

Embedding Safe and Together into Quality Assurance Systems and Processes: S&T Practice Check List

London Partnership Evaluation Briefing Two

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Introduction

I think it's really difficult to change cultures in institutions and Safe and Together asks for a cultural shift... I think CP chairs, people in Quality Assurance in a sense are the people where it matters, because they're the people evaluating what is good work (Social worker, interview).

I'm picking it up in quality assurance, don't worry, and sending emails to senior managers saying, "This language is atrocious!" (Quality assurance professional)

During Year 2 evaluation of the London S&T partnership project¹, Quality Assurance (QA) emerged as a salient site to support implementation of S&T into Children's Social Care responses to domestic abuse. In year 3 evaluators, convened a cross-borough action learning set of QA professionals to explore this further. Session, one revealed an appetite amongst professionals for materials to support their work, and subsequent sessions were spent discussing what this could look like and working together to design the S&T Practice checklist presented here.

It draws on the core principles of S&T, defining domestic abuse as a harmful parenting practice, pivoting to perpetrators to hold them to account and offering an invitation to change alongside

¹ <https://www.respect.org.uk/pages/safe-and-together-london-partnership>

recognising that victim-survivors are endeavouring to do their best to protect children in a context where their space for action is constrained. There are implications here for changing the framing of intervention, the language used, especially with respect to victim-survivors and the kinds of actions that are included in plans. All of these are trackable within QA and audit processes.

We sought feedback to improve the material before it was rolled out across partnership borough QA processes, as part of embedding the Safe and Together approach. The checklist is intended to be multi-functional and contextually applied. It can be developed in line with, and in relation to, existing borough Q&A systems and processes, and beyond. For example, it can be used as an audit tool, as a thinking prompt, as part of 'learning conversations' within QA and other external and internal colleagues. Current developments in partner boroughs include ensuring current practice standards align with S&T principles and embedding this checklist within online resources.

We will follow up on ways that the check list has been used in Year 4 evaluation.

Safe and Together Informed Practice Check List for Quality Assurance

LANGUAGE AND FRAMING		
Victim-blaming language is NOT used e.g: <i>(Victim-survivor).. must stop letting Dad into the house</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Mutualising language is NOT used e.g: <i>Spoke to (victim-survivor) about the family violence</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding of DA includes coercive control and multiple pathways to harm		<input type="checkbox"/>
ENGAGEMENT AND INTERVENTIONS WITH ABUSIVE PARENT		
Patterns of abusive behaviour have been documented		<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistent attempts to contact/engage with abusive parent have been made		<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic abuse is documented as a parenting choice		<input type="checkbox"/>

This parenting choice and its impact on children has been discussed with abusive parent		<input type="checkbox"/>
Where appropriate perpetrator services/programmes have been offered to abusive parent		<input type="checkbox"/>
Case planning has concrete behaviour change goals for abusive parent		<input type="checkbox"/>
PARTNERING WITH NON-ABUSIVE PARENT		
Assessment and case record identifies the victim-survivor's protective efforts and strengths		<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker has acknowledged these strengths and protective efforts with victim-survivor		<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognition of how abuse interferes with victim-survivor's parenting		<input type="checkbox"/>
Victim-survivor has been offered DV support		<input type="checkbox"/>
COMPLEXITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY		
Recognition of how mental health, substance/alcohol use can be the outcome of, or exacerbated by, domestic abuse		<input type="checkbox"/>
Consideration of how intersectional positions (race/ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, disability) can increase oppression/perpetrators power to abuse		<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKER SAFETY		
Worker has considered their own safety when engaging with abusive parent		<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker is supported by their manager to explore own safety, including with an intersectional lens (how race and sex can shape sense of unsafety)		<input type="checkbox"/>