

Clothworkers' Foundation Better Futures II Year 1 Report

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Jo Fischl, Mhairi Guild, Rosie Burrells
0207 426 8888

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Introduction

Almost a decade ago, in the summer of 2011, an incident of police brutality triggered a short period of social unrest which came to be known as the London riots, starting in London's Tottenham and quickly spreading both in London and several other UK cities. Although much of the media reporting at the time placed blame on the supposed lack of morality of the young people involved, the underlying causes which led to such unrest were found to be complex in nature. A range of contributing factors such as poor relations between marginalized communities (particularly BAME groups) and the police, social and economic inequality, and the lack of career prospects and opportunities available to young people have been cited in research carried out since the riots took place¹.

In response to such problems, the Clothworkers' Foundation set up a proactive funding grant stream, Better Futures, which aimed to support projects which prioritised the needs of disadvantaged young people in predominantly urban areas. The majority of projects were funded for a period of three years and at the end of the funding period nfpSynergy was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the impact the grants had on the young people supported, as well as their families and wider communities. Although, of course, the funding alone could not hope to solve the full range of issues which led to the riots, it was found that the projects supported were having a profound impact on the lives of young people participating in a wide variety of ways. These ranged from supporting the young people to grow in confidence and develop their aspirations for the future, through to giving them the practical tools they needed to secure career opportunities.

However, the vital question raised by both nfpSynergy's research and subsequent discussions with the Clothworkers' Foundation was whether the support which had been provided as a result of the grants amounted to *a good job completed*, or rather *a good job started*. In the complex lives of the young people supported, continuity was shown to be particularly important. Further, for the charities themselves, many of whom were small and locally based, having longer term support from grant funding gave them the security they needed to allow them to build on momentum and have a more lasting and meaningful impact. It was decided that the funding be extended – with some of the same charities funded for a second period (typically three years), whilst some new projects also received funding as part of the Better Futures II grant scheme. The charities awarded funding through Better Futures II are as follows:

Charity	Grant	Funded in original Better Futures?
Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust	£301,000 over 3 years	Repeat
ReachOut	£150,000 over 3 years	Repeat
One In A Million	£177,500 over 3 years	Repeat
Making the Leap	£176,000 over 3 years	Repeat
Leap Confronting Conflict	£225,000 over 3 years	New
UK Youth	£150,000 over 2 years	New

¹ Sussex University (2019) Re-reading the 2011 English riots ESRC 'Beyond Contagion' interim report, January 2019. Available at <<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=beyond-contagion-report-for-the-guardian-january-2019.pdf&site=557>> [Accessed 3 February 2021].

It was also agreed that nfpSynergy would again evaluate impact. However, this time we would work alongside the charities throughout the period of funding to build an understanding of progress at key stages during the projects and report back to the Clothworkers' Foundation in detail at the end of each year of grant funding, rather than evaluating only at the end of the project funding cycle. This report summarises the first year of funding for the participating charities.

A note on Covid-19 and its impact on the research: Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK in March 2020, research which had been planned for Spring 2020 was delayed – this was due to a number of factors but chiefly because of concerns that the pandemic had created a multiple challenges for the charities receiving funding and as a result it was felt that it would not be helpful to ask them to engage in research during this time of significant upheaval. For some charities, furthermore, the pandemic required the necessary redirection of work and resources towards other urgent projects and ways to support their beneficiaries. As a result, the research was carried out in Autumn / Winter 2020 instead – this has meant that whilst this paper reports back on the first round of in-depth research reviewing the projects, some of the projects are in fact more than a year into their funding. nfpSynergy will continue to carry out a further two research phases but these may be less widely spaced out than originally planned.

Another point to be noted with regard to Covid-19 is that, as noted, it had a significant impact on many of the projects: from its impact on the lives of those supported, through to the practicalities of how charities' work could be delivered under lockdown and amidst social distancing measures. This meant that it inevitably became a key theme of the interviews. With the vaccination programme now underway, the future looks more positive in 2021 and many charities will be keen to return to some of their previous ways of working. However, our research has shown that the themes raised around Covid-19 will remain salient for all charities involved, both in terms of ongoing impacts for young people (particularly the economic and social ramifications affecting education and employment prospects) and in terms of the learnings which charities plan to take forward from their experiences of this uniquely challenging period.

Methodology

During the first year of the evaluation, we employed a number of research methodologies. Firstly, nfpSynergy project researchers met with key staff members for each of the charities in order to understand the projects in detail, the objectives planned for the year, and the ways in which the projects would be monitored and evaluated against such objectives through internal data collection and measurement processes. We also worked with the charity teams to understand where and how nfpSynergy's qualitative evaluation processes could best work alongside internal processes to capture the most valuable insights. Throughout the year, nfpSynergy gathered insight through meetings and information shared by the charities, which, alongside further desk research, has been used throughout this report to feedback on progress at the charities, and to provide evidence and context for the in-depth qualitative research.

In Autumn / Winter 2020, we carried out new qualitative research across all organisations to gain in-depth understanding of the progress of the projects and any emerging impacts. In our original evaluation proposal to the Clothworkers' Foundation, nfpSynergy proposed that the interviews which took place in Year 1 would primarily be with staff at the charities, with a focus on assessing the progress made so far and any adaptations to plans and objectives during the process of the first year of funding. It was then planned that interviews with young people themselves would become a larger component of the projects in Years 2 and 3 of the projects as they became more established.

This focus on staff reviews of the first year has largely remained, although young person interviews were included for one of the projects – ReachOut. As a result of the pandemic and the time required for adaptations to delivery, it made particular sense for research to prioritise staff and stakeholder interviews at this first stage of evaluation, in order to understand early achievements in set-up and delivery, how changes have impacted on projects to date, and what this has meant for the development of the funded projects in the longer term. However, since the funded ReachOut programme expands an established model of delivery, rather than representing a new venture, it made sense to begin exploring impact within this context and to hear more about the experience of project delivery during Covid-19 from young people's perspective.

In the original proposal, it was also agreed that nfpSynergy would carry out two interviews with charity staff per project in Year 1. However, the charities involved all work in very different ways and we wanted to be flexible in terms of capturing the most valuable insights into their first year. For this reason, in some cases staff interviews have been substituted for longer group interviews or small focus groups to enable us to gather a range of views from across the organisation. It should also be noted that in some cases we have exceeded two interviews per charity; in such instances we have borrowed funding from future years of the evaluation, as we believe that additional insight at this point has been valuable in understanding the charities' unpredictable first year.

We focused on a range of topics within interviews, including the following broad themes:

- What has been achieved in terms of project set up and delivery and what have been the challenges?
- How has the project evolved or developed since the original proposal?
- How is progress of the project being monitored and evaluated internally, and how will this be further developed over the remainder of the project?
- Specific section on Covid-19; what has been the impact on the project this year, and how do you expect it to impact ongoing delivery plans?
- What impact/difference has the project had on the lives of young people so far?
- (For those projects funded under original Better Futures programme) How is this project building on what was achieved through previous funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation?

The breakdown of fieldwork for each of the projects can be seen below.

Charity	Qualitative Research
Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust (SLCT) / Blueprint for All (Please note this charity has been renamed since the research, thus is typically referred to as SLCT in the research)	1 staff interview, 2 teacher interviews
ReachOut	2 staff interviews, 2 young person / mentor interviews, and 1 session observation
One In A Million	1 group staff interview with 4 staff members, 1 individual interview
Making the Leap	1 group interview / focus group with 5 staff members
Leap Confronting Conflict	2 staff interviews
UK Youth	This project began later and interviews for year 1 are planned for summer 2021

Common themes from the interviews

The six projects which the Clothworkers' Foundation have funded under the Better Futures II grant scheme provide a varied range of interventions for young people facing disadvantage or challenging circumstances. These are all individual projects, with specific objectives, working within a range of different communities or settings where young people face varied challenges. For this reason, we don't seek to directly compare the impact the projects may have against each other. However, though the projects vary, our research revealed many *shared challenges faced by the charities*, as well as *similarities in the types of impact they are having* on young people and in *the opportunities they identify*. Over the past year, these similarities have in some senses been highlighted by the coronavirus pandemic – as both the young people supported by these organisations as well as the charities themselves grapple with many comparable difficulties. Below we share some key themes which emerged from the interviews.

Alongside general themes, we include a section on initial signs of impact that are already emerging from the projects. In the individual charity sections which follow we delve into the specific findings for each of the organisations supported in greater depth. However, we hope the shared themes below shed some valuable light on what has been achieved in an overall sense in the Better Futures II programme over the first year of funding. In light of the extremely challenging context of 2020, these charities have shown themselves to be adaptable and resilient, and able to continue to provide young people with vital support at a time when it has often been more needed than ever. As noted above, at the end of the first Better Futures programme, it was asked whether continued funding would strengthen its impact. Although we are reviewing only the first year, we believe there are strong indications that doing so has supported the growth and stability of those charities previously funded as well as extending the scheme's impact via the addition of the two newest projects.

Provision of vital support at a challenging time

The Covid-19 outbreak has created a wide range of challenges for the charities funded under the Better Futures II programme. It is worth noting that, in spite of this, all projects have been able to continue supporting their communities during this extremely challenging and unusual time. In some cases this has meant adaptations to their model or to delivery methods, whilst others have needed to divert their work more significantly to meet urgent need in their areas during the crisis (with support from the Clothworkers' Foundation in allowing funding to be redirected).

In the early weeks of the outbreak, it would have been reasonable to expect a large impact on the ability of the projects to continue their work. There have indeed been major challenges and this has sometimes meant that ambitions which had been in place for expansion and development have been put on hold, whilst the charities have focused on the adaptations needed to ensure continued support for young people. However, we found that many of the charities have continued to meet many of their objectives, even if these have been achieved in a slightly different way than originally proposed. Further, the feeling is that whilst plans have been slowed by Covid-19 and timelines impacted, projects have generally not been knocked off course entirely, and aim to get fully back on track over the remainder of the funding period.

Current crisis both highlights and exacerbates young people's needs

One of the key themes which emerged from all interviews was the extent of the impact of Covid-19 on the young people that the charities are working with. This comes as no surprise considering national discourse

around the challenges which all young people are facing across the UK – from concerns about mental health² and the widening of educational inequality³, through to unemployment⁴. However, with many of the young people supported by the charities already facing significant disadvantages, Covid-19 and its related impacts were particularly damaging. We heard about a wide variety of issues young people were facing – charities told us about young people losing structure in their lives, missing out on education or lacking hope for the future, as well as about young people who had suffered bereavements. They also told us about increased conflict in family relationships under the pressure of lockdown and those struggling to help support their families financially, with the threat or reality of job losses.

As a result of these factors, increased need for support from young people was reported and – importantly – staff told us that they found that the support that they needed to offer young people was more holistic in nature. Staff talked about needing to adapt and be flexible in how they work in order to meet these exacerbated needs; in some cases, this meant more intensive or one to one support, whilst in others it involved greater staff awareness of, and proficiency in, certain kinds of support, particularly in relation to mental health. Regardless of the specific objectives of the programme, support has needed to be much more rounded and sensitive to young people's situations, before the organisations have been able to move onto more practical support or guidance. While staff were already addressing complex issues prior to Covid-19, the expansion in challenges faced by young people (as well as their increased social isolation) have meant that the holistic nature of support has become more embedded in charities' everyday work.

"there's probably so many examples of young people who have during this period, have not known how to cope, it's really thrown them off their days, their structures, they're not sure when they're going to get a job next and it's not just them in their situation it's their family members where they're being impacted so I'd probably say, to think of some examples, I think the level of emotional support that we have been able to provide has been quite astronomical. I think personally for myself there have been young people who've, you know, I can honestly say it's probably no exaggeration but Making The Leap has been a bit of a lifeline for them" – Making the Leap staff interview

"I think it really required the team and I to be a lot more innovative in the type of conversations we had, almost [counsel-esque] so a lot more dialogue around wellbeing before even having a conversation about, okay, what work are you looking for?" – Making the Leap staff interview

"throughout 2019/20 seeing incredible impact on a lot of the young people who either had challenges already with their emotional wellbeing and their emotional health, or through Covid were really quite severely impacted. And experienced a lot of trauma. And where we've been able to shift the programme online through the end of the last academic year, to the end of 2020, we were able to put a huge emphasis [on that]...we had feedback from the young people, from their mentors, from the teachers, that if the project did anything in continuing through Covid it was that it supported young people's mental health in the lockdown, and it supported them in managing their remote learning" – ReachOut staff interview

² Princes Trust, 2021. Briefing on 2021 Prince's Trust Tesco Youth Index. [online] Available at: <<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/tesco-youth-index-2021>> [Accessed 8 February 2021].

³ The Guardian, 2021. Home schooling is widening attainment gap between rich and poor, finds report. [online]. Available at : <<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jan/21/home-schooling-is-widening-attainment-gap-between-rich-and-poor-finds-report>> [Accessed February 2021]

⁴ The Guardian, 2021. Closed doors and lives in limbo: young Britons face Covid jobs crisis. [online]. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/feb/04/closed-doors-lives-limbo-young-britons-face-covid-jobs-crisis>> [Accessed 8 February 2021].

Digital transformation and remote support

In common with organisations around the world, one of the initial difficulties faced by the charities was around how to continue to deliver their work remotely. The Better Futures II charities faced the additional difficulty of ensuring that the work that they did to adapt their services still worked for the particular needs of more vulnerable young people. For many of the charities, the early weeks following the first Covid-19 outbreak involved significant investment of time and resources in a period of rapid digital transformation and adaptation to remote delivery. This involved everything from ensuring staff had the equipment and skills required or testing out different software and resources, through to rewriting the structure of programmes and running pilots with groups of young people to see what worked. In some cases, programmes were moved entirely online and in others some of the work happened via one-to-one telephone support. In our research, several themes emerged on what these changes have meant, revealing common challenges as well as potential benefits. A key question that emerged was how much this focus on remote support would be taken forward in the coming months as it (hopefully) becomes possible to return to in-person activities.

- **Provision of vital support:** It is clear that adaptation work has been time well spent. Digital and telephone support provided during this period, particularly during the first lockdown, has proved vital for many young people, offering much needed social interaction, structure and support – and has even been described by some staff members as providing a lifeline to their young people. It has also allowed the continuation of school based programmes, such as career talks and mentoring, whilst ensuring the safety of volunteers.
- **Response from young people:** Interestingly, charities reported varied responses from young people when it comes to interacting with their programmes through technology. Whilst some were very happy to access services online, others were less comfortable than might be expected of digitally savvy young people. In particular, the use of professional platforms such as Zoom wasn't necessarily something all young people were comfortable with. However, the charities generally found that young people gained confidence with online engagement over time. Another challenge with remote support was that programmes which rely on young people becoming able to talk openly about their experiences or emotions found it sometimes proves difficult for participants to build up the necessary rapport and trust online. However, for some charities the fact that support was now more focused on one-to-one rather than group work, actually made it easier for others to delve deeply into individual challenges in a way that may take longer in a group environment.
- **Group dynamics:** Another challenge lies in building a successful group dynamic online. In some cases this was easier than others – for example, ReachOut had a lot of success in moving existing groups online, where there was a pre-formed group dynamic and rapport with volunteers. It could prove much more difficult for charities to build up such dynamics with a new group – something that could be partially ameliorated through making use of the tools afforded by the technology, such as breakout rooms, to try to recreate some of the activities that help create intimacy in person.
- **Issues around digital exclusion:** The lack of access to technology for some young people has made it much harder for them to engage with digital programmes. For example, One In A Million reported that many of the young people they work with do not have access to laptops at home, which made it harder for the charity to move their group activities into the digital space. Another of the charities, Making the Leap, talked about some of the young people struggling to access their group courses via a mobile phone as they had no laptop access.
- **Response from employers, volunteers and partners:** In general, we heard that charities have had an extremely positive experience when it came to working with other stakeholders via technology. For volunteers – for example mentors or those providing careers talks or virtual

workplace experiences to young people – there was a positive response to online activities. This is perhaps unsurprising considering that many are working from home anyway – however, it was generally felt that this receptiveness would continue, considering the time and cost savings as well as the lack of travel time. Those who provided training for professionals also commented positively on the potential of continued digital work due to increased convenience, and therefore attendance, at these kinds of sessions during 2020.

So what does the future look like in terms of digital delivery? Clearly, the investment is continuing to pay off for the moment as restrictions continue. However, some charities commented that they would like it to continue to play some part in the future beyond Covid-19 restrictions. On the one hand, most interviewees felt that face to face work couldn't and shouldn't be entirely replaced by online – with so many of the benefits of working in person, especially with vulnerable young people, being difficult to replicate digitally. On the other hand, many interviewees saw the fact that their organisations had been forced to dramatically push themselves in terms of technology had brought many positives and opportunities. Most interviewees felt that they would like to retain at least some aspects of the changes they had made to their working practices, whilst others felt even more strongly that a blended model of digital/remote support and face to face would work for the project delivery in the future.

"some people are more in tune with the online world and are more comfortable with it than others and we have certain young people who haven't been more comfortable necessarily with the online offering" – ReachOut staff interview

"for working with new people who've never done our programmes before there was a slight challenge in kind of getting them to feel comfortable, especially speaking online it's a bit of a weird atmosphere, you don't really know the person on the other end of the call, you're kind of having to talk about your real feelings and your real emotions. So at the beginning I was kind of a little bit... apprehensive about how it would work but strangely enough, it has even, I think it's allowed people to become more confident, open and vulnerable ...I think it's because they have that kind of privacy and that time to really, to really engage with the content" – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

"technology was a barrier in some respects because not everybody is as comfortable on the Zoom and Teams platform as you may have assumed. You know, you always think that young people are, you know, maybe astute at using technology, very different to sharing a video on Snapchat so yes, being on a professional platform so to speak and having conversations about what you're trying to do when you're not quite sure what's happening in the world, you know, confidence was extremely low." – Making the Leap staff interview

"I think virtual and these type of meetings are going to be the future... we need to get them ready and also comfortable in how they handle these meetings... and also it's important just for us in terms of staying in the relationship really. I don't think anything takes the place of face to face, anything, seeing body language and everything else but yes, for me and for the team this will be something that needs to stay in our delivery model." – One In A Million staff interview

Monitoring & Evaluation under remote working

In the interviews, we discussed charities' monitoring and evaluation processes and the specific findings on this area are elaborated in more depth below. However, one theme that a few organisations mentioned was the

additional challenge around collecting data when working remotely i.e. not being there in person to encourage young people to complete feedback forms following talks or during courses. Some organisations spoke about how this had focused their attention on ensuring that they were collecting the most relevant information only at this time and thus reducing the burden on participants. Others remarked that some of the areas they wanted to measure had shifted as a result of the changes to the programme.

"that really does make it a lot harder to actually get quality feedback because, because I can't be in the room with the students giving them the form and collecting them back myself, it means that busy teachers are my main point of contact." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust staff interview

"Well we've had to adapt...I had a conversation with my data impact manager...we were like what's the best way we can reach these young people, do you want to do a digital course, let's do an online survey instead...getting young people to really complete that online specifically straight after they've finished the course. Yes, sometimes it's been a bit of an issue in terms of them remembering to do it, if it's not right there in front of them and they're not right here with me and I can see what they're doing it's a little bit difficult to get those results back instantly, I've kind of had to cajole a little bit and I've had to kind of get young people to remind them this was really important for us. So I think in that sense because I've developed that relationship with them it helped them to respond to those forms" – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

The impact of the Black Lives Matter movement

One topic raised in relation to a couple of the charities was the role that the Black Lives Matter movement has had on the charities' engagement with volunteers and employer partners. Although this wasn't mentioned by all it is particularly noteworthy in light of the emergence of Better Futures from the aftermath of the London riots, a period of unrest triggered by the police shooting of a young black man. Two interviewees mentioned that they had seen an increased interest in wider engagement at their charities following the recent movement – with a SLCT staff member mentioning increased interest from employer partners to volunteer their time and Making the Leap reporting engagement from employers who are becoming more focused on the need to diversify in their recruitment. The appetite from young people to have a forum to discuss these issues was further reflected in one of the testimonials which ReachOut shared with us from their own feedback collection (reported in their section below).

"we're in a very unique position that we have had an influx of people who're very willing to work with us, especially considering the Black Lives Matter movement and the death of George Floyd, all of that has kind of meant that people are very much willing to be like, actually, I've realised that I don't do enough to aid BAME young people and I would like to do that now. So we've had like a lot of new partnerships." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust staff interview

"Certainly from a corporate engagement perspective, the aim is to engage more employers that need to diversify their intake, their recruitment so with the sort of movement in the last sort of six months, it's opened a door of opportunity for us and by having that corporate engagement in the program they get to see that we actually have a very, very diverse group of young people and through the quality of the training we're able to perhaps dispel some of the myths that our corporates have about young people from the demographic that we work with and they are able to then portray themselves as professionals in waiting which is, you know, really, really good and so for me, that would be the

main aim that we get a lot more corporate partners involved in wanting to diversify their recruitment pipelines.” – Making the Leap staff interview

Relationship building – challenges and opportunities

There have been a mix of obstacles and opportunities when it comes to forming relationships with partners. There have certainly been some positives; see the increased interest, for example, for volunteers highlighted above. One area which has understandably been more difficult this year has been for charities working directly with schools such as SLCT, ReachOut and (on one of their programmes) Leap Confronting Conflict. Whilst all have been successful at maintaining and/or building some new relationships during this period, schools have clearly been under substantial pressure, meaning that progress in moving relationships forward or getting projects off the ground has often been slowed down. Schools are focused on ensuring that students catch up academically as well as dealing with changing restrictions (and, since January 2021 – closure of schools for a second time) so inevitably external programmes which might be viewed as “extras” have dropped in priority. At the same time however, where relationships have been maintained by schools, there is a clear recognition that the value of these programmes is, in many ways, more needed than ever.

The power of community reputation and trust

One of the shared factors in the success of the charities in general, and in their ability to continue their work during a turbulent year, is related to how deeply embedded they are in the communities they work in. This manifested in a range of ways in our discussions; in some cases the physical presence of charities in their communities had had a huge role in building up local reputation and encouraging engagement and referral to their services. For OIAM for example, their work is located within community spaces and staff have built trust amongst local families through provision of support over the long term – this has meant that even when they have been unable to operate from their usual premises during Covid-19, they have been able to maintain connections with young people through detached youth work in the community. In another example, teachers who had worked with SLCT reported the importance of the Trust – particularly in terms of its historic connections to Stephen Lawrence – within their local community.

This also comes through in the hands-on approach of many of the organisations – for example, in introducing themselves to young people and recruiting within the spaces in which young people feel comfortable. For instance, staff at Leap Confronting Conflict talked about the importance of this approach in initial engagements with young people, where prior to Covid-19 they would introduce young people to their work through meeting them in youth centres and sports clubs etc. For some the importance of these approaches has been reinforced by the fact that they’ve been forced to work differently during the pandemic – for example, they’ve needed to refocus on building their presence online and relying more on referrals from other organisations. Finally, a common thread was that young people often referred friends or relatives on to the charities themselves as a result of their positive experiences. Overall, it seems clear that the pre-existence of strong relationships and reputation have been helpful in enabling charities to weather the storms over 2020.

“I think the nature of some of the areas we work in trust is a big thing, people, you know, for want of a better word, maybe have broken relationships, lack of trust, I don’t know but what we’ve always tried to do is be consistent and be a constant in people’s lives, young people’s lives for a start but also gaining that trust of the wider community as well” – One In A Million staff interview

"Stephen Lawrence Trust are very much about involving us, and us involving them, in local community issues - especially issues surrounding our local BAME community" – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust teacher interview

Impact on young people

This report reviews the first year of the project, and thus, future reports will report in greater depth on the impact of the Better Futures II programme. However, some themes around impact are already emerging – some of which clearly build on the findings from the original Better Futures evaluation.

- **Growth in confidence:** One of the common themes which is shared by many of the charities is in the impact they are already seeing in growth of confidence amongst the young people they work with. These positive impacts were mostly mentioned in relation to young people who had been worked with over a longer period but has also been reported by many of the charities about their work post March 2020. With many young people's sense of self-belief and motivation taking a hit as a result of the job market and social impacts of Covid-19, it is particularly positive that many of the charities have been able to continue to play this confidence building role. This confidence growth was evidenced by staff in examples such as young people talking up or smiling more in workshops and group sessions, sitting up straight or being willing to ask questions.

"In school I used to be like really, not really talking to that many people and then I never used to really put my hand up, but ever since ReachOut like taught me it's alright to get the wrong answers, it's alright to try, it's alright to do something, I was like putting myself out there a bit more and putting my hands up more in class" – ReachOut young person

"Seeing them at the other end of a workshop where they're sat up straight, whereas before they may have been slouched in their chair or they're smiling, is really something" – Making The Leap staff interview

- **Raising aspirations:** A theme that emerged in a number of projects was around the value gained from young people getting exposure to the concept of different career options. Staff talked about how hearing about different professions and career paths had an important role in expanding young people's horizons and sense of what could be possible. Experiences such as workplace visits, demonstrations and inspiring talks were felt to have been influential on young people's motivation when it came to thinking about the future as well as giving them a knowledge of how to get there.

"I personally have seen that growth and confidence, when the students are able to get comfortable with whoever's presenting but also comfortable with the material that they're presenting, so it no longer seems like a foreign concept that they will be working one day and they're thinking things like oh actually, this could be a career for me." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust staff interview

"I think the overall impact of our programmes is that young people achieving something they don't think they would achieve, they enter spaces they don't think they would enter...especially a lot of our young people are African Caribbean...you can see how sometimes they can feel the racial impact of being able to enter certain spaces and enter certain events. They feel like I shouldn't be here and certain opportunities they feel like they shouldn't take because it's not for me ...because of their involvement with our programme ...they really start to understand that the world is their oyster." – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

- **Relatable role models:** Several staff members and other stakeholders also pointed to the importance of role models, particularly those which young people felt were relatable – for example those from similar backgrounds in terms of ethnicity and/or coming from the local area. In some cases, this could be staff members themselves, whilst in others it was in the choice of mentors or speakers who were well matched to the young people or could provide an inspiring talk and make it feel that the career option being presented was a genuine possibility for the young people.

"being able to for example, see someone delivered to you who looks like you also makes a massive difference" – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust staff interview

"The representation aspect was a key part because I think quite often when you do careers education activity it can actually be counterproductive because young people might not see themselves ... you come away thinking, 'oh actually you might have reinforced some of the worry that they had because they didn't see anyone looking like them, throughout the whole day, and that wasn't even mentioned by any of the people that they met... but I think with the Trust, it was a great way to bring that into the school." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust teacher interview

- **The concept of a 'safe space':** One of the key themes which emerged in the original Better Futures evaluation was in the value of the safe space to the young people supported by the various projects. Of course, with the outbreak of Covid-19, much support provided by the charities was no longer being delivered in physical spaces and thus many of the charities were in the position of trying to create this sense of safety for young people virtually. This could often take longer for young people new to the projects; however, the skills of staff in making young people feel comfortable and confident clearly helped to retain this value for the programmes.

"that's down to these guys, the consistency and their heart and the trust that they're building in young people when trusting adults can be very minimal and hanging by a thread, so all these three [staff members] are our heroes" – One In A Million staff interview

"I have got a bond with (mentor), I have someone I can trust, I can tell what is on my mind or anything and also the girls here we are like, we are all so close with each other now and its really nice. It's really fun." – ReachOut young person interview

- **Long term interventions:** Largely, these projects are not focused on one-off interventions but often work with young people over months or even years. Even when a young person could be seen as having 'dropped out' or disengaged from programmes such as those provided by Leap Confronting Conflict and Making the Leap, the organisations report that they often find that young people come back later when they are more ready to engage with the demands of the project. This means that change is often gradual and incremental, and the full benefits may take time to be fully realised.

"it's difficult isn't it because everybody wants a hard outcome, like, you've done level one and you've done level two and you've done level three but if you work with young people, you know...really it's all about the journey for us and our young people and it's how we walk them through that journey and it's how we help them to unfold slowly." – One In A Million staff interview

"I know we've talked about [six month] follow up but to be honest it's almost a lifetime of follow up"
– Making the Leap staff interview

"every young person is very different so we understand that it might take that one individual a lot longer to get to where they want to be but we do certainly stick with them, we really do recognise that and offer them support" – Making the Leap staff interview

The future remains uncertain

Over the course of the past year, the charities funded by Better Futures II have had to exercise a level of flexibility and willingness to adapt that would rarely be required in a normal year. They have altered programmes considerably, changed delivery models and methods of working with young people and stakeholders and have reacted with speed to external changes. Having long term support in place from the Clothworkers' Foundation, as well as the level of flexibility shown by the Clothworkers' Foundation (and other funders) in allowing them to restructure the ways they work, has played a huge role in enabling this. When we discussed the year ahead, whilst plans were being put in place, charities were aware that the coming months remained uncertain and that they needed to be prepared to be flexible. With the latest lockdown announced after the completion of our interviews, this is certainly proving to be the case so far. The decision by the Clothworkers' Foundation to extend the Better Futures II programme and work again with a number of the same charities has provided these organisations with the stability and consistency they need to, in turn, provide stability to the young people they support during a highly challenging period.

"I think the nature of being online is that we remain flexible and we have been already throughout. I mean things are changing weekly so we want to be as sensible as we can be in our online delivery, we want to find a way of transitioning back to face to face delivery as smoothly and as efficiently as we can when that time comes. So that's what a lot of our kind of time and energy is being spent on at the moment, as well as keeping up to date with what's going on and working with schools... We've got to take all of that into account and make sure we've got contingency plans in place so the young people can continue to receive the support that they need." – Reach Out staff interview

"they've really helped us to keep that vision going and consolidate our growth model and that's, so that's looking just purely from an organisational point of view, the finances that, of those supporting our workers but also obviously then you're into the same stability that helps the organisations, the same stability that helps our children and young people." – One In A Million staff interview

Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust (SLCT)

Desk Research & Year 1 Summary Statistics

Project summary: Pathways to Professions programme

- Pathways to Professions is a three-year programme supporting young people aged 13-15 in three areas of England: London, Manchester and Birmingham. It was launched in May 2019.
- So far SLCT is engaged with six schools in London and three in Manchester, providing a range of bespoke, core and ad-hoc support.
- It supports young people in their understanding of the breadth of career opportunities available, and helps them gain the necessary skills for success in the workplace.
- SLCT works with schools as the access point to young people, and encourages schools to embed a programme of careers education and guidance.
- Aim to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks (national and international best practice guidelines), including providing real-life encounters with work, higher and further education, ensuring good information on the jobs market and how learning links to careers, and helping develop careers plans suited to individual interests and strengths.
- Key focus is tackling socio-economic barriers to career progression and over 90% of programme beneficiaries meet the eligibility criteria of: a BAME background, on Free School Meals and/or eligible for Pupil Premium.

Summary of outputs and achievements (as reported at end of year 1, May 2020):

Planned outputs for 3-year programme	Year 1 targets	Year 1 achievements
1. 100 opportunities (work experience, apprenticeships, Social Action) uploaded to SLCT website	30 opportunities	1,200 young people took part in Social Action as part of Stephen Lawrence Day, in partnership with the Volunteer Police Cadets
2. Development of three curriculum resources for schools and teachers	1 resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created 1 PowerPoint resource (Succeeding using Resilience), shared with over 180 schools and via social media • 7 curriculum resources created and shared with teachers across 300 schools
3. Development of six toolkits for young people to understand the skills required for transition from education to employment	2 toolkits	3 toolkits developed in partnership with professional organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Into Architecture with HKS Architects • Into Law with Stephenson Harwood LLP • Into Publishing with Hachette Publishing
4. One-to-one support for 200 young people across London, Manchester and Birmingham	Support for 70 young people	One-to-one support for 70 young people in initial programme support meetings and ongoing programme mentoring for selected students in need of extra support

5. Engagement with 15 schools across London, Manchester and Birmingham	Engagement with 5 schools	Engagement with 9 schools in London and Manchester, including 5 to which core support is provided, and 4 where less frequent bespoke support is provided. Expansion into Birmingham schools will occur in years 2 & 3
6. 250 schools downloading toolkits and curriculum resources	75 schools	60 toolkits downloaded in year 1. 3000 toolkits accessed as part of Stephen Lawrence Day home-schooling resources (between 1 st and 22 nd April 2020)
7. Delivery of 30 employability workshops	10 workshops	Delivered 24 workshops, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Into Architecture workshops at Deptford Green School • 3 workshops on architecture with HKS Architects at partner schools • Into Law sessions with Stephenson Harwood LLP • Employability sessions in partnership with Paradigm Project
8. Delivery of 30 inspirational talks	10 talks	Delivered 12 industry talks across all core schools, including architects, lawyers, communications specialist and project managers
9. 50 work experience placements	10 placements	Usually take place in March/April – lockdown prohibited these plans. Those that were planned will be split between years 2 & 3
10. Engagement with 10 new mentors across a range of industries	Engagement with 3 new mentors	Engaged with more than 25, inc. 18 as session facilitators and 7 as mentors and one-to-one session supports
11. 50 employers across a range of industries to engage with programme	Engagement with 25 employers	26 employers engaged from multiple sectors inc. Architecture, Law, Publishing, Business, Freelance professionals, Finance, Consultancy, Personal Development and Construction
12. 10 case studies to be developed for website, showcasing best practice	3 case studies	3 developed so far and to be uploaded to website in July 2020
13. 10 case studies to be developed providing inspiration to young people	3 case studies	3 developed for internal reflecting, learning which will be shared with programme partners and students

Qualitative Interviews

The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust⁵ is one of the charities receiving a second round of funding via the Better Futures programme. Their Pathways to Professions programme provides support to young people in terms of broadening their understanding of the career opportunities available to them and helping them gain the necessary skills for success in the workplace. Engagement with young people is achieved through relationships with schools and SLCT usually concentrates most of its work early on in the school year, finishing before the summer term when exams and other deadlines must be prioritised. As such it was still possible to carry out much of the programme's in-person content before the first Covid-19 lockdown led to national school closures for most pupils. Core project objectives for the year were mostly met before the pandemic

⁵ Since our interviews with the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust took place, they have undergone a name change in keeping with the wishes of Stephen Lawrence's family, and are now known as Blueprint for All. Since the charity was still delivering under its original name at the time of our research, and all interview discussions proceeded on this basis, the rest of this report section continues to refer to the charity as the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust (SLCT). Future evaluation phases and reports will refer to the new name, Blueprint for All.

restrictions – and on some measures, such as the number of schools delivered to, exceeded expectations. That said, some trips and face-to-face work were necessarily cancelled and some workshops still yet to be delivered when schools were closed. In reviewing progress to date, we carried out one SLCT staff interview and two school careers staff interviews.

Achievements

SLCT staff described the key achievements of the year as lying in the opportunities to open up the minds of young people to different career options, and the level of engagement students showed with the sessions. They also felt that while objectives remained consistent from the beginning, they had been able to show flexibility during roll-out, for example in responding to schools who weren't officially part of the programme.

"We were able to exceed the number of workshops and talks that we did, which was really fantastic because we were able to deliver more to the students... So making sure that there was a wider reach really was wonderful...because it wasn't just 'okay, we met the programme aims and we stopped', it was the fact that we were able to go that extra mile that really was special to me." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust staff interview

From the perspective of the school staff we spoke to, there was a clear sense that the project had been working very well up until the pandemic halted activity and that they remained completely committed to working with the Trust going forward. They had found the workshops and other sessions very useful and collaboratively developed, providing meaningful employer encounters and very promising pupil engagement.

SLCT provides a wide menu of options for schools and has become a trusted, long-term partner:

The careers leads we spoke to had worked with SLCT on and off for at least three years and described a range of projects, events and collaborations with an organisation they very much view as a partner in delivering their careers programme. The Trust is therefore seen as a collaborator with whom career leads can work with to develop ideas and plan events. It is important to note that both the schools consulted during this Year 1 reporting phase are based within South-East London, locally to the charity, which has created a particularly strong bond due to their shared sense of community and geographic proximity. One careers lead spoke of having felt a duty to ensure pupils were aware of their work and had the opportunity to engage with their offer: *"Stephen Lawrence Trust are very much about involving us, and us involving them, in local community issues – especially issues surrounding our local BAME community"*

Engagement can be observed, but impact is longitudinal: Teachers spoke very positively of the Pathways to Professions workshops and activities their Year 9 groups had participated in during 2019-2020 and felt pupil engagement with sessions across the SLCT offer was high. They were thoughtful, however, about the nature of the lasting impact careers provision has on their young people and emphasised that the most meaningful impact they see in their pupils takes place through accumulated exposure to, and participation in, careers experiences throughout their school lives.

SLCT supports schools in trying to make their offer as bespoke as possible: Just as the most significant impact on a young person's planning for their future is achieved over time rather than during a single session, career leads spoke warmly of the way SLCT staff have been able to tailor their programmes and events to schools' needs. This ability to tailor the offer flexibly was seen as even more important in light of the difficult outlook ahead for young people in a tough job market and with disrupted exams: *"Working*

with them, you can go to the SLCT with bespoke requests, and I think they do try to facilitate them as much as possible, which is really helpful... they very much do think of us in terms of opportunities”.

Schools are under extreme pressure and virtual provision will be variable going forward:

Discussions with teachers highlighted the clear and extreme pressure that schools are under at this time. All activities involving in-person visits from external agencies or charities had been necessarily cancelled due to social distancing measures and missed schooling meant it was hard to prioritise careers education within school hours. Meanwhile, the ability to continue with virtual provision for programmes such as Pathways to Professions will vary considerably from school to school, depending on digital capacity, wider school buy-in and the accumulated pressures on young people.

Impact of Covid-19

School closures: For schools, the impact of the pandemic was clear and immediate, in that doors were closed to most pupils in Spring 2020 and the rest of the school year transitioned to remote learning. This obviously halted traditional delivery for all charities working with schools. From the perspective of SLCT, while much of the core Pathways to Professions delivery had already been delivered for the first year of funding, the pandemic nevertheless impacted across activities, with lots of mentoring sessions cancelled, as well as some visits and other in-person activities.

Transition to online: As for most charities SLCT moved to online delivery for the school year 2020-21 and at time of research had delivered around five online talks. The logistics are not felt to be too challenging and it is believed the programme can still meet the objectives previously set. However, even at the time of our discussions it was clear that the year was still quite unknown and whether work experience placements, for example, would also need to be organised remotely or whether in-person placements might still be feasible.

Challenges facing schools: When we spoke to leads at schools participating in the Pathways to Professions programme, it was clear that all careers work at that time would need to be delivered virtually. School staff noted the myriad challenges which have emerged for schools, particularly managing the bubble system and other social distancing measures and cutting back on extra-curricular activities to focus on academic catch up. The extent to which this would be possible is clearly variable from school to school; even speaking to two different individuals within schools based in the same borough, one spoke with much more optimism about how careers work could continue while the other was much more uncertain, citing obstacles from a lack of sufficient IT access to a wider reluctance within the school for kids to be out of lessons.

In terms of the potential of virtual delivery, there was much positivity since both interviewees remained committed to working with SLCT and saw project content as suitable for online provision. Indeed, one noted the hidden positives; that virtual delivery could actually increase careers reach among a greater number of young people and that it would likely be easier to book volunteer speakers. On the other hand, delivery remains contingent on wider school-buy in and prioritisation at this toughest of times, on schools having strong enough digital access to coordinate virtual delivery, and on careers leads being sufficiently empowered to continue with scheduled activities. These challenges and opportunities will look different in every school:

“A lot of things could happen virtually, and I’m sure the Trust is working on that and would be happy to support but currently... in my school none of that is possible either for a range of factors, going from we simply don’t have the IT access to, you know, they don’t want the children out of lessons

because they've missed so much... so at the moment it's a bit, yes, in a state of uncertainty." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

"With young people times are difficult ... especially with Covid now and how that's just shutting things down... For us it's about tailoring the experiences around people... and what we are able to do this year because of the ease of technology is we can actually do it to a whole year group, which is amazing. We can stream in and get the aspirations of that year group and start to tailor those conversations." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

Monitoring and Evaluation: SLCT has a comprehensive process for collecting feedback across its projects, with baseline, mid- and post-programme surveys. The pandemic has affected this process, however, since post-programme survey collection has not been possible due to the lockdown and school closures; a problem that has also been raised by other grant-holders who work via schools and require teachers to be intermediaries. More informal verbal and email feedback was also collected from teachers regarding the sessions and they are working on ways to mitigate challenges; however, flexibility will be required due to the inevitable obstacles posed by social distancing measures.

Impact on young people

Engagement with the programme: The programme's overall reach for the year is placed at around 120 students engaged regularly (15-20 per school), with much wider involvement for some sessions. SLCT advises schools on eligibility criteria for its projects and then schools select participants themselves, with careers leads using their knowledge of the young people to ensure those who will most benefit are able to take part.

"Usually the aim is to primarily target young people experiencing some sort of barrier, so it could be ... there's free school meals, there's pupil premium, or they're from a particular ethnic group - or ... what I would call the 'forgotten middle', you know ... they're not particularly disengaged but ... they're kind of slightly under achieving, and they need a bit of motivation and kind of link what they're doing in school with what potentially could happen later to keep them engaged and give them a bit of inspiration" – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

For the Into Architecture programme, Year 9 groups of selected pupils attended a number of different workshops, where volunteers supported them to model professional processes in teams: from brief to completion, while linking school subjects to the professional world. The most successful and engaging sessions therefore worked to bring maths, physics and design learning to life as groups worked through engineering challenges. There is little drop out once pupils are engaged, though there can be some who decide not to go further after trying out an initial first session. Careers leads felt that once pupils stick to a programme they are often hugely effective and, from SLCT's perspective, having a committed teacher at the school is often the most key predictor of successful engagement.

"[On what works best] Definitely having a committed teacher or somebody who's committed to making sure that the whole programme is very well organised within the school in the parts that I personally can't reach." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust staff interview

Interviews with school staff enforce this point, showing that care and expert guidance is needed to ensure success; selecting the right candidates for a programme, making sure sessions can be scheduled sensitively (balancing the demands of lesson time against pupils' need for free time), trying to encourage wider school

buy-in, and making sure that sessions run well and pupils are supported throughout. School staff felt that SLCT understands the balancing act and the level of commitment being asked of young people who may be giving up lunchtimes or after-school hours.

Relatable speakers: Staff and teachers alike emphasise the importance of representation when it comes to young people's engagement with a project. Being able to identify with careers speakers, workshop volunteers and those you meet at work experience opportunities were all deemed crucial across ethnicity, accents, and perceived backgrounds. It could even be counter-productive, one teacher noted, to have careers encounters where you cannot recognise yourself, as these jobs become even more remote from your life experience.

"The representation aspect was a key part because I think quite often when you do careers education activity it can actually be counterproductive because young people might not see themselves ... you might go and do an employer visit to broaden horizons, to give them the tools to start preparing for the future, but you come away from the day thinking, oh actually you might have reinforced some of the worry that they had because they didn't see anyone looking like them, throughout the whole day, and that wasn't even mentioned by any of the people that they met.. but I think with the Trust, it was a great way to bring that into the school." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

SLCT are also aware of this need for local relatability when moving into new schools, noting that in Birmingham or Manchester, for example, a local accent could be particularly powerful and building up contacts outside London an ongoing process. They have however been able to utilise their wider networks of beneficiaries from previous projects who have gone on to work in relevant professions to assist with this in newer areas.

Impact over the long term: Above all, teachers emphasise that the meaningful lasting impact they see in their pupils takes place through the accumulated exposure to careers talks and experiences over the course of their school lives. Each of the career leads we spoke to were certain of the positive impact SLCT's activities have had on many of the young people who have taken part in terms of their post-school destinations. However, they note that this would rarely come about through a single programme but rather through repeated encounters which broaden an individual's horizons and offer practical ways for them to connect their dreams to concrete study and longer-term careers planning.

In another sign of the programme's promise and its potential for wider buy-in among participating schools, one school careers lead also felt there had been good nascent feedback from other adults in the first year:

"Not many parents get engaged and show up for that kind of thing, but actually quite a lot of parents did come to the [Pathways to Professions] meeting and the feedback was really, really, positive... you know, they were really enthusiastic about what we were trying to achieve" – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

Growing confidence and interest: Looking into the types of impact the programme is beginning to signal, SLCT staff remark that that they notice students who take part become visibly more confident and proactive, asking speakers more questions about their work. As pupils become more interested in the professions they encounter and more focused on the workshops, their wider soft skills are engaged:

"It's one thing... if they see a YouTube video about architecture or publishing but it's another thing entirely to meet somebody who's in that career who can answer your questions right then and there," – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust staff interview

Exposure to new career ideas: The programme's power is thought to lie in the way it introduces young people to previously foreign concepts and opens up possibilities; new careers ideas are introduced and then shown to be accessible, with signposting towards the study and work experience decisions that lead there.

"We are finding in school that its often, you know, not that our young people don't have high aspirations... I think young people do have very high aspirations - but what they often lack through no fault of their own is just an awareness of what's out there, and it's developing that awareness." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

"At this stage in their school career, it's more about aspiration, confidence, transferrable skills, and information, you know, knowledge of possible pathways... that is quite key, knowing that, 'oh some people do this job', and even things like 'oh I met a solicitor and he didn't study law at university'" – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

Indications of success: Careers leads viewed there to be a definite, if not provable, link between working with SLCT on the various projects it offers and their destination data for recent school leavers. Both cited research which suggests exposure to four or more meaningful careers encounters is associated with reduced incidence of becoming NEET after leaving school by up to 86% - and also to increased earnings.⁶ Having worked with SLCT for a number of years, both could also identify year groups who had benefited and individuals in particular who for whom they saw a clear causal link between participation and their eventual university courses:

"I am just thinking of a student that is now in year twelve, very much has expressed an interest in architecture, attended one of the Stephen Lawrence architecture days. I think that's really kind of confirmed their passion for architecture and for design, really had the opportunity to connect with some employers, talk about what they are doing - that then translated into a serious amount of study, really good grades, really clear aspiration and a scholarship at an independent school. Which is kind of really going to set them up for the future and that impact for me is absolutely clear, you know - those experiences are allowing young people to make decisions." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

"I mentioned this young man who just started medical school. He was involved with the Trust from year eight to year eleven when he left school... He had in year eleven careers mentoring, so I think that had a big impact because there was like kind of a friendship group in the school that was quite boisterous, if I can use that word, and I think that the mentoring really kind of kept him on track and really gave him a lot of confidence to go for this goal, to be a doctor... We were able to access work experience with the support of the Trust, so he did medical work experience... I remember we had one career talk that was amazing with this surgeon, and I think that had a big impact on him because this student is black and here was this black woman who was so inspiring... and not hiding

⁶ Education and Employers, 2020. Key findings from our research. [online] Available at: <<https://www.educationandemployers.org/research-main/key-findings-from-our-research>> [Accessed 8 February 2021].

the reality of the job and the hard work needed to get there... By the time he left us I think he was really proactive and organised and had a clear image of what he wanted and how he was going to get there... I would say that is a definite example of what the programme achieved and the impact that it had." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

Building on previous funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation

The benefits of continued funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation also have meant that particularly on the networking and logistical side of things, Pathways to Professions has been able to hit the ground running since appropriate relationships with relevant employers were already well developed. The charity's ability to utilise connections across professional fields and to offer further opportunities in some cases is one of the key attractions for schools, particularly since diverse representation among speakers and facilitators can be assured.

Next steps

At the time of research, the next stage for the programme involved schools and SLCT working together on what provision could look like in 2020/21. Teachers viewed the path ahead as rocky for their schools, students and careers programming more broadly, as schools sought to catch pupils up on missed schoolwork and technological capacity was under pressure. The outlook for virtual provision varied even between the two schools contacted, with one career lead quite worried about their ability to access an online offer, in terms of both digital access and school priorities, and the other energised and optimistic about transferring to online delivery with little problem. Confidence in the charity to support them throughout was nevertheless high:

"The beautiful thing about the Trust is that if something doesn't go right we work on it again and we learn from each other- and I think that they're the type of partners you want to work with." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

"Everything that we've done with the Trust so far, I'm very positive about... Everything that we've done with them could be done virtually. It's just about us having the actual access to IT to then make it accessible to our young people." – Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust school staff interview

With new school closures the project's delivery timelines and objectives are likely uncertain once more and it will be important during the next phase of reporting to discuss the different ways delivery may have been impacted with a range of stakeholders, as well as exploring how newer partnerships in Birmingham and Manchester are faring. However, it was clear at the time of research that prior to the pandemic, there was a great initial response to Pathways to Professions, good collaborative work with the Trust on finessing the approach and ensuring engagement, and great feedback on both volunteers and the young people's engagement. Across whatever delivery methods prove necessary going forward, SLCT hopes to work further on diversifying the workshops offered to ensure greater cultivation of softer skills (such as confidence building) alongside tangible careers work.

ReachOut

Desk Research & Year 1 Summary Statistics

Programme summary:

ReachOut works with 11–16-year-old secondary school pupils as part of their Academy programme which runs in the evenings within schools from October to June. The first hour is spent in a one-to-one session where mentees and mentors (mostly working adults) focus on improving numeracy and literacy skills and follow a structured Character Journey focused on fairness, good judgement, staying power and self-control. The second hour involves a fun activity that aims to put character strengths into practice (often sports-based run by professional coaches).

2019/20 data – schools funded by the Clothworkers' Foundation:

School	Project type	Mentees enrolled	Mentees attending regularly	Sessions delivered (Sept-March)	Impact
Bow School	Face-to-face	16	10	20	This group showed great Staying Power; are passionate about their opinions being heard; are real decision makers when it comes to activities; high level of commitment (attendance and punctuality); great relationships between mentors and mentees
Chestnut Grove Academy	Face-to-face	14	9	7	Most of the group referred to improve self-control, behaviour and academic confidence; drama chosen as second-hour activity to emphasise importance of creative subjects; those who attended regularly improved their behaviour and participation over the weeks
Bishop Challoner Catholic Federation (girls)	Face-to-face	16	13	6	Great amount of progress in short time; experienced a bereavement at the start of the project (death of fellow pupil), project helped to support them with their grief; young people were relieved to express their feelings in a safe space; have enjoyed participating in debates, improving self-control and discussing new topics
Bishop Challoner Catholic Federation (boys)	Face-to-face	16	16	6	
Beacon High School	Face-to-face	11	10	16	Referred to focus on character development (particularly fairness); school and parents reported marked improvements in behaviour and attitudes towards peers and teachers
Regent High School	Face-to-face	12	10	20	3 rd year of mentoring this group (girls started in year 7); developing character, improving behaviour and increasing confidence both socially and academically; provided a much needed supportive and social space, particularly during lockdown
Regent High School	Online	11	10	9	
Total		96	78	84	

Qualitative Interviews

The ReachOut programme is unusual in the Better Futures II funding stream in that the charity's existing model has been established and working for several years rather than representing a new project or approach. The Clothworkers' Foundation funding is therefore primarily focused on extending the reach of the current programme to enable the charity to continue working with groups for a longer period of time, thereby increasing the longer-term impact, as well as to establish new school partnerships. In reviewing progress to date, we carried out two staff interviews at both senior and delivery levels. We also attended a mentoring session held online (ReachOut Home) where we carried out two interviews with pairs of mentors and mentees to understand the developing impact.

Achievements and challenges

The scope of ReachOut Academy has grown from 39 projects delivered in 2017 to 59 projects in delivery prior to the March 2020 lockdown. With the Clothworkers' Foundation funding this has included delivery of an additional seven ReachOut Academy projects across five London-based schools within disadvantaged communities in 2019/20.

Building school and student engagement with the programme: The charity's Year 1 objectives for the two new school partnerships were simply to ensure participants' engagement in the programme, demonstrate the benefits to schools and therefore secure ongoing participation into the following year; aims which have been successfully met. For the existing partner schools, ReachOut planned to improve relationships further to ensure they would keep working with the programme, while expanding work into new year groups in some cases. The feedback they have received from schools has been very positive and while the newer partnerships experienced a shorter session (Jan-March) before the spring lockdown began, those schools had still felt the benefits in that time and opted to continue.

Overall, staff feel that being able to improve young people's engagement, and therefore their attendance, within the programme represented a strong achievement last year. Retaining engagement and turnout tends to be one of the programme's key challenges, given the long-term commitment required and the fact that participation involves returning to school at 6pm to give up an evening of free time. Since many young people who participate are already struggling to some degree with challenges around school engagement, attainment or behavioural challenges, keeping attendance strong through 2019-20 is a testimony to the programme's strength and ability to offer significant value to those taking part.

Adaptation to online delivery: Another key achievement, explored in more depth below, has been the charity's speed in adapting their model to online delivery following the pandemic. ReachOut Home, which replicates their in-person delivery as closely as possible, was successfully piloted during the summer and then launched fully in the autumn. Issues of digital security and safeguarding, together with logistical challenges around adapting content and resources, were tackled remarkably quickly and feedback so far appears very positive for the way this alternative offer has been able to offer continuity of mentorship.

Impact of Covid-19

ReachOut Academy was effectively discontinued in March 2020 as the closure of schools prevented face-to-face delivery. As in many programmes, this was difficult as it came at the time young people were perhaps most in need of a support network. At an organisational level this was also a highly challenging time, with many staff furloughed and, on the monitoring and evaluation side, the team were unable to collect end of

year feedback in the usual way. While digital forms were created, wider events made it impossible for these to be completed or for school staff to be contacted regarding monitoring.

Creation of online offer: ReachOut staff note how valuable face-to-face relationships are to the programme but worked to adapt to online alternatives and to understand the difficult position schools would be in regarding social distancing once they reopened. The early stages of the pandemic were used to plan out an online offer (in consultation with young people, teachers and parents) and the organisation moved quickly to pilot its ReachOut Home programme, which involves Zoom-facilitated sessions which run for 30 weeks, at 1 hour 15 mins per week and involve a combination of one-to-one and group activities. The pilot took place in May-June with four existing partner schools.

Responses to the online offer: Survey data gathered from regularly attending mentees suggested 90% enjoyed coming to ReachOut sessions online, while data gathered from 32 regularly attending mentors indicated that 66% noticed improvements in their mentee's emotional wellbeing. Half (50%) thought ReachOut Home was just as, or more, impactful than in-person sessions. On the schools' side all teachers taking part said they would recommend their school continue with ReachOut Home from September 2020. They felt the key benefits were the opportunity for young people to discuss their concerns, experience a connection to normality (particularly the opportunity to do something with their peers while not at school), and continue consistent, safe and reliable contact with another adult. For young people participating in the pilot, it also offered a great draw in being able to see friends over the summer.

Overall, ReachOut feel most young people have adapted well, having become used to virtual delivery during the pandemic. There have even been some small benefits seen, such as fewer distractions during sessions and chances to share projects being completed at home. However, it has still been a lot for young people, mentors and teachers to get used and some, as project managers point out, simply haven't been comfortable with online delivery or had sufficient digital access. The programme has not therefore been able to reach everyone and has had to provide as best it can for those who have responded well to virtual engagement.

Ongoing need for flexibility: ReachOut staff expect to keep refining the online model flexibly and expected to see more unanticipated outcomes and impacts developing as the programme works to support young people through these turbulent times in whichever ways it needs to. It has also been important to project management staff to ensure project leaders are kept up to date and trained in terms of their knowledge of the landscape for young people. The preference, as for most other programmes in the funding stream, remains for in-person delivery - where it is felt that the most meaningful impact can be achieved. Staff nonetheless feel their virtual offer is as faithful to the original model as possible and flexible enough to be used wherever needed until it is safe to resume regular activities.

Engagement and impact on young people

Engagement: Retaining engagement among young people always poses a challenge, which ReachOut is constantly working to meet via staff training, engaging content and strengthening relationships with schools. The challenge of requiring young people to dedicate their spare time to a regular commitment - over their social lives, regular study needs or home obligations - is one shared with other programmes working in schools. As a long-term project which runs over 30 weeks this is especially acute for ReachOut. During the pandemic this has only become harder, with routines up in the air, new pressures and difficulty in forward planning. Nevertheless, the attractions of fun activities, a social atmosphere and a clear benefit for schoolwork are cited by participants as encouraging them to stick with the project once involved.

Engagement and retention take time, although young people tend to see the benefits once invested. This process relies heavily on the relationships which are nurtured between mentors and mentees and so in turn is reliant on the organisation's ability to continue recruiting and training strong mentors, from representative backgrounds and to offer volunteers a meaningful experience of their own. It also rests heavily on the relationships with schools and, as seen in other charities with school-based programmes, thoughtful and committed support from making the right initial referrals through to encouraging continued engagement throughout the duration.

Impact – confidence and communication: The kind of impacts that ReachOut seeks to contribute to focus on four key character strengths (fairness, good judgement, staying power and self-control) as well as offering support and activities which build social and academic confidence. Growing articulation and maturity are also signs that project managers look out for and often observe over time. Yet it is common for staff to receive emails from teachers even early on, remarking on the changes they are seeing in young people and how participants' emotional wellbeing and self-confidence are growing:

"We did actually get an email through last week from a school contact... just letting us know the impact of the programme on the young people as it stands and this is a project that only started a few weeks ago, so it was fantastic to hear... I can read out a few snippets of that for you... 'The young person has been beaming since Monday's session and mentions it every single time I walk past him. Another young person says she's really finding the sessions helpful...with a huge smile on her face, which is very rare to see, and said that's she's really happy... it's made her day'." –

ReachOut staff interview

The programme aims to create an environment where young people are able to develop their autonomy and the confidence to find their voice. These impacts are borne out in participant testimonies where young people describe finding the courage to raise their hand more in class or having the chance to practice presenting and overcoming their fear in a safe space:

"My confidence has developed a lot and also my leadership skill have developed a lot with the group activities that we used to do and also, my communication skills have gotten better as well because I can now talk freely in the group as whereas before I would probably just keep quiet and have forgotten what I was going to say." – ReachOut mentee and mentor interview

"It also helped me in school because in school I used to be like, not really talking to that many people and then I never used to really put my hand up, but ever since ReachOut taught me it's alright to get the wrong answers, it's alright to try...I was like putting myself out there a bit more and putting my hands up more in class". – ReachOut mentee and mentor interview

This kind of progress through year-on-year support is echoed by one mentor who has seen the change in her mentee's comfort levels and ability to challenge herself while they have been working together:

"When she started at ReachOut she was very clear [confidence] was something that she wanted to develop and has taken really, really good proactive steps to try and improve that area, so proactively volunteering to give an idea to the class or to present back to the class in group activities, and that's carrying over when we have been on Zoom as well." – ReachOut mentee and mentor interview

Wider communication skills as well as a space to be able to work on aspects of academic improvement in a non-classroom setting have also been key. As one mentor discussed, they and their mentee might work on new vocabulary or other small goals to help improve academic confidence and reinforce areas of learnings:

"As she already mentioned we did have a vocabulary goal one year where we aimed to learn how many words on a regular basis and... from the academic work that we used to do in person to the way we interact over Zoom now, [young person]'s communication skills are really, really strong and I think I know ReachOut's contributed to that... I would say also maybe ReachOut has helped to reinforce some other things [from] school, so more recently we are starting a GCSE year... that certainly is something that we've talked about and reinforced as well in terms of [revision] strategies." – ReachOut mentee and mentor interview

The ability to develop a supportive relationship with a reliable adult outside of their everyday lives in this way is another key benefit, remarked upon in teacher and staff testimonies. Young people have a place to talk about their concerns with a regular, trusted person who is neither a parent nor teacher, while also participating with their peers in a fun and safe environment outside the classroom.

"I actually described ReachOut [recently]... how it's...beneficial for their schoolwork and also, it's really good for their...communication, like getting to know other people and having a fun place to go to. I have got a bond with [my mentor], I have someone I can trust, I can tell what is on my mind or anything and also the girls here we are like, we are all so close with each other now and its really nice. It's really fun." – ReachOut mentee and mentor interview

Wider impacts since the pandemic: During the pandemic the impact on participants appears to have grown in key ways, with mentors able to provide an extra layer of support on concerns around the pandemic and school disruptions themselves. Sessions have also offered an 'anchor' to retain connections, tap into young people's social life and offer a strong, structured activity at a point where lives are very unpredictable. Project management staff note that they have recognised how important they are as an organisation in this context, particularly where young people have been experiencing grief or disillusionment with their education.

"I think it's been a fantastic opportunity for the girls to connect and keep focus - whilst restrictions are still in place it maintains those aspects for them. It is likely the return to school will be very different to what they are used to, so ReachOut Home will be a helpful anchor for them." – ReachOut school staff testimonial

"I feel that online mentoring has helped to keep my mentee engaged and stimulated during a challenging time. Being in lockdown has been difficult because it's meant that students have had to work in unusual ways at home, where they don't have peer support or opportunities for relationship building in the same ways. I feel that it was also important to have a space for the young people to discuss the issues around Black Lives Matter which was facilitated in the session." - ReachOut mentor testimonial

In particular it has provided a forum to support young people's mental and emotional health in even more meaningful ways. Staff note that they have always been aware of this wellbeing role but that the challenges of the year have allowed them to place an even stronger emphasis on its place within the ReachOut Home offer.

"We support mental health but it's not something we've ever measured... And definitely, throughout 2019/20 seeing incredible impact on a lot of the young people who either had challenges already with their emotional wellbeing and their emotional health, and where we've been able to shift the programme online through the end of the last academic year... we were able to put a huge emphasis [on that] when we piloted the online work... we had feedback from the young people, from their mentors, from the teachers, that if the project did anything in continuing through Covid it was that it supported young people's mental health in the lockdown, and it supported them in managing their remote learning" – ReachOut staff interview

Project management staff note that so far, they have still been able to see solid impact with online delivery and that they are still achieving their goals for participants. Both mentors and mentees also note the element of convenience in remote delivery, even if it's not their preference:

"I prefer face to face because I get to see everyone, but I do like virtual ones because virtual has opened, like, another door for us to show a lot more stuff, so normally like we will have a project and we will just leave it at home and then we might forget about it, but doing ReachOut virtual during the summer we did this show and tell thing - so we've got to show our projects that we've been keeping away from people such as showing my poems ... and a lot of other girls started showing their homework and it was really nice because normally we wouldn't be able to take big stuff to school and I didn't really like going back and forth to school and home, so now I am just at home... it's a lot better and its more convenient for the mentors because they don't need to come from work to ReachOut" – ReachOut mentee and mentor interview

Young people interviewed also noted that their hopes for the year ahead in ReachOut include support with their academic work and time management, as well as handling the stress of exam years amidst educational disruption. This anxiety around schoolwork was shared by young people in a number of funded projects, underscoring how difficult the impact of the pandemic has been on young people's education worries – all the more so for those who may have struggled with school life previously. Both young interviewees showed a proactive interest in their projects offering support for schoolwork and revision in a hands-on way.

Importance of longer term engagement: As in most project settings, a key indicator for overall impact is the opportunity to offer a longer-term support system to young people. Where relationships with mentors have been able to continue past an initial year it often makes a huge difference, in the eyes of staff and teachers alike, in supporting the formative development of participants. One school has worked with ReachOut on a cohort between Years 7 and 10, seeing substantial longer-term impacts during that time.

"We've seen huge impact in that long-term commitment because the majority of them have been working with the same mentors and now coming into their fourth year... I attended the sessions after a long time seeing the maturity levels in the girls really change... they all themselves report that it's through the Reach Out sessions, they have come much more to find their voices. We are hearing them write and read their poetry, think about their identity, being able to actually express how they feel about that and also, having experience of racism, sexism themselves, and they've really actually become quite outspoken about all those things which we would not have seen from them in year 7. And the school have really reported that particularly through the lockdown it did them wonders in managing all of their work and keeping up their levels of motivation." – ReachOut staff interview

"[On thinking about life without ReachOut] I have thought about this quite a few times. If I hadn't been involved in ReachOut then I don't think I would have finished reading a book or I would not have actually finished writing my poems, or I wouldn't be as confident as how I am right now because ReachOut has like helped me open the doors and helped me write... kind of like find who I am a bit, so it's been so beneficial and it's helped a lot." – ReachOut mentee and mentor interview

Impact of continued funding and next steps

For ReachOut staff, the benefits of receiving longer-term funding support lie in expanding programmes to more schools and being able to tackle particular issues within the programme, such as improving attendance and engagement in order to increase impact. They view this continuity of funding as wholly positive in giving them the security to expand reach, while building deeper relationships.

"It's only positive and for us it just allows us that security to be able to continue working with the same young people for longer and... keeping up work in areas of, in this case, London that really, really need this service." – ReachOut staff interview

While the context has again shifted since research was conducted in November 2020, the core objectives for the coming year were to continue delivering an online ReachOut Home programme as close to the in-person model as possible and being ready to make a smooth a transition back to physical delivery when this becomes possible. The organisation has managed to shift its whole programme online at an impressive speed and with positive feedback so far. It will be useful to explore in the next report how far the model has been able to maintain engagement and its contribution to impact in the context of longer-term pandemic restrictions as the academic year has continued. In particular, it will be important to note how projects have progressed in the newer schools which have had less time to build up the same level of trust and continuity as more established schools.

One In A Million (OIAM)

Desk Research & Year 1 Summary Statistics

Adapting to Covid-19:

- Community buildings that OIAM use for the delivery of their activities are owned by local authorities and schools and many of these were closed during the first lockdown, meaning activities could not be delivered in the usual way. The centre in Bierley remained open for emergency food distribution purposes, however, over the lockdown period in Canterbury there were two vandalism attacks (arson and burglary) on the main centre there, which has been a major setback.
- Since the onset of the pandemic, OIAM have continued to restructure and adapt the work of the three members of staff funded by the Clothworkers' Foundation. In the early stages of the pandemic, focus shifted towards providing support for the vulnerable, including children, families, adults and older people suffering from isolation in the local communities they work in.
- OIAM were asked by local leaders to utilise their expertise in supporting and managing the emergency volunteering response to the pandemic on behalf of Bradford South district. This included training volunteers, ensuring DBS checks were carried out and relevant safeguards were in place, and matching volunteers with tasks. The Community Pathways Development Officer helped with the coordination of this effort, and the work was commended by key members of the local community's emergency response.
- OIAM's connection with young people in the community was maintained but was largely of a detached youth work style with the aim of keeping existing relationships with young people alive.
- The Community Activator in Canterbury was furloughed for a period from April to September, due to commitments and increasing demand as an essential worker at a local supermarket.
- Over the school summer holidays, the Community Activators in Bierley focused on producing and delivering activity and wellbeing packs to families and young people, which included equipment and resources (sports, art, cookery). This provided a reason to knock on doors and check in with local families. These packs were a big success, and were also adopted by Bradford Council Youth Service.

OIAM's work coordinating local volunteers (March to June 2020):

Referrals

251* people referred to and contacted by OIAM Bradford South Covid-19 Response

98 people responded and completed relevant training

45 DBS checks completed

*Total number of people contacted is likely to be more than quoted here due to changes in the database used at the beginning of the project. OIAM staff estimate this should be closer to 300 referrals.

Befriending Requests

48 people emailed the befriending job description

26 people completed training

18 befrienders passed to various local befriending services

Community Support Requests

22 people offered to support community organisations and have been contacted and referred

12 people deployed to community centres

Sewing Requests (make scrubs for local hospitals)

94 people contacted regarding sewing requests

8 people offered to support sewing requests

6 people deployed and scrubs distributed to various NHS institutions

Over 40 sets of scrubs provided (mainly for care homes)

Helped to facilitate a socially distanced sewing group creating face masks for vulnerable communities

Shopping Requests

31 people offered to fulfil driving/shopping requests

20 people deployed

Qualitative Interviews

One In A Million (OIAM) is one of the charities receiving a second round of funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation via the Better Futures programme. The funding is being used to support three staff roles, the Community Activators working with disadvantaged communities in Bierley (job share) and Canterbury districts in Bradford, and the Community Pathways Development Officer, who oversees OIAM's work in all local communities. OIAM works with disadvantaged children and young people, engaging them through sports, the arts and enterprise. The charity aims to help young people in disadvantaged areas to overcome the obstacles they face, enable them to make a positive impact in their community, and progress in their journeys of education and employment. A big part of OIAM's work is earning the trust of local young people and providing them with a secure and safe space to grow, learn and experience new things. OIAM was first founded in 2005, and strong engagement already exists with local communities, but the aim of the first year of Better Futures II funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation was to build on and further strengthen this foundation. OIAM also aimed to focus on creating more in-depth experiences for young people, in particular progressing them from the 'engage' part of the model, into 'enrich' and 'enhance'. As part of our qualitative research we conducted a group interview with 4 members of staff about their experiences 'on the ground'. We also conducted one individual staff interview from a more strategic and operational angle.

"[OIAM's work] is about giving [young people] some new experiences, growing their confidence, exposing them to different things, finding out their interests, their talents, their passions and helping them to discover their self a little bit more of who they are, what they are, what they actually like because for some of these young ones they've never been in places where those opportunities have been given to them." – One In A Million staff interview

Achievements

As with many of the charities funded by Better Futures II, OIAM's original plans for year 1 and their work with young people in the community was substantially disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this, they have risen to the challenge, showing great resilience by redirecting their work in the local community. Below are some of their notable achievements for the period.

Pre-pandemic

- **Trips to watch live sport:** Prior to the pandemic, days out to watch live sports such as football and rugby were an impactful and exciting part of OIAM's work with young people. For example, in November 2019 OIAM organised a coach trip for around 35 local young people to Wembley Stadium to watch a women's international football match. In our group interview with OIAM staff, they spoke passionately about the power of taking these young people out of their local environments and the clear impression this experience had on them:

"So we got all the girls that came to the session involved and then some of the boys started to say I want to go, I want to go, so we kind of expanded it even more you know, it started off we were taking a minibus and as it expanded we actually ended up taking some other children who were from around the other hubs. [...] So we filled the coach and just went and it was a really amazing time, it was great to see, you know, their faces, [...] there were ninety thousand fans there and we were a part of that. [...] when they got home it was like one a.m. and they were all asleep on the coach [...] but you could just see in their faces that they were just buzzing to be there and they had a really good time, so yes, it was

definitely something that stands out as a really kind of impressionable experience I think.” – One In A Million staff interview

“So being able to get thirty-five, forty young people off the estate that they don’t really want to step out of, onto a coach, a four-hour journey down to London, some had never ever been before, never mind Wembley to watch a football game, and then back again, all done safely you know. Yes, for me that would be one of the highlights” – One In A Million staff interview

- **Building corporate partnerships:** As mentioned earlier, having already successfully engaged local young people, one of OIAM’s key areas of focus over the course of the first year was to provide them with more in-depth experiences. Plans to offer more taster courses and activities that these young people would not normally have access to were obviously set back by the pandemic. However, prior to this, OIAM staff told us they had begun to successfully expand their corporate partners programme:

“[Through] our corporate partners programme we’d really started to bring in sort of third parties that could enhance it all really and give almost an introduction to the world of work. So that was it really, exposing the young people to more and more opportunity through various different avenues off the back of our strong engagement” – One In A Million staff interview

During the pandemic

- **Helping coordinate volunteers in Bradford South:** Following the first Covid-19 outbreak in March 2020, OIAM’s usual work with young people could not continue as normal, and as a result they shifted towards meeting local needs more broadly. OIAM were able to use their expertise and links within the community to coordinate and manage the volunteering effort set up to support the most vulnerable people in the Bradford South district. As part of this emergency volunteer response, they helped to train and refer close to 300 volunteers. Their efforts were praised by leading members of the local community.

“So we redeployed and basically managed a database of volunteers from all across Bradford which we then matched up with needs across the districts of South Bradford. So that could’ve been shopping, prescriptions, sewing, dog walking, befriending calls, so that was over a period of two or three, well it was from lockdown, so end of March till the end of June.” – One In A Million staff interview

- **Maintaining relationships – detached work and distributing activity and wellbeing packs:** With OIAM’s usual centre-based work paused, they adopted an innovative approach to maintaining support and connections with young people during such an unprecedented and uncertain time. The Community Activators maintained their presence in the community through detached youth work, but recognising just how tough the impact of boredom and isolation was on the young people in their communities, the Community Activators in Bierley decided to create and deliver activity and wellbeing packs to families in the local area. Not only did these packs provide fun and stimulating activities for young people, they also offered a reason to knock on doors and check in with local families and harder to reach young people.

"We produced some activity packs and wellbeing packs, so wellbeing packs were mainly aimed at the sort of older end of our young people, [...] so maybe your secondary school age really, and the activity packs were mainly aimed at the younger end. So the activity packs just had loads of physical and mental activities in there, puzzles, press-up challenges, football challenges and we actually managed to secure some funding to provide some sports and other equipment, skipping ropes, cones." – One In A Million staff interview

Impact of Covid-19

We have already highlighted the many ways in which the Covid-19 outbreak has impacted OIAM's planned programme delivery during the year 1 period. As with many of the charities funded by Better Futures II, the pandemic has clearly permeated and altered all aspects of their work. We have seen how the scope of OIAM's work in the community has been adapted in order to serve the wider local emergency action. When we spoke to staff in our interviews reviewing year 1, the pandemic was obviously the main theme when we discussed the challenges, and thus this section looks at some of these in closer detail.

Closure of community centres due to lockdown and vandalism: The national and local lockdowns put in place throughout the pandemic have meant the community buildings where OIAM usually deliver their work have either been closed or repurposed to serve the emergency Covid-19 response effort. As we have seen already, this has meant that OIAM have not been able to carry out their usual programme of activities as planned. A further blow and setback to the recovery of their usual interactions with young people has been the continued closure of the centre in Canterbury due to instances of arson and burglary in 2020.

As we explore below, one of the clear benefits of the OIAM model is how they are physically embedded within community spaces; whilst this remains a positive, it means that the loss of these spaces has been keenly felt by the charity. However, the detached work carried out by the Canterbury community activator has played an important role in ensuring some continuity and providing a sense of this community engagement in a different way. These activities have involved both walking around the area talking to local young people as well as, when restrictions have allowed, organising sports activities in outdoor community spaces.

Maintaining engagement, and uncertainty around the return to normal delivery: Throughout the majority of year 1, OIAM have been working in a range of new and different ways to support their community to the very best of their ability. With the areas they work in generally remaining in high levels of restrictions over the course of 2020, although they have been able to reintroduce some activities at certain points, they have felt the impact of the uncertainty of when they will be able to fully resume normal delivery. These changing restrictions and ongoing uncertainty have made it hard to plan ahead, and has meant it has sometimes been challenging to maintain relationships with young people – especially the older cohorts – now that their work has become more fragmented:

"I think our older side, the youth side of it it's been more difficult to stay in touch with them than the sort of what we term our younger age kids club, you know, being able to reach out to their families and activity packs has been much easier than it has been for the youth, and even when we've tried to engage them virtually, we've had some success but not a lot of success. [...] then August and into September things started to open up a little bit and we started to go well, okay, maybe things [are] changing [...] so around September when we were back in and face to face working, I think that stopped any headway we'd made with the virtual aspects of it and then fast forward to end of

November we're thrown back into that place and I feel we got caught out a little bit with it." – One In A Million staff interview

Related to this, in the interviews OIAM staff recognised the impact of uncertainty and upheaval the pandemic is causing in young people's lives. They highlighted their difficulties in keeping some young people engaged whilst they are so far removed from their usual routines and habits in terms of school and socialising. As the following staff quotes suggest, their focus has been on being a constant in young people's lives, and helping them to cope with the day-to-day challenges of living through such an unprecedented event:

"right now, for young people it's been helping them to discern what are they actually going through, it's been allaying any fears and for some it's, you know, it's just been, it's just been about helping them to cope and make good decisions through this situation." – One In A Million staff interview

"Since second lockdown we're just facing more challenges in terms of some of these [sports and schools] facilities closing. Now we are allowed to still do our work face to face, it's seen as essential, so we're just trying to work round that at the minute but the bottom line is we're still engaging with the young people, we're still providing a vision for the young people, we're still there and being a constant and consistent. So yes, challenges but you know, all is not lost by any stretch." – One In A Million staff interview

Digital exclusion: With the numerous challenges they have faced and their focus on the emergency volunteering response, transferring their delivery model to an online format was not something OIAM had done to the same extent as some of the other charities we've spoken to. In the interviews with staff, a number of obstacles to online delivery were highlighted, such as access to the necessary skills, tools and equipment. Despite this, OIAM have been engaging with some young people online, including through wellbeing calls and Zoom quizzes – and, in particular, a regular girls' group that took place very successfully via Zoom during the first lockdown. The team acknowledged that these digital elements and learnings are something they hope to be able to build upon in the post-pandemic world. In particular, it was noted how important it is to ensure young people have the skills and knowledge of to present themselves professionally in an online setting as this becomes a more prominent aspect of the world of work.

Impact on young people

With OIAM's usual activities disrupted and the primary focus for much of the period having been on emergency Covid response work, it feels too early to assess the impact of the planned work on young people in significant depth at this stage. However, in general staff spoke positively about the changes they had been seeing in young people prior to the pandemic as well as during those periods where they have been able to resume face to face delivery. Thinking back, staff in our interviews highlighted the growth in confidence they had seen amongst particular young people who they had worked with, a number of whom were very shy initially but who were described as coming out of their shells over time:

"when I first met this young person she was quiet, shy, wouldn't say boo to a goose you know, and now she's come in, well just recently she's been coming into the youth sessions and just speaking and opening her mouth, you know, that confidence that I've seen grow is unbelievable. So yes, you know, you notice things like that massively in certain young people" – One In A Million staff interview

Staff also said another indicator of how much young people valued their time on the project was feedback from parents about the excitement and willingness to come back week after week. This is a clear sign of the sense of a safe space which OIAM is able to provide for the community within their locations (which was also highlighted in the first round of Better Futures funding).

"I mean feedback wise from parents as well they're always saying the children and young people are really enjoying it, you know, even when it's absolutely peeing it down outside they're still turning up at the door ten minutes early, getting drenched, to come in. So yes I think for me it doesn't have to be verbal feedback, I think sometimes your feedback can come from little things like that that you notice." – One In A Million staff interview

As an organisation, OIAM see themselves as providing a voice for local young people in the community and say they have often allowed young people's interests and passions to shape the programme. Indeed, they are seemingly viewed in a similar light by the local authority; an indicator of this during the pandemic was OIAM being asked to pull together a focus group of young people to help inform the local authority's response.

Building on previous funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation

OIAM's longevity and reputation in South Bradford means that as an organisation they are very well embedded in their community, and this is their key strength. They are visible, well known and well trusted locally and, as a result, the majority of their engagement comes through word of mouth and their existing connections.

"I just feel we're trusted, I feel we're quite well respected, I feel that people will, families will come to us, children will come to us knowing that they're going to get a strong experience and impact on the wider community" – One In A Million staff interview

In our interviews, one staff member explained why this level of trust is so important for the work they do:

"I think the nature of some of the areas we work in trust is a big thing, people, you know, for want of a better word, maybe have broken relationships, lack of trust, I don't know but what we've always tried to do is be consistent and be a constant in people's lives, young people's lives for a start but also gaining that trust of the wider community as well" – One In A Million staff interview

It is directly because of the continued funding provided by the Clothworkers' Foundation that OIAM has been afforded the security and stability required to build and continue to embed themselves into the community. This is allowing for the development of a long-term strategy and growth of a holistic approach towards young people's needs, and has enabled continuity for these young people.

"the financial aspect of [funding from the Clothworkers] is phenomenal for the organisation, it allows us to continue to keep developing, it allows me in the seat I sit into build a strategy and implement a strategy that continues and continues to grow. So one of the hardest things is to keep building short term strategies [...] So they've really helped us to keep that vision going and consolidate our growth model and that's looking just purely from an organisational point of view, the finances [are] supporting our workers but also obviously then [it provides] the same stability that helps the organisations, the same stability that helps our children and young people." – One In A Million staff interview

Next steps

This has been a challenging year for OIAM – they have faced significant difficulties in carrying out their usual activities. However, the alternative emergency response work has been delivered extremely successfully, and the staff have provided much needed support to their communities during an extremely difficult and uncertain period. The team at OIAM have also learnt new and valuable ways to engage young people and innovate in the delivery of their work – from detached provision to some examples of online engagement. This is a credit to the team's resilience and the trust they have built amongst families in the area. As a charity whose model and delivery places considerable emphasis on community work and face to face delivery, OIAM are keen to start 'getting back to normal' as soon as they can. This will include getting back to their original plan for year 1, which was to build up their enrichment and enhancement activities and give young people as many opportunities as possible, including trips outside of the local area and engagement with corporate partners.

OIAM have largely been able to maintain relationships and their reputation in the community through the alternative provisions they have been offering, meaning they are confident of being able to pick up where they left off. Their enrichment sessions have been delayed due to lockdown but they don't foresee this being a challenge to get back up and running once the pandemic restrictions allow. However, it is likely that OIAM will continue to face challenges in their recovery due to the impact of further lockdowns, and to compound this, the continued impact to the project caused by the damage to the building they used in Canterbury. Nevertheless, the team at OIAM continue to look ahead with similar passion and drive:

"I reckon we do need to look at how we re-establish really our work and that's not because it's totally gone but it has been broken and it has been fragmented. So I would hope, I would hope by the end of this time that we have got, I would like to see us back on the model that we had and the direction that we were going with some of those learning aspects in the virtual, the youth voice being established again formally and a deepening of the upskilling and the training of our staff in terms of our own theory of change." – One In A Million staff interview

As we move in the second year of the evaluation, we look forward to seeing how OIAM can harness the many benefits of their strong local community reputation to both rebuild their work and move forward to work on enhancing the model over the coming months.

Making the Leap (MTL)

Desk Research & Year 1 Summary Statistics

Background information:

- Plan to deliver a support programme to 390 unemployed young people from socially and economically deprived backgrounds in London over 3-year period.
- Organisational aims are to raise aspirations, foster self-belief, develop essential skills and provide access to career opportunities.

Impact of Covid-19:

- Centre closed and stopped face-to-face delivery.
- Adapted delivery to an online model using webinars, online workshops and remote contact via phone and email.
- Recognising additional challenges young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are now facing.

Stats from surveys of young people prior to starting the programme:

- Profile of young people on the programme:
 - 72% live in social housing
 - 57% were eligible to receive free school meals
 - 25% had experienced homelessness
 - 56% grew up in families with parents who were unemployed
 - 75% are from BAME communities
- Types of support needed by young people on the programme (self-identified):
 - 70% need help improving their confidence and self-esteem
 - 75% need support accessing job roles
 - 65% need help with their motivation
 - 88% require assistance with interview technique
 - 64% need help to identify their strengths

Summary of support provided on a rolling monthly basis (prior to Covid-19):

Engagement and outreach: The Head of Engagement leads on connecting with young people and generating referrals through relationships with organisations in deprived areas (Jobcentre offices, Housing Associations, colleges and other community providers). Holding surgeries and open days at partner organisations to engage with young people, providing one-to-one guidance and inviting them to attend MTL's centre for further support. Referrals also happen via email or telephone, via social media and via MTL's alumni network who encourage friends or family members to make contact (currently 35% of referrals come from a friend or family member).

Needs assessment and action plan: as part of the registration process, young people undergo an individual needs assessment to help understand their situation, goals and strengths, this also helps to identify any barriers. A written action plan is then devised with the young person.

Future skills and employability workshop: young people attend a three-week workshop at the centre, Monday-Friday 10am-4pm. These take place once a month, but were paused in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The workshop includes group activities to develop soft skills and increase aspirations, as well as job application and interview advice. There are also three half-day visits to employers at corporate partner offices across London.

Follow up support: following workshop completion, young people receive face-to-face structured coaching, pastoral and job readiness support. They also receive remote support via email and phone. Referrals are made to other agencies depending upon needs or career aims.

Employment engagement/placement: The Head of Corporate Partnerships sources entry level opportunities for young people. Main sectors are finance, property, marketing and media.

Outcome stats:

- 242 young people have received the initial assessment (Target – 240)
- 133 young people have attended the three week workshop (Target – 130)
- 43 young people have been placed into career opportunities (Target – 40)
- Survey of young people's perceptions:
 - 89% say they have increased confidence and self-esteem
 - 88% say they have increased motivation and raised aspirations
 - 87% say they have improved attitude and work ethic

Qualitative Interviews

Making the Leap is one of the charities receiving a second round of funding via the Better Futures programme. They provide a rolling cycle of activities aiming to support young people from disadvantaged background to progress towards meaningful employment. There are a number of stages in young people's journeys with Making the Leap. There is a process of engagement and recruitment to the programme where young people take part in an initial assessment to discuss aspirations and career aims, a structured course aiming to support young people to develop the skills they need to succeed, and a programme of follow on support to help move them towards employment. Making the Leap also works closely with employer partners to broker potential opportunities for young people. Through the funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation which part-funded a number of posts, they aimed to slightly increase numbers of young people reached through the programme, but also to increase the length of their course from two to three weeks, thus further enriching the learning potential of the course. Through a focus group session we spoke to staff members in a number of roles across the organisation, covering oversight, direct delivery with young people, and employer engagement.

Achievements

Progress against objectives for the first year: As shown in the summary statistics on the first year above, Making the Leap have performed highly and have met the objectives they set out for year 1 in terms of reaching both their target numbers and raising confidence and motivations. They told us they were fortunate to have been having a successful year prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, in part supporting this achievement of their targets. As set out in their plans in the original proposal, in the pre-Covid-19 period, the two-week course was successfully transformed into a three-week course to widen the range of experiences provided to young people during the programme – in particular by providing more opportunities to interact with corporate partners.

Transformation to digital delivery: The team see the rapid transformation of the programme following Covid-19 outbreak as a considerable achievement. It was transformed from a three week to a one week programme, which could be conducted online – through a comprehensive process of testing and review by the staff. They also cited their achievements in adapting their recruitment practices and managing to engage new young people to the programme via referral partners and online engagement. Through our discussions with staff, it was clear that the adaptation process was extremely well considered, with staff speaking thoughtfully about the way the programme was adapted with the perspectives and needs of young people at the forefront.

They continued to manage and build partnerships with corporates during this challenging period – and to get young people ready for jobs via their ongoing support, and even managed to secure virtual opportunities for young people via employer partners in spite of the economic context.

"for us to be able to have support to be innovative, to be able to implement the particular strategies online has really just been quite ground breaking ... I think for me, from my perspective, just going out there and sort of working with your colleges or your universities or your job centres, just being able to maintain that and also take that to another level where we can reach people through different interventions or different means being online has been very, very, very powerful" – Making the Leap staff interview

"I feel that we've got to the point now where we've got a week and it's very, very enriched and saturated with so many great components that will leave them equipped to apply for the roles that they want with confidence, with the skills that they need. Thinking about the realm that we're in now so I'm really, really proud of what we've done as a team." – Making the Leap staff interview

Unsurprisingly, when we spoke about challenges, the team were largely focused on the impacts of the pandemic which will be elaborated on in more detail below.

Impact of Covid-19

The outbreak of Covid-19 has had a number of impacts on Making the Leap. In March 2020, they had to pause face to face delivery, get staff and volunteers set up for remote working, and then plan for how to adapt delivery of the programme. Several challenges and observations emerged from our discussion of how Covid-19 affected Making the Leap's work.

Increased needs: As highlighted in the common themes section, many challenges were created or exacerbated for the young people they work with – from loss of structure and motivation, through to concerns about employment. They have also found young people who they supported previously returning to them due to job losses and furloughing – this re-engagement from young people who they worked with in the past a credit to the value of the support which Making the Leap provides.

"there's been so many transitions in their lives that has had an impact on them and you know, when they communicate that across to us, you know, there's been job losses for our young people, some have been furloughed and it has just meant that they have either re-engaged with us, you know, from many years back... [looking for] emotional support and just, you know, maybe some practical interventions and advice that they need in getting back up and running into [new] employment and I think what we have done successfully [has been] dynamic during this period and offered, you know, so much support...I think I can see that our (young people) appreciate that and really have used that to maybe upskill themselves during this period and yes, and take some positives away from that." – Making the Leap Staff Interview

Holistic support: The personal circumstances young people were facing meant staff needed be innovative in the way they approached conversations, which often needed to be more holistic than before. They also often found they needed to provide more intensive 1-to-1 support for each person from the start of engagement, giving time for discussions around the wider challenges young people were facing.

"it really just kind of revolutionised our kind of approach and the time that we give to each young person so that increased which was quite nice in some respects but obviously that had a massive bearing because for every person that we might speak to on a Teams call or Zoom call, you might maybe, like, half an hour to forty five minutes before maybe sending correspondence via WhatsApp and then getting a phone call so what you see is that the amount of time that we would have to put out to get one person almost tripled just to kind of get that engagement" – Making the Leap Staff Interview

Impact on engagement/referral: Restrictions meant that those working on the engagement/referral side could no longer use in person outreach methods to reach young people – again the team stepped up to the challenge of adapting their methods in order to find ways to reach young people where possible. For example, they were able to make use of good relationships with referral partners (such as job centres) and also worked on building their visibility online, particularly through social media as well as being more accessible to young people via WhatsApp. Although there was an initial lull in referrals whilst partners adapted to technology, this picked up again after the initial shock of the pandemic outbreak, and the resulting impact on unemployment levels started to become clear.

Digital transformation: This formed the main focus for MTL over the early weeks of the first lockdown – as above, they radically changed the programme from three weeks to one week, ensuring the most important elements were maintained, and carried out a period of testing to ensure activities worked online and that they could create an online space where young people felt safe and supported. The team reflected that inevitably some elements are lost in not being face to face, and in having a shorter time to engage with young people during the course itself – but felt they had achieved the right balance in terms of what can work successfully and engagingly in an online format. They made use of various features of technology to try to replicate the benefits of the original programme such as the rapport built within the groups. With corporate visits an important aspect of the usual programme, they also found ways for activities with these partners to be moved to online – to ensure young people continued to benefit from these aspects which bring career opportunities to life and give young people an experience of corporate environments.

Response from young people: Staff highlighted the varied responses of young people to accessing Making the Leap's support online – in particular, that some young people were less comfortable interacting online than might be predicted. With the group dynamic such an important and impactful part of the in-person courses, staff needed to work hard to encourage participants to feel comfortable interacting online and recreate the sense of a safe space in this arena.

"we had this assumption that the young people would hit the ground running and as soon as they logged on to Zoom that's it, they're going to just love it but it was quite contrary. We had to do a lot of ...making sure that they felt comfortable and safe in this realm". – Making the Leap Staff Interview

Despite this challenge, staff felt there was huge value in the confidence young people gained over the week's course; *"there's a huge vulnerability that they have when they're on camera and it's a nice thing because then you get to see how much progress in confidence, you know, that they've made in those five days and, you know, you can definitely see it in the way they project their voices and their body language."*

One major challenge was in some young people's access to appropriate technology; as one staff member commented, *"we've noticed that not every young person has access to a laptop so that to me was the most*

heart-breaking thing, seeing people struggling using a phone, for example. We have a whole office with computers that are just sat there and then, you know, it just makes you feel a bit dejected in that sense but we've tried our best to make sure [it] is accessible".

Employer engagement: The team were very positive about the way they have been able to continue working with corporate partners over this period. A particular success included moving the social mobility careers fair to an online format – which included working very closely with partners to ensure the presentations they created were engaging and interactive for young people. The introductions made during the fair also led to young people gaining employment opportunities. As above, employers have also been involved in the course element of the programme, providing virtual sessions on topics such as interviews or networking. On the digital side, the reaction from employers has been very positive – and may be an area where online delivery could continue to some extent in the future. Particular benefits were time and money saving for employers, and being able to engage with a wider range of employers geographically.

In terms of placing young people in opportunities, unsurprisingly vacancies have reduced – particularly bulk vacancies. However, they have still successfully placed some young people in one off vacancies and other placement opportunities – the fact that this has been possible in such challenging circumstances is an indication of the strength of both Making the Leap's external partnership building and the progress they are able to make in preparing young people for potential opportunities. Whilst the external context remains challenging, they are continuing working on getting young people ready and keeping them motivated for when the opportunities do arise.

Impact on young people

All staff members spoke powerfully about the changes they see in young people over the course of their engagement with MTL, from referral, through the course content, their work with mentors and – often – successful placement with employers. The energy and dedication of the team came through strongly in discussions with staff, and – alongside the clear structure of the programme with its various stages of support – it is clear that this supports the growth of young participants on the programme. Examples of impact discussed in the interviews (often reflecting those found in the common themes section) include:

Growth in confidence: Staff discussed seeing young people's attitudes and sense of self-belief begin to shift through their engagement with MTL. This was often discussed in terms of young people who would initially join the courses with low energy and levels of engagement – and this beginning to gradually change both throughout the course and in the post course engagement activities with MTL.

"for me, seeing somebody who doesn't talk at home, present to one of our corporate partners on one of the days or, you know, having somebody who's never worked get into a job and knowing that they didn't think they could get a job when they first spoke to me is what keeps me here" – Making the Leap staff interview

Soft skills for work: Alongside this confidence building, it is clear that young people are gaining the highly practical soft skills they need to prove their potential to future employers. Young people learn a variety of skills including presenting themselves, communicating effectively and networking. Staff also talked about the importance of 'remaining relevant' and believe this is fundamental to the success of their work – shown, for example, in the successful adaptation of the programme to Covid-19; where one of the previous programme activities prepared young people on making introductions in person, shaking hands etc, they have adapted

this to provide young people with the skills to present themselves professionally in an online space. Staff gave examples of this growth and evolution of skills leading young people to opportunities; going from *"not smiling, just very shy, growing in confidence, putting himself across, being mindful of his virtual presence, the support that he got afterwards, after the workshop to being submitted, performing well in his internship and he's...become a great ambassador for the organisation."*

Long term support: One of the elements that seems to contribute to MTL's success in supporting young people is the step-by-step process of what is provided; from initial engagement discussions, through to the course itself, and onto the post course support to get them ready for employment opportunities. These processes are highly linked up and it was clear in our group interview that staff work closely together to ensure young people's successful transition through these various stages of support. In addition, MTL also seem to operate very much with an open-door policy even when young people have completed the programme; as above, they spoke for example about young people who were accessing support again following loss of employment during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sustained and holistic support is clearly part of the success of the programme.

Support from the Clothworkers' Foundation

As one of the programmes which has been funded for a second time by the Better Futures programme, there is a lot of appreciation from the team as to the value this continuity has provided them. Examples provided included being able to respond to feedback from young people regarding the programme, such as increasing the employer engagement side of the course and extending the length from two to three weeks.

"as a charity...you're constantly looking at financial stability and also continuity as well so to be able to get the second round of funding just meant we could increase and develop and do more which is exactly what we've done. You know, we're always looking for longer term funding because it gives you that flexibility." – Making the Leap staff interview

Next steps

Making the Leap have proved themselves to highly innovative and adaptable in the face of a challenging external environment, allowing them to continue to provide much needed and valued employment support. They have approached this task with energy, taking many positives from the fact that they've had to embrace technology across the organisation, and there is an appetite for ensuring that this work continues into the future of the programme and the organisation. One area for consideration for MTL is whether any aspects of the work the team have done to adapt the programme to remote and digital delivery will be continued once face to face delivery is again possible. Staff feel that whilst they have huge pride in the transformation of the programme to online, face to face remains the ideal method of engagement. However, there were benefits from the online shift and certain aspects where they would like to retain and build on digital work, both in their delivery with young people and their work with partners. Thus, regardless of Covid-19 restrictions, MTL are likely to move towards a mixed delivery model. In particular, there is a consideration of whether online delivery could provide a potential opportunity to expand geographically beyond London and reach more young people and potential partners.

There is also a desire to continue harnessing the power of technology in other areas too – for example, in reducing their reliance on paper during in person courses, and in streamlining their data collection and monitoring processes to make sure these are more closely tied together. In addition, this year has seen the

organisation build its online presence as a recruitment tool for engaging young people and they are keen for this to continue.

"[from] the young person who first interacts from the engagement team all the way through to the progression and also to job as well, we want to make that a lot more streamlined as well so [our aim is to] make sure we utilise technology properly and maximise on the experience that we now – and the newfound knowledge that we have in using it."- Making the Leap staff interview.

On the employment side a topic that emerged for the year ahead was in relation to engaging with employers who were ambitious about prioritising diversity in their recruitment practices. There was also an acknowledgement of the level of economic uncertainty ahead as they work with corporate partners to try to find potential opportunities. Supporting young people into temporary opportunities and work experience will be valuable in the meantime, whilst continuing to work on keeping young people's hopes and ambitions alive in spite of this difficult context. Future stages of our evaluation will enable us to explore how MTL tackles these ongoing challenges, as well as investigating how they take forward the learnings from the adaptations they have had to make into the charity's future development.

Leap Confronting Conflict

Desk Research Summary

Summary of training activities throughout January to July 2020:

- Delivered 5 face-to-face courses as part of the Improving Prospect programme. These involved 38 young people aged 13-21. The courses focused on developing skills to understand their relationship with conflict, break cycles of behaviour and make positive changes. These courses included:
 - Introduction to Conflict Management (one day course)
 - Introduction to Conflict courses (one day course) – delivered in partnership with organisations working with at-risk young people (Spotlight, Street League, Waltham Forest College). Waltham Forest College session was part of a new partnership, working with 12 students displaying disruptive behaviour, including some on the fringes of local gangs.
 - Leadership courses – 3–4-day personal development workshop targeting more chaotic and disengaged young people
 - Internal Leadership course with 8 young people (7 completed the course), considering choices they make and their impact, identifying benefits of taking responsibility, one-to-one sessions to develop personal development plans and access work/education opportunities
 - One-to-one sessions (8 sessions over 8 weeks) with 5 young people with complex backgrounds, not suited to group courses – these informed the design of digital courses
- Delivered 1 course (Working with Challenging Behaviour) to 16 professionals (teachers, prison officers and youth workers).
- Trialled flexible delivery models including intensive one-to-one sessions with 5 young people.
- Piloted a digital training course with younger cohorts, in partnership with West London Zone.
- Created new resources to support young people in transition from primary to secondary school.
- Cancelled all face-to-face courses in March 2020 due to the pandemic – and pulled together to maintain support for young people, mainly through adopting digital methods of delivery.

Impact of Covid-19 and the move to a digital delivery model:

- Have made sustained efforts to involve partners and young people since the beginning of lockdown – consulted with 55 young people in March and April 2020, and carried out two surveys of graduates from the programme, partners and stakeholders. In these consultations they heard about increased conflict at home and the impact of lockdown on mental health.
- Developed programmes for delivery via digital platforms that reflected changing needs of young people and professionals.
- Programmes have been delivered via Zoom, engaging small groups and individuals through games, exercises and discussion, including:
 - One-to-one digital training for 6 young people aged 15-21 over 8 weeks
 - Five week online Youth Workers programme for 179 youth practitioners
- The financial impact on Leap Confronting Conflict was a concern at the outset of the crisis – a number of mitigating steps including furloughing and an emergency appeal supported them onto a firmer financial footing. However, with some core funding is coming to an end, they are concerned about the impact that emergency funding will have on funding opportunities available in 2021.

Working with younger age groups:

- Part of Leap Confronting Conflict's 2020/2024 strategy is to engage young people aged 10 +.
- They are developing an understanding of primary to secondary school transition, have co-produced a new resource to support the development of emotional intelligence, resilience, understanding of conflict and self-care – this has been shared with over 200 schools.
- Have worked in partnership with West London Zone to deliver training to 13 and 14 year olds.
- Are introducing a new curriculum to suit the needs of younger cohorts, including new modules on self-awareness, friendship and leadership and more play and drama-based activities.

Qualitative Interviews

Leap Confronting Conflict is a new addition to the Better Futures II funding portfolio. The grant from the Clothworkers' Foundation supports their Improving Prospects programme which is an educational development programme supporting young people facing destructive conflict in their lives. They run a range of training programmes (ranging from 1 to 10 day courses) to give young people (typically aged 15-21) the tools they need to overcome these challenges, as well as providing surrounding one-to-one support. There are a range of follow-on activities which young people can engage in such as monthly group sessions, industry talks and an Ambassadors programme. They also work with partners to deliver programmes with groups of young people in a variety of settings, as well as running courses for professionals who work with young people. The Clothworkers' Foundation funding aimed to support the expansion of this work, both in terms of the core programme working with 15-21 year olds as well as increasing their work with younger audiences (14 and under) through programmes within schools. We spoke to two staff members working directly on programme delivery to understand progress of the project, the effects which Covid-19 had had on delivery, and any signs of emerging impact from young people who had participated on the programme to date.

Achievements, objectives and challenges

Transformation to online delivery: Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 last year, Leap Confronting Conflict was making positive progress against its objectives for the first year, as detailed in the desk research summary above. The ways that the charity works were significantly impacted by the lockdown measures from March 2020 and thus staff see the period of transformation to online delivery as a key achievement for the charity. There was a decision to mostly focus on one-to-one delivery (a format that they had already started trialling prior to Covid-19) and adapt this programme to an online format. This seems to have been carefully thought through in terms of what would work in an online format as well as taking into consideration the kinds of support that would most benefit their young people at this time. Through the adaptations made they have been able to provide much needed support to young people over a challenging period.

"I just think the ability to kind of adapt and ensure we are still offering some sort of support to young people throughout the whole time, I think is probably the main achievement" – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

"we decided that during March we would have maybe a month of design delivery and development, just to really kind of understand the digital space ...So a lot of the content that we do it seems very bitesize when you do in a day but then when you have it in an eight-week programme, ten-week programme it becomes more intense and more rich. So we've kind of taken like the best modules from those programmes and really made it more of a proper training that would give more fruitful conversations, more, more progression, because you can see over a space of ten weeks or eight weeks how far that person or those people are progressing." – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

Increased flexibility: Staff also reported that they have become more flexible and creative as an organisation as a result of the demands of adapting to Covid-19 restrictions – and feel like this has had a positive impact in what they can offer, for example in partnership work. They've also been able to use the time during restrictions to build the groundwork for expansion, such as through partnerships with schools – so they've been able to hit the ground running when restrictions have allowed.

"I think before lockdown we weren't as flexible ...I think it's because a lot of our courses take place where we are and a lot of people had to come down to us and now we've kind of realised that we have to be a bit more adaptable and flexible. So it's really pushed us to push ourselves outside of our comfort zones and to really, like, engage and interact in spaces that we wouldn't have before and to really push ourselves in the digital space and be creative and innovative." – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

Progress against objectives: Overall, there was a feeling that many of the elements the charity hoped to work on over 2020 were underway, although the delivery of the core programme had to change significantly. Due to the focus on one-to-one delivery they have reached fewer in overall numbers than planned but believe the support they have been able to provide has been more in-depth than before. However, there are certainly aspects of the programme development plans which have been slowed by Covid-19, especially some of the schools partnership work, which remains at earlier stages than planned due to the impact of school closures.

They have a comprehensive evaluation process in place with young people to monitor impact, including baseline data collection, attendance tracking, post course evaluation, as well as follow up data collection 6 months after the course completion. They've generally been able to maintain feedback processes over the Covid-19 period though it can be more difficult to encourage young people to complete forms. To counteract this challenge, those supporting data collection in the organisation have taken a very focused approach during this period, really homing in on what data is most needed to make the process more streamlined and as easy as possible for young people to complete.

In terms of our discussion of project challenges, the vast majority related to Covid-19 and thus are detailed in the section below. However, one of the challenges that was raised separately to Covid-19 related to the difficulties of working with schools and how it often takes more time to get a foot in the door. In particular, they noted the need to be flexible in working with schools as pre-designed courses don't tend to suit all – thus, they need to work in close partnership with schools to design bespoke programmes.

Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 outbreak has had a number of impacts for the Leap Confronting Conflict programme. Chiefly, they needed to adapt their core programme significantly – moving from face-to-face group work to one-to-one online delivery. They have been able to do some limited amount of face-to-face work during the period of reduced restrictions during the summer, but due to their limited space it has been very difficult to recommence any group work within their setting. At an organisational level, the staff team have had to adapt to online working and there have been staff changes during this period. They have also been unable to hire the additional project worker that had been planned prior to Covid-19 to support their delivery work. Below we detail a range of challenges that emerged from our staff interviews, as well as learnings and even some unexpected benefits which came out of the adaptations.

Additional challenges for young people: As has been reported across the Better Futures II programme, the pandemic exacerbated challenges for young people in all areas from financial concerns to mental health or family relationships and even risk of homelessness. For Leap Confronting Conflict this has often meant having to deviate from the course structure to give time for young people's particular concerns; *"Depending on which point we're speaking...they were very worried about what's going to happen for the future, what do the restrictions mean...So some of the sessions we've had to speak about this because naturally they couldn't focus on doing the tasks"*.

Response of young people to delivery changes: Staff reported mixed views from young people around online engagement. For those who had previously interacted in person, there was sometimes frustration with being online, e.g. *"this isn't the same, can I just come into the office?"* And for those that were new to the programme, there could be an initial level of discomfort about talking about quite personal topics around the challenges they were facing and their emotions in an online setting with someone they didn't know. However, they found that after an adjustment period, the change in structure of the programme from an intensive group course to a one-to-one programme running over a longer period proved to have a positive effect on many young people. As one staff member explained, *"I was a little bit apprehensive about how it would work but strangely enough, I think it's allowed people to become more confident, open and vulnerable...I think it's because they have that kind of privacy and that time to really, to really engage with the content and to really not think about other things that are going on."*

Whilst the team generally feel that face to face is the ideal rather than online, their experiences of increasing the amount of one-to-one work they do seems to have been positive and something they would take forward in future, alongside the group programmes. They are closely monitoring the impact of the one-to-one work to ensure they take away learnings on the relative benefits.

"I think [the one-to-one sessions] actually allowed, especially young men that I've worked with recently, to really kind of open up, that they have never opened up in the same way that they would've had if they'd done a group session... I really found that having that one to one space as well gave them the tools to really actually practice what they were learning and then come back to me and reflect on it, because a lot of the young people would always say in their evaluations they just never had the time to really actually practice it." – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

Recruitment challenges: Prior to Covid-19 Leap Confronting Conflict had a very hands-on approach to recruiting young people to the programme. Since the outbreak, the usual settings for this outreach work such as youth centres and other community spaces have largely been closed. Fortunately, they have been able to make use of good relationships with pre-existing partners to support referrals but making new connections has been more difficult. They have also been working on building their online presence to support recruitment and connection with partners.

Working with partners: They have been able to continue their work in delivering programmes with partners but this has been quite up and down over the pandemic period – and they are running less work with partners than planned prior to Covid-19. Some of the challenges have been that online delivery hasn't always been practical for the young people their partners are bringing them in to work with, and that partners have often been focused on young people's immediate needs such as money, work and housing, and therefore this kind of programme may be seen as less of a priority. However, they found that the partnership work did increase over the summer period and in some ways the online delivery made it quicker and easier to organise programmes. They also found that there was a good response to online courses aimed at practitioners who have appreciated the convenience of this in comparison to taking a full day out of work for a face-to-face course.

Impact on work with schools: Due to schools being shut from March 2020 until the summer, Leap Confronting Conflict's intention to build this area of their work was set back significantly. However, since the

summer, they have had some success in their work with schools, for example running a pilot programme with children making the transition from primary to secondary school.

Engagement processes and impact on young people

In our interviews, staff members shared examples of the changes they see in the young people they work with and what factors of the programme they believe to contribute to those changes.

Strong reputation: Although they do work with referral partners to engage young people to the programme, staff members told us about the importance of their hands-on approach to making initial contact with young people – in some senses, the fact that they were unable to employ these methods under the Covid-19 period has highlighted their value. Normally, project workers would engage young people via external outreach, by going to those places where young people already are – examples include community centres and youth clubs, sports clubs, hostels, homeless shelters, probation and young offenders' institutes. They would take a gradual approach, chatting to the young people in these settings, to build trust and rapport with them in these spaces before inviting them to attend courses or meet with project workers more formally. Because of the backgrounds and experiences of the young people they tend to work with, these non-formal engagements are really important to the likelihood of young people choosing to engage as they can be distrusting of those they don't know. Since Covid-19 staff have felt the loss of this approach; however, they do also have a strong network of word-of-mouth referrals, including young people referring peers to the programme – a clear testament to the strong reputation they have built within their communities.

Self-awareness: One of the core impacts which the Leap Confronting Conflict programme has on young people is in supporting them to recognise what conflict is and how it is manifesting in their lives. Many are coming from a challenging start – for example, they may have been excluded from school or are trapped in cycles of negative behaviours and conflict. Throughout the programme they become more reflective about how conflict occurs, how they are responding emotionally and how they might change their responses.

"a lot of young people that have done these programmes have felt a difference...in terms of their reflections ...in terms of their preconceived ideas and thoughts about themselves, [...] how they are when it comes to internal conflicts with their own decision making, with their life choices, the decisions that they're makingSo sometimes it could lead them to create an issue that wasn't there in the first place or even expand into kind of physical situations, which isn't obviously the best but we kind of tried to get them to think about their next action, to think about how they could've changed that situation in a different way, how you could've got a positive outcome." – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

This awareness-raising is also valuable in their work with professionals working with young people – in these cases, it's about recognising the role of conflict and avoiding writing off young people; as one staff member explained, *"So even for practitioners how you can connect with a young person and not have those preconceived notations about that young person and what you can do to remove that judgment"*.

Importance of long-term support: Staff commented that the changes they see are incremental – they won't complete the journey in the three days of the course which means that the longer term follow up support, as well as the one-to-one courses are important. Many of the young people they work with are starting from a place where patterns of behaviour are highly ingrained, and working with staff to reflect on behaviours, and practise the tools they learn are all part of the process. Staff shared positive examples of

young people who – over a period of sustained support from Leap Confronting Conflict – had grown in skills such as self-belief and understanding of boundaries, decision making, and communication.

Overcoming barriers and raising aspirations: Through the work that Leap Confronting Conflict does in helping young people to better understand the role that conflict plays in their lives, it is clear that young people are, as a consequence, able to move forward in other areas of their lives. This means addressing barriers, both internal and external, becoming more confident and building a sense of how to move towards personal or career related goals. Staff gave examples of a young person who had gone from being very uncomfortable in their own skin through to taking part in Leap's advisory group, or another who had gone on to making a start in moving towards their career ambitions. With many of the young people coming from ethnic minority backgrounds, one staff member also mentioned how young people can "*feel the racial impact of being able to enter certain spaces and enter certain events. They feel like I shouldn't be here and certain opportunities they feel like they shouldn't take because it's not for me...because of their involvement with our programme ...with the external courses and external events and things like that, they really start to understand that the world is their oyster and they can make it what they choose to make it despite certain barriers.*"

Sense of community and safe space: Another positive impact comes from the sense of community that is built within the group courses, as well as in the wider Leap Confronting Conflict programme, for example through their monthly sessions, career events, and Ambassadors programme.

"A lot of the young people, I noticed that they are getting involved in the sort of monthly sessions and it builds a bit of a community and I think they've got a place, a group of friends they make from the programmes and they can be positive with. They're all trying to make this sort of change, or are at a different point in it which is different to going back to your group of friends that maybe you're getting into trouble with that have got no idea of what you're on about... that's why a lot of them form their own sort of friendship groups from the programmes. And a lot of them say like, yes, it's kind of like my support session and they kind of get on really well with each other." – Leap Confronting Conflict staff interview

Next steps

As is still the case now, when we spoke to staff in November, the future looked uncertain, with plans clearly impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions. Staff were keen that they be able to resume more group and face to face work once this is possible and safe. However, whilst uncertainty continues, they were aware of the need to be flexible. For example, whilst they don't believe their usual group sessions translate well to online, they were considering whether some form of group online taster course (e.g. 90 minutes) might be a possible route to build initial engagement with young people. They were also keen to continue the development of their schools work with younger groups, and particularly to build long term connections with schools so that the learning from the training that Leap Confronting Conflict offers becomes embedded in the schools' practices. However, undoubtedly progression in this area will have been impacted again by the latest school closures. As mentioned above, staff capacity has been a challenge with the pause on recruitment for the additional project worker – they hope to be able to increase capacity for the more time intensive one to one work, and to have more staff who are trained to deliver this work.

They expect that due to the lower numbers they've been able to deliver to over this period, as well as the strain which the pandemic has put on the lives of young people in the communities where they work, they are

likely to see increased demand for support over the coming months. These young people may also come to them with a wider range of support needs and they will therefore need to consider how the programme needs to be adapted to meet young people's immediate needs.

Staff were reflective about some of the positives from the adaptations made over the course of the pandemic, particularly the increased focus on in depth one-to-one work over a longer period. The deeper impact which this type of work is having on those young people who have been able to benefit has provided an important learning for the charity and looks likely to impact future delivery plans beyond Covid-19. Future rounds of research will allow us to explore how Leap Confronting Conflict will balance the relative benefits of group work and individual support – and what the future programme can offer in terms of both addressing the changing needs of the young people they work with, and meeting the charities' aims to reach more young people.

UK Youth – Your Space pilot

Desk Research Summary

About the Your Space pilot programme:

- A two-year street based (detached and outreach work) youth programme delivered in partnership with Uniting Communities Organisation (UCO), based in Blackburn.
- Aims to reach vulnerable young people on their terms, in a space and at a time that works for them.
- Phase 1 began on 1st September 2020 with the recruitment and training of youth workers.
- Local community scoping also took place in September 2020; this involved a consultation with 36 community institutions in three wards, that aimed to aid understanding of the challenges facing young people and their relationships/interactions with these institutions. Local crime statistics and demographic information on the local wards was also collected.
- Phase 2 delivery commenced on 19th October 2020. Initial data collection tools and a theory of change was created during this time to help evidence the impact of street-based youth work.

Emerging findings:

- There is a huge list of challenges facing young people: high levels of antisocial behaviour, unemployment, fly tipping, and drug and alcohol misuse in Blackburn were significant prior to Covid-19. The pandemic has exacerbated the boredom these young people feel, combined with a drying up of employment and apprenticeship opportunities. Activities that have increased include excessive use of fireworks, bullying younger children, increases in gang engagement and letting dogs loose to chase other people.
- The most positive interactions with young people are reported by local chicken shops and barbers, spaces where young people feel comfortable – in contrast, relations are most strained with faith leaders and PCSOs.
- The UCO team have received positive responses about their visibility on the streets, with Your Space branded jackets helping to spark conversations in the community and raise awareness. The team have learnt about anti-social behaviour hotspots and have had many initial conversations with young people, beginning to gain their trust. Conversations have been around the impact of Covid-19, including social and financial struggles. UCO have provided emergency food packages to several families.

Summary of planned outputs and outcomes:

Outputs	Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth workers trained and linked to specialist support 2. Local street-based youth work model created – based on the Theory of Change of local need 3. Street-based youth work delivered in deprived urban areas 4. Engagement with disadvantaged young people 5. UK Youth evaluation toolkit and learning cycle created to build a share evidence base 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Street-based youth workers deliver street-based youth work safely and in collaboration with the local community 2. Young people report strong relationships with youth workers 3. Young people feel empowered to take constructive action 4. Communities report improved relationships with youth sector and young people 5. Youth sector gains insight into effective street-based youth work through dissemination of evidence and learning

Initial Discussions and Next Steps

UK Youth was the final project to join the portfolio for Better Futures II, receiving their grant in summer 2020. Working in partnership with Uniting Communities Organisation (UCO), this is a street-based youth pilot programme (combining outreach and detached youth work) being delivered in Blackburn and is named 'Your

Space'. Sadly, this kind of street-based youth work (which was previously common place within local authority teams) has seen significant cuts in recent decades and is often difficult to fund as proving impact can be more challenging than with typical youth programmes. However, UK Youth believes it has a vital role to play and would like to see this element of the sector reinvigorated. Since the Covid-19 outbreak and its impact on youth centres and community spaces, the need for this kind of programme has become even more stark. Through the pilot project, as well as supporting young people directly on the ground, UK Youth aim to show the value of the work to funders and the wider sector.

As the project was still in relatively early stages when our interviews for the other projects were taking place, we have not yet carried out the Year 1 interviews for this project. We are meeting quarterly with the UK Youth team to review the progress of the project and are planning for the interviews which will likely take place in summer 2021, and thus review year 1 of the project in depth. We will either update this report once the interviews are complete, or will include UK Youth's summary within our Year 2 report for the Better Futures II programme as a whole.

From our initial discussions and the summary data above, UK Youth is progressing well against its plans for the first year of the project. Some further themes from the meetings are included below:

Impact of Covid-19: This project is unique amongst the Better Futures II portfolio in that it was launched following the Covid-19 outbreak and thus has been planned with the risks of changing restrictions in mind. In addition, the local area in which the pilot is taking place – Blackburn – has had a high restriction level throughout the pandemic so in some senses the conditions under which the team have been working are relatively consistent thus far. Street work is also permitted to continue during restrictions due to its essential nature. There are some challenges however – for example, the team need to strike the balance between encouraging young people to abide by lockdown restrictions, whilst maintaining positive relations with young people and ensuring that they do feel able to approach them for support. Young people have also expressed an interest in social action projects such as litter-picking or cleaning up graffiti and a youth-led community football tournament – whilst the team are keen to maintain the young people's interest in such areas, they also know that this will need to be balanced with ongoing restrictions in the months ahead.

Building Trust in the Community: As shared in the above summary, there has been a positive response to the youth workers within the community and young people have become more willing to interact over time. In our update in January 2021, the team reported that they had so far recorded 370 interactions with young people over the project.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Setting up data collection processes has been a key part of the early months of the Your Space project – and UK Youth and UCO are working closely together to work out the best ways to capture data. Many of the young people they work with are disengaged with many services and can be distrustful – thus, it is particularly important to consider what data is necessary to collect (e.g. which demographic data is necessary), and when is appropriate to collect it – to avoid jeopardising the relationships which the youth workers are building with young people and the wider community. They are currently trialling a very short three question survey and are also testing different methods of data collection – for instance, paper surveys vs. providing young people with an emailed link or QR code – to see which are most effective. The comprehensive process of review which the team have in place to explore the effectiveness of these methods will be highly valuable in developing strong evaluation processes for the project.

Concluding points and next steps for the Better Futures II evaluation

The six charities funded as part of Better Futures II have faced considerable adversity over the course of 2020. That all have managed to continue to provide much needed support within their communities – often through a massive overhaul of their recruitment, engagement and delivery methods – is a feat in itself. In addition, through the ways they have adapted and responded to Covid-19 and its impacts, many of the charities have been able to innovate and challenge themselves during this period. It seems likely that some learnings gained through the process will inform the work of the charities even as the external context begins to improve. However, the terrain remains challenging and uncertain, both in terms of the ongoing risk of restrictions impacting delivery but also regarding the longer-term impacts of the pandemic (both economic and social) and how they will affect the charities themselves and the communities they support. In this context, the continued support of the Clothworkers' Foundation as well as the flexibility shown is invaluable.

Looking to the next stage of the evaluation, we will be continuing to review progress with the charities over the coming months, alongside firming up the timings for the next round of formal interviews, likely to take place in Autumn 2021 to review the charities' second year of grant funding. In the case of UK Youth, we will be reviewing their first year of funding in summer 2021 and can either update this report to include these findings or include them within the overall second year report for all Better Futures II funded charities.

Some of the topics which will rise in importance as the evaluation moves into its second year include:

- **Delving deeper into impact:** With many of the projects at a relatively early stage this year, and facing disruption from the pandemic, this year's evaluation of impact has largely focused on those early signs that are beginning to emerge. In some cases, we have also necessarily focused on longer term impact where projects have been funded as a continuation or extension of an existing programme. In years two and three we aim to explore the impact of the projects in more detail, including more primary research with young people themselves about their own experiences of engaging with the projects and any differences they are making in their lives.
- **Understanding how pandemic learnings are being applied:** As discussed, we have been inspired by how many positive developments were reported by charities as a direct result of their experiences adapting their work over the course of 2020. Whilst adaptation and flexibility in delivery methods clearly remain necessary for the time being, it will be helpful to understand if and how the learnings from this process are being incorporated into charities' practices over the longer term.
- **Reviewing viability of objectives and timelines:** In the context of 2020, it has clearly been essential for the charities to sometimes take a more pragmatic approach to some of the plans they had originally set out. The practicalities of what can be delivered online, the different needs of young people during this time, and the external economic context, have all required realism about what can and should be prioritised. In spite of this, many of the charities have made strong strides towards meeting their objectives, albeit sometimes in a different way than initially intended. However, it will be important to consider in future research whether the ongoing challenges mean that objectives

remain, firstly, possible within the timeframe and, secondly, appropriate to the changing context in which they are operating.

- **Continuing to explore the value of long-term funding:** With one of the unique aspects of this funding stream being the Clothworkers' Foundation's decision to take a longer-term approach to support, we will be keen to explore the benefits of this in greater depth as the impact of this round of funding becomes clearer over the remaining two years. Initial indications around the value of continuity both for the charities themselves and the communities they serve seem to be a positive endorsement of the approach, and we hope to gather more insight in this area in future reports.

We look forward to reviewing both these discussion points and the wider findings from the report with the Clothworkers' Foundation team.

About nfpSynergy

nfpSynergy is a research consultancy that aims to provide the ideas, the insights and the information to help non-profits thrive.

We have over a decade of experience working exclusively with charities, helping them develop evidence-based strategies and get the best for their beneficiaries. The organisations we work with represent all sizes and areas of the sector and we have worked with four in five of the top 50 fundraising charities in the UK.

We run cost effective, syndicated tracking surveys of stakeholder attitudes towards charities and non-profit organisations. The audiences we reach include the general public, young people, journalists, politicians and health professionals. We also work with charities on bespoke projects, providing quantitative, qualitative and desk research services.

In addition, we work to benefit the wider sector by creating and distributing regular free reports, presentations and research on the issues that charities face.

2-6 Tenter Ground
Spitalfields
London E1 7NH
020 7426 8888

insight@nfpsynergy.net
twitter.com/nfpsynergy
facebook.com/nfpsynergy
linkedin.com/company/nfpsynergy

www.nfpsynergy.net