

## SUMMARY OF INTERIM FINDINGS

# Evaluation of a system wide approach to implementing Routine Enquiry about Adversity in Childhood (REACH™) across Nottinghamshire

### PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) include a range of stressful and potentially traumatic experiences that children can be exposed to. These can include experience of child maltreatment, or living in a dysfunctional household and/or community. Research consistently shows that ACEs are associated with increased risk of poor health and well-being across the lifecourse. In recent years, Nottinghamshire County Council and partners have increased efforts to prevent and respond to the impacts of ACEs, and in 2019 commenced a **test and learn project to develop and implement the Routine Enquiry about Adversity in Childhood (REACH™) programme across services in the county.**

### THE REACH™ PROGRAMME

The programme aims to enable services and practitioners to implement ACE enquiry as part of routine assessment processes, with all or selected service users. **ACE enquiry involves the use of an ACE questionnaire to facilitate service users' disclosure of ACEs in the context of a person-centred conversation.** The REACH™ model includes **five key stages to ensure services are organisationally ready to implement ACE enquiry**, to train and support practitioners prior to and during implementation, to embed practice change and to evaluate outcomes.



### DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH TO REACH™

#### Nottinghamshire REACH™ programme strategy group

**REACH™ programme team and project manager**  
*County/service level engagement and support; whole system project management*

**Nottinghamshire REACH™ programme implementation group**  
*Community of practice; support; information sharing*



# 9

#### PARTICIPATING SERVICES ACROSS NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Nine out of 13 services who explored their participation in the REACH™ programme agreed to participate in the test and learn project. Additional partners are considering their participation.

#### HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Health visitors, GP social prescribing team

#### SUPPORT SERVICES

Substance use, intimate partner violence, children's centres, family services

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

Police, community rehabilitation service, youth justice

#### Regional engagement and strategic support

*Director of Public Health annual reports (2017; 2018); Public Health Nottinghamshire Substance Misuse Framework (2017/22); Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit (2019/20)*

## DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REACH™ PROGRAMME MODEL

### READINESS, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- A considered approach to programme implementation, including pre-implementation workshops, completion of readiness audits by participating services, and staff training and follow-up support was viewed highly in terms of supporting services to fully consider if and how REACH™ may be implemented in their service.

**Over 500 practitioners have participated in the Nottinghamshire REACH™ training programme. Training is associated with significant increases in trainees':**



Knowledge on ACEs and ACE enquiry



Confidence to ask service user's about ACEs



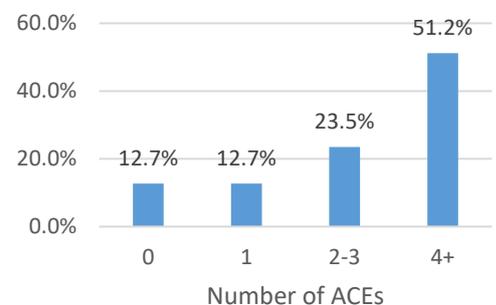
Confidence to respond to disclosures and refer for support

- For various reasons, services are at different stages of programme development and implementation, and require differing levels of support. Some organisations will take longer to implement and embed the programme than others.
- Some services need additional time to consider and plan programme implementation, even after completion of the readiness audit and staff training.
- The varying and continuing training needs of current and future practitioners engaged directly or indirectly in the programme was highlighted as a key consideration for programme implementation and sustainability.
- The strategic and implementation groups have been important in the development and implementation of the programme across and within services.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF TARGETED AND ROUTINE ACE ENQUIRY

- All services have established plans to implement ACE enquiry following a person-centred approach.
- ACE enquiry has commenced in five services (with over 200 service users), with all other services due to commence in 2020.
- Data from a sample of services users suggest much higher levels of ACEs amongst clients in one service, compared to the English population survey data (4+ ACEs; 51% vs 10% respectively).
- To date, findings suggests that ACE enquiry is acceptable to practitioners and service users, who have engaged with it so far, and a number of positive outcomes for service users are starting to emerge. (Several case studies are presented in the full report).

#### Prevalence of 10 ACEs\* – substance use support service users (n=173)



*"...as well as being a burden off my shoulders that I've carried around for all these years...opened up a doorway that I've been looking for a long, long time...why couldn't anyone have told me about this (ACE enquiry) before" (Service user)*

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- The interim findings suggest that it is feasible and acceptable to implement the REACH™ programme across a range of service types. The whole system approach, including the readiness, training and support processes of the Nottinghamshire REACH™ model have proven key in supporting programme implementation.
- Over 500 practitioners have been trained, with significant increases in their knowledge about ACEs and ACE enquiry, and confidence to discuss adversities with clients and support them appropriately.
- All services implementing (or planning to implement) ACE enquiry are following a person-centred approach. A number of services have reported positive outcomes for clients. No negative outcomes have been reported.
- Data from a sample of services users suggest much higher levels of ACEs amongst clients in one service, compared to the English population survey data.
- The whole system approach to implementing the Nottinghamshire REACH™ programme test and learn project should continue into year two, accompanied by programme implementation support, monitoring and evaluation.

\* Based on the 10 ACEs included in the English population ACE survey. The ACE tool used in the REACH™ programme includes 14 questions exploring 10 or more ACEs.