

# What Works to Prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) at the Community Level? An Evidence Review and Mapping Exercise.

## Background

**Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** are stressful experiences that occur during childhood which directly hurt a child (for example, maltreatment) or affect them through the environment in which they live (for example exposure to domestic violence).



ACEs are associated with poor educational achievement and the development of a wide range of harmful behaviours.

ACEs suffered by adults in Wales during childhood<sup>1</sup>



## What were the aims of the study?

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring all children in Wales have the best start in life and the ACE Support Hub has been successful in increasing awareness and understanding of ACEs across Wales.

The aim of this project was to identify 'what works' at the community level to prevent and mitigate ACEs and childhood adversity more broadly and to identify and map projects and initiatives across Wales.



## What did the study find?

The survey received **54 responses**

Projects worked with a range of community groups and types of adversity. Project leads identified aims as...



"...to improve self-esteem, to get them out of house and off the screens and into the natural world, to explore and build their confidence and improve their mental health"

"Making them feel a part of a community, a safe place for them, someone to talk to, someone to love and care about them..."

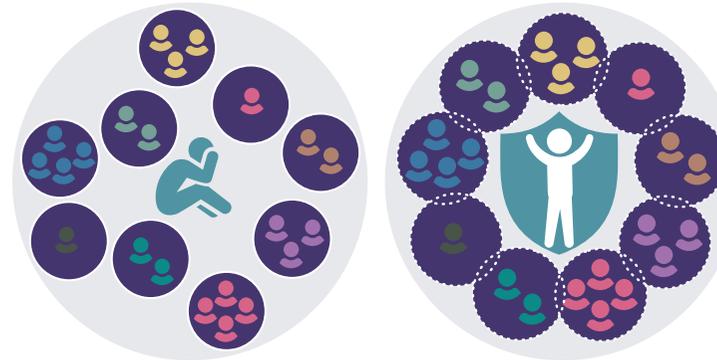
"...the hope really is to get them to a place in which their welfare acknowledges that that abuse is not right"

## The projects offered a range of services to community groups



## What works?

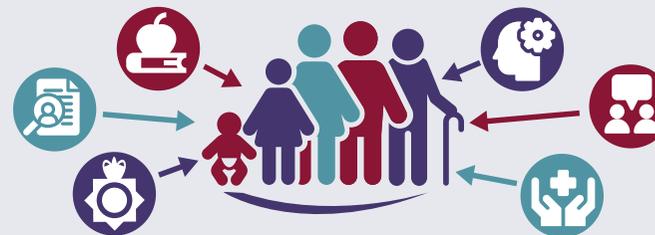
A joined-up community approach can have a significant impact on children facing adversity.



The report identified numerous community projects across Wales which are:

- often established to respond to the needs of the community and are shaped by the communities in which they are located.
- effective at reaching and addressing the needs of diverse community members.
- flexible and able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.
- often working with other services to enhance provision, using their trusted status to facilitate wider support.

Addressing ACEs and adversity requires multiple interventions across sectors and throughout the life course.



Within this, community-based interventions can be effective in preventing and mitigating the impact of ACEs and adversity by providing a local response to address community need.

The projects identified by this study provide a range of services to address different ACEs and adversities within the community and represent a key resource to support Welsh communities.

<sup>1</sup> K Hughes et al., 2018. *Sources of Resilience and their Moderating Relationships with Harms from Adverse Childhood Experiences*. Public Health Wales.  
Information in this infographic is taken from: Samia Addis, Troy Wey, Ellie Toll, Joanne C. Hopkins (2022). *What Works to Prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) at the Community Level? An Evidence Review and Mapping Exercise*. Cardiff, The ACE Support Hub, Public Health Wales NHS Trust.