



Fit for Work through CashBack Evaluation and Learning Report

2021/22



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**An evaluation report
prepared by Research Scotland**

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1 ABOUT FIT FOR WORK THROUGH CASHBACK

Barnardo's Fit for Work through CashBack project aims to support young people in the most disadvantaged communities in Scotland to develop their employability skills and aspirations.

£550,000
THROUGH CASHBACK
FOR COMMUNITIES

2020 TO 2023

300
YOUNG PEOPLE

The Fit for Work through CashBack project is funded through CashBack for Communities, a Scottish Government programme which takes funds recovered from the proceeds of crime and invests them into free activities and programmes for young people across Scotland.

Fit for Work through CashBack is an eight week interactive and bespoke programme for disadvantaged 15 to 24 year olds. It aims to increase aspiration and develop the skills of disadvantaged young people, particularly those affected by crime and in areas of deprivation.

Find out more about Fit for Work here:

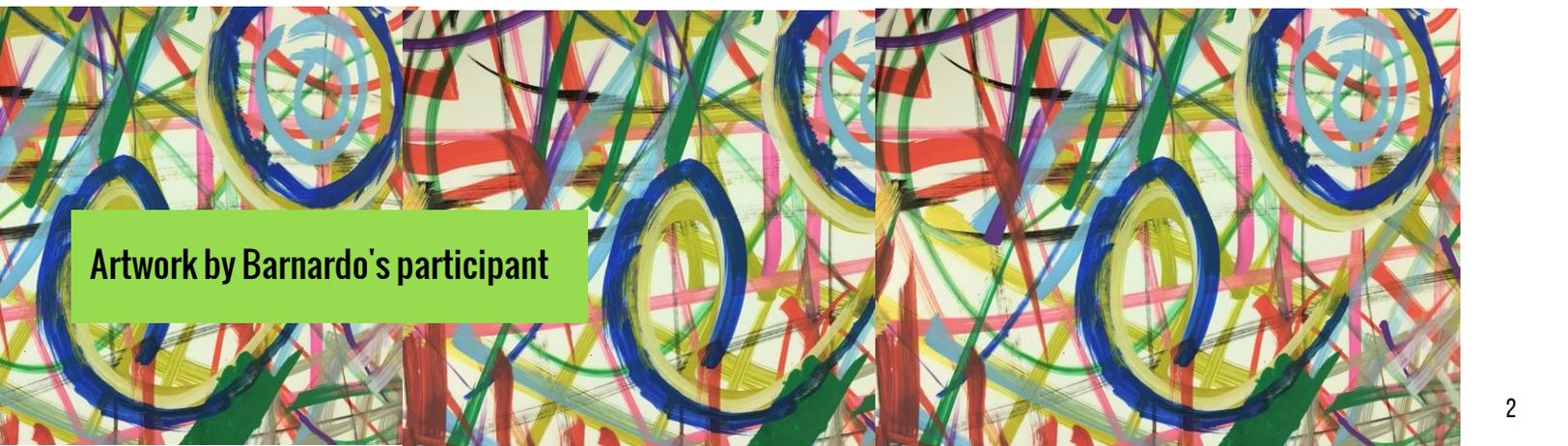


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The Fit for Work through CashBack programme involves:

- Engagement - A Barnardo's mentor and young person work together to assess and identify the key outcomes they want to achieve from the programme, building a trusted and consistent relationship.
- Bespoke activities - Young people are supported over an eight week period through group work and one to one mentoring to be more active and improve their physical and mental health, to understand personal finances, and to develop their soft, core and vocational skills.
- Accreditation and graduation - Young people are offered a recognised or accredited award, such as a Youth Achievement or Personal Development Award. Young people progressing to work are offered additional in-work support and guidance. Others are supported to progress to more intensive employability provision with Barnardo's or other local providers.

Normally the programme includes an element of community volunteering, work placements and employer visits. For Phase Five, Barnardo's undertook a review of how volunteering opportunities were sourced and arranged, with the aim of providing a wider range of local volunteering opportunities, work tasters and placements. However, year 1 of the programme was not able to incorporate this element due to the restrictions in place as a result of Covid-19. During year 2, 2021/22, Barnardo's was able to gradually re-introduce some outdoor volunteering opportunities. These opportunities remained limited in year 2 due to the pandemic and related restrictions.



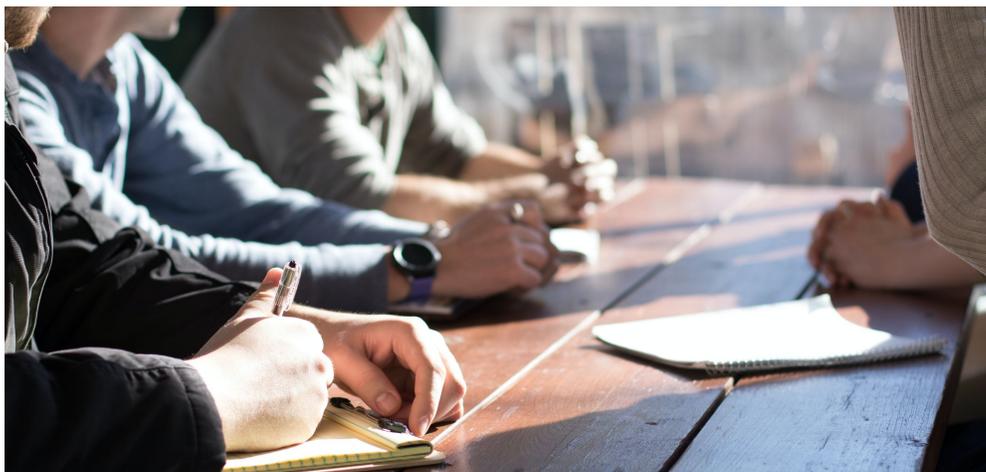
Artwork by Barnardo's participant

2 FIT FOR WORK THROUGH CASHBACK PARTICIPANTS 2021/22

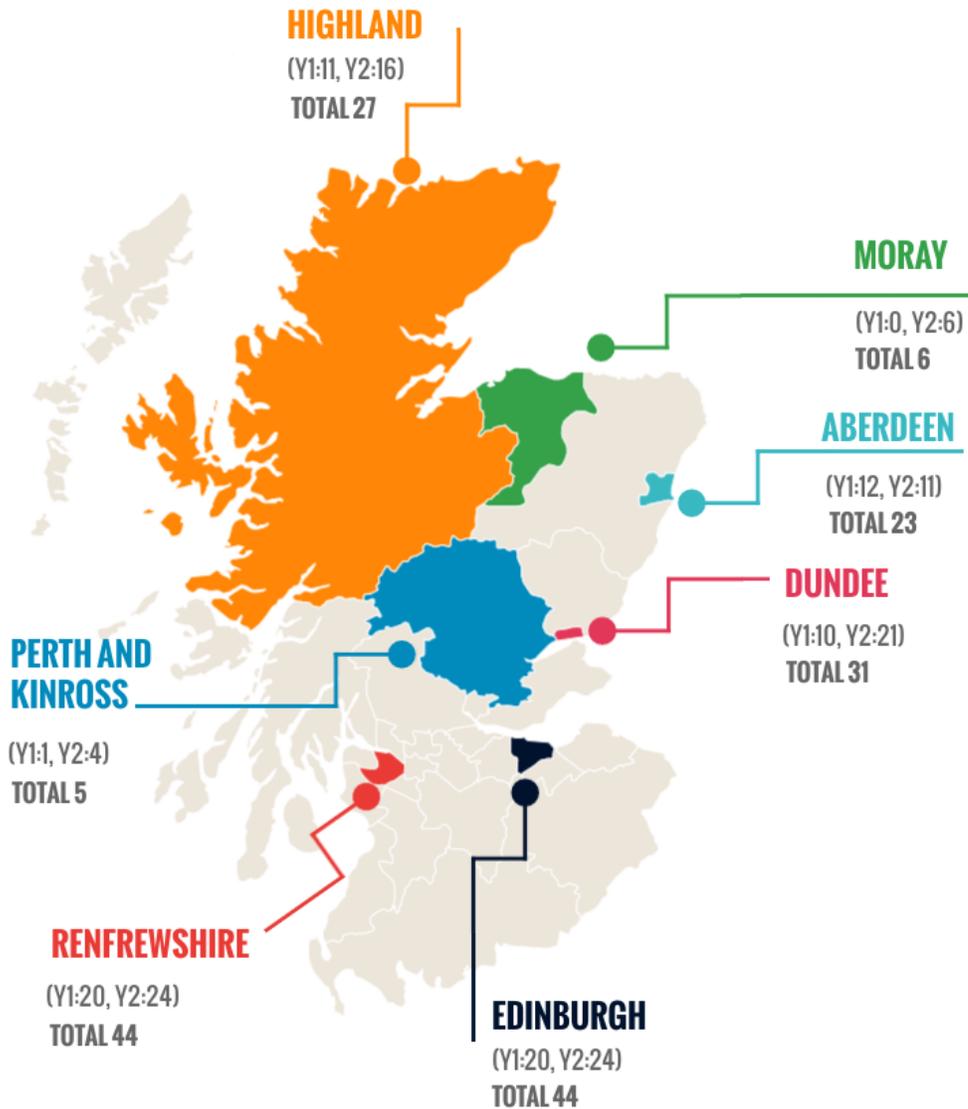
In 2021/22 a total of 106 new young people joined the Fit for Work through CashBack programme. There were 74 participants in Year 1, meaning the total number of participants over Years 1 and 2 was **180**.

	AGED 10 - 15	AGED 16 - 18	AGED 19 - 24
Year 1	4	60	11
Year 2	29	69	7
Total	33	129	18

Some participants continued over from Year 1 into Year 2, due to the pandemic and associated restrictions in opportunities. Overall, 155 participants completed the programme (40 in year 1 and 115 in year 2). In addition, 17 young people continued on the programme into year 3.



For 2021/22, delivery covered seven areas. Moray was introduced as a new target area for the programme.



Within these areas, Fit for Work through CashBack is strongly targeted at communities in areas of high deprivation. Barnardo’s carefully targeted the work at the 10% most deprived communities in Scotland (based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) within these local authority areas. It also reviewed evidence about types of deprivation within these communities, and targeted activities at communities experiencing the highest level of disadvantage relating to youth unemployment, crime and poor health.

In year 2, almost all of the young people involved in Fit for Work through CashBack were from the 50% most deprived areas in Scotland (90%). A third were from the 20% most deprived areas. Many of the young people that Fit for Work engages with are school refusers and have no qualifications.

	0-20% MOST DEPRIVED	20-30%	30-50%	50-100% LEAST DEPRIVED
Year 1	22 young people 30%	31 young people 42%	18 young people 24%	3 young people 4%
Year 2	36 young people 34%	28 young people 27%	30 young people 29%	11 young people 10%
Total*	58 young people 32%	59 young people 33%	48 young people 27%	14 young people 8%

*1 unknown Source: Quarterly Review Sheets

Most participants identified as male. In year 2, the proportion of young women taking part in the programme increased, compared with year 1.

	MALE	FEMALE
Year 1	51 young people 69%	23 young people 31%
Year 2	60 young people 57%	46 young people 43%
Total	111 young people 62%	69 young people 38%

Across Scotland figures for 2020/21 – produced in September 2021 – show that the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 12.5%, and 12.4% of 16 to 24 year olds were not in employment, education or training. The proportion of young men not in employment education or training was 14.4% compared with 10.4% for young women.¹

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-labour-market-people-places-regions-statistics-annual-population-survey-2020-21/pages/7/>

Over half of all participants identified as having a disability. Of these, most had issues with learning, understanding and concentrating. Participants also had social or behavioural needs, hearing issues or memory issues. For comparison, in Scotland approximately one in five people identifies as disabled.

	NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE	PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE
Year 1	41	55%
Year 2	53	50%
Total*	94	52%

There was a good mix of participants in terms of sexual orientation, with 12 per cent identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other across years 1 and 2. This compares to an average of around four per cent for the 16 to 24 year old age group across the UK ². Information has not been broken down for each year due to the small number of young people involved.

In terms of ethnic origin, 8 per cent of participants were minority ethnic across years 1 and 2³. Overall, across Scotland eight per cent of the population is minority ethnic ⁴. While this varies considerably by local authority and neighbourhood, three of the areas that Fit for Work through CashBack operates in have reasonably high minority ethnic populations - Aberdeen (8%), Edinburgh (8%) and Dundee (6%). Again, information has not been broken down for each year due to the small number of young people involved.

Across years 1 and 2, 8 per cent of participants identified as having a religious belief.

²Annual population survey, UK, 2018 (sexual orientation question asked)

³Self describing as an ethnic origin other than white Scottish or white British.

⁴For this purpose, to ensure comparable figures, defined as minority ethnic/ white non-British - <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ethnicity-identity-language-and-religion>

3 IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE

The numbers

YOUNG PEOPLE REPORTED:	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
Their confidence increasing	100%	96%
Positive changes in their behaviour	100%	69%
Feeling able to do new things ⁵	89% to 100%	74% to 85%
Positive supportive networks	83%	84%
Feeling more stability - used as a measure for resilience	33%	70%

Overall, young people felt more confident, more able to do new things, and reported positive changes in their stability.

In year 1, just a third of young people reported feeling more stability. However, it should be noted that the measures for stability were taken from workstars completed at the beginning and end of young people's participation in the programme. Over year 1, the public health situation, restrictions on everyday life and ability to plan for the future changed significantly due to factors beyond the Fit for Work programme. In year 2, a higher proportion of young people felt more stability and resilience.

⁵First figure from workstars, second figure from focus group discussions

Views and experiences

Young people often said that the main reason for joining the Fit for Work programme was because they wanted to build their confidence. Most felt that Fit for Work had helped with their confidence and resilience in terms of:

- Talking to others
- Dealing with anxiety
- Building a positive attitude
- Coping with problems and challenges
- Speaking to someone if they had a problem
- Communicating online
- Future aspirations and motivation.



I want to do something with my life.”

- Participant



It has helped me to build my confidence and learn new life skills.”

- Participant

Barnardo's worked with many young people with anxiety issues, and these improvements in confidence were important in terms of their social skills. Participants indicated that they felt they could now talk to people, and feel more in control of the situation. Some indicated that they had found it particularly difficult talking to others after a long time of lockdown and limited social contact, and that the programme had helped significantly with this.



Definitely for me. I used to get really anxious speaking to people I didn't know.”

I am now able to be more open.”

These courses give me a confidence boost. It makes socialising a little bit easier and I can prevent socially awkward situations.”

- Participants

I have anxiety issues, and normally get nervous talking to people, I'm getting better at talking to people I don't know.”

I never liked speaking to people, I can speak more now.”

I feel more at ease approaching people.”



Case study: Building confidence

Alfie* got involved in Fit for Work after his careers advisor at school suggested he do the course. He had applied to college but the course wasn't on in 2020. He wasn't sure at first, but once he met the project worker one-to-one he felt all right about it.

Alfie learned how to write a CV, how to work as a group, and also had the chance to get involved in his community through litter picking. He feels more confident in CV writing and applying for jobs. He also feels better about interacting with others.



"I've learned about teamwork and being able to communicate with a group."



"I know how to deal with people. Just speaking to people, meeting new people."

Alfie plans to go on to college in autumn. Fit for Work helped him to develop his skills and confidence before going on to college. In the meantime he is applying for a job to keep him busy until college starts.



"If it wasn't on Fit for Wok, I'd probably just be sitting at home."

Stakeholders were also positive about the confidence, resilience and behaviour of participants. Stakeholders felt that Barnardo's was able to support young people to do what is right for them, with no pressure. This was particularly important as many young people were going through a very difficult time.



"After having met with the young person I referred, he told me that he was more open to new things since taking part in the course. He was more upbeat about himself, and less defensive."

- Referral partner



"Her confidence is so much greater."

- Referral partner



"I referred a 6th year pupil who had very little confidence before attending. The change and increase in his confidence at the end of the course was so lovely to see."

- Referral partner



After having met with the young person I referred, he told me that he was more open to new things since taking part in the course. He was more upbeat about himself, and less defensive."

- Referral partner



I definitely see a change in them."

- Delivery partner

Example: Working with schools

One teacher highlighted the value of Fit for Work for pupils who struggle with mainstream classes, have social anxiety or are school refusers. Through Fit for Work, young people develop more confidence and social skills. Young people become more confident, engage a bit more in classes, and are happier putting their views across.



They've definitely grown in confidence."

Fit for Work also helps young people to think about options for the future, and gives the school more confidence that they will stick at their chosen destination.



We do our best in school to have a positive destination for every kid, but there's always a niggling feeling that they may fall off. But by doing Fit for Work and seeing places other than school that can support you, they are more inclined to stick at their destination."

Case Study: Confidence and skills

Hannah joined Fit for Work after taking part in another Barnardo's course. She wanted to get more confidence and help with planning her career. Hannah really liked Fit for Work. She did the course on a one-to-one basis because she did not feel that taking part in a group online environment would work for her.

It was easy to talk to the Barnardo's lead worker about this, and they quickly agreed another approach. Because of the restrictions in place due to Covid-19 they connected mainly through one-to-one phone activity and they managed to meet up face-to-face once. Hannah enjoyed the routine and regularity of the contact.



I liked having a routine of things that I have to do."

Through Fit for Work, Hannah learned a lot of new skills. She became more confident and aware of her own abilities.



I definitely learned new things. Just, like a lot about how to write about myself and my own qualities... I am now more likely to put my feelings and thoughts on paper."

She also felt more able to put her view across to others after Fit for Work.



I am more willing to... not put my foot down but say when things are bothering me."

Hannah felt more able to communicate with others and talk on the phone because of Fit for Work.



It changed how I feel about the phone. I still don't like making calls but I can answer phone calls better."

Hannah also developed new hobbies and started to take up sewing in her spare time. She is taking opportunities to be more creative, through art and writing. Hannah feels that through Fit for Work she has learned how to balance work and leisure. She feels that others have also noticed changes in her.



Everyone says I have... They have noticed I definitely seem more sort of confident and brighter I guess."

Overall Hannah very much enjoyed Fit for Work. Next, Hannah plans to go on to another Barnardo's course. She is still not too sure what she would like to do for work, but she has a better idea of what she doesn't want to do - anything too loud or too busy.



I definitely would recommend it. Anything that helps with your career and confidence."

PHYSICAL AND PERSONAL SKILLS

The numbers

Young people developed their skills and gained accreditation for learning.

YOUNG PEOPLE:	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
Gained accreditation for learning and skills development	29	92
Felt that they increased their skills	83%	97%

Views and experiences

Young people highlighted that their personal skills increased in terms of:

- IT and digital skills
- money management
- planning and organising
- talking to others and voicing opinions
- working as part of a team
- independent travel.

In year 1, young people focused mainly on skills around IT and money management. Many mentioned that the course being online in year 1 helped to increase their skills in using Zoom, accessing emails and remembering passwords. Many talked about the money management aspect of the programme, highlighting that Fit for Work taught them about how to save, budget, compare prices, manage their money and be aware of financial scams.

 I got into saving, it's really good."

 It taught me how to manage my money and to save."

For year 2, young people mentioned a wider range of skills including improving organisation and planning skills.

 It has helped me to be more organised."

 I'm more organised than I used to be and get to the sessions on time."

Some felt better able to talk about their views, opinions and needs. Many felt that they had improved their skills in terms of working with others.

 "I'm more able to talk to people and to voice my opinions."

 "It's helped me to work as part of a group. I'd never done this before."

 "It has helped me develop my social and communication skills."

One young person said they felt more able to travel independently.

 "I wasn't able to get on a bus myself because I have anxiety but after working with Barnardo's for a while I've been able to get on the bus myself multiple times now."

Stakeholders agreed that participants had developed their personal skills, including:

- IT and online interview skills
- financial knowledge and budgeting skills
- creative writing and video skills
- presentation and listening skills
- working with others, problem solving and supporting one another.

Many of the young people involved in Fit for Work are school refusers and have no qualifications. Staff indicated that through the programme they have the opportunity to gain a range of qualifications including Personal Development Awards, Youth Achievement Awards, SQA accreditations, John Muir Trust awards and First Aid qualifications.

Example: Working with schools

Barnardo's works in partnership with MyBnk to deliver a Money Works course for the Fit for Work programme. This involves MyBnk running four sessions covering a range of financial topics including understanding payslips, how to set up a bank account and where to access safe financial advice. At the end of the course young people get a Level 4 SCQF award in Financial Management.



It is good for their self-esteem and their CV. It can also help when they are applying for mortgages or when they get a job.”

- Delivery partner



It has made them think differently about how they can make money, for example they can do 'mini' jobs like dog walking or babysitting.”

- Delivery partner

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The numbers

Young people developed their skills and gained accreditation for learning.

YOUNG PEOPLE REPORTED:	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
Improvements in health and wellbeing	56%	63%

It is important to recognise the significant challenges to mental and physical health during 2020 to 2022. In the context of restrictions on every day life and a continually changing public health environment, young people across Scotland (and the world) faced real issues with physical and mental health.

In year 1, many of the young people involved in Fit for Work found that they rated their health and wellbeing lower at the end of the programme than at the start, while others reported health and wellbeing increasing over the programme. It is likely that many of these changes are related to wider factors, and not directly related to Fit for Work itself.

More detail on how Fit for Work contributed to the health and wellbeing of participants is set out below.

Views and experiences

Through Fit for Work participants took part in a wide range of health and wellbeing activities, including:

- Mental health support
- Kindness and support
- Creative projects such as creating a podcast
- Meditation
- Discussions about boundaries
- Outdoor activity such as visiting country parks and walking challenges
- Outdoor group activity like laser quest
- Visiting animals
- Gardening and horticulture
- Gambling, drugs and alcohol awareness activity.

Young people felt that Fit for Work helped with health and wellbeing through:

- **Providing structure**

Many felt that the routine and regularity of the Fit for Work sessions helped them to feel useful and positive. In year 2, when participants were getting out of the house for sessions, they particularly found that this helped them with their routine and their sleeping patterns.

 "Instead of sitting in the house all day, I'm getting out more. I guess it makes me feel happy."

 "Instead of sleeping my days away, I'm forcing myself to get up."

 "I've started waking up on time, my sleep schedule is better than it was when I left school."

- **Encouraging physical activity**

Many young people became more active as a result of fitness challenges and activities introduced through Fit for Work. In one area, participants found a Conqueror fitness challenge really helped them to be more active. In another, participants receiving fitness watches as part of a fitness challenge encouraged them to be more active.

 "I have walked between 10 and 20 miles a week."

 I'll be honest I've been a lot more active. Like I have energy to tidy my room and go out for walks."

 We went on a bike trip and were out for like three hours."

- **Getting outdoors**

Many of the activities in year 2 were outdoors, such as walks or group outdoor activity like laser quest. Young people felt that Fit for Work helped them to get outdoors more, be active and to feel happier because of this. Young people had also enjoyed spending time outdoors, and feeling confident being outdoors.

 I have done more outdoor activity stuff, like going on long walks."

 It has encouraged me to get out and walk a lot more."

 I go out more and take the dog for long walks. I really enjoy being outside."

 I am more active and go out more. It's got me into a routine."

- **Supporting mental health**

Both the physical activity and the regular sessions helped some young people to deal with mental health issues. A few highlighted that they really connected with the other young people in the group, made lasting friendships.

 It has helped me deal with my mental health issues."

 I struggle a bit with my mental health. Doing the fitness challenge has helped me."

 I'm definitely happier when I come to Fit for Work."

 I am definitely more positive."

Example: Impact on health and wellbeing

In one group, there was a young person whose only interaction with people was the Fit for Work sessions. He was there on time for every session. In another group, one young person had poor mental health and could be suicidal. He engaged well with the group and was always on time for the sessions.



Fit for Work gives young people hope, it helps them to understand why we go to work. This is the starting point."

- Barnardo's staff



He said that being on Fit for Work was the first time that he had felt part of something."

- Barnardo's staff

Participants indicated that without Fit for Work they would be considerably less active, and would have a less positive daily routine.



Well...I'd probably be staying up til 6 in the morning, playing games...something completely impractical."



I would probably just be lying in bed til late in the day everyday."



I was bored, lockdown got to me. I was quite overwhelmed, at a low point."

Stakeholders agreed that Fit for Work had a positive impact on participants' health and wellbeing. For example, in some money management sessions participants talked openly about their financial difficulties and the impact this had on their mental health. In creative sessions, young people responded well to the sense of play and being silly, trying out new things and building self-esteem and confidence. They also talked to one another about their experiences and thoughts.



The young person I support always comes away from sessions with an apparent sense of well-being and achievement, which in turn helps them to behave in ways which make them and others around them happy and fulfilled.”

- Referral partner

Example: Supporting health and wellbeing

In the Edinburgh Fit for Work group, there is a system in place for referring young people to a counsellor. The Fit for Work group has access to five spaces.



The benefits of the Fit for Work programme are huge for young people, it really helps their mental health.”

- Fit for Work, staff member

EMPLOYABILITY

The numbers

Young people developed their skills and gained accreditation for learning.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2
37 of the 40 young people who completed the programme achieved a positive destination	80 of the 100 young people who completed the programme achieved a positive destination
33 progressed to training	37 progressed to training
3 went on to full time education	30 went on to full time education
1 went on to a job	12 went on to a job
28 stayed on Fit for Work into year 2	17 stayed on Fit for Work into year 3
6 did not complete the programme	6 did not complete the programme

Views and experiences

Young people taking part in the Fit for Work through CashBack programme talked about how their employability skills had improved through:

- Developing their CV
- Gaining accredited qualifications
- Learning how to apply to college or for apprenticeships
- Helping them to think through their goals and what they want to achieve.



It's the first time that I have put pen to paper since leaving school. It's handy having things written down."

Young people also talked about the life skills that they had gained, which helped them to feel better prepared for work.

 "I'm better equipped for different situations."

 "I am more prepared and more willing to tackle problems."

 "It has given me access to lots of opportunities."

 "I've been out of work for just over a year now. This is a chance for me to get back into work and getting a qualification from it was an added bonus."

Some of the young people who had joined Fit for Work had come because they felt they had nowhere else to go, and didn't know what to do with their lives. Most of the participants in discussion groups indicated that they now had clear plans about what they wanted to do next - including further training, starting college, starting apprenticeships, looking for a job or gaining qualifications needed for a particular career. Just a few were not yet sure what they wanted to do next.

 "It helped quite a lot, I didn't have a clear idea what to do when I left school."

 "It's helped me to think about my goals for the future."

Example: Positive destinations

One young person was going on to start an apprenticeship as a customer assistant. He felt that Fit for Work helped him to achieve this outcome.

 "The whole reason I got this apprenticeship was through Barnardo's."

Example: Attainment

Joe* joined Fit for Work because he was about to get suspended. His guidance worker suggested trying the programme.

Joe did an SCQF level 3 money management course, did arts and crafts, and attended group meetings. He enjoyed the art activity because he liked drawing. Each person got a bit bag of arts supplies delivered, and they did arts activities that had a positive and feel good message. They also did photography activity capturing acts of kindness.

He liked the course and was fine doing the course online. Through the course, he has built up his confidence speaking to other people. He now draws more in his spare time. He wants to try to get a job now, and then join the army. He developed these plans through Fit for Work - "because they've given me a confidence boost."

Importantly, Fit for Work helped young people to move on to positive destinations that suited them and their aims, providing bespoke support to young people to think about their options.

Example: Work that is good for your health

One young person was offered a job. It was in 12 hour shifts and involved lots of travel. Through Fit for Work, they explored the offer and thought about health and wellbeing. They talked about how even though work is important, it needs to be the right job for you. He is now exploring other options.



Barnardo's has helped.; It is what made me realise the job is not right. It would take a big toll on my mental and physical health."

Example: Positive destinations

One young person has developed a clear plan through taking part in Fit for Work. He picked up a summer job and worked through his longer term options with Barnardo's.



I had some unrealistic ambitions and we settled on something a bit more me.”

Working with Barnardo's staff, they looked at different college course options and narrowed it down. He applied for college and was successful in receiving an unconditional offer for autumn 2022 doing media and broadcasting. This young person felt that without the support through Fit for Work he would have been scared off by the range of options available, and not made a decision.

Many of the young people were hoping to continue to work with Barnardo's through further courses, such as the Barnardo's Employability Fund course. Young people saw this as a stepping stone to achieving their longer term aims.



I am planning to go on the Employability Fund course and then hopefully go to college.”

Staff indicated that there had been an increase in the number of young people staying on within Barnardo's and progressing through different employability programmes.

Stakeholders agreed that young people developed their employability and learning skills through Fit for Work. For example, one stakeholder thought that young people's goals and aspirations became more realistic as they realised what they needed to do to get the first step on the career ladder. Stakeholders also commented that through Fit for Work young people gained qualifications to add to their CVs, which may help them in seeking employment.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The numbers

Young people developed their skills and gained accreditation for learning.

YOUNG PEOPLE:	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
Contributed volunteering hours as part of the programme	142 hours	215 hours
Had a heightened sense of belonging to their community	90%	67%
Felt their contribution to community links and social interactions were improving	90%	67%
Had an increased motivation to positively influence their community	70%	67%

In year 1, opportunities to volunteer included litter picking, working at a local community allotment, and gardening projects. However, opportunities to volunteer were impacted significantly by the public health situation. Some participants were not able to do any volunteering due to the restrictions.

In year 2, volunteering opportunities continued to be outdoor focused. With public health restrictions continuing to change regularly, in some cases volunteering was planned but was cancelled at the last minute.

In year 2, one young person continued on to volunteer with a community organisation after the programme. Again, volunteering opportunities available locally were restricted due to the pandemic.

Views and experiences

In discussions, young people indicated that they were getting out into their community a lot more because of Fit for Work. This was particularly evident in year 2, when participants were able to undertake group outdoor activity.



We went places I'd never been and it was interesting to keep in touch with your community."

 I feel more active in my community, going outside, meeting new people.”

A few participants talked about how they felt differently about their area now, and wanted to take responsibility for looking after them.

 It makes me want to look after places. There are beautiful places and this generation of youth is making a mess. It gave me a feeling of urgency.”

 I feel like it’s important. Like our beach clean up, it’s a way of giving back to the community, you go along and make the beach a better place for everyone.”

 I’ve got involved in charity walks through the Venture Trust.”

Some felt that they were spending their time differently, and more connected to their families and friends.

 Before, talking to adults felt weird but now I am good at talking to adults, understanding what adults want.”

Participants also indicated that there was a good sense of community within the Fit for Work group itself. And some found a connection with the community just by getting up, leaving their room, going out of the house and being outdoors.

 I liked the sense of community. We were a tight knit group. We all got pushed together because of the course.”

 Now I'm forcing myself to get up and out at least once a day.”

Most of the young people we spoke to said that they weren’t involved in anti-social behaviour or the justice system, so the programme didn’t influence this activity for them. However, there were a small number of examples of young people reducing their involvement in the justice system through participation in Fit for Work.

 I have a little bit more respect for other people.”

Stakeholders felt that Fit for Work encouraged a proactive and entrepreneurial approach, supporting young people to do more for themselves and in their community. Stakeholders felt that young people also developed a sense of community within the Fit for Work group, beginning to support one another and look out for each other.

Example: Getting involved in local activities

One young person visited the local car museum with Fit for Work. He got to know one of the volunteers who worked there, and the volunteer invited him to come back and watch while he was working on one of the classic cars. He has now developed aspirations to be a car mechanic. He is planning to go to college to study car mechanics, and has signed up to the next Barnardo's course to help him to achieve this goal. He said that if he hadn't attended Fit for Work, he would have left school and wouldn't be doing anything with his time.

Case study: Diversion from justice system

Henry* got involved in Fit for Work after being involved in the justice system.



I got told if I did stuff through Barnardo's I wouldn't go to jail."

He chatted to Barnardo's about Fit for Work. At first he didn't want to go, but then he thought he would give it a try.

Barnardo's helped him with his CV and plans for the future. He uses the planning techniques in day to day life now.



I learned how to do SMART goals. I'm using them quite a lot in everyday life, like for setting goals for my fitness."

Henry now feels more confident and willing to try new things.



I'm more confident in doing new activities. I'm more willing to try things. We didn't get to do a lot of the activities because of Covid, but I'm willing to try."

Henry plans to continue his involvement with Barnardo's until he gets a part time job. He feels that his CV is much better, and now he has something to put on his CV.



Fit for Work will definitely help me to apply... A qualification is better than a blank CV."

Longer term, Henry plans to go to college to do sports, leisure and fitness.

Case study: Working with Green Team

The Green Team in Edinburgh worked with Barnardo's to offer volunteering as part of the Edinburgh Fit for Work course. The Green Team supports outdoor, practical conservation work and personal reflection. The Green Team offered six days of support to the Fit for Work group. The young people got involved in practical conservation tasks including:

- helping to create a new woodland in urban Edinburgh
- creating a gorse firebreak in Holyrood Park
- cutting and burning invasive weeds at Carstorphine Hill



It was about being outside, being part of a group, having a shared experience.”

The Green Team worked with Fit for Work to establish common aims, around being outside, developing social skills and being active.



We have been able to provide young people that experience of being able to introduce them to green spaces, in and around their homes.”

Longer term, the Green Team has supported Fit for Work to explore how to run a varied programme of practical tasks within the programme, to ensure young people can continue to volunteer outdoors.

4 LEARNING DURING 2020 TO 2022

LEARNING ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

Young people were very positive about the Fit for Work programme. The main thing that young people enjoyed was that it was a positive and supportive environment. Young people mentioned how the course felt relaxed, calm, low key, friendly, inclusive and easy going. This was very important to the participants.



You don't feel under pressure about anything... not to the point you are breaking, like I used to, feel."



It doesn't feel like a chore. I want to come in and be around the young people who are here."



It feels way more calmer, not stressed."



It's more chilled and mellow."

Participants felt able to have their say in what happened as part of the Fit for Work programme, and were very positive about the staff believing them to be helpful, supportive and organised.



I think we're treated like adults, not like students or children."



They made it fun. It's not as serious as going into work."



The staff member) was lovely, absolutely wonderful, supportive and easy to talk to."



We had great chats and she has a really positive energy."

Example: Practical help

One young person needed to organise an emergency repair, but had issues with finances and no money in the bank. The project worker helped her to access a crisis loan. She found the paperwork very overwhelming, and the project worker helped a lot with this. The project worker also helped her to fill in a long health form from DWP.

Stakeholders agreed that the atmosphere was supportive, welcoming and collaborative.



Young people feel supported and are able to be themselves in a safe and inclusive environment.”

- Partner

Most young people said that there was nothing that they would change about Fit for Work. A few would like the Fit for Work course to last longer. A few said that they were disappointed that their volunteering opportunities did not go ahead – due to wider public health issues – as this was an important aspect of the programme for them.



I'd want to actually be able to volunteer. I was quite upset. I was looking forward to it.”

LEARNING ABOUT ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE DELIVERY

Most sessions were delivered online in year 1, while many of the sessions in 2021/22 were delivered face-to-face. Young people were positive about the online sessions in year 1 and felt that this approach worked well – but that they preferred face-to-face sessions. In year 2, young people indicated that they enjoyed being able to meet face-to-face, get outdoors, do activities and have a social element to the course in 2021/22.



It was different to the last group on Zoom. You could mute up and speak just when asked. This group we were forced outside in the open. You kind of have to speak or do something.”

Staff at Barnardo's agreed that the online sessions were better than they had expected. Staff found that bringing young people together to meet face-to-face was easier once people had got to know each other online. However, during year 2 staff found that young people expressed a clear preference for face-to-face opportunities.



Young people are happier socialising face-to-face.”

- Barnardo's staff

However, many young people have needed support to be able to get involved in a face-to-face group environment and have needed one-to-one support first to develop their social skills and confidence.

Example: Online activity in Highland

Online activity worked well in Highland, where young people tend to be more spread out geographically. Running the courses online during year 1 enabled connections to be built with a wider range of young people. In this area, Fit for Work through CashBack considered a blended approach in the future with some activity online, and young people brought together for specific events or sessions. However, during year 2 they realised that young people had a clear preference for face-to-face sessions and some were experiencing digital fatigue.

Delivery partners indicated that in year 1 they were able to do their work with young people online, but that it presented different challenges. For example, one partner found that it was quite hard to run creative projects with young people with their cameras off, and so worked with Barnardo's staff to build the confidence of the next group of people to turn their cameras on.

LEARNING ABOUT WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Staff indicated that working in partnership was important for identifying and reaching potential participants, and making connections. Partners varied across each of the Fit for Work areas, dependent on local contexts. Referral partners included schools, Skills Development Scotland, youth groups, creative groups and equality groups.

Referral processes have generally worked very well. Working with schools helped to create joined up and integrated referral routes. A few staff felt that more could be done to explore whether Fit for Work is the right route for each young person, working closely with school staff, social work staff and Skills Development Scotland.

Working with local youth, creative and equality organisations has helped Fit for Work reach young people that they would not have reached before. Working with local criminal justice teams and youth diversionary services has helped to reach young people at risk of involvement in the justice system.

Delivery partners have strengthened the range of opportunities available to young people, and enabled experts to support young people to develop their skills in key areas. This includes money management, environmental conservation, arts and creativity.



Working with the Green Team has been fantastic, it gets young people out of doors in different parts of Edinburgh they have never been to.”

- Fit for Work, staff member

Discussions with delivery and referral partners highlighted that partners find Barnardo’s easy to work with and dedicated to supporting young people.

Partners felt that Barnardo’s created a good atmosphere in terms of joint working.

Partners felt that Barnardo’s staff were very dedicated and committed, putting in extra effort to help each individual.



The project workers go the extra mile to reach out to the young people, and take responsibility to help them to achieve.”

- Delivery partner



They are a good, solid provider. We have no qualms about referring to Fit for Work and Barnardo’s.”

- Referral partner



Project workers at Barnardo's really care about their young people as individuals, and as a result the level of commitment from young people is really high."

- Delivery partner

For example, one referral partner felt that referrals happened flexibly and involved careful discussion between organisations. This partner liked that Barnardo's had an initial chat with people to see if they would like to be involved. This partner also felt that it was useful that Barnardo's was able to offer a seamless suite of provision, so that when young people complete Fit for Work they can easily move on to another relevant opportunity within Barnardo's if appropriate.



The suite of provision is really beneficial to the young person... It can be a seamless transition in the employability pipeline.. when they are ready they can progress up."

- Referral partner

LEARNING ABOUT PROFILE

The Fit for Work programme attracted a higher proportion of young men than young women, but the balance improved during year 2. The team found that it was challenging to attract young women to the programme. Some staff wondered if some young women felt the Fit for Work programme sounded like it was more for young men. A few mentioned that when girls got involved it could be a challenge to encourage girls to stay until the end of the programme. This would be worth careful consideration to explore whether the programme could be adapted to better suit the needs and preferences of young women.

It is worth carefully considering the balance within the programme. Young women face significant barriers in the labour market, including occupational segregation and a gap in earnings of 33% between 18 to 21 year old women and men. There is also evidence that the pandemic hit women's employment the hardest⁶.

While the Fit for Work programme is heavily targeted at the 20% most deprived areas, there is a spread of participants across a range of SIMD deciles within the 50% most deprived areas. It is worth considering whether more targeting of the most deprived areas is required for future years.

These issues are important to consider for year 3 of the Fit for Work programme. Although the volume of young people involved will need to increase slightly to meet the three year target of 300 young people, it is also important to think about who will benefit the most from the support, to tackle inequalities and boost life chances for the most disadvantaged young people.

LEARNING ABOUT FIT FOR WORK

During a worldwide pandemic, the evaluation needs to recognise the significant external factors impacting on outcomes for participants, particularly measures around young people's health and wellbeing. For some participants this stayed the same or declined between the beginning and end of the Fit for Work programme, due to wider factors.

In year 1 it became apparent that the evaluation method required too much information from young people, about a large number of indicators, gathered in different ways at different times. The evaluation method was therefore streamlined part way through 2020/21 to remove the online survey of young people, and include structured survey questions within discussion groups facilitated by Research Scotland with young people throughout the year. This removed online surveys and reinvested time in conversations, to help us to understand the reasons behind young people's outcomes in a more nuanced and useful way. This has worked well for year 2. To enable this approach to continue to work, Barnardo's will need to ensure that as many participant workstars as possible are completed in year 3, and that the outcomes reported on are as consistent as possible, to provide robust information on core outcomes.

⁶ <https://wbg.org.uk/analysis/uk-policy-briefings/covid-19-and-economic-challenges-for-young-women/>

Appendix One

Years 1 and 2: Progress against targets

	TARGET YEARS 1 AND 2	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	MEASUREMENT
Overall number or participants	200	74*	106	Barnardo's stats
Outcome 1: Confidence and resilience				
Young people report confidence increasing	80%	100%	96%	Focus groups (Yr1:29/Yr2:27)
Young people report being able to do new things	80%	100%	96%	Focus groups (Yr1:29/Yr2:27)
		89%	74%-85%	Workstar: aspiration (Yr1:18/Yr2:69) and survey (27)
Young people report positive changes in their behaviour	80%	100%	74%	Focus groups (Yr1:10/Yr2:27)
Young people report feeling more resilient	70%	33%	70%	Workstar: stability (Yr1:18/Yr2:69)
Stakeholders report increased confidence and resilience of young participants	80%	100%	100%	Stakeholder interviews and survey (Yr1:3/Yr2:10)
Stakeholders report positive changes in behaviour of young participants	80%	100%	100%	

	TARGET YEARS 1 AND 2	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	MEASUREMENT
Outcome 2: Physical and personal skills				
Young people gain accreditation for learning and skills development	70%	29 people = 73%	92 people = 87%	Barnardo's monitoring (Yr1:out of 40 completed, Yr2: out of 106)
Young people demonstrate increased skills	80%	83%	87%	Workstar: Workplace, job search, workplace and job skills (Yr1:18/Yr2:69)
Stakeholders report participant skills increasing	80%	100%**	100%	Stakeholder interviews and survey (Yr1:3/Yr2:10)
Outcome 3: Health and wellbeing				
Young people report increases in wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators	70%	56%	63%	Workstar: Health and Wellbeing (Yr1:18/Yr2:69)
Stakeholders report increases in SHANARRI among	80%	100%**	100%	Stakeholder interviews and survey (Yr1:3/Yr2:10)
Stakeholders report increased confidence and resilience of young participants	80%	100%	100%	Stakeholder interviews and survey (Yr1:3/Yr2:10)
Outcome 4: Learning, employability and options				
Young people achieve a positive destination	75%	37 people = 93% of 40 completers	80 people = 80% of 100	Barnardo's monitoring (Yr1:out of 40 completed, Yr2: 100 completed)
Young people improve attendance***	70%	68 people*** = 81%	100 people = 94%	Barnardo's records: attendance at Fit for Work

	TARGET YEARS 1 AND 2	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	MEASUREMENT
Outcome 4: Learning, employability and options				
Young people improve attainment***	70%	29 people = 72% of 40 completers	92 people = 92% of 100 completers	Barnardo's records: accreditation for learning
Stakeholders report increased attendance and attainment	80%	100%	100%	Stakeholder interviews and survey (Yr1:3/Yr2:10)
Outcome 5: Community contribution				
Young people volunteering or leadership in community organisations	10%	0%	1 person = 1%	Barnardo's records:
Hours of volunteering contributed by participants	4,000 over 3 years	142 hours	215 hours	
Community focused awards gained	2	0	6 people	
Stakeholders report improvement in contribution, links and social interaction	80%	100%	100%	Stakeholder interviews and survey (Yr1:3/Yr2:10)
Young people's perception of neighbourhood improves	60%	-	67%	Focus groups (Yr1:10/Yr2:27)

	TARGET YEARS 1 AND 2	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	MEASUREMENT
Outcome 5: Community contribution (continued)				
Young people have heightened sense of belonging to a community	60%	90%	67%	Focus groups (Yr1:10/Yr2:27)
Young people have increased motivation to positively influence community	60%	70%	67%	
Young people feel contribution, links and social interactions are improving	60%	90%	67%	
Long term outcome: Diversion from involvement in the justice system				
Young people report reduced anti-social and/or criminal behaviour	50%	All stated not applicable to them	100% of those who felt it was relevant to them (3/27)	Focus groups (Yr1:10/Yr2:27)
Young people report feeling less inclined to participate in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour	50%			

*Participation figures for year 1 were impacted by the global health situation. The overall target number of participants is 300 over 3 years.

**Barnardo's does not aim to work with people who are attending school. Improvements in attendance are measured through attendance at a positive learning environment through the Fit for Work programme.

***Improvements in attainment are measured through achievement of accredited learning through the Fit for Work programme.



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