Executive Summary

Adverse Childhood Experiences, Resilience and Trauma Informed Care: A Public Health Approach to Understanding and Responding to Adversity
“Fire can warm or consume, water can quench or drown, wind can caress or cut. And so it is with human relationships: we can both create and destroy, nurture and terrorize, traumatize and heal each other.”

Source: Perry D, Szalavitz
This executive summary report highlights the twelve key Director of Public Health messages and signposts to further related information and resources from the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2018 entitled: Adverse Childhood Experiences, Resilience and Trauma Informed Care: A Public Health Approach to Understanding and Responding to Adversity.

Its aim is to support you in your future thinking, practice and progress as you strive to best support those who have experienced childhood adversity irrespective of where they are in their life course.
Key Message 1

Adverse childhood experiences are common to many of us: they reflect key stressful events from before birth, to the age of 18. There should be no shame in having experienced adversity.

Find Out More...

- Public Health Wales - https://bit.ly/2S0Ym0I
- Adverse Childhood Experiences - NHS Health Scotland (video) - https://youtu.be/VMpIi-4CZK0

Source: WAVE Trust - The 70/30 Campaign
Key Message 2

The impact of adverse childhood experiences can be offset by safe, secure responsive adult relationships that buffer the effects of stress/adversity and support the development of resilience, a key mechanism to make sense of, and recover from threat and fear.

Find Out More...

- Elizabeth Blackburn | Ted 2017 - The science of cells that never get old (video) - https://bit.ly/2J1Sipr
- Supporting Resilience - https://youtu.be/eHyv_LFXkVU

Source: Alberta Family Wellness Initiative, Palix Foundation
Key Message 3

‘Chronic toxic stress’ can have a lasting effect on physical and mental health and wellbeing from birth to the older years. These effects can be passed on to further generations, which can cause intergenerational harm.

Find Out More...

- Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development (video) - https://youtu.be/rVwFkcOZHJw
- What causes wellness | Sir Harry Burns | TEDxGlasgow - https://youtu.be/yEh3JG74C6s
- How Brains are Built: The Core Story of Brain Development (video) - https://youtu.be/LmVWOe1ky8s

Source: WAVE Trust - The 70/30 Campaign
Key Message 4

The impact of adverse childhood experiences can be mitigated throughout the lifespan: there is always hope and opportunities for recovery in childhood, adolescence, into adulthood, and even in the latter years.

Impact of adverse childhood experiences across the life course

Source: Based on Felitti et al.

Find Out More...

- The power of everyday heroes | Jaz Ampaw-Farr | TEDxNorwichED (video) - https://youtu.be/g3xoZXSW5yc
Key Message 5

The human costs of adverse childhood experiences are considerable for individuals, families and communities, both in the moment and from intergenerational effects. Environmental and community adversity, along with experience of adversity at an individual level, has been described as a ‘Pair of ACEs’.

Find Out More...

- ACEs - Adverse Childhood Experiences (video) - [https://vimeo.com/226551139](https://vimeo.com/226551139)

Source: Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness at George Washington University
Key Message 6

A public health approach to adverse childhood experiences seeks to describe the range and variety of adversity while reducing the experience of adversity for everyone, with benefits for all. This involves working within services to intervene, and to respond where there is evidence of harm. This involves the development of trauma-informed systems and services.

Source: WAVE Trust - The 70/30 Campaign

Find Out More...
- Opening Doors: Trauma Informed Practice for the Workplace (video) - https://vimeo.com/274703693
Key Message 7

By taking a ‘preventive spend’ approach to adversity in childhood we can reduce the costs to health, education, social care, police and justice services of responding to the impact and consequences of adverse childhood experiences.

A public health perspective to understanding preventative approaches to adversity across the population.

Find Out More...

Key Message 8

Being trauma aware and trauma informed is ‘everyone’s business.

Trauma-informed and trauma-responsive systems

Source: Safe Hands and Thinking Minds

Find Out More...

- Tackling the Attainment Gap by Preventing and Responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences - https://bit.ly/2rw8LEG
Key Message 9

In practice, to be trauma informed requires a cultural shift from ‘What’s wrong with you?’ to ‘What happened to you?’ and to follow through with ‘How has this affected your life?’ and ‘Who is there for you?’

Source: Warren Larkin Associates

Find Out More...
- Good relationships are the key to healing trauma | Karen Treisman | TEDxWarwickSalon - https://youtu.be/PTsPdMqVwBq
Key Message 10

Routine enquiry is an approach to understanding and responding to an individual’s experiences of adverse childhood experiences. It is a tool that can be built into practice with training, support and supervision.

The Routine Enquiry into Adversity in Childhood (REACH) Model

Source: Warren Larkin Associates

Find Out More...

• REACH Model video - https://bit.ly/2OT7ja1
Key Message 11

Community Planning has the potential to be a transformational mechanism, working through a strengths based approach, with communities, to understand and respond to adverse childhood experiences.

Growing Resilient Communities

Source: ACEs Connection

Find Out More...

- Growing Resilient Communities - https://bit.ly/1SUE8DP
- Cormac Russel. Sustainable community development: from what’s wrong to what’s strong | Cormac Russell | TEDxExeter - https://youtu.be/a5xR4QB1ADw
- Sustainable community development: from what’s wrong to what’s strong | Cormac Russell | TEDxExeter - https://youtu.be/a5xR4QB1ADw
Key Message 12

The GIRFEC Child’s Plan and Wellbeing Indicators are an important example of ‘strengths based approach’ for use with babies, children, young people and their families.

Find Out More...


Source: Highland Childrens Service - Practice Guidance. Getting It Right For Every Child (PDF)
Future Plans

The following upstream/downstream graphic details the next steps that might flow from the information detailed in the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2018.

The Public Health Directorate is keen to advise and work with key stakeholders to effect change and to address the burden and costs of adversity, ‘hidden in plain sight’ for the babies, children, young people, families, adults, elders and communities across NHS Highland.

1. **Primary Prevention/Intervention**
   1.1. Build awareness amongst Community Planning partners of the influence of environmental and structural influences (poverty, housing, employment, crime) that compound the effects of adversity in childhood and adolescence
   1.2. Develop a community of interest among children, young people, families and communities by:
      - Working to develop rights-led approaches to understanding adversity and supporting resilience, for example, through training the ‘UNCRC with adverse childhood experiences’
      - Working with early years, school and youth based services to raise awareness of the impact of adversity in the lives of the babies, children, young people and families they work with
   1.3. Develop communities of interest to support grassroots awareness of adversity across Highland and Argyll and Bute by:
      - Hosting of adverse childhood experiences awareness raising/screening of Resilience and follow up discussion panels with community involvement
      - Engaging with local Community Planning Partnerships in the Highland and Argyll and Bute Partnerships
      - Building on our work to develop and grow compassionate communities which are tolerant, supportive and understanding

2. **Secondary Prevention/Intervention**
   2.1. Support work with Community Planning partners to respond to the associated effects, impacts and costs across the life course in different services and settings by:
      - Sphere, service and team awareness raising
      - Development and implementation of trauma-informed/responsive policy and practice
      - Assessment of skills and training needs across systems, services and teams
   2.2. Create and support trauma-informed practitioner communities across Highland and Argyll and Bute. This will involve:
      - Developing a shared ethos and language around adversity and how trauma-informed approaches can support resilience with individuals of all ages, families and communities
      - Ensuring that services are supported to develop skills, confidence and competences in asking about adversity in the lives of families and adults through the use of routine enquire approaches as outlined in this report
      - Developing a strategic based understanding of how to respond to trauma with services that can engage and work with children, young people, families and communities

3. **Tertiary Prevention/Intervention**
   3.1. Develop a community of interest and trauma-informed ideas and values across Public Protection Committees in Argyll and Bute and Highland including:
      - Child Protection
      - Adult Care and Protection
      - Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
      - Violence Against Women Partnership
      - Community Justice Partnership

Upstream and Downstream Tiers of Prevention/Intervention
“The truth is, you cannot love yourself unless you have been loved and are loved. The capacity to love cannot be built in isolation.”

Source: Perry D, Szalavitz
Acknowledgements

We must acknowledge the expertise of the children, young people, families and communities with lived experience of adversity and from who, with their individual and collective insights, provided the impetus and inspiration for this Director of Public Health Annual Report.

We all have a part to play to ensure that such insight continues to inform our listening and learning, our understanding and responses, and our thinking and practice with respect to Adverse Childhood Experiences for now and in the future.

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