



# **Barnardo's Evaluation of Phase 4 of CashBack Supported Activity**

**Year 3: May 2020**

Artwork by Fit for Work participants, 2020

## **Research Scotland**

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# FIT FOR WORK PROGRAMME SUMMARY

## What is Fit for Work?

The Fit for Work programme run by Barnardo's is an eight-week employability programme. It provides intensive support to young people furthest from the labour market, in areas of deprivation. It aims to help people to develop skills for life, learning and work, and move into further learning, training, volunteering or employment.

### WHO TOOK PART?

**301**

Participants

**269**

Completed the course

Age  
**15 TO 24**

### Gender



SIMD  
**55%**

in the most deprived 20%  
parts of Scotland

### WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE?



**100%**

REPORT IMPROVED  
WELLBEING

**95%**

Feel able to do new things

**91%**

Report increased aspirations

**90%**

Report increased confidence

**85%**

Report positive changes in  
behaviour

**83%**

Have achieved positive  
destinations

*"I have hope now. Instead of thinking that things are always going to go downhill, I now have hope."*

*"I feel 100% more motivated to succeed."*

*"I feel more confident to do things independently."*

*"I never cared, but I do now."*

————— Participants —————



*"I'm definitely feeling more optimistic."*

# 1. Introduction

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## About this report

This is an evaluation of the third year of Barnardo's Fit for Work programme (2019/20) funded through CashBack for Communities. 2019/20 is the final year of Phase 4 of the CashBack programme. This report also acts as an overview of Phase 4 work, over three years from 2017 to 2020.

## About Barnardo's

Barnardo's is the UK's largest children's charity. It focuses on six priority areas of early support, family support, emotional health and wellbeing, child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, looked after children and leaving care. It aims to support stronger families, safer childhoods and positive futures for young people.

## The Fit for Work programme

Barnardo's is funded by CashBack for Communities to deliver the Fit for Work programme between 2017 and 2020. The programme provides intensive support to young people furthest from the labour market, with the aim of achieving and sustaining positive destinations.

The Fit for Work programme involves an eight-week employability programme, running twice a year in each of five local authority areas. The local authority areas are Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Highland and Renfrewshire.

The five local authority areas were deliberately targeted to include communities in areas of deprivation. The programme focuses on areas that are deprived in relation to crime, income, education and health. This includes targeting within each area to focus on the most deprived communities (using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation indicators).



The Fit for Work programme involves activities to improve young people's health and wellbeing, financial fitness, employability skills and supports volunteering. Some young people are supported to achieve awards such as Personal Finance Award (SQA), Youth Achievement Awards or Employability Awards.



Young people also receive one to one follow up support. Those who progress to positive destinations are offered additional in-work support and guidance. Those who do not immediately progress to a positive destination are offered aftercare employability support. Each young person is assigned an employability mentor, who builds a relationship with them, provides guidance and supports progress towards outcomes. This mentor is a consistent point of contact throughout the programme.

The target group is young people aged 15 to 24 who are furthest from the work force – at stages one and two of the employability pipeline. The programme aimed to engage young people that were disadvantaged because they were:

- living in areas of deprivation;
- unemployed, not in education or training; or
- at risk of being involved in antisocial behaviour, offending/re-offending.

## Agreed targets and intended outcomes

Barnardo's was allocated £564,548 of Phase 4 CashBack funding over 3 years from 2017 to 2020.

CashBack funding is granted on the understanding that the programme will work towards agreed outcomes and outputs. Barnardo's agreed to deliver the following CashBack outcomes and measures progress towards these outcomes through set targets.

## CashBack outcomes and targets for Phase 4 – 2017 to 2020

### Outcome 1: Young people build their capacity and confidence

- 225 (75%) will increase their confidence
- 225 (75%) are able to do new things
- 195 (65%) go on to do new things after their initial CashBack involvement
- 70% of other stakeholders report increased confidence and ability to do new things

### Outcome 2: Young people develop their physical and personal skills

- 225 (75%) will report an increase in their skills
- 70% of other stakeholders report skills increasing

### Outcome 3: Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively

- 240 (80%) will report increased aspirations
- 65% of other stakeholders report increased aspirations
- 240 (80%) report positive changes in behaviour
- 70% of other stakeholders report perceived positive changes in behaviour

### Outcome 4: Young people's wellbeing improves

- 240 (80%) make positive comments about wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators
- 70% of other partners will make positive comments about wellbeing against relevant SHANARRI indicators

### Outcome 6: Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options

- 240 (80%) will access training
- 240 (80%) will access learning (including staying on at school)
- 210 (70%) will achieve positive destinations
- 150 (50%) will gain employment or apprenticeships
- 30 (10%) will progress to volunteering
- 30 (10%) will progress to other provision

### Outcome 8: Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

- 240 (80%) report a reduction in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour

### Outcome 9: Young people contribute positively to their communities

- 30 (10%) volunteer or take on leadership role in community organisations
- 30 hours of volunteering contributed by participants
- 2 community focused awards gained by participants
- 210 (70%) feel their contribution to community has improved
- 70% of other stakeholders' report young people's contribution/links with community improved

## Evaluation method

The evaluation method for year three involved:

- **analysis of project monitoring data** – on participation and outcomes
- **a staff discussion group** – involving nine staff members
- **a survey of young people** – with 35 responses
- **a survey of stakeholders** – with five responses
- **telephone interviews with young people** – involving five young people
- **a case study** – involving an interview with a Barnardo's staff member, a partner and a young person involved in one area of work.

Where possible, we have reported progress against targets as a numerical figure.

Some outcomes have been measured through surveys which were conducted with a sample of participants. The sample of participants was not large enough to be accurately representative of all participants. Although a response rate of almost a third was achieved (35/115 participants) in order for these results to be extrapolated in a statistically significant way data would need to be gathered from almost all participants (89/115)<sup>1</sup>.

Achievements relating to the outcomes which are measured by the participant survey are reported as a percentage. To provide an indication of how these percentages would relate to the targets, an average percentage across the three years has been calculated, and indicative numbers provided based on this average percentage. However, it should be noted that the 'average' figures are not based on actual numbers, they are best estimates of outcomes based on the data available. The numerical calculations have been made based a proportion of the 269 young people who had completed the programme as at April 2020.

A full table of all targets and indicative performance across the three years of the programme is included in Chapter Five.

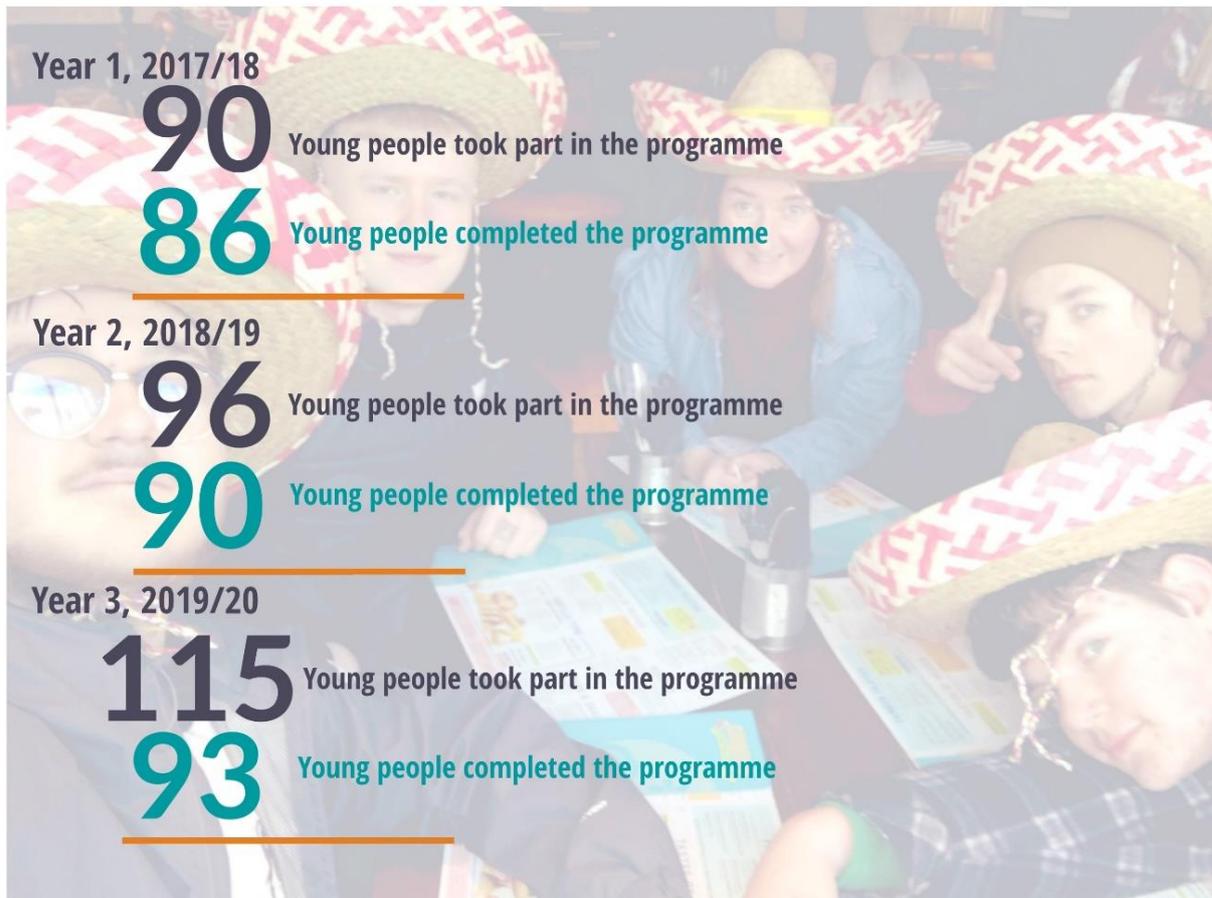
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<sup>1</sup> To be 95% confident that the results would be +/- 5% from the sample.

## 2. Participation

### Overall participation

Barnardo's aimed to work with 300 young people through the Fit for Work programme, between 2017 and 2020. Across the three years of the programme, Barnardo's has worked with **301** young people.



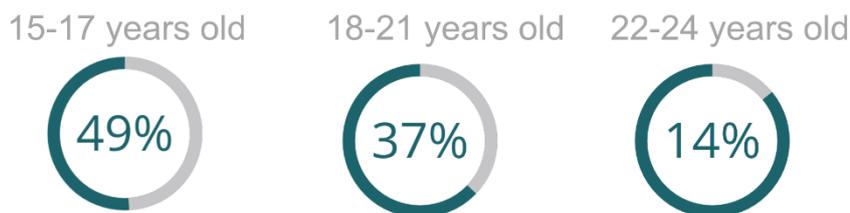
A total of 301 young people were involved over the three years. Of these, 269 completed the programme. A further 15 young people were still on the programme at the time of writing this report. The global public health situation which emerged in early 2020 meant that a small number of participants who were taking part in activities in March 2020 were unable to complete their course because activities were suspended or paused. This means a total of 284 participants are likely to complete the programme, out of the 301 who were involved.

## Participant profile

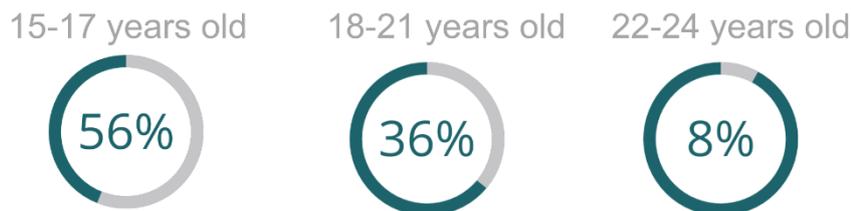
### Age

The project targeted young people aged 15 to 24. Most of the young people the project has worked with are aged 15 to 17. The age profile of participants became younger over the years, with an increasing proportion of 15 to 17 year old participants.

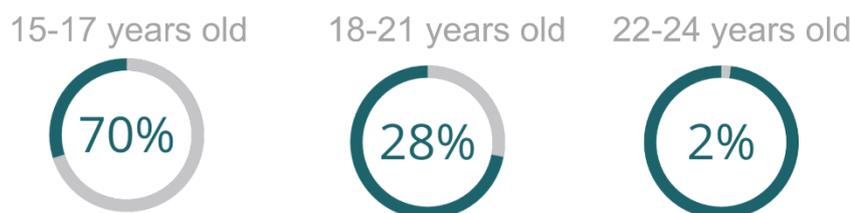
### Year 1, 2017/18



### Year 2, 2018/19



### Year 3, 2019/20

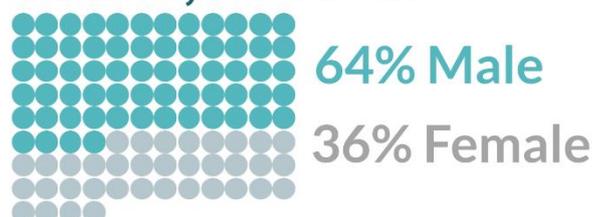


Over time, staff recognised that there was potential to include young people who were in education, but were not engaging, or were planning to leave part way through the year. Staff have worked with schools and other partners to engage young people in this situation and involve them in Fit for Work. This shift also reflects feedback in the early stages of the programme from a few participants, who felt that the programme was more suited to younger participants. However, overall staff felt that the programme was flexible enough to respond to the needs of participants no matter what age they were.

## Gender

Across the three years of the Fit for Work programme, around two thirds of participants have been male and a third female. A small proportion have defined as non-binary. The proportion of female participants increased slightly in 2018/19.

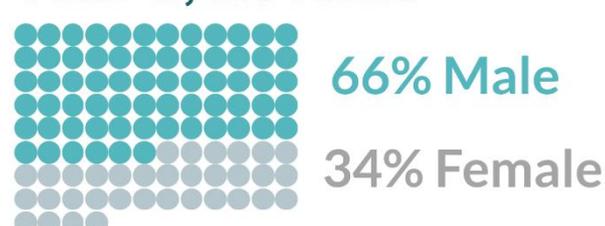
### Year 1, 2017/18



### Year 2, 2018/19



### Year 3, 2019/20



It is useful to note that a higher proportion of young men are unemployed and not in education or training. The most recent ONS statistics (February 2020), report that UK-wide an estimated 66% of unemployed young people not in education, employment or training are male, and 34% are female<sup>2</sup>. The profile of participants is therefore very close to that of the target demographic, and over the three years the profile has fluctuated very closely in line with the wider ONS trends for this group.

In some areas there have been a high number of female participants. In one area, a high proportion of women were recruited through working closely with school careers advisors. However, some staff have found it challenging to recruit young women. In year three, creative activities as well as physical activities have taken place to encourage involvement. In some cases female only groups have been used, and female staff and role models have been involved in running the programme.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/february2020>

## Location

The Fit for Work programme operated in five local authority areas – with between 41 and 77 participants in each area across the three year period. The highest number of participants was in the Highland area, with the fewest in Aberdeen.

Area	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19	Year 3 2019/20	Total
Aberdeen	9	11	21	41
Dundee	18	20	21	59
Renfrewshire	19	20	22	61
Edinburgh	21	22	20	63
Highland	23	23	31	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>301</b>

## Deprivation

The programme targeted areas of deprivation. Overall, more than half of participants over Phase Four have been from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland. Almost all participants have lived in the 50% most deprived areas of Scotland.

Over time, a higher proportion of young people from deprived areas have been involved in the programme. In the third and final year of Phase 4, there was a very strong focus on deprivation. In 2019/20 almost two thirds of participants came from the 20% most deprived parts of Scotland, and none of the participants came from the 50% least deprived parts of Scotland.

Datzone	Year 1 2017/18	Year 2 2018/19	Year 3 2019/20	Total %
SIMD Deciles 1 and 2 <i>Most deprived 20% in Scotland</i>	50%	51%	63%	55%
SIMD Decile 3	14%	15%	13%	14%
SIMD Decile 4	16%	13%	14%	14%
SIMD Decile 5	9%	6%	10%	9%
SIMD Deciles 6 to 10 <i>Least deprived 50% in Scotland</i>	11%	15%	0%	8%

## Profile

Young people came to the programme through referrals and signposting from organisations including Skills Development Scotland, Prince's Trust, local authority employability teams, teams working with care experienced young people, NHS staff and third sector organisations. In recent years, Barnardo's staff have also worked closely with schools to raise awareness of the programme and this has worked well in attracting participants on the verge of disengaging from education.

Overall, staff at Barnardo's felt that the young people involved in the programme were at early stages on the employability pipeline and were often high risk. Staff felt that they were reaching their target group of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who were not in education, employment or training, often had chaotic lives and had to deal with a range of personal issues and barriers.

“The young people that we work with are often very vulnerable.”

Staff member

“We tend to get the most challenging young people referred to us.”

Staff member

Referral partners indicated that young people referred included those not attending school; young people distant from employment; young people with significant challenges in their lives; young people on low incomes; young people with learning difficulties; and other vulnerable young people.

### 3. Outcomes

This chapter explores the impact Barnardo's Fit for Work programme has had on young people, focusing on the outcomes it intended to bring about. These are:

- [Young people build their capacity and confidence](#)
- [Young people develop their physical and personal skills](#)
- [Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively](#)
- [Young people's wellbeing improves](#)
- [Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options](#)
- [Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system](#)
- [Young people contribute positively to their communities](#)



## Young people build their capacity and confidence

Barnardo's wanted to see participants increasing their confidence and going on to do new things. This was measured quantitatively, through the following targets, using a survey of participants and stakeholders. Each year, almost all survey respondents said that the programme had increased their confidence and that they were able to go on to do new things – well above target. All stakeholders (referral and delivery partners) also reported increased confidence among the young people they worked with.

Indicator	Target	Actual			Average*
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Participants will increase their confidence	75% (225)	92%	91%	88%	90% (242) + 17
Participants are able to do new things	75% (225)	97%	97%	91%	95% (256) + 31
Stakeholders report increased confidence and ability to do new things	70%	90%	100%	100%	97%

*\*The number reported is based on 269 participants who completed the programme. Throughout this report, it should be noted that the 'average' figure provides an indication of how the percentages achieved would relate to the numerical targets. These are indications, not precise numbers, due to the size of the sample responding to the survey.*

The proportion of participants actually going on to do new things is also above target. The programme aimed to support 195 young people (65%) to go on to do new things after their involvement in Fit for Work. Data from Barnardo's reporting scorecard indicates that 213 young people (79%) went on to do new things through obtaining positive destinations after their initial CashBack involvement.

Indicator	Target	Actual			Total
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Participants go on to do new things – positive destination obtained	195 (65%)	55	74	84	213 (79%) +18

Note: This table is based on actual figures from all participants. % calculated based on 269 completers across the 3 years.

The numbers going on to do new things significantly increased in Years 2 and 3, partly due to changes in how this indicator is recorded and monitored, and improved tracking of young people's journey and destinations once they have completed the Fit for Work programme.

## Young people's views

Increasing confidence was a key outcome of the Fit for Work programme for many participants. Through discussions and survey responses, young people told us that their confidence had increased.

“I am more confident.”

“It's definitely improved my confidence in terms of how it used be.”

“Definitely more confident than I was before.”

Participants

The main things young people said they felt more confident about were around meeting new people, talking to people and communicating. Young people had developed their social confidence, and gave examples of:

- being able to talk in a group;
- being more comfortable around other people; and
- being less socially anxious.

“I can start a conversation with a group of new people.”

“It's been like a boost to my social skills.”

“I was really socially anxious before but now it's made me more comfortable around other people.”

“I feel I could definitely talk to more people now.”

“I feel a lot more confident in my ability to enter a group of people and be able to speak to them a lot easier than I would have before starting the course.”

Participants

Young people also gave examples of being more confident in different situations, such as travelling and using public transport. Because of having more confidence, many young people said they were able to try new things and were more open to new opportunities.

“I'm a bit more confident and am now able to speak to people. I have a college interview at the end of the month.”

“I think I'm more open to take more opportunities than before.”

“It's given me a platform of confidence. I have the ability I just don't know how to use it.”

Participants

### Staff and partner views

Staff also indicated that they had seen confidence develop among Fit for Work participants. Staff gave examples, such as one participant who was very shy initially, but by the end of the course he volunteered to lead the Fit for Work group tour to the Christmas market in Glasgow. A few staff members felt that sometimes young people can spend a lot of time at home, often on the computer, and that coming to meet other people helped to build confidence and break down barriers.

**“Group work helps them to build their confidence.”**

**“They get a lot from peer learning, as they are not so isolated.”**

Staff members

Delivery and referral partners said that the young people they worked with had seen increases in confidence since participating in Fit for Work. Stakeholders felt that young people were more confident about trying out new things, working with other people, empathising with others and being independent. Stakeholders also felt that young people seemed more confident about their future.

**“They looked more confident in the group setting on their final presentation. They participated fully in the programme. They seemed more confident about their future.”**

**“Attending unfamiliar places with less apprehension. Talking to new people and taking part in activities which they normally would have avoided.”**

Stakeholders

### **Case study example: confidence**

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Maria is a 16 year old who found out about the Fit for Work programme through school. She has now left school. She joined the programme as it seemed a better choice than being at school, and she hoped it would prepare her for college. Through the programme, Maria learned how to look after herself and get ready for work. She also learned a lot about team building. Through the programme she volunteered at Shelter, which helped her confidence a great deal. Maria feels that she has definitely changed since starting the programme, particularly in terms of her confidence. She feels more confident, more able to do new things, more motivated and healthier.

**“I’m better than I was before. I can be anxious.”**

In the future Maria would like to go to college to do a childcare course. Overall, she felt Fit for Work encourages people to socialise and builds their confidence. She found the course friendly and she liked how the sessions were run.

**“It’s a really good option to help people to get to the next stage of what they want to do.”**

## Young people develop their physical and personal skills

There is a clear perception from both participants and stakeholders that the Fit for Work programme helps to develop participant skills.

Indicator	Target	Actual			Average*
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Participants report an increase in their skills	<b>75% (225)</b>	89%	94%	91%	<b>91% (245) +20</b>
Stakeholders report skills increasing	<b>70%</b>	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>

\*Based on 269 programme completers over the three years.

### Young people's views

Many young people felt that their skills had developed through participation in the Fit for Work programme. Young people highlighted developments in skills including:

- money management and budgeting
- time management
- communication
- listening
- leadership skills
- team work
- mental health awareness
- independent travel
- reading, thinking and voicing opinions
- focus and concentration
- first aid skills
- problem solving
- career planning
- job specific skills
- organisation
- writing a shopping list.

Some young people had learned specific, work related skills.

“With the work placement, I learned to use a till.”

Participant

However most felt that the skills they had developed were more general, personal skills for life and learning.

“I have better time management and team work skills.”

“I have learnt new skills, I am able to communicate and work with others.”

“I feel that I can think more about problems and go into more detail.”

“I’ve found that I am able to be a lot more assertive and take on leadership roles.”

“Listening skills have improved in school.”

Participants

Young people also reiterated that their social skills had developed, with some saying that these new skills would help with interviews in the future. Some highlighted that they had become more mature, proactive, patient, focused and calmer.

“Still a little goofy, but I can control myself and be good.”

“I don’t act like a dafty.”

Participants

Stakeholders agreed that young people had developed skills which supported them in life, learning and work, including developing social skills and becoming more independent.

“They seemed more confident in their attitudes towards work and society as a whole. They seemed more confident in their ability to handle money matters and make decisions for themselves.”

“They were more equipped to make better choices.”

Stakeholders

## Young people’s behaviours and aspirations change positively

Across the programme, almost all young people completing the survey reported that their aspirations had increased and reported positive changes in their behaviour. The proportion of young people reporting increased aspirations and positive changes in behaviour was above target. Stakeholders also felt that aspirations and behaviour had changed positively.

Indicator	Target	Actual			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Average*
Participants report increased aspirations	<b>80%</b> <b>(240)</b>	97%	94%	82%	<b>91%</b> <b>(245)</b> <b>+5</b>
Participants report positive changes in behaviour	<b>80%</b> <b>(240)</b>	92%	89%	74%	<b>85%</b> <b>(229)</b> <b>-11</b>
Stakeholders report increased aspirations among participants	<b>65%</b>	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>
Stakeholders report perceived changes in participant behaviour	<b>70%</b>	100%	80%	100%	<b>94%</b>

\*Based on 269 programme completers over three years.

Although the proportion of programme completers reporting positive changes in behaviour was above target, the actual number was below target – because 269 people had completed the programme rather than 300. Due to the global pandemic, 15 young people remained on courses that were paused and had not yet completed their involvement.

### Young people’s views

Many young people involved in focus groups and interviews felt that their behaviours and aspirations had changed positively.

Some felt that they were now better at trying new things.

“I am slightly better at trying new things.”

“I feel like I’m more open to new things now.”

“It has made me more motivated to try stuff.”

“I have done a lot more activities in these 7 weeks of Fit for Work than I had in the year and a half of absence from doing anything.”

Participants

Many felt more independent, mature and responsible. Some felt less anxious, more relaxed and more hopeful and some felt more positive about themselves.

“I have hope now. Instead of thinking that things are always going to go downhill, I now have hope.”

“I feel I’ve become more mature as a person.”

“I thought that everyone would think differently about me, but everyone is saying they feel the same which helps us all feel relaxed and comfortable.”

“It has made me have more positive thinking within myself and not thinking so lowly of myself.”

Participants

### **Case study example: aspirations**

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*Callum\** joined the programme at 16. He hadn’t been attending school for four years. Through Fit for Work, he took part in a range of work placements. He tried a one day construction placement, but did not enjoy it. He then tried a placement in a hotel, with support from the Fit for Work lead. He found this placement very good.

**“It was a good environment. It was positive, not negative.”**

He said he wouldn’t have considered this kind of work before, and the programme encouraged him to try new things.

**“I opened up to stuff I wouldn’t have considered.”**

**“I wouldn’t have done anything like that.”**

He is now thinking about working in a hotel in the future. In the meantime, he is applying to work in a local supermarket.

\*Name changed to protect identity

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Many young people felt that through the programme they had achieved greater purpose and focus. Young people talked of having a reason to get up in the morning and to leave the house.

“It has made me get up in the morning and get ready to go out.”

“It gives me a focus to do things.”

“Wanting to achieve more, actually do something with my life.”

“This has shown me I can do more than I think.”

“Fit for Work helped me realise my abilities are greater than I thought.”

Participants

Some said that this new purpose and focus had resulted in a different attitude, and more confidence with trying learning and employment opportunities. A few mentioned the important role the programme had in encouraging them to consider college as an option.

“It gave me the motivation to apply for a place at college and helped me to get into a routine.”

“It has made me more prepared for college and confident about it.”

“It has helped me gain more motivation to look at opportunities in the workplace.”

“I want to push myself to get new skills, help others and get a job.”

Participants

Many young people said if they weren't at Fit for Work, they would just be at home.

“Probably laying in bed or looking for a job because that's what my mum would be forcing me to do.”

“I'd probably just be sitting around doing nothing.”

Participants

## **Case study example: motivation and aspirations**

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Alan\* is an 18 year old who got involved in the Fit for Work programme through his school. School was not working particularly well for him, and he was concerned about moving between a special school and a mainstream school, which was causing him great stress and anxiety. He hoped that the programme would push him out of his comfort zone, as he struggles with confidence and feels very anxious a lot.

Alan took part in a range of activities. One activity which he found enjoyable was 'learning bingo' where participants ask one another questions, and get to know the other people involved in the programme.

Alan now feels more able to do new things, and more motivated to succeed. He has tried new things, for example he recently went on a field trip to a trampoline park with a group, which is something he would never have done before. He also feels better in terms of his mental health.

**“There’s been an impact already. I feel more independent and more confident.”**

**“I feel 100% more motivated to succeed.”**

Overall, Alan feels that the programme has changed his attitude. Previously, he felt his lack of confidence and anxiety would hold him back. He now seeks discomfort – to try something new” and says he is “acting more like an adult.

In the future, Alan would like to go to university and he is interested in a wide range of subjects.

**“Personally I want to continue to build up confidence and get into a good routine and go to uni. If I put the work in, I’m sure I can do that.”**

\*Name changed to protect identity

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### **Staff and stakeholders**

Staff and stakeholders felt that young people had changed their behaviours positively, through developing a better understanding of what is acceptable in the workplace and in adult life; becoming more motivated; and developing a more positive outlook. Some stakeholders and partners highlighted improvements in time keeping and attendance.

**“More accepting of other people’s differences and opinions – more likely to think of the consequences of their actions.”**

**“More willing to try and achieve.”**

**“More settled and focused with clearer ambitions.”**

**Stakeholders**

## Young people’s wellbeing improves

All survey respondents reported improved wellbeing across at least one of the SHANARRI indicators as a result of participating in Fit for Work (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included).

Indicator	Target	Actual			Average*
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Participants make positive comments about wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators	<b>80% (240)</b>	100%	100%	100%	<b>100% (269) +29</b>
Partners make positive comments about wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators	<b>70%</b>	80%	100%	100%	<b>93%</b>



### Young people's views

Young people responding to the survey were asked if they had experienced any changes in their wellbeing, in relation to five of the SHANARRI indicators. All said that they felt more active. Almost all said they felt more able to achieve, included, responsible and respected.



In discussions with young people, it was clear that participants felt safe, nurtured, healthy, responsible and respected as part of the programme.

### *Healthy*

Many participants mentioned that they were more active through the Fit for Work programme, through doing a range of activities. Participants felt that being more active impacted on both their physical and mental health.

“I feel better about myself physically because I’ve taken part in lots of activities.”

“It is good for my physical and mental health. I’m not just sitting about doing nothing.”

“I am more active and feel more focused to do things.”

“It has helped my physical health because I walk more and my mental health because it has lessened my anxiety.”

Participants

A few mentioned how much better they slept after exercising. A few told us that they had learned about food and cooking, and were able to make better choices about healthier eating.

“I am more aware of being more active and eating better.”

Participant

A few participants mentioned that they had stopped smoking as a result of taking part in the Fit for Work programme.

“Since I started the course, I have stopped smoking.”

Participant

Staff also felt that young people were healthier, through being more active and learning about healthy eating and other healthy behaviours.

### **Case study example: feeling healthier**

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One participant said that he felt “mentally healthier” and respected.

He said through the course he found out that he was good at listening. The tutor said he was good at listening and this made him feel good. He said this was important for his mental health.

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#### ***Responsible and respected***

Many young people said they felt respected and responsible. Participants said they felt involved in how the programme was run, and able to influence this. Participants also felt that they could choose for themselves what to get involved in, and what to focus on within the programme.

“Well you just go there and there’s nothing but respect from everyone.”

“I felt like I could make my own decisions about what I wanted to get involved in and that made me feel responsible.”

Participants

#### ***Safe, nurtured and included***

Some participants mentioned that they felt safe and nurtured on the programme. Young people said they felt very supported by the staff, and by each other. A few participants said they had previously been in environments which they did not feel were supportive, and a few had been let down by people in the past who they thought would be able to help them.

“I feel safe in the space I am in and the people I am with.”

Participant

## Activity which improves learning, employability and employment options

Barnardo's set targets for the proportion of participants accessing training and learning within the Fit for Work programme. These targets were broadly met. Participants recorded as accessing training or learning received SCQF qualifications or accreditations at Level 3 or Level 4. While the Fit for Work programme broadly achieved the percentage targets for these outcomes, the numbers for participants accessing training were very slightly below target – partly due to the fact that 15 participants remained on the course at a 'paused' stage due to the global pandemic.

Indicator	Target	Actual			Total
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Participants access training	240 (80%)	80	71	62	213 (79%) -27
Participants access learning	240 (80%)	80	71	77	228 (85%) -12

Barnardo's also recorded what participants went on to do after the Fit for Work course. Barnardo's reporting scorecard shows that 223 young people have gone on to positive destinations. With 269 young people completing the programme over three years, this is a high proportion with more than four out of five young people going on to a positive destination.



The profile of positive destinations achieved is different to that anticipated at the start of the programme. Originally it was intended that half of all participants would go on to employment or apprenticeships. However, the group reached has been far from the labour market, and generally the most appropriate destinations for these groups have been full time education or further training.

Indicator	Target	Actual			Total
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Participants go on to do new things – positive destination obtained	<b>195 (65%)</b>	55	84	84	<b>223 (83%) +28</b>
<i>Of which – employment</i>	<b>150 (50%)</b>	11	10	6	<b>27 (10%)</b>
<i>Of which – full time education</i>	-	6	12	15	<b>33 (12%)</b>
<i>Of which – training</i>	-	36	44	62	<b>142 (53%)</b>
<i>Of which – volunteering or other</i>	-	3	18	1	<b>22 (8%)</b>

### **Case study example: journey to employment**

One participant found out about the Fit for Work programme through school. She was missing a lot of time at school because of anxiety and mental health issues. A careers advisor at school told her about the programme. Taking part in the programme was “a big step” as she had suffered bullying throughout her life at school, and generally didn’t feel that she fitted in there. She hadn’t done anything like Fit for Work before but was willing to give it a try.

Through Fit for Work, she was able to volunteer in a shop and learned how to use a till. She also learned about what the workplace environment would be like. She recently moved on to the next level employability course at Barnardo’s, receiving further employability support. She now attends Barnardo’s and college for part of the week, and is hoping to enrol on a childcare course at college.

## **Case study example: journey to employment**

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One young person started the Fit for Work course when he was about to drop out of college. He had not done anything like Fit for Work before. He took part in group work and individual support, and felt that he had changed for the better since joining the programme.

**“I feel more confident to do things independently.”**

He started going out more, trying new things, being more active and doing what he wanted to do. He found out that he liked lots of things that he didn't think he would, and felt more confident that he was able to achieve. He also made good friends and has stayed in touch with them.

**“I go out more socially and go out on my bike more.”**

He continued on with Barnardo's on another employability course, and is very much enjoying it. He is also doing some work for Barnardo's while applying for his PVG so that he can take up an apprenticeship as a snowboard instructor at an outdoor centre. The Fit for Work programme helped him to feel that it was possible for him to become a snowboard instructor, which he hadn't felt was possible before taking part. He feels he now has a very clear plan of what he wants to do next.

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### **Young people's views**

Young people gave examples of how the project had helped them to access training, learning, volunteering or employment – or supported them on the journey towards this.

For example some participants had:

- been supported to sign up for an employment agency
- been supported to apply for work
- developed ideas of a career path – for example in nursing, tourism, gardening
- developed ideas of a learning path – for example going to college, going on a course to develop their skills, signing up for awards or other qualifications, or finding volunteering opportunities
- accessed employment – either through a taster or a short term job
- accessed learning opportunities – for example getting an interview with college, applying to university.

**“I am thinking about doing another course.”**

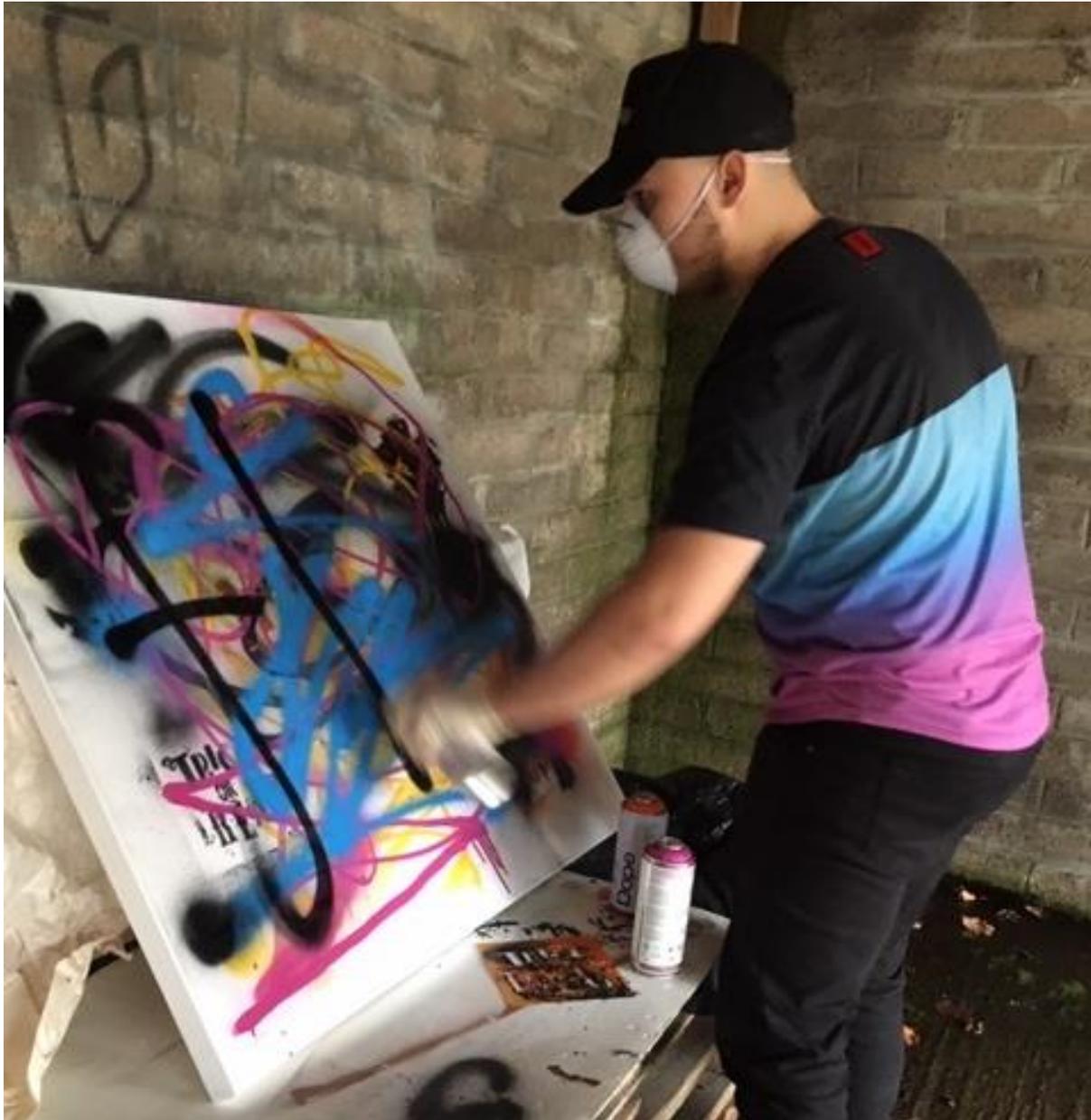
**“It has helped me to think about what I am going to do next.”**

**Participants**

Some had developed a better understanding of what a working environment may be like.

“I mean in school I had no idea of what being in the workplace would be like. But Barnado’s helped with that.”

Participant



However, some participants – particularly those at early stages in the programme or those for whom involvement had been paused due to the public health situation - said that they suffered a lot from social anxiety and mental health issues, and didn't feel comfortable thinking about their future. Some found this stressful and it created anxiety for them. Some said that they had managed to develop some idea of what to do next, but that they knew it would take time to get there.

“I still don't know what I want to do.”

“I have a goal but it is taking a bit of time to get there.”

“The 1:1 session with the project worker has helped me to think about where I go next, but I know I need to work to overcome my personal obstacles.”

Participants

#### Staff and stakeholder views

Fit for Work staff said that there was clear evidence that Fit for Work was helping to develop young people's skills for employment. Staff felt that the course supported young people to consider their options, including helping with applying for college and interview and CV preparation. Staff felt that it was helping young people to see what was possible, by providing opportunities to explore the work environment.

Staff also gave examples of young people progressing on to other relevant courses, run by Barnardo's and Skills Development Scotland, achieving interviews for employment, or securing employment opportunities.

“Fit for Work helps young people to get the life skills for employment.”

Staff member

Stakeholders also felt that young people were more prepared to consider their future options.

“More engaged in planning their next steps regarding post school options.”

“Many young people worry about leaving school, especially when they are uncertain about their future. School is a safe, familiar environment. This programme allows them to gain experience outside school...”

Stakeholders

## **Case study example: learning and employability options**

Alana is a 21 year old who got involved in the Barnardo's Fit for Work programme in 2018/19. She had previously been involved in other Barnardo's activity.

Alana had been out of work for a while and had lost a lot of confidence. Through the Fit for Work programme she took part in a range of group based activities to improve confidence. She also listened to talks from organisations on topics such as mental and physical health and visited the Scottish Parliament.

Alana felt that Fit for Work benefitted her "a lot" and that she had changed since starting the programme. She felt she had greatly developed her leadership and communication skills.

**"I am a lot more outspoken in a group situation than I thought I could be."**

Through Fit for Work, she received a fitness tracker and visited a gym. She learned about walking 10,000 steps a day, and she now keeps track of this and makes sure she does her steps. She is also now more willing to go walking to new places, and she is happy to walk and go on outings without panicking and feeling anxious.

Overall, Alana feels more able to do new things, more motivated, healthier, more active and more secure within herself.

**"I've learned that I can take on a leadership role and I have a brighter outlook."**

**"I'm definitely feeling more optimistic."**

Alana has signed up to do a university course in cyber security and is very excited about this. Without the Fit for Work course, she feels she would probably be "struggling to find which direction" she should go in.

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## Diversion from criminal behaviour or involvement with the justice system

The approach to exploring impact on diverting participants from involvement with the justice system was refined over the course of the Fit for Work programme. Over time it became clear that while the original target was for 80% of all participants to report a reduction in antisocial behaviour or criminal behaviour, not all participants would be involved in this type of activity. The survey was redesigned to capture which participants had previously had some involvement in antisocial behaviour or the justice system, and whether the programme had an impact on their behaviour.

Through this refined system, in 2019/20 17 young people said that they were involved in activity such as noisy behaviour, creating a disturbance, abusive or threatening behaviour, graffiti, fireworks or anything else against the law. Of these participants, 14 said that they were now less involved in this type of behaviour because of the Fit for Work programme. Of these, half said they were a lot less involved and half said they were a little less involved.

Indicator	Target	Year 1	Actual Year 2	Year 3
Participants report a reduction in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour	80%*	Not available	46%**	82%

\*80% of those involved in antisocial and/ or criminal behaviour

\*\*46% of all programme participants

\*\*\* 82% of participants previously involved in antisocial behaviour

Participants who had seen a change in their behaviour indicated that they now felt more part of the community, and had changed their routine so that they were busier, more engaged in other activities and less involved in risky behaviours.

“Because all my time is spent in Fit 4 Work I don’t have enough time to cause problems in my community.”

“I never cared but I do now.”

“More people speak to me on the street.”

“I have stopped drinking and staying out late.”

“Don’t get into trouble with the polis.”

Participants

## **Case study example: diversion from criminal behaviour**

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One participant said that without Fit for Work, he would be “in the jail”.

He said that when at court, it was recommended that because he was on the Fit for Work course, he should not go to jail and should instead stay in his secure accommodation.

This participant has engaged well with the course, despite not having attended school since S2.

**“It kept me out of trouble.”**

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Staff also reported that young people were changing their behaviour in relation to antisocial behaviour. For example, staff highlighted the experience of one participant who was in care and said that being on the Fit for Work programme had been a really positive experience for her. She said it had given her something to do, and had diverted her from antisocial behaviour and getting involved in crime. She felt the programme helped her to feel happy to be with people who wanted to do something positive.



## Young people contribute positively to their communities

Across the three years of the programme, participants contributed a total of 3,426 hours of volunteering time to their communities<sup>3</sup>.

Indicator	Target	Actual			Average*
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Participants contribute 30 hours of volunteering	30 hours	Average of 23 hours per volunteer	Average of 20 hours per volunteer	Average of 15 hours per volunteer	Average of <b>19 hours</b> per volunteer
Participants go on to volunteer or take a leadership role in community organisations	10% (30)	53% volunteered (48)	64% volunteered (62)	71% volunteered (71)	<b>67% (181)</b>
		3% continued volunteering (3)	6% continued volunteering (6)	1% continued volunteering (1)	<b>4% (10)</b>
Participants feel their contribution to their community has improved	70%	94%	75%	47%	<b>72%</b>
Stakeholders feel young people's contribution to their community has improved	70%	75%	90%	100%	<b>88%</b>

The programme also had a target of two young people achieving a community focused award. This target was significantly exceeded. In total 144 young people achieved either the Youth Achievement Award or the Dynamic Youth Award, both of which have a community focus.



<sup>3</sup> A total of 1,090 hours in year 1, 1,260 hours in year 2, and 1,076 hours in year 3

### Young people's views

Young people mentioned that they felt more sociable, were spending more time with friends and were more confident being out of the house. Young people who had taken part in volunteering opportunities were positive about these.

“Volunteering was fun.”

“One day of volunteering and giving back to the community and just getting out of the house is beneficial to you for your mental being and also the community you're helping.”

Participants

However a few participants, particularly in the older age groups, said that they didn't want to volunteer – they just wanted a job.

### Case study example: volunteering and exploring options

One participant was very interested in doing volunteering but did not yet feel confident enough to do this. This participant was part way through the programme. She was working on combatting her nerves, with the aim of being confident enough at the end of the programme to explore volunteering options.

Another participant was volunteering at a charity shop and enjoying it. This participant wanted to continue volunteering while considering his options, to take time to “figure out what to do next”.

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### Staff and stakeholder views

Staff said that the different volunteering opportunities help young people to work within local communities and also to give something back.

“Volunteering is a two way thing, it benefits charities and the young people.”

“When we do get groups engaged with volunteering activities, they really get a lot out of it. The idea of giving something back is really great.”

Staff members

However, some of the project workers said that they sometimes struggled to find suitable volunteering opportunities – particularly in the winter when outdoor opportunities were limited.

### Case study example: developing volunteering opportunities

In one area, Fit for Work staff developed good links with a local nursing home that looked after people with dementia. Young people have been involved in a range of volunteering opportunities, including entertainment (such as running a magic show), and befriending (such as taking people out for walks or out in their wheelchairs).

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## 4. Programme delivery

### What works

#### Person centred and flexible approach

Young people felt that the Fit for Work staff were very flexible to their needs, and that they were listened to. Importantly, young people emphasised that staff were non-judgemental, supportive, friendly and approachable.

“We are treated like adults.”

“I like the programme because there is always a sense of respect.”

Participants

Staff also felt that the Fit for Work programme worked well because it was flexible, adaptable and led by participants. This meant it could be varied and fun.

“Fit for Work provides a more informal and flexible approach compared to other employability programmes.”

“Fit for Work is a lot more fun than other employability programmes.”

Staff member

Staff felt that it was very important that young people were able to input to the planning and delivery of the programme, taking a youth work approach. In this way, staff felt the programme was different to other employability programmes.

“It’s great that we can adapt the programme to meet the needs of individuals.”

Staff member

“The programme is planned by the young people. The project worker’s role is to facilitate what they want to do.”

Staff member



### Supportive atmosphere and group work

Most young people very much enjoyed the group work element of the programme. Participants felt that they had made new friends and built a supportive peer environment within the programme. Some said that they enjoyed the relaxed and open environment, where they didn't feel judged.

“Just everyone clicked together. Everyone got to know one another and became good friends.”

“I like the programme because I don't feel judged by my peers or the staff.”

Participants

A few young people also liked that the programme brought together a diverse range of participants, and young people get the chance to mix with people that they may be unlikely to meet anywhere else. A few mentioned that they particularly liked that they had time to connect and meet people before the programme started.

“I feel more confident because we didn't just get flung into the programme, we met each other beforehand.”

Participant

Staff felt that getting young people to participate as a part of a group had real benefits, because it gives participants the opportunity to see what they have in common. They said that many of the young people had mental health issues, and being part of a group helps them to discuss their issues and can make them feel less isolated as they realise that other young people are experiencing similar issues or barriers. The project workers can then follow up with one to one support sessions.



“Young people feel respected and listened to.”

“Just having them in a group and talking to each other is a good thing. They can see what they have in common.”

Staff members

## Range of activities and inputs

Young people enjoyed the range of activities that they had the opportunity to be involved in through the programme. Young people mentioned a vast range of activities including:

- **physical activities** – trampolining, bowling, archery, visiting a gym, gardening, boxing, go-karting, climbing, bouldering, laser-tag;
- **health skills** – drug and alcohol awareness, sexual health, mental health, healthy eating;
- **life skills** – cooking, money management, financial awareness, understanding gangs;
- **work skills** – developing CVs, teambuilding and exploring industries; and
- **community** – visiting the Scottish Parliament, volunteering.

Participants also enjoyed the mix of group work and one to one support. Young people felt it was always clear that they could access one to one support if they wished to, as well as taking part in the group activities.

“We get the chance to speak with (the Fit for Work lead) on a 1:1 basis.”

“...It’s good to have a bunch of different experiences.”

“It was a chance to do something different and to learn new skills.”

Participants

## Case study example: exploring options for the future

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In one group, a participant wanted to be a games developer. The group explored virtual reality games and learned about the industry. They thought about the skills and qualities you need for different jobs and how to set goals. In another group, they visited a wood recycling centre to explore employment opportunities.

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Staff also said that because they often have guest speakers or invite other trainers to run sessions, this helps to give the young people wider exposure and insight to other jobs, careers and opportunities.

“It helps to open their eyes to other possibilities and jobs that they might not have thought about before.”

“It’s great that they get to go to different places and meet different people doing different jobs. They would not normally get to do this.”

“Young people get to do things that they might not normally get to do.”

“Fit for Work provides a gentle step forward to the world of work.”

Staff members

In one area, there was a deliberate decision to include a wide range of creative opportunities as well as physical activities. The aim was to engage those who may not be attracted by sport and physical activity, and may be excluded, vulnerable or isolated.

### **Case study example: creative opportunities**

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Over the life of the Fit for Work programme, Barnardo's has been interested in exploring whether the focus on fitness and physical activity has a positive or negative impact on young people's engagement with the programme. As part of this, in one area there was a strong focus on including creative opportunities within the Fit for Work programme. This was driven by a new Fit for Work lead in that area, who brought a strong creative and community learning background.

There was clear recognition that art and creative opportunities could help young people to express themselves, support health and wellbeing, and encourage isolated and excluded young people to participate. The Fit for Work lead spoke with local artists to involve them in the programme. This resulted in two new types of activity.

Firstly, a local graffiti artist was involved. The artist was well known locally, and his involvement was used as a hook to start talking to young people and encourage them to become involved. As part of the programme, young people worked with the graffiti artist to decorate an outside shed area, which sat within the building in which the programme was delivered. Many young people got involved in the programme because of this opportunity.

Secondly, a local project called Underground Cinema became involved. This project had experience of working as a creative artist with young people, including education projects aimed at building skills and confidence. Again, this was a good hook for involving young people – as the person leading the work was a recognised local actor.

This work was delivered in a way which drew out the potential and possibility of young people. Participants had the freedom to develop their own creative projects, developing skills based on their own interests. Young people developed a film in two afternoon sessions. In two short workshops, participants can develop something they are proud of.

**“It is empowering. It gives them creative control. They make all the important decisions and what they make is theirs.” (Partner)**

Each group is unique, and so needs a slightly different approach. However, through film, each young person can quickly find a place where they can excel and be in charge of one element of production. People love films, stories and music and can tell things from their own particular point of view.

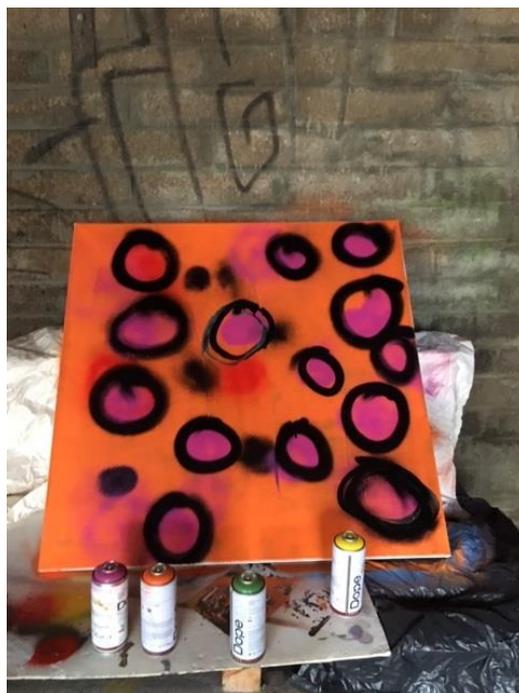
**“They can step into a different world... escape in a way.” (Partner)**

Through this work, young people became engaged with Barnardo's in a positive way and ready to engage further through other employability support. Fit for Work helps to build roots and connections, so that young people can go on to access further support. The programme also helps to build young people's confidence and engagement with the community. For example:

- One young person with severe anxiety only engaged in the creative aspects of the programme. During these sessions, he came completely out of his shell and was able to participate in music and song writing.
- One young person with anxiety and autism showed a completely different side through engagement in creative activities. He became less disruptive and started helping out. Over time, he became more engaged in physical activities, took on a leadership role in mountain biking, realised he would like to be an outdoor education worker, and has attended interviews for this role.

**“It is giving people control. They can make something they are proud of.” (Partner)**

**“There is a lot more of a bounce in their step. They feel supported, that there is somebody in their corner.” (Partner)**



***Artwork by Fit for Work participants***

The programme retains the wider principles of the Fit for Work programme, developing activity jointly with participants in an organic way. New activities are introduced based on participant interest and needs. For example, when drug and alcohol issues were raised by participants, a drug and alcohol councillor was brought in to chat about risk and decision making in a supportive way.

### **Range of recruitment methods**

Participants had heard about the programme in a range of different ways. This included through referral partners such as Skills Development Scotland, Enable, social work the Job Centre, youth workers; through social media such as Facebook; through being involved in other Barnardo's programmes; and through word of mouth. In two areas, staff felt that using social media to advertise the programme generated a lot of interest from young people, parents and schools.

### **Routine**

Young people enjoyed the structure and routine of the programme, having to be there for a certain time. Staff agreed that the routine and social aspect were helpful elements of the programme.

"I think it worked really well. It was good to get out of the house."

Participant

"It gives young people a reason to get up and a chance to be with other people."

Staff member

### **Learning for others**

Participants felt that they would recommend the programme to other young people. Most felt that there was nothing they would change about the course, and that it had helped them a lot in thinking about their next steps.

"I'd tell them not to hesitate to do it. It gives them confidence, they don't need to be anybody else except themselves and nobody will judge them. 100% do it."

"Yeah – I'd definitely recommend it."

"Yes. I'd explain how much it's helped me with building my confidence and mental health. It was all so, so good."

Participants

## Areas for consideration

Most participants couldn't think of anything that could be better about the course. But staff and a few young people identified a few areas for future consideration.

### Group size and mix

Overall participants liked the course. However a few felt their group was a bit small. Some would have liked larger groups. A few young women would have liked more women involved in their group. Conversely, a few participants suggested it would be nice to have separate groups for younger and older participants.

However, most participants were happy with the size and mix. Staff felt that overall the programme was flexible to adapt to the needs of individual participants.

**“It all depends on the individual and their particular issues, the important thing is that we are able to work with them and to engage with them.”**

Staff member

### Individual support

Staff found that at times it could be challenging to support vulnerable young people in group settings in the first instance, particularly young people referred through criminal justice, social work or drug and alcohol teams. Often these young people required some early one to one support from Barnardo's, before moving into the group work setting.

Staff suggested two potential ways of dealing with this. One was to be clearer about where the Fit for Work programme fitted in, with potential participants in need of one to one support signposted to other Barnardo's programmes which offer this before attending Fit for Work. Another approach was to include more one to one support within the Fit for Work programme. This learning will be built into Phase 5 of the Barnardo's CashBack programme.

**“Being part of a group can scare some young people, they might prefer 1:1 sessions.”**

Staff member

### Partnerships

In the early stages of the programme, staff felt there was a need for further work with referral partners to ensure that they fully understood the purpose and focus of the Fit for Work programme, and the target group. This would help to reduce inappropriate referrals to the programme. As this work progressed over years 2 and 3, relationships with referral partners developed and these partnerships helped to attract the target group to the programme.

Staff were also keen to explore more joint working opportunities with other CashBack for Communities partners, for example across sport and creativity.

### Identifying volunteering placements

Staff initially found it challenging to identify suitable volunteering placements. Some organisations can't take young people under 16 years of age, and others may not take young people who are vulnerable or need to be supervised. Young people would also welcome more volunteering opportunities or work placements.

“I'd like more opportunities to a placement, or to do volunteering... A job placement would be great.”

Participant

### Timing

While some participants wanted sessions to be longer, others wanted them to be shorter, start later or be at more regular times. Some participants liked that the sessions did not take up the whole day, stressing that it was important to recognise that young people often had other responsibilities and may not be able to commit to a full day. Some liked that the course didn't start until 10am, which gave them more time to get up and get ready than going to school.

“It doesn't take up all of my time and the hours 10 until 2 suit me.”

Participant

However, a few participants were travelling long distances on public transport and found that a small number of short (say two hour) sessions did not suit them. A few would have preferred longer sessions over fewer days to reduce the amount of travel required. Some also said they would have liked for the course to run over more weeks.

“Honestly, I really enjoyed it – I would be happier if it lasted longer.”

Participant

One stakeholder said it was worth considering dedicated or regular start and finish dates for school pupils, that would fit in better with a school timetable.

### Content

Overall the participants felt the course was well run with good speakers and useful activities. However, a very small number felt the course was a bit repetitive, or was more appropriate for the younger age group within the target group. One staff member also felt that some awards could be a bit repetitive or patronising for young people – particularly those in the older age groups.

### Evaluation

Staff have found it quite difficult to get young people to complete surveys or participate in follow up telephone interviews to inform the evaluation. A new online outcomes star has been developed to capture evidence to measure progress towards some of the softer outcomes. Staff are being trained on how to use the tool, and it will link to the wider evaluation framework for future work.

## 5. Conclusions

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### Programme reach

The programme reached 301 young people, meeting its target of engaging 300 young people over the three year period. Of these, 269 young people completed the programme. A further 15 young people remained on Fit for Work activity which was paused due to the public health situation in spring 2020.

The programme is reaching its intended target group in terms of supporting potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals. More than half of participants were living in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland. The focus on disadvantage has increased over the three years, with a higher proportion of young people coming from the most deprived areas.

Participants were at the early stages of the employability pipeline and included those not attending school; with significant challenges in their lives; on low incomes; with additional support needs; and with chaotic lives.

The profile of participants is approximately two thirds male. This is broadly in line with UK wide trends in young people not in education, employment or training.

## Progress towards intended outcomes

The Fit for Work programme has made very good progress towards its intended outcomes. Particularly positive outcomes reported by participants<sup>4</sup> include:

**100%**

Report improved wellbeing

**95%**

Feel able to do new things

**91%**

Report increased aspirations

**90%**

Report increased confidence

**85%**

Report positive changes in behaviour

**83%**

Have achieved positive destinations

A summary of progress towards each target and outcome is provided below.

Young people build their capacity and confidence	
Target	Outcome
225 (75%) increase confidence	242 (90%)
225 (75%) able to do new things	256 (95%)
195 (65%) go on to do new things	213 (79%)
70% of stakeholders report increased confidence and ability to do new things	97%
“It’s given me a platform of confidence.”	
Young people develop their physical and personal skills	
Target	Outcome
225 (75%) report an increase in skills	245 (91%)
70% of stakeholders report skills increasing	100%
“I’ve found that I am able to be a lot more assertive and take on leadership roles.”	

<sup>4</sup> Based on an annual survey of participants, which a proportion of participants complete each year.

### Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively

Target	Outcome
240 (80%) report increased aspirations	245 (91%)
240 (80%) report positive changes in behaviour	229 <sup>5</sup> (85%)
65% of stakeholders report increased aspirations	100%
70% of stakeholders report perceived positive changes in behaviour	94%

"I have hope now. Instead of thinking that things are always going to go downhill, I now have hope."

### Young people's wellbeing improves

Target	Outcome
240 (80%) make positive comments about wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators	269 (100%)
70% of stakeholders make positive comments about wellbeing against relevant SHANARRI indicators	93%

"It is good for my physical and mental health. I'm not just sitting about doing nothing."

### Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options

Target	Outcome
240 (80%) access training	213 (79%)
240 (80%) access learning	228 (85%)
210 (70%) achieve positive destinations	223 (83%)
150 (50%) gain employment or apprenticeships	27 (10%)
30 (10%) progress to volunteering	10 (4%)

<sup>5</sup> 85% of the 269 participants who completed the course. The % target was met, but the number target was not - partly due to 15 participants having their involvement 'paused' in spring 2020 at the time of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

30 (10%) progress to other provision	186 (69%)
“It has helped me to think about what I am going to do next.”	
<b>Outcome 8: Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system</b>	
<b>Target</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
80% report a reduction in antisocial behaviour and/ or criminal behaviour	82% of all participants previously involved in antisocial behaviour*
“I have stopped drinking and staying out late.”	
<b>Outcome 9: Young people contribute positively to their communities</b>	
<b>Target</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
30 (10%) volunteer or take on leadership roles in community organisations	181 (67%) volunteer as part of the programme 10 (4%) continue volunteering
210 (70%) feel their contribution to the community has improved	72%
30 hours of volunteering contributed by participants	Total of 3,426 hours of volunteering Average of 19 hours per volunteer
2 community focused awards gained by participants	144 participants gained community focused awards
70% of stakeholders report improved contribution or links with community	88%
“...volunteering and giving back to the community and just getting out of the house is beneficial to you for your mental being and also the community.”	

\*This measure was strengthened over the three years of the evaluation. The 82% figure is for year 3 only. Figures for the previous years are not comparable.

## Recommendations

- The Fit for Work programme has supported participants well in their early stages of the employability journey. It has supported increased confidence, aspirations, positive behaviour change and wellbeing. It has also supported progression into further training and learning. The value of this type of early employability support should be recognised, and work of this nature continued.
- The Fit for Work programme should be clearly positioned within the wider employability journey of young people. It is a gentle introduction to the world of work, at an early stage.
  - It should be recognised that this programme supports young people at an early stage of their employability journey. Any future work should set intended employability outcomes at a reasonable level. For this group it would seem more appropriate to focus on positive destinations in terms of learning and training, rather than directly into employment.
  - The varied needs of young people should continue to be recognised within the programme, with clear links to individual support where required – either before or during the Fit for Work programme.
- While the balance of men and women across the programme is reasonable, it is important to continue to attract young women to employability programmes like this. This may involve learning from successful approaches in certain Fit for Work areas; considering groups for young women only; and ensuring female staff and role models are involved in running the programme.
- During Phase 4, Barnardo's has experimented with the impact of different types of activities for the target client group. This clearly demonstrated that both physical activities and creative opportunities have a draw and positive impact for young people in skills development. The programme should continue to include different types of activities and opportunities, to ensure that a wide range of young people are attracted to participate in the programme.
- Some participants have expressed interest in larger groups and targeted sessions (for example separate sessions for young women and men, and separate sessions for older and younger age groups). It would be worth considering whether this would add strength to the programme in any of the locations.
- We note that Barnardo's has been working on the lessons learned through Phase 4 of the programme, and has built these into its Phase 5 plans. This includes exploring the volunteering aspect of the programme and how to strengthen this for participants; a stronger focus on gathering evidence about softer outcomes; ensuring accreditation remains appropriate for the learning achieved by young people; and being clear about the positioning of the programme within the wider suite of employability support available.