

North Yorkshire Youth Mentors



adventure | learning | discovery

Year One Learning Review Summary
1st March 2020 – 28 February 2021

Executive Summary

The North Yorkshire Youth (NYY) Mentor Project is a 3-year investment that started 1st March 2020 with support from The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). It supports vulnerable young people through intense, early intervention, one-to-one sessions and group work activities. The aim is to improve their wellbeing, future employment opportunities and to learn new skills.

In its first year, 103 young people have been supported, mostly through 1:2:1 sessions online owing to Covid-19 and lockdown rules and restrictions. 30 have since moved on from the service.

The young people present with highly diverse needs. In fact, there are 32 different reasons for their referral with the top 3 being related to anxiety, relationship difficulties and self-harm behaviours. On average, there are at least 4 reasons per young person referred to the Youth Mentor service. These can include the need for emotional support, family problems / home life, education support, mental health support, social isolation and loneliness, bullying and bereavement and coping with caring responsibilities. During the year, there has been a notable increase in a need to support young people around self-harm, anxiety, exploitation, identity and suicide ideation.

Change is happening for the young people supported by the team of 5 Youth mentors now employed by NYY for this Project, but that change is not uniform. The pace and type of changes experienced are unique to each young person.

There is evidence of change linked to each of the outcome domains below which feature in the full report as case study stories of change and analysis of data for the distance travelled by young people that is tracked by the NYY team.

"They have helped me with feeling more confident and helping, dealing with difficult friends, made me more confident about going on public transport and seeing other people's perspectives."

Personal Assets	Emotional & social capabilities	Attitudes	Behaviours
Skills	Self-control		Self-esteem
Strengths	Resilience		Social relationships ¹
Potential	Self-awareness		Responsible decision making ²
Aspirations	Tolerance		Doing some social action

¹ This includes skills associated with the ability to form and maintain social relationships with other in and across communities.

² This could be evidenced for example by the way they set goals and take steps to achieving them; and problem solving.

Based on a survey of some of the young people receiving the mentoring service, they report that it especially helps them:

- Cope with different things going on in their lives better than they might have done.
- Feel more confident, strong and positive about themselves.
- Understand that they have potential and to believe in themselves.

Youth Mentor tracking data suggests there have been 42 different outcomes for the young people, observed at different points in the relationship. The top 10 are:

- Improved emotional and mental health
- Improved support networks
- Early help offered tackles problems quickly and reduces frequency of risky behaviours
- Increased participation in decision making
- Reduced feelings of isolation and loneliness
- Improved communication skills
- Increased engagement/community involvement
- Improved ability to self-manage challenges and health conditions

- Increased openness and communication regarding wellbeing
- Increased health and social-related quality of life for people.

Case studies collected for this learning review illuminate the practical effects of youth mentoring for young people:-

- Stopped self-harming.
- Walking away from dangerous relationships.
- Making positive choices for their education.
- Feeling a sense of achievement.
- Learning how to manage complex emotions.

Moreover, in the absence of their Youth Mentor, half of young people surveyed said they would not have anyone else they trusted enough to speak to instead.

They would feel sad, hide their emotions, bottle them up, and in some cases continue their risky and damaging behaviours. The preventative – or protective factor aspect – of the youth mentoring cannot be understated for these young people.

Young people are shaping the service they receive

Importantly, the young people decide what type of communication and relationship they want with their Youth Mentor. Some arrive with definite goals and want support to fulfil them. Others have no goals, simply want someone to talk to, and over time become more self-aware or decide to self-regulate and make more positive decisions for themselves. Through the mentoring, they

talk about things they like to do and things they want to change. Resources, activities and approaches used by the Youth Mentors are all informed by the young people they work with. Young people are keen to talk to their Youth mentors in future about their mental health, family, confidence, self-care ('how to love myself'), how to manage adult life, relationships and feelings.

Learning Lessons

The full report identifies four learning themes emerging in the first year of the Project:

- 1. Adapting to meet the slightly different needs of young people compared to the norm.**
- 2. Overcoming the challenges of engaging with young people during Covid-19.**
- 3. The different drivers of demand for youth mentoring in North Yorkshire.**
- 4. How to continually improve the Youth Mentor Project's systems and service.**

Reflections sessions with the Youth Development Manager and Youth Mentors at different points in the year revealed a number of lessons being learned about process and impact.

The future

NYM will use this learning to consider how best it can manage the expected increase in demand for youth mentoring by exploring options such as operating a waiting list, working with others in localities where there is an alignment of expertise and resource and / or increasing the team's capacity further. The culture of learning together will endure beyond the first year as it has helped the team develop bonds even further with one another, and this will help the two new Youth Mentors recruited in January 2021 to feel the benefits of that culture to continually improve practice.

Young people will continue to shape the service, and be supported to engage in social action within their communities to a greater extent in 2021/22. Similarly, once that is happening, young people can be encouraged to take a more proactive role in shaping the way this evaluation and learning service is shaped and delivered to 2023. The evidence and learning from this Project can, and will, be shared more widely to support future sustainability investment cases beyond 2023.

What learning could be useful to others?

- 1** Using Covid-19 as a catalyst to adapt communication and engagement methods.
- 2** Embracing the opportunity to offer a blended mentoring service delivery model.
- 3** Deploying time differently in smarter ways that enables simultaneously more CPD and practice improvement time for staff and contact time for young people.
- 4** Investing in systems and training that will make practitioners' lives easier (i.e. MYMUP).
- 5** Remaining true to the principle of young people shaping the service they receive.

Disclaimer: Information is presented in good faith and deemed accurate at the time of publication (30th April 2021), however the author cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

Our Partners:





adventure | learning | discovery



North Yorkshire Youth
Carlton Lodge
Carlton Miniott
Thirsk
North Yorkshire
YO7 4NJ

T: 01845 522 145

www.nyy.org.uk