



UNIVERSITY
OF HULL

Independent Local Evaluation of HeadStart Hull:

Report for Children and Young People

August 2021

A copy of the full HeadStart Hull
Independent Evaluation Report can be found at:
<https://hull-repository.worktribe.com/output/3877725>

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Foreword

Poor mental health is something that most people will experience in their lifetime, whether it is only a couple of stressful days or a diagnosis of a disorder, however I believe that everyone deserves the help, regardless of how healthy they seem to be, without there being so much stigma surrounding accessing the support.

HeadStart Hull, for the past five years has been using their services and interventions to support young people with their emotional health and wellbeing, as well as encouraging schools and parents/carers to help their children and themselves. This has been done through various young person led campaigns (like the YANA campaign), support systems (like the parent/student peer mentoring system) and the Mark of Excellence award. All of these support systems have been designed to support and educate young people, parents, carers, youth workers and teachers on how to help themselves and everyone around them.

Mental health in teenagers and children is often ridiculed and explained by the young person being shy or nervous in school. It's seen as something that will pass as the young person gets older, however that is frequently not the case. Fifty percent of mental health cases start by age 14, and three quarters start by 24, which shows that early intervention is vital to preventing the development of mental health issues or reducing the effect that it has on the young person. There are many factors that can contribute to being in a state of poor mental health, however concerns regarding Covid and the lockdown causing people to be in isolation is seen as the biggest factor right now. This means that now more than ever access to the necessary help is harder than before, meaning that organisations like HeadStart Hull are more essential than ever before.

As a young person, I strongly encourage and invite you to read this report as its findings show how vital not only HeadStart Hull, but other mental health support systems are in endorsing positive behaviours that encourage better emotional wellbeing for not only young people but for parents and carers too. By reading about things that work and the limitations that arise, we can improve our services and help even more people with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Gabriela Surdyk

Gabriela Surdyk
(Previous Young Mayor and HeadStart Hull Volunteer)



Introduction

The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) have paid for six projects in England to try and improve the mental health of young people aged 10-16 years. Each project was carried out over five years. HeadStart Hull is one of these projects. It was organised by Hull City Council. The University of Hull was hired to look at how well the project worked in Hull.



The NLCF invested **£56m** in six local partnerships



Nearly **10%** of children aged five to 16 years suffer from a clinically diagnosable mental health condition

Anxiety disorders are the **most predominant psychiatric disorders** in young people



HeadStart Hull

The HeadStart Hull sessions were designed to help children and young people aged 10 to 16 years, their parents and carers, and people working with children and young people in schools and in the community.

The sessions were delivered at **four levels** depending on what each child and young person needed: Universal, Universal Plus, Targeted and Targeted Plus.

Universal

This approach is for all young people aged 5 to 16 years across the city of Hull. It includes:

- making positive emotional health the usual way of life in schools and in the community
- showing children and young people positive ways to manage their feelings and worries, including when upsetting things happen to them.
- encouraging children and young people to talk about their feelings and worries with an adult they can trust
- Helping children and young people find an adult they can trust to talk to. This could be an adult in their family, at school or in the community.

Universal Plus

This approach aims to help people who work in places like schools, youth centres, and community-based services, to provide fast help to children, young people and their families when they need it, or when behaviour or circumstances suggests they need it.

Targeted

This approach includes helping children, young people and their parents or carers access support from others in similar situations to them by talking, sharing ideas and by learning new ways to help from each other.

Targeted Plus

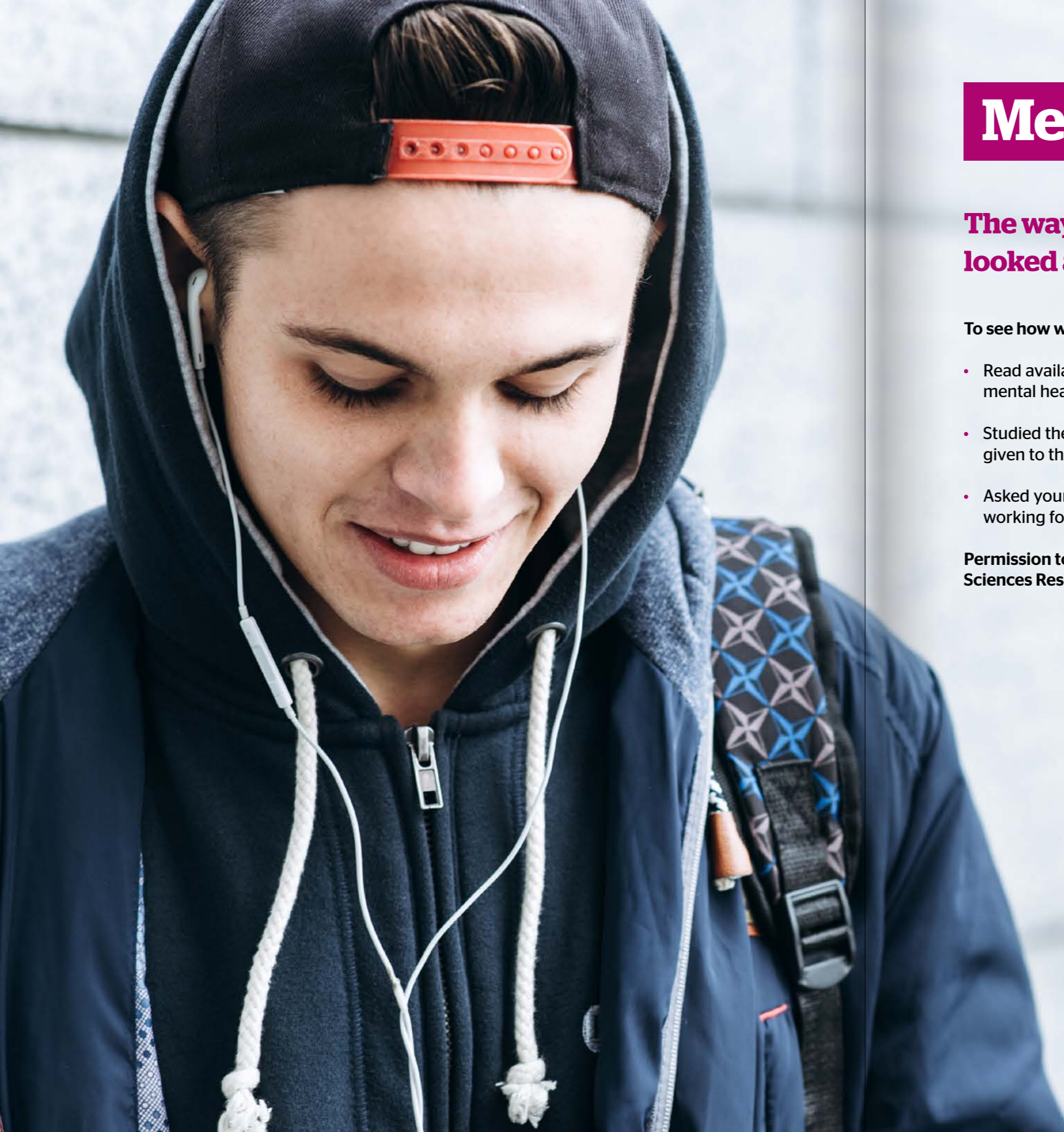
This approach provides more specialist one-to-one help from counsellors or coaches for those who need it.

The picture below describes how HeadStart Hull works

HeadStart Hull Delivery model

"Enabling young people to have positive mental health and wellbeing, thrive in 'their communities' and to be able to 'bounce back' from life's challenges"





Method



92 schools in Hull
signed up to
HeadStart Hull
as of May 2020

The way the University of Hull looked at how well HeadStart Hull worked

To see how well the project worked staff at the University of Hull:

- Read available information written by experts in child and young people's mental health.
- Studied the progress of young people by looking at the facts and figures given to them by the staff working for HeadStart Hull.
- Asked young people, their parents and carers, teachers, and people working for HeadStart Hull about their experience.

Permission to do this was given by the University of Hull Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 28th June 2018 (REF FHS53).

What they found out about Hull



The COVID-19 pandemic has **made things worse** for many children, young people and their families.

For example, FareShare Hull and Humber who give food to people who cannot afford it, reported that they **fed more than 10,500 people every week**.



Hull is one of the **poorest places** in England.

More children and young people in Hull are **going to hospital for conditions caused by drinking alcohol**.



In 2017/18, there were **37 admissions** of children and young people aged under 18 to hospital in Hull because of a diagnosed mental health condition. This was higher than the year before.

Pupil absences (authorized and unauthorized) went up in all schools in Hull in the school year 2018/2019 when compared with the school year 2015/2016.



Ofsted (who inspect schools and services that care for children) reported in 2020 the progress and **experiences of children in care in Hull have worsened** and many children have not received good enough help to meet their needs.

In 2019, across Hull, the **average Attainment 8 score** (the student's average score across their eight best subjects) was **43.3**, which compares to 46.7 for pupils across all state-funded schools in England.

Access to HeadStart Hull services



As of May 2020, there were **92 schools in Hull signed up to HeadStart Hull**. Thirty-five of these schools were signed up as HeadStart Lite. This meant they could be part of HeadStart Hull but would get less help.

Most young people **found out about HeadStart Hull from a teacher** or another member of school staff



Between September 2016 and July 2019, **1,039 young people** went to a HeadStart service (Turn2Us and Play Rangers not included).



Out of 101 young people who were asked, **81 found it easy to arrange to attend** a HeadStart service.



Friendliness of others was the most helpful reason for young people to attend a HeadStart service.

The parents and carers who were asked what they thought would make the service better for their child said **making it quicker for children to be seen** and making the course longer.



HeadStart Hull staff have reported **young people being hungry** on arrival to sessions.

They have tried to address this by making food available at the start or during sessions.



Who delivers each HeadStart Hull service

Jigsaw PSHE - Schools

Turn 2 Us - Hull City Council (HCC) Youth Service

Play Rangers - Hessele Road Network, and the Maxlife and St Michael's Youth Projects, all registered charities.

Young People's Peer Mentoring - Cornerhouse, a registered charity

SMILE (Community) Group Work - HCC Youth Service

WRAP Group Work (Schools) - Barnardo's, a registered charity

SMASH Group Work (Schools) - Humber NHS Foundation Trust

Emotional Resilience Coaches - HCC

Counselling - The Warren until August 2018 and Hull and East Yorkshire MIND, a registered charity from December 2018

Parent Peer Mentoring - Child Dynamix, a registered charity

Parenting Support - HCC

Parenting support for children with additional needs - KIDS Yorkshire and Humber, a registered charity

Children and Young People's Campaigns - Children and Young People Volunteers "Headstarters"



Photo: © Chris Pepper

Experience of children and young people using a HeadStart Hull Service



Most of the young people we asked **found the HeadStart Hull service they attended enjoyable**



Two thirds thought they were good fun

More than half of the young people thought **the service was helpful** and less than half said it was confidence boosting. Very few young people said the service was not good.

The average length of time a young person spent attending a HeadStart Hull service was **100 days**.



School based group work - SMASH had the longest average attendance and WRAP had the shortest.

Eighty-seven of the 104 young people we asked had not heard of the **www.howareyoufeeling.org.uk** website



Ninety-seven of the 104 young people we asked had not heard of the mobile app Caremonkeys.



- A score called My Star™ was used to measure how much young people improved when they attended a service. The average score for the six HeadStart Hull services collecting data was 3.5 before and 4.2 after attendance. This means that the services were mostly helpful.
- Nearly half of young people using one of the six HeadStart Hull services progressed and nearly half stayed the same. More people going to school-based group work - SMASH improved than those going to other services.
- Five out of 100 young people using a HeadStart service got worse. Community based group work - SMILE had the highest number of people who did not improve, and counselling had the highest number of young people who got worse.
- All the HeadStart Hull services for young people were good at helping them to improve their feelings and behaviour, and confidence and self-esteem.

Over the next couple of pages are young people's opinions on what they thought of the HeadStart Hull services.

“ There's always gonna be something difficult about anything you do but at first for me it was getting used to telling someone I didn't know what's going on but now I am more confident to. ”

“ Primary school put in a referral and they came to visit me, they then came to find me on induction week and matched me up with a mentor. ”

We asked the young people how having a peer mentor had helped them. Five of them said talking about their worries, and five said it made them feel more confident. Four young people said they felt less lonely, and two said being introduced to other people. Two young people described being helped with their problems and one said being encouraged to take part in activities. One young person explained that it had helped them have less arguments at home because they had been given advice on how to avoid this.

YP's Peer Mentoring

“ I went to help others and it made me feel good. I learned how to comfort and give aid. It would help people like me if the training was made more accessible. ”

Turn 2 Us

“ I attended the service to make me feel better about myself and I did. It helped being at lunchtime. ”

“ I went because I can tell people things that I would not like to tell at home, and they would understand. It helped because they made me happy and made me smile and calm down when I was angry. I learnt to be calm and listen more. ”

“ I learnt how to be safe when having sex. ”

SMILE

“ I went because I was angry and lashed out. The staff helped me. I learnt how to make pizza. More trips and baking would make it better. ”

“ I attended the service because I was worried about my neighbours keeping me up and then not being able to concentrate at school, and my dad's girlfriend calls me names. I liked the session when we did what is a good friend and what is a bad friend. I learnt how to deal with bullying. ”

“ I went because people said it was a good place to go for help and support. It helped meeting new people and friends. I learnt not to be shy and to not be afraid to shout out what you think, but make sure you're being respectful of your surroundings. ”

“ It helped because they tell you the good and bad of various things. They were very supportive, around my sexuality, as I am a huge supporter of the LGBTQ community and they were really friendly. I learnt how to handle my emotions and my actions. ”

Play Rangers

“ I went to visit friends and have fun with new people. The sugar, friends and activities made me feel good. They don't restrict creativity and mind flow. ”

WRAP

“ I attended because WRAP is for people with special needs and family problems. It helped as every session and was mindful and the staff were great. I learnt how to cope with bad times. It would be better for people like me if the staff talked to kids privately. ”

SMILE

“ My mum told me about the service. My lovely new friends made me feel good. I learnt that it's easy to make new friends here. ”

“ It would be better if we could go outside and play football. ”

Play Rangers

“ I went because my mate was there. It helped being around happy people. ”

“ It was fun and easy, plus I was with my friends. It helped me because I was with people I knew, and the activities were fun. I learnt about healthy relationships. ”

SMILE

“ It helped me with friendships, and I learnt how to react when someone annoys me. ”

“ I didn't want to at first, but I gave it a try and I enjoyed it as everybody was very nice. It helped to meet new friends. It would be better if there were sports. ”

SMILE

“ I went because I was worrying too much about my sister and coping with her was making me upset. We found her with a massive pair of scissors over her hand threatening to cut her hand off. She has autism and looks like a 12-year-old but is only 1 or 2 on the inside. It helped me when we made a worry monster a couple of weeks ago so I could talk to my parents about my worries without me having to say I need to talk. The special poems about SATs help us once we have talked about the worry, it is out of our system and we don't need to think about it anymore. I learnt that it is actually OK to worry and you are not alone. ”

“ My Mum explained the service to me and said to have a go, and it sounded like fun. I have learned that you can tell people about your worries. It would be better if there were more people of the same age or older there. ”



Experience of parents and carers using a HeadStart Hull Service



Most of the parents and carers using HeadStart Hull parenting services who we asked, said they **would recommend the service to someone else**



The average time a parent spent attending a HeadStart Hull parenting service was **110 days**

- To see how well parents and carers improved when using a HeadStart service a score called Family Star™ was used. The average score before attending was 6.1 and 7.4 after. This meant they were finding out what works but still needed help.
- Half the parents using the HeadStart Hull parenting services improved. Parent peer mentoring had the highest level of improvement.
- Parent peer mentoring had the most people who got worse.
- All the parenting HeadStart services were good at helping parents to improve their knowledge of boundaries and behaviour and emotional wellbeing.
- Parents in Hull did better than those all over the country.

Experience of those delivering the HeadStart Hull Services

- Half the workers we asked said they feel able to talk about mental health and wellbeing because they had training, but they were not all confident in doing so. Some workers did not get any training.
- People organising HeadStart Hull services are proud to be part of something which is desperately needed and relied on, but they think because there are other similar services elsewhere in the city it can be confusing. They think that HeadStart Hull should be for young people of all ages and not just 10-16 years.
- The top five emotions we observed when talking to managers, coordinators, and facilitators about working on the HeadStart project were positivity, frustration, pride, concern and feeling challenged.
- People managing and coordinating HeadStart services said improvements could be made through:
 - more staff
 - more places to go that are under cover
 - suitable counselling spaces in schools
 - more universal services for under 10's
 - better publicity to enable young people to choose what service they need for themselves
 - making the HeadStart Hull checklist quicker to complete
 - better ways to talk to everyone involved
 - more money to keep the service going

My Star™ and Family Star™ Copyright © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Limited

Recommendations

The people from the University of Hull who looked at how well the project worked made some suggestions that may help it to be better:

1. For all the people involved in HeadStart Hull services to talk to each other in a more helpful way.
2. Give more help to the charities and the volunteers who provide HeadStart Hull services.
3. Continue to pay for the HeadStart Hull services that have helped children, young people, parents and carers and look at the age guidance so that more young people can access the projects.
4. As young people in years 10 and 11 of secondary school were not as likely to attend a HeadStart Hull service, work with them to co-design wellbeing sessions of the most interest to them, for example, exam stress or moving to College or into work.
5. Keep the HeadStart Hull brand and Mark of Excellence by finding a way to join it with Thrive.
6. Identify a person and money to maintain the www.howareyoufeeling.org.uk website and promote it more across the city.
7. Make a list of spaces available to meet and hold activities and sessions.
8. Make the HeadStart Hull Checklist shorter and make referring children and young people into services easier.
9. Include clear items in Ofsted standards to help measure mental health and wellbeing for children and young people. Help schools to find more time in the curriculum for mental health and wellbeing sessions. Recognise that schools need to have adequate lunch breaks so that children have time to eat their meals.
10. Include supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in all job descriptions of staff working with children and young people, and make sure these staff can access and attend the training they need.
11. Give staff the opportunity to discuss how they have helped young people with an emotional problem and share ideas that work.
12. Give more regular and clear updates to the staff working with the young people in HeadStart Hull services.
13. Find a way to make sure there is always enough money to pay for HeadStart Hull services in future.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the contribution of the stakeholders who gave up their valuable time to respond to our requests for information, participate in the evaluation and openly share their opinions and views about HeadStart Hull services with us. I am particularly grateful to the core HeadStart Hull Team and all the Service Leads who worked hard to help our team gain access to children, young people, their parents and carers and promote our evaluation website to them. This became even more important during the first national lockdown from March 2020 onwards, and I am immensely grateful to those children, young people, parents, carers and workers who took the time to engage with our website at a time which was filled with so much uncertainty about the future. I am also grateful for the flexibility offered from the HeadStart Hull Programme Manager to enable us to continue to progress the evaluation during the pandemic and bring it to a successful conclusion.

Thank you

Jacquie





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