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An evaluation of the Stand Out youth employability programme

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A report by IFF Research for the Youth Futures Foundation

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- Youth Futures Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation established with a £90m endowment from the Reclaim Fund to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds. Our aim is to narrow employment gaps by identifying what works and why, investing in evidence generation and innovation, and igniting a movement for change.
- This report details the findings from an evaluation conducted by IFF Research of the Stand Out programme, a youth employability programme delivered by UpRising and One Million Mentors.
- For more information about the report please contact: Evaluation at Youth Futures, evaluation@youthfuturesfoundation.org

Contents

1 Executive summary

The project

UpRising and One Million Mentors were awarded a grant from Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) under the "Impact (Pilot)" funding stream to deliver their employability and mentoring programme, Stand Out, to 400 young people aged 18-25 across three cohorts. To help to recruit young people, the organisations partnered with RECLAIM, a youth leadership and social change organisation, supporting young working class people.

Stand Out is an online employability and mentoring programme aimed to help young people 'stand out' to employers in their job search by providing intensive employability support via taught sessions, independent learning, and mentoring. The programme is delivered through a combination of live sessions with the functionality to engage via catch-up. The programme targets young people 18-25 years old, unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or who identify as working class.

YFF commissioned IFF Research in May 2021 to conduct an evaluation and impact feasibility assessment of the Stand Out programme. The evaluation aimed to establish whether the programme is being delivered as intended and the impact it has had. Based on the findings from the evaluation, YFF decided that the Stand Out programme was not yet ready to proceed to an impact efficacy trial and therefore was not appropriate for the next phase of investment and evaluation.

Table 1 summarises the evaluation findings.

Findings

Table 1 Summary of study findings

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	FINDING
What was the proposed Theory of Change for the intervention?	The rationale for the Stand Out programme is that if young people 18-25 years old who face barriers to employment receive a month-long online curriculum with up to 12 months of mentoring they are more likely to have improved wellbeing and employment opportunities. And if mentors and corporate volunteers enjoy working with the young people and professionally develop, they will be more motivated to recruit young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds into their organisations. Together, these outcomes were expected to lead to the ultimate programme impacts of young people's increased social mobility, social capital and social cohesion.

What were the critical drivers/ mechanisms of change?	Young people were expected to achieve outcomes through four mechanisms of change: • a supportive community of other young job-seekers; • encouragement to be accountable to their job search; • exposure to the world of work; and • expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance.
To what extent is the proposed Theory of Change plausible / evidence-informed?	The wider evidence suggests the following features of the Stand Out programme can be positive for participant outcomes: • Participation is voluntary. • Support is available for up to a year. • Support is flexible. • The programme offers a broad package of employability support. • Support is designed to develop job-specific skills, basic academic skills, thinking skills, social skills, personal qualities and career motivation. • Support aims to achieve 'softer' outcomes. • Support uses goal setting to improve experience and outcomes. • Support aims to deliver a high-quality mentor and mentee relationship. • Support aims to provide good quality training and support for mentors. The Stand Out model includes features that the existing literature on employability and mentoring programmes has not (fully) evidenced as leading to successful employment, education and training (EET) outcomes. This includes: • how a fully online delivery model might affect participant outcomes; • the particular types of programme activities and their link to participant outcomes; • the sequential link between improvements in young people's confidence leading to progression in work; and • the monthly frequency of the mentoring component of the programme.

How has the intervention been delivered?	UpRising surpassed its participant target of 400 young people. All young people met at least one of the eligibility criteria. The programme notably engaged high proportions of participants from ethnic minority groups, and who were refugees and internally displaced people (IDP), relative to the general population. Participants were mainly recruited through their university and RECLAIM. Programme efforts to advertise through UCAS were unsuccessful and ended after Cohort 1. Peer-to-peer connection was both supported and limited by both the online programme delivery and the flexible nature of engagement with live sessions or via catch-up. The evaluation found live engagement with the programme was lower than expected; participants reported watching session recordings in their own time rather than engaging live. UpRising delivered at least five hours of coaching during the core programme, as intended, and the amount varied across cohorts in an effort to improve young people's attendance at coaching sessions. Attendance data shows that 35% of young people across the three cohorts attended at least one of the coaching sessions. The delivery of morning check-ins changed across cohorts in an effort to improve young people's attendance at check-ins. The evaluation cannot establish whether participants completed the eight hours of independent learning because this was not monitored. The programme surpassed their targets for hours of knowledge and skills workshops delivered. Most young people took part in at least one workshop and chose the workshops most relevant to their support needs. Fewer volunteers contributed to the programme than intended. Over a third of young people attended the careers skills advice sessions hosted by volunteers. Like the knowledge and skills workshops, young people interviewed reported attending these on an as-needed basis. Fewer mentors were trained than intended. The mentor matching process took place as planned, but the young people's perceived quality of the match varied, and the frequency of initial mentoring meetings was not delivered as intended.
How has the context/external environment affected delivery of the intervention?	Recruitment and programme delivery took place online rather than in person due to the restrictions in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. UpRising and One Million Mentors were awarded grant funding by YFF in December 2020. Lockdown in England ended four days before Cohort 1 delivery began in July 2021. Leads could not use the planned recruitment approaches and instead had to trial several different approaches to explore how they could reach the programme's target young people. In terms of

	delivery, it was the first time that both elements of the programme had been delivered online.
How do participants experience the intervention?	Online delivery made participation possible for some young people that would not have otherwise taken part, and supported networking and learning. However, participants' practical and technical ability to use the channels and engage in the real-time, online sessions limited some engagement. Young people new to the online platforms used in the programme and to accessing employability support found the pace and number of sessions in the first week of the programme overwhelming. Participants were less likely to find the check-ins valuable compared with more tangible skills-based activities, like getting personalised advice on their CV. The check-ins may be more relevant for young people at the start of their career journey, with less awareness of or confidence in what to do, or for young people with less competing demands on their time, such as not in education, employment or training. Young people who attended coaching sessions found it supported their networking with other young people, and their job search accountability. Barriers to attendance included young people being unaware of what sessions involve, and both young people and mentor difficulties in accommodating the sessions around their busy schedules. Young people chose to attend the knowledge and skills workshops which felt most relevant to them. This was influenced by the young person's circumstances and prior experience of employability support. The careers skills advice sessions and knowledge and skills workshops helped young people to improve their knowledge of how to go about their job search, by helping them feel more confident in where to find job advertisements, how to scan job opportunities and decide what would be relevant for them and being more selective in which jobs to apply for. Young people's views of a good match with their mentor at the beginning the mentoring programme depended on the young person's support needs. Features of a good match included the mentors' career or sector experience, attitude, availability and the type of support they offered. Participants were critical of the match when they had a clear career goal that their assigned mentor did not bring knowledge or experience of, or either had other mentors outside the Stand Out programme at the time of the match or had mentors in the past that they compared their match to. Unlike young people's experiences, mentors' experiences of mentoring differed based on the young person's attitude and their commitment to the mentoring. Mentors typically felt well supported by One Million Mentors

	and most described feeling able to drive forward their mentoring relationship.
What outcomes have participants achieved?	Young people significantly improved across five outcomes that were sustained at both the three-month and six-month follow-up: improved tacit skills, increased professional networks, improved wellbeing, increased competitiveness in the labour market and entering employment, education or training. More young people were in full time employment after the programme. Measuring movement into 'meaningful' employment was a challenge. Employment outcomes captured in the survey do not show the nuance of a participant being, for example, more targeted in their job search (but applying for fewer jobs), leaving an unsatisfying role, or taking up work experience or 'precarious' work but in an area they are passionate about.
Which participants benefit / do not benefit from the intervention?	The outcomes evidenced demonstrate that all participants benefit from the programme to a degree. Sample sizes for subgroups were too small to detect significant changes to outcomes at subgroup level. Young people who have not accessed employment support before or were not in employment, education or training more commonly described a range of benefits from programme participation in the qualitative discussions. Young people already 'employability literate', in that they had taken part in other employability programmes, started their job search, or were attending universities where they were receiving other employability support, were less likely to report the same degree of benefits.
What are the main pathways though which participants achieve outcomes? Which parts of the model trigger outcomes?	The pathways to outcomes are difficult to determine because attendance data was not available for participants engaging in the play-back materials for which programme staff reported a high number engaged that way. Relevant observations include: • Young people's experiences of a supportive community of young job-seekers varied considerably, with different levels of engagement through the online channels and small-group coaching, yet social and peer networks increased so another mechanism is likely acting upon young people's peer networks. • Encouraging accountability to job search in the form of daily check-ins may not be a mechanism for bringing about personal effectiveness or increased confidence and self-worth because the outcomes were still achieved without young people fully engaging with it and with it changing between cohorts. Young people reported coaches and mentors supported their accountability so their role may be more influential than check-ins.

	• Young people interviewed spoke about an additional benefit that may be influencing other outcomes: exposure to peers and professionals helped to 'broaden their views' about what opportunities were available, and ways of considering and responding to those opportunities. It stands to logic that this may be an important pre-condition for achieving raised perceptions of what young people can achieve. While young people's exposure to the world of work and receiving expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance varied before and during the programme, participant evidence suggests they did experience these features of the programme. An outcome these mechanisms are expected to lead to also improved and were sustained at both three and six months: tacit skills
Which elements of the support are more / less effective?	The technical practicalities of delivering a wholly online programme that includes both live and catch-up impacts on attendance and engagement with all programme activities. This does not make them less effective, rather that more needs to be done to leverage the benefits this flexibility offers and mitigate risks to engagement. The check-ins may be more relevant for young people at the start of their career journey, with less awareness of what to do and less confidence in what to do, or for young people with less competing demands on their time, such as not in education, employment or training. One-to-one and small group activities were effective when young people's personal and professional interests, circumstances and availability were well matched to the volunteers, mentors and their peers. Group knowledge and skills workshops were viewed by young people as the most effective part of the programme; they valued the applied, practical nature of these. Participants were considering different career paths and were in different stages of their career journey. The programme may want to consider the relevance of session content and the diversity in its career panels for different sub-groups of young people within the overall intervention group. Mentoring arrangements that meet young people's needs on demand better reflected the ad hoc nature of their job search. The evaluation cannot comment on the independent learning element because this could not be monitored or explored in detail qualitatively.
How can the intervention be refined to support outcomes?	The programme faced difficulties in operationalising the criteria of young people identifying as working class. The programme should clearly and simply operationalise all eligibility criteria so different partners can recruit eligible participants quickly.

	Young people's access to the online platforms varied. Consolidating the programme into fewer platforms, and ideally platforms that most participants are already familiar with, may help to reduce feelings of confusion or feeling overwhelmed. The diversity of young people, and the scale of the programme, suggests the programme should continue identifying and reducing barriers to access among new cohorts. There are trade-offs to requiring young people to keep their cameras on during online sessions. The evidence from this evaluation suggests participants, coaches and volunteers found cameras being off limited some of their connection with other programme participants and delivery staff. Yet, some young people want this for privacy reasons and to feel able to participate. The programme must weigh up the trade-offs when confirming, and communicating, its policy for having cameras on to participants. Participants felt that being grouped together with others who are close in age, in more similar life stages, or have similar sector interests may help to improve the usefulness of peer networking offered by the programme. Some young people were more advanced in their career search than others, making some of the support less relevant for them. Some young people did not complete the programme or dropped out for this reason. The wider literature suggests flexibility in support delivery is important for engaging diverse young people so moving towards a model of requiring young people to attend all sessions is unlikely to be effective. Instead, the programme should consider how to leverage the flexibility as a benefit. Participants were considering different career paths and were in different stages of their career journey. The programme may want to consider the relevance of session content and the diversity in its career panels for different sub-groups of young people within the overall intervention group. Given the diversity of participants dipping in and out of the programme, and the communication channels available, the programme may want to consider ensuring the same information, such as timetabling, is repeated across all platforms. To ensure advice and guidance feels more personalised, the matching is really important to get right. Both young people and mentors would benefit from knowing why they were matched together, and perhaps given the opportunity to change matches after an initial meet. Mentoring arrangements that meet young people's needs on demand better reflected the ad hoc nature of their job search. The programme may want to consider how it enables and encourages mentors to offer these arrangements.

How feasible is the intervention for an impact evaluation?	The evaluation highlighted significant uncertainty in relation to intervention feasibility, including: • Variability in fidelity and adherence due to inconsistency in the way that young people engaged with the programme. • Barriers to identifying the minimum viable dosage due to difficulty recording the number of people engaging with recorded programme content. • A lack of clarity about how the online model achieves outcomes due to difficulty evidencing some of the mechanisms within the Theory of Change.
What are the options for an impact evaluation? How feasible are these?	An assessment of evaluation feasibility demonstrated that experimental approaches – such as a randomised control trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED) – would be extremely challenging to conduct to provide a clear result within the budgetary restrictions of Youth Futures' endowment, specifically that: • The sample sizes that would be needed for a RCT to have sufficient power and sensitivity to detect change would be large (likely more than 1,000 participants per arm within a trial) which was not within YFF's budget. • The sample sizes that would be needed for a QED would be even larger, and identifying a suitable counterfactual would be difficult due to the variability in participant starting points and outcomes.

2 Introduction

Background

UpRising and One Million Mentors were awarded a grant from Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) under the "Impact (Pilot)" funding stream to deliver their employability and mentoring programme, Stand Out, to 400 young people in January 2021. The programme builds on UpRising's Fastlaners programme delivered over 2016-2020, and One Million Mentors' mentoring offer, developed since 2016. Stand Out was aimed at young people between the ages 18-25 who were unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or identified as working class. The Stand Out programme set out to support young people aged 18-25 by providing intensive employability support via taught sessions, independent learning, and mentoring. The programme builds on existing evidence that highlights the importance of longer duration programmes lasting at least 12 months; frequent contact with participants, individualised support, flexibility and appropriate mentor matching, in delivering an effective employability intervention programme.[1]To help recruit young people to the programme, the organisations partnered with RECLAIM, a youth leadership and social change organisation, supporting young working-class people. At the time of the evaluation, the programme was being delivered by UpRising and One Million Mentors.

While participants could be from anywhere in England, UpRising expected most young people to be based in London, Birmingham and Manchester because that is where they and their delivery partners had well established links to young people.

Programme Overview

Stand Out is an online employability and mentoring programme aimed to help young people 'stand out' to employers in their job search. It aims to provide bespoke employment support, connections with employers and peer networks.

The 1-month core programme originally planned to deliver 18 workshops and events, totalling around 40 hours of provision, with one or two 1–2-hour sessions delivered daily. These are designed to support personal development, develop networking skills and build a personal brand. Two hours of support from corporate volunteers or programme staff was also planned to give feedback on current job applications and interview skills, as well as 9.5 hours of morning check-ins from programme staff. Wraparound support provision was also planned to include five hours of weekly coaching and 8 hours of independent learning and reflections. The employability workshops are facilitated by tutors from Uprising and corporate volunteers that may speak at careers events or sessions. Coaching sessions are delivered weekly by individuals with professional coaching qualifications.

Following the core curriculum, young people receive up to a year of professional mentoring to sustain and continue their development, delivered via a 1 hour session per month.

[1] Findings from IFF's evidence review for the Stand Out programme. For more information on the sources reviewed, please see Appendix G. For the full Evidence Review, please see Appendix G.

Mentors are sourced by One Million Mentors and matched with participants based on participants' career aspirations.

Young people need to meet one or more of the following criteria to be eligible for the programme:

- 18-25 years old,
- Living anywhere in England,
- Unemployed, or in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of further or higher education, or leaving school, college or university,
- From ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds,
- or identifying as working class.

See Appendix A for a detailed process map of the participant journey through the programme. The programme Theory of Change (ToC), in the Support Model chapter, shows the route to outcomes, refined over the course of the evaluation.

Programme timings

The programme was delivered across three cohorts:

- Cohort 1: the four week core programme was delivered across July – August 2021 and the up to 12 months mentoring programme ran from September 2021 to August 2022.
- Cohort 2: the four week core programme was delivered across October 2021, and the up to 12 months of the mentoring programme ran from November 2021 to October 2022.
- Cohort 3: the three week core programme was delivered across November – December 2021 and the up to 12 months of the mentoring programme ran from January 2022 to December 2022.

Research questions

The aim of the evaluation was to explore how the Stand Out programme achieves outcomes, including participants' 'hard' education, employment and training (EET) outcomes and 'soft' employability outcomes, such as confidence, resilience and know-how. The research questions were:

- What was the proposed Theory of Change for the intervention?
- What were the critical drivers/ mechanisms of change?
- To what extent is the proposed Theory of Change plausible / evidence-informed?
- How has the intervention been delivered?
- How has the context/external environment affected delivery of the intervention?

- How do participants experience the intervention?
- What outcomes have participants achieved?
- Which participants benefit / do not benefit from the intervention?
- What are the main pathways through which participants achieve outcomes? Which parts of the model trigger outcomes?
- Which elements of the support are more / less effective?
- How can the intervention be refined to support outcomes?
- How feasible is the intervention for an impact evaluation?
- What are the options for an impact evaluation? How feasible are these?

3 Methods

The evaluation involved three elements:

1. The **scoping stage** which took place from May to August 2021. The purpose of this part of the evaluation was to understand the overall design of the programme and the intended participant journey, to profile the participants who were taking part in the programme, and to develop the programme Theory of Change. An evidence review was also conducted to gain an understanding of the theoretical base that underpins key elements of the programme. This consisted of a rapid review of evidence from similar programmes, leading to full review of 26 documents, including peer-reviewed academic studies, literature and evidence reviews, process and impact evaluations, other primary research, programme reviews and policy papers. See Appendix H for the list of documents reviewed.
2. The **programme evaluation** which took place from June 2021 to May 2022. The purpose was to assess the extent to which the programme was delivered as intended and identify any refinements which could be made to improve delivery, and to test and explore the Theory of Change, including analysis of outcomes.
3. The **feasibility study** which took place from June to December 2021. The purpose was to gain an understanding of whether an impact evaluation was feasible, and what approach to assessing impact was appropriate for the programme.

Theory of Change development

IFF Research, in collaboration with YFF and the delivery partners, developed an initial Theory of Change for the Stand Out programme during the scoping stage between May and August 2021. This drew on the separate UpRising and One Million Mentors' Theory of Change which covered their elements of the programme (see Appendix C and Appendix D). These were based on the organisations' learnings from delivering similar programmes.

The initial Theory of Change was refined in spring 2022, following completion of the main research stage which provided a more in-depth understanding of how the programme inputs linked through to outcomes (see Appendix E).

Programme evaluation data collection

The programme evaluation involved a combination of primary and secondary analysis and was conducted between June 2021 and March 2022, with analysis of a six-month follow-up survey conducted in October 2022.

Online and telephone surveys of young people

Online surveys of young people, lasting up to 15 minutes, were used to measure the impact of the programme on those taking part. The surveys were administered to all young people who registered for the programme at four time points, as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Survey administration

Survey	Mode	Administration
Pre-core curriculum survey	Online	UpRising
Post-core curriculum survey	Online	UpRising
Three-month follow-up survey	Telephone	IFF Research
Six-month follow-up survey	Online	UpRising

See Appendix F for more information on the achieved sample by survey.

Qualitative research with young people

IFF Research recruited 60 young people from the programme sample and conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews towards the end of the core programme. Given the digital nature of the programme delivery, interviews were conducted over video conference. Interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes and participants received a £30 payment as a thank you. See Appendix F for more information about the achieved sample.

Peer research

A peer-to-peer research approach was taken to ensure young people were active in shaping both the evaluation and the findings. Eleven young people took part, interviewing each other as pairs or in groups of three.2 IFF Research provided training on interviewing techniques such as different interviewing and probing styles as well as ways to write up interview findings. Peers were then asked to use the skills learnt in the training session to interview one another on their experience of the programme. To accommodate their different schedules the interviews took place online, either via Zoom or Teams, and were recorded with consent and deleted after the interview write-ups had been completed. Peer researchers received £30 as a thank-you for their time. Upon completion of the interviews in pairs, IFF Research carried out 30-minute feedback sessions with each of the peer researchers to reflect on what they had found out from their peers and how they had found the experience of peer interviewing more generally. This peer feedback was then triangulated with the feedback from IFF's interviews with young people. Where relevant, feedback from the peer research has been highlighted throughout this report.

Qualitative interviews with individuals involved in delivering the programme

IFF Research conducted 30 interviews with individuals involved in programme recruitment and delivery, including strategic stakeholders, operational staff, recruitment partner, coaches, corporate volunteers and mentors. Interviews explored experiences of set up,

[2]Eight young people received training but did not go on to complete an interview with their peers.

recruitment and delivery successes and challenges, and lasted up to an hour. See Appendix F for more information about the achieved sample.

Performance and management information

The programme collected participant application responses, attendance and further metrics of engagement with the programme that the evaluation drew upon. Performance and management information (MI) was used to describe the scope and reach of the programme and to measure the profile of audiences that engaged with the programme. See Appendix F for more information.

Analysis

The analytical approach for the qualitative research was iterative and inductive – building upwards from the views of participants – incorporating elements of 'grounded theory' analysis i.e. the thematic review and continual analysis of hypotheses from participants' transcriptions and dialogue. Analysis began informally during fieldwork itself; as the research team worked closely together throughout the fieldwork period, feeding back headline findings to each other as discussions were conducted, and continually updating the approach and thinking as data was amassed. The data was analysed to search for themes and trends.

Programme staff collected and updated MI data on the programme participants upon recruitment to the programme, during the programme, and upon completion of the programme. This was securely shared with IFF in batches at three points across the evaluation.

Analysis of the survey data was conducted within and across timepoints, primarily at a total sample level, and of target groups of interest, where sample sizes allowed. IFF Research used the data provided to produce the programme participation and participant outcomes analysis set out in this report.

We triangulated data, methods, and analysis to explain the programme outcomes and what was done to deliver the programme. In practice, this meant analysing all evidence sources in their own right, then comparing and contrasting the findings across evidence sources. During this, we weighed up the quality of evidence. Any inconsistencies between different data sources were explored and explained. Where there were competing findings by evidence source, stronger evidence was considered over evidence with gaps.

Evaluation limitations

This evaluation was subject to some important limitations which must be considered when reading this report.

Only 28 young people took part in all four of the surveys, so it was not possible to conduct longitudinal analysis of individual or demographic sub-group outcomes taking into account earlier programme experience. A detailed breakdown of responses is provided in Appendix F. Instead, the data is treated as a series of cross-sectional surveys of participants at each of the programme time points and we make comparisons between the surveys. However, it

should be borne in mind when interpreting these findings that the composition of participants within each cohort is not completely consistent across the survey waves.

The three-month follow-up survey for Cohort 1 was administered over Christmas holidays and this likely influenced participant circumstances and responses. Given the age of programme participants, many were likely to have a break studying or working a short-term holiday contract during this time.

The evaluation did not design outcomes data collection to capture changes within employment, education or training; rather, data collection was designed to capture movement between these destinations. The surveys captured information on whether participants were in employment, education or training at each time point, and on skills and wellbeing. Across the evaluation, it became evident that participants varied greatly in their progression to employment, education or training, and it was difficult to ascertain the quality of this movement from programme start to end. This means, for example, the evaluation cannot determine whether movement from one job to another is a positive move for a participant.

Participants took part in the two distinct, complementary elements of the programme: the core programme and the mentoring programme. The evaluation looked at the whole Stand Out programme. Thus, it is difficult to attribute changes observed to either the core programme or the mentoring programme.

YFF originally commissioned the evaluation to conclude before the programme ended. Attendance and outcome data from surveys were collected for the whole programme and are included in the analysis. However, qualitative research ended at the start of the mentoring programme and so is limited in that it did not capture participant experiences of the full programme. The qualitative interviews with participants took place shortly after they had completed the one-month core curriculum, which meant most participants interviewed had only taken part in their initial mentoring session (if that) and were therefore unable to provide detailed reflections on their mentoring experience. Feedback on the mentoring element of the programme is largely drawn from the participant follow-up surveys. No quantitative or qualitative evidence was captured on the post-programme activities.

The programme MI was extensive and of high quality in terms of completeness. Application form and attendance data for participants joining live sessions was available for all participants, enabling robust analysis of participant profiles and engagement with the programme. The limitations were the inability to record on a participant's application form whether their employment (if not a zero-hour contract) was 'precarious' and, for the learning platforms used for online sessions, to track participant engagement with recorded sessions. In terms of readiness and ease of use, the MI required some manipulation to analyse at a participant level; this could be considered by delivery leads if programme monitoring is required going forward.

Ethics and data protection

YFF and IFF developed a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and a Data Sharing Agreement.

- The Data Protection Impact Assessment showed movement of data between the parties involved in the evaluation: IFF Research, YFF and the delivery partners, UpRising and One Million Mentors.
- The Data Sharing Agreement set out how personal data of programme participants would be shared with IFF to analyse the profile of participants benefiting from the programme, their expectations of it, the 'dosage' of support (i.e., what support they received/sessions attended), and their experience on the programme, and invited programme participants to take part in the research.

Participants were shown a privacy notice which set out how their data would be used. This was hosted on both the Stand Out and IFF Research's websites. The privacy notices shown to participants can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

At all stages participants had the opportunity to opt out of the evaluation entirely in which case their data was removed from all evaluation analysis.

4 Support Model

Programme

The Stand Out programme aims to help young people 'stand out' to employers in their job search by providing intensive employability support via taught sessions, independent learning, and mentoring. The programme targets young people aged 18-25 year old who are unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or identified as 'working class'. During the evaluation, the programme was being delivered by UpRising and One Million Mentors. To help to recruit young people, the organisations partnered with RECLAIM, a youth leadership and social change organisation supporting young working-class people.

Proposed programme theory

The Stand Out delivery model combines two programme components: the core programme and the mentoring programme. The initial Theory of Change captured our understanding of the Stand Out delivery model at the start of the evaluation, including our assumptions of how the programme would operate and how young people and mentors would experience it. It illustrates the mechanisms for change and how programme activities are translated into impacts. The Theory of Change is discussed below, followed by a visual illustration in Figure 1.

The rationale for the Stand Out programme is:

- If young people 18-25 years old who face barriers to employment receive a month-long online curriculum with up to 12 months of mentoring they are more likely to have improved wellbeing and employment opportunities; and
- If mentors and corporate volunteers enjoy working with the young person and professionally develop, they will be more motivated to recruit young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds into their organisations.

Together, these outcomes are expected to lead to the ultimate programme impacts of young people's increased social mobility, social capital and social cohesion.

The assumptions underpinning the programme Theory of Change were:

- Young people most in need take part, and mentors/volunteers reflecting young people's interests take part.
- Young people engage in all programme activities as designed and are not already receiving employment support.
- Young people have the qualifications and job-related skills to pursue the career they want to.
- A combination of real-time and recorded content enables young people to maintain programme engagement.

- A combination of 1-to-1, group and independent activities are necessary for young people to achieve outcomes.
- Programme staff, mentors, coaches and corporate volunteers have the skills and capacity required to deliver the programme as intended.

Operating context

Stand Out builds on UpRising's Fastlaners programme delivered over 2016-2020, and One Million Mentors' mentoring offer, developed since 2016. Similar to Stand Out, Fastlaners supported young people aged 18-25 from ethnic minority groups and/or those facing social disadvantages. The aim was to help young people by connecting them with a trained business mentor to strengthen their competitiveness in the labour market. The curriculum focused on building employability skills, as well as intensive mentoring and engagement with employers. Similar to the Fastlaners programme, One Million Mentors' mentoring offer aimed to recruit, train and deploy one million mentors to help young people transition into further and higher education or the world of work. The mentors come from a range of backgrounds, the criteria being that they must be working, retired or on a career break, are over 25 years old, and can commit to one hour, once per month for up to a year.

Impact of COVID-19

The Stand Out programme was originally envisioned to be delivered in-person. However, the timescales for applying for YFF funding coincided with the start of the pandemic in 2020. As a result, the programme leads revised the design in the funding application at pace in design to deliver the programme online. The programme was awarded grant funding by YFF in December 2020. Lockdown in England ended 4 days before Cohort 1 delivery began in July 2021. Social distancing rules were relaxed before Cohort 2 and the furlough programme ended before Cohort 3.

Programme inputs

UpRising conducted a pilot of the Stand Out programme in Summer 2020, during the height of the Covid pandemic. The pilot involved 25 young people. The decision to scale up was based on this pilot. UpRising secured YFF funding to build on the pilot, and to combine it with a mentoring programme.

After the pilot in 2020, YFF agreed UpRising's plans to deliver the core programme and wraparound support online. The core programme was intended to last one month and to involve knowledge and skills workshops and events, support from a coach in a small group, and independent learning. One Million Mentors were to lead the mentoring programme, lasting for up to 12 months after the core programme. The programme was initially set up to be delivered with two cohorts: Cohort 1 to start in July 2021 and Cohort 2 to start in October 2021. With the agreement of YFF and IFF Research, a third cohort was added in December 2021.

To set up the programme, UpRising identified the software and digital platforms required to deliver the programme online. This included the monitoring platform Slack which was expected to be used by young people to interact with each other and for delivery staff to

post programme updates, and Notion, a platform used to deliver the core programme sessions. The programme also uses Sales Force and Survey Monkey software as tools to capture data on how the programme is operating and how young people and professional participants are experiencing the programme.

Programme activities and associated outcomes

Core programme

UpRising staff planned to work with recruitment partners and young people engagement networks to engage 400 young people facing barriers to employment for Stand Out. Their criteria for young people taking part were those who are 18-25 years old, unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, are from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or who identify as working class. While participants could be from anywhere in England, UpRising expected most young people to be based in London, Birmingham and Manchester because that is where they and their delivery partners had well established links to young people. The programme was intended to be delivered similarly across all cohorts but the delivery experiences in early cohorts informed minor changes to programme activities in later cohorts. More details on this can be found in the findings section under programme assumptions.

Young people were expected to be recruited to the programme face-to-face, through recruitment partners, including RECLAIM and UCAS, and the delivery partners' networks, including university contacts. The programme also planned to use online methods to recruitment, like social media advertising.

The Stand Out programme delivery leads planned to work with engagement networks to engage 200 volunteers from 40 businesses. For example, by posting on doit.org and on the HSBC intranet as volunteering opportunities.

Once the young people, coaches and corporate volunteers were identified for the core programme, UpRising intended to undertake application and onboarding activities to support individuals' engagement in the core programme. As part of the on-boarding into the programme, young people were to receive digital access and onboarding support to software and online platforms to be used across the programme: Notion, Slack, Zoom, Mural and the One Million Mentor platform. The decision to use these platforms was informed by advice received during the Summer 2020 pilot that the programme should use technology being used in the workplace. Once onboarded to the technology, young people were to be invited to complete activities on Slack to get to know each other. The final onboarding activity was intended to be for young people to complete an information form that collects information about their medical history, emergency contacts, contact details and which includes information on the programme's code of conduct and a media consent form. Based on the onboarding activities, programme staff would telephone participants to discuss the programme or any additional needs.

The length of the process from recruitment to completion of onboarding was expected to depend on the participant and their willingness to engage but was thought to be achieved in a week.

For coaches and corporate volunteers, the onboarding involved reading the coach handbook, which guided them on scheduling four coaching sessions with participants (as well as on elements such as introducing them to the volunteer coordinators and safeguarding).

Once young people were onboarded, they were expected to engage flexibly in a suite of activities for one month. No minimum dosage was expected or identified; young people were expected to engage in the total amount of time outlined below for each activity, either live or via catch-up.

Young people were expected to benefit from a supportive community of other young job-seekers through on-going, ad hoc engagement with their peers through online channels like Slack and Notion and engage in 5-hours' worth of employment skills coaching in small groups with other young people and facilitated by corporate volunteers. This supportive community of young job-seekers was seen as a key mechanism for enabling young people to achieve an outcome within the one-month core programme: increased social and peer networks. When combined with other short-term outcomes – increased personal effectiveness and confidence and self-worth, described below – it was expected that young people would experience improved wellbeing within six months of programme start.

Young people were also expected to engage in one-to-one, morning, virtual check-ins with UpRising staff (up to 9.5 hours) and undertake 8 hours' worth of independent learning. Stand Out hoped that the check-ins and independent learning activities would increase young people's personal effectiveness and their confidence and self-worth within one month of the core programme. If young people benefited in this way, the programme expected this to lead to young people's raised perceptions of what they can achieve and contribute to their improved wellbeing.

Young people were also expected to actively participate in 40 hours' worth of online knowledge and skills group workshops, and two-hours' worth of one-to-one career skills advice, both facilitated by corporate volunteers, coaches and trained UpRising staff. The workshops were designed to be practical - focusing on the components of job searching and employment hiring practices. For example, setting up a LinkedIn profile, drafting a CV and practicing interview skills. The one-to-one skills advice was expected to involve the young person and the coach reviewing the young persons' strengths, skills and experience to identify a career that is suited to them (then, this would be further explored with the mentor in the mentor programme). These activities, when combined with the mentoring programme, were designed to help young people focus their job search and keep them accountable in that search. These activities were expected to improve young people's tacit skills, which includes young people having a better understanding of what is needed by employers, how to make a 'good' job application and perform well in an interview, and to better promote themselves to prospective employers. The one-to-one career skills advice,

and the planned year-long mentoring advice, were both expected to lead to outcomes through expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance.

Once young people improved their tacit skills, the programme expected this to benefit their competitiveness in the labour market and lead to them entering employment, education or training.

Mentoring programme

One Million Mentors planned to engage 400 trained mentors from their existing networks and through social media outreach.[3] Mentors also had application and onboarding activities planned to support their engagement in the mentoring programme. After the mentor signed up, they completed their online profile, a 90-minute online training session broken down into 5–10 minute modules and a mentor workshop delivered by an experienced facilitator. After this, mentors were added to the available mentor pool for the programme.

One Million Mentors facilitated a group induction session once mentors were matched with a mentee to familiarise them with each other. The match was based on participants' goals and industry preferences indicated in their personal statement and the aim was to specifically match them with a mentor that could help bridge the gap in their skill sets and offer deeper understanding of their chosen industry.

Once mentors were matched with a young person, they were expected to meet once a month for up to an hour with the young person. That regular, year-long interaction, combined with mentors providing expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance was expected to benefit young people's tacit skills and increase their professional networks. It was also expected to benefit mentors by improving their leadership and mentoring skills, making them feel like they had benefited the careers of young people, helping mentors to better understand young people's barriers to progression, and making them feel more motivated to recruit young people to their organisations.

Features of the Stand Out programme evidenced in wider literature

The wider evidence suggests the following features of the Stand Out programme can be positive for participant outcomes: [4]

- Participation is voluntary. Positive outcomes are more likely when an individual has volunteered to take part in a programme rather than being required (Busse et al., 2018).
- Support for up to a year. Long term (defined as at least 12 months) onward and in-work support can be critical for disadvantaged young people to benefit from a programme. Previous studies suggest it is important that support does not end when a person secures an offer of employment but continues as a bridge to the new role (Newton et al., 2020).

[3] Details of the organisations from which mentors were drawn are provided in Chapter 5.

[4] See Appendices G and H for the evidence review and bibliography.

- Support is flexible. Flexibility around the duration, frequency, intensity and timing of sessions to meet needs of participants is linked to successful programmes. While being flexible, it is also frequent, with participants receiving contact more than once a week (Armitage et al., 2020).
- A broad package of employability support. There is evidence that multiple activities and types of support work best to bring about positive outcomes for young people (Newton et al., 2020).
- Support is designed to build 'human capital'. It intends to develop competencies and improve specific qualities tailored to the needs of participants. Evidence shows that employability programmes that develop job-specific skills, basic academic skills, thinking skills, social skills, personal qualities and career motivation may deliver more benefit in the long term than 'work first' programmes which may deliver only employment which is short term or poor-quality (Newton et al., 2020).
- Support aims to achieve 'softer' outcomes. For example, improved confidence, improved well-being, building aspiration, ability to identify opportunities, improved social and emotional capabilities and 'hard' outcomes, like moving into work. Evidence shows that soft skills can be more beneficial than some 'hard' outcomes over the long term: softer outcomes have been linked with more positive or meaningful long-term employment or education outcomes (DWP, 2012).
- Support uses goal setting to improve experience and outcomes. Evidence shows that goal-based programmes tend to be more successful. Ideally, support is based on personalised initial assessments of strengths and barriers (Armitage et al., 2020).
- Support aims to deliver a high-quality mentor and mentee relationship. The matching process is designed to take account of a mentee's experience and interests, and with the mentor able to be flexible and responsive to the mentee's needs when scheduling sessions. Evidence also suggests that rapport between the mentor and mentee is more important than the nature of the mentoring channel (Armitage et al., 2020).
- Support aims to provide good quality training and support for mentors. Existing literature has shown this reduces mentee and mentor drop out (Armitage et al., 2020).

Evidence gaps

The Stand Out model includes features that the existing literature on employability and mentoring programmes has not (fully) evidenced as leading to successful outcomes. These present an opportunity to test in this evaluation, and future evaluations of similar programmes. This includes:

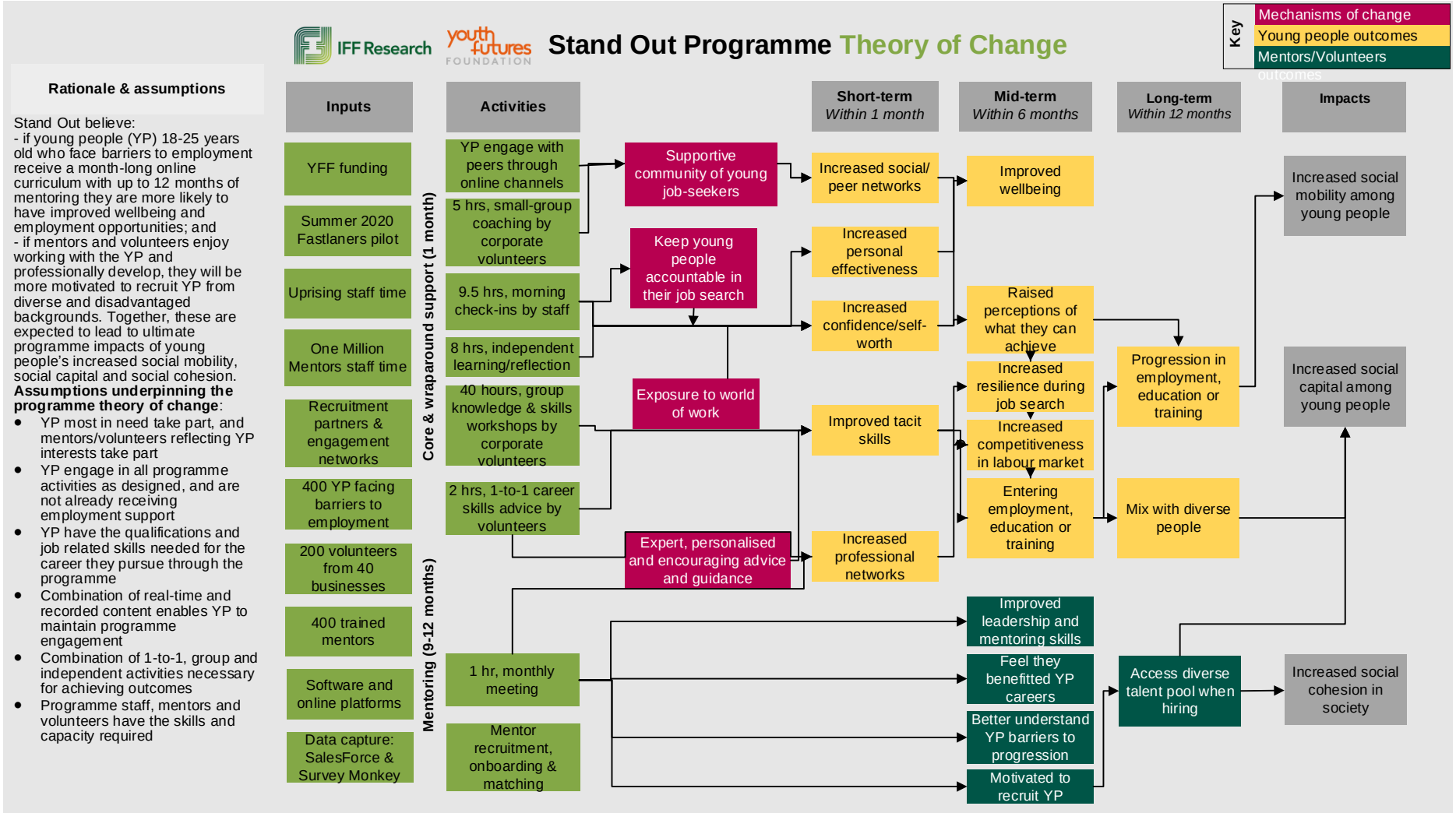
- The programme draws upon some elements of best practice of online delivery as shown in the literature, such as live online learning with options for downloadable content, and both private and open communication options. However, it was unclear

from the initial programme Theory of Change how the programme's fully online delivery model might affect participant outcomes.

- The particular types of activities in the programme and their link to successful EET outcomes.
- The sequential link between improvements in young people's confidence leading to progression in work has not been fully evidenced to date by wider literature.
- The frequency of the mentoring component of the programme (monthly) is untested in the literature.

Figure 1, overleaf, presents the initial Stand Out programme Theory of Change.

Figure 1 Stand Out programme Theory of Change



Model of intervention

The intended journey for young people following the YFF-funded Stand Out programme, as well as what is involved in delivering the programme and the points at which data on progress was collected is set out in this section and is presented visually in the process map below.

As introduced earlier, Stand Out is an online youth employability (one month) and mentoring (up to 12 months) programme. The programme aims to help young people 'stand out' to employers in their job search and secure meaningful employment.

The rationale for the Stand Out programme is if young people 18-25 years old who face barriers to employment receive a month-long online curriculum with up to 12 months of mentoring they are more likely to have improved wellbeing and employment opportunities; and if mentors and corporate volunteers enjoy working with the young people and professionally develop, they will be more motivated to recruit young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds into their organisations.

Eligibility for the programme

Young people need to meet one or more of the following criteria to be eligible for the programme:

- 18-25 years old,
- Living anywhere in England,
- Unemployed, or in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of further or higher education, or leaving school, college or university,
- From ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds,
- or identifying as working class.

To identify class, the programme used the Social Mobility Commission[5] (SMC) criteria. The criteria help to establish the levels of social mobility of an individual. SMC criteria includes:[6]

- main household earner's occupation - from a lower socio-economic background – technical and craft occupations; routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations; long-term unemployed, **or…**
- eligible for Free School Meals, **or…**
- school attended was a state school or independent school with >90% bursary, **or…**
- parents did not go to university.

The application form completed by participants in the programme included questions about their circumstances, to determine whether they meet the Social Mobility Commission

[5] An independent statutory body (an organisation created by an Act of Parliament), in line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

[6] https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/

criteria. It also captured further information (such as disability or refugee status) which may contribute to a young person being 'marginalised'.

Recruitment and onboarding

Young people

Stand Out delivery leads aimed to recruit 400 participants to two programme cohorts via face-to-face recruitment through schools and universities, and through social media via their links with schools, universities and youth services. Cohort 1 was planned to start in spring 2021 and Cohort 2 in summer 2021. With the agreement of YFF and IFF, a third cohort was added in December 2021. YFF funded a third cohort because cohorts 1 and 2 did not recruit the 400 young people as the intended target at the start of the programme.

Once the young person decided to join the programme, an expression of interest form was to be completed, followed by an application which included a privacy notice and consent to further email. At this stage programme staff were to judge the suitability of potential participants by comparing their application responses to the programme eligibility criteria and offer a place onto the programme when appropriate. After accepting a place on the programme, young people were to be invited to attend a social and informational event about the programme. The application form included a question about participant access needs which included digital skills and access. Systematic assessment of digital skills or access was not part of the programme.

As part of the on-boarding into the programme, young people were to receive digital access and onboarding support to software and online platforms to be used across the programme: Notion, Slack, Zoom, Mural and the One Million Mentor platform. Once onboarded to the technology, young people were to be invited to complete activities on Slack to get to know each other. The final onboarding activity was intended to be for young people to complete an information form that collects information about their medical history, emergency contacts, contact details and which includes information on the programme's code of contact and a media consent form. Based on the onboarding activities, programme staff would telephone participants to discuss the programme or any additional needs.

The length of the process from recruitment to completion of onboarding was expected to depend on the participant and their willingness to engage but was thought to be achieved in a week.

Mentors

Mentors were to be sourced from One Million Mentors' existing mentor network. After a mentor signed up, they were to complete their online profile to capture their demographics and a 90-minute online training session broken down into 5–10-minute modules delivered by an experienced One Million Mentor facilitator. After this, mentors were to be added to the available mentor pool for the programme.

Core programme content

The core programme and wraparound support was planned to last one month and involved one or two daily 1–2-hour long sessions. During this time, corporate volunteers would conduct small-group coaching (5 hours), group knowledge and skills workshops (40 hours) and one-to-one career skills advice (two hours). The planned curriculum was:

- Week 1: Induction, introductory workshops, CV writing and careers panel
- Week 2: Resilience and project management workshops, cover letter writing, speed networking and careers panel
- Week 3: Networking and interview skills workshops, update CV, careers panel and mock interviews
- Week 4: LinkedIn and personal branding workshops, project management challenge and mentor introductions

Young people were also expected to do up to eight hours of independent learning and reflection, including watching weekly inspiring videos, completing a weekly checklist and reflections. Wraparound support was also planned to occur in parallel to the core programme activities and was to include home groups and weekly coaching sessions. All activities were to be conducted online through platforms, Slack and Notion.

Mentoring programme content

The mentoring programme planned to follow the core programme.

One Million Mentors were to facilitate a group mentor workshop once programme staff matched mentors with a mentee. After completing the mentor workshop, mentors would receive a certificate of achievement.

The match between mentor and mentee was to be based on participants' goals and industry preferences indicated in their personal statement and the aim was to match them with a mentor that could help bridge the gap in their skillsets and offer deeper understanding of their chosen industry.

Once mentors were matched with a young person, One Million Mentors planned to send an introductory email to connect them and to encourage them to arrange their first mentor meeting. Mentors were expected to conduct up to 12 hour-long, monthly mentoring meetings with the young person.

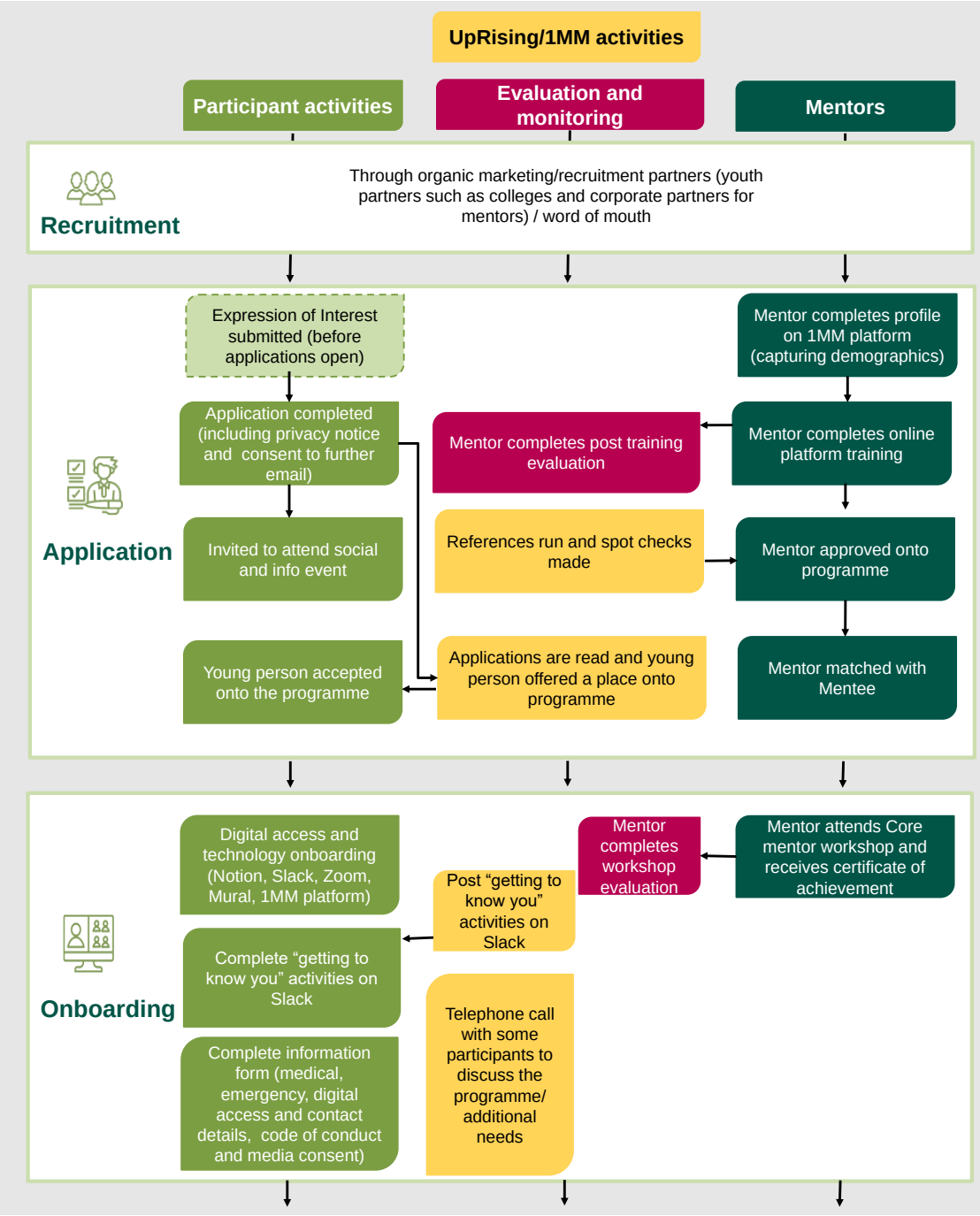
One Million Mentors planned to send monthly newsletters to mentors, the Mentor Bulletin, and were to be available for ad-hoc queries from mentors.

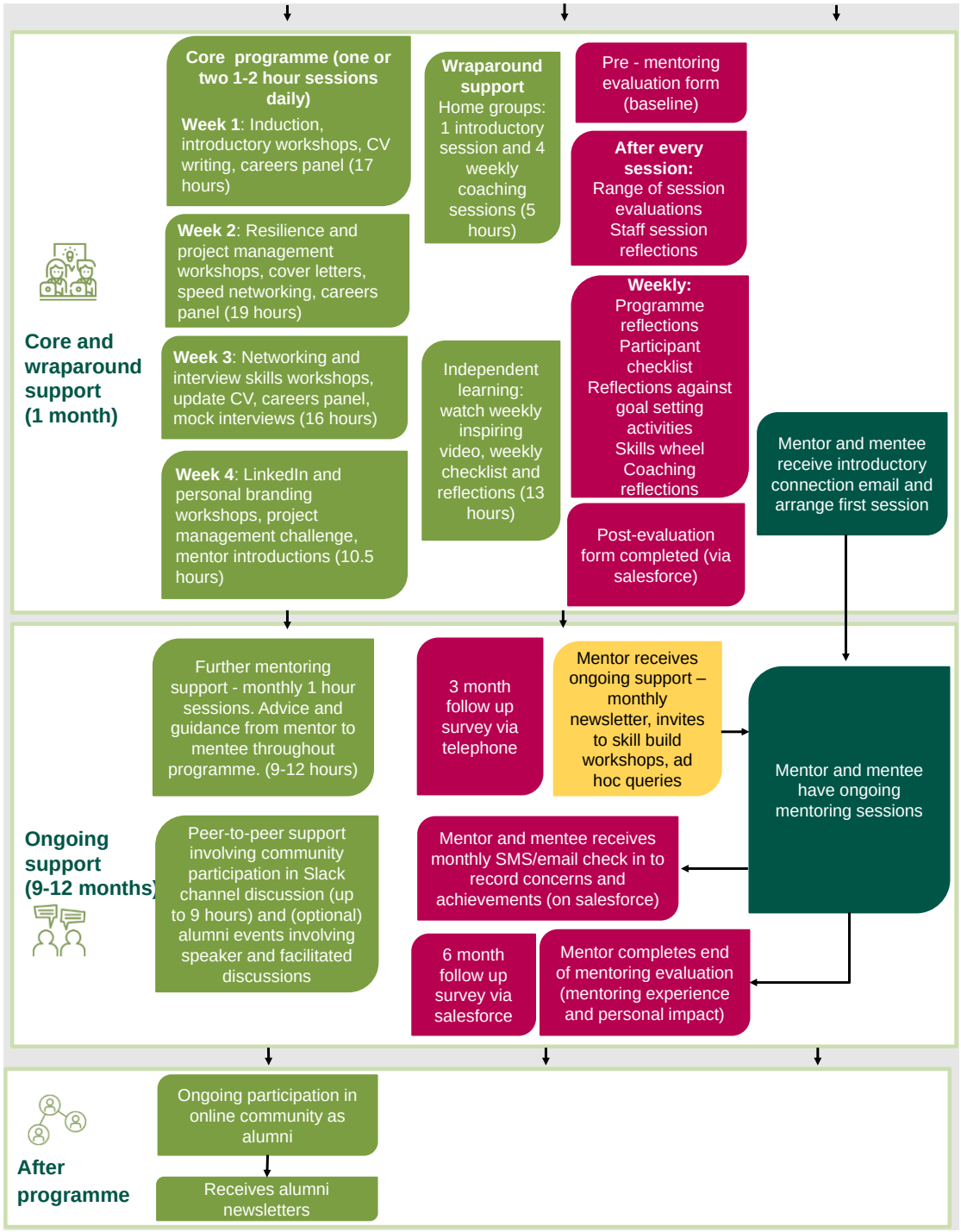
Post programme

After the end of the programme, Stand Out planned to encourage young people to continue engaging in the online community as alumni and planned to circulate newsletters to alumni.

Figure 2, overleaf, visually presents the intended journey for young people and mentors following the Stand Out programme.

Figure 2 Stand Out process map




Core and wraparound support (1 month)
Core programme (one or two 1-2 hour sessions daily)
Week 1: Induction, introductory workshops, CV writing, careers panel (17 hours)
Week 2: Resilience and project management workshops, cover letters, speed networking, careers panel (19 hours)
Week 3: Networking and interview skills workshops, update CV, careers panel, mock interviews (16 hours)
Week 4: LinkedIn and personal branding workshops, project management challenge, mentor introductions (10.5 hours)
Wraparound support
Home groups: 1 introductory session and 4 weekly coaching sessions (5 hours)
Independent learning: watch weekly inspiring video, weekly checklist and reflections (13 hours)
Pre - mentoring evaluation form (baseline)
After every session:
Range of session evaluations
Staff session reflections
Weekly:
Programme reflections
Participant checklist
Reflections against goal setting activities
Skills wheel
Coaching reflections
Post-evaluation form completed (via salesforce)
Mentor and mentee receive introductory connection email and arrange first session
Ongoing support (9-12 months)
Further mentoring support - monthly 1 hour sessions. Advice and guidance from mentor to mentee throughout programme. (9-12 hours)
Peer-to-peer support involving community participation in Slack channel discussion (up to 9 hours) and (optional) alumni events involving speaker and facilitated discussions
3 month follow up survey via telephone
Mentor receives ongoing support – monthly newsletter, invites to skill build workshops, ad hoc queries
Mentor and mentee have ongoing mentoring sessions
Mentor and mentee receives monthly SMS/email check in to record concerns and achievements (on salesforce)
6 month follow up survey via salesforce
Mentor completes end of mentoring evaluation (mentoring experience and personal impact)
After programme
Ongoing participation in online community as alumni
Receives alumni newsletters

5 Operation of the model in practice

Summary

UpRising and One Million Mentors largely delivered the Stand Out programme as set out in the initial programme Theory of Change. The key differences from the intended programme model were:

- The programme was due to start when the COVID-19 pandemic began. Instead of delaying delivery, UpRising and One Million Mentors changed the programme to a fully online model. Young people recruitment moved online, requiring the programme to trial new recruitment approaches. Programme efforts to advertise through UCAS were unsuccessful and ended after Cohort 1. Participants were mainly recruited through their university and RECLAIM, a youth leadership and social change organisation, supporting young working-class people.
- Use of Social Mobility Commission (SMC) criteria provided useful context for analysis, but more work will be needed to develop these criteria further as a tool to guide recruitment, either on this programme or others in future.
- UpRising and One Million Mentors expected young people to engage in all programme activities flexibly but fully. Young people reported 'dipping in and out' of activities they felt would benefit them, because of other time commitments, or choosing not to attend further sessions because they viewed the programme as less relevant to their needs. The learning management system could not track young people engaging in activities through the catch-up facility and attendance at live activities was relatively low.
- UpRising adapted core programme activities based on experiences of earlier cohorts. For example, they introduced evening sessions, combined the check-ins with the skills workshops and provided more dedicated technical support to young people.

This chapter summarises the findings related to the feasibility of the programme theory and its implementation as intended. It discusses participant views on what worked well and less well, how different contexts influenced programme delivery and suggestions for programme refinements. The discussion is organised around the mechanisms for change captured by the programme Theory of Change.

Experiences of recruiting young people to the programme

Stand Out delivery leads initially aimed to recruit participants via face-to-face recruitment through schools and universities, and through social media. However, due to the social distancing restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme explored online alternatives to replace the intended approach. Participants were mainly recruited through their university and RECLAIM, a youth leadership and social change organisation, supporting

young working-class people[7]. Programme efforts to advertise through UCAS were unsuccessful and ended after Cohort 1.

Participants were most likely to have heard about the programme from their university (32%). Participants recruited through this channel were significantly more likely to be based in the Midlands (42%), the South (40%) and London (35%) compared to the North (16%). They are also more likely to be from a Black and ethnic minority background compared to White (35% compared to 25%). The proportion of young people from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds may reflect One Million Mentors' connections with Black and ethnic minority-focused university organisations.

Participants who took part in Cohort 3 were more likely to have found out about the opportunity via their sixth form college or university (49% compared to 30% at Cohort 1 and 2 respectively).

RECLAIM was the second most common source of recruitment; 21% of participants learned about the programme this way. RECLAIM recruited for the programme from their own networks based in Manchester. As a result, participants who found out about the programme this way were more likely to be based in the North (54%). Those who were recruited via RECLAIM were significantly more likely to identify as working class or to fit the SMC criteria (91% compared to 74% of those recruited via sixth form college/university[8]).

The programme explored advertising via UCAS to reach young people; however, this yielded few responses. Four participants found out about the programme this way. UpRising stopped this approach given the low numbers of young people who responded to the email from UCAS and all participants were recruited through the other channels described above.

The programme included a refer a friend scheme which encouraged participants in marketing materials to invite a friend to join them in the programme. Two participants reported being referred to the programme through a friend or sibling taking part.

Recruitment of young people meeting the programme's target criteria was one of the key challenges, affecting the programme's potential ability to scale up. The programme faced difficulties in operationalising the criteria of young people who identify as working class during delivery to Cohort 1. RECLAIM, the recruitment partner, felt the complexity of defining 'working class' was the main challenge for operationalising the programme's recruitment target:

7 RECLAIM is a youth leadership and social change organisation which uses their experience and platform to support and amplify the voices of working class young people. They exist to create a society in which being from a working-class background no longer presents barriers to achievement, success, or influence. For more details see: ABOUT US | RECLAIM Project

8 This also includes the 4 participants who found out about the programme via UCAS.

"The brief was fairly wide in terms of how we measure whether someone is working class or not. Simply because that is such a complex thing to measure ... However, we were given a very specific definition of criteria they would have to fulfil, such as not being in employment or being in precarious employment, zero-hour contracts, not being in education. So, they could be final year university/ college students as well as a specific age range, 18-25."

RECLAIM

RECLAIM continued to refine their approach during the programme, in line with Social Mobility Commission (SMC) criteria.[9] The criteria help to evidence the levels of social capital of an individual. SMC criteria includes:[10]

- main household earner's occupation - from a lower socio-economic background – technical and craft occupations; routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations; long-term unemployed, **or…**
- eligible for Free School Meals, **or…**
- school attended was a state school or independent school with >90% bursary, **or…**
- parents did not go to university.

The application form completed by participants in the programme included questions about young people's circumstances to determine whether they meet the SMC criteria. It also captured further information (such as disability or refugee status) which may contribute to a young person being 'marginalised'.

Suggested refinements

The diverse recruitment channels were necessary and sufficient in recruiting the target number of young people. The programme faced difficulties in operationalising the criteria of young people identifying as working-class criteria. The programme should clearly and simply operationalise all eligibility criteria so different partners can recruit eligible participants quickly.

Experiences of a supportive community of young jobseekers to improve wellbeing

Accessing a supportive community was seen as a key mechanism for young people building increased social and peer networks within the one-month core programme. Along with increased personal effectiveness, confidence and self-worth (delivered via other elements of the programme) this was expected to result in improved wellbeing within six months.

[9] An independent statutory body (an organisation created by an Act of Parliament), in line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

[10] https://socialmobilityworks.org/toolkit/measurement/

Experience of engaging with peers through online channels

Peer-to-peer connection supported some but limited other aspects of the online delivery, discussed in more detail next.

Online delivery

Online delivery made participation for some possible due to the flexibility and convenience it allowed and helped young people to connect with other young people and staff outside of sessions.

> *"Because everything is online it is really flexible, and I don't have to be in person so don't have to travel to a venue which might have prevented me from attending a lot of the sessions."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

The play-back feature helped young people to reference what was covered in live sessions at a later date. This supported their learning.

> *"I really wanted to after the course go through [them] again... if you're watching it online you pick up different things, so I like that I did both."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

UpRising developed short video tutorials and shared these during onboarding and included a session on Day 1 to troubleshoot any online issues young people may have had. Lessons learned from Cohort 1 led to delivery leads running online platform onboarding activities with Cohort 2. In the week between the first applicants accepting their place and the programme starting, programme staff also called participants one-to-one to make sure they had onboarded onto the platforms and that they were able to ask any questions.

> *"One addition in Cohort 2 was that we added evening onboarding calls to reach out and support participants who won't be able to access the daytime instruction calls, so we tried to be more flexible with what participants told us in the July [first] cohort and this translated throughout the entire programme."*
>
> ***SENIOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT OFFICER AT UPRISING***

However, the online nature of the programme also limited peer-to-peer connections. Participants' practical and technical ability to use the channels inhibited them to engage in the real-time. For others, online sessions limited some connection because the two online platforms – Slack and Notion – were new to many of them.

> *"Expecting that many people to understand a whole new platform is kind of dumb. You should probably use something that all people know how to work with, because people get unmotivated very quickly."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

The decision to use these platforms was informed by advice received during the Summer 2020 pilot that the programme should use technology being used in the workplace.

An 'impersonal' feel to the session was described by participants, coaches and volunteers when participants kept their cameras off during live sessions so people could not match faces to names.

> *"…challenges with camera. I had to encourage them to come on camera."*
>
> **COACH, COHORT 2**
>
> *"I never saw a face of a participant."*
>
> **VOLUNTEER, COHORT 2**

Later cohorts also received an UpRising contact responsible for their wellbeing; alumni from other programmes were hired as 'Slack champions' to support participants; more time was allocated to build online confidence; and there was increased programme focus on building community links.

The suite of support was useful, yet some young people still described feeling anxious about finding and accessing documents or effectively communicating across the two platforms, which affected their motivation to engage with the programme.

> *"I thought the entire programme was about support and then my friend told me you are supposed to go on Slack [to report any issues] but I didn't because I find Slack very confusing as well … the thing you use to interact with staff … it was so confusing because they had an overwhelming number of channels that were completely useless."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

Flexible nature of engagement with sessions live or via catch-up

Delivery leads reported that live engagement with the programme was lower than expected. One in four (23%) young people who responded to the participant survey watched all sessions live and two thirds (65%) mentioned engaging with the sessions both live and via recording. Peer-to-peer connection was further limited by the flexible nature of engaging with sessions live or via catch-up.

Internet connectivity prevented or limited programme participation, which participants, corporate volunteers and coaches discussed. Corporate volunteers and coaches observed some participants did not have suitable equipment or facilities to engage in the online sessions or with the software used for different activities. For example, some participants were reliant on mobile phones which made reading materials difficult, and others did not have access to a private workspace to join sessions.

> *"Quality of internet [was] tricky, not great for some participants."*
>
> ***VOLUNTEER, COHORT 3***

Programme staff tried to accommodate additional needs where possible. For example, providing access to an office or library space for participants to engage. Given the diversity of participants and their needs, accommodation was not always possible. For example, a

participant was told by the programme they would receive a dongle, but this did not arrive, so she struggled to access the programme.

Suggested refinements

Consolidating the programme into fewer platforms, and ideally platforms that most participants are already familiar with, may help to reduce feelings of confusion or feeling overwhelmed. There will always be young people unfamiliar with whatever platforms used so building on the technical induction to also include a reference page or information sheet would be helpful.

Participant experiences suggest the programme can build on its existing support; for example, making course slides mobile-compatible for people who can only access the programme on their mobile phone; in the induction ask young people what technical challenges they may face in participation (e.g., internet connectivity issues, lack of device to connect) and do what is feasible to overcome these barriers; and being explicit where a session needs to be accessed via a laptop or computer device.

After two years of online programme delivery, UpRising conducted a review of how young people engage in online learning (UpRising, 2022).[11] The review found that there are good reasons to allow young people to keep their cameras off. There are trade-offs to this decision; the evidence from this evaluation suggests participants, coaches and volunteers found this limiting their connection with other programme participants and delivery staff.

Small group coaching: dosage

Small group coaching was another activity intended to establish a peer network. Programme management information data confirms that UpRising delivered at least five hours of coaching as part of the core programme[12]:

- In Cohort 1, this included one 1-hour Introduction to Coaching session followed by four 2-hour coaching sessions.
- In Cohort 2, the introduction to coaching was combined with the introduction to mentoring into an extended 1.5-hour session, followed by 4 1-hour sessions.
- In Cohort 3, the same combined introductory session was run, followed by only one coaching session due to the programme delivery being condensed.[13]

Attendance data shows that 35% of young people across the three cohorts attended at least one of the coaching sessions (excluding the introduction session)[14]. Coaching attendance was relatively high compared to some of the other programme activities

[11] Understanding Young People's Engagement In Online Programmes | UpRising

[12] Broken down by cohort: Cohort 1 averaged 7 hours, cohort 2 averaged 4 hours and cohort 3 averaged 4 hours.

[13] The MI has three coaching sessions listed for Cohort 3 but two sessions are zero hours in length. For the purposes of analysis, we have assumed that these sessions did not run.

[14] In the 'endline' survey, completed at the end of the one-month core programme, 59% of survey respondents reported taking part in a coaching session. This may reflect that the young people completing the survey were more engaged with the programme.

because there was more flexibility in scheduling one-to-one sessions between a participant and coach, than a group of participants and a session facilitator[15].

Experience of engaging with peers through small group coaching

Young people's experiences of the coaching element of the programme differed. Some experienced it as intended, describing in the depth interviews their feeling that they had benefited from getting to know other young people in their coaching group.

> *"I liked meeting everyone and it had more of a community feel, I knew everyone personally as a result like they were friends I could get advice from and we could help each other, and network".*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

Others noticed that attendance was low in their coaching sessions, or that their coach had changed after they began which disrupted their engagement. A young person interviewed shared their observation that lack of awareness of what sessions involved might be contributing to low attendance among some young people. .

> *"I don't know whether it was a miscommunication or a technical issue, but if I had a better understanding at the sessions that were running. I think I would have definitely gained much more from the programme than I did."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

Coaches also observed that they found it difficult accommodating all participants' schedules, which resulted in some participants missing content or needing to catch up on the next session.

> *"Biggest challenge – time getting all to commit."*
>
> ***COACH, COHORT 2***
>
> *"Lot of dropouts. Waste of them giving up time, no expectation to schedule extra sessions if people drop out."*
>
> ***VOLUNTEER, COHORT 3***

This has a knock-on effect in that it diverted the focus some sessions and limited the intended network building. The flexibility of the sessions also meant that coaches themselves found it challenging to fit the coaching sessions around their other commitments.

Despite the challenges reported by participants around getting to know their peers via these online methods, there was evidence that social and peer networks had significantly improved at the three-month follow-up survey. By this stage participants were more likely

[15] Note that attendance data shows live attendance only. Coaching sessions were necessarily live, as the content was interactive, whereas other sessions could be watched via catch up.

to report that they had friends they can talk to about their career aspirations (85%) and who provide moral support around fulfilling career goals (79%).

However, this improvement was not sustained at the six-month point across both metrics relating to this outcome. This may indicate the peer networks formed through the programme were not sustainable once the programme moved into the mentoring phase and participants no longer had daily interaction with their peers via programme activities.

Ultimately, participants did demonstrate improved wellbeing which was sustained by the six-month point. As discussed below, this may have been more strongly driven by the programme delivering improvements in participant self-confidence and self-belief.

Suggested refinements

To support participant attendance in the coaching sessions and maximise the opportunity for young people to form long-lasting networks with their peers, participants and coaches suggested running the programme outside term time, keeping sessions to a maximum of an hour and doubling the timeframe so participants could choose from two alternative times for each session. Some would also prefer an evening option.

Participants also felt that being grouped together with others who are close in age, in more similar life stages, or have similar sector interests may have helped to improve the usefulness of peer networking offered by the programme.

> *"Some of the sessions are really general. It would be amazing if you were put into different streams – like people who want to do humanities … STEM careers... law, technology."*
>
> *YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1*

Experiences of the programme keeping participants accountable to their job search

The programme aimed to raise participants' perceptions of what they can achieve within six months of joining the programme by keeping young people accountable to their job search through morning check-ins, independent learning and weekly reflection sessions.

Delivery of the morning check-ins evolved over the cohorts in response to the Cohort 1 experiences. The evaluation cannot establish whether participants completed the eight hours of independent learning because this was not monitored. Some participants referenced conducting their own further research or working on their CV outside of the programme, but it is unknown whether all participants were doing this or how long it took.

Delivery leads noticed Cohort 1 participants were engaging with fewer live sessions than expected, or sometimes missing sessions. In response, they began to monitor attendance weekly and follow-up low attendance with phone calls and SMS messages.

Morning check-ins and reflection sessions: dosage

Morning check-in engagement was low. Attendance data shows that 11% of participants attended any live coffee morning and 3% attended one of the weekly, live reflection sessions.

Some young people felt that these sessions could be more focused and delivered in less time:

> *"Make [the programme] more straight to the point, just shorter and clearer ... people have no attention timespan, no-one's going to be watching their computer from 10 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon and be completely focused, it's just not going to happen, so if they want people to take the most out of this, they should make it shorter and more interesting".*
>
> YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1

The Programme intended to deliver group morning check-ins to as many participants as possible, daily, over the course of the programme. However, Programme leads recognised this challenge early on and changed the format and length of these check-ins between each of the three cohorts to improve engagement:

- For Cohort 1, morning check-ins were offered every day, typically lasting half an hour, along with weekly reflection sessions. In total the cohort received around ten hours of contact.
- For Cohort 2, morning check-ins were offered three times a week (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) rather than every day and were slightly extended so that each check-in was an hour long. Again, ten hours of contact was available to the participant.
- For Cohort 3, the check-in sessions were not delivered as standalone sessions, but were instead combined with the skills workshops (which were extended by an hour each to accommodate this). Seven hours were available in total.

Although check-in and reflection sessions were intended to help keep young people accountable in their job search, young people interviewed suggested the one-to-one coaching sessions with mentors during the core programme were more likely to support job search accountability. Reasons for these contradictions are unclear.

> *"Having a mentor there to hold me accountable, to do goal-setting with has been useful."*
>
> YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1

The personalised nature of the coaching sessions and the ability to speak to someone directly who could give them advice, motivation and support supported this accountability.

> *"I'm not sure if I hadn't attended the programme, if I would've actually finished my application or not for the veterinary nursing course. So, even if I didn't gain anything from it long-term, just having the coaching sessions gave me the motivation to finish my application ... I was*

struggling with it for so long and I think I just needed a push to do it, and then when I got it [completed] and when I got in, it was quite surprising, but it was really good, obviously."

YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1

Suggested refinements

Participants were less likely to find the check-ins valuable compared with more tangible skills-based activities, like getting personalised advice on their CV. Check-ins may be more relevant for young people at the start of their career journey, with less awareness of what to do and less confidence in what to do, or for young people with less competing demands on their time, such as not in education, employment or training.

Participants in the qualitative research who did not take part in the check-ins shared it was because they were less clear on the purpose of the sessions. It may be more effective to tag the check-in onto the end of the knowledge and skills workshops, as in cohort 3 delivery. Participants also reported value in meeting their peers via the small-group coaching sessions, so ensuring more consistent delivery of these may be effective as an alternative to a whole cohort check-in session.

Experiences of the programme facilitating exposure to the world of work

Knowledge and skills workshops: dosage

The programme aimed to support young people into employment, education or training in part by giving participants exposure to the world of work. Being exposed to the world of work was seen as a key mechanism for enabling young people to improve their tacit skills through knowledge and skills workshops and careers advice. The online 40 hours' worth of knowledge and skills workshops were designed to be practical - focusing on the components of job searching and employment hiring practices. For example, setting up a LinkedIn profile, drafting a CV and practicing interview skills.

The programme surpassed its targets for hours of knowledge and skills workshops delivered but young people did not engage in all sessions as was intended. The programme delivered around 43 hours of knowledge and skills workshops in Cohort 1, 42.5 hours in Cohort 2, and 38 hours in Cohort 3. The original timetable for these workshops took place over 4 weeks for Cohorts 1 and 2, and this was condensed to three weeks for Cohort 3.

Nearly three quarters of participants (74%) took part in at least one knowledge and skills workshop, as reported in the post-core curriculum survey. However, it was rare for participants to take part in all sessions. Young people interviewed discussed choosing to attend the sessions which felt most relevant to them. This was influenced by the young person's circumstances and prior experience. For example, if they already had been given help towards CV writing then these sessions felt less relevant for them to attend, compared to a session such as 'Standing out on LinkedIn'. In contrast, the one-to-one CV writing and feedback on CV sessions were the most impactful for young people without a CV.

The most attended sessions (live) were 'Virtual presence: how to stand out in a virtual world' (18%), 'Pitching yourself on paper' (14%), and 'Standing out on LinkedIn' (13%). On the other hand, the least attended sessions were launching your professional persona (3%) and mock assessment centre (3%). Attendance data shows live attendance at each session but not how many participants watched the session via catch-up.

> *"Sometimes it felt a bit repetitive, but often I avoided the sessions where I knew that I've done that topic or theme, or I've got that experience already."*
>
> *COHORT 1 YOUNG PERSON*

Other young people reported feeling overwhelmed by the pace and number of sessions held in the first week of the core programme. This led to some participants describing 'information overload'.

> *'I didn't take part in a lot of the activities because I just couldn't find the time, or I found it too confusing to follow all the different things that were going on.'*
>
> *YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1*

Coaches and delivery leads felt more clearly explaining the level of time required of participants to get the most value from the programme during onboarding would better prepare participants to engage with the programme.

Suggested refinements

The findings demonstrate the diversity of support needs among participants. Some young people were more advanced in their career search than others, making some of the support less relevant for them. Findings elsewhere in the report indicate some young people did not complete the programme or dropped out for this reason. The wider literature suggests flexibility in support delivery is important for engaging a diverse range of young people. For this reason, moving towards a model of requiring young people to attend all sessions is unlikely to be effective. Instead, UpRising should look to manage the risks of flexible delivery to maximise the benefits that flexibility brings young people engagement.

Careers advice from corporate volunteers: dosage

Fewer volunteers contributed to the programme than intended. The programme aimed to engage 200 volunteers but in total recruited 158 volunteers from 44 different organisations, and contributed 402 hours as facilitators, speakers, and coaches across the programme. Organisations included ARUP, Mayer Brown, PWC, Siemens, This Place, AMX, Lexis Nexus, Procter and Gamble, Multiverse, Project People, the Civil Service, L'Oréal, HSBC, Softwire, BEIS, Siemens, WSP, Southbank Centre and British Muslim TV, Metro Alliance, Balfour Beatty, YouPress, and NatWest.

Over a third (36%) of young people surveyed at the end of the core programme attended the careers skills advice sessions hosted by volunteers. Like the skills workshops, young people interviewed reported attending these on an as-needed basis.

Experience of exposure to work through careers advice and workshops

The careers advice and workshops helped young people to improve their knowledge of how to go about their job search by helping them feel more confident in where to find job advertisements, how to scan job opportunities and decide what would be relevant for them and being more selective in which job opportunities to go for.

Young people commonly praised the career panel sessions as the best part of the programme because they were informative about how to get into a career.

> *"Those [career panels] were really good … it was nice to have employer panels because they would tell us about what they did and how they got into what they did and nice to hear journeys and stories. They kind of gave you a roadmap of how to get into a certain career."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

The career panel sessions were also inspiring to young people, in different ways. For example, volunteers shared stories of their hardship to get into careers they love, and this demonstrated resilience to the young people.

> *"It was nice to hear peoples' different journeys and the things they did to get there, and you learnt a lot about resilience. Everyone's journey is different and for some people it was not as smooth … I definitely felt inspired and motivated and made me write a game plan of what I wanted to achieve and bringing that to my mentor and creating a plan … that was one of the highlights of the programme."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

For young people from working class backgrounds whose parents did not go to university, these sessions were the first time some were hearing about career pathways through university, and this was inspiring for them.

> *"I think it [career panels] was really good giving us access to that world and those types of people because they were really inspirational and helpful in getting us on that path … people who were successful in their chosen career field. A lot of us are from working class backgrounds with parents that didn't go to university – my parents did not."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

However, the diversity of individual support needs of the programme participants impacted how young people perceived the effectiveness of the workshops. The workshops combined recent school leavers with graduates or with older participants who had not graduated from further or higher education. School leavers found the sessions on graduate schemes and internships irrelevant and would have liked coverage of other options. Some school leavers and graduates described feeling 'uncomfortable' discussing the types of job they were interested in when it varied between these groups. A young person believed Stand Out was more suited to graduates because the people in their group were graduates, and the careers he felt were showcased required advanced education.

Suggested refinements

Participants were considering different career paths and were in different stages of their career journey. The programme may want to consider the relevance of session content and the diversity in its career panels for different sub-groups of young people.

The programme delivery leads were exploring adding QR codes onto the session recorded videos so that young people can register their attendance whether they attend live or watch recorded sessions; this will enable the programme to track 'full' attendance.

Given the diversity of participants dipping in and out of the programme, and the communication channels available through the programme, the programme may want to consider ensuring the same information, such as timetabling, is repeated across all platforms.

Experiences of expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance

Alongside exposure to the world of work (described above), the programme aimed to support young people into employment, education or training by providing young people with expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance from corporate volunteers and coaches, and a mentor matched based on their professional interests and goals.

Mentoring: dosage

The mentor matching took place as intended, but the young people's perceived quality of the match varied, and the frequency of initial mentoring meetings was not delivered as intended.

Analysis of programme data shows nearly all participants (95%) were matched with a mentor. A minority (5%) were not matched with a mentor because:

- The programme prioritised engaged participants. The pre-course survey was a prerequisite when making an application for the programme and was an essential component for the matching process. Participants that failed to fill out the survey did not progress to the mentoring stage; and
- Some young people dropped out after the matching process had been completed.

After matching, young people and mentors typically met or connected through email if their availability prevented a meeting.

Almost a quarter of young people (23%) attended one session per month with their mentor as intended, while others engaged in more than one session. One in three (30%) participants attended more than five meetings – over one per month. Both mentors and young people reported the main reason for not meeting as often as intended was because of difficulties finding a time convenient for both parties, and the appropriateness of the match to the young person's interests and needs. This is described in more detail below.

Experiences of the mentoring matching process

The most common reported initial experience of matching from participants was filling in a form about their career and sector interests at the start of the programme. This was evaluated by programme staff and used to match participants to a mentor either in a similar career or sector with similar goals or on availability.

No participant or mentor recalled the reasons they were matched, though many could speculate based on the first couple of meetings. On reflection, participants would find this information useful at the time of the match because it could be a point of discussion in the first meeting to kick off the relationship.

We asked young people their views on what they thought about their mentor match. Their views of a good match depended on the young person's support needs. Features of a good match included the mentors' career or sector experience, attitude, availability and the type of support they offered.

The most commonly expressed reason for a good match was their mentor was in a relevant career or sector. This was viewed as even more valuable when the mentor gave in-depth, first hand insight into careers or sectors of interest.

> *'I was actually worried about that, that I'd be mentored by somebody randomly... I was worried that if I wasn't menteed by someone in my field I wouldn't benefit from that, but I was really happy when I found out that my mentor worked in my field.'*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

The next most commonly expressed reason for a good match was a mentor that provided practical support. This included giving feedback on CVs, personal statements and career or education applications; searching for jobs and reviewing job descriptions together; and preparing for interviews.

Young people valued when their mentor was flexible in their availability and generous with their support. In practice, this meant the mentor was contactable outside scheduled sessions, responsive to emails, and flexible over the time and length of sessions.

> *My mentor has been very helpful and i know that they are happy to provide assistance if I asked for it and I've had no difficulties or conflicts when trying to contact them. That's why I'm happy, because there's reliability."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

The mentors' supportive attitude and encouragement, regardless of the topic of discussion, was another feature of a good match described by young people.

> *"I was a bit nervous...but she was really good and told me to relax and believe in myself."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

For young people who described struggling to keep focus on their career search and feeling overwhelmed by options, a mentor who supported them to focus on their priorities was key to their good match.

> *"He's very helpful, from our first session he helped narrow down my different interests and what I look for in a company, and I quite liked how we did that.'*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

For young people who described struggling to stay motivated they valued a mentor who kept them accountable, by requiring the participant to set the agenda for mentoring sessions and for completing agreed tasks before their next session.

> *"Accountability has been the main thing for me. I have to come with stuff to the session otherwise it's not worthwhile...I think it will get better as the months go on in terms of relaying my career goals. I'll tell her how the internship is going and ask her how she would deal with any problems I'm having at work."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

Participants were critical of the match when they had a clear career goal or either had other mentors or had mentors in the past that they compared their match to. For participants with a clear career goal, not being matched on their sector of interest limited the relevance of the connection.

> *"Only had one session with mentor….It was a get to know each other session…the only thing was that he (mentor) was a software engineer, and I would have preferred someone in the food industry... you know, someone who has the same interests and experiences in work as the career I want to do."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

For some young people, this was still valuable to them, just not as much as they expected at the programme start.

> *"A very strong woman... and she said she wanted to mentor because she wanted to inspire young women from underprivileged backgrounds to be their best selves... I feel I could get more out of it if I could go on about the career I want, but at the same time I can't say I'm unhappy about it."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

In two unique cases, participants described ending their mentor relationship early because their mentor was not experienced enough for them to see the benefit, and the negative attitude of the mentor discouraged the young person.

> *"She basically turned round and said, 'I don't know what I can help you with', which was quite disappointing to hear... I did leave feeling quite rubbish. It was not something I want to hear;*

I'm excited about the career, it's not something I wanted to hear that I should give up. I left the session feeling quite angry and quite hurt..."

YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2

Participants with other mentors, or had mentors in the past, were more critical of their matched mentor where they did not feel the mentor was of comparable quality or relevance.

"I had reservations about the pairing because I had mentors in the past that had been in senior positions, and in specific sectors that related to my career aims. So, the mentor I had been matched with, although we hadn't met yet, was relatively new in their career and wasn't in a field that I was interested in."

YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2

Experiences of the expert, personalised, and encouraging advice and guidance through the mentoring

Most participants surveyed agreed that:

- their mentor was flexible (86%)
- they felt supported by their mentor (81%)
- their mentor was committed and interested (81%)
- they were well matched (79%)
- they had a good working rapport with their mentor (77%)

Well-matched mentors and young people were key for young people interviewed feeling they received expert, personalised and encouraging advice. Participants were more positive about the benefits of their mentor when they had been matched with mentors they felt were in their field of interest. This helped young people improve their knowledge of their chosen industry and their contacts within it.

The evidence review showed goal setting is likely to be a key part of ensuring the success of a mentoring relationship. It is thus positive that four out five participants (81%) who had had contact with their mentor had already agreed on career development goals to work on throughout their remaining sessions. Participants felt the main benefit from the mentoring programme was setting achievable goals with their mentors to work towards (22%) and improved career focus as a result (19%). Discussing goal setting was the main benefit one participant described of his mentoring experience:

"They were proactive from the get-go- from scheduling sessions to making sure they understand what goals we're working towards as a team."

YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1

Goal setting was important for mentors to know how best to support and encourage their young person. For example, a young person described how her mentor encouraged and supported her to complete a course application that she had mentioned was a goal of hers.

> *"I'm not sure if I hadn't attended the programme, if I would've actually finished my application or not for the veterinary nursing course… just having the coaching sessions gave me the motivation to finish my application."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

The opportunity to further practice skills gained from the core programme was another benefit of the mentoring. Young people who described receiving helpful advice and guidance often shared examples of their mentor reviewing a targeted CV, role-playing an interview and discussing goal-setting.[16]

> *"They've really helped me. I've done a few practical interviews with my mentor in preparation for the actual interview. It's paid off, as I got a job. It's helped me to set goals about what I want to achieve."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

While mentoring was intended to be delivered in a meeting once a month, some mentors offered their young person to contact them by email as needed. Young people who experienced this ad hoc mentoring found it really useful because it met their needs on demand and reflected the more ad hoc nature of their job search.

> *"I always had an email, someone was always checking in, I never felt like I was floating around or confused about anything. There was always somebody to speak to catching up with things, making sure I was on track, making sure I was okay."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2***

Suggested refinements

To ensure advice and guidance feels more personalised, the matching is really important to get right. Both young people and mentors would benefit from knowing why they were matched together, and perhaps given the opportunity to change matches after an initial meet.

The features of a less effective match suggests more work could be done by the programme to show the benefits of mentoring before or when matches were announced, even if the mentor is not in the same sector. For example, other young people who did not initially like their match because it was not based on their career goals found other benefits from their mentor, such as support in managing their workload, stress, staying motivated, reflecting on job interview preparation, and signposting to relevant resources and guidance.

[16] NB. The evaluation gathered feedback from participants in the very early stages of their mentoring relationship.

Mentoring arrangements that meet young people's needs on demand better reflected the ad hoc nature of their job search. The programme may want to consider how it enables and encourages mentors to offer these arrangements.

Mentor experience of mentoring

Mentor recruitment and onboarding: dosage

Fewer mentors were trained than intended: 368 mentors of a target of 400 were trained to support participants. Programme leads felt these were sufficient numbers to support the number of young people participating in the Stand Out programme.

Mentor experiences of training and matching

One Million Mentors provided mentors with training in the form of a 'platform onboarding' session and a mentor workshop. Most mentors reported feeling confident to start mentoring after receiving the online training (88%), and confident to mentor after the mentor workshop (86%).[17]

While confidence was generally high after the workshop, some mentors interviewed felt a bit more time to understand all aspects of the programme would have been helpful.

> *"Only having one hour to process all aspects of the programme was not enough."*
>
> **MENTOR, COHORT 2**

One Million Mentors then matched each mentor with a participant using information filled from the participant application form, as intended. The match was based on participants' goals and industry preferences indicated in their personal statement and the aim was to specifically match them with a mentor that could help bridge the gap in their skillsets and offer deeper understanding of their chosen industry.

Mentors' early experiences of mentoring were generally positive. They valued the opportunity to make a difference to young people.

> *"Opportunity to meet and make difference to young people. Great opportunity to have young people experience coaching and how the support of others can really help you."*
>
> **MENTOR**

The role exposed mentors to the realities for young people today; their pressures and stresses.

> *"Rewarding. Only 1 session and was really happy afterwards, made my day, opens your eyes about YP reality, level of stress and pressure they feel, realise how much you can give."*
>
> **MENTOR**

[17] Figures taken from the mentoring feedback collected after each session. The total of 269 included in the workshop feedback is less than the total of mentor participants, as many were fully trained prior to the workshop becoming mandatory for 1MM, and already had some experience. 1MM felt it unnecessary to push those volunteers to attend one.

Mentors also found the time commitment reasonable, which helped them to commit to and stay with the programme.

> *"Easy/low maintenance – positive to give back without having to make long term commitment."*
>
> **MENTOR**

Unlike young people's experiences, mentor's experiences of mentoring differed based on the young person's attitude and their commitment to the mentoring. When a young person was described as engaged, mentors found the mentoring effective and enjoyable. When a young person was less engaged, some mentors found it difficult to keep the momentum of mentoring up and to best meet the needs of their young person. In these cases, having more information at the start about the characteristics and circumstances of their young person, would help them to tailor their support based on participants' needs.

> *"I was matched with a mentee who wasn't very enthusiastic about our sessions even though I was willing to give them extra time out of my work schedule. Not sure what the basis was for the pairing but having more information about their background would have helped me tailor support for them."*
>
> **MENTOR**

Overall, mentors felt well supported by One Million Mentors and most described feeling able to drive forward their mentoring relationship.

> *"You do have network of people with One Million where upskilling sessions are done with info on what's available. Similar faces throughout so it was easy to connect with others."*
>
> **MENTOR**

The exception was a small number of mentors who felt they would have benefited from more communication from One Million Mentors, after they were matched to a participant. Mentors reported communication tapering off once the mentoring relationship was underway, which made them feel like 'they were left to their own devices'.

> *"When I wasn't able to reach my mentee/schedule sessions with them I wasn't sure whom to reach out to as 1MM hadn't signposted us to any support."*
>
> **MENTOR**

The evaluation completed before the programme completed so it cannot establish whether mentors feel they have improved leadership and mentoring skills, feel they have benefitted young people's careers, better understand barriers to progression or are more motivated to recruit young people.

6 Findings

Summary

- Stand Out surpassed their participant targets of 400 young people; the programme delivered to 444 participants. Of these, the 434 who did not drop out of the evaluation were included in the evaluation analysis.
- The eligibility criteria for young people taking part were those who are 18-25 years old, unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, are from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or who identify as working class. All young people met at least one of the eligibility criteria. The programme successfully engaged high proportions of participants from ethnic minority groups, and who were refugees and internally displaced people (IDP). A small proportion of participants said they were doing something which didn't meet the programme's target definition, and the programme accepted some people who were not in their final year of studying.
- Young people significantly improved on five outcome measures that were sustained at both the three and six month follow-ups: improved tacit skills, increased professional networks, improved wellbeing, increased competitiveness in the labour market and entering employment, education or training. More young people were in full time employment after the programme. However, movement into 'meaningful' employment was less straightforward to capture, as participant situations are complex, varied and evolving, and the timeframe of the evaluation limited further exploration.
- Young people significantly improved on a further five outcome measures that were sustained at the three month follow-up but not after six months. These were: increased social and peer networks, increased confidence, increased exposure to the world of work, raised perceptions of what they can achieve and increased resilience during the job search.
- Young people did not significantly increase their personal effectiveness at any follow-up stage.

This chapter summarises the findings related to the profile of participants engaged, evidence of outcomes achieved, an assessment about whether programme assumptions and the mechanisms for bringing about change have held true; evidence of promise and reflections on the programme theory of change, and evaluation feasibility.

Participants

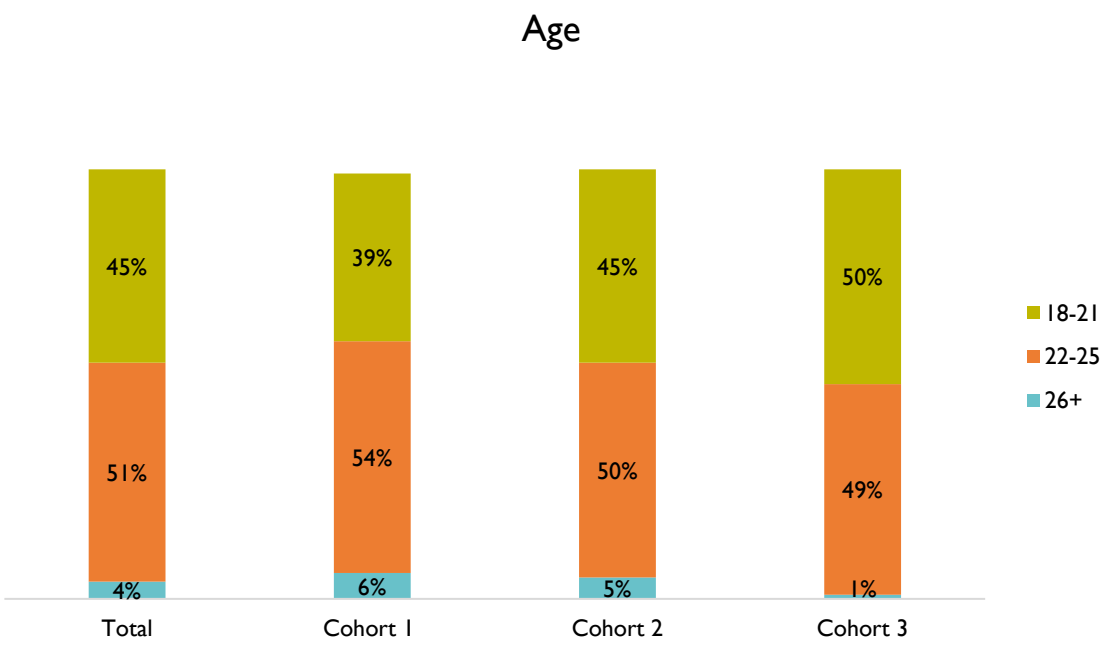
The criteria for young people taking part were those who are 18-25 years old, unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, are from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or who identify as working class.

The Stand Out Programme engaged more than the 400 young people it intended to support. It reached a higher proportion of ethnically diverse participants and participants who were refugees/IDP compared with the UK population as a whole. But not all participants were unemployed, in precarious work or about to leave university.

Overall, 434 Stand Out participants were eligible for inclusion within the evaluation analysis. These participants were aged 18-25, based in England, and did not drop out or defer their place on the Stand Out programme, or opt out of the evaluation.[18]

Figure 3 shows just over half were aged 22-25 (51%), and most of the remaining evaluation participants were aged 18-21(45%). Four per cent of participants turned age 26 between the core curriculum ending and programme management information being shared for evaluation purposes.

Figure 3 Programme participant age



Base: Age from Participant data: Total= 434, Cohort 1 = 147, Cohort 2 = 121 and Cohort 3 = 166.

Participants who were unemployed, in part-time or precarious work

Most applicants met the criteria of being unemployed, in part-time or precarious work, or in the final year of university. Upon application to the programme 51% were studying full-time, 32% were unemployed, 21% were working part-time, 5% were on a zero-hours contract, 3% were studying part-time.[19]

Eight per cent (33 participants) said they were currently doing things which do not strictly meet the programme's target definition, including 14 participants working full-time upon

[18] The definition for eligibility is as follows: Cohort = 1/2/3, Programme = not blank, Participant Status = not "Dropped Out" or "Deferred", Participant age=18.0 – 25.99 (upon completion of the core curriculum), Region=England AND Participants who did not opt out of the evaluation or withhold consent for their data to be shared with the evaluators.

[19] Participants were often doing multiple activities at once – for example, working alongside their studies.

application. However, due to limitations of information captured on the application form, it is difficult to know whether a young person's full-time role may have been precarious or simply not meaningful to them. A further eight participants were completing an apprenticeship or training scheme, while 11 participants were doing 'something else'.

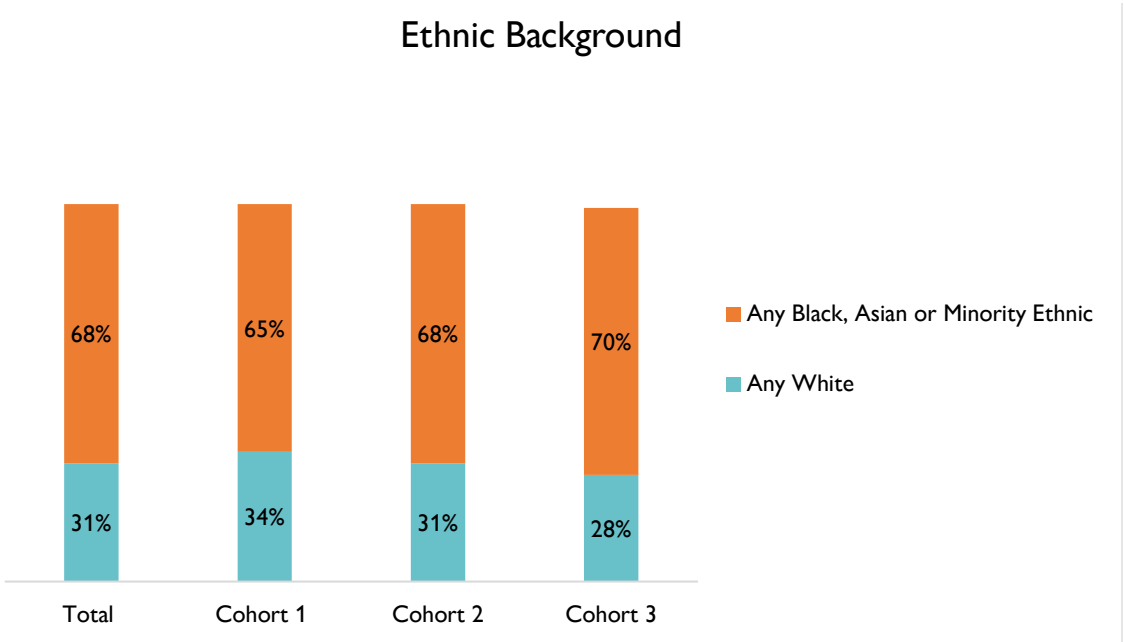
Participants in the final year of studies

The programme accepted some people who were not in their final year of studies if it was felt they could benefit from the support at this stage. Of those studying either full or part-time, two thirds (64%) were in their final year of study.

Participants from ethnically diverse background or who identify as working class

The programme successfully reached a higher proportion of young people of non-White ethnicity. Two thirds (68%) of Stand Out participants were Black, Asian or minority ethnic, while 31% were White. Those on the programme who identified as White were all from a '*White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British*' background (33%); the second and third most commonly represented ethnic groups on the programme were: '*Asian or Asian British – Indian*' (16%) and '*Asian or Asian British – Indian*' (16%).

Figure 4 Programme participant ethnicity



Base: Ethnicity from Participant data: Total= 434, Cohort 1 = 147, Cohort 2 = 121 and Cohort 3 = 166.

Overall, Stand Out recruited just over eight in ten (82%) who fit the Social Mobility Commission (SMC) criteria. Stand Out participants who fitted the SMC criteria were more likely to be White (90% compared to 80% of Black, Asian or ethnic minority background).

At the analysis stage, IFF incorporated some of the additional participant information collected via the application form to create a wider definition of 'marginalised'. Nine in ten (89%) of participants on the programme met at least one of the following criteria:

- Black, Asian or minority ethnic; or

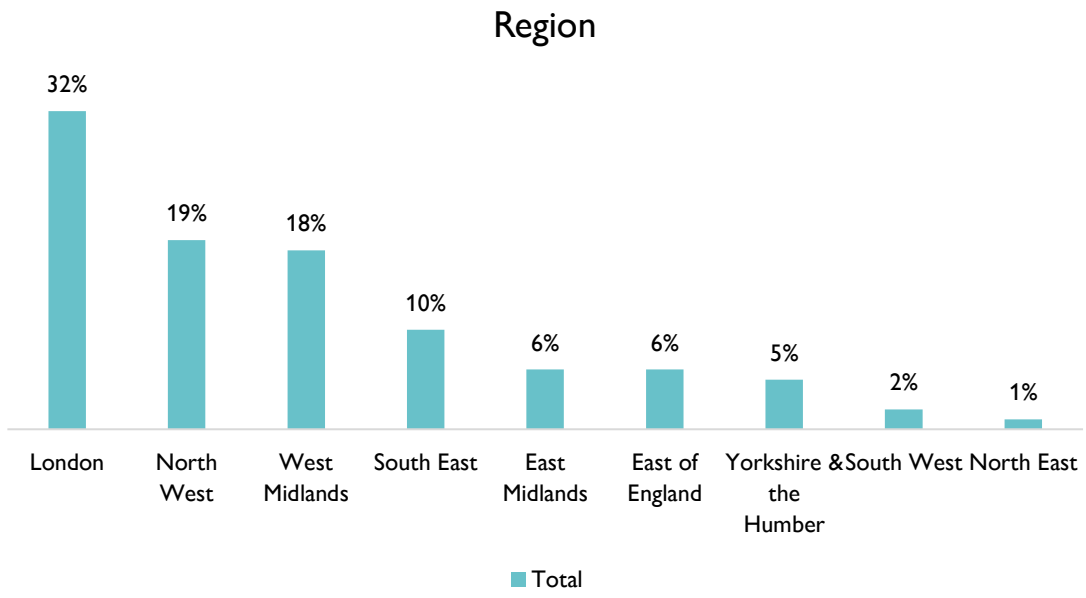
- Main household earner's occupation when they were 14 was long-term unemployed or a routine, semi-routine, manual or service occupation; or
- Received free school meals; or
- If the young person's parents did not go to university; or
- Attended state school or received bursary at a fee paying or independent school; or
- Disabled; or
- Refugee/ Internally Displaced Person (IDP); or
- In any other way has additional needs. For example, has experienced mental health conditions, has been in local authority care, has experienced alcohol or substance dependency.

The proportion of refugees or internally displaced people (IDP)on the programme was significantly higher than the UK average (2% compared with 0.26%),[20] suggesting the programme has been successful at reaching certain marginalised audiences.

Participant region

The programme was open to young people across England, yet most participants were clustered around certain geographic locations. Delivery partners drew upon their existing networks in London, Birmingham and the North West, and thus most participants lived in London (32%), the North West (19%) and the West Midlands (18%); see Figure 7.

Figure 5 Programme participant home region



Base: Home Region from Participant data: Total= 434.

[20] https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/about/facts-about-refugees/#:~:text=Are%20there%20many%20refugees%20and,of%20the%20UK's%20total%20population.

Participants who dropped out from the programme

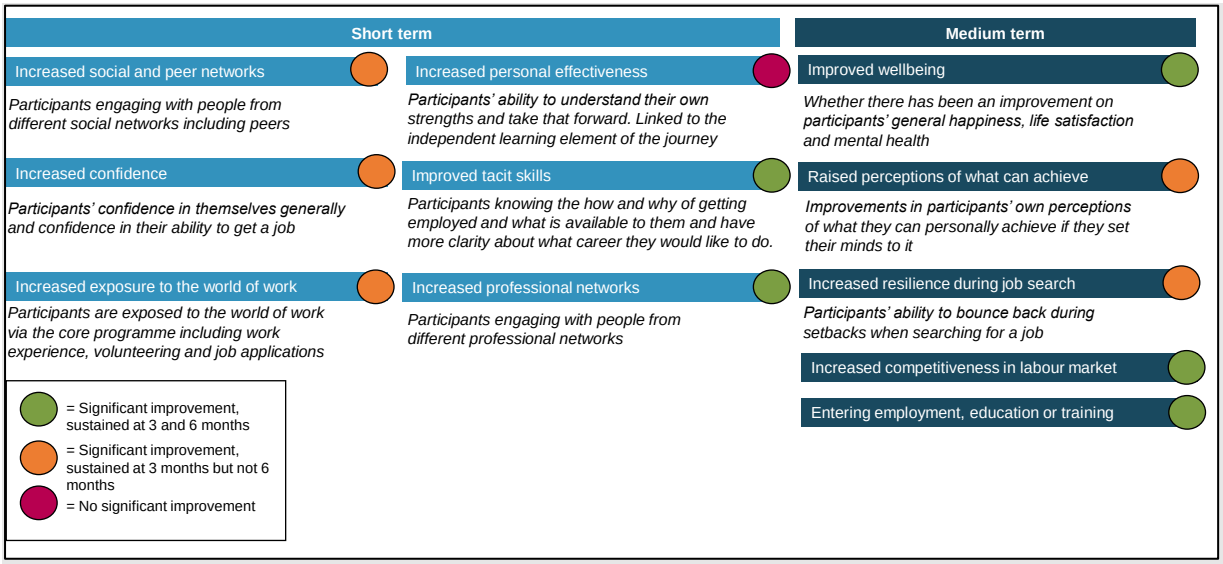
The programme had a low drop-out rate. Eight per cent of participants formally dropped out or deferred their place on the Stand Out programme.[21] Overall, there are few differences in profile between participants who stayed on the programme compared to those who dropped out. Those who dropped out were slightly more likely to be younger (59% were aged 18-21 compared to 45% of those who stayed on the programme) and unemployed (41% compared to 32% employed).

Of those who dropped out or deferred their place, 10 took part in the three-month follow-up survey. Three participants described dropping out due to personal circumstances, while two had started another training programme such as Kickstart or with the Prince's Trust and two felt they were too busy to participate in the programme. One participant explained that they had not received a response from the Stand Out programme after signing up. While this is an isolated case, there is an opportunity for clearer communication at the application stage to ensure that nobody feels they have slipped through the cracks. As explored above, some participants stayed on the programme but engaged selectively or in a limited way.

Feasibility of the programme

This section presents findings on the outcomes observed from participants of Stand Out, drawing on participant surveys and qualitative interviews. Significant differences are shown with a *. All differences have been statistically tested and are significant with a 95% confidence level. Figure 6 summarises the intended outcomes that were evidenced three and six months into the programme.

Figure 6 Summary of achieved outcomes



[21] Overall, 37 participants applied to the programme but deferred or dropped out. Of these, three participants opted out of the evaluation. Findings should be treated indicatively and are not statistically significant.

Increased social and peer networks

Young people were expected to achieve a measurable increase in the outcome of social and peer networks within the one-month core programme. Participants' social and peer networks significantly improved at the three-month follow-up survey but dipped at the six-month follow-up survey, presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Increased social and peer network outcomes achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Have friends I can talk to about my career aspirations	63%	70%	85%*	71%
Have friends who provide moral support around fulfilling career goals	63%	69%	79%*	67%
Feel disconnected from people own age	39% disagree	41%	69%*	41%[22]
Base	364	213	145	150

Young people interviewed found breakout sessions supported this outcome because it allowed them to meet and communicate with other participants.

> *"Breakout sessions helped me to meet other young people. It improved my confidence and communication because I needed to interact with them."*
>
> **Young Person, Cohort 1**

The community of peers the programme established was felt by some young people to create a sense of healthy competition which motivated participating young people to progress with their job search.

> *"It inspired me to seek out more work, and more volunteering because that is the feeling that it has created."*

[22] **Have friends to talk to about career**– three-month follow-up three-month follow-up and six-month both significantly higher than pre; three-month follow-up three-month follow-up significantly higher than post.
Have friends who provide moral career support - three-month follow-up three-month follow-up significantly higher than pre and post
Feel disconnected from people own age – three-month follow-up three-month follow-up significantly higher than pre, post and six-month follow-up.

Young Person, Cohort 1

Increased personal effectiveness

Participants reported feeling more confident trying new things after completing the core curriculum and at the three-month follow-up survey. However, there was no significant improvement in relation to completing tasks to a high standard nor sustained improvement in being able to see tasks through to completion. Over eight in ten participants felt confident in doing this upon entry to the programme which suggests they have less distance to travel with this outcome (Table 4).

Table 4 Increased personal effectiveness outcome achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Confident trying new things	70%	78%*	83%*	77%
Struggle to finish tasks	47% disagree	49%	59%*	45%
Complete tasks to a high standard	82%	85%	86%	84%[23]
Base	364	213	145	150

Increased confidence and self-worth

Participants' confidence and feelings of self-worth significantly improved after the one-month, core programme. Confidence and self-worth were sustained at three months but dipped at six-months after the core programme.

Table 5 Improved confidence and self-worth outcome achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Confident in my strengths to help me get a job	50%	66%*	79%*	66%

[23] **Confident trying new things** – post and three-month follow-up three-month follow-up both significantly higher than pre. **Struggle to finish tasks** – three-month follow-up three-month follow-up significantly more disagreed that they struggled to finish tasks than pre.

Confidence in myself	56%	66%*	80%*	68%[24]
Base	364	213	145	150

Participants interviewed described how their confidence and self-worth improved and attributed this to an improved understanding of their own strengths and how to articulate these to an employer.

> *'I think it's made me feel more confident in that I've been able to understand what my strengths are and where some of my weaknesses lie. I think it's also helped me to refine some skills that I was hoping to go in there and sharpen. I think I've got the skill benefit and some of the associated confidence boost that comes with that for interviews and beyond.'*
>
> YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1

Programme activities that involved young people speaking in front of their peers online, and listening to their perspectives, also helped young people's speaking skills and their confidence in speaking to other people.

> *"I think it's a programme that definitely improves your confidence as well as speaking skills. Just listening to other people engaging … and you need that confidence to go out there and pursue jobs - it sort of all links in, so it's a really good programme, to be honest".*
>
> YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1

Improved wellbeing

Young people were expected to achieve increased social and peer networks, increased personal effectiveness and increased confidence and self-work within one month of the core programme. When the three outcomes were combined, it was expected that young people would experience improved wellbeing within six months of programme start.

Participants showed significant improvement in their overall satisfaction with life after completing the core curriculum; this was then sustained at the three- and six-month follow-up surveys. They were also significantly more likely to report feeling that things they do are worthwhile at the three and six-month follow-up surveys. Mentoring may have played a role in contributing to this outcome because at the six month follow-up survey young people were five months into their mentoring.

Table 6 Improved wellbeing outcome achieved

[24] **Confident in strengths to help get a job** –three-month follow-up significantly higher than all other timepoints.
Confidence in myself – three-month follow-up significantly higher than all other timepoints.

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Overall satisfaction with life	37%	49%*	63%*	53%*
Feel things they do are worthwhile	47%	53%	61%*	57%*[25]
Base	364	213	145	150

Raised perceptions of what can be achieved

An increase in young people's personal effectiveness and their confidence and self-worth within a month of the programme start was also expected to lead to young people's raised perceptions of what they can achieve.

Participants felt significantly more confident at the three-month follow-up survey that they could achieve what they wanted, but this sentiment was not sustained at six-months. The evaluation did not capture any improvement in participants' feeling that planning for the future is worthwhile and that if they work hard they will get what they want – though most participants began the programme already feeling relatively capable on both measures.

Table 7 Raised perceptions of what can be achieved outcome achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Can achieve what I want	65%	72%	83%*	70%
Planning for the future is a waste of time	82% disagree	84%	85%	81%
If I work hard I will get what I want	76%	80%	79%	78%[26]
Base	364	213	145	150

[25] **Life satisfaction**– Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre; three-month follow-up and six-month follow-up significantly higher than post.
Worthwhileness – Three-month and six-month follow-up both significantly higher than pre survey.
[26] **Confident I can achieve what I want** – three-month follow-up significantly higher than pre, post and six-month follow-up.

Support from coaches and mentors underpinned young people's raised perceptions of what they can achieve.

> *"It gave me the confidence to say to myself 'I don't need to be stuck in a job when I now know I have options, I have time to find a job that I like'."*
>
> *YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2*

In the evaluation interviews, young people spoke about another related benefit to raised perceptions of what they can achieve: gaining different perspectives from industry figures, peers and programme staff. This was often described as young people benefiting from 'broadening their views' about what opportunities were available, and ways of considering and responding to those opportunities. It stands to logic that this may be an important pre-condition for achieving raised perceptions of what young people can achieve.

Increased professional networks

Young people's professional networks were expected to improve within one month of the programme starting. Participants were significantly more likely to feel they had relationships that could help them get a job after completing the core programme. This outcome was sustained at the six-month follow-up survey.

Participants were also significantly more likely at the three-month follow-up survey to know people they can call on for employment advice, and to have positive relationships with people they work or volunteer with. These outcomes were not sustained at the six-month follow-up survey.

Table 8 Increased professional networks outcome achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
They have relationships that could help them get a job	20%	38%*	63%*	50%*
Know people can call on for employment advice	35%	65%*	73%*	69%
Have positive relationships with people work/volunteer with	84%	85%	92%*	91%[27]

[27] **Have relationships that will help in getting a job**–Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre; three-month follow-up and six-month follow-up significantly higher than.

Base	364	213	145	150

Networking activities, with both professionals and other young people, contributed to young people's perceptions of their increased professional networks.

> *"...because of the networking, I am able to talk with people, sell myself better and actually sell myself to somebody."*
>
> *YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2*

The appropriateness of the mentor match played a key role in determining participant satisfaction: where participants had been matched with mentors that they felt were in their field of interest and that they had interests in common with, they were more positive about the impact of their mentor. A relevant match was beneficial in terms of broadening their knowledge of their chosen industry and their contacts within it.

> *'He's expanded my reach; I didn't consider going internationally and he told me about the types of opportunities that were out there... the support that I'm having right now is very nice'.*
>
> *YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2*

This was less common when the mentor's industry differed from the young person's area of interest.

Increased resilience during job search

Both increased professional networks within one month of the programme start, and raised perceptions of what young people can achieve within six months of the programme start, were expected to lead to increased resilience during job search.

Participants reported improvements at the three-month follow-up survey on both struggling to bounce back if something goes wrong and feeling that getting rejected is a normal part of the job search process. However, this improvement was not sustained at the six-month follow-up survey.

Table 9 Increased resilience during job search outcome achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Struggle to bounce back if something goes wrong	42%	45%	63%*	48%

Know people can call on for employment advice- Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre.
Have positive relations with people work with – three-month follow-up significantly higher than pre and post.

Getting rejected is a normal part of job search process	89%	92%	94%*	88%[28]
Base	364	213	145	150

Programme staff, mentor and coach practical support and encouragement contributed to some young people's increased resilience during their job search.

> *"Just having someone there that you can talk to eased a lot of my anxiety… that has put my mind at ease a lot."*
>
> YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1

> *"They've shown me that it doesn't have to be as intimidating as it looks for interviews, taking it step-by-step and focusing on each step to achieve your goal…"*
>
> YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2

Improved tacit skills

Young people's tacit skills were expected to improve within one month of the programme start. Tacit skills included young people having a better understanding of what is needed by employers, how to make a 'good' job application and perform well in interview, and to better promote themselves to prospective employers.

Participants' tacit skills improved significantly for young people who completed the one-month core programme, and these improvements were sustained at both three and six months.

Table 10 Improved tacit skills outcome achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Know how to demonstrate skills employers look for	32%	63%*	79%*	74%*
Know what employers look for in the recruitment process (	28%	67%*	73%*	61%*

[28] **Struggle to bounce back**–three-month follow-up significantly more disagreed with struggling to bounce back than all other time points
Getting rejected is normal– three-month follow-up significantly higher than pre survey.

Can make a good impression when meeting new people	65%	75%*	89%*	79%*
Know how to set myself apart from other job applicants	20%	46%*	50%*	53%*
I know or have met someone in the career I'm interested in	38%	54%*	65%*	61%*
A range of educational and career options are open	60%	76%*	81%*	75%*
Know how to get experience or training needed for job or qualification	26%	53%*	66%*	66%*[29]
Base	364	213	145	150

The programme helped participants feel more confident about different aspects of job searching. Young people reported feeling more confident about where to find job advertisements, how to scan job opportunities and decide what would be relevant for them, and in being more selective in which job opportunities to go for. A participant shared they have a more structured approach to job searching and selection of roles according to their skills.

> *"I feel I understand that you have to have a more structured approach to job searching…like not applying to everything. More what jobs fit with your skills…. also not letting job rejections deter me from applying again."*
>
> ***YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 1***

[29] Significance testing – the *s represent:
Know how to demonstrate skills–Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre; also, three-month follow-up significantly higher than post.
Know what employers look for - Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre; also, three-month follow-up significantly higher than six-month.
Can make a good impression–Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre; also, three-month follow-up significantly higher than post.
Know how to set apart- Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre.
Know someone in career interested in–Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre; also, three-month follow-up significantly higher than post.
Range of career options open - Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre.
Know how to get training/experience- Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre; also, three-month follow up and six-month follow-up significantly higher than post.

The programme activities also improved young people's understanding of the types of role and organisation that exist in their sector of interest.

> *"It helped me to clarify what I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to work in international humanitarian organisations, but I just didn't know what type of job I wanted to do and during the programme I met people who worked in the charity sector, who worked in programme management, and it reinforced the idea that that is what I want to do. It reassured me on what I wanted to do."*
>
> *YOUNG PERSON, COHORT 2*

Once young people improved their tacit skills, the programme expected this to benefit their competitiveness in the labour market and lead to them entering employment, education or training.

Increased competitiveness in the labour market

Linked to tacit skills, participants' overall competitiveness in the job market improved significantly upon completion of the core programme; this improvement was sustained across the three and six-month follow-up surveys wherein participants felt more comfortable with a range of practical job search skills.

Table 11 Increased competitiveness in the labour market outcome achieved

Metric	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Three-month follow-up	Six-month follow-up
Draft a CV	89%	97%	96%	97%
Complete an application	84%	92%*	94%*	94%*
Job interview skills	68%	89%*	89%*	89%*
Communication skills	88%	94%*	97%*	92%
Personal presentation	90%	93%	97%*	92%[30]
Base	364	213	145	150

[30] **Drafting a CV** –Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre.
Completing an application– Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre.
Job interview skills - Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre.
Communication skills –Post, three-month follow-up and six-month all significantly higher than pre.

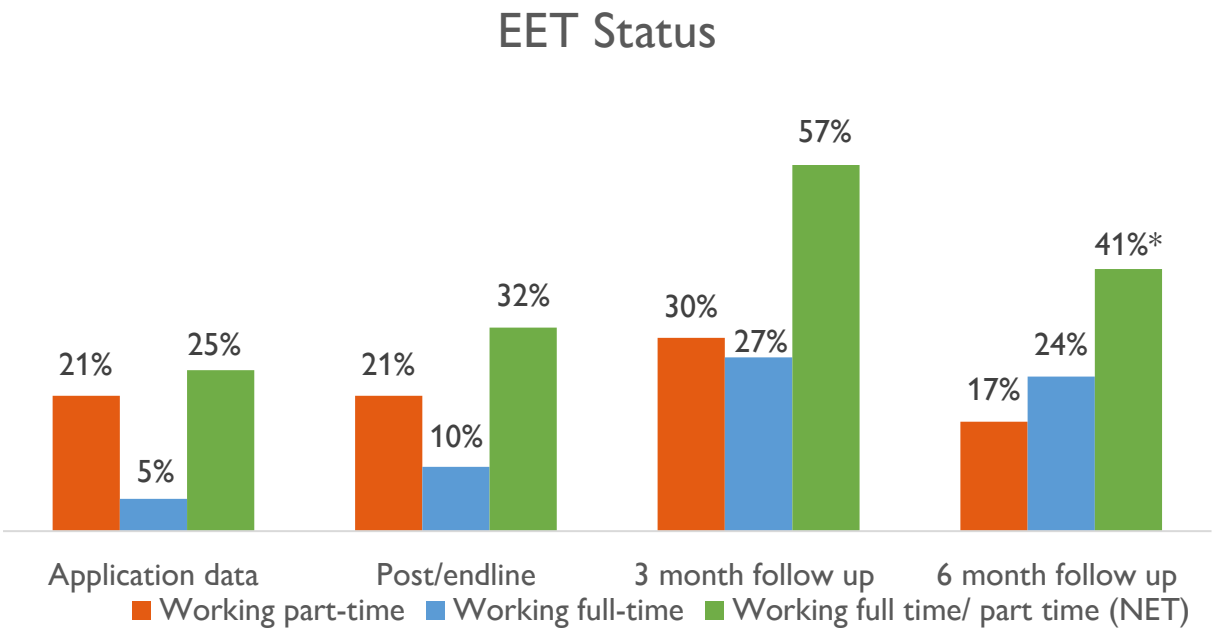
Entering employment, education or training

The evaluation captured the employment, education or training (EET) status of Stand Out participants at four time points: their application form, the 'post' survey after the one-month core curriculum, and the three-month follow-up surveys – two months into mentoring - and the six-month follow-up surveys – five months into the twelve-month mentoring element.

More young people were in full time employment after the core programme and part-way through mentoring. However, movement into 'meaningful' employment was less straightforward to capture, as participant situations are complex, varied and evolving. The programme did not require people to be out of EET as a pre-condition and so measuring change in situation is difficult without more sophisticated monitoring.

Participants were significantly more likely to be in employment, education or training by five months into the mentoring element of the programme. At the application stage, 25% of participants were in EET compared with 41% at the six-month follow-up survey. This impact is largely driven by participants going into full time employment between application and the six-month follow-up (5% compared with 24%).

Figure 7 EET Status across all quantitative survey points



Base: All participants across all time points. *Show Significant increase when compared to Application data.

Looking specifically at participants who completed the three-month follow-up survey,[31] over half were in employment three months after beginning the programme (57% were working full time or part time compared with 25% upon application). Positively, the proportion of those working full time significantly increased from 7% to 27%.

[31] To look at a consistent cohort we isolated results to those who participated in the three-month follow-up, comparing their results at this time point to their application form data. This allowed us to look at change over time among a relatively large consistent cohort.

The survey captured whether the young person was studying full time in the week before the survey so the measure at the survey points therefore reflected whether it was term or holiday time. There was a significant decrease in those studying full time at the three-month follow-up (46% to 3%), as well as a significant increase in young people working in zero-hour contracts (7% to 19%).

Looking at the employment outcomes of participants at the six-month follow-up survey,[32] the proportion studying full time returns to a similar level as at the application stage (41% compared with 46% at the application). This suggests that the dip at the three-month point is explained by participants being currently on their Christmas break at that time, rather than having left their full-time study during the programme. Participants on zero-hour contract jobs also return to application stage levels (8% at 6 months compared with 7% at the application) which is similarly likely to be due to the timing of the data collection.

However, there are methodological limitations to be aware of when interpreting the change in participant EET status.

Table 12 Methodological limitations of measuring entering into employment, education or training

Challenge	Potential solution
Young people's diverse support needs and complex journeys to employment means the outcomes we might expect someone to achieve within a time period may depend on their circumstances.	• Ask young people whether outcomes achieved meet their expectations, or reasons for progress made.
Response rates to the surveys – ideally, everyone would have taken part in all surveys to track the same cohort over time. Given this was not the case, we can instead look at matched surveys/time points by filtering on those who completed surveys at multiple time points. This reduces the base size further, which makes it difficult to see statistically significant differences. The programme tried incentivising completion and increased the value of incentives. This had a limited effect on response rates.	• Use group sessions or mentoring sessions to complete surveys (without input from mentor). • Programme staff to encourage participation at end of facilitated sessions, or in written reminders alongside programme communications. • Consider exploring gamification approaches to maximise response rates. These are strategies that make the survey more fun and relevant for participants. For example, the programme can reward respondents with points, badges, or levels for

[32] By keeping the sample consistent through-out the evaluation points this reduces the base size substantially, so the results for the six-month follow up should be read with caution.

	completing tasks or answering questions; create competition or collaboration among respondents or cohorts with leaderboards or social sharing; or show respondents their progress with feedback or progress bars.
Measuring movement into meaningful employment is a challenge – Employment outcomes captured in the survey do not show the nuance of a participant being, for example, more targeted in their job search (but applying for fewer jobs), leaving an unsatisfying role, or taking up work experience or 'precarious' work but in an area they are passionate about.	• Provide the opportunity to share more than one outcome. For example, what is the main activity you are doing now? Do you do anything else as well? • Capture changes in sector or seniority. • For each status change, add a follow up question to the survey to capture whether the short-term status change is a positive one for the participant. For example, do you feel this is a change that gets you closer to meeting your EET aims?
The time points of the survey - with Cohort 1 completing their three-month follow-up survey in December, Christmas may have affected what people were currently doing at the time of the surveys.	• Avoid surveys around Christmas/holiday period. This may help with response rate as well as more accurate measurement of current activity.
Assessing programme staff, mentors and volunteers skill and capability was outside the scope of the evaluation. Qualitative research with young people, programme staff and mentors suggests these audiences had the skill required, and capability was influenced by contextual and programme factors.	• More detailed data collection beyond the scope of this evaluation would be required to assess skills and capability to deliver the programme.

Young people's perceptions of fewer outcomes achieved

None of the young people interviewed felt they did not benefit in some way from the programme or felt they had negative experiences. Young people who reported fewer benefits than they anticipated at the programme start felt this was due to a combination of personal reasons and the relevance of the programme to their needs. Reasons included:

- young people had accessed skills building and mentoring support before;
- coaches and mentors not seen by young people as a good fit, either because sectors or personalities did not match preferences, or because capacity of either the professionals or young people meant they could not connect; and
- young people's availability meant their programme participation was limited.

Programme theory

The findings about how the programme was delivered in practice and how the programme benefited participants allows us to revisit the programme theory to assess whether programme assumptions and the mechanisms for bringing about change have held true.

Whether programme assumptions have held true

The assumptions related to young people's interest, the quality of the core programme and mentors or corporate volunteers, and the evidence captured about these assumptions are summarised below.

Table 13 Theory of Change assumptions

ASSUMPTION	WHETHER EVIDENCE HELD TRUE
Young people most in need take part, and mentors reflecting YP interests take part	The Stand Out Programme engaged more young people than it intended. It reached a higher proportion of ethnically diverse participants and participants who were refugees/IDP compared with the UK population as a whole. The complexity of measuring class meant that operationalising the criteria of young people who identify as working class for recruiting organisations to apply to recruit young people was a challenge. Most young people felt that they were well matched with their mentor. Around a tenth did not agree they were well matched, and this led to them feeling the mentoring was less valuable. The basis for the match was not shared with mentors and young people and young people did not have the opportunity to comment on their match or request a different mentor.

Young people engage in all programme activities as designed, and are not already receiving employment support	Participants typically accessed the core programme in a flexible manner; dipping in and out of the activities according to their schedule and/or needs. Participants did not consistently access the whole programme. Some participants struggled to fit the first month's activities around study and work. Those with full time courses and jobs might be better suited to less intense timetabling. However, the evidence review identified the need for flexibility and personalisation in youth employability support. So, while this assumption did not hold true, it may be that it is less essential for participants to complete all activities to achieve outcomes. The evaluation cannot detect a minimum viable dosage of activities required to achieve outcomes. On average, participants had between one – two sessions of mentoring after the core programme. Over three quarters of those taking part in the six-month follow-up survey reported having had contact with their mentor. Only 3% said their mentor was not committed and interested, and less than 1% that they did not feel supported by them. However, while some took part in at least one mentor meeting a month (as intended), other participants reported not taking part in any sessions. Feedback from mentors suggests that this was because of the flexible approach, driven partly by what the participant needs/asks for, and partly by the approach of the mentor themselves. Many young people were already 'employability literate'; some had already accessed employability support (e.g., other UpRising programmes), and around a quarter had previously been mentored. As prior behaviour may have contributed to positive EET outcomes it is difficult to attribute the programme as the cause of positive outcomes. Thirty-four young people accepted a place on the core programme but deferred or dropped out. The reason participants gave were they felt unable to commit to the programme requirements due to other commitments and feeling too busy.
Combination of real-time and recorded content enables young people to maintain programme engagement	The online nature of the programme and the ability of young people to attend live sessions and play-back recordings resulted in benefits and challenges. On the one hand, online delivery made participation for some possible and helped young people to connect with other young people and staff outside of sessions. The play-back feature helped young people to reference what was covered in live sessions at a later date and supported their learning. However, features of the online delivery model limited the establishment of a supportive community of jobseekers and presented challenges related to participant practical and technical ability to use the

	channels and engage in the real-time, online sessions. There are trade-offs to allowing participants to keep their cameras off; the evidence from this evaluation suggesting participants, coaches and volunteers found this limiting their connection with other programme participants and delivery staff. After two years of online programme delivery, UpRising conducted a review of how young people engage in online learning.[33] The review found that are good reasons to allow young people to keep their cameras off. Namely, to allow for privacy in their home environment and to help put young people at ease.
Combination of one-to-, group and independent activities necessary for achieving outcomes	The programme benefited participants' tacit skills and knowledge of how to 'stand out' in a job setting. Drafting CVs, completing applications and interview skills were more likely to be viewed as strengths after the programme. There were some improvement in relation to participants' employment status, with employment levels rising over time. However, movement into 'meaningful' employment is less straightforward to capture, as participant situations are complex, varied and evolving. There is no direct evidence around the appropriateness of tools and materials directly bringing about individual outcomes.
Programme staff, mentors and volunteers have the skills and capacity required	Assessing programme staff, mentors and volunteers' skill and capability was outside the scope of the evaluation. Qualitative research with young people, programme staff and mentors suggests these groups had the skill required, and capacity was influenced by contextual and programme factors. Delivery leads reported that staff worked agilely. Agility is supported by outlines and facilitation plans for each session and staff being on standby for each session so it should go ahead in case of absence. Accordingly, neither participants nor delivery staff raised staff absence as an issue, though some participants mentioned sessions being re-scheduled at short notice and it is unclear whether this was linked to staff or speaker absence.

Mechanisms for change

It is difficult to be certain whether the mechanisms for change expected to lead to outcomes worked because the recruited participants included some who did not strictly meet the criteria and did not consistently engage in the programme as designed. Relevant observations include:

- Young people's experiences of a supportive community of young job-seekers varied considerably, with different levels of engagement through the online channels and

[33] Understanding Young People's Engagement In Online Programmes | UpRising

small-group coaching, yet social and peer networks increased so another mechanism is likely acting upon peer networks of job seekers.

- Encouraging accountability to job search in the form of daily check-ins may not be a mechanism for bringing about personal effectiveness or increased confidence and self-worth. This is because the outcomes were still achieved without young people fully engaging with it and with it changing between cohorts. The scope, duration and frequency of check-ins also evolved across each cohort. The population sizes for each cohort are too small to assess outcomes at the cohort level.
- Young people's exposure to world of work varied before and during the programme yet participant evidence suggests they did experience these features of the programme. Tacit skills improved which was an outcome this mechanism was expected to lead to.
- Young people receiving expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance varied before and during the programme yet participant evidence suggests they did experience these features of the programme. An outcome these mechanisms (combined with the mechanism noted above) were expected to lead to also improved and was sustained at both three and six months: tacit skills.

Evidence of promise and reflections on the programme Theory of Change

Eligibility criteria

The programme's criteria for young people taking part were those who are 18-25 years old, unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, are from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or who identify as 'working class'.

The programme engaged more young people than it intended. It reached a higher proportion of ethnically diverse participants and participants who were refugees/IDP compared with the UK population as a whole.

The most successful recruitment channels were delivery partners' university networks and external recruitment partner RECLAIM. These channels were reflected in the participant profile, which skews towards white working-class young people based in the North of England (near RECLAIM) and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds at university because of UpRising and One Million Mentors' connections with Black and ethnic minority-focused university organisations.

The complexity of operationalising the criteria for young people who identify as working-class for recruiting organisations to apply to recruit young people was a challenge and recruitment partners evolved their understanding across programme delivery. The Social Mobility Commission criteria was used to operationalise the working-class eligibility criteria.

The eligibility criteria means young people had diverse support needs and complex journeys to employment. The outcomes expected within the timeframe of the programme were

dependent on young people's circumstances. The evaluation found many participants were already 'employability literate' to at least some extent (even where they did fit the eligibility criteria). A significant proportion of young people had taken part in other employability programmes, started their job search, or were attending universities where they were receiving other employability support.

The eligibility criteria has implications for the feasibility of an impact evaluation. While in practice it can be helpful to be flexible and inclusive, a single, agreed definition of eligibility is particularly important for identifying a counterfactual.

Features of support

Evidence shows that goal-based programmes tend to be more successful. Ideally, support is based on personalised initial assessments of strengths and barriers. Stand Out intended there to be regular goal setting but evidence of personalised initial assessments with goal setting that is revisited across the programme was limited. Some young people mentioned this occurring in the context of their sessions with coaches and mentors, rather than check-in sessions when it was planned. For these young people this activity was felt to help them stay accountable to their job search and feel accomplished given the progress they made. Young people also reported they would have benefited from goal setting, which suggests it is not consistently occurring.

Evidence suggests that rapport between the mentor and mentee is more important than the nature of the mentoring channel. The evaluation ended before mentoring was completed and thus only evidence of the initial couple mentoring sessions were captured. The evidence captured in the evaluation does support this point.

Existing literature shows good quality training and support for mentor reduces mentee and mentor drop out. The evaluation could not directly assess this.

Outcomes

Participants' tacit skills improved significantly after the core programme and this improvement was sustained six months later. Elements from the core curriculum which may have been particularly effective in contributing to this positive outcome include receiving personalised feedback on their CV in the CV writing workshop and at the interview practice and coaching sessions.

This builds on existing evidence around improved 'human capital' being a key success factor in finding employment: few successful employability interventions teach career skills without also developing social and emotional capabilities. Employers require young people to be informed about careers but also to be capable of appropriate behaviours in the workplace. The Talent Match evaluation reported that improvement in job specific skills, motivation, teamwork skills and reliability were strongly linked with being more likely to find employment.[34]

[34] Talent Match | The National Lottery Community Fund (tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

All short term outcomes except one (increased personal effectiveness) had significantly improved by three months into the programme. This suggests that the expected timeframe for these emerging (within a month of programme start) are realistic. Medium term outcomes were expected to emerge by six months into the programme. In practice, all five of these outcomes were observed earlier, to some degree, within three months of programme start. This suggests the timeframe for medium outcomes could be brought forward, from six months to three months.

More young people were in full time employment after the programme. However, movement into 'meaningful' employment was less straightforward to capture, as participant situations are complex, varied and evolving. The programme did not require people to be out of EET as a pre-condition and so measuring change in situation is difficult without more sophisticated monitoring.

The outcomes observed tell us something more about the path to entering employment, education or training. Based on participant experiences, this appears principally achieved through tacit skills, professional networks and exposure to the world of work – these enhance young people's competitiveness in the labour market which enables them to transition into paid or skilled roles.

Participants accessed around 60 hours of support across the programme, as intended, but the support was not accessed fully or consistently. Participants accessed the core programme and mentoring flexibly, dipping in and out of the activities according to their schedule and/or needs. This flexibility was seen as an asset of the programme by participants who found it hard to prioritise the full programme around other commitments and who found some support less relevant to their needs.

The literature review identified the need for flexibility and personalisation in youth employability support. So, while the programme was not accessed fully or consistently, it may be that it is less essential for participants to complete all activities to achieve outcomes. The evaluation cannot detect a minimum viable dosage of activities required to achieve the intended programme outcomes.

Existing literature also shows that participation being voluntary leads to better outcomes. Those who volunteer for mentoring or employability programmes often see better outcomes than those who are told it is compulsory. So, a balance needs to be struck between ensuring that those who need the support are engaged and supported consistently, without obliging young people to take part.

Evaluation feasibility

The Stand Out programme was funded by YFF as an 'impact pilot', meaning that one aim of the evaluation was to establish feasibility for a future experimental/ impact evaluation. There are three main elements of the impact assessment feasibility study. These were to:

- Explore potential comparative data sets for the programme.
- Establish the required programme scale to detect change in any future impact evaluation.

- Recommend an approach for conducting an efficacy evaluation.

This section summarises findings from a review of similar youth programme evaluations, interviews with evaluators and experts and discussions with YFF over the course of the evaluation. The literature review helped to understand the practical challenges experienced by evaluators to implementing various approaches. It also enabled us to identify the level of change achieved by similar programmes to calculate the potential effect size of these programmes.

Outcomes of interest

Outcome measures for the impact of programmes directed towards youth employment can be broadly classified into five categories: employment; education and skills; welfare; economic; and entrepreneurship. The desired outcomes for Stand Out are set out in the Theory of Change and mainly focus on the first three categories.

For the employment category, the main outcome variables of interest relate to individuals' transitions such as entering employment, training, or higher education, or taking actions to actively seek employment. Where the individual is already employed, other outcomes relate to improved quality of work, like hours worked, occupation, contract type, earnings, salary.

In the education and skills category, progression into further training or education, or gaining professional qualifications usually apply but are perhaps less relevant to the Stand Out programme.

In the welfare category, the outcome measures focus on an individual improving the levels of confidence, their networks and their expectations/aspirations, and improvements in well-being.

Of the three relevant categories, there are generally more standardised ways of measuring employment outcomes, and education and skills outcomes. These outcomes are also more commonly collected in existing datasets, which might then be used as a source of counterfactual data. Welfare outcomes tend to be measured in a variety of ways and are less likely to be systemically collected elsewhere. Bespoke data collection is therefore more likely to be required for the purposes of counterfactual impact evaluation.

Surveys of the participants are the most direct way of measuring impact. This method is especially effective when there is a before/after analysis with a survey conducted at the time of the intervention and a follow-up subsequent survey collecting any changes. However, surveys are not always robust ways of verifying outcomes as would be in measurement through administrative data. Surveys also need to be highly incentivised and suffer from participant attrition. It is worth noting that in previous evaluations 1MM and UpRising have experienced difficulties in capturing improvements in welfare and soft skills using quantitative approaches, like pre / post numbered scales. We cannot therefore be certain whether changes have not occurred or whether they have occurred but were not observed. Unobserved change might be the result of limitations to recall, , changes in self-awareness among participant or other context not considered in the design of the instruments. Other approaches that might help to mitigate these issues include asking about changes in outcomes, using worded rather than numeric scales, and reminding of previous scores.

For Stand Out there is also a need to consider quality of outcome (e.g., nature of employment) and how it fits with individuals' aspirations and goals. A key aim of this programme is to help young people into 'meaningful' employment or to achieve outcomes that are 'fulfilling their potential'. In the mobilisation stage of this evaluation, it was decided not to include 'meaningful work' as an outcome in the Theory of Change, given difficulties in achieving objective measures of what this means for entry level jobs. Therefore, job quality has not been measured in this evaluation. However, it has become increasingly clear over the course of the evaluation that this measure is important, particularly given the high number of participants already in work when they started the programme. Future evaluations could draw on the following developments in measuring quality of work.

The 2017 Taylor Review led to renewed attention to understanding, measuring, and improving the quality of work and employment. The review used the 'QuInnE' model of job quality, developed by the Institute of Employment Research and others as part of a pan-European research programme which outlines six high level indicators of quality. [35] These include wage, employment quality, education and training, working conditions, work life balance and consultative participation and collective representation. Recent work to create measures of job quality for these indicators may be useful for further evaluation.[36]

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) conducted their own review after the Taylor Review. They found a high degree of overlap exists in the number and type of dimensions used by researchers. Six key dimensions emerge: pay and other rewards; intrinsic characteristics of work; terms of employment; health and safety; work–life balance; representation and voice. CIPD also suggested the importance of measuring job quality at the level of individual workers, and to incorporate both objective and subjective dimensions.[37]

The Work Foundation at Lancaster University has also been investigating how the working lives across the UK are changing in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis.[38] Key areas of relevance for measuring young people's job quality are likely to include job sustainment, participation in training, wage and role progression, and social support.

Eligibility

Constructing a comparable control group is a substantial issue for youth employability programmes. A starting point is often the eligibility criteria of the programme. As discussed in the previous chapter, programme staff faced challenges in defining and operationalising programme eligibility criteria. While in practice it can be helpful to be flexible and inclusive, a single, agreed definition of eligibility is particularly important for identifying a counterfactual. Here we assume that the definition of eligibility for Stand Out is as follows:

[35] QuInnE is an interdisciplinary project investigating how job quality and innovation mutually impact each other, and the effects this has on job creation and the quality of these job. QuInnE project brings together a multidisciplinary team of experts from nine partner institutions across seven European countries.
[36] Good work: the Taylor review of modern working practices - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[37] Understanding and measuring job quality | CIPD
[38] Working Lives | Lancaster University

- Age - 18-25 years old,
- Location - anywhere in England,
- Employment status - unemployed, or in part-time or precarious work or in the final of further or higher education, or leaving school, college or university,
- From ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or identifying as working class.

For the purposes of impact assessment, it would be necessary to more tightly define whether just some or all of these four criteria must be fulfilled for eligibility. It would also be beneficial to define 'ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or identifying as working class' and agree how it would be measured. Without clear eligibility criteria which are adhered to at recruitment it is not possible to construct a robust comparison group, or to be confident in the fidelity of the evaluation design.

Understanding the likely effect size

The sample size necessary for an impact evaluation to achieve statistical significance will depend on the effect size of the programme: the smaller the minimum detectable effect we are seeking to measure, the larger the samples of participants and controls we need. We estimate the expected size of the effect by looking at past studies of similar mentoring programmes, then we show the required sample size to reach a given statistical power.

However, attribution of outcomes to the programme is difficult, given the two distinct elements of the programme, and difficulties measuring dosage of all programme activities and elements.

Size of the effect

The impact feasibility study started with trying to ascertain the likely impact of the combined programme on outcomes of interest.

Evaluation of the current and predecessor programmes can give us an indication of gross impact. Findings from our own pre- and post-programme surveys are set out in this report. Past programmes include:

- UpRising's previous Fastlaners programme, which is broadly comparable in scope, although shorter in duration at 2 weeks core programme plus six months mentoring and wider support. UpRising reported that Fastlaners achieved 64% into employment six months after completion (all were unemployed at the start).
- Previous evaluations of One Million Mentors programmes do not measure employment and training outcomes. They found a 24-percentage point increase in confidence in achieving ambitions pre/post 12 month mentoring, and a 31-percentage point increase in confidence to secure the experience or training they need to succeed.

None of these evaluations were subject to a counterfactual and cannot provide sound assumptions for likely impact.

The next step of the impact feasibility study was to review relevant literature, reviewing the findings of three systemic reviews of evaluations of mentoring and employability programmes. These synthesise across studies where a counterfactual impact analysis has been possible to understand the levels of effects due to the support. Otherwise, the literature was limited in robust impact evaluation of youth employment programmes.

Table 14 shows the outcomes the studies focus on and the overall impact measures. The key statistic reported to measure the size of the effect of these programmes is Hedge's g, a standardised measure of the difference in mean between the treated and control group that pools across the estimates in the individual studies recognising the different accuracies as measured by standard deviation. As a rule of thumb, to interpret Hedge's g: 0.2 is a small effect size, 0.8 is a large effect size.

Table 14 Research studies and their outcome

Study	Description	Outcome	Hedge's g
• DuBois et al (2011)[39]	• Systematic review of 73 evaluation programmes from 1999-2010 for mentoring programmes	• Employment outcomes (combined)	• 0.18
• Kluve et al (2017)[40]	• Systematic review of 113 studies, focusing on a variety of youth employment programmes across several countries	• Probability of employment	• 0.06
• Raposa et al (2019)[41]	• Meta-analysis of 70 youth mentoring outcome studies, with a total sample size of 25,286 youth (average age of 12 years old)	• All outcomes (combined)	• 0.21

An effect size of 0.2 would likely be considered a small effect size. This means that even if the difference between the two groups means is statistically significant, the actual difference between the group means it is trivial. The table indicates that the treatment effect found was 0.18 standard deviation of employment in DuBois et al (2011), 0.06 standard deviations

[39] DuBois, L et al (2011) 'How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence'

[40] Kluve, J et al (2017) 'Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth: a systematic review'

[41] Raposa, E et al (2019) The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies

for probability of employment and 0.21 for a wider set of outcomes (Raposa et al, which integrates the earlier studies).

These studies all present a positive and statistically significant effect size. However, its magnitude is relatively small. This implies that, while a positive effect is likely to be present, a large sample size will be necessary in order to detect it in an impact evaluation. This is reflected by the fact that out of the studies reviewed in Kluve et al (2017) only 35% report a statistically significant and positive effect.

The differences between the size of the effect reported may be due to the type of programme considered. Kluve et al (2017) expand their analysis to various youth employment programmes which also include skill training, subsidised employment, and entrepreneurship promotion. Thus, we would expect the effect size to be lower when programmes that were less directly targeted on employment outcome are included.

Statistical power

Statistical power denotes the probability of detecting a statistically significant effect for a given sample size at the 5% significant level. This implies that if an experimental design is used with an estimated 0.5 power, it would be expected to obtain a significant result only half of the times it was conducted. This concept is then used to provide sample sizes for surveys or counterfactual impact analyses.

Table 15 shows what these effect sizes mean for the sample size required in a counterfactual impact analysis. The effect sizes reported in the table would generally be regarded as small. Various studies have looked at the size of samples needed for small effect sizes and – with small effects – estimates are typically around 400 for each of the two groups (supported and comparators).

Table 15 Sample size required in a counterfactual impact analysis

Sample size needed	Hedge's g	Outcome measured
357	0.21	All outcomes (combined)[42]
486	0.18	Employment outcomes (combined)
4,362	0.06	Probability of employment
9,813	0.04	Income

[42] YFF does not recommend this approach due to potential fishing problem. Humphreys, M., Sanchez de la sierra, R., & Van der windt, P. (2013). Fishing, commitment, and communication: A proposal for comprehensive nonbinding research registration. Political Analysis, 21(1), 1–20. http://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mps021

The response rates for programme surveys were low. If a survey is the main method of recording outcomes, then participant volumes would need to be larger still, to achieve outcomes data for 400 individuals (whether or not they completed the programme). The same applies to the comparison group.

Options for a counterfactual

For robust counterfactual analysis, data is needed both for those receiving support and a reasonable number of non-participants. A further requirement is that data be collected over time, covering a period either before or at the time of the support as well as a period at some point afterwards where effects have occurred. An intervention can usually collect evidence from their participants, but it is a challenge to collect comparable evidence from non-participants. Options, including their advantages and limitations and discussed below.

Longitudinal surveys

Advantages: Surveys of the participants are the most direct way of measuring impact and allow us to measure a wider range of outcomes compared to admin data. This may better reflect changes in a participant's human/social capital (their knowledge, their skills, their confidence and their networks) which are ultimately the goal of the Stand Out programme. This method is especially effective when there is a before/after analysis with a survey conducted at the time of the intervention and a follow-up subsequent survey collecting any changes. This achieves a Level Two on Standardised Maryland Scale of evaluation robustness, Level Three and Four are achieved if there is a counterfactual.

Limitations: Ultimately, any study design which involves data collection through surveys must counter issues of lack of survey response, poor comparability, response bias, and representativeness of the sample. For email surveys, the survey response rate is at times as low as 20%. Although it was substantially better for this evaluation and may be improved through different incentive schemes, the chances of obtaining accurate longitudinal data are often thin. Online survey providers may be able to achieve sufficient size surveys among their panellists with similar characteristics to a programme's participants, but the opt-in nature of online panels and survey sampling methods create issues of measurement comparability between treatment and control groups.

Administrative datasets

The Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data has been developed over a number of years using administrative records about education at its core. It is a micro dataset, in that individual level records have been compiled, and has recently been made more accessible through the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Secure Research Service. The LEO dataset connects individuals' education data from schools with their employment, benefits, and earnings data. The data covers all academic years from 2003 onwards. This dataset contains information about the education outcomes of Key stage 4 and 5 students (aged 14 to 18 years old) and higher education graduates at different point after graduation. Data also includes student characteristics, gender, ethnicity, whether they received free school meals, special educational needs and learning difficulties. The records are then linked to higher

education, employment, benefits and earnings data. Recent work on graduate employment outcomes has used LEO linked to HMRC pay-as-you-earn records.

Advantages: Linked administrative datasets often contain comprehensive data about an entire population across several time periods. These would allow to extract a comparison group from a vast sample. LEO is a linked administrative dataset which allows to obtain a much larger sample than surveys, in addition it allows analysis to avoid issues such as lack of survey response, poor comparability, response bias, and representativeness of the sample.

Limitations: However, the number of variables measured is often limited. The main challenge to using such administrative data would be access, with the linking of participants in the Stand-Out programme to LEO involving a series of permissions and approvals. Access to LEO is through the ONS, at its Secure Research Service. ONS carries out an in-depth feasibility check of the project, this includes elements such as ensuring that the purpose, method and data required is proportionate to research aims. Small sample sizes and/or an expected small effect size may prevent the evaluation of Stand-Out from being granted access to LEO data. Even if these hurdles are crossed, there will then be statistical issues, in both establishing a set of comparable individuals and in establishing whether treatment effects are measurable in the data. The issues around measurability also include timeliness, in that the availability of post-support data to assess a recent involvement with an individual may not be possible as there are time lags (roughly two years) to compiling LEO.

Such permissions would not be an issue with the DWP Employment Lab, which is an initiative being developed with the specific aim of supporting impact evaluations on employment-related interventions. The service will involve participating organisations like UpRising and One Million Mentors sharing their data on an intervention with the DWP Employment Lab so that it can be analysed and evaluated, and a report shared back. The aim is to build understanding on what works in helping people into employment. However, experts advise that this service is still in the early stages of development.

Public surveys

The ONS and other bodies conduct numerous nationally representative surveys to gather information on work, education and welfare outcomes and variables.

Advantages: These may be a useful source from which to obtain a comparison group if questions about outcomes already in the ONS survey are replicated in the surveys of the participants.

Below are three surveys that have relevant characteristics: in that they have a panel element, with outcomes being tracked over time and that they cover young people with sufficient sample.

1. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a quarterly survey of individuals to establish measures of employment using a sample of around 40,000 individuals in the UK aged 16 to 64. This dataset is used to construct unemployment figures and other labour force statistics. It contains around 4,000 observations for individuals aged 16 to 24 This subsample is used in the "Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)" bulletin and may contain useful information for a potential

comparison group. The LFS uses a rotating panel sample design, whereby each respondent is interviewed on a across five consecutive quarters. This allows comparison with a programme panel containing observations across a year, though it does not allow for a longer-term analysis.

2. The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a survey conducted by the ONS in 3 waves between 2011 and 2015. It aimed to compare how disabled and non-disabled people participate in society in a number of areas. The survey included questions about work, education, and social participation. This survey includes a sample of 4550 individuals with no impairment as a control group; 16% of this subsample are aged 16-24 and could be used as a comparison group.
3. The Mental Health Survey for Children and Young People (MHCYP) is a survey which was conducted in 2021 to find out about the mental health, development and wellbeing of children and young people aged between 2 and 19 years old in England. It covers a sample of around 9,500 individuals. This data could be used to determine a comparison group for welfare outcomes such as confidence, self-esteem, and well-being. The comparison would only be possible if the survey replicates the questionnaire in the MHCYP.

Limitations: None of these surveys will cover all of the outcomes of interest for Stand Out and only the Labour Force Survey is continuous; the other surveys are older so the labour market is not comparable.

Evaluation design

A range of possible research designs for measuring the impact of the Stand Out Programme are available. Approaches to find comparable non-participants usually seek to replicate in data the steps the programme take to select participants, to then chose a comparison group that did not receive support but look similar to the beneficiaries. Options make use of either experimental or non-experimental approaches.

Randomised Control Trial (RCT)

The preferred approach to impact evaluation, including from a YFF perspective, is to randomly allocate whether eligible young people do or do not to receive the intensive online employability and mentoring programme. This meets the assumptions for an ideal counterfactual by design, in that the control group has met all selection criteria.

Advantages: RCTs have several attractive advantages as they robustly control for selection bias (internal validity).

Limitations: Implementing an RCT for Stand Out would present challenges:

- Identifying 800 young people that meet the eligibility criteria, who find the programme attractive and agree to take part is likely to be problematic based on what we know about Stand Out recruitment.
- Experience from other evaluations using surveys suggests that it can be very difficult to keep in touch with the control group sufficiently well to measure their outcomes. The Talent Match programme piloted a counterfactual survey which aimed to

achieve 400 responses to a follow-up survey, across two areas (200 in each). They managed to achieve a total of 77 and this method was dropped from the evaluation.

- Linked to the above, RCTs with long duration are challenging, for a variety of reasons (e.g., maintaining contact with the control group, maintaining fidelity of design). RCTs are more amenable to short and tightly defined interventions. This need not preclude their use for the Stand Out programme but may suggest a need to shorten the overall programme length e.g., six-month mentoring element. The intensity of the programme would also need to be more in line with the original intent – rather than the more flexible participation that has occurred (but which is perhaps better suited to some of the target groups such as those in full-time education or in work).

Almost Randomised Design

An alternative experimental approach at the individual level is the Randomised Encouragement Design, where instead of randomly allocating online employability and mentoring programme to some individuals, it may be seen as fairer to randomly allocate some encouragement to take up the programme.

Advantages: Randomised Encouragement could be conducted at individual level or college/university level. It would involve contacting a randomised sample of young people that meet the eligibility criteria, providing them with information about the benefits of the Stand Out Programme and possibly incentives to take part (which taken together would constitute the 'encouragement'). Absence levels of the encouraged sample with a matched sample of non-encouraged individuals can then be compared. While this would not measure impact directly, impact could be estimated if it could be shown that the 'encouragement' instrument was correlated with the participation in the programme.

A further option is to identify a control group from people who started the Stand Out programme, but do not complete it. In this scenario, the group of people who applied to the programme but couldn't take part in it for external reasons, could be like the beneficiaries in non-observable characteristics, such as motivation or confidence. Therefore, they are a potentially strong comparison group.

Once the individuals apply for the Stand Out programme, the programme checks their eligibility for the service. Once eligibility is confirmed (and pre-survey data collected), the aim is to identify individuals that decline to continue with the programme before they started. The drop outs would be considered as controls for the study. Outcomes data would be collected for both those participating in the programme and those that dropped out.

Limitations: One issue with this approach is whether there is a large enough number of drop-outs that can be used as controls. This evaluation found just under 20% attrition from application to accepting a place. To achieve a comparison group of 400 non-participants/drop-outs, the total number of applicants would therefore need to be in the region of 2,000. This option is only feasible if the programme were already planning a significant increase in scale. A further issue is that there may well be unobservable ways in

which the non-participants and participants differ, but which explain any difference in outcomes.

Non-experimental designs

The most robust approach to identifying comparators is through randomisation. However, there are a range of methods that can be employed where there are no potential counterfactuals of this type. These use statistical matching methods to select from the unsupported wider population or sample a set of individuals that look comparable in terms of characteristics. Approaches then use Propensity Score Matching (PSM) to identify participants and non-participants with the most similar characteristics, such as socio economic circumstances, which could be associated with the outcome. These methods are particularly valuable with administrative datasets or surveys that collect evidence about outcomes, as the sample that are in these datasets tend to be representative of the whole population. The matching then draws out from this wider group the most comparable individuals.

A series of robustness tests are used to both assure quality and consider improvements to the modelling. Matching techniques such as PSM use balancing tests to check, after the matching, treated and control groups only differ in their participation status.

Final feasibility

Whilst an RCT design may be possible there are substantial challenges to this approach including the capacity of delivery partners to recruit the requisite volume of potential participants, and to administer the randomisation. There are also questions about the scope and shape of the programme which may need to be changed to make it more amenable to an RCT. As discussed, this might be a shorter and more tightly defined intervention.

Conclusion

Summary

Programme description

Stand Out is an online employability and mentoring programme aimed to help young people 'stand out' to employers in their job search by providing intensive employability support via taught sessions, independent learning, and mentoring. The programme targets young people 18-25 years old, unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the final year of university, from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or who identify as working class. The programme is delivered by UpRising and One Million Mentors. To help to recruit young people, the organisations partnered with RECLAIM, a youth leadership and social change organisation, supporting young people who identify as working class.

Proposed model and theory

The rationale for the Stand Out programme is if young people 18-25 years old who face barriers to employment receive a month-long online curriculum with up to 12 months of mentoring they are more likely to have improved wellbeing and employment opportunities. And if mentors and corporate volunteers enjoy working with the young people and professionally develop, they will be more motivated to recruit young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds into their organisations. Together, these outcomes were expected to lead to the ultimate programme impacts of young people's increased social mobility, social capital and social cohesion.

The mechanisms of change and intervention model pathways through the programme were:

- Young people were expected to benefit from a supportive community of other young job-seekers which would enable them to increase their social and peer networks. When combined with programme outcomes of increased personal effectiveness and increased confidence, the programme expected young people would experience improved wellbeing.
- Young people were expected to be accountable in their job search through programme check-ins and independent learning activities which were intended to increase young people's personal effectiveness and their confidence and self-worth. Together, these outcomes were expected to lead to young people's raised perceptions of what they can achieve and contribute to their improved wellbeing.
- Exposure to the world of work through knowledge and skills group workshops and careers skills advice, and the year-long mentoring advice, were expected to improve young people's tacit skills.
- Expert, personalised and encouraging advice and guidance, delivered through one-to-one career skills advice, and the year-long mentoring provision, was expected to lead to increased professional networks and contribute to improved tacit skills.

- Once young people improved their tacit skills and professional networks, the programme expected these combined outcomes to lead to young people's increased competitiveness in the labour market and to entering employment, education or training.

Programme delivery

Although we have noted the methodological limitations of the evaluation and make recommendations for future approaches, the key findings in relation to programme delivery are:

- Stand Out surpassed their participant targets of 400 young people; the programme delivered to 444 participants. All young people met at least one of the eligibility criteria. The programme notably engaged high proportions of participants from ethnic minority groups, and who were refugees and internally displaced people (IDP), relative to the general population.
- Participants were mainly recruited through their university and RECLAIM. Programme efforts to advertise through UCAS were unsuccessful and ended after Cohort 1.
- Peer-to-peer connection was both supported and limited by both the online programme delivery and the flexible nature of engagement with live sessions or via catch-up. The evaluation found live engagement with the programme was lower than expected; participants watched session recordings in their own time rather than engaging live.
- UpRising delivered at least five hours of coaching during the core programme, as intended, and the amount varied across cohorts in an effort to improve young people's attendance at coaching sessions. Attendance data shows that 35% of young people across the three cohorts attended at least one of the coaching sessions.
- The delivery of morning check-ins changed across cohorts in an effort to improve young attendance at check-ins. The evaluation cannot establish whether participants completed the eight hours of independent learning because this was not monitored.
- The programme surpassed their targets for hours of knowledge and skills workshops delivered. Most young people took part in at least one workshop and chose the workshops most relevant to their support needs. It was rare for participants to take part in all sessions. The most attended live sessions were 'Virtual presence: how to stand out in a virtual world', 'Pitching yourself on paper', and 'Standing out on LinkedIn'.
- Fewer volunteers contributed to the programme than intended. Over a third of young people attended the careers skills advice sessions hosted by volunteers. Like the knowledge and skills workshops, young people interviewed reported attending these on an as-needed basis.

- Fewer mentors were trained than intended. The mentor matching process took place as planned, but the young people's perceived quality of the match varied, and the frequency of initial mentoring meetings was not delivered as intended.

Programme experience

The key findings in relation to programme experience are:

- Online delivery made participation for some young people possible, and supported networking and learning. In contrast, participant's practical and technical ability to use the channels and engage in the real-time, online sessions limited some connection because the two online platforms – Slack and Notion – were new to many participants.
- Young people new to the online platforms used in the programme and to accessing employability support found the pace and number of sessions in the first week of the programme overwhelming.
- Young people who attended coaching sessions found it supported their networking with other young people, and their job search accountability. Barriers to attendance included young people being unaware of what sessions involve, and both young people and mentor difficulties in accommodating the sessions around their busy schedules.
- Young people chose to attend the knowledge and skills workshops which felt most relevant to them. This was influenced by the young person's circumstances and prior experience of employability support.
- The careers skills advice sessions and knowledge and skills workshops helped young people to improve their knowledge of how to go about their job search. This was by helping them feel more confident in where to find job advertisements, how to scan job opportunities and decide what would be relevant for them and being more selective in which job opportunities to go for.
- Young people's views of a good match with their mentor at the beginning the mentoring programme depended on the young person's support needs. Features of a good match included the mentors' career or sector experience, attitude, availability and the type of support they offered. Participants were critical of the match when they had a clear career goal that their assigned mentor did not bring knowledge or experience of, or either had other mentors at the time of the match or had mentors in the past that they compared their match to.
- Unlike young people's experiences, mentor's experiences of mentoring differed based on the young person's attitude and their commitment to the mentoring. Mentors typically felt well supported by One Million Mentors and most described feeling able to drive forward their mentoring relationship.

Outcomes achieved

- Young people significantly improved five outcomes that were sustained at both the three-month and six-month follow-up: improved tacit skills, increased professional networks, improved wellbeing, increased competitiveness in the labour market and entering employment, education or training. More young people were in full time employment after the programme. Measuring movement into 'meaningful' employment was a challenge. Employment outcomes captured in the survey do not show the nuance of a participant being, for example, more targeted in their job search (but applying for fewer jobs), leaving an unsatisfying role, or taking up work experience or 'precarious' work but in an area they are passionate about.

Outcomes not achieved or not sustained

- Young people significantly improved five outcomes that were sustained at three-month follow-up but not at six month follow-up: increased social and peer networks, increased confidence, increased exposure to the world of work, raised perceptions of what they can achieve and increased resilience during the job search.
- Young people did not significantly increase their personal effectiveness. Young people personal effectiveness was high at baseline, which may be contributing to this; young people had less distance to travel to increase their personal effectiveness and therefore the outcome measurements did not identify this outcome.

Feasibility for a future impact evaluation

An impact evaluation of the Stand Out programme is not feasible. Considerations of what is needed to make the programme amenable to impact evaluation include:

- Eligibility criteria – Impact evaluation requires a well-defined and identifiable target group, and this is particularly relevant if constructing comparators from existing datasets. Existing datasets are less likely to include the more 'niche' characteristics such as the Social Mobility Commission criteria of working class so if these are really key for the programme purpose then a bespoke survey data collection is likely to be required for a comparison group.
- Define the intervention – The programme was designed to be delivered in-person before the evaluation began. It was then revised to be delivered fully online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Delivery partners were considering a hybrid model for future cohorts. A hybrid model has implications for impact evaluation:
    - Scope and scale – A face-to-face element would restrict delivery partners more in terms of their ability to recruit the target 400 participants across a limited number of locations. An online approach would enable the programme to scale up without significant additional resource. While delivery partners are interested in a hybrid approach, it should weigh this decision up against the practicality of participants taking part as intended and delivering this at the scale needed for impact evaluation.

- Defining the target audience – The online approach works better for those in work and full-time education because they can access it to their own timeframes. So, changing the mode of delivery is likely to change its target audience. This is not necessarily problematic but it should be specified in the eligibility criteria.
- Clarity on outcomes and routes to impact – Further work is needed by the delivery partners on agreeing what movement into 'meaningful work' or 'fulfilling potential' means and how to measure it. Key areas of relevance for measuring young people's job quality are likely to include job sustainment, participation in training, wage and role progression, and social support.
- In previous evaluations One Million Mentors and UpRising have experienced difficulties in capturing improvements in welfare and soft skills using quantitative approaches, like pre or post numbered scales. This may be due to recall, changes in self-awareness or context not considered. Other approaches that might help to mitigate these issues include asking about changes in outcomes, using worded rather than numeric scales, and reminding participants of previous scores.

The highly individualised nature of participant journeys with Stand Out mean that an impact evaluation would be challenging. It would either need to involve very large numbers of participants so that those with different journeys could be compared against each other or would need more consistency in the profile of participants and what their involvement in the programme entails.

Suggestions for programme refinement

The following elements would benefit from consideration as key refinements that could help increase access, sustain participation and achieve impact from this or comparable programmes.

- The programme faced difficulties in operationalising the criteria for young people who identify as working-class. The programme should clearly and simply operationalise all eligibility criteria so different partners can recruit eligible participants quickly.
- Young people's access to the online platforms varied and some felt overwhelmed by the number or unfamiliarity of platforms they had to use. To reach the most diverse group of young people at scale, programmes should use platforms that are familiar to most participants and keep the number of platforms to a minimum.
- There are trade-offs to requiring young people to keep their cameras on during online sessions. The evidence from this evaluation suggests participants, coaches and volunteers found cameras being off limited some of their connection with other programme participants and delivery staff. Yet, some young people want this for privacy reasons and to feel able to participate. Mandating cameras to be on may increase connectedness for many but can risk excluding some groups of young people. Programmes should have a clear policy of when it is necessary to have cameras on.

- To sustain attendance in the coaching sessions and maximise the opportunity for young people to form long-lasting networks with their peers, participants and coaches suggested running the programme outside term time, keeping sessions to a maximum of an hour and doubling the timeframe so participants could choose from two alternative times for each session. Some would also prefer an evening option. Other programmes should take into account this need for flexibility and conciseness in the delivery of any sessions.
- Programmes should also avoid 'overload' of information and session during the first weeks to reduce drop out by those who feel overwhelmed by the volume of information.
- Participants also felt that being grouped together with others who are close in age, in more similar life stages, or have similar sector interests may have helped to improve the usefulness of peer networking offered by the programme.
- Skills based activities, such as personalised advice on a CV, are more valued than frequent check ins. Check-ins may be more relevant for young people at the start of their career journey, with less awareness of what to do and less confidence in what to do, or for young people with less competing demands on their time, such as not in education, employment or training.
- Some young people were more advanced in their career search than others, making some of the support less relevant for them; some young people did not complete the programme or dropped out for this reason. The wider literature suggests flexibility in support delivery is important for engaging diverse young people so moving towards a model of requiring young people to attend all sessions is unlikely to be effective.
- Participants were considering different career paths and were in different stages of their career journey. This and comparable programmes should consider whether and how to tailor session content to different groups of young people rather than expect attendance at all sessions.
- Participants dipped in and out of the programme and its communication platforms. If a programme must use multiple platforms it is important to present timetabling information across all of the platforms to support sustained participation.
- To build the foundations of a successful mentoring process, both young people and mentors benefit from being well matched and knowing why and on what criteria they were brought together. This helps build rapport and shape early conversations. Potentially participants should have the opportunity to change mentors if they feel the match is not right for them.
- Mentors can benefit from knowing more about the background and aspirations of the young person they are matched with to consider the areas in which they can be of most help before they encounter the programme participant.

- Successful mentoring tends to be on demand to reflect the ad hoc nature of a young person's job search. This may need further consideration of how to facilitate these arrangements through voluntary mentors.

Lessons for future evaluations

This report has detailed a number of limitations to this evaluation that could be addressed to strengthen the data available for future research either for this or comparable programmes.:

- UpRising and One Million Mentors should consider investing in more sophisticated attendance monitoring, to track the many ways in which young people can engage with the programme. This is important given the trend towards delivering youth employability support online to reach more diverse young people.
- Alongside this, for this or similar programmes, waves of the evaluation survey may need to be conducted within programme contact time to ensure sustained participation. This will enable longitudinal analysis at individual level.
- Attendance data could also be linked to evaluation survey records to build a more accurate picture of the association between pattern and type of session attended and outcomes.
- For One Million Mentors, test how the Stand Out programme theory applies to mentoring as a separate intervention because the evaluation concluded before the mentoring element finished. For other programmes, build in time for follow up after all programme activities are complete.
- For UpRising, collect more detail on young people's job sustainment, participation in training, wage and role progression, and social support at the application stage and measure this across the programme. This evaluation was limited by not being able to assess whether the young person was in 'meaningful' work and in turn consider whether leaving the job to return to education was a positive or negative step. Future evaluations should draw on research cited in this report to inform measurement of the quality of work that young people are doing.
- For UpRising, One Million Mentors and all programmes engaging young people: build on the finding that all participating young people varied in their ability to engage fully with the intended delivery model because of other pressures on their time and the complexities of their lives. Specifically, whether the relatively intensive, long-term commitment of this model is feasible for young people in full time education to engage with.

7 Appendices

Appendix A: Stand Out Programme Participant Privacy Policy

About this notice

UpRising Leadership (hereafter UpRising) needs to collect personal data about participants in order to deliver its programmes to young people and fulfil its charitable aims. We process your personal data in line with the requirements set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

UpRising is a charity registered in England & Wales (Charity No. 1149905). The Stand Out programme is delivered by UpRising and One Million Mentors (One Million Mentors/we/our). Whilst One Million Mentors runs its day-to-day operations as a separate organisation, for legal purposes, it is a part of UpRising. Therefore, throughout this document 'UpRising' refers to both UpRising and One Million Mentors.

This privacy policy explains how UpRising (we/our) processes personal data of prospective, applicant, current, and former participants (you/your). If you have any questions about how we use your personal data please contact us at dataprotection@UpRising.org.uk or by post at UpRising Leadership, Unit 2.E.03, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London, E1 6LA.

UpRising respects your privacy. We will always be transparent with you about how we process your personal data, and it is stored safely and securely. We never share your personal data with any third parties, unless we are required to by law or in ways that help us to provide this service.

How we collect your personal data

We may collect your personal data in a number of ways, including:

- personal data provided by you when you complete an Expression of Interest Form
- personal data provided by you when you complete an Application Form
- personal data collected indirectly when you use our website
- personal data provided by you when you are accepted onto our programmes and complete an Information Form
- personal data provided by you when you participate in our programmes and complete Evaluation Forms before, during, and after the programme
- personal data provided by you when you give your consent to be interviewed and/or participate in focus groups for research and/or promotional purposes
- personal data collected indirectly in the form of visual content when you participate in our programmes (e.g., photos, videos, session recordings)
- personal data provided by you when you participate in our programmes and provide personal documents such as your CV

- personal data provided by you when you engage in our online tools and learning platforms, such as Mural, Notion, and Slack
- personal data provided by you after you have completed the programme when we ask you about your employment, education, and training status

Types of personal data processed

We may process the following types of personal data:

- your unique system IDs generated in our systems used to identify you
- contact details (e.g., name, email, telephone number)
- information about why you want to take part
- information about your mentoring preferences
- demographic information about you (e.g., data of birth, gender) - including more sensitive data classified as special category data (see below)
- educational and background information about you (e.g., the type of school you attended, the occupation of your parent/carer when you were 14)
- information about where you live
- medical information relevant to your participation
- emergency contact details of a person(s) you nominate
- your responses in evaluations completed before, during, and after our programmes
- further details about your experiences on our programmes (e.g., in a focus group or interview)
- personal documents (e.g., CV) and your contributions during the programme (e.g., comments on Mural)
- visual content of you (e.g., photos, videos, session recordings)
- your employment, education, and training status before and up to 12 months after you take part in our programmes

We also collect the following special categories of more sensitive personal data:

- your racial or ethnic origin
- your religious beliefs
- your political opinions
- data concerning your health
- your sexual orientation

We take additional care when handling these types of data.

How UpRising processes your personal data

We may process your personal data for the following purposes.

If you express an interest in and/or apply to our programmes:

- to inform you when applications for our programmes open
- to contact you to discuss the programme and provide any support you may need in your application
- to monitor interest in our programmes
- to update you on the status of your application
- to assess applications, including scoring applications (this process will always involve human intervention – see the section below on 'Automated decision making and profiling')

If you participate in our programmes:

- to communicate programme information and updates with you before and during your participation (e.g., zoom links, reading materials, evaluation forms)
- to match you with a mentor
- to send you information we feel may be of interest to you and relevant to your employment search and/or career development
- to act in an emergency (e.g., call your emergency contact or access data about any medical conditions)
- to monitor and evaluate our impact (e.g., asking for programme feedback, your responses to evaluations, and your employment, education, and training status)
- to improve our programmes
- after aggregation and anonymization, to demonstrate the impact of our programmes to stakeholders
- only ever with your unambiguous and explicit consent, in marketing materials (e.g., an Instagram post)
- to understand how you use and engage with our website
- to stay in touch with you as a member of our alumni to continue to support you in your next steps

Lawful bases for processing your personal data

When we process your personal data we only do so when permitted by law. This includes:

- Where the processing is necessary for our legitimate interests, only when your interests and rights do not override our interests (our interests include monitoring interest in our programmes, enabling you to participate in our programmes, ensuring

we target young people most in need of our help, monitoring the impact of our programmes, generating interest in our programmes, and raising funds through fundraising activities)

- When you have given explicit consent, such as checking a box on a form
- For research purposes, primarily through an evaluator and the YFF data depository
- For equality of opportunity or treatment.

Automated decision making and profiling

When you apply to our programmes we will ask you for your demographic and background information. This is so that we can ensure we are fulfilling our mission as a charity to support young people from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds, monitor the effectiveness of our programmes for different groups, and fulfil our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Therefore, we use this data for two purposes. We anonymise and aggregate this personal data for reporting, evaluation, and research purposes. We also 'profile' applications using a secure, semi-anonymised, carefully designed, and human-monitored scoring system. We will never make solely automated decisions and recruitment to our programmes always involves human intervention. As explained in the section below detailing 'Your rights under GDPR', you have a right to object to this processing or, where you have given us your consent including in relation to special category data, you have the right to withdraw your consent. If you would like to exercise your right to object or withdraw consent, we will stop processing your data whilst we investigate whether an exemption applies. We will also clearly communicate the implications of any ending to our processing with you.

Sharing your personal data

We never sell your personal data to anyone. We never share it, unless we are required to by law or in ways that enable us to deliver this service. In the event that we do share it, we will take additional steps to protect your identity and personal data, such as anonymising it where possible and establishing data processing contracts with the receiving organisation. These circumstances may include:

- Non-anonymised data to external evaluators employed to help us evaluate our programmes
- Consultants employed to work on our database
- Potential future employers requesting a reference for you
- Any other circumstance where we are required to do so by law
- Youth Futures Foundations for the purposes of funding the programme and holding the data securely in their data depository. The data depository will be used by third parties for further evaluation and research with appropriate safeguards.

International transfers

Most of your personal data will be stored on servers inside the European Economic Area (EEA). There may be some instances where the servers we use are located outside of the EEA. In these instances, we will ensure that your data is only processed in countries that have adequate levels of protection or appropriate safeguards.

How long UpRising retains your personal data

We only keep your personal data for as long as is necessary. If you express an interest in or apply to our programmes but do not participate we retain your data for 12 months afterwards. This is so we can notify you of further programmes we feel you may be interested in. You may request that we delete your personal data at any point beforehand. If you participate in our programmes we retain your data for the entire time you are a participant. Once you are part of our alumni, we keep your data for as long as is necessary for our processing purposes. This depends on the purposes of our processing. We decide how long we need to keep your personal data by considering the following:

- your rights and interests
- the nature and sensitivity of your personal data
- the potential risks involved in the continued processing of your personal data
- our legitimate interests, including whether our processing remains necessary for our reporting requirements, fundraising activities, and promotional interests
- any regulatory requirements and any existing or possible legal requirements
- whether our processing remains necessary for research and statistical purposes.

Where possible, we will anonymise your personal data so that it is no longer identifiable with you. In such cases, we may retain this data indefinitely.

Alumni

After you have completed a programme you will become a member of our supportive alumni community. As part of this, you will receive our alumni newsletter, unless you have previously opted out of receiving email communications from us. In this case, we will ask you whether you would like to opt in to join our alumni mailing list. You can opt out of receiving these communications at any point by emailing us at dataprotection@UpRising.org.uk or by clicking the unsubscribe button on any of these emails.

Your rights under GDPR in respect of your personal data

You have the following rights under the UK GDPR in respect of the processing of your personal data:

- Right to request access to the personal data we hold about you

- Right to request correction of any inaccurate or incomplete personal data we hold about you
- Right to request the erasure of any personal data we hold about you
- Right to request restriction of our processing of your personal data
- Right to object to the processing of your personal data, unless you have given consent in which case you have the right to withdraw consent
- Right to request that UpRising transfers a copy of your personal data in an electronic format
- Right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

If you would like to exercise any of these rights, please contact us at dataprotection@UpRising.org.uk and we will respond to you as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstance we may be entitled to reject your request and if this is the case we will communicate this with you clearly.

Appendix B: Stand Out Programme Evaluation Participant Privacy Policy

This evaluation of the Stand Out programme run by 1 Million Mentors (1MM) and UpRising has been commissioned by the Youth Futures Foundation (YFF). The evaluation is being undertaken by IFF research, an independent research organisation.

What is this project about?

The project is being carried out to find out any impacts the Stand Out programme has on participants. We also want to explore why and how the programme has impacted participants and any ways the programme can be made better in the future. To explore this, we will be:

- Speaking to participants on the Stand Out programme, via surveys, peer to peer research and in-depth qualitative interviews;
- Speaking to programme leads, tutors, stakeholders, mentors and other volunteers via in-depth qualitative interviews;
- Conducting analysis using management information data collected for participants as part of the programme during the during the evaluation period.

The results of the evaluation will inform the future design and scaling up of the Stand Out programme.

What personal information belonging to me will IFF be processing?

We will be processing names, email addresses and phone numbers in order to contact you about the research outlined above.

What will happen to the information I give to IFF Research via the surveys or interviews I might take part in?

IFF Research will use the information for research purposes only. Responses from all individuals taking part in the evaluation will be reported in aggregate form, meaning your responses to questions are presented in a way that they will not identify you. If you decide you do not what your data to be included in analysis or you want to change any information given, you have two months from the point of participation to inform the evaluation team.

Your data will be securely shared with the project funders, Youth Futures Foundation (YFF), to be held in a data depository for the purposes of evaluation and research to help young people. To fulfil these purposes the data may also be shared with other organisations who manage the depository, evaluate outcomes, conduct further research or link to data that is associated with YFF's vision and values. YFF will process your data in accordance with data protection law which includes keeping it secure and only using it where there is a fair and lawful basis to do so. For more information, please see YFF's privacy policy.

All data held by IFF will be retained for 3 months after the end of the evaluation, i.e., until March 2022, and then destroyed. By this we mean removed from all IFF digital systems and back-ups held by any member of the evaluation team. You can request that your data is withdrawn before this date by contacting dpo@iffresearch.com and giving the reference

Stand Out Evaluation. Until the point data is destroyed, you also have the right to request access to your survey data. You can request access to your data by contacting Sophia Jouahri or Sanyogita Singh at IFF Research on 0207 250 3035 or email StandOut@iffresearch.com.

For more information about IFF Research and its surveys, follow this link: https://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/

Do I have to take part in the surveys or interviews?

No one has to take part if they don't want to but, to ensure that Stand Out is as helpful to individuals as possible, your answers are very important to us.

How will we be using the Stand Out data?

We will be using Stand Out data to conduct an impact analysis and to understand how and why the programme has impacted participants.

Why our use of your personal data is lawful

In order for our use of your personal data to be lawful, we need to meet one (or more) conditions in the data protection legislation. For the purpose of this project, the relevant condition(s) that we are meeting under Article 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018 in that this processing of personal information is carried out under legitimate interest.

Your data protection rights

You have the right:

- to ask IFF for access to information that they hold about you
- to have your personal data rectified, if it is inaccurate or incomplete
- to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing
- to restrict processing of your personal data (i.e., permitting its storage but no further processing)
- to object to direct marketing (including profiling) and processing for the purposes of scientific/historical research and statistics
- not to be subject to decisions based purely on automated processing where it produces a legal or similarly significant effect on you.

Further information about your data protection rights appears on the Information Commissioner's website at: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/principle-6-rights/.

You have the right to raise any concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) via their website at https://ico.org.uk/concerns/.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you have any questions you can contact Sophia Jouahri or Sanyogita Singh at IFF Research on 0207 250 3035 or email StandOut@iffresearch.com.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner's Office is the independent body who oversee the data protection legislation. They can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,

Wycliffe House, Water Lane,

Wilmslow, Cheshire,

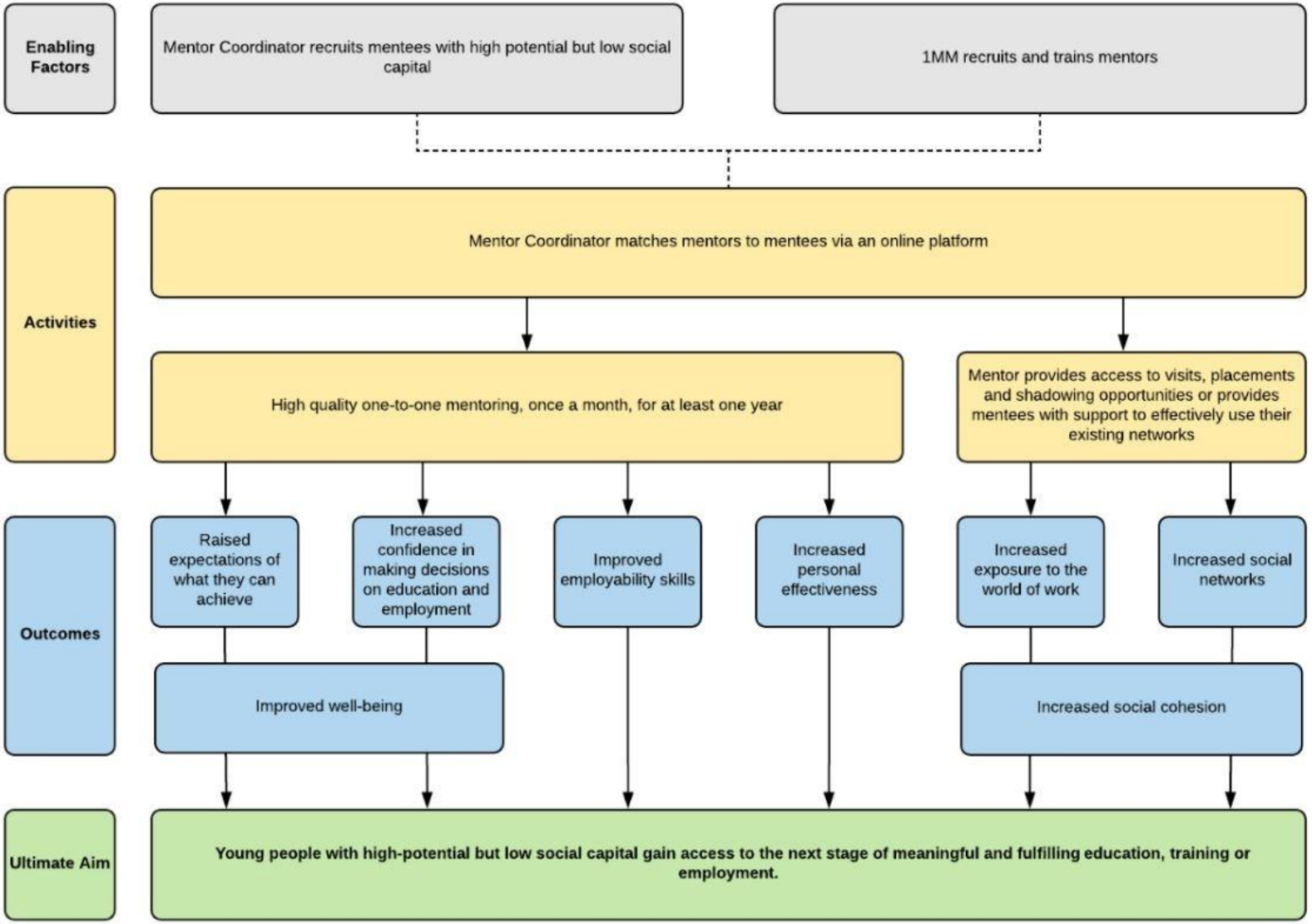
SK9 5AF

youth futures FOUNDATION

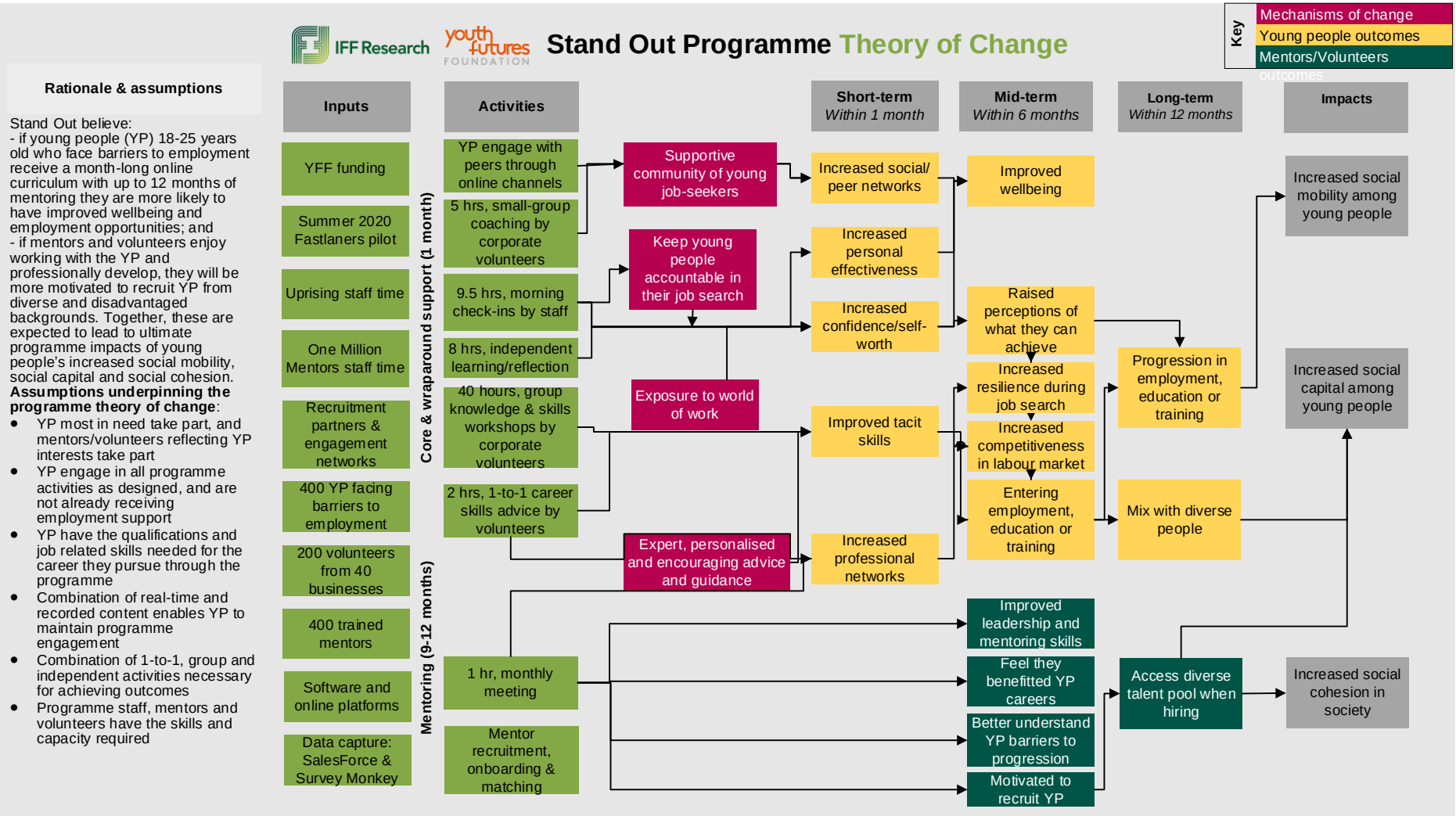
Appendix C: UpRising Theory of Change

Context	Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		Impact
	Organisational:	Activities:	Participation:	Learning:	Action:	
There are high levels of unemployment and under employment in young people with high potential and low social capital, from diverse backgrounds. As jobs become more difficult to secure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, young people need more developed digital skills and a stronger understanding of how to access opportunities and jobs remotely. There is a need to break down barriers to employment for young people with high potential and low social capital.	Location: we will focus recruitment on the areas we are well established in across England. These include: Bedfordshire, London, Birmingham and Manchester. Because the programme is delivered online it transcends geographical locations which allows us to recruit a more diverse cohort. Time: 12 month programme delivery, consisting of 3 months of intensive support and 3 months follow up support and 12 month wraparound mentoring support. Partners: Employer	Participants will undertake the following programme components: > Induction & 3 months intensive Fastlaners workshops > 3 months follow up ad-hoc workshops and support sessions from UpRising staff > Professional mentoring (12 meetings with mentors over 12-months) > Graduation Participants will enter the alumni network following the programme and will be able to access alumni	Number: The programme will target approx. 400 participants over 1 year. Age: 18-25 years old. Background: Participants should be drawn from diverse backgrounds with a focus on young people from under-represented backgrounds, these include White working-class and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.	The development of skills, knowledge, networks & confidence in young people that enable them to be more 'work-ready'. Longer term mentoring, providing ongoing, regular and individualised support for participants, that leads to improved employment outcomes. Employers and mentors increase awareness of the individual and systemic barriers to progression facing young people with high potential and low social capital.	Young people from disadvantaged communities will be better equipped to gain meaningful employment (volunteering or training). Young people will be more supported and confident to seek and attain meaningful employment (volunteering or training). Employers will actively look to recruit more young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.	Young people from disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds find meaningful employment (volunteering or training). Professional mentoring is successful in supporting young people into employment (volunteering or training). Young people from diverse backgrounds are better equipped to seek employment in a significantly challenging employment period.

Appendix D: One Million Mentors Theory of Change



Appendix E: Stand Out initial programme Theory of Change



Appendix F: More detail on method and analysis

Table F:1: Survey participants

Survey	Cohort 1 (July 2021)	Cohort 2 (October 2021)	Cohort 3 (November 2021)	Total
Pre survey (upon entry to the programme)	**136**	**95**	**133**	**364**
Post survey (upon completion of the core curriculum)	**72**	**61**	**80**	**213**
Follow-up survey, three months after the core curriculum ended	**74**	**34**	**37**	**145**
Follow-up survey, six months after the core curriculum ended	**60**	**37**	**53**	**150**
Total	**147**	**121**	**166**	**434**

Table F:2: Breakdown of survey participants

	Application data		Pre-survey		Post-survey		Three-month follow-up survey		Six-month follow-up survey	
Total	**434**	**100%**	**364**	**100%**	**213**	**100%**	**145**	**100%**	**150**	**100%**
Cohort 1	147	34%	136	37%	72	34%	74	51%	60	40%
Cohort 2	121	28%	95	26%	61	29%	34	23%	37	25%
Cohort 3	166	38%	133	37%	80	38%	37	25%	53	35%
Female	301	69%	253	70%	149	70%	89	62%	102	68%
Male	117	27%	97	27%	54	25%	48	33%	41	27%
18-21	195	45%	159	44%	94	44%	54	37%	64	43%
22-25	222	51%	189	52%	108	51%	87	60%	80	53%
26+	17	4%	16	4%	11	5%	4	3%	6	4%

White	134	31%	112	31%	66	31%	46	32%	19	32%
BME	293	68%	249	68%	145	68%	98	68%	40	68%
Prefer not to say	7	1%	3	1%	2	1%	1	0%	0	0%

Qualitative research

Depth interviews with programme stakeholders too place between May and June 2021 as part of the scoping stage. Depth interviews with programme leads, focus groups with mentors, tutors and volunteers, and depth interviews with participants took place between June 2021 and March 2022.

Table F:3: Achieved sample for qualitative discussions

Audience	Cohort 1 (July 2021)	Cohort 2 (October 2021)	Cohort 3 (November 2021)	Total
Participating young people	**30**	**30**	**0***	**60**

*not included in the evaluation due to limitations on timing.

Table F:4: Achieved sample for qualitative interviews with individuals involved in delivering the programme

Audience	Scoping (May 2021)	Follow-up (October 2021)
Strategic stakeholders	**2**	**2**
Operational staff	**3**	**1**
Recruitment Partner	**0**	**2**
Coaches	**0**	**7**
Corporate Volunteers	**0**	**7**
Mentors	**0**	**6**
Total	**5**	**25**

Performance and management information (MI)

UpRising shared the following MI with IFF Research via an Excel document which contained detailed information on the following metrics:

- Participant application form data
- Participant evaluation survey data
- Attendance data, showing a record of which individuals had attended which core curriculum sessions (live). Participants could also watch the sessions back in their own time as they were recorded. This has not been recorded as systematically as Notion is an open access platform without personalised logins.
- Workshop data, showing a record of which individuals had attended the curriculum workshops.
- Notion analytics, showing (anonymous) participant engagement with Stand Out's online e-learning platform between late July and early February 2022.
- Slack analytics, by date, channel and participant
- Notes from a mid-programme review conducted by UpRising staff internally (for cohort one only)
- Staff session reflections as part of a continuing process of learning and development, for all three cohorts.
- Alumni newsletters data, showing campaign monitoring (e.g., sent, opened, clicked, unsubscribed). When participants finish the curriculum, they are automatically added to the campaign monitor alumni subscriber list and therefore receive the alumni newsletter, unless they have opted out of email 'marketing' communications.
- Mentoring data, including number of sessions attended.

Analysis

Performance and management information

The MI was reviewed for completeness and use. The participant application form data was used to assess the profile of participants on the programme, while the evaluation data was merged with the three-month follow-up survey data collected by IFF (see below). Analysis of attendance data and mentoring data enabled evaluation of the programme dosage.

Survey

The participant surveys were tabulated, combining the online survey evaluation data hosted by UpRising (and shared as part of the programme MI) with the three-month follow-up survey data hosted by IFF.

Analysis variables were created based on participant profile, such as cohort, age, gender and ethnicity, and applied as cross-breaks.

Significance testing was applied to explore whether differences between groups of participants or between metrics over time were statistically significant. All differences reported are statistically significant, using a 95% confidence level. There were some limitations on the extent to which sub-group analysis could be performed, as described in more detail in the Evaluation Limitations section below.

Qualitative evidence

Using a grounded theory approach, interviews, focus groups and peer feedback were analysed using an Excel-based analysis framework, structured around key themes. This allows analysis of individual interviews, as well as analysis by themes or other specific audiences. Layers of categorising/coding of the data helped to ensure objectivity in analysis as well as providing a full audit trail of the analysis process.

Triangulation

We triangulated all evaluation evidence. In practice, this meant analysing all evidence sources, then comparing and contrasting the findings across those evidence sources. During this, we weighed up the quality of evidence. Any inconsistencies between different data sources were explored and explained. Where there were competing findings by evidence source, stronger evidence was considered over evidence with gaps. The Theory of Change explained how the activities undertaken aimed to contribute to a chain of results that lead to the intended impacts on participants. This was our analytical framework for a "performance story". All research evidence – qualitative and quantitative data – was assessed on the extent to which it supports/challenges the theory underpinning delivery.

Appendix G: Evidence review

Introduction

Aims of this review

1. **To understand the scope of evidence on the impact of mentoring and employability programmes.** To identify 'what works' and if there is evidence that programmes with similar characteristics lead to the outcomes desired for participants on the Stand Out programme. Or conversely to understand if there are contra-indications for such programmes which may challenge the assumption that participants will achieve these outcomes. It will also flag where there are gaps in evidence which will need to be filled by the current evaluation.
2. **To gauge how feasible it will be to conduct a future impact evaluation for the Stand Out programme.** By reviewing the methodology and findings of evaluations of similar programmes, and associated literature to review their robustness and the possibilities of applying similar approaches with this programme.

This report largely focusses on the first aim, to inform the Theory of Change and current process map. However, many of the findings here inform whether similar programmes are effective, or if particular elements affect this and give insight into the potential effect of dosage, duration, intensity and other programme features.

1 Methodology

Identification of sources

A rapid review of the scope of evidence was undertaken, not a systemic formal literature review. This enabled a flexible approach, following up the most promising and relevant sources in a short timeframe.

Partners provided 11 documents for review (including evaluations of previous similar UpRising and 1MM programmes), and cross-references from these sources identified 38 potentially of interest. IFF internally identified 23 documents (from previous research studies on similar topics, and cross-references from these). A further 28 sources were selected from online searches on Google / Google Scholar based on combinations of the following terms: mentoring, employability, programme, evaluation, online, UK, youth, disadvantaged, unemployed, labour market, ethnic, BAME.

The range of sources identified included both rigorous academic studies and 'grey' literature; peer-reviewed academic studies, literature and evidence reviews, process and impact evaluations, other qualitative and quantitative research, programme reviews conducted internally and externally and policy papers.

Each source was dealt with in the following way.

1. Screened, with the focus on executive summaries, abstracts and conclusions.
2. If considered potentially relevant the details were entered into a Document Log spreadsheet. This included a brief summary of contents, the country of focus, whether it was concerned with mentoring and / or employability and whether this was online, the definition of mentoring / employability covered and the profile of targeted participants. Short documents were fully reviewed at this stage, and for some longer documents key points were taken. *100 sources have been initially reviewed and entered into the Document Log so far, as shown in* ***Error! Reference source not found.***.
3. Prioritised for further review – whether it appeared probably useful / dependent on priorities / probably not useful to review in more detail. This was based on how similar the programme(s) and the target participant group were to the Stand Out FD / 1MM programme, whether there was any online delivery, location and the age of the source. The robustness of any findings was also considered, so some sources are highly robust but based on programmes which are less directly relevant (e.g. meta-analyses of the impact of school-based mentoring in the USA) whilst others may be less robust but discuss highly relevant programmes in nature (e.g. qualitative evaluations of recent UK online mentoring programmes).

Ultimately, 26 documents were fully reviewed.

Types of literature

There is strong evidence that some mentoring and other employability interventions have led to positive impacts for young people, but there are limited rigorous studies on comparable programmes.

In general terms, there is evidence that mentoring and other employability interventions 'work', but there is considerable variation in effectiveness depending on the nature of the programme and the target group. Issues that impact on success are: (1) duration and intensity of support, (2) quality and flexibility matching process for mentoring, (3) profile of participants and complexity of their needs.

Areas of evidence gaps include: (1) how online delivery affects outcomes (2) articulating the link between increased confidence and aspirations – and movements into EET, (3) understanding the context within which EET outcomes are / are not achieved, (4) how particular types of activities contribute to employability programmes being effective

Robust impact evaluations have been conducted on UK-based mentoring and other employability programmes using government administrative data and randomised control trials. These methods may not be possible for Stand Out, but the use of non-participant registrants as a control group and / or comparisons with Labour Force Survey data could be considered (depending on participant needs profile).

2 Findings

Comparability of programmes and rigour of sources

Definition of mentoring

Mentoring is used to describe a wide range of programmes with great variety in terms of content, duration and intensity. Programmes reflect the development of mentoring from school-based 'Big Brother Big Sister' US programmes in the early twentieth century and now mentoring encompasses many settings including education and training providers, workplaces and the community (Armitage et al, 2020).

Target groups also differ with many US studies based on mentoring of school-age children, UK programmes include those aimed at young people who are NEET, in HE, about to transition from school, have disabilities, of a particular gender or interested in a specific career path. Mentors might be voluntary peers or young people a few years older than the mentee, working professionals or experienced social workers. Mentor recruitment methods, training, support and programme structure are very variable.

Very few programmes delivered purely online have been evaluated, though the pandemic has resulted in several organisations switching methods and evaluations are in the pipeline (Centre for Youth Impact, 2018). Some which have been delivered virtually have relied on messaging / email rather than video calls.

Whilst some programmes have desired outcomes around employment or education others aim to modify behaviour and attitudes, avoid risks (e.g. a young person becoming involved in crime or drug misuse) or have unspecified, vague intentions. Studies reviewing and comparing mentoring programmes often use very loose (or no) definitions so it can be unclear how applicable findings might be to the Stand Out FD / 1MM programme.

Definition of other employability interventions

Throughout this report unless mentoring is specifically mentioned 'employability interventions' or 'employability programmes' largely refers to other types of programmes e.g. courses, sessions or taught content. There are no standardised definitions of 'employability' or related terms such as 'work ready', for example one recent review defines employability as 'the skills needed to be able to move self-sufficiently within the labour market', but others have more basic definitions.

There is a wide array of employability programmes in different settings, run by different organisations there is no core list of activities which are always provided. Interventions may offer activities including job search assistance (e.g. interviews and CV writing), job skills training, work experience (paid and unpaid), information, advice and guidance (IAG) career counselling, education classes.

Whilst employability programmes have a narrower focus as their aims are around employment there is still notable divergence in precise desired outcomes, delivery approaches, activities undertaken, the characterisation of groups in need of this support, who delivers it and their agenda. Whilst some interventions seek meaningful and / or sustainable employment through the delivery of employability skills, others aim simply for employment.

There are two main theoretical models to build employability.

- **Work first** focusses on rapid entry to work, for example offering job search assistance or work experience. This is described by others as 'job search assistance', building skills to find work. They often have narrow employment aims.
- **Human capital**. focusses on training and development, to increase skills and qualifications and to reduce the effects of particular disadvantages *before* assisting individuals to find work. For example 'second chance' full time education programmes,

or training to meet entry level industry standards. This is described by others as 'job skills training', and can be much wider, including social skills or behavioural capabilities relating to employment. They often have wider employment aims which take sustainability and meaningfulness of employment into consideration.

Rigour

There are substantial number of sources with robust analysis based on US mentoring programmes including around a dozen large meta-analyses on impact. Although, as outlined above, these programmes are usually fundamentally different from the Stand Out programme they do provide some headline indications of what mentoring might (and might not) achieve. They are frequently cited and are probably the basis for the widespread acceptance that mentoring 'works'.

There are many process evaluations and research reports focussed on delivery and outputs (e.g. the mentee / mentor relationship being sustained over a particular period), including UK based studies. Often these are based on qualitative research and explore what features of mentoring (e.g. intensity, duration, type of mentor) can make it successful (measured in terms of outputs such as the relationship being sustained, the programme being completed and satisfaction) (DfE, 2014).

Several DWP programmes for UK unemployment benefit claimants which have featured mentoring alongside other employability interventions have been evaluated rigorously by external researchers utilising administrative data and matched non-participant data who have been able to report their net impact on employment, additionality and cost-benefit analysis (DWP, 2012). However, employability programmes often deliver a different mix of activities and may have wider or longer term aims than these programmes.

Alongside the previous evaluations of 1MM and UpRising programmes particularly relevant UK based sources, largely targeting disadvantaged young people include;

- Employability interventions: *The Youth Contract for 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment or training* – (2014, DfE) – Evaluation reporting impact of programme on outcomes of eligible NEET population, and key lessons from design and delivery. Assessed value for money in relation to costs and outcomes, differences between the two models (national and city areas).
- Mentoring: *'Examining the wider context of formal youth mentoring programme development, delivery and maintenance: A qualitative study with mentoring managers and experts in the United Kingdom' (2018, Children and Youth Services Review)* – qualitative research amongst mentoring experts which explores how individual, inter-personal, organisational, community, policy and society influences programmes. Importance of recognising complexity to ensure delivered as intended and evaluated appropriately.
- Mentoring: *'Building motivation, achievement and progression online: evaluating Brightside's approach to online mentoring*' (2014) – Systematic evaluation of effectiveness of Brightside – a charity which supports young people through a mixture of information provision and online mentoring. Mixed methods: literature review, depths with staff and clients, analysis of web statistics, online participant

survey and detailed content analysis of conversations. Note target group is wider than disadvantaged young people.

- Mentoring: *'Forging futures through mentoring: A risk worth pursuing?'* (2018, Children's Commissioner) – Overview of mentoring provision and review of evidence on mentoring effectiveness, characteristics of good practice, especially for those who are vulnerable e.g. in care. Looks at what evidence suggests about impact of mentoring. Based on analysis of over 350 mentoring programmes, literature reviews and depths with experts.

Scoping the impact of mentoring and employability programmes

'What works' – positive evidence for programmes similar to the Stand Out programme

There are no directly comparable programme evaluations as the type of activities, target group, delivery method and hoped for outcomes vary too widely. Here we outline the factors/variables that evidence suggests are positive for participant outcomes taken from programmes with some similar features to Stand Out. Its worth noting that these factors have been synthesised from a range of evidence sources such as DfE, 2014; Institute of Employment Studies, 2014; Centre for Youth Impact, 2019; University of North Carolina, 2020; YFF, 2021 and therefore no singular reference can be attributed to a specific point.

- **In general terms mentoring 'works' –** there is a substantial amount of evidence that it can have positive impacts. As outlined above much of this is from large US meta-analyses based on multiple Randomised Control Trials, so is robust but based on programmes which can vary substantially to this, although there are similarities.
- **Both the work first and 'human capital' models of employability have been shown to be successful** in impact evaluations.
    - Work first has been shown to be effective in the short term (e.g. moving claimants off out-of-work benefits), but programmes may not have longer term aims or monitor longer term outcomes. Improving ability to recognise and take up relevant opportunities has been found useful and more general employability programmes e.g. career counselling, education classes have been demonstrated to link to short term employment.
    - Human capital based programmes can also be effective, particularly those which offer second chance, full time education or shorter training to meet basic industry standards. Skill development is often reported as critical in increasing employability for example project work, creativity, and online skills. Developing competencies, improving specific qualities and skills tailored to the needs of participants have been found useful in enhancing long term life chances.
- **Broad packages of employability support** – there is evidence that multiple activities and types of support work best. For example the Talent Match evaluation

reported that those participants who had received more types of support were more likely to have secured employment. Robustly evaluated employability programmes with evidence of success most commonly include **job-search skills, education, information, advice and guidance and work experience.**

- Few successful employability interventions teach career skills without also developing **social and emotional capabilities**. Employers require young people to be informed about careers but also to be capable of appropriate behaviours in the workplace. The Talent Match evaluation reported that improvement in job specific skills, motivation, teamwork skills and reliability were strongly linked with being more likely to find employment.
- UK-based mentoring and employability interventions amongst disadvantaged young people can lead to positive employment or education outcomes There is a smaller body, but some robust evidence from programmes which are similar but not identical to this.
- Mentoring and employability programmes targeting **the most disadvantaged / the furthest from the labour market** can lead to successful outcomes for participants. For example the Talent Match programme found that their employability interventions saw 17% of beneficiaries move into sustained employment (of at least six months). Others identify the following groups as furthest from labour market (both those who face these / have faced them in their past); have a disability, have mental ill health, have alcohol or drug misuse issues, are homeless, are in care, are young carers, are in receipt of benefits, have a criminal record, have low educational attainment (do not have 5 GCSEs A to C) or have low aspirations.
- **Mentoring and employability programmes are often successful in achieving 'softer' outcomes** – for example improved confidence, improved well-being, building aspiration, ability to identify opportunities. These can be more beneficial than some 'hard' outcomes over the long term – for example building confidence may be more useful than moving into short term / insecure work unrelated to career aspirations. Previous Fastlaner employability programmes have seen nearly all respondents (who responded to research) report improved career outlook and confidence.
- **It is possible to link these softer outcomes with long-term employment or education outcomes** – various sources report that a rise in confidence or aspiration leads to participants being more likely to look for opportunities, i.e. that they are more likely to get a job or course or training place if they are confident enough to apply for one. Employability programmes that develop job-specific skills, basic academic skills, thinking skills, social skills, personal qualities and career motivation may deliver more benefit in the long term than those which deliver only employment which is short term or poor-quality or under-employment.

- **It meets a need** – there is a need for such programmes as other sources of support have reduces, there is evidence programmes create additionality, and are not displacing others.
- **Participation being voluntary sees better outcomes –** those who volunteer for mentoring or employability programmes often see better outcomes than those who are told it is compulsory (e.g. in order to maintain benefit eligibility). Attracting young people through 'magnet' activities or opportunities that interest them can work, for example music, sport, art or financial magnets such as vouchers for attendance. Though this could reflect that those who volunteer are different in other ways from those who do not which make them more likely to achieve desired outcomes, there are examples where evaluation has been attempted to address this by using registrants who do not go on to fully participate as a control group, and by matching on a wide range of other criteria.
- **A high quality mentor / mentee relationship leads to desired outcomes** – with the mentor being flexible and responsive to the mentees needs.
- Good quality training and support for mentors leads to desired outcomes – this reduces drop out for both mentees and mentors.
- Goal based programmes (ideally based on personalised initial assessments of strengths and barriers) are linked with effectiveness.
- **Shorter programmes can be successful in some ways –** they have been seen to lead to less dependency on the intervention and encourage take up of other opportunities e.g. from friends or family.
- **Long term / onward support can be critical for some participants –** being able to return to 'a place of safety' to discuss opportunities and avoid the 'cliff-edge' of valued support being withdrawn within nothing to replace it. In work support to help young people understand how to conduct themselves successfully has been shown to avoid a cycle of short-term employment then unemployment, particularly for those with notable disadvantages.
- Flexibility to meet needs of participant is linked to successful programmes – duration, frequency, intensity and timing of sessions (as reported by mentoring managers in UK).
- **Online delivery is not detrimental –** evaluations of online mentoring show no decreases in outcomes achieved. There is currently very limited evaluation of employability interventions delivered purely online (though this will be worth reviewing during course of programme as many shifted online during the pandemic).
- **Online delivery allows flexibility** and so can reach a different group previously uninterested (e.g. voluntary downloadable online employability workshops for HE students and graduates have been shown to reach a different participant profile). It can widen access amongst those who may have other commitments and find a rigid face to face schedule hard to meet. Without flexibility interventions involving attendance (at subsidised work, classes) can reduce the number seeking and entering

other employment, i.e. for work first programmes it may cause a problematic displacement activity, and participants may miss other opportunities.

- **A blended approach mixing live and downloadable online content** has been found best – giving some flexibility but also connection with peers and tutors.
    - Guidance is available online although there is no prescription for the exact balance for best results as it depends on content. Live online learning works best for active learning and interaction when learners can participate through questions, giving feedback etc. However, it is best not to attempt to replicate everything taught in a classroom online, some content will be better recorded / downloadable (e.g. videos, shared documents, independent study and assignments). Being able to download some content will enable preparation, catch up, more time and chance to revise.
- The best online programmes can have **highly engaged learners**. Employability training can be **improved by the type of interaction possible online**. Identified best practice includes programmes planned bearing in mind the following.
    - Participants can connect to tutors privately and openly (e.g. FAQ sections, virtual drop-in sessions, a knowledge base,) and also peer to peer communication is enabled (e.g. collaborative documents, social announcement discussion board.
    - The whole learning community is active and are given reasons to participate e.g. community activity, peer to peer, feedback, collaboration, project-based work.
    - Modelling of community-minded behaviour, taking participants experiences and views into account, use engaging language, use polling to build interaction and give immediate feedback.
    - Structure, routine, policies and guidance – all content should be fully accessible and GDPR compliant, tutors need to have policies including safeguarding and acceptable use. Need to clearly communicate expectations of young people (e.g. online etiquette such as dressing as they would for class, privacy, bullying) to keep everyone comfortable.
    - Research shows that for mentoring rapport is more important than the nature of the channel. It can equalise the mentor / mentee relationship (e.g. mentee is not intimidated by mentor arriving in formal work clothes or arranging a meeting somewhere they may feel uncomfortable).

Evidence on 'what does not work' or works less well for similar programmes

Here it is important to consider whether any of these contra-indicators may suggest that the Stand Out approach will not work well / work less well. It's worth noting that these factors have been synthesised from a range of evidence sources such as DfE, 2014; Institute of Employment Studies, 2014; Centre for Youth Impact, 2019; Armitage et al, 2020; Hooley

et al, 2014; Kaufman, 2017; YFF, 2021 and therefore no singular reference can be attributed to a specific point.

- **Not all mentoring and employability programmes for disadvantaged young people are effective** – especially where those furthest from the labour market are the target group. Impact / success varies depending on the programme characteristics, those more likely to be associated with successful outcomes (and / or a relationship that lasts) feature;
    - **Longer duration (at least 12 months)** also long-term follow up support (including in-work).
    - **Intensive support** – frequent contact more than once a week.
    - **High quality, individualised support** – multiple, specialist, practical support can be required to overcome barriers to employment (e.g. with transport systems, challenging family circumstances, housing, mental health issues, social interactions and basic skills).
    - **Flexibility** - meeting arrangements and content to fit around participants lives and interests.
    - **A good, appropriate mentor match** – matching based on career or work aspirations but also hobbies, matching by ethnicity, matching those with relevant specialist skills (e.g. in social work) to help with particular barriers**.** Giving agency to mentees in selecting their mentor has been successful.
- **Short term employment may not enhance long term life chances** – insecure, poor quality employment or underemployment may not be beneficial. Views are though mixed, with some young people positive about any employment as a step towards other aspirations but others seeing it as a step towards insecurity.
- **The most disadvantaged or furthest from the labour market (as defined above) may not be reached if not specifically targeted –** the stated target groups are those from ethnic minority groups, or who face social disadvantage / with low social capital / a long way from the labour market / unemployed or under-employed. Application webpage: 'Unemployed, in part-time or precarious work or in the leaving school or in the final year or leaving of FE / HE. And specifically for those from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds or identify as working class'.
- The most disadvantaged young people are less likely to benefit than those closer to the labour market – some sub-groups, for example those less qualified, have been shown to be less likely to achieve desired outcomes.
- **There are risks of negative effects** especially with vulnerable mentees, those without other stable adult relationships, where the relationship with the mentor ends prematurely, when the mentor has unrealistic expectations. More vulnerable mentees especially can be harmed by early termination / short term intervention.
- **Focus only on importing information, and not developing behaviours can be less successful in the long term.** Some research has looked at the personal

behavioural capabilities required by employers (e.g. being self-aware, receptive, driven, and resilient) and concluded many employability programmes are focussed on providing information rather than developing these behaviours.

- **Classroom-based provision alone may not be sufficient for many, especially disadvantaged young people over 18**. Providing multiple forms of support mixing both the human capital model of training sessions with 'real life' experience of work is most commonly recognised to deliver successful outcomes – for example helping access work experience, build workplace skills, addressing specific personal barriers and support with work searches. not just skill acquisition or work search. Participants need a combination of support types and help addressing specific barriers.
- The Talent Match evaluation reported that completion of particular activities (e.g. volunteering, additional training, improving ability to write a CV or identifying other training to take up) were associated with a decreased likelihood of entering employment, though a number of other factors were also at play e.g. the local labour market and individuals' distance from the labour market.
- **Not all online teaching is effective** – especially where those furthest from the labour market are the target group. Success varies depending on the programme characteristics, those more likely to be associated with successful outcomes (and / or a relationship that lasts) feature;
    - Considered use of tools – popular social media or the latest complicated software does not necessarily provide the best forum. Social media can lead to blurring of professional boundaries, Whilst the functions for polling, breakouts, screen sharing, annotation and collaboration can be very useful to build engagement many 'tried and tested' packages, which young people and tutors will be more familiar with offer these.
    - Staff support – some may not be confident shifting online. Competency and access to tools (e.g. mics) needs to be considered, good practice shared as CPD and opportunities to build confidence and practice with a 'critical friend'.
    - Support for vulnerable young people – not all young people may feel they can interact freely online or instinctively know how to use software. Programme managers / tutors need to understand any barriers they may need help to overcome e.g. creating online profiles, managing online identity using security and privacy settings, keeping data secure, low bandwidth, no suitable space at home. Inducting and facilitating slowly ('scaffolding') has been shown to be most successful. Some young people may be at risk of isolation or other wellbeing issues, so need to know how to raise concerns about their learning, or about their interactions with others.
    - Participants are most effective when are provided with guidance on a daily routine, how to set up time and space and completion timelines. Without a

blend of live and downloadable content the risk of disengagement is higher (the blend provides both flexibility and interaction).

- **Online content that is all delivered live or all downloadable online is generally not found as effective** as learning through a blend of the two, with live sessions focussed on interaction, feedback and building peer-to-peer relationships whilst downloadable content can provide extra time to digest complicated material and preparation.
- **Solely online delivery is not favoured by most mentees** – a blend of online and in-person delivery is generally preferred. Programmes conducted entirely online can lead to difficulties building initial rapport / trust. However, there is little guidance about what constitutes an ideal balance.
- Ignoring **structural issues such as race, class, disability and gender** limits the benefits for groups affected by discrimination. These characteristics can impact outcomes for employability programmes, for example evaluation of the Talent Match programme found that young people who were male, without a disability and / or were heterosexual were more likely to secure employment. Apprenticeships, which offer many young people a route into employment, see the under-representation of females in gender-segregated sectors which tend to be lower paid, and disabled people and ethnic minorities more broadly.
    - Every critical measure of **low social mobility** (including unemployment for young people and gaps in school attainment) was found to be poor by the government's social mobility commission in 2019. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to have made each of these factors worse especially as digital access to access employability programmes is limited. In March 2020, only 51% of households earning between £6,000 to £10,000 had home internet access, compared with 99% of households with an income over £40,000. Allowing flexibility in time given to respond, and when / how content can be accessed could help, though as outlined above, missing out on live lessons may further disadvantage more vulnerable young people.
    - Critical Race Theory suggests that the 'race' of young people matters because they will face barriers based on assumptions during their search for employment. For example BAME students seeking work placements may be at a disadvantage as White students are more likely to be able to organise these through existing contacts and it has been shown that young people with a 'BAME sounding' name on their CV are around 50% less likely to gain an interview relative to one with a white sounding name.
    - To address these issues employability support processes need to recognise the endemic discrimination faced by some young people (and not ignore these issues). Programmes should not be built around a default young person assumed to not experience employment barriers such as racism. Tailored support should be provided in order to help mitigate the disadvantages they are likely to face in a wider labour market.

Gaps in evidence which will need to be filled by the current evaluation

- **Often 'hard' impacts are smaller than anticipated**. Whilst some participants do achieve the desired employment / education outcomes proportions are often lower than expected. Organisations often appear a little surprised / disappointed as they don't feel this fits with their experience that their programme had a positive effect. Some employability interventions have been seen to lead to young people 'feeling closer' to employment, achieving temporary employment, or employment not aligned with aspirations. These small steps can be seen as positive outcomes by young people, (Talent Match Evaluation and Fastlaner's 'A helping hand into employment') *This flags it may be useful to capture steps / small shifts towards the headline outcomes, and that qualitative approaches may be valuable.*
- **Long term impact,** some studies suggest that impact of employability interventions may grow over time, for example the Future Jobs Fund (subsidised employment and employability skills) found a positive next impact after 18 months and hypothesised this would continue to increase. However, this was largely concerned simply with whether participants remained in some of employment, there is little assessment available about the quality of longer term employment and how often any underemployment initially entered leads to better quality employment. *Longitudinal approaches may be valuable, though it will be complex to pin-point programme impact from a distance.*
- There is little evidence to link soft outcomes from programmes to 'better' employment or education outcomes which link to social mobility. For example one report links the development of personal capabilities with being work-ready but do not evidence the next step into employment, or employment which leads to social mobility. *It is not explicitly reported, so the assumption needs testing that growth in confidence and aspirations means participants seek higher level courses / more skilled employment which leads to social mobility.*
- **There is very limited evaluation of online employability programmes**, insight into the impact of a shift to online teaching and learning in the UK is mainly based on HE courses. There is a paucity of studies in how to best support diverse learners online (e.g. on equity, accessibility, inclusion, ethics) and whilst there are many studies on the engagement of online learners these tend to be very specific and not applicable to the audience and content discussed here. There is also little to say how effectiveness varies by those accessing live or downloadable content.
- There is a **lack of formative and process evaluations to assess effectiveness of different elements of online employability programmes**. Whilst robust existing evaluations can show they were effective overall at getting young people ready for work, it is not proven which actual approaches are more effective or why. For example participants on the Talent Match programme on average received 5.8 different forms of support, with some receiving 11 different forms. Although the evaluation identified that those who received some forms of support were more likely to have successful outcomes (see 'what works' above)

there is recognition that multiple factors were at play including local labour market conditions, the pre-programme activities of participants and demographic factors.

- **Context impacts outcomes, but unclear specifically why particular factors have particular impact –** evidence highlights the importance of considering demographics, the wider context of mentee's life and other interventions they may be subject to. But there is little research why these elements might affect outcomes. *We are capturing a range of information about young people's wider lives to help explain drivers of outcomes. For the impact feasibility element we need to consider what else it is useful to capture, considering the other points made – balancing the time needed to collect.*
- **No reliable studies assessing how delivery format (online / offline / blended) affects outcomes** – research in this area is in it's infancy, and where programmes are described as online they may use only email rather than video calls.
- **Local labour market** – some studies have taken this into account to enable demonstration of additionality, and also that whilst young people can be equipped with employability skills etc if there are no suitable opportunities impact will be limited. For example the ONS Labour Force Survey.

Appendix H: Documents reviewed during scoping stage

Armitage, H. et al (2020), What Makes for Effective Youth Mentoring Programmes: A rapid evidence summary. Nesta and Manchester Metropolitan University.

Belmana (2015), Systematic evidence Review (for Volunteer It Yourself).

Brightside (2020), The power of online mentoring: Students three times more likely to access Higher Education.

Busse, H. et al (2018), 'Examining the wider context of formal youth mentoring programme development, delivery and maintenance: A qualitative study with mentoring managers and experts in the United Kingdom', Children and Youth Services Review 95, pp. 95-108.

Damm, C. et al, (2020), Talent Match Evaluation: A Final Assessment. The National Lottery Community Fund.

Demos (2016), Evaluation of UpRising's Leadership Programme.

Department for Education (2014), The Youth Contract for 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment or training evaluation.

Department for Work and Pensions (2012), Impact and Costs and Benefits of the Future Jobs Fund.

Future First (2020), Future Me Online Mentoring Evaluation Report.

Hooley, T., Hutchinson, J. & Neary, S. (2014). Building Motivation, Achievement and Progression Online: Evaluating Brightside's Approach to Online Mentoring. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Houston, K. (2010), Online Employability Workshops – Local or Global?

Impetus, the Young Foundation and the Social Research Unit at Dartington (2014), Ready for Work.

Institute of Employment Studies and YFF (2020), Supporting disadvantaged young people into meaningful work.

Institute of Employment Studies, CEI, University of Warwick, PRI, Leeds Metropolitan University (2014), The Youth Contract for 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment or training evaluation.

Jankowski, GS (2020), The 'Race' Awarding Gap: What can be done?

JISC (2020), Digital Pedagogy Toolkit.

Kaufman, M. (2017), E-mentoring: National Mentoring Resource Center Model Review.

Mobilise Public Ltd (2021), One Million Mentors. Evaluation 2020/21 – Interim Report.

Symonds, Jennifer E. and O'Sullivan, Carmel (2017), 'Context and Implications Document for: Educating young adults to be work-ready in Ireland and the

United Kingdom: A review of programmes and outcomes', Review of Education Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 264-266.

The Behavioural Insights Team (2019), One Million Mentors Process Evaluation.

The Centre for Youth Impact (2018), Can you bottle a good relationship? Learning about mentoring in the Talent Match programme.

The Centre for Youth Impact (2019), Building Confidence: Final Report on the First Impact Accelerator Cohort.

University of North Carolina, Educational Leadership (2020), A systematic review of research on online teaching and learning from 2009 to 2018.

The Girls' Network (2021), The Girls' Network Covid-19 Impact Report.

University of North Carolina, Educational Leadership (2020), A systematic review of research on online teaching and learning from 2009 to 2018.

UpRising (2021), Improvement meeting.

Youth Futures Foundation (2021), What works according to YFF.

Appendix I: Evaluation framework

Element	Research question	Theme	Source	Outcomes to explore	Subgroups to focus on	Comments
Programme delivery	What were the processes for onboarding and project set up of the core programme, ongoing and wraparound support? How well did the set up process go and why?	Programme set up	Depths with delivery leads (round 1)			
	How was the core programme delivered? How well did the core programme go and why?	Delivery of core programme	Depths with delivery leads (round 1 and 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors) Peer to peer research Depths with young people			Note that we would also want to explore the ToC assumptions with this point, when finalised
	How was the wrap around support delivered? How well did the wrap around support go and why?	Delivery of wraparound support	Depths with delivery leads (round 1 and 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors) Peer to peer research Depths with young people			
	How was the ongoing support delivered? How well did the ongoing support go and why?	Delivery of ongoing support support	Depths with delivery leads (round 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors) Peer to peer research Depths with young people			

	What were the main risks to delivering the programme?	Risks to delivery	Depths with delivery leads (rounds 1 and 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors)			
	What were the key lessons learnt from the programme? If the programme was going to be repeated, what would they do differently?	Lessons learnt	Depths with delivery leads (rounds 1 and 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors)			
Effectiveness of the programme	What did participants achieve as a result of the programme?	Perception of participants acheivements as a result of the programme	Peer to peer research Depths with young people Depths with delivery leads (round 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors) Pre and post surveys	Distance travelled against outcome goals Increased personal effectiveness Raised participant perceptions of what they can achieve	Gender Ethnicity Disablity Additional needs Criminal conviction Highest educational qualitification Free school meals	
	In what ways has the programme helped participants?	Perception of how the programme has helped participants	Peer to peer research Depths with young people Depths with delivery leads (round 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors) Pre and post surveys	Increased exposure to the world of work Increased confidence Increased social networks Improved tacit skills Improved wellbeing		

			amoungst participants Increased competitiveness in the labour market	
To what extent was each aspect of the programme useful for young people?	Perception of what was more or less useful about the programme for young people	Peer to peer research Depths with young people Depths with delivery leads (round 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors)		
Who did the programme help and why?	Who the programme helped and why	Peer to peer research Depths with young people Depths with delivery leads (round 2) Focus groups with delivery staff (incl mentors and tutors) Pre and post surveys		Analysis of qualitiative interviews with young people and pre and post surveys by key subgroups as well as specific questions to delivery staff on their perception of who the programme helped and why

Appendix J: Overview of how each data collection method was designed

Due to the nature of the study encompassing many strands the below outlines the rationale behind the overarching quantitative and qualitative strands of the research.

Quantitative Research

This covers the participant application data and quantitative surveys; participation for which were all voluntary and not incentivised.

All potential participants completed application data covering a variety of essential information to establish eligiblity for the programme. Some base line measures for the programme can be traced back to application data.

The baseline survey constitutes the first point from which IFF Research collaborated with Stand Out to develop survey questions from which they could measure programme objectives through-out the evaluation. This encompassed multiple stages of questionnaire development with collaboration across IFF Research, the Stand Out programme and YFF for sign off.

The subsequent surveys (Post/ 3 month follow up and 6 month follow up) were essentially evolutions of the original base line survey. Adapted based on the needs of the programme evaluation at said point in the research. Each round of questionnaire developed encompassed questionnaire drafting by IFF, followed by multiple rounds of amends and sign off by both Stand Out and YFF.

The pre/ post and 3 month follow up surveys were conducted by IFF Research's CATI telephone interviewer team, the 6 month survey was conducted online by participants sent out via Stand Out's communications. As a standard, the interviewers were briefed on the survey content, the participant profile and aany other relevant information to the survey before conducting fieldwork. Early on in fieldwork the participant data was exported and checked for quality control purposes.

Qualitative research

This covers the group focus groups, young person interviews, delivery lead interviews, peer-to-peer research; participation for which were all voluntary and not incentivised.

All resources required to conduct interviews and focus group; such as questionnaire scripts, discussion guides for focus groups, were initially drafted by IFF Research and shared for feedback and sign-off with Stand Out and YFF. Interviews were conducted across the IFF Research team as well as via their interviewing team. As a standard, the first interviews are conducted by a senior researcher to ensure quality control on the interview content and to provide example for subsequent interviewers.

The peer-to-peer research was developed with a YFF Steering group of young people, separate to the Stand Out programme. The Stand Out programme then nominated engaged young people to take part in this strand of the research. Young people were paired up to conduct interviews with their allocated partner, taking turns. Following this, IFF held a short

feedback session focusing on what they had learnt about their partners experience of the programme.

Appendix K: Baseline Survey Questionnaire

A Main section

We'd like to find out a bit more about you, before you start Stand Out. We'll be asking you some of the same questions again during your Stand Out journey to find out how you feel as you progress through the programme.

ASK ALL

A1 **Have you ever done any of the following?**

Please select all that apply.

MULTICODE.

Undertaken some form of work experience	1	
Undertaken some form of volunteering	2	
Taken up additional training outside of school or college	3	
Been mentored	4	
Drafted a CV	5	
Applied for jobs (including apprenticeships)	6	
Attended at least one interview	7	
Completed an apprenticeship	8	
Gained employment	9	
Set up my own business	10	
None of the above	11	
Prefer not to say	12	

ASK IF A1 = 6

A2 **Roughly how many job or apprenticeship applications do you make in a typical week?**

WRITE IN (NUMERIC)		
Don't know	1	
Prefer not to say	2	

ASK ALL

A3 **Do you currently have a confirmed offer of employment or study?**

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

ASK IF A3 = 1

A4 **What is the offer of employment or study for?**

MULTICODE

Working full-time	1	
Studying full-time	2	
Working part-time	3	
Studying part-time	4	
A zero hours contract of employment	5	
Apprenticeship / training scheme	6	
Other	8	
Prefer not to say	9	

NEW PAGE

ASK ALL

A5 **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

◢ *SINGLE CODE.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to say
_1 Once I have started a task, I struggle to finish it	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 When I'm given tasks, I can complete them to a high standard	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 I am confident about having a go at things that are new to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 If I work hard, I will get what I want	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 I feel confident I can achieve what I want	1	2	3	4	5	6
_6 Making plans for the future is a waste of time	1	2	3	4	5	6
_7 I have confidence in myself	1	2	3	4	5	6
_8 I am confident in my strengths to help me get a job	1	2	3	4	5	6

◢ NEW PAGE

ASK ALL

A8 **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

SINGLE CODE.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to say
_1 If something goes wrong, I struggle to bounce back and carry on	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Getting rejected from a job is a normal part of the job search process	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 I'm not sure what career I'd like to pursue	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 I know or have met someone in the career I'm interested in pursuing	1	2	3	4	5	6

NEW PAGE

ASK ALL

A7 **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

SINGLE CODE.

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know
_5 I know how to demonstrate skills employers are looking for	1	2	3	4	5	6
_6 A range of different educational and career options are open to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
_7 I know how to go about getting the experience or training I need to get the job or qualification I want	1	2	3	4	5	6
_8 When I meet new people, I can make a good impression	1	2	3	4	5	6
_9 I know how to set myself apart from other job applicants	1	2	3	4	5	6
_10 I know what employers look for in the recruitment process	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL

A8 **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

SINGLE CODE.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to say
_1 I have positive relationships with people I have worked or volunteered with	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 I have relationships that will help me get a job	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 I know people I can call on for employment advice	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 I feel disconnected from people my age	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 If I needed help, there are people who would be there for me	1	2	3	4	5	6
_6 I have friends who provide moral support around fulfilling my career goals	1	2	3	4	5	6
_7 I have friends I can talk to about my career aspirations	1	2	3	4	5	6

NEW PAGE

ASK ALL

A9 **Where would you rate yourself on the following skills:**

SINGLECODE

	No skills in this area and I don't think it is important	No skills in this area but I want to build this skill	I have taken some small steps to build this skill	I have taken some large steps to build this skill	I feel that this skill is one of my areas of strength	Prefer not to say
_1 Drafting a CV	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Completing an application form	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 Job interview skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 Communication skills (e.g.. politeness, appropriate language, clearly explaining yourself)	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 Personal presentation (e.g. dress appropriately for work)	1	2	3	4	5	6

B Additional demographics

NEW PAGE

ASK ALL

We'd now like to ask you a few more questions about yourself. It's your choice whether you'd like to answer them.

B1 **Which of these best describes the accommodation you are living in at the moment?**

Rented privately	1	
Rented from a council or local authority	2	
Rented from a Housing Association	3	
Being bought on a mortgage/bank loan	4	
Shared ownership where you pay part rent and part mortgage	5	
Owned outright	6	
Living with friends/relatives and paying some rent	7	
Living with friends/ relatives and not paying any rent	8	
You are living in temporary or sheltered accommodation or are rough sleeping	9	
Other	10	
Don't know	11	
None of these	12	

B2 **Do any of the following experiences apply to you?**

Please select all that apply.

MULTICODE

I have been in local authority care	1	
I have been convicted of a criminal offence	2	
I have experienced alcohol dependency	3	
I have experienced drug dependency	4	

NEW PAGE

FINAL SCREEN FOR ONLINE

Thank you very much for your time today.

Just to confirm, we'll be keeping your anonymised responses for analysis purposes and if you'd like a copy of your data, to change your data, for your data to be deleted or to lodge a complaint, then please follow the process outline on our webpage: http://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr/. You also have a right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and you can do so by calling their helpline on 0303 123 1113.

If you have any questions about the research, then please get in contact with Anya Karadia at IFF Research on 020 7250 3035 or Anya.Karadia@iffresearch.com.

For more information, please see the link to our privacy policy:
https://www.iffresearch.com/standout-privacy/

B Additional demographics

NEW PAGE

ASK ALL

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You are living in temporary or sheltered accommodation or are rough sleeping	9	
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MULTICODE

I have been in local authority care	1	
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I have experienced drug dependency	4	