



Camau Cynnar
gyda'n Gilydd
**Early Action
Together**

Rhaglen ACEau yr Heddlu a Phartneriaid
Police & Partners ACEs Programme

Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training:

A 15-month police and partners follow-up



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A 15-month police and partners follow-up

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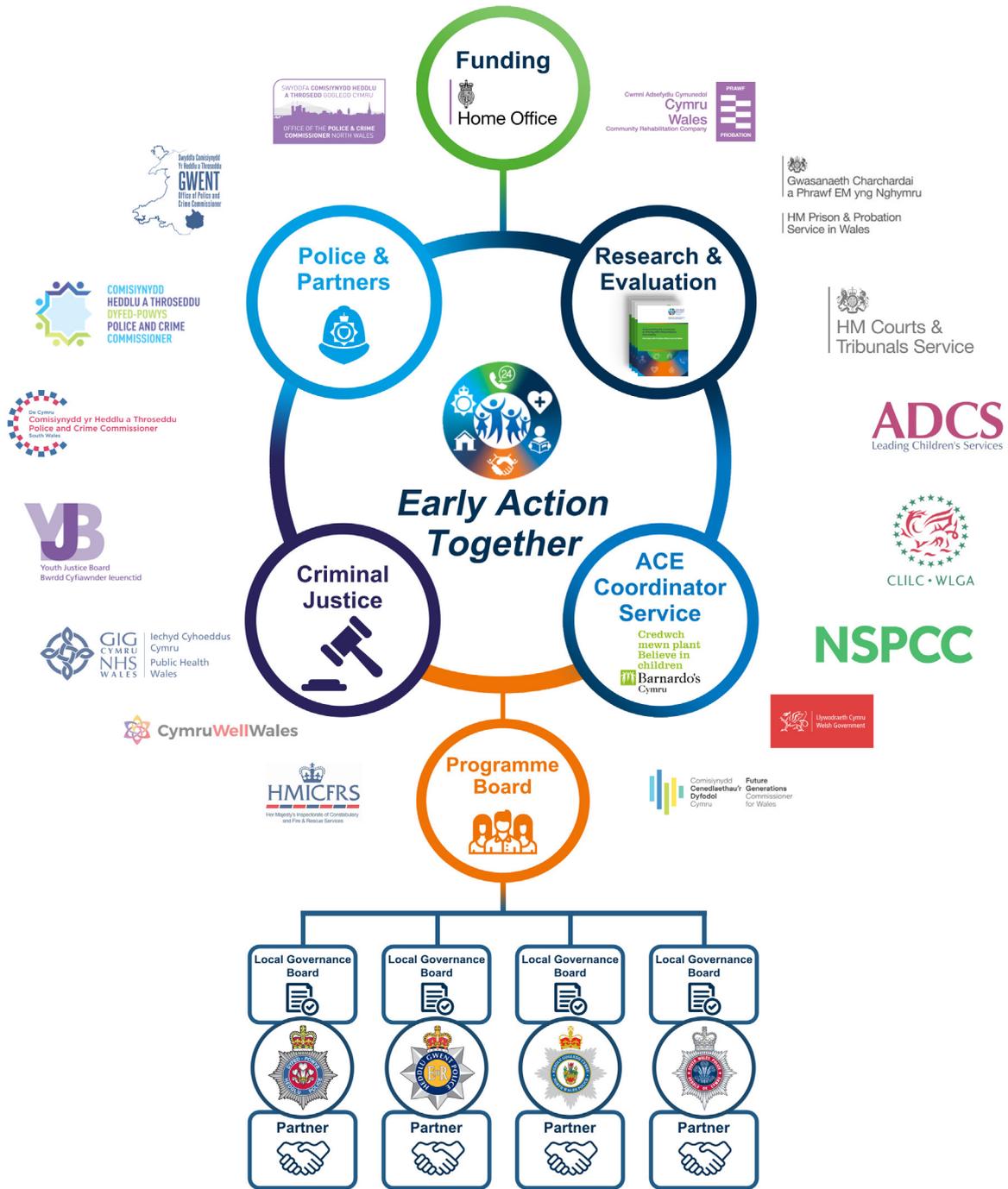
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Early Action Together Programme Structure



Overall Programme Aims

To transform police and partner responses to vulnerability, to deliver a multi-agency whole systems approach to enable early intervention and preventative activity when Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma are evident and families are at risk of poor outcomes.

Overall Programme Objectives



A competent and confident workforce to respond more effectively to vulnerability using an ACE informed approach in both fast and slow time policing.



Organisational capacity and capability, which proactively meets changing demands.



A 24/7 single integrated 'front door' for vulnerability that signposts, supports and safeguards encompassing 'blue light', welfare and health services.



A whole system response to vulnerability by implementing ACE informed approaches for operational policing and key partners.

The National Adverse Childhood Experiences Approach to Policing Vulnerability: Early Action Together (E.A.T) programme



Camau Cynnar gyda'n Gilydd
Early Action Together

Rhaglen ACEau yr Heddlu a Phartneriaid
 Police & Partners ACEs Programme

Funded by the Home Office to deliver a national programme of change across Wales (2018-2020), the E.A.T programme is a unique collaboration between Public Health Wales (PHW), the four Welsh Police Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners, in partnership with Criminal Justice, Youth Justice, and third sector organisations.

The programme sets out to address the increasing demand of vulnerability on services to transform how police and partner agencies work together to respond to vulnerability beyond statutory safeguarding. Recognising the importance of early intervention and preventative action, the programme will develop a whole systems response to vulnerability to ensure pathways for support are available for the police when vulnerability falls below thresholds for statutory support. Building into current systems, this work will utilise existing community assets to develop a bank of resources for police and partners to draw upon when supporting people in their communities.

This report is one of a series of research publications that will enable us to understand and evidence the impact of the E.A.T programme:

- Transitioning from police innovation to a national programme of transformation: an overview of the upscaling of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and trauma-informed training and evaluation
- Understanding the landscape of policing when responding to vulnerability: interviews with frontline officers across Wales
- An evaluation of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training: national roll out to police and partners
- Enabling early intervention and prevention in the policing of vulnerability: an evaluation of the role of police in multi-agency integrated service delivery
- Police perspectives on the impact of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma-Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training across Wales.

This programme of research investigates the impact of an early intervention and prevention response to vulnerability in policing and the criminal justice system. Research and evaluation is being completed around the ACE TIME training, and how it has been embedded; in addition to the evaluation of the wellbeing of police and partners.

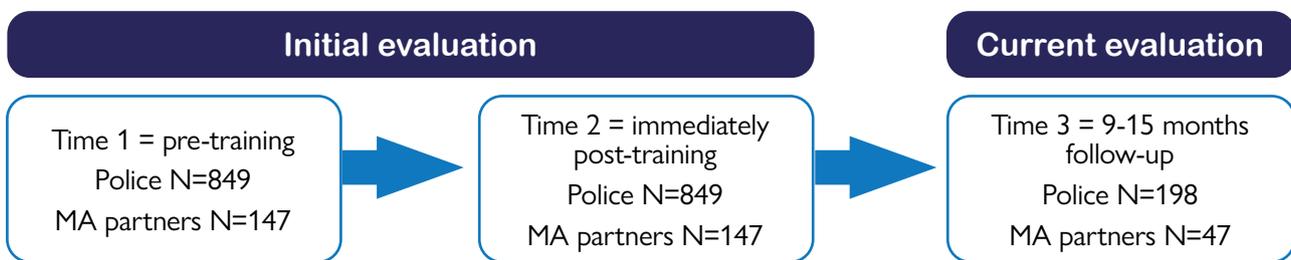
For more information about the E.A.T. programme please visit the website: www.aces.me.uk



Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training:

A 15-month police and partners follow-up

A one-day training package delivered by the ACE coordinator service from Barnardo's to educate the police and multi-agency (MA) partners on ACEs, their impact on development and behavioural outcomes, and how to respond to ACEs within a police setting. This report follows on from the previous report, "An evaluation of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training", which assessed survey data collected before and after the ACE TIME training to assess the immediate impact of the training on police and MA partners' knowledge and practice. The current reports assesses a selected sample of the participants that took part in the previous ACE TIME training evaluation, to explore if results immediately post-training have been sustained 9 to 15 months after the training.



Analysed Variables	Police Findings	MA Partners Findings
Confidence in working with ACEs.	Significantly decreased	Successfully sustained
Confidence in working with vulnerability.	Successfully sustained	Successfully sustained
Perceived responsibility over a child's antisocial behaviour (ASB).	Significantly increased ¹	Significantly increased ¹
Perceived vulnerability of a child displaying ASB.	Successfully sustained	Successfully sustained
Perceived extent to which an ASB incident is a police matter.	Significantly increased	Successfully sustained
Perceived vulnerability of children present in a domestic abuse incident.	Significantly decreased ¹	Successfully sustained

In order for the training to be sustained...



Following the training, police commented that they wanted refresher training sessions, ongoing government support and funding, improved awareness of agencies for signposting vulnerable people, further collaboration between partner agencies, and to establish a regular mechanism of feedback on referral forms and outcomes.

MA partners were more confident in working with ACEs than police

Women were more confident in working with vulnerability than men.

Women and more experienced staff viewed children present at a domestic abuse incident to be more vulnerable than other participants did.

¹ Participants' perceptions and/or confidence have changed in an unfavourable direction nine to fifteen months after training.



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Acronyms used in the report

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
AC	Adverse Childhood Experience coordinator
ACE TIME training	Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together Training
ASB	Anti Social Behaviour
E.A.T	Early Action Together
MA	Multi Agency
NPCC	National Police Chiefs Council

1. Introduction

In Wales, as is the case across the UK, the complex needs of diverse communities amount to a rising demand on police services [1]. Frontline officers are responding not only to crime, but to issues of public safety, welfare and vulnerability [2], where opportunities for early intervention and prevention emerge. As such, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and College of Policing set to transform policing to improve their response to this demand [3]. The NPCC 2025 vision aims to develop a workforce able to operate autonomously and with accountability [3]. This includes for police to be able to identify vulnerable people at the earliest opportunity and reduce risk of harm through early intervention with partners. In light of this challenge, the Early Action Together (E.A.T.) programme aims to support the nation's four police forces in developing an all-Wales approach to supporting vulnerability. As part of this programme, training was developed for frontline police and multi-agency (MA) staff to improve their understanding of and response to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the life course impacts of trauma.

In 2017, an ACE-informed approach to policing vulnerability was initially piloted within South Wales Police [4], and later adapted into The Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma-Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training, which was rolled out across forces in 2018 (see Box 1 for more information on the ACE TIME training). The initial evaluation of the ACE TIME training considered its immediate impact on police and MA partners' knowledge, confidence, and practice [5]. Findings revealed that knowledge and understanding of working with vulnerability and ACEs, and the impact they can have, had increased post training, enabling participants to more confidently and competently respond to vulnerability using an ACE-informed approach. Training participants' views on the value and content of the training were also examined in the year following the training, through one-to-one interviews [6]. The report states how police felt the training had improved their knowledge and practice and highlights that further support is needed to embed the training into their roles.

This report is based on a follow-up evaluation with ACE TIME training participants. It sets out to find whether the positive changes identified in the initial ACE TIME training evaluation [5] were sustained at nine to fifteen months after attending the training. Positive changes from the previous evaluation that will be looked at in this report are:

- Significantly improved levels of confidence in working with ACEs.
- Significantly improved levels of confidence in working with vulnerable people.
- Police having significantly lower levels of perceived youth responsibility in an antisocial behaviour scenario; as they recognised the impact of unstable home environments and ACEs as influencers on the youth behaviours.
- Significantly increased levels of perceived vulnerability of children as they witness a domestic abuse scenario.

The current evaluation has the following objective:

To examine whether positive findings from the initial ACE TIME training evaluation have been sustained over a longer-term follow-up (i.e. nine to fifteen months after training).

Box 1. Delivery and content of ACE TIME training

- A one-day, mandatory training package delivered in both police and external locations by the ACE Co-ordinator service at Barnardo's between October 2018 and March 2020.
- The ACE Co-ordinators (ACs) were employees of Barnardo's who were experienced in working with vulnerability. Each force area had 2-3 ACs who delivered the training in pairs. After the training, ACs continued to support the transition to a trauma-informed workforce through a process of embedding.
- Attended by 6447 police, police staff, new recruits, and partner agencies from South Wales (N=2288), Dyfed Powys (N=1135), Gwent (N=1690), and North Wales (N=1334) force areas.
- Training used a combination of lecture-style and participation/group exercises to explore vulnerability and how to take a trauma-informed approach. Resources included animated educational videos and case studies to enhance real-world learning.

Training aims:

1. To support the workforce to increase awareness of ACEs and related trauma and the impact across the life course.
2. To enable individuals to competently and confidently respond using an ACE-informed approach.
3. To support a whole system approach with partners to prevent and mitigate ACEs.

2. Methods

Following the initial evaluation from the phase one roll out of the ACE TIME training (2018-19) [5], further quantitative and qualitative data were collected from police and MA partners nine to fifteen months post-training (herein referred to as 'follow-up') to explore the sustainability of the training outcomes. This brief report presents follow-up data from 245 participants (198 police staff; 47 MA partners) across all four force areas in Wales. In line with the current report objective, analysis was undertaken only on data from the participants that took part in the previous evaluation survey (i.e. pre-training [Time 1]; immediately post-training [Time 2]). Details of this sample can be found in Appendix 1 Tables 1 and 2. The evaluation of ACE TIME training across all time points was reviewed and approved by Health and Care Research Wales and Public Health Wales Research and Development (IRAS ref: 2535898). Training participants were contacted via email to invite them to participate in the Time 3 evaluation. Those that consented and took part in the evaluation are therefore a self-selected sample. The research team designed an online and paper version of the follow-up survey to increase accessibility. The survey included a series of demographic questions followed by five scales assessing Police Confidence in Working with Vulnerability (PCWV, [7]), perception of vulnerability and responsibility in response to operational policing scenarios, and embedding the training into practice. For more information on these scales please see Appendix 2, or the original ACE TIME training evaluation for specific scale items.

Survey responses were analysed using mean scores for each of the scales and subscales. Wilcoxon signed ranks analysis was used to explore the direction of change of police and MA's attitudes and confidence between Time 2 and 3. The outcomes were then categorised into binary variables (e.g. 0 = medium to low levels of confidence; 1 = high levels of confidence) to run binary logistic regressions to determine the independent influence of demographic factors (i.e. gender, length of service, MA partners or police group) on training outcomes.

Throughout the survey participants were invited to provide additional comments on open text boxes asking about: their confidence and competence levels when applying the training into practice; attitudes towards training messages; their ability to apply the training; and their opinions on the operational policing scenarios.

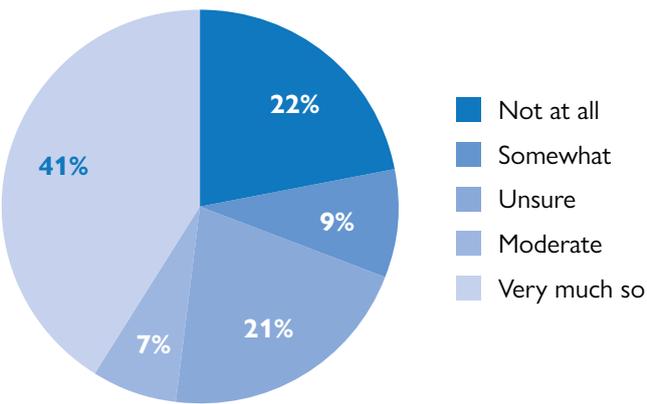
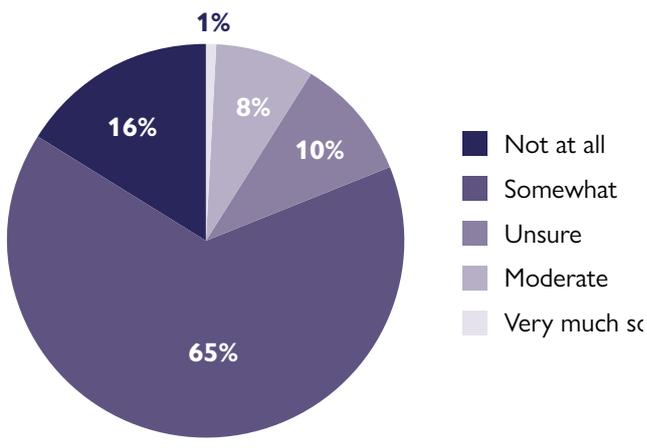
The comments were analysed using ATLAS.ti software; focusing on instances of consensus and disagreement with one another as well as with training messages. For more information on the full methodological approach used, please refer to Appendix 2.

3. Findings

A key summary of the main findings is presented in the subsections below. In **dark blue** are the findings that refer to all participants, results in **light blue** refer to police officers' responses, and results in **orange** refer to **MA partners' responses**. More detailed results can be found in Appendix 3 of the report.

Practical application of training

81% of all participants reported that the training enabled them to confidently respond to vulnerability using an ACE-informed approach (answered as moderate or very much so).



48% of police staff reported having used the knowledge gained from training in practice either moderately or very much so.

From the sample of participants that left comments in the survey (N=98), it was found:

13% of police reported that the training had improved their competency when doing referrals and signposting individuals to the right agencies.

"ACE Training has provided an awareness of what they [ACEs] are and what factors may have led to the situation [I am] responding to. I am fairly confident of identifying ACEs and linking them to behaviour, or the incident, and will consider this when deciding a proportionate course of action."
Police, Gwent

33% of police reported they used the training to identify ACEs and be generally more aware of what ACEs are and their impact on the public.

"I have reduced demand by being able to direct to appropriate networks, agencies, and charities."
Police, North Wales

² All percentages in this page have been rounded up.

Confidence in working with ACEs.



Findings from previous ACE TIME evaluation report [5]:

At Time 1 both police and partners had moderate levels of confidence when working with ACEs; which significantly increased to high confidence at Time 2.

39.2% of police and partners reported they were highly confident³ in working with ACEs at Time 3.

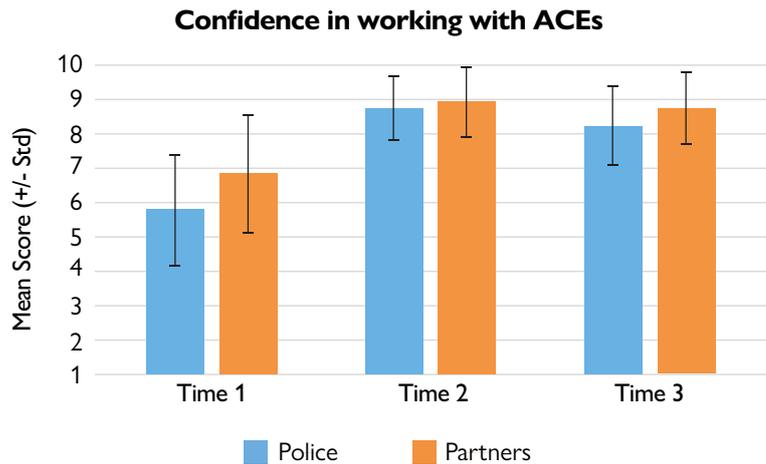
This compares to **5.1%** of participants at Time 1 being highly confident in working with ACEs, and **51.1%** at Time 2.

Further findings revealed that MA partners were 2.8 times more likely than police to feel confident about working with ACEs at Time 3⁴.

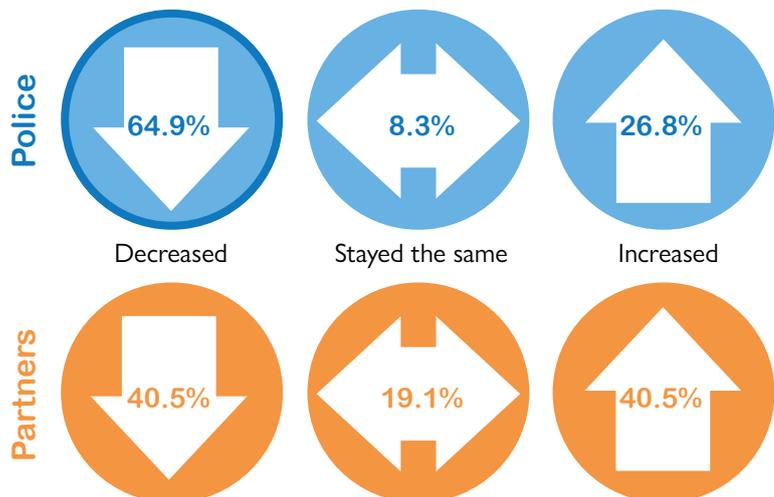
“I am fairly confident of identifying ACEs and linking them to behaviour or the incident, and will consider this when deciding a proportionate course of action.”

Police, Gwent

Improving participants’ confidence in working with ACEs was a key objective of the training. Confidence was measured immediately pre- (time 1) and post-training (time 2), and then at follow-up (time 3) on a 10-point Likert scale from (1) not at all confident, to (10) completely confident (N=222). Five separate confidence questions were combined to produce an overall mean score, where high scores represent higher confidence.



Confidence in working with ACEs decreased for police but was sustained by MA partners at Time 3.



Confidence in working with ACEs significantly decreased for police from Time 2 to 3, with **64.9%** of police showing **decreases in confidence scores**⁵.

Changes in MA partners’ confidence levels between Time 2 and Time 3 were **sustained**.

³ Highly confident is a score of 9 or 10.

⁴ Findings from binary logistic regression; odds ratio adjusted for force area, length of service, and gender.

⁵ Wilcoxon signed ranked test (z=5.60, p<.001).

Confidence in working with vulnerability



Findings from previous ACE TIME evaluation report [5]:

At Time 1 both police and partners had high levels of confidence in working with vulnerability, which significantly increased at Time 2.

46.5% of police and partners were highly confident in working with vulnerable people at Time 3.

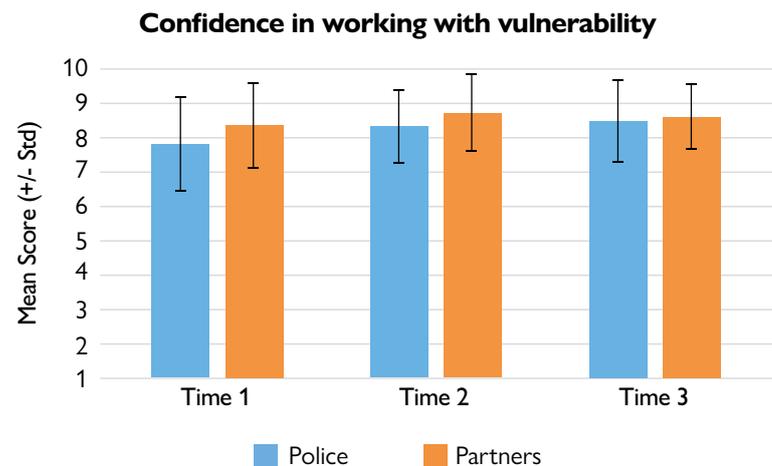
27.5% were confident⁶ in working with vulnerable people at Time 1, and 40.2% at Time 2.

Women were 3 times more likely than men to feel highly confident in working with vulnerability at Time 3⁷.

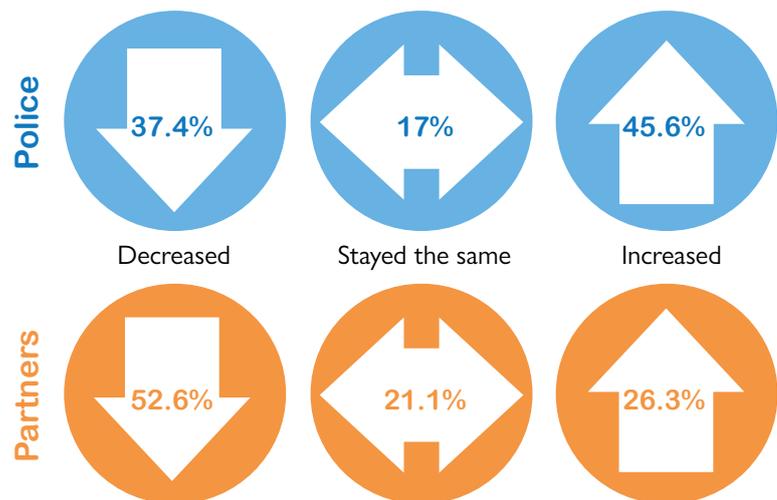
"I feel very confident in being able to respond to vulnerability. I can understand the behaviours, and vulnerabilities in people due to the ACEs approach"

MA partner, South Wales

Improving participants' confidence in working with vulnerability was a key objective of the training. Confidence working with vulnerability was measured immediately pre (time 1) and post training (time 2), and then at follow-up (time 3) on a 10-point Likert scale from (1) 'not at all confident' to (10) 'completely confident' (N=226). Four separate confidence items were combined to produce an overall mean score, where high scores represent higher confidence.



Confidence in responding to vulnerability was sustained at Time 3.



Changes in police and MA partners' confidence levels when working with vulnerable people were **sustained** from Times 2 to 3.

⁶ Highly confident is a score of 9 or 10.

⁷ Findings from binary logistic regression; odds ratio adjusted for force area, length of service, and group sample (MA partners or police staff).

Perceived levels of youth responsibility in an antisocial behaviour scenario.



Findings from previous ACE TIME evaluation report [5]:

There was a significant decrease in perceptions of youth responsibility from police from Time 1 to Time 2, but no difference for partners.

5.1% of police and partners considered the young person to be highly responsible for their actions⁸.

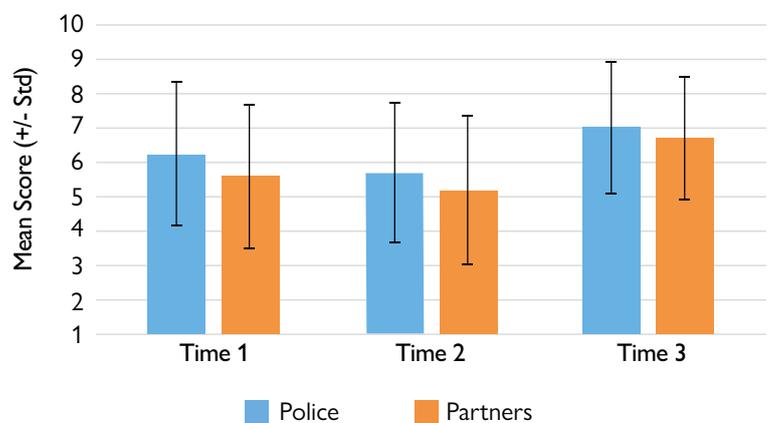
At Time 1, **12.7%** of participants believed the youth to be highly responsible for their actions. This subsequently decreased to 6.6% at Time 2, however changes were not sustained on Time 3.

“Although there is mitigating circumstances and an understanding why, the young boy still needs to be responsible for his actions.”

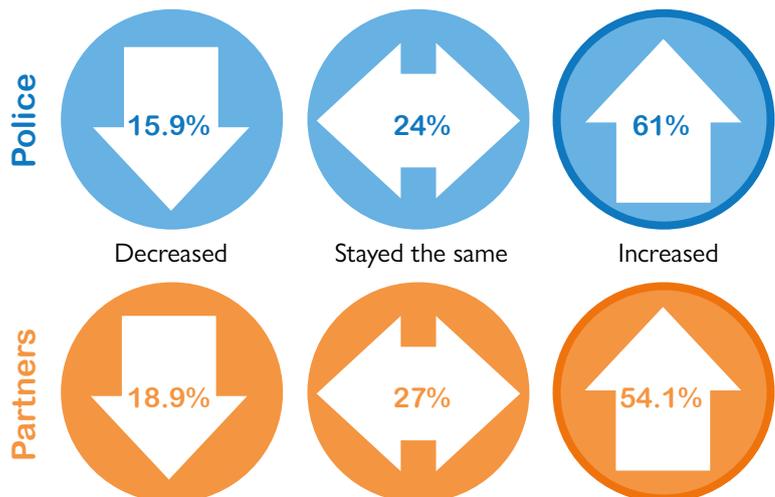
Police, Gwent

To assess whether participants acknowledged a person’s history and context as drivers for crime, they were shown a scenario in which a young person is displaying signs of antisocial behaviour and asked: “How responsible is the youth for their actions?” rated on a scale from (1) not responsible to (10) ‘completely responsible’ (N=196), measured at Times 1, 2 and 3. Lower scores potentially reveal a recognition of multiple influences on behaviour, in line with a more trauma-informed perspective.

Perceptions of youth responsibility in an ASB scenario



Perceptions of youth responsibility in an antisocial behaviour scenario significantly increased at Time 3.



Perceived levels of youth responsibility **significantly increased**, with **61%** of police⁹ and **54.1%** of MA partners¹⁰ showing increased levels of perceived youth’s responsibility from Time 2 to 3.

⁸ Perceptions of high responsibility were captured with scores of 9 or 10

⁹ Wilcoxon signed ranked test (z=5.96, p<.001).

¹⁰ Wilcoxon signed ranked test (z=3.38.60, p<.001).

Perceived levels of youth vulnerability in an antisocial behaviour scenario.



Findings from previous ACE TIME evaluation report [5]:

There was a significant increase in perceptions of youth vulnerability from police from Time 1 to Time 2, but no difference for partners.

20.3% of police and partners considered the young person to be highly vulnerable in the antisocial behaviour scenario¹¹

At Time 1, **20.3%** of participants believed the youth to be highly vulnerable. This subsequently increased to **26.2%** at Time 2, and decreased again at Time 3.

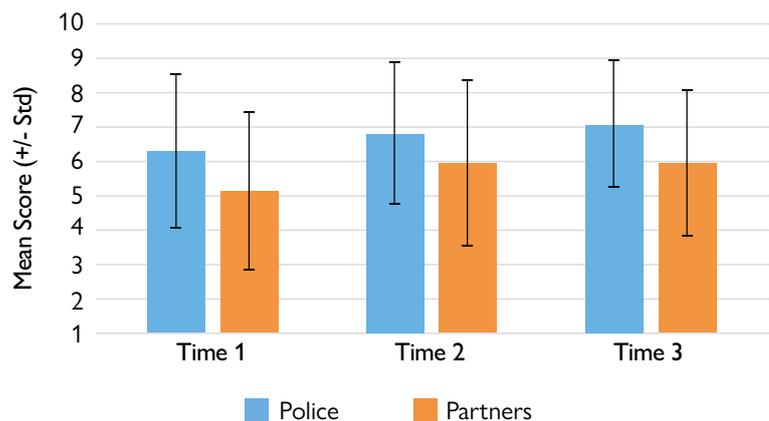
Women were **3.8** times more likely to perceive the child as highly vulnerable in this scenario¹².

“In itself not a serious issue when compared to other cases we deal with HOWEVER if no intervention then this young person will end up in the criminal system and probably used by county lines gangs”

Police, North Wales

Within the antisocial behaviour scenario participants were also asked: “How vulnerable do you consider this youth to be?” on a scale from (1) ‘not at all’ to (10) ‘extremely vulnerable’ (N=202), measured at Times 1, 2 and 3. Higher scores potentially reveal participants’ identification of ACEs within the scenario and their impact on vulnerability.

Perceptions of the ASB scenario as a police matter



Perceptions of youth vulnerability in an antisocial behaviour scenario were sustained at Time 3.



Changes in police and MA partners’ confidence levels when working with vulnerable people were **sustained** from Times 2 to 3.

¹¹ Perceptions of high responsibility were captured with scores of 9 or 10.

¹² Findings from binary logistic regression; odds ratio adjusted for length of service, and group sample (MA partners or police staff).

Perceptions of the antisocial behaviour scenario as a police matter.



Findings from previous ACE TIME evaluation report [5]:

Participants showed a significant increase in perceptions of the antisocial behaviour incident being a police matter from Time 1 to Time 2.

17.1% of police and partners highly considered the antisocial behaviour scenario to be a police matter¹³

At Time 1, **12.7%** of participants highly perceived this scenario to be a police matter. This increased to **17.7%** at Time 2, and slightly decreased at Time 3.

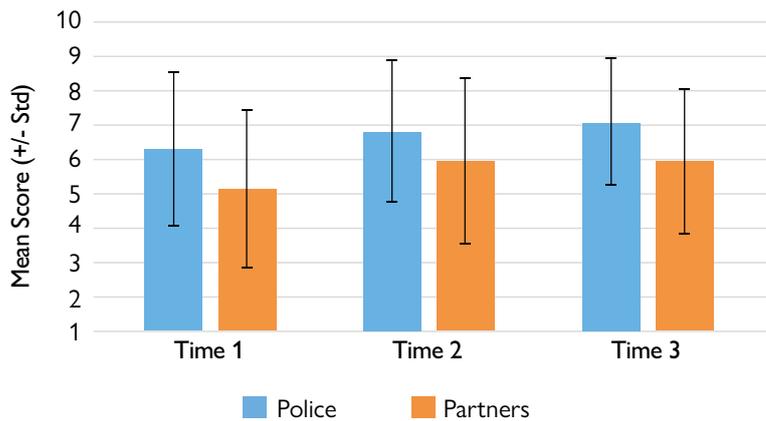
Police were **5.5** times more likely than MA partners to perceive the incident in this scenario to be a police matter¹⁴.

“This may appear minor but this is where we can identify and input early interventions to prevent further ASB”

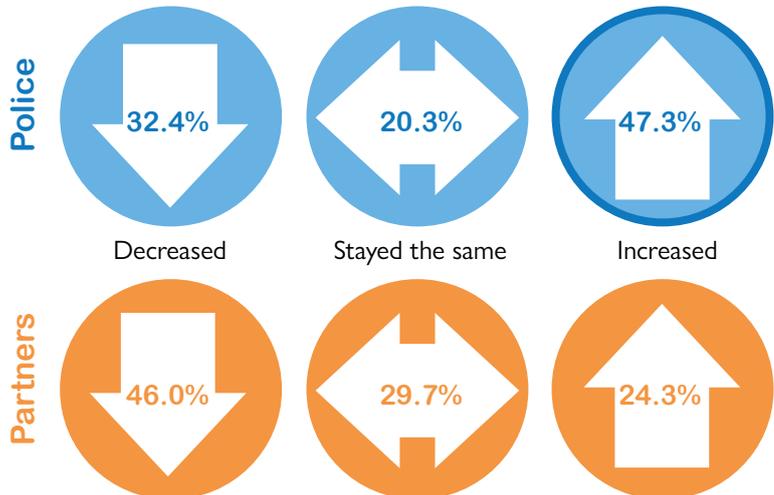
Police, South Wales

Within the antisocial behaviour scenario participants were also asked: “Do you think this is a police matter?” on a scale from (1) ‘not at all’ to (10) ‘most definitely’ (N=199), measured at Times 1, 2 and 3. Higher scores were desirable as they potentially demonstrate participants’ acknowledgement of vulnerability as a policing responsibility.

Perceptions of the ASB scenario as a police matter



Perceptions of an antisocial behaviour scenario being a police matter significantly increased for police and was sustained by MA partners at Time 3.



Perceptions of the antisocial behaviour scenario being a police matter significantly increased amongst police between Time 2 to 3, with **47.3%** of police¹⁵ showing an increased score on this measure.

Changes in MA partners’ perception of the ASB scenario being a police matter were **sustained** from Time 2 to Time 3.

¹³ Higher perceptions of the ASB incident as a police matter were captured with scores of 9 or 10.

¹⁴ Findings from binary logistic regression; odds ratio adjusted for length of service, and gender

¹⁵ Wilcoxon signed ranked test (z=2.16, p<.05).

Perceived levels of children’s vulnerability in a domestic abuse scenario.



Findings from previous ACE TIME evaluation report [5]:

Police and MA partners had increased levels of perceived vulnerability of children in the domestic abuse scenario from Time 1 to Time 2..

47.7% of police and partners considered the children in the scenario to be highly vulnerable¹⁶.

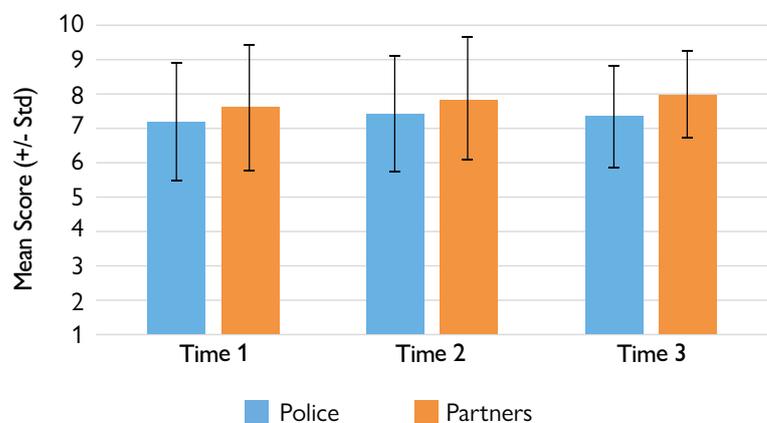
At Time 1, **48.5%** of participants believed the children in the scenario were highly vulnerable. This increased at Time 2 to **62.6%** but has decreased at Time 3.

At Time 3 women were **2.8** times more likely than men to perceive children in this scenario to be highly vulnerable¹⁷.

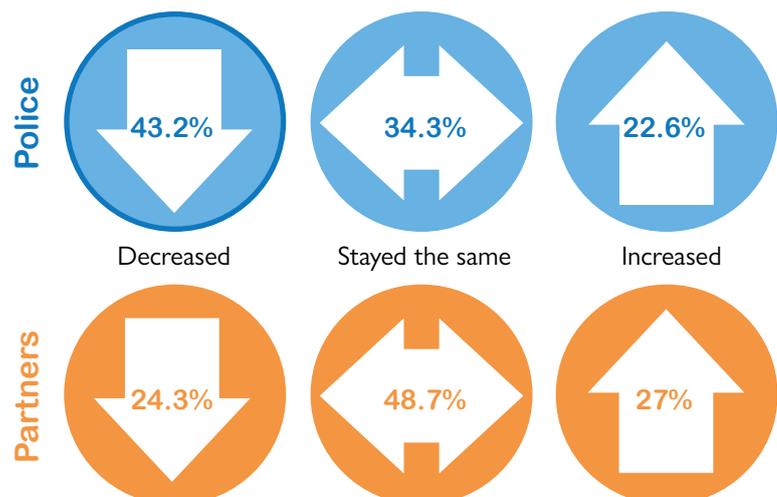
Professionals with 20+ years’ experience in the field were also **3.2** times more likely to perceive the children as vulnerable in comparison to those with less than 3 years’ experience at Time 3¹⁸.

To assess whether the trained participants understood what ACEs are and their impact on children’s wellbeing, they were shown a scenario involving children witnessing domestic abuse and asked: “How vulnerable do you consider the children in this family to be?” rated on a scale from (1) ‘not at all’ to (10) ‘extremely vulnerable’ (N=197), measured at Times 1, 2 and 3. Higher scores indicated the participant recognised the domestic abuse incident as a form of ACEs impacting on the children present at the address, which is in line with ACE-informed working.

Perceptions of youth vulnerability in a domestic abuse scenario



Perceptions of children’s vulnerability in a domestic abuse scenario significantly decreased for police but were sustained by MA partners at Time 3.



Perceived level of children’s vulnerability at Time 3 was significantly lower than at Time 2 for police, with 43.2% of police having decreased scores on the scale at Time 3¹⁹.

Changes in MA partners’ perception of children’s vulnerability in a domestic abuse scenario were sustained from Time 2 to 3.

¹⁶ Perceptions of high vulnerability are captured with scores of 9 or 10;

¹⁷ Findings from binary logistic regression; odds ratio adjusted for force area, length of service, and group sample (MA partners or police staff).

¹⁸ Findings from binary logistic regression; odds ratio adjusted for gender, force area, and group sample (MA partners or police staff).

¹⁹ Wilcoxon signed ranked test (z=3.21, p<.01).

Barriers and enablers to sustainability

1 in 10 participants felt that the **infrastructure** necessary to implement the training effectively was not yet in place and **further embedding** was needed in order to make staff feel more confident when navigating the new systems.

Embedding suggestions by participants to maintain the **sustainability** of the programme included:

Further regular and/or refresher training sessions to support participants to improve their skills and keep up-to-date with new systems designed to support the training.

"I feel confident but always believe there is more to learn to build that confidence further"

MA partner, South Wales

"Need further input as things change on a regular basis in all organisations"

Police, South Wales

Improved awareness of partner agencies available and routes of communication in order to access support.

"I know some avenues in which we can engage as a multi-agency approach to problems but is probably not fully sighted as to what is out there now."

Police, North Wales

The creation and continuation of mechanisms to support the provision feedback for referrals submitted.

"I regularly look at occurrences and if a child is involved I check how often he/she is involved with the Police and ensure that PPN's have been submitted for that person so that they can get the intervention they need."

Police, South Wales

And suggestions for wider system change:

Government and wider-systems support and funding.

"ACE training has certainly raised awareness. I think that society unless fully supported by appropriate funding from government will struggle to act meaningfully in this area."

Police, Gwent

4. Conclusions

The current evaluation explored the sustainability of the positive findings from the initial ACE TIME training at a nine to fifteen months follow-up. Nevertheless, the current report has several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. These can be found in Appendix 4.

Overall, 80.7% of police and MA partners reported that the training package had enabled them to confidently respond to vulnerability using an ACE-informed approach nine to fifteen months after the training. In addition to this, half (48%) of police staff reported having used the ACE TIME training in their day-to-day jobs. Police reported that the training changed the way they think and respond to incidents by making them more aware of ACEs, how to identify them, and how to refer and signpost individuals appropriately. These findings suggest that the training continued to have a meaningful impact on some of the participants' behaviour and ways of working nine to fifteen months after training.

Despite this, there was a significant decrease in the number of police who reported feeling confident in working with ACEs between Times 2 to 3. This suggests that the reported increase in confidence that was seen for police immediately post-training (Time 2) was not sustained over the longer-term (Time 3). In contrast, the confidence of MA partners was sustained at long-term follow-up (Time 3). Further findings revealed that MA partners were also 2.8 times more likely to feel confident in working with ACEs than police at Time 3. It was not possible to examine what may have contributed to the differences between MA partners and police levels of confidence in working with ACEs. However, a possible contributing factor could have been the way in which the training principles and/or concepts fit within the policing context in contrast with partner agencies. For example, MA partners may be trained and work within a professional culture which is rooted in a more holistic (and therefore less deterministic) model that recognises wider determinants and considers the relationships between past or present adversity, current presentation (e.g. behaviour) and response. In contrast, police perceptions of current presentation and required response may remain rooted in a law enforcement model, which is inherently more deterministic; with training and application for police focused on pre-determined behaviour-response pathways. As well as the way in which the ACE TIME training aligns with other training provided by participants' respective organisations, maybe making MA partners feel more confident than police at this time point. Perhaps further investigation could aim at comparing the enablers and barriers for police and MA partners when applying the training in order to adapt it, and/or the police organisational systems, adequately. The 'Police perspectives on the impact of the ACE TIME training across Wales' report [6] could help to inform this line of investigation. Moreover, in line with participants' comments, forces could assess the feasibility of further refresher training as well as support, mentorship programmes, and collaboration between partner agencies and police to sustain their levels of confidence in working with ACEs.

The previous ACE TIME training evaluation found that confidence levels in working with vulnerability increased immediately after the training (Times 1 to 2) [5]. The current evaluation reveals that these scores were sustained nine to fifteen months later (from Times 2 to 3). Nevertheless, women were 3 times more likely than men to feel highly confident in working with vulnerability at Time 3. It has not been possible to determine why levels of confidence in working with vulnerability were maintained by police whilst their confidence in working with ACEs decreased. However, a possible factor could be any further complementary training and/or support, either direct or systemic, received by MA partners that was not available for police. Further investigation and comparison between police and partner agencies' way of working which enables the training implementation would be beneficial. Furthermore, as suggested in the comments, possible refresher training and/or further collaboration with MA partners, including mechanisms of feedback, could help police sustain their confidence in working with ACEs.

The previous ACE TIME training evaluation found that after receiving the training (Time 2), police viewed the young person involved in an anti-social behaviour scenario to be less responsible for their

actions than they were at pre-training (Time 1). The change in perception of youth responsibility for police was in line with the key messages of the training; with low levels of perceived responsibility suggesting increased levels of empathy towards the youth, greater awareness of ACEs, and their impact on behaviour. However, this change was not sustained nine to fifteen months after the training (Time 3). Both police and MA partners attributed significantly more responsibility to the youth for their actions at follow-up, suggesting that training messages around ACEs and their implication in criminal behaviour were not sustained. On the other hand, the current evaluation shows that participants' perception of how vulnerable the young person was had been sustained at follow-up (from Times 2 to 3), after having significantly increased immediately post-training [5]. The findings around youth responsibility are interesting. Within the literature, the trauma-informed approach recognises that this young person may not be accountable for their actions due to traumatic experiences reducing a child's ability to regulate their emotions, leading to more reactive expressions which are often manifest in anti-social behaviour [8,9]. Therefore both structure and flexibility in approaches are needed, which is often not acceptable within the parameters of the UK legal framework. For example, according to the College of Policing, the role of policing is to "preserve order, bring offenders to justice, and protect people and property and preventing the commission of offences", which can cause conflict in the application of trauma-informed approaches within policing. The mean scores from the survey highlight this with police viewing the child both vulnerable and responsible for their actions *"Although there is mitigating circumstances and an understanding why, the young boy still needs to be responsible for his actions."* (40 female, Gwent).

The training defined a trauma-informed and public health perspective to be one which considers the underlying causes of problematic behaviour, and the potential influence that childhood adversity and traumatic events (e.g. abuse and witnessing violence in the home) may have on an individual's actions. For example, often behaviours may be learnt or act as emotional or reactive expressions for individuals who struggle to regulate their emotions. However, police continue to recognise and consider the young person's vulnerabilities which may open up opportunities for improved engagement with perpetrators who are vulnerable, and open up opportunities for early intervention. Nevertheless, future research should focus on the wider systemic barriers and enablers in policing when applying trauma-informed approaches, to help implement these interventions successfully. The police perspectives report on the ACE TIME training implementation [5] investigates this issue further.

In addition, the previous ACE TIME evaluation found that immediately after the training, participants viewed the antisocial behaviour incident as more of a police matter than they did prior to training [5]. The current report found that this view was sustained by MA partners, whilst it significantly increased for police at follow-up (Time 3). This suggests that police continued to recognise the ASB scenario as an opportunity for early intervention and prevention of the escalation of antisocial behaviour into further criminal behaviour. This finding is supported within some of the comments made by participants, *"This case is not serious but there are warning signs that the child may be experiencing 1 or more ACE's in which case intervention may reduce their likelihood to continue this behaviour and commit crimes in the future."* (26 female, Dyfed Powys). Future research could investigate whether there has been an increase in early intervention and safeguarding referrals and whether these have had an impact in reducing repeat offending and first-time entrants into the criminal justice system. Further research could also investigate if early intervention and safeguarding referrals have resulted in more vulnerable people receiving intervention from partner agencies and whether these have a long-term impact.

Police perceptions of the levels of children's vulnerability in the domestic abuse scenario were also not sustained between Times 2 and 3. Again, although there was an initial increase in police perceptions of children's vulnerability immediately after the training (Time 2), this effect returned to pre-training levels at follow-up. This suggests that positive effects of the training were of limited duration. Nevertheless, MA levels of perceived vulnerability of children increased pre- to post-training [5] and continued to be sustained nine to fifteen months after training. Additionally, women and police staff with longer service length were 2.8 and 3.2 times more likely (respectively) to perceive the children as highly vulnerable within the domestic abuse scenario in comparison to men and police staff with fewer years in service.

This could be due to participants with longer service length periods having accrued more experience and therefore being better able to recognise vulnerability. Perhaps, further investigation could be carried out to explore ways in which participants' knowledge and experience can be used within the training and/or organisation to facilitate the training application and impact.

According to participants' comments, refresher training sessions could be considered to reinforce some of the messages that were not sustained at follow-up within the police force. This could include: confidence in working with ACEs, perceived responsibility and impact of ACEs on behaviour, and the link between ACEs and vulnerability. Another comment made by participants was the need for improved awareness and collaboration between partner agencies, including the implementation of mechanisms of feedback on referral forms and outcomes. This could potentially benefit police levels of confidence in working with ACEs, and perceived vulnerability of children experiencing ACEs. These comments are consistent with those reported in a previous E.A.T programme report which explored police training and organisational needs to facilitate the training application via one-to-one interviews six to twelve months after training [6]. This suggests that the perceived further needs, addressed in the comments, are clear and communicable; and the majority of police feel that meeting these needs is essential to the long-term effectiveness of the training.

Key learning from this follow-up evaluation should be considered alongside findings from the first evaluation of the ACE TIME training [5], and police perspectives on the impact of the ACE TIME training across Wales report [6] to inform any future development or implementation of ACE TIME training. However, in light of the issues of sustainability specifically identified here, the following suggestions are made for actions that may be considered to further support the longevity of positive training outcomes:

Suggested actions for the sustainability of the training:

- **Explore the feasibility of carrying out refresher training, including the determination and evaluation of potential outcomes, needed frequency, and target audience.**
- **Explore the feasibility of using the most confident and/or ACE-informed participants' (female, MA, and those with the longest service length) knowledge and experiences within the training, and/or force areas, to support the sustainability and embedding of the training into practice.**
- **Explore and compare the enablers and barriers for applying the training within police and MA partners to adapt the training, and/or systems, adequately.**
- **Enhance the participation of MA partners at training to improve awareness of MA organisations, pathways for communication, action, and response to vulnerable people.**
- **Ensure that current ACE-approaches within policing continue to be embedded. Including the improvement of referral and feedback loops to support multiagency collaborations as well as staff application of the training into their day-to-day roles.**

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Appendix 1 – Demographic comparisons

A demographic comparison between the original and reduced sample at Time 3 determined they were proportionally similar. This was not tested via a statistical analysis.

Table 1. Demographic comparison between Time 1 and Time 3 police sample.

Demographic	Original Sample		Follow-up Sample		
	N	%	N	%	
Total participants	849	100	198	23.32	
Age range	19 – 66		20 – 58		
Mean age	36.6		38.8		
	18-25 years	91	10.7	11	5.6
	26-35 years	316	37.2	67	34.0
	36- 45 years	218	25.7	64	32.5
	46+ years	171	20.1	55	27.9
Gender²⁰					
	Female	320	37.7	82	41.4
	Male	476	56.1	110	55.6
Job Role					
	Police Community Support Officer	115	13.5	37	18.7
	Police Constable	479	56.4	108	54.5
	Detective Constable	42	4.9	6	3.0
	Police Sergeant	92	10.8	28	14.1
	Detective Sergeant	13	1.5	3	1.5
	Police Staff	34	4.0	7	3.5
	Other ²¹	21	4.5	8	4.0
Force Area					
	North Wales	222	27.8	62	31.3
	South Wales	177	22.2	31	15.7
	Gwent Police	294	36.8	82	41.4
	Dyfed Powys	106	13.3	23	11.6

Table 2. Demographic comparison between Time 1 and Time 3 MA partner sample.

Demographic	Original Sample		Follow-up Sample		
	N	%	N	%	
Total participants	147	100	47	31.97	
Age range	18 – 64		26 – 60		
Mean age	42.8		40.19		
	18-25 years	12	8.2	-	-
	26-35 years	29	19.7	19	40.4
	36- 45 years	31	21.1	10	21.3
	46+ years	63	42.8	18	38.3
Gender²⁰					
	Female	113	76.9	40	85.1
	Male	24	16.3	7	14.9
Sector					
	CYD Education / services	32	21.7	13	27.7
	Safeguarding/ social care and family support services	32	21.7	13	27.7
	Health and Well-being	32	21.7	10	21.3
	Housing/ community/ local authority worker	23	15.6	5	10.6
	Other ²¹	18	12.2	6	12.8
Force Area					
	North Wales	54	36.7	18	38.3
	South Wales	9	6.1	7	14.9
	Gwent Police	44	29.9	15	31.9
	Dyfed Powys	25	17.0	7	14.9

²⁰ Participants that did not self-identify as male or female were excluded from this table to protect their anonymity.

²¹ Other includes: Inspectors, Communications and Dispatch, and Specials.

Appendix 2 – Methodological approach

Sample and procedure

The study used a stratified convenience sampling method to recruit participants into the follow-up. First, all participants (n=900) that had consented to being contacted for follow-up during the first evaluation were emailed by a member of the research team inviting them to participate in the follow-up evaluation. The email included both an online survey link and a Word document version of the follow-up survey, a participant information sheet detailing the research purposes, the unique ID code in order to match their responses to their old ones, information on data management, and a statement that participation was voluntary and confidential. Participants choosing to complete the survey on a Word document were asked to email it back to the research team upon completion; this was the case for Dyfed Powys police exclusively, as due to data protection regulations they were not able to complete the online version of the survey.

Approximately one month later, the EAT local police leads were contacted to cascade the email invitations to all their staff, with the online survey link and corresponding Word document. This included those that had previously participated in the study, those that had been trained but had not taken part in the original evaluation, and those that had not been training nor taken part in the previous evaluation.

Police and MA partners that previously took part in the training were prompted via email to complete the survey on two occasions by the research team before force-wide emails were distributed by police leads. The survey was estimated to take around 15-20 minutes to complete, and participants were able to complete at their leisure. All data for this report were collected from October to December 2019 (approximately nine to fifteen months after participants attended the ACE TIME training).

Measures

Below is a brief summary of measures used. For more detail, please see the previous ACE TIME training report (5).

Demographics	Age, gender, force area, job role, sector, length of service, and date of ACE TIME training completion.
Police confidence in working with vulnerability (PCWV)	The PCWV [7] (9 items) measured participants' confidence in the understanding of how to work with vulnerability (4 items) and confidence in understanding and working with ACEs (5 items). Confidence was rated using a 10-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) 'not at all confident' to (10) 'completely confident'.
Responses to operational policing scenarios	Participants read an antisocial behaviour scenario involving a child, and a domestic abuse scenario in a household where children were present. Participants then responded to seven statements on a 10-point Likert scale, from (1) 'not at all', to (2) 'most definitely', measuring their professional judgement and decision making in relation to the scenarios.
Responding to vulnerability using an ACE-informed approach.	Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt the training package had equipped them to confidently and competently respond to vulnerability using an ACE-informed approach on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) 'not at all', to (5) 'very much so'.

Data analyses

Quantitative data: Data were handled and analysed using SPSS Statistics software (version 24). All data were cleaned, missing items were specified, relevant items were transformed to account for reverse coding, and data from participants that previously took part in the study were matched across the three time points using their unique ID code, gender, age, and force area details. First, mean scores for each of the different scales were computed in order to run Wilcoxon signed rank analyses from Time 2 or Time 1, to Time 3 to determine whether the findings immediately post ACE TIME training had been sustained, increased, or decreased at follow-up (Time 3).

After this, the means of variables at Time 3 were re-categorised into binary variables (e.g. highly confident or not highly confident), and used to run logistic regressions to assess if the outcomes at follow-up were significantly influenced by demographic factors. This included length of service, gender, and organisational background (police or MA partners).

Qualitative data consisted of open comment boxes that were filled within the survey with the prompts of “Please explain your answer” or “Any further comments”. Excel software (version 8) was used to count the number of occurrences of themes relating to the sustainability of the training and/or its application.

Appendix 3 – Changes and direction of changes from Time 2 to Time 3

Table 3. Participants' change and direction of change from Time 2 to Time 3.

Scales and items	Police					MA				
	Decreases (%)	Increases (%)	Ties (%)	Z Value	P Value	Decreases (%)	Increases (%)	Ties (%)	Z Value	P Value
Level of confidence when responding to ACEs	64.88	26.79	8.33	5.60	.000	40.48	40.48	19.05	.18	.857
Level of confidence when responding to vulnerability	37.43	45.61	16.96	1.60	.109	52.63	26.32	21.05	1.75	.081
ASB Scenario – How responsible is the youth for their actions?	15.07	60.96	23.97	5.96	.000	18.92	54.05	27.03	3.38	.001
ASB Scenario – How vulnerable do you consider this youth to be?	36.91	31.54	31.54	.63	.527	26.32	34.21	39.47	.063	.950
ASB Scenario – Do you think this is a police matter?	32.43	47.30	20.27	2.16	.031	45.95	24.32	29.73	1.22	.223
DA Scenario – How vulnerable do you consider the children in this family to be?	43.15	22.60	34.25	3.21	.001	24.32	27.03	48.65	.657	.511

Footnote: Statistically significant results are highlighted in bold.

Appendix 4 – Methodological limitations

The following limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings:

- **Selection bias** – Training participants self-selected to complete the follow-up evaluation survey. Whilst every effort was made to ensure that all training participants were invited to take part in the evaluation, it is not possible to determine if all eligible individuals received such invitations, or what the overall uptake to the survey was.
- **No control comparison cohort** - As training was widespread across forces, it was not possible to compare those who were trained with an untrained cohort. Therefore, it is not possible to know the extent in which the results are attributable to the training, or other factors (e.g. further organisational support; see below).
- **Non-standard survey delivery processes** – The survey was completed online for three out of the four forces. In the remaining force, concerns about data protection and confidentiality resulted in the completion of electronic versions of the questionnaire delivered in Microsoft Word. This approach was likely more time consuming and may have had limited engagement or other undetermined impacts on data collection.
- **Reliability of participant report** – In the follow-up survey, participants were asked to report when they completed the training, as this information was not otherwise available to the research team. However, many participants were unable to accurately recall this detail, often resulting in missing or unusable data. Further, it became apparent that some police and MA staff had completed the follow-up survey, but had not actually completed the training. For the current study, it was therefore deemed appropriate to use only those participants for whom it was possible to match their surveys across all time points. This resulted in a significantly reduced sample. Despite this, it is important to note that after further analysis it was found that sample at follow-up was proportionally similar to that of the sample participating in the first ACE TIME evaluation in terms of demographic details.
- **Implementation fidelity and extraneous variables** – During the course of the training, the content and delivery were continually refined by the trainers. Whilst such changes were implemented to improve the training and its outcomes, it was subsequently not possible to determine precisely which version of the training participants in the evaluation had received. In addition to changes in the training, all forces also implemented new systems and procedures to support their staff in applying the knowledge gained from the training, which varied according to force area and from team to team.
- **Unknown psychometric properties of measures used** – Survey questions were derived where possible from validated scales; nevertheless, most of those reported were created for the purpose of this evaluation (i.e. the policing scenarios) and therefore their validity and reliability is not known.



**Camau Cynnar
gyda'n Gilydd**
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Early Action Together is a partnership between Public Health Wales, the four Wales Police Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners, Barnardo's, HM Prison and Probation Service Wales, Community Rehabilitation Company Wales and Youth Justice Board Wales.

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