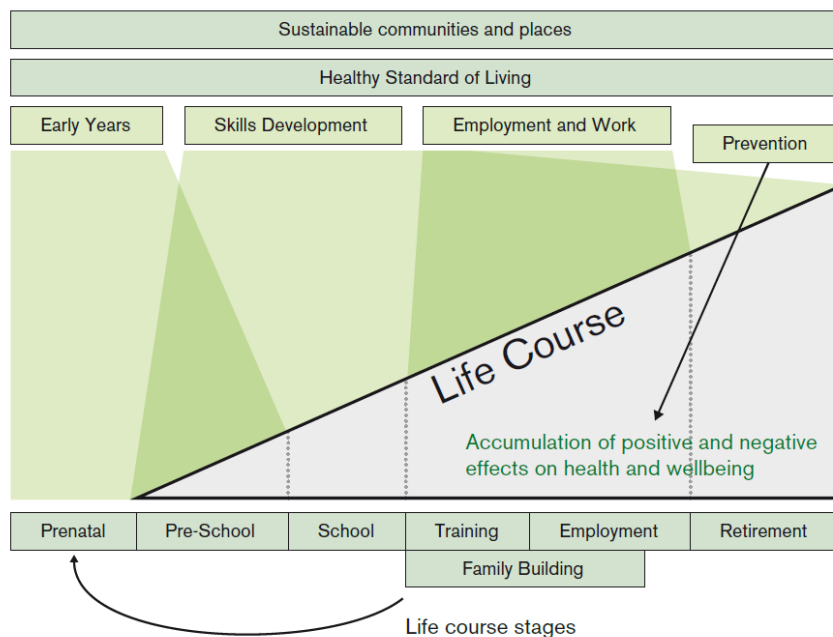


# Early Years and Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Ensuring young children have a good start in life and preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences

## Why is this an area of focus for the PSB?

The Marmot Review highlighted that disadvantage starts “before birth and accumulates throughout life”. Inequality in the Vale of Glamorgan was found to be a main headline emerging from the well-being assessment and action to reduce inequalities must start before birth and be followed through the life of the child. Only then can the close links between early disadvantage and poor outcomes throughout life be broken. Generally young children in the Vale have a good level of well-being, however, as is often the case, Vale of Glamorgan level data often masks inequalities within the county



and this is true for a range of indicators in relation to young children’s health and development. **The PSB has therefore highlighted ensuring all children have a good start in life as a critical area for collective action and an area where we can build on our strengths to make a real impact.**

In addition to evidence relating to young children themselves, it is important to consider the wide range of social, economic, cultural and environmental factors which influence life chances, or the ‘wider determinants of health and well-being’. Experiences at a young age not only affect the life chances of our current future generation but the generations they will go on to bear themselves.

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

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

The wide range of data considered within the assessment can all be linked to affecting young children’s experiences and opportunities both for now and into the future.

The Public Health Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study highlights that “children

who experience stressful and poor quality childhoods are more likely to adopt health-harming behaviours during adolescence which can themselves lead to mental health illnesses and diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes later in life. Adverse Childhood Experiences are not just a concern for health. Experiencing ACEs means individuals are more likely to perform poorly in school, more likely to be involved in crime and ultimately less likely to be a productive member of society.

## Findings from the assessment

With regards to the development of young children the assessment highlighted this as an asset to build upon within the Vale of Glamorgan and an area where good progress has been made. However, linked to tackling inequalities the PSB want to ensure **ALL** children have a good start in life.

- In general, young children across the Vale of Glamorgan show **good levels of development** in relation to health behaviours when compared to their peers across Wales.
- The percentage of reception age children in the Vale of Glamorgan who are **overweight or obese** has reduced in recent years and is the lowest rate in Wales, significantly lower than average.
- The Vale of Glamorgan observes a lower than Welsh average rate of **low birth weight babies** although area differences can be observed. LBW can be considered a key predictor of health inequalities and in the Vale of Glamorgan areas with lower healthy life expectancy also have a higher rate of low birth weight babies than both the Vale and Welsh averages.
- The rate of **teenage conceptions** is consistently low for under 16s, under 18s and under 20 year olds.
- The most recent data available in relation to the average number of **decayed, missing or filled teeth** in children aged 5 years showed the Vale of Glamorgan to have the lowest rate in Wales of 0.7. However differences can be observed within the Vale and the average number of children aged 5 with decayed, missing or filled teeth was higher in the Barry area than the Eastern or Western Vale.
- In 2015/16 in the Vale of Glamorgan the percentage of **Foundation Phase** children reaching the expected development outcome or above across all areas of development was the highest across the Central South Education Consortium Area and was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in Wales behind Monmouthshire. The Vale performed particularly well in relation to Maths, where the Vale ranked first in Wales. However the difference in performance between those children entitled to Free School Meals and those not entitled at the Foundation Phase has been highlighted as an area for improvement.

### Example links to our other areas of focus

- A high quality **environment** can provide opportunities for play and physical activity providing a range of well-being benefits to young children.
- **Tackling Inequalities** will help to ensure we give all children a good start in life through improving the well-being of parents and future parents.
- Ensuring we **engage** with all sections of our community will help ensure that all young children and parents who need support receive it and that children themselves have opportunities for their voices to be heard.

### What our self-assessment told us?

PSB partners are undertaking a self-assessment exercise to consider each organisation's current position against each of the four areas of focus with regards to policy, leadership, activities, resources and impact. The aim is to help identify where we can work together more effectively, learn from best practice and identify where gaps and duplication may exist. The assessment can also be used as a baseline assessment to monitor progress during the course of the Well-being Plan alongside other performance management arrangements. For the early years theme it was found that for many partners activities being undertaken will have a direct or indirect impact on young children or their parents in order to prevent ACE's, however there was a lack of strategic overview across organisations as a whole in relation to a specific focus on early years and a lack of evaluation of the impact of activity on early years unless linked to grant funding conditions.