

Children affected by domestic abuse

Home Office Funding bid submission

In no more than 250-words, please provide an overview or executive summary of your proposal.

Our project aims to reduce the detrimental impact of domestic abuse on a child's attachment and relationship with parent/carers, by offering therapeutic evidence based interventions. Interventions will aim to mitigate the impact of domestic abuse by reducing risk of exposure to future abuse and on strengthening the relationship with the non-abusing parent/carer to build resilience, safety and improve long-term outcomes. The invention will seek to change our approach to DV by moving to a trauma-informed model which recognises the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and adult attachment theory. We are committed to this work given the scale of the issue and the need for a more effective offer to families.

In 2017 our Bristol 'Think Family' database identified 4,000 victims from 665 perpetrators, the majority with children. Over three quarters of children supported through the children and families services have been impacted by domestic abuse. Bristol's child population is growing and in the last decade the number of under 15's living in Bristol has increased by 16.2%. The growth rate in the number of under 5's over the last decade is the 4th highest nationally. Of the 3,601 children in need episodes in Bristol in the year up to March 2017, domestic abuse was identified as a factor in 68% of assessments, significantly above the national average of 50%. We will build upon our existing strengths based family and community model delivered through our integrated, multi-disciplinary children centres responding to Bristol survivors' feedback that they feared social care interventions.

In no more than 200-words, please provide an overall description of your organisation and any partnership arrangements in place for the delivery of the project.

Bristol City Council's 2018 Children's Charter sets out our vision for Bristol children to be safe from abuse and harm. We are committed to trauma informed approaches through our work to become an ACE-Aware city. The primary delivery partners in this project will be Next Link, Bristol Children Centres, Bristol City Council's Strengthening Families Teams and the Through Care Service. Next Link are a local specialist domestic abuse charity and provide services to adults and children across the city. The Council funded Strengthening Families teams deliver and coordinate a range of targeted parenting and support services for children and families.

Our project will extend our existing partnership delivering interventions to children aged 0-8. Children over 8 have existing access to 1-2-1 and groupwork so this funding would establish a therapeutic offer across the life-course. Specialist domestic abuse practitioners will be seconded from Next Link to deliver interventions through our children centre hubs, primary schools and in homes, expanding our existing multi-disciplinary Strengthening Families teams. They will deliver specialist interventions to families in refuge accommodation. We will expand our therapeutic social work offer for children in care to support recovery and achieve stability and permanency.

How will this Funding be used to improve outcomes for children/young people who are or have suffered domestic abuse?

We will deliver evidence-informed interventions for children 0-8 impacted by domestic abuse and their parents/carers. Domestic abuse the early years can have implications for children's long term outcomes and negatively impacts the parent/child relationship. Recent advances in neuroscience

have demonstrated the impact of stress in utero on brain development and later life outcomes. We aim to improve outcomes for children from early intervention through to children in care or adopted. We will deliver recovery-focused interventions to improve relationships, reduce the risk of family dysfunction/breakdown and establish long term familial safety and function. This is in line with NICE Guidance on interventions for children with symptoms associated with exposure to domestic abuse. We will improve the health and safety of babies, including those in utero, by targeting women in the antenatal/perinatal period who are experiencing/recovering from domestic abuse in response to WHO research findings that women are at increased risk of domestic abuse when pregnant.

Each intervention is listed below along with expected outcomes following by outcome measure indicated in brackets. Please note standardised measures (Strengths and difficulties questionnaires, SDQ; Parent Coping Scale, PCS; Maternal/Paternal Antenatal Assessment Scale, M/PAAS; The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale, WEMWBS) will be completed before, immediately after and 6 months after intervention by parent or education provider where appropriate, and semi-structured interview with parents and child (if age appropriate).

Intervention

Theraplay (for children 3-8) (outcomes measured using SDQ and interviews)

- Increased pro-social behaviours and reduction in difficult behaviours
- Reduction in symptoms of anxiety and fear
- Improvement in social/parent/carer relationships
- Improvement in school attendance/attainment

Video Interactive Guidance (for children 0-5) (outcomes measured using SDQ and interviews)

- Increased pro-social behaviours and reduction in difficult behaviours
- Reduction in temper tantrums or fighting/increase in positive behaviours
- Improved relationship/attachment between parent and child
- Parenting strategies improved

Non-Violent Resistance Nurture Programme (for children 5-8) (outcomes measured using SDQ, PCS and interviews)

- Improvement in the relationship between parents and children/families
- Reduction of aggression between siblings
- Children feel happier at home, less stressed and anxious.
- Parents and teachers feeling more hopeful and confident.
- Parents report better coping/enhanced enjoyment with parenting.
- Children are perceived as more cooperative with parent.

Welcome to the World antenatal and postnatal nurture programmes (Parents/parents-to-be) (outcomes measured using PCS and WEMWBS)

- Increase in parent/parent-to-be attachment.
- Increase in parent/parent-to-be mental wellbeing.

Freedom Programme and Theraplay crèche (Parent and children 0-5) (Questionnaire designed by the programme and WEMWBS)

- Improved family relationships and wellbeing for parents

We will train staff and multi-disciplinary practitioners across partner agencies and developing referral pathways that enable access to interventions. This will include:

- Seconding practitioners from our specialist domestic abuse services to work within Children's Centres.
- Establishing referral routes through our integrated Locality meetings and from neighbourhood police responding to domestic abuse incidents ensuring a responsive and timely service.
- Training Children's Centre staff in the interventions and offering these to parents as part of a targeted offer.
- Interventions to children and parents in refuge accommodation.
- Expanding the social work offer to children in care, foster carers and adopters.

How will the Funding be used to successfully develop and demonstrate partnership working?

This bid has been developed in conjunction with the police, Children's Centres, Next Link and Children and Families Service who have agreed to being named in this bid. The focus of the bid has been identified through the Safer Bristol Domestic and Sexual Violence Needs assessment (2018). The funding will support our partnership's implementation of becoming ACE-aware and using a collaborative, multi-disciplinary strengths base approach to intervening early to reduce family breakdown and care entrants of older children.

The funding will train practitioners from across the partnership building multi-disciplinary action learning networks and shared innovative approaches. Groupwork will be hosted within Children's Centres but delivered by partnership staff. By creating a core 'offer' of interventions in Bristol which spans agencies we will support a collaborative understanding and collective response to the impact of early trauma on children.

Locality Multi Agency Network meetings will be used to triage and coordinate local access to 'recovery interventions' on offer. This will enable a responsive pathway to the families at the highest need. We will utilise our local integrated Think Family database which pulls data from across the partnership, to identify localities and schools in areas of high prevalence and work with our area based Partnership Managers to offer a targeted group work within education settings. Practitioners from across all agencies in Bristol, including schools already use our weekly locality meetings to refer children/families, so this bid will enhance our existing integrated models.

Health practitioners in the Family Nurse Partnership and Perinatal Mental Health team will identify young women at high risk in the ante or perinatal period and refer them into our 'wraparound offer' delivered through local Children's Centres.

Seconded practitioners will work alongside key workers, school staff, children's centre staff and social workers during the rollout of the training programme across agencies to build practitioners confidence and skills in supporting children and parents who have experienced domestic abuse. They will work in partnership to provide consultation and co-deliver interventions. This will improve sustainability as the partnership workforce will be upskilled and build confidence over the course of the project.

This bid has beer

How will value for money be achieved by Funding the project?

This Funding will:

- Train 75 practitioners in Theraplay
- Train 12 practitioners in VID
- Train 150 practitioners in NVR
- By March 2020, 400 children aged 0-8 will have receive therapeutic interventions
- By 2020-2021, outside the funding years, 500 families with 750-1,000 children will be receiving therapeutic reparative interventions
- By 2020 120 additional parents to have accessed the out-of-hours Freedom Programme
- By 2020 36 parents will have completed a Rockabye course
- By 2020 450 parents to have completed Welcome to the World & the Nurture Programme
- Build knowledge and understanding in the system by helping those working in our Integrated Locality Teams to effectively identify and respond to children who are exposed to domestic violence by co locating/ seconding.

This will build a robust and sustainable network of practitioners. Bristol police crime data shows that a child was present >50% of the domestic. NICE's 2013 report evidences conservative cost benefits of £30,000/woman who received a successful intervention. Benefits would be multiplied and extended over the child/ren's life-course as demonstrated in the specific impact of exposure to domestic violence on a child's psychological and social outcomes .

This proposal is focussed on remedial prevention. The proposal builds knowledge and understanding in the system to improve efficiency and effectiveness by ensuring that the right support is offered to families at the earliest opportunity, diverting children from family services.

These programmes are currently demonstrating positive impact locally and are not currently able to meet the level of demand . There is economy of scale in building on existing arrangements for overheads and management and supervision enabling a sustainable systems change.

The additional training that will be delivered through this funding will enhance the skills and knowledge of professionals already in the system, such as children's centre staff and family support workers. This will improve impact of interventions will the aim of reducing re-referrals rates to children social care for children affected by Domestic abuse.

Evaluation outcomes and recommendations will inform Bristol City Council's ten year ACE Strategy.

This Funding will:

How will monitoring, evaluation and shared learning be provided and ensured through this Funding?

Overall responsibility for the monitoring, evaluation and shared learning will rest with the Project Coordinator in conjunction with a Project Officer specialising in Monitoring and Evaluation from within Bristol City Council's Children's Workforce Team. Routine data will be collected about activity at all stages of the proposed project including:

- Numbers of practitioners trained and number of interventions offered per trained practitioner. Qualitative data will also be gathered from the range of trained practitioners to identify any barriers in delivery of interventions to inform future planning.

- Number of individuals referred to each intervention within the suite of interventions.
- Number of individuals taking up places on each of the interventions – number of sessions offered, number taken up as a % of total, reason for non-attendance.
- Data relating to each of the interventions will be collected as in the table in C3 to assess the effectiveness of each intervention.
- Data about all children accessing interventions will be gathered prior to and following the intervention to see if there are child level factors that can be used to inform future planning/delivery of targeted domestic abuse services.

Quarterly monitoring meetings will take place to review the progress of the project and ensure that outcomes are being achieved as planned. The monitoring group will be a sub-group of our domestic violence steering group and will include representatives from partner agencies to ensure learning is shared across partners and that any service developments arising out of the project are coordinated between agencies.

As part of the project, shared learning materials will be developed to support interventions with particularly high risk groups including young parents, women pregnant women, boys witnessing domestic abuse and parents experiencing high levels of parental conflict.

Given the size of our project, we do not propose an independently accredited evaluation but we will approach the providers of Theraplay, NVR, VIG and the Nurture Programme and invite them to evaluate our work as part of their development of evidence about the effectiveness of the interventions.

Overall responsit

How will the Funding be used to demonstrably evidence that interventions will be deliverable and sustainable?

Successful delivery of the project will be ensured by utilising existing successful partnership arrangements in place between Bristol’s Children and Families Services and Next Link. This partnership has evidenced successful interventions around domestic abuse for many years. Our workforce is experienced in delivering early years interventions and domestic abuse. Through this fund we will add value to what we provide and increase our reach into communities of unmet need and enable systems change.

Through collaboration with police and social care, Next Link support the formation of safe relationships with statutory partners. As evidenced by the seconded IDVAs that currently work within the locality teams, this practice approach and culture can help inform wider teams to help victims to feel safe and comfortable to disclose the abuse they are experiencing, and enable them to engage in support to protect themselves and their children. Next Link will work with practitioners throughout Bristol Children and Families Services, Children’s Centres and early years health services to improve practitioners knowledge and confidence in support families who experience domestic abuse.

Our project will create sustainability in a wider sense by supporting parents and children to break the cycle of abuse that is associated with domestic abuse. By supporting families to recover from their traumatic experiences and strengthen the parent/child relationship we anticipate a reduced rate of referrals into Children’s Services, reduced school disruption and exclusions and reduced rates

of family breakdown. We will measure this longitudinal through our Strategy 10-year citywide ACE Programme and integrated Partnership Think Family Database.

Please explain how the proposal could be scaled back were a smaller amount of Funding offered than has been bid for:

The proposal could be scaled back by reducing the numbers of practitioners trained in the core 'recovery programme' across the workforce and reducing the number of seconded workers to 'kick-start' delivery of the interventions. We would continue to take a partnership approach to this and so would maintain a commitment to training across the workforce to ensure sustainability but would reduce the number of practitioners trained overall. We would use our domestic violence needs analysis data to identify the most appropriate area of the city to scale back the proposed delivery of the project. We could further scale back the offer to children in care and focus on children remaining in the family home.

If we scaled back the number of seconded workers to 5 and reduced the training offer by 1/3 this would reduce the bid value to £626156. The impact of this on the project would be that the number of interventions offered to children and families would be scaled back accordingly.

If a significant reduction in funding was proposed we would need to reconsider the bid in terms of the coordination/management capacity and consider if a full time management post would represent value for money.