

RESILIENCE REVOLUTION'S ANNUAL REPORT

September 2019 - August 2020



CONTENTS

Foreword.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	2
Chapter 2: Whole Town Approach.....	2
Digital Community of Practice.....	13
Youth Engagement.....	18
Chapter 3: The Revolution in Schools.....	22
Bounce Forward.....	28
Chapter 4: Targeted support.....	32
Moving on Up - Group work.....	33
Moving On Up - 1 to 1.....	35
Saddle Up.....	37
Back on Track.....	39
Triangulation interviews.....	41
Friend for Life.....	42
Self-Harm Support.....	44
Walk and Talk.....	48
Conclusion.....	51
Closing remarks.....	56
References.....	57

FOREWORD

“This global pandemic has made life even harder than before, especially for those facing the greatest challenges. We face lots of disruption. Did you know that due to the lockdown and schools closing for lots of young people, the latest estimation is that it will take over 20 years for deprived areas to close the gap academically with those in richer areas. Find out more [Here](#).

We find this shocking and, as Blackpool is one of the most deprived areas in the country, we know how much this will affect children and young people in our town for years to come.

We know living in Blackpool is not easy for some of us. There’s not a lot of money to go around, and this has a knock-on effect on our mental health. We know some of you are wondering where the next meal might come from so we recognise there are some really tough additional struggles on top of school, friends and staying healthy.

This report shares with you the fantastic work that is happening in Blackpool schools and in the wider community to make things better for all young people across the town.

We believe that school can set us up for the future. We also know that school can be stressful, particularly due to the pressures of exams- so how can we reach our true potential if we are not in the right mind-set at school? It's important that we all act now!

We are working together with schools and the wider community so we can all help each other stay positive and resilient through tough times. This report shares with you the fantastic work that is happening in Blackpool to make things better for all young people across the town.

We have written this foreword to introduce the report, but more importantly, to encourage you all to read it. You will find out all the things we have been doing and how we are making a change in our town. We see stories of real people on every page of the report, and this is only a glimpse of the life-changing impacts we are seeing in young people, families and our town. We know that when a young person first joins the Resilience Revolution they can be shy and uncertain but working together, giving everyone a voice and watching people grow is a real privilege. Seeing young people taking centre stage and raising their voices, representing their families and their town is making things better. We know the work we are doing now is for our future, so please read what we have been doing over the past year and join us in doing even more in the next year.”



Elle
Co-leader



Hannah
Co-leader

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the Resilience Revolution's Annual Report- September 2019 to August 2020. It's full of facts and figures about our activities, stories from peoples' experiences and tells you what we have learned over the past year.

For those of you who haven't heard about the Resilience Revolution (RR), you may be wondering what it is and how it might be helpful for you and others around you.

The RR is a complex and passionate partnership of HeadStart Blackpool (led by Blackpool Council), the Centre of Resilience for Social Justice at the University of Brighton, and Boingboing Resilience Community Interest Company. Supported and funded by the UK's National Lottery Community Fund, this partnership is a collaboration of individuals, organisations and services across Blackpool. It uses Resilient Therapy (Hart, Blincow, & Thomas, 2007) to develop new ways of working to support young people's mental health and wellbeing, with young people, parents / carers and adult supporters involved as co-leaders.

The RR is a social movement inviting anyone who lives, works or volunteers in the town to get involved and make Blackpool a more resilient town for everyone to live in, especially those facing the greatest challenges.

The word *resilience* is everywhere at the moment, especially in this current time of trying our collective bests to deal with the COVID-19 global pandemic. Here in the RR, we are worried that people think that being resilient means we have to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, and if we can't do that by ourselves, then we are failures. We hear far too many times that people feel ashamed of the struggles they face, even when the problems lie in the system. Should we be responsible for the failings in the benefit system? Should those of us that need social work support be blamed for the huge funding cuts in community support?

Here in the RR, we say no! We use the definition of resilience 'Beating the odds whilst changing the odds' (Hart et al, 2016): Beating the odds, so people can do better than anyone expected them to given their circumstances; and changing the odds because we know we need to change the systems that are causing these challenges in the first place. We also believe that it is the people with the lived experience of these challenges that should be at the forefront of campaigning for change.

We believe that by creating a passionate and committed partnership with people from across the town, from all professions and all walks of life, we will create the change that will make it easier for us all to thrive.

ENJOY!

We have a set of principles that guide our work.



Our Fundamentals



Asset-based – We focus on the positives and build on strengths within a person, a family and in every situation.



Brave and Innovative – We work in new and exciting ways to solve the most difficult challenges.



Co-production – We work alongside young people, parents and carers and other stakeholders to reach a shared goal, with shared responsibility and shared learning and mutual benefits. Co-production is a joint effort!



Research – We are a learning programme, and research and evaluation is an essential part of this programme. We aim to reflect and critique constantly, so that we can figure out what works for young people and families.



Social Justice – We address inequalities and level the playing field to make sure that everybody has access to the same opportunities.



Systems change – We work to change and improve systems, which create persistent barriers for young people and families within them.



Whole Town Approach – We work across the whole town to build our Resilience Revolution.

These principles were showcased in our most recent three-day Big Resilience Get Together in Summer 2019, attended by 226 young people, parents and carers, school staff, practitioners and academics from over 30 organisations and groups, schools, the Council and the NHS. Have a look at our [co-produced blog](#) about the event. Each day was themed into different areas of our work: schools, mental health, and Our Children (young people in the care of the Local Authority). As part of this, young people asked a panel of strategic leads, managers and commissioners some really tough questions and made direct responses to the keynote speakers. Young people were also involved in the design, branding and filming of the event, as well as delivering workshop sessions. The feedback was great, with attendees commenting that “hearing young people’s responses to keynote speeches was very inspiring” but, as always, there was room for improvement. We will act on the feedback and learning to create a unique and exciting [international resilience conference](#) in March 2022, right here in Blackpool.

How we have been learning from our Resilience Revolution (RR)

The RR is a research programme, which means we have been testing and learning innovative ways of supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing. We want to make sure that we learn and share with others what the RR achieves. That is why we are collecting and presenting a wide range of information: in words, numbers, statistics, charts and images.

We want to use all of this rich information to build on successes and make improvements in areas that impact all our lives here in Blackpool. We want people in other areas to learn from what we are doing, and so, we need to understand how the changes we report have been created.

To help us see and guide changes as they are happening, our overarching methodological approach has involved using a tool called the Value Creation Framework (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). It's a way to look at all our revolutionary activities in real-time and capture their journey. The Value Creation Framework (VCF) can help explain how a project, or a social movement like ours, drives valuable changes. It's also designed to help people direct those changes- and that's why, right across the RR, people understand and use the VCF.

The changes that we have analysed throughout this report may have value for:

- **An individual person**, for example, helping a young person to feel more confident to answer questions in class.
- **An organisation**, for example, helping an organisation grow its network of volunteers, or it could be even bigger than that!

- **A whole system**, for example, helping local schools think differently about how they respond to bullying. This is also known as systems change, and it's like the golden ticket for us in the RR because it means that lots of people will benefit from the changes rather than one person. This means **Beating the Odds whilst Changing the Odds** (Hart et al., 2016).

We have used the VCF to help us bring together and summarise all these different types of values in this report's conclusion.



CHAPTER 2: WHOLE TOWN APPROACH



Community

There is an African proverb that states “It takes a village to raise a child”, recognising that children and young people’s life chances are determined by the accessibility of resources in their environment. Bronfenbrenner put together a [theory](#) to develop this idea further showing these differing influences from family, school, local community out to society as a whole (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Learning from this theory we actively build relationships between individual people and organisations, sharing opportunities to learn together and co-produce solutions to problems we face in day to day life. This underpins and drives our whole town approach, with a social justice lens in the Resilience Revolution (RR).

Last year, we hosted key events where we learnt more about our resilience approaches. 5 Resilience Get Togethers and 9 Resilience Forums brought together **136 people**. The Resilience Get Together is free and open for anyone in the community, who would like to find out more about our resilience approach and how this can help them to better support Blackpool’s children and young people. It is just an hour and a half, which is short enough for people to ‘**dip their toe in the water**’, but long enough for them to get a taster and find out if they want to get more involved.

The Resilience Forums are organised by Boingboing and the University of Brighton’s Centre of Resilience for Social Justice (CRSJ). They are also free and open for anyone, who is interested to attend. They specifically focus on **one aspect** or **application of resilience**, and are delivered by academics, people with lived experience of a particular adversity, or practitioners with good practice to share.

Last year, we **presented at** key events where we shared our message with the wider Blackpool community.

- RR at Blackpool and Fylde College Freshers’ Fayre in September 2019 = **32 new students**
- Autumn Fete at The Harbour hospital = **32 people**
- Stanley Park ‘Park Run’ Takeover to encourage the Resilient Move fresh air and exercise = **25 Blackpool residents**
- Information and activity event at Blackpool Carers Centre = **23 young carers**

We have also been busy promoting our work nationally, with RR representatives attending over 66 webinars and conferences to showcase and discuss our work. For example, this included the Research in Practice Conference in Leicester in March 2020, which focused on our social justice approach to resilience.

Work with parents, carers and families

Parents of the Revolution is a group of parents and carers from all walks of life, who share experiences and interests in supporting young people with their mental health. The group has a passion for changing unfair systems and improving outcomes for all Blackpool's children and families. With 12 parent and carer sessional workers, the group develops and supports different activities. Regular meetings are held that any parent and carer can join for a coffee and a chat about resilience, as well as monthly "take a stand" meetings where members develop plans to challenge unfair systems. They have had a very busy year with lots of presentations and activities, which you can see on the timeline below.

A Year of Parents of the Revolution –



September 2019 – Presentation at Social Care National Consultation Forum in Westminster – shared the co-produced guiding principles for Local Authority work with families. - Attended an international event **'Preserving Family Contact'** with speakers from across the UK and Australia – this included discussing how voices of **all** parents could be heard and utilised better within fostering and adoption systems.

October 2019 – Boundary School Parents' Resilience Course – delivered their interactive session. - **Building Resilience in Parents and Carers (BRiPC)** - Teaching 6 parents all about the Resilience Framework and highlighting resilience-building at a family level, rather than just at an individual level.

November 2019 – Blackpool Family Rocks Presentation – presented to **8** legal professionals in Blackpool Council highlighting the work the group has been doing to amplify parents' voices across a range of complex systems, as well as to promote the opportunities to get involved with parents groups.

December 2019 – Empowering Parents and Empowering Communities (EPEC) – worked with Blackpool Better Start to promote a new parent course called EPEC. Parents of the Revolution brought a resilience lens to the learning course materials and shared their expertise in how to engage parents who have children in secondary school.

January 2020 – Family Framework Launch – **60** people attended an event where the 42 Resilient Moves were translated into moves suitable for the whole family to do together. Find out more [HERE](#)

February 2020 – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Presentation – **45** people in safeguarding roles in the North West learnt about Blackpool Family Rocks Model of Practice across Blackpool Children's Social Care. - **35** foster carers learnt more about the RR at the **Foster Care Forum**. Volunteered **8** hours to support people on the B.R.I.C Chatty Bus, a community initiative spearheaded by Blackpool Residents Inquiry Claremont to tackle isolation across the town.



March 2020

– **SEND Forum** – held a stall for **100** delegates highlighting how to use the Blackpool Families Rock model in an inclusive way.
 - Presented to **40** parents at Revue Learning Academy **Coffee Morning** and Aiming Higher Open House

April 2020

– **Activity packs** – created and delivered to **530** families across Blackpool.

May 2020

– **Empowering Young People and Families Co-production Group** – surveyed local families and contributed to the content of new co-produced resource packs for families with young people on Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) waiting lists.

June 2020

– attended weekly **schools co-production groups** and amplified parent voice in recommendations for schools, as well as supporting the plans for a short film with Charlie Waller's P.L.A.C.E. support network.

July 2020

– established an activist group called **TAKE A STAND**. Meetings take place every 4th Thursday, find out more [HERE](#). Promoted a survey to have a say in what their relationship with schools was like during Covid-19. Attended the Working Well for Children and Families online event to discuss their good practice in amplifying parents' voice in complex systems with professionals from across the North West.

August 2020

– attended **Mental Health First Aid Training**.

In addition to of all this, Parents of the Revolution also have...

- Held **28** Coffee and Chats – a peer support space (now online) to share views about parenting and plan how to tackle inequalities together.
- Designed and taken part in **14** online quizzes, which provided a helpful distraction for young people and families during lockdown.
- Co-produced a series of newsletters between March and May to support families through lockdown, find out more [HERE](#).
- Co-produced **10** resource packs for online workshops and delivered them to the door. This was a great way of building relationships and encouraging parents to attend the Parents and Carers course. Book yourself onto this course [HERE](#).

Blackpool Families Rock

A co-production group is formed by 11 parents, carers, young people, community members, social work practitioners, and the Head of Service. The group co-produced the new approach to working with children and families in Blackpool, the *Blackpool Families Rock model*. This model is now embedded across the whole partnership with the support of this group.



The group also aims to constructively challenge and shape practice and procedures for work with children and families in Children's Social Care. Meeting monthly, the group co-produced value-based questions for Social Worker recruitment interviews. They also held a Question & Answer session with Blackpool's Principal Social Worker. The group challenges social work practice to be fair and considerate to families and drives service improvement. Their work has already helped Children's Social Care to make important practical changes, such as adding new criteria to practice audits and reviewing and writing parts of a Family Time Practice guidance document for Children's Social Care. The group is also among the key partners in the development of 'Pathway Planning with Care Leavers'.

The group has been part of co-presenting and co-training the novel Blackpool Families Rock model both locally and nationally.

The group has continued to meet digitally throughout lockdown. Their next steps are to work more closely with social care teams to share their expertise and recruit more families to be involved.

What happens next? The Parents of the Revolution constantly challenge inequalities of all kinds. Their activist group 'Take a Stand' is meeting with Children's Social Care so that social work practice can benefit from their lived experience and expertise. Parents of the Revolution are developing an impact wider than Blackpool, supporting the development of a Training the Trainer course for Resilient Rutland – a like-minded project using resilience approaches to improve health and wellbeing in young people and families across Rutland county.

SGO group – Special Guardians

A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) is made when the Family Court decides it is in the best interests of a child or young person to live with someone who is not their parents. Blackpool has a high number of Our Children, and lots of them live with a family member, friend or relative. This valuable caring role is provided by many family members and others, but there is no statutory requirement for them to be given any support. In Blackpool, the Special Guardians group began over two years ago to fill this support gap.

The group provides peer support on a monthly basis and aims to change aspects of the system to better support special guardians more widely, who often have little real control over whether to undertake this challenging role.

In the past year, the group co-produced a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document, which addresses issues that are often difficult to get answered. The group used their own experiences and knowledge, combined with research and input from local social care teams, to put together an easy to read and accessible document.

The group linked with the Grandparents Plus national charity and are starting to work with Blackpool Children's Social Care to provide direct support for this group of parents and carers.

The group has also been recognised as a beacon of good practice for SGO carers, as one of the only local authorities in the country to offer this support. During lockdown, the group has continued online and provided access to much-needed peer support during an especially difficult time.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

We know it can be a tough time for young people and their families on the waiting list for CAMHS. Empowering Young People and Families is one of our new co-production groups. They work alongside partners in Blackpool Teaching Hospital and Boingboing to 'change the odds' (Hart et al., 2016) and improve families' experience of this time. They are co-producing two resource packs, one for young people and one for parents and carers. These are designed to support everyone in the family with their mental health and to bring in a resilience lens. The group has identified that peer support and workshops may be one of the first ways to change the odds for families on the CAMHS waiting list. They have surveyed parents and carers across Blackpool to find out what workshops would be most helpful, as well as working with young people to imagine what a peer support project could look like.

Developing alliances with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and groups

Supporting community organisations and groups is a key part of our community development approach. They are co-leaders of the RR. We support each other to implement resilient approaches and build a better future for local young people in every platform including physical space.

Junior Park Rangers

Local young people do more than just tell us that the local parks and green spaces are important to them - they have shown us. In collaboration with Blackpool Better Start and Blackpool Council Parks Service, the Junior Park Rangers help look after and maintain our natural resources. Since the RR started in 2016, 184 young people have taken part in 106 sessions. Over the last year, 166 young people have taken part in 77 sessions in different green spaces in Blackpool. The Rangers have created a month by month nature activity guide which links to Resilient Moves.

In October 2019, young people successfully co-planned and co-delivered a fun outdoors Halloween event, which attracted local families with young children to take part in activities like pumpkin carving, monster hunts, story-telling and more. Check out a video about the event [HERE](#).

Since March 2020, the Junior Park Rangers have been supporting the community through the pandemic. They've helped design resilient seed packets, with 300 sent out to families in lockdown, as well as taking part in quizzes to continue developing their passion for nature.

During lockdown, without open playgrounds or community gardens there was little for families to do in their local park. A trio of Junior Park Rangers co-created a proposal and designed a sensory space filled with herbs and fruit trees and took their idea to the town's decision makers. They were successful in their bid to develop the area and received a grant of £1000. Here are some images of the sensory space for families that they have created.



Aiming Higher

Aiming Higher shares our passion for disability inclusion. Not only do Aiming Higher actively promote Resilient Moves in their social media campaigns, the Aiming Higher team have all embedded the principles of Resilient Therapy and co-production into their work with families. In their Coffee and Chat meetings, Aiming Higher invite guest speakers as well as key decision makers. The RR has presented at Coffee and Chat mornings online during lockdown and discussed with families what a resilience lens is and how co-production can help to not only beat the odds for some families, but also to change the odds for all families.

Blackpool Football Club Community Trust

After the lead representative of Blackpool Football Club Community Trust (BFCCT) attended our advanced training Facilitating Resilient Therapy, they went on to introduce co-production with young people into the design and delivery of their Inspires programme, which has been commended by the Premier League for its integration of the resilience evidence-base. The programme includes two specific sessions on the Resilience Framework and Resilient Moves are incorporated throughout the programme. It was delivered in 4 schools this year. As part of this work, a Youth Engagement staff member has supported them to model a Youth Voice project that BFCCT are now taking on themselves.

We are lucky and privileged to have many voluntary and community sector organisations co-leading the RR. Organisations are developing their own responses to building community resilience and we are learning together to make Blackpool a more resilient town.



Training Blackpool's Workforce

We are big on sharing our collective learning. The RR offers training, based upon the Resilient Therapy (Hart et al., 2007), which encourages critical debates, sharing of local evidence, and personal reflections. Our training is designed to empower our fellow co-leaders of the RR with knowledge and confidence to address inequalities.

Our courses:

- **Introduction to Resilient Therapy** – For anyone with a pulse that is interested in resilience. Learn what Resilient Therapy is and how it can help you and others. This helps to build resilience across Blackpool through strategic ways of working with children, young people and families.
- **Facilitating Resilient Therapy** – For people who are familiar with Resilient Therapy and approaches across Blackpool. Learn how to use Resilient Therapy with others.
- **Practitioner Resilience** – For social workers, school staff and practitioners supporting children and young people in Blackpool. Learn ways to understand their practitioner needs when facing uncertainty, change or strive for a work life balance, and explore how resilience impacts on professional practice.

- **Academic Resilience Approach (ARA)** – For anyone interested in supporting children and young people in Blackpool schools. Learn about the ARA and find out how school communities can build resilience at multiple levels of the school system and protect pupils, parents and staff from the worst effects of adversity.
- **Supporting Academic Resilience Approach (ARA)** – For people who are familiar with the ARA. Learn how to use the ARA with others.

Sessions have been run at different local venues including: The Grange, Blackpool and Fylde College, Bickerstaffe House, Blackpool Football Club and online via Microsoft Teams. [Click HERE for more information and booking](#)

290 people have attended these training sessions and provided feedback over the last 12 months:

- 229 people attended the Introduction to Resilient Therapy
- 36 people attended the Practitioner Resilience
- 10 people attended the ARA in the community
- 9 people attended the Facilitating Resilient Therapy
- 6 people attended the Supporting ARA

Introduction to Resilient Therapy

- 44% increase in topic knowledge after the session
- 96% agreed the training met its aims
- 97% agreed the course was well presented
- 96% agreed the course was a positive learning experience
- 93% agreed the information was relevant to work
- 94% would recommend to a colleague
- 93% would attend further training from us

Online Introduction to Resilient Therapy

- 30% increase in topic knowledge after the session
- 98% agreed the training met its aims
- 98% agreed the course was well presented
- 97% agreed the course was a positive learning experience
- 97% agreed the information was relevant to work
- 97% would recommend to a colleague
- 98% would attend further training from us

Practitioner Resilience

- 28% increase in topic knowledge after the session
- 97% agreed the training met its aims
- 98% agreed the course was well presented
- 98% agreed the course was a positive learning experience
- 97% agreed the information was relevant to work
- 98% would recommend to a colleague
- 98% would attend further training from us

ARA in the community

- 30% increase in topic knowledge after the session
- 96% agreed the training met its aims
- 96% agreed the course was well presented
- 96% agreed the course was a positive learning experience
- 94% agreed the information was relevant to work
- 96% would recommend to a colleague
- 96% would attend further training from us

Here are some personal reflections from people who attended our training.

Learning about Resilience

“Resilience Therapy is not as complicated as it sounds. Great session that has simplified it for me.” And “I really enjoyed the training. It was very informative and interactive. It has given me a lot to think about in terms of how I can help and bring around positive change and skills for the young people I work with.”

Useful Tools

“I will be incorporating the framework into both paid and voluntary work.” And “I will use the framework as a tool with young people to identify strengths and areas that need work. Will look on BoingBoing website, find resources and learn the language.” And “I will be passing on advice to colleagues to help with their resilience.”

Recommendations

“More training should be given across the NHS Trust for staff.”

An important session for our team was 2 days of training on white privilege and becoming actively anti-racist. We are committed to social justice and are continually learning how the RR can be inclusive to all. We have taken the first steps to learn more and acknowledge that there is still work to be done every day to challenge racism and systemic injustices in our society.



DIGITAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



After lockdown our training moved online. A group of 14 trainers across the RR meet regularly to share learning about online training. The group highlighted 3 benefits of this new way of digital learning:

- Keeping course content to its essentials;
- Trainers and attendees can log in from anywhere;
- Sessions are flexible and can fit around commitments and demand.

The group also created a list - Top Tips for Online Training - and linked them to the Resilience Framework

1. If you are delivering training, experience what it feels like as a participant by attending an online training session. Make some notes about what is helpful, engaging, and what might work for your own delivery. **KNOW AND UNDERSTAND YOURSELF**
2. You need a co-facilitator to help manage the online room and share presenting for better engagement. **GET TOGETHER WITH PEOPLE YOU CAN RELY ON**

3. Plan and practice the content and activities. It's a good idea to make sure that presenters can deliver all the content and cover for each other if a technical problem should occur. **SOLVE PROBLEMS**
4. Keep the time spent presenting information short so that you can embed lots of activities and discussions. Use all the tech available, i.e. polls, whiteboards, images and videos. **EXISTING SOLUTIONS- USE THEM**
5. Create a bank of physical workbooks, handouts and activities that can be sent out ahead of the session to help reduce screen time. **MAKE LEARNING WORK AS WELL AS POSSIBLE**
6. Facilitators can arrange 'test calls' with attendees before the meeting – this helps to make the training personalised and get people familiar with the chosen platform's functions, as well as checking devices that will be used to access the training. **KEEP RELATIONSHIPS GOING**
7. Use the online ticket sites to advertise and promote sessions. Include readings (if copyright allows) or our own videos in the online ticket site page itself. **HIGHLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS**
8. Brand the digital space – for example, use your organisation's logo as your background. **FIND SOMEWHERE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU BELONG**
9. Put a clear plan of the session up at the start so people know what is happening in the session and include a comfort break. **ORGANISE YOURSELF**
10. It's good to be available for debrief phone calls after the session finishes, particularly if sensitive topics are covered. **UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS**

Learning within interviews with Resilience Revolution Staff

Learning is a collective ongoing process for the Resilience Revolution. We wanted to know what Resilient Moves staff make in their day to day work, so we spoke with 6 Resilience Coaches, 2 Senior Coaches and 1 Advanced Practitioner. We counted up any specific comments that referred to the Resilient Moves listed on the Resilience Framework. (Hart et al. 2007)

425 Resilient Moves were discussed at these interviews. The range of moves deduced within each interview was between 53 and 85. The most frequent resilient move was *'Know and Understand Yourself.'*

Noble truths are principles that underpin the practice of Resilient Therapy. The four noble truths are; accepting, conserving, commitment and enlisting.

97 noble truths were discussed at interviews. *'Accepting'* had the highest overall score with 48, which shows that those working with young people accept what they have been through in their lives, what help and support they may need, and work alongside them to improve their resilience in any way they can.

Additionally, 7 members of Youth Engagement staff took part in interviews between January and February 2020. These were also analysed using a deductive approach, this time searching for specific words and concepts such as Train, Learn, Job, and Career.

Ten key themes emerged from this analysis that demonstrated the many ways the Youth Engagement Team are committed to learning and sharing good practice.



Youth Engagement

A total of **534** young people have taken part in a range of co-production activities to co-lead the Resilience Revolution (RR) since 2016 as equal partners. This has included **347** young people making changes in their school, for example by joining their school's pupil resilience committee or training to be a peer mentor. **268** young people have attended a raft of out-of-school opportunities to make a change in the community more widely. This includes groups like our Young People's Executive Group (YPEG) where young people hold the RR to account and create lasting change to make Blackpool a better place for children and young people.

Over the last year, Covid-19 has inevitably brought challenges for some of the Youth Engagement projects that were underway or on the horizon prior to lockdown. Despite this, the Youth Engagement Team has continued to reach young people across the RR and in total, **183 young people have engaged in co-production opportunities between September 2019 and August 2020.**

In response to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, Youth Engagement quickly adapted and used a range of online platforms that young people could engage with in order to keep activities going. Groups such as YPEG and Blackpool Beating Bullying went from being face-to-face to online sessions so young people could continue making a difference. We began new ways to support young people and their communities during these tough times, for example co-producing social media posts to support mental health and wellbeing, and working closely with community organisations to embed Resilient Therapy within their approach, including Blackpool Football Club's Community Trust, Revolution and Blackpool Carers Centre.



A Year in Youth Engagement

— **September 2019 – How-to guide** – Fresh from their research residential over summer at the University of Cumbria, the Revolution Researchers worked hard on their how-to guide. The guide reflects on projects the group has worked on and includes handy tips for others interested in co-producing research with young people. The guide is now finished and can be read [HERE](#).

— **October 2019 – HeadStart National Residential** –

Co-planned and co-delivered by young people, the Resilience Revolution hosted a 3-day residential for the HeadStart areas across Blackpool, Newham, Wolverhampton, Hull and Kent to come together and share learning. Over the 3 days we had a whistle stop tour of Blackpool, as well as tackled some local and national issues faced by young people.



— **November 2019 – Same Pay for the Same Day launch event** – The Same Pay for the Same Day is a campaign for fair wages led by young people. After analysing survey responses from over 400 young people across Blackpool, the group shared their findings and recommendations with local organisations at an exciting launch event. Check out this [blog](#) co-written by young people to find out more and see their campaign leaflet.

— **December 2019 – Blackpool Beating Bullying (BBB): First award** - BBB presented its first Bronze award to Montgomery Academy for its implementation of the BBB charter mark. The campaign and charter mark were co-produced with young people with the aim of reducing bullying in schools, which our young people highlighted as one of the most common issues that pupils face. This first award to Montgomery Academy was presented to the school in Blackpool Town Hall with 9 young people and around 30 adult guests attending, including school head teachers, staff and governors, the Mayor, councillors, and parents. Since then, more awards have been achieved by Blackpool schools. You can read more about BBB in Chapter 3.

— **January 2020 – Peer Mentoring Delivery began**

— The peer mentoring offer was delivered in 8 primary schools in Blackpool. 84 young people were successfully trained in different areas of the Resilience Framework so they can support other young people in their schools. The sessions were well-received and schools committed to taking the initiative forward.

— **February 2020 – HeadStart National Conference** –

6 young people represented the RR at a national event in London, called 'The HeadStart Learning 2020: The Why, How and What of Resilience in Children and Young people'. Young people took on a range of roles, including co-facilitating sessions, filming, and interviewing participants.



— **March 2020 – Children's Services Communications Event: Young People Takeover** – Young people from the RR and Just Uz took over the quarterly Children's Services communication event on 10th March, presenting to 232 attendees about co-production. Young people successfully shared why it is so important for professionals to work alongside young people and involve them in decisions that affect their lives. The event was well-received, with Children's Services practitioners commenting that *"The event allowed me to reflect on the importance of listening to the young people we work with and put this at the forefront of my mind"*, and they are now *"Working very hard to get the voice of young people and parents involved in every aspect of our work."*

— **April 2020 – Open up the Mic** – Young people embarked on a new project alongside Showtown Blackpool to incorporate discussions around Resilient Moves and mental health into comedy. Young people played a key role in the commissioning process and helped to decide who would get the contract. They went on to work online with a real comedian to develop their comedy material and take part in different challenges, which taught them to *"make time to have a laugh, because it bonds us together"*.

– **May 2020 – Creative Activism Zines –**

In collaboration with the University of Brighton and Boingboing, young people from the RR attended online workshops to learn about activism and zine-making (small self-published magazines). With advice from local artists and photographers, young people created their own individual and collective zines around tackling inequality and raising awareness of topics such as LGBTQ rights, votes at 16 and the environment. To find out more, check out our blog [HERE](#).

– **June 2020 – Covid-19 school recommendations**

– Our young co-leaders were instrumental in elevating young people’s voices in discussions around the wider re-opening of schools following Covid-19. Some young people worked in the Resilience Revolution Education Voices group alongside parents, carers, teachers, workers and academics to co-produce a series of recommendations for schools, which you can read [HERE](#). Others took part in co-research and surveyed over 120 young people across Blackpool to find out about their experiences during lockdown and see what support might be needed from schools and colleges to help students return safe and happy. You can read the report with their findings [HERE](#).

– **July 2020 – Civic Activism project –**

Young people started working as co-researchers alongside HeadStart staff from Blackpool, Newham and Cornwall, as well as academics from the University of Brighton and Queens University Belfast. Together they are co-creating knowledge around how activism in local and global communities could be a resilience building mechanism to improve young people’s mental health and wellbeing.



– **August 2020 – Blackpool Bright Minds launch –**

The Blackpool Bright Minds YouTube channel was launched to give young people a one-stop shop of what is going on in Blackpool for them to get involved in. There are 18 partners to the channel, with videos uploaded weekly to make sure there’s always something new out there for the young people to watch. The steering group for the channel is led by young people and facilitated by members of the Youth Engagement Team. Young people play a key role in designing and filming video content, benefiting from opportunities to develop their journalism skills. Click [HERE](#) to check out the channel.

In addition, young people have also...

- Attracted 107 YouTube views through filming a Question & Answer video interview with Mayor Amy Cross
- Brought together 101 books for a new Resilience Revolution reading collection, available to loan digitally in collaboration with Blackpool Central Library
- Taken part in 67 online quizzes facilitated by the Youth Engagement Team, which provided a helpful distraction for young people and families across the community during lockdown
- Written 35 social media posts to share the Resilience Framework with wider audiences and showcase Resilient Moves during lockdown
- Attended 6 strategic meetings and promoted youth voice in decision making, including the HeadStart Executive Board, Blackpool School Improvement Board, and North West SEND Steering Group
- Recruited 3 additional peer sessional workers, taking the total to 6, who have successfully joined the team and continued to support the different activities and initiatives across the Resilience Revolution
- Sat on 2 interview panels and helped decide which staff are recruited to the Resilience Revolution
- 2 young co-leaders of the Revolution co-produced ‘A Guide to On-line Gaming: Top Tips for making Resilient Moves when Gaming’, which you can read [HERE](#)

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Impact of Youth Engagement activities on young people

49 young people involved in Youth Engagement completed a survey in July 2019. Out of them, **30** young people repeated the survey again between January and March 2020.

The survey asked them about their:

- Self-esteem, i.e. how they felt about themselves
- Self-efficacy, i.e. their confidence in their own abilities
- Civic engagement attitudes, i.e. how much they believed they should help their community
- Civic engagement behaviours, i.e. whether they were taking action to help their community
- Identity development, i.e. how sure they felt about who they are as a person and where they are going in life

The 30 young people have been split into two different groups below based on type of involvement. Although there were no significant differences in their survey scores from July 2019 to March 2020, we can see potential trends emerging for the different groups. This analysis suggests that more intensive involvement with Youth Engagement activities is relating to more positive changes for young people. In other words, it helps young people to help out!

Group 1: Resilience Committees

- 23 young people from school resilience committees
- Attended between 3 and 7 Youth Engagement sessions
- Aged 10 – 13 years old
- 4% increase in self-efficacy
- 5% increase in civic engagement attitudes
- 5% increase in identification with commitment – this means young people are feeling a bit more sure that their future plans are right for them

Group 2: Out-of-school groups

- 7 young people from YPEG, Revolution Researchers, Digital Group, and other activities
- Attended between 6 and 159 Youth Engagement sessions
- Aged 9 – 18 years old
- 22% increase in self-efficacy
- 15% increase in civic engagement attitudes
- 7% increase in civic engagement behaviours
- 14% increase in exploration in breadth – this means young people are thinking more about lots of different things they might do in future
- 9% increase in exploration in depth – this means young people are thinking more about whether their future plans are right for them

In-depth analysis through interview findings

9 young people involved in Youth Engagement activities were interviewed about their experiences between November 2019 and March 2020.

They said that since taking part, they have seen benefits such as:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem

Most young people interviewed talked about growing in self-confidence in some way – these included changes in their self-image and viewing themselves more positively, as well as feeling more confident to speak up and share their opinions. Young people identified particular aspects of Youth Engagement that played a role in this, including: motivation and support from staff; the feeling of being listened to; being on camera; public speaking opportunities; being able to mix with young people of different ages; and the feeling of making a difference to other people's lives.



“I feel a lot more self-worth. I feel like I'm now worth something to people. Before, I didn't, I don't know why, but I didn't. But now I have more of a positive vibe about myself...Whereas before I would've been like 'oh no, I'm just a nobody really' and now I'm like, 'I'm a somebody'... They opened my eyes to the fact I'm making a change to people's futures and current lives... And then it hit me, and I was like 'so why am I thinking so negatively about myself if I'm doing all of this?'”

- Developed new skills

Young people talked positively about the opportunities they have been offered within Youth Engagement and the range of skills they have been able to develop as a result. For example, some young people reported greater communication skills. This included expanding their vocabulary, learning how to read social cues such as body language, and improving their public speaking skills. Young people also talked about improved organisational skills, including the ability to plan, prioritise and budget. Other areas of development include more specialist skills – from young people learning how to carry out social research, to digital skills such as camera work.



Young people also have successfully applied some of their learning outside of the RR. For example, some have found their research and organisational skills helpful for school and college work. They have also applied their communication skills and improved their social networks as a result.

- Improved family relationships

Some young people talked about growing closer to certain family members since taking part in Youth Engagement activities, including treating them with more respect and empathy, being more excited to spend time with them, and generally getting along better.



“[Home life] is a lot calmer now. With my brother, we've got a lot closer, because I'm able to see things and he wants to know what I do and we kind of work with the framework together... Me and Mum don't argue as much as we used to, because HeadStart is kind of a break for me as well, so she can have her time when I'm here”

- Blossoming friendships

Some young people said that their friendships improved since attending Youth Engagement activities. For example, one young person suggested they have been able to build on existing friendships, reporting that they have gone from just listening to their friends to talking to them more, because they now “feel more confident to say things”. Other young people talked about making new friends, both within the Youth Engagement groups and also in other settings such as school.



“When high school came around, I was deeply scared about it. But when I had picked up the skills from HeadStart, I could socialise with people in high school. Because on the first few weeks, I was like that shy kid that didn't really want to talk to anyone. But when I picked up the social skills, I decided to start talking with people, and I made a few new friends there”.

- Increased belief in young people's abilities

Young people told us they believed more in their own abilities, whether this be their ability to answer questions in class, speak in front of audiences, or to help others.



"I have a lot more advice, I kind of don't shy away being like 'oh you need to go see someone.' I kind of like tell them, 'oh you can do this and this' or 'have you thought about this?' Whereas before I would've just been like 'I think you should just go see a professional, there's not much I can do'".

For some young people, this extended to a sense of belief in young people as a wider group and their ability to make a difference. For example, this included comments around changes in perception, from feeling *"I'm a kid, I have to do everything you say"*, to a greater sense of empowerment in which young people are viewed equally to adult professionals.

"And we're doing it through the power of co-production so if any politicians are like 'aw no, kids can't say this' we'll just, 'Bam! How-to guide, ha! We did this co-produced!'"

- Improved mental wellbeing

For some young people, attending Youth Engagement groups has improved their wellbeing by providing an alternative space that gives them a temporary break away from issues at home. Other young people reported that HeadStart has supported them to talk about mental health and develop strategies to deal with challenges.



"Before HeadStart, my mental health was like really bad and I didn't know how to help myself, and I didn't know where to go to seek help... but since I came into HeadStart, it encouraged me to open up about my mental health. It has provided me with the support that I need and also, it provides me with a little getaway and it takes my mind off everything"

- Positive changes in behaviour

Before joining the RR, some young people described issues such as misbehaving in school or being "hyper". After taking part in Youth Engagement activities, however, they noticed their behaviour improved and they started to act "more mature" as a result. The sense of responsibility awarded from Youth Engagement groups, as well as the opportunity to step up as a role model for younger children, appeared to play a role in this change.



Some young people also reported increased pro-social behaviour; young people have learnt about the importance of empathy within Youth Engagement groups and some have gone on to apply this outside of HeadStart to help others. For example, one young person gave the example of intervening when a pupil at his school was being bullied and as a result, "the day I did that, I didn't hear a peep out of them once to him."

- Belonging in Blackpool

Some young people reported a shift in the way they feel about Blackpool, including viewing the town more positively and feeling more proud to call it their home.



"I used to not be proud about, I used to hate saying to people abroad 'I'm from Blackpool.' But now I'm proud to say that I'm from Blackpool and I'm proud to show the experiences and the achievements of us. I used to live in that stigma that everyone else does. But now I'm kind of coming out of it and I'm part of that like, 'no Blackpool will change for the better.'"

Young people's attachment to the RR seemed to play a key role in this, and as a result they were keen to see even more young people engage with the RR moving forward.

- Future goals and aspirations

We know young people are our future. However, before attending Youth Engagement activities, some young people were originally unsure what their futures had in store for them. They have since been supported to think about their futures and developed a sense of direction as a result, planning to pursue careers in fields such as art, teaching, youth work, and more.



In summary, Youth Engagement has been very active over the last year. As well as presenting numbers of young people involved in co-production and key achievements made, this analysis has also included findings from both quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews with young people.

Through combining these data sources, we can see that in addition to working on a town-wide level, Youth Engagement has had an incredibly positive impact on the lives of individual young people taking part – both inside and outside of schools. On the next pages, find out more about our whole school approaches to building resilience.

“The plan once upon a time was to just kind of, let’s roll with it, let’s see where the road takes me... And then I realised I can’t live my life like that because it’s not a good way to live your life... So by creating that life plan and trying to stick to it, it’s better than what I was doing before... I feel a lot better about my future than I did before”

Other young people already had future goals in mind but found support from Youth Engagement helpful in terms of confirming their choice and developing relevant skills and experience.

“[My] career goals have not changed because I still want to work with children with disabilities... But HeadStart have sort of pointed me in the directions to where I can go for the help to get where I want to, and any training that I might need... It’s helped me gain experience and confidence”



CHAPTER 3: THE REVOLUTION IN SCHOOLS

Academic Resilience Approach (ARA)

The Resilience Revolution (RR) also takes place in schools. So far **16,079** young people have attended a school that co-leads the RR.

The RR promotes the implementation of the ARA (Hart & Williams, 2014). We work alongside all schools in Blackpool to highlight, then build upon the strengths already in place across the school and the town. This is a whole school resilience approach because it involves all members of the school community; whether you are a welfare assistant, a head teacher, a parent or a pupil; and considers resilience across the whole school system. It is a call to action for all schools in Blackpool to look through a resilience lens in order to close the gap for disadvantaged pupils and those facing additional challenges.

The ARA is not a programme but an approach. This means each school customises the steps to fit their specific needs.

- Step 1.** Learn about resilience
- Step 2.** Audit the school by identifying strengths and areas for improvement
- Step 3.** Co-produce an action plan to build resilience across the whole school
- Step 4.** Innovation funding
- Step 5.** Review progress
- Step 6.** Share good practice and campaigns across Blackpool

The last 12 months saw:



Step 1: Training

The ARA offers resilience training for all school staff, and has been delivered in Blackpool schools for the last three years.

On average, staff scored themselves 55% confident with their knowledge of resilience at the beginning of the training sessions and this grew to 87.5% by the end of the session.

Satisfaction scores:

- **97%** agree the training met its aims
- **97%** agree the course was well presented
- **97%** agree the course was a positive learning experience
- **96%** agree the information was relevant to work
- **97%** would recommend to a colleague
- **95%** would attend further training

Here are some examples of what school staff said:

"It was useful to learn different methods to collect evidence and how to use methods to allow children to ask questions, such as questions in a box."
PSHE training attendee

"I gained insight into systems change regarding the whole school as well as the individuals."
Academic Resilience for Pastoral Staff training attendee

"As a rule I believe there is always room to improve so never usually give more than an 8/10. [participant gave a score of 9/10] This was an excellent course with very engaging facilitators."
'What is Resilience?' training attendee

Step 2: Audits

Four different audits highlight the school's assets and identify areas for resilience building. The 4 perspectives are: pupils, parents, staff and the Senior Leadership Team.

What did primary school audits recommend?

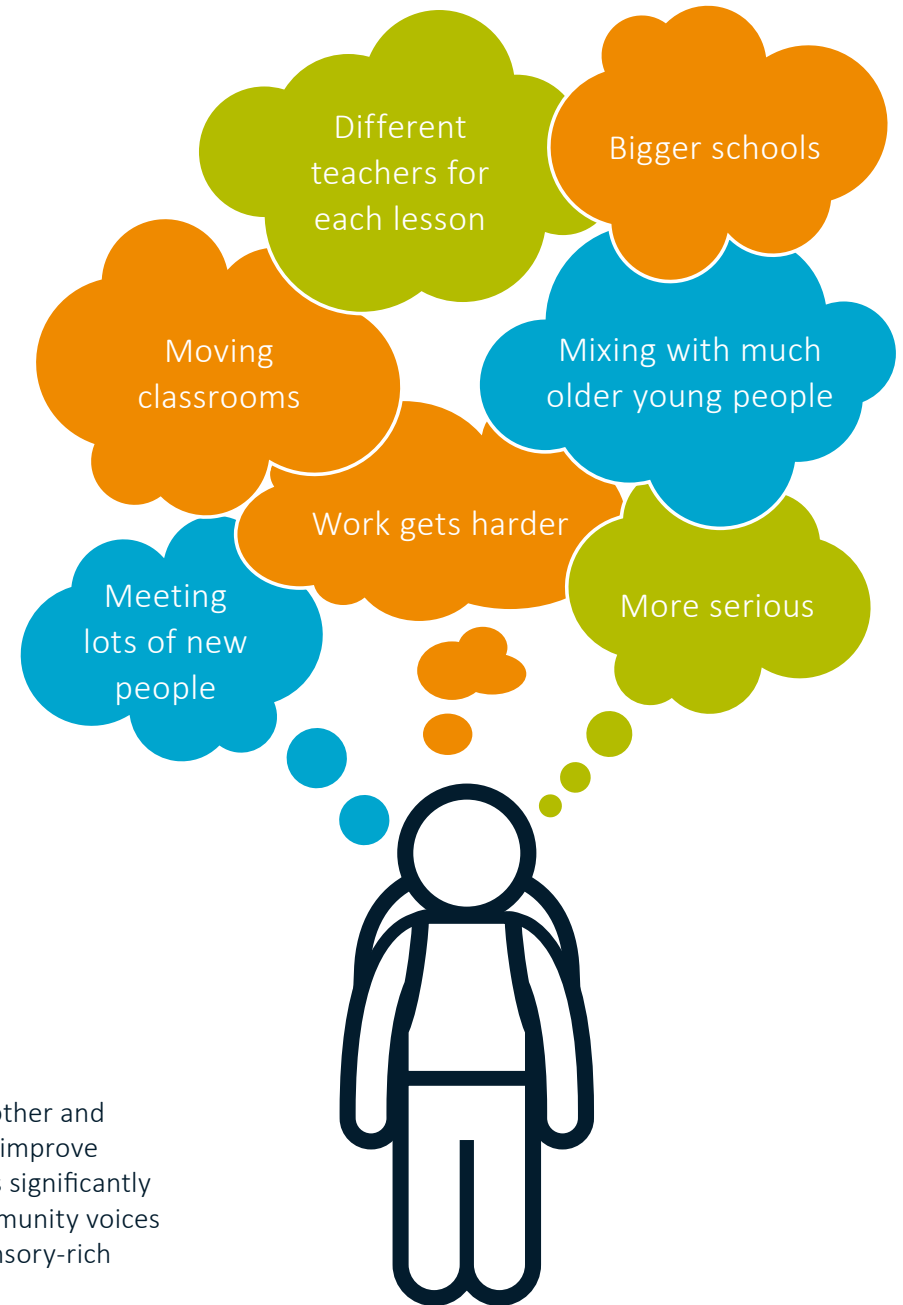
- Wellbeing space in the school
- More Resilience Frameworks and resilience sessions across the school community
- More active roles for young people, including co-production with school staff and having meaningful responsibilities such as attending staff meetings and pupil-led committees
- Supporting wider community needs such as food, housing and clothing

Staff, pupils and parents in primary schools arrived at shared priorities, agreeing on which additional resources would best support the needs of the whole school community and the ambition to engage parents in resilient thinking, training and activities. This focus on the wider school community shows a shared commitment to the importance of whole school approaches to resilience.

What did secondary school audits recommend?

- More active role for young people, including co-production with school staff and having meaningful responsibilities such as anti-bullying work, and helping to design transition support for new pupils
- Wellbeing space in the school
- Greater school cohesion
- Improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged
- More health and staff resources for school

Staff, pupils and parents in secondary schools called for increased engagement with each other and the wider community as they have seen that increased engagement activities appeared to improve pupils' sense of belonging and raise their aspirations. Calls for more carer engagement was significantly important in schools reporting a high number of SEND students. Students, carers and community voices wanted to see schools develop their work with community services to enable access to sensory-rich activities, such as specialist sports training and arts and cultural activities.



Step 3: Action plans

The audits inform an action plan within each school. The ARA was rolled out across **45 schools in three waves: 2017, 2018 and 2019**, which means some schools have been working on their action plans longer than others. A sample of the actions are below

- Pupil led assemblies
- Eco-monitors
- Monthly achievement awards
- Gardening club
- Peer mentors
- Parent resilience course
- Careers advice
- University / College taster sessions
- Communication events
- Volunteering initiatives
- Pastoral training

Step 4: Innovation funds

Schools could apply for money to help implement their action plans from a pot called the 'Innovation Fund'. This includes attending a panel, where young people are invited to present their co-produced plans about what they could do in their schools to make it a more resilient place to learn and thrive.

Since September 2019, 11 schools have attended the RR innovation fund panel, all of which have successfully been awarded the fund.

Young people co-produced plans for new spaces to be created at school for Resilient Moves to be made. Some moves they wanted to make were:

- **BASICS** with new play and hobbies equipment in the school
- **BELONGING** in a new parents' engagement room
- **LEARNING** in new outdoor reading space
- **COPING** in new sensory spaces
- **CORE SELF** in the school 'Wonderwall' for everyone to feel inspired and motivated

SEND schools used their Innovation Fund to further train school staff to improve communication with and between pupils, empowering their voices and improving their social and developmental skills. 23 members of staff have been awarded speech language communication certificates. Some schools have not been able to implement plans in the way they hoped due to Covid-19. Schools have been given some flexibility to adapt their plans if it supports the school to stay Covid-secure. For example, the plan for creating a new wellbeing space currently needs to be used in a new way to keep distance, but in the long term the school will use the fund toward a space suitable for coming together.

Step 5: Review Progress

The RR works with schools to review if they have followed the recommendations their audits suggested. The reviews showed that, across all schools, there's rapid progress in creating resilience spaces in schools. Spaces are used by young people with immediate wellbeing needs, but have also been used for groups to learn about building resilience. One room has a 'shout out' resilience board. Another used the space for a parents' resilience course. One school's Hub has been described as *"a peaceful and calming place that allows us to be ready for work in the afternoon."* Action plans used in schools show dedication to co-production by including many of the strategies suggested in pupil audits.

Schools that have used innovation funding to create physical spaces, both indoor and outdoor, have seen a timely building up of schools' resilience. Teachers have reported that these newer spaces have been vital for their Covid-secure planning.

Step 6: Good Practice and Campaigns

As well as working with schools individually, the RR has also created opportunities to bring schools together to drive forwards local systems change.

The Resilience Revolution organised **Communities of Practice** - a space for all school staff to share news and learning from their resilience work.

36 people from Blackpool schools and school services attended two Communities of Practice events during September to December 2019, and took part in activities and discussions around:

- Staff wellbeing and how this is reviewed by school leaders and policy makers
- How Blackpool schools have promoted resilience in their school community
- Supporting young people to present at the International Resilience Conference in Blackpool 2022
- School-based Therapy Dogs, including benefits

"The dog helps to recognise, calm and socialise children."

"Children request to speak to the dog to share their worries."

"Reading to the dog can help motivate readers."

"Helps encourage children to come to school."

"Helps English as additional language children to speak and develop confidence."

"Dogs help to maintain calming atmosphere in meetings about difficult issues."



Activism and resilience building activities in schools

The Resilience Revolution engages young people in activism and offers opportunities for meaningful participation for systems change. The Resilience Revolution has been a driver for a number of campaigns aimed at education systems in the town.

Blackpool Beating Bullying, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is the first co-produced anti-bullying charter mark in the UK. The criteria and accreditation were co-produced because our young people know bullying is an issue within Blackpool schools, as it is all over the country, and our young people know what needs to be done to beat it.



Across 3 schools in Blackpool, **421** young people, parents, school staff and governors responded to a survey that measures the anti-bullying work in their schools. This measure helps a panel to decide if a charter mark (bronze, silver or gold) can be awarded. It is not easy to gain this charter mark and the co-produced measurement is not a simple tick box exercise. The survey asks the hard questions, not only 'do you learn about anti-bullying in lessons?', but more specifically, 'does this learning help you?' 'Do you feel safe at school?' and 'Do you feel able to ask staff for help?'

60 school staff also attended a training event to hear what the group had to say about the experiences of bullying in Blackpool schools, how the charter mark was developed, and what schools could do to help beat bullying in their school.

The charter mark is accompanied by a toolkit that provides practical ideas for beating bullying across the whole school.

So far, 3 schools have received a bronze award and 23 schools are in the process of completing the charter mark measurement. Find out more [HERE](#).

Inclusion Not Exclusion –

Historically in Blackpool, both the number of fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions have been twice the national average. The Resilience Revolution co-production group 'Inclusion not Exclusion' are campaigning to make changes to exclusion practices across the town. The group have met monthly to co-produce good practice and have designed an infographic to help raise awareness of the impact of exclusion on young people. The impact of the Resilience Revolution on school exclusion rates for all Blackpool students will be explored during the current year of the programme.



Resilience Revolution Education Voices is a growing co-production group that started with 23 co-leaders of the Revolution, including young people, parents and carers, teachers, academics, and workers, who met online weekly throughout lockdown.

Like many people, the group spent the first few weeks of lockdown in panic mode; how is it possible to carry on a revolution from behind closed doors? How could projects continue to be co-produced with no face-to-face contact? Digital tools enabled the group to beat the odds, and change the odds, in a global pandemic.

The group imagined a 'positive moment' for all the people who were entering a school building, whether that was during lockdown or after lockdown was lifted. Each member of the group imagined what it could look and feel like for everyone in the school community to have a positive experience, as well as taking part in a debate and discussion exercise, conducting a literature review, and taking polls. The group pooled their expertise to co-produce a set of principles that schools could refer to. This is the TRUST document, which can be accessed [HERE](#).

The TRUST document has been shared in all schools and showcased nationally to the Department for Education.

"The document has been distributed to staff and as a Blackpool school, it does reflect the process that we are following to allow our pupils a smooth transition back into school. Many of the issues that arise in the TRUST document are things we have approached, for example, allowing for adapting to new rules and routines, demonstrating understanding, allowing time to talk. We are still early days in our phased return but our pupils are managing as well as can be expected with the strategies we have put in place."

School Nurture Lead

Alongside our partner Boingboing, a Covid -19 version of a Mental Health in Schools Guide was created and printed ready to send to local schools in September 2020. Read it [HERE](#)

In addition to activism, other resilience building activities also took place in schools. Read more about these activities next.

BOUNCE FORWARD



Bounce Forward is a 10-week resilience course based on Resilient Therapy (Hart et al., 2007) for all young people in Year 5. It was delivered by Lancashire Mind and aimed to build young people’s knowledge of mental health and resilience – not only for themselves, but also their friends, family and school community. This was so that they were skilled to cope when times are tough. Currently, the course is being delivered by school staff using the resources co-developed by Lancashire Mind and the RR.

Between 2017 and 2019, a total of **3,134** young people took part in Bounce Forward across Blackpool in 36 schools. 582 took part between September 2019 and December 2019. The evaluation and full report of the programme is available [HERE](#).

Feedback from young people:

- 80% felt listened to
- 83% worked on things that were important to them
- 92% liked the activities
- 89% enjoyed Bounce Forward overall
- 80% would recommend Bounce Forward to a friend



Feedback from teachers:

- 97% - were satisfied with the Bounce Forward sessions
- 97% - would recommend Bounce Forward to colleagues or other schools



“I loved that when I had my hand up, they never cut me off. They always listened!” (Young person)

“If someone is feeling down I could show them the [Resilience] framework and they could use one of the potions.” (Young person)

“It gives the children an opportunity to learn a variety of coping strategies for everyday stresses and concerns and helps them to think more positively rather than focus on the negatives.” (Teacher)

“I’m going to spread the message by going to show people how to be resilient.” (Young person)

BOUNCE FORWARD



Before and after taking part in Bounce Forward, young people completed questionnaires about their wellbeing, resilience, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Young people's school exclusion records were also collected.

- **Over 2,000** young people completed a questionnaire to rate their wellbeing.

After Bounce Forward, **55%** reported improvement in their wellbeing.

- **Over 800** young people completed a questionnaire about various mechanisms of resilience building.

After taking part in Bounce Forward:

- **41%** rated **family connection better**, e.g., having a trusted adult at home
- **49%** reported improvement in participation in **home and school life**, e.g., playing a meaningful role in decision-making
- **48%** reported **higher self-esteem**, e.g., being confident in their own abilities
- **34%** reported improvements in **goals and aspirations**, e.g., believing in a positive future

- **Over 500** young people completed a questionnaire about their resilience.

After taking part in Bounce Forward:

- **50%** reported improvement in their overall resilience
- **42%** reported improvement in caregiver/relational resilience



Impact at school

- School exclusion data was analysed for over 2000 young people:
 - 87 had a record of fixed term school exclusions
 - 31 young people who had previous history of fixed term exclusion(s) did not have any further records of exclusion after taking part in the programme

To practitioners who aspire to design and implement a programme like Bounce Forward... Lancashire Mind Wellbeing Coaches recommended:

- Co-producing exercises with young people
- Using SEND teaching practices to meet specific needs of individuals
- Extending beyond the classroom and into the home, involving parents and carers
- Using the free resource pack to self-deliver Bounce Forward in schools

Sharing the learning- Lancashire Mind Resilience Forum with Highfurlong:

Along with Wellbeing Coaches from Lancashire Mind, 8 young people from Highfurlong School spoke at a Resilience Forum to share how the programme has supported them and their school's resilience. The forum was attended by over 30 attendees and

the session addressed systems change opportunities, with discussions around potential organisations that might benefit from Bounce Forward's fun activities and resilience-based sessions. Suggestions included scouts, girl guides, and young carers groups.

The Bounce Forward programme, with Lancashire Mind and their resilience expertise, has now been embedded to support transition to secondary school and is being delivered in schools in other parts of Lancashire. A comprehensive teaching resource pack can be accessed [HERE](#).

Evaluating the impact of the Resilience Revolution in schools

Measuring young people's resilience

Annually the RR asks young people to share their views about their wellbeing, resilience and their local environment. This is the Wellbeing Measurement Framework Survey. One section of this survey measures pupil resilience.

The RR's understanding of resilience is that it does not just come from individual characteristics but also from protective factors embedded in the world around them, such as support from the community and the ability to participate in a fair society.

To understand all the different factors that can impact wellbeing and resilience in Blackpool schools, the survey findings about resilience are grouped into three elements:

- Personal strengths
- Support
- Participation

Since September 2019, over 2000 young people from Years 6, 9 and 10 responded to the survey. The Year 6 pupils reported higher scores (on average) in each question than young people in Years 9 and 10, so this suggests that more can be done across Blackpool secondary schools.

The results showed:

- Family and community support was one of the highest scoring areas of resilience
- Problem solving was one of the lowest scoring areas of resilience

The RR recommends schools should consider ways to embed co-production and activism inside the school to encourage young people to participate in creating solutions and making meaningful decisions. This could help improve 'problem solving' scores. Working with community organisations and parents to tackle the issues affecting the local community would build on the assets from the 'family and community support' scores.

BOUNCE FORWARD



School System Resilience in Response to Covid-19

The RR promotes resilience as a social process and encourages all voices in the community to be heard. Nationally, 105 staff and 107 parents and carers completed a survey during lockdown that aimed to understand the impact of fluctuating wellbeing on perception of the school. Many of the survey replies were from Blackpool schools and families.

Results from Blackpool showed that schools were perceived in a more positive light by people who scored themselves higher in the wellbeing measure. There was also a great deal of agreement between what school staff and parent and carers said about the overall school climate. So, if parents reported something at the school was good, it's likely the staff reported it was good too.

However, there were 2 key differences between what school staff reported in their responses and what parents reported.

- 1. Staff morale** – parents felt the morale of staff at their school was higher than it was reported by the school staff themselves.
- 2. Staff workloads** – parents felt the staff workload at their school was lower than what was reported by the school staff themselves.

The survey asked about the experiences of some of the families who were schooling at home.

“As a family, we have ensured some structure to each weekday so that school work gets done, but we have also loved being able to spend time together as a family going for walks, playing games etc. It has given us time that we did not have before - and we hope to maintain this moving forward (once normality has returned).”

- Parent

The survey also asked people what they would like schools to look like after lockdown.

“I want to see staff training around Covid 19, staff training around emotional regulation, raising awareness around resilience and how to support young people on their return to school”

- Parent

Recommendations from the survey findings were to build opportunities that increase parents' voices in the school climate, as well as to use the experience of lockdown to make changes to the curriculum and school sites. For example, this might include investing in the school grounds so that it is accessible for all needs, and reducing academic pressures by balancing it with a wellbeing, social and life skills curriculum.



CHAPTER 4: TARGETED SUPPORT

In the Resilience Revolution (RR), we piloted a range of new approaches supporting young people and families facing different challenges. After extensive consultation at the development stage of the bid, young people told us that transitioning from primary to secondary, concerns with self harm and school exclusions for our children created the greatest challenges.

Young people from the RR identified that transitioning from primary school to secondary school was one of the key periods for young people. Healthy transition is crucial for later wellbeing and success. Through the Moving on Up project, our Resilience Coaches work with young people in this period to support their transition, either on a one-to-one basis or by group work depending on the young person's needs.

Another group we support are young people in Educational Diversity, a pupil referral unit in Blackpool providing support for young people where mainstream school is unable to meet their social, emotional, behavioural or medical needs. We support young people who are transitioning from Educational Diversity to mainstream school through Moving on Up on a one-to-one basis. In another project, Saddle Up, we have combined equine therapy and art therapy approaches to support young people from Educational Diversity to improve their self-regulation, communication, and relationship building skills.

We also support Our Children through projects such as Back on Track and Friend for Life. In the Back on Track project, Resilience Coaches work alongside Our Children and across systems (Foster Families, Schools, Social Work) to support young people to remain in mainstream education. Our other project, Friend for Life, aims to match Our Children with adult volunteers to foster supportive, lifelong friendships.

Young people at risk of, or who are, self-harming are also a specific group that we support through two projects. In the Self-Harm Support project, our Resilience Coaches offer short-term support to young people and their families. In another project, we worked with the Youththerapy team at Blackpool Teaching Hospital to provide the Walk and Talk counselling service to young people. This is an alternative form of counselling, where therapeutic techniques are embedded in activities and in locations of young people's choice.

In the next sections, you will read about these projects that have been implemented as part of the RR between 2017 and 2020, and our learning from them.



MOVING ON UP - GROUP WORK



Co-developed by Resilience Coaches, young people, and schools, Moving on Up Group Work supported 520 young people between 2017 and 2019. The evaluation and full report of the programme is [HERE](#).

Resilience Coaches worked with young people in Year 6 to provide support during their transition from primary school to secondary school. Over six weeks (one session each week), small groups of young people talked about their concerns about secondary school and learnt more about how to deal with potential difficulties. In the sessions, young people built skills to encourage adapting quickly and easily to their new secondary school.

Over **250** young people completed a questionnaire about their wellbeing.

60% said their wellbeing got better after the six sessions.



Feedback from young people:

85% felt understood, respected and accepted

83% worked on things that were important to them

83% considered the leader and group's approach a good fit

85% felt part of the group and that the group was right for them

183 young people completed a questionnaire about their readiness for secondary school.

57% reported improvement in readiness for secondary school

54% felt more prepared about their transition to secondary school

50% felt more confident about going to secondary school

44% felt more confident about making friends at secondary school

MOVING ON UP - GROUP WORK



Impact at School

- Young people who participated in the project had better attendance in Year 7 than they had in Year 6. This is a different picture from the national trend, which shows that attendance rates on average decrease from Year 6 to Year 7.
- 9 young people had a past record of fixed term exclusions. Among them, 6 young people had no further incidences of exclusion after taking part in Moving on Up – Group Work.

For practitioners who aspire to design and implement a similar project, Resilience Coaches recommended:

- Good communication and links with both primary and secondary schools
- Keeping the group sizes small, ideally between 8 and 12
- Using the free user guide and pack developed for teachers to self-deliver Moving on Up – Group Work in schools

Digital Transition Groups during lockdown

Moving schools is a key period of time that can impact on the resilience of young people and families. The Resilience Revolution works alongside schools and families to build holistic support around young people during this period of change.

108 young people moving up to secondary schools in Blackpool, and a few young people who are moving up to other schools in Lancashire, continued working with their Resilience Coaches in digital groups after the Covid-19 lockdown period. The digital groups met weekly in a safe digital space. This was a place for young people to meet others who were transitioning to the same secondary school.

Older pupils and school staff attended some of the sessions to build relationships and offer support:

Young people played games together, took part in quizzes, and watched videos of the school grounds. Groups met for over 42 hours during the lockdown period.

At the end of the sessions young people were asked to rate the session.



MOVING ON UP - 1 TO 1



Where needed, Resilience Coaches worked alongside young people, parents and carers, and schools on a one-to-one basis to help young people to feel more equipped and prepared to leave primary school and start secondary school. This targeted support started in Year 6 until the young person was settled in Year 7.

Between June 2017 and August 2020, **243** young people were supported by Moving on Up – 1 to 1. A further **135** young people are still receiving support.

Feedback from a young person and a parent

"I think it was good because it boosted my resilience a lot. Back then I was dead shy and wouldn't do what I do now. I can speak in front of hundreds of people, back then I probably wouldn't even speak in my class. So I think it's helped a LOT." (Young person)

"The support we have received from the resilience service has been amazing, from day one when an introduction took place to now. (...) My son has overcome panic attacks, extreme anxiety every night before bed and fears of high school. He [now] sleeps in his own room and feels safe to do so and this is a huge improvement. His resilience coach has provided my son with the tools he needed to take control of his anxiety instead of letting it control him. The support wasn't just for my child, the coach has massively supported me too, as a parent we sometimes blame ourselves for things but the coach has always shown me massive respect and praised me for the way I handle my son's difficulties. (...) Your service is truly amazing and very much needed in Blackpool as a lot of children even those that don't have immediate issues struggle with the transition to high school and your service truly does make that integration and transition into high school so much easier, happier and positive for our children!" (Parent)

Resilience

70 young people reported changes in specific areas of resilience after the Moving on Up – 1 to 1 support:

- **64%** reported improvement in problem solving. The average increase in scores across the whole group was **17%**
- **61%** rated their peer support better. The average increase in scores across the group was **12%**
- **57%** reported improvements in goals and aspirations. The average increase in scores across the group was **18%**
- **44%** reported improvement in empathy. The average increase in scores across the group was **8%**
- **49%** rated their family connections better. The average increase in scores across the group was **8%**
- **49%** reported improvement in their participation in school life. The average increase in scores across the group was **10%**

MOVING ON UP - 1 TO 1

Impact at school

School attendance records were available for **232** young people who took part in Moving on Up – 1 to 1. This group of 232 young people saw an increase in their attendance rate when they went in to Year 7. They had nearly 8 days more attendance at school in Year 7 than they had in Year 6. This impact on attendance in Year 7 is really positive when it's also compared to the national trend, which showed on average attendance went down when young people moved into Year 7.

We also explored **school exclusion rates** of young people from 2013/2014 to 2018/2019 academic years. For **62** young people whose support ended before Spring 2019 term:

- 11 young people had a record of fixed term exclusion(s). Across these 11, a total of 21 fixed term exclusions were reported before young people started receiving support. This reduced to only 9 fixed term exclusions during the support period, then 6 fixed term exclusions were reported after young people completed the project. This shows that the incidences of fixed term exclusions dropped after receiving support.
- 5 young people who had previous history of exclusion(s) did not have any further records of exclusion after taking part in the project.

Goals

Young people set goals for the areas they wanted to see improvement in, then worked on them with their Resilience Coaches during their Moving on Up – 1 to 1 support.

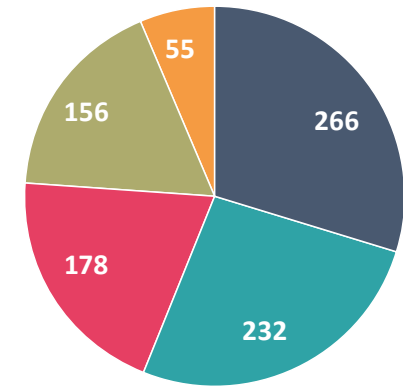
Between July 2018 and August 2020, 217 young people have set a total of **887** goals. The number of goals identified for each young person ranged from 1 to 8 goals, with an average of 3 goals each.

The goals were linked to section(s) of the Resilience Framework:

- **266 goals related to Coping**, e.g. *“To learn strategies to help me feel calmer.”*
- **232 goals related to Learning**, e.g. *“I want to get better at science because it teaches you how to be safe and smart.”*
- **178 goals related to Belonging**, e.g. *“To make friends at high school.”*
- **156 goals related to Core Self**, e.g. *“To take responsibility for myself.”*
- **55 goals related to Basics**, e.g. *“I would like to do more sport activities over summer.”*

Young people also rated their progress towards reaching their goals. They scored themselves when setting the goal and reviewed this regularly. At the end of their support, young people rated themselves significantly closer to reaching their goals.

Goals linked to Resilience Framework



■ Coping ■ Learning ■ Belonging
■ Core Self ■ Basics





Saddle Up

Accredited by ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), Saddle Up was a 10-week support project that combined equine therapy and art therapy approaches to improve young people's self-regulation, communication and relationship building skills. Saddle Up was a brave and unique project that resulted in significant benefits for some young people in Blackpool.

Between 2016 and 2019, 63 young people aged between 10 and 15 participated in the project. The evaluation and full report of the programme is [HERE](#).

Strengths and difficulties

To evaluate the impact of Saddle Up, 35 young people and 39 teachers completed a questionnaire assessing young people's strengths and difficulties before and after taking part in the project.

After Saddle Up:

- 60% of the young people reported improvement in their conduct problems
- 51% of the young people reported improvement in their hyperactivity
- 71% of the young people reported improvement in their total difficulties score

At the end of the project, the proportion of young people who reported serious difficulties were lower, and fewer young people reported that these difficulties had serious impacts on their lives.

Additionally, school staff reported that for 41% of young people, the impact of young people's difficulties on their peer relationships and classroom learning was lower after taking part in Saddle Up, and the average decrease reported was 41%.

Key outcomes

25 to 32 young people also rated their progress on key outcome areas in the project. At the end of Saddle Up:

- All young people reported improvements in horse riding and horse care
- 92% to 100% reported improvements in relationships, aspirations, core self, and self-regulation





Feedback from school staff

Feedback from school staff revealed improvement in various areas of young people's behaviour and feelings, including: confidence; self-esteem; independence; self-awareness; sense of bravery and hope; emotional literacy; understanding others' and own feelings; acknowledging and expressing feelings; and peer relationships.

"The children all grew in confidence massively. Friendship groups increased and they worked with young people that they would not have worked with before." (Teacher)

"The young people have learned about caring, responsibility, hygiene, and developing relationships. Each person grew every week and built up their confidence, teamwork and problem-solving skills – even with people they might not normally work with. The sessions are well organised and young people look forward to the sessions. The learning is being felt in the classroom too; they've been more involved in lessons, more talkative with their peers and they presented an assembly. I have taken guidance from the sessions too and can use this in my own role and have shared information with my colleagues." (Teacher)

Teachers also reported improvements in themselves:

"I have taken resilience steps myself and now know how to talk more effectively with children and make them feel more comfortable." (Teacher)

"I really enjoyed the therapeutic nature of the check in and check outs as I feel the children felt very valued and comfortable with the adults and their peers. The art therapy sessions were successful. I took a lot from these and will take guidance from these for my 121's in my role as a learning mentor." (Teacher)

A letter from a parent stated: ***"I wanted to write you a letter about our son. Before attending Saddle Up, he was not sociable and quiet. After Saddle Up sessions we noticed a change in his anger and emotional issues which has made a massive difference to our family. He comes home and talks about his day. He takes more responsibility for his dog and looks forwards to his school and hobbies. We are grateful for this opportunity and feel it would benefit other pupils."*** (Parent)

Young people, school staff and the delivery team of Saddle Up co-produced recommendations to practitioners who aspire to design and implement a project like Saddle Up. They suggested:

- Meeting individual learning needs
- Training delivery staff in therapeutic principles
- Considering equine therapy in other SEND settings
- Encouraging school staff to join in activities
- Developing a 'Saddle Up: Follow Up' resource pack to be used in classroom activities

These different targeted support projects show just how passionate we are about offering the right support at the right time in order to build resilience in young people, increase aspirations, and to support young people to feel more confident at school. It has seen some positive outcomes for individuals and we are sharing this learning far and wide so that it can help to improve the education system in Blackpool so that it works well for everyone.

Young people also told us that other groups of young people might benefit the most from targeted support. The next pages share our learning from projects supporting Our Children.

BACK ON TRACK

Back on Track

Resilience Coaches worked alongside young people, foster carers, school and social workers on a one-to-one basis to support Our Children to remain in mainstream education where appropriate.

Since November 2016, a total of **30** young people (66% male) aged between 11 and 15 were referred for Back on Track support. Between September 2019 and August 2020, 5 young people took part in Back on Track.



Strengths and Difficulties

13 young people completed a questionnaire about their strengths and difficulties before and after taking part in Back on Track. After receiving support young people reported better social behaviours.

- 69% of young people said that their difficulties decreased. This reduction was by about 14% (on average)
- 50% of young people said that the impact the difficulties had on specific areas of their lives like friendships and in the classroom family, reduced. This was a reduction of 54% (on average)

Difficulties	Before support	After support
• Emotions	5 in 20	2 in 20
• Behaviour	5 in 20	2 in 20
• Hyperactivity	10 in 20	4 in 20
• Peer Relationships	5 in 20	4 in 20
Total from all above difficulties	10 in 20	5 in 20
Impact difficulties have on daily life	10 in 20	4 in 20

While the changes were not statistically significant in some areas of this questionnaire, this could be because of the small sample size. Nevertheless, the changes are in the right direction such as lower emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and hyperactivity after taking part in Back on Track.

BACK ON TRACK

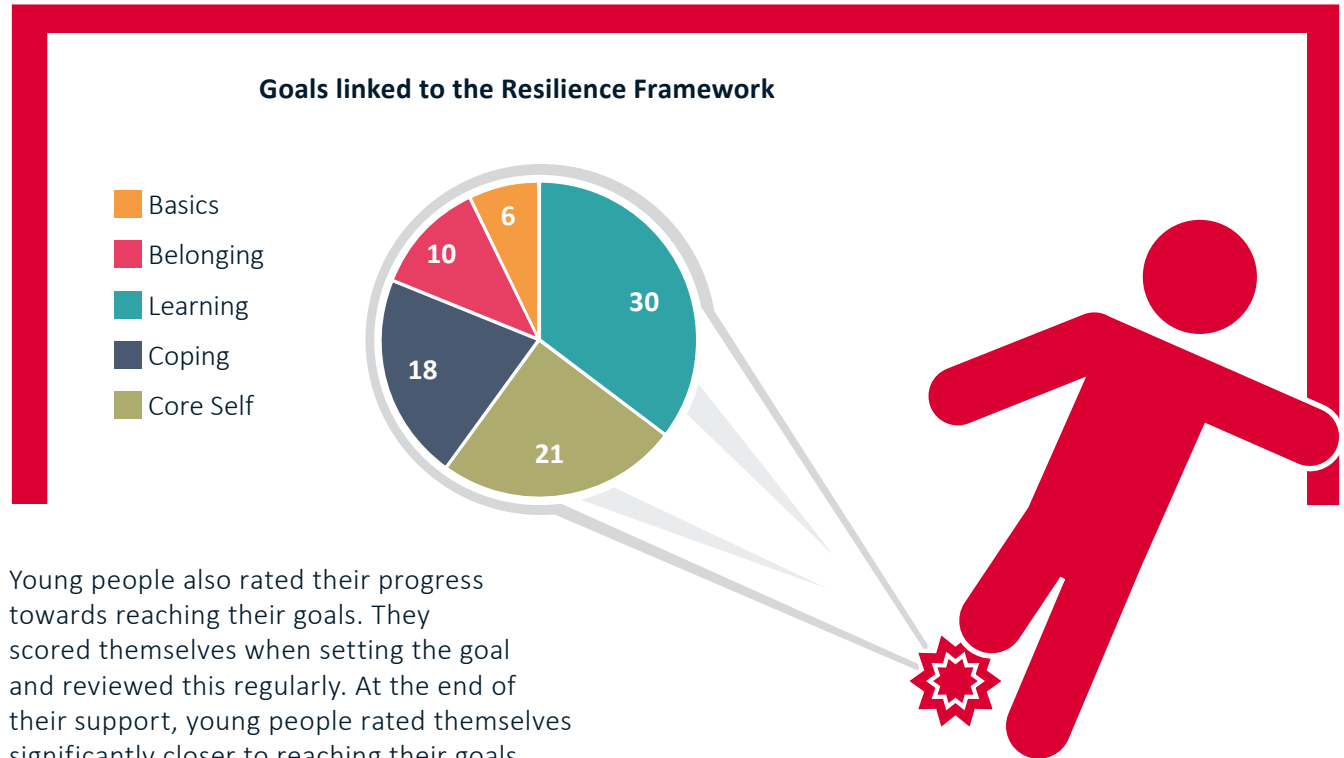


Goals

Young people set and worked towards goals with their Resilience Coaches and picked the areas they wanted to see improvement. Between March 2017 and June 2020, **85** goals were recorded for **19** young people. The number of goals ranged between 1 and 5, at the end of their support, young people rated themselves significantly closer to reaching their goals. On average, young people reported that their goals increased by 2 or 3 points.

The goals were linked to section(s) of the Resilience Framework:

- **266 goals related to Coping**, e.g. “To learn strategies to help me feel calmer.”
- **232 goals related to Learning**, e.g. “I want to get better at science because it teaches you how to be safe and smart.”
- **178 goals related to Belonging**, e.g. “To make friends at high school.”
- **156 goals related to Core Self**, e.g. “To take responsibility for myself.”
- **55 goals related to Basics**, e.g. “I would like to do more sport activities over summer.”



Young people also rated their progress towards reaching their goals. They scored themselves when setting the goal and reviewed this regularly. At the end of their support, young people rated themselves significantly closer to reaching their goals.

Education

- In line with the national trend, school attendance rates decreased between the referral and at the end of support - 93.5% and 89.5% respectively.
- School exclusion rates were available for 7 young people. Among them, 5 young people received a total of 18 fixed term exclusions before and during Back on Track support but 0 young people received further instances of exclusion after their support ended.

TRIANGULATION INTERVIEWS



Every 4 months, Resilience Coaches, young people and families who took part in the support were invited to interviews. Below are some quotes from these interviews showing the impact of their Back on Track experience.

Young Person

"I started being nice. There is a girl that came back to school, and I kept like bullying her, like picking on her, but now I stopped since I've seen my Resilience Coach. Now, we've just started being best friends again."

"I used to argue with my sister but now I've stopped that."

Parent

"If you weren't around, where would we be? The Resilience Coach's been vital in helping and supporting my child and all of us as a family, with school and everything else. (...) You've done wonders with not just my child but probably all the other children as well."

"The major thing I have to say about HeadStart is they worked massively on her anger issues, I do think that has helped greatly her anger. (...) It's (BoT) made a lot for us because our Resilience Coach has also supported me in meetings, she's come along with me, stood by my side and spoke about my daughter and praised her highly, and recommended things for her within the school setting. So for me it's good that I've had another person on board that knows my daughter's needs."

"The Resilience Coach supported my daughter through transition from primary school to high school, which was great. (...) It was another face that my daughter could go and speak to if she needed to, even if she just needed to rant. It was mainly about the transitioning from primary school to high school, she had that friendly face, she had somebody to hold her hand and support her, not just us all the time."

Resilience Coach

"I've noticed that the young person was willing to expect more of herself, that she wasn't being written off, that she could manage school. And I think that changed her behaviour. She became less volatile and more content in school."

"The young person looked more empowered, and she would say, 'I think I can do this' and she did in the end. (...) I think she's got more self-worth and more, she believes in herself more."

Looking at the surveys scores and interviews, we can conclude that young people feel they are improving their relationships and developing better social skills. We can also say that Back on Track helps families through school meetings and processes. Working with young people, families and schools for a minimum of 12 months, setting goals and building resilience can combine to drastically minimise the chances of being excluded from school.

FRIEND FOR LIFE



Professor Angie Hart, University of Brighton developed the original concept of the Friend for Life. Friend for Life (FfL) matches adult volunteers with Our Children aged 10, 11 and 12 for fun and friendship. Adults make a permanent commitment to be there through thick and thin. This innovative project was developed in collaboration with Our Children, young people and their supporters and was inspired by research around the importance of significant adults. Our Children choose their friends. Volunteers do not receive any financial incentives for spending time with them.

18 friendship matches have been facilitated overall in the 3 years since its beginning and no relationships have broken down. Over the last 12 months the project has received more referrals. Between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020, 25 adult volunteers collectively received over **450** hours of training and support.

In addition to facilitating and supporting Friendships, the team provided 13 group activities for Our Children and volunteers such as writing/craft days, trips to local attractions, and shared celebrations around Christmas, Halloween and International Friendship Day.

During lockdown, the team facilitated virtual quiz nights, sent crafts and board games, hosted a draw your Friend competition, and a 'grow your own sunflower' activity. Many activities were co-produced with Friends and wider young people of the Resilience Revolution.

This year, we also established a co-production and peer support group for volunteers called the Community of Friends (CoF). The meetings were initially face-to-face but have moved online since lockdown. The CoF developed strategies to support friendships in the initial stages, such as more experienced volunteers supporting newer ones. They identified that it can be difficult to keep in touch between face-to-face meetings when young people lack access to phones and technology.

Lockdown amplified these challenges and friendships from shielding households faced additional barriers.

Next year the CoF intends to explore virtual communications and share some of the learning in a co-produced resource. We have also taken on our first apprentice, providing an opportunity for a care leaver to work within the project.



Impacts on young people have been evaluated using a combination of Goal Based Outcomes, visual mapping interviews, focus groups and via a review of meeting notes and school attendance records.

Our Children's' Visual Mapping (VMI)

Visual mapping interviews with the first 4 young people matched, showed that 3 of 4 consistently included their friend as a very important positive influence, which was very close to them. 2 of 4 rated their friend as the most important adult in their life over time. Collectively, young people reported fewer people as negative influences and more people as positive influences in their lives over six months.

Following the VCF, reported improvements for young people around self-confidence and socialising appeared to have a knock on effect on relationships at home and at school (realised value).

FRIEND FOR LIFE



Education

For young people who have been matched for a year or more:

- Instances of fixed term exclusion at school has reduced by 1.2 days on average
- School attendance increased by 6 more days in school per year
- No young person that has been matched with a Friend has been permanently excluded from school.

Overall, Our Children told us they value that their Friends are volunteers and are reliable (i.e. consistent and available when they say they will be = enabling value). The volunteers reported immediate benefits from the friendship itself. Some volunteers also reported a better understanding of Our Children and the inequalities they face (potential value) and many reported improved opportunities to connect to others via shared events (enabling value). One strategic value was the FfL projects' ability to share its learning with existing statutory programmes such as the Independent Visitors Service.

The FfL project has also inspired the creation of similar community-based initiatives such as Friend for School, Talented Friends and Digital Friends (more on these next year). Data suggested learning from the FfL project may therefore have transformative value by promoting a Friendship First approach that prioritises Youth Voice and Youth Choice in service design and delivery.

Here are just some of the things people said about the project:

Talking about feelings and asking for advice

"Being friends with (my Friend for Life) has actually helped me talk about my feelings and stuff which has helped me like talk about stuff with other friends." (Young person)

"It's not just having someone to speak to...it is just like having that extra person to speak to is like, you pick up ideas about how to socialise so it is like when a baby copies something." (Young person)

"Before I met (my Friend for Life) I was like, social awkward. So, I was just there like, I didn't really like speaking. And then like, I just speak all the time now. I don't shut my gob!" (Young person)

"(My FFL) just like, gave me advice. (They) like managed to make me feel better when like, nobody could and like, just gave me a different angle to look at." (Young person)

"Cause I know if I had a problem I could speak to (my FFL) about it, but I think I have only had like one problem and that was about SATS when it was coming up and (my FFL) just encouraged me and I did well on my STATS- well I am pretty sure I did well." (Our Children)

"We have had a few incidents where we have had quite a few bad weeks at home... they see another adult who is kinda telling them similar things so it is not just you that is saying 'oh well calm down' – they put it in from a different angle and it sometimes comes across differently." (Foster carer)

Commitment over a life time

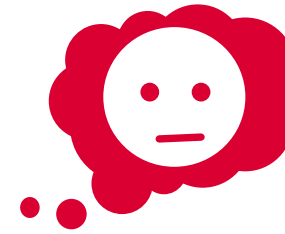
"Forget about all the good you can do and all the worthiness of the project and bla bla bla- you know you've gonna get a good friend out of this." (Adult Friend)

"It means a lot to the young person and you get a lot out of it too." (Adult Friend)

"I mean for me this for life thing is just a given now. So ya, I am looking forward to it being in the future." (Adult Friend)

"It fills the gap- from the kids' point of view." (Social care worker)

SELF-HARM SUPPORT



Resilience Coaches provided short-term support for young people who self-harm and their families. By co-producing activities for around 8 weeks with the young person, the Resilience Coach tailored support helping the young person and their families to build coping mechanisms and reduce self-harming thoughts and behaviours.

Since April 2017, Resilience Coaches supported 117 young people (64% female) aged between 9 and 16. The average age of referral is 13.5 years old. 32 young people received Self-Harm support between September 2019 and August 2020.

Feedback

Young people rated their satisfaction with the support as 9.5 / 10 and parents and carers rated their satisfaction with the support as 9.8 / 10

“I have gained a lot more confidence and a lot happier, I think everything went great and there is nothing that could have been done differently. I am a better person emotionally because of this- thank you” (Young person)

“I have enjoyed having someone to talk to and doing the activities provided. I have gained a lot of knowledge and coping strategies and it’s helped me a lot” (Young person)

“I think it is a fantastic service. Confidence has grown, more open about feelings and now we can make things work.” (Parents and carer)

“I believe the support that has been given to [young person] has been outstanding. They have had this routine of meeting weekly which gave them the chance to talk. The regular updates were good too from Resilience Coach and helped us as a family.” (Parents and carer)

Strengths and difficulties

29 young people completed a questionnaire about their strengths and difficulties before and after taking part in the project. More than half of the group reported improvements in 8 weeks. Two key areas that the young people wanted support with were managing emotions peer relationships.

Good outcomes are observed in these 2 areas.

- The average decrease in emotional difficulties = 22%.
- The average decrease in peer difficulties = 19%.

The proportion of young people who reported serious difficulties such as emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and peer problems, as well as the combination of these difficulties, was lower. More importantly the impact that these difficulties had on day to day life was reduced by 46%. This suggests that in 8 weeks, young people improved their ability to manage the impact of difficulties and to be resilient during tough times.



SELF-HARM SUPPORT



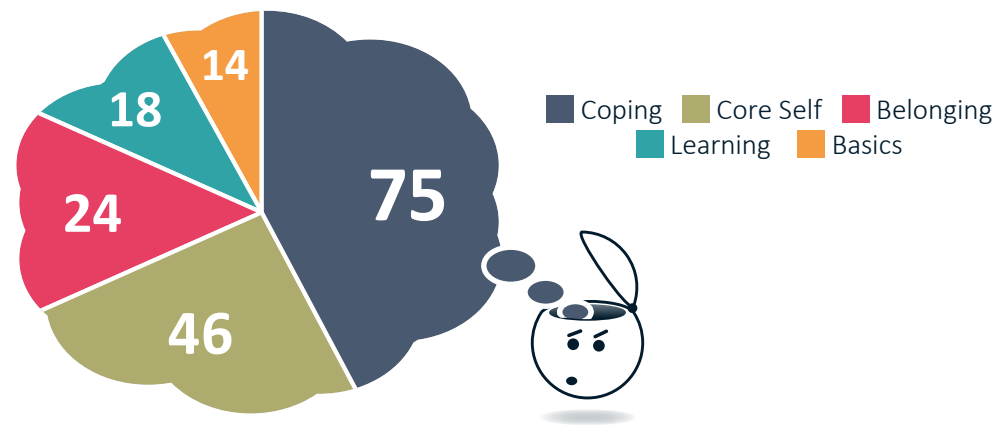
Goals

Between May 2018 and August 2020, **40** young people set **177** goals with their Resilience Coaches in the areas they wanted to see improvements. The number of goals ranged between 1 and 9 for each young person. At the end of their support, young people rated themselves significantly closer to reaching their goals. On average the scores have increased by 3 points on a 0-10 Scale.

The goals were linked to section(s) of the Resilience Framework:

- **75 goals related to Coping**, e.g. *“Using music as a distraction for negative thoughts.”*
- **46 goals related to Core Self**, e.g. *“Learn to accept myself; be less mean to myself.”*
- **24 goals related to Belonging**, e.g. *“Try new groups and socialise more.”*
- **18 goals related to Learning**, e.g. *“Manage worries around home and school work.”*
- **14 goals related to Basics**, e.g. *“To improve sleep pattern.”*

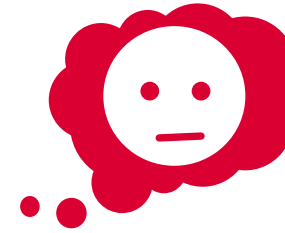
It is interesting that young people saw really good improvements in Basics, Belonging and Coping and that improving sleep, trying new groups and using distraction techniques effectively were a key feature of the self harm support project.



Re-presentation at A&E

We also explored whether young people re-presented at the Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) or other hospital services with self-harming thoughts or actions after receiving Self-Harm Support. By April 2020, this data was available for **89** young people, and among them **82%** of young people had not been back to A&E with self-harm injuries or risks.

SELF-HARM SUPPORT



Reflective accounts written by Resilience Coaches were explored to identify patterns throughout the support. Several themes emerged:

- **Coping better** – Young people were seen to be better prepared to cope when times get tough, using strategies they learnt during their support to calm down and self-soothe. This ranged from individualised distraction boxes, to activities such as art, gaming and music.

“She uses her distraction box when she gets upset or angry, she uses it as a way of calming down and has not since said that she feels suicidal. It has helped her to realise what she can use to calm down and soothe herself, to stop thinking about negative thoughts and distract her mind.”

- **Increased awareness of risk and safety** - Young people were reportedly more able to keep themselves safe and reduced self-harming behaviours. They were also more aware of risks to their safety and how to manage these.

“[Young person] opened up about what situations she saw as risks and we spoke together about ones that she didn’t realise such as gaming and age restrictions. Mum keeps [young person] safe by checking her phone now, when we discussed this she could understand why after doing the session on online safety”

- **Improved family relationships** – Some young people saw improvements in relationships with their family members following Resilience Coach Support, including getting along better and talking more to parents about how they are feeling.

“She understood that keeping things from mum wasn’t helpful and it upset mum that she couldn’t talk to her. She started to open up more and let mum in to the worries and problems that she had. This helped them to build a better more open relationship.”

- **More hopeful and prepared for the future** – Some young people were better prepared for their future goals after working with their Resilience Coach.

“[Young person] and I spoke to a nearby university about the qualifications that were needed to become a police officer and the steps she had to take. She got into the police cadets and is now planning the future beyond this. By doing well in her GCSE’s and making sure she stays focused at school, she can get the qualifications she needs to become one. This has helped her to see the future for herself and think positively about it.”



SELF-HARM SUPPORT



- **More positive outlook** – Young people’s optimism increased as support went on, with young people growing in their ability to see the positives of situations rather than focusing on negatives.

“She started talking more positively every session that we spent together... She would talk to me about positive aspects of her life and things that she had done at the weekend that she had enjoyed. The positives in her life helped her to understand that not everything was negative, and being able to talk through this with me helped her see that... Mum says that [young person] has been a lot more positive and happy since she started the intervention, her mood had lifted and it is noticeable”

- **Improved understanding of emotions** – Resilience Coaches may have helped some young people to better understand the emotions they were feeling and the reasons for this.

“[Young person is] understanding more around triggers and ways to manage her feelings safely”

- **Expressing feelings more** – Some young people initially struggled with opening up to others. Following Resilience Coach support, these young people grew in their confidence to lean on others and let them know how they are feeling.

“As she was struggling with verbalising her issues, she found she was bottling it all up therefore making the situation worse. She identified that she would be happy to open up and talk to Dad if needed, therefore she created a Feelings letterbox – that was a large box and would be placed downstairs by the front door if she needed Dad to read something she had placed in there. Allowing her to write down her feelings meant she was not embarrassed talking about them, but it was passed on, in a safe way so that a discussion could be had with her Dad.”

WALK AND TALK



Youtherapy at Blackpool Teaching Hospital and the RR teamed up to deliver an alternative form of counselling to young people at risk of self-harming. Walk and Talk supported young people to develop alternative coping strategies, gain confidence and self-worth as well as build their individual resilience through activities and locations of the young person's choice, such as parks, outdoor venues or schools.

Between July 2017 and December 2019, **475** young people were supported by Walk and Talk.

Feedback

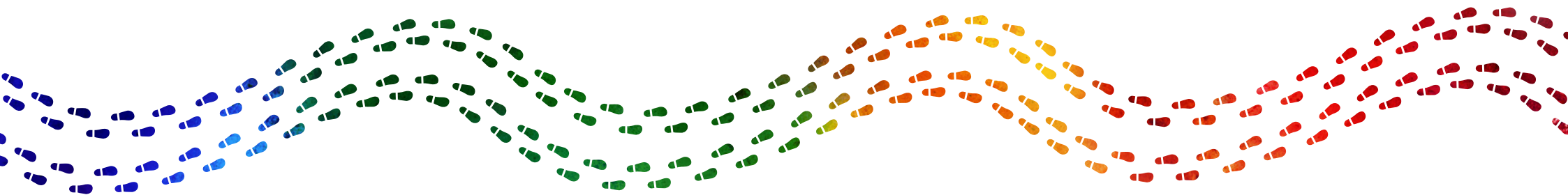
"People actually listened and cared about my feelings in each and every session. If I ever need help again, I would go for this service again." (Young person)

"I enjoy and look forward to Walk and Talk. I feel like I can talk about anything, going out and getting fresh air and also being able to talk to someone." (Young person)

"It helped me get weight off my shoulders and helped me improve talking to teachers, parents, and friends. I could improve my talking skill, but I will try and teach myself how to do that." (Young person)

"Made me feel at ease, everything was explained fully and my daughter was in charge which helps young people." (Parent)

"Walk and talk was an amazing experience to be out of the counselling room and give [people] the freedom to share where they felt most comfortable and safe. I enjoyed letting young people take the control on where they wanted to walk and giving them the choice, as this empowered them and allowed them to have a say in some aspect of their life." (Counsellor)



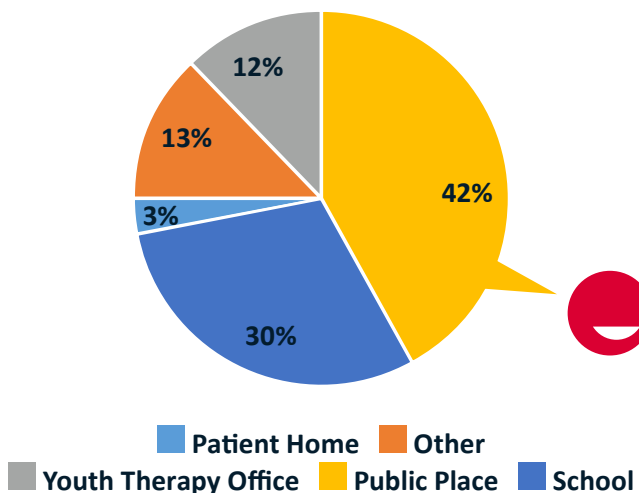
WALK AND TALK



About the Walk and Talk support

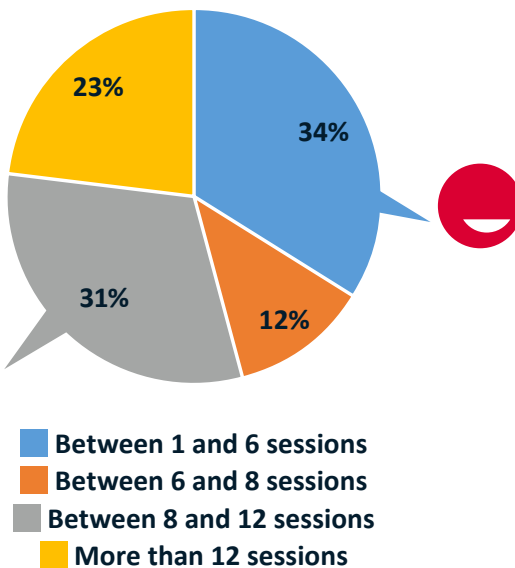
The figures below show some information about the support young people received.

Location Chosen for Walk and Talk Sessions



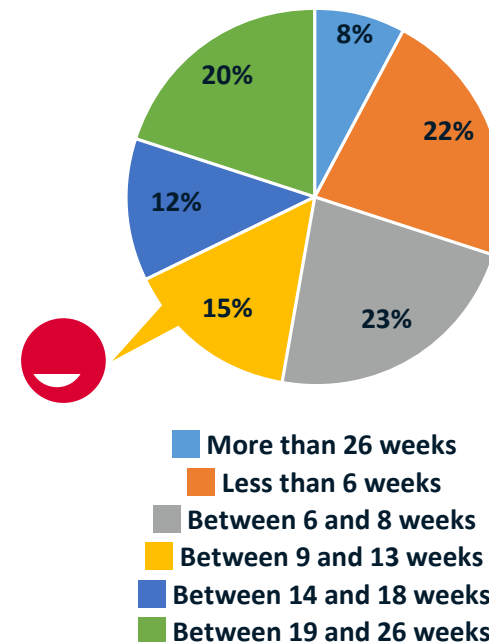
42% young people chose to meet in a public place like a park. **30%** chose to meet in school.

Length of Support



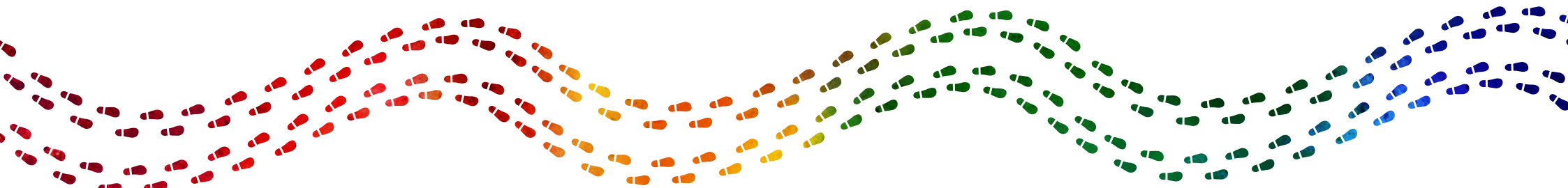
45% young people completed the support within **8** sessions.

Wait time between referral and support



45% of young people were seen within **8** weeks after referral.

72% of the young people waited less than **18** weeks to receive support.



WALK AND TALK



To evaluate the impact of Walk and Talk, about 400 young people reported their negative emotions before and after they received Walk and Talk support. They completed a questionnaire assessing their levels of anxiety, depression, trauma, risk to self, and emotional distress.

After support:

- **78%** reported lower level of negative emotions.
- On average there was a **34%** decrease in negative emotions.

Recommendations from Counsellors

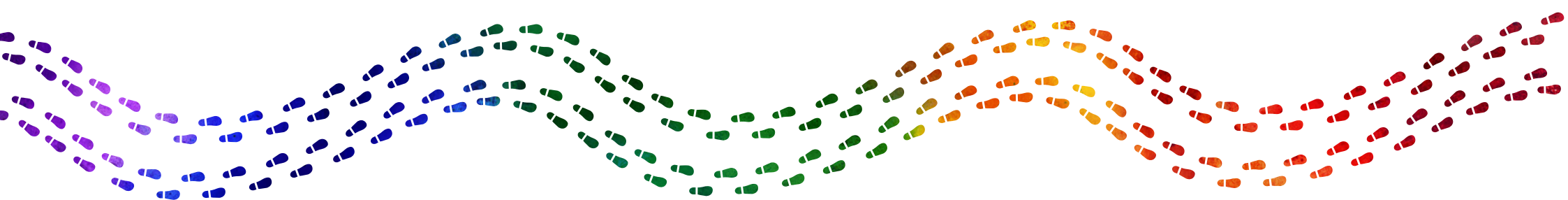
To practitioners who aspire to design and implement counselling in a similar format, Youthery Counsellors recommended:

- Using a person-centred approach to adapt counselling on young person's needs
- Listening to young people's voices and giving them autonomy
- Building strong relationships with schools
- Using strategic locations and scheduling
- Being prepared and doing dynamic risk assessments
- Creating a local list of "Places of Calm"

Places of Calm

Youtherapy Counsellors created a list of free or low-cost places for young people to go after their support ends and remember how to use the skills they learned during therapy, particularly around self-soothing.

The Promenade, the beach, Stanley Park, De Vere trails, Watson Road Park, Grange Park Field, The Grange, Dinmore Avenue Family Centre, Moor Park Health & Wellbeing Centre walking track, Four Seasons Fishery, Kincaig Park, Horse Sanctuary, Solaris Centre and Highfield Park.



CONCLUSION

Covid-19 Pandemic Challenges and Our Response

As with the rest of the world, our lives and work in the Resilience Revolution (RR) have been deeply affected by the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. A lot of our work this year has focused on challenging inequalities that risked being made worse by the pandemic:

- We delivered a co-produced leaflet to every Blackpool home, introducing us and the Resilience Framework
- We sent out activity packs to **1,000** young people in the transition phase from primary to secondary schools
- Activity pack was sent to our homeless community members who were accommodated in local hostels
- We sent out 50 Relaxation Packs to young people receiving support from Youththerapy / CAMHS
- Our partner, Empowerment, worked with us to co-create a resource to help raise awareness of the increased risk of domestic abuse during lockdown and available support

For the RR, the pandemic and lockdown brought new challenges, increasing some areas of need as well as demanding innovative approaches to ensure we continued to pursue our aims.

We had strengths to draw on that helped us to achieve this. Experience of digital co-production work and social media with young people enabled us to start immediately to move our activity groups and training online. Additional activities such as virtual quizzes, online competitions, themed social media posts and resources for young people were quickly introduced to keep everyone connected. Because we are aware not everyone has access to the digital world, physical activity packs for young people were created and delivered to their homes.

With Covid-19, our work with schools was altered to offer schools immediate support and resources. We worked together to co-produce recommendations for schools and policy makers. We did this locally, in partnership with schools and community groups. This co-production work was shared nationally with the Department for Education and globally through publication and on our partners' social media and websites.

Some of our research plans were altered to fit with a virtual environment, for example through the use of digital survey tools. One result of this was that responses to some surveys have decreased, such as training evaluations. On the other hand, some surveys that have been shared on social media, have increased our engagement. Covid-19 specifically highlighted some digital engagement barriers in Blackpool and this form of exclusion from learning has become an important social justice issue for the Resilience Revolution going forward.

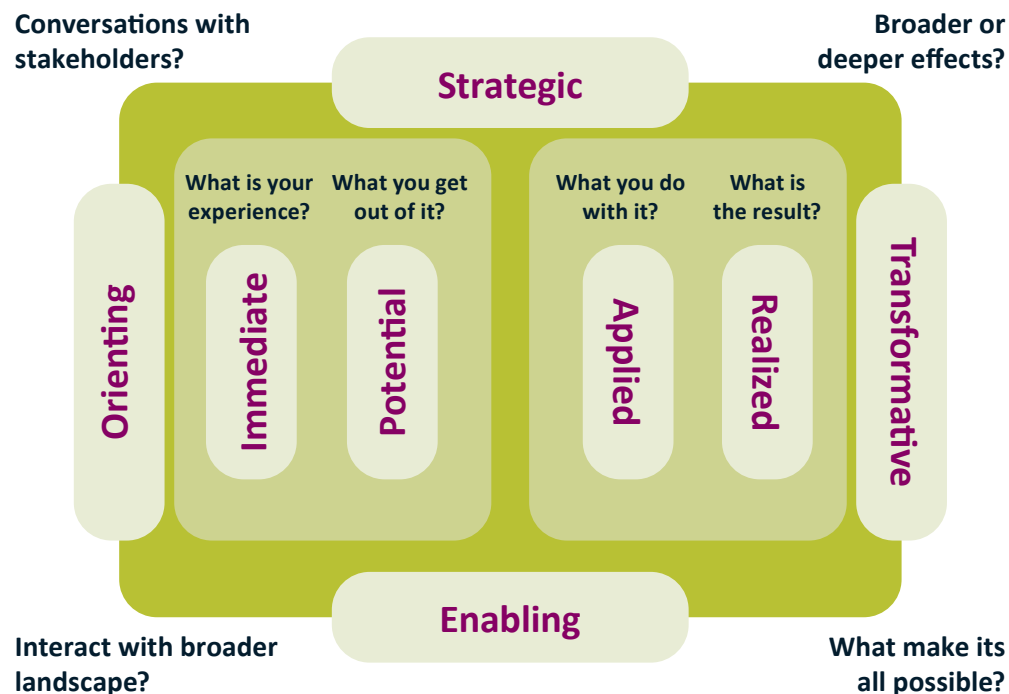


CONCLUSION

The differences we have made and how we achieved them

We have used the Value Creation Framework (VCF) to guide our learning and identify the differences we have made over the last year. The box below summarises the 8 different types of value that are seen when people work together.

- 1. Orienting Value:** How we see ourselves related to the world, e.g., shared beliefs and values that inform what we decide to do.
- 2. Immediate Value:** Things that people do or share that have immediate value.
- 3. Potential Value:** Values that have a potential to make an impact on the world.
- 4. Applied Value:** When people try and put something (like a new idea or approach) into practice.
- 5. Realised Value:** When real difference has been made to the world around us.
- 6. Transformative Value:** Things that have dramatic and broad or deep effects on people and their world.
- 7. Enabling Value:** The approaches that people take or things that they do to try and achieve their aims
- 8. Strategic Value:** This value arises when we take notice of and engage with people who have a stake in what we are doing.



A graphic representation of the VCF (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020)

To draw together this year's report, we looked specifically for examples of these 8 types of value within all the activities across the RR. The VCF helps us to capture our learning in a consistent and structured way and it evidences how real differences are being generated from the work across the partnership.

CONCLUSION

Orienting Value

It is clear from our actions that the RR has united as a social movement that is committed to improving resilience for everyone in our community. Our activities over the last year show that we worked to reduce a range of inequalities and how we targeted some of our support for those facing some of the greatest challenges. This is in line with other approaches that are known as 'proportionate universalism'.

As a result of the impact of Covid-19, we had to shift some of our attention to respond to specific challenges raised by the pandemic. We demonstrated that we consider ourselves as part of an international movement, committed to developing and learning from each other in socially justice-based approaches in order to build transformative community resilience.

Immediate Value

Evidence was collated from feedback forms, survey scores, interviews and focus groups with young people, families and practitioners. This captured the instant impact that being part of the RR had on people, including:

- Enjoyment, excitement, pride and motivation
- Feeling valued, understood, listened to and respected
- Successful, immediate support that responded to crises, difficulties and feelings of distress

Potential Value

Evidence was collated after participating in new activities and captured the potential of people to make a difference to their own and others' lives.

- Provided young people, families and practitioners with a broad range of strategies to respond to challenges
- Shared the Resilience Framework and its resilience building 'moves'
- Identified new support resources such as the 'places of calm'
- Increased knowledge of mental wellbeing and resilience, self-awareness of feelings and emotions, self-belief in capacity to solve problems and address challenges, and hope and confidence for the future

Applied Value

People and organisations are actively participating in the Resilience Revolution and applying their learning.

- Over 16,000 young people attended a school that is a RR partner
- Young people who were transitioning between different types of schools were supported
- Hundreds of young people who faced enhanced challenges participated in our targeted support initiatives
- Hundreds of parents and carers, school, health and voluntary sector practitioners attended our training activities
- The Resilience Framework and many of its Resilient Moves were applied by hundreds of young people and those people around them
- Young people took the lead in their goal-setting in their work with practitioners
- All Blackpool schools are using the Academic Resilience Approach with our support
- Campaigns took place around issues such as anti-bullying, wages, the environment and demanding young people's voices are heard

CONCLUSION

Realised Value

Now that our RR is maturing, we are seeing changes in the statistics.

- Young people have increased: resilience; wellbeing; attendance at school; self-esteem; using peer support; capacity to cope; ability to respond to challenges; ability to take responsibility for areas of their lives; and ability to trust and open up to others
- We have seen reductions in: rates of exclusions from school; emotional and behavioural difficulties; self-harm; and the number of representations at A&E
- Young people have learned new skills that have enhanced their home, leisure, or social life, such as cooking
- Young people's relationships at home and school have improved
- Young people have set and successfully achieved hundreds of their goals
- Practitioners, teachers and parents and carers have reported increased resilience
- Organisations have developed closer and more effective working partnerships
- Schools have successfully achieved the goals set on their action plans

Transformative Value

Over the last year, we have seen positive transformations in many individual's lives.

- Developing sustainable RR activities that build resilience in our homes our schools and our whole town.
- Co-produced safe spaces as part of the Academic Resilience Approach. This has transformed the school space and helped schools keep young people safe in the face of COVID-19.
- Friends for Life - our innovative and unique project that supports Our Children is transforming the lives of young people and adults by creating and nourishing lifelong friendships.
- Blackpool Beating Bullying campaign is the first co-produced charter mark in the UK and is helping to transform young people's experiences of schools.

Enabling Value

We have strong evidence that the value we have created has been underpinned by:

- Young people taking the lead
- Enhancing communication between family and school when supporting young people
- Co-producing all our work and learning
- Adopting strengths-based approaches to address challenges by using the assets within young people and the community
- Drawing on and sharing best practice and research in resilience building approaches
- Supporting and building trusting relationships across the whole town
- Being flexible when engaging young people in activities
- Building on our already well-developed use of technology to respond to Covid-19 and continue meeting young people's needs

Many of these enabling values summarised here and detailed in this report align firmly with the RR fundamentals of: Asset-Based; Co-production; Research; Social Justice; Systems Change; and Whole Town Approach. We think that it is then fair to claim that adopting these fundamentals were themselves a key contributor to the enabling value we have witnessed over the last year.

CONCLUSION

Strategic Value

Our engagement with stakeholders extends far beyond Blackpool. We consider wider UK society and policy influencers as key stakeholders too and have spread news of our RR with them in social media posts, presentations, national training, blogs, and reports. We also shared learning through national conferences with the National Lottery Community Fund and with our colleagues from HeadStart partnership areas: Hull, Wolverhampton, Kernow, Kent and Newham.

Across all our activities we believe that we are helping to transform how organisations move beyond simply listening to young people and move to supporting them to co-lead. Our report shows a wealth of evidence that all aspects of life – family, friends, school, and career – have been transformed with **enhanced relationships, renewed aspirations, and increased learning opportunities**. Transformations are happening at the **system level** where work of co-leaders of the RR are **developing and delivering sustainable activities** within schools, Local Authority services, health services, and other support agencies.

Our next challenge, in the final phase of the HeadStart programme, is to build a legacy that will enable the successful areas of the RR to continue once the funding has ceased. There are many ways to get involved and support us with our mission, you can find more about opportunities to be part of our RR [HERE](#).

CLOSING REMARKS

Co-leaders Hannah and Elle

“When you sit and think about it, you are being resilient all the time. Just take a moment to count up all the things you’ve done today to keep yourself going and to help others. We call these Resilient Moves and we are proud that hundreds of young people in Blackpool now know all our 42 Resilient Moves and put them into practice on a daily basis.

Lots of work from hundreds of people across our Revolution has got us to where we are right now but... we can’t slow down. In fact we are ramping up! This is because there is an intensification of restrictions and barriers affecting us all. We can see young people and those who are facing the greatest disadvantage in our society impacted the most by the long-term economic and health impacts of the pandemic. When this is met with sweeping legal change and political uncertainty, it’d be a mistake to wait for Westminster to deliver a plan for Blackpool. There is a disproportionate impact on our jobs, our education, and our health, which has the potential to be deepened by isolation from each other. So, we are galvanised into action to make sure that the work we’ve started - where Blackpool’s community see this adversity as a problem with the systems, not the individuals – empowers people to tackle it together, using our brave and tested resilience approaches. We support you to take your part in our shared responsibility to tackle injustice in all its forms, in every system in our town.

This report is bursting with evidence of the ways we are making changes together. We’ve reported improvements in wellbeing, confidence and resilience for many people in Blackpool, but there is still a way to go. We’ve seen that our message and learning is spreading but you can help us spread this further. We have highlighted that specific groups of people facing tough challenge still need us to work with them to challenge inequality and make the systems work better for everyone. Come and join us; our schools need our support, our key workers need our support, our health workers, our parents and families and young people need us all to work together to change the systems and create a resilient town to live, work and thrive in.

Finally, we want to say a huge thank you to the National Lottery Community Fund for not only providing the funding for our Resilience Revolution, but for also supporting us every step of the way. We know that every pound of our 13 million funding represents a person who has bought a lottery ticket. We know that a lot of those people are struggling themselves to make ends meet, so our biggest thank you goes to all of you lottery players out there and to say we are doing everything we can to make your money work for Blackpool’s young people.”

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