

Adults, Children & Education(ACE) Scrutiny Commission



Report of: Adults Children and Education Directorate

Title: Adverse Childhood Experiences

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Dr Jacqui Jensen

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Recommendation

To note the report.

Summary

Our long term aim is to build an ACE resilient city, to prevent children from being impacted by ACE's and have healthier happier lives. We intend to support adults who have been impacted by ACE's themselves and support them to be better parents and be healthier adults.

We intend to develop Bristol as an ACE resilient city, using research intelligence to inform service design, which will then improve outcomes for residents across the life-course, reduce health inequalities, and consequently ensure the sustainability of services.

We have reached out to partners across the city to gain intelligence from their experiences and those of their service users to inform our work.

We are connecting with Public Health Wales and the public sector in Wales who have received significant funding and it is hoped that they will support our workforce development plans.



1. Summary

- a) We are the first local authority and partners who intend to develop our work on ACE's across the life course. Our ultimate aim is to build an ACE resilient city, to prevent children from being impacted by ACE's and have healthier happier lives. We intend to support adults who have been impacted by ACE's themselves and support them to be better parents and healthier adults.
- b) We will have a short strategy and plan, which will include workforce development and the eradication of ACE's will be a strand in the One City approach and Plan.
- c) A Bristol Health Partnership HIT (Health Improvement Team) expression of interest is being developed to further exploit research including the local children of the 90's research findings.
- d) All statutory partners, including neighboring LA's are intent on working together to minimize the impact of ACE's on local people.

2. Context

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) are negative experiences in early life and childhood that can have an impact on health and wellbeing throughout life.

Evidence to date has identified the following ACEs:

- Direct: physical, emotional or verbal abuse and physical or emotional neglect
- Indirect: domestic violence, parental drug/alcohol misuse, parental criminal behaviour/incarceration, parental mental illness and bereavement (linked to death or separation)

There is a significant body of evidence that these stressful experiences during childhood have a profound impact on an individual's life chances. Research has shown a causal relationship between ACEs and poor physical and mental health and socioeconomic outcomes. The impact of those stresses in childhood can lead to a higher risk of adopting health-harming behaviours (e.g. drug and alcohol misuse and risky sexual behaviours), performing poorly in school and involvement with the criminal justice system. It can also lead to poorer health outcomes throughout the life course, and an early death. The more adversity a child experiences the more likely it is to impact upon their lifelong mental and physical health.

We are working with local and regional partners to develop a joined up approach to break the cycle of ACEs. We intend to take a life course approach that addresses the root causes of ACEs but also provides support for the symptoms.

Summary of Actions

- Hot Coffee, Hot Topic Session on Domestic Abuse/Contextual Safeguarding, March 2018: This initiated work on 'ACE Bristol'.
- ACEs Workshop, April 2018: Brought together key leaders across the city (and our neighbouring LA's) to a learning and discussion forum with leading academics to build consensus in how we tackle ACEs across our child and adult population.

- ACEs resilient city ambition embedded within the One City Approach. The ‘Children’s Strand’ of the Plan focusses on addressing ACEs.
- Multiagency Bristol Task and Finish Group in Place, coordinated by the Mayors Office. Three thematic Task and Finish Group meetings have been held with partners, with input from over 40 partners (summary of themes below). A further 3 more meetings are scheduled.
- Regional network in place to support information sharing and identification of opportunities for joint work. This is coordinated by Avon and Somerset Police.
- Links developed with ACE Wales team, jointly with Avon and Somerset Police partners. We are currently exploring whether Bristol can be the pilot area for roll out of resources developed in Wales. ACE Wales received over £6 million for a programme of work on ACEs from the Police Transformation Fund.
- There is momentum towards a BNSSG approach – and some discussion of the possible development of an ‘ACE informed’ CCG (and the STP an ACE informed STP). This would be the first in the country. Policy Officers across BNSSG are working together to share materials and develop a ‘case for change’ with high level milestones / a proposed timetable for implementation.
- Research:
 - ACE HIT being developed with Bristol Health Partners. This is at Expression of Interest Stage and will be considered for approval to develop a full proposal in November.
 - Funding bid to ARC West for regional resource for ACEs Research

Where are we now?

There has been widespread support which is building momentum for work on ACEs, and there is an appetite to be ambitious.

The links with BNSSG colleagues are positive and there is a mutual understanding that each of the areas need to work at a pace that works with the structures and opportunities within the areas. It is likely that through the BNSSG working group we will develop a BNSSG ‘vision / strategy’ (e.g. two page overview). This is intended to support consistency in language, allow us to share in resources where practical and to gain the benefits of a strong regional approach, whilst at the same time allowing for local flexibility in implementation.

The Bristol Task and Finish Group are informing the development of a Bristol action plan, which will make good use of the development of our integrated locality working arrangements.

The core themes coming out of the work in the Task and Finish Group are summarised below, with examples of some of the questions being raised:

1. **Leadership & Strategy:** How can we achieve greater alignment of organisational strategies across the partnership, supported by more joined up performance frameworks that don't see indicators in isolation? How can we ensure this leads to more connected pathways and commissioning?
2. **Commissioning:** How can we move from a system that focusses on the symptoms of ACEs to a whole system understanding, where we design services around experience, and invest to save? How do we create a system where there is fluidity of our collective resources?
3. **Workforce:** How do we give the workforce the skills, confidence and support structures they need to talk about ACEs? Who is the workforce when we think of a life course approach? How can we bring the workforce together for more integrated working, whilst recognising professional expertise and identity?
4. **Communities and Families:** How do we improve the way we work so that families and communities are enabled to solve problems and find long term solutions?
5. **Impact:** How will we evidence our collective impact and make best use of evidence and research opportunities?

Next Steps

- Continue to develop the ACE Bristol Action Plan through the Task and Finish Group, to be in place for Spring 2019. This is likely to include plans for training, communications and development of a structure through which this can be delivered.
- Continue to work with BNSSG partners to develop a Case for Change and an overarching vision.
- Continue to learn from research and other areas working on ACEs.
- Submit Expression of Interest for an ACE HIT (BNSSG remit).
- Explore opportunities for joint work with ACE Wales (Train the Trainer opportunity)
- Host partnership conference: 17th January 2019, We The Curious.
- Ensure ACEs are central to future partnership arrangements.
- Capitalise on quick wins and use opportunities in recommissioning and strategy development.

3. Policy

- Adult and children's safeguarding statutory duties
- Crime reduction statutory duties
- Giving children the 'best start in life' Public Health statutory duty

4. Consultation

All work outlined above has been undertaken with internal and external partners

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

There is no reduction in our service delivery in relation to ACE's, it is an enhancement of our service and our partnership offer. The ACE approach is underpinned by our Equality duties and covers all sectors with protected characteristics.

Appendices: None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None