

Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board 22nd September 2020

Report Title	JHWS Update on Priority 2: Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and resilience
Item for decision or information?	For Information
Sponsor	Assistant Chief Constable Rhiannon Kirk
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Organisation	Gloucestershire County Council
Key Issues:	
<p>Action to prevent and mitigate the consequences of ACEs is essential to improve population health.</p> <p>Back in November 2017 the impact on individual lives, on communities and on health and social care service demand were all drivers for wanting to develop a coherent county-wide approach to ACEs. The Action on Aces Strategy was signed off by the Board in November 2018 and work is ongoing to embed an ACEs informed approach within organisations and communities across the county.</p> <p>During and post COVID-19 pandemic it is more important than ever that we continue to do all we can to mitigate the causes and effects of adverse childhood experiences. Our report outlines how our work is organised and the progress we have made over the past few months.</p> <p>One of the key issues we would like the Board to consider is how we maintain resource for this work beyond the end of the current funding streams.</p>	
Recommendations to Board:	
<p>Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion ACEs • Support and embed trauma informed practice within their own organisation • Provide resource to continue and extend the scope of our work • Use the learning from the ACEs work to inform the individual organisations recovery plans and thus further embed the vision, values and behaviours. 	

Financial/Resource Implications:

The original funding for the full time ACEs co-ordinator post ends in May 2021 and an apprentice role which also focuses on ACEs work ends in March 2021. GCC have made the following commitment regarding funding:

- £24,000 towards funding another year of the ACEs co-ordinator post. This meets 50% of the costs of the post.
- £20,000 towards a part time communications officer post

In order for the co-ordinator role to continue beyond May 2021 funding needs to be found for the other 50% of the post. Board members are asked to commit to funding the remaining £24,000.

To extend the apprentice role we would need to find an additional £11,000.

Additional funding streams such as the National Lottery are being explored but these may take longer to secure. The ambition if we were successful would be to develop ACEs Practitioner roles that would work directly in the community.

1.0 Background and Scope

- 1.1 Since the Health and Wellbeing Board's special meeting on the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in November 2017 and the formation of the ACEs Panel in January 2018 work has been ongoing to embed an ACEs informed approach within organisations and communities across the county.
- 1.2 ACEs are specified traumatic events occurring before the age of 18 years. High or frequent exposure to ACEs, without the support of a trusted adult can lead to toxic stress. There is a large body of evidence that shows the adversity we experience as children can affect us into adulthood. For example, a study in the BMJ published in June this year showed that growing up with child maltreatment, domestic violence & other ACEs costs England & Wales £42.8 billion a year in resulting conditions like substance misuse, cancer, mental illness, heart disease and other illnesses over the life-course.
<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/10/6/e036374>
- 1.3 Developing resilience through access to a trusted adult in childhood, supportive friends, positive attachments and being engaged in community activities has been shown to improve outcomes even in those who experience high levels of ACEs. This relies on active, thriving, and resilient communities.
- 1.4 The vision for Action on ACEs Gloucestershire is a resilient county where communities and organisations are acting on ACEs. We want communities and organisations to be aware of, able to talk about and take action on ACEs. The aim is to build a social movement that recognises the potential lifelong impacts of adversity in childhood and takes action to stop childhood harm.
- 1.5 There is a clear link with other priorities in the JHWS including mental wellbeing, early years and best start in life and housing.
- 1.6 The Health and Wellbeing Board can add value by championing ACEs, supporting and embedding trauma informed practice within their own organisations and providing resource to continue and extend the scope of the work. Through the individual organisations, the Board can use the learning from our ACEs work to inform their recovery plans and thus further embed the vision, values and behaviours.

2.0 Action on ACEs Panel and Core Team

- 2.1 The ACEs Panel oversees the delivery of this priority and is chaired by former CEO of Cheltenham Borough Homes, Paul Stephenson. Other partners on the panel include representatives from Gloucestershire County Council; Gloucestershire Constabulary; The Nelson Trust; and the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Panel meets on a quarterly basis and is supported by a Core Team who meet more regularly. Due to COVID-19 the Panel has been unable to meet since February; the next meeting is scheduled for 24th September 2020.

- 2.2 One of the areas that the Panel has been looking at is strengthening its membership and we are delighted that the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, Helen Lovett has agreed to join us. Helen is making ACEs one of her topics of the year.
- 2.3 Feeding into the panel are sub-groups that drive forward the priorities within the strategy: The Education Sub Group chaired by Kevin Day; the Communities Sub Group chaired by Paul Stephenson and the Training Sub Group chaired by Dr Imelda Bennett.

3.0 Funding

- 3.1 Dedicated Action on ACEs work is currently jointly funded across GCC Children and Families Hub; GCC Public Health and Gloucestershire Constabulary. Funding for the full time ACEs co-ordinator post ends in May 2021 and an apprentice role which also focuses on ACEs work ends in March 2021.
- 3.2 We are lucky to have the Gloucestershire Constabulary Campaigns and Engagement Manager as part of our Core Team and the GCC Communications Team offers support where they can. Discussions have taken place to fund a dedicated Communications Officer role for two days a week to allow us to disseminate our messages more widely and to support events such as the annual conference and Ambassador meetings but this is currently on hold during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- 3.3 In order for the Coordinator role to continue beyond May 2021 funding needs to be found for 50% of the post (funding is already confirmed from GCC C&F Hub for the other 50%). This equates to £24,000. Given the impact that ACEs have across all our areas of interest, we are looking to partners to commit to resourcing this important role for another year. To extend the apprentice role we would need to find an additional £11,000.
- 3.4 Funding has been secured by the CCG to develop training in partnership with the Nelson Trust on how to have difficult conversations. The training for practitioners working with clients with trauma histories covers an introduction to how trauma impacts the individual and their ability to cope and how to facilitate discussions based on ACEs through Trauma Informed Conversations. The first virtual training days are due to go ahead in November 2020.
- 3.5 We are also exploring possible funding opportunities through the Lottery and other funding streams with the ambition to potentially develop ACEs Practitioner roles that would work directly in the community.

4.0 Strategy

- 4.1 The Action on ACEs Strategy was launched in 2018 and has been ratified by the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and Safer Gloucestershire.-It works alongside the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Framework.

4.2 The strategy has seven strategic objectives and seeks to provide a common language for talking about adversity and resilience:

1. We will raise awareness and understanding of ACEs with communities and organisations through delivery of a co-ordinated local campaign
2. We will implement training to equip communities and organisations to respond appropriately to ACEs
3. We will continue our partnership work with communities and organisations to build resilience through encouraging trusted relationships and developing core life skills
4. We will develop relevant resources and information for people identified with ACEs who need signposting to further sources of support
5. We will increase our understanding of the distribution of ACEs across Gloucestershire
6. Organisations will incorporate ACEs informed approaches into relevant organisational policies, strategies and contracts
7. We will evaluate interventions and share good practice and positive outcomes from ACEs work across Gloucestershire, the South West and beyond.

4.3 Many communities and organisations across Gloucestershire are already working to prevent, intervene early and overcome the impact of ACEs, and build resilience, whether or not they are aware of the specific concepts / terminology. Several local third sector organisations have been using a 'trauma informed approach' for many years.

4.4 More recently, as sectors focus on COVID – 19 recovery many are now looking into what a trauma – informed approach means to them and how they can build resilience. For example the Gloucestershire Educational Psychology Service have produced guidance for school staff, parents and pupils on how to support a child or young person who has experienced a traumatic event as part of the school recovery.

4.5 A better understanding of ACEs and the role of resilience will complement existing work already going on in Gloucestershire that focuses on building positive relationships, social capital and resilience. This includes work such as restorative practice, strength based approaches, and asset-based community development; strengths based approaches are fundamental to tackling health inequalities.

4.6 An evaluation of the first year of the strategy has been paused during COVID-19 and will be completed as soon as capacity allows. Reflecting on the work that has been carried out since the launch of the strategy, a strategy refresh was planned for May 2020 but due to capacity issues during COVID-19 has been put on hold until the autumn. From the work that has already been completed, we do know that it is not just children that we need to focus on but adults as well. For example, we know that adults with complex needs appear in many GCC and partner services but that a joined up and trauma-informed approach can build resilience, improve outcomes and reduce their need for statutory intervention on an ongoing basis. Our strategy refresh will reflect our learning thus far and the

developing evidence base around ACEs.

- 4.7 It should be stressed that we are learning all the time as new research is published. It was really positive that the new NIHR Applied Research Collaboration West (ARC West) chose healthier childhoods as one of their four research themes in October 2019. They work with colleagues in primary care, child health, child and adolescent mental health, children’s social care, as well as police and schools. They aim to build the evidence base to enable frontline services, working with children and their families, to do a better job in their fight to reduce the harm caused by childhood adversity and deprivation. We hope to collaborate with and learn from the ARC in this area.

5.0 Action Plan

- 5.1 Action on ACES is about viral change and there is currently no formal action plan below the strategy. The multi-agency sub-groups are focused on meeting their strategic objectives and the ACEs ambassadors take back their learning around ACEs to further ‘infect’ their own organisations and sphere of influence. Ongoing evaluation is helping to capture learning and will inform the refresh of the strategic objectives.
- 5.2 In terms of communicating the Action on ACEs behaviours and strategic objectives, the first Action on ACEs conference was so well received that plans for a second conference were made for June 2020. Unfortunately due to the current situation we have had to put this on hold until 2021. Ambassador events and communications are also planned for when capacity in the system allows.

6.0 Measuring progress and addressing health inequalities

- 6.1 Metrics are being developed for each of the strategic objectives in the strategy. Some of these are process oriented such as ‘number of people who have reported attending training/awareness sessions’ and others cover longer term outcomes such as a reduction in permanent exclusions from school and an increase in children and young people’s Warwick Edinburgh mental wellbeing scores.
- 6.2 Progress against the strategic objectives since March this year can be seen in the table below:

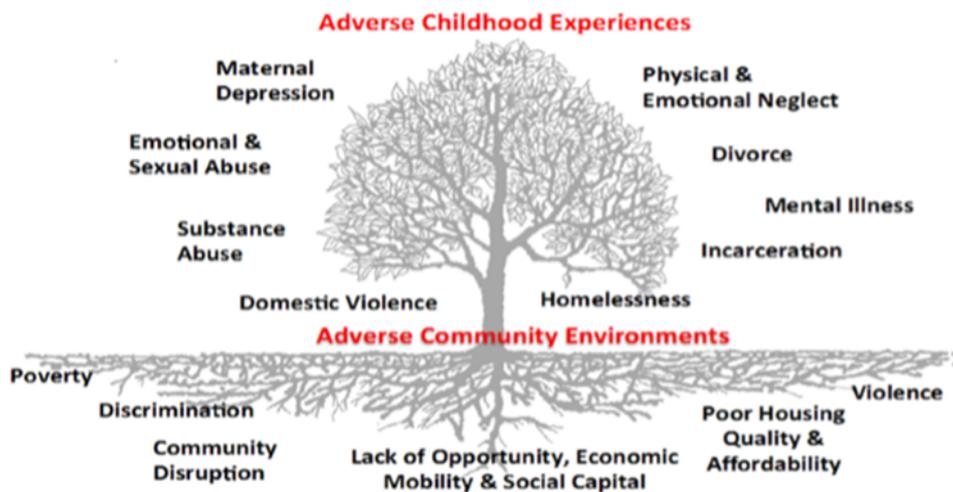
Objective 1 – Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More than 130 Action on ACEs Ambassadors- Ambassador events paused due to COVID-19- Social media: 981 followers; Since March there have been 18,000 impressions to date.- Updates on the latest news and resources have been sent out to the Ambassadors every 3 – 4 weeks.
Objective 2 - Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There has been no formal delivery of the ACEs awareness sessions due to COVID-19

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since March 2020 1500 people have accessed the e-learning pages on the website – this is an indirect measure of the eLearning package and we would expect it to increase. There were 185 users in June alone. - The recovery curriculum and restore schools developed by Molly Macleod and partners considers the impact of trauma and is being promoted to Gloucestershire Schools
Objective 3 – Partnership Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The community and education sub – groups have been put on hold - Vince, Family Investment Officer has been shortlisted for Housing Heroes Award for his work as part of the Action on ACEs project for Cheltenham Borough Homes. The awards ceremony is taking place on the 10th September. - Cheltenham Borough Council’s <u>No Child Gets Left Behind</u> Community Agreement has been established. A commitment between Cheltenham schools, organisations and residents that we will support one another in a way that reflects kindness, empathy and understanding of the impact of childhood adversity. - The Vulnerable CYP Cell Parenting Sub – Group has been set up as part of the response to COVID-19
Objective 4 – Information and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The website has had more than 6000 page views since March 2020 with almost 2500 users.
Objective 5 – Distribution of ACEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research has shown that the since lockdown there has been an increase in the number of adverse experiences and traumatic experiences particularly around domestic abuse, substance misuse and parental mental health. - Gloucestershire pupils took part in the Oxford Online Pupil Survey - Lockdown Edition and the results will be published in September. - Gloucestershire children in care have taken part in University of Bristol study and the results will be published in due course.
Objective 6 - Policies, strategies and contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gloucestershire Constabulary continues to work towards becoming a trauma – informed organisation. - The work of the COVID-19 Vulnerable Children & Young People Cell will feed into the recovery agenda for partners
Objective 7 - Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The strategy evaluation report has been delayed until later in the year - The evaluation of the toolkits developed by Children’s Commissioning has been completed - The evaluation of the midwives toolkits is complete.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ACEs coordinator contributed to a case study for a forthcoming document from the Local Government Association on ACEs.
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6.3 Evaluation of the Toolkits, the community project and our professional awareness survey has shown that we are having an impact on both professionals who work with those experiencing ACEs and health inequalities and on individuals and communities themselves but there is always more work to be done.

6.4 Action on ACES encapsulates work to address health inequalities. You can see this through the ‘Pair of ACEs tree image’ which grew out of the need to illustrate the relationship between adversity in the family and adversity within the community. It represents the issues we are trying to address. The leaves on the tree represent the ‘symptoms’ of ACEs that are easily recognised in clinical, educational, social care and community settings.



6.5 If the tree is planted in poor soil that is rich in systemic inequities, it won't have the essential nutrients needed to encourage thriving individuals and communities. Adverse community environments such as a lack of affordable and safe housing, community violence, systemic discrimination, and limited access to social and economic mobility compound one another, creating a negative cycle of ever worsening soil that results in withering leaves on the tree and an increased likelihood of ACEs being experienced.

6.6 It is likely that ACEs are currently contributing to health inequalities. Individuals who are lower on a social gradient may be more vulnerable and studies show that ACEs do not occur in isolation and can be inter-generationally transmitted. Addressing the causes and impact of ACEs will help reduce health inequalities.

7.0 What's gone well so far?

- 7.1 The ACE Ambassadors come from both statutory and voluntary sector organisations across Gloucestershire and as of July 2020 there were 130 of them. The Ambassador's network has been a really good way of sharing learning, stories and good practice and spreading the word. You can see feedback below from one of the Action on ACEs Ambassadors – Lizzie Coburn, NSPCC Schools Service Co-ordinator:

'One positive of being in lockdown has been that we've had some time free for training, so I've been able to share the Gloucestershire ACES e-learning with all my South West and Wales colleagues and with our Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire volunteer team. I've had feedback that it's really helpful, easy to understand and gives pause for thought.'

'I'm currently supporting ChildLine remotely while my usual schools service role is on pause. It's given me a real insight into the challenges our young people are facing, the support they need and are going to need due to living through this pandemic. It's a real privilege to be able to help in a small way, and I'll be very keen to work with the Action on ACEs team on how we can use the ACES project to support young people in Gloucestershire, going forward.'

Feedback from another ACEs Ambassador:

'I just wanted to say thank you for an amazing ACEs eLearning package! It had me in tears and made so much sense. I can't wait to take this forward within the service.'

- 7.2 Learning from the ACEs Maternity Pilot has been captured and fed into the next phase of the pilot and shared more widely through conferences and in a journal article submission awaiting publication.
- 7.3 The Toolkits developed by Children's Commissioning have been well received and utilised.
- 7.4 In Viral Change, changing behaviours is deemed to be important as it is identified as driving sustainable culture change above any other factor. This is because behaviours are visible and can be imitated and replicated by others in a way that "values" or thoughts" can't be. We have developed a set of clearly defined behaviours which have been embraced by the Ambassadors and wider network: change the question; show compassion; make social connections.
- 7.5 Colleagues from the ACEs Panel joined the discussions at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Prevention of ACEs and the impact of Covid - 19 which was held remotely on 4th June 2020.
- 7.6 Information on ACEs was featured as part of the Out of Schools Settings and Providers Covid - 19 Reopening Guidance Pack.

7.7 Many sectors such as Children Services, Housing and Education are considering trauma – informed approaches and resilience as part of their Covid – 19 recovery.