

Evaluation of the Venture Trust's CashBack Change Cycle 2017-2020

Findings and reflections from a three-
year evaluation



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1. Executive Summary

Introduction and methodology

Rocket Science was commissioned by the Venture Trust to conduct an external three-year evaluation of the CashBack Change Cycle (CBCC) programme between 2017 and 2020.

CBCC is an innovative employability programme delivered by the Venture Trust, in partnership with the Bike Station in Edinburgh, and Bike for Good in Glasgow. Over the three-year funding period, the programme aimed to engage with 256 young people across areas of multiple deprivation, with the objective of enrolling 192 of these people on the programme. Participants had the opportunity to develop vocational skills in bike building / maintenance, general employability skills, and were helped to build their self-confidence and motivation.

Rocket Science has produced evaluation reports annually for the CBCC programme, highlighting the outcomes that the Venture Trust is achieving, producing recommendations on what can be improved, and informing programme development year on year.

Each report has been informed by the following:

- Analysis of management data collected by the Venture Trust
- Longitudinal interviews with young people who have participated in the programme
- Analysis of video interviews with young people during the programme
- Interviews conducted with staff members involved in the delivery of the programme
- Interviews with organisations who had referred young people onto the programme.

This final report provides both an annual update, and a reflection on the programme as a whole, aggregating and comparing data across all three years.



Programme overview

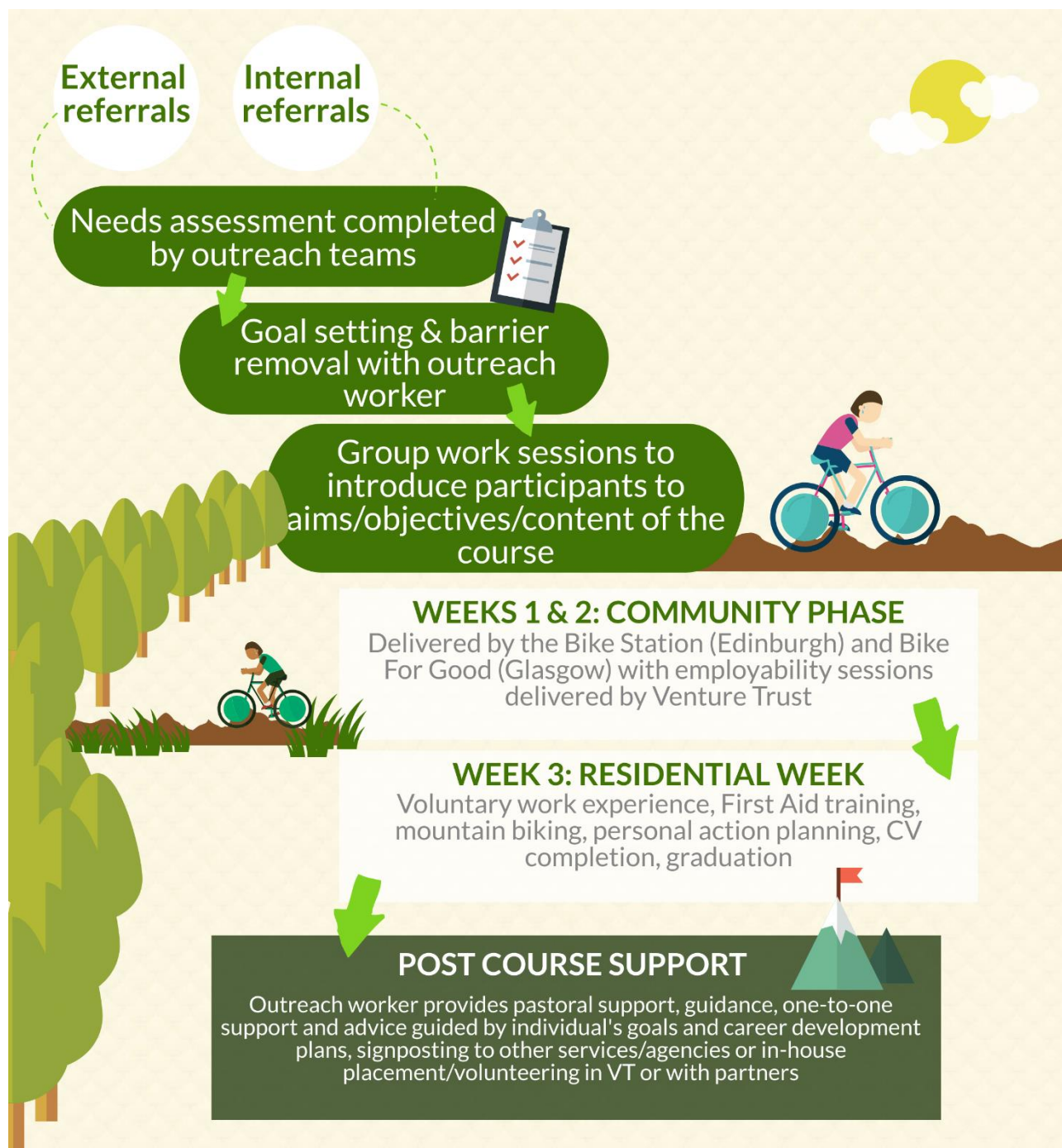


Figure 1 Structure of the Venture Trust Cashback Change Cycle programme [Source: Rocket Science presentation of Venture Trust]



Referral demographics

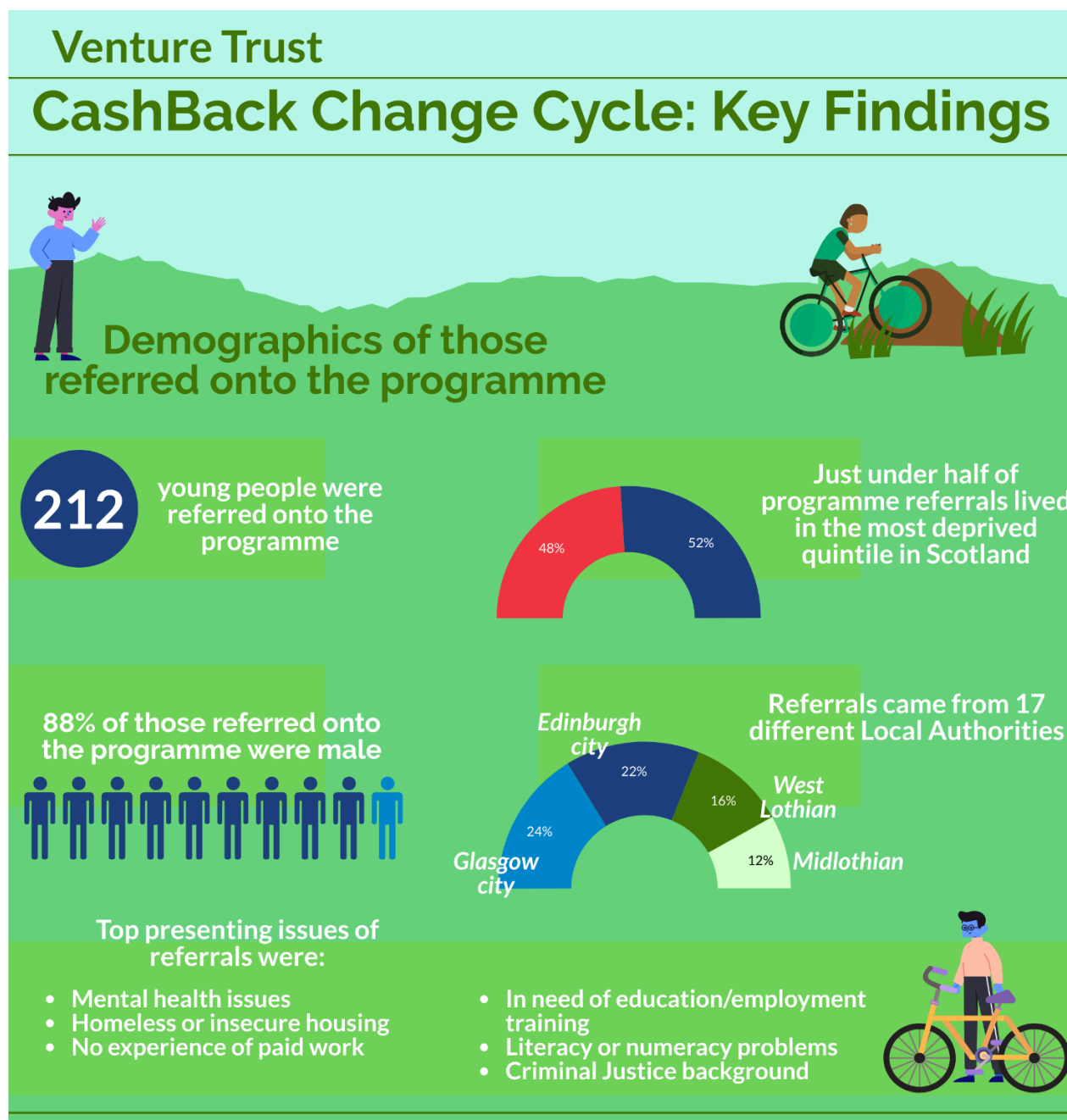


Figure 2 Demographics of those referred to the programme [Source: Rocket Science analysis and presentation of Venture Trust Data]



Outcomes and achievements



Figure 3 Outcome targets compared programme outcomes of all three years [Source: Rocket Science analysis and presentation of Venture Trust data]



Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Our findings confirmed the importance of pre-course support, particularly in sustaining engagement with participants throughout all stages of the programme. *We recommend* that the Venture Trust continue to provide this, refining the offer and exploring reasons for continued disengagement. The Venture Trust could increase the value of pre-course support by expanding it for particular individuals - for instance, offering different types of more flexible support for those who cannot attend the three-week course.

Recommendation 2: Our findings suggest that young people are engaging with the CBCC programme as part of a longer journey to employment. As the programme operates at Stage 2 to 3 of the Employability Pipeline, participants may already have had some support from other organisations prior to starting, and may continue to need further support after the programme's finish. The Venture Trust have already built good relationships with referrers, however, there is an opportunity to increase these connections further, creating clear and consistent pathways of support between a network of trusted organisations. *We recommend* that Venture Trust pursue this opportunity. This would mean improving signposting for young people to the most appropriate organisations for aftercare support, including introducing them to new staff and preparing them for this change. This would increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for young people, and would help ensure there is no duplication of effort, creating 'employability programme fatigue'.

Recommendation 3: Our findings suggest that the use of social media increased awareness of the CBCC programme, leading to an increased number of external and self-referrals. *We recommend* an enhanced use of social media, especially Facebook, to promote the programme. The use of short eligibility surveys on social media platforms could act as a quick and effective way to assess whether self-referrals are likely to be appropriate. It may be possible to conduct social media research to explore its reach and impact on young people and referrer organisations. This would provide Venture Trust with examples of best practice in social media use to increase referrals.



Recommendation 4: A number of participants struggled with not being able to get in contact with family or friends during the residential. This led to some anxiety and worry among some participants. This suggests improvements could be made in identifying participants who may need to keep in contact with a support network while away from home. *We recommend* that the Venture Trust explores a range of methods to do this, including providing these participants with limited and carefully managed mobile phone access while on the residential week.

Recommendation 5: While referrers were very positive about the difference that the programme had made for participants, they felt that more formal feedback would be helpful. *We recommend* that the Venture Trust establishes a system of providing feedback to referrers about how the young person has progressed during and after the CBCC programme. This could be linked to the ongoing effort to build close relationships with referrers and encourage repeat referrals. This can be seen both as a benefit to this programme and as a contribution to strengthening relationships for other work in the future.

Recommendation 6: Our findings show a lack of engagement of female participants across all three years, suggesting an opportunity for the Venture Trust to explore different and creative ways of engaging with females, including the potential for a female-only course. *We recommend* that future communication with Edinburgh- and Glasgow-based organisations that work with young women and girls should highlight CBCC's relevance to increasing positive outcomes for young people. This work could help establish more partnerships with other relevant organisations where benefits are twofold: increasing the number of female referrals and increasing signposting opportunities for support after female participants have completed the CBCC programme.

Recommendation 7: The Venture Trust have collected useful outcomes data through Outcomes Stars and video interviews. However, *we recommend* that Venture Trust further enhance this data offer, for example, ensuring that demographic data is available for programme engagements, rather than for referrals on to the programme.



2. Programme and evaluation aims

This chapter sets out the CBCC programme aims and objectives, and the purpose of the evaluation.

What is the CBCC programme, who does it support, and what are its aims?

Venture Trust was awarded a three-year grant (from April 2017 to March 2020) from the Scottish Government's "CashBack for Communities" Phase IV funding. This supported the CashBack Change Cycle (CBCC) programme, an innovative employability programme in partnership with the Bike Station in Edinburgh and Bike for Good in Glasgow.

The target group for the CBCC programme is young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, training or employment. This includes young people who face multiple barriers to their career progression, such as involvement with the criminal justice system, homelessness, alcohol and drug use, poor mental health, caring responsibilities, a care-experienced background or early social work involvement.

The CBCC programme aims to help participants increase their motivation and self-confidence, develop vocational and employability skills, and support their progression towards positive destinations, increasing the stability of their lives. As such, the programme focuses on Stages 2 and 3 of the Scottish Employability Skills Pipeline (*Figure 4* below).

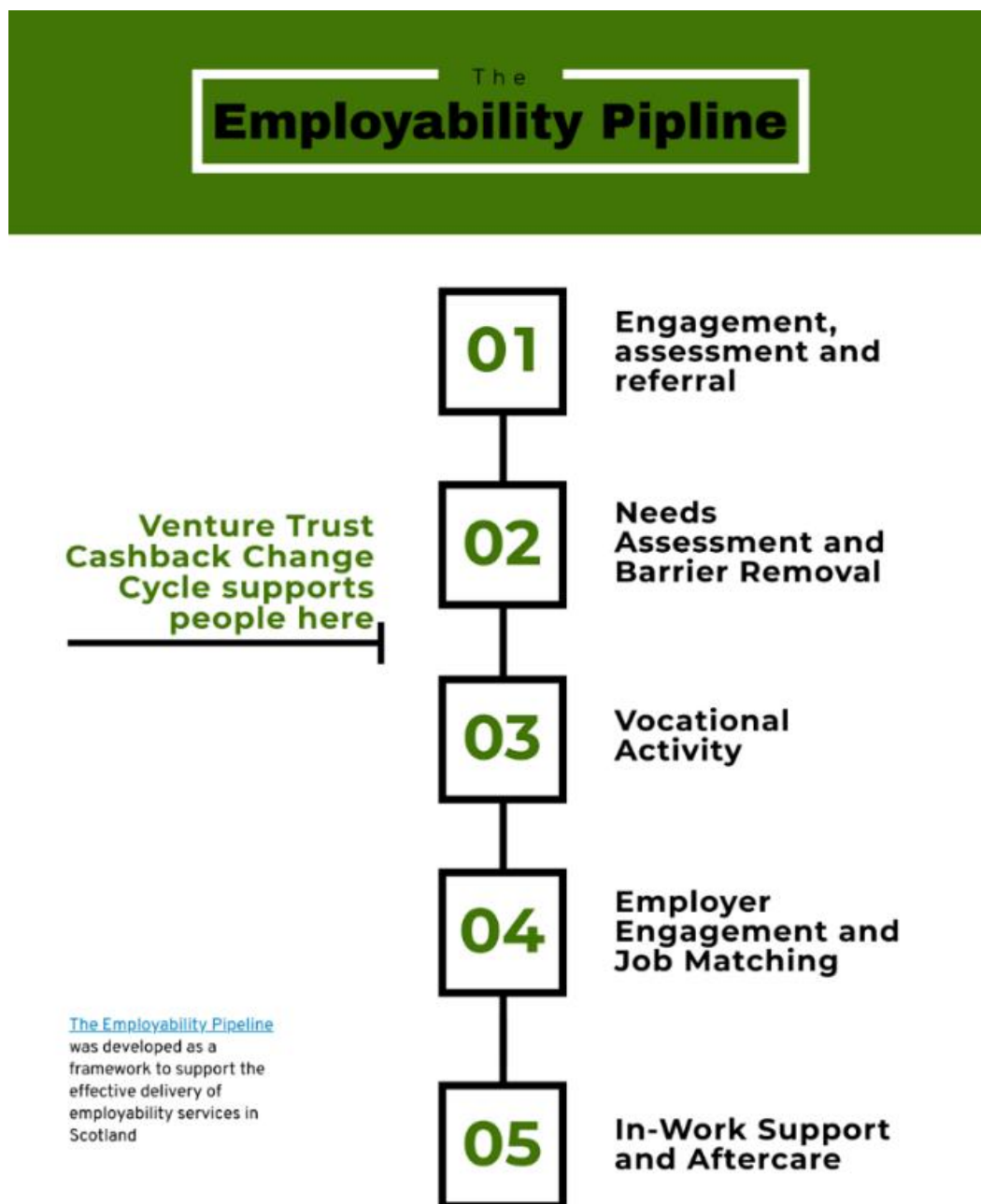


Figure 4 Venture Trust Cashback Change Cycle programme and the Scottish Employability Skills Pipeline [Source: Rocket Science presentation of Venture Trust]

All programmes funded by CashBack for Communities, including the CBCC programme, have six main outcome targets for participants. These are shown overleaf in *Figure 5*:

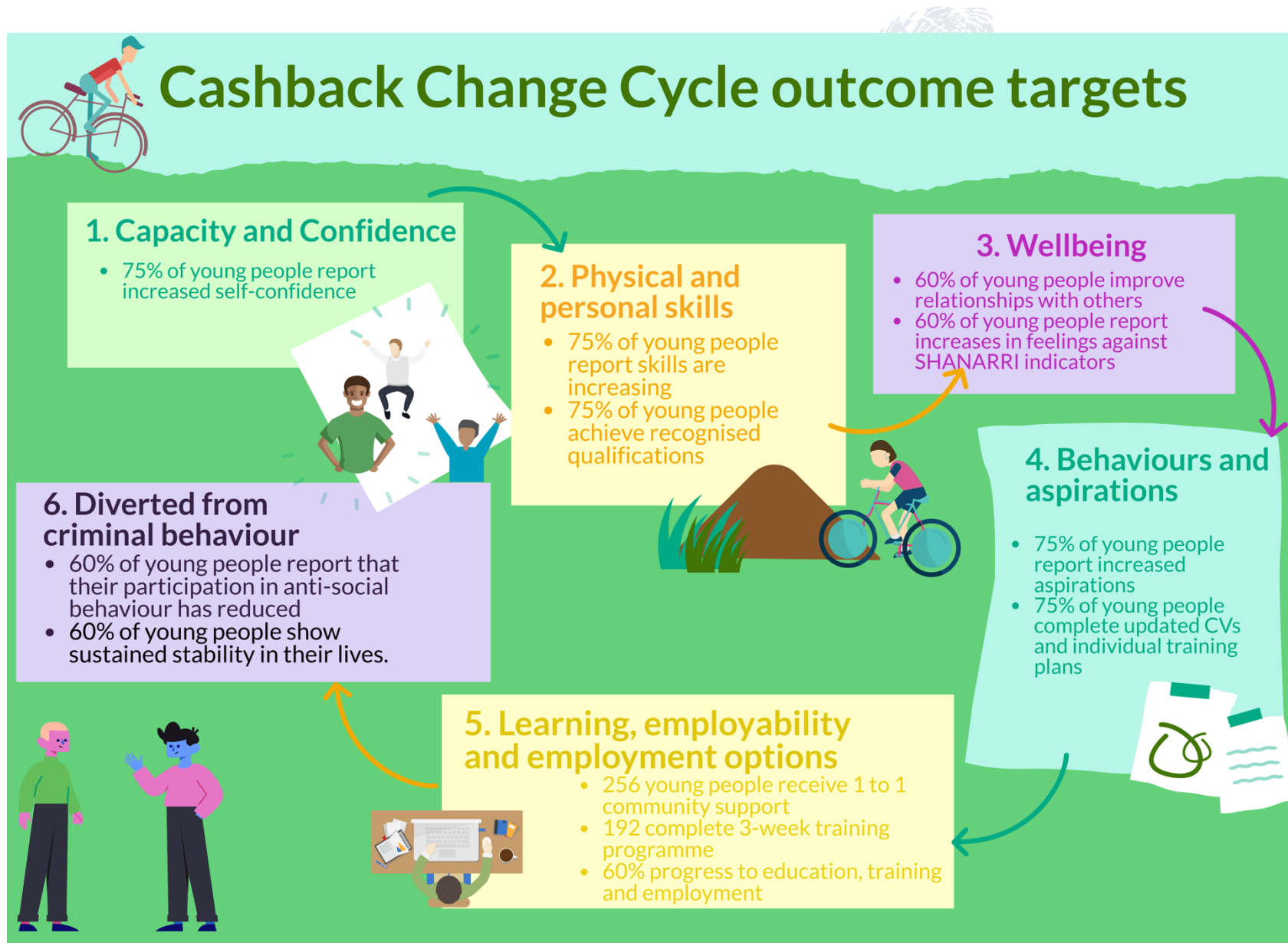


Figure 5 Six Cashback Change Cycle outcome targets [Source: Rocket Science presentation of Venture Trust outcome targets]



Evaluation aims and methodology

In 2017, Rocket Science was appointed as the CBCC programme's external evaluator. **The evaluation aimed to assess:**

- The extent to which the CBCC programme has been successful in reaching its target group
- The impact of the programme in relation to the six outcome areas
- The shorter and longer-term employability outcomes for participants
- Public sector sustainability options for the programme, including possible funding.

Venture Trust and Rocket Science conducted a joint evaluation framework workshop in Year 1, where they agreed on the following **evaluation methods**:

- Venture Trust collects Outcome Star and participants' self-evaluation in relation to the six outcomes targets
- Venture Trust employability staff reflect on each participant's development at the end of the first two weeks of each programme, filling out reflection forms
- Young people conduct peer video interviews, or staff members conduct video interviews with young people during the residential week
- Rocket Science conduct 3-, 6-, 9- and 12-month follow-up telephone interviews with participants from each programme. Considering the practical difficulties of reaching young people via telephone (eg frequently the young people do not answer their phone), in practice young people may not be followed-up at exactly these three-month intervals
- Rocket Science conduct interviews with staff members and referrers to gain a fuller picture of the difference the programme is making, what works, and what could be improved for future iterations.

Timeline of evaluation activities

Rocket Science has produced three annual reports for the Venture Trust, tracking programme outcomes and evolution over time, and helping to support continual learning.

This report represents the final Year 3 report, which gives both an overview of final year activities and outcomes, but also compares this with Years 1 and 2, to reflect on the programme as a whole.

The timeline of these reports has been:

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Year 1 Evaluation
report – May 2018

Year 2 Evaluation
report – May 2019

Year 3 aggregate
report – July 2020

Annual evaluation activities

Table 1, below, provides an overview of evaluation activities per year:

Evaluation Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Analysis of management data	Analysis of Year 1 management data	Analysis of Year 2 management data	Analysis of Year 3 management data
Number of peer/staff video interviews reviewed	10	31	16
In-depth referrer consultations	N/A	10	4
In-depth staff consultations	2 Venture Trust staff	5 Venture Trust staff and 3 Bike Station/Bike for Good staff	2 Venture Trust Staff and 2 Bike for Good/Bike Station staff
3 month initial interviews	4	16	5
6 month interviews	2	11	10
9 month interviews	N/A	7 (4 with Year 1 participants)	N/A
12 month interviews	N/A	4 (with Year 1 participants)	6
15 month interviews	N/A	N/A	1
Other	N/A	N/A	Field visit to graduation event

Table 1 Overview of evaluation activities for each year [Source: Rocket Science record of activities]



3. Programme pathway and structure

This chapter covers the structure of the CBCC programme, outlining the process from initial referral to completion, and detailing each programme element.

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

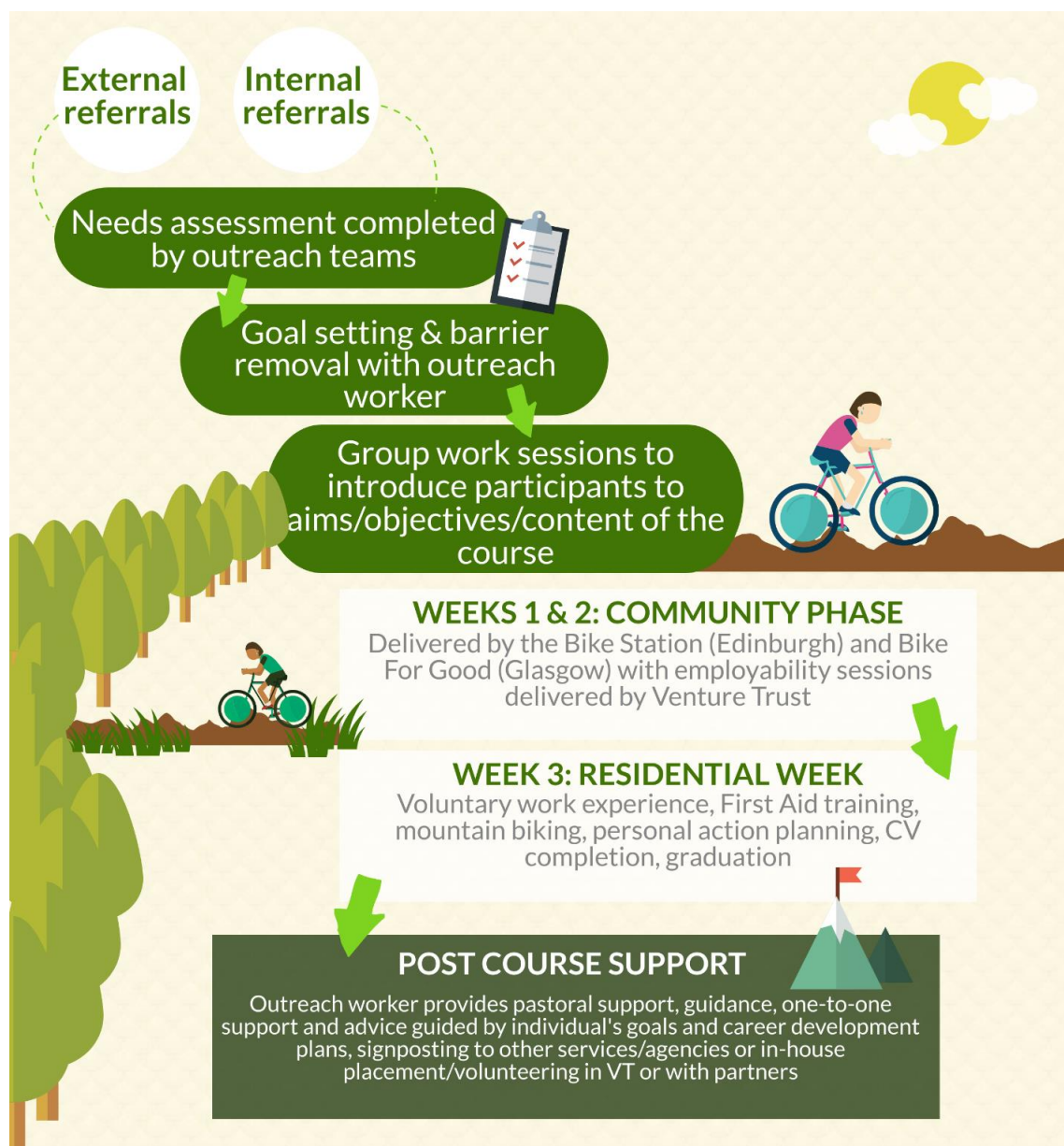


Figure 6 Structure of the Venture Trust Cashback Change Cycle programme [Source: Rocket Science presentation of Venture Trust]



Referral and journey start

As shown in *Figure 6*, each person begins their journey by being referred onto the programme – either internally from other Venture Trust programmes, externally through partner agencies, social media, other organisations or through self-referral (explored in greater detail in [Chapter 4](#)).

Pre-course support

A needs assessment is carried out by an outreach worker. If a young person is felt to be a good fit for the programme, and the programme appeals to that young person, then they are helped to become 'programme ready'. This involves goal setting and barrier removal, which is unique to each individual. This could, for example, constitute support around mental health issues and anxiety, or could instead mean help in finding permanent accommodation.

Group work sessions are then provided which help people to understand the course structure so that they know what to expect. This helps to create buy-in to the programme from the outset. In Year 3, this included a group visit to the Bike Station, giving participants a taste of what was to come and creating familiarity between them and Bike Station staff.

"We try to meet a young person three times before the course. The more pre-work we can do before the course, the more likely they are to engage."

Venture Trust staff

Our findings confirmed the importance of pre-course support, particularly in sustaining engagement with participants throughout all stages of the programme. *We recommend* that the Venture Trust continue to provide this, refining the offer and exploring reasons for continued disengagement. The Venture Trust could increase the value of pre-course support by expanding it for particular individuals - for instance, offering different types of more flexible support for those who cannot attend the three-week course.



Community phase (Weeks 1 and 2)

Following pre-course support, the community phase combines classroom-based employability training and vocational skills development focused on bike building and maintenance. Each course begins with around 10-12 participants split into two equal groups. Participants can gain:

- A Velotech Bronze Award or a City & Guilds qualification (both are SCQF Level 4 qualifications)
- An SQA Employability Award Level 3 or 4
- Safe on-road and off-road cycling skills
- Health and Safety training (leading to an iHASCO certification)
- Fire Safety and Manual Handling skills and accreditation.

As some participants struggle with the classroom element of the programme, the CBCC programme provides a mixture of activities each day, for example, a morning of CV work followed by an afternoon of bike building. Each Friday, participants are provided with the opportunity to use their bikes, for example, by riding to the Pentlands in Edinburgh or round Pollock Park in Glasgow. Staff feel that this is important to sustaining momentum and interest in the course:

“the groups swap at lunch time. It means even if it’s a dry day in terms of employability skills, the bike bit keeps them engaged as it’s outdoor work. Most people don’t like sitting in classrooms, so our approach blends the two, it’s a bit more innovative and makes sense to get people into that next stage of the pipeline”

Venture Trust staff

By the end of the first two weeks, all participants should have a fully working bike and be proficient in riding it.



Residential phase (Week 3)

Week three provides greater freedom, enabling participants to socialise more and bond as a team. It consists of a five-day wilderness-based residential, including:

- Personal development coaching
- A conservation project
- First Aid Training
- Mountain-biking training
- Personal action planning and CV completion.

Aftercare support

Following completion of the programme, course participants are given **community-based support**, such as one-to-one advice, signposting and brokered access to a wide-range of local services and opportunities.

Programme evolution

Since our initial report in May of 2018, the Venture Trust has invested in and improved the delivery of the CBCC programme each year, following recommendations. The most crucial change made appeared to be increasing staff capacity and consistency in Years 2 and 3 of the programme. In Year 1, a single worker was responsible for all delivery, while in Years 2 and 3 there was a delivery worker for each area (East and West). This enabled several key changes, which improved referrals and support for participants:

1. Increased capacity and consistency enabled better relationships with referrers
2. Increased capacity meant pre-programme support could be offered, reducing disengagement
3. Increased capacity and consistency meant aftercare support could be offered, and better links into other programmes could be made
4. Staff consistency meant continual learning could occur, ensuring a smooth-running programme.

In Year 3, staff found that the earlier someone was able to engage with a young person, and the greater the intensity and frequency of support, the greater the likelihood that they would go on to take part in the community phase.

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4. Referral routes and promotion

This chapter explores the different routes onto the programme, what works in promoting it to other organisations, referrer understanding of the programme and their feedback.

Routes onto the CBCC programme were diverse, though a large proportion of referrals came through 'partner agencies'. These partners tended to be other employability or pre-employability training programmes. This suggests that rather than acting in isolation, **CBCC is part of a longer journey of support for young people**, often representing a second or third step towards employability for its participants. As the CBCC programme operates at Stages 2 to 3 of the employability pipeline, focusing on barrier removal and vocational activity, some participants need further support after the programme's end, and may benefit from a selection of post-course options.

The Venture Trust have already built good relationships with referrers, however, there is an opportunity to increase these connections further, creating clear and consistent pathways of support between a network of trusted organisations. *We recommend* that the Venture Trust pursue this opportunity. This would mean improving signposting for young people to the most appropriate organisations for aftercare support, including introducing them to new staff and preparing them for this change. This would increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for young people, and would help ensure there is no duplication of effort, creating 'employability programme fatigue'.

Referrers found out about the Venture Trust in different ways. This tended to be through promotional materials (eg a promotional email), colleagues, or through existing links with Venture Trust staff. In Years 2 and 3, Venture Trust staff delivered a series of presentations to organisations working with similar client groups, but at Stage 1 and 2 of the employability pipeline, for example, DWP, SDS and Celtic. As these organisations were working at an earlier stage of pipeline, **the CBCC programme was able to act in tandem with these, rather than in competition.**



Efforts to promote the programme appeared to pay off, as referrers had a good understanding of the programme and who it was for. Interviewed referrers had knowledge of the aims and structure of the programme, including the intended impacts, the skills and qualifications participants could gain, who would be suitable, and what the residential aspect entailed. Referrers reported that Venture Trust staff had often come to meet partners and potential participants to describe the programme. This had the dual effect of developing trust between Venture Trust staff and participants and providing in-depth and accurate insight into the programme.

"I gave her guidance around what the young person would like, and she came and met us, she showed us a PowerPoint and explained what would happen and what they could expect".

Referrer

"Anyone who has got that whole practical element, anyone that is interested in mechanics [would be suited to the programme]."

Referrer

In Year 3, Venture Trust staff had started using various social media platforms to improve recruitment. Twitter was used to get in touch with referrers and had a more professional aspect to it. Facebook and groups on Facebook were used to directly get in touch with young people. Staff reported that Facebook messaging young people directly had led to a number of self-referrals.

We recommend an enhanced use of social media, especially Facebook, to promote the programme. The use of short eligibility surveys on social media platforms could act as a quick and effective tool to assess whether self-referrals are likely to be appropriate. It may be possible to conduct social media research to explore its reach and impact on young people and referrer organisations. This would provide the Venture Trust with examples of best practice in social media use to increase referrals.



Those who had referred into the programme reported a positive change in most participants including finding a peer group, an increase in confidence and motivation, developing a routine and using the course as a steppingstone to further training.

"The young person I referred has definitely benefited... [They are] living in sheltered accommodation and didn't really have a routine before. [They] got that from the programme. [They'll] be able to use that now as a steppingstone to go onto further training."

Referrer

"[They've] always been a confident person in the house, but the way in which [they're] confident has certainly changed. [They] definitely seem a lot more animated now, and it's affected [their] confidence in a good way."

Referrer

"They've really enjoyed it. It's meant that – a lot of young people have said they don't have enough time to do stuff they want to do – by going onto Venture Trust, they get to be busy and active for five days a week."

Referrer

Referrers felt that participants had to be ready for the programme, stating that they may not recommend the programme to participants who have chaotic lifestyles:

"If they're at crisis point with their mental health or addictions, then I don't think they'd be appropriate for the programme. I think you'd have to be a bit more settled. I think the programme works best as a step between being settled and receiving more training. You want the young person to sustain the momentum they've got from the course".

Referrer



5. Demographics and engagement

This chapter covers programme numbers, participant demographics (including geography, SIMD level, presenting barriers and gender split), and retention rates. *Figure 7*, below, outlines the key findings:

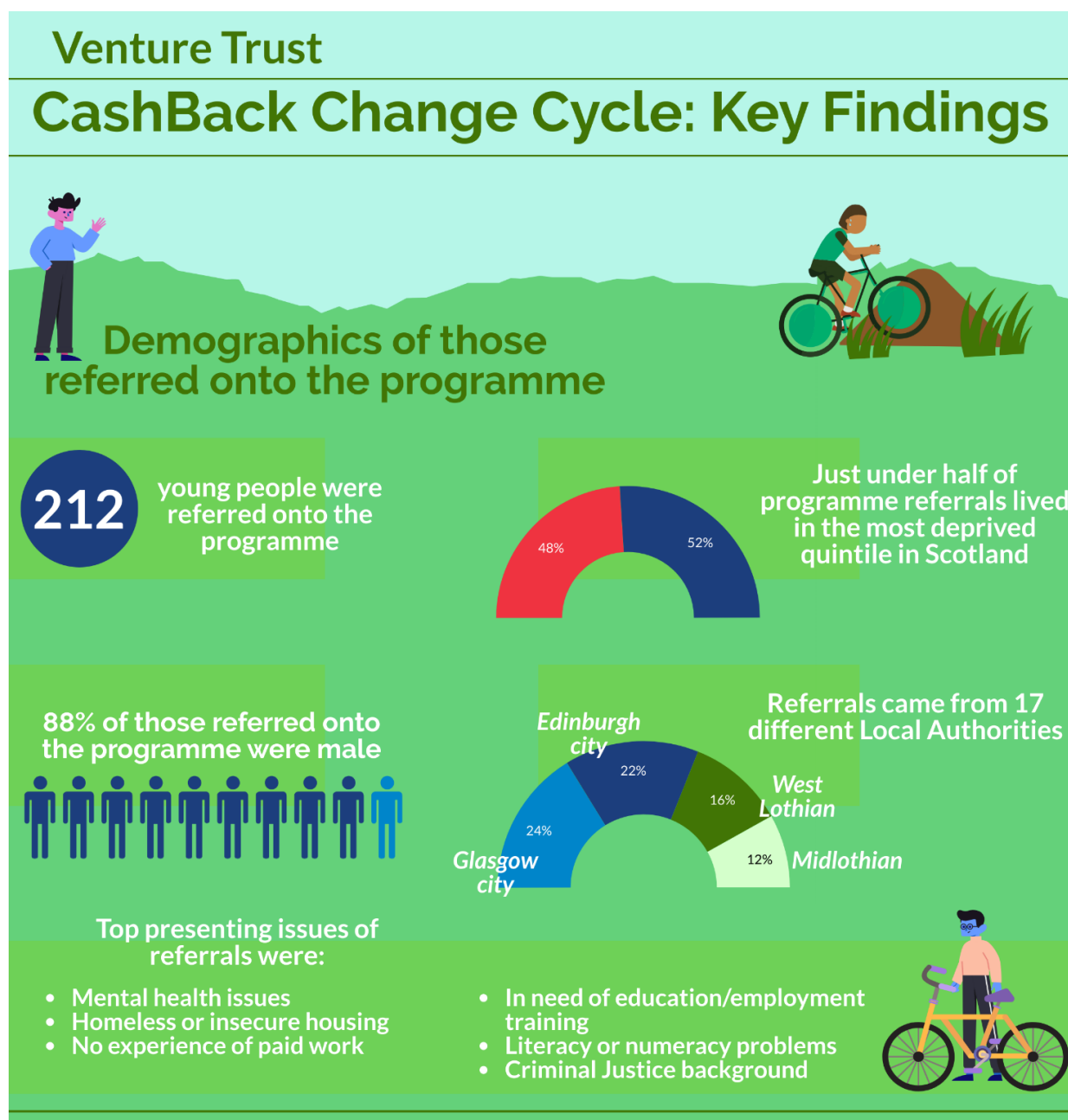


Figure 7 Demographics of those referred to the programme [Source: Rocket Science analysis and presentation of Venture Trust Data]



Programme targets and numbers

The CBCC programme had 158 course attendees over three years, equivalent to 82% of its target (*Figure 8*). Much of this shortfall can be attributed to recruitment difficulties in Year 1, with unsuitable referrals leading to high drop-out rates. Following recommendations at the end of Year 1 to increase staff capacity and embed workers in the different regions (Edinburgh and Glasgow), participation numbers increased dramatically in Years 2 and 3. Had Year 1 exhibited similar participation numbers to Years 2 and 3, Venture Trust would have been much closer to achieving its overall target of 192 programme starts.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
29	67	62
Total programme starts: 158 young people		
Target programme starts: 192 young people		
82% achievement of target		

Figure 8 Number of people engaged in Venture Trust Cashback Change Cycle per year [Source: Rocket Science presentation of Venture Trust data]

Staff attributed greater participation numbers in Years 2 and 3 to a more well-established and consistent offer, and a greater understanding of the course from referrers. By having fixed working locations, staff were able to build ongoing relationships with other organisations/referrers in each locality in later years. Staff members felt that this led to other organisations making repeat and more appropriate referrals to the CBCC programme.

Staff also described ongoing difficulties in recruitment due to the nature of the group they were working with. Many of the young people they had hoped to engage with did not end up on a course. Chaotic lives and difficult external circumstances led to substantial disengagement before the course even began. Due to the course's intensity from day one, late entry did not tend to be a possibility, meaning that in Years 1 and 2, last minute drop-outs led to vacancies that went unfilled. To combat this, in Year 3, staff created a 'reserve list'. This meant that should someone be unable to attend the course, another suitable young person could take their place.



Programme engagement and completion rates

Three-quarters of the young people that the Venture Trust engaged with ended up on the CBCC programme. Of those who started the programme, overall, 58% completed both the community and residential phases.

The proportion of young people who completed all programme elements varied each year, with much better continued engagement in Years 2 and 3. In Year 1, just under four in every 10 participants completed all elements of the programme, but this rose to around six in every 10 participants for Years 2 and 3 (*Figure 9*).

It should be noted that during Year 3, the presence of illicit substances on one of the residential stays led to a number of young people being sent home, which has affected overall programme completion rates (9 people began the residential but only one completed this journey). Had this not occurred, it is likely that completion rates would have been as good, or better, than in Year 2.

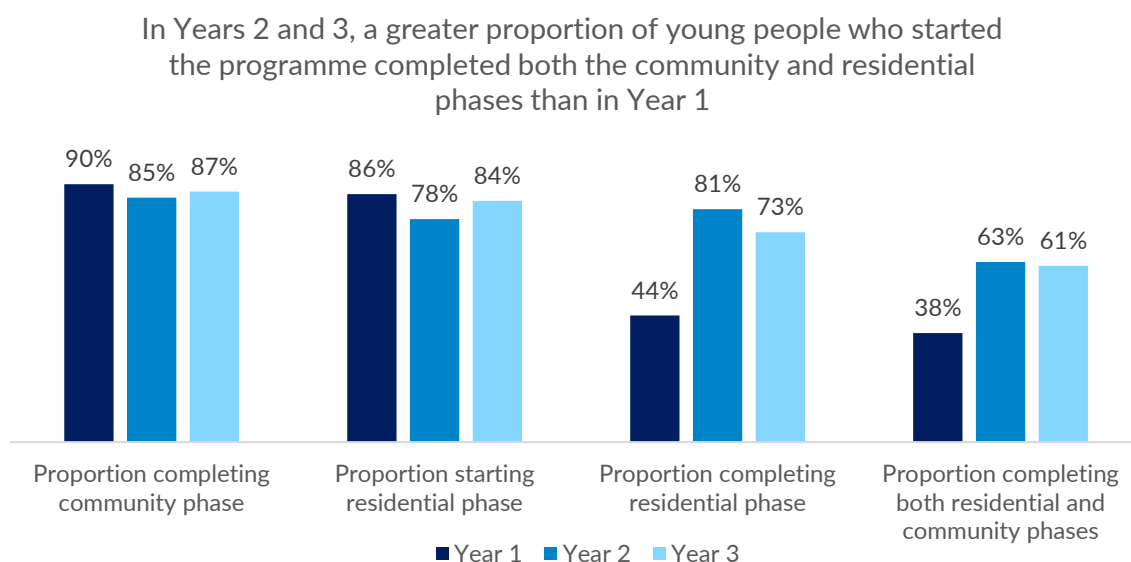


Figure 9 Percentage of young people who started and completed each phase of the CBCC programme [Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]



In video interviews, some participants stated that the residential week had left them feeling **homesick**. Other participants reported having caring responsibilities at home and felt anxious about not being able to contact family members. Social anxiety was common throughout the participant group and this may have contributed to some participants finding the residential week difficult. Residential programmes with similar client groups have successfully trialled the use of managed access to mobile phones for young people with caring responsibilities and this has increased retention.

Improvements could be made in identifying participants who may need to keep in contact with a support network while away from home. *We recommend* that Venture Trust explore a range of methods to do this, including providing these participants with limited and carefully managed mobile phone access while on the residential week.

Staff attributed better continued engagement to greater staff availability, continuity and consistency, stressing the importance of a trusted face and the ability to build close and open relationships with participants. This also enabled the programme to have a higher number of participants on each course in Year 3 (*Figure 10*).

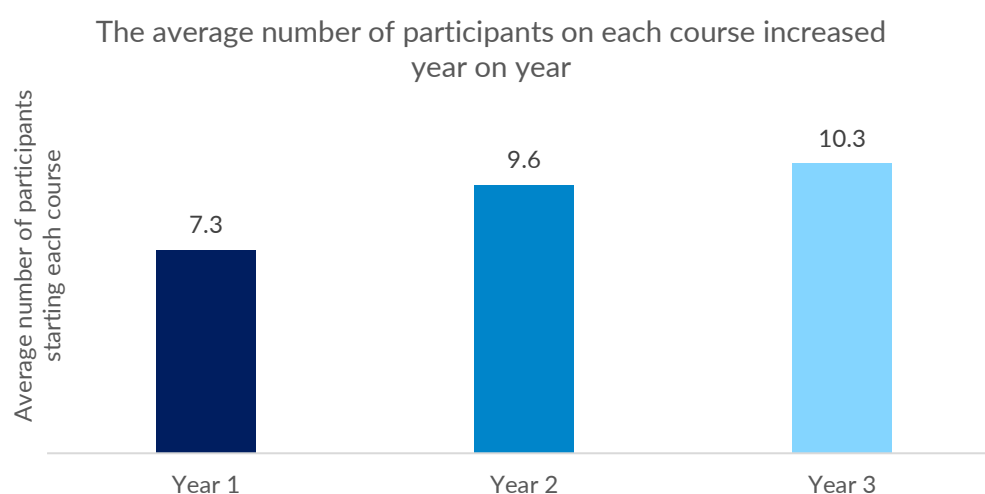


Figure 10 Number of participants on the CBCC programme each year [Source: Rocket Science analysis and presentation of Venture Trust data]



The importance of a trusted member of staff was echoed in video interviews with young people in Year 3:

"I've enjoyed dealing with the staff, the staff have been brilliant"

Participant

"The hospitality and the warm welcome from people; the workers are great"

Participant

It was also noted that in Year 1, and to a lesser extent, in Year 2, **participants saw the community and residential phases as separate**, which accounted for some of the drop out seen between the end of the community phase and the beginning of the residential. This was compounded by a lack of consistency in staff between the phases.

Following recommendations in Year 1, **in Years 2 and 3, staff made a concerted effort to increase the cooperation between staff members of the first two weeks and the third week of the programme**. Where possible, one staff member was present during all three weeks, and where this was not possible, staff members from the first two weeks of the programme visited the residential. Adaptions were also made to ensure greater consistency. This included **young people adopting particular roles** (eg timekeepers, energisers) for the whole duration of the programme.

In Year 3, staff again increased efforts to reduce drop out between the community and residential phases. This included **renewed efforts to improve staff consistency**, alongside **the provision of more information to participants** on the importance and benefits of the residential throughout the community phase, and **explanations of how the two sections worked together**. It was noted that having the same staff members across multiple courses and years had meant feedback could be provided, and this had made things run much more smoothly, creating a "*well-oiled machine*".

"[In Year 3] we attempted more consistency and continuity and that worked really really well. We were able to hire someone to be a consistent team leader who fundamentally understood the programme"

Venture Trust staff



Presenting barriers

Overall, participants faced a similar set of issues, with the most common issues being:

1. Mental Health
2. Homelessness or insecure housing
3. No experience of paid work
4. A need for education / employment training
5. Literacy or numeracy problems.

Table 2, overleaf, compares the presenting issues of participants referred to the CBCC programme across Years 1, 2 and 3. It shows that participants faced a range of issues, with fluctuations in the proportions facing certain issues between years. While the proportion of those with mental health issues decreased each year, the proportion experiencing homelessness or insecure housing steadily increased, reaching 39% in Year 3. In Year 3, the proportion of people with barriers such as a history of problem alcohol and drug use, with a criminal justice background and with literacy and numeracy problems dropped substantially, suggesting a potentially different cohort to Years 1 and 2.



Presenting issue	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<i>Mental health issues</i>	52%	44%	40%
<i>Homelessness or insecure housing</i>	27%	26%	39%
<i>No experience of paid work</i>	36%	30%	31%
<i>In need of education / employment training</i>	27%	24%	30%
<i>Literacy or numeracy problems</i>	39%	36%	23%
<i>Criminal Justice background</i>	42%	39%	21%
<i>History of problem alcohol or drug use</i>	21%	25%	13%
<i>Care experienced</i>	6%	19%	11%
<i>Learning Disability</i>	9%	15%	10%
<i>Long Term Physical Illness/Condition</i>	9%	9%	9%
<i>Caring responsibilities</i>	6%	6%	9%
<i>No qualifications</i>	6%	8%	7%
<i>Registered Disabled</i>	3%	4%	3%
<i>Ethnic minority</i>	3%	2%	2%

Table 2 Percentage breakdown of barriers facing participants per year [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

It was common for participants to experience multiple intersecting barriers to work, leading to a mix of needs on the programme. Venture Trust staff reported that the programme attracted a mix of participants with different needs and proximities to the labour market. For most participants it was felt that employment was a possible outcome of the programme, but others needed continued support after the programme finished:

"I guess some of them were really ready for employment, and could hold down a job, and there's only a few who probably still need to work on changing habits."

Venture Trust staff



To accommodate this range of needs, **Venture Trust staff were flexible and adaptive in their programme delivery**, consulting with the young people to determine what they wanted to gain from the programme and how this could be achieved. Similarly, **Venture Trust staff had to accommodate a range of physical needs**. For example, one young person who was referred onto the programme had coordination issues which meant that he could not use a bicycle safely. Venture Trust staff referred this participant on to a specialist support service that was able to help modify the bike.

Participant location and SIMD level

Overall, just under a quarter of participants lived in Glasgow City, and 22% lived in Edinburgh. As the programme was delivered in these areas, this is to be expected. However, **participants travelled from further afield** too, particularly in Years 2 and 3, as referral networks become more established. The proportion of participants from Glasgow decreased from 35% in Year 1 to 18% in Year 3, and the proportion of those from Edinburgh increased between Years 1 and 2, staying relatively stable between Years 2 and 3. A greater proportion of participants were referred from West Lothian and Midlothian in Year 3. Overall, there was fluctuation each year in where those being referred lived, and referrals came from a total of 17 different local authorities (*Table 3 overleaf*).

Venture Trust covered travel expenses for all participants, and staff would work with participants to identify the cheapest and most direct methods of public transport.



Referral location	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Aggregate
Glasgow City	35%	28%	18%	24%
Edinburgh City	14%	24%	23%	22%
West Lothian	16%	7%	22%	16%
Midlothian	3%	11%	16%	12%
North Lanarkshire	8%	5%	1%	4%
South Lanarkshire	8%	3%	7%	6%
East Lothian	3%	4%	0%	2%
Scottish Borders	3%	3%	0%	1%
Clackmannanshire	0%	3%	0%	1%
Falkirk	0%	3%	0%	1%
Fife	5%	0%	0%	1%
Inverclyde	5%	0%	6%	4%
Renfrewshire	0%	3%	6%	4%
Stirling	0%	3%	0%	1%
Perth & Kinross	0%	3%	0%	1%
West Dunbartonshire	0%	3%	2%	2%
East Renfrewshire	0%	1%	0%	0%

Table 3 Percentage breakdown of referrals by location [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

Postcode data was available for 196 participants who had been referred onto the programme during Years 1, 2 and 3. By analysing this data, it was found that just under half of all participants on the CBCC programme were from the top 20% most deprived areas in Scotland (*Figure 11*).

Overall, just under half of participants lived in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland



■ Deciles 1 and 2 ■ Deciles 3 and 4 ■ Deciles 5 and 6 ■ Deciles 7 and 8 ■ Deciles 9 and 10

Figure 11 Percentage of participants living deprived areas of Scotland according to SIMD datazones [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]



Participant genders

Overall, 88% of referrals to the CBCC programme were male. Despite efforts made to increase female participant rates, in Year 3, 90% of referrals continued to be from men (*Figure 12*).

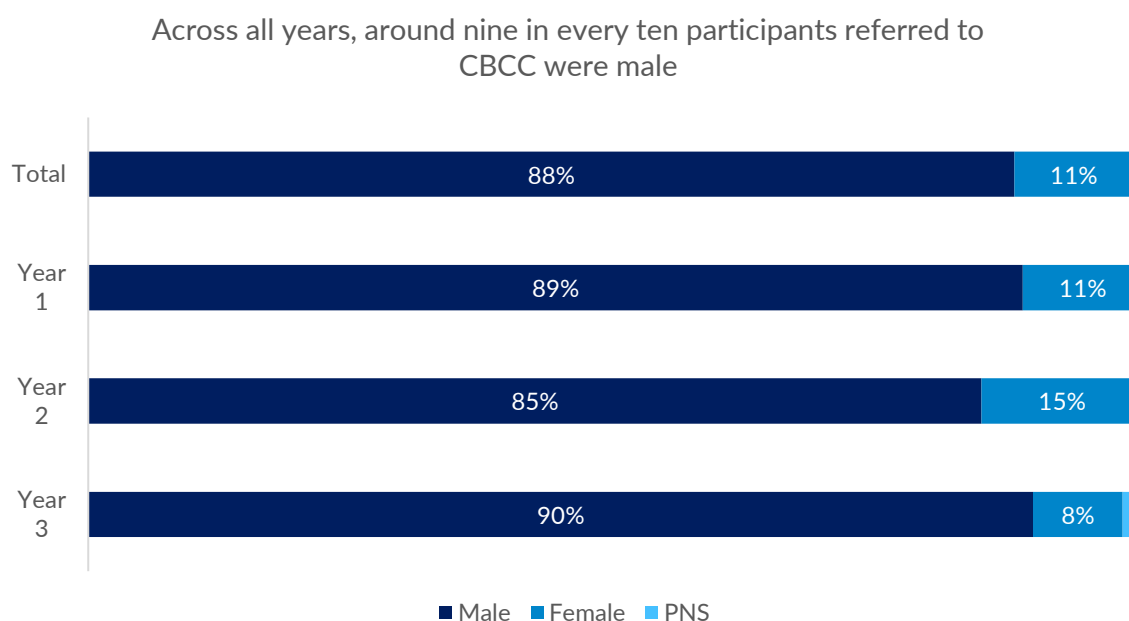


Figure 12 Gender breakdown of participants per year and total [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

In Year 3, it was felt by staff that **some external referrers might still view the course as “male-focused.”** This feeling was reinforced by an interview with a female participant, who mentioned struggling with the course’s ‘masculine’ environment.

Partner agency staff also identified this issue and had begun delivering a programme specific to women. **It was suggested that the Venture Trust could look into delivering a similar women-only CBCC course** as a way to boost female participant numbers and increase the programme’s experience with this group.

“It is very difficult to get girls involved. We do not know what the magic is. We always try to combat that.”

Partner Agency staff



We recommend that future communication with Edinburgh- and Glasgow-based organisations that work with young women and girls should highlight CBCC's relevance to increasing positive outcomes for young people. This work could help establish more partnerships with other relevant organisations where benefits are twofold: increasing the number of female referrals and increasing signposting opportunities for support after female participants have completed the CBCC programme.



6. Programme targets and outcomes

This chapter details the CBCC programme's achievements against the target project outcomes, highlighting what worked in achieving these, and any improvements.

Outcome data is based on self-assessments that participants fill out at the beginning and at the end of their engagement with the programme (see [Appendix 1](#) for a full list of how outcomes are constituted). This has been complemented by video, phone and face-to face interviews with participants, as well as with staff and referrers.

Outcome data

The programme measured six outcomes in total. Four of these relate to participants' progression throughout the programme and are collected through an "outcome star" and a self-evaluation form. Responses from these two sources of data were combined by Venture Trust staff into these measurements of progression:

- Young people building their capacity and confidence
- Young people's behaviour and aspirations change positively
- Young people's wellbeing improves
- Young people report an increase in skills and gain accredited learning
- Young people report a reduction in crime or anti-social behaviour¹.

Whether young people moved into positive destinations after the course finished has also been recorded through continued staff engagement with participants.

¹ For consistency, all outcome percentages have been derived in the same way: the number of participants reporting an increase across any of the categories, divided by the total programme starts for each year. This has been done to create a conservative estimate.



Figure 13 provides an overview of the outcomes the programme achieved, showing that in most cases Venture Trust exceeded its targets:



Figure 13 Outcome targets compared programme outcomes of all three years
[Source: Rocket Science analysis and presentation of Venture Trust data]



Overall, participants seemed to really enjoy the course. It was important that it offered something new and different, and this made it exciting for people taking part:

"It was just something I wouldn't normally get the chance to do in terms of the activities I was doing."

Participant

Interviews suggested that there was something for everyone, whether it be gaining a new skill or qualification, meeting new people and making friends, increasing confidence or the chance to pursue a new career:

"Everybody should join it because it's a brilliant course. You get a lot of qualifications out of it, you get a bike, amount of help. Help from everybody, you get treated like a human being, you get respect. Best course I've been on."

Participant

"if anyone ever has a chance to do this take it - it will be the most wonderful beautiful thing and the best experience you'll ever do the memories here are going to stick with me for the rest of my life. I think everybody should experience it."

Participant

Capacity and confidence

An increase in confidence was one of the most valued aspects of the CBCC course. Overall, 77% of course participants reported a confidence increase, exceeding the target of 75% (*Figure 14, overleaf*). Across stakeholder interviews in Years 2 and 3 (staff and referrers), 13 out of 16 suggested that participants gained an increase in confidence, exceeding the 75% target.



Overall, 77% of participants reported an increase in their confidence, with consistent over-achieving in Years 2 and 3 based on targets

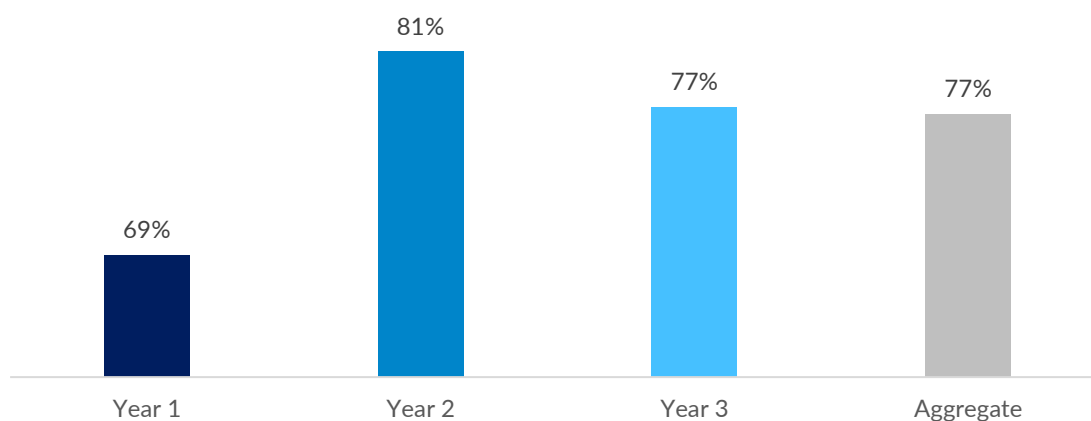


Figure 14 Percentage of participants who reported an increase in their confidence per year and overall [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

Participants highlighted that working in a group had helped them to feel more confident to speak to people. This was often raised in relation to having felt nervous about the prospect of meeting new people prior to joining the programme.

"Speaking out in front of people. I used to be more shy. Ever since [CBCC] I have been more confident."

Participant

"I feel like I am a more open guy, I can chat to people."

Participant

"it has really helped build my confidence to talk in groups. These guys in the group talked to each other, they involved everyone in the conversation, so I learnt from that."

Participant



Participants noted how important it was for them to build a peer group during the programme, and the positive effect that this had on their confidence.

"It was brilliant. The boys were pretty decent. Some had got into trouble - others not. So there was a mixture. So seeing other people's backgrounds - and speaking to them - that made me think. If that boy can do it, I can do it. So the best thing about the course was the mixture of people. We were having heart to heart conversations."

Participant

Increased confidence and self-belief enabled participants to improve their communication skills, resulting in some positive effects, including a participant reporting that his previous anger problems had subsided.

"It helped me with all my problems. I used to have anger problems, but at the programme it was good. And getting myself confident and speaking out."

Participant

Confidence "to be me, be the person that I am"

Participant

Many participants reported that the physical activities on the residential week of the programme - mountain biking, rock climbing, and abseiling - helped increase their confidence. **By successfully undertaking new and challenging tasks, participants were able to feel more confident in their ability to manage unfamiliar situations.** Referrer interviews reinforced this.

"When we did mountain biking, I fell off my bike and I had to get up and show a bit of resilience... and after I did that my confidence levels shot right up because it made me feel like I could conquer certain fears."

Participant

"His confidence really improved because he felt more understood."

Referrer



"[After the programme] there was a visible change in terms of confidence. He became happy to arrange to go to services by himself. He was more reluctant to go to place without support to other services before. He is more independent now."

Referrer

The residential week was felt by staff and referrers to be important to increasing the social skills and confidence of participants, enabling the freedom and time for this personal development, once the more structured employability focussed phase was over.

"When they come back from the adventure, they are always very close. It makes them a small community. Through the first week, some are more socialising with each other; others might be a bit unsure. Then after the third week... when they come back, they are slightly different people."

Partner agency staff

"The residential is really key for a lot of young people... It allows the young person to test their boundaries and gives them a bit of a chance to find out what they want to do in the future."

Referrer

An increase in self-belief appeared key to finding the determination and strength to apply for jobs, or to pursue a new career path.

"Believing in my own worth, I think I'll be able to go out and get the job that I want [instead of thinking] I'm not good enough for it"

Participant

"I will probably go to a shop now and hand in my CV when I never would've done that before"

Participant



Case Study 1

A member of staff at Al's temporary accommodation told him about the CBCC programme and referred him to the programme. He really enjoyed the course and felt that it was "just what he needed." The programme helped him build his confidence and improved his interview, job and teamwork skills.

"[The course] shows you what you are able to do with your skills. It shows you are able to change if you are in a certain position... it helped me combat some of my fears and gives me some strength to face life."

He felt strongly that the course could really help other people. "It will help people that are disadvantaged [and those] who don't care about life. It will give them skills that they can go to work with, that they can look for work with and even enjoy life... I would recommend it to anyone... It gives you the strength to go and live your life."



6 months after taking part in the programme

Al was studying a course in college as well as undertaking an additional course online. He has also been applying for jobs and is pleased that he had many interviews for different roles. He has continued to receive support from Venture Trust since completing the course. As well as this, Al now has his own home.



12 months after taking part in the programme

We spoke to Al during the summer holidays in 2020. He was waiting for his college results so that he could progress into the next year of his course. Al is still studying an additional online course alongside this. As well as his studies, Al had a part-time job in retail.

Al was still living on his own accommodation. He felt that the course had showed him "how to be independent in your life... cook, have a routine, how to do little things. It provided me with some skills to cope with stress even with this situation with the coronavirus... [it teaches you] to cope, just to be, to be resilient."



Physical and personal skills

Overall, 86% of participants reported an increase in skills as a result of the CBCC programme, exceeding the target of 75%. This was particularly high in Year 3, with 94% reporting a skills increase (*Figure 15*). Across stakeholder interviews in Years 2 and 3, 11 out of 16 suggested an increase in skills, equivalent to 69%, slightly under the 75% target. This may be a result of the types of conversations we had with stakeholders. Stakeholders focused more commonly on the confidence and wellbeing of referrals as well as the overall referral process than an increase in skills.

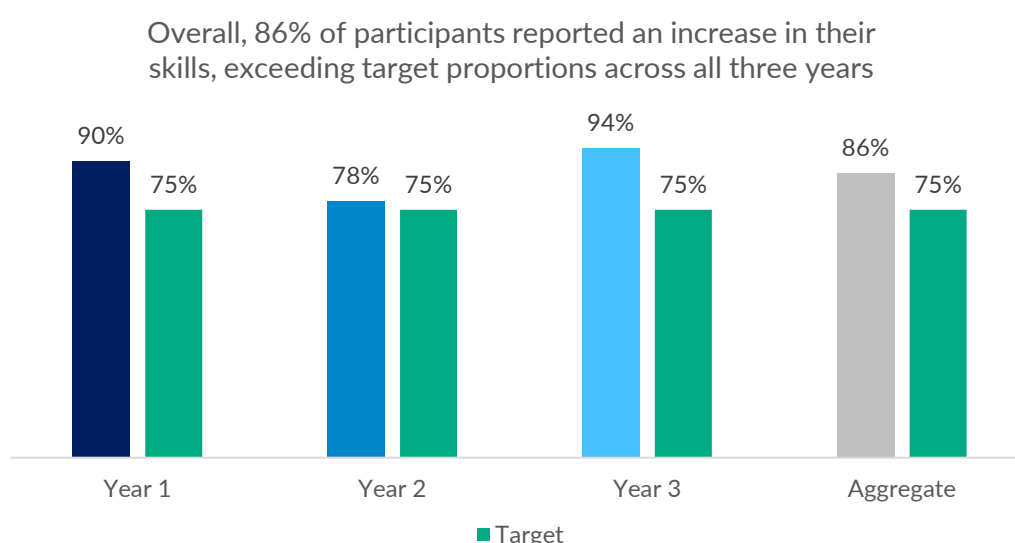


Figure 15 Percentage of participants who reported an increase in skills per year and overall
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

Referrers commonly mentioned an increase in young people's practical, "hands-on" skills and interest in both bikes and the outdoors. This was echoed by many participants, who reported an increased interest in physical and outdoor activities, as well as a more active lifestyle.

"I couldn't even ride a bike before the course, so for me I learnt how to ride a bike and build a bike, it was really helpful."

Participant

"I have lost a lot of weight since the course. Because I got more active and got up early. I go on my bike a lot – the bike of the Bike Station."

Participant



*"The programme helped me be more active, get out, as [I was] just sitting at home and watching TV.
The more you get up, the more successful you can get."*

Participant

All participants were offered the opportunity to gain accredited learning as part of the programme. Overall, 89% of participants achieved this, exceeding the 75% target consistently (**Figure 16**). This was particularly high in Year 3 (94%), which may be in part the result of the addition of a new SQA in Employability.

Overall, 89% of participants achieved accredited learning, exceeding targets across all three years

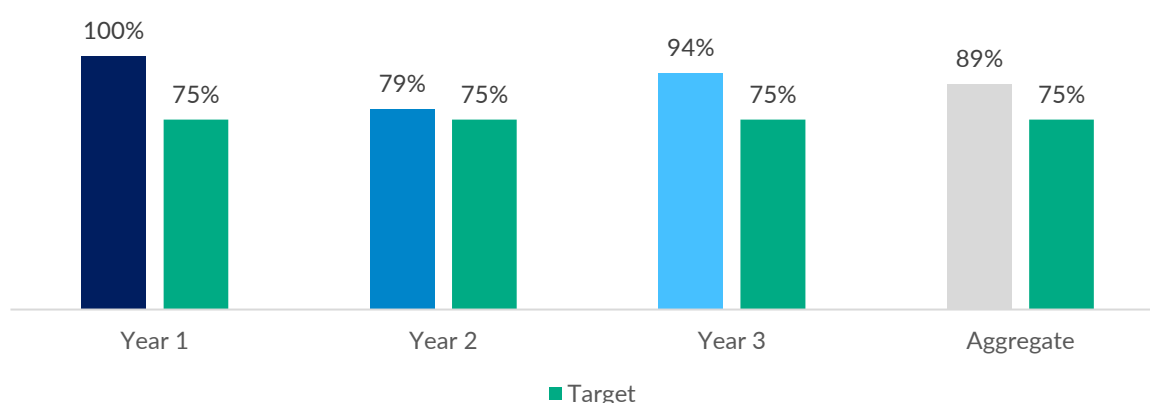


Figure 16 Percentage of participants who achieved accredited learning per year and overall compared with target outcomes [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

Interviews suggested that participants appreciated having access to qualifications that they otherwise would not have or could not afford.

"The qualifications will help me to get onto the building site... that's saved me a bunch of hassle getting those qualifications myself."

Participant

The most commonly achieved qualifications across Years 1, 2 and 3 were Fire Awareness training and Manual Handling training (**Table 4**). Between Years 1, 2 and 3, the proportion of participants receiving a Velotec Bronze award, HSE First Aid at Work qualification, Fire Awareness Training and Manual Handling Training decreased, though the proportion receiving a City and Guilds award increased between Years 2 and 3.



In Year 3, the Venture Trust decided to ratify a new SQA in Employability, realising that participants were doing everything required for this, but were not receiving accreditation. 37% of participants received this qualification, explaining why a greater proportion received accredited learning in Year 3. It was felt that **while this was helpful with referrers, and for job prospects, it could put some young people off as it involved more paperwork.**

Manual Handling, Employability and Fire Awareness training were qualifications that participants were able to complete during the first two weeks of the programme. As the majority of disengagements occurred between the two weeks of employability training and the one-week residential programme, **awarding qualifications in this time ensured that even participants who disengaged from the programme were able to achieve some accredited learning.**

	<i>City and Guilds award</i>	<i>Velotec Bronze award</i>	<i>HSE First Aid at Work</i>	<i>Fire Awareness Training</i>	<i>Manual Handling Training</i>	<i>SQA Employability</i>
Year 3	39%	23%	32%	42%	58%	37%
Year 2	25%	39%	46%	67%	67%	0%
Year 1	52%	38%	69%	90%	90%	0%

Table 4 Recorded qualifications of participants per year [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

In almost all interviews with Bike Station, Bike for Good, and Venture Trust staff, an increase in participant skills was reported, however, two referrers in Year 2 felt that participants had not been engaged long enough to increase their skills.

"This person liked bike maintenance so much that that's now what he wants to do."

Referrer

"Both seemed more ready and motivated to apply for work after the CBCC course."

Referrer



Case Study 2



Gerard had been on a different Venture Trust course and was signposted to this programme by a member of staff who knew about his interest in car mechanics. He was attracted to the programme because he needed the experience to get into the field and wanted to learn the mechanics of bicycles.

Overall, he thought the programme was *"really fun... and nicely structured."* He enjoyed building the bike, meeting friendly people and learning valuable skills such as how to ride a bike, communication skills and working as part of a team.

"[Working with others] was difficult at first. It usually is for me in groups that I'm unfamiliar with. The more I was there and got into it, the more I enjoyed being with the group. I actually made a few good friends from that."

Gerard felt the experience of completing the programme would help him greatly to enter the workshop/building environment. As well as that, Gerard felt that the programme helped increase his confidence and motivation.

"It definitely helped with motivation and just sticking at things... I definitely wanted to give up multiple times during it, but people around me helped push me on to make sure I finished it."



3 months after taking part in the programme

Gerard was applying for training courses in mechanics with the help of people at Venture Trust.



6 months after the programme

Gerard was having difficulties finding a job in his desired field: *"it's been a hassle."* He continued to receive support from Venture Trust and was looking at different types of jobs and college opportunities. Gerard felt that he was *"still more outgoing"* as a result of the course. He also felt that the programme had helped him see what sort of job opportunities he can go for.



A year after Gerard finished the programme

Gerard had applied to a mechanics course at college. He had been scheduled for an interview, but due to the lockdown this was cancelled. Gerard said things have been relatively quiet for him due to the difficulties of lockdown and being in the at-risk group. He still felt that the programme had helped him with confidence, knowledge, interview and bike mechanics skills. *"I have helped fix up my granny's bike since the course - so that's helped her!"*

His future plans had not changed overall and he hoped to get into working with engines at some point in his career. Until then, Gerard was considering working towards completing his driving test and getting a job as a lorry driver.



Behaviours and aspirations

Participants reported that the CBCC programme had increased their aspirations and expanded their horizons. Being more confident enabled participants to be open to new experiences and ambitions, and physically being in different scenery appeared to have had a positive effect on aspirations. Across stakeholder interviews in Years 2 and 3, 12 out of 16 suggested an increase in positive behaviours, equivalent to the 75% target.

"It's seeing all the new places and it's good to get out of the city and it's relaxing."

Participant

"I want to keep the mentality that I've had here for three weeks, don't let my phone or things distract me, keep it easy and focus on things that are important in life."

Participant

"Doing the course, it shows you how much you can accomplish in one day."

Participant

Overall, 73% of participants reported positive behaviour changes and aspirations. This fell slightly shy of the 75% target and was largely due to a dip (66%) in Year 2. In Year 3, 81% of participants reported a positive change in behaviours and aspirations (*Figure 17, overleaf*).

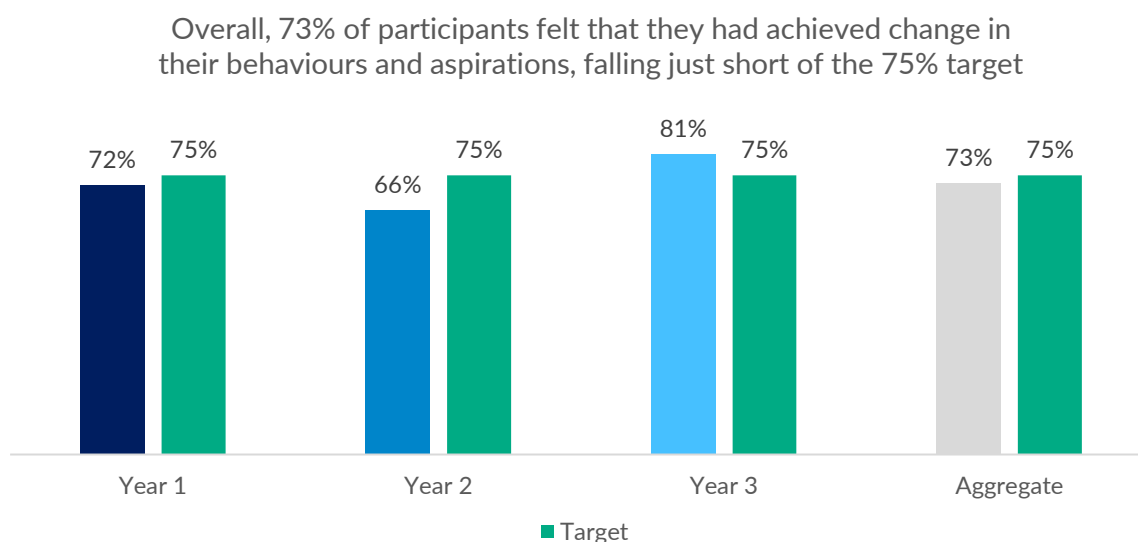


Figure 17 Percentage of participants who reported a change in behaviour and aspiration per year and overall compared with target outcomes [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

For some participants, the CBCC programme helped to confirm their interest in pursuing particular careers. Through the programme, participants found direction and were able to take the first steps towards employment in these sectors.

"I worked in things like restaurants, but I wasn't really into that – so I was a bit nervous about what to do before the programme. The CBCC course helped me realise that I would like to work with my hands and maybe with bikes and outdoors."

Participant

Referrers reported an increase in the motivation of young people to engage with further training opportunities, with one referrer noting that the young person they were involved with was exploring options for volunteering with Bike For Good. As well as this, referrers saw changes in the levels of physical activities that participants undertook.

[The course] "reignited my love for cycling... since I stopped working, I hadn't really been cycling very much. Since then, I've been on mountain biking trips and rides with the bike shop. It's certainly refreshed my love of the sport."

Participant



Participants often left with an idea of what they wished to do in the future. Some wanted to go to college, look for part-time jobs or find full-time employment. Areas of interest included mechanics, youth and social work, retail, working with animals, warehouse or factory work, manual labour and the service industry.

Wellbeing

Overall, 70% of participants reported an increase in their wellbeing, well above the target of 60%. The percentage of participants reporting an increase in wellbeing between Year 1 and Year 2 of the programme rose by exactly double, from 38%, to 76%. In Year 3 this increased continued, with 79% of participants reporting an increase in their wellbeing (*Figure 18*). Across stakeholder interviews in Years 2 and 3, 13 out of 16 suggested an increase in wellbeing, exceeding the 75% target.

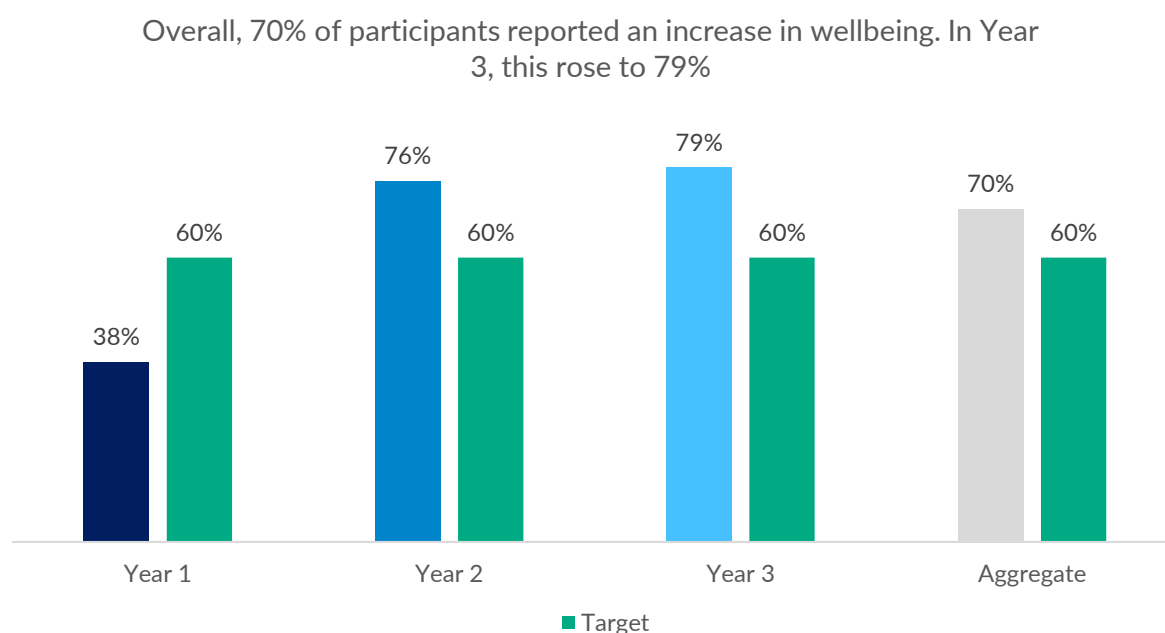


Figure 18 Percentage of participants who reported an increase in wellbeing per year and overall
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]



Participants found that the programme helped them to establish a good routine and lead more **healthy, balanced lives**. Participants reported that, before the programme, they would often not eat three meals a day, would sleep in and go to bed at irregular hours, and find it difficult to be productive. They suggested that this changed as a result of the programme.

"My routine before the programme - I would sleep all day. It is really different now. The programme helped me to get a normal routine – get up in the morning and get stuff done."

Participant

"Before the course I used to get up late and now I am up early. I feel more motivated now to apply for jobs."

Participant

Most participants referenced the informal peer groups that formed on the programme as one of the **major highlights**, with many participants reporting in follow-up interviews that they were still in contact with their programme mates after it had ended. These outcomes are important to note, given the social isolation and lack of confidence that many participants reported to have prior to the programme. Some participants said that they had previously felt unable to leave their house due to poor mental health. Venture Trust staff emphasised that **the peer relationships among participants** were also very important in ensuring participants' active engagement with the programme sessions.

"Yeah, everybody on the programme was great... I would honestly consider some of them as one of my best mates."

Participant

"I still talk to most of them. Was with one of them last night. Just hanging out. He only lives 10 minutes away from me."

Participant



Case Study 3

Mo found out about the CBCC programme through a friend. Before the course, Mo had a bike that which was made up of a number of broken parts. He would fix it on his own and it would still break regularly.

Mo enjoyed the programme and thought of it as a "*good experience*". He made some friends out of the course and improved his bike fixing skills.



6 months after taking part in the programme

Mo was studying at college part-time five days a week and was still in touch with the staff at Venture Trust. Mo hadn't used his bike in 2-3 months.



12 months after taking part in the programme

Mo had just finished his last week of college and said his course had gone really well. He was enrolled in another course beginning in September. He had applied for summer jobs, but had not heard anything back from the places he'd applied to. His future plans are to study another course which will help him find employment or go straight into employment.

Since lockdown, Mo has been using his bike every day as a chance to get outside. This has helped his wellbeing during lockdown.

Positive destinations

Venture Trust collects outcome data for all participants who start the programme, including those who disengage before completion. As such, the number of young people moving into positive destinations was compared to the total number of young people who had started the programme in each year.



Overall, **73%** of participants went on to positive destinations (*Figure 19*), either in employment, training, education or voluntary roles. This far exceeds the target of 60%, **and constitutes a considerable achievement given the multiple complex needs of the target group**. In Year 3, a lower proportion of young people have so far gone on to positive destinations. This is likely to be partly the result of a shorter time passing since the course's end, and also as a result of the covid-19 crisis, which has hit young people the hardest.

Overall, 73% of participants moved on to positive destinations. This was lowest in Year3, which is likely to be due to C-19

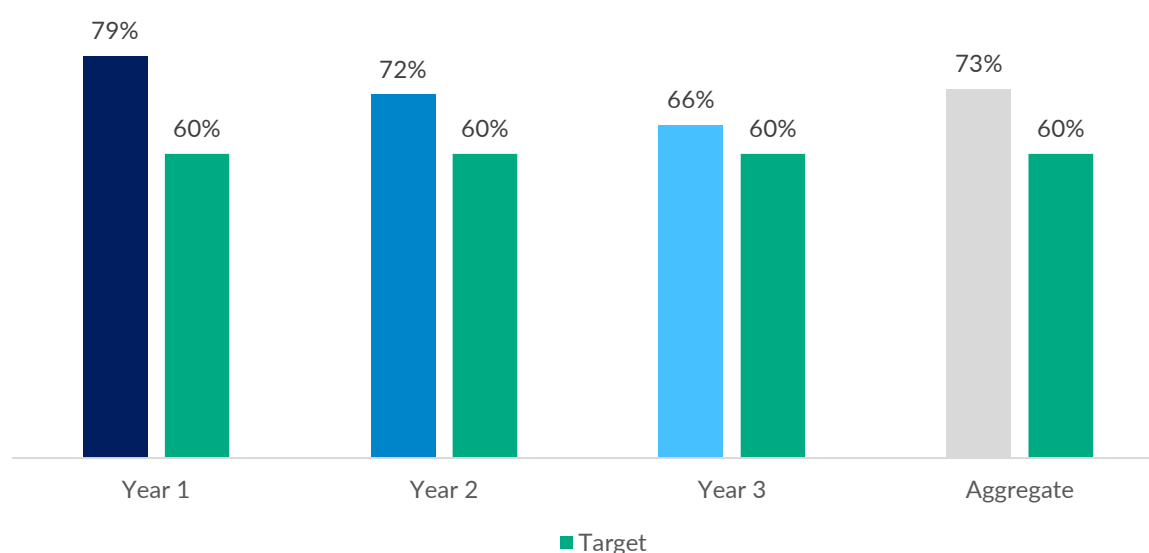


Figure 19 Percentage of participants who moved on to positive destinations per year and overall
[Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

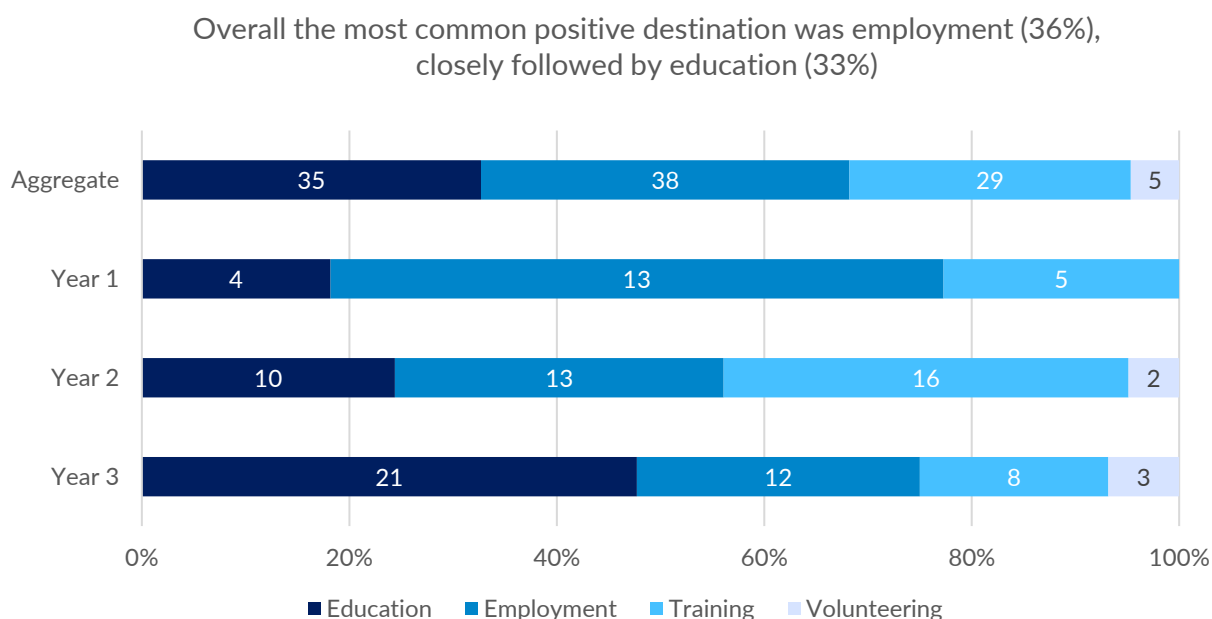


Figure 20 Breakdown of participants' positive destinations per year and overall [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

Many participants we spoke to were interested in pursuing a career involving the outdoors, maintenance, repair, or construction. The CBCC programme was able to help some participants move into jobs in these sectors.

"I got myself a full-time job since the programme. It is in construction – the demolition of old tenements. Two weeks after the CBCC course, my Venture Trust worker had given me a reference. After that I got a full-time job. It's cold outside but it is good... I always wanted to do construction - since I was 15."

Participant

"My key worker helped me with the job. I was in contact with them until I got my full-time job. Without their reference I probably would not have got the job."

Participant



Venture Trust staff felt that in Year 3 **positive destinations** were improving as a result of more **aftercare**. However, **this outcome was felt to be more or less difficult to achieve depending on the level of need of the participant**. For example, if a participant was in supported housing or was homeless, this would need to be addressed before a positive destination in employment could be achieved.

Case Study 4

When Martin's friends got onto the Venture Trust CBCC programme, he asked if he could come along as it sounded good. Martin enjoyed all aspects of the course, but particularly liked learning about the bikes, meeting people, making new friends and especially the residential "*it was just a week away from everything*". He enjoyed how there was "*something new*" everyday. Martin has dyslexia and found the extra support he received on the course when it came to written work very helpful.



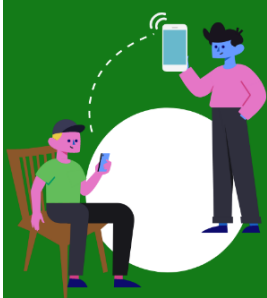
He was homeless and living with friends at the time he took part in the course. When the course ended, people from Venture Trust helped him get set up in temporary accommodation and helped set up his benefits.

15 months after taking part in the programme

We spoke to Martin once - 15 months after he took part in the programme - and he was doing well. He was working in a job which Venture Trust helped him secure. He is hoping to change working environments in the future to experience something different.

He mentioned how good an experience it was meeting everybody on the course and still keeps in touch to the other people on the course on Snapchat.

While Martin loved his bike and used it to get back and forth from work, he unfortunately had to sell his bike to a friend when he needed money. He regretted that he had to give it away.





Antisocial/criminal behaviour

Overall, 50% of participants across all three years reported a reduction in their own antisocial or criminal behaviour (*Figure 21*). This figure falls short of the 60% overall target; however, a higher rate of Year 3 participants (71%) reported a reduction in antisocial or criminal behaviour than in previous years (45% in Year 1 and 33% in Year 2).

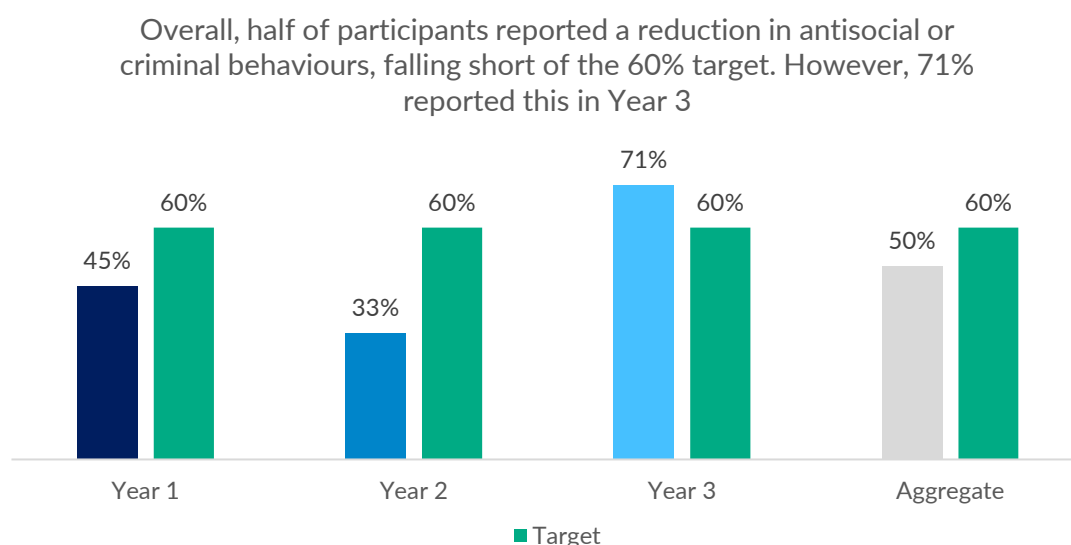


Figure 21 Percentage of participants who reported a reduction in antisocial or criminal behaviours per year and overall [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Venture Trust data]

This finding was supported by interviews with participants, in which some reported that the programme had helped them to reduce their antisocial or criminal behaviour. One Year 3 participant expressed how the course had helped them get away from problem alcohol and drug use:

"It gets you gets away from drugs, drinking alcohol - [it] conquers your fears. If you're having a tough time, it's a bit of relaxation ... that can help you move on, so when you go back you can just feel like a wee confident person and you can just get on with your life and have a good time."

Participant

"I stay out of trouble and I feel calmer... less anxiety. I'm staying away from crime since I have been on the Venture Trust programmes..."

Participant



It is important to note that not all of those enrolled on the programme had previously offended or were involved in criminal or antisocial behaviour. As many participants will not have been involved in this kind of behaviour before starting the programme, there is a limited scope for a reduction.

Other outcomes

Participants highlighted that having such a tangible takeaway from the programme – the bike they built themselves – was a bonus. For many participants, it meant that they had something that was a long-lasting outcome, and this contributed positively to their life in a range of different ways, including transport or wellbeing during lockdown. Some participants also noted that having access to a bicycle after the programme had helped them to save money. This was emphasised by a participant who was living in temporary accommodation outside Edinburgh and had to commute into the city in order to look for work. In general, many participants reported that they continued to use the bicycles from the CBCC programme.

Our interviews highlighted that lasting support from Venture Trust tailored to participants' needs was valuable and important. In our Year 3 interviews, several participants mentioned still being in contact with Venture Trust at their six-month follow up. This meant that they could get help with job opportunities as these arose, through one-to-one help or through the job club. However, this seemed to slip after a year, with participants reporting less contact from Venture Trust staff. Sometimes this was due to participants being ready to finish support.

"I think, at the time, they had done everything they could. I think they thought it was time for me to do things myself."

Participant

There were a number of other beneficial outcomes listed by participants, including an increased ability to focus, interpersonal skills and empathy. Additionally, two participants found permanent housing as with the help that they received from Venture Trust.

"I can communicate with people and stay focused on what I'm doing when I'm searching for jobs"

Participant



"I've always been an understanding person, but I've learnt to be even a bit more. Working in a group I always want to be the first one to answer, but the staff on the course asked me to ask what other people think and help develop other people by asking."

Participant



7. Comparative performance and future funding

In this chapter we explore the performance of ChangeCycle compared with the performance of similar programmes, and reflect on the future positioning and funding of ChangeCycle, with a particular focus on the next two years – a period which will be characterised by all the features of a deep recession in terms of the economic context and specifically very high unemployment, particularly among young people. We draw out the main points and recommendations from this discussion.

Comparative performance

There are regular efforts to compare the performance of employability programmes with similar programmes to understand respective strengths and weaknesses and, specifically to identify incidences of high performance that can be described and promoted.

This is an area of considerable difficulty. In practice, programmes can look similar, but may work with groups of a different profile, in different areas (with different job opportunities in terms of both scale and type) and at different times in the economic cycle (eg it would not make sense to compare the outcomes achieved by a programme in a very tight labour market with a similar programme operating in the depths of a recession – and similarly the same programme in the same place is likely to achieve much lower outcomes if a recession occurs). For these reasons, there are significant qualifications around any comparisons, and they need to be interpreted with care.

However, there are some benchmarks which it is possible to draw on:

- The Scottish average figures produced by Cambridge Policy Consultants for the Scottish Government in 2014 (we have updated these in line with inflation)
- The fiscal and economic costs of unemployment – which helps to assess the value of a programme which reduces unemployment or at least accelerates work finding.



Benchmark costs

The overall cost of the CashBack Change Cycle is £608,000. Based on a figure of 158 programme starts this means a **per capita cost of £3,848, with a cost per positive outcome of £5,287**. As set out above, it is important when comparing this figure with others to take account of the client group (ie those with multiple barriers who are more distant from work).

An evaluation of the Activity Agreement pilots that operated in ten areas across Scotland between May 2009 and March 2011 found that cost per signed up participant was £3,497 (£4,300 at current value) and the average cost (per hard progression) of those who reached the end of their Agreement or left early was £7,707 (£9,480 at current value). We have extracted and updated the costs of more comparable programmes (in terms of the client group) presented by Cambridge Policy Consultants in 2014² – with the addition of Future Jobs Fund and Work Programme:

Programme	Cost/gross job entry (2005/6)	Updated to 2020	Cost per participant	Updated to 2020
New Deal for Young People	£2,619	£3,824	£866	£1,264
Employment Zone NDYP	£4,283	£6,253	£1,296	£1,892
Private sector led NDYP	£3,224	£3,966	£1,177	£1,448
Flexible New Deal			£1,889	£2,701
Future Jobs Fund (similar to Kick Start)	£9,000	£11,070	£3,946	£4,854
Work Programme	£2,097	£2,495		
Average <i>per assistance</i> for all Scottish support			£1355 (16-19yo) £1196 (20-24yo)	£1531 £1,730

² [http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/media/473005/sef - employability research - cambridge policy consultants - final report - november 2014.pdf](http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/media/473005/sef_-_employability_research_-_cambridge_policy_consultants_-_final_report_-_november_2014.pdf)



The latest publication to offer some comparative costings is the Final Evaluation of the Talent Match programmes³. What this shows is a wide variation in the cost per participant, from £2,000 per beneficiary to £11,300. This variation appears to be largely related to the activities carried out (rather than the deprivation of the area or local unemployment). The average amount per young person on Talent Match, from any partnership, was around £4,000.

The national programmes offer a much less intensive experience than Change Cycle (often for participants who are not as distant from work) – hence the claim of ‘parking and creaming’ which was made of Work Programme. In addition, they are large scale programmes with associated savings in terms of overheads. But their per person costs show that Venture Trust’s cost per person and cost per positive outcome fall within the same area as many of these employability focused programmes for young people. We have not found any published data on comparable per person costs for CashBack programmes.

Benchmark savings

Another way of assessing the value of CashBack Change Cycle is using estimates of the fiscal and economic impact of having young people in work rather than unemployed. We carried out a detailed analysis for the Dundee Partnership in 2016 and below we set out our main conclusions. We have updated the figures to 2020 – but with a reduction in the value of unemployment support and the move to Universal Credit it is hard to replicate the fiscal calculation. However, the economic impact will remain similar.

The Annual cost of an individual on ESA is:

Programme	Fiscal Value	Economic Value
ESA	£9,091	£13,236

- The fiscal cost includes the annual cost to DWP of benefit payments and the associated administration cost, and the increased service demand on the NHS for an individual out of work
- The economic cost includes the lost economic growth that would have occurred had the individual been in employment for a year.

³ <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/talentmatch/files/2020/07/tm-eval-comparative-final-2020.pdf>



Reducing the duration of an ESA claim has the following fiscal and economic benefits per individual:

	monthly cost	reducing unemployment by					
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months	18 months	24 months
fiscal cost	£758	£2,273	£4,545	£6,818	£9,091	£13,636	£18,181
economic cost	£1,103	£3,309	£6,618	£9,927	£13,236	£19,854	£26,472

The annual cost of an individual on JSA is:

Programme	Fiscal Value	Economic Value
JSA	£10,321	£14,790

Reducing the median duration of a JSA claim for someone who has been long term unemployed from 2.5 years has the following fiscal and economic benefits per individual:

	monthly cost	Reducing unemployment by					
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months	18 months	24 months
fiscal cost	£860	£2,580	£5,160	£7,741	£10,321	£15,481	£20,641
economic cost	£1,233	£3,698	£7,395	£11,093	£14,790	£22,185	£29,580

What this shows is that, for those at high risk of long-term unemployment, **the outcomes from the Change Cycle programme suggest that it offers good value for money.**

It would be worth following through with a sample of clients to understand the longer-term impact on their life and their employability outcomes (though as time passes it will become harder to accredit this to Change Cycle).



Future positioning and funding

In terms of employability positioning and funding, the impact of Covid-19 has changed everything. Within a period of six months we will have gone from historically low unemployment to historically high unemployment, so the context for employability programmes is transformed. After each of the last three recessions it has taken seven years for the employment figure to return to pre-recession levels and this has important implications for the focus, design, duration and partnerships around a programme.

The final issue is about the nature and scale of national support programmes for unemployed people. These are going to be introduced at scale. The Kickstart Scheme announced in July 2020 is expected to cost c£2bn and will apply across the UK. **It will make sense to position Venture Trust programmes explicitly as a lead into these opportunities by setting up guarantees by employers to take on graduates from Venture Trust programmes.**

More generally, there is a growing divergence between DWP funded programmes in England and DWP/Scottish Government funded programmes in Scotland. In Scotland, the national employability programme Fair Start Scotland (FSS) has been contracted in a different way and at a different scale from the Work and Health Programme (WHP) in England, with the Scottish Government topping up DWP money to transform the scale of the national programme. So, while in all areas of Scotland FSS is by far the largest source of support for those further from work, in England WHP is now marginal. As we enter the final year of Fair Start, the Scottish Government are pursuing a twin track approach to employability, guided by the overarching principles of No One Left Behind.

This means that funding that was previously centralised (eg with SDS) is now being passed to Local Authorities – some of whom are taking care to pass these through their Local Employability Partnership to ensure that the way that funding related to Activity Agreements, and Employability Fund are distributed in a coherent, joined up way. Alongside this, there is a lot of thinking about Fair Start 2 – with the likelihood that this will pick up cues from the ‘Falkirk approach’ of trying to align a wide range of funding around locally focused partnerships (building on LEPs).



However, the depth and duration of the current recession will have an impact here – both in terms of transforming the funding devoted to employability (and enhancing employer demand for recruits) and in encouraging a more strongly differentiated range of offers. Unemployment had in 2019 reached levels which encouraged a focus on those remaining out of work – many of whom faced multiple barriers with the majority related to health and/or disabilities. Now, those who are unemployed will include large numbers who are recently redundant, large numbers of new entries to the labour market (mostly young people from school, College and University) as well as those who were unemployed before the impact of Covid-19. This suggests that **there is a sustained need for a focus on long term unemployed young people – as well as young people emerging into the labour market who are at risk of NEET.** They will require even more support – over a sustained period – if they are to compete successfully in a very loose labour market.

The practical implications for Venture Trust, and programmes like Change Cycle are:

- Sustaining a focus on those further from work – who will require even more help now – and over a longer period.
- Developing relationships with longer term vocational pathways to job opportunities in order to create a way of helping these young people use the recession to enhance their skills and enter the labour market at a higher level in terms of skills and income (and sustainability)
- Developing relationships with employers who are keen to use the Kickstart Scheme and want to work with a partners such as the Venture Trust to prepare young people further from work for a productive six month work experience (and one that is more likely to lead to a longer term job)
- Taking advantage of the streamlined recruitment processes that are currently in place in some sectors that is allowing some of those further from work to bypass the usual more demanding recruitment filters.



8. Findings and recommendations

Key findings

Programme pathway and structure

Venture Trust and partner agency staff felt that the *pre-programme support was crucial to ensuring buy-in* to the programme and engagement from participants. In Year 3, pre-programme support included visits to the Bike Station – allowing participants to meet each other and get a taste of what was to come.

Staff identified the *importance of aspects of the community phase* (combining classroom-based employability training and vocational skills development) in sustaining momentum and interest in the course. It was important for staff to provide a mixture of activities each day, as some participants may struggle with the classroom element of the programme. This would involve, for example, a morning of CV work followed by an afternoon of bike building.

Programme evolution

Since our initial report in May of 2018, the Venture Trust has invested in and improved the delivery of the CBCC programme each year, following recommendations.

- In Year 1, participant numbers were lower than planned and referrals were often unsuitable. It was recommended that the Venture Trust strengthen the programme's referral system. As a result, in Years 2 and 3, the Venture Trust had two employability delivery workers and one programme coordinator, an increase from one delivery worker in Year 1.
- In Year 1, it was recommended that the Venture Trust engages more closely with young people prior to start of the CBCC programme, ensuring that they are fully prepared for the three-week programme. Increased staff capacity in Years 2 and 3 enabled Venture Trust staff to work more closely with potential participants prior to the start of the programme, with staff engaging up to six weeks before the course in Year 3.



- In Year 1, the number of participants moving into positive destinations was lower than required. Rocket Science recommended the development of continuous support after the completion of the programme, ensuring that participants were better supported to move into positive destinations. Increased staff capacity also allowed Venture Trust to work more closely with young people on a one-on-one basis after the completion of the programme.
- Employability support and the support offered in the residential week felt disjointed. Rocket Science recommended that the Venture Trust increase cooperation between staff members. The Venture Trust increased the consistency of staff in Years 2 and 3, and provided more information to participants about the role of the residential.
- In Year 3, the Venture Trust ratified a new qualification that participants could gain on the course – an SQA in employability.

Referral routes and promotion

Referral routes

Routes onto the CBCC programme were diverse, though a large proportion of referrals came through partner agencies. These partners tended to be other employability or pre-employability training programmes. Referrers found out about the Venture Trust in a number of different ways, including promotional materials (eg a promotional email), colleagues, or existing links with Venture Trust staff. *CBCC is part of a longer journey of support for young people*, often representing a second or third step towards employability for its participants. This means that some participants needed further support after the programme's end. With referrals and signposting to further support, the CBCC programme was able to act in tandem with these organisations, rather than in competition.

Promotion

Efforts to promote the CBCC programme appeared to pay off, as *referrers had a good understanding of the programme and who it was for*. This had the dual effect of developing trust between Venture Trust staff and participants and providing in-depth and accurate insight into the programme. Referrers felt that participants had to be ready for the programme and would not recommend the programme to participants who had chaotic lifestyles.



In Year 3, Venture Trust staff started using various social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to improve recruitment. Staff reported that Facebook messaging young people directly had led to a number of self-referrals.

Demographics and engagement

Demographics

The CBCC programme had 158 course attendees over three years, equivalent to 82% of its target. Staff attributed greater participation numbers in Years 2 and 3 to a *more well-established and consistent offer, and a greater understanding of the course from referrers*. Staff also described ongoing difficulties in recruitment due to the nature of the group they were working with. To respond to these difficulties, staff in Year 3 created a 'reserve list'. This meant that should someone be unable to attend the course, another suitable young person could take their place.

Programme engagement and completion rates

Overall, of those who started the programme, *58% completed both the community and residential phases*. It should be noted that during Year 3, the presence of illicit substances on one of the residential stays led to a number of young people being sent home, which has affected overall programme completion rates.

It was noted that in Year 1, and to a lesser extent, in Year 2, *participants saw the community and residential phases as separate*, which accounted for some of the drop out seen between the end of the community phase and the beginning of the residential. Following recommendations in Year 1, in Years 2 and 3, staff made a concerted effort to increase the cooperation between staff members of the first two weeks and the third week of the programme.

It was common for participants to experience *multiple intersecting issues and barriers to work*, leading to a mix of needs on the programme. The most common issues faced by participants included mental health; homelessness or insecure housing; no experience of paid work; a need for education/employment training; and literacy or numeracy problems. In video interviews, some participants stated that the residential week had left them feeling homesick. This was most commonly because of participants having care responsibilities or having mental health issues.



Overall, referrals to the programme came from a total of 17 different local authorities, with just under a quarter of referrals living in Glasgow City and 22% living in Edinburgh. *Just under half of all participants on the CBCC programme were from the top 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.*

88% of referrals to the CBCC programme were male and despite efforts made to increase female participant rates, in Year 3, 90% of referrals continued to be male.

For most participants it was felt that employment was a possible outcome of the programme, but others needed continued support after the programme finished. To accommodate this range of needs, *Venture Trust staff were flexible and adaptive in their programme delivery.*

Programme targets and outcomes

Participants seemed to really enjoy the course. Interviews suggested that there was something for everyone, whether it be gaining a new skill or qualification, meeting new people and making friends, increasing confidence or the chance to pursue a new career. In most cases, *outcomes of the programme exceeded targets* and those who had referred into the programme reported a positive change in most participants. Having a *tangible takeaway from the programme was a real bonus* for participants, and many still used the bicycle they had built.

Capacity and confidence

The CBCC programme had a profound effect on the confidence, self-belief, motivations and aspirations of its participants. This is important, as interviews showed a clear connection between increased confidence and self-belief and better employability outcomes eg greater confidence in interviews, greater motivation to pursue career goals, the ability to conquer fears and to overcome obstacles. This is backed up by research on long-term unemployment, which shows a strong association between confidence and motivation to search for jobs, and decreased risk of long-term unemployment. Unlocking confidence also seemed key to other wider outcomes, for example, better communication skills, staying away from alcohol and drugs or dealing with anger issues. The CBCC programme *demonstrates the importance of softer indicators in progressing towards 'harder' employability outcomes*, that move participants further down the employability pipeline.

Physical and personal skills



Referrers and participants commonly mentioned an *increase in young people's practical, "hands-on" skills and interest in both bikes and the outdoors*. The most commonly achieved qualifications across Years 1, 2 and 3 were Fire Awareness training and Manual Handling training.

Behaviours and aspirations

Participants reported that the CBCC programme had *increased their aspirations and expanded their horizons*. For some participants, the CBCC programme helped to confirm their interest in pursuing particular careers and they *often left with a better idea of what they would like to do in the future*. Referrers reported an *increase in the motivation of young people to engage with further training opportunities*. Some wanted to go to college, look for part-time jobs or find full-time employment.

Wellbeing

Participants found that the programme *helped them to establish a good routine and lead more healthy, balanced lives*. Most participants referenced the *informal peer groups that formed on the programme as one of the major highlights*. Additionally, the peer relationships among participants were very important in ensuring participants' active engagement with the programme sessions.

Positive destinations

Overall, *73% of participants went on to positive destinations either in employment, training, education or voluntary roles*. This far exceeds the target of 60% and constitutes a *considerable achievement given the multiple complex needs of the target group*. The most common positive destination for participants was employment (36%), closely followed by education (33%). Venture Trust staff felt that in *Year 3 positive destinations were improving as a result of enhanced aftercare*. However, this outcome was felt to be more or less difficult to achieve depending on the level of need of the participant.

Antisocial/criminal behaviour

50% of participants across all three years reported a reduction in their own antisocial or criminal behaviour. This figure falls short of the 60% overall target; however, a higher rate of Year 3 participants (71%) reported a reduction in antisocial or criminal behaviour than in previous years. It is important to note that as not all of those enrolled on the programme had previously offended or were involved in antisocial behaviour, there was limited scope for a reduction.



Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Our findings confirmed the importance of pre-course support, particularly in sustaining engagement with participants throughout all stages of the programme. *We recommend* that Venture Trust should continue to provide this, refining the offer and exploring reasons for continued disengagement. Venture Trust could increase the value of pre-course support by expanding it for particular individuals - for instance, offering different types of more flexible support for those who cannot attend the three-week course.

Recommendation 2: Our findings suggest that young people are engaging with the CBCC programme as part of a longer journey to employment. As the programme operates at Stage 2 to 3 of the Employability Pipeline, participants may already have had some support from other organisations prior to starting, and may continue to need further support after the programme's finish. Venture Trust have already built good relationships with referrers, however, there is an opportunity to increase these connections further, creating clear and consistent pathways of support between a network of trusted organisations. *We recommend* that Venture Trust pursue this opportunity. This would mean improving signposting for young people to the most appropriate organisations for aftercare support, including introducing them to new staff and preparing them for this change. This would increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for young people, and would help ensure there is no duplication of effort, creating 'employability programme fatigue'.

Recommendation 3: Our findings suggest that the use of social media increased awareness of the CBCC programme, leading to an increased number of external and self-referrals. *We recommend* an enhanced use of social media, especially Facebook, to promote the programme. The use of short eligibility surveys on social media platforms could act as a quick and effective way to assess whether self-referrals are likely to be appropriate. It may be possible to conduct social media research to explore its reach and impact on young people and referrer organisations. This would provide Venture Trust with examples of best practice in social media use to increase referrals.



Recommendation 4: A number of participants struggled with not being able to get in contact with family or friends during the residential. This led to some anxiety and worry among some participants. This suggests improvements could be made in identifying participants who may need to keep in contact with a support network while away from home. *We recommend* that Venture Trust explore a range of methods to do this, including providing these participants with limited and carefully managed mobile phone access while on the residential week.

Recommendation 5: While referrers were very positive about the difference that the programme had made for participants, they felt that more formal feedback would be helpful. *We recommend* that Venture Trust establishes a system of providing feedback to referrers about how the young person has progressed during and after the CBCC programme. This could be linked to the ongoing effort to build close relationships with referrers and encourage repeat referrals. This can be seen both as a benefit to this programme and as a contribution to strengthening relationships for other work in the future.

Recommendation 6: Our findings show a lack of engagement of female participants across all three years, suggesting an opportunity for Venture Trust to explore different and creative ways of engaging with females, including the potential for a female-only course. *We recommend* that future communication with Edinburgh- and Glasgow-based organisations that work with young women and girls should highlight CBCC's relevance to increasing positive outcomes for young people. This work could help establish more partnerships with other relevant organisations where benefits are twofold: increasing the number of female referrals and increasing signposting opportunities for support after female participants have completed the CBCC programme.

Recommendation 7: Venture Trust has collected useful outcomes data through Outcomes Stars and video interviews. However, we recommend that Venture Trust further enhance this data offer, for example, ensuring that demographic data is available for programme engagements, rather than for referrals on to the programme.

Appendix 1



Outcomes	Contributing questions		Source of questions
Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence to look for work I am confident that I can set well-formed targets I am confident that I can see myself as others see me (self- awareness) I am confident that I have good listening skills I am an assertive person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am aware of the best roles for me to fill for teamwork I am confident at problem solving I am confident that I will take a creative approach to most problems I am confident about answering competency-based questions in an interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome Star Self-reflection form
Outcome 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspirations future plans Current job readiness I am very clear what my goals are for the next 6 months I am confident that I have planned sufficiently to enable me to achieve my goals I can see clearly how my skills apply to a wide range of other situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am clear what employers are looking for I am confident that I can demonstrate the skills, values and behaviours that employers are looking for I am very clear about the importance of reflective activity to professional life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome Star Self-reflection form
Outcome 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional/mental health Substance misuse Physical health activity levels Relationships 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome star
Outcome 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offending/anti-social behaviour 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome star

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