

**EBPU** Evidence Based Practice Unit

A partnership of

Anna Freud  
National Centre for  
Children and Families

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# HeadStart Heads Up

## Supporting young people at home: what helps young people with their mental health and wellbeing?

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### What is this briefing about?

The HeadStart Learning Team has been carrying out interviews over the last three years (2017 to 2019) with approximately 80 young people (aged 9 to 14) across the six HeadStart partnerships, to hear directly from young people about how they handle problems and difficult feelings and situations in life, including the coping strategies that they use and the support that they receive. Findings from the interviews about the young people's experiences (including support that they have received from HeadStart) have already been published in-depth elsewhere.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

While the coronavirus pandemic may mean that young people are accessing support services in new ways, it is also important to highlight the types of support that young people might draw on during this time from their friends, their families, and by themselves. Therefore, though the interviews referenced in this briefing were not conducted specifically about young people's responses to the coronavirus pandemic, the aim of this briefing is to share findings from the interviews so far which might be relevant to children and young people's experiences during this period of lockdown. We hope that this briefing will help young people and families to reflect on and generate ideas about ways of managing this difficult situation.

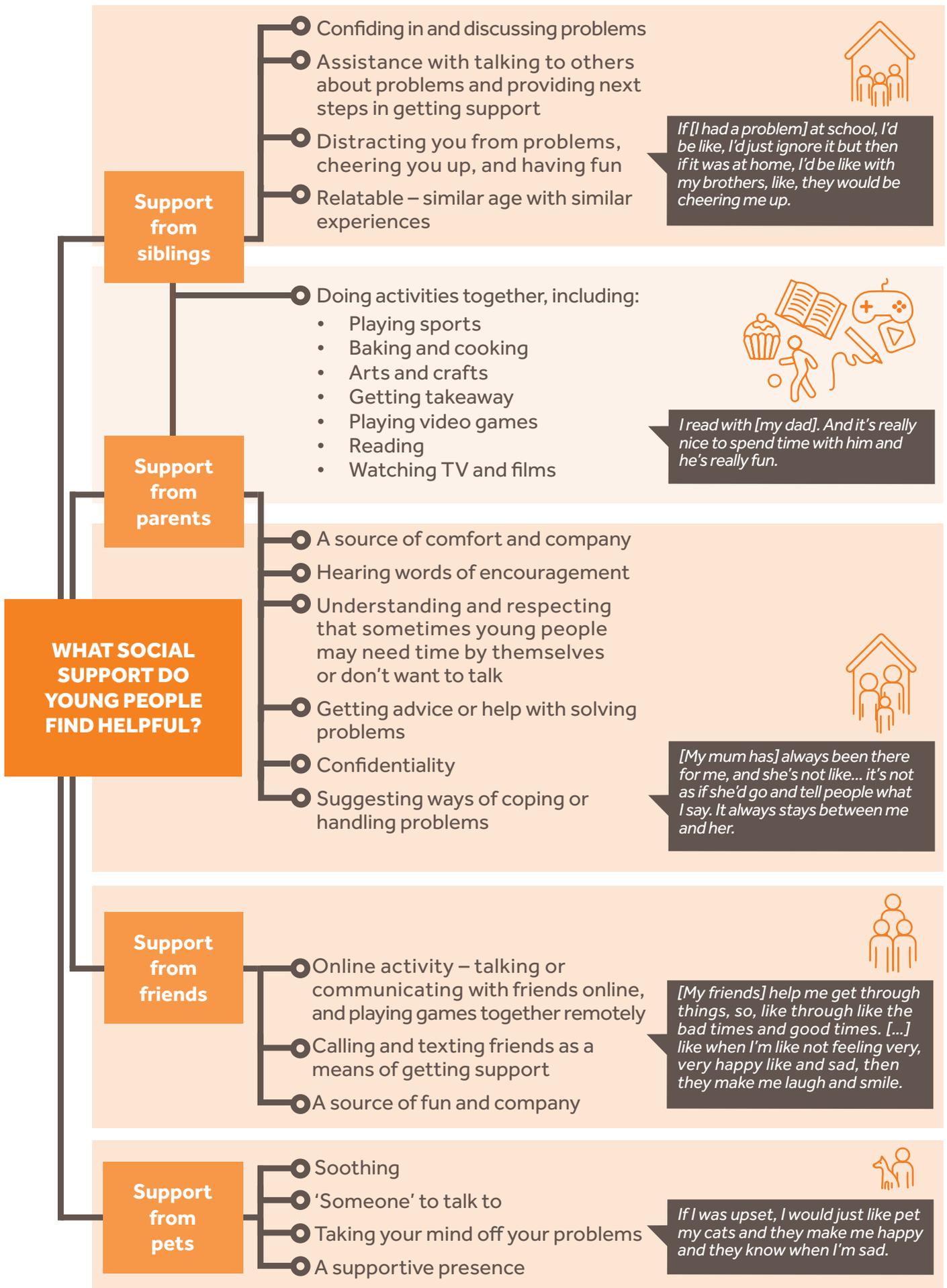
This briefing first gives an overview of the types of support that the young people described receiving from their parents, siblings and pets when they had a problem or were feeling sad, worried or angry. The current coronavirus pandemic means that young people will likely not be seeing their friends in person, therefore we have also described the support that the young people reported receiving from their friends remotely. We then give an overview of the types of activities and strategies that the young people described using and finding helpful in relation to dealing with difficult feelings and situations. The briefing draws on our interviews with young people across all three years.

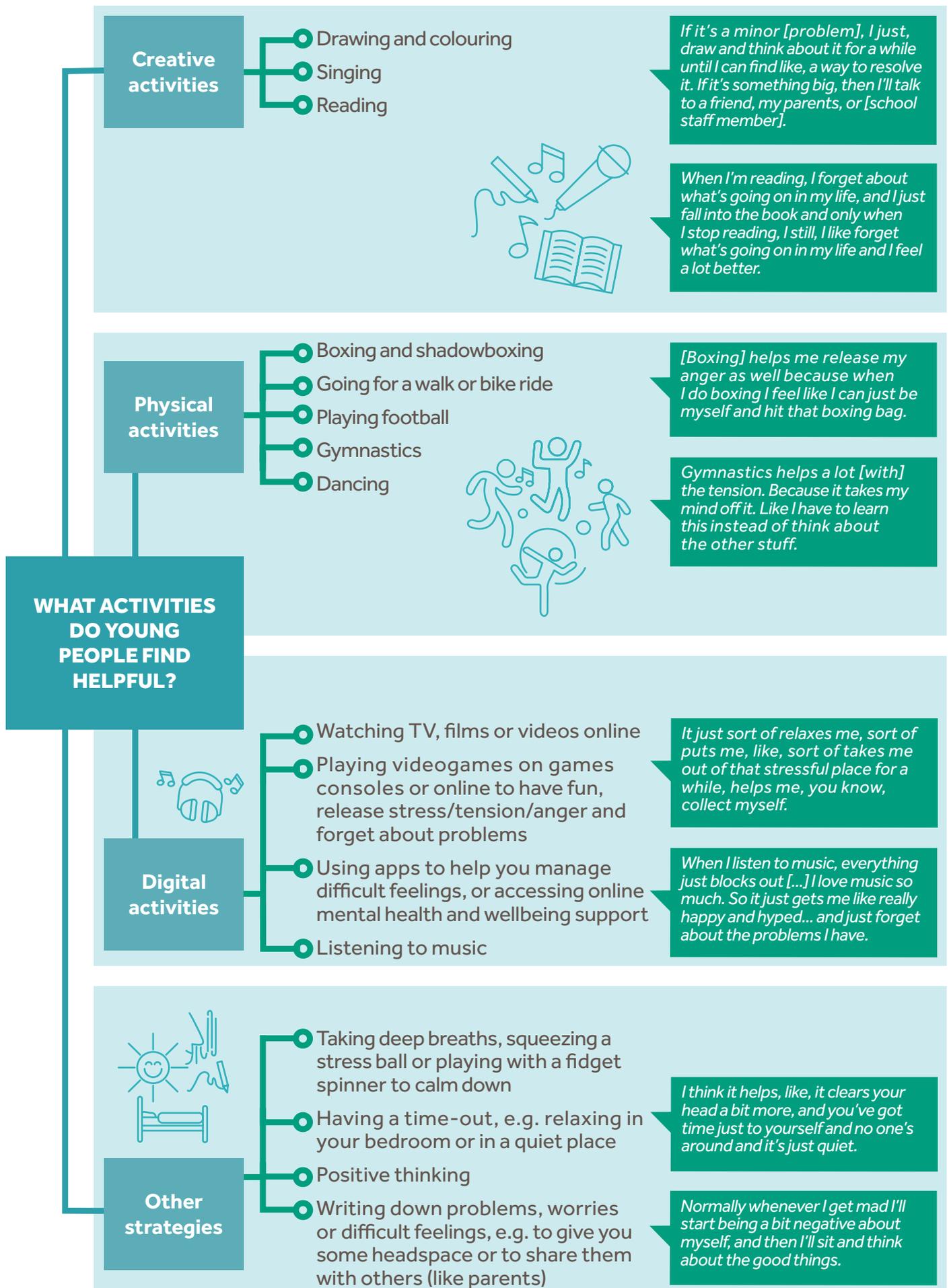


1 - [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/sites/evidence-based-practice-unit/files/headstart\\_briefing\\_2.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/sites/evidence-based-practice-unit/files/headstart_briefing_2.pdf)

2 - [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/sites/evidence-based-practice-unit/files/evidence\\_briefing\\_6\\_january\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/sites/evidence-based-practice-unit/files/evidence_briefing_6_january_2020.pdf)

3 - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0272431619858420>

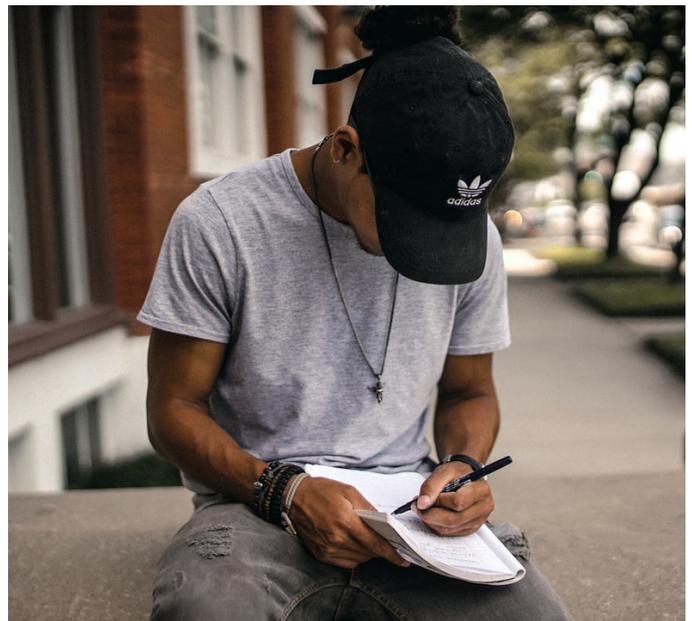




## What kinds of support are the HeadStart partnerships delivering during the coronavirus crisis?

The HeadStart programme delivers support for young people (and families) in school and community settings. Therefore, during the coronavirus pandemic, the HeadStart partnerships have had to make some adaptations to the support that they provide. Here are some examples of what HeadStart is doing during this period:

- Headstart Blackpool (as part of the Resilience Revolution) have co-developed a range of resources for the community in Blackpool, including relaxation packs for all young people in need and family resilience activity packs for all households, as well as a set of key recommendations for systems leaders. All of the HeadStart Blackpool resources can be found here: [www.rrbblackpool.org.uk](http://www.rrbblackpool.org.uk)
- Support workers in HeadStart Hull are continuing to provide services to young people and families (who had been receiving face-to-face support) by phone, video call and email. All of the HeadStart Hull resources can be found here: <https://www.howareyoufeeling.org.uk/headstart-hull>
- Providers in HeadStart Wolverhampton are delivering support and activities (which were previously delivered in person) virtually, via the City of Wolverhampton's Virtual Squad: <http://www.wvvirtualsquad.co.uk/> More information about the HeadStart Wolverhampton programme can be found here: <http://win.wolverhampton.gov.uk/kb5/wolverhampton/directory/service.page?id=rg3-cC7Diow>
- HeadStart Kernow have been increasing their production of resources, information, advice and guidance to reach young people, families and schools during this period. All of the HeadStart Kernow resources can be found here: <https://www.headstartkernow.org.uk/sec-sch-support/covid-19/>
- Delivery partners and members of the HeadStart Kent team are now delivering support for young people and families (who had been receiving face-to-face support) by phone and virtually. All of the HeadStart Kent resources can be found here: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/>
- HeadStart Newham are developing a range of new resources for schools and parents to support young people. This includes the All About Me journal (with a focus on mental health and wellbeing), which the team are using to keep in touch with young people by phone and virtually. All of the HeadStart Newham resources can be found here: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/homepage/covid-19/>



## Where can I find support?

Childline: Call 0800 1111

The Samaritans: Call 116 123

On My Mind: [www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind](http://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind)

The Mix: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

Shout: Text 85258

## The HeadStart programme

Started in 2016, HeadStart is a five-year, £58.7 million National Lottery funded programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. HeadStart aims to explore and test new ways to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 10 to 16 and prevent serious mental health issues from developing. To do this, six local authority-led HeadStart partnerships are working with local young people, schools, families, charities, community and public services to design and try out new interventions that will make a difference to young people's mental health, wellbeing and resilience. The HeadStart partnerships are in the following locations in England: Blackpool; Cornwall; Hull; Kent; Newham; Wolverhampton.

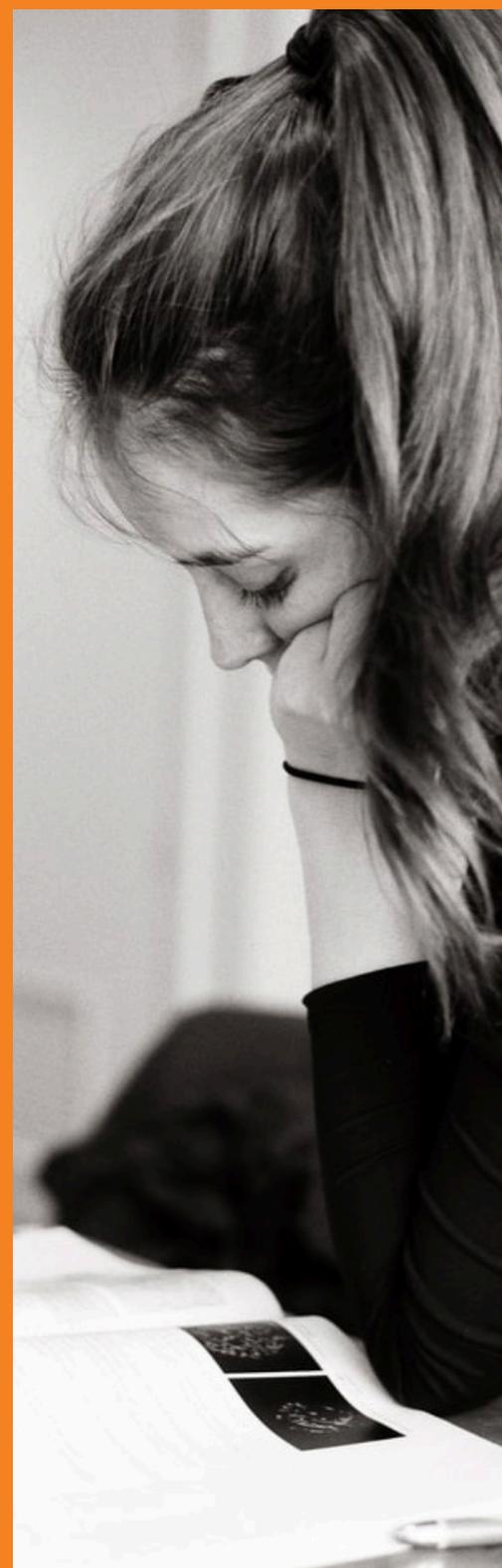
## The HeadStart Learning Team

The Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU) at the Anna Freud Centre and University College London (UCL) is working with The National Lottery Community Fund and the HeadStart partnerships to collect and evaluate evidence about what does and does not work locally to benefit young people now and in the future. Partners working with the EBPU on this evaluation include the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC) and the University of Manchester. This collaboration is called the HeadStart Learning Team. Previous partners in the HeadStart Learning Team include The London School of Economics (LSE) and Common Room.

With thanks to the Learning Team's qualitative research sub-team: Ola Demkowicz, Rosa Town, Alisha O'Neill and Parise Carmichael-Murphy.

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