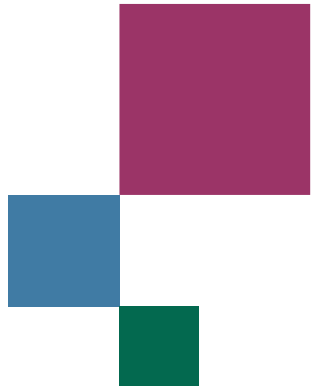




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Research &
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Merseyside YES Fund 2024-25 Evaluation

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Quality assurance

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Executive Summary

On behalf of the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) was established to prevent and reduce serious violence in Merseyside. This included being responsible for driving local strategy and embedding cultural change, alongside commissioning activities, programmes and interventions to ensure the sustainability of effective and impactful approaches to serious violence prevention.

In 2024, the MVRP merged their Arts Culture Sport (ACS) fund with the Youth Diversion Fund administered by the PCC, to provide bigger grants, to reach more young people through ambitious and engaging projects. This became the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) Fund. 30 organisations received funding of up to £25,000 each to deliver interventions across the areas of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens and Wirral, and ensure further reductions in serious violence across the region. In total they have supported **11,588** young people.

The Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) is focused on giving young people in the areas which have seen the highest levels of violence and the biggest cuts to youth services, access to better opportunities to prevent them getting into trouble. The fund supports the delivery of a range of diversionary activities and engagement methods that young people choose to participate in to learn a range of new skills, make new relationships and improve their confidence and wellbeing. Diversionary activities are designed to distract attention and engage young people in more productive and positive tasks. Activities like arts, sports and cultural events provide positive diversions, build the resilience of young people, foster positive relationships and can often be delivered as part of wider community-based activities. Key benefits include reducing the likelihood of young people reoffending, improving both mental and physical health whilst increasing self-esteem and providing young people with a sense of identity and purpose. This helps break down the barriers between young people and services, creating positive relationships and opportunities to access various support services.

Ensuring the development and sustainability of these diverse interventions across areas most at-risk of violence has been a fundamental objective of the MVRP since its inception. A vital component of this strategy was to embed these programmes within a whole system public health approach to violence prevention, that is evidence and data led.

£494,810

Distributed funds

30

Organisations



Funding focused on those areas which have seen the highest levels of violence and biggest cuts to youth services.

19 localities across 5 metropolitan boroughs



Beneficiaries

Best practice implemented by delivery organisations, specifically pertaining to engagement, included centring the voice of young people in delivery design. This ensured activities were suitable for the beneficiaries and also empowered young people through a **sense of ownership**. A further best practice identified by one specific organisation was having relatable educators, often with **lived experience** of the issue they were running workshops on.

Delivery organisations, in response to a broad and diverse beneficiary pool, took a multi-faceted approach to intervention type, with the majority of projects offering group activities, along with 50 per cent specifically offering 1:1 support. Reflecting both the unique needs of the beneficiaries and the array of outcomes targeted, 50 per cent of all delivery organisations offered a mix of activities in their project to a wide range of participants. By offering a selection of activities, delivery organisations with diverse beneficiary groups, were able to offer activities that appealed across age groups. On average delivery organisations worked across four of the six age ranges, demonstrating the need for activities to be diverse in order to meet the needs and interests of the beneficiaries. What is apparent through the analysis is not only the diversity of core beneficiaries and associated outcomes but also the wide range of indirect beneficiaries reached through delivery. As reported in the monitoring data, across three quarters (July 2024-March 2025), delivery organisations estimated they reached **5,861** indirect beneficiaries¹ and **11,588** direct beneficiaries.

Delivery organisations also identified three trends in **engagement**. These included difficulties maintaining engagement for those aged 15-17 due to academic pressures around examinations, key engagement periods where diversionary activities were productive (Halloween, Bonfire and Mischief night²) and the necessity to adopt specialised engagement tools for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) young people such as visual supports and sensory tools.

Demographic data demonstrated a **wide range of beneficiaries were engaged**, specifically a wide age range. As such, the variety of activities on offer, alongside intersecting themes and issues addressed, represent the complexity of the interventions. Whilst the majority of beneficiaries engaged were *White British*, the record of an additional 13+ ethnicities demonstrates the reach of the projects. Additionally, whilst all 30 delivery organisations targeted *young people* as beneficiaries the additional targeting of a further 22 beneficiary types also demonstrates far reaching engagement. Seven of those beneficiary types were covered by 50 per cent or more of delivery organisations.

Data also evidences benefits and unexpected outcomes accrued amongst **indirect beneficiaries** as well as core beneficiaries, representing the holistic nature of the fund which fosters community wide change, supporting long-term sustainable support networks, and alignment with the whole family approach.

Delivery

Increased numbers of participants affected delivery, either requiring funds to be redistributed to cover staff costs, or utilising volunteer support to deliver targeted 1:1 services. The Southport stabbings of July 2024 and following race riots hugely impacted the delivery of projects across Merseyside. The fund supported organisations to continue working through this difficult time, building confidence and trust

¹ This is an estimate because indirect beneficiaries are calculated on a case-by-case basis, with some organisations opting to base it on average family size i.e. one core beneficiary to an average family of four and others choosing alternate methods.

² Mischief Night is an informal tradition observed in various regions, often on the night before Halloween (October 30th) or Bonfire Night (November 4th). In the UK, Mischief Night is celebrated in some areas, particularly in the North of England, where it remains a local tradition. It is characterised by activities ranging from innocuous pranks to disruptive behaviour.



amongst young people and communities to reengage, with some organisations reporting that the incident brought the communities together and supported meaningful interactions around race and violence.

The development of new skills amongst both beneficiaries and staff was cited as an important unanticipated outcome for some projects, along with increased community cohesion and engagement, especially noticeable in projects where there was a focus on supporting the development of peer relationships, which led to the growth of more inclusive communities.

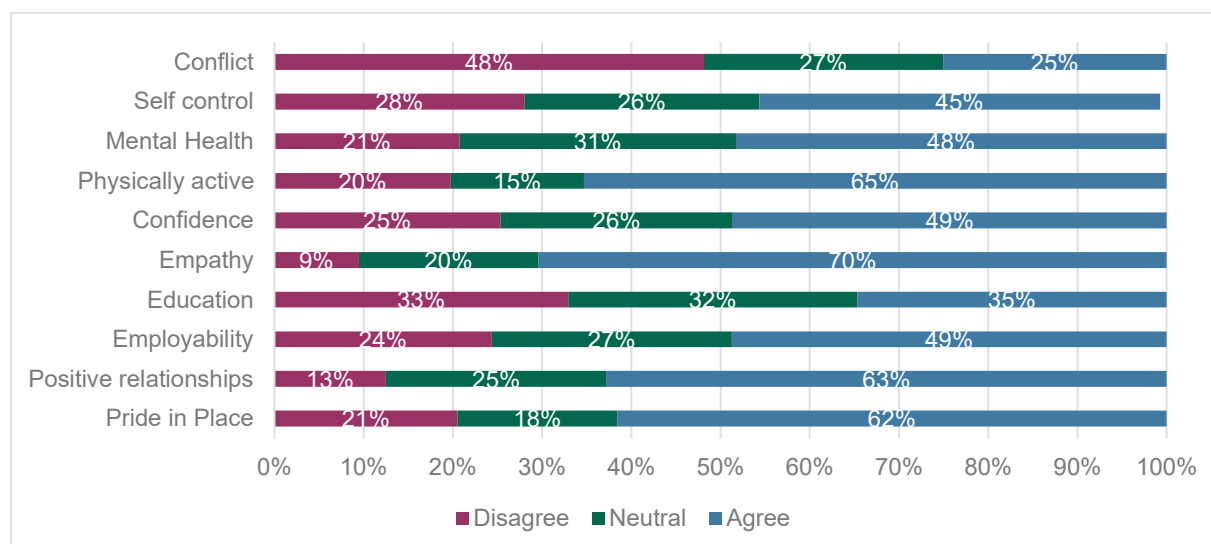
The key to successful delivery highlighted by the majority of projects was the creation of safe spaces for young people to be themselves and share their concerns. Projects that took a whole family approach identified opportunities for all members to access support, learning and engagement, which develops stronger systems for long term change. Mental wellbeing interventions interlinked with physical wellbeing was shown in some areas to have a ripple effect, with young people cascading their learning and skills throughout their wider communities, again adding to the growth of resilient inclusive communities.

Mixed reviews of fund management highlighted areas for refinement in reporting and evaluating requirements, to ensure that they are more proportionate to the grant size. But most organisations expressed positive experiences of support with both the MVRP and evaluation team.

Outcomes

Across all outcomes, data collection showed Empathy, Physical Activity, Positive Relationships and Pride in Place received the most positive responses, with between 62-70 per cent agreeing with the statements and recognising positive change. Empathy also had the lowest number of young people disagreeing with the statement, at only nine per cent. Education on the other hand received the most mixed responses, with an almost even split between disagree, neutral and agree responses.

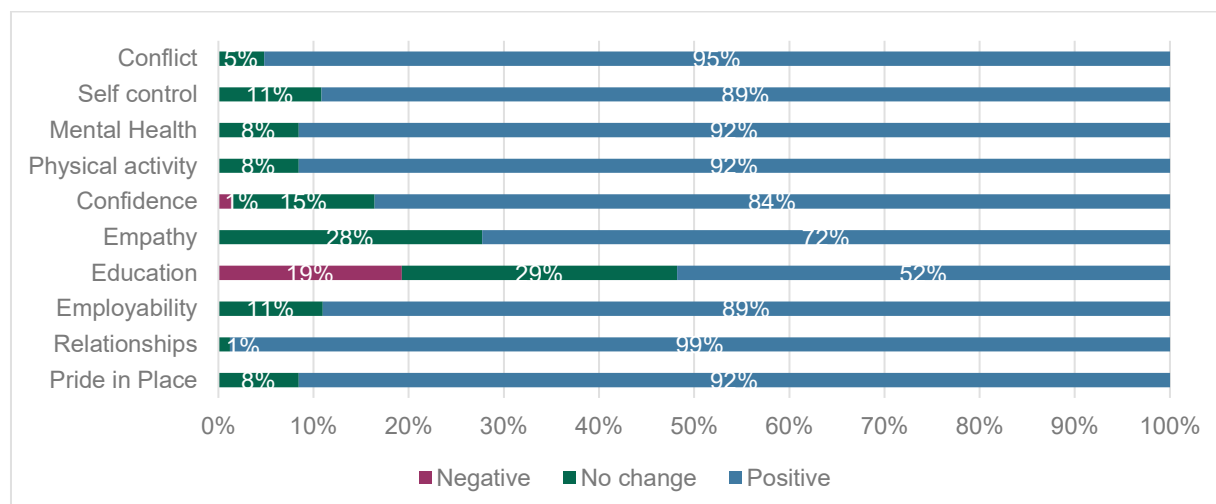
Overview of monitoring data on all outcomes



In comparison, the site visit data is very positive, with a majority of young people expressing a positive improvement of being part of the programme across all outcomes. In fact, for all outcomes other than education, those stating a positive impact was over 70 per cent, with the majority of outcomes coming in over 90 per cent. This is paired with very low levels of young people stating the programme had a negative impact on them, with the only significant result in this area being for education.



Overview of site visit data on all outcomes



The interrelations between mental health and physical activity was highlighted across all projects, with young people stating they noticed an improvement in their happiness when they became fitter. Staff also reported multiple benefits for young people, such as increases in fitness, improved understanding of nutrition, and the building of healthy interests around exercise. In one instance a staff member directly linked this to the reduction of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the local town centre, speaking to the benefit of sport based diversionary activities.

Feedback from young people, staff and parents/carers also supports the evidence of improvements in confidence. Staff at one of the groups stated that there was a marked difference in the confidence of young people over the course of the programme, with certain individuals getting much more involved and asking questions towards the end of the programme. A young person from the same group reaffirmed this, commenting on their increase in self-esteem and confidence.



'Since joining the psycho education sessions, my self-esteem has increased, and I feel more confident'.

- Young Person

Young people consistently reported how exposure to a wide range of people from different backgrounds had taught them to become more mindful of others' situations, exercising more patience with people and explaining the benefits of learning how other people work.



'We are all from this team and we look out for each other, in school or around the estate, we wouldn't want anyone from our team to be upset.'

- Young Person



Systemic Outcomes and Fund Legacy

Stats from the PCC show that serious crime in Merseyside has been prevented and reduced during 2023-2024. A range of outcomes have been achieved on both individual and group levels to reduce young people's vulnerabilities associated with violence including:

- Conflict
- Self-control
- Mental health
- Physically active
- Confidence
- Empathy
- Education
- Employability
- Positive relationships
- Pride in Place

Delivery organisations are continuing to find ways to increase the sustainability of programmes, by developing and refining their approaches to combatting serious violence. The combination of funds from the MVRP along with other grants and income streams, allows organisations to deliver the interventions that they know work, and bring additional added value and supplementary experiences and services that they could not afford otherwise. Learning is shared and embedded into approaches across the sector with cultural change being achieved across the region via networking, collaboration and the adoption of the public health approach to dealing with serious violence.

A distinct shift can be seen from the focus of sports to wider art and culture themed projects. Only 20 per cent of projects offered purely sports based interventions, with equally as much emphasis placed upon arts and culturally based interventions across the region.



'The legacy of the funding is that projects and programmes have become more inclusive.'

- MVRP team member

A number of projects supported by the YES Fund took a whole family approach to working with young people. These projects recognised that working with families has the potential to create a ripple effect. This ethos of the whole family approach is pivotal to the MVRP. Projects understand that reducing risk factors for young people requires the support of families and local communities to ensure that each element of a young person's life can support them to grow and develop and make the best choices that they can. Projects are becoming more sustainable due to investment and support from the local communities in which they reside.



'It provides these people with a sense of belonging as well, we were not expecting this. The impacts go a lot further to the heart of the community.'

- Volunteer

Conclusions and Recommendations

Interconnections between outcomes were highlighted across the data, and it is important to consider this in the planning of future programmes and activities. Many young people spoke of how outcomes helped to reduce conflict, including physical activity and improved mental health. Others cited the



benefits of wellbeing and creative activities to support controlling emotions. Multiple benefits can be gained by targeting outcomes with sport and creative interventions.

Shared identity and experience was also highlighted during focus groups, with delivery staff explaining the value of young people being able to mix with **others who are going through similar experiences**, and the reduction in isolation this can have for young people, which affects levels of loneliness. This should be an important part of group design in future planning.

Delivery organisations identified three trends in **engagement**. The first centred on difficulties maintaining engagement for those aged 15-17 due to academic pressures around examinations. They also identified key engagement periods where diversionary activities were productive (Halloween, Bonfire and Mischief night) and the necessity to adopt specialised engagement tools for SEND young people such as visual supports and sensory tools. Reduced engagement at various points in the calendar year by specific groups needs to be considered and planned for in future delivery to minimise disruption to engagement and offer targeted support to the right groups at the right times.

The key to successful delivery highlighted by the majority of projects was the creation of **safe spaces** for young people to be themselves and share their concerns. Projects where there was a focus on supporting the development of peer relationships reported the growth of more inclusive communities. This increased community cohesion and engagement was unanticipated by many organisations but highlights the desire for change.

- Stats from the PCC show that serious crime in Merseyside has been prevented and reduced.
- Delivery organisations are continuing to find ways to increase sustainability and develop and refine their approaches to combatting serious violence via intersectional diverse work and programmes.
- Cultural change is being achieved across the region, via networking, collaboration and the adoption of the public health approach to dealing with serious violence.
- Cultural change is being achieved through the whole family approach that organisations undertake, to build resilience amongst communities not just young people themselves.
- Learning is shared and embedded into approaches across organisations, projects and areas.
- Inclusivity and choice remain fundamental to creating safe supportive spaces for diverse young people to come together and grow.
- These projects have also provided safe spaces for parents and carers to feel at ease without judgement, interact with peers dealing with the same issues, and make connections and friendships.
- A range of outcomes have been achieved on both individual and group levels to reduce young people's vulnerabilities associated with violence.



1 Introduction

ERS were commissioned by the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) in January 2024 to create an evaluation framework and supporting monitoring tools for their Arts Culture Sports (ACS) funding programme. In June 2024 the contract was extended to evaluate the next round of funding grants in this provision commencing in August 2024 and finishing in March 2025.

The Home Office awarded multi-year grant funding to the MVRP between 2022 and 2025 of £15.58 million. This funding was to enable the partnership to continue its vital work around serious violence prevention. A proportion of the MVRP funding was allocated specifically to the capacity development of the community Arts Culture Sport sector and their role in reducing vulnerabilities associated with serious youth violence. The purpose of this element of the funding was to provide effective intervention programmes for children and young people involved in serious violence, whether as perpetrators and / or victims or to intervene early to prevent children and young people from being engaged with or vulnerable to such crimes.

1.1 Overview of the YES Fund

This fund was previously referred to as the ACS or SAC fund, distributed by the Community Foundation Merseyside. Feedback from consultation with the local voluntary sector organisations, highlighted to the MVRP that there were many smaller pots of funding available for essentially delivering the same work, creating additional impact on the capacity and resource of smaller organisations to apply for funding and requiring them to bid for multiple smaller pots to support the delivery of interventions.

In response to this feedback, the MVRP merged their ACS fund with the Youth Diversion Fund administered by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), to provide bigger grants, to reach more young people through ambitious and engaging projects. 30 organisations received funding of up to £25,000 each to deliver interventions across the areas of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens and Wirral, and ensure further reductions in serious violence across the region. In total they supported 11,588 young people.

1.2 Fund rationale & development context

On behalf of the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the MVRP was established to prevent and reduce serious violence in Merseyside. This included being responsible for driving local strategy and embedding cultural change, alongside commissioning activities, programmes and interventions to ensure the sustainability of effective and impactful approaches to serious violence prevention. The MVRP uses a multi-agency Public Health Approach to preventing and tackling serious violence. A Public Health Approach means that serious violence is treated as a preventable issue and multiple agencies need to work together to address the root causes of the issue and so prevent the cycle of violence. The MVRP work collaboratively with partner agencies from the public and third sector, using prevention and early intervention as a model of delivery.

The Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) is focused on giving young people in the areas which have seen the highest levels of violence and the biggest cuts to youth services, access to better opportunities to prevent them getting into trouble. The fund supports the delivery of a range of diversionary activities and engagement methods that young people choose to participate in to learn a range of new skills, make new relationships and improve their confidence and wellbeing.

Diversionary activities focused on arts, sports and culture, are increasingly identified as having the potential to support young people, improve mental health and well-being, build resiliency and



community connectedness and reduce risks of violence.³ Building resiliency can support children and young people to overcome hardship and trauma (including Adverse Childhood Experiences - ACEs). Key sources of resiliency during childhood include personal, relational and community resources; social and leisure activities; and trusted relationships with adults (Hughes et al, 2018).

Diversionary activities have been cited as a solution to the problem of labelling a child as an offender and thus reinforcing the criminal behaviours and belief that paths are predetermined. Robin-D'Cruz argues that "diversion is qualitatively different from statutory supervision in that it is by nature voluntary, a distinction that should be respected to avoid the damaging effects of labelling."⁴

Ensuring the development and sustainability of these diverse interventions across areas most at-risk of violence has been a fundamental objective of the MVRP since its inception. A vital component of this strategy was to embed these programmes within a whole system public health approach to violence prevention, that is evidence and data led. This was particularly prevalent in 2020/21 when interventions were targeted towards areas identified as most-at risk, with evaluators identifying a range of positive impacts for children and young people (and their families) including reducing risk factors for exposure to violence and enhancing protective factors⁵.

³ Hughes K et al. (2018). Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harm from adverse childhood experience. Cardiff: Public Health Wales.

Fancourt D, Finn S. (2019). Health evidence network synthesis report 67. What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. Copenhagen; World Health Organization.

⁴ Robin-D'Cruz, C., (2019) Mapping youth diversion in England and Wales. Available at: <https://justiceinnovation.org/portfolio/mapping-youth-diversion> (Accessed April 2025).

⁵ Hough and Quigg (2021) Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership 2020-21, Sports, Arts and culture Work Programme



Table 1: Overview of funded projects

Organisation	Grant Award	Number of young people	Delivery
Knowsley			
Evolving Mindset	£24,997	50	Arts, sports and employability-based sessions
L14 Community House	£25,000	3,600	Training sessions, prevention courses, activity workshops
Stockbridge Village Galaxy FC	£5,000	160	Football related activities
First Step	£22,425	61	Direct support to those experiencing/witnessing domestic abuse via drama and art workshops and 1:1 sessions
Liverpool			
Autism Adventures	£14,980	75	Boxing and training activities
Capoeira for All	£22,891	50	Art sessions and podcasting
Dovecot & Princes Drive Community Association	£20,000	250	Variety of activities including empowerment, art therapy and employability
Norris Green Community Alliance	£18,450	180	Regular activities and support
Positive Pathways Northwest	£24,800	250	Detached youth work
St Michael's Lark Lane	£8,992	40	Family mediation and counselling
The Lodge Holistic Beauty Spa and Wellness Centre	£9,000	400	Wellness programme for families living with trauma
Tiber Community	£20,655	200	Football and fitness sessions combining mental health
Walton Youth Project	£20,115	120	Diversions activities
Yellow House	£13,195	2,530	Art sessions for at risk and SEND young people
Sefton			
Community by Nature	£23,834	100	Forest school
Conquer Life	£10,101	512	Fitness and art classes plus events
Inclusive Hub CIC	£23,800	40	Physical and mental wellbeing activities
Litherland Youth and Community Centre	£10,200	90	Educational intervention groups on ASB
Netherton Feelgood Factory	£10,000	30	Afterschool activities
Netherton Park Community Association	£10,000	40	Sport, art and wellbeing sessions
Parenting 2000	£8,500	35	Boxing and football sessions
Waterloo Hotshots	£10,000	600	Tennis and boxing sessions
St Helens			
People Empowered CIC	£22,282	350	Diversions activities including art, dance and drama
Powered by Hip Hop	£7,393	100	Graffiti, DJ and Parkour activities
St Helens YMCA	£12,500	130	Creative and active sessions including leadership training
Vibe	£12,500	150	Activities and sessions exploring relationships and choices/ consequences
Wirral			
Comics Youth	£19,000	150	Arts based SEND sessions
Future Yard	£24,995	930	Early intervention sessions with arts, culture and heritage themes
Utopia	£14,455	80	1:1, art and sports session with neurodivergent young people
Youth Federation	£24,750	300	Boxing



1.3 Evaluation methods

The evaluation has employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to appraise the extent and strength of outcomes arising from the interventions delivered by YES funded projects. This section briefly describes the different methods employed.

1.3.1 Document, data and evidence review

A review was undertaken of the overall monitoring data provided by the MVRP including quarterly monitoring and end of project reports.

A number of strategic documents relating to the MVRP and wider youth diversionary activities, were also reviewed to support the evaluation team's understanding of the programme's strategic context and development. The purpose of the review was to gather background information and consolidate understanding of the wider context within which the funding and organisations operate, confirm the intent and purpose of the funding stream and its distribution, and support the subsequent development and design of interview questions.

1.3.2 Monitoring and evaluation support to YES funded grantee organisations

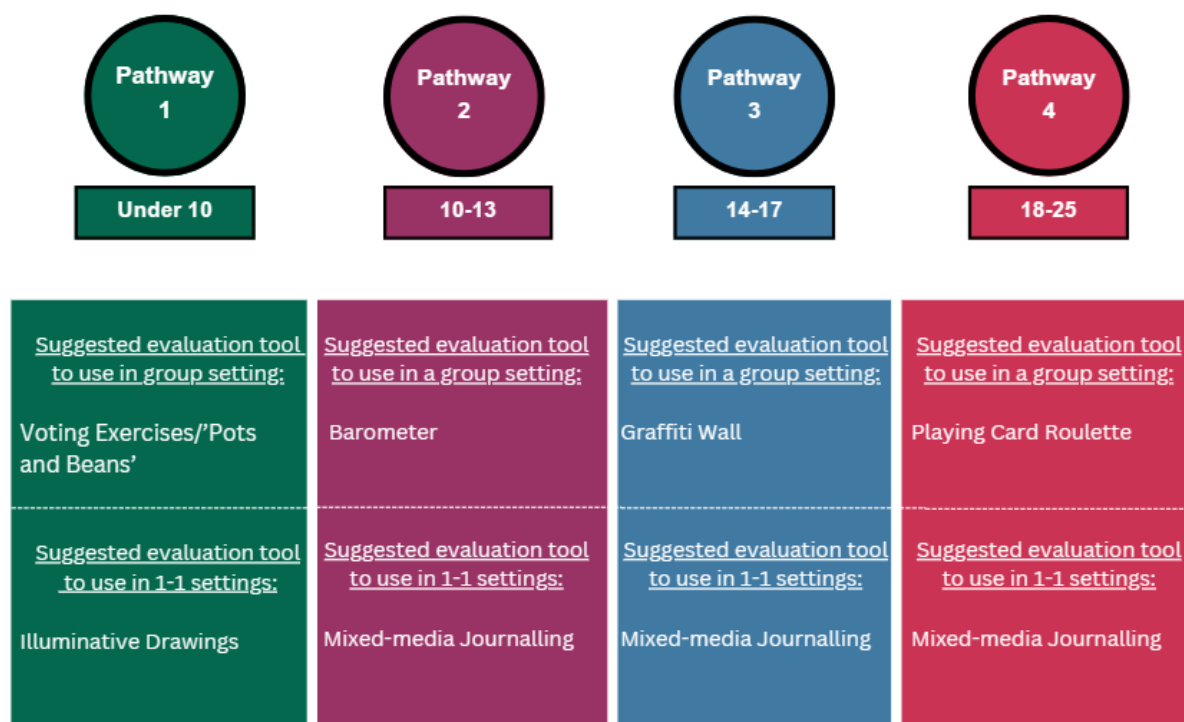
To support the delivery of the data collection, ERS created **guidance to administering and completing the research tools**, including how to select the correct tool pathway for each project or young person. This guidance was designed for grantee organisations and was presented in **two online interactive workshops, supported by two evaluation team members**. Alongside the interactive workshops, ERS also offered **1:1 engagement** with grantee organisations who wanted additional support or were unable to attend the workshop. This engagement is mainly via online 1:1 calls or phone calls with either lead delivery workers or managers. However, in order to remain flexible and adaptive to the needs of the grantee organisations we are working with, this engagement has also taken the form of detailed regular email correspondence and multiple meetings with the same organisation. Our bespoke approach ensures that all organisations have the same access and support, given at times that suit their needs in formats that are as accessible as possible.

1.3.3 Data collection from YES funded grantee organisations

Data collection was originally anticipated to be collected at the beginning and end of project delivery with all young people, however due to delays in funding and delivery linked to the tragic incident in Southport over summer 2024, grantees were asked to collect data only once, at the end of the project. Guidance and worksheets were provided, and online workshops were held to explain how to use the guidance. Organisations were asked to collect data from both groups and individuals, depending upon the nature of the work they were carrying out, and were asked to select a pathway based upon age to ensure consistency across the multiple groups.



Figure 1: Data collection pathway decision tree



Tools have been piloted during a testing phase, with young people engaged in MVRP activities.

1.3.4 Surveys of participants

As the evaluation engagement was delayed this affected some data collection amongst young people, specifically for those organisations who had chosen to carry out their work with cohorts. To capture as many views as possible of young people who were no longer engaged with projects an online e-survey was designed to mirror the questions collected by organisations with current young people. The survey was designed to be completed post engagement for young people to reflect on how the interventions had made them feel and received 45 responses.

1.3.5 Focus groups with young people

Nine organisations were selected for site visits, with consultation and activities undertaken with young people from across the organisation, alongside semi-structured interviews with staff members. Organisations ranged in location, size and delivery to provide a range of insights into what works well, and the impacts of different types of interventions on young people.

The organisations visited were:

- Stockbridge Village Galaxy FC
- Autism Adventures
- The Lodge
- Yellow House
- Community by Nature
- Inclusive Hub CIC
- People Empowered CIC
- The Vibe
- Future Yard

1.3.6 Focus groups with grantee organisations

Three online consultations took place with staff from 21 of the grantee organisations. An additional three calls were taken with individuals who were unable to attend any of the dates provided. These consultations were semi-structured focus groups with professionals aimed at understanding what had worked well, what were the barriers and challenges, and what will be the legacy of these projects.

1.3.7 Interview with MVRP

Two staff members from the MVRP undertook a semi structured interview to gain their insight into the fund, its delivery and the impacts on those young people involved.

1.3.8 Evaluation framework design

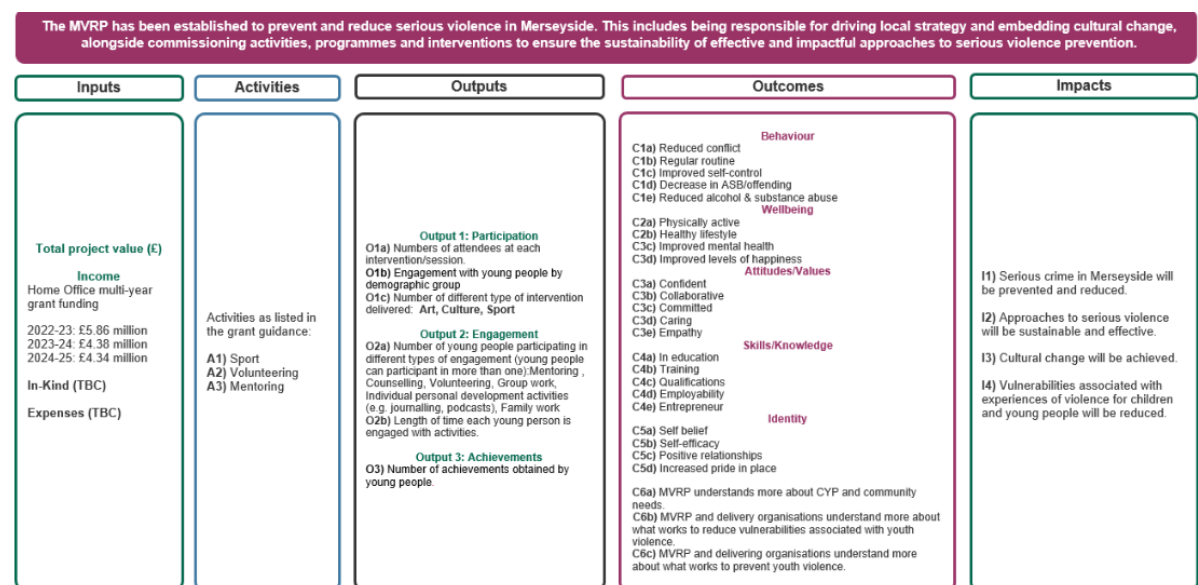
ERS was commissioned in early 2024 to develop an evaluation framework and approach for the 2024-2025 funding round of the Arts, Culture Sport fund (ACS), now the Youth Empowerment Scheme fund (YES). This involved the creation of an evaluation framework and guidance, peer mentoring guidance, and guidance and a toolkit for delivery organisations.

Broadly, the aims of the evaluation were:

- To ensure MVRP demonstrate the purpose and value of the YES Fund
- To support MVRP's understanding of the links between funded activities and the intended outcomes/ impacts of the YES Fund
- To develop a strong evidence-base, illuminating what works and why, to enable the MVRP to make future commissioning decisions, including creating the conditions for experimentation and innovation

1.3.9 Merseyside YES Fund Logic Model

Figure 2: YES Fund logic model





1.3.10 Challenges and adaptations

Data collection was originally anticipated to be collected at the beginning and end of project delivery with all young people, however due to delays in funding and delivery linked to the tragic incident in Southport over the summer 2024, grantees were asked to collect data only once, at the end of the project. This meant changes and adaptations to the initial evaluation framework, where a baseline – endline journey mapping exercise was no longer feasible.

As the engagement of the evaluation team with delivery organisations was delayed, this affected some data collection amongst young people. Specifically affected were those organisations who had chosen to carry out their work in planned cohorts. For those cohorts who had already worked through the programme between August and October 2024, no evaluation tools had been shared or used. To capture as many views as possible of young people who were no longer engaged with projects an online e-survey was developed and sent out by organisations, however there are limitations and restrictions to engagement when using this kind of survey, and no incentive given to young people to respond, as their engagement with the programme and potentially organisation had ceased.

The original evaluation design also included an element of mentoring and the development of a team of peer researchers to be identified from organisations receiving funding. Unfortunately, due to a number of reasons, including delays in delivery, delays in evaluation and the needs of the young people working with a number of the groups, this option was not felt to be appropriate.

1.4 Summary

- Merging the MVRP's ACS fund with the PCC's Youth Diversion Fund supported organisations to access larger grants to support their work.
- £494,810 was distributed to 30 organisations across five metropolitan boroughs of Merseyside.
- The MVRP uses a multi-agency Public Health Approach to preventing and tackling serious violence, meaning it is treated as a preventable issue and multiple agencies need to work together to address the root causes of violence and prevent its recurrence.
- YES is focused on funding the areas which, based on MVRP data, have seen the highest levels of violence, anti-social behaviour and the biggest cuts to youth services, supporting the delivery of a range of diversionary activities and engagement methods.
- A mixed methods approach to evaluation was implemented with bespoke data collection tools and consultations of young people, delivery organisations and stakeholders.
- A comprehensive framework was created including a logic model based upon the Theory of Change.
- Changes were made to the evaluation plan and data collection responding to the needs of the organisations and communities in the wake of the Southport incident.



2 Fund Achievements: Beneficiaries

This chapter considers the young people who take part in the programme, both their engagement and participation, alongside a wider look at the diversity of direct beneficiaries and typology of indirect beneficiaries. In doing so, this chapter will facilitate understanding and provide context for the subsequent chapters.

2.1 Core Beneficiaries

The core beneficiaries of the YES Fund are young people. This section begins with insights from delivery organisations around young people's participation and engagement, including barriers, trends, and best practices for sustaining long-term development. It then details the activities funded, highlighting project themes and issues targeted, illustrating what is on offer for young people. Finally, the section concludes with an analysis of beneficiary demographics to better understand who is being reached by this funding.

2.1.1 Participation and Engagement Insights

Comments provided by delivery organisations evidenced three potential **barriers to participation** during the course of delivery: provision of indoor facilities; affordability; and concern around safety.

The first was the challenge of providing **indoor facilities**, specifically in relation to sporting activities. One organisation detailed challenges around finding an *“indoor training facility big enough for all of the children”*. In the absence of a space, this particular organisation was forced to cancel two sessions due to unsuitable weather conditions, causing disruption in consistency for the young people. They cited that a best practice going forward would be identify and book indoor facilities earlier in the year to maintain participation numbers.

The second barrier to participation was **affordability**. Specifically, in the context of the cost-of-living crisis and in recognition that 79 per cent of delivery organisations see ‘people living in poverty’ as one of their primary beneficiary groups (n=29). In response to these barriers, one delivery organisation stated that to mitigate these risks they would spend time beforehand researching appropriate facilities that were both indoors and more centralised for beneficiaries. The challenge of affordability not only refers to the cost of attending sessions but also to the cost of travel. This travel cost was particularly relevant as many young people and their parents/carers were concerned about safety if a young person were to commute on foot to sessions/activities.

This **concern around safety** was the third barrier to participation. This becomes all the more relevant in the aftermath of the Southport Riots, 30th July to 5th August 2024. In focus groups, delivery organisations shared the challenges following the riots, including parents in particular being reluctant to allow their children to attend sessions. Delivery organisations responded by utilising funding *“to be out and about on the streets talking with people”* and by continuously risk assessing sessions, working *“with the police so we had police on standby if issues came up”*. Additionally, in the context of the Southport riots, defined by racial violence, one delivery organisation identified *“a 40 per cent reduction in participation among young people of colour, who were afraid to join activities”*, an observation echoed by a number of other organisations. This particular organisation sought to reduce these barriers alongside atmospheres of fear, and hostility by facilitating sessions to encourage positive relationships and wider community collaboration to support and rebuild trust.

Also observable through conversation with delivery organisations were certain **trends around engagement** and **best practices for engagement**.



One delivery organisation observed a trend where attendees constantly fell between Year 7 to Year 10. Beyond this **age range**, they found it difficult to maintain engagement in the group. This may link to other feedback from delivery organisations around difficulty sustaining engagement with those aged 15-17, as a consequence of mock GCSE and A-level exams. Also identified were **key engagement periods or occasions**, such as Halloween, Bonfire and Mischief night⁶, where diversionary activities are beneficial not just to the young people but the wider community. This is because delivery organisations identify these nights as occasion of disruptive behaviour. In recognition of this several groups diverted resources or planned in advance a suite of diversionary activities over these days. A final observation around engagement challenges was in keeping **SEND young people**, specifically those with ADHD engaged, best practice indicated that having *“visual supports and sensory tools helped them stay focused and be able to stay part of the session”*. Additional best practice implemented by delivery organisations, specifically pertaining to engagement, included, centring the voice of young people in delivery design. This ensured activities were suitable for the beneficiaries and also empowered young people through a **sense of ownership**. A further best practice identified by one specific organisation was having relatable educators, often with **lived experience**, of the issue they were running workshops on.

2.1.2 Project Theme/Activity Type

Having considered challenges and mitigations around participation and engagement, this section explores intervention types, and the range of activities on offer. This section will demonstrate that the breadth of activities available were proportional to the wide range of project themes and the wide range of beneficiaries themselves, be it core or indirect beneficiaries.

Five broad **project themes** were developed. These were to:

1. Advance people's physical and mental health, wellbeing and safety
2. Connect people with the arts, culture and heritage
3. Improve life skills, education, employability and enterprise
4. Maximise ability to strengthen community cohesion and build social capacity
5. Promote reduction of isolation and disadvantage and access to local services

As demonstrated in Table 2 the most common project theme was to *advance people's physical and mental health, wellbeing and safety*, with 5,628 beneficiaries being targeted⁷. Whilst the theme *improve life skills, education, employability and enterprise* had a low percentage coverage of organisations focussing on the theme, only three of 30 delivery organisations, the number of beneficiaries engaged is relatively high. More so than the theme *maximise ability to strengthen community cohesion and build social capacity*, which was projected to reach 1,030 beneficiaries. Whilst these figures represent core themes it is common that projects may have targeted intersecting themes.

⁶ Mischief Night is an informal tradition observed in various regions, often on the night before Halloween (October 30th) or Bonfire Night (November 4th). In the UK, Mischief Night is celebrated in some areas, particularly in the North of England, where it remains a local tradition. It is characterised by activities ranging from innocuous pranks to disruptive behaviour.

⁷ As projected by grant applications.



Table 2: Project Themes

Project Theme	Number of Delivery Organisations focused on theme (n=30)	Percentage of Delivery Organisations focused on that theme	Number of beneficiaries targeted (n=11,588)
Advance people's physical and mental health, wellbeing and safety	19	63%	5,628
Connect people with the arts, culture and heritage	1	3%	930
Improve life skills, education, employability and enterprise	3	10%	3,940
Maximise ability to strengthen community cohesion and build social capacity	6	20%	1,030
Promote reduction of isolation and disadvantage and access to local services	1	3%	60

As projects commonly targeted intersecting project themes, it is also possible to observe projects using a mix of activities as well.

Figure 3: Number of delivery organisations working with activity type (n=30).



Delivery organisations, in response to a broad and diverse beneficiary pool, took a multi-faceted approach to intervention type. Whilst all projects offered group activities, 50 per cent specifically detailed offering 1:1 support in their grant application. Reflecting both the unique needs of the beneficiaries and the array of outcomes targeted, 50 per cent of all delivery organisations offered a mix of activities in their project. By offering a range of activities, delivery organisations with diverse beneficiary groups can offer activities that appeal across age groups. On average delivery organisations work across four of the six age ranges demonstrating that for many, activities must be diverse in order to meet the need and interest of the beneficiaries themselves (n=29). Of those organisations choosing a singular activity type, sport was the most popular. As identified in the outcomes section, there is a positive correlation between physical activity and mental wellbeing, and this may in part explain the popularity of the activity type.

In addition to the five project themes, there was also a wide range of specific **issues that were** targeted by delivery organisations. These were outlined in the end of grant reports. Much like the project themes, it is evident from both grant applications and end of grant reports that many organisations targeted numerous issues in tandem.



Table 3: Primary issue addressed by delivery organisation (n=29).

Primary issue addressed	Number of delivery organisations focussing on these issues (n=29)
Anti-social behaviour	11
Stronger communities/Community support and development	3
Crime and safety	2
Mental health	2
Poverty and disadvantage	2
Sport and recreation	2
Arts, culture and heritage	1
Building skills and improving access to employment	1
Domestic violence	1
Health, wellbeing and serious illness	1
Offending/At risk of offending	1
Reducing isolation	1
Violence and Exploitation	1

As demonstrated above, the key issue targeted is anti-social behaviour, with 40 per cent of delivery organisations citing this as the core issue addressed.

The end of grant report also provides an opportunity for delivery organisations to report outputs across various categories of impact. Whilst these outputs do not correspond directly to the outcomes assessed by the YES Fund evaluation⁸ they are demonstrative of the scope of activity undertaken. For the purpose of analysis, the outputs have been organised to align with relevant outcomes, with the exception of *support vulnerable people* which is better represented by beneficiary type. It is also important to note that these outputs are recorded against by a smaller sample of delivery organisations and so are not reflective of programme wide outputs. (see Appendix for full table).

⁸ Conflict; Self-Control; Mental Health; Physically Active; Confidence; Empathy; Education; Employability; Positive Relationships; Pride in Place

Table 4: Snapshot of outputs delivered across a sample of delivery organisations.

Support Vulnerable People:	Total (n=4)
Number of people accessing support services as a result of the project	269
Number of people supported to achieve independent living/require less living support as a result of the project	244
Number of people who participated in community activities as part of the project	480
Behaviour: Reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour	Total (n=14)
Number of young people who took part in a project/programme and had not re-offended within a period of 3 months	46
Number of people taking part in a project/programme designed to divert them away from anti-social behaviour	1,896
Number of perpetrators of domestic abuse taking part in a project/programme designed to divert them away from abusive behaviour	31
Wellbeing: Increase access to sport, exercise and leisure activities	Total (n=7)
Number of hours of sport, exercise & leisure activities provided by the project	913
Wellbeing: Improve health (physical / mental / emotional)	Total (n=14)
Number of activities promoting healthy lifestyles (e.g. healthy eating, smoking cessation etc)	743
Number of people who participated in sport, exercise & leisure activities	1,122
Skills/Knowledge: Increase employability	Total (n=2)
Number of people who gained sustainable employment as a result of the project	11
Number of people who started on the path to employability as a result of the project	75
Skills/Knowledge: Promote opportunities for creativity	Total (n=2)
Number of people participating in projects that promote creativity as part of the project	209
Number of projects that promote creativity	16
Community: Strengthen organisations through capacity building	Total (n=2)
Number of new partnerships established as a result of the project	21
Community: Improve the community working together	Total (n=2)
Number of hours of community activity provided as part of the project	210
Community: Promote safer communities	Total (n=2)
Number of people who reported that they felt safer in their communities as a result of the project	147
Number of people who reported feeling safer in their communities as a result of the project	147
Number of people being supported as victims of anti-social behaviour or crime as a result of the project	25
Community: Improve community facilities	Total (n=1)
Number of people who reported that the community facilities were improved as a result of the project	138

Also demonstrated by this data set, is the number of beneficiaries engaging for the first time with activities as a result of the programme. Whilst the sample size is small, it is not demonstrative of achievement across all delivery organisations but is indicative of the potential for new engagement.

Table 5: Output table showing new engagement with activities.

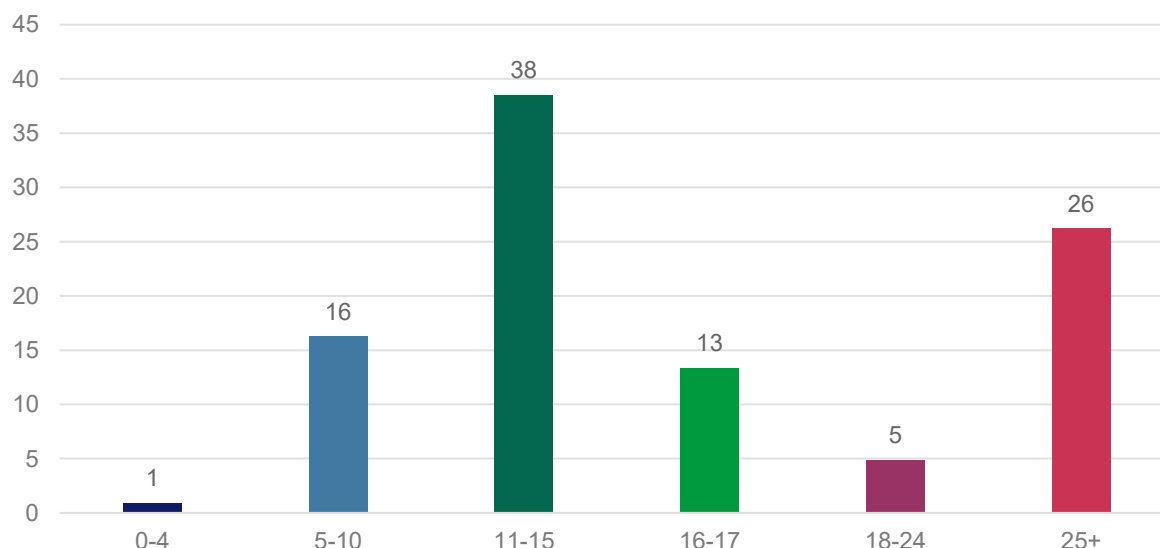
New Engagement Outputs	Total	
Number of people accessing support services for the first time as a result of the project	(n=5)	196
Number of people who participated in community activities for the first time as part of the project	(n=5)	352
Number of new people taking part in sport, exercise & leisure activities as part of the project	(n=7)	896
Number of people who attended training for the first time as part of the project	(n=2)	22
Number of people who gain new skills for the first time as part of the project	(n=2)	60
Number of people who gained accreditation for the first time as a result of the project	(n=2)	6
Number of people taking part in arts activities for the first time as part of the project	(n=2)	273

2.1.3 Beneficiary Demographics

Beneficiary data collated via the monitoring form is not able to authentically provide the specific number of beneficiaries for each organisation, due to non-mandatory categories of information and mixed approaches to data imputing. Whilst reporting against age, borough and ethnicity provides an indication of beneficiaries per delivery organisation, discrepancies between these totals means it is only possible to detail the number of young people reported against that specific category. However, what is possible to ascertain from the data, is proportions of beneficiaries by demographic indicators. These include age, gender, ethnicity and borough. This data demonstrates the diversity of beneficiaries and indicates groups of young people that are engaged by the YES Fund.

2.1.3.1 Age

Figure 4: Percentage of young people reached by age range (n=30)⁹.



As demonstrated above, the majority of core beneficiaries reached were between the ages of 11-15. With those aged 25+ constituting the second largest group of beneficiaries at 26 per cent. However, one organisation reported significantly larger beneficiary numbers, reporting the age ranges of 7,483 beneficiaries. In contrast the average number of beneficiaries, from all delivery organisations, reported against age was 588. If excluding that one organisation, the average number of beneficiaries becomes

⁹ Age range as defined by monitoring form



342 per delivery organisation. This caveat is significant because that organisation also reported a very high number of beneficiaries reached over the age of 25. If they were excluded the percentage of those reached over 25 years of age drops from 26 per cent to three per cent.

What can be learnt is that in terms of overall beneficiaries reached the two highest age groups would be 11-15 and 25+ (shown Figure 4). However, it is possible to say that across all 30 delivery organisations, intervention was not specifically targeted against those over the age of 25+ but that one organisation was particularly successful in reaching beneficiaries of that age.

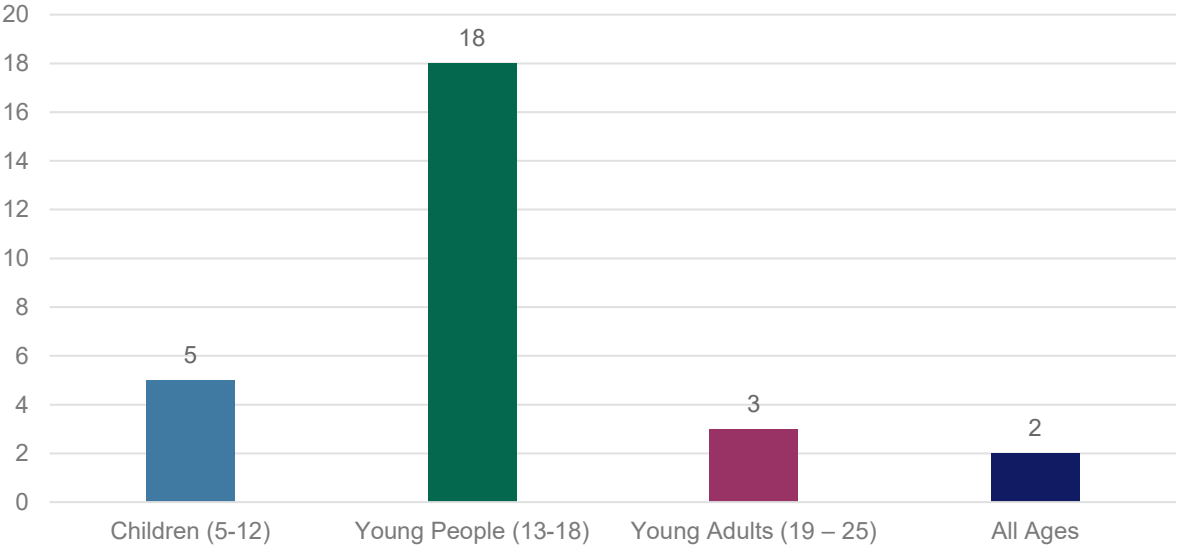
The age ranges shown above are as reported in the monitoring data. However, there is a secondary categorisation of age which is stipulated in the grant application and subsequent end of project reports. These age ranges are defined as the following:

- Children (5-12)
- Young People (13-18)
- Young Adults (19-25)
- All ages

Of the 28 delivery organisations that reported primary age group at both application and in the end of grant report, only four changed their response. Three organisations changed from Children (5-12) to Young People (13-18) and one organisation changed from Young People (13-18) to all ages.

The breakdown of age ranges by these criteria is as follows:

Figure 5: Number of Delivery Organisations targeting each ‘Primary Age Group’ (n=28).



Whilst beneficiary numbers reported in the previous graph (Figure 4) show a high number of those reached over 25+, Figure 5 shows that 82 per cent of delivery organisations see *children to young people*, five -18 years old, as the **core** beneficiary group.

2.1.3.2 Gender

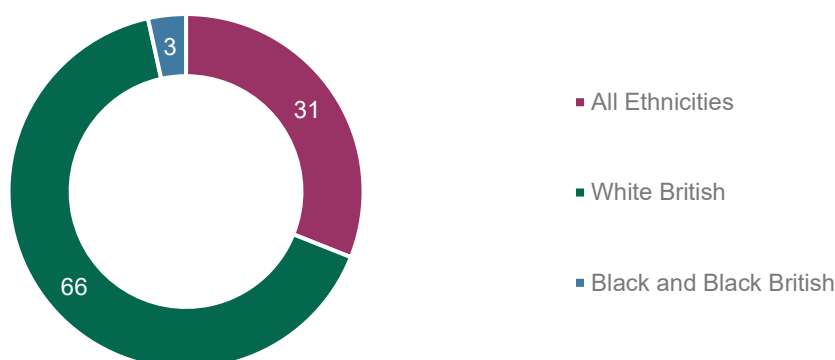
Provided through the end of grant reports, 28 delivery organisations gave the percentage of male to female beneficiaries. In the absence of concrete beneficiary numbers for those organisations, it is only possible to give the average percentage. Across 28 delivery organisations this is 59 per cent male to 41 percent female.



2.1.3.3 Ethnicity

Whilst the programme did not stipulate reaching wider ethnic groups as a formal objective, delivery organisations collected two sets of data in regard to ethnicity. The first was *primary ethnicity group* recorded by delivery organisation and the second was *self-identified ethnicity* reported as individuals.

Figure 6: Percentage of Delivery Organisations working with 'Primary Ethnicity Group' (n=29).



As demonstrated above, 66 per cent of delivery organisations reporting against ethnicity cited *White British* as the most common ethnicity of beneficiaries. This is reflected in the self-identified ethnicity data. The three per cent constitutes a single organisation citing *Black and Black British* as their primary ethnicity group. Significantly 31 per cent of delivery organisations citing *all ethnicities* is also reflected in the second data set, not only by actual number of beneficiaries reporting but also number of different ethnicities categories provided. The table below also provides a comparison against ethnicity as reported by the 2021 census, across all five Merseyside boroughs.

Table 6: Percentage total of beneficiaries, self-reported ethnicity (n=1423).

Self-Identified Ethnicity	Percentage of total beneficiary responses by Self-Identified Ethnicity	Percentage of total of Merseyside population by Self-Identified Ethnicity ¹⁰
White - British	75.83	87.29
Other (incl. prefer not to say)	6.45	5.83 ¹¹
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	5.97	0.05
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2.94	0.75
Black - Black British - African	2.04	1.13
White - Irish	1.74	0.95
Mixed - White and Asian	1.22	0.54
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1.15	0.51
Mixed - White and Black African	0.81	0.49
Black – Black British - Caribbean	0.74	0.17
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.44	0.33
White Roma	0.29	0.12
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0.25	0.93
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0.13	0.27

¹⁰ ONS Data, **2021 Census**, 'Population by ethnic group, 2021, local authorities in England and Wales'.

¹¹ NB: For Census Data, this does not refer to 'prefer not to say'. It refers to those identifying as 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian; Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black; Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups; White: Other White; Other ethnic group: Arab'.



2.1.3.4 Borough

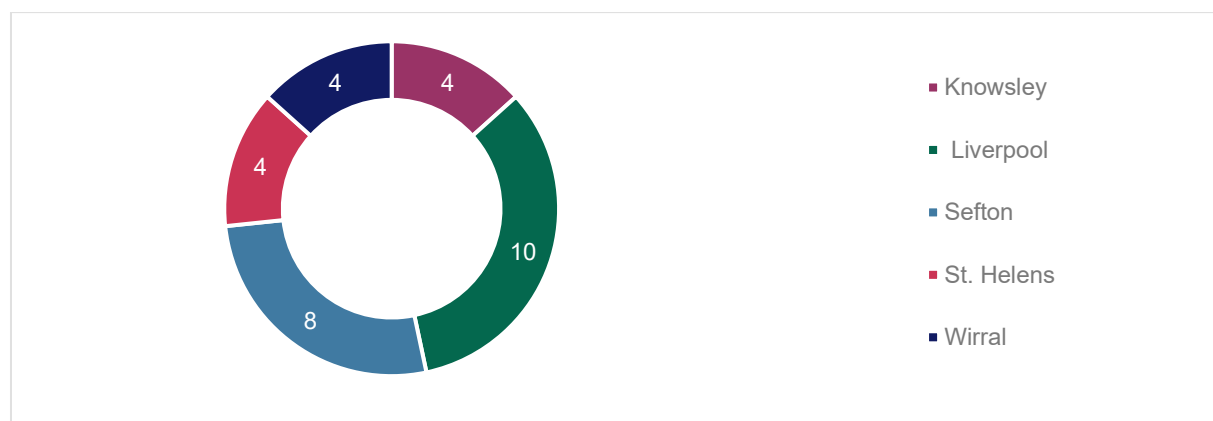
There are five boroughs that make up the metropolitan county of Merseyside: Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral.

Table 7: Breakdown of populations and Wards by Borough.

Borough	Population (2021) ¹²	Wards
Knowsley	153,000	Prescot, Page Moss, Stockbridge Village, Northwood
Liverpool	500,000	Speke, Toxteth, Dovecot, Yew Tree, Norris Green, Walton, Prince Park (Riverside Ward ¹³)
Sefton	275,000	Linacre, Southport, Crosby, Netherton and Orrel, Litherland
St. Helens	180,000	St Helens Town Centre, Parr
Wirral	320,000	Birkenhead, Tranmere, Bidston, St. James, Seacombe

Whilst often delivery organisations extend their reach beyond their borough, either from beneficiaries travelling to certain projects or through benefits accruing amongst the wider community, each organisation was affiliated to a certain borough.

Figure 7: Number of delivery organisations in each Borough (n=30).



As demonstrated by the figure above, 18 organisations were based in Liverpool and Sefton. With 4 organisations operating out of Knowsley, St. Helens and the Wirral.

The graph below demonstrates the percentage total of reported¹⁴ beneficiaries reached by borough. It uses two datasets. The first, represented in pink, represents the 29 organisations that reported against area in their monitoring data. The second, represented in green, shows the same data set but excluding one delivery organisation. This organisation reported 6,721 beneficiaries against area reporting for Knowsley. As demonstrated by the graph below, the data from this one organisation significantly impacts the area proportions. Both data representations are however useful. The pink bar can be said to demonstrate actual beneficiaries reached, the green bar perhaps better displays geographical spread of intervention on average.

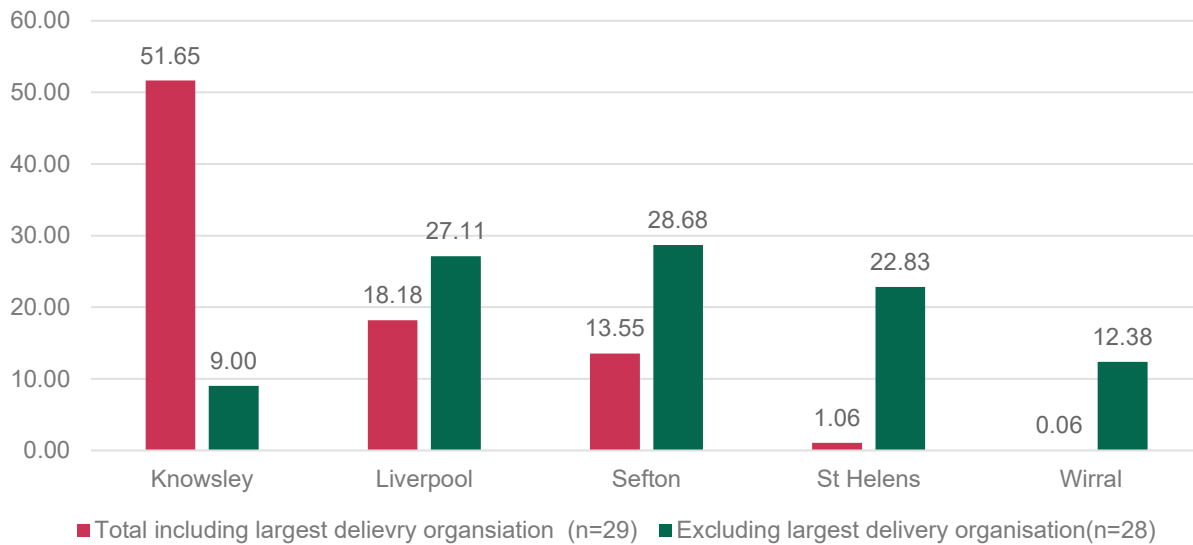
¹² ONS, Data and Analysis, 2021 Census (Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand for clarity)

¹³ Riverside Ward dissolved in 2023

¹⁴ Reported meaning, delivery organisations reporting monitoring figures against this demographic criteria only.



Figure 8: Percentage total of beneficiaries, reported across each borough.



Across all 29 delivery organisations, the most beneficiaries were reached in Knowsley with 51.65 per cent of all beneficiaries being from the area. However, when excluding the largest organisation, we can see that the other 28 organisations roughly align with their operating base. Liverpool and Sefton occupy the largest percentage of beneficiaries reached. And whilst Knowsley, St. Helens and the Wirral are not equal in beneficiaries despite four delivery organisations operating in each area the range is nine per cent to 22.83 per cent. As opposed to the total 29 organisations showing a range of 0.06 per cent to 51.65 per cent across those three boroughs.

2.2 Wider Beneficiaries

Following an exploration of the range of beneficiaries reached, this section goes on to identify typologies of indirect beneficiaries, namely families and communities. This section looks at the range of outcomes for each beneficiary type, an overview of training offered through the programme, and the number of volunteers engaged.

2.2.1 Beneficiary's Range

On average each delivery organisation recorded working with eight distinct beneficiary groups, ranging from one beneficiary group to 19 per organisation (n=29). What is apparent from this data is the diverse range of beneficiary groups reached beyond children and young people which was covered by all 29 organisations.

There were seven beneficiary types that were targeted by 50 per cent or more of the delivery organisations. These included: Children and young people; People living in poverty; People with mental health issues; Families/Parents/Lone parents; Ex-offenders/offenders/At risk of offending; Local residents and Victims of crime/violence/abuse.



Table 8: Beneficiary types engaged.

Beneficiary Type	Number of Number of Delivery Organisations focused on that beneficiary group (n=29)	Percentage of Delivery Organisations covering beneficiary type
Children and young people	29	100
People living in poverty	23	79
People with mental health issues	18	62
Families/Parents/Lone parents	17	59
Ex-offenders/offenders/At risk of offending	16	55
Local residents	16	55
Victims of crime/violence/abuse	15	52
People with learning difficulties	14	48
Not in education, employment and training (NEET 16)	13	45
People with low skill levels	11	38
People with alcohol/drug addictions	9	31
Women	9	31
Black, Asian and minority ethnic	8	28
Carers	8	28
People with physical difficulties	7	24
LGBT	6	21
Refugees/asylum seekers /immigrants	6	21
Men	5	17
People with multiple disabilities	4	14
Homeless people	3	10
Long-term unemployed	3	10
People in care or suffering serious illness	3	10
Older People	2	7

2.2.2 Indirect beneficiaries

What is apparent through the analysis is not only the diversity of core beneficiaries and associated outcomes but also the wide range of indirect beneficiaries reached through delivery. As reported in the monitoring data, across three quarters, July 2024-March 2025, delivery organisations estimated they reached 5,861 indirect beneficiaries. This is an estimate because indirect beneficiaries are calculated on a case-by-case basis, with some organisations opting to base it on average family size i.e. one core beneficiary to an average family of four and others choosing alternate methods.

This is in part due to the holistic nature of the fund which fosters community wide change, supporting long-term sustainable support networks. These indirect beneficiaries can be grouped into two key categories, families of direct beneficiaries, and the wider community in which they live. Each group experiences these benefits in a multitude of ways.

Indirect Beneficiaries: Families

For families of direct beneficiaries one such way they benefitted was through the empowerment of parents/carers. Through certain projects parents/carers have been provided with resources, advice and support through which they can better understand their children's emotional and behavioural needs.



With some organisations reporting positive feedback from parents/carers citing decreased tensions and frustrations at home. There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that these learnings have then been shared with wider networks, be it other parents outside the group or the wider family unit, further extending the impact. Another way in which families are benefiting indirectly is through opportunities for parents/carers to participate themselves in sessions. This provides not only increased time with their children and opportunities for learning/training, but it fosters greater interaction and increases wider awareness of young people's needs and lives.



'Working in partnership with the local gym we...put together a fitness session for parents and young people to do together that will increase physical and mental health of families and also give families the opportunity to do something together which is often not possible with young people who struggle to access a gym so by removing these barriers we can support the whole family and offer the space and environment to succeed.'

- Delivery Organisation

Another indirect benefit for families is the facilitation of re-building relationships with their young people. This extended beyond parents to the whole family unit, especially siblings. Delivery organisations indicate that through children demonstrating better self-regulation and engagement at home, family dynamics are reportedly improving. This maybe through improved wellbeing of young people as targeted by the intervention as well as the application of skills and tools such as emotional regulation and conflict resolution.



'There are multiple incidences in this time period when we have experienced the relationships between our participants and their parents and wider family improve quite significantly due to activity at [Delivery Organisation]. For example, some of our young people feel quite hopeless and have not only struggled in education but are looked at by many as unemployable. This leaves parents and family members very frustrated, and communication has broken down (we hear the word "nagging" quite a lot). Through our programmes we have given those young people new skills and confidence which has contributed towards re-building relationships within their families. We've seen a renewed sense of pride from parents and a positive look to the future.'

- Delivery Organisation

Alongside the benefits to the wider family network, the involvement and inclusion of family into delivery has the additional benefit of allowing facilitators to build trust with the families themselves, fostering a more collaborative, whole family, approach to young people's wellbeing. In addition, trust between the delivery organisation and parents/carers offers another benefit which is *"parents/carers benefitting by knowing their children are in a safe environment rather than being exposed to negative influences such as crime and ASB."* (Delivery Organisation).

Indirect Beneficiaries: Community

The first way in which the community as a whole may benefit from the fund and suite of projects is through the reinvigoration of young peoples' attitude towards the community. Be it through empowering young people to make change within their community or an increased awareness and empathy towards the community. This has also been facilitated through intergenerational activities. One delivery organisation detailed such a shift in attitude, noting that *"young people previously involved in disruptive activities showed improved attitudes and behaviour. Discussions about the impact of anti-social*



behaviour (ASB) helped them understand how their actions affect the broader community.” A beneficiary of their project shared:



‘I didn’t think how we acted mattered, but now I see how it can affect others. I’m trying to do better.’

- Young Person

With a reduction in ASB the wider community’s safety invariably benefits, one delivery organisation expanded further on this: *“due to reduced youth involvement in crime and antisocial behaviour, local businesses experienced less vandalism and theft, leading to a safer shopping environment and potentially increased business”*. The reduction of ASB also leads to a reduced burden on law enforcement and social services in the area.

The final way in which the wider community benefits is through positive outcomes manifesting in schools. This can include greater attendance and engagement in school as well as more generally through better behaviour in educational settings- improving outcomes not just for direct beneficiaries but also their classmates.

2.2.3 Trainings

In total, across the five boroughs, 342 individuals received training.

Figure 9: Number of individuals trained per Borough (n=342).



Knowsley had the highest number of individuals trained, 181, which is in line with the percentage total of beneficiaries reached in that area which was 51.65 per cent. Equally the Wirral had the least number of individuals trained, 15, which is also in alignment with percentage total of beneficiaries reached of 0.06 per cent. This suggests resource matched needs in relation to quantity of beneficiaries per borough.

Table 9: Training undertaken as part of the programme

Training	Accreditation ¹⁵	Type
Child Safeguarding	Level 2	Child Protection and Safeguarding
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Level 3	Child Protection and Safeguarding
NSPCC Child Protection	Level 1/2/3	Child Protection and Safeguarding
Online Safety Training	N/A	Child Protection and Safeguarding
First Aid	Level 2	Health and Safety
Food Hygiene	Level 2	Health and Safety

¹⁵ NB: likely not all CPD, some may be formal qualifications rather than ongoing professional development



Beauty	Level 2	Sports
Boxing England Safeguarding	N/A	Sports
England Boxing Coaching	Level 1/2	Sports
FA Coaching	Level 1/2	Sports
LTA Tennis Coach	Level 2	Sports
Parkour Coaching	Level 1	Sports
Mindflow, Mindfulness and Wellbeing	N/A	Wellbeing
Mentoring	Level 2	Youth Work
Youth Work	Level 2/3/6	Youth Work

2.2.4 Volunteers engaged

Across the 30 delivery organisations staff have been supported by 248 volunteers, with an average of eight volunteers per delivery organisation. Roughly half (121), of these volunteers have been engaged as a direct result of the funding.

2.3 Summary

- Delivery organisations identified three key barriers to **participation**: provision of indoor facilities; affordability; and concern around safety.
- Delivery organisations also identified three trends in **engagement**. These included difficulties maintaining engagement for those aged 15-17 due to academic pressures around examinations. identification of key engagement periods where diversionary activities were productive (Halloween, Bonfire and Mischief night) and the necessity to adopt specialised engagement tools for SEND young people such as visual supports and sensory tools.
- Demographic data demonstrated a **wide range of beneficiaries engaged**, specifically a wide age range and as such the variety of activities on offer alongside intersecting themes and issues addressed represent the complexity of the intervention.
- Whilst the majority of beneficiaries engaged were *White British* the record of an additional 13+ ethnicities demonstrates the reach of the projects. Additionally, whilst all 30 delivery organisations targeted *young people* as beneficiaries the additional targeting of a further 22 beneficiary types also demonstrate far reaching engagement. Seven of those beneficiary types were covered by 50 per cent or more of delivery organisations.
- Benefits and unexpected outcomes were accrued amongst **indirect beneficiaries** as well as core beneficiaries, representing the holistic nature of the fund which fosters community wide change, supporting long-term sustainable support networks. And in alignment with the whole family approach.



3 Delivery

This chapter explores the delivery of the YES funded projects identifying key themes from the engagement in relation to barriers, challenges and what works. As previously described, the 30 different projects worked with a range of young people across the Merseyside region, each supporting the particular needs and challenges of the local communities in different ways.

3.1 Challenges/Barriers to delivery

The majority of projects (=26) undertook diversionary developmental outreach, a large number (=19) used a tailored intervention approach, almost half (=12) engaged via awareness raising or education-based interactions, and nine focussed on the issue of offending/reoffending. For most projects there were no planned changes to delivery, however projects encountered a number of challenges, through which some useful learning points were identified for future delivery and engagement.

Multiple projects reported that increased numbers of participants affected staffing requirements which in turn had an impact on delivery. Projects either had to divert money away from other elements (such as excursions or resources) to support the demand for staff time or increase the use of volunteers to expand and widen sessions and the type of work they were able to deliver.

One project reported a lack of understanding about the requirement for resource to complete admin and monitoring, with staff undertaking this in their spare time on a voluntary basis to ensure that requirements were met. This project however noted that this was a good learning experience for future bid requirements and project delivery, increasing the staff understanding.

Another challenge leading in some instances to changes to delivery cited by multiple projects was that of delays and the weather. Inability to deliver certain elements due to the conditions, alongside the availability of facilities, partners and resources caused delays to timeframes and in some instances meant that projects had to adapt and change approach or intervention. For example, the bad winter weather disrupted the activities of one organisation so much that they decided to divert some resources into paying for an indoor space and raise the rest of the cost via charges to participants.

Another interesting challenge that was raised as a point to consider for future delivery, was that of engagement at various times when there were other priorities and opportunities for young people. A number of projects cited finding engagement more difficult over the Halloween/Bonfire night period, when there were more opportunities for young people to engage in anti-social behaviour. Whilst others found that young people studying for GCSE or A Levels, disengaged on a large scale around mock exam time. Projects reflected that these time periods will need to be considered in the future to ensure that the right groups are targeted with support and opportunities at the right times for them.

The most important challenge to date for delivery of the 2024/25 YES funding round however, was the attack in Southport in July 2024 and the riots that followed because of this. This was reported by almost all projects throughout consultation work, highlighting the reluctance of parents to let young people attend groups, but also the fear and trauma experienced by the communities of Liverpool, specifically those in Southport. Not only did the incident itself make young people and families unwilling to engage in activities, but the race divide and community tensions that ensued rippled through the groups of young people and throughout the wider communities. A number of projects praised the fund for allowing them to continue their work at a time when visibility and support was much needed. Some projects directly attributed the fund to ensuring that families and communities reengaged, whilst others stated that the tragedy had compelled their young people and wider communities to engage in those difficult conversations and had felt more connected as a result.



Although the engagement of diverse groups such as neurodiverse young people, or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was widely reported to be successful, it also raised a number of challenges and highlighted the lack of external support services/availability of services to support young people with more challenging needs. Some projects reported changing their approach to working with families with SEND to ensure that they better suited the needs of these families. Whilst others described changing activities and timelines to reflect the requirements of neurodiverse young people, who wished to undertake tasks of their choosing at their own pace.

3.2 Unexpected Outcomes

Feedback from young people participating in activities, and from data collected across the projects points towards positive outcomes and engagement. A number of unexpected outcomes were highlighted by projects emerging from the work that they were delivering to young people, families and communities.

Gaining new skills across young people, families and staff teams was noted by multiple organisations, including for example, developing better mental health awareness amongst staff, alongside identifying more opportunities for partnership working.

The increase of wider community access to buildings, services and projects was highlighted by a number of organisations, citing engagement with wider community services, and an increased sense of community and belonging being expressed by those engaged, including young people, parents and local community members.

One organisation expressed that greater trust between children and family members was established, which although was not one of the aims of the project, supported resilience and wellbeing both at home and within the wider community, thanks to the support and facilitation of conversations and interventions from staff teams. Alongside these relationships, a number of organisations reported the strengthening of peer relationships and support amongst young people, with one project stating, *“although a key goal was reducing isolation, we didn’t expect the result to be so noticeable”*. Another organisation described how the project had brought together two groups from an area of organised crime, with a history of racial abuse, tension and conflict. The project facilitated these groups to come together within the community via the use of a youth bus, and engage in sessions with each other, learning and understanding each other’s perspectives. The staff have reported witnessing the young people playing football together on the streets now, and a reduction in the conflict and racial abuse between them.

3.3 What works

Projects approached the same problem of anti-social behaviour and violence in many different ways; however, one theme was consistently cited by young people, families and delivery staff as being an integral element to the work that was being carried out. The creation of a safe space for young people was provided by all the projects, in various forms, from actual buildings offering physical safe spaces, to groups and sessions where young people could safely express and be themselves. Where sports-based activities were the main intervention approach, coaches aimed to promote safe spaces where young people could not only train physically but also confide any concerns or problems they may have in their wider life, whilst engaging in exercise. This was reinforced by some of the arts-based projects, explaining that it is sometimes easier to have a difficult conversation whilst your hands and eyes are engaged in drawing/creating a piece of artwork, removing the barrier of making eye contact and having the topic of discussion the only focus in the room. One organisation, which has been established since the 1980s, explained that it has created a long-lasting community of like-minded individuals, all focussed upon sharing their experiences and supporting young people to learn from their



lived experiences and understand the ways that their actions and interactions affected people and the world around them.

The importance of the safe space to share and grow, was confirmed by multiple projects, with an emphasis on the need for support from peers as well as trusted adults. One example was given by an organisation who were supporting a young person who had lost their mum and struggled through this difficult time of grief. The staff remarked that the peer support they had received from the group had been amazing. Having strong male voices from the coaches and older team members as well as his teammates had been of huge importance, and he had expressed to the team that without that support he would have taken his own life.

The groups have created new communities for young people to feel included, safe and supported. A growth and development of empathy and encouragement is supported through the different activities and approaches, with the same aim, to empower all young people to look after each other and the community, making the area a nicer place to be, and somewhere the young people felt they could belong. One organisation stated that *“creating a sense of comradeship for our young people was key”*. In another project, a member of the U13 team stated that the personalities were what made the place special. This project, through the training and development of a sports team, have created an environment where *“you can always find someone to talk to if you need to”*. Across the delivery, young people at every age confirmed they all knew who they could go to if they needed support, including their peers/older young people in their groups, alongside trained coaches and workers.

The engagement of young people with SEND and neurodiversity as targeted groups by a number of projects has been successful, cited by staff, families and young people themselves. A key theme running through all consultation was how inclusive the projects have been. By using very targeted activities and approaches, that address the specific needs of local communities, the projects have actively engaged with a range of groups across communities, offering opportunities to come together, learn and grow. One project, for example, used their mobile youth bus as a first step to engagement with groups and individuals on the streets, and through building trust and confidence with these groups, has successfully increased the number of young people attending its youth centre. Inclusive elements of delivery and support have brought young people together who may never have been in contact and exposed them to other viewpoints. This has developed friendships and relationships that staff were not expecting to see grow. Diversity of engagement has taught empathy across a number of projects, with both young people and delivery teams expressing that young people have learnt to be more mindful that you don't know what another person's experience is, and not to judge others.

In one organisation consultations were held by the evaluation team with a number of young people of various ages attending different sessions. All the young people spoken to noted that their fitness levels and health was positively increasing due to attending training at the project, and that this in turn helped improve their mental health. Every young person however was keen to point out that coming to the project wasn't just about their fitness, discussing feelings of having a space that was theirs to come together, knowing there was somewhere where no one was left out, a place where those who didn't traditionally have a space, had one. This was a priority for all the young people attending this project, with real pride and passion being demonstrated at all levels of the project for a place where all were welcome to train, grow and develop.

Another key element to the success of these projects, has been the involvement and engagement of the wider community. One project reported that community members have commented that they feel safer seeing the project working on the streets, whilst another expressed that the centre had grown in popularity since the funding, as wider community members felt able to access the space and services provided. A number of projects are ran and/or supported by individuals from the local community. These volunteers are often not just parents and carers but other members of the wider community who see the positive benefits that the projects and programmes create. *“This is a real community team ran by and*



for the local people. [It's] getting the community involved and has meant other community members have commended us on our work and want to get involved. This year we have grown from three volunteers to eight." Volunteer run organisation

The importance of volunteering and supporting each other is evident across all programmes, teenage volunteers and those providing lived experience peer support were praised across multiple projects for providing a level of support and understanding that can't be achieved through paid staff alone. Community action, social change opportunities and volunteering have all played an important part in building the confidence of young people, fostering more pride in place and developing wider networks and engagement. More general awareness in the community and specific collaborative partnerships have been developed because of the work the funding has allowed projects to do. A number of organisations reflected that having further opportunities to network and meet other projects accessing the funding in other areas would be beneficial for the future, allowing the sharing of skills and expertise to offer new opportunities to young people across all parts of the region.

The whole family approach has helped with positive relationships within families and communities across multiple projects. Providing wider support to families and individuals within communities, not just young people, has been effective in promoting changes in behaviours that young people continue after they have left projects and services. Local people have been given the chance to see young people making positive contributions to their area. This increases community cohesion and supports the development of positive relationships in local communities, reinforcing that projects like this have ripple effects across areas. The progression of young people or community members through projects and services, into volunteering and employment has been a positive method employed by multiple projects. The cyclical journeys starting as service user moving to volunteer moving to staff member builds self-confidence and esteem in local communities, empowering them to make positive differences for themselves and those around them.

It is encouraging to note that confidence and self-esteem has improved in young people attending projects, through a range of different approaches. Sport, wellbeing activities and 1:1 interventions have all provided individuals with the support they need to deal with their challenges. This flexibility of the fund to support so many varied approaches is to be commended, allowing organisations to respond and adapt to the changing needs of their communities. For example, delivering boxing training to autistic and nonverbal individuals, has proved successful, with partners stating that they have witnessed increased confidence in participants, along with supporting some to learn to adapt to different environments. A growth and development of empathy and encouragement is supported across all projects, with coaches and staff reporting how important it is to empower all young people to look after each other and their wider community, for example, keeping the area around the project building clean and a nicer place to be. Some young people reported finding meditation and wellbeing sessions good to learn how to better control their emotions and support understanding their feelings, (i.e. how they respond and react to others), whilst many others acknowledged that attending sports-based sessions also helped with this. One project described how a 10-year-old participant had produced their own presentation around mental health and positive thinking and delivered that to her school assembly. This shows that there is the ability for the knowledge that young people are gaining within sessions and through the projects to be shared into the wider community.

3.4 Fund Management

There was a lot of positive feedback for the way that the fund was managed, with organisations stating reasons such as flexibility, support and the financial security to test certain activities and methods. A number of projects also said the fund helped get young people back into centres and returned the confidence of parents and communities to engage with groups and activities again, after the Southport incident in the summer. Networking opportunities at the MVRP conference were also acknowledged by



multiple organisations, with feedback stating more of these opportunities to collaborate and learn from each other would be beneficial in the future.

One question which was raised by a number of organisations within focus group consultations, was whether application processes need to be as long and complicated as they are? Most organisations reflected that they are simply trying to keep their buildings open. One organisation stated that reporting should be proportionate to the size of the grant received, explaining that other funders did not require such vigorous monitoring and reporting requirements. It is acknowledged that the Police Crime Commissioner do not require monitoring forms for their grants. However, the MVRP are monitored by the home office on a quarterly basis and require figures and insight to inform this. It was acknowledged that for some organisations who'd previously had PCC funding, this new YES fund could have felt overburdensome, asking for far more than ever before. Some organisations did reflect that there were lots of processes and requirements that they hadn't previously experienced, however all were detailed in the grant application information, and projects accepted that they had requested the grants fully aware that they would need to report and engage with an external evaluator.

One organisation raised the important point that evaluation should be carried out in engagement with young people. This organisation attempts to do everything in coproduction with their young people, and sometimes they do not wish to engage with some of the requirements that they are asked to. The organisation explained that even though the monitoring and evaluation requirements were detailed in the application forms, if young people are clearly expressing a wish not to engage with an evaluator or monitoring at a certain time, there should be flexibility and understanding of this choice.

There was mixed feedback about the evaluation. Some organisations felt that the requirements were not clearly communicated and there was some confusion with the collection of monitoring data and report forms, as well as the data requested by the evaluation team. Feedback would suggest that engaging the evaluation team with the projects from the very beginning of delivery may have negated some of this confusion. Communications were also not received by all projects leading to a lack of awareness and understanding. However, there were also many positive responses about the evaluation, with more than one organisation acknowledging the positive experience of having an external evaluator come into sessions and talk directly with young people, families and communities. The data collection activities and guidance were also praised by some organisations as simple, effective and easy to use and will be used to monitor and collect data on other projects in the future, hopefully supporting longer term collection of data and evidence in Merseyside.

3.5 Summary

- Increased numbers of participants affected delivery – either requiring funds to be redistributed to cover staff costs, or utilising volunteer support to deliver targeted 1:1 services.
- Restrictions to delivery were caused by bad weather, capacity of partners and delays/restrictions in resources. Projects adapted to these challenges to provide additional and alternative engagement, providing consistent support.
- Reduced engagement at various points in the calendar year by specific groups needs to be considered and planned for in future delivery.
- The Southport stabbings of July 2024 and following race riots impacted the delivery of projects across Merseyside. The fund supported organisations to continue working through this difficult time, building confidence and trust amongst young people and communities.
- Some reported that the incident brought the communities together and supported meaningful interactions around race, violence and local communities.
- The development of new skills amongst both beneficiaries and staff was cited as an important unanticipated outcome for some projects.
- Increased community cohesion and engagement was also unanticipated by many organisations.



- The key to successful delivery highlighted by the majority of projects was the creation of safe spaces for young people to be themselves and share their concerns.
- Projects where there was a focus on supporting the development of peer relationships reported the growth of more inclusive communities.
- Targeted engagement with neurodiverse and young people with SEND was beneficial and offered appropriate support and interventions for these groups of marginalised young people.
- The engagement of wider community members via volunteering roles was thought to be a key to successful delivery within communities, alongside offering volunteering roles to young people embedding a peer support approach and showcasing the positive outcomes young people can have on communities when engaged constructively.
- Projects that took a whole family approach identified opportunities for all members to access support, learning and engagement, which develops stronger systems for long term change.
- Mental wellbeing interlinked with physical wellbeing was shown in some areas to have a ripple effect, with young people cascading their learning and skills throughout their wider communities.
- There were mixed reviews of fund management with some organisations questioning if reporting and evaluating requirements were proportionate.
- Positive experiences of support were described from the MVRP and evaluation team across all areas.



4 Outcomes for young people

The following chapter will outline and analyse the effect on participants involved across the 30 projects funded as part of the programme. The section will begin by looking at a comparison between the 10 key outcomes selected for analysis, highlighting any areas of interest and picking out which outcomes have seen the largest change. Following on, the results from data collection around each outcome will be looked at in depth, combining all data sources. Throughout the chapter reference will be made to the outcomes monitoring, site visit data, survey data, and consultations with the project teams.

As explained in previous chapters, a variety of data collection methods were used in order to get maximum coverage across both participants and delivery organisations. The data was cleansed in order to ensure consistency and accuracy, and different questions and activities received different levels of engagement for all data collection methods. As such, the numbers of participants differ for both qualitative and quantitative data, and for each outcome.

Outcomes are organised and analysed by theme. In total, there are five themes, with each theme containing two outcomes. This ensures outcomes provide sufficient coverage across each area. For analysis purposes, responses were grouped by either agree or disagree, meaning agree is made up of those who stated agree/strongly agree and vice versa. This ensures consistency and allows for more easy comparison.

It is also important to note that although delivery organisations were advised to only ask outcome statements which were relevant to their delivery, most organisations asked all outcomes statements. As such, this could mean that there is a higher proportion of young people remaining neutral across outcomes.

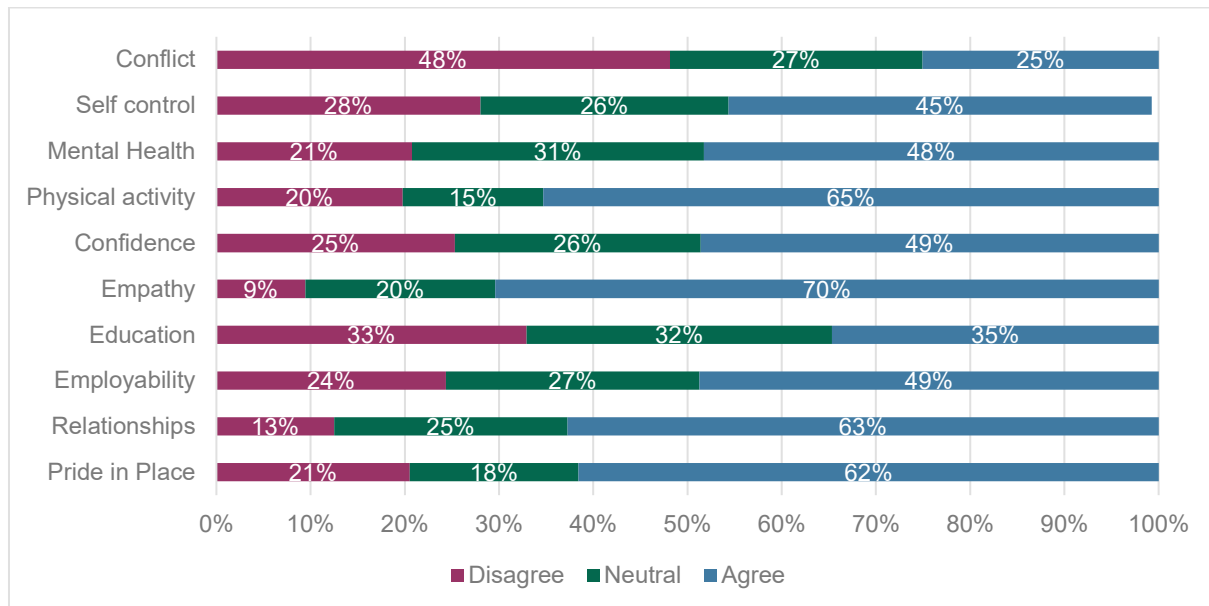
4.1 Overview

The quantitative monitoring data outlined in Figure 10 provides an overview of how the young people involved in the programme responded when consulted about the 10 outcomes. For all outcomes apart from conflict, agreement with the statement indicates a positive response, however for conflict, disagreement represents a positive response.

Across all outcomes, Empathy, Physical activity, Relationships and Pride in Place received the most positive responses, with between 62-70 per cent agreeing with the statements. Empathy also had the lowest number of young people disagreeing with the statement, at only nine per cent. Education on the other hand received the most mixed responses, with an almost even split between disagree, neutral and agree responses.

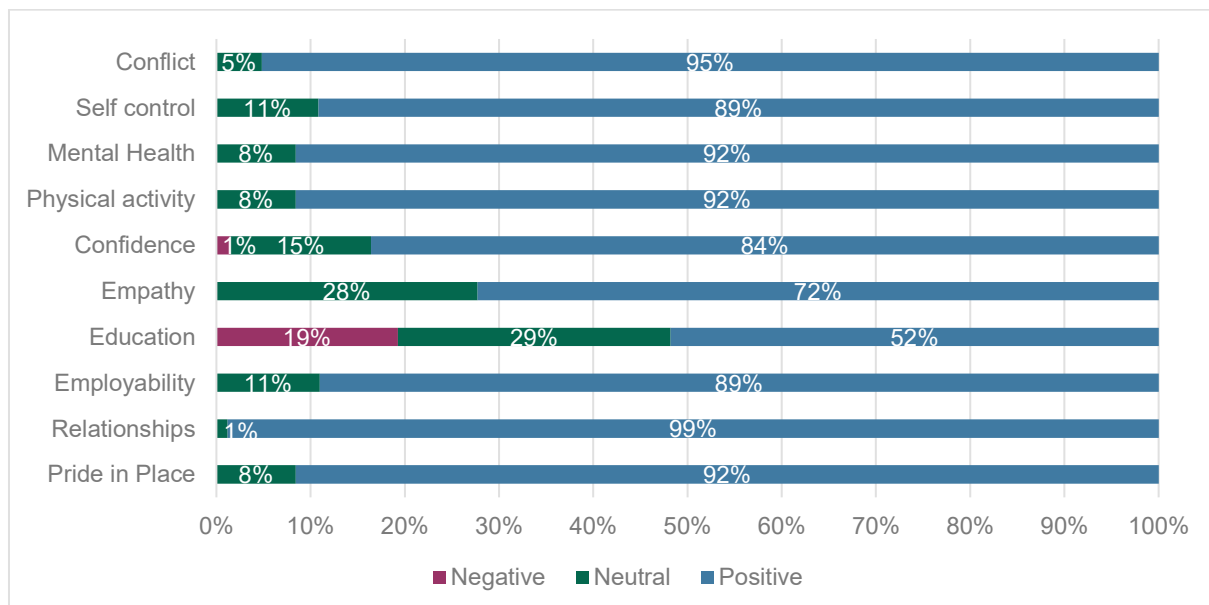


Figure 10: Overview of monitoring data on all outcomes.



In comparison, the site visit is very positive, with a majority of young people expressing a positive improvement of being part of the programme across all outcomes. In fact, for all outcomes other than education, those stating a positive impact was over 70 per cent, with the majority of outcomes coming in over 90 per cent. This is paired with very low levels of young people stating the programme had a negative impact on them, with the only significant result in this area being for education.

Figure 11: Overview of site visit data on all outcomes.



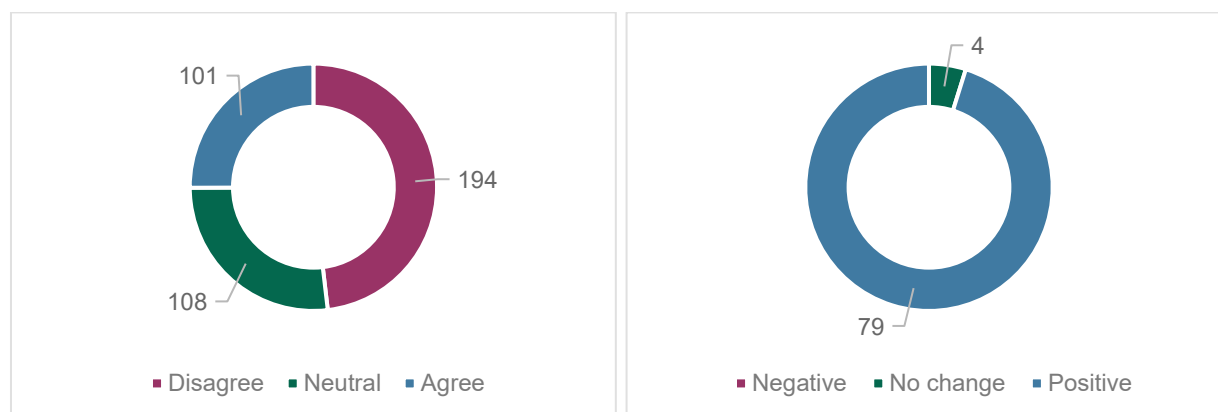
4.2 Behaviour

Although the monitoring data for conflict is still positive, with 48 per cent of young people disagreeing with the statement, overall, the responses for this outcome were fairly split. This is represented by a large number of young people either agreeing or remaining neutral for this statement. This split in



responses to this question can be partly explained by the interpretation of the question, with a number of young people stating that conflict and disagreement with others is dependent on who the question relates to, as they only get into conflict with certain people. Other young people further stated that they do not disagree with others, rather others disagree with them. The site visit data is far more positive, with 95 per cent of young people stating that involvement in the programme has had a positive impact in relation to conflict. Additionally, discussions revealed those who stated there had been no change was because they had no prior issues with conflict.

Figure 12: Summary of monitoring data on conflict (left) and site visit data on conflict (right).



This is supported by the survey data, where slightly more disagreed with the statement at 67 per cent. Positive responses were also received in relation to the change the programme had had on young people for conflict, with 68 per cent stating it has had a positive impact, 30 of the remaining 32 per cent of young people stated there had been no change. Despite this lower percentage than the site visit data, of the 12 young people that stated there had been no change, all 12 disagreed with the previous statement. As such, it is possible this difference in numbers could reflect the different methodological design, either from asking the questions in conjunction, or from the effect of groupthink with site visits.

Discussions taken place for the monitoring and at site visits reinforce the positive impact of the programme. Multiple discussions with young people revealed the benefits of participation on how they approach conflict, with numerous young people stating that over the course of their involvement they had got better at not falling out with others. Multiple reasons were provided for this, with young people stating they had become better at laughing things off or avoiding conflict more.

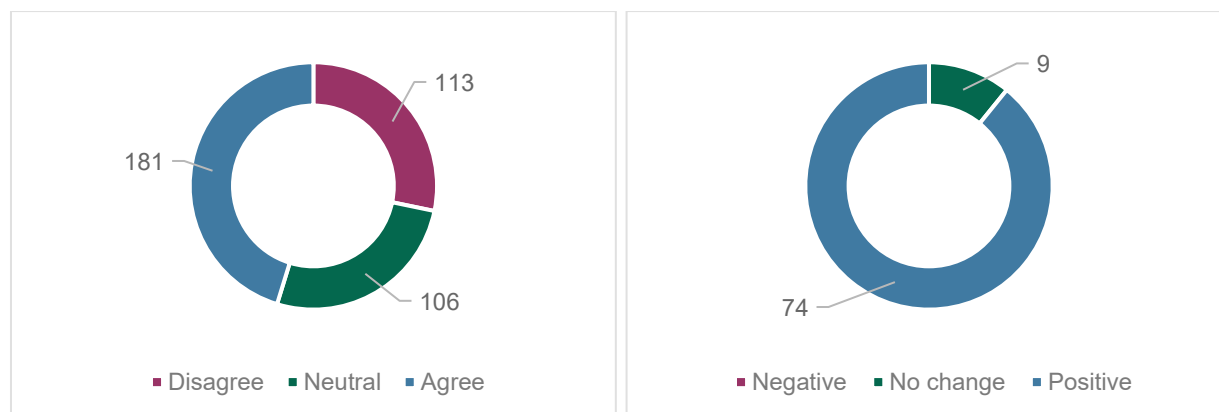
A clear theme was that this effect is especially pronounced within the clubs or groups they attend, with young people expressing a greater level of respect for those they are in a club/group with, alongside these places providing a safe place where they can better deal with disagreements. This was supported by a parent at one group who stated the sessions provided an “*escape*” for their children, and that they get on far better with each other and others while attending the sessions. On a simpler level, young people stated that the programmes provided a place to go and an activity to engage in, reducing conflict between friends.

For control of emotions the monitoring data shows a fairly even split between the three options, with slightly more young people agreeing with the statement than those who disagreed or stayed neutral. This suggests that despite the programme, many young people still struggle to control their emotions. Despite this, almost all young people (89 per cent) stated an improvement in how they control their emotions following involvement in the programme, with the remaining young people stating no change. The majority of those who stated no change for this question came from one group (seven out of nine), those who did, stated it was because they were still learning how to control their emotions and feelings better, demonstrating emotional maturity and self-reflection.



This is further supported by the survey data, in which a higher percentage of individuals agreed they were in control of their emotions at 77 per cent, with only 8 per cent stating they were not. Furthermore, 89 per cent of individuals stated there had been an improvement following involvement in the programme, the exact same percentage as from the site visit data. All individuals that stated they were not in control of their emotions in the survey data stated the programme had had a positive improvement on how they control their emotions.

Figure 13: Summary of monitoring data on control of emotions (left) and site visit data on control of emotions (right).



Mixed views were received in relation to control, however when looking into the discussions had during the monitoring and site visits, the picture is far more positive. A number of young people clearly linked their involvement in the programme with the development of coping mechanisms to deal with anger. One young person stated that since joining the group they now know when to walk away from situations and away from conflict, showing positive improvement as well as the clear link between outcomes within the behaviour theme. Young people also stated that they are able to focus stress and aggression into their training which helps them to clear their minds, this was reinforced during site visits. Other benefits mentioned included reduced impulsivity, increased focus and better control of tempers.



‘Before, I’d run before learning to walk. Before the programme, I was always impatient. I wanted to cut to the chase with things. I was quite hyperactive as well, so I never took time to absorb what I was doing. But during the programme, I’ve really learned how to take my time and be more patient.’

- Young Person

Alongside coping mechanisms, young people spoke on the positive impact the staff had had on their control of emotions. One group explained how they are able to talk to staff about their emotions, helping them to control their feelings. Further to that, a young person from another group stated the staff always made sure you felt heard and created a calming atmosphere, and that the calmness she feels in this space has translated to outside of the group.



‘The people here listen to us.’

- Young Person



Discussions had during the site visits also highlighted the interconnections between outcomes. Many young people spoke of how other outcomes helped to reduce conflict, this included physical activity and improved mental health. In relation to physical activity, exercise and football was referenced for helping to get anger out, alongside another young person stating boxing had a positive impact on their emotions and their sense of satisfaction. This was reinforced while speaking about emotional control, as young people explained the benefits of venting frustration and aggression to help control emotions. Further to that, young people in another group referenced the benefits of meditation, stating that this had helped them to get better control of their emotions. These interrelations highlight the multiple benefits that can be gained by targeting these outcomes with sports and creative interventions.

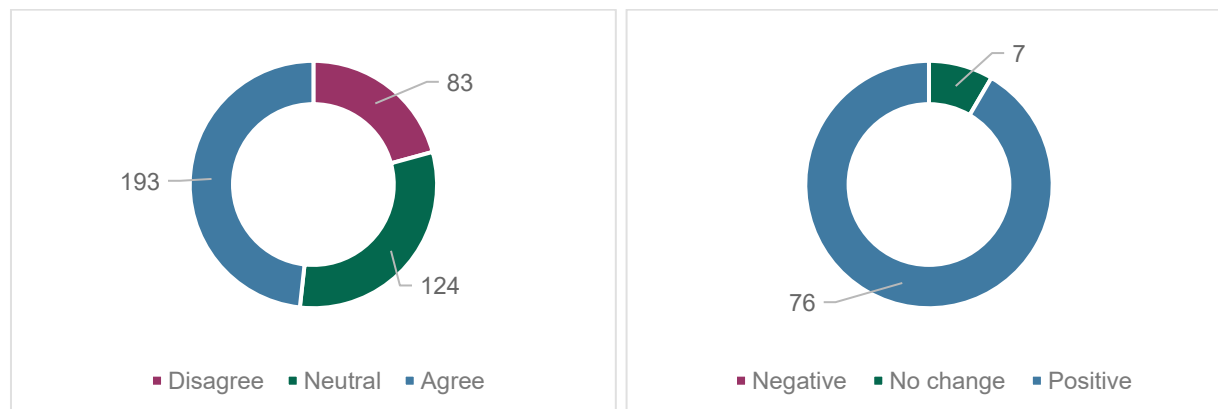
4.3 Wellbeing

Of the young people involved in the monitoring data, just under 50 per cent agreed with the mental health statement, suggesting almost 50 per cent of those involved have good mental health. Quite a large number of young people remained neutral for this question however, at 31 per cent. Discussions with young people around mental health and feedback from staff carrying out the monitoring suggest that a number of young people felt uncomfortable when taking about mental health, with reports of young people both physically and mentally withdrawing from the conversation. This could partly explain the slightly higher percentage of those remaining neutral for this question but also highlights the sensitivity of this topic and importance of approaching these discussions with care.

Once again the site visit data shows a strong improvement in mental health for those involved, with 92 percent of young people expressing a positive change, all remaining respondents stated no change. Those who stated no change were all in the same group. When asked to expand on their response they explained that they were either no happier than before or expressed issues with their lives that were unrelated to the group.

The survey data reinforces these findings, with slightly more respondents agreeing with the statement on mental health at 59 per cent, and slightly fewer expressing a positive change at 86 per cent. Encouragingly, all bar one young person that reported poor mental health to the first statement also reported an improvement from the programme. Additionally, all those who stated no change to the second statement agreed with the first statement about mental health. This suggests the programme is supporting those in need of mental health support.

Figure 14: Summary of monitoring data on mental health (left) and site visit data on mental health (right).



Discussions with young people during monitoring revealed multiple factors which influence mental health in young people. Multiple young people highlighted that their mental health varies largely from



day to day, dependent on how their day went and their social environment. Further to that, young people highlighted personal factors which influence this such as adverse childhood experiences, past services and neurodivergences.

Despite the multitude of factors reported to influence mental health, and complexities in approaching the topic, discussions with young people from a variety of groups supports the positive quantitative evidence already highlighted. Positive feedback was received on some of the topics covered in sessions, such as the importance of sleep hygiene, nutrition and exercise on mental health. Discussions during site visits highlighted multiple benefits, and routes to these benefits. Once again the benefits of exercise for reducing anger and thus improving mental health was spoken of. In addition, young people from multiple groups spoke of the relationships developed during their involvement, with friends, coaches and staff. Relationships with staff and coaches were beneficial for young people feeling better about themselves, while new friendships with likeminded people were generally beneficial for mental health.



‘I used to be very agoraphobic, so just getting here was a big thing for me.’

- Young Person

At times young people closely linked their involvement in groups and clubs with improved mental health, creating concern over whether this translates to outside the group. In fact, a young person from one group explained how they wished they could come to the space at all times. It is important to note that this was a group which deals with highly vulnerable individuals, and rather than this being an issue it more highlights the importance of the spaces provided as part of the programme.

The benefits of discussing mental health was prominent in discussions across the breadth of the fund. Young people spoke about how they have struggled with a lack of mental health support, and that the groups were the only place they felt comfortable. Other young people discussed the stigma around mental health, and how it was beneficial for their mental health discussing the topic with other young people who shared their identity and experiences. Shared identity and experience was also highlighted during focus groups, with delivery staff explaining the value of young people being able to mix with others who are going through similar experiences, and the reduction in isolation this can have for young people. This benefit was highlighted throughout discussions during site visits, with multiple young people expressing a reduction in loneliness from attending groups. Additionally, one group highlighted the benefits of being in a trauma informed space, stating they felt more in control and willing to talk.

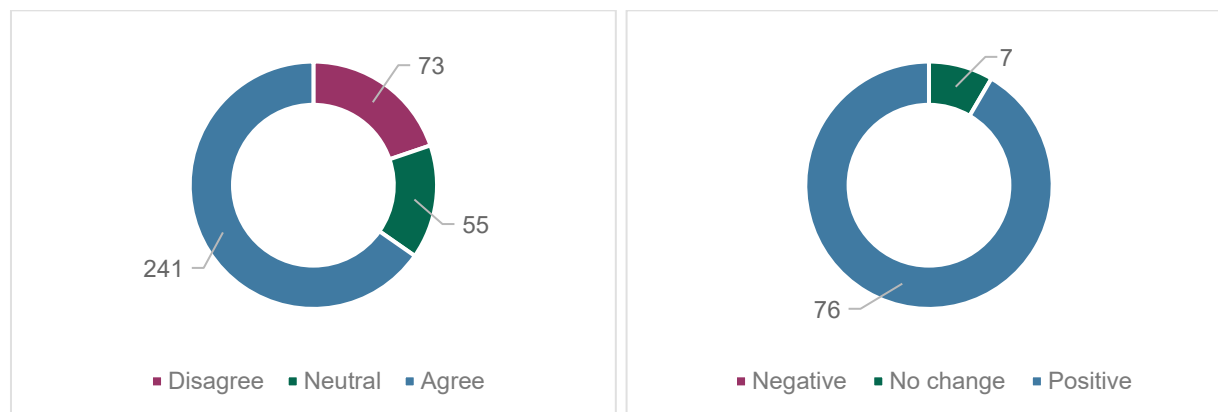
Physical activity received one of the more positive responses of all questions, with 60 per cent of young people agreeing with the statement, and only 24 per cent disagreeing, suggesting a large number of those involved in the programme enjoy physical activity. This is perhaps not a surprising result, with the sport focus or sport inclusion in a large number of funded programmes. Interestingly the statement received the lowest number of young people remaining neutral, at only 15 per cent, perhaps suggesting that this is an area which is polarising for young people. This was reaffirmed by feedback from staff carrying out the data collection, with reports of strong and mixed responses.

The programme had a positive impact on young people's enjoyment of sport, with 92 per cent of those involved reporting an improvement in this area. Of those who voted for no change, one stated they have always enjoyed physical activity, and that the group hadn't made a difference in this aspect. The remaining six young people were part of another group and were not able to explain why there had been no change, however, did explain that they didn't like being out in the cold and preferred playing on computers. An even higher percentage of those who carried out the survey agreed with the statement



around physical activity, at 82 per cent. Further to that, 80 per cent stated their enjoyment of physical activity had improved as part of their involvement in the programme.

Figure 15: Summary of monitoring data on physical activity (left) and site visit data on physical activity (right).



Large amounts of positive feedback were received from young people which support the evidence outlined above, strengthening the link between the programme and positive progress on physical activity. The programme directly contributed towards positive enjoyment, with young people highlighting physical activities they were involved with and expressing enjoyment, this included football, Morris dancing, boxing and running. Further to that, feedback from one group suggested that young people differentiated between traditional sports and movement based creative games, with one young person reinforcing this by highlighting how much more they enjoyed the creative games.



‘I have a competition coming up with Morris dancing, this makes me excited as I have a new troop.’
- Young Person



‘I loved taking part in the recent charity football game. It made me realise how unfit I was, so I have signed up to couch to 5k.’
- Young Person

Others demonstrated progress made during the course of the programme, with one young person stating they used to hate running, but now they love football and run lots during training and matches. Further to that, another young person explained how their involvement encouraged them to take up running to increase their fitness, demonstrating the potential for a long-term improvement past the programmes end. Additionally, staff reported multiple benefits for young people, such as increases in fitness, improved understanding of nutrition, and the building of healthy interests around exercise. In one instance a staff member directly linked this to the reduction of ASB in the local town centre, speaking of the benefit of sport based diversionary activities.

As previously mentioned, discussions in this area once again highlighted the interrelations between mental health and physical activity, with young people stating they noticed an improvement in their happiness when they became fitter.



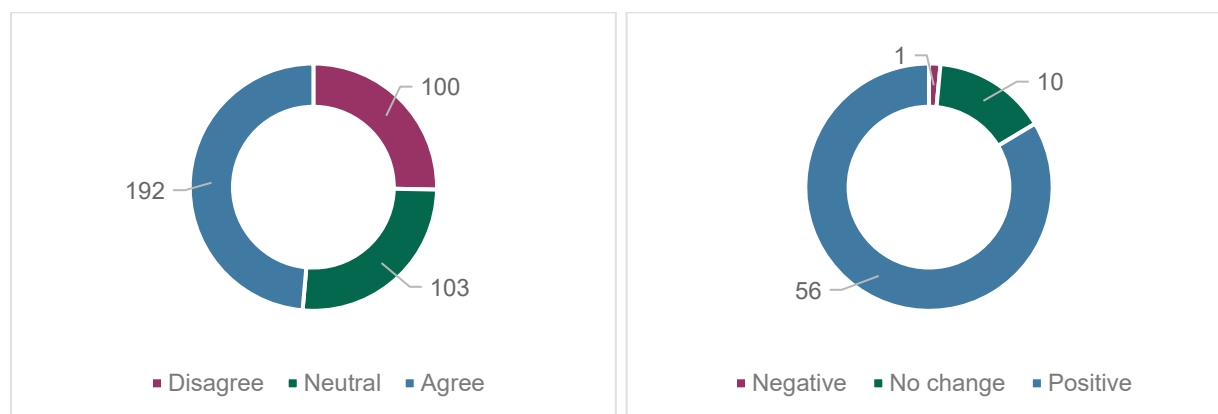
4.4 Attitudes and Values

Just under half of young people involved in the programme stated they were confident, with just under 50 per cent agreeing with the statement on confidence, with a fairly even split between those who disagreed and remained neutral. Once again there was a strong positive improvement in confidence across the fund, with 84 per cent stating there had been an improvement. Interestingly, one young person stated their confidence had got worse as a result of involvement, staff noted this young person was typically very nervous, and that this was something they had been working on.

Those who answered no change came from two groups. The first group had an even split (eight for each) between those saying there had been a positive change, and those saying no change. Those stating no change explained that they still needed to work on their self-confidence, and how to apply this to sport, at school and at home. They also acknowledged the support provided from their team and coaches in improving their confidence. The other group that responded no change explained that it is not unusual for those with neurodiverse diagnoses to take more time to increase confidence.

The survey data was marginally more positive for confidence. A larger percentage of young people agreed with the statement about confidence, with 66 per cent agreeing and only 11 per cent disagreeing with the statement. Additionally, 92 per cent of young people stated involvement in the programme had improved their confidence. Of the four young people that disagreed with the initial statement, three stated they felt more confident following their involvement, and of the eight young people that remained neutral, six reported an improvement in confidence. As such, the data points towards young people having good confidence levels at the end of the programme, as well as a strong improvement in this over the course of their involvement.

Figure 16: Summary of monitoring data on confidence (left) and site visit data on confidence (right).



During discussions, many young people reported needing additional support in order to feel confident trying new things. This was expanded on, with young people stating they feel much more confident when they are well supported, particularly by their friends. Young people also discussed the various factors which influence their confidence, with many highlighting the negative impacts of social media, and the importance of their appearance in looking confident. Further to that, it became clear the importance of other outcomes in supporting confidence, with young people stating they get confidence from positive role models, and how dependent confidence is on their mental health.

Despite this, young people reported confidence building week on week over the course of the programme and spoke of the benefits of supporting each other for boosting confidence. Confidence had grown by taking part in a wide variety of activities such as outdoor activities, physical activity, arts and craft, meditation and social interaction. Increased confidence was shown by young people being more



vocal and less afraid to make a fool of themselves. In addition, young people stated they feel more comfortable approaching new situations than at the start of the programme, with one individual stating that being thrown in at the deep end on shadowing really helping them to improve in this respect.

Feedback from both young people, staff and parents/carers supports the evidence of improvements in confidence. Staff at one of the groups stated a marked difference in the confidence of young people over the course of the programme, with certain individuals getting much more involved and asking questions towards the end of the programme. A young person from the same group reaffirmed this, commenting on their increase in self-esteem and confidence.



‘Since joining the psycho education sessions, my self-esteem has increased and I feel more confident.’

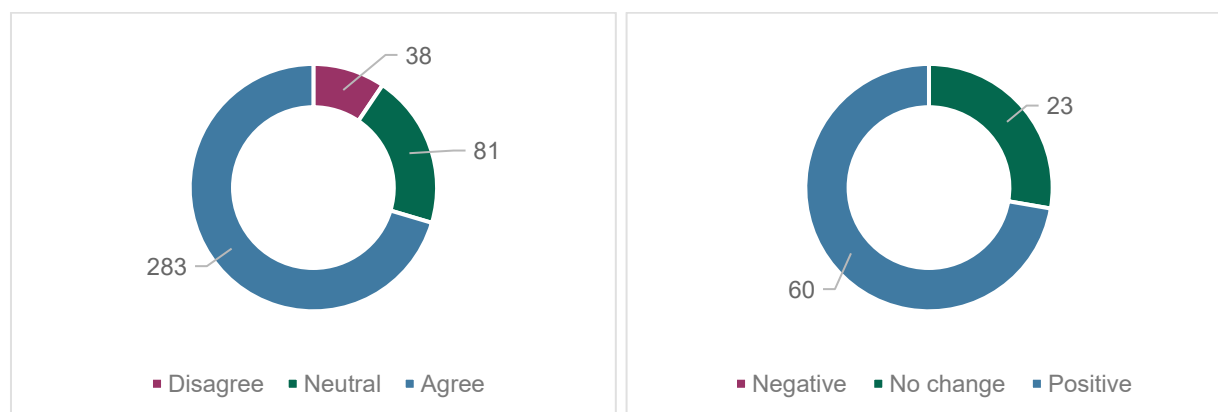
- Young Person

When asked to expand on their responses, young people from one group stated that they were happier in general which improves their confidence. Further to that, a parent of a young person from another group, who is working towards a coaching qualification, explained how their son’s confidence had grown massively from working towards this, going from being scared of doing pad work to directing others in this area.

Empathy was the outcome which had the highest agreement amongst young people, suggesting a large percentage (67 per cent) of those involved in the programme cared about others’ feelings at the end of the programme. Interestingly, this outcome also received one of the lower scores for young people stating there had been an improvement; the figure was still high however, at 72 percent. This suggests that although there has been an improvement, a good number of young people involved in the programme perhaps always demonstrated good levels of empathy. Of those who chose no change, many young people explained this was because they had always cared about others’ feelings, this was apparent across multiple groups.

The survey data was even more positive, with 91 per cent of young people agreeing with the statement, once again reinforcing the data that young people had strong empathy at the end of the programme. In terms of a change in empathy, the data is similar to that from the site visits, with 78 per cent of young people stating an increase, and the remaining 22 per cent stating no change. Positively, all young people that disagreed with the initial statement stated that they were more empathetic following their involvement.

Figure 17: Summary of monitoring data on empathy (left) and site visit data on empathy (right).





Discussions around empathy support the positive progress in this area, however there was a clear distinction between caring for those close to them, and those who they do not know as well. When asked to explain why they agree with the statement, many young people referred to their 'team' and how they want everyone in the team to feel cared for, representing a positive in this area which is directly linked to the programme. This was expanded on with young people stating they look out for their teammates both during and outside of sessions, for example checking in on them at school and around the estate.



'We are all from this team and we look out for each other, in school or around the estate, we wouldn't want anyone from our team to be upset.'

- Young Person

Other young people also explained how their involvement had improved their empathy more generally as well. Young people explained this in relation to their family, stating they felt bad shouting at their parents and that they check in more on younger siblings since the start of the programme. This also expands further afield, with young people stating they generally consider others' feelings more now, and others explaining how they consider everyone on the estate in order to increase access in the programme and benefit new members.



'[speaking about supporting a younger sibling] I see myself in them— I used to be that kid who cried, and no one cared.'

- Young Person

Discussions had on site visits further reinforce the positive change in this area. A young person from one group explained how they care more when others are upset now, checking in on them to see how they are feeling. Additionally, multiple groups spoke about understanding the consequences of their actions more. This was explained by speaking of being careful with what they say and being more considerate of others as they want them to be happy.

Other young people explained how exposure to a wide range of people from different backgrounds had taught them to become more mindful of others' situations, exercising more patience with people at times. This was also picked up in other sessions, with young people expanding on this and explaining the benefits of learning how other people work.

4.5 Skills and Knowledge

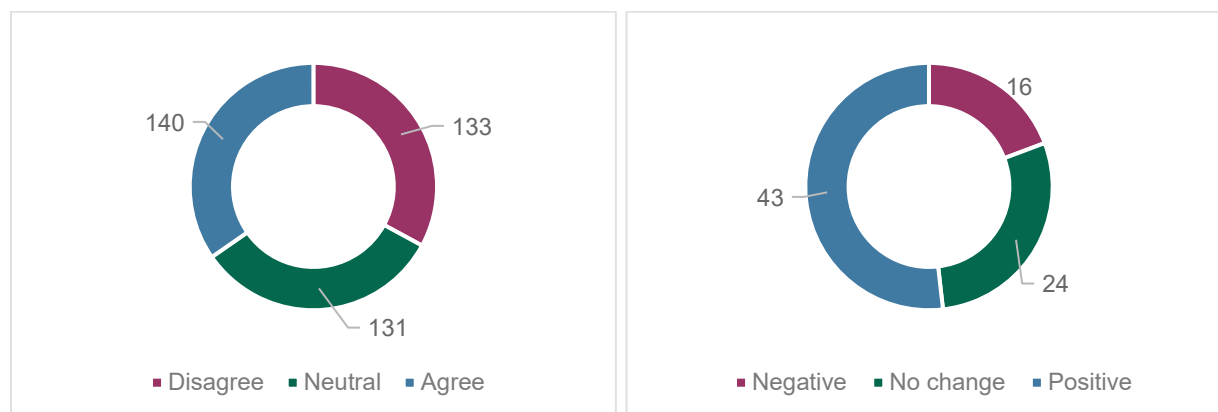
As previously mentioned, education is the area which saw the largest split, with an almost completely even split between statements within the education category. This is supported by a comparatively large number of young people stating the programme had had either a negative impact or no impact on their feelings towards education or training. This suggests that despite improvement in other areas, education is an outcome which is more difficult to improve, this could be because most programmes only have an indirect impact on this outcome, rather than a direct impact like most other outcomes.

The survey data is slightly more positive than the monitoring data, with 50 per cent of young people agreeing with the statement about education. This higher percentage could be as a result of young people not wanting to express enjoyment for school while in a group setting for the monitoring. The data on the impact of the programme is similar to that from the site visits, with 49 per cent of young people



stating it had a positive impact, however only 14 per cent stated it had a negative impact. This reinforces the notion that this is a difficult outcome to improve.

Figure 18: Summary of monitoring data on education (left) and site visit data on education (right).



Discussions with young people as part of the monitoring activity and site visits further reinforce the split opinions and polarising nature when it comes to school and education, with discussions covering both positive and negative emotions. Young people of all ages detailed negative experiences at school relating to bullies and teachers, while older young people spoke of confusion around next steps and what they want to achieve in life. Further to that, staff at multiple groups reported young people being influenced by others particularly for this answer, with one young person berating another for giving a positive response.

Further discussion on site visits revealed many of the negative responses in relation to education were because young people preferred attending the group or session rather than going to school, not that the sessions had a negative impact on their education. Many young people expressed their dislike for school, stating they would be shouted at and referencing a lack of support at school, comparing this to the comfortable and supportive atmosphere at sessions. In addition, coaches for one group provided context that many who answered negative change were disengaged and struggled to fit into mainstream school systems. It is apparent for many young people progress in this area appeared to be far more difficult than others, with many still expressing dislike for school.

Despite this, there were also positive discussions around the impact of the programme on young people's views of school. One young person spoke of how their enjoyment for school had increased as they were now part of a team, and teammates looked out for each other in school. Another young person stated how they feel more motivated at school since being part of the programme. Furthermore, a young person explained how the programme had taught them the importance of hard work and how they were applying that to school and their studies. Other benefits included feeling more positive about school thanks to general improvements in mental health, happiness, and confidence; despite this some young people expressed their dislike for school. This clearly shows that despite the polarising and challenging nature of education for many young people, which is often influenced by past negative experiences, interventions like those on the programme can still make a positive impact.

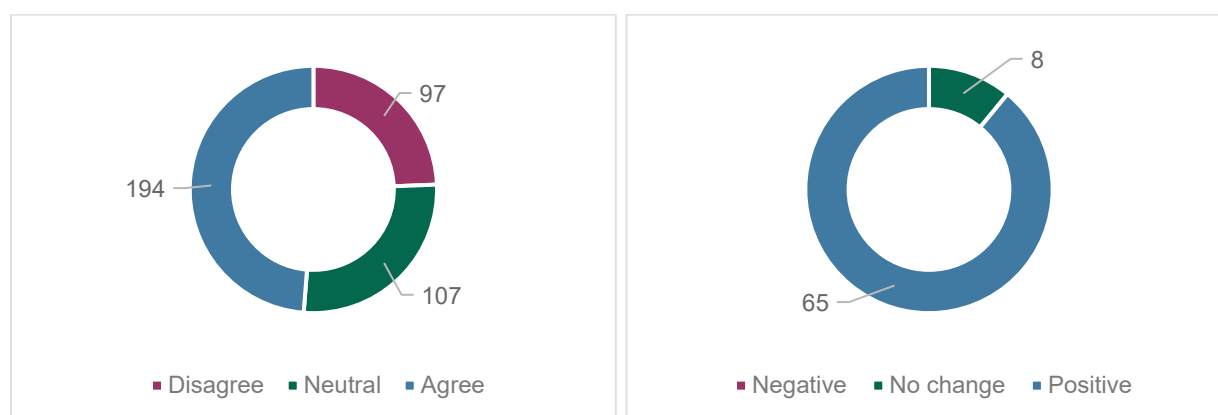
Discussions with older participants involved in more practical training were more positive than those with younger participants about school. Many discussed increasing their industry knowledge on specific areas as well as increasing the breadth of their knowledge, aspects which they hoped would improve their career prospects later down the line. Others also pointed out the benefits of learning in a non-traditional setting, stating it was much preferred to learning at school.



Employability had similar levels of agreement to many other outcomes, with just below 50 per cent of young people agreeing with the statement at the end of the programme. Once again, the programme had a strong positive impact on young people's feelings towards employability, with 89 percent of young people stating there had been an improvement. Many participants who answered no change felt they were too young to be thinking about jobs. Additionally, two others were involved in sessions which had a mental health focus, with little to no coverage on employability.

The survey data provides slightly different results. Marginally fewer young people agreed with the statement about employability, at 43 per cent, however a large number stayed neutral at 40 per cent. In addition, fewer young people stated there was a positive change as a result of their involvement in the programme, at 61 per cent, with 36 per cent stating there was no change. Interestingly, of the 13 young people that responded to both questions and stated there had been no change, nine of them either disagreed or remained neutral on the previous statement. This suggests that it is challenging to change views on employability.

Figure 19: Summary of monitoring data on employability (left) and site visit data on employability (right).



Younger participants had less to say on the area of employability, with many discussions centring around the different jobs young people saw themselves striving towards when they are older. Projects have also implemented specific sessions to support this outcome. For example, one project brought in a specialist speaker which was successful in supporting young people find new activities and possibilities that they were not previously aware of. These young people were also referred on to support them in achieving these new aspirations.

Young people from multiple projects reported learning about new jobs and routes into work that they were not originally aware of. On top of that, they stated they knew more about what they wanted to achieve, and thanks to the programme they understood the pathway to achieving that and were generally more hopeful about the future. Additionally, many young people expressed an increased confidence to apply for jobs, also stating they had less fear of rejection than before. Part of this had come from general increases in confidence, however they had also gained vital industry knowledge and experience which increased their employment specific confidence.

Staff from one group reported a detailed discussion amongst young people around what is realistic, with many young people reporting viewing work as seeming unattainable due to their academic performance and undiagnosed learning needs. However, once job discussions were framed in relation to young people's lived experience, using flexible examples that didn't require neurotypical behaviour, young people opened up, brainstorming ideas and showing more confidence in relation to jobs. This highlights the linkage between education and employability, and the importance of framing discussions on employability appropriately for young people.



Many young people also spoke of confidence in relation to employability. Multiple young people highlighted struggling with confidence in education, speaking of jobs in the context of the sets they are in at school. In addition, other young people stated it was hard applying for jobs when you have low self-confidence, and that generally applications and interviews trigger anxiety which hinders them.

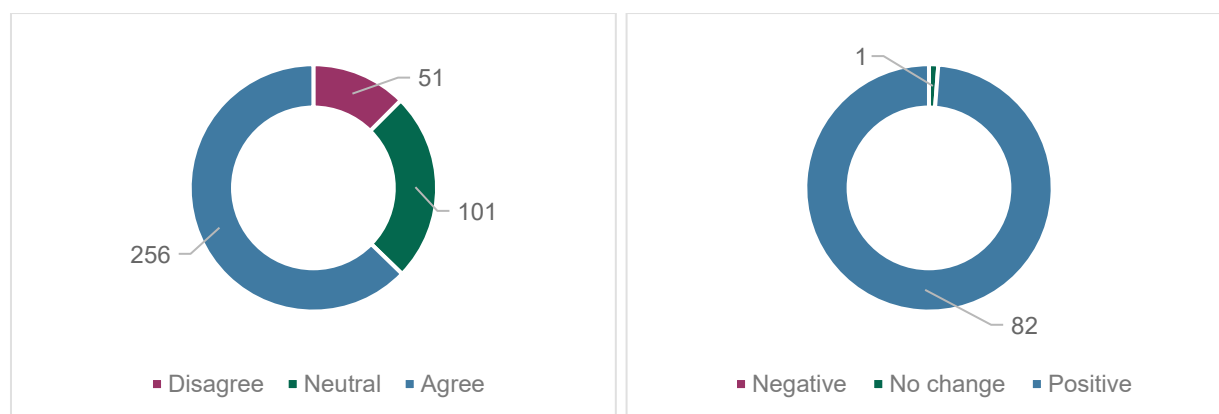
During focus groups, staff highlighted a number of success stories of young people on their project. One project explained how new teenage volunteers have been taken on board and are gaining practical experience. In addition, alumni from another project gained industry experience at Taylor Swift and Bill Ryder Jones gigs. Other positive examples include young people gaining work with local football clubs, and others achieving employment at a local shop where sessions were held. This is even more impressive when considering these young people previously viewed themselves as unemployable.

4.6 Identity

Relationships was one of the best performing outcomes over the programme. The majority of young people agreed with the statement about relationships at 64 per cent, suggesting the majority had positive relationships in their lives at the end of the programme. In addition, 99 per cent of young people stated there had been an improvement in their relationships as a result of involvement in the programme, with only one young person remaining neutral.

Interestingly, there was far more agreement with the relationships statement in the survey data, with 94 per cent of young people agreeing with the statement. In addition, 81 per cent of young people stated there was an improvement, which, although still a very high percentage, is lower than the site visit data. As the other data matches up more closely, it is possible that this is due to the lower number of respondents to the survey than either the monitoring or site visit data.

Figure 20: Summary of monitoring data on relationships (left) and site visit data on relationships (right).



Discussion with young people around relationships strongly supports this data. The majority of discussions were focussed on positive existing relationships, alongside the creation of more of these relationships thanks to involvement in the programme. Young people spoke of relationships with various family members and friends, detailing how they have both positive role models, and people they can look to for help.



‘This is the only place I don’t feel like a problem.’

- Young Person

Throughout the monitoring, young people spoke of the strengthening of existing relationships, as well as the creation of new ones as a result of their involvement. Many young people discussed how they had made friends at the group and with others in the team. Furthermore, the introduction of positive role models was evident. Positive role models that were introduced as part of the programme included peers, older members, volunteers, coaches and mentors. Young people detailed how they felt supported and ‘heard’ by positive role models at their respective groups. Further to that, one young person highlighted the value of their peer mentor having shared experiences with them, a notion which many others in the group agreed with. Another group spoke of the value of having elders at the group, highlighting the deeper level of understanding they have, and the confidence and security this provides.



‘She gets it. She’s been through stuff like me, not just pretending to understand.’

- Young Person



‘We’re [young people] adding our significance. [Delivery organisation] are leading, we have the elders and they are leading it. It’s a sense of security to back us, particularly in the case of the affinity space and race, etc. You understand things that many do not. The affinity space is crucial and really important. I’ve found a sense of belonging and community, a safe space. This benefits everyone who comes here.’

- Young Person

During focus groups staff spoke about the relationships they’ve seen develop between groups of young people. This was expanded on with delivery staff explaining how the project had brought girls and boys together, and young people who might not have come together otherwise. Further to that, feedback from mentors was that there has been an improvement in relationships with peers as young people are able to express their emotions and channel their anger better.

Discussion during site visits around relationships were also overwhelmingly positive, with it being clear that relationships have developed and been improved as a direct product of the programme. Young people spoke of how they had met people who they knew they could go to if they needed support. It was evident that many of the groups had formed strong relationships, with multiple groups explaining how the team have come together and that they think of each other as family now. One group went on to explain how if anyone was struggling, the whole team rallies around to provide support. With other groups specific events are held to help the groups bond, and older team members at one group described how they enjoyed attending these and acting as positive role models for the younger team members.



‘[it’s] full of my brothers who I can share my favourite sport with.’

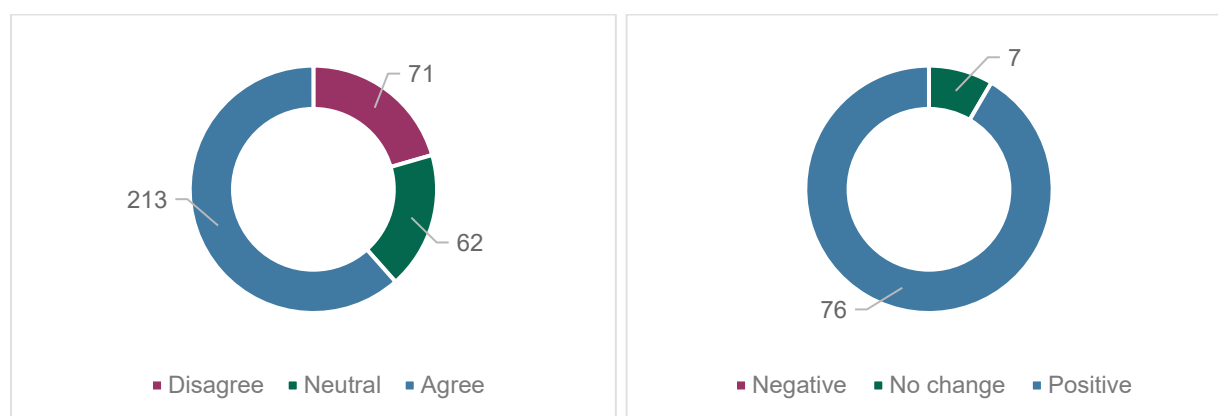
- Young Person

Positive relationships extended past team members and friends, with many young people expressing respect and admiration for coaches and staff involved in the projects. These relationships clearly went beyond this however, with multiple groups stating how they would go to staff, coaches or older group members with any concerns they had at school, home or in the sessions, or even to share positive aspects of their lives. Family was also mentioned, with many young people reporting improved relationships with their siblings and parents. In one instance, for a session which targets support at both parents and young people, a participant explained how their relationship with their parent had improved, as they liked how their parent felt and acted when they left the centre.

Pride in place is another outcome which performed well, represented by strong results from both the monitoring and the site visits. A small majority of young people agreed with the statement about pride in place at 56 per cent, with 25 of the remaining 44 per cent disagreeing with the statement. The low number of young people remaining neutral suggests this is another area which is polarising for young people. Once again, a large majority of young people stated there had been an improvement in this area over the course of the programme, at 92 per cent.

This is reinforced by the survey data, where 68 per cent of young people agreed with the statement, once again showing a strong sense of pride in place amongst young people at the end of the programme. The data on the change in this outcome is slightly less positive, with 70 per cent of young people stating this had improved from their involvement, the remaining 30 per cent state there had been no change. There was also a fairly even split for those who stated no change between the young people who agreed and stayed neutral for the first statement. Those who disagreed with the first statement all stated an improvement from their involvement in the programme.

Figure 21: Summary of monitoring data on pride in place (left) and site visit data on pride in place (right).



Discussions with young people strongly supported the quantitative evidence outlined above, with many highlighting a direct link between the programme and increased pride in their local area. Young people consistently linked pride with the group or team they were involved in, with pride in their local area, specifically expressing pride in representing their clubs. Further to that, young people stated since joining their team, they like living on their estate more, as everywhere they go they bump into teammates or coaches. They went on to explain *“you feel like you belong”*. Others who spoke of not



liking where they live, described the programme they were involved in as a beacon of hope. In addition, some young people spoke of increased ethnic pride as a result of their participation.



‘At least we’ve got this place. It shows not everyone’s written us off.’

- Young Person



‘I was in a difficult spot with my living situation, but I stayed here for the course. I’ve loved it so much there’s nowhere else I’d want to live now.’

- Young Person

Throughout discussions during site visits, the community focus of projects was apparent. One young person expressed that everything they do gives back to the community, so all ages come along and get involved. Others noted that crime had appeared to reduce on the street where projects were located, and that people had begun to feel safer. This was partly due to the project and young people cleaning up the road and the areas outside of it and encouraging others to do the same. It is hoped that this would be a two-way dynamic, with local people given the chance to see young people making positive contributions to their area, fostering positivity and happiness within the community. Consultations with parents supported this, with many sharing pride with not only the activities done with the young people, but also with the community-based work carried out.

As highlighted throughout the previous section, the project has contributed towards large scale positive change and behavioural changes amongst young people in the areas it has targeted. During focus groups these “extreme behaviour changes” were linked to not just increased engagement with others in the community, but a passion for helping others. In fact, one of the young people within the programme was nominated for and subsequently won a community award. This was an autistic young person that staff described to have made a remarkable change over the course of the programme.

4.7 SEND Young People and Outcomes

Throughout the monitoring and during site visits there were multiple instances where participants highlighted differences in outcomes due to SEND. Those differences in outcomes and challenges mentioned will be discussed in this chapter. It is important to note that many of the young people previously mentioned, and those included within the statistics will have had SEND, however as they did not make specific reference to this, they have not been included here.

Many SEND young people expressed challenges they had faced relating to experiences outside of the groups not being well suited to their needs. This accounted for some of the negative responses from the monitoring data. In terms of conflict, one group detailed experiences of being misunderstood due to sensory overload or emotional triggers, leading to conflict. One specific example was given where a young person “snapped” at a teacher for being unexpectedly touched.

When speaking about physical activity many young people stated they only enjoyed it when they were in control and able to stop when they wanted to. Others detailed experiences of being forced to take part in overstimulating, non-adapted activities. Conversations clearly highlighted enjoyment of physical activity is closely linked to appropriate design and giving youth autonomy.

Other challenges were mentioned in discussions with young people about emotions. When speaking about empathy, young people discussed how SEND youth are often misjudged as “selfish” or “rude”,



when often they are either masking or overwhelmed. Young people from other groups detailed how they often struggle to understand emotions and feelings due to their neurodiversity. However, one young person went on to explain how they were learning to adapt to others, and how nice it was to be around a neurodivergent group who were different from their friends. This was echoed by young people in another group, who explained that they felt happy neurodivergence was well represented within the group.

In relation to emotional control, it was raised that young people are neurodivergent may struggle to control emotions. However, a parent of a non-verbal young person explained how beneficial the group had been for improving their emotional control and how they react. They went on to explain that the routine provided by the group is a positive, and that the sessions provided an opportunity for him to get his emotions out when he was angry.

During discussions about employability young people explained the challenges those with neurodiversity face. Some explained how they struggle when applying for jobs, explaining how they struggle with interviews and CV's, while many others expressed general difficulty because of their neurodiversity. One young person noted the benefits of the approach taken to learning on their course, noting the benefits of the hands-on approach for their dyslexia, they went on to explain that they struggle with traditional approaches to teaching.

There were many other benefits highlighted during discussions. In one group, parents of non-verbal young people detailed large improvements in confidence because of the sessions. One of them went on to explain how their child struggles with loud places, however being part of the sessions has really helped them with this. They added that the group had been great for their child's mental health, and that it had provided a space for them to stay physically fit, something which is more difficult for their additional needs. Lastly, when asked about outcomes relating to identity, they detailed how it had improved their relationships, building relationships with new friends alongside coaches who support them to develop other skills.



'They wear headphones as they don't like noise, but they still come and have got used to the noise in the gym. It's really loud in here but they absolutely love it, they really enjoy it.'

- Parent



'He gets to socialise with others, his friends, and he's included in something. It helps him to be accepted.'

- Parent

4.8 Unexpected Outcomes

Various unexpected outcomes have been highlighted throughout the report; this chapter will discuss further unexpected outcomes which were highlighted mainly during site visits, but also in focus groups with delivery organisations. Previously mentioned unexpected outcomes include the following:

- Benefits to indirect beneficiaries such as families and the local communities.
- New skills across young people, families and staff teams such as better mental health awareness.
- Increase of wider community access to buildings services and projects.



It was clear from discussions had throughout the evaluation that the programme had not only had a positive impact on young people, but also that it had been beneficial for the parents as well. This was revealed through conversations with parents.

A conversation with a parent during a site visit revealed how beneficial the club had been for them in helping them to build new connections with other parents. They went on to explain how the additional needs of their child meant that they had lost touch with many of their friend, however coming to the group allowed them to meet other likeminded parents, who understood the additional needs of caring for someone with Autism. They now considered the other parents as good friends and regularly went out and met up with them outside of the sessions. Further to that, other parents highlighted how the sessions provided them with a safe space, where they could feel at ease without the judgement of other people wondering why their children behaved in particular ways.

Mental health benefits for parents were also spoken of during discussions. While some sessions targeted this as an outcome working with parents to try and tackle mental wellbeing challenges, parents from other groups simply acknowledged the importance of having a break from their children was. These parents went on to speak of the “respite” provided, while stating the sessions provided a “sanctuary for them”. Further to that, another parent reported feeling calm and happy.



‘You can’t underestimate the need for this safe haven.’

- Young Person

Parents also highlighted the importance of community, and the community approach which was taken by organisations. One spoke of the benefits to them of being more involved in the community, stating that the club had given them a focus, and that they were getting a lot out of helping out, volunteering and supporting the club to support their children and others in the community. Furthermore, another spoke of the community that was being built within the group they were involved in. They went on to explain that there was a real feeling of trust, mutual respect, support and community within the snug room that was set aside for parents to have some time to themselves or with others in the same situation. They went on to express feeling calm and confident seeing their children being happy and interacting, which is not their usual experience within other settings.



‘Going to [Delivery Organisation] is a highlight, they’re made a fuss of in a way that they aren’t anywhere else.’

- Parent

Parents detailed the positive impact the project had on the wider community as well. Parents from one group all agreed on the lack of alternatives for children to play, congregate and engage in the local community, stating the positive reach and impact that the group was having. Others expressed that they could see the difference in the community and the changes in it with the children safe and occupied in these sessions. Others agreed that it was important to keep the children off the streets and that the schemes were really good to support the organisation to support the community.



4.9 Summary

- Across all outcomes, **young people gave generally positive responses** at the end of the programme.
- **Young people demonstrated very strong improvements in all outcomes** over the course of the programme.
- **Survey data generally supported these findings**, giving overall positive responses to both outcome statements and the improvement in outcomes over the course of the programme.
- Across all outcomes, a large number of those who stated there had been no change over the course of the programme went on to explain that they were at a good level for the respective outcome at the start of the programme.
- Young people showed **strong progress when it comes to conflict**; discussions revealed that young people became better at handling conflict and removing themselves from negative situations. This theme is especially pronounced at clubs, where young people develop a high level of respect for one another.
- Young people showed **strong progress for control of emotions**. Young people demonstrated they learnt good coping mechanisms for anger. Sport was found to be a great avenue for relieving anger and aggression. Young people also highlighted the benefits of being able to talk to someone for regulating emotions.
- Young people showed **strong progress in mental health**, with only a small percentage of young people expressing poor mental health at the end of the programme. Young people detailed multiple routes to improved mental health which happened over the course of the programme, many relating to other outcomes such as physical activity and the building of relationships.
- Young people gave **mixed feedback on the discussions had around mental health** for both monitoring and during site visits, with some young people feeling triggered by the subject, but others praising the benefits of discussing mental health in a safe setting.
- Young people once again **showed strong progress in enjoyment of physical activity**, alongside very good levels of enjoyment at the end of the programme. Increased enjoyment was expressed for a wide variety of sports and physical activity, as well as increased understanding of healthy habits such as sleep hygiene and nutrition.
- The large majority of **young people felt more confident** at the end of the programme. A wide variety of things were reported to boost confidence, such as activities, increased social interaction and increased exposure to new situations.
- **Good progress was made in terms of empathy, with very strong levels of empathy** at the end of the programme. Young people showed increased levels of empathy for those on the programme with them, such as team or club members, as well as improved empathy more generally and for family and friends outside of the programme.
- There was **good improvement in terms of education, but still a mix in terms of views on education** at the end of the programme. Despite mixed views on school and education, young people reported feeling better about the subject due to general improvements in mental health and confidence. Very positive feedback was received from older participants involved in practical training.
- **Strong progress was made in terms of employment**. Many younger participants reported not having considered work as they are too young. Young people reported concerns around their academic performance, however responded positively to discussions about less traditional routes into employment.



- **Very strong progress was made in terms of young people's relationships, with very strong levels** at the end of the programme. Young people strengthened existing relationships, as well as creating new ones with friends, family, coaches, staff and mentors. Many young people were introduced to positive role models as a direct result of the programme.
- Young people showed **strong progress in pride in place, with high levels of pride in place at the end of the programme**. Many projects successfully fostered a sense of community for young people, and young people reported a sense of belonging thanks to the programme.
- Feedback from SEND young people suggested feelings of being misunderstood or facing challenges outside of the programme. SEND young people highlighted the benefits of meeting likeminded people and having a safe place within the programme in which their additional needs are understood.
- Parents reported a number of benefits, such as improvements in mental health and strengthening of relationships. Parents also hailed the community approach and improvements to the local community from the programme.
- Strong interrelations were highlighted between outcomes, both within and across outcome themes. Many young people linked other outcomes to mental health, such as confidence and conflict. Physical activity was also strongly linked to conflict and emotional control. In terms of employability, young people reported needing to improve general confidence.



5 Systemic outcomes & Fund legacy

This chapter focuses on the **legacy and sustainability** of the YES funded community projects. These projects offer diversionary activities with a focus upon arts, culture and sports to support young people aged under 25 years who may be more vulnerable to experiencing violence and at risk of anti-social behaviour. This could be due to a lack of self-esteem, experiencing challenges at home, residing in a community where drugs and alcohol are prevalent, or lacking infrastructure and accessible services. All these factors are recognised by the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) as increasing vulnerability to experiencing violence and/or exploitation. The aim of this fund is to provide **sustainable and effective approaches to addressing serious violence**.

5.1 Crime Reduction

As of March 2025, the total number of "violent crime" recorded in Liverpool was 38,400, a number which has decreased by nine per cent when compared year-over-year in the period of March 2024 - February 2025¹⁶. Over the last year, Liverpool's crime risk score has shown a downward trend of approximately 22 points, indicating that the risk profile is going down. However, it must be noted that this is an extremely short time period for crime trend analysis, and caution should be exercised when interpreting this figure. When looking at data for the previous five years, no trend could be found in Liverpool's crime risk scores, and the trend may well be static.¹⁷ This indicates that the work of the MVRP, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), statutory authorities and wider stakeholders is effectively preventing serious crime from escalating within the region, through strategic interventions and programmes such as those delivered by the YES funded projects.

According to the PCC in October 2024, overall crime on Merseyside had decreased by 15 per cent. Violence against the person offences had decreased by 7.13 per cent, and violence with injury had decreased by 11.10 per cent. Knife crime was also shown to have decreased by 6.56 per cent on Merseyside. All of this indicates a positive trend in violence reduction within the region. Through its effective collaborations, the MVRP has worked to embed the public health approach to tackling serious violence ensuring partners understand the impact of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The positive feedback from young people, their families and wider communities indicates that projects are supporting those who are vulnerable, to prevent issues in years to come.

5.2 Legacy

It was important for the MVRP that projects took a trauma informed approach, and as much as possible were youth led. Getting value for money was important but engaging with a more diverse range of young people (such as those with SEND or who identify as neurodiverse) ensured that the projects have been more inclusive and able to target those who are at a higher risk. This round of funding the team wanted to continue to ensure that there were different activities going on for young people with additional and other needs. *"The legacy of the funding is that projects and programmes have become more inclusive."* (MVRP team member). 50 per cent of the projects funded took a mixed approach to activities, providing a range of arts, cultural and sports-based elements. 20 per cent engaged in sports-based activities, with another 13 per cent offering arts-based elements and the remaining 17 per cent providing a mixture of counselling and skills building activities, continuing to address the previous imbalance of the focus on funding sports-based activities.

¹⁶ <https://www.plumplot.co.uk/Liverpool-violent-crime-statistics.html>

¹⁷ <https://crimerate.co.uk/merseyside/liverpool>



The Southport stabbings in July 2024 had a massive influence on the fund as a whole, but more specifically, project delivery. The incident delayed the commencement of the projects as the authorities were dealing with the aftermath including the following race riots. This really changed the local landscape and affected not only how things were being delivered, but also the subjects that were being delivered. Some delivery was changed to support and reflect local need, with the MVRP conscious that projects were struggling to support their communities. After the Southport incident, people felt unsafe and uncomfortable with letting their children and young people go back into projects and the wider community. The tireless work of the projects, their presence in these areas and on the streets really supported communities to feel safer and confident about accessing services and projects again.

The creation of accessible trusted friends was cited as one of the biggest success factors across all projects. If young people can trust someone, and can start to build a relationship, then they will reengage and keep attending. Across the projects, trusted adults, friends and relationships were created and supported in a variety of ways, but all focussed on providing safe and reliable individuals to confide in and speak with. Evidence points towards this trusted friend element at supporting a reduction in vulnerabilities. For example, working with young people and community members who have a history of offending has been helpful to ensure that programmes are being delivered with the input and support of those with lived experience and relatable examples of how young people can be taken advantage of and what makes them vulnerable. Early intervention is key to reducing young people's vulnerabilities associated with violence and ensuring widespread cultural change.

Projects working with families have the potential to create a ripple effect. This ethos of the whole family approach is pivotal to the MVRP. Projects understand that reducing risk factors for young people requires the support of families and local communities to ensure that each element of a young person's life can support them to grow and develop and make the best choices that they can. A number of projects supported by the YES Fund took this whole family support approach to working with young people. Parents and carers at one organisation acknowledged that although not all the things that project do are funded by YES, it is important to note that they first stepped inside the centre for their children, to access opportunities for them, and have now also found a place of their own within their local community.

Another board member also explained that at their project, a number of the coaches were men from the local community, previously struggling with a variety of life problems or little to do with their free time other than go to the pub. They reported that these coaches were now role models for the children and the other local community members. They were changing personal habits, making sure they were attending games, and ensuring they acted more responsibly when out and about, leaving a legacy within that community.



'They appear to feel more valued, and have pride in what they are doing, ensuring that they model this to all the kids on the estate'

- Project board member

5.3 Sustainability

The grant awarding team carefully considered the local landscape to see what was already provided and what new things could be offered in each area of applications. Every different aspect was brought into consideration and decision making, to ensure a fair and even distribution of projects. Inclusive



community-based approaches targeting specific demographic groups has been effective in creating wider community cohesion and addressing the range of needs of the children and families that are being supported. This has been a real success of the funding this year and has provided the opportunity for testing and adapting approaches, which will in turn provide more sustainability moving forward. The passion and enthusiasm of the people delivering these projects are key success factors and support the ongoing desire to keep activities sustained within settings. For example, one organisation appears to have created momentum within the community to keep the organisation going via volunteers and local support. Whilst another has been engaging more within the community via this round of funding, to further increase the sustainability of this programme of work.



‘It provides these people with a sense of belonging as well, we were not expecting this. The impacts go a lot further to the heart of the community.’

- Volunteer

Delivery organisations agreed that engaging with the lives of those young people that you know that are the most problematic can help to keep them off the streets, particularly on high-risk nights. Building these relationships is the first step to keeping those at risk of offending and being easily led, out of trouble. The establishment of these relationships and trust supports the ongoing sustainability of projects, as young people want to reengage. Creating a safe space for these young people to trust and build relationships, allows opportunities for young people to develop the confidence to actually attempt and achieve other things. The whole family approach is also central to this, engaging and integrating parents, carers and local community members into these groups increases everyone’s wellbeing and supports more understanding and supported communities.

Organisations shared how the whole family approach was supporting communities to become more resilient and better connected. This approach supports projects to become more sustainable. For example, one sports based project shared that parents love coming to watch their children at the weekend. Instead of spending weekends in the pub, they are focussing on supporting their young people at morning games. A parent from an arts-based project expressed that she could see the difference in the community and the changes in it, with the children safe and occupied in these sessions. Another agreed that it was important to keep the children off the streets and that the schemes were really good to support the organisation to support the wider community.

One recommendation for the future suggested by a number of organisations, would be to have more networking, partnership and collaboration opportunities, for organisations to address issues more strategically as a sector and share learning of what works well. Delivery staff also indicated that a barrier to sustainability was short term contracts, as they do not support staff retention. Becoming well established with staff and building trust was a key factor in sustaining project delivery, with the continuity of the staff team crucial.



5.4 Summary

- Stats from the PCC show that serious crime in Merseyside has been prevented and reduced.
- Delivery organisations are continuing to find ways to increase sustainability and develop and refine their approaches to combatting serious violence.
- Cultural change is being achieved across the region, via networking, collaboration and the adoption of the public health approach to dealing with serious violence.
- Learning is shared and embedded into approaches.
- Only 20 per cent of projects offered purely sports based interventions, with much more emphasis placed upon arts and culturally based interventions across the region.
- A range of outcomes have been achieved on both individual and group levels to reduce young people's vulnerabilities associated with violence.



6 Conclusions

The merging of the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership's (MVRP) Arts Culture Sport (ACS) fund with the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Youth Diversion Fund supported organisations to access larger grants to support their work, with £494,810 distributed across 30 organisations focused in areas which have seen the highest levels of violence and the biggest cuts to youth services.

6.1 What Works

The MVRP uses a multi-agency Public Health Approach to preventing and tackling serious violence, meaning it is treated as a preventable issue with multiple agencies working together to address the root causes of the violence to prevent its recurrence. The key to successful delivery highlighted by the majority of projects was the creation of safe spaces for young people to be themselves and share their concerns. Projects where there was a focus on supporting the development of peer relationships reported the growth of more inclusive communities. This increased community cohesion and engagement was unanticipated by many organisations.

Targeted engagement with neurodiverse and young people with SEND was beneficial and offered appropriate support and interventions for these groups of marginalised young people. Importantly, it was highlighted that projects that took a whole family approach identified opportunities for all members to access support, learning and engagement, which developed stronger systems for long term change at a family and community level. Demographic data demonstrated a **wide range of beneficiaries engaged**, specifically a wide age range and as such the variety of activities on offer alongside intersecting themes and issues addressed represent the complexity of the intervention. Whilst the majority of beneficiaries engaged were *White British* the record of an additional 13+ ethnicities demonstrates the reach of the projects.

Mental wellbeing interlinked with physical wellbeing was shown in some areas to have a ripple effect, with young people cascading their learning and skills throughout their wider communities. 50 per cent of projects took a mixed intervention approach to their delivery, offering sport and arts, cultural, wellbeing opportunities to provide a more inclusive offer that addressed a whole range of needs. This created trust and confidence amongst young people to try interventions and opportunities that they may not have done before.

Additionally, whilst all 30 delivery organisations targeted *young people* as beneficiaries the additional targeting of a further 22 beneficiary types also demonstrate far reaching engagement. Seven of those beneficiary types were covered by 50 per cent or more of delivery organisations, further strengthening the value of the whole family approach to reducing vulnerabilities.

Multiple discussions with young people revealed the benefits of participation on how they approach conflict, reinforcing the positive impact of the programme. Numerous young people stated that over the course of their involvement they had got better at not falling out with others. Multiple reasons were provided for this, with young people stating they had become better at laughing things off or avoiding conflict more, alongside recognising these places provide a safe place where they can better deal with disagreements.

Almost all young people (89 per cent) stated an improvement in how they control their emotions following involvement in the programme. Whilst the majority of those who stated no change for this



question stated it was because they were still learning how to control their emotions and feelings better, demonstrating emotional maturity and self-reflection.

A number of young people clearly linked their involvement in the programme with the development of coping mechanisms to deal with anger. The importance of relationships with staff was also clearly highlighted, helping them to control their feelings was attributed to being able to talk to staff about their emotions.

Confidence amongst young people has grown by taking part in a wide variety of activities such as outdoor activities, physical activity, arts and craft, meditation and social interaction. Feedback from young people, staff and parents/carers supports the evidence of improvements in confidence.

6.2 Lessons Learned

Increased numbers of participants affected delivery – either requiring funds to be redistributed to cover staff costs, or utilising volunteer support to deliver targeted 1:1 services. This had both positive and negative outcomes for projects, and should be considered at the planning stages, to mitigate any risk by over subscription of activities.

Delivery organisations identified three key barriers to **participation**: provision of indoor facilities; affordability; and concern around safety. Projects adapted to these challenges to provide additional and alternative engagement, providing consistent support. The importance of remaining flexible and fluid was highlighted by organisations to remain able to adjust to situations beyond their influence. The MVRP should continue to support organisations to have an iterative approach to their delivery, responding to the ever-changing needs of young people and their communities.

The Southport stabbings of July 2024 and following race riots impacted the delivery of projects across Merseyside. The fund supported organisations to continue working through this difficult time, building confidence and trust amongst young people and communities to reengage. Some reported that the incident brought the communities together and supported meaningful interactions around race, violence and local communities, all reported the negative impact this incident had on the feelings of safety for young people and their families in Merseyside. Supporting organisations to prioritise supporting communities at this time was highlighted as beneficial, open discussion should be continued between the MVRP and delivery organisations to ensure consistency across projects in the event of incidents such as this.

Of the 10 outcomes measured with young people Empathy, Physical Activity, Positive Relationship and Pride in Place received the most positive responses, with between 62-70 per cent agreeing with the statements. Young people also spoke of the strengthening of existing relationships, as well as the creation of new ones as a result of their involvement in the programme. Furthermore, the introduction of positive role models was evident including staff members and peer mentors, this focus on relationships and support by people and peers should be a key part of programmes moving forwards.

Despite the polarising and challenging nature of education for many young people, which is often influenced by past negative experiences, interventions like those on the programme can still make a positive impact on young people's attitudes and experiences of education and training. Future evaluations need to consider measuring the effectiveness of these interventions on perceptions around school differently to account for the attitudes towards education experienced by a large number of young people engaging in programmes such as these.



6.3 Recommendations

Delivery organisations identified three trends in **engagement**. These included difficulties maintaining engagement for those aged 15-17 due to academic pressures around examinations, key engagement periods where diversionary activities were particularly productive (Halloween, Bonfire and Mischief night) and the necessity to adopt specialised engagement tools for SEND young people such as visual supports and sensory tools. Reduced engagement or increased need for interventions at various points in the calendar year by specific groups needs to be considered and planned for in future delivery to minimise disruption to engagement and offer targeted support to the right groups at the right times. Taking a person-centred approach to supporting different groups is also key to ensuring that activities and interventions are appropriate and accessible.

The development of new skills amongst both beneficiaries and staff was cited as an important unanticipated outcome for some projects. Including training and skill development that impacts organisations and communities both should be considered by all organisations as a part of their funding applications to ensure wider impact and growth of stronger resilient communities.

The engagement of wider community members via volunteering roles was thought to be a key to successful delivery within communities, alongside offering volunteering roles to young people embedding a peer support approach and showcasing the positive outcomes young people can have on communities when engaged constructively. Social action/voluntary opportunities can increase pride in place and strengthen beneficiaries feelings of identity. Elements of this approach should be considered by all organisations within their intervention plans and tailored to fit local needs and delivery requirements.

There were mixed reviews received of the fund management with some organisations questioning if reporting and evaluating requirements were proportionate. However, positive experiences of support were described from the MVRP and evaluation team across all areas. The MVRP should consider communication and monitoring/evaluation requirements based upon this feedback to ensure that proportionate and purposeful data is collected in future iterations of this funding programme, to minimise the impact on organisational resources and capacity.

Interconnections between outcomes were highlighted across the data, and it is important to consider this in the planning of future programmes and activities. Many young people spoke of how outcomes helped to reduce conflict, including physical activity and improved mental health. Others cited the benefits of wellbeing and creative activities to support controlling emotions. Multiple benefits can be gained by targeting outcomes with sport and creative interventions.

Shared identity and experience was also highlighted during focus groups, with delivery staff explaining the value of young people being able to mix with others who are going through similar experiences, and the reduction in isolation this can have for young people, which affects levels of loneliness. This should be an important part of group design in future planning.

Choice and independence in how to engage was highlighted by both neurodiverse young people and individuals with SEND, but also by their parents and carers. Allowing autonomy on interaction, to choose how to engage, and for how long was a success factor in supporting young people to engage in activities in a way that felt empowering and meaningful for them. The key to this was creating an inclusive atmosphere where young people were allowed to be themselves, engage as they wanted and felt comfortable, leading to growth across numerous areas reported by parents, carers and young



people themselves. This freedom and flexibility in how to engage should be supported across all interactions, providing safe spaces for all young people.

6.4 Summary

- Stats from the PCC show that serious crime in Merseyside has been prevented and reduced.
- Delivery organisations are continuing to find ways to increase sustainability and develop and refine their approaches to combatting serious violence via intersectional, diverse, work and programmes reaching a range of beneficiaries (both direct and indirect).
- Cultural change is being achieved across the region, via networking, collaboration and the adoption of the public health approach to dealing with serious violence.
- Cultural change is being achieved through the whole family approach that organisations undertake, to build resilience amongst communities not just young people themselves.
- Learning is shared and embedded into approaches across organisations, projects and areas.
- Inclusivity and choice remain fundamental to creating safe supportive spaces for diverse young people to come together and grow.
- These projects have also provided safe spaces for parents and carers to feel at ease without judgement, interact with peers dealing with the same issues, and make connections and friendships.
- A range of outcomes have been achieved on both individual and group levels to reduce young people's vulnerabilities associated with violence with evidence to support this from young people themselves, delivery staff, family and wider community members.



Appendix A

A.1 Supplementary Outputs

Support Vulnerable People:	Total (n=4)
Number of people accessing support services as a result of the project	269
Number of people supported to achieve independent living/require less living support as a result of the project	244
Number of people who participated in community activities as part of the project	480
Behaviour: Reduce crime, violence and anti-social behaviour	Total (n=14)
Number of young people who took part in a project/programme and had not re-offended within a period of 3 months	46
Number of people taking part in a project/programme designed to divert them away from anti-social behaviour	1896
Number of perpetrators of domestic abuse taking part in a project/programme designed to divert them away from abusive behaviour	31
Wellbeing: Increase access to sport, exercise and leisure activities	Total (n=7)
Number of activities available as part of the project	263
Number of hours of sport, exercise & leisure activities provided by the project	913
Number of people taking part in sport, exercise & leisure activities as part of the project	810
Wellbeing: Improve health (physical / mental / emotional)	Total (n=14)
Number of activities promoting healthy lifestyles (e.g. healthy eating, smoking cessation etc)	743
Number of hours of sport, exercise & leisure activities provided by projects	2501
Number of people who participated in sport, exercise & leisure activities	1122
Skills/Knowledge: Increase employability	Total (n=2)
Number of people who gained accreditation as part of the project	75
Number of people who gained sustainable employment as a result of the project	11
Number of people who started on the path to employability as a result of the project	75
Skills/Knowledge: Increase in beneficiary training, education, accreditation and employment	Total (n=2)
Number of people who gain new skills as part of the project	100
Number of people who gained accreditation as a result of the project	10
Number of people who started on the path to employability as a result of the project	90
Skills/Knowledge: Promote opportunities for creativity	Total (n=2)
Number of new people participating in projects that promote creativity as part of the project	146
Number of people participating in projects that promote creativity as part of the project	209
Number of projects that promote creativity	16
Community: Strengthen organisations through capacity building	Total (n=2)
Number of new partnerships established as a result of the project	21
Number of existing partnerships developed/strengthened as a result of the project	8
Community: Improve the community working together	Total (n=2)
Number of people engaged in regular volunteering as part of the project	43
Number of hours of community activity provided as part of the project	210
Community: Promote safer communities	Total (n=2)
Number of people who reported that they felt safer in their communities as a result of the project	147
Number of people who reported feeling safer in their communities as a result of the project	147
Number of people being supported as victims of anti-social behaviour or crime as a result of the project	25
Community: Improve community cohesion	Total (n=1)
Number of people who participated in community activities as part of the project	78
Community: Improve community facilities	Total (n=1)
Number of people who have used the new/improved community facilities	138
Number of people who reported that the community facilities were improved as a result of the project	138

A.2 Survey of Participants

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Yes Fund Evaluation

The Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership's Youth Empowerment Scheme is focused on giving young people in the areas which have seen the highest levels of violence, and the biggest cuts to youth service, access better opportunities to prevent them getting involved in trouble.

ERS are the research company that has been brought in to independently evaluate the impact of the Fund's activities. We would like to ask you a few questions about your experience of the project. This will allow us to understand what difference being involved in the YES programmes has made for you. Your answers are the most important part of the evaluation. They will help the team to understand what works well and to improve in the future.

It will take around 4 minutes to answer the questions. If you need any help filling out the survey, or feel that you require support afterwards, please speak to a member of the project team.

All your responses are anonymous and will be sent to ERS via the online platform, Survey Monkey.

Your data will not be shared in any form or use for any other purposes beyond the evaluation. ERS will store the data on our secure cloud systems and all responses will be deleted once the evaluation project comes to a close in 2025.

If you have any queries or would like to receive information for submitting a complaint, please feel free to contact Ray Blythe from ERS at rblythe@ers.org.uk or 0191 244 6100.

1. Are you happy to continue with this survey?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No (ROUTE to end)
2. How old are you?
 - ☐ Under 10 (ROUTE to Reduced Conflict P1)
 - ☐ 10-13 (ROUTE to Reduced Conflict P2)
 - ☐ 14-17 (ROUTE to Reduced Conflict P3)
 - ☐ 18-25 (ROUTE to Reduced Conflict P4)

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Reduced Conflict P1

3. Do you fall out with your friends a lot?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
4. Since coming to the group/sessions, do you fall out with your friends more or less than before?
 - ☐ I fall out of my friends **more than before**
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I fall out with my friends **less than before**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025



Improved Self Control P1

5. Do you feel in control of your feelings?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
6. How did coming to this group/sessions, change the way you control your feelings?
- ☐ I am **more in control** of my feelings
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I am **less in control** of my feelings

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Improved Mental Health P1

7. Do you feel happy in general?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
8. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you feel?
- ☐ I feel **better**
 - ☐ I feel **the same**
 - ☐ I feel **worse**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Physically Active P1

9. Do you like moving your body and playing physical games?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
10. Since coming to the group/sessions, do you like moving your body and playing physical games more or less than before?
- ☐ I like to play physical games **more than before**
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I like to play physical games **less than before**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Confidence P1

11. Do you feel like you can try new things?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
12. Did coming to the group/sessions make you feel more or less like you can try new things?



- ☐ I feel more like I can try new things
- ☐ No change
- ☐ I feel less like I can try new things

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Empathy P1

13. Do you feel you care about other people's feelings?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
14. Since coming to the group/sessions, do you care about others feelings more or less than before?
- ☐ I care about others feelings more than before
 - ☐ No change
 - ☐ I care about others feelings less than before

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Education P1

15. Do you like going to school?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
16. Since coming to the group/sessions, do you like school more or less than before?
- ☐ I like school more than before
 - ☐ No change
 - ☐ I like school less than before

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Employability P1

17. Do you know about different jobs you could do when you grow up?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
18. Did coming to the group/sessions, help you learn about the jobs you could do?
- ☐ Coming to the group helped me learn about jobs
 - ☐ No change
 - ☐ Coming to the group did not help me learn about jobs

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Positive Relationships P1

19. Do you have people in your life you can ask for help?
- ☐ Yes



- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

20. Did coming to the group/sessions help you meet these people?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Pride in Place P1

21. Do you like living in your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

22. Since coming to the group/sessions, do you like where you live more or less than before? (ROUTE all answers to End of Survey)

- ☐ I like where I live **more than before**
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I like where I live **less than before**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Reduced Conflict P2

23. Do you fall out with people a lot?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

24. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you deal with disagreements with others?

- ☐ I am **much better** at dealing with disagreements
- ☐ I am a **bit better** at dealing with disagreements
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I am a **bit worse** at dealing with disagreements
- ☐ I am a **much worse** at dealing with disagreements

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Improved Self Control P2

25. Do you feel you are in control of your feelings and how you react to things?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

26. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you control your feelings and how you react to things?

- ☐ I am **much better** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
- ☐ I am a **bit better** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things



- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I am a **bit worse** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
- ☐ I am a **much worse** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Improved Mental Health P2

27. Do you feel you have good mental health?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
28. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you feel in general?
- ☐ I feel **much better**
 - ☐ I feel **a bit better**
 - ☐ No change
 - ☐ I feel **a bit worse**
 - ☐ I feel **much worse**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Physically Active P2

29. Do you feel you enjoy physical activities/games?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
30. How did coming to the group/sessions change the amount you enjoy physical activities/games?
- ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **much more**
 - ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **a bit more**
 - ☐ No change
 - ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **a bit less**
 - ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **much less**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Confidence P2

31. Do you feel you feel confident to try new things?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
32. How did coming to the group/sessions change the amount you enjoy physical activities/games?
- ☐ I feel **much more** confident to try new things
 - ☐ I feel **a bit more** confident to try new things
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I feel **a bit less** confident to try new things
 - ☐ I feel **much less** confident to try new things



Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Empathy P2

33. Do you feel you care about other people's feelings?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
34. How did coming to the group/sessions change the amount you enjoy physical activities/games?
- ☐ I care about others feelings **much more** than before
 - ☐ I care about others feelings **a bit more** than before
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I care about others feelings **a bit less** than before
 - ☐ I care about others feelings **much less** than before

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Education P2

35. Do you like being in school?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
36. How did coming to the group/sessions change the amount you enjoy physical activities/games?
- ☐ I like school **much more** than before
 - ☐ I like school **a bit more** than before
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I like school **a bit less** than before
 - ☐ I like school **much less** than before more

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Employability P2

37. Do you feel confident you can get a good job in the future?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
38. How did coming to the group/sessions change the amount you enjoy physical activities/games?
- ☐ I feel **much more** confident I can get a good job in the future
 - ☐ I feel **a bit more** confident I can get a good job in the future
 - ☐ No change
 - ☐ I feel **a bit less** confident I can get a good job in the future
 - ☐ I feel **much less** confident I can get a good job in the future

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Positive Relationships P2



39. Do you have people in your life you can look to for support and help?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

40. Did coming to this group/sessions help you meet these people?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Pride in Place P2

41. Do you like living in your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

42. Since coming to this group/sessions, do you like where you live more or less than before? (ROUTE all answers to End of Survey)

- ☐ I like where I live **much more** than before
- ☐ I like where I live **a bit more** than before
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I like where I live **a bit less** than before
- ☐ I like where I live **much less** than before

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Reduced Conflict P3

43. Do you fall out with people a lot?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

44. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you deal with disagreements with others?

- ☐ I am **much better** at dealing with disagreements
- ☐ I am **a bit better** at dealing with disagreements
- ☐ No change
- ☐ I am **a bit worse** at dealing with disagreements
- ☐ I am **much worse** at dealing with disagreements

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Improved Self Control P3

45. Do you feel you are in control of your feelings and how you react to things?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know



46. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you control your feelings and how you react to things?

- ☐ I am **much better** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
- ☐ I am **a bit better** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I am **a bit worse** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
- ☐ I am **much worse** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Improved Mental Health P3

47. Do you feel you have good mental health?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

48. How did coming to the group/sessions affect your mental health?

- ☐ My mental health is **much better**
- ☐ My mental health is **a bit better**
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ My mental health is **a bit worse**
- ☐ My mental health is **much worse**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Physically Active P3

49. Do you enjoy doing physical activities/games?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

50. How did coming to the group/sessions change the amount you enjoy physical activities/games?

- ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **much more**
- ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **a bit more**
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **a bit less**
- ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **much less**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Confidence P3

51. Do you feel you feel confident in yourself?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

52. How did coming to the group/sessions affect your confidence?



- ☐ I am **much more** confident
- ☐ I am **a bit more** confident
- ☐ No change
- ☐ I am **a bit less** confident
- ☐ I am **much less** confident

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Empathy P3

53. Do you feel you consider other people's feelings?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
54. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you think about others feelings?
- ☐ I consider others feelings **much more** than before
 - ☐ I consider others feelings **a bit more** than before
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I consider others feelings **a bit less** than before
 - ☐ I consider others feelings **much less** than before

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Education P3

55. Do you know what you want to achieve in school/college?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
56. How did coming to the group/sessions help you understand what you want to achieve in school/college?
- ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **much more**
 - ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **a bit more**
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **a bit less**
 - ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **much less**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Employability P3

57. Are you confident to get a good job in the future?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
58. How did coming to the group/sessions change your confidence in getting a good job in the future?
- ☐ I feel **much more** confident to get a good job in the future



- ☐ I feel **a bit more** confident to get a good job in the future
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I feel **a bit less** confident to get a good job in the future
- ☐ I feel **much less** confident to get a good job in the future

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Positive Relationships P3

59. Do you have positive role models in your life?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
60. Did coming to group/sessions help you to find these people?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Pride in Place P3

61. Are you proud to be from your area?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
62. How did coming to the group/session affect how proud you are about where you live? (ROUTE all answers to End of Survey)
- ☐ I am **much more** proud about where I live
 - ☐ I am **a bit more** proud about where I live
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I am **a bit less** proud about where I live
 - ☐ I am **much less** proud about where I live

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Reduced conflict P4

63. Do you fall out with people a lot?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
64. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you deal with disagreements with others?
- ☐ I am **much better** at dealing with disagreements
 - ☐ I am **a bit better** at dealing with disagreements
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I am **a bit worse** at dealing with disagreements
 - ☐ I am **much worse** at dealing with disagreements



Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Improved Self Control P4

65. Do you feel you are in control of your feelings and how you react to things?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
66. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you control your feelings and how you react to things?
- ☐ I am **much better** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
 - ☐ I am **a bit better** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
 - ☐ No change
 - ☐ I am **a bit worse** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things
 - ☐ I am **much worse** at controlling my feelings and how I react to things

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Improved Mental Health P4

67. Do you feel you have good mental health?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
68. How did coming to the group/sessions affect your mental health?
- ☐ My mental health is **much better**
 - ☐ My mental health is **a bit better**
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ My mental health is **a bit worse**
 - ☐ My mental health is **much worse**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Physically Active P4

69. Do you enjoy doing physical activities/games?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Don't know
70. How did coming to the group/sessions change the amount you enjoy physical activities/games?
- ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **much more**
 - ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **a bit more**
 - ☐ **No change**
 - ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **a bit less**
 - ☐ I enjoy physical activities/games **much less**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Confidence P4



71. Do you feel you feel confident in yourself?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

72. How did coming to the group/sessions affect your confidence?

- ☐ I am **much more** confident
- ☐ I am **a bit more** confident
- ☐ No change
- ☐ I am **a bit less** confident
- ☐ I am **much less** confident

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Empathy P4

73. Do you feel you care about other people's feelings?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

74. How did coming to the group/sessions change the way you think about others feelings?

- ☐ I consider others feelings **much more** than before
- ☐ I consider others feelings **a bit more** than before
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I consider others feelings **a bit less** than before
- ☐ I consider others feelings **much less** than before

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Education P4

75. Do you know what you want to achieve from education/training?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

76. How did coming to the group/sessions help you understand what you want to achieve from education/training?

- ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **much more**
- ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **a bit more**
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **a bit less**
- ☐ I understand what I want to achieve **much less**

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Employability P4

77. Would you be confident to apply for a job?



- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

78. How did coming to the group/sessions affect your confidence to apply for jobs?

- ☐ I feel **much more** confident to apply for jobs
- ☐ I feel **a bit more** confident to apply for jobs
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I feel **a bit less** confident to apply for jobs
- ☐ I feel **much less** confident to apply for jobs

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Positive Role Models P4

79. Do you have positive role models in your life?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

80. Did coming to group/sessions help you to find these people?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

Pride in Place P4

81. Are you proud to be from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

82. How did coming to the group/session affect how proud you are about where you live? (ROUTE all answers to End of Survey)

- ☐ I am **much more** proud about where I live
- ☐ I am **a bit more** proud about where I live
- ☐ **No change**
- ☐ I am **a bit less** proud about where I live
- ☐ I am **much less** proud about where I live

Yes Fund Evaluation – Past Participant Survey 2025

End of Survey

Thank you for answering these questions. If you have any questions or comments regarding this survey please contact rblythe@ers.org.uk