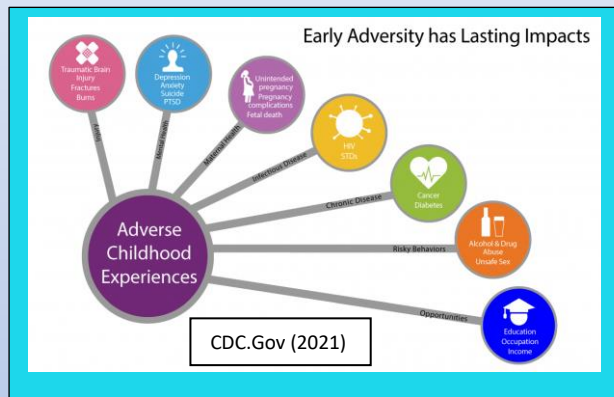


How Ace's can affect a child

When children are exposed to adverse childhood experiences, it can have a long-lasting negative impact on their lives.



Adults in Wales with 4 ACE's or more are more likely to:

- ★ Develop heart disease
- ★ Go to prison
- ★ Frequently visit the GP
- ★ Develop type 2 diabetes
- ★ Commit violence
- ★ Have health harming behaviours

What are ACE's?

Adverse Childhood Experiences are stressful events occurring through childhood. ACE's come in many forms.

Public Health Scotland (2021)



- ★ Domestic violence
- ★ Parental abandonment
- ★ A parent with mental health
- ★ Being the victim of abuse or neglect
- ★ A member of the household being in prison
- ★ Growing up in a house with alcohol and drug abuse

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)



Very well mind (2020)



How can School's help?

Estyn (2020)

- . Provide support for vulnerable pupils in partnership with other services.
- . Understand the impact ACE'S can have on a child
- . Prioritise building trusting relationships with families that encourage them to share important info with the school
- . Ensure that there is suitable access to calm. Nurturing and supportive spaces for pupils with ACE's
- . Provide training and support so staff understand their role as a potential trusted adult for vulnerable pupils.



The Ace Support Hub

The ACE support Hub launched in January 2018. It aims to help create the environment for change and to support individuals, communities and organisations to help create an ACE aware society.

Estyn (2020)



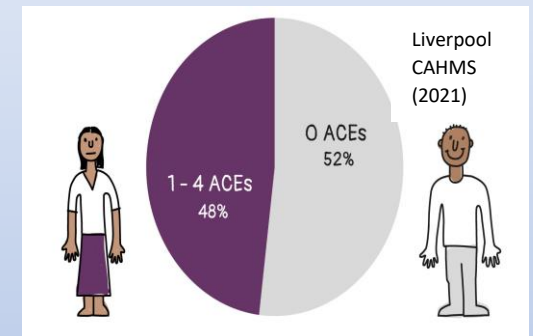
The Aces support Hub aims to make Wales a world leader in preventing and tackling ACE's by

- . Preventing ACE's from occurring in children's lives
- . Supporting early intervention when children are experiencing Ace's to minimise their impact
- . Building resilience in adults who have experiences ACE'S

Public health Wales (2020)

How often do ACE's occur?

In England, almost half of adults have experienced at least one ACE, with 10% experiencing four or more.



- . In 2019 just over 1 in 7 adults reported 4 or more ACE'S
- . Verbal abuse was the most common ACE



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Rationale

Throughout this rationale, safeguarding and child protection will be discussed, while exploring child protection policies that have evolved over time and the reasons behind this. Some of the policies that will be discussed include the Children's act 1989, Every child matters 2007 and the Laming report, all of which play a vital role in the child protection system we have in place today. The rationale will include information on multi agency working, and why this is important, and how schools promote child welfare. It will also discuss the contents of the above leaflet and why this subject was chosen.

'Child protection is defined as a key part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It is the activity which is undertaken to protect children and young people who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant abuse, harm or neglect'. (Children in Wales 2020). The welfare of children is paramount and through the years, more laws have been put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all children. The UK's four nations have their own child protection system, very similar to each other with laws passed to prevent behaviours that could cause harm to a child. Serious risk of harm may occur from a single event in a child's life or a series of concerns over time. Child protection and safeguarding children are two different things. Safeguarding is in place for all children while child protection is a procedure for children at risk of harm. There are four main types of abuse and neglect: emotional, physical sexual and neglect. Child protection laws are in place to prevent any child being harmed and ensuring the correct action is taken when abuse has taken place. Laws to prosecute people accused of child abuse have been in place since the 1880's, but a high number of child abuse deaths have played a big part in the child protection system that is in place today. The 1989 children's act established the legislative framework for the current child protection system in England and Wales.

'Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm' (NSPCC learning 2020). All settings that work with children should have safeguarding policies and procedures in place that ensure there is equality when protecting children from harm.

'The safeguarding and child protection policy is the key document that helps staff understand what they need to know in order to keep children safe and how to respond when they are concerned. Policies should be reviewed and updated at least annually, but possibly more often to account for changes in guidance'. (Safeguarding in school, 2021). To effectively safeguard children, adults must pay attention to any signs of abuse and report any concerns. The role of adults in a childcare setting should be to create a safe environment in which a child can thrive and develop in an effective way. Safeguarding children is not just about protecting children from immediate harm but taking a bigger view of their lives and putting strategies in place to prevent them from being at risk in the future.

In order for children to be protected to the highest standard, there are policies and procedures in place, where laws have been passed, which allow local authorities to investigate if they feel there is any immediate risk to a child. The children's act 1989 paved way for stricter laws to protect children. 'The children's act 1989 is a United Kingdom act of parliament, which allocated duties to local authorities, courts, parents and other agencies in the United Kingdom' (Law commission for England and Wales 2020). The act states that children's welfare should be paramount with the main aim to strengthen protection for children. The act recognises that children are best cared for within their own family and local authorities must provide support where possible. Under section, 47 of the act 'local authorities have a duty to investigate if a child is thought to be at risk of any forms of abuse'. The 1989 act take into consideration the best interests of the child when any decisions are being made and section 17 states 'children in need should be supported so they can reach their full potential and develop fully and healthily'. In recent years, the social services and well-being act come into force. This act came into place on the 6th of April 2016 and provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support. The main principles for the act include putting the individual and their needs at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in the outcomes that supports their well-being. It also emphasises on the importance of prevention and early intervention.

The child protection system in place today has strengthened over the years but sadly, major failings within the child protection system have led to this. Just one example was the heart-wrenching story of 8-year-old Victoria Climbié. Victoria was tortured and murdered by her great Aunt and her boyfriend, despite having numerous teams such as social services and the police involved. The extent of the failure to protect Victoria was unmeasurable; Victoria was known to four social services departments, two housing authorities, two child protection teams at the Metropolitan police, a specialist centre at the NSPCC and still suffered horrific abuse and neglect, which led to her death. Her death led to an enquiry headed by Lord Laming and resulted in major changes in child protection policies in the UK. The Laming report (2003) states that 'the suffering and death of Victoria was a gross failure of the system, and it was clear to see that the agencies with responsibility for Victoria gave low priority to the task of protecting children'. The Laming report made 108 recommendations all with the aim of strengthening child protection.

Every inquiry into a death of a child caused by abuse or neglect has brought forward proposals for change and improvement to the child protection system. The Every child matters legislation evolved as a response to the inquiry instigated by Lord Laming, It brought new measures to reform and improve the care and protection of children. Every child matters (2003) proposed to improve child protection by 'increasing the focus on supporting family and carers, ensuring intervention before children reach crisis point and also providing adequate training for those working with children'.

Every child matters recognises the lack of communication with agencies involved in the Victoria Climbié case and that children with special educational needs found that services intervened too late. Part of the papers long term vision is to provide earlier interventions by ensuring information is shared between agencies, identifying lead professionals to take the lead on each case where a child needs protecting and also integrating professionals through multi-disciplinary teams.

When a child is suspected of being the victim of child abuse and neglect a multi-disciplinary team is often used to improve investigations. 'A multi-disciplinary team is a group of professionals who work together in a co-ordinated and collaborative manner to ensure an effective response of child abuse and neglect' (U.S. department of justice, 1998). An MDT approach is beneficial to a child at risk, these teams ensure appropriate information is shared amongst all parties involved, this can include social services, doctors, schools and police. An MDT approach aims to ensure there are thorough investigations with input from all relevant parties to maximise the chance of successful conclusion to any child abuse case while also providing support to the child to minimise trauma.

It is now recognised more widely that children should not only be protected but they should have their own voice with decisions that affect them and have their own rights. 'The United Convention on the Rights of a Child is an international human rights act that grants all children and young people a comprehensive set of rights' (Save the Children, 2021). The UNCRC is a legally binding agreement, which has seen 196 countries signing up since 1989. Article 19 of the UNCRC states 'parties shall take all appropriate legislative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or any forms of abuse' (UNCRC, 1990).

The leaflet attached above was made to raise awareness of adverse childhood experiences (ACE's). 'Adverse childhood experiences are traumatic events, particularly those in early childhood that significantly affect the health and well-being of people' (Public Health Wales, 2020). A report by PHW suggested that in 2016 '47% of adults in Wales suffered at least one adverse childhood experience in their lives with 14% suffering four or more'. Children who experience stressful events in childhood such as abuse, a parent dying, living with a parent who is abusing alcohol or drugs or a parent that is in prison are more likely to experience poor mental health, adopt self-harming behaviours which can lead to poor health, or end up in prison themselves. With Adverse childhood experiences being a common cause for Mental and ill health, and higher crime rates it is vitally important that awareness is raised on not only what could cause ACE's but how it should be responded to. The above leaflet is aimed to provide schools with information on ACE'S with a view for them to have better understanding on what to look for and how they can support pupils that have experienced ACE's so that the affects later in life can be minimal. When education staff have better awareness of ACE's this will enable them to promote child welfare more effectively while providing essential support for these pupils. The Estyn report (2020) suggests that schools can help support these pupils by 'understanding the impact ACE's can have on a child, prioritising building trusting

relationships, ensuring that there is a suitable access to calm nurturing spaces for pupils with ACE's and also providing adequate training for staff'. According to theorist Abraham Maslow and his theory of the hierarchy of needs 'children must have their most basic needs met in order to achieve their full potential' (McLeod, 2020). Basic needs are food, water, warmth and rest, followed by safety and security. Sadly for many children who experience ACEs they will not have, even their basic needs met and this could result in low self-esteem, difficulties forming relationships and poor attainment at school. Schools can help these children by ensuring their basic needs are met at school by providing things like breakfast club, which is funded by the Welsh government and a safe happy environment where they are given the chance to reach their full potential. If a school suspects that a child may be at risk of abuse or harm it is their duty of care to report this, Most schools have my concern forms which are available to fill in online. Staff should also be fully aware of the safeguarding and child protection policies at their setting and should follow the correct procedures to ensure there is help available for these children. All children regardless of their home situation should be provided with equal opportunities in school. According to every child matters (2007)

One of the key areas of priority for developing social inclusion centred on improving education attainment for all children, regardless of personal circumstances. Through the removal of barriers to engagement and achievement, young people will be able to participate, engage and succeed in life.

Some children who have experienced ACE's and extreme abuse may have been placed in foster care. Schools can provide these pupils with equal opportunities by accessing the pupil development grant. The purpose of the PDG grant is to improve outcomes for learners eligible for free school meals and looked after children. It is intended to overcome any additional barriers that prevent children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve their full potential. Schools can use these grants by monitoring these children and recognising any areas they may need more support in, so for instance a play therapist could be used for a child struggling with low self-esteem or difficulty forming relationships, or ICT equipment may be provided for a pupil that has no access to anything at home.

To conclude this essay it is evident to see that child protection and safeguarding children is a major priority in the UK. Through failings within the system we have seen laws and policies strengthened with the aim of preventing any further deaths as a result of child abuse and neglect. Multi disciplinary teams have been an excellent way of ensuring there is a wide team of professionals all surrounding the child and putting them at the centre of care. Having a team of professionals all sharing information regarding the child ensures there is less chance of abuse and neglect being missed. Lord Laming's inquest into the Victoria climbie case paved way for huge changes to be made within child protection and raised awareness on the flaws within the system urging the government to enhance laws to protect children. The children's act 1989 ensures that local authorities know it is their responsibility to investigate any abuse that is suspected and provides all the legislation needed

to ensure the best protection for children. Schools and childcare settings are now receiving better training on child protection and safeguarding and the wellbeing of all children is the main priority at schools. It is inevitable that Adverse childhood experiences will continue but the affects they have late in life can be reduced as long as these children receive the correct support early on. A school environment should always be a place where they feel safe secure and loved and it is here they will be given the opportunity to thrive, as theorist Carl Rogers once said ' Like a flower it will grow to its full potential if the environment is right' (Mcleod, 2019).

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