



THE
LEATHERSELLERS'
FOUNDATION

Preventing and Tackling Adverse Childhood Experiences: Initial Summary Report

July 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Leathersellers' Foundation enables individuals and communities by working with charities; fosters opportunity through education; and supports the leather industry. Our annual giving is around £4m, steered by three guiding principles of Compassion, Endeavour, and Independence.

In September 2022, the Foundation embarked on a five-year strategy to help prevent and tackle the consequences of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), following a year-long pilot. Development of the strategy was prompted by a growing body of evidence on the long-term implications of ACEs, and the prevalence of childhood trauma across the work of our grantees.

In the first year of giving, we supported 24 ACEs focused charities and CIOs throughout the UK, with unrestricted grants of £20,000-£25,000p.a. for four years.

When launching the programme, we were aware that counselling and practical support were not the only effective or necessary approaches to tackling ACEs but were unsure how this would be realised through our grants. Thankfully, we received applications from multiple sectors, all able to provide evidence on the proportion of their beneficiaries who had experienced ACEs, allowing us to fund a wide range of activities from year one. Moving forward, diversity of approach will be pivotal to the development of our reach and offer, having learned that to support all age groups affected by ACEs, we must both include and look beyond activities that are specifically designed to address childhood trauma.

As we consider the impact of the first year of awards and what we have learned so far, we recognise our responsibility and privilege as an independent funder. Leathersellers is committed to providing multi-year, unrestricted funding, allowing the experts providing the service to decide where the funding is best put to work. Since the awards were made in 2022/23, costs have steeply risen. In October 2024, all charity partners funded through the programme received a 10% increase in their annual grant payments for the remainder of their funded period.

In this first report, we reflect on the work and impact of the organisations supported in 2022/23. As well as celebrating the meaningful difference they have made in the lives of the individuals and families they support, the report also considers the challenges of working to tackle ACEs and the difficulties of measuring preventative efforts and driving systemic change.

The Foundation continues to explore how to best support this area of life changing work. We are grateful for the time and relationships we have established with our charity partners, who are generously steering us through this journey.

Stacey Lamb

Head of Charity Grants

YEAR ONE AT A GLANCE

In the first year of the ACEs Strategy the focus was weighted in favour of our first two strategic objectives, supporting charities to:

- 1. Help prevent adverse childhood experiences
- 2. Improve the lives of people affected by adverse childhood experiences

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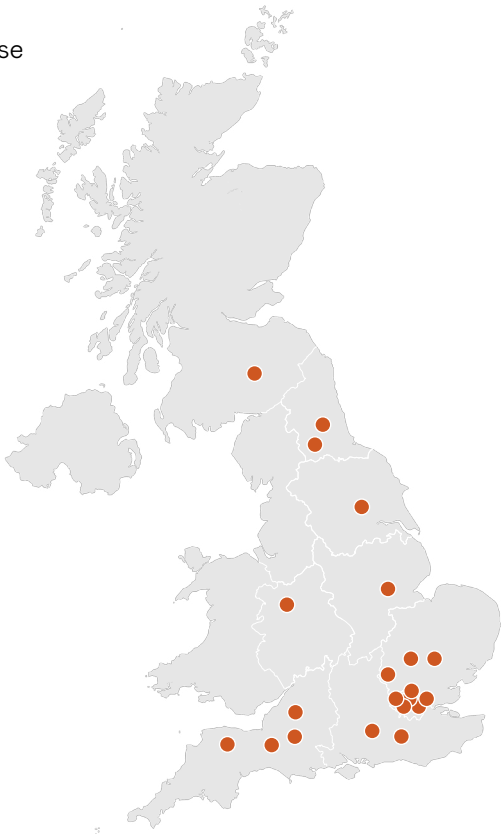
Unrestricted, multi-year grants awarded

£2,340,000

Total multi-year grants awarded

45,000

Over 45,000 children, young people and adults received help from the charities we support



Charities' Field of Work

11	6	2	2	1	1	1
Mental Health	Domestic Abuse	Homelessness	Immigration	Parental Imprisonment	Sexual Abuse	Criminal Justice

Age Groups Supported

10	1	9	2	2
All Ages	Children Only	Children and Young People Only	Young People and Adults	Adults Only

Key learnings

- To help prevent and tackle the consequences of ACEs, a range of tailored services are necessary. In the first year, the approaches applied by our charity partners spanned counselling, wrap around support, mentoring, housing provision and creative arts.
- Due to the potential life-long impact of ACEs and the range of ways that this may present, there is no one 'type' of organisation that can be considered 'ACEs focused'. An organisation's ability to help prevent and tackle ACEs can be better identified by considering the experience and challenges of the people they support.
- Organisations providing ACEs focused support are essential services, and although independent, they are often intertwined with NHS and statutory provision in their local communities.
- Whilst prevention and early intervention must be a priority, many people do not disclose or begin to recognise the impact of ACEs until adulthood. It is imperative that support is available to adults affected by ACEs, as well as services tailored to children and young people.
- Where parents themselves have experienced ACEs, there is a risk of a generational cycle of harm. To break this cycle, prenatal and/ or a whole family approach can help support a nurturing and stable environment, in which an infant can thrive.
- All charities funded through the programme told us that the demand and complexity of issues they are asked to support continues to increase. Whilst this results in waiting lists and the need to adapt services, it also takes a significant toll on staff wellbeing and resources.

THE LEATHERSELLERS' FOUNDATION ACES STRATEGY



Strategy mission statement

We provide unrestricted funding to a range of organisations throughout the UK working to prevent and tackle the consequences of ACEs, and facilitate shared learning, evaluation, and collaboration to help break the cycle of harm.

Objectives

1. To support organisations to prevent and break the cycle of ACEs
2. To enable organisations to respond to the needs of individuals and families who have experienced ACEs, throughout the UK
3. To drive impact and raise awareness of best practice, learning, and opportunity as it relates to preventing and tackling ACEs

Why adverse childhood experiences?

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Foundation's main charity grants were directed to organisations addressing homelessness and domestic abuse, driven by growing evidenced need. Through a deeper understanding of the work of these charities, we learned more about the cyclical nature of challenges experienced, and the prevalence of childhood trauma across client groups. Following a period of consultation and research we confirmed that this was also true of a number of our previous giving areas, including employment, criminal justice and rehabilitation.

By focusing on ACEs, our funding can support interventions that can break the cycle of harm, unrestricted by sector or service type. The range of potential charity partners provides an opportunity for Leathersellers to facilitate collaboration and learning, and to help add to the growing body of evidence on preventing ACEs.

Encouraging a trauma-informed approach

As part of the grants round criteria, we support services that are trauma-informed. Children, young people and adults requiring support due to ACEs deserve an accessible, safe service, designed to prevent re-traumatisation. The six principles of trauma-informed practice help to ensure this quality of service - safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration. Trauma-informed practice is widely recognised and encouraged by charities, public services and many local authorities, and we are proud to support its adoption.

UNDERSTANDING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Adverse childhood experiences are highly stressful or traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can be a single event or a long-term situation, where a child's sense of security, trust, physical and/ or mental health is threatened or violated.

10 Adverse Childhood Experiences

Abuse



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

Neglect



Physical



Emotional

Household Challenges



Divorce



Parental
Imprisonment



Substance
Use



Domestic
Violence



Mental
Illness

Based on the original ACEs study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente 1995-1997

Experiencing ACEs can change the biological response of a child's brain.ⁱ Without intervention and support, ACEs can result in life-long consequences, including poor mental health outcomes, a predilection to high-risk behaviours, and the potential to start or continue a generational cycle of harm.ⁱⁱ

**Almost half of all adults in England have experienced at least one ACE.
Adults who have experienced 4+ ACEs are:ⁱⁱⁱ**

- 11 x** more likely to have used illicit drugs
- 11 x** more likely to have been imprisoned
- 7 x** more likely to have been involved in violence
- 5 x** more likely to have an unplanned teenage pregnancy
- 4 x** more likely to have low levels of mental wellbeing and life satisfaction
- 2 x** more likely to binge drink and have a poor diet

Identifying risk

Risk of ACEs may be identified before a child is born or at times when situational or relational challenges may indicate potential ACEs, such as when a parent is known to be in prison.

Intergenerational harm can occur when a parent has experienced ACEs, stemming from the link to survival behaviours that have been necessary to develop and associated poor health outcomes. This can put greater pressure on the parent-child dynamic, which increases the risk of adverse outcomes.^{iv} In addition, there is a growing body of evidence which considers how toxic stress can alter parental biology in ways that affect a child's development and health, even before birth.^v

PREVENTING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Preventing ACEs can require multiple interventions from a range of experts and organisations across sectors, including health, social care, education and criminal justice.

Of the 24 funded charities in Year One:

100% worked to break the generational cycle of harm

33% delivered specific prevention focused activities

75% provided support to parents and families

In partnership

All funded charities worked with local and aligned services to support access. In addition:

11 charities worked in schools

14 charities regularly worked with the NHS/ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Before birth

The poor physical and mental health outcomes linked to ACEs can be amplified during the perinatal period.^{vi} Programmes designed to improve co-parenting relationships and provide practical support in the home are recognised as one of the most effective interventions to prevent ACEs.^{vii}

Perinatal support provided by charity partners in the first year of the ACEs Programme spanned a range of emotional and practical provision, including accommodation, peer support and counselling.

In 2022/23 Home Start Wessex provided 402 families with perinatal counselling and support, helping the family to bond, build confidence, and develop a peer support system through wellness walks, outdoor and community-based groups.

98% of Home Start Wessex beneficiaries reported improved parent and child mental health and wellbeing

94% of single parents supported by Home Start Wessex reported improvements in their coping skills and self-management resulting in reduced stress

From birth

Risk of ACEs can be indicated through a range of parental health and environmental factors, including domestic abuse, parental substance abuse, and poor parental mental health which has been shown to increase the risk of ACEs in children.^{viii}

Rising Sun's Liberty House provided safe and secure survivor-centred accommodation and bespoke support to pregnant and new mothers, on leaving a situation of domestic abuse. The support empowered women to draw on their own strengths to build safe and independent futures for themselves and their babies, through one-to-one counselling, and life skills workshops exploring positive parenting, resilience, budgeting and employability.

100% of women supported by the Liberty Project achieved an improvement in safety

93% reported improved health and wellbeing

In 2022/23 the ACEs Strategy funded six organisations specifically working to support survivors of domestic abuse. The Pandora Project experienced a waiting list of eight months for its Grow Together programme, which helped parents learn about their children's experience of the domestic abuse that had occurred. Programme participants firstly accessed a support worker and were offered one-to-one support, followed by access to group programmes.

Early years family support

Where a risk of ACEs is present, it is by no means a foregone conclusion that ACEs will or must occur. Appropriate and early intervention can support a nurturing and stable environment, in which an infant can thrive. Our charity partners reported the importance of a whole family holistic, tailored approach.

Cornwall based charity, Trelya, delivered an Outstanding Ofsted registered specialist nursery, Skylar, providing individualised support for pregnant women, children and their parents. Skylar's 360-degree approach included family support, partnership work, therapies and home visits, prioritising the stability and mental health of the whole family. Despite parents involved in Skylar having not attended/ having had negative experiences of school, Trelya's support from the point of birth ensured that each child, and their families were 'school ready' at the transition to primary school.

100% of children supported through Skylar were school ready, able to follow routines, communicate and were nappy free

Systemic gaps

Throughout the year our charity partners engaged with decision makers to highlight the need for systemic change in their specialist areas and propose solutions. Children Heard and Seen (CHAS) advocated for a child-centred, cohesive system to help identify children with a parent in prison. 190,000 children are estimated to be affected by parental imprisonment each year.^{ix} With no statutory framework in place to identify and support them, many children live alone for some time before any professional or organisation becomes aware.

In conjunction with Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit, CHAS developed Operation Paramount, the first-ever mechanism to identify children with a parent in prison. From May 2022 to November 2024, 983 children across Thames Valley were identified, and referred to the charity for support. Currently implemented in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and the West Midlands, the model's cross-referencing of existing Prison Service and police data is scalable nationwide. As stated by Richard Holden MP during a Westminster debate in 2024, "there does not need to be a lengthy consultation. Children Heard and Seen has a ready-made solution."^x

"Since being with CHAS I have recognised the fact that it's not my fault. They've helped me understand and process the way I feel."

– CHAS Service User

Healthy relationships

National charity, Tender, was the only funded charity using creative arts as its main approach. In the first year of their grant they began a radical strategic review, resulting in a shift to a 10-year prevention-based strategy from 2024. A benefit of providing unrestricted funding to Tender and others is that our grants can be used in response to the latest evidence, and support the highest potential impact.

“By prioritising prevention, we can end this public health crisis and empower young people to make the choices that will prevent them becoming victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse and sexual violence...We need to embed healthy relationships education for all children and young people in England with long term investment that creates long term change.”

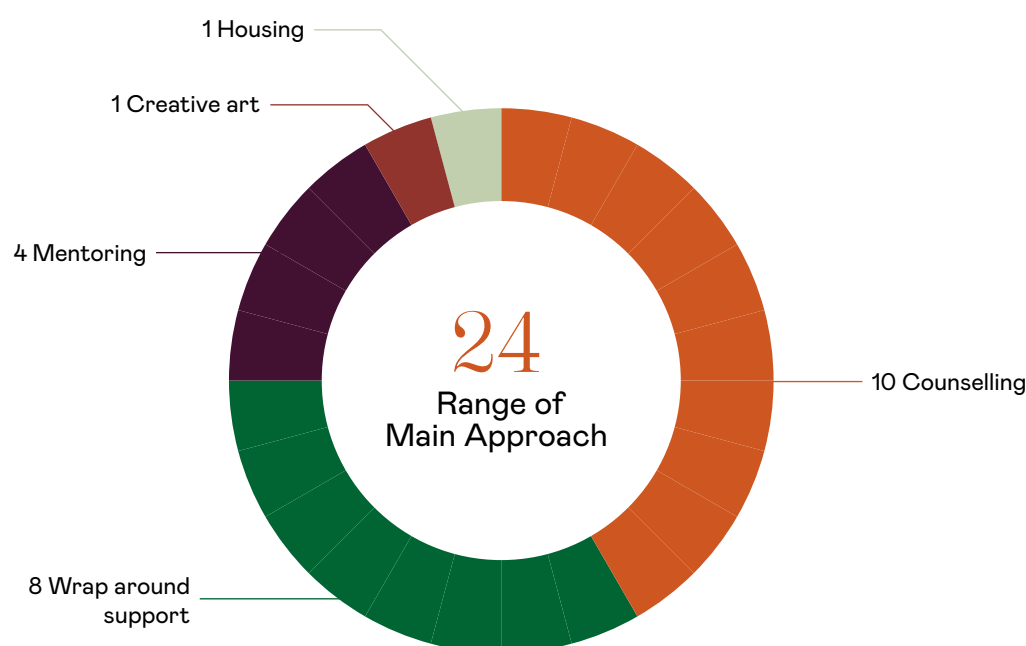
– Susie McDonald MBE, CEO, Tender

On completing Tender workshops in school:

91% of primary school Tender workshop participants now know who to talk to if they feel unsafe or need support

85% of secondary school Tender workshop participants felt more confident in dealing with issues of violence and abuse

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY ACES



80% of charities provided 1:1 counselling as part of their service

75% of charities provided group counselling as part of their service

4 charities provided accommodation as part of their service

In 2022/23 funded charities worked across the areas of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, immigration, mental health, homelessness and criminal justice. Despite this wide range, the funded charities used five main approaches: counselling, wrap around support, mentoring, creative arts and housing.

Counselling

Counselling services delivered by our charity partners included a bespoke range of talk, play, and art-based therapy, nature walks and interaction with animals.

10 out of 24 charities supported by the ACEs Programme identified counselling as their main approach:

- 2 provided counselling services for all ages
- 6 provided counselling services for children and young people, often requiring involvement or provision of supplementary services for parents and families
- 1 organisation provided counselling services from age 14
- 1 organisation supported adults only

This group of organisations demonstrated the highest variance in the number of people they each helped per year, ranging from 100 to over 2,500 people. Charities provided a range of specialist services, either operating from a single premises or delivering across a large geographical area in partnership with schools and local authorities.

The majority of counselling services provided some support for parents and carers, with many taking a strategic whole family approach. Beyond the Horizon embedded parent/ carer support as part of their core service. After receiving one to one therapy and family sessions, outcomes showed:

93% of children and young people talked about their feelings/ experiences with those around them

90% had better relationships with family members

81% showed a reduction in mental health concerns

“Before it felt like I couldn’t breathe, but now I am here it has helped a lot...it has changed my life.”

– Beyond the Horizon Service User

“It’s helping me be a better parent to her. She is speaking to me more - she is more open and telling me more about the things that are upsetting her.”

– Beyond the Horizon, Parent of Service User

Supporting Adults

Our partners told us that factors including denial, shame or the need to focus on surviving a situation, means that it is often not until adulthood that people request or are offered help. In addition, adults were often unaware that they had experienced ACEs or how much ACEs had impacted their lives, until they received support.

The Southmead Project was the only counselling service to exclusively support adults and provided 2,758 counselling sessions in 2022/23. The charity told us that whilst adults may have accessed counselling due to childhood neglect and emotional abuse, some went on to disclose child sexual abuse (CSA) for the first time. When supporting adults who have experienced ACEs, substance abuse is highly prevalent. The Southmead Project developed tailored programmes of support and delivered long-term therapeutic interventions to give people a meaningful chance of recovery from past abuse.

“I am clean! I know what I want. I don't feel lost anymore.
I'm finding my way.”

– Southmead Project Service User

Wrap around support

Eight charities supported in the first year of the ACEs Strategy identified wrap around support as their main approach. This entailed a combination of counselling and practical assistance, such as help to secure accommodation and engage in social groups.

Charity partners taking this approach worked in the areas of immigration, mental health and domestic abuse, where support beyond a specific crisis intervention was often required. It followed that our partners providing this support tended to engage for longer periods than services noting counselling as their main approach, as ongoing practical support was provided to help stabilise the person's day to day.

At Body & Soul, wrap around support is provided as part of an intentional community with open-ended access to services including therapeutic interventions, legal advice and creative workshops.

“The compassion, understanding and sense of community
have been a lifeline for me and my children...a safe haven,
a place where I can share my struggles, seek advice, learn
and find comfort knowing that I'm not alone in this journey.”

– Body & Soul Parent

Charities aiming to reach survivors of domestic abuse often engaged in outreach, meeting women where they most felt comfortable. This was crucial in 2022/23, as charities reported that the rise in living costs meant that many of their service users returned to abusive relationships, unsafe or neglectful environments, gangs and criminality in a desperate attempt to meet basic needs.

The Pandora Project in West Norfolk provided outreach services for women for up to 12 months when needed.

“I didn’t recognise the person I’d become over the years.
I’m now back to my old self. Pandora has been a lifeline!”

– Pandora Project Service User

Mentoring

Four funded charities’ core services were mentoring programmes, largely designed and delivered by and for the young people that they support. The success of these programmes stemmed from the trust built between mentor and mentee over time, and the level of understanding often gained through similar lived experience.

In 2022/23, the Kids Network partnered with 50 primary schools across London to support 300 children aged 8-11, through 5,000 child-led mentoring sessions. The charity aimed to provide a trusted adult mentor, before the child reached crisis point, working closely with schools, social workers and Family Early Help Teams.

Of the children supported by the Kids Network:

100% reported increased wellbeing

99% said they developed tools that would help them in their lives

“My mentor has helped with a lot of my mental health, even if she doesn’t know. She makes me feel that every day is a good day.”

– Kids Network Mentee

In 2022/23, around 700 primary school students were permanently excluded, with 75% of those being under the age of 10. The Harrow Club delivered the intervention programme, Moving On Up in four schools, supporting children aged 9-13, at the key period of transition to secondary school. None of the children engaged in the programme were excluded, and all successfully reintegrated into their chosen schools.

“It is hard to describe truly how valuable [Moving On Up] is to our young people, but I can confidently say it is the most impactful intervention I’ve experienced in my career.”

– Year 5 Teacher

Children and young people with care experience do not always have a consistent trusted adult in their lives, and mentoring can bring a level of stability and encouragement that they may not otherwise experience.

Sister System worked alongside 113 care experienced girls and women aged 13-24, providing 907 hours of intensive, therapeutic mentoring. Working with girls and women for up to nine years, the difference Sister System makes in the lives of their beneficiaries is evidenced by the frequency of mentees becoming paid 'Big Sisters'.

“I want to be the person I needed when I was a teenager.”

– Sister System Ambassador

Accommodation

The long-term impact of ACEs can increase the risk of social exclusion and homelessness. In our first year of giving, DENS was the only partner delivering accommodation as their core provision, with survey data indicating that 35% of clients attending therapy had experienced more than eight ACEs, and 41% disclosed that they had experienced CSA.

We found that homelessness was also an ongoing concern for young people supported by our two partners working specifically in the immigration space, Young Roots and the Baobab Centre.

“When it seems like there’s a darkness between now and the future there will always be someone from Baobab to hand me a light and walk me through what seemed like forever.”

– Baobab Centre Young Community Member

In 2023 refugees were routinely given seven days to leave their accommodation when granted leave to stay in the UK. In response, Young Roots diverted the resources of their casework team to help respond to notices and find alternative accommodation, preventing 86 young people from being street homeless.

“Becoming homeless in a country you’re not familiar with is a feeling I cannot put into words.”

– Young Roots Service User

COLLABORATION

Link and Learn 2023

In March 2023, the Foundation brought together 90 charities, funders and specialists for an annual Link and Learn event. The day featured panel discussions on income streams, embedding lived experience, and a funder Q&A panel. The event facilitated cross-room discussion and funded partners were able to share their learning and expertise to help provide solutions to challenges raised.

“I enjoyed how interactive the event was, meeting people to discuss positives and challenges - all sharing ideas.”

- Link and Learn Charity Attendee

“Meeting and hearing from other charities who face the same challenges as us and meeting new potential funders in person was so valuable.”

- Link and Learn Charity Attendee

Experts by experience

Developing services informed by lived experience is a priority for all our funded charities, with many services designed, led and delivered by experts by experience. One charity supporting survivors of domestic abuse told us that 75% of their team had lived experience, which is thought to be indicative of our wider partners working in the area of domestic abuse.

Formal programmes to gain knowledge and guidance from experts by experience included:

- Children Heard and Seen's Lived Experience Group, which was launched at the Houses of Parliament
- A survivor leaders' group working to influence change in the area of sexual abuse, facilitated by SARSVL and local partners, which attracted independent funding
- Tender's Youth Board, which increased from 11 to 20 members
- A new service delivered by CLEAR with adults aged 16+ who were actively self-harming, following increased presentation across CLEAR's core service

Working in partnership

The charities we support work in close partnership with local specialist organisations in their community. Despite limited resources, our partners also deliver training and engage in research and development to improve their services.

- Open Door psychotherapy and Sister System began a partnership in 2022/23 allowing girls and women they support to benefit from both services i.e. counselling/ mentors.
- A Way Out are embedded within the local Police Exploitation Team, and delivered informal training on trauma-informed practice and adult exploitation.
- Trelya established a partnership with Leeds University to develop a tool to give a voice to young people who are not usually heard from or listened to. The trauma-informed toolkit will be used in schools or other organisations that work with young people who have experienced/ are experiencing ACEs.
- With Kids continued to collaborate with Queen Margaret University to deliver the MSc in Play Therapy, accredited by the British Association of Play Therapists.
- Tender delivered their final instalment of the online interactive series, Learning Labs, in partnership with Safe Lives and Surviving Economic Abuse, "Reimagining Masculinities." The event brought together over 60 teachers, charity leaders, employers, funders and parents to consider how boys and young men could be better allies in ending VAWG.
- The Southmead Project delivered a conference day for in-patient NHS staff, sharing their expertise of how best to support adult male survivors of CSA.

CHALLENGES

Demand

The work of ACEs focused charities is intertwined with health care, social care and criminal justice services. Due to overwhelming demand, ACEs focused charities are operating as essential community services, embedded in mutual referral and close working with the NHS and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This raises questions on how long this can be sustained when complexity of need is increasing and waiting lists are full. Whilst there may be no obvious alternative, the level of demand and prevalence of ACEs highlights the continuing need to support the work of these essential charities and their services.

Complexity

All charities providing counselling to young people reported an increase in severity and risk within the year, namely a rise in self-harm and suicidal ideation. CAMHS is overwhelmed by demand and is a key referrer to our partners.

Open Door psychotherapy and counselling provided over 9000 appointments in 2022/23 of which nearly 8000 were direct therapy sessions. The charity received a record number of referrals for 12–18-year-olds and more than 50% of young people across services reported suicidal thinking.

“My life has changed in so many ways since I started coming here. The person I saw really listened to me; it has helped me so much. My life is different now”

– Open Door Service User

42% of women supported by Saffron Sheffield reported experiencing suicidal thoughts. Many of Saffron Sheffield's service users are unable to access other services because they have recently attempted suicide, are still living with their abuser, are displaying significant dissociative symptoms or are assessed as too vulnerable to begin a therapeutic intervention.

“This service has saved my life in a way I will never forget. I now understand and accept what I have been through. I know myself for the first time in 24 years and am happy ...This service has turned my life around, and I will always be grateful... I hope this service continues and saves a lot more lives of women who have been in my situation”

– Saffron Sheffield Service User

Capacity

Whilst our partners share learnings with aligned organisations, including statutory services, multi-agency risk groups, and national and local networks, most partners are unable to engage with academics and policy focused work due to lack of resources. When this did occur, it usually required the time of charity chief executives, who were already under tremendous strain, fulfilling multiple roles due to demand and staff shortages. In 2024 and 2025, the Leathersellers' Link and Learn events included expert discussion on staff wellbeing, retention and support for CEOs.

REFLECTIONS FROM YEAR ONE

In the first year of the ACEs Strategy the focus was weighted in favour of our first two strategic objectives, preventing and tackling ACEs through our grants programme. The 24 ACEs focused organisations supported in 2022/23 established an exceptional standard of service and impact for the programme going forward. No awards were provided to charities from Wales or Northern Ireland, and we hope to address this with support from grantees and fellow funders working in these regions.

Charitable organisations providing ACEs focused support are essential services, and whilst independent, they are intertwined with NHS and statutory provision in their local communities. Their role is often as a specialist service. Therefore, it was unexpected that only one funded charity provided services exclusively for children, and only two provided services exclusively for adults. We look forward to monitoring how this develops in future years.

Our understanding of what an ACEs focused organisation looked like was effectively challenged, and caused us to modify our approach mid-year, focusing on the prevalence of multiple ACEs across the client group rather than activity. We are grateful to the practitioners and charity leaders who helped us adapt and are confident that this will improve the diversity and reach of our funding.

Conducting conversational reports provided richer, more relevant data than written reports and enabled us to identify risk more effectively. Recording the data gathered in a way that would allow for objective measurement against strategic outcomes was complex. However, over the year we improved this methodology and now have an efficient and straightforward system in place. Conversational reporting significantly reduced the burden on grantees, and we actively seek and welcome opportunities to share our learnings with fellow funders (see Appendix 2 for more information on conversational reporting).

Increasing and improving the evidence base for effective ACEs prevention and services will be challenging. Our partners have little, if any capacity to share their learning beyond their impact reports, and engagement in research or national projects cannot be prioritised over service delivery without significant associated funding (and likely additional staff resource at a reasonably senior level). We will explore how we can use the collective data we gather most effectively and aim to facilitate more opportunities for our partners to share their learning with a wider range of practitioners, academics and funders.

In concluding the first year, all at the Foundation have been inspired by the impact of the services supported, only strengthening our commitment to the five-year ACEs Strategy. We have been amazed by the dedication and expertise of charity teams across the UK and look forward to continuing our support to help children, young people, adults and families affected by ACEs.

YEAR TWO

In 2023/24, we aimed to build on the grants programme's reach and sought to make progress in raising awareness of ACEs and identify how Leathersellers can best support wider learning and collaboration.

We look forward to sharing our reflections on this as we worked to:

- Undertake targeted promotion to encourage a proportionate geographical spread of applications, including services in Northern Ireland and Wales.
- Build upon the diverse range of activities currently supported through the Strategy to gain further insight into effective interventions, including access to sport and the outdoors.
- Extend our added value offer to include use of Leathersellers' Hall, facilitate learning opportunities and increase access to funders and fellow specialists.
- Raise awareness of ACEs and the work of our charity partners, becoming a trusted advocate and sounding board to support their sustainability.
- Increase our network and engagement with ACEs practitioners and professionals, to identify how we can add value to the wider ACEs landscape.
- Explore how the data and learning we collect from our grantees can better add to the evidence base of effective approaches to preventing ACEs.
- Share learning on the benefits of conversational reporting and the provision of multi-year, unrestricted funding with fellow funders.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Grants Awarded 2022/23

Organisation	Description	Location	Total Award
A Way Out	Supports and empowers women and children trapped in cycles of abuse, exploitation, addiction and poverty across Tees Valley.	North East	£100,000
Beyond the Horizon	Provides therapeutic services to children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse, parental separation and bereavement.	West Midlands	£100,000
Body & Soul	An intentional community providing therapy and wrap around support for people of all ages who have experienced ACEs, the care system, suicidal ideation and/ or are living with HIV.	National	£100,000
Children Heard and Seen	Delivers one-to-one support for children impacted by parental imprisonment, and advocates for change.	National	£100,000
CLEAR Emotional Trauma and Therapy Specialists	Provides therapy and counselling for people of all ages who have been affected by abuse, exploitation or violent crime.	South West	£100,000
DENS	Provides hostel and temporary accommodation, counselling and practical support to those experiencing homelessness, poverty and social exclusion.	Hertfordshire	£80,000
Harrow Club	Delivers youth activities, safe spaces and bespoke interventions for children and young people at risk of criminal exploitation and school exclusion.	London	£100,000
Home-Start Wessex	Supports parents-to-be and families with a child under the age of five, supporting them to cope with parenthood and challenges such as poor mental health, abuse, homelessness and poverty.	South West	£100,000
Kids Inspire	Supports children and young people up to the age of 25, with tailored talk and creative therapies.	East of England	£100,000
Nottingham Central Women's Aid	Supports women and children who are survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence with therapeutic support, group sessions and accommodation.	East Midlands	£100,000
Open Door Young People's Consultation Service	Provides tailored therapy and counselling for young people aged 12-24 experiencing poor mental health, self-harm and suicidal ideation, and support for parents/carers of young people.	London	£100,000
Pandora Project	Supports women and child survivors of domestic abuse, providing long term one-to-one support, accommodation, counselling, and education to young people about healthy relationships.	East of England	£80,000
Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Service	Provides high-risk IDVA and outreach support, mentoring, psychoeducational groups, counselling, court support and accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse.	South East	£100,000

Saffron Sheffield	Provides specialist trauma counselling and psychotherapy to support vulnerable women and girls aged 16+ in Sheffield who have experienced abuse or trauma as children or adults, including sexual abuse, sexual violence, rape or sexual exploitation, physical domestic abuse.	Yorkshire & Humber	£100,000
Sister System	Works alongside girls and young women aged 13-24 affected by care, offering them an early intervention mentoring and educational programme that will enable, enhance and empower her towards fulfilling her potential.	London	£100,000
Support After Rape and Sexual Violence Leeds	Provides specialist therapy and advocacy for girls and women survivors of sexual violence and CSA.	Yorkshire & Humber	£100,000
Tender Education and Arts	National charity using creative arts workshops in schools, to educate 5–25-year-olds about healthy relationships and how to prevent coercion and abuse.	Across England	£100,000
The Baobab Centre for Young Survivors in Exile	A non-residential therapeutic community for young asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced ACEs.	London	£100,000
The Kids Network	Provides trusted adult mentors across London for children aged 8-11.	London	£100,000
The Southmead Project	Delivers counselling and therapeutic support for adult survivors of abuse and addiction.	South West	£100,000
Trelya	Wrap around service providing counselling, mentoring and practical support from their purpose-based community centre in Cornwall.	South West	£100,000
With Kids	Provides Play Therapy to children who have experienced ACEs, supporting them to regulate their emotions, improve concentration and sustain friendships. With Kids also provides tailored support for parents, carers and families to help improve their wellbeing and attachment with their child.	Scotland	£100,000
Yellow Brick Road Projects	Works with 12-35-year-olds, delivering guided mentoring, life skills and community activities.	South East	£100,000
Young Roots	Delivers youth work and one-to-one casework, advocacy and support for young people who have experienced ACES and are seeking asylum in the UK.	London	£80,000

Appendix 2: Evaluation Approach

The evaluation methodology was designed by first developing a theory of change to clarify what we hoped to achieve/ work towards by the end of the strategy, and to ensure that we honoured our commitments to transparency and accessibility. We then codified the theory of change through an evaluation framework.

Evaluation Approach

Stage One: Theory of change and evaluation framework - to anchor the evaluation in a codified, sequential assessment of KPIs-outputs, which determine progress towards specific outcomes.

Stage Two: Document review - to understand the impact of individual funded partners through annual impact reports, major social media campaigns, and published research studies.

Stage Three: Conversational reports - to gain deeper contextual and practical insight into the activities and impact of individual partners against the specific outputs of the evaluation framework.

Stage Four: Surveys - to gather information on how useful the Leathersellers' added value offerings were throughout the year, supporting networking, shared learning and collaboration.

Conversational reporting

Following a pilot in 2021, Leathersellers conducted annual grantee impact reviews through conversational reporting, rather than a traditional, written report. This allowed us to obtain richer data and more clearly identify risk. In addition, this personal approach fostered trusting relationships with grantees, and the flexibility of the conversation helped manage the challenge of monitoring such diverse activities.

Whilst the conversations flowed organically, we recorded the information shared against specific indicators aligned with our evaluation framework. This ensured that we obtained all necessary data to consider and demonstrate progress against our strategic outcomes and objectives.

Limitations

Each of our grantees deliver different activities and their impact cannot be directly compared. Due to this, our evaluation questions are designed to look at related outputs rather than focusing on the activity itself. This has meant that a more qualitative approach to evaluation has been applied.

The grants we provide are unrestricted, aimed to underpin the work and sustainability of the organisation rather than a specific project. For this reason, the evaluation and statistical information shared pertains to the work of organisations in their entirety, all supported by a wide range of funders and income streams - not attributed to our grant funding alone.

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