



A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO SCOTLAND'S COVID-19 RECOVERY, RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE AFFECTED BY TRAUMA

Increased risk of trauma and re-traumatisation

Risk of experiencing trauma and re-traumatisation has significantly increased, including for people experiencing poverty, unemployment, illness or sudden bereavement, for children affected by abuse and exploitation, and for women and children affected by violence against women.

Existing trauma may be compounded by risk, adversity and inequality that has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Frontline workers are at higher risk of vicarious trauma, as well as chronic stress and burnout.

Increased demand for support and services

COVID-19 restrictions have potentially reduced or limited experiences of positive, social support and relationships.

There will likely be a significant increase in the numbers of people affected by trauma requiring support as restrictions ease.

Staff across the workforce may be experiencing stress, challenging working environments and vicarious trauma, potentially reducing their capacity to make connections and respond to others' trauma.

WHAT WE EXPECT TO SEE NEXT

The impact of trauma caused and exacerbated by the pandemic will be felt for many months and years to come. In the short to medium term, specialist and universal services expect to see a rise in demand for support. In the long term, people affected by trauma are at risk of poorer long-term outcomes if they face barriers to accessing high-quality support.



Continued increased risk of trauma

The impact of the pandemic on mental and physical wellbeing is likely to have resulted in elevated and sustained levels of trauma for many people. The Scottish workforce will continue to be at risk of higher levels of stress, burnout and vicarious trauma.



Increased demand on services

Positive, social support is a key predictor of recovery from trauma. The expected rise in distress and mental health difficulties will increase the demand for specialist and universal support services.



Widening of existing inequalities

The prevalence of trauma is already higher for people facing adversity, disadvantage and inequality. Without access to high-quality support, people affected by trauma are at higher risk of experiencing poorer outcomes at all stages of their lives, and COVID-19 has increased this risk.

HOW CAN A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH SUPPORT SCOTLAND'S ROADMAP TO COVID-19 RECOVERY, RENEWAL AND TRANSFORMATION?

There is growing national and international evidence that embedding a trauma-informed approach in the remobilisation of services, systems and workforces can support Scotland's long-term recovery and renewal.

What have people affected by trauma told us they need from services, systems and the workforce?

A key part of a trauma-informed approach is about minimising barriers to accessing support. Not everyone in the workforce needs to be able to treat trauma, but it is vital everyone has the knowledge, skills and confidence to respond to trauma appropriately and effectively.



A trauma-informed approach is made up of many different components, but at its heart is the recognition that everyone has a role to play in tackling the causes and impact of trauma, and in improving the outcomes of people affected by trauma.

NEXT STEPS FOR SCOTLAND'S COVID-19 RECOVERY AND RENEWAL

A long-term trauma-informed response

As we look at how to transform our systems and services following the pandemic, this moment provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen awareness of the prevalence and impact of trauma on people, including our workforce, and embed trauma-informed practice and policy in systems and services. Evidence shows this will help manage demand on services and reduce long-term costs.

Improving long term outcomes

Trauma impacts on many outcomes, including mental and physical health, education and employment, and adversity and inequality can often compound the impact of trauma. Increased access to and engagement with trauma-informed services can lead to improved outcomes for people affected by trauma.

Ensuring a joined-up, collaborative approach

Joined-up, multi-agency working is vital as this ensures a consistent approach is taken across organisations in responding to trauma as early as possible, providing a shared language and understanding for leaders, the workforce and people affected by trauma.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- [National Trauma Training Programme](#) for further information on training for developing a trauma-informed practice.
- [COVID-19: Mental Health – Transition and Recovery Plan](#) (Scottish Government, October 2020)
- [Scotland's roadmap to COVID-19 recovery and renewal: five key actions for supporting vulnerable people and communities](#) (Improvement Service, October 2020)
- Elected Member briefing note: [Taking a trauma-informed lens to COVID-19 recovery, renewal and transformation](#) (IS, NHS Education for Scotland and COSLA, November 2020)