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**Early Action
Together**



Early Action Together Programme Response to Commission for Justice in Wales: Call for Evidence	
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Details	<p>The Early Action Together programme welcomes the opportunity to provide written evidence to the Commission for Justice in Wales, and to help inform a long term vision for justice that makes better sense for the people of Wales.</p> <p>Evidence is provided in response to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.What problems face the people who work within the justice system in Wales (including policing, prosecution, courts, prisons and probation) and the people who are affected by it? 2.What is working well in the justice system in Wales? What is not working well? Are there examples of innovation and good practice, both in and beyond Wales, which should be adopted and shared? 3.Are there changes that should be made to the capabilities and effectiveness of the ways in which the police, probation and prisons approach their tasks? What should be done to increase community safety, wellbeing and social cohesion and reduce crime? What can be learnt form other countries where rates of crime and imprisonment are lower? 4.What steps do you think need to be taken to facilitate positive change in the justice system in Wales?
Supporting Documents	Annex A - A Partnership Agreement: Working Together to Build Resilience through a Public Health Approach to Policing and Criminal Justice in Wales



Camau Cynnar gyda'n Gilydd

Early Action Together



1.0 What problems face the people who work within the justice system in Wales (including policing, prosecution, courts, prisons and probation) and the people who are affected by it?

- 1.1 Many of the issues facing policing, criminal justice and health organisations are rooted in inequality, vulnerability and adversity. As a result, policing and criminal justice services are often focussed on treating symptoms rather than preventing the causes, which by the time of their presentation to front line professionals can often be incurable. This repeat presentation of symptoms has created a common set of challenges that place a disproportionately high demand on policing, criminal justice and health budgets and resources.
- 1.2 Research undertaken by Public Health Wales in one Police Force area in Wales has highlighted the increasing demand on Police in responding to vulnerability related need (including for example child welfare concerns, and issues relating to mental health, vulnerable adult and domestic violence). An analysis of local performance data showed that whilst there were around 6,1590 referral notices (relating to 57,364 occurrences) made by the Police to partner agencies over a 12 month period, the vast majority of referrals (between 72% and 80%) did not result in any further action being taken. There was also mixed understandings of vulnerability, trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) amongst the police workforce, and a lack of shared understanding of vulnerability across services.
- 1.3 Globally there is an increasing body of evidence which demonstrates that suffering childhood trauma, including growing up with a household member incarcerated, can have long-term negative impacts on an individual's health (physical and mental) and has been associated with an uptake of health-harming behaviours, and criminal justice outcomes. Other ACEs commonly explored in research in the UK include childhood abuse (physical, sexual or emotional), neglect (emotional or physical) and other types of household trauma (i.e. parental divorce/separation or drug misuse). The recent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) studies published by Public Health Wales provide some valuable insights into the root causes of vulnerability, mental wellbeing, health harming and anti-social behaviours amongst the Welsh population, reporting that adults who experienced 4 or more ACEs when compared to those with no ACEs, were:
- 15 times more likely to have committed violence against another person;
 - 14 times more likely to have been a victim of violence;
 - 16 times more likely to have taken crack cocaine or heroin over the past 12 months;
 - 5 times more likely to have low mental well-being;
 - 3 times more likely to have attended Accident and Emergency units; and
 - 3 times more likely to have stayed overnight in hospital
- 1.4 This research suggested that preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of crack or heroin use by 66%, incarceration by 65% and violence perpetration by 50%.



Camau Cynnar gyda'n Gilydd

Early Action Together



- 1.5 The most recent Public Health Wales ACEs research in Wales (2017) found that 5 out of 10 adults surveyed had at least one ACE and 14% had four or more. The prevalence of ACEs in the offender (particularly the prison) population is likely to be much higher. ACEs, similar to crime have also been found to be inter-generational, therefore working with the offender population, and those at risk of entering the criminal justice system will be key in reducing the onward transmission of ACEs to future generations.
- 2.0 What is working well in the justice system in Wales? What is not working well? Are there examples of innovation and good practice, both in and beyond Wales, which should be adopted and shared?**
- 2.1 Despite a robust evidence base clearly showing links between childhood trauma and long-term negative impacts on health and social outcomes, including involvement in inter-personal violence later in life (as perpetrator and/or victim), there has been a lack of coordinated focus on early intervention and preventative activity in addressing root causes of vulnerability. In recognition of this, an all Wales collaborative bid was submitted between Public Health Wales, the four Police and Crime Commissioners and four Police forces across Wales as well as key partners to the Home Office Police Transformation Fund in 2017. In November the Home Office announced that the bid was successful and had been awarded £6.87million up until March 2020.
- 2.2 The Early Action Together Programme (Police Transformation Fund) aims to address the lack of early intervention and preventative activity when ACEs are evident and families are at risk of poor outcomes and the associated impact on policing and partners in terms of vulnerability and crime. The programme is an opportunity to bring partners together to fundamentally change the way vulnerable people are supported, ensuring vulnerable people have the opportunity to break the generational cycle of crime and adversity.
- 2.3 It involves taking a public health approach to policing which means using an evidence base to understand the current context and identify what works, developing and evaluating interventions to tackle the root causes and scaling up and assessing those interventions showing the most promise. The programme will be adaptable to local needs rather than trying to force a one size fits all approach to what is a complex landscape.
- 2.4 The programme is being guided by the following principles to ensure it achieves the maximum benefit for the largest number of people and remains focussed on developing sustainable systems that enhance the current work around vulnerability for the foreseeable future.
- Working with systems not symptoms
 - Focus on people not process
 - Working differently not more



Camau Cynnar gyda'n Gilydd

Early Action Together



- Led by evidence not assumption
- Build into, not onto

2.5 The programme seeks to achieve this by:

- Building and sharing an extensive evidence base helping us move from a position of understanding the ACE research to understanding what a positive and effective response looks like at different stages of Policing, the wider justice system and for other interrelated partners
- Impacting on short, medium and longer term organisational governance so that strategy and policy is ACE informed
- Using evidence to help police and criminal justice make decisions and changes to working practice to enable transfer of investment to a system wide prevention first model. Enabling a workforce with the capacity and capability to deal with changes in demand through improving training, recruitment and support for staff.
- Changing systems, processes and practice to enable a 24/7 front door response to vulnerability; early intervention and prompt positive action as a way of doing business rather than an ad hoc specialist approach
- Working in collaboration with partners to deliver and ensure a systems wide approach where Police practice recognises and responds to impact on others and other partners are able to respond more effectively to areas of business, which currently have significant impact on Policing.

2.6 It is hoped that the programme will achieve a number of outcomes including a better informed and skilled workforce which is empowered and enabled to proactively respond to citizens; increased vulnerability awareness amongst frontline staff and an increase in police engagement of vulnerability; a reduction in repeat demand; appropriate, quality and consistent sharing of information for vulnerability; increased public confidence and victim satisfaction; improved staff confidence; an increase in proactive policing and partner interventions to protect the vulnerable; and reduced demand on policing and partners. Ultimately many of the benefits of the programme will be realised after the funding period and will be felt more widely than the policing and criminal justice sector – this is about embedding cultural change and a different way of working into every day practice and that takes time.

3.0 Whilst not a direct a deliverable from the Early Action Together programme, the Enhanced Case Management Model in the youth justice context, and diversionary services for Women and Young Adults in Wales, have also been heavily influenced by the ACEs research and provide good examples of ACE informed delivery.



Camau Cynnar gyda'n Gilydd

Early Action Together



- 3.0 Are there changes that should be made to the capabilities and effectiveness of the ways in which the police, probation and prisons approach their tasks? What should be done to increase community safety, wellbeing and social cohesion and reduce crime?**
- 3.1 The impact of ACEs have been known to social care and health professionals, teachers and youth workers for many years, but without a plan to address the issues in a coordinated way, the benefits in jointly tackling them have been unrealised. Research evidence from police and partners suggests an increasing picture of vulnerability-related demand, suggesting a need for a system wide, workforce development approach to responding to vulnerability using an ACE approach.
- 3.2 The policy and legislative context in Wales supports new approaches to addressing issues which, historically, have often seemed intractable. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) both set out a transformative vision to improving the wellbeing of people in Wales through prioritising collaboration, integration, long term planning, and prevention. Preventing and mitigating the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through taking a macro approach to understanding individual vulnerability is a clear priority with which to focus collective action.
- 3.3 Policing and criminal justice partners are responding to an increasingly diverse and complex landscape requiring a more sophisticated approach to tackle new and evolving challenges. Whether it is child sexual exploitation, domestic violence and abuse, cybercrime or new threats from serious and organised crime, human trafficking or terrorism, it is acknowledged that working collaboratively across the system is key to preventing crime and protecting vulnerable people.
- 3.4 In recognition of this, Public Health Wales, Policing and Criminal Justice partners across Wales have come together to produce a **national Partnership Agreement**¹ (see Annex A) setting out how they will work collaboratively to drive action and bring about system-wide change to improve the quality of lives, wellbeing and safety of people living in Wales. The Agreement expands on the original Memorandum of Understanding developed between the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and Public Health Wales, providing a basis for partners to work together to identify and tackle joint priority issues facing policing, criminal justice and public health, where appropriate through system-wide changes in policy and in the design, commissioning and delivery of services.
- 3.5 The Partnership Agreement sets out the commitment of Public Health Wales, Policing and Criminal Justice partners to jointly develop a programme of work aimed at building organisational and community resilience through a public health approach to understanding and identifying the root causes of common issues that cut across policing, health and

¹ Full title - A partnership Agreement: Working together to build resilience through a public health approach to policing and criminal justice in Wales



Camau Cynnar gyda'n Gilydd

Early Action Together



criminal justice. Partners will seek to design, test and implement long-term sustainable solutions with an emphasis on early prevention, intervention, ACEs and vulnerability. Key to this will be creating a trauma informed workforce, systems and environment across across policing and criminal justice as well as health, to be able to respond more effectively to vulnerability, though improving awareness, identification and response to children and adults who have experienced trauma/adversity. The Agreement reinforces the need for system change, drawing on evidence to help organisations better integrate the commissioning of services and help shift the allocation of budgets to a greater focus on prevention. It will support local strategy and delivery through collaboration with PSBs and Community Safety arrangements.

- 3.6 It is anticipated that this Agreement will help to reduce demand on policing, criminal justice and health services—realised through focussing on early intervention and prevention strategies that reduce escalation of issues (e.g. re-arrests/repeat presentation of vulnerability); identify and address gaps in service provision, avoiding duplication of resources and energy across services in managing recurring issues, and provide a joined-up service that is better able to respond to the needs of individuals and local communities in Wales, particularly the most vulnerable.

4.0 What steps do you think need to be taken to facilitate positive change in the justice system in Wales?

- 4.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generation's Act (2015) provides a useful framework to inform an approach to achieving positive change in the justice system, that is underpinned by a focus on:
- Prevention - understanding the root causes of issues and where appropriate, investing in effective upstream interventions
 - Collaboration - acting in collaboration with others to identify shared priorities, and opportunities for pooled budgets and joint resources
 - Involvement - engaging and involving partners and the diversity of individuals affected by our decision making
 - Integration - considering how decision making may impact upon the well-being goals
 - A long term focus - balancing short and long term needs, ensuring sustainability and future proofing.
- 4.2 Facilitating positive change in the justice system in Wales requires a different approach to working with people and addressing offending that better recognises the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, focuses more on early intervention and preventive activity where families are at risk of poor outcomes, and where staff and individuals feel informed and empowered in building resilience/protective factors. The justice system must understand offending and crime as a public health issue rather than purely a criminal justice issue, focusing on treatment as opposed to purely managing symptoms.



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4.3 As outlined in the Partnership Agreement (Annex A), partners must agree to work together to bring about systems wide change and integrated service delivery across Wales through driving action and a joined-up response to priority issues affecting devolved and non devolved partners. This will enable partners to better identify and address system-wide changes in policy and in the design, commissioning and delivery of services to improve the wellbeing and safety of families and communities across Wales. At policy level, there will be a need to shift public expenditure from crisis services to early intervention (potentially the less expensive long term option), requiring an integrated approach across organisations, policy and public departments.