

Recovering from Domestic Abuse: Cedar's Impact in Scotland

3 May 2019, Edinburgh

Conference Report

Cedar Scotland
Advisory Partnership

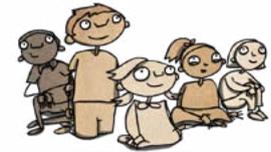

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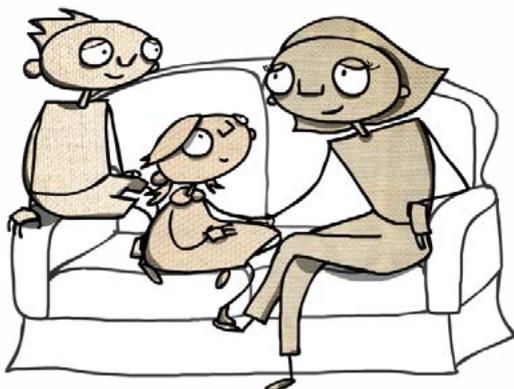

improvement **service**



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1. What is Cedar?

Cedar (children experiencing domestic abuse recovery) is Scotland's leading [evidence-based](#) recovery programme available for children and young people. Cedar supports children and young people and their mothers in recovering from their experiences of domestic abuse by focusing on strengthening the mother-child bond. Cedar has been in Scotland for 10 years, with 11 projects based across the country, and its vital early intervention work provides key contributions to improving outcomes for children and young people and in tackling violence against women and girls.

Why is Cedar important to Scotland's children and young people agenda?

It is estimated that around 100,000 children in Scotland experience domestic abuse.¹ There is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people's development. This evidence shows that domestic abuse and coercive control can affect children and young people in multiple, far-reaching ways, impacting all areas of their life including health, education and relationships.

Cedar follows a strengths-based approach and builds resilience in children and young people recovering from the trauma of domestic abuse. The model is built on the idea that early intervention can address many of the social, behavioural and emotional issues often encountered by children who have experienced domestic abuse.

Cedar supports a number of national agendas in relation to improving outcomes for children and young people, in particular Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach for improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people. Alongside other services and approaches, Cedar outcomes make an important contribution to the eight SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, in particular focusing on ensuring children and young people feel safe and nurtured. Cedar also contributes directly to the Scottish Government's national outcomes for children and families (2007 & 2019): "Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens"; "We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk"; and "Children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential".

Domestic abuse is a recognised adverse childhood experience (ACE). Cedar plays a vital role in addressing the trauma and adversity that children often experience after having lived with domestic abuse and coercive control and should be considered a vital part of Scotland's holistic approach to improving outcomes for children.

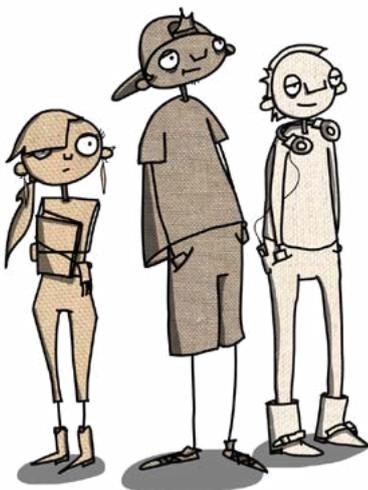
Why is Cedar important to Scotland's tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) agenda?

The Scottish Government and COSLA's [Equally Safe strategy](#) prioritises prevention and early intervention of VAWG. Due to Cedar's focus on improving children and young people's wellbeing and safety, Cedar feeds directly into priority three of Equally Safe, "Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people". Priority three specifically outlines the need for specialist one-to-one and group work support services for all children affected by VAWG in order to address their recovery needs.

1 [Scottish Executive](#) (2001)



Recovery programmes are key in responding to and preventing VAWG. They are not an alternative to crisis support but, rather, complement services that support children and young people and their mothers out of crisis. Without appropriate support, women, children and young people can face challenges in recovering from the impact of domestic abuse.





2. General Information

Conference aims

The Cedar conference aimed to:

- Raise awareness of the causes, consequences and appropriate responses to domestic abuse impacting children, young people and their mothers;
- Highlight the vital need for recovery programmes such as Cedar and demonstrate, through lived experience speakers and experts in the field, the impact that Cedar has had on mothers, children and young people recovering from domestic abuse across Scotland over the last 10 years;
- Showcase Cedar's strengths in early intervention for children, young people, and their mothers who have experienced domestic abuse, including multi-agency working, resilience building and therapeutic group work; and
- Demonstrate Cedar's key role in supporting and strengthening current agendas, approaches and legislation to, in particular, GIRFEC and Equally Safe.

Organisations supporting the conference: The National Lottery Community Fund, Improvement Service and COSLA

Number of delegates: 100+

Organisations represented: Over 60 organisations across the public sector, including statutory and non-statutory services/agencies, third sector, academic institutions and private organisations

Programme: Keynote Speakers/Panellists

Cllr Kelly Parry, Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, COSLA

Trevor Owen, Head of Violence Against Women, Social Isolation and LGBTI Equality Policy, Scottish Government

Anne Marie Hicks, National Procurator Fiscal for Domestic Abuse

Heather Coady, Dr Fiona Morrison (University of Stirling) and Lesley Johnston (NHS Lothian)

Cedar Graduates

Naomi Breeze (presentation funded by 11 local Cedar Projects)

Dr Marsha Scott (Scottish Women's Aid), Dr Cathy Sharp (Research for Real), Sheila Noble (Fife Cedar Plus & Fife VAWP)

Workshops

A Flavour of Cedar: An Interactive Workshop, PC Kerry Anderson (Fife Cedar Plus) and Susan Gray (Cedar Inverclyde)

ACEs and Gender, Professor Jane Callaghan (University of Stirling)

Cedar Young People Graduates: Me, My Mum and Cedar (Cedar Scottish Borders)

Early Years Domestic Abuse Recovery (EYDAR), Tracey Hutcheon and Rachael O'Byrne (Fife Cedar Plus)

The Safe & Together Model, Anna Mitchell (Safe & Together Institute UK Lead)

Mums and Cedar (Cedar Scottish Borders)

Cedar's Adaptability and Flexibility, Alison Donnachie (Cedar Inverclyde), Carol Young and

Dominique Haggerty (Cedar West Dunbartonshire) and Kim Brown and Laura Kelly (Cedar Perth)



3. Feedback and Positive Actions



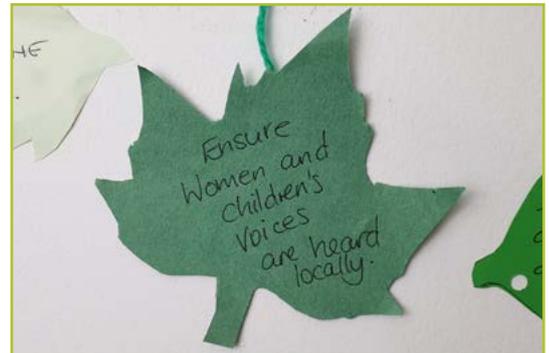
Feedback

We received a response rate of approx. 70%. Of those who provided feedback, 88% strongly agreed that the event was useful and informative, and 12% agreed that the event was useful and informative.

Feedback was very positive and reflections on the day focused on a number of areas, including:

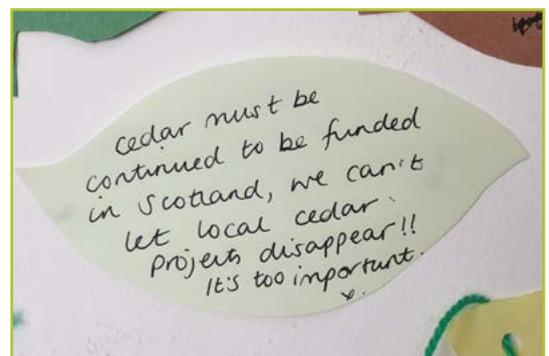
The impact of lived experience

- "It was fantastic to hear from the Cedar graduates— what brilliant, strong women!"
- "The three women survivors were inspirational. Hardly a dry eye in the room"
- "The input from the women who have experienced DA was moving and fantastic to hear. It puts the great work of Cedar into perspective. Inspirational"
- "The mothers' stories and input were the most powerful, moving and informative. I have never witnessed such honest, dignified testimonies. Awesome!"
- "The incredible stories from the women who have been through the programme are inspiring"
- "Being reminded of the impact domestic abuse has on people's lives. The brave people who told us about their real lives were inspirational. I think a lot of people will carry their stories with them when back at their jobs"
- "Really helpful to have the opportunity to hear from the lived experience. So emotive and when done properly, very very powerful"



The vital need for Cedar's long-term sustainability

- "Just hearing how important Cedar is first-hand from Cedar graduates reminds me how important the work we do is and how we need to ensure Cedar is sustained. We can't lose it"
- "It reinforced my passion of Cedar and how this intervention has supported so many mums and families"
- "Being able to see the collective impact that has been made nationally with Cedar in the 10 years it has been running"
- "The need for more funding to keep all the good work continuing and making a positive difference to women and children"
- "What next for areas where there has been Cedar service but there are no plans to renew funding"
- "It feels scary that some Cedars are ending"
- "Cedar must be continued to be funded in Scotland, we can't let local Cedar projects disappear!! It's too important"





Cedar's key role in the wider policy landscape

- "To continue to highlight to services the need for this programme as we need this intervention. It fits in with ACEs and GIRFEC, we cannot afford to lose this programme"
- "Confirming the importance of Cedar as a restorative programme"
- "To recognise the connections between this work and the wider early years/early intervention/prevention agenda"

Positive actions

Many delegates committed to taking forward positive actions from the day. These actions focused on a number of areas, including:

- Raising awareness of Cedar at local and national levels;
- Ensuring the voices of women and children with lived experience are heard at a local level;
- Ensuring Cedar is sustainable and avoid losing existing Cedar projects, expertise and infrastructure; and
- Ensuring that Cedar is available to mums and children in all areas across Scotland and avoid a postcode lottery





4. Key Discussion Points

These discussion points have been collated from conversations that took place during keynotes, workshops and networking, as well as questions submitted to sli.do throughout the day.

Funding and sustainability

Funding was mentioned repeatedly throughout the day, both by speakers and delegates. Funding is coming to an end between now and 2021 for the majority of local Cedar Projects, most of which are funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. Given the current financial climate at a local level in both the public and third sectors, local Cedar Projects have faced difficulties in achieving sustainability as a non-statutory service. If sustainable funding is not invested in Cedar at a national level, we will lose valuable Cedar expertise and infrastructure across the country, which has taken a decade to develop. This loss is already starting to occur; for example, the Glasgow Cedar Project is now coming to an end, meaning that a local authority area with the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse in Scotland in 2017/18 no longer has an evidence-based recovery service for children.²

Further, access to high-quality specialist recovery services like Cedar should not be a postcode lottery. Research indicates that there is at least one child in every classroom in Scotland who has experienced domestic abuse, but there are currently only 11 local authority areas in Scotland who provide Cedar. Many other local authority areas have expressed a strong interest in bringing Cedar to their area, but are unable to do so because of a lack of funding at both local and national levels. High-quality specialist recovery programmes should be available to children and their mothers regardless of where they live.

Recovery is early intervention

Presentations and keynotes highlighted how Cedar's recovery work provides effective early intervention as the programme is proven to improve outcomes for children and young people by seeking to mitigate the long-term effects of domestic abuse on children's health and wellbeing, education and relationships. Early intervention is a key priority across public sector reform, and Cedar's outcomes cross-cut a wide number of national strategies that prioritise early intervention to improve women and/or children's safety and wellbeing, such as Equally Safe, GIRFEC and Curriculum for Excellence, as well as strategic approaches within Public Health, Mental Health and Community Justice.

Lived experience

A number of Cedar graduate mothers and young people delivered keynotes and workshops. Many more Cedar graduate mothers attended, supported by Cedar coordinators. The overwhelming response from delegates was that hearing from women and young people with lived experience were the most powerful parts of the day. Following the conference, Cedar coordinators noted that the majority of Cedar mum graduates who attended found the event very worthwhile and that it contributed to their recovery journey (and thus their child's recovery) in terms of hearing from other women and hearing about multiple aspects of domestic abuse. The conference highlighted the necessity of placing lived experience at the centre of policy and practice, and that safe and robust engagement demonstrably supports children, young people and women in their recovery journeys.

2 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/domestic-abuse-recorded-police-scotland-2017-18/>



A whole systems approach to domestic abuse

A number of workshops and discussion throughout the day highlighted Cedar's key role in the wider domestic abuse services landscape. For example, The Safe & Together Model workshop highlighted how recovery programmes like Cedar are vital. Safe & Together works to shift child welfare professionals' understanding of domestic abuse to keep children safe and together with the non-abusing parent and to move away from the failure to protect. This means professionals will gain a better understanding of the long-term impact of domestic abuse on children, making them more likely to seek specialist services, like Cedar, to refer onto. Further, given the large-scale awareness raising and training initiatives on the recent Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act taking place across agencies and organisations such as Police Scotland, Cedar practitioners noted the importance of ensuring that there are high-quality support services in place.

Also highlighted throughout the day was the strength of Cedar's co-facilitator model, where colleagues from non-specialist organisations and agencies are trained co-deliver groups. Cedar has trained well over 200 colleagues from over 20 different agencies for co-delivery. This model was consistently noted as invaluable in terms of improving those colleagues' learning and development and its contribution to systems change, as well as contributing towards the cost-effectiveness of the Cedar programme.

Trauma, adversity and resilience

The relationship between Cedar and ACEs was referenced throughout the day. Several Cedar coordinators noted that Cedar provides a framework and toolkit for delivering work on the domestic abuse ACE, and that it is important that the work Cedar has been delivering in Scotland for the last 10 years is understood within the emerging common language of adversity and resilience. Several practitioners also noted that there was an opportunity for Cedar to inform a gendered approach to ACEs that ensures Scotland's ACEs approach is in line with Equally Safe.

Further, given the Scottish Government and NHS Health Scotland's current focus on developing a trauma-informed workforce, the trauma training plan, once implemented, will likely raise awareness of the effects of domestic abuse and coercive control and there need to be clear pathways to high-quality trauma-informed recovery support, like Cedar, in place.

Cedar's adaptability and flexibility

Several local Cedar Projects highlighted how they have adapted the Cedar programme for local context. Fife Cedar Plus have adapted Cedar and, with a child psychologist, have developed EYDAR (early years domestic abuse recovery) for babies and children aged 0-4, and have delivered training to a number of Cedar coordinators in anticipation of other local Cedar Projects delivering EYDAR. Cedar West Dunbartonshire have developed a kinship model for Cedar, given that in their local authority area, many of the children who are referred to Cedar do not live with / are not cared for by their biological parents.

A number of projects also offer post-group support as, once the 12 sessions are completed, Cedar graduates often wish to continue the support community they have developed. Some projects, like Cedar Scottish Borders, help arrange regular, informal meet-ups for graduate mums, and the Project has supported the development of a young people's group who have since been involved in Diversity Week, 16 days and have made a short film about their experiences of Cedar, which they showcased at the conference. Cedar Inverclyde are working





with mothers who attend Cedar to help them work towards qualifications, developing their confidence and skills.

Other possible adaptations and extensions to the Cedar programme discussed on the day include working with adoption and fostering colleagues to expand the Cedar programme, working with partners to develop Cedar resources for families with literacy issues and for women and children with disabilities.

These adaptations demonstrate that the Cedar model is highly flexible for local context. Local Cedar Projects highlighted how their recovery work delivers a suite of support and opportunities for community-based and user-led activities beyond the groupwork and 1-1 sessions outlined in the Cedar programme, demonstrating value for money and contributing to users' outcomes beyond those initially identified by the early independent evaluations.

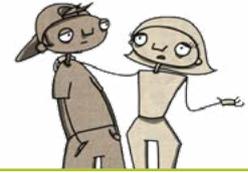




5. Next Steps

To build on the momentum produced by the Cedar conference, the National Project aims to:

- Continue to develop national awareness of Cedar. In particular, strengthen links with various Scottish Government directorates, including Children & Families, Mental Health, Public Health and Justice; highlight Cedar in relation to national priorities and strategies, including GIRFEC, ACEs, trauma-informed practice and Child Protection; and continue to strengthen links with other national agencies/organisations/networks to raise awareness of Cedar at the local and national level
- Continue to expand the suite of tools for local Cedar Projects to use to develop sustainability, such as a briefing on Cedar and ACEs and explore opportunities for developing a cost-benefit analysis

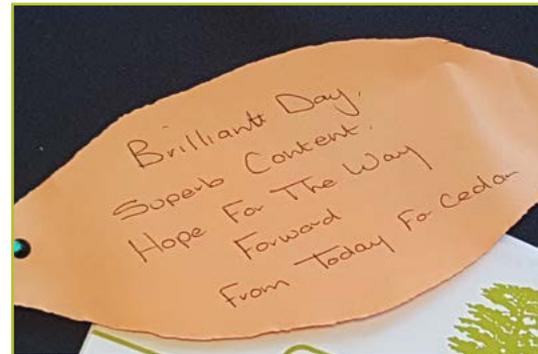


6. Conference Materials Available

Selected workshop presentation/slides (please contact laura.james@improvementservice.org.uk)

[Videos](#) of selected keynotes and panel discussions

Elected Member Briefing: [Children, Young People and Domestic Abuse: Impact, Support, Recovery](#)





cedar network

www.cedarnetwork.org.uk