**Hyb ACE Cymru
ACE Hub Wales**

What Works in the Prevention and Early Intervention of ACEs at the Community Level?

Identifying and Supporting Projects across Wales

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Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
BCR	Building Community Resilience
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CTC	Communities That Care
CVC	Community Voluntary Council
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
HBA	Honour Based Abuse
HMPPS	HM Prison and Probation Service
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
SFI	Strengthening Families Initiative
SRCDC	South Riverside Community Development Centre
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWDASV	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
WSSPR	Wales School for Social Prescribing Research

Abstract

Background

Previous research undertaken by ACE Hub Wales indicated that community projects across Wales provide support for community members in respect of a range of adversities. Building on this research, the aim of this project is to identify and map further community projects; to understand the most effective methods of supporting these projects as well as barriers to engagement; and finally to explore the impact of services on community groups.

Methods

This project had three stages of data collection: stage one was to undertake focus groups with stakeholders from community projects across Wales; stage two was to develop a case study by identifying and mapping community projects in one area; and stage three was to undertake focus groups with the beneficiaries of services of three community projects across Wales.

Findings

Stakeholders noted the contribution that community projects make, and they also outlined several areas where the work of community organisations could be supported: funding; supporting staff development and wellbeing; and practical support such as developing websites or supporting publicity. Mapping community projects in Cardiff identified 31 projects which provide support to diverse community groups and address a range of need. Finally, beneficiaries of services of three community projects noted a range of benefits from the services provided including wellbeing and parenting support, friendship, and advocacy in respect of health, welfare and education services.

Conclusion:

Supporting community organisations requires a multifaceted approach, encompassing funding, staff support and development, and practical assistance. There is also a need for the development of networks which would facilitate mutual support and allow for a more cohesive provision of services.
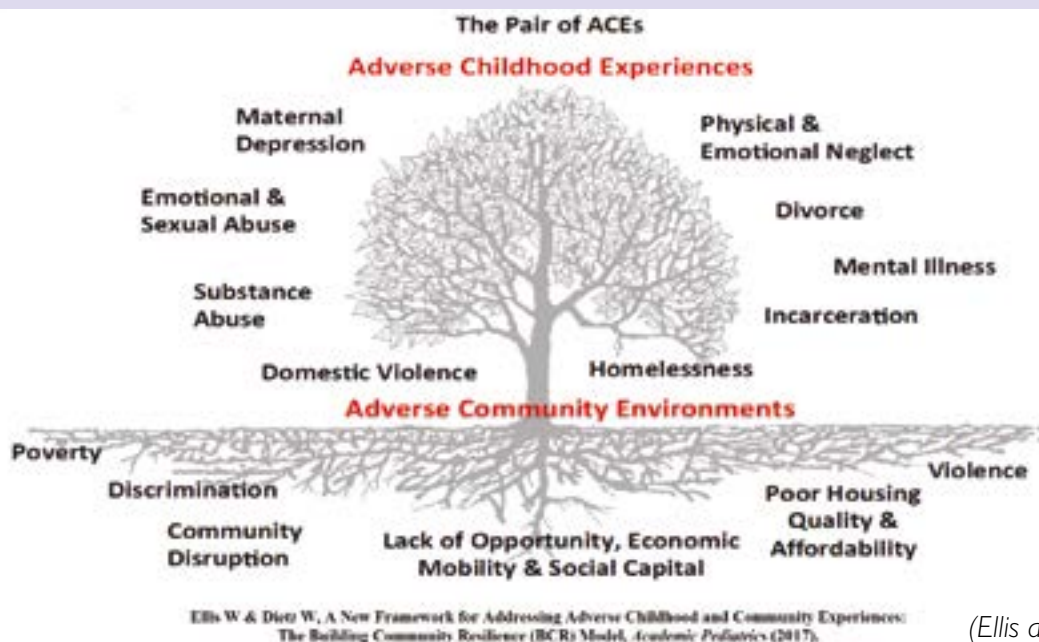
Section 1: Background

1.1 Addressing ACEs through a community approach

A review of the literature concluded that community based interventions can build collective resilience, support individuals with services, and build strong bonds to a group (or a culture), all of which have been shown to be important factors in preventing and mitigating the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Hughes et al., 2018). Such a response needs to extend across sectors and include health, social care, policing, education and community, as well as extend across the life course, from early childhood through to adulthood (Di Lemma et al., 2019). Within this, involving and empowering local communities, particularly disadvantaged groups, can promote health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. Key are participatory approaches which can directly address marginalisation and acknowledges the importance of community engagement as a strategy for health improvement, particularly as it leads to services that better meet community member's needs (Public Health England, 2020).

The literature identified several community-based projects which focus on bringing together services to address a broad range of factors which contribute to ACEs. These successful initiatives involve the movement to build resilient, trauma informed communities and programmes, bringing together stakeholders from different community sectors to develop coordinated community responses. These include community members; parents; youth; policy makers; health and social service providers; funders and researchers (Matlin et al., 2019). Examples of community programmes include the Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI) and Communities that Care (CTC) in the UK and Strong Communities and Building Community Resilience (BCR) in the US.

The BCR model provides a diagram, The Pair of ACEs Tree (Figure 1) to illustrate the relationship between adversity within a family and adversity within a community. The leaves on the tree represent the 'symptoms' of ACEs that are easily recognised in clinical, educational and social service settings. The tree is planted in poor soil that is steeped in inequities such as a lack of affordable and safe housing, community violence, systemic discrimination, and limited access to social and economic mobility. These compound one another, creating a negative cycle of ever worsening soil that results in withering leaves on the tree. The Pair of ACEs tree resource was created to communicate that policies to address adversity embedded in communities, are rooted within systems (Ellis and Dietz, 2017).

Figure 1: The Pair of ACEs Tree

The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal Depression

Physical & Emotional Neglect

Emotional & Sexual Abuse

Divorce

Mental Illness

Substance Abuse

Incarceration

Domestic Violence

Homelessness

Adverse Community Environments

Poverty

Violence

Discrimination

Poor Housing Quality & Affordability

Community Disruption

Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital

Ellis W & Dietz W, A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model, *Academic Pediatrics* (2017).

(Ellis and Dietz, 2017)

1.2 The community infrastructure in Wales

In 2015, the first national Welsh ACEs study (Bellis et al., 2015) identified the extent of ACE exposure among adults in Wales, and the strong cumulative relationships between ACEs and health-harming diseases, health conditions and health service use. This study also indicated that there is a substantial subset of people who suffer ACEs and avoid, entirely or in part, negative health, and social consequences, displaying levels of resilience to negative consequences. Emerging evidence suggests that a range of factors can help develop childhood resilience, including at least one stable relationship between a child and adult, better developed self-regulation skills and a sense of having control over personal circumstances (Bellis et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2018). These findings have influenced local and national public health policy in Wales and driven multi-agency work to prevent ACEs and support those affected by them (Riley et al., 2019).

In Wales, the policy and legislative context is supportive of addressing ACEs and recent legislation puts children at the heart of co-produced, sustainable policymaking (Star, 2019). The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (Welsh Government, 2015) provides the foundation for all public services to work collaboratively towards an integrated life course approach to wellbeing. 'A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for Health and Social Care' (Welsh Government, 2019) recognises the lifelong importance of addressing adversity experienced in childhood (Di Lemma et al., 2019). More recently, a Review of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Policy: Report (Welsh Government, 2021) outlined the need to ensure that the greater awareness and understanding of childhood adversity translates into action which makes a positive difference. Finally, the Children and Young People's Plan highlights the priority that, working together, children and young people from all backgrounds will be treated fairly, have the best start in life and be supported in their journey through education, training and self-employment (Welsh Government, 2022).

In Wales, many sectors are working to identify and respond to adversity in order to improve outcomes for those who have experienced ACEs (Di Lemma et al., 2019). Resilient communities are those who are cohesive, well connected and can collectively use available resources. Part of this resilience acknowledges that social connections and engaging in community life is an essential part of individual mental wellbeing, because it creates a sense of belonging, solidarity and enhances strong coping mechanisms (Davies et al., 2019). Welsh Government have set out the vision of Wales where everybody has the opportunity to develop meaningful social relationships and where people are supported by friends, family, communities and wider society when they are most vulnerable (Welsh Government, 2020).

The Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the national membership organisation for the third sector and volunteering in Wales and provides services and support to charities, community groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises, and volunteers. WCVA's membership consists of over 2,500 third sector organisations, it also has partners from the private and statutory sectors who support its work. WCVA manages the Welsh Government funded grant scheme, the Volunteering Wales Grant Fund, and in 2018-2019 distributed around 11.5 million in funding to charities, social enterprises and volunteers in Wales. WCVA also provide training, events and awards with the intention of bringing voluntary organisations in Wales together to learn and connect.

Every county in Wales has a voluntary sector infrastructure body, generically called a County Voluntary Council or CVC. The key role of a CVC is to provide advice and information to local voluntary and community groups on volunteering, funding sources and a wide range of other issues. The sector's infrastructure body at a national level is WCVA. The 19 local CVCs in Wales (Appendix A), and the national support body WCVA, make up a network of support organisations for the third sector in Wales called Third Sector Support Wales.

Linking with this, social prescribing seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way as well as supporting individuals to take greater control of their own health. Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses, and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services which can include a variety of activities. Social prescribing is also an approach which is found in community based initiatives, these are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations, for example, volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports. Social prescribing is designed to support people with a wide range of social, emotional, or practical needs,

and many schemes are focussed on improving mental health and physical well-being using the voluntary and community sector, rather than relying on health and social care services to provide a solution. In April 2020, the Wales School for Social Prescribing Research (WSSPR) was launched; the aim of which is to develop a social prescribing evaluation methodology.

Finally, mutual aid is a list of local support groups that have been established during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is listing the various support groups that have been established during the pandemic in an easy to search format; there are currently 2065 groups listed.

1.3 Existing research

This project will build on a previous evidence review which undertook a scoping review of the international literature and a survey to identify and map community projects operating across Wales (Addis et al., 2022). The survey identified 54 projects which focused on different community groups and provided support in respect of a variety of ACEs and adversities. The projects were set up for a range of reasons, including tackling deprivation, supporting mental and physical health, bridging gaps in the existing system, personal experiences and the impact of COVID-19. The adversity addressed by the projects included domestic abuse, substance misuse, those involved in the care system, homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system and social, emotional and wellbeing needs. Community groups who were beneficiaries of the projects include new and expectant parents, families, children and young people, adults, and community groups. The projects identified by the survey fell into three main categories:

1. Projects which were part of funded, Wales or UK wide initiatives. These included Flying Start (Welsh Government), the Housing Support Grant (Welsh Government), the Youth Justice Blueprint (Ministry of Justice) and Youth Offending Teams (HMMPS).

2. Projects which operated under the umbrella of broad third sector or charity groups. Examples included initiatives such as Clear (part of Change that Lasts), a partnership between Welsh Women's Aid and Respect, and services run by NSPCC for expectant and new parents (Pregnancy in Mind; Baby Steps; Building Blocks).

3. Community projects which were set up in response to community need (grass roots community projects). These address a diverse range of adversities and community groups and often have limited and/or short-term funding. An example is the Community Youth Project which supports young people from diverse communities in Newport.

While the larger, funded programmes are subject to evaluation and oversight, often as part of the funding requirements, there is far less knowledge and understanding of smaller, grass roots community projects, both in terms of the services they provide and the impact on the communities with which they work.

1.4 Study aims

Building on the previous evidence review, this research has the following aims:

1. To identify and map further community projects in Wales, and to understand barriers and facilitators to engagement with organisations such as ACE Hub Wales.

2. To understand the resources needed to support these projects, and the most effective way that this support could be provided to ensure the future provision of services to the community.

3. To understand the experience of beneficiaries of services, and how the services provided contribute to the prevention and mitigation of ACEs.

Section 2: Methods

The project has three stages of data collection:

1. Focus groups and interviews with stakeholders from community groups across Wales

2. Identifying and mapping community projects in one area

3. Focus groups with beneficiaries of community projects

2.1 Stage one: stakeholders

Online focus groups and individual interviews were undertaken with stakeholders from community projects across Wales. Stakeholders were identified as contacts of ACE Hub Wales or contacts from previous research, and emails were sent to invite them to participate in the research. Questions focused on community projects in their local area, the services provided, barriers and facilitators to engagement and the most effective means to support community projects. With permission, discussions were audio recorded and recordings transcribed. Using the transcripts, key themes were summarised.

2.2 Stage two: case study of community projects

The second phase of data collection was to identify and map community groups in one geographical area. Cardiff was selected and a range of methods were used to identify community projects. These included emailing previous contacts, phoning project leads, snowballing and web searches including the Cardiff Third Sector Council website. The initial list was sent out to stakeholders for review and to suggest any additional community projects. Community projects were mapped, and a brief description of each community project provided.

2.3 Stage three: beneficiaries of services

The third stage of data collection were face to face focus groups with beneficiaries of services of three community projects. The projects were selected to represent a range in terms of:

- Geographical area
- Services provided
- Community groups

Initially, the project leads were approached, and they acted as gatekeepers to arrange focus groups with community members. The focus group discussion focused on the services provided by the project, their impact, how they might be improved and to identify any gaps in provision. With the consent of participants, the discussion was recorded and transcribed and using the transcripts, key themes were summarised. A thank you payment was made in recognition of time given, either to the group as a whole or to individual participants.

2.4 Ethical considerations

This research adhered to guidance provided by Public Health Wales in terms of ethics and data protection. Participants were given information about the project prior to participation and gave informed consent. Where English was not the first language of participants, translation services were provided. All quotes used are anonymous.

Section 3: Findings – community projects

This section outlines the findings of the stakeholders' focus group and individual interviews. Findings focus on services provided by community projects, support for community projects and engaging with community projects.

Table 1: Participating Stakeholders

Organisation	Services provided	Area
Valleys Kids	Parental Support	Southeast Wales
Cartrefi Conwy	Housing Association	North Wales
A Primary School	Education	North Wales
Hafan Cymru	Housing Association	West Wales
Barod	Substance Misuse Services	West Wales
Mind	Mental Health Support	East Wales
Homestart	Parental Support	North Wales
Children's Services	Family Support	North Wales
Medrwn Môn	County Voluntary Council	North Wales
Community Cohesion	Community Support	North Wales

3.1 Services provided by community projects

Stakeholders identified the provision of a range of practical support to community members as key in terms of service provision: *"A lot of stuff about living rural is transport…we have volunteers going out and collecting people, medicines and prescriptions" (Stakeholder, Medrwn Môn)*. However, it was also acknowledged that support can be effective, even if it is quite simple: *"How do we support people to access, provide a safe space…just come along, have a cup of tea and a chat and find out what they need" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids)*.

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It was accepted that the services provided need to be inclusive: *"It isn't necessarily that there needs to be more activities, but they need to be more inclusive, and people need to feel more comfortable in accessing them in a way that they need them really" (Stakeholder, Medrwn Môn).* Additionally, there was an appreciation of the need to support all groups within the community: *"The gypsy traveler community… we need to get more services, external services to be more robust and be able to support them…I think that potentially some services don't feel overly confident to support those communities" (Stakeholder, Community Cohesion).* There was also an admission that services were not always tailored to meet the needs of diverse groups and that services may need to be adapted: *"It could be sometimes with certain communities, we look at a different sort of delivery model" (Stakeholder, Community Cohesion).*

Community projects often address gaps that exist in provision, in some cases as a result of the withdrawal of statutory services due to the COVID-19 pandemic: *"There's been this fall back on voluntary sector agencies to deliver or pick up the slack from statutory and health" (Stakeholder, Barod).* Mental health in particular was highlighted by a number of stakeholders as an area where accessing support was often

difficult: *"For mental health…we know that there aren't the organisations out there that support" (Stakeholder, Cartrefi Conwy).* Difficulty accessing these services had been made worse by the pandemic: *"Accessing services, there is nothing in between, trying to get into a mental health service; Covid has absolutely exacerbated that" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids).* Relating to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision, a further gap was noted by a stakeholder: *"The biggest gap that I find with my cases personally is where you've got a child who's got ADHD or autism and they're presenting with an emotional or a wellbeing issue. So, you find that CAMHS will pass that back to the neuro development team and the neuro development team will pass it back and there a bit of a gap there really" (Stakeholder, Children's Services).*

> *"For mental health…we know that there aren't the organisations out there that support" (Stakeholder, Cartrefi Conwy).*

In terms of accessing services, it was also noted that there was a need to access them through a central point: *"Access to services is a really interesting point…what it has created is one conduit, to access services, they have to go through another assessment process which can be quite onerous…it is always seen as children's services" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids).* The result is the need to complete a form to access those services, and this may be off-putting to families: *"As an organisation we have to fill in a C1 (child protection referral)…even if it is nothing to do with child protection, just for families wanting some additional support…once you put your hand up to a services, you are on the radar and some people really don't want identification" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids).*

It was acknowledged that intervening at an early stage was critical for a more successful outcome: *"If we can get early interventions…early exposure to availability of support… it means that we can potentially plant the seed early doors, rather than when those individuals are at crisis point" (Stakeholder, Barod).* However, the stigma associated with accessing services was felt to play a part in some people's reluctance: *"The media also plays a huge part in the stigmatisation of those…whether you're in mental health, domestic violence, drugs and alcohol. They create those barriers…and those people that don't want to access our services because they're already stigmatised" (Stakeholder, Barod).* It was felt that for families who needed support, it was considered a normal part of life: *"Everybody needs some support at some time and for me, you destigmatise services by making them universal so any family will have access to mindfulness or other kind of groups, so that you almost normalise support" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids).*

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It was also considered important that families took ownership of decision making: *"I always encourage mums or families who are after support to self-refer, I think that is really important" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids).* It was felt that if the ideas came from professionals, families were less likely to engage: *"It's the professionals saying to the families 'this is what you need'…so often it's top down and I think some of the families maybe don't feel they've got ownership of that, they also feel judged" (Stakeholder, A Primary School).* Stakeholders emphasised the importance of using a strengths-based approach when working with families: *"What we will almost always identify are the positives that there are within that family network, and we will do our best to draw that out…so that we build that confidence and trust" (Stakeholder, Homestart).* Additionally, it was recognised that there was a need to build sustainable resilient communities: *"It's about training those smaller community groups and those paid third sector organisations to have those skills…it's about identifying people in the community, isn't it? Because paid projects are never going to be the ones that make the most impact" (Stakeholder, Medrwn Môn).*

> *"What we will almost always identify are the positives that there are within that family network, and we will do our best to draw that out…so that we build that confidence and trust" (Stakeholder, Homestart).*

Stakeholders recognised the impact of trauma and the importance of having an understanding of trauma: *"I am particularly interested in trauma…because it underpins the work we do in anything, in any community, people work, it is the elephant in the room, it is what we bring to the table" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids).* This is in recognition that trauma is often widespread among people accessing these services: *"So many of our tenants, so many, and staff actually, have got trauma… I have a lot of tenants I work with and nearly all of them have ACEs, at least four ACEs" (Stakeholder, Cartrefi Conwy).* It was also recognised that trauma will continue to affect families and, as a result will need to be addressed in order to protect children

in the long term: *"For me, my idea is to work with the adults who have had a lot of childhood trauma, because what I am noticing is…it doesn't go away, it stays in the family" (Stakeholder, Catrefi Conwy)*. Crucial to addressing trauma was the importance of providing a safe space: *"Our approach is to mitigate against trauma…providing that safe space. But also in a non-stigmatising way, being connected to something, having someone to talk to, being accessible" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids)*.

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3.2 Support for community projects

In terms of support, funding was an issue that was raised by many stakeholders, in particular, the demands for staff members of completing funding applications: *"It is a lot on them, there is a lot of trauma and for them, writing is difficult" (Stakeholder, Cartrefi Conwy)*. Another point made in respect of funding was the capacity of smaller organisations to apply for funding: *"You have lots of smaller organisations doing great work, they don't have the ability to withstand of process of application for grants" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids)*. Additionally, where funding was allocated through a third party, this was not always felt to be the best method: *"Another dynamic we have a large organisation that is meant to be a conduit for funding, but we have to careful there because often they will clean up as well, it should be on the ground" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids)*.

Funding priorities can change over time and stakeholders noted the need to adapt funding bids to fit changing priorities even though the needs of community groups remain the same: *"In terms of that kind of commissioning process there are certain trends…tailoring it to the trends that are coming out of those commissioning bodies, really, but your end communities have exactly the same needs" (Stakeholder, Community Cohesion)*. One thing that was appreciated in terms of funding, was the recognition of the importance of partnership working and recognition of the third section: *"I would say there are some really nice things coming out of commissioning…focus on more partnership working…not expecting public services to be the lead all the time, I think there is much more recognition for the third sector now which is, I think it's fantastic really" (Stakeholder, Community Cohesion)*.

Concern was expressed in terms of the short-term nature of funding, and that this would result in services provided over a limited period which would not be enough to result in sustained change: *"Especially when you're working with children with ACEs or adults with ACEs, twelve months might not be long enough for any kind of long-term development" (Stakeholder, Medrwn Môn)*. Additionally, the way that services were designed may result in services being too short term: *"A lot of projects…they get support for 8 weeks, if you're at a point of crisis…8 weeks is never long enough" (Stakeholder, Medrwn Môn)*. It was felt that taking services away from families who had become reliant on them was potentially damaging: *"Suddenly you're taking away everything that you've built up, that they've built up to support themselves and yet take it away from them which is probably worse than ever happening in the first place" (Stakeholder, Community Cohesion)*. Stakeholders found that open-ended support worked better

> *"A lot of projects…they get support for 8 weeks, if you're at a point of crisis…8 weeks is never long enough" (Stakeholder, Medrwn Môn).*

for families who may choose to stop and pick up support as they needed it: *"With our social prescribing project…we don't put a time limit on it. We set them goals and when they reach a goal, if they want to finish, that's fine, if they want to start another one, will go to the other one" (Stakeholder, Medrwn Môn)*.

The short-term nature of funding had significant implications for those working within organisations: *"We don't know whether we're getting that funding…staff retention, it's tricky because understandably a lot of people don't want to remain in an industry where you're literally going from month to month with your contract" (Stakeholder, Mind)*. The impact of the short-term nature of funding on staff was echoed by another stakeholder: *"It takes a lot to train and properly induct people…it can take like three or four years to get somebody established…and you can't possibly keep people when your contracts are ending" (Stakeholder, Homestart)*. Consequently, the nature of funding will have an impact on staff and staff retention: *"That's about the staff and retaining them, because ultimately what we see is, when you get really good staff, really good*

staff move on…I think it's really important that we can try and retain staff" (Stakeholder, Barod).

It was also noted that where staff work for community organisations rather than statutory services, they may not be viewed in the same way as those employed within professional spheres: *"You've got someone who works really well with the family and then they're bringing their concerns, sometimes there's a question, I think over the validity of the information…this isn't the writings of a professional with key qualifications" (Stakeholder, Barod).* This was echoed by another stakeholder: *"We're not statutory service, so our voices aren't always heard" (Stakeholder, Hafan Cymru).* Consequently, it was felt that it was important to ensure that all workers had appropriate skills, and this would result in an improved service: *"I think if we can upskill that front line group and retain them on the ground…that would have a massive inroad to those people getting the appropriate service provision interventions" (Stakeholder, Barod).* However, the training on offer was not always felt to be what was needed and it was felt to be important that service providers were able to outline their training needs: *"You've never asked me…there is just something about actually asking organisations directly" (Stakeholder, Homestart).*

In addition to training, participants felt that it was important to support the wellbeing of staff; one way of providing support was through supervision: *"The only thing that I've raised with the local authority…is the lack of support for, or the lack of training really for supervisors… good quality, high quality supervision of staff and volunteers is incredibly important" (Stakeholder, Homestart).* Such support is particularly important when staff and volunteers are working with people who have experienced trauma: *"For staff that support people with a lot of trauma…it is traumatising. Organisations should be trauma informed, because it can have a negative impact" (Stakeholder, Cartrefi Conwy).* It was recognised that staff need time and support to reflect: *"Staff who are involved in that to actually have time to reflect themselves…they might be hearing the most harrowing of stories…you need time to process that" (Stakeholder, A Primary School).*

3.3 Engaging with community projects

In respect of barriers that may exist in terms of community organisations engaging with government bodies, language was cited as a potential reason: *"I suppose sometimes the language that is used by Welsh Government…is not actually language that we would use on the ground floor…sometimes things are not pitched at the right sort of level and the language that's used reflects that" (Stakeholder, Homestart).* The importance of direct communication with community groups was also noted: *"I think it goes back to that sort of support and that relationship with people, so if Welsh Government…were to send me an email that's not at all tailored to me and I get it generically and it sort of gets, read a cursory glance and then closed down" (Stakeholder, Homestart).*

It was also noted that dealing with people with ACEs and trauma is challenging and there was a need for wider support: *"It is difficult for people on the ground, dealing with such complex cases, there is not really the support…somebody needs to bring it together…the things that can help are a huge spectrum" (Stakeholder, Cartrefi Conwy).* It was also felt that it was important that community organisations work together and support each other: *"There is the role for the larger, voluntary sector organisations to support others, there needs to be far more community cohesion, community network, where smaller organisations can come together, and hear what is going on and share the burden of, how do we support organisations to come together. We need a really strong sector that looks at how do we mitigate against ACEs" (Stakeholder, Valleys Kids).*

Section 4: Findings – mapping community projects: a case study

This section provides a detailed mapping of community projects in one geographical area. The aim is to provide detailed information about the services that are offered by community projects in one location to understand how they combine to provide a range of services to community groups.

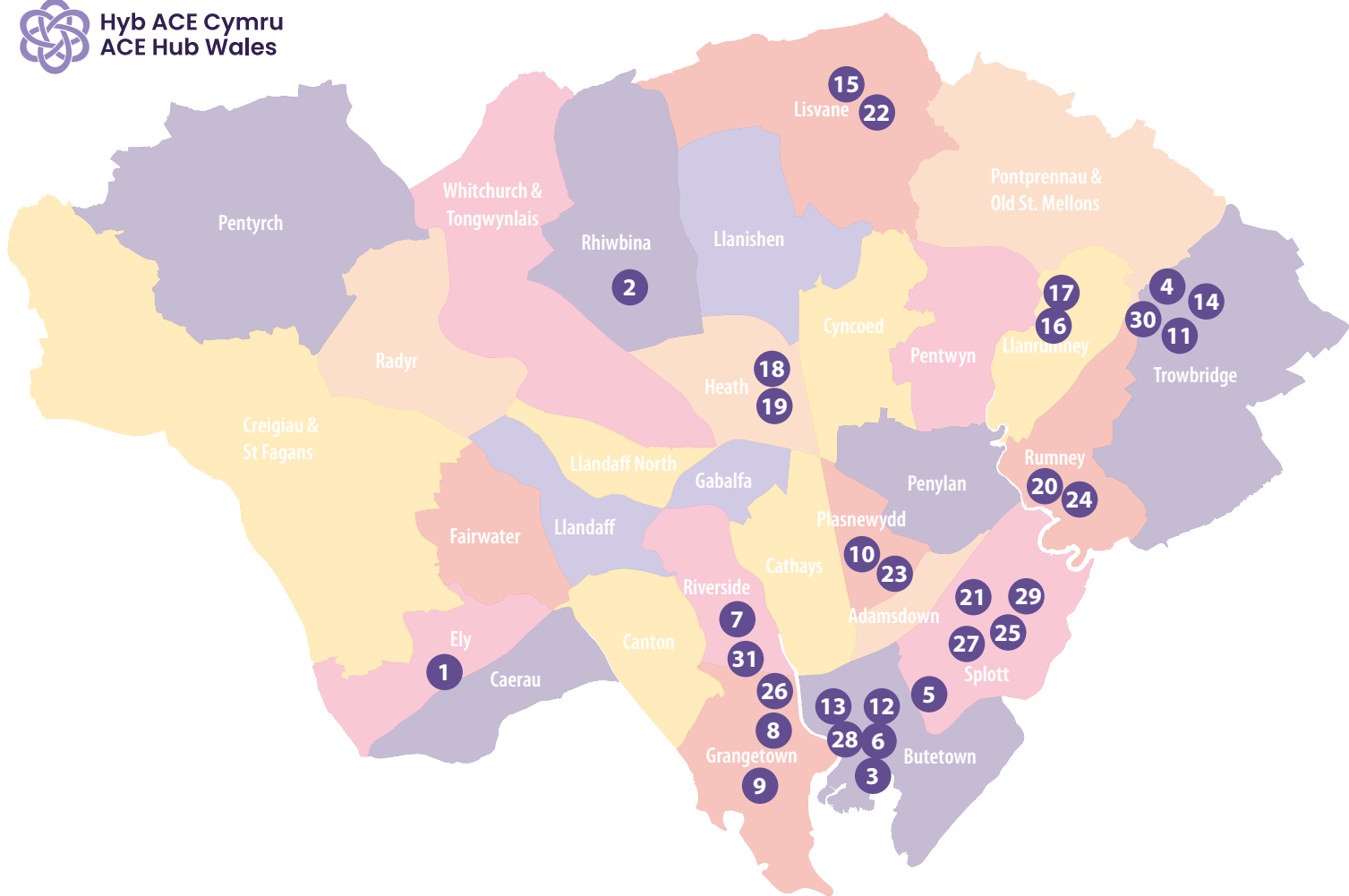## 4.1 Map of community projects: Cardiff

Table 2: Community Projects, Cardiff

	Project	Location	Community groups
1	Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE)	Caerau & Ely	Community in Caerau & Ely
2	Arabic Grace Church	Rhiwbina	Arabic including refugees and asylum seekers
3	BAWSO	Butetown	Black and minority ethnic groups
4	Beacon Centre	St Mellons	Local community
5	Boomerang	Splott	Homeless
6	Butetown Community Centre	Butetown	Local community
7	Grandparents Raising Grandchildren	Cathedral Road	Grandparents and kinship carers
8	Grange Pavilion	Grangetown	Local community
9	Grangetown Boys and Girls	Grangetown	11-25 year olds in Grangetown
10	Growbaby	Roath	Families with children under five years
11	Gypsy Traveller Wales	Trowbridge	Gypsy and Traveller community
12	Hayaat Women Trust	Butetown	Black and minority ethnic women
13	Henna Foundation	Butetown	Muslim and wider minority ethnic groups
14	Hope St Mellons/St Mellons Pantry	St Mellons	Local community
15	Lisvane Men's Shed	Lisvane	Men
16	Llanrumney Boxing Club	Llanrumney	Children and youth fitness club
17	Llanrumney Hall Community Trust	Llanrumney	Local community
18	Llynfedw Gardens Project	Heath	Local community
19	Maes Y Coed Community Centre	Heath	Local community
20	Moss-Rose Cottage	Rumney	Local community
21	Oasis Refugee Centre	Splott	Refugees and asylum seekers
22	Old School Community Centre	Lisvane	Local community
23	Rainbow of Hope	Roath	Homeless and disadvantaged including asylum seekers and refugees
24	Rumney Forum	Rumney	Local community
25	Seren in the Community	Splott	Children and young people in Splott, Tremorfa, Adamstown and Roath (STAR area)
26	South Riverside Community Centre	Riverside	Local community
27	Splott Community Volunteers	Singleton Road	Local community
28	Tiger Bay Amateur Boxing Club	Alice Street	Local community
29	Tremorfa Community Pantry	Tremorfa	Local community
30	Trowbridge Pantry	Trowbridge	Local community
31	Women Connect First	Riverside/Butetown/Roath	Black and minority ethnic women

4.2 Community projects in Cardiff: services provided

1 Action in Caerau and Ely
https://www.aceplace.org/

Action in Caerau & Ely is a community developed charity owned and run by the residents of Ely and Caerau in West Cardiff. It was set up to develop and deliver a range of different projects and activities to regenerate and improve the communities of Ely and Caerau including: a time credit scheme that builds and underpins local participation; crisis support for those experiencing poverty; training and support for the unemployed; community led health and well-being activities; arts/heritage activities and social enterprise development.

2 Arabic Grace Church

The aim of the Arabic Grace Church is to support Arabic people across Cardiff including refugees and asylum seekers. As well as meeting twice a month, it provides outreach and support in terms of transport, translation for appointments, particularly health and dental appointments, and making connections with people who can assist. They also assist with access to college course and arrange and deliver food parcels.

3 Bawso
https://bawso.org.uk/

Bawso is committed to providing advice, services, and support to black and minority ethnic individuals in Wales who are affected by abuse, violence and exploitation. Bawso is dedicated to prevention, protection, and support services for the most vulnerable and provides a range of services, advice and support on areas including accommodation, community and outreach, children and young people, modern slavery, therapeutic interventions, community engagement interpreting services and training services. Services include advice and information; refuge provision; children and youth; floating support; community advocacy project; black and minority ethnic specialist; support for migrant victims; asylum and refugee and outreach.

4 Beacon Centre
https://www.beaconcentre.org.uk/

The Beacon Centre sits at the heart of St Mellons in East Cardiff. Together with local residents and partners it provides spaces, activities and services that help people to overcome life challenges and find new opportunities for positive change.

5 Boomerang
https://www.boomerangcardiff.org.uk/

Boomerang Cardiff is a charitable organisation which focusses on the needs of the community across Cardiff, it aims to help and support people and families, working to promote, benefit and empower the inhabitants of Cardiff in a common effort to enhance living standards. Starting as a homeless/poverty organisation Boomerang Cardiff now addresses homelessness/prevention of homelessness; poverty, in work poverty/critical living conditions; community engagement/education; social isolation/loneliness.

6 Butetown Community Centre https://butetowncommunitycentre.mystrikingly.com/

The Butetown Community Centre located in central Cardiff offers a range of activities, classes and social activities and events. The community centre includes a community café and offers adult education.

7 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) http://www.grgcardiff.co.uk/

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Cardiff is a Cardiff-based support group for grandparents and kinship carers caring for a child full-time. Kinship care is an arrangement where children live with a relative or a close friend rather than their birth parents. GRG offers grandparents and kinship carers the opportunity to meet other in similar situations, offering emotional and practical support, access to information and advice in terms of rights, legal options and financial entitlements, help preparing for meeting or assessments and interactions with professionals.

8 Grange Pavilion https://grangepavilion.wales/

Grange Pavilion community centre was built to provide residents with an accessible and inclusive indoor and outdoor space to support community led projects in Grangetown. Grangetown Pavilion provides public amenities, three large rooms for hire, a café, office space, hot-desking and a garden that features five rainwater ponds, a wildflower meadow, a honey bee garden, a community allotment and a green for play, exercise and picnics.

9 Grangetown Boys and Girls https://www.facebook.com/groups/525521297865166/

Grangetown Boys & Girls Club is a youth club for 11-25 year olds; it has pool, table tennis, play station, a recording studio and will soon be offering a range of qualifications.

10 Growbaby https://www.vineyardcardiff.org/growbaby/

Growbaby provides a welcoming community for families and their children. Since 2017, they have been hosting a weekly 'Stay and Play' coffee morning for parents and their children and providing good quality, new and second-hand baby clothes and equipment for children (up to five years), completely free of charge to anyone who needs it.

11 Gypsies and Travellers Wales https://gtwales.org.uk/core-work/

Gypsies and Travellers Wales provides advice and support to Gypsies and Travellers about accommodation, homelessness, welfare benefits, reviews and appeals, health, social services and racial discrimination. Underlying all services is a focus on challenging discrimination and promoting an inclusive and positive culture. The strategic aim is to make sure that by challenging discrimination and stereotypes, they achieve greater engagement with the wider community and their greater access to public services.

12 Hayaat Women Trust, Butetown, Cardiff http://www.hayaatwomentrust.org/

The Hayaat Women Trust is a women-led charity, formed in Cardiff to support and empower less advantaged people in communities in Wales and Sub-Saharan African countries. It offers a range of different services to help disadvantaged families out of poverty in particular, black and ethnic minority women who find it difficult to access mainstream services due to cultural and language barriers. Hayaat Women Trust offers "Advocacy without Barriers" to assist women with issues relating to health, welfare and benefits, social care, and educational issues.

13 Henna Foundation https://www.facebook.com/hennafoundation/

Henna Foundation is committed to strengthening families within Muslim and wider minority ethnic groups within the community. Particularly the needs of women, young people and children by supporting positive engagement between service users and government departments, statutory and voluntary sector agencies and wider civil society. Significant work is related to complex Violence against Women (VAW) casework; supporting victims of so called Honour Based Abuse (HBA), abuse and crimes, including cases of forced marriages and abandoned wives and children.

14 Hope St Mellons/St Mellons Pantry https://www.hopetrustcardiff.org/about/

The object of HOPE Trust Cardiff is to promote social inclusion in Cardiff and to promote the mental health and well-being of persons resident in South Wales suffering from depression, bereavement, loss or pregnancy-related crises, by the provision of voluntary counselling, education and support. Hope is the umbrella organisation for three projects: Hope St Mellons; Tavs Centre; and The Junction. Also, St Mellons Pantry which is a membership-led food pantry.

15 Lisvane Men's Shed https://www.facebook.com/LisvaneMensShed/

Lisvane Men's Shed is a community based, non-commercial, non-profit organisation which was set up in 2021 following COVID-19. The aim is to promote the health and well-being of local men, providing activities, friendship and social interaction, to fight isolation, loneliness and depression. The goal is to progress to premises that will support a small workshop for activities, including hobbies, craft, woodwork; a place to meet and talk, drink tea, tell stories and laugh.

16 Llanrumney Boxing Club https://www.facebook.com/phoenixabcllanrumney/

Llanrumney Boxing Club is a community based amateur boxing gym based in Llanrumney in Cardiff, offering boxing classes to children, young people and adults. In a purpose built boxing gym they host three classes per night: classes for children age 6-9, classes for young people age 10-16, a seniors class and a women only class. They offer amateur boxing as well as boxing for fitness purposes.

17 Llanrumney Hall Community Trust https://www.llanrumneyhall.org/

The Llanrumney Hall Community Trust is a community led trust set up to steer the regeneration of Llanrumney Hall. The focus is to provide a community hub, this includes the Llanrumney Hall Pantry, a food facility service providing subsidised groceries and household goods to the local community; a Gardening Club; an Over 50's Lunch Club; room rentals for local groups and business; and educational courses in partnership with Cardiff & Vale College.

18 Llwynfedw Gardens Project

https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Llwynfedw-Gardens-213693119378665/

Llwynfedw Gardens Project is a community group run by volunteers. The park is an oasis in the middle of a residential area and the pavilion is an increasingly important venue for the local community. They have carried out improvements to the building and surrounding area, and their aim is of protecting and enhancing Llwynfedw Gardens as a place of freedom, recreation and enjoyment for the long-term benefit of all sections of the community.

19 Maes Y Coed Community Centre

https://www.myc.wales/

Maes y Coed Community Centre is a volunteer run community centre which provides a multi-purpose community resource providing a wide range of services, activities and meeting spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds.

20 Moss-Rose Cottage

https://mossrosecottage.co.uk/

Moss-Rose Cottage provides an environment in which people of working age with 'invisible' barriers such as brain injuries, long COVID, low level mental health issues and other chronic conditions can access resources, support and strategies to improve their self-esteem and improve their chances of employment. It provides a setting that will improve the shared wellbeing of the wider community by creating mutually beneficial connections and relationships.

21 Oasis Refugee Centre

https://www.oasiscardiff.org/

The aim of the Oasis Refugee Centre is to help refugees and asylum seekers integrate within their local community. It provides support for 100-150 visitors each day including people from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, El Salvador, and Ivory Coast. The centre is open to refugees and asylum seekers and runs various women-only sessions and groups, art classes, English language classes, sports sessions, daily advisory sessions, advocacy forums, relaxation sessions, and a free lunch is provided every weekday. Outside the centre, they organise regular cultural and sports trips around Wales from museum and art gallery visits to sport team activities and mountain peak challenges. Oasis also runs regular community events including a home supper club.

22 Old School Community Centre

https://lisvanecommunity.org.uk/old-school-community-centre/

A new building, due to open in 2022 will provide a home for a Community Library, a café area, two meeting rooms and a main hall. The new facilities will enable a focus on the needs of the community in terms of addressing loneliness, social inclusion, fitness, creativity and educational needs within a vibrant and welcoming setting which is very much at the centre of village life.

23 Rainbow of Hope, Roath, Cardiff　　　http://www.rainbowofhope.co.uk/

Rainbow of Hope reaches out to homeless and disadvantaged people including asylum seekers and refugees. Their mission is to relieve poverty and distress by providing or assisting in the provision of food, shelter, clothing and grants of money and also by offering support and advice. A drop-in centre is open five days a week and offers a range of services including daily free lunch, free tea and coffee, ladies group, men's group, weekly Bible Study Group, English classes, an asylum seekers group, weekly free hairdresser, arts and crafts, discipleship group and fellowship meal. It also provides a soup run every night.

24 Rumney Forum　　　https://www.facebook.com/rumneyforum/

Rumney Forum is a local charity run by and for the community. They have a large selection of school uniform items, clothes, household items and a pantry for emergency basic grocery bags. They also have a small charity shop section with a wide range of preloved items, and they hold small groups and events for the community throughout the year. Every week they supply around a weeks' worth of shopping (four carrier bags) for a £7 donation, to families in need across the district. Additionally, they hire out many different items for a small charge per week.

25 Seren in the Community　　　https://www.facebook.com/sereninthecommunity

Seren in the Community is a charity supporting families, children and young people, and the wider community in Splott, Tremorfa, Adamstown and Roath (STAR) area. Set up in 2016, the aim is that all have equal access to opportunities, good health and well-being. Services are led by the needs of the community and intended to create positive change through collaboration with local partners to create sustainable facilities and create inclusive environments to empower and provide opportunities for everyone to reach their full potential.

26 South Riverside Community Development Centre (SRCDC)　　　https://www.srcdc.org.uk/

SRCDC is a charity established for the purpose of benefiting the communities of Riverside, Canton and Grangetown. The focus is on mental, physical, cultural and social welfare as well as to relieve poverty. SRCDC offer a community pantry scheme, community food project, parent and toddler groups, youth club, read and write, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and a computer suite.

27 Splott Community Volunteers　　　https://splottcommunityvolunteers.co.uk/

Splott Community Volunteers provide a breakfast club as well as a free bag of food for people experiencing food poverty to take home. Breakfast Club provides an opportunity to build social networks and enables people from different cultures and backgrounds, who may not otherwise meet, to come together and form solid connections and friendships, thus strengthening the community in which they live and bringing about ongoing positive impact. The group also give access to advice, activities, education and volunteer opportunities. Funds are raised by face-painting, table top sales and seasonal children's events.

28 Tiger Bay Amateur Boxing Club

https://tigerbayabc.com/

Tiger Bay Amateur Boxing Club was originally founded in 1984. The ambition is to create a space to coach and inspire young people and for the whole community to train. Recent events include a Tech Workshop to teach the youth of the community how to use tablets and how to make the most of the useful technology. The club also hosts visits from pupils of local primary schools and during the pandemic, provided food and drinks to vulnerable people.

29 Tremorfa Community Pantry

https://www.facebook.com/tremorfapantry/

A community pantry run by members of the community to share food and toiletries. In 2021 they shared 35 tonnes of food and developed crochet clubs and dinner clubs.

30 Trowbridge Pantry

https://www.facebook.com/ylptrowbridge/

Trowbridge Pantry joins a network of community food stores, helping to create a sustainable and long-term solution to food poverty and helping people save money on their food bills. For a small weekly subscription of £5, pantry members get access to groceries, including fresh fruit and vegetables plus store cupboard favourites.

31 Women Connect First

https://womenconnectfirst.org.uk/

Women Connect First targets disadvantaged, isolated and marginalised black and minority ethnic women who are experiencing multiple layers of deprivation, discrimination, and exclusion in accessing services and employment. It offers a range of services including advice, advocacy, counselling, and a wide range of training programmes and volunteering opportunities. The mission is to empower women and improve their lives through offering holistic services in a safe space and ensure their voices are heard across Wales in order to improve policy and practice to respond to their needs.

Section 5: Findings – beneficiaries of services

Three face to face focus groups were undertaken to explore the experiences of the beneficiaries of community projects and the impact of services provided. Projects included:

- Well Women Group, Colwyn Bay
- Hayaat Women Trust, Cardiff
- Valleys Kids, Rhondda Cynon Taf

5.1 Well Women Group, Colwyn Bay

The Well Women Group began when tenants of Cartrefi Conwy, completed an art course. The artwork produced formed an exhibition (Figures 2 & 3). The group carried on meeting, forming a support group for members. Members of the group undertake a range of activities including meditation, crafts, baking and walking. The group is open to all women and provides a safe space for members to discuss experiences. Group members noted how important the group was to them: *"I really enjoy it, seeing people …having a laugh"*. Another member noted: *"We look forward to meeting up every week"*. Members felt that a key strength of the group was the supportive nature: *"I think it is because we all stick by each other"*. The group was open and friendly to all who wanted to join: *"There is no cliques, no one has an agenda"*.

> *"I really enjoy it, seeing people … having a laugh"*

Additionally, the group was considered a safe space, where members could share as much or as little information as they choose: *"What's beautiful is that (Name) has gone at her own pace, of telling people, nobody has ever asked any questions and I think that is what this group is about, this is a sacred space, so when she was ready to say"*. Other members acknowledged that these conversations could be difficult and noted how difficult it could be to share difficult experiences: *"I was quite proud…for her to confide in us"*.

Meditation was considered key in addressing trauma: *"We do meditation twice a week and that has been key, that hasn't changed. A lot of us, in our lives, we have had trauma"*. Addressing the trauma that had been experienced was considered key for healing: *"It's the only beneficial thing to get well, I think you just stay stuck, if you didn't have this space, I would just be stuck on that merry go round of self-destruct"*. The group undertook a range of activities, including planning trips out together, further artwork and counselling; however, they often met and chatted: *"Sometimes we don't want to do anything, just sit here and chill"*.

> *"We do meditation twice a week and that has been key, that hasn't changed. A lot of us, in our lives, we have had trauma"*

Figure 2: Art Exhibition 1	Figure 3: Art Exhibition 2

5.2 Valleys Kids, Rhondda Cynon Taf

Valleys Kids provides a range of activities including art, play, education, and youth work to support children, young people and families. The aim of Valleys Kids is to release potential within communities to counteract the effects of social deprivation and enable children and young people to grow and develop through play, education, recreation, and creative activities.

Participants noted that Valleys Kids provide a range of courses relating to parenting skills: *"Confident parents, confident kids. It was a six-week course, they work with the parents…they have two different teams, a child one and a parents' one"*. This support was noted to have had an impact on both parents and their children: *"My oldest had no confidence whatsoever, but now he has got his own place, he's got a full-time job; he's doing well for himself"*. Parents also felt that attending courses built their confidence: *"I think it has helped my confidence as well, to be a parent"*. Additionally, other, practical assistance that Valleys Kids provide such as the food bank, was appreciated: *"I've had a food bank before and Christmas time, they have helped me out"*.

It was noted that support was ongoing, often over a period of many years and in many different forms: *"They are always here for you, it doesn't matter if you are in the course or not on a course. You can always phone up…they won't turn you away from their services...they are always there"*. Additionally, parents felt that as their family's needs changed as children got older, there was still the opportunity to access support to address problems as they arose: *"I have done parent puzzle before, but the older they get, they change, so sometimes doing the puzzling again, it is different ideas, it is surprising what you pick up"*.

> *"They are always here for you, it doesn't matter if you are in the course or not on a course. You can always phone up…they won't turn you away from their services...they are always there"*.

Support took different forms, in addition to structured courses, Valleys Kids provides an opportunity to meet with other parents just to chat, this was valued, both in terms of time to relax but also as an opportunity to learn from other parents: *"(Name) might say something, that is an idea, I could do that with my boy…so you are getting feedback off everybody else, other parents as well as professionals"*. Additionally, it was noted that time chatting with other parents was 'me' time: *"It's just nice to meet up, socialise. We have been on other courses, and we have bumped into each other years apart, nice to meet up, really helpful"*.

> *"It's just nice to meet up, socialise. We have been on other courses, and we have bumped into each other years apart, nice to meet up, really helpful"*

However, parents noted that they would welcome other services, in particular, specialist skills: *"Something for my son to be more independent…I need him to learn life skills"* and a course for older teenagers was also mentioned. Parents also valued opportunities for their children to take part in extracurricular activities although if there was a charge or fee, this was a barrier for parents: *"My daughter is going to baseball cap decorating workshop, and that is free"*. Valleys Kids was also a source of information for other activities and services: *"Valleys Kids are amazing and if you don't know where to go, they will tell you"*.

5.3 Hayaat Women Trust, Cardiff

Hayaat Women Trust (see section 4.2 for description of services) provided services in response to the impact of lockdown, particularly the isolation felt by young people, one example is the Young Queens project: *"That's for young girls, helping them express themselves"*. They did this through drawing, poetry and drama and the aim was to build confidence and self-esteem and also to give them a sense of identity, both within a Somali culture and a Welsh culture. In addition, Hayaat employed tutors to provide additional tuition in key subjects to address school missed due to the pandemic, however a barrier was that many of the children did not have laptops: *"a lot of the children didn't have laptops, I think the lockdown anyway has shown a lot of poverty in technology in these areas"*.

The Hayaat Women Trust provides a range of services for women, including those who had recently arrived in Wales; *"We didn't know anything about Britain or how the system works"* (translated). Hayaat was able to provide support in terms of accessing services and securing a school place for children. Hayaat also offers support for parents who have a child with a disability, providing information and advocacy around issues such as statements as well as employing professionals to explain and discuss needs. It was considered there was a lack of support for children with special needs, and in some cases, this was underpinned by discrimination: *"There are children who don't get statement because the school sees them to be a misbehaving ethnic child rather than this child actually has a problem".*

"We didn't know anything about Britain or how the system works"

The experience of discrimination was noted across other services including health care and midwifery where it was felt that cultural differences were not considered. One example that was given was the expectation to breast-feed on the ward where a male visitor was present. It was felt that cultural training for health staff was needed, and this was exacerbated by a lack of health professionals from black and minority ethnic groups: *"There's not many people within mental health that look like us, that can speak, that can explain what's happening…within clinical psychologists, one in eight is ethnic minority".*

"There's not many people within mental health that look like us, that can speak, that can explain what's happening…within clinical psychologists, one in eight is ethnic minority"

Another example of discrimination within the community was in the field of employment: *"I just feel like there's not enough ethnicity in certain jobs…I've applied for 30 jobs in a month and I never used to get any response from them, I believe it's improved a little bit over the years, but there is still the offices that I worked in, I was the only black female there".* While there was difficultly finding employment, once in a job, participants noted that it was difficult to progress: *"I worked in two jobs for 10 years and I couldn't progress, even though I had all the qualifications".*

It was noted that often for these women, the result is that they use organisations such as Hayaat for company and support: *"People think…that we're reclusive, we're hiding in our communities but there is no opportunities for us to go out with our children and do these certain activities because of the time or the fact that they're not taking into consideration the cultural differences".* An example of this was a lack of women only swimming opportunities: *"I asked, 'do they do women only nights?' I would love to go swimming with my daughter and my son".* However, such opportunities were often not available, or if they were, it was not at a time that would suit the women and their children. Across these spheres, participants felt that it was discrimination and a failure to understand cultural differences which resulted in them feeling excluded from mainstream provision and services: *"That's what we're talking about you know, having that inclusivity in everything, it all comes really back down to us feeling kind of othered".*

"People think…that we're reclusive, we're hiding in our communities but there is no opportunities for us to go out with our children and do these certain activities because of the time or the fact that they're not taking into consideration the cultural differences"

"That's what we're talking about you know, having that inclusivity in everything, it all comes really back down to us feeling kind of othered"

Section 6: Discussion

Community based interventions can build collective resilience, support individuals with services, and build strong bonds to a group (or a culture), all of which have been shown to be important factors in preventing and mitigating the impacts of ACEs (Hughes et al., 2018). Previous research (Addis et al., 2022) identified a range of community organisations across Wales which provide services to support community groups. These organisations were divided into three levels: projects which are part of funded, Wales or UK wide initiatives; projects which operate under the umbrella of broader third sector or charity groups; and community projects which have been set up in response to community need – grass roots projects.

The aim of this research was to further develop understanding and evidence in respect of community organisations in Wales, focusing on those which operate at the grass roots level. This study explored the services provided by community projects, as well as the most effective ways that they can be supported; identified and mapped community organisations in Cardiff as a case study and explored the impact of community organisations on beneficiaries of services. This section brings together the evidence by providing a summary of the findings for each of the three stages of data collection, outlines the strengths and limitations of this research and considers implications for policy and practice.

6.1 Summary of findings

Stakeholders

Stakeholders highlighted the broad range of services provided by community projects across Wales and reported that these community projects often fill gaps in statutory provision. The importance of inclusive services for diverse groups was observed, as was the need to address stigma, both in terms of the adversity and in terms of accessing the services. It was felt that there was a need to view accessing support services as a normal part of life and when working with families and communities, a strengths-based approach would result in building resilient and sustainable change for individuals and communities.

Stakeholders recognised the importance of understanding trauma, particularly since trauma is often prevalent in community members who face and have faced adversities. Also mentioned was that the impact of trauma can be long-term and will continue to affect families and as such, the need to address trauma in order to protect children from the long-term impact was recognised. In addressing trauma, it is considered essential to provide a safe space for people, someone to talk to and accessible services.

In terms of supporting community projects, funding was frequently cited with demands of completing complex funding applications noted, especially for smaller projects where staff may not have the necessary skills. Also noted was the short-term nature of funding and changing funding priorities in the face of continued and unchanging community need. Open ended support was considered the most beneficial, where families could pick up and drop off engagement with services as needed. Short term funding also had an impact on the recruitment and retention of staff including the ability to provide appropriate training and support, which was considered key for building expertise and ensuring staff wellbeing.

In terms of engaging with community organisations, language used was considered important, as was direct contact. It was felt that more support was needed for community organisations as well as an overarching body to 'bring it together' and ensure cohesion in terms of provision.

Mapping community projects

The mapping of community projects in Cardiff identified 31 community projects. These projects provided support to a range of community groups including black and ethnic minority groups, refugees and asylum seekers, homeless people, older people, children and young people and those facing mental health issues or suffering from isolation. A range of services were provided by projects including opportunities for companionship, advocacy, the provision of meals and food parcels, transport, translation and fitness.

Beneficiaries of services

Three focus groups were undertaken with the beneficiaries of services of three community projects. The Well Women group met once a week and the group is considered a place for members to discuss any issues and provide support for one another. Members valued the group as a safe space which has an active role in addressing and healing trauma and the group undertake various activities including meditation, cooking, and crafts. Valleys Kids provided a range of activities including art, play, education, and youth work to support children, young people and families as well as providing a food bank. Participants felt the courses provided had resulted in improved parenting skills. The open access nature of Valleys Kids was valued and for many parents, simple support, such as a cup of tea and a chat was valued. The Hayaat Women Trust is a women-led charity in Cardiff which offers a range of services to help disadvantaged families out of poverty, in particular communities who find it difficult to access mainstream services. Participants noted that through advocacy, they had been assisted to navigate institutions and issues relating to health, social care, housing, and education. However, a significant focus for participants was the impact of discrimination and lack of cultural awareness and the impact this had on their lives and experiences across a range of services, including education, health, employment, and leisure.

6.2: Strengths and limitations of the study

This study provides evidence in relation to several issues related to community organisation and highlights services provided and the most effective means of support. It also provides a map of community projects in one geographical area, providing a summary of services available. Finally, this study assesses the impact of the community projects on the beneficiaries of services. As a result, this study contributes to the evidence base in respect of the role, needs and impact of community organisations in Wales using a combination of evidence from multiple sources to address the research questions.

However, while stakeholders from well-established groups were represented in the focus groups, it was more difficult to identify and include those from smaller community provision, although a number of these were identified during the development of the case study. While the intention of the case study was to extensively map local projects in Cardiff and every effort was made to identify as many as possible, there will be several projects that have not been included in the mapping. Additionally, due to the short term nature of some funding, some of the projects listed may end and as a consequence the list will become outdated.

6.3: Implications for policy and practice

Funding was an issue which was raised by many stakeholders who noted that several factors would make applying for funding easier. These included assistance with completing funding applications and a more generous word count on forms to allow for fuller explanations of project aims. It was also noted that while funding often covers specific projects, community projects would also welcome funding for day-to-day running costs e.g., accommodation or events such as days out. Funding would also be welcomed to bridge funding for staff so that they could be retained between contracts. Finally, it was noted that funding which encourages partnership working was welcomed while funding which encouraged competition between community projects is disliked since it discouraged collaboration.

One stakeholder noted that they would like **practical assistance** with website development since this would provide an opportunity for donations to be made to the organisation. Also, the ability to publicise services beyond using social media was also mentioned.

It was acknowledged that staff require access to **good quality training**, also, rather than being 'top-down', training should be developed with community projects to ensure it is appropriate and addresses their needs. Stakeholders also mentioned that while staff may not have the formal skills and training of professionals, they develop a wide range of skills, experience, and expertise and this should be recognised. It was also noted that staff need appropriate support, perhaps in the form of supervision, especially where they are dealing with individuals with trauma and possibly coping with their own trauma.

Stakeholders noted the importance of **developing community networks** which would allow organisations more influence and increase access to support and/or funding. Also, mentioned as important was the provision of support in terms of planning and developing services and projects.

6.4: The need for further research

It is necessary to develop a better understanding of the specific needs and requirements that different community groups have in order that more tailored support can be provided. A 'one size fits' all approach will not adequately address the specific needs and requirements of individual community groups which may include specific cultural sensitivities. Support needs to acknowledge the diversity which exists in terms of services provided, the workforce providing services and those who benefit from services.

Section 7: Conclusion

Previous research undertaken by ACE Hub Wales indicates that community projects across Wales provide support for community members in respect of a range of adversities. Building on this research, the aim of this project was to identify and map further community projects; to understand the most effective methods of supporting these projects as well as barriers to engagement; and finally, to explore the impact of services on community groups.

This project had three stages of data collection: stage one was to undertake focus groups with stakeholders from community projects across Wales; stage two was to develop a case study by identifying and mapping community projects in one area; and stage three was to undertake focus groups with the beneficiaries of services of three community projects across Wales.

Stakeholders noted the contribution that community projects make, and they also outlined several areas where the work of community organisations could be supported. This included funding, supporting staff development and wellbeing and practical support such as developing websites or supporting publicity. Mapping community projects in Cardiff identified 31 projects which provide a range of support to diverse community groups and address a range of need. Finally, beneficiaries of services of three community projects note a range of benefits from the services provided including wellbeing and parenting support, friendship, and advocacy in respect of health, welfare and education services.

A number of key policy and practice implications were highlighted within the findings. These include funding, practical assistance, the ability to publicise services, good quality training and developing community networks. However, further research is needed to develop understanding of the way that community projects can provide support which is tailored to the specific needs and priorities of diverse community groups.

Finally, supporting community organisations requires a multifaceted approach, encompassing funding, staff support and development and practical assistance. There is also a need for the development of networks which would facilitate mutual support and allow for a more cohesive provision of services.

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Appendix A: Welsh County Voluntary Councils (CVCs)

Flintshire	Flintshire Local Voluntary Council
Wrexham	Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham
Bridgend	Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations
Cardiff	Cardiff Third Sector Council
Carmarthenshire	Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services
Ceredigion	Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations
Conwy	Community and Voluntary Support Conwy
Denbighshire	Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council
Glamorgan	Glamorgan Voluntary Services (Vale of Glamorgan)
Gwent	Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
Rhondda Cynon Taff	Interlink (Rhondda Cynon Taff)
Gwynedd	Mantell Gwynedd
Anglesey	Medrwn Mon (Isle of Anglesey)
Neath Port Talbot	Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services
Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
Powys	Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations
Swansea	Swansea Council for Voluntary Service
Torfaen	Torfaen Voluntary Alliance
Merthyr Tydfil	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil