



year of young people
bliadhna na h-òigridh
2018



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs) EVENT BACKGROUND

This event is being held to seek your views on what is currently working well in terms of preventing and mitigating ACEs; what needs to change; and how the Scottish Government can create the conditions for change, as well as how different sectors can work collaboratively together on this agenda.

The [2017-18 Programme for Government](#) committed to embedding a focus on preventing ACEs and, where they occur, addressing their negative impacts by supporting the resilience of children and adults in overcoming early life adversity. The term ACEs is usually used to refer to 10 key adversities that were explored in an original study in the US in the 1990s and subsequently examined in ACE surveys internationally, these are:

1. physical abuse
2. sexual abuse
3. verbal abuse
4. emotional neglect
5. physical neglect
6. parental separation
7. growing-up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems
8. growing-up in a household in which there are adults with mental health difficulties
9. growing-up in a household with domestic violence
10. growing-up in a household in which there are adults who have spent time in prison

There is a long-standing evidence base of the influence that ACEs can exert throughout the life-course, which without intervention, impact on health, justice, learning and life outcomes. Scotland has not undertaken ACE surveys to date, but ACE questions are currently being tested for potential inclusion in the Scottish Health Survey.

There are also a range of additional types of childhood adversity that we know can impact on children's health and wellbeing and outcomes into adulthood, such as bereavement, bullying, community adversity (e.g. area deprivation, neighbourhood violence) and poverty. The Scottish Government is committed to addressing *all* types of childhood adversity and uses the term ACEs broadly (rather than just focusing on the 10 listed above). Consideration of ACEs is crucial to thinking about how to improve the lives of children and young people, to support better transitions into adulthood, and achieve good outcomes for all adults.

Further background information on ACEs is available on the NHS Health Scotland website: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/adverse-childhood-experiences>

Findings from the ACE surveys undertaken in Wales are also available on the Public Health Wales website: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/94697>

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