



The Berkeley Foundation: Improving Youth Mental Health

Evaluation report

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1. Introduction



1.1. About Berkeley Foundation

Berkeley Foundation is an independent charity established by Berkeley Group in 2011. The Foundation aims to support young people, their families and their communities across London, Birmingham and the South East of England,¹ working towards the following three impact areas:

- **Individual impact:** Young people have a safe place to call home; improved health and wellbeing; access to employment; and the skills to succeed in life.
- **Organisational impact:** Charity partners supporting young people are stronger, more resilient, and better able to overcome challenges and operate effectively.
- **Systemic impact:** Insight and learning about ‘what works’ in improving the lives of marginalised young people is shared across the voluntary, private and public sector.

The Foundation works in partnership with the voluntary sector across four areas: A Safe Place to Call Home, Access to Employment, Skills to Succeed, and Health and Wellbeing.

1.2. About the Improving Youth Mental Health programme

The Improving Youth Mental Health programme was launched in 2017 and is a part of the Foundation’s Community Investment Fund. This fund provides medium-sized grants to charities and CICs working to support young people to overcome a wide range of barriers, improve their lives and build a fairer society.

The other three current programmes forming part of the Community Investment Fund are Skills for Positive Futures, Combatting Youth Homelessness, and Empowering Young Women into Work.

Aim and outcomes of the programme

The aim of the Improving Youth Mental Health programme is to support the improved mental health, wellbeing and resilience of young people aged 11-18 in communities where the Berkeley Group works. The programme specifically wanted to engage young people who have an increased risk of developing a mental health issue, or are experiencing early symptoms, in activities that could improve their mental health. Preventing young people from developing serious mental health issues is a key aim for the programme, by supporting young people to develop their resilience to cope and thrive.

¹ Berkeley Foundation support projects in the following areas: Greater London, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Kent, Hampshire, West Sussex, Warwickshire and the City of Birmingham. National organisations can only receive funding for work in those specific areas.

The Improving Youth Mental Health programme aims to achieve the following four **programme outcomes**:



Applying for the Improving Youth Mental Health programme

The programme was open for applications from 8 August 2017 until midnight 29 September 2017. All applicants were asked to provide the following information:

- Issues/needs they will address
- Main activities and outputs
- Outcomes
- How they will monitor and evaluate the impact
- Target beneficiaries
- How the project demonstrates the values of equality and diversity
- Cost of project/funding requested

In addition to this, the applicants needed to show how their project would work towards **one or more of the programme outcomes**, as well as demonstrating how they met the following **funding criteria**:

- Put young people at the centre of service design and delivery
- Target young people who can't or don't usually access support services
- Show a clear understanding of the needs and barriers faced by their beneficiaries
- Take an innovative approach to prevention and early intervention

In December 2017, the Improving Youth Mental Health programme awarded £279,000 in funding to a total of six charity partners: [Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families](#), [Free to Be Kids](#), [Harlequins Foundation](#), [Leap Confronting Conflict](#), [MAC-UK](#), and [St. Matthew's Project](#). The organisations and their projects are described in more detail in chapter two.

Capacity building grant

Four out of six of the charity partners have received or are currently in receipt of a capacity building grant to support their organisational development. This grant is in addition to the project funding.

1.3. Evaluation aims

Renaissi was commissioned by Berkeley Foundation in April 2019 to evaluate the Improving Youth Mental Health programme, with the following aims:

- To **inform the development of the Improving Youth Mental Health programme**, to ensure it delivers positive changes for young people affected by poor mental health;

- To **provide recommendations** for future funding programme design and implementation.

The evaluation sought to explore the six charity partners' experiences of the following areas of the funding journey:

- Application process and assessment
- Programme design and delivery
- Outcomes and impact
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Wider learning and impact
- The relationship Berkeley Foundation has with charity partners


These six areas of interest were agreed together with Berkeley Foundation and charity partners during a workshop hosted by Renaisi in May 2019.

1.4. Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation design drew on a combination of qualitative research techniques:

- **A rapid review of documents** and existing monitoring data to build our understanding of what the programme aims to achieve, and what processes are in place.
- **Telephone interviews with each charity partner** – one round in September 2019, and a follow-up interview in March / April 2020.
- **Two workshops with charity partners.** The first took place in May 2019, to inform what this evaluation should focus on. The second workshop took place online in June 2020 and served as a space for us to share initial key findings with charity partners, ask for their reflections on those findings, and jointly discuss recommendations for the programme.
- **Three face-to-face field visits**, which included interviewing staff, volunteers and young people as well as observing sessions. We developed a visual data template for young people to complete with answers to some of our key questions. Additional **telephone interviews** were conducted with the other three charity partners for whom a visit was not possible.

The Berkeley Foundation also engages in ongoing internal monitoring and evaluation, via quarterly phone calls or meetings with all partners to discuss project progress and learning. In addition, partners are asked to submit quarterly progress trackers, biannual narrative reports and share case studies and testimonials where appropriate.

	Research method	Number of people engaged
	Interviews with charity partners	1 st interview: 6 charity partners 2 nd interview: 5 charity partners
	Workshops with charity partners	1 st workshop: 5 charity partners 2 nd workshop: 4 charity partners
	Fieldwork <i>Three face-to-face visits combined with telephone interviews</i>	<p>During the visits, we spoke directly to a total of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 delivery partners • 2 delivery staff • 2 volunteers • 5 young people <p>We also collected data from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations of three charity partners' activities – a total of 70 young people took part in those activities • 14 visual data templates completed by young people <p>Through telephone interviews, we spoke directly to a total of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 delivery partners • 7 delivery staff • 2 volunteers • 2 young people

1.5. Limitations to the evaluation

The charity partners delivered very different types of projects (see next section), which make them difficult to compare. We aim to make the commonalities and differences between the projects clear throughout this report.

We had intended to visit all six projects, however this was not possible for two reasons: two charity partners advised us that it was not suitable for a researcher to attend their activities, and one visit was cancelled due to COVID-19. However, we have conducted additional telephone interviews with staff, volunteers and young people and in one case we have worked with their external evaluator to access previously collected data, to provide alternative ways of gathering information about those projects.

2. About the funded charity partners



Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families	<p>The Centre aims to build resilience and to help children, young people and families to improve their mental health.</p> <p>The States of Mind project was a collaboration between the AMBIT Team at the Centre and Bea Herbert (a young social entrepreneur). It is a community-based peer-mentoring programme for young people facing multiple difficulties (e.g. mental illness, substance use disorder, educational exclusion).²</p> <p>Delivery partnerships: The Centre worked closely with partners who had existing relationships with young people, and who could offer the physical space for mentoring training and sessions.</p> <p>Funding period: April 2018 – October 2019 (extended to March 2020)</p> <p>The project worked towards all four programme outcomes.</p> <p>States of mind aimed to achieve the following outcomes in young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling more in control of mental health• Feeling more informed regarding mental health• Feeling more engaged in conversations around mental health• Improved relationships with peers and the community; and• Improved mental health and wellbeing
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² The project evolved and several changes were made to delivery in the second year – see section below.

Free To Be Kids	<p>Free To Be Kids is a charity supporting children and young people who are struggling with social or emotional difficulties.</p> <p>Thrive Mentoring is a peer-mentoring programme building on Free to be Kids' existing 'Thrive Outside' therapeutic residential projects. The programme matches young people aged 11-14 years old with a trained adult volunteer to undertake one-to-one mentoring support over a six-month period, and in some cases longer.</p> <p>Funding period: May 2018 – April 2020 (extended to March 2021)</p> <p>The project worked towards one of the four programme outcomes: Young people have improved mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Thrive Mentoring aimed to achieve the following outcomes in young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced risk of developing mental health difficulties• Improved self-esteem• Improved social-confidence• Improved capacity to manage frustration• Improved ability to trust and work with others• Improved resilience• Improved likelihood to engage in 'helping adult relationships' in the future• Achieve their own individual goal
Harlequins Foundation	<p>Harlequins Foundation is the charitable arm of Harlequins FC. The charity aims to use the power of sport combined with education, skills development and entrepreneurship to tackle inequality, poor health and the challenges facing the most vulnerable in society.</p> <p>METTLE is an eight-week mental resilience schools programme aiming to help children to understand the concept of resilience and equip them with a mental resilience 'toolbox'.</p> <p>Delivery partnerships: Harlequins Foundation worked closely with schools to deliver its programme.</p>

	<p>Funding period: April 2018 – March 2019</p> <p>The project worked towards three of the four programme outcomes: 1) Young people have improved mental health and wellbeing, 2) Young people feel more informed about their mental health, and 3) Young people are better able to manage their mental health and lead a full life.</p> <p>METTLE aimed to achieve the following outcomes in young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants understand how to set clear goals • Participants understand their emotions and how to control emotions • Participants are able to reflect on setbacks and how to learn from them • Participants clearly understand what resilience is • Young people think, feel and behave in an increasingly positive and resilient manner
<p>Leap Confronting Conflict</p>	<p>Leap supports young people aged 11-25 to make changes in their lives by gaining self-awareness about their relationship with conflict.</p> <p>The Under Our Roof project aims to support young people in care (both residential and foster care) and their carers to manage conflict better, and to support them to build and maintain safer and more supportive relationships. Berkeley Foundation is one of four funders of the project; its funding is ring-fenced for delivery in Haringey. Leap intended to run training for both young people and foster carers, but in Haringey they worked with foster carers only.³</p> <p>Delivery partnerships: Leap worked closely with Haringey Council and residential homes in the area to deliver their training for foster carers.</p> <p>Funding period: March 2018 – February 2020 (extended to September 2020)</p> <p>Under Our Roof aimed to achieve the following outcomes in young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people have improved ability to build and support good mental health

³ The project went through some significant changes which are further described in the section below.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people have a greater understanding of conflict • Young people have an increased ability to manage conflict effectively • Young people have an improved ability to manage negative relationships • Young people have an improved ability to maintain and form positive relationships <p>Adult carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult carers have increased understanding of how to manage difficult behaviour • Adult carers have improved ability to identify opportunities in conflict situations • Adult carers have increased confidence in the young person • Adult carers have improved ability to maintain and form positive relationships with the young people in their care • Adult carers have improved ability to support young people to build good mental health
<p>MAC-UK</p>	<p>MAC-UK is a young people's charity that aims to use psychology and co-production to support the mental health of young people.</p> <p>NQ-INTEGRATE aims to contribute to the skills, knowledge and understanding of the sector, systems and workforce that young people come into contact with, in order that excluded young people can access the help that they need at the right time, build trusting relationships, and improve their overall wellbeing. In each year of the funding period, MAC-UK recruited a newly qualified mental health practitioner responsible for embedding MAC-UK's approach within the mental health services of external community projects supporting excluded young people. The first practitioner was based in Camden & Islington and Barnet and the second practitioner is based in Ealing.</p> <p>Delivery partnerships: Both practitioners have been based in a partner organisation, and have worked closely with partner organisations including schools.</p> <p>Funding period: April 2018 – March 2020 (extended to September 2020)</p> <p>NQ-INTEGRATE aimed to achieve the following outcomes in young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people have increased ability to access clinical/psychologically informed services for mental health support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people reached through NQ-INTEGRATE have improved mental health and wellbeing; are more informed about mental health in a community context; have improved relationships with their peers, networks and access to help • Sustained leadership impact of NQ-INTEGRATE graduates in youth services contributes to improving the mental health of excluded young people <p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members of community service feel more supported and understood in their roles • The host service team has increased knowledge of and skills in community mental health interventions, improved ability to build trusted therapeutic relationships and improved understanding of an asset-based approach to supporting young people
<p>St. Matthew's Project</p>	<p>St. Matthew's Project is a sports charity that aims to provide a safe and encouraging environment for young people to enjoy structured sports and learning opportunities, to fulfil their potential and to improve their wellbeing both physically and mentally.</p> <p>Fit for Life offers mental health and wellbeing workshops in conjunction with free football sessions. The programme aims to offer a comprehensive support package to 8-14 year olds at risk (e.g. affected by gangs and crime) helping them to develop their life skills in order to bring about positive changes for individuals.</p> <p>Delivery partnerships: St. Matthew's Project worked closely with a mental health centre that provided a counsellor who delivered the Fit for Life workshops.</p> <p>Funding period: April 2018 – March 2020</p> <p>Fit for Life aimed to achieve the following outcomes in young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people have increased confidence and independence • Young people have improved self-esteem • Young people have improved self-efficacy, resilience, self-control and discipline • Young people develop strong and supportive peer/social networks • Young people feel better able to engage with school • Young people have increased levels of volunteering and participation in St. Matthew's Project.

3. Findings



This chapter presents findings from the document review and the qualitative research undertaken with charity partners, delivery staff, volunteers and young people to help understand their perceptions of the funding programme and the impact it has had.

3.1. Application process and assessment

Straightforward and appropriate application process

Charity partners viewed the application process as **straightforward and appropriate to the level of funding**. Application forms were described as neither too long nor too short, with partners feeling able to provide adequate information about their project without having to go ‘overboard’. In addition, some partners specifically said that it was **easy to find all the information** they needed to submit the application to Berkeley Foundation which had not always been the case when applying for other grants.

“It was pretty standard, quite a good application form. Not too long and not too short.” (Lead contact)

Some partners were particularly **positive about the follow-up call** as they felt they could share more in conversation.

“After we applied, I had a long phone call with them, which is unusual – you can get a lot more said over the phone than on paper.” (Lead contact)

Others felt that the **application process was quite typical**, however since being awarded the funding the relationship with the funding programme has felt more personal compared to other funders.

“It was a typical, if slightly more anonymous process – just a standard application form with a deadline. We have since developed a very real, person-to-person relationship with the grant manager.” (Lead contact)

However, some felt that there might be scope for Berkeley Foundation to simplify the application process even more.

“In all these funding applications, you have to show a lot of evidence for little money. It would be nice to have tick boxes instead of having to write it all out.” (Lead contact)

Programme criteria aligned to a great extent with partners’ existing project aims

Charity partners agreed that the programme criteria to a great extent aligned with their existing project aims. No partner therefore felt under pressure to adapt their work prior to applying for the funding in order to make it ‘fit’ the criteria.

“Berkeley Foundation’s stated funding criteria seemed a good fit with our mission and project.” (Lead contact)

How the partners’ project delivery aligned with the funding criteria is further explored in the following section.

Some charity partners would prefer to articulate their project outcomes later in the funding period

Charity partners who attended the final workshop noted that they would prefer to articulate their project outcomes to the Foundation at a later stage than the point of application, when they are further along in developing their projects. It was felt by some that setting the outcomes during the application process was counterintuitive to the funding programme being focused on innovation, and that there would be a benefit to taking a more iterative approach.

“Traditional funding programmes like Berkeley Foundation tend to have a model where you set all your objectives at the start, and whilst we all praise Berkeley Foundation for how flexible they are, it would be even more beneficial if we could be a bit more radical and set the objectives half-way through. You learn a lot in the beginning in the design phase, and you might want to change them completely.” (Lead contact)

Summary: Application process and assessment

- The application process was seen as appropriate and straightforward, and charity partners had little to say about it. The follow-up call was appreciated as it gave space for applicants to share more about their work in a more relaxed way.
- The application process was fairly standard, and it seemed to match well with what charity partners expected from a funding application.
- The programme criteria aligned to a great extent with charity partners’ existing work.
- Some charity partners would prefer to agree the project objectives and outcomes further along the project period, when the project has had time to develop.

3.2. Programme design and delivery

How charity partners applied the programme criteria in the design and delivery of their projects

Put young people at the centre of service design and delivery

According to the Amplified Insights Survey from 2017, 83% of professionals delivering young people’s mental health services thought that young people should be more involved in decision-making which would affect the organisations day to day work, and 72% of young people agreed that getting involved in the decisions about how their services are run would help make them better for themselves and for other young people. In addition to this, the survey shows that 92%

of parents felt that involving young people in service planning and decision-making could help to improve the wellbeing of children and young people.⁴

All charity partners agreed that putting young people at the centre of service design and delivery is key to meaningfully involving young people in their services and to improve young people's mental health and wellbeing. However, some noted that despite strong consensus on this, too few organisations in the sector truly put this principle into practice.

"For me, that aligns completely with my work, that is why I set up my organisation. I realised there were a lack of charity partners putting young people at the centre of delivery." (Lead contact)

All charity partners had designed their project with young people in mind, and for most of them young people are at the heart of what they do as an organisation. However, how they did this differed across the board.

One of the charity partners **engaged young people in focus groups** to inform the design of their programme. However, most charity partners did not actively engage young people in the design phase, but rather drew on their previous experience of working with young people.

Case study: MAC-UK

MAC-UK's focus in their Berkeley Foundation-funded project is on how an expert practitioner can improve the ability of the local team to build therapeutic relationships with young people, improve their understanding of mental health, and for them to take an asset-based approach. MAC-UK aims to share their model of working with existing services to ensure they reach the young people who need their support the most, and to ensure that young people's needs are listened to.

"Many councils and many organisations have a more deficit approach, and we want to focus on asset-based approaches. We support the local team's ability to co-produce things with young people to give them a sense of agency."

In terms of the actual content and focus of projects, most charity partners worked directly with young people and felt it was important that **what they did was led by and shaped for young people**. Examples that interviewees shared included delivering a peer-mentoring programme involving young people supporting other young people, and consciously making sure young people feel they are leading the project and have a voice.



"This project means a lot to me because there aren't many safe spaces for girls to voice their opinions and connect through an activity they love."
(Young person)

⁴ Young Minds (February 2018) Your Voices Amplified. Retrieved from: <https://youngminds.org.uk/media/2152/amplified-insights-survey-2018.pdf>. Nearly 1,500 young people, 650 parents and 400 professionals took part in the survey.

Target young people who can't or don't usually access support services

Most charity partners actively worked to reach young people who would not normally access these types of programmes, or more generally reach young people with complex needs.

There were two main ways in which the charity partners reached and targeted young people:

- **Targeted approach:** Most charity partners received referrals from social services, youth centres or schools, and actively worked with young people who had been identified as suffering or at risk of suffering from mental health issues. These charity partners tapped into the target groups those partner organisations already worked with. One charity partner, MAC-UK, used their '[street therapy](#)' model to reach young people.
- **Universal approach:** One charity partner engaged a mixed group of young people from a geographic area that had been identified as having a need for the project. To reach young people within that area, they delivered the project in schools during regular school hours. The project was open to all young people in the targeted year group to attend.

"All the kids on our projects are from that group, that's who we are. About 95% of referrals have come from social services or schools where normal stuff isn't working." (Lead contact)

As two organisations' projects evolved to work mainly with adults supporting young people rather than young people themselves, this criteria was not directly achieved. However, the adults they direct their services at do work with young people who do not usually access support services.

Show a clear understanding of the needs and barriers faced by their beneficiaries

The majority of those interviewed felt they do understand the needs and barriers faced by the young people they support. They felt that this comes 'naturally' to them as most had worked extensively with young people prior to joining the Improving Youth Mental Health programme. The Foundation has not developed clear guidelines on exactly what 'clear understanding' should look like, which makes it harder to objectively assess whether charity partners are meeting this criteria.

Case study: Leap Confronting Conflict

When developing the Under Our Roof programme, Leap CC conducted focus groups with young people in care and with foster carers to understand what conflict exists in their lives, and what needs to change for young people to navigate conflict situations better. These focus groups shaped how the programme is run today, and is the reason why Leap CC works closely with foster carers so that they have the tools to better support young people.

One organisation has through this programme started to work with a different cohort of young people experiencing challenges that they had not worked with previously. This partner acknowledged that they therefore did not have a clear understanding of these young peoples' needs and barriers at the start of the project; however, in the setup phase they spent a significant amount of time to build that understanding and inform the rest of the project.

“We were open about the fact that we hadn't worked in this area before, so we did run a number of focus groups.” (Lead contact)

Take an innovative approach to prevention and early intervention

Five of the six charity partners talked about this programme criteria in our interviews, and most of those five said their project involved doing something they had not done before. However, there was agreement amongst charity partners that these ‘new’ activities were not particularly innovative to the sector as a whole.

“Perhaps not innovative – sometimes you need to do what you know works. We are doing mentoring, and it is very much traditional but with a difference – because they have done the relationship building already as they've been living together for a week at the residential.” (Lead contact)

Those running mentoring programmes said that using a mentoring model is not particularly innovative in itself, but *how* it is delivered makes their project different to others. For example, to build trusted relationships between mentors and mentees, one charity partner has chosen to allow the mentors and mentees to spend time with each other in a safe space surrounded by other young people, mentors and staff before they ‘officially’ start their regular mentoring sessions. This approach has proven to be beneficial for both mentors and mentees and their relationships with each other.

Another charity partner is delivering a peer-mentoring programme, which is relatively uncommon in the sector. Doing this has supported young people to gain confidence in how they could in turn support other young people.



“This project is very important to me as peer-mentoring has been very important for me when I grew up, and I would love to work with a mentee in the future to give back what I have received at my lowest.” (Young person)

In addition to this, one charity partner worked with an external facilitator to deliver mental health sessions for young people within the context of the activities they were already delivering (see case study).

Case study: St. Matthew's Project

St. Matthew's Project brought in a counsellor to run sessions with young people before or after their football practice. The sessions were very much led by young people and covered topics that they wanted to talk about including anger, gang grooming and how to understand your own mental health. Having someone with expertise in mental health coming in and supporting young people practising with the St. Matthew's Project's football teams was new to the organisation, although they had always supported young people to cope with challenges in their lives.

“We're not just about football. Never have been.”

Charity partner successes

Charity partners are delivering very different types of projects (as described in section two), and success therefore looks different for each of them. However, there were two common themes throughout the data we have collected:

- Most charity partners have been successful in **finding beneficiaries** to work with (both young people and adults where applicable), and felt their projects are perceived as attractive by those in their target groups.
- They have also been successful in **recruiting volunteers** who are keen to support their work.

“It has not been difficult to get kids. Not particularly difficult to get volunteers either. A few times I’ve had to ask around a bit.” (Lead contact)

The following list captures particular successes experienced by individual charity partners:

- For the two charity partners working directly with adults (either foster carers or members of staff), one of the key successes has been the **willingness and openness amongst adults to work in a different way with young people** due to the work of the partner organisation.

“A key marker of success for us is that they’re really understanding now that there is not a right way of doing it, they need to offer support based on everything else that’s going on in the young person’s life.” (Lead contact)

- One organisation noted that they are now **established and recognised as an organisation that does mental health work**, which was a field they did not identify themselves as working in before partnering with Berkeley Foundation, despite providing wellbeing support.
- Some charity partners felt it has been **relatively easy to retain young people** in their programmes once they had joined. It is difficult to say exactly what enabled them to achieve this when others found it difficult, but the importance of offering consistent support and building trusted relationships with young people have both been mentioned as key factors.

“Generally, once the sessions have got going, things go well. Hardly anyone has dropped out from a population of hard-to-reach kids.” (Lead contact)

The outcomes experienced by beneficiaries are further explored in section 3.3 below.

Key challenges delivering the project

In our document review, we found that charity partners had experienced the following challenges at the beginning of the funding period:

- Difficulties engaging partner organisations
- Keeping young people engaged

- Illness and disengagement of volunteers
- Recruiting mentors
- Difficulties finding venues to host activities
- Having enough time for monitoring and evaluation

These challenges were reflected in our interviews and workshops with charity partners. The challenges that charity partners experienced varied according to the specifics of each project. However, some commonalities have emerged.

One of the main challenges mentioned in the interviews was **managing partnerships** with, for example, schools, local authorities, and other external partners. Even though partnerships are crucial to the model of all charity partners' work, they were also challenging to maintain, particularly for those working with multiple partners. For those reliant on other organisations to help deliver their projects, it was particularly challenging when partners were inconsistent in their support. This has at times delayed projects or led to a change in approach.

“Unfortunately, they were going through a lot of internal changes in terms of staff and strategy. This meant there was a lack of clarity in terms of who was responsible on the ground for connecting up and reporting in.” (Lead contact)

For those working in schools it has been challenging to navigate through **schools' lack of time and resources**, and they have been forced to adapt their approach throughout the project period.

“Working with the schools has been a challenge in terms of their timetables, and their change of priorities. For example, we arrive and something has been moved, and there's a swimming lesson going on instead of our session.” (Lead contact)

As described above, some charity partners felt it was relatively easy to ensure **continued youth commitment and engagement** whilst others felt this was a challenge. The reason for it being a challenge was often attributed to working with young people who may not normally engage with these types of activities, and with young people who may be experiencing varying levels of mental health issues. It is not clear why some charity partners have been successful in retaining young people whilst others have struggled. For those who felt it was a challenge, this situation required adjustments to project design and approaches to secure greater and sustained involvement.

“It can be difficult to pin young people down. Sometimes it was a timetabling issue and other practical issues, but more challenges have specifically been around mental health, which were expected but difficult.” (Lead contact)

Similarly, ensuring **continued commitment of volunteers, families, staff and adults** (for those projects working directly with adults) could also be a challenge. For example, charity partners delivering mentoring programmes described how it could take some time to secure committed volunteers before they could actually schedule the first session.

“Sometimes a volunteer isn’t sure if they want to commit and wants longer to think about it. One volunteer wanted to start but then her job changed, another who wanted to start and then couldn’t do it for six months so everything got pushed back...Getting to the point of being matched and getting the meeting is a lot of work.” (Lead contact)

For more established projects, **not being able to keep up with demand** for places from young people due to a lack of funding or capacity is a continuing challenge. The tension between quality versus quantity was commonly mentioned in the interviews and in the final workshop with charity partners.

“If I had my way, I’d pick ten kids for a whole year. But who’s going to fund £20 or £30 grand to work with ten kids?” (Lead contact)

Charity partners generally agreed that given the choice, it would be preferable to work with fewer young people for a longer period of time as this would be more impactful for those young people.

“This is a relational piece of work, and it’s great that Berkeley Foundation did it for two years rather than one year. But really, you’re talking about five years to make a real impact.” (Lead contact)

Changes to delivery

All charity partners described having tweaked their delivery in one way or another throughout the project period. Most of those changes were relatively small and did not change the aim or objectives of the project, only how it was delivered. The most common themes were having changed delivery partners and made changes to the length of time they worked with young people.

“The idea was that it would be regimented – one cohort of kids and volunteers in the autumn, and one in springtime. But that hasn’t been the case at all. Some ended up getting mentoring for 12-18 months.” (Lead contact)

However, one charity partner had to significantly change their original plan in order to respond to their findings in the research and development phase. Initially, the project was designed to work with both young people and their carers, but instead developed to work primarily with carers.

How charity partners have worked to overcome challenges

There were a number of ways charity partners have worked to overcome the above challenges including:

- **Working with partners who have pre-existing relationships** with young people, which has helped to get the project off the ground. Familiarity is key to engage young people in activities.
- Offering **consistent support to young people** (or adults that partners worked with), working through any lack of engagement.

- Being **fluid around individual requirements** through, for example, adapting what the project offered and when so as to accommodate young people with varying needs and preferences.
- Engaging with Berkeley Foundation and other partners to **collectively think about how to overcome challenges**.

More information about how the Berkeley Foundation funding has helped partners to overcome challenges and achieve their goals can be found in section 3.4.

Summary: Programme design and delivery

- Overall, most charity partners had designed and delivered their project with the four programme criteria in mind. Charity partners put more emphasis on some criteria than others.
- Due to the variety in types of projects delivered, success meant something different for each charity. However, two key themes included success in finding beneficiaries to work with and finding volunteers to support the charity.
- Key challenges have included managing partnerships, continued commitment of people involved (including young people, families, and volunteers), and not being able to meet demand.
- Working with partners who have pre-existing relationships with young people, consistent support, being flexible to individual requirements, and collectively thinking about how to solve issues were some of the ways charity partners overcame these challenges.

3.3. Programme outcomes and observed outcomes for young people and adults

Charity partners' perceptions of the programme outcomes

Partners were required to work towards at least one of the programme outcomes. All charity partners said **the work they do achieves one or more of the programme outcomes**. Partners felt that Berkeley Foundation had selected an interesting range of projects which approach the issue of youth mental health from a variety of angles. Some partners work towards these outcomes in an indirect way by working with adults so that they can in turn support young people.

Young people have improved mental health and wellbeing

All charity partners said they were intending to achieve this outcome either directly or indirectly. The latter applied to the charity partners that support foster carers and members of staff who are supporting young people.

The most common theme in the interviews was that charity partners support young people's mental health and wellbeing through offering a safe space for them to speak openly about issues

without being judged. Creating those trusted environments helped young people to relax, and to feel more confident to share their thoughts and feelings with peers and adults.



“This project means a lot to me as it's a safe space, and you can talk without being judged by anyone. Everyone here has built a bond so everyone is nice to each other.” (Young person)

This was also reflected in the two projects that worked with adults.

“In a session, one foster carer made a comment about how the last session had helped to support her in herself, and that she could now be more open to how she's feeling. She really valued coming together with the group where she could share her feelings.” (Lead contact)

However, despite many anecdotal stories about people's improved mental health and wellbeing, the difficulty of measuring these improvements was a common theme amongst all charity partners. Some highlighted that improvements in mental health takes time, and that changes may not become evident until after the funding period. They would welcome more support from the Foundation to help with this.

“This outcome completely relates to what the programme is trying to do, but it has been a challenge to agree to a measurement for that.” (Lead contact)

Case study: Free To Be Kids

Free To Be Kids mentoring programme matches a trusted adult with a young mentee. The charity is seeking to create safe spaces for young people where they can be themselves, where they can disclose things if needed, and where they feel listened to. One of their mentors described how they have supported a young person for about six months. During this time the matched pair has explored London, been to the theatre, and discussed issues about mental health. The mentor said that having already built a trusted relationship at the residential camp was a key foundation for building a safe space when they were seeing each other one-to-one.

“A lot of kids we work with have really poor emotional intelligence or skills – building those trusted relationships is a massive step. That's why part of the mentor/mentee relationship is [being matched with] someone they've met before. That has been a real key marker of success.”

Young people feel more informed about their mental health

All partners also felt that they were working towards this outcome. Some did this through running sessions for young people on different aspects of mental health (e.g. sleep, different moods). In one of our field visits, we observed a session where young people had the chance to relax and speak openly about what was on their mind. Other examples included adults speaking openly about mental health during one-to-ones with young people, or discussing mental health during mentoring sessions.

“I can encourage discussion about it [mental health] and encourage them to feel more confident and hopefully improve their mental health.” (Volunteer)

Young people have improved relationships with family and friends

This outcome was less straightforward for some charity partners, and there was some uncertainty around the extent to which they worked towards it due to a lack of clear evidence. Most charity partners said that they hoped to achieve this outcome, but in what way and what impact it has had was unclear because they did not have direct contact with young people's family and friends. Some noted that they probably worked towards it in an indirect way – improving young people's own mental health is likely to have positive effects on the people around them. Again, charity partners felt that this outcome was difficult to measure, and therefore mainly relied on anecdotal data.

Two charity partners were the exception to this: MAC-UK actively worked to improve young people's relationships with others and with youth services, and Leap CC were actively working towards this outcome as they were supporting foster carers to improve their relationships with young people in care.

“This is the main outcome we're working towards, improving relationships with carers. Giving them the tools focusing on mental health and wellbeing to explore with young people.” (Lead contact)

Young people are better able to manage their mental health and lead a full life

Many of the charity partners agreed they were working towards this outcome, but further discussions unearthed some uncertainties around what exactly it entails. Some noted that 'leading a full life' can mean different things to different people, and is therefore hard to measure. It is also an ambitious and long-term aspiration for projects that are relatively short in length.

“I'd be cautious to say yes, but most young people who went through the programme either as a mentee or a mentor were better able to manage their mental health.” (Lead contact)

On the one hand, charity partners felt that not having overly prescriptive programme outcomes was useful, as it enabled them to interpret these outcomes and concepts in way that made sense for their project. On the other hand, they also felt slightly unclear about the Foundation's exact expectations, and whether they were meeting them.

Overall, charity partners appreciated that the outcomes were quite broad as it meant they were more easily applicable to the varied group of projects that they deliver. However, **measuring the programme outcomes and several of their individual project outcomes was difficult**, and it was hard to provide the appropriate evidence to the Foundation that these outcomes were being met. This was particularly acute for those organisations working with people for a relatively short period of time, as the programme outcomes describe long-term changes in a young person's life.

What outcomes have been observed

The data from our interviews and field visits suggests that charity partners have achieved the following outcomes for at least some **young people**. This list covers all of the outcomes we have observed, but not all charity partners achieved every outcome.



The most common theme in the data was **increased confidence** amongst young people. For some young people attending peer-mentoring training this meant that they felt more confident sharing their own opinions with others, and for others it meant more confidence in their ability to mentor other young people.



"I feel more confident now. If I mentor another person, I would be confident enough to do that. I'm really excited for the programme to come back, I would like to give it another try." (Young person)



Increased social connections was another common theme, particularly for those charity partners running mentoring programmes or running sessions on mental health with young people.

"I feel like I am part of a team and like I am able to voice my opinions. I've made new friends." (Young person)



Many of those interviewed said that they have **learnt new skills** from being part of charity partners' programmes. These skills included mentoring others, social skills and speaking in front of others, and listening to other people.

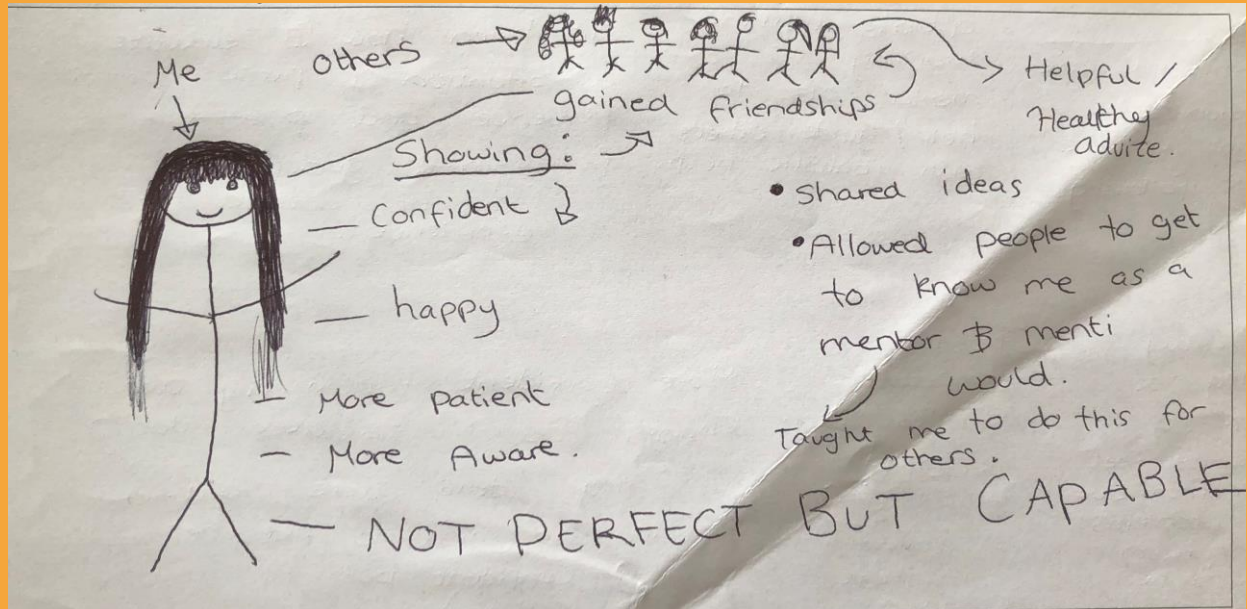
"I've learnt a lot – it is hard to pinpoint. I suppose you learn about yourself in terms of how you can try to get the best out of someone, try to be the best listener and the best supportive person in your mentee's life. I've learnt a lot from [staff member] in terms of different ways of talking about certain things or raising certain things." (Young volunteer)



Improved mental health was also mentioned by some, alongside **reduced levels of stress**. Attending the mentoring sessions or other group sessions has helped young people to feel more at ease and calm.

"I always feel less stressed when I come here as I have so many exams and stressful things. But here I forget all my worries and just have fun." (Young person)

Case study: Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families



This drawing was made by one of the young people attending Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families and Bea Herbert's peer-mentoring training. The drawing depicts their answer to the questions: 1. *What have you been doing as a part of this activity?* 2. *How does it make you feel?*

They described having gained friendships through the training, and that they now feel more confident, happy, patient and aware of what it means to become a mentor.

"I have most enjoyed generally having a laugh to make us feel better from our own problems, yet knowing when to be serious as a group." (Young person)

The following outcomes were observed **amongst adults** that some charity partners work with:



Increased confidence in their ability to work with young people in a positive way.

"It gives me the space to speak with a psychologist about my feelings, and any worries I might have. I feel it helps me go out into the community with confidence in the work I'm doing."
(Delivery partner)



Reduced levels of stress

"I was very stressed before, but after the programme I understood a lot of things. It helped myself as well as my children." (Foster carer)



Increased wellbeing

"The kind of work I do, you spend a lot of time thinking about other people's lives, so you can forget about your own sometimes. It's nice to have the space to openly speak about yourself. In turn, it enables you to do your job better." (Delivery partner)



Improved conflict management skills

"I have implemented a lot of the things we talked about during the training. It gave me a lot of ideas. I have been a child minder for a long time. Sometimes there are challenges between mums and the children." (Foster carer)

Summary: Programme outcomes and observed outcomes in young people and adults

- As a group, the charity partners are working towards all four programme outcomes.
- All charity partners felt they are working towards young people having improved relationships with family and friends, however for most of them this is an indirect result of the work they are doing and they therefore do not much direct evidence. Two of the charity partners do actively and directly aim to achieve this outcome.
- Charity partners noted that the programme outcomes are quite broad, and can therefore be interpreted in different ways. This made it harder for charity partners to know what the Foundation expected from them in terms of evidence needed.
- There is evidence that young people have experienced the following positive outcomes: increased confidence, increased social connections, improved skills, improved mental health and reduced levels of stress.
- There is evidence that adults supported by the charity partners experienced the following positive outcomes: increased confidence in their ability to work in a positive way with young people, reduced levels of stress, increased wellbeing and improved conflict management skills.

3.4. Impact on funded charity partners and beyond

Impact of the funding programme on charity partners

Overall, charity partners were very positive about the funding they had received. The list below illustrates some different ways in which the funding has supported the organisation. It should be noted that each example does not apply to every charity partner, but all partners experienced at least one of the following benefits.

The Improving Youth Mental Health programme has:

- Enabled partners to conduct **more research on the best approach before setting up the project**. It was very valuable to have funding in the development phase to ensure the project has the biggest possible impact on young people.

“If we didn’t receive the Berkeley Foundation funding to support the development of the programme itself, it couldn’t exist.” (Project lead)

- Enabled partners to **work on something they had not done before**. For one organisation this meant being able to develop their peer-mentoring offer, and for another this meant being able to become recognised as an organisation that does mental health work.

“We’re now established as an organisation that does mental health work. People recognise that now. Councils have noticed, and other charity partners in the area have noticed.” (Lead contact)

- In addition to this, it has enabled some charity partners to gain **wider recognition for their work**.

- Enabled partners to **develop deeper relationships with partner organisations**.

“Since we worked with Berkeley Foundation, we have deeper and better relationships with the schools.” (Lead contact)

- Enabled partners to **try new ways of working** including piloting working with beneficiaries for a longer period of time. This was seen as very beneficial because building trusting relationships with young people requires time.

“It was particularly important because at the time, we’d done quite a lot of good quality short term work and this allowed us to shift to longer term work.” (Lead contact)

- Enabled partners to reach a **wider audience of young people** than they had previously.

- Enabled partners to take a more **preventative approach to mental health**, which is something many of them appreciated and saw as an approach that has a higher impact on young people.

“It enabled us to take a preventative approach to mental health, and apply psychology to spaces more accessible to young people.” (Lead contact)

- On a more practical level, the funding programme enabled charity partners to **hire staff** to deliver the programmes. Being able to hire delivery staff was a crucial component for some charity partners, and the projects would not have happened without it.

Case study: Harlequins Foundation

The Harlequins Foundation used the funding from Berkeley Foundation to employ a full-time member of staff, and they have stopped using part-time and casual workers. Having coaches working consistently with young people has been seen as a success for the charity partner. Working consistently in schools has helped the charity to ensure that the METTLE programme has remained high quality.

Wider impact of the funding programme

There was little data on the wider impact of the funding programme on for example, the wider community or sector. However, two charity partners gave examples of ways in which the programme has had some wider impact:

- There has been an increased interest amongst other partners for peer-mentoring models when working with young people.
- Other partners have adopted the approach used by the charity partner.

“Three charity partners have taken on the attributes of the approach to work in a psychology-informed way to involve young people more in decision making. Those resources and ways of working will carry on beyond the time of the project.” (Lead contact)

Impact of the capacity building grant

Some charity partners received an additional capacity-building grant from Berkeley Foundation. This capacity-building grant was spent on different kinds of projects including hiring an external consultant to create a strategy for how the organisation can communicate their work better to become more recognised; and having someone set up a CRM system for the organisation to track their work more efficiently. These grants have enabled charity partners to invest in organisational capacity in a way that they had not been able to do previously.

Charity partners that received this funding were generally positive about the opportunity, and recognised they probably would not have invested the same money in their development otherwise. Amongst interviewees, there was some agreement that grants to support capacity building are not common.

“It’s been a massive help for us, not the kind of thing we could have got funded elsewhere.” (Lead contact)

Summary: Impact on funded charity partners and beyond

- The programme has enabled charity partners to undertake research on the best approach before launching their project, work on something they had not done before, develop deeper relationships with partners, try new ways of working, reach a wider audience of young people, take a more preventative approach to mental health, and gain wider recognition for their work.
- There was little data on whether the programme has had any wider impact, however there were two examples including increased interest amongst other partners in working with a peer-mentoring model, and that other organisations have started to use a charity partner's approach to working with young people.
- The capacity-building grant has been helpful for charity partners who received that funding to invest in organisational capacity in a way that they are unlikely to have been able to do otherwise.

3.5. Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation framework is viewed by charity partners as a thorough process, which potentially requires too much of charity partners

The majority felt that they are asked for a level of reporting which is out of proportion to the relatively small scale of the grants. Some pointed to larger grants they have received from other funders, where they are only asked to produce one end-of-year report. The multi-faceted nature of the Foundation's monitoring and evaluation process in comparison can feel onerous and is time consuming for partners. Charity partners understood the need for the tracker (as this is something they need to do for other funders as well) but described it as confusing.

"The first time doing it felt like a major undertaking every three months, as well as the reports every six and 12 months. It does come around very quickly! On top of that, the calls. It is quite a lot." (Lead contact)

However, some felt that it helped them to stay focused and capture more data than they would do normally.

"I do feel it does sharpen your focus... It does make you think more often about 'how are we doing?', but we're a small organisation and it takes resources to do that." (Lead contact)

Some questioned how much value the M&E framework creates in its current format

The framework is outcomes focused, whereas some projects were more focussed on developing new approaches, innovation processes or only worked with a small group of people. This made it harder for those charity partners to evidence the outcomes.

“Not sure how much [the M&E framework] adds. There need to be some KPIs, but it feels a little value-less as the sample is so small, [so you] can’t base much on that.” (Lead contact)

Taking a quantitative approach to monitoring also felt at odds with work focused on mental health, where impacts can be difficult to quantify. One partner described Berkeley Foundation as more focused on ‘numbers’ compared to other funders.

“There’s probably a bit of mileage in working out something with young people that makes sense to them as well as something that makes sense to people in a boardroom who want to understand where their money is being spent. There is probably a bit more work to be done to meet somewhere in the middle.” (Lead contact)

Producing case studies and capturing informal data was seen as beneficial

For some partners, being asked to produce case studies as part of their reporting has proven beneficial, as they have been able to capture their impact in a way they had not previously. Others have been able to use reports produced for Berkeley Foundation to present to partners or board members.

Overall, charity partners would prefer if the tracker allowed for more qualitative information to be shared, as the tracker itself currently does not allow for partners to capture the ‘full story’ of what they do. Although qualitative data is captured through narrative reports and the case studies, charity partners did not tend to recall or consider that information and instead focused on their experience of using the tracker.

“This project was more process based than outcomes based, and I didn’t feel the tracker allowed us to capture that learning. We weren’t able to demonstrate all our learning.” (Lead contact)

Summary: Monitoring and evaluation

- Overall, charity partners felt that the monitoring and evaluation framework required a level of input that was disproportionate to the size of the grant.
- Some charity partners felt that it added some value in giving them a regular opportunity to think about what they are doing and why.
- There was an appetite for the Foundation to use more qualitative information, case studies and project learning in its monitoring and evaluation practice.

3.6. Wider learning

Key learning from delivering the funded projects

The most common point of learning from delivering the funded projects was that **time is needed to have a sustained impact**. For example, many of those interviewed expressed a wish to work

on longer-term projects to truly build impactful relationships with young people, families and charity partners.

“These kind of projects need a lot more time, it’s only a three year project. Should be minimum five years to explore and build something that’s sustainable. It takes a long time to build these relationships. Schools are reluctant to open up.” (Delivery partner)

In addition to this, **consistency and sustained support to beneficiaries** was seen to be the most impactful way of working instead of *“parachuting in and then leaving”*.

Linked to this is the importance of focusing on **quality instead of quantity**. There is a sense that it is less meaningful to work with many young people for a short period of time, and most partners would prefer to work with fewer for a longer time period. Some also noted that success is more about the approach you use to connect with young people, rather than the number of times and number of people you have interacted with.

“You need to do much more with these kids. You need to invest more. [You need an approach which is based on] quality over quantity.” (Lead contact)

The main barrier for doing this is naturally funding. As one interviewee noted, *“it is expensive to make a difference”* and that many funding bodies tend to fund short-term projects that are working with a higher number of young people, instead of focusing on the quality of intervention. Some charity partners noted that Berkeley Foundation had funded them for a longer time period than many other funders would, however the ambitions and intended outcomes of the programme need to be in proportion to the amount of funding and length of funding period. Some partners felt their projects were not funded for long enough to reach their full potential, and some worked with more cohorts of young people for a shorter period of time than they would ideally have liked to, in order to meet their engagement targets.

Those that have used a mentoring model reported one of their key learnings that **peer-mentoring around mental health has proven to be very useful** – both for young people and adults.

“Having space for a young person to speak to a slightly older person about their fears or things that make them anxious is clearly a good thing. That person being outside their normal groups or peer groups has a real strength to it. That’s something that has been powerful and I have taken away from the project itself.” (Lead contact)

Partners who have had to **deviate from their original proposed approach** in the face of challenges spoke about the value of their project in terms of the **learning that has been produced**. Learning from mistakes and changing approach along the way was seen as beneficial.

Finally, some charity partners learnt more than they were able to capture and report in the monitoring and evaluation framework. An **approach that allows them to reflect on learning and report it in a more open way would be more beneficial to them**. This is very much linked

to the Foundation's monitoring and evaluation framework, and it would be beneficial to review it to ensure it can capture the full range of insights and learning that projects have developed.

The context of COVID-19

Our final workshop, attended by four charity partners, took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This influenced the conversation on recommendations for the Foundation and how to take this work forward.

- Some charity partners noted that many of the young people they work with have not been following the social distancing rules due to challenging situations in their homes, and/or a lack of trust in authorities. Young people are still at risk in the midst of this crisis.
- There was a worry amongst partners that many funders, including Berkeley Foundation, have paused their funding programmes due to COVID-19. The general consensus amongst those attending the second workshop was that young people are in need of targeted support, and that they are in need of their services now more than ever.

“That Berkeley Foundation froze their funds felt like a very corporate decision, and it doesn't really go hand in hand with the ethos of the Foundation.” (Lead contact)

At the time of the workshop, Berkeley Foundation had paused new applications and renewal decisions for some of their programmes in order to focus resources on the Covid emergency response. This situation affected those charity partners who had applied for a second phase of the Improving Youth Mental Health funding. However, at the point of publishing this report the Foundation had re-opened the renewal decision process.

Ways in which charity partners have shared learning across the sector

There was a clear desire among most charity partners to share their learning with others. However, it was clear in the data that few charity partners had the capacity to share their learning as widely as they would have liked. Berkeley Foundation's assistance would be welcomed here. Suggestions included organising events with other funders or stakeholders in the wider youth mental health sector, as well as communications support.

There was one example of a charity partner that had planned to share their findings in a final event, however due to COVID-19 the event could not take place.

Summary: Wider learning

- Charity partners highlighted a wide range of learning from delivering their work, and the most common theme was that time is needed to have a sustained impact on young people and to build deep relationships with partners.
- It is clear from the data that charity partners have a desire to share their learning more widely, but have little capacity to do so. Help from the Foundation would be beneficial to support this.

3.7. Relationship with Berkeley Foundation

Charity partners' relationship with Berkeley Foundation was overwhelmingly positive

In the interviews, it was clear that the impact of the funding and the way it was delivered by Berkeley Foundation were very much interlinked. Charity partners were very positive about the funding and the impact it has had on their work, and they were also content with the funding programme's approach delivering it. There was a sense that Berkeley Foundation are truly interested in ensuring that their funding makes a difference.

"You always get the idea they very much want their funding to make a difference. It's not just a public relations exercise." (Lead contact)

Relationships with Berkeley Foundation are viewed as overwhelmingly positive, with charity partners describing the Foundation as a **flexible, understanding and sympathetic partner**.

Foundation staff are viewed as **curious and invested** in the work of the funded projects, demonstrating a level of interest that they have not necessarily experienced in other funding programmes. This is seen as a key strength of the Foundation and its approach to grant making, which feels more like a partnership than a basic funder-grantee relationship.

"A sense of learning as they go along - not something you always get from funding organisations." (Lead contact)

Some felt that the amount of paperwork and the monitoring and evaluation framework can be a bit off-putting. However, others said that thanks to the personal relationship with the Foundation, they felt more at ease with the requirements.

"By the end of the relationship, it's the opposite way around. The paperwork is very easy. The funding manager is very flexible. That human approach to what would otherwise be a cumbersome monitoring process." (Lead contact)

All partners would have **no hesitation in recommending applying for a grant** from Berkeley Foundation to others.

Several partners also expressed the hope that the end of funding would not be the end of their relationship with Berkeley Foundation and **would welcome continued support** from the Foundation if possible.

Summary: Relationship with Berkeley Foundation

- Charity partners were overwhelmingly positive about the relationship they have with the Foundation.
- All partners would recommend others to apply for a grant from the Foundation.

4. Conclusions and recommendations



The Improving Youth Mental Health programme has enabled charity partners to undertake research on the best approach before launching their project, work on something they had not done before, develop deeper relationships with partners, try new ways of working, reach a wider audience of young people, take a more preventative approach to mental health, and gain wider recognition for their work. It has benefitted young people and the adults who support them in a range of ways, including improving their mental health, confidence, skills and connections with others. Charity partners were overwhelmingly positive about the relationship they have with the Foundation, and this relationship has helped them to develop their programmes in an iterative way to ensure that what they do is as effective as possible.

Overall, the following findings stand out as significant:

- **Application process and assessment:** The application process was seen as appropriate and straightforward. It was effective in selecting projects which aligned with the programme aims. No specific changes to the process have been suggested by charity partners.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** The Foundation's monitoring and evaluation reporting process is seen as thorough but overly burdensome by charity partners. They would welcome a greater focus on learning and insights about their projects, and a more balanced use of qualitative information and quantitative outcomes data. Some partners also wanted the process to be more focused on the needs and voices of young people – sharing their stories, as well as fulfilling the need to inform the Foundation's work. Partners found evidencing their impact on young people's and adults' mental health difficult, and would welcome more support with how to do this well.
- **Programme design and delivery:** The programme was effective at achieving its intended aims and objectives. The Foundation's relational approach and flexibility was particularly helpful, and enabled projects to develop and improve over time in response to challenges. The additional capacity building support was also helpful. There was an appetite for longer-term funding (in the region of five years) because long-term, consistent support is needed for young people with poor mental health to experience positive and lasting changes. There was also an appetite amongst some partners to work with smaller groups of young people to be able to more significantly impact their lives, though there is a high demand amongst young people for support which should also be taken into account.
- **Outcomes and impact:** We have found evidence that the programme has positively impacted young people and adults supported by the charity partners. Being able to provide an approach that is consistent, relational, and based on listening seems to have been effective in supporting young people and the adults around them to improve their mental health and achieve a range of other outcomes. Charity partners experienced a range of challenges, but were able to learn from this process and make improvements to their approach.

- **Wider learning and impact:** Charity partners have developed a wealth of knowledge about how to support young people and the adults around them through the delivery of their funded projects. Most have an appetite to share this learning more widely, and would welcome support from the Foundation to help them to do this. Some have already shared information about their approach with other partners who have an interest in this area of work. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be taken into account, as the context to this work has changed significantly in recent months. Young people's mental health has become an even more acute issue, which makes sharing learning about approaches that could work more important than ever.

Recommendations

Berkeley Foundation's ethos and approach

1. Charity partners were positive about their relationship with Berkeley Foundation and appreciate the Foundation's ethos, in particular its friendly, understanding, partner-centred and flexible approach. However, this ethos is not clearly reflected in the Foundation's communications or application and monitoring processes. Our overarching recommendation is therefore to **review the Foundation's communications and processes** at every stage of grantmaking to **ensure that these reflect your values and ethos** as an organisation.

Programme outcomes, monitoring and evaluation

1. The overarching programme outcomes are appropriate and sufficiently high-level to be applicable to a varied group of projects. However, we recommend that the Foundation clarifies its expectations about what reasonable progress towards these outcomes might look like, and make it clearer to funded charity partners and applicants that their project does not have to fully achieve the outcomes.
2. We further recommend that the Foundation remains realistic about how far projects will be able to robustly evidence programme outcomes, particularly those that are more indirect to their delivery (e.g. impact on young people's relationships with friends and family) and/or long-term aspirations (e.g. young people able to lead a full life); and that the Foundation communicates this openly with applicants and funded charity partners.
3. We recommend that the Foundation makes it clear to charity partners in the initial stages of the partnerships that the Foundation allows and wants to encourage charity partners to revise their project outcomes mid-project if they feel the outcomes set at application stage are no longer appropriate. Allowing partners to be more iterative will encourage them to take learning into account and allow them to focus on evaluating the most relevant aspects of their work, which may not become evident until the project becomes more established.
4. We recommend that the Foundation reviews the programme monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure it a) minimises the administrative burden on charity partners, and b) allows charity partners to record a greater range of data including qualitative information and insights about their project's progress in the tracker.

5. We further recommend that the Foundation re-focuses its monitoring and evaluation process on capturing learning rather than primarily focusing on outcomes data. This will make the process more appropriate to the types of projects being funded through this programme (i.e. a diverse range of approaches, most of which are new for the organisation, and in some cases focused on changing systems or testing different ways of working rather than directly focusing on young people's outcomes).
6. We recommend that the Foundation provides more structured support to charity partners to help them to capture appropriate evidence about the impact and effectiveness of their projects. This could be achieved through additional capacity building grants enabling charity partners to commission this support; through centrally commissioning an expert provider to advise and help build partners' capacity in this area; or to commission this as a stream of work within future programme evaluations.
7. We also recommend that the Foundation supports charity partners that help young people indirectly (i.e. by targeting support at the adults around them) to develop appropriate ways to capture that indirect impact.

Programme design and delivery

1. The programme criteria seem appropriate, however we recommend that the Foundation reviews their wording and provides clear examples of what these criteria might look like in practice, so that charity partners and applicants know whether they meet the Foundation's expectations.
2. We recommend that the Foundation considers whether it is feasible and appropriate to offer some longer-term grants (in the region of 3-5 years in length) for organisations that are in a position to offer long-term, consistent support to a targeted group of young people with more acute mental health support needs, to help them sustain long-lasting improvements.
3. There is an inevitable tension between providing support to as many young people as possible in the face of high demand, and working in a sustained and in-depth way to achieve a more significant impact for a smaller number of young people. We recommend that the Foundation communicates to charity partners that they are encouraged to find their own balance between these aims, and that the Foundation takes a flexible approach to partners' engagement targets if there is a compelling reason for these to change mid-project.
4. The capacity building grants have been well-received by charity partners, particularly given few opportunities for this type of support being provided by other funders. We recommend that the Foundation continues to offer targeted capacity building grants alongside providing project funding to help charity partners develop organisationally.

Wider learning and impact

1. We recommend that the Foundation supports charity partners to share their learning from these projects, by for example organising learning events or publicising key points of learning through its networks.

2. We recommend that the Foundation uses its reporting processes to capture and identify learning that could be shared more widely, in addition to using this information for internal learning purposes.
3. We recommend that the Foundation commissions an evaluation partner at the beginning of future funding programmes, to be able to capture more detailed information about the types of approaches that are more or less effective in improving young people's mental health, and why.