



Domestic Abuse Matters change programme for Police

Getting started

What are the elements of the programme?

Force health check

A 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 22 point inspection, along with a 'fresh eyes' examination of three areas pertinent to domestic abuse, chosen locally by the force area. Health check includes reality testing where desired.

'Train the trainer' course

Training local trainers on a DA Matters 'train the trainer' course to future proof the force. These trainers are approved by SafeLives and can, if they wish, once they have passed the Quality Assurance process, deliver DA Matters in other areas working for SafeLives. All trainers receive a programme of support from the DA Matters QA lead when delivering DA Matters in force, and additionally if they deliver for SafeLives nationally.

Training for first responders

The training is designed to increase empathy and decrease negativity around responding to domestic abuse. This is delivered with the local trainers and a team of national DA Matters trainers. This element is provided to a minimum of 75% of the responders to DA within the force.

Training DA Matters Champions

A system of on the job 'DA Matters Champions' are given extra skills, with a mandate to sustain the change in skills, behaviour and attitudes by challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, checking service delivery, 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. This element is provided to a minimum of 10% of the trained responders to domestic abuse within the force.

Presentation of findings and learning

A 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 domestic abuse responder in their police force. This is combined with an evaluation post the training to assess change in practice and knowledge immediately after the training and six months later.

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. Additionally, this workshop starts to look at how a force can safely use the lived experience of domestic abuse within their workforce to enhance service delivery both internally and externally.

Ongoing support

This is provided by way of a secure group on the SafeLives Community platform, through which DA Matters force leads, trainers and champions can obtain further training opportunities, access to national best practice and the chance to network with each other. The adopter forces can also access top up training to keep their local trainers up to date as we develop the training elements of the programme, free of charge.

In January 2020 SafeLives will launch the newly developed 'Workshops for Cops' for specialists and responders covering eight topics identified by the 20 adopter forces themselves. These will only be available to SafeLives DA Matters adopter forces

Full aims and objectives for each of the training elements, along with the training methodologies used are available on request.

Where has the programme been delivered?

DA Matters has been delivered so far in Humberside, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Bedfordshire, Cheshire, Sussex, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire, Hampshire, Northampton, West Mercia, Warwickshire and Police Scotland, Dyfed Powys, Derbyshire, West Midlands, States of Jersey, Thames Valley and Gwent.

Making the programme local and needs based

Each delivery phase is tailored to the needs of the force area. This is achieved by the use of 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 DHRs and SCRs, local procedures and processes and public demographics of the location along with other relevant information to inform the training. In some cases additional sessions can be created to meet need. Where legislation and processes are different, for instance in the Military Police or Channel Islands, Ireland and Scotland a conversion process is used to ensure the training is fit for purpose.

Evaluation

The evaluation examines before and after knowledge, understanding and perceived ability. Six months later the learners are asked to consider how they are using this knowledge, skills and new improved practice. The outcomes are overwhelmingly positive:

Immediately after the training

- 83% of first responders were willing to recommend the training to a colleague
- 77% of first responders had a greater understanding of the stages of coercive control and abuse
- 75% of first responders felt the training would help them respond to victims in a more informed way
- 75% of DA Matters Champions felt they would be able to support responders suffering from compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma
- 72% of first responders felt they had a greater knowledge of the tactics used by perpetrators when coercively controlling a victim

After six months

- 80% of first responders felt that the training had influenced their response to domestic violence and abuse incidents
- 87% of first responders reported a positive change in how they work with victims of domestic violence and abuse
- 77% of first responders reported that the training had improved their evidence gathering

Summary

Considering the responses gathered in the initial evaluation, and what impact responders hoped the programme would have on them, the responses clearly demonstrate that the desired outcomes have been realised. Responders are conducting more thorough and in-depth investigations, and are asking more expansive questions of victims, while demonstrating more empathy and understanding, as well as greater awareness of perpetrator behaviour. Several forces have reported higher numbers of arrests for Coercive Controlling Behaviour and a decrease in victim blaming language.

Get in touch

If you would like to discuss the delivery of Domestic Abuse Matters in your force, please contact:

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It would be helpful to have the following information to hand:

- The total number of responders to domestic abuse including uniform responders, neighbourhood policing, investigation officers, safeguarding officers, PSD investigators, call takers and front counter staff members
- Taking into account a set mobilisation period, what is your desired delivery start date?
- Does your force operate on a set training day basis and if so when are these set training days?

*SafeLives' DA Matters training really does deliver. Its slick, to the point and very impactful. Officers suggest it's some of the best training they've received. It provided the **skills uplift** we required sending a hugely positive message across the constabulary. It's **thought provoking** and has certainly influenced officers to consider better questions around coercion and control.*

DA Matters Police Lead, Suffolk