

GROWTH Pilot Report

Background:

In 2013 Sefton EBP, Sefton CVS and Windmills as a partnership applied to the Big Lottery 'Awards for All' programme to deliver the GROWTH project as a pilot programme. The full amount of funding was awarded which was a maximum of £10,000. The delivery partnership and context of the project was developed through:

- Existing positive relationships between the three agencies achieved through the experience of delivering National Citizen Service Programmes (a national youth initiative) and the £10 Smile Challenge (a Windmills initiative recently rolled out across a number of Sefton Primary schools).
- Focus group consultation with deputy head representatives from the Crosby cluster of secondary schools in 2013, which evidenced the potential need and interest in the GROWTH model of delivery.
- The partnerships consideration of pupil premium requirements and the potential for this approach to be a response to this, as well as achieving improved utilisation of local assets by schools, including volunteers, support services, professional and community networks.

GROWTH Aims and Delivery Structure:

- To work with a cohort of 10 pupils in year 8 who were at risk of, or presenting as being in the early stages of being disengaged, de-motivated or having issues with attendance, punctuality or attainment.
- To provide targeted support which would influence positive engagement in school and community life, academic progress, attendance, punctuality and in raising aspirations at this key transition time.
- To provide fortnightly, one to one mentoring sessions for each pupil provided by a volunteer business or community mentor.
- To provide a structured programme of half day 'group based' peer sessions themed on GROWTH:
 - **Giving** – SMILE £10 challenge where participants facilitated a local community social action project with only £10 to make someone SMILE (**Share** skills and talents, doing something **Meaningful**, with an **Impact** that will leave a **Legacy** and be for **Everyone**)
 - **Resilience** – visit to a local fire station and talk from fire officer on the need to create strategies for building personal resilience in the face of challenging circumstances
 - **Opportunities** – Visit to Peels Post Super Post (Seaforth) to explore the emerging breadth of opportunities from investment in this economic initiative.
 - **Wellbeing** – a '5 ways to wellbeing' focussed activity day facilitated in a local community and youth setting which explored how young people can best utilise community resources to enhance their emotional and physical wellbeing.

- Transitions – Interactive and participative day held at the University of Liverpool enabling participants to explore a variety of pathways for their future.
- Happiness – a celebration event at the end of the project focussed on the participants celebrating all they have achieved, reflecting on their lessons learned and identifying next steps as they embark on their year 9 experiences.
- To track the cohort of pupils over the year to measure impact on transition from year 8-9.
- To carry out an impact evaluation of the project to inform learning and plans for scale up should the project be effective.

Appointment of St Michaels High as our pilot school:

St Michaels High School was the chosen school for the pilot based upon our capacity to work with only one school in order to deliver a focussed research project within the funding resource available. The appointment of St Michaels High was made through a scoring system led by the partnership when applications were received from schools that chose to submit an expression of interest. Ten participants who met the intended criteria for the pilot were identified by the year 8 Head of Year and school youth worker/chaplain. The participants were then matched with a mentor and programme delivery commenced in October 2013 through to July 2014, with exception of the celebration day planned for the 18th September 2014.

Project Impacts Measured or Observed:

Whilst the project was aimed at year 8 pupils who were at risk of, or presenting as being in the early stages of experiencing challenges in and outside the school environment, over the year a number of individuals who were part of the cohort experienced more significant challenges, which resulted in not being able to fully engage in the programme e.g. family illness, non-attendance at school, an increase in the need for support from higher end services e.g. CAMHS.

To help us in achieving a comparative study we monitored results achieved with the GROWTH cohort of young people, as well as a control group of the same age, year and school.

School Benefits:

- 40% of participants increased their attendance during the project
- 50% of participants with punctuality problems showed improvement.
- 40% of participants demonstrated an improvement in their educational attainment in relation to assessment levels recorded at the start and mid way through the project.
- Observations fed back by school staff demonstrated that 60% of participants improved their ***attitude to learning*** and 50% their ***attitude to life and the future***.
- Comments provided through school staff were that the project was supportive and participants viewed their experience of GROWTH as very positive, in particular the out of school networks and opportunities that have been accessible as a result of the opportunity to take part.

Participant Benefits:

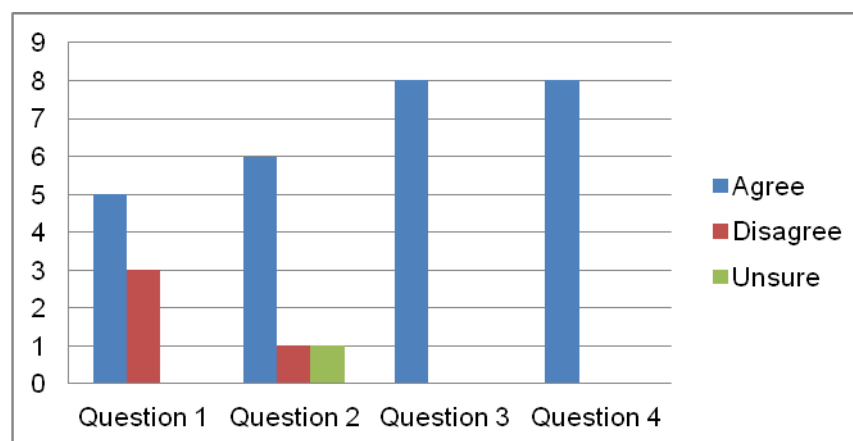
- 30% demonstrated improvements in how **they can take control of their life** in comparison to only a 10% improvement represented from the control group.
- 30% demonstrated a **clearer vision for the future in comparison** to only 10% of the control group. Interestingly the control group data registered a 30% decrease in their ability to positively view the future at the same time.
- 30% demonstrated **improvement in their awareness of opportunities**, in comparison to 10% of the control group. Again, interestingly 30% of the control group members registered their awareness of opportunities became worse over the time frame.
- The most significant area of improvement was in relation to participant's perception of their **support network**. 40% felt their support network had improved in comparison to 10% of the control group. Again, 20% of the control group demonstrated their support network had decreased during the time scale of the project.
- Young Advisors (independent of the delivery team and mentors) asked the following questions of the GROWTH cohort as part of a focus group session which 80% of participants were able to attend:

1: Has your attitude towards school and learning increased since being on the programme?

2: Have your aspirations for the future increased?

3: Are you feeling more confident to reach your aspirations?

4: Thinking about the other things you've done on the programme, have they helped you with your vision for the future?



The top three areas that participants said they liked the most about GROWTH were:

1. Learning new things
2. Having their own personal mentor
3. Recording their GROWTH experience highlights through rap in a real recording studio.

Other areas which featured strongly were being able to do something different, support, activities/trips outside of school, meeting new people



Recommendations:

The project has created a great opportunity for us to learn from the pilot and establish recommendations that would support in shaping the future delivery of this type of model for schools and their pupils. This includes:

- Strong leadership and partnership commitment between all stakeholders involved. This is particularly important when it comes to dedicating resources by schools e.g. a linked member of staff to support with coordination, communication processes e.g. regular meetings to review progress and coordination of mentor meeting times etc, consideration of school resources e.g. mini busses to improve logistic of the project.
- Quality training and regular supervision with the volunteer mentors provided by the delivery partnership. This ensures mentoring sessions remain focussed on achieving goals set at the beginning of the project and good utilisation of professional and community networks.
- Resources and facilitation of activities used in the project need to be creative, engaging, inspiring, interactive and 'youth proofed'. Essential to making the link between the mentors and the activities there needs to be more robust connectivity between the two.
- Clear Information sharing protocols and processes need to be in place between the school, delivery partners and mentors to enable progress or concerns to be monitored or responded to.
- Develop a number of sustainable models of delivery that meet the needs of school commissioners, and benefit the type of pupils that GROWTH has been designed for. This would include considerations for a primary to secondary transition piece of work e.g. Universal or Targeted Smile £10 Challenge (Primary Focus) leading in to Year 7 GROWTH project at Secondary.

Appendix 1: GROWTH Rap/Song Lyrics Designed by Participants and recorded in the studio owned by one of our volunteer business mentors:

This session was set up free through one of our business mentors which enabled the young people to use the recording studio. The focus was their experience of GROWTH so far (completed June 2014)

- **Ellis's song:**
Friends thought I was bad, I and the teachers got mad. Growth has taught me not to get in as much trouble but sometimes I still do. I've tried to stop smoking, became isolated because I haven't overcome it. Since growth my attendance has grown, made plenty of friends on the journey, now I'm no longer on my own.
- **Bastille -Pompeii:**
We were all insecure until this came along. Many days we were sad with nothing to do No Xbox or PlayStation 4, I was bullied off the game - No fifa or Black Ops 2 or GTA 5 But if you close your eyes, does it almost feel like growth has changed your life. But if you close your eyes, does it almost feel what we've been waiting for.
- **Growth Rap:**
The growth project has helped us achieve, Learn new things and made us believe, On our first day out to the Crosby Lakeside, We swung on swings and played on the slide, They gave us a tenner to make a change, To bring people Christmas crafts and games, We learnt resilience at the fire station, To keep us calm when we lose our patience, At the docks we met the cops, Who showed us jobs and taught us lots, The trust respect and growth we learnt, Has set us up to change the world.

Appendix 2: The Mentor Experience

Volunteer Mentoring was a key strand to the project facilitating bi-weekly one to one 30 minute mentor sessions with each participant. This was predominantly on school premises during term time, however there was flexibility to this and many mentors also facilitated additional, value added activities with their participants outside of this framework e.g. coordination of visits/meetings which explored participants aspirations and opportunities such as nursery nurse tasters, safari park day out, meeting with a police officer.

Some mentors also provided support to structures such as CAF and sign posting to support services.

To effectively evaluate the mentor contribution to the project, the following questions were asked of the mentors, their answers are also listed below:

Q1) What has been the value of mentoring for young people as part of the project?

As a mentor to young people I feel the greatest value to them is that they have someone other than an authoritative figure e.g. teacher or parent with whom they can share their concerns, worries and fears.

I think that for some young people being able to take a break from their normal routine in school, to be guided in reflection about their decisions and their actions has been really helpful. Being able to set plans and goals for the future has also been helpful.

Obviously I cannot speak for them, but I feel my mentees have benefitted in having someone external coming into school and them both seeing that there is a world outside school. This world is different, requiring skills they may have away from academia. I think it has given them confidence to open up and speak their mind, and also given them a forum to air their fears, hopes, dreams and given them some focus to their reasoning on why school is important.

Arranging specific work shadowing for individual Mentee, providing opportunities they may have not had access to:-

- *Working in their ideal job*
- *Speaking to positive role models who are in their ideal job*
- *Young person aware that others do care and want to help*
- *Non-judgemental outsider external from school listening to their 'story'*

Q2) What difference has the mentor seen in the young person as a result of mentoring?

I feel the two young people I have mentored have benefitted in different ways, one has shown a marked improvement in his attitude to his school work, while the other has improved less so due to family issues and is seeking further professional assistance.

Sadly I have not seen any difference as I came onto the programme late due to staff changes and only had three meetings with the young people. I had no personal prior experience of mentoring and found that my meetings and going to the group events was not enough to make a connection with the young people I was assigned. I think that if I had had mentoring skills this would have made a difference.

I think confidence to speak up and communicate more freely relating to good or bad issues. Certainly one of my mentees has come out of his shell massively since our first session.

A clearer action plan for their future. Improved behaviour and concentration in class. Understanding the importance of resilience, team work, backup plans and being realistic. Importance of working hard, striving to succeed in school and personal wellbeing. Being grateful for all the support St Michael's have already offered and the Growth programme. More confident and higher self-esteem.

Q3) What value added has the mentor provided beyond the planned bi-weekly sessions?

I have on occasions tried to contact one of the parents to see why their son is not in school and if I can help in any way. Due to reservations in relation to the behaviour from one of my mentees I was reluctant to mentor them outside the school environment.

I attended all of the group sessions since being assigned to this piece of work. I felt that this was important to attempt to build a relationship with my mentees and to understand their interactions with the wider group and the school a little better, to put the work into context.

I have organised a special visit for one of my mentees to his chosen hobby and career choice venue. Also organised a trip and working exercise for all pupils on the programme.

Organising work shadowing specific to each Mentee. Providing opportunities for young people to speak to positive role models who are in their ideal job. Showing others care and a desire to want to support them. Attended CAF meetings.

Q4) What have you gained from being a mentor?

I have mentored young people for a number of years and have found that each opportunity to mentor gives me great satisfaction and improves my appreciation of the needs of the mentees.

I have realised that mentoring skills could be really useful in many areas of my work, and have arranged to undergo some training.

Some satisfaction, two new friends and an insight into a younger pupils view of school having previously worked more with "older" pupils.

Immense satisfaction. Have really enjoyed seeing the young people develop in confidence and positive attitude. Networking and arranging specific work shadowing. Becoming the mentees friend and will continue to offer both of these young people my support. Increased awareness of issues young people have to deal with inside and outside school. Limited time and support school can offer an individual.

Appendix 3: Funding Models

Sustainability planning and commissioning of this service:

The pilot although initially funded by Big Lottery will not be able to be resourced in this way again, nor is it likely through our research that other funders will fund such a programme due to the model of delivery currently being within curriculum time.

Costs consider full cost recovery by each of the partnership agencies and learning achieved as part of the pilot. Although a £10,000 grant allocation was made by Big Lottery to support the financial delivery of the initial GROWTH pilot, the 3 partner agencies match funded this in delivery time in order to inform the success and effectiveness of the project.

The sustainability model at this point therefore requires a commissioning response to which we have scoped the following costing models for consideration by school commissioners. These models can be flexible e.g. designed to support a primary to secondary transition programme working with a primary/secondary cluster, a cluster of secondary schools or a single school. Further flexibility can be built in to extend these to various age groups.

Proposed Project Costings:

- 1) To work with 10 cohorts of young people (10 in a group) over one year from either 1 school or over a cluster of up to 5 schools :**
Total cost: £107,870
Cost per school if over a cluster of 5 schools: £21,574
Cost per participant: £1078.70

- 2) To work with 5 cohorts of young people (10 in a group) over one year from either 1 school or over a cluster of up to 5 schools:**
Total cost: £63,358
Cost per school if over a cluster of 5 schools:
Cost per participant: £1267.16

- 3) To work with 1 cohort of young people (10 in a group) over one year from 1 school:**
Total Cost: £25,448
Cost per participant: £2544.80

