



***Knowing your children* – supporting pupils with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**

Report title:

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Report details

The report was commissioned by the Welsh Government Education Directorate to evaluate how well schools in Wales support pupils with ACEs. The report also looks at the effectiveness of the collaborative work between education and other public services in supporting these pupils and their families.

The report also considers school strategies to support pupils who are currently experiencing trauma or ACEs, using case studies to illustrate best practice.

Summary of main findings

Many leaders, teachers and support staff now have a better understanding of impact of ACEs on children and young people as a result of the training by the ACE Support Hub.

The schools that best support pupils with ACEs and other vulnerable pupils know their pupils well, and provide a safe and nurturing environment where all pupils can feel happy.

The quality and impact of support for pupils with ACEs tend to be better in the primary schools visited by Estyn than in secondary.

In the best cases, schools focus on improving the wellbeing of all of their pupils. While there is targeted and specialist support and interventions for those that need it most, there is also well-considered universal provision for building pupils' resilience and strengthening their emotional intelligence.

A few schools use their Pupil Development Grant (PDG) to fund targeted support such as nurture groups, where pupils learn how to socialise and learn coping strategies.

Most pupils say that they have suitable adults in school whom they trust and feel safe enough to discuss problems with and believe that they will help them.

Arrangements to monitor the wellbeing and progress of vulnerable pupils and

those who have ACEs are appropriate in most schools.

The wellbeing of Welsh citizens, including children and young people, is high on the agenda of all local authorities and is one of the main priorities in their corporate strategic plans.

All local authorities have signed the Wales Accord for the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) that helps them to share personal information effectively and lawfully, and allows services to work together to support people. However, the use of information sharing protocols (ISPs) between local authorities and other services and outside agencies is inconsistent.

All local authority education services have arrangements to discuss children and young people through multi-agency planning meetings or 'team around the family' meetings. A few local authorities have developed their Families First service to create 'Early Help' services or 'Early Help Hubs'. These hubs include police, education and voluntary agencies. They are intended to support families who may not qualify for statutory services.

The Welsh Government should:

R8 - Promote the WASPI and encourage the timely sharing of information about vulnerable pupils and families with schools.

Accept - We will encourage Local Authorities to work with the statutory partners to review their WASPI arrangements to ensure information sharing protocols with other services and agencies ensure vulnerable pupils and their families are appropriately supported.

Our next step will be to write out to Local Authorities and consortia to determine the extent to which they promote the WASPI and what works best in terms of sharing information about vulnerable pupils and their families.

We will then draw together some notes on best practice on information sharing which we will share with the field to encourage consistency of approach across Wales.

The report sets out the following recommendations for schools, governing bodies and local authorities:

Schools should:

R1 - Provide both whole-school and targeted support for vulnerable pupils, in partnership with other services, based on an understanding of the impact of ACEs on children.

R2 - Prioritise building trusting and positive relationships with families that encourage them to share important information with the school.

R3 - Ensure that there is suitable access to calm, nurturing and supportive spaces for all vulnerable pupils, including those with ACEs, and particularly for older secondary pupils.

R4 - Provide training and support all secondary school staff, not just those involved in pastoral work, to understand their role as a potential trusted adult for vulnerable pupils.

R5 - Establish mechanisms to share information about vulnerable pupils and families confidentially and sensitively with relevant staff.

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

R6 Share relevant information about vulnerable pupils and families promptly with schools.

R7 Assist schools to develop ACE-informed strategies to support vulnerable pupils.

The Education Directorate's Support for Learners Division will write to local authorities and regional consortia to draw their attention to the recommendations placed on them and on schools by this report.

Publication details.

The report was published on 16 January and can be found on Estyn's website: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/>

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



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