

SomersetWorks Partnership College Pilot Evaluation

Cristiana Orlando, Kate Alexander, Abbie Winton, Daniel Muir, Becci Newton

Institute for Employment Studies

The Institute for Employment Studies is an independent, apolitical, international centre of research and consultancy in public employment policy and organisational human resource management. It works closely with employers in the manufacturing, service and public sectors, government departments, agencies, and professional and employee bodies. For 50 years the Institute has been a focus of knowledge and practical experience in employment and training policy, the operation of labour markets, and human resource planning and development. IES is a not-for-profit organisation which has around 50 multidisciplinary staff and international associates. IES expertise is available to all organisations through research, consultancy, publications and the Internet. Our values infuse our work. We strive for excellence, to be collaborative, and to bring curiosity to what we do. We work with integrity and treat people respectfully and with compassion.

Inclusive Terminology

The terminology used to define ethnicity continues to evolve, and greater awareness has arisen about gender, cognitive differences as well as of disability. IES seeks to be a learning organisation; as such we are adapting our practice in line with these shifts. We aim to be specific when referring to each individual's ethnicity and use their own self-descriptor wherever possible. Where this is not feasible, we are aligned with Race Disparity Unit (RDU) which uses the term 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except white British. RDU does not use the terms BAME (black, Asian, and minority ethnic) or BME (black and minority ethnic) as these terms emphasise certain ethnic groups and exclude others. It also recommends not capitalising ethnic groups, (such as 'black' or 'white') unless that group's name includes a geographic place. More broadly, we understand that while individuals may have impairments it is society that disables them, hence we refer to disabled people. Not all people identify with male or female and we reflect their self-descriptions in our work and use the term non-binary should abbreviation be necessary. We value neurodiversity. Where possible we always use people's self-descriptors rather than impose categories upon them

Institute for Employment Studies
City Gate
185 Dyke Road
Brighton BN3 1TL
UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1273 763400
Email: askIES@employment-studies.co.uk
Website: www.employment-studies.co.uk

Copyright © 2023 Institute for Employment Studies

IES project code: 6192

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	The SomersetWorks Partnership College	1
1.2	Evaluation process	4
2	Theory of Change	7
2.1	SWPC Theory of Change	7
3	Programme participants and activities	11
3.1	Sociodemographic profile	11
3.2	Outputs	12
3.3	Activities	13
3.4	Outputs and initial outcomes	14
3.5	Distance travelled	14
4	Staff consultations	16
4.1	Programme set-up	16
4.2	Programme delivery	18
4.3	Partnership work	20
4.4	Lessons learned	21
5	Young people case studies	23
5.1	Young Person A	23
5.2	Young Person B	24
5.3	Young Person C	25
5.4	Young Person D	26
5.5	Young Person E	27
6	Value for Money	28
6.1	Costs	28
6.2	Social Return on Investment	30
7	Conclusions and recommendations	33
7.1	Conclusions	33
7.2	Recommendations	35
	Response from the Head of SomersetWorks: what we have learnt and changed	37
	References	41
	Appendix	42
	SWPC Pilot funding and set-up timeline	42
	Advocate Support Journey Map	43
	Partner and advocate organisations supporting the research	45
8	Triage Process for SomersetWorks/Partnership College	47

1 Introduction

In November 2021 Somerset County Council (SCC) was awarded funding by the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF) to run an eight-month pilot of an innovative pre-employability programme targeted to the most vulnerable young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the county, under the name of the SomersetWorks Partnership College Pilot. Due to delays in agreeing and awarding the funding, the government department leading the fund (the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) allowed CRF projects to extend delivery until the end of November 2022 instead of the initial deadline of June 2022.

After a short period of initial set-up, the Partnership College Pilot ran from March to November 2022, with the delivery of support to young people commencing in April 2022. It was delivered by SomersetWorks together with 22 partner organisations across the county.

SCC commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to lead an evaluation of the pilot. The research ran between February and October 2022, with the purpose of evaluating the initial design of the intervention, progress against targets, delivery and management, outcomes, value for money, and lessons learnt.

In particular, the research focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the approach taken by the SomersetWorks Partnership College, which combined coordination and brokerage of partners' offers including therapies as well as education and employment provision to support the most vulnerable young people NEET in the county. This report presents findings from the evaluation.

1.1 The SomersetWorks Partnership College

Somerset is a diverse county, including urban and rural areas, with pockets of high wealth alongside areas of significant deprivation. As of March 2021, SCC estimated that 28 per cent of care leavers, 15 per cent of young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), 62 per cent of young offenders, 50 per cent of young carers and 39 per cent of those in care in the country were NEET¹.

In 2020 Somerset County Council secured European Social Funding (ESF) to enable it to provide targeted NEET prevention and support for its young people aged 15-18 (which has also supported the Council to meet its duties under the Raising of Participation Age policy). Through this, SomersetWorks has supported over 700 young people who are

¹ Source: UK Community Renewal Fund Application for the SomersetWorks Partnership College Pilot

NEET or at risk of NEET to identify suitable destinations and provide support to their transitions. Through this, SomersetWorks has established that many young people lack understanding of the full range, and implications, of post-16 options available to them. It has also identified that some particularly vulnerable young people, for whom a combination of traumatic life experiences, social deprivation and lack of opportunity, exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, have substantial barriers to making successful post-16 transitions. Following the pandemic, poor mental health has increased among young people² and the SomersetWorks team has found that young people have become more isolated and reluctant to leave home, which has negatively affected their capacity to engage with learning. SomersetWorks also reports that there have been a greater number of education non-starters and early leavers than before the pandemic.

To address this gap, the SomersetWorks Transition College Head and Post-16 Adviser, who had been working extensively with the local NEET population and support services in the region, designed and secured funding from the UK CRF to deliver a needs-based pilot support service for young people furthest from the labour market who face multiple and complex barriers. The pilot aimed to identify and work with young people in the county who require a substantially higher level of intensive support to remove barriers impairing their progress towards positive and sustainable destinations. It targeted young people who are documented as NEET or whose destination is 'Not Known' in Year 13. These were young people who have often completed a one-year post-16 programme, but then disengaged and not progressed into their second year. The ethos of the pilot is that, working in partnership with community, young people can be empowered to believe that they can make positive changes and choices for their future lives.

The pilot was delivered through a multi-agency collaboration, the SomersetWorks Partnership College (SWPC). The SWPC includes key local partners from the community and voluntary sectors with expertise on individual therapeutic and trauma work, personal skills development, and developing and providing education and employment opportunities for vulnerable young people. There are two distinct types of partner. Firstly, those commissioned to supply the SWPC advocates, who acted as keyworkers and brokered support and provision for participants, and secondly, organisations that SWPC could draw on for specific provision depending on the best fit for the young person.

The partners involved in the delivery were:

- ARK
- Bright Futures
- Bristol Bears
- Edventure
- Intuitive Thinking Skills
- Make It Education
- Minehead Eye
- Pyramid Mentoring

² For example, <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports-and-impact/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/#main-content>

- REACH
- Rusty Road to Recovery
- Somerset Area Sports Partnership
- SEED
- Shared Earth Learning
- Somerset Skills and Learning
- SSE Outdoors
- The Maker's Place
- Young Somerset
- Youth Unlimited

A further organisation, Ethos, was contracted to test an outreach model to contact young people, although was not part of the main partnership.

Beyond core partners, SWPC also worked with a wider range of partner agencies including statutory bodies, such as Youth Offending Services, the SCC SEND Team, Virtual School or Children's Social Care, and non-statutory organisations such as businesses, initiatives, social enterprises and charities (for example, Citizens Advice or Yeovil4Family). SWPC also engaged with Somerset colleges to support the design of late-start and rolling-start date courses for young people who were not ready for September enrolment, to allow for longer transition support.

At the time this report was drafted SWPC had engaged 62 young people aged 16–18 including children looked after, those leaving care, young offenders, homeless young people, those with SEND, and poor mental health. SomersetWorks had also secured additional funding from the Covid Relief Fund to continue delivery into 2023. This means young people on the pilot who required intensive, on-going, support will be able to stay on the programme following the period funded through CRF.

1.1.1 Timeline

The set-up of SWPC took place within a compressed timeframe, which included a delay in the awarding of funding by government. This affected delivery, particularly constraining the lead-in period for programme set-up and onboarding of partners. The original bid for funding, which was submitted in May 2022, was for delivery over a six-month period, from October to March 2022. However, the notification of award of funding came in November 2022, and the deadline for the programme was therefore extended to June 2022. This meant that delivery was due to take place January to June 2022.

Onboarding of partners took place over a short time, as SomersetWorks moved quickly to draw up an implementation plan and agree work packages and costs between November and December 2021. The Programme Deputy Head role was advertised in November 2021, recruited in December and in post for February 2022. In April 2022, following the start of delivery, government announced an additional extension for CRF delivery to November 2022. A table detailing each milestone in the programme's set up can be found in the Appendix (Table A1).

1.1.2 Delivery model

Referrals to SWPC could initially come from any partner who identified a young person that was deemed eligible for the programme, to widen the reach of the programme. However, as the project developed, a triage system was put in place so that all referrals would come through SomersetWorks, to streamline the process and mitigate the risk of referrals which did not meet the programme eligibility criteria. In this revised approach, the Deputy Head initially met referred young people to assess their eligibility and match them to the best advocate to meet their needs.

The SWPC Deputy Head oversaw provision and the ongoing expansion of the support offer, through sustained relationships with partners. This included regular meetings with advocates, through monthly caseload reviews, to monitor young people's progress and support brokerage of provision with Provider Partners.

The SWPC advocate was pivotal in leading support for young people for the entirety of their journey to education, employment or training (EET), building a relationship of trust and mentorship. Advocacy support generally follows a 'Support of Journey' Map (see Appendix, Table A2 and A3).

Provision for each participant was established and agreed jointly by the Deputy Head, the advocate, and the young person, depending on participants' needs and aspirations. The activities were delivered through a flexible and tailored programme. The period of engagement for each young person was flexible and established through ongoing assessment of need. Young people's participation came to an end once they had reached a secure outcome, such as in education or employment, or moved onto next steps provision. When participants exited the programme, advocates continued to offer light-touch support, in the first months, to support sustained transitions.

1.2 Evaluation process

The Institute for Employment Studies led an evaluation to analyse the development and effectiveness of the SWPC Pilot. This involved:

- **Development of the Theory of Change**, to set out the intervention's rationale, intended inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts, underpinning assumptions and intended mechanisms for change. This was supported by an online workshop with SomersetWorks and SWPC partners, to develop shared understanding of the intervention's rationale and delivery approach. The Theory of Change was tested empirically through the evaluation and informed all research activities.
- **What Works research**, through a rapid evidence review focused on: what works to assist young people furthest from the labour market to sustain positive destinations (such as identification and engagement, advisory support, increasing capability, reducing barriers); and what works to develop successful multi-agency youth employment partnerships (for example, establishing no wrong doors, joining up resources, developing holistic support, building coherent pathways). The what works

research provided an evidence-based approach to benchmark current practice within the SWPC and provide practical guidance for delivery.

- **Analysis of Management Information data**, collected as participants entered the pilot, and mid-way through their journey (for those who were still in the programme in November 2022) or upon exit (for those discharged by November 2022). This included analysis of the sociodemographic profile of participants, programme outputs, activities, and outcomes, as well as distance travelled.
- **Consultations with SomersetWorks**, through ongoing monthly discussions with the Deputy Head. The consultations explored appropriateness of programme design against desired outcomes, progress, management and coordination, strengths, challenges, and opportunities in partnership work and in delivery, influence of external factors on delivery, as well as engagement of young people.
- **Consultations with advocates and partners**, through in-depth interviews with four advocates and four partner organisations. The consultations explored views on programme design, partnership work and programme delivery, impact of the partnership approach and programme on young people's journey towards sustainable and meaningful positive destinations, and lessons learnt.
- **Case studies of young people**, to understand journeys through the programme, the support accessed, challenges encountered and overcome and outcomes. The case study approach was selected following predicted challenges recruiting participants (who were particularly vulnerable) for individual interviews. The cases were selected by SomersetWorks to illustrate different types of participant journeys. Data was drawn from the written case notes kept by the advocate and any partners that were offering support. The case studies also used the data from the monthly caseload review meetings held between the Deputy Head and the advocate supporting that young person. To mitigate limitations, the case studies are presented as illustrative examples, to showcase the range of support accessed by young people and how it impacted their journeys, but evaluative assessment is reached through the combined insight of case studies and outputs and outcomes data.
- **Value for Money analysis**, to understand how the potential benefits of the programme compare to the costs involved in delivery. Provider cost data was combined with Management Information data to consider what the Social Return on Investment from the programme up to November 2022 may look like.
- **Evaluation report and dissemination**, drawing together and synthesising all the evidence from the research, to support SomersetWorks to evidence effectiveness and inform future activity. The report explores findings on overall outcomes against targets and design, areas of good practice and those requiring improvement, lessons learnt, and recommendations for the future development of the partnership.

1.2.1 This report

For the purpose of this report, findings are presented as follows:

- **Chapter 2: Theory of Change** covers the Theory of Change developed for the intervention and describes each element in detail.
- **Chapter 3: Data analysis** outlines findings from the analysis of the programme Management Information (MI) data, including the sociodemographic profile of programme participants, activities, outputs and outcomes to date as well as participant's distance travelled using the bespoke scale developed by the SWPC.
- **Chapter 4: Staff consultations** sets out findings from eight consultations with advocates and partner organisations. Findings from the interviews are supplemented by insight gained through consultations with SomersetWorks throughout the evaluation.
- **Chapter 5: Young people case studies** showcases the journeys of five programme participants through the programme.
- **Chapter 6: Value for money** presents analysis conducted to assess whether the programme constituted Value for Money to the Exchequer and to society as a whole.
- **Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations** draws together the findings from the evaluation and synthesises these in a set of conclusions and recommendations to inform future practice.

2 Theory of Change

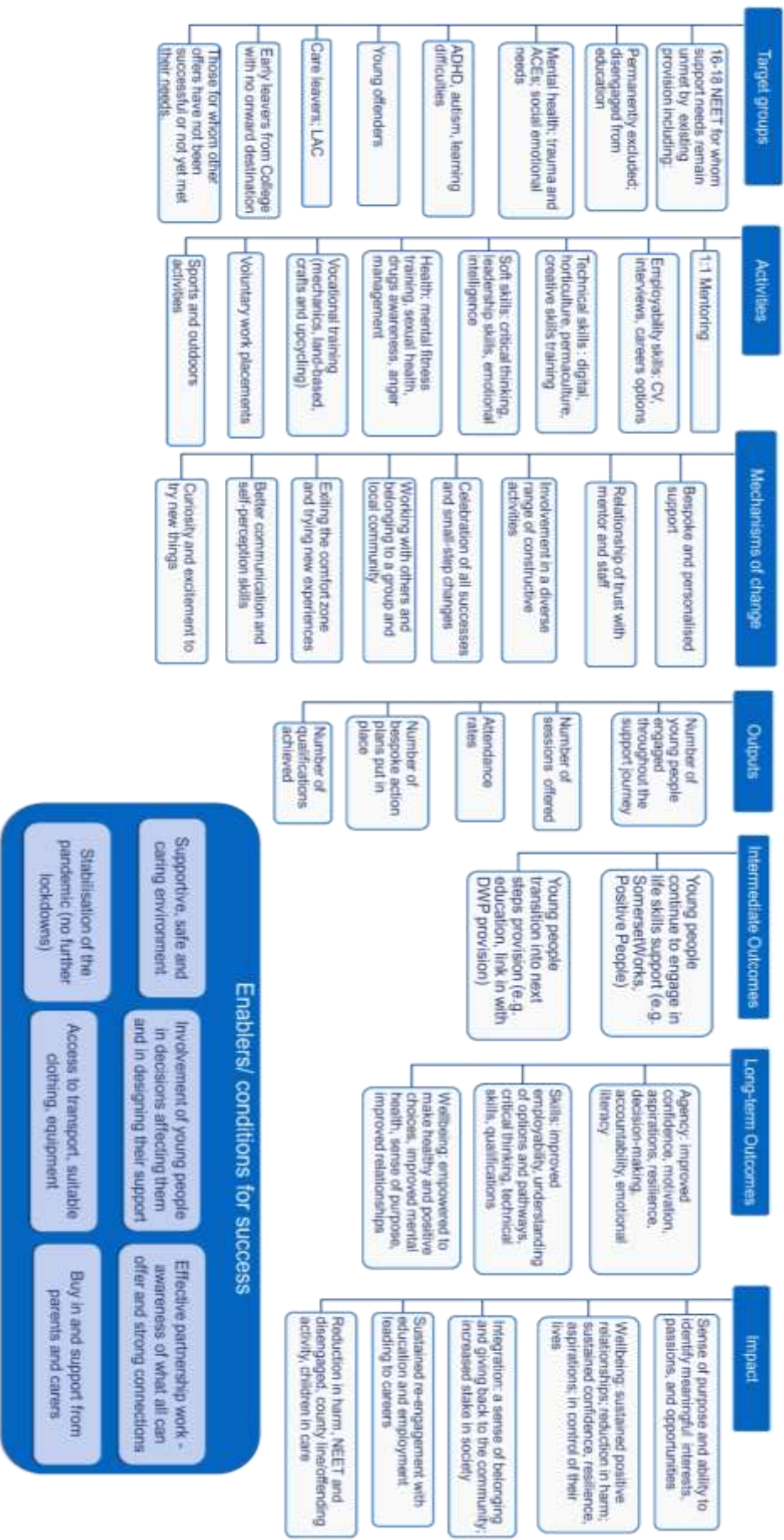
Theory of Change is an approach to planning and evaluation that begins by identifying needs and describing a change to be brought about by an intervention to address those needs. It provides a framework for explaining how activities are expected to bring about change and lead to the achievement of outcomes and impacts. It also allows assumptions made about the expected causal linkages between activities and outcomes to be set out, as well as the things or conditions that need to be in place in order for the desired change to happen (Newton, 2017).

In order to develop a Theory of Change for the SWPC, a workshop was held in January 2022 with 29 SWPC partner representatives. The main aims were to develop a shared understanding of the Theory of Change approach and how it would be used to deliver the intervention; and to ensure that the Theory of Change captured partners' shared understanding of how the intervention would be delivered, the outcomes that it would achieve, and how these would be achieved. This chapter describes the expectations of those involved for the delivery of the intervention to provide framing to the findings from the evaluation covered in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

2.1 SWPC Theory of Change

In this section we present the Theory of Change for the SWPC and describe each element in greater detail. The Theory of Change is outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: SWPC Pilot Theory of Change



2.1.1 Target groups

The target group for the SWPC is young people aged 16–18 NEET whose support needs are unmet by existing provision in Somerset. This includes young people who have been permanently excluded, those otherwise disengaged from education, those with mental health conditions, trauma and experience of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), those presenting social and emotional needs, those with ADHD, autism, or other learning difficulties, young offenders, care leavers and looked after children.

2.1.2 Activities

SWPC's offer is articulated through the provision of bespoke and flexible support, delivered by the partner organisations and coordinated by the advocate assigned to each young person. A key input is individualised support through combined provision from the advocate and partners on the programme. This is complemented by specialist support as well as educational and enrichment activities.

The activities young people on the programme can engage in, beyond individualised mentoring, include employability skills sessions, digital and creative skills training, sports, outdoor activities (for example, horticulture, permaculture), soft skills support, health support (including mental, physical, and sexual health), drugs and alcohol support, as well as vocational training and work placements. Provision for each participant is established and agreed jointly by the advocate and young person, and is dependent on the participants' needs and aspirations.

2.1.3 Mechanisms

A variety of mechanisms need to be in place for the activities to lead to intermediate and long-term outcomes. These centre on the immediate effect on young people who are prompted to think, feel and behave differently.

The key facilitators of many of these changes is the provision of regular individualised support by advocates and the suite of provision, support and activities available through partners that young people participate in. Through this individualised and bespoke support, young people are encouraged to develop a trusting relationship with staff. As a result of these trusting relationships and involvement in a diverse range of enrichment activities, young people are expected to become more confident to try new things. This can, in turn, support young people to work with others (both staff and peers), and increasingly develop their communication skills alongside an improved sense of belonging to the community.

Another core mechanism is that young people are enabled to see value in the flexible and tailored learning and support they receive and so actively engage with the offer made to them – evidenced through their attendance at arranged sessions, the nature of their interaction with staff, as well as their feedback on the activities.

Personal relationships developed with staff, progressive achievements through engagement, celebrating small-step achievements, and work to promote positive self-reflection also contribute to young people building confidence, and improving their self-management skills which in turn can lead to further change, including improved self-awareness.

Through exposure to educational, enrichment and employment activities young people build knowledge of paths open to them and, through increased self-awareness, they are able to judge the suitability of these options to their preferences, skills and aspirations.

2.1.4 Initial and longer term outcomes and impacts

Over the course of delivery, it is expected that these mechanisms lead to a range of outcomes for participants.

These include in the short term (within three months of exiting the SWPC):

- **Continued engagement:** in life skills support, for example through ongoing engagement with the SWPC, or follow-up provision such as through SomersetWorks or other adult support programmes for those 19 and above.
- **Transition into next steps provision:** including education (including college, further training), employment support (for example, through DWP provision) and/or initial entry to employment, education or training.

In the longer term (six to 12 months after exiting the programme) it includes:

- **Increased agency** through feeling more confident and engaged in positive activities, as well as improved motivation and aspirations for the future, and ability to identify and address learning and wellbeing needs.
- **Improved skills** such as employability, understanding of options and pathways, critical thinking, technical skills, qualifications, achieved through learning and engagement in educational and enrichment activities.
- **Improved wellbeing** through feeling more empowered to make healthy and positive choices, improved mental health, and a stronger sense of purpose.

The final impact resulting from participation is sustained engagement in:

- A preferred, positive EET destination including employment, education or training – demonstrating a successful transition has been made.

With an improved sense of purpose and ability to identify meaningful interests, passions, and opportunities, improved wellbeing and resilience, to sustain positive relationships and reduce harm, young people should be more likely to engage and remain engaged with their chosen destination over a sustained period (a minimum of six months).

3 Programme participants and activities

This chapter presents an analysis of Management Information data collected by SomersetWorks during the SWPC pilot. Data was collected from April to October 2022. It shows how many young people were referred and information on the demographics of participants including additional support needs. The chapter then explores journeys through the college; the number of activities delivered; key outcomes and the distance travelled by young people during their time at SWPC.

3.1 Sociodemographic profile

A total of 62 young people were referred to the SWPC during the pilot stage³. The young people were aged between 16 and 18 on entry to the programme (see Table 1).

Table 1 Age of young people referred to SWPC at entry

Age at entry	Frequency
16	18
17	26
18	18
Total	62

Source: SWPC management information

All young people described themselves as white British. Just over a third (22 participants) were female and 37 were male, with two preferring not to disclose their gender identity. The majority of young people were economically inactive at the start of the programme (n=44) while the rest were unemployed and looking for work (n=18)⁴. The majority (32) held no qualifications, a third (22) held Level 1 qualifications, eight had a Level 2⁵ qualification (see Table 2).

Table 2 Highest qualification held by young people referred to SWPC at entry

Qualification Level	Count of Highest Qualification
Level 1 (GCSE grade equivalent 1-3)	22

³ Of the 62 young people referred, 54 engaged in support, and 46 sustained engagement for the duration of the pilot. The remaining 16 referrals were either retracted by the referring organisation or closed before completion. See 'Outputs' section for details.

⁴ Given the age of the young people on the programme (under 18) they are most likely not able to access most welfare benefits

⁵ To achieve a Level 2 qualification, a GCSE grade equivalent of 5 is required.

Level 2 (GCSE grade equivalent 4-9)	8
None	32
Total	62

Source: SWPC management information

Young people who participated in the SWPC had a range of complex needs including being looked after children, having Youth Offending Team (YOT) involvement, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) (see Table 3). The most common categories of EHCP were Social, Emotional and Mental Health (n=9), Communication and Interaction – Speech and Language (n=6), Communication and Interaction – Social Communication (n=5), Cognition and Learning (n=5) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (n=3). These EHCP categories were not mutually exclusive and some participants had a number of needs and/ or disabilities.

Table 3 Categories of need of young people referred to SWPC at entry

Categories of need	Frequency
Looked after children	21
Youth Offending Team involvement	13
SEND	36
EHCP	24

Note: Multiple response data

Source: SWPC management information

3.2 Outputs

Of the 62 young people referred to the SWPC during the pilot stage, 54 young people engaged in support, and 46 sustained engagement for the duration of the pilot. Of these, 48 per cent (n=22) completed the programme and 52 per cent (n=24) were still engaged on the programme as of October 2022.

The remaining 16 referrals were either retracted by the referring organisation or closed before completion. In eight instances, this was due to young people not engaging in the support. Five referrals were returned with four of these due to the referral being retracted by the referring organisation and one young person being too high risk for the SWPC to support⁶. Other reasons for closing referrals were the young person already being in education, employment, or training; the young person turning 19 and claiming Universal Credit; and the young person being detained under Section 20.

⁶ No further data is available detailing the type of risk and why it was deemed too high for participation in SWPC

3.3 Activities

Young people who engaged in SWPC were supported by eight advocate organisations which worked with the young people and enabled their access to support from 12 partner organisations. Each engagement with an advocate (Table 4) or a partner organisation (Table 5) was recorded. Organisations supplying advocacy provided anywhere between 23 and 298 engagements depending on capacity, with an average of 10 young people referred and 20 engagements in activities per organisation. Two partner organisations did not engage any young people; the remainder provided between three and 282 engagements, with an average of four young people referred and 12 engagements in activities. The 62 young people referred to the college took part in a total of 2,103 engagements with an average of 33 per participant. The 46 young people who engaged in the support took part in 1,929 engagements, an average of 44 per young person.

Table 4 Number of engagements provided by advocate organisations

Advocate engagements	
REACH	298
Intuitive Thinking Skills	282
SASP	247
Youth Unlimited	198
Bright Futures	189
Pyramid Mentoring	115
Edventure	29
Minehead Eye	23

Source: SWPC management information

Table 5 Number of engagements provided by partner organisations

Partner engagements	
Intuitive Thinking Skills	282
Bright Futures	189
Young Somerset	125
Shared Earth Learning	79
Make It Education	41
The Maker's Place	35
Edventure	29
ARK	12
SEED	7
Rusty Road	3

Note: two further organisations, Bristol Bears and Somerset Skills and Learning, were either outside the core offer or did not record their interactions

Source: SWPC management information

3.4 Outputs and initial outcomes

The programme and CRF funding aimed to support young people to enter education, training or work, or to progress towards this through engaging in job searching or life skills support. Given the heterogeneity of the group that would be supported, some of these outputs (such as entry into education or work) could be seen as initial outcomes and were preceded by participation in life skills support. SWPC aimed to support 30 young people into education or training, 20 in job searching, and 50 in life skills support. Progress against these targets is shown in Table 6.

During the pilot SWPC did not reach the target for education and training, with 15 young people in education and training following support, rising to 16 as of October 2022. The target for the number of young people engaged in job searching following the support was exceeded, with 27 young people looking for work, rising to 29 as of October 22. The number of young people engaged in life skills support following the support also exceeded the target with 53 young people engaged, rising to 62 as of October 22.

Table 6 Outcomes achieved

Outcome	CRF target	Total achieved during the pilot	Total to date*: 26/10/2022
People in education/ training	30	15	16
People engaged in job searching	20	27	29
People engaged in life skills support	50	53	62

* includes new intake from rolling programme throughout the year

Source: SWPC management information

3.5 Distance travelled

SomersetWorks developed a measure to track young people's progress through SWPC. This used a seven-point scale to capture distance travelled (Table 7), the scale indicates the position occupied by a young person on their journey to EET at the start of their engagement and mid-way or at the end, depending on whether they remained engaged on the programme or had exited after the end of the pilot. A young person's position on the scale was derived from an initial meeting and updated through monthly check-ins with the Advocate and information from all partners supporting the young person.

Table 7 Distance travelled scale

Distance Travelled Scale	
0	Not Engaging
1	Enrolled and Engaged (initially with a SW TC and then with an SWPC Advocate) – YP is able to communicate through text, email, online or phone, through closed door to a room
2	Face-to-Face Engagement in Home – YP is able to meet Advocate online, at the YP's home, outside the front door or in a room in the house
3	Confident to leave home with Advocate – YP is confident to travel away from home, either managing a walk or taking a car journey to an agreed venue, eg for a coffee or a taster session with another partner
4	External Engagement – YP is able to commit to, attend and take part in one of the range of offers from other partners within the Partnership College
5	The “What Next?” Question – YP is able to engage in discussions about plans for their future, develop aspiration and vision
6	EET Planning - YP is able to start to engage in the plan process, discuss possibility and investigate options
7	Exit with Outcome – YP is fully supported into EET

Of the 46 young people who sustained engagement in the programme:

- the average start point was one;
- the average point at the time the evaluation data was drawn was six;
- the most distance travelled was five points along the scale; and
- the overall average distance travelled was four.

4 Staff consultations

Consultations with eight advocates and partner organisations explored the support delivered by SWPC during the pilot programme, the process of designing and setting up the programme, how partnership working functioned and lessons learned from the pilot. Findings from the interviews were supplemented by insights gained through consultations with SomersetWorks throughout the duration of the evaluation. A short summary of each organisation that took part in interviews is included in the appendices.

4.1 Programme set-up

4.1.1 Programme development

The development of the SWPC was led by the SomersetWorks, by the Transition College Head and the Post-16 Adviser, who initially designed the intervention and built on their knowledge and network of partners with expertise in supporting vulnerable young people across the SCC, to bring together a range of organisations that could deliver the holistic and specialised support envisioned by the intervention.

The partnership approach to delivering support for young people furthest from the labour market was roundly praised by partners. Working within a partnership meant that partners could draw on the expertise of other members of the SWPC to provide holistic support. The model of bringing partners together and creating a triaged referral process was deemed an effective way of delivering support to the most at-risk young people and one that should be replicated going forwards. Partners also felt trusted by SomersetWorks staff to deliver support that would be most effective for individuals, according to their expertise and provision offer.

The initial meetings that the SomersetWorks Transition College Head and Post-16 Adviser held with potential partners worked well to identify the organisations which would be part of the SWPC and what they could offer, and supported partners to develop a shared understanding of the intervention. Some partners would have liked to see direct involvement of young people in the design phase to ensure the programme fully reflected the target population's needs, but appreciated that given the high vulnerability of the target group as well as short timeframe for the pilot, this was not possible.

Some partners also highlighted that building a directory of services available within the partnership from the outset would have supported earlier understanding of resources and ability to cross-refer young people, which would have strengthened the partnership. The SomersetWorks team had set up a space for this in the Virtual Meeting Room (VMR) tool that supported delivery, from programme commencement, although not all partners fully engaged with this (see below) which may have led to this comment. Over time, an

additional resource the 'Boards' App was introduced to ensure partners could access information on provision from mobile devices.

Once in place, this app facilitated delivery, by displaying all available provision on the SWPC, and was used by advocates when introducing a young person to the range of support available from provider partners. It also encompassed information from wider partners such as Citizens Advice, and about provision such as CSCS card training that was available locally. The resource was regularly refreshed over the period of delivery to keep it up to date. While having this app in place at the start of the programme may have streamlined early delivery, given some partners found the VMR system harder to access, the compressed timeline for the set-up and start of the SWPC meant that it was challenging for it to be implemented earlier.

4.1.2 Programme implementation

As noted, there were delays to the award of funding which led to successive extensions of the delivery timeline, all of which had an impact on the implementation of the SWPC and especially set-up and partner onboarding. This shortened timeline affected the time available for SCC to work through due diligence to commission the partner organisations which could not be shortened to fully compensate. Some partners felt the time available was insufficient and others described 'teething issues' having resulted. This included processes feeling rushed, with some, such as disclosure protocols and safeguarding procedures, not in place from the start. Given the high vulnerability of the young people SWPC engaged, this raises important concerns which should be addressed as a matter of priority by the SWPC, in future iterations of the programme.

A further challenge resulted from the time needed to recruit and bring in the Deputy Head. This constrained time to invest in relationship-building and information-sharing, to support the quality and coordination of delivery and ensure everything was in place before young people started on the programme. Partners believed this impacted on some aspects of delivery, for example, delays to advocates receiving young people's contact details to engage them in a timely manner. Without this overarching role, it also proved challenging to source a same-sex advocate for one young person who requested this, and led to some difficulties in keeping track of young people with no fixed address.

Many partners spoke positively about the Virtual Meeting Room (VMR) which was the Management Information (MI) system developed by SomersetWorks and used to record participant activities and progress. However, some reported challenges in accessing and building familiarity with the VMR. Some would have liked more support initially to understand the VMR and its use in referrals. There were also suggestions to improve processes for recording progress and outcomes based on existing tools and some partners would have welcomed being part of design decisions on the tool to measure distance travelled, and how progress would be captured (digitally or on paper). However, there was also recognition that the programme required a unified system and the limited time for set up constrained opportunities for co-design.

Nonetheless, partners recognised that, despite teething issues and challenges, early work in relationship-building led by the Transition College Head and the Post-16 Adviser, and

the sustained and intensive engagement with partners by the Deputy Head, contributed to the mitigation of many operational issues (see also Chapter 4.3.3). These experiences however highlight the importance of being able to invest time to develop implementation support and systems at the outset.

4.2 Programme delivery

4.2.1 Referral and onboarding of young people

While partners believed the triaged approach to referral, whereby they received a referral from SomersetWorks and accessed information on participants through the VRM, to be effective, they also raised some challenges with the process. These included the length of time that it could take for SomersetWorks to match a young person to an advocate, and particularly gaps in information about young people at the point of referral.

Some advocates in the consultations said they did not receive enough detail on the young person's history to be able to fully safeguard them and their staff, and some examples were given that suggested referrals may not have been appropriate. However, balancing these views, minimising the disclosure of sensitive information is an important consideration related to data protection and safeguarding and a requirement of the GDPR legislation. There was also a lack of clarity around the disclosure protocol and escalating safeguarding issues once they had surfaced. Examples included a request for detailed information on offences where participants had a history of offending; and an instance where lack of information at the referral stage led to a young person with high anxiety being placed in a provision for young people with a history of offending. As a result of early issues of this type in early delivery, SomersetWorks introduced a triage system for referrals including leading an initial needs and risk assessment to ensure appropriate information could be shared. The team also reiterated protocols for support and disclosure. A benefit of the VMR was that it provided a secure resource for information to be held, with capability to limit access to sensitive information on a need to know basis.

These points show the importance of effective information-sharing systems for a programme targeting highly vulnerable young people. It is critical that processes for information-sharing are in place at the point of referral and that partners are well and regularly briefed on protocols. The pilot phase of the SWPC generated areas for improvement and these challenges are providing learning for future iterations.

Some partners believed there were too many meetings before young people could access provision. On joining the programme, SomersetWorks led a risk assessment and initial needs assessment. Following this, they referred the young person to an advocate, although in some cases delays in this referral emerged. After being matched to an advocate, regular monitoring ensured young people's action plan remained current and was helping them to make progress.

This meant that a warm and streamlined handover, from the point of referral to provision was often not possible and the young person had to engage with multiple adults, and multiple assessments, which could feel overwhelming. This heightened the risk of young

people disengaging early on, and impacted on advocates' ability to engage in trust and relationship building with young people. While certain processes could be skipped or shortened, such as the risk assessment before referral to provision, in future iterations of the SWPC it will be important to consider how the intervention can develop a more streamlined referral model that ensures warm handover and fosters trust and relationship building between advocates and young people from the point of referral.

4.2.2 Engagement of young people

Partners and advocates described generally good levels of engagement among young people. This was supported by staff working to build strong relationships with young people through regular meetings and communications. Some highlighted the importance of positive relationships with adults for the young people involved in the SWPC. There was also evidence that advocates played a strong role in supporting engagement with partners, including accompanying young people to provision to ensure attendance.

Staff also described the impact of engagement on young people's outcomes. Most common was a change in attitude among the young people. Many gained confidence and improved self-esteem from the support, meeting new people, and achieving goals. Young people were also described as gaining direction and sense of purpose, enabling them to begin thinking about next steps in their career and education. Other changes included improved interpersonal skills, and a greater sense of responsibility and accountability, with some young people becoming more independent and requiring less 'hand-holding'. These findings reflect the ambitions set out in the programme Theory of Change, and suggest that, for many young people on the pilot, the SWPC was effective at creating the small-step changes that enable the vulnerable groups it targets to engage more positively in progress towards EET.

Despite these generally good levels of engagement, some young people dropped out or did not regularly attend sessions. This was attributed by partners to a lack of motivation to engage, mental health problems, difficult personal circumstances and a lack of family support. Advocates and partners had experience and expertise in engaging with young people facing these challenges, and it was acknowledged that advocates played a key role in fostering and maintaining engagement by being patient and persistent. It was also recognised that there were cases where SWPC support could only go so far.

Consultations with SomersetWorks highlighted that disengagement was often tied to the level and severity of mental health issues among participants, and was compounded by a gap in local services that can support young people with these needs.

This creates a challenge for how SWPC can support young people to achieve a goal such as education, employment or training, when they are struggling with significant socio-emotional issues, ranging from domestic violence to undiagnosed SEND needs. As a result, SomersetWorks has liaised with statutory services to get additional support in place for families and young people with these severe high needs before they are referred to SWPC, with aims to reduce the risk of disengagement in the programme. This is a positive step and shows the importance of engaging statutory services alongside other partners to drive more effective implementation and delivery, and strengthen the

intervention model. Doing this towards the end of the pilot phase will pave the way for a stronger partnership model and improved delivery in future iterations of the programme.

4.3 Partnership work

4.3.1 Relationship-building among partners

Partners and advocates in the consultations talked about the value of the cross-partner meetings arranged by SomersetWorks, both during the implementation and delivery stages of the programme. These were felt to be key to the SWPC partnership model and to get a good understanding of partners' provision. However, many wanted these meetings to be more frequent to support case conferencing and to share learning. There was also a sense that 'staff room-style' conversations, which were felt to be essential to the partnership model and would enable providers to share knowledge and work collaboratively, were lacking. Although this was made challenging by the geographical spread of partners, they felt more could be done to foster this.

Linked to this, staff felt that time for relationship building between partners should be budgeted for in the programme, as it was not included in their contracts with SomersetWorks. This meant that partners had limited capacity to attend meetings, even where they wished to do so. This is an important consideration for future iterations of the programme, as a key element of interventions that rely on partnership for successful delivery is the capacity partners have to invest in developing collaborative practices, which greatly relies on sustained and consistent relationship-building (Orlando, 2021).

4.3.2 Communication and information-sharing

Staff in the consultations also identified that improving the facilitation of cross-partner meetings could have helped address some communication challenges that arose. This included, in some instances, difficulties referring to other partners, lack of clarity around partner offers, a sense of competition rather than collaboration between some partners, and a feeling that some provision was duplicative rather than complementary. Consultations with SomersetWorks highlighted that the SWPC brought many partners together in collaboration, including some that had little previous experience of working in partnership. This could create initial reluctance to share information, impacting communication and collaborative work. SomersetWorks worked with each partner to smooth out these challenges, and over time information-sharing became more streamlined.

While steps taken by SomersetWorks to address these challenges are positive and pave the way for improved future delivery, the impact that these challenges had on the early delivery of the programme should be recognised. As noted, interventions that rely on partnership work need to ensure that the right processes and systems, particularly for information-sharing and communication, are in place for effective collaboration to take hold. Once again, in part this can be traced back to the truncated timeframe for

programme set-up and it is expected that with more lead-in time, these risks would be better mitigated.

4.3.3 Partnership with SomersetWorks

Staff in consultations spoke about partnership working with SomersetWorks, as the lead partner, as key to shaping their experience. Partners generally felt that this had been positive and that SomersetWorks communicated well, ensured that the partners felt valued and had a good understanding of the support needed by young people. Many in the consultations described SomersetWorks as providing excellent structure to the SWPC, delivering support to partners through one-to-one meetings, and keeping partners informed of opportunities like apprenticeships and jobs fairs. One partner said that SomersetWorks staff were excellent at consulting partners, who therefore had a strong voice in the working of the programme. Others felt supported and reassured that they were not alone and were able to access additional guidance and training when they needed it (for example, with sexual health, CSCS-Card training).

However, some partners raised challenges related to communication with SomersetWorks, particularly during the early stages and having sufficient information to support delivery. Some also felt that clarity from SomersetWorks had been lacking on where responsibility lay regarding decisions on participants' exit from the programme. There was consensus that this guidance should come from SomersetWorks, yet some partners felt that had not been made explicit. Some also pointed to a lack of formal feedback mechanisms. Consultations with SomersetWorks highlighted that the VMR provided a platform that partners could use to feedback on progress and delivery of the programme. However, as noted earlier, some partners were reluctant to use the platform, which had the effect of constraining the flow of feedback via this source. The SomersetWorks team, working with the Local Authority, endeavoured to find a suitable alternative which integrated with Local Authority systems however this could not be delivered within the timeframe for the pilot. Again, this suggests that more time for set-up prior to delivery could enable investment in developing stronger communication and feedback mechanisms and ensuring all partners are equipped and able to use data and information sharing systems.

4.4 Lessons learned

Through the challenges encountered during the SWPC pilot, a number of key lessons have been learned by partners for future iterations of the programme. There were suggestions for improving administration which included investing more time upfront to ensure clarity across the partnership concerning processes, key contacts and stakeholders, and managing referrals from the outset. It was also felt there could be improved information on the number of referrals partners should expect. Finally, partners wanted budgets to recognise the time needed to resource collaboration – they felt a lot of work was going on behind the scenes to ensure that the support being offered was delivered to a high standard, but which was not included in the contracted time.

Consultations with SomersetWorks highlighted wider lessons learned through the pilot. In particular, relationships built with wider statutory partners were beneficial to and informed SWPC practice on a number of levels, extending the reach and effectiveness of the intervention. This included easier access to joint commissioning of support for families with young people who could benefit from Education Other than at School (EOTAS) packages, and sharing data from young people's Distance Travelled from NEET to EET assessment (see Chapter 3) with the SCC SEND Team and Virtual School, to inform their practice and provision. Working closely with the SEND department in SCC also enabled the SPWC to provide viable options and support for young people leaving Year 11 and at risk of dropping out of education in Years 12 and 13. This was recognised as an area of growth where SWPC was able to provide a viable alternative to the young people it targeted, and one which the partnership was hoping to further develop and expand in future delivery.

It was also recognised that some advocate organisations had responded more quickly than others to putting support in place for the young people, and this was an area over which SomersetWorks felt they had less control as the lead partner, as it often depended on partner organisations' own processes and staff experience. This was identified as an area for further work for SWPC in the next year of delivery, with a focus on identifying approaches to ensuring all partners can set-up support within similar timeframes. SomersetWorks also highlighted a commitment to further engaging in partnership-building, so as to support a sense of shared ownership across SWPC, drawing on the diversity and strengths of each partner.

5 Young people case studies

In order to bring to life some of the journeys experienced by young people engaged with SomersetWorks, this chapter outlines five case studies. These case studies explore the support that each young person received from the SWPC, advocates and partner organisations, the barriers that they overcame and the outcome that was achieved. It is worth reiterating that these case studies were selected by SomersetWorks due to difficulties organising interviews with the young people, and are meant to be illustrative examples. Data was drawn from the written case notes kept by the advocate and any partners that were offering support. The case studies also used the data from the monthly caseload review meetings held between the Deputy Head and the advocate supporting that young person

5.1 Young Person A

What was their story?

'A' was referred to SomersetWorks after having a difficult time in school from the age of 14. Their living situation was unstable and they had moved between living with different family members. During this time they had frequently gone missing as a result of being exploited by county lines. Their relationship with their family broke down and they were then placed in semi-independent accommodation by the local authority as part of their duty of care. During this time, they also received support from Youth Justice Team workers due to a pending court case and ongoing support following a prior offence that had necessitated them being electronically monitored through an electronic tag device. This tag had been removed before they started on the programme.

What support was provided?

Most importantly, A's advocate was able to develop a strong relationship of trust and continued to offer support during fluctuating periods of engagement over the eight-month support period. After identifying A's interest in sport, they were matched with a partner organisation (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership) that focused on supporting individuals through fitness training – helping them engage in boxing and attending the gym. This interest in sport was also pursued through attendance at Bristol Bears (another partner organisation) but they only attended one session.

As an alternative, A was encouraged by their advocate to take up the SomersetWorks driving lessons offer, in addition to the Somerset Skills and Learning functional skills course. The driving lessons were important in giving A responsibility over the process of applying for their provisional licence, organising lessons and arranging their theory test with the support of their advocate. A also took up the offer of one-to-one tutoring in English and Maths for which they were provided a laptop. At the point of their initial assessment, it was recognised that A was 'exceptional' at maths and thus Somerset Skills and Learning was willing to support them to do a full qualification.

What were the challenges and how were they overcome?

During their time on SomersetWorks, A was arrested and charged for selling Class A drugs after they began mixing again in their former county lines circles. A dismissal application was abandoned due to the evidence against them, and A pleaded guilty to the offences. The case was eventually adjourned but A still remains subject to conditional court bail.

A's advocate kept them engaged and began to plan for the future despite a possible custodial sentence. This included discussions about starting college with the Transition Support Team. A passed their English Function Skills Level 2 exams and, as a result, was accepted onto the Level 2 Sports course for a two-week trial.

What were the outcomes?

Since A passed their Functional Skills exams, they were able to successfully enrol in college for a Level 2 Sports course alongside Maths and English GCSEs.

The distance travelled measure for the programme showed the complexity of their journey. Their starting point was 3 (confident to leave home with the advocate), mid term they were measured to be at 0 (not engaging). Their end point in college took them to 7 (re-engaged and supported into an EET destination).

5.2 Young Person B

What was their story?

'B' dropped out of school before completing their GCSEs due to anxiety, low mood and social communication difficulties. B has an autism diagnosis and on entry to SomersetWorks found it very hard to engage with others. B suffered from low self-esteem and confidence which meant that they rarely left the house or their bedroom. While B felt helpless about the future, in terms of their career and aspirations, they wanted their life to change.

What support was provided?

B was matched with an advocate based in a Neurolinguistic Programming coaching provision and agreed to engage with coaching on a one-to-one basis. This advocate helped B gain an understanding of how their life would be better if they overcame some of their limiting beliefs. The advocate achieved this by helping explain how the brain works and working with B on the emotional blocks that were forming barriers around them by constructing a vision board, focusing on planning and creating intent and starting to create a routine.

In terms of activities, B was matched with The Maker's Place where they were able to grow in confidence socially and engage with peers in a non-threatening, small group. While B did attend the activity for a number of weeks, they felt that others attending were not their 'tribe'. Further support was also given to help B continue with their education. SomersetWorks provided them a laptop and a Maths and English tutor who was able to teach them in-person at GCSE level. These sessions took place three times a week and allowed them to begin producing grade 9 level work.

Finally, B's family also received support with rapport building, understanding B's autism diagnosis and what this means for their perception of the world. Through this, significant progress was made.

What were the challenges and how were they overcome?

B struggled with leaving the house without multiple layers of clothing and headwear to hide their identity. However, as part of the plan made with their advocate, they were able to set small goals such as going for a walk without this additional clothing. Demonstrating progress, when B had to attend an optometrist appointment, they requested to go into a nearby clothing store and try on clothes, which was the first time they had done this in four years. B was even able to attend their Covid vaccine appointment which their mother felt was a significant step.

What were the outcomes?

B's progress with their tutor meant that they were able to gain access to a funded Education Other than at School package to help them continue their education as part of a supported transition to college. Consequently, their distance travelled moved from 0 (not engaging) through to 7 (supported into an EET destination) as they moved closer towards further education.

5.3 Young Person C

What was their story?

'C' was referred to SomersetWorks when they were 18 after being asked to leave college because of disruptive behaviour and poor attendance. C is diagnosed with ADHD and is dyslexic, but had also experienced early trauma and had a challenging relationship with their family. Consequently, C experiences periods of low mood and depression. On beginning the programme, they had recently moved out of their accommodation and could not afford their yoga and martial arts classes that they had been attending previously to help manage their mental health and keep them busy.

What support was provided?

C was matched with an advocate with whom they met fortnightly. They were given the opportunity to try several activities including Support Service for Education Kilver Court in which they were able to explore an outdoor education programme. On this programme, they particularly enjoyed making connections to other young people and engaging with the climbing, shooting and biking opportunities. They also visited Rusty Road to Recovery, a partner that supports recovery and mental wellbeing through hands on car restoration experience. C quickly connected to other young people and was enthused by car restoration.

What were the challenges and how were they overcome?

With support of Somerset Skills and Learning, C signed up for a Level 1 college course in Catering and was introduced to Bristol Bears, a SomersetWorks partner that offer life and employability skills, in addition to mental and physical health activities. However, neither of these activities retained C's interest. C was still struggling with what they wanted to do to move forward in their NEET journey since they wanted to avoid doing anything that would challenge their mental health. At this stage, C was in receipt of Universal Credit and had given up considering a way out of being NEET.

When C was finally engaged on activities that they enjoyed they found themselves in a better position to discuss their future through a deeper understanding of their interests, limitations and

how they could manage their mental health. At this point C vocalised their aspirational desire to become a yoga instructor since this matched both their interests and lifestyle needs.

What were the outcomes?

SomersetWorks was able to make a case to Somerset County Council's SEND team for C to receive a one-year foundation, and subsequent two-year yoga teacher training course. Their distanced travelled went from 4 (engagement in provider partner activities) to 6 (planning steps into an EET destination).

5.4 Young Person D

What was their story?

'D' was referred to SomersetWorks after finishing Year 11 at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), where they had felt safe and nurtured despite their struggles with self-harm behaviour and suicidal ideation. Their struggles meant that D also could not be left without parental supervision and could not travel alone. They initially joined college aged 16 but found the environment challenging and less nurturing and so could not continue.

What support was provided?

D was matched with two advocates and a partner organisation to help develop a package of support. This consisted of building a route way for them to be able to return to education through being active and developing new relationships. Several activities were offered to D which allowed them to grow confidence, work through the stress they experience and develop a closer relationship with the world around them. Through the use of youth-supported transport, D was able to attend Ark and Egwood and Shared Earth Learning both of which draw on the therapeutic use of the natural environment.

Alongside the activities, SomersetWorks contributed to the review of D's Education and Health Care Plan which helped to identify a Specialist College as a potential educational destination. A further option considered was matching D with an Education Other than at School package funded through Somerset Council.

What were the challenges and how were they overcome?

Not all of the activities that D engaged with worked for them, but those that did gave them a much better sense of how to interact with others their own age and consider what their aspirations might be. D expressed aspirations to eventually get into paid employment, yet it was felt that they needed significant support to enable them to return to education, training or employment.

What were the outcomes?

Starting the programme at 2 (engagement with advocate online or at home), D is currently at position 6 (planning steps into an EET destination) while SomersetWorks awaits a final decision from themselves and their parents regarding some of the proposed actions that best match their journey out of being NEET. Nevertheless, the process of planning the process and investigating options is underway at the end of the 8-months of engagement.

5.5 Young Person E

What was their story?

'E' was referred to SomersetWorks aged 16. They had recently been placed in care as a result of being homeless and had begun living in semi-independent accommodation around Christmas time. Due to the Covid restrictions E had fallen out of the habit of attending education and learning. E had started a Level 1 automotive course but was de-enrolled due to poor attendance. There was a risk that E had entered problematic social circles, and they were getting out of bed late and making use of illegal substances.

What support was provided?

E had regular visits from their advocate which helped them develop a strong relationship of trust. This was important since it meant that they were both able to gain an understanding of E's resilience and personal strength, in addition to what E was able to do without pushing himself too far. Through this relationship, E agreed an action plan with their advocate which involved working towards developing a CV and finding employment. E has expressed an interest in becoming a HGV driver but was still quite young. Nevertheless, E was able to engage in the SomersetWorks driving lesson offer which required them to search for a driving school, arrange lessons and a theory test, all of which was supported by their advocate. Alongside this, E was made aware of employment opportunities within warehousing and logistics which led to an interview at a supermarket warehouse depot.

Although this relationship meant that E's advocate could provide them with support, E was not yet ready to engage with any of the other SomersetWorks partners.

What were the challenges and how were they overcome?

The first challenge was getting E to engage with the online coaching offer they had received through Intuitive Thinking Skills. When this did not work, SomersetWorks attempted to engage E face-to-face by asking E's advocate to visit them at their residence. This approach worked and the advocate engaged early, yet there remained barriers including a lack of motivation and an avoidance of taking on responsibility.

The second challenge was regarding the paid employment that E was engaged in. As a result of a small, non-work-related incident, E's wellbeing declined which meant they were no longer able to sustain the role. Instead, E's advocate made sure that they continued to engage in their driving lessons and reassess other possible options.

What were the outcomes?

After considering their options, E decided to return to college and enrolled in a Level 1 Mechanics course. This has meant that E's distance travelled has gone from 0 (not engaging) to 7 (supported into an EET destination) over the 8-month period.

6 Value for Money

This chapter presents the analysis conducted to assess whether the programme constituted Value for Money to the Exchequer and to society as a whole. Cost data spanning April to November 2022 was combined with Management Information data on the delivery of the programme to assess whether the potential benefits of the trial, derived by considering the impact of other comparable programmes and the costs associated with an individual being NEET, outweigh the costs involved in the delivery of the programme. Cost data is accounted for starting from April 2022 as this is when delivery commenced.

6.1 Costs

The data used to analyse the costs of delivering the SWPC were provided by Somerset County Council. Expenditure data and management information containing the engagements of participants by Advocate and Provider Partners were used in the analysis. The data covered April to November 2022, the period for which matched UK Community Renewal funding was provided.

It was planned that £435,064 would be spent on the SWPC from April to November 2022. It was expected that the programme would support 50 young people, giving a planned cost per participant of £8,701. For context, the Department for Education was willing to spend a maximum of £2,200 per participant on Youth Contract, a national programme that offered additional support for disengaged 16–17-year-olds who did not possess Level 2 qualifications to move into education, training or work with training (Newton et al., 2014). The eventual cost per participant of Youth Contract was £1,721 in Newcastle-Gateshead, £871 in Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield and £783 nationally (excluding these two areas plus Liverpool). Given that Youth Contract employed a Payments by Results model, a lower cost per participant is perhaps to be expected.

Due to delays to the SWPC start, the actual expenditure was significantly lower at £296,190. Moreover 62 individuals were referred in the programme, giving a cost per participant of £4,777 no matter the depth of support they received. Whilst 62 individuals were referred, 54 received some form of engagement and 46 sustained engagement (as a result of 16 successively having the referral retracted or disengaging). Given 54 young people did receive some form of provision on the programme (even though those for whom referrals were retracted or who disengaged received a low number of engagement (between four and 20)), the analysis takes into account this number, rather than the 46 who fully sustained engagement. This means that the programme had a cost per engaged individual of £5,485. Across the 54 engaged individuals, there were 2,103 engagements giving a cost per engagement of £141.

Total expenditure was split almost evenly between Advocate and Provider Partners – the expenditure on Advocate Partners was £147,780, whilst the expenditure on Provider Partners was £148,410, meaning that the cost per participant of Advocate and Provider Partners are very similar, at £2,384 and £2,394 respectively. However, Advocate Partners engaged a higher number of individuals (52) than Provider Partners did (38). As such, the cost per engaged individual is much higher for Provider Partners than for Advocate Partners, at £3,906 and £2,842 respectively. Advocate Partners also had a higher number of engagements per engaged individual, resulting in a lower cost per engagement compared to Provider Partners – at £111 and £192 respectively.

Costs per engaged and engagement also varied widely across Advocate and Provider Partners. Table 8 displays the cost information for the Advocate and Provider Partners for whom complete data (cost and engagement) was available.

Table 8 Cost data by provider

Provider	Total expenditure	Engaged	Engagement	Cost per engaged	Cost per engagement
<i>Advocate Partners</i>					
Partner A	£47,000	18	298	£2,611	£158
Partner B	£14,000	8	114	£1,750	£123
Partner C	£11,500	13	272	£885	£42
Partner D	£27,000	8	240	£3,375	£113
Partner E	£18,000	13	186	£1,385	£97
Partner F	£5,500	3	23	£1,833	£239
<i>Provider Partners</i>					
Partner G	£1,800	1	12	£1,800	£150
Partner H	£12,038	3	11	£4,013	£1,094
Partner I	£14,400	5	41	£2,880	£351
Partner J	£8,600	6	35	£1,433	£246
Partner K	£3,000	2	3	£1,500	£1,000
Partner L	£21,624	4	79	£5,406	£274
Partner M	£14,280	10	125	£1,428	£114
Partner N	£14,000	2	7	£7,000	£2,000

Source: SWPC management information

Amongst Advocate Partners, Partner C had the lowest cost per engaged (£885) and engagement (£42). Partner D has the highest cost per engaged (£3,375), nearly four times the cost of Partner C, whilst Partner F had the highest cost per engagement (£239), more than five times the cost of Intuitive. Amongst Provider Partners, Partner M had the lowest cost per engaged (£1,428) and engagement (£114), whilst Partner N had the highest (£7,000 and £2,000 respectively), nearly five and over seventeen times greater than Partner M costs respectively. However, this says nothing about the quality of the engagements and the differences in the needs of the individuals each provider engaged

with, and given the small numbers of engaged and engagements in certain cases, themes from these figures should be treated with a degree of caution.

6.2 Social Return on Investment

Using the cost information discussed above, we now consider the Social Return on Investment (SROI) achieved by SWPC. The likely benefits of the programme which we consider for this will come from the programme's aim of helping to support young people aged 16–18 that are NEET to overcome their personal barriers in order to progress into education, employment or training. Coles et al. (2010) estimate the life-time financial and economic costs of NEET 16–18 year olds. Financial costs are those that impact public finances, including welfare payments, lost tax revenues and increased spending on health and criminal justice. Economic costs are the net costs incurred by society as a whole – whilst welfare payments are a cost to the Exchequer, they are a benefit of equal value to the individual, therefore they are not an economic cost. Examples of these include loss to the economy, welfare loss to the individual and the family, and the opportunity cost of financial resources used as a result of the individual's NEET status. The costs are estimated across the individual's working life, with an annual discount factor of 3.5 per cent applied to costs incurred in the future to account for the value attached to the present as opposed to the future. Coles et al. (2010) estimate the life-time financial and economic costs of a NEET individual (16-18 years old) in 2009 are £56,301 and £104,312 respectively.

In order to uprate these figures to the present day, we apply the GDP deflator used by the Greater Manchester CBA Model unit cost database (GMCA, 2022) to uprate their estimated unit costs which are used widely to estimate the social value of interventions (which equates to an annual uprating rate of approximately 2.2 per cent). Applying this to the figures produced by Coles et al. (2010) gives life-time financial and economic costs of a NEET individual in 2022 of £73,394 and £135,981 respectively. These uprated figures may not reflect the actual present costs, given that changes to the welfare system, wage differentials and the NEET population, amongst others, may mean that the GDP deflator does not accurately capture the likely increased cost of NEET status seen since 2009. Additionally, as these costs cover the working life of a present day 16–18-year-old NEET individual that is, beyond the next 40 years, any inaccuracies may compound over time. As such, the true value these figures approximate are uncertain.

Whilst data is only partially available on the outcomes achieved by SWPC participants, as the majority of participants are still engaged on the programme at the time of reporting, we cannot directly attribute these outcomes to the programme as we do not know what outcomes participants would have achieved had they not participated in the programme – no credible counterfactual was established from which we could estimate the direct impact of the programme. As such, we turn to other comparable interventions for an estimate of the impact of SWPC on participants' NEET status.

Youth Contract was a national programme that began in England in September 2012 which offered additional support for disengaged 16–17-year-olds to move into education, training or work with training. The Education Funding Agency managed the delivery of the

programme, providing Payment by Results contracts to prime providers operating on a regional or sub-regional basis. Providers worked alongside local authorities to identify potential programme participants and to ensure that provision complemented existing local provision and met local needs (Newton et al., 2014). The programme was subject to an impact evaluation which econometrically estimated the impacts of the programme on participants' NEET status using a comparison group of matched non-participants (Nafilyan & Speckesser, 2014). Impact estimates six months after starting the programme (roughly corresponding to the period of delivery of SWPC to November 2022) are produced for 16-, 17- and 18-year-old males and females separately. A weighted average of these six impact estimates gives a rough estimate of the overall impact of Youth Contract on the probability of being NEET six months after programme start of -5.6 per cent.

The 18–21 Work Skills Pilot 1 was a randomised control trial that provided training provision to 18–21-year-old jobseekers to improve their maths and English in order to affect improvements in their employment outcomes (Newton et al., 2018). The trial was implemented across three DWP districts from November 2014: Cornwall, Devon and Somerset; Kent; and Mercia. The programme had a maximum duration of six months. The evaluation of the pilot found that the blended form of training (predominantly online but offering a combination of online learning with face-to-face support from a tutor) led to an increase in the probability of continuing in learning, progressing to further training or entering employment (that is, not being NEET) of eight per cent when individual characteristics were accounted for.

The limitations in these comparisons, with the Youth Contract and Work Skills Pilot 1, should be noted. Both programmes share some characteristics with the SWPC, specifically around supporting disengaged young people in the younger age cohorts (16–18 and 18–21) and the focus on educational and employability activities. However, the design, setting, and target groups for these interventions is different to that of SWPC. The SWPC engages a group of young people with particularly complex needs and vulnerabilities, who are amongst the hardest to reach NEET young people, and has a greater focus on socio-emotional support and the development of soft skills. Furthermore, the SWPC started following the Covid-19 pandemic, which has created unprecedented circumstances, and has implications on the levels and types of needs and of support young people may have.

The cost per NEET individual from Coles et al. (2010) are calculated by dividing the total financial and economic costs by the total 16–18 NEET population – it is unclear how long an individual needs to be NEET for in order to incur the average cost figures estimated. We assume that these figures are representative of a young person that remains NEET for a year, therefore the impact estimates from the Youth Contract and the 18–21 Work Skills Pilot 1 need to be sustained for a year after the point at which they were estimated. Longer term impacts were estimated for Youth Contract, but these are volatile due to small sample sizes at this longer follow up point.

Applying the estimated impact on the probability of being NEET estimated of Youth Contract (5.6%) to the 54 individuals who sustained engagement on the SWPC and the

estimated life-time costs of a NEET individual in 2022 (£73,394 and £135,981 respectively) results in a total financial benefit from SWPC of £221,943 and a financial benefit-cost ratio of 0.75 (based on the total cost figure of £296,190) that is, for every £1 spent on SWPC, the programme returns £0.75 in financial benefits constituting a loss to public finances. Additionally, there is a total economic benefit of £411,207 and an economic benefit-cost ratio of 1.39 so, a positive return on investment. Switching to the impact estimate of eight per cent from the Work Skills Pilot increases the financial and economic benefits to £317,062 and £587,438 respectively, and the benefit-cost ratios of 1.07 and 1.98 - both a positive financial and economic return on investment. In order for SWPC to break-even that is, to produce a benefit-cost ratio of 1.00, the programme needs to reduce the probability of an individual being NEET by four per cent for the financial case and 7.5 per cent for the economic case.

As previously mentioned, the life-time costs of young person who is NEET in the present day is uncertain. Instead of uprating the 2009 figures by the GDP deflator (approximately 2.2 per cent per annum), uprating the figure by five per cent per annum results in financial and economic life-time costs of NEET in 2022 of £101,109 and £187,329 respectively, which using the estimated impact of Youth Contract (5.6%) results in financial and economic benefit-cost ratios of 1.03 and 1.91 respectively. Alternatively, using the estimated impact from the Work Skills Pilot (8%) results in financial and economic benefit-cost ratios of 1.47 and 2.73 respectively. Using the 2009 figures without uprating results in financial and economic benefit-cost ratios of 0.57 and 1.06 respectively when using the estimated impact of Youth Contract, and 0.82 and 1.52 respectively when using the estimates impact of the Work Skills Pilot.

The average life-time costs of a NEET individual that Coles et al. (2010) produce that we have used thus far will not accurately depict the costs incurred by NEET status across the different individual circumstances of SWPC participants. Whilst the average financial life-time costs of NEET status in 2009 are £56,301, they also provide estimates of the life-time financial costs of NEET status for different scenarios. Three of the nineteen scenarios examined resulted in costs in excess of £2 million, including the scenario 'Tariq B' – a young offender that gets trapped on a criminal path through adulthood, that incurs a total cost to public finances of £2,371,067. These scenarios demonstrate the wide variation in circumstances faced by NEET individuals, and the challenges with estimating the SROI of interventions such as the SWPC. Given the uncertainty around the various datapoints used and how well these translate to the SWPC, the measures of SROI discussed above should not be seen as accurate estimates of the true SROI. Rather they should be used as reference points when considering the efficacy required from interventions such as SWPC in order to constitute Value for Money. In order to estimate the true SROI associated with SWPC, a robust impact evaluation would need to include a thorough cost-benefit analysis.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter draws together the findings from the evaluation and synthesises these in a set of conclusions and recommendations to inform future practice.

7.1 Conclusions

The SWPC Pilot was designed to assist highly vulnerable young people to overcome barriers and develop the personal and transferable skills that would support them in moving into, and sustaining, an EET outcome. The aim of the Pilot was to offer a bespoke, personalised support service, that was as unique as the young people referred to it. The offer developed was intended as a stepping-stone to provide alternative ongoing transition routes into EET, as and when the young person was ready.

The premise behind the SWPC Pilot was to find out whether the community and partners who work with young people across SCC could work together and create cohesive programmes of support for the most vulnerable young people. This would involve creating bespoke packages that not only offered support but pro-actively helped move young people into positive post-16 outcomes, by using the combined knowledge, diversity and expertise of those involved. The programme established collaborative partnership delivery, providing individualised solutions for each young person, building on their strengths and putting them firmly at the centre of the support delivered.

The evaluation findings highlight that the SWPC Pilot has effectively moved young people further along the journey towards EET, but this work often does not fit neatly into the confines of a short time-scale project, as the level of need experienced by highly vulnerable young people means longer engagement is needed to achieve a sustained improvement and successful transition. In particular, a notable proportion of young people on the SWPC held an EHCP, so the work of building a relationship of trusted support with them, their family, and wider support services involved, required careful and time-intensive engagement. Finally, the challenges tied to the late award of funding and the impact of this on delivery should not be underestimated, particularly in relation to the resource and time required for designing and setting up administrative support.

With this in mind, the evaluation of the SomersetWorks Partnership College pilot has highlighted a number of key conclusions:

- **The pilot was mostly successful in engaging the target population.** All participants on the programme were young people who were particularly vulnerable and hard to reach, including those with no qualifications and a range of complex needs (for example, with an EHCP or SEND). The programme was successful at meeting its engagement targets, with 62 young people accessing support (24 per cent above UKCRF target). However, 46 participants (74 per cent) sustained engagement for the

duration of the programme, eight young people (15 per cent) disengaged before completing the programme, and eight more had their referral retracted or closed (15 per cent) either because they no longer met the eligibility criteria or because their needs were deemed too complex for the support the SWPC could provide.

- **The pilot exceeded a number of outcome targets.** At the time of the evaluation, the SWPC had supported 29 young people into job searching activities (45 per cent above UKCRF target), and 62 young people into life skills support (24 per cent above target), an important indicator of the programme's effectiveness in meeting its purpose. However, the programme did not meet its target for transitions into education or training (54 per cent of UKCRF target achieved). Given the high risk of disengagement among vulnerable young people with complex needs, the nature of the SWPC, which focuses more strongly on pre-employability support, and the compressed timeframe for the delivery, the partial achievement of the outcome is still to be celebrated.
- **The pilot was successful in supporting participants to move closer to EET.** The outputs from the programme and the SWPC distance travelled measure evidence that the programme has been successful at moving young people closer to EET destinations. For the 46 young people who sustained engagement, the initial average starting point was one, indicating successful engagement on the programme, and the average current point on the scale was six, indicating planning for transition into EET destination was taking place. This was further highlighted in the case studies of young people. Once again, given the complex challenges faced by participants and intensive ongoing support required to sustain engagement, this outcome should be celebrated.
- **Engagement of participants on the programme was generally positive.** According to staff and young people's case studies, engagement was largely positive and constructive, reflecting the ambitions of the Theory of Change. This was supported by the young person led approach and by partners and advocates working to build relationships with the young people through regular meetings and communications. However, the multiple steps and meetings before action plans were implemented may have heightened the risk of disengagement, indicating that the referral process may need to be reviewed going forward.
- **The SWPC partnership model requires strengthening.** While the partnership approach was praised by partners as a key element of success in the SWPC, there were gaps which impacted the delivery and effectiveness of the intervention. Challenges were seen particularly in the set-up and implementation stages of the programme, with most due to insufficient time and budget for onboarding of partners and to develop a strong shared understanding of the programme delivery model and robust communication, safeguarding, information and data sharing processes. These are essential elements of any intervention based on partnership and collaboration, and particularly important given the high and complex needs and risks of the target participant population. These need to be addressed and strengthened as a matter of priority by the SWPC for future iterations of the programme.
- **It was too early to assess whether the programme was delivering value for money.** Given that the programme had been running for nine months, and most participants were still engaged in the intervention at the time of reporting, it was too

early to assess robustly whether the programme was delivering value for money. There was insufficient data on programme completion, destinations and likelihood of sustained outcomes for participants. For an accurate assessment of the value delivered by SWPC, an impact evaluation would be required with a robust cost-benefit analysis. The current analysis may be used as reference point when considering the efficacy needed by interventions such as SWPC to constitute Value for Money.

7.2 Recommendations

The SWPC is a promising intervention and has elements of good practice that can be built on. There are also some areas which SWPC should focus on as the Pilot comes to an end and it moves towards becoming an established programme:

- Funders need to allow for time, ahead of programme start, to **invest in relationship-building with partners to support information sharing, understanding of protocols, provision and systems**. This in turn will support the quality and coordination of delivery, readiness for delivery and that the intervention is fully configured to meet young people's needs. This should include allowing sufficient time for partners to become acquainted with and comfortable using systems, such as the VMR and the Boards app, and ensuring they can be supported along the way.
- The SWPC should consider **reviewing the current referral process**, to ensure that warm handovers from SomersetWorks to advocates and partners can take place. Reviewing and streamlining the number of meetings that young people experience prior to accessing provision may reduce the risks of young people disengaging. While certain processes cannot be skipped, such as SomersetWorks's duty to undertake the young person's risk assessment, it is important to consider how the intervention can develop a more streamlined referral model that ensure, consistently, warm handovers.
- The work led by the SWPC to build **relationships and networks with statutory services** such as SEND and Inclusion teams, as well as to set support in place for families and young people with severe socio-emotional needs is positive and should be progressed. It ensures the intervention works at the 'system' levels and avoids fragmentation. This will be essential to ensure adequate support is in place before young people are referred to the pre-employability support provided by SWPC, and reduce the risk of returned referrals and disengagement from the programme.
- Future iterations must ensure that partners are brought together more frequently and that **opportunities for cross-partnership activity are included in partners' contracted time** – though the difficulties of finding times that suit all have to be acknowledged. Finding the means to require this and gain partner support is an important to consider. Through meeting partners can build a mutual understanding of their offers, stronger relationships and improved communication, which in turn will help ensure that the young people are consistently accessing provision which is appropriate and accessible. This is an essential element of partnership-based interventions and one the SWPC should develop further. To support this, SWPC should further draw on the tailored 'What Works' resources developed by the IES as part of this research.

- A final consideration is how **young people's lived experience can inform programme design**. Gathering feedback from current (and future) participants on what worked and what could be improved or changed and with what result from their perspective would be valuable to ensuring future iterations work optimally. The SomersetWorks team is reviewing how this can be systematically embedded.

Response from the Head of SomersetWorks: what we have learnt and changed

Response from the Head of SomersetWorks: what we have learnt and changed

This short section provides commentary from the Head of SomersetWorks which responds to issues raised as part of the evaluation. It adds more detail about how the team responded to issues as they arose and in the period following the closure of the evaluation. These lessons will inform future iterations of the SWPC.

This should be read with reference to the IES What Works Guide - Supporting disengaged young people into positive destinations

At the outset and prior to the programme commencing SomersetWorks met with partners to build a greater understanding of what we wished to trial and establish how they could be a part of the programme. We explained the key indicators as outlined by CRF and these were embedded in the work packages (in essence, contractual arrangements), however we do recognise that even greater time was needed to be spent working with with partners at the outset which was difficult due to the timeframe we were working to.

1. The work packages detailed the lines of communication which were initially in meetings with the Head of SomersetWorks and then with the Assistant Head on appointment. As the programme evolved and in response to circumstances the referral process was streamlined as detailed in the working in partnership guidance. The work of the advocate was crucial in implementing support and will be developed in future iterations.

2. The staff engaged by each partner were listed on the VMR and this was updated as the programme evolved with all reporting going into a single central record accessible to all partners to give a holistic overview of the interactions and progress. There were regular meetings of Partner Providers and Advocates but attendance at these was at times an issue that would need to be addressed going forward.

3. There were ongoing challenges due to the rural nature of the county and more opportunities could be developed to address these issues - however staff and partners were flexible, and transport was not allowed to become a barrier.

4. When SomersetWorks and Advocates met young people, they did not go in with a "to do" list – there was no brochure of the offer, instead we worked to develop what was needed from interactions with the young person. Now we have more information and can reflect on delivery we feel more work needs to be undertaken on the philosophical approaches of different partners and how they work with others to establish what works best. This is an area for development.

5. A data sharing agreement was put in place with clear roles and responsibilities and all partners complied with GDPR. Issues with data handling and processing were a result at times from the speed of implementation and the lack of administrative support at the

inception. This was addressed as the programme developed but would need to be looked at again in future projects.

6. The VMR was established through Professional Choices for data sharing at the outset but not all partners were on-boarded on commencement of the pilot due to the late notification of the funding award and the SCC process for awarding the contracts. But all accessed this as the proves continued and it provided a secure facility.

The VMR database was put in place as a single point of record. This was due to be until the arrival of the case management database that would integrate with Local Authority systems, however delays with SCC meant that this did not arrive during the pilot and staff had to manually create reports and analyse data from spreadsheets and a management system that was put in place as an interim measure but became the system for the pilot.

7. Initially The Head of SomersetWorks was the single initial point of contact with this handed to the Assistant Head on appointment. In future iterations and for scalability there would need to be more consideration as to the staffing that would be needed alongside a longer set up phase. As stated elsewhere we were constrained by the timetables set by CRF.

8. As the CRF partnership continued The Assistant Head linked together all the provision as a single point of contact, working across all partners. SomersetWorks contracted the partners within designated geographical areas, however the partners recruited their own staff and would wish to evaluate this going forward to enable SomersetWorks to work more closely with all the Advocates and partners in terms of direction and planning. One partner described his member of staff as being in reality a member of SomersetWorks, however this was not how it always appeared to work and this would need to be looked at as learning from this trial. As an extension of this there would need to be more co-creation across all our partners both procured and within agencies we have worked with.

9. SWPC worked to tailor what was right for a young person and not just fill a timetable, this was an issue at the outset as there was pressure to make referrals. With hindsight commencement should have been delayed to allow time for set-up despite the constraints of the delivery time frame and this is a point of learning.

10. We would need to increase the contact with all partners not just the leads but those on the ground. Where this has been achieved there has been great success in developing a young person-based outcome and this is an area to address going forward.

11. We have worked to develop links and contacts with a wide range of partners – not only those who were formally procured but those who provide a range of services to young people including those with statutory responsibilities, Educational Establishments and Training providers so that as wide a range of opportunities as possible are available. This will be a point of learning as we plan for future work and activities.

What we have learnt across this Pilot will be used to develop other opportunities and our work going forward.

References

Coles, B., Godfrey, C., Keung, A., Parrott, S., & Bradshaw, J. (2010) Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16–18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training. York: University of York. Available at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/pdf/NEET.pdf>

Newton, B., Hillage, J. & Buzzeo, J. (2018) Evaluation of the 18-21 Work Skills Pilot 1: final report. London: Department for Education. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741896/Evaluation_of_the_18-21_Work_Skills_Pilot_1.pdf

Newton, B., Speckesser, S., Nafilyan, V., Maguire, S., Devins, D., & Bickerstaffe, T. (2014) The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation: Research Report. London: Department for Education. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354706/RR318A - The youth contract for 16- to 17-year-olds not in education employment or training evaluation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354706/RR318A_-_The_youth_contract_for_16-_to_17-year-olds_not_in_education_employment_or_training_evaluation.pdf)

Newton, B. (2017) Evaluation of Communities for Work Stage 1: Theory of change and logic model, Institute for Employment Studies

Nafilyan, V. & Speckesser, S. (2014) The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation: Econometric estimates of programme impacts and net social benefits. London: Department for Education. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/358761/RR318B - The youth contract provision for 16- to 17-year-olds not in education employment or training impact analysis.pdf.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/358761/RR318B_-_The_youth_contract_provision_for_16-_to_17-year-olds_not_in_education_employment_or_training_impact_analysis.pdf.pdf)

Orlando, C. (2021) What works in youth employment partnerships: A guide to improve practice and case study collection. Institute for Employment Studies

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2022) *Cost Benefit Analysis*. Available at: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/research/research-cost-benefit-analysis/>

Appendix

SWPC Pilot funding and set-up timeline

Table A1: SWPC Pilot funding and set-up timeline

13 April 2021	Invitation to submit a bid was received by SomersetWorks, with one month turn-around
10 May 2021	Bid submitted to CRF from SomersetWorks
5 November 2021	Funding awarded with spending deadline set for end of June 2022
22 November 2021	SomersetWorks Planning Day with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to develop the partnership
26 November 2021	Partners Planning Meeting with potential partners to define programme offer and delivery model
29 Nov –3 December 2021	Work Package discussions with potential partners
20 December 2021	Deputy Head of SWPC Interview
22 December 2021	All Work Packages sent to partners and start dates confirmed
1 January 2022	Scheduled date for commencement of delivery
10 January 2022	Theory of Change workshop with partners
28 February 2022	Appointment of Deputy Head into post
April 2022	SomersetWorks informed by CRF that the funding deadline is extended to end of November 2022

Source: Somerset County Council, 2022

Advocate Support Journey Map

Table A2: Advocate Support Journey Map

Advocate's To do List	Steps and DTS
<p>Step 1:</p> <p>a. <u>Complete the paperwork</u> as soon as possible (See SWPC Advocates Boards App for links)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDQ • <i>START of Journey Survey</i> <p>b. <u>Contact Assistant Head</u> to inform of paperwork completion and position on 0-7 DTS for baseline setting</p>	<p>Distance Travelled Scale:</p> <p>0 = Not Engaging</p> <p>1 = Enrolled and Engaged – YP is able to communicate through text, email, online or phone, through closed door to a room</p> <p>2 = Face-to-Face Engagement in Home – YP is able to meet Advocate online, at the YP's home, outside the front door or in a room in the house</p>
<p>Step 2:</p> <p><u>What's the dream?</u></p> <p>Hold the hope, help find the hope and determine the aspirational belief</p> <p>a. Is there a need to support with English or Maths at this stage?</p> <p>b. Check if digital support is needed. If so, offer a SWPC laptop and arrange with Assistant Head</p>	<p>Distance Travelled Scale:</p> <p>2 = Face-to-Face Engagement in Home – YP is able to meet Advocate online, at the YP's home, outside the front door or in a room in the house</p> <p>3 = Confident to leave home with Advocate – YP is confident to travel away from home, either managing a walk or taking a car journey to an agreed venue, eg for a coffee or a taster session with another partner</p>
<p>Step 3:</p> <p><u>What's in the way?</u></p> <p>Uncover the barrier(s) and contact Assistant Head to discuss and shape <u>Next Steps</u> to access SWPC Partner Providers/Offer and other service providers</p>	<p>Distance Travelled Scale:</p> <p>3 = Confident to leave home with Advocate – YP is confident to travel away from home, either managing a walk or taking a car journey to an agreed venue, eg for a coffee or a taster session with another partner</p> <p>4 = External Engagement – YP is able to commit to, attend and take part in one of the range of offers from other partners within the Partnership College</p>
<p>Step 4:</p> <p><u>Moving forward</u> to EET</p> <p>Revisit the dream and plan steps to achieve this. Talk to Assistant Head for guidance if you need this.</p>	<p>Distance Travelled Scale:</p> <p>5 = The "What Next?" Question – YP is able to engage in discussions about plans for their future, develop aspiration and vision</p> <p>6 = EET Planning - YP is able to start to engage in the plan process, discuss possibility and investigate options</p>

<p>Step 5:</p> <p>a. <u>Complete the paperwork</u> as soon as possible: (See SWPC Advocates Boards App for link)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CLOSE of Journey Survey</i> <p>b. <u>Contact DM</u> to inform of paperwork completion and allocation of new YP!</p>	<p>Distance Travelled Scale:</p> <p>7 = Exit with Outcome – YP is fully supported into EET</p>
--	---

Table A3: Routes to EET from Step 4 in the Advocate Support Journey Map

College/Further Study	Apprenticeship/Traineeship	Employment
<p>1. Support your YP to investigate College website/prospectus to see what courses are on offer. Determine the correct level of entry for your YP – ask AH if you need clarification about the levels requirement that are needed for the chosen course.</p> <p>2. If the YP has an EHCP, there will need to be a consultation by County SEND Team with the College before an application is received to determine if the YP’s needs can be met by the College – talk to AH for support with this crucial step.</p> <p>3. Contact the College’s Transitions Coordinators from the College to arrange transition support for your YP, visits or help with the application process (see SWPC Advocates Boards App for contact details.)</p> <p>4. Take your YP into the College for another visit.</p> <p>5. Have a coffee in the cafeteria.</p> <p>6. Try out the transport route to the College with your YP.</p> <p>7. Support you YP with an online application.</p>	<p>1. Sign up YP to the Government Apprenticeship website and show them the link to traineeship video (see SWPC Advocates Boards App for links.)</p> <p>2. Arrange an appointment with Skill-Up (See Advocates App for contact details.)</p> <p>3. Determine if there is a need to support with obtaining FS1&2 in English or Maths? If so, speak with AS.</p> <p>4. Check the Boards App for most recent links to current apprenticeship and traineeship vacancies and support your YP to complete their application.</p> <p>5. Is your YP interested in obtaining a CSCS Card to be able to work in the Construction Industry? Inform AH to find local offers.</p>	<p>1. Help your YP write a CV or arrange an appointment Skill-Up to help with CV development and job search (See Advocates App for contact details.)</p> <p>2. Register your YP on one or all of the job search websites and set up notifications with them (see SWPC Advocates Boards App for links.)</p> <p>3. Consider some of the routes for 16+ employment opportunities (see all links to contacts on SWPC Advocates Boards App – examples below...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldi apprenticeships • SWAPs options (from 17.5 years old) • Morrisons Warehouse – many opportunities from forklift driving to packing etc. • Hinkley Point C • Wetherspoons • Tesco <p>3. Visit Opportunities Hubs – for career guidance and local employment opportunities (see SWPC Advocates Boards App for links.)</p> <p>4. Consider registering your YP on Innovate – an online preparation for work course (see SWPC Advocates Boards App for links.)</p>

		5. Supported Employment Routes – Speak with AH about routes for YP with learning difficulty/disability
--	--	--

Partner and advocate organisations supporting the research

Partner Organisations

ARK at Egwood

ARK at Egwood is a not-for-profit land-based community organisation, providing a safe outdoor space for activities including woodcraft, agriculture, animals, horticulture, nature, cooking, and rural arts and crafts. ARK provides support for young people who struggle with having the confidence to engage with education or employment (for example those who struggle to leave the house, or with interpersonal skills). They aim to improve these young people's confidence which will help them to work out what they want to do next in terms of education, training and employment. ARK has an ethos of not putting pressure or expectations on people to do certain activities as they tend to support people with very low confidence and social skills. This lack of pressure puts control back into young people's hands, which in turn leads to improved enthusiasm and confidence.

"[ARK at Egwood] gives people a space to slow things down, connect with themselves and with others"

"It's led by the young person... Part of what works at Ark is having no expectations of people. So, they come to Ark there's no pressure to achieve, you don't have to perform. If you want to do nothing you don't have to anything. We find that works really well for the people getting referred because they haven't got the confidence, they can't talk to other people. So by having no expectation you're putting the control back in their hands really. So then they decide what they want to do and because they're in control of it they're more enthused to do stuff and then they start slowly interacting with others and their confidence comes and they start doing more".

Make It!

Make it! offers alternative education provision for vulnerable and disaffected young people with an emphasis on re-engaging them in their learning through creative, practical and vocational projects. This programme seeks to build practical skills and confidence through social and emotional work focused on a practical activity. Prior to SWPC, Make it! worked with schools, in particular with pupils at high risk of being excluded, in addition to pupil referral units. A range of activities are offered including woodwork, metal work, upcycling, cooking, gardening, and forest school. In 2021/22 they received five young people a week from SWPC and will continue running into the next year.

Makers Place

Makers Place offers a creative space that is safe and welcoming and provides an opportunity for people to make, mend and grow things together. Located on a farm in rural Somerset, they have a craft cabin and wooden workshop cabin, in addition to a vegetable plot, horses and chickens. Most of the young people from SWPC attended the craft sessions, and they also received one young person on a construction-skills focused morning. In 2021/22 they received four young people a week from SWPC and will continue running into the next year.

“We do a variety of activities and tailor it to what their interests are really. It’s not like a classroom setting, it’s very chilled, we have a lot of banter, it’s a calming peaceful atmosphere”

Shared Earth Learning

Shared Earth Learning offer forest school and outdoor activities in Frome. The aim is to help develop an understanding of the connections between people and the planet, particularly among vulnerable people who normally would not get the opportunity to spend time in the woods. Originally, they developed the programme for younger children, but SWPC gave them the opportunity to expand their offer. During the sessions they spend time learning about growing and preparing food, talking around a fire, going for walks and playing football. In 2021/22 they received up to six young people a week from SWPC and will continue running into the next year.

Advocate Organisations

Intuitive Thinking Skills

Intuitive Thinking Skills provides attitude and culture change programmes for people with complex needs, acting as an alternative to counselling that empowers people to change their own thought patterns. It is a national programme that is delivered in a range of settings including the health service, prisons and schools. In the SWPC Intuitive Thinking Skills specialise in supporting young people with barriers around mental health and attitude, working with young people and their families to challenge thinking patterns and overcome self-limiting beliefs which then allows the young people to engage with other partners. They have delivered this support to 14 young people as part of SWPC. They also deliver accredited courses for the partnership around mental health, substance issues and criminal behaviour. They are a peer led organisation with the majority of their staff having come through the programme as learners.

“We specialise in attitude change and one of the key skills we work on is critical thinking...challenge people’s beliefs on what holds them back”

Pyramid Mentoring

Pyramid Mentoring is a mentoring service operating in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and Somerset. They have a team of expertly trained mentors who develop confidence, independence, resilience, and positive experience through their bespoke programmes. Their ultimate aim is that ‘they are no longer needed’ and acknowledge that it should not be a befriending programme. Instead, they offer a change of life. They work with people on CVs, getting to college and generally moving forwards which they recognise is not always something nice and ‘woolly’, it requires hard work. Young people have a person-centred action plan, depending on their needs, rather than KPIs etc. Participants set small tasks towards a bigger goal rather than being sent straight into training, work, volunteering etc. Tasks include SWAT analyses and CV support. In 2021/22 they received 10 clients from SWPC and will continue running into the next year.

“The whole ethos is based around a pyramid. It’s all about building that solid base and that trust before you can really do any mentoring. Without that you’re not going to move forwards”

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP)

SASP aim to provide a happier and healthier life for people in Somerset, predominately working with eight- to 18-year-olds who have chaotic homelives and experiences of trauma to build confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing through mentoring and engagement with community sport. The scheme operates in every county with funding from Sports England. They provide four advocates for the SWPC who provide mentoring to six young people at a time, supporting them to engage in partners on the programme and with sports and physical activity for young people interested in this.

Reach Youth

Reach Youth are a Somerset based alternative education provider. They provide youth worker-based support to young people for SWPC. Their youth workers meet young people where they are in their journeys, build relationships and support them with off-site activities such as using public transport and engaging with employers. Activities are young person led, based on individual needs and wants.

Triage Process for SomersetWorks/Partnership College

1. Referrals received into SomersetWorks (SWks)
2. Friday AM: Triage 1 by Head and Senior Transition Coordinator (STC)
 - a. Complex cases identified and allocated to STC to complete initial level of checking, then, if no risk, allocated to Transition Coordinator (TC) who visits and completes enrolment and offers support
 - or...

- b. All other cases allocated to SWks TC who visits, completes enrolment and offers support, which includes:
 - i. Weekly caseload review with STC – to monitor progress, discuss concerns.
 - ii. Should request for SWPC arise, TC to email STC with background/case note history and interventions to date and reason for request. STC to create list of names and narrative for next Triage 2 (see below).
- 3. Friday PM: Triage 2 with AH SWPC (include those referrals from TCs list for consideration)
 - a. Case by case consideration matched to SWPC capacity, locality and level of existing support.
 - i. Complex cases not seen by a TC triaged and allocated to SWPC
 - b. for initial enrolment meeting (possibly consider taking a paper referral form on visit)
 - ii. Completion of SWPC referral form – STC preferably to request referral from most appropriate person currently working with the young person
 - c. Triage TCs SWPC requests
 - iii. Completion of SWPC referral form – STC to request referral from most appropriate person