

HeadStart Community Well-Being Service

Summer Programme 2020



2018 / 2019 Summer Programmes

In the first two years of the HeadStart Community project, young people were supported via specific targeted group work with a focus on supporting young people who were making the sometimes difficult transition between either Primary and Secondary School, or Secondary School and College. During the school summer break, referrals for 1:1 Youth Facilitator¹ support decreased, and face-to-face and regular group work were reduced, enabling the team to focus on this transition support. In 2019, ongoing support was also introduced to sustain the intervention throughout the first term.

2020 – the effect of the Covid Pandemic

The disruptions caused by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown inevitably affected what was achievable for the summer of 2020. Schools were closed between the end of March and July 2020, and teachers were preoccupied with developing an online curriculum, and then were focussed on the opening up to certain year groups from the beginning of July.

By April 2020 the HeadStart team had made preliminary plans for the 2020 summer programme – a collaboration had been established with Active Cornwall, and draft plans were in place with information sheets and posters created to send to schools. However, at the point when groups of young people would have been identified and plans would be confirmed, schools were grappling with the changes required to open up to students again. Despite online group work being planned in some areas, referrals from schools were not forthcoming and one college withdrew permission for external professionals to use their buildings. By June only 6 referrals had been received for the whole programme; whereas in 2019 the majority of referrals had been received by this time. Additionally, delivery partners were at different stages of introducing face-to-face work, which meant that several Youth Facilitators were unable to commit to face-to-face group work as had been intended.

It was clear therefore that a different approach was needed and the team acted swiftly to identify opportunities to reshape the summer offer. There was consensus that, after so long away from school, transition support was required for all ages and year groups. The decision was made to collaborate with partner organisations and utilise the Intervention Fund² in order to ensure the highest impact to the largest possible number of young people, at short notice. Making use of the established partnership network allowed the team to identify opportunities and mobilise quickly, resulting in an adapted summer programme for 2020 which comprised:

- Ongoing 1:1 support for Youth Facilitator caseloads
- Delivery of a National Citizenship Programme
- You, Me, Us care packages
- Supporting families to participate in the Cornwall Outdoors' summer activities programme.

¹ Youth Facilitators provide 1:1 and groupwork support to 10-16 years to improve emotional resilience and mental well-being.

² The Intervention Fund is a flexible fund to enable young people to access additional specialist services or community provision, either during or post Intervention, in order to continue positive progression.

Summer Programme	Direct staff delivery time	No. of young people supported	Intervention Fund Cost
2019	54 days	35	£5,274.90
2020	34 days	29 (and another 300+ indirectly)	£4,314.53

The Revised 2020 Summer Programme

1. Continued 1:1 support

Conversations Youth Facilitators were having with young people on their case-loads highlighted the various challenges being faced by young people due to the unprecedented circumstances: feelings of isolation; anxieties around exams and going back to school; home situations worsening e.g. increased arguments, family illness and shielding. Given this evidence-base, it was determined that young people would benefit from continued 1:1 support, so the Covid Well-Being service referral route was maintained over the summer months in order to offer young people continued support at this difficult time. Support was delivered through online and face-to-face sessions, depending on the young person's preference and partner organisations' risk assessments for face-to-face work. Benefits to young people included being able access a largely continuous service throughout the holidays; receiving a more rapid response (e.g. via text), instead of needing to wait for weekly appointments; and for a small number who were particularly isolated and without access to phones or laptops, support in purchasing technology to enable them to connect. During July and August, 12 referrals were received, and 11 new young people were supported over the summer period. In total, 56 young people were supported through the summer months; with the reduction in planned groupwork enabling additional capacity to be offered to existing caseloads in recognition of the unprecedented and challenging times. The majority of these young people continued to be supported into the Autumn term, so impact measurements using My Mind Stars are as yet unavailable.

**Young people supported:
56 (44 from pre-lockdown and 12 new)**

2. National Citizen Service (NCS) programme

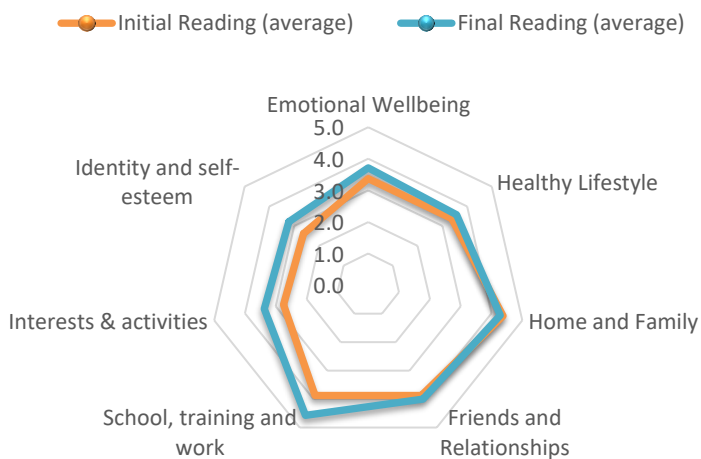
Due to the strong working links between Young People Cornwall (YPC) and HeadStart, a partnership opportunity was identified for HeadStart to link with NCS and YPC, whose summer programme had also been disrupted. The NCS theme for 2020 was 'Transition', with targeted 10-day programmes aimed at supporting young people about to move to College or 6th form. As this fitted well with HeadStart objectives for the summer work, it was agreed that a Youth Facilitator and Community Facilitator would lead the Mid-Cornwall NCS group.

The NCS Transition programme took place in a large indoor warehouse, delivering a variety of activities to promote team building, leadership and presentation skills, interspersed with well-being sessions and support. The group was supported to develop and deliver a social action project – these included organising care packages for local homeless people, developing a Forest Garden in a local woodland, and the creation of a mental health awareness mural.



NCS group delivering care packages to St Petrocs

NCS My Mind Star results



My Mind Stars were completed with each participant at the beginning and end of the programme. On average, the areas identified as showing most improvement were Identify and Self Esteem; Interests and Activities; and School, Training and Work.

These outcomes aligned with the programme's objectives of supporting the transition back to school or college, developing transferable skills for future employment, promoting community values, and increasing well-being.

Young people supported: 10
Intervention fund cost: £227.53
HeadStart staff time: 22 days

3. You, Me, Us packs

Another collaboration opportunity arose to support CRCC's You, Me, Us packs, arising from existing links between Cornwall Rural Community Charity's (CRCC) Participation Worker and LPCo³ staff. The concept was initiated by the West Cornwall Youth Cabinet who wanted to support young people aged 11-18 facing financial hardship and isolation during Covid-19, in particular those who did not have access to online platforms for services and support. The young people who designed the packs felt it was important to promote positive emotional health, to share items to remind young people that they are not alone, and to provide details of how to access support local to them.

As well as using the Intervention Fund to help pay for the packs, the HeadStart Community Support Worker has worked one day a week on this project. During the first six weeks 1,730 packs were distributed county-wide: 339 to young people in the East; 555 to the Mid; 837 to the West.

You, Me, Us packs are going out to schools, community groups and outreach workers across the county. 300 packs a week will continue to be distributed until the end of December 2020.

Example of a pack:

- Headstart Zcard
- Headstart postcard with contact details
- 20ml shower gel
- 20ml shampoo and conditioner
- Silly activity - bubbles or stress ball
- Mugshot noodles pack (or similar)
- Mug cake
- Sanitary products for females
- Recipe card with meals under £5 designed by young people

³ Learning Partnership for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Feedback from recipients and key workers

“Getting a pack makes me feel someone cares”

“They are so simple yet so needed”

“Everyone thinks you can get online to get help, but not all of us can”

“It has been a great discreet way to tackle period poverty, knowing a young person has additional food and healthcare products, has added another level of support.”

Young people supported: 300+
Intervention fund cost: £3,500
HeadStart staff time: 12 days

4. Outdoor Activity provision

As a result of the school closures, HSK⁴ collaborated with Cornwall Outdoors to offer opportunities for children and their families to get into outdoor spaces, try new things and spend quality time together, in order to have some fun, learn new skills, and ease any anxiety around the return to school. The decision was made to support this initiative by offering spaces on the activities to the young people receiving Youth Facilitator support and their families. Understandably, there were many families who were either unable or unwilling to take up this offer due to shielding and anxieties around Covid-19. However, eight families engaged with the offer, registering for between one to three activities each including archery, coasteering, mountain biking, snorkelling and climbing.

Since participating in this activity programme, one young man has identified that it made him feel happier than at any time recently. HeadStart is now funding him to partake in group activity sessions at BF Adventure.



Feedback from young people and their families

“I felt safe, I was worried about going but loved it as the lady was very good with letting me rest when I needed to. The lady gave good clear instructions which I understood, and I loved scoring 3 bulls eyes!”

“Huge thanks to your team for enabling us to go, huge thanks to Delaware and Porthpean instructors. Really, really appreciated it. 👍👍”

“Absolutely Fantastic!” “The instructors were brilliant and really helped boost their confidence.”

“My two children had anxiety around going back to school, so it was good timing to go to these activities (coasteering, climbing and mountain biking) as they put them out of their comfort zone and I was able to use the experience to talk about and link to their fears around school, for example talking about breathing techniques and positive thinking. Both had fears around coasteering, but ended up being so courageous and overcame their fears, I was so grateful that they had that experience. I think the activities really boosted their emotional resilience, so thank you!”

Young people supported: 15
Intervention fund cost: £587

⁴ HeadStart Kernow <https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/>

Key learning points

- Young people's involvement improves service quality**

By listening to young people's experiences of lockdown the team were able to adapt the summer programme in response to their needs, particularly by offering continued 1:1 support in a flexible way. Co-production was at the core of the You, Me, Us packs and NCS programme, contributing to the success and impact of both.
- Having an agile 'Test and Learn' approach to the project enables change**

One of the service aims of the HeadStart Facilitator contract to 'test new, and develop existing ways of working'. Thus, an adaptable change process was already in place, including a shared vision of what the service aims to achieve; good communications between staff, external partners and young people; regular consultation with all stakeholders on key decisions; and budget flexibility. The Intervention Fund was established as an adaptable fund to be used to enable young people to access additional support where needed, for example, to specialist services, community provision, travel, and other ways to reduce barriers to positive progression. This built-in flexibility enabled the team to adapt to changing circumstances and make decisions quickly when necessary.
- Regular communication is key to ensure issues are understood and changes are possible.**

Having regular catch up meetings enabled us as a team to understand the issues county-wide, and share ideas for potential adaptations to the summer programme. Importantly, the regular communication between Facilitators and young people they were supporting enabled the team to feel confident that they had a good understanding of the issues they were facing and a sense of what it might be beneficial to offer. Furthermore, having strong lines of communication with Cornwall Council's contract lead was key to ensuring changes were understood and approved at all levels.
- Collaborative working ensures more efficient service delivery**

The strength of the existing partnership networks enabled collaboration opportunities to be highlighted quickly. Staff from across the partnership are used to working together and could step into new roles without major complications.
- We can indirectly benefit greater numbers of young people and their families**

A relatively small proportion of the Summer Intervention Fund budget was used to indirectly reach over 300 young people, and possibly many more, through the You, Me, Us packs. Additionally, siblings and other family members of young people on caseloads had opportunities to access activities for well-being this year through the Cornwall Outdoors activity programme. Opportunities to support similar projects will be considered throughout the remaining year of the project, in order to extend the reach to more young people and their families.