



## Domestic Abuse Matters change programme for police

### 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.

### **Cost?**

- Optional 3 day Health Check - £3,775
- Train the Trainer for up to 25 trainers - £3,283
- Optional senior managers sustaining the change day- £1800
- Price per learner per training day for responders or champions- £65- £85 (per group of 25 with two trainers- £2,163)

## Where?

- Delivered so far in Humberside, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Bedfordshire, Cheshire, Sussex, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire and Hampshire.

## 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.

## Testimony

- *'I'm getting the most amazing feedback, from the team and the trainers too. Even officers who were sceptical about the training, at the end of the day say this is the best training they have had. I can see the impact it's having immediately –a coercive control appeared on our daily management log which was a first and a direct result of an officer attending the training. One of our call handlers had an hour long call with a victim. She had stayed on the phone longer than normal because she thought she could detect more going on than the victim was initially confident to say. By the end of that hour the victim had disclosed multiple sexual assaults. The call handler feels she was able to make that connection with the victim because of the DA Matters training'* **ACC- Bedfordshire Police**
- *"This training made it real and you made it totally relate to us and what we do"* **Surrey Responder**
- *'If we had had this training a few years earlier we undoubtedly would have saved lives and prevented DA homicides"* **Surrey Inspector**
- *"SafeLives DA Matters training really does deliver, its slick, to the point and very impactive. Officers suggest its some of the best training they have 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 questioning around coercion and control"* . DA Matters Lead Suffolk.
- *"We all agreed that it was probably the most relevant and beneficial training we'd had in years".* **Suffolk Sgt Responder**
- *"That's the first training I've had in 18 years around domestic abuse. It was really good, brilliant, in fact. It was impactive and has made me really think about how I'll approach it in the future"* **Suffolk responder**
- *"Just wanted to say how much I appreciated the above training on Friday. I was going to say how much I enjoyed it however some parts were hard going and it took a lot for me to sit through the video from Scotland. Bearing in mind I have been in the*

*job for 26 years I still came away with renewed vigour around the question of domestic violence and how I as an officer will approach it".* **Suffolk Responder**

- *Just wanted to say thank you for a very useful and professionally presented day yesterday. At times daunting, chilling content but informative, thought provoking and behaviour, perception changing.* **Detective Constable Surrey**
- *After the training I have learnt to not take situations for granted, considering bigger picture, using questioning to elicit information from victim. Spending time with victim (irrespective of operational demand) as it may be only chance victim has to escape."* **Responder Cheshire**
- *I have had 4 completely unsolicited emails from officers who attended the training, saying how good it was. I have never known that before!!* **DCI Leicestershire Police**
- *The session they did threw a whole new angle on DA which I think most people have no idea about nor do they understand the impact it has on people and I think it really helped my colleagues get the coercive and controlling aspect of a DA which is a massive part of the whole situation.* **Responder Sussex police**
- *I have to say it was absolutely brilliant. Although the course delivered some tough material and was extremely uncomfortable at points it was an extremely powerful message and certainly gave everyone in the room a lot of food for thought.* **Responder with lived experience Sussex Police**

## **Evaluation**

All forces who have adopted DA Matters have their evaluations and can give you their permission should you wish to see them. We also have a [four-force evaluation](#) which gives combined anonymised outcomes. The outcomes are overwhelmingly positive.

- 83% of First Responders were willing to recommend 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