



# Trauma Informed Derbyshire

Connecting head, heart and hands

# There's a **movement** happening in Derbyshire

Together with partners across the system, we're working to **connect, activate and inspire** trauma-informed approaches to service provision in Derbyshire.

Derbyshire's Public Health department has launched a system-wide conversation to explore the impacts of trauma and to shape a collective vision for a trauma-informed workforce.



# Foreword

In Derbyshire we have been building an evidence base to understand the impact of trauma and to identify how colleagues working in schools, healthcare, social care and the criminal justice system can work in trauma-informed ways. The evidence shows that if we do this, we can improve the lives of our residents.

As a public health team we are on our own trauma-informed journey, embedding knowledge and understanding of trauma and its effects, to inform our work and most importantly improve outcomes for Derbyshire citizens.

We are committed to developing a whole system approach to being trauma-informed. We are calling this approach Trauma Informed Derbyshire. So far this has involved welcoming a wide range of colleagues across our system to join a conversation to build towards a better understanding of how trauma can shape lives and how we can use trauma-informed approaches to improve outcomes for all.

This report shows the progress of Trauma Informed Derbyshire over the last year. I hope you find this useful and inspiring.

ELLIE HOULSTON - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

# About this handbook

This handbook summarises the work of the Trauma Informed Derbyshire programme, led by Public Health since January 2023.

It has been co-produced by practitioners across the system, through workshops, network meetings and many interviews. It acts as a common resource to join us together as a system with a shared understanding and purpose around the benefits of being trauma-informed.

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# Introduction

Our vision is to build a trauma-informed workforce, that is able to recognise the impacts of trauma and respond in ways that promote recovery - overall reduce inequalities and increase the life chances for all who reside and work in Derbyshire.

We are convinced that together we can do more to support children, young people and adults of all ages who are affected by trauma.

Trauma-informed working is not just about what we do, it is also about the way we think, who we are at work and how we organise and deliver our services. It's about how we, as a workforce, shape our system for the better, at all levels of responsibility. It requires a workforce that is properly supported, resourced and encouraged to practise within trauma-informed environments and systems.

We are seeing the proven potential of trauma-informed approaches to transform the lives of individuals and the effectiveness of our public service systems. Whether that's working with people in the prison system to understand the behaviours that lead to their incarceration; working to prevent adverse experiences in the lives of children; working to heal the trauma caused by racial injustice or addressing the many other challenges that trauma can bring to individuals and communities.

## We're working together to:

Reflect on our practices, **learn from one another** and work collaboratively across our system

Support our citizens to **live well, be happy and thrive**

Identify opportunities to **work collaboratively** across our system

**Support, protect and strengthen** our workforce

**Advocate** for trauma-informed policies and leadership

**Share best practice and build an evidence base** for further investment in trauma-informed approaches

“As professionals,  
we can either  
**break down or  
reinforce** the  
barriers trauma  
can create.

**Every interaction** either adds a brick if we’re not trauma-informed or removes one if we are. While we can’t dismantle the wall all at once, trauma-informed approaches can create better pathways, helping people access services before they reach crisis.

For those with complex trauma, **even small actions**—like making someone feel heard—can make a profound difference in their lives and their families.”

QUOTE FROM A DERBYSHIRE HEALTH MANAGER



# The Movement



# Our Guiding Framework

## Connecting head, heart and hands

All of our work is rooted in the understanding that to be truly trauma-informed we need to connect the **head, heart and hands**.



### Head:

In order to be truly impactful, trauma-informed work must be underpinned by a good understanding of trauma—its impact on health, wellbeing, and behaviour, as well as the ways we can support those affected and promote recovery.

**Find out more** about trauma

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### Heart:

At the heart of trauma-informed approaches is how we nurture and strengthen compassion, self-care and kindness for all people and organisations at all levels. Truly trauma-informed approaches support and protect the wellbeing of both staff and the people they serve.

**Read more** about why this work matters

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**View** our Trauma Informed Derbyshire vision

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**Try our tips** for how to regulate your nervous system

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### Hands:

Being trauma-informed involves re-evaluating, and possibly innovating, policies, procedures, and processes. We need to consider the culture of our workplaces and how to create safe environments for everyone who uses and works within them.

**Find out** what you can do to grow trauma-informed approaches

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**Use** our reflective practice tool to try out these approaches for yourself

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# Understanding and supporting trauma recovery is **everybody's business.**

Over the last 12 months, over 200 individuals from across the system have been working together to describe a vision for a Trauma Informed Derbyshire.

This has included Joined-up Care Derbyshire organisations and health services, local government, social care, community health, early help services, education and voluntary and community sector organisations.

This work has been led by Public Health, the Trauma Informed Derbyshire Steering Group, and Derbyshire Mind. We are exploring our existing trauma-informed knowledge base, the best practice we have to build upon, the learning and development activities taking place across Derbyshire and our collective vision for a trauma-informed workforce.

The Movement has **3 working groups** made up of dedicated colleagues from across Derbyshire's public services.



with representation from LLBD, weight management, community safety, substance use, health protection and locality teams: working to improve public health delivery in Derbyshire.

## Trauma Informed Derbyshire Steering Group



from public health, education, probation and justice, mental health and suicide prevention, and policing: working to co-create our vision and principles; collaborating on a common language; informing the strategic direction and initiating system wide discussion.

## Trauma Informed Derbyshire Network



including peer learning spaces, programme of facilitated workshops, practice and resource exchange: working to share and grow trauma-informed approaches across the system.

# We have been asking stakeholders across the system **why** Trauma Informed Derbyshire mattered to them:

“

Trauma-informed approaches are crucial for effective mental health support, as many health challenges stem from trauma.

We know that by having a trauma-informed approach, at the earliest possible stage, embedded as business as usual, we will ensure people receive the support they need.

”

“

**Using a trauma-informed approach is essential.**

Without taking the time to understand the underlying issues, cycles of trauma will persist for children, young people, and adults. The children I work with need support to understand their feelings, as they often struggle to recognise them. This applies to anyone experiencing trauma. When we treat this approach as fundamental rather than optional, we begin to see real successes and opportunities for improvement.

”

“

**We want all police officers to understand trauma-informed practices.**

When they do, people can recognise that they are not inherently bad and that they haven't been disowned because they are 'horrible' or 'useless,' as they may have been led to believe. Instead, we need to learn how our brains work and why they respond as they do, fostering self-kindness and positive coping strategies.

”



# Why trauma-informed approaches really matter

# Trauma shapes lives in ways that are **profound and far-reaching**, reshaping the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

Experiences of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, and adversity don't discriminate—trauma can affect people across all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances. Yet, we know that trauma is particularly concentrated among people in low socio-economic groups, minority communities, and communities of colour where it deepens existing inequalities.

Trauma can fill our mental health units, our drug and alcohol services, our prisons, our excluded pupil provision and our medical wards. For decades, research has illuminated the lasting effects of trauma. These experiences shape how people engage with the world, how they relate to others, and their overall mental and physical health. Repeated exposure to trauma, whether

through individual hardship or collective challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, economic pressures, global conflicts, social media and rising race-related and social tensions, leads to even worse outcomes and new forms of distress. Trauma can also perpetuate itself, with the coping mechanisms developed in response to trauma echoing through generations.

Additionally, trauma not only affects those seeking support but also the staff providing it. Supporting individuals with trauma histories can be emotionally demanding, leading to secondary trauma, burnout, and effects on staff wellbeing. Many staff also carry their own lived experiences of trauma.

That's why trauma-informed approaches are essential to reducing inequalities and increasing the life chances for all who reside and work in Derbyshire. An important task for all services is to examine the extent to which they build an understanding and awareness of trauma into all their practices. It means recognising the prevalence of trauma, understanding its effects, and taking action to prevent further harm.

Trauma-informed approaches aren't a quick fix— they underpin a compassionate, multi-agency system where people recover, staff thrive, and communities are strengthened. Being trauma-informed supports us to work and live at our best, it enables everyone to feel heard, respected and supported.

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**Trauma not only affects those seeking support but also the staff providing it.**

# What is trauma?

“Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as harmful or life threatening. While unique to the individual, generally the experience of trauma can cause lasting adverse effects, limiting the ability to function and achieve mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.”<sup>1</sup>

## How does trauma affect the brain?<sup>2</sup>

There are three areas of the brain which may be affected by exposure to trauma.

### The Prefrontal Cortex

The Prefrontal Cortex is the brain's 'watchtower' monitoring and regulating our responses to the world. It is the prefrontal cortex that can step in to calm our threat system when it is over-reacting. However, exposure trauma can cause the prefrontal cortex to become under active. When this happens, the brain becomes dominated by the more reactive and threat sensitive amygdala.



### The Hippocampus

The Hippocampus is the brain's 'librarian' integrating and organising our experiences into memory. Exposure to trauma can impair hippocampal function, which means that memories of the experience are not processed or filed properly. This is why memories of trauma may be experienced as feeling in the present, may be disjointed or fragmented or may be difficult to access.

### The Amygdala

The Amygdala is the brain's 'fear centre' and keeps us safe from immediate harm. Like a smoke alarm, when the amygdala detects a threat, it sends an instant signal to release stress hormones and activates the body's fight or flight response. In people exposed to trauma, the amygdala may become overactive, leading to an increased sensitivity to threat and a heightened stress response.

## How does trauma affect behaviour?

Whether through an acute trauma, or chronic harm during childhood, the impact upon the brain's sensitivity to threat can have significant implications for how a person functions day to day. Survivors' thoughts, feelings and behaviours become organised around threat and self-protection. This might involve protecting oneself by being distrustful of others, avoiding situations or enacting fight/flight responses. Many survivors of trauma experience overwhelming feelings and may try to cope by using substances or self-harm.

Many behaviours seen as negative or even criminal may be rooted in these trauma responses, for example swearing, fighting, or destroying things when stressed or upset. We might traditionally think of these as 'bad behaviour by a bad person', however understanding how trauma affects the brain offers us another perspective. What if these behaviours are not random acts of challenging behaviour but an attempt to regulate a brain that's wired for fight or flight?

Trauma does not exert its impact in a vacuum. Some people can go through very traumatic experiences and recover if they have supportive relationships and access to community resources. Sadly, many children and adults exposed to trauma, do not have access to supportive relationships and may also experience additional stress through deprivation, discrimination and lack of social opportunity. This deepens the impact of trauma making it more likely that they will endure a long-lasting impact on their physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

Trauma-informed approaches help us to recognise these neurobiological, psychological and social impacts of trauma. This understanding enables us to meet people where they are, help them feel safe, support their emotional regulation, and empower them to develop positive coping strategies for healthier lives and relationships.



**Trauma Informed  
Derbyshire**  
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<sup>1</sup> Gov.uk, Working Definition of Trauma-Informed Practice

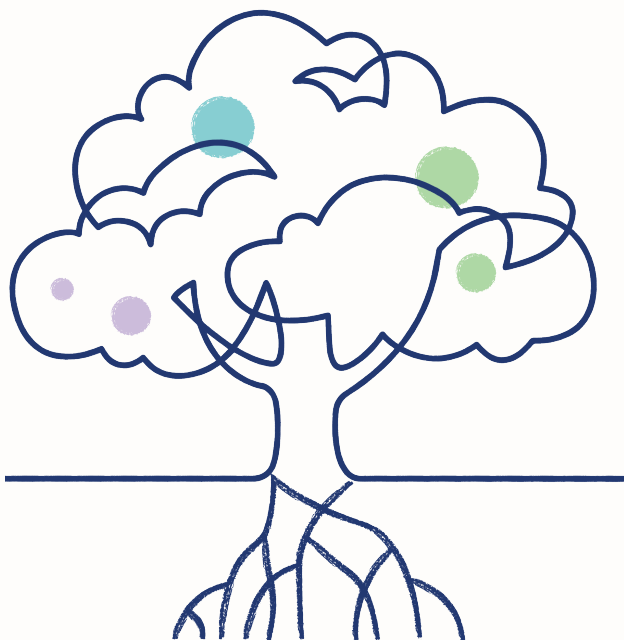
<sup>2</sup> Get Self Help, Trauma and the Brain



# Types of trauma and their impact<sup>3</sup>

Trauma Informed Derbyshire - Our story of change

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Scottish Government  
'Trauma-Informed Practice Toolkit Scotland'



## Roots: Types of Trauma

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Relational
- Cultural, spiritual & racial
- Moral injury

## Trunk: Core Effects of Trauma

### Emotional:

- Overwhelming emotions
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Numbing and disconnection

### Cognition and Memory:

- Hypervigilance to threat
- Threat focussed thinking and beliefs
- Nightmares and flashbacks
- Attention, information processing and executive difficulties.

### Body:

- Hyper-arousal and hypo-arousal
- Sleep & concentration problems
- Unexplained physical symptoms

### Behaviour:

- Reactive to triggers
- Self-neglect, avoidance, self-protection
- Risk-taking or impulsive behaviours

### Relationships:

- Lack of trust, misperceptions.
- Withdrawal, isolation

### Sense of Self:

- Low self-esteem, feeling worthless, self-blame
- Loss of sense of self or identity
- Dissociation, fragmentation

## Branches: Impact of Trauma

### Mental Health:

- Higher risk of all mental health difficulties especially PTSD, CPTSD, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, personality difficulties
- Harmful alcohol and substance use, addiction
- Self-harm and suicidal behaviour
- High risk of further trauma
- Multiple complex needs

### Physical Health:

- Higher rates of health harming behaviours
- Higher rates of preventable disease
- Reduced life expectancy

### Social Impact:

- Educational & occupational disadvantage
- Relationship difficulties
- Parenting difficulties
- Reduced life chances
- Contact with the justice system
- Homelessness



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# What are trauma-informed approaches?

Trauma-informed approaches are grounded in, and directed by, an understanding of how trauma exposure affects the neurological, biological, psychological, and social development of people of all ages.

Being trauma-informed involves our head, heart, and hands. The head represents the knowledge of how trauma affects people, while the heart reflects our compassion and understanding toward ourselves and others. The hands symbolise how we support people, ensuring our organisational structures promote safety and trust.

Trauma-informed approaches recognise that trauma is a common experience which may influence our health, behaviour and ability to live well and thrive. By integrating this understanding into our practice and system, we can create supportive environments that help people recover.

<sup>4</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioural Health Services

A programme, organisation, or system that is trauma-informed:



**Realises** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery



**Recognises** the signs and symptoms of trauma in individuals, families, staff, and others involved with the system



**Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices



Seeks to actively **resist** re-traumatisation<sup>4</sup>

# Trauma-Informed Approaches

Trauma-informed approaches can be implemented in any type of service setting, organisation, or system and are distinct from trauma-specific interventions or treatments that are designed specifically to address the consequences of trauma and facilitate recovery.

**In Derbyshire our system wide collaboration has resulted in a set of five co-produced principles, described later in this handbook:**





# We have been asking staff what being trauma-informed means to them:

“

Like taking the red pill in The Matrix—once you start seeing the world through a trauma-informed lens, you can't unsee it.

Now, whenever I have a conversation with someone, understanding how and why they are the way they are, is always part of how I see them in my mind when we are working together.

”

“

Being trauma-informed means being a human who listens, observes without judgement, and helps people problem-solve.

Even taking a moment to reassure and connect with someone, however briefly, can make a real difference. You don't have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.

”

“

Being trauma-informed doesn't always mean asking people about their trauma, it means assuming that trauma is very common.

”

“

Understanding that the behaviours we see, whether in adults or children, are always a form of communication

It's not always an excuse, but it is often an explanation, and being trauma-informed helps us be more curious in a kind way.

”

“

**It's about shifting the ethos of an organisation.**

Even if it isn't labelled as 'trauma-informed', it involves recognising that we're working with people. By understanding them better, we can tailor support to their needs and help them recover and thrive in their communities.

”

# Our Story of Change so Far

We have collaborated with partners across the system to understand the challenges faced by our communities, workforce, and connected systems. We know that these challenges are not unique to Derbyshire but are shared by many other systems. Together, we have identified the strengths we can build upon and the collective actions we need to take moving forward.

# Empowering our communities

## Our community in Derbyshire is resilient and strong

People support one another, and public awareness about trauma is growing. We have many organisations developing trauma-informed approaches across sectors—health, mental health, local government, social care, early help, education, drug and alcohol services, police, probation and beyond. The county's beautiful green spaces provide therapeutic environments that aid recovery. Derbyshire Public Health, along with many system partners, are advocating for the wider adoption of trauma-informed approaches. Our aim is to share and extend the known benefits of being trauma-informed. We support a system-wide approach, where all services develop a deeper understanding of the impacts of trauma and the confidence to enhance their trauma-informed practice.

## However, there are still barriers to accessing trauma-informed support

Some people tell us they find it difficult to access the help they need due to cultural, health, language, funding or location-based challenges. Like many areas nationally, some areas receive better support than others, creating a postcode lottery of care.

Stigma surrounding trauma remains a major hurdle, with those affected sometimes being unfairly labelled and misunderstood. Trust in support services is sometimes fragile due to inconsistent or inadequate past experiences, and in some cases, the support offered can inadvertently re-traumatise individuals.

## We want to change this by empowering communities to become more trauma-informed

Together, we can prioritise prevention and community-centred initiatives. This means breaking down barriers to access, enhancing practical support, and fostering a culture where trauma is understood and accepted as a factor in people's lives.

We want to equip communities with the tools, skills, and resources necessary to create environments that promote wellbeing and resilience.

We each have expertise to share and should play an active role in shaping the support people receive at every age. As staff working across Derbyshire, we must provide local people with the knowledge, opportunities, and tools to do this well.



# Empowering our workforce

## Our workforce is motivated and ready for action

Across Derbyshire, staff bring an incredible depth of knowledge, lived experience, and a shared commitment to providing trauma-informed approaches.

A vision for a Trauma Informed Derbyshire is emerging, supported by strong resources, data collection, and a focus on staff wellbeing. Training in trauma-informed approaches within organisations is beginning to create long-term cultural shifts, and there is widespread enthusiasm for this movement.

Best practices are developing across various sectors, ranging from raising awareness and initiating trauma-informed training to cultivating a culture of deep understanding among practitioners. Leadership is increasingly recognising the critical importance of adopting trauma-informed approaches.

## But the system doesn't always allow staff to work in a trauma-informed way

The Derbyshire workforce is passionate and dedicated but like many other regions we often feel over-stretched and our desire to support everyone fully can be overwhelming.

Services can be oversubscribed, making it difficult for staff to deliver the person-centred care they want to, in order to address individuals' holistic needs. Awareness of available support can be inconsistent, and knowledge is often fragmented across teams and organisations. Trauma-informed approaches can be seen as the domain of specialists only, but everyone can be part of a trauma-informed system. Our challenge is how to raise awareness and understanding.

## We are committed to nurturing our workforce so they can provide the best support possible

Together, we must establish training and resources for our staff to thrive within a Trauma Informed Derbyshire. This involves prioritising workforce wellbeing and building supportive relationships at the heart of every organisation. We want to foster a culture of trust and collaboration, ensuring that every staff member has strong support from their colleagues and managers. We must also address secondary trauma, recognising that staff can be affected by the experiences of those they support. We need to build greater awareness of the hidden vulnerabilities that trauma can create. It is vital to provide trauma specific interventions delivered by trained specialists. However, everyone can contribute to a trauma-informed workplace, as improving an individual's quality of life goes beyond specific interventions. Every interaction can promote human kindness and foster a sense of safety.

# Empowering our system

## There is a system-wide appetite to grow trauma-informed approaches.

Across Derbyshire, there is increasing recognition that trauma is everyone's business.

Many organisations are already delivering trauma-informed approaches, albeit under different names, and there is a strong desire to adopt a unified trauma-informed approach at all levels of the system.

This includes developing shared language, outcomes, policies, and collaborative practices. Efforts are underway to break down silos, reduce bureaucracy, and create more integrated ways of working.

## There is a need to better join up our complex system to prevent, mitigate and address trauma

Inconsistent awareness and understanding of trauma-informed approaches across various organisations can hinder widespread adoption. People with significant trauma histories often present with a complexity of needs that cross various services, but support can feel siloed, causing people to fall through the gaps, or have multiple contacts and requests to retell or relive their trauma experiences that can lead to further distress.

We know that organisation and service restructure can affect not just the internal workforce but also the working relationships between partners and wider system collaborations. Additionally, decision making can lack diverse representation, leading to institutional biases that obstruct the growth of trauma-informed approaches.

## We want to grow a truly trauma-informed system

Our aim is to create a system that works towards a unified vision and adopts shared language and principles. Let's ensure leaders, managers and the whole workforce are equipped with clear, actionable plans and regular opportunities to collaborate, share resources, and celebrate best practices. We must foster spaces for creativity and experimentation to allow new and innovative approaches to emerge. This work must include diverse voices, particularly those with lived experience, in decision making.

To achieve this, we need to keep a trauma-informed culture alive, fuelled by widely available learning and development opportunities, ensuring staff have the latest knowledge and tools. We know this work must be supported by long-term resourcing, trauma-informed policies, commissioning trauma specific interventions, and strong leadership committed to nurturing this essential effort. Systems are made up of people and we all have a unique and important contribution to make in promoting approaches that will make Derbyshire trauma-informed.

# Our Vision



We are calling on everyone – communities, staff, and leaders – to unite around a shared vision of a trauma-informed Derbyshire



Staff receive adequate induction and regular training to understand trauma and how it affects people

Staff effectively implement trauma-informed approaches, and understand the importance of relationships and strength based practice

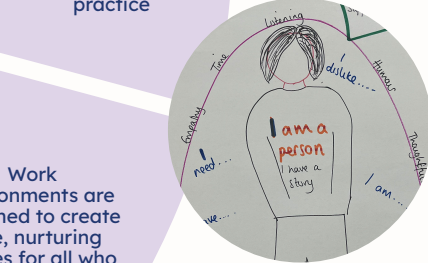
There is support to help staff with their own stress, develop resilience and promote wellbeing

Organisations share a trauma-informed vision, with common purpose, principles and language

Strong partnership working provides holistic support and prevents further trauma

Cross-system learning nurtures collaboration, shares best practice, and celebrates improved outcomes

Work environments are designed to create safe, nurturing spaces for all who work in or visit them



Policies, procedures, and strategies are aligned with trauma-informed approaches, embedded in culture and practice



Leadership and management that activate, nurture, and sustain trauma-informed approaches

Organisations embed trauma-informed practice and resources

People feel in control of their support, which helps them to build coping mechanisms and resilience

People experience inclusive and equitable support that addresses injustice + works actively to remove systemic biases and barriers.

People have trusting and safe relationships, built through consistent and compassionate interactions.

People feel safe and secure and receive trauma specific interventions when needed

People are resilient and receive compassionate, empowering support

The workforce is equipped with knowledge and support to embed trauma-informed approaches

A joined up system that nurtures the commitment and capability to provide trauma-informed approaches

Together we are building a trauma-informed workforce that is able to recognise the impacts of trauma and respond in ways that: promote recovery, reduce inequalities and increase the life chances for all who reside and work in Derbyshire.



**Trauma Informed Derbyshire**  
Connecting head, heart and hands

# Outcomes and metrics

The development of trauma-informed approaches is critical because trauma can have profound effects on behaviour, decision making, education, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Improved trauma-informed knowledge and approaches will help us better understand and address the health and wellbeing inequalities often driven by adverse childhood experiences and other harmful trauma experiences across the life course. By providing more effective and meaningful services to children and adults, we can prevent the long-lasting negative effects that trauma can cause.

Being trauma-informed significantly contributes to breaking the cycle of trauma; these approaches can halt the intergenerational transmission of trauma, reduce the risk of future crises, and promote better long-term outcomes, including reduced violence, improved public health, and social inclusion.

Staff have started to describe the impact of the work so far:

“We’re seeing growing commitment to this agenda, with more people actively engaging. They’re implementing trauma-informed measures, raising the issue in senior management meetings, updating policies, revising processes, and evaluating staff or volunteer training needs. This commitment will likely lead to better service outcomes, including higher quality care and improved mental and physical health.”

“I’ve been working to get my team up to speed by sharing materials on trauma-informed practice, helping everyone become familiar with the approach.”

“I’ve embraced how trauma impacts the brain, and this understanding shapes our work. It ensures we always approach our work through a trauma-informed lens.”

Over time, we would expect to see the following among children, young people, and adults who have experienced trauma:

### Organisation and System level outcomes

#### Example Outcomes

More people recovering from the impacts of trauma and staying physically and emotionally well

Fewer people requiring high levels of care

Reduction and prevention of trauma related crises

Decrease in school dropouts and exclusions

Decrease in (re)arrests, with more people diverted from prison

Higher levels of health and health determinants in under represented groups

#### Possible metrics

Number of organisations with a trauma-informed lead

More contracts awarded to trauma-informed contractors / services / organisations

Evidence of regular learning and training spaces / working groups to grow trauma-informed approaches

Evidence of trauma-informed job descriptions and person specifications

Presence of trauma-informed policy and regulations

Organisational audits evidence resourcing (e.g. time and staffing) and implementation of trauma-informed approaches

### Person level outcomes

#### Example Outcomes

People feel physically and psychologically safe and secure

People experience and benefit from trusting and healing relationships

People feel in control of their support

People experience inclusive and equitable support

People more involved in the coproduction of new services

#### Possible metrics

Person level survey

Number of people affected by trauma signposted to appropriate support to meet their needs

Number of people accessing trauma specific interventions

Increased levels of resilience measured through evaluation tools (e.g. children and young people emotional wellbeing survey)

Support plans audits evidence bespoke plans developed in partnership people

No of people with lived experience of trauma who are involved in design and decision making

Increased number of marginalised people supported

### Workforce level outcomes

#### Example Outcomes

Staff receive regular, up to date evidence based training and support

Staff understand trauma and its effects on people

Staff experience reduced stress, increased resilience, and enhanced wellbeing

Staff effectively implement trauma-informed approaches

Less staff recruitment and retention issues. Slower rates of staff turnover

#### Possible metrics

Staff level survey

Improved measure of employee resilience, mental health and wellbeing

Improved rates of staff turnover and staff sickness

Number of staff trained in trauma-informed approaches

Audit evidences regular, reflective and trauma-informed supervision

Number of staff impacted by trauma who are recognised and supported through employee assistance

Audits of processes and procedures to assess trauma-informed approaches (e.g. case notes, response protocols, school discipline policies)



# Our Principles

By being trauma-informed we especially aim to better support those affected by trauma and to champion the breaking of long-term cycles of deprivation, discrimination, and inequality.

# Relationships matter



We all need safe, compassionate, trustworthy relationships to develop, learn and thrive and we understand this is more difficult for those of us affected by trauma

- Because hurt may have happened in all kinds of relationships
- Because our ability to form relationships can be impacted by trauma
- Because relationships can both harm and heal

## CASE STUDY: Ripley Junior School

### Redefining relationships within school communities

How taking a trauma-informed approach to community building is strengthening relationships between teachers, children, caregivers, and peers.

Ripley Junior School is a school that implements a trauma-informed, whole-school approach to support the mental health and wellbeing of children, staff and the wider school community. Having completed the yearlong *Attachment and Relationship Aware Schools* programme, it places relationships at the heart of learning.

The school holds regular sessions in class to explore children's feelings, focusing on ways to help children understand and manage their emotions, boost confidence and self-esteem. Children learn how to support each other - supported by staff who understand the importance of creating a safe and nurturing environment for learning to take place. Children who need extra support participate in 1:1 or small group Thrive sessions, and parents are invited to share how they feel their child can best be helped so that there is a strong connection between home and school.

The school endeavours to build strong, trusting relationships with all parents. Every morning, the headteacher and other members of the staff team head out into the local community. "We walk a route, have chats, and look out for anyone running late or having a tough morning, so we can be there for them. Over time, families began reaching out—sending messages like, 'Can you call me?' or 'Can you knock on the door as you pass?' For us, it's about showing commitment to our community and proving we are dependable. As trust has grown, we now work together to support their little ones."

The school also supports parents who may have experienced their own life traumas. "We're creating space for them to heal, build trust, and access support that boosts their confidence as parents." The school hosts "pop-in mornings" where parents join classroom activities with their children, fostering positive engagement.

Ripley Junior School was a Timpson Award winner in 2019, recognition of the excellent practice that takes place to make the school a wholly trauma-informed environment.

**Find out more about the school at:**

[www.ripley-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing](http://www.ripley-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing)

# Behaviour is communication



Through having a better understanding of how trauma can affect someone's behaviour we can offer more supportive and effective responses. Being curious about what may have happened in the past gives us a better understanding of what's affecting someone now.

- Because trauma can increase our feelings of fear and threat
- Because trauma can disrupt our ability to regulate our communication
- Because trauma-related behaviours are often misunderstood

## CASE STUDY: His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

### Trauma-informed approach to women on probation

Improving engagement for women on probation through a trauma-informed approach

The Probation Service in Derbyshire has been actively working to enhance its engagement and supervision of women on probation, focusing on overcoming challenges and improving outcomes. Women make up less than 10% of those managed by the service, and their distinctive needs are now receiving increased attention and focus.

There had been many examples of women presenting at the probation office in heightened emotional states, displaying what was described as “challenging behaviour” or being unable to engage. In some cases, women missed appointments, leading to enforcement actions, including being returned to court for non-compliance.

To address this, the East Midlands Probation Service developed a women's-specific strategy. The first step was identifying practitioners as women's specialists, who received training focused on trauma-informed practice, understanding women's identities, and recognising how trauma affects behaviour. This new learning allowed practitioners to better understand the trauma that women may have experienced in their lives. They explored how trauma events past and present can affect our ability to regulate emotions, particularly in triggering environments and how this can be perpetuated in the criminal justice system.

Practitioners soon recognised that the behaviours displayed by women was often a response to trauma from their lived experiences. For many, attending the probation office was

a triggering event, exacerbated by exposure to male service users, cold and unwelcoming environments, and intimidating interview rooms.

To address these issues, the team implemented a gendered, trauma-informed approach. They refurbished a space specifically for women, creating a welcoming and comfortable environment. A separate reporting process was also established to ensure women did not interact with male service users or encounter other distressing triggers. Every aspect of the women's experience at the office was reviewed, aiming to reduce stress and provide safety.

Understanding and embedding trauma-informed approaches improved relationship-building between probation officers and women on probation. Women reported feeling more comfortable and less anxious, and practitioners became more empathetic, recognising that behaviour often signals deeper needs linked to past trauma.

The team also implemented support measures for the wellbeing of practitioners, including reflective practice sessions and enhanced clinical supervision. These strategies ensured staff were supported while managing the complex needs of women on probation.

By adopting a trauma-informed, gendered approach, the East Midlands Probation Service improved engagement, increased compassionate responses to behaviour and fostered a more supportive environment for women on probation.



# Safety and choice



We listen to, value, and recognise the experiences, needs and choices of everyone. Working alongside people with respect, compassion and kindness.

- Because trauma can take away feelings of safety
- Because trauma can take away power and feelings of choice
- Because trauma can make it harder to speak up and be heard

## CASE STUDY: Derbyshire Living Well

### Embedding co-production into mental health services

How Living Well systems are designed and delivered in partnership with people with lived experience

Derbyshire Living Well is a new approach to mental health support. The programme centres on Safety and Choice, with the experiences and ideas of both people and staff at the core of service design and delivery.

This has been achieved by:

- Embedding agency into the model in every way, for example managing risk with people rather than for them; meeting people where they want to meet; moving staff from being fixers who focus on problems to catalysts that focus on working in partnership with people
- Creating person-centred documentation that defines people by their strengths and needs, rather than their deficits
- Giving people the courage to self-author their care plans so they are in control of their support
- Leaders committing to model an approach which carefully listens to the messages from below, even when they are difficult to hear
- Employing 'story gatherers' to collect stories from those experiencing mental health support to ensure their voices continue to shape service delivery.

**“A fresh start for people in need. You get a choice about things and have options. I can decide if I want to stay in or go out when we meet. My worker lit a fire up my arse and gave me the get up and go, then I went out and did it myself.”**

- Creating a Collaborative, where experts by experience sit alongside system leaders to make decisions about the future of their mental health system ([view one of their Collaborative reports here](#))
- Employing peer workers within multi-disciplinary Living Well teams to ensure that people can access support from others who relate to their experiences.

Living Well teams aim to use co-production to share power and democratise the system, making staff and citizens jointly responsible for achieving a bolder vision for mental health.

**Click to view the animation or find out more here:**  
[www.livingwellderbyshire.org.uk](http://www.livingwellderbyshire.org.uk)

# Empowering and strengths based



Through realising and responding to people's strengths and abilities as individuals, families, and communities, we can nurture recovery and support better outcomes.

- Because trauma can cause feelings of shame and disempowerment
- Because trauma can make life's challenges more difficult to cope with
- Because recovery happens when people are empowered to build upon their strengths and see a positive future

## CASE STUDY: Adult Social Care: Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, and Development

### Strengths based, trauma-informed social work

Empowering Social Workers to support adults with self-neglect through trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches

Derbyshire County Council's Adult Social Care team have adopted a trauma-informed approach to enhance their social work practice. Adults who self-neglect are a vulnerable group with complex needs often rooted in trauma—a critical area of focus both locally and nationally. The deep and complex issues which can arise supporting people who self-neglect, prompted the social work team to innovate their practice – embedding trauma-informed understanding at the core of their work.

Through quality assurance activities, including audits and Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Derbyshire's adult social care team identified several common challenges in handling self-neglect cases. Social Workers also noted a rise in cases of this nature, often complicated by issues such as hoarding, addiction, and mental health challenges. In some cases, people were reluctant to engage with support, and practitioners emphasised the need to foster empowering relationships and effective collaboration within multi-disciplinary teams.

The Adult Care Department enhanced trauma awareness among adult Social Workers by arranging trauma focused training, coordinated by the Principal Social Worker, to deepen understanding of how trauma influences self-neglect. This training emphasised empowerment and strengths-based approaches to encourage recovery and self-improvement.

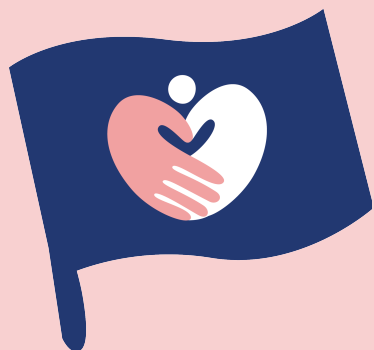
Additional training with an Environmental Health Officer provided practical skills and legal insights for managing self-neglect cases, as well as ways to recognise and respond to signs of trauma.

To reinforce trauma-informed practice, the Safeguarding Adults Board developed a self-neglect toolkit, offering practical guidance on issues like hoarding and addiction, with trauma awareness central to its approach. Social Workers gained access to a dedicated intranet page and a Multi-agency Adult Risk Management process to support appropriate referrals and match adults to suitable services.

Insights were gathered directly from adults who had experienced self-neglect, creating case studies to deepen colleagues' understanding of the impacts of trauma and the value of trauma-informed knowledge and approaches. Practitioners report increased confidence and empathy in their responses to self-neglect, and feedback from regular surveys and audits reflects enhanced understanding and effectiveness.

Through these initiatives, Derbyshire County Council empowers its social work teams to support adults more effectively, helping them build resilience and achieve positive change based on their strengths and personal goals.

# Inclusive and universal



Being trauma-informed benefits everyone. We recognise that trauma can play a part in shaping anyone's life. There is no 'them and us'.

- Because trauma can affect anyone
- Because the impacts of trauma may be complex and misunderstood
- Because taking a trauma-informed approach will benefit everyone

## CASE STUDY: Public Mental Health training

### Upskilling communities in suicide prevention and mental health first aid

How communities are being equipped with the skills, tools, and knowledge to support people outside of formal services.

For Derbyshire's Public Health department mental health is a priority for the whole community and considered to be 'everyone's business'. They have invested in providing free suicide awareness and mental health training to anyone living or working in Derbyshire. This raises public awareness about the importance of mental health and emotional well-being and gives volunteers and staff the skills and confidence to have supportive conversations at work and in their daily life.

Mental health support can happen in all kinds of places: pubs, hairdressers, chatting with a friend, attending a peer support group, creating art, enjoying a mindful garden, visiting the GP, and, of course, getting help from a mental health service. Public Health's Mental Health and Suicide prevention team have also been offering free training to citizens, shops, businesses, and community organisations to ensure that support is available in the everyday spaces people spend their lives. Training ranges from suicide prevention with the Zero Suicide Alliance and short mental health sessions to a full two-day Mental Health First Aid course. Participants develop an understanding of their own mental health and that of others, gaining practical skills to promote mental wellbeing across local communities.

"We aim to upskill people and then keep them active in their ability to offer support. Once people have completed training, we link them to opportunities that help them stay connected. We have a newsletter and social media channels

where we regularly share prompts, ideas, and activities to keep people engaged and access to Mental Health First Aid networks, where anyone trained through the course can join to receive ongoing support and share knowledge and best practice."

The training includes recognising some of the influencing factors that may be affecting mental health. People don't have to be experts in mental health or trauma to offer useful support to others – being a good listener and offering some kindness at times of distress can be helpful ways of showing people that others care about them, offering belief and purpose to help in their recovery.

Providing informal support at the earliest possible stage that someone needs it, can help to de-escalate negative thoughts or emotions and establish a foundation for further support, whether that is self-help or professional.

**"Derbyshire County Council has been offering free training to citizens, shops, businesses, and community organisations to ensure that support is available in the everyday spaces people spend their lives."**



# Share best practice with us

We're working together to produce an evidence base, a network of stories and experiences, that deepen our understanding of trauma-informed approaches in Derbyshire.



## Tell us about your work

Which sector do you work in and what positive change are you looking to achieve for the residents of Derbyshire?

## The challenge you faced

What challenges were you / your team / the children or adults you work with facing before you implemented trauma-informed approaches?



### HEAD

How did you develop your understanding of trauma and being trauma-informed? What difference has that made?



### HEART

How did using trauma-informed approaches allow you and your colleagues to further practise differently and have greater impact? How did you and your organisation work to foster your own or your team's wellbeing?



### HANDS

What steps has your service/organisation taken to implement trauma-informed approaches in practice, policy and processes? What difference has it made?

If you've got a story to share complete this template and email to [asch.trauma.informed@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:asch.trauma.informed@derbyshire.gov.uk)



# The Difference we want to see

# Ten pillars of a trauma-informed system<sup>5</sup>

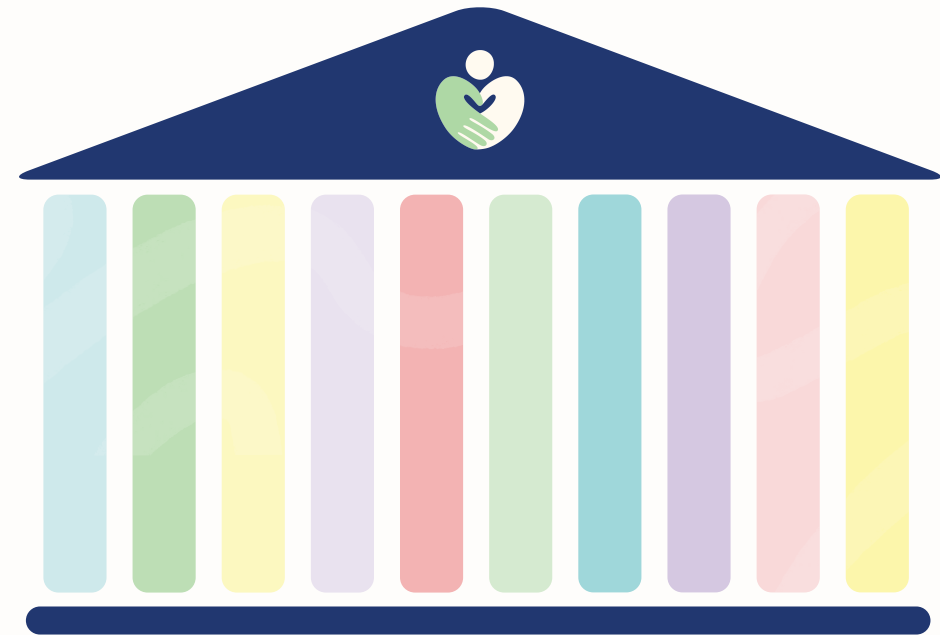
The ten pillars described here outline the changes required at multiple levels to develop a trauma-informed system and workforce.

We recognise that this transformation will not happen overnight. Building a trauma-informed system takes time and sustained effort. Therefore, what follows is not intended as a checklist or a step-by-step process, but rather as a guide to the key characteristics of being a trauma-informed system.

These pillars are intended to help partners build upon the many excellent approaches that already exist. We hope you can use them to stimulate discussion, foster collaboration, and initiate development plans that progress towards our shared Trauma Informed Derbyshire vision.

**“This isn’t about starting over or adding something extra; it’s about weaving an understanding of trauma and trauma-informed approaches into existing practices, enriching them with a trauma-informed ‘golden thread.’”**

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioural Health Services



- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Governance and Leadership   | Physical Environment    |
| Trauma-Informed Communities | Measuring Impact Policy |
| Joined-up System            | and Strategy Trauma-    |
| Resourcing                  | Informed Staff          |
| Learning and Development    | Trauma-Informed Support |

# Ten pillars of a trauma-informed system

## Safe and collaborative physical environment

Organisations ensure that the physical environment promotes a sense of safety and collaboration.

Staff and all ages of people experience these settings as safe, inviting, and not a risk to their physical or psychological wellbeing.

New builds and redesigns incorporate an understanding of the impact of the built environment and interior design on trauma and wellbeing.

## Trauma-informed governance and leadership

The leadership and governance of organisations and systems support and invest in implementing and sustaining trauma-informed approaches.

Each organisation has a designated point of responsibility to lead and oversee this work, ensuring that individuals with lived experience are included in decision-making.

Developing a Trauma Informed Derbyshire, along with the development of trauma-informed approaches and collaboration, is a regular item on the agenda of board and partnership meetings.

## Policy and strategy aligns with trauma-informed approaches

Organisational culture, policy, procedures, and cross-agency protocols are underpinned by Derbyshire's trauma-informed principles.

These policies address the social determinants of trauma and adversity, including educational inequality, discrimination, marginalisation, and poverty.

Trauma-informed approaches are integral to strategic priorities, championed by senior leadership and supported by a clear, actionable plan.

Organisational operations and decisions are conducted transparently to build and maintain trust with people and staff.

## Collaborative learning and development culture

A learning culture is nurtured where partners and communities share power equally, allowing for creativity, innovation, and collective learning.

Individuals, their supporters, and staff have significant involvement and meaningful choice, actively participating in the design and delivery of services.

Organisations recognise the importance of power differentials and acknowledge how people have historically been diminished in voice and choice.

Peer support and mutual self-help are key for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration and promoting recovery and healing.

## Joined-up trauma-informed system

Systems are designed to meet people's needs.

Collaboration across sectors is grounded in a shared vision, common principles, and a mutual understanding of trauma-informed approaches.

Systems acknowledge their capacity to cause trauma and strive to mitigate this by making every contact count.

People receive a consistent approach across the organisations they access, ensuring there is no wrong door to helpful support.

System-wide communities of practice prioritise systems thinking, leadership, and learning, recognising the importance of a shared language and vision, as well as the need for integrated services to meet holistic needs.



# Ten pillars of a trauma informed system

## Measuring impact of trauma-informed support

Ongoing assessment, tracking, and monitoring of trauma-informed principles are conducted, alongside the effective use of evidence-based trauma specific assessments, and practice.

Measures and evaluation methods are designed and utilised to assess the effectiveness and impact of trauma-informed approaches, taking into account the views of a wide range of staff and the people of all ages they are supporting and working with.

## Trauma-informed communities

Public awareness-raising campaigns are implemented to ensure individuals understand the impact of adversity and trauma, as well as the roles that individuals, organisations, and wider society play in challenging inequality and discrimination.

These efforts aim to prevent and mitigate the negative effects of adversity and trauma while reducing further exposure.

Organisations assist individuals' supporters and communities in developing the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to provide trauma-informed support outside of formal services.

## Trauma-informed support

Practitioners are trained in interventions based on the best available evidence, ensuring cultural appropriateness and alignment with trauma-informed principles.

Service delivery is holistic, person-centred and needs-led.

Trauma screening and assessment are applied where relevant.

There is a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Practitioners are aware of trauma-specific services and can connect people to appropriate support offered through clear treatment pathways.

## Resourcing trauma-informed support

Funding structures are designed to support trauma-informed approaches.

This includes providing resources for staff training on trauma, its key principles and the potential impact on people's capacity to live and thrive well.

Additionally, funding supports the development of safe and suitable facilities and the establishment of peer support systems.

It also facilitates the provision of evidence-based trauma assessment, treatment, and support, alongside fostering trauma-informed cross-agency collaboration and leadership.

## Trauma-informed staff

Ongoing training in trauma is provided.

Organisations human resource systems incorporate trauma-informed principles in hiring, supervision, and staff evaluation.

There is a strong focus on staff wellbeing, with support available to all in the workplace.

Procedures are in place to assist staff with trauma histories and those experiencing secondary traumatic stress or vicarious trauma.

Staff are empowered to deliver effective trauma-informed services through adequate organisational support.

# The practical actions we can all take

**We have collaborated with partners across the system to explore practical actions that staff, managers, and leaders can take to support the growth and implementation of a Trauma Informed Derbyshire.**

The following suggestions are intended as starting points that staff, managers, and leaders can pursue. We recognise that each organisation will differ in terms of what is needed for their workforce and delivery model. We hope this provides inspiration for the actions you can take to support this important work.

# As a volunteer or staff member

wanting to grow my trauma-informed understanding and practice, I could:

Wherever you sit in the system, you have an **important role to play**—compassion, kindness and facilitating support has a genuine impact

Recognise potential **signs of trauma**, **being curious about behaviours** and not making judgements

Stay informed about **trauma theory** and its implications in service delivery, recognising that **traumatic experiences may be common** amongst people and colleagues

Take time to grow **trusting and consistent relationships**, ensuring that every interaction fosters a sense of safety and support

Implement a **person-centred, needs-led approach** that provides individualised support in **a language people can understand**

Ensure people are **supported to make their own decisions**; for example, encourage people to self author their care plans

Actively work with **stakeholders to provide coordinated support**, where people don't have to tell their stories again and again

Recognise when **trauma specific interventions may be helpful** and support people in accessing them

Adopt a **“no wrong door” approach**, never turning people away. Instead, introduce them to someone who can help and carry out sensitive handovers where needed

Support **resilience and positive coping strategies** while understanding the root causes of negative coping behaviours

Grow personal support systems, that enable people to **establish trusting and healthy relationships** within families, communities, and peer networks

Encourage **participation in positive experiences** that promote future health and wellbeing, ensuring that individuals also have opportunities for fun

Be aware of **personal and cultural biases**, showing sensitivity to the cultural identities that are important to individuals

Endeavour to offer **environments that are physically and psychologically safe**, allowing individuals to choose where to meet or providing calming spaces when needed

What other ideas do you have for growing **your** trauma-informed understanding and practice?

Learn more about trauma and trauma-informed approaches through our resources

[Page 11](#)

# As a manager

wanting to support my staff to embed trauma-informed practice, I could:

**Provide an induction and training** that equips the workforce with practical skills and confidence in trauma-informed practice and responding to trauma related issues effectively

**Foster a continuous learning environment** where staff can reflect, learn from colleagues, feel safe to make mistakes, identify challenges, and improve trauma-informed approaches

**Ensure staff know where to find information** to signpost those affected by trauma to the right services, and that those services can respond effectively when accessed

**Help staff understand their role** in trauma support, empowering them to provide assistance even if they cannot resolve the trauma itself

**Provide practical tools** like “crib sheets” with useful trauma-informed approaches to use when working with people

**Foster strength-based and person-centred practice** through effective induction, management, role-modelling and focusing regularly on trauma-informed approaches in team briefings and meetings

**Encourage staff to put people in control of their support**, by modelling a collaborative approach, ensuring support plans are person-led and actively reinforce co-production practices

**Implement practices that support staff wellbeing**, such as regular supervision, peer support programmes, regular breaks, encouraging self-care and prioritising wellbeing in practice meetings and personal development reviews

**Recognise the effects of vicarious traumatisation** and ensure staff receive consistent support to manage it, including access to wellbeing resources

**Ensure that trauma-informed HR policies are in place**, including considerations for staff recruitment and working conditions that account for the impacts of trauma on staff

**Nurture teams to support one another** through regular spaces for peer support, space for staff to check in on their wellbeing and create teams where risk is shared and safely contained

**Promote a culture of recognition and thanks**, encouraging positive feedback like thank you cards, praise logs, and forums for sharing best practices

**Give permission for staff to use their judgement**, empowering them to grow and implement trauma-informed approaches

**Ensure consistency** in trauma-informed practices across departments and teams

**Seek feedback**, and ensure staff can safely share the realities of their work environment and experiences without negative consequence

**What other ideas do you have for growing your trauma-informed understanding and practice?**

Learn more about trauma and trauma-informed approaches through our resources

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# As a leader

wanting to embed trauma-informed practice across my organisation or system, I could:

**Co-develop a trauma-informed strategy**, identify opportunities to promote trauma-informed approaches across areas of influence, and ensure alignment with strategic priorities

**Develop, enforce, and review policies that prioritise safety and wellbeing** for individuals and staff, reflecting trauma-informed principles throughout the organisation and embedding these practices into daily operations

**Invest in ongoing training for staff on trauma-informed approaches** focusing on the importance of safety and understanding the potential impact of trauma on individuals and communities

**Establish well-defined policies and guidance to facilitate support** for staff, providing enhanced support for those affected by trauma when needed

**Uphold trauma-informed approaches** by walking the floor, listening to staff and individuals' experiences, celebrating successes, being present at trauma-informed practice meetings, partnership meetings, and training sessions

**Implement the four practices of attuning, wondering, following and holding**, [read more here](#)

**Ensure there are cross-agency partnership working agreements** with other support agencies and staff are working actively to grow strong relationships with communities. Ensure TID is becoming a regular item on partnership agendas

**Ensure outcomes frameworks are trauma focused** and there are regular feedback mechanisms that use qualitative and quantitative data, to gather insights and ensure both people and staff have a strong voice in decision making

**Create regular spaces to consider the organisation's/system's role in preventing, mitigating, and addressing trauma**, encouraging continuous reflection on culture, practice, and processes while identifying opportunities to develop and implement trauma-informed approaches

**Understand the impact of discrimination and inequality as barriers to accessing and engaging with services**, and act to remove and mitigate these barriers. Implement practices to move beyond cultural stereotypes and biases

**Develop clear plans for how staff and individuals with greater needs will be supported**, how behaviour will be understood, and how situations will be de-escalated. Use scenario planning to ensure these plans meet trauma-informed principles

**Ensure there are trauma-informed environments** for delivering services by paying attention to locations, entrances, waiting areas, decor, and available reading materials

**Ensure that support and engagement materials are trauma-informed**, including conversation templates, care plans, leaflets, websites, case notes, and meeting minutes

**Implement trauma-informed HR policies** including considerations for staff recruitment and working conditions that account for the impacts of trauma on staff

**Encourage departments to conduct trauma-informed audits and assessments**, evaluating policies, practices, environments, paperwork, and staff wellbeing

What other ideas do you have for growing **your** trauma-informed understanding and practice?

Learn more about trauma and trauma-informed approaches through our resources

[Page 46](#)

# Developing trauma-informed approaches

## Trying out new approaches:

**What** trauma-informed approach do we want to try out?

**Who** do we want to try it out with?

**How** will we try it out and what will we do?

**What** difference could this make?

## Reflecting on impact:

What did we learn?  
What impact did this have on staff and people of all ages?

What might this mean for our service and our practice?

What actions will we take forwards?

# Next steps



# So, what's next?

## Collaboration between organisations is essential for creating a trauma-informed system in Derbyshire

People who have experienced trauma are vulnerable to adverse outcomes if those around them fail to recognise and respond to their difficulties. To address this, we must work together to educate more organisations and our entire system on trauma-informed approaches, creating a cohesive and compassionate environment that supports both service users and the workforce.

We know this must include information about trauma, its symptoms, and potential impacts. This includes how traumatic events can 'rewire' the brain, leading to reactions that are not always under conscious control.

To do this we know we need effective collaboration between sectors, organisations and across levels of seniority.



As a system, we have identified the following areas to focus on first, in order to continue to grow and implement a more Trauma Informed Derbyshire.

#### **COLLABORATION**

Maintain a dedicated system-wide working group to focus on Trauma Informed Derbyshire, refresh the vision, and steward collaborative trauma-informed approaches across the system

#### **LEARNING & REFLECTION**

Ensure that staff at every level have regular opportunities for reflective practice, learning, and participation in trauma-informed practice exchange networks

#### **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

Implement comprehensive induction and ongoing training on trauma and its effects, with a strong focus on staff wellbeing

#### **STORIES & DATA**

Share stories, data, and case studies to build an evidence base and grow trauma-informed approaches at the individual, organisational and system levels

#### **LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE**

Secure commitment from leaders to drive cultural change and ensure developing trauma-informed approaches is a regular item on agendas at board and partnership meetings

#### **POLICY & STRATEGY**

Align strategic priorities with trauma-informed approaches, embedding them into existing systems and policies to ensure sustainability

#### **PROVIDING SUPPORT**

Encourage individuals to practise trauma-informed approaches, promote them as the new norm, and offer trusting, impactful support to others

#### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Launch public awareness campaigns to change culture, reduce stigma, and normalise conversations around trauma and mental health

#### **RESOURCING**

Ensure there is allocated time and budget to support this work, including funding for training and cross-agency collaboration and leadership

# Now it's time to act



Shifting the system's focus to trauma-informed approaches will improve outcomes for children, young people, adults, and families, helping them recover from trauma and develop the resilience they need to live well and thrive.

We hope that everyone will commit to making trauma-informed approaches the standard, not the exception. We encourage every leader, manager, volunteer, and practitioner to step forward, collaborate, and ensure that Derbyshire's trauma-informed principles are embedded across all organisations. By connecting our head, hands, and heart, we can provide the right care and support, empowering people of all ages to tap into their resilience to live well and thrive.

You may be doing this work already, you may be doing it under a different name, or you might want to further develop your understanding or practice. Whatever stage of the trauma-informed journey, we'd love to have you join us.

## Join the movement!

Contact - [asch.trauma.informed@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:asch.trauma.informed@derbyshire.gov.uk)

# Learn more about trauma and trauma-informed approaches

## Books and articles

Association of Directors of Public Health (N.D)

### **‘Adverse Childhood Experiences’**

<https://www.adph.org.uk/resources/adverse-childhood-experiences>

Harris, N. B. (2018)

### **‘Toxic Childhood Stress: The Legacy of Early Trauma and How to Heal’**

Bellis MA, Hughes K, Cresswell K, et al. (2023)

### **‘Comparing relationships between single types of adverse childhood experiences and health-related outcomes: a combined primary data study of eight cross-sectional surveys in England and Wales’**

BMJ Open 2023;13:e072916. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2023-072916  
<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/13/4/e072916.full.pdf>

Nelson, C. A., Bhutta, Z. A., Harris, N. B., Danese, A., & Samara, M. (2020)

### **‘Adversity in childhood is linked to mental and physical health throughout life’**

<https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m3048>

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

### **‘Trauma-informed approaches to supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage - A Rapid Evidence Assessment’**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/642af3a77de82b000c31350d/Changing\\_Futures\\_Evaluation\\_-\\_Trauma\\_informed\\_approaches\\_REA.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/642af3a77de82b000c31350d/Changing_Futures_Evaluation_-_Trauma_informed_approaches_REA.pdf)

University of Utah Health (N.D.)

### **‘Five Ways to Practise Trauma Informed Leadership’**

<https://accelerate.uofuhealth.utah.edu/leadership/five-ways-to-practice-trauma-informed-leadership>

Van der Kolk, Bessel

### **‘The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma’**

Gillespie, S. M., & McKinnon, M. (2020)

### **‘Trauma informed leadership and posttraumatic growth’**

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8620727>

## Websites

### Lads Like Us

Lads, sharing their own lived experience of trauma, how that's impacted them, and the difference trauma-informed practice can make.

<https://www.ladslikeus.co.uk>

### National Child Traumatic Stress Network

<https://www.nctsn.org>

### Scottish Government

Trauma-informed workforce and services

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/psychological-trauma-and-adversity/pages/workforce-and-services>

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma Informed Approach

[https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA\\_Trauma.pdf](https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf)

### UK Trauma Council

Evidence-based resources to improve professionals and carers' understanding of the nature and impact of trauma.

<https://uktraumacouncil.org>

### Young Minds

Adversity and Trauma Informed Practice Guide for Professionals

<https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3091/adversity-and-trauma-informed-practice-guide-for-professionals.pdf>

## Videos

### Three Ways Trauma Can Change the Brain Bessel van der Kolk

<https://youtu.be/LKWUmwxi1ZI>

### What is resilience? Center on the Developing Child | Harvard University

<https://youtu.be/cqO7YoMscU>

### The science of resilience Center on the Developing Child | Harvard University

<https://www.youtube.com/1r8hj72bfGo>

### How resilience is built Center on the Developing Child | Harvard University

<https://youtu.be/xSf7pRpOgu8>

### How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime

Nadine Burke Harris TED Talk

[https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime)

### Building Resilience. Tipping the Scales. NSPCC

<https://youtu.be/EW20A962wd4>

### Trauma and the Brain NHS Lanarkshire

<https://vimeo.com/340449102>

### Opening Doors: Trauma Informed Practice for the Workforce

NHS Scotland

<https://vimeo.com/274703693>

### Trauma Informed Practice for Anyone Working with Children and Young People Sowing Seeds

<https://vimeo.com/334642616>

### Childhood Trauma and the Brain NHS Lanarkshire

<https://youtu.be/xYBUY1kZpf8>



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## **Trauma and the Brain.**

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/TraumaBrain.pdf> (Accessed: 24 October 2024).

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# Special thanks to:

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**The Community of Practice (Public Health)**

**The Trauma Informed Derbyshire Network**

**The many people interviewed**

**And everyone else who has contributed**

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# And finally,

Look after yourself – people are always our best resource. So "put your own oxygen mask on before helping others with theirs".

You'll find some helpful tips for how to regulate your own nervous system on the next page.

# Tips on how to regulate your own nervous system

Trauma Informed Derbyshire - Our story of change

## 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

This sensory-based technique encourages individuals to focus on their immediate surroundings, helping them return to the present moment and calm their mind.



5 things they can **see**



4 things they can **touch**



3 things they can **hear**



2 things they can **smell**



1 thing they can **taste**

Böhle, C. (2019). Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Anxiety and Depression: An Overview. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 69, 15-27. DOI:10.1016/j.cpr.2018.09.002

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## Box breathing

1. **Find a comfortable position** (sitting or lying down).
2. **Relax** your shoulders and close your eyes to minimise distractions.
3. **Start the breathing cycle:**

Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds, filling your lungs completely.

Hold your breath for 4 seconds.

Exhale slowly through your mouth for 4 seconds, releasing all the air.

Hold your lungs empty for 4 seconds.

4. **Repeat the cycle 4 to 6 times**, or as many times as desired.

Brown, R. P., & Gerbarg, P. L. (2005). Sudarshan Kriya yogic breathing in the treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression: Part II—clinical applications and guidelines. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 11(4), 711-717.

## Mindful Walking

Walking with mindfulness involves focusing on the physical sensation of walking, the contact of feet with the ground, and one's breath.

### How to Use:

During breaks or downtime, take a slow, deliberate walk while paying attention to your body and surroundings.

### Evidence:

Mindful walking is shown to reduce stress, promote relaxation, and improve focus, particularly when used as a form of active grounding.

Citations: A 2020 study in *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* found that mindful walking reduced stress and improved emotional wellbeing among healthcare workers (Afonso et al., 2020).

Afonso, R., et al. (2020). Mindfulness and healthcare professionals: A systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(10), 3807.



**Trauma Informed  
Derbyshire**  
Connecting head, heart and hands