



Evaluation of Barnardo's ReachOut Rotherham Project Year Two Summary Report

Introduction

This summary of the annual evaluation report on the ReachOut project in Rotherham reviews the progress and achievements of the project during its second year of operation.

Barnardo's ReachOut is a preventative child sexual exploitation (CSE) project established under a partnership funding agreement between Barnardo's, the KPMG Foundation, Department for Education, Communities and Local Government and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC). An independent evaluation was commissioned from the University of Bedfordshire and DMSS Research both to evaluate the impact of the project and to provide ongoing learning and feedback to help shape its development.

At the start of the project a diverse staff team was recruited from a range of professional backgrounds including criminal justice, social work and youth work. As would be expected, there have been some staff changes in year two and a slight overall reduction in staff capacity. However, the team maintains its motivation and continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to work with children and young people.

Partnership working is central to ReachOut and the good relationships established in its first year have been sustained and strengthened in year two. Highlights of partnership working this year include more joint work with Early Help, the continued collaboration with the Clifton Learning Partnership and the successful development of the Voice and Influence Partnership. Evaluation interviews with partner agencies have continued to elicit positive feedback.

'None of this would have happened without the ReachOut funding, but more importantly they helped to create a safe space to allow it to happen. Barnardo's helped to provide the belief that it could happen.' (Partner agency)

The ReachOut project

At the outset of the project the ReachOut board, staff and stakeholders came together to identify the project's theory of change which has since been revisited annually as part of the project's planning and review cycle.

Box 1: ReachOut’s Theory of change (refreshed April 2017)

The ultimate goal the ReachOut project shares with its partners is for Rotherham to be a safe and supportive place for children of all communities to grow up - a place where families and communities have the information and support they need to confidently safeguard their children, and where young people are less vulnerable, make positive choices and enjoy healthy relationships.

In order to achieve this goal ReachOut believes that all children and young people need healthy relationship education – while more vulnerable young people need targeted support to raise their awareness, aspirations and self-esteem and to access help before problems escalate and thereby reduce the need for statutory interventions

ReachOut aims to contribute to the further development of a culture of trust between agencies and between agencies and communities. It seeks to build the capability of professionals and develop sustainable support to effectively combat CSE.

ReachOut’s three main strands of activity continue to be:

- Outreach work to raise awareness and provide support to children and young people in their communities
- Healthy relationship education in schools and other settings
- Direct support for children and young people identified as at risk of CSE

These operate at three levels of prevention: universal, including outreach at community events such as Rotherham Pride, which helps to convey the message that CSE is relevant to everyone; primary prevention, including education work in schools which continues to reach large numbers of children and young people; targeted prevention with groups and communities identified as potentially more vulnerable to CSE as well as direct work with children and young people.

The evaluation

Over the course of the year evaluators have: carried out interviews with ReachOut staff and managers and representatives from external agencies; observed sessions of ReachOut delivery and interviewed staff and young people involved; interviewed samples of young people and parents who have received one to one support; analysed feedback questionnaires from school students and staff; reviewed project monitoring and samples of case records.

Summary of evaluation findings

Outreach

The specific impact of outreach activities is hard to measure. However, the outreach undertaken by ReachOut is consistent with the available evidence on effective approaches and the project continues to reach large numbers of people with a CSE preventative message.

The learning from year one informed year two priorities for outreach and this year work has included community outreach in new areas alongside the police and Early Help. It has also included ongoing training for taxi drivers which is having positive effects:

‘Any initial reluctance on the part of drivers was overcome when they saw the benefits to themselves – they now see it as part of what protects them from possible complaints etc....[And] We’re starting to see drivers raising concerns – not just children but adults such as confused elderly. Feel drivers are more clued up about safety generally and starting to see themselves as having a role in safeguarding’ (Partner agency)

Continued work in Eastwood has demonstrated the pay-off of long term, community-based work and the relationships which ensue.

‘It’s been a success but things take time. The girls attend the group because workers were pro-active and went out ‘pulling’ them in, they slowly built the group up through building relationships and doing activities, eventually they did do more CSE work but they had to develop relationships first. The girls now know who they are and what they do in terms of CSE prevention’. (Partner agency)

Healthy relationship education

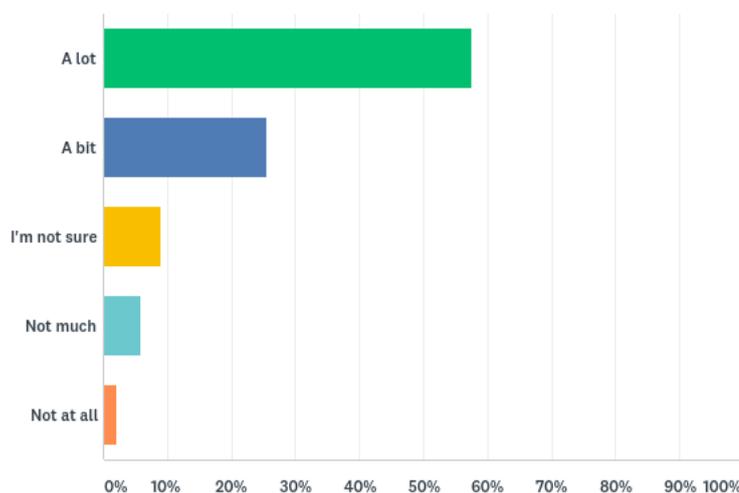
ReachOut has continued its programme of ‘Real Love Rocks’ delivery in schools giving greater priority in year two to schools in targeted areas.

Ongoing feedback is collected from students and staff so we now have a database of responses from 528 secondary and 574 primary school students. These clearly indicate that the programme achieves its immediate learning outcomes for a high proportion of participants. In addition, 90% of primary students and 92% of secondary students felt able to join in or ask questions if they wanted to.

Large numbers of primary and secondary students had discussed ReachOut sessions outside the classroom. This is a good indication of awareness, engagement and relevance. Many primary and secondary students had talked to friends and around a quarter of secondary and over a third of primary children and talked to their parents/carers about RLR. Perhaps

most importantly in terms of impact and retention students enjoyed the sessions with over half of primary pupils reporting that they enjoyed them ‘a lot’.

Q4 Did you enjoy the Real Love Rocks sessions?



Responses from 50 school staff indicate that teachers continue to view the quality and effectiveness of RLR as very good with 100% agreement that:

- The sessions were well planned and organised
- The materials were appropriate for the children’s age and stage
- The workers interacted well with the children
- Real Love Rocks was relevant to all children involved in the sessions

‘Fantastic delivery of the sessions. They were engaging and the presenters showed enthusiasm and vibrant personalities which enthused the students and engaged them in discussions. (Teacher)

ReachOut’s delivery in schools is resource-intensive and difficult to sustain over the longer term. In year two, therefore, a ‘training the trainer’ programme has been introduced to help embed the delivery of RLR by schools themselves. Participant feedback on the courses is very positive.

‘Really well presented, lots of time for discussion. Good resources, it taught me lots of good ways to add to my lessons in PHSE. I’m looking forward to using this programme.’ (Teacher)

There are also early indications that this may be an effective approach to spreading and embedding healthy relationship education into Rotherham schools. A follow up e-survey of participants from the first two training courses received 15 responses – 7 had already run RLR sessions in their schools and the others had established plans to do so.

'The programme has been delivered between a team of staff to approximately 200 year 8 students and small groups / individual students as deemed necessary in other year groups. The sessions went really well and promoted a lot of interaction and discussion with students'. (School manager)

Direct work with children and young people

Between the 1st January 2017 and 31st December 2017 ReachOut received a total of 101 referrals of individual children and young people. 37% of referrals came from Social Care, a further 30% came through Early Help. There was a decrease in referrals from Education from 24% in 2016 to 17% in 2017. One young person was referred by a health service and 5 by members of their family.

95% of those referred were girls and young women. Ages ranged from 9 to 18 years with the majority (72%) being aged between 13 and 15 years. The mean average length of intervention was 5.5 months.

Referrals were frequently triggered by concerns over young people's cyber behaviours, the most common cause for concern being that young people had shared inappropriate photographs of themselves with strangers, or were having inappropriate contact with adults on line. In a quarter of the sample these online contacts had already led to meeting up with men encountered on line; known sexual exploitation and abusive relationships.

Worker assessment of core outcomes suggests that the project has successfully increased young people's ability to recognise exploitative behaviour – particularly when this occurs on the internet, and reduced their level of risk of exploitation.

Feedback from young people and parents has been extremely positive about the quality of relationships with ReachOut staff and the support they have received. All the young people we interviewed were able to give clear and specific accounts of the CSE related knowledge and understanding they had gained, but it was the relationship with a specific worker and the practical, reliable, holistic support they had received that had made the greatest impression on them.

"[I got choices about what I wanted to learn about] I wanted to know more about substance abuse, so we did 4 weeks on drugs and 4 weeks on alcohol. [They also looked at how to build her self-esteem and to encourage positive ways of thinking] I've put quotes on the bedroom wall that make me feel good about myself. When I look back to last year, I didn't know much, now I know a lot more than I did then'....I have a good relationship with E she's really hyper- which is a good thing! I can talk with her outside sessions if I needs

her ... ReachOut is good, if you ever want to know anything they always can tell you what you want to know.’ (Young person)

‘Her self-esteem has sky-rocketed since being with us and E is part of that. We have worked as a team. E recently did the ‘helping hand tool’ with her on a visit here and she wrote down about 30 things/ideas for the future when before she would have struggled to write down 3 or 4. This looked like real evidence of change and it’s all been a joint process between us.’ (Foster Carer)

In conclusion

In conclusion, ReachOut has continued to develop and deliver a programme of high quality work during 2017. The project has maintained its strong commitment to partnership working including its involvement in the multi-agency Evolve team. A highlight of the year has been the contribution to young peoples’ voice and influence through its support of the Different but Equal board.

ReachOut’s healthy relationship education remains important and valued and the training the trainer approach trialled this year shows promise for embedding the work into schools in a way that can be sustained.

The direct work with children and young people continues to be of a consistently high quality and is highly valued by young people and parents.

The recent Ofsted inspection gave Rotherham an assessment of ‘good’ for its children’s services, a significant improvement from 2014 and the contribution of ReachOut to this improvement was acknowledged by those we interviewed for this evaluation:

‘Given our history we needed the extra input especially at the preventive level. The local authority has boosted the early help response too but it’s been helpful to have the expertise of Barnardo’s in CSE. ReachOut has become part of an emerging success story in Rotherham.’