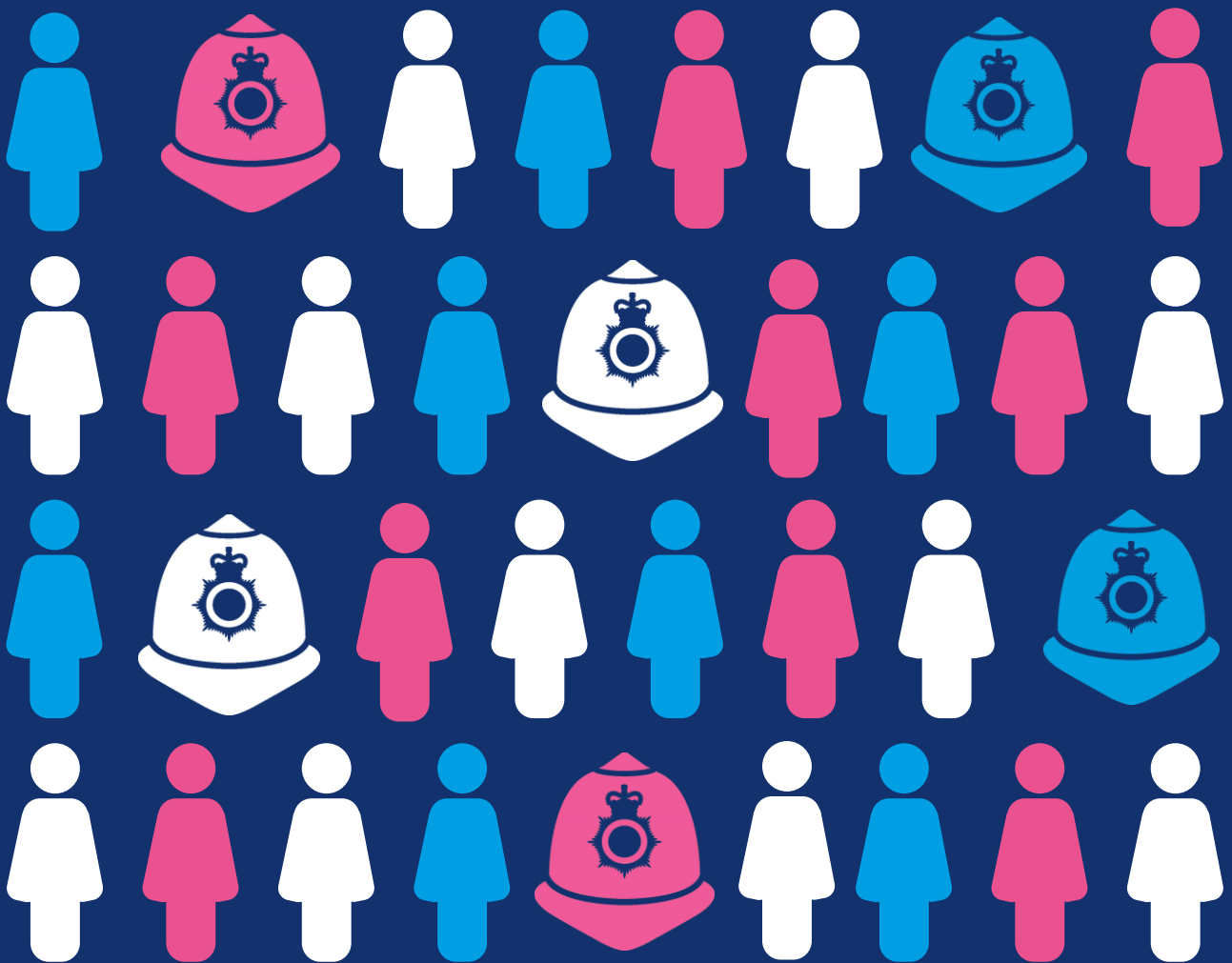

Domestic Abuse Matters: Police responders and Champions training



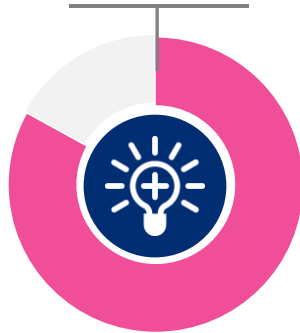
Domestic Abuse Matters – Interim Findings - 2017



87%

Of responders report improvements in **how they work with victims of abuse**

83%



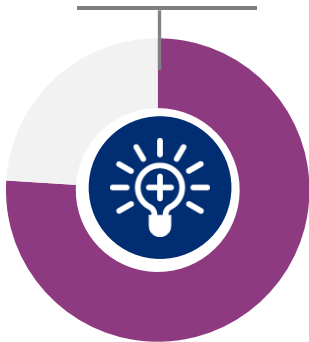
Of **first responders** reported that the training was **directly applicable to their role**



83%

Of **first responders** were willing to **recommend the training to a colleague**

76%

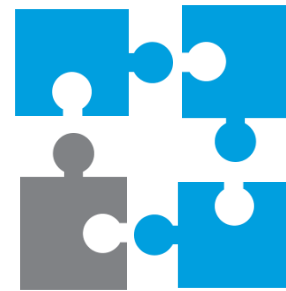


Of responders report an **increase in confidence when responding to violent domestic incidents**



Excellent training that focuses attention on a significant problem

- **First Responder**

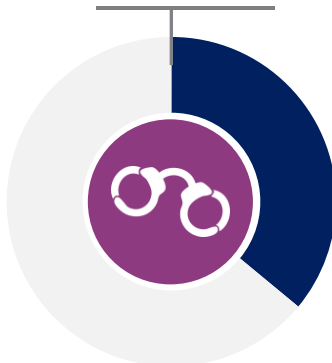


Three out of four first responders reported improvements in their **evidence gathering**



DA Matters Champions who report improvements in their own way of working

36%



Have been involved in an **arrest for coercive and controlling behaviour**



“Investigations, both initial and protracted are of a higher quality”

• **First Responder**



Domestic Abuse Matters

Summary Findings - 2017

Introduction

This report considers the DA Matters training carried out by SafeLives across 4 police force areas throughout 2017. Part One considers the initial feedback provided by participants immediately after training and Part Two looks at responses given to a 6-month follow up questionnaire in 3 forces. Part 3 will list generalised observations and conclusions from the findings so far.

Part 1 – Initial feed-back from participants

Participants profile

39% of First responders and 52% of Domestic Abuse Matters Champions who responded were female. First responders had an average age of 38.5 and Champions and average age of 37.6. 85% of First Responders and 90% of Champions described themselves as White British.

Respondents covered a wide range of roles within the force, including call handlers, investigators, PC's, sergeants and detectives.

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

Responses of First Responders

The responses from First Responders, when asked about the key learning outcomes of the program, were very positive. Respondents were asked to consider their level of knowledge prior to and post-training (Appendix 2).

When considering participants who reported either a 'Very' or 'Extremely' high level of knowledge in an area, respondents reported large increases in knowledge and awareness for all of the key course learning outcomes.

Participants reported increases in understanding the stages of coercive control and abuse (78%), the tactics perpetrators of domestic abuse demonstrate when they are coercively controlling victims (73%) and knowledge around perpetrator tactics for keeping victims in relationships (68%).

Participants also reported increases in knowledge around victim questioning (78%), recording of information (45%), evidence gathering (44%), and the tactics perpetrators use to manipulate police officers (45%).

Responses of DA Matters Champions

As with the First Responders, the responses from DA Matters Champions, when asked about the key learning outcomes of the program, were very positive (Appendix 3).

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

When considering participants who reported either a 'Very' or 'Extremely' high level of knowledge in an area, respondents reported large increases in knowledge and awareness for all of the key course learning outcomes.

DA Matters Champions reported increases in knowledge around the role of the DA Matters Champion (82%), the use of the GROW model of 'hot debrief' (75%), techniques used to support responders suffering with compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma (74%) and knowledge of the personal effects on officers of dealing with traumatic events such as DA (71%).

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

Supervisors 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%)

Evaluation of Training and Feedback from Participants

83% of First Responders were willing to recommend DA Matters training to a colleague (scoring 8 or higher on a 1 – 10 scale). 65% of participants felt that the DA Matters training would have a 'Very' or 'Extremely' large impact on the way they perform their role moving forward, and 75% felt that the training had a 'Very' or 'Extremely' large impact on their ability to respond to victims of domestic abuse in a more informed way.

“ 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.

78% of DA Matters champions were willing to recommend DA Matters Champion / Mentor training to a colleague (scoring 8 or higher on a 1 – 10 scale), and 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.

Part 2 – 6-month follow-up

Participant Profile

54% of First responders and 59% of Champions responding were female. Responders had an average age of 40.4 years and an average length of service of 11.3 years. 89% of First Responders and 94% of Champions described themselves as White British.

Respondents covered a wide range of roles within the force, including call handlers, investigators, PC's, sergeants and detectives.

“ Officers are making positive outcomes a priority when dealing with DA and we are seeing improvements in the quality of evidence in some cases

Responses of First Responders

83% of First Responders reported that the training was directly applicable to their role and 80% that the training had influenced their response to domestic incidents.

Every element of the training had a positive impact on participants practice, with a range in average responses of 5.33 – 5.91 / 7 (Appendix 4). The most positive areas were awareness of why victims may not support police action, and understanding why victims may not want to leave the perpetrator.

87% of participants reported a positive change in how they work with victims of abuse. 76% reported that the training had improved their evidence gathering, 57% how they respond to those perpetrating abuse, and 66% how they work with police colleagues.

Key areas of improvement were in providing reassurance to victims, putting safeguarding actions in place, gaining a wider background to the offence, asking if there had been previous domestic abuse incidents, and questioning and reporting on perpetrators and their behaviour.

“ More questions are being asked by attending officers to establish not only the offence reported but any further incidents which have been reported.

36% of respondents reported that they had been involved in the arrest of an offender for perpetrating coercive and controlling behaviour since undertaking the training.

The training had a positive impact on participants' knowledge, confidence and awareness when dealing with all types of domestic incidents. Respondents report that

they have at least moderately increased in knowledge (78%), confidence (76%), and awareness (81%) when responding to violent domestic incidents, and by 73%, 73% and 80% respectively when responding to non-violent domestic incidents.

Responses of DA Matters Champions

5% of respondents reported having spoken to a DA Matters Champion in a professional capacity and 30% of Champions reported being supported in their role.

“ Believe colleagues are more aware of the importance of prioritising coercive and controlling behaviour reports and dealing with it effectively

The DA Matters Champions training appears to have had a moderately positive impact on respondents own practice, with a range in average responses of 3.84 / 7 – 4.41 / 7 (Appendix 5). The most impactful area was in understanding the personal effects on police responders of dealing with traumatic events such as DA.

72% of respondents reported that the training had impacted on their own way of working and 63% that it had helped to impact on the working response of others.

Champions report having reviewed crime reports, victim statements and DASH forms, as well as having sat in on interviews and listened in on calls in order to support colleagues. Several Champions reported supporting colleagues who had suffered negative personal effects after responding to incidents.

Part 3 - Observations and Recommendations

The Domestic Abuse Matters training has been very well received by Police Forces and has had a positive impact on participants' views, knowledge and attitudes to Domestic Abuse. The feedback from the 6-month follow-up questionnaires shows that this knowledge has had a direct and immediate impact on practice.

The principal concerns raised by participants relate to awareness, resources, support, and time-pressure, and it is these concerns that have informed the recommendations listed below.

A portion of respondents noted that whilst the training was beneficial, they felt they didn't have enough time within their role to give more time to each case, that procedure wouldn't allow them to alter the way they approached domestic abuse cases, or that there were insufficient resources across the force to facilitate proper implementation of the training. These views re-appeared in the 6-month feedback.

The key things that came out of the 6-month follow-up were that awareness of who the DA Matters Champions were and what their role involves was low. DA Matters Champions were also not being well supported in their role, with some having not been spoken to since the training.

For the training to achieve the highest level of utility, it is important that the force take the momentum forward post-training. SafeLives feels this can be achieved in the following ways:

- Ensure that the role of the DA Matters Champion is embedded within the force, and that training is kept up to date, utilised, and that Champions are well supported.
- Elevate the status of DA Matters Champions within the force; ensuring front-line officers know who they are and what support is available.
- Ensure additional time is available to DA Matters Champions to carry out their extended duties.
- Ensure additional time and resources are made available for officers responding to domestic incidents.
- Help DA Matters Champions to connect and share knowledge with Champions in other Police Force areas using platforms such as POLKA or the SafeLives Community Platform.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

Post-training

Feedback forms were completed by 3053 Domestic Abuse First Responders and by 225 Domestic Abuse Matters Champions.

The forms were completed on paper forms, at the end of the training course and 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.

6-month Follow-up

An online survey was completed by 92 Domestic Abuse First Responders and 34 Domestic Abuse Matters Champions (although one appears to have been in error).

The survey was constructed in Survey Monkey and 2 emails were sent out to participants who had consented to further contact 2 weeks apart. The survey was open for a total of 3 weeks. The survey asked participants to reflect on their learning from the course, how impactful it had been and if it had changed their practice. Some questions were answered on a 5 or 7-point scale, and others gave options to tick multiple responses. Some questions called for an 'open-ended' response. These considered how well the training had been adopted within the force and whether there had been any barriers in this regard.

Appendix 2: 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	22%	95%
Understanding of the stages victims of coercive control and abuse experience	14%	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%	93%

Appendix 3: 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%	86%
Personal effects on police responders of dealing with traumatic events such as domestic abuse	23%	94%
Techniques used to support responders experiencing compassion fatigue, secondary trauma syndrome and vicarious trauma	10%	84%
How to use the GROW model of 'hot debrief' with colleagues	8%	83%
Supervisors		
Importance of supervising the assessment of risks and provision of effective safety planning in cases of domestic violence and abuse	42%	94%
How to respond when a colleague is either a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse	42%	97%

Appendix 4: First Responder rating of learning outcomes

Area of training	Average of responses (out of 7)
Understanding how perpetrators coercively control their victims	5.71
Awareness of why victims may not support police action	5.91
Understanding why victims may not be able to leave a perpetrator	5.91
Supporting victims to disclose domestic abuse	5.65
Effectively evidencing incidents, ensuring perpetrator accountability	5.33
Offering safeguarding advice to victims	5.67
Understanding how perpetrators manipulate police responders	5.83

Appendix 5: DA Matters Champions rating of learning outcomes

Area of training	Average of responses (out of 7)
Understanding the role of the DA Matters Champion and embedding this within the force	4.41
The personal effects on police responders of dealing with traumatic events such as Domestic Abuse	4.32
Techniques used to support responders experiencing compassion fatigue, secondary trauma syndrome and vicarious trauma	4.06
The Grow model of 'hot debrief'	3.84