



The Wave Project - Cornwall and Devon

Project no. 10262971

Final report – June 2019



BACKGROUND TO THIS PROJECT

The Wave Project was granted 3 years funding from The National Lottery Community Fund (then the Big Lottery Fund) in 2015, to develop a sustainable surf therapy programme across Cornwall and North Devon. The charity had developed a model using surfing lessons run by trained volunteer mentors, which had been found to help vulnerable and isolated children and young people improve their confidence, self esteem and social relationships. Improvements to clients' emotional wellbeing often translated into more stable family and peer relationships, better school performance and more friendships, which in turn helped to buttress their mental health during traumatic and challenging life events.

The new project, called The Wave Project - Cornwall and North Devon, aimed to deliver surf therapy courses for 720 vulnerable children, and set up a sustainable surf club across the region for these children to participate in. We also aimed to train 225 of these children as volunteer surf mentors, who would go on to help other children learn to surf.

DELIVERY

We recruited four Project Coordinators to deliver the surf therapy programme – three working across Cornwall and one in North Devon. They set up surf therapy projects for 240 children a year between them, and evaluated the impact of a six-week surf therapy course on each child's emotional health and wellbeing. Each young person was referred by professionals from health, social or educational services in the region.

These referrers included:

- **NHS:** Child & Adolescent Mental Health Team, Cornwall NHS Partnership Trust, Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust
- **Schools:** Over 30 primary and secondary schools in Cornwall and North Devon
- **Cornwall Council services**, including Accessible Activities Programme, Early Help Service, Sensory Support Service;
- **Devon Council services**, including Adoption Services, Integrated Children's Service, Intensive Family Intervention Team, Social Services, Special Guardianship Team, Youth Inclusion Support and Youth Service.

Over three years from March 2015 to March 2018, these projects

- Delivered 72 surf therapy courses (54 in Cornwall and 18 in North Devon), supporting 720 children;
- Established sustainable surf clubs in St Ives, Gwithian, Newquay, Polzeath, Bude and Croyde with 241 active members;
- Restructured membership payments, moving away from cash payments and setting up direct debits
- Opened an office and surf shop in Newquay to contribute to the ongoing sustainability of the project
- Established branch offices in St Ives and Croyde

- Recruited 1,151 volunteers across the region – over three times as many as planned
- Commissioned and published an independent longitudinal evaluation of the project (attached).

KEY OUTCOMES

Our five outcomes set out in our contract were:

1. Young people suffering from extreme social isolation and/or mental health problems will have more confidence and self esteem;
2. Clients will feel calmer, more motivated and resilient;
3. Clients will feel less socially isolated and have better, stronger friendship networks;
4. Clients will improve their life skills, such as communication and teamwork, giving them better life chances;
5. The organisation will have increased its capabilities (knowledge/skills/confidence), acquired relevant supporting tools where/if appropriate and used these newly developed capabilities to deliver outcomes more effectively and sustainably to beneficiaries.

Over the course of the grant period we obtained **546 pre and post wellbeing questionnaires from participants** and **224 from parents / guardians**. Client group mean scores in each of the three years increased for confidence, calmness, social connections and life skills (see Appendix). We also produced, and delivered upon, a Building Capabilities report published in 2016 (see Appendix).

Comparing client pre and post questionnaires as a group mean across all projects revealed the following outcomes:

- 7.1% increase in confidence
- 7.4% increase in calmness
- 6.1 % increase in resilience
- 4.9% increase in social trust
- 5.7% increase in happiness and wellbeing
- 7.1% increase in positive functioning

These were group mean scores from all 546 children who returned pre and post surveys to us. The surveys used validated questions to avoid leading questions.

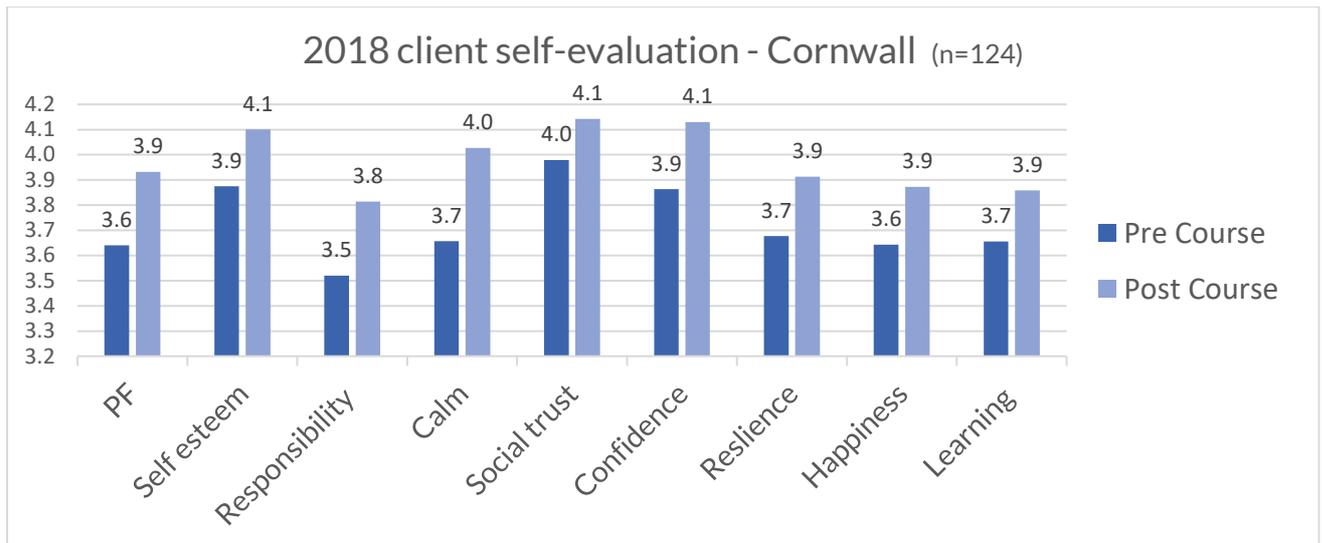


Fig 1: Summary of client self-evaluation in 2018

Attendance rates across all projects averaged at **79%**, where 100% would indicate every referred client attending every session.

88% of participants said they felt **safe or very safe** on their course. **Client satisfaction scores** (on a Yes / No questionnaire post course) were as follows:

After doing The Wave Project,	yes (n=546)
I feel better	95 %
I feel more happy	95 %
I feel fitter	90 %
I made new friends	89 %
I had fun	98 %

Parents and guardians were asked to complete a post course survey around two weeks after their child had completed a course. The aggregated results of these surveys were as follows:

After doing The Wave Project, my child	yes (n=224)
Felt more positive	95 %
Felt happier	99 %
Was more active	77 %
Made new friends	75 %
Had fun during the sessions	100 %
Demonstrated improved behaviour	57 %
Demonstrated better self-management	60 %
Demonstrated a more positive attitude	80 %
Showed more empathy	59 %
Showed better communication skills	61 %
Demonstrated a healthier lifestyle	68 %

FEEDBACK

Narrative feedback from parents also provides an insight in to the outcomes from the course. The vast majority of feedback of the course of this project was positive, both from parents, referres and participants. . This was collected from comment sections on the questionnaires, emails, letters and cards from the young people and parents / guardians.

Rudy has loved her time on TWP. She is totally pro-surfing now! We have noticed that she has had less social issues at school and has definitely been more confident and has higher self-esteem as a result. She seems to have 'grown-up' a lot and takes more responsibility for herself and is better at communicating in a positve way. She has also seemed calmer and more in control of her moods.

Parent, 2018

Over the 6 week course I noticed that Joe became more confident and at ease about wearing a wetsuit. When Joe was able to focus at surfing he really enjoyed catching the waves and gave him a feeling of great success. Due to his autism and not being able to stay on task for the whole session the staff were very understanding and supported Joe in playing on the beach, until he could go back in to the waves. Thank you

Parent, 2018

“His self image improved as a result of learning to surf. Jago has been making really good progress overall. We have ticked no to some boxes because it is hard to attribute it specifically to TWP. He has also been getting a lot of support at school.

Parent, 2018

Archie has been really happy he has been able to surf, stand up and catch waves! We have overcome barriers of getting him to an event. He doesn't want to go and then when he is with you surfing he loves it!

Parent, 2018

He discovered that he found the sound of water calming. He started asking to go and sit near water when stressed. You gave Charlie back his smile.

Parent, 2018

Positivity from Finley when he got back, telling me about what he had done. The more energy put in to him the bigger the impact but the bigger the fall if it doesn't continue. He has struggled with having 6 weeks in a row to it being less regular. It helped to know who the driver was as a family. Knowing we could come to watch him and being supervised constantly decreased the anxiety levels for us too as we live an anxious life with F. At TWP those that supported didn't see his disability.

Parent, 2018

FEEDBACK (cont)

Caitlin is very quiet and introverted- due to my son's autistic behaviour. Although she cried most weeks on arrival- she actually had a lovely time in the sea! She enjoyed telling us about her surfing. On the last week- NO tears and half a smile (progress). We are going to carry on surfing.

Parent, 2018

Her attitude to life was more positive- wants to be here now. She was happier to talk and in a much more positive tone + manner. Positive interactions - no anger towards family. Interest in life, family. She has shown less grief + anger about her father's death. She told me yesterday she feels like she has accepted it not <3 Thank you for all you have done for my daughter :) <3 :) <3 :) <3

Parent, 2018

We struggle to find an activity/ sport that Evelyn can go to and actually enjoy, she gets so worked up and upset about "the unknown". She has never stayed at a club. So, to see her stay throughout the session and see her smile meant the world to us! She loves surfing, and for the first time EVER has more self confidence and self esteem. Every one of the volunteers were so friendly! Thank you so much.

Parent, 2018

Positive straight after the sessions- moods not maintained in general. A definite intent in wanting to surf in the future, keen to be a volunteer. It's been a great experience. Fantastic staff + helpers. Brilliant project :)

Parent, 2018

It was a friendly environment and helped boost my confidence, lower me stress and make me happier

Participant, 2018

I like that we are a group. I have met new people and have found something I'm fairly good at.

Participant, 2018

Everybody is very friendly and motivating. I feel happy with Wave Project!

Participant, 2018



CASE STUDY – ISAAC MITCHELL

Fourteen year old Isaac Mitchell, from Cornwall, had been out of school for nine months due to severe anxiety when he started at The Wave Project in 2017. After completing his course, he went back to school, and went on to become a volunteer surf mentor, supporting other young people.

In his own words, he describes his experience:



“ I started the Wave Project six-week course back in late August 2017, following a 9 month period of Home Education, following a very hard time at school. I had some experience with surfing beforehand, but the Polzeath team helped me massively. Little did I know where I would be the following year...

I was instantly greeted warmly and felt like part of the group, I wasn't made to feel awkward or uncomfortable. The way of teaching was brilliant: learn one step, put it into practice in the sea and then come back to the beach for the next step. Within a few weeks, my surfing had come on enormously and I had learned new tips from excellent surf instructors and volunteers. In September, around half way through the course, I returned back to school (year 9) after a hard time and several months of home education.

If I hadn't had joined the Wave Project, there is no way I would be the more confident, less stressed and ultimately more happy person I am today. The Wave Project has boosted my confidence and after completing the 6-week course, I joined the surf club and I absolutely love going to it on Saturdays. I have got to meet new people who share the passion with me, and I have made friendships along the way, which is a big thing for me, as I never had friends in school and was a target for bullying.

In March 2018, 7 months after I first joined the Wave Project, I was given the incredible opportunity of volunteering. I immediately took up the offer and went on the training day, along with a few others my age who were doing the same. Despite the horrendous weather, we all loved it!

So 9 months down the line from the start, I am volunteering for this incredible charity and I am absolutely loving it. I love to share and teach my passion with the new kids, some I can relate to when I look back at myself last year. 12 months ago, I was a different person. The Wave Project has transformed me into someone new. I urge

anyone who is given the opportunity to go for it! You never know where it may take you..."

Isaac, age 14, May 2018

FINANCIAL REPORT 2018-19

Revenue	Total Costs		Funding from TNLCF		
	Planned	Actual	Received	Spent	Difference
Salaries, NI and pensions	103,129	103,129	103,129	97,345	-5,784
General running costs	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,063	63
Training	4,000	4,000	4,000	2,026	-1,974
Travel	14,000	14,000	14,000	10,963	-3,037
Sessional workers	18,000	18,000	18,000	35,131	17,131
Evaluation	4,000	4,000	4,000	-	-4,000
Revenue total	144,129	144,129	144,129	146,528	2,399
Overheads					
Staff	24,000	24,000	-	-	-
Accommodation	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,800	800
Utilities	3,000	3,000	3,000	1,063	-1,937
Overheads total	36,000	36,000	12,000	10,863	-1,137
Capital					
Office equipment	2,000	2,000	-	-	-
Vehicles	3,600	3,600	-	-	-
Surfboards and wetsuits	3,000	3,000	-	-	-
Capital total	8,600	8,600	-	-	-
Total for reporting period	188,729	188,729	156,129	157,391	1,262
Balance carried forward	385,035	385,035	319,835	321,660	1,825
Final total	573,764	573,764	475,964	479,051	3,087

FUTURE PLANS

The Wave Project in Cornwall continues to grow. We have obtained funding for further surf therapy course and continue to work with referral partners to explore the possibility of courses being spot-purchased directly by them.

The surf club currently has 241 active members who meet weekly for a surf session. We are moving towards a model where the surf club is run by volunteers – a system which became active at the end of this grant period in March 2019. So far, it is working well, with volunteers now running the sessions directly under the supervision of the Project Coordinator. It means the Coordinator is freer to develop their project and oversee the surf therapy courses.

We aim to continue running our surf therapy courses to reach as many young people as possible, continuing to develop our sustainability and ensuring projects are delivered to a high standard of effectiveness, with consistent, positive outcomes for young people.

