

# *Creating a Universal Adverse Children's Experience Response Strategy*



*The Blackburn with Darwen journey  
towards developing a systems resilient borough*

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# Blackburn with Darwen – Early ACEs work

- In 2012, **Blackburn with Darwen (BwD)** was the first area in the UK to undertake a **population-based ACE survey**, which identified the prevalence of ACEs across the Borough and identified poor health and social outcomes in adulthood
- **Almost half (46%) of adults living in Blackburn with Darwen had suffered at least one ACE, with 12% of adults in Blackburn with Darwen having suffered four or more ACEs (Bellis et al., 2013)**
- Research has shown that the **more ACEs people experience, the greater the risk of a wide range of health-harming behaviours and diseases** as an adult
- The **impact of ACEs and trauma is wide reaching**; it crosses organisational boundaries, settings, population groups and impacts across the life-course



# Blackburn with Darwen – Early ACEs work

- In 2017, the **Pennine Lancashire ACEs Framework** set out a shared ambition to develop ACE informed communities and ACE informed organisations across the borough.
- The development of a **Social Movement** began with interventions and programmes being established across the system including:
  - **Routine Enquiry into Adverse Childhood experiences (REACH)** being trialled in appropriate settings, e.g. Early Years, Health Visiting and other Health settings
  - Piloting the **Emotional and Brain Resilience to Adverse Childhood Experiences (EmBRACE developed by Sue Irwin)** program in educational and third sector settings
  - **Community screenings of the film ‘Resilience’** with Q&A and links to support the drive for ACE champions and accelerate the ACEs movement
  - The development of an **ACEs ‘hub’ and Twitter account** in order to share knowledge, skills and experience in the area



# The ACEs Model

Trauma  
Informed  
Communities

Trauma  
Informed  
Organisations

**Universal Approach** - Prevent ACEs from occurring across the population

**Targeted Approach** - Prevent ACEs from occurring in high risk individuals, families and communities

**Prevent re-occurrence of ACEs** for those who have experienced ACEs

**Prevent or mitigate the consequences** for those who have experienced ACEs

**Decrease prevalence of ACEs** and reduce average ACE score by 1



# Current Position

## *Driven by evidence and local data:*

- **Full Population Survey – 2013**
- **Lancaster University is currently evaluating outcomes for CYP following the use of Routine Enquiry for new parents in BwD (results due May 2022)**
- **The EmBRACE model was evaluated this year and its Trauma Informed approach was found to create ‘sustainable cultural change and asset-based capacity building over time’ (Hibbin & Warin, 2021).**
- **ACEs are woven into organisational KPIs and commissioning**

## *Listening to the Voices of those affected by ACEs and trauma:*

- **Young person’s Toolkit** - in 2019 a guide was created by young people in BwD to inform adults on how young people would like to be approached and supported when discussing ACEs.
- **Local authority commissioned mental health training, including training for our youth ‘Wellbeing Champions’ have ACEs and the trauma informed approach built in.**
- **Citizen’s Inquiry** - BwD Public Health in partnership with Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen have recently completed a citizen’s inquiry to **engage with community members with regards to approaching ACEs and building a set of recommendations for developing trauma informed communities.**

# Current Position

## *Raising awareness and developing partnerships across the system:*

- **Development of a Strategy Group led by Public Health** with multi-agency representation
- **Sub-groups established to address specific needs**
- **Events** to raise awareness and grow the movement
- Working collaboratively and in partnership **across Pennine Lancashire**
- **Establishing approved training providers** and widening the **organisational offer to support workforce development**
- Working with third sector partners to **recognise and share good practice**
- Building internal provision for schools and other educational settings **to improve in-house support for children and young people (led by Educational Psychology)**
- **Developing ACE Community Champions**



# Looking Forward

- **Development of a Systems-Resilient Framework** using a Socio-Ecological model
- **Commitment to building trauma-informed settings** from early years to schools and colleges, health and social care to communities and neighbourhoods, criminal justice to housing and employment.
- **Building capacity** via ‘managed networks’
- **Working towards a shared language and shared vision** across the borough, to bring all partners along the Trauma Informed journey
- **Using case studies** to bring the trauma-informed journey to life
- **Sharing good practice** through events and social media
- Agreeing a set of principles, adhering to the **Pennine-Lancs Trauma-Informed Pledge**
- **Future commissioning** based on data and recommendations



