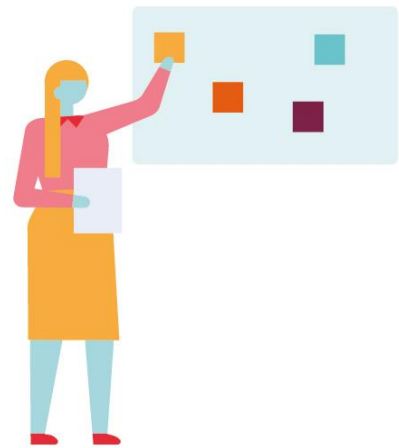


Inspiring Futures evaluation

Summary for children and young people

Cordis Bright
August 2023



Introduction

About Inspiring Futures

Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) is an organisation that aims to help young people from all different backgrounds into work. YFF gives funding to other organisations to help find out what works and why.

Young people already had challenges in moving into further education, training and work. The COVID-19 outbreak made these challenges even more difficult.

To help with this, YFF and BBC Children in Need (BBC CIN) developed a programme called Inspiring Futures. Inspiring Futures gave funding to 85 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in England to deliver positive activities for children and young people, especially those with the biggest difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

About the evaluation

[Cordis Bright](#) is a research organisation that is helping BBC CIN and YFF to find out what worked and why in the Inspiring Futures programme.

We worked with young peer researchers at every stage of the evaluation, in a process called co-production. Co-production means working together and sharing power with people who have lived experience of something that you are focussing on. To find out more about this, head here:

<https://sway.office.com/N7rAdi9iofNectzY>

Young peer researchers were involved in:

- Designing research methods, questions and tools.
- Talking to young people supported by the Inspiring Futures programme.
- Analysis and developing the findings, recommendations, and reports (including this one).

This report tells you what we found out.

More detail can be found in the [main evaluation report](#).

What we found out

Inspiring Futures supported lots of different types of activities

- 85 organisations across England received funding for 12 to 18 months.
- The projects supported children and young people aged from 10 to 24.
- Most often the projects were about:
 - Life skills
 - Training
 - Befriending or mentoring
 - Work placements
 - Issue-based youth work
- The projects supported more children and young people than expected.

Inspiring Futures helped the organisations in a difficult time during the pandemic

The 85 organisations used the funding to:

- Keep going during the pandemic.
- Keep supporting children and young people.
- Begin new activities.
- Change how they were doing things so they could keep helping children and young people during lockdowns and other pandemic challenges.

Children and young people needed different kinds of support during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic caused very big changes in children and young people's daily lives. There was still some need to help children and young people with further education, work and training, like before the pandemic. But there was an even bigger need to help them with things like:

- Confidence, self-esteem, and motivation.
- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Basic needs (accommodation, food, safety).
- Communication, social, and life skills.

Organisations changed how they were doing things so they could better help children and young people

Organisations used the Inspiring Futures funding to change how they were doing things because they could see that children and young people needed different things during the pandemic.

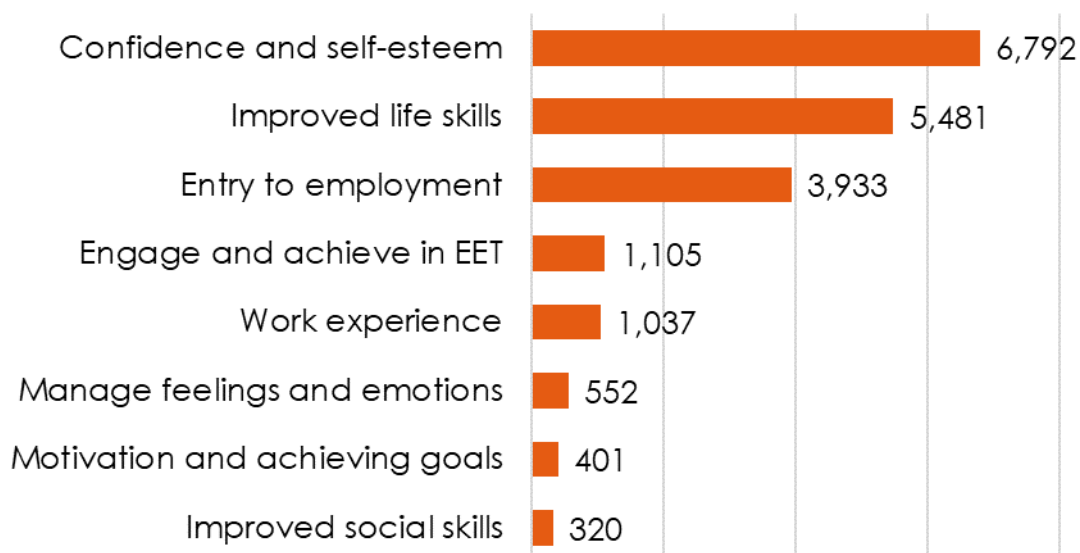
The organisations started:

- Supporting families with basic needs (accommodation, food, safety).
- Focussing more on helping with confidence, self-esteem and motivation, and with mental health and wellbeing.
- Doing more things online, and finding ways to make things COVID-19 safe when in person.
- Finding new ways to reach children and young people who were more isolated.

Some of these new ways of doing things worked well and the organisations will keep doing them after the pandemic too.

The Inspiring Futures funding helped children and young people in different ways

The chart below shows the different areas that got better for the children and young people who were supported through the Inspiring Futures programme¹:

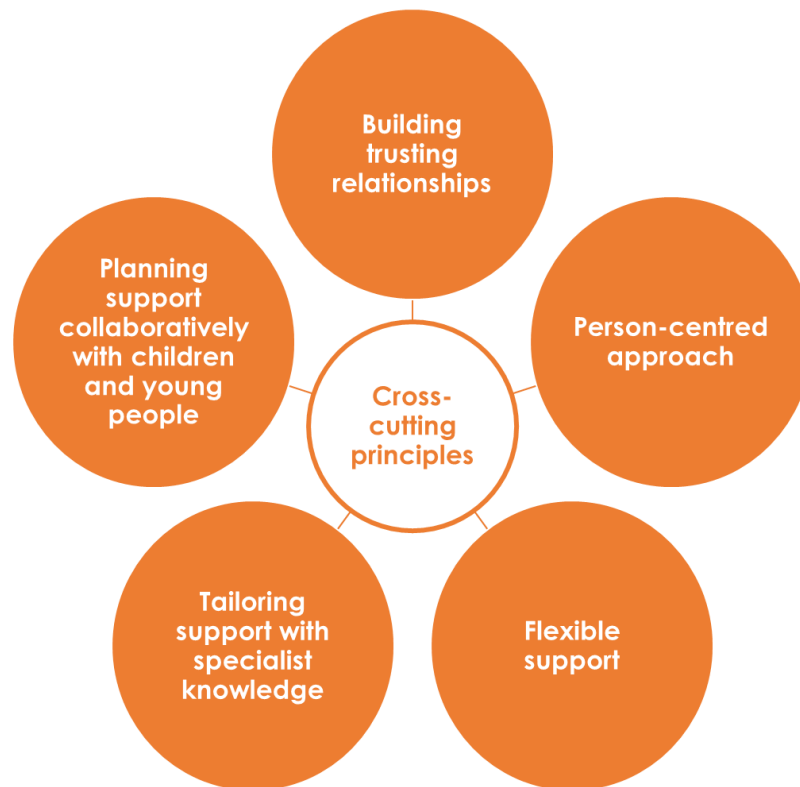


¹ Please note, young people may be counted towards more than one of these 'difference types' and grantees were not all aiming for the same 'difference types'. This data represents 62 of the 85 grantees in England.

There were also some positive changes for family members, like improved relationships and mental health and wellbeing.

We noticed five important things about supporting children and young people's employment pathways

The organisations agreed that these five things are most helpful when supporting children and young people:



The organisations that support children and young people still need funding and help

The organisations that received Inspiring Futures funding agreed that children and young people still need a lot of support, and the cost-of-living crisis is worrying. To help these organisations to continue to support children and young people's employment pathways, they would like:

- Long-term funding.
- Funding that can be used flexibly and for organisational development.
- Opportunities to share learning with other VCS organisations.
- Extra support such as:
 - Training opportunities (e.g. online safeguarding and providing mental health and wellbeing support).

- Organisational development.
- Support with accessing funding.
- Help to develop improved ways of monitoring and evaluation to keep learning what works and why.

The evaluation made recommendations that we developed with key groups

- We came up with sixteen recommendations for how to keep improving. We did this by working with: people who worked on Inspiring Futures, grantees, young peer researchers, and people with insight into policy.
- The recommendations are about:
 - Giving children and young people good-quality support.
 - Making sure that funding and policy helps this happen and works well.
 - Building a strong picture of 'what works'.

Acknowledgements and contact details

About the YRG

We are a group of young peer researchers called the Youth Reference Group (YRG). We got involved because we are passionate about youth voice, and we worked on the Inspiring Futures evaluation to help champion young people's experiences.

As part of our role, we use our own lived experience to identify and recognise the issues young people face. This is vital because in order to understand and combat a system which disadvantages specific groups of young people, we must place young people's voices and experiences at the heart of the process. Anisha and Louise wrote about their experiences working on the Inspiring Futures evaluation project - [here](#). Caroline and Nyasha also wrote about their experiences - [here](#). You can read our tips from working on the evaluation here: <https://sway.office.com/N7rAdi9iofNectzY>

Contact details

To find out more about Inspiring Futures or the evaluation, please get in touch using the details below.

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BBC Children in Need

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Inspiring Futures grantees

Inspiring Futures grantees	
Amaze Brighton & Hove	New Era Foundation
Ansbury	Nightsafe
Artcore Limited	Nightstop Communities Northwest CIC
Aston Mansfield Charity	Not Pants CIC
Aston Villa Foundation	Nova New Opportunities
Autism Bedfordshire	Oxfordshire Youth
AutismAble CIC	Pedestrian Ltd
Babbasa Youth Empowerment Projects CIC	Prior's Court Foundation
Basingstoke Voluntary Services	Recre8now
Beap Community Partnership	Redcar & Cleveland Mind
Bradford College	Rubygirl Limited
Breaking Barriers	Saints Foundation
Buckinghamshire Disability Services (BuDS)	Salmon Youth Centre In Bermondsey
Carefree - Fostering Independence Cornwall	Society for the Advancement of Black Arts
Carers Trust Heart of England	Soft Touch Arts Ltd
Centre of Wellbeing, Training & Culture	Sound Connections
Circle Community	Sport 4 Life UK
Company Three	Step by Step
Construction Industry Trust for Youth	Team Domenica
Creative Youth Network	The Diana Award
Cripplegate Foundation	The Juno Project
Damilola Taylor Trust	The Manchester Deaf Centre Ltd
Derbyshire Autism Services Group (D.A.S.G.)	The Melton Learning Hub
Ellesmere Youth Project	The Mustard Tree Foundation (Reading)
FACE - Family and Community Enterprise	The Platform Project

Inspiring Futures grantees	
Flying Futures CIC	The Proud Trust
Football Unites, Racism Divides Educational Trust	The Royal School for the Blind
Friends, Families & Travellers	Toranj Tuition
Gateway Support Group	Transform Training
Getaway Girls	Trelya
Globalmama Enterprises Limited	UpRising Leadership
Golden Opportunity Skills and Development (GOSAD)	Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action
Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside (AKA Groundwork Lancashire West & Wigan Limited)	WATCH Ltd
Health For All (Leeds)	Westminster House Youth Club
Hearts and Minds	Windsor Fellowship
Highfields Community Association	YES OUTDOORS
Hillingdon Autistic Care & Support	YMCA Derbyshire
InUnity Ltd	YMCA East Surrey
Jacari	YMCA Milton Keynes
Lancashire Women	YMCA Norfolk
Lighthouse Futures Trust	Your Own Place CIC
MATRIX Neurological	YWCA England and Wales t/a Young Women's Trust
Mencap Ealing	

BBC CIN staff

- The Inspiring Futures project was an effort across multiple teams at BBC Children in Need.

YFF staff

- Emily Preston-Jones – Evaluation Manager for Inspiring Futures
- Matthew Poole – Director of Grants and Investment
- Jane Colechin – Deputy Director of Impact and Evidence
- Catherine Fitzgerald
- Shivonne Gates

YRG team members

- Caroline Appleton
- Josh Campbell
- Louise Chandler
- Katie Douglas
- Nyasha Duri
- Anisha Rahman
- Fahmida Yasmin