

# Evaluation of Bridges Project Way2Work#Cashback: Year 1 report

**Bridges Project**

June 2018

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# Bridges Project Way2Work#Cashback

Year 1 Evaluation



BRIDGES PROJECT

was granted up to

# £393,183

of CashBack for Communities funding  
for Phase 4 (2017-2020)

## Way2Work#CashBack

supports vulnerable young people from Midlothian and East Lothian to transition from school or unemployment to positive destinations

### Employability activities include:



**PX2**



**Animal Care**



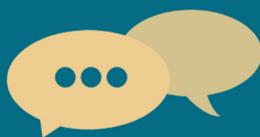
**Construction**



**First Aid**

### Impact of the project

**3/4** increased confidence



**40%** moved on to a positive destination

**2/3** improved behaviour



#### Top Positive Destinations



### Recommendations for Year 2

- Use Employability Skills Assessments with all participants at agreed intervals
- Resolve data sharing issues
- Review data collection processes
- Develop a systematic approach to collecting destination data

## Executive Summary

### Introduction and context

Bridges Project works with disadvantaged young people across the Lothians to access the services necessary to move into independent living, employment, further education and training.

In 2017 Bridges Project was granted up to £393,183 of CashBack for Communities funding to deliver the Way2Work#CashBack programme during Phase 4. The programme supports vulnerable young people aged 14–21 in Midlothian and East Lothian to transition from school or unemployment to positive destinations such as work, training or further education through a range of interventions including group work, case work, and job placements.

Blake Stevenson was commissioned to evaluate the programme over the three years of Phase 4 CashBack funding. In Year 1, the evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups with participants, and interviews with stakeholders and staff. The evaluation also included a review of Bridges Project data and questionnaires completed by stakeholders.

### Delivery of Way2Work#CashBack in Year 1

Year 1 of the Way2Work programme provided a range of activities including tailored one to one support and groups covering topics such as preparing for employment, construction, animal care, tenancy and first aid.

A total of 173 young people engaged with the programme in Year 1, which represents significant progress towards the target of 360 young people over the three year period.

More than half of participants had finished school at the point of referral to the Way2Work programme. The most popular activities during Year 1 were the Preparing for Employment groups, the one to one support, and the PX2 groups.

### Impact of Way2Work#Cashback

The evidence gathered through interviews, focus groups and stakeholder questionnaires during Year 1 indicates that the Way2Work programme is broadly having a positive impact on participants, against the six outcomes it is required to meet.

#### Outcome 1: Building capacity and confidence

The Way2Work#CashBack programme successfully built the capacity and confidence of participants in Year 1. The Employability Skills Assessment (ESA), which measures confidence and capacity of group and one to one participants at regular intervals, demonstrated a gradual increase in average scores across all groups and the one to one provision during the year evidencing an overall increase in confidence.

Likewise, participants and stakeholders spoke of improvements in the ability of participants to self-travel, engaging with others and socialising. The PX2 group, which focuses on confidence and self-esteem, was seen as being particularly helpful in increasing the confidence of young people.

### Outcome 2: Developing personal and physical skills

Young people gained a range of skills during Year 1 of Way2Work. Participants spoke of developing employability skills such as building a CV and preparing for job interviews. They also developed skills for learning and life through the support on the programme. These included reading and writing, cooking and knowledge about housing.

### Outcome 3: Changing behaviour and aspirations

The Way2Work programme has met all of its targets for changing behaviour and aspirations in Year 1. Most young people who were interviewed had not been referred to the programme for behavioural reasons but many still spoke of their behaviour improving and goal setting for the future. Stakeholders echoed that view, identified positive changes in behaviour and new aspirations for more than half the young people they worked with.

### Outcome 4: Improving wellbeing

Based on changes in average SHANARRI scores, young people improved their wellbeing in Year 1. Stakeholders also commented, in their questionnaire, that the programme has had a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of young people, and some participants and stakeholders went on to explain that the programme had improved relationships and developed positive friendships.

### Outcome 5: Increasing school attendance and attainment

It was not possible for Bridges Project to report on attendance and attainment due to issues with the data sharing agreement that is in place with Midlothian Council. Bridges Project are working to resolve this issue so that a two-way exchange of information can be in place for Year 2.

A small amount of information was collected on attendance from stakeholders and participants, which showed that some young people still attending school had improved their attendance while participating in the Way2Work programme.

### Outcome 6: Improving learning, employability and employment options

Although the Way2Work programme has only met two of its targets relating to learning, employability and employment options, it has exceeded its overall target for the number of participants moving into positive destinations. A high number of participants have started college courses, and others have moved into employment at this early stage.

It has also proven difficult to track the destinations of participants once they leave the programme.

Participants interviewed, who had moved into positive destinations, indicated that the Way2Work programme had been crucial to helping them to progress into employment, education or training. Stakeholders also acknowledged the programme's role in supporting young people, who would have struggled to enter positive destinations.

### Key considerations and recommendations

Overall, the Way2Work programme has been largely successful in meeting its targets for Year 1 and feedback from stakeholders and participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Where there has been a shortfall in meeting targets this has primarily been due to overlap between indicators, which will be addressed for Year 2 of the programme.

Although there have been some inconsistencies with the way data is collected on participants and reported against indicators, this has also been identified and rectified for Year 2.

The key recommendations from the Year 1 evaluation:

**Recommendation 1:** ESAs are an important self-assessment tool for measuring the progress of young people in a range of areas but their use is not standardised across the one to one and group activities. In Year 2, the ESAs should be used with all participants at agreed intervals so that it captures the progress across all elements of the programme.

**Recommendation 2:** Bridges Project should resolve with Midlothian Council the issues around data sharing to ensure that attendance and attainment data can be accessed for future monitoring and evaluation of programme impact. Bridges Project's consent protocols should also be re-assessed so that anonymised attendance and attainment data can be provided to the evaluation team.

**Recommendation 3:** The data collection processes used by Bridges Project should be reviewed to ensure that data for each indicator can be easily evidenced and that participant details are recorded consistently.

**Recommendation 4:** The programme would benefit from access to destination data for a larger number of young people who have exited the programme. Although this information is often challenging to collect, a more systemic approach to following up with young people at a set point or liaising with local authority contacts to get an update on their progress will improve understanding of young people's destinations.

## 1. Introduction

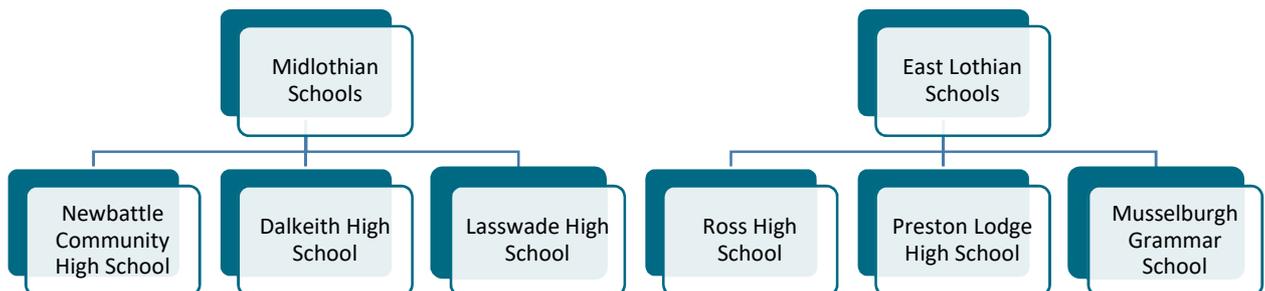
1.1 In July 2017, Bridges Project commissioned Blake Stevenson to conduct a three-year evaluation of the activities that are being funded as part of the CashBack for Communities Programme, Way2Work#CashBack.

1.2 This report explores the progress during Year 1. It measures the impact of the programme against six key outcomes (listed below) that Way2Work is funded to deliver.

### Context

1.3 Bridges Project was granted up to £393,183 from CashBack for Communities to deliver Way2Work over three years. The programme is designed to support vulnerable young people aged 14–21 to transition from school or unemployment into positive destinations such as work, training or further education. Key features of the programme include one to one support, group work, case work and job placements.

1.4 The project works with six schools from across Midlothian and East Lothian.



1.5 In addition to these six schools, the project has also worked with Harbour Point School in connection with Spark of Genius. Harbour Point School provides young people who are unable to attend mainstream schools with an alternative education.

1.6 The programme is targeted mainly at those who are marginalised or disadvantaged due to a range of circumstances, such as being looked after or in care, having caring responsibilities, mental health issues, or being disengaged or poorly engaged in education. Many of the young people involved live in areas that are the most deprived in Scotland.

### Evaluation aims

1.7 The purpose of this evaluation is to independently measure the extent to which the Way2Work programme is delivering against its six core outcomes. These are:

- Outcome 1: young people build their capacity and confidence
- Outcome 2: young people develop their physical and personal skills

- Outcome 3: young people’s behaviours and aspirations change positively
- Outcome 4: young people’s wellbeing improves
- Outcome 5: school attendance and attainment increases
- Outcome 6: young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options.

**Evaluation activity to date**

- 1.8 To inform the report, the evidence is drawn from face-to-face interviews and focus groups with young people involved in the programme; telephone interviews with key stakeholders; and a review of quantitative and qualitative data collected by the Bridges Project.
- 1.9 To understand the progress of young people, the Ryff Scales of Psychological Wellbeing, which is a validated tool for measuring the wellbeing of individuals, has been used as part of the evaluation. This involves Bridges Employability Support Workers (ESWs) completing the scale with participants every 12 weeks. However, the tool was only introduced in February 2018 and it is too early for the results of the Ryff Scales to inform this Year 1 report.
- 1.10 Below is a summary of the main data sources used to evaluate the Way2Work programme in its first year, including the number analysed and the outcomes that each one provided evidence for.

**Table 1.1 Data sources for Year 1 Evaluation**

Data source	Number analysed	Relevant outcomes
Interviews & focus groups	7 YP interviews 1 focus group with 7 YP 4 stakeholder interviews	All outcomes
Case files	7 case files	All outcomes
Stakeholder questionnaires <sup>1</sup>	Questionnaires completed for 20 YP in Q4	All outcomes
Employability Skills Assessment scores	ESA scores for 107 YP	Outcome 1: young people build their capacity and confidence
SHANARRI scores	SHANARRI scores for 74 YP	Outcome 4: young people’s wellbeing improves

<sup>1</sup> Revised questionnaires were only implemented during Q4 to provide greater insight. As such, analysis of stakeholder questionnaires in this report is limited to those completed during Q4.

## Outline of interim report

- 1.11 Chapter 2 of this report provides an overview of the programme, including the profile of participants and the nature of both the one to one and group support provided. Chapter 3 then explores the impact of the programme to date and the extent to which it has delivered against the core outcomes. Finally, Chapter 4 summaries the findings from the first year of the programme and provides recommendations for the future delivery.

## 2. Overview of programme

- 2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the Way2Work#CashBack programme. It explores the profile of the young people who have taken part in the programme and describes the nature of both the one to one support and group activities offered to participants. The chapter also comments on the effectiveness of the outcomes and indicators used for evaluating the programme.

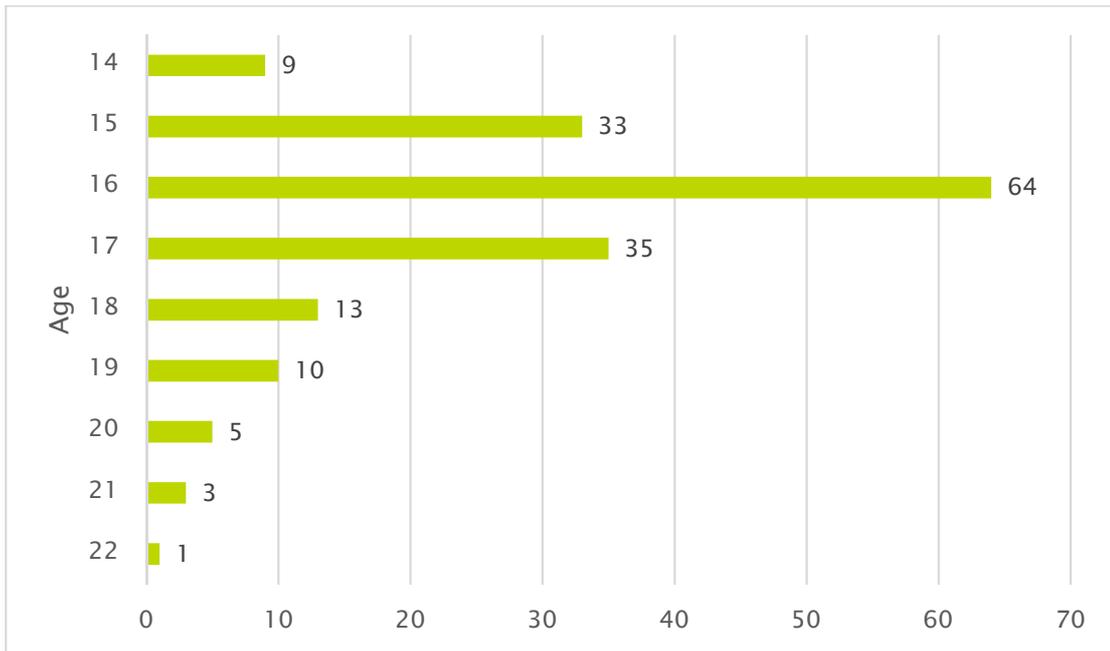
### Funding agreement

- 2.2 Bridges Project is receiving up to £393,183 from Phase 4 of CashBack for Communities to deliver the Way2Work#CashBack programme over a three-year period. Of this amount, £348,866 (89%) is allocated to project activity expenses including salaries for a project coordinator and two Employability Support Workers (ESWs), as well as staff travel and training expenses. The remaining £44,317 (11%) of the budget for the programme is allocated to management and marketing (£39,317), with a smaller amount for external evaluation (£5,000).
- 2.3 For the 2017/18 financial year, the total grant amount allocated was £133,180 of which £130,295 was spent, representing a surplus of £2,885

### Profile of participants

- 2.4 Way2Work is targeted at vulnerable young people aged 14–21 and it is expected that 360 young people will be supported by the programme during the funding period.
- 2.5 Throughout Year 1, Way2Work worked with young people who are either living in areas of deprivation; not in employment, education or training; excluded from school, or at risk of exclusion; and at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour, offending or re-offending.
- 2.6 In Year 1, the Way2Work team worked with a total of 173 young people. A total of 90 males and 83 females participated in Way2Work, representing an almost even split.
- 2.7 In terms of age, as Figure 2.1 shows, young people were aged between 14 and 22, and the largest proportion of young people (37%) were aged 16 at the point of referral. The data shows that the majority of these young people being referred to the service are aged between 14 and 17.

**Figure 2.1 Ages of participants at point of referral (n=173)**



2.8 Overall, as shown in Figure 2.2, a higher number of participants had left school at the point of referral to the Way2Work programme than were still in school.

**Figure 2.2 Number of Way2Work participants who were in school/had finished school at point of referral (n=173)**

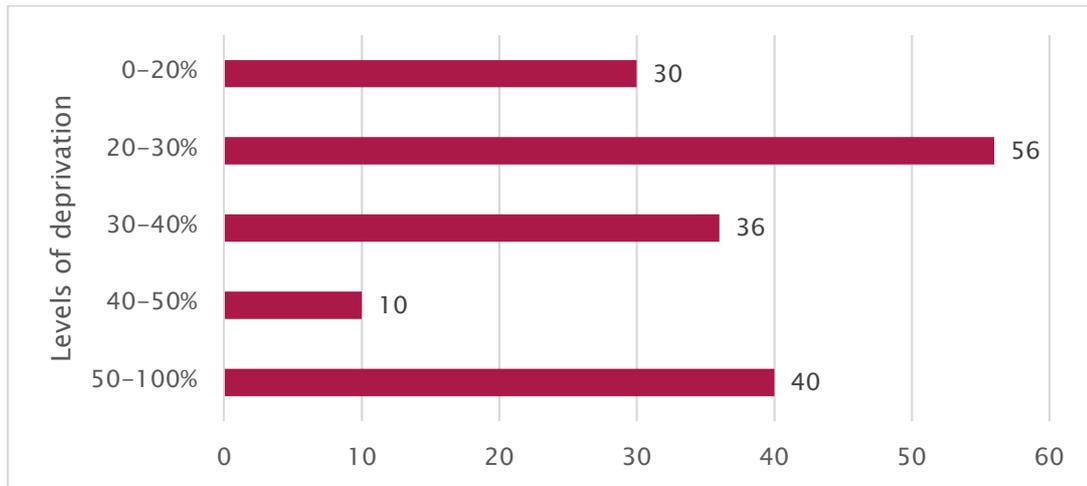


Using data provided by Way2Work<sup>2</sup>, Figure 2.3 summarises the SIMD profiles of 172 participants from Year 1.<sup>3</sup> Half of participants during Year 1 lived in the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods, although a significantly smaller number lived in SIMD quintile 1.

<sup>2</sup> Which was not provided by quintile or decile.

<sup>3</sup> Postcode data was unavailable for one participant.

Figure 2.3 SIMD data for Year 1 participants (n=172)



- 2.9 In future years of the evaluation, SIMD data will be provided by decile or quintile to allow more detailed analysis of the number of participants from deprived areas engaging with the programme.
- 2.10 Of the 173 Way2Work participants who engaged in the Way2Work programme in Year 1, just over half (90, 52%) exited the programme during the year.

#### Nature of one to one support

- 2.11 Some of the young people participating in the programme are offered intensive support on a one to one basis, with one of two dedicated ESWs. The support received is tailored to participants' individual needs and so the early stages of a young person's involvement are crucial in determining those needs.
- 2.12 At the point of referral, the ESW builds up a profile of the young person, considering areas such as their family background, school attendance and attainment, and whether the young person has received support from other agencies in the past. They also undertake a baseline assessment of the young person to enhance their understanding of each young person's background, skills, interests and needs.
- 2.13 Some of the main tools used for measuring both the needs and progress of recipients of one to one support include the action plan and the Employability Skills Assessment (ESA). With the help of their ESW, the action plan is completed in the early stages of their involvement in Way2Work. It encourages the young person to think about their aspirations and goals, and issues which might affect their ability to reach these goals. Having recognised these issues, the action plan also enables the young person to discuss what they would like to achieve through the programme.
- 2.14 As part of the ESA, the young person is required to assess, on a sliding scale out of a total score of 88, their competency in a range of areas including communication, form filling and timekeeping. The ESA is completed on more than one occasion, enabling the young person and their ESW to measure progress over time.

2.15 One to one appointments provide the young person and their ESW an opportunity to reflect on the young person's progress, achievements and issues since the previous appointment. They also involve a discussion of any actions to be taken forward into the future and/or the next meeting. Between meetings, the young person and their ESW keep in touch, typically via text but also through phone calls and emails.

### Group activities

2.16 In addition to the one to one support, young people are also given the opportunity to attend a variety of group sessions on offer at Bridges Project, which are designed to address their needs and improve their skills in a range of areas.

2.17 Young people participating in these groups complete a SHANARRI score on a regular basis, using a five-point scale for each of the indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included).

2.18 The group activities are:

- PX2;
- Preparing for Work;
- Morrison Construction;
- Construction Skills Certification Scheme drop-in;
- Animal Care;
- Tenancy Award; and
- First Aid at Work.

### PX2

2.19 The PX2 course is centred on confidence building and the timeframe for delivering the course varies. At the outset, it was expected that four PX2/Mindbuzz programmes would be delivered each year. In Year 1, six<sup>4</sup> PX2 courses were delivered, of which one is currently ongoing, and 28 young people have attended one of these courses. Participants work their way through a manual which covers the '12 steps' and the course aims to equip young people with the confidence needed to unlock their potential and move into a positive destination.

2.20 While confidence building is the main focus of PX2, it also helps participants to build other important life skills such as communication, effective thinking and resilience, improving their self-esteem and encouraging them to set goals at the same time. The PX2 course explores the workings of the mind and helps young people to reflect on how they speak to themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> This figure also includes one Mindbuzz group and one Spark of Genius group, which follow a similar format to the PX2 course.

## Preparing for Employment

- 2.21 The Preparing for Employment group meets weekly to receive employment and employability support to help them move into a positive destination. Seven Preparing for Employment groups, four of which are currently ongoing, ran in Year 1 and were attended by 62 young people. One was disbanded due to low attendance.
- 2.22 Participants complete a workbook which contains various written exercises and this is combined with practical, group activities. As part of the course, participants are assisted in CV writing and they also learn important interview skills. They are also encouraged to reflect on their personality traits, skills and areas for improvement.

## Morrison Construction

- 2.23 The Morrison Construction programme was aimed at young people who are interested in a career in the construction industry. It was delivered twice during Year 1 and attended by 14 young people.
- 2.24 Developed by Morrison Construction, this was a tailored, six-week programme which helped young people to build an understanding of the construction industry and the qualities and skills required to work in the industry. The course explored areas such as the job market, how to write a construction-based CV, transferrable skills, interview skills, and health and safety. Participants were also given the opportunity to go on a site visit, as pictured below.



- 2.25 As part of the group, young people gain their The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland Health and Safety certificate and a Fire Safety Awareness certificate. Potential next steps for those completing the course include sitting their Construction Skills Certification Test, enabling them to embark on a career in the construction industry. This group has now come to an end due to a change in staffing at Morrison Construction, but Bridges Project are currently investigating alternative construction-based courses that could run in its place.

## Construction Skills Certification Scheme drop-in

- 2.26 The Morrison Construction groups complement the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) drop-in sessions that are also on offer at Bridges Project, and these have been attended by 19 young people in Year 1. The sessions allow young people to work towards obtaining a CSCS card, which provides certification for a range of construction jobs. These sessions are currently ongoing and young people are able to participate as and when required.

## Animal Care

- 2.27 The Animal Care course is a partnership pathway with the Way2Work team, the Lifelong Learning and Employability team at Midlothian Council, and Scotland's Rural College. The course, which is still ongoing, involves weekly group activities and has been attended by 10 young people. It is aimed at young people who are interested in working with animals and enables them to undertake assessments and work towards an SQA-recognised qualification in Animal Care.
- 2.28 Participants also have the chance to go on educational visits to local cat and dog homes and the zoo. These visits enable the young people to ask questions related to animal care and working in the industry, and to obtain information about opportunities for work experience.

## Tenancy Award

- 2.29 The Tenancy Award group, which ran once during Year 1, was aimed at young people who experience issues with housing and homelessness. Delivered in partnership with Borders College, in Year 1 the group was attended by seven young people. Through their participation in the programme, young people received support with housing and worked towards an SQA-accredited learning award. The group met weekly over a period of approximately 12 weeks.

## First Aid at Work

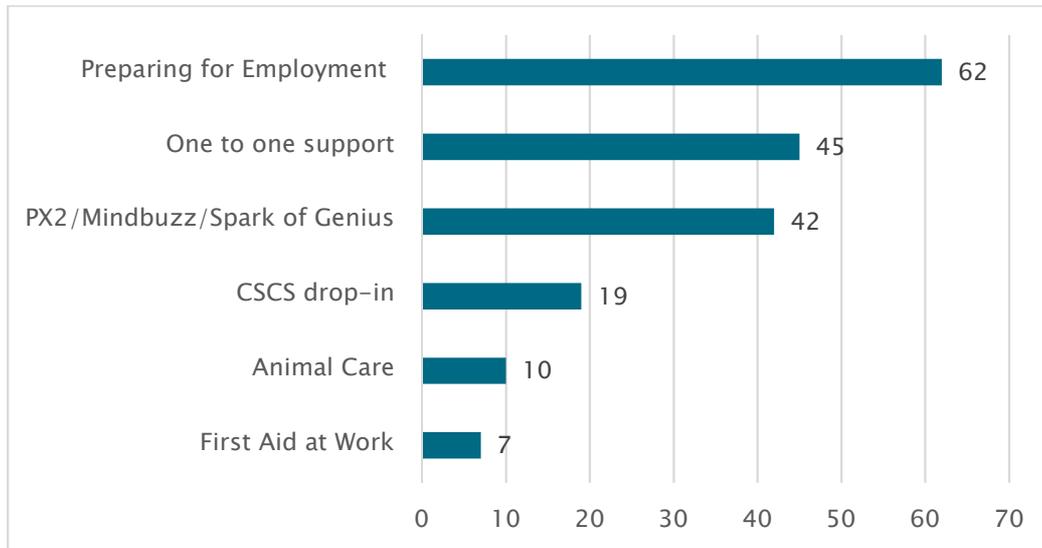
A small number (7) of Way2Work participants attended a First Aid at Work course in Year 1. The course explored several aspects of first aid, including the recovery position, CPR for adults, children and babies, choking, bleeding and shock. The course was designed to improve young people's:

- confidence in initiating first aid treatment,
- control of a safe environment, and
- knowledge about treatment in emergency situations.

## Participation rates

- 2.30 The most popular activity was the Preparing for Employment groups. The number of participants and the activities they engaged with are summarised in Figure 2.4.

**Figure 2.4 Number of participants engaged in each Way2Work activity (n=191)<sup>5</sup>**



### Effectiveness of outcomes and indicators

- 2.31 Each of the outcomes and many of the corresponding indicators chosen by the Way2Work team are appropriate for the programme of support and activities being delivered. In particular, the indicators capture the key components of the programme, e.g. building confidence, increasing participation in activities involving others, improving attendance and attainment at school, and achieving positive destinations.
- 2.32 However, in Year 1, the programme has been required to evidence against a total of 31 indicators. There is some overlap in the indicators both between and within the various outcomes. Some examples are:
- Outcome 1, 'Young people report they are able to do new things' and Outcome 2: 'Young people report skills increasing'; and
  - Outcome 3, 'Young people take part in PX2 and other motivational groups' and Outcome 3, 'Young people access other Bridges Project services/activities'.
- 2.33 There is also some overlap in the indicators listed for Outcome 6. In Year 1, Way2Work staff have gathered data on the number of young people who achieve positive destinations, in addition to data on the individual destinations (i.e. those who volunteer, access learning and gain employment after completing the programme).
- 2.34 Clarifying what should be recorded against the indicators will allow for a clearer understanding of whether the programme's key targets have been met, and this has now occurred.
- 2.35 During Year 1, there have also been some minor issues in reporting against each of the indicators. This has been caused by confusion amongst project staff about which young people are counted as Way2Work participants and how they are counted against each

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<sup>5</sup> The total adds up to 191 because some participants were involved in multiple groups and/or one to ones.

indicator. For instance, it was unclear to staff whether young people who have gone into multiple positive destinations are counted against this indicator more than once, although it has now been made clear that only the first destination is counted.

- 2.36 There was also originally some double up in the counting of young people in Q2 due to differing use of proper names and 'known as names' by referring agencies, which resulted in some young people being counted more than once in group and one to one numbers.
- 2.37 The Scottish Government has provided clarity to Bridges Project around measuring against the indicators, which should help ensure that reporting against the outcomes and indicators is more consistent for the remaining years of CashBack funding.
- 2.38 As this chapter has shown, in its first year the Way2Work programme has delivered a wide range of group and one to one activities that are aimed at increasing the employability of disadvantaged young people and helping them move into positive destinations. Although there have been some minor issues with the outcomes and indicators this year, namely the overlap of indicators and the duplication of some numbers, these will likely be addressed for Year 2 of the programme. In the next chapter we examine the impact that the Way2Work programme has had on participants across a range of outcomes.

### 3. Programme impact

- 3.1 The focus of this chapter is the impact of the programme, based on its delivery against the six core CashBack for Communities outcomes for young people.
- 3.2 The Way2Work team have measured the progress of participants against a series of indicators for each of the six funded outcomes. These indicators are used to evidence overall progress towards delivering each outcome. In turn, targets have been set for each indicator, usually on a quarterly basis. Some of the internal progress tools described earlier, such as the Employability Skills Assessment (ESA) and the SHANARRI scores, are used to evidence whether the targets for each indicator were met. These tools are combined with other sources of information, such as quarterly stakeholder questionnaires.
- 3.3 Both the quantitative secondary data and the qualitative interview and focus group data indicates that, on the whole, Way2Work has largely been successful during Year 1 in delivering against the six key outcomes.

#### Outcome 1: Building capacity and confidence

- 3.4 In its first year the Way2Work programme has had a positive impact on the capacity and confidence of participants. When the quarterly targets for each indicator are combined, the annual target for most indicators was exceeded.
- 3.5 The only target that has not been achieved is for increased participation in groups/activities involving other people, with only a record of 58 participants meeting this target. It is unclear why there is a shortfall of the Year 1 target of 84, especially when, in Q4, 43 young people showed increased participation.

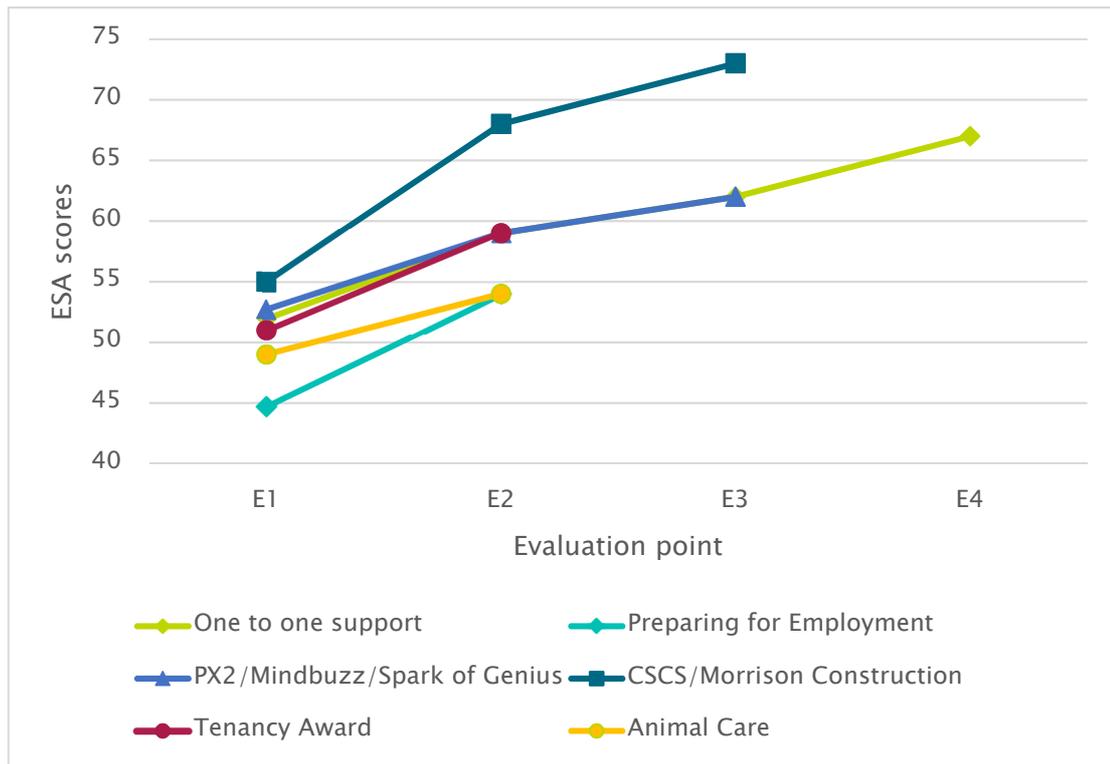
**Table 3.1 Indicators for Outcome 1: Build capacity and confidence**

Indicator	Target	Actual	Achieved?
Young people increase their confidence/capacity	96	129	✓
Young people report they are able to do new things	84	100	✓
Stakeholders report increasing confidence through survey/questionnaire (%)	70%	100%	✓
Young people go on to do new things after initial CashBack involvement	84	134	✓
Young people show increased participation in groups/activities involving other people	84	58	Not met

- 3.6 There was a wide range of evidence collected by the evaluation team in Year 1 that participants have increased their confidence through involvement in the Way2Work programme. In particular, ESA scores, which were completed by 107 participants, offer a picture of how the confidence and capacity of participants has improved over time.

3.7 As shown in Figure 3.1, all groups and the one to one provision experienced an increase in average ESA scores across Year 1 of the Way2Work programme. The CSCS and Morrison Construction groups experienced the most significant increase in the average score. The one to one participants who completed ESAs at four evaluation points experienced a more gradual increase. This is consistent with the more intensive nature of one to one support, which is generally aimed at young people with lower levels of confidence.

Figure 3.1 Average ESA scores for Way2Work one to one and group participants during Year 1<sup>6</sup>



3.8 Future programme delivery would benefit from the tool being applied more consistently to one to one and group activities so that a greater proportion of programme participants complete ESAs.

3.9 The success of the programme in building young people’s confidence during Year 1 was also echoed by the young people. They provided examples where, as a result of the programme, they could now:

- self-travel and go out and speak to people;
- speak more easily in front of others;
- have the confidence to go and look for a job.

3.10 Stakeholders who completed questionnaires also indicated that participants had increased their confidence. They provided evidence of this such as contributing more to

<sup>6</sup> ESAs were not completed by Way2Work groups at all four evaluation points.

group discussions, making friends in the group, socialising with their neighbours and volunteering in the community.

- 3.11 Some interviewees described the activities that were especially helpful in building young people’s confidence. These included the PX2 course with its emphasis on confidence building and self-esteem; they said that the course was about “*making small changes*” which have a big impact. They also identified the tenancy course as important in building young people’s confidence.

**Participating in new things**

- 3.12 One of the young people interviewed, commented on the impact of the programme in encouraging them to try new things, explaining that they never used to want to do things, but, as a result of the programme, they are open to new opportunities. Stakeholders who responded to the questionnaire also indicated that the vast majority (90%) of the young people that they worked with were willing to try new things such as gardening, construction and volunteering.

**Outcome 2: Developing personal and physical skills**

- 3.13 The Way2Work programme has successfully developed the skills of participants during Year 1. All annual targets for the indicators had been met or exceeded.

**Table 3.2 Indicators for Outcome 2: Develop personal and/or physical skills**

Indicator	Target	Actual	Achieved?
Young people gain accreditation for learning and skills development	84	84	✓
Young people report skills increasing	96	129	✓
Other stakeholders report skills are increasing through survey/questionnaire (%)	70%	100%	✓

- 3.14 The young people and stakeholders interviewed described a range of both hard and soft skills that the programme had helped young people to develop. A few young people mentioned that they had learned important employability skills.

*“coming here has helped me know how to build a CV, interview skills, stuff like that, so it’s basically just helped me for future life.” (programme participant)*

- 3.15 This support, and examples of it, varied from receiving help with numeracy skills to support with their reading and writing. The stakeholders recognised that the programme was particularly helpful for young people who had been out of education for quite some time and, as well as skills for learning, it supported them to develop or improve a range of life skills including communication skills, cooking and knowledge about housing.
- 3.16 Stakeholders also gave examples of young people undertaking accredited learning like working towards their CSCS card and obtaining first aid and emergency aid qualifications. The group work and initial accreditation was also supporting young people to progress into further study for example, animal care courses in college.

### Case study 1: Stuart\*

Stuart\* was referred to the Way2Work#CashBack programme at Bridges Project in spring 2017. He had become disengaged from school and was home-schooled for a period of time. He also had a range of personal issues including ADD/ADHD, anxiety, depression and ASD/Asperger's, as well as difficulties communicating. Stuart had been supported in the past through an Activity Agreement, and from CAMHS and Pathways to Success.

Stuart was referred to the programme at Bridges to receive employability support to help him explore his options and to move into a positive destination. He had previously been involved in, and struggled with some of the group activities at Bridges before being referred to the Way2Work programme. He was moved to one to one support instead. Since moving into the Way2Work programme Stuart has joined a self-evaluation group and cooking group, as well as continuing to receive one to one support.

Early on in the programme, Stuart expressed an interest in gaming and photography but recognised that his confidence and current qualifications could make it difficult for him to pursue a career in photography. After being picked up for his initial one to one meeting, Stuart did not feel comfortable enough to leave the car, which made it difficult to have the one to one sessions with his key worker.

Through the sessions with his key worker, Stuart received employability support, which included help in planning for the future and particularly thinking about college. Stuart has also taken part in a conflict resolution group run by an external partner but delivered as part of the Bridges Project. Through this group, Stuart learned how to resolve conflict and better control his emotions. He also completed an employment course, which involved making CVs on the computer and learning about appropriate behaviour for the workplace.

Stuart said that he worried about his future but that Bridges *"settle your mind a little"* and that *"they're great at planning with the future."* He felt that his involvement at Bridges had a positive impact on his relationships with others, while he also *"grew a lot more relationships from Bridges as well."* He mentioned that he had made new friends at Bridges and that he could rely on his key worker in particular.

Stuart recognised that he was *"progressively getting more and more outside"* through his involvement with Bridges. Since being involved in Way2Work, his ESA scores have risen from 28 points to 60 out of 88. Stuart also began a year-long placement at a local retailer, which he was really enjoying; his key worker helped him to prepare for this and gave him advice on what to do. Stuart also completed an application to study childcare at college. Stuart commented that the programme at Bridges had *"completely changed [his] life for the better."*

\*Not his real name

### Outcome 3: Changing behaviour and aspirations

3.17 In Year 1, the Way2Work programme has exceeded all of its annual targets relating to changing behaviour and aspirations.

**Table 3.3 Indicators for Outcome 3: Positively change behaviours and aspirations**

Indicator	Target	Actual	Achieved?
Young people have increased aspirations	96	108	✓
Stakeholders report increased aspirations (%)	55%	91%	✓
Young people report positive changes in behaviour	96	118	✓
Stakeholders report perceived positive changes in behaviour through survey/questionnaire (%)	55%	98%	✓
Young people take part in PX2 and other motivational groups	60	66	✓
Young people set positive destination linked goals	120	141	✓
Young people access other Bridges Project services/activities	60	78	✓

- 3.18 While the majority of the young people interviewed on a one to one basis were not referred to the programme because of behavioural issues, most reported that their behaviour had changed, in some way, for the better. Many also agreed that their aspirations and goals for the future had changed because of their involvement in the programme. One young person mentioned that they are now getting on with people much better than before and that their behaviour had improved because of the relaxed atmosphere at Bridges, compared to the more pressurised environment at school. Another felt that while they used to be *“super shy and reclusive,”* they had become more outgoing. One interviewee recognised that they had got better at managing their emotions.
- 3.19 Some of the stakeholders felt similarly that the programme had a positive impact on young people’s behaviour. One described how one young person was involved with the *“wrong crowd”* and was drinking and smoking. This person soon began to open up to others involved in the programme and eventually went on to college and to do a work experience placement.
- 3.20 Stakeholders, through their questionnaire, identified that more than half (13, 65%) of the young people had improved their behaviour. According to their responses, behaviour had improved in a number of ways. For example, one participant had become more motivated after leaving an unhealthy relationship and taking time to reflect on their negative behaviour. Another, who had shown *“childish tendencies with another member of the group”* now had a *“more mature outlook”* and a third, who had anger management issues, had improved their ability to control negative emotions.

## Aspirations

- 3.21 Many of the young people interviewed commented on how their future plans had changed. For example, one participant said that they didn't know what they wanted to do when they left school, but that they *"have a general sense of direction now"* and were interested in engineering. Another young person praised the programme at Bridges and commented that *"they're great at planning with the future and help settle your mind a little"* about the future. This young person had left school early but had since moved on to a work placement and was in the process of applying to go to college.
- 3.22 Stakeholders who completed questionnaires identified that 75% of participants had increased their aspirations. In comments, they described how participants were now actively pursuing careers in areas such as construction, gardening, animal care, mechanics and sports coaching.
- 3.23 In interviews, one stakeholder felt that the Way2Work programme, and elements within the programme, e.g. PX2, *"encouraged [young people] to have a goal"* and that this helped to support a young person into a positive destination. They also referred to one young person with learning difficulties who, despite initially believing that it would be impossible to find a job, had transitioned successfully into employment at a local retailer.

## Outcome 4: Improving wellbeing

- 3.24 All of the annual targets for Year 1 in relation to Outcome 4 were exceeded.

**Table 3.4 Indicators for Outcome 4: Wellbeing improves**

Indicator	Target	Actual	Achieved?
Young people make positive comments about wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators	96	96	✓
Stakeholders make positive comments about wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators through survey/questionnaire (%)	55%	80%	✓
Young people have increased attendance levels at Bridges Project	72	85	✓
Young people interact more with families, peers and communities	84	94	✓

- 3.25 A key method used by Bridges to measure the wellbeing of group programme participants across a range of areas is SHANARRI scoring. Figure 3.2 presents the average scores recorded for 74 young people who participated in group activities during Year 1.<sup>7</sup> The different stages at which the young people complete their SHANARRI scores is indicated by 'E1', 'E2', 'E3' and 'E4', with E1 representing the first evaluation point.

<sup>7</sup> The evaluation team received two sets of SHANARRI scores for nine young people, therefore Figure 3.2 represents the averages obtained from 83 sets of scores in total.

Figure 3.2 Average Year 1 SHANARRI scores for group participants (n=74)



- 3.26 As Figure 3.2 shows, there was a marked improvement in the average SHANARRI scores of group participants over time. However, the average scores obtained for Safe, Achieving and Responsible decreased slightly between E3 and E4. The greatest overall increases can be observed for Achieving and Responsible scores.
- 3.27 The improving SHANARRI scores applied particularly to those who attended the CSCS drop-in sessions at Bridges. The average scores for this group increased by an average of 1.9 across all eight areas. Again, this group's Achieving and Responsible scores increased more than any other score, rising from 1.7 to 4.5 and 2.5 to 5 respectively. The smallest increase was found in the group's Respected score, which still rose significantly from 2.8 to 4 between E1 and E4.
- 3.28 The SHANARRI scores therefore suggest that Way2Work has had a particularly significant impact in helping young people to feel more responsible and in fostering a sense of achievement. However, in future it would be beneficial for the completion of SHANARRI scores by participants to be more consistently implemented to ensure that the information gathered from the exercise is accurate and provides greater insight into the progress of participants.
- 3.29 The other measure that will capture wellbeing of participants is the Ryff scale questions. In Year 1, data was not available, due to the short time it has been in place but in future years this tool will also be used to reinforce the SHANARRI measures of wellbeing of Way2Work programme participants.
- 3.30 Many of the stakeholder questionnaires mentioned the positive impact of the programme on young people's mental health and wellbeing. One stakeholder gave the example that one young person who "suffers from periods of depression and sometimes feels down"

was “now opening up to staff and responds well with help and support”. The young people who were interviewed also identified that their general wellbeing had improved through participating in the programme.

- 3.31 When asked in interview about the impact of the programme on young people’s wellbeing, one stakeholder responded that the programme participants were “in a safe environment where they felt they were able to express how they were feeling, what they were feeling.”, helping young people to understand that they are not alone and to learn that their peers often feel the same way. Another stakeholder commented that some of the group activities are important in enabling young people to be signposted on to other organisations and supports that may be more appropriate for them, such as CAMHS.
- 3.32 In terms of physical wellbeing, young people interviewed commented on the programme’s positive impact in that they were safer and were taking less risks. One young person explained that they had received one to one and group support in areas such as safety online, safety outside and sexual health.
- 3.33 A few young people and stakeholders commented on young peoples’ improved relations with others and the development of positive friendships. For example, one young person said that they used to have problems getting on with other members of the group at Bridges, but that working in the group had helped them to develop better relationships now and they could have a mature conversation with people. One stakeholder commented that those who received tenancy support through group sessions at Bridges had built strong relations with their peers in the group and had learned how to take part in discussions, while another similarly commented on the positive impact of the CSCS group on peer relations.

### Outcome 5: Increasing school attendance and attainment

- 3.34 Unfortunately, Bridges Project were unable to report on school attendance and attainment during Year 1 of Way2Work due to issues with the data protection agreement it has with Midlothian Council. They are working to resolve the consent issues so that the protocol allows a two-way exchange of information so that in Year 2 reporting on attendance and attainment can be included as part of the evaluation.

**Table 3.5 Indicators for Outcome 5: School attendance and attainment increases**

Indicator	Target	Actual	Achieved?
YP attendance at school improves	72	Not reported	Unknown
YP attainment at school improves	72	Not reported	Unknown
YP leave school with more qualifications than expected	72	Not reported	Unknown
YP take part in school-based work experience programmes	60	Not reported	Unknown
YP take part in Staged Assessment Intervention (SAI) meetings	90	Not reported	Unknown

- 3.35 In the stakeholder questionnaires, data on attendance before starting Way2Work and current attendance was provided for five young people. All of these participants had

experienced significant increases in attendance, with one young person experiencing a change from 5% attendance before Way2Work to 95%. However, the small sample size of this group limits the conclusions that can be drawn from this data.

- 3.36 The majority of the young people consulted during the interviews and focus groups were no longer attending school. However, in cases where the young person was still at school, there was some evidence that the programme is having a positive impact on their attendance and attainment, for example, one young person was referred to the programme to receive help with college applications and they had been adamant that they wanted to leave school but once involved in the programme, they were now considering staying on at school until S5.

**Outcome 6: Improving learning, employability and employment options**

- 3.37 Way2Work has succeeded in meeting two of the six targets set in relation to young people participating in activities to improve their learning, employability and employment options.

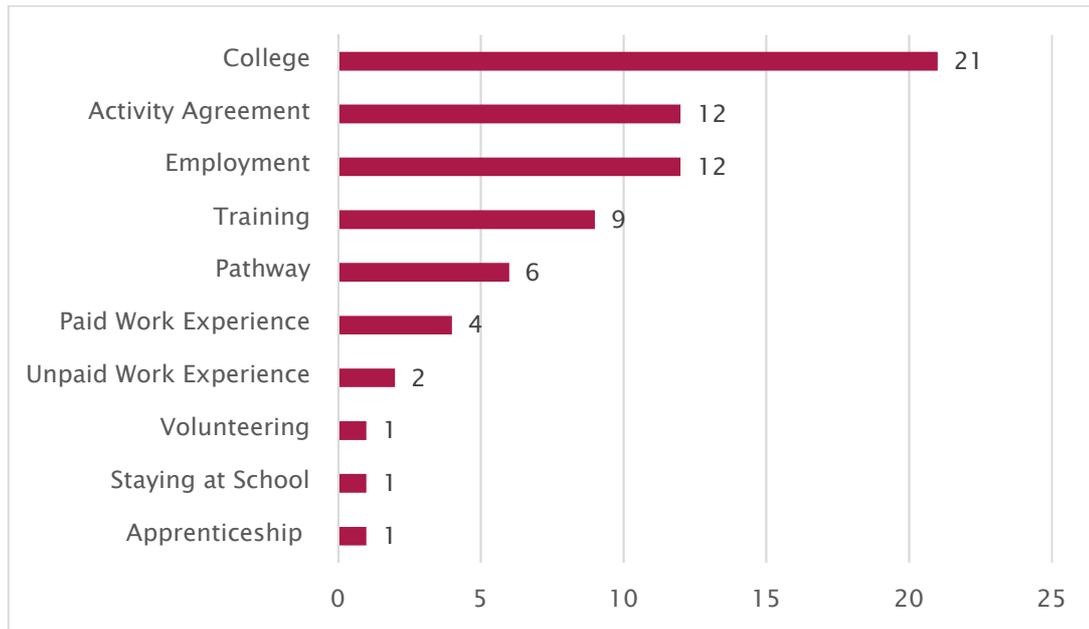
**Table 3.6 Indicators for Outcome 6: Participate in activity that improves learning, employability and employment options**

Indicator	Target	Actual	Achieved?
Young people will access training (during programme)	72	67	Not met
Young people will access learning (during programme)	90	80	Not met
Young people will achieve positive destinations	51	69	✓
Young people will progress into accredited learning	30	27	Not met
Young people will volunteer	6	7	✓
Young people will gain employment	15	13	Not met

- 3.38 As indicated above, at least 69 young people have moved into positive destinations during Year 1 of the Way2Work programme, which is higher than the target of 51 and represents 40% of the 173 participants.
- 3.39 Of the 69 who have moved into positive destinations in Year 1, 42 had moved whilst they have been involved in the Way2Work programme and 27 once they had exited the programme.



**Figure 3.3 Positive destinations of young people supported by Way2Work (n=69)**



- 3.40 As Figure 3.3 shows, of those young people who moved into positive destinations, the highest number started college courses (30%), which was almost double the number of those in the next most common destination. Fewer participants (17%) have moved into employment, although this is unsurprising given the high number in college or training, which requires a significant time commitment.
- 3.41 It has been difficult to track progression into positive destinations once young people have exited, as a result, the number who have moved into positive destinations is likely to be higher and for better understanding of the impact of the programme, it would be beneficial for destination data to be gathered on a larger number of young people who have exited the programme.
- 3.42 Most of the young people consulted during the interviews and focus groups had also either moved into a positive destination since getting involved in the programme or had planned their next steps. Those destinations included young people that were:
- undertaking a rural skills course at college;
  - working as a labourer;
  - joining the army;
  - studying childcare at college; and
  - staying on at school.
- 3.43 The young people interviewed, who had moved into a positive destination since getting involved in the programme, felt that they would not have done so if they had not taken part in Way2Work. One young person who had moved into employment with a local joinery company said that they *“wouldn’t be doing it without Bridges”*. Two stakeholder interviewees reinforced the positive impact that the programme has had on young people

who might have otherwise struggled to move into a positive destination. Another highlighted that even in cases where young people had not yet progressed into a positive destination, because of the personal challenges they faced, but the programme is still invaluable in providing them with support that they might have not been able to access from elsewhere. They commented that *“without these programmes ... there would be nothing for [the young people]”* and that they would be isolated.

### Case study 2: Michael\*

Michael\* was referred to the Way2Work#CashBack programme by his former guidance teacher in May 2017, when he was 17. He had left school in January 2016 but had not progressed into sustained employment. He was interested in entering the construction industry and started attending the CSCS drop in sessions at Bridges to explore this career path.

Michael joined the Morrison Construction Group held at Bridges in August 2017, and attended six out of the seven sessions. These three-hour sessions covered topics such as careers in construction, transferrable skills, preparing a targeted CV, and health and safety. Michael found the guidance on what to do on construction sites, and learning about the different types of construction jobs that are available, particularly useful.

Over the course of these sessions, Michael's confidence gradually increased. Although Michael said he was shy when he first joined, he felt that having to work in a group had improved his communication. One of the ESWs observed that Michael *“is coming out of his shell by interacting with the group a lot more asking for help and sharing stories.”* Michael also commented that the group had *“helped me be proud of myself”* and that it had improved his organisational skills.

Michael's progress is also reflected in his ESA scores, which he completed during the group. When Michael first completed an ESA he received a score of 45 out of 88. This rose to 65 part way through the sessions and had reached 70 by the end, showing significant progress in a range of employability areas.

Likewise, Michael's SHANARRI scores increased in all areas as he progressed through the group. For example, at the first assessment, Michael's Achieving score was 1 out of 5; by the time of the third assessment, this had risen to 5.

Upon finishing the Morrison Construction Group in October 2017, Michael became a labourer at a local joinery business. He has discussed the possibility of starting an apprenticeship with his boss, who was supportive of Michael doing so in the near future. Although Michael's current job is not in the construction industry, he still credits the Bridges Project with getting the job and has said *“I wouldn't be doing it without Bridges.”*

\*Not his real name

3.44 As this chapter has shown, Year 1 of the Way2Work programme has successfully supported young people to prepare to enter the labour market by addressing many of the barriers they face. The evidence shows that the programme has improved the capacity and confidence, skills, behaviour and wellbeing of participants. However, there is still some opportunities for improving participants' access to the learning, training and employment by linking more young people into the full range of programme activities in the offered through the group and one to one elements of Way2Work.

## 4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Way2Work has largely been successful in meeting its targets in the first year of the programme. In interviews with young people and stakeholders, feedback was overwhelmingly positive about the impact of Way2Work on the confidence, skills, behaviour, and wellbeing of participants.
- 4.2 Although school attendance and attainment data was not available for Year 1 of the evaluation, anecdotally young people who were still at school and stakeholders spoke of improvements in this area, suggesting that the programme has supported participants to improve their attendance.
- 4.3 Under outcome 6 – improving learning, employability and employment options, in Year 1 there was a shortfall in more than half of the targets for this outcome and there is a lot of overlap with the indicators, which makes reporting against them less straightforward. However, the achievements under this outcome have been significant in that participants have successfully developed skills for learning and life and progressed into training, further education and employment.
- 4.4 In terms of data collection, there have been some inconsistencies in the way that information on participants is collected and reported against indicators. In particular, early on there was some duplication in the reporting of the number of participants due to young people recorded multiple times under different names, although this issue has now been identified and rectified.
- 4.5 Overall, the Way2Work programme has exceeded its target of reaching 120 young people each year, working with a total of 173 participants in Year 1. Similarly, it is evident from the SIMD data collected, as well as the backgrounds of the young people who participated in the research, and comments from stakeholders, that those living in deprived areas with significant barriers to future employment are being reached and supported.

### Recommendations

- 4.6 Based on the findings of the Year 1 evaluation there are some recommendations and areas for consideration.
- 4.7 **Recommendation 1:** ESAs are an important self-assessment tool for measuring the progress of young people in a range of areas but their use is not standardised across the one to one and group activities. In Year 2, the ESAs should be used with all participants at agreed intervals so that it captures the progress across all elements of the programme.
- 4.8 **Recommendation 2:** Bridges Project should resolve with Midlothian Council the issues around the data sharing agreement to ensure that attendance and attainment data can be accessed for future monitoring and evaluation of programme impact. Bridges Project's consent protocols should also be re-assessed so that anonymised attendance and attainment data can be provided to the evaluation team.

- 4.9 **Recommendation 3:** The data collection processes used by Bridges Project should be reviewed to ensure that data for each indicator can be easily evidenced and that participant details are recorded consistently.
- 4.10 **Recommendation 4:** The programme would benefit from access to destination data for a larger number of young people who have exited the programme. Although this information is often challenging to collect, a more systemic approach to following up with young people at a set point or liaising with local authority contacts to get an update on their progress will improve understanding of young people's destinations.