

PATHWAYS TO CONFIDENCE EVALUATION REPORT



WHAT IS PATHWAYS TO CONFIDENCE?



North Lanarkshire Psychological Services was engaged at the beginning of the project to develop a robust evaluation framework and subsequently provide an independent report on the impact of the project after two years of operation. This document is a summary of their report and we trust that you will find it informative and inspiring.



Pathways to Confidence is a partnership project which aims to improve outcomes for children and young people aged 8-14 years and their families who are experiencing difficulty in their lives. Operating in Bellshill, Uddingston, Hamilton and Blantyre, the project commenced in October 2014 and is funded by William Grant and Sons Ltd through Foundation Scotland.

The unique model is that both the young people and their principal carers through one to one mentoring and befriending are supported with two different organisations working closely with each family. Participants are also helped to access other services where more specific needs can be addressed. Through the building of strong trusting relationships with Pathways to Confidence staff, volunteers and partners each person has the individualised long term support they require.

I felt as though I'd been let down in the past with different agencies so I thought 'here we go again' but that's not the case at all. I have a lovely mentor who I get on really well with.

WHAT WAS THE PLAN?



Young people and families would have:

- The support they need to access other services
- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Reduced isolation
- Increased aspirations
- Better school experience
- Increased literacy skills
- Better family relationships
- Improved longer term outcomes in education and employment

Mentoring, strengthening links between school, home and the community, and literacy support have been repeatedly identified as important elements of successful projects for young people and Pathways to Confidence (PTC) set out to encompass these elements.

It has definitely changed everything, the way our house is.

The plan was to build a young person's self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy, by identifying their own goals and assisting them to work towards these goals. In addition families who are struggling and whose circumstances impact negatively on their children would have the support they need to build on their skills and realise their potential. This would prevent further escalation of their circumstances and help them access the help and support they need to help and support their own children resulting in better life chances for each young person.

Challenges that families faced included poor mental health, poverty, isolation, and community conflict and substance misuse. These factors can negatively affect many aspects of their lives and in partnership with the funder planned outcomes were agreed.

WHO IS INVOLVED?



The principal partners in the project are COVEY Befriending in South Lanarkshire and Bellshill and Mossend YMCA (BMYM) in North Lanarkshire. Airdrie Citizens Advice, Family Mediation, Partners in Play and the Hamilton Information Project for Youth (HIPY) offer more specialist services for the families and young people; money advice and resolution, counselling, additional needs expertise and literacy support.

The work that gets done behind the scene before we come into it is fantastic.

A Young Persons' Coordinator and Family Support Coordinator ensure that families get the right support, coordinating their staff team of Befrienders and Family Support Workers and engaging trained volunteer Family Mentors. An Aspire Coordinator works in the school setting, coordinating groups and one to one links between young volunteer mentors and younger pupils, this element of Pathways to Confidence commenced in July 2016 and is not included in this report. A Project Lead gives support to staff and reports to a Governance Group made up of stakeholder representatives. This group meets quarterly to review progress against the original project plan.

THE BIG QUESTION

Have there been improved outcomes for young people and their families as a result of Pathways to Confidence?

THE SHORT ANSWER
YES!

HOW DO WE KNOW?



The information used in the research was collected from 1 April 2015 – 1 June 2016. 26 young people, (13 male/13 female) aged 8-14 years and 29 adult participants - parents, grandparents or guardians (2 male/27 female) provided data. Other young people and their families have been involved with the project outwith the time frame agreed for the research.

I feel happier now, generally.

A range of evaluation tools and measures were used for the young people and adults including standard scales and more bespoke questionnaires. Measures were taken at the start then after 6 months and 12 month points of involvement.

A Support Circle tool provided a subjective, visual representation of perceived support and a feedback form was completed at the end of the young person's journey with the project.

In addition three semi-structured focus groups and two case study interviews were conducted with participants and volunteer family mentors. The views of the befrienders and partner agencies were also gathered through a feedback form.

The transcripts of the groups, interviews and completed forms were collated and the emerging themes which were identified provided not only a rich source of evidence, but confirmation of the results from the ongoing project evaluations.

CASE STUDY

As a result of trauma and loss, Ben's family was left isolated, had extremely low confidence and were generally not coping. The main carer Ben's grandmother had low confidence, didn't leave the house and had a poor relationship with Ben.

Ben thought that having a befriender would be boring but quickly changed his view. Given that his Gran was unable to take him out, he simply hoped to have a friend that would enable him do all of the fun things he aspired to.

The positive change in Ben had not gone unnoticed by his teachers noting that he had matured. Ben felt happier and not only developed a relationship with his befriender but also made a friend through other YMCA activities.

It was reassuring for Ben to have a friend who had a shared experience of loss and someone he can relate to.

Prior to her involvement with Pathways to Confidence Gran felt unable to leave the house; and her biggest hope was gaining the confidence to get out more frequently. She recognised how pivotal this would

be to regaining her self-esteem and for her relationship with Ben.

Over time, with support from the Coordinator and a volunteer mentor Gran gained in confidence and after 9 months indicated that she now had the desire to go out. The significant change in Gran was noticed by those around her, as many had said to her that they couldn't believe the complete transformation.

Gran has also been supported to seek advice from the Citizen's Advice Bureau and now with the support of her family mentor regularly gets out and about.

Gran recognised how her enhanced wellbeing had helped her relationship with Ben. The family now make a point of sitting down together every night to have dinner and use the time as an opportunity to interact.

Thinking that any change to how she was feeling would have taken years given how low she was at the beginning of the project, Gran summarised: "It's just been amazing. I never thought I would get so far as I have in so small a time".

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?



The results of the research demonstrate a significant impact not only for the young people but also for the parents or carers, resulting in better outcomes for family as a whole.

For participants there was significantly enhanced emotional wellbeing, increased confidence and greater aspirations for the future.

I'm doing better. I get into less trouble and play better.

There were marked improvements in lifestyle choices, engagement with school, healthy eating, socialising and quality time spent with their family members.

All young people increased in confidence with almost half now attending new clubs such as swimming, football and the YMCA Health and Wellbeing group.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED? CONT'D



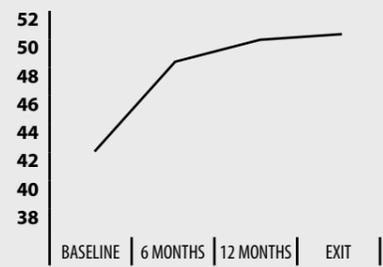
YOUNG PEOPLE

All young people indicated the befriender's consistency and reliability were central to building the trusting relationship they now had; having someone "you can trust and rely on" or someone "caring" makes the biggest impact. The close relationship formed with their befriender was fundamental to the success of their experience and in them making good choices. They had formed genuine goals and aspirations for the future, with some young people now wanting to use this experience for others who are going through a similar situation.

Relationships with family members had recovered with the previous communication barriers being removed. Young People said that Pathways to Confidence had helped not only them individually, but also their family as a whole.

They have made me feel happier and I have a really good friend.

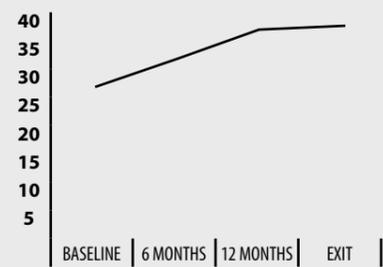
STIRLING CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING SCALE



Measuring the extent of the child's positive emotional state, positive outlook, and social desirability.

Children's wellbeing improved over time with children exiting the project showing an increase. Results underline that it takes time for children's wellbeing to improve.

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS



10 questions which note the young people's lifestyle in terms of positive family relationships, attitudes regarding school and aspirations for the future.

Attitudes towards school, aspirations for the future and lifestyle activities all showed an improvement after 6 months of befriending support for the young people with the increase maintained at 12 months. Some young people then accessed further activities within the YMCA when befriending concluded.

PARENTS AND CARERS

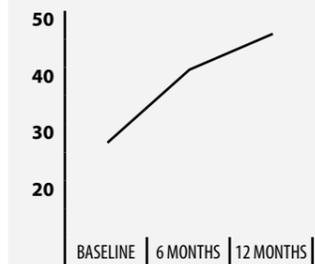
Initially each parent had held a pessimistic view of what the project offered. This was quickly turned round and they recognised their initial expectations were clouded by past experiences.

Parents and carers noted positive changes; a growth in self-confidence and improved family relationships. Also there emerged the desire to seek employment, indicating positive future aspirations not only for themselves, but also for their children.

Many were supported to access other services, attend appointments and have the help and advice that they needed.

I can't believe the turnaround in such a short period.

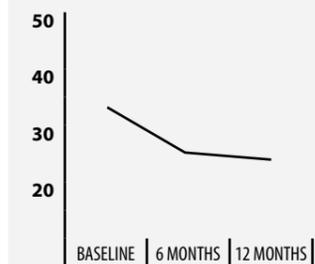
WARWICK-EDINBURGH MENTAL WELLBEING SCALE



Measuring aspects of positive mental health in adults.

Adults supported by the project experienced significantly improved mental wellbeing after 6 months which was increased further at the 12 month point. Considering some of the complexity of challenges the participants faced this is a marked result in such a short time.

ADULT WELLBEING SCALE



Consideration given to aspects of wellbeing, specifically depression, anxiety, inwardly and outwardly directed irritability.

There was a marked reduction in anxiety, depression and irritability as length of involvement increased. This was demonstrated by increased confidence and self-awareness, reduced isolation and less risk-taking behaviours (such as substance misuse).

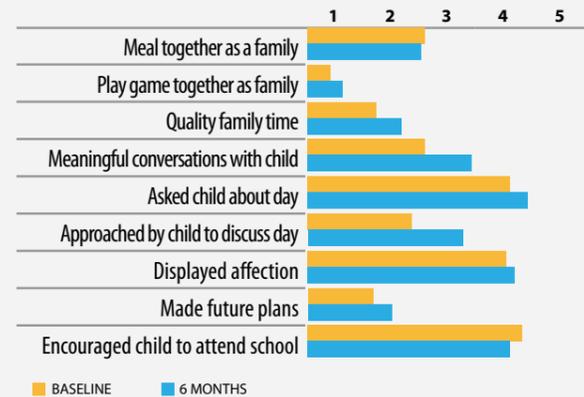
WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED? CONT'D



LIFESTYLE DIARY

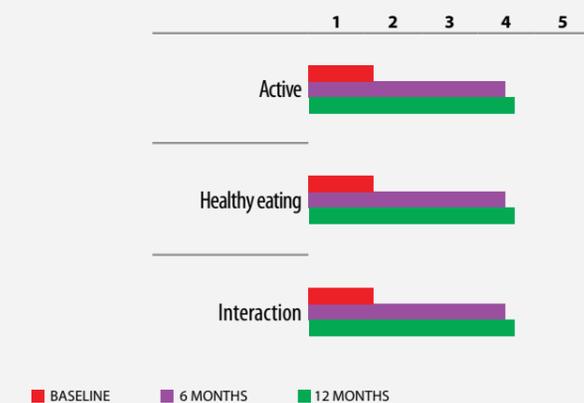
The lifestyle diary provided descriptive data on family activities and personal lifestyle, in terms of being active, healthy eating, recent achievements, and their socialising.

QUALITY FAMILY TIME



Families spent increased quality time together and in 6 months indicated that they had better family relationships as a result of their support. Some resulting benefits were in participants losing weight and others being able to share their problems; more positive attitudes regarding school, and greater aspirations for their future.

LIFESTYLE



For the whole family, levels of activity, healthy eating and socialising increased during involvement with Pathways to Confidence with children continuing to be involved in positive lifestyle activities on exiting the project.

BEFRIENDERS AND MENTORS

Volunteer family mentors and staff befrienders found their experience

I feel like I have already achieved above and beyond what I would ever have expected. The mentor training alone was fantastic. It motivated me even more. I totally grew as a person.

enriched being given new opportunities and developing further skills. Family mentors appreciated the level of training and support from the project gaining a sense of reward, more confidence and a change in their future

aspirations. Befrienders and mentors indicated both personal and professional growth as a result of their involvement.

PARTNERS

Many families have benefitted from increased income, access to specialised services, and resolution of childcare problems through support to access partner agencies.

Airdrie CAB has supported 20 families through Pathways to Confidence, giving advice for a wide range of complex issues. They have been able to reach many vulnerable and disadvantaged families who would not have previously approached them without the support of the PTC team. Six families have experienced a combined financial gain of nearly £16,000 enabling them to have a better quality of life and as

a result of this positive partnership, many families wellbeing and lifestyle has been improved.

For young people with additional needs referred to Partners in Play, challenging behaviour was reduced as their emotional needs were met and addressed through weekly meetings with their mentor. There was improved school experience and attendance across cases, with one young person able to successfully integrate into a mainstream club.

Relationship Scotland has received six potential referrals from PTC. It is too early to accurately assess the impact of these sessions but the fact that participants are now able to attend and engage in counselling is in itself an achievement.

Support for Literacy through Hamilton Information Project for Youth had not yet been accessed.

To achieve the very positive outcomes for the young people and their families, partnership working is a key aspect of the project. This shared vision has been strong throughout and has also given rise to much learning.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?



The Pathways to Confidence team have had an opportunity to reflect on the current evaluation framework and consider what is most effective for capturing outcomes. The tools were very robust with the exception of the parental stress measure which did not apply in most cases. An alternative measure of parental stress should be considered.

The value of partnership working was recognised, allowing families and young people to receive support on various levels, around many different issues. By working together the partnership can address the individual's complex concerns and maximise their potential for better life opportunities.

The principal partners worked hard to establish a values based relationship and cooperated together to protect this. There were some issues around communication with other partners and steps have now been taken to improve this.

It is the longer term support with both the young people and the families that is most effective in ensuring the best outcomes for those aged 8-14. Having considered the positive impact it is proposed that there be no fundamental change to the Pathways to Confidence model which has resulted in good outcomes for those most vulnerable in our society.

Universally, parents and young people had no regrets about their experience and felt the Pathways to Confidence team could do nothing more than what they already provide.

I have an interview this month for college, to go back and do social care and it's because I've come here. I want to better myself.

WHAT NEXT?



The Pathways to Confidence project is entering a third year of operation and consideration needs to be given to sustainability. An initial workshop has taken place to explore priorities and it was agreed that funding should be sourced to ensure continuation of the benefits to the local community. Operationally the staff need to be aware of the possibility of formulating an exit strategy for the young people and their families.

I'm a bit more able to open up actually from when I started.

Strategically the obvious health and well-being benefits of the project align well to the Health and Social Care agenda and the outcomes relating to school experience links with the Raising Attainment focus of the Scottish Government. The principal partners should consider investigating the social return on investment to identify preventative spend. They should also make further links with partners at National and Local level as this successful model of support has the potential to be replicated.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the parents, family members and young people who bravely shared their experiences of Pathways to Confidence with us. Without their co-operation, this report would not have been possible. Thank you too to the Pathways to Confidence team for collating the data, coordinating time with families, and sharing their passion for the project.

PATHWAYS^{TO}CONFIDENCE
for 8-14s and their families



A copy of the full report is available on request from the COVEY office

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