Hand in Hand Service

Interim Evaluation Executive Summary

This Executive Summary presents the findings from the interim evaluation of the Hand in Hand service between October 2020 and March 2021.

The Service

Hand in Hand works with children and young people aged between 10 and 18[1] in North Yorkshire and the City of York, who are at risk of, or are currently being, sexually or criminally exploited, and those that are repeatedly reported missing. The service supports young people holistically in a young person centred way, focusing on ensuring that they feel safe in all aspects of their life.

'Working with [worker] has definitely helped me so much – especially with the grooming situation. She's made me feel comfortable talking about it and helped me recognise the signs of grooming. The last session we did we watched this video of a girl and she asked me if I could spot the warning signs and I was able to do it, but before I wouldn't have known. I'm more aware and I can see the warning signs.' – Young Person

The Evaluation

The evaluation is seeking to understand the impact of the service on young people communities and systems, as well as generate learning related to critical success factors, challenges and opportunities. The final report will be available in December 2021. The interim evaluation has drawn on a satisfaction and impact survey of partners; external data on missing incidents, arrests and recorded offences for 23 young people; internal monitoring and outcomes data; data from the User Satisfaction Survey[2]; and interviews with eight young people, five practitioners and the Service Manager.

Impact

Hand in Hand received **125 referrals** between in the period of August 2019 and March 2021. 58% of referrals came from Social Workers. Hand in Hand **worked with 79 young people** over the period. The remainder of referrals were not taken due to capacity of the team.

'Hand in Hand built trust with the person and were able to advocate and support him with ongoing exploitation issues. They gave him stability and safety… The young person got a safe home, support to address his substance misuse and access education.' – Partner

[1] There is some flexibility in this age range, with the service working with young people up the age of 21 who have additional needs, and with children as young as 8 where there is need.
[2] The User Satisfaction Survey is a short survey distributed by The Children's Society at the end of an intervention. It asks questions about young people's experiences with services, and ideas for improvement. Data was available for seven young people from the Hand in Hand service between August 2019 and March 2021.

Amy Woolger, Evidence & Impact Team

67% of young people reported an overall improvement in their lives.[3]

'It did take some time for me let out to [worker] about what was going on, but it all came out in the end and she gave me so much help. The fact that she has made me have dreams I would never thought I would have had made me so much happier… If you told me a year ago that I would have these aspirations then I would probably laugh and tell you that I'd never, never feel this way, but [worker] has helped me crush the bad, and now I can look forward to all these lovely things.' – Young Person

For young people, working with Hand in Hand has led to an improvement in their:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Awareness, knowledge and understanding
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Physical health and access to positive activities

'It's lifted a weight off my shoulders; I was carrying the guilt and blaming myself, but I know it's not my fault.' – Young Person

Consequently, this has led to:

- Young people accessing their rights, entitlements and appropriate support/services
- A reduction in missing episodes, arrests and offences
- Young people demonstrating improved self-advocacy/the ability to be independent
- Young people engaging with and maintaining education
- Reduced risk factors and improved protective factors
- Positive outcomes in criminal justice procedures and processes
- Young people experiencing improved relationships
- Young people expressing a more positive outlook

'With other young people, the risks have diminished enough for their names to be removed from Child Protection Plans. The positive outcomes for these young people are huge and it is a credit to the work of the team that these decisions can be made.' – Partner

100% of partners that responded to the impact and satisfaction survey **would recommend the Hand in Hand service**.[4] Partners rate the service highly for being **well-led, responsive, safe, caring** and **effective**. Through working with the service:

- **88%** said that it increased their **capacity** to focus on other areas of work
- **75%** said that they had improved **understanding** of the needs of young people experiencing exploitation
- **71%** said that they had improved **awareness** of external factors/networks around a young person

'A huge positive for me is that I have been able to work with a worker … who is invested in the child and has really worked hard to get through some of the barriers the child puts up and continues to ask the child about what they would like to happen to make it easier/better for them. This dedication and compassion is evident in the way this worker ensures that they attend regular meetings held by social care and also the way in which they speak about the children. It is very child-centred.' – Partner

[3] Data from the My Wheel outcomes tool for 61 young people that completed two tools between August 2019 and March 2021.
[4] Data from eight responses to the satisfaction and impact survey of partners.

63% said that these outcomes led to improvements in how they respond to young people. The impact of these changes is far reaching: **100% either hold caseloads or come into regular contact with young people**. 80% either hold a caseload of, or regularly come into contact with, 71 or more young people. For those holding caseloads, the average caseload is 73 young people.[5]

'The young people need time to trust and it can often take many weeks or months before this happens. It has made me realise that exploitation cannot be a quick fix, and each telephone call or visit is building on those foundations to have positive outcomes for those young people we support.' – Partner

Learning

There a number of critical success factors, which have facilitated the positive impacts that the service has had on young people, communities and systems. These are:

- A service and approach that is flexible, confidential and young person led
- Recruiting workers with the right qualities to build a trusted relationship with the young person
- The ability to take a different approach and develop a different relationship to statutory services
- Longer term funding
- Effective partnership working

With additional funding, there are a number of opportunities for the service, including collaboration with other programmes on systems change work. The evaluation also identified a number of learning areas that could be beneficial to service delivery, linked to the triage and allocation process, and peer case discussion of existing cases.

'I can honestly say that I don't feel that anything could be improved. The service given and provided was perfect, and like I say helped me and my work so much. I would highly recommend the service and will use Hand in Hand again throughout my future work.' – Partner

For further information, please see the full interim evaluation report, which is available on our website here.

[5] Using the median caseload for the three individuals that selected ranges where it was possible to calculate the median (85.5, 85.5, 20). Using 101 as the caseload for the individual that selected 101 or more. Consequently, the average caseload could be significantly higher.