

Course: BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care

Module: Independent Project (BMHP6020_BIRM)

Component 1: Element 1 - Project Proposal

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Element 1 - Project Proposal

My project title: The impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on mental health outcomes among adults aged 18 years and over in the United Kingdom

1) **Aim:** This research aims to explore how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) influence mental health outcomes among adults aged 18 years and over in the UK, across diverse ethnic backgrounds, and examine the implications for Health and Social Care practice.

2) **Objectives:** The objectives of this research are to define and examine Adverse Childhood Experiences within a UK context and explore their prevalence. The study will analyse current UK literature to identify links between ACEs and adult mental health outcomes among individuals aged 18 years and over. It will critically evaluate existing Health and Social Care responses, including the effectiveness of trauma-informed practice across diverse communities. Finally, the research will provide evidence-based recommendations to support improvements in policy and practice within UK Health and Social Care services.

3) Background/Rationale:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including abuse, neglect and household dysfunction, are recognised as a significant public health concern in the UK. Evidence indicates that individuals exposed to ACEs are at increased risk of poorer mental health outcomes in adulthood, placing sustained pressure on Health and Social Care services. Despite increasing awareness, inconsistencies remain in how ACEs are identified and addressed within adult services. UK research emphasises the importance of trauma-informed approaches; however, implementation across services remains uneven. This research is important as it synthesises recent UK evidence to explore the relationship between ACEs and adult mental health, while identifying gaps in current practice. By focusing on a UK Health and Social Care context, the study aims to enhance understanding and inform improved support for adults affected by childhood adversity. This study focuses on adults aged 18 years and over from diverse ethnic backgrounds within the UK, acknowledging that cultural and socioeconomic factors may influence both exposure to ACEs and access to support services.

4) Methods: This study will adopt a secondary research approach using existing UK literature. Data will be collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, UK government reports, NHS publications, and third-sector organisations. Sources will be limited to those published within the last ten years to ensure relevance. A thematic approach will be used to analyse findings and identify key patterns relating to ACEs and adult mental health outcomes. Ethical considerations include accurate citation, critical evaluation of sources, and avoidance of plagiarism in line with university guidelines.

5) Resources:

- Online academic databases (e.g. university library)
- NHS and UK government websites
- Peer-reviewed journals

6) Timescale:

- Jan–Feb 2026: Literature search and proposal refinement
- Mar–May 2026: Analysis and dissertation writing
- Jun–Jul 2026: Editing, final review, and submission

7) Self-reflection as researcher (any strengths or challenges):

A key strength I bring to this research is strong organisation and engagement with academic literature. A potential challenge may be critically analysing complex research; however, I plan to address this by using academic support, feedback from my supervisor, and structured reading strategies.

References

- *Bellis, M.A., Hughes, K., Ford, K., Ramos Rodriguez, G., Sethi, D. and Passmore, J. (2019) Life course health consequences and associated annual costs of adverse childhood experiences across Europe and North America. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 60(9), pp. 1012–1023.*
- *NHS England (2019) The NHS Long Term Plan. London: NHS England.*
- *Public Health England (2016) The impact of adverse childhood experiences on health. London: PHE.*
- *NICE (2018) post-traumatic stress disorder (NG116). London: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.*
- *Mind (2021) Trauma and mental health. London: Mind.*