Young Start Evaluation

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from an evaluation assessing the impact of the Young Start programme, delivered by the Big Lottery Fund according to policy directions issued by the Scottish Government. Young Start distributes money from dormant bank and building society accounts and aims to create opportunities for children and young people to help realise their potential. Grants are awarded to third sector organisations working with children and young people aged 8 to 24 years and delivering projects that work towards one or more of the following outcomes:

Confident	Children and young people have more confidence and skills;
Healthy	Children and young people have better physical, mental and emotional health;
Connected	Younger and older generations are better connected and have more understanding and respect for each other;
Enterprising	Young people are better prepared for getting a job or starting a business.

This evaluation aimed to assess the impact of the Young Start programme. Specifically it sought to:
- Assess the success of Young Start in meeting its aim and outcomes;
- Identify the degree of young people involvement in projects, the use of local assets and its impact;
- Identify common learning, challenges and impact on organisations
- Investigate sustainability and preventative potential of Young Start projects.

Ultimately, recommendations were issued to contribute to the development of the Young Start programme and inform potential future evaluations of the programme.

Methodology

The evaluation adopted a multi-method approach to investigate completed Young Start projects. In summary, methods included:
- An analysis of Young Start funding management data held by the internal funding management system at the Big Lottery Fund with background information provided by annual reports.
- A review of 46 assessment reports, produced by funding officers to inform decision making, and 46 end of grant reports completed by grant holders at the end of projects.
- Telephone interviews with staff from 17 Young Start grantee organisations from across Scotland and project visits to three grantee organisations.
- Four detailed case studies were produced based on telephone interviews and project visits.

The approach faced a number of methodological challenges which limited the ability to generalise findings. These included challenges associated with the recent move in grant management systems, varying information provided in end of grant reports and a biased interview and project visit sample.

Findings

The following key findings emerged from the research.

- **Young Start grant-making:** Between the launch of Young Start and the evaluation start in November 2014, 393 grants were awarded totalling £16,647,428. This included 36 successful re-applications. The majority of projects delivered on the Confident outcome, the smallest number delivered on the Connected outcome. Projects most often targeted specific groups and catered for young people aged 14 to 19 years. They were less frequently directed at BME and LGBT children and young people and those at the extremes of the Young Start age range.

- **Impact of projects on young people:** Participating in Young Start projects had multiple and interconnected benefits for young people. Most frequently, projects improved confidence and contributed to building social networks. Participating in projects furthermore allowed young people to develop soft and hard skills, become more independent, feel respected, valued and more socially included, achieve qualifications and awards, build aspiration and improve employability. Furthermore, projects broke down intergenerational and territorial barriers, provided respite breaks, improved young people's mental health and increased levels of physical activity. Many young people progressed towards positive destinations which was a key element of several projects.

- **Young people involvement:** Projects involved young people in roles that extended beyond participation, although nature and extent of involvement varied. Consulting with young people and involving them as volunteers in project delivery were the most frequently mentioned methods of involvement. Young people in project or organisational management roles were less common.
  Involving young people beyond participation reinforced the positive benefits of projects, improving young people's confidence, developing their skills, and improving engagement and commitment to the project.

- **Use of local resources:** Local resources were used widely across projects. They comprised local partner organisations, staff members, volunteers and young participants, local places and facilities. Using resources from the community was vital for providing opportunities and activities, and instrumental in achieving positive outcomes for young people.

- **Project learning & impact on delivering organisations:** Young Start projects allowed organisations to learn about young people's wishes and additional needs and to adapt their services accordingly. This included reshaping delivery of Young Start projects as well as sourcing funding for additional services, thus contributing to organisational growth. Other organisations benefitted from building organisation capacity and profile.

- **Project sustainability:** Increasing numbers of organisations are re-applying to Young Start for continuation funding with 36 out of 47 re-applying organisations having received a second grant by November 2014. Interviews indicate that most organisations wished to continue Young Start projects and many had successfully applied to Young Start again. Few projects were sustained through other funding sources although no conclusions could be drawn due to the biased sample.

- **Preventative potential of projects:** Although not a requirement of the Young Start programme, we were interested in the preventative effect of projects. Most projects were considered to have worked preventatively, with projects for example providing positive, diversionary activities, developing skills, social connections and positive outlooks. For several projects it was recognised that projects intervened at a stage where problems were already existent. Difficulties were furthermore identified with measuring prevention as a project outcome and generally.

Implications

The findings have the following implications for the Young Start programme and potential future evaluations.

➢ Young Start projects delivered with differing frequency across the four programme outcomes and specific age and equality groups appeared to be less frequently represented among beneficiaries. As part of the ongoing development of the programme, Young Start should examine the relevance of programme outcomes as well as the representation of specific beneficiary groups across the Young Start portfolio.

➢ Benefits of Young Start projects went beyond *agreed* Young Start outcomes and included benefits not captured by Young Start outcomes. Young Start should recognise and capture these positive impacts of projects, particularly the importance of building social networks and promoting social integration.

➢ Involving young volunteers in project delivery was a positive aspect of many projects. Young Start should however promote the concept of young people involvement at a more senior level, particularly in the light of the current demand on Young Start which is likely to increase its significance for assessment.

➢ Success rates for organisations re-applying to Young Start were high and allowed many Young Start projects to be continued. However, high demand for Young Start funding and smaller funds available is decreasing the success rate and delivering organisations should be encouraged to investigate alternative funding streams. In addition, further research is required to establish the sustainability of Young Start projects which do not re-apply or were unsuccessful.

➢ The question around the preventative potential of Young Start projects encountered common difficulties associated with the concept of prevention, including unfamiliarity with thinking of projects in prevention terms and defining and measuring prevention. If Young Start wished to emphasise the programme's contribution to the Scottish Government's preventative approach, it should aim at clarifying the concept among applicants and grant holders.

➢ The evaluation adopted a multi-method approach to investigating the impact of the Young Start programme, which encountered significant challenges. Given the inadequacies of available data, Young Start should aim to improve monitoring data and revise the approach by including methods able to provide sound quantitative data and more representative interview samples. It will improve Young Start's position to advocate for the importance of investing dormant bank account funds in young people and of adopting approaches that put young people at the heart of projects and harness and develop local assets.

Introduction

1.1 Evaluation of the Young Start programme

In 2014 – 2015, the Big Lottery Fund carried out an evaluation of the Young Start programme in Scotland.

The evaluation aimed to learn from the investment in Young Start projects. Learning will be disseminated among Young Start grant holders and the wider sector and will contribute to the ongoing development of the Young Start programme.

The evaluation work was accomplished over a period of four months. This was the first evaluation of the Young Start programme.

1.2 Background to the Young Start programme

The Young Start programme was launched on 13 March 2012 to distribute Scotland's share of money from dormant accounts. It is delivered by the Big Lottery Fund according to policy directions issued by the Scottish Government.

By focusing funding from dormant bank accounts on children and young people, Young Start reflects the Scottish Government's move towards a preventative approach to addressing the diverse range of problems affecting Scottish communities.

Young Start aims to create opportunities for children and young people to help realise their potential by funding third sector organisations to deliver projects across Scotland working with children and young people aged 8 to 24 years. Funded projects meet one or more of the following outcomes:

Confident	Children and young people have more confidence and skills.
Healthy	Children and young people have better physical, mental and emotional health.
Connected	Younger and older generations are better connected and have more understanding and respect for each other.
Enterprising	Young people are better prepared for getting a job or starting a business.

In line with current policy and practice, Young Start furthermore encourages projects to actively involve children and young people in the design, delivery and management of projects and to take an asset based approach, making the most of local people, places and communities.

The Young Start Advisory Group, consisting of representatives from children and youth organisations and other key stakeholders, provides advice on issues, opportunities, current

policy and learning developments and promotes joint working of key organisations supporting children and young people in Scotland.

1.3   Evaluation aim and objectives

This evaluation aimed to assess the impact of the Young Start programme. Specific objectives of the evaluation included:

- To assess the success of the programme in meeting its aim and outcomes – whether funding created opportunities for young people to develop their potential, becoming more confident, skilled, healthy, connected and/or enterprising.
- To identify the degree to which young people were involved in planning, delivering and managing projects and to assess the impact thereof.
- To identify the degree to which projects were taking an asset based approach and to assess the impact thereof.

The evaluation furthermore investigated whether projects were likely to be sustainable and to what extent they were taking a preventative approach. It also explored whether Young Start projects encountered common challenges or identified common learning.

Ultimately, the value of the available resources for the purpose of evaluating the programme was assessed.

Methodology

2.1 Overview of methods

This section briefly describes the methodology selected to elicit learning from the Young Start programme. The research was carried out by a Young Start funding officer with research experience and skills seconded to the evaluation project for the period of November 2014 to February 2015. It included desk based research, data analysis, qualitative telephone interviews and project visits. In summary, this included:

- A review of Young Start funding management data held by the Funding Management System at the Big Lottery Fund with background information provided by annual reports.

- A review of 46 assessment reports by funding officers and 46 end of grant reports completed by grant holders.

- Telephone interviews with staff from 17 Young Start grantee organisations from across Scotland.

- Project visits to three grantee organisations.

- Four detailed case studies were produced based on telephone interviews and project visits.

2.2 Funding management data

❖ **Rationale**

Analysis of funding management data served to provide background information on the number and value of Young Start awards, the frequency of Young Start outcomes, information on beneficiaries and the number of reapplications. Information was sought for the time period between the start of the programme on 13 March 2012 and 1 November 2014, corresponding to the start of the research.

Information from the analysis of funding management data was a pre-requisite for the sample selection of assessment and end of grant reports, telephone interviews and project visits.

❖ **Data sources**

Data exported from the Big Lottery Fund's internal funding management system included application and grant management data as well as data on outcomes and beneficiaries. Recorded information on beneficiaries was self- reported by applicants at the application stage. Information was exported into MS Excel data files.

❖ **Analysis**

Data was analysed using MS Excel. Number and value of grants made in the described time period were calculated. Frequency of outcomes and average grant size for each outcome were identified. Furthermore it was calculated how frequently Young Start projects worked with specific beneficiary groups.

❖ **Challenge**

The change to a new funding system in 2013 had a number of consequences for the analysis of funding management data. In a few cases, information had not transferred correctly and in the initial phase of familiarisation with the system, processes were simplified and information therefore not always readily accessible. In addition, the system's reporting function had been developed for the management of funding and required adjustment for the purpose of the evaluation.

2.3 Assessment reports and End of Grant reports

❖ **Selection process**

Results from the analysis of funding management data indicated that since the beginning of Young Start, 54 organisations submitted end of grant reports upon the completion of projects and grants had been closed by funding officers. A further 7 end of grant reports were available for complete projects but grants still needed to be closed by funding officers. Young Start end of grant reports ask for information on 1) the difference the project has made to the people involved in it, 2) how the project made use of local people, places and other resources, and 3) beneficiary numbers.

Assessment reports, produced by funding officers to inform the decision making of the Young Start committee prior to the grant award, were sought to provide information on children and young people involvement in the project which is not asked for in end of grant reports.

❖ **Sample**

Forty-six end of grant reports were selected for review. End of grant reports were available in digital or printed format. Five projects that had been closed down early were excluded from the sample.

Assessment reports were exported from the funding management system for each of the 46 projects which had been selected for the end of grant review.

❖ **Analysis**

Assessment reports were reviewed and the nature and frequency of young people involvement were identified. Based on the premise that funding officers are including similar information in assessment reports, statistics are available.

Textual information from end of grant reports was reviewed and common outcomes and use of resources were identified. Anonymised quotes from end of grant reports were included in the report to exemplify themes.

❖ **Challenges**

The analysis of end of grant reports faced methodological challenges due to the variety of information provided in reports.

Responses provided by grantees in Young Start end of grant reports varied greatly in length and detail. While fulfilling Young Start reporting requirements associated with the grant award, the diversity of information did not allow comparing data across projects in a statistically representative way and therefore no information is provided on the frequency of identified themes.

Similarly, information on beneficiary numbers was excluded from the report as numbers requested in end of grant reports had not been provided or varied greatly in format, including providing ranges or indicating 'more than x' beneficiaries.

2.4   Telephone interviews and project visits

❖ **Selection**

Young Start projects were included in the sample for telephone interviews and project visits if they met a number of criteria:

- Grants had been closed on the funding management system or recorded project end dates indicated that projects had ended before November 1, 2014.

- Project end dates were in the recent past or projects had received continuation funding and were still ongoing.

- Grants had been closed without issue and had not been closed early.

- No other issues with projects had been identified by staff members, such as project contacts being unavailable or having left the organisation.

- Applications for continuation funding had not recently been rejected.

It was further decided that interviewed projects should be representative of the general distribution across Young Start outcomes and project locations.

Within those constraints, grants were randomly selected for inclusion in the sample.

❖ **Sample**

In total, 85 projects were eligible for inclusion in the sample. Through random number generation, a sample of 35 Young Start grantee organisations was invited to participate in a telephone interview or project visit for the evaluation. Twenty organisations responded to the invite (response rate of 57%). Interviews were conducted by telephone with 17 staff

members of Young Start grantee organisations and three projects were visited. Interviewees included project coordinators, fundraising managers and chief executive officers. In some cases interviewees had been in post for only part of the project.

The distribution across Young Start outcomes and project locations of participating projects can be seen in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Distribution of interviewed projects across outcomes (n=20)

Outcome	Confident	Healthy	Connected	Enterprising	More than one outcome
Number of projects	19	5	1	5	10

Table 2: Distribution of interviewed projects across project locations (n=20)

Project location	Number of projects[1]
Glasgow	4
Edinburgh	2
Dundee	1
Fife	2
North[2]	2
East[2]	4
West[2]	2
South[2]	3
Scotland wide	2

[1]The number of projects totals 22 as 2 projects worked across 2 project locations.

[2] North included Aberdeenshire, Angus, Eilean Siar, Highland, Moray, Shetland; East included Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Midlothian, Perth & Kinross, Stirling, West Lothian; West included Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire; and South included Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire

Projects in the interviewed sample included arts and media projects, volunteer and employability projects, advocacy and health promoting projects, and youth services targeted at young carers or young people with additional support needs.

❖ **Data collection**

Interviews followed a semi-structured format with flexibility allowing how relevant topics were approached. Interviewees were informed of the aim and process of the evaluation and were assured impartiality with regards to future grant applications and current grants held with the Big Lottery Fund. All interviews bar one were recorded on a recording device with the consent of participants.

Information was sought on the following themes:

- General information on the project work

- Development of the project

- Young people involvement in development, delivery and management of the project and key issues encountered in involving young people

- Use of resources in the local community and its impact on the project and organisation

- The impact of the project on young people, including the impact of young people involvement and young people's progression

- The preventative potential of projects

- Key learning emerging from the experience of delivering the project

- Organisational changes due to the project

- Sustainability of the project

Participants were either probed on those themes directly or themes emerged in the natural flow of the conversation.

Themes covered during telephone interviews and project visits were identical. However, project visits allowed going into more detail due to the length of the interview as well as exemplifying comments through project materials.

❖ **Data analysis**

Recorded interviews were revisited and detailed notes, including verbatim quotes, were made on each interview. Transcripts served to identify and code the most frequent and relevant responses. Quotes from project staff and brief case examples were used to exemplify themes. Organisation names were included in the report if consent had been given by interviewees verbally or electronically.

Four projects were selected for case studies to illustrate in greater detail projects meeting one of the four Young Start outcomes. Due to the high prevalence of the Confident outcome, case studies reported on the Confident outcome in addition to the Healthy, Connected, or Enterprising outcome.

❖ **Challenge**

The final interviewed sample of Young Start projects was biased. This was due, first, to our decision to exclude projects which had been unsuccessful in their application for continuation funding from the sample of potential interviewees. Second, interviewees self-selected with many agreeing to participate in the evaluation who had received a second Young Start grant in the past nine months to continue projects.

The selective sample limits the potential to generalise findings from interviews and project visits across the Young Starts portfolio as interviewed projects had been selected for continuation by both the organisations delivering them and the Young Start decision making committee.

2.5   Limitations and challenges of the approach

A significant limit of the selected approach is the lack of young people's involvement. Information on participants' outcomes was provided by project and organisational staff, rather than young people themselves. This approach was due to time and resource constraints and safeguarding considerations associated with involving (vulnerable) young people in evaluation work.

Similarly, the generalisability of the findings to the wider Young Start portfolio is limited by the restricted availability of quantitative information due to the challenges described in this section. This evaluation is therefore primarily qualitative. Future evaluation works should consider whether it is possible to select a methodology that is able to provide quantitative information.

Findings

3.1 Overview of Findings

The following section outlines findings from the evaluation work, bringing together results of the analysis of funding management data, end of grant and assessment reports, telephone interviews and project visits.

Part one sets the background to the Young Start programme and presents number and value of Young Start grants, frequency of outcomes and information on beneficiaries. The subsequent parts present findings on the project impact on young people, young people involvement, use of local assets, project learning and impact on delivering organisations, project sustainability and preventative potential of Young Start programmes.

Examples are provided in the form of brief descriptions of project activities and/ or quotes from interviewed project staff (hereafter referred to as project staff). Where available, extracts from end of grant reports are included to support themes.

3.2 Findings: Overview of Young Start grant making

❖ **Grants awarded**

Between the programme launch on 13 March 2012 and 1 November 2014, Young Start made 393 awards. The total award for Young Start grants (including grants revised during grant management) was £16,647,428. The average grant size for Young Start grants was £42,360.

During the time period, 54 grants had been closed as projects had come to an end. Three grants were withdrawn either by the Big Lottery Fund or the grant holder without having been paid and six grants were reduced during grant management due to early closure of projects or because additional match funding had been secured.

Thirty-six organisations had successfully re-applied to the Young Start programme to either continue their first project or for a new project with two organisations receiving Young Start funding for the third time. Eleven organisations re-applied for Young Start funding but were unsuccessful.

❖ **Outcomes**

The large majority of the 393 projects awarded Young Start funding delivered on the **Confident** outcome (see Figure 1). Twenty per cent delivered on the **Healthy** outcome, 17 per cent on the **Enterprising** outcome and the smallest number of projects delivered on the **Connected** outcome. Thirty-five per cent of projects were delivering on more than one outcome which most frequently was the Confident outcome in addition on one or more of the other outcomes.

Figure 1: Frequency of outcomes across all funded projects (n=393)
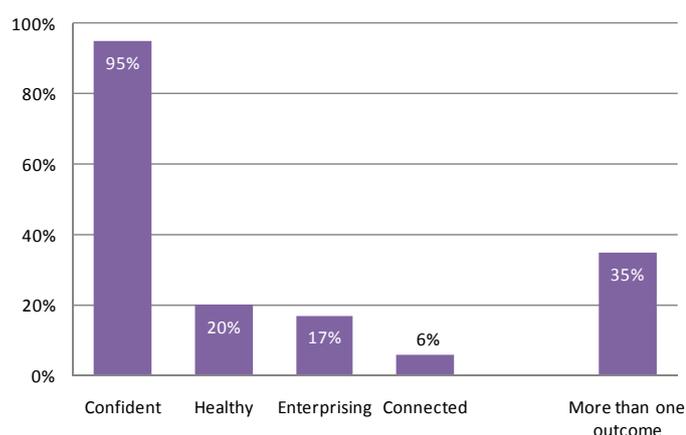
❖ Beneficiaries

At the application stage, organisations were asked to indicate whether their project was relevant to any equality group in particular. Most organisations indicated that their project did not focus on a specific equality group (81%) but rather aimed to be inclusive and open to everyone. The remaining projects focused on one or more of the equality groups displayed in table 3. Projects for people with disabilities were most common. Only few projects indicated targeting BME groups or LGBT communities specifically.

Table 3: Frequency of equality groups across all funded projects (n=393)

Equality group		Percentage of all funded projects (number of projects)
Disability		12.0%
Gender		
	Female	1.8%
	Male	1.0%
Ethnicity		
	Relevant to one or more specific ethnic groups	3.8%
Specific groups		
	BME	2.3%
	White	2.0%
Sexual orientation		
	Lesbians, gay men or bisexual people	1.8%
Religion		
	Muslim	0.3%

Information from telephone interviews and project visits provided further insight into target groups of Young Start projects that extended beyond equality monitoring information. Table 4 shows target groups of interviewed and visited projects by order of frequency. Two projects targeted more than one specific group.

Table 4: Frequency of target groups across interviewed projects (n=20)

Target group	Percentage of all interviewed projects (number of projects)
Open	25%
From areas high on the SIMD	20%
Additional support needs	15%
Young carers	10%
Mental/ emotional health	10%
Hard to reach	5%
Rural	5%
Minority ethnic	5%
Not in education, employment, training	5%
Homelessness experienced	5%
Care experienced	5%

Interview data also showed that Young Start projects catered most frequently for young people aged 14 to 19 years. Fewer projects involved children and young people at the extremes of the Young Start age range (see Figure 2), particularly at the lower end.

Figure 2: Participant age across interviewed projects (n=20)
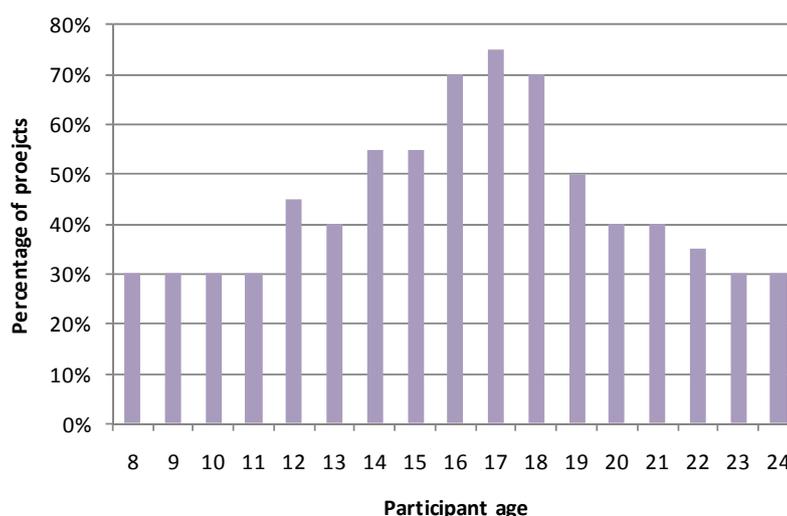
3.3   Findings: Impact of Young Start projects on Young People

End of grant reports and interviewees provided information on the difference Young Start projects had made to young people.

❖   Findings from End of grant reports

Responses indicated that projects had positively impacted on young people. This included a range of positive developments and outcomes which were frequently interlinked. The large majority of end of grant responses indicated that young people experienced more than one positive change. Outcomes for young people are shown in Table 5, with no information provided on their frequency due to the variance in responses.

Table 5: Outcomes for young people based on end of grant reports (n=46)

Increased confidence/ self-esteem	Independence
Hope for the future/ aspiration	Improved mental and physical health
Skill development (soft and hard skills)	Improved employability
Improved social networks/ relations	Improved understanding of specific issue
Better access to other services	Better access to information
Received qualifications/ awards (incl. SQA qualifications, Saltire Awards, Diana Award, Dynamic Youth Award, Achievement Awards)	
Move to positive destinations volunteering, work placements, education, employment, other opportunities)	

❖ **Findings from interviews and project visits**

Interviews and project visits provided information on the project impact on young people, methods for identifying impact and challenges associated with measuring impact.

■ **Project impact on young people**

All project staff felt that their project had a positive impact on young people. Reported positive outcomes for young people both met and went beyond Young Start outcomes. The large majority of projects benefitted young people in more than one way and outcomes were frequently interlinked.

Improved confidence Most frequently, project staff felt that participation in projects had improved young people's confidence. Visible signs of increased confidence were young people opening up to other participants in the course of the project, being able to present the results of their work in front of large audiences and engaging in activities they would not have tried before.

"Or when they are out in the field, or when they are helping with the kids, just to see the confidence in those young people, you can just really see the benefits with it." [Volunteer project working towards Confident outcome]

"None of our young people used to come into [youth club] on a general night. However many of the young people as their confidence has grown (...) within our club setting they come along on a general night when it's not the same mix, it's not the same support and there's other people there." [Inclusive youth project working towards the Confident and Healthy outcome]

"But I think what you can probably take out of this, a lot of the softer skills - the self-esteem, the confidence, all those things that they perhaps were lacking to start with, are more positive now."[Showcase the Street]

"Yes, I think you can see visually from some of the kids you saw six months ago, when they first came, quite withdrawn, quite quiet, difficult to engage with, not very engaging when it comes to the other kids in the group. And then six months later, when you look at them they are like a different child. They are busting, they've made another three or four friends at the project, they are a lot more confident, present a lot happier, not so withdrawn and isolated." [Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service]

Feeling valued/ respected A number of project staff furthermore mentioned as a benefit of the project that young people felt respected and valued. This was achieved through project activities and project delivery.

By supporting young people with disability to take part in community life and access the local youth club, an *inclusive youth project* helped participants to feel valued.

A *volunteer project* treated young volunteers as valuable members of an 'adult' staff team. Young people's feedback showed that they appreciated being treated like an adult and being awarded responsibility and trust.

Independence Young people became more independent (from parents/ carers) as a result of participating in a number of projects. Participants developed independent travel skills with support of project staff and were supported to exercise choice and control through the provision of accessible information.

Developing skills Young people developed numerous soft and hard skills across projects. This included communication, presentation and leadership skills, social and team work skills, life skills, employability and organisational skills and skills specific to the project work such as conservation, film production, theatre.

The following extract from an end of grant report describes the development of soft skills.

"The most overwhelming feedback was in the area of soft skills, where young people reported increased confidence and invaluable transferable skills like teamwork and improved communication, time keeping, being aware of how their actions can impact on others and the value of having good manners." [Media project delivering on the Confident outcome; end of grant report]

Building aspiration A significant minority of projects allowed young people to develop aspirations. This appeared to be particularly relevant for projects working with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including young people coming from areas high on the SIMD, having experienced homelessness or with experiences of living in care.

> "So whilst it might look as if we are just delivering music and performance, it's not about that. It's about making young people realise they belong, giving them the strength and self-belief and aspiration to know that you can actually have dreams and we can help you get there. Then it's not an unreasonable thing to want to have your own wee house or your own job or go to university or whatever else." [Centrestage Communities]

This was also highlighted in an end of grant report.

> "The biggest change in the young people is the sense of positivity towards their future: they now believe that they can achieve employment, a positive lifestyle and that they have a worth in society."[Physical activity project delivering on the Confident and Healthy outcomes; End of grant report]

Improved employability Project staff felt that projects contributed to young people's employability in a number of ways. Projects supported young people to develop confidence, aspiration and practical skills such as creating CVs and writing applications. A significant minority of projects provided young people with industry specific work experience or volunteering opportunities.

Young people in *Centrestage Communities* project were encouraged to think about and build aspiration for their own business model.

> "And they have the potential to develop their own business model because they started thinking about their own skills in a different way. Yes, they were singing, yes, they were dancing but that built their confidence and allowed us to have conversations about what else they were good at." [Centrestage Communities]

The following extract from an end of grant report indicates how newly acquired skills contributed to young people's employability.

> "Their volunteering experience not only helped the young people to manage their finances, but also provided them with invaluable employability skills including presentations and training, warehousing and customer relations." [Peer education project delivering on the Confident and Enterprising outcomes; End of grant report]

Qualifications/ awards In various projects, young people were able to achieve qualifications or awards, recognising their achievements and contributing to employability. These included Saltire Awards, Youth Achievement Awards and an SQA award. A number of projects also provided young people with opportunities to complete sections of the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Improved social networks Apart from confidence, one of the most significant benefits of projects was improved in social networks. Young people were able to form friendships that were frequently reported to extend to social contact outside the project. Forming new

friendships had a big impact on young people's wellbeing which was identified in interviews and end of grant reports.

> "I think one of the main things was the socialising aspect for the young people." [Universal Comedy]
>
> "So it was that friendship making, and the relationships that they've developed between the young people and the support that they've gained from that, that's really important for their wellbeing and mental health. It's like they really felt supported and they had people to share things with."[Universal Comedy]
>
> "Some of the young people were completely socially isolated and had no interaction with other young people and participation in (the project) gave them friendships and support to feel worthy of achievements and feel proud and share their positive experiences with others." [Mental health project delivering on the Confident outcome; End of grant report]

Apart from friendship networks, individual projects allowed young people to form romantic relationships and improve family relationships.

Improved social inclusion Various projects explicitly aimed to socially include marginalised or disadvantaged groups into community life or mainstream services. This included challenging participants' perceptions of not belonging and not being able to access 'ordinary' experiences.

Young people participating in *Centrestage Communities* and *Glasgow Media Access Trust*'s projects accessed community venues and facilities which they had not visited before as they did not feel they belonged. With the support of project staff, young participants started to feel comfortable in venues and facilities and accessed them again outwith the project.

Other projects provided space for young people who 'don't fit the box' to participate in projects.

*Terrifically Adventurous Youth Theatre Association (*hereafter *TAYTA)* included young people with additional support needs in their project and was able to provide them with room for creativity and with the flexibility they required.

Improved social cohesion Several project staff members felt that their project had broken down barriers and created understanding by bringing together different groups to work on projects or engaging in activities that challenged stereotypes. This included for instance territorial and intergenerational barriers as well as stereotypes associated with having a disability.

> "We know sort of some have additional needs, (because we work with them through the additional needs unit), and some don't, some are actually quite privileged. And all of those young people have come together as volunteers and just that social interaction and friendships and common interest through volunteering or the outdoors (...) has been a really positive outcome for them. Just building their social skills with each other and building new friendships."[Volunteer project working towards Confident outcome]

Respite Several projects provided young people with respite from their usual environments.

The *Broomhouse Centre* and *Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service* allowed children and young people time away from their caring responsibilities and try out activities which they would not had the possibility to engage in otherwise.

Similarly, *Tweeddale Youth Action* and *YouthBank Scotland* project staff stated that projects provided young participants from chaotic backgrounds with distraction and positive activities and temporarily removed them from their normal circumstances.

Other A smaller number of project staff mentioned that Young Start projects had the following benefits for young participants:

- *Improved mental health and wellbeing*: Projects contributed to improving young people's mental health and wellbeing particularly where young people already presented with issues of mental health or had additional support needs. Young people's mental health and wellbeing improved by young people building up social networks or by receiving dedicated one-to-one support during which mental health issues were addressed.

- *Building resilience*: Projects helped young people to build resilience in the face of barriers they were experiencing or could experience in the future.

- *Increased fitness levels*: One project focused on providing young people with opportunities to become engaged in physical activity and highlighted that participants continued their engagement following the end of the project.

> "What it created was a pool of people who weren't doing anything at a time who are now positively engaged in activity."[Showcase the Street]

Young people's progression Following the project, many young people were reported to have progressed towards positive destinations. This included moving into employment, going into further education, re-engaging with education, taking up volunteering opportunities, work placements or internships, as well as becoming involved in different community based projects.

Young people's progression was described pointedly in one end of grant report.

"All participants have chosen to either remain in secondary education, start a college course or full time training course or go into employment. This from a cohort of young people in danger of achieving little other than unemployment, substance addiction, mental health issues and criminality." Mentoring project delivering on the Confident and Enterprising outcomes [End of grant report]

Progression from the service was a key part for several projects and young people were frequently supported into accessing other opportunities.

"As part of the two week summer school, it's actually about flagging up other things that are coming up, trying to get them to apply for other things and to engage them in other things that are coming up." [Glasgow Media Access Trust]

For one project, it was however recognised that for young people with chaotic lifestyles, stabilisation was equally a positive and desirable outcome.

■ **Information on impact**

Information on the impact of projects on young people came from a variety of sources. First, information on the difference projects had made came from young people themselves, through formal consultation or informal comments by young people. In several projects, young people underwent an assessment, agreed personal outcomes and progression was monitored at regular intervals. Additional information was available through project staff who observed visible changes in participants throughout the course of the project. Further feedback on young people's development came from parents, carers and/ or staff members from partner organisations working with young participants. A small number of projects were formally evaluated or continuously operated from within an evaluation framework.

■ **Long term impact**

In the majority, project staff identified the short term impact of projects. Only limited information was available on the long term impact of projects which is in part due to the fact that the majority of projects had only finished within six months of the interview.

As an exception, *LINK East Fife Mental Health* was able to provide information on young people's progression after exiting the service due to an evaluation of the service that included contacting previous service users.

"It was lovely to reconnect with young people who had moved on and hear where they were now. That people had moved on who came to us really, really struggling, holding a range of complex needs, that were out in university or ... a lot of them are inspired to work in the care sector you know because they've had a difficult time and they then want to be the person that can support somebody through it." [LINK East Fife Mental Health]

Move On project staff highlighted the difficulty of measuring whether positive change was sustainable long term as no or very limited information on young participant's progression was available once they left the service. Innovative ways of tracking longer term outcomes were therefore being developed to provide insight into young people's situation after one or two years of leaving the service.

3.4   Findings: Young People Involvement

Information on young people involvement in the development, delivery and management of projects was available from assessment reports, interviews and project visits.

❖   **Findings from assessment reports**

Assessment reports provided insight into planned and actual involvement of young people at the application stage. Results showed that young people were involved or planned to be involved in every aspect of the project, however to varying degrees (see Figure 3) .

Figure 3: Common methods for young people involvement identified in assessment reports (n=46)
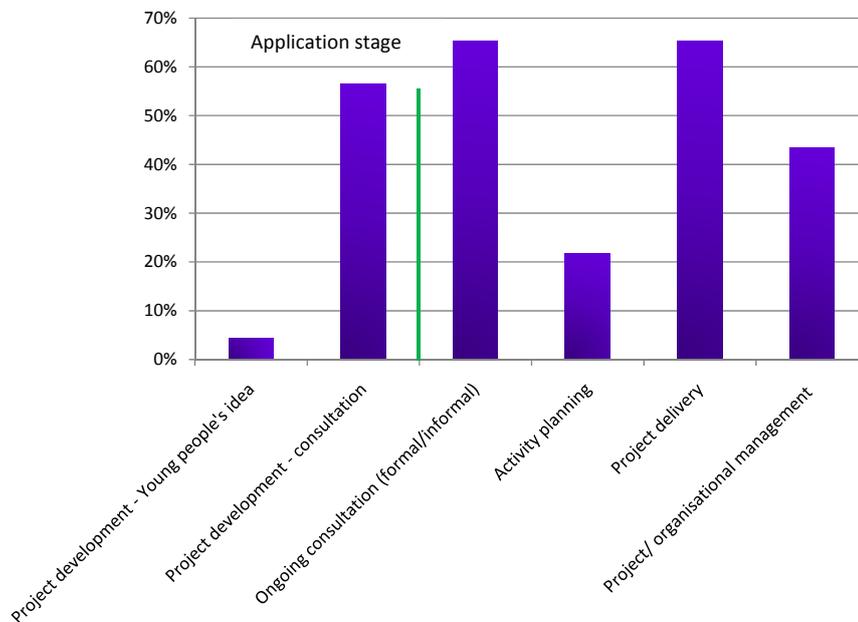
Most frequently, young people were involved in ongoing project development through formal or informal consultation and in project delivery. In the majority, young people delivered projects as volunteers who buddied, peer mentored or befriended other participants.

Young people involvement in either project or organisational management was less common but nonetheless mentioned by a significant minority. Fifty per cent of organisations who stated that young people would be involved in management already had established structures in place by having young people on management boards, involved in youth management teams, steering groups or roles such as staff recruitment. Most other

organisations were planning to develop young people involvement in management as part of the Young Start project.

❖ **Findings from interviews and project visits**

Responses from project staff provided in depth information on the nature and impact of young people's involvement in the project and mirrored the findings resulting from the analysis of assessment reports.

■ **Developing the project idea**

Several projects had been developed following demand from young people for certain opportunities or activities.

YouthBank Scotland secured resources to bring young people involved in local youth banks together in a national forum after they expressed the desire for development and networking opportunities in the form of a forum.

> "They said they wanted a national forum and they told us how they wanted it to work." [YouthBank Scotland]

■ **Ongoing project development / activity planning**

In most projects, participants were consulted on an ongoing basis to inform the ongoing development of projects. This included both formal and informal feedback. Formal feedback was sought for instance through evaluation forms after each activity, post-it evaluations, or through creative activities when working with younger children. Some projects also consulted with parents, carers, or other project workers where appropriate.

In various projects, children and young people were directly consulted on which activities/ workshops they would like to take part in, invited to decide on the format of activities.

According to project staff, involvement of young people in the continuous development had a variety of positive benefits for young people and the project. This included increased confidence, greater ownership and commitment to the project, improved communication skills, greater enjoyment and a more varied and innovative programme.

> "It gives them a group that they are coming to that is giving them activities that they are going to enjoy purely because they've picked what they want to do." [Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service]
>
> "If you are imposing stuff on them as opposed to asking them what they want, then they stop coming." [Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service]

"Our drama practitioner doesn't tend to put ideas into their heads, it's all about what do the young people want to work on. And they always come up with something and that's always an issue that matters to them. So it's really good for helping them develop their understanding of different things but also develop their communication skill around them but with people from all age groups." [TAYTA]

"You know I think when people were coming along first they were maybe a bit shy and all the rest of it but they seemed to really quickly grasp the fact that they were kind of in charge of what was going to happen. And they really embrace that because I think that was something they weren't used to. They are kind of used to being told that they can't do this and they can't do that. So to have the freedom to actually lead the project themselves was really empowering." [Universal Comedy]

While the majority of project staff agreed that listening to what young people wanted was a critical aspect of the project, a few staff also drew attention to the necessity of balancing young people involvement with staff expertise.

Centrestage Communities highlighted that, while young people's enjoyment came first, staff members needed to be able to suggest and realise new activities in order to provide young people with experiences that went beyond what they already knew.

"It's getting that balance between what we feel and know with the experience behind us as teachers and leaders will work with that particular group of young folks, and also allowing them to have their input as to the direction of travel." [Centrestage Communities]

■ **Project delivery**

A substantial number of projects made use of young volunteers to deliver projects. Young people took on roles as mentors, peer leaders, or delivered activities to other groups, including children and older people. A number of projects focussed specifically on developing young people as volunteers or providing them with volunteering opportunities. Other projects involved young volunteers as secondary beneficiaries who supported delivery to primary beneficiaries including younger children, young people with additional support needs or mental health problems.

The impact of young people involvement in project delivery was described as improved confidence, empowerment, developing ownership and particular skills, as well as developing a sense of responsibility. Involving young volunteers also led to a more diverse programme of activities as young people were able to develop and deliver new activities.

"And the thing is as well, youngsters like that come in with new fresh ideas that perhaps don't know of, and they've also got new interests and skills that perhaps we haven't got. It's a kind of win-win situation." [Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service]

Frequently young participants who had completed the project continued their involvement with the organisation and/ or project as volunteers themselves, training as peer mentors to support the next generation of service users. These young volunteers were considered well placed to support new groups of young people due to their experience and progression.

> "We got sort of peer leaders that have been through the system and sort of come out the other side, positive now, they got some drive, they got some ambition, they are really well placed to support the younger ones now."[Tweeddale Youth Action]
>
> "We've had a number of young people going on to become volunteers because they say they felt the difference it made having that support to them that they want to give it back." [LINK East Fife Mental Health]

■ **Management**

A smaller number of organisations involved young people in project and/or organisational management. This included having young people on management committees, establishing Youth Management Teams to inform service development, setting up a project steering group including young people of the first generation of service users and involving young people in staff recruitment.

Benefits of involving young people in management roles were identified as improved confidence, building skills associated with the management role such as presentation or fundraising skills.

Young people participating in *Central Advocacy Partners*' project also significantly influenced the commitment and enthusiasm of the management board by joining as board members (see Confident case study).

■ **Challenges in young people involvement**

The majority of projects reported no major challenges in involving young people in the development, delivery and management of projects. Young people were keen to input and feedback on project activities. In a few cases, volunteer recruitment and engagement approaches were revised to respond to challenges.

An *inclusive youth project* was faced with declining enthusiasm among volunteer buddies and acknowledged that by providing young volunteers with greater responsibilities their commitment to the project improved.

> "What we found as time progressed and working with the buddies that allowing them to organise the activities and to actually come in and have a programme where it's them and not the youth workers or adult volunteers, it's them running it that very much keeps their interest and they feel as if they have a part to play more so." [Inclusive youth project working towards the Confident and Healthy outcome]

Move On staff acknowledged that volunteering as peer educators to co-deliver workshops can be intimidating for young people and is currently looking into amending this strand of the project to encourage more young people to become peer educators.

Where challenges were mentioned, they most frequently concerned young people involvement in management positions.

Challenges in recruiting young people for management positions were encountered by *Tweeddale Youth Action* and building enthusiasm for the role among young people was a crucial and continuous aspect of the project.

Glasgow Media Access Trust noted that the training and support required by young people on management teams required significant time and resource.

Most projects involving young people in management roles drew attention to the many commitments of young people and transitory nature of their involvement. Frequently, organisations had to work around young people's exam schedules and holiday periods. Similarly, young people were often moving on quickly, such as into employment or further education, which limited their ability to remain involved in (time intensive) management roles.

3.5   Findings: Use of local assets

End of grant reports, interviews and project visits provided insight into how projects had taken an asset based approach, namely how they made use of people, places and other resources in the community.

❖   Findings from End of grant reports

All projects indicated in end of grant reports that they had made use of existing local resources in some way. Use of local assets was classed into a variety of themes which can be observed in Table 6. Due to the diversity of information provided in end of grant reports, no detail on the frequency of themes is provided.

Table 6: Use of local assets based on end of grant reports (n=46)

Use of outside/ leisure facilities/ local businesses	Partners delivering activities/ providing information
Recruitment through partners	Signposting/ pathway creation to other activities/ organisations
Use of young volunteers	Use of adult volunteers
Partners providing work or volunteer placements, employability training	
Skill sharing and networking among organisations/ agencies	
Delivery at local facilities, e.g. educational institutions or community centres	
Link to local community life through volunteering/ celebrations/ performances	

❖ **Findings from interviews and project visits**

Responses from interviews and project visits reflected a similar use of resources as identified in end of grant reports. In depth information on the nature and impact is provided for local partner organisations, people and places and facilities.

■ **Partners**

All projects relied on partnerships with local organisations and agencies for a variety of reasons.

Recruitment Most organisations liaised with partner organisation to recruit young participants for projects. This ranged from leaving flyers with children at primary or high schools to receiving referrals from statutory and voluntary partners. Partner organisations and agencies were frequently seen as being best placed to identify young people who would benefit from projects, particularly where those were marginalised or isolated, and facilitated access to greater numbers of potential participants.

> "The wider the group you work with the more likelihood to get young people involved who perhaps aren't involved or haven't been involved for quite some time." [Showcase the Street]

Partner's role in recruitment also extended to recruiting volunteers. An *inclusive youth project* liaised with a local school to recruit young volunteers as buddies and was able to tap into existing award schemes within the school that included volunteering.

Creating opportunities Many projects needed partners to create opportunities for young participants to volunteer, gain work experience or widen the range of activities young people were able to try out.

Volunteer Centre Midlothian developed partnerships with schools and sheltered housing complexes which were essential for allowing young volunteers to support activities for children and older people. *ICE Store* as well as an *inclusive youth project* partnered with local businesses to provide young people with industry specific work experience.

> "I think the fact that we all work together (...) to provide the opportunities for the young people is the general consequence that there's more opportunities for the young people." [Inclusive youth project working towards the Confident and Healthy outcome]

TAYTA's partnerships allowed young participants to be part of a variety of drama projects which helped them to develop their skills and confidence. *Ocean Youth Trust*'s young volunteers were able to support sessions with schools and voluntary organisations accessing the organisation's projects.

Opportunities were also created by sharing resources among organisations or through in kind support of agencies or organisations.

Tweeddale Youth Action partnered with a local charity which provided financial support for transport and thus made the project accessible for young people from rural areas. *Universal Comedy*'s local authority partner provided in kind support through venues, transport and staff which allowed the project to be realised. *YouthBank Scotland* shared resources with their partners which allowed them to offer more opportunities to young people than expected.

> "In so many ways, for Y3I, for this project, it's been the network of people associated to it that has enabled us to do so much more than we could even have thought at the beginning. We've achieved more, we've done more because people were saying let's share resources to get us there so that brings down that cost and that can be used for something else."(YouthBank Scotland)

Project delivery Opportunities for new experiences and learning were also created by partner organisations delivering activities, advice or information sessions.

Community organisations and local businesses delivered creative and physical activities for young carers participating in projects run by *Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service* and the *Broomhouse Centre*.

> "We try to keep it as interesting and different as possible for the children and that does involve using a lot of outside agencies." [Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service]

Central Advocacy Partners' groups of young people invited local organisations and agencies to provide them with information, advice and workshops on a range of issues they had identified as relevant to them, including internet safety and healthy eating.

Other Partners were a valuable resource for a number of other reasons. Delivering organisations sign-posted or referred young people to (specialist) organisations or agencies where specific support was required. Interagency working occurred where young people were particularly vulnerable.

An *inclusive youth project* was actively engaged with the local authority's social service and fed into the support plan for a young person in care.

Play Therapy Base worked with other organisations and agencies in contact with participating children and young people in their project to ensure the success of their therapeutic intervention.

> "That's (multi-agency working) definitely the way we work because children aren't ever in isolation. They need all those people around them to make things change." [Play Therapy Base]

■ **People**

Most projects benefitted from the assets of people both directly associated with the project and from the community.

Staff Staff members, including employed, sessional staff and interns, were frequently cited as invaluable resources for the project. Staff members brought talents, interests and connections which were necessary to provide opportunities to young people.

Tweeddale Youth Action used the skills and connections of staff to allow young people to access work experience in specific industries such as catering, fashion or sound engineering.

> "Just sort of using the contacts that we got in the community, using the resource that we as staff have here to do stuff, just gives us access to opportunities that just don't exist as a generic opportunity, as a general opportunity out there." [Tweeddale Youth Action]

Several young people earned work experience at the media company led by the lead practitioner of *TAYTA*'s project. *YouthBank Scotland* explored staff talents and interests not associated with work to see how they might be used for their project, such as outdoor learning or deejaying.

Projects furthermore identified the benefit of having young staff members or interns supporting the project. Young staff was seen to inspire young participants and present positive role models for them.

TAYTA's young drama practitioner was able to tell participants about his recently completed arts degree and to advise them on a potential career in this area. *Glasgow Media Access Trust*'s project participants were supported by a young intern who recently started his media education at a renown institution. Getting to know the intern made the career choice more achievable.

Volunteers Many projects made use of local volunteers, including young and adult volunteers. Most young volunteers supported projects as mentors, peer leaders or by providing activities (see Young People Involvement in Project Delivery).

Adult volunteers took a variety of roles across projects:

- *Children's Summer Camp*'s project was fully led by volunteers through the voluntary nature of the organisation.

- Young and adult volunteers befriended young people with mental health issues who accessed *LINK East Fife Mental Health*.

- *Glasgow Media Access Trust*'s summer school received mentoring support from a voluntary filmmaker and producer of the Commonwealth Games Team.

- *Central Advocacy Partners* recruited volunteer drivers to allow young people from rural areas to access the project.

- *Ocean Youth Trust*'s adult volunteers provided young participants with volunteer training.

Projects also acknowledged the value of volunteers in end of grant reports.

> "During the course of the project we have had several community members come on board and train as volunteer and they have been vital in helping staff activities and trips and outings." Youth project delivering on the Confident outcome [End of grant report]
>
> "Local volunteers were instrumental in taking the project forward, particularly in X where a young volunteer who particularly well connected with her local community, took on the role of project leader and encouraged others to get involved." Arts project delivering on the Confident and Connected outcome [End of grant report]

Participants Participants were valuable assets for projects in themselves. Young people engaging in group work provided their peers with support, confidence and inspiration.

Participants in *Universal Comedy*'s project were reported to have gained confidence to contribute to comedy group sessions from being part of the group, hearing other young participants voice their ideas and seeing those ideas being acted upon.

> "Meeting other people in a similar situation was really, really important for them."
> [Universal Comedy]

YouthBank Scotland staff felt that young people were more willing to discuss difficulties or issues if peers had mentioned similar experiences and had dealt with them successfully. Additionally, young members of youth banks were able to inspire their peers by sharing experiences and ideas.

> "It's about young people seeing other young people affecting change." [YouthBank Scotland]

Many projects involved or planned to involve young people who had completed the project by, for instance, having them take an active role in recruiting the next generation of participants. For many others, young people progressed into volunteering roles becoming peer leaders, mentors or befrienders. (see Young People Involvement in Project Delivery)

■ **Places and facilities**

The majority of projects made use of local places and community facilities. Various projects took place entirely in the community and used community centres or educational

institutions to deliver projects. Other projects accessed community facilities or venues for specific activities and events.

Taking projects out into the community was crucial for project delivery and for achieving positive outcomes for young people. The following benefits were mentioned by project staff:

Accessibility Delivering projects in a local facility made projects more accessible for participants.

Play Therapy Base's therapy sessions took place in a community centre and schools in proximity to participants' locations as the organisation's office space was outwith the boundaries of delivery locations.

Creating Opportunities Various projects made use of local venues and facilities to provide young people with new experiences as well as to facilitate engagement with further opportunities by making young participants aware of their existence.

The *Broomhouse Centre* accessed local sports facilities to allow young carers to try out different types of sports, such as ice skating at the local ice ring. *Children's Summer Camp* held preparation meetings for their summer camp at the local community centre which led to young people engaging with other projects at the centre which they did not know about prior to participating in the project.

> "And then they come to the community centre for their meetings, and then 'I didn't know this was here', 'I didn't know this was on' before you know it they are back in the community centre every single day." [Children's Summer Camp]

The benefit of taking projects to venues was also recognised in an end of grant report.

> "Many participants indicated they didn't know the venues where we organised activities even existed which highlighted to staff the importance of reconnecting to local areas." Youth project delivering on the Confident, Healthy and Enterprising outcomes [End of grant report]

Improving confidence Several projects introduced young people to community venues and facilities with the aim of improving young people's confidence. This included improving confidence by allowing young people to access certain experiences or accompanying them to places they were reluctant to access on their own.

Participants of *Central Advocacy Partners*' project engaged in 'ordinary' activities in the community, such as visits to a pub and nightclub, which was a significant achievement for them as they had not been able to access comparable experiences before.

Centrestage Communities brought young project participants to venues and places they did not access prior to participating in the project. Therefore, activities included performing in the town centre and visiting the local theatre and Glasgow.

> "And it's showing them very gently there's a world outside this wee community and they are part of their life solution. They don't need to wait to be invited, they can actually go themselves." [Centrestage Communities]

Social inclusion A crucial part of building young people's confidence was to challenge their feelings of social exclusion. Project staff mentioned that young people did not access certain opportunities in the community as they did not feel they belonged or were entitled to make use of them.

Move On's peer educators supported workshops in schools and for voluntary sector organisations as well as accessing leisure centres as part of Friday activity sessions to challenge their feelings of not belonging and create an identity of valuable members of the community.

> "A lot of what we do is about trying to connect people into their community and make them feel part of what's going on."[Move On]

Projects also supported selected project participants into volunteering in the community which allowed them to become active citizens.

Encouraging future engagement with opportunities Making use of local venues and facilities and improving young people's confidence and sense of inclusion served to build young people's readiness to access places again outwith the project.

Glasgow Media Access Trust made young people aware of other opportunities at their local arts hub and used the Panopticon and Glasgow Film Theatre for project activities. Through their presence at the project, young people developed confidence and ownership of these places and subsequently accessed them again.

> "I think that's the main benefit, it's about the people that they meet and the places that they go." [Glasgow Media Access Trust]

Social cohesion Finally, using community venues and places assisted improving social cohesion by challenging stereotypes and territorial boundaries.

Central Advocacy Partners project participant's visibility in the community allowed preconceptions of young people with disabilities to be challenged. *Centrestage Communities* broke down territorial boundaries by taking young people into areas distinct from their own communities.

3.6   Findings: Learning from projects

During interviews and project visits, project staff were asked to identify what they had learned from delivering Young Start projects, including any issues that might have been encountered.

❖ **Project delivery**

As projects progressed, various organisations identified the need to revise delivery models to be able to have the most impact on young people. Changes to the delivery occurred in response to young peoples' wishes regarding project activities, recognition that young people had additional needs or that needs varied from initial needs assessments.

- In the early stages of project delivery, *Tweeddale Youth Action* recognised young people's difficulty of engaging in employability focused group work and changed to providing one-to-one support and mentoring to prepare young people for the group environment. The revised model was accompanied by the realisation that young people's primary needs differed from initial understandings.

  > "I suppose at the start of the project we thought that one of the biggest issues was young people not having the tools for employability such as CVs. But as the project's gone on, we found that there's a far greater need really around aspiration and confidence."[Tweeddale Youth Action]

- *Showcase the Street* changed their delivery model in the second year of their grant as young people struggled to achieve dance qualifications through a structured and demanding dance programme. The new informal structure of crew based street dance was found to be more effective in sustaining young people's engagement.

- *Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service* split a large young carers group into two age groups to be able to provide age appropriate activities and to manage the large number of participants safely.

- When realising that many young participants presented with a range of additional needs around confidence, mental health, employment and education, the *Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations* provided additional one-to-one support to project participants.

- *YouthBank Scotland* discovered at the delivery stage that a high number of young participants presented with additional support needs and consequently adapted activities and materials and provided extra support to young people.

❖ **Budget and travel**

A few projects were felt to be working to tight budgets. This was the case for example when projects extended their remit to respond to newly identified needs that had not been included in the original funding application.

A frequently mentioned cost factor was travel expenses for both staff and participants. Travel costs had either not been included in original calculations or had been underestimated. Underestimated travel costs were common for projects working nationally, working with children too young to access public transport on their own or projects catering for young people from rural communities.

To reduce travel costs, one project recruited volunteers who transported young participants from rural locations to the project.

3.7   Findings: Project impact on organisations

The evidence gathered through the interviews showed that Young Start projects impacted on delivering organisations in a number of significant ways.

❖ Organisational growth and development

Reponses showed that Young Start projects helped organisational growth and development.

Play Therapy Base Co-operative had been fairly new at the point of receiving the Young Start grant. The grant allowed the organisation to deliver its first project of filial therapy and increased the organisation's confidence and capacity.

> "It's actually been a big part of us growing as an organisation. Because when we first got funding, it was almost like they were giving us the chance because we were quite new at that point. That gave us a huge boost to our confidence. And then we were able to offer a service out there which people hadn't been able to afford to have." [Play Therapy Base Co-operative]

Centrestage Communities was able to consolidate its delivery model used in the Young Start project and successfully secured funding to deliver the project in another location as well as funding to sustain the first group of participants.

> "But the important thing, because Young Start was 2 years, it gave us time to consolidate the model, to develop the model and find ways to sustain it beyond that 2 year period. Because it's so, so important that you don't just show these kids something amazing and something they can really do and then take it away." [Centrestage Communities]

For a number of organisations, Young Start projects helped to unearth further needs and led to organisations sourcing funding for additional staff or staff hours to offer required services.

An *inclusive youth project* was able to secure funding for additional youth work staff to provide support addressing individual young people's social and developmental needs which were identified during delivery of the Young Start project. The *Broomhouse Centre* similarly recognised that more holistic support of young carers and their families had the potential to alleviate the weight of caring responsibilities and secured additional funding for a dedicated support worker. By building trusting relationships with young participants and their families, *Centrestage Communities* identified high levels of poverty and associated needs

among families. The learning allowed the organisation to adjust other project work and expand its services to include cooking, life skills and financial inclusion classes.

❖ **Organisational capacity**

In some cases, Young Start projects helped to build organisational capacity.

Ocean Youth Trust's volunteer development project allowed the organisation to increase the number of fully trained volunteers supporting the delivery of activities as well as becoming an accredited SQA training centre, opening up the opportunity for further projects.

> "Now that we are an SQA training centre that opens the door for us to deliver lots more different kinds of qualifications in the future." [Ocean Youth Trust]

YouthBank Scotland reshaped after creating an active network of local youth banks in the form of a national forum and trained young ambassadors to be able to support youth banks and promote young people involvement locally and nationally. Both were influential in shaping the organisation's new strategic plan.

> "I think in many ways the fact that we had Y3I, it's been transformative for us. We were a very new organisation who had a clear idea about what we wanted to do and an incline about how we wanted to get there. The national forum and the ambassadors programme have given us the how we get there as well as given us a whole range of new aspirations and new challenges and also new people." [YouthBank Scotland]

Universal Comedy's comedy tutors were able to develop their skills in working with young people with learning disabilities.

❖ **Organisational profile**

For a small number of organisations, Young Start projects helped to raise organisational profiles.

Through its project, *Play Therapy Base Co-operative* was able to raise awareness of the organisation and therapeutic approach, leading to increased demand for the service. Young people participating in *TAYTA*'s drama project fed into a variety of projects with partners, such as developing a substance abuse video for an educational charity, which resulted in the organisation being better known by community organisations and agencies.

3.8   Findings: Project sustainability

Most organisations were continuing or wished to continue their Young Start projects.

❖ **Re-application to Young Start**

A significant number of organisations had received continuation funding from Young Start at the time of interview. In most cases, funding was used to continue the same project. Some projects had developed projects in the second grant application.

During the second grant period, *Volunteer Centre Midlothian* offered young volunteers additional opportunities by extending their befriending service to older people living in the community. *Move On* offers young people the opportunity to achieve SQA awards for volunteering as peer educators.

A small number of organisations used second Young Start grants to deliver a different project or the same project in a different location.

Several organisations who had not yet secured continuation funding were either waiting for decisions to be made on their second Young Start application or were considering applying to Young Start again. Many project staff acknowledged the difficulty of securing funding in the current climate and some were (considering) applying to more than one funder for continuation funding.

❖ **Interim periods**

In the interim period between grants, project staff reported that projects continued through alternative funding streams, were paused, or were paused while certain aspects of the project were being developed further. A small number of projects for which continuation funding had not yet been secured relied on voluntary commitment of sessional staff to continue.

❖ **Sustainability alternatives**

Where no further Young Start funding was considered or secured, organisations had incorporated the project into a larger project for which funding had been secured, included in a funding application for a larger project or were negotiating continuation of the project with the local authority. Only a small number of projects had come to an end with no concrete plans for continuation.

3.9   Findings: Prevention

Project staff commented on the preventative potential of their Young Start projects and outlined how Young Start projects had worked preventatively or intervened when problems already existed. Challenges associated with Young Start projects were identified.

❖ **Preventative potential of projects**

The majority of projects were thought to have worked preventatively. Explanations of how projects contributed to prevention were multiple and more than one was commonly mentioned.

- **Positive, diversionary activity:** Projects provided young people with regular activities that were positive and diverted them from engaging in potentially negative

activities by removing them both physically and temporarily from such opportunities.

> "Overall (...) the diversionary activities we are offering at X are having a positive impact on not only the confidence and self esteem of individuals within the group, but the community as a whole (as evidenced by a recognised reduction in anti-social behaviour)" [Media project delivering on the Confident outcome; End of grant report]

- **Age:** Frequently, prevention was related to age. Young Start projects were considered preventative as they worked with children and young people. Some young people were at critical/ transition periods in their lives which allowed projects to 'catch them at the right time'.

> " I think, yes. Because... young people start coming at such an early age." [Inclusive youth project]
>
> "I think to do something like this at that sort of stage in their lives is really important. To change a possibly negative outlook to a positive outlook. And I think that's definitely what's happened." [Universal Comedy]

- **Developing social and human capital:** A smaller number of project staff linked prevention to young people developing skills, positive world views, aspirations, passions and social connections as part of their project. This was seen as equipping them to access further positive opportunities.

> "Our philosophy is entirely that early intervention is preventative spend, it absolutely is. And that culture of participation and enabling people to build social capital, that support and communication network around about them, helps them look for work, helps them look at new opportunities, helps them take part in their community and that can only be good for our country as a whole." [YouthBank Scotland]

- **Removing negatives:** In a number of cases, prevention was linked to removing negatives, such as providing young people with respite from caring responsibilities or daily chaos and reducing isolation by providing inclusive activities.

- **Thematic prevention:** In several cases, project staff associated prevention with addressing specific issues as part of the project. This included for instance workshops on internet security or sexual health, young people supporting the development of a video raising awareness of substance abuse among young people, or learning about risk taking and risk management as part of volunteer training.

- **Targeted prevention:** A small number of project staff considered prevention as particularly relevant for groups of young people facing difficulties or having additional support needs.

❖ **Intervening at a later stage**

A number of project staff recognised that their projects were acting at a later stage where young participants were already presenting with difficulties or were in crisis.

Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Services staff acknowledged the reactive nature of its project for young carers.

> "We try to be as preventative as possible but the initial point is probably more reactive in order to put plans in place quickly to try and reduce the impact quickly on a young carer." [Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service]

The *Broomhouse Centre* advocated for identifying carers at a younger age to be able to intervene and support them from early on. *Play Therapy Base* acknowledged that children and young people taking part in filial therapy were approaching crisis point and hoped that future participants could be identified at an earlier stage. *Link East Fife Mental Health* identified their befriending project as early intervention preventing deterioration of mental health issues or supporting recovery.

❖ **Measuring prevention**

Various responses highlighted the difficulty of measuring prevention generally and as an outcome of Young Start projects.

> "Yes, it's probably the hardest thing to measure - the preventative side of things." [Tweeddale Youth Action]
>
> "It's quite difficult to say that as a result of what we did people who would have become homeless or got into unmanageable debt don't do so."[Move On]

Measuring prevention was deemed particularly difficult in the absence of information on long term outcomes for project participants as information collected on outcomes for young people was in most cases short term.

Case studies

The following section provides examples of projects meeting one or more of the four Young Start outcomes in the form of case studies. Two case study projects met both the Confident and one other outcome. This is explained by the prevalence of the Confident outcome in the Young Start portfolio and the logical connection between programme outcomes.

To reiterate, Young Start outcomes are the following:

- Confident - Children and young people have more confidence and skills.
- Healthy - Children and young people have better physical, mental and emotional health.
- Connected - Younger and older generations are better connected and have more understanding and respect for each other.
- Enterprising - Young people are better prepared for getting a job or starting a business.

4.1 Case study: Confident outcome

	Central Advocacy Partners – Young Start Inclusion Project
Project summary	The Young Start Inclusion Project involved young people with learning disabilities in drop-in group sessions during which they participated in a range of workshops, information sessions, activities and outings.
	Young people attended inclusive group sessions on a weekly basis, with groups based in Falkirk and Stirling. Young participants were supported by sessional staff to decide on and plan workshops and activities. Themed, accessible workshops for instance covered disability hate crime, internet safety, sexual health and the Scottish Independence Referendum. Further activities included sports and outings in the local community. Allocated time at the end of each group session gave young people a space to address specific issues on a one-to-one basis. Individual support for instance included help to access volunteering opportunities or signposting to other services.
	The project aimed to improve social inclusion of young people with learning disabilities and to allow them to become more active citizens.
	The need for the project was identified during consultation with young people and carers which highlighted the demand for a project which was both able to provide young people with learning disabilities with information on their choices and with the possibility to be supported through social opportunities.
Grant Award	£50,000 over two years
Young people involvement	The project was significantly youth led. In the early stages of the project, young participants developed a contract on the rules of and expectations towards the group sessions and identified venues for the group meetings.
	In the course of the project, young people identified issues that were relevant to their lives and developed ways to address these issues through workshops or activities. Sessional workers facilitated the process.

	"But it is very much run by and for the young people themselves. The facilitators are there to support them and to ensure health and safety and manage risk, but it is the young peoples' groups." The youth led nature of the project allowed for the development of a varied and innovative programme. Having young people lead groups moreover amplified the impact of and learning from the project and recognised young people as experts of their own lives, and as being able to decide on which themes and activities were relevant to them. *"It becomes much more powerful when it's the young people themselves who are facilitated to say 'This is what we want to do'."* Young people also became involved in organisational management. Young participants joined the organisation as members, attended AGMs and four young people joined the management committee.
Profile of participants	Young people with learning disabilities and a number of young people with other additional support needs participated in the Young Start Inclusion Project. Young people were aged between 18 and 24 years. A number of young people exceeded the age range as the project progressed. More than 41 young people accessed the project over the course of the two years, with 15 young people taking part in each group at a time.
Use of local assets	The project made use of a range of resources from the local communities. Partner organisations were essential to deliver themed workshops and activities that young people had identified as being of relevance to them. Partners included Disability Sports Alliance, Learning Disability Alliance, NHS Sexual Health Nurse, Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities, Police Scotland, dog patrol, Fire Brigade, and local voluntary organisations providing physical activities. Partnerships with community groups also served to find young people volunteering opportunities. Group sessions were held in community venues, including a local college and community centre. Other community venues were accessed for activities and outings. Making use of community facilities and venues was an important part of the project. After introducing young people to a variety of facilities and venues, young people started accessing them outwith group activities as well. Furthermore, the visibility of being in community and public venues provided an opportunity to challenge stereotypes about young people with disability. *"The other thing that for us was important was about using community facilities so that any kind of stereotypes about disability would be challenged. So we would go out to local pub together as a group. And I think doing that together and behaving as positive citizens challenges peoples' ideas about 'Oh, they are all disabled."* Volunteer drivers were recruited to allow young people from rural areas and lack of public transport to access the project. Through volunteering,

	individuals were able to develop their understanding of disability.
Impact on young people	Young participants developed confidence and practical life skills by being supported to lead the planning of activities, being able to make informed decisions and learn from workshops. Many young participants learned to travel independently, using public transport and going as far as Glasgow and Edinburgh. Young people showed a significant improvement in self esteem and regard for their physical and mental health. Providing young people with accessible and relevant information, supporting them to develop skills to be more independent and to be able to access ordinary life experiences allowed young people to exercise choice and control in their lives. *"We also helped them, and that was a really big thing for them, was to access ordinary life experiences. Things that their peers do without thinking about. So one of the huge successes was that the young people wanted to go to a nightclub so we found out about the Dates 'n' Mates stay out late campaign and through that found out that the Arches in Glasgow run an event for people with disabilities. [...] So they planned t hat and they went along. And that's now become something that they do on a regular basis. [...] And just by doing that, the sense of self esteem in some of those young people and the feedback they gave us was really quite powerful."* Through group work and joint activities, young people were able to build their social networks and developed friendships that extended beyond the project work. Taking part in local community life through volunteering and accessing community facilities and venues allowed young people to feel valued as members of the community. The project worked preventatively by addressing specific themes such as internet safety and disability hate crime in workshops.
Challenges	As the project progressed, young participants started to exceed the age limit of the group. As a solution, young people suggested a buddy system where older participants could train as peer volunteers to support the next generation of young participants. The approach forms part of the second Young Start grant application.
Key learning	The value of young people's involvement was a key learning for the organisation. Young people shaped their groups and initiated new developments in the organisation. *"You know the impact of these young people groups on our organisation was been huge. That's one of our learning things I think for us. We thought we are going to be supporting them and actuallyit's an equal balance, they support us, we support them."*
Organisational	Changes initiated through the participation of young people included for

changes	instance extending the development of contracts on group rules and expectations to the rest of the service and a recognition of the importance of social media.
	"That's been a learning outcome for us actually, that's putting us out in the social network. Our organisation becoming more aware of the power of social media for an organisation. And that's a learning that's been coming directly from the young people and their enthusiasm for it."
	Young people joining the member committee had a significant impact on the governance of the organisation. Young people were able to inform the organisation on their needs and wishes and to contribute enthusiasm and commitment to the committee.
	"And I can't tell you the difference having young people on our member's committee makes, there's a real enthusiasm and commitment and passion. And it's really good to see that."
Life after the project	The group applied for a second Young Start grant to continue supporting the groups and to develop previous young participants who expressed a desire to become volunteers. To bridge the funding gap, facilitators are volunteering their time to be able to continue group sessions.

4.2   Case study: Healthy outcome

Children's Summer Camp – Possilpark Children's Summer Camp	
Project summary	The Possilpark Children's Summer Camp project provided children from the Possilpark area of Glasgow with the possibility to attend a one week summer camp and take part in a programme of activities.
	Children attending Summer Camp had the opportunity to try out a large range of educational and recreational activities, for instance swimming, horseback riding, arts and crafts, visits to Edinburgh castle, the Parliament, Edinburgh Dungeons, museums, going on walks, mountain climbing or canoeing. Children received support from allocated adult volunteers.
	The project aimed at providing children with a respite break that allowed them to escape their daily stresses and experience a positive and supported holiday.
	The summer camp has been taking place on an annual basis since 1976, initially started and funded by the local council. After funding was withdrawn it was continued by community volunteers. It remains fully volunteer-led to this day.
Grant Award	£34,005 over two years
Young people	Children were consulted on the choice of activities both at preparation

involvement	meetings and summer camp. They were furthermore feeding into menu planning and helped with fundraising activities.
	Young volunteers supported children at the summer camp. This included young volunteers who had previously attended the camp as children.
	Similarly, members of the management committee, including the current chair, attended the summer camp as children.
Profile of participants	Children aged eight to 12 years participated in the project. Children were coming from low income families with issues of parental substance misuse and/ or behavioural problems. Thirty-two children, with an equal number of boys and girls, took part in each summer camp. The Young Start funding supported summer camps in three consecutive years. Children were supported by 16 adult volunteers.
Use of local assets	The project made use of a large range of resources from the local community. The project was delivered exclusively by local volunteers who attended camp to support young people and/ or engaged in fundraising activities.
	Local partner organisations and agencies referred children who they identified would benefit from attending the summer camp. This included schools, police, social work, through care and aftercare services, churches and the local housing association, community centre and food bank.
	Information and preparatory meetings were held at the local community centre. Introducing young participants to the facility also allowed them to discover other opportunities.
	"And then they come to the community centre for their meetings, and then 'I didn't know this was here', 'I didn't know this was on' before you know it they are back in the community centre every single day."
	Ultimately, children's parents and carers as well as community members who had attended summer camp as children were involved in fundraising activities.
Impact on young people	The week at summer camp provided young participants with a safe space away from their frequently chaotic lives. It allowed them to experience a structured and 'normal' environment in which they were treated with respect, where their opinion was valued and they were able to build trusting relationships with adult volunteers.
	The biggest impact of participating in summer camps was identified as increased confidence and the development of new friendships among children that extended beyond summer camps. Meeting children from across the local area also allowed breaking down territorial and cultural barriers.
	Through the range of activities and outings children were able to make new experiences that they were not normally able to access due to

| | financial restrictions or because they are not available in their home environment. Furthermore, activities were frequently taking place outdoors and got young people active by involving them in sports.

Programme activities furthermore allowed children to develop a range of skills, including team work and communication skills as well as teaching them manners and values. |
|---|---|
| Challenges | During the summer of the Commonwealth Games, the organisation encountered initial challenges of securing transport due to the high demand for rentals during that period. |
| Key learning | The difficulty of securing transport highlighted that unexpected challenges can occur despite the long term experience of delivering the summer camp and reinforced the need for long term planning and organising.

The recent years of delivering the project have furthermore highlighted an increased need among families as a number of children were referred by newly established agencies supporting people in need. |
| Organisational changes | For their voluntary and long standing commitment, Children's Summer Camp has been nominated for the Queen's Volunteer Award. |
| Life after the project | Young Start funding allowed children to participate in the camp free of charge and take part in a varied programme of activities. Further funding is sought to provide summer camp in future years, at the same or reduced level depending on funding. The organisation is considering applying to Young Start again and acknowledges that securing funding or sponsorship through alternative routes is proving increasingly difficult. |

4.3 Case study: Confident and Connected outcomes

Volunteer Centre Midlothian – Transform Project	
Project summary	The Transform Project allowed young people to take up supported and supervised volunteering opportunities for up to six months. Through Young Start funding, young people were able to take on volunteering roles as befrienders in sheltered housing and as activity buddies for primary school aged children.

Twice a week, young befrienders were taken into sheltered housing complexes to support activities with older residents, including for instance bingo or quizzes. Activity buddies supported activities for children at local primary schools, play schemes, local brownies and guides, and the Science Festival.

The project aimed to build young people's confidence and skill set as well as preparing young people for further education or employment. |

	It was developed due to the popularity of previous befriending sessions and a recognition that many young people were seeking to get experience in working with children while such opportunities, particularly of supported volunteering opportunities and for young people under 16 years, were not available in the local area.
Grant Award	£38,284 over one year
Young people involvement	Prior to developing the project, young people were consulted on which types of volunteering opportunities they preferred.

Young participants furthermore had the opportunity to feed into the development of activities for children and older people as well as to organise and lead activities as they progressed in their volunteering roles. This included for instance cake decoration sessions with residents of sheltered housing complexes.

By being involved in developing and organising activities, young people developed ownership of the project as well as confidence.

"If they get to deliver their own session or even give ideas about sessions, they really enjoy that as well because they feel like they have some control over the project, they've got a bit of ownership and that their opinion matters."

"You do find that if it's an idea they've come up with and then   we act on it, it's a really positive experience for that young person. Obviously building their confidence, they've come up with this idea and it's gone really well." |
| Profile of participants | Young participants were between 14 and 18 years old. Many of the young people who participated were identified as being at risk of heading towards negative destinations, for instance having dropped out of school. In total, 85 young participants took part in the project. |
| Use of local assets | The project partnered with 9 primary schools across Midlothian, 4 sheltered housing complexes, play schemes, after school clubs, lunch clubs, and Science Festival to provide young people with volunteering opportunities. As such, these partnerships are essential for successful project delivery.

"Because we've made these links, it means that we always have opportunities for young people, even during school holidays they can come along and volunteer."

Recruitment was similarly done through partner organisations, including referrals from statutory organisations or through presentations at local high schools and colleges.

Young participants themselves were assets particularly for working with primary school aged children. Schools welcomed young volunteers as they were setting examples in their volunteering role, acted as role models and |

	helped supporting the transition into secondary school through young volunteers' knowledge of the respective schools.
Impact on young people	The main impacts on young participants were increased confidence and self esteem. A few weeks into the project, young participants could be observed to be more confident in coming along and started talking more to older people and children. Some moved on to deliver sessions by themselves. Young participants reported learning new skills, including skills in delivering sessions, communication skills, interacting with children and teaching them rules and boundaries. Older people were reported to have thoroughly enjoyed activities involving young people. Young people were able to prompt older people to share their experiences and encouraged mutual learning. Furthermore, supporting activities for older people allowed developing a better relationship between generations and negative perceptions to be challenged. *"It's broken down a lot of barriers as well, maybe perceptions that older people had maybe of younger people, but now are really positive and has met a lot of really nice young people through the project."* Young participants had the opportunity to gain Saltire Awards for their commitment to the project and were able to put the experience of volunteering on their CVs, improving employability. Following participation in the project, young volunteers were supported to access other, more independent volunteering opportunities, or to enter college or employment. If no suitable opportunity was available, young volunteers were able to extend their supported volunteering experience until another opportunity was present.
Challenges	Due to the new nature of the project, project partners were initially hesitant to come forward and welcome young people into schools, particularly where young people were considered to be heading towards negative destinations. Once they were able to identify the positive benefits for children however, more schools started to come forward and offer volunteering opportunities for young people. High demand from young people required setting up a waiting list to access the project.
Key learning	Building up relationships with other local organisations and groups was taking time. Once the project was established the range of activities involving young volunteers expanded. Timing of activities was revised as initial times turned out to be inconvenient for many young people.
Organisational	None.

changes	
Life after the project	The project received a second Young Start grant after a transitional period covered by another funding source and a brief period where the project was not delivered. The organisation is currently looking for further funding to continue the project after the life of the second Young Start grant.

4.4 Case study: Confident and Enterprising outcomes

Move On – Financial Inclusion Peer Education Service	
Project summary	The Financial Inclusion Peer Education Service provided young people in Glasgow with the opportunity to become volunteer peer educators and support delivery of advice and information workshops on money and debt issues. Young people furthermore accessed one-to-one debt advice, income maximisation and living on a budget sessions. In additional group work sessions, young people discussed budgeting skills, financial literacy and were introduced to financial products and concepts.

Young people becoming peer educators underwent training which included up to date information on benefits and housing alongside money and debt advice. One-to-one sessions for instance included support in understanding benefit changes, helping young people apply for job seekers or employment support allowance or assisting them in opening a bank account.

Young peer educators supported staff members in delivering workshops to other young people at partner organisations and within Move On. Importantly this included peer educators sharing their life experiences with peers. Young people also developed personal plans including their aspirations regarding employment training and education.

The project was developed by linking two services provided by Move On, peer education and money and debt advice. Peer educators were trained in financial literacy as well as being able to access money and debt advice. The project development was informed by the organisation's research into the needs of young people with regards to money management and debt, which found high levels of poor money management skills, issues with debt and an unfamiliarity with financial products. |
| Grant Award | £49,239 over one year |
| Young people involvement | Young people accessing the services of Move On have the opportunity to share their views on how services can be developed, delivered and improved. Feedback is sought for instance through consultation or questionnaires assessing how well individual sessions were received. |

	Formal research into the money and debt related needs of young people accessing Move On services and services of partner organisations was moreover conducted and underpinned the funding application.

Participants in the Young Start project took an active part in the delivery of workshops as peer educators. Peer education was an essential part of empowering young people to have a voice and share their experiences with peers, turning often negative life experiences into more positive, educational messages.

On an organisational level, young participants have been involved in staff recruitment by applicants being interviewed separately by staff and young service users. Involvement in recruitment helped young people understand the recruitment process for their own job search and was considered beneficial for young people engagement and experience of the service.

> "*And I think if we're giving them genuine opportunities to actually influence how we do what we do and who does it then I think they get a much better experience of being at Move On.*"

Finally, involving young people in staff recruitment had a significant benefit for the organisation by allowing management to gauge an applicant's ability to engage with service users and identify unsuitable candidates. |
| Profile of participants | Young people aged 16 and over participated in the project. Young participants had experiences of homelessness and/ or living in care. In total, 34 young participants trained as volunteer peer educators and 61 young people (including peer educators) benefitted from one-to-one or group money and debt advice sessions. |
| Use of local assets | The project partnered with a variety of organisations and projects and delivered workshops to provide young people with opportunities for peer education. Workshops were held in local schools, particularly in disadvantaged areas, homeless hostels, for participants of other Move On projects such as FareShare, and projects for looked after young people.

Young participants were also able to take part in Friday afternoon sessions for current and past service users where groups took part in activities in the community such as visiting local leisure centres, or received advice and information, including external and internal opportunities for volunteering.

Connecting young people with the community through workshops and Friday afternoon sessions was a crucial part of the project. It allowed young people to feel part of the community, engaged them in positive activity, allowed them to develop social connections and reduced barriers to accessing community facilities.

> "*A lot of what we do is about trying to connect people into their* |

	community and make them feel part of what's going on." The project was furthermore supported by corporate partners. Joint activities allowed young people and partners to develop mutual understanding for each other's life story and showed young people different perspectives and opportunities. Holding presentations in front of corporate partners significantly developed young people's confidence. Young participants were themselves significant assets to the project. Supporting workshops as peer educators, young volunteers were very well placed to connect with young people attending workshops due to the similarity in backgrounds and age and were able to send strong educational messages by relating their personal experiences.

Impact on young people	Volunteering as peer educators had a significant impact on young people's confidence. Indicators of improved confidence were for instance young people starting to talk to peers, being able to make eye contact and importantly being willing to deliver workshops to peers.
	
	Participation in the project furthermore improved young people's self-esteem. Staff challenged young participant's negative views of themselves by pointing out young people's skills and progress throughout the project.
	
	    "And so I think that's a key bit of what we do, kind of growth in
	    confidence, growth in self-esteem."
	
	Importantly, the project allowed young people to feel more socially included and reduced isolation. Through the variety of activities, participants connected to peers, communities, and project partners. Friendships were developed that extended beyond the project.
	
	    "A lot of the work we describe is about connections, you know making
	    connections. You know the young people connect with Move On. They
	    then connect with their peers and develop peer support networks. We then
	    support them to go out into the communities, and they're in schools or
	    they speak to a corporate partner. All the time they are expanding their
	    horizons, making new connections, feeling less isolated, feeling more part
	    of the community, more part of the society."
	
	Their volunteering experience, one-to-one and group support furthermore helped young people to develop a variety of skills, including budgeting and presentation skills, and contributed to employability. One-to-one support also showed that young people moved along the employability pathway, submitting CVs and applications, moving into employment, training or education.
	
	The preventative effect of the project was felt to lie in its potential to push young people in a position where they were able to make informed decisions about how to manage and prioritise their money, or what accommodation to choose. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that prevention was a difficult concept to measure, particularly in the absence

	of information on long term outcomes.
Challenges	None reported.
Key learning	Peer education was identified as intimidating young people initially. The organisation is looking at changing this strand of work slightly during the life time of their second Young Start grant to encourage more young people to become involved as peer education volunteers.

Similarly, early findings from the second project year showed that young volunteers were hesitant to work towards the SQA qualification on offer. Negative school experiences and fears of failure were cited as reasons for their reservations. Move On is currently working on changing the delivery model for the qualification, aiming at making it less intimidating for young people. |
| Organisational changes | None. |
| Life after the project | A second Young Start grant was received to continue the project and develop it further by offering young people to work towards an SQA qualification. The organisation is in early stages of considering options for the project following the end of the second Young Start grant. |

Conclusion and recommendations

Since the programme launch in 2012 the Young Start programme funded a large number of projects. Findings from the evaluation demonstrated clear trends in Young Start grant making as well as the impact of Young Start on young people and grantee organisations, the

benefits of putting young people at the centre of projects and making use of local resources. An analysis of key findings and recommendations are presented in the following section.

5.1   Key findings and recommendations

❖   **Has the Young Start programme met its aim and outcomes?**

From the outset, most projects aimed at providing children and young people with opportunities to become more confident and develop their skills. Significantly fewer projects aimed to meet the Healthy, Enterprising and Connected outcomes. Projects were frequently directed at specific target groups, although only a small number of projects targeted BME and LGBT young people specifically. Young people aged 14 to 19 years were the most common beneficiaries with fewer projects aimed at children and young people at the extremes of the Young Start age range.

Qualitative findings showed that Young Start projects had numerous benefits for young people. Unsurprisingly, findings supported the prevalence of the Confident outcome with projects most often reporting improving young people's confidence. Projects also contributed to the Enterprising outcome by providing young people with opportunities for volunteering and work experience, developing their skills and aspiration. Young people's physical, mental or emotional health improved through the provision of one-to-one support and opportunities for physical activity. Connecting young and old people was less commonly mentioned which is understandable given the small number of projects presenting a fit with this outcome generally.

Findings indicated that several projects were meeting more than the outcome(s) they agreed to meet at grant set-up or, conversely, did not comment on how projects had contributed to agreed outcomes. The *Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations*, agreed to meet the Confident outcome, provided young people with work experience and supported them into volunteering or further education, thus contributing to the Enterprising outcome as well. As indicated in the 'Healthy' case study, *Children's Summer Camp* did not refer to the health impact of its project explicitly although the mentioned benefits of the project are likely to have contributed to improving health.

The above finding is understandable as neither end of grant reports nor interviews asked project staff to refer specifically to how their projects had contributed to the agreed outcomes, thus grant holders were free to report on the overall difference their project had made to those involved rather than on how outcomes had been met.

While this complicated quantifying how many projects had achieved Young Start outcomes, it had the benefit of grant holders and interviewees reporting positive benefits of projects which went beyond programme outcomes, although they might have indirectly contributed to achieving Young Start outcomes. For instance, projects had a positive impact on young people's social networks which improved their confidence and health. Other common themes involved Young Start projects promoting social inclusion, cohesion and independence and providing room for respite.

Based on the previous findings, we recommend Young Start to consider the following:

➢ Examine the distribution across Young Start outcomes and the representation of equality groups as part of the ongoing development of the programme.

➢ Support grant holders in thinking about how their projects will achieve outcomes (e.g. in the form of indicators) and ask them to report on outcomes when monitoring progress (e.g. by explicitly asking about outcomes in end of grant reports).

➢ Recognise the benefits of Young Start projects beyond programme outcomes. Particularly improved social networks and inclusion are crucial to many projects and are likely to have an impact on the Confident and Healthy programme outcomes.

➢ Ensure that any progress monitoring steps also capture these additional benefits (e.g. by asking grant holders to report on any other positive benefits of projects in end of grant reports)

❖ **How did Young Start projects involve young people in the development, delivery and management?**

Involvement of young people is a key concern for the Young Start programme and projects involving young participants to a greater extent are looked on more favourably in the application process. Findings from the evaluation showed involvement of young people beyond participation, although levels and the nature of involvement varied across projects. The main methods of involvement were through consultation and in delivery. Fewer projects were involving young people in management roles and this kind of involvement was mentioned as experiencing the most challenges.

It is very positive to see that many projects were training and making use of young volunteers to support the delivery of projects. Regularly, this involved young people who had taken part in projects and wished to remain involved by supporting the next generation of participants. For some projects, young people involvement in delivery therefore grew as projects were moving into future years.

Putting young people at the heart of projects by involving them in development, delivery and management reinforced the positive impact projects had on young people which highlights the importance of adopting an approach which puts Young People at the heart of projects. In addition, young people involvement is likely to become a more significant factor for deciding the success of applications due to the current high demand for Young Start funding.

> It is therefore recommended that Young Start consider the following:
>
> ➢ Encourage projects to take a strategic approach to involving young people at all levels, notably promoting involvement in management roles.
>
> ➢ Support successful applicants in implementing this approach (e.g. providing information on available Big Lottery Fund guidance on actively involving young people)

❖ **How did Young Start projects make use of local resources?**

Young Start projects were making use of a large range of local resources, harnessing and developing their assets. Local resources included project participants, volunteers, staff, local facilities and places, and partner organisations. Taking an asset based approach was essential for creating opportunities and achieving positive outcomes for young people.

> ➢ Given the success of using local resources among the sample, Young Start projects should be encouraged to think about how they can harness assets that go beyond traditional partnerships for the benefit of young people.

❖ **What was the impact of projects on grantee organisations?**

Grantee organisations learnt from the experience of delivering Young Start projects as time progressed. Learning was frequently about identifying young people's wishes and additional needs and resulted to adaptations to the delivery model. For many organisations, Young Start projects led to organisational growth by providing services to meet additional needs or increasing capacity which resulted in expansion of services.

❖ **Are projects likely to be sustainable?**

Most organisations in the interviewed sample wished to continue Young Start projects and were reliant on external funding to keep projects alive. For most projects, the primary source for continuation funding was Young Start. Sustainability of projects was therefore considerably related to the demand for Young Start funding and funds available.

While the success rate for re-applications was high with slightly more than three out of four applying organisations receiving funding again, it is questionable whether this trend is sustainable into the future. As more Young Start projects are coming to an end of their initial funding period, increasing numbers of applications for continuation funding are likely to add to the demand for Young Start funding. The more probable scenario for the future is therefore that more organisations will be unsuccessful in re-applying for Young Start funding due to reasons of insufficient funds and will be required to look for alternative funding sources to keep projects alive.

It is recommended that Young Start consider the following:

➢ Grant holders should be encourage to investigate funding sources beyond Young Start in time before the project end date and should be informed about current chances of success (to the best possible extent) when re-applying to Young Start.

➢ Further research should investigate the sustainability of projects which are either not re-applying to Young Start or were unsuccessful in applying for continuation funding to be able to provide a more accurate picture of what happens to projects following the end of their Young Start grant.

❖ **Did Young Start projects work preventatively?**

Young Start projects worked preventatively by for instance providing diversionary activities or raising awareness of specific issues as part of projects.

Responses illustrated the frequent challenges encountered in discussions of prevention. Respondents often seemed to be unfamiliar with thinking of their projects in prevention terms. Findings furthermore suggested uncertainties about what was meant by prevention and various conceptions of prevention (co-)existed among organisations. Associated with this was a recognition of the challenges associated with measuring preventative impact due to the difficulty of determining the absence of negative outcomes as well as the difficulty of gathering information on the long term impact of projects on young people.

➢ As the Young Start programme contributes to the Scottish Government's preventative approach by concentrating funding on young people, Young Start may consider whether it wishes to raise more awareness of the concept of prevention among applicants and to encourage organisations to think of projects through a prevention lens.

➢ However, this suggestion should be deliberated in relation to overall demands on applicants and grant holders, and whether it is appropriate for the programme as well as proportionate to the grant size and effort required.

❖ **What have we learnt from the experience of conducting the evaluation?**

The evaluation adopted a multi method approach to investigate the impact of the Young Start programme. The approach faced challenges due to the limitations of available data, notably grant management data, information in end of grant reports and a biased interview sample. As a consequence, limited quantitative information was available which restricted the ability to generalise findings across the Young Start portfolio.

Based on the findings and challenges outlined throughout the report, it is recommended that the following steps are taken to improve the success of potential future evaluations.

➢ In line with previous recommendations, Young Start grant holders should be asked specifically to comment on outcomes in end of grant reports in order to improve comparability among projects.

➢ Future evaluations might wish to consider including a method that is able to provide sound quantitative data, such as surveys.

➢ Sample selection for interviews should aim for a more representative sample, for instance by revising inclusion criteria for the sample.

➢ Ultimately, future evaluation works should consider involving young people in the evaluation in order to be in line with programme objectives.

5.2   Conclusion

As the Young Start programme is about to enter its fourth year of existence, this evaluation has shown that Young Start projects positively impacted on young participants, organisations and the wider community. Organisations involved young people in project development, delivery and management, made use of local resources and recognised the importance of adopting these approaches for reinforcing the positive impact which projects had on young people.

The evaluation findings indicate that Young Start is in a good position to advocate for the importance of investing dormant bank account funding in young people and for following national policy recommendations of putting young people at the heart of projects and adopting asset based approaches. Yet, potential future evaluations of the programme should revise the methodology to substantiate qualitative findings with statistical information on the impact of Young Start projects to further strengthen its position.