WALES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Wales Without Violence

A Shared Framework for Preventing Violence among Children and Young People

Uned **Atal** Trais
Violence **Prevention** Unit

PAC CYMRU

Imagine a Wales without violence.

Contents

Acronyms

ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
CMET	Contextual, Missing, Exploited and Trafficked
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
ISTV	Information Sharing to Tackle Violence
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and more
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NHS	National Health Service
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RSE	Relationships and Sex Education
UK	United Kingdom
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VPT	Violence Prevention Team
VPU	Violence Prevention Unit
WHO	World Health Organization

Acknowledgements

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Foreword

from the Peer Action Collective Cymru

Violence among children and young people is a complex public health issue, and its effects are corrosive and widespread, impacting the lives of families, schools and the wider community.

But organisations and agencies alone can't fix it. Violence is a collective problem that everyone has a responsibility for solving. Together, professionals, children and young people can work to develop the solutions to shape a future without violence.

The Peer Action Collective Cymru — a ground-breaking team of young people designing and conducting research about children and young people's experiences of violence — is on a mission to do just that. By listening to those affected by it and transforming their views and experiences into positive action, we are working to put an end to violence in Wales.

Over the past 18 months, we have partnered with the Wales Violence Prevention Unit, a multi-agency team spanning the policing, criminal justice and health sectors, to investigate the roles that children, young

people and professionals can play in ending violence across the country. This relationship has been insightful, positive and empowering, giving young people within Peer Action Collective Cymru the opportunity to create a movement that will leave a legacy for future generations.

The first step in our ongoing partnership has been to construct a Framework, the process of which has been rooted in our core value to centre the voices of children and young people in Wales.

Together, we talked to many children and young people, and developed a consultation that sought to understand their views and experiences — as well as those of professionals — to guide the way that agencies and organisations address violence and protect those affected by it.

Key themes from children and young people

Bullying in schools and online

Gender-based violence

Sexual harassment

Knife crime

Physical violence

Hate crime (trans abuse, racial abuse, homophobia)

What we heard

Through these conversations, we explored many issues that impact the lives of children and young people in Wales.

One of the most common themes was how their identity can affect their experience of violence. We heard about discrimination faced by those of various sexual orientations, ethnicities, genders, socio-economic backgrounds, family structures and appearances.

We also heard how those who practise different religions or are neurodiverse can be singled out and subjected to bullying and violence. **Overall, we heard how children and young people want to feel safe to be themselves.** This demonstrates the need to create an environment where every identity is respected, allowing all children and young people from all backgrounds and communities to feel safe and be able to thrive.

A foundation for change

The intention of this Framework is to end violence among children and young people in Wales and provide professionals with insight into issues that are affecting them, including online and in-person bullying, sexual harassment and knife crime, amongst many others.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far, but it really is just the start. For now, it is over to you. As you read through this Framework, consider not just the evidence that has come from research, but also what children and young people in Wales are telling us about their own experiences, and their ideas for the future.

I hope you will see, as we have seen through our many interviews, events and conversations, that there is hope for a future Wales without violence and an ambition from children, young people and professionals alike to make this happen.

Stephanie McArdle
Peer Action Collective Cymru

Introduction

Wales is on a mission to end violence among children and young people. This Framework is for the professionals, volunteers, communities, children and young people who are ready to make it happen.

For every pupil in Wales who does not experience bullying, there is one who does[1], and for a third of these pupils, it will be recurrent[2]. For every 10 people admitted to hospital for injuries caused by a sharp object, four are 24 years old or younger[3]. Across the UK, for every 10 women aged 18 to 24, nine have experienced sexual harassment[4].

Violence among children and young people carries untold misery for the people, families and communities who experience it, and causes a significant cost to the Welsh economy.

Whilst violence is prevalent, it does not affect people equally. Children living in the poorest areas of the UK are seven times more likely to be involved in violent crimes as young adults[5]. In England and Wales, people from black and minoritised ethnic groups are six times more likely to be victims of homicide[6].

We have a collective duty to end violence and protect the people most vulnerable to it. To do this, we must understand violence as a systemic problem, rooted in inequality.

Ending violence is possible

Whilst violence is a harmful and systemic problem, we know from the evidence that it is preventable — and that ending it is possible. Through the development of this Framework, children, young people and professionals from across Wales dared to imagine a society in which we all live free from violence.

However, it needs lasting, systemic change and a whole-society approach where everyone — including the NHS, police, schools and education settings, charities and community organisations, the Senedd, as well as UK and local government — has a role to play. Whole communities also have a role, as do families and peer groups and individual children, young people and adults.

In Wales, we are able to build on a solid foundation of collaboration. We are supported by policies, strategies and legislation — such as the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the National Trauma Practice Framework — that promote a public health and trauma-informed approach to prevention. The new Serious Violence Duty introduced by UK Government facilitates a partnership and data-led approach to understanding the root causes of violence, which is instrumental to successfully implement the strategies and evaluate the activities set out in this Framework.

A shared approach to preventing violence among children and young people

But there is still more work to do to embed a culture of violence prevention through a shared, whole-society approach — a way of working that:

- promotes holistic, whole-system thinking to address a complex, societal issue
- focuses on structural inequality alongside promoting healthy relationships and non-violent societal norms, as well as building individuals' resilience and responding to their needs
- critically questions and harnesses research to understand the causes of violence and effective strategies for prevention

- uses evaluation to understand the effectiveness of violence prevention programmes
- is rooted in the lived experiences of children and young people and works alongside them to create the solutions.

With that in mind, this Framework lays the groundwork for multi-agency action, supporting partners in Wales to make sure valuable time, money and resources are spent on implementing strategies and activities that prevent violence among children and young people.

This Framework has been created to support local areas in Wales to fulfil their responsibilities under the new Serious Violence Duty. But it is also intended for all people working with children and young people who want to explore the evidence of what works to prevent violence — and seek guidance on how to put this into practice.

With it, we also want to equip children and young people with the skills — and nurture the behaviours — they need to live free from violence.

Giving everyone their say

This Framework has been developed through extensive and participatory consultation with professionals, children, young people and members of communities in Wales.

More than 470 children and young people and over 550 professionals and volunteers participated in the consultation. It draws on their ideas and experiences and articulates a shared understanding and collaborative approach to violence prevention.

As well as an online survey, the Peer Action Collective Cymru and the Wales Violence Prevention Unit:

- ran workshops in areas suggested by partners
- attended community events such as Freshers' fairs and Pride celebrations
- rented a shop in Cardiff city centre, providing a safe space for members of the public to speak to the Peer Action Collective Cymru team about their views on preventing violence.

Informed by the views and experiences of over 1,000 people in Wales, this Framework has been designed as a guide to violence prevention that is grounded in evidence and echoes the voices of the communities we serve. Throughout the Framework, you will find quotes from children and young people who shared their thoughts with us anonymously. Their views, experiences and aspirations demonstrate a desire to build a Wales without violence.

The range of voices involved in shaping this Framework demonstrates that preventing violence among children and young people must be a collaborative effort — no single sector or organisation can solve this problem alone.

355 people
Online consultation (survey)

214 people
Online events (webinars)

220 people
Freshers' fairs

92 people
School events

96 people
Pop-up Shop

157 people
Workshops

How we developed this Framework

This Framework, which is both evidence-informed and coproduced, draws upon evidence of what works to prevent violence among children and young people from two literature reviews, which were commissioned by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit and Welsh Government.

The literature reviews are:

- Maxwell and Corliss (2020) *Good practice in youth violence prevention: A mapping and horizon scanning review*, CASCADE, Cardiff University, Cardiff

- Addis and Snowdon (2021) *What Works to Prevent Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)? Systematic Evidence Assessment*, Wales Violence Prevention Unit, Public Health Wales, Cardiff.

It also uses extensive research exploring violence prevention frameworks from across the globe.

Using this evidence base, we developed an initial model that was consulted on with children and young people, and professionals across Wales, through workshops, outreach events and an online consultation. We also sought technical advice from experts on specific areas. This model was then adapted following feedback.

This pragmatic approach to developing this Framework means that it is both rooted in the evidence of 'what works' and considers the practicalities of implementing violence prevention work in Wales. Most importantly, it is grounded in the lived experiences of children and young people.

And how to use it

This Framework outlines the key elements needed to successfully develop primary prevention and early intervention strategies to end violence among children and young people through a public health, whole-system approach.

This Framework first provides a definition for violence among children and young people, and provides a rationale for focusing prevention activity in this area. It then highlights the benefits of a public health approach when considering violence prevention initiatives, drawing attention to the principles that underpin this approach.

Building on this, the Framework outlines what is known about violence among children and young people, using evidence to understand prevalence, as well as unpicking the risk and protective factors for these types of violence, and exploring how it is experienced unequally between different groups. These sections provide you with a foundation on which to consider effective strategies for prevention.

The nine strategies that follow are the core of this Framework. They have been mapped against the socio-ecological model to show how they can effect systemic change, alongside examples of current programmes in Wales to provide greater insight into what these strategies can look like in practice.

The strategies include examples of evidence-informed interventions, as well as system change measures to prevent violence. Some interventions and programmes have a strong evidence base with multiple, robust evaluations demonstrating their effectiveness. Other approaches show promising signs of preventing violence or modifying risk factors for violence but may not have been subject to such extensive evaluation to date. This section will support you to consider what will work to prevent violence, and how, by working collaboratively, we can develop a whole system approach to violence prevention for Wales.

A public health approach is predicated on evaluation, and so the final section of this Framework focuses on the importance of evaluating interventions to understand how they're being implemented and whether they're actually working to prevent violence. The Framework provides an illustrative theory of change for each of the nine strategies, which can be used as the basis for your own, along with suggestions of indicators that can be used to measure change and track progress towards ending violence in Wales.

Throughout, you will find the thoughts and ideas of children and young people who spoke to us about how to create a Wales without violence and, in this Framework, they have the final say. The closing section draws together what we heard from children and young people from across Wales, about exactly how their lives would be different, better, safer, if violence did not exist.

Our vision

Let's imagine a Wales without violence…

In a Wales without violence, people are healthier, families are better supported and equipped to nurture a child's development and wellbeing, organisations are more inclusive, communities are safer and society fairer.

In this future Wales, all children and young people are heard, trusted and able to live free from the fear of violence. Children and young people can be themselves. They are not constrained or dictated to by limiting and stereotypical ideas about gender, race, age or sexuality, or religion.

A Wales without violence is one where everyone thrives, communities are listened to and solutions are developed together. It is a place where people are treated equally, respected, and valued both in their relationships and in public. Our homes, workplaces and schools, and our public places and communities are inclusive, equitable and safe for all.

What would a Wales without violence be like?

Peace. My mind would be at peace.

Defining 'violence among children and young people'

For the purpose of this Framework, a coproduced definition of violence among children and young people was developed and then consulted on with children, young people and professionals in Wales:

(i) Violence among children and young people is an umbrella term for acts of, or the threat of, violence and abuse between those under the age of 25. It can be physical, verbal, psychological, sexual or economic. It can occur in the home, education settings, workplace, community or online.

As highlighted in the definition, violence among children and young people encompasses a range of different forms of violence that occur among this age group. We heard from children, young people and professionals in Wales that this may include:

Violence type between children and young people under the age of 25[i]:

Bullying	Harassment	Physical violence and abuse	Sexual harassment
Sexual violence and abuse	Stalking	Domestic abuse	Intimate partner violence
Online violence and abuse	Intimate image abuse	Psychological or emotional violence and abuse	Economic or financial violence and abuse
Knife crime	Gun crime	Hate crime	So-called honour-based abuse
	Exploitation	Modern slavery	

Violence types recognised as closely related to violence among children and young people:

Child/adolescent to parent violence	Victimisation of children or adolescents from domestic abuse between parents

[i] Some violence types listed may fall within the definition of violence among children and young people where acts of violence or abuse take place between children and young people. However, they may also involve older adults, potentially in an exploitative or abusive relationship. Examples could include so called honour-based abuse, exploitation or modern slavery.

47%

of children and young people who took part in the consultation felt that **bullying — online and in-person** — was the most common issue in their community.

The children and young people involved in developing this definition did not differentiate between different forms of violence in the same ways that professionals might. Instead, violence among children and young people focuses on the age group of those experiencing it, rather than the nature of the violence or victim characteristics. Children and young people also did not differentiate between violence that occurs online or offline, in the community or in private spaces such as the home.

The children, young people and professionals who contributed to this definition were clear that the term 'youth violence' was a term that has become outdated. It was felt that the term can contribute to labelling and stereotyping of children and young people as a group.

Links to other forms of violence

Whilst this Framework focuses on violence among children and young people, it is recognised that it is strongly linked to other forms of violence and trauma that can happen throughout childhood and adulthood. To prevent violence, it is important that these different forms of violence are understood as interconnected.

For example, it is well-evidenced that experiencing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can increase the risk of experiencing violence later in life. Likewise, there are important links between experiencing violence from peers and vulnerability to exploitation, so-called honour-based abuse or child/ adolescent to parent violence, amongst many others.

It is also important to note that primary prevention strategies are often the same or similar across many different forms of violence and abuse.

Why focus on preventing violence among children and young people?

There is a strong rationale for focusing on preventing violence among children and young people from a public health, children's rights and criminal justice perspective, and from the voices of children and young people leading the development of this Framework.

This rationale is outlined below[ii]:

1. **Children and young people are most at risk of experiencing violence**
   Violence affects people of all ages and at all stages of life, from infants to older people. However, children and young people are at a much greater risk of experiencing violence in comparison to older adults. Specific groups of children and young people, including those who are LGBTQI+, who have disabilities, are from racially and ethnically minoritised groups, and women and girls, are more vulnerable to different forms of interpersonal violence. Likewise, children and young people who are asylum seekers, migrants and refugees can be vulnerable to specific forms of violence, including trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation.

2. **Children and young people are most likely to experience multiple forms of interpersonal violence**
   There is evidence to suggest that experiencing one type of violence can lead to an increased risk of experiencing other forms of violence, abuse and trauma, and that this is most likely among children and young people. For example, children and young people who experience physical violence or neglect early in their lives are at a greater risk of experiencing other forms of violence later in adolescence and early adulthood.
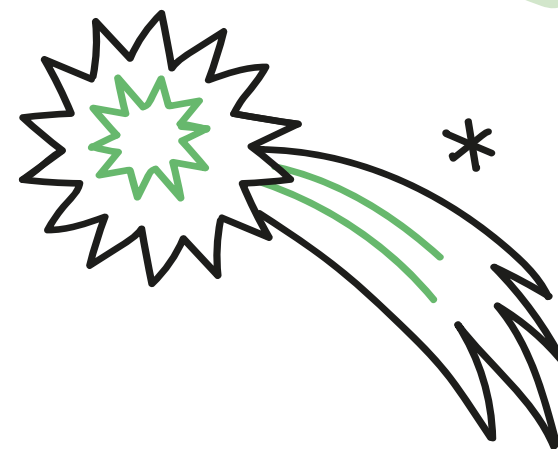
   Likewise, experiencing violence among peers may increase the likelihood of it occurring within romantic relationships. Recognising the connections between multiple forms of violence among children and young people and working toward a more integrated and coordinated approach can help ensure violence prevention efforts better match the needs and challenges experienced by the populations they serve.

3. **Evidence suggests that prevention approaches are most effective when implemented with children and young people**
   Experiences in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood have a particularly strong influence and can impact development and future life paths. Certain stages in life can present opportunities to address the risk factors for involvement in violence — for example, providing early years support

for parents and families or offering age-appropriate healthy relationship programmes in schools. Prevention programmes that are focussed on working with children and young people at this early stage of life have also been proven to be the most effective in preventing violence. These programmes can also increase resilience and improve health and wellbeing across their lives.

> ## 'I would travel the world fearlessly.'

[ii] Adapted from CDC (2016) *Preventing multiple forms of violence: a strategic vision for connecting the dots*, Division for Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; alongside ongoing violence monitoring work of the Wales VPU, and advice from children and young people and professionals who inputted into this Framework. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/strategic_vision.pdf

Developing a public health approach to violence prevention that works for Wales
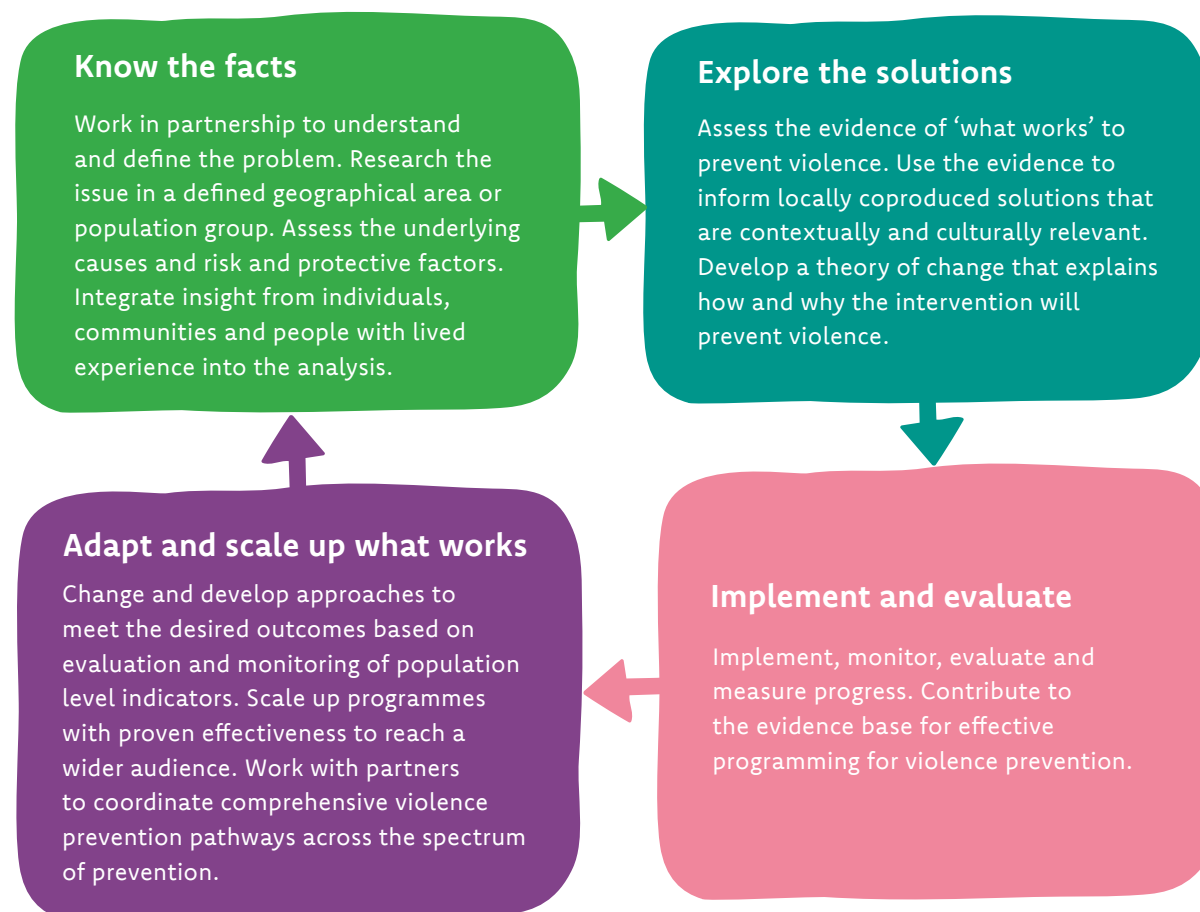
A public health approach is a way of working that focuses on the health, safety and wellbeing of an entire population. It draws upon multi-disciplinary evidence to take a systematic approach to promoting health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities across a population.

The tools and skills used to understand public health problems can also be adapted to complement existing approaches used by policing and criminal justice partners to prevent violence.

The World Health Organization's[7] public health approach to violence prevention is often used as a frame of reference for developing a systematic and evidence-informed process for violence prevention. We have worked with partners throughout the development of this Framework to build on this model and create a process that works for Wales.

The four-step model reflects the views of stakeholders in Wales and the developments in knowledge about the practical implementation of violence prevention efforts:

Figure 1: The four stages of a public health approach to violence prevention

Know the facts

Work in partnership to understand and define the problem. Research the issue in a defined geographical area or population group. Assess the underlying causes and risk and protective factors. Integrate insight from individuals, communities and people with lived experience into the analysis.

Explore the solutions

Assess the evidence of 'what works' to prevent violence. Use the evidence to inform locally coproduced solutions that are contextually and culturally relevant. Develop a theory of change that explains how and why the intervention will prevent violence.

Adapt and scale up what works

Change and develop approaches to meet the desired outcomes based on evaluation and monitoring of population level indicators. Scale up programmes with proven effectiveness to reach a wider audience. Work with partners to coordinate comprehensive violence prevention pathways across the spectrum of prevention.

Implement and evaluate

Implement, monitor, evaluate and measure progress. Contribute to the evidence base for effective programming for violence prevention.

What is violence prevention?

Violence can be predicted and prevented like any other public health issue. Public health identifies three tiers of prevention (figure 2).

This Framework focuses on primary prevention and early intervention. Primary prevention aims to prevent violence before it occurs, secondary prevention focuses on the immediate response to violence (early intervention), and tertiary prevention focuses on long-term care and harm reduction after violence has occurred.

We need coordinated interventions at each tier to make sure that violence, at a population level, is not only stopped before it occurs, but that it is responded to in a safer, effective and more compassionate way when it does happen, helping to prevent violence in the future.

Figure 2: Tiers of prevention

Violent event occurs

Past

Future

Primary prevention

Secondary prevention

Tertiary prevention

Time perspective

Primary prevention

Primary prevention means stopping violence from happening in the first place. It means transforming the social conditions, such as racial and gender inequity that excuse, justify or even promote violence.

Individual behavioural change may be the intended result of prevention activity, but it can't be achieved before, or in isolation from, a broader shift in the underlying drivers of violence across communities, organisations and society as a whole.

Primary prevention approaches can work across the whole population (universal) or be targeted at particular groups who may be at an increased risk of experiencing violence (targeted). Examples of these programmes include early years and family support, whole-school approaches to preventing violence, and bystander training.

Secondary prevention

Secondary prevention (early intervention) supports people at the earliest opportunity when they have experienced violence. This can prevent violence from recurring and can limit harm through a safe and compassionate response.

Secondary prevention includes taking a trauma-informed approach by listening to and believing people, recognising their strengths as individuals, and promoting opportunities for their wellbeing, healing and recovery. It is important to recognise that people may need different types of support depending on their needs and circumstances.

Secondary prevention also includes making sure people know where to report any violence they have experienced or witnessed. Examples of secondary prevention include identification and referral to support and specialist services, therapeutic care, helplines or diversion of those at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

Tertiary prevention

This involves response, treatment and rehabilitation after violence has occurred, as well as prevention of long-term harm, including repeat victimisation or perpetration.

Examples of these programmes include long-term support and advocacy for victims, management of offenders, or perpetrator programmes.

When all three types (primary, secondary and tertiary) are used together, they create a comprehensive response to violence.

Violence prevention principles

The following nine principles were identified by children, young people and professionals across Wales as important principles for violence prevention:

1 **Recognise that violence is preventable**
Violence is a public health issue. That means it can be prevented before it occurs (primary prevention) and responded to more safely and effectively when it happens to limit future harm (secondary prevention).

2 **Build partnerships for prevention**
Preventing violence is everyone's business. There is a collective responsibility to create systemic change to prevent violence and protect the most vulnerable people and communities in Wales. There is not one single agency that holds the answers. Instead, it is important to work within a broad multi-agency partnership to develop and implement the solutions.

3 **Coproduce the solutions**
Coproduction shifts power and decision-making to children and young people by allowing them to exercise their right to have their voices heard in matters that affect them. Evidence also tells us that interventions developed in partnership with the communities they are designed for are much more likely to be socially and culturally relevant to the people they intend to help and are more effective.

4 **Uphold children's rights**
Children and young people have rights under the Human Rights Act 1998, but they also have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). All governments who have signed up to the UNCRC, including the Welsh Government, must make sure that children, young people and adults know about and understand the UNCRC. Children's rights are the cornerstone of violence prevention as they ensure that children and young people:

- are safe
- are not discriminated against
- have their best interests protected
- have the things they need to survive and develop
- have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales has developed The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach[8]. This is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UNCRC to help public bodies integrate children's rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice.

5 **Take a trauma-informed approach**

This means that individuals, families, communities, organisations and systems take account of the adversity and trauma that may affect someone. It means recognising and supporting the strengths of an individual to overcome this experience in their lives, including being person-centred, empowering and promoting opportunities for wellbeing, healing and recovery. In Wales, the Trauma-Informed Wales Framework[9] provides a Welsh definition of a trauma-informed approach and a set of five principles that underpin four practice levels that describe the different roles people and organisations may have when supporting people affected by trauma.

6 **Use an intersectional lens**

Intersectionality is used to describe the interaction between social categories that may advantage or disadvantage someone because of structural inequalities relating to race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, disability or other protected characteristics. These factors have an important relationship with violence, because they can directly relate to the prevalence, impact and lived experience of violence among people in different population groups. As such, both analytical and strategic work for the prevention of violence must address these multiple and intersecting inequalities that shape the social and cultural context in which violence occurs.

7 **Integrate multi-agency data into decision-making**

Violence can be predicted and prevented like any other public health issue. Establishing robust data sharing agreements and using routine multi-agency data to understand patterns and trends in violence across Wales ensures violence prevention efforts are targeted at the communities where they're needed most.

8 **Take an evidence-based approach**

Violence prevention programmes should be underpinned by robust evidence of their effectiveness. Programmes should be evaluated to understand the process of implementation and their impact. Findings should be shared to build the evidence base for violence prevention.
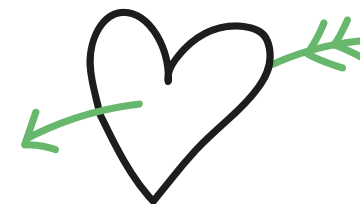
9 **Be proactive in involving communities**

Effective prevention efforts engage people across different environments where they live, work, learn, socialise and play, and leverage the assets in that community. It is important to engage people where they are, ensuring work is culturally informed by involving whole communities in the prevention of violence.

If violence among children and young people didn't exist in Wales,

'young people would feel free to express themselves'.

If violence among children and young people is prevented, 'graver issues that develop in our future relating to violence wouldn't occur, because we wouldn't have gotten involved in violence at such a young age. We would therefore have more opportunities and higher paying jobs would be more accessible to us'.

I deserve to feel safe

74%

of children and young people said they had the power to help end violence

However, only

58%

said they felt listened to by professionals when making decisions

Understanding violence among children and young people in Wales
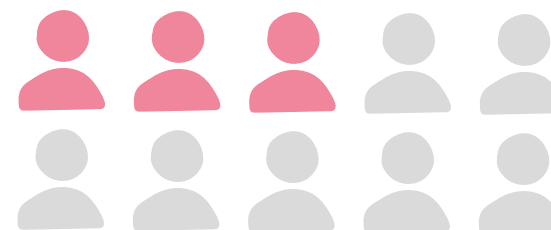
Prevalence

Violence among children and young people is common, serious and normalised within our society. For many, it is unfortunately commonplace and can cause long-lasting harm and trauma.
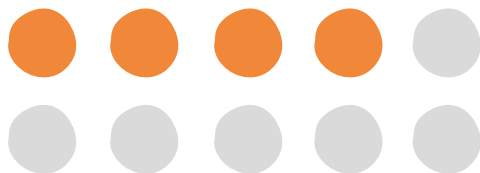
The most significant issue identified by children and young people in Wales was bullying, online and in-person. Other issues they identified included hate crime, stalking, sexual harassment and violence, knife crime, gang and drug-related violence and domestic abuse.

For the year ending March 2020, an estimated **1 in 5** children aged 10 to 15 years in England and Wales experienced at least one type of online bullying behaviour[11].
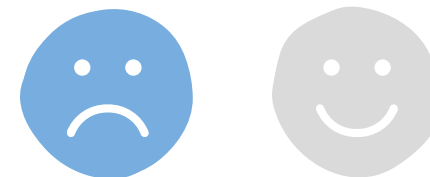
3 in 10 children and young people have experienced recurrent bullying[2].
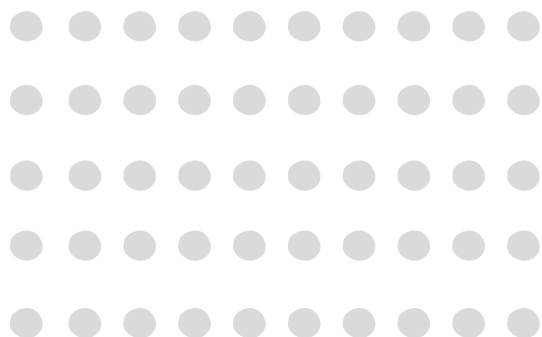
For the year ending March 2022, **4 in 10** domestic abuse victims were aged between 16 and 24 in England and Wales[10].
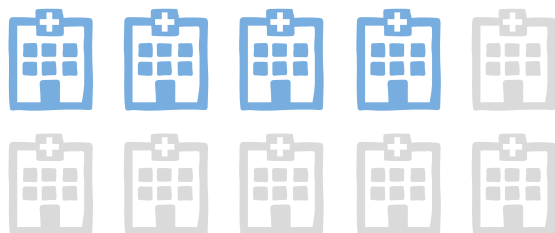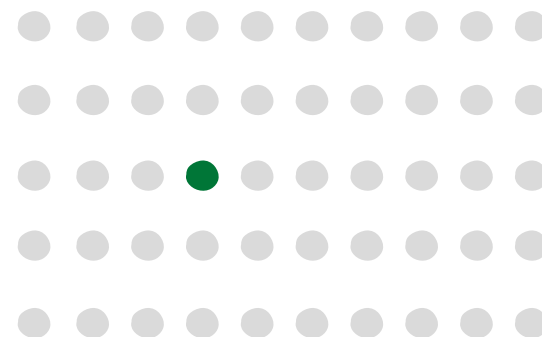
In 2018, **2 in 10** students in Wales had experienced cyber bullying from another pupil in the past year[1].

In 2018, **1 in 2** students in Wales had experienced bullying from another pupil in the previous year[1].

Fewer than **1 in 100** young people carry a knife[12].
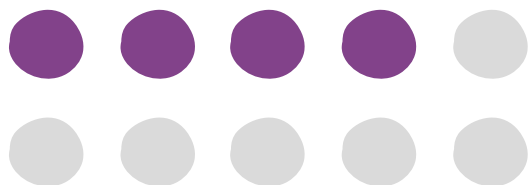
For the year ending June 2022, **4 in 10** hospital admissions in Wales for injuries caused by a knife or other sharp object were for those aged 24 or younger[3].

9 in 10 of 18 to 24 year old women across the UK report having experienced some form of harassment[4].

For the year ending March 2020, **7 in 10** victims of sexual assault are between 16 and 25[15].

For the year ending March 2022, **4 in 10** of those who experienced stalking in England and Wales were aged between 20 and 24[13].

In 2018, **6 in 10** female secondary school pupils report having personal experience of peer-on-peer harassment[14].

In 2018, **3 in 10** school pupils in Wales had been in a physical fight in the previous year, of which 45% resulted in injuries that required medical attention[1].

Violence and inequality

The risk, nature and impact of violence among children and young people is experienced unequally among different groups of children and young people.

For the year ending March 2020, **1 in 5** of the young people who experienced online bullying in England and Wales had a long-term illness or disability[11].
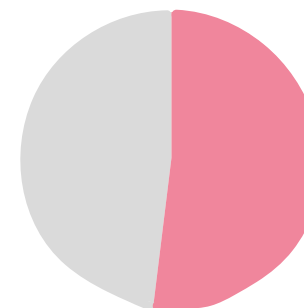
Between March 2018 and March 2020, **30%** of all sexual assault victims in the UK were students, and 20% were unemployed[15].

For the year ending March 2022, approximately **7 in 100** women were victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales; compared to 3 in 100 men[10].

Between March 2018 and March 2020, **65%** of all sexual assault victims in the UK were disabled[15].

Between March 2018 and March 2020, **52%** of sexual assault victims were bisexual[15].

1 in 3 women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime[16].

7x

In 2018, children living in the poorest areas of the UK were **7 times** more likely to be involved in violent crimes as a young adult[5].

For year ending March 2020, **2 in 5** stalking victims in the UK were bisexual[13].

6x

For the year ending March 2021, people from black and minoritised ethnic groups are more likely to be bullied in UK schools, experience race-related hate crime and harassment, modern slavery and exploitation, and are **6 times** more likely to be victims of homicide in England and Wales[6].

16–24

For the year ending March 2022, 16 to 24 year olds are the **most common victims of homicide, sexual violence and domestic abuse** across England and Wales[17].

15x

In Wales, people who have experienced significant adversity in childhood are **15 times more likely** to experience violence as an adult[18].

Risk and protective factors

The socio-ecological model provides a holistic model for understanding the various factors that can affect an individual's behaviour, thoughts and beliefs. It is a versatile model that has been adapted to understand many human experiences, not just violent behaviour.

The nesting circles (figure 3) place the individual at the centre surrounded by various systems that are all influential over the person. The **individual** is influenced by personal and biological factors, such as age, educational attainment, income and substance use.

The first circle around the individual encompasses the **relationships** that the individual may have with family, friends and partners. These relationships can affect the individual's experiences and influence their behaviour, thoughts and beliefs.

The next circle looks beyond the immediate relationships and includes the settings or **communities** in which social interactions occur, such as schools, workplaces, online, neighbourhoods and religious establishments. Whilst these systems do not necessarily directly impact the individual, they can exert negative and positive influences that can affect the individual, such as the social networks a person is able to get involved in.
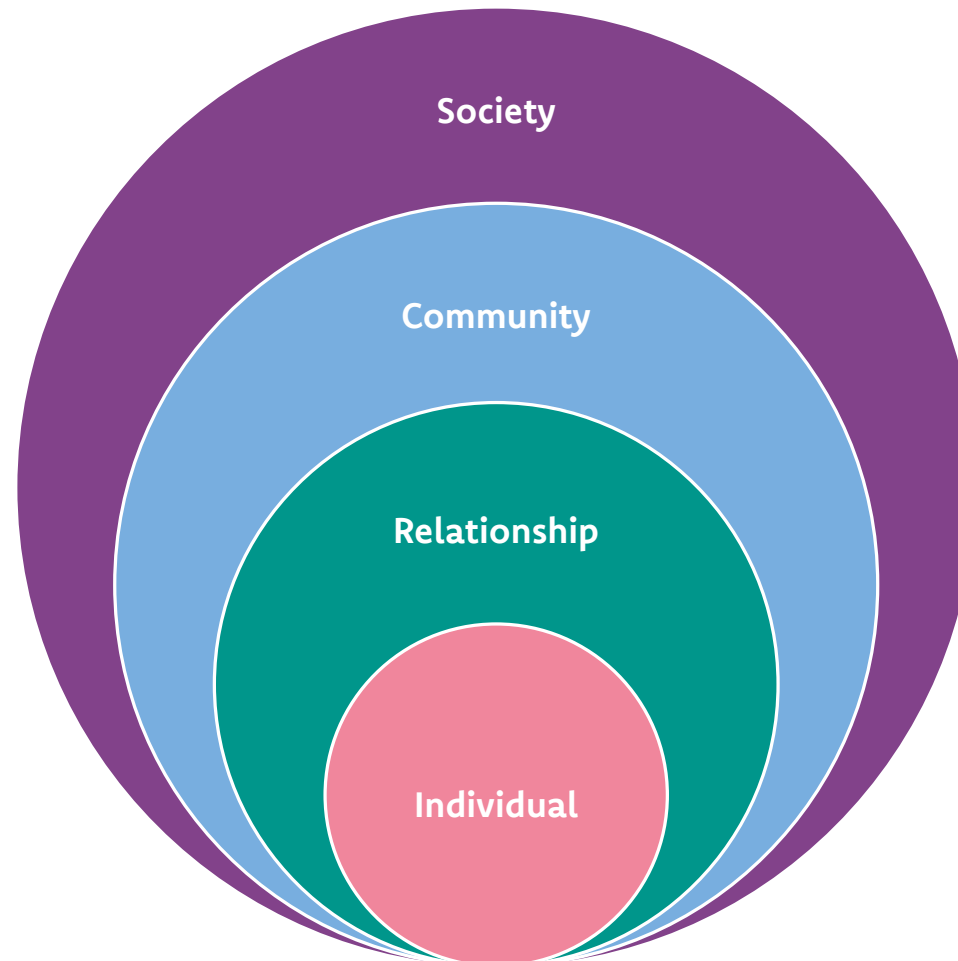
The outer circle highlights the broader **societal** factors, such as health, educational or economic policies, and social and cultural norms, that an impact on an individual's life.

The diagram shows some of the key risk and protective factors that are evidenced in the research and highlighted by children, young people and professionals in Wales as important factors in mediating children and young people's involvement in violence.

Figure 3: Socio-ecological model for violence among children and young people

Risk factors

- Gender and racial inequity
- High levels of poverty and socioeconomic inequity

- Poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunity
- Accessibility/acceptability of weapons and substances
- Harmful gender norms and cultural practices
- Institutional racism
- High levels of discrimination based on protected characteristics

- Negative peer group norms and social control
- Unequal power dynamics in relationships
- Disengagement from education
- Lack of nurturing relationships and environment

- Shame, fear, frustration, low self-esteem
- Loneliness
- Loss and bereavement
- Poor feelings of personal safety/fear
- Substance use
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Exposure to violent media
- Lack of knowledge about laws

Protective factors

- Gender and racial equity

- Inclusive institutional and community policies and practices
- Meaningful employment and training opportunities
- Safe recreational areas and community enviornments
- School and community inclusion
- Low levels of poverty

- Positive peer group and family norms and relationships

- Relationships with a trusted adult
- Stable, safe and nurturing childhood
- High self-esteem, emotional regulation and good mental health
- Prosocial attitude
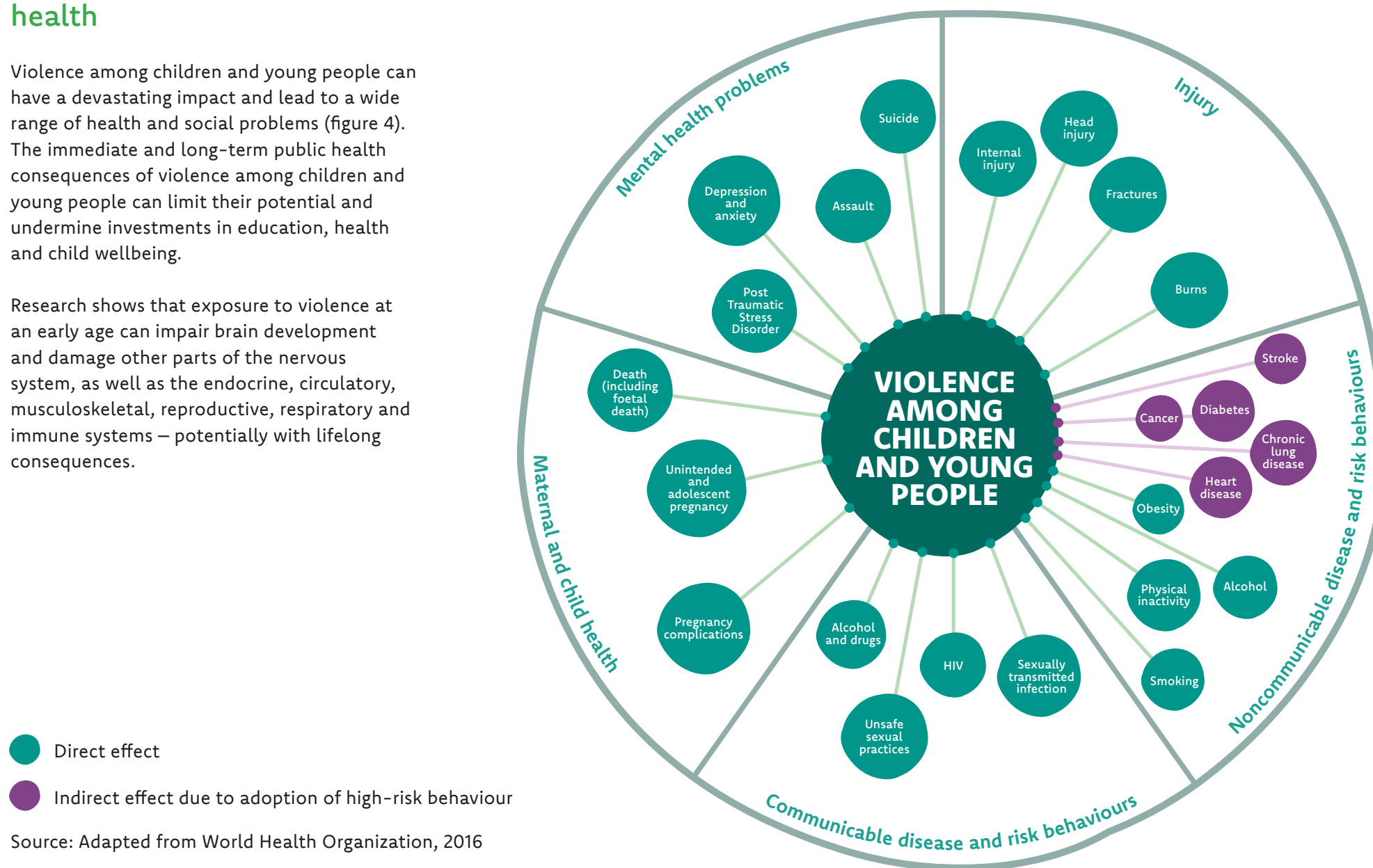
*Please note this an illustrative list rather than exhaustive

27

The effect of violence on health

Violence among children and young people can have a devastating impact and lead to a wide range of health and social problems (figure 4). The immediate and long-term public health consequences of violence among children and young people can limit their potential and undermine investments in education, health and child wellbeing.

Research shows that exposure to violence at an early age can impair brain development and damage other parts of the nervous system, as well as the endocrine, circulatory, musculoskeletal, reproductive, respiratory and immune systems – potentially with lifelong consequences.

Figure 4: The effect of violence on health

Direct effect

Indirect effect due to adoption of high-risk behaviour

Source: Adapted from World Health Organization, 2016

A whole-system approach to preventing violence
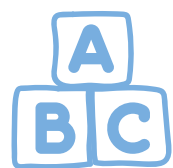
A whole-system approach describes collective actions that can be taken by multiple partners to address a complex, population-scale issue, such as violence.

This Framework outlines nine evidence-informed strategies that, together, have the potential to prevent multiple forms of violence that impact children and young people if a whole-system approach is used.

To take a whole-system approach, it is important to understand that effective violence prevention efforts engage people across the many different environments where they live, work, learn, socialise and play – often called 'settings'.

These are the places where social and cultural values are produced and reproduced, and prevention efforts should aim to involve the people, professionals and communities in the settings that are most relevant in their lives.

Violence prevention settings

Early years

Workplaces

Media

Legal and justice

Sports and recreation

Public spaces

Schools

Health

City centres and nightlife

Faith-based

Popular culture

Social and leisure

Social media

Arts

Colleges and universities

Transport

29
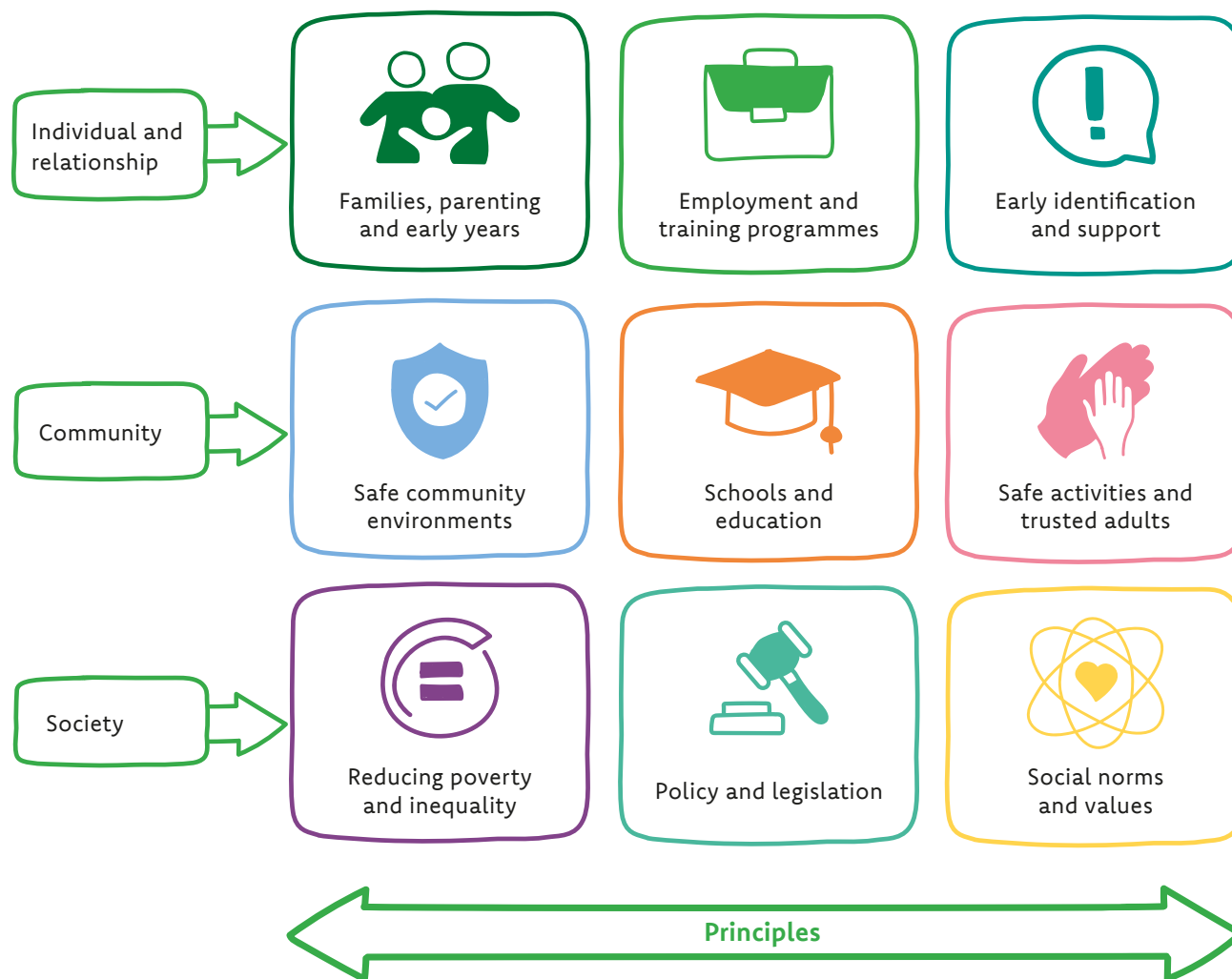
Nine strategies to prevent violence among children and young people

Preventing violence among children and young people requires multiple, complementary processes and collective and coordinated action.

For that reason, these strategies are inter-related and provide a comprehensive approach to preventing violence focusing on primary prevention and early intervention. The nine strategies span from birth and early years, through to childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Whilst this Framework provides an overview of a whole-system approach to violence prevention, it is critical that local approaches to preventing violence are underpinned by the principles outlined in section 'violence prevention principles'.

The diagram to the right shows the nine strategies and how they map against the socio-ecological model to effect whole-system change. In the next section, there is a description of each strategy, with examples of the types of interventions from Wales.

Individual and relationship

Families, parenting and early years

Employment and training programmes

Early identification and support

Community

Safe community environments

Schools and education

Safe activities and trusted adults

Society

Reducing poverty and inequality

Policy and legislation

Social norms and values

Principles

Families, parenting[iii] and early years

Nurturing caregiving environments in the early years and throughout childhood

Investing in a child's first days, weeks and years can benefit them throughout the rest of their life.

This strategy includes promoting supportive, nurturing and resilient family and caregiving environments, and quality early years and pre-school education, including measures for the prevention of child abuse and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among the general population as well as more targeted groups.

There is an abundance of research showing that investing in a child's early years has benefits that last throughout the rest of their lives. A happy, healthy and safe home environment with strong adult-child relationships and attachments supports children to meet their developmental milestones. The first two years of life - often called the 'first 1,000 days' - are particularly important for healthy development, due to the fast rate of neurological growth that occurs during this period.

The promotion of positive family environments throughout a child's development is connected to caregivers' knowledge about healthy and age-appropriate child development and attachment, as well as the ways families communicate, manage behaviour and resolve conflict.

Strategies could include activities focused on:
- providing support for parents[iv], including antenatal and postnatal care
- affordable and accessible childcare
- parenting programmes and whole-family interventions to bolster relationships and provide holistic support around a child or young person.

Programmes should support parents and caregivers by giving them the skills to avoid violently punishing their children and improve parent-child communication, helping to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

These programmes could also be practical in nature, such as help with accessing safe and secure housing, managing finances, cooking, finding mental health services, supporting family networks and offering resources and advice about online safety.

Some children and their families and carers may need additional support through targeted provision, such as:
- care-experienced children
- children with parents in prison
- children who are victims of parental domestic abuse or other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- children and young people who are parents or carers themselves.

Compared with their peers, children and young people from these groups may have poorer outcomes in relation to their education and health — providing targeted support is important to build resilience and respond to individual need. Work in this area should also include training for professionals on working with these groups of children and young people through a trauma-informed approach and on seeking the views of children in matters that affect them.

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iii Parenting' describes the way caregivers meet children's needs and support their physical, emotional and cognitive development before and after birth. Caregivers with a parenting role may not be the child's biological parents. Throughout this document the term 'parent/s' is used to refer to the child's main caregiver/s.

iv Parenting support: describes the broad range of policies, programmes and services that enable and support parents in their parenting role. It is important to clarify that parenting interventions that aim to develop parents' knowledge and skills are important, but they are only one element of a comprehensive whole system approach to parenting support.

> Positive family environments will give children and young people **'a safe space to talk and communicate'.**

Programme/intervention type

- Parenting programmes
- Universal health visiting and midwifery services
- Pre-school education and family engagement programmes
- Psychological support interventions for children who are victims of parental domestic abuse.

Examples from Wales

- **Parenting. Give it time**[19] — This campaign provides positive parenting practical hints, tips and expert advice to encourage good behaviour from children and offers alternatives to physical punishment.
- **Flying Start**[20] — This is a geographically targeted early years programme for families with children under four years old in some of the most deprived areas of Wales.
- **Children's Rights in the Early Years Network**[21] — Children in Wales jointly co-ordinates and facilitates this Network with the Department of Education and Childhood Studies, Swansea University. The Network has developed a poster that explores children's Rights in the Early Years[21].

Employment and training programmes

Enhancing economic opportunities for children and young people

This strategy focuses on the importance of children and young people having access to meaningful and equitable training and employment opportunities to develop a career path and find direction and hope for the future. These are important protective factors for preventing violence and exploitation.

Children and young people experience severe inequalities in access to employment and training. These inequalities are heightened among certain groups, including those who have low school engagement, as well as those who are disabled or neurodiverse, young carers, girls and women, and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, amongst others.

In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic may have worsened these inequalities, with children and young people more likely to be in low paid temporary work, on zero-hour contracts or working in 'shutdown' sectors — such as hospitality and retail — which were required to temporarily close or reduce their staff and services. The cost of living crisis is likely to further worsen these inequalities for children and young people unless remedial action is taken.

Violence prevention strategies in this area include:

- investing in enhanced training, mentoring and employment coaching for children and young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)

- working with employers and training organisations to create meaningful opportunities for children and young people to develop more equitable routes into work and training
- workplace inclusion programmes that promote access to employment for everyone, including flexible working opportunities.

> ## 'My life would be better, and I would progress faster'
>
> if employment and training programmes were enhanced.

Programme/intervention type

- Coaching to secure sustained and meaningful employment
- Employment and skills training accompanied by therapeutic, specialised support
- Providing resources for job interviews, including clothes and transport
- Working with employers to develop opportunities for young people
- Coaching that includes self-esteem work
- Robust workplace inclusion policies and practices
- Organisational monitoring of number of young people in the workforce and providing bespoke support, such as mentoring.

- **Young Person's Guarantee**[22] – This will give everyone under 25 the offer of work, education, training or self-employment. This includes programmes such as apprenticeships, Community Employability Programmes, Working Wales and Big Ideas Wales.

- **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**[23] – This aims to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) by early identification of those at risk of becoming NEET or homeless. It helps them to fulfil their potential by offering the right support to allow them flourish.

- **Disabled People's Employment Champions**[24] – This network works with businesses across Wales to create the conditions for disabled people to thrive in work, support recruitment and retention, and make workplaces more inclusive, changing attitudes and reducing stigma.

- The new **Curriculum for Wales**[25] – The curriculum includes a cross-cutting focus on careers advice for three to 16 year olds. Welsh Government has published a careers and work-related experiences toolkit[26] that supports schools and other education settings with this aspect of the curriculum.

Early identification and support

Intervening as soon as possible to limit harm through a trauma-informed approach

Children and young people must be believed and listened to, as well as receive timely support based on their individual needs, circumstances and choices. This strategy describes trauma-informed approaches to encouraging children and young people who have experienced violence, or are concerned about violence, to access safe, appropriate and timely support.

These approaches include an array of formal and informal services provided by charities, as well as the public sector, such as:

- helplines
- trauma-informed training for the children and young people's workforce
- trauma-enhanced specialist services
- identification and referral in healthcare or custody settings
- safeguarding.

Interventions may also support children and young people exhibiting signs of harmful or violent behaviour, such as child or adolescent to parent violence, intimate partner violence or harmful sexual behaviour. Intensive therapeutic approaches address the individual, family, school and community factors associated with violence perpetration.

Importantly, these approaches also focus on strengthening parent-child and whole family relationships and protective factors that may impact children's risk of involvement with violence. In Wales, the Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales[43] provides a framework for preventing children from entering the criminal justice system (see text box 'The Youth Justice Blueprint' on page 37).

Some children and young people may need more targeted support to help address depression, fear and anxiety or other mental health concerns, or harmful substance use. Through the consultation, we heard that it is seen as incredibly difficult to access mental health services, and a lot of children and young people felt that these services are crucial to health and wellbeing.

We also heard from children and young people in Wales, that transitioning between children and adult services is very difficult for young people. A young person may 'age-out' of multiple services they are accessing at different times, often between the ages of 16 and 25. During these transition periods, they may be at a heightened risk and need support and consistency from professionals working with them.

'Better mental health services would help the root cause of people needing to be violent.'

Programme/intervention type

- Early identification and referral in primary care
- Hospital-based violence prevention teams
- Contextual safeguarding approaches
- Trauma-informed training for the children and young people's workforce
- Trauma-enhanced specialist services
- Diversion programmes
- Helplines
- Alcohol brief intervention and advice (short sessions encouraging people to reduce their alcohol consumption)
- Online safety services
- Efforts to build trust and increase engagement and reporting to services.

Examples from Wales

- **NHS Violence Prevention Team (VPT)**[28] — Established in October 2019 and funded by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU), the VPT now operates in two emergency departments in South Wales. Each team comprises two nurses and a community-based caseworker. The VPT offers advice, support and guidance to patients who have experienced violence, with the aim of engaging with those injured whilst they are in hospital (at the point of crisis) and to prevent violence by encouraging patients to access support and services.
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) In-Reach Pilot Programme**[29] — This pilot programme aimed to build the capacity (including skills, knowledge and confidence) in primary and secondary schools to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff. It also worked to improve schools' access to specialist liaison, consultancy, advice and training. This was funded by the Welsh Government and ran from September 2018 until July 2021.

- **Report Harmful Content**[30] — This is an online tool for reporting harmful content online, including threats, impersonation, bullying and harassment, self-harm or suicide content, online abuse, violent content, unwanted sexual advances and pornographic content. The platform functions by providing up-to-date information on community standards and direct links to the correct reporting facilities across multiple platforms.
- **The Swansea CMET (Contextual Missing, Exploitation and Trafficking) Panel** — This is a multi-agency meeting established and led by Swansea Council that works within a contextual safeguarding framework. The panel responds to the needs of a child or young person who has been identified by partners, and provides or facilitates access to mental health, homelessness and violence specialist support services. It also focuses on identified hotspot locations and peer groups, providing targeted outreach activity. The CMET panel allows children and young people to be diverted from the risk of exploitation, involvement with violence and serious organised crime.

? What is contextual safeguarding?

Contextual safeguarding recognises that children and young people are influenced by a whole range of different environments outside of their family, including in school, college, the local community, their peer groups and online. Children and young people may encounter risks in any of these environments, and the different contexts can be inter-related. Contextual safeguarding looks at how we develop a more holistic understanding of the environments and relationships in which children and young people live, better understand these risks, and engage with children and young people to keep them safe.

The Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales

Preventing children from entering the criminal justice system, minimising their contact with it and maximising opportunities for diversion is essential in supporting them to lead crime free lives. The statutory aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out requirements to ensure local services are provided to prevent children from offending and to promote their future welfare.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have a significant effect on mental wellbeing throughout life leading to negative outcomes such as involvement in crime. Those with four or more ACEs are 15 times more likely to commit violence and 20 times more likely to be imprisoned. Policy is therefore focused on preventing and minimising the impact of ACEs, of stopping inter-generational problems and developing resilience to improve life chances.

The Youth Justice Blueprint also recognises the commitment to the delivery of children's rights in Wales. The whole-system approach described below takes account of the relevant articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the design of youth justice services for Wales. It sets out the ambition for a rights-based and trauma-informed system, which will support services to deliver positive outcomes for children in Wales.

The Blueprint workstreams focus on prevention, pre-court diversion, community, custody and resettlement. Embedding preventative, child-centred approaches across these areas help children across Wales to thrive.

Key achievements of the Youth Justice Blueprint to date are:

Enhanced Case Management (ECM) is now available to all youth offending teams (YOTs) in Wales for children in voluntary and statutory contact with them. The mapping of YOT health provision across Wales has been completed to establish what services YOTs have access to in their local area and where there are gaps. Support has been provided to the youth justice sector with resources, training and qualifications to deliver trauma-informed practice (TIP).

In 2021, a revised service specification developed for the **Forensic Adolescent Consultation and Treatment Service** (FACTS) with the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales — which now provides the delivery of a pan-Wales psychology-led trauma-informed model to youth offending teams.

Safe community environments

Creating physically and psychologically safe spaces for children and young people

Too often, children and young people do not feel safe in their communities. Creating protective community environments where children and young people can thrive and develop is an important strategy in promoting their physical and psychological safety, and their health and wellbeing.

During the consultation for this Framework, it became clear that children and young people are often asked to leave public places, despite not causing any issues. Places that offer free Wi-Fi often threaten to call the police if children and young people are gathered simply to use the Wi-Fi offered. This can create conflict, or worse, cause children and young people to move away from well-populated, 'safe' areas to more isolated areas.

Communities can include places with any defined population with shared characteristics and environments.

This includes physical spaces such as:

• schools
• towns and cities
• youth-serving organisations or institutions
• green spaces, nightlife areas, festivals and public transport.

It also includes online spaces, such as gaming or social media platforms, where people regularly interact.

Characteristics of a community's environment can have a significant influence on how a person acts, creating a context that can have a positive or negative effect on their behaviour.

Approaches that modify the characteristics of these places are considered community-level ways of working. They can involve, for example:

• changing planning policies to provide affordable, safe, quality housing, community infrastructure or green space
• creating appealing, safe and accessible spaces for children and young people
• identifying violence hotspots within nightlife areas to inform licensing decisions, transport planning or other safety schemes.

As well as physical adaptations, approaches could also include contextual safeguarding in which these concerns are viewed through a holistic, community-level lens to protect children and young people and their peers — examples include changing policies that impact community spaces, such as those that offer protection from online harm. Police officers building relationships with children and young people and other community members is another example.

These approaches can improve both the perceived and actual level of safety, while reducing opportunities for violence and crime. In turn, they increase protective factors, too, such as community members having more constructive interactions and opportunities to support children and young people, and promoting prosocial norms that protect against violence.

'Developing spaces for us to hang out and spend our time productively. A space to provide us with more opportunities to thrive'.

Programme/intervention type

- Nightlife safety schemes
- Hotspot policing
- Contextual safeguarding
- Asset-based community development
- Substance misuse harm minimisation
- Information Sharing to Tackle Violence (ISTV)
- Modifications to the physical environment to prevent violence — e.g., increasing lighting and CCTV, managing accessibility to buildings and public spaces, street cleaning, increasing security and creating and maintaining green space
- Reduced exposure to community-level risks — youth violence is associated with several community-level risks, such as concentrated poverty, residential instability and density of shops and venues selling alcohol
- Street outreach and community approaches (online and offline) connect trained outreach staff with community members. This allows them to mediate any conflicts and help children and young people access community support, reducing risks and building buffers against violence
- Bystander programmes in the workplace and other community-based settings.

Examples from Wales

- **The Wales Violence Prevention Portal —** This is a bespoke data hub that 'warehouses' data from multiple sources, including emergency department assault attendances, hospital admissions, police reported crime data and ambulance service call-out data. It allows partners to work together to understand patterns and trends in violence to make sure violence prevention efforts are targeted at the communities where they're needed most. Organisations can register for access to the Portal by contacting the VPU team.
- **Ask Me project**[46] — The Ask Me project, delivered by Welsh Women's Aid, aims to maximise people's understanding of violence against women and girls, so they are able to raise awareness in their community and respond appropriately to survivors if they choose to share their experiences. The project consists of free training and ongoing support that helps community members start conversations about abuse, know where help is available, share their knowledge with others and learn how to respond to anyone who shares their experience of abuse.

Schools and education

Integrating violence prevention into school and education settings

Education settings play a crucial role in violence prevention. These are places where children and young people are socialised into societal norms, learn about relationships with their peer group and community, develop a sense of belonging and acquire knowledge, skills and experience.

Educational engagement is also an important protective factor in preventing violence in childhood and adolescence – and throughout the rest of their lives.

Whilst education settings should always be safe and secure environments for children and young people, frequently, they are also places where significant amounts of violence take place (both online and offline), including harassment, bullying, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, as well as physical violence. This can include violence that takes place in education settings, but it can also encompass violence that occurs at home or in the community, which are later identified within education settings.

Children and young people felt that there needs to be

'a lot more discussions in schools to ensure everyone feels valued and safe'.

Education settings are in the unique position of being able to involve many children and young people at one time in violence prevention efforts from childhood through to adolescence and young adulthood, as well as engaging parents and the wider community.

Skilled teaching and support staff can provide important role models outside of family life, and education settings can make ideal environments to develop positive social behaviours, habits and expectations, while challenging harmful social and cultural norms that tolerate violence.

Education settings also have an important role in protecting children and young people and providing environments that support and promote dignity, development and protection, as well as identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns[47].

There is a wealth of research on evidence-based programmes and whole-setting approaches that are proven to be effective in reducing levels of violence. Preventing and responding to violence in education settings can also improve educational attainment, achievement and experience. Many of the life skills taught in violence prevention programmes, such as communication, managing emotions, critical reflection, resolving conflict and solving problems, are the same skills that can help children and young people succeed in education and that can protect against other issues that affect learning, such as alcohol and drug use.

The new Curriculum for Wales[25] provides a range of opportunities for schools to integrate violence prevention efforts into the curriculum. In particular, the Statements of what matters[33] emphasise that healthy relationships are fundamental to wellbeing. It also highlights the importance of critical engagement with social and cultural influences to understand how social norms and values develop.

Likewise, the statutory requirement for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)[34] to be taught in all secondary schools and relationships education in primary schools underlies the significance of schools as appropriate settings for prevention. The overall aim of RSE is that students understand the benefits of healthy relationships to their own mental health and wellbeing, providing an important opportunity for developing skills for healthy relationships and violence prevention.

(?) Why is taking a whole-school or whole-setting approach important?
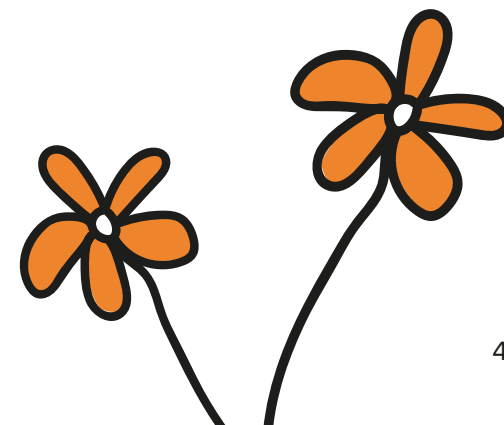
Comprehensive activities that help prevent violence and involve all stakeholders who are important in a child or young person's life have been proven to be more effective in preventing violence than activities that just focus on one target group or a short-lived intervention. This approach works towards making sure that the whole school or setting shares the same vision towards reducing violence, and that leadership, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents and the community work together towards this goal.

In Wales, there are a range of opportunities for aligning violence prevention efforts with existing support for whole-school or setting approaches to health and wellbeing. These include the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes and the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being.

Programme/intervention type

- Develop leadership, policies, governance and coordination methods to create a whole-setting approach
- Collect data on violence and monitor changes over time
- Hotspot mapping to identify areas where students feel less safe
- Review and make adaptations to buildings, grounds, transport and shared online spaces
- Identify safe spaces and develop links and partnerships with local support services
- Integrate violence prevention into curriculum-based activities
- Provide trauma-informed training to education staff
- Provide training for education staff on healthy relationships, social norms and values, violence prevention, and online safety, including current trends
- Implement evidence-based violence prevention programmes
- Develop social norms campaigns to encourage active bystanders and help-seeking
- Involve parents, carers and the community in violence prevention activities
- Evaluate violence prevention activities and use the evidence to strengthen the approaches being taken.

- **Whole-school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing** — In March 2021, Welsh Government issued the Framework embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being[35] as statutory guidance to governing bodies of maintained nursery, primary, secondary, middle, pupil referral units (PRUs), and special schools and local authorities in Wales. The Framework aims to provide direction to address the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of all children and young people, as well as school staff as part of the whole-school community. It gives schools the opportunity, through a continuous improvement approach, to promote positive mental wellbeing, prevent mental ill health and to take action to support individuals where needed. A driving principle of the Framework is promoting equity for all and is underpinned by the core values of belonging, efficacy and voice.

- **Trauma-informed education system** — ACE Hub Wales has developed a model to ensure that the education system in Wales is informed by trauma and adverse childhood experience (TrACE) approaches. ACE Hub Wales' TrACE model has seen the delivery of a significant training programme offered to all primary and secondary schools in Wales as part of the whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing[35]. The further education sector is working to implement the model in all colleges in Wales. Wrexham Glyndŵr University, with support from ACE Hub Wales, is on track to becoming the first TrACE University[53]. The TrACE-informed model works alongside the ongoing social inclusion work in schools, colleges, and with parents and the community. It includes training to ensure that people who may have encountered trauma or adverse childhood experiences will be given the opportunity to progress and thrive.

- **360 Degree Safe Cymru**[37] — This is an interactive online safety self-evaluation tool that is available for all schools governed by local authorities in Wales. It can be accessed through Hwb, the Welsh Government's digital platform to support the curriculum for Wales. The tool helps schools to review and develop their online safety policies and provision, produce action plans, benchmark their provision against good practice and compare them with national averages. The tool also provides access to a range of relevant resources and example policy templates, and allows schools to collaborate on developing their provision and practice.

- **Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes (WNHSS)**[38] — This helps schools develop and sustain whole-school approaches to health and wellbeing. The goal is to create positive and sustainable changes in policy, practice and social and physical environments to lay the groundwork for better health and wellbeing. The programme encompasses core principles around pupil and community involvement, school ethos and formal and informal curriculum delivery.

Connection to safe activities and trusted adults

Creating positive connections with trusted adults and safe activities so children and young people can learn and grow

Children and young people's risk of becoming involved in violence can be buffered through strong connections with caring adults (outside of parents and caregivers) and doing activities that encourage their skill development, creativity, learning and growth.

These relationships can have a positive influence on children and young people's choices and prevent them from committing crimes and acts of violence, using alcohol and drugs and engaging in harmful sexual behaviour.

Trusted adults can include teachers, coaches, mentors, youth workers, extended family members, neighbours or community volunteers, amongst others. Positive and consistent connections with an adult role model helps children and young people learn how to have healthy relationships and challenge harmful behaviours or beliefs.

It also helps them to interact well with their own peer group — often through a shared interest. Through positive interpersonal relationships and learning activities, children and young people can also develop positive life goals, be more engaged at school, improve their skills and establish networks that lay the foundation for future life opportunities. This strategy includes a range of different activities, from arts, music, theatre, sports and play opportunities, grassroots community-led schemes — particularly in marginalised communities — after-school programmes, through to youth work.

These activities can be used therapeutically for those who have experienced violence — or who have been identified as 'at risk' of involvement with violence. But these activities can also help all children and young people get involved with their peer group and work with caring adults, and learn through creative, cultural and community-led opportunities.

The **Youth Work Strategy for Wales**[65] sets out a shared vision for the future of youth work in Wales.

Supported by an implementation plan, it promotes and actively encourages opportunities for all young people aged 11 to 25. Effective youth work plays a huge part in helping young people understand their rights, socialise, develop and access support for a range of issues, including their mental and emotional health or wellbeing. It also helps them to play an active role in their communities and offers support for their education, employment or training.

Having 'more opportunities for us outside of school environments would focus our energy' and would 'provide us with more opportunities'.

Programme/intervention type

- Sports, arts and theatre programmes
- Youth work
- Mentoring
- Access to therapeutic approaches for children and young people at risk
- Community-led and cultural programmes
- Trauma-informed training for professionals and volunteers working with children and young people
- Training for professionals and volunteers working with children and young people on healthy relationships, social norms and values, violence prevention and online safety (including current trends).

Examples from Wales

- **The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework**[23] — This helps young people make a positive transition into education, employment or training when they leave school, ensuring that no one is left behind.
- **Premier League Kicks**[39] — This is a youth outreach programme that helps to create safer, more inclusive communities and reduce offending by using the power of sport. The programme regularly works with children and young people of all backgrounds and abilities in football, sport and personal development, providing a trusted, positive influence in high-need areas. Cardiff City FC Foundation's Premier League Kicks sessions offer children and young people aged 11 to 19 access to free football sessions, online activities and opportunities for personal development, as well as actively engaging with young people through additional youth work. Swansea City AFC Foundation provides free weekly sessions, giving people aged eight to 16 across South West Wales the opportunity to play football, whilst 16 to 18s in further education have the chance to become volunteer officials or coaches.

- **Fire and Rescue Youth Provision**[40] — The All Wales FRS' are passionate about working with young people and deliver a variety of youth intervention programmes aimed at those aged between 11 — 25 years.

  Our Fire and Rescue Service has an important part to play in contributing to the well-being of children and young people by delivering early intervention projects and by providing relevant education about the importance of fire safety, the consequences of deliberate fires, hoax calls and anti-social behaviour. We do this through our various projects including Reflect Project (Crimes and Consequences), Phoenix Project, Fire Setting Intervention Scheme and Fire Cadets.

Reducing poverty and inequality

Addressing the root causes of violence through programmes to reduce poverty and inequality

'Safety is a middle class privilege.'

Reducing poverty and inequality are fundamental to preventing violence.

Whilst violence can happen to anyone, its adverse impacts are felt most severely in communities with high levels of socio-economic deprivation — so reducing poverty and income inequality are fundamental building blocks in preventing violence and improving community safety.

Research has shown a strong association between poverty and violence, with the latter often described as having a bi-directional relationship with inequality. Social inequalities relating to socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and gender increase the likelihood of violence taking place.

In turn, violence further ingrains and perpetuates those inequalities, leaving certain populations more vulnerable to violence, exploitation, harm, neglect, maltreatment, trauma and its consequences. Specific groups of people — such as those who are LGBTQI+, people with disabilities, people from racially and ethnically minoritised groups, women and girls are more likely to experience multiple forms of interpersonal violence.

Cross-national evidence indicates that rates of violence can be lower in countries where there is less inequality and disparity between population groups. Policies and programmes that improve economic security and stability for people from marginalised groups — with opportunities to strengthen their education, employment and income prospects — can act as protective factors.

Other programmes could include those that build confidence, knowledge and leadership skills, which can lead to improved outcomes in education, employment and community engagement and political participation.

All programmes should involve communities as leaders in planning, development and implementation, and provide opportunities to connect with cultural and community identities to foster a sense of belonging.

But violence prevention efforts cannot take place, and communities cannot thrive, if people do not have access to basic living standards, including food, housing and warmth.

Levels of poverty have been affected severely by the UK's exit from the European Union, the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis, with the impact hitting those who are most disadvantaged the hardest. These socio-political challenges have sent shockwaves through our society and the economic wellbeing of vulnerable households in Wales.

It has also exacerbated existing inequalities and had a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable communities. Children are consistently the age group most likely to be in relative income poverty — one possible reason is that adults with children are more likely to be out of work or working fewer hours due to childcare responsibilities, disproportionately affecting single mothers.

The latest reliable poverty statistics for Wales show that an estimated 31% of children in Wales are living in relative income poverty. The Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy[41] identifies five priority areas to improve the lives of low income households. These areas are childcare, in-work poverty, food poverty, housing and regeneration and mitigating the impacts of welfare reform. This strategy will be refreshed in 2023.

Programme/intervention type

- Gender mainstreaming (strategies to achieve equality between women and men) and gender budgeting
- Minimum basic income schemes
- Allyship training
- Strengthening economic programmes to promote full and equal labour force participation
- Strengthening leadership opportunities, including political participation, for children and young people from marginalised groups.

Examples from Wales

- The **basic income for care leavers**[42] scheme — This is being piloted in Wales for young people leaving care who are turning 18 between 1st July 2022 and 30th June 2023. This scheme is intended to help care leavers afford basic needs by receiving a set amount of money from the Welsh Government. The monthly payment is made in addition to income generated from employment but replaces benefits the person is eligible for.
- **Positive Futures** — This sport-based social inclusion programme works with children and young people from areas of high deprivation in Newport. The programme uses trained role models (sports coordinators, sports coaches and volunteers) to provide opportunities, and develop skills, aiming to promote resilience and prevent anti-social behaviour and involvement in serious organised crime. The programme is funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Gwent, along with many other partners such as One Newport, Sport Wales, Welsh Government and local authorities. Positive Futures has grown in reach significantly in the past six years and now operates across Gwent and the South East Wales Region, including in Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent[43].

- **Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan**[44] — This sets out how Welsh Government will lead the way in achieving greater equality for women and girls in Wales.
- **Anti-racist Wales Action Plan**[45] — This is built on the values of anti-racism and calls for zero tolerance of all racial inequality. It will support the vision for an anti-racist nation, where everyone is valued for who they are and the contribution they make.
- The **Criminal Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan for Wales**[46] sets out an action plan for anti-racism in the criminal justice system in Wales and was commissioned by the Criminal Justice Board for Wales.

Children and young people were aware of the impact of poverty on bullying:

'Underprivileged children, who are unable to afford new items, may get ridiculed as a result'.

Policy and legislation

Fostering a policy and legislative environment that enables violence prevention

A robust legislative and policy framework lays the groundwork to prevent violence, addresses risk factors and legislates for employing a children's rights approach.

It can also provide a structure for protecting, effectively responding to and supporting victims, witnesses and children.

Whilst laws alone can't reduce violence, effectively implementing and enforcing them strengthens all nine strategies to prevent violence among children and young people.

Examples of policy and legislation include:
- strengthening systems and coordination for protection, response and support through mandates, standards, procedures and accountability mechanisms
- establishing frameworks for identification, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up for children and young people who experience violence
- establishing pathways to fair, transparent and child-friendly justice for all children
- enhancing funding for prevention and the responsibility of partners to act to prevent violence through multi-agency working
- establishing frameworks for multi-agency data and information sharing and common indicators for violence prevention
- providing equitable funding for all areas to address local needs
- enforcing duties to protect children and young people from violent content online.

Children and young people felt that **'the political system needs to be changed to create a more equitable society'.**

Areas of policy and legislation relating to violence prevention in Wales span both the devolved and non-devolved landscape. Although crime and justice legislation is not devolved, key services that help to prevent violence – such as health and social care, accommodation, education, employability and substance misuse support – are devolved. This means that Welsh violence prevention efforts take place in a unique delivery and legislative context.

Children's rights are central to preventing violence among children and young people, and policy in Wales is underpinned by a commitment to them. In 2004, the Welsh Government formally adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as the basis of policy making relating to children and young people. The UNCRC is an international agreement setting out the rights of children and young people aged 18 and under to be safe, play, have an education, be healthy and be happy.

In May 2012, the duty to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) came into place as part of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

To help deliver this commitment to children and young people, a Children and Young People's Plan[47] was launched in March 2022. It aligns with the principles of the UNCRC and sets out seven cross-governmental priorities that were developed alongside children and young people.

Work to prevent violence in Wales takes place in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which seeks to improve the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act requires public bodies in Wales to take a more joined-up approach, think long-term, prevent problems and collaborate with people and communities in a better way. Information on the indicators for measuring progress is available in the Wellbeing of Wales report[48].

In December 2019, the UK Government announced that it would bring forward legislation to create a new Serious Violence Duty, which came into force in January 2023. It requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce violence, including identifying the kinds of violence that occur in an area and the causes of it, and preparing and implementing a strategy for preventing and reducing violence in that area.

Programme/intervention type

- Alcohol and licensing policy (i.e., minimum unit alcohol pricing)
- Prohibiting physical punishment
- Funding for prevention
- Measures to promote partnerships for helping to prevent violence
- Legislation limiting access to firearms and other weapons
- Legislation criminalising sexual abuse and exploitation of children
- Legislation on relationships and sex education
- Legislation on online safety
- Legislation to protect victims and witnesses.

How do laws serve a child's right to be protected from violence?

The right of children to be protected from all forms of violence is recognised by international and regional treaties, conventions, declarations — most notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It calls upon States Parties to review all domestic legislation and related administrative guidance relevant to violence against children (including customary, traditional and religious laws), and prohibit all forms of violence against children in all settings, with no exceptions.

In addition, States that are Parties to these treaties are called upon to adopt all appropriate legislative measures — including implementation, enforcement and budgetary measures — to give full legal effect to this right. These measures fit within a broader effort to implement and enforce laws that protect children's rights to be free from violence and ensure compliance with international and human rights standards.

In Wales, the **Children and Young People's Plan**[47] sets out how the UNCRC will be implemented, including seven cross-government priorities that were developed alongside children and young people.
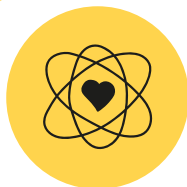
- **The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act (2020)** — In January 2020, as part of its commitment to children's rights, Welsh Government changed the law to stop the physical punishment of children. The Act removes the defence of reasonable punishment from common and criminal law in Wales. Support for parents and parenting is a key element of the Act's implementation plan, further raising the profile of parenting and support for parents in Welsh policy and practice.

- **The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the VAWDASV Act)** — This sets out a duty for local authorities and local health boards in Wales to prepare a strategy for tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV). The purpose of the VAWDASV Act is to improve:

  ◊ arrangements for preventing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

  ◊ arrangements for protecting victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

  ◊ support for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Welsh Ministers also have a statutory requirement under the VAWDASV Act to prepare and publish a National Strategy to prevent VAWDASV following a general election. The most recent strategy was published in May 2022[69]. It's being delivered through a blueprint approach and will be overseen by a national partnership board.

- **Socio-economic Duty**[50] — This came into force in Wales in March 2021. It requires relevant public bodies, including Welsh Ministers, to consider the need to reduce inequalities as a result of socio-economic disadvantages when taking strategic decisions.

- **National milestone**[51] — This was laid in the Senedd in December 2021 for the elimination of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap by 2050.

- **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** — When the Welsh Government introduced these regulations, it placed a duty on Welsh Ministers to set objects to reduce child poverty and report on their progress towards achieving those objectives every three years.

Social norms and values
Modifying harmful attitudes and beliefs

This strategy describes programmes that challenge harmful attitudes, beliefs, social norms and stereotypes that uphold privilege, inequality and subordination, justify violence and stigmatise survivors.

Violence prevention efforts in this area seek to strengthen social norms and values that support non-violent, respectful, nurturing, positive and gender-equitable relationships for all children and young people.

Group and individual behaviour in a society are influenced by social norms and values. For example, social norms and values guide attitudes and behaviour around child-rearing, gender roles, sexuality, inclusion and the acceptability of violence within a group or society.

An individual's social norms and values are influenced by their family, peer group, community and society more widely — for example, social media, advertising and entertainment, which includes gaming, pornography, TV and film. Efforts to promote positive social norms and values — and to reduce the impact of harmful ones — are an essential tool for preventing violence.

> **Values** represent general standards of what is 'good', 'not good', important and worthwhile.
>
> **Social norms** are the behavioural rules, expectations and perceptions about others that are largely shared by people within a group or society

Best practice for social norms and values programmes[56]

Interventions may be more successful when they:

- are based on theoretically grounded models of changing social norms
- are based on high-quality formative research to identify:
  - ◊ behaviours you want to promote or change
  - ◊ social norms that influence those behaviours
  - ◊ social rewards and sanctions that keep norms in place
- create an opportunity for critical reflection about the interaction of values, attitudes, social norms and behaviour
- reinforce messages through multiple pathways and exposures
- use credible messengers and positive role models to offer alternative perspectives and behaviours
- create opportunities for people to practice alternative behaviours that reflect positive norms
- include environmental and structural changes that make it easier for people to adopt new behaviours
- engage both collective and community approaches.

Adapted from the World Health Organization INSPIRE technical package (2020).

There are many examples of how social norms and values can underpin or justify violent behaviour. For example, in some societies or social groups, social norms can dismiss corporal punishment as a necessary part of child-rearing or violence as an acceptable response to conflict in a community. Inequitable gender norms that enable domestic abuse and men's control over women's behaviour are associated with higher levels of gender-based violence.

Peer group and societal norms that reinforce male sexual entitlement and stigmatise people who are LGBTQI+ can lead to high levels of sexual harassment and violence. Likewise, societal norms that justify racism and white supremacy — or the vilification of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees — frequently underpin hate crime, harassment and violence towards people from these groups.

Social norms can also affect the process for seeking help for violence. For example, social norms that reinforce male entitlement and power, or prioritise family privacy or reputation, can lead to victim-blaming and discourage both girls and boys from disclosing violence or seeking help.

Programmes may challenge inequitable social norms regarding gender, power, masculinity, race, ethnicity, sexuality and promote those around equitable relationships, protection and shared responsibilities. These interventions could be targeted at groups of children and young people - including group work with their peer group - parents, sports clubs, schools, colleges and universities, the night-time economy, and include innovative campaigns taking place on social media.

Programme/intervention type

- Bystander programmes
- Social marketing campaigns
- Group-based workshops to promote changes in harmful attitudes and norms, critical reflection and skill development
- Allyship training
- Gender transformative approaches.

Modifying harmful norms would help **'ensure that we stand up openly for each other regardless of gender or beliefs'.**

Engaging men and boys to help prevent violence

Efforts to meaningfully engage men and boys in preventing violence are becoming increasingly common in research and activism. There is a significant amount of research showing that this engagement is critical in preventing male violence.

This rationale tends to emphasise three elements:

1. Any work to prevent violence must engage men and boys, because it is largely (but not exclusively) men who perpetrate violence.
2. Harmful constructions of masculinity and related social norms and attitudes can encourage violent behaviour.
3. Men and boys have a positive and constructive role to play in preventing violence.

Activities in this area include engaging men and boys:

- as positive role models in violence prevention (such as the **Coaching Boys into Men programme**[57])
- as active bystanders (such as the **Football Onside**[58] programme)
- in campaigns (such as the **That Guy**[59] campaign, the **#SafeToSay**[52] Campaign, or **White Ribbon**[60])
- in gender transformative training and activism (such as **Beyond Equality**[61] or **Mandem**[62]).

Examples from Wales

- **#SafeToSay**[52] — This is a campaign developed by the Wales VPU, in partnership with the Good Night Out Campaign, that aims to make nightlife safer by encouraging active bystanders against sexual harassment. It provides information on support services and advice on how to step in safely if someone notices harassment or has concerns about another person's behaviour, especially within their friend group.
- **The Intervention Initiative**[53] — Based on social norms theory and developed by academics at the University of the West of England, this programme empowers communities to intervene proactively to stop violence and abuse. Bystander training, delivered by Welsh Women's Aid in universities across Wales, teaches students how to identify problematic situations, assume responsibility and intervene safely.
- **Statements of what matters**[33] — These form part of the new curriculum for Wales[25] and emphasise the important role of social influences in shaping our behaviours, relationships and experiences — and affecting our health and wellbeing. It highlights how learners will need to engage critically with these social influences within their own culture, as well as those of others, to understand how social norms and values develop.

? What is a bystander approach?

We are all bystanders, all the time. We witness events unfolding around us constantly. Sometimes we recognise events as being problematic. When this happens, we might decide to do or say something — becoming an active bystander either in the moment or at a later stage — or to do nothing and remain a passive bystander.

There are many factors that will influence why we decide to intervene or not. If we do decide to intervene, we are sending a clear message to the wrongdoer that their behaviour is socially unacceptable. Social norms determine the rules of behaviour for social groups or social situations. So, if messages about certain behaviours being unacceptable are constantly sent and reinforced within a community or group, then the boundaries of what is considered acceptable behaviour will shift.

Bystander interventions are based on the different stages needed to move from inaction to action. For this to happen, the bystander must:

⚠️ notice and be aware of the event

🔍 see the event or behaviour as a problem

👆 feel responsible and motivated to act

⚙️ have the necessary skills to be able to intervene safely and effectively

Bystander training programmes focus on giving people the skills to recognise and safely respond to problematic attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a culture where violence occurs. In recent years, bystander interventions have been increasingly developed, implemented and evaluated in the UK, and there is a promising evidence base for their effectiveness in preventing violence.

Working in partnership

Collaboration is one of the cornerstones of a public health approach to preventing violence. Identifying ways to exchange information, promote learning and develop shared governance, language and understanding is essential to maximising the impact of our efforts.

A cross-cutting prevention approach across multiple forms of violence among children and young people will mean building on existing partnerships, creating new relationships and working with new people – including with children and young people, and communities.

To prevent violence among children and young people, we need to create opportunities for violence prevention practitioners to develop relationships and learn from one another in a more effective, systematic way.

With a regular exchange of information among partners working to prevent violence, we gain:

- a broader range of expertise and a more extensive network of professionals
- additional opportunities for sharing data and using this data for taking action
- expanded knowledge of other resources and networks
- increased options for violence prevention
- quicker awareness and adoption of innovations, maximising their impact.

Partnerships for preventing violence in Wales

Violence prevention efforts in Wales must function across the devolved and non-devolved landscape. Organisations such as the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, local authorities, local health boards, Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales, the four Welsh police forces, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice work closely together, in partnership with the third sector and communities in Wales, to provide effective services.

This partnership is formalised in Wales through a partnership agreement between Public Health Wales, the four Welsh police forces and criminal justice partners, which is designed to bring about system-wide change to improve the quality of life, wellbeing and safety of people in Wales. It is also evidenced through joint strategic work such as the Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales[27], the Women's Justice Blueprint for Wales[52] and work in areas such as anti-racism and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)[63]. This work is being carried out within the context of the Welsh Ministers' executive powers and the legislative competence of the Senedd as set out in the Government of Wales Act 2006.

Every Welsh local area will have a range of multi-agency arrangements in place. These existing partnerships will include Public Service Boards (under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015); Regional Partnership Boards (under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014); Regional Safeguarding Boards for both adults and children (under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014); Regional or Local Community Safety Partnerships; Regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Boards (under the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015).

From 2023, organisations in Wales will also have a responsibility to comply with the Serious Violence Duty in which local partners must work together to prevent violence in their area (under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022). However, no partnership model is specified, and existing partnership arrangements can be used where possible.

To effectively prevent violence, there needs to be involvement and support by partners, public and private sectors, and the community from all levels — as well as local government, regional structures, Welsh Government and UK Government.

This includes partners working across different areas of violence, across the devolved and non-devolved landscape. And it needs to involve those working in different sectors, such as healthcare, child welfare, criminal justice, policing, education, housing, planning, business, fire and rescue, and faith-based and community organisations. Strong partnerships at multiple levels, across sectors, and with others working in related areas can lead to better understanding and a more comprehensive view of the work and systems involved, as well as increased coordination of efforts.

Prevention infrastructure: enablers for prevention

Forming new relationships and partnerships can result in new ways of working. In Wales, we have a unique landscape that encourages collaborative working and maximum involvement with violence prevention efforts.

From the conversations we had during the consultation events for this Framework, we know that professionals in Wales have many resources to draw upon that allow violence prevention activities to take place; however, they have also identified areas where improvements could be made.

Examples of these include:

Strong political and legislative landscape

- Wales has a strong political, civil and sector-specific leadership. This guides strategic decision-making and ensures resources are focussed on reaching the same goals.
- The **Serious Violence Duty** allows organisations to take a multi-agency, localised approach to preventing violence. It encourages professionals in Wales to work together, share data and information across agencies, collaborate to understand the local issues in their areas and implement preventative activity.
- However, sometimes the partnership landscape can appear overly complex. Partners may need support in navigating the range of partnership boards and legislation to ensure collaboration is as effective as possible.

Funding

- In Wales, there are a range of different funding streams for violence prevention activities that organisations, schools and community groups can access.
- By taking a whole-system approach to violence prevention activities, organisations can combine funding and resources to provide more sustainable interventions.
- However, long-term, sustainable funding is essential for effective violence prevention activities to take place across Wales.

Information sharing

- Information and data sharing is an important tool for preventing violence among children and young people. It is important for organisations to share information, data, research and examples of best practice.
- Violence prevention professionals in Wales are already working collaboratively; however, the **Serious Violence Duty** will enhance this multi-agency, localised way of working, making it easier for organisations to share information — which is vital to the public health approach to violence prevention.

Voices of children and young people

- In Wales, we are dedicated to understanding the experiences of children and young people, and working with them to coproduce the solutions to violence and shape the work taking place.

- 74% of the children and young people who took part in the consultation believed that they have the power to prevent violence because: 'they are the next generation'; 'they know exactly what children and young people are going through'; and 'when they work together with the support of adults, they can make change'.

- This Framework is an example of what professionals can achieve if they actively seek to understand the experiences of children and young people, and give them the voice and power to make changes.

Shared vision

- In Wales, we have a passionate workforce with a shared vision to prevent violence among children and young people, protect them from the impact of violence and mitigate the effects of trauma caused by exposure to violence. This shared vision brings partners together to achieve these goals.

Research and evaluation

Evaluating violence prevention interventions

Evaluation is a process that assesses the value, quality and impact of a service, programme, intervention or project. This allows you to gather evidence about whether a programme is progressing according to plan and identifies opportunities to improve its performance. Without it, it is difficult to assess whether the objectives of a programme are being met, so evaluating services and interventions is an important step in developing and implementing evidence-based practice.

Evaluation can also allow services to develop an understanding of their users' experience and identify changes to improve its value and impact. It can improve monitoring and provide information on the merits and failings of programmes to support any decision-making. Evidence on effectiveness can support the case for funding and programme sustainability.

It's recommended that evaluation processes are embedded into the culture of an organisation to develop an environment where questions about the purpose of activities, anticipated outcomes and the quality of projects and programmes
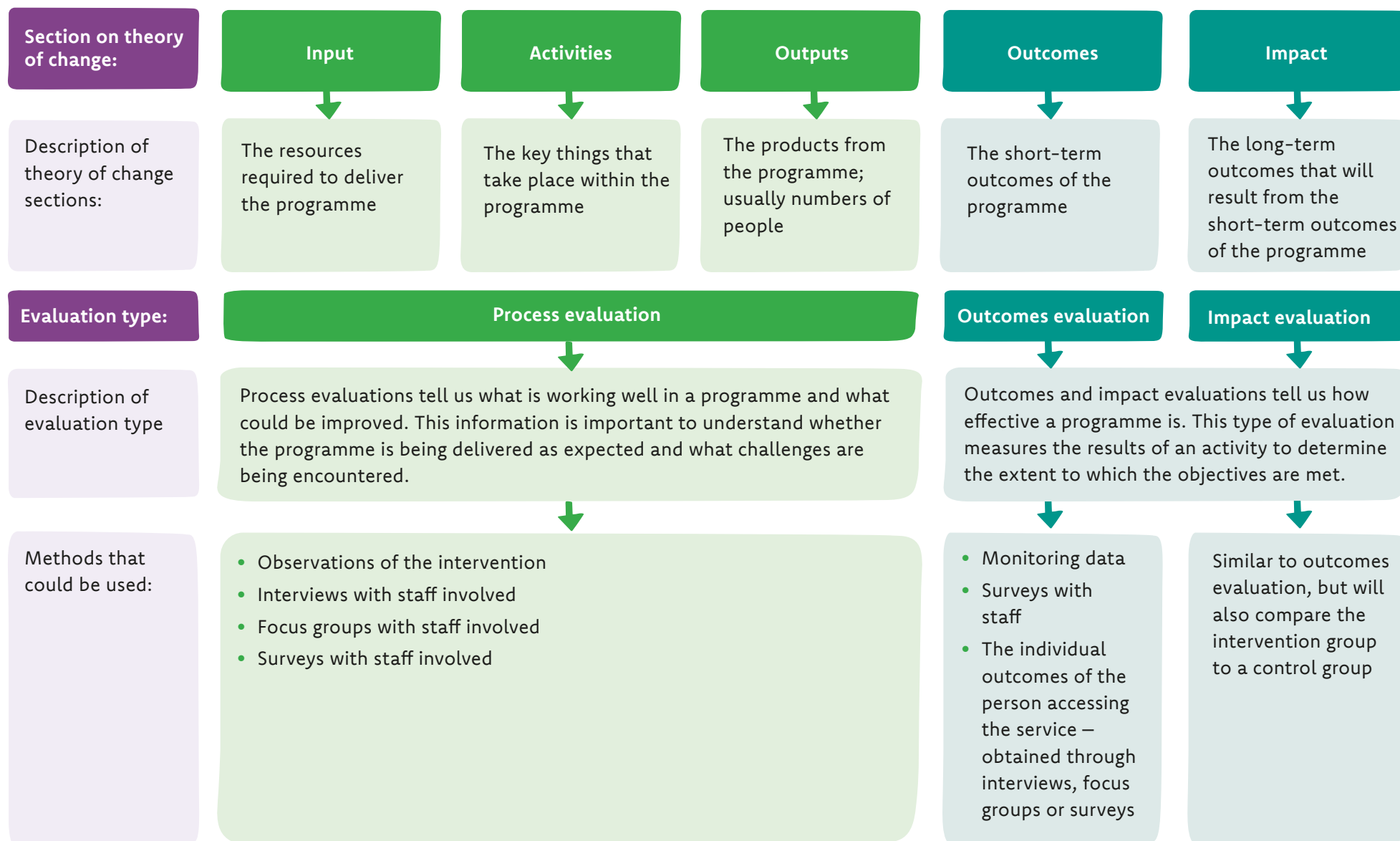
are routinely explored. The Wales VPU has developed a Violence Prevention Evaluation Toolkit[54], which is a helpful resource for evaluating interventions.

There are three main types of evaluation: process, outcomes and impact. These can be mapped against a theory of change to help the evaluator decide which aspects to measure and how.
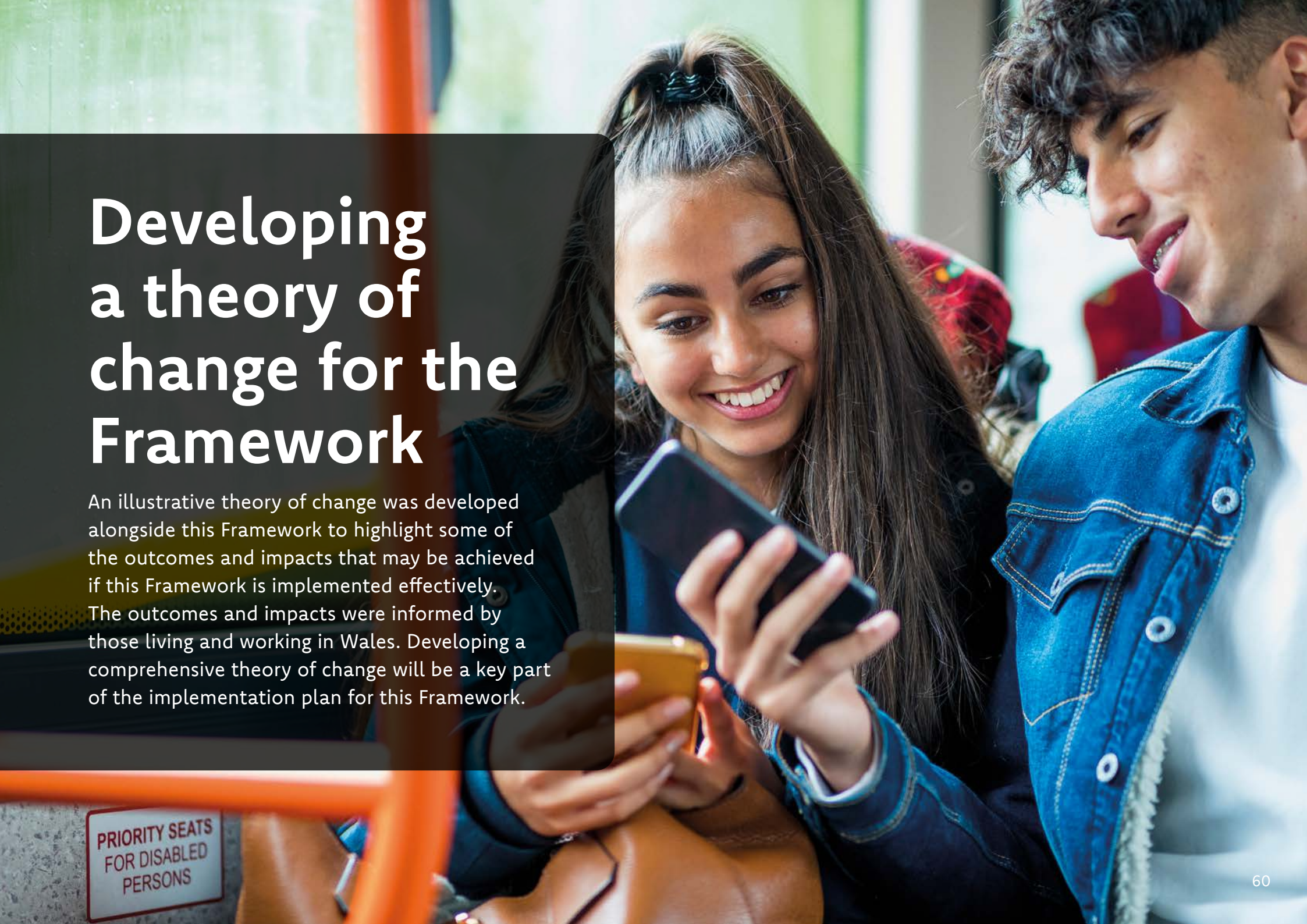
A theory of change describes how a programme or intervention is intended to work and brings about change for the individuals, groups and communities it's targeted at. A theory of change can help build consensus on the development, running and outcomes associated with a programme.

A theory of change is made up of five core components: input, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. More information on these, and how they correspond to evaluation activity, can be found on the next page.

Section on theory of change:	Input	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Description of theory of change sections:	The resources required to deliver the programme	The key things that take place within the programme	The products from the programme; usually numbers of people	The short-term outcomes of the programme	The long-term outcomes that will result from the short-term outcomes of the programme

Evaluation type:	Process evaluation			Outcomes evaluation	Impact evaluation
Description of evaluation type	Process evaluations tell us what is working well in a programme and what could be improved. This information is important to understand whether the programme is being delivered as expected and what challenges are being encountered.			Outcomes and impact evaluations tell us how effective a programme is. This type of evaluation measures the results of an activity to determine the extent to which the objectives are met.	
Methods that could be used:	• Observations of the intervention • Interviews with staff involved • Focus groups with staff involved • Surveys with staff involved			• Monitoring data • Surveys with staff • The individual outcomes of the person accessing the service – obtained through interviews, focus groups or surveys	Similar to outcomes evaluation, but will also compare the intervention group to a control group

*Evaluation must involve the voices of **all** stakeholders, including the people accessing the service, the staff involved in delivering the programme and other professionals who link in with the programme.*

Developing a theory of change for the Framework

An illustrative theory of change was developed alongside this Framework to highlight some of the outcomes and impacts that may be achieved if this Framework is implemented effectively. The outcomes and impacts were informed by those living and working in Wales. Developing a comprehensive theory of change will be a key part of the implementation plan for this Framework.

PRIORITY SEATS
FOR DISABLED
PERSONS

Ultimate goal: Wales without violence

Inputs

1 Build collaborative partnerships to create systemic change	**2** Adopt a children's rights approach	**3** Use multiagency data to inform decision-making
4 Implement coordinated and comprehensive violence prevention activities as part of a whole-system approach	**5** Take a trauma-informed approach	**6** Use research and evaluation to take an evidence-informed approach to violence prevention
7 Engage children and young people to coproduce the solutions	**8** Use an intersectional lens	**9** Involve communities in developing solutions

Activities

Families, parenting and early years

Outputs

- Proportion of families accessing early years support services and programmes

Outcomes

- Families can provide nurturing caregiving environments
- Improved family health and wellbeing

Impact

- Children and families are able to thrive, starting before a child is born
- Healthy relationships are formed between parents/caregivers and children
- Children and families are safe
- Children are no longer physically punished

Activities

Employment and training programmes

Outputs

- Proportion of children and young people in employment and training programmes

Outcomes

- Reduction in the number of children and young people not in education, employment or training
- Children and young people have access to meaningful training and employment opportunities, including mentoring

Impact

- Children and young people are in meaningful employment or training and have a career path and equitable opportunities for their future

Activities

Early identification and support

Outputs

- Number of children and young people accessing safe, appropriate and timely support — including specialist therapeutic interventions and mental health services — for any violence or trauma they have experienced or are concerned about

Outcomes

- Children and young people have access to trauma-informed support services
- They have access to services at the earliest opportunity
- They also have a seamless transition between children's services and adults' services

Impact

- Adverse childhood experiences are prevented
- Children and young people have better mental health and less anxiety, fear and depression
- They receive the support they need to prevent them from becoming involved in violence
- Reduction in the number of children and young people attending Emergency Departments with assault-related injuries

Activities

Safe community environments

Outputs

- Proportion of children and young people accessing safe, recreational spaces within their communities (online and offline)

Outcomes

- Provision of protective community environments where children and young people can thrive and develop
- Community members have more opportunities to support, and build positive relationships with, children and young people

Impact

- Children and young people feel a sense of belonging within their communities
- Planning policies provide affordable, safe and accessible spaces for children and young people
- Children and young people are safer online and offline
- Violence within community environments is prevented

Activities

Schools and education

Outputs

- Proportion of children and young people accessing violence prevention programmes within education settings
- Proportion of children and young people accessing education-based, trauma-enhanced services for the trauma and adversity they've experienced
- Proportion of education professionals who have received online safety training
- Rates of school exclusion decrease

Outcomes

- Social norms that protect against violence are promoted and negative social norms challenged
- Parents, education staff, specialist services and the wider community are engaged in violence prevention programmes
- Violence prevention is embedded into the curriculum and into whole school approaches to health and wellbeing

Impact

- Children and young people have improved educational attainment, engagement and experience
- They have better life skills, including those around communication, emotional management, problem solving, critical thinking and resolving conflicts
- Violence within school and education settings is prevented

Activities

Safe activities and trusted adults

Outputs

- Proportion of children and young people engaged in activities outside school/ education

Outcomes

- Children and young people are able to make positive behavioural choices and are supported by adults whom they can rely on

Impact

- Children and young people have adults whom they can trust and look up to as role models in their community
- Children and young people have improved life opportunities

Activities

Reducing poverty and inequality

Outputs

- Proportion of children and young people with access to basic living standards (food, housing, warmth, etc)
- Proportion of people with protected characteristics in equitable and meaningful employment

Outcomes

- Children and young people have equitable access to food, quality housing and warmth
- Families have clear pathways out of poverty
- Inequitable social norms that discriminate against specific groups of children and young people and encourage violence are challenged and ended

Impact

- Reduction in child poverty across Wales
- Reduction in exploitation, harm, neglect and maltreatment of children and young people
- Reduction in hate crime, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence
- Elimination of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap

Activities

Policy and legislation

Outputs

- Proportion of policies and legislation that promote children's rights
- Proportion of policies and legislation that include violence prevention
- Levels of funding provided by Welsh and UK Government for violence prevention

Outcomes

- Children's rights are embedded in policy and legislation
- Policy and legislation provide an overarching framework for violence prevention, protection, response and support

Impact

- Children and young people's voices are included in matters that affect them
- Children and young people are safe, happy, healthy, able to play and get an education
- A more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales

Activities

Social norms and values

Outputs

- Proportion of children and young people who have access to social norms programmes that challenge inequitable social norms and upskill bystanders to prevent violence
- Proportion of people exposed to social marketing campaigns to challenge negative social norms and values

Outcomes

- Equitable social norms that protect against violence are promoted
- Prosocial bystander responses to attitudes and beliefs that support violence are promoted
- Children and young people can disclose violence or seek help for trauma and adversity they've experienced

Impact

- Strengthened social norms and values that support non-violent, respectful, nurturing, positive and gender-equitable relationships for children and young people
- Across Wales, there are equitable norms around gender, power, race, ethnicity and sexuality

Indicators

There are a number of different ways to assess whether the outcomes and impacts outlined in a theory of change have been achieved.

To the right are three examples of how some of the outcomes and impacts outlined above in our theory of change could be measured — we call these measurements 'indicators'. Whilst there are many different ways to measure the outcomes and impacts through evaluation activity and through monitoring population-level data, below are some suggestions that could be used from publicly available data sources. The Wales VPU has developed a comprehensive list of violence prevention indicators[55];this can be found in the 'useful resources' section of this document, but please note that not all of these are publicly available data sources.

Outcome/Impact	Indicator
Children and young people will have improved school and educational engagement.	• Percentage of pupils regularly attending school • Percentage of children and young people who are in education, employment or training • Number of children and young people achieving expected grades[v]
Healthy relationships are formed between parents/caregivers and children.	• Percentage of children and young people with a positive supportive relationship with their caregiver[vi]
Children and young people are supported to disclose violence or seek help for trauma and adversity they may have experienced.	• Percentage of all children and young people aged 10 to 17 years who know some place they can go for help in cases of violence victimisation or exploitation • Percentage of children and young people who sought institutional or professional help for violence victimisation or exploitation, amongst those who report ever experiencing violence or exploitation[vii]

[v] Data available from StatsWales and My Local School
[vi] Data available from population household surveys (e.g. census), school surveys (e.g. School Health Research), and pre- and post- intervention surveys
[vii] Data available from population household surveys, school surveys and pre- and post- intervention surveys

Wales Without Violence: final remarks

To help us develop this Framework, we asked children and young people to imagine a Wales without violence.

Here are their answers:

I would be happier.

I would leave the house more often.

I would feel safe to go out at night.

Children and young people would feel free to express themselves.

People would be more accepting of others.
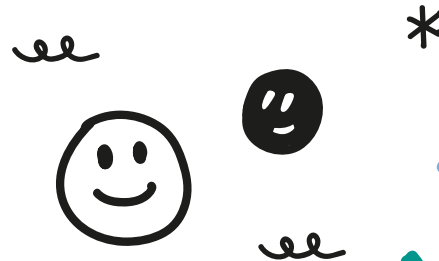
We would have a happier and healthier society.
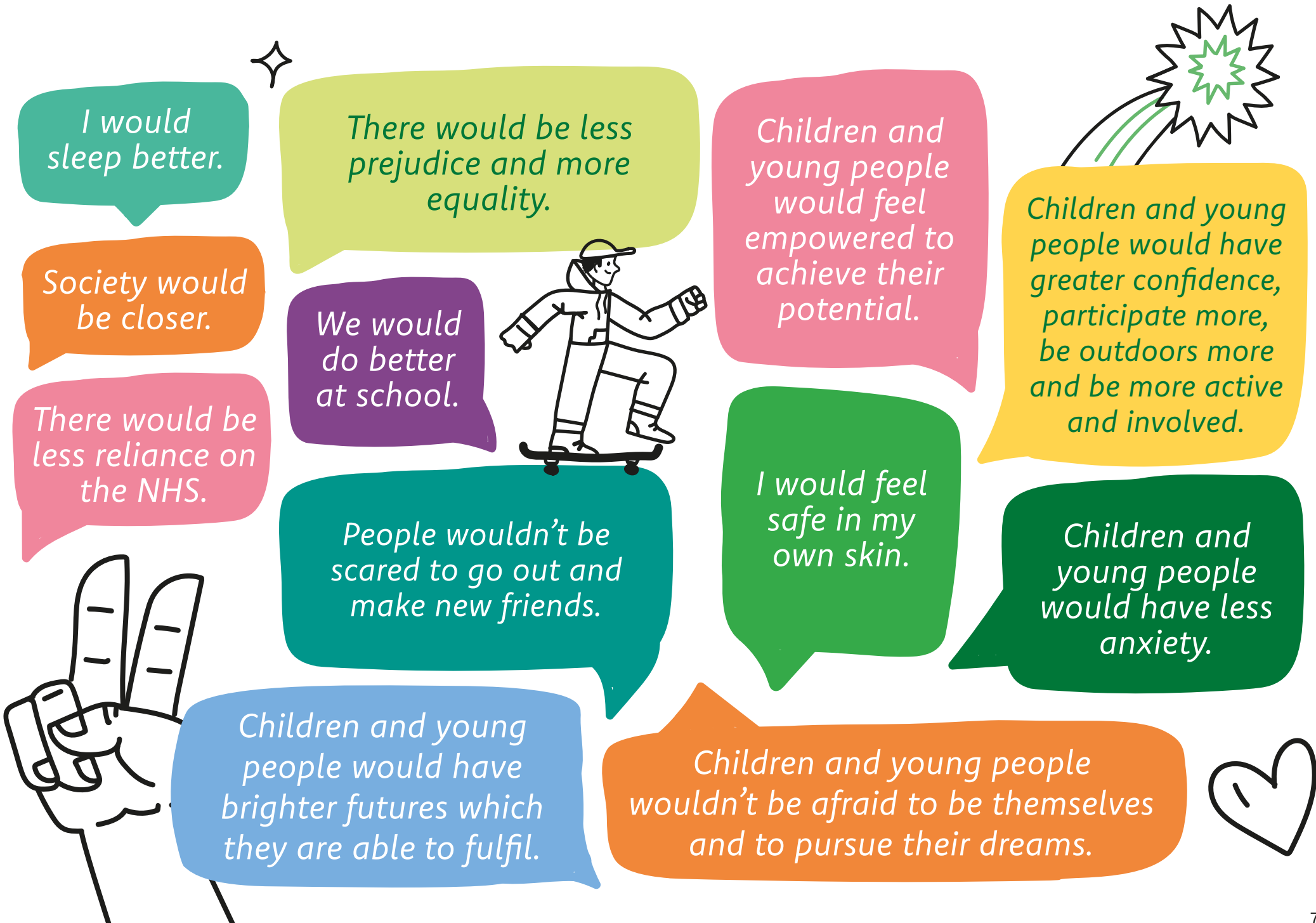
I would be less stressed and less fearful.

There would be peace. My mind would be at peace.

People would have fewer mental health problems.

Children and young people's lives would be more enjoyable.

I would sleep better.

There would be less prejudice and more equality.

Children and young people would feel empowered to achieve their potential.

Children and young people would have greater confidence, participate more, be outdoors more and be more active and involved.

Society would be closer.

We would do better at school.

There would be less reliance on the NHS.

People wouldn't be scared to go out and make new friends.

I would feel safe in my own skin.

Children and young people would have less anxiety.

Children and young people would have brighter futures which they are able to fulfil.

Children and young people wouldn't be afraid to be themselves and to pursue their dreams.

Glossary

Allyship: When someone actively supports the rights of a minority or marginalised group without being a member of it.

Bullying: Bullying (including cyber-bullying) is unwanted aggressive behaviour by another child or group of children. It involves repeated physical, psychological or social harm, and often takes place in schools and other settings where children gather, and online.

Child: Everyone under the age of 18.

Child/adolescent to parent violence: Any behaviour used by a child or young person to control, dominate or coerce their parents. It is often threatening and intimidating and can put family safety at risk.

Coercive control: A pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence.

Domestic abuse: Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following: coercive control, psychological and/or emotional abuse, physical or sexual abuse, financial or economic abuse, harassment and stalking, online or digital abuse.

Emotional or psychological violence and abuse: Restricting a child or young person's movements, denigration, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection and other non-physical forms of hostile treatment. Witnessing violence is also a form of emotional or psychological violence and abuse and can involve forcing a child to observe an act of violence or the incidental witnessing of violence between two or more people.

Exploitation and modern slavery: Exploitation is the use of an individual (e.g., children or a young or vulnerable person) for someone's own advantage, gratification or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment. Exploitation can come in many forms, including sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and modern slavery.

Financial or economic abuse: Financial abuse involves a perpetrator using or misusing money which limits and controls the victim's current and future actions and their freedom of choice. It can include using credit cards without permission, putting contractual obligations in their partner's name and gambling with family assets. Economic abuse is wider in its definition than 'financial abuse', as it can also include restricting access to essential resources such as food, clothing or transport, and denying the means to improve a person's economic status (for example, through employment, education or training).

Gang-related violence: Gangs typically engage in criminal activity and use violence or intimidation to enhance or preserve their power, reputation or economic resources. The nature of violence can vary largely, and includes homicide, knife and gun-related offences, assault and exploitive crimes. Children and young people involved with gangs might be victims of violence or pressured into doing things (e.g., stealing or carrying drugs or weapons). They might be abused, exploited and put into dangerous situations.

Gender-based violence: Violence directed towards someone or a group of people because of their gender identity or biological sex.

Gender responsive: Programming that includes specific action to try and reduce gender inequalities within communities.

Gender transformative: Programming that is designed around a fundamental aim of addressing root causes of gender inequality within society.

Harassment: Covers a wide range of behaviours of offensive nature. It is commonly understood as behaviour that scares, threatens, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a person.

Intersectionality: An analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person or groups of people's social identity combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality identifies multiple factors such as gender, sex, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, disability or physical appearance (which may overlap and intersect) to create advantage and disadvantage among particular groups.

So-called 'honour'-based abuse: There is no universally agreed upon definition of 'honour'-based violence. It is generally used to refer to crimes that have been committed by perpetrators who perceive they are protecting or defending the 'honour' of a family or community. These crimes often include forms of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Such 'honour' may be used to justify a range of abusive behaviours, typically against women and girls; however, these are human rights violations and must not be excused for any reason.

Stalking: Stalking involves a person becoming fixated or obsessed with another. Stalking is a pattern of persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered, scared, anxious or harassed.

Intimate partner violence: This can include physical violence, sexual violence, stalking or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy.

Knife and gun crime: This can include offences where an individual is in possession of a weapon, has used a weapon against another person or threatened an individual with a weapon.

Online abuse and violence: This can include any type of violence or abuse that happens on the internet and across a range of different devices (e.g., PC, mobile or gaming devices).

Sexual violence and abuse: Any behaviour thought to be of a sexual nature that is unwanted and takes place without consent. Sexual violence and abuse can be physical, psychological, verbal or online.

Young person: A person under the age of 25.

Additional resources

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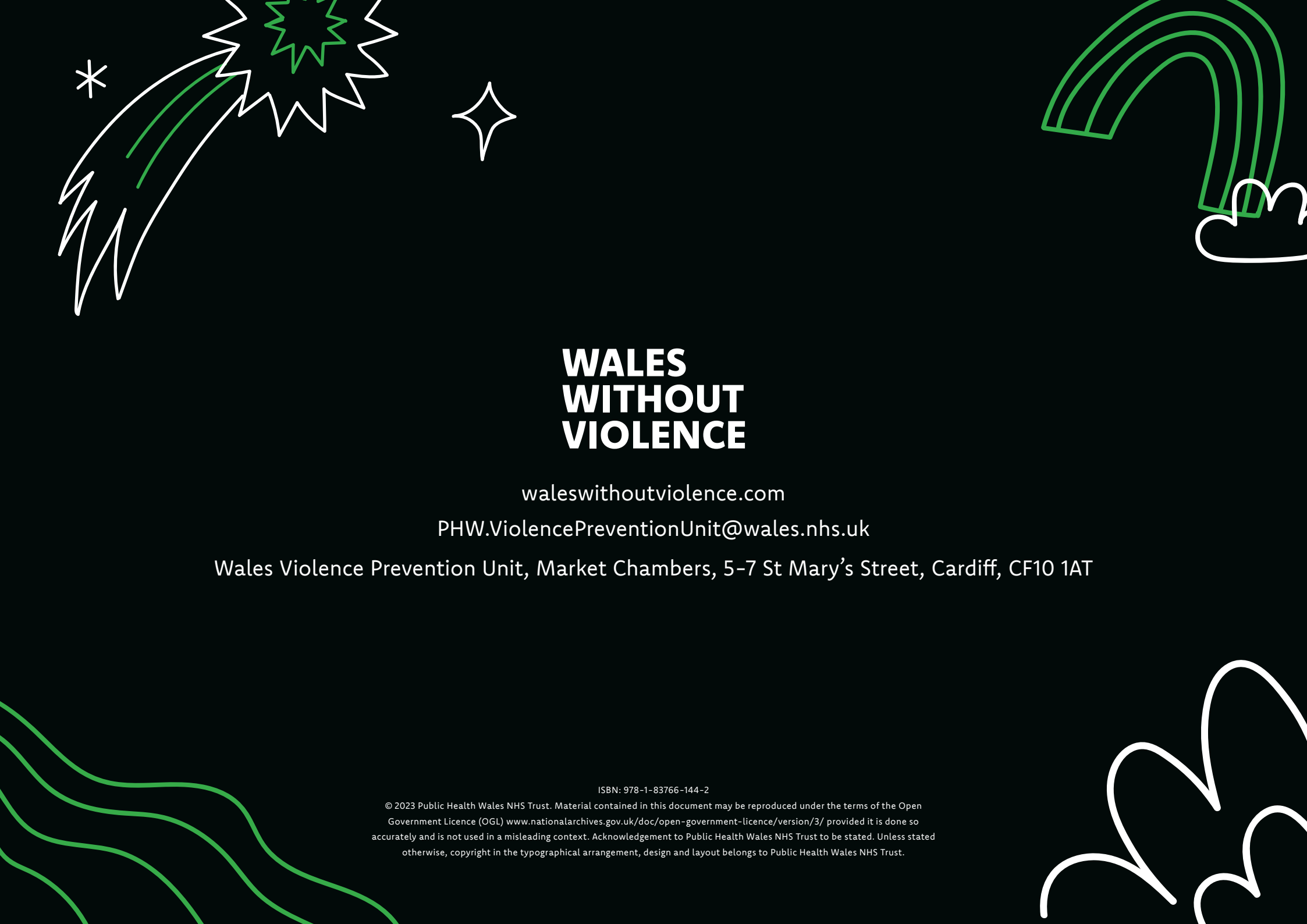
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