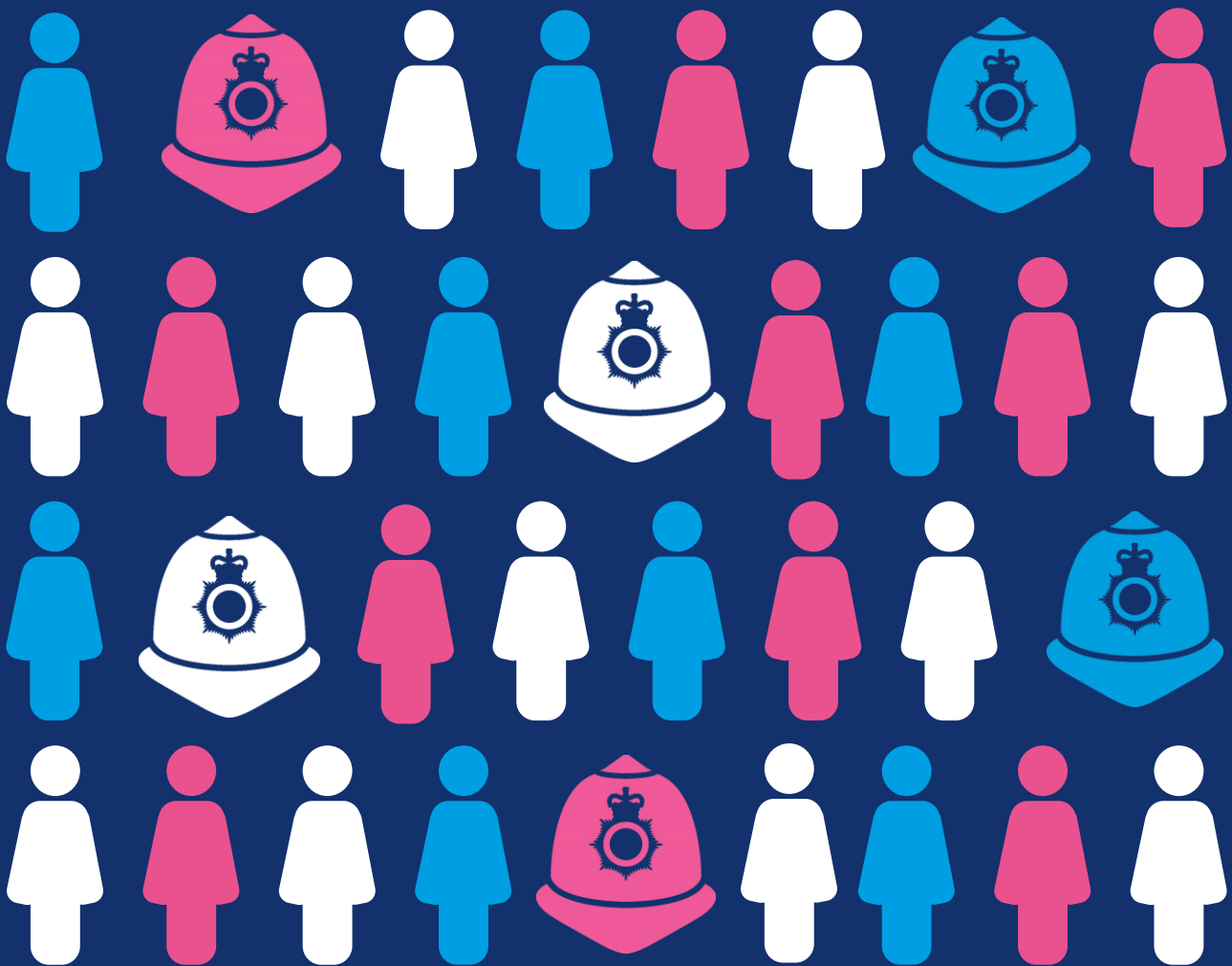

Domestic Abuse Matters: Police responders and Champions training

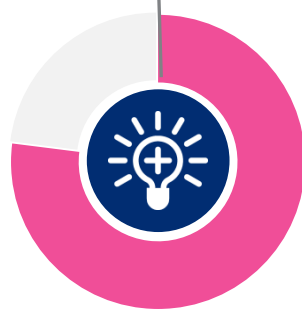




75%

of **First Responders** felt training would help them **respond to victims** in a more informed way

77%

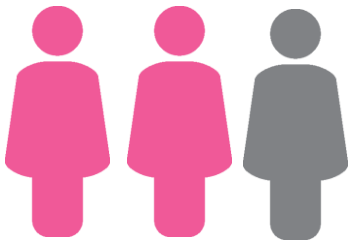


of **First Responders** had a much greater understanding of the **stages of coercive control and abuse**



83%

of **First Responders** were willing to **recommend the training to a colleague**



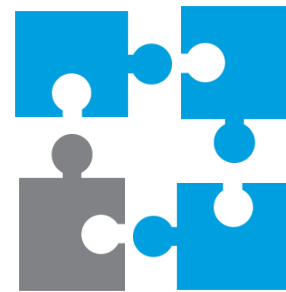
65%

of **First Responders** felt the training would have a positive impact on how they **perform their role**



Excellent training that focuses attention on a significant problem

- **First Responder**

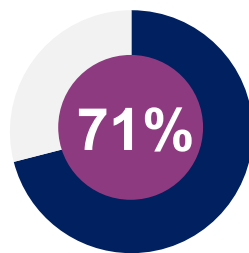


Three out of four DA Matters Champions felt they would be able to support responders suffering from **compassion fatigue** and **vicarious trauma**



of **First Responders** felt they had a greater knowledge of the tactics used by **perpetrators when coercively controlling a victim**

71%



of **DA Matters Champions** felt they had a greater knowledge of the **personal effects on officers of dealing with domestic abuse**



“Just much more confidence to ask the right questions, get the details to keep victims safe and prosecute offenders. Great course”

- **First Responder**

Domestic Abuse Matters – Findings to date

Introduction

This report outlines initial findings from the Domestic Abuse Matters training carried out by SafeLives across four English Police Force areas throughout 2017 and 2018. Feedback forms were completed by 3,657 First Responders and by 361 Domestic Abuse Matters Champions who attended the training and responses were analysed. A full methodology can be found in Appendix 1.

Domestic Abuse Matters exists because the College of Policing was asked by the HMIC to review what it provided to forces by way of Domestic Abuse training to frontline responders. SafeLives provided an external view and found that the College was providing helpful learning objectives to police forces nationally but these objectives were used by each force differently, with training varying in terms of duration, content and quality.

Domestic Abuse Matters was written with the College of Policing by SafeLives to provide police forces with a sustainable programme of change that offers the opportunity for the country to provide consistency of service to families experiencing domestic abuse. This interactive training tool seeks to address negative attitudes towards domestic abuse and to promote a cultural shift across Police Forces. It complements the development and subsequent implementation of the criminalisation of coercive control (more details can be found in Appendix 2).

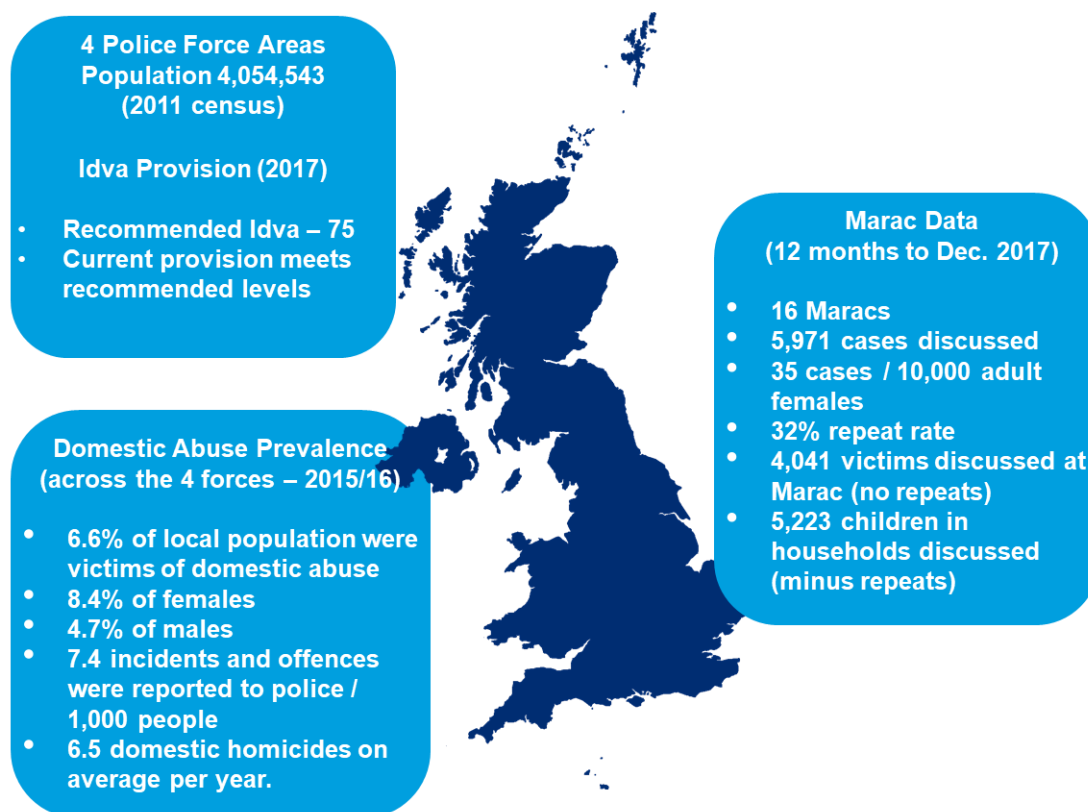
For the program to work effectively, it is essential that at least 75% of first responders receive training. The minimum requirement for forces is 75% of officers up to and including the rank of Sergeant who come into contact with victims, perpetrators, children or family members. Forces in this report have expanded on this to include those working in custody, force control and response, and those of more senior ranks. Training such a high volume of officers helps to build momentum and to quickly and effectively bring about a cultural change.

Additionally, for the forces in this analysis, 25% of responders were given additional training as ‘on the job’ Domestic Abuse Matters Champions. Champions receive additional teaching designed to help sustain the change in skills, behaviour and attitudes of their peers; challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, checking service delivery, giving constructive feedback and congratulating good practice. Champions also identify and act on compassion fatigue, burnout and vicarious trauma for staff members, and to respond to abuse within their colleague’s personal lives.

This report considers immediate feedback from responders. Further evaluation activities, considering the longer-term impacts of the training, are ongoing, and will form the basis for future reports.

Area Profile

Data below displays combined figures for Marac (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) referrals for the four police force areas, as well as domestic abuse prevalence data taken from the Police and Crime Survey for England and Wales.



Feed-back from First Responders and Champions

First responder and champion profile

Amongst first responders, two-fifths (39%) of respondents were female. There was a slightly higher percentage of female champions (49%). Across England and Wales, 30% of officers are female (Police Workforce Statistics 2017).

The vast majority (84% of first responders and 85% of champions) described themselves as white British. A minority (2% of first responders and 2% of champions) described themselves as being black or minority ethnic (BAME). This compares to 6.3% of officers across England and Wales who identify as BAME (Police Workforce Statistics 2017).

On average first responders were aged of 38.7 years and champions an average age of 37.3 years. The most commonly reported roles of responders within the force were PC, and those working in Response and Custody.

Outcomes for First Responders

The training focuses on several key outcomes, namely:

- Understanding of coercive and controlling behaviour,
- Perpetrator tactics for keeping victims in relationships,
- Understanding victims and why they may not wish to leave a relationship or support police action,
- Questioning of victims and perpetrators,

- Evidence gathering,
- Safeguarding, and
- Perpetrator manipulation of police responders.

First responders were asked to consider their level of knowledge prior to and post-training (see Appendix 2) in all of these areas. Across all key learning outcomes, respondents reported large increases in knowledge and understanding, as outlined in the sections below.

“ Thoroughly enjoyed this course, so impactful and helps to scratch the surface especially for Responses on attendance at domestic incidents. Really makes you look past and question the face value of a situation.

Training gave first responders more knowledge and confidence, allowing them to respond better

The large majority of first responders reported increases in understanding the stages of coercive control and abuse (77%), the tactics perpetrators of domestic abuse demonstrate when they are coercively controlling victims (72%) and knowledge around perpetrator tactics for keeping victims in relationships (68%).

“ Be much more conscious of reasons victims do not engage. Course has given greater understanding of hidden behaviour leading to non-engagement.

First responders also reported increases in knowledge around victim questioning (68%); the tactics perpetrators use to manipulate police officers (58%), recording of information (45%), and evidence gathering (44%).

First responders felt the training would impact on their future performance in a variety of ways

Two-thirds (65%) of first responders felt that Domestic Abuse Matters training would greatly impact on the way they perform their role moving forward, and three-quarters (75%) on their ability to respond to victims of domestic abuse in a more informed way.

Respondents were asked to expand on these answers, considering what they had learnt and what they might take forward into their practice. The most common responses focussed on identifying coercive and controlling behaviour, questioning of victims and perpetrators, and understanding the complex dynamics that may lead a victim to not engage with police or support a prosecution. Multiple responders discussed this in the context of repeat victims and felt that moving forward they would be more sympathetic and open in these situations.

Following training, 94% of First Responders had a strong understanding of the tactics perpetrators use to keep victims in a relationship.

Respondents highlighted that they would be more open-minded, empathetic and considerate towards victims, and that they would give more time to investigations and to the gathering of a broader range of more in-depth evidence and information. Responders reported feeling more confident in their own abilities and capacity to deal with domestic abuse incidents.

“ I now understand the calls cannot be taken on face value. The manipulation tactics used by perpetrators and the challenges victims face in reporting and leaving abusive relationships.

Whilst the overwhelming number of responses were positive, responders did raise some concerns as well. The majority of these related to current police workloads and an overall lack of resources. Responders were concerned that they would not be able to give the required additional time to more in-depth investigations, or to fully realise the course contents and training. It is important that Police Forces address these concerns with officers and do as much as they can to give staff the

time and resources to conduct the best possible investigation and to respond to incidents effectively.

The impact of the training differed across genders and age groups

Analysis was conducted to determine which parts of the training were the most or least impactful, and whether there were differences across age or gender (see Appendix 1). This analysis suggested that the most impactful areas of training involved:

- Understanding the stages of coercive control,
- The tactics used by perpetrators to keep victims in the relationship, and

- Understanding how perpetrators can manipulate police responders.

Female respondents gave more positive responses across all questions and concerning all key learning outcomes; in all cases these differences were found to be statistically significant ($p < .001$). Specifically female respondents were more likely to think that training would change how they would perform their role (68% compared to 59%), and that training would enable them to respond to victims in a more informed way (75% compared to 69%). Female respondents were also more likely to recommend training to a colleague than their male counterparts (89% compared to 78%).

From a closer look at the raw data, female responders considered their knowledge prior to the course to be slightly lower than their male colleagues did, and somewhat higher than their male colleagues after training.

The analysis also found significant relationships between age and course outcomes. Older participants were more likely to give positive responses when asked about the following areas (in all cases $p < .001$):

- Stages victims of coercive control experience
- Tactics perpetrators use to keep victims in relationships
- Evidence gathering
- Manipulation of first responders by perpetrators

However, they responded less positively when asked whether training would alter how they would perform their role moving forward ($p < .001$).

“ A more open approach with less unconscious bias. Being more aware of the language I use and questions I ask. Thinking about the time I spend with the victim.

Whilst no data was gathered on length of service, these findings may reflect a change in training content for younger and newer police officers in recent years. Feedback from a number of younger officers indicated that they had received a degree of similar training before. If this were not the case for older officers, this would explain the additional impact of training on them. It is important for forces to reflect on why older officers may

not view the training as having a longer-term impact on their role. Some feedback from officers considered that force policy and structure may limit their capacity to change how they respond to domestic incidents. This reflects the notion that whilst officers want to change their response, they feel that doing so may be out of their control.

Overall responses across all ages and genders were very positive, with training considered to be incredibly beneficial; four out of five (83%) first responders were willing to recommend Domestic Abuse Matters training to a colleague (scoring 8 or higher on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was 'Would not recommend' and 10 was 'Would strongly recommend').

Differences across age and gender are important for Police Forces to keep in mind as they implement and build on the training, and these differences will be considered and reflected on during future evaluations.

Outcomes for Domestic Abuse Matters Champions

As with the first responders, responses from champions on the key learning outcomes of the program were very positive (See Appendix 4). Champions reported large increases in knowledge and awareness for all of the key course learning outcomes:

- Knowledge around the role of the DA Matters Champion (82%)
- The use of the GROW model of 'hot debrief' (75%) (Appendix 5)
- Techniques used to support responders suffering with compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma (74%)
- Knowledge of the personal effects on officers of dealing with traumatic events such as DA (71%)

“ I can share my knowledge with confidence and also have peers - other champions - I can speak to. Really enjoyed today - thank you!

Prior to training only 9% of Champions were confident responding to colleagues experiencing compassion fatigue, secondary and vicarious trauma. After training this had risen to 79%

Participants with supervisory responsibilities reported increases in knowledge around risk provisioning and safety planning (52%), and responding to a colleague who is either a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse (55%).

The large majority (78%) of champions were willing to recommend Domestic Abuse Matters Champion / Mentor training to a colleague (scoring 8 or higher on a 1 – 10 scale, where 1 was 'Would not recommend' and 10 was 'Would strongly recommend'). The overwhelming majority (98%) of participants felt that the training would enable them to support and offer development opportunities to colleagues when they are dealing with victims of domestic abuse in a more informed way.

Following training, 93% of Champions felt they had the knowledge to respond to a colleague who was either a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse.

Respondents highlighted the importance of ongoing support and awareness around the role of Champion

Whilst responders were positive about the new role, and could see its value to themselves and their force, as with first responders, champions highlighted concerns over both time and resourcing. For the role of champion to work effectively, time needs to be allowed for them to work with colleagues to offer support, review evidence and other materials, and to ensure that the aims of the training continue to be realised.

“ As a supervisor I will ensure staff have relevant tools and understanding to improve how they deal with DA.

Observations and Conclusions

Domestic Abuse Matters training aims to increase knowledge, understanding and awareness for front line police responders in the areas of coercive and controlling behaviour, the behaviour of both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, and questioning and evidence gathering.

The responses of officers across the four Police Force areas considered were consistently positive, and showed large increases in knowledge across all course outcomes. First responders felt that the training would have a positive impact on how they perform their role moving forward, and that they would respond to domestic abuse incidents in a more positive way. More in-depth and comprehensive investigations, coupled with increased empathy and a more open-minded response, will undoubtedly have an array of positive impacts on all those affected by domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Matters aims to promote a long-term cultural shift in the approach and attitude of officers to domestic abuse. To achieve this it is important that the momentum generated by the training is maintained. This is best achieved through the use of the Domestic Abuse Matters Champions, who can offer support and additional on-going training to responders. For the training to work as envisaged, ensuring that officers are made aware of who champions are, and what support and assistance is available, is essential. Secondly, ensuring that champions are supported in their new role and are given the additional time needed to complete these duties is of great importance.

Six-months post training, SafeLives conducts a follow-up evaluation with responders across forces to see what impact the training has had on practice. The findings from this evaluation will form the basis of a future report.

“ My police officer didn't just believe me he understood me and what my ex-partner was doing to me. He made promises and kept them, he updated me without fail and I felt supported throughout every stage of the process. The fact I could trust him enabled me to trust the system and follow through with the prosecution. Because of him I am free and freedom is such a gift when many are struggling every day just to survive

- Vicky, SafeLives Pioneer

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

Feedback forms were completed by 3657 Domestic Abuse First Responders and by 361 Domestic Abuse Matters Champions.

The feedback was completed on paper forms at the end of the training course. Participants were asked a variety of questions to gauge their level of understanding, both before and after the training, related to the key objectives and outcomes of the programme. Questions were answered on a standard 5-point scale ranging from 'Not at all' to 'Extremely' knowledgeable. Additional information was collected on gender, age, ethnicity and the participants' role within the force.

Some questions called for an 'open-ended' written response. These questions related to the programme itself and to how participants will alter their behaviour and practice moving forward.

The data from the forms was input into Survey Monkey by a trusted third party and the data exported to Excel for analysis. Data was analysed as a whole, as well as by different age groups, and by gender. Differences between groups were determined for significance with statistical testing in SPSS [t-tests and ANOVAs]. Correlations were used to explore the relationships between different variables. There are known limitations of this methodology (post-test). For instance, participants may feel more positively, or overstate their knowledge of core constructs measured. Because of this, it is not possible to determine the impact of the programme on outcomes or whether outcomes may be linked to other external factors. There may, for example, be other factors influencing outcomes and the relationships between variables which were not measured as part of this study. Analyses are exploratory and are intended as a descriptive overview of how first responders and champions felt following training on key areas of the Domestic Abuse Matters learning objectives.

Appendix 2: What is Domestic Abuse Matters?

Why?

DA Matters exists because the College of Policing was asked by the HMIC to review what it provided to forces by way of Domestic Abuse training to frontline responders following the inspection known to most as "everyone's business" in 2014. The College asked SafeLives to provide an external view and we found that the College was providing helpful learning objectives to the 43 police forces nationally but these objectives were used by each force differently, with training of first responders varying in terms of duration, content and quality. This was creating the potential for national inconsistency of service to families experiencing DA. DA Matters Change Programme was written with the College of Policing by SafeLives to provide police forces with a sustainable programme of change which offers the opportunity for the country to provide consistency of service to families experiencing DA.

What?

- Training local trainers on a DA Matters train the trainer course to future proof the force.
- Training first responders designed to increase empathy and decrease negativity around Domestic Abuse.
- System of on the job "DA Matters Champions" given extra skills via training in order to sustain the change in skills, behaviour and attitudes by challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, checking service delivery and giving feedback and congratulating great practice. DA Matters Champions also identify and act on compassion fatigue, burnout and vicarious trauma and respond to abuse within colleagues personal lives.
- Force health check - Critical friend approach to ensure that the force can support and therefore maintain the cultural, attitudinal and behavioural change achieved by the training. The process is defined by a 21 point inspection, along with a "fresh eyes" examination of three areas pertinent to DA, chosen locally by the force area. Health check includes reality testing where desired.
- Presentation of post programme report - Presentation of findings from the health check and learning from the responders and DA Matters Champions as to what it is like to be a DA responder in their police force.
- Sustaining the Change senior leader workshop - An opportunity to give the strategic command team some taster training sessions from the responders and DA Matters Champions programmes to raise awareness in the senior ranks. The workshop is bespoke to the force and is designed to consider how they will sustain the change achieved by the training.

- Evaluation - Evaluation of training elements of the programme is included in the costs.

How?

- Critical mass theory - 75% of all first responders to DA (including response officers, neighbourhood policing officers, PCSOs, Specials, Call handlers, prisoner interview teams, and front counter staff) trained to effect mass behavioural change.
- DA Matters Champions maintain the change and support their colleagues combatting compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.
- Force health check is essential to the programme in order to support and maintain the change achieved by the training.
- Training is delivered by jointly trained by approved police trainers and DA experts from an evaluated trainer guide.
- An Internal communication strategy within the force area prior to delivery is vital.
- Each learning session contains no more than 25 people who do not wear uniform for the training.
- The delivery phase for the responders is concluded within 4 months with only the DA Matters Champions training being outside that period but in any case within 6 months from the start of the responder delivery. This can be extended for large forces areas such as Police Scotland or Metropolitan Police for instance.
- Local trainers are used alongside SafeLives trainers making it locally relevant. The force area is future proofed by allowing remaining and future training to be carried out internally, under licence from the College of Policing.

Making it local and needs based.

Each delivery phase is localised to the needs of the force area. This is achieved by using a template which allows forces to indicate, areas of concern, focus and key messaging required. The document also gives information to trainers on arrest, risk assessment, prosecutions and attrition rates, recent DHR's and SCR's, local procedures and processes and public demographics of the location along with other relevant information to allow the training element of DA Matters to meet local need. In some cases additional sessions can be created to meet need.

Appendix 3: First Responder rating of learning outcomes

The summary responses here consider whether participants felt they had a 'Very' or 'Extremely' good understanding of a subject prior to training and post-training:

Area of training	Before training	After training
Understanding of the tactics perpetrators of domestic abuse demonstrate when they are coercively controlling their victims	23%	95%
Understanding of the stages victims of coercive control and abuse experience	15%	92%
Understanding of the tactics perpetrators of domestic abuse use to keep their victim(s) within a relationship and prevent them from leaving	26%	94%
Types of questions that would encourage a victim of coercive control to disclose their experiences to you as a police responder	22%	90%
How it is best to record domestic abuse on police records following training	39%	84%
How police responders can gather evidence, and offer safeguarding advice following training	45%	89%
Tactics perpetrators of domestic abuse can use to manipulate police responders	34%	92%

Appendix 4: DA Matters Champions rating of learning outcomes

The summary responses here consider whether participants felt they had a 'Very' or 'Extremely' good understanding of a subject prior to training and post-training:

Area of training	Before training	After training
The role of the DA Matters Champion	4%	81%
Personal effects on police responders of dealing with traumatic events such as domestic abuse	23%	91%
Techniques used to support responders experiencing compassion fatigue, secondary trauma syndrome and vicarious trauma	9%	79%
How to use the GROW model of 'hot debrief' with colleagues	9%	82%
Supervisors		
Importance of supervising the assessment of risks and provision of effective safety planning in cases of domestic violence and abuse	46%	93%
How to respond when a colleague is either a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse	43%	93%

Appendix 5: The GROW Model

The GROW model is a process used for goal setting, problem solving, and for structuring mentoring conversations. It provides a framework that focuses on goal setting, self-awareness, solutions, actions and activities, and that promotes accountability. It establishes the mentor as a facilitator, allowing the mentee to select the best options for them, rather than being guided in one direction or another.

The stages of the Grow model are:

- Goal – goal setting for the session and for the short and medium term
- Reality – exploring the current situation. This will include and current issues or challenges, and the mentees distance from their goal
- Obstacles / Options – exploring barriers to achieving the goal and the options that are available to overcome these
- Will / Way forward – converting the options in to action steps that can be used to achieve the goal