



The Resilience Revolution Final Research Report 2016-2022

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Executive Summary: The Resilience Revolution Blackpool 2016-2022

This report presents the research and evaluation of the Resilience Revolution programme (2016-2022).

The Resilience Revolution is an innovative whole town approach to building resilience, made possible by funding from The National Lottery Fund's HeadStart programme. Funding was available between 2016 and 2022, across 6 areas nationally in the UK with the purpose of testing and learning new ways to support young people's mental health (ages 10-16).

In Blackpool, the programme took the bold step of developing a vision for the whole town; giving everyone who lived, worked or volunteered in the town the opportunity to get involved. The Resilience Revolution embraced co-production as a way to design and test innovative projects. Co-production meant a range of people, with different expertise, working together, as equals towards shared goals including:

- Building lifelong trusted relationships between; young people, families, schools, workers and organisations.
- Working alongside schools to promote more inclusive learning environments.
- Working alongside young people and families on new ways to deliver support.
- Working alongside young people and families to make processes and policies that impact them, fairer.
- Raising awareness of what is unfair and how it needs to change through campaigns.

Over time, the Resilience Revolution worked to move systems more strongly towards the prevention of mental health problems. It helped people to "beat the odds", whilst also "changing the odds" (Hart et al., 2016); promoting well-being and created opportunities and new spaces for resilience to grow (RSA, 2018).

The Implementation of the Resilience Revolution

The Resilience Revolution engaged young people, parents and carers and professionals to co-produce both practice and research.

Three tiers of support were initially co-produced and delivered.

Universal:

Delivered in all schools in Blackpool.

- Supporting all 44 Blackpool Schools to have a Resilient Therapy and co-production informed approach to systems change.
- Delivering an introduction to resilience course to every Year 5 primary school pupil.

Universal +:

Offered to anyone living, working, or volunteering in Blackpool.

- Free Resilient Therapy, co-production and activism events and activities for young people aged 10-16.

- Free resilience training and learning events for the children’s and families’ workforce, regular supervision and communities of practice.
- Free resilience training and peer support groups for families, parents and carers.

Targeted:

Targeted support was tailored towards priority groups:

- ‘Our Children’, (the term looked after children and young people in Blackpool prefer), were supported through Friend for Life and Back on Track projects.
- Young people who self-harm had access to therapy through Walk and Talk or support from a Resilience Coach.
- Young people moving from primary into secondary school identified as having lower levels of resilience were supported by a Resilience Coach on an individual or group basis.
- Young people with emotional and communication needs enrolled at Blackpool's Pupil Referral Unit and at a primary school were supported by a combination of Resilient Therapy (Hart et al, 2007) informed equine care and art therapy.

In addition to these initial universal and target areas, the Resilience Revolution sparked innovative activities often initiated by young people, parents and carers and schools.

Table 1. An overall summary of numbers of people engaged in the Resilience Revolution.

Young people (universal & universal +)	Young people (targeted)	Parents	Professionals	Volunteers
19184	2552	841	3276	152
Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Other school settings	Community based organisations	
31	8	3	147	

Research Questions and Methodology

Five research questions shaped the research and evaluation:

1. What were the projects within the Resilience Revolution and who was part of them?
2. What were different people's experiences of the Resilience Revolution?
3. What was the impact of the Resilience Revolution for 10- to 16 -year -olds?
4. How much has the Resilience Revolution created spaces for systems changes?
5. What is the potential for sustaining the Resilience Revolution?

This research was informed by the Value Creation Framework (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020) and drew from quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources. We adopted a 'test and learn' approach. Co-production was central, and methods were selected to maximise accessibility and participation.

Table 2. Research and Evaluation Data Sources

Data Source	Source Number
Project Specific Surveys	16,200
Interviews	60
Focus Groups	5
Feedback Forms	3,800

Regular learning events and conferences helped to develop co-research skills, presentation skills, and amplify lived experience voices at an international level in South Africa, Portugal, Ireland, United States of America, Greece and at the Blackpool based International Resilience Conference in March 2022.

Findings

Research question 1: What were the projects of the Resilience Revolution and who was part of them?

The Resilience Revolution involved many community organisations, individuals, and schools across Blackpool. Table 3 below presents details of participation in the Resilience Revolution projects.

Table 3. Total numbers participating in each project of the Resilience Revolution (n/a indicates not applicable).

	Young People	Parent and carers	Schools	Professionals	Organisations
Academic Resilience Approach	19,184	108	44	945	n/a
Video Interactive Guidance	21	42	n/a	3	n/a
Parents of the Revolution	n/a	135	n/a	n/a	n/a
Youth Engagement	669	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Back on Track	39	39	22	n/a	n/a
Self-Harm Support	154	77	15	n/a	n/a
Moving on Up Group Work	520	n/a	19	n/a	n/a
Moving on Up One to One	520	520	44	n/a	n/a
Friend for Life	28	28	n/a	56	n/a
Saddle Up	63	n/a	3	6	1
Friend for School	9	n/a	1	3	1
Digital Friends	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Peer Mentoring	26	n/a	1	n/a	n/a
Resilience Clubs	93	n/a	3	n/a	n/a
Creative Experiences	300	n/a	n/a	n/a	3
Bounce Forward	3134	n/a	20	45	n/a
Junior Park Rangers	262	n/a	n/a	4	n/a
Workforce Development	n/a	n/a	44	2331	147
Walk and Talk	475	n/a	n/a	n/a	1
Apprenticeships / Sessional	24	n/a	n/a	28	5
Blackpool Beating Bullying	n/a	n/a	44	n/a	n/a

As shown in Tables 1 and 3, the provision of diverse activities enabled a broad range of individuals to take part in the Resilience Revolution. Active participation in the delivery of the Resilience Revolution included 669 Young People, 841 parents and carers, 44 schools, 3276 professionals like NHS workers, council employees and practitioners, and 147 community partners like schools, colleges, universities, and Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) and 152 volunteers.

Participation levels for all groups increased steadily prior to initial COVID-19 restrictions. Engagement with young people dipped when restrictions were in place yet returned once restrictions were lifted. Conversely, engagement with parents, carers and partnership organisations increased as the programme trialled new ways of online and hybrid working.

The overall number of individuals and groups participating in Resilience Revolution projects is higher than our figures show. This is because of the extensive partnership working with schools, colleges, universities, and VCFSE sectors. As the Resilience Revolution grew, some of these groups did not directly report into the programme's reporting structure but had significant involvement.

Research question 2: How was the overall implementation process experienced?

The experiences of stakeholders suggested six key factors that need to be considered when designing and implementing similar complex initiatives. These are:

1. Motivations for joining

Young people and parents took part to shape local services and systems to ensure they are relevant, accessible, and effective. The key motivation of practitioners and community organisations for joining the Resilience Revolution was often to transform and improve these services and systems by working directly with people who use them.

2. Relationships

Adults and young people emphasised the importance of respectful relationships as important foundations of future work. A key goal for many young people in the targeted support projects was to make new friends and improve their sense of belonging. Parents and carers emphasised the importance of informal spaces where they could share their lived experiences, exchange peer support and feel less isolated.

3. Group and team facilitation

Relaxed but focused, knowledgeable, and respectful facilitation of groups and teams helped co-produced activities achieve their aims. Young people, parents and carers felt their diverse voices were heard and acted upon in the Resilience Revolution.

4. Adapting approaches

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns necessitated changes in the way the Resilience Revolution operated with a shift to more online activities. This worked better for adults than some young people. A willingness to adapt the way things were done was found to be important throughout.

5. Ensuring voices are heard and amplified

The Resilience Revolution generated many opportunities to ensure that young people's and parents'/carers' voices were heard. This happened locally within the Resilience Revolution's leadership through the Young People' Executive group, in schools and nationally in important policy making processes such as the Westminster mental health consultation event in 2018.

6. Meaningful co-production

The Resilience Revolution's activities were in general experienced as involving meaningful and genuine co-production. This was helped when professionals and those in positions of power were open to be challenged. The Workforce Development project aimed to improve this. Making use of both informal and formal spaces helped genuine co-production. The informal spaces provided a safe space for all to speak and resulted in specific recommendations for change and improvement to feed into formal spaces. People also valued accountability with feedback about the progress of agreed actions.

Research question 3: What was the impact of the Resilience Revolution for 10- to 16 -year -olds?

Through their involvement in the Resilience Revolution, schools became fairer, safer and better places where the voices of pupils were listened to and acted upon. Young people reduced their levels of negative thinking and saw statistically significant improvements in: feeling confident, feeling able to make changes in school, being hopeful about their futures, coping, problem-solving, understanding resilience, wellbeing and in being able to make friends. Through staff training on resilience, Resilience Committees and innovation fund projects, transformations took place at both individual and system levels. For instance, at individual level, increased attendance, self-confidence and pride in the school, as well as reduced behavioural episodes and exclusions were reported for pupils who were part of Resilience Committees.

1. Primary school

Surveys were completed by young people in primary schools before and after taking part in the Resilience Revolution projects. The results of these show significant improvements in young people's wellbeing, emotional control and behaviour. Following Resilience Revolution projects, young people had increased levels of resilience, self-esteem, and aspirations for future achievements. Their confidence to take part in new activities and making decisions in school and at home was also improved.

2. Secondary school

Surveys from young people in secondary school saw statistically significant improvements in their mental health scores after taking part in Resilience Revolution projects as well as feeling more prepared for the challenges of secondary school, more confidence, more able to make new friends. There were

greater aspirations for future achievements as well as better school attendance. Schools that joined the anti-bullying Charter mark project saw improved wellbeing scores for young people compared with schools that had not joined the Blackpool Beating Bullying campaign.

3. Parents

Evidence of improved parent and carer self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy was observed. Groups of parents and carers took part in and led a range of training events; and conducted interviews for social care workers and co-produced toolkits and guidance documents. These opportunities led to improved resilience and wellbeing, with a particular focus on peer-support as a mechanism for improvement.

4. Our Children

The Resilience Revolution used brave innovative approaches that support 'Our Children' (Children Looked After) building longstanding and trusted relationships in school and in the community. Our Children reported improvements in their emotions, behaviours, aspirations, self-esteem, confidence, school attendance and civic engagement.

5. Young People's Mental Health

Through the Walk and Talk and Self harm support projects, young people took part in activities because they wanted targeted support with managing their emotions and behaviours. At the end of these projects young people had improvements in their life aspirations. Young people were more motivated and able to manage their emotions better. Some young people also improved relationships with peers. And specifically in the self-harm project, 77% of young people did not go back to Accident and Emergency related to self-harming.

6. Employment and Skills

Young people involved in co-production opportunities reported transformational impacts in confidence, sense of belonging and new life skills. A range of new employment roles specifically for parents, carers and young people with relevant lived experiences were created, this led to improved self-esteem, sense of belonging and leadership skills. Apprentices rated their experiences at 8.8 out of 10. Young people and parents and carers in co-production groups helped connect a range of local and national organisations, including Ofqual (Office for Qualifications, Examinations and Regulations) as well as ensuring recruitment processes became increasingly more accessible and relevant for the Blackpool community. Young people's involvement has indicated a long-term impact on aspirations and confidence about their future opportunities. Outcomes suggest a strong sense of empowerment and self-advocacy for young people.

The Resilience Revolution has improved mental health and well-being in Blackpool's young people and increased protective factors that might enable them to overcome adversities that they face in the present or in the future. Longitudinal and in-depth assessment of experiences and impact is likely to produce

stronger and more conclusive results. Young people's involvement in the Resilience Revolution's implementation and co-production opportunities has resulted in an array of positive outcomes.

Research Question 4: To what extent did the Resilience Revolution build capacity within the system?

Capacity building was linked to four interconnected processes: 1) effective and distributed leadership, 2) co-production, 3) training and employment and 4) activism. In the Resilience Revolution, capacity building was successful because of the understanding that lived experience experts, and - particularly in Blackpool - youth expertise, significantly added to the likelihood of improving schools, health services, and community organisations. This improvement was seen in accessibility, inclusivity, and relevance but also in terms of governance and accountability.

1. Capacity building through effective and distributed leadership

Distributed (a type of shared) leadership includes individuals, teams, organisations and whole systems into a unified movement. Parents and carers highlighted that having a team leader helped to match lived experience and activities effectively leading to inclusion and meaningful engagement. Young people highlighted that, adult facilitators of youth groups supported continuous engagement, helped activities to remain focused, provided clarity and cohesion ensuring tasks were completed.

2. Capacity building through co-production

Co-production was a route to navigating services and systems and involved enhancing social networks, enabling peer support, and growing individual capacity by developing skills acquisition and improving practices. Much of the Resilience Revolution's contribution to capacity building are the ideas, toolkits, and products co-produced by young people, parents, carers, practitioners, and academics. For example, the Blackpool Families Rock Model of Practice helped shape a new way of working with families. Beyond Blackpool, a toolkit was co-produced for young people and parents working with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

3. Capacity building through training & employment

Lived-experience co-trainers built capacity across Blackpool and beyond by sharing their expertise and experience. For example, young people and parents and carers co-delivered training offered by Boingboing, at Big Resilience Get Togethers and at the International Resilience Revolution Conference. This increased personal capacity, whilst improving understanding of resilience and best practices where young people increasingly became "the centre of all decision making" (Charity 3). Over time, youth and parent and carer employment structures were expanded inside the Resilience Revolution's organisational culture and partnering organisations. The employment of apprentices and sessional workers improved communication, organisation, and the quality of work, contributed to a more diverse workforce, increased creativity and risk mitigation.

4. Capacity building through activism

The ability of projects to influence systems linked to 1) youth voice, 2) cross-organisational partnerships and 3) intergenerational partnerships. Here, young people, parents and carers, and those that support them worked collectively to drive systems change at local and national levels. This way of working was evidenced across all universal and targeted projects: youth projects, in schools, training and communities of practice, within the Friendship Model of Volunteering and in Parents and Carers groups. It was also nationally recognised. For example, Blackpool's young people were specifically commended (Tilly, Morris & Yusuf, 2021) for contributions to the Youth Affairs All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs (APPG) on The Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Young People - Submission of evidence - Boingboing. This was one of 7 co-produced policy submissions where the Resilience Revolution helped to change national policy and practice.

Two other policy submissions have influenced a change in the national parliamentary consultation processes. Are you influential? Get your voice heard in UK Parliament - Parliament UK Education offers training to young people in how to submit evidence and take part in consultations. Also, Campaign for change - Parliament UK Education is a bespoke school-based programme to support youth campaigning skills.

Cross-systems activism increased following the first national COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020 with the 'Inclusion Not Exclusion Group' which was a collaboration between schools' staff, young people, NHS workers as well as other Blackpool professionals. Young people were further enabled to build their capacity around contributing to wider systems change via projects such as Activists in Residence, Blackpool Youth Climate Group, and the Resilience Revolution Education Voices group.

Research question 5: What is the potential for the sustainability of the Resilience Revolution?

All 11 Resilience Revolution universal and targeted approaches have been sustained in-full or in-part. Seven of these projects have been actively sustained by continuation of funding (Back on Track, Friendship Model of Volunteering, Self-Harm Support, Walk and Talk, Apprenticeships, Youth Engagement co-production and Moving on Up 1:1). Some projects expanded, such as the Friendship Model of Volunteering and work with Apprenticeships.

The remaining four projects were more passively sustained via the continued use of co-produced guidance (i.e , Academic Resilience Approach, Bounce Forward, Moving on Up group work, and Saddle Up). For example, although the equine aspect of Saddle Up was not continued after the project ended, Educational Diversity teachers reported the continued use of art and emotional regulation classroom-based activities and practices that they had learned from the project.

Thus, successful sustainability came from the creative and innovative adaptation of the original projects and through applying resilience concepts to improve projects' fit with local needs. For example, work with Parents and Carers and Voluntary/Community/Faith/Social Enterprise (VCFSE) groups took place across projects and expanded over time. The transformational impact of the Resilience Revolution is evident across all four areas that Windell (2014)

outlines as imperative for reducing health inequalities. These included: early intervention, inclusive education, improved employment, and a healthy environment.

1. Early intervention:

- Blackpool Council Volunteers Service will continue the Friendship Model of Volunteering with support from the business community, particularly Merlin Entertainments.
- Funding has been secured for a five-year research collaboration with the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), Empowerment, Lancaster University to look at health inequalities in different areas of Blackpool.

2. Inclusive education:

- Continued support to Our Children and young people at risk of self-harm and exclusion will be provided by Resilience Coaches embedded in local schools.
- Blackpool Football Club Community Trust's Premier League Kicks programme embeds Resilient Therapy and co-production in the school curriculum.
- The Grand Theatre has Resilient Therapy embedded explicitly in their future projects.

3. Improved employment:

- A total of 45 young people and 20 parents and carers have accessed supportive employment opportunities within the Resilience Revolution and partnering organisations since inception.
- Blackpool Council has established a Co-production Team and a team of youth advisors to promote the use of co-production projects across every directorate in the Council. The teams will continue to deliver co-production training and Communities of Practice sessions.
- Blackpool Council and partner organisations, such as the Blackpool Teaching Hospital, have altered recruitment processes to increase the likelihood of successful youth employment in their organisations.

4. Healthy environment:

- Blackpool Council Parks Service is committed to an apprenticeship within their team and to continue to fund and expand Junior Park Rangers.
- The Resilience Revolution's [Resilience Pathway](#) demonstrates that the resilience approaches and values are a long-term commitment in Blackpool.

Supporting Sustainability

Three themes emerged from interviews that highlight factors that supported sustainability of the Resilience Revolution's work. These include:

- Redistribution of power (e.g., inclusive language, recognising the value of lived-experience, enhanced understanding of co-production, supportive funding structures)
- Pride in the collective (e.g., individual and organisational reputational benefits of co-production and cross-partnership working)

- Intergenerational planning (e.g., co-production across generations, an ambition for improving mental health in Blackpool for future generations)

Sharing findings as they arose increased the potential for sustainability as it inspired collective pride whilst improving organisations and systems. Intergenerational planning saw young people and their supporters enthused and motivated with the innovative way of the Resilience Resolution approaches. This led them to commit to personally sustaining practices and projects for those that come after them.

Recommendations

The Resilience Revolution's findings show statistically significant improvements in wellbeing, resilience and an increase in civic and social behaviours. Therefore, this evaluation found that in the Resilience Revolution programme social action was a mechanism that helped to reduce health inequalities and challenge multiple disadvantages young people face.

Furthermore, the Resilience Revolution showed evidence for rapid practice development in the local workforce. Stepping up voluntary co-production opportunities into new paid employment opportunities helped to sustain values and ideas as well as drive improvements in services. Based on the learning from the process, outcomes, and impact of the Resilience Revolution the following recommendations are suggested.

Overall

- Start with social justice focused conversations to grow meaningful grass-roots campaigns.
- Engage with young people and a wide range of parents and carers groups to improve local services.
- Create a wide-ranging choice of co-production opportunities across the whole town.
- Co-produce local policies and strategies particularly in education, health and social care because it can lead to fairer outcomes for young people and families.
- Make wellbeing a priority because without this, it will be impossible to make transformative changes to systems.

For Practitioners and their Managers

- Create lived experience co-trainer jobs because these will help drive workforce practice developments.
- Explore the barriers to engagement and co-produce solutions about how to overcome them.
- Invest in youth employment opportunities; youth advisors and apprenticeships to share decision making with those new to the workforce.
- Training packages need to be co-produced after relationships are built. It is important to know the community and its needs and training needs to include relevant local examples.
- A tiered training programme with a range of short and longer training courses helps ensure learning has accessible routes for a wide range of workers and volunteers.
- A high frequency of training and learning events helps workers to connect, test and learn from new approaches.
- Intergenerational co-produced training resources help unite the whole community to have a shared understanding and common language.

- A repository of local examples of successful resilience building work is useful for practitioners to use to improve decision making in work with young people and families.

For Policymakers

- Incorporate resilience and co-production within national measurements of school performance.
- Update the statutory requirement for independent visitors to require lifelong commitment of a trusted adult to every young person in care
- Young people choosing their lifelong friend and co-producing the matching, training and supervision processes will help drive best practice in intergenerational friendships for Our Children.
- Create national co-production groups that focus on people from coastal communities to address inequalities.
- Reconsider universal approaches. Co-produced and specific resilience building activities can have systems level impacts.

For Funders

- Ensure funding requirements have suitable flexibility and resilience.
- Remove limitations on percentages that can be spent on implementation, research and treatments. Co-production is all of these rolled into one.
- When commissioning services, consider local providers first. Lived experience local experts lead to more sustainable outcomes.

For Researchers

- Ensure the research and evaluation works within co-production spaces. The benefit of co-research allows projects to quickly adapt to new opportunities and strengths as well as create teams to work as co-researchers, improve data capturing and analysis.
- Report regularly as a continuous process – enabling adjustments and improvements that impact on people’s lives to be made as soon as possible. Future research needs to evaluate and correlate longer-term systems changes after the implementation of the Resilience Revolution in Blackpool.