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To What Extent Do Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Adolescent Engagement in Criminal Activities, Particularly Gang Affiliation and Knife Crime?

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Declarations:

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Abstract:

Adverse childhood experiences, also referred to as ACEs, such as neglect, abuse and household dysfunction, are increasingly recognised as significant predictors of youth involvement in gangs and knife crime. This paper intends to examine the extent to which ACEs contribute to the likelihood of adolescent engagement in these specific forms of criminal behaviour within the UK. Drawing on recent research, this review highlights the disproportionately high prevalence of ACEs among adolescents involved in gangs and knife-related offences compared to their peers. It explores the psychological, social, and environmental mechanisms through which ACEs increase the risk of criminal involvement, considering key moderating factors such as socioeconomic status, and cultural background. The paper also evaluates the effectiveness of interventions aimed at preventing gang affiliation and knife crime by addressing childhood adversity. Findings emphasise the urgent need for trauma-informed approaches within criminal justice, social care, and community prevention strategies to disrupt the pathways linking childhood adversity to youth offending. By deepening the understanding of ACEs – gang and knife crime relationships within the wider community, this paper aims to inform policy and practice that can reduce youth violence and improve outcomes for vulnerable adolescents.

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1.0 Introduction:

1.1 Background and Context:

Among numerous studies and criminological theories, there has been speculation that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) play a crucial role in the development of children and adolescents, particularly in the engagement of destructive, violent, or dangerous behaviour. To begin, social learning theories, which were first developed in 1977 by Albert Bandura, alludes that when children are exposed to criminality, violence, neglect, or abuse in their home lives, they are more likely to engage in offending behaviour, (Timbs, 2025). Building on this, both development and life – course theories further suggest that adversities taking place early in childhood can set a long-term trajectory of antisocial and aggressive behaviour. These theories or perspectives treat ACEs as early risk markers that help identify the reasons for links between higher levels of adversity and their consistent association with later violent offending. In addition to this, research within the UK has found that individuals experiencing six or more ACEs increase their risk of gang affiliation by 154%, this figure from Villadsen et al., (2025), highlights the profound impact that early trauma can have on children and adolescents and their vulnerability to serious violence and gang involvement. Furthermore, both research and criminological theories consistently demonstrate that early exposure to abuse, neglect, violence and criminality within the home may be a potentially crucial route through which ACEs shape later involvement in serious youth offending, including knife crime and gang affiliation, giving rise to the current research focus: to what extent

do adverse childhood experiences influence adolescent engagement in criminal activities, particularly gang affiliation and knife crime?

In recent years, there has been a significant growing interest in the link between adversities occurring in childhood and their influence on the behaviour of those affected. Although there is extensive research that illustrates that there are links between ACEs and criminality, it has not been proven indefinitely. Regardless of this, the Welsh ACEs Study (Public Health Wales NHS Trust, 2015) as cited in the Scottish Government (2018) report, states that individuals experiencing four ACEs are 15 times more likely to become a perpetrator of violence, compared to their peers who have no history of ACEs, this figure suggests that there is a strong and clear link between ACEs and their influence on future criminal or violent behaviour. However, despite existing research, there remains a large gap in understanding how certain ACEs, like household dysfunction, school violence, and childhood maltreatment has the power to influence future engagement in violent criminal behaviour such as knife crime, (Marchmant, 2025). This study aims to explore the gaps in literature to establish the links between which child maltreatment and school violence can influence vulnerable young people into joining a local gang.

1.2 Aim and Objectives:

This study seeks to explore the extent of which adverse childhood experiences influence adolescent engagement in criminal activities, placing a focus on gang affiliation and knife crime, while critically examining the role of schools in identifying, addressing, and mitigating the risks through intervention and prevention strategies. The first objective of this research is to critically examine the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, gang involvement, and knife crime among adolescents within the UK, focusing on key social, environmental, and psychological mechanisms that contribute to youth offending. Next, to evaluate the effectiveness and challenges of interventions, both school and community based, including violence prevention programmes, trauma informed education, and the support of at – risk students to disrupt the pathways from ACEs to gang affiliation and knife crime. Finally, the last objective of the research stands to investigate how existing school and community policy and practices address the link between ACEs and adolescent involvement in gang culture and offending, with a particular focus on the connection between specific adverse childhood experiences and patterns of knife crime.

1.3 Research Significance and Theoretical Framework:

The findings from the research aim to address and build on the critical gaps in the existing literature surrounding ACEs and their influence on gang affiliation and knife crime. Currently there is not enough research to understand how school violence fits into the equation, and this will be of some focus during the study. Although there is a

recognised connection between ACEs and violent outcomes, the specific mechanisms through which early trauma leads to involvement in gang culture and the perpetration of knife crime remain underexplored. Research from Haylock (2020) states that there has been an established link between ACEs, poor mental health, and youth gang culture, but there is no exploration of how school violence fits in. It is possible that a factor of poor mental health could be linked to school violence and bullying, but certain factors, like this one, were non-existent within this paper. Therefore, by focusing on the exploration of school violence and childhood maltreatment, the study may be able to provide insights into the pathways that link ACEs to serious and organised violence, to inform the development of school based targeted interventions and prevention strategies for children and adolescents at risk.

The study is guided by two key theories, the social learning theory and the rational choice theory, which both strive to explain the dynamics of human behaviour from different perspectives. Bandura's social learning theory concentrates on the role of observation in childhood. According to Saka (2025), the theory suggests that individuals learn from their observations; by watching the people around them, children can learn from imitating the behaviour from the present adults. Similarly to this, the rational choice theory posits that children make the decision to imitate behaviour only after they have weighed up the costs or benefits, (Thomas, 2024). Meaning that instead of just imitating the behaviour that is presented around them, the individuals start to think about the consequences of their actions, then chose the behaviour that benefits them more, (Reyns, 2024). Both social learning theory and rational choice theory can be used to explain why individuals engage in any form of behaviour, whether it may be socially

conforming, or perpetrating crime, as each provide a framework for understanding why individuals make decisions in numerous ways. Cornish (2017) expresses that the main difference between the theories lies in their primary focus; social learning theory highlights the influence that the individuals surrounding us have an influence over our social learning processes and how we act, while rational choice theory places emphasis on rationality and individual decision making. Although, Akers (2017), summarises that there can often be an overlap with the two theories, as some individuals may learn about the costs and benefits of certain behaviours, especially in a criminal context, from their observation of others, this means that their rational decision making process has already been informed.

These theories can be applied to this research in a criminal context of ACEs, gang affiliation, and knife crime, as the theories can illuminate how vulnerable adolescents exposed to traumatic events, may learn violent or offending behaviours through their social environment, (Perera, 2023). in addition to this, Wood (2019), throws light on the illusion that the rational choice theory may also provide a greater insight into adolescent gang affiliation. Offering that some individuals perceive themselves to be safer, socially, if they are involved with a gang, therefore highlighting that some gang members have rationally chosen gang involvement for survival. To reiterate, these theories provide frameworks for a deeper understanding of the pathways linking ACEs to gang and knife crime and serve purpose in the significance of the research.

1.4 Methods of Research:

This study seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. What are the critical social, environmental, and psychological mechanisms that link adverse childhood experiences, gang affiliation, and knife crime among adolescents within the UK?
2. How effective are current school and community-based interventions, such as violence prevention programs, trauma informed education, and at – risk student support in disrupting the pathways from ACEs to gang affiliation and knife crime, and what challenges do these interventions face?
3. How do current school and community policy and practices address the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and adolescent involvement in gang culture and offending, particularly concerning the links between specific ACEs and patterns of knife crime?

To address the gaps in literature and gather a better understanding surrounded the pathways through which ACEs influence adolescent engagement with gang culture and knife crime, the study will employ a mixed methods approach. The approach will consist of a thorough review and analysis of existing literature surrounding all aspects of ACEs and their links to criminal behaviour, and a public survey for the purpose of exploring public awareness of the issues at hand. According to Wasti (2022), the use of a mixed methods approach allows for a more complete understanding of the research problem as it combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research. This approach will grant an in-depth insight to the widespread issue and the cumulative impact that ACEs have on the disruption of healthy development, and the long-term consequences they have on behaviour. This study will adopt a mixed methods approach to further investigate the gaps in research and explore and recognise the prevalence and impact

that is crucial for the development of effective intervention and prevention strategies to promote better choices and tackle gang culture and knife crime in all areas.

The research will focus primarily on two geographic locations, London and Swansea, which are known for their significant numbers of organised crime connected to adolescent gangs. However, this does not cover all areas of the United Kingdom and will not provide enough data to clarify how big the issue really is. By focusing on these two cities, the study can compare which strategies for prevention work and understand which strategies are in dire need of reform or improvements. These specific cities were selected for the study as violent crime and gang culture is significant in both. Firstly, Crime Rate (2025) demonstrates that knife crime is a major concern in Swansea, with 6,523 offences as of March 2025. Parallel to this, the Office for National Statistics (2025), report that they year ending March 2025, there were 16, 297 knife enabled offences, meaning a nine percent increase from the year before. These statistics only illuminate the ongoing issue of knife crime within some parts of the UK, only further highlighting the significance of this study.

This study will be organised into five chapters, to cover the main issue, the relevance of the study and the data collected, and to propose prevention and intervention studies in both school and community aspects, to promote adolescent well-being and offer vulnerable young people education, and support. By the end of the study, it is expected that both the survey and existing research will show that there is a lack of public knowledge on ACEs and the potential impacts they can have on vulnerable young people. The goal of the survey is to see if the public can comprehend the impact and severity of adversity and the pathways to crime. Understanding the connection between

adversity and engagement in gang culture and knife crime, is vital for informing prevention and intervention strategies. Raising public awareness of how early trauma can lead to criminal behaviour aims to support efforts to reduce youth knife violence and improve outcomes for all vulnerable individuals.

2.0 Literature Review:

2.1 Overview of ACEs and Brain Function:

The concept of ACEs and crime has been extensively examined in literature. For example, there are various ACE studies that consider criminal behaviour to be linked significantly to past trauma; research from Public Health Wales (2015), indicates that individuals with four or more ACEs are up to 15 times more likely to commit violent acts and 20 times more likely to be incarcerated at some point in their lives. The Welsh Ace study suggests that the more ACEs an individual has experienced, the more likely they are to engage in risky or criminal behaviour. Research from Lacey et al., (2020) demonstrates that adversities in childhood seem to 'cluster', meaning that children who are exposed to one ACE, are often exposed to more during their childhood and adolescence which further increases their risk of engagement in criminal activity. Several researchers have documented the significance of the effect that ACEs can have

on those struggling with prolonged trauma. ACEs can affect more than just behaviour, and they can have an astounding effect on brain function and rational thought, resulting in change in the brain structure of some individuals, especially in areas that are in control of impulse control and decision making. Research from Hand (2025) leads to believe that because of the effect ACEs and trauma have on the brain structure of children, it makes decision making and rational thought difficult for some children to consider the aftermath of their actions and manage their emotions and impulsivity. The author tells that thinking about actions thoroughly, understanding the consequences of emotional outbursts and the overall managing of emotions are all executive functions for responsible behaviour.

In examining the neurobiological impact of ACEs, the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala are the focuses. This is because the prefrontal cortex is essentially the control centre for decision making, and the amygdala is in control of the emotions. A recent neuroimaging study conducted in the USA, encompassing 7,275 adults, investigated the impact of ACEs on brain function across various psychiatric diagnoses. Keator et al., (2024) explains that the study utilised resting state and task-based MRI scans during a continuous performance task, researchers assessed alterations within the brain activity associated with increasing ACE scored. Additionally, the authors further explain that their findings indicate that larger ACE scores correlate with heightened activity in some areas of the brain, like the dorsal striatum which is crucial for learning habits, and reward-based decision making and the cerebellum which recent research suggests plays a role in cognition and emotion. Furthermore, Keator et al., (2024) revealed that the study demonstrated a significant association between elevated

ACE scores and anxiety related disorders, substance misuse, and depression. This could suggest that previous research underscores the long-term impact of early adversity on mental health. This view is supported by Hesterman (2021) who infers that the impact of ACEs on brain function and development can significantly impair decision making processes. When the prefrontal cortex is compromised, rational thought and planning become difficult. Simultaneously, the author explores how an overreactive amygdala, often the result of prolonged exposure to traumatic experiences, can lead to impulsive and/or emotional reactions. Similar conclusions were reached by Haslam et al., (2024), who offers that risky behaviours resulting from an impaired brain function may then emerge as maladaptive coping mechanisms that individuals use to manage the pain and stress associated with their abuse. Substance abuse, reckless behaviour, and often unhealthy relationships can provide a false sense of control or escape, essentially perpetuating a cycle where initial trauma leads to impaired ability to make positive decisions, and subsequently, risky or even criminal behaviours. To reiterate, not only do ACEs affect behaviour, but they can also lead to prolong stress and trauma that continues to affect the mental and physical health of those who have suffered. The prolonged stress and trauma can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms and Haim-Nachum (2022) explains that ongoing stress and trauma combined with unhealthy coping mechanisms can make it tough for some individuals to consistently make responsible choices, leading to a cycle of abuse and criminality. Breaking these cycles requires comprehensive interventions that address both the underlying trauma and the maladaptive coping strategies and while these challenges are significant, targeted

interventions and supportive environments can foster resilience and further encourage healthier decision making.

Overall, numerous studies have attempted to address how ACEs can further affect the brain function of children who have been exposed to trauma. Research from Keator et al., (2024) pinpointed specific brain regions as potential mediators in the relationship between ACEs and adult psychiatric diagnoses, highlighting the complex interplay between early life experiences and the development of mental illnesses. These findings underscore the profound and often lasting effects of early traumatic experiences on the structure and function of the brain, emphasising the crucial need for early intervention and prevention strategies to mitigate the detrimental consequences of ACEs.

2.2 Criminological Theories Surrounding ACEs and Criminal Behaviour:

The issue of ACEs and the engagement in criminal activity have over the years received considerable scholarly interest. This section will thoroughly explain four criminological theories and their application to understanding the link between ACEs and crime, while also evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each theory in this context. For instance, the first theory, being the strain theory, at the core, proposes that crime is the result of a disconnect between an individual and their ability to achieve their goals through legitimate reasons, (Van Wyk, 2023). Robert Agnew's general strain theory posits that crime arises after elevated stress leads individuals to 'adapt through innovation'. In this context, this would mean children exposed to ACEs, their inability to

reach their goals in a legitimate way, so they turn to crime instead. An example of this would be a child who has experienced more than one ACE finding it difficult to navigate through school life, lessening their chances of experiencing a good education and a good job. This situation could lead to a sense of frustration and hopelessness as they may feel their goals slipping out of reach. In addition to this, (Brezina, 2017), illustrates how children and adolescents who have a history of ACEs may have difficulties forming bonds with others, or maybe the ACEs they have experienced have damaged or destroyed the relationships or support systems they have. Moreover, if a struggling young person has no stable family or positive role models, this could lead to a feeling of being unsupported or isolated, which only adds to their strain. The general strain study presents that when an individual starts to feel intense strain, they look for alternative ways of achieving their goals, and in some instances, this means turning to crime. Walsh (2025) unravels an explanation that connects trauma to offending, one example is a person who feels isolated and rejected by society, could join a gang in hope of finding the acceptance and belonging they are looking for. In the same way someone who is unable to find a job might resort to theft and reselling to make money. Overall, ACEs can set the scene for criminal behaviour by creating the strain that pushes individuals toward criminal behaviour. There are some obvious strengths and weaknesses to this theory, firstly, the theory does well at explaining how early trauma and societal pressures can lead to crime, making it easier to understand how adolescents who have experienced ACEs might feel frustrated and under pressure, leading to emotional outbursts or turning to crime to cope. In addition, Keith and Louine (2019) elude that this theory can be used to explain higher crimes rates in

disadvantaged communities, as people in these communities often face more obstacles when trying to achieve their goals, leading to increased strain, and a higher chance of criminality. Although the theory has some strengths, it does not consider why some people who experience strain turn to crime, while others do not. Also, it can be quite difficult to determine levels of strain, meaning that there is no way of knowing the level of strain a person is experiencing, or how it may affect their behaviour.

Another theory that can be used to explain the ACEs crime link is the broken windows theory. McLeod; Natale and Mapson (2024), state that the theory suggests that visible signs of crime and disorder, like broken windows or graffiti, can encourage more crime in disadvantaged areas. The theory posits that when minor issues are ignored, there is a higher chance that it creates an environment where more significant crimes will occur, ACEs can aid in the creation of these environments. Those experiencing ACEs often grow up in neighbourhoods that are already struggling with issues such as poverty, neglect and violence, communities where disorder is quite common and visible. Gau and Cameron (2019) argue that the cycle of ACEs can prevent some families and their wider communities from addressing their issues, especially if parents themselves are struggling with their own past traumas. Mental health issues are common in adults who have high ACE scores, Public Health Wales (2025) offer that many communities simply lack the resources needed to combat many of the challenges that disadvantaged communities and people face, mental health services included. Furthermore, when communities lack resources, like job fairs and training, or even after school programs, it can often be difficult to create opportunities for young people to stay out of trouble. Consequently, ACEs can contribute to the cycle of disorder by creating environments

where the inhabitants feel less invested in their communities and certain disadvantages, such as poor mental health, poverty, and substance misuse create more scenarios where adolescents are likely to engage in risky or criminal behaviour. The broken windows theory draws attention to the importance of the community an individual grows up in and helps to understand the depths of how that environment can impact their attitude and behaviour. However, Monaghan (2022) puts forward that the theory can be applied to justify harsh policing tactics, which leads to the targeting of marginalised communities and unfair punishments for minor offences, endorsing aggressive policing in areas of high crime. Although, the College of Policing (2021) reason that the theory just means that low level disorder must be tackled quickly to be effective, as serious offenders from elsewhere may seek the opportunity to join disadvantaged communities leading to new disorders and crimes. Despite this, the theory does not consider or explain the root cause of criminality, it just places the focus on the symptoms of crime, like graffiti and broken windows, rather than addressing the underlying issues of lacking opportunity and poverty that lead to crime in the first place.

2.3 Critical Social, Environmental, and Psychological Mechanisms

Linking ACEs, Gang Affiliation and Knife Crime UK:

When considering why ACEs might lead adolescents to engage in gang activity and knife crime, several mechanisms must be contemplated, for example, there are many social processes such as weak social bonds, exposure to violence, peer influence, social disadvantage and exclusion. The first process is likely the result of ACEs and

ongoing trauma, Humphrey and Van Bruschot (2018) talk about the cycle that is created by ACEs. The authors elude that certain ACEs, abuse, neglect or household dysfunction, tend to almost always disrupt the formation of health attachments between children, their families and good role models. Also, their detachment may also affect their attitudes towards school and the boarder community, which further weakens social bonds, leaving young people more susceptible to negative influences, and in this instance, gangs.

Secondly, children who are exposed to violence in their homes or their communities are “fifteen times more likely to be a perpetrator of violence”, (Scottish Government, 2018). Children witnessing domestic violence frequently at a young age might lead them to believe that violence is normal and can be an acceptable way to resolve conflict. Current statistics show that domestic violence is a large-scale problem within the UK affecting children and adults everywhere, this cannot be denied as 81% of minors recorded as experiencing domestic violence were also living with an adult victim, (Nicole, 2025). This indicates that witnessing domestic violence at a young age can have profound and lasting effects on the emotional and psychological well - being of children, therefore increasing their risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence, including knife crime. Wedlock and Molina (2020), expresses that children who experience ACEs like domestic violence, neglect and psychological abuse often seek safety, belonging and protection from others within their community. Healthier Together (2025), asserts that gangs often pray on the vulnerability of young people, using them to carry drugs, recruit other young people, and can involve their members in violence and other criminal activity. Statistics from the Home Office (2025), show that almost 60,000

knives have been removed from UK streets, dropping the number of knife homicides by 20%. Although knife homicides have dropped, there remains a large number of knives and sharp objects being surrendered or seized on the streets of England and Wales, with the largest number in London and the West Midlands, (Allen and Wong, 2025). Additionally, the sense of belonging brought by joining a gang further increases a young person's reasoning of violence, case in point, growing up around violence could encourage the affected young person to believe that carrying a sharp object could save their life while engaging in violent behaviour such as knife crime. Furthermore, a lack of awareness or positive role models could motivate some individuals to seek guidance from gang members.

Thirdly, peer influence may play a major role as adolescents are highly influenced by their peers, this process goes hand in hand with social disadvantage, and sometimes exclusion. For a young person with a history of ACEs, surrounding themselves with people who can understand their pain and trauma can be emotionally validating, poverty, lack of opportunity and discrimination can be associated with disadvantaged communities. Research from Catch22 (2023) infers that these interconnected risk factors are significant as young people seek acceptance and belonging and gangs can provide this sense of approval that is lacking in their home or school environments. Moreover, disadvantaged communities generally have a limited access to opportunities to keep youth out of trouble, which leave some young people to feel hopeless and marginalised contributing to their vulnerability to gang involvement and violent crime, (The National Lottery Community Fund, 2018). Returning to exclusion and rejection, children with high ACE scores are regularly overlooked at home and during school,

meaning they may not have many, if any, positive friends/role models in their lives. Sometimes, this leads to behavioural issues which does not aid in their participation or integration within school life, (Fazackerly, 2025). The author accentuates the importance of involvement in school by revealing that adolescents that are permanently excluded from school can have a 50% more chance of perpetrating serious violence within a year other expulsion. This view is supported by Cornish and Brennan (2025) and the Youth Justice Resource Hub (2025) as both disclose that behaviour driven by needs that are unmet, due to late or unidentified diagnoses in neurodivergent children are severely misunderstood and over punished. instead of offering disadvantaged and neurodivergent children support and opportunities, school and staff are repeatedly failing some children by using exclusion as a disciplinary response. the Youth Justice Resource Hub (2025) clarifies that children from disadvantaged or lower income backgrounds are unlikely to be identified as neurodivergent early, which intensifies inequalities for these children.

2.4 Examination of School and Community Interventions and Their Challenges:

Currently within the UK, there are systems in place that can aid in the protection of children and young people, for example, this includes violence prevention programs, trauma informed education and support for at risk students, these services fundamentally aspire to keep young people safe and out of trouble. First off, violence prevention programs allow for the teaching of resolving conflicts peacefully and safely, (NHS England, 2026). Violence Reduction Units, NHS Violence Reduction Programme

and Healthy Relationship Programme, are just some examples of violence prevention programs offered within the UK. Public Health Wales, Department of Health and Social Care and the Home Office (2019) illustrate that these prevention programs were enforced as multi agency approaches that focus on early intervention, support and rehabilitation for the purpose of tackling root causes of community issues, providing tailored support for individuals within the community and to educate the public on healthy behaviours. The Violence Prevention Unit (2026) often uses group discussion, role play and skill - building exercises to bring together young people and teach them how to solve conflict peacefully, and emphasis with others. The promotion of healthy and positive social behaviours allows for the building of relationships and reduces aggression in young people. This prevention program can impact gang and knife crime as equipping young people with alternatives to violence can reduce the likelihood of them turning to violence for the acceptance or gaining status within gangs, resolving disputes. However, Bruno, Joelsson, Franzen and Gottzen (2020) stress that ensuring these programs are consistently implemented can be very difficult for a few reasons. The first reason being limitations in funding and resources, without the essentials the effectiveness of the programs would be very limited. In addition to this, the complex drivers of violence rooted in poverty and inequality require broad societal changes, limitations are also brought on by disregarding the underlying societal issues and trauma that contribute to high levels of serious violence.

The second intervention that is worth mentioning is trauma informed education. The growing movement focuses on creating supportive, safe and encouraging environments by helping school staff understand how certain types of traumas like neglect, abuse and

loss impacts the learning and behaviour of adolescents all over the country, (Home Office, 2022). Trauma informed practices involve creating a school environment that is taught to recognise and respond practically to the impact of trauma, shifting their focus from “what is wrong with you?” to “what has happened to you?”, (National Education Union, 2026). The training includes training teachers and other school staff to understand the effects trauma has on the brain development, behaviour and attitudes of young people, implementing support within the classroom and ensuring that those affected can utilise mental health services. For many young people in the UK, trauma informed practices work by addressing the emotional and psychological wounds that ACEs have brought them, helping them to develop resilience and improve their relationships. The National Associations for People Abused in Childhood (2025) express that the impact that these practices can have on young people can be empowering and even has the possibility to prevent re – traumatising, reducing the vulnerability of young people to negative influences like violence and gangs.

Nevertheless, there are challenges in shifting school culture to prioritise students mental and emotional well-being. The Welsh Government (2025) released a statement reporting that shifting to trauma informed practices can be difficult to achieve as disruptive behaviour often impact the learning of other students. Also, due to the need of extensive staff training, systemic changes and lack of funding, there may be some resistance from staff who do not have a full understanding of the approach, hindering the process. Lastly, the diverse needs of students with varying degrees of trauma require individualised approaches, and lack of staff means further complicating implementation efforts. NHS Wales (2026) declares that the deep-seated nature of

existing school structures and processes makes achieving trauma informed practice and environments and complex and ongoing process.

Next, supporting at risk student programs allow for targeted support to students who are identified as 'at-risk', this could mean they are on path for academic failure, behavioural problems or involvement in gang or criminal activity. The Department of Education (2023) discloses that early intervention is difficult to put into operation because of low level of mental health disclosures from students. Support for at-risk students includes the following, tutoring, mentoring, counselling or referrals to community services. While providing these support systems can guide at-risk students to build positive relationships and stay on track with their education, identifying them can be challenging. The Education Hub (2025) offers that despite trying, these programs face issues of underfunding, lack of supportive staff members and the coordination with other agencies, leaving at-risk children without support and help they desperately need.

Many schools and community-based interventions are limited to their ability due to underfunding which impacts how effectively they can implement collaboration with other services to offer support for students. Other challenges are highlighted by Antalek (2025) who states that cultural responsiveness lacks, as some interventions must be tailored to the specific needs or cultural contexts of the students within the community they serve. Bennett (2024) supports the notion of these programs being challenging with the notion that accurately measuring the long-term impact of trauma can be almost impossible, young people can grow resilient to their traumas, but this does not cancel out the emotional or psychological impact they face. To fully understand the impact that these challenges could have on the behaviour and attitudes of young people, the long-

term outcomes must be accurately measured. By understanding each of these components and the challenges they face, schools and partner agencies, like the NHS, charities and the police, can work together effectively to create more opportunities to keep isolated and agitated young people out of gangs and violent behaviour, to disrupt the pathways from ACEs to gang affiliation and knife crime.

2.5 Addressing the Relationship Between ACEs, Gang Culture and Offending:

Despite the extensive research into how ACEs can affect isolated children and lead them into gang culture for acceptance or comfort, there is not a large amount of literature that connects specific ACEs, their impacts, and knife crime. The Youth Endowment Fund (2025) emphasises that having just two ACEs could lead young people into gangs (61% chance) but for those who suffer six or more, the chances are more than doubled at 154%. This would mean that children that suffer through abuse, neglect, household dysfunction, parental separation, domestic abuse and mental ill health, are significantly more likely to be involved in gang culture and violence.

Early intervention is vital for addressing the issues caused by poverty and ACEs, UK schools are aiming to improve early intervention tactics through trauma informed training, data collection and analysis. McCloughry (2024) asserts that it is vital to improve these practices as schools are seeing higher levels of anxiety, mental health challenges and difficulty in the engagement of learning from students. Along schools, the wider community must also allow for the creation of stronger and more informed practices that

focus on addressing the root causes of some ACEs. At current, community-based interventions and preventions consist of mentoring to provide positive role models to young people, counselling that offers mental health support to everyone affected by ACEs and family support such as home visiting programs that aspire to strengthen the relationship between new parents to create stable home environments, (Addis, Wey, Toll and Hopkins, 2021). Although school and community preventions are often discussed, there are other initiatives that could support children from disadvantages backgrounds. Knife crime initiatives have been put in place in Wales due to high numbers of serious violence. These initiatives are significant in the governments Serious Violence Strategy released in 2018, that is formed of many initiatives. The Metropolitan Police (2026) state that these initiatives offer efforts to limit the availability of knives, in hopes that the seizure and reduction in access decrease the number of attacks with sharp objects down nationally. Restricting access of who can purchase knives or sharp objects has reduced overall knife crime as it makes it harder for young people to obtain them, this can be supported by Local Government Association (2025) as they report that there has been an 18% decrease in knife assaults alongside the new regulations. This means that lives could potentially be saved as although there has only been a small decrease in numbers, the regulations can prevent impulsive acts of violence. In addition, the new regulations mean that anyone caught carrying a knife or sharp object that can be used as a weapon will face harsher punishment, with the penalties being a maximum prison sentence of four years, and custodial sentences for those who choose to repeat offend. The Sentencing Council (2026) express that stricter regulations can act as a deterrent and young people may think twice before picking up

these weapons. Although it has not resolved the issue fully, the limited availability on the purchase of knives does make it more challenging for young people to obtain them, therefore contributing to a safer society.

Specific ACEs Linked to Knife Crime:

The study focuses on the established link between specific ACEs and an increased likelihood of knife crime. Here are just some specific adversities that have established links, exposure to violence, neglect, abuse and parental separation. Firstly, exposure to violence plays a large role in whether young people turn to gang culture or knife crime. Firstly, the normalisation of violence leads vulnerable young people to view violence as the 'norm' and an acceptable way to resolve conflicts or gain status for those already involved within gang activities, (Burke, 2022). Secondly, the trauma that children experience after being exposed to trauma can often result in emotional dysregulation, impulsivity and the inability to control their anger, each of these factors increase the likelihood of young people becoming a perpetrator of violence, (West Yorkshire Combined Authority, 2026). Considering there are several theories that suggest that individuals learn from behaviour that is exhibited around them, it is only fair to assume that young people learn violent behaviours through observation and imitation, especially when they are surrounding themselves with others who exhibit this behaviour. For those affected by exposure to violence, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (2026), explains that gangs can provide a sense of belonging and protection. For vulnerable young people within the UK, there are many areas of deprivation that have heavily influenced by crime and violence, becoming a member of a gang can seem like a necessary survival tactic.

Moreover, school violence is closely linked to gang affiliation and knife crime as schools can be breeding grounds for these issues. Campuses are sites where students can be directly or indirectly exposed to violence. This exposure can contribute to the normalisation of violence and increase the likelihood of students carrying knives for protection, (Burke, 2022). Furthermore, schools can be subject to gang recruitment, where students are pressured into conforming to violent norms. For schools with high levels of violence, educators often struggle to create a safe and supportive environment, exacerbating these issues.

3.0 Methodology:

3.1 Overview of Methodology:

According to the Mishra and Alok (2022), a research methodology is best described as the set and design of processes and procedures of data collection and analysis.

Research methodologies are used as a guide for researchers to ensure that aims and objectives are met allowing the research questions can be answered effectively, (Daniel, Harland, and Wald, 2024). This study will use a mixed methods approach to examine the extent to which childhood experiences influence adolescent engagement in criminal activities, with a focus on gang affiliation and knife crime. The study intends to

use both quantitative and qualitative data to explore different themes around the ACE – crime link, in particular, gang affiliation and knife crime. Data will be collected through a public questionnaire to evaluate the public perception of ACEs, their effects, and their impact on the likelihood of adolescent engagement in gang activity and knife crime. The analysis of the data will be compared to other ACE studies and existing literature to further assess critical social, environmental, and psychological mechanisms that link to ACEs, gang affiliation, and knife crime. There are many gaps within the literature, and the study aims at combating the limited information available surrounding the effectiveness of current school and community-based interventions within the UK, particularly within Swansea and London, and attempt to recommend solutions to the challenges that said interventions may face.

Strengths of Comparison:

Contextualising research within the broader academic landscape necessitates careful consideration of both the advantages and disadvantages of the comparison of this study to other academic works. To begin, the first advantage allows readers to understand the depth of the issue, and how the findings of the study can correlate with existing literature to highlight the impact of ACEs and their influence on gang culture and knife crime. Desai (2025) eludes that research and comparison come hand in hand and can be a vital tool in research as it allows for a better analysis of similarities and differences unearthing meaningful insights. In addition, the author shares that comparing research results with other existing literature is crucial for several reasons. The first being that it allows the research to validate or refute findings, strengthening the credibility of the research overall. Moreover, a comparison can help identify gaps within

the current understanding to effectively demonstrate the importance of said research. Lastly, Mwita (2022) says that the contrast in methodologies can assess the strengths and weaknesses of comparative studies, helping researchers to justify their methodological choices and suggest potential improvement for future research.

Weaknesses of Comparison:

Although comparison is vital within research, there are several challenges and disadvantages. The first example being the overreliance on existing literature, leading to an excessive focus on comparisons that potentially overlook the unique contributions that your own research can provide, (Jilcha, 2025). Additionally, selectively comparing studies that validate research findings and dismissing those that refute or contradict the findings create bias completely, this should be avoided at all costs. In addition to this, when comparing two studies with different methodologies, sample populations, and/or contexts, without acknowledging the differences can result in two things, the oversimplification of the results, or a misleading conclusion, (Bigham, 2023). Furthermore, an oversimplification can lead to the lack of critical evaluation of the findings and quality of the studies within the comparison, this can significantly weaken the analysis.

Sample, Context and Result Prediction:

Within the context of the questionnaire, there aims to be around 100 participants that will be asked to identify what they would class as ACEs, and how specific mechanisms like family dynamics and peer influence can affect the likelihood of young people involving themselves with gang culture and knife crime. The questions selected within

the questionnaire aim to identify the level of knowledge the public have on ACEs and their links to criminal behaviour. Additionally, the questions will cover each of the objectives within the research and intend to uncover how the public believe young people can be kept out of trouble, and how effective the intervention or prevention programs within the UK are.

The results are predicted to show that the public has a limited knowledge on what can be classed as ACEs and how these adversities can affect the behaviour of young people. Another predication is that the study will be limited by the number of participants, this may be likely as the research covers a sensitive topic and many people do not like to be involved within research surrounding the issues of gang culture, ACEs, or knife crime. Additionally, it is likely that because the questions are labelled as 'optional' not all the questions will be answered by each of the participants, this adds to the limitation as it can reduce the data quality and compromise the statistical validity of the research. Popovich (2024) illustrates that when respondents chose to leave questions blank, they are doing more than just providing no data, they often create systemic gaps that differ from other respondents.

3.2 The Research Onion:

Of the many different research approaches, the research onion developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill remains a popular framework. Gamage (2025) describes the research onion as a visualising research design that is made up of layers of broad philosophical beliefs, which begin on the outer layer, to specific data collection techniques, filling the smaller layers within the onions core. The research onion is made

up of six layers, these being the research philosophy, the research approach, methodological choice, the research strategy, time horizon and the techniques and procedures. Each layer represents the coherent and rigorous research design built by researchers, (Cambridge Proofreading, 2026). This framework can be used as a simple tool intended to guide a researcher's choice of methodology, beginning with their research philosophy, down to the smaller practical steps, (Phair and Warren, 2025).

3.3 Aim and Objectives of Study:

Statistical Data:

Statistics on knife crime within the UK reveal that there is an ongoing problem, with 51,527 police recorded offenses within the last year. Although, it has been reported by the Ben Kinsella Trust (2026) that 22,141 of these offenses involved the assault of young people, or committed by young people, with intent to cause injury. Despite the overall prominent levels of knife crime, the Home Office and MP Jones (2025) report that within the last twelve months, there has been a 5% decrease in the number of knife crime incidents in the UK. However, the next statistic taken from the Ben Kinsella Trust (2026) sheds light on just how prevalent these crimes have been for a decade, the trust states that between March 2016 and June 2025, there has been a 64% increase in police recorded offenses within the UK. Police records claim that several different sharp objects are involved in the murder of 57 young people aged below 25, the weapons used ranged between kitchen knives, machetes, and zombie knives, (Ghani, 2025). Both Ghani (2025) and the Ben Kinsella Trust (2026) portray just how alarming this statistic is by following along with just under 30% of the 57, were below the age of 16.

Link to ACEs:

Research suggests several links between knife crime and ACEs, for example, those with four or more ACEs are believed to have a significantly increased risk of association of violence. This could be due to trauma response, sources such as the Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution (2026), suggest that as trauma response, young people suffering ACEs manifest the inability to regulate and process their emotions, which can result in responses such as aggression and anger. Furthermore, other research shows that self-protection and fear often overlap, with those in danger acting in violent ways to protect themselves, this could be the case for many young people carrying knives in the UK. Although carrying a knife for protection is illegal, the government confirms that children as young as 11 are carrying knives for their own protection, Ofsted, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Care Quality Commission (2024), found that 47% of young people carrying knives, have been witness to serious violence within a year, additionally, “60% had seen ‘real world’ violent acts on social media”. This report illustrates the growing impact of witnessing violence first hand, as these young people believe that the only way to protect themselves may be to carry weapons, further putting themselves and others at risk of serious violence. This means an overlap between victim and perpetrator, carrying a sharp object makes vulnerable children significantly more likely to become a perpetrator of crime. This view can be supported by the Youth Endowment Fund (2023) as their survey found that 71% of young people choosing to carry a weapon admitted to violent behaviour between 2022 and 2023, this was in comparison to just 15% of the rest of the respondents. Overall, young people who carry knives for their own protection risk putting themselves

and others in danger by increasing their chances of involvement in serious violence, whether this may be as victims or perpetrators, escalating conflicts and endangering lives.

Recap of Aim and Objectives:

To reiterate, the aim of the study is to explore the extent of which adverse childhood experiences influence adolescent engagement in criminal activities, placing a focus on gang affiliation and knife crime, while critically examining the role of schools in identifying, addressing, and mitigating the risks through intervention and prevention strategies. And the following are the objectives which aim to aid in the answering of the research question:

1. To critically examine the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, gang involvement, and knife crime among adolescents within the UK, focusing on key social, environmental, and psychological mechanisms that contribute to youth offending.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness and challenges of interventions, both school and community based, including violence prevention programmes, trauma informed education, and the support of at – risk students to disrupt the pathways from ACEs to gang affiliation and knife crime.
3. To investigate how existing school and community policy and practices address the link between ACEs and adolescent involvement in gang culture and offending, with a particular focus on the connection between specific adverse childhood experiences and patterns of knife crime.

Using the aim and objectives, the study intends to understand the depths of public knowledge on the link between ACEs and knife crime. Although the study aims to have around 100 participants, this could be limited as it covers sensitive topics. However, due to the lack of research into ACEs and their effects on certain behaviours, and the sensitive nature of the research questions, some respondents may be hesitant to submit responses for some of the section in the questionnaire, therefore they have the option to skip the questions. Additionally, these intended participants may not have the time to complete the questionnaire at this busy time of the year because of their jobs and home life. This would limit the study significantly, as school staff and others that work alongside children could provide valuable insights into how ACEs can affect the development and behaviour of young vulnerable people. Despite these limitations, the objectives can be met through the critical evaluation of current and up to date research and relevant literature.

3.4 Theory, Approaches and Ethical Considerations:

The research is grounded in epistemology, a branch of the theory of knowledge, which influences researchers using the research onion by guiding their approach to understanding and validating knowledge claims. This epistemological stance specifically shapes the development of the questionnaire, ensuring that questions are designed to obtain valid and reliable insights into the extent to which ACEs influences adolescent engagement in criminal activities, in particular, gang affiliation and knife crime and the level of effectiveness of the current prevention and intervention programs within the UK.

Ethical approval for this study has been obtained from the university after a thorough ethics proposal was reviewed.

Participants will be fully informed that the survey intends to explore the public awareness of ACEs and their potential impact on young people and the gateways into gang culture and knife crime. There is an emphasis on the voluntary nature of their participation, all participants have the right to skip questions or withdraw from the questionnaire at any point, and they can be assured that all answers will be completely anonymous and used solely for research purposes. To ensure confidentiality, measures will be taken to collect only age data, omitting names or other identifying information.

3.5 Limitations of Methodology:

The primary limitation of this method lies within the reliance on existing literature, which can restrict the scope of the findings. In addition, the study is constrained by the potential reluctance of participants, given the sensitive nature of the research in question. Currently, the existing literature lacks comprehensive research into ACEs and their specific links to crimes such as gang affiliation and knife crime. Some research has provided insights into why certain ACEs can impact young people and their involvement in gangs and knife crime, but they remain suggestions rather than valid research. These further limits the study by potentially overlooking nuanced connections and specific mechanisms through which ACEs may influence engagement in these criminal activities. For the improvement of future studies, research could incorporate a qualitative method to gather more in-depth insights into individual experience and

perceptions, while additionally focusing on longitudinal designs to track long term effects of ACEs on specific criminal behaviours.

4.0 Analysis:

4.1 Overview of Analysis:

The purpose of this chapter is to present and interpret the findings of the research in significance of the extent to which ACEs can impact the behaviour of young people and

how adversity in childhood has significant links to gang culture and knife crime. To reiterate, the overall aim of the research is to understand the extent to which adverse childhood experiences influence adolescent engagement in criminal activities, focusing on gang affiliation and knife crime. To determine the extent, this chapter will be broken up into several sections that cover each objective of the research, and a comparison between this study and the Welsh ACES Study in attempt to gain a thorough understanding of the importance of early intervention and the benefits of disrupting adversity before the effects take hold.

Within this chapter, each of the responses from within the questionnaire will be used alongside information taken from existing literature to paint a picture of just how important public knowledge on ACEs can be. Although the questionnaire aimed to have around 100 participants, it did not meet the expectations, and the sample stands at just over a quarter the size, this could be for several reasons. Moreover, this means that the statistical power of the study is reduced and the generality of the study is limited, due to the smaller sample size, the responses may not accurately reflect on the population intended.

Analytical Approach:

This analysis adopts a multifaceted approach, with the use of descriptive analysis to summarise the key characteristics of the data found within the questionnaire. The analysis will also include correlation statistics, thematic analysis, content and comparative analysis, and lastly synthesis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the deep impact that ACEs have on the behaviour and development of adolescents. Correlation

analysis was conducted to analysis the relationships between ACEs and gang culture and knife crime, revealing that while there is a lack of research into how specific ACEs can be linked to gang culture, the Welsh ACE study and other literature identifies ACEs to be the cause of foundational factors that push adolescents into gang crime. This can be seen in Weitzel; Hopper and Herridge (2021) where the authors describe current research that highlights that young children with complex needs are at a higher risk of engagement in gang culture and may require tailored support to enable them safe exit from gangs.

Thematic analysis of the questionnaire data revealed several reoccurring themes, most notably, only 66.7% of participants considered that exposure to domestic violence to be an ACE. This indicates that a significant minority may not recognise or acknowledge certain violent behaviours or situations as domestic violence, the outcome might have been different if the word 'exposure' were to be replaced with 'victims', although this could be due to a lack of awareness, or differing definitions on what constitutes domestic violence.

A comparative analysis of the Welsh ACE study and the research questionnaire highlight significant differences in sample and outcomes. The Welsh ACE study focused on adults within Wales, whereas this study places a focus on gathering public knowledge to understand what prevention and intervention programs are supported and the challenges they face. Although there are similarities, the methodologies of each are very different. By synthesising findings from both studies, this analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive gang culture and knife crime.

The chapter will be structured in a way that first presents the key findings of the questionnaire and then moves onto a comparison of the Welsh ACE study. This approach

has been chosen for several reasons, the descriptive data of the questionnaire is essential for understanding the sample, and the knowledge of the public on ACEs and how they can influence adolescent engagement in gang culture and knife crime. Regression analysis was chosen to determine whether the participants would be able to identify a series of ACEs, which many of the participants were unable to do so. In addition to this, thematic analysis has allowed for the identification of several key themes, like a link between high ACE scores and perpetrators of violence, and a use of comparative analysis highlights differences within perspectives. For example, ACEs alone cannot determine whether an individual will engage within gang crime; their behaviour is also affected by sociodemographic variables, (Canturk; Faraji and Tezcan, 2021).

This analysis contributes to the field by illustrating the gaps within the literature and portraying the importance of public perception in the context of ACEs to expand the support that can be offered to at-risk youths. These results align with the Youth Select Committee (2020) who stress that there is significant evidence to suggest a disconnect between public perception of ACEs being underlying cause of gang culture/knife crime. They believe that the public perception focuses on punitive measures, while existing literature indicates that high ACE scores are strongly associated with the risk of serious youth violence and weapon involvement. Despite this, there are several limitations of this study, the biggest being that there is a lack of resources that challenge or refute the correlation between ACEs and specific crime. The existing literature theorises that specific ACEs, like neglect, abuse and abandonment, can be the leading foundational causes of gang involvement, and while studies have shown that high ACE scores have an effect, it

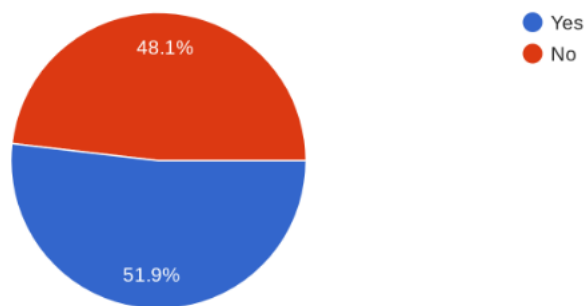
has not been shown to be true. Because of the small sample size within the study, this brings other limitations into effect. The large reliance on existing literature could form the opinion that the study is biased, especially when considering there are no resources available to argue that ACEs do not significantly impact the development and behaviour of young people, leading to their engagement in gang culture. Overall, the evidence suggests that ACEs have a significant impact on young people, even rewiring their brain and directly impacting their decision-making process and emotional regulation.

4.2 Key findings of Study:

Question One: Are you familiar with the term 'Adverse Childhood Experiences'?

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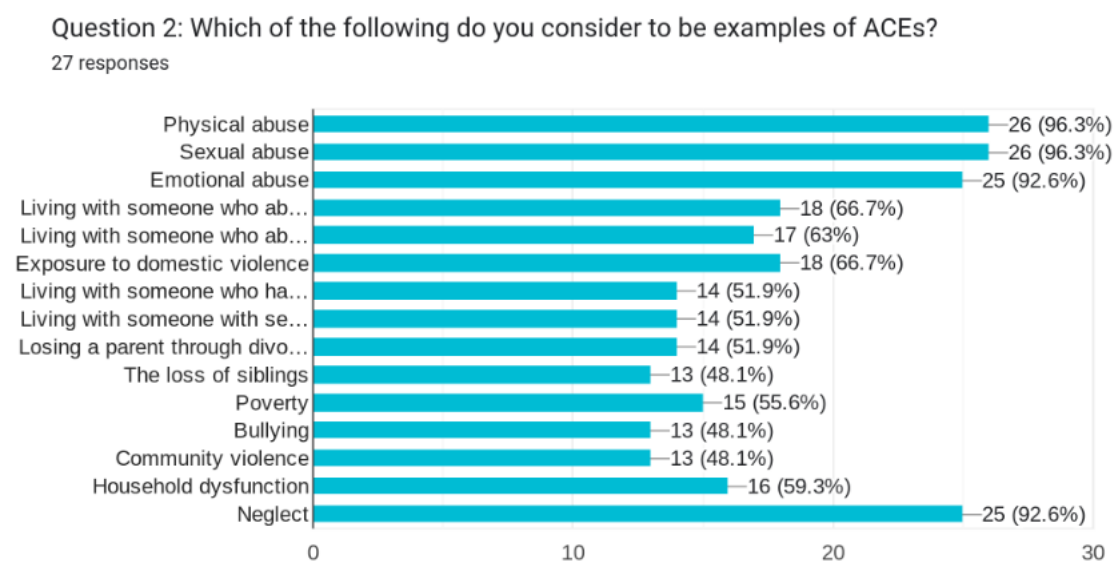
27 responses



As the above images show, the findings from the study indicate that there is a lack of public knowledge on ACEs and their impact on the behaviour of adolescents. Almost half of the participants were unfamiliar with the term “adverse childhood experiences”, and in comparison, only 37% of these are employed in jobs that involve regular contact with children under the age of 18, this indicates that there is not enough knowledge of

the impacts that ACEs can have or what may fall under the ACE category. Considering that a percentage of the respondents are in employment that involves being around children regularly, this is quite concerning, a lack of knowledge within this context can be damaging as those working with children should be informed in order to provide support for at-risk young people.

Question Two: Which of the following do you consider to be examples of ACEs?



Question two of the questionnaire asked the participants to select what they would consider to be examples of ACEs, each of the factors listed have been considered ACEs by health services, but not all the participants selected each factor. As the image shows, 96.3% of participants selected 'physical abuse' and 'sexual abuse', but only 66.7% selected 'exposure to violence'. This indicates a strong public awareness of physical and sexual abuse as direct forms of trauma as people generally understand these to be serious adverse experiences that have ongoing effects. The lower percentages shown in the above

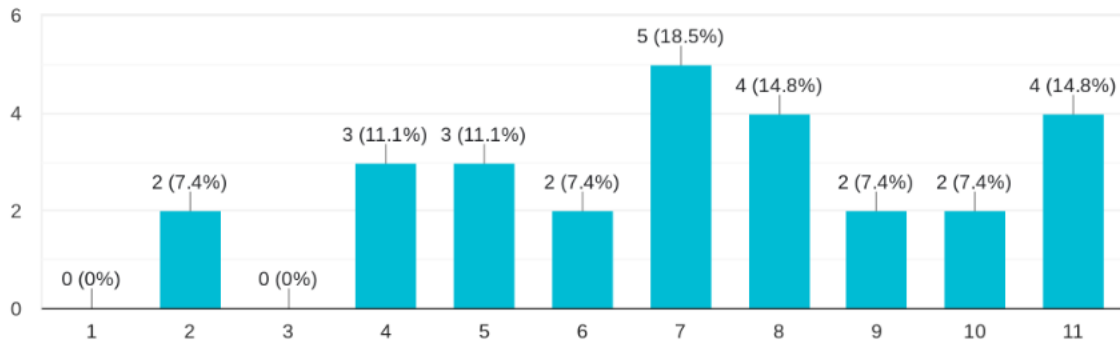
image suggests that the public may not fully recognise or appreciate the long-term impact of poverty, community violence, bullying or household dysfunction, even though research confirms that it can be deeply harmful to the development of children.

This highlights the need for more public education that can broaden the understanding of ACEs. It is essential that the importance is emphasised that exposure to domestic violence is not just a background issue; it has direct effects on the development, confidence and social aspects of young people, and the trauma can be profound. The lower recognition of the loss of siblings, poverty, and bullying as ACEs may also mean that few people realise the impact that they can have. Additionally, it means that people do not recognise the importance of intervening in certain situations to offer vulnerable young people support, and often kindness that would go a long way. This can also be said for those who have little understanding of how much support could be given to children witnessing violence in the home. Overall, it shows that while there is a good awareness of direct abuse, there is a large gap in understanding the impact of indirect experiences.

Question Three: Compared to other social factors (e.g. education, poverty, peer influence), how influential do you think adverse childhood experiences are in shaping youth gang involvement.

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27 responses

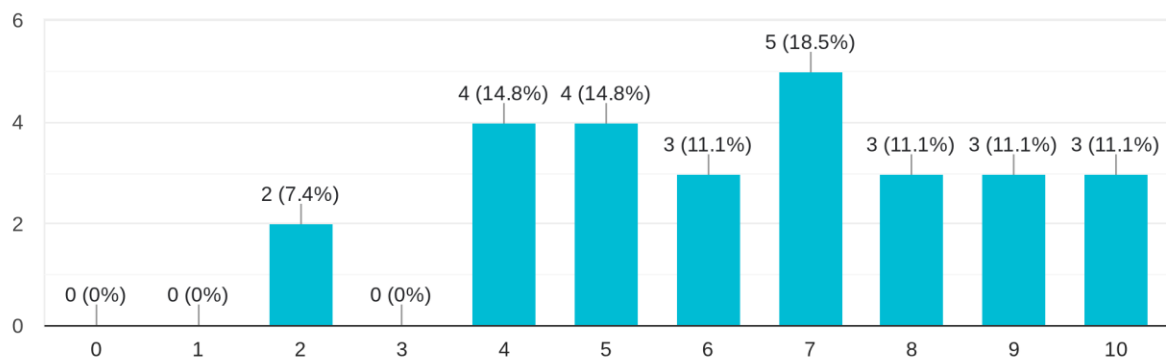


This question allowed the participants to select a rating of 0-11, the highest rating being seven. Most of the ratings cluster between the middle suggesting that the respondents see ACEs as having a moderate influence on youth gang involvement. Considering the respondents' varied ratings, this could mean that ACEs are not seen as either the most significant or only factor, but they have some influence. The highest percentage of the rating stands at 7 (18.5%), which suggests that at least five of the participants believe that ACEs are a fairly strong contributing factor while also recognising that other factors play a role in the engagement of adolescents and gang culture. Moreover, the 14.8% selecting both 8 and 11 shows a notable proportion of participants to think that ACEs are one of, if not, the most influential factors. The data from this question suggests a consensus that ACEs are a moderate factor in shaping adolescent involvement in gang culture. Although, the data does indicate that the respondents believe that other factors are at play too.

Question Four: To what extent do you believe adverse childhood experiences influence the likelihood of a young person becoming involved in weapon-related offences during adolescence?

Question 4: To what extent do you believe adverse childhood experiences influence the likelihood of a young person becoming involved in weapon - related offences during adolescence?

27 responses

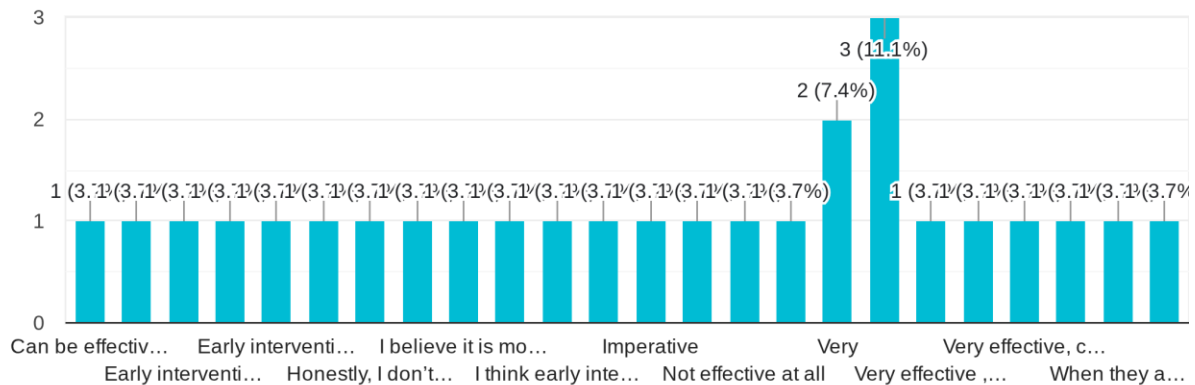


Surprisingly, the responses for question four are like the responses in question three. The responses again are concentrated within the mid-range, suggesting that it is the general belief that ACEs have a moderate impact. Again, the highest percentage 18.5%, selected a rating of seven, therefore indicating that a significant proportion of participants think ACEs are a strong influence on weapon related offences, but not the most notable. Only two respondents selected a rating of two, suggesting that very few people believe ACEs have a minimal influence on the likelihood of weapon-related offences within adolescence. Much like in question three, most respondents recognise that ACEs are not the only factor contributing to weapon related offences.

Question Five: How effective do you believe early intervention for children affected by ACES is, compared with later criminal justice interventions, in preventing youth involvement in violent or gang related activity?

Question 5: How effective do you believe early intervention for children affected by ACEs is, compared with later criminal justice interventions, i...uth involvement in violent or gang related activity?

27 responses



This question allowed the respondents to give their own opinion on whether early intervention was effective in comparison with later criminal justice interventions in preventing youth involvement in violent or gang related activity. There were a range of answers, but the majority of respondents believe that early intervention could be very effective. The following are examples of responses:

1. Early intervention can put troubled youths on a good path, showing them that they can have a better future than their past. However, if they do commit petty crimes, I believe that they should face consequences to understand what it is like within the system to hopefully prevent them from reoffending.

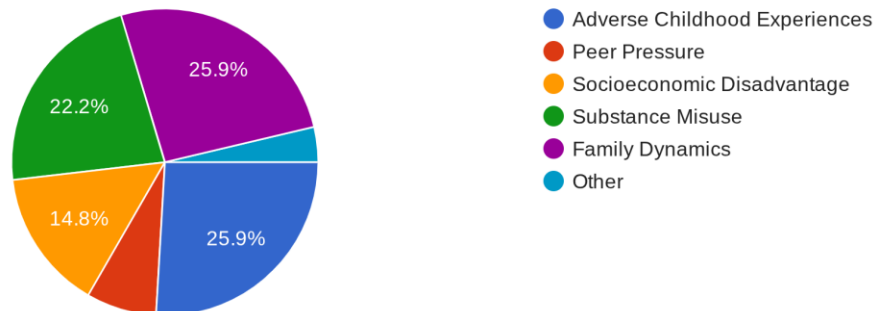
2. Early intervention is certainly the most important factor to keeping young people out of gangs and violence; they need to know that they are more than their trauma.
3. Honestly, I do not think it makes a difference for the majority of these young people; they are already too far gone due to the excessive witnessing of violence in person on TV or online.

These responses, along with others, state that early intervention is “not effective at all”, elude that there is no consensus. Some people believe that early intervention is the best option while others advocate for punitive measures. The central debate revolves around whether rehabilitation and early intervention support are more effective than later punishment in addressing the problem that causes crime among vulnerable adolescents that have been exposed to ACEs. The data shows that some participants believe addressing trauma and providing support can prevent future criminal behaviour. Although some may argue that punishment alone does not address the underlying issues. One of the responses suggested that petty crimes should be punished, indicating that the participant believes that it is essential for young people to understand how the criminal justice system works, as a deterrent for later criminal behaviour.

Question Six: From your perspective, which factor do you believe most strongly influences adolescent involvement in youth violence or group offending?

Question 6: From your perspective, which factor do you believe most strongly influences adolescent's involvement in youth violence or group offending?

27 responses

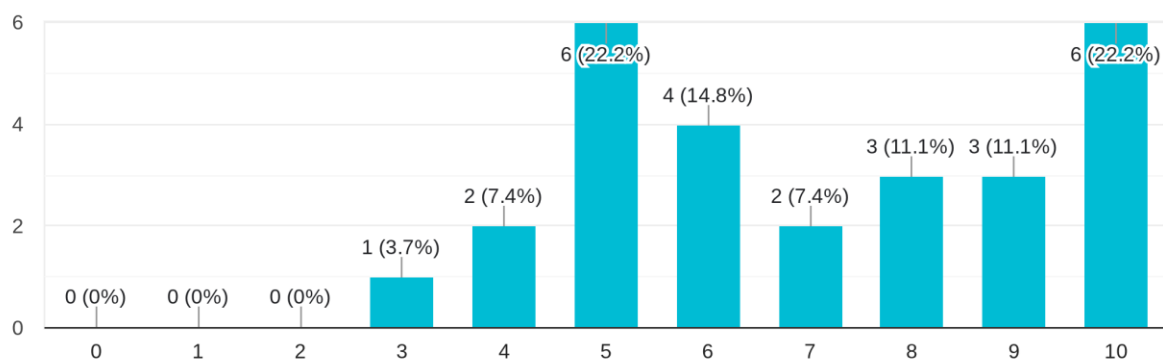


The pie chart above shows that 25.9% of respondents believe that family dynamics can be the most strongly influential factor in adolescent involvement in youth violence or group offending. Surprisingly, only 3.7% of people selected 'other' and 7.4% selected 'peer pressure', showing that the majority of participants do not view these factors as primary drivers of youth violence. Next, another 25.9% of people believe that ACEs were the most influential factor, which is ironic as almost half of the respondents were unfamiliar with the term before the questionnaire. Additionally, the selection of 'substance misuse' was smaller than expected, at 22.2%. Although it was not as high as expected, it is the second highest percentage after ACEs and family dynamics. Implying that some people believe that substance misuse can strongly influence the decisions and behaviour of adolescents. Finally, only 14.8% of participants selected 'socioeconomic disadvantage'. Considering exiting literature reveals that gang culture and violence are more prevalent in

socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. This was also a surprise. Overall, again there seems to be no consensus on which factor is the most strongly influential on the involvement of adolescent engagement in gang culture or violent offending.

Question Seven: To what extent do you believe that family dynamics and relationships during childhood influence a young person's likelihood to participate in gang-related behaviour?

Question 7: To what extent do you believe that the family dynamics and relationships during childhood influence a young person's likelihood to participate in gang - related behaviour?
27 responses



Considering that 59.3% of participants selected 'household dysfunction' in question one, and 25.9% of participants selected 'family dynamics' in question six, the data from this question was not so surprising. 22.2% of participants selected 5, and the same amount was selected for a rating of 10. The split in respondents indicates a divergence in perception regarding the extent to the influence on a young person and their likelihood of participation in gang related behaviour. The divide between the higher percentages suggests that while some believe that the influence is moderate, others believe that the

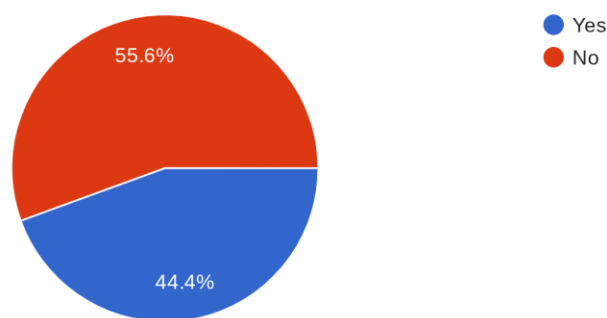
influence has a much more significant role to play. In contrast, those who rated the influence as 10 likely view family dynamics and relationships as critical determinants of gang involvement. They may also believe that dysfunctional family environments or lack of parental/familiar support strongly predispose young people to seek belonging and validation in gangs. This divergence underscores the complexity of the issue and the need for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between family dynamics, relationships, and the involvement of gang culture for survival.

Question Eight: Are you aware of any cases, either from research, the media, or professional experience, where adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) appeared to influence youth involvement in group or gang – related behaviour?

If yes, please describe briefly – do not include any identifying details.

Question 8: Are you aware of any cases, either from research, the media, or professional experience, where adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) appear...volved in group or gang - related behaviour?

27 responses



This question was designed to explore participants' awareness of potential influence of Aces on youth involvement in gang culture and crime. The question sought to explore whether the connection was something that resonated with their personal experiences and

knowledge. The brief description request allowed for the participants to give some initial, but anonymised examples of cases that the public could be aware of, aiming to understand the depth of their understanding and in addition potentially triangulate this information with other findings within the study. Primarily, this question was added to assess if participants were aware of the potential link between ACEs, gang involvement, and violent behaviour. 44.4% of participants did leave more comments to explain cases they were aware of. However, some of the responses were not as anonymous as hoped so therefore cannot be included in this analysis. However, there were two cases that remained anonymous and stood out. They are listed below.

Case One: “Girl who was abused by father got involved with a gang, died by stabbing (she was both victim and perpetrator who carried a sharp object for protection).”

Case Two: “High area of poverty and knife crime, group of boys attacked and murdered young man on the streets, I believe an attempted robbery.”

Each of these cases highlights the significant link between ACEs and gang culture, while also considering other factors such as poverty and essentially, socioeconomic disadvantages. Although there is no evidence to suggest that poverty and abuse were the main factors that contributed to these cases, existing literature does suggest that these factors must be considered. The first case highlights how carrying a knife for safety just adds to the risk of becoming either victim or perpetrator of serious violence.

Question Nine: To what degree do you think early trauma or adversity impacts a young person's decision – making skills, confidence, and outlook on future opportunities?

This question was left open for the participants to comment as little or as much as they want. Each participant answered this question, and the majority believe that early trauma impacts the confidence of young people. The following are some examples of the answers the question received.

1. “It definitely has an impact on their confidence, and I think they try and find comfort in other people (like gang members).”
2. “Has detrimental impact on their confidence and their emotional regulation, lots of young people are very agitated and aggressive”
3. “I think we got more confidence being in a gang”
4. “Yes, it does. Early trauma shapes a child.”

Overall, the most alarming answer is example number three. This answer is concerning because it implies that the individual's decision-making skills and confidence have been impacted by their trauma. This individual may perceive gang membership as a source of confidence or safety, suggesting an impaired judgement which may have led them to choose other risky and potentially harmful behaviours. As existing literature suggests, early trauma can disrupt the development of healthy coping mechanisms and decision-making processes, making vulnerable adolescents more likely to involve themselves with negative influences (Fan, 2025). The response also suggests that the individual may have suffered low self-esteem until finding safety, comfort, and validation in their gang. Illustrating the

potential cycle of disadvantage where early trauma leads to poor choices, further limiting prospects.

Question Ten: How effective do you believe schools are in recognising and supporting pupils who have experienced adverse childhood experience as part of efforts in preventing future antisocial or offending behaviour?

This question was another that was left open; however, this time there were no divergences in answers from participants. Almost all of the participants say something along the lines of schools, being very good at recognising pupils who have experienced ACEs, but either they cannot support these young people, or their support is not effective at all. Here are some of the most influential answers:

1. “Working alongside school, they can spot these young people a mile off, just not enough funding or time in the day to allocate support for each of the students that are classed as at risk”.
2. “I believe they can be very quick to recognise young people who are experiencing ACEs, I just don’t think they have the resources to support each of these fully.”

These responses along with findings from Sibieta and Snape (2025) highlight that schools in the UK face a severe funding crisis that has left 98% of leaders unable to support disadvantaged, SEND and at – risk young people. Underscoring the complex challenges that schools face in addressing the needs of students.

Question Eleven: How would you evaluate the level of support currently offered by social and community services to children and families affected by adverse childhood experiences?

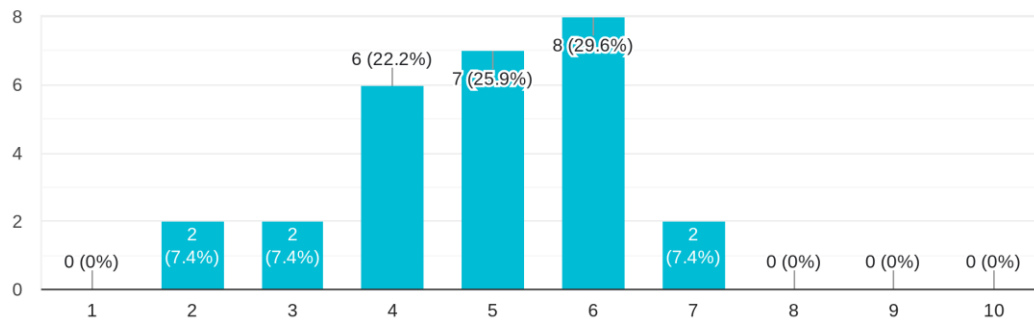
The responses to this question were concerning; there seems to be a general consensus that these support systems are lacking in every way. For example, there are a number of respondents with the belief that social services are “shocking”, “probably not that good”, or “just do not care enough” to support vulnerable young people and their families.

However, a small number of respondents are concerned about the lack of funding for both community and social services, and believe that with extra funding and assistance, these programs could do much more for vulnerable adolescents and their families. The prevalence of negative views on social services, in contrast with a relative lack of discussion about community services, may suggest a critical gap in awareness. It could be possible that the respondents are less familiar with the availability or effectiveness of community-based services and support systems that can be available to vulnerable young people and families.

Question Twelve: How effective do you believe current community or governmental interventions are in helping children affected by ACEs avoid criminal behaviour? Rate from a scale of 1-10.

Question 12: How effective do you believe current community or governmental interventions are in helping children affected by ACEs avoid criminal behaviour? Rate from a scale of 1 - 10.

27 responses



The average rating from the respondents was 4.85 suggesting that the perceived effectiveness of the current community and governmental interventions is moderate, with a significant portion of respondents rating them as relatively ineffective (29.6%). The reasons for this may be similar to the harsh judging within the last question. Again, a lack of awareness surrounding the community or governmental factors that are in the process of helping and supporting children that have experienced ACEs.

Question Thirteen: Can you provide me with an insight into why you selected your rating? (Optional).

Several respondents provide that they rated the community and governmental interventions low as a result of them not being accessible to everyone. Or another notable example is “there are prevention programs in place, but they are not broadcast enough for people to know about them”. This indicates that there needs to be advertisements for services that are in place to support youths at risk. This lack of awareness reinforces the

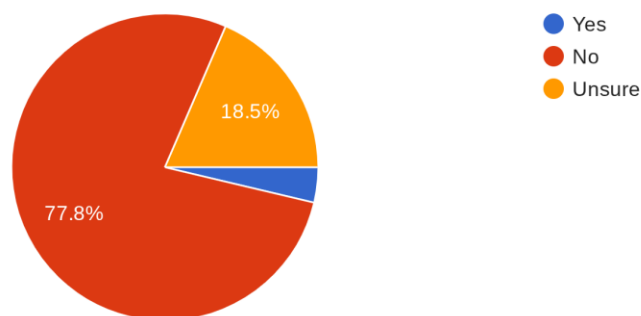
urgent need for targeted advertising campaigns to inform the public about existing services and ensure that vulnerable young people can access the support they require.

Question Fourteen: Can you think of any ways that could keep vulnerable adolescents out of trouble with the law? Optional

This question was designed for respondents to give feedback into what activities or services would keep vulnerable young people out of trouble with the law. The results were expected as 49.5% of respondents (out of 21), suggested “youth clubs”. Considering the purpose of youth clubs is to provide a safe, supportive environment for young people where they can develop essential life skills, this remains a positive suggestion, (Abreu and Harker, 2025). Other suggestions made were sports clubs, job opportunities, and volunteering opportunities.

Question Fifteen: Do you think public awareness about the connection between ACEs and youth crime is sufficient?

Question 15: Do you think public awareness about the connection between ACEs and youth crime is sufficient?
27 responses



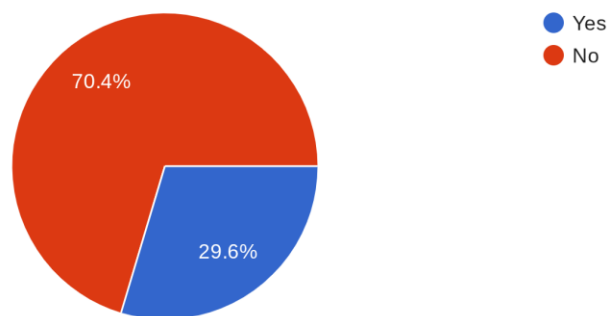
This question was included to understand whether the public believed that there should be

more awareness about the connection of ACEs and youth crime. 77.8% of the respondents thought that the level of public awareness was insufficient. Meaning that there is a widespread perception that the public is not adequately informed about critical issues and factors leading to gang culture and knife crime. The potential lack of understanding regarding the impact of ACEs on adolescent development and their connection to criminal activities is important. Furthermore, it also implies that there is a dire need for increased educational efforts to raise awareness and promote prevention strategies.

Question Sixteen: Have you encountered or heard of successful intervention programs that help reduce gang and knife crime by addressing childhood adversity?

Question 16: Have you encountered or heard of successful intervention programs that help reduce gang and knife crime by addressing childhood adversity?

27 responses



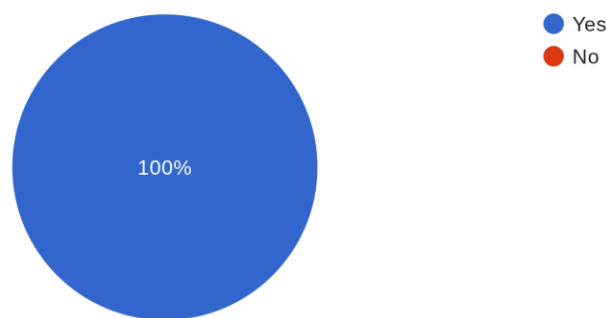
A large number of respondents (70.4%) indicated that they had not heard of successful intervention programs that help reduce gang and knife crime by addressing childhood adversity. This is alarming and again portrays the dire need for a more informed educational approach. Also, there seems to be a lack of understanding or awareness throughout the study. There were eight responses recorded for programs that were known

about; five of them talked about knife boxes. The strategy was for governmental bodies to work alongside schools, placing knife boxes on campuses where youths carrying knives have the opportunity to give them up and dispose of them safely. By placing knives into these boxes, knives can be taken off the streets to reduce the risk of them being used for violent crimes. Another advantage of these boxes is that their presence can spark conversations surrounding knife crime and the consequences.

Question Seventeen: Would you support increased education or programs aimed at helping children with ACEs to prevent future gang or knife crime involvement?

Question 17: Would you support increased education or programs aimed at helping children with ACEs prevent future gang or knife crime involvement?

27 responses



The unanimous support for increased education programs targeting ACEs and preventing gang and knife crime involvement illustrates a strong consensus among participants regarding the importance of early intervention and preventative measures of vulnerable adolescents.

4.3 The Welsh ACE Study:

Key Findings from The Welsh ACE Study:

Research collected from the Welsh ACE Study, conducted by Public Health Wales, highlights a significant correlation between childhood adversity and engagement in violence and gang culture in adolescence or adulthood. Riley; Bailey; Bright and Davies (2019) state that just under half (47%) of Welsh adults have experienced one ACE, and 14% have reported experiencing four or more. In addition to this, Grimshaw (2021) says that the public health implications of ACEs are profound, and that community and government services are failing many traumatised adolescents and adults within the UK by denying them access to treatment that deal with the symptoms of their trauma and institutionalise them instead. Grimshaw's view can be supported by several health publications, although the Institute of Health Equity (2025) and Walsh et al., (2025) are a decade apart, both publications elude that young people with four or more ACEs are 15 times more likely to be perpetrators of violence against another person, pushing their chances at being incarcerated at some point in their lives to 20 times that of their peers with no ACEs. The ACE study also found that within the male prison population in Wales, half of the prisoners had reported experiencing at least four ACEs, each of these statistics demonstrates the prevalence of ACEs and crime within Wales especially, which calls for further research into effective prevention or intervention strategies that

combat the complex influences that trauma has on individuals. To bring this back to context, there seems to be a lack of research into specific subsets of violent behaviour like gang culture, however, the study has identified that high ACE scores link significantly with foundational elements that can lead to involvement in gang culture, such as compromised resilience, cycles of violence and cultural or socioeconomic factors, (Youth Endowment Fund, 2023). The methodological approach for this study was a survey format where researchers conducted face to face interviews. Although, there were certain aspects linked to reviewing types of abuse, where respondents self-completed the proportions of the survey. The target population was adults in Wales, aged between 18-69, the survey had 2,028 respondents in total.

5.0 Conclusion:

5.1 Overview of Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study provides compelling evidence regarding the significant impact of adverse childhood experiences on adolescent involvement in gang culture and knife crime. The findings underscore a clear correlation between exposure to ACEs and other foundational factors associated with these behaviours. While the data presented from the questionnaire offer valuable insights, it also reveals critical gaps within public awareness and resource accessibility, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions and prevention strategies. This overview will delve into the key findings that support each research objective, while exploring their implications, and propose actionable recommendations for addressing the complex issues.

5.2 Relevant Findings:

Objective One: To critically evaluate the relationship between ACEs, gang involvement, and knife crime among adolescents within the UK, focusing on key, social, environmental, and psychological mechanisms that contribute to youth offending.

in summary, existing literature reveals that there are several interconnected factors driving the link between ACEs, gang involvement and knife crime among adolescents within the UK. Social processes and exposure to violence play a critical role, with Kurniawan et al., (2019) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (2021) further

demonstrating that exposure to violence increases vulnerable adolescent perpetration of violence by fifteen times. This perpetuates cycles of trauma.

Certain ACEs can lead children to seek safety and belonging outside the home, making them vulnerable to gang recruitment. In essence, gangs often provide a sense of comfort and community where members believe they are protected. However, this comes at the cost of requiring members to commit crimes to prove their loyalty, (Childline, 2026). Furthermore, peer influence further exacerbates the problem, as young people, vulnerable especially, can be pressured into engaging in risky behaviours to fit in. This goes hand in hand with gang culture.

Despite governmental efforts to remove knives from the streets, the underlying issues have not been resolved. Police Professional (2025) reiterate that approximately 60,000 knives have been removed from UK streets by the authorities. However, there has been no attempt to fix the underlying issues of poverty, community violence or ACEs. In order to combat knife crime overall, these social determinants must be addressed effectively to combat gang activities, and knife crime.

Objective Two: To evaluate the effectiveness and challenges of interventions, both school and community based, including violence prevention programs, trauma informed education, and the support of at-risk students to disrupt the pathways from ACEs to gang affiliation and knife crime.

The evaluation of the effectiveness and challenges of intervention strategies found that violence prevention programs aim to address root causes of adolescent violence by teaching conflict resolution skills, promoting empathy and challenging harmful social norms. Humphrey and Van Bruschoot (2018), insist that the enforcement of these

prevention strategies aids in creating safer environments, reduce violence rates and helps young people make the right choices so they can keep from reoffending. These programs are tailored to offer specific support for individuals and their families because the processes involve assessments to identify the risk factors and needs for targeted interventions.

A trauma informed approach consists of recognising the impact that trauma has on learning, development and behaviour, (NHS England, 2026). The creation of safe environments for students to feel supported and understood is essential in combating the underlying issues surrounding gang culture and knife crime. The Violence Prevention Unit (2026) expresses the importance of understanding trauma, so that educators can respond to the needs of at-risk students, with empathy and avoid prolonged traumatising. It is essential to have safe and encouraging environments where vulnerable young people can develop trust within others, build positive relationships and regulate their emotions. Each of these factors can have a positive outcome for academic success and the overall well-being of students.

Additionally, targeted support for at-risk students includes identifying those with complex needs and providing them with support and often additional resources such as counselling and academic support. The National Education Union (2026) provides the insight that these resources can help vulnerable students overcome obstacles, allowing them to build resilience and achieve their full potential.

Although, aforementioned, there are a few challenges, which include inconsistent implementation of interventions, a severe lack of funding in all areas, and many difficulties reaching the most at – risk students. Also, there is a risk of stigmatising

participants if programs are not implemented with the utmost sensitivity. To begin the recap, trauma informed education faces challenges within the exclusive and extensive training for those within the educational system, meaning there can be a difficulty trying to address deep rooted trauma, the National Associations for People Abused in Childhood (2025) expresses that it is vital to overcome these challenges to provide the best possible support to empower at-risk young people.

Overall, there are many challenges that need to be addressed, such as identifying at-risk students early to ensure they receive treatment for their trauma, like specialised mental health support. Next, there are limitations in sufficient resources, and ensuring that the resources are accessible and culturally appropriate. As seen in the questionnaire, there is a lack of public support for social, community and governmental services within the UK.

Objective Three: To investigate how existing school and community policy and practices address the link between ACEs and adolescent involvement in gang culture and offending, with a particular focus on the connection between specific adverse childhood experiences and patterns of knife crime.

Existing literature incorporates exposure to violence, and school violence, but does not give specific reasoning for their direct involvement of gang culture and knife crime.

Considering ACEs lay the foundation for the involvement of gang culture, specific ACEs like school violence, abuse and neglect, may have the most influence on adolescent engagement in gang culture. Moreover, schools that face high levels of violence can be significantly linked to gang culture, as violence can be seen as the norm, and each individual student will be affected directly or indirectly, (Burke, 2022). The exposure to

violence on school grounds can directly be linked to gang recruitment, or activities such as carrying an offensive weapon, like machetes or knives.

A notable limitation of this study stems from the lack of existing research and literature directly addressing the intersection of ACEs, schools and community policies, gang and knife crime. The lack of existing literature not only highlights a significant gap within the current understanding of how school and community policies address the link between ACEs and adolescent involvement in gang culture and offending, but also contrains the depth of the analysis that could be achieved within this study. A limited availability of directly relevant data shows that it is vital to explore all aspects and necessitates a cautious interpretation of the findings that underline the need for further investigation within this context.

5.3 Limitations of Research:

To summarise, there were several factors that limited the study, The main limitation being that the study depends heavily on existing literature, without significant primary data, other than from the questionnaire. This means that the study primarily summarises and synthesises existing knowledge rather than providing new insights. In addition to this, the originality is limited and there could be claims of bias, as there are no sources included that refute the claim that ACEs have a huge impact on the behaviour of vulnerable young people. This inherently means that the lack of original data cannot challenge existing claims of the Welsh ACE Study, the comparison cannot highlight inconsistencies, only gaps within the research.

One of the main issues with the study is the limited sample size, which has made it difficult to generalise the findings to a larger population. Instead, the data received has come from 27 respondents, and therefore the results may not be representative of public knowledge and consensus. Moreover, the statistical analysis was limited, and trends were not easy to observe leaving the validity of the study compromised.

Overall, future studies should aim to have a much larger sample size to confirm these preliminary findings. Additionally, there needs to be a reform of intervention and prevention strategies, or a targeted advertising campaign for those who are need of support from them. To conclude, the synthesis of the data and existing literature point toward ACEs as being the foundation for vulnerable adolescents engaging in gang culture and knife crime.

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Appendix:

Image One:

Confirmation of Age: *

- ☐ < 17
- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26- 40
- ☐ 41-60
- ☐ 61 +

Image Two:

...

Please indicate if your current job involves regular contact with children under 18. *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Image Three:

Question 1: Are you familiar with the term "Adverse Childhood Experiences"? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Image Four:

...

Averse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

[World Health Organisation \(ACEs Survey\)](#) World Health Organisation (2020) explains that ACEs are 'potentially traumatic events' occurring in childhood, and such experiences can cause toxic stress that disrupts normal brain development and increase the risk of negative outcomes, including mental health problems, substance misuse, and involvement in criminal activities during adolescence.

Image Five:

Question 2: Which of the following do you consider to be examples of ACEs? *

- ☐ Physical abuse
- ☐ Sexual abuse
- ☐ Emotional abuse
- ☐ Living with someone who abused drugs
- ☐ Living with someone who abused alcohol
- ☐ Exposure to domestic violence
- ☐ Living with someone who has gone to prison
- ☐ Living with someone with serious mental illness

- ☐ Losing a parent through divorce, death or abandonment
- ☐ The loss of siblings
- ☐ Poverty
- ☐ Bullying
- ☐ Community violence
- ☐ Household dysfunction
- ☐ Neglect

Image Six:

Question 3: Compared to other social factors (e.g. education, poverty, peer influence), how influential do you think adverse childhood experiences are in shaping youth gang involvement.

B I U ↻ ✕

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Unlikely ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Extremely

Image Seven:

Question 4: To what extent do you believe adverse childhood experiences influence the likelihood of a young person becoming involved in weapon - related offences during adolescence? *

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Unlikely ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Extremely

Image Eight:

Question 5: How effective do you believe early intervention for children affected by ACEs is, compared with later criminal justice interventions, in preventing youth involvement in violent or gang related activity? *

B *I* U  

Short-answer text

Image Nine:

Question 6: From your perspective, which factor do you believe most strongly influences adolescent's involvement in youth violence or group offending? *

- ☐ Adverse Childhood Experiences
- ☐ Peer Pressure
- ☐ Socioeconomic Disadvantage
- ☐ Substance Misuse
- ☐ Family Dynamics
- ☐ Other

Image Ten:

...

Question 7: To what extent do you believe that the family dynamics and relationships during childhood influence a young person's likelihood to participate in gang - related behaviour?

*

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Unlikely

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Extremely

Image Eleven:

...

Question 8: Are you aware of any cases, either from research, the media, or professional experience, where adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) appeared to influence youth involvement in group or gang - related behaviour?

*

☐

Yes

☐

No

...

If yes, please describe briefly - do not include any identifying details.

B *I* U  

Long-answer text

Image Twelve:

Question 9: To what degree do you think early trauma or adversity impacts a young person's decision - making skills, confidence, and outlook on future opportunities? *

B *I* U  

Long-answer text

Image Thirteen:

...

Question 10: How effective do you believe schools are in recognising and supporting pupils who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as part of efforts in preventing future antisocial or offending behaviour?

B *I* U  

Image Fourteen:

Question 11: How would you evaluate the level of support currently offered by social and community services to children and families affected by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)? *

B *I* U  

Long-answer text

Image Fifteen:

...

**Question 12: How effective do you believe current community or governmental interventions are in helping children affected by ACEs avoid criminal behaviour?
Rate from a scale of 1 - 10.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Image Sixteen:

...

**Question 13: Can you provide me with an insight to why you selected your rating?
(Optional)**

Long-answer text

Image Seventeen:

...

Question 14: Can you think of any ways that could keep vulnerable adolescents out of trouble with the law? (Optional)

Long-answer text

Image Eighteen:

Question 15: Do you think public awareness about the connection between ACEs and youth crime is sufficient?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Image Nineteen:

...

Question 16: Have you encountered or heard of successful intervention programs that help reduce gang and knife crime by addressing childhood adversity?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

...

If you selected "Yes", please specify.

Short-answer text

.....

Image Twenty:

...

Question 17: Would you support increased education or programs aimed at helping children with ACEs prevent future gang or knife crime involvement?

☐ Yes

☐ No