



INVEST

Evaluation Report Summary

BACKGROUND

Funded by Guildford and Waverley Care Commissioning Group (CCG), the Invest service was created in response to the identified need that for many young people a referral to one to one counselling provision was not the most appropriate solution. They needed lower level, early intervention support which was simply not available.

Many research articles, policy papers and strategic documents, whether from academics, central government or regional authorities highlight the importance of identifying, tackling and preventing mental health issues before they develop. Many mention the critical role schools and other youth organisations play. The Lifetime Impact Report states that there is a *"clear relationship between poor mental health in children, for example anxiety, depression and behavioural problems, and poor school outcomes, poor physical health, self-harm and risk taking behaviour."*

Sarah Brennan CEO of YoungMinds said in July 2016, *"Without treatment, children are more likely to self-harm or become suicidal, to be violent and aggressive towards those around them, or to drop out of school, which can ruin their prospects for the future."*

The importance of schools and youth groups in early intervention and identification is clear, however, schools should not have to do this on their own.

The Invest pilot offered a professionally guided peer group setting, raising awareness of mental health issues whilst focusing on limiting any potential stigma attached through a young person's involvement in it.

Crucially, it offered a timely and impactful intervention, something that had been requested by young people in Surrey.

AIM

Overall:

To raise awareness of precursors and signs of future mental health problems through a series of targeted workshops; working with young people before issues develop.

Specifically to meet the key priorities:

- Challenging stigma,
- Raise awareness of mental health issues and precursors;
- Build capability and capacity in Universal Services through *"supporting schools to enhance their emotional well-being and mental health offer to children and young people."*

Workshops were available for those who are considered, or consider themselves, to have issues which may later develop into mental health issues, i.e. low confidence, low self-esteem, anxiety, mood swings, hyper behaviour, depressed mood, social isolation, and extreme shyness. Engagement funding awarded from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) transformation funding allowed for 36 workshops, supporting up to 48 young people.

The service was offered in the Waverley and Guildford area to secondary schools, along with youth groups and organisations. Potential referral organisations were split into age ranges: 11-14, 15-17, and 18-21 years to ensure the young people are with age appropriate peers.

The Invest service engaged with 36 young people from a variety of schools including mainstream, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), and behavioural schools. See figure 1 for gender split.

Gender Split

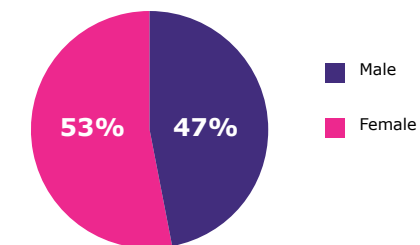


Figure 1. Percentage of males and females who participated in the programme.

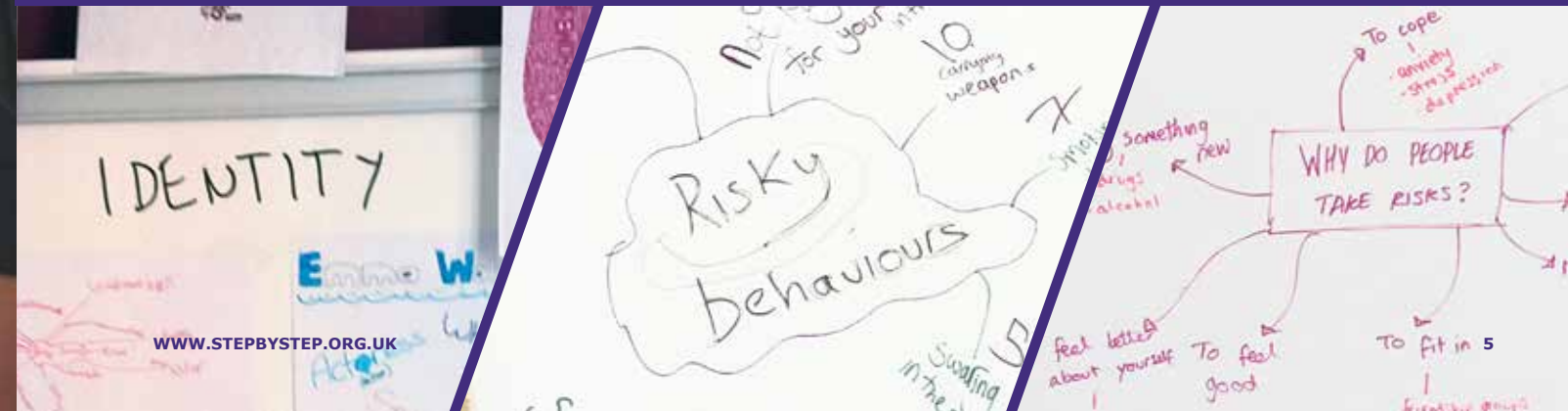
DELIVERY

The workshops were delivered to a total of 36 young people between the ages of 11-17. Each group included an outdoor activity workshop whose aim was to provide the young people further opportunity to develop cohesion, trust and test the skills they had learnt throughout the intervention period.



WORKSHOPS

- **Step up Confidently** – Tackling low confidence with guided group discussion. What is confidence?; benefits & negatives; scenario situations; teamwork activities and management techniques.
- **Step towards Self-Esteem** – What is self-esteem?; how is it perceived by the group?; what are the impacts?; what can be done? Group activity.
- **Small steps to Identity** – Why we act the way we do; what impacts on your identity?; your role.
- **Step away from Anxiety** – Understanding what anxiety is; physical sensations and behaviours; triggers; techniques (emotion regulation; mindfulness; grounding).
- **Stress and the Steps to reduce it** – What can lead to stress?; group discussion; triggers; managing stress; techniques (emotion regulation; mindfulness; grounding).
- **Step back from Risky Behaviour** – What are risky behaviours, (self-harm; self-medication; denial; not communicating)?; addressing the reality; where to access support; triggers; coping.



OUTCOMES

Understanding of each topic was measured before and after workshop intervention. Young people rated their understanding of each topic before the workshop began and following intervention. Young people reported an average increased understanding of 26%. Please see figure 2. A total of 27 young people responded to this question.

64% of respondents reported an increase in self-esteem (13 respondents). Please see figure 3.

64% of respondents reported an increase in emotional well-being (13 respondents). Please see figure 4.

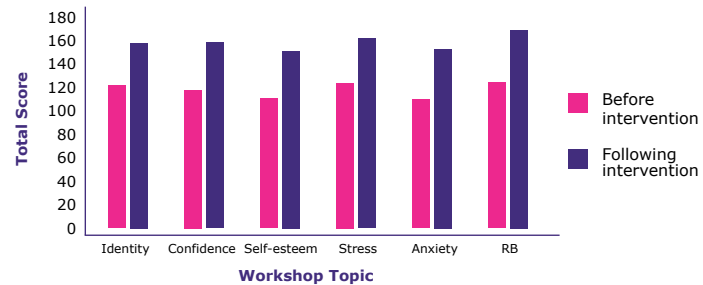


Figure 2. Understanding rated before and after workshop based intervention.

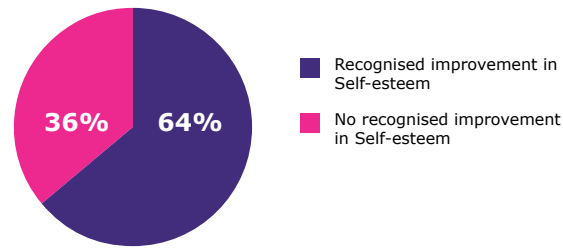


Figure 3. Changes in self-esteem following workshop based intervention

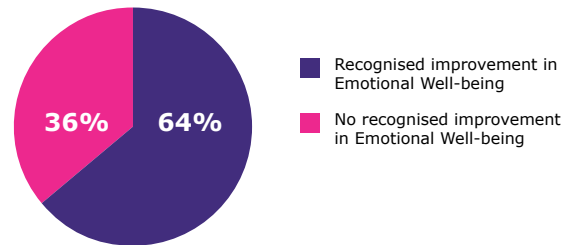


Figure 4. Changes in Emotional Well-being following workshop intervention



64% OF RESPONDENTS REPORTED AN INCREASE IN SELF-ESTEEM

FEEDBACK

A year 8 pupil, identified as having low self-esteem and anxiety,
"Thank you for the great support, it has really helped me and I'm going to miss doing this every week. I really appreciate it. I honestly enjoyed every second!"

A year 8 pupil identified as having low confidence and difficulties making friendships,
"I made a new friend and the group activities were really fun."

A year 9 pupil who identified as having poor emotional well-being stated,
"They help me with dealing with the hard times and there is a lot to do as well."

A year 11 pupil who identified as having low confidence and difficulty dealing with anxiety described the residential trip as,
"A really enjoyable trip because we did team bonding and got to know the trained facilitators better."

A year 11 pupil who reported low self-esteem and difficulty managing their emotional well-being summarised the intervention by saying,
"Overall, I have learned that other people feel the same types of things and that it is OK to talk about things. I've also learnt that people identify themselves according to what makes them happy."

Professional Feedback

"Very beneficial group. Would like to target boys group if possible! Well organised and professional group!"

"Just to say that one of the girls from the group yesterday came to see me at lunchtime and said that some of the girls have been talking about how useful the group was, they wanted to join in the half term activity and why can't it be longer than 6 weeks! Amazing start, please pass our thanks onto your trained facilitators."

"I absolutely loved it and as a consequence of the day spent with you has stirred my imagination for a brand new approach."

Parent Feedback

"My son attends a school where you have just started your Invest Pilot project. The course content looks amazing and I'm sure the children will benefit from this, I know my son will."



The Lifetime Impact Report states that "Schools can ... play in important role in the early identification of emotional problems, as well as learning difficulties, which can themselves lead to emotional and conduct problems." Surrey's Early Help Strategy is underpinned by a principle of "Early help and timely intervention [where] partnership resource is directed at preventing problems before they arise."

This pilot project delivered early intervention, preventing mental health issues arising in young people in Guildford and Waverley, stemming the tide of referrals to more intensive Surrey CAMHS services. Its success has been recognised to secure further funding for a pilot in Hart, Hampshire, 2017-18.

With thanks to NHS Guildford and Waverley CCG.

Lifetime Impacts: Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health-Understanding the Lifetime Impacts. Mental Health Foundation (2005).

CASE STUDIES

Autism

A young person from a specialist behavioural school with an Autism diagnosis finding it difficult to fit in with the new school. This young person has difficulties in concentrating for long periods of time and difficulty communicating with people.

The workshops enabled the young person to be open and to share his thoughts and feelings with workshop delivery staff. The facilitators, through interaction, identified the young person had low confidence and self-esteem. The young person often thought of himself in a negative light and found it difficult to be positive about himself and his situation.

The flexibility of the programme allowed the delivery staff to adopt a different approach, working to uncover his talents,

interests and personality. The facilitators, enabling him to think in a reflective manner, managed challenging behaviour, and helped him understand how some of his behaviours were inappropriate.

The Young person started to open up and develop conversation with peers and facilitators throughout the intervention. He became very thoughtful and his understanding of the topics developed. He felt that his thoughts towards himself changed.

Low Self-esteem and Anger

A young person who, by his own admission, identified as having low self-esteem and anger issues. The young person was guarded and appeared reluctant, to the point where he wasn't going to engage in any way during the first session. It became apparent after a short time that he lacked confidence in front of the group and found it uncomfortable to share his own experiences. Facilitators were able to engage the young person on a 1:1 setting or with one person in the group that he felt comfortable with.

Over the period, facilitators were able to provide the required level of 1:1 support to enable the young person to change from interacting solely with the facilitators, to engaging with peers and group activities, with

significant contribution to group discussions surrounding anxiety and risky behaviour.

His confidence grew and he became more open and willing to share his thoughts and feelings. His perception of mental health and his internal stigma surrounding this had changed. The young person described the workshops as helpful for developing his understanding of the subjects we covered but he noted in his feedback that he felt his emotional well-being had worsened since the start of the sessions. Facilitators were able to signpost to the counselling service and alternative support resources that he could access.

Low Self-esteem and Anxiety

A young person identified for low self-esteem and anxiety. The young person was extremely shy even talking to peers, and found it uncomfortable and difficult to talk to facilitators. The young person began to develop her confidence after each session following dedicated time offered by the facilitators.

Feedback from the school mentioned that the young person had always been very closed and found it hard to open up.

The flexibility of the workshops allowed the facilitators to adapt sessions to suit the needs of the group. Discussion elements changed to smaller groups of twos and threes with consideration given to the seating arrangements from the large

table to a smaller, less formal setting. In this environment, the young person was able to develop her confidence each week.

The young person highlighted how much progress she had made over the 6 weeks during a Q&A session, as she was the only one who put her hand up to ask a question. This was significant because of the difficulties the young person displayed in communicating over the first few sessions. She asked a question that would be difficult for most people to ask in a group setting, *"How do you get better at speaking to people if you find it hard to talking to people?"*

Step by Step offers services to empower young people and prevent homelessness throughout Hampshire, Surrey, Berkshire, and Dorset.



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