

Adverse Childhood Experiences, (ACEs) are traumatic events that happen before the age of 18 that may impact on long-term health outcomes. There are ten widely recognised ACEs:

Abuse



Physical Abuse



Sexual Abuse



Verbal Abuse

Neglect



Emotional neglect



Physical neglect



Growing up in a household where:



There are adults with alcohol and drug problems



There are adults with mental health problems



There is domestic violence



There are adults who have spent time in prison



Parents have separated

Around half of all adults

living in England and Wales have experienced some form of Adverse Childhood Experience as a child. This equates to approximately

20 million adults with at least one ACE.



Around one in ten

have experienced 4 or more ACEs.



This equates to **four million adults** with 4 or more ACEs in England and Wales.

In Gloucestershire, this equates to around **87,000 adults** with **four or more ACEs**.¹

Compared to those with no ACEs, people with 4 or more ACEs are²:

4x



more likely to develop Type 2 Diabetes

3x



more likely to develop heart disease

3x



more likely to develop respiratory disease

3x



more likely to have attended A&E

3x



more likely to have stayed in hospital overnight

Compared to those with no ACEs, people with 4 or more ACEs are more likely to adopt health harming behaviours (even after adjusting for socio-demographics).³ They are:

4x

more likely to be a high risk drinker



6x

more likely to smoke



15x

times more likely to have committed violence in the last year



16x

times more likely to have used crack, cocaine or heroin



29x

times more likely to have tried a child suicide attempt



20x

times more likely to have served time in prison



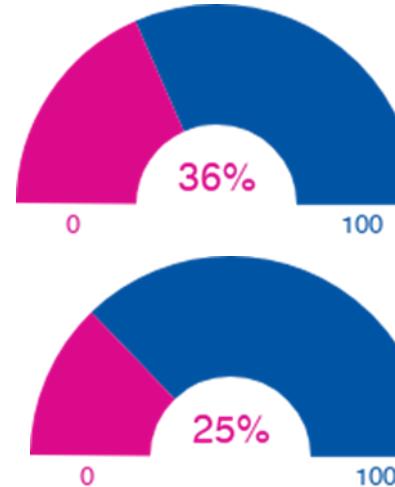
11x

times more likely to smoke cannabis



Prevalence of ACEs in Gloucestershire

based on the Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey of 2018 and the Pupil Wellbeing Surveys of 2020 and 2022:



36% of pupils reported having experienced 0 ACEs⁴

25.3% of pupils reported having experienced 4 or more ACEs⁵

This was significantly higher than in 2018 when 20.1% reported 4 or more ACEs.



Experiencing **4 or more ACEs is linked to deprivation**.

Pupils in IMD quintile 1 schools were around **2.5 times** as likely to report 4+ ACEs than those at independent schools⁶

In 2022, **females** (where given as biological sex) **were significantly more likely** to report **4+ ACEs** than males⁷:



29.8%



20.5%

29.8% of females reported experiencing 4+ACEs compared to 20.5% of males.

Pupils identifying as LGB were significantly more likely to report 4+ ACEs than heterosexual pupils.⁸

Behaviours of pupils with 4+ ACEs in Gloucestershire

Compared to those with less than 4 ACEs, pupils experiencing 4+ ACEs were much more likely to engage in health harming behaviours.⁹

They were:

2x

more likely to report having at least one exclusion



3x

as likely to have been in trouble with the police



2x

as likely to say they were regular cigarette smokers



2x

as likely to vape regularly



Compared to those with less than 4 ACEs, pupils reporting 4+ ACES¹⁰ were significantly more likely to report:



being drunk regularly



trying illegal drugs

and significantly less likely to report:



eating '5 a day'



getting the recommended hours of exercise per week



getting the recommended hours of sleep the previous night

Impact of pupils experiencing 4+ ACEs in Gloucestershire

Pupils experiencing 4+ ACEs were¹¹:



significantly more likely to report lower **mental wellbeing** than those with less than 4 ACEs (48.7% vs. 26.8%)



more than twice as likely to report **self-harm** (51.6% vs. 19.3%)



have **less academic achievement and future aspirations**.



significantly less likely to report they **Often achieved top grades** (36.4% vs. 43.6%)



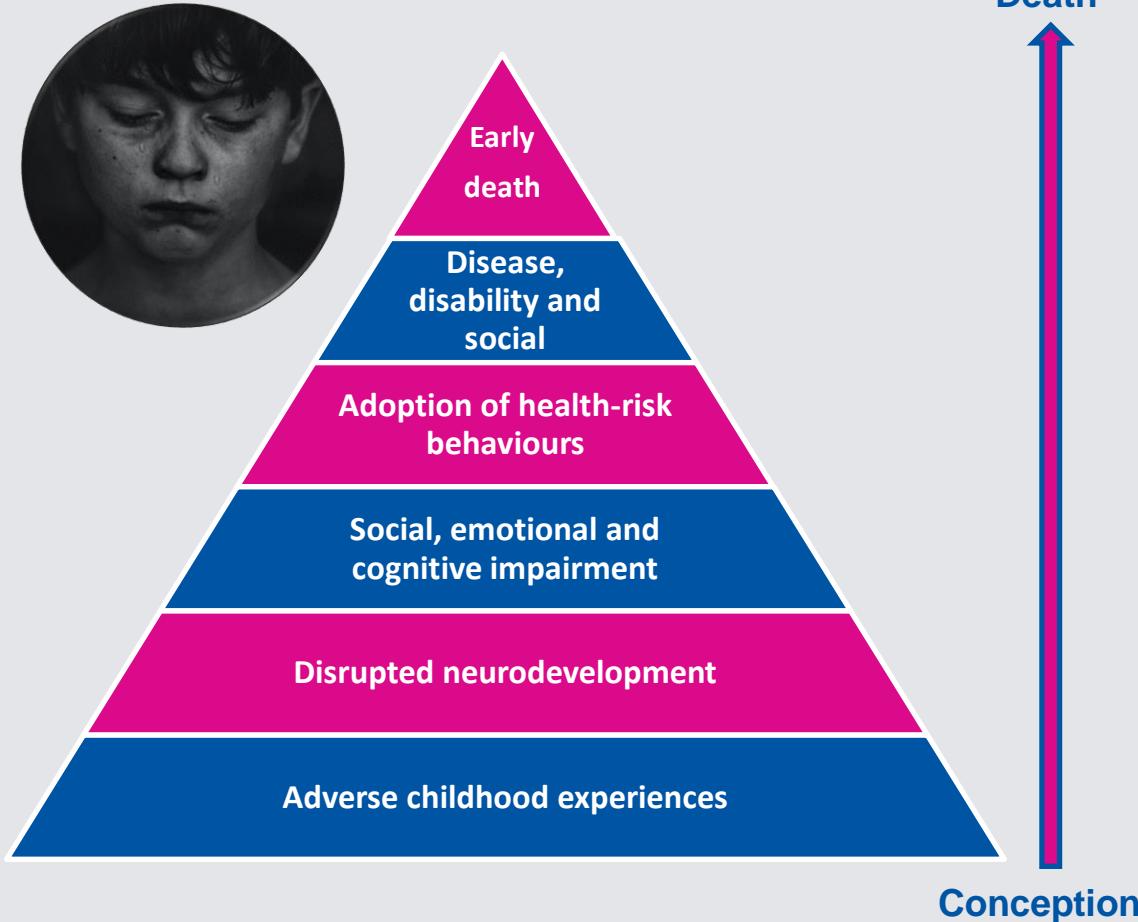
less likely to report they **expected to continue in education or training** next year (71.8% vs. 78.7%)



less likely to **apply to university** than those with less than 4 ACEs (39.9% vs. 46.0%) and were significantly less likely to say they **felt confident about their future** (60.3% vs. 79.2%).

The ACE Pyramid

The mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences influence health and well-being throughout the lifespan.



Building resilience

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) are used to predict positive outcomes for children and young people, including good health and success in school. PCEs also help buffer the negative effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) meaning that even if a child has experienced these ACEs and beyond the ten initial ACEs, experiencing **PCEs can protect children and young people from developing long term negative effects** from these experiences.

The following measures from the Pupil Wellbeing Survey correspond to two of the seven PCEs that support the mitigation of ACEs¹³:

- **84%** of CYP respondents to the 2022 Pupil Wellbeing Survey reported **feeling safe or very safe at home or the place where they live**
- **84%** of respondents to the 2022 Pupil Wellbeing Survey said that **when they are worried about something, there is someone they can go to for help**.



Action on ACEs has provided a county-wide co-ordinated approach to raising awareness of ACEs with communities and organisations, for example, through the ACEs ambassador programme. In the 2019/20 ACEs survey, 65.5% of respondents rated their knowledge of ACEs to be at least 'good'.¹²



Trauma Informed Relational Practice in Schools

Analysis of Pupil Wellbeing Survey data

- ❖ Whilst overall **persistent absenteeism** has increased across all schools during the pandemic, the increase in those schools not adopting a trauma informed relational approach was significantly higher than those who are.
- ❖ The proportion of **pupils absent from school to avoid bullying** has reduced (more than halved) in schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach since 2018, however this has remained the same in the comparison schools since 2014.
- ❖ The proportion of pupils in schools adopting a **trauma informed relational approach** saying they missed school because they don't like it, has been reducing steadily since 2018, in contrast in the comparison schools the number has been increasing in the same period from 4.6% to 20.4%.
- ❖ The proportion of pupils saying they have **never been excluded** has reduced in the comparison schools since 2014, in contrast the proportion in schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach that has remained the same.
- ❖ The proportion of pupils in schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach saying they were **listened to during the process of an exclusion** has increased between 2020 and 2022.
- ❖ The proportion of pupils at schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach saying **things got better after an exclusion**, has increased between 2020 and 2022, in contrast the proportion at the comparison schools where it has decreased.
- ❖ Pupils at schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach were more likely to say they **enjoyed school** than those at the comparison schools.
- ❖ The proportion of pupils saying they are '**often in trouble**' has been reducing generally but has reduced quicker in schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach than in the comparison schools, and in 2022 was **7.1%** vs. 10.1%.
- ❖ Pupils at schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach **feel safer in school** than those in the comparison schools.
- ❖ Pupils at schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach saying they have been '**seriously bullied regularly**' has reduced since 2018 and is lower than in the comparison schools (**4.7%** vs. 7.2%)
- ❖ Since 2018 bullied pupils at schools adopting a trauma informed relational approach have reported higher levels of **having someone to help them deal with bullying**, reversing a previous declining trend.

What are we doing locally?

 The Action on ACEs strategy was refreshed in 2021 and sets out our ambition. Being trauma informed is essential to reducing negative outcomes associated with childhood adversity and increasing resilience, while restorative practice is the mechanism to delivering trauma informed approaches in a safe, holistic way.

 Going forward we will increase knowledge of how to embed the skills and behaviours needed to take action on ACEs; helping turn theory and awareness into practice. This will help organisations and communities recognise and respond more appropriately to ACEs and trauma. Training on trauma informed practice is essential and needs to come from the sectors that have a strong background in this approach.

 Gloucestershire's innovative Trauma Informed Relational Practice (TIRP) online training package is supporting those working with children, young people, and their families within schools and other organisations that surround our schools and communities.

 Trauma informed relational approaches are being implemented in Gloucestershire schools as part of a wider leadership programme, which has been instrumental in supporting the agenda to more inclusive education, a reduction in exclusions, and an increase in overall student and staff attendance and wellbeing.

 The Gloucestershire Mentoring Programme, a county based programme using ACEs and trauma as indicators of need, launched in 2022 with the aim to improve resilience and outcomes for girls and young women who are considered at risk of involvement with the criminal justice system.

Areas of best practice

 Promoting the understanding of resilience and positive childhood experiences to mitigate ACEs has been crucial to understanding how we can support children, young people, and their families across the county.

 In Gloucestershire we are at the forefront in our approach to being ACEs aware, trauma informed and relational. As well as a trauma informed way of working, we are incorporating a relational practice approach as the mechanism of delivering it in a safe and holistic way and to stop people from being retriggered by the information they receive. Action on ACEs are now supporting others to embed a trauma informed relational approach into their local systems.

 Taking a whole systems approach to delivery. Building an effective whole systems approach includes developing a shared vision and working in collaboration to identify collective solutions to bring about sustainable, long-term systems change.

Key evidence

- Adverse childhood experiences: what we know, what we don't know, and what should happen next. <https://www.eif.org.uk/report/adverse-childhood-experiences-what-we-know-what-we-dont-know-and-what-should-happen-next>.
- Responding to adverse childhood experiences: An evidence review of interventions to prevent and address adversity across the life course. https://research.bangor.ac.uk/portal/files/23440237/RespondingToACEs_PHW2019_english.pdf.
- Questioning the use of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) questionnaires. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31887655/>.
- Alex Timpson attachment and trauma awareness in schools programme. <https://www.education.ox.ac.uk/research/the-alex-timpson-attachment-and-trauma-programme-in-schools/>.
- ACE Hub Wales. [Home - ACE Hub Wales](https://acehubwales.org/). • Ending childhood adversity: A public health approach. [Ending childhood adversity: A public health approach - Publications - Public Health Scotland](https://www.endingchildhoodadversity.org/publications/)

DATA SOURCES: 1. Calculated from the findings of the [2015 Welsh ACEs Survey](#) 2. [2015 Welsh ACEs Survey](#) 3. [2015 Welsh ACEs Survey](#) 4. Based on the Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey of 2018 and the Pupil Wellbeing Surveys of 2020 and 2022. 5. Based on the Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey of 2018 and the Pupil Wellbeing Surveys of 2020 and 2022 surveys. 6. Based on aggregated data from the Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey of 2018 and the Pupil Wellbeing Surveys of 2020 and 2022. 7. Based on the Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey of 2018 and the Pupil Wellbeing Surveys of 2020 and 2022. 8. Based on the Gloucestershire Online Pupil Survey of 2018 and the Pupil Wellbeing Surveys of 2020 and 2022. **Caveat:** the ACEs questions were asked to pupils in Year 12+ but there was no requirement for pupils to answer them. The data presented is % of those who answered the questions. 9. Aggregate of PWS surveys 2018,2020,2022. 10. Aggregate of PWS surveys 2018,2020,2022. 11. Aggregate of PWS surveys 2018,2020,2022. 12. In 2018 we carried out a survey of professionals from statutory agencies and voluntary organisations in Gloucestershire to understand levels of ACEs awareness and knowledge in Gloucestershire. The survey was repeated in 2019/20 to assess whether levels of awareness had increased. 13. Pupil Wellbeing Survey 2022.