



Cross Party Group For The Prevention And Healing Of Adverse Childhood Experiences (Aces)

Commission Of Inquiry Into The Delivery Of 70/30 – Invitation To Submit Evidence:

Please read the accompanying Background Information document before responding.

1. Name (Please print first and last name)

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3. Please tell us in what capacity you are responding to this consultation:

Individual responding in a personal capacity (go straight to question 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual responding in a professional capacity (go straight to question 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual responding on behalf of an organisation (please answer question 3.1)	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.1. If you are an individual responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of the organisation you are representing:

Zero Tolerance

3.2 Its website and telephone number

<https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/>

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3.3 Your job title

Policy and Practice Officer: Children and Young People

4. Personal contact

4.1 If you are willing to be contacted directly by a member of the Commission, to explore in greater depth any aspect of your evidence, and are comfortable for this to be by telephone, text, or WhatsApp, please supply your mobile number

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In each theme, you are invited to propose – and provide evidence to support – actions which would make a **significant** contribution to the achievement of 70/30. Supporting evidence may be provided by way of references to published documents, or by Appendices. If you do provide Appendices, please limit their number and length. The Commission has limited admin support and providing too much material could mean a risk that it will not be read.

SECTION A: SYSTEMIC CHANGE

THEME 1: SYSTEMIC CHANGE TO MAKE A 'SENSE OF COHERENCE' WIDESPREAD IN CHILDREN'S LIVES

THEME 1, Q1 – SYSTEMIC CHANGE: What systems changes would support the creation of nurturing environments for all children, enabling parents routinely to create safe and stable environments for their families?

Zero Tolerance focuses on primary prevention of men's violence against women and girls (VAWG) by tackling the root cause: gender inequality. Societies which are unequal in terms of gender – where men earn more than women, women undertake more unpaid care work, and men hold positions of leadership (Engender, 2022) – allow VAWG to thrive because men and women do not hold equal power (Hester and Westmarland, 2005). Zero Tolerance have several strands of work focused on children and young people, including co-chairing the Scottish Government's Gender-Based Violence in Schools Working Group and sitting on the Gender Equality Taskforce for Education and Learning. Zero Tolerance applauds the structural, primary prevention focus of the ACEs approach. However, there are some key omissions which will limit its success.

Many ACEs listed – domestic abuse, sexual violence – are forms of gender-based violence, but the ACEs approach as described does not take a gender sensitive approach to primary prevention. The background information document does not mention gender, gender inequality, sexism, patriarchy – all factors which increase the risk of women and girls experiencing violence - nor that it is predominantly perpetrated by men (Equally Safe, 2018:8). Other forms of gender-based violence, such as female genital mutilation, are not included on the ACEs list, but have comparable long-term impacts (NSPCC, 2022).

Moreover, the ACEs list is limited as it does not include inequality and oppression, meaning that experiences of racist violence, poverty and scarcity, ableism, transphobia and homophobia are not included. While these might be covered by verbal and physical abuse, the depoliticising of violence and adversity caused by structural inequality renders invisible the oppressive systems which cause them.

These two omissions together limit the efficacy of the ACEs approach in tackling the structural causes of ACEs. Neglecting oppressive systems removes significant

contexts that must be addressed in order to take a primary prevention approach to tackling ACEs.

This structural approach is key to enabling parents to create safe and stable environments for their families. Structural inequalities form a significant portion of the barriers which parents face to creating safe homes. Gender has a key role to play: it is the root cause of VAWG, including domestic abuse. To prevent children having adverse experiences as a result of domestic abuse and the subsequent long-term consequences, we must tackle all forms of gender inequality, including structural power imbalances (Scottish Women's Aid, 2017:4).

The interaction of gender and poverty is critical: in 90% of cases women experiencing domestic abuse also experience financial abuse (Engender, 2022:5). Financial insecurity is closely linked with experiences of abuse whereby perpetrators trap women and children by reducing their space for action (Sharp-Jeffs et al., 2018; Sharp, 2008). As understood by Scottish Women's Aid, '[the cost] of living crisis is a matter of life and death for women and children experiencing domestic abuse' (Scottish Women's Aid, 2022). This demonstrates that while gender inequality is a cause and consequence of VAWG, it intersects with other forms of inequality which must be tackled together.

References

Engender, 2022. *WOMEN & THE COST OF LIVING: A CRISIS OF DEEPENING INEQUALITY*. Accessed 17/11/2022. Available online: <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/Women-and-the-cost-of-living---updated-copy.pdf>

Hester, M., Westmarland, N., 2005. 'Tackling Domestic Violence: effective interventions and approaches.' *Home Office Research Paper 290*. Accessed 13/9/2022. Available online: <https://dro.dur.ac.uk/2556/1/2556.pdf>

NSPCC, 2022. 'Female genital mutilation (FGM),' Types of Child Abuse. Accessed 17/11/2022. Available online: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

Scottish Government and COSLA, 2018. *Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and*

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Sharp-Jeffs, N., Kelly, L., & Klein, R. 2018 Long journeys toward freedom: The relationship between coercive control and space for action—Measurement and emerging evidence. *Violence Against Women, 24(2)*, pp. 163–185

Sharp, N. 2008. 'What's yours is mine': The different forms of economic abuse and its impact on women and children experiencing domestic violence.

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THEME 1, Q2 – SYSTEMIC CHANGE: What policy actions, by which agencies, would facilitate the systems changes identified in your answer to Theme 1, Q1 above?

Maximum 500 words:

Tackling structural inequalities and the ways in which they interact with each other requires a whole-system approach, with all parts of local and national government working together coherently. The parts of this consultation response which go beyond the Cross-Party Group's jurisdiction should be taken to others who *can* make them a reality.

Tackling inequality is not limited to work with children and young people. However, children and young people's environments do offer a useful entry point to change attitudes and culture around gender, race, class, disability and sexuality. For example, the Education Reform process could be utilised to create a gender equal education system where children's rights are respected and children of all genders are able to learn core skills, from understanding three-dimensional space to empathy and nurture. This would help inform a whole-school approach to preventing VAWG, which aims to create a culture within the school of consent, respect, and gender equality. As part of this, early years settings can also be used for primary prevention of VAWG and ACEs by tackling structural inequalities. This involves actions such as empowering practitioners to encourage non-gendered play and ensuring diverse characters (in terms of gender, race, disability, types of family, et cetera) in story books. Indeed, the youth work sector can also be utilised to tackle inequality and prevent VAWG and ACEs, by ensuring that all youth workers in Scotland have robust training on VAWG and are confident in delivering gender equal practice.

However, whilst children and young people environments are useful sites of primary prevention, primary prevention will not work if they are the only focus. We

must also take action to tackle the inequalities being experienced and therefore re-entrenched by adults now. For example, this could include tackling the gender and race pay gaps (including how they intersect to render women of colour some of the lowest paid in our society [Engender, 2022: 2-3]), providing adequate childcare so that parents of all genders are able to participate in the labour market, and ensuring that positions of power and leadership across society are held by a representative group – in terms of gender, race, class, disability, and sexuality. If we fail to tackle the inequalities which are happening now, our primary prevention efforts in children and young people’s environments will not be successful. All parts of the system must work together and mutually support the realisation of equality and rights in order for us to prevent VAWG and ACEs before they happen.

One policy action to address this theme is reforms to universal credit. Structural poverty, domestic and financial abuse are reinforced by universal credit payments; the system expects claimants living together to make a single claim that is paid to one claimant on behalf of the couple which risks giving the perpetrator total financial control (Sharp-Jeffs et al. 2018). Though this may be outside this group’s remit, prevention of childhood trauma requires structural change that can only happen when government works collaboratively and mainstreams equality across all areas of work.

References

Engender, 2022. WOMEN & THE COST OF LIVING: A CRISIS OF DEEPENING INEQUALITY. Accessed 17/11/2022. Available online:

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THEME 2: SYSTEMIC CHANGE TO REDUCE CHILD MALTREATMENT

This is an open-ended invitation for responses which focus on improving systems, or aspects of systems, rather than individual issues.

THEME 2, Q1 – SYSTEMIC CHANGE: Please share here any ideas for fundamental system changes which would contribute significantly to the achievement of the 70/30 goal, or any major reduction in child maltreatment.

We applaud the ambition of the 70/30 goal, and the primary prevention approach to achieving it. However, as we work towards this goal, it is important that an intersectional, gender-sensitive approach is taken. This means ensuring that ACEs are reduced for all children – including all genders, and those who experience racism, poverty, homophobia, transphobia – so that no child is left behind. The 70/30 goal should also be tied to similar goals for reduction in VAWG in adults. This is because, for example, preventing domestic abuse for children requires also preventing domestic abuse experienced by women. If similar goals are set, then primary prevention approaches will by necessity be mutually supporting, which will increase the likelihood of success.

Primary prevention of VAWG – and therefore many of the ACEs, which are gendered – means tackling gender inequality. Societies with gender relations where women do not have equal access to power allow VAWG to thrive. This is because when power is not shared it can be easily abused. Therefore, a whole-system approach to tackling gender inequality is necessary as part of the work to prevent ACEs. This includes creating a gender equal education system, reducing workforce segregation, ensuring gender equal pay, and ensuring that a diverse range of men and women are represented in positions of power.

Another key part of achieving the 70/30 goal and ending VAWG is investing consistently in expert organisations – like Zero Tolerance – which focus on primary prevention. This sits alongside increasing funding for expert women's

organisations – such as Women’s Aid and Rape Crisis – which can provide specialist support to survivors of VAWG/ACEs. However, service provision will not end VAWG and ACEs for good, and organisations focusing on primary prevention cannot support the Scottish Government’s work towards the 70/30 goal without funding to support capacity.

THEME 2, Q2 – SYSTEMIC CHANGE: Please share here any additional ideas for fundamental system changes which would contribute significantly to the achievement of the 70/30 goal, or any major reduction in child maltreatment.

Others may argue that poverty causes domestic abuse and other ACEs. However, as previously stated the root cause of VAWG is gender inequality. Poverty acts to exacerbate the risk of VAWG because poverty is feminised. More women than men live in poverty in Scotland (Engender, 2022: 1; Close the Gap, 2018: 1), with single mothers, women of colour, women with insecure immigration status, care-experienced women, and women who sell sex being at particular risk (Engender, 2022). There are a number of reasons for this, including occupational segregation (with men and women doing different kinds of jobs, and work typically done by women being undervalued and therefore underpaid [Engender, 2022: 2-3; Close the Gap, 2018: 1]), insufficient and expensive childcare preventing women from entering the labour market (Engender, 2022: 22-23; Close the Gap, 2018: 2), and

insufficient financial support from the government to reimburse women for their 24/7 domestic labour as mothers.

The impact of feminised poverty is that women hold less power than men because money allows access to freedom. For example, if a woman is experiencing domestic abuse, she may not be able to afford to leave due to feminised poverty (Scottish Women's Aid, 2022). Moreover, women find it much harder to leave abusive relationships when they are experiencing poverty because their financial vulnerability means abusers can use money as a tool for coercive control and keep them trapped in the relationship (Engender, 2022: 26; Close the Gap, 2018: 2). Many women face the choice between staying with their abuser and living in poverty and destitution (Scottish Women's Aid, 2022). Indeed, financial abuse is experienced by 90% of women in abusive relationships (Engender, 2022: 5). This is even more so the case for disabled women and single mothers (Engender, 2022: 26). Therefore, in order to meet the 70/30 goal, specific action must be taken to overcome feminised poverty.

References

Close the Gap, 2018. 'Women, work and poverty in Scotland: What you need to know,' Close the Gap Briefing 1. Accessed 17/11/2022. Available online: <https://www.closethegap.org.uk/content/resources/1---Women-work-and-poverty-what-you-need-to-know.pdf>

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Scottish Women's Aid, 2022. *Cost of living crisis is a matter of life and death for women and children experiencing domestic abuse*. Accessed 2/12/2022. Available online: <https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Cost-of->

[living-crisis-is-a-matter-of-life-and-death-for-women-and-children-experiencing-domestic-abuse-PR.pdf](#)

THEME 2, Q3 – SYSTEMIC CHANGE: What policy actions, by which agencies, would facilitate the systems changes identified in your answers to Theme 2, Qs 1&2 above?

There are a number of policy actions which would contribute to achieving gender equality and therefore preventing VAWG/ACEs. These include, but are not limited to:

- Providing sufficient free childcare so that parents of all genders can participate in the workforce;
- Legislating to close the gender and racial pay gaps;
- Providing sufficient financial support for parents, especially single parents;
- End joint claims for universal credit;
- Designing an education system where all children are able to develop a range of skills regardless of gender;
- Ensuring that a diverse range of people of all genders are represented in positions of power;
- Funding and utilising the expertise of organisations which work on primary prevention.

Only a gender-sensitive approach to the 70/30 goal which tackles VAWG and feminised poverty will bring success. Indeed, given the clear, strong links between ACEs and VAWG, any strategy to achieve the 70/30 goal should align with and support Equally Safe.

References

Scottish Government and COSLA, 2018. *Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and*

eradicating violence against women and girls. Accessed 17/11/2022. Available online:

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/04/equally-safe-scotlands-strategy-prevent-eradicate-violence-against-women-girls/documents/00534791-pdf/00534791-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00534791.pdf>

SECTION B: PRIME ROOT CAUSES OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

The research carried out to date on 70-30 has identified certain prime causes of child maltreatment, and certain promising approaches to preventing child maltreatment.

THEME 3 – PARENTS WITH TRAUMA AS A RESULT OF THEIR ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

THEME 3 – PARENTS WITH TRAUMA AS A RESULT OF THEIR ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: How can we support parents living with trauma from prior ACEs, which impact their parenting, to be caring, loving parents who nurture their children?

Supporting children and adults to recover from trauma they have experienced at any time in their lives is of vital importance. As many ACEs are gender-based, it is vital that specialist women's services – such as Women's Aid and Rape Crisis – are adequately funded to support survivors. They have specific expertise to offer on VAWG recovery but cannot provide this support without sufficient capacity.

Thinking beyond the trauma of ACEs, toxic masculinity traumatises boys in a specific way by demanding that they ignore their feelings and 'act tough' (Our Watch, 2021: 32). Research shows there are strong links between dominant forms of masculinity that revere aggression, control, dominance, men's sexist attitudes and behaviours that lead to the perpetration of violence against women and girls (Flood and Pease, 2020; Fleming et al., 2015; Levtov et al., 2014; Heise, 2011). Men who rigidly adhere to dominant norms and ideas about masculinity are more likely than other men to:

- commit violence against women, including sexual violence;
- demonstrate attitudes that are supportive of sexism and violence;
- perpetrate violence when their masculinity is questioned, challenged, or when they do not live up to the norms of masculinity they believe in;
- decide to use violence as a means of gaining and keeping control in their intimate relationships. (Our Watch, 2021: 33)

As a result, prevention work has highlighted the critical importance of tackling socially constructed norms about gender and masculinity that reinforce and maintain gender inequality (Namy et al., 2017; Michau et al., 2014; Heise, 2011). Tackling this will reduce childhood experiences of domestic abuse and other ACEs by allowing men to become more loving, nurturing parents who can express their feelings in a healthy way.

References

Fleming, P.J., McCleary-Sills, J., Morton, M., Levtov, R., Heilman, B., and Barker, G (2015) 'Risk factors for men's lifetime perpetration of physical violence against

intimate partners: results from the international men and gender equality survey in Eight countries', PLoS ONE, 10(3), pp. 1-18

Flood, M. and Pease, B. (2020) 'Attitudes play a role in perpetration of this violence, in victims' responses to victimisation, and in community responses to violence against women', *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 10(2), pp. 125-142

Heise, Lori. (2011) 'What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview' Working Paper. London: STRIVE Research Consortium, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London.

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Michau, L. Horn, J. Bank, A. Dutt, M., Zimmerman, C. (2015) 'Prevention of violence against women and girls: lessons from practice', *The Lancet*, Volume 385, Issue 9978, 25, pp. 1672-1684

Namy, S., Carlson, C., O'Hara, K., Nakuti, J., Bukuluki, P. Lwanyaaga, J., Namakula, S., Nanyunja, B., Wainberg, M. L., Naker, D., Michau, L. (2017) 'Towards a feminist understanding of intersecting violence against women and children in the family', *Social Science and Medicine*, Volume 184, pp. 20-48

Our Watch (2021) *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (2nd ed.) (Melbourne: Australia)

Powell, A. and Henry, N. (2014) *Preventing Sexual Violence*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

THEME 4 – LACK OF PARENTING SKILLS

THEME 4 – LACK OF PARENTING SKILLS: How can we support parents or carers to show their children love, compassion, and tolerance, to set clear and consistent boundaries and to support their children to thrive, without stigmatising?

Maximum 500 words:

The ACEs approach has a significant focus on parenting. Whilst it is important to consider the role of nurture in preventing ACEs, a structural approach to this must be taken. The majority of parenting is still done by women, who are the 'primary carer' in the majority of families and make up the majority of single parents (Engender, 2020). Whilst we support wording which encourages men to take an equal and positive role in parenting their children, the unequal present reality must be acknowledged. Indeed, it is important to avoid placing an unfair burden on women, who already bear the brunt of poverty and domestic abuse, to take on the significant task of preventing ACEs alone. The emphasis must be on structures that facilitate gender equal, safe, nurturing parenting – not on blaming mothers for the violence they or their children experience.

Parenting skills and gender equality are closely tied. Firstly, a broader approach to gender equality would support improved parenting skills. Within the early years, it is important that young children of all genders are able to play with dolls and role play nurturing to learn skills in empathy, relationships, and parenting. As children grow older, the RSHP curriculum should encourage gender equal parenting where responsibility is shared between parents. However, no matter what parenting skills young people learn, they will be unable to apply them when they become parents unless there is structural support in place. This includes financial support for parents, adequate childcare provision, and family-friendly employment law. For these policies to be popular, a fundamental cultural shift is required to see parenting as skilled labour rather than a woman's 'natural' activity. Parenting must, therefore, be supported and celebrated by Government.

References

Engender. (2020). Gender & Unpaid Work. Accessed 10/10/2020. Available online: https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/1594974358_Gender--unpaid-work--the-impact-of-Covid-19-on-womens-caring-roles.pdf

THEME 5 – PARENTAL SUBSTANCE MISUSE

THEME 5 – PARENTAL SUBSTANCE MISUSE: How can we support parents whose lives are affected by substance misuse, such that they are able to function as caring, supportive parents who meet their children’s needs?

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 6 – PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

THEME 4 – PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES: How can we support parents or carers with mental health issues, such that this does not interfere with their ability to function as caring, supportive parents who meet their children’s needs?

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 7 – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

THEME 7 – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR ABUSE: How can we ensure that parents do not subject their children to the harmful effects of domestic violence, abuse or conflict, such that together they support the healthy emotional development of their children?

Maximum 500 words:

Domestic abuse, like other forms of men’s violence against women and girls, is a cause and consequence of gender inequality (Hester and Westmarland, 2005). In societies where men hold more power than women, women are made vulnerable to men’s abuse of the power they hold (Hester and Westmarland, 2005). Domestic abuse is most often perpetuated by men against women, or sometimes other men (Equally Safe, 2018: 8). Therefore, the only way to stop the harmful effects of domestic abuse is to take a primary prevention approach and tackle the root cause: gender inequality. Any ACEs-focused strategy which aims to end domestic violence must align with and support Equally Safe, the Scottish Government’s broader strategy to ending men’s violence against women and girls.

The suggestion that women experience either domestic violence or abuse does not reflect definitions given in Equally Safe or the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act. Domestic violence is part of a broader experience of domestic abuse, including coercive control, economic and psychological abuse (Stark, 2006; Johnson, 2006; Hester, 2009; Sharp, 2008; Sharp-jeffs et al., 2018).

Gender inequality must be tackled alongside other structural factors which worsen domestic abuse. As discussed, poverty is feminised. Women's greater risk of poverty makes them more vulnerable to abuse, and their experience of poverty can make it unaffordable for them to leave (Engender, 2022: 26; Close the Gap, 2018: 1). This, by extension, puts their children at risk. Therefore, poverty and gender inequality must be tackled simultaneously in order to reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse.

References

Close the Gap, 2018. 'Women, work and poverty in Scotland: What you need to know,' Close the Gap Briefing 1. Accessed 17/11/2022. Available online: <https://www.closethegap.org.uk/content/resources/1---Women-work-and-poverty-what-you-need-to-know.pdf>

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Stark, E. 2007. *Coercive Control: How Men entrap Women in Personal Life.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

THEME 8 – POVERTY

WAVE's research findings are that, unlike the root causes listed above, all of which have a strong research base underpinning their causal impact on levels of child maltreatment, the research base for poverty as a root cause is not strong. The evidence for a correlation with poverty, on the other hand, is very strong. WAVE's

research suggests that ACEs are a prime cause of poverty, through the mediating effect of lack of both 'soft' and 'hard' skills, and that poverty in turn has a negative effect on outcomes, especially in families carrying ACEs, in a negative spiral effect.

We are aware that many individuals and organisations in Scotland do not share this view, and so the Commission is interested in evidence of the causal effects of poverty on child maltreatment. Please do not rely on correlation evidence in any submission you make; that correlation is taken as established.

THEME 8, Q1 – POVERTY: What are the causal mechanisms by which poverty affects the occurrence of child maltreatment?

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 8, Q2 – POVERTY: What can be done to minimise the effect of poverty on quality of parenting and child wellbeing?

The eradication of poverty is the best way to minimise its effects. Ensuring that everyone in Scotland has access to the resources (money, food, housing, clothing, et cetera) they need to flourish is a more effective use of resources than attempting to deal with the consequences of poverty after the fact (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2022). Any strategy to end poverty must recognise that, as discussed, risk and experiences of poverty are exacerbated by gender inequality. Women hold less financial power than men because of the pay gap and the undervaluing of work often done by women (Engender, 2022: 2-3; Close the Gap,

2018: 1). This is even more so the case for women of colour (Engender, 2022: 3). This is why more women than men live in poverty in Scotland, many of whom are single mothers (Engender, 2022: 1; Close the Gap, 2018: 1). Women living in poverty often have the additional financial and labour pressure of caring for children (Engender, 2022: 4; Close the Gap, 2018: 2), meaning that they often experience more severe impacts, such as skipping meals to ensure their children can eat, or being unable to access the labour market due to lack of childcare or prejudice about mothers (Engender, 2022: 22-23). Therefore, gender inequality and poverty must be tackled together to reduce their impacts on women and children in Scotland.

References

Close the Gap, 2018. 'Women, work and poverty in Scotland: What you need to know,' Close the Gap Briefing 1. Accessed 17/11/2022. Available online: <https://www.closethegap.org.uk/content/resources/1---Women-work-and-poverty-what-you-need-to-know.pdf>

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SECTION C: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

THEME 9: SECURE ATTACHMENT

Under this theme, given the strong existing evidence for the positive impact of children developing secure attachment, we ask for evidence on how to increase,

significantly, levels of Secure Attachment amongst children in Scotland. (As background, see the report <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1110/attachment-matters-for-all.pdf>)

THEME 9 – SECURE ATTACHMENT: Every year in Scotland over 17,000 children develop Insecure Attachment. Perhaps 7,500 develop Disorganised Attachment. What measures would transform these numbers to a fraction of these levels?

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 10: PARENTAL SENSITIVITY OR ATTUNEMENT

There is also strong existing evidence on the value of good parental attunement with their child, in helping children on the pathway to secure attachment, and the positive outcomes which flow from that, together with its protective effect on levels of child maltreatment. We welcome submissions with suggestions on how this pathway to reduced child maltreatment may be significantly strengthened.

THEME 10 – PARENTAL SENSITIVITY OR ATTUNEMENT: Multiple research studies have identified good Attunement between a parent or carer and a baby as a major contribution to good outcomes. How can we support all parents to develop this skill?

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 11: PARENTING SUPPORT

There is a commonly expressed view, that no parent ever wants to hurt their child. Whether true or not, it is clear that the vast majority of cases of maltreatment owe more to lack of knowledge (e.g. understanding of the age-appropriate capabilities of children), or lack of skills. Intrusion of other life stressors can also have a negative impact. We welcome submissions on means to improve support which would arm parents, and future parents, with the know-how and ability to thrive and perform well as parents.

THEME 11 – PARENTING SUPPORT: How can we create a reality in which, for Scotland to be the best place in the world for children to grow up, our parents are the best in the world?

The ACEs approach has a significant focus on parenting. Whilst it is important to consider the role of nurture in preventing ACEs, a structural approach to this must be taken. The majority of parenting is still done by women, who are the 'primary carer' in the majority of families and make up the majority of single parents (Engender, 2020). Whilst we support wording which encourages men to take an equal and positive role in parenting their children, the unequal present reality must be acknowledged. Indeed, it is important to avoid placing an unfair burden on women, who already bear the brunt of poverty and domestic abuse, to take on the

significant task of preventing ACEs alone. The emphasis must be on structures that facilitate gender equal, safe, nurturing parenting – not on blaming mothers for the violence they or their children experience.

Parenting skills and gender equality are closely tied. Firstly, a broader approach to gender equality would support improved parenting skills. Within the early years, it is important that young children of all genders are able to play with dolls and role play nurturing to learn skills in empathy, relationships, and parenting. As children grow older, the RSHP curriculum should encourage gender equal parenting where responsibility is shared between both parents. However, no matter what parenting skills young people learn, they will be unable to apply them when they become parents unless there is structural support in place. This includes financial support for parents, adequate childcare provision, and family-friendly employment law. For these policies to be popular, a fundamental cultural shift is required to see parenting as skilled labour rather than a woman's 'natural' activity. Parenting must, therefore, be supported and celebrated by Government.

References

Engender. (2020). Gender & Unpaid Work. Accessed 10/10/2020. Available online: https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/1594974358_Gender--unpaid-work--the-impact-of-Covid-19-on-womens-caring-roles.pdf

SECTION D: OTHER ISSUES

The following are important issues, but do not fit neatly into the categories of 'root causes' or 'possible solutions'. What we invite, in each case, are submissions which suggest measures which would help to deliver the goal of a 70% reduction in child maltreatment by 2030.

THEME 12: LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Promise. The Independent Care Review in Scotland, conducted by Fiona Duncan, produced the report '*The Promise*'. That document sets out five foundations on

which a transformation of the Scottish Care system must be grounded: Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding. In the supporting document, *Plan 21-24*, five fundamentals for change are laid out: What matters to children and families, Listening, Poverty, Children’s Rights and Language.

While *The Promise* may in many cases address what happens to children after experiences of maltreatment, it is an outline of steps that move towards the same goals that 70/30 seeks – a safer, happier, more fulfilling life for all children.

THEME 12, Q1 – LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: If you have recommendations to make which would increase the likelihood of success of *The Promise*, or build on its foundations, please put these forward here.

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 12, Q2 – LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: If you have other recommendations which would support better outcomes for looked after children, and help them to become better parents for the next generation, please put these forward here.

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 12, Q3 – LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: Average outcomes for children who have been in residential care, in the UK, are well below those in countries like Denmark or Germany, despite ratios of staff to children being higher in the UK. What actions could raise UK outcomes levels to those of these other countries?

Maximum 500 words:

THEME 13: FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

FASD (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) is a neurodevelopmental condition with lifelong cognitive, emotional and behavioural impact on children. Current estimates suggest that 5% or more of UK babies are born with this incurable disorder, which is entirely preventable. It has devastating effects on the life chances of children born with this condition. Low IQ, inability to understand cause and effect, and high levels of entry into the criminal justice system, are just a few of its many adverse effects. Currently it is seldom diagnosed or identified, and usually mis-diagnosed – for

example as ADHD. This is unfortunate, as the treatments for ADHD and FASD are entirely different.

We are interested in potential measures which would significantly reduce levels of FASD, but also in policies which would have this terrible disorder properly measured, reported, and recognised.

THEME 13 – FOETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER: Given that the FASD damage to unborn children often occurs before a mother is even aware that she is pregnant, how can it be successfully reduced to minimal levels in Scotland?

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION E: FURTHER IDEAS FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION

This section is for ideas, not covered in Sections A to D above, to prevent child maltreatment before it happens (i.e. primary prevention).

SECTION E: IDEAS FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION – FIRST IDEA

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION E: IDEAS FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION – SECOND IDEA

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION E: IDEAS FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION – THIRD IDEA

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION F: IDEAS FOR SECONDARY OR TERTIARY PREVENTION

This section is for responses suggesting ways to reduce child maltreatment by at least 70% by 2030, which are not covered above, in Sections A to C, and which would reduce child abuse, neglect or children witnessing domestic violence after initial harm to the child has occurred.

SECTION F: IDEAS FOR SECONDARY OR TERTIARY PREVENTION – FIRST IDEA

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION F: IDEAS FOR SECONDARY OR TERTIARY PREVENTION – SECOND IDEA

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION G: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

While the target for a 70% reduction by 2030 – the 70/30 target – has not been set for Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), it is a pernicious and hugely damaging experience for any child, probably much more so than physical abuse. WAVE and the Cross Party Group share a commitment to prevent and reduce CSA and welcome any contributions which would help create a major reduction in levels of CSA.

The following four questions invite evidence-based contributions.

SECTION G, Q1 - WHAT IS A STRETCHING BUT POSSIBLE % REDUCTION IN CSA IN SCOTLAND BY 2030? Please show separate estimates for (i) CSA by Strangers, (ii) CSA by Family Members, Relatives, or people well known to the family, and (iii) CSA in Institutions. Guesstimates are acceptable, but please provide evidence for your answers.

Protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse cannot be discussed in isolation but is one essential element of an integrated approach to supporting children and families within their communities (Nelson 2016: 213). This approach cannot be separated from other social and structural factors such as poverty, inequalities and culturally harmful attitudes to gender and race (Nelson 2016: 214).

This sits in contrast with individualised approaches that have dominated public policy which have failed to make substantial progress in prevention (for a full discussion on the limitations of these approaches see Nelson 2016: 216-219). This is because these approaches to child protection intervene after the fact on a case-by-case basis that fails to tackle the root cause.

For prevention approaches to be successful, fostering and supporting genuinely informed communities in protecting children and young people from abuse and exploitation is essential. This includes involving children and young people, not by making them responsible for protecting themselves but by talking to them early about their body parts and bodily autonomy. This lays the foundation for understanding consent and preventing sexual violence, but also provides language for children to explain and discuss what has happened to them.

Fundamentally, this means that we need to respect children's bodily autonomy and their boundaries. This requires a cultural change so that our society normalises respecting children's right to say no to hugs or kisses rather than a culture that accepts children being told they *must* hug a family member. This gives the impression that adults as figures of authority can and do have the right to tell them what to do with their body, which increases risk for children. If children have the language to say someone touched them when they did not want them to, they can be better empowered to raise the alarm rather than feeling ashamed and keeping it a secret. This helps reduce (ii) CSA by persons within or known to the family.

Neighbourhood Mapping for Children's Safety (NMCS) is an example of a community development approach that has proved successful across diverse communities. NMCS used co-ordinated mapping approaches to gather and interpret evidence around children's safety in a particular geographical area and has been tested in Scotland and England. Full review and details of project in Craigmillar (Edinburgh) and applicability of NMCS can be found in Nelson (2016 226-248).

The crucial aspect of this approach that could be replicated is bringing together multiple agencies and communities to identify problems and seek solutions.

These collaborative approaches help reduce (I) CSA by strangers, as the more informed and aware communities the more people can identify signs of distress in their own children (Nelson 2016: 215). These approaches are not in opposition to, but supportive of, the Early Intervention Initiatives of the Scottish government.

References

Nelson, S. (2016) Tackling Child Sexual Abuse: Radical Approaches to Prevention, Protection and Support, (Bristol: Policy Press).

Nelson, S. (ed) (2008) See us – hear us! Schools working with sexually abused young people (Dundee: Violence is preventable).

Nelson, S. (2004) Neighbourhood Mapping for Children’s Safety: A Feasibility Study in Craigmiller Edinburgh. (Edinburgh: Womanzone Community Health Project)

Nelson, S., and Baldwin, N. (2004) ‘The Craigmiller Project: neighbourhood mapping to improve children’s safety from sexual crime’, Child Abuse Review, 13(6), pp. 415-25

SECTION G, Q2 - WHAT MEASURES WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE CSA BY STRANGERS TO THE FAMILY? Please support your answer with evidence.

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION G, Q3 - WHAT MEASURES WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE CSA BY FAMILY MEMBERS, RELATIVES AND PEOPLE WELL-KNOWN TO THE FAMILY? Please support your answer with evidence.

Maximum 500 words:

SECTION G, Q4 - WHAT MEASURES WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE CSA IN INSTITUTIONS? Please support your answer with evidence.

Maximum 500 words:

Prioritisation

Prioritisation

If you had to prioritise the actions you have set out in Sections A to F above, which top 5 actions would you take forward (with 1 being the most important to you, and 5 being the 5th in importance of those top 5)?

1	Re-write the ACEs list to specify which ACEs are gender-based violence, and so that racism, poverty, homophobia and transphobia are also considered ACEs
2	Tackle gender inequality, including gender stereotypes, the pay gap, access to the labour market, and representation in positions of power
3	Align with Equally Safe
4	Eradicate poverty, taking a gender sensitive approach given that poverty is feminised
5	Build a parent-friendly society, including valuing parenting as a skill, providing adequate childcare and ensuring family friendly employment law

Finally, is there any one key action which you feel is missing?

Linking up the government's work on ACEs and VAWG is essential. They are closely related, and so strategies must be mutually supporting and coherent to ensure success.

