

What is SafeLives?



SafeLives is a UK charity working to end domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.



Domestic abuse is when a partner or ex-partner:

Tries to control you or control your life,

Makes you do things you don't want to do,

Threatens you,

Treats you in a way that is humiliating and disrespectful,

Is violent towards you, including sexual violence.

Domestic abuse can be one or more of these things

Most of the time, domestic abuse is experienced by women and caused by men.



SafeLives works with organisations across the UK to help services respond better to domestic abuse.

We listen to survivors and put their voices at the heart of our thinking. We want to help people to get the right help at the right time to make families everywhere safe and well.



What is Whole Lives Scotland?

SafeLives wrote a report in 2017 called **Whole Lives**.

In this report, we were trying to understand how people in Scotland who are experiencing domestic abuse find help from specialist services.

Since then, we got funding to carry on this work in different parts of Scotland. This is why we called our project **Whole Lives Scotland**.

Some of this work happened in Stirling.

We did research in Stirling between January and April 2020.

In Stirling, we decided to find out how people with learning disabilities got help and support when they are experiencing abuse in their relationships.

We wanted to learn what makes it hard to get support.

We also wanted to find out what good things local services are doing to support people with learning disabilities who are being abused by their partners.



We spoke to local domestic abuse and learning disability services, health services and others.



We asked them what their services do to support people with learning disabilities when they are experiencing domestic abuse.

We also asked what the challenges are.

We wrote a report about what we heard and came up with 4 areas of **recommendations**.

Recommendations are things we think could help improve services for victims of domestic abuse in Stirling who have learning disabilities.



This Easy Read summary tells you about these recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

Create a Communication and Accessibility Resource Pack



The resource pack would be for services to help them improve their communication and become more accessible to people with learning disabilities.

The pack would include:

Resources in accessible format, like Easy Read, to help communication between staff and people using the service.



This would include confidentiality and consent forms, information about domestic abuse, on how to stay safe etc.



Accessible leaflets, like Easy Read, giving information about local domestic abuse organisations that offer support and how to get in touch with them.



Guidance for professionals on how to best use a risk assessment checklist with people with learning disabilities, to find out how at risk they are.



Guidance for agencies on how to create a domestic abuse policy.

This means they would know what to do if they come across someone experiencing domestic abuse.

How would the pack help?

The pack will:



Provide guidance and resources to services so they know where domestic abuse support can be found in their area.

Support good communication between professionals with each other and with people who use services.



Provide resources for people with learning disabilities who experience domestic abuse to learn where they can find support and what to expect.

Support professionals to make appropriate use of tools and adapt them to working with people with a learning disability.

Recommendation 2: Raising awareness



This recommendation is about delivering training sessions to professionals to raise awareness on domestic abuse and learning disability.

These sessions would be created and delivered alongside local experts, including people with learning disabilities.

The sessions will cover:

Domestic abuse, relationships and learning disability

Where to get support locally

Communication skills

Useful tools for providing support to victims and survivors with a learning disability.



How will the sessions help?

We hope the sessions will:

Make sure that professionals have a good understanding of learning disability and domestic abuse.





Raise awareness of how domestic abuse impacts on people with a learning disability.

Improve working with victims and survivors.

Increase awareness of where people can get support in their area.



We want professionals to become more confident in supporting people, even if they do not work with people with a learning disability all the time.

Recommendation 3: Referral pathway



This recommendation is about creating a document that lists all learning disability and domestic abuse services and where people can get support.

This document would make it easier to find the right support and refer to a service.



This document would help professionals know about what support is available in their area and how to access different services.

It would also talk about risk assessment and what the law says they should do to protect people from domestic abuse.

How will this help?



The document will help professionals know what to do if they suspect that someone with a learning disability is experiencing domestic abuse.

It will give professionals the tools and information they need to make sure the person gets the right help, at the right time.



It will help professionals become more confident and know what is the right thing to do.

Recommendation 4: Agencies working together



This recommendation is about encouraging different professionals to work together, share knowledge and support each other.



One idea is to have regular meetings to get to know each other and talk about work.

Another idea is to have an online library for people to share resources and useful tools for everyone to access if they need it.



How will this help?

This will help professionals who work with learning disability or domestic abuse to connect with each other.



It will encourage sharing information and working in partnership.

It will create an online library of resources for everyone to use.

This Easy Read summary was made by People First (Scotland) for SafeLives.



**People First
(Scotland)**

