



Learning from Lockdown: providing safe and effective support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse in Scotland

Dr Marsha Scott, CEO Scottish Women's Aid

Learning from lockdown: schools

Vulnerable CYP accessing school spaces

- » Fewer than 4.5% of CYP with multi-agency plans accessing hubs at any point during lockdown
- » Processes for school spaces patchy across Scotland
- » Women's Aid groups reported being excluded from local decision-making processes
 - Only 30% of WA groups reported being able to make referrals for vulnerable CYP to school spaces through a local process



Feedback from one local authority

Re trying to secure spaces in local education hubs for CYP using their services, and the children of their workers (deemed Category 2 Keyworkers):

*“Despite close ties with the local VAW Partnership, at no stage during lockdown was the Women’s Aid service approached or made aware of discussions regarding spaces for vulnerable children and young people. The CEO contacted all relevant council leads regarding the issue, including the Child Protection Lead, the Strategic Lead for VAW, and the Council Officer responsible for local hub provision, but due to internal council confusion as to where the responsibility sat regarding vulnerable children accessing spaces, the situation did not change for the entirety of lockdown. **There were available spaces in the hubs throughout the lockdown period.***

“When bringing the issue to the VAWP, progress was unable to be made as the Education representative on the partnership had no strategic decision-making power.”

Learning from lockdown: schools

Returning to school

- » *“It is likely that there may be a need for increased support for children and young people who [are] affected by domestic abuse [...] It will be essential to draw together support from partners and third sector organisations in order to ensure appropriate support for children and young people.” – Scottish Government COVID-19: Guidance on support for continuity in learning*



 scottish
women's
aid

Outcomes and learning

- » The patchy local provision of school spaces for children living with domestic abuse, and the lack of engagement with specialist support services delivered **an outcome: the failure to protect some of the most vulnerable children in Scotland.**
- » In face of future national/local lockdowns, what processes must be put in place now to ensure those children are protected and offered spaces in a safe and effective way or are we doomed to repeat history?

