

Embedding trauma-informed and responsive organisations, systems and workforces

National Learning Event, September 2024

Background and overview of the event

The Scottish Government and COSLA have a shared ambition for a trauma-informed workforce and services across Scotland, capable of recognising where people are affected by trauma and adversity, that is able to respond in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery and can address inequalities and improve life chances.

The [National Trauma Transformation Programme](#) (formerly the National Trauma Training Programme) is a major and long-term change programme, which aims to support this vision. The NTTP provides a wide range of learning resources, guidance and implementation support for all sectors of the workforce, including leaders, to up-skill staff to the appropriate level of trauma-informed and responsive practice and, critically, to embed and sustain this model of working.

This event aimed to:



Share learning, reflect on progress and impact and celebrate the work local authorities and key community planning partners have been doing to embed a trauma-informed and responsive approach across services, systems and workforces.



Provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on recommendations and next steps for this work across Scotland, and in particular, consider how to strengthen collective leadership for this agenda.



Launch three new reports, including:

1. A [National Learning Report](#), published by the Improvement Service, sharing learning about the progress, emerging impact, and enablers and barriers from work happening across Scottish local authorities and key community planning partners;
 2. A [Follow-Up Evaluation of the NTTP Local Authority Delivery Trials](#), published by the Scottish Government, exploring progress and learning across the three local delivery trial sites since the [interim 2021 evaluation report](#); and
 3. The [2024 NTTP Workforce Survey](#), published by the Scottish Government, exploring awareness and attitudes to psychological trauma and trauma-informed practice across the Scottish workforce.
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We heard from a range of speakers, including:

- **The Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Maree Todd**, and **COSLA President, Councillor Shona Morrison**, are co-chairs of the National Steering Group for the NTTP Leadership Group and both spoke of their commitment to progressing this agenda nationally.
- **Jenny Smith-Littlejohn, Improvement Service, and Derek Ewens, The Lines Between** provided an overview of findings from the National Learning Report and the Follow-Up Evaluation of the NTTP Local Authority Delivery Trials, including learning around progress and impact, key opportunities and challenges, and key recommendations for progressing this work locally and nationally.
- **Dr Suzanne Aziz (Transforming Psychological Trauma Implementation Coordinator, NHS Glasgow & Clyde)** shared learning about Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership's journey with this work, focusing on leadership commitment and strategic opportunities.
- **Angi Pinkerton (Trauma-Informed Practice Officer, South Ayrshire Council)** shared South Ayrshire's work to date, focusing on the importance of leadership buy-in, prioritising staff care, support and wellbeing, and how a trauma-informed and responsive approach supports existing local and national priorities.
- **Sophie Gwyther (Lead Officer, Protecting People Team, Dundee Council)** shared learning about the development of a workforce lived experience of trauma group within the council.




Engagement

There were 970 registrations for the event and **715 attendees** on the day. This included a broad range of public, private and third sector organisations and policy areas, including representation from all 32 local authorities, as well as senior leaders, managers, policymakers, practitioners and Elected Officials. Services/ policy areas represented included:

- Dentistry
- Alcohol & Drugs
- Nursing
- Psychiatry & Mental Health services (including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Social Work (including Children and Families, Adults, and Justice social work teams)
- Social Care
- Education (including Additional Support Needs)
- Welfare Advice
- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Health Visiting
- Housing
- Employability
- Clinical Psychology
- Residential Care
- Public Protection
- Organisational Learning & Development
- Sports and Creative Arts
- Environment & Wildlife
- Emergency Services (including Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, and Scottish Ambulance Service)
- Inspection and Improvement Bodies (including Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, and Public Health Scotland)

Key messages and recommendations

The report, speakers and participants identified a number of key messages and recommendations for progressing this work across Scotland:



Leadership and organisational commitment are crucial in supporting meaningful and sustainable progress. Leadership, at both strategic and operational levels, is a key enabler to successful implementation.

Long-term national strategic commitment and resource that recognises embedding a trauma-informed and responsive approach within our services, systems and workforces is a long-term improvement journey, rather than a short-term training initiative. **Meaningful mechanisms for accountability for this work** to promote a joined-up, multi-agency approach and to provide consistency across services, organisations and systems for evidencing the progress and impact of this work.

The need for a **whole system approach** with collective leadership and multi-agency, joined-up working across policy areas. This includes recognising how a trauma-informed and responsive approach supports existing local and national priorities (e.g., delivering The Promise, embedding children's rights and embedding MAT Standards).

Staff care, support and wellbeing is crucial in embedding a trauma-informed and responsive approach. Ensuring that the workforce have access to proactive and reactive wellbeing supports and feel safe and valued at work is key to staff being able to embed changes within practice.

Strengthening feedback loops with staff and people accessing services and **developing safe and meaningful mechanisms for power sharing with people with lived experience of trauma** to design and deliver services that recognise and respond to the impact of trauma.

Opportunities for sharing learning and good practice and celebrating successes, across teams, services and policy areas.

Building capacity and capability of the workforce is a priority. Trauma leads, champions and Transforming Psychological Trauma Implementation Coordinators (TPTICs) bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise across trauma, training and education, and policy areas/ services. Additionally, freely accessible training and implementation resources developed by the NTTTP supports consistency and saves time and resource. This is a key strength on which to build and continue to develop the national training model, including train the trainer programmes, to support training delivery and implementation into practice.

What action are you taking forward after attending the event?

Participants identified key actions they will take forward in their own areas of influence, including:

- ✔ Prioritising staff care, support and wellbeing in relation to trauma, reviewing organisational policies and processes through a trauma-informed and responsive lens, and considering organisational readiness before implementation
- ✔ Exploring safe and meaningful ways to embed the voice of people with lived experience of trauma into service design and delivery, including recognising that many people across the workforce will have their own lived experience of trauma
- ✔ Raising awareness of the importance of a trauma-informed approach and making trauma-informed practice part of the conversation
- ✔ Making connections with other colleagues, sharing learning and identifying ways to work together on shared priorities around embedding a trauma-informed approach
- ✔ Leading by example, being a visible leader and ensuring embedding a trauma-informed approach is a strategic priority

Feedback from attendees:

“ [It was useful] getting an overview of the work going on nationally and hearing some specific examples of creative and innovative work in the area... it really helped to frame my thinking around what a trauma-informed organisation can look like. ”

“ It crystallised the importance of having leadership buy in and working with what you can now... I really liked the importance placed on lived experience [of trauma] within the workforce as this can so easily be overlooked. ”

“ Fantastic presentations from local trauma leads providing examples of great initiative and impact – very inspiring and provides potential for other local authority areas. ”



Useful resources

[National Trauma Transformation Programme Website](#)

[Training resources](#)

[NTTP Roadmap for Creating Trauma-Informed and Responsive Change: Guidance for Organisations, Systems and Workforces](#)

[Trauma case studies](#) – please contact us at trauma@improvementservice.org.uk if you have any good practice examples you would like to share!

Further engagement

NTTP Newsletter: [Subscribe](#) to the NTTP Newsletter.

Collaborative Peer Workshops: for local Trauma Champions and Lead Officers, and other colleagues working in local and national organisations, with a focus on implementation of a trauma-informed approach. [Sign up for the workshops.](#)