

Adverse Childhood Experiences

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Adverse Childhood Experiences

- An adverse childhood experience (ACE) describes a traumatic experience in a person's life occurring before the age of 18.

The Ten Adverse Childhood Experiences	
Child	Parents / household
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical abuse• Sexual abuse• Emotional abuse• Physical neglect• Emotional neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mother treated violently• Household substance misuse• Household mental illness• Parental separation or divorce• Incarcerated household member

- Robust evidence base linking ACEs to severe negative health and social outcomes across the life course



Questions to define health harming behaviours – The ACEs Score Calculator

Adverse Childhood Experiences	Definition
Parental separation	Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
Domestic violence	How often did your parents or adults in your home ever slap, hit, kick, punch, or beat each other up?
Physical abuse	How often did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way? This does not include gentle smacking for punishment
Verbal abuse	How often did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you down?
Sexual abuse	How often did anyone at least 5 years older than you (including adults) ever touch you sexually?
	How often did anyone at least 5 years older than you (including adults) try to make you touch them sexually?
	How often did anyone at least 5 years older than you (including adults) force you to have any type of sexual intercourse (oral, anal, or vaginal)?
Mental illness	Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal?
Alcohol abuse	Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic?
Drug abuse	Did you live with anyone who used illegal street drugs or who abused prescription medications?
Incarceration	Did you live with anyone who served time or was sentenced to serve time in a prison or young offenders' institution?

All ACE questions were preceded by the statement "While you were growing up, before the age of 18..."

ACEs study USA

Adverse Childhood Experiences Are Common

Household dysfunction:

Substance abuse	27%
Parental sep/divorce	23%
Mental illness	17%
Battered mother	13%
Criminal behavior	6%

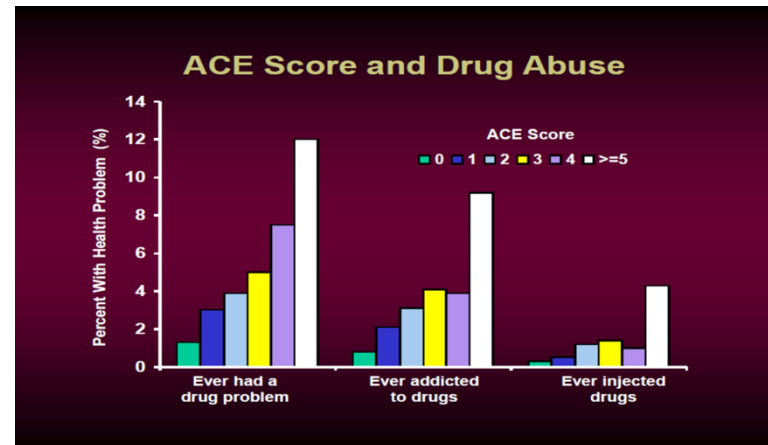
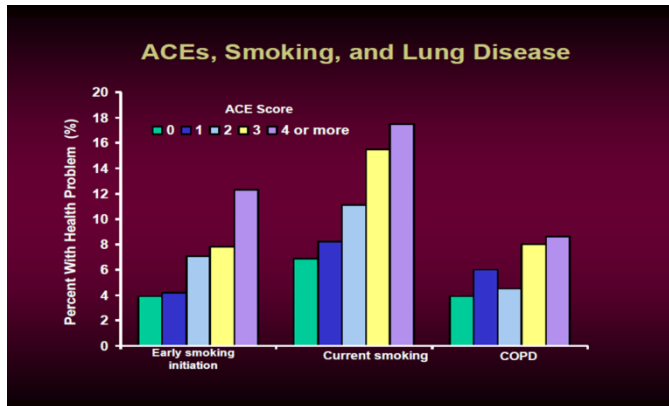
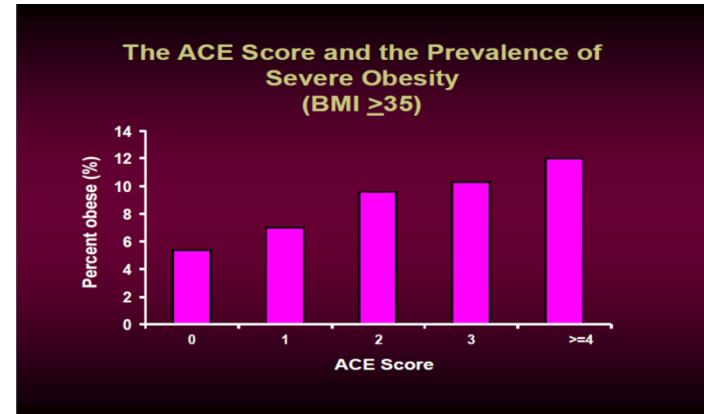
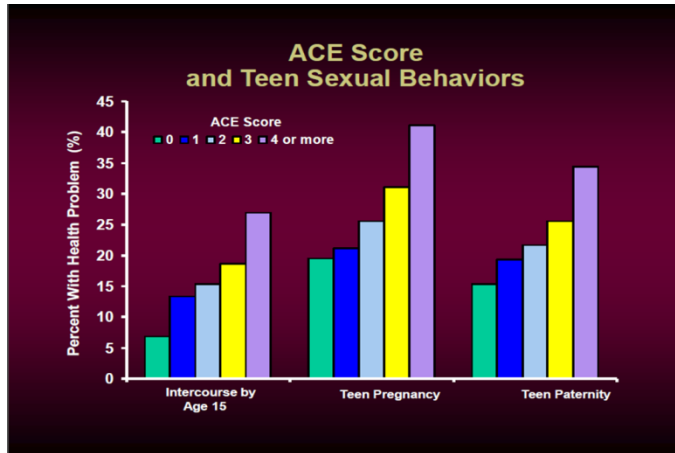
Abuse:

Psychological	11%
Physical	28%
Sexual	21%

Neglect:

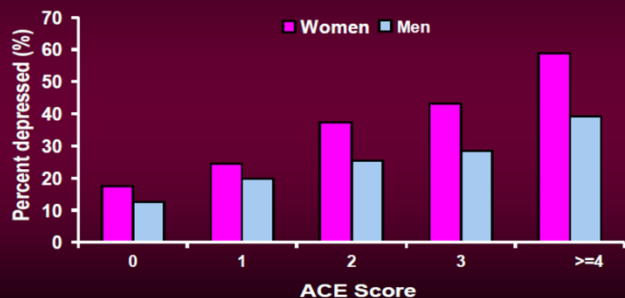
Emotional	15%
Physical	10%

ACEs study USA

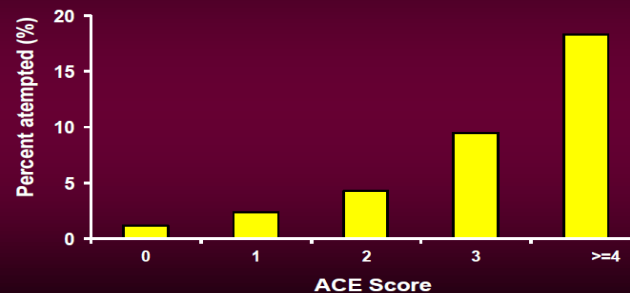


ACEs study USA

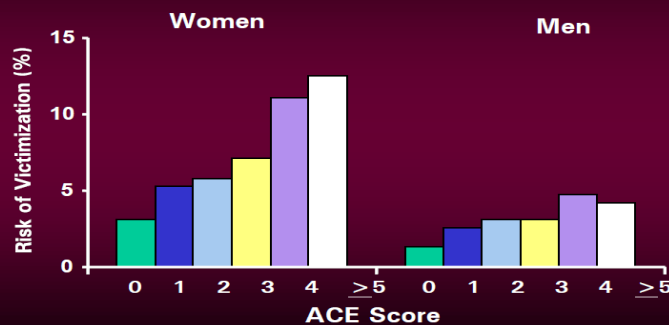
The ACE Score and a Lifetime History of Depression



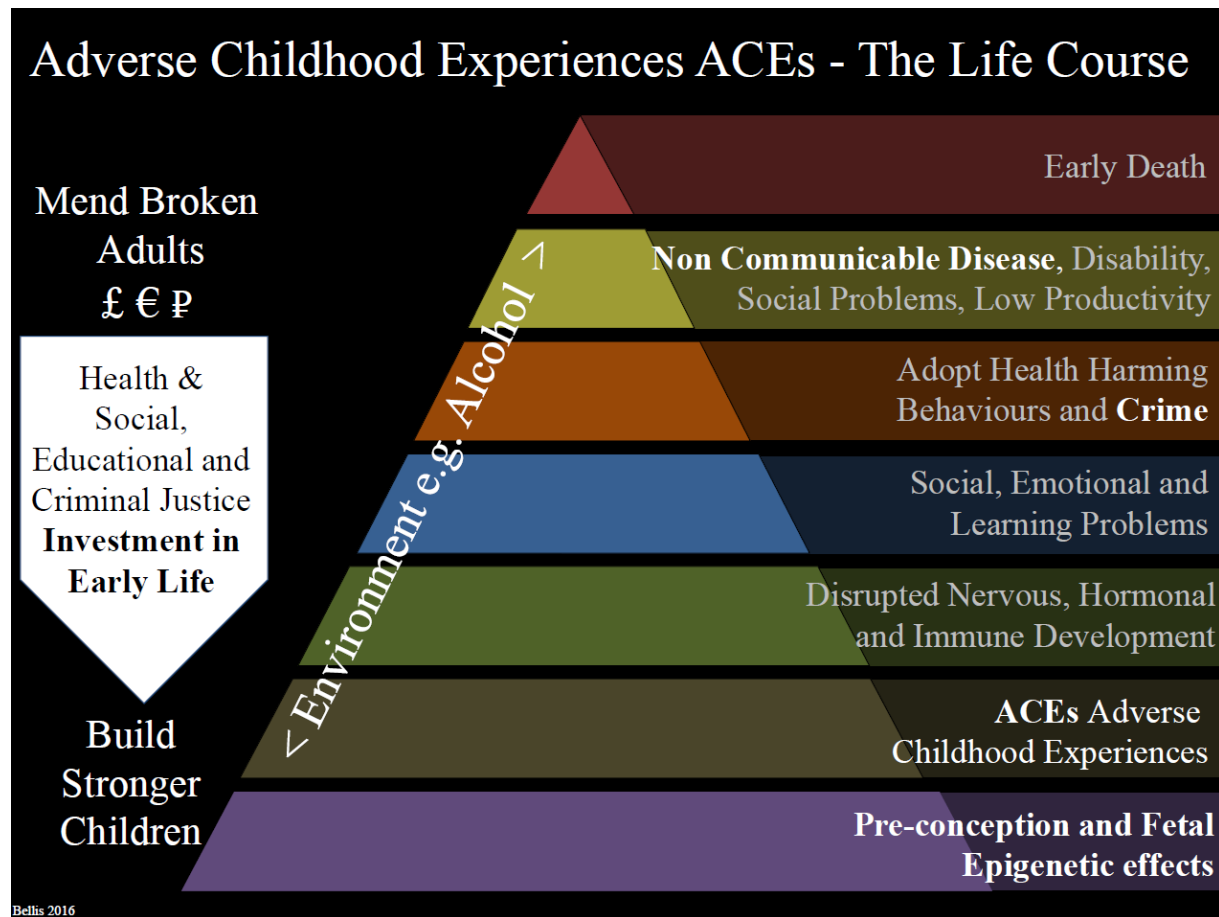
The ACE Score and the Prevalence of Attempted Suicide



ACE Score and the Risk of Being a Victim of Domestic Violence



ACEs - the Life Course



ACEs Study - UK

Outcome	All		Adverse Childhood Experience %				χ²trend	P
	%	n	0	1	2to3	4+		
Sexual Behavior								
Unintended teenage pregnancy (<18 years)	5.5	3836	2.9	5.6	8.3	17	106.097	<0.001
Early sexual initiation (<16 years)	16.8	3374	10	19.4	23	37.8	164.629	<0.001
Substance use								
Smoking (current)	22.7	3885	17.7	21.8	28.3	46.4	127.022	<0.001
Binge drinking (current)	11.3	3885	9.3	13.2	12.6	16.7	18.579	<0.001
Cannabis use (lifetime)	19.5	3878	12.2	21.5	27	47.7	241.57	<0.001
Heroin or crack cocaine use (lifetime)	2.2	3882	0.9	1.5	4	9	84.106	<0.001
Violence and criminal justice								
Violence victimization (past year)	5.3	3883	2.4	4.2	10.7	16.1	137.578	<0.001
Violence perpetration (past year)	4.4	3884	2	3.6	8.7	13.9	119.609	<0.001
Incarceration (lifetime)	7.1	3879	3.1	8.1	10.2	24.5	182.58	<0.001
Diet, weight and exercise								
Poor diet (current)	15.6	3879	13.3	15.9	18.3	25.1	31.679	<0.001
Low physical exercise (current)	43	3881	44.1	41.4	41.2	42.7	1.434	0.231

ACEs Study - UK

UK: Compared with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs were:

2x more likely to **binge drink**
3x more likely to be **current smoker**
5x more likely to have had **sex under 16 years**
7x more likely to be involved in **recent violence**
11x more likely to have **used heroin or crack**
11x more likely to have been **incarcerated**

INDEPENDENT OF POVERTY



If they had no ACEs problems could be reduced by:



Smoking
16%



Early Sex
33%



Heroin/Crack
59%



Binge Drinking
15%



Violence
60%

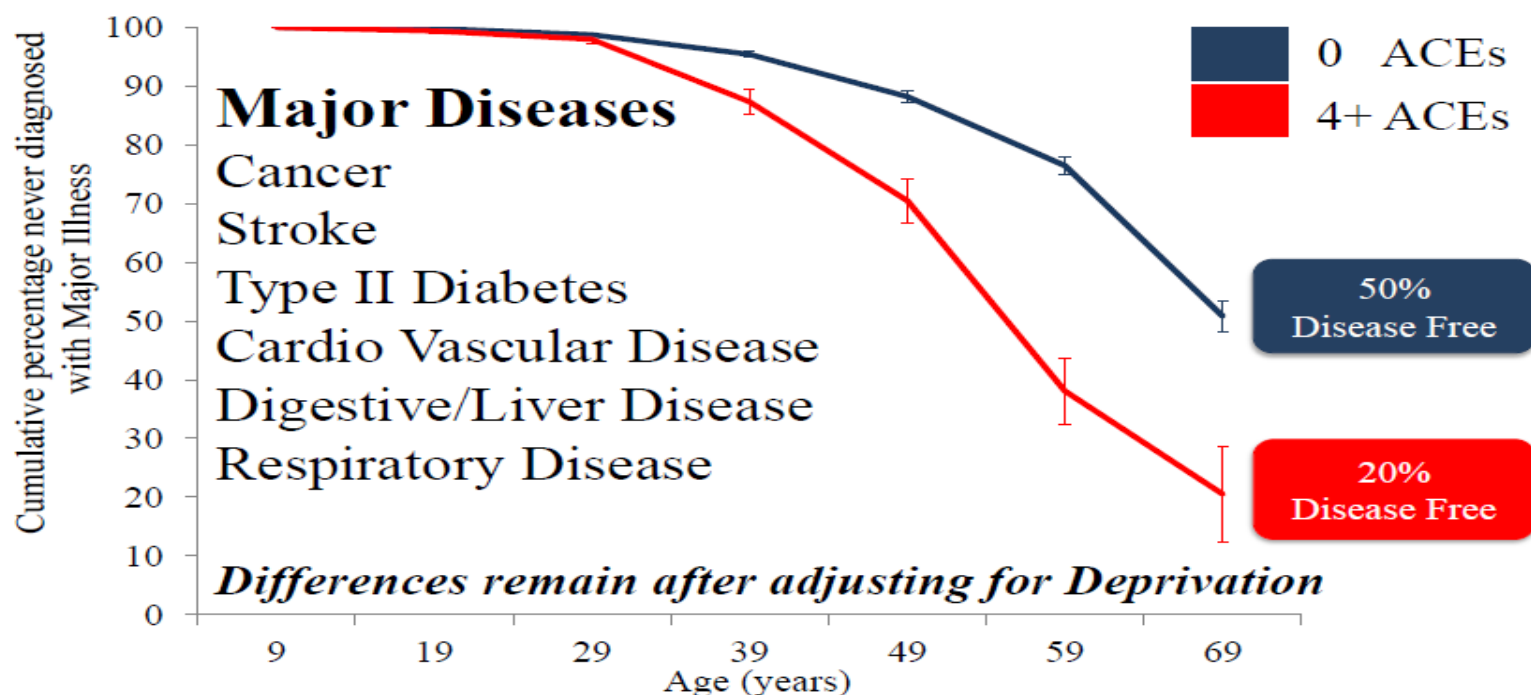
Aged 18-70 years

Bellis 2016

Bellis et al. 2014, n=3885

ACEs Study - UK

Individuals **Never Diagnosed** with a Major Disease by Age (%)



Bellis 2016

Aged 18 to 69 years; (n = 3,885) Bellis et al, Journal of Public Health, 2014

ACEs study -Hertfordshire, Luton & Northamptonshire

How many adults have suffered each ACE?

CHILD MALTREATMENT



Verbal abuse
23%



Physical abuse
14%



Sexual abuse
6%

CHILDHOOD HOUSEHOLD INCLUDED



Parental
separation
18%



Domestic
violence
16%



Mental
illness
11%



Alcohol
abuse
11%



Drug use
4%



Incarceration
3%

For every 100 adults 44 have suffered at least one ACE during their childhood and 9 have suffered 4 or more



0 ACEs 56%



1 ACEs 18%



2-3 ACEs 17%



4+ ACEs 9%



Figures based on population adjusted prevalence in adults aged 18-69 years

Compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs are:

2 times more likely to currently binge drink or have a poor diet

3 times more likely to be a current smoker

4 times more likely to have had sex while under 16 years old or to have smoked cannabis

4 times more likely to have had or caused unintended teenage pregnancy

8 times more likely to have been a victim of violence in the last year or ever been incarcerated

10 times more likely to have been a perpetrator of violence in the last year

Preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of:



Early sex
(before age 16)
by 36%



Unintended teen
pregnancy
by 44%



Smoking
(current)
by 25%



Binge drinking
(current)
by 22%



Cannabis use
(lifetime)
by 45%



Heroin/crack use
(lifetime) 54%



Incarceration
(lifetime) 50%



Violence
perpetration
(past year) 61%



Violence
victimisation
(past year) 56%



Poor diet (current;
<2 fruit & veg
portions daily) 14%



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Wales

ACEs are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child (e.g. sexual or physical abuse) or affect the environment in which they live (e.g. growing up in a house with domestic violence).

How many adults in Wales have been exposed to each ACE?

CHILD MALTREATMENT



Verbal abuse
23%



Physical abuse
17%



Sexual abuse
10%

CHILDHOOD HOUSEHOLD INCLUDED



Parental separation
20%



Domestic violence
16%



Mental illness
14%



Alcohol abuse
14%

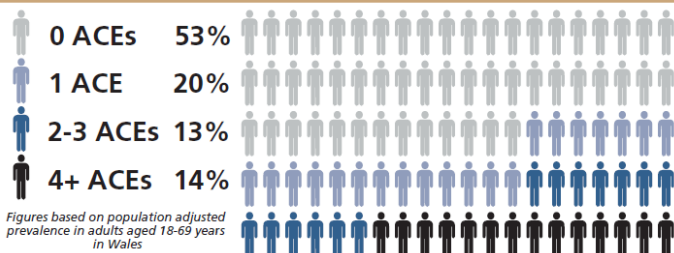


Drug use
5%



Incarceration
5%

For every 100 adults in Wales 47 have suffered at least one ACE during their childhood and 14 have suffered 4 or more.

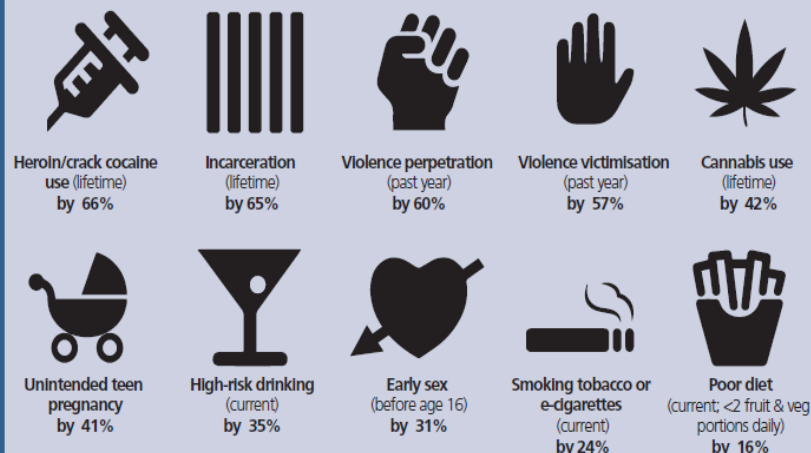


ACEs increase individuals' risks of developing health-harming behaviours

Compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs are:

- 4 times more likely** to be a high-risk drinker
- 6 times more likely** to have had or caused unintended teenage pregnancy
- 6 times more likely** to smoke e-cigarettes or tobacco
- 6 times more likely** to have had sex under the age of 16 years
- 11 times more likely** to have smoked cannabis
- 14 times more likely** to have been a victim of violence over the last 12 months
- 15 times more likely** to have committed violence against another person in the last 12 months
- 16 times more likely** to have used crack cocaine or heroin
- 20 times more likely** to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime

Preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of:



Systematic Review (2017)

- 4+ ACEs increased risk **all** health outcomes
- Weak association: inactivity, obesity & diabetes
- Moderate: smoking, alcohol, cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease
- Strong: sexual risk taking, mental health, problematic alcohol use
- Strongest: drug use & violence
- Outcomes for multiple ACEs represent ACE risks for next generation-
 - Violence, mental illness & substance use

What should we do?



What *can* Be Done About ACEs?

These wide-ranging health and social consequences underscore the importance of preventing ACEs before they happen. **Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments** (SSNREs) can have a positive impact on a broad range of health problems and on the development of skills that will help children reach their full potential. Strategies that address the needs of children and their families include:

Voluntary home visiting programs can help families by strengthening maternal parenting practices, the quality of the child's home environment, and children's development.

Example: Nurse-Family Partnership



Home visiting to pregnant women and families with newborns



Parenting training programs



Intimate partner violence prevention



Social support for parents



Parent support programs for teens and teen pregnancy prevention programs



Mental illness and substance abuse treatment



High quality child care

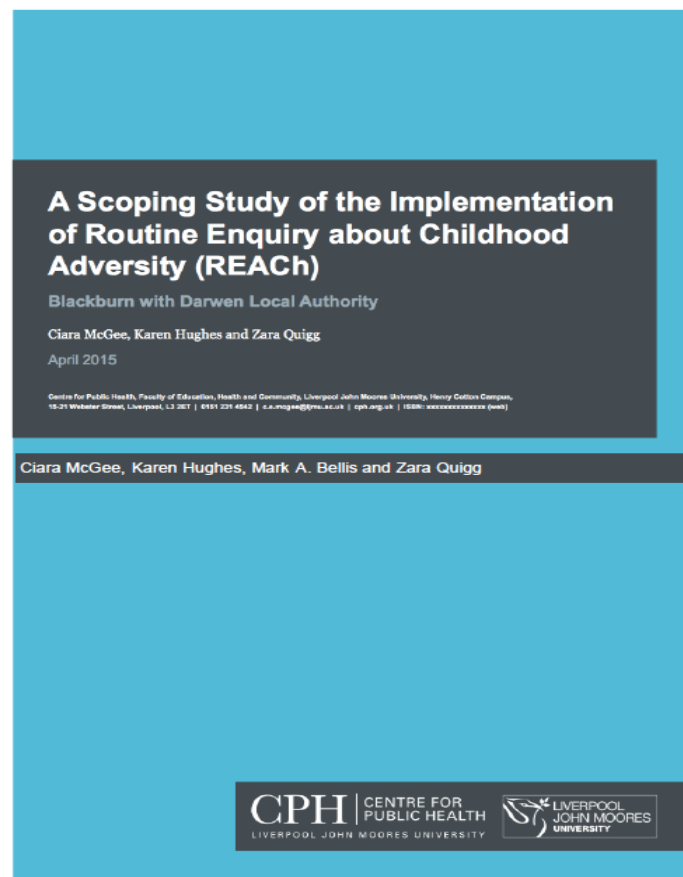


Sufficient Income support for lower income families

Routine Enquiry about Adversity in Childhood

- 10 years before individual discloses. May ask 1 or 2 ACEs
- Don't ask: risk repeating interventions that don't address issue
- Chronic Diseases & behaviours: determined decades earlier, in childhood

Public Health – Commissioned LCFT to train front line staff



How can we respond?

- Primary Prevention
 - **Prevent** ACEs occurring
 - Ensuring best start in life, supporting parents, building resilience
- Secondary Prevention
 - **Identify** adverse events as/when they occur to reduce impact (trauma informed approach)
- Tertiary Prevention
 - **Enquiry** to identify past ACEs in those with established physical or emotional problems/illness & provide support or therapeutic care to enable change