

The Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group for the Prevention and Healing of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament, 21st November 2018, 6-8 pm

Welcomes and introductions

MSPs who attended:

- Gail Ross, SNP MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross
- Rona Mackay, SNP MSP for Strathkelvin & Bearsden
- Liam McArthur Scottish Liberal Democrats MSP Orkney Islands (Highlands and Islands)
- Emma Harper, SNP MSP for South Scotland

Other attendees:

- Julia Morton, 70/30 Ambassador & Founder of 'The Haven' Stonehaven
- Louise Slorance, RCPCH Scotland
- Kirsten Hogg, Barnardo's Scotland
- Lisa Bywater, With Kids, Edinburgh
- Emile van Loo, With Kids
- Bailey-Lee Robb MSYP, Scottish Youth Parliament
- Ryan McShane MSYP, Scottish Youth Parliament/Who Cares? Scotland
- George Hosking, WAVE Trust
- Rona Maclean-Ross, Fife Council
- Gary Broadway, Kirkcaldy High School, Fife
- Jillian Adie, The Salvesen Mindroom Centre
- Sara Martinez, 70/30 Campaign
- Owen Thompson, office of Gail Ross MSP
- Arlene McClure, Croftfoot Primary School, Glasgow
- Martine Leitch, Croftfoot Primary School, Glasgow
- Suzie Scott, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS)
- Councillor Elspeth Kerr (Drumchapel), Glasgow City Council
- Niamh Burns, Scottish Parliament
- Jon Slater, 70/30 Ambassador East Kilbride

Apologies:

- Anne Macdonald, Co Convenor Cross Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Nicki Lawrence, Barnardo's Scotland (colleague Kirsten Hogg – Head of Policy at Barnardo's Scotland attended on her behalf)
- Suzanne Zeedyk, Connected Baby
- Christine Carlin, The Salvesen Mindroom Centre (colleague Jillian Adie attended on her behalf)
- Elaine Stalker, Families Outside
- David Mitchell, Rossie Young People's Trust

- Dr Nicola Wylie, Rossie Young People's Trust
- Janine Rennie, Wellbeing Scotland
- Debi McCall SNP Councillor for Ward 1 Penicuik

Minutes of last meeting agreed and discussion around actions arising:

1. MSPs who have responded re local educators: Maureen Watt, John Mason, David Torrance, Emma Harper, Liam McArthur.
2. Rona Mackay has had a reply from the Minister, Maree Todd, regarding training of children's panel members.
3. Gail has written to John Swinney regarding getting a screening of the resilience documentary in all Scottish schools and getting ACEs and trauma/toxic stress included as a key module in teacher training course. He has not yet replied.
4. She has also written to Richard Lochhead, who has not yet replied.
5. Holyrood magazine – ongoing / to send a press release for publication.
6. Gail has also written to the First Minister concerning having health and wellbeing come first as a component in addressing attainment gap in Scotland, and is awaiting a response.

Guest Speaker Presentations: Trauma-informed Communities

George Hosking, WAVE Trust

George introduce the recent report by his colleague, Ita Walsh, '**Age 2 to 18 - systems to protect children from severe disadvantage**' The report, which took 4 years to complete, explores the reasons which lead people into lives of severe, multiple disadvantage, and proposes solutions based on systems changes. Unsurprisingly, the prime cause identified is Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Its core conclusion is that a national shift to a user-focused, trauma-informed system of services, characterised by ACE-awareness, followed by adoption of a pedagogical approach across all aspects of children and family services, would protect against severe, multiple disadvantage. Link to full report [here](#).

One of Ita's core recommendations is the setting up of Trauma-informed Communities across the UK. George described the self-healing, trauma-informed community (STiC) project WAVE Trust is supporting in 12 UK areas (4 in Scotland). Appropriately for this CPG, this is an approach based on the prevention and healing of ACEs, which includes encouraging trauma-informed approaches by schools, mental health, social services, police, probation, prisons, etc.

George shared examples of work from areas across the USA, including Walla Walla and San Francisco which serve to demonstrate the power and notable impact of a trauma-informed approach within a locality.

1. Walla Walla: trauma-informed approach turned a school from one of failure and poor behaviour to success and much improved behaviour;
2. San Francisco: 5 year research evaluation of a set of trauma-informed schools saw striking improvements in attendance, ability to learn, incidents involving physical aggression (down 86%) and out of school suspensions (down 95%);
3. San Diego: probation – special trauma responsive unit (suicide attempts down 60% with introduction of trauma-informed practices)

George mentioned a number of specific examples of progress in trauma-informed approaches from around the UK, including community collaboration in Belfast, enthusiasm from schools in both Glasgow and Hertfordshire, Ayrshire Police becoming Scotland's first trauma-informed police force (with over 700 officers trained) and the Met Police screening *Resilience* on 29th November 2018 at Leicester Square.

Councillor Elspeth Kerr, Glasgow City Council (Drumchapel/Anniesland)

Developing a Trauma-informed Community in Drumchapel

- 'Hurt people hurt people'. James Docherty said this at Glasgow's recent ACE Aware Nation conference. It is absolutely true.
- Drumchapel has suffered severe job losses. There can now be 3 generations without work. There is a lack of family role models of work in the family.
- Families can thus become lost in despair and mental health problems. Worse as the intergenerational examples to follow have less and less knowledge.
- More ACEs in areas like Drumchapel. 25% of the population of Drumchapel are children and of those 45% are in poverty. More children bringing up themselves.
- More people self-medicating with alcohol and drugs to try and hide from their realities. We need to stop this cycle.
- 3D Drumchapel, along with the 70/30 campaign and WAVE Trust, are coordinating meetings along with local organisations that work with children including health visitors, health improvement, Glasgow Life and head teachers from primary and secondary schools in Drumchapel.
- The Head Teacher of Camstradden Primary quickly put into context exactly why a trauma-informed approach was needed. When she arrived she found a school under great stress, with some families with chaotic behaviour. It needed a different approach from the traditional 'authoritarian' one. She recounted a story of a boy, with a drunk mum, and the support he needed.
- With all of that in mind I will share some of the great things going on already in Drumchapel
- I will start with 3D Drumchapel. They work with families from pre-birth, improving family relationships, parenting skills and family wellbeing, and promoting improved child development. They provide a wide range of support, from baby massage to taking families to panto at Christmas. They have a clothes bank for birth to five.
- A key focus for 3D is delivering Solihull training to staff and parents. They are also training parents to train parents. They also want to show the Resilience film to parents in small groups, and to help parents identify their own trauma and receive peer support. In this way, they aim to build parents' self-esteem, and help them identify how their relationships affect the self-esteem of their kids. It will help them to break the cycle when they realise they are doing things the way their parents had.

- The move to create a trauma-informed community in Drumchapel has found strong support. Members of the Drumchapel Early Years Network have joined in. We have people from schools and health. I have already spoken to the local police about Trauma-informed policing in Drumchapel – e.g. considering who is in the house when an arrest has to be made, and do this when the children of the house are at school as the impact of the rest of the families issues are causing trauma enough.
- I also asked them to let schools or nurseries or health visitors know if there has been a traumatic event, where the children will be impacted, as quickly as possible. Preferably before they see the child so that they can be a support and recognise what the children need.
- Other parties we can reach out to, or have reached out to, include the NW Suicide Prevention Forum and to NW Violence Against Women groups who meet in Drumchapel too. Suicide rates are huge in our area especially among men. We have 5 local housing associations and Glasgow Housing Association in Drumchapel and we are going to work with all of them in whatever way we can. 3 of these Housing associations engage well and have events on for the children throughout the year and other family events. We will give them information of where to signpost people who might need a bit of help.
- Social work are going to be integral to our success in making Drumchapel a Trauma Informed Community.
 - Must get social workers on board.
 - Thresholds are too high, need to be at crisis to get support. We need to get them involved much earlier.
 - Inarticulate children cannot succeed in giving evidence re child protection.
 - Too many incidents which affect the child are not communicated by social work to schools (GDPR argument), or only reported many weeks later.
- We want trauma-informed schools in primary schools and the high school in Drumchapel.
 - Need to ensure this is not seen as the bad children rewarded and the good children neglected.
 - Put health and well-being at the centre of everything.
 - More and more non-verbal children arriving at school with no language. How do we reach them?
 - Some 3-year-olds are developmentally 1.5 years, some 5-year-olds are developmentally 3 years.

There is a mental health crisis.

- 8-year-olds thinking of suicide
 - 5-year-old carer looking after his 2-year-old brother
 - There are no mental health facilities for under 16s in Drumchapel
- We want to screen the Resilience film with schools and nurseries and make sure all the police have seen it and there will also be a screening of it at an upcoming

breakfast and a blether. We realise that the more people who see it the more people who will look past behaviour and see the whole child and try and help.

- There is a charity in Drumchapel called Cope. They support people to self-manage their own mental health. They will support anyone who is having trouble dealing with life. They are not an acute service though and also not a medical facility. It is not counselling they do, it is teaching people to self-manage. There is a lack of support for people with acute mental health conditions and when in crisis and there is a lack of support for people with substance misuse problems, domestic violence and postnatal depression (PND).
- There are Addiction and recovery groups who work across Drumchapel. These have become fewer over the years but the need is increasing.
- Another issue I feel needs to be addressed is that if people turn up looking for a service and they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol they are turned away and told to come back when they are clean. Just like with a child, any form of communication should be taken into account and help should be given.
- What is the impact on families when they are turned away?
- Parent Network Scotland deliver ACE-aware training for parents.
 - 10-week course
 - Visible difference in families in 4 weeks
 - Delivered through Rockpool
- Building Positive Pathways and GCA (the Glasgow Council on Alcohol) can support families with alcohol issues and would support TiCs.
 - Also deliver ACE- and trauma-informed training.
- Scottish SPCA: Link between animal abuse and child abuse.
 - 35 referrals in Edinburgh since June. 95% of the children had ACEs.
 - Causes: Their parents show more love to their animals than them.
- Health visitor comment: Domestic violence, alcohol, drugs, mental health problems escalating.
 - Most traumatised mothers wouldn't leave their homes.
 - Fear of judgement, low self-esteem.

How do you get to the people who need it the most?

We need to work with fathers, the man attitude needs to go. Men can cry and have mental health too. This message needs to be got out there to de-stigmatise.

- Links with Caledonian University.
 - 5-year-olds “graduation” ceremony – enables them to envision a future in which “I can...” Makes children realise that they can have the same opportunities and encourages them to take them.
- Miss Kendra drama approach in schools (difficult to fit into the academic day)
- Suggestion: a half day on developing ideas, including what worked in Washington State and what worked elsewhere, together with local ideas.

So back to what I said at the beginning, Hurt people hurt people! We need to stop the hurt that happens to children in order for children to grow up not hurting each other and for a new society to emerge where we all support each other. This may seem like a pipe dream but I believe we can do it.

Suzie Scott, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS)

GCVS is the third sector interface for Glasgow, acting as a link between public sector and third sector. Suzie is the manager of the Scot government funded 'Everyone's Children' Project. The role is to promote and support third sector organisations who provide services to children, young people and families.

Glasgow suffers from high poverty levels and wide attainment gaps, with many areas of multiple deprivation. These can't be fixed by one agency alone – it needs all agencies to work together. The project's role is to strengthen partnerships with Community Planning & Health and Social Care Partnership.

Many third sector organisations in the city already work with trauma: Barnardos, Children 1st, NSPCC, and smaller organisations like 3D Drumchapel. The challenge is how to join it all up and build it up together.

One objective is to see more money moved to Family Support Services. Mainly provided by third sector and funded by Big Lottery, but then the funding stops and they shut down. How can we stabilise measures to stop ACEs? GCVS is working with the Health and Social Care Alliance, and promoting GIRFEC.

ACEs work started a year ago with Resilience film screening for third sector – 180 attended. Worked with interested people to establish the ACEs network in March 2018. Now supporting a thriving Glasgow ACEs network – seven hundred members – schools, social work, health, police, third sector, private sector, individuals – Citywide and 3 localities – supported by Everyone's Children Project. Many third sector organisations already starting to talk to families about ACEs in a supportive way. Some schools, such as Croftfoot Primary, are interested in becoming trauma-informed schools and active in the Trauma-informed Community project.

One positive step would be to combine the efforts of the ACE Network, GCVS and the WAVE Trust Trauma-informed Communities project so they all work together. If WAVE's application to the Big Lottery to fund TiCs around the UK is successful, this would enable us to have a dedicated resource for ACEs in Glasgow.

This would enable us to spread knowledge about ACEs to local communities and smaller organisations through events, training, and networking, perhaps using local schools as the focus in a local community. If local trauma-informed schools are half as successful as those in the United States, this would attract other schools, and if we can put all of this together then we would be on our way to making Glasgow a Trauma-informed City, with a partnership around resilience / trauma-informed work between public, third sector and private partners.

Link to blog of the last Glasgow ACE's Network meeting (at which George spoke) useful too: <https://www.gcv.org.uk/gcv-blog-aces-network-meeting/>

Julia Morton, The Haven in Stonehaven (Star Sparks)

Julia described her own journey from delivering yoga in prisons, as a therapeutic service, to realising that help was needed earlier and earlier in damaged lives, leading to yoga for children and then yoga for pregnant Mums. Julia has set up 'The Haven' as a centre for healing, and this is the core of the Trauma-informed Community initiative in Stonehaven.

Stonehaven is a coastal town 30 minutes south of Aberdeen. It has a population of 11,600 and is the main town in a rural area. As part of the "Living with Hope" research undertaken by Professor Karen McArdle, University of Aberdeen, three main barriers to community wellbeing were identified:

- Culture and lack of community engagement
- Bi-directional Social Isolation
- Lack of Community Empowerment.

Despite having lower rates of crime and unemployment, rates of depression are much higher than for surrounding areas. There is also a higher rate of cancer. There is a lot of denial about the existence of trauma, but there is a lot of unidentified trauma, and Julia has experienced this in the local community. She was horrified by the extent of it, and in response became a 70/30 Ambassador.

She also started the Stonehaven Trauma-informed Community initiative, and has received support from many different sectors of the local community, including midwifery, foster care, a Deputy Head Teacher, other teachers, a local councillor, other therapists and a mental health nurse.

Strengths

- 136 Members on STIC Facebook Page (early 2019)
- 10 Members on Steering Committee with diverse background
- Have local councillor and MSP support
- Part of the Kincardine and Mearns Wellbeing Network
- Supported by 70/30 Campaign

Achievements

- Screening of Resilience as part of Wellbeing Festival
- Press awareness in newspapers
- Trauma teddies working with Community Police
- Support from Kincardine and Mearns Development Partnership

Plans

- February 2019 ACES Display in Library Front Window (successfully completed)
- Trauma-Informed Awareness Events as part of wellbeing festival in March
- Create STIC packs
- Bring Trauma Informed Training to the community
- Develop The Haven as an ACES hub

Contact: Project Lead and 70/30 Ambassador, Julia Morton

Phone: 07473388198 / **Email:** julia@thehaven.co.uk

Open discussion on topics presented:

How did WAVE Trust choose the areas to work with for STiC?

LOVE- Suzanne Zeedyk
MADLUG

There was a discussion about the adequacy of current corporate parenting. It is built into the Children and Young People's Act as a statutory responsibility, but is it working? Gail responded that this is a responsibility of Community Partnerships, and the quality is variable from area to area. Sadly, many Looked After Children don't receive the reliable love they deserve. She will ask a question of the Scottish Government on how this responsibility is working in practice.

Sara shared Kevin Denvir's reflections on his behalf as he was unable to attend the meeting in person: Locally, in Orkney, it has been interesting to see where people are on the journey to being curious and accepting ACEs as a significant lens through which to view societal problems and worthy of deeper thought. Not everyone is at the same place and people develop views and opinions over time (Both towards and away from being supportive).

In Orkney there was strong support on the back of the Resilience screenings although people are open to influences all the time and new questions emerge which "move" people both towards and away from listening and giving time. Everyone is under massive resource pressures and NEW work is not always welcome! There is resistance in some quarters to ACEs speak, yet if we talk about attachment or inclusion or even trauma it seems it's already part of strategic plans and some super work being done. Language is absolutely key in building bridges and partnerships.

Kevin has been finding that many people already have a "professional" knowledge which makes it very hard to see issues from a different perspective. Knowing already means you are vested in that understanding so, for me, moving towards where people are is more effective than trying to draw them towards new or different thinking.

Rona Mackay explained that she had written to the Minister for Children and Young People about training for Children's Panel members. She read out to the group the response she received. ACE training has been developed in the last 18 months, including online resources, and she found this reassuring. Should there be refresher sessions for older members?

Gail Ross announced her success with a resolution at SNP party conference. Delegates unanimously passed a resolution to research and publish a study on levels of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Scotland, together with their impact on life outcomes.

There was a discussion about making a Scottish film on ACES. *Resilience* was felt to be too American, and did not reflect Scottish society. There were references to Suzanne Zeedyk and James Docherty's recent appearance on an ITV documentary on ACEs. George suggested that the film should be made after the Scottish ACE survey had been carried out, so that its findings could be summarised and reflected in the film.

Bailey-Lee suggested that young people should be supported if taking part in the study. Rona Mackay said: 'we need a solution focus, it was not a question of 'how many ACEs'.

Emma Harper expressed concern at the lack of representation from South-West of Scotland at the CPG. We need to recruit some local 70/30 ambassadors who could then sit on group. George offered to help with this, if local introductions are made.

There was concern expressed by some that doing a study and a film meant we are focusing on data, which could distract us from practical action and progress.

Jon Slater mentioned his experience as someone with 9 ACEs. The key is the support of 'a Constant Caring Adult'. Having a mentor to look up to makes such a difference. He also spoke of the need for a truly holistic approach, and the importance of language – e.g. 'listening', 'kindness', 'talking to families', 'dedicated hubs', 'Ambassadors', 'mentors', 'information. People are looking for answers, and the answers are out there.

The point was made that much can be done without a lot of money. We need people to show the way and create a ripple effect of change.

Discussion of future meetings: themes, dates, guests etc.

Gail read out a list of 30-40 ideas that had been suggested. George volunteered to get the feedback of the group on these ideas, which can then be considered with Gail and her team.

Any Other Competent Business:

N/A

Actions:

- I. Write to Scottish government regarding corporate parenting (how they think it's working)

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the CPG will take place on 27th or 28th March (a proposed January meeting did not take place due to staff sickness in Gail's office). The 30th of May is also pencilled in for a meeting. Themes and speakers have yet to be determined.