## 

25th May 2018

Venture Trust

Evaluation of CashBack Change Cycle Year One Report

20 June 18

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# 1 Executive summary

Introduction and methodology

Rocket Science was commissioned to conduct an external evaluation of the CashBack Change Cycle (CBCC) programme between 2017-2020. CBCC is an innovative employability programme delivered by Venture Trust in partnership with the Bike Station in Edinburgh and Bike for Good in Glasgow.

Over the three-year funding period, the programme aims to engage with 256 young people from areas of multiple deprivation, with 192 of these taking part in the course. Participants have the opportunity to develop vocational skills focused on bike building/maintenance and general employability skills, and they receive support to build self-confidence and motivation.

This Interim Report has been informed by findings from the following:

* Analysis of management data collected by Venture Trust
* Interviews with young people 3 months and 6 months after they participated in the programme
* Analysis of 'session logs' completed by staff at the Bike Station and Bike for Good
* Analysis of video footage from peer interviews conducted by young people during the course
* Interviews conducted with staff members involved in the delivery of project.

Programme delivery to date

At the end of Year 1 of the programme, four CBCC Courses have been delivered: two in partnership with the Bike Station in Edinburgh, and two in partnership with Bike for Good in Glasgow. In total:

* Venture Trust engaged with 38 young people during the community-phase of the programme
* 29 clients started the workshop (week 1 of the programme)
* 26 clients started the residential week (week 3 of the programme) and therefore took part in all phases of the CBCC course
* 21 young people were engaged with after the completing the CBCC course. This figure is expected to continue to rise as Venture Trust puts ongoing effort into engaging with young people that were part of the CBCC course.

In terms of reaching the target client group, so far:

* Most participants (25) came from Glasgow, Edinburgh or West Lothian. However, there was at least one participant from each of the targeted local authority areas.
* More than half of young people participating in CBCC have come from the two most deprived deciles in Scotland.
* 89% (34) of participants were male.
* Participants presented with a range of barriers to work. Over half (52%) presented with mental health issues.

Achievement against project outcomes

* The overall number of young people engaging and completing the programme Year 1 is lower than planned. 38 young people engaged compared with a target of 65, and 26 completed the programme compared with a target of 48. This was mainly due to difficulties gaining appropriate internal and external referrals. The overall *proportion* of people engaging who go on to complete the course is however on target.
* 77% of young people participating in the programme in Year 1 reported increased confidence and self-esteem. This exceeds the outcome target of 75%. Young people described feeling more confident talking to other people and more confident about the future.
* All 29 young people (100%) who participated in Year 1 of the programme achieved accredited learning - well above the outcome target of 75%. 26 (90%) also reported an increase in their skills, again exceeding the outcome target of 75%.
* 81% of the young people who participated in Year 1 of the programme reported increased aspirations and positive changes to their behaviour, exceeding the outcome target of 75%.
* Only 42% of the 26 young people who participated in the CBCC course reported an increase in wellbeing – this is considerably lower than the outcome target of 75%.
* Of the 26 young people who completed the programme in Year 1, half reported a reduction in criminal/anti-social behaviour (ASB). This is below the target set out by Venture Trust of 60%. It is important to note however that not all participants were involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour when they first engaged with the programme. Findings from the peer interviews highlight the significance of developing a routine in weeks 1 and 2 in helping participants to gain more 'stability'.
* Having completed the CBCC course, 12 of the 26 (46%) young people who participated were reported to have progressed into education, training/learning or employment. This is below venture Trust's own target of 60%. Data is however still currently being collected for those participants that have recently finished the programme.
* Every young person that participated in the peer interviews and follow-up interviews emphasised how much they enjoyed the CBCC course.

Initial findings and recommendations

**Finding 1:** The participant numbers are lower than planned for this stage in the programme and referrals are often unsuitable.

**Recommendation**: Investment in the referral network for the course (ie improving awareness and understanding of the CBCC course amongst Venture Trust partner agencies) could increase the number of appropriate referrals. Given the number of young people who initially agree to participate but do not attend, we recommend increasing the contact time during this period to provide reassurance and ease concerns.

**Finding 2:** The CBCC programme met three of the six outcome targets for Year 1 delivery, with the shortfall most notable in reported levels of wellbeing and positive destinations. All young people involved in the fieldwork conducted by Rocket Science emphasised how much they enjoyed the programme.

**Recommendations:** We recommend that Venture Trust review the performance data and identify appropriate responses. While the number of positive destinations reported could increase over time, it could also be an early warning sign that more follow-up support is required to help participants build on what they have achieved through the programme. The issue of wellbeing needs to be explored in more detail to identify potential areas for improvement.

**Finding 3:** Staff members felt unclear about who was responsible for providing continuous support to participants at each phase of the programme.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that Venture Trust develop clear guidelines for staff involved in course delivery outlining how and by whom continuous support is to be provided to young people who have been internally and externally referred.

**Finding 4:** Participants on Year 1 of the CBCC programme were predominantly male. Staff reported ‘macho dynamics’ which negatively impacted upon course delivery and one participant left because she was the only female.

**Recommendation**: We recommend that Venture Trust make a concerted effort to recruit young women to the CBCC course by liaising with partner agencies and targeting promotion. Effort should be made to ensure that each course has a representative number of young women for the client group. This may involve carefully presenting the programme to focus on transferrable mechanical skills.

**Finding 5:** Staff members reported that the employability workshops in the first two weeks and the residential week in the third week of the course were currently operating in silos. This was said to feel ‘disjointed’ and impact upon the continuity of support provided to participants.

**Recommendation:** Efforts should be made to increase the level of communication and cooperation between staff involved in different phases of the course to ensure that the structure and content is complementary. It may also be worth considering whether one staff member could be present throughout the full three weeks of the CBCC course for better continuity.

# 2 Project details

Venture Trust has been awarded a three-year grant (from April 2017 to March 2020) from the Scottish Government’s “CashBack for Communities” Phase IV funding. Venture Trust developed an innovative employability programme in cooperation with the Bike Station in Edinburgh and Bike for Good in Glasgow: the “CashBack Change Cycle programme” (CBCC).

During the three-year funding period, the CBCC programme aims to engage with 256 young people from areas of multiple deprivation across at least eight local authorities in close proximity to Edinburgh and Glasgow. This includes, in the west, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire, and in the east, Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, but clients can come from any Local Authority area.

The target group for the CBCC programme are young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, training or employment and, as such, are at risk of long term unemployment. In addition, some of the young people are at risk of offending or reoffending, anti-social behaviour and face multiple barriers to their career progression, including involvement with the criminal justice system, homelessness, substance abuse, poor mental health, caring responsibilities, a care experienced background or early social work involvement.

The CBCC programme is aimed at enabling participants to build motivation and self-confidence, develop vocational and employability skills, and support their progression towards positive destinations, so increasing the stability of their lives. As such, the programme is intended to focus on Stages 2 and 3 of the Scottish Employability Skills Pipeline.

The CBCC programme is a three-week course comprising the following components:

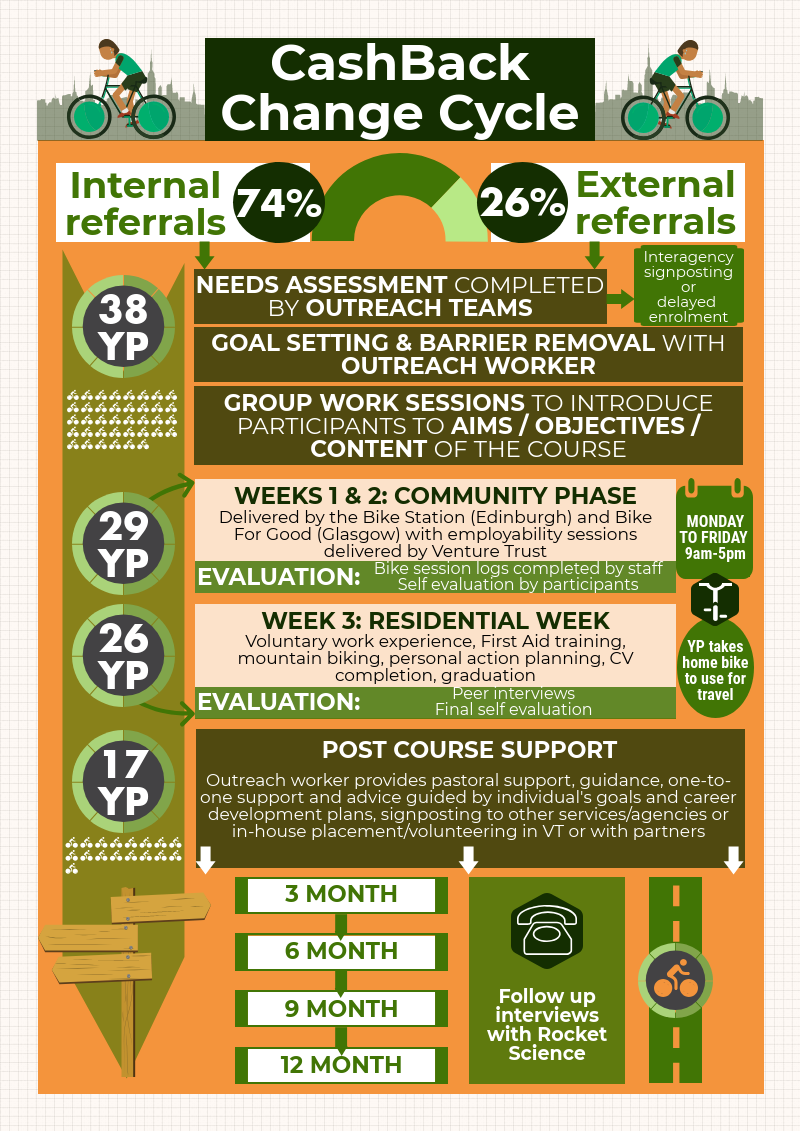
* Two weeks of a combination of classroom-based employability training and a vocational skills development course focused on bike building/maintenance. This includes participants building their own bikes which they can keep after the completion of the course. The first two weeks of the course covers:
* Practical vocational training, ie bike construction/maintenance, with the goal of achieving either the nationally recognised Velotech Bronze Award or a City & Guilds qualification (both are SCQF Level 4 qualifications)
* Safe on-road and off-road cycling
* Employability sessions delivered by Venture Trust, including health and safety training (leading to an iHASCO certification) and other modules such as fire safety and manual handling.
* A five-day wilderness-based residential week that includes:
* Personal development coaching
* A conservation project
* First Aid Training
* Mountain-biking training
* Personal action plan and CV completion.

In addition, the CBCC programme foresees:

* An initial period of 1-to-1 support in the community before the start of the programme
* Following the completion of the programme, community-based aftercare support where the young person receives 1-to-1 advice, support, signposting and brokered access to a wide-range of local services and opportunities.

Overall, the programme intends to engage with 256 young people in the community phase of the programme, and for 192 young people to take part in the CBCC course.

Overleaf we set out the CBCC model in graphic form including the flow of participants through the different stages (NB the figure of 17 young people receiving post course follow up support is correct at time of writing but will increase as young people are engaged).



# 3 Evaluation Method and Aims

The CBCC programme has the following six outcome targets:

1. **Capacity and confidence:**

* 75% of young people report increased confidence
* 75% of stakeholders report increased confidence and self-esteem in young people

1. **Physical and personal skills:**

* 75% of young people report skills are increasing
* 75% of young people achieve recognised qualifications
* 75% of stakeholders report young people’s skills are increasing

1. **Behaviours and aspirations**:

* 75% of young people report increased aspirations
* 75% of young people complete updated CVs and individual training plans
* 75% of stakeholders report young people show positive changes in behaviour
* 75% of stakeholders report perceived positive changes in young people

1. **Wellbeing:**

* 60% of young people improve relationships with others
* 60% of young people report increases in feelings against SHANARRI indicators
* 60% of stakeholders perceive increases in SHANARRI indicators in young people

1. **Learning, employability and employment options:**

* 256 young people receive 1 to 1 community support
* 192 complete 3-week training programme
* 60% progress to education, training and employment

1. **Diverted from criminal behaviour:**

* 60% of young people report that their participation in anti-social behaviour has reduced
* 60% of young people show sustained stability in their lives.

The evaluation aims include the assessment of:

1. The extent to which the CBCC programme has been successful in reaching its target group
2. The impact of the programme in relation to the six outcome areas
3. The short, medium and long-term employability outcomes for participants of the course
4. Public sector sustainability options for the programme, including possible funding.

In 2017, Rocket Science was appointed as the external evaluator.

Venture Trust and Rocket Science conducted a joint evaluation framework workshop where they agreed on the following evaluation methods:

* Venture Trust collects Outcome Star and participants’ self-evaluation in relation to the six outcome targets
* For Bike Station/Bike for Good staff to reflect on each participant’s development at the end of the first two weeks of each course
* For young people to conduct video peer interviews with each other
* For Rocket Science to conduct three, six, nine and twelve-month follow-up telephone interviews with three participants from each course
* For Rocket Science to conduct a more intensive evaluation with the participants from three courses, including:
* A follow-up focus group with the participants of the course
* Interviews with staff members of this course reflecting on each participant
* Interviews with someone close to the young person (e.g. family or friend) in order to get an external perspective of how the course has influenced the young person.

Evaluation progress

So far, Rocket Science has completed the following evaluation activities:

* Analysed the management data collected by Venture Trust
* Conducted four 3-month follow-up interviews (including participants from course 1, course 2 and course 3)
* Conducted two six-month follow-up interviews (including participants from course 1)
* Reviewed Bike Station/Bike for Good staff logs for 19 participants (including participants from Course 2, Course 3 and Course 4)
* Reviewed 10 peer/staff video-interviews (including participants from Course 2, Course 3 and course 4)
* Conducted two interviews with staff members (both were staff members on Course 3).

We intended to have conducted more interviews in advance of this report, but it proved difficult to reach some of the young people due to them not picking up their phone and/or having changed their phone number. In addition, we worked closely with Venture Trust staff to organise a focus group with participants from Course 3, but none of the expected participants were present.

We had also intended to conduct three interviews with someone close to participants of Course 3. However, after careful consideration, we felt that it was insensitive to ask the young people for, for example, their parents’ contact details considering that many of the young people experience difficulties at home. In addition, interviews with referrers have not yet been conducted. As such, we can not yet report on the views of other stakeholders, and the degree to which they perceive the CBCC course to make a difference to young people’s lives. In order to account for this, we will adopt our methodology for year 2 and year 3 and put an increased emphasis on gathering the views of “other stakeholders” (see Chapter 7).

It is important that we respond to these issues and find alternative ways of gathering insights. It seems likely that there will remain issues about gathering participants together for focus groups and there are clearly difficulties in gaining contact details for people close to participants. As a result of this experience, we have agreed with Venture Trust to adapt our methodology for years 2 and 3 and to gather additional insights by:

* Rather than using focus groups for sample groups, we will invest time ensuring we meet the overall target for follow-up interviews. In order to do so, young people will from now on be automatically enrolled into the evaluation (ie follow-up interviews) with an option to “opt out”.
* Using views of staff and other professionals working with the young person (eg their outreach worker at Venture Trust) to gain an understanding of their perspective on the young person’s development.
* Talking to a small number of referral agencies to explore their current perception of the programme and any issues that may depress referral numbers.

# 4 Overview of programme delivery to date

At the end of Year 1 of the programme, four CBCC Courses have been delivered: two in cooperation with the Bike Station in Edinburgh, and two in cooperation with Bike for Good in Glasgow. In total:

* Venture trust engaged with 38 young people during the community-phase of the programme
* 29 clients started the workshop (week 1 of the programme)
* 26 clients took part in the residential week (week 3 of the programme) and therefore took part in all phases of the CBCC course
* 21 young people were engaged with after the completing the CBCC course. This figure is expected to continue to rise as Venture Trust puts ongoing effort into engaging with young people that were part of the CBCC programme.

As Figure 1 shows, most participants came from Glasgow, Edinburgh or West Lothian. There was at least one participant from each of the targeted local authority areas. 89% (34) of participants were male. Overall, looking at reasonable catchment areas around the two delivery sites in Glasgow and Edinburgh, participation is split roughly 50:50.

Figure 1 Local authorities of CBCC participants of the first year of the programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

The young people the CBCC programme engaged with had a wide range of presenting issues. 61% of young people came from areas belonging to the two most deprived deciles in Scotland (see SIMD 2016). 52% presented with mental health issues. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of all the presenting issues.

Figure 2 Presenting issues of the young people engaged with during the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

Figure 3 below shows how many young people present with a certain number of presenting issues, ranging anywhere from one to 14 presenting issues. The most common number of presenting issues is 6 and the average number of presenting issues per person is 5.8. 84% of young people who engaged with the CBCC course presented with four or more issues.

Figure 3 The number of presenting issues of the young people engaged with during the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

Looking in more detail at the SIMD background of participants, one can see in Figure 4 that 15 young people (39%) come from an area that is among the most deprived decile in Scotland. A further 8 young people (21%) come from the second most deprive decile.

Figure 4 The local areas organised according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 of young people engaged with in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

28 (74%) young people engaged with during the first year of the CBCC programme were referrals internal to Venture Trust. In turn, 10 (26%) young people were referrals from external organisations. Figure 5 shows from which organisations the 38 young people were originally referred from to Venture Trust (ie including those that initially completed other Venture Trust courses than CBCC). Six referrals came from the Criminal Justice Team and five from Skills Development Scotland.

Figure 5 The number of referrals from different partner agencies that referred the young people that ultimately were engaged with during the first year of the CBCC programme to Venture Trust (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

# 5 Achievement against project outcomes

This chapter analyses the progress to date made by Venture Trust. It looks at the number of participants in the programme during Year One and the outcomes they achieved. It draws on participant data provided by Venture Trust and our engagements with young people during our field research. We have not reported on any views of stakeholders in the progress of young people as we have been unable to collect sufficient data to report on these outcomes for year one.

Number of participants

The CashBack Change Cycle programme seeks to engage with 256 young people and have 192 young people complete the full course over the life of the programme. For the first 12 months of this project between April 2017 and March 2018, this equates to 65 engagements with young people and 48 young people completing the course. Actual numbers were lower than planned in year one, primarily due to difficulties gaining appropriate referrals from partner agencies and within Venture Trust. In year one of the programme, Venture Trust engaged with 38 young people. 29 young people started the course and 26 young people started the residential week and therefore took part in all phases of the CBCC course. Proportionately, the completion figures compare with the engagement figures – i.e. the number of completions is a similar proportion of the target as the number of engagements. In other words, whilst the achievement *proportion* is on target, the issue lies with the initial number of engagements.

Figure 6 The number of planned and actual young people that engaged with and/or took part in all phases of the CBCC course in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

Participant achievement against each of the six different outcomes is analysed below.

It should be noted that for most of the outcomes we present the percentages in terms of how many young people have achieved the outcome in relation to the 26 young people that took part in all phases of the CBCC course. However, since the majority of the employability sessions and wider learning takes place in the first two weeks of the course, some of the percentages are presented in relation to the 29 young people that started the first week of the CBCC course.

Young people build their capacity and confidence

Venture Trust set a target of 75% of young people reporting increased confidence and self-esteem following the completion of the CashBack Change Cycle programme. Of the 26 young people who took part in all phases of the CBCC course, 20 (77%) reported an increase in confidence and self-esteem – 2% above the outcome target.

Figure 7 The number of young people who completed the CBCC course in the first year of the CBCC programme that increased their confidence (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

Additional qualitative data from the peer interviews shows that **eight (out of ten) young people believe that the course has helped them with their confidence.**

The type of things the young people feel confident about is wide-ranging as becomes apparent in the follow-up interviews:

* **Confidence about talking to other people:** “Talking to people face to face every day during the programme has helped me to become more confident….I had quite a bit of anxiety, but now I feel well different. I just do things now.”
* **Confidence about the future:** “I feel more confident, definitely. I guess it helped me get more confidence about what I want to do and where I want to go in life.”

As with all projects of this sort it is important not to just focus on those participants who appear to make full use of a programme and the experience makes a difference. It will also be valuable to try to understand why a quarter of participants did not report increased confidence.

Young people develop their physical and personal skills

Venture Trust set the following two targets for this outcome:

* 75% of young people to achieve accredited learning
* 75% of young people to report an increase in their skills.

As can be seen in Figure 8, all 29 (100%) young people who started the CBCC course achieved some form of accredited learning and 26 (90%) reported an increase in their skills – both significantly above the outcome targets.

Figure 8 The number of young people who report an increase in their skills and/or achieved accredited learning in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

As Figure 9 shows, 21 young people (81%) have achieved recognised Level 4 SCQF qualifications/accreditations, ie the Velotech Bronze Award or the City & Guilds bike maintenance qualification. In addition, 25 young people received manual handling and fire awareness training.

Figure 9 The number of young people that have achieved different awards in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

Additional qualitative data from the peer interviews shows all ten young people we talked to believe they have built their personal and physical skills during the CBCC programme. The types of skills covered by participants were:

* How to write a CV
* Fire awareness
* The nationally-recognised bike maintenance Velotech Bronze Award qualification
* Self-development
* Job interview skills
* Listening, communication and concentration skills
* Team-building skills
* Mountain-biking.

The follow-up interviews gave insights into how the young people were able to apply some of these skills:

* One young person said that the “interview skills training has helped me [him] to communicate my [his] skills more confidently”. He recently had a job interview and thought it had gone very well.
* Another young person said that he “now feels more ready to do interviews for college”.

Young people’s behaviour and aspirations change positively

Venture Trust set itself the target of 75% of young people reporting increased aspirations and for 75% of young people to report positively changing their behaviours. Of the 26 young people who took part in all phases of the CBCC course, 21 (81%) report increased aspirations and positively change behaviour respectively (see Figure 10) – 6% above outcome target.

Figure 10 The number of young people who report to have positively changed behaviour and/or increased aspirations in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

Additional qualitative data from the peer interviews shows that the participants of the CBCC courses have **developed a wide range of aspirations during the CBCC course**, including among other things:

* To work in a care home for the elderly
* To pursue work involving outdoor activities
* To sign up for a cooking class at college
* To be a football coach for a disability team
* To do further bike mechanics training
* To do further volunteering with the Bike Station in Edinburgh and/or Bike for Good station in Glasgow.

One young person said that they didn’t yet know what they would like to do in the future.

The follow-up interviews furthermore captured the extent to which these aspirations have changed because of the CBCC course – as one young person put it: “Doing the course has given me some enlightenment, now I am volunteering at the Bike Station and I really like it.”

Young people’s wellbeing improves

Venture Trust set itself a target of 60% of young people reporting an increase in their wellbeing. As Figure 11 shows, 42% of the 26 young people that took part in all phases of the CBCC course report an increase in wellbeing – well below the outcome target.

Figure 11 The number of young people who report an increase in wellbeing in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

However, these results warrant careful interpretation. Firstly, it is possible that many of the young people ‘over-report’ their wellbeing at the beginning of the course. In this case, there may be a discrepancy between the reported and actual increase/decrease in wellbeing ie the survey results may not accurately reflect the positive impact the CBCC course has had on a young person’s wellbeing. Secondly, it is possible that the impact the CBCC course has on the young people’s wellbeing is apparent in the longer-term and therefore cannot be captured in the short period between self-evaluations.

A key aspect of a young person’s wellbeing is their relationships with others. **All the ten young people who participated in the peer interviews emphasised how much they enjoyed working with their peers in the programme.** One participants described working with others as “easy, funny, exciting”.

The follow-up interviews confirmed that working with others has made an impact on participants beyond the time of the CBCC course:

* “It was really good [working with others]. I am usually a guy who works on his own, so it was a good experience for me to work with others. Yeah, it helped – it feels easier to approach others since.”
* One participants recalled how even his mother noticed a difference in him being more “chatty”.

A few of the participants said that they are still in touch with some of the other participants on social media.

The gap between target and achievement is notable and it will be important to understand if there is scope to do more to help participants enhance their well-being.

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

Venture Trust set itself a target of 60% of young people completing the CBCC course would progress into education, training, learning and employment opportunities. As Figure 12 shows, 46% of the 26 participants who took part in all phases of the CBCC course made progress into education, training/learning or employment – 14% below the target.

Figure 12 The number of young people who progressed into education, training, learning or employment opportunities in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

While it can be assumed that the proportion of young people that progress into positive destinations is likely to increase over time, these achievements will also be increasingly harder to relate back to the impact of the CBCC course. This highlights the importance of supporting the young people to progress into positive destinations as soon as possible after their completion of the CBCC course.

The destinations that young people have progressed after completing the CBCC course include:

* Volunteering with Venture Trust or a primary school
* A youth employment programme with Venture Trust
* Casual labouring work with a local building company
* Car washing
* Sales assistant
* West Lothian College
* Part-time job for a cleaning company.

Not much qualitative data could be collected about this outcome at this stage. One participant recalled in a follow-up interview how the CBCC programme has helped him to participate in further employability activities: “I am volunteering at the Bike Station in Glasgow, and I think it was really doing the bike mechanics training that helped me get this volunteering position. I mean, they didn’t need to train me as I had already learned the skills in the course…I am hopefully going into an automotive course soon to get back into car mechanics. It’s a course with Arnold Clark, the car dealership. They are doing a course – pure car mechanics. I applied for the course and had an interview [after the CashBack course], still waiting to hear back.”

This is an important target in terms of the longer-term impact of the programme and it will be important to monitor the longer-term journeys of participants to explore the extent to which they achieve positive outcomes and build on these – and the extent to which the programme has contributed to this progress.

Young people report reduction in their own antisocial/criminal behaviour

Venture Trust set itself a target for 60% of young people to report that their own participation in anti-social behaviour has reduced. Out of the 26 young people who took part in all phases of the CBCC course, half (50%) reported a reduction in their anti-social behaviour (see Figure 13) – slightly below the outcome target.

Figure 13 The number of young people who report a reduction in their own antisocial/criminal behaviour in the first year of the CBCC programme (Source: Venture Trust Management data)

This outcome, however, warrants careful interpretation. Considering that antisocial/criminal behaviour is not a requirement for young people to become part of the course, it may be that some young people do not face this as an issue in the first place can therefore not report a reduction of this over time. Three young people that have had a criminal justice record and/or previously offended reported a reduction in their own antisocial/criminal behaviour.

A key component in reducing a young person’s antisocial/criminal behaviour is sustained stability in their lives, ie routine. **The peer interviews show that six young people think that the CBCC programme had helped them establish a better routine than they used to have.** They particularly emphasised that they used to struggle getting up in the morning and started their day late, and that during the CBCC they have been able to prove to themselves that they can uphold a better routine. Numerous young people said during the peer interviews that they already had a good routine before starting the CBCC course. The young people were hopeful that they could maintain the routine after the CBCC course finished.

In the follow-up interviews, participants recalled the importance of establishing a good routine during the CBCC programme – as the young people put it themselves:

* “Getting up a routine was really important.”
* “It [the CBCC course] helped me to get back into a working routine, turning up five days a week from 9-5.”

Other outcomes recognised

In addition to the points raised in relation to the six outcomes, the following points were identified in peer and follow-up interviews:

* **All young people – both those participating in the peer interviews and/or the follow-up interviews – said that they liked and enjoyed the CBCC course.**
* When they were asked in the peer interviews about what they liked the least, four young people said that they felt transport was an issue, i.e. they needed to get up very early in order to arrive in time for the course.

# 6 Initial findings

This chapter sets out our initial findings – based on the already discussed outcome data as well as interviews with staff members who are involved in the delivery of the CBCC course. Considering the early stage of the CBCC programme, these findings are provisional rather than conclusive.

Our overall conclusion is that the programme seems to be making a significant positive impact on participants. The main issues relate to referrals - both the overall scale of referrals and the referral of participants who are able to fully benefit from (and contribute to) the programme.

There are two areas where achievement is falling short of target: impact on well-being and the achievement of positive destinations. The latter is a vital objective and it will be important to check whether participants are able to build on the experience and maintain progression into a sustained positive destination.

In terms of wellbeing it will be important to explore the reasons for the shortfall and what can be tried out to see if this outcome can be further enhanced.

In terms of referral, in a competitive market – with a range of alternative provision – this is a common issue for providers. It is likely to require a renewed effort in terms of re-engagement with potential referrers – and ensuring that potential referrers are clear about appropriate candidates.

Alongside the overarching narrative of referrals is the issue of sustained contact and progress-checking. In their review of their 3 phase model, Venture Trust identified the need for more pre-programme selection and this appears to apply to this programme. In addition, it would be helpful to understand the scale and nature of internal referrals to CBCC – in terms of whether the full potential for internal referral is being realised (the original intention was for two thirds of referrals to be internal) and the extent to which internal referrals have proved appropriate in practice.

Finally, there appears to be an issue about the continuity of engagement with individual participants. The wider Venture Trust 3 phase model is built on each participant being supported throughout their journey through different courses at Venture Trust by an outreach worker. Currently, this does not seem to be the experience of all participants, primarily not for those that were referred to the CBCC course from external organisations, and it would be worth revisiting this aspect of the model and exploring how it can be strengthened.

In more detail our findings are:

1. **The participant numbers are lower than planned for at this stage**: As shown in Chapter 5, the participant numbers at this stage in the CBCC programme are lower than initially planned. While it was planned for the programme to engage with 65 young people, only 38 were engaged at this stage. Similarly, while it was planned at this stage for 48 young people to have completed the course, only 26 young people did so.
2. **Venture Trust has had problems in gaining *appropriate* referrals for the CBCC programme:** Interviews with staff members have shown that they believe that the CBCC programme has struggled to receive appropriate referrals, for example, the second course group was still facing too many behavioural issues (a point also raised by the Bike Logs). It is felt that initially many of the young people being referred to the programme were not yet ready for such an employability programme. Staff members suggested that unsuitable referrals, and potential misconceptions as to what the CBCC programme is, are likely to have also led to some young people not showing up and/or dropping out early on in the CBCC course.
3. **The CBCC programme meets three out of six outcome targets that specified the impact in terms of proportion** (outcome 1, outcome 2, outcome 3). It falls short of meeting outcome target 4, 6 and 8. The shortfall is currently most notable in terms of positive outcomes and wellbeing. These are both important and action should be taken to enhance both of these.
4. **Every young person in the peer interview and follow-up interviews emphasised how much they enjoyed participating in the CBCC course.**
5. **The course’s participants are predominantly male**, **i.e. only 4 out of 38 young people that the CBCC programme engaged with were female**. This gender imbalance has shown to have impact on the course delivery – what one staff member called “macho-dynamics” as well as drop-out rates: for example, in Course 4, one female participants decided to leave the course as she should would have been the only female participant after the other female participant had to leave the course due to bereavement in her family.
6. **Linkages between employability workshops and residential week:** Staff members suggested that currently the employability workshops during the first two weeks of the course and the residential week in the third week are disjointed, i.e. there is little communication between the different staff members, and this has an impact on the coherence and quality of the experience.
7. **Community-based aftercare support:** Staff members suggested that there was a lack of clarity about the degree of support a young person receives after completing the CBCC programme, and who exactly is responsible for delivering this support.
8. **Cooperation with the Bike Station in Edinburgh and Bike for Good in Glasgow:** Staff members from Venture Trust on the one hand, and staff members from the Bike Station in Edinburgh and Bike for Good in Glasgow on the other hand, feel very positive about their cooperation on the CBCC programme: all partners that we spoke to highlighted their perception that all organisations have a shared ethos and a commitment to making a difference to young people. In addition, it is felt that the cooperation during the planning and delivery of the course works to a high standard.

# 7 Recommendations for Years 2 and 3

On the basis of our initial findings, we outline a number of recommendations for the delivery of the programme in Years 2 and 3:

1. **Reviewing performance and identifying appropriate responses.**

The management information identifies at least two areas where performance falls short of target.One of these – positive destinations – may be about the need for more time to elapse. But it may also be an early warning of the need to do more in this areas in helping participants actively connect with follow up experiences that allow them to build on the benefits of the programme. The other – wellbeing – will need to be explored in more depth to understand the scope for improvement.

1. **Increase the number of young people the CBCC programmes engages with through strengthening the programme’s referral system:** In order for the CBCC programme to meet its target of engaging with 256 young people and for 192 young people to complete the course, Venture Trust needs to – on top of the already planned additional course – ensure the upcoming courses are attended by a greater number of young people. Considering the ongoing likelihood that some young people who initially committed to attending the course may end up not being present, we recommend that Venture Trust engages with more young people prior to each course. One means of increasing the number of young people being referred to the course is by further investing in the referral network for the course, i.e. making the CBCC programme better known among Venture Trust’s partner agencies. This is likely to be important in any case (because of regular changes in personnel and roles), but a sustained effort in this area to raise awareness and benefit – and specifically to ensure a clear appreciation of who may benefit – is likely to bring returns.
2. **Minimise the risk of young people not attending and/or dropping out of the course:** In order to minimise the risk of young people not attending the course despite their confirmation, we recommend for part of the 1-to-1 community support (i.e. the support before the start of the course) to take place at the Bike Station/Bike for Good.Increasing the familiarity with the Bike Station/Bike for Good before the course can potentially reduce the barrier of coming there on the first day of the course.In addition, it is important for partner agencies and potential participants to be clear about the structure and activities that are part of the CBCC course: “managing expectations” in this way has the potential to reduce drop-out rates. In order to gain a better insight as to the why young people are dropping out of the course, we recommend for Venture Trust to record the stated and/or perceived reasons for their dropping out of the course.
3. **Devise a clear strategy for continuous support after the completion of the course.** Staff members felt that there is currently a lack of clarity about how the continuous support after the completion of the CBCC course is organised, i.e. who is responsible for providing continuous support to participants, and what exactly it entails. We recommend that Venture Trust develops clear guidelines as to how the continuous support to CBCC participants (both those who were “internal” and “external” referrals) is organised and what exactly it entails.
4. **Attention to gender balance at the stage of recruiting for the course:** We recommend that Venture Trust engages in an additional effort to recruit young women for the CBCC course by alerting partner agencies to publicise the CBCC programme to female participants in particular. In the setting up of individual courses, it will be important to ensure a gender balance among participants in order to prevent previous incidences of female participants dropping out of the course.
5. **Increased cooperation between staff members of the first two weeks and the third week of the course:** We recommend that the two parts of the CBCC programme – the employability/bike building sessions in the first two weeks of the course, and the residential week in the third week of the course – are better joined up. This could be done through increasing communication and cooperation between staff members for the first two weeks of the course and the third week, and/or to ensure that there is one staff member present across both parts of the course. As such, it could be ensured that the different employability sessions of the two parts of the course - the exact order and structure of which are likely to vary from course to course – complement each other.

# Evaluation activity for Year 2

