



HeadStart Kernow Learning: Community and Youth Facilitators

(Interim Report July 2020)



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Glossary

Bloom	An innovative partnership approach with CAMHS, Primary Mental Health and other services and organisations, Bloom is a consultation model for professionals working with young people experiencing difficulties with their emotional, social or mental wellbeing.
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Early Help Hub	A single point of contact for Cornwall Council and Community Based Children's Early Help Support and Services. Professional triage and processing hub for all service requests for Children's Early Help Services led by Cornwall Council and the Cornwall NHS Partnership Foundation Trust (CFT).
LPCo	The Learning Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
TIS	HeadStart Kernow has commissioned trauma-informed training for professionals which is delivered by Trauma Informed Schools (TIS UK).

Thematic review of case-studies	A thematic review of 46 anonymised case-studies (telling the stories of over 60 young people) that were collected by The Learning Partnership.
Analysis of Outcome Star data	Analysis of 25 repeat Outcome Stars collected as part of the pilot of the new My Mind Outcome Star developed in partnership with Triangle Consulting and Action for Children. Analysis of 30 repeat Outcome Stars collected as part of the Summer Transition Programme 2019.
Management information	A review of the management information provided by LPCo as part of their regular contract reporting to HeadStart Kernow, including reach figures.

The HeadStart Community Facilitator contract contributes to The National Lottery Community Fund's four outcomes for HeadStart:

- improve emotional well-being
- improve engagement in school and academic attainment
- reduce the onset of diagnosable mental health disorders
- reduce engagement in risky behaviour

Further Outcome Stars and case-studies will be collected and analysed for the final report.

So What? Learning for commissioning

The findings so far demonstrate the following learning which can be applied to future commissioning of youth services:

An integrated model where referrals are mediated

One of the strengths of the HeadStart programme is the ability to adapt and change its approach. From the outset (and consistently throughout the contract) the young people referred for support from a Youth Facilitator consistently had higher levels of need than anticipated. This, combined with high demand for Youth Facilitator support, posed significant challenges so midway into the contract a new model of working was developed. Direct referrals for Youth Facilitators were paused and access to direct support was then considered and mediated through Bloom Professionals Consultation meetings, allowing referrals to be considered holistically by CAMHS Clinical Psychologists, Primary Mental Health workers, Early Help Locality managers, and other professionals, as well as Youth and Community Facilitators. This approach led to a more holistic review and offer of services.

A Whole Family and Whole School Approach where professionals work closely with partners to signpost young people and their families to additional support

The project demonstrates the importance of a 'Whole School' and 'Whole-Family Approach' when supporting young people:

- by using a trauma-informed approach, Youth Facilitators were able to help young people understand their mental health much more intricately, thus enabling them to manage how they responded to and overcame presenting issues.
- working closely with partners and signposting young people and their families to additional support made a positive difference in the outcomes because the Youth and Community Facilitators were able to address a variety of different needs of the young person and their parents or carers.

The importance of trust between the professional and the young person to achieve positive outcomes

Trust between the Youth Facilitator and the young person made the most impact on achieving positive outcomes. Trust is built in a large part due to the training, skills and experience of the Youth Facilitators, enabling them to build a therapeutic alliance with the young person. Creating a physical and relational safe space is important. Using a trauma-informed approach and the PACE model (Play, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy – Dr Dan Hughes), the Youth Facilitator provides an emotionally-regulated and available adult who can provide calm and containment.

The length of intervention as it takes time to build a trusting relationship

It takes time to build a trusting relationship. The contract has flexibility within it to allow Youth Facilitators to support young people for longer than the usual 12 sessions if required.

A person-centred approach that's co-produced. When it comes to mental health there is no 'one size fits all'

Every young person was involved from the outset in co-producing and co-designing the individual bespoke support that they received. Youth Facilitators use the My Mind Outcome Star to facilitate discussion with the young person. The Outcome Star uses a 'Journey of Change' approach to empower the young person to learn what works for them so that they move along a journey to eventually managing their own emotional wellbeing independently. The expected outcomes include improved emotional wellbeing and identity and self-esteem. HeadStart demonstrates that when it comes to mental health there is no 'one size fits all'.

Flexible access to support

Uptake and engagement are increased when the young person has input into the type of support they wish to pursue. The HeadStart Community and Youth Facilitator contract enabled support to reach more young people because it offered those who do not wish to meet face-to-face, the opportunity to have a consistent regular person to speak to over the phone or online. As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent in March 2020, the HeadStart

Facilitator team quickly, flexibly and nimbly adapted their models of support to young people via the Covid-19 Well-Being Service (primarily offering support to young people over the phone, by text or online).

Training professionals and volunteers who work with young people in understanding trauma-informed approaches

The project has demonstrated the importance of continuing the work of training all professionals and volunteers who work with young people in an understanding of a trauma-informed approach, so that there is a common understanding of language and behaviour in supporting young people holistically, within educational settings and more broadly within community organisations.



Background

LPCo has been commissioned by Cornwall Council to deliver the HeadStart Facilitator contract to 10-16 year olds showing early signs of emotional distress, and is focused around preventing the development into mental ill health. This has been carried out by building sustainable links between young people, families, local community organisations, schools and public services. This is delivered through the combined work of the Youth Facilitators, who focus on individuals and direct delivery with young people, and Community Facilitators who help to build the capacity of communities and strengthen networks for young people and parents enabling young people to access the appropriate support, at the right time and in the right place.

The contract length is 3 years from January 2018 through to December 2020 with an option for extension. To date, LPCo and its delivery partners have delivered the Facilitator intervention programme for 2 ½ years with the value of the contract being a total of £1.6m over three years. This interim report, produced by Cornwall Council, analyses data on reach and impact up to March 2020.

<p>About HeadStart Kernow</p> <p>Started in 2016, HeadStart is a five-year, £58.7 million National Lottery funded programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. HeadStart aims to explore and test new ways to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 10 to 16 and prevent serious mental health issues from developing. To do this, six local authority led HeadStart partnerships are working with local young people, schools, families, charities, community and public services to design and try out new Facilitator interventions that will make a difference to young people's mental health, wellbeing and resilience. The HeadStart partnerships are in the following locations in England: Blackpool; Cornwall; Hull; Kent; Newham; Wolverhampton.</p>	<p>About The Learning Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (LPCo)</p> <p>LPCo is a voluntary sector organisation that works with a number of partner organisations across Cornwall to support young people, unemployed adults, the workforce and employers in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The Youth Team is currently working with partners (Young People Cornwall, Pentreath, CRCC & Xenzone) to deliver the Your Way services and the HeadStart Community contract. LPCo are also a partner within Ambitions led by CSW Group. These complementary projects help provide a range of services to support young people, all of which allow young people to be involved in designing and shaping of the services.</p>
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The HeadStart Community Facilitator contract is one strand of the HeadStart Kernow programme. Other strands of the programme that impact directly on the HeadStart Facilitator contract are:

Workforce development	HeadStart Kernow has commissioned trauma-informed training which is delivered by Trauma Informed Schools (TIS UK). HeadStart facilitators have completed this training. It is focused on attachment theory, neuroscience and the importance of play and creativity.
Bloom	HeadStart Kernow has been instrumental in the development and ongoing management of Bloom which is a consultation model for professionals working with young people experiencing difficulties with their emotional, social or mental wellbeing. Bloom is an innovative partnership approach with CAMHS, Primary Mental Health and other services and organisations. A Bloom Professionals Consultation can be requested for any child/young person struggling with emotional, social or mental wellbeing difficulties, as long as they are aged 0-18 years and they live or are educated in Cornwall. Referrals are made via the Early Help Hub on a CAMHS referral form.

The Intervention

The HeadStart Facilitator contract focusses on early intervention. Early intervention is intervening as soon as possible to tackle problems/issues which have already emerged for children and young people. Interventions are more effective if there is stronger accountability, a highly skilled workforce and more integrated services (Every Child Matters Green Paper 2003).

Youth Facilitator

Six Youth Facilitators provide direct face-to-face support on an individual and group basis to young people aged 10-16 years old.

The Youth Facilitators provide 12 sessions of 1-to-1 support over a 12-week period (generally lasting up to 60 minutes per session), in either in a school or community setting.

The Youth Facilitators also run wellbeing groups in schools and in community settings and have recently started developing a support group for Elective Home Educated young people to meet their needs.

Community Facilitator

Three Community Facilitators enable a joined-up approach between young people, families and community organisations.

The Community Facilitators offer three core strands of support: Mental Health Awareness training to community organisations and parents; signposting and support to families and professionals to access available services and community provision; and direct support to families through mentoring and information sharing.

Young people

Young people aged 10-16 years old receive support (depending on their individual circumstance) to:

- manage feelings effectively
- form positive, healthy relationships
- form positive peer group relationships and social connections
- develop effective planning and problem-solving skills
- develop effective life and organisational skills
- develop effective decision-making skills

Specific project work also takes place and over the previous two summers group support has been delivered by both Youth and Community Facilitators to support transitions between Year 6 to Year 7, and Year 11 to College. Since January 2018, 457 young people have been identified to work with HeadStart Youth Facilitators. 296 young people have completed this intervention in a planned way, 41 have exited in an unplanned way, and 120 young people are currently being supported on caseloads. 74 young people have been engaged in co-production and/or peer-to-peer activities.

Parents

Community Facilitators offer valuable short-term support to parents, for example:

- helping make sense of services on offer
- breaking down any fears or concerns
- assisting with funding applications
- support in making referrals

Community Facilitators provide information around the trauma-informed approach and help parents to consider the importance of their own well-being, whilst sharing strategies for building resilience and regulation within the household. Parents also receive formal Mental Health Awareness training. Since January 2018, 45 parents have benefited from direct 1-to-1 Community Facilitator intervention.

Community

A key aspect within this contract is support by Community Facilitators, which aims to make better connections between young people, families, schools and community-based activities that support emotional health and wellbeing, as well as helping to reduce the stigma around mental health.

Support from Community Facilitators has helped both brand-new and well-established community organisations. Since January 2018, 165 community-based groups and organisations have benefitted through capacity-building activities from Community Facilitators, including Mental Health Awareness training and signposting to other organisations including the One Vision Community Development Workers.

Coastal Crusaders CIC



Coastal Crusaders CIC was established in 2019 to help young people with their mental health, fitness and access to employment via ocean sports. During its early stages the Community Facilitator for Mid Cornwall assisted Coastal Crusaders CIC by signposting them to capacity-building support from Your Way Community Workers. A successful partnership ensued as Coastal Crusaders became an activity provider for the HeadStart Summer

Transition programme in 2019: their beach well-being sessions supported those referred to increase confidence, self-esteem and social bonding, whilst providing the CIC with valuable experience of working with young people (Case-study: May 2020).

St Stephens Boxing Club

St Stephens Boxing Club received initial support from Your Way Community Development workers. As a result of this affiliation they were put in touch with HeadStart and received Mental Health Awareness training and support. The Community Facilitator then supported the development of a Boxing Group at The House in St Austell. Using funds from the HeadStart project, Facilitators offered a 12-week programme as a stepping stone for young people to potentially attend the regular community club. The boxing sessions proved to be extremely successful, with one young person attributing his experience at the club to his personal growth and move from an APA back to mainstream secondary school. (Case-study: May 2020).



Bodmin's KBSK Performing Arts



A Facilitator's work with Bodmin's KBSK Performing Arts highlights the value of partnership-working and 'being the glue' between services. After making initial contact with the group, the Community Facilitator greatly assisted the KBSK Director through a major safeguarding concern around a young person who had suffered abuse in the home. Links were then made with the Your Way Community Development worker, who was able to give additional support and advice around gaining funding, securing new

premises, and introduced the group to 'Into Bodmin', with whom KBSK now work closely. Feedback for the HeadStart Facilitator was extremely positive: *"Thank you so much for listening and having so many options and roots of helping. I'm very, very grateful for all the support you're putting in place and putting me in contact with the right people so thank you so much!"* (Case-study: May 2020).

Contract Delivery

As awareness of the Youth Facilitator face-to-face service and its positive impact on young people increased, demand rose significantly. During 2018 waiting lists developed, with some young people waiting between 3-6 months to have contact from a Facilitator. This inevitably caused concern from professionals and families regarding the potential further distress caused to young people through not receiving Facilitator support during this time period. An original aim of the project was to offer an early Facilitator intervention service in order to support early signs of emotional distress, before they developed into serious mental ill health. However, from the outset referrals were consistently of a higher level of need. A variety of presentations were seen, including high anxiety, breakdowns and bereavement in the family home, low mood, self-harm and behavioural difficulties, school refusal and low attendance. It became apparent that many young people faced multiple issues and needed multi-agency support. This posed challenges to Youth Facilitators and their ability to close these more complex cases after the expected twelve-week period, and further added to waiting list numbers given due to the extended support being offered.

Through reviewing the service, direct referrals were discontinued and a new model of working was developed. From September 2019 Youth Facilitator 1-to-1 referrals were integrated into Bloom Professionals Consultation meetings via the Early Help Hub, allowing for referrals to be considered by CAMHS Clinical Psychologists, Primary Mental Health workers, Early Help Locality managers, and other professionals, as well as Youth and Community Facilitators. This approach led to a more holistic review and offer of services, although unfortunately the onset of COVID-19 has disrupted the assessment of its impact. The new model of working also saw Youth Facilitator interventions offered within the community through drop-in sessions at Youth Advice Centres across Cornwall; and school group work was increased, offering rolling programmes that could be handed over to TIS trained teachers to retain this support post-project.

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent in March and during the subsequent lockdown, Facilitators were proactive in adapting their work in response to the newly emerging needs of young people and communities. In response to the pandemic which had led in turn to a revised Bloom consultation model, the HeadStart Facilitator team developed a temporary online Well-Being Service. This acted as a referral pathway for young people to continue to access support until the resumption of face-to-face services. Youth Facilitators offered each young person on their caseload the option to continue engagement using a variety of platforms: text, phone-calls, Skype, Zoom, FaceTime and Facebook. After an initial lull, the response was positive, with young people often choosing to engage weekly, and most commonly via text. In order to maintain contact with those without the technology or confidence to engage by phone or online, personalised letters and activity packs were posted out. These letters proved to be important as young people reported that they felt less isolated and felt 'thought of'.

Community Facilitators continued to support the Covid-19 revised Bloom model, offering signposting advice and guidance on community provision. They supported the set up and manning of the Young People Cornwall online webchat

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offer, providing 'drop-in' support to young people 7 days a week from 9am to 12am on weekdays and 9am to 9pm at weekends. They also created online content such as psycho-education resources and delivered well-being sessions. Working with the HeadStart Kernow team within Cornwall Council, the Facilitators were an integral part of the development of an online emotional support page for parents. Using blogs and videos, they offered advice and strategies, based on a trauma-informed approach, helping parents and carers deal with the impact of the pandemic on emotions and behaviours within the family home.

Measuring Impact

This report measures impact through analysis of My Mind Outcome Star data and case-studies, which were collected by LPCo. Consent to participate in the evaluation was gained as part of the referral form developed by the LPCo. The form makes explicit reference to the HeadStart evaluation and gives every young person over 13 (or their parent/carer if they are under 13) the option to give informed opt-in consent to participation in the HeadStart evaluation. Young people received participant information that informed them that participation in the evaluation is optional and non-participation does not impact on the right to receive the HeadStart Facilitator intervention. It explains that they will not be identifiable and how the data will be used.

My Mind Outcome Star

In 2018 LPCo piloted a new Outcome Star, developed by Triangle Consulting with Action for Children, that is specifically designed for use in early Facilitator intervention services that aim to prevent the onset or development of mental illness, and to fill the gap before a mental illness is diagnosed. The young people receiving the HeadStart Facilitator intervention were involved in the development of the My Mind Outcome Star by giving their feedback on the measures, wording, and how it looked and was presented.

The piloted My Mind Star had eight measures which were refined following feedback for the final published Star (see <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/using-the-star/see-the-stars/my-mind-star/>).

- Emotional wellbeing (renamed 'Feelings and emotions' for the final star)
- Healthy lifestyle
- Home and family (renamed 'Where you live')
- Friends and relationships
- School, training and work
- How you feel (renamed 'Interests and activities' and then 'How you use your time')
- Safety (this measure was removed)
- Identity and self-esteem (renamed 'self-esteem')

The Outcome Star is useful for measuring and supporting change as it uses person-centred, strengths-based and co-production approaches. The Stars are completed by the young person in collaboration with the Youth Facilitator and functions both as a talking aid and as a way to focus the intervention on the

identified need. First Stars are completed before they receive the intervention, and Second Stars are completed after the intervention.

Like all Outcome Stars, the My Mind Star uses a Journey of Change model. The Journey of Change is a theory that sets out the stages the young people go through in making sustainable change to their lives. Young people are not scored (unlike other measures of wellbeing) but rather indicate their position on a scale:

- 1= Stuck
- 2= Talking about it
- 3= Believing and taking action
- 4= Learning what works
- 5= Managing well

Careful interpretation of the data is necessary. For example, a young person may indicate on their Second Star (after the intervention) that they are now 'Managing well', while on their First Star (before the intervention) they were 'Stuck'. This young person is said to have 'moved forward' on the scale, which is an improvement. Another young person, who is engaged in risky behaviour, may indicate that they were 'Managing well' on the First Star. After receiving the Youth Facilitator intervention, and coming to recognise their behaviour as risky, they may indicate that they are 'Talking about it'. So while this second young person has 'moved back' on the scale they have in fact also improved.

Data Collection and Analysis

Outcome Star data was collected by LPCo and analysed by the HeadStart Kernow team. It was provided in an anonymised format for analysis. LPCo have used the My Mind Star through the life of the HeadStart programme. The data available at the time of this interim report are the repeat Stars from the pilot and the Summer Transition Programme 2019. It is expected that future analysis will be available at the time of the Final Report.

Youth Facilitator

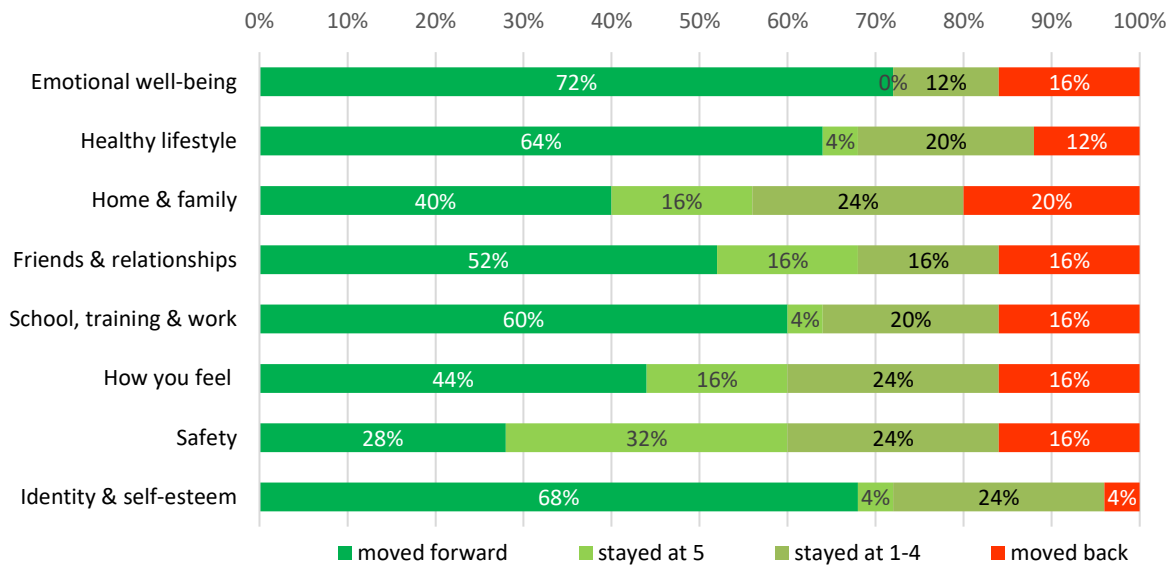
During the pilot of the My Mind Outcome Star 25 young people completed stars before and after they received 1-1 support from a Youth Facilitator. The following data and analysis is taken from the 'My Mind Pilot Results for HeadStart' report produced by Triangle Consulting in May 2019.

The 25 repeat stars were completed within an average of 86 days of the first star:

- 68% of stars were completed by females.
- The average age of the young person was 13.3 years.

The change between readings indicate that the Youth Facilitator intervention had an impact across all the eight measures.

% of young people moving forward, staying at the top of the Journey of Change or moving back



- 72% saw an improvement in their emotional wellbeing.
- 68% reported improvement in their identity and self-esteem.
- 64% reported improved healthy lifestyle.
- 60% saw improvement in their relationship with school, training & work.
- 52% saw improvement in friends & relationships
- 44% reported improvement in How you feel
- 40% saw improvement in their home & family (with an additional 40% seeing no change)
- 28% reported improvement in their safety (with 56% seeing no change).

Summer Transition Programme

The My Mind Outcome Star was used as part of the HeadStart Community Summer Transition Programme 2019 evaluation. During summer 2019, Youth and Community Facilitators collaborated with Active Cornwall to support 35 young people over the four weeks of August (over a period of six days) to prepare them for the transition between primary and secondary school. The young people were all in Year 6 (aged 11). 21 were male and 14 female. The programme was targeted at young people in West Penwith, St Austell & the Clay Country, and Bodmin, which are three areas that are identified as having the greatest need within the Physical Activity Strategy.

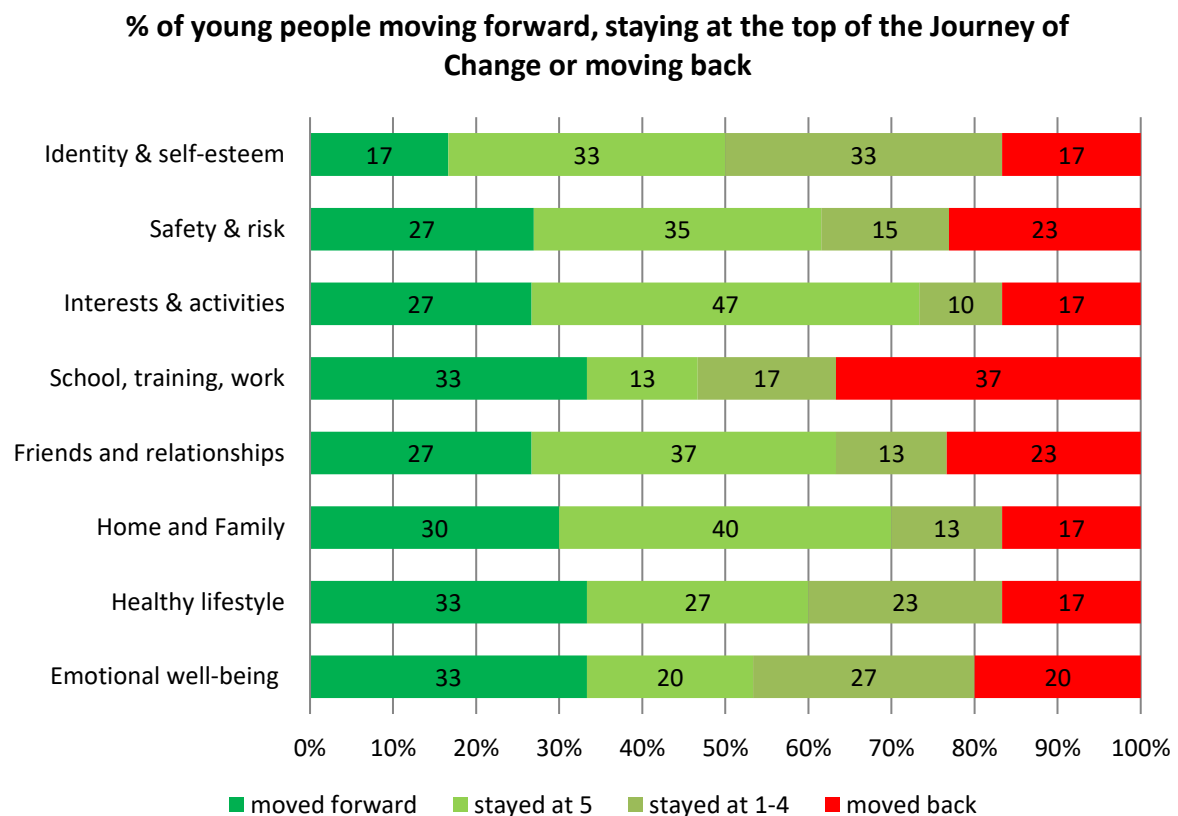
Activities during the sessions included team building exercises and support in mindfulness, handling anxiety and discussing concerns. The four young people in West Penwith undertook the Forest School, surfing, rock-pooling, exploring anxiety, walking and fireworks. This group joined up with another group of young people (not part of the Summer Transition Programme) who were undertaking HeadStart Kernow workshops. This not only increased numbers on the workshops but also allowed good join up between the HeadStart community project and other HeadStart Kernow activities. It also led to a specific piece of

follow up work around an animation workshop which may not have happened without this join up. The ten young people in Mid Cornwall were joined by young people entering Year 8, who acted as peer Facilitators. They undertook a treasure hunt, discussed transition concerns, did a drumming workshop and water sports activities. The twenty-four young people in East Cornwall learned survival skills, had a session in mindfulness, a swimming session, an Arts Therapy session, as well as some life skills lessons, including healthy eating whereby the Youth Facilitators encouraged the young people to choose what they would like to cook together each week.

Initial and repeat Outcome Stars were completed by 30 young people:

- 30% of second stars were completed within a month of the first star. The majority were completed after the young people started secondary school.

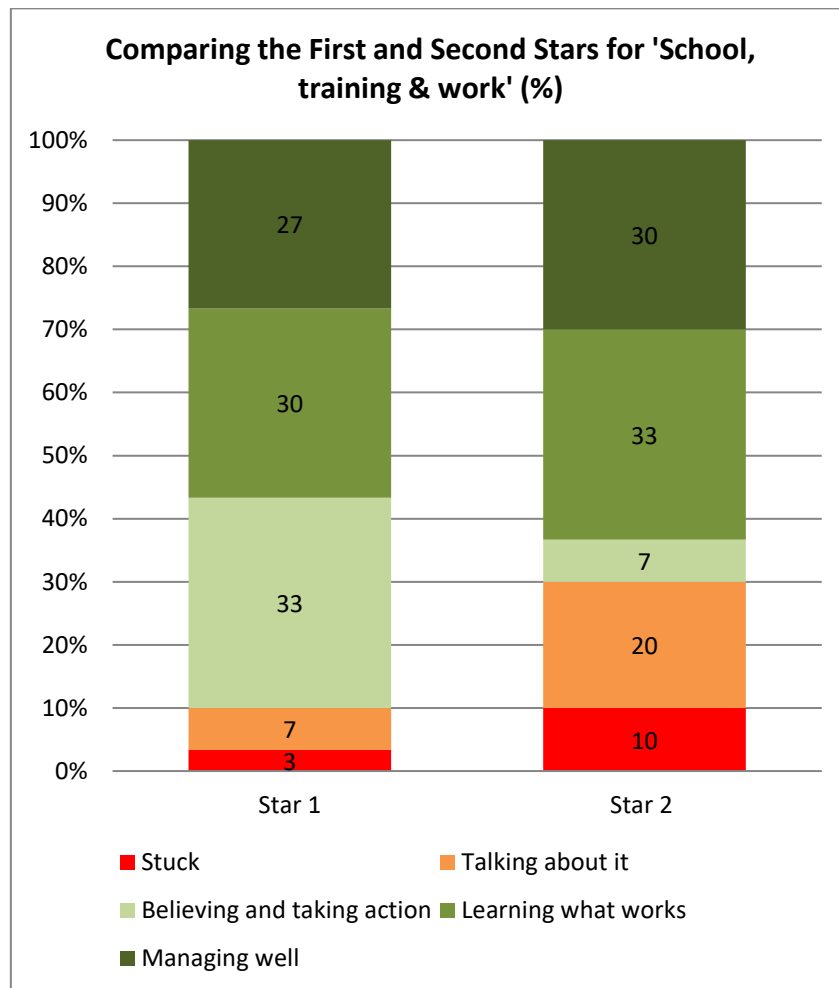
The change between readings indicate that the Summer Transition Programme had an impact across all the eight measures, with a particular impact on 'emotional wellbeing', 'relationship with school, training & work' and 'improved healthy lifestyle'.



- 33% saw an improvement in their emotional wellbeing.
- 33% saw improvement in their relationship with school, training & work.
- 33% reported improved healthy lifestyle.
- 30% improvement in home & family
- 27% saw improvement in friends & relationships
- 27% saw improvement in interests & activities
- 27% saw improvement in safety & risk

- 17% reported improvement in their identity and self-esteem

37% of young people have 'moved back' along the Journey of Change for the 'School, training, work' measure. Looking more closely at this measure, we see that 20% of the young people report on the Second Star that they are 'Talking about it', which makes sense in the context in which the Second Star was completed (when they had made the transition to secondary school). On the First Star (completed as they were beginning the intervention to support the transition), 33% of young people said that they were 'Believing and taking action'. This context needs to be borne in mind.



The project supported young people over the summer holidays at a total cost of £14,256.24 (£400 per young person). This includes the cost of running the activities over the six sessions (including activity costs, facility hire, coaching costs, staffing costs), prearranged transport for the young people, and refreshments for the young people (lunches, drinks and basic snacks).

LPCo identified two main challenges in delivering this support: finding suitable referrals from schools and finding suitable facilities (as two schools withdrew access to school site at the last moment). The partnership working with Active Cornwall was seen as particularly beneficial as the Active Cornwall coach took a lead on delivering a tailored physical activity to the group and added gender

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balance to the groups in some instances, which was positive for the young males as the majority of HeadStart Facilitators are female.



Case-studies Review

Case-studies were written by Youth Facilitators to highlight the work involved and the impact of the support given. 46 anonymised case-studies were provided by LPCo that told the stories of over 60 young people. The data were coded and evaluated using the qualitative software NVIVO, which helped to break down the cases into key themes and ideas. These are discussed below.

The case-studies were analysed on young people aged 10-16 with the majority aged 11 and 14. Over half of the young people were female. Some interventions were specifically targeted at females (such as a group of nine eleven-year-old girls who met once a week to discuss mental health and psychological wellbeing).

presentations of 'behaving badly' or inability to control their anger. Once this had been discussed, the young people began to build self-awareness and emotional resilience and built a more trusting relationship with the Facilitator.

In one case-study, the young person took ideas home and practiced them, finding them beneficial. She became aware of the reasons people feel anxious and could talk herself through this more effectively than before, as she understood the origin and could recognize her body's physical responses. In another case, the Facilitator supported the young person to consider "more healthy ways to regulate emotion." Not only did they consider anger triggers but they also supported the young person practically by signing them up for boxing.

A similar approach helped another young person who found that her own misunderstanding of her mental health was causing her to feel confused and believe that her experience of her anxiety was made up. Once she had her feelings validated and explained, she reported that she felt much more confident and had an increase in self-worth and self-esteem.

By using a trauma-informed approach, Facilitators were able to help young people understand their mental health much more intricately, thus enabling them to manage how they responded to triggers and overcome them.

Complex Lives

The case-studies show that many young people had high levels of complexity in their lives. In one case for example, a young person suffered severe anxiety which impacted on his attendance at school. This was then strained even further by his poor relationships with family and friends.

In another, a young person was initially described as being very isolated and rarely leaving the house which had meant he had not attended school in over five months. The case-study explained how the Facilitator worked with the young person and it became clear that his mother had previously spent time in rehab for alcohol misuse, and that he had been removed from his mother's care when he was nine years old. This had an impact on his emotional resilience and mental health. Without knowing this context his behaviour could have been perceived differently.

In a separate case a young person had low attendance at school and low attainment. When attending school, she often appeared late and unkempt. However, again upon working with the young person it became clear her mother struggles with mental illness and had been hospitalized and her father was not only overly strict but also sometimes violent towards her.

These case-studies show the importance of the Facilitator building a relationship with a young person to better understand additional stresses or pressures. High levels of anxiety could equally be attributed to an unhappy home, worries about transitions to school, or simply not having an appropriate outlet for emotions.

Engagement in School and Academic Attainment

In many instances' "disinterest" or "lack of ability" did not feed into young people's lack of attendance or attainment in school. In some instances, it was home life that kept them under pressure and meant they arrived in school under-prepared, over-tired, and over-stressed about things not relating to their schoolwork.

In other instances, young people with severe anxiety found it difficult to leave their bedroom and struggled to attend school where peers significantly affected their anxiety. The case-studies demonstrated that young people with little or no self-esteem, confidence, or self-worth felt incompetent, or that academic studies would never be for them.

The case-studies gave many examples of the beneficial impact of the Youth Facilitator had on young people. One of the most impactful cases was a fifteen-year old boy who, at the beginning of the Facilitator intervention, was struggling with his family at home, had anger issues and had indicated there was something very painful in his childhood he was unable to talk about. At the beginning of his sessions he indicated he was interested in pursuing a career in the armed forces and recognized that his anger would be an issue if he were unable to manage it. He worked with his Facilitator on his self-esteem and self-worth and learned strategies to control his anger. He developed an understanding of how to create a balanced lifestyle that focussed on health and sleep and he reported vast improvements in his school attainment. By the end of the twelve weeks, he was awarded the most progressed in his year at school (this was three months after the school had last given him isolation for his behaviour). He also was able to share his painful experience with his Facilitator, which he said he felt relieved to share. He has written a statement about how he is turning his behaviour around and takes pride in being a role model for others.

Many other young people who had a Facilitator intervention made applications for college or had gained employment with a significantly more positive outlook for their own futures. Facilitators also helped young people achieve their required grades to be able to move forwards with their plans for the future.

Reduce Engagement in Risky Behaviour

A few case-studies were of young people who were involved in risky behaviour (with drugs, alcohol or fighting with their peers). In most instances it appears that this was in reaction to issues at home or their emotional state. The Facilitators discussed these unhealthy coping mechanisms with the young people, leading to change in their risky behaviour.

In one case a sixteen-year old young woman was struggling with poor attainment at school, explosive behaviour and a poor attitude at home. She was fighting at school and was at risk of being permanently excluded. She was also drinking and taking drugs which led to her hospitalization. Her Facilitator built a relationship with her and built a level of trust where they could together identify some of the root causes of the behaviour. The Facilitator was able to work with the family alongside a family functional therapist to support them as a whole. Over a period of eight months the young person continued to work with the

Facilitator occasionally and together they supported her to attend her college interview and an interview for a job for which she was successful.

The case-studies show that trust is the most important aspect of these relationships, and it is trust between the young person and their Facilitator that allows for open conversation and support with difficult situations and emotions. It was these trusting relationships that allowed for positive outcomes.

Partnership Working

The case-studies show that due to the complexity of need, it was essential to include a range of partners in these Facilitator interventions. This is something the project appears to do successfully. In one instance, the Facilitator assisted the young person's parent with a referral to the Early Help Hub for Play and Art Psychotherapy support for the younger sibling. They also made a referral to CLEAR for specialist support for the whole family. In another case-study £1k was secured from Cornwall Rural Community Charity to support a young person in developing a hobby, making friends and tackling isolation.

When settling a young person into secondary school, the Facilitator made sure they identified and met with a staff member who would be that young person's emotionally available adult to help her when needed. These links helped ease her transition and settle her into her new school.

The case-studies showed that working closely with partners, and signposting young people and their families to additional support, made a positive difference in the outcomes because the Facilitators were able to tackle a variety of different needs of the young person and their parents or carers.

Trust

The thematic review of the case-studies suggests that trust between the Facilitator and the young person made the most impact on achieving positive outcomes. Trust is built in a large part due to the training, skills and experience of the Youth Facilitators which enables them to build a therapeutic alliance with the young person. Creating a physical and relational safe space is important. Using a trauma-informed approach and PACE model (Play, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy – Dr Dan Hughes), the Youth Facilitator provides an emotionally-regulated and available adult, who can provide calming and containment.

One case-study showed that the Facilitator's non-judgemental approach meant that the young person opened up because she saw her Facilitator as having an interest in her and having confidence in her to succeed. In many case-studies it took a trusting relationship for the young person to open up about some of the personal concerns they previously felt unable to talk about.

In some instances, building trust with one Facilitator opened doors for further support from other professionals for specific care. For example, a young person built such a good trusting relationship with their Facilitator, that the Facilitator was able to suggest support for the young person's OCD; the young person trusted the Facilitator to make the referral and they engaged with the service.

A case-study about the group support demonstrated how it made a difference for some young people to be surrounded by other young people they trusted. In one example, a young woman spent time in a small group of similar young people which helped her build confidence and social connections as well as develop coping strategies. By building a relationship with parents too, Youth Facilitators are able to help build the trust they need to access and engage with additional support.

The case-studies show that some young people previously had found it difficult to trust anyone. Deciding to trust the Facilitators meant that for the first time they were receiving support they needed. Without this trust, many young people would not have attended the 1-to-1 meetings or disclosed personal information. This allowed Facilitators to have the impact they wanted to achieve.

The Youth Facilitators are in a unique position as they are often viewed as distinct from schools or Local Authority, which increases their ability to create connections and build trusted relationships. This has been important as young people often report that they feel isolated within their school and familial relationships. Trust can make such a profound difference to the young person and be key to them moving forward on their journey. It has enabled the young people to test out their thoughts and feelings, to then be empowered to talk about their issues with other key people in their lives (such as parents and teachers). The support of the Youth Facilitator has increased their support networks and overall made them feel happier.

Reduce the Onset of Diagnosable Mental Health Conditions

The thematic review of the case-studies suggests that open and honest discussion of how people experience and manage mental health, coupled with developing a greater understanding of mental health and positive coping mechanisms, can support young people to not reach crisis point. Facilitator interventions helped young people to understand the scientific and psychological impact of stress, lack of sleep, lack of exercise and nutrition, and above all the impact of trauma. This has helped young people to be better able to cope with any developing anxiety, depression, and other diagnosable mental illnesses, and to learn how to support themselves going forwards.

Young People Quotes

"My most significant change since starting the boxing sessions is that my attitude has changed so much that I am now being placed back into mainstream school."

"I trust my Facilitator."

"Happier, with improved self-confidence. I really enjoyed the sessions and am sad they are coming to an end."

"[He] was able to express that he felt proud of his achievements and his ability to overcome difficulties."

"I liked the sessions and the games. I am much happier."

"The worries were so much bigger than they should have been as it's all ok actually."

"I found it quite helpful and supportive for me because I went through some hard times with someone dying who was close to me and they helped me get through that and they helped me with moving up to school."

"I know that I can do this now and know that I can have a future. I think I've made good progress and feel I can start meeting my friends more and get back to school."

"I just want someone to ask how I am, how my day has gone. Someone to text once school has finished."

"I am managing better at school because of the sessions."

"I didn't think I've even be here at this age, let alone be thriving!"

"I'm not having so many anxious thoughts and I feel like I am managing much better and like I have things to look forward to."

"I feel things are more in control now"

"I'm getting more sleep which is better for me and I am waking in a better mood. I have been having less panic attacks as I have been using calming techniques and visualisations to help me. At night I do mindfulness which is relaxing. I am glad I received support with S, we talked about everything I needed to and I found the coping ideas really helpful."

"This is the only support that has made any difference. I am looking forward to new things now and feel like I can do it."

"I'm staying clear of negativity and actually doing really well. I was accepted onto my course which I'm really happy about and will start in September."

Facilitator Quotes

"Young person said she enjoys face to face over a group setting. She feels that she can open up more without feeling the need to share her journey with the rest of the group. She said she felt better after opening up."

"I am so proud of how far this young person has come. He thrived during the summer transition project. He formed new friendships well and supported other members of the group with his experience and learnt knowledge. The young person is able to communicate with his family about his fears and worries."

"However, the success in this case has been around partnership working and knowing who the best person to put the group in contact with. When I meet with the director of KBSK she was struggling for funding and having various

problems relating to the building they were using at the time. I knew that she would not want to access mental health awareness training until she had received support in these areas and therefore arranged a meeting with the Your Way Community Development Worker, who put her into contact with Into Bodmin."

Summary of findings

This interim report demonstrates the following learning which can be applied to future commissioning of youth services:

- An integrated model where referrals are mediated through Bloom Professionals Consultation meetings
- A Whole Family and Whole School Approach where Youth Facilitators are trauma-informed and work closely with partners to signpost young people and their families to additional support.
- The importance of trust between the Facilitator and the young person to achieve positive outcomes.
- The length of intervention as it takes time to build a trusting relationship.
- A person-centred approach that is co-produced. When it comes to mental health there is no 'one size fits all'.
- Flexible access to support.
- Training professionals and volunteers who work with young people in an understanding of a trauma-informed approach.

Literature Review

The findings of this interim report mirror those in the academic literature. According to Collin-Vezina *et al.*, (2016), children and young people who have experienced adverse experiences (such as a disregard of feelings and views), have been harmed or exploited, are less trusting that people would treat them with care, respect and belief. These children and young people are less likely to be in a secure home environment where there are trustworthy others (Hallett, 2015). This creates a challenge for professionals working with those most vulnerable and highlights the importance of professionals creating and maintaining a trusting relationship with them. Due to their adverse experiences building trust with a child or young person may take longer, meaning that longer intervention will be needed in order to ensure maximum success of the intervention. According to Gilligan (2015), the personal qualities of the professional, and way in which they relate and interact, are crucial in creating a trusting and good working relationship with a child or young person. Key qualities are: ability to listen, being easy to talk to, sensitive, warm and non-judgemental. Persistence has been identified as a vital factor to successful intervention, especially if a child or young person is displaying challenging behaviour. Through 'sticking through' the challenging behaviour or lack of engagement a child or young person will gain trust in the professional and realise that they are on 'their side'. (Jago *et al.*, 2011.)

According to Weare (2015), there is vast evidence regarding the need for interventions to last a considerable amount of time in order to maximise success. While Smeaton (2013) states that some assessments and interventions with children and young people can be short term, relationships must be built quickly. Often a relationship must be established slowly and over time in order for the child or young person to trust the professional enough to be honest about the issues that they are facing. Lefevre et al., (2017), also draws on the concept that professionals are able to design sessions when they understand behaviour patterns and the previous experiences of individual children and young people. This enables them to build the trusting relationship that is so important for successful intervention. This can often be through alternative settings such as informal conversations and outdoor activities.

A child centred approach is often discussed in the literature surrounding working with children and young people. According to Berelowitz *et al.*, (2013), it is paramount that a child or young person feels that they are being listened to carefully. Children and young people need to be treated as individuals and able to express themselves in the way of their choosing. According to Lefevre et al., (2017), children and young people must be carefully considered and have their concerns and needs met and addressed with sincerity. Hallett (2013), discusses the need to correctly balance supporting a child or young person and meeting their needs in terms of safety, but also enabling them to have their own freedom and voice. According to C4EO (2014), the inclusion and support of family and care givers is key to successful intervention as collaborative approach is needed in order to ensure best outcomes for children and young people.

In summary there is a clear need for early intervention in order to ensure that a child is being adequately supported. Studies suggest that a trusting relationship between professional and young person is crucial. There is widespread agreement from the literature that the following are important for professionals in working with a young person: building a trusting relationship; listening carefully; take time to establish the relationships; treating the young person with respect and as an individual; and persistence.

Next Steps

The findings in this report are interim. Another learning report will be produced at the end of the contract and will incorporate analysis of case-studies and Outcome Star data from the whole of the contract period. Collecting more data and case-studies will help us to better understand both the impact and the process of the intervention and capture evidence to inform future provision.

About the authors

This interim report, and the analysis it contains, has been produced at Cornwall Council by Natalie Russell (HeadStart Digital and Learning Lead), Hannah Clark (LGA National Graduate Development Programme) and Hannah Dixon (Headstart Kernow Project Support Officer). It was produced in collaboration with Deborah Clarke (HeadStart Contract Manager and Bloom Lead), Charlotte Hill (Head of

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My Mind Outcome Star www.outcomesstar.org.uk/using-the-star/see-the-stars/my-mind-star/

StartNow www.startnowcornwall.org.uk

The Learning Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (LPCo) www.cornwall-learning-partnership.org/partners/

The National Lottery Community Fund www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/headstart

