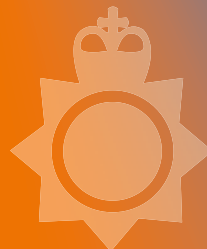
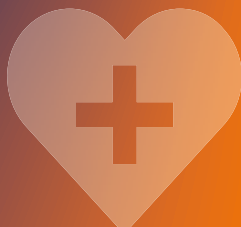




Camau Cynnar
gyda'n Gilydd
**Early Action
Together**

Rhaglen ACEau yr Heddlu a Phartneriaid
Police & Partners ACEs Programme

Police perspectives on the impact of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training across Wales



Police perspectives on the impact of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training across Wales

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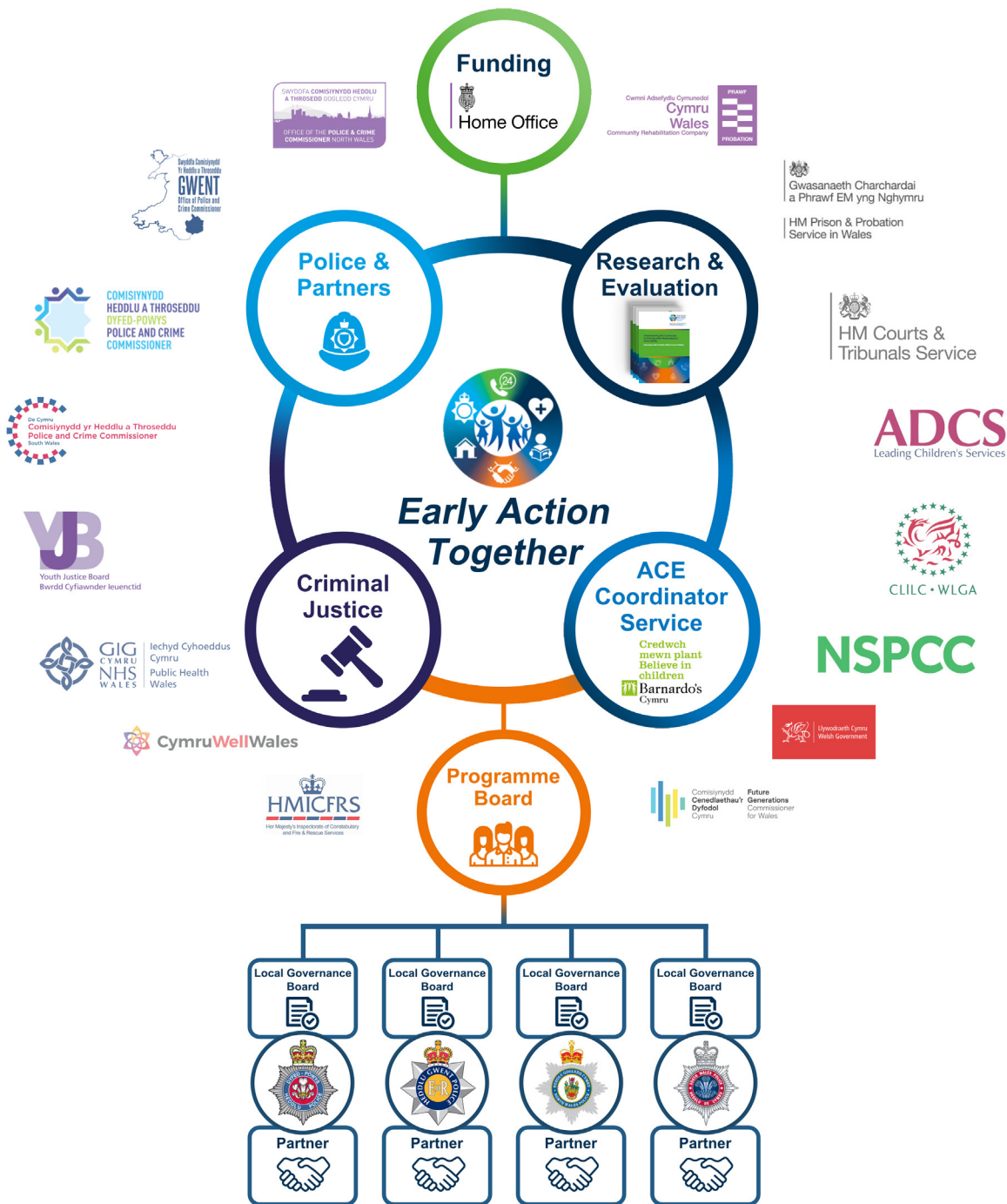
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Early Action Together Programme Structure



Overall Programme Aims

To transform police and partner responses to vulnerability, to deliver a multi-agency whole systems approach to enable early intervention and preventative activity when Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma are evident and families are at risk of poor outcomes.

Overall Programme Objectives



A competent and confident workforce to respond more effectively to vulnerability using an ACE informed approach in both fast and slow time policing.



Organisational capacity and capability, which proactively meets changing demands.



A 24/7 single integrated 'front door' for vulnerability that signposts, supports and safeguards encompassing 'blue light', welfare and health services.



A whole system response to vulnerability by implementing ACE informed approaches for operational policing and key partners.

The National Adverse Childhood Experiences Approach to Policing Vulnerability: Early Action Together (E.A.T) programme



Camau Cynnar gyda'n Gilydd
Early Action Together

Rhaglen ACEau yr Heddlu a Phartneriaid
 Police & Partners ACEs Programme

Funded by the Home Office to deliver a national programme of change across Wales (2018-2020), the E.A.T programme is a unique collaboration between Public Health Wales (PHW), the four Welsh Police Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners, in partnership with Criminal Justice, Youth Justice, and third sector organisations.

The programme sets out to address the increasing demand of vulnerability on services to transform how police and partner agencies work together to respond to vulnerability beyond statutory safeguarding. Recognising the importance of early intervention and preventative action, the programme will develop a whole systems response to vulnerability to ensure pathways for support are available for the police when vulnerability falls below thresholds for statutory support. Building into current systems, this work will utilise existing community assets to develop a bank of resources for police and partners to draw upon when supporting people in their communities.

This report is one of a series of research publications that will enable us to understand and evidence the impact of the E.A.T programme:

- Transitioning from police innovation to a national programme of transformation: an overview of the upscaling of Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and trauma-informed training and evaluation
- Understanding the landscape of policing when responding to vulnerability: interviews with frontline officers across Wales
- An evaluation of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training: national roll out to police and partners
- Enabling early intervention and prevention in the policing of vulnerability: an evaluation of the role of police in multi-agency integrated service delivery
- Police perspectives on the impact of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training across Wales.

This programme of research investigates the impact of an early intervention and prevention response to vulnerability in policing and the criminal justice system. Research and evaluation is being completed around the ACE TIME training, and how it has been embedded; in addition to the evaluation of the wellbeing of police and partners.

For more information about the E.A.T programme please visit the website: www.aces.me.uk



Police perspectives on the impact of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training across Wales

The ACE TIME Training

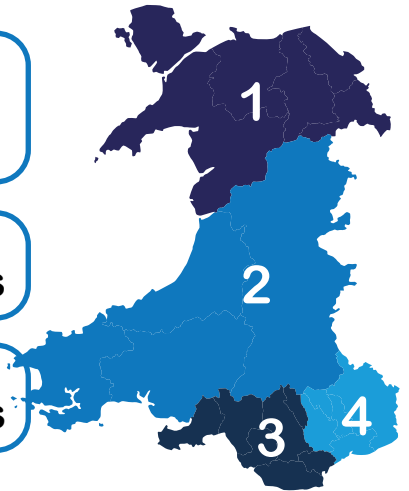
A one-day package delivered to frontline police officers, staff and multi-agency partners by the ACE coordinator service from Barnardo's*

Aim: to provide understanding around ACEs and the impact of trauma, enabling trauma-informed responses to vulnerability

66 officers and staff from the four Welsh police forces

Face-to-face, semi-structured **interviews**

Narrative analysis to explore **experiences**



What did police officers and staff say?



“ACE TIME Training has increased my...”

- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Information gathering
- Signposting
- Quality of referrals
- Multi-agency working



“[the training] definitely improves your knowledge”

“we’ll spend an extra 10, 15, 20 minutes talking to them...”

“a lady was sat next to me – just by meeting her, I’ve referred loads”

“The helpful support we received was...”

- ✓ ACE coordinator presence in stations following the training
- ✓ Feedback on referral forms from ACE coordinators and senior officers
- ✓ Add-on referral form training (Gwent Police Force only)

More information about local multi-agencies

“We still need...”

More referral form guidance

Support for the police to make change

ACEs refresher training



*Barnardo's is a charity that supports vulnerable children and young people. We would like to thank all the police officers and staff who participated in the research across Wales.



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Acronyms used in the report

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
ACE coordinator	Adverse Childhood Experience coordinator
ACE TIME training	Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-agency Early Action Together Training
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DC	Detective Constable
DCI	Detective Chief Inspector
DPP	Dyfed Powys Police
DS	Detective Sergeant
E.A.T	Early Action Together
FCC	Force Control Centre
GWP	Gwent Police
LDT	Local Delivery Team
MA	Multi-Agency
MARF	Multi-Agency Referral Form
NPT	Neighbourhood Police Team
NWP	North Wales Police
PC	Police Constable
PS	Police Sergeant
PPN	Public Protection Notification
PPU	Public Protection Unit
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
SD	Standard Deviation
SWP	South Wales Police

Executive Summary

The Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training is a one-day training package that was delivered to frontline police and multi-agency (MA) partners across Wales with the aim of providing awareness of ACEs and the impact of trauma, in order to develop tactical skills to enable a more informed response to vulnerable individuals (see Box 1). The training was delivered by the ACE coordinator (AC) service positioned within Barnardo's and the Early Action Together (E.A.T) national programme team between October 2018 and March 2020¹.

Box 1: The ACE TIME training objectives:

1. To support the workforce to increase awareness of ACEs and related trauma and the impact across life course
2. To enable individuals to competently and confidently respond using an ACE informed approach
3. To support a whole systems approach with partners to prevent and mitigate ACEs

The current report consists of interviews with police officers and staff who received the ACE TIME training to examine their perspectives on the impact of the training on their knowledge and practice. In addition, it examines their attitudes towards the AC service who delivered the training and the ongoing support following training, referred to as embedding, which aimed to support application to operational policing, facilitating the change to a trauma-informed workforce in Wales. This report will inform police and MA partners about the experience of police during a national programme of transformation and cultural change.

Methods

Sixty-six semi-structured interviews were completed with a range of different policing roles across the four forces in Wales; Dyfed Powys Police (DPP), Gwent Police (GWP), North Wales Police (NWP) and South Wales Police (SWP). A number of key questions were asked relating to police officers' and staffs' experiences of the ACE TIME training including: the impact of the training on knowledge and practice; further embedding provision and needs; AC service communication and involvement; E.A.T programme awareness; the impact on personal wellbeing; and the impact on MA working practices. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed prior to conducting a narrative analysis.

Key Findings

The evidence suggests that the ACE TIME training has made a positive impact, of varying degrees, on the knowledge and practice of police officers and staff across Wales. Key findings relate to: the impact on knowledge and understanding; the impact on practice; and the attitudes towards embedding. For example, many participants explained the positive impact on practice:

"[It] definitely works, my mentality when I go to calls now is I am seeing different things and thinking 'oh, that's an ACE, that's an ACE, oh that's an ACE' and it's just, it's unbelievable how one little training session could change the way you see different people." (see page 13)

¹ The ACE TIME training was continually developed over the time it was delivered, therefore participants may have received differing versions of the training (see Limitations on page 34).

Impact on knowledge and understanding:

- Most participants reported that **the training had increased understanding of ACEs** including their classification, their impact on behaviour and life outcomes, and the intergenerational cycle of ACEs.

"I didn't have that understanding of how much a child actually takes in from sort of being born to sort of four-ish, four or five." (see page 17)

- For other participants, **the training had provided a name for previous awareness** of how early experiences could have a detrimental impact in later life.
- **Awareness of using a trauma-informed approach was evident** yet some individuals were still unsure about the terminology.
- **Participant buy-in appeared to be dependent on police role**, which may have contributed to the varying knowledge reportedly gained.

Impact on practice:

- Participants reported a number of positive changes, including **delving deeper when responding to vulnerability, completing more detailed vulnerability referral forms and recommending agencies for support**. Nevertheless, many participants requested further guidance on how to complete referral forms and wanted standardised examples provided at the training.
- Many participants favoured the joint training with MA partners, which had also resulted in **increased MA engagement following the training**. However, some expressed a need for more joint working.

"One lady in particular was sat next to me - just by meeting her, I've referred loads." (see page 16)

- Overall, there was a **lack of recollection of any wellbeing messages** despite material on personal wellbeing having been delivered at the training.
- The main perceived **barriers to implementing trauma-informed practice were reported as public engagement, policing culture and officer attitudes**.

Attitudes towards further embedding delivered by the ACE coordinators:

- **Having external trainers from Barnardo's was viewed as positive** in the majority due to their expertise and ability to provide a different perspective.
- Many participants reported that they had **benefitted from the AC service's further embedding including their presence in police stations, support with cases, follow-up referral training and feedback on referrals**.

"you know she is constantly coming in and asking is there anything more that can be done? So, yeah really, really good." (see page 27)

- A number of participants felt **further embedding was needed** including consistent organisational support across the forces, and further information relating to available MA partners and how to implement practical messages from the training. Some participants also felt that **ACEs refresher training would be valuable**.

Conclusion

Findings suggest that the ACE TIME training can provide positive changes to policing knowledge and practice across Wales, supporting earlier findings from the ACE TIME evaluation on the impact immediately post-training. The findings also demonstrate the positive impact of the further embedding provided by the AC service to support changes to police practice. Overall, participants considered the training to be acceptable and viewed the aims as achievable, suggesting face validity. Nevertheless, there are a number of key areas that require further development and these are described in the key recommendations (see Box 2). Moreover, further research is warranted to evaluate the long-term sustainability of the training on police knowledge and practice.

Box 2: Key recommendations (see page 36 for full recommendations):

The content and delivery of the training:

- Ensure that police and staff understand how knowledge of ACEs and trauma fits into their role and how to apply it to their practice
- Facilitate joint training with police and MA partners where applicable
- Provide clear, standardised guidance on the completion of vulnerability referral forms (Public Protection Notice (PPN) in GWP and SWP, CID I 6 in NWP, and Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) in DPP)
- Continue using experts in the area, such as ACs, to embed the training messages.

The wider systems and structures to embed the training into practice:

- Provide mandatory follow-up referral training to all police forces
- Support officers to confidently decide on appropriate referrals in relation to signposting, supporting and safeguarding
- Provide wellbeing training to police and staff to embed understanding of the importance of own wellbeing when working with vulnerable individuals
- Encourage visible support from management in police organisations to promote change to a trauma-informed approach
- Increase opportunities for joint problem solving with partners, focusing on early intervention and prevention, as well as supporting co-location where possible
- Include the broader concept of ACEs throughout the induction of all new recruits
- Provide annual ACEs refreshers for all suitable police and staff to facilitate a trauma-informed workforce.

Further research:

- Evaluate the long-term sustainability of the training on police knowledge and practice
- Evaluate the impact of the training on operational policing including referrals for lower level vulnerabilities and MA working.

1. Introduction

This report seeks to examine police perspectives on the impact of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training and embedding work of the ACE coordinator (AC) service post training on police knowledge and practice across Wales. It sets out to provide collective perceptions of the ACE TIME training, the impact it has had on the views and practice of police officers and staff, what further embedding officers have received and any additional requirements they have to implement the training professionally. Furthermore, findings from this report feed into a number of key recommendations for police and multi-agency (MA) partner organisations on how to deliver a national programme of transformation and cultural change.

1.1 Understanding the landscape of policing when responding to vulnerability

A number of key findings emerged from the landscaping report [1] which provided a baseline of police understanding and perceptions of ACEs and vulnerability, before the ACE TIME training was delivered. These findings included:

- Police understood the long-term impact of high-level trauma e.g. physical abuse
- Police lacked awareness of the term “trauma-informed approach” and its meaning
- Police had a high regard for a whole-systems approach, through collaborative working with MA partners
- Personal wellbeing was not considered a priority when responding to vulnerability
- Police felt that training should be delivered by experts in the area.

These findings indicated the need for a broader understanding of ACEs, and education regarding the use of a trauma-informed approach within policing. Having a high regard for MA working suggests that further collaboration would be welcomed, and that the facilitation of joint working could be beneficial for all. The finding that personal wellbeing was not considered a priority when dealing with vulnerability was consistent with the high burn-out rates in policing [2]. This shows a need for further understanding of the importance of wellbeing and an improvement in internal wellbeing support. Believing that training should be delivered by experts, suggests that external trainers are valued highly and should therefore be effective in delivering ACEs training.

1.2 Development and delivery of the ACE TIME training

The ACE TIME training is a one-day package delivered to frontline police officers and staff² and MA partners³, with the aim of providing awareness of ACEs and the impact of trauma, in order to develop tactical skills to enable a more informed response to vulnerable individuals. Following a small-scale pilot in South Wales Police (SWP), the ACE TIME training, which was initially designed by Barnardo's, was further developed by the AC service who were positioned both within the charity and the Early Action Together (E.A.T) programme [3,4]. The ACs were recruited based on their extensive experience of working with vulnerability and their role was to deliver the ACE TIME training and provide ongoing support following training to police officers on the ground, to aid the application of the training messages into operational policing; a process referred to as embedding. MA partners were also invited to take part in the training with police, encouraging joint learning, and sharing of experiences and best practice.

2 Police staff that attended the ACE TIME training included roles such as PCSOs, call handlers and custody staff.

3 22% worked in children and young people's education services; 22% in the safeguarding, social care and family sector, 22% in the health and wellbeing sector and 16% in housing, community and local authority [5].

The training was split into two sessions; one taking place in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Content of each session is shown in Box 3.

Box 3: The ACE TIME training content	
<p>Morning Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with vulnerability • Impact of toxic stress on the brain • Understanding the impact of trauma on brain development, behaviour and responses to threat • Understanding ACEs and their impact on life outcomes • Secondary and vicarious trauma • Promoting personal wellbeing 	<p>Afternoon Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of ACE LENS (look, explore, needs, signpost, support, safeguard) to policing • Tactical skills, communication and effective responses to trauma • Working together for a trauma-informed early intervention approach • Promoting resilience to mitigate ACEs • Local and national resources and pathways available

The training lasted approximately seven hours and involved a PowerPoint presentation with a combination of exercises including: videos; case studies; and individual and group tasks. A variety of delivery methods were used to encourage engagement and participation. Each training session was run by two ACs who acted not only as trainers, but as a support system for any participants who found the topic of the training uncomfortable. The ACs were also prepared to challenge any negative attitudes towards the training messages in a trauma-informed manner, being aware that participant reactions could be influenced by personal experiences.

The training was designed with the following objectives:

1. To support the workforce to increase awareness of ACEs and related trauma and the impact across the life course.
2. To enable individuals to competently and confidently respond using an ACE-informed approach.
3. To support a whole system approach with partners to prevent and mitigate ACEs.

1.3 Findings from the ACE TIME training evaluation

An evaluation of the immediate impact of the ACE TIME training on police and MA partners' knowledge and practice, as well as their confidence and competence when responding to vulnerability, has been conducted using a survey method [5]. This was achieved by collecting survey data immediately before and after the training was administered. Initial findings showed that knowledge and understanding of working with vulnerability and ACEs, and the impact they can have, had increased post training. The training had also enabled participants to more confidently and competently respond to vulnerability using an ACE-informed approach. These positive findings from pre to post training evidences the immediate positive impact of the training. However, further qualitative exploration is necessary to better understand police experiences and perceptions, which the current report sought to achieve.

1.4 Aims

The aims of this report are to:

1. Explore and understand the impact of the Adverse Childhood Experience Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Early Action Together (ACE TIME) training on police in Wales
2. Explore and understand the impact of the embedding work of the ACE coordinator (AC) service post training in operational policing

2. Methods

This evaluation study set out to understand police officers' and staffs' perspectives on the impact of ACE TIME training across Wales. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to include a number of key questions relating to: the impact of the training on knowledge and practice; further embedding provision and needs; AC communication and involvement; E.A.T programme awareness; the impact on personal wellbeing; and the impact on MA working. A total of sixty-six face-to-face interviews were completed with police officers and staff from the four forces in Wales (Dyfed Powys Police (DPP), Gwent Police (GWP), North Wales Police (NWP) and SWP) from July to October 2019.

The full methodology and sample demographics are detailed in Appendix 1.

All procedures were approved by Health and Care Research Wales and Public Health Wales Research and Development (IRAS ref: 2535898).

3. Findings

3.1 Police experiences of the ACE TIME training

3.1.1 Perceptions of the training aims

To assess whether participants were aware of what was trying to be achieved by the training, they were asked to describe the main aims and responded as follows:

Perceived aims of the ACE TIME training

- To increase understanding of ACEs
- To be consciously aware of ACEs in practice
- To understand the impact of ACEs on behaviour and life outcomes
- To improve awareness of pathways to support
- To improve the quality of referral forms

Overall the perceived aims are aligned to the original objectives of the training (see 1.2 on page 10) that focus on awareness of ACEs, responding to incidents using an ACE-informed approach, and achieving a whole-systems approach with partners to mitigate ACEs. This suggests objectives were clearly outlined and supported by training content, which aided recall. Nevertheless, some individuals thought the aim of the training was to reduce the number of referrals being submitted: *“One of the negatives I took away from the course was discouraging officers to submit public protection notices.”* (SWP, 18, PS). This was not the case, and instead officers and staff were being encouraged to submit higher quality referrals to reduce the number of referrals that resulted in no further action. Believing the training was advocating a reduction in referrals may have been a barrier to openly considering the training initiatives and therefore should be made clearer in future training sessions and addressed by management within policing where required.

Positive attitudes towards the aims

Overall, aims were viewed positively and considered relevant to policing: *“...admirable, they’ve obviously got this spot on in terms of trying to reduce long-term offending and supporting people that have fallen into crime.”* (GWP, 07, PC). The preventative approach was favoured as an alternative to a punitive approach, suggesting police are open to becoming more trauma-informed: *“I think it is important because we do need to sort of look at the root cause of criminal behaviour rather than just every time someone commits a criminal act just punishing for that one act.”* (NWP, 09, PC).

Aims of the training are achievable

There was a strong consensus that the aims of the training were *“definitely”* achievable for most roles, because officers identified that they were *“the first responders to incidents involving children.”* (GWP, 15, DS) and were *“more likely to come into contact with people who have those sort of traumatic experiences”* (NWP, 09, PC). The aims were also deemed achievable because of available support from partner agencies (see 3.1.4 on page 15):

“Now we’ve been given the information to access those other agencies without social services, yeah there’s more connection. I referred one and they got back to me.” NWP, 10, PC

That said, some participants thought that the training could not prevent all negative outcomes due to the diverse nature of calls: *“You can’t go to this course, on this training, and think that’s going to help me solve all domestics cos they’re all different, or solve all vulnerability calls cos they’re all different.”* (DPP, 03, PC).

However, “the take away [was] that it’s got restrictions, it’s not going to work every time, but you try every time” (GWP, 02, Police Staff); suggesting that the police were willing to try despite the uncertainty of possible success.

Role was a strong determinant of whether participants thought the aims were achievable, with some roles (e.g. PCSO) being identified as more suitable to fulfilling the aims than others:

“We’re probably among the best in terms of the police roles to deal with them, [...] and we’ve probably got a bit more time on our hands than response officers have to do it.”
SWP, 02, PCSO

A number of reasons why participants felt that PCSOs may be more suited to fulfilling the aims of the training within their daily practice were given, for example, “because they’ve got the time to be able to sit down and do that and get a lot more information.” (NWP, 01, PCSO) and can “develop that bond with them to try and break the cycle.” (SWP, 12, PS), which may have resulted in varying degrees of participant buy-in dependant on role. In addition, it was suggested that those working in a response role had less opportunity to apply the training due to: having less time; dealing with individuals in crisis; and not having the opportunity to build rapport with individuals and families in the community, with one response officer expressing that the training aims were achievable in “any role where the officer doesn’t have to jump from one call to another.” (SWP, 22, PC). This finding corroborates evidence from the ACE TIME evaluation that certain roles viewed the training as less relevant due to their limited ability to apply what they had learnt into their practice [5].

On the whole, it appears the ACE TIME training has been effective at delivering messages around ACEs and the consequences of trauma and has done so in a way that encouraged the majority of participants to perceive trauma-informed policing as achievable.

3.1.2 Attitudes towards training

General positive attitudes

There was an underlying positive attitude from most interviewees towards the training in general, with comments about it being “really good” and “very informative” from all the four forces:

“It was one of the better training days we’ve had with Gwent Police if I’m honest.”
GWP, 04, PCSO

“I think North Wales Police did well with the training, yeah I do.”
NWP, 10, PC

“It was brilliant training, we all loved it [...]. I would go to that training happily every single year.”
SWP, 05, PCSO

“Having multi-agency come in, it kind of breaks those barriers down. Because we’re like well, ‘why aren’t they doing that?’... ‘this is how we do it and why.’” DPP, 07, PC

Training content was regarded by some as common sense - “I think that it’s just common sense that if a kid has a good upbringing they’re generally going to do well in adult life.” (GWP, 15, DS) - and “The fact that we are influenced by our parents’ decision making and choices is nothing new. And you can call it what you like, it’s always been there and it’s like we said earlier; a lot of it is common sense.” (DPP, 02, PC). However, the majority of participants described how the training positively impacted their knowledge and understanding (see 3.2.1 on page 17), suggesting that participants’ prior awareness of how early experiences influence later life was varied, for example:

“[It] definitely works, my mentality when I go to calls now is I am seeing different things and thinking ‘oh, that’s an ACE, that’s an ACE, oh that’s an ACE’ and it’s just, it’s unbelievable how one little training session can change the way you see different people.” SWP, 15, PCSO

Personal interest in the topic

Some participants expressed a personal interest in the subject due to having a passion for protecting the public and children, “it’s always been like a passion of mine to help kids” (GWP, 22, PC) and “I’ve always had a passion for PPU [Public Protection Unit] and I thought it was a good course.” (NWP, 10, PC). Further, one individual commented:

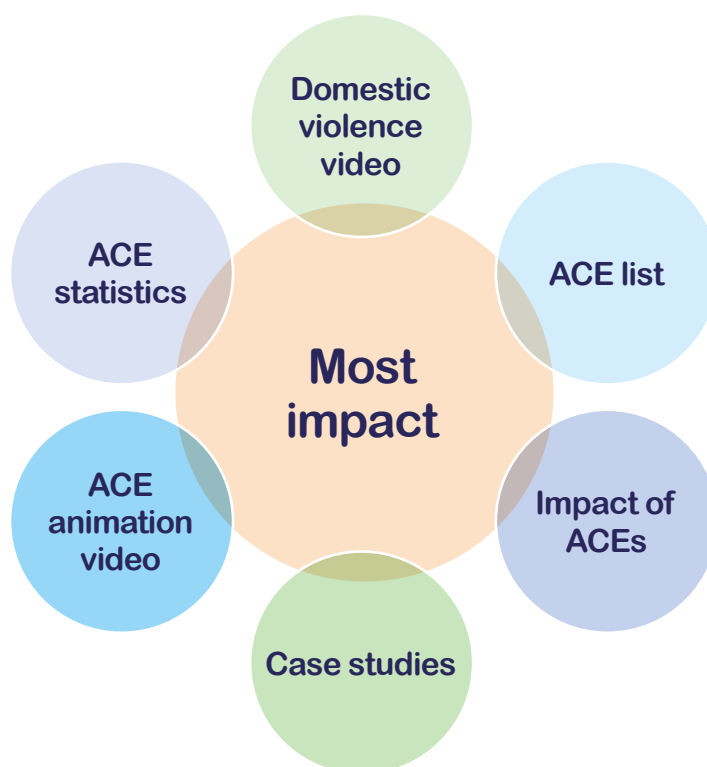
“It was the best training I’ve had. I don’t know if that’s because it’s personal to me, because I enjoyed it, because it’s what I’m interested in.” SWP, 20, PCSO

Therefore, engagement in the training may have been impacted by the extent of personal interest in the training topic, which has important implications for participant buy-in. In addition, different police roles may attract different personality types. Consequently, it may be beneficial to frame the training in a way that appeals to a variety of roles in order to encourage interest and consequential participant buy-in.

3.1.3 Aspects of the training that had a lasting impact

To understand the most impactful aspects of the training, participants were asked which core elements had resonated with them the most (see Figure 1) and why. This allowed for any relationship between method of delivery and impact to be explored.

Figure 1: The most memorable parts of the training⁴



The Scottish domestic violence video resonated the most

The Scottish domestic violence video⁵ was regarded by the majority as having the most lasting impact on participants because of the real significance: “By the time we’ve got there it could be like nothing has happened [...] even though all of that’s just happened on that video.” (DPP, 01, PC). Many participants described the domestic violence video as “*impactive*” and “*powerful*”, whereas others said it was “*upsetting*” and “*difficult*” to watch. Some participants explained how the video had visually helped

4 The ACE list/classification, ACE statistics and the impact of ACEs are discussed in relation to impact on knowledge, understanding and awareness of ACEs (see 3.2.1 on page 17).

5 The ‘Police Scotland domestic abuse video’ (also referred to as the ‘Strathclyde video’ within the training) depicts a real-life domestic violence incident.

to embed some of the key training messages in their minds, “Because you need to see it to have a full understanding.” (GWP, 04, PCSO) and was “so effective in getting the message across.” (SWP, 19, PCSO), suggesting that the video had induced learning and increased professional curiosity since the training:

“I’m glad that I got to watch it because that’s helped me understand now. [...] And we’d like to think that next time we deal with what seems to be an unwilling victim that there might be a little bit more if you scratch beneath the surface.” NWP, 02, PC

Some other activities were also described as resonating the most including the ACE animation⁶, with many expressing that the video “showed how the negative experiences can affect them in visual form.” (DPP, 05, DS) and that the simple cartoon setup “summed it up perfectly” (GWP, 01, PC). Moreover, some of the case studies had a lasting impact because “it makes it more real” (GWP, 16, DS). Additionally, footballer Ian Wright’s story was described as “quite powerful actually” (NWP, 03, PC) and for one individual it:

“Makes you smile and just makes you think, that man’s changed his life. And anybody could do that, any one of us and it doesn’t just have to be a police officer. It could be anybody, a kind voice at the other side of the phone or the control room, just anybody.” NWP, 02, PC

The vivid descriptions of the videos given by participants since viewing them emphasises the significant impression they had and the potential benefit of using video format in training to facilitate recall.

3.1.4 The importance of multi-agency partner presence

Participants were asked about their perceptions of having joint training with MA partners and how this impacted their learning. MA partner roles varied at each training session including roles such as social workers, care workers and youth workers.

Comments on MA presence at the training were consistently positive with participants expressing that they thought it was important – “It can only be a good thing, yeah definitely the more the merrier.” (NWP, 02, PC) – providing rationale to continue including MA partners in future police training, where relevant:

“Yeah, I think we need it. I think there should be packages of training certainly for vulnerability and dealing with incidents that we should all go to together.” GWP, 19, Inspector

A number of key reasons why the police felt that MA partner presence was important to the training are discussed below.

Builds working relationships and supports collaboration

MA presence was deemed to enable police and MA partners to share their perspectives and experiences: “I liked that we mixed with other agencies. Because we could feed on each other’s experiences.” (DPP, 05, PS). This sharing of knowledge not only enabled police and MA partners to learn from one another, but also supported the potential for future collaboration:

“I think any engagement with partners and any collaboration is important. And I think it can only be beneficial to us, it gets people talking.” SWP, 13, Inspector

Some police considered the training as a great networking opportunity, “to make those connections” (GWP, 11, Inspector) because “it gives you a chance to kind of know who they are and then when you’re out and about you might need them. You might need those contacts.” (GWP, 03, PCSO). Being able to put a face to a name was regarded as useful, “it’s massive to put a face to a name as well.” (GWP, 19,

6 The ACE animation was produced for Public Health Wales to raise awareness of ACEs, their potential to damage health across the life course and the roles that different agencies can play in preventing ACEs and supporting those affected by them. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiMjTzCnbNQ>.

Inspector) because “these days a lot of people you talk to are via email, you never see their face you know.” (GWP, 11, Inspector). This networking opportunity was thought to have encouraged the consideration of collaboration: “[We] know that they’re available should we need them and likewise.” (DPP, 05, PS). Consequently, one participant positively described meeting an individual from MIND, the mental health charity, at the training and spoke of referring a number of people to their service:

“One lady in particular was sat next to me - just by meeting her, I’ve referred loads.”
GWP, 08, PS

Fosters greater understanding of MA roles and responsibilities

Police from across the four forces thought the training provided an opportunity for MA partners and police to share explanations of their roles:

“I think it helps really because then if there’s sort of a question and answer about it you get a bit of an understanding of what each agency does when it comes to vulnerability.”
NWP, 09, PC

“...the other agencies coming together and meeting, just for a better understanding, I think that worked well, because it was a mix of everyone”
SWP, 03, PCSO

“It’s good when they come in and tell you what they’d sort of do and what they look at, what they want from us, their remit sort of thing.”
GWP, 20, PC

“...having multi-agency come in, it kind of breaks those barriers down. Because we’re like well, ‘why aren’t they doing that?’... ‘this is how we do it and why...’” DPP, 07, PC

Participants reported a greater understanding of MA partners perspectives since the training, “I’m more understanding... although we’re all there maybe for a common good, we all do have different priorities to appoint us” (GWP, 01, PC), which was thought to promote positive attitudes between agencies: “The police have more of a responsibility than I thought we did in this regard. I just think it highlights the fact that this isn’t a social services issue.” (GWP, 14, DC). Some participants also reported that the training reduced stereotypical perceptions, for example:

“...hearing their views on the police, the stereotypical beer swilling womanisers. And the police saying ‘oh they’re sort of left-wing, vegetarian, vegan sandal wearers.’ You know very old fashioned, cliched views of each other. And they’re [the stereotypes] getting washed away now.” DPP, 02, PC

This improvement in understanding of MA partner roles may have been beneficial in creating fair expectations of other services but may also encourage empathy and understanding around the strains other services are experiencing.

Beneficial to MA partners

There was a general view from all forces that the training was equally beneficial for police and MA partners and therefore, the training should be made available to all relevant agencies: “I think everybody who works with vulnerable people [...] should have it.” (DPP, 06, Police Staff). It was also viewed as helpful to know that other agencies were receiving the same training: “I’m all for that so I think just by understanding that all the agencies are having the same training as us is helpful.” (GWP, 05, PS).

One individual specifically thought it would be beneficial for “Crown Prosecution [...] in regards to sentencing and things like that.” (SWP, 21, DC). Another participant expressed that improvements in MA working were contingent on all agencies receiving the same training, “it’s alright us having the training but

let's hope the other agencies are getting the same training to work together." (NWP, 10, PC), implying the potential benefits of national, MA roll out.

3.2 Impact of the ACE TIME training on knowledge and practice

3.2.1 The impact on knowledge, understanding and awareness of ACEs

Interviewees were asked a range of questions exploring changes in knowledge and practice since receiving the ACE TIME training, providing insight into potential benefits of receiving the training.

Improved knowledge, understanding and awareness

It was reported by interviewees that the ACE training *"definitely improves your knowledge."* (GWP, 06, PCSO) and *"deepens [your] understanding"* (NWP, 02, PC). This new knowledge included:

- Awareness of ACEs - *"I wasn't aware of some of them."* (SWP, 21, DC)
- The age at which a child could be affected by their environment - *"I didn't have that understanding of how much a child actually takes in from sort of being born to sort of four-ish, four or five."* (SWP, 07, PCSO)
- How experiencing any number of ACEs can have detrimental effects - *"...the relatively low level of ACEs which can have a significant impact on children, I think that was surprising for me."* (SWP, 11, Inspector)
- The intergenerational nature of ACEs - *"What it did do is increase my understanding of the side effects of it. As in, if mum and dad are both alcoholics, the child's ability to communicate correctly is impacted on greatly... So therefore when you speak to that first generation... they're not really adults, their brain hasn't developed at the right stages at the right times."* NWP, 08, PS

The training provided notable insight into the national prevalence statistics surrounding ACEs from earlier research [7]: *"somebody's like 20 times more likely to go to prison if they've got three or more ACEs in their childhood [...] sticks in your head quite a lot and just to see how damaging everything can be."* (SWP, 09, PS). Some interviewees described perceptions that experiencing ACEs made someone more likely to be abusive as an adult (e.g. the intergenerational cycle of adversity): *"If my dad was a drug user and used to beat my mother in front of me, the chances are when I was an adult I probably would beat my girlfriend or wife up."* (GWP, 15, DS). However, some officers also appeared to understand that ACEs alone do not predict future outcomes: *"just because they've got ACEs doesn't mean anything is going to be wrong does it."* (DPP, 01, PC). This was vital as one of the aims of the training was to encourage the mitigation of ACEs, not to assume young people's lives have been pre-determined by their early experiences. While having ACEs may increase the likelihood of violence perpetration in the future, the evidence suggests that the chances of victimisation are of equal concern [6]. Therefore, it is important to address this idea that the abused become abusers, at the training, to reduce the spread of misinformation.

Participants recalled how the training had increased their awareness of ACEs within practice, for example: *"...before the course it didn't cross my mind, not once"* (SWP, 19, PCSO) yet *"every call I go to now you're like, oh, you question yourself, oh, 'is this why or is that why?'"* (SWP, 19, PCSO). Additionally, participants reported a degree of learning on the subject: *"It's probably something that we haven't stopped to think about in so much detail before."* (DPP, 05, PS).

Officers felt their ability to recognise ACEs was improved as they now had the knowledge to facilitate this - *"subconsciously I would start to see those things more than before."* (SWP, 22, PC) - and were able to apply

their ACEs knowledge to previous incidents:

“Sort of 04:00 in the morning they’d be shouting and bawling in the street, dragging the kids in the house. Obviously, the property was in a state of disrepair as well. So, obviously going back to the training, thinking about it obviously I was probably aware it was probably likely to be alcohol issues, drug issues, financial issues due to the state of the house.” NWP, 12, PCSO

Many participants did not recognise a difference between ACEs and vulnerability but reported being more aware of vulnerability in general as a result of the training: *“I just know that vulnerability is more evident maybe than what I would have thought before doing the training.”* (NWP, 13, PCSO). For others, the training appeared to explain the relationship between ACEs and vulnerability: *“I think it has helped my knowledge and understanding of ACEs... and the link really between that and vulnerability.”* (SWP, 18, PS). In addition, some officers described how their previous understanding of vulnerability fits with their new knowledge about ACEs: *“I obviously knew vulnerability through CSE [Child Sexual Exploitation]. But then looking at the ACEs it also helps me understand why they’re then vulnerable to CSE because it’s linked nicely into that.”* (NWP, 01, PCSO).

Despite the majority of participants reporting an improvement in their knowledge and understanding of ACEs, there were some reports that the training had little or no impact, with views that it was *“just kind of highlighting it [ACEs] and making it more of a focus.”* (GWP, 04, PCSO). This was usually because officers felt they were knowledgeable beforehand as a result of:

- Previous roles - *“I was a special needs teaching assistant, so it kind of brought back some of the scenarios that I’ve been in in the school and the training I’ve been in.”* (SWP, 04, PCSO)
- Further education - *“I did psychology and child psychology anyway....I did my dissertation on born or bred sort of thing.”* (NWP, 03, PC)
- Personal experiences - *“I’d say no because...I wrote my own story of my ACEs when I was growing up.”* (GWP, 03, PCSO).

Some officers and staff felt that although their knowledge had not increased, the training had *“put a name on [ACEs]...”* (GWP, 04, PCSO), describing how although they did not have a phrase to encompass it - *“we didn’t know what they [ACEs] were called”* (GWP, 21, PC) - they were aware of how early experiences could have a detrimental impact in later life:

“A lot of officers perhaps already understood some of the challenges and some of the issues around child trauma, but this kind of puts a name to it.” SWP, 18, PS

Thus, the training appeared to be *“highlighting”* ACEs whilst bringing it to the forefront of their minds.

Overall, these findings suggest that the training improved knowledge and understanding for the majority of police officers and staff, which has positive implications for the effectiveness of the training at meeting its objectives. This is also consistent with findings presented in the ACE TIME evaluation report [5]. Even amongst those who reported no improvement in knowledge, the training provided new terminology for situations they come across frequently, which could facilitate shared understanding.

3.2.2 The impact on practice

Officers were asked whether the training had an impact on their practice, to which a variety of behavioural changes were reported.

Information collected increased

Some officers spoke of spending more time with service users in order to gain information that would previously be considered as “outside [of] the box” (SWP, 16, PCSO), for example:

“Maybe we’ll spend an extra 10, 15, 20 minutes talking to them, about why, what can we do there, you know, what can we do to stop you doing this again, and those sort of questions come into your mind now, whereas they didn’t before.” SWP, 10, DC

“Delve[ing] a little bit deeper” (SWP, 19, PCSO) to gain further understanding of the individuals involved was reported across the forces. This was done by “not just asking the run of the mill questions” (SWP, 04, PCSO) but instead being tactical and exploring all avenues of conversation:

“Even asking questions of the kids, you know, ‘How’s school?’ You know, if they say, ‘I haven’t been,’ it throws up, ‘Why aren’t you going?’ and things like that.” SWP, 09, PS

Some officers also referred to “put[ting] a wedge in the door” (SWP, 04, PCSO), and changing the way they asked questions in order to encourage rapport and sharing: “[It’s] not just standing up with your clipboard in your hand, ‘right I’ve been told to come and check you’re alright, are you alright?’ It’s having a cup of coffee, sit down, ‘well I’m just gonna stay here for 10 minutes, you know I’ve got other things to do’. And then say, ‘are you okay?’” (GWP, 02, Police Staff).

It was felt that by further exploration, officers could provide more appropriate support, as they would have a better idea of the needs of the individual: “find out more about them so they can try and get the right sort of support in place.” (SWP, 05, PCSO). It was also reported that in-depth discussions were important for unearthing information that might impact decisions on thresholds, for example, discovering safeguarding problems that would qualify for statutory service intervention:

“I think if ACE training had been in place prior to that incident [...] perhaps instead of her being categorised as a medium risk missing person, I think she would have been categorised as a high risk missing person.” SWP, 18, PS

In regards to offenders, “rather than just blankly dealing with the offence” (DPP, 02, PC), staff members reported aiming to understand the reasons behind an individuals’ behaviour, often by specifically asking about their childhood experiences: “I just decided to have a conversation about him, his life, his background about what his kind of troubles are.” (SWP, 22, PC). This appeared to lead to increased empathy towards offenders, “looking at it from a trauma perspective, you can see why they’re acting in a certain way.” (NWP, 01, PCSO) and towards their criminal activity:

“They’re committing the crime maybe because of the upbringing they’ve had.” SWP, 20, PCSO
“They’ve been through X, Y and Z so they are more likely to go and do this and that, yeah.” GWP, 08, PS

These findings corroborate evidence from a previous evaluation that reported how participants initially felt the training would improve their communication with vulnerable people by increasing their empathy and enabling better information gathering as well as improving their referrals [5]. This suggests that, as a result of the training, participants are thinking more holistically, to build a bigger picture of individuals’ circumstances, which can help towards providing tailored support.

Quality of referral forms improved

Among those who felt the training impacted their practice, the majority, from across all four forces, felt that the quality of vulnerability referral forms (Public Protection Notices [PPNs]⁷, Multi-Agency Referral Forms [MARFs]⁸ and CID16s⁹) had improved: *“the quality of [them] has improved”* (GWP, 05, PS). This was because *“you just fill out a little bit more detail”* (SWP, 19, PCSO) regarding the following:

Information about possible ACEs	Recommended agencies for support	Using ACEs language
<i>“Incorporating the ACEs into it when we need to do a CID-16.”</i> NWP, 07, PC	<i>“...now I put on my MARFs who I think are the best people to be supporting that person.”</i> DPP, 03, PC	<i>“People use the language of ACE now and previously that was not the case.”</i> GWP, 13, PS

Some officers felt this improvement was because previous direction on referrals was inadequate: *“I think previously, before the ACEs programme and Barnardo’s input, I think there wasn’t enough input on what should be in there.”* (GWP, 19, Inspector). Whereas, other officers felt that in order for the ACEs training to improve the quality of referrals, *“[it] has to be coupled with the PPN [referral] training as well”* (GWP, 13, PS), supporting the importance of the further instruction relating to referrals (see 3.3.2 on page 26).

Nevertheless, there was also evidence that some participants believed they were merely being asked to list the ACEs of an individual on their referral forms - *“I list them at the bottom.”* (GWP, 21, PC) - with some asking for an inclusion of ACEs ‘check boxes’ on future referrals: *“just put the nine ACEs, say yes/no, yes/no”* (GWP, 22, PC). This shows that some individuals appear to have developed incorrect understanding of the intended use of ACEs, using ACE scores as the potential basis for decisions or as intervention thresholds [8]. While, understanding and recognising ACEs can help to develop trauma-informed tactical policing, a tick-box style method of reporting ACEs would not provide the detail needed for the units such as the Public Protection Unit (SWP and GWP), and Central Referral Unit (DPP and NWP) to make informed decisions about risk. Instead, detailed descriptions on ACEs are required within policing to ensure that necessary thresholds can be met and the relevant support can be provided. To avoid this misunderstanding, clear reiteration of instructions from senior officers within policing should be given to those filling out referral forms.

Quantity of referrals altered

The training was also reported to have influenced the quantity of police referrals being submitted. In NWP, participants reported a decrease in police referrals: *“I don’t submit as many now, only if I feel that they need to be submitted. It’s not just a covering my back-job sort of thing.”* (NWP, 13, PCSO). This appeared to be partly due to an increase in signposting, where police would recommend specific agencies or charities that they were aware of in the area: *“I am aware that signposting wise we can try and go down that route of contacting them and getting it sorted there and then rather than trying to put a referral in.”* (NWP, 07, PC). Additionally, by encouraging individuals to seek help themselves, officers felt they were empowering individuals whilst also reducing time spent filling out referral forms:

7 PPN is an information sharing document completed by officers in GWP and SWP following attendance at a scene where a safeguarding or welfare concern has been identified.
 8 A MARF is an information sharing document completed by officers in DPP when there is a safeguarding concern for an adult or child.
 9 CID16 is an information sharing document completed by officers in NWP following attendance at a scene where a safeguarding or welfare concern has been identified.

“What we would have done in the past is spend five hours with him sorting that out and then come back and waste another hour doing a referral that wouldn't have any kind of impact on anything. So we can now just say he was signposted to A&E, they've referred him to drug and alcohol and then that's dealt with.” NWP, 07, PC

The introduction of a direct referral form to the early help hub also resulted in fewer police referrals, *“The number of CID 16s have reduced but the number of referrals to the early intervention hub have increased.”* (NWP, 08, PS), which one Sergeant felt was now standard practice: *“I don't have to keep saying to my staff ‘have you thought of early intervention, have you offered the early intervention help.’ That is becoming more the norm for the staff to offer it and to document that they've offered it.”* (NWP, 08, PS). However, this direct referral pathway was not available in other force areas.

Other participants reported, *“put[ting] more referrals in”* (GWP, 17, DC) as a result of new knowledge gained from the training. This was because participants were more likely to deem an incident as important to record after exploring an individual's ACEs: *“there has been times when I've gone ‘didn't we need to do a PPN for that person because that's the ACE thing?’”* (SWP, 02, PCSO). However, there was some uncertainty as to whether spending time writing detailed referrals made any difference to outcomes:

“I'll write those things up into a PPN but realistically I'm thinking if I might write even the most detailed report and list all the ACEs that are sort of there, I'm sceptical as to that extra effort that I put into it, will that attract anymore support for that family or not?” SWP, 22, PC

This indicates that further messages around when a referral should be submitted need to be provided by managerial staff within the police, along with some understanding of the thresholds that lead to further action so that officers can feel confident their referral is going to have an impact.

No impact on referrals

Nevertheless, an equal proportion of participants, across the forces, felt that the training had no impact on their referrals: *“I don't think the training has changed the way, changed my approach to them in particular.”* (SWP, 06, PCSO); *“it's not really changed how I deal with things.”* (GWP, 07, PC). This was typically because they felt they were already filling out their referrals to a high standard:

“No, I don't think there's anything that I didn't do before that I do now in order to get people more support.” DPP, 05, PS

Some officers felt *“too scared to not put one in”* (NWP, 03, PC) due to rigid guidelines around submitting referrals and thus felt that there was no room for changes to be made:

“...we've got a very rigid way which we have got to make sure everything is filled in and done. So, no, no real effect from that.” GWP, 02, Police Staff

These findings have implications for participant buy-in to the training, as officers are less likely to be open to the concept of changing their referral practices if they believe there is no room for improvement. This suggests that participants need assurance during the training that improvements can be made and that senior management within policing support this change.

Improved confidence

Across all forces, many participants felt that the training improved their confidence in responding to ACEs and vulnerability:

“Dealing with the vulnerable person and knowing what agencies we can use to help them, I definitely feel more confident.” GWP, 05, PS

Some participants felt that their improved confidence may result in more honest conversations with other professionals, leading to the provision of better support, *“it gives people that confidence really to say, ‘well, we know actually you’ve got to do something about this because we know you’ve had the ACEs training.’”* (GWP, 11, Inspector) and *“it does give me more confidence to sort of with agencies say, ‘well, have you considered this?’”* (SWP, 14, PCSO).

The training was most beneficial for those who initially lacked confidence in their ability to respond to vulnerability.

3.2.3 The impact on multi-agency working

Opposing views were reported concerning participants’ use of MA partners following training to explore how it may have influenced their working relationships; opposing views were found.

Increase in collaborative working

A key aim of the training was to encourage collaborative working to ensure the best possible support for vulnerable members of the public. For many officers, the training had increased collaboration with MA partners, *“there’s more connection.”* (NWP, 10, PC) and *“use of partner agencies has certainly increased”* (SWP, 10, PC). This was thought to be a result of an increased awareness of partner agencies, *“I’m more aware now of who can help me”* (NWP, 02, PC) and *“I didn’t even know that that role was available.”* (DPP, 05, PS). Officers specifically referred to learning about the Single Point of Access¹⁰ (SPOA), *“I mean I didn’t even know we had a SPOA, a single point of access for like vulnerable adults”* (NWP, 06, PCSO) and the early help hub *“I have a better understanding of referring people to the early help hub and what it’s all about.”* (NWP, 13, PCSO). This was seen as a marked improvement since the training:

“We didn’t have that 12 months ago... I wouldn’t have known I could do these things to help.”
NWP, 02, PC

No impact on multi-agency working

Conversely, other participants felt that the training had no impact on MA working because of pre-existing professional familiarity, *“I’d say it’s the same really because it’s so regular.”* (GWP, 02, Police Staff) and good working relationships, *“we’ve always engaged well and professionally with them.”* (DPP, 05, PS). Therefore, it may be that improvements in MA working were sustained in those who had limited previous awareness of available MA services and how to use them. Overall, the training seems to have encouraged police to assess their working relationships with MA partners, whether they were deemed to need improvement or not, which can only be beneficial for achieving best joint working practice.

3.2.4 The impact on personal life

Potential wider consequences or iatrogenic effects of the training were explored by discussing participants’ behaviour changes.

Awareness of ACEs outside of work

Staff across forces described how they now consider ACEs when around their own children and have an improved awareness of long-term impact of their parenting behaviour: *“I’m much more mindful about how I speak to my children, in particular like negative things”* (DPP, 08, DC); *“I do go home and think, always find a positive even if they do something naughty, find a positive, and the way you word things”* (SWP, 01, PCSO); *“I found it quite emotive especially this parental separation because my wife and I separated, and we have two children...”* (GWP, 01, PC); and *“I try to be more careful what my son gets exposed to whether it be*

¹⁰ Single Point of Access – an access process where multiple services share a single set of contact information in order to provide information, advice and assistance in a local area for vulnerable people.

at school, whether it be at home.” (NWP, 02, PC). Additionally, one officer spoke of concerns over their child being perceived to have ACEs by others: “it’s put a bit more pressure on me I think. I put a bit more pressure on myself for my child to be looking pristine for nursery.” (GWP, 04, PCSO).

Participants commented that since the training, they have been more observant within the community, outside of work, recognising the potential effects ACEs may be having on others:

“Certainly, when you stand in a school yard and I probably live in quite a deprived area. You look around and you can see the ACEs, they’re jumping out at you.” SWP, 13, Inspector

The idea that “you can see the ACEs”, for example “their hair is overgrown, their shoes are flapping, they’ve got holes in their trousers” (GWP, 04, PCSO), is potentially problematic because whilst living in poverty has its own challenges, it cannot be assumed that individuals from a lower socio-economic background are more likely to have ACEs. Statistically, ACEs are known to be present across varying levels of deprivation [9]. Therefore, addressing the complexity of the relationship between ACEs and deprivation is important for the appropriate detection of ACEs.

When recognising ACEs outside of work, some officers and staff spoke of using their professional knowledge to help others: “My niece is divorced and her children are having issues... [I] say to them ‘well your council should be running something like early intervention to assist you in getting some assistance from other agencies.’” (NWP, 08, PS).

Exploring their own ACEs

The training encouraged participants to consider whether they had ACEs themselves: “you think to yourself, have I got any?” (GWP, 22, PC); “...even my own personal life, you know, you do think about parents breaking up or domestics and things.” (SWP, 19, PCSO). As this was expected, the ACs offered emotional support during the training and explained that if anyone felt they needed to, they could leave the room and a trainer would follow them out to provide support. In addition, a training exercise included a discussion about wellbeing services available to police; covering internal and external support. The potential effect of the training on participants’ wellbeing is an important consideration for future training as it may influence how participants respond and behave during the training, and possibly have a delayed impact on participants after the training.

No impact on personal life

It was also common for participants in all forces to report no personal changes following the training. Reasons for this included:

- Having a different mind-set at home - “I don’t really get involved in that sort of stuff when I’m out, I’ve sort of got my own little sort of family life.” (GWP, 07, PC)
- Not coming across young people outside of work - “I don’t deal with kids really outside of my, outside of jobs. So, I wouldn’t say it’s really affected me that much in my personal life.” (SWP, 06, PCSO)
- Not being a parent - “I don’t have children so I suppose there isn’t a direct impact.” (GWP, 14, DC)
- Feeling they would always respond to vulnerability in the same manner because “I’m never fully off duty.” (SWP, 22, PC):
“I think if you come across anything you always deal with it the same way as you deal with it in work anyway.” GWP, 02, Police Staff

Overall, messages around ACEs resonated with some participants’ personal lives and not others, although there is no evidence to suggest either outcome is beneficial. In general, participants did not appear to be negatively impacted, which suggests the training can be delivered safely.

3.2.5 The impact on wellbeing awareness

A key message from the training was how vicarious and secondary trauma could have a negative impact on wellbeing. Therefore, participants were asked whether the training had any impact on the awareness of their wellbeing, to evaluate the effectiveness of delivery of this message.

Lack of wellbeing messages and impact on wellbeing

The majority of participants across all forces were unable to recall any personal wellbeing messages, despite their inclusion in the training. For example, *“I remember them speaking about protecting other people’s wellbeing, but I can’t remember speaking about your own wellbeing.”* (SWP, 06, PCSO). As a result, many officers said that the training had no impact on their awareness of how the role influences their wellbeing and therefore it is likely that the police still do not regard their wellbeing as important – as found when exploring the landscape of policing pre-ACE TIME training [1].

It is unclear if lack of recollection of wellbeing messages was due to aspects of delivery, such as number of slides or time of day, or due to preconceived perceptions of relevance to officers. Nevertheless, this result is concerning given the high impact of the role on police and the perceived cultural barriers around seeking wellbeing support [1] and implies the need for stronger wellbeing messages throughout the training. Some participants felt that they had not benefited from any wellbeing messages because of their existing awareness, *“No, I’m quite aware of my own wellbeing and don’t really need anybody to tell me about that.”* (DPP, 02, PC) and *“I know I’ve got to look after myself and do the best I can for my body and myself and my mind and soul.”* (NWP, 05, PCSO). This also suggests a degree of personal resilience, which may have influenced the impact that the wellbeing messages had.

Participants who did recall wellbeing messages felt the training *“was geared around making sure you’re alright.”* (SWP, 03, PCSO) and reported changes in the awareness of their own wellbeing, responding with comments such as: *“it did definitely raise my awareness of my own [wellbeing].”* (SWP, 14, PCSO) and *“certainly improved knowledge of stresses and the way I deal with them.”* (NWP, 07, PC). Some participants described how important they felt the wellbeing messages were:

“It’s probably a torch that needed shining for some time because, if it was left to in-house training we’d paper over it because that’s the job as opposed to ‘should it be really considered as part of your job?’” (GWP, 19, Inspector)

This demonstrates how some may feel that the police are expected to deal with trauma and not be affected by it: *“I think we just take that as normality don’t we?”* (SWP, 10, PC). These attitudes may contribute to any perceptions of receiving poor wellbeing support among the police.

Overall, information about vicarious and secondary trauma needs to be reiterated across the forces in Wales. This is to ensure that all police officers and staff understand how their wellbeing may be negatively impacted by the high concentration of vulnerability-related calls they are receiving and that to look after the public, they must look after themselves.

3.2.6 Perceived barriers to implementing training messages

Participants were asked what they felt the barriers were to implementing trauma-informed practice. The main reported barriers included public engagement, policing culture and officer attitudes (discussed below). Nevertheless, following analysis, the barriers appeared to reflect wider inherent challenges in the policing role [1], which suggests overcoming them would not only be beneficial for this specific training programme, but would also ease everyday practice.

Public engagement

Limited public engagement was the most frequently cited barrier, with a widespread belief that you can only help someone if they want to be helped: *“if the person that you’re dealing with is receptive to the assistance and the help and everything that you give them, great. If they’re not, you can’t do anything.”* (DPP, 06, Police Staff). Participants felt the public were often averse to communicating with the police, *“a lot of them are scared of the police”* (SWP, 20, PCSO); *“as soon as they see us, they’re shouting things and it’s quite difficult... They can’t be seen associating with us.”* (GWP, 04, PCSO), making information gathering on previous trauma challenging and reducing the ability to provide appropriate support:

“So it’s difficult for us to get them one on one, get to know them to see what’s going on in their life.” GWP, 04, PCSO

This suggests more emphasis is required on how toxic stress can influence individuals’ responses to situations - including interactions with the police - and how soft skills (e.g. building rapport; responding empathetically) can help to overcome engagement challenges, particularly for those who are resistant to help.

Police uniform was also thought to limit engagement: *“When they’re having a mental health episode, sometimes the last person you wanna see is someone in a uniform with a body cam flashing at you.”* (DPP, 03, PC). Some officers described how uniform may be associated with previous negative experiences with the police: *“if children or adults have had bad experiences with police they don’t see, they just see the uniform.”* (SWP, 04, PCSO).

A number of officers felt that the police are perceived more negatively among certain community groups, who may prefer to engage with other services: *“A lot of the people that we deal with won’t engage with us necessarily but they may engage with mental health services or social services, something like that. Whereas they have a very negative opinion of the police and they just think we’re going to trip them up and sort of send them to prison.”* (NWP, 09, PC). This suggests the need for a change to public perspectives of the police, in order to facilitate effective responses, and partly explained the attitude among police that they are sometimes not best suited to respond. However, there may also be a need for police to trust and utilise the available partner agencies who they feel can provide the right support to vulnerable people.

Policing culture and officer attitudes

Other perceived barriers included the culture within policing and how it influences workforce attitudes, *“I think the biggest barrier is the culture of the police”* (NWP, 07, PC) because *“there’s always resistance for whatever change in the police.”* (NWP, 07, PC). Participants spoke of *“the mind set of ‘we need to arrest people when they’ve done something bad, we need to put them before the courts.’”* (GWP, 13, PS), restricting their ability to look beyond a crime and understand the reason(s) behind behaviour. In addition, the culture of accountability within policing was reported as a barrier to changing referral practices:

“We are probably putting too many public protection notices in, however, I think there’s a reason why police officers do that because we are so accountable.” SWP, 18, PS

Participants also described how some police may not *“want to take it [the ACE TIME training] on board”* (GWP, 06, PCSO), seeing it as *“the new gimmick”* (SWP, 14, PCSO). This was regardless of whether they gained knowledge: *“they’re going to be more aware but they might not necessarily buy into it.”* (GWP, 13, PS) or, *“find it to be beneficial.”* (GWP, 06, PCSO). Participants described officers choosing to disregard the training: *“we’re people too. Sometimes you’re not in the mood to deal with it in that sort of way, you just want to get rid of it as quickly as you can.”* (SWP, 06, PCSO). This was often because it sounded like additional work: *“I think there was probably some resistance from frontline officers at one point because they felt it was going to be an additional level of work for them.”* (GWP, 19, Inspector). Another officer described how sometimes *“they think you’re trying to teach them to suck eggs”* (SWP, 07, PCSO), which may result in an unwillingness to consider the training as valuable. Differences by age cohort were also identified: *“I’m sure the way I react to something and the way someone who’s in their mid-20s reacts, just because of life experience, would be different anyway.”* (DPP, 04, PS).

The findings suggest the need for a continued push for organisational change within the police to transform the culture and related attitudes. Reassuring participants throughout the training that culture change requires a significant amount of time and commitment may help relieve feelings that police culture will forever block potential changes to policing approaches. Nevertheless, previous research has suggested that culture change does not happen immediately and can take decades [10]. Therefore, efforts to change culture by introducing new initiatives, such as the ACE TIME training, should not be deterred by this finding.

3.3 Embedding and facilitation of changes

3.3.1 Attitudes towards ACE coordinators

The training was developed and delivered by the AC service, comprised of experts from Barnardo’s positioned within E.A.T but external to the police. Participants were asked how they thought this impacted upon the effectiveness of the training.

Positive attitudes towards ACE coordinators as trainers

Positive attitudes towards the ACs were widespread, with participants from all four forces describing the trainers as: “very good” (NWP, 02, PC); “brilliant” (DPP, 07, PC); “engaging” (DPP, 04, PS); “really passionate” (SWP, 13, Inspector); “knowledgeable” (SWP, 05, PCSO); and “interesting to listen to” (NWP, 11, DC).

Officers liked that the ACs had relevant experience and could provide a different perspective (see Table 1), endowing them with credibility as trainers, over and above that of police staff. This supports previous findings that police feel training should be delivered by relevant experts in the field [1].

Table 1: Perceived benefits and challenges of having external experts to deliver the training

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More credible 2. Relevant experience 3. Experts in their own field 4. Provides different perspective 5. Good understanding of police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of understanding of police 2. Conflicting perspectives

3.3.2 Perceptions of ACE coordinator embedding work

The AC service provided ongoing assistance following training, referred to as embedding, to support application of information to operational policing and facilitate movement toward a trauma-informed workforce in Wales. Understanding participant perceptions of the embedding process can provide insights to whether it is effective and why. The AC service’s approach to embedding varied depending on force area and polarised opinion, with only some force areas suggesting there was good ongoing support.

Beneficial to have ACE coordinators present at stations

Participants reported varying levels of AC presence at their local stations:

“Yeah I’ve seen them a couple of times around the station.” NWP, 03, PC

“Yeah, they’re here all the time.” DPP, 04, PS

There was a strong consensus that it was beneficial to have the ACs present at stations: *“I think that’s good that they come in and visit different stations and tell you what they’re up to.”* (SWP, 07, PCSO). This presence assisted in the further embedding of the training messages and enhancing officers’ tactical skills in responding to vulnerable individuals in a trauma-informed way: *“That’s the follow up I guess, isn’t it? And a reminder to use the stuff from the course.”* (DPP, 03, PC). In addition, it enabled further discussion, *“I’ve seen them around here a few times [...] I’ve spoken to them about some [CID] I 6s and referrals that have gone in.”* (NWP, 01, PCSO). AC presence also prompted individuals to ask for support:

“I know that at times I probably think, ‘I won’t bother her with it’, but because you see her you’re like, ‘Oh, actually while you’re here.” SWP, 19, PCSO

Participants regarded the face-to-face contact with ACs as a valuable method of communication to aid learning, *“it’s just having someone there – because sometimes being on the phone or being on the email isn’t the same as talking face-to-face.”* (SWP, 19, PCSO) and *“just chatting over the table, you get a lot more from it, I suppose, cos it’s one-to-one.”* (DPP, 03, PC).

Participants appeared to appreciate this casual approach taken by the ACs, which allowed them to seek advice flexibly at a time that suited them: *“I think that’s good when you’re not sort of taken out of work but just have a casual conversation. And again, it’s sort of topping up your knowledge and reminding you.”* (SWP, 07, PCSO). This approach may have helped to overcome some of the inherent challenges of the dynamic working environment in policing by providing an opportunity for police to seek and utilise support, based on their own perceived need; thus enabling autonomy in their role. Nevertheless, the ACs’ unstructured approach to support did not always result in engagement, *“I haven’t spoken to them but they have been here. I think it was seeing if anybody needed any help or anything but, yes, they’ve been back.”* (GWP, 21, PC), suggesting this form of embedding may not be beneficial for all.

In SWP and DPP, participants spoke about the ACs attending patrols and “ride alongs” with police – *“She came out on a Friday just to see how we dealt with it and if she could see any ACEs that were picked up.”* (SWP, 15, PCSO) – which was viewed as beneficial as it gave the ACs the opportunity to experience the type of calls police respond to and see their perspective:

“I think that’s opened their eyes as trainers to the reality of the situation cos you can’t get it across in a training – what it’s like to go to these calls.” DPP, 03, PC

The ACs were also reportedly providing details on MA contacts to support with cases, *“[The ACs have] given me details in relation to Better Futures, which is really good, and Barnardo’s which is trying to get that support for this young child.”* (DPP, 08, PC) and *“We’ve had a few inputs then from Barnardo’s, so we’re aware of other agencies that can assist us in supporting these children.”* (SWP, 19, PCSO).

Continued input from the ACs in SWP was viewed as positive: *“You know she is constantly coming in and asking is there anything more that can be done? So, yeah really, really good.”* (SWP, 14, PCSO). ACs supported the set-up of early help hubs and orientation of new staff: *“[the AC] she’s been sort of crucial in the implementing of the E.A.T PCSO that’s now within the hub.”* (SWP, 13, Inspector). A PCSO working within the hub explained that the presence of the ACs had provided the opportunity to work one-to-one:

“She bases herself in stations, like I’m working with her all day tomorrow and we’ll speak to response teams and community teams, she works with them quite a lot.” SWP, 01, PCSO

The presence of ACs underlined the importance of training messages, “[it] shows us that it’s moving forward and we are taking it seriously.” (SWP, 10, PC) because: “Normally you get the training and that’s it. Done. And there’s no follow up, there’s no assistance afterwards, there’s no reminders or anything.” (SWP, 09, PS). This suggests that AC presence could be key to encouraging participant buy-in to the value and durability of the training messages.

Benefits of an add-on referral workshop

In GWP only, police received a follow-up PPN (referral) workshop, designed and delivered by the AC service. Many officers reported improved confidence in submitting quality PPNs (see 3.2.3-4 on page 22), with ACs providing specific support with and feedback on referral forms: “I have contact with them around referrals and things to make sure that we’re putting the right information in the referrals, to make sure that it’s not just a referral but it’s a meaningful one.” (GWP, 19, Inspector). However, some participants wanted this to be incorporated into the initial training day: “truncate the day a bit and fit an hour’s PPN thing into that. Instead of having to come back for another afternoon.” (GWP, 05, PS). Additionally, some uncertainty remained about when to submit a PPN, “there is still a bit of uncertainty perhaps, lack of clarity on the frontline about when to submit a PPN, you know around ACEs.” (GWP, 11, Inspector); suggesting that more clarity is needed. Thus, additional content in the PPN workshop may be beneficial to effectively improve police confidence and competence when submitting referrals.

These findings suggest that the workshop has made a positive contribution to the improvement of referrals and therefore evidences the potential benefit of national roll out of a referral workshop following the ACE TIME training.

Not had contact since the training

Many participants, especially in NWP and GWP, expressed that they had not had any contact from the ACs since the ACE TIME training: “I don’t think so, I’m not even sure who the ACE coordinators are if I’m honest, so I’m going to say no.” (NWP, 07, PC). Therefore, based on feedback from SWP and DPP, it is likely that further ‘on the ground’ embedding from the AC service would have been beneficial in NWP and GWP. In SWP, one individual thought it would be beneficial to be able to access extra advice in person - “Oh it would always be handy to have them there, yeah definitely, to ask if you needed any extra help or support with something.” (SWP, 05, PCSO) - suggesting that continued co-location of the ACs would have been beneficial.

Despite limited contact, participants felt they could approach ACs for support if needed, using contact details shared at training: “...the contact details at the end, they said, ‘guys, don’t feel any hesitation, you know, just contact. We are there’, really nice.” (GWP, 10, PCSO). Those who had seen them around the station since the training were confident in asking for support: “I’m sure I could, yeah, that was the message if you need to speak to us, just drop us a line.” (SWP, 18, PS).

Overall, the findings suggest that the co-location of ACs and police encouraged the formation of professional relationships and was beneficial to the embedding of training messages and the provision of additional information. It is apparent from the comments made by police that the ACs in SWP and DPP very much favoured being physically present in stations and ‘working on the ground’ to provide support. This type of embedding was limited in NWP and GWP, which may explain the perceived need for further embedding in these areas.

3.3.3 Organisational support

Participants were asked about their perceptions of how well the police as an organisation were supporting the movement towards using a trauma-informed approach, in order to understand whether the internal support to make change was being provided. Internal organisational support was considered important for successful change as police officers and staff work under a command and control structure, according to the preferences of their higher ranking staff.

Varying organisational support

Aside from the AC service, organisational support from higher ranking officers within policing offered an additional avenue for embedding ACE TIME training by providing reminders of the training content and facilitating the use of ACEs knowledge and trauma-informed practice in everyday work. However, a key perception expressed by those interviewed, apparent across all four forces, was that there was a lack of organisational support provided following the training, whereby there had been no mention of ACEs or trauma by those in higher ranks. Some officers thought this was justified as they did not expect support, “No-one’s really checked in on it but I wouldn’t expect them to.” (SWP, 03, PCSO) and others believed the support “would be there if I asked for it.” (SWP, 05, PCSO), suggesting they are comfortable with the current level of organisational involvement.

Equally, some participants thought there was good provision of organisational support: “The organisation as a whole are really driven with ACEs and Early Action Together.” (SWP, 18, PS). For example, this was evidenced by “a new ACEs support worker in the division.” (SWP, 14, PCSO). Participants had also received regular email updates, which were considered helpful for embedding change into their work. However, the over-reliance on email communication as the support mechanism from the organisation did not align with the value of face-to-face training and support, described by participants.

Other participants spoke about the support offered by supervisors, “The sergeant for the PCSOs here, he has offered support if I need it.” (NWP, 01, PCSO). Support had also been provided for participants to continue learning about ACEs and MA working: “We had an ACEs conference down in Bridgend last week and the sergeant said ‘absolutely you attend the training and the conference’. I’ve been able to go up to the council offices and meet with people from the different agencies of Resilient Families.” (SWP, 04, PCSO).

Overall, it appears that organisational support was inconsistent across the forces which may influence the effectiveness of the training and embedding at facilitating a trauma-informed approach across the forces.

Value of feedback

One of the key aspects of good organisational support was timely feedback on referrals. In NWP, a designated DS provided support and feedback on CID16s, for example: “If there is a good example of someone using them, then she’ll send them an email, saying, ‘well done.’ Or if someone’s forgotten or they’ve missed opportunities for identifying ACEs she’ll also just remind them of what they are, sort of picking up on it. So I think that’s quite good ongoing support for it.” (NWP, 09, PC). Participants also received feedback on service user engagement “to make you know that the referral was worthwhile and we’re doing something.” (NWP, 07, PC) and support with early help hub referrals:

“The DS sent me an email saying ‘brilliant’ I’d identified X, Y and Z, no need for a [CID]16, just straight to the help that they needed.” NWP, 10, PC

In GWP, all PPNs were being reviewed by sergeants to “check them before they go off to social services” (GWP, 14, DC) and “if somebody makes a low quality one then we do get feedback a lot of the time.” (GWP, 07, PC). This was to ensure that sufficient information was included “and if not they [the supervisors] sort of advise” (GWP, 20, PC). Monitoring of the PPNs was also conducted by Inspectors for sections including missing persons and Operation Encompass¹¹, with feedback provided to sergeants: “The feedback from the

11 Operation Encompass directly connects the police with schools to ensure better outcomes for children who are subject or witness to police-attended incidents of domestic abuse. More information available at: <https://www.operationencompass.org/>.

PPNs is great to hear because it's great to know that we're doing the right thing." (GWP, 12, PS).

Overall, there was a high regard for feedback, including the impact information has on threshold decisions, incentivising good practice: *"If they see that there's value to it, they'll do it all the more."* (GWP, 19, Inspector). This supports previous research that highlighted the need for feedback on referrals because a high percentage of safeguarding referrals result in no further action [11], implying that an inadequate amount of information may have been provided. In GWP and NWP, the two areas that officers reported receiving less AC service further embedding, officers spoke about receiving good ongoing support from supervisors in their organisation regarding referrals. In some ways, this support may have counteracted the inherent lack of AC 'on the ground' embedding in both areas and suggests that as long as there is flexibility of support, based on need, it may have a positive impact on police knowledge and practice. Therefore, the reported successful use of organisational support to embed change in regards to referrals in GWP and NWP is likely to be beneficial for SWP and DPP also. It also evidences further variance between forces on their approach to further embed the work of the ACE TIME training.

3.3.4 Awareness of Early Action Together programme

Participants were asked about their awareness of the E.A.T programme to provide insight into how well the programme was advertised.

Little or no awareness of the programme

Generally participants demonstrated limited awareness of the aims of the E.A.T programme and how their work on the ground fed into a wider agenda for change. Some officers felt they were unaware of the programme due to their role, *"not an awful lot but that's probably just because of my role."* (NWP, 01, PCSO), yet this lack of awareness was seen across a variety of roles in all forces such as PCSOs, PCs and an Inspector. There was a feeling among those that were not aware of the E.A.T programme that perhaps they should be: *"I'm not really aware, I hesitate to say that because I think I should be."* (DPP, 04, PS).

Participants regularly reported that they had "seen the logo" (GWP, 08, PS), despite not being directly informed about the programme. Some participants remembered seeing it *"on documents we've been sent in terms of training and I think it's on a lot of people's email signatures as well that I've read."* (SWP, 06, PCSO), particularly from their ACs: *"Yes, I've seen that on the bottom of the emails that [AC] has sent me."* (SWP, 09, PS). However, participants did not appear to connect the branding to the aims of the programme.

In contrast, some participants reported awareness of the programme, *"of course we heard about it, it's been kind of advertised."* (GWP, 10, PCSO), implying that information about the programme was at least partly disseminated. Understanding of the programme was shown through descriptions of the perceived programme aims:

"It's about nipping things in the bud before they start. It's like why wait until you've got a big problem, let's sort it when we've got a little problem and that's my understanding of the programme." NWP, 08, PS

There was also an awareness of other projects related to the programme, introduced in localised areas, such as Operation Encompass in GWP, *"schools with the Op [Operation] Encompass [...] and we have Barnardo's early intervention"* (GWP, 05, PS) and the early help hub in SWP, GWP and NWP:

"You've got the hub now which has been set up which deals with the public protection notifications... when this new hub thing gets the referrals they can make the best judgements then on what you've submitted." GWP, 03, PCSO

Awareness of these associated projects shows that they are being advertised themselves however, they are not being explicitly branded as E.A.T.

Communication about the programme

In regards to communication about the E.A.T programme, participants mainly recalled the use of emails, however, participants felt this was not the most effective method, as information could easily be missed due to brief reading, *“I sometimes skim my emails rather than read them in depth.”* (SWP, 06, PCSO) and the pure quantity of emails in their inbox: *“I might have had an email, I might have had two. But let’s put this into context, when I have a week off, I come back to just under 300 emails.”* (NWP, 08, PS). These findings suggest communication about the programme has been limited and for many, deemed ineffective.

Early Action Together programme’s local delivery teams

Whilst staff from across the forces described limited contact from their local delivery team (LDT)¹², a small number did report knowing who their police leads were, and having direct contact with them. This was often due to working with them, *“I’ve done a bit of work myself with [the LDT] who’s overseeing a lot of it.”* (NWP, 07, PC) and contacting them for advice, *“I do speak to them quite regularly because I ask them for the feedback on the PPN referrals and that sort of stuff.”* (GWP, 19, Inspector). For participants that had received contact from the LDT, this provided the opportunity to receive further information and may have had an impact on the sustainability of the programme.

Across Wales, overall awareness of the E.A.T programme appears to be limited with poor communication and minimal involvement of other E.A.T workers. However, the impact of not knowing about E.A.T is unknown as it may not be a necessity for understanding the importance of ACEs and taking a trauma-informed approach and thus may not reduce any positive changes associated with the training and embedding.

3.4 Sustainability of changes and further embedding needs

Participants were asked whether they thought changes to practice were sustainable and if not, what additional support would be required to facilitate a trauma-informed workforce.

It is sustainable

The majority of participants felt the police forces could continue to be ACE aware and trauma-informed going forward because it was viewed as a simple change to their outlook: *“All it is, is a frame of mind... you don’t have to be highly skilled, highly trained, have certain qualifications to have a bit more empathy and just a bit more knowledge around the subject.”* (DPP, 03, PC).

“I wouldn’t go back to the old ways [...]. I’d have no reason to, I mean all I’ve done is gained more information in understanding an individual’s behaviour.” GWP, 01, PC

Some participants reported how *“the benefits in the long-term could be huge for policing.”* (SWP, 13, Inspector) because the new processes, which had been introduced as a result of the ACEs initiative, made the role of policing easier. Therefore, officers and staff would choose to maintain their new knowledge and practice as it was beneficial for them to do so: *“From a policing point of view it’s certainly sustainable because it’s reducing our workload.”* (NWP, 11, DC).

¹² LDTs include a local force police lead whose role is to disseminate the E.A.T programme messages to senior policing roles, who then filter down information to individual teams.

To facilitate sustainability, there was a general consensus that more resources may be required, “it all seems to come down to... money and time and resources” (DPP, 02, PC), for example:

“I think it’s going to take significant investment, a significant amount of time for us to really see that on a daily basis if I’m honest.” SWP, 08, PS

Other resources included more officers on the streets, in order to “spend more time with people to look into what’s going on.” (GWP, 04, PCSO); suggesting that their resources were currently stretched and may inhibit the ability to spend the time needed to respond to vulnerability calls.

Further embedding is required (see Table 2)

Participants expressed the need for further embedding which suggests that, for some, the AC service and their police force may have missed opportunities to provide further support. As a result, this may have reduced the impact of some of the training messages, with officers struggling to embed change without the appropriate support¹³.

Table 2: Main further embedding needs

Further embedding needs	Example quotes
<p>Improve awareness of MA partners and processes</p> <p>Including further guidance on MA partner’s roles and responsibilities, and early help and support agencies</p>	<p><i>“Maybe even you know like a follow-up package with, ‘these are your support agencies, this is what they do. This is how to contact them or refer.’”</i> (NWP, 11, DC)</p> <p><i>“A social services input would be good. I do think it is directly related to the training. As I say, the things that we should be looking for in properties.”</i> (GWP, 04, PCSO)</p>
<p>Improve communication with MA partners</p> <p>Identifying specific points of contact within an agency, access to email contacts and to a database of MA contacts</p>	<p><i>“I think we should have points of contact that people from other agencies are happy for police officers or whoever to ring up for advice.”</i> (GWP, 08, PS)</p> <p><i>“...because we work shifts we can’t be ringing them on the weekend, so even email contacts would be handy.”</i> (GWP, 04, PCSO)</p> <p><i>“...having you know like a database almost [...] Because again, in your day to day role you’re so busy aren’t you and it’s where do I find half an hour to sit and go and have a look around the internet?”</i> (NWP, 11, DC)</p>
<p>Co-location of police and MA partners</p> <p>Sharing a premises to work more collaboratively</p>	<p><i>“Under one roof, that would be the perfect outcome.”</i> (GWP, 01, PC)</p> <p><i>“Have them coming in, having an office in the police station or us being able to go in and work from their offices wherever that might be.”</i> (NWP, 01, PCSO)</p>

¹³ It must be acknowledged that some comments may have been a result of participants recently attending the training and that further embedding may not have commenced in their local area.

Further embedding needs	Example quotes
<p>Improve knowledge on police processes</p> <p>Including information on the practical application of the training such as completion of vulnerability referral forms and new processes including early help</p>	<p>“[examples of] this is a good [referral], this is a bad [referral], this is what could be, what you need to be doing.” (NWP, 01, PCSO)</p> <p>“I’m a bit confused, so I do think if somebody from MASH [multi-agency safeguarding hub] came out and said ‘this is what we do and if you want to do the PPN... you need to put X amount of information in’ or ‘we need to know if for example there’s a divorce in the family, I need to know that for it to go to X, Y Z.’” (SWP, 01, PCSO)</p>
<p>Feedback on referrals</p> <p>Including feedback on poor and good quality referrals, and on the outcomes of some cases</p>	<p>“From a police perspective if we send a referral off we might go to 10 more calls and send 11 more referrals off. And it feels like sometimes okay, we’re doing these calls, we’re sharing this information, what’s being done?” (SWP, 08, PS)</p> <p>“...if they see that there’s value to it, they’ll do it all the more.” (GWP, 19, Inspector)</p> <p>“[Feedback from] a sergeant maybe who’s in the early hub or in the control room” (NWP, 05, PCSO)</p>
<p>ACEs in induction training</p> <p>For all new recruits</p>	<p>“It’s got to be done when people come into the force.” (GWP, 05, PS)</p> <p>“I think it might be better now if the ACE training gets implemented into training before ‘bobbies’ come out.” (NWP, 03, PC)</p>
<p>Follow-up summary of the training</p> <p>Where police are reminded of key information provided at the training</p>	<p>“The only thing I like after training is sometimes having a look at a document that you can refer back to.” (GWP, 07, PC)</p> <p>“...it could be literally an A4 sheet, these are the ACEs that you need to look out for and this is what you need to do when you come across them. Again, that could be posters around the station or whatever.” (NWP, 04, DC)</p>
<p>Continuous refresher training</p> <p>Where police are given updates and reminders of the ACEs research</p>	<p>“It would be good if this isn’t a one-off thing.” (DPP, 02, PC)</p> <p>“Training is effective when it’s more ongoing as opposed to a single episode of training and then it goes away.” (GWP, 13, PS)</p> <p>“...maybe just be once a year, or maybe part of the CPD [continual professional development] days, the continuous improvement days.” (SWP, 01, PCSO)</p>

4. Limitations

A number of limitations were present in the current evaluation, including the inability to verify which version of the training interviewees received (see Box 4). Consequently, participant perspectives of the impact on their knowledge and practice may depend on which variation of the training package they received.

Box 4: Implementation and fidelity to intended delivery

Participants may have received differing versions of the training due to the continuous development of the ACE TIME training package during the delivery period. Examples of these changes include: the removal of the Scottish domestic violence video, which was discussed in relation to positive impacts on police practice (see 3.1.3 on page 14); adjustments to the amount of information given on topics in the training such as the biological mechanisms involved in stress; and movement of existing activities between the morning and afternoon sessions. Nevertheless, the consistency of core messages across all packages may partly mitigate this limitation.

Other factors that may have contributed to participants receiving slight variations of the training include that it was delivered by a variety of AC pairings, with different styles and experience, which may have resulted in some personalisation of the training package. There were also slight modifications to the training package dependant on force area. For example in NWP there was an additional local pathways section at the end of the training package, which including detailed information on agencies available and a new police referral processes, that was not delivered to the other three forces.

Additionally, the timeframe between receiving the training and current interviews, which varied between participants, may have influenced recall and experience of further embedding. Selection bias may have occurred, whereby those interested in the study were more likely to volunteer to take part and therefore the sample (n = 66) may not be a true representation of police across Wales. Lastly, all findings were based on self-report measures as police were not observed in practice and thus a triangulation of data (comparing what they said they did with what they actually did) is not possible.

The above limitations, which may have had an impact on police perspectives of the training and further embedding, are therefore important to consider in relation to generalising findings and future research.

5. Summary

The aim of this report was to explore and understand the impact of the ACE TIME training, and the embedding work of the AC service following the training, on the knowledge and practice of police officers and staff across Wales, while also identifying further requirements for embedding and sustaining change. A total of sixty-six face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture police officers' and staffs' experiences and their confidence and willingness to apply what they had learnt into their professional practice. This also included their experiences of further embedding, their thoughts on programme sustainability and associated requirements. Through a narrative analysis, the main findings are discussed. Additionally, a number of key recommendations are proposed for implementing an ACE- and trauma-informed approach to policing, including further embedding suggestions for sustainability of a transformational change programme.

The ACE TIME training appears to have made a positive impact on the knowledge and practice of police officers and staff across Wales to varying degrees. For most participants, the training has increased their understanding of ACEs including: their classification; the impact on behaviour and life outcomes; and the intergenerational cycle of ACEs. For others, the training has provided a name for previous awareness of how early experiences could have a detrimental impact in later life. Awareness of using a trauma-informed approach was also evident yet some individuals were still unsure about the terminology.

In regards to police practice, participants reported a number of changes including: delving deeper when responding to vulnerability; completing more detailed referral forms; and recommending agencies for support. However, barriers to implementing trauma-informed practice, which were also inherent challenges to the policing role, were reported, such as public engagement, policing culture and officer attitudes. Regarding further embedding, a number of participants felt more was needed including: consistent organisational support across the forces; further information relating to available MA partners; and how to implement practical messages from the training. The need for further embedding suggests a gap in knowledge since receiving the training. A need for more joint working with MA partners was also expressed with a high-regard for co-location.

From these findings, it is evident that the ACE TIME training can provide achievable and sustainable changes to police practice across Wales, supporting earlier findings from the ACE TIME evaluation [5]. Nonetheless, although this evaluation of police perspectives of the impact of the ACE TIME training provides some understanding of change, it does not demonstrate that organisational culture change has occurred within policing. Therefore, further research is warranted to evaluate the sustainability of the training messages on police knowledge and practice.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed from the findings discussed and are proposed for police organisations:

The content and delivery of the training:

- Ensure that police and staff of all ranks and roles understand how knowledge of ACEs and trauma fits into their role, to enhance applicability to practice
- Facilitate joint training with police and MA partners where applicable
- Provide clear standardised guidance on the completion of vulnerability referral forms (PPN in GWP and SWP, CIDI 6 in NWP, and MARF in DPP), including information on ACEs and examples of good and bad practice
- Continue using experts in the area, such as ACE coordinators (ACs), to embed the training messages.

The wider systems and structures to embed the training into practice:

- Provide mandatory follow-up referral training to all forces
- Support officers to confidently decide on appropriate referrals, whilst recognising the difference between signposting, supporting and safeguarding and provide assurance in terms of 'accountability'
- Provide specific wellbeing training to police and staff to embed understanding of the importance of own wellbeing when working with vulnerable individuals
- Encourage organisational support across all four forces by ensuring visible support from management within police to promote trauma-informed working
- Increase opportunities for joint problem solving with partners, focusing on early intervention and prevention, by sharing lists of local agencies and their contact details as well as supporting co-location where possible
- Include the broader concept of ACEs throughout the induction of all new recruits, reiterating the association with early intervention and prevention, and provide annual ACEs refreshers for all suitable police and staff to facilitate a trauma-informed workforce.

Further research:

- Evaluate the long-term sustainability of the training on police knowledge and practice
- Evaluate the impact on operational policing such as the effectiveness of alternative referrals for lower level vulnerabilities and the evaluation of MA working to best respond to vulnerability

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Appendix 1. Methodology

Sample selection

ACE TIME trained police officers and staff who participated in the pre-training interviews, and consented to being contacted, were invited via email to partake in a post-training interview; see Table A1 for a breakdown of sample size from pre and post interviews. The research team used snowball sampling¹⁴ to organise further interviews and an opportunity sampling method¹⁵ at the police stations.

Table A1. Pre-evaluation sample size, number of police officers trained and post interview sample size for each force

Police force area	Number of completed pre interviews	Police pathfinder area in each force area	Number of police trained up to January 2019 within pathfinder area	Post interview sample size within pathfinder area
Dyfed Powys	26	Ceredigion	187	9
Gwent	50	Blaenau Gwent & Newport	730	22
North Wales	58	Isle of Anglesey & Flintshire	347	13
South Wales	18	Rhondda Cynon Taf	564	22
Total	152	All Wales	1,828	66

Recruitment

Police officers and staff from each police force received an initial email from their LDT about the forthcoming follow-up ACE TIME training interviews. This was then accompanied by an email from the E.A.T research team inviting all pre-evaluation participants (police officers and staff who had consented to being contacted) to take part in a follow-up interview. The email invitation included a brief overview of the programme, the inclusion criteria for follow-up interview (ACE TIME trained) and a voluntary participation statement, with an attached participant information sheet detailing what the research involved and how the data were going to be used, and stating that participation was confidential. The email also prompted participants to ask colleagues if they would volunteer to partake and to share their contact details with the research team if so. Participants recruited via the opportunity sampling method were provided with a verbal overview of the programme, inclusion criteria and voluntary statement and also received a printed copy of the information sheet to read and keep prior to taking part.

Due to the higher numbers trained in SWP and GWP and insufficient engagement, researchers liaised with the LDTs to carry out some additional targeted recruitment. The police leads in each force area made contact with local inspectors and sergeants to encourage further discussions with officers about the study. This improved engagement and provided the research team with lists of additional contacts that had volunteered to participate. Recruitment ran from July to October 2019.

¹⁴ Or 'chain-referral sampling' is a nonprobability sampling method where participants recruit other participants for a study. In this case, existing pre-evaluation participants provided email contacts of fellow police officers who were interested in taking part.

¹⁵ Nonprobability sampling is where participants are selected from naturally occurring groups at the time of the study. In this study, any police officer who was present at the police station at the time of the researcher's visit was invited to take part in an interview.

Participants

A total of 66 (34 female and 32 male) participants completed one-to-one interviews across the four Welsh police forces. See Table A2 for the sample characteristics including age, gender and years in force according to force area.

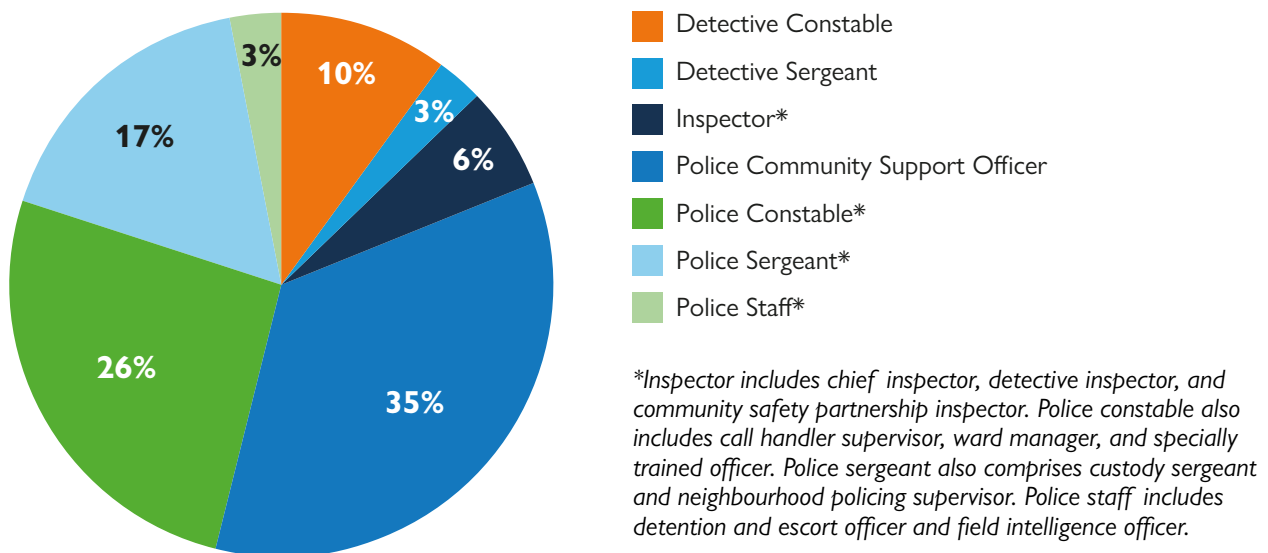
Table A2. Participant distribution according to gender, age and years in force by force area

Force area	Gender		Age (years)		Years in force	
	Female	Male	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Dyfed Powys	8	< 5*	45.8	6.9	17.3	8.2
Gwent	8	14	40.9	8.0	14.7**	7.5
North Wales	9	< 5*	37.1	11.7	10.2	6.8
South Wales	9	13	38.0	9.4	10.3	6.7
Total (All Wales)	34	32	39.8	9.4	12.7**	7.5

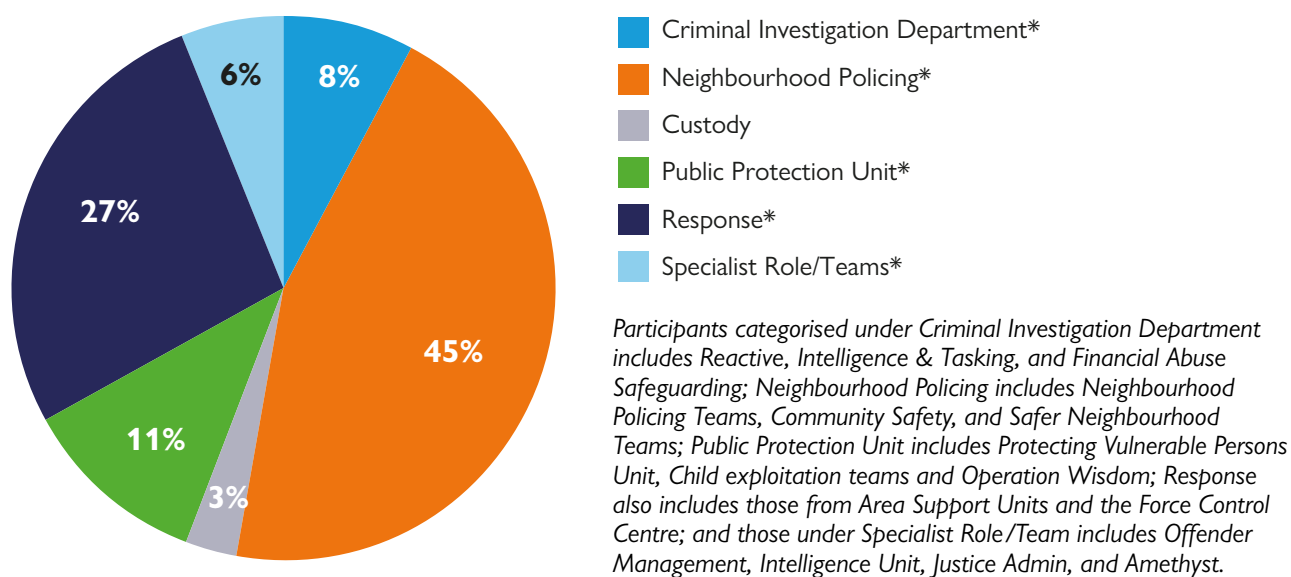
*Data suppressed for figures < 5 to maintain anonymity. ** Missing data from one participant for years in force.

Study participants were grouped into seven categories according to role/rank. The most commonly identified role was PCSO (35%), followed by PC (26%) and PS (17%) (see Figure A1 for further breakdown of role).

Figure A1. Percentage of sample distribution by police role/rank



Participants were also grouped into seven departments, with those working in neighbourhood policing making up the largest proportion (45%), followed by response (26%), and PPU (11%) (see Figure A2 below for further breakdown of department).

Figure A2. Percentage of sample distribution by police department

Materials

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed by the research team, which comprised of several thematic areas including: experiences of attending the ACE TIME training; the impact of the training on their knowledge and practice; further embedding provision and needs; AC communication and involvement; E.A.T programme awareness; impact on personal wellbeing; and impact on MA working. A demographics sheet (used in the pre-evaluation) captured age, gender, ethnicity, job role, department, years' experience, and other police forces they have worked in. A personal wellbeing sheet was designed for each force area listing internal, local and national wellbeing services available to officers.

Procedure

Six researchers conducted one-to-one interviews with police officers and staff across the four forces in Wales. Researchers organised interviews according to the participants' preferred time and location (at a station) to lessen the burden on their duties and increase engagement. A minimum of one interview and maximum of four interviews were prearranged during each visit. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

Prior to interview the researcher explained: the research study and that participation was voluntary; that all data would be anonymised and stored securely by Public Health Wales; and that the participant could withdraw from the study at any time. The participant also: received a printed copy of the information sheet to read and keep; was given time to ask questions; and was asked to provide written consent. Interviews lasted on average 43 minutes, with the shortest lasting 18 minutes and the longest lasting 1 hour and 11 minutes. At the end of each interview, participants were debriefed by the researcher, which involved reiterating the purpose of the research, and the participants' anonymity and giving the opportunity to ask any further questions before providing a personal wellbeing sheet listing available services.

Data analysis

All qualitative analysis was completed on Atlas.ti version 8.3.20 software. A narrative analysis was selected as the most appropriate method, to explore and interpret the stories described by participants [13].

Coding was used to explore and determine the narrative from participants. In order to create the coding template, two lead researchers analysed four interviews each (one from each force area) and merged the codes. The initial coding template was then applied to a further six interviews prior to a second merge of the template. The second template was then used by six researchers (including the two lead researchers) to analyse most of the remaining interviews. A final merge was then carried out for all six templates to create a comprehensive 'master template', which was applied to the remaining nine interviews.

Illustrative quotes are presented to emphasise key findings.



**Camau Cynnar
gyda'n Gilydd**
**Early Action
Together**

**Rhaglen ACEau yr Heddlu a Phartneriaid
Police & Partners ACEs Programme**

Early Action Together is a partnership between Public Health Wales, the four Wales Police Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners, Barnardo's, HM Prison and Probation Service Wales, Community Rehabilitation Company Wales and Youth Justice Board Wales.

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