



Youth at Risk

**Evaluation of the Community
Transformation Programme**

By York Consulting LLP

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**Youth at Risk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. Youth at Risk received funding through the Youth Sector Development Fund to deliver the Community Transformation Programme (CTP) across local areas in England. York Consulting was commissioned by Youth at Risk to evaluate the impact of CTP from the years 2009 to 2011.
2. The Community Transformation Programme (CTP) aimed to support young people by developing their personal skills (e.g. critical awareness and effective decision making) and by providing one to one support from a coach who focussed on empowering young people to change their behaviours. The programme delivery focussed on three areas:
 - **Coaching for Success (CfS):** young people in schools not realising their full potential. Young people attended a three day training session, followed by six months of coaching;
 - **Choices and Aspire:** young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or at risk of NEET. Young people attended a three day training session, followed by six months of coaching;
 - **Coaching for Communities (CfC):** young people most at risk through involvement in criminal justice system; anti-social behaviour; gang-related activity or are not registered with any statutory agency. Young people attended a five day residential, followed by nine months coaching.
3. The programme worked on the principle that *'it takes a whole community to raise a child'*¹ and so alongside young people's support, adults were trained (teachers, youth workers, police, prison and probation staff, parents, families and carers) to support young people; to build capacity for a greater understanding and ongoing support in local communities.

Key Findings

Impact on Young People

4. The training had significant impact on young people's critical thinking which encouraged changes in their behaviour. This was particularly the case for those that reported the most extreme negative behaviour and is testament to the power of the residential in developing young people's resilience and improving outcomes. Some young people, therefore, did experience a 'transformation' and their risk of experiencing negative outcomes significantly reduced. Two thirds of young people (30 out of 46) who were NEET were supported back into EET.
5. These transformations were particularly apparent amongst the young people that reported the most extreme negative behaviour, suggesting that the programme was most successful with the most 'at risk' young people.

¹ Youth at Risk (2010)

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6. Many young people reported improved relationships, particularly with their parents as a result of their commitment to address issues. There were examples of young people reflecting on how their behaviour had affected their relationships in the past and changing how they related to others.
7. To an extent, data gathered from agencies working with young people, corroborate the changes reported by young people. This showed a reduction in the number of young people offending and an improvement in young people's predicted grades at key stage four.
8. For a large number of young people, engagement in negative behaviour either stayed the same or increased. This meant that, for many risk indicators, the net number of young people engaging in negative behaviour increased.
9. However, the impact for some very vulnerable young people was so significant we believe it outweighs the non-impact witnessed in other areas. As a consequence, the programme could reap potential savings to the public purse as a result of young people desisting from offending and moving from NEET to EET.

Impact on Adults

10. Youth at Risk encouraged local authorities to engage adults from the local communities to participate in the YaR transformational training. A total of 2,457 adults attended the initial engagement session and from this, 1,873 elected to be trained and 1,522 completed the full three day training. From this pool of trained adults, 439 elected to continue working with YaR as a volunteer.
11. Some areas significantly increased capacity to support young people with many training over 100 adults, and one, training over 400.
12. Particularly impressive was the spread of adults and agencies engaged on the training. There was an almost even split between professionals and community members with 55% of adults who completed the training being 'professionals that work with young people' and 45% being either 'parents, local residents, volunteers, or others'. This shows that the programme was successful in engaging all groups in the community.
13. Crucially, there was a wide range of agencies participating: schools, social services, housing, police, voluntary and community, Connexions, Youth Offending Services, education welfare and health. This shows the broad appeal of the training as well as the potential to influence how a range of professionals work with young people.
14. The training had a range of impacts on adults. It improved their personal skills and confidence to work with young people. It had a clear positive impact on the majority of adults with nine out of ten rating the impact as good or excellent. There was a clear recognition that it had improved their aspirations and motivations and self esteem as well as their ability to work with young people. Professionals, for example the Police, reported an improved understanding of young people and their behaviours. Some professionals reported that the training had 'reignited' their careers.
15. There were also examples of where the training was impacting positively on joint working across agencies as well as relationship between local authorities and businesses.

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Impact on Communities

16. Although LAs tried to focus on particular areas of deprivation within their local authorities, it has not been possible to evidence the impact of the programme at a community level such as at ward level for example. This is because of changes in the original focus of support and intensity of delivery impacting on the overall impact on a particular area. To hit targets, recruitment of both adults and young people was often extended more widely, so reducing the degree of concentration and potential impact at the community level.
17. However, we have evidenced particular areas where there was intensity of training that led to a change in vibe and optimism, for example in local community groups and agencies. However, the greatest impact was witnessed in schools and in particular on young people's re-engagement in learning. Consultations with senior leaders and assistant heads reported a significant impact on teachers and young people alike. There was evidence of improved behaviour and attendance and ultimately on the quality of learning received by the young person. Evidence from school data shows that this improved predicted grades at key stage four.

Recruitment of Young People

18. A total of 2,088 young people engaged with CTP. These are impressive numbers and YaR exceeded their target of working with 2,050 young people. The number of young people deciding to undertake more intense training after initial engagement, was 1,387.
19. Over a third (34%) deselected themselves at this stage. From this, 997 completed the training (72%) and 815 completed the coaching. 59% of young people who attended the training therefore completed the full programme.
20. The numbers of young people engaged varied significantly across the LAs from 256 in one area, through to 67 in another². Recruitment was affected by an amalgam of issues including LA resources and capacity, programme schedules, logistics, relations with partner agencies (schools, connexions, YOTs etc).
21. The young people had a range of risk characteristics. Some had much higher levels of need and required more intensive support, while others required more motivational support to improve their engagement with learning in school.
22. 13% of young people had higher needs and were recruited onto Coaching for Communities; 38% were NEET or at Risk of NEET and were recruited onto Choices or Aspire, and 49% were recruited onto the Coaching for Success programme.

Conclusions

23. CTP reaped benefits for many young people. The impact on young people's critical awareness and resilience to deal with challenging situations was significant and in many cases this led to improvements in behaviour and a reduction in risk. However, for many others, the impacts were not clear, and many left the programme early (though for a number of reasons, some of which were positive, such as gaining education placements or employment).

²Another LA only engaged eight young people, but this is due to leaving the programme early.

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24. In addition, the demands on local areas to deliver against agreed targets put huge strains on their capacity and initially on relations with Youth at Risk. Youth at Risk responded well and provided additional support to LAs to ensure targets were met. This support was well received and partnerships remain strong between Youth at Risk and local authorities.
25. To ensure that capacity to support young people continues to develop, we recommend Youth at Risk encourages a re-training of volunteers and promotes the programme as much as possible to existing partnerships. Our consultations referenced six authorities willing to continue with the training and three of these actively seeking further funding.
26. Key messages regarding the potential saving to local authorities can be more widely promoted. Youth at Risk invested considerable effort evidencing distance travelled and outcomes, and as much as possible, this information should be shared with authorities to report on impact, and potential long term savings.

Recommendations

27. To summarise on lessons learned from the programme as a whole, we offer the following points for consideration:
 - Ensure sufficient lead in time with LAs is factored into the early stages of programme delivery;
 - Devolve responsibility for engaging young people to agencies much earlier in the process;
 - Provide clear examples of the nature of the engagement and the resources requirements of local authorities;
 - Ensure the engagement workshops operate to attract the right people who are ready to make a change in their lives;
 - Anticipate and plan for points where additional capacity is required;
 - Enhance level of outcomes reporting to LAs;
 - Focus on providing support for parents and families;
 - Provide greater detail at the outset of the programme;
 - Enhance level of support between training to coaching;
 - Include area-wide events;
 - Create stronger matching processes;
 - Focus programmes on bespoke outcomes;
 - Undertake a Social Return on Investment (SROI).

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Youth at Risk (YaR) received funding through the Youth Sector Development Fund to deliver the Community Transformation Programme (CTP) across local areas in England. York Consulting was commissioned by YaR to evaluate the impact of CTP between the years 2009 to 2011.
- 1.2 The Youth Sector Development Fund (YSDF) was announced following the then Labour government's *Aiming High*³ strategy in 2007. At this time it was recognised that the voluntary and community sector was providing some of the most innovative and effective support to young people, particularly for the most disadvantaged or 'hard-to-reach' young people in society. However, generally voluntary and community sector organisations (VCSOs) were thought to lack the capacity to deliver youth provision on a wide scale, and as such most youth provision was public sector-led, with only a small percentage delivered by VCSOs.
- 1.3 The YSDF, by providing business support and up to £100 million of funding to VCSOs, aimed to enhance the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to deliver new and existing youth provision on a wider and more sustainable scale.

Youth at Risk

- 1.4 Youth at Risk (YaR) were established in 1991 as a charity with the aim of improving the lives of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and alienated young people.
- 1.5 They deliver training and coaching programmes for young people to help them come to terms with their past and to recognise they have a future beyond their present expectations. Their training and coaching seeks to challenge and empower young people to make positive changes in their lives. They deliver programmes across the United Kingdom, working closely with local authorities to support young people they have identified as being 'at risk' of negative outcomes.
- 1.6 It is worth considering at this point the significance of risk on long term outcomes. Being 'at risk' is more accurately considered to be the result of degrees of exposure to external influences that could cause negative outcomes.⁴ These external influences can present anything from a minimal or remote risk, through to high risk, with young people engaging regularly in risky behaviour such as use of illegal drugs, offending or non/low school attendance that will lead to long term negative outcomes. Potential outcomes from chronic and high levels of 'at risk' behaviour will include low socio-economic status, mental health problems, teenage pregnancy and ultimately a shorter life span.

³ Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities, DCSF, 2007.

⁴ Case. S. (2006) 'Young People at Risk of What? Challenging Risk-focused Early Intervention as Crime Prevention', Youth Justice, Volume 6:3 171-179.

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- 1.7 The Youth Justice Board in a report on the relationship between risk and protective factors,⁵ state that there is a clear overlap between youth offending and substance misuse with educational underachievement, young parenthood and adolescent mental health problems. The Youth Justice Board determine there are four key domains that have the most significant influences on young people:
- **Family:** conflict, parental attitudes, poor parental supervision, abuse and neglect;
 - **School:** low achievement, aggressive behaviour, lack of commitment and disorganisation;
 - **Community:** living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, lack of neighbourhood attachment, disorganisation and neglect, availability of drugs;
 - **Personal:** attitudes condoning offending behaviour, alienation and lack of social commitment, hyperactivity and compulsivity.
- 1.8 Youth justice workers often rate thinking and behaviour, lifestyle and education as the three significant factors⁶ and state that “*action taken to address these risk factors and to increase levels of protection helps to prevent a range of negative outcomes*”.⁷

The Community Transformation Programme

- 1.9 Youth at Risk, through the Community Transformation Programme (CTP) aimed to support young people by developing their personal skills (e.g. critical awareness and effective decision making) but also by improving their immediate environment in their school, family and the community. Some young people recruited had lower levels of risk but were underachieving academically due to low aspirations, poor attitudes and behaviour; some young people had lost motivation to achieve at all and were either at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or were NEET. At the other end of the spectrum, young people had chaotic lifestyles and complex needs. These young people had experienced abuse, neglect, family breakdown and violence. Many had a range of alcohol and drug addictions and were involved in criminal activities, gang culture and anti-social behaviour.

Key Elements of Delivery

- 1.10 Particular aims of CTP were to identify appropriate programmes of support for young people at risk of negative outcomes. These included:
- **Coaching for Success (CfS):** young people in schools not realising their full potential;
 - **Choices:** young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET;
 - **Aspire:** a less challenging programme introduced half way through CTP that was developed to address the challenges in recruiting NEET young people.;

⁵ Sutherland, A., Merrington, S., Jones S., Baker K. and Roberts. C. (2005) *Role of Risk and Protective Factors*, Youth Justice Board.

⁶ Youth Justice Board, (2005), *Risk and Protective Factors*, Summary Report

⁷ Ibid

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- **Coaching for Communities (CfC):** young people most at risk through involvement in the criminal justice system; anti-social behaviour; gang-related activity or who are 'at risk' not registered with any statutory agency.

1.11 The nature and intensity of the training varied between the strands, but, at its core, all Youth at Risk training programmes aimed to enable participants to review their self perception and their life choices. Through a series of workshops and facilitated conversations, CTP aimed to empower participants to realise their full potential and to take responsibility for their life outcomes.

1.12 Clearly there is no 'one size fits all' solution in terms of tackling young people's poor or offending behaviour and building resilience⁸. However Youth at Risk attempted to take a very visionary approach through this programme. They worked on the principle that 'it takes a whole community to raise a child'⁹ and so alongside support for the young people, they trained and encouraged adults (teachers, youth workers, police, prison and probation staff, parents, families and carers) to play a significant role in supporting young people: to build capacity for a greater understanding and ongoing support in local communities.

Specific Programme Aims

1.13 Youth at Risk were committed to delivering against targets set out in the YSDF applications which stipulated:

- expanding Youth at Risk's approach in ten Local Authorities (LAs) working with 2050 young people and 2750 adults;
- facilitating improved partnership working between agencies and local authorities;
- creating a national network of coaches;
- increasing and sustaining Youth at Risk's infrastructure and delivery capacity.

Evaluation Aims and Objectives

1.14 The primary focus for this external evaluation was to provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme as a whole. Specific evaluation objectives were to:

- report on the effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery;
- evidence the impact and outcomes on young people: both soft (for improved self esteem and confidence) and 'hard' outcomes (e.g. NEET young people obtaining education, employment or training);
- evidence the impact on capacity building (training of adults and recruitment of volunteers);
- evidence the impact and outcomes on the local community.

Evaluation Approach

1.15 The evaluation comprised of the following activities:

⁸ Prince Trust, CLINKS, (2008), *Breaking the Cycle of Offending, One Year On*

⁹ Youth at Risk (2010)

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- **Stakeholder consultations:** with YaR staff and all LA Project Managers at the beginning, mid-point and end of CTP;
- **Case-study visits:** included interviews with local service managers, adult participants, young people, parents and coaches at the beginning, mid-point and end of CTP;
- **Data analysis:** included participants' Evaluation Forms and LA data on individuals and the local communities.

1.16 The evaluation was delivered on a formative to summative basis, with findings on programme delivery and lessons learned being shared among participants and with Youth at Risk as the programme progressed. Earlier reports provided detail on programme delivery, including the issues and challenges in delivering the programme (interim report, 2010) and conditions for successful delivery (2010). This final report focuses on reporting programme outputs and outcomes and the impact on young people, adults and communities.

1.17 The report is structured as follows:

- **Section Two:** Young People Engaged and Trained on CTP;
- **Section Three:** Impact of CTP on Young People;
- **Section Four:** Impact on Local Capacity to Transform Young People's Lives;
- **Section Five:** Conclusions, Sustainability and Lessons Learned.

2 YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED AND TRAINED ON CTP

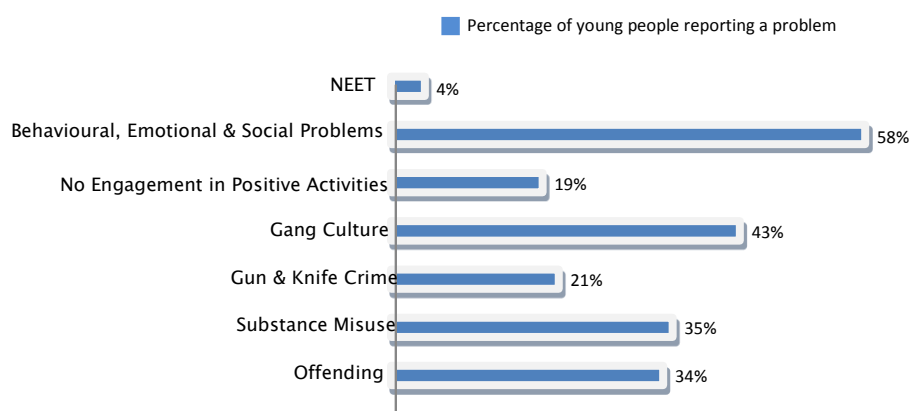
2.1 This section details the overall performance of the programme in terms of recruiting and training young people and makes reference to some of the challenges that impinged on local performance. The overall numbers of young people recruited and trained are impressive and were the result of considerable endeavours from Youth at Risk and partners. However, it became clear over the programme’s duration that there was great variability in support for, and engagement with, the programme across local areas. This affected the overall performance of the programme as dropout rates were higher than average for Youth at Risk and there was considerable variability in retention rates across authorities.

‘At Risk’ Status of Young People Recruited onto CTP

2.2 Young people recruited onto the programme demonstrated multiple problems and were clearly at risk of achieving negative outcomes. The programme was therefore successful in engaging the vulnerable and ‘at risk’ groups. **Figure 2.1** shows the service user needs of all young people (1,387¹⁰) who began a CTP programme. The most significant issues were behavioural, emotional and social problems (58%) and being involved in gang cultures (43%). Over a third were engaged in substance misuse (35%) and offending (34%), and around a fifth were involved in gun and knife crime (21%). 19% were not engaged in any positive activities.

2.3 However, the programme struggled to engage young people who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), with only 4% being NEET (see para.2.8 for the reasons why).

Figure 2.1: At Risk Characteristics



Source: Youth at Risk monitoring data; forms completed by young people on the first day of training. N=1,387

¹⁰ For simplicity, numbers refer to the total number of young people within the sub-population. However, the specific number of respondents to each question varies due to non-responses.

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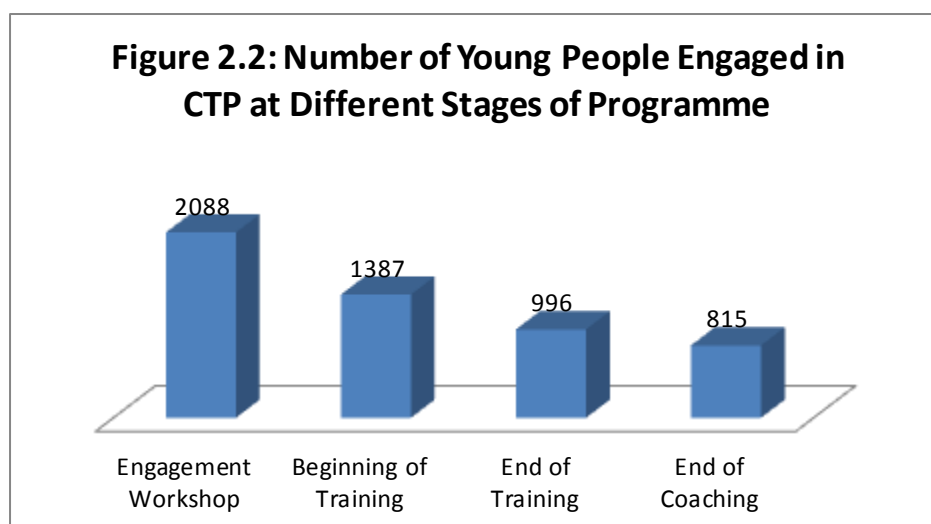
At Risk Characteristics

- 2.4 As would be expected, young people attending the CfC programme were displaying particularly high risks of achieving negative outcomes: in particular, three quarters (75%; n = 175) were engaged in substance misuse, with over half (52%) saying they had got drunk 'a lot' in the last three months and over a quarter (28%) saying they had taken drugs 'a lot' over the last three months.

Numbers of Young People on Programme

Overall

- 2.5 A total of 2,088 young people attended an engagement workshop. Of those, 1,387 young people attended the initial three day training and 815 went on to complete the full programme, including the 6 – 9 months of coaching (the length of time varied depending on the specific programme). An additional 177 young people received some coaching, but withdrew from support early. **Figure 2.2** below shows the number of young people who engaged with the programme through the different stages.



Source: Youth at Risk Monitoring Data

- 2.6 These are impressive numbers and Youth at Risk, in partnership with local authorities and agencies, delivered a programme on a much larger scale than any one agency had prior experience of; the dedication in making this work, particularly within Youth at Risk, has been consistently high.

Recruitment of Young People by Programme

- 2.7 Almost half (683¹¹, 49%) of the young people were supported on the Coaching for Success programme (see **Table 2.1**). Recruitment on the other programmes is, as would be expected, lower, due to fewer young people experiencing higher levels of risk.

¹¹ Numbers refer to young people electing to attend full training

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Table 2.1: Number of Young People on Each CTP Programme					
	CfS	Choices	CfC	Aspire	Total
Number	683	436	175	93	1387
Percentage	49%	31%	13%	7%	100%

Source: Youth at Risk Programme Monitoring Data

- 2.8 The Choices programme had a greater level of variance from the original scope due to difficulties in recruiting young people who were NEET (only 4% of the CTP population were NEET). This was due to problems in accessing NEET young people and engaging agencies working on behalf of NEET young people. As a result, this programme extended its scope to include young people in schools who were ‘at risk’ of NEET due to low levels of attendance and underachievement. Fewer people were recruited on to the more intensive CfC programme, with just over one in ten (13%) young people attending training. 7% of young people involved with CTP were recruited onto the Aspire programme that was developed to address the challenges in recruiting NEET young people.

Recruitment of Young People by Local Authority

- 2.9 Initially ten Local Authorities (LAs) supported the programme, in line with the bid application. The number of young people who engaged on the programme varied significantly across the LAs¹²: numbers varied from 256 in one area, through to 67 in another¹³.
- 2.10 LAs responsible for recruiting the targeted number of young people experienced significant challenges. Recruitment was affected by an amalgam of issues including LA resources and capacity, programme schedules, logistics, relations with partner agencies (e.g. schools, Connexions, youth offending teams etc). In addition, CTP was a resource intensive programme and sometimes LAs experienced conflicting priorities which meant that not all the necessary resources to focus on recruitment could be deployed.
- 2.11 Variations in recruitment were due in some cases to local authorities and agencies being more committed and believing more in the potential of the programme.

“Some people engage with the programme whole heartedly, some struggle with it.” (Strategic Lead)

- 2.12 This quote expresses perfectly the dichotomy of opinion across LAs and agencies. The degree to which this impacted on recruitment, and ultimately, programme impact should not be underestimated. Consultations and programme data revealed a clear relationship between the performance of CTP and the degree to which LAs and agencies perceived its value.

¹² Numbers refer to young people electing to attend full training

¹³ Another LA only engaged eight young people, but this is due to leaving the programme early.

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Retention Rates

- 2.13 It has to be acknowledged that there were people for whom the training was not a positive experience and who chose to leave before its completion. This was the result of the challenging nature of the training and a degree of this was anticipated. Whilst almost three fifths of young people (59%; 815) completed the programme, drop-out rates were higher than desirable, with just over two fifths (41%; 572) not completing the training. Improvements in identifying suitable young people for the training needed to be made to overcome this. It is worth pointing out that it was not always the young people with more complex needs that dropped out. We have evidence that young people with fewer ‘at risk’ characteristics de-selected themselves from the training (and coaching) as they did not perceive it relevant to them or felt that the dialogue was not motivating them in a positive way.
- 2.14 Dropout rates were significant with nearly one half of all young people who agreed to go on the full training (after attending the engagement workshop) leaving early.
- 2.15 These retention rates do not reflect the average retention rates of Youth at Risk programmes of previous years (74% for all programmes in 2010/11, and 65% in 2009/10). This further highlights that the high retention rates were a consequence of the specific design and delivery of CTP. Chiefly, high drop out was the result of a high volume of young people needing to be recruited in a short period of time, sometimes leading to unsuitable young people attending the programme who subsequently left (the quote below provides an example of one young person unprepared and unsuitable for the programme) In addition, as has been referenced in earlier reports, many had insufficient capacity to ensure the programme was delivered as effectively as possible within the timescales.
- “It p***** me off. You had to talk about stuff you didn’t want to talk about. I punched the wall, and at times was just sat in my chair, punching my head going “la la la la” because I didn’t want to listen.” (Young Person who left the programme)*
- 2.16 Youth at Risk felt that, at times, the YSDF structure demanded a strong focus on outputs and, consequently, this sometimes forced themselves and LAs to prioritise outputs over outcomes.

Table 2.2: Retention of Young People by Programme					
	Aspire	Choices	CfS	CfC	Totals
No. of Young People Attending Engagement Workshop	93	739	859	397	2088
No. of Young People Attending 1st Day of Training	93	436	683	175	1387
No. of Young People Completing Training	89	345	452	110	996
No. of Young People Completing Coaching	76	265	331	45	815 ¹⁴
Retention Rates¹⁵	82%	61%	48%	26%	59%

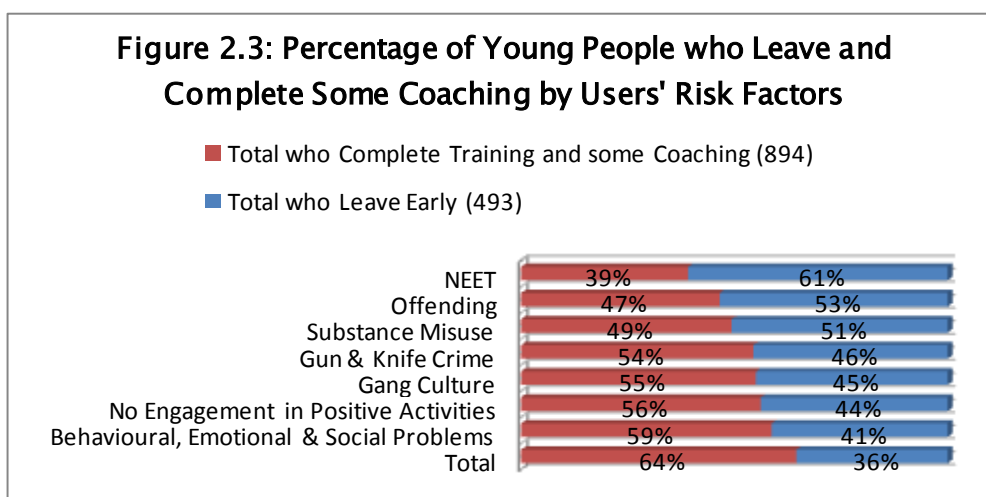
Source: Youth at Risk Monitoring Data

¹⁴ Number does not total breakdown by programme due to missing data on which programme some young people were enrolled on.

¹⁵ Calculated as a percentage of young people attending first day of training compared with those completing coaching.

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- 2.17 Retention was lowest with young people on the CfC programme: only one in four young people who started the training completed the coaching. This demonstrates the challenges in working with young people with complex needs. In addition, just fewer than one in every two pupils on CfS chose to complete the training; three out of five young people on the Choices programme completed; compared with four out of every five young people on Aspire. Aspire, a programme developed to meet the needs of NEET young people or those at risk of NEET, showed the highest rate of retention, indicating that Youth at Risk successfully addressed the issue of support for this cohort. This is a very positive outcome, considering the real value in supporting young people who are NEET and the potential cost savings to the public purse.
- 2.18 **Figure 2.3** shows the relationship between ‘at risk’ characteristics and their relationship to retention. This indicates that NEET young people are more likely to drop out of the training.



Source: Youth at Risk monitoring data; forms completed by young people on first day of training. N = 1,387

- 2.19 Interestingly, retention rates across the LAs varied significantly, from 83% retention (149/179) in one area, to 23% (36/160) in another (see **Figure 2.4**). Varying retention rates were a result of two factors: the level of engagement from the LA (the higher the level of engagement, the greater the retention rate), and the young people’s levels of need (the greater the level of need, the lower the retention rate), further demonstrating that young people with more complex needs had a greater need for more intensive support in order to remain engaged. This is shown quite clearly in **Figure 2.5** that compares retention rates of two local authorities against levels of young people.

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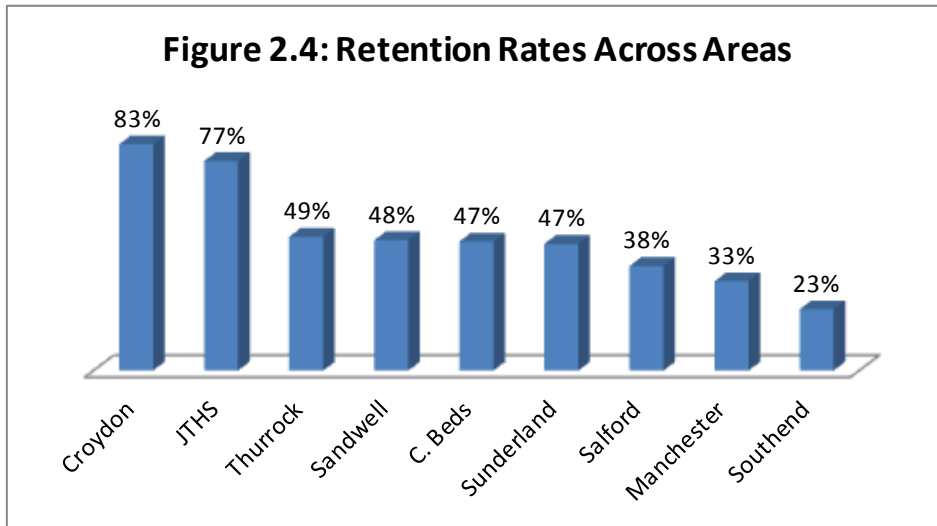
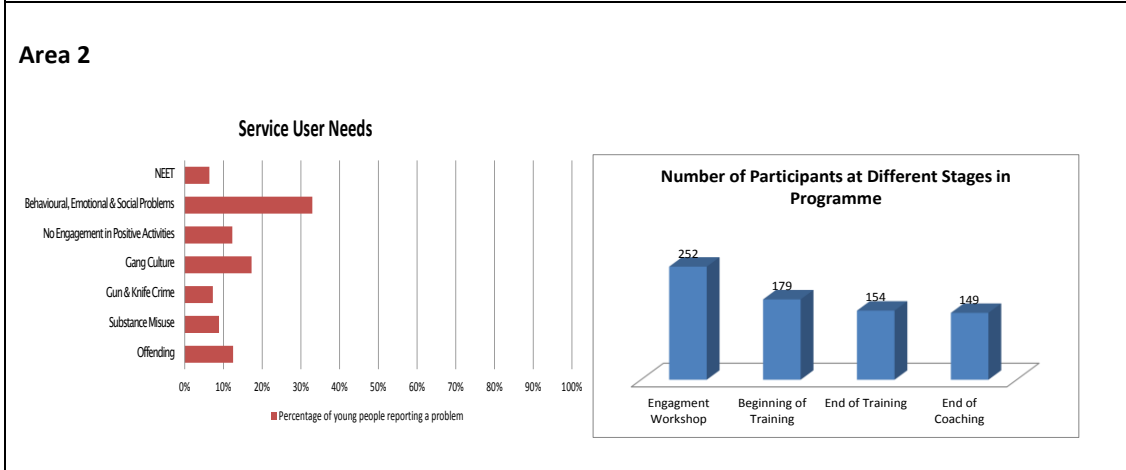
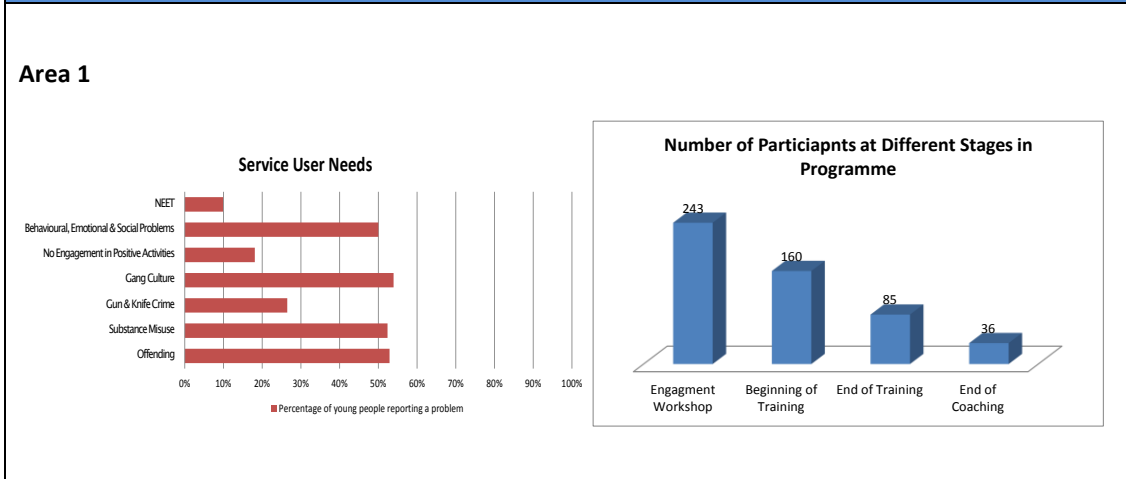


Figure 2.5 Comparing Level of Need and Retention



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- 2.20 This programme has been a complex programme to administer and has tried to reach out to a large number of young people with a range of backgrounds and issues. In order for the experience to be as positive as possible, it is worth bearing in mind that people with complex needs, typically require a higher level of intensity of support as well as more coordinated support to encourage sustained engagement.
- 2.21 Higher rates of completion are obviously desirable and stakeholders suggested a number of ways that retention could have been improved:
- greater detail at the outset of the programme aims and content: almost two fifths of young people (39%; 249 out of 657) rated the information about training sessions before they happened as fair, poor or very poor, making decisions about training difficult;
 - improved handover from training to coaches to ensure continuity of momentum among both adults and young people;
 - improved support to young people, particularly after a residential, when young people needed additional support;
 - inclusion of an area-wide event to bring all young people together, similar to Ballet Hoo!, to help retain young people. LAs involved in both CTP and Ballet Hoo! felt Ballet Hoo! was more effective in retaining both young people and coaches because the central event (ballet performance) provided a focus and incentive to continue with the programme. It is also developed stronger relationships between young people as it regularly drew them all together. Coaches were also less likely to drop-out because the regular meetings around the ballet brought them all together and created a strong support network.
- 2.22 It should be noted, however, that Youth at Risk are aware that the programme does not work for everyone, and that many young people who left early reported being positively influenced by the programme:
- “The week away was really good, it has changed the way I think about my life before in a really good way...I just didn’t want to meet with my coach all the time.”* (Young Person on Coaching for Communities)
- 2.23 The impact of the programme on young people is described in more detail in the following section.

3 IMPACT OF CTP ON YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1 This section details the outcomes and impacts on young people. It concentrates on the impact on young people who have completed the training and the majority/all of the coaching¹⁶. Evidence was generated from Youth at Risk's self completion questionnaires that asked young people to report on their behaviour, as well as feedback their opinions of the training and support., Youth at Risk should be credited for their attitude to impact measurement, which has created an evidence base of significant quality and quantity that has enabled a robust and confident assessment of their impact. This is particularly commendable considering the wider context of the youth sector coming under criticism for its incapability to evidence its impact¹⁷. Evidence is also drawn from face to face interviews with young people, their parents and other practitioners working with young people. In addition, we attended some of the training and workshop events and witnessed the changes in young people before and after the training.

3.2 We report the impact of the programme on young people within three distinct areas where there is evidence of quite considerable change. These are:

- **raising critical awareness:** Young people's ability to think critically about factors that have contributed to low self esteem and negative behaviour;
- **empowering young people to change:** Positively impacting on a young person's ability to improve their own life chances;
- **evidence of change:** Improved behaviour, school attendance and achievement, a reduction in criminal activity and indulging in drugs and excessive alcohol.

Raising Critical Awareness

3.3 The training delivered to young people through CTP focussed on a dialogue of recognition of past experiences that may have contributed to low self esteem leading to negative behaviour. Young people interviewed before starting the training displayed symptoms of low self esteem and had a complexity of issues:

At school people rile me and I take it out on them by fighting with them...I hurt myself when I get upset and lose my temper. I will hit people, punch things – I hit brick walls every few days and I have broken fingers.” (Male, CfS)

3.4 Young people were encouraged to acknowledge how past events influenced their behaviour and attitudes and to take responsibility for their actions going forward.

“Mistakes are fine, but you must own up to them; take ownership and play the lead in your life.” (Youth at Risk, Trainer)

¹⁶ Some young people left the coaching early. These have been included in the analysis.

¹⁷ <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/1051646/?DCMP=EMC-YouthWorkWeekly>

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- 3.5 The training was designed to be a catalyst for change and observations and interviews with young people during the training demonstrated that it was having the desired effect in many young people.

“It helped me think about me and my mum and how I treat her badly”. (Female, CfC Residential)

“It made me think about my relationships and how they have affected me.” (Male, Choices)

“I’ll take opportunities that come along now. I’ve left the past behind and I’ll focus on the future.” (Male, CfC Residential).

- 3.6 In addition, the changes in young people were recognised by volunteers attending at the training sessions:

“Some of the breakthroughs I saw...it would take me two years to reach some of that.” (Youth Worker)

“When you give young people the responsibility to reflect on themselves, this empowers them. I’ve not seen this before.” (Deputy Head)

- 3.7 The positive and supportive atmosphere in which young people were challenged in the training engendered trust and encouraged openness. It allowed young people to realise they were not alone with their problems.

“At first I just talked, but didn’t really say anything. But towards the end everyone was telling their stories, so I felt comfortable telling mine. We wrote stuff down. I was nervous reading it out – I’d never told anyone my dad was on drugs and how much I hated it. But it was supportive and relaxing. It was helpful – I felt I could say anything I wanted to say.” (Female, CfC)

- 3.8 More specifically, evidence generated from the young people at the close of all training sessions showed that they considered they had gained knowledge and skills to help them deal with situations better (see **Figure 3.1**). In particular, 96% reported having a greater understanding of what it took to keep their word, 95% were more comfortable in accepting feedback from others and 94% learnt new things about themselves. Significantly out of the 92% of young people who stated they agreed with the statement that they were more focused on their futures, and 47% *strongly* agreed.

- 3.9 Some comments on the feedback forms to Youth at Risk showed how the programme encouraged young people to think differently.

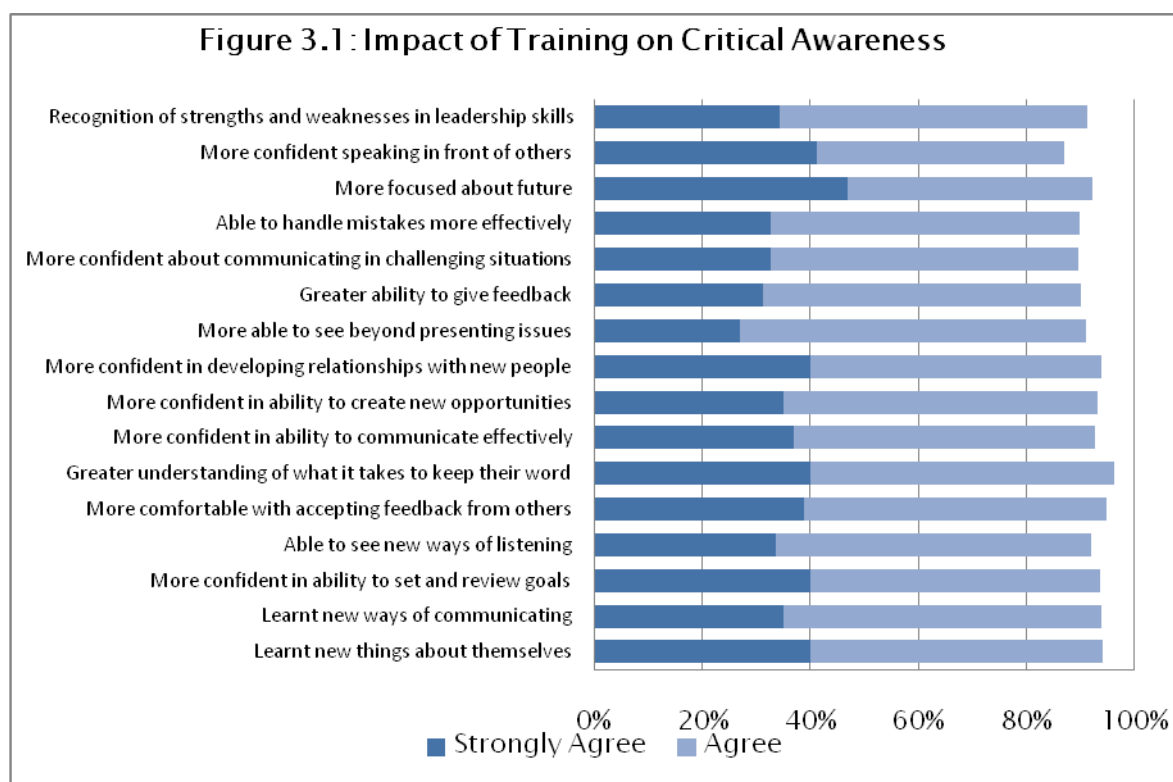
“This has taught me a lot about my life” (CfC);

“I’ve enjoyed and learnt what I need to be to be motivated” (CfS);

“Thanks for helping me see my life needs work” (CfC).

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3.10 Young people recognised the need to change and there was optimism about their ability to change their own circumstances and seek out a better future.



Source: Youth at Risk Monitoring Data: forms completed by young people on last day of training. N=996

3.11 The training, in particular the residential training was an intensive process and required a great deal of commitment, creativity and flexibility from all involved. CTP was an example of what can be achieved when proactive partnerships are forged between local authorities, public and voluntary and community agencies, along with volunteers.

"It has been inspirational. I'm going to go back and do better in school." (Male: Residential, CfC)

Empowering Young People to Change

3.12 Following the training, young people were assigned a coach to help them make the necessary changes in their lives. Coaches were recruited from the trained volunteers and many had significant experience and skills that young people could call on for advice and support. Over 900 young people began work with a coach and just over 800 completed the full period of support (6 or 9 months).

3.13 Adults were trained using a similar dialogue of challenge, recognition and goal setting. This helped ensure that young people and coaches had a common experience and were equally motivated to change and achieve their aspirations.

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“You get to see the issues from the young person’s point of view. It’s good to see the other side.” (Senior Practitioner, Targeted Youth Support)

“...it meant that I was in step with what the young people had just experienced and it gave me confidence to working with them.” (Youth Worker)

- 3.14 More of the impact of the training on adults is provided in Section Four, but these quotes clearly demonstrate the value of building the capacity within adults and young people concurrently.
- 3.15 We have details of goals set by 533 young people who, between them, identified 1,611 goals. Goals included a range of skills developments, improving resilience factors and changes in behaviour as well as ultimate or longer term aims. For example, one young person’s set of goals included: (1) *Improve Confidence*, (2) *Achieve Action Steps*, (3) *Improve Grades* and (4) *Apply for College*. Many goals also demonstrated a focus on improving relationships with parents and teachers. Some goals were obviously visionary and there to keep young people focussed on achieving and aspiring, such as *‘Become a Paramedic’*.
- 3.16 Some goals clearly represented an intended journey on which young people, along with support from their coach, were embarking. **Table 3.1** provides a sample list of goals set.

Table 3.1: Example of Young People’s Goals
<p>Personal Skills Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be less distracted To improve my confidence Manage temper Become more organised
<p>Behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce drinking Cut down on drug use Control anger and stress Stop getting into trouble with police
<p>Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve relationships at home Show respect for others Show more respect towards teachers Get on better with peers
<p>Long term focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve higher grades than expected Start college Get good grades in Maths

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3.17 Young people made good progress towards their goals; two fifths (41%; 655) of all goals were achieved and progress was made with almost half (48%; 767). 189 (12%) goals were recorded as not having been achieved; however only one person did not achieve any goal s. A detailed analysis of young people’s progress towards their goals is presented below¹⁸.

Top 10 Categories of Goals				
	Percentage of All Goals	% Achieved	% Made Progress Towards	% Not Achieved
Improve school work/grades	32%	36%	56%	8%
Improve attendance/behaviour	15%	45%	51%	4%
Have more confidence	12%	50%	45%	5%
Find employment	7%	35%	57%	9%
Improve social skills	4%	57%	36%	7%
Go to college/university	4%	46%	54%	0%
Improve family relationships	3%	40%	40%	20%
Improve attitude	3%	50%	50%	0%
Increase involvement in positive activities	3%	30%	30%	40%
Be more motivated	2%	50%	25%	25%

3.18 This shows that the majority of goals were centred around young people’s focus in school and their academic achievement, with a third (32%) of all goals focusing on improving school-work or grades. The greatest progress was towards goals focusing on improving young people’s attitude (50% of all goals achieved, with 50% made progress towards) and progressing to college or university (46% of goals achieved, 54% made progress towards), demonstrating how the programme was leading young people to positive destinations.

3.19 This indicates a very positive experience for young people in terms of setting a combination of aspirational but achievable targets. As part of the evaluation, we generated a number of examples of how coaches supported young people to help them improve their circumstances. The example of Kat below provides evidence of how effective the relationship can be in getting young people to make their own changes in their lives.

¹⁸ Analysis taken from a stratified sample (206) of young people.

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Figure 3.2: Case Study Example of Effective Coaching Support To Young People

Background: Kat¹⁹, a female aged 19 on the Choices programme, was expelled from school in Year 9 and was involved in offending; she was referred onto the programme through NACRO. She mixes with peers, many of whom had a bad influence on her, and she had debts. Her relationship with her family was very difficult and they had not spoken for some time. She lacked motivation and was not focussing on achieving anything positive.

Training: Kat attended the three day training and said that she found it “*very difficult*” but recognised herself in many things they were saying, “*I felt like I wanted to face up to things in my life after that*” (Kat).

Coaching: Kat had a very positive relationship with a coach with whom she met weekly and was in regular touch with over the phone. She really valued the support: “*I look forward to the sessions... when we meet up I can say what’s on my mind and talk about good and bad things*” (Kat). Goals set included improving relationship with her Mum, sorting out her debts and focussing more on her motivation and aspirations.

Impact: Both the coach and young person were very positive about how the programme had changed Kat. It taught her to take ownership and responsibility for her life. She sorted out her relationship with her mum “*I hadn’t spoken to my mum for ages before the training. Now I live with her*” (Kat). She found a way to sort out her debt and she is more motivated and determined to succeed. The outreach worker at NACRO said her behaviour had completely changed: she became more mature and wanted to engage; her behaviour stopped being a problem and she was more respectful with the tutors. “*Relationships have developed with different members of staff...she’s realised it’s her life and not just a school activity. She’s taken on more responsibility.*” (Outreach worker, NACRO)

She now gets up in the mornings and is on time for a course she has enrolled on at college, she also did a work placement at ASDA and this has been a very positive experience. “*The training came just at the right time...she has matured a lot*” (Coach)

This has all made Kat feel less stressed and in control of her life.

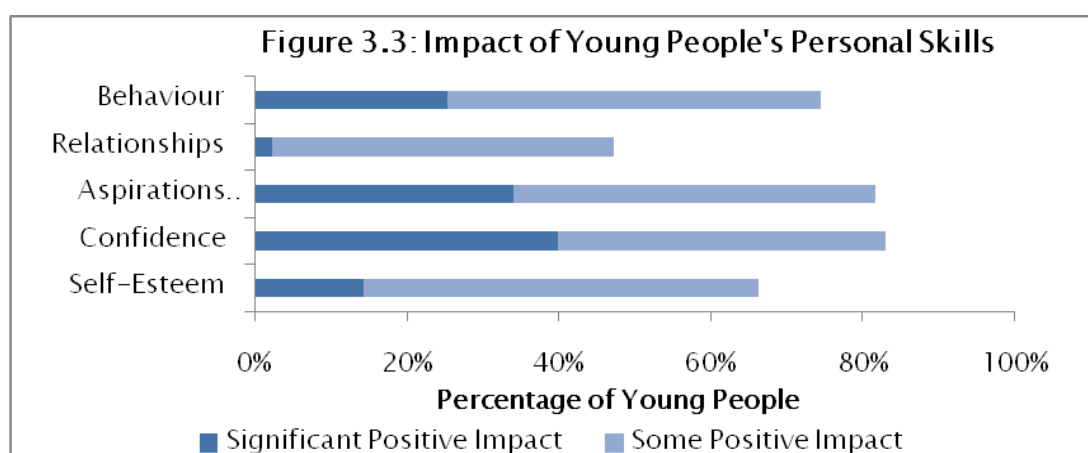
“*Before I was leaving everything. Now when I get it, I sort it. I’m stress free.*”

3.20 This case study example demonstrates the real value of a programme that empowers young people to make their own changes in their lives.

3.21 More broadly, evidence of impact of the programme on young people’s emotional characteristics and their resilience to withstand challenging situations was generated at the end of the programme of support from all young people. Data generated indicates that the impact on personal skills and attributes has been very significant. As **Figure 3.3** shows, over four fifths of young people reported being more confident (83%), having higher aspirations (82%, n = 894), being more motivated (82%) and having improved behaviour (74%). Additionally, two thirds reported having higher self-esteem (66%) and almost half had improved their relationships with people (47%).

¹⁹ All names have been changed to protect the identity of young people.

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Source: Youth at Risk Monitoring Data: form completed by young people when they complete coaching. No=894

3.22 These improvements in personal skills had positive effects on young people’s resilience (protective) factors, and young people reported improved relationships with family members, other adults and their peers as a result. The ‘Relationships’ factor above is drawn from an average score of answers to multiple questions and hides some significant improvements. In particular, 71% (n = 894) of young people reported an improved ability to develop relationships with adults. Additional improvements in relationships included:

- 78% increase in number of young people reporting improved ability to work with others;
- 75% increase in number of young people reporting greater skills in developing positive relationships with new people;
- 74% report improved ability to accept support;
- 73% increase in number of young people reporting supporting others;
- 30% increase in number of young people who reported receiving more help from professionals when they needed it;
- 26% reduction from beginning to end of the programme in number of young people who reported arguing with their parents;
- 17% increase in number reporting doing something with their family they’ve enjoyed;
- 15% increase in number reporting their parent/carer helping them when they needed it;
- 12% increase in number having meals with their family.

3.23 These self-reported findings indicate a potential long term improvement in factors that will help young people deal with challenging situations in the future. Changes were particularly significant for young people coming off the CfC programme, where many responses indicated above 90% improvement in relations with family and friends.

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3.24 However, for some young people, the relationship with their coach was not always a positive experience. We have evidence from a number of coaches and young people that meetings were not frequent enough, young people did not always attend and coaches were not always as available as they could have been. A number of young people reported being coached over the telephone. In a number of LAs, it was reported by adults that the matching process was too long after the training and coaches thought that momentum had been lost. This indicates insufficient resources at the local level to undertake the degree of activity required.

“I had trouble getting in touch with my coach and most of the time he seemed to be too busy to meet.” (Young Person)

“It has been really difficult to keep a relationship up with my young person as he doesn’t turn up so often and if I call, he doesn’t answer the phone.”
(Coach)

3.25 We have evidence that some young people did not recognise the need for a long term relationship with a coach as their levels of risk were lower. Although these young people left the coaching early, it does not necessarily indicate a negative conclusion to the programme.

“I met with him a few times, but then I decided I didn’t want to meet any more, I know what I have to do now.” (Young Person)

Impact on Behaviour

3.26 Crucially, what does all the evidence show in terms of how CTP has impacted on young people’s risky behaviour? For some young people, the changes brought about through the training and support from the coach had a significant impact on their behaviour, and their involvement in anti-social activities decreased, whilst their involvement in pro-social behaviours increased. Some young people, therefore, did experience a ‘transformation’ and their risk of experiencing long term negative outcomes reduced. The Youth at Risk monitoring forms allowed young people to rate their extent of involvement in risky behaviours and **Table 3.2** below shows the change from beginning to end of the programme in the number of young people reporting *heavy* (as opposed to light) involvement in different risky behaviours. This shows that the number of young people reporting heavy involvement in risky behaviours reduced.

Table 3.2: Percentage Change in the Number of Young People Declaring High Risk Characteristics	
NEET	65% reduction (46 to 16)
Heavily involved in gang culture	26% reduction (89 to 66)
Heavily involved in gun & knife crime	11% reduction (45 to 40)
Heavily involved in substance misuse	23% reduction (35 to 27)
Heavily involved in offending	37% reduction (27 to 17)

Source: Youth at Risk Monitoring Data: comparing form completed on first day of training with form completed on completing coaching.

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- 3.27 These transformations were particularly apparent amongst the young people that reported the most extreme negative behaviour, suggesting that the programme was most successful with the most 'at risk' young people. In general, the number of young people reporting engaging heavily in negative behaviour reduced by between a third and a quarter. It is particularly impressive that the number of young people reporting significant levels of offending reduced by nearly two-fifths (37%; from 27 to 17). Additionally, and although numbers of NEET young people on the programme were low, two out of three young people who were NEET at the beginning were positively engaging in education, employment or training by the end (65%; 30 out of 46).
- 3.28 The following case study of a young person we followed through the training demonstrates clearly the potential of the programme to have a positive impact on very vulnerable young people.

Figure 3.4: Case Study Example of Impact of on a Very Vulnerable Young Person

Background: Ed was 16. When he enrolled on CfC he was in foster care and had suffered a long history of abuse and neglect. He changed foster carers many times and suffered abuse along the way. As a result of this, Ed had low confidence, drank heavily to cope and he was frequently in trouble with the police. His drinking was coming to a climax just before he enrolled as he was due to leave care and had nowhere to live. Ed was at significant risk.

Experience of Programme: Ed was told about the CfC programme by Connexions and thought it might help him. He found the residential very painful as he had never told anyone about his past and was finding it difficult to open up. He was very disengaged but was determined to be on the course and recognised its value. However, by the end of the third day he began to open up and engage. He said he found this very comforting; he was able to get things off his chest, which made him feel better about himself. After the residential he was assigned a coach, with whom he got on very well. They met weekly and would talk about "*life, basically*". He found it particularly helpful to have someone consistent in his life who was spending time with him out of choice.

Impact: Ed did not improve straight away, and actually got worse straight after the residential, as he found it difficult to cope with everything he had unearthed. He "*tortured the drink*" for three weeks after the residential, but over time the lessons he learnt from the residential and the support from the follow-up sessions and coach helped him deal with this. He learnt to trust people again and gained a lot of confidence from the residential, as it made him realise he can work through difficult times and come out of the end still ok. He is now drinking much less and has stopped his anti-social behaviour. He is now much calmer, able to deal with problems maturely and able to build stronger relationships with people.

"He needed the opportunity [to talk about his problems]. He is a young man now." (Coach)

However, Ed is currently NEET with no immediate plans. He needs continued support to ensure he successfully engages in education, employment or training.

- 3.29 However, there was a large number of young people who completed the training who displayed changes in their emotional characteristics and some anti-social activities, but stated that their engagement in other anti-social activities had either remained the same or increased. **Table 3.3**, for example, shows the net number of young people reporting any involvement in different risk-taking behaviours: this shows that the percentage of young people engaging in gun and knife crime, substance misuse and offending actually increased from the beginning to the end of the programme. These young people are therefore still at risk of negative outcomes.

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Table 3.3: Percentage Change in the Number of Young People Declaring at Risk Characteristics across the Whole Programme of Young People	
NEET	65% Reduction (from 46 to 16)
No Engagement in Positive Activities	25% Reduction (from 65 to 49)
Gang Culture	25% Reduction (from 206 to 155)
Gun & Knife Crime	9% <i>Increase</i> (from 93 to 101)
Substance Misuse	21% <i>Increase</i> (from 140 to 170)
Offending	1% <i>Increase</i> (from 131 to 132)

Source: Youth at Risk Monitoring Data N=588²⁰.

- 3.30 It is difficult to unpick the reasons for an increase in the number of young people stating they were involved in risky behaviours. The information is drawn from self-reporting data and is therefore subject to inaccuracies: for example it was acknowledged at the outset that the programme would encourage in young people a greater level of ownership and honesty about their actions, which may go some way to explain the lack of improvement. However, it does also suggest that the programme does not address all negative behaviours and that more one to one support or a different type of support was needed.
- 3.31 To substantiate self declarations of changes in behaviour, the evaluation attempted to draw on evidence generated at the agency level that would show changes in young people’s behaviour. As well as data from schools, this included information from Connexions, Youth Offending Services and Drug and Alcohol support services. Consequently this provided information on young people with higher at risk behaviours who were already known to agencies.
- 3.32 The agency data does seem to substantiate the overall changes in behaviour that young people with the higher level of risks stated in their self completion forms. However, despite best efforts from both the evaluators and local authorities, the quantity and quality of the agency data is variable and therefore a meaningful, robust analysis of the agency data is not possible.
- 3.33 In addition, to quantitative data, we have a number of qualitative case studies that show how young people changed their behaviour through the combination of training and support from their coaches. The case study in **Figure 3.5** demonstrates, from a qualitative perspective, how the programme has impacted on a young person’s engagement with learning.

²⁰ Comparing responses from forms completed by young people on the first day of training with responses completed on last day of training. Data had to be ‘cleansed’ for comparison and therefore total numbers is smaller than the whole cohort (n = 588).

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Figure 3.5: How CfS Helped a Young Person Re-engage in Learning

Background: Sarah is a Year 11 pupil at an academy. Coaching for Success was held at her school and she decided to enrol. At the time, she felt unsupported as she had lost many close relatives through bereavements. She was also lonely as she had to care for her siblings a lot and didn't have time, or the confidence, to spend time with her friends. Her feelings of loneliness and struggles to cope with the bereavements were affecting her school life: she could become angry and be abusive and storm out of lessons. *"She had attitude basically."* (Coach)

Her grades were slipping and she was predicted Es and Fs. She would often turn up to school filthy and unkempt.

Experience of Programme: Sarah attended the training sessions through CfS and found these a lot of fun. She learnt a lot about other people's personalities and how to keep promises and concentrate better at school. She was also assigned a coach, who she would meet for weekly 45-minute sessions. She found the coach filled the gap Sarah felt as a result of her bereavements, and helped her cope with them and support her. They discussed many strategies to help Sarah with her behaviour, including imagining she was in a 'box' during lessons, so others could not distract her. *"She was over the moon to do it and would tell us what she was doing [with her coach]...they really got on well together."* (Mother)

Impact: Sarah, her mother and coach all spoke positively of the difference the training and coaching had made to Sarah's life. She learnt to cope with her anger, which enabled her to build better relationships with teachers. Her behaviour in class improved and she began to stay behind to do extra work, which she hadn't done before. Her grades started to increase as a result, and she was predicted Cs and Ds instead of Es and Fs.

"Week on week she's improved...she even got the idea of maybe even apologising to teachers [for her behaviour]." (Coach)

Sarah's confidence also improved and she began to open up to her mum more, which improved their relationship. Her confidence has also made her more outgoing, and she spends more time with her friends. Overall, therefore, the programme, and particularly the coaching, helped Sarah feel more supported and overcome her difficulties, which in turn improved her behaviour, attainment and relationships with family and friends.

- 3.34 This is an example of how young people were encouraged to refocus their energies after significant setbacks. The coach clearly played a significant role, particularly early on in their relationship and allowed Sarah to discuss her feelings and learn to cope. This allowed her to refocus her efforts on her schooling.

Impact on Relationships

- 3.35 Many young people reported developing stronger trusting relationships between each other and with their coaches. For example, for three young people who were in independent living and did not have contact with their families, their coaches organised a Christmas trip including a large 'family' Christmas dinner, so that the young people could experience a 'family type Christmas'.

"It's created strong, trusted relationships." (LA Support Worker)

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“They learn that people are genuinely there for them.” (Coach)

- 3.36 In one LA, support to families was much more intensively delivered. The CTP training was combined with another training programme delivered by Youth at Risk that offered support to parents as part of a ‘Think Family’ strategy. This enabled parents and young people in the same families to receive the training (not in the same sessions), and the impact of this was very positive in terms of challenging their way of thinking and relating to each other.

Figure 3.6: Impact of YaR Training on a Family

One family were committing high levels of anti-social behaviour and there were parenting concerns. The eldest son was truanting from school and was a young carer because the mother struggled to control the younger children and maintain the living conditions at home. The mother and eldest son attended the YaR training. The YaR residential course had a very positive impact on the eldest son. Previously he was involved in anti-social behaviour and stole cars. The son was reluctant to attend, but was persuaded by his mother to attend the introductory meeting as she had a positive experience on the YaR training. The son decided he did want to go: *“I was so surprised – but pleased he was going”* (Parent). The mother described how her son came out of the training a different person. He has been attending school since, and the mother evidenced a health and safety certificate he had recently passed to help him become a mechanic. The mother now feels more able to cope: she said a lot of this was due the YaR training (along with other help from a key worker as part of family’s support). Being more in control, the mother now expects her older sons to assist with duties around the home such as washing up and tidying bedrooms.

“The training has enabled me to see the boys’ behaviour from a different point of view. I have more of an open mind about the cause of disagreements.” (Mother)

“The training improved the relationship between me and my eldest son. He wrote me a letter after my baby was born saying how proud he was of me – I was touched.” (Mother).

Source: York Consulting Family Pathfinder Evaluation – Family Follow-up Interview.

Summary

- 3.37 This section has shown in some detail the value of the training in impacting on young people’s thinking skills and empowering them to make the changes necessary in their lives. It also provides evidence that those young people who have higher levels of need and are at risk of long term negative outcomes can be empowered and supported to change their behaviour. There are also examples that young people who were underperforming in school have been motivated to improve their grades. There were also a large number of young people for whom the training did not impact on their behaviours, indicating the programme cannot reach all young people.
- 3.38 The next section provides detail on how CTP helped develop capacity within local authorities by training adults to support young people more effectively and provides examples of positive impacts on communities.

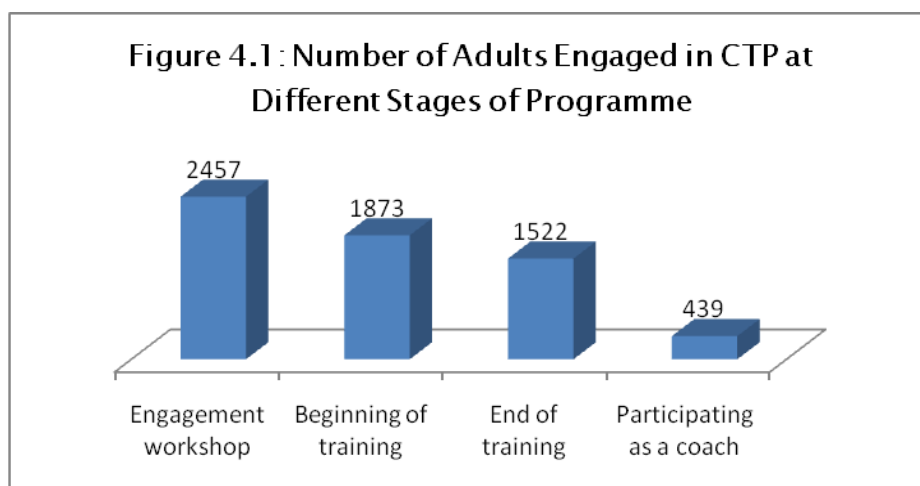
4 IMPACT ON LOCAL CAPACITY TO TRANSFORM YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

Introduction

- 4.1 In this section we describe how CTP has focussed on training adults in the similar dialogue of 'Challenge, Empower and Achieve'. This was both to develop adults own potential to achieve, but also to enhance the ability of adults to work more effectively with young people by engendering a common understanding. Building local capacity, for example within agencies and schools, was a key vision for Youth at Risk and partners. We look more closely at ways in which areas developed their programmes of support and encouraged a positive change in communities.

Engaging Adults on to CTP

- 4.2 Youth at Risk encouraged local authorities to engage adults from the local communities to participate in the transformational training. A total of 2,457 adults attended the initial engagement session and, from this, 1,873 elected to be trained and 1,522 completed the full three day training. 439 were specifically recruited to work with Youth at Risk as a volunteer.



Source: Youth at Risk Monitoring Data

- 4.3 Just fewer than one in five adults who elected to be trained did not complete the training. We spoke with a number who stated that the training was difficult and very different from other forms of training they were used to. For some adults, the style and content of the training was not something they enjoyed or in which they saw any merit.

"I just didn't like it; it was very American and quite aggressive. Some staff got upset and said it crossed 'personal boundaries.'" (Head of Youth Interventions)

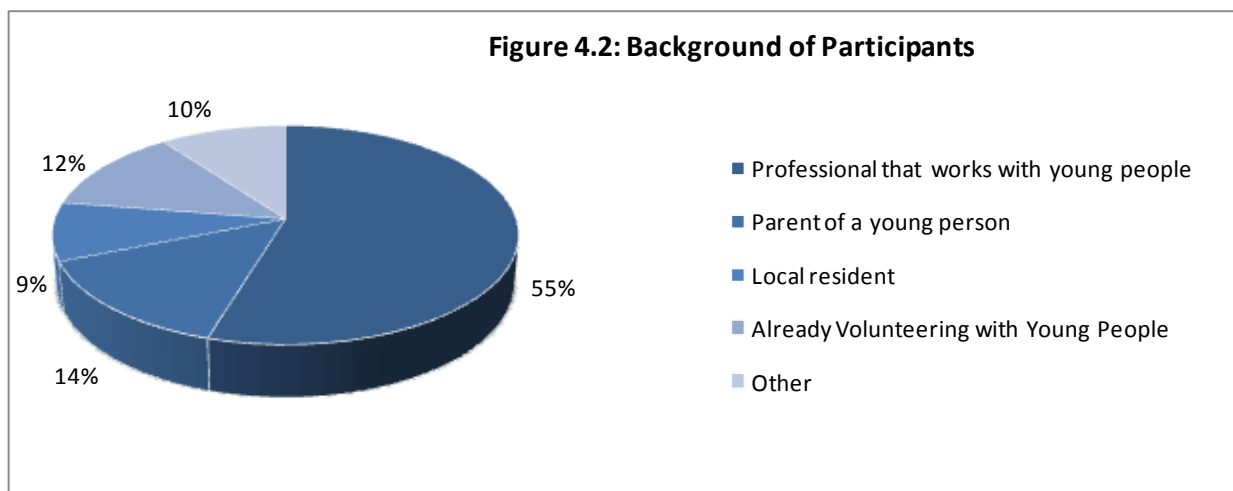
"I went to the training and I was all fired up, but then I just gave up, it took too long." (Performance Manager, LA)

- 4.4 However, for many others, it has been rewarding and challenging and has encouraged and incentivised people to make changes, in both their working and personal lives.

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Who and where did Youth at Risk train adults?

4.5 The spread of adults and agencies engaged on the training was impressive. As shown in **Figure 4.2** there was an almost even split between professionals and community members, with 55% (n=1,522) of adults who completed the training being ‘professionals that work with young people’ and 45% being either ‘parents, local residents, volunteers, or others’. This shows that the programme was successful in engaging all groups in the community.



Source: Youth at Risk monitoring data: forms completed by adults on first day of training N=1,873

4.6 Taking a closer look at professionals, there was a wide spread of agencies engaging in the training as shown in **Table 4.1**. The majority of professionals (45%, 390) came from schools reflecting the high levels of engagement of schools in the programme, particularly CfS.

Table 4.1: Agencies Attending Training		
Schools	45%	390
Social Services	12%	104
Housing	6%	48
Police	4%	38
Charity	4%	37
Connexions	4%	34
Youth offending	3%	30
Education Welfare	2%	15
Nursing	1%	7
<i>Other</i>	18%	159
Total		867

4.7 The training appealed to a range of ages and ethnicities: 25% of adults trained were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and a range of different faiths were represented including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. The majority (62%) of participants who signed up to the training were aged over 35, but 28% were between 25 and 35 years of age and just fewer than 10% were between 20-24 years of age.

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- 4.8 Over two-thirds (68%, n=1,873) of adults who signed up to the training were female and over 75% of the coaches on CfS and CfC were female. There was a more even split of coaches on the choices programme (47% male and 53% female), but there are opportunities to focus in engaging more males in a coaching role.
- 4.9 The number of adults who engaged on the programme varied significantly across the LAs. Interviews with stakeholders from the LAs attributed this difference to the capacity within LAs to support the programme. This shows clearly where there were real successes in particular areas and where there was a very positive response across all areas from adults.

Impact on Personal Skills of Adults

- 4.10 The CTP programme had a very positive impact on the majority of adults. 89% (n=1,522) of adults who completed the training rated the results they gained as either good or excellent. 91% of adults reported improved aspirations and motivation and around three quarters of adults reported greater confidence (74%), ability to develop effective relationships (72%) and self-esteem (69%).

“It raised my aspirations. It really motivated me to think ‘I can do more with my life.’” (Youth Worker)

- 4.11 Crucially, 86% (347 out of 413) of members of the local community (parents, volunteers and local residents) and 72% (479 out of 664) of professionals reported they had gained an improved ability to work with young people.
- 4.12 Those who completed coaching roles reported similar gains showing that the benefits from the training and coaching had a sustained impact. 80% reported that the coaching role improved their ability to support young people to more effectively realise their potential.
- 4.13 Accruing benefits from coaching was particularly true of parents, slightly less reported by residents (see **Table 4.2**). Parents viewed the coaching as very valuable and stated it had helped develop their own parenting skills.

“It really encouraged me to think how I talk to my kids and how I deal with their behaviour when it seems irrational.” (Parent)

Table 4.2: Proportion of Adults Reporting Positive Impact from Coaching (Proportion of Adults Reporting Significant Impact in Brackets)			
	Residents	Parents	Overall
Ability to work with young people	89% (33%)	88% (41%)	86% (49%)
Improved working practices	56% (11%)	88% (35%)	65% (28%)
Ability to work with others	67% (11%)	88% (29%)	72% (30%)
Improved aspirations and motivation	78% (33%)	94% (65%)	84% (52%)
Improved confidence	78% (33%)	94% (44%)	77% (36%)
Improved self-esteem	67% (22%)	88% (38%)	69% (28%)

Source: Youth at Risk Coaching Feedback. N=141

- 4.14 Parents reported particular benefits of the training; nearly nine out of ten reported improvements in a range of personal skills, behaviours and motivations. 88% reported improvements in their relationships and 94%, improvements in their aspirations and motivations as well as their confidence.

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- 4.15 Where adults embraced the sentiments of the training there has been some quite significant declarations.

“From a personal opinion the experience of the training was extremely worthwhile for my personal and professional development. The residential training opened up my thinking in a way that no other course has, to date. It not only allowed me to think about my work with students in a new and exciting way, but also had a dramatic impact on the way I think about me as a person.” (Director of Inclusion, Academy)

- 4.16 There were also examples of how it had improved relations between agencies and the police. A CTP lead in one LA was particularly positive of the impact on police officers who attended the training (10 in total). He said it had broadened their perspective from ‘defeating’ crime to a more holistic approach, increasing their understanding of young people and why they might commit crimes. The Strategic Lead felt this had altered the officers’ approach to how they dealt with young people. The number of young people getting involved in the criminal justice system has decreased in this LA and he thinks this is one of the contributing factors.

Impact on Working Practices

- 4.17 Many adults and coaches interviewed as part of the case study work gave personal accounts of how their engagement in the programme helped them improve their working practices. It ‘reignited’ some professionals who were becoming jaded with their professions (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: The Impact of CTP on Working Practice

“I’ve changed my style of management. I had a habit of always wanting to fix things. Now, I try to get them to take responsibility and do it themselves. I have more confident employees now because they’re coming up with their own ideas.” (Performance Manager, Community Safety Team)

“As a child protection social worker who has worked many years in statutory services working with children and families with little effective change, this programme has been a ‘beacon of light’ - an inspiration to professionals and third sector volunteers alike.” (Youth Officer, CSO)

“The constant use of coaching and daily exposure to professionals undoubtedly had a huge benefit on the team’s personal skills, specifically coaching in the area of discipline.” (Army Lieutenant)

“I found the training very interesting and it gave me lots of techniques I found helped me to work with young people...it changed the way I saw young people.” (Life Coach)

“It’s made me look at the situation and think, ‘hang on, why am I doing this intervention?’” (YOS worker)

“I had become disillusioned with the direction in which youth work was heading (very ‘number crunching’ and impersonal) and I’ve been re-inspired with youth work as a result of the training...it made me realise the importance of youth work, and the difference it can make to young people’s lives.” (Youth Worker, LA)

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Developing Integrated Working

- 4.18 The programme also contributed to bringing services together and helped develop networks, albeit on a very local level. Coaches had the opportunity to network during the training and reported how they developed new relations with other services.

“The opportunity to network from the training sessions was really valuable and we have forged some good links with other services.” (Youth Worker)

- 4.19 One Strategic Lead for the programme gave a particular example where one coach was a Programme Manager in Community Safety in the police. The school were concerned about some potential gang activity in the school and sought advice from the volunteer about how to respond. She flagged it up with her manager, and the police visited the school to manage the incident. The Strategic Lead believed that, without these links forged by CTP, the school would probably have not involved the police and there would still be a gang problem.

- 4.20 In another area, the programme had a positive impact on a local authority Business Network Group by bringing coaches representing local businesses and the LA closer together. For example, they became heavily involved in the National Apprenticeship Week, doing talks and presentations to encourage SMEs to take on more apprentices:

“The programme enabled us to test business and LA relationships and we came up trumps.” (Strategic Lead)

Impact on Communities

- 4.21 Although LAs have tried to focus on particular areas of deprivation within their local authorities, it has not been possible to evidence the impact of the programme at a community level such as at ward level for example in most LAs. This was due to changes in the original focus of support. Some areas planned to focus on particular vulnerable cohorts of young people: for example, young people who were Looked After, or young people who were NEET; other areas planned to focus on particular geographical areas. To some considerable degree, programme integrity was compromised as areas were compelled to broaden out the scope in order to recruit and train sufficient young people and adults to meet agreed targets. Many Strategic Leads within local authorities expressed disappointment in how the programme had changed its scope from the original aims.

- 4.22 However, we gathered a range of data that indicates some changes in particular wards where CTP support was more concentrated. As a result we are able to say the following:

- CTP may have contributed to a positive impact in offending rates when comparing LA and ward figures in which CTP was operating. Offending rates in 4 out of 5 (CTP) wards decreased at a faster rate than the whole of their respective LAs. Also, the two LAs where CTP was delivered also experienced decreases in offending rates, with one of these areas experiencing a reduction in numbers of offending by almost half;
- CTP may have contributed to a positive impact in substance misuse rates in one local area that recorded a reduction of 26.8% in the ward where CTP was delivered, compared with a reduction in substance misuse of 18.3% in the LA as a whole;

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- Likewise, in another two wards in two LAs in which CTP operated, the percentage of young people achieving 5 A*-C grades or equivalent increased by 15.8%, greater than the average figure of 13.4% for the two LAs combined. Grades also improved in one local authority where a focus on schools was a particular feature.

4.23 We cannot state that CTP has impacted on particular communities at the ward level from this data as we have no way of mapping the intensity of programme involvement in particular areas, so this information provides context only.

4.24 However, we do have a number of qualitative examples that demonstrate how CTP had a positive impact on local communities, whether in a school, a church, or a community group of parents for example.

Impact on the School Environment

4.25 Schools have become a key focus of support to young people. This was partly due to the ease of engaging and recruiting young people and adults, but more due to recognition of the potential benefits on young people in terms of improving their motivation and aspirations to learn. Some schools became heavily involved when they changed to an academy and refocused energies on improving performance, bringing in a new agenda to improve discipline and this programme fitted well with that agenda.

4.26 It was particularly apparent when speaking with schools that teachers significantly benefited from the training.

“The training is not like other training that teachers receive in Inset, it is not about how to teach, it is about how to communicate and how to understand young people...it has been invaluable.” (Assistant Head)

“Teachers have massively changed in their aspirations. This is inspirational stuff and is just what we needed to reinvigorate our staff.” (Senior Leader)

4.27 Examples of the benefits of intensity of training were provided through our case study work with schools.

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Figure 4.4: Impact on a School Environment

Background: The school had become an Academy and there was a very keen focus on improving performance. CTP was considered to be an opportunity to provide additional support to pupils. This Academy embedded CTP to a large extent, running two CfS programmes, two Choices programmes and a sixth form mentoring programme. In total, 150 young people and 20 sixth formers had been involved: over a quarter of all the school pupils. 18 staff attended the adult training.

Impact: The Director of Inclusion has seen significant results for both the young people directly involved and the school as a whole. He stated there had been a transformation in the behaviour of Year 10 pupils within six months. For example, they had 10 pupils attend the Choices course that were all on reduced timetables at school due to their behaviour; two to three weeks later they were all back in full-time education and all achieved 5 A*-Cs, which he never thought possible before the programme. In addition, school attendance improved for 35% of young people who attended the training. For the school as a whole, the YaR principles were fully embedded into the school's behaviour policy. The YaR training helped raise teacher's aspirations of what can be achieved and helped forge a stronger understanding of the young people, the motivations and behaviour. This enabled them to be more empathetic and provided them with stronger strategies to work with the young people. They have also begun a Personal Development Programme for Years 7 and 8 that is based around YaR principles – focusing on goal setting and handling mistakes.

The Director of Inclusion stated pupils felt more valued and the discipline and attitude in school had improved. The school's fixed-term exclusions reduced by 75% over the last two years .

The school received an 'Outstanding' status in their last Ofsted inspection, and the Director believes their work with Youth at Risk played a part in this. Specifically, their grading for behaviour improved from satisfactory to good: *"Students' behaviour in lessons and around the academy was mainly good during the inspection. Their attendance is improving and is broadly average"* (Ofsted Monitoring Visit, 2010). As a result staff morale improved and the Director stated this had improved school performance overall. Other schools are now visiting the Academy to further understand how the Youth at Risk approach has been used to address behaviour.

Engaging Local Community Groups and Agencies

- 4.28 One LA recently focussed activity on a church community that became familiar with the programme through young people attending a residential and adults at the church attending coaching. There was a sense of optimism regarding how this might develop in the near future.

"This is beginning to turn what was an abstract concept around coaching into an understanding of how you can work with young people more effectively." (LA Project Manager)

- 4.29 As a result of this it was reported that young people were becoming aware of local community groups such as Residents Associations and was leading to young people becoming more involved in communities.

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- 4.30 In another local area the focus was on a group of young parents who themselves went through the Choices programme and then decided to go on the adult training to become a coach. This helped empower young parents to support other young people in their area.
- 4.31 One particular achievement of CTP was getting training providers on board. CTP can complement course content but also help young people stay engaged (in terms of punctuality and contributing to sessions) during their course. One agency provided an interesting exemplar of how support to young people can help young people develop employment skills and how employers could use the programme as a way of improving their organisational and work ready skills.

Figure 4.5: Developing Agency's Capacity to Support Young People

A social housing provider trained their young apprentices at the same time as training adult employees. Some apprentices lacked communication skills and confidence which was affecting their ability to deal with situations in work. There was a perception among some adult employees that the young people did not possess the right skills, but there was little capacity within the organisation to effect change. The senior manager was approached by the LA and decided to put forward both his set of apprentices and a small group of adults on to the training to be coaches to the apprentices. As a result of this training, there was a greater level of support: 7 out of the 9 young people were retained in employment and the adult employees benefited considerably from the training, so much so that the company planned to integrate Choices into their Supported Apprenticeships programme.

Summary

- 4.32 Adult participants were very positive of the benefits they gained from the programme, which improved both their own personal skills and also the support they provided to young people. The programme successfully recruited volunteers that operated in different ways to support LAs in programme delivery but also to support young people directly through one to one coaching. This flowed through into examples of how schools, communities and agencies embraced the training and positively influenced their local environment, so improving support to young people.

5 CONCLUSIONS, SUSTAINABILITY AND LESSONS LEARNED

Impact on Young People

- 5.1 The Community Transformation Programme supported some of the most vulnerable young people in local communities: those with drug and alcohol problems, those involved in offending and gang activity and those for whom a positive family environment has been missing for much of their lives. It also supported young people who were at risk of under achieving academically due to low aspirations and little motivation or skills to change.
- 5.2 Youth at Risk worked in partnership with local areas to identify appropriate groups of young people who would benefit from an injection of challenge and support delivered by trained experts and locally trained volunteers. Over 1,300 young people received the training and over 900 received additional one to one support from a volunteer in the community acting as a coach.
- 5.3 The impact on young people's critical awareness and resilience to deal with challenging situations was very significant. The training was a catalyst in enabling young people to acknowledge their past experiences and to recognise their ability to change their behaviour and, ultimately, their future.
- 5.4 For some young people, the change in their critical awareness in terms of understanding the influence of past experiences had a significant impact on their behaviour. This was particularly the case for those that reported the most extreme negative behaviour and who made significant progress in reducing their offending and reducing their involvement in gangs.
- 5.5 For young people with lower levels of risk, there was also some evidence that they improved their attendance and behaviour at school, and as a result, their predicted grades at Key Stage 4 had improved.
- 5.6 However, for quite a substantial group of young people, there was little evidence of impact and we expect that, for many of those, involvement in risky behaviours was minimal. Also, it has to be acknowledged that one size does not fit all with regards improving young people's outcomes, and for some, the programme did not suit them and did not work. It is difficult to decipher precisely why the methodology works for some young people and not others, but evidence from the interviews and case studies suggests that the key differentiator is *awareness* and *willingness* to change. Young people need to be aware their behaviour is inappropriate and want, on some level, to change, yet lack the strength, motivation or ability to do so. They may not necessarily feel their behaviour is inappropriate prior to the programme (though many do), as for some the programme instilled this awareness. For these young people, the programme acts as catalyst and provides them with the encouragement and challenge to change. However, those young people who showed little evidence of change had no awareness of the inappropriateness of their behaviour and were unwilling to change.
- 5.7 Indeed, a significant number of young people dropped out of the programme, either because they did not like the style of delivery, felt they did not need the support, or became disillusioned or disengaged somewhere along the journey.

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- 5.8 However, although there were high rates of attrition and areas of non-impact, issues faced by some young people on the programme were so high, and the transformation on a proportion of young people so great, that we believe the significant impact on a subset of young people outweighed the areas where there was limited impact. If we consider the lifetime cost to society of a single person NEET is £104,000²¹, and the cost of providing a prison bed in a Youth Offender Institution is £100,000 a year²²; the programme begins to appear more cost effective. Overall the programme reported supporting 30 young people from NEET into EET (although we have not been able to comment on the sustainability of this outcome) and 15 young people on CTP went from reporting high levels of offending at the beginning of the programme to no offending at all at the end. This would indicate a significant saving for the public purse. Determining how the evidence on outcomes can be evidenced and how local commissioners can learn of the cost benefits to their areas should be a priority for Youth at Risk.

Impact on Communities

- 5.9 A key aim of the CTP was to develop capacity within areas to provide better support to young and vulnerable people. The evaluation evidenced considerable outputs in terms of numbers of adults trained and the number of adults volunteering either as a coach or in other capacities.
- 5.10 Adults gave interviews that described how the training impacted on their own personal motivations and skills to work with young people. What was impressive was the range of agencies engaging in the support, including social services and the police. We gathered qualitative evidence that demonstrated how services worked together better and shared information earlier to address emerging problems.
- 5.11 In addition, there were real pockets of quite inspirational activity and, as the evaluation progressed, it became apparent that the training was indeed greatly valued. Young people and adults alike described how the training had been a key turning point in their lives, and encouraged them to make some key changes. For example, long-term issues in family relationships were able to be addressed and young people were encouraged to be trained as a coach so they too could support other young people.
- 5.12 One of the most significant impacts, however, has been in the school community. Schools that trained a significant number of pupils and staff reported a tangible change in school performance, particularly around behaviour and attendance, but also around the 'vibe' of the school. There was also evidence from the data and from schools that predicted grades of some pupils improved as result.

²¹ Coles, Godfrey, Keung, Parrot and Bradshaw, 2010. *Estimating the Life-time Cost of NEET: 16-18 Year Olds not in Education, Employment or Training: Research Undertaken for the Audit Commission*. This cost is mainly as a result of: payments in unemployment benefits and tax losses through direct taxes and reduced indirect tax yields due to lower consumer expenditure.

²² New Economics Foundation, 2010. *Punishing Costs*. See: <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/punishing-costs>

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Sustainability of Programme Impact

- 5.13 There were examples of LAs taking a long view regarding their engagement with CTP and how it could help improve performance on area wide priorities and targets. Some areas aligned the CTP programme to particular strategies in order to ‘give strategies legs’: some programmes were part of Neighbourhood Improvement Plans for particular areas, and linked into Regeneration and Children’s Plans. CTP was integrated into some LAs NEET strategies as local areas focussed more on preventative work with young people and the Choices programme in particular was delivered to reduce the risk of young people becoming NEET.
- 5.14 A few areas reported including CTP as part of their community cohesion strategy focussing on relations between cultures and ethnicities in their communities. Including CTP on community-based strategies should help ensure that LAs consider the value of the programme and discuss ways of future delivery. From our consultations, there were six authorities that had the desire to carry on delivering some elements of the support and three of these were actively looking for alternative forms of funding to secure more training. Promotional material including the outcomes across each area could be forwarded as a way of demonstrating impact in the local areas. CTP has been sustained to a lesser degree than originally anticipated due to a changing economic and political climate that has impacted on the sustainability of the majority of Youth Sector Development Funded programmes²³.
- 5.15 There were concerns regarding the future sustainability of the trained coaches: some local areas put in place quite effective support structures, but there was evidence that the impetus was already beginning to fall away. There will be a natural decline in the numbers of volunteers, as that is the nature of volunteering. Therefore, opportunities to continue training adults to support their young people, particularly in schools, could be further developed. In addition, and given the strong potential of the programme to support parenting and families more generally, we would recommend that Youth at Risk give stronger priority to engaging parents onto future programmes.
- 5.16 There are opportunities, however, to sustain and expand the activities from the CTP programme by linking it with current policy agendas. For example, the strong contribution from communities and the forging of different community members makes CTP a possible contributor to the Big Society agenda. Additionally, the impact on NEET and re-offending could create opportunities for CTP to be funded through Social Impact Bonds (SIBs).

²³<http://www.ghkint.com/Services/PublicPolicy/ThirdSectorSupport/EvaluationoftheYouthSectorDevelopmentFund.aspx>

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5.17 Youth at Risk is sustaining its activity through the Transitions Fund²⁴. Their focus over the next coming years is to shape their approach in response to new policy agendas, most noticeably the Localism and Big Society agendas. This will entail a shift to providing more services for local consortia (delivering Early Intervention Grants/community budget agendas) and for local communities. Their vision is of an England-wide network of accredited transformational coaching practitioners, embedded in communities that they serve. A mix of local volunteers (an increasing number of whom will be graduates of Youth at Risk programmes), staff in partner organisations, and neighbourhood and community organisations (including schools) will be supported by Youth at Risk to work with young people as a springboard to transforming their communities. The role of Youth at Risk will be to develop, support and foster the network using a mixed economy funding model where community assets and public funding for community based work will be leveraged in and cross-subsidised by income generated through trading activities.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

- 5.18 The evaluation has been delivered as a formative to summative evaluation and as a result we have gathered a wealth of information from stakeholders (local authorities, partner agencies, schools, volunteers, parents and young people) regarding their experiences of the programme. We have presented previous papers detailing the necessary conditions for successful delivery so will not recap them here. However, affecting a transformational change is a longer term vision. Therefore, going forward, we feel it is important that lessons are learnt in order to improve on performance in terms of both cost effectiveness (inputs, outcomes and deadweight) but also to ensure the maximum impact on young people is reaped.
- 5.19 To a significant extent, the issues and challenges of the programme were the result of high concentrations of activity in a small number of local authorities (ten originally, then dropping to nine). In essence, there was a tension within the design of the programme, in terms of focussing on achieving a transformational change in communities that required intense levels of activity. This placed in many cases too great a burden on individual authorities who were tasked with recruiting large numbers of young people and adults in very short timescales. Responsibility for programme delivery needed to be more devolved, either across a greater number of authorities or across agencies within authorities.
- 5.20 Due to the high intensity of activity and demands on authorities, original aims of local programmes were compromised. A pattern in terms of adjustments to delivery emerged:
- an original focus on particular communities in many areas was broadened to include areas across LAs, so defusing the potential for a 'community transformation';
 - support for particular groups of young people (e.g. young mothers, Looked After Children);
 - engagement of NEET was not a prevalent feature and the Choices programme predominately attended by young people at risk of NEET;
 - logistics of delivering residential placements placed a huge strain on individuals and there were additional costs (travel and hotels) that had not been accounted for in the original specifications.

²⁴ www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/transitions_fund_awards_june_2011.xls

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- 5.21 Improvements in the developmental stages of this programme can be made to ensure that partnerships between Youth at Risk and local authorities/agencies continue to develop. It should be acknowledged that Youth at Risk did put considerable effort in to supporting areas and this well received. As a result, strong partnerships remain intact. Indeed, some agencies were newly engaged with Youth at Risk through CTP and stated they were looking for opportunities to develop the programme. However, improved communication and transparency of commitment throughout the stages of the programme needs to be a focus going forward.
- 5.22 Lessons can also be learned by centrally government-funded initiatives, as Youth at Risk sometimes felt pressured to deliver intensive and overly-ambitious concentrations of activity in order to meet contractual agreements. Greater flexibility needs to be factored into the expectations of government-funded recipients in order to allow the programmes to prioritise quality delivery.

Recommendations

- 5.23 To summarise on lessons learned from the programme as a whole, we offer the following points for consideration:
- **Ensure sufficient lead in time with LAs is factored into the early stages of programme delivery:** this will lead to more integrated programmes better suited to local need, which would increase local commitment and potential future sustainability. It would also help agencies plan for the potential intense periods of recruitment and training as well as understand their roles and responsibilities in delivering the programme;
 - **Devolve responsibility for engaging young people to agencies much earlier in the process:** this will limit the burden on particular authorities or agencies;
 - **Provide clear examples of the nature of the engagement and the resources requirements of local authorities:** This will enable LAs to be better prepared in planning the resources of the programme;
 - **Ensure the engagement workshops operate to attract the right people who are ready to make a change in their lives:** this would minimise drop-out;
 - **Anticipate and plan for points where additional capacity is required:** this will ensure LAs/agencies can cope with activity peaks;
 - **Enhance level of outcomes reporting to LAs:** Youth at Risk have a powerful and relatively easy-to-use outcome measurement system. Fully utilising this by providing regular feedback to local areas on their progress and outcomes will encourage stronger buy-in in local areas;
 - **Focus on providing support for parents and families:** the impact of the programmes on parents and families was particularly noted. Consider how Youth at Risk could extend support to families by collaborating with services delivering support for families with complex needs.
 - **Provide greater detail at the outset of the programme:** retention is likely to improve if the most appropriate young people are recruited onto the course. Supplying more information on the programme's content and delivery style will enable young people to make more informed choices;

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- **Enhance level of support between training to coaching:** providing more intense support between the training and coaching will increase young people's ability to cope with the transition back to 'normal' life following the training, and reduce drop-out of different emotional problems at this point;
- **Include area-wide events:** although not formally evaluated, anecdotal feedback from partners involved in several YaR programmes felt that enveloping delivery around a core event improved relationships and retention;
- **Create stronger matching processes:** our evaluations of previous coaching programmes found that a strong matching process positively impacted on retention and coaching relationships. A simple audit of coaches' and young people's likes and hobbies could lead to stronger matching;
- **Focus programmes on bespoke outcomes:** developing bespoke programmes aimed at tackling a specific issue (eg. programme to reduce gang activity or substance misuse) may be more effective at reducing the areas of non-impact;
- **Undertake a Social Return on Investment (SROI):** we have concluded that the areas of impact for some very vulnerable young people outweighs the non-impact witnessed in other areas as well as generates significant savings for the public purse. A robust SROI would validate this claim.

Concluding Remarks

5.24 Youth at Risk, through the Community Transformation Programme, aimed to challenge and empower vulnerable young people to make a change in their lives for the better. The training was a catalyst in this process. Many young people clearly went through a process of realisation and change during training, often very emotional, and came out more determined to address their issues. In turn, adults who went through a similar process reported the training encouraged them to review, take stock of their current practices and parenting styles and to have new conversations with their young people. However, the programme had a very 'spiky' profile; many young people embraced it, while many dropped out. Although Youth at Risk are aware that the programme is not for everyone, there was significant drop-out over the life of the programme. However, for those for whom the programme worked, change was significant, and significant changes can convert to savings to the public purse, specifically with regards to reduced offending and reduced number of NEET young people. Youth at Risk and partners should build on their strengths in delivery and lesson learned, to ensure that future programmes have a greater level of success and deliver the maximum impact on young people involved.