

HeadStart Local Evaluation

Year-end Report 2017/18

August 2018

There has been considerable progress in the development of HeadStart Kent during implementation in the initial areas. Stakeholders are aware of the programme and the dissemination of key messages has taken place both locally and countywide. However, further work may be needed to develop stakeholder's understanding of how their role contributes to the programme using clear and consistent messages, as well as improving the reach to certain groups of stakeholders.

The launch of the online Resilience Hub was noted as a particular success and tools accessed via the Hub are being utilised by schools and communities. The programme has reviewed, and adapted tools based on feedback and learning to ensure they continue to be regarded as effective resources and are utilised by the wide range of stakeholders.

The overarching deliverables in the implementation plan were achieved, however, detail was added, and slight adaptations were made as a result of learning and in reaction to arising situations. There were some challenges during the first stage of the programme, most notably relating to various aspects of commissioning process. Where there were challenges, lessons learnt were documented and mitigated where possible.

Many schools and community organisations are now directly benefitting from HeadStart Kent through training, funding or by delivering elements of the programme within their setting. The training has been well received by staff, with participants reporting it was effectively delivered, there was an improvement in knowledge following training and that the learning would be useful in their work with young people.

Young people are benefitting from universal support in the engaged HeadStart Kent schools and those potentially requiring support are being identified. Domains Based Conversations are viewed as a useful tool by staff and are being utilised in having conversations with young people around their emotional wellbeing and resilience, however, a limited number of follow up conversations have been recorded to evidence take up of support offered in HeadStart Kent schools and communities.

Young people have been involved in the development of the programme and have participated in numerous activities, including the local and County SpeakOut groups, which are established and well attended. The HeadStart Kent Participation Workers were described as valuable in facilitating the involvement and voice of young people in the programme and the flexibility afforded to them in their work is beneficial to the outcomes of young people.

The young people identified as requiring support from the programme have a less positive appraisal of their wellbeing and report more difficulties compared to all young people who took part in the Wellbeing Measurement Framework survey in HeadStart Kent schools last year, with older students reporting high levels of attention difficulties.

Although only a limited number of young people have so far completed support provided through programme interventions, in general those that have completed showed an improvement in their wellbeing and evidence collated in the form of case studies and quotes suggests elements of the programme are improving the resilience and wellbeing of young people.

Being at a relatively early stage in the programme, limited evidence to suggest a system-wide change in attitudes towards mental wellbeing among young people is expected, however, initial indications show the programme is making progress towards this ambition by influencing thinking and improving staff confidence through training.

Full report available by contacting:

Sarah Collins, HeadStart Kent Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
(sarah.collins@kent.gov.uk)



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