



# Annual Report

## 2020 - 2021

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## WHAT IS MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION?

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a peer education programme providing young people with the language and framework to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of abuse. The programme 'scenarios' explore a range of behaviours including name-calling, sexting, controlling behaviour and harassment. A 'bystander' approach is used, where individuals are not considered potential victims or perpetrators, but empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way.

***Building relationships; Supporting Learning*** -The MVP Programme aims to support the creation of a safe learning environment in which young people can flourish and attain.

"The Mentors in Violence Prevention programme provides our school communities a structured and effective approach to support staff and pupils alike in challenging gender based violence and other abusive behaviours. Gender based violence affects the health and wellbeing of young people, in particular young women, but the harmful social norms that underpin it have been shown to have negative outcomes for all our young people. MVP's bystander approach empowers young people and staff to challenge these norms and has been shown to contribute to a positive ethos of safety and inclusion within the school communities where it is used. Pupils develop the skills and confidence to recognise harmful behaviours and support their peers. Senior pupils who take a leadership role in delivering the programme, in particular benefit from the development of a wide range of life skills including organisational and presentation skills and teamwork."

**Gayle Gorman, Chief Executive and HMI Chief Inspector of Education**

## WHY IS MVP NEEDED?

Violence against women is a human rights issue. It is a violation of women's rights to life, their right not to be tortured or treated in an inhumane or degrading way, their right to respect for private and family life and their right not to be discriminated against.

It remains an endemic problem across the world and has been identified as a major public health issue. The World Health Organisation ([2013](#)), estimates that almost one third of women worldwide have experienced gender-based violence, with most of this being intimate partner violence.

**60,641** reported incidents of domestic abuse

In Scotland, against a backdrop of a long-term trend of decreasing crime rates, violence against women remains a significant problem with domestic abuse rates remaining stubbornly high and other forms of gender-based violence seeing long term increases. In [2018/19](#) police recorded 60,641 incidents of domestic abuse which was a 2% increase on the previous year, 82% of incidents involved a female victim and a male accused. A little over half (51%) of these were between current partners and 48% between former partners, with 88% of incidents occurred in a home or dwelling. It is highly likely that incidents of domestic abuse are significantly greater. We know under reporting and failure to recognise abuse, such as coercive control, remain significant problems.

**At least 1 child in every classroom** at the time they start school will have been living with domestic abuse since they were born

Domestic abuse is not only experienced by the victims cited above, but also by children in a family. The [2017](#) Insights National Briefing by SafeLives states 'At the time they start school, at least one child in every class will have been living with domestic abuse since they were born.

According to the Scottish Governments [Equally Safe](#) strategy, one in five children in the UK (United Kingdom) will have experienced domestic abuse by the time they reach 18.

**1 in 6 teenage girls** report severe abuse from a partner

Domestic abuse can and does occur within young people's own relationships. Levels of abuse in teenage relationships are difficult to gauge and it is an area under researched in the UK. Scottish Government figures for 2018-19 show that 6% of all reported cases of domestic abuse in Scotland involve young people under 18 years either as victims or accused. An NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) survey ([2009](#)) found that of those young people in relationships: 25% of girls and 18% of boys experienced physical abuse and 33% of girls and 16% of boys experienced sexual abuse. One in six girls reported some form of severe abuse.

**100% increase in sexual crimes** over the last 10 years

Other forms of gender based violence also remain significant problems. In Scotland, sexual crimes including rape, sexual assault and 'other sexual crimes' saw a small 1% decrease from 2018-19 to 2019/20 but this is against a backdrop of a 100% increase since 2010/11. Serious sexual assault and rape are disproportionately experienced by women as are other forms of sexual assault such as unwanted sexual touching and indecent exposure. A similar picture emerges for 'other sexual crimes' recorded by the Police Scotland such as 'communicating indecently' and cause to view sexual activity or images. Again, a wide gender disparity exists, with 79% of victims of other sexual crimes reported as female and 95% of perpetrators male.

### **Cyber enabled**

'other sexual crimes'  
Median age of victim 14  
Median age of perpetrator 18

In addition to gender, age is also a significant concern. Analysis of crime figures (2017) show a significant proportion (51%) of these 'other sexual crimes' are cyber enabled, and records show that victims of this tend to be younger, with a median age of 14, with 75% under 16 years. Perpetrators also tend to be younger with a median age of 18.

**71% of all UK women** have experienced sexual harassment in a public space

Sexual harassment has been highlighted over the last year as endemic in our society in particular our public places. A recent survey by UN Women UK YouGov (2021) found that 71% of women of all ages in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space, 86% among 18-24-year-olds.

**58% of girls** report experience of online harassment and **47% threats** of physical or sexual violence

For many young people who spend a lot of their time and conduct many of their relationships online, harassment and GBV (Gender Based Violence) in this sphere is of growing concern. Research from Plan International (2020) has shown 58 per cent of girls report that they have personally experienced some form of online harassment on social media platforms ranging from threats of physical or sexual violence to racist comments and stalking. Of the girls who have experienced harassment, 47 per cent had been threatened with sexual or physical violence. The report highlights those women and girls are often targeted just for existing online or for speaking up and being actively engaged. The abuse often results in young women being silenced, policing their own behaviour and feeling unsafe both online and in the physical world.



Equally Safe the Scottish Governments strategy to eradicate violence against woman and girls describes prevention as involving 'addressing the systematic inequality, attitudes and assumptions that give rise to violence and abuse.' Its 2017 delivery plan set out several key priorities where education settings can play a crucial role and where the MVP programme contributes including raising awareness of gender based violence, challenging gender stereotypes and norms and addressing safe and healthy relationships and consent.

## 2020-2021 PROGRESS

The main aims of the plan for MVP in 2020-2021 were to support local authority development plans for rolling out MVP in all their schools, implement the programme in the remaining four authorities and to develop materials and resources including new scenarios with input from focus groups of senior mentors. These aims were impacted by restrictions imposed by Covid-19 and the focus changed to supporting practitioners adapting to these new challenges. One major impact has been the ability to gather detailed data on programme delivery such as number of mentors trained and sessions delivered, pupil evaluation and attitude shifts. This report will highlight the support offered to schools and practitioners, developments to the programme and the inspiring work of young people despite the challenges of Covid-19.

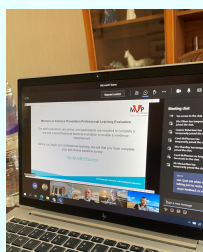
### MVP Scotland website launch



### Mentors adapt to challenge



### MVP virtual professional learning



Professional learning was carefully adapted for virtual delivery and launched in February 2021. Thirty practitioners took part in the pilot programme and feedback was positive.

"The course was insightful and really excellent delivery/used a range of methods for delivery. I enjoyed all of it and feel more confident about driving this forward in school now."

### MVP in the National Offer

Virtual sessions on being an active bystander and the use of the 'be kind' messages were developed. Over 400 young people participated in the sessions, providing positive feedback.

### MVP goes international

The pandemic offered opportunities for international connections. Expertise and resources have been shared with colleagues from the USA and Sweden, with the aim of further collaboration with practitioners and young people in the future.

### MVP across Scotland

**55%** of Scottish secondary schools have received MVP professional learning since the programme began with over a third engaged in active delivery throughout 2020/21.

MVP is engaged with all 32 local authorities, and delivering in 29.

## MVP IN LOCKDOWN

In March 2020, the UK government announced a national lockdown, when Covid-19 was declared a worldwide pandemic. Over the course of 2020 and into 2021 this resulted in a nationwide move to remote learning and teaching on two separate occasions. This resulted in significant impact to the MVP programme. While a third of schools continued to deliver either online or through health and wellbeing activities, the remainder paused the programme to focus on learning and teaching and adapting to remote learning. As a result, and in agreement with Scottish Government, there was no 2019-20 annual report produced to allow both schools and the national team to respond to immediate support needs at both a national and local level. The national team were engaged in a number of key areas in response to Covid-19 over 2020.

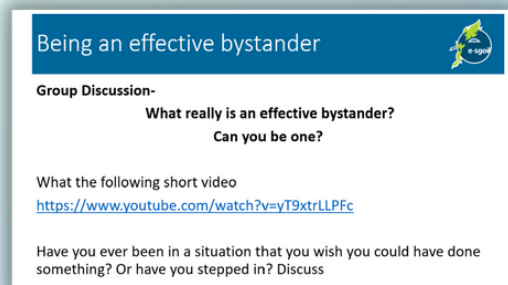
### National e-learning offer

In the first weeks of lockdown, the MVP national team staff were engaged in several activities supporting practitioners across Scotland including transition support, as part of the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) and in developing and delivering lessons as part of the e-Sgoil programme within the health and wellbeing team. This later provided an opportunity to continue to deliver some of the key themes and messages of MVP as part of the national e learning offer via e-Sgoil. Sessions were delivered to over 400 young people from September 2020 – December 2020 and feedback was very positive.

"I found the lesson really interesting and hadn't heard of a bystander" S1 pupil

"made me think about how much more i could do and i want to get involved more when i go back to school, does my school do MVP" S2 pupil

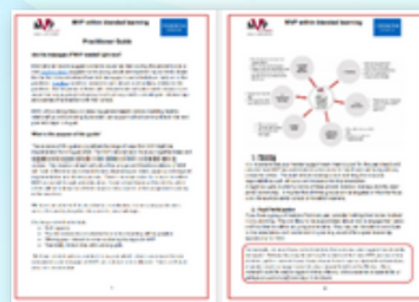
"why cant we do more like this in school can you come to our school and do MVP" S3 pupil





## MVP blended learning guide

The national team took swift action to develop materials and guidance, including a blended learning practitioners guide ([June 2020](#)), which aimed to support practitioners with suggestions and resources for continued promotion of MVP's key themes.

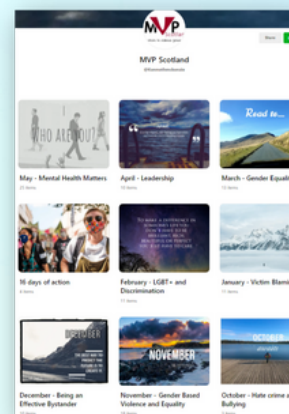


## Wakelets

Support and resources for professionals were curated into Wakelets, and they have now become a monthly permanent support feature of the programme.

Wakelets allow the opportunity to compile easy to access advice, support and materials to help with learning and teaching around key themes.

<https://wakelet.com/@MVPScotland>



## Domestic Abuse - Information for Educators

Lockdown and the resulting movement restrictions brought an increased focus on supporting women and children living with domestic abuse. In response to this, the national team worked in partnership with Scottish Women's Aid and the Improving Gender Balance and Equalities national team at Education Scotland, to produce a Domestic Abuse Information for Educators guide ([2020](#)). This aimed to raise awareness of the issue among education practitioners and to help them identify and support vulnerable families.



In addition, a young expert group who have experienced domestic abuse, put together a message for educators outlining what they want them to know when supporting a young person who has experienced domestic abuse.

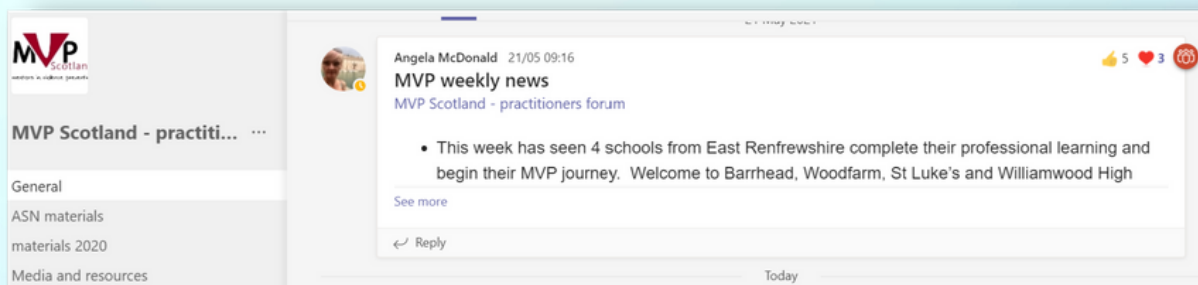
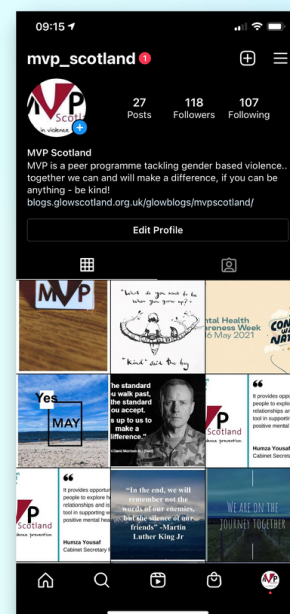
[Messages from Yello](#) ([education.gov.scot](http://education.gov.scot)).

## MVP: NATIONAL RESPONSE

During the crisis phase of Covid-19, despite the loss of two national team development officers, the programme continued to develop with a view to readying for when normal learning and teaching could resume. In addition, the remaining development officer continued to provide support remotely to both local authority co-ordinators and individual schools and staff. As many local authority staff themselves were moved to different roles to support the impact of the pandemic on education it was necessary for the remaining MVP Development Officer to offer increased direct support to schools and practitioners.

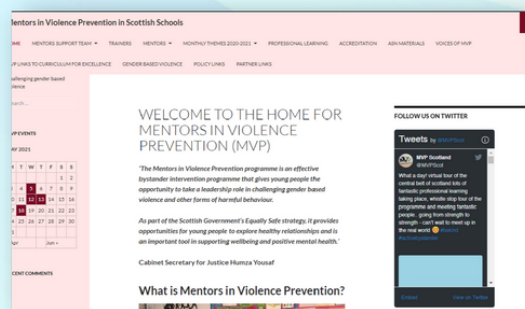
## Social Media

Social media became key as an effective tool to communicate with the MVP network across Scotland. Various platforms were further developed to grow the MVP presence and extend its reach, accessing a wide range of users. Twitter continued to be one of MVP's most effective platforms with reach growing significantly, The MVP national team page and Instagram page have also been a success.



## Website – MVP has a new home

Responding to earlier feedback from practitioners, a new website was developed on GLOW and populated with a wide range of MVP materials, resources, curricular and policy links, accreditation information and a section to highlight videos and news articles about delivery across the country. In the first week of launch this received 1020 site visits and 248 sessions including from as far afield as the United States of America and Canada.



## Professional learning

Professional learning underwent significant changes to adapt to Covid-19 restrictions, and the national team quickly upskilled in current technologies to develop an online offer for practitioners. This included new pre course learning materials and an extensive redesign of courses allowing greater flexibility of delivery through twilight and half day sessions.



Interactive session

A wide range of interactive technologies were used to simulate groupwork activities and live text boxes and Mentimeter to record and visualise feedback and responses. MVP professional learning is as much about attitudes and values as it is about developing skills in programme delivery. The team wanted to ensure a wide range of techniques were used to engage staff during the professional learning sessions and to ensure a safe and nurturing learning environment was established.

## MVP professional learning endorsement

The MVP professional learning programme has now been successfully endorsement by the Professional Learning Directorate at Education Scotland. Programmes which have been endorsed, demonstrates that they are informed by the national model of professional learning and link effectively to the relevant professional standards and current policy context.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MVP DELIVERY ACROSS SCOTLAND

The national team kept in regular contact and worked closely with local authority co-ordinators across Scotland to assess the national picture and provide bespoke supports depending on need. This regular communication provided intelligence to ensure prioritisation of tasks and activities to the national team. As many local authority co-ordinators were drawn into emergency by Covid-19 response work, there was limited capacity to support the MVP programme. However, there was recognition of the importance and value the MVP programme would have in supporting recovery.

Compiling information from a recent survey of MVP co-ordinators, of which 81% responded, along with MVP professional learning records, revealed that 55% of schools in Scotland have received MVP professional learning since the programme was introduced in 2014. During the pandemic year, 2020-2021 almost a third of the schools were still delivering the programme in some form, demonstrating a significant achievement given the huge disruption to learning and teaching and the significant time pupils spent remote learning.

Local co-ordinators were asked directly, ***'How do you feel Covid-19 has impacted on the MVP Programme within your authority and your ability to lead on it?'***

*Responses included:*

*"Covid has impacted the training and implementation of this programme. A change of lead in the central team has also compounded this. However, All schools are willing and so a revised action plan has been formulated with the proposal of 4 schools next year and 4 the year after. The authority does have one trainer and so plans are being comprised."*

*"MVP has not been a priority during covid-19, I think just because pupils haven't been in school. I know that all our schools from next term want to start delivering ASAP. Inverclyde are already in contact for the identified staff to be trained as they are keen to start."*

*"Throughout the last year it has been virtually impossible for schools to deliver the programme in the full manner in which it is intended, due to school closures and year group "bubbles". As such I have taken a "hands off" approach to coordination as I am aware of the additional curriculum pressures schools have been under throughout the last year."*

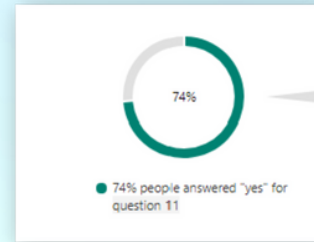
Despite the disruption and challenges local coordinators remain positive about the year ahead and have already begun making plans for the new school term and reintroducing MVP as intended.



MVP practitioners in schools were also surveyed and asked about the impact of Covid-19 on programme delivery as well as support needs moving forward. We asked the following questions:

### **Has Covid-19 affected your delivery of MVP in 20/21?**

74% responded yes



### **If the answer is yes, in what way?**

*"Unable to mix year groups and have pupils delivering sessions. Time pressure at the start of the year to get things organised, behind schedule from the very start without the June launch we usually do."*

*"No face-to-face delivery has been possible as the seniors' students were not allowed in the S1/2 classes."*

*"I have had to reduce the number of MVP mentors that delivered sessions to younger year groups. Mentors also had to wear masks when delivering the MVP sessions."*

*"Due to bubbles, the MVP pupils could not go to classrooms of the younger years to deliver lessons. We also could not do a drop in at break and lunch. The MVP pupils did not have as much a presence around the school as last year's pupils did."*

### **To successfully continue the delivery of MVP in the coming year, are there further supports required?**

*"Yes. More staff training as I need to recruit more staff".*

*"Just making sure the resources are kept up-to-date including access to video clips."*

*"Online resources (looking through updates today) and any examples of good practice being used by other schools that can be implemented or adapted".*

*"Having a team's page would be great for asking questions and sharing good practice".*

This feedback has been invaluable as it gave us a good starting point in what we wanted to develop during this period. We really wanted to get a sense of what the need and want was from practitioners.



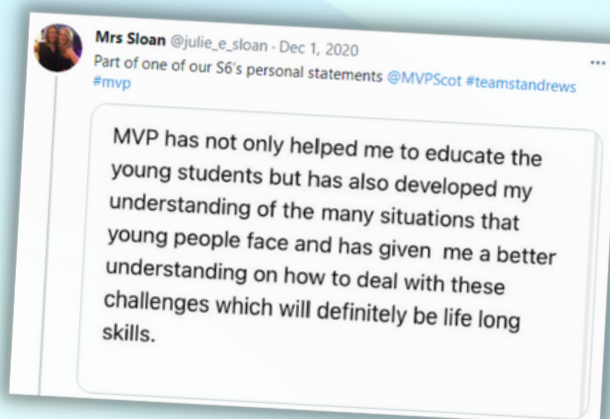
## MENTORS MAKING IT WORK

### Practitioners and mentors going the extra mile

Remarkably, despite the many restrictions, lockdowns and remote learning, one third of secondary schools across Scotland continued to deliver the MVP programme in some way. The effort and the creativity shown by both pupils and staff has been inspiring.



## MENTORS MAKING IT WORK CONT'D



It can be seen that the demands for support due to the challenges presented by the pandemic have been varied and have required the MVP national team to be agile and responsive. Support will continue to local authorities, school teams and practitioners as they deliver high quality learning experiences about sensitive, timely topics whilst negotiating uncharted territories.



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2021 - 2022

### Reimplementation in school

Many schools who paused or adapted MVP programme delivery during lockdowns have expressed their eagerness to resume regular peer led delivery in the 2021/22 academic year. The national team will respond to this by:

- offering professional learning to reskill and build capacity including training for trainers
- support schools and authorities through meetings, and visits when face to face meeting resume.
- sharing of relevant resources through the website and weekly news on teams
- offering regular practitioner, co-ordinator and trainer meetings.

The survey of local authority co-ordinators saw an 81% return and has given a clear picture of school delivery, where professional learning and implementation targeted support is required. The national team will work closely with co-ordinators to facilitate this.

### Resume implementation in remaining authorities

The national team will work alongside the authority co-ordinators in the remaining three authorities to resume readiness and professional learning to enable delivery in their target schools.

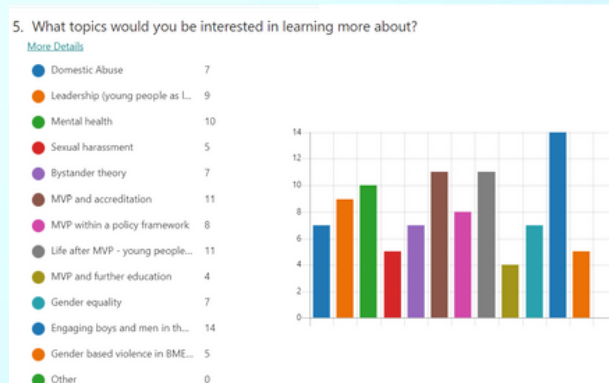
### Engaging with young people

Development officers will run a series of focus groups with senior mentors from across Scotland, engaging their views on current materials and resources with a view to updating where appropriate and identifying gaps in scenarios.

### Responding to wider identified need

Many areas of concern have arisen during Covid-19; domestic abuse, mental health and harmful sexual behaviours online. The MVP programme aims to support practitioners through sharing information and resources, offering professional learning opportunities and developing MVP materials to support delivery.

In the recent survey, practitioners expressed particular interest in topics such as engaging boys and men in challenging gender based violence, MVP accreditation, life after MVP and mental health.

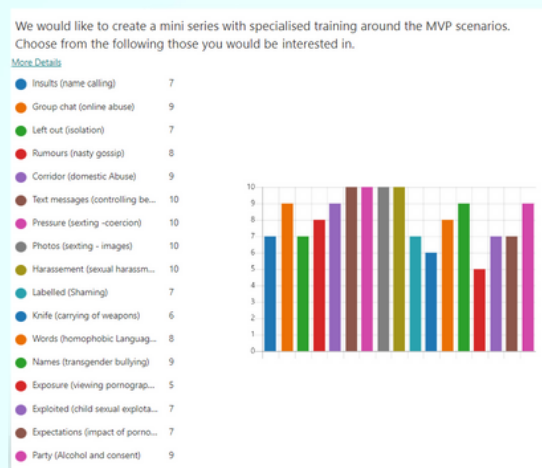


## Increased professional learning opportunities

The development of online professional learning offers ease of access to practitioners in more remote, rural areas of the country where travel and time out of school are often barriers to attending. These staff will now have greater opportunity to become involved with the programme. The national team will work with these authorities to establish these opportunities and therefore increase the reach of the programme.

While face to face professional learning remains the preferred option, the national team will continue to offer remote online professional learning as an effective means of increasing capacity in schools, allowing a range of practitioners to come together from across the country.

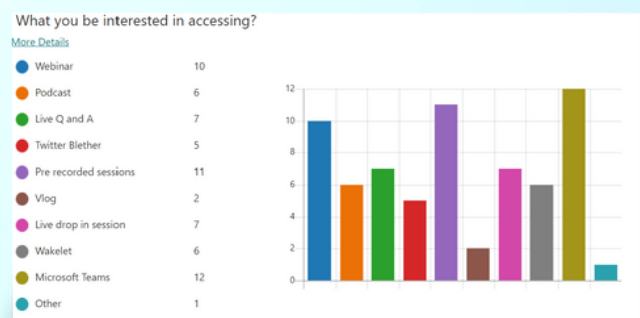
Professional learning for schools new to the MVP programme will continue (when permitted) to be delivered in person.



Practitioners have identified a number of scenarios where they feel less confident in delivery of the subject matter. Future plans may look to providing audio guides allowing both practitioners and mentors flexibility in preparing for delivery as well as being an additional tool to upskill them in more challenging areas such as sexual harassment and child sexual exploitation.

## Participation and reach

The national team will continue to develop its online presence to further extend the reach of the programme and its key messages. New features are planned, based on practitioner feedback, such as practitioner blogs, and a podcast is being developed to allow discussions and interviews with guests and practitioners on key themes relating to MVP as identified through practitioner surveys.



## THANK YOU...

The MVP national team would like to thank the many people across the country who support and deliver the programme with passion and commitment including local authority co-ordinators, teaching staff, the MVP national steering group and partner agencies, such as the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Police Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland, Community Learning & Development and third sector youth work agencies.

A special thanks goes to our wonderful senior pupil mentors who continue to deliver MVP with skill and enthusiasm.



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