Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Wales

ACEs are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child (e.g. sexual or physical abuse) or affect the environment in which they live (e.g. growing up in a house with domestic violence).

How many adults in Wales have been exposed to each ACE?

**CHILD MALTREATMENT**

- Verbal abuse: 23%
- Physical abuse: 17%
- Sexual abuse: 10%

**CHILDHOOD HOUSEHOLD INCLUDED**

- Parental separation: 20%
- Domestic violence: 16%
- Mental illness: 14%
- Alcohol abuse: 14%
- Drug use: 5%
- Incarceration: 5%

For every 100 adults in Wales 47 have suffered at least one ACE during their childhood and 14 have suffered 4 or more.

Figures based on population adjusted prevalence in adults aged 18-69 years in Wales
ACEs increase individuals’ risks of developing health-harming behaviours

Compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs are:

- 4 times more likely to be a high-risk drinker
- 6 times more likely to have had or caused unintended teenage pregnancy
- 6 times more likely to smoke e-cigarettes or tobacco
- 6 times more likely to have had sex under the age of 16 years
- 11 times more likely to have smoked cannabis
- 14 times more likely to have been a victim of violence over the last 12 months
- 15 times more likely to have committed violence against another person in the last 12 months
- 16 times more likely to have used crack cocaine or heroin
- 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime

Preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of:

- Heroin/crack cocaine use (lifetime) by 66%
- Incarceration (lifetime) by 65%
- Violence perpetration (past year) by 60%
- Violence victimisation (past year) by 57%
- Cannabis use (lifetime) by 42%
- Unintended teen pregnancy by 41%
- High-risk drinking (current) by 35%
- Early sex (before age 16) by 31%
- Smoking tobacco or e-cigarettes (current) by 24%
- Poor diet (current; <2 fruit & veg portions daily) by 16%

The national survey of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Wales interviewed approximately 2000 people (aged 18-69 years) from across Wales at their homes in 2015. Of those eligible to participate, just under half agreed to take part and we are grateful to all those who freely gave their time. Information in this info-graphic is taken from Adverse Childhood Experiences and their association with health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population.

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