The SCARPA Project
Review of work Sep 2007 to Oct 2010
Ros Medforth, The Children’s Society Research Unit
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Acknowledgements

A big thank you to all of the young people participating in SCARPA work who took part in the interviews over the three years. Many thanks also to the programme staff and to external professionals for participating in the review by sharing their views and experiences of SCARPA, and in particular to staff members Kirsten Hall and Richard Haigh for all their help throughout the review process. Thanks also to Gwyther Rees in the Research Team for his support and advice with the writing up of this report.

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Introduction

This report describes a review of the SCARPA (Safeguarding Children At Risk – Prevention and Action) Programme undertaken during the period from November 2007 to October 2010. This introductory section begins by giving a very brief overview of the background context to the programme and a summary of SCARPA’s main aims and objectives. This is followed by a section detailing the objectives of this review and the methodology employed.

The SCARPA Programme: Background context and aims

The purpose and aims of the SCARPA Programme

The SCARPA Programme was launched in November 2007 to work mainly with young people under sixteen who were missing from home or at risk on the streets both in the city of Newcastle and the wider area of Northumbria. It is located within an independent suite of rooms in the Brunswick Methodist Church in Newcastle city centre. SCARPA is delivered in partnership between The Children’s Society and Barnardo’s: The Children’s Society’s work within the SCARPA framework is to provide targeted youth support to young people who go missing and to support their families; while the Barnardo’s work focuses on young people at risk of Sexual Exploitation. SCARPA’s staff team currently consists of a full time programme manager, senior practitioner, project worker, family project worker and part time administration manager who are all employed by The Children’s Society. A Barnardo’s project worker focuses on young people at sexual exploitation.

The model for practice at SCARPA involves offering a holistic service of one-to-one intensive support to young runaways to help them stay safe and work towards solutions to the issues which were causing them to go missing, plus advocacy and referral on to other services when appropriate. Alongside this it was envisaged early on that the programme would have a wider role to raise awareness among young people in the area about the risks of running away and among professionals of young people’s needs in relation to running away.
Casework with young people started in January 2008. In October 2008 a family worker was employed to work with the families of young people involved in going missing and exploitation, in the hope that by working with all of the family, young people would have a much better chance of improving their situations. Specifically, SCARPA supports young people by providing: help with any immediate needs that young people have; a safe place in the city centre; ongoing support if required – they aim to be in contact with young people at least twice a week (and more if needed), and support in accessing, negotiating and maintaining relationships with other service providers in the area.

SCARPA aims to help the young people they work with to:

- be ‘safe from harm’
- stop going missing
- reduce risky behaviours
- exit situations of exploitation.

The Review

The review presented in this report was carried out by researchers at The Children’s Society’s Research Unit. It focuses on the case work with young people who go missing, an aspect of the SCARPA programme funded by Northern Rock between the period from September 2007 and October 2010.

The aim of the third year review was to identify and measure the outcomes of the work carried out with young people and to highlight the learning (what has gone well, not so well and suggestions for improvements). In particular it aimed to;

- ascertain the key features which contributed to the programme’s success and highlight its strengths and weaknesses,
- capture learning from all three years,
- review and measure the outcomes of the programme - as reported to the Funder Northern Rock,
- produce an end of funding summative review report at the end of year three which highlights the above.

Review design

This review predominantly utilises qualitative methods to collect data, however, general monitoring statistics relating to the numbers of young
people receiving support at SCARPA and work undertaken during the three year period collected through the Children and Young People’s Monitoring System (henceforth CHYMS) are also included in this report in chapter 2 to provide some degree of contextual background to the review. This review also borrows from a Realist Evaluation \(^1\) approach methodology: staff were asked to provide 6 case examples which included the following for each case: the young person’s presenting issues (contexts), changes occurring for the young person through the intervention (outcomes), the work they actually carried out with the young person and both enabling and hindering factors impacting on the work (mechanisms). Further quantitative outcome data for all the young people worked with was also taken from SCARPA’s annual reports which included data from their own Common Assessment Framework Plus (henceforth CAF plus) review system.

**Methods of data collection**

Table 1 below provides an overview of the different methods of data collection that were used over the three year period.

**Table 1: Overview of feedback for review collected over the three years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback collected</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young people</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7 face to face interviews carried out</td>
<td>6 face to face interviews carried out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff members</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3 telephone interviews; 1 face to face interview carried out</td>
<td>2 telephone interviews; 2 questionnaires completed; 6 case studies provided by staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External professionals</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3 questionnaires returned (out of 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAF Plus data recorded by staff</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Outcome data for all ‘intensive’ cases</td>
<td>Outcome data for all ‘intensive’ cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHYMS data recorded by staff</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Contextual data for all contacts with young people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In-depth face-to-face interviews with young people**

In the third year a researcher from the Research Unit held interviews with six young people at the SCARPA programme in August 2010. Four females and two males (aged 13-16) were interviewed. The young people were asked to identify what had been happening in their lives when they had first

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\(^1\) The key driver for Realist Evaluation is to find out what works with different children and young people in different circumstances, through measuring contexts, mechanisms and outcomes.
been referred to the programme, what work had been carried out with them, and what they had liked and not liked about the programme. They were also asked to describe the outcomes and impact of this work on their lives. (See appendix 1a for a list of the questions). At the end of year two, seven young people (aged 13-16) had taken part in an interview with a researcher from The Children’s Society Research Unit.

**Feedback from SCARPA staff**

In year three, two staff members involved in the programme were interviewed over the phone regarding the general learning from the programme, and two took part by completing a questionnaire covering what had gone well, not so well, and any learning to be gleaned during the third year of the programme’s life. Two workers had carried out casework with the young people; another managed this work and the other member of staff worked at the programme base as a family worker. This information had also been gathered at the end of year two. At the end of year three, the programme staff were also asked to complete case study forms for the six young people who participated in the interviews with the researcher. They were asked to provide summary information for each young person relating to the young person’s presenting issues and context, the actual work carried out, a summary of the perceived outcomes for each young person, what had helped and hindered the work and any further learning they wished to share.

**Written feedback from external professionals**

From a total of five stakeholders who were selected by the SCARPA Programme to take part in this review to feed in their views, three external professionals contributed their views through written feedback at the end of the three year funding period. (See appendix 1b for the questions).

**CHYMS monitoring data**

Internal monitoring data was also analysed and included in this report.

**Other information**

This report also includes summaries of ‘outcome’ data for all intensive cases collected by staff during this three year period through their CAF Plus system and included in their annual reports. This included outcomes for young people on: going missing; staying safe; home situation; offending; education; substance misuse and general well being. The SCARPA Programme also supplied other documents detailing the work carried out over the three years. This included copies of annual reports, presentations and other documentation.
Analysis of the review data

As highlighted above, this review primarily focuses on a qualitative analysis of interview and questionnaire data gathered from internal programme staff, external professionals and young people at two points in time who had been involved in the programme in some capacity. The findings within this review report also include some data from an interim review carried out by the researcher at the end of year two. A thematic analysis of the interview data collected from participants was undertaken.

A brief summary of each chapter

Chapter 2 commences with an overview of SCARPA’s work as a whole followed by a brief description of the case work carried out with young people who go missing. The chapter then concludes with a description of who the programme has worked with in relation to the case work aspect of their work.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 present the review findings:

- Chapter 3 describes how the work was actually carried out: the programme delivery mechanisms used in the casework to improve the young peoples’ lives.

- Chapter 4 presents the main outcomes of the case work for the young people involved in the casework.

- Chapter 5 presents some key learning points derived from programme staff, young people and external professionals including perceived strengths of SCARPA, the factors enabling the casework, followed by the main hindering factors and challenges faced by SCARPA during the work.

- Chapter 6 provides a brief summary of the development and evolution stages of the SCARPA programme and their plans for future directions.

Finally, chapter 7 concludes the report with a summary of the key findings explored in the previous chapters.
What SCARPA workers do, and who they work with

This chapter starts by providing an overview of the whole of the work carried out at SCARPA and then focuses on the case work with young people who go missing. It goes on to provide a brief overview of the numbers and characteristics of the young people who have received case work support at SCARPA. This is followed by a description of the model of casework carried out at SCARPA, and includes a brief description of the extent and nature of the work carried out with young people over the three years.

An overview of the work of SCARPA

Direct support for individual young people who go missing in Newcastle

Direct support is provided by staff to young people who have been involved in going missing. Project staff have a caseload of ten young people at any one time. This case work is the main focus of this review report, and more detail shall be provided on this particular aspect of the work in the next section of this chapter on page 11.

Return Interviews with young people reported missing

In November 2009, SCARPA staff started to carry out return interviews with young people in Newcastle who had been reported missing to the police to talk to them about what had happened and the reasons for their going missing. These interviews were carried out with young people who were not currently open to Social Care. The following situations for a young person generated a return interview request:

- gone missing or has run away on two or more occasions
- been missing or has run away for more than 24 hours
- been involved as a victim or perpetrator of criminal behaviour whilst missing or having run away
- has known mental health issues
- is at known risk of sexual exploitation
- is at known risk of contact with persons posing risk to children
- incidents that have generated assessment of needs via Common Assessment Framework, S47 or S17 of the Children Act 1989.

The following quote illustrates the nature of the interview:

“(Young people)... receive a visit from a SCARPA worker who will offer them time and space to talk about the things that are troubling them” (From SCARPA literature).

Enabling the identification of support early on was highlighted as a feature of the return interview:

“The early indication is that this will be an effective way of trying to identify and support young people at the earliest stage when things are not going so well for them.” (From SCARPA literature)

A staff member found this a useful addition to her work:

“It’s a good opportunity to do a bit of work with the young person while you are there, have a little conversation with them, see what comes up...” (Staff member)

A third of these return interviews become intensive cases, while others are found to require minimal support from SCARPA workers.

**Group work with young people**

Early on the SCARPA staff also carried out some group sessions with young people, including a ‘pamper day’ for girls. However, the workers have since been very careful about bringing groups of young people together as the potential for the young people to go missing together is created. For this reason group work had been minimal. The following quote illustrates the potential dangers:

“Compared to targeted youth support it’s a refreshing change for project workers to involve young people in creative group work.... Yet we saw the speed with which mobile numbers are swapped and new potential going missing networks might be created. We’re wary of inadvertently adding to potential for risk for vulnerable young people and so have had to tread carefully whenever we have embarked on a piece of group work.” (From SCARPA literature)

**Support for young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation**

As mentioned in the introduction section, the SCARPA programme works in conjunction with Barnardo’s. A Barnardo’s worker supports individual young
people who are at risk of sexual exploitation. There is much overlap with the missing work, as all of the young people who receive support from the Barnardo’s worker have also had missing incidents.

**Direct support for the families of young people who go missing**

As previously stated, in year two, the family service was launched at SCARPA. A family worker works with the families of some of the young people referred to the programme when this is deemed to be appropriate. Support is provided for young people peoples’ families to help to reduce the risk of the young people going missing in the future.

**Training and awareness raising for professionals**

SCARPA provides training events to raise awareness about the issues involved with young people who go missing and who are at risk of being involved in sexual exploitation. Professionals from a range of services across the city and Northumbria- wide have attended sessions. In year one, it was agreed that awareness training, on both ‘missing’ and ‘sexual exploitation’ issues, was made available to all staff within Newcastle who work with young people. In year two and three SCARPA delivered training sessions on Sexual Exploitation and Missing issues, both as part of Safeguarding Training for Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards and following requests from professionals.

**Local lobbying and the collation of information and statistics**

With regards to local lobbying, SCARPA has worked with the Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards across the North East, highlighting the issues being faced by young people who go missing (see above). Furthermore, during its first year of operation, SCARPA started to collate information and statistics around the number of young people that run away in Newcastle, and have been referred due to concerns of sexual exploitation across the Northumbria area.

”Due to the collation of this information, for the first time the extent of the problem can be evidenced, to help raise awareness of the issues facing young people at risk on the streets.” (From SCARPA literature)

Certain media outlets have also picked up on the work of SCARPA, and the issues they work with:

”Our work has seen both the project itself and the issues that SCARPA deals with receiving exposure in media outlets such as The Big Issue, Evening Chronicle, BBC Radio Newcastle, Metro Radio and several others.” (From SCARPA literature)
Establishment and involvement in Practice groups

Three SCARPA practice groups have been established for the areas of missing, sexual exploitation and trafficking. The groups aim to coordinate a response to these issues, share learning, develop best practice and identify future priorities. These practice groups meet regularly and feed into the SCARPA strategic over-group. SCARPA had been instrumental in forming and facilitating ‘The M- SET Group’ (missing, sexual exploitation and trafficking) which was established in Newcastle as a sub group of the Local Safeguarding Board. In relation to the ‘missing’ - NI71 practice group, SCARPA facilitates a meeting every two months with the Police and Social Care in Newcastle to identify the ten most vulnerable and at risk young people who have been involved in going missing in order that a multi agency response is in place for these ‘top 10’ young people.

Involvement with Children’s Services, the Police and other agencies

SCARPA have had close involvement with Newcastle Children’s Services to support their response to young people who go missing by facilitating Return Interviews with young people who have gone missing and who do not already have Social Care support (see above). SCARPA have also worked with a range of voluntary and statutory sector partners including: Social Care; Police; Local Safeguarding Children Board; Barnardo’s; Brunswick Methodist Church; Education Welfare; Drugs and Alcohol Services and Your Homes Newcastle. SCARPA also emails out a quarterly one page newsletter to all partners who have expressed an interest in receiving regular updates about the service, and has held seven open mornings over the three years to promote the work of SCARPA.

Table 2 below provides an overview of the types of work carried out and the numbers of beneficiaries of each service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of work</th>
<th>Numbers in Year 1</th>
<th>Numbers in Year 2</th>
<th>Numbers in Year 3</th>
<th>Total numbers of beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct case work with young people who go missing</td>
<td>27 young people</td>
<td>33 young people</td>
<td>46 young people</td>
<td>106 young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual exploitation direct case work</td>
<td>15 young people</td>
<td>13 young people</td>
<td>29 young people</td>
<td>57 young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support for families</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 families</td>
<td>17 families</td>
<td>26 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training sessions on Sexual Exploitation and Missing issues</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>16 sess for 385 attendees</td>
<td>9 sessions for 132 attendees</td>
<td>25 training sessions for 517 attendees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brief description of the direct case work with young people who go missing

Model of work (for case work with young people who go missing)

As previously stated, the model for practice at SCARPA involves staff offering a holistic service of one-to-one intensive support to young people who go missing to help them stay safe and work towards solutions to the issues which were causing them to go missing, plus advocacy and referral on to other services when appropriate. This work is carried out by two SCARPA project workers. Staff provide targeted youth support to young people who go missing, generally working with individual young people on a weekly basis for as long as needed (an open case work approach) to reduce their risky behaviours such as going missing and to improve their lives.

“This is informal education- to help the young people to develop as people and make safe choices.” (Staff member)

The work carried out centres around risks and relationships, and building young people’s self esteem. Staff use an array of ‘risk’ resources as well as informal conversations, using counselling skills to help young people to make safe choices in their lives.

“it’s not about accommodation or providing food (physical support) but about something more intangible, but equally important and very profound in its effect on young people.” (Staff member)

The project staff take a pro social modeling approach to working with young people and are ‘young person centred’. A more detailed look at what the project staff do, and how they actually carry out this casework with the young people can be found in chapter 3.

Types of work carried out during case work

Keeping safe work

- Work with young people on the risks of going/being missing, and keeping safe.
- Work on the risks of sexual exploitation and grooming and abusive behaviours.
- Work on the risks of cannabis use; offending; risky peers.
- Work on Internet safety - On line safety.

Advocacy and referral

- Advocating for support from Social Care, Education, housing.
- Referral to Social Care.
- Referral to family worker at SCARPA (for parent/s).

Personal development and relationship work

- Work to build self worth/self esteem.
- Work on feelings; relationships and attachments.

The case work with young people has also included, for example, trips to the cinema and quad biking for individual young people.

**Casework: who SCARPA has worked with over the three years**

The following section focuses on young people involved in the casework aspect of the SCARPA programme.

**Referral routes**

There were four main referral routes for young people: self referrals by young people themselves (of which there were very few); partner agency referrals (for example, Police, Social Care; Connexions; and other mainstream services); young people identified through the missing sub group (NI71 practice group) and young people identified through the return interviews.

**Numbers of young people who have been provided with a service**

Table 3 below shows the numbers of young people who SCARPA have contacted and worked with over the three years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Numbers of young people contacted and worked with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact made with young person and a service offered</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of young people in year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of young people in Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of young people in Year 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total numbers of young people contacted and/or worked with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the table above shows, in year 1, (2007-2008) 38 young people met the criteria for intervention at SCARPA of whom 32 were offered a service. Staff met face to face with 27 young people providing them with a service. In year 2, (2008-2009), staff worked intensively with 33 young people. 124 young people were contacted and offered a service. In year 3, (2009-2010), staff worked intensively with 46 young people. 58 had been contacted and offered a service.

As the table shows, a total of 204 young people have been contacted and have been offered support from SCARPA over the three year funding period. Some of these have resulted in one off contacts. Of the total number 106 young people have received an intensive package of support from SCARPA staff over the three years.

**Age range of young people in contact with SCARPA**

The CHYMS monitoring data collected by staff indicates that for all recorded contacts with individual young people made by staff, most of the young people were in the age range 11-15, followed by the 16-17 age range. Relatively few younger children were contacted (10 and under). The ‘18 plus’ figure of 21 is likely to refer to parents contacted by the family worker. Thus, a total of 181² contacts with children and young people were recorded by staff onto the CHYMS system.

![Age range chart]

**Ethnicity of the young people in contact with SCARPA**

As can be seen from the figures below for all recorded contacts with young people, the vast majority of the young people were white.

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² This total figure of 181 contacts is different to the above figure of 204 in table 3 as it is likely that not all contacts were entered onto the CHYMS system within the time period in question.
Gender breakdown of young people in contact with SCARPA

As can be seen below, the majority of the young people worked with by SCARPA were female over the three year period. However, staff commented that in the final year they worked with slightly more males than previous years.

It is important to note that the higher proportion of females accessing SCARPA is reflective of the general picture of young people going missing in Newcastle generally. A greater proportion of females go missing in Newcastle and so more females than males are referred to SCARPA.
How the casework is carried out with young people

This chapter describes in some detail how SCARPA actually works with young people who go missing. It lists and then describes the main features of the casework model. It ends with a case study to give a flavour of the nature and diversity of the work carried out with young people.

The main features of the work

The following chapter describes in some detail how the programme actually works with young people who go missing, and the mechanics of how they go about achieving change for the young people they work with. As stated above, the approach taken is quite eclectic drawing on a number of different models. It is targeted youth work, child centred in nature, includes an informal education element, and takes a pro social modelling approach.

SCARPA works with young people specifically to raise their awareness of the risks of going missing, and other risky behaviours, and to keep them safe ultimately. Weekly sessions (this is flexible, it is sometimes more and sometimes less depending on the young person’s wishes and needs) are carried out with a young person either in school, at the SCARPA base or some other location when the young person is asked to think through the possible dangers that they may encounter and the consequences of their actions. This is facilitated through the use of a range of tools, activities and exercises. (A description of these tools and methods can be found later on page 21). The sessions are tailored to young people’s own particular needs and situations.

The following describes how the work is carried out:

- The project workers spend time building up and maintaining strong relationships with the young people to develop their trust and encourage engagement in the work.
The project staff model pro social behaviours for the young people, encouraging and rewarding ‘good’ behaviours and challenging ‘not so good’ behaviours in a supportive and non-judgemental way.

The project workers are persistent in their approach with young people, not giving up when young people are hard to engage and being a consistent and regular person in their lives.

The project workers use an individualised and holistic approach with each young person, working with each young person in a flexible and tailored way.

The project staff work with young people on a relatively long term basis if this is required.

The project workers use a number of resources such as quizzes and activities with the young people, which they use with the young people to address their concerns and needs.

Each of the above areas shall now be explored further.

**Spending the time to build up trusting relationships with the young people**

The whole foundation of the SCARPA approach (and their apparent success) appears to revolve around workers building and maintaining strong and constructive ‘relationships’ with the young people.

"SCARPA sets out to build a relationship without which there can be no chance of any successful work. You accept young people will miss appointments – and set things up on the basis that you’ll meet them when and where they choose – it doesn’t matter sometimes they’ll still stand you up! It’s hardly ever personal.” (From SCARPA literature)

“It’s important to have skilled professionals who can talk to young people and build that relationship. To have a key relationship with a young person who spends proper time with them.” (Staff member)

This is much more than simply being assigned to a young person and is no easy task:

"Working with the young people, building the relationship and engaging them in the work is the hardest role.” (Staff member)
Staff at SCARPA appear to work in a particularly young person centred way which young people appreciate. This involves finding out what the young people want from a situation, and putting their needs to the forefront. Without this relationship, the foundation blocks of the work, and engagement with the young people would be difficult. In the year two review report, staff and young people felt that the staff’s skills and ability to develop trusting relationships with the young people was crucial to the process. Valuable relationships had clearly been built up with the young people (and also with some of their families where appropriate). In year three, these ‘relationship building’ skills were also highlighted by external professionals:

“(They are) very good at building relationships with young people. Building trust through consistency even when young people make mistakes.” (External professional)

A young person interviewed in year three again highlighted the crucial nature of this skill with regards to building trust:

“I can’t talk to someone I don’t bond with...she’s the best counsellor I’ve ever had...I can actually tell her stuff that I wouldn’t tell anyone...it’s really helped me...” (Young person)

And:

“In three weeks I’ve changed completely, I was proper cheeky before...but we have bonded and I feel I should be nice to her...and I wanna be nice! She’s like a best friend to me and I can talk to her, I trust her...” (Young person)

At the end of years two and three the young people interviewed described clearly the features of SCARPA they particularly liked. These factors appeared to facilitate and enable their engagement in the work and appeared to be key ingredients with regards to the relationship building process. The young people highlighted the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What young people particularly liked about SCARPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• They felt listened to and cared for by staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They appreciated not feeling judged or criticised by workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They appreciated not being told what to do, and liked being given suggestions and advice which made sense to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They felt close to workers: they felt they were like their friends or family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They liked the informal, welcoming and fun nature of SCARPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the third year review, unsurprisingly the degree to which the young people liked and felt cared for by workers was again identified by the young people. This appears to be a vital component of the work.

“She wants to see you happy...she wants to help...she’s like part of your family.” (Young person)

“She tries to make life as good as possible for you.” (Young person)

The young people interviewed were clearly very fond of the workers:

“I love her to bits!” (Young person)

“Her personality is mint. She’s class! She has a laugh with us, she’s mint!.” (Young person)

“She’s brilliant...I text her all the time... she knows more about it (than anyone)...there’s something about her...she’s easy to talk to...” (Young person)

“They are like your friends...they are just dead friendly...all have different personalities...” (Young person)

The young people interviewed also described how much fun they had at the project. One young male commented that he liked that it wasn’t always serious, and that he could have a laugh with workers. This appears to be another key feature of the programme which enabled and sustained the engagement of the young people: having some fun there. Other young people interviewed for the year three review also liked that they could have a laugh at the project. The informal nature of SCARPA was a great asset in this respect for the young people. A young male described how he enjoyed working with the project worker as it wasn’t as ‘heavy’ as the work carried out by another external professional, this ‘fun’ aspect seems to have helped to motivate him to keep engaging in the work.

“I can have a good laugh with her!” (Young person)

“You know it’s gonna be a laugh, it’s not gonna be like school” (Young person)

For this young person, the worker had encouraged him to do a DJ’ing course, and had arranged for him to go spray painting. He described how his worker had encouraged him to do activities.

The young people also talked about feeling accepted and welcomed. Clearly staff are very skilled at making the young people (at least those interviewed) feel welcomed and cared for, and at engendering trust, and this appears to encourage the young people to ‘want’ to work with them.
Modelling pro social behaviour with young people

As previously discussed the staff model pro social behaviours for the young people, encouraging and rewarding ‘good’ behaviours and challenging ‘not so good’ behaviours in a supportive and non-judgemental way.

"Reinforcing good behaviours and showing by example." (Staff member)

Staff portray values and qualities for the young people to emulate. This appears to involve being respectful, listening, but also challenging the young people when this is necessary and getting them to think through scenarios in a way that ‘makes sense’ to the young people. Staff described the model as being optimistic at heart— as it views the young people as having the capacity and potential to change. The young people interviewed described how they appreciated staff being honest with them, offering them advice and treating them like adults, rather than telling them what to do:

"She’ll tell you like what she thinks." (Young person)

"They don’t exactly throw opinions on us...they appreciate me coming...they treat you like a responsible adult." (Young person)

Providing consistent and regular support and being persistent with the young people

Providing a consistency of ongoing support was also viewed as important by the young people in years two and three of this review. They appeared to value the ongoing and consistent nature of the support provided and the knowledge that the project workers would not suddenly disappear from their lives. A young person interviewed in year three commented how much he liked seeing the programme worker on a regular basis, having weekly support from her.

External professionals also highlighted this regular and consistent aspect of the work:

"(What do you like?) Immediate contact with the girls and their families. Working with parents/carers regularly. Regular, consistent meetings with the students.” (External professional)

Being available out of school hours was also seen as beneficial:

“Being available out of school hours/weekends. Young people can contact SCARPA worker any time or call in to Brunswick Office.” (External professional)
“During school holidays/weekends SCARPA workers were able to pick up the pieces of problems that arose and impossible for teachers to monitor.” (External professional)

It is important to note however, that although SCARPA staff provide consistent and regular support to the young people they work with tailoring the support to individuals needs, they do not offer a twenty four hour service, thus being available at any time including weekends as some of the quotes above may suggest. (Indeed to provide such a service within the current staffing ratio would likely be a recipe for staff burnout).

Throughout the three years, staff felt that their persistence was also a key ingredient of the success of their approach.

“Persistence is key – and real persistence is one of the few things that might differentiate you in the eyes of a young person from ‘the others’ – the other professionals. So you try to surprise their expectations with your persistence – you send them cards, texts, if they’ve stood you up you go and call for them, you visit them at school.” (From SCARPA literature)

A young person interviewed in year three commented on this persistence, saying workers sometimes ‘go on about things’ though she was very quick to add that this was done for her own good when she was at risk, and that this was definitely not a bad thing.

A staff member felt that understanding was key to this process:

“Go to them, understand if they are luke warm...” (Staff member)

However, staff also conceded that there had to be a limit to this persistence:

“Of course we also have to set limits and boundaries - it’s not about casting young people as helpless victims and having no expectations of them– SCARPA is a voluntary service – at some point they have to take a step towards you or it’s pointless. And sometimes the fact is young people don’t want to hear it – they’re at that running wild phase. As a team we had some interesting discussions in the early days – we still do - about where to set the line in terms of how much we should expect from young people – knowing that we have waiting lists and young people who want help.” (From SCARPA literature)
Employing a flexible and holistic approach towards working with the young people

SCARPA provides intensive individualised and flexible support packages to young people (and families).

“Some young people love the more structured exercises and some hate them. We have to adapt our approach but if as a result young people place a higher value on themselves then their resilience to exploitation will also rise.” (From SCARPA literature)

By maintaining low open ended caseloads, staff feel that they have the flexibility to respond to individual needs and are not restricted by time constraints:

“The quality of the work is enabled through the maintenance of low caseload numbers which allows the workers to engage with the families and complete the work required through the building and maintenance of excellent working relationships with the parents/carer and young people.” (Staff member)

In year two a young person had commented that she valued being able to text at any time. (Again, this may feel to the young person that she can text at any time, but in reality staff work within set hours and are not available twenty four hours a day). It appears that this flexibility (both real and perceived) helps to engage and sustain the young people’s (and parents) involvement in the work. It was felt that both young people and parents respond favourably to this approach, and that they may not have received this from other services.

Staff members work holistically, looking at the ‘whole’ picture for the young person. They do not simply reduce the problem to the symptom of going missing. They look at what else may be going on for the young people at the time. This could be related to relationship issues, risky behaviours, how they feel about themselves, and what else they may be experiencing in their lives. This approach is a little reminiscent of ‘life coaching’.

"I don’t know about unique but I regard it as increasingly important that SCARPA has an ability to be holistic but also to move more flexibly with young people as they go through different processes.” (From SCARPA literature)

As mentioned previously, SCARPA works with both young people and families if the latter require support. Staff provide support where necessary, or refer on when this is deemed to be appropriate. A number of the cases appear to be adolescent/parent or carer conflict scenarios along with young peoples’ involvement in risky and unsafe behaviours, in which all parties can
require support in order for the problem to be solved. As for the casework with young people, the family worker also responds to individual needs, and the intervention is not carried out in an overly prescribed or time limited manner.

**Working long term if needed- going the distance**

Working longer term with young people when necessary and the importance of being a ‘passenger’ on this ongoing journey and allowing the young people to take the lead is also a key feature of the model:

"Nationally we talk now a lot about building a team around a young person and 'intensive interventions’. And it sounds great – conjures that image of the young person as a formula one car, pulling into a pit stop as a team of highly specialised individuals get to work, with a short period of frenzied activity before the young person revs up and blasts off back onto the track. I’m not sure”...“increasingly there seems to be fewer services who could can offer to travel with a young person as a passenger in the car they still get to drive, someone who’ll be there for a bit longer than a quick burst of activity in the pit-stop... I’m not sure how many professionals get a chance to be the passenger because of the way services are increasingly structured – we sort of all want to dip in – do a bit on our niche issue and dip out again.” (From SCARPA literature)

An external professional commented that it was important that SCARPA works over time with young people:

“(A strength is that) it has the scope to work holistically and over time with young people.” (External professional)

And again,

“There is a real need for an independent service that can work intensively over a longer (as required) period, with multiple issues that YP bring.” (External professional)

**Using activities and exercises as a tool to facilitate discussion with young people about risks, relationships and other areas of difficulty**

Through informal conversations, SCARPA staff use a number of resources which they have accumulated over the years such as quizzes and activity based risk taking scenarios as the basis to encourage conversations with young people during the casework to address their concerns and needs. For example, this may include encouraging the young people to look at and think through the inherent risks in certain situation such as going missing. This process also helps to build the young people’s confidence to be able to extricate themselves from risky situations. Some young people may know a
situation is risky, but not feel able to actually remove themselves from danger. Building confidence and self esteem can help to enable this process.

The young people appeared to value the ‘risk’ exercises finding them very thought provoking and ultimately helping to change how they viewed risks and relationships.

The case study below produced by staff members, gives a flavour of the diversity of work carried out in the context of the young person’s background and also highlights the outcomes achieved through the work.
**CASE STUDY  Jo**

**BACKGROUND CONTEXT**
Jo was regularly going missing from home – sometimes refusing to return home. She was spending time at known risky addresses and locations, and was involved in sexual activity with older men at risky addresses where there was alcohol and drugs. She was not attending school and there were family relationship problems at home.

**SCARPA’S INTERVENTION**
Work was carried out with Jo on keeping safe and protecting herself. The worker also carried out sessions on grooming, decision making, self esteem, drugs and alcohol, sexual health, identifying risk and bullying. Sessions took place in school, at SCARPA and also in cafes – with the programme worker using such tools as Teentalk and SCARPA’s own sexual exploitation materials. The SCARPA worker kept in regular weekly contact with Jo, seeing her face to face at least one per week, plus weekly additional phone calls and texts.

The worker also liaised with Educational Welfare, sometimes accompanying Jo to school – and Jo had a phased return to school. However, during the work Jo was excluded from school and is now seeking training via other providers. The worker also accompanied her to the sexual health service, and supported her in a court attendance. She was also supported to access diversionary opportunities. There was regular liaison with the care team – social workers, YOT workers, and Drugs and Alcohol. The SCARPA family worker became involved and worked with mum – also facilitating Jo and her mum to attend a Strengthening Families programme.

**OUTCOMES**
Jo’s missing episodes declined – only once in the last 2 months of the service. She ceased her association with known risky males. Incidents related to alcohol misuse stopped. Jo and mum both reporting better relationships. A referral has also been made for bereavement counselling.
Outcomes of the casework for young people

The data included in this section comes from a total of 13 young people interviewed during years two and three by a researcher; feedback from three external professionals, the 6 case studies completed by staff and SCARPA’s own CAF plus data as recorded in their annual reports. It is important to highlight at the outset that the young people who were interviewed by the researcher for the review for both years were by necessity handpicked by the staff and so may have been more motivated to speak ‘positively’ about the programme. Thus, the quotes included here from young people cannot be seen as representative of all the young people attending the programme. Although a feedback questionnaire for all young people to complete albeit voluntarily was designed, unfortunately this was not taken up.

As detailed previously, SCARPA aimed to deliver the following outcomes for young people:

- to stop them going missing,
- to be safe from harm,
- to reduce their risky behaviour,
- to enable them to exit situations of exploitation.

Before the above outcomes are discussed, an exploration of the less tangible changes taking place within the young people which enables them to reach the point of stopping running away and being safe from harm will now be explored.

The young people interviewed over years two and three talked about becoming calmer, having improved relationships and feeling more relaxed and happy generally through the case work. Although it is not always clear to what extent the programme has achieved these changes entirely on their own, it is apparent from the young people’s comments that the project workers have had a big impact on how the young people are thinking about things and responding to situations. This in turn has led to further positive
outcomes for the young people and their families. Furthermore these outcomes are clearly interconnected.

Table 4: Overview of outcomes for young people recorded by workers - taken from the CAF Plus data in SCARPA’s annual reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes for young people</th>
<th>Year 2 (a total of 33 young people)</th>
<th>Year 3 (46 young people)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to their going missing behaviours</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to staying safe</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General well being improved</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home situation improved</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in offending</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in substance misuse</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education improved</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feeling calmer/more settled/more mature

In year two the young people commented that they felt more relaxed and calm, as they were not having to keep things bottled up, and were less angry or uptight. Again in year three, some of the young people commented on feeling more settled and mature in their outlook:

“At home, I’ve settled down now...” (Young person)

“It’s made me more mature...I understand things now.” (Young person)

Table 5: General wellbeing of young people recorded by workers - taken from the CAF Plus data in SCARPA’s annual reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General wellbeing</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 5 above, in year 2, staff felt that 75% of the 35 young people worked with were reported to have had improved in terms of their general wellbeing. In year 3, 65% of the 46 young people supported were
reported to be showing improvements with regards to their general wellbeing.

**Improvements at school**

Staff highlighted in the case studies that school situations had improved for some of the young people:

"School improved- young person now has a place at the PRU and attends regularly." (From case study)

"School attendance and behaviour improved substantially." (From case study)

"Young person’s general behaviour has improved.” (From case study)

**Improved relationships and increased empathy**

In year two, the young people talked about how relationships had been improved at home, and how they had more understanding of how their behaviour was impacting on their parents. Again, in year three, some of the young people interviewed highlighted this particular impact of the work.

"I’ve changed completely, it’s given us more courage…it makes you wanna be able to take life on the chin…” (Young person)

This young person explained that he can now ‘take arguments at home on the chin’, if his parents are angry with him he realises they are cross because they are worried and they are doing it for his own safety. This was echoed by another young person:

"I listen to me ma now...all she is trying to do is keep us safe...” and “I (know I) should put me ma before anyone else...” and “I’ve stopped running away...cos I listen to me ma now.” (Young person)

This young person described how she is taking more notice of what her mum tells her now, and has stopped running away. The work appears to have encouraged her to think about her mum’s feelings more which has helped to improve the relationship. She commented that she is still cheeky with her mum sometimes, but appeared to be more aware of how her behaviour impacts on mum and the situation.

Another young person commented:

"I haven’t been missing since...the exercises helped...I was arguing with me ma (before) I’m not going missing since SCARPA...everything’s
been alright (I: Why is that, do you think?) Relationships at home have got better cos I stopped going missing.” (Young person)

“Relationships have changed for the better…I’m getting on better with mum…” (Young person)

Furthermore, this was echoed by another young person who commented:

“Since I’ve started (at SCARPA) I’ve not gone missing…I’m not having arguments, not wanting my own way anymore... I don’t argue, instead of shouting I talk to her (mother) now... I don’t run away, I’ve settled down...it helped speaking to people...since then I’ve been calm...I stay in the house now and have clamed down, I don’t spend time out wandering around the streets...I don’t think that’s good enough (behaviour) I talk to my mum now...the safety work helped…”

A staff member also highlighted better relationships as part of a case study:

“Better relationships between young person and family members e.g. mum.” (From case study)

Table 6: Home situation of young people recorded by workers - taken from the CAF Plus data in SCARPA’s annual reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home situation</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CAF plus data shows that staff reported that 33% of the 35 young people worked with had experienced improvements in their home situation. Out of 46 young people in year 3, 37% reportedly showed improvements in relation to their home situation.

**Empowering young people- improving self esteem and confidence**

Staff highlighted that some young people’s self esteem and confidence had increased:

“Increased self esteem from pro-social interactions with me and SCARPA.” (From case study)
"It is early days but she appears to have increased self esteem." (From case study)

External professionals had noted the following change in some of the young people:

"...(She) is hopefully changing and maturing. (The project worker) is still in contact to a lesser degree now but has spent hours with (young person’s name) building up her confidence and self esteem, how to handle difficult relationships with parents but mainly with boyfriend. How to cope with emotional blackmail etc." (External professional)

"Talking through problems and giving excellent training/coaching to enable the young person to think for themselves and to raise their self esteem." (External professional)

A few of the young people interviewed described feeling more confident and empowered through the work:

"She’s really clear to do your own stuff, and that gives us more confidence in myself, ... I can do things without others help.” (Young person)

Another young person commented:

"I’ve got a lot more confidence now...It helps sharing problems and talking...not keeping things bottled up and then doing something stupid...I’ve dropped all that now.” (Young person)

The outcomes described above have clearly contributed to the main intended outcomes of SCARPA and as such can be seen as vital stepping stones along the way for these young people. These more intermediate outcomes often need to be achieved before the longer-term outcomes can be tackled. Furthermore, all these outcomes appear to be interconnected and feed into each other in complex and dynamic ways.

An exploration of the longer-term outcomes as defined in the original bid for the Funder Northern Rock will now follow:
Outcome 1  To stop the young people going missing

Table 7: Gong missing behaviour of young people recorded by workers - taken from the CAF Plus data in SCARPA’s annual reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the CAF plus data, (see table 7 above) in year 2 staff reported that 58% of the 35 young people they had worked with had experienced improvements in the area of their going missing. Of the 46 young people who accepted support in year 3, workers reported that 52% of young people had improvements to their going missing behaviour.

In year three staff reported in the case studies that some of the young people’s missing incidents had reduced or ceased altogether:

“No missing behaviours since young person started work with SCARPA.” (From case study)

“Young person’s missing incidents have reduced recently.” (From case study)

In year 2, the young people interviewed appeared to be more aware of the risks around going missing and keeping themselves safe. All of them said they no longer went missing without informing someone or had reduced the incidences. (Of course this is a self reported judgement and talking to parents and workers may provide a very different perspective!). A young person had explained that when he makes the ‘right’ choices things work out better for him and others treat him responsibly. In year three a young person commented:

“You see how bad it would get if you ran away, what could happen...in two seconds your face could be in the gutter...it helps you to see what could happen... and (so) you just wanna change your life.” (Young person)

Another young person similarly commented:

“It just went to me head...I could get hurt.” (Young person)

The risks appear to have come alive through the work for these young people. They appear to feel shock about what could happen to them, and this helps them to ‘want’ to change their behaviour. The work appears to help to change how the young people think, feel and act as a consequence. The work ‘makes sense’ to them, and this appears to be key.
Outcome 2  To keep them safe from harm

Table 8: Staying Safe behaviour of young people recorded by workers - taken from the CAF Plus system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staying Safe</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the CAF plus data shown in table 8 above, staff reported that 50% of the 35 young people worked with had experienced improvements in year 2 with regards to keeping safe. Of the 46 young people in year 3, a slightly higher 52% showed improvements with regards to their staying safe.

In years two and three, the young people interviewed described being more aware and knowledgeable of the risks inherent in going missing, being out on the streets and/or taking drugs. Furthermore, this cognitive awareness appeared to be altering their actual behaviours to some degree (see outcome 1). In year 3, staff also reported that some young people were more aware and knowledgeable regarding on line safety, grooming and the risks in relation to going missing:

"(She has) more awareness of online risks.” (From case study)

"(She is) knowledgeable about sexual abuse and grooming which may protect her from potential abusers.” (From case study)

"Increased awareness of risks when missing/online.” (From case study)

During the interviews some of the young people described how they are now very careful on Facebook and other online sites, and that they are very aware of the dangers to them posed by these sites.

An external professional commented that an outcome of SCARPA is that the needs of the most vulnerable young people who are most at risk are now being better addressed in the area:

"Whilst the generic numbers and frequency of young people in Newcastle going missing has not significantly reduced (as some agencies hoped) since the SCARPA project commenced I feel that the vulnerability of those most at risk has been better addressed…” (External professional)
It is important to note here that SCARPA’s remit is not one of a preventative nature, and reducing the overall numbers of young people going missing in Newcastle – a proportion of whom will be going missing for the first time - is not actually within their capability to achieve. They work mainly with young people who have already gone missing. They can and do however have an impact on the number of young people who have already gone missing to reduce their vulnerability and keep them safe.

SCARPA can be seen as contributing to the ‘stay safe’ outcome for young people as identified by the Government’s ‘Every child matters’ framework.
Outcome 3  To reduce their risky behaviour

Table 9 Risky behaviours of young people (total 35) recorded by workers - taken from the CAF Plus system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offending</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance misuse</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the CAF plus data, from year 2, staff had reported some improvements in the areas of young people’s offending and substance use behaviours for the 35 young people worked with (37% for offending and 11% for substance misuse). As shown above, staff also identified no change in these regards for a number of the young people worked with. Of course, it may have been that for some of these young people improvements may not have been necessary. Furthermore, there were perceived to be relatively few cases where young people’s offending and substance misuse had actually deteriorated during the work. This data was not available for year 3.

Work carried out with the young people at SCARPA involves explaining why certain behaviours are not a good idea and the consequences of these actions and this appears to have been beneficial to the young people. As a young person commented in year 3:

"I’m a lot happier now...me life is going well...she told us to have a laugh and be safe...you can do anything except the dangerous stuff...”.

(Young person)

Outcome 4  To enable them to exit situations of exploitation

In year 2, a young person had described how she was helped by staff to stand up for herself against a bullying boyfriend. Issues of control and work around exploring the effects of ‘mind games’ were worked through with this young person through the ‘freedom programme’.

As highlighted previously, staff at SCARPA carry out work to help young people exit risky and exploitative situations, through raising their confidence and self esteem. Although the young people may be aware of the dangers involved in a situation, they may lack the self esteem, confidence and assertiveness to actually remove themselves from these situations.

The interviews with young people over years two and three suggest that SCARPA workers are able to get young people to really think about risks and to engage them in a process of considering the consequences of their
actions. Their style of talking to and engaging with young people seems to open the door and trigger this change for some. The ‘safety’ work and informal conversations help to get them thinking about risks in a real way and this encourages them to actually ‘want to’ (not just feel they should) keep safe and avoid risks. Their actual desire and motivation to change their actions/disrupt risky habitual behaviour appears to be triggered by the nature of this work. The change can be profound. Without this internal change external behavioural changes are difficult to bring about. This appears to be a key ingredient in the work.

Staff also reported that some young people have accessed appropriate support services when this has been needed, and that staff have also advocated for care placements when this was the only alternative:

“Young person now engaged with other services such as counselling and an outdoor activities programme.” (From case study)

“Young person now has a settled Care place that SCARPA advocated for in light of no improvement in her relationship with parents.” (From case study)

Furthermore, an external professional commented that:

“The project has reduced corporate risk to other organisations involved in MFH management and response.” (External professional).
Key learning from practice

A number of valuable lessons have been captured through speaking to staff, young people and external professionals through this review. These lessons point to areas where the work has been working well, and highlight conditions which appear to impact favourably on this type of work with young people, and which contribute to the positive outcomes. Conditions which have hindered work are also explored in this chapter.

The strengths of the SCARPA model

Staff members, external professionals and also the young people who were interviewed identified the following ‘strengths’ of the SCARPA programme itself.

The independent nature of the programme (non statutory)

In years two and three, it was felt that the independent nature of SCARPA helps the young people and family members to engage in the work. Some of the young people (and families) have had negative experiences of Social Care in the past and find it hard to trust statutory agencies. The laid back and informal attitude of the workers and their voluntary sector persona was felt to engender trust in the young people:

“(It helps having a) laid back attitude, ‘voluntary sector persona’... having a ‘different’ approach (non statutory) is a strength.” (Staff member)

“Independence from statutory agencies (helps).” (External professional)

“It is an independent service which aids engagement with young people.” (External professional)
The central and discrete location of the programme

In year two, staff had highlighted that SCARPA’s central location was a strength, and that the support from the church where they are based had also been very helpful. The accessibility of SCARPA for young people coupled with its discrete nature was also highlighted by an external professional in year three:

"The accessibility of their premises for children – discrete but in the heart of the city centre, close to the metro and locations where young people gather.” (External professional)

The commitment and ability of workers

Staff members highlighted their ‘value base’, seeing this as a strength of SCARPA.

“SCARPA has a good value base and works hard to maintain this.” (Staff member)

Staff members caring, commitment and ability was also picked up by the external professionals who had worked with SCARPA and participated in the review:

"They are all caring, professional, experienced people who have endless patience and expertise. I have enjoyed working with them and have learnt a lot from them.” (External professional).

"I like lots of things (about SCARPA) the commitment, motivation, knowledge and ability demonstrated by the workers & (manager)- I think (name of manager) is a real asset to the service.” (External professional)

Another professional commented:

“The enthusiasm and can do attitude of the project manager and his team (has helped it to go well).” (External professional).

Having a family worker based at the programme

In years two and three, staff felt that the family work contributes hugely to the work as it was felt that working with young people in isolation can sometimes mean that vital information needed is missed to achieve positive outcomes. It can provide a different dimension to the work and a historical
perspective which can throw light on the young people’s and parents behavior. Furthermore, many of the issues appear to be to do with adolescent/parent conflict scenarios and just working with the young person in isolation is not likely to always move such situations forward. Parents sometimes require support to change their own behaviours. It was felt that if possible working with parents when the young people themselves do not wish to engage in the work may be a possibility as parents can still be desperate for help.

Internal review systems

Staff members at SCARPA are keen to measure the outcomes and impacts of their work with young people. Their current CAF Plus system consists of a review process carried out every three months with the young people they work with, to assess the outcomes of the work with young people and to plan further work. The two monthly review helps to ensure that pieces of work are structured and focused and that a young person can be referred on to more appropriate services if required. Since SCARPA has been in operation, CHYMS which incorporates a three monthly review function has also been introduced to ensure consistency across all programmes of work within The Children's Society. This will enable the SCARPA team to further measure the impacts of its work and facilitate learning from practice.

Other factors impacting positively and negatively on the casework

An exploration of the main factors which participants in the review felt facilitated and hindered the work of SCARPA will now be presented. These factors appear to encapsulate some of the conditions which enable and hinder the work of SCARPA.

The young person centred and relationship focussed approach of SCARPA

As highlighted in the previous section, as part of this review, staff and external professionals identified a number of strengths of the SCARPA programme which they view as important features of the SCARPA model. These features appear to contribute to the young people’s meaningful and sustained engagement in the work. Staff commented that some of the young people have found it very difficult to engage with other services, but have engaged well with SCARPA:
“The young person is well known to other services who report a difficulty in engaging her, but she engaged well with SCARPA...taking time to build up a relationship (helped).” (From case study)

Thus it was felt that the relationship focussed approach and the young person centred nature of SCARPA may have contributed to young people’s sustained engagement and the success of pieces of work:

“The young person had not, in my opinion, had a worker solely focussed on supporting her before.” (From case study)

Young people’s engagement (and non engagement) in the work

Staff also noted that when young people engaged in the work this was very helpful:

“Constant support from SCARPA (helped) and YP engaging in that support.” (From case study)

“He understands that he is at risk.” (From case study)

However, young people’s sporadic engagement had sometimes hindered the work. Furthermore, instability in the young people’s lives was also found to hinder the work:

“Young person had a period of 4-5 months with no missing incidents during a settled period at Dad’s. When that broke down missing incidents began again from her mother’s. The young person is aware of potential risks when she goes missing.” (From case study)

“This has been an extremely complicated case... as the young person did not have a permanent home and both step parents actually stated they did not want the young person. Almost daily her situation would change and her risk taking behaviour increased again. Now that she is in residential care we hope to refocus on risks rather than working on crisis management brought on by family problems.” (From case study)

Staff have found that this work can take a lot of patience, persistence and understanding on their part to engage young people in the work. An external professional noted:

“If a meeting has been arranged in school and young person has not attended school for any reason- SCARPA worker must find this frustrating and time consuming. However, as their communications are
so good and they have built a good working relationship with me, they did ring ahead then proceeded to the young person’s home when required.” (External professional)

Peer pressure and negative peer influence was also viewed by staff as sometimes hindering their work:

“(The young person) was associating with a higher-risk young person known to us, who has now been placed in a secure unit. They went missing together regularly, previously.” (From case study)

“The young person’s boyfriend has influenced her to commit crime and go missing.” (From case study)

“The young person’s peer group are older and influence him to become involved in crime.” (From case study)

**Parental engagement**

Similarly staff commented that when parents are supportive of the work, this can help the case to go well:

“Support from young person’s mum (has helped).” (From case study)

However, sometimes staff found that family members did not wish to engage in the work themselves or were unsupportive of the engagement of their child:

“Young person’s mum failed to engage properly with our family worker and has not been that supportive of young person’s engagement.” (From case study)

“Parent with mental health issues who discouraged meaningful engagement.” (From case study)

Again as noted above, instability and inconsistency in the young person’s life could hamper the work carried out:

“Inconsistency of parents wanting her to live with them and changing their mind (had hindered work).” (From case study)

**Partnership working**

It appears that good partnerships have been built up with statutory agencies and this has also helped the work to go well. An external professional commented:
"It’s a great example of partnership working.” (External professional).

Staff commented that schools have been supportive and provide a good space to do work with some of the young people. They have carried out sessions within the school environment which has been positive. It was noted that this environment seems to fit in well with the young people- as sessions are carried out in their allocated ‘school time’:

"School has been a really productive environment for SCARPA – some young people don’t want to think about issues and deal with stuff in their own time – but if it’s part of their school day we’ve found they’re often well up for it – we’ve got some good relationships with schools in Newcastle.” (From SCARPA literature).

An external professional also noted that carrying out the sessions in school was helpful from their perspective:

"Personally, the fact that the workers were more than willing to come into school to meet the young people and were able to do this confidentially. The young people therefore were not missing too much school time. Parents/carers, SCARPA workers and Social Workers were all able to meet at school.” (External professional)

An external professional also highlighted good communications with SCARPA workers:

"Good communications with me as Head of Year, regular meetings and correspondence either mobile phones/emails.” (External professional)

Staff felt that having a good reputation and being treated seriously as a project with local agencies has been beneficial. External professionals who fed in their views also highlighted SCARPA’s reputation locally:

"(It helps) Scarpa having credibility within the region being valued and seen as leaders in the arena of SE (sexual exploitation) & missing.” (External professional)

"...(SCARPA is) highly regarded and respected across all agencies as experts in their field, approachable, reliable.” (External professional)

"The project manager being the vice chair of the strategic missing children group adds value to these arrangements and is a strong voice for the voluntary sector.” (External professional)
Staff noted that when other agencies have been able to provide activities or services for young people this has been beneficial for some cases:

"Youth Offending Team have arranged for young person to go on a plastering course." (From case study)

However, in year two, relationships had sometimes become strained with Social Care due to the project making safeguarding referrals and challenging social workers decisions on occasions, although staff felt that working together had helped to overcome this barrier. The manager’s role in liaising with social care managers was also felt to help in this regard. In year three, problems had also arisen when key participants from other agencies had stopped attending the multi agency practice group.

**Resource and capacity issues**

Another challenge faced by SCARPA has been securing funding to keep the programme of work going, and planning out how to move forward. An external professional commented:

"Uncertainty of funding and continuation of service (has been problematic).” (External professional)

A staff member felt that another worker was needed to carry out return interviews as this would enable capacity for casework with more young people. An external professional commented:

"If capacity allowed, (it would be good) to conduct all return interviews for MFH children and young people.” (External professional)

As it stands SCARPA have a waiting list of young people in need of a service.

"This not a great scenario, but is unavoidable.” (Staff member)

**The learning cycle: self evaluation**

**Learning from practice- self evaluation**

Through this review, the staff team at SCARPA, thirteen young people and three external professionals have highlighted in general terms the areas that they perceive to be working well at SCARPA, the factors that have enabled work and also the factors which they feel have been hindering the work. This review can therefore provide some tentative ideas as to why some young
people may be getting ‘better’ outcomes, and why others may not be. From the case study data (relating to six young people in year 3) for example it may not work so well with young people who have a lot of inconsistency and change in their lives, and it may be that these young people would benefit from a slightly different kind of intervention?

Analysing the outcome data produced through the CAF plus system we can say, for example, that 58% of young people worked with in year 2 either stopped running away, or showed a reduction in running away. But if the ‘outcome’ data for each young person was linked to their contextual data, as well as the mechanism data for each young person, much more could be explored. We could explore:

“What works with which groups and under what circumstances”

Through taking this ‘realist’ approach we would be able to relate outcome data for each young person worked with to their contexts and what the SCARPA programme has done with each young person. CHYMS now allows staff to input all this data, contextual data and characteristics for each young person worked with plus data on the interventions carried out, what has helped and hindered work and the outcomes achieved for each young person. Furthermore, support with such ‘realist’ self evaluations will be provided through the Evaluation Core Offer which is currently being implemented within The Children’s Society. Offering young people the opportunity to independently feed in their views and experiences with support from the Research Unit would also help with SCARPA’s own self evaluations. It will be important to explore ways of incorporating the CAF plus system into CHYMS or linking the two systems together. This would then enable staff’s ideas or theories on what works with whom to be tested out in a cycle of learning, which could then feed back into practice. This review can perhaps help staff to identify areas they may wish to ‘test out’ in the future and so help the SCARPA programme to develop further good practice in this area.
Development and future directions

The development of the programme model

In year two, staff (including the programme manager) highlighted that initially, they had felt as a new project ‘thrown in at the deep end’ with regards to working within this already well established practice area within The Children’s Society. They struggled to find an easily accessible and prescribed method of working for this group of young people. The team described having to work out for themselves the best way to proceed and that they felt they had to develop their own resources and approach from scratch. In the third year, staff described how they had passed through various stages of development:

"Year 1 involved much learning, year 2 developing work/style and year 3 consolidation of what is working. From this base, the next couple of years are exciting..." (Staff member)

And another staff member commented:

"By the 3rd year we kind of figured out how we want to do it." (Staff member)

The team are currently in the process of writing a clear description of their model, in order that people (Funders, and the general public) can visualise what it is that they are doing and how it is actually helping young people. They have called their model ‘Project 85’. This is because they feel that a lot of what they do can equally be applied to other groups of young people and not just to young people who go missing, for example young offenders, those with substance abuse problems or school problems.

"Going missing is a symptom...85% of the work is the same – generic – across these groups. The conversations are the same. Talk about family, school etc. 15% is specialist to this group of young people. (Staff member)

3 Through new developments occurring within The Children’s Society this information will be easier to access for new projects in the future.
**Future directions and plans for SCARPA**

The programme is currently waiting to see what happens with regards to funding applications. Depending on the outcome of these, they will either continue to develop case work support as now, or they will develop other areas which they believe to be important, and where they feel the gaps are. The following, taken from SCARPA’s own literature presents their current ideas with regards to the development of the SCARPA programme of work:

*Early Intervention and Preventative group work*
Regionally SCARPA workers would identify groups of high risk young people in environments such as pupil referral units, youth offending institutes, youth inclusion programmes, schools, and other youth venues. High impact going missing and sexual exploitation awareness work with young people would be delivered using purpose made materials from The Children’s Society, Barnardo’s, and SCARPA.

*Outreach*
Over the last 3 years SCARPA have mapped and learnt from young people about grooming hot spots and vulnerable locations. SCARPA workers would begin to routinely offer outreach services including late night and weekends assisting the police to map risk locations and building relationships with young people and offering interventions where necessary and appropriate.

*Individual support*
SCARPA would continue to offer individual support for young people / families that was not purchased via it’s group work and outreach activities where it identified young people in need.

*SCARPA ‘apprentice’ program*
SCARPA would offer young people the opportunity to go through an accredited, structured, multi-layered and carefully monitored ‘apprentice’ program. This would allow young people who had reached identified goals with their own situations to individually train to become involved in SCARPA’s group work, outreach and casework activity. The aim here would be both to allow young people to go through an accredited process that allowed them to support other young people, whilst increasing the impact of SCARPA’s work by allowing young people to hear from other young people who have gone through a similar experience but managed to improve their situations.
Conclusion

This review is based primarily on qualitative and anecdotal data collected from staff, thirteen young people and three external professionals who were asked to feed in their views. A number of strengths of the SCARPA model as well as hindering and enabling factors impacting on the work were identified by participants. The SCARPA model appears to revolve around the staff having the time to build long term constructive relationships with the young people. Being persistent in their approach and addressing young people’s needs in a flexible and holistic way was also felt to be important. An external professional described being impressed by this aspect of the work of SCARPA:

“*I have been very impressed by the SCARPA project. The workers have been able to spend far more time with the young people in my care than I could as a pastoral head and teacher.*” (External professional)

The young people interviewed appeared to value the support provided by staff and described a number of ways they have benefited from the work, including for some how they are now enjoying improved relationships with their parents and increased confidence. Furthermore, some also described how they have changed how they think and act through participating in the work, and have understood and taken on board the messages about keeping safe and as a result have stopped or reduced their missing episodes. As one young person commented:

“*(what they say) it just makes sense.*” (Young person)

It will be important to continue to measure the outcomes and learning from the SCARPA programme through CHYMS and the Evaluation Core Offer, to help the programme to fully evidence their outcomes for young people in the future and to develop their practice in this area further. Hopefully, this review and further support with self evaluation over the coming months and years from the Research Unit will enable SCARPA to build on this work. An external professional who had worked with the staff commented:
“SCARPA is an effective project, I regard it as an exemplar in this area of work and it is great professional pleasure to be associated with it. (External professional)
Appendices

Appendix 1a

Questions for young people

1. What was going on in your life when you first got involved with the SCARPA programme?
2. How long have you been involved?
3. Tell me a little about what your programme worker has worked with you on, what did they do?
4. What has changed through your being involved in this work/what do you think you have you gained from being involved in the programme?
5. What have you particularly liked about the programme, what’s been good?
6. Which bits have you not enjoyed as much? Is there anything that you’d change about the programme?
7. Is there anything else you’d like to say about SCARPA?

Appendix 1b

Questions for external professionals

1. Please briefly describe your role/connection with the SCARPA programme.
2. Please describe the activities/work you have been involved in.
3. What do you think are the main outcomes for the young people involved in SCARPA (what have the young people gained through the work?)
4. Please describe below any wider outcomes of SCARPA that you are aware of.
5. From your own experience, what do you feel are the overall strengths (if any) of SCARPA? (including factors enabling the casework)
6. What do you feel are the overall weaknesses (if any) of SCARPA? (including factors that hindered the casework)
7. In what ways (if any) do you think SCARPA could be improved or developed?
8. Is there anything else you would like to say about SCARPA?

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