

Inspiring Futures evaluation

Deep-dive case studies edit

Cordis Bright

November 2022



- 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.
- BBC Children in Need is the BBC's UK charity. Our financial support is committed to funding grassroots organisations and project workers in every corner of the UK, who provide the vital relationships and support to help the children who need us most.
- The COVID-19 outbreak exacerbated multiple challenges for young people looking to access further education, training and work.

As a rapid response to the pandemic to support young people during that challenging time, Youth Futures delivered a series of grants through the Inspiring Futures Fund in partnership with BBC Children in Need.

Through the fund, we provided £7m to 107 frontline charities and social enterprises (85 of which were based in England, which is the focus of this evaluation) to deliver positive activities that support children and young people on their journey towards employment.

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If you have any questions about the application process you can get in touch on 020 7553 4539 or by email at: grants@youthfuturesfoundation.org



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About the research team/evaluator

Youth Futures Foundation commissioned Cordis Bright to evaluate the Inspiring Futures Fund. The commissioning and evaluation management was conducted by members of the Impact and Evidence department, Emily Preston-Jones, Catherine Fitzgerald and Shivonne Gates.

Cordis Bright provides research, evaluation and consultancy aimed at improving public services. You can find out more here:

<https://www.cordisbright.co.uk>

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Deep-dive case studies

November 2022

Introduction

This document presents the eight deep-dive case studies developed as part of the evaluation of Inspiring Futures.

About the deep-dive case studies

These case studies form part of the Inspiring Futures evaluation. They are part of a range of methods used by the evaluation. These deep-dives explore promising practice across different programmes, to improve our understanding of what worked to support children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deep-dive case study grantees

Deep-dive case studies were co-produced with each of the following eight grantees, exploring their Inspiring-Futures funded work:

- Autism Bedfordshire
- Babbasa Youth Empowerment Project
- Circle Collective
- Sound Connections
- Sport 4 Life
- The Proud Trust
- Trelya
- Westminster House Youth Club

These eight case studies provide only a sample of the work of the 85 Inspiring Futures grantees in England.

They were chosen collaboratively by between Cordis Bright, Youth Futures Foundation, and BBC Children in Need colleagues to provide examples of the cross-section of projects funded by Inspiring Futures, and to explore promising practice and interesting approaches.

Methodology

Case study methods and research tools were developed collaboratively between Cordis Bright, Youth Futures Foundation, and BBC Children in Need colleagues.

A mixed methods approach was used for the case studies, comprising:

A virtual focus group with grantee staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A virtual focus group interview with young people who were supported by the grantee, facilitated by Cordis Bright. Where possible, this was co-facilitated with a peer researcher from the YFF's Youth Reference Group.

Review of application, mid-point, and end-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Opportunity for grantee to sense-check findings.

Deep-dive case study research was carried out throughout Spring and Summer 2022, at which point grantees were partway through their grant-funded period.

These methods were largely qualitative, to capture the nuances of each project and understand the differences made in participants' own words. Application and reporting data was used to understand the target and actual numbers of young people reached, and to understand (along with staff and young people consultation) the barriers and challenges faced by the young people supported and the intended differences of the Inspiring Futures-funded work.

Please note, these core methods were adapted slightly in some cases. Young people supported by Westminster House Youth Club were consulted in-person rather than virtually; and young people supported by Autism Bedfordshire were consulted via a survey administered by the grantee, rather than a focus group. Please see the case studies below for more details on these adaptations and the specific numbers consulted for each case study.

Case study grantees were all given the opportunity to sense-check the case study for accuracy and provide feedback before the case study was finalised.

Autism Bedfordshire Case Study

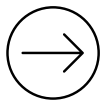
About Autism Bedfordshire	
Description:	Autism Bedfordshire is a charity dedicated to improving the lives of autistic people and their families across Bedfordshire.
Location	Bedfordshire
About the Inspiring Futures grant	
Grant size:	£34,000.00
Length:	12 months
Intended differences for young adults ¹	<p>Autism Bedfordshire aimed to support autistic young adults aged 18-25 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve their self-belief, confidence, and self-esteem. • Develop essential skills for progressing into employment, training, or further education, with a particular focus on improving communication skills. • Achieve qualifications (including entry level pre-employment qualifications) and volunteering records. • Progress towards employment.
About the children and young adults supported	
Numbers of children and young adults supported	At the end of the grant period, Autism Bedfordshire had reached 92 young adults. This was more than its overall aim of 75 young adults over the course of the project. When Autism Bedfordshire was consulted during their grant period, staff shared that this they had reached fewer young adults than expected at mid-point, which they attributed to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on constraining their team's capacity.
Description of the barriers and challenges faced by the children and young adults supported	<p>Autism Bedfordshire aims to support autistic young adults. Each person is unique. However, some common issues autistic young adults face include²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in understanding and using language to communicate. • Difficulty with social interactions and relationships with people. • Functional difficulties, such as coping with a change in routine, thinking flexibly, or planning ahead.

¹ Based on mid-point report form and consultation with Autism Bedfordshire staff.

² Based on application data.

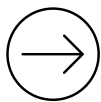
How did Autism Bedfordshire use the Inspiring Futures grant?³

Inspiring Futures funding supported Autism Bedfordshire to provide a range of support to autistic young adults aged 18-25, including:

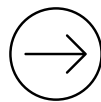


Skills Development courses designed to help autistic young adults to develop communication, employment, social, and life skills in order to become more independent and to be a part of the local community. The size of each group is limited to six young adults.

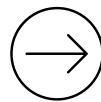
Courses typically took place once a week over a six-to-eight week period. Delivery format varied depending on the content of each session, but all had a practical element during which participants could practice the skills being taught. Course topics included: Resilience in the Local Community, Travel Training, Communication and Social Skills, Building Self-esteem and Confidence, and Pre-Employment and Volunteering (an accredited course leading to a Level 3 Award in Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development).



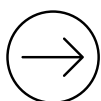
A **Transition Support service**, called '**My Future**', delivered as an intensive three-week summer programme. This programme aimed to support young adults navigate adulthood and in their journey towards employment, education, or training, with a particular focus on enablement and independence. Within this, **skills sessions** included budgeting, travel training, friendship/relationship skills and communication skills.



Social groups of up to 20 young adults, designed to help autistic young adults socialise and develop social skills.



Flexible one-to-one support to autistic young adults in the community. Inspiring Futures funding enabled Autism Bedfordshire to employ a member of staff to deliver one-to-one support online and in the community, depending on the young person's needs



A **monthly support group for parents/carers** to help them understand how best to support their child and help them prepare for adulthood. Attendance at the first three sessions ranged between six to eleven parents. These sessions covered topics including advocacy and rights, Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), post-18 employment and education options, reasonable adjustments in the workplace, and how to treat their children as young adults.

³ The methodology for this case study was slightly different to the other seven produced as part of this project. Rather than qualitative consultation with young adults, a survey approach was used. More about this can be seen at the end of this case study.

The experience of young adults supported by Autism Bedfordshire during the pandemic

Staff at Autism Bedfordshire reported that the young adults they supported **struggled to cope with the frequent changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic**, such as significant changes to their daily routines and a loss of familiar support networks. The uncertainty of the pandemic made autistic young adults feel **anxious, overwhelmed, and scared**, and has caused a **deterioration in mental health**.

‘For someone who is autistic, everything changed so often that it was terrifying.’

- Staff member at Autism Bedfordshire

Social isolation had a significant impact on **young adults’ confidence and ability to socialise with peers**. Staff reported that some young adults fear going back out into the community since the COVID-19 pandemic. In a survey for young adults who had participated in the My Future programme, all seven respondents indicated they wanted to start the programme to gain confidence and improve their social skills.

Autism Bedfordshire staff also said that autistic young adults lost some of their independence during the pandemic, which increased the demand on family members who were supporting them.

The experience of Autism Bedfordshire during the pandemic

Staff at Autism Bedfordshire experienced **increased demand for support** during the pandemic, in terms of the number of young adults needing support and increased level of need. The increased level of need was one reason that Autism Bedfordshire were not able to support all the young adults in need of their support. (Another contributing factor was constrained staff capacity due to COVID-19).

This posed challenges for staff capacity, particularly **capacity to deliver one-to-one support**. Staff reflected that this type of flexible, personalised, one-to-one support is important for autistic young adults who have more complex needs or face more challenging circumstances.

‘For people who are ‘hard to reach’, they
require one to one support.’

- Staff member at Autism Bedfordshire

Adaptions during the pandemic

Staff reported that the Inspiring Futures funding was vital in supporting them to make key adaptations to their delivery during the pandemic. Adaptations included:



Transitioning to online delivery during lockdown. Autism Bedfordshire adapted to delivering support online. For example, the Skills Development courses were delivered via Zoom and initial assessments for My Future were conducted online.



Increased one-to-one support in the community. Inspiring Futures funding supported Autism Bedfordshire to employ a member of staff to provide one-to-one support, and to help address the challenge of increased demand and constrained staff capacity.



Translated government guidance on COVID-19 restrictions to plain English for their members. This helped members of Autism Bedfordshire understand what the current guidance on restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic was and helped alleviate stress caused by frequent changes.

What difference did support make?

Young adults self-assess their progress in Skills Development courses against course-specific objectives at the beginning and the end of the course. Course tutors assess progress by observation, questions, and reflexive discussion during the course. Autism Bedfordshire consider both assessments to measure progress and the difference the support has made to the young adult.

Staff measure outcomes of My Future through case studies and evaluation forms completed by the young adult and their parent/carer.

Several young adults went onto further education, employment or training after participating in My Futures. Four of seven respondents reported that they have started employment, volunteering, or college since completing the programme.

However, the key measures of success for Autism Bedfordshire were **improved self-belief, confidence and self-esteem** and **essential employability skills**, for example communication and social skills. Staff reported that they had helped achieve these differences for the young adults they support.

‘It was about upskilling someone to leave their house for the first time, not getting employment straight away. If you got them a job without doing this, they would leave within a day.’

-Staff member at Autism Bedfordshire

The young people who were consulted agreed, as:

- Six of seven respondents agreed that the programme has helped others.
- Six of seven respondents agreed that they felt more confident about starting to look at employment support.

‘Autism Bedfordshire gives me new skills and allows me to work on my social skills without feeling judged.’

-Young Person

How did Autism Bedfordshire make a difference?

Autism Bedfordshire take a **person-centred approach** to providing support. Staff provide support that is **flexible** and **tailored** to each young adult's circumstances, needs and goals, which they explained allows them to accommodate individual needs and makes support more accessible and easier to engage with. For example, where a young adult did not want to receive one-to-one support over the phone during lockdown, staff members provided support via text or WhatsApp messages.

Staff emphasised the importance of **investing time** to get to know young adults and **going at the pace that works for the young adults**. For example, many young adults received one-to-one support to improve their confidence and social skills before attending the larger social group as part of My Future. In this way, intensive one-to-one support acted as a stepping stone to the next stage of their employment journey.

‘It might be that the young adult needed help walking down the road, getting out the house, or helping them to access community services. Whatever they wanted to achieve, we provided help to break down those practical barriers.’

-Staff member at Autism Bedfordshire

Lessons learned through delivering support

Staff shared their top lessons for supporting autistic young adults in the future:



Adopting a person-centred approach. Providing support that is flexible and tailored to each person is essential when supporting autistic young adults. Staff reflected that it was important to understand autism and invest time to understand each individual because barriers vary by person and environment: *‘there is not one autistic adult that is the same.’*



Being consistent. Staff reported that My Future, their three-week summer programme, was not enough to meet the needs of the young adults they were supporting on its own. It is important for support to be consistent over time, and to offer more support in the school holidays. To do so, Autism Bedfordshire are developing an Easter support programme and hope to run a programme in October half term.



The importance of long-term funding. Staff said that autistic young people require support that is long-term and open-ended. Staff recognised the parallel importance of long-term funding to ensure lasting outcomes are achieved for young adults in their pathways to employment.

‘The grant we received was 12 months. For autistic people, we ideally want two to three years to get outcomes.’

-Staff member at Autism Bedfordshire

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:

A virtual focus group with three Autism Bedfordshire staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A survey completed by 7 young adults who had participated in the My Future programme.

Review of application and mid-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Sense-testing with Autism Bedfordshire to check findings.

This is slightly different to the other seven deep-dive case studies. The young adults were consulted via a short survey designed and administered by Autism Bedfordshire (rather than via a focus group with Cordis Bright and a young peer researcher) as per the young adults' preference. This is a form of engagement that the young adults are more familiar with, as Autism Bedfordshire carries out surveys with them as part of their support and monitoring. As a result, the information shared by young people is more quantitative in nature and less detailed than in some other deep-dive case studies.

Find out more



For more information about Autism Bedfordshire, please contact Sharna Raine at Sharna.raine@autismbeds.org

Babbasa Youth Empowerment Project Case Study

About Babbasa Youth Empowerment Projects

Description:	Babbasa is a youth organisation that supports minoritised young people aged 13-25 from Bristol's deprived inner-city communities to pursue their ambitions through skills training, mentoring, events, and recruitment support services.
Location	Bristol

About the Inspiring Futures grant

Grant size:	£44,148
Length:	12 months
Intended differences for young people ⁴	<p>Babbasa used the grant to develop Babbasa TV and fund programmes focused on developing employability skills for disadvantaged young people from low-income and ethnically monitorised backgrounds whose job prospects were impacted by Covid-19. Babbasa aimed to increase young peoples':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Levels of work experience. ● Confidence and self-development. ● Employment. ● Access to a supportive community during the pandemic.

About the children and young adults supported

Numbers of children and young people supported	At the end of the grant period, Babbasa had reached 970 young people, out of its overall aim of 1000 young people over the period of the project.
Description of the barriers and challenges faced by the children and young people supported	Babbasa aims to support disadvantaged young people from ethnic minority backgrounds whose employment prospects have been affected by COVID-19. According to research conducted by Babbasa with the University of Bristol (2020) ⁵ , only 19% of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the inner-city of Bristol have the necessary skills to meet their aspirations, get access to opportunities and gain meaningful occupation.

⁴ Based on mid-point report form.

⁵ Cited in application documentation. This has not been independently verified by the Inspiring Futures evaluation team.

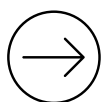
How did Babbasa use the Inspiring Futures grant?

Babbasa TV

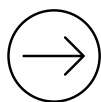
Babbasa used the Inspiring Futures grant to develop and expand the reach of **Babbasa TV**⁶, an online platform which provides a non-judgmental forum for young people to discuss important topics. Babbasa TV is run by a 'Trailblazer.' Trailblazers are Babbasa alumni, one of whom has gone on to be employed via the Kickstart scheme and one of whom is now employed by Babbasa.

Babbasa TV aims to build skills including **teamwork, public speaking, presenting, and critical thinking**. Young people are involved in all aspects, as presenters and debaters and in the production and marketing teams.

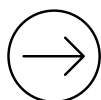
Babbasa TV has three main programmes:



The **'Let's Talk'** programme provides opportunities for young people to hold discussions on the issues most important to them.



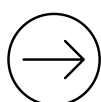
The **'Start It Up'** programme provides opportunities for young people to hear from professionals on how to start up in an industry.



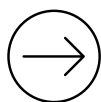
The **'Level Up'** programme involves employability skills workshops.

Adapting core programmes for online delivery

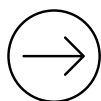
Babbasa used Inspiring Futures grant funding to adapt their three core programmes for online and hybrid delivery:



The Support Programme helps young people to improve their confidence and address obstacles at school or with finding work that they might be facing because of their background or health condition. Activities include personalised one-to-one and targeted group support.



The Challenge Programme prepares young people for work by supporting them to be a Babbasa **Youth Ambassador and create a positive impact** in their community. Activities include a soft skills course, one-to-one mentoring with professionals in the young person's chosen industry, and networking opportunities.



The Placement Programme delivers employability training and supported recruitment for young people into work experience, placements, internships, apprenticeships, and permanent positions. Activities include workshops (topics include writing CVs and cover letters, and preparing for interviews), feedback on applications and Q&A sessions with employers.

⁶ Babbasa TV was launched in June 2020 on Instagram and YouTube.

Delivering Spotlight sessions

The grant also enabled Babbasa to deliver '**Spotlight sessions**', providing one-to-one and small group support for those most at risk of long-term harm to their wellbeing and employment prospects as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The experience of young people supported by Babbasa during the pandemic

The pandemic caused significant **uncertainty** amongst young people about their future, leading to **poor mental health** and a **lack of motivation and direction**. Staff also noticed these problems and said that they got worse as the pandemic went on.

'Young people were wondering what is next for them – it was frightening to think about. There weren't many places of support available to get in contact with and those that existed were oversubscribed.'

- Young person

In addition to the impact on mental health, young people and staff members reported **a lack of employment and work experience opportunities** and **increased competition for fewer vacancies**.

Young people said this was particularly true of **opportunities in creative industries**, such as film, media and music. They said these were already difficult to access pre-pandemic but had become even more inaccessible due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the lack of opportunities for practical work experience. Staff members also reported fewer opportunities for young people in business and finance.

'There was not much support at the time. I was lucky as I was able to find some support.'

- Young person

Lastly, young people reported that **support was limited during the pandemic**, which could lead to **feelings of isolation**. Staff members agreed they had also seen this change in young people. Accessing support digitally was also challenging due to **digital poverty** – a lack of equipment, internet connection, skills, etc.

‘We did research at the end of the first lockdown to see how young people were feeling. They felt ignored and like no one was listening to them.’

- Staff member at Babbasa

The experience of Babbasa during the pandemic

Before the pandemic, Babbasa mainly engaged young people through face-to-face outreach in schools and in the community.

Staff members at Babbasa had to react quickly to the pandemic to **re-consider how they engaged young people and delivered support**.

‘Overnight, we couldn’t access young people.’

- Staff member at Babbasa

Staff members also reported that young people became **harder to engage** as the pandemic went on, as they experienced worsening mental health, motivation, and became further and further from employment.

Adaptions during the pandemic

Staff found the Inspiring Futures grant vital in enabling them to address these challenges and make key adaptations to their approach during the pandemic.



Adapt to online engagement. Babbasa staff adapted their methods of engagement so that they were able to reach and enrol young people online via social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. They have also used Babbasa TV as a platform to encourage viewers to directly engage with their services.

‘The Inspiring Futures grant was extremely valuable to us to allow us invest in new ways of working.’

- Staff member at Babbasa



Delivery of online workshops. Babbasa adapted their core programmes for online delivery, offering some employability skills training via live workshops and pre-recorded videos. This enabled them to continue engaging young people in support whilst face-to-face delivery was not possible during lockdowns.



Innovate and expand Babbasa TV. Babbasa developed their digital platform by introducing interactive forums to Babbasa TV and increasing opportunities to connect with inspirational business leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds. Staff also refreshed Babbasa TV through updating equipment and design. Again, this enabled Babbasa to increase and maintain engagement with young people during periods where face-to-face delivery was not possible during the pandemic.



Addressing digital poverty. Many of the young people Babbasa supported were disadvantaged by the move to online learning. Staff reported that many of the young people they support live in highly occupied housing with poor internet connection and often had to share devices. In response, Babbasa started an equipment lending scheme to help young people access their services, as well as online learning at their school and/or college.

What difference did Babbasa make?

Babbasa staff measure outcomes using surveys, observations, progress reviews and programme feedback. They monitor young people’s progress in relation to five core skills relating to work-readiness:

1. Confidence
2. Skills
3. Knowledge of opportunities
4. Professional networks
5. Capacity to make informed choices.

Young people and their caseworker will discuss their progress, before coming to an agreed score for each skill.

The young people we spoke to agreed that their involvement with **Babbasa TV** has **improved their confidence, communication skills, and knowledge**. For example, one young person reported that Babbasa TV has taught them about the film industry, as well as about the different topics debated as part of 'Let's Talk'.

Babbasa's mid-point reporting data return stated: *'Those that engage with the Challenge Programme progress impressively towards their aspirations and in the last six months especially we have seen amazing success in our young people getting work placements in creative industries that are historically limited to well-connected and more advantaged young people.'*

'It has improved my public speaking and confidence. We did a talk show where we discuss a topic. They are current and sometimes controversial topics.'

- Young person

Babbasa has also helped young people **access work experience and networking opportunities** through the three core programmes, Babbasa TV and 'Spotlight sessions'. Young people said they accessed meaningful opportunities, such as being involved in a Channel 4 panel, an apprenticeship, and work through their Trailblazer programme for Babbasa alumni.

Another young person explained, *'The Placement programme has given me a clear career path to take whereas before I was unsure where in the industry I wanted to be, now I know what I am aiming for and how to get there. I feel more hopeful when I think about my future and less unclear about what I am doing.'*

'[Without the project] I wouldn't be as confident as I am. Babassa TV taught me a lot about my industry (film).'

- Young person

How did Babbasa make a difference?

Babbasa provides support that is **young person led**. Staff emphasised the importance of **listening to young people** and **shaping the delivery of programmes around their needs and interests**, and said this approach was needed more than ever during the pandemic.

For example, Babbasa TV has developed into a **platform for young people** where they can be represented and are able to speak about a broad range of issues and topics that are important to them, including race, religion and culture. Digital discussions included '*What Does an Anti-Racist Society Look Like?*', '*Does Drill Cause Crime?*' and '*Acting White*'. One young person described Babbasa TV as a '*safe space*' for these discussions.

'It is a community of people – my views are respected and listened to, and my ideas are used. I hadn't experienced that before in teamwork and school.'

- Young person

The young people we spoke to also valued Babbasa's **ethos of helping people from under-represented backgrounds** and their **commitment to diversity**. They said that this was unique and that there are not many other organisations in Bristol trying to provide opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

'I hear from young people that they feel listened to and believed in. Our team's approach is to invest in young people and we are prepared to spend a long time with them. In schools or colleges, they may not have a voice.'

- Staff member at Babbasa

Lessons Learned



Creativity and innovation in delivery and engagement. Babbasa staff and young people recognised that social media platforms (such as TikTok) were crucial for engaging young people since the onset of the pandemic.

Staff valued that Inspiring Futures funding allowed them to try new and innovative methods of engagement and delivery. A young person led approach was also a key enabler of this.



Deliver a hybrid approach of online and in-person support.

Online delivery was important for reaching young people who may not be able to attend sessions in-person.

Staff noted that online delivery was particularly useful for engaging young people with low confidence, as it meant they were able to access support on their own terms, for example by keeping their camera off in live workshops.

However, the limitations of online delivery were also recognised, particularly for young people who did not have the equipment and means to access support online. This highlights the importance of a hybrid approach to delivery and engagement.



Importance of flexible funding. Staff members said that the target-driven nature of funding can be a barrier to delivering support that focuses on 'softer' outcomes such as improved confidence. They also noted that flexible funding is important to deliver innovative support, as it is not always possible to know whether a new method of delivery or engagement will work.

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:

A virtual focus group with three Babbasa staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A virtual group interview with four young people who participated in Babbasa TV or a Youth Empowerment project facilitated by Cordis Bright and a peer researcher from the YFF's Youth Reference Group.

Review of application and mid-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Sense-testing with Babbasa to check findings.

Find out more



For more information about Babbasa, please contact Zoe Lynes at Zoe.Lynes@byep.org.uk.

Circle Collective Case Study

About Circle Collective

Description:	Circle Collective is a London-based organisation that supports young people experiencing a range of barriers to finding employment through an employability support programme and two streetwear stores in London that serve as work experience 'training grounds' for young people.
Location	London

About the Inspiring Futures grant

Grant size:	£63,442
Length:	17 months
Intended differences for young people ⁷	<p>Circle Collective aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase young people's confidence, skills, and understanding required to secure employment. ● Improve young people's wellbeing and self-esteem. ● Support young people to secure a job and remain in the role for at least six months.

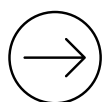
About the children and young adults supported

Numbers of children and young people supported	At the grant mid-point, Circle Collective reported to have reached 140 young people, out of its overall aim of 255 young people over the course of the project. Circle Collective attributes reach to increased digital marketing, increased storefront advertising, and having developed relationships with referral partners such as local colleges, all of which were supported by the Inspiring Futures funding.
Description of the barriers and challenges faced by the children and young people supported	<p>Circle Collective works with young people aged 16 -24 who often face multiple barriers to work. Their application form noted that in 2019-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most young people worked with were from economically deprived backgrounds. ● 66% of young people were from an ethnic minority background, including those with low labour market participation. 44% of the young people they worked with were from a Black African or Black Caribbean background; 7% were from a Pakistani background. ● Over 25% had a physical or learning disability. ● 17% disclosed a mental health condition.

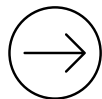
⁷ Based on mid-point report form.
November 2022

How did Circle Collective use the Inspiring Futures grant?

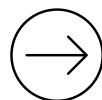
Inspiring Futures funding enabled Circle Collective to continue to run **#BackYourFuture**⁸, a ten-week employability programme for young people aged 16-24. The programme is designed to provide support to young people before, during, and after the job application process. Optional activities include:



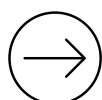
Four to eight hours per week of **customer service training and work experience** in the Hackney and Lewisham Circle Collective shops.



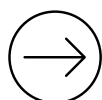
Employability support such as Curriculum Vitae (CV) writing skills and interview practice as well as support whilst in role.



Weekly one-to-one **mentoring and group coaching** with Circle Collective staff.



Wellbeing workshops, including yoga and meditation, managing anxiety, managing sleep patterns, and confident communication.



Corporate partner-led **insight events** and work experience opportunities.

Circle Collective also used the Inspiring Futures funding to develop and implement a digital marketing strategy aimed at growing their online presence. The aim is for staff to be able to spend more time working with young people on the programme, rather than on recruitment.

The experience of young people during the pandemic

Young people agreed it was hard to find employability advice and guidance during the pandemic, especially if they had already left education.

They said their lack of knowledge about the practical elements of applying to jobs, such as writing applications and attending interviews, was a barrier to employment, but they could not find good quality information online. They said that during the pandemic, when social interactions were limited, it felt even harder to access the support they wanted.

‘If I was still in education, I could go to school or Uni and ask for help. The pandemic also limited interactions with strangers and establishments. I never had much experience

⁸ Circle Collective has delivered the #BackYourFuture programme since 2012.

with cover letters and CVs. [...] I didn't know who to go to ask about it.'

- Young person

Young people also agreed **their mental health was negatively impacted**. One young person explained, *'That period of time where I was looking for work was the most anxious in my life for me. I don't know if I'll ever be that anxious again.'*

They lost their sense of motivation to find work and their self-esteem suffered after being confined in their homes during lockdown. Often young people also shared that the pandemic was a stressful period for them for personal reasons.

'I've never seen so many referrals to crisis lines.'

- Staff member at Circle Collective

Staff recognised the same challenges that young people mentioned and they noted that they were seeing higher levels of anxiety and other mental health issues amongst the young people they supported than ever before.

The experience of Circle Collective during the pandemic

Staff at Circle Collective explained that one of the most difficult effects of the pandemic was the **uncertainty** when it came to funding. This is because many of their regular sources of funding, such as local authorities, had diverted their budgets towards the COVID-19 response. They also found that networking between charities mostly came to a halt.

Due to high levels of mental health issues amongst young people during the pandemic, staff were taking on more **'emotional baggage'** than they had previously. One staff member explained, *'The staff were burning out quicker than before. We didn't come back from Christmas feeling refreshed. Now we also join in on the wellbeing sessions with young people.'*

The **demand for support increased**, and staff reported taking on more young people than ever before – at the same time, entry level jobs rapidly reduced at the beginning of the pandemic.

Lastly, #BackYourFuture was unable to deliver in store for some periods due to **temporary store closure in line with COVID-19 restrictions**.

These factors came together to create a challenging time for the charity and led to staff experiencing burnout.

What difference did Circle Collective make?

How do Circle Collective measure the difference made?⁹

Circle Collective **measure outcomes in several ways**, to reflect the multi-faceted differences they aim to make.

1. **Questionnaires** at the beginning and end of the programme to measure improvements to wellbeing and self-esteem. Circle Collective uses the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Health Wellbeing Scale and the Hamilton Anxiety Scale to measure improvements in mental health, and the Schwarzer 1995 Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale to measure self-esteem and confidence.
2. **Weekly one-to-ones** with a mentor, to monitor young people's progress.
3. **Monitoring** how much support young people receive, to calculate the amount of intervention required to support a young person into work. However, staff emphasised the importance of a bespoke approach, recognising that young people find employment at different rates.

What difference did Inspiring Futures-funded activities make for young people?

Circle Collective supported young people facing barriers to employment into work. The young people we spoke to also stated that participating in #BackYourFuture had been a valuable and enjoyable experience and had benefitted them in their journeys to employment.

'I learned a lot. It's mostly not just about finding a job, but also my own self-achievement.'

- Young person

How did Circle Collective make a difference?

Circle Collective was **a safe space for young people during the pandemic**, offering them **somewhere to meet with peers** (virtually or in-person) and receive mentoring. Staff explained that having a safe space was vital for wellbeing and mental health because of the impact of the pandemic on mental health and social skills. Staff also emphasised the importance of

⁹ Please note, these outcomes measures were not seen as part of the evaluation.

building confidence in young people before they begin applying and interviewing for jobs.

‘Youth clubs don’t exist much anymore. People can come and spend time with us. If they had a tough day, they know they can come here. We lost that in COVID but we tried to create that virtually.’

- Staff member at Circle Collective

Real-life work experience opportunities helped young people gain skills, knowledge, and confidence.

‘During COVID, we had the Sage CEO talk to us. I had a one-on-one talk with him, and he gave me work experience at Sage for two weeks because he heard I wanted to be an accountant. This allowed me to develop skills.’

- Young person

Many of the young people had little or no work experience, but the programme gave them a **‘chance to make mistakes’**. The opportunity to build their experience on the shop floor and through corporate work experience allowed young people to **increase their employability and their self-confidence**.

One staff member explained, *‘We had a young person on the programme with [a neurological disorder]. When he felt overwhelmed, his [neurological disorder] got worse. The team worked with him to build his confidence. Then he gained experience working on the shop floor. Now he knows how to deal with his [neurological disorder] in a workplace environment. He says he’s gained independence. Prior to coming to Circle, he hadn’t come to Lewisham by himself or spoken to people by himself because he was scared of what people might think of him. Now he has a job in his desired industry.’*

Applications during the pandemic



Offer increased wellbeing support. Staff explained that during the pandemic, they adapted the #BackYourFuture programme to focus more on wellbeing support, as more young people were presenting with anxiety, loneliness, and isolation.

‘One-to-ones became more about: what’s your situation, your money, food, and living situation, rather than employability.’

Staff member at Circle Collective



Pivot to delivering online sessions. The #BackYourFuture programme originally supported young people in-person but pivoted to online sessions during the 2020 lockdowns. When unable to facilitate work experience, Circle Collective’s corporate partners instead delivered weekly online sessions such as ‘How to budget’, ‘How to fail’, and ‘Mock interview skills.’



Adapt outcomes measures. Staff reported that during lockdowns, it was necessary to adapt some of their outcomes to reflect the sudden lack of employment opportunities. They broadened intended outcomes to include accessing education and/or training as well as employment. This is an adaptation that will be sustained going forward.



Identify new funding sources. The COVID-19 pandemic was a difficult time for Circle Collective in terms of sourcing funding. Their main source of funding, local authorities, ‘dried up overnight.’ The charity adapted to seeking funding from corporate partners such as UBS Bank.

Lessons Learned



Young people ‘don’t know what they don’t know’. Staff learned that it was important to introduce young people to new sectors and professions that they may not have previously come across via education. They did this by delivering corporate insight sessions.

‘It was inspiring to hear from other people about their professions and learning about

different careers you probably didn't know existed.'

- Young person



Zoom is a useful tool for delivering corporate sessions. Whilst most of Circle Collective's delivery has gone back to in-person, staff will continue to deliver corporate sessions via Zoom, enabling them to run multiple sessions a week with partners around the globe and build an online library of sessions for young people.



Invest in efficient technology. Staff reported that the pivot from in-person to virtual delivery was difficult due to the quality of their technology. For example, they were using second-hand laptops donated by corporate partners. In the future, Circle Collective hope to invest in higher quality equipment.



The importance of a digital presence. Circle Collective staff reported that receiving the Inspiring Futures funding enabled them to free up some resource to invest in their digital strategy. Now Circle Collective has an established digital team and social media presence, which has enabled them to connect with more young people and recruitment partners than before.

In the future...

As a small charity without a built in HR department, Circle Collective felt that it would be valuable to be able to access support and guidance at senior management level to help guide their growth and internal policy.

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:

A virtual focus group with three Circle Collective staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A virtual group interview with four young people who participated in #BackYourFuture facilitated by Cordis Bright and a peer researcher from the YFF's Youth Reference Group.

Review of application and mid-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Sense-testing with Circle Collective to check findings.

Find out more



For more information about Circle Collective, please contact Matt Lewendon at matthew@circlecollective.org.

Sounds Connections Case Study

About Sounds Connections

Description:	Sound Connections is a London-based charity that enables and empowers young people through high quality music-making opportunities. Sound Connections used the Inspiring Futures grant to support their Wired4Music programme.
Location	London

About the Inspiring Futures grant

Grant size:	£42,625.00
Length:	18 months
Intended differences for young people ¹⁰	<p>Wired4Music aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase young people's specialist skills in music through training programmes and paid work opportunities. ● Empower young people to pursue creative avenues into further/higher education, employment, and training. ● Help young people find employment in the music industry. ● Increase young people's soft skills such as confidence and self-esteem through mentoring.

About the children and young adults supported

Numbers supported	At the end of the grant period, Sound Connections had reached 1,000 young people out of the overall aim of 1,000 young people over the course of the project.
Description of the barriers and challenges faced by the children and young people supported	<p>The target cohort of Wired4Music is young people between the ages of 16-25. The largest age demographic in Wired4Music is 20-25 year-olds, many of whom are transitioning out of education and actively seeking employment opportunities in the music industry. Evaluation and monitoring data¹¹ collected by Sound Connections in 2020-21 indicates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 85% of young people supported are from deprived socio-economic backgrounds. ● 70% of young people supported are from or Ethnically Diverse backgrounds. ● 65% are female or have a minority gender identity.

¹⁰ Based on mid-point report form.

¹¹ Cited in application data. This has not been independently verified by the evaluation team.

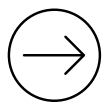
How did Sound Connections use the Inspiring Futures grant?

Sound Connections used the Inspiring Futures grant to support their music leadership programme, Wired4Music.

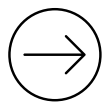
Wired4Music is a **youth-led music network** that provides opportunities for young people to produce and participate in music projects and events (such as events to support South Asian musicians, open-mic nights, and a 10-year anniversary event). Young people involved in Wired4Music receive one-to-one mentoring and guidance from Sound Connections staff plus opportunities for training and experience.

The programme also supports young people interested in other creative roles, like videography and media.

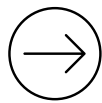
Wired4Music involves:



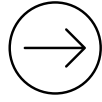
Opportunities to develop skills specific to the music industry, such as organising music festivals, performing, or writing articles about the industry for the Wired4Music website. For example, a three-month residency at Rich Mix was delivered in which young people work as a group, build their skills and music, and showcase their work to an audience in Shoreditch.



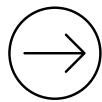
Industry networking opportunities and access to an online platform that promotes members.



Online workshops for skills development, some led by industry professionals. Topics include song writing and learning how to produce music.



'Mini DNAs' – **one to one mentoring** to discuss career goals and provide support and guidance.



Paid residency opportunities for artists.

The experience of young people during the pandemic

The young people we spoke to agreed that the pandemic was a stressful time for many people. At the same time, they explained that lockdown gave them the **opportunity to reassess the direction of their lives** and to focus more time and energy on creative projects.

'Everyone had a career crisis. The pandemic was like a time to look in the mirror.'

- Young person

Because the young people were actively searching for creative projects during lockdown, they said that they may not have encountered Sound Connections had the pandemic not happened.

‘I joined so that I could find creative opportunities to stay afloat during lockdown. I’ve met so many people off the back of it – it’s been great.’

- Young person

The experience of Sound Connections during the pandemic

Sound Connections staff reported **working with more young people during the pandemic than ever before**. For them, this reflected the higher number of **people feeling lost or that they needed support**.

‘We had some safeguarding crisis calls. This was quite unusual as we are a music focused charity. Now we are a music plus pastoral needs organisation.’

- Staff member at Sound Connections

Whilst they were pleased to be reaching a higher number of young people, they also shared their concerns around how to meet this rising demand.

‘We are in a bit of a boiling pot at the moment: the cost-of-living crisis alongside the pandemic’s impact on young people’s mental

health, self-esteem, and self-worth.'

- Staff member at Sound Connections

Adaptions during the pandemic

In response to these challenges, Sound Connections made some adaptations:



Offering meaningful opportunities online. Prior to the pandemic, Sound Connections offered in-person meetings, events, and performance opportunities. Under lockdown measures Sound Connections hosted large online music events, offering young people the opportunity to both organise and perform, and online mentoring which staff stated increased accessibility for young people.



Offering more wellbeing support. During the pandemic, Sound Connections staff found that a stronger focus on the mental wellbeing of young people was necessary. They continue to respond to this as the effects of the pandemic are continuing to be felt.

What difference did Sound Connections make?

As an organisation, Sound Connections:

1. Tracks how many young people they have supported into different employment opportunities.
2. Collects qualitative stories of long-term impact. For example, young people's journey in their music industry and the role of Wired4Music in their progress.

Many young people supported by Sound Connections have since **found relevant jobs in the music industry**. The young people we spoke to said that opportunities given through Wired4Music helped them to **advance their careers** in the music industry even whilst the country was in lockdown.

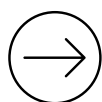
'It helped me be creative through the pandemic. Now I work in events. Having projects with Sound Connection made the in between waiting part much easier.'

- Young person

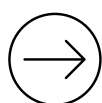
For example, being able to work on online music events helped young people develop their CVs. They also **built their networks, developed career aspirations,** and **found meaningful ways to spend their time during lockdown,** including working towards an end-goal such as an event or performance.

Young people said *'The Mini DNAs helped me decide what [career] direction to go in,'* and *'When I was involved in the Rich Mix residency, I met other [industry professionals]. That led to my current job in the Roundhouse.'*

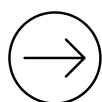
How did Sound Connections make a difference?



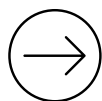
Use a 'youth voice approach'. Wired4Music developed using young people's needs as the starting point, and aims to listen to young people and what they think will work for them



Offer diverse opportunities so young people can develop a range of skills. For example, one young person found a passion for writing during the pandemic. Wired4Music provided the opportunity for them to write about music and mental health for their website and are guiding them through the next stages, including a writing mentorship. They said, 'it's been an amazing ricochet effect.'



Giving young people responsibility and ownership over the projects they are involved in.



Offer guidance from those with industry experience. Young people said that the music industry was difficult to break into and required specialist skills that many did not have. Having guidance from professionals was valuable for young people hoping to access a variety of different paths into the music industry

'I enjoyed how much responsibility we were given with the work we were doing. It was guided but we were trusted to put an event together. First, I thought it was quite a lot of pressure and I don't know what I'm doing, but it was really good to have the challenge rather than something we were being walked through.'

- Young person

Lessons Learned



There are ways to effectively reach young people digitally.

During the pandemic, Sound Connections used their online platform and social media such as Instagram to connect with new young people and maintain contact with current members. As social distancing measures relax, they still maintain contact largely through digital channels.



Trust and investment from funders. Staff agreed that funding from BBC CiN and YFF helped build their profile and their track record to apply to similar funders in future.



Longer term funding. Whilst the Inspiring Futures grant was invaluable to Sound Connections during the pandemic, staff reported that even longer term funding would enable them to spend more time supporting young people and less time fundraising.

‘Money and time is appreciated. The grant supported [the staff’s] extra working time to deliver a higher quality programme with staff who are not burnt out. It gave us more space to create different things and meet needs in different ways different ways.’

- Staff member at Sound Connections

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:

A virtual focus group with four Sounds Connections staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A virtual group interview with four young people who participated in Wired4Music, facilitated by Cordis Bright and a peer researcher from the YFF's Youth Reference Group.

Review of application and mid-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Sense-testing with Sound Connections to check findings.

Find out more



For more information about Sound Connections, please contact Liz Coomb at liz@sound-connections.org.uk

Sport 4 Life Case study

About Sounds Connections

Description:	Sport 4 Life is a sport for employment charity that works with 11-24 year olds to help them prepare for and move into sustained employment, education, or training.
Location	Birmingham

About the Inspiring Futures grant

Grant size:	£60,000
Length:	18 months
Intended differences for young people ¹²	<p>The project aims to improve skills and improve access to employment and training for young people. It aims to support young people to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gain accredited qualifications, such as Sports Leadership QCF Level 1 and 2, Youth Achievements Awards, and others. ● Strengthen key life skills through mentoring and training. ● Access employment, education, or training. ● Improve their mental health and wellbeing through mentoring.

About the children and young people supported

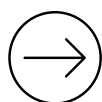
Numbers supported	At the end of the grant period, Sport 4 Life had reached 150 people so far, out of its overall aim of 150 young people over the course of the project.
Description of the barriers and challenges faced by the children and young people supported	<p>Sport 4 Life aims to support young people who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Sport 4 Life's 2019-2020 operating year, barriers and challenges included¹³:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 90% of young people supported were living in the top 20% most deprived wards nationally. ● 79% of young people supported were from an ethnic minority background. <p>Self-reported challenges faced by young people included being not in employment, education, or training (NEET); being in a workless household; having parent/s with offending history; being in a single parent family; being a young carer; having a criminal record; being a single parent; being eligible for free school meals; gang affiliation; homelessness; substance misuse; mental health challenges; social care involvement; and living amongst domestic abuse.</p>

¹² Based on mid-point report form.

¹³ Based on application data.

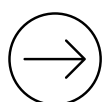
How did Sport 4 Life use the Inspiring Futures grants?

Sport 4 Life used the Inspiring Futures grant to fund a sports-based employability programme which includes:

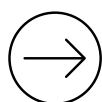


One-to-one bespoke mentoring sessions for young people. If the young person is in full-time education, mentoring sessions take place in schools or virtually, and focus on developing positive behaviours and soft skills. For young adults not in full time education, mentoring sessions are focused around developing soft skills, identifying needs, and providing employability support.

The duration of support is **flexible**. Staff offer six sessions to young people of school age, but six months of further support is available if needed. For young adults, they offer support for up to a year with the option to extend if needed.



Training activities. Young people receive group-based training activities delivered by Sport 4 Life's training team. The training received depends on the young person's specific needs and goals and includes accredited qualifications, employer encounters, structured sports sessions, and youth-led social action.



Providing resource for **travel costs, interview clothes, workplace uniforms, and technology for young people without access to laptops.** This can be in the form of a bursary.

The experience of young people during the pandemic

Young people agreed that lockdowns and social distancing were significant barriers to young people seeking employment during the pandemic.

'At the start of COVID, lots of people were losing their jobs. It was hard to find a way to have interviews virtually. Lots of people were working from home and the Job Centres were affected.'

- Young person

Without support from Sport 4 Life, young people also said they would have suffered **worse mental health outcomes and decreased self-confidence** due to the lack of structure, social interaction, and guidance.

Staff agreed that the key challenge for young people during the pandemic was the **negative impact on their confidence and self-esteem**.

Staff reported that many young people felt as though they had missed out on the education they would have normally received whilst in lockdown and returning to school after lockdown was a frightening experience for many.

‘Young people were deflated and demotivated. They felt that everything they had been working towards didn’t count now. It made young people feel further away from the job market than ever.’

- Staff member at Sport 4 Life

Additionally, staff described the sense amongst young people that there were not any jobs ‘out there’ for them.

The experience of Sport 4 Life during the pandemic

Staff found the **transition to online delivery difficult** at times. This was due to several factors: a **lack of access** for young people to digital technologies, the growing sense of **digital fatigue** amongst young people, and **some young people finding it harder to engage over video call** than in person.

Despite these challenges, staff also reported there were some benefits, such as being able to see a **greater number of young people virtually** than in-person, and the option to offer sessions on a more **flexible** basis to young people.

Staff stated that they were under a **greater amount of pressure** during the pandemic due to the increased mental health needs of young people. For example, they commented that some young people were suicidal, and in these cases it was challenging to arrange safeguarding virtually compared to when they would support young people in person.

Adaptations during the pandemic



Providing more wellbeing support on an ongoing basis. Staff explained that it was important to learn more about the increasing mental health challenges faced by young people during the pandemic. Mentors received additional training on how to provide wellbeing support for young people as well as providing employability support.



Supporting young people with digital access. Sport 4 Life works with some young people who do not have access to the internet or a laptop. To continue providing these young people with mentoring and support during the pandemic, Sport 4 Life ran a scheme to give young people laptops using Inspiring Futures funding. For young people who were reluctant to engage on video calls, Sport 4 Life suggested turning off the camera or using the chat box only for mentoring sessions.



Delivering online qualifications. During the pandemic, Sport 4 Life supported young people to enrol on online courses to improve their employability skills by investing in an online qualification platform.

What difference did Sport 4 Life make?

Sport 4 Life measure the difference they make in several ways:

1. Using **Outcomes Stars** to measure outcomes. This monitors behaviour, teamwork, self-esteem, communication over time.
2. Using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to measure improvements to emotional and mental wellbeing.
3. Using **UpShot**, a customer relationship management system, to monitor progress.
4. Using an Employability Skills Survey to monitor development of young people's employability skills.
5. Parents/carers and teachers provide feedback to Sport 4 Life at the end of term.

'We had feedback from schools and parents to say that young people are attending school more as they feel less anxious.'

- Staff member at Sport 4 Life

Staff reported that some young people supported by Sport 4 Life moved into employment, education, or training.

The young people we spoke reported that they felt **more confident** because of Sport 4 Life's support, which helped them with socialising and improving their communication skills. They said that the regular meetings with mentors and employability workshops were the most helpful for improving confidence.

‘Before my confidence was really lacking. It felt hard to talk to people, but now I’ve really built up my confidence, it’s easier to talk to people.’

- Young person

Young people and staff agreed that the young people supported experienced **improved mental health and reduced anxiety**. Young people thought that Sport 4 Life helped provide them with more structure and discipline in their day-to-day lives which worked well for improving motivation.

One staff member shared, *‘Last week I had a teacher say that before, a child was throwing things in class. I had an amazing session with him. Afterwards, the teacher told me that he had better engagement, and his mum told me he was helping with chores at home.’*

For example, one young person reported that he now goes to the gym once a week, which had improved his confidence. Staff reported that this had resulted in improved behaviour and attendance at school.

‘My confidence and structure has been better.’

- Young person

How did Sport 4 Life make a difference?

Sport 4 Life mentors emphasised the importance of **building relationships with young people**.

‘Sport 4 Life are really helpful. They care about what stuff you want to get into, check how you’re doing, how daily life is and check you’re ok. They just give you support. It’s a really good service.’

- Young person

Young people said that the **flexible, informal, and understanding approach** of their mentors made them feel understood and was ultimately beneficial to the development of soft skills and employability skills. For example, one young person explained that their mentor did not pressure them at the beginning but let them open up in their own time.

‘They tailor the service to you. It feels like you’re being listened to and progressing. It makes you want to come back.’

- Young person

Staff and the young people we spoke to highlighted the value of Sport 4 Life’s **tailored and individualised approach**.

‘When I’m on a mentoring session, each session is totally different. Every person is different. Everything is bespoke.’

- Staff member at Sport 4 Life

For example, Sport 4 Life also offer education opportunities based on the specific needs and goals of each young person they work with. This may involve sponsoring a young person to go on a training course to develop their skills and experience before applying for jobs.

One young person explained, *‘They’re quite flexible in working. The aim isn’t to process you and package you, but to give you the support you need and keep building you up, rather than trying to rush you out and then be done [...] If my job falls through, I know the door is never closed.’*

Lessons Learned



Provide digital training for young people. Many young people were unaccustomed to using virtual methods for formal interviews and required further training.



Virtual sessions were less effective with younger people. Staff stated that it was important to re-establish face-to-face sessions with younger groups as soon as possible, as engaging this age group virtually or over the phone was difficult.

One staff member noted, 'Lots of young people were used to holding the phone with their mouth to the mic and the camera facing up. If it was a job interview, all the employer could see was the ceiling. We had to retrain them so they could see each other face to face.'

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:

A virtual focus group with four Sport 4 Life staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A virtual group interview with two young people supported by Sport 4 Life, facilitated by Cordis Bright and a peer researcher from the YFF's Youth Reference Group.

Review of application and mid-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Sense-checking with Sport 4 Life to check findings.

Find out more



For more information about Sport 4 Life, please contact Saad Mohammed at saad@Sport4Life.org.uk.

The Proud Trust Case Study

The Proud Trust Case Study

Description:	The Proud Trust is a lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) organisation that supports LGBT+ young people through youth groups, peer support, mentoring programmes, and the Proud Connections chat service.
Location	Greater Manchester, Cheshire West and Chester.

About the Inspiring Futures grant

Grant size:	£69,871.00
Length:	18 months
Intended differences for young people ¹⁴	<p>Proud Futures aimed for the following differences for young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling better about themselves, more able to take on life's challenges, more in control of their lives and feel greater motivation to 'go for it'. • Improved life skills, transferable to workplaces, further education and training. For example, higher confidence to try new things, better problem-solving and teamwork skills, and stronger protective behaviours to keep emotionally and physically well: <i>"The focus is on confidence building, team-building, soft skills, and creativity."</i>¹⁵ • A better life situation, being more able to get a job and more likely to engage in and gain meaningful volunteering. For some young people, getting a job/volunteering.

About the children and young adults supported

Numbers of children and young people supported	At the end of the grant period, The Proud Trust have reached 509 young people, out of its overall aim of 515 young people over the project as a whole. When The Proud Trust was consulted during the grant period, staff shared that they had reached fewer young people than hoped for. The Proud Trust attribute lower numbers to digital fatigue during lockdown and suggest that a hybrid approach that they have taken since lockdown restrictions eased may improve numbers.
Description of barriers and challenges faced by those supported	Proud Futures aims to support LGBT+ young people whose mental health has been affected by COVID-19. According to research conducted by LGBT+ rights charity Stonewall (2017, 2019) ¹⁶ , LGBT+ young people are at high risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET) due to discrimination.

¹⁴ Based on mid-point report form.

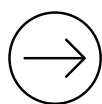
¹⁵ Staff member at the Proud Trust.

¹⁶ Cited in application documentation. This has not been independently verified by the evaluation team.

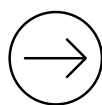
How did the Proud Trust use the Inspiring Futures grant?

Inspiring Futures funding enabled The Proud Trust to run **Proud Futures**¹⁷, a six-month programme aimed at LGBT+ young people aged 18-25 who are not currently in employment, education, or training. Each Proud Futures cohort consists of 10-12 young people.

The Proud Futures programme features:

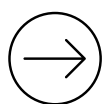


Workshops designed to support young LGBT+ people into meaningful work, training, or volunteer placements. Topics include practical skills, such as CV writing and interview skills, and broader themes such as ‘What is work?’ and the barriers and issues LGBT+ people face in the workplace.

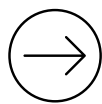


The option to do a **work placement** with businesses local to Greater Manchester, such as the Manchester Museum.

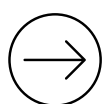
The Proud Trust also used the Inspiring Futures grant to:



Deliver a **youth group** to support LGBT+ young people in Greater Manchester. The youth groups were mostly delivered using a hybrid approach, running in-person with the option to attend virtually via Zoom. Staff members regularly checked in with online attendees to make sure the group was accessible, and they were able to engage in this format.



Employ five young people, two through the Kickstarter scheme and three directly.¹⁸



Contribute towards operational costs during the pandemic to support its ongoing sustainability, for example resourcing staff, monitoring, administrative functions, etc.

The experience of young people supported by the Proud Trust during the pandemic

Social isolation during the pandemic led to **poor mental health** and **low levels of motivation** amongst LGBT+ young people. The young people we spoke to said that the quality of their online lessons at school and college was poor, which negatively impacted their ability to engage with school and to feel motivated about their lives.

¹⁷ Proud Futures was first piloted in 2020 with funding from the European Social Fund.

¹⁸ Those young people involved in the Kickstart scheme were not part of the group consulted as part of the evaluation.

‘I had a job interview the week before lockdown. The day before the interview they said we’re not hiring anymore. This massive stillness happened, where you looked outside and it was barren. I was in a house of two – it was a nightmare. It’s taken until now to try and get a job again.’

- Young person

Staff at The Proud Trust also recognised the same experiences for young people and highlighted that long periods of social distancing and virtual learning harmed young people's ability to engage with others but also to develop key employability skills such as communication, teamwork, and socialising skills.

Staff suggested that LGBT+ young people were at a higher risk of experiencing challenging situations at home because of lockdown measures which were also damaging to mental health.

‘It was a mental health pandemic, and issues that young people were already facing were compounded. It’s extremely hard to find a job when you are suffering from traumatic experiences’

- Staff member at the Proud Trust

The experience of The Proud Trust during the pandemic

Staff at The Proud Trust said that they were able **to efficiently transition into digital delivery** during lockdown due to early preparation. As a result, The Proud Trust staff reported that they experienced **high levels of engagement with young people** during the early stages of the pandemic. However, levels of engagement dropped over the course of the lockdown, which staff attributed to **‘digital fatigue’** due to online schooling.

What difference did Proud Futures make?

‘We didn’t set parameters for the numbers of young people who got work. We are not trying to churn out workers – our focus is on meaningful employment or education, not just about getting a job.’

- Staff member at The Proud Trust

Staff measure outcomes through self-reflection activities with young people. They developed individual learning plans with short- and long-term goals and revisited these during and at the end of the course. For example, long-term goals included getting a job in the young person’s chosen industry, whilst short-term goals included improved confidence and improved soft skills.

‘I’d never had a job before. I thought, if I do a course, it will make getting a job easier, and it has - I’ve got a job now.’

Young person

Whilst several young people did **gain volunteering roles or employment**, this was not the key measure of success for the programme. Instead, the key measure of success for Proud Futures was the improvement of employability skills such as teamwork and communication, and improved confidence and self-esteem for LGBT+ young people.

‘You could tell some people in the group gained a fair bit of confidence. Before, I couldn’t speak to people. Now, I can.’

- Young person

The young people we spoke to enjoyed participating in Proud Futures and agreed it had benefitted them, especially their **confidence** and **social skills**. Young people highlighted the practical skills workshops and the group work dynamic as being particularly beneficial.

‘Having a youth group full of other trans people has helped me come to terms with myself.’

- Young person

How did the Proud Trust make a difference?

The Proud Futures programme is underpinned by **youth work principles**. Rather than providing a prescriptive programme, staff aimed to **respond to the unique needs and interests of the young people**.

‘If a young person isn’t engaging, we figure out a new response.’

- Staff member at The Proud Trust

For example, Proud Futures staff developed a session about freelancing due to demand in the cohort. When delivering the programme, staff learned that it was important to strike a balance between being youth led versus youth worker supported. One staff member explained, *‘too much freedom can make young people feel unsupported.’*

Some work placement providers hosted young people on an online basis, whereas others were able to provide an in-person placement experience. Young people found the in-person placements more valuable for developing their employability skills.

Adaptions during the pandemic

Staff reported that the Inspiring Futures funding was vital in enabling them to make key adaptations to their delivery during the pandemic.



Adapt workshop content. Opportunities in industries that typically employed young people pre-pandemic, such as retail and hospitality were harder to find during the pandemic. Proud Futures staff re-designed workshops to focus more on soft skills, confidence, and issues affecting LGBT+ people getting ready for employment and in employment. This is partly in response to the

challenges they saw young people face during the pandemic, especially worsening soft skills and fewer opportunities to develop these socially and in their place of learning or training.



Proactively engage young people attending online. When delivering a hybrid programme, it was important to check in more often with those joining virtually and ensure they found the sessions accessible. This adaptation responds to the challenges The Proud Trust found with keeping young people engaged online as the pandemic progressed and 'digital fatigue' set in.



Invest in efficient technology and an appropriate venue. Some young people reported it was difficult to engage in a hybrid session when attending online due to connectivity issues in the centre. Moving to a new location helped solve this issue.



Address digital fatigue. Attendance to online groups dropped over the course of the pandemic. Staff attributed this to 'digital fatigue', which was increased by a shift to online learning in school and college. In response, staff engaged more proactively with young people online outside of group sessions to help them still feel connected to the programme.

A 'hybrid approach' can bring unexpected benefits for non-verbal young people.

One young person in attendance was non-verbal and, during in-person sessions, wrote on their phone for a staff member to read aloud. Online, they were able to write directly in the chat. Staff suggested this helped create a stronger sense of autonomy.

Lessons learned through delivering Proud Futures

Proud Futures is set to become part of The Proud Trust's core delivery due to the positive impact it made on young people.

Staff and young people agreed there was promising practice, and shared their top lessons learned for the future:



Provide support before and during work placements. Originally, Proud Futures introduced young people to placement providers, but it was up to young people to set up meetings and engage with the provider. In future, staff plan to set up and attend meetings and set up regular check-ins during the work placement.



Understand the skills and needs of work placement providers and offer support and guidance in response. At times, young people experienced accessibility issues with forms and documents provided by work placement providers. Features such as font size, readability, and the length and complexity of

forms meant that some young people found them difficult to complete. In future, Proud Futures staff aim to provide more learning about the specific needs of the young people to providers.



Deliver a hybrid approach of online and in person support to reach young people who may not be able to attend sessions in-person. Young people suggested it would be good to also be able to access sessions online if for some reason they were unable to attend them.

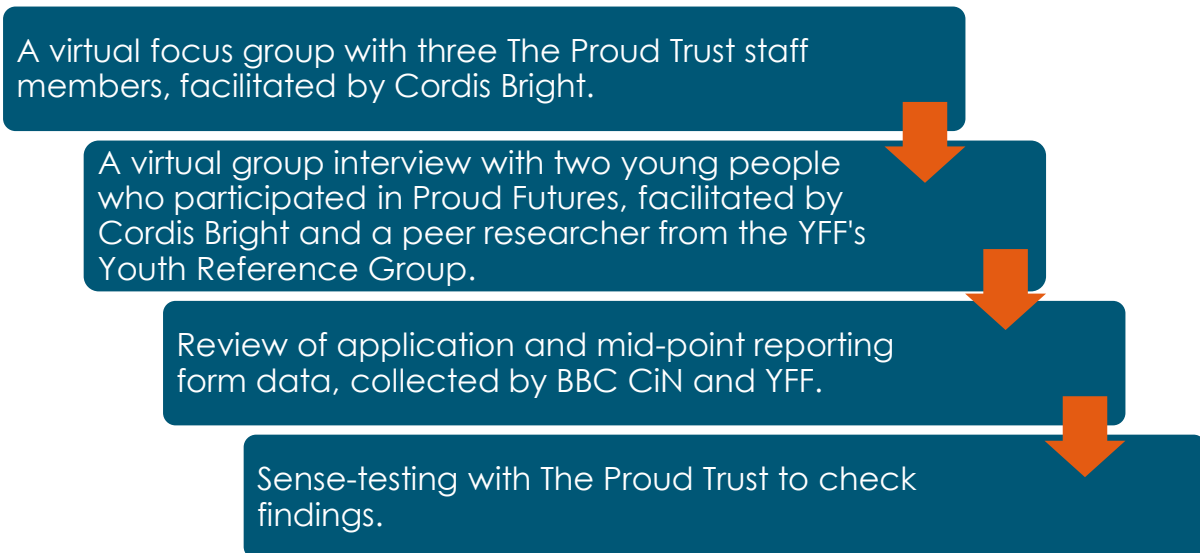


The importance of flexible funding. Staff reflected that a youth led approach doesn't always fit with *'what we are often commissioned to deliver, when it needs to be delivered against someone else's outcomes.'* Inspiring Futures enabled The Proud Trust to operate with flexibility and freedom in how they allocate their budget and deliver the programme.

One staff member said, *'We need funders that trust what Proud Futures are doing and [that we] are going to achieve outcomes. We don't want to shoehorn ourselves into a funder's requirements.'*

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:



Find out more



For more information about The Proud Trust, please contact Cath Hayes at CathHayes@theproudtrust.org.uk.

Treyla Case Study

Treyla Case Study

Description:	Treyla provides holistic wrap-around support for children and young people in West Cornwall who are from the widest parts of the community and typically furthest from support.
Location	West Cornwall

About the Inspiring Futures grant

Grant size:	£52,406.00
Length:	18 months
Intended differences for young people ¹⁹	<p>Treyla aimed to make the following differences for young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving their skills and employability, including confidence, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, self-management, and planning skills. ● Raising their aspirations. ● Increasing their motivation.

About the children and young adults supported

Numbers supported	At the end of the grant period, Treyla had reached 61 young people. This was more than its overall aim of 55 young people over the course of the project.
Description of the barriers and challenges faced by those supported	<p>Treyla aims to support young people aged 10-24 years old from low-income families in Penzance East who have a range of complex needs and who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Penzance East is the second most deprived community in Cornwall and in the top 1% of the most income deprived areas in the country (Office for National Statistics 2019)²⁰. Treyla's Inspiring Futures application notes that these young people were identified by the ONS as at risk of being within the hardest hit in the country by youth unemployment due to the pandemic²¹.</p> <p>Issues faced by the young people supported include domestic violence, safeguarding issues, substance misuse, mental health issues, and involvement with the criminal justice system.</p>

¹⁹ Based on mid-point report form.




²⁰ Cited in application documentation. This has not been independently verified by the evaluation team.

²¹ Cited in application documentation. This has not been independently verified by the evaluation team.

How did Trelya use the Inspiring Futures grant?

Trelya used the Inspiring Futures grant flexibly to **increase capacity** and ensure **consistency of support** for the young people they support. They support young people and families through holistic wrap-around support which takes a range of forms.

For example, the Inspiring Futures grant supported Trelya to provide:

-  **Crisis response** to a variety of circumstances, including poverty, domestic violence, safeguarding issues, substance misuse, and mental health issues.
-  **One-to-one support** for young people. The duration and frequency of one-to-one support was flexible and bespoke to the needs of the young person being supported.
-  **Social activities** that are creative and tailored to young people's needs, interests and passions. This has included swimming, horse-riding, drama, dance, art, animation and cooking.

The experience of young people supported by Trelya during the pandemic

The young people we spoke to reported feeling **socially isolated** and experiencing **poor mental health** during the pandemic. Staff agreed, and said that **young people were struggling to adapt to 'normal' life after lockdown**, including the return to face-to-face social interactions.

'We got shut away and everyone had stress from it. Around our age we had lots of school work set and then had to deal with mental health as well.'

Young person

Young people supported by Trelya also said their **education had been negatively impacted**. The young people we spoke to found online learning stressful and overwhelming, and reported feeling like they had missed important years of their education. They said that when they returned to school, this did not seem to be acknowledged, and that in June 2022 they were still trying to catch-up with missed learning.

‘We missed most of Year 8. If you haven’t done the work we get punished for it.’

Young person

Young people also found that there were fewer **employment opportunities** in the area during and since the pandemic.

‘In the summer it used to be so easy to find jobs around here, but now it’s a lot harder.’

Young person

Staff members recognised all these same challenges and highlighted that **the pandemic compounded complex issues that young people were facing in their family life**, including domestic abuse, financial pressures, and mental health issues. They also reported some **increased risks to young people**, for example social isolation and an increase in time spent online **increasing the vulnerability of young people to exploitation**, and coastal communities experiencing a rise in cases of county lines and cuckooing (in which vulnerable people are exploited by those involved in crime).

The experience of Trelya during the pandemic

The above challenges led to a higher workload for staff and **constrained capacity**. At the same time as meeting the increased needs of young people and their families, staff needed to ensure compliance with restrictions and policies and adapt to staff absences due to COVID-19.

Staff at Trelya also needed to adapt their methods of **engaging and supporting young people, which became more challenging as young people were spending much more time on online**, for example on their mobile phones and on social media.

Indeed, some young people were spending more than 13 hours per day on their mobile phones, according to staff who discussed and reviewed ‘screen time’ with some of the young people they supported.

‘We’ve lost a bit of our young people to an online world that isn’t particularly accessible to us because it’s their private world. But then unfortunately we see the damage that causes when young people are self-harming or have sky-high anxiety or become defiant or oppositional.’

- Staff member at Trelya

Staff found that where young people spent more time online, it was also **more challenging to ‘keep an eye’ on their activities and engage new young people in support.**

The difficulties young people were facing during the pandemic also had an impact on **staff mental health.** Staff reported feeling limited in what they could do to support children and young people whose situations may have been deteriorating. However, staff members also acknowledged that the team supported each other, by sharing dilemmas and problem-solving together.

Adaptions during the pandemic

Trelya delivered support in **more flexible ways** during the pandemic and valued how they could adapt using the Inspiring Futures grant to support this. They reported the following adaptations:



Refocusing support towards meeting immediate needs. Trelya adapted their support to focus on meeting young peoples’ and families’ immediate needs, which were often exacerbated by the pandemic, for example financial pressures, food poverty, and domestic abuse.



Shifting to delivering support outdoors. Restrictions on socialising indoors encouraged Trelya to make use of outdoor spaces in their delivery of support. Staff members would often meet young people and family members in a park or for a walk and provided some activities outdoors.



Smaller group sizes. Trelya reduced group sizes initially in order to comply with restrictions – but staff found that smaller groups were beneficial to young people as they could provide more intensive support. As a result, Trelya plan to keep doing this in the future.

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:

A virtual focus group with three Trelya staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A virtual group interview with five young people who recieved support from Treyla, facilitated by Cordis Bright and a peer researcher from the YFF's Youth Reference Group.

Review of application and mid-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Sense-testing with Treyla to check findings.

Find out more



For more information about Treyla, please contact Susie Gray at susie.gray@trelya.com.

Westminster House Youth Club

About Westminster House Youth Club

Description:	Westminster House Youth Club is a charity providing purposeful recreational and educational activities for young people. They used the Inspiring Futures grant to fund tuition sessions, training and extra-curricular awards and qualifications for young people, and to run a food bank.
Location	Peckham, South East London

About the Inspiring Futures grant

Grant size:	£71,160.00
Length:	18 months
Intended differences for young people ²²	<p>Westminster House Youth Club aimed to improve young people's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment, through tuition sessions to ensure young people remain engaged in the education system and are supported to catch-up on their disrupted education. • Access to extra-curricular certifications including the Duke of Edinburgh award and work ready qualifications. • Physical and mental health, thereby minimising the physical risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the mental effects of lockdown.

About the children and young adults supported

Numbers of children and young people supported	At the end of the grant period, Westminster House Youth Club had reached 242 young people. This was more than its overall aim of 120 young people over the course of the project. This included providing tuition sessions to 141 young people and extra-curricular certification opportunities to 97 young people. When consulted, staff shared that they reached more young people they expected due to the distribution of food reaching younger siblings of youth club members.
Description of the barriers and challenges faced by those supported	Westminster House Youth Club aims to support marginalised young people aged 8-19 experiencing poverty and deprivation. 85% of young people supported are from an ethnic minority background and 50% are girls and young women ²³ . Many youth club members are looked after children ²⁴ .

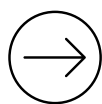
²² Based on mid-point report form.

²³ Based on application data.

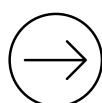
²⁴ Based on focus group with staff members.

How did Westminster House Youth Club use the Inspiring Futures grant?

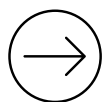
Westminster House Youth Club used the Inspiring Futures grant to:



Provide one-to-one tuition sessions in Maths and English. These sessions were open to all young people receiving support but focused on those aged 11 and over. They were designed to help young people catch-up on their education which had been disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number and frequency of tuition sessions depended on each young person's needs. Sessions were delivered online and in-person at a youth club.

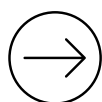


Support young people to work towards extra-curricular achievements, including the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award and work ready qualifications. DofE sessions were mainly delivered in-person, although some were delivered online depending on the young person's needs. Work ready qualifications included Dementia Friends training, a mindfulness certification by the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP), and food safety training.

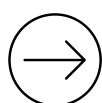


Distribute food and vitamins to young people and their families by running a foodbank. Staff ran a foodbank at their site in Nunhead, distributing fruit, vegetables and vitamin D to young people and their families to strengthen their immune systems against the COVID-19 virus.

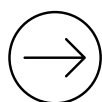
Westminster House Youth Club also used the grant funding to contribute to the following activities:



Delivering an education club during lockdown, offering a space for young people to do their schoolwork and additional support with homework.



Setting up a walking programme, designed to encourage young people to exercise more by setting challenges. Young people were provided with smart watches which they could use to track their steps.



Contributing towards operational costs during the pandemic, such as safety equipment and increased cleaning, to help ensure the building was safe to use.

The experience of young people supported by Westminster House Youth Club during the pandemic

Online learning during the pandemic led to young people saying that their **education had been negatively impacted**. The young people we spoke to reported that the quality of online lessons was poor. This impacted on their engagement and resulted in **low motivation to attend classes**. Young people also reported feeling **less motivated to seek help**.

‘Learning online was not good. That’s why I had to have a tutor. I attended classes less. The lessons were not good or interactive. If you have a bad attention span already you won’t want to join because they were boring.’

- Young person

Staff at Westminster House Youth Club also recognised the impact of the pandemic on young people’s education, and the implications this had for their futures. Staff suggested that online learning was not engaging for young people, particularly when teachers turn their cameras off.

‘Young people experience] massive disruption in year 10 and 11. Your whole life is dictated by these years.’

- Staff member at Westminster House Youth Club

They also stated that young people achieving grades of C or above were particularly neglected by schools, as schools were concerned about results and focused their attention on young people who were working at the C/D borderline in terms of grades.

The impact on young people’s **physical and mental health** was also highlighted by Westminster House Youth Club staff. Lockdown restrictions on spending time outdoors affected the health of young people supported, particularly as most did not have gardens in which to exercise. Staff also reported that many young people were still on the waiting list for mental

health support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) two years later.

The experience of Westminster House Youth Club during the pandemic

Westminster House Youth Club experienced **increased demand for support** during the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of both numbers and level of need. For example, staff reported an increase in demand for support with basic needs, including for the foodbank.

‘There was a big need for the foodbank. Even on days we were not running it, parents and young people would come in to ask for food.’

- Staff member at Westminster House Youth Club

Staff said this is also shown in the long waiting lists for support from Westminster House Youth Club, which at the time of consultation (in June 2022) included requests from the early pandemic.

Adaptations during the pandemic



Introducing one-to-one education support in response to increased need resulting from young people’s experience of disrupted education. The pandemic provided an opportunity for staff to think outside the box and address this increased need, as they could not deliver support in the same way they had previously. The Inspiring Futures grant supported Westminster House Youth Club to try one-to-one tuition sessions.



Increasing partnership working. Westminster House Youth Club mobilised quickly to develop partnerships with other local organisations during the pandemic. For example, the organisation forged a relationship with Nunhead Knocks, a group of local people who came together to support the wider community during the pandemic. The two organisations worked together to identify people in need in the local community and get help to where it was needed.



Adapting DofE support when travel was restricted. During lockdown, young people could complete the expedition element of the award by camping on the premises in Nunhead and completing the walk element in London. Westminster House Youth Club also incorporated their walking programme into the fitness section of DofE, and foodbank into the volunteering section.



Staying open throughout the second national lockdown. Westminster House Youth Club re-opened in June 2020 following the first national lockdown and remained open throughout subsequent lockdowns, following an assessment by the Metropolitan Police. This involved key changes to their delivery and operations, included smaller group sizes, increased breaks between sessions and increased cleaning of the building.

What difference did support make?

Staff measure outcomes in terms of awards and certifications achieved, and by collecting questionnaires, gathering feedback from young people, tracking young people's progress in tuition, and ongoing dialogue with parents and carers.

Tuition sessions **helped young people catch up on their education**, which had been disrupted by the pandemic. One young person explained, *'Over lockdown we missed out on a lot of learning. The tuition helps you to catch up on what you've missed.'*

Both staff and young people reported that providing one-to-one tuition sessions were particularly helpful. Young people said that tuition had helped to **get their motivation back** up. According to a questionnaire administered by Westminster House Youth Club, young people felt more confident in Maths as a result of the tuition sessions²⁵.

**'We would still be at a year 6 level if we didn't
have support from the youth club.'**

- Young person

The young people we spoke to also shared that the support they had received had **helped them with their future careers**, especially support to achieve awards such as **DofE** as it looked good on their CV and taught them life skills. One young person explained, *'I'm doing my work experience in a few weeks. They told me that my having done DofE helped me stand out and made them pick me.'*

Young people also said that the support had helped to **improve their confidence and social skills**.

How did Westminster House Youth Club make a difference?

Staff shared that Westminster House Youth Club is underpinned by **youth work principles**.

²⁵ Based on mid-point report form.

‘Good old fashioned youth work works.’

Staff member at Westminster House Youth Club

Staff emphasised **the importance of building relationships** and connections with young people and their families in order to understand each individual's circumstances and background. For the staff, this helps to **establish trust** between staff members and the young people and families they support.

‘We know people, we know their circumstance.’

Staff member at Westminster House Youth Club

Lessons learned



There are limitations to virtual support. Whilst many services moved online during the pandemic, staff reflected that virtual working was not effective at engaging young people in their service, and can also be inaccessible when for young people who do not own a laptop or have access to a suitable environment at home. They found in-person support more effective for the young people they were supporting.



The importance of flexible working hours. Staff emphasised the importance of flexible working hours for effective youth work, but the increasing tendency of people in youth work to work the traditional 9am-5pm. Instead, they highlighted that **working in evenings, on weekends and during holidays** was crucial for supporting young people.



The importance of flexible funding. Flexibility from Inspiring Futures in terms of grant management and adapting plans as needed, allowed Westminster House Youth Club to adapt their services to meet the changing needs of young people during the pandemic – for example, disrupted education, or the need for food. Staff agreed it was empowering to be able to make key decisions about delivery and how they allocate their budget, using their knowledge about the needs and circumstances of the young people they are supporting.

Background to the case study

This case study is informed by the following research methods:

A virtual focus group with three Westminster House Youth Club staff members, facilitated by Cordis Bright.

A virtual group interview with nine young people who participated in Proud Futures, facilitated by Cordis Bright and a peer researcher from the YFF's Youth Reference Group.

Review of application and mid-point reporting form data, collected by BBC CiN and YFF.

Sense-testing with Westminster House Youth Club to check findings.

Find out more



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