

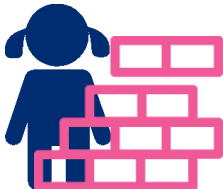


A network of services that support adult and child victims and survivors of domestic abuse in Scotland. Sharing practice, voicing questions and drawing on the expertise of colleagues in the sector, as we look to COVID-19 recovery planning

Monthly call theme:
Children

We asked attendees what challenges there have been supporting children during the pandemic...

Isolation and its impact on wellbeing



- Children miss **face-to-face** support
- Delivery of **counselling** services not possible
- Lack of **safe meeting spaces** / opportunities to meet children on their own
- No respite from **tense home environments**
- **Digital exclusion** – falling behind in education and social life
- Lack of support for **schoolwork** due to family crises
- No support from **extended families**
- Compounded **isolation** for some children in BAME families
- Different **schools policies** on allowing meetings and one-to-one support
- Difficult to access local **mental health support**
- Uncertainty and **disruption** of routines and activities

Unsafe child contact arrangements



- **Confusion** over what contact is allowed
- **Social Work less available** to guide and oversee contact
- **Supervised contact** completely stopped
- Delays to **court proceedings**
- Lack of **safe space** for contact
- **Perpetrator** behaviour
 - Increased pressure for contact
 - Pressure for long 'Zoom' sessions
 - Claiming symptoms/shielding to keep children or change arrangements

Professionals told us about good practice in their areas to meet the needs of children during COVID-19

Creative engagement



- Craft boxes distributed
- Activity packs sent to homes
- Play therapy restarting
- Donations of toys & books

Technology solutions



- Use of Zoom and Whatsapp to support children remotely
- Local funds to provide laptops/tablets/internet
- Use of apps for children to share views, e.g. Mind of My Own

What services told us they need to effectively support children experiencing domestic abuse



Safe spaces

- Schools open later for activities
- Public spaces to meet, e.g. library
- Safe digital spaces – an online resource toolbox for families on digital resources and options for children
- Premises for safe supervised child contact



Funding

- More specialist children's workers
- Greater service capacity for quicker access
- CEDAR running in all areas
- Hiring spaces to support children in
- Legal support for parents (with knock-on effects for children)
- Sourcing technology for disadvantaged children



Child-centred guidelines

- No school closures
- Schools allow visits for domestic abuse support
- Minimise disruption to extended family contact

What next?

- The final network meeting will focus on the **mental health** of victims and survivors